

MINUTES of Texas Children’s Justice Act Task Force
Meeting date: April 23, 2010

Call to order: A regular meeting of the Texas Children’s Justice Act Task Force, was held at the Texas Center for the Judiciary, Austin, TX on April 23, 2010. The meeting convened at 9:00 a.m., Larry Thorne presiding.

Members in attendance:

Roy Block
William Briley
Kriste Burnett
Cozette Bustamante
Jon Evans
Joe Gagen
Tom Gaylor
Rolf Habersang
Denise Hyde

Randi King
Joyce James
Margaret Lalk
James Lukefahr
Daniela Ontiveroz
Joy Rauls
Larry Thorne
Gerry Williams

Members not in attendance:

Audrey Deckinga
De Shaun Ealoms
Valerie Milholland
Chris Oldner
Dan Powers
Fairy Rutland

Staff in attendance:

Heidi Penix
Ginny Woods
Colette Bonstead

Guests in attendance:

Dan Capouch
Susan Miller
Katy Bourgeois, Foundation Assistants

SESSION 1: Welcome and Task Force Business by Larry Thorne. Judge Thorne welcomed members and guests and introduced the meeting facilitator, Katy Bourgeois, and Joy Rauls, the new executive director of Children’s Advocacy Centers of Texas.

Approval of January 22, 2010 minutes: Minutes from the January 22nd Task Force meeting were emailed to the members following the meeting and posted to the CJA website.

Motion was made by Rolf Habersang and seconded by Margaret Lalk to approve the minutes of the January 22nd meeting. Motion carried without opposition.

Task Force member and officer elections by Ginny Woods. Ms. Woods reminded the Task Force of the upcoming member and officer elections. An overview of the relevant bylaw provisions were included as part of the meeting materials. The committees for member and officer nominations will meet before the July 23rd meeting to develop the slate of nominees.

First responder working group report by Ginny Woods. Ms. Woods reviewed the report from the first responder working group. The first responder working group was charged with evaluating current protocols and available training for first responders to reports of child abuse and neglect and making recommendations regarding training and protocol improvements. At the January 22nd Task Force meeting, the Task Force approved the working group’s recommendation to set aside \$100,000 to develop two training programs: (1) child abuse and neglect training for school personnel, and (2) child abuse and neglect training for law enforcement. Following the

Task Force meeting, CJA staff issued two requests for applications (RFAs) for the two training programs. The Training and Research Institute for Professionals Law Enforcement (TRIPLE), a 501(c)(3) subsidiary organization of TMPA, responded to the RFA for law enforcement training. Dallas Children's Advocacy Center (DCAC) submitted an application in response the RFA for school personnel training.

The First Responder working group recommended that the Task Force approve both applications with the following stipulations to be incorporated into the grant award:

(1) Child Abuse and Neglect Training for Law Enforcement

- Updated curriculum should be shared with CPS state office to ensure consistency.

(2) Child Abuse and Neglect Training for School Personnel

- While Dissemination Recommendations may include information on how to distribute curriculum using local children's advocacy centers, the recommendations must also include information on how to distribute the curriculum through other organizations, including regional education centers.
- Dallas CAC should consult with relevant stakeholders to ensure that final curriculum and accompanying materials are relevant to school districts throughout the state, including those located in small and mid-sized communities.
- Final curriculum must be reviewed and endorsed by representatives from Children's Advocacy Centers of Texas (CACTX), CPS state office, Texas District and County Attorney's Association (TDCAA), TMPA, as well as the CPS statewide disproportionality manager.

Motion was made by Margaret Lalk and seconded by Randi King to approve TRIPLE's application to develop and deliver child abuse and neglect training for law enforcement with the stipulations set out by the working group incorporated into the grant award. Motion carried without opposition. Tom Gaylor abstained from voting.

Motion was made by Denise Hyde and seconded by James Lukefahr to approve DCAC's application with the stipulations set out by the working group incorporated into the grant award. Motion carried without opposition.

SESSION II: Introductions by Katy Bourgeois, owner and principal analyst of Foundation Assistants. Ms. Bourgeois introduced herself, discussed the strategic planning agenda and goals for the planning meeting. Task members expressed their expectations for a successful meeting.

SESSION III: Establishing Common Understandings by Ginny Woods and Heidi Penix. Ms. Woods gave an overview of the federal CJA purpose and the requirements for states, the Texas CJA Task Force purpose and functions, and reviewed the existing Task Force recommendations. Ms. Penix discussed attributes of projects with state-wide system level impact, attributes of being an effective grantee and shared examples of particularly effective projects. Ms. Penix also discussed common attributes of problematic projects.

Dan Capouch suggested putting procedures in place to revoke problematic grants. Rolf Habersang would like to see a stronger evaluation component for all projects. The Task Force also would like to invite representation from the education system to attend future Task Force meetings.

SESSION IV: Setting the Stage/Defining our Mission: The Task Force brainstormed their purpose to determine how they as a task force could be successful.

The Task Force reach consensus regarding two primary goals:

- There is restorative justice for children
- The Task Force is a catalyst for and influences common understanding of what the system should be doing.

Additional Goals included the following:

- Kids (who come into care) achieve healthy, productive lives that we would want for our children.
- We understand the impact/effects of staying in the system.
- We impact the number of children in care.
- Society recognizes and intervenes in child abuse as readily as a broken arm.
- The Task Force identifies what is effective and funds it statewide.
 - Projects are funded that are effective, replicated, continuing
- We understand who we are serving and what needs are in different populations
 - Racial/ethnic groups
 - Children with special needs
- There are successful outcomes for kids (victims) outside CPS system
 - Well-trained team, stakeholders
- Statewide access to Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services
- Reduction in inappropriate use of race and poverty in decision-making at all levels
 - Requires cultural competence

The Task Force also discussed what would make a good recommendation. The Task Force determined a good recommendation:

- Allows evaluation
- Advances the purpose (meets one of four stated intents)
- Broadens Participation

The Task Force divided into 3 small groups. Each group would address current recommendations in a particular category and make suggested revisions. The groups would then rotate and address another set of recommendations. This time, the small group would determine whether they agreed or disagreed with the previous groups' suggestions.

SESSION V: Refining the Recommendations: The Task Force participated in the small group activities and then returned to report back to the large group. The Task Force reached consensus regarding the following recommendations:

- A. Activities to improve investigative, administrative and judicial handling of cases of child abuse and neglect
 - 1. Provide MDTs with training to enhance coordination of investigation, intervention and prosecution and/or work with local communities to establish MDTs.
 - 2. Provide statewide and local professional training to improve the handling of child abuse and neglect cases.
 - 3. Support Texas CASA and CAC Texas.

- B. Experimental, model and demonstration programs for testing innovative approaches and techniques
 - 1. Develop and implement programs that address the unique challenges faced by victims of child abuse or neglect with mental or physical disabilities.
 - 2. Increase use of specialized courts and/or attorneys to handle child abuse and neglect cases.
 - 3. Develop and implement programs that increase cultural competency in relation to decision-making processes in the handling of cases of child abuse and neglect.

- C. Reform of State laws, ordinances, regulations, protocols and procedures
 - 1. Develop and implement {best practices/model protocols}* for identification of child abuse and neglect which can be used and disseminated state-wide.
{Facilitator’s note: Agreement made to continue to work to reach consensus on term to replace “best practices/model protocols” that is not profession-specific.}
 - 2. Reform state laws and create and/or expand programs that ensure all children and youth have continuing access to advocacy and the judicial system.

The Task Force also reached consensus to continue discussion on the following items:

- 1. Consider whether to add a recommendation to “Evaluate and make recommendations concerning state laws and regulation impacting child abuse and neglect cases.”
- 2. Continue conversation about how to increase cultural competency (Broadly, including that of the Task Force, grantees and the CPS system)
 - o Decrease disproportionality and disparate outcomes for youth and families of color

SESSION VI: Review of Partnership and Multiyear Projects. Last year the Task Force set aside \$250,000 to support Texas CASA and CACTX. In recognition of the central role Texas CASA and CACTX play in achieving the mission of the CJA in Texas, the Task Force agreed to add a recommendation specifically addressing support for the two organizations. Joy Rauls and Joe Gagen were not present for the discussion regarding partnership projects.

The Task Force also reviewed current recommendations to ensure current multiyear projects would continue to be eligible for funding under the new recommendations.

SESSION VII: Wrap Up, Next Steps. In terms of next steps, the Task Force briefly discussed the grant review process. Considerations included the following:

- Incorporate qualifications related to attributes of an effective grantee to review process;
- Incorporate evaluation/effectiveness component to all grant projects;
- Look at 2-3 year impact; and
- Don't be too rigid as to exclude less experienced organizations.

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at **3:25**.

These minutes were approved at a Texas Children's Justice Act Task Force meeting on _____, 2010.

CJA Task Force
April 23, 2010
Facilitator's Report

The CJA Taskforce will be Successful If...
(Brain Storming)

Consensus Primary Goals:

- There is restorative justice for children
- The Task Force is a catalyst for and influences common understanding of what the system should be doing.

Additional Goals:

- Kids (who come into care) achieve healthy, productive lives that we would want for our children.
- We understand the impact/effects of staying in the system.
- We impact the number of children in care.
- Society recognizes and intervenes in child abuse as readily as a broken arm.
- The Task Force identifies what is effective and funds it statewide.
 - Projects are funded that are effective, replicated, continuing
- We understand who we are serving and what needs are in different populations
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 - Children with special needs
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 - Well-trained team, stakeholders
- Statewide access to Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services
- Reduction in inappropriate use of race and poverty in decision-making at all levels
 - Requires cultural competence

Consensus Recommendations

Activities to improve investigative, administrative and judicial handling of cases of child abuse and neglect

- Provide MDTs with training to enhance coordination of investigation, intervention and prosecution and/or work with local communities to establish MDTs.
- Provide statewide and local professional training to improve the handling of child abuse and neglect cases.
- Support Texas CASA and CAC Texas.

Reform of State laws, ordinances, regulations, protocols and procedures

- Develop and implement {best practices/model protocols}* for identification of child abuse and neglect which can be used and disseminated state-wide.
 - *Facilitator's note: Agreement made to continue to work to reach consensus on term to replace "best practices/model protocols" that is not profession-specific.
- Reform state laws and create and/or expand programs that ensure all children and youth have continuing access to advocacy and the judicial system.

Experimental, model and demonstration programs for testing innovative approaches and techniques

- Develop and implement programs that address the unique challenges faced by victims of child abuse with mental or physical disabilities
 - *Facilitators Note: In researching that vs. which, I found the traditional approach is to use "that" with restrictive clauses and "which" with nonrestrictive clauses. Since the recommendation was intended to be restricted to programs addressing unique challenges, I have gone with "that".*
- Increase use of specialized courts and/or attorneys to handle child abuse and neglect cases.
- Develop and implement programs that increase cultural competency in relation to decision-making processes in the handling of cases of child abuse and neglect.

Miscellaneous Discussion Points & Responses

A Good Recommendation...

- Allows evaluation
- Advances the purpose (meets one of four stated intents)
- Broadens Participation

For the grant review process....

- Add items on slide 27 and 28 to stipulations on grant applications
- Incorporate evaluation/effectiveness measures
- Look at 2-3 year impact
- Don't be too rigid

Items for which consensus was to continue discussion/consideration.....

- Consider whether to add a recommendation to "Evaluate and make recommendations concerning state laws and regulation impacting child abuse and neglect cases."
- Continue conversation about how to increase cultural competency (Broadly, including that of the Task Force, grantees and the CPS system)
 - Decrease disproportionality and disparate outcomes for youth and families of color