



STAFFING AND OVERSIGHT REVIEW SUBCOMMITTEE

Suzanne Kreie, Chair
Lisa Chapland, Co-Chair

“In compliance with Chapter 231 of the Public Laws of 1975, notice of this meeting was given by way of public posting on the New Jersey Task Force on Child Abuse and Neglect website: [DCF | New Jersey Task Force on Child Abuse and Neglect \(NJTFCAN\)](#).”

**Please note the meeting was recorded for the transcription of minutes.*

March 10, 2026

Meeting Minutes

Attendance

Marygrace Billek, Public member
Lisa Chapland, Relative Resource Parent
Suzanne Kreie, Coordinated Family Care
Laura Jamet, Department of Children and Families
Elizabeth Sherwood, Division of Law
Linda Porcaro, Somerset County Office of Youth Services
Garnet Roberts-Batson, DAD’s Council
Traci Telemaque, Office of the Public Defender
Lynette Rente, Office of the Public Defender

Guests:

Emily Douglas, Montclair University
Svetlana Spiegel, Montclair University
Wendy Zeitlin, Montclair University
Amanda O’Reilly, Department of Children and Families
Tracy Newell, Department of Children and Families
Shakir Umar, Department of Children and Families

Staff:

Bethany D’Amelio, Department of Children and Families

Call to Order

The meeting was convened with the reading of the public notice.



STAFFING AND OVERSIGHT REVIEW SUBCOMMITTEE

Suzanne Kreie, Chair
Lisa Chapland, Co-Chair

“In compliance with Chapter 231 of the Public Laws of 1975, notice of this meeting was given by way of public posting on the New Jersey Task Force on Child Abuse and Neglect website: [DCF | New Jersey Task Force on Child Abuse and Neglect \(NJTF CAN\)](#).”

**Please note the meeting was recorded for the transcription of minutes.*

1. Approval of Prior Meeting Minutes

The committee voted to approve the meeting minutes without edit. There were no opposition and no abstentions.

2. Presentation on the New Data Portal

A presentation was delivered by the Department’s data team regarding the new data portal. The presentation provided an overview of how committee members may use the portal, what data elements are currently being captured, and the general purpose of the system in supporting data-informed review and discussion.

The presenters explained that the portal is intended to improve access to relevant information and to support the committee’s ability to examine trends affecting children, youth, and families. The team also clarified that some reported figures may reflect distortions associated with the pandemic period. Members were advised that certain numbers should therefore be interpreted carefully, particularly when comparing data across time periods that include pandemic-related disruptions.

The presentation also addressed the scope of the data included in the portal. Members were informed that information related to the Institutional Abuse Investigation Unit is not being collected within this portal because that information does not fall under the Division of Child Protection and Permanency data set included here. This distinction was presented as an important limitation for members to understand when reviewing reports and drawing conclusions from available information.

Committee members responded favorably to the presentation and expressed appreciation for the clarity, thoroughness, and usefulness of the information provided. Members



STAFFING AND OVERSIGHT REVIEW SUBCOMMITTEE

Suzanne Kreie, Chair
Lisa Chapland, Co-Chair

“In compliance with Chapter 231 of the Public Laws of 1975, notice of this meeting was given by way of public posting on the New Jersey Task Force on Child Abuse and Neglect website: [DCF | New Jersey Task Force on Child Abuse and Neglect \(NJTF CAN\)](#).”
**Please note the meeting was recorded for the transcription of minutes.*

indicated that the presentation helped improve understanding of both the functionality of the portal and the context necessary to interpret the data accurately.

3. Membership and Recruitment Committee Discussion

The committee discussed the need to strengthen and sustain membership through a more organized recruitment and review process. Members considered the formation of a recruitment committee to take a lead role in evaluating current membership needs and developing a more structured strategy for outreach and review.

The proposed recruitment committee would be responsible for examining the committee’s current composition, identifying gaps in representation or expertise, and planning a recruitment strategy aimed at broadening participation. Members also discussed assigning the recruitment committee responsibility for reviewing membership applications and conducting interviews as part of the selection process.

The discussion reflected a shared interest in ensuring that committee membership remains active, representative, and responsive to the scope of issues under review. Members emphasized the value of creating a clear process that supports continuity, transparency, and thoughtful consideration of prospective applicants.

4. Priority Areas: Education

The committee identified education as a priority area for further discussion and data review. Members noted the importance of understanding how involvement with the child welfare system may affect a young person’s educational experience and outcomes. The discussion centered on what educational data points would be most helpful in assessing the impact of placement changes and system involvement.

Members raised several questions that they believe warrant further examination, including:



STAFFING AND OVERSIGHT REVIEW SUBCOMMITTEE

Suzanne Kreie, Chair
Lisa Chapland, Co-Chair

“In compliance with Chapter 231 of the Public Laws of 1975, notice of this meeting was given by way of public posting on the New Jersey Task Force on Child Abuse and Neglect website: [DCF | New Jersey Task Force on Child Abuse and Neglect \(NJTF CAN\)](#).”

**Please note the meeting was recorded for the transcription of minutes.*

- How many placement or school transitions do youth experience on average?
- What percentage of youth in placement have Individualized Education Programs?
- How many youth in placement graduate from high school?

These questions were framed as foundational to understanding educational stability, service needs, and long-term outcomes for youth involved in the system. Members emphasized that access to reliable educational data would be important for identifying trends, gaps, and opportunities for improvement.

The committee also discussed where this data may currently be captured and how the committee might access it. The discussion reflected the committee’s interest in using educational indicators to better understand youth experience and to inform future recommendations.

5. Discussion of Recent Media Coverage Concerning Youth Sleeping in Offices

The committee discussed a recent media article reporting that youth have been sleeping in Division offices due to New Jersey’s housing crisis. In response to the article, a representative indicated that such situations occur very infrequently. The committee was informed that, when these situations do arise, they are typically associated with the complex needs of specific youth, including mental health, behavioral, and/or cognitive factors that can make placement more difficult at certain times.

The discussion emphasized that these circumstances are not primarily attributed to a general lack of resource homes. Rather, members were informed that some youth may not be appropriately served in traditional resource home settings and may instead require more specialized care environments. This led to discussion of the need for specialized care



STAFFING AND OVERSIGHT REVIEW SUBCOMMITTEE

Suzanne Kreie, Chair
Lisa Chapland, Co-Chair

“In compliance with Chapter 231 of the Public Laws of 1975, notice of this meeting was given by way of public posting on the New Jersey Task Force on Child Abuse and Neglect website: [DCF | New Jersey Task Force on Child Abuse and Neglect \(NJTF CAN\)](#).”

**Please note the meeting was recorded for the transcription of minutes.*

homes capable of meeting the needs of youth with more significant clinical or behavioral challenges.

Members were also informed that the Commissioner has launched a Youth Mental Health Roundtable who may examine these issues further. This initiative was referenced as an important step toward better understanding service gaps and identifying solutions for youth whose needs may not align with existing placement options.

During discussion, members asked about SHPS homes. The committee was informed that those homes are no longer in operation within the Department. This information contributed to the broader conversation about the current array of placement resources and the need to ensure appropriate care settings for youth with specialized needs.

6. Public Comment

There were no public guests present. No public comment was offered.

Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned. Next meeting: April 14, 2026.

This memo aims to maintain transparency and provide the public with an overview of the task force's recent deliberations. The committee values community input and engagement as we collectively strive to enhance the welfare of children and families across New Jersey. This report was prepared, in part, with the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI).

For further information or queries, the public can reach out via the contact channels provided by the Department of Children and Families.