



State of New Jersey
Department of Children and Families

New Jersey Task Force on Child Abuse and Neglect

SECOND ANNUAL REPORT

Proceedings and Findings for the period of
July 1, 2011 - June 30, 2012

CO-CHAIRS, NEW JERSEY TASK FORCE ON CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT

Honorable Allison Blake, Ph.D., L.S.W.,
Commissioner
Department of Children and Families

Dr. Martin A. Finkel
Medical Director
NJ Child Abuse Research and Education
Services Institute

NEW JERSEY TASK FORCE ON CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT MEMBERS

Hon. Jennifer Velez, Commissioner
Department of Human Services
Designee: Gayle Riesser

Joseph Krakora, Public Defender
Office of the Public Defender
Designee: Lorraine Augostini

Jeffrey S. Chiesa, Attorney General
Department of Law and Public Safety
Division of Criminal Justice
Designee: Denise Hollingsworth

Charles W. Dortch, Jr., J.S.C.
Superior Court Judge
Camden County Hall of Justice
Family Division
Designee: Sonia G. Martinez

Hon. Gary M. Lanigan, Commissioner
Department of Corrections
Designee: Herbert Kaldany, D.O.

Gerald J. Council, P.J., Superior Court Judge
Mercer County Courthouse
Designee: Alfred Federico

Richard E. Constable, III, Esq,
Acting Commissioner
Department of Community Affairs
Designee: Susan Rogers

Chris Cerf, Acting Commissioner
Department of Education
Designee: Natasha Palmer

Colonel Joseph R. Fuentes, Superintendent
New Jersey State Police
Designee: Joseph Glennan

Carolyn Murray, Acting Essex County Prosecutor
Essex County Prosecutor's Office
Designee: Mark Ali

Mary E. O'Dowd, Commissioner
Department of Health and Senior Services
Designee: Gloria M. Rodriguez

senate members
Hon. Shirley Turner, Senator
Senate, District 15
Designee: Meredith Rivera

NEW JERSEY TASK FORCE ON CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT MEMBERS

public members

Diana Autin, Esq, Executive Co-Director
Statewide Parent Advocacy Network

Rhona Beadle, State Chapter Coordinator
NJ Children's Alliance

Marygrace Billek, L.C.S.W., L.C.A.D.C. Director
Mercer County Department of Human Services

James Chester
Foster and Adoptive Family Services

Kathy Collins, L.C.S.W., Executive Director
Monmouth Cares

Dr. Robert DeNigris McCormick, Director
Center for Child Advocacy Montclair State University

Rita M. Gulden, M.S.W., Executive Director
CASA of New Jersey

Marianne C. Majewski, L.C.S.W.
Executive Director
Catholic Charities Diocese of Metuchen

Erik Riverson, Youth Representative

Maura Somers Dughi, Esq.
Child and Family Advocate

Cynthia VanBrunt, Executive Director
CASA of Monmouth County

Cecilia Zalkind, Esq, Executive Director
Advocates for Children of NJ

staff

Adrienne E. Jackson, M.S.W., Executive
Coordinator, NJTFCAN
Dcfnjtfc@dcf.state.nj.us

SECOND ANNUAL REPORT FOR THE PERIOD JULY 1, 2011 - JUNE 30, 2012

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*Honorable Allison Blake, Ph.D., L.S.W.
Commissioner
Department of Children and Families*

*Dr. Martin A. Finkel
Medical-Director
NJ Child Abuse Research Education and Service
(CARES) Institute*

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction.....	5
NJTFCAN Proceedings.....	7
Summary of Activities - 2011 to 2012.....	8
Work of the NJTFCAN Committee and Subcommittee.....	12
Recommendations.....	14
Issues for Follow Up in 2012 to 2013.....	15
Minutes.....	15
NJTFCAN Committee and Subcommittee Membership.....	16

NEW JERSEY TASK FORCE ON CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT

SECOND ANNUAL REPORT

FOR THE PERIOD

JULY 1, 2011 - JUNE 30, 2012

Introduction

The New Jersey Task Force on Child Abuse and Neglect (NJTFCAN) is a statutorily established, multi-disciplinary advisory body to New Jersey's child welfare system. The NJTFCAN also serves as New Jersey's Children's Justice Act (CJA) Task Force and the designated entity that entitles it to receive and administer CJA funds.

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 (NJTFCAN). The bill also expanded the responsibilities and membership of the NJTFCAN.

The purpose of the NJTFCAN in accordance with the statute is to study and develop recommendations regarding the most effective means of improving the quality and scope of child protective and preventative services provided or supported by State government, including a review of the practices and policies utilized by the Division of Youth and Family Services (DYFS) and Division of Prevention and Community Partnerships (DPCP) in DCF in order to:

- (1) optimize coordination of child abuse-related services and investigations;
- (2) promote the safety of children at risk of abuse or neglect;
- (3) ensure a timely determination with regard to reports of alleged child abuse;
- (4) educate the public about the problems of, and coordinate activities relating to, child abuse and neglect;
- (5) develop a Statewide plan to prevent child abuse and neglect and mechanisms to facilitate child abuse and neglect prevention strategies in coordination with the Division of Prevention and Community Partnerships;
- (6) mobilize citizens and community agencies in a proactive effort to prevent and treat child abuse and neglect; and
- (7) foster cooperative working relationships between State and local agencies responsible for providing services to victims of child abuse and neglect and their families.

In November 2010, the NJTFCAN was designated as one of DCF's federally mandated Citizen Review Panels. Consistent with the requirements of the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA), in general, each panel established shall, by examining the policies, procedures, and practices of State and local agencies and where appropriate, specific cases, evaluate the extent to which State and local child protection system agencies are effectively discharging their child protection responsibilities in accordance with —

- (i) the State plan under subsection (b);
- (ii) the child protection standards set forth in subsection (b)
- (iii) any other criteria that the panel considers important to ensure the protection of children, including—

- (I) a review of the extent to which the State and local child protective services system is coordinated with the foster care and adoption programs established under part E of title IV of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 670 et seq.); and
- (II) a review of child fatalities and near fatalities (as defined in subsection (b)(4)).

In addition, the NJTFCAN receives, evaluate and approve applications of public and private agencies and organizations for grants from moneys annually appropriated from the Children's Trust Fund" established pursuant to section 2 of P.L.1985, c.197 (C.54A:9-25.4). Any portion of the moneys actually appropriated which are remaining at the end of a fiscal year shall lapse to the "Children's Trust Fund."

Grants are awarded to public and private agencies for the purposes of planning and establishing or improving programs and services for the prevention of child abuse and neglect, including activities which:

- (1) Provide statewide educational and public informational seminars for the purpose of developing appropriate public awareness regarding the problems of child abuse and neglect;
- (2) Encourage professional persons and groups to recognize and deal with problems of child abuse and neglect;
- (3) Make information about the problems of child abuse and neglect available to the public and organizations and agencies which deal with problems of child abuse and neglect; and
- (4) Encourage the development of community prevention programs, including:
 - (a) community-based educational programs on parenting, prenatal care, prenatal bonding, child development, basic child care, care of children with special needs, coping with family stress, personal safety and sexual abuse prevention training for children, and self-care training for latchkey children; and
 - (b) community-based programs relating to crisis care, aid to parents, child abuse counseling, peer support groups for abusive or potentially abusive parents and their children, lay health visitors, respite of crisis child care, and early identification of families where the potential for child abuse and neglect exists.

The Task Force shall, in awarding grants, establish such priorities respecting the programs or services to be funded and the amounts of funding to be provided as it deems appropriate, except that the Task Force shall place particular emphasis on community-based programs and services which are designed to develop and demonstrate strategies for the early identification, intervention and assistance of families and children at risk in order to prevent child abuse and neglect.

The Task Force shall adopt such rules and regulations pursuant to the "Administrative Procedure Act," P.L.1968, c.410 (C.52:14B-1 et seq.) to govern the awarding of grants pursuant to this subsection as may be necessary to establish adequate reporting requirements on the use of grant funds by recipient agencies and organizations and to permit the Task Force to evaluate the programs and services for which grants are awarded.

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA) provides Children's Justice Act (CJA) grants to develop, establish and operate programs designed to improve:

- (1) the handling of child abuse cases, particularly cases of child sexual abuse and exploitation, in a manner which limits additional trauma to the child victim and the victim's family;
- (2) the handling of cases of suspected child abuse or neglect related fatalities;
- (3) the investigation and prosecution of cases of child abuse, particularly child sexual abuse and exploitation; and
- (4) the handling of cases involving children with disabilities or serious health-related problems who are victims of abuse and neglect.

Children's Justice Act funds are used to develop programs to reform state systems and improve the New Jersey's response to cases of child abuse and neglect, particularly child sexual abuse and suspected cases of child abuse and neglect fatalities.

Children's Justice Act funding supports experimental, model and demonstration programs for testing innovative approaches and techniques to improve the prompt and successful resolution of civil and criminal court proceedings or enhance the effectiveness of judicial and administrative action in child abuse and neglect cases.

Funding for the Children's Justice Act Grant is derived from the Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) of 1984. In March 2000, the federal government enacted the Child Abuse Prevention and Enforcement Act (CAPE), allowing one half of the increase in VOCA, funds up to \$20 million, to be used nationally for CJA grants. State funding is determined by a formula dependent on the population of children under age 18 within the state.

Since 1988, the state of New Jersey has received Children's Justice Act grants to establish a variety of projects and programs that are designed to address the four purpose areas detailed above. The New Jersey Department of Children and Families (DCF) is confident that CJA funds will continue to positively impact and enhance New Jersey's child protection system well into the future.

NJTFCAN Proceedings

The New Jersey Task Force on Child Abuse and Neglect (NJTFCAN) met on the following dates: July 22, 2011, September 23, 2011, December 2, 2011, January 27, 2012 and May 25, 2012. These meetings provided the NJTFCAN with the opportunity to discuss and assess items associated with their statutorily mandated work. The meeting minutes provide a record of the activities of the NJTFCAN during the past year. Supporting the work of the NJTFCAN are the Committees and a Subcommittee which meet bimonthly and report the results of their activities to the NJTFCAN. There are seventy individuals who contribute to this important work. In addition to these meetings, NJTFCAN and DCF participated in a governance retreat on September 16, 2012. The purpose of this retreat was to identify key concerns for its current scope and direction, revise the bylaws, conduct committee/subcommittee Chair elections and discuss past accomplishments, current challenges and the future direction of the committees/subcommittee.

Summary of Activities – 2011 to 2012

The statutory charge of the NJTFCAN is outlined on page 5. The NJTFCAN attended to its charge by the following actions in 2011-2012:

1. IMPLEMENTED PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND TRAINING PROGRAMS.

Each year, the NJTFCAN sponsors multidisciplinary training programs to improve the handling of cases of child abuse and neglect. All Task Force sponsored professional training programs are child-focused and designed to promote skills that prevent additional trauma to child victims and their families.

CJA funds were used to support the following professional development projects to enhance the knowledge of persons involved in the investigation, prosecution, assessment and treatment of child abuse and neglect:

- a. Finding Words, New Jersey: Forensic Interviewing & Preparing Children for Court. Since 2002, the DCF and NJTFCAN have supported Finding Words NJ a forensic interviewing program originally developed in collaboration with the American Prosecutors' Research Institute (APRI) and based on the national Corner House protocol RATAAC and subsequently disseminated by the National Child Protection and Training Center (NCPTC). The goal of the project is to train frontline professionals involved in the investigation and prosecution of child abuse to conduct an effective and legally defensible interview of alleged child sexual abuse victims of various ages and prepare children for court. At the completion of the five day training, participants have a meaningful understanding of important concepts and practices including: child abuse dynamics, children's language and development, memory and suggestibility, the impact of questions on the process of abuse disclosure and factors associated with a credible and reliable child statement.

Finding Words Trainings were held/will be held for a maximum of 40 participants each as follows:

September 12 -16, 2011 Northern Region. Counties: Bergen, Essex, Hudson, Morris, Passaic, Sussex, Warren – 40 Participants

October 24 – 28, 2011 Central Region. Counties: Hunterdon, Middlesex, Monmouth, Mercer, Ocean, Somerset, Union – 40 Participants

November 14 – 18, 2012 Southern Region. Counties: Atlantic, Burlington, Camden, Cape May, Cumberland, Gloucester, Salem – 40 Participants

March 12 – 16, 2012 Southern Region. Counties: Atlantic, Burlington, Camden, Cape May, Cumberland, Gloucester, Salem – 40 Participants

June 4 – 8, 2012 Northern Region. Counties: Bergen, Essex, Hudson, Morris, Passaic, Sussex, Warren – 40 Participants

October 22 – 26, 2012 Central Region. Counties: Hunterdon, Middlesex, Monmouth, Mercer, Ocean, Somerset, Union – 40 Participants Anticipated

The Finding Words, NJ child-focused forensic interviewing project continues to reform the investigation and prosecution process and improve civil and criminal court proceedings. To date, close to 1,300 professionals involved in investigating child sexual abuse have been trained in the Finding Words-NJ protocol and have demonstrated, through role play, effective child sensitive interviewing skills. Multidisciplinary team members are more knowledgeable about the process of disclosure, age appropriate guidelines in questioning, child development, barriers to disclosure, memory, perpetrator/victim relationships, suggestibility and problems encountered during the interview.

Some of the outcomes of the training are:

- Prosecutors have adopted Finding Words, NJ as their protocol of choice when interviewing alleged child abuse victims.
 - Criminal cases are strengthened with accurate information to withstand legal scrutiny and child victims are better prepared for courtroom testimony.
 - Child victims experience fewer traumas during the investigation and prosecution process
 - Prosecutors are more sensitive to the special needs of child victims and actively support the development of Child Advocacy Centers (CAC).
 - The project is in compliance with the goals of the Task Force CJA Three-Year Assessment to reform the investigation and prosecution process and improve civil and criminal court proceedings.
 - The NJTFCAN continues to work with the DCF to facilitate child-focused forensic training for DYFS child abuse investigative units.
- Multidisciplinary (MDT) Team Training. CJA funds were provided to the Multidisciplinary Coordinators' (MDT) Association for training to improve case management of the investigation and prosecution of child abuse cases referred to the prosecutor's office. The NJTFCAN and the MDT Coordinators' Association collaborated on the annual MDT conference. The conference was delivered using lectures and classroom workshops to improve the knowledge of professionals involved in investigating and prosecuting child abuse and providing medical and mental health services to alleged child victims

Most county prosecutors employ MDT coordinators to ensure that members of the MDT are kept informed about changes in cases and to ensure that child victims receive appropriate medical and psychological evaluations and services to prevent additional trauma during the prosecution process and prepare children for courtroom testimony. Accordingly, training is provided in joint investigation protocols, prosecution strategies, psychological and medical evaluations, preparing children for court, legal and ethical issues, mental health services to child victims, case management, and the role of each discipline on the MDT.

The MDT Conference was held on April 5, 2012 entitled, “A Child Abuse Conference for Professionals: A Multidisciplinary Approach Conference” - Topics & Speakers: (1) Why Refer a Child for a Specialized Medical Evaluation (2) Game Based Cognitive Behavioral Therapy for Child Sexual Abuse (3) Human Trafficking (4) Effective Use of Expert Mental Health and Medical Testimony, and (5) Domestic Violence and the Co-Occurrence of child Abuse. The keynote speaker: Detective Richard Love (Retired), spoke on Sexting: The Danger Children Face; and the Exploitation of Children via Technology. Approximately 350 child protection professionals attended.

On May 3, 2012, MDT coordinators participated in “Leadership/Skill Building Training” - Topic & Speaker: Understanding and Responding to Secondary and Vicarious Trauma – Speaker: Detective Robin Morante. Roughly 50 MDT Coordinators, CAC Directors and Victim Witness Coordinators attended.

- b. Skill Building Conference. To continue to advance the knowledge of those who serve New Jersey’s children, the NJTFCAN, in collaboration with the Department of Children and Families (DCF), plans to host a statewide multidisciplinary skill building conference in September 2012 for approximately 250 child protection professionals. The conference date, topic and speaker are currently under discussion by the NJTFCAN.
- c. Biennial Conference. In January 2011, the NJTFCAN in collaboration with DCF distributed a Request for Proposals (RFP) statewide to colleges and universities and other agencies and community organizations with experience in planning and coordinating a conference. NJTFCAN and the selected organization, Rutgers University, sponsored a statewide conference for professionals in the field of child welfare.

On October 21, 2011, the interdisciplinary conference provided an opportunity to learn from experts in child welfare issues and disciplines serving children and families. CJA funds provided free registration for 150 DYFS child protection workers and a reduced registration fee for all professionals attending the conference. Conference title - Opening Doors: Partnerships for Prevention and Healing featured two keynote speakers: Judge Glenda A. Hatchett and Tracey Wells-Huggins, RN, Founder/CEO, Renewed Minds CDC, INC. The full day conference allowed participants to engage in a variety of workshops ranging from the effects compulsive gambling has on children and parenting for prevention to ethical dilemmas in child abuse cases. Over 700 child protection professionals attended the conference.

Some of the outcomes of the conference are:

- Attendees increased their communication and collaboration across disciplines and strengthened their skill.
- Attendees enhanced their knowledge regarding the latest research and emerging child welfare issues.

2. DISTRIBUTED CHILDREN’S JUSTICE ACT (CJA) COMMUNITY GRANTS.

CJA funds were used to establish and support programs to improve New Jersey’s child protection system in a manner which limits additional trauma to child victims of abuse and neglect. In accordance with the NJTFCAN Three-Year Assessment, model programs and innovative approaches were implemented to improve the identification, investigation and prosecution of child abuse and neglect and enhance the effectiveness of the judicial process.

Handheld Device Pilot Project

DCF utilized Children's Justice Act (CJA) funds to purchase handheld devices, accessories and Go to My PC Software for the Department of Children and Families, Division of Youth and Family Services (DYFS) Special Response Unit (SPRU) investigators to have access to New Jersey Statewide Protective Investigation Reporting and Information Tool (NJ SPIRIT) afterhours. The DYFS Special Response Unit is responsible for addressing allegations of child abuse/neglect after normal business hours, weekends and Holidays. NJ SPIRIT is a comprehensive, automated case management tool that integrates various aspects of case practice in a single statewide system, including intake, investigation, case planning, case recording, resource management, service delivery tracking, and financial management.

This pilot project includes 163 Special Response Unit (SPRU) investigators who respond to allegations of abuse and neglect referrals made after hours, weekends and Holidays.

Strengthen the Identification and Reporting of CA/N

As previously mentioned, NJTFCAN and DCF participated in a governance retreat on September 16, 2011. At this retreat, a need to educate and engage the public on reporting suspected child abuse was identified as one of its priorities. In February 2012 the NJTFCAN, in collaboration with DCF, distributed a request for information to New Jersey County Prosecutors and MDT Coordinators. The request for plans solicited innovative approaches to strengthen the identification and reporting of suspected child abuse. This initiative specifically required that the education community be included as the target audience in addition to other community agencies and stakeholders. CJA funds will be used to address the unique needs of the counties to provide a multidisciplinary one-day training, conference, lecture, webinars or other innovative means to reach the target population.

3. DISTRIBUTED CHILDREN'S TRUST FUND (CTF) COMMUNITY GRANTS

The New Jersey Children's Trust Fund (CTF) is a private/public partnership created by law in 1985 to fund child abuse and neglect prevention programs in New Jersey communities. The CTF supports local child abuse and neglect prevention programs that implement evidence-based and evidence-informed programs. Funds come to the CTF primarily from residents through the NJ state income tax check-off; and other private donor contributions. The funding priority for the current funding cycle (through 6/30/14), established by the NJTFCAN, is to promote positive parent-child attachment and support infant and early childhood mental health programs. Grants were awarded through a competitive process and funded for a three-year cycle. The request for proposals was issued on February 17, 2011 and three (3) grants were recommended for funding and contracts were awarded on July 1, 2011. These projects are overseen by the Department of Children and Families, Division of Prevention and Community Partnership (DPCP), Office of Early Childhood Services. They are:

- Incredible Parents! Incredible Kids! - Essex County is the targeted community. Incredible Parents = Incredible Kids (IP=IK) incorporates an evidenced based curricula. This is a preventative program aimed at promoting positive outcomes for children and their parents involved in the program. Some of the program objectives are children will have increased knowledge of personal safety and improved social behaviors while parents will demonstrate positive change in their attitudes on parenting/child rearing behaviors via pre-post test. The grantee is Family Connections, Inc.

- Positive Parenting-Padres Positivos – Mercer County is the targeted community. This program conducts parenting workshops incorporating the Common Sense Parenting (CSP) curriculum, developed by Boys Town, and adapted from the Family Home Program. This model emphasizes positive relationships, skills training and self-control. Positive Parenting-Padres Positivos conducts family outreach, parent classes, and individual behavioral sessions with children, as well as teacher consultations, as needed. Development of effective parenting skills is one of the program objectives. The grantee is Jewish Family and Children's Service of Greater Mercer County.
- Triple P- Positive Parenting Program – Cumberland County is the targeted community. The Triple P program is a parent/family support strategy proven to prevent and treat behavioral, emotional and developmental problems in children by enhancing parent knowledge, skills and confidence. This model teaches positive parenting techniques within the cultural, educational, and developmental context and needs of participants. Participants develop effective parenting skills that lead to a safe nurturing environment, positive parent-child relationships, positive child development and non-violent strategies to deal with common behavior problems. In addition to these program objectives, parents have reduced stress and communication between parents/couples improves. The grantee is South Jersey Healthcare.

4. WORK OF THE NJTF CAN COMMITTEES AND SUBCOMMITTEE

Prevention Committee

In 2011-2012, the Prevention Committee of the NJ Task Force on Child Abuse and Neglect established goals, objectives, activities and measures to guide and evaluate its work and duties as provided by statute and the NJTF CAN By-Laws. The goal of the Committee, in collaboration with the Division of Prevention and Community Partnerships, is to coordinate the efforts of stakeholders with expertise in and commitment to family support and the prevention of child maltreatment, to ensure the continued development, effective implementation and on-going evaluation of New Jersey's Statewide Prevention Plan. To accomplish this, the Committee has solicited diverse members from the state and non-profit, academic and community groups to become members of the Committee and continues to reach out to potential additional members. Three Work Groups, with additional representation, have been established and charged with specific tasks.

The Feedback Workgroup has developed an action plan to inform families, child and family-serving professionals, and the larger public about the Prevention Plan, and to solicit feedback from various constituencies about the effectiveness of the Plan, gaps, and recommendations on how to strengthen the Plan and its implementation. The Feedback Workgroup has reviewed the Division of Prevention and Community Partnership's PowerPoint about its prevention and family support activities, and is developing a presentation on the Prevention Plan. It is anticipated that the community presentations and feedback sessions will commence in the fall of 2012.

The Standards Workgroup has begun the process of reviewing and revising the New Jersey Standards for Prevention: Building Success Through Family Support, a required element of all funding from DPCP and the Trust Fund. The Standards Work Group includes members who are not on the Task Force or Prevention Committee who have expertise related to the Standards. The Group has reviewed the existing document, begun a literature review of the field, established a communication mechanism for the members to share information and identified additional experts to engage in the process. It is anticipated that the new Standards will be ready to be implemented in the 2014 funding cycle.

The Policy Workgroup is charged with staying current with policy and research issues, local, state and federal, that are related to child abuse and neglect prevention and family support and strengthening and disseminating that information to the Prevention Committee as well as highlighting issues that need to be placed on the agenda for discussion. There have been two meetings to date, as well as a discussion with the Assistant Director of DPCP.

In collaboration with DPCP, the Committee developed a Statement on Prevention, approved by the Task Force, which defines primary and secondary prevention, strategies for implementing prevention and family support programs and services, the cost effectiveness of prevention and the need for a collaborative approach across departments with the public and private sector for successful family and community strengthening.

Protection Committee

The Protection Committee of the NJ Task Force on Child Abuse and Neglect had similar success in 2011-2012. The Committee established goals, objectives, activities and measures to guide and evaluate its work and duties as provided by the NJTFCAN By-Laws. The goal of the Committee, in collaboration with the Division of Youth and Family Services, is to coordinate the efforts of stakeholders with expertise in and commitment to advancing the interests of children in the criminal and civil justice systems in order to address issues of child protection and systemic improvement. Strategic priorities include building collaborative working relationships between New Jersey's child serving systems, supporting, improving and sustaining the 21 county multidisciplinary teams. To accomplish this, the Committee has solicited diverse membership representative of NJ stakeholders with expertise in and commitment to child protection. Several workgroups are currently under development to address child protection issues in the areas of sexual abuse and human trafficking. On such workgroup, a Batterer's Accountability Workgroup (BAW), has full membership and has begun its work. This BAW was formed to address the fact that, even when they are not themselves physically assaulted, children often suffer lasting emotional effects from exposure to domestic violence. The Protection Committee, through the BAW, seeks to address the impact of domestic violence on children and is charged with assessing New Jersey's 21 county prosecutor's offices on their current practice. The BAW hopes to develop recommendations for a protocol for prosecutor's offices concerning the co-occurrence domestic violence and child abuse.

Communication Committee

The Communication Committee of the NJ Task Force on Child Abuse and Neglect was a robust committee that had an integral role in disseminating information statewide primarily focused on issues of public awareness and prevention. In the restructuring of the Department of Children and Families, the Communication Committee was absorbed into DCF. The Task Force believes that the Communication Committee is important to the success of the Task Force and has thus reestablished this committee. At its inaugural meeting in July 2012, the charge of this committee, goals and objectives will be formalized with a specific focus on committee composition. This committee is broadly seen as a vehicle to increase awareness of child abuse and neglect prevention and intervention for the public and for professionals. This may involve outreach via media, presentations, awareness campaigns, and material development. The committee expects to develop projects and promote awareness of the Task Force in partnership with the other Task Force Committees together with DCF.

Staffing and Oversight Review Subcommittee (SORS)

The Staffing and Oversight Review Subcommittee is charged with reviewing staffing levels of the Division of Youth and Family Services (DYFS) in order to develop recommendations regarding staffing levels and the most effective methods of recruiting, hiring, and retaining staff within the division. For more information around the work of SORS, please visit the website at <http://www.nj.gov/dcf/about/commissions/njtfcan/> to review their 6th annual report.

5. DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES (DCF) PRESENTATIONS

The Task Force received comprehensive presentations and updates from DCF executive staff around the scope, work, strategic priorities and initiatives from the following offices:

- An overview of, and key components of the DCF, Division of Child Behavioral Health Services were presented to the Task Force. During this presentation, the mission was described and a comprehensive summary of each of the division's key components was provided.
- Members of the Task Force received a tour of New Jersey's State Central Registry (SCR). SCR operates 24/7/365 and is the statewide centralized screening for the processing of ALL incoming reports of child abuse/neglect in the State of New Jersey.
- The Task Force was informed by the DYFS Deputy Director and Assistant Director of the division's work around the case practice model. A comprehensive presentation provided an overview of the case practice model and details about the next phase, Focus on Supervision. Focus on Supervision builds on the progress already made, and creates the opportunity for additional professional development and practice enhancements in work with children and families. This phase is aimed at strengthening the supervisory role in case conferencing – through a process that reinforces the commitment to teaming.

NJTFCAN Recommendations

Based on its Three Year Assessment (2010 – 2013), the NJTFCAN reinforces and expands on previous recommendations for action by DCF:

- Ongoing training is essential to continued collaboration and partnership building and improved outcomes for children and families in the State of New Jersey. Additionally, it is necessary due to personnel turnover in child protection and law enforcement.
 - ▶ Continue to provide ongoing training for members of the MDT to improve working relationships and coordination between child protective services, law enforcement, and the Regional Diagnostic Treatment Centers (RDTCs) and CACs.
 - ▶ Develop and implement training for caseworker staff, resource families, the courts, law enforcement, attorneys, and other key partners to address the strengths and needs of children with disabilities and their families who are involved in the child welfare system.
 - ▶ Prioritize training of child protection professionals for work with children with disabilities and special healthcare needs.
 - ▶ Train law enforcement personnel and child protective service (CPS) workers regarding the roles and expectations of each party during a child abuse and neglect investigation or when allegations of child abuse or neglect are made.
 - ▶ Continue to provide a biennial statewide multidisciplinary training conference on child maltreatment for professionals and a biennial statewide conference on the larger field of child welfare including prevention and family support.

- Although DCF has made great strides in reforming its child welfare system, there are still many challenges that remain. NJTFCAN makes the following recommendations:
 - ▶ Continue to support New Jersey's child welfare reform in all areas that overlap and are consistent with CJA and CTF priorities and utilize CJA and CTF dollars to assist the state with addressing CJA related child protection issues cited for improvement by New Jersey's Federal Monitor as well as CTF related prevention and family support initiatives.
 - ▶ Subject projects or endeavors funded through New Jersey's CJA and CTF funds to an evaluative process in order to assess outcomes and other indicators and measure the performance of the funded activity.
- Develop a process for gathering and analyzing data necessary to monitor the implementation of the educational stability provisions of Fostering Connections Act, specifically data on the number of children placed outside of their county of residence, number who remain in their home school district after placement, number who are enrolled in the district of their placement and reasons why they do not remain in their home district.
- Gather and analyze data necessary to monitor the implementation and effectiveness of family visits with children in care.
- Implement specialized training in working with adolescents to those caseworkers with specialized adolescent caseloads, including caseworkers working with adolescents with disabilities and special healthcare needs, beginning with a review of whether there is a curriculum in place and if so, its components, or whether one needs to be developed.

Issues for Follow-Up in 2012-2013

The NJTFCAN identified the following activities and issues as priorities for action next year:

- Review data reports specific to disproportionality in New Jersey's child welfare system as well as current policies and practices that may affect disproportionality and make recommendations to address this issue.
- Review data reports specific to implementation and effectiveness of family visits with their children in care and make recommendations for improvement.
- Review data reports specific to implementation and effectiveness of Family Team Meetings and make recommendations for improvement, as needed.
- Ensure broad public understanding of the functions and work of the NJTFCAN regarding both prevention and protection, and increased public engagement in and support for the work of prevention/family support and protection. Toward this end, revisit the NJTFCAN calendar project which highlighted child abuse prevention tips and was an educational tool for the community within the context of the revitalized Communication Committee
- Schedule updates and presentations from DCF staff to help provide point-in-time progress reports.

Meeting Minutes

For more information about meeting minutes please visit the website at <http://www.nj.gov/dcf/about/commissions/njtfcan/>

NJTFCAN COMMITTEES/SUBCOMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

Prevention Committee

Maura Somers Dughi, Esq., Chair

Diana Autin, Esq., Vice-Chair

Adriana Agudelo, Esq, Assistant Director,
Department of Children and Families Division
of Prevention & Community Partnerships

Diana Autin, Esq., Executive Co-Director
Statewide Parent Advocacy Network (SPAN)

Christine Baker, Ph.D., Family Life Education
Center (FLEC) Director, Supervising Psychologist
Metro Regional Diagnostic Treatment Center

Amanda Blagman, Policy Analyst
Advocates for Children of New Jersey

Jeannette Collins, Director of Program and
Curricula
Child Assault Prevention Program

Suzanne Conrad, M.A., R.N., L.P.C., Consultant

Patricia A. Crimaldi, Regional Supervisor
New Jersey Child Assault Prevention

Anthony DiFabio, Psy.D., CEO
Robins Nest, Inc.

Maura Somers Dughi, Esq.
Child and Family Advocacy

Gina Hernandez, MA, Division Director of
Prevention Programs
Prevent Child Abuse-NJ

Paulette Hines, Ph.D., Executive Director,
Center for Healthy Schools, Families and
Communities

Alice Hunnicutt, Director
Vocational Rehabilitation
Department of Labor and Workforce Development

Natasha Johnson, M.S.W., Deputy Director
New Jersey Department of Human Services
Division of Family Development

Cheryl Mojta, Director of Operations
Child Assault Prevention Program

Natasha Palmer
New Jersey Department of Education

Gayle Riesser, Ph.D., Senior Research Associate
Department of Human Services

Susan Rogers
Department of Community Affairs

Rush Russell, Executive Director
Prevent Child Abuse-NJ

Pat Stanislaski
Partnering for Prevention, LLC

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Office of the Secretary
NJ Department of Agriculture

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NJ Children's Alliance

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Department of Children and Families,
Division of Youth and Family Services

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Monmouth County Child Advocacy Center
Monmouth County Prosecutor's Office

Judy L. Spinney, LCSW
Therapist

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New Jersey Children's Alliance

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New Jersey Department of Education

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Department of Children & Families
Office of Communications

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Statewide Parent Advocacy Network, Inc.

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Maura Somers Dughi, Esq.
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Amy Fischer, Assistant Family
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Administrative Office of the Courts

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Statewide Parent Advocacy Network, Inc.

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Legal Services of New Jersey

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Department of Children and Families

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New Jersey State Senate, District 19

Senate Designee: Laurie McCabe, District 19

Clarence E. Whittaker, Jr., Esq., Manager
Community Services, Department of Children
and Families, Division of Child Behavioral
Health Services (DCBHS)

Kara Wood, Director
Department of Children and Families, Division
of Youth and Family Services (DYFS)

*DYFS Designee: John Ramos, Jr. M.S.W., Executive
Assistant, Department of Children and Families,
Division of Youth and Families Services*

Cecilia Zalkind, Esq. Executive Director
Advocates for Children of NJ