



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

January 8, 2016

9:30 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

Minutes

In Attendance

Mary Jane Awrachow	Foster and Adoptive Family Services (FAFS)
Allison Blake	Department of Children and Families
Christian Arnold	Department of Law and Public Safety
Nancy Curry	Department of Education
Lt. Louis Andrinopoulous	NJ State Police
Martin A. Finkel	CARES Institute
Wendi White	Department of Corrections
Seetha Holmes	Office of the Public Defender
Stephanie Ullman	Camden County Superior Court
Marilyn Gorney-Daley	Department of Health
Maura Somers Dughi	Child and Family Advocacy
Jennifer Underwood	Department of Community Affairs
Donna Younkin	DCF – Director of Special Initiatives
Cecilia Zalkind	Advocates for Children of NJ
E. Marie Hayes	Cape May County Freeholder
Rita Gulden	CASA of NJ
Ann Diaz-White	180 Turning Lives Around Inc.
Matthew Schwartz	Youth Representative
Richard Stagliano	Center for Family Services
Sara Munson	Rutgers, Institute for Families

DCF Staff:

Ifeanyi Pole DCF – Office of the Commissioner

Introductions and Review of Minutes

Introductions were made.

The July 2015 Minutes were approved.

DCF Sustainability and Exit Plan Presentation – Commissioner Allison Blake

Commissioner Blake informed NJTF CAN that Joseph Ribsam, Lisa von Pier and Christian Arnold played major roles in the renegotiation discussions. NJTF CAN members were given a copy of the consent decree entitled, “Sustainability and Exit Plan,” and Commissioner Blake informed NJTF CAN of the history behind the lawsuit filed. The DCF Sustainability and Exit Plan presentation discussion highlights were as follows:



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- The principles of the Sustainability and Exit Plan developed to guide the work of the settlement agreement have remained the same. The biggest changes are the Foundational Elements which include Data Transparency, Case Practice Model, State Central Registry Operations, Appropriate Placements, Service Array, Medical and Behavioral Health Services, Training, Flexible Funding, Resource Family Care Support Rates, Permanency, and Adoption Practice. These are the core components of a healthy child welfare system which the New Jersey Department of Children and Families (DCF) will be reporting on moving forward. The new agreement is written such that the Monitor has the ability to move principles back to Active Monitoring status if deemed necessary.
- DCF is moving forward with issuing new reports (i.e. Commissioner's Dashboard, Children's Inter-Agency Coordinating Council (CIACC) Summary of Activity report, etc.) that are available on DCF's website. Sara Munson, in collaboration with DCF's Human Resources, and Research, Evaluation and Reporting staff, have worked together to develop a report which provides all aspects related to the workforce.
- DCF has sustained a safe reduction in the use of foster care. This requires a new set of skills for workers and services for children in their home settings.
- DCF has created specialized units in every county to focus on recruitment, retention and supporting resource families. Recruitment efforts will continue as there will be children with different needs.
- Commissioner Blake discussed DCF's future moving forward and emphasized the need for the stakeholders to understand the current agreement and to monitor it going forward. DCF's Sustainability and Exit Plan was executed in November 2015.
- DCF will continue to hire staff to be responsive to the community and sustaining the current infrastructure. In accordance with the new agreement, DCF is making a shift away from compliance to focus on the quality of work for those DCF serves. DCF is continuing to transition to evidence supported services with the understanding that the population of children and youth being served has changed which means the services have to shift. Supportive housing services have been developed statewide due to more intact families. There is a small pilot program in Monmouth County where DCF has partnered with 180 Turning Lives Around, Inc. to provide four housing units and wrap around supportive services to the families. DCF received an additional twenty-five vouchers through a partnership with the Department of Community Affairs (DCA).



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- The resource family support rates are tied to the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) rates. This has always been in DCF policy and now it will be made available on DCF's website.
- The behavioral health services for children and youth under DCF's Children System of Care (CSOC) has become a national model. DCF receives federal funding to support behavioral health services for youth in New Jersey. Services have shifted to community based settings and home based services. Commissioner Blake informed NJTF CAN that the Children's Inter-Agency Coordinating Council's (CIACC) Summary of Activity report is published every month and is available on DCF's website. Commissioner Blake also stated that CSOC tracks children in detention centers.
- Deputy Commissioner Joseph Ribsam highlighted the DCF Sustainability and Exit Plan data in the PowerPoint presentation and stated that the "To Be Maintain" area represents that DCF has meet the required target for six months; and the "To Be Achieve" area represents measures that have yet to be achieved. Deputy Commissioner Ribsam further informed about the types of work that fit in these categories and gave updates on DCF's current status.
- DCF staff and a group of experts will be looking at the Qualitative Review (QR) process, a system review tool that addresses the strengths in a case, system issues on a county level and opportunities for improvement. This is a part of DCF's work that is required through the Federal Child and Family Review (CFSR) and part of the agreement. The new agreement will be measured by the QR process and a workgroup has been assembled to change the language in the tool to align with DCF case practice model. In late January 2016, DCF will be announcing their work going forward and training will be offered on a regular basis. Commissioner encouraged NJTF CAN to reach out to Ifeanyi Pole if they were interested in the QR training.
- Deputy Commissioner Ribsam informed NJTF CAN that in order for DCF to exit the agreement, all measures will have to be moved into the "To Be Maintained" category and sustained for 12 months. An agreement has been reached in which the Monitor will issue one report that reflects the full 12 months instead of every six months. The first report is expected to be issued in March 2016.
- Deputy Commissioner Ribsam also informed NJTF CAN that DCF will return to court in the summer of 2016 for their scheduled hearing. There is a provision that states within six months of DCF's exit that the plaintiff has the ability to go back to court to reinstate the order if there are large cuts to the budget and/or changes with sustainability.



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Subcommittee/Committee Updates

Communication Committee – Yvonne DeCicco

Yvonne DeCicco stated the mission of the Communication Committee; which is to increase awareness and promote social change related to child abuse and neglect prevention and to promote awareness of NJTF CAN's activities and issues. Yvonne informed NJTF CAN that the majority of the Communication Committee's 2015 goals will rollover into 2016. For instance, the annual reports for the Task Force and SORS, NJTF CAN web calendar of statewide trainings and events, redesigning NJTF CAN web pages to be more interactive, and recruiting new Committee members with web design expertise will all remain goals in 2016

NJTF CAN thanked the Communication Committee for a job well done on the new NJTF CAN logo.

Dr. Martin Finkel asked Yvonne for the Communication Committee to consider developing a campaign to increase awareness of the Children's Trust Fund (CTF) and its prevention initiatives.

NJTF CAN inquired if DCF had a resource parent's handbook. Commissioner Blake stated that DCF has a variety of publication resources for parents. Ifeanyi will email NJTF CAN a link to DCF's publications webpage.

Prevention Committee – Maura Somers Dughi

Maura Somers Dughi emphasized the importance of the Prevention Committee efforts to begin allocating resources before children are harmed. Maura provided NJTF CAN with the history of the original Standards for Prevention (copywritten in 2003) and the Prevention Plan. In 2015, the Standards for Prevention document was revised and released in April 2015 for Child Abuse Prevention month along with the updated Prevention Plan. The Standards for Prevention webinar training has been provided and the Committee is working with Rutgers on the advance training. Training will be available to organizations that are funded by DCF's Division on Family and Community Partnerships (FCP) and the Committee wants to expand the training beyond DCF. The next steps are to provide training on how to promote wellbeing and how to prevent negative adverse childhood experiences.

Maura also informed NJTF CAN that the Prevention Committee is currently working on creating a curriculum for higher education to teach the prevention of child maltreatment; Kerrie Ocasio is coordinating this effort.

Maura inquired about ideas NJTF CAN may have to generate funds from the Standards for Prevention to further the Prevention Committee's new ideas and efforts with assistance from Christian Arnold.



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The Prevention Committee is looking to recruit members from the Department of Labor (DOL) and the Department of Agriculture (DOA).

Maura informed NJTF CAN of their approved Children's Trust Fund (CTF) funding of a staff member for the pilot program in Newark. The pilot is called "Improving Outcomes for Families of Infants and Young Children." It is working with frequently encountered families and high risk families to keep them from entering the child welfare system. Maura highlighted the 54 Family Success Centers (FSC) and the remarkable work they are doing with the resources they are offering families across the state.

Maura also informed NJTF CAN that Charmaine Thomas has been attending the National Alliance of Children's Trust meetings; which have generated some ideas to be presented to the NJTF CAN for use of the CTF. The Committee is also requesting that the Communication Committee work on a campaign for the CTF.

Maura invited members of NJTF CAN to join the Prevention Committee.

Protection Committee – Donna Younkin

Commissioner Blake thanked Donna for stepping in as the Acting Chair of the Protection Committee until a new Chair is appointed.

Donna provided some history of the Protection Committee's work regarding domestic violence and its impact on child which is an area the Committee will continue to pursue. In 2015, the Protection Committee efforts were spent focusing on human trafficking and its effects on youth. A set of Human Trafficking Guidelines were produced for counties to combat human trafficking statewide. Through the human trafficking discussions, the Committee began to focus on sexting and child pornography. The Protection Committee will also begin looking at educational diversion program for minors recognized as being involved in sexting.

DCF and the NJTF CAN will be sponsoring a skill building conference in September 2016 on child pornography with guest speaker, Dr. Sharon Cooper from law enforcement and the National Center for Missing and Exploited children (NCMEC).

Donna invited NJTF CAN members to join the Protection Committee.

Staffing and Oversight Review Subcommittee (SORS) – Rita Gulden

Rita Gulden informed NJTF CAN that in 2015, SORS began working on developing a staff survey that should be implemented in January 2016 or February 2016 with the final report available by the end of the fiscal year. SORS is in the process of redoing their strategic plan which education stability and training will continue to be a part of the plan.



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Rita extended an invitation to NJTF CAN members to join SORS.

NJTF CAN Business – Action Items

Subcommittee/Committee Elections

As per the bylaws, NJTF CAN is required to hold an election of the four Committee Chairperson. The Task Force elected and voted on the Committee Chairperson for:

- Communication Committee – Seetha Holmes
- Prevention Committee – Maura Somers Dughi
- Protection Committee – Commissioner Blake with check with Marygrace Billek to see if she is interested in chairing the Protection Committee.
- SORS – Rita Gulden

Matthew Schwartz has agreed to serve on SORS and the Communication Committee. Esther Hayes and Richard Stagliano have volunteered to serve on the Protection Committee. Sara Munson has volunteered to serve on the Communication Committee and SORS.

Subcommittee/Committee Applications

NJTF CAN voted and approved the subcommittee/committee applications which includes:

- Daren Brantley - Protection Committee
- Roslyn Dashiell - Prevention Committee
- Niurca Louis - Prevention Committee
- Andrea O’Neal - Prevention Committee
- Svetlana Shpiegel – Prevention Committee

NJTF CAN will revisit the topic of changing the time and location of their meetings at the March 2016 meeting.

Announcements

Child Abuse Prevention will be celebrating 30 years of service on April 14, 2016 in Atlantic City. The New Jersey Task Force on Child Abuse and Neglect will be honored.

Commissioner Allison Blake will also be recognized at this Conference. Brochures of the event were given out at the meeting and an electronic version will be sent via email to NJTF CAN and its committees.

The CARES Institute is hosting its next Experts in Child Abuse and Neglect lecture series on January 12, 2016 from 9:00am until Noon with Dr. Angelo Diardino. The topic is “Believing the Unbelievable: Children at risk where they pray and where they play”.

Next Meeting March 18, 2016 – New Brunswick