
New Jersey Task Force on Child Abuse and Neglect
Staffing and Oversight Review Subcommittee (SORS)

8TH ANNUAL REPORT

to Governor Chris Christie and the New Jersey Legislature



Proceedings and Findings for the period of July 1, 2013 - June 30, 2014

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8th ANNUAL REPORT FOR THE PERIOD JULY 1, 2013 - JUNE 30, 2014

Staffing and Oversight Review Subcommittee

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Executive Director
Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA)

Vice-Chair

Vacant

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Introduction

On July 11, 2006, P.L. 2006, Chapter 47 was enabled which established the Department of Children and Families (DCF). This law amended numerous statutes in order to transfer a number of functions from the Department of Human Services to this new department, including the New Jersey Task Force on Child Abuse and Neglect (“Task Force”). The bill also expanded the responsibilities and membership of the Task Force. Further, the law included provisions whereby the Division of Child Protection and Permanency (CP&P), formerly the Division Youth and Family Services (DYFS), Staffing and Outcome Review Panel established under N.J.S.A. 30:4C-3.1 was dissolved and its roles and functions were assumed by the Task Force through the creation of a Staffing and Oversight Review Subcommittee (SORS).

The charge of the SORS is to review staffing levels of the CP&P in order to develop recommendations regarding staffing levels and the most effective methods of recruiting, hiring, and retaining staff within the CP&P. In addition, the subcommittee was mandated to review CP&P’s performance in the achievement of management and client outcomes and prepare a report of its findings to the Governor and the Legislature.

Subcommittee Proceedings

The SORS met on the following dates: July 9, 2013, September 10, 2013, November 12, 2013, January 14, 2014, March 11, 2014, and May 13, 2014. These meetings provided the SORS the opportunity to discuss and assess items associated with their statutorily mandated work. To view a copy of the meeting minutes please visit <http://www.nj.gov/dcf/providers/boards/njtfcant/>

Summary of Activities – 2013 to 2014

The charge of the Staffing and Oversight Review Subcommittee (SORS) is outlined in the New Jersey Task Force statute and includes the following:

- Reviewing staffing levels of Child Protection and Permanency (CP&P)
- Developing recommendations regarding staffing levels;
- Developing recommendations around the most effective methods of recruiting, hiring, and retaining staff within the division;
- Reviewing CP&P’s performance in the achievement of management and client outcomes; and
- Reporting annually the Subcommittee’s findings to the Governor and the Legislature.

SORS, which is also a subcommittee of the Task Force, attended to this charge by the following actions in 2013-2014. The subcommittee received comprehensive presentations and/or updates from DCF executive staff around the scope, work, and strategic priorities from the following:

- Division of Child Protection and Permanency
- Office of Training and Professional Development
- Office of Advocacy
- Office of the Commissioner
- Office of Contracting
- Office of Educational Support Services
- Office of Performance Management and Accountability

SORS Focused on Parent/Child Visitation

In its work this year, the SORS continued to prioritize issues for discussion which met its legislative charge and to which the committee believed it could add value. In July, DCF responded to the subcommittee's ongoing quest for information on Parent/Child Visitation. Also cited in the monitoring report as a standard not yet achieved, visitation issues have been forefront for the subcommittee.

Priorities of the SORS

In 2013 the subcommittee requested an update from DCF's Educational Support Services which had previously presented to the subcommittee in 2012. The subcommittee learned that NJ SPIRIT has been enhanced to capture data on education stability and that efforts were being made to capture educational data from the DOE.

In 2011, the SORS conducted a survey of CP&P's staff. In response to the results of the survey, the subcommittee has determined to conduct focus groups with the help of the T/TA Network to ascertain if the key issues initially identified continue to exist. DCF assisted the subcommittee in accessing the TTA network since requests for assistance can only be made by the child welfare agency or the courts. Data collected from the focus groups will help drive the development of survey questions.

The subcommittee heard from the Office of Performance Management and Accountability who provided an overview of the Qualitative Review Process, the Performance Improvement Process as well as an overview of the 2012 QR results which can be viewed on the DCF website <http://www.nj.gov/dcf/about/divisions/opma/>.

Issues for Follow Up in 2014-2015

The subcommittee identified the following priorities for in the upcoming year:

- Gather data from identified CP&P staff in regard to the existing array of services, appropriate training opportunities and agency resources specifically related to:
 1. Parent/child and sibling visitation and services, particularly those that support parent/child and sibling visitation
 2. Educational stability, particularly the quality and consequences of educational decisions
- Staff training and retention in regard to measured outcomes of the current training curriculum

The SORS will explore these issues to determine what oversight will be necessary to ensure that the improvements being achieved now are sustained for years to come to ensure the safety of our most vulnerable children.