

**New Jersey Task Force on Child Abuse and Neglect
Staffing and Oversight Review Subcommittee (SORS)**

Marygrace Billek= Chair

Mary Coogan = Vice-Chair

Tuesday May 8, 2018: 10:00 A.M. – 12:00 P.M.

Foster and Adoptive Family Services

4301 Route 1 South

Monmouth Junction, NJ

In Attendance- In Person

Marygrace Billek	Mercer County DHS
Mary Hallahan	Resource Parent
Corinne LeBaron	Foster and Adoptive Family Services
Lori Morris	Lifeties
Linda Porcaro	Somerset Co. OYS
Aubrey Powers	DCF Assistant Commissioner, PMA
Jeyanthi Rajaramam	Legal Services of NJ
Angie Waters	CASA Atlantic/Cape May

In Attendance- Conference Line

Tosca Blandford-Bynoe	Dept. Law and Public Safety
Lisa Chapland	Kinship Resource Parent
Nancy Carre-Lee	Designee; DCF Assistant Commissioner CP&P

Staff

Dawn Marlow	DCF-NJTFCAN SORS
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Review of Minutes:

Introductions were made to include the Open Public Meeting Announcement. The November 2017 minutes were reviewed by the members and approved. Both the January and March SORS meetings were cancelled due to administrative changes and weather-related issues.

New Business:

The 2017 11th Annual Report was reviewed and discussed. Marygrace led the discussion around next steps as the subcommittee moves into creating the next Annual Report to form the priorities of the subcommittee. Review included discussions around the staff survey results compared with Workforce Report completed by Rutgers. This included a discussion centered around community service array to support families and whether contracted services are available and flexible in meeting family's needs which was cited as an area to address in the original survey. The members determined that

they would like to invite Debra Lancaster, DCF Director Office of Strategic Development (OSD), to attend a SORS meeting to provide an overview of the work and priorities of OSD.

Discussion then transitioned into outcomes of training and cultural competence from both the staff survey and the Workforce report. While the Workforce Report cited statewide data shows that the workforce is racially and ethnically reflective of the populations served, questions and discussion from the SORS members focused on the local diversity and how this may have an impact on disproportionality and disparity which is high in NJ. This hearty discussion led into a discussion on institutional racism and how implicit bias can impact decisions at all points in a case- to include public members when they are making reports of abuse or neglect. It was noted that disproportionality is an area that the new DCF Commissioner is committed to researching.

Discussion transitioned into looking at the Issues for Follow-Up from the Annual Report and what will the subcommittee look at in the upcoming year. Mary Hallahan questioned the outcome of the draft report from Rutgers who surveyed resource parents for the Retention Task Force and whether that report was made public. Aubrey Powers reported that he was aware there were methodology challenges, but he would investigate the status and report back to the group. The members discussed draft priorities for the upcoming year to include in order of importance:

1. Presentation from the Office of Strategic Development
2. Presentation from CSOC to discuss access and availability to Mental Health/Behavioral Health Services
3. Resource Recruitment and Retention Plan update
4. Presentation from the Office of Training and Professional Development- electronic learning management system and new training initiatives

Dawn Marlow conducted a presentation on New Jersey's Child and Family Services Review (CFSR). The presentation began with an overview of what the CFSR is and process. This review process is a collaborative effort between the Children's' Bureau and a state, tribe or territory to look at strengths and areas needing improvement in the child welfare system. The review process includes a Statewide Assessment which looks at systemic factors that impact families, an onsite review of cases and stakeholder interviews to inform safety, permanency and wellbeing outcomes and finally the Program Improvement Plan for every identified outcome or factor not found in substantial conformity.

Dawn presented the breakdown of the onsite review of 65 cases in three counties: Essex, Monmouth and Warren. These cases were reviewed during the week of July 10th, 2017. The 65 cases included 40 out of home and 25 in-home with Essex receiving 31 cases as it is the largest metropolitan area of the population that is served which is a requirement in the CFSR manual. The other two counties had 17 cases reviewed. In addition, there were 21 focus groups of stakeholder interviews held during the week as well. The case review measures 18 relevant items under the 7 outcomes of safety,

permanency and wellbeing. For an outcome to be substantial achieved, 95% of applicable cases must be rated a strength in each relevant item. Not every case will be determined applicable for every item. Dawn presented the results for the 7 outcomes and highlighted that while NJ has strengths and made improvements in this CF SR round, Safety Outcome 2 was rated at 75% substantial achievement, Permanency Outcome 1 was rated at a 15% substantial achievement. Well Being Outcome 1 was at 40%. These will be areas that will need to be targeted for the PIP.

Dawn reported that the other outcomes, while they did not meet the 95% threshold, further analysis of the findings and consultation with the Children's Bureau determined that these areas would not need to be addressed in the PIP. For example, Well Being Outcome was only rated at 73% substantially achieved. Applicability of cases matter as not all 65 cases were applicable for this outcome and of the 8 cases that were not achieved, majority were due to lack of documented dental/oral screening per American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry standards for children under 3. This has been addressed by the Child Health Units.

Dawn reviewed the results of the 7 Systemic Factors which are also made up of 18 relevant items. These ratings are based on the Statewide Assessment which includes quantitative and qualitative data as well as the focus group stakeholder interviews during the onsite review. Again, while NJ made improvements in this round with achieving 5 out of 7 factors, the Case Review System and Service Array and Resource Development factors were identified as areas to improve upon.

Dawn presented details on Safety Outcome 2 which looks whether children are safely maintained in the own homes whenever possible and appropriate. This outcome is measured by 2 items:

- Item 2- concerted efforts to provide services to prevent removal or re-entry
- Item 3- concerted efforts to assess and address safety and risk

Highlights for Safety Outcome 2 identified that initial safety and risk assessments were completed on time and thoroughly, when initial safety services were identified as a need they were implemented timely and children were removed only after a comprehensive assessment identified removal was necessary to assure safety.

Areas that were identified as needing improvement were safety services not aligning or meeting the level of need to assure safety and on-going safety and risk assessments were either missing or not comprehensive as it related to:

- Non-custodial households
- Fathers
- Older children
- Adult siblings

Focus on permanency with details of Permanency Outcome 1 and the Case Review System were presented. Permanency Outcome 1 looks at whether children have

permanency and stability in their living arrangement. This outcome is measure by 3 items:

- Item 4- whether child has a stable placement with best interest changes in placement
- Item 5- timely establishment of appropriate permanency goals
- Item 6- concerted efforts made to achieve permanency goals

Placement stability was a major strength for NJ with 97.5% of cases were identified as having a stable placement. However, case planning to achieve goals was more sequential as opposed to concurrent, late identification of adoption goals led to delays in filing TPR and judicial backlogs delayed timely permanency.

The Case Review System also impacts permanency. This systemic factor is measured by the assessment of 5 items:

- Item 20- written case plan for every child developed with the parents
- Item 21- periodic reviews at least every 6 months by court or administrative review for every child
- Item 22- permanency hearings occur no later than 12 months from date of entry and no less frequently than every 12 months thereafter
- Item 23- Timely filing of TPR or TPR exceptions
- Item 24- Notice of hearings and right to be heard for caregivers

While periodic reviews and permanency hearings were held timely, engagement of parents in case planning, filing of TPR petitions and caregiver notice and right to be heard in court proceedings varied statewide. Through some root cause analysis to include post- CFSR focus groups, we learned that comprehensive case planning requires enhanced engagement strategies for staff, especially with fathers. Another area cited is that in some counties, CP&P relies on the courts to approve the goal change to adoption before filing TPR when that is not necessary. DCF and AOC data systems interface is very limited and while notice of placement and notice of change goes from NJS directly to the courts- it is a one-way interface. Caregiver post CFSR focus groups identified that notification of hearings from the courts is not timely or non-existent. Lastly permanency data analysis to determine barriers, especially around timely scheduling of guardianship proceedings which is to occur in 6 months and appeals is cumbersome.

Dawn presented focus details on wellbeing. This included a breakdown of Well Being Outcome 1 which looks at families having the enhanced capacity to provide for their children's needs. This outcome is measured by 4 items:

- Item 12- concerted efforts to assess the needs of and provide services to children, parents and foster parents
- Item 13- concerted efforts to involve the parents and children in the on-going case planning process
- Item 14- frequency and quality of worker visits with child
- Item 15- frequency and quality of worker visits with mothers and fathers

Noted strengths for wellbeing included quality assessments were made for caregivers and children to address their needs and that children when appropriate were involved in their case plan. However, comprehensive assessment of needs and services for parents were often missed- especially for fathers who were also often left out of case planning. There was a difference in the frequency and quality of visits between workers and mothers versus workers and fathers. There was also a difference regarding in-home case practice and out of home case practice.

Dawn reviewed overall CFSR strengths to include strong safety practice at the front end, preservation of connections for children in care, maintenance of strong partnerships and coordination of services for families and a commitment to Continuous Quality Improvement.

Overall areas to improve upon included comprehensive engagement and assessment of parents- particularly fathers so that the appropriate services to meet their underlying needs would be matched. Through root cause analysis it was determined that it was not so much a lack of service array or resources but a misalignment due to lack of comprehensive assessments. For example, providing substance treatment services without assessment of the underlying reasons why a parent is using. Use of on-going safety and risk assessment to inform planning and service provision was also lacking. Agency and courts efforts to achieve timely permanency and case practice performance on in-home cases was not as strong.

Dawn reviewed the PIP process which includes submission of initial PIP within 90 days of final report, review at intervals over 2-year period with an overlapping year to establish a baseline measurement. The five stages of PIP development were also reviewed and include:

- Data analysis
- Intervention exploration
- Finalize interventions
- Develop implementation plan
- Develop reporting structure and measurement plan

These stages included an in-depth review of the CFSR results and root cause analysis, review of quantitative administrative data and qualitative data such Qualitative Review findings, CP&P case reviews, structured feedback from broad spectrum stakeholder focus groups and local CQI teams. Through this process 3 overarching goals and strategies developed:

1. Ensure that children remain safely in their own home whenever possible
 - Strengthen safety and risk assessment practice
 - Shift state CQI activities toward understanding the successes and challenges for in-home practice
2. Improve child welfare case practice in New Jersey, particularly around engagement and assessment of parents
 - Improve caseworker visits with parents
 - Strengthen father engagement

3. Improve timeliness of permanency for children entering foster care in NJ
 - Strengthen concurrent planning practice and accountability
 - Strengthen DCF relationship with child welfare stakeholders and the Administrative Office of the Courts

Feedback from the members supported these goals and initial strategies. Dawn reported the initial PIP was submitted and that bi-weekly consultation with the Children's Bureau continue to occur as well as a scheduled two-day onsite implementation meeting next week with the Children's Bureau. Next steps included finalization of implementation steps and development of measurement plan and reporting structure.

Marygrace wrapped up the meeting by discussing some of the focus areas that the new DCF Commissioner verbalized at the Task Force meeting which includes embarking on a listening tour to hear the voices of families and other stakeholders and as well as her interest in vicarious trauma on staff which can be a focus for this subcommittee.

Next Meeting:

Tuesday July 17, 2018
10am-12pm
Location: FAFS- new location
101 College Rd E
Princeton, NJ 08540

Announcements & Closure

Jey announced Family Unification Day celebration through LSNJ which will be on June 21st at the Law Center

SORS members welcomed new staff members:

- Tosca Blanford-Bynoe
- Lisa Chapland
- Angie Waters
- Robyn Veasey

Acknowledgements were given to recent resignations:

- Lisa vonPier
- Lisa Nemeth