

**Joint Task Force on Children’s Justice/Child Sexual Abuse
ELLINGTON AGRICULTURAL CENTER, NASHVILLE, TN**

September 15, 2022 - 10:00 AM

Attendees

Aaron, Carla
Alexander, Denise
Allen, Sandra
Boshears, Marlene
Boyd, Ellen
Cobb, Dana
Cooper, Tim
Dixon, Mathew
Ebert, Jon
Etheridge, Stephanie
Farrar, Lynne
Graham, Ryan
Hargrow, Craig
Harper, Dawn
Hart-Curry, Marjahna
Koslick, Amy
Johnson, Anthony
Lee, Mary

Lowen, Deborah
Maciuk, Stacy
Maifair, Sammi
Meise, Michael
Murphy, William
Page, Jacque
Paisley, Lori
Palmer, Mary
Quin, Margie
Seeman, Larry
Sinback, Kathy
Spann, Amanda
Stallworth, Virginia
Talley, Jackie
Wade, Pat
Wilkerson, Jason
Worsham, Billy
Wyatt, Verna
UT Staff

Chansuthus, Daryl
Frierson, Stephanie
Hadjiharalambous, Sissie
Lawal, Toni

Regrets

Bevans, Rebecca
Bottoms, Delaine
Davis, Kristen
Franklin, Rebecca
Gentry, Annette
Karnes, Lanis
Knowles, Catherine
McGee, Melissa
Miller, Stacy
Smith, Rae Anne
Snodgrass, Carla
Woerner, Stephen

Welcome

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

2021/2022 Joint Task Force Accomplishments

Each of the committee chairs provided accomplishments and work focus. They were as followed

- **CPIT Committee Chair Dawn Harper** reported the Committee completed the revisions to the CPIT Best Practice Training Manual and a medical/pediatric protocol for CPIT teams across the state. The Committee also reviewed new state laws that affect the work of CPITs - for example, laws regarding requirements for reports of severe abuse, CPITs membership, CSEM, and local education agencies child abuse coordinators roles and responsibilities.
- **Court Improvement Committee Chair Kathy Sinback** reported the Committee is near completion of updating the “**Social Workers as Witnesses at Court**” curriculum. Chair Sinback also reported on the booklet for children who have experienced abuse and neglect called “**What Happens in Juvenile Court - Dependency and Neglect Cases?**” Sinback noted that the Committee experienced some setbacks with

completing the booklet due to staffing changes at the Metro Arts Commission (the nonprofit organization offered to create the illustration for the booklet).

- **Outreach and Awareness Committee Chair Sandra Allen** reported that the Committee collaborated with TDCS to survey public schools' child abuse coordinators about their knowledge of Erin's Law. The survey also assessed their training needs. Following the review of the survey findings, Allen reported the Committee updated the "**Erin's Law Guide**," a document that addresses child sexual abuse prevention and intervention curricula for public schools, and disseminated it widely to all of the state child-serving agencies and their contracted services providers and to organizations across the state serving children and youth.
- **Treatment Committee Chair Jon Ebert** reported that the Committee finalized the development of a TDCS document regarding CSEC. The 54-page document examined what is known about children and youth who are commercially sexually exploited. The CSEC document, developed by Treatment Committee members William D. Murphy and Jacqueline Page, and the executive summary by Larry Seeman can be found on the JTF website. Ebert added that Page, and Pierce Beckham, TDCS Director of System Integration presented on the document at the 2021 Connecting for Children's Justice Conference. Ebert also reported that the Committee is looking at Children with Problematic Sexual Behavior (CPSB) to gain a better understanding of this issue.

TDCS Priorities/Updates

TDCS Commissioner Margie Quin and Office of Child Safety (OCS) Deputy Commissioner Carla Aaron presentation covered the following:

- Reports to the Child Abuse Hotline
- CPS Case Referrals
- Staffing Challenges
- Retention Efforts
- Recruitment Efforts
- Listening Tours to DCS 12 Regions
- Ongoing Challenges (e.g. placements for custodial children, increase in mental health and resource needs, secondary trauma for staff, training needs, and supervisors carrying caseloads)

In addition, Aaron briefly talked about the Department's next steps:

- enhancing collaborative efforts related to human trafficking,
- expanding drug teams in West Tennessee,
- reinstating CPS Academy,
- creating specialty teams (SWAT, training, second shift) and
- exploring innovative and creative approaches to child protection and prevention.

Panel Featuring Adult with Lived Experiences in Foster Care

The three panelist were as followed: **Mary Lee**, the General Counsel at the Tennessee Commission on Aging and Disability. As a child, Mary spent nearly five years in foster care before being adopted one week before her eighteenth birthday. This experience led her to dedicate her life and career to helping others especially at-risk and vulnerable populations. Mary has received several awards and accolades for her incredible work to support and advocate for children and youth who have experienced foster care including being honored by the White House as a Foster Care Champion of Change, awarded the North American Council on Adoptable Children Activist Award, and named by Glamour Magazine as a Hometown Hero. **Stacy Maciuk**, a Tennessean, spent 16 years of her life in the foster care system. Stacy has dedicated the last two decades of her life advocating for foster kids. Stacy was named by People Magazine as a Hero Among Us, and was the recipient of the Lewis Hine Award for unheralded public service. **Billy Worsham**, employed by The Arc Tennessee, a nonprofit agency that promotes and protects the human rights of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Since his stay in foster care at age 15, Worsham has dedicated his life to serving children, youth and individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD). He began his career while living at the Smoky Mountain Children's Home in Sevierville, Tennessee.

Remarks from the panelist included, but were not limited to the following:

- *“Make sure foster children and youth receive mental health services and not feel ashamed for it - don't wait for them to ask for it, just give it to them.”*
- *“School was my safe place - the teachers at my private school gave me so much support.”*
- *“Learning how to advocate for myself was a huge one in terms of getting what I needed - for example, for the first time, a judge asked me what I wanted - at the time, I was 16, and I told him I wanted to be adopted. I wanted parents and grandparents for my future children.”*
- *“I treasured my Life Book.”*
- *“My placement taught me to love my community back.”*
- *“Education and relationship matters a lot especially when you are in foster care - those working with this population need to know the importance of what they say and how they say it.”*

Recommendations for improving the foster care program:

- *“Recruit and engage foster parents from the faith community.”*
- *“Create mentoring opportunities for foster children.”*
- *“Do a better job at educating the public about this issue - some individuals have the wrong idea about children and youth in the foster care system.”*
- *“Bring back the youth advisory council that was funded by Jim Casey and managed by Vanderbilt Child and Family Policy Center” - described the council as being engaged in work related to advocating for improved foster care policies and procedures as the most effective program and that youth responded so well to it because it was interactive. Three full-time staff persons was dedicated to this work and the council was composed of 20 members.*

Approval of the Meeting Minutes for June 9, 2022

Vice President Pat Wade asked if any members had corrections or comments for the JTF June 9, 2022 meeting minutes. None voiced; minutes approved in the present form.

Committee Chairs' Report Out on Goals and Action Steps

The Committees' meeting discussions were as follows:

- **CPIT.** Chair Dawn Harper reported on the Committee goal and action steps. They are as followed:

Goal: Continue to improve the CPIT Team response to child sexual abuse and severe physical abuse.

Action Steps:

1. Disseminate the revised CPIT Best Practice Manual to the CPITs across the state.
 2. Attend regional CPIT meetings in diverse geographic regions to gain insights about the CPIT processes statewide.
 3. Consult with representatives from the JTF Court Improvement Committee and District Attorney General Conference (DAGC) about the statute regarding video recording of an interview of a child being extended from age 12 to 17.
 4. Consult with TDCS and TDMHSAS about strategies for decreasing drug use during pregnancy in drug-exposed cases.
 5. Communicate with TDCS, TBI, and other agencies that work child exploitation cases about enhancing services and support for CSEM victims.
 6. Review state laws and TDCS policies and procedures for addressing CSEM.
- **Court Improvement.** Chair Kathy Sinback Committee reported out on the Committee goal and action steps. They are as followed:

Goal: Improve the effectiveness of child welfare-related proceedings.

Action Steps:

1. Communicate with juvenile court judges' executive committee about suggestions for conference topics and court improvement tools.
2. Create guidelines and considerations to assist courts in determining appropriate commitment status for children.
3. Assist the Statewide Safe Baby Court Leadership Team in developing resources, tools, and trainings to assist courts in implementing the Tennessee Safe Baby Courts Best Practice Standards in all D/N cases.
4. Assist with Pro Se D/N Petition to be standardized through the AOC.
5. Create and distribute court booklet to help children understand court proceedings, expectations, and participants.

6. Assist TDCS with developing non-custodial/kinship placement training similar to foster parent trainings.
 7. Continue to review as necessary, distribute, and present the “Social Workers as Witnesses at Court” curriculum to ensure consistency with current rules and laws.
- **Outreach and Awareness.** Chair Sandra Allen reported out on the Committee goal and action steps. They are as followed:
Goal: Educate and inform the public, childcare providers, schools, child welfare professional groups, law enforcement, health care organizations, and other groups about child welfare related resources and training opportunities.

Action Steps:

1. Re-disseminate information and disseminate new information to audiences who serve children and youth.
 2. Ensure information posted on TDCS, JTF, and state child-serving agencies websites and social media is current, accessible and easily located.
 3. Work with media and other groups to disseminate general information about child abuse and neglect to parents and nontraditional groups, such as neighborhood and tenant associations, faith-based organizations and private sectors.
 4. Explore the availability of PSAs and/or develop PSAs to be disseminated statewide.
 5. Disseminate information regarding ACEs, child safety, and mandated reporting to postsecondary educational programs with an emphasis on social work, nursing, early childhood education, and psychology.
 6. Develop a plan to disseminate information to Tennessee Higher Education Commission (THEC), Tennessee Board of Regents (TBR) and other higher education regulatory agencies and to advocate for child abuse and neglect information in higher education programs.
 7. Partner with TDCS Child Abuse Sexual Abuse Prevention Committee to review the survey completed with school administrator and child abuse coordinators to develop next steps.
- **Treatment Committee:** Chair Jon Ebert reported out on the Committee goals/objectives and action steps. They are as followed:
Goal/Objective 1: Continue to build on the work done related to therapeutic practices for youth who have experienced CSE.

Action Steps:

1. Develop "summary sheets" from the original CSE document.
2. Identify considerations for special populations (e.g. minority populations, boys & CSE, LGBTQ victims).

1. Explore current state of service delivery for this population in Tennessee.
2. Effectively disseminating the "summary sheets" for child serving professionals and advocates.

Goal/Objective 2: Determine the need for additional resources related to children with sexual behavior problems to inform DCS and other child serving systems.

Action Steps:

1. Review the updated Association for the Treatment of Sexual Abusers (ATSA) Child Sexual Behavior Task Force Report and other relevant documents.
2. Identify any additional dissemination strategies that would impact best practices.

Adjournment

President Lynne Farrar made closing remarks, and announced that the next meeting date: **virtually on Thursday, December 8.** Meeting adjourned at 2:30 pm.