

Child Abuse and Neglect Committee Meeting Minutes

March 9, 2022

Tuckahoe Library

Meeting Attendees: Ginny Powell, FACT Board; Ali Faruk, Families Forward; Ellen White, JDR Judge (retired); Katherine Hunter, Carley Lansden, Child Fatality Specialist; Shannon Hartung, VDSS; Morgan Nelson, DFS; Nicole Poulin, FACT; Michelle L'Hommedieu, FACT Counsel; Kristen Pritchard, VSDVAA; Stephanie Howard, Norfolk State University; Betty Wade Coyle (via phone), Melissa O'Neill, CASA-DCJS; Anya Shaffer, DCJS; Jeanine Harper, GRSCAN; Eric Reynolds, Office of the Children's Ombudsman; Jane Liseenden, Office of the Children's Ombudsman; Destiny Allen, Office of the Children's Ombudsman; Jeanine Harper, GRSCAN; Taylor Davis, FACT

Meeting called to order by Ginny Powell at 12:39PM

Approval of Minutes -

- September 8, 2021 Minutes
 - Prior to today's meeting Betty Wade Coyle submitted corrections, these are reflected in the printed minutes in attendee's packets
 - Stephanie Howard - correction to Norfolk State University
- December 6, 2021 Minutes
 - Prior to today's meeting Betty Wade Coyle submitted corrections, these are reflected in the printed minutes in attendee's packets
 - Stephanie Howard - correction of affiliation from NOVA State University to Norfolk State University
 - Anya Shaffer - correction of affiliation from DJJ to DCJS
 - Ellen White - Added affiliation of JDR Judge (retired)
- Both meeting minutes were approved with no objections or abstentions

Update on the Office of the Children's Ombudsman, *Eric Reynolds*

- Operating with only three staff, just got approval for another staff member
- Still designing the website; transition in administration has caused some delays
- Recently purchased a case management system which will help to maintain good data for reports
- Monitoring bills during session - SB 396 court reviews to review status of children in foster care and the placements (clarification of existing law in that bill) - enacting clause to allow the office to create a workgroup
 - Fact finding mission on high acuity foster care placements - foster kids who are having a hard time finding placements due to behaviors
- Update on Complaints - over 100 received and processing the best they can
 - Themes for complaints: practice issues (communication with parents, service provision, visitation, placement decisions, etc.), lack of trauma informed practices, alternative custody arrangements (previously known as diversion)

- VDSS issued guidance on alternative custody arrangements last April. The Office of the Children's Ombudsman is hoping to solve legal issues with diversion and what is needed in statutes to help protect rights of all involved during the in-home guidance practices
 - Most are coming from biological parents (68%), 13% are relatives, 9% resource families, 4% DSS local staff, 6% "other"
 - They are seeing similar numbers for cases in both CPS and foster care
- The office is investigating substance exposed infants statutes and what should be done with these cases - VDSS has created a decision tree that helps local staff decide if they should take on the case
 - There has been an increase in fatalities where the infant was substance exposed and then death was due to unsafe sleep. There has been an increase in THC substance exposed infants.
- There seems to be a growing interest by legislators in introducing legislation around problems within foster care

VDSS Updates -[Slides](#), *VDSS Family Services Staff*

- 23 local DSS departments opened at least 50% of their VH/H referrals to In-Home cases in Quarter 2 of Fiscal Year 2022 with 6 of those opening more than 75% of their VH/H referrals to In-Home cases.
- 71 LDSS saw an increase in the number of In-Home Cases opened from this time last year.
- April is Child Abuse Prevention Month - VDSS will be hosting virtual events
 - The theme is the same as last year: "Growing a Better Tomorrow for All Children"
 - April 1st - hoping to place pinwheels at Lewis Ginter
 - April 5th - Families Forward will go over State Prevention Plan
 - April 13th - Speaker Vu Le
 - April 19th Speaker Kim Hardy
 - April 27th Parent Leaders Forum
- Introduction of Carley Lansden - new Child Fatality Specialist
 - Overview of the current child fatality process
 - The local agency determines child fatality cases that have a suspicion of child abuse or neglect then they send notification to their regional practice consultant. Then there is completion of the preliminary child fatality/near-fatality form
 - State Child Fatality Review Team is responsible for conducting statewide review
 - There are five Regional Child Fatality Review Teams (Eastern, Central, Northern, Piedmont, and Western) that look at all child deaths investigated by a local department in their region and they are not reviewed until all criminal proceedings have been resolved. They determine if it was a preventable death and then make recommendations to inform policies or training needs. Some recommendations may be implemented at the regional level while others go up to the state level

- Themes based on reviews at the regional level: unsafe sleep (over half of deaths based on most recent data), gun related deaths, and water safety
- Initiatives - training curriculum specific to child death investigations, campaigns specific to the current themes; coordination with local efforts and provide resources to regions who are implementing their own initiatives
- In-home Update
 - Adding Motivational Interviewing, Brief Strategic Family Therapy, Home Builders, Family Check-Up to the list of evidence-based programs (EBPs). The current EBPs are Multisystemic Therapy, Family Functional Therapy, and Parent-Child Interaction Therapy
 - These are under the national clearinghouse, currently Virginia does not have the capacity to conduct in depth evaluation so all EBPs will need to be well studied at a national level
 - Adding these new EBPs will close a previous gap for 5-8 year olds
 - Currently have an RFA looking for providers who want to be certified in one of the 7 EBPs. The RFA requires a letter of support from the LDSS that will demonstrate need and also include that the practitioner will receive referrals.
 - EBPs specific trainings for LDSS will begin summer 2022 - hoping to train all LDSS staff in Motivational Interviewing; reached out to CSBs to see if they can partner to build out EBPs in their areas that are experiencing high volumes of referrals

FACT Updates, Nicole Poulin, Executive Director

- Update on Child on Child Sexual Abuse/ Problematic Sexual Behavior partnership with Virginia Department of Health - we're looking at a six month project hoping to start April 1st. We will be developing a workgroup of folks from the CAN committee once the project gets underway
- Issue brief will be released soon on Sexism and Trauma
- Currently supporting seven Trauma-Informed Community Networks (TICNs) with grants and the grants committee is working to determine funding priorities for the next round of community based grants

Discussion of CAPTA Reports

- Review of [2021 Response](#)
- Issues for 2022 Report
 - Continued review of Family First implementation and effectiveness
 - Continue receiving data being offered by DSS - The committee would like a deeper dive into the impact and effectiveness of policy, legislation, and guidance and potential case studies (specifically in the area of Family First)
 - Data around Safe Haven relinquishments and the implementation of the policy
 - Since 2018, 19 babies have been relinquished under the safe haven law
 - Continued review of issues on the hotline to answer the following questions:
 - What are the wait times?
 - What are the consequences of the lack of capacity on the hotline?;

- Of the total calls, how many reach a specialist? How many hang up?
 - What is the average wait time?
 - What is the average length of a call?
 - What are the reasons for cases being screened in and screened out?
 - What is happening at the local level? How can we add the experience and input from local communities on challenges and successes?
 - Continue to discuss child-on-child sexual abuse cases
 - Requesting an update on child abuse and trafficking
 - Overarching thread of issues around recruiting and retaining staff
- Melissa O'Neill motioned to approve the areas of concern and have the committee co-chairs draft the CAPTA report - Katherine Hunter seconded
 - No opposes or abstentions

Next Steps, Ginny Powell

- There is not currently another meeting date set.

Meeting was adjourned at 2:30PM