



## SUBCOMMITTEE ON THE SAFETY OF CHILDREN

Nydia Monagas, Chair  
Greta Anderson, Co-Chair

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*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.*

November 20, 2024  
Meeting minutes

### **Attendance**

Greta Anderson, Department of Children and Families  
Nydia Monagas, New Jersey Children's Alliance  
Commissioner Christine Beyer, Department of Children and Families  
Jill Pniewski, Department of Children and Families  
Cynthia Lischick, Forensic Nurse  
Devin DeFoe, Essex County Special Care Coordinator  
Christine Doman-Wells, Rutgers University  
Juanita Brooks, PEI Kids  
Lorene Wilkerson, New Jersey Child Placement Advisory Council  
Amber Floyd, Mercer County Special Care Coordinator  
Jack Auzinger, Lived Experience Expert  
Ron Welch, Dad's Council  
Joslyn Bjorseth, Department of Children and Families  
Erin Brown, Department of Children and Families  
Anthony Cameli, Families and Communities Together  
Dayna Zatina Egan, Montclair State University  
Dr. Martin Finkel, NJ CARES Institute  
Liza Kirschenbaum, CASA of New Jersey  
Dr. Rachel Silliman-Cohen, NJ CARES Institute  
Caryn Hirsch, Catholic Charities  
Jaqueline Martin, Project Impact  
Michele Renner, Catholic Charities  
Darianne Masticola, School Counselor

### **Staff**

Bethany D'Amelio, Department of Children and Families

### **1. Welcome and Introduction**

- The meeting began with an acknowledgment of all committee members present and a brief overview of the agenda.
- The committee is dedicated to improving accessibility and quality within childcare services and examining related policy issues.

### **2. Child Care Licensing and Regulation**

- Presentation focused on the voluntary registration program facilitated by the Department of Children and Families and the Office of Licensing, along with contracted agencies.
- Childcare Resource and Referral Agencies operate across the state's 21 counties, overseen by the Department of Human Services' Division of Family Development. These agencies are integral in administering family childcare registrations.

### **3. Challenges in Adequate Child Care Provision**

- The committee recognized challenges, including maintaining adequate staff-to-child ratios and addressing complaints of inappropriate staff actions.
- Issues concerning unlicensed facilities have been rising.
- Highlighted efforts for comprehensive inspection and adherence to state requirements.

### **4. New Developments and Proposals**

- A focus on family support resources, especially in mental health services, was highlighted. Concerns were raised about misinformation leading families to associate support services with state monitoring.
- Proposals are in place to redefine communication strategies that mitigate misconceptions and ensure families are aware of the support services available without fear of unwarranted scrutiny.

### **5. Workforce and Training Initiatives**

- An emphasis was placed on training and equipping the childcare workforce to handle modern challenges adeptly.
- Collaborative working groups have been recommended for breaking down large tasks into manageable projects, encouraging shared progress.

### **6. Future Outlook and Commitments**

- Focus groups with healthcare providers, educators, and law enforcement will inform ongoing and future strategies.
- Commitment to transparency, reflecting on legalities such as mandatory reporting adjustments, is a priority.

The committee remains dedicated to nurturing an environment in which the safety and development of all children is adequately safeguarded. Our ongoing discussions are framed within a context of inclusivity and comprehensive analysis to foster actionable outcomes. Feedback and engagement are highly valued as we advance these important initiatives in the community.

*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.*