“In compliance with Chapter 231 of the Public Laws of 1975, notice of this meeting was given by way of notice filed with the Secretary of State, the Trenton Times and the Newark Star Ledger and posted at the Department of State, 125 West State St., 1st Floor, Trenton, New Jersey.”

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

November 14, 2024

10:00am – 12:00pm

Meeting minutes

**Attendance**

Members:

Corissa Kazar, Embrella

Sanford Starr, Department of Children and Families

Wendy Yallowitz, Department of Children and Families

Jessica Cowan, Infant & Early Childhood Mental Health, Montclair University

Theresa McCutcheon, Rutgers School of Social Work

LaTanya Forest, Department of Children and Families

Patty Mojta, Rutgers School of Social Work

Diane Dellanno, Advocates for Children of New Jersey

Antonietta Phelan, Sommerset County, Office of Youth Services

LuAnn Dias, Catholic Charities

Spencer Austin, Rumson School District, school psychologist

Sue Conrad, Public Member

Zachary Miller, New Jersey CARES Institute

Jennifer Valentine, CASA of New Jersey

Dr. Susan Esquilin, Anti-Racist Mental Health Alliance of New Jersey

Staff:

Bethany D’Amelio, Department of Children and Families

This committee convened to discuss ongoing and future initiatives aimed at improving the welfare of children and families in New Jersey. This document summarizes the key points and decisions from the meeting.

1. **Opening Remarks:**
   * The meeting commenced with introductions and an overview of the agenda. The committee's commitment to serving the community with integrity and fairness was reiterated.
2. **Historical Context:**
   * The task force's origins were discussed, tracing back to its establishment by executive order in 1983, aimed at addressing child abuse and neglect through coordinated state efforts.
3. **Current Strategic Goals:**
   * **Promoting Racial Equity:** Emphasis was placed on ensuring equitable access to prevention services across all racial and ethnic groups.
   * **Youth and Family Partnership:** Strategies to enhance partnerships with families in policy and program planning were explored.
   * **Trauma-Informed Practices:** A drive to establish trauma-responsive services state-wide was stressed.
   * **Collaborative Stakeholder Engagement:** Efforts to partner with key stakeholders for comprehensive prevention services were outlined.
4. **Recent Changes and Developments:**
   * The restructuring of subcommittees and the introduction of new focus areas were detailed. For instance, the previous Prevention Committee evolved into the Family Support and Child Wellbeing Subcommittee.
   * New subcommittees focusing on Race, Poverty, and Neglect emerged to address changing societal needs.
5. **Statewide Prevention Plan:**
   * An overview of the 2022-2025 prevention plan was provided. Members were encouraged to review the plan in preparation for further discussions.
6. **New Initiatives:**
   * The introduction of the "Predict Align Prevent" initiative was highlighted, focusing on using data to tackle specific community risks.
   * Expansion of intervention programs through Medicaid and diverse funding sources was discussed, leveraging new financial avenues to bolster family support services.
7. **Community and Member Engagement:**
   * Continued engagement with community providers and the inclusion of diverse members in the task force were emphasized as pivotal for achieving the task force's objectives.
   * An invitation for community members to attend subcommittee meetings and special workgroups was extended.
8. **Next Steps:**
   * The next meeting is scheduled for February 6, 2025. Participants are encouraged to review all presented materials and submit feedback or proposals for consideration.
9. **Conclusion:**
   * The meeting concluded with an open forum for questions and suggestions. Members were reminded of their role in championing community-focused initiatives and partnerships across state sectors.

The committee expresses its gratitude to all who contribute to these vital discussions and initiatives aimed at fostering a safer and more supportive environment for children and families across New Jersey. Continued dialogue, collaboration, and commitment from all stakeholders remain crucial in achieving these goals.

*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 meeting 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.*