



SUBCOMMITTEE ON RACE POVERTY AND NEGLECT

Katherine Stoehr, Chair

"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."

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

March 25, 2024
Meeting Minutes

Attendance:

Katherine Stoehr, Department of Children and Families
Nydia Monagas, New Jersey Children's Alliance
Natasha Johnson, Department of Human Services
Eleanor Gilliam, Department of Children and Families
Sonia Moticha, Department of Education
Larry Braasch, Division of Family Development
Wendy Yallowitz, Department of Children and Families
Dr. Veronica Ford, Prevent Child Abuse New Jersey

Guests:

Amanda Gilliam, CASA New Jersey

Staff:

Bethany D'Amelio, Department of Children and Families

1. Opening Remarks

- Presentation of meeting objectives and expected outcomes. Reading of the public notice.

2. Strategic Planning and Subcommittee Updates

- Emphasis on distinct work streams for each subcommittee to avoid overlapping responsibilities.
- Development of clearer goals for task force operations, underlined by crafting well-defined objectives for child safety and protection.
- Review of subcommittee roles, particularly focusing on prevention, protection staffing, and oversight.

3. Discussion on Child Welfare and Neglect Definitions

- Addressing the broad definition of neglect and exploring legislative avenues to provide more clarity.
- Debating the necessity for an explicit differentiation between neglect and poverty to avoid inappropriate interventions.

4. Focus Group Initiatives

- Organization of focus groups comprising stakeholders from law enforcement, education, and health sectors to discuss appropriate hotline usage.
- Protocol development aimed at facilitating constructive dialogue to reinterpret the existing statutory definitions and ensure proper channeling of resources.

5. External Collaboration and Funding

- Proposal to engage external parties for the facilitation of focus groups and compiling qualitative research reports.
- Discussion on the potential allocation of Children's Trust Fund resources to support these initiatives.

6. National Context and Comparative Analysis

- Presentation of national perspectives and resources on child protection statutes and methods employed in other states.
- Initiating a comparative review to incorporate successful strategies from different jurisdictions.

7. Open Floor and Closing Remarks

- Invitees shared their feedback on the proposed strategies and reviewed the next steps towards consensus-building on reforms.
- Closing remarks emphasized the importance of transparent and inclusive processes throughout the initiatives.

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.

