

**New Jersey Task Force on Child Abuse and Neglect  
Staffing and Oversight Review Subcommittee (SORS)  
Marygrace Billek= Chair  
Mary Coogan = Vice-Chair  
Tuesday November 21, 2017: 10:00 A.M. – 12:00 P.M.  
DCF Professional Center Room 104  
30 Van Dyke Ave.  
New Brunswick, NJ**

**In Attendance- In Person**

Marygrace Billek	Mercer County DHS
Lisa Chapland	Kinship Resource Parent
Mary Coogan	ACNJ
Mary Hallahan	Resource Parent
Corinne LeBaron	Foster and Adoptive Family Services
Lori Morris	Lifeties
Lisa Nemeth	Dept. Law and Public Safety
Lisa vonPier	DCF Assistant Commissioner, CP&P

**In Attendance- Conference Line**

Stephanie Albanese	Legislative Director Senator Vitale
Robyn Veasey	Office of Public Defender

**Staff**

Dawn Marlow	DCF-NJTFCAN SORS
-------------	------------------

**Review of Minutes:**

Introductions were made to include the Open Public Meeting Announcement and the September 2017 minutes were reviewed by the members and approved.

***New Business:***

Review of the proposed 2018 SORS meeting dates. The dates were approved by the group. Dawn will forward the approved dates to the NJTFCAN coordinator. The group also discussed location of the meetings. It was determined that there should be one location for the meetings. Corinne LeBaron offered the FAFS location which is centrally located with accessible parking. The group agreed to this location for all of the dates. Corinne will check into the availability and notify Dawn Marlow. The group agreed if there are any conflicts to use the DCF Commissioners Conference Room as the backup location.

The next order of business was a presentation by Abbie DiMeo, DCF Program Administrator for the Manage by Data Fellows Program. Abbie began with an overview of presentation objectives and agenda. Abbie outlined the DCF data culture is continuous quality improvement (CQI) and highlighted some areas in which DCF is implementing CQI. Abbie discussed how DCF is committed to data transparency through the use of publically available such as the Commissioner's Monthly Reports which provides a snapshot of NJ child welfare data.

Next Abbie completed a demonstration on how to navigate and use the NJ Child Welfare Data Hub. Mary Coogan provided some feedback that the Data Hub is full of useful information however it needs to be brought out to the forefront of the DCF public website as currently it is hard to locate.

Abbie discussed that the Data Fellows Program targets middle management staff to have them identify existing knowledge, create new knowledge and become champions of change. Abbie reported that staff is exposed to different types of data such as:

- Point in time data such as how many children are in placement
- Process data such as how many investigations or case plans were completed
- Outcome data such as repeat maltreatment
- Qualitative Data such how is safety in home rated in terms of strength or area needing improvement

Abbie gave an overview of the history of the program objectives as well as what the objectives and logistics are in present day to include best practices for adult learning. Abbie also discussed the program administrative structure as well as the program enrollment and retention rates over the years. As of the last 3 cohorts there has been a 100% retention rate. Abbie also discussed the current program cohort and there demographic roles across the department. Mary Hallahan asked why the enrollment decreased after the first year cohort. Abbie explained that the program was condensed from 18 seminars to 9 and in order to manage the topics the enrollment would need to be reduced as well.

Abbie shifted the presentation to an overview of the history, current project topics as well as an overview of the data sources that the data fellows use such as census data, literature reviews, DCF data, and longitudinal data and CP&P local office data as well as each fellow participants experience. The program also exposes fellow participants to data from other Divisions and they review data over time not just point in time data.

Abbie showed an example of children in placement over time from 2006 where there were very high rates of out of home placement to a significant downward trend over time to 2016. Abbie engaged the SORS members to hypothesize why there was a slight increase in out of home placement beginning in 2012. The group discussed that Superstorm Sandy could have been a contributing factor. Abbie discussed with the group that the increase began in the beginning of 2012 where Sandy occurred towards the end of the year. Abbie reminded the group that being in a tri-state area, in 2011 the national news was the high profile sexual abuse case involving Jerry Sandusky and NJ

experienced an increase in referrals to the hotline. Abbie also reported that there were two high profile child deaths in 2012 which could also have contributed to the increase in out of home placement as this can have an impact on case practice decision making.

Abbie also reported that fellows are exposed to data from other counties that they may not be familiar with if they have only worked in one county to show how practice and decision making varies across the state.

Abbie discussed some specific projects and findings such as children with successful permanency were more likely to have formal supports present at Family Team Meetings than children with unsuccessful permanency. Another finding helped identify a service gap in a specific county. This information was used to advocate the need for and the opening of a Family Success Center in Passaic County. Another fellow finding helped address short stays in placement in Monmouth County by partnering with the Administrative Office of the Courts for access to the Family Automated Case Tracking System to conduct searches for missing parents/family members prior to placing any child in an unrelated resource home. This access is being extended in other counties. There was a lengthy hearty discussion regarding placement with relatives versus legal custody given to relatives through the court system and best practices for both the court system and CP&P. Lisa vonPier reported that she will discuss this issue with Clinton Page to bring back to the Court Improvement Committee.

Abbie concluded the presentation with program lessons learned such as what was successful and challenging as well as the program overall impact to DCF. Abbie stressed that the teaching of the program is to not make the fellows participants work easier but how the work impacts the children and families and give them a greater understanding. Abbie also invited the SORS members to the Fellows Interim Presentation on 2/23/18 with a snow day of 2/27/18. Dawn will provide Abbie with a list of SORS participants so that invitations can be sent.

### **Next Meeting:**

Tuesday January 16, 2018

10am-12pm

Location: To Be Confirmed: FAFS

4301 Route 1 South

Monmouth Junction, NJ

### **Announcements & Closure**