



Protection Committee
Richard Stagliano, Chair
Liza Kirschenbaum, Esq, Vice-Chair
September 15, 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
Martin Finkel	CARES Institute
Joanne Hatt	Passaic County Prosecutor’s Office
Liza Kirschenbaum	CASA of New Jersey
Nydia Monagas	NJ Children’s Alliance
Sonia Moticha	Department of Education
Jane Reynolds	Mercer County Prosecutor’s Office
Judy Spinney	Therapist
Richard Stagliano	Center for Family Services
Jennifer Underwood	NJ Department of Community Affairs
Lorene Wilkerson	NJ Child Placement Advisory Council

Guest:

Mary Coogan	Advocates for Children of New Jersey
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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 June 16, 2021 Minutes

The June 16, 2021 minutes were approved without edit.

Protection Committee Charter – Committee Mission and Goals

Mary Coogan, Acting Co-Chair of the NJTF CAN, joined the meeting to meet the members and hear about the work of the Committee. Mary explained that, during their last meeting, the Task Force discussed asking each of the subcommittees to discuss their mission and objectives and to discuss whether their focus is still relevant. The discussion will help to ensure that the committees are doing the work that members feel is relevant and that it is valuable to the overall mission of the Task Force. Committee members were provided with a charter template to help guide the discussion. Mary reminded the members that the Task Force is bigger than just DCF and is mandated to examine state systems as a whole. Ideally, the goal is to strengthen families so that they do not have to enter the child welfare system.



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The Committee discussed the following to include as missions and objectives:

- Legislative work
- Collaboration with the Prevention Committee
- Reviewing and commenting on relevant DCF Policy
- Education on responsibilities regarding understanding, identifying, and reporting abuse
 - Guidelines and trainings to ensure that all recognize responsibility as reporters
- Ensuring adequate resources to address, diagnose, and treat child abuse and neglect
- Identify current issues and trends in child welfare and develop strategies to address those issues and trends
- Development resources to do effective and thorough investigations
- Development of MDT process
- Education of professionals in law enforcement, child protection, mental health, and medical about issues related to diagnostic and treatment services
- Ensuring that there were effective resources and treatment available
- Make recommendations to the Task Force regarding the use of Children's Justice Act (CJA) funds

Purpose:

- Help state institutions better protect New Jersey's children through the development and implementation of collaborative entities and efforts, educational opportunities, public policy advocacy, and incubation of ideas for better serving children suspected of being abused or neglected.

Values:

- Inclusive
- Respectful

Membership and Roles:

- The Committee discussed the importance of having representation from the Judiciary on the Protection Committee. Daniel agreed to reach out to the Task Force Designee for the Judiciary, Jacqueline Augustine, to obtain representation.

Liza suggested creating a workgroup related to the CJA guidelines that will assist in developing ideas for the Committee charter. Liza agreed to create a Goggle document so that all members will be able to view and make edits. Nydia, Liza, Richard and Daniel will work together on this workgroup.

Committee Initiatives



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Juveniles with Sexually Inappropriate Behaviors Workgroup

Nydia informed the Committee that the workgroup's next step is to bring recommendations to the Task Force that include conversations at the state level to work on advising policy regarding how the Division of Child Protection and Permanency (DCPP), Children's System of Care (CSOC), and Institutional Abuse Investigation Unit (IAIU) respond to cases that involve child on child sexual contact. The Committee discussed the reduction in the number of referrals to Regional Diagnostic Treatment Centers (RDTCs). The RDTCs hope to have a dialogue with DCF leadership about issues regarding referrals. The Committee discussed how DCPP handles child on child referrals and DCF policy regarding when DCPP refers children to RDTCs. Another concern that was mentioned is the lack of child abuse pediatricians at the RDTCs.

Nydia also spoke about the difficulties of data collection due to differences in how cases are defined across the state and what is required in terms of data collection. Through the Child Advocacy Center – Multidisciplinary Team (CAC-MDT) Advisory Board, a data subgroup was created to address issues with data collection. New Jersey Children's Alliance (NJCA) hired a consultant to examine publicly available statewide data and to make recommendations that will assist in providing a better understanding of county level data and then be able to understand it at the state level.

The Digital Realm of Child Abuse Workgroup

Sonia informed the Committee that the workgroup created a 9-page online safety resource guide for parents and caregivers. Additionally, they created a 2-page handout that includes the most salient information from the full document. The goal is for the documents to be provided to school districts for distribution. Prior to finalization, the documents were reviewed by members of both the Protection Committee and Prevention Committee. The edits from those reviews have been compiled and the documents are under review at the Department of Education (DOE). Sonia stated that once the documents gain approval at the DOE, the best method of distribution to school districts is through a broadcast memo. The workgroup will also brainstorm to determine other means of distribution.

Announcements

Dr. Finkel announced that on October 20, 2021, the CARES Institute will be offering a symposium on Forensic Interviewing by Tom Lyon, psychologist and attorney, and researcher on interviewing children.

Nydia announced that on September 20, 2021, the MDT Coordinator's Association is providing a free training that will feature Margaret Holzer, Victor Vieth, and other presenters.

Meeting adjourned – Next Meeting December 15, 2021.