



New Jersey Task Force on Child Abuse and Neglect

Christine Norbut Beyer, MSW, Co-Chair
Mary Coogan, J.D., Acting Co-Chair

Minutes
December 17, 2021
Virtual Meeting

In Attendance

Christian Arnold	Office of the Attorney General
Jacqueline Augustine	Administrative Office of the Courts
Christine Beyer	NJ Department of Children and Families
Marygrace Billek	Mercer County Human Services
Mary Coogan	Advocates for Children of New Jersey
Esther East	Family Therapist
Martin Finkel	CARES Institute
Hon. Margaret M. Foti	Bergen County Vicinage
Seetha Holmes	NJ Office of the Public Defender
Natasha Johnson	NJ Department of Human Services
Nydia Monagas	New Jersey Children’s Alliance
Sonia Moticha	NJ Department of Education
Assw. Nancy Muñoz	21 st Legislative District
Jason Sarnoski	Warren County Commissioner
Richard Stagliano	Center for Family Services
Jennifer Underwood	Department of Community Affairs
Wendi White	NJ Department of Corrections
Lorene Wilkerson	NJ Child Placement Advisory Council

Guests:

Patty Mojta	Prevent Child Abuse NJ
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Staff

Daniel Yale	NJ Department of Children and Families
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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.”

Introduction and Welcome

A brief welcome was provided by Mary Coogan and the public notice information was provided. Mary asked that each member briefly introduce themselves.

NJTFCAN Business

Review and approve minutes from the September 24, 2021.

The minutes from the September 24, 2021 meeting were approved without edit. Dr. Finkel abstained from the vote.



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Updates from Commissioner Beyer

Commissioner Beyer provided an update on the following:

- DCF strategic plan – Looking to identify where there may be changes or updates to the priorities, updates to the goals, or adding new objectives to the goals. DCF is looking forward to using the next few years to solidify the work that is underway and develop future initiatives. DCF will continue the work around race equity and family voice. The DCF executive team will be meeting with Joyce James, national consultant, to discuss kick off and launch “phase 3” of DCF’s work regarding race equity. Joyce will be working with 8 cohorts of between 25-30 DCF staff to develop strategies for “on the ground” interventions to make changes in disparity and disproportionality within DCF’s work both with DCF staff and families served. Commissioner Beyer explained that this is “phase 3” of this work because DCF started this work with providing mandatory training for all DCF staff around implicit bias, understanding implicit bias in child welfare, and how implicit bias impacts our work. This third phase is using the previous trainings and applying it to “on the ground” work with changes that we can implement. Commissioner Beyer also informed members that in one of the upcoming meetings, she will discuss race equity and disproportionality data as DCF is beginning to see where they can close the gap for children in foster care. The overall number of children in foster care, African American children in particular, is where the disparity is largest and that number is starting to decrease. The greatest reduction in disparity is regarding children placed with relatives.
- 2022-2025 NJ Statewide Prevention Plan - The Prevention Committee completed the Statewide Prevention Plan and so DCF can begin to look at how plan lines up with the priorities of DCF and with the DCF funding. Commissioner Beyer stated that funding was set aside to be able to launch additional prevention initiatives as a result of the prevention plan.
- DCF budget priorities - Primarily, DCF is asking for all of its services to be maintained at their current level. DCF’s asks for growth this year is around home visiting. With the legislation that was passed around home visiting, the committee has been formed, created subcommittees, and has been meeting regularly. A vendor was selected that meets the criteria set forth by the legislation. There will be a need for additional funding along with insurance and Medicaid. DCF will also be asking for increases in the state allocation for psychiatric and psychological evaluations. Also, a small amount of money is being requested for supportive visitation services so that it can be implemented statewide. DCF has also been doing a lot of work trying to shift funding that is already allocated into other areas within the Department that support the work and initiatives that have been identified as priorities.
- American Rescue Plan (ARP) Funds - Commissioner Beyer spoke about the opportunities around the use of ARP funds for childcare. These funds are not allocated for a specific department which provides the ability to do cross-department, cross-systems work. There are a lot of funds going into counties and municipalities and there is an opportunity for us to come together to think about how best to utilize those resources and funds to assist with infrastructure.
- Sustainability and Exit Plan (SEP) - DCF has been working with the federal monitor and the plaintiff’s attorneys to get to a place where DCF can exit the SEP. Although the details have not yet been determined, DCF has been in negotiations to exit within the next year or so. DCF is not looking to replace the federal monitor as DCF collects large amounts of data and information that is made public. However, DCF is looking at what role the NJTF CAN might have, particularly SORS, being the body



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that is tasked with staffing, outcome review, and oversight. Could we look to strengthen the work within that subcommittee by providing them with regular and ongoing data?

- Powerful Families, Powerful Communities – The original purpose was to bring parents and people with lived experience to the table in a much more meaningful way to help redesign child welfare in this state. There is a particular focus on reducing children going into non-kin foster care. Much of that work has begun including legislation regarding preference for kin. However, there is a lot of work that needs to be done to better support kinship families. Commissioner Beyer has been conducting a listening tour with kinship providers which will continue into January. DCF is obtaining information from parents in a variety of different ways to help support this work but is also focused on creating community conditions for primary prevention. DCF partnered with an international design firm, IDEO, to work together on human centered design and having parents, families, and adults with lived experience be the ones to define the intervention. Rutgers is our evaluation partner along with an individual from California whose focus has been bringing people with lived experience into the evaluation process. People with lived experience are involved with every phase of this work.

Commissioner Beyer asked members what they would want to see DCF tackle in the next four years. This includes things that DCF is already doing that should be expanded or things that aren't being done that should be. The following were discussed:

- Continued partnership with DHS on the childcare front specifically around how we improve quality in childcare and how we develop systems
- Greater focus on education for children who are in placement or being supervised by DCPD
- Education and information for families on the role and services of DCF and DCPD
- Out-of-home system and residential system
- Child sexual abuse prevention and response
- Supportive housing in a way that can do a better job in terms of race equity.

2022-2025 Prevention Plan Presentation

Patty Mojta, Prevent Child Abuse NJ, NJTF CAN Prevention Committee Co-Chair

Patty presented Task Force members with a slideshow of the 2022-2025 NJ Statewide Prevention Plan. The presentation included a description of the development process and a review of the Human Services Advisory Councils (HSAC) needs assessment, the CDC's report on preventing child abuse and neglect, and statewide plans that were used to inform the plan. Patty also discussed that the Prevention Committee, as well as the DCF Division of Family and Community Partnerships, completed a visioning exercise that asked those that participated what would make New Jersey an exemplary model for child abuse prevention in the nation. The ideas that resulted from these exercises created the themes that led to a discussion on priorities. The Committee also reviewed the previous Statewide Prevention Plan to determine if there were any priorities that should be carried into the future plan. Patty then provided a brief walkthrough of the newly developed plan.

Patty also discussed next steps for the Prevention Plan:

- Oversight and monitoring of Prevention Plan and updating as appropriate



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- Enlist support from NJTF CAN in identification of new partners as the Prevention Committee does not currently represent all who should be at the table regarding prevention work
 - Connect to aligned efforts (e.g. Powerful Families, Powerful Communities)
 - Collaboration across departments
 - Marketing campaign (e.g. press release, webinar, etc.) to promote the Prevention Plan and gain support for prevention work.

Mary challenged Task Force members that are in various State Departments to read the plan in detail and think about what their departments can contribute to this plan and to think about what they can do collectively to increase collaboration.

The Task Force discussed how the plan would be marketed and publicized. Ideas included the Task Force releasing a press release and then asking members to share the release through social media and other channels, doing a webinar with different Task Force members presenting or department leaders presenting certain sections, and educating community providers who are in this space to be able to provide feedback. As every department has a stake in the prevention of child and neglect, it is necessary to help them understand their role and see that the work they are doing can prevent child abuse and neglect.

A motion was made by Richard Stagliano to approve the 2022-2025 NJ Statewide Prevention Plan. Judge Foti seconded the motion. The Task Force voted to approve the plan.

Subcommittee/Committee Updates

Protection Committee

Richard informed members that the Protection Committee developed a charter to clarify the Committee's role and identify who should participate. Richard asked that the charter be emailed to Task Force members for the next meeting.

Regarding the Youth with Problematic Sexual Behaviors Workgroup, Nydia stated that DCF administration agreed to attend the Protection Committee meeting in March 2022 in order to explore DCF's response to child on child sexual abuse cases. The workgroup will be drafting questions to provide in advance to Commissioner Beyer and other DCF staff that are planning to attend. The workgroup plans to have the questions prepared and sent by mid-January so that all will know what will be discussed and the meeting will be as productive as possible. The workgroup is also looking to improve curricula around educating the workforce on problematic sexual behaviors in children, assessment and treatment. The workgroup continues to look at legislative efforts around the country and how that might inform practice in NJ.

Nydia also explained that the Protection Committee created a Medical Evaluation and Referral subgroup that will focus on development of statewide trainings about sexual abuse medical exams and physical abuse medical exams. The training will be developed with input from each of the Regional Diagnostic Treatment Centers (RDTCs), Child Advocacy Centers (CACs), Forensic Nurse Examiners, etc. The training will be for DCP and CSOC staff to educate on the purpose of medical exams, what a medical exam entails, how to communicate with caregivers the importance of medical exams, and to dispel myths about medical exams. Commissioner Beyer stated that the training should not only be developed for DCP and CSOC staff but for all child serving agencies. Nydia stated that because the initial response is typically handled by DCP and/or CSOC, that the training would begin with their staff and then eventually broaden to all child serving agencies. The workgroup



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will also look to develop and/or revise existing literature about medical exams that can be provided to parents and caregivers. Commissioner Beyer asked that DCPD staff as well as Jessica Trombetta be involved in the development as the training is intended for DCF staff.

Sonia shared the Online Safety Guide for Parents and Caregivers with Task Force members. Sonia explained that two documents were created, one is very comprehensive and the other is a condensed flyer/handout that would be distributed to parents. Included at the bottom of the handout is a link to the more comprehensive version so parents can read more about the information. Sonia explained that the content has not gone through the Department of Education (DOE) review yet, so additional changes are possible. Sonia stated that she hopes to have a finalized version ready for approval at the next Task Force meeting. Once the document is approved, it will be broadcast through the DOE to all schools - public, non-public, and charter – and will include a memo that will explain why these resources were developed, how schools can utilize and distribute them, and the website where the documents are housed. The workgroup will also meet to discuss other options for distribution outside of the school system.

Mary informed members that they should have each received a copy of the Protection Committee application for Dr. Julia DeBellis and Dr. Rachel Silliman Cohen. After a brief discussion, Mary made a motion to approve Dr. DeBellis for membership on the Protection Committee. Dr. Finkel seconded the motion. The Task Force voted to approve Dr. DeBellis' application. Natasha made a motion to approve Dr. Silliman Cohen's application for membership on the Protection Committee. Dr. Finkel seconded the motion. The Task Force voted to approve Dr. Silliman Cohen's application.

Prevention Committee

Staffing and Oversight Review Subcommittee (SORS)

Mary informed the Task Force that the SORS were provided with updates from DCF at their previous meeting. During their next scheduled meeting, Nancy Carre-Lee, Executive Director of the DCF Office of Staff Health and Wellness, will be providing a presentation.

NJTFCAN Annual Report Recommendations and Review

Members were asked if they had a chance to review the final draft of the NJTFCAN Annual Report and were provided time to ask questions. One question that was raised was whether CSOC should be included in the introduction. It was determined that the question could be raised again for the following year's report as it would not substantially change the report for this year. Members were then asked to review the recommendation portion of the report and provide suggestions for additions or edits. After a brief discussion, two additional recommendations were added to this portion of the report.

Mary made a motion to approve the NJTFCAN annual report with the additions that were suggested. Judge Foti seconded the motion. The Task Force voted to approve the NJTFCAN Annual Report. Commissioner Beyer abstained from the vote as she had to leave the meeting prior to the discussion regarding recommendations.

Review and Approve 2022 Meeting Dates



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The proposed calendar of meetings for 2022 was discussed. A motion was made by Sonia to approve the 2022 meeting dates. Richard seconded the motion. The Task Force voted to approve the 2022 meeting dates.

Announcements

Dr. Finkel informed members that on March 9, 2022 at 1:00 p.m. CARES Institute will hold a quarterly lecture on child abuse and neglect. The lecture will feature Dr. Christopher Greeley, a pediatrician from Baylor Medical School, discussing the impact of disparity and inequality on child and family well-being.

Next Meeting – March 25, 2021.