



New Jersey Task Force on Child Abuse and Neglect  
Christine Norbut Beyer, MSW, Co-Chair  
Mary Coogan, Esq., Acting Co-Chair

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“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.*

**December 13, 2024**

**9:30am – 12:00pm**

**Attendance:**

Commissioner Christine Norbut Beyer, NJ Department of Children and Families (DCF)  
Katherine Stoehr, DCF  
Nydia Monagas, NJ Children’s Alliance  
Dr. Martin Finkel, CARES Institute  
Jason Butkowski, DCF  
Sonia Moticha, NJ Department of Education (DOE)  
Richard Stagliano, Center for Family Services  
Chris Arnold, NJ Office of the Attorney General (OAG)  
Kaitlin Mulcahy, Montclair University  
Marygrace Billek, Staffing Oversight and Review Subcommittee (SORS)  
Jaqueline Augustine, NJ Courts  
Jennifer Underwood, NJ Department of Community Affairs (DCA)  
Wendi White, NJ Department of Corrections (DOC)

**Guests:**

Angela Phillips, DCF

**Staff:**

Bethany D’Amelio, DCF

**Introduction**

The Task Force has convened to address key topics impacting New Jersey’s children and families. This memorandum serves to inform the public of the Task Force’s discussions and to highlight progress in ongoing initiatives.

**Agenda and Key Discussions**

**1. Child Welfare System Review**

- The Task Force received a presentation with DCF detailing the work to prepare for the upcoming 2025 Child and Family Services Reviews (CFSR) conducted by the Administration for Children and Families (ACF). Preparations have been underway to ensure New Jersey’s compliance and effectiveness are thoroughly showcased.

- **Systemic Factors:** Emphasized the need to integrate improved data management and resource allocation systems for more responsive service provision to New Jersey's children and families.

## **2. Subcommittee on Race, Poverty, and Neglect Initiatives**

- Subcommittee Chair spoke about efforts to expand community-based support outside traditional child protection systems. Ongoing work seeks to broaden support available to families, enhancing their ability to thrive amidst challenging socioeconomic conditions.
- There was a recognized need to involve more diverse stakeholders, including parent leaders and law enforcement personnel, in the initiatives and conversations of the subcommittee.

## **3. Subcommittee on the Safety of Children**

- A 2025 work plan was detailed by the Co-Chair of the Safety of Children Subcommittee. The Safety Subcommittee is collaborating with the NJ Office of School Bus Safety and the DCF Child Abuse Record Information (CARI) check unit to guide the subcommittee's work on creating safer spaces for children on school busses and in schools.

## **4. Subcommittee on Family Support & Wellbeing**

- The Task Force coordinator read aloud an update provided by the Co-Chair of the Family Support and Wellbeing Subcommittee who could not attend this Task Force meeting due to other obligations. The update detailed plans to create a charter and onboarding process to assist with member recruitment and retention. A review of the 2022-2025 Prevention Plan will be done to determine which of the original priority areas will remain a focal point for this newly created subcommittee. Lastly, this subcommittee will team with the Subcommittee on Race, Poverty, and Neglect to expand the roster of community-based supports available to families in NJ outside of supports available through the Division of Child Protection and Permanency (DCP&P).

## **5. Marking, Development and Fundraising Subcommittee**

- The Chair of the newly restructured Development and Fundraising Subcommittee reported on the subcommittee's inaugural meeting. The subcommittee's focus includes membership recruitment from the development and fundraising sectors to elevate the Children's Trust Fund.

## **6. Staffing Oversight and Review Subcommittee (SORS)**

- The chair of SORS provided an update on the SORS report and outlined the final timeline leading up to distribution. It was acknowledged that the SORS report and the CSFR have areas of overlap which will be discussed in a meeting in early 2025 in which subcommittee chairs will convene to consider how the Task Force's subcommittees can work together to address the recommendations of the SORS report while preventing overlapping efforts.

## **7. Budget and Financial Planning**

- The Commissioner presented fiscal plans for State FY 2026 outlining budget challenges and allocations, noting that the Governor has already asked Departments for plans to reduce expenditures ahead of a difficult budget year. Discussions stressed the detrimental impact such financial contractions could have on vital services for children and families.
- Feedback emphasized the importance of maintaining flexible funding to support service continuity during fiscal constraints.

## **8. Service Accessibility and Collaboration**

- Meetings have ensured alignment of various pieces of legislation and state-wide initiatives to support the Task Force's collective goal of a robust child welfare and protection system. Inter-agency cooperation remains crucial for large-scale improvements.
- Notable attention was given to developing accessible service directories to guide affected families efficiently through available resources.

## **Conclusion and Next Steps**

The meeting concluded with a reiteration of the Task Force's commitment to garner support from diverse community sectors to implement meaningful change. NJTFCAN aims to foster a supportive environment enabling New Jersey's children and families to thrive.

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, through 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.