

New Jersey Task Force on Child Abuse and Neglect
Department of Children and Families
Allison Blake, Ph.D., LSW, Co- Chair
Dr. Martin A. Finkel, Co- Chair
May 31, 2013
9:30 A.M. – 12:00 P.M.
Minutes

In Attendance

Mark Ali	Essex County Prosecutor's Office
Lorraine Augustini	Office of the Public Defender
Diana Autin	SPAN
Allison Blake	Commissioner
Rhona Beadle	NJ Children's Alliance Chapter
Marygrace Billek	Mercer Co. Dept. Of Human Services of
Lauren Carlton	Department of Law and Public Safety
James Chester	Foster & Adoptive Family Services
Kathy Collins	Monmouth Cares
Maura Somers Dughi	Child and Family Advocate
Martin A. Finkel	CARES Institute
Rita Gulden	CASA of NJ
Adam Cortes	Department of Corrections
Natasha Johnson	Department of Human Services
Natasha Palmer	Department of Education
Gloria Rodriguez	Department of Health & Senior Services
Cecilia Zalkind	Advocates for Children of New Jersey
Mary Coogan	Advocates for Children of New Jersey

Staff:

Adrienne E. Jackson	DCF – NJTFCAN
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Introductions and Review of Minutes

Introductions were made and March 2013 meeting minutes were approved.

Minutes and agenda are placed on the MyNewJersey site or the portal for member convenience. About half of the committee was successful with going into the MyNewJersey website to access documents.

DCF Update

Commissioner Blake discussed the Superstorm Sandy Long Term Recovery. At the last meeting, she informed that a workgroup was being developed through the Governor's Office of Recovery and Rebuilding that focused on addressing the recovery related to public health, children and families, and social services. The group consists of representatives from the following state agencies DOH, DHS and DCF. Since the last meeting DCF has developed and submitted a proposed plan to the federal government that has three global focuses for the impacted areas of the state:

1. Strengthening Families and Preventing Instances of Child Abuse Exacerbated by Superstorm Sandy's Impact

2. Preventing Violence and Exploitation Exacerbated by Superstorm Sandy's Impact; and
3. Building Resiliency and Supporting Recovery.

These strategies are focused on attempting to provide services and supports to communities impacted by Superstorm as a result of increased needs. Although these services will be extended to those who ordinarily access DCF's services, there are a lot of children and families in the State that have been impacted by the storm who do not ordinarily seek any State supported services. As a result, DCF and the State are cognizant that strategies need to be developed to ensure that information and access to these services are readily available to this population as well. To that end, a focus on strategies that are aimed at natural community supports where there is a tendency or comfort in asking for help have been explored.

NJ Prevention Plan

Maura Somers Dughi, Chair of the Prevention Committee informed that Lisa von Pier and the staff of Division of Family and Community Partnerships has begun the process of revising the prevention plan. She also indicates that this is a collaborative process. The plan will be completed by January 2014. Adrienne Jackson stated that the Prevention Plan Steering Committee's current plan expires December 31, 2013. The committee is looking to get the plan to the Task Force committee by December 31, 2013. However, if the deadline is not met, Adrienne, Maura and Diana Autin have discussed talking to the Task Force about extending the existing plan beyond 2013 and then memorializing the extension in the annual report next year to acknowledge publically that the plan had expired and we are currently revising the new plan. Adrienne did some research as to any specific language as to whether you can or cannot extend the plan and there appears to be no opposition to such base on her research.

3rd Annual Report Update

Adrienne discussed the 3rd Annual Report which is completed and thanked everyone for their feedback. The Communication Committee was charged with completing the 3rd annual report and will be their responsibility moving forward. DCF Office of Communications has the report and they will be doing the design and any cover that will be associated with it. Once received, it will be shared with the Communication Committee and then it will be published on June 30, 2013. A copy will be shared with the Task Force.

Biennial Conference Update

Adrienne discussed the Biennial conference in which she informed is progressing as expected. The Call for Papers have been announced as well as the Save the Date. Six (6) proposals have been received to date and will close on June 15, 2013. Within the next week, you will get another "Save the Date" email. Dr. Charlyn Harper-Brown will be the keynote speaker for the conference as well as doing a workshop in the afternoon. We are expecting around one thousand people to attend this conference. If you know anyone who wants to submit a proposal to the call for papers, please forward them the email.

Review and Vote of Subcommittee/Committee Applicants-Task Force

- Lisa Nemeth, DAG -SORS- **APPROVED**
- Angela Melchionna, DAG-Protection Committee- **APPROVED**
- Maureen Braun Scalera, LCSW, MSW, Prevention Committee- **APPROVED**
- Andrea Lovas – Communication Committee – **APPROVED**

Dr. Finkel stated that “it’s great to see that we are getting some new people and new energy”.

Communication Update

Kathy Collins, Chair, mentioned again that the Communication Committee was responsible for the annual report. The next task will be to focus on the website and to have some idea as to how to make it a little more interactive (eg. calendar of events, alerts, etc.). Also, it was mentioned that the committee is recruiting for new members.

Years ago, the committee developed a campaign that read, “A person who cares can prevent child abuse.” The committee asked Taskforce members if they want to use this campaign or come up with another one in an effort to get prevention messaging out in the communities.

Prevention Committee Update

Maura discussed that the committee is in the process of reviewing the original standards of prevention programs that are already incorporated in DCF contracts. There has been an attempt to make them more user-friendly and create an objective system of evaluation.

It was also mentioned that the committee is looking to have a presentation done by Division of Family and Community Partnerships (DFCP) of all the different services and programs that fall under the DFCP so that the members are aware of things that are going on. The committee has experienced success in recruiting members from different areas. Being economically self-sufficient is an important component of family stability, so the Department of Labor representative recently recruited is very welcomed. There was a presentation of the Family Success Centers and plans are being developed to have one on Home Visiting. Maura will send the Committee an article that was in the Washington Post last week which highlighted home visiting and particularly the Healthy Families America Program.

Protection Committee Update

Mark Ali discussed the Batterers Accountability and Human Trafficking working groups. Batterer’s Accountability is moving slowly and hopes to have an update at the next meeting. Human trafficking is working on developing guidelines which are broken up into five categories: therapeutic (mental health), medical, law enforcement, child protection and survivor. One of the biggest issues that were identified is to know the signs that would warrant further investigation. Additional training is need for the first responders to ask trigger questions that would raise concern and incorporate the risk and safety assessment. Dr. Finkel discussed doing some brainstorming for the Protection Committee to develop a strategic plan for the important issues that need to be addressed.

SORS Update

Mary Coogan reported SORS activities on behalf of Ceil. She reported that the focus is on training child protection workers from the 2011 SORS report regarding issues that were identified and need to revisit them. An additional area of concern is parent child visitation. As these two are the priorities for the subcommittee, they would also like to revisit Educational Stability Act and the Department's efforts there. She referenced a presentation that was did by Michele Safrin this past year and wanting her to return.

Adrienne stated that SORS annual report is done and submitted to DCF for packaging, covering and publishing.

Ethics

Dr. Finkel asked Adrienne about how people are doing in completing their ethics training. Adrienne is still working on getting people to submit from 2011. The Task Force is really good with getting their information in. The subcommittees are a challenge. The last request went out in May 2013 and the deadline is July 2013 and will circle back once again.

It was discussed regarding the re-appointments of members; everyone's term has expired. The re-approval process will begin January 2014. The Task Force appointees –the three year term or until they re-appoint the members that currently exist continues. The public members would have to be reaffirmed for their appointment. The Communication Committee will have to appoint a co-chair soon.

Announcements

Next quarterly CARES' conference will be on June 11, 2013 with Dr. Christopher Greeley. Dr. Greeley will be talking about the History of Childhood: from Hammurabi to Hackensack. It's being held at the Burlington Community College. You can register online at CARES Institute. Please share this information with your colleagues. The training is free.

DHS

Natasha Johnson of DHS informed that DHS intends to model some of the programs they already have for public assistance with their use of the SSBG money for Superstorm Sandy. There will be no income requirement for these monies and will assist people with back rent, back mortgage, deposit for a new place to live and some help with rent/mortgage going forward and child care. The proposal has not been approved by ACF. Division of Mental Health and Addiction services will be putting money into mental health services in the nine impacted counties.

Next Meeting/Announcement – July 26, 2013 – New Brunswick