

Joint Task Force on Children's Justice/Child Sexual Abuse UT SWORPS (NASHVILLE CAMPUS)

June 9, 2022 - 10:00 AM

Attendees

Allen, Sandra	McGee, Melissa	Bevans, Rebecca
Bottoms, Delaine	Murphy, William	Boshears, Marlene
Cobb, Dana	O'Donnell, Hayes	Boyd, Ellen
Cooper, Tim	Page, Jacque	Ebert, Jon
Crivens, Lydia	Palmer, Mary	Etheridge, Stephanie
Davis, Kristen	Sams, Zoe	Franklin, Rebecca
Farrar, Lynne	Seeman, Larry	Gentry, Annette
Graham, Ryam	Talley, Jackie	Johnson, Anthony
Hargrow, Craig	Wade, Pat	Karnes, Lanis
Harper, Dawn	Wyatt, Verna	Meise, Michael
Hart-Curry, Marjahna	Woerner, Stephen	Miller, Stacey
Knowles, Catherine	Worsham, Billy	Paisley, Lori
Koslick, Amy	UT Staff	Randolph, LaShonda
Layman, Jim	Frierson, Stephanie	Sinback, Kathyrn
Legendre, Charlsi	Hadjiharalambous, Sissie	Smith, Rae Anne
Lowen, Deborah	Lawal, Toni	Snodgrass, Carla
Maifair, Sammi	Regrets	Stallworth, Virginia
	Alexander, Denise	

Welcome

President Lynne Farrar thanked everyone for attending the meeting. Introductions and general announcements followed.

- Stephen Woerner, Children's Advocacy Center of Tennessee executive director announced that the 2022 Connecting for Children's Justice Conference on November 14 - 15 is going to be hybrid -in person at the Embassy Suites in Franklin.
- Lydia Crivens of the Memphis Child Advocacy Center (CAC) announced that the agency is celebrating 30 years of providing services to children abused or exposed to violence in Shelby County. Other CAC representatives announced milestone celebrations too - Dawn Harper, Nashville Children's Alliance president announced that the alliance is celebrating 30 years and Delaine Bottoms, Exchange Club Carl Perkins Centers announced that the center is celebrating 40 years.

JTF Overview - State and Federal Mandates

Vice President Pat Wade provided an overview of the JTF state and federal mandates. For new members, it was an orientation and other members a refresher. The presentation covered the following:

- The Mission and Charge

- JTF Establishment
- JTF Federal and State Mandates
- Our Accomplishments
- JTF Meetings and Attendance Policy
- List of Committees and Role//Responsibilities
- Where minutes are found, including JTF work products and resources

Approval of the Meeting Minutes for March 24, 2022

Vice President Pat Wade asked if any members had corrections or comments for the JTF March 24, 2022. Meeting Minutes. None voiced; minutes approved in the present form.

DCS Legislative Reports

Jim Layman, DCS legislative director presented on DCS 2022 Legislative Report. Layman's presentation covered the following:

- **PC 785 Foster care system transitioning program.** Requires DCS to reimburse relative caregivers to provide financial support for the child's care. Permits a relative caregiver to receive payment equal to 50 percent of the full foster care board rate under certain conditions.
- **PC 951 LEA to designate a foster care liaison.** Requires each local education agency (LEA) to designate a foster care liaison to collaborate with DCS, facilitate LEA compliance with state and federal laws related to addressing education barriers for students, and assist in coordinating services/resources for students in foster care.
- **PC 918 Preparation of permanency plan.** Requires in cases of child abuse, the agency preparing the plan and the court developing or approving that plan to consider whether allegations of abuse or neglect warrant supervision of any visitation between the child and the abusing or neglecting parent, and whether it is in the child's best interest that supervision be required ongoing.
- **PC 849 Anonymous reports of child abuse made to DCS.** Clarifies that if a report of harm to a child was made to DCS anonymously, then the juvenile court is prohibited from ordering the parents or person responsible for the care of the child to allow the department entrance for purposes of interview, examination, and investigation unless the department has presented evidence corroborating the anonymous report of harm.
- **PC 971 Landlord to provide address of child alleged to be abused to DCS investigator** requires a landlord to provide a case manager from DCS or CPIT with information on the address or location of a child who has been alleged to be abused or neglected and resides or is located on the property.
- **PC 915 Child protective investigation teams - report of severe child abuse.** Requires the department to convene a child protective investigation team when a report of severe child abuse is received. Expands the role and procedures of a child protective team investigation to include cases involving severe child abuse.

- **PC649 Members of child protective team.** Establishes that each child protective team may include an appropriately credentialed medical provider and a mental health representative.
- **PC841 Annual child abuse training required for all public school personnel.** All school personnel and employees working directly with students, not just teachers, must complete Child abuse training, annually.
- **PC995 Training for police officers on child abuse and child sexual abuse identification.** Adds “child abuse training” to the training to be developed by the TN Law Enforcement Academy, DCS, and the POST Commission in training local law enforcement on child abuse and child sexual abuse. Previously only “child sexual abuse” was required under this training.
- **PC649** Establishes that each child protective team may include an appropriately credentialed medical provider and a mental health representative.
- **PC781 Contact information for LEA's child abuse coordinator.** Requires local education agencies (LEAs) and public charter schools to submit the contact information of the LEA's or public charter school's child abuse coordinator and alternative child abuse coordinator to the department of children's services at the beginning of each school year. Authorizes a person to report directly to the department and law enforcement when alleged child abuse involves someone affiliated with the school.
- **PC983 Resources for victims of child sex trafficking.** Requires the department of children's services and the department of human services to collaborate to provide recommendations to the general assembly on resources and services specific to persons from 18 to 24 years of age who have been victims of child sex trafficking. Recommendations must be submitted to the judiciary committee of the senate and civil justice committee of the house by March 1, 2023. PC642 Requires that all school personnel who work directly with students, not only teachers, be trained at least once every three years on the detection, intervention, prevention, and treatment of human trafficking in which the victim is a child.
- **PC984 Services to children who have been sexually abused or trafficked.** Requires the District Attorney General Conference to work with TBI, DCS, Tennessee Sheriffs' Association, Tennessee Association of Chiefs of Police, and CACTN to develop recommendations on the creation of multidisciplinary teams. The law also requires these agencies to provide responses specific to child sex trafficking cases with the purposes of enhancing the services to victims of child sex trafficking; improve the coordination of investigations and the tracking of child sex trafficking cases, and identify gaps in services. Report of recommendations due to the legislature by January 15, 2023.
- **PC1115 Human trafficking offenses.** Enhances and revises felonies for trafficking and/or forced labor. Changes the age from 13 to 18 that a person is allowed to testify outside of the courtroom for human trafficking cases and adds human trafficking victims to those who may petition for an order of protection. Requires DCS to develop

a policy to assist foreign national children suspected of being human trafficking victims. Requires DCS to develop and maintain assessment tools to screen system-involved children at-risk for human trafficking. Revises CPIT members to allow representatives from mental health disciplines, medical discipline, and human trafficking NGOs.

In addition, Stephen Woerner chimed in to talk a little about PC 78, noting that legislators attempted to clean up language from the initial bill. He also noted that legislators added language concerning alleged perpetrators that are either a volunteer, former or current school employee: reports in these cases must be made directly to DCS rather than the schools' child abuse coordinator.

DCS Updates

Amy Koslick, DCS Office of Child Safety (OCS) executive director, provided the following updates:

- **Children's Justice Act (CJA) grant.** The state's CJA annual grant was submitted to the Children's Bureau on May 28. The grant included information pertaining to the JTF roles and responsibilities - federal membership requirements, a summary of FY22 work focus and accomplishments, and meeting minutes.
- **Sentinel Injury.** This pilot project started in the Shelby County and Upper Cumberland regions and involves pairing a safety nurse with CPS to look at minor injuries that are often missed during investigations. All DCS staff will eventually receive training about sentinel injuries, including why they are significant, who is at risk, and what to do if you suspect abuse.
- **Pre-Service Training.** DCS Office of Professional and Training Development will no longer support pre-service training, rather it is moving to OCS. OCS leadership is planning to add key topics related to child safety, and work with new hires during their on-the-job training to ensure they learn the important levels required to do their job.
- **Improved Recruitment Strategies/Methods.** The Department continues to benefit from using social media to recruit staff, allowing DCS to fill positions in areas where there has been low staffing capacity. For example, South Central was at 41% capacity and now only have 10 vacancies. Also, DCS is planning to hire case manager assistants for both OCS and child programs.
- **Regional Road Trips.** OCS leadership is meeting with supervisors in each of the regions to hear what is working well and not so well.
- **Homelessness Children.** OCS is looking at concerns regarding multiple persons residing in one-bedroom homes and in cars. The Departments wants to identify these families and connect them to resources.

Committees' Report Out

The Committees' meeting discussions were as follows:

- **CPIT.** Chair Dawn Harper reported members Grant Carroll and Harmon Hunsicker retired from Metro Nashville Police Department and that more law enforcement would be helpful for the committee. Harper also gave an update on the CPIT Best Practice Manual:

- This is complete and under review at DCS, soon to be shared widely.
- The medical best practices is included in the manual.
- Changes were necessary to keep up with National Children's Alliance standards and changes in the law.
- Discussion on how frequently this should happen led to a motion by Delaine to review this annually with amendments as needed, and to revise every five years following the enactment of National Children's Alliance standards (which happens every five years). Amy seconded. All approved.
- Vigorous discussion was held on the utility to evaluation of CACs and the difficulty in making sure that all CACs are meeting best practices to the extent that they are able.

Harper reported the Committee discussed other projects for the group:

- **THC.** THC as an indicator for severe abuse is likely an unintended consequence of the law. The Committee hopes to look at potential revisions to allow appropriate services to families who may need it, without unnecessary punitive consequences to young families. The Committee would like to look at how other states are handling these cases and how child welfare is responding to these situations.
 - **Forensic Interviews.** The state is moving to a cloud storage of the videos of forensic interviews funded by DCS and coordinated by CACs, but there is no clarity in statute as to who owns it. Also, the Committee posed the following question: is it discoverable as part of a public records request? The Committee would like these issues to be studied with changes recommended to be defined in law.
 - **Severe abuse.** Severe abuse is a difficult concept spread throughout Tennessee law. The Committee would like this reviewed to allow the multidisciplinary review of all appropriate cases. DCS continues efforts to better identify these children for appropriate review and services.
 - **Human trafficking.** Committee discussed how CPITs could help victims of human trafficking. Suggestions included: review of where these children are in the members respective regions, grow relationships with appropriate agencies for referrals and counseling, and improve the services specifically for these children and their families.
- **Court Improvement.** Lynne Farrar reported out on behalf of Chair Kathy Sinback Committee who was unable to attend the meeting.

- Children’s book on what to expect during court is currently on hold due to the students providing the artwork being on hiatus for the summer. Additionally, the language for the book has been submitted.
- Rae Ann Smith updated the Social Work Testimony presentation.
- The Pro-se petition is close to completion. Judge Meise submitted a template that used in Dickson County, which appears to be easy to understand and complete.
- **Outreach and Awareness.** Chair Sandra Allen reported the Committee developed a strategy for disseminating Erin’s Law guidelines - for example, develop a cover letter to accompany the guidelines. Toni Lawal agreed to create a word spreadsheet to include the agencies/organizations to share the information with and a column for responsible parties. Lawal noted that she had already shared the information with UT SWORPS Child Care and Referral staff as well as TDMHSAS - the latter agreed to include it in their monthly communication that goes out to all of the agency staff (1850 plus) and contracted grant funded providers. Additionally, Lawal announced Committee member Lori Paisley, who was unable to attend the meeting, sent an email to the Chair and coordinator stating that she posted the updated Erin’s Law guidelines to DOE website and shared it in their newsletter. Paisley also reported she highlighted Child Abuse Prevention Month in DOE April newsletter, and contacted Misty Moody, Director of School Based Support Services to ask her to share the guidelines with her stakeholders and Moody agreed to share it in her next newsletter

The Committee also discussed at length the recently amended law for public schools’ child abuse coordinators requiring LEAs to provide child abuse coordinators contact information to DCS. Also, there was concern about the language regarding the amended law that authorizes a person to report directly to the department and law enforcement when alleged child abuse involves someone who is affiliated with the school.

Chair Allen reported the Committee’s final discussion was regarding updating the online mandatory reporter training once there is clarification about the child abuse coordinators’ law.

Treatment Committee. Melissa McGee reported out on behalf of Chair Jon Ebert who was unable to attend the meeting due to an event conflict out of state. McGee report included the following:

- **Strategic Planning Objective 1:** Expand work already done related to therapeutic practices and needed services for youth who have experienced CSE.

Action Step: Finalization of Document - TASK COMPLETED - The executive summary has been incorporated into the online document, and is posted on the JTF website.

Action Step: Summary Documents -

1. Ebert is to work to with committee members on summary sheets, beginning with male victims.
2. Committee to read new research document, *A Global Review of Existing Literature on Sexual Exploitation of Boys*.
 - a. Identify top six ideas/topics to be included in summary paper by August 9, 2022.
 - b. Document distributed to Treatment Committee via email on 6/9/22.
3. Additional summary sheet topics previously identified include:
 - a. LGBTQ victims
 - b. Treatment and intervention basics and considerations
 - i. Jacque Page will check with partners who have received funding to serve and educate on child exploitation.

Action Step: Full Document Dissemination -

1. Continue to share to various partners:
 - a. COE's - Ebert
 - b. TCCY - McGee
 - c. Professional Organizations - i.e. TAMHO, NASW TN, TLPCA, TCA, CAC's
 - o Group members will email committee with organizations/names of those who have received to date.
 - o McGee will create language to accompany document when disseminating.

Outcomes:

- o Tim Cooper has distributed to regional clinicians throughout DCS.
- o Submitted the SCEC document to Stephen Woerner, Executive Director, Children's Advocacy Centers, for distribution as appropriate.

Strategic Planning Objective 2: Develop a *DCS document* regarding Children with Sexual Behavior Problems (CSBP) that outlines appropriate language, types of assessment and interventions.

1. Continue to support ATSA document development with updates from Page.
 - a. Page reports it has now been sent out to full Juvenile Committee and been reviewed by multiple committee members. There was good feedback and that will be reviewed and document updated as appropriate.
 - b. After review, it will go to Executive Board of Directors for full approval.

Action Steps:

1. Seeman recommends all review at the ATSA document.