



New Jersey Task Force on Child Abuse and Neglect

## **STAFFING AND OVERSIGHT REVIEW SUBCOMMITTEE**

Marygrace Billek, Chair  
Lisa Chapland, Acting Co-Chair

**November 15, 2022**  
**10:00 A.M. – 12:30 P.M.**

### **In Attendance:**

Marygrace Billek  
Lisa Chapland  
Mary Hallahan  
Laura Jamet  
Corinne LeBaron  
Amanda Melillo  
Linda Porcaro  
Robyn Veasey  
Angie Waters

Mercer County DHS  
Kinship Resource Parent  
Foster and Adoptive Kinship Parent  
NJ Department of Children and Families  
embrella  
19<sup>th</sup> Legislative District  
Office of Youth Services – Somerset County  
Office of the Public Defender  
CASA of New Jersey

### **Guests:**

Jonathan Wright  
Robyn Aceturro  
Leon Carelli  
Jessica Sauer  
Benita Miller

Resource Parent  
Former Kinship Foster Parent  
Child Advocacy Association of NJ  
Child Advocacy Association of NJ  
Powerful Families, Powerful Communities

### **Staff**

Daniel Yale

NJ Department of Children and Families

*"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 is being recorded for the transcription of minutes. Please be sure to state your name prior to making comments, motions and seconding votes.*

### **Welcome and Introductions**

A brief welcome was provided by Marygrace Billek and the meeting was called to order. Each member and guest provided a brief introduction.

### **Review September 13, 2022 Minutes**



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The September 13, 2022 meeting minutes were approved without edit.

### **Powerful Families, Powerful Communities (PF/PC)**

*Benita Miller, Executive Director, Powerful Families, Powerful Communities*

The purpose of Powerful Families, Powerful Communities is to work with communities to co-design a future child and family well-being system in NJ. NJ is trying to move from a system that is solely focused on child protection system intervention and transform to include a vision around family well-being and to obsolete the need for non-kin foster care placements. PF/PC is currently working with communities in Camden, Millville, Bridgeton, and Newark. These communities were chosen due to higher rates of child protective interventions and the resources that were available in those communities. They are looking at families with substance misuse issues and contain children that are 0 – 5 years old. The focus is on ensuring that the youngest children benefit from upstream preventive services so that they are more likely to remain with their families. Nationally and across NJ, there are higher rates of removals with the youngest children in black and brown families. PF/PC is working with co-designers that include teams of birth parents, youth who were in foster care, kinship resources, or people from communities that have higher rates of interaction with child protection services. The groups also include social workers and schoolteachers that wanted to assist in the process of redesigning the child welfare system.

Last year, PF/PC completed the first phase of design with the support of an international design firm, IDEO. The group developed a set of interventions focused on centering the voice of the community, examining what economic mobility might look like for those communities, how to ensure that we are providing enough services to younger people that might be interacting with the system, and thinking about what truth and transformation might look like for a better system. The group used the ideas that were discussed and focused on the themes that emerged.

PF/PC is working towards a system that interacts with DCF in a different way, where the system leverages community voice. The community not only means the families, but also the stakeholders that undergird those communities. This includes businesses, the community, the providers, and local governments. Currently the group is discussing how to build an infrastructure in the 3 selected communities that will help advance a statewide infrastructure to leverage co-design to problem solve at the community level.

Benita stated that, now that trust has been built within the community to come to the table and trust the process, the next phase is to think about who is missing from the table. We need to bring together trusted stakeholders in the community to help think through what that might look like. They need to look at how to build out a system that complements keeping children safe, building trust in community, and delivering services in a new and different way. Additionally, how can they leverage and increase the resources that exist in the community and bring these resources to the conversation.



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A concern was raised regarding asking families to participate in the co-design system and whether they would be more likely to miss other benchmarks that are required by DCF, PerformCare, or court order. Benita stated that there is a continuum and co-design will not take the place of child safety interventions when they are required, but instead aim to keep families out of the child protection system when intervention is not required.

### **SORS Annual Workplan**

Marygrace explained that the workplan will be subject changes based on the proposed changes to the role of the SORS. The members decided upon the following items to be discussed during 2023:

- Request an update on the DCF Office of Health and Well-Being regarding staff response to safety survey, telework impact on staff, etc.
  - Request a copy of the staff safety survey prior to meeting
- Request information/data from DCPD regarding re-entry into out-of-home placement.
  - Questions about specific data sent to DCF prior to meeting
- Request information from DCF regarding recruiting staff, workforce development, and hiring.
  - The members discussed reusing the previous survey or creating another staff survey to compare data from previous survey
- Request an update from DCF regarding Family First Prevention Services and any outcome data.
- Request a report from DCF regarding the Four Branch Meetings regarding takeaways/recommendations/next steps.
- Request an update from DCPD regarding the impact of Solution-Based Casework.
- Monitor the ongoing immersion, implementation of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion practices across the various divisions – CSOC, DCPD, OTPD, etc.
- Request information on DCF’s ongoing efforts related to bias, anti-racism and anti-poverty training.

### **2023 SORS Meeting Dates**

SORS members reviewed the meeting dates for 2023.

### **Announcements**

Marygrace reminded members that there was a membership application for review. Members reviewed the application and voted to move the application forward to the Task Force for approval.

Meeting Adjourned – Next meeting January 10, 2023.