



**Protection Committee**  
**Richard Stagliano, Chair**  
**Liza Kirschenbaum, Esq, Vice-Chair**  
**March 17, 2021**  
**Virtual Meeting**  
**Minutes**

**In Attendance:**

Greta Anderson	NJ DCF – Institutional Abuse Investigation Unit (IAIU)
Doug Behan	Rutgers School of Social Work
Eileen Caraker	Gloucester County Prosecutor’s Office
Joanne Hatt	Passaic County Prosecutor’s Office
Liza Kirschenbaum	CASA of New Jersey
Lisa Landsman	Trainer/Consultant
Nydia Monagas	NJ Children’s Alliance
Sonia Moticha	Department of Education
Clinton Page	NJ Department of Children & Families
Judy Spinney	Therapist
Richard Stagliano	Center for Family Services
Jennifer Underwood	NJ Department of Community Affairs
Lorene Wilkerson	NJ Child Placement Advisory Council

**Guests:**

Amanda O’Reilly	NJ Department of Children & Families
Mai Nguyen	NJ Department of Children & Families

**Staff:**

Daniel Yale	NJ Department of Children & Families
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**Introduction and Welcome**

The meeting was called to order and the Open Public Meetings notice was read. A brief welcome was provided by Richard Stagliano and each member provided a brief introduction.

**Review and Approve September 23, 2020 Minutes**

The September 23, 2020 minutes were approved without edit.

**Impacts of COVID-19 on DCF Presentation**

Amanda O’Reilly, Director, DCF Office of Research, Evaluation, and Reporting, provided the Committee with a presentation on the Impact of COVID-19 on DCF and the families that they serve.

The Committee discussed with Amanda the types of referrals that DCF is now receiving at this point in the pandemic. Amanda informed the Committee that many of the changes in the types of referrals that are being received are those that schools refer. These types of cases tend to be general neglect allegations such as parent/caregiver capacity-related challenges. Another area in which there has



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been a decrease in child injuries that are often reported by schools. The types of referrals that have seen the least amount of decrease are the types of cases reported by law enforcement and health care providers such as substance exposed infants and domestic violence.

**New Jersey Family, Women, and Children Data Presentation**

Mai Nguyen, Ph.D., Eagleton Science Fellow, Rutgers University, DCF Office of Research, Evaluation, and Reporting, provided a presentation on the general demographics of NJ as well as data on the economic outlook, health and healthcare, and intimate partner violence and sexual assault.

**2021 Children's Justice Act (CJA) 3-year assessment**

Daniel explained that, as the CJA Task Force, the NJTF CAN, is required to make recommendations to DCF to improve the investigation, prosecution, and judicial handling of cases of child abuse and neglect, particularly child sexual abuse and exploitation, in a manner that limits additional trauma to the child victim. Every 3 years, the NJTF CAN conducts an assessment of the progress that has been achieved towards their recommendations and then makes further recommendations for the following 3 years. As the CJA grant is intended to be used specifically to improve child protection issues, the Protection Committee is being asked to provide input on the assessment process as well as the recommendations for the next 3 years.

The Committee was provided with the 3-year assessment document that was completed by the NJTF CAN in 2018. The Committee discussed the recommendations that were made in 2018 including judicial training, support for Child Advocacy Centers (CACs) and Multidisciplinary Teams (MDTs). The Committee agreed that many of the previous recommendations regarding judicial training that were previously made need to be changed. The focus of training has shifted to race equity, trauma training, ACEs, etc. Liza felt that the focus should also be shifted to systemwide stakeholders rather than just judiciary and court staff. Several Committee members agreed to work with Daniel to provide recommendations for the upcoming 3-year assessment. Regarding CACs and MDTs, Nydia provided an update to the Committee on progress that has been made towards the specific recommendations of the 3-year assessment. Sonia suggested a recommendation to provide support resources, training or assistance with the decision-making process to educators regarding what to be looking for in terms of child abuse and neglect when in remote settings. Nydia agreed and stated that there had been conversations about developing a training regarding identifying and reporting child abuse and neglect. This type of training will assist in educating participants in what types of cases need to be referred to DCF as well as those that should not. Nydia also informed the Committee that there have also been multiple conversations about child on child sexual activity. Nydia stated that the subgroup was in the process of developing recommendations on how these types of cases are assessed, how they are handled, how they are tracked by DCF, and how to talk with families about how to access voluntary services and why it is important. Nydia agreed to work with Daniel to develop more specific language for recommendations for the upcoming 3-year assessment.



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**Committee Initiatives**

**The Digital Realm of Child Abuse Workgroup**

Sonia reminded the Committee that the workgroup submitted a survey to school districts pertaining to preventing child sexual abuse, specifically looking at the digital realm and online safety component. The workgroup submitted a report in December 2020 based on those recommendations to the Commissioner of the Department of Education. Online safety remains a very important topic of discussion. Sonia informed the Committee that the Department of Education (DOE) is moving forward with several of the recommendations from the workgroup. The DOE will be releasing information through their social media platform in June for National Internet Safety Month. They will also be creating or identifying a parent resource regarding online safety to be distributed through their broadcasting system to school districts. Also, the DOE will also be compiling a list of resources, curriculum and programming that could be used by schools regarding online safety. Sonia stated that the workgroup will continue to work on these recommendations and asked that if any Committee members have any related resources that they would like to be considered, to forward them and they will look into them.

**Juveniles with Sexually Inappropriate Behaviors Workgroup**

Nydia informed the Committee that workgroup members met with Clinton Page and Nancy Carre-Lee of DCF to discuss child on child sexual abuse cases. Nydia stated that during this meeting, they learned that DCPD began tracking these types of cases through the State Centralized Screening (SCR) in January 2021. Nydia discussed that Greta Anderson had also been in discussions to track these types of cases for DCF's Institutional Abuse Investigation Unit (IAIU) as well. Greta explained that they were hoping to add a checkbox to the referral so that the data gathered could be examined more closely. Daniel is looking into having a similar checkbox included for Children's System of Care (CSOC) referrals as well. Nydia also informed the Committee that NJCA was able to be included on DCF's webinar agenda to present on Problematic Sexual Behavior (PSB) in Youth. This will be primarily focused around providing education on what PSB is but also around how caseworkers can talk to families about it and to be able to explain the importance of engaging in treatment. Nydia informed the Committee that the workgroup has been contacting other states who have policies and legislative initiatives to address these types of cases to get some guidance on what worked for them, what the challenges were, etc. Lisa stated that there are 3 states that have legislation for these types of cases, so she and Nora will be contacting various agencies in these states to get further information.

**Announcements**

Sonia informed the Committee that it was recently announced that NJ schools are eligible to receive federal grant funding regarding mental health. There will be \$30 million available which would allow for \$45,000 for each district.



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**Meeting adjourned – Next Meeting June 16, 2021.**