



Protection Committee
Richard Stagliano, Chair
Liza Kirschenbaum, Esq, Vice-Chair
June 16, 2021
Virtual Meeting
Minutes

In Attendance:

Greta Anderson	NJ DCF – Institutional Abuse Investigation Unit (IAIU)
Joyce Applegate	Catholic Charities
Eileen Caraker	Gloucester County Prosecutor’s Office
Jacquelynn Duron	Rutgers University
Martin Finkel	CARES Institute
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
Jane Reynolds	Mercer County Prosecutor’s Office
Richard Stagliano	Center for Family Services
Jennifer Underwood	NJ Department of Community Affairs
Lorene Wilkerson	NJ Child Placement Advisory Council

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.

Review and Approve March 17, 2021 Minutes

The March 17, 2021 minutes were approved with the following edit: Eileen Caraker to be added to the list of attendees for the March 17, 2021 meeting.

Committee Initiatives

Juveniles with Sexually Inappropriate Behaviors Workgroup

Nydia informed the Committee that the workgroup has been focusing on tracking data regarding child on child sexual contact. The Division of Child Protection and Permanency (DCPP) started tracking data earlier this year and the Institutional Abuse Investigation Unit (IAIU) will start tracking this data in the fall of this year. The Childrens System of Care (CSOC) has reported that any cases of child on child contact would be reported through IAIU or CMOs. Dr. Finkel stated that DCPP policy from 2011, in terms of investigation is very clear. Dr. Finkel stated that this type of investigation requires a referral to a Regional Diagnostic Treatment Center (RDTC). Dr. Finkel asked that if the referrals are going



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through CMOs or PerformCare, who is doing the investigation and how do we assure that the children are getting the appropriate evaluations for medical and mental health services. Nydia stated that they were trying to determine if that was occurring in all cases. Nydia also stated that the DCP policy states that a referral to an RDTC is required in child on child sexual abuse cases only when one child is in a caretaker role. The Committee discussed changing the language in the DCP policy to include comprehensive assessment of juveniles and families in this type of case, when to refer for appropriate treatment, and how to talk to families about why treatment is important. The other request would be to keep a case open until a “warm handoff” can occur and the child is engaged in treatment. Nydia stated that the workgroup recommendations were to request that the NJTF CAN discuss this issue and begin conversations at the state level regarding possible changes or amendments to this policy. Nydia stated that it is also problematic that the policy refers to the children that initiate child on child sexual contact as “offenders”.

Nydia also informed the Committee that the workgroup has been discussing possible legislation regarding referral and investigation for child on child sexual abuse cases. Nydia stated that workgroup members met with those in Missouri that had been successful in getting legislation passed to address this issue. Missouri has legislation and policy in place that requires their Child Protective Services (CPS) to complete “Juvenile Assessments” and create “Juvenile Case Plans” for all child on child cases in which the initiator is 14 years of age or younger. They also have CPS workers trained to work with these types of cases and to refer for a “warm handover” for direct services. Missouri has found that if families are appropriately engaged and that the need and reason for the treatment are described, that they do not have retention issues with those families. However, the workgroup discussed that it would be more beneficial to work directly with the state to amend policy without having to create legislation. Nydia informed the Committee that the final piece that they were working on was education. They were successful in getting on the DCP webinar calendar and provided a training on Problematic Sexualized Behavior (PSB) on May 25, 2021 for DCF staff. The training included information on what PSB is, how to engage families in treatment, how to explain to families why treatment is important, and information on where those treatments are available. Nydia also stated that they are trying to get the recording of the webinar so that it can be shared with other entities. They are also working with DCP to create curricula for the Office of Training and Professional Development (OTPD) on working with this population.

The Digital Realm of Child Abuse Workgroup

Lorene informed the Committee that the Department of Education (DOE) released a draft of the Parent Guidelines. The workgroup reviewed the document and made recommendations for minor changes prior to sharing with the full Committee. The majority of the changes that were made were additions to the list of resources that were included. There were minor “tweaks” made to language to ensure that information was clear, additional statistics, and other points of clarity. Sonia explained that the best-case scenario would be that the document would be ready for release prior to the beginning of the school year, but that it is more important to make sure the content is correct prior to release. The draft



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that the Committee received included feedback from the workgroup but asked that members review the document and make comments and suggestions by Monday or Tuesday of the following week. Sonia stated that it will be distributed as its own broadcast which may include other information and resources about online safety as well as information for schools as to how it may be utilized and shared with parents.

Lorene informed the Committee that June is Internet Safety Month and the DOE has released some media regarding Internet safety. Sonia stated that a Resource and Opportunity was sent to all school districts sharing an Internet resource from Netsmarts for educators. The resources span from K-12 including different focal points. The DOE also released social media posts regarding Internet safety which includes link to resources for online safety.

The Committee discussed that the document is very comprehensive but also felt that how the content is rolled out is very important. There is so much information included in the document that perhaps it can be broken into parts and released as separate topics. Sonia felt that this was important as well and agreed to share this recommendation with the DOE. Lorene also suggested connecting with Parent Teacher Associations (PTAs) to assist with distribution and meeting with parents to further discuss this information.

Announcements

Dr. Finkel informed the Committee that the next session of the Child Abuse and Neglect Lecture Series will occur on October 20, 2021 and will feature Tom Lyons, a research psychologist and the leading authority on interviewing children.

Meeting adjourned – Next Meeting September 15, 2021.