



New Jersey Task Force on Child Abuse and Neglect

Allison Blake, Ph.D., L.S.W., Co-Chair
Martin A. Finkel, DO, FACOP, FAAP, Co-Chair

Minutes

September 15, 2017

9:30 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

Capital Center Building - Trenton, NJ

In Attendance

Leida Arce	Department of Children and Families
Christian Arnold	Department of Law and Public Safety
Heath Bernstein	Department of Children and Families
Allison Blake	Department of Children and Families
Mary Coogan	Advocates for Children of New Jersey
Anna Diaz-White	180 Turning Lives Around, Inc.
Martin A. Finkel	CARES Institute
Karin Garver	Department of Education
Mollie Greene	Department of Children and Families
Kathleen Haggerty	Administrative Office of the Courts
LaTasha Holmes	Department of Children and Families
Seetha Holmes	Office of Public Defender/Office of Law Guardian
Natasha Johnson	Department of Human Services
Colette Lomoth-Galette	Department of Health
Judith Meltzer	Center for the Study of Social Policy
Asw. Nancy F. Munoz	Legislative District 21
Aubrey Powers	Department of Children and Families
Joseph Ribsam	Department of Children and Families
Brian Ross	Department of Children and Families
David Sanders	Casey Family Programs
Fred Simmens	Casey Family Programs
Richard Stagliano	Center for Family Services
Charmaine Thomas	Department of Children and Families
Jennifer Underwood	Department of Community Affairs
Lisa von Pier	Department of Children and Families
Wendi White	Department of Corrections
Charyl Yarbrough	Department of Children and Families

DCF Staff:

Daniel Yale DCF – Office of the Commissioner

“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 – Martin Finkel

Commissioner Allison Blake welcomed and thanked everyone for their participation in today’s meeting to hear about the Department of Children and Families (DCF) five year meta-analysis on the findings of child fatalities



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caused by child abuse and neglect. Deputy Commissioner Joseph Ribsam chaired the Advisory Committee on Child Fatalities. Commissioner Blake thanked Joseph for his leadership in this review process.

Presentation on findings of Advisory Committee on Child Fatalities
Deputy Commissioner Joseph Ribsam, Chairman, DCF Advisory Committee on Child Fatalities

Joseph Ribsam provided the presentation that reviewed the findings of the Advisory Committee on Child Fatalities. Following the presentation, it was the intent that members of the Task Force will provide recommendations for the final report that will be made public. Additionally, the recommendations are also expected to be incorporated into the statewide plan on the prevention of child abuse and neglect.

Some of the highlights of the presentation includes;

- There are two phases to the work of the Advisory Committee:
 - Phase 1 - The Committee reviewed 109 child fatality cases from January 2010 through December 2015. The reviews focused on a broader context of the family dynamics and/or the different systems of interactions.
 - Phase 2 -Present the findings to the three system review panels (NJTF CAN, Staffing and Oversight Review Subcommittee (SORS) and Child Fatality and Near Fatality Review Board (CFNFRB)) for their feedback and recommendations.
 - The key terms were discussed in terms of what gets counted as a fatality as a result of abuse or neglect. Abuse is the physical, sexual or emotional harm or risk of harm to a child under the age of 18 caused by a parent or other person who acts as a caregiver for the child. Neglect occurs when a parent or caregiver fails to provide proper supervision for a child or adequate food, clothing, shelter, education or medical care although financially able or assisted to do so. Child Fatality is a fatality of a person under the age of 18 which has been determined to result from child abuse or neglect. Caregivers are the persons that commit the act of abuse or neglect that result in the fatality. A perpetrator of child abuse or neglect must be a caregiver of the abused or neglected child.
- Statistical data and analyses were provided to the Task Force which will be included in the final report of the Advisory Committee on Child Fatalities.

Task Force members provided initial feedback and recommendations following the presentation for inclusion in the final report. Members of DCF's staff took notes to capture these recommendations and follow up on questions.

The Task Force was encouraged to send any additional comments and thoughts to Joseph Ribsam (Joseph.Ribsam@dcf.state.nj.us) and Leida Arce (Leida.Arce@dcf.state.nj.us) to be included in the final report.

Dr. David Sanders provided some feedback based on his work with the National Commission on Child Fatalities. Dr. Sanders commended DCF for having this type of open discussion with system partners and the



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continued efforts toward the transparency of the agency. He discussed the importance of the analysis to help identify potential characteristics that could trigger certain interventions and what to do with the information from the review. Dr. Sanders stated that DCF is headed in the right direction in its review process and recommendations.

Announcements

Information regarding the Prevention Planning meeting will be sent out to those that are interested in participating in the session.

Meeting Adjourned

Next Meeting – November 17, 2017 in New Brunswick (Room 102)