



NEW JERSEY TASK FORCE ON CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT

Christine Norbut Beyer, MSW, Co-Chair
Mary Coogan, Esq., Co-Chair

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**Please note the meeting was recorded for the transcription of minutes.*

September 26, 2025

Meeting Minutes

Attendance:

Mary Coogan, Advocates for Children of New Jersey
Christine Beyer, Commissioner, Department of Children and Families
Sonia Moticha, Department of Education
Wendi White, Department of Corrections
Martin Finkel, public member
Marygrace Billek, public member
Richard Stagliano, Center for Family Services
Nydia Monagas, New Jersey Children's Alliance
Traci Telemaque, Office of the law Guardian
Assemblywoman Nancy Munoz, District 21
Owen Henry, NJ Senator
Hon. Rodney Thompson, Superior court family division
Christin Chillem, Salem County Human Services
Eunice Salton, Chair of NJ Child Placement Advisory Council
Concetta Lapergola, designee for Hon. Thompson
Jennifer Underwood, Department of Community Affairs
Corinne LeBaron, Embrella
Lineuri Placencia, New Jersey Department of Health, designee for Iris Jones
Jeffrey Sutherland, Cape May County prosecutor's Office
Christian Arnold, Assistant Attorney General
Kaitlin Mulcahy, Montclair State University
Rachel Silliman Cohen, NJ CARES Institute

Guest:

Jason Butkowski, Department of Children and Families
Sanford Starr, Department of Children and Families



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Katherine Stoehr, Department of Children and Families

Greta Anderson, Department of Children and Families

Kayann Foster, Lived Experience Expert Partner (L.E.E.P.)

Suzanne Kreie, Middlesex County CMO

Lisa Chapland, Resource Parent

Lydia Mastandrea, Office of the Law Guardian

Katie Onitiri, Department of Corrections

Jasmine Norris, HWS FSO

Beth Kuentler, Outside Voice

Lori Clark, Outside Voice

Buckley Slender-White, Outside Voice

Staff:

Bethany D’Amelio, Department of Children and Families

1. Actions on Prior Minutes

- March 25, 2025 Minutes: Approved (with abstentions from members not present at the March meeting).
- June 25, 2025 Minutes: Approved (with abstentions noted).

2. Subcommittee Reports and Actions

2.1 Subcommittee on Poverty, Neglect, and Community Outcomes (PNCO)

- Rename
 - The subcommittee formerly titled “Race, Poverty, and Neglect” was renamed to “Poverty, Neglect, and Community Outcomes (PNCO).” Approved with one abstention.
- Presentation of Recommendations for Task Force approval
 - Three workgroups convened in April: Training; Liability; Pilots & Innovations.



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- Participation: Over 40 stakeholders (education, law enforcement, healthcare, parents/young people with lived experience, and state partners connected to the hotline).
- Rationale: Nationally, approximately one in three U.S. children are the subject of a hotline report before age 18; many allegations involve neglect, and most are not substantiated.
- Goal: Safely recalibrate hotline use so legitimate maltreatment concerns are prioritized.
- PNCO Workgroup Recommendations (Highlights)
 - Training Workgroup
 - Establish, in statute, a single basic “New Jersey Gold Standard Mandated Reporter Training” titled “Recognizing and Reporting Child Maltreatment in New Jersey.”
 - Require completion at least once every three years for key mandated reporter groups (education, healthcare, law enforcement, childcare), with associated statutory changes.
 - Implementation supports:
 - Offer a synchronous training option and create an advisory group to assess costs.
 - Launch a statewide website with access instructions, a New Jersey decision tool, community supports, and trainer certification information.
 - Designate an entity to select, train, certify, and support trainers.
 - Provide an LMS-hosted asynchronous training with maintained participant transcripts.
 - Supplemental modules:
 - Co-developed with sector oversight bodies; to be taken alongside the Gold Standard at least once every three years.



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- Reason statement:
 - There is currently no standard curriculum, no oversight of training content or delivery, and no statewide tracking; the recommendations ensure consistent legal/policy content and timely updates.
- Liability Workgroup
 - Shift from universal mandated reporting to categorical mandated reporting (limiting the mandated duty to specified professional categories while preserving the public’s ability to report as private citizens).
 - Elevate knowingly false reporting from a civil to a criminal penalty (specific penalty levels to be determined; analogous statutes such as false emergency calls were referenced).
 - Multi-step approach to reduce and ultimately remove anonymous reporting:
 - Provide callers information on why identifiable reporting improves safety and investigative efficacy.
 - If anonymity is still requested, identified steps would be taken.
 - Deploy a decision-making tool to support accuracy and reduce liability concerns for reporters, integrated with the training plans.
- Discussion and Next Steps on PNCO Package
 - Members held extensive discussion, including concerns regarding changes to anonymous reporting.
 - Outcome: The Task Force voted to approve the recommendations and move them to the implementation stage, with four voting members abstaining.
- PNCO Leadership
 - The current PNCO Chair resigned, and an Acting Co-Chair was approved; formalization will occur at the subcommittee level.



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2.2 Subcommittee: Safety of Children

- Legislative/Policy Track
 - Reviewing two bills to develop recommendations that strengthen “Pass the Trash” safeguards in K–12 hiring, responding to findings of insufficient oversight and accountability.
 - Ongoing meetings with bill sponsors; intent to prepare a Task Force letter of support.
- Training/Education Track
 - There is currently no required professional development for K–12 staff focused on boundary-violating or grooming behaviors.
 - The group is drafting recommendations to bring information on boundary-violating behaviors to school staff, including:
 1. Collaboration with the Department of Education to create a “best practices” document for school staff.
 2. A dedicated module within mandated reporter training, with potential expansion to other caregiving settings.

2.3 Staffing and Oversight Review Subcommittee (SORS)

- The annual data report (due December) is in development with a university partner and will include the first three-year comparison.
- An in-person session is scheduled for October 17, 2025, to review analysis and visualizations.
- Trends will be presented at the next meeting, prior to submission to the legislative and executive branches.
- New applications were received for membership consideration.

2.4 Family Support and Child Wellbeing Subcommittee

- Continues to meet monthly to discuss workgroup updates.
- The subcommittee divided into workgroups focused on prevention plan priority areas.



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- Workgroups continue updating the Prevention Plan with a November 2025 target for completion, in preparation for submission to the Task Force for approval in December 2025.

2.5 Subcommittee: Marketing, Development, and Fundraising (MDF)

- Communications
 - A prospectus describing the Children’s Trust Fund value-add and history is being finalized to support creation of one-pagers and community materials; additional members are being recruited.
- Micro-Grants Concept
 - MDF requested authority to explore designating a portion of annual Children’s Trust Fund revenue for smaller, community-based prevention initiatives via a streamlined application and Task Force vote, complementing larger statewide investments and demonstrating impact.
 - Action: A motion was made and approved, with two abstentions, allowing MDF to develop a micro-grant process for the use of Children’s Trust Fund funds.
 - Next step: MDF will present recommendations for potential micro-grant processes at the December 2025 meeting.
- Outreach
 - MDF announced they will host a vendor table at the upcoming NJTF CAN Fall Conference.

3. Legislation: Problematic Sexualized Behavior (PSB)

- In its first year, the PSB program provided services to over 150 youth and trained over 12,000 individuals to understand, recognize, and respond to PSB in youth.
- The workgroup is seeking to sustain this program through Task Force-supported legislation.
- In May 2025, the workgroup worked with legislators to sponsor bills: S4512 and A5682.
- The workgroup presented a letter to legislators, backed by key stakeholders and requested Task Force support.
- Action: A motion was made for the Task Force to sign the legislative letter in support of the PSB legislation; the Task Force voted in support, with three abstentions noted.



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- Ongoing: Continued outreach for additional support and sponsorship.

4. Department Update

- Budget and Federal Landscape
 - Required 2027 budget documents are in preparation for the Office of Management and Budget.
 - In the event of a federal shutdown on October 1, 2025, foster care payments, adoption subsidies, and other federally supported services can continue through at least October, with state commitment to sustain critical grants and services; longer disruptions would prompt reassessment.
- Transition Planning
 - Preparation of transition materials is underway ahead of the gubernatorial election to ensure continuity of Task Force and Department initiatives.
- Annual Report
 - A draft Task Force Annual Report will be circulated before the December meeting, with a goal of final approval in December and transmission to the Governor’s Office in early January.

5. Public Comment

- No public comments were offered.

6. Votes Recorded

- March 25, 2025 Minutes — Approved.
- June 25, 2025 Minutes — Approved.
- Rename of “Race, Poverty, and Neglect” subcommittee to “Poverty, Neglect, and Community Outcomes (PNCO)” — Approved (one abstention).
- Appointment of PNCO Acting Co-Chair — Approved.
- Approval to advance PNCO recommendations to implementation — Approved (four abstentions).
- Endorsement of legislative letter supporting Problematic Sexual Behaviors (PSB) youth services legislation (S4512/A5682) — Approved (three abstentions).
- Authorization for MDF to develop a Children’s Trust Fund micro-grants process — Approved (two abstentions).



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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, with 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.