

**New Jersey Task Force on Child Abuse and Neglect
Staffing and Oversight Review Subcommittee (SORS)
Cecilia Zalkind, Esq, Chair
Rita Gulden, MSW, Vice-Chair
Tuesday, July 9, 2013 - 10:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.
20 West State Street, 2nd Floor Conference Room 220
Trenton, NJ 08550**

In Attendance

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| Claudia Azille | DCF-Burlington Area Office |
| Marygrace Billek | Mercer County Human Services |
| Rita Gulden | CASA of New Jersey |
| Mary Hallahan | Foster Parent |
| Lisa Nemeth | Department of Law & Public Safety |
| Natasha Palmer | Department of Education |
| Nancy Parello | Advocates for Children of New Jersey |
| John Ramos | DCF, Child Protection and Permanency |
| Michele Safrin | DCF-Office of Educational Support and Programs |
| Clarence Whittaker | Department of Children and Families |
| Cecilia Zalkind | Advocates for Children of New Jersey |

Staff

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| Adrienne E. Jackson | DCF-NJTFCAN |
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Introduction and Review of Minutes

Introductions were made and May meeting minutes were reviewed and approved.

Annual Report

The report has been submitted to the Governor's office and the New Jersey Legislature; which can be found online and it is posted on the myNewJersey account. The committee thanked Adrienne for all her efforts in making sure the report was completed on time.

New Business

Office of Education Stability

Michele Safrin informed the committee that NJ SPIRIT has been enhanced to capture education stability. Within the next six months, some reports will be developed in Safe Measures (the compliance piece to track which offices are compliant with timeliness, entering the data and how many children are changing places, etc.)

There was no paper copy of data provided to the committee; however, Michele mentioned that the data is consistent with the last time she presented to the committee. Roughly seventy-five percent of the children that go into placement are remaining in their same schools. DCF is very excited about working with DOE to capture educational data related to academic performance,

engagements (school attendance, school truancy, dropout, graduation, and other things education related). This is the first step regarding data exchange with DOE.

The Educational Stability Liaisons meet monthly to go over any kind of changes, obstacles, and to discuss any type of case practice issues related to educational stability.

Education Stability has been focusing on its training. Rutgers Special Education Law Clinic is delivering the training regarding: special education discipline, registration, enrollment and working on a curriculum for early intervention services. It will be rolling out to all DCF staff. Training is being developed for adolescent workers, in terms of educational planning with youth in care starting from 8th grade through graduation. The training will be tailored in order to deliver it to the youth themselves. It will focus on the bill of rights, standardized tests (what this means for students) and making sure that workers/caregivers understand the importance when a child is not performing efficiently and what they need to do about it. The Train the Trainer will be utilized for the career technical education (vocational education) and early intervention services for the youths. Debora Torres is the field coordinator on the state level; and she has recently worked with the Pride Trainers which a portion of the training is on Education Stability.

Q&A

What is the timeframe for all the educational training?

The training will be available in September to all DCF staff through DCF Training Academy. The training will be available for other community groups.

What is the timeframe for the roughly seventy-five percent of the children remaining in their same schools?

The data goes back to September 2010 which consists of school age children and includes classified preschool handicapped.

Are children entering placement for the first time or changing placements?

It includes both and there is a slight percentage when they are changing placements. Children are continuing with their after school activities by working with other resource parents and developing contracts with transportation providers to ensure that children get back and forth to the afterschool activities. Extra curriculum is important to children and if you cannot work something out at the local level, the next step will be to call Michele's office so that something can be worked out with the contracting unit for vendors to provide transportation. The Educational liaison should be involved with placement due to guidelines, deadlines and making sure the transportation starts. The Educational stability liaison directory is updated every three months and is available on the website.

Has it been an issue with parents' involvement with the schools and having foster parents remaining anonymous?

The workers are required to put in writing to the biological parent and law guardian whether the child will remain in the original school or change school. If the student is changing schools and there is a safety issue then that information will be left out in terms of which school the child is attending.

What happens to the kids who are in a group home setting or congregate care?

The guidance that is given to case workers is to consider what is in the best interest of the child and to be advocating for the child. The issue is then; the school district does not have to provide transportation.

What type of data does education stability collect?

Education stability collects the following type of data:

- If a child remains or changes schools
- if it is court ordered for the child to remain in the same school
- the date the school is notified of school change and the actual enrollment
- best interest factors (how the worker came to the determination to keep a child in the same school or change school)
- collect whether in special education, dropout rate, graduation rate and track the history of school placements for the academic year.

Old Business

Visitation Questions – Open Discussion

Adrienne Jackson provided the committee with a copy of the memo regarding DCF response to SORS questions around Parent/Child and Sibling Visitation that the committee presented back in May 2013. The memo and the updated case plan, contracting program information and placement kit (resource parents has really great information in it) will be uploaded to the shared portal after the meeting. The attachments will be labeled as they are written in the response. The committee will add this to the September's meeting for further discussion. Adrienne will provide the link for the Monitor's Report when it comes available. The report in the past has addressed the issue of visitation.

Future Presentation Discussion

Elizabeth Bowman will be attending the September's meeting to discuss Quality Assurance and Performance Management. Adrienne will send out an email in August regarding questions for Elizabeth and visitation issues that are relevant to performance measures.

The committee will revisit the discussion around the survey that was done March 2011 to see whether the committee is interested in doing it again, in a shorter format.

A follow up discussion regarding family team meetings and any data that is available.

Next Meeting/Announcement - September 10, 2013 – Trenton, NJ