

Family and Children's Trust Fund (FACT)
Child Abuse and Neglect Advisory Committee Minutes

Call to Order and Introductions

The meeting was called to order by Committee Chair Betty Wade Coyle at 10:08 AM on Wednesday, September 7th, 2016. The meeting included: Rita Katzman, Cedric Moore, John Oliver, Anya Shaffer, Jeanine Harper, Vivian Stith-Williams, Kathanne Hunter, Laurie Crawford, Jenna Foster, Nancy Fowler, Nicole Poulin and Meghan Resler.

Approval of Minutes

Following committee member introductions, which included an introduction from FACT's new staff member, Meghan Resler, Ms. Coyle reviewed the agenda. The committee reviewed the minutes from the meeting that took place December 3rd and June 2nd. ON MOTION DULY MADE (Mr. Oliver) and seconded (Cedric Moore) the minutes were approved.

Executive Director's Report

Ms. Poulin provided an update on FACT's latest activities. Two new members have joined the FACT Board of Trustees: Linda Gillium and Lilliana Hernandez. FACT continues to work on a branding campaign with a target date for approving messaging strategies of December. FACT hired a new Senior Research Associate, Meghan Resler. FACT continues to participate in Vision 21 meetings in an advisement capacity through the 'Partner Advisory Team' (PAT) committee. FACT submitted a letter of support for the Virginia Department of Health's (VDH) CORE grant proposal to the Centers for Disease Controls (CDC). The grant was awarded. FACT will be serving in an advisory role for that grant.

Ms. Shaffer provided a brief overview of the initiative: CORE is a Violence Intervention Grant focusing on 3 primary areas TBI Prevention, Child Passenger and Safety Seat Initiative, and Child Maltreatment and Abuse Training Centers throughout Virginia. Ms. Poulin continued to provide an update on FACT collaborations, which included meetings with the Executive Directors for the Children's Cabinet (Daniela Lew), Office of Children's Services (Scott Reiner) and the Virginia Sexual and Domestic Violence Action Alliance (Kristi Van Audenhove).

Vision 21 Presentation

Following Ms. Poulin's report, Laurie Crawford, Project Manager with VDSS' Office of Family Violence, presented an update on Vision 21: Linking Systems of Care. Jenna Foster, Vision 21 Co-Convener, and Nancy Fowler, Office of Family Violence Manager joined Ms. Crawford for her presentation. Ms. Crawford provided a PowerPoint Presentation to supplement her remarks.

Vision 21 is a 6 year grant funded by the Office for Victims of Crime, Department of Justice with the goal to bring together all of the relevant systems and professionals to provide early identification, intervention, and treatment for child and youth victims of crime through personal experience or observation and their families and caregivers.

“Phase One” of the project began on April 1st and is scheduled to last for 15 months. During this phase, age-specific screening tools will be piloted after staff conducting the screen complete training modules. 3-4 sites in Abington and Charlottesville are currently being finalized to participate in this phase. The project teams from the pilot sites will evaluate the tools for validity and reliability and the training for efficacy. This feedback will be used to modify materials before the tools are rolled out state wide. The project has an IRB application in process for the screening tool, training manual, evaluation plan, MOUs with partners and consent and assent forms. The pilot’s projected start day for the first two sites is Nov-Dec 2016. A second set of pilot sites to begin approximately six months later.

Discussion took place around Vision 21’s screening tool and accompanying training. Ms. Katzman and Ms. Harper raised questions around the tool administrator’s ability and training to identify and report suspected sexual or physical abuse to CPS and further stated that the screening tool is not an assessment or an investigation, if abuse is suspected it must be a priority to refer the case to CPS. Ms. Fowler responded that one of their pilots will have CPS workers on site and they will seek specific feedback on referring cases. Ms. Fowler also confirmed that not all staff conducting the screening tool from selected sites will be mandated reports (i.e. staff from domestic violence programs). In those cases, staff will be required to follow the internal policies outlined for their agency related to suspected child abuse and neglect.

Ms. Poulin asked if the screening is voluntary. Ms. Foster confirmed that every screening will have consent and assent forms at the beginning and a release of information form after. The person administering the tool will explain that they are mandated reporters (if appropriate) and what that means; mandated reporting information is also printed on the form. Most questions are “yes” or “no” and children have the option to not answer any question. Ms. Poulin expressed concern over the range of ages of children being screened, and suggested that children of varying ages often answer with more information than ‘yes’ or ‘no’ regardless of instructions and have different levels of comprehension. Ms. Foster confirmed that for the younger ages, the parents will be responding to the questions.

Mr. Oliver noted that the screening tool should have clear criteria to uphold consistency of screening and avoid misuse. Ms. Coyle asked if Vision 21 is looking at availability and access to services after, and stated concern about additional trauma caused by asking for information about problems when appropriate services are not available to address them. Ms. Fowler responded that one of the goals of the project to address how communities and systems of care respond. Ms. Crawford added that part of the process of selecting pilot sites was accessing the level of services available with the goal of insuring appropriate referrals.

Additional questions were raised around cultural competency training for staff administering the screen tool and issues potentially associated with re-traumatization. Ms. Fowler explained that this is “a work in progress”. Input and oversight will continue to be provided by the Partner Agency Team (PAT) made up of representatives from various state agencies and subcommittees will continue to provide a research and advisory role. Many of these issues have already been identified and work will continue on how to effectively address them as the project moves forward.

Following Ms. Crawford's presentation Ms. Katzman provided an update on the CPS Program and Child and Fatality Review Board. Ms. Katzman used a PowerPoint Presentation to supplement her remarks and provided a Preliminary Report on Child Death Investigations in Virginia during State Fiscal Year 2015. During that time, 52 children died as a result of a "founded" case of abuse or neglect. 72 died in cases where abuse or neglect could not be proven. The most vulnerable population continues to be children under the age of 4, with the issue of unsafe sleeping habits being the leading factor in fatalities for children under 1 year of age.

Discuss December Committee Priority Planning Session

Following Ms. Katzman's update, Ms. Harper provided an overview of the upcoming meeting in December that is particularly set aside for planning. Carl Ayers, Director of the VDSS Division of Family Services will join the meeting to discuss the Three Branch Initiative. The Committee will look at FACT's Board of Trustees charge for the Child Abuse and Neglect Committee and develop a work plan with goals and how to move forward. During the meeting they will also discuss possible new members. Ms. Harper will facilitate the meeting. Before the meeting members will review the committee's charge and explore possible new members.

Committee member updates included

- Ms. Katzman announced that she is going to retire at the end of the year.
- Ms. Hunter announced that DBHDS was awarded a Systems of Care grant.
- Ms. Harper reported that SCAN is starting a new policy committee to help organizations frame adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) in language for policy makers. SCAN is also doing a lot of work in local school systems in increasing work on trauma informed practices, disciplinary issues as they relate to expulsions and suspensions grounded in trauma informed care. They held trainings in Richmond City East End Schools. The ACEs summit, a trauma informed network in Philadelphia, went well. During the summit the Community Resiliency Model was presented on, which looks at building increased knowledge of trauma and adverse childhood experiences from the ground up. They received positive feedback and emails from attendees.
- Ms. Poulin will be attending the annual meeting of the National Alliance for Children's Trust and Preventions Funds in Arizona Sept. 20-22nd.
- Mr. Oliver asked if anyone has information on whether Virginia is up to date on lead exposure. Ms. Shaffer responded that she will look into VDH's response and Ms. Poulin stated that she will research Medicaid reimbursement on testing. Mr. Oliver responded that this is a very important issue, that if doesn't fit with this committee would certainly fall under the FACT Board of Trustees.

The Committee adjourned at 12:57 PM.