

MINUTES of Texas Children's Justice Act Task Force
Meeting date: October 24, 2008

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 October 24, 2008. The meeting convened at 8:45AM, Chair Hon. Larry Thorne presiding.

Members in attendance:

Roy Block	Dr. James Lukefahr
De Shaun Ealoms	Margaret Lalk
Cathy Crabtree	Hon. Larry Thorne
Jon Evans	Valerie Milholland
Lt. Cozette Fogus	Fairy Rutland

Members not in attendance:

Denise Hyde
Joe Gagen
TaNeika Wood
Hon. Fred Chavez
Gerry Williams
Dan Powers
Joyce James
Dr. Rolf Habersang

Staff in attendance:

Ginny Woods
Cherisse Robison

Guests in attendance:

Jackie Bowman
Cathy Cockerham
Tina Amberboy
LaTanya Tatum
Vickie Ernst
Liz Kromrei

Welcome and introductions, by Hon. Larry Thorne. Judge Thorne welcomed members and guests. Judge Thorne set the next four meeting dates: January 23rd, April 24th, July 24th, and October 23rd. Motion was made by Dr. Lukefahr, and seconded by Margi Lalk, to approve meeting dates. Motion carried without opposition.

Approval of minutes: Motion was made by Cathy Crabtree, and seconded by Roy Block, to approve the minutes of the April 25, 2008 meeting. Motion carried without opposition.

Adoption of Agenda: No changes were suggested to the agenda. Judge Thorne suspended vote. A discussion of the Task Force bylaws and new membership will be added to the January 23, 2009 agenda.

Officers' Report of Member Elections, by Judge Thorne, CJA Task Force Chair. The Task Force Officers nominated Roy Block, Dan Powers, and Gerry Williams for reelection to the Task Force. Motion was made by Dr. Lukefahr, and seconded by Cathy Crabtree, to re-elect Roy Block, Dan Powers, and Gerry Williams to the Task Force. Motion carried without opposition.

Nominating Committee Report on Officer Elections by Fairy Rutland. The Officers Nominating Committee proposed the reelection of Judge Thorne and Valerie Milholland to the Task Force offices of Chair and Vice Chair, respectively. Motion was made by Fairy Rutland,

and seconded by Cozette Fogus, to re-elect Judge Thorne and Valerie Milholland to serve as Task Force Chair and Vice Chair, respectively. Motion carried without opposition.

Report on Budget, by Cherisse Robison, CJA Grant Monitor. Ms. Robison updated the Task Force on the current status of the budget. The Task Force has \$68,964.11-\$179,730.03 funds remaining for new projects after the close of GY2008. The Task Force discussed parameters for awarding these funds. Motion was made by Cathy Crabtree, and seconded by Dr. Lukefahr, to set aside \$25,000 for training-related projects of up to \$5,000 per project. The CJA staff will have the authority to award these funds with subsequent Task Force ratification at the next Task Force meeting. The remainder of these funds will be rolled over for use in GY2010. Motion carried without opposition. See Attachment A, GY08 budget dated 10/24/08 and Attachment B, GY09 budget dated 10/24/08.

Child and Family Services Review update, by Liz Kromrei, Director of Staff Services, Texas Department of Family and Protective Services, was received by the group.

Judicial Commission Report, by Tina Amberboy, Executive Director, Permanent Judicial Commission on Children, Youth, and Families, was received by the group.

CJA Status Report, by Ginny Woods, CJA Project Director and Cherisse Robison, CJA Grant Monitor. Ms. Woods reviewed the purpose of the CJA funds and the role of the Task Force. Ms. Robison outlined a project plan and timeline for the remainder of the grant year.

Assessment Facilitated Discussion: As a large group, the Task Force brainstormed responses to the following questions:

1. What are the emerging trends affecting the child-protection system in Texas?
2. What are the strengths or promising practices of the child-protections system in Texas?
3. What are weaknesses or continuing needs within the child-protection system in Texas?

Task Force responses are included on Attachment C, Brainstorming Questions.

Following the brainstorming session, Task Force members and guests divided into workgroups to begin identifying key issues to pursue in the next three years. Members joined one of the following four groups based on their interest and professional expertise: Improving Investigations/Interventions, Conservatorship, Improving Assessments and Access to Services, and Improving Courts. Task Force members not in attendance were also assigned to one of the groups. See Attachment D, Assessment Workgroups.

Based on the information coming from the brainstorming session, each group was given forty-five minutes to identify and report back to the large group 3-4 key issues.

Group 1, Improving Investigations/Interventions

1. MDT Support
 - Professionalize MDT facilitator position
 - Support family advocacy
 - Enhance medical and mental health participation, esp. in rural areas

2. Investigator trainings in regard to emerging issues, such as non-English speaking persons, children with disabilities, drug endangered children, internet crime, etc
3. Forensic interviewer training in regard to emerging issues
4. Investigative unit enhancements to address fragmentation of law enforcement investigations
 - Support strategies that consolidate or collaborate within law enforcement agencies

Group 2, Conservatorship

1. Children Stuck in PMC
 - Disproportionality
 - Youth Voice
 - Youth in Court
 - Circles of Support
 - Inadequate Placements
2. CPS Caseworker Training, Supervision, and Retention
3. Engaging Families
 - Engaging Parents
 - Statewide Parent Collaboration Group
 - Kinship Placements and Support
 - Paid Relative Care
 - Family Group Conferencing/FTM
 - Strength-based Perspectives
 - Finding Parents and Relatives – diligent search
4. Effective, Consistent AAL and GAL Involvement
 - Training for GALs and AALs
 - Cross-Systems Training

Group 3, Improving Assessments and Access to Services

1. Dual diagnosis
2. Engaging parents
3. Worker retention
4. Increasing youth voice
5. Substance abuse
6. High-prevalence of medications
7. Structure group home living
8. Parent/child treatment

Group 4, Improving Courts

1. Training and education for criminal and civil judges to address judicial inconsistency. Provide education to all attorneys and caseworkers.
2. Increase use of technology to create shared databases and used of video conferencing to increase flow of information.
3. Expand use of model Texas CPS Courts
4. Recognize issues involving immigration and other international issues that affect CPS cases.

5. Partner with other stakeholders in programs that affect CPS cases, training, and drug courts.

CJA Grantee Report, by Vickie Ernst, Associate Director, ChildSafe. Ms. Ernst reported upon the outcomes of ChildSafe's Child-Protection Strategic Alliance project for the 2008 grant year.

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 3:30PM.

These minutes were approved at a Texas Children's Justice Act Task Force meeting on January 23, 2009.

CJA Budget

Fiscal Year: October 1, 2007 - September 30, 2008

Attachment A 10/24/2008

6Y08

Income
 GY 07 Remaining Funds: \$ 154,398.14
 GY 08 Grant Income: \$ 1,305,254.00

Total Grant Income \$ 1,459,652.14
 Operating Expenses \$ 256,756.09
 Project Expenditures \$ 706,823.02
 GY 08 Unexpended Funds: \$ 496,073.03

Total Grant Income \$ 1,459,652.14 Total Grant Income
 \$ 100,000.00 Budget Reserve
 \$ 263,200.08 Operating Expenses
 \$ 876,869.42 Total Budgeted
 \$ 219,582.64 Funds Remaining for New Projects

Ad Item	Budget	Actual Expenses to Date	Balance
CASA of Hidalgo	\$ 3,000.00	\$ 2,800.67	\$ 199.33
Bluebonnet CAC/Tr-County CASA	\$ 4,500.00	\$ 4,500.00	\$ -
Childsafe	\$ 122,496.00	\$ 99,785.79	\$ 22,710.21
CAC	\$ 91,638.00	\$ 88,051.00	\$ 3,587.00
El Paso Human Services	\$ 2,183.00	\$ 2,183.00	\$ -
Gregg Cty Drug Ct Site Visit	\$ 2,500.00	\$ 736.50	\$ 1,763.50
Shaken Baby Alliance	\$ 199,997.00	\$ 189,199.54	\$ 10,797.46
Texas Casa	\$ 230,997.00	\$ 160,182.74	\$ 70,814.26
TX Casa - Tech Conf	\$ 1,500.00	\$ 1,153.26	\$ 346.74
Greater Dallas Council	\$ 193,058.42	\$ 150,478.43	\$ 42,579.99
CJA Task Force	\$ 25,000.00	\$ 7,752.09	\$ 17,247.91
Total Budget	\$ 876,869.42	\$ 706,823.02	\$ 170,046.40
Total Expenses		\$ 706,823.02	\$ 170,046.40

CJA Budget
Fiscal Year: October 1, 2008 - September 30, 2009

Attachment B 10/24/2008
6709

Income	
GY 08 Remaining Funds:	\$ 496,073.03
GY 09 Grant Income:	\$ 1,356,331.00
Total Grant Income	\$ 1,852,404.03
Budget Reserve	\$ 100,000.00
Operating Expenses	\$ 294,800.00
Total Budgeted	\$ 1,277,874.00
Funds Remaining for New Projects	\$ 179,730.03

Total Grant Income	\$ 1,852,404.03
Operating Expenses	\$ -
Project Expenditures	\$ -
FY 09 Unexpended Funds:	\$ 1,852,404.03

	Budget	Expenses to Date	Balance
Abilene Police Department	\$ 42,909.00	\$ -	\$ 42,909.00
CAC of Hidalgo County	\$ 96,421.00	\$ -	\$ 96,421.00
CAC of Smith County	\$ 45,789.00	\$ -	\$ 45,789.00
CAC of Texas	\$ 94,922.00	\$ -	\$ 94,922.00
CAC of Texas - Forensic Interview	\$ 2,345.00	\$ -	\$ 2,345.00
CAC of Tom Green County	\$ 50,000.00	\$ -	\$ 50,000.00
CASA of Hidalgo County	\$ 3,000.00	\$ -	\$ 3,000.00
CASA of Trinity Valley	\$ 43,036.00	\$ -	\$ 43,036.00
Dallas CAC	\$ 65,700.00	\$ -	\$ 65,700.00
Greater Dallas Council on A & DA	\$ 99,999.00	\$ -	\$ 99,999.00
Navarro County CAC	\$ 24,625.00	\$ -	\$ 24,625.00
Northeast CAC	\$ 7,474.00	\$ -	\$ 7,474.00
Nueces County CAC	\$ 75,000.00	\$ -	\$ 75,000.00
Rusk County CAC	\$ 8,000.00	\$ -	\$ 8,000.00
TCU Institute of Child Development	\$ 57,125.00	\$ -	\$ 57,125.00
Texas CASA	\$ 251,916.00	\$ -	\$ 251,916.00
Texas Foster Families Association	\$ 12,372.00	\$ -	\$ 12,372.00
TX Office for Prev of Dev Disabilities	\$ 61,129.00	\$ -	\$ 61,129.00
UTHSC-SA	\$ 141,750.00	\$ -	\$ 141,750.00
Zero to Three	\$ 69,362.00	\$ -	\$ 69,362.00
CJA Task Force	\$ 25,000.00	\$ -	\$ 25,000.00
Total Budget	\$ 1,277,874.00	Total Expenses \$ -	Balance \$ 1,277,874.00

1. What are the emerging trends affecting the child-protection system in Texas?

- Increase in Child Neglect
- Dual Diagnosis
- Bad economy
- Children Stuck in PMC
- Involving Youth in Court
- Engaging Parents
- Increasing Youth Voice
- Disproportionality
- Worker Retention
- Drug Endangered Children
- Increased Mediation
- *Gates*
- Increasing MDT size
- Changing ethnic composition within the State
- High prevalence of medicated children in care
- Increase in internet crimes
- Increase in autism diagnosis
- Looking at the family from a strength-based perspective
- Evolving judicial role
- Willingness to engage in interdisciplinary learning
- Increase in collaboration, less adversarial
- More efforts dedicated to finding parents and relatives
- Increased kinship placements
- Fostering Connections federal bill – paid relative care
- Stricter sentencing
- Immigration
- Increase in child trafficking
- International child abductions
- Poverty
- Redefining the PMC worker role

2. What are the strengths or promising practices of the child-protections system in Texas?

- Trauma-informed services
- Increasing awareness in law enforcement about connection between domestic abuse and child abuse
- Opportunities to inform stakeholders
- Broad statewide stakeholder collaboration
- Public private/partnerships
- Local CACs and CASAs (Texas leads nation in number of both)
- Drug Courts
- Model CPS Courts
- Family Team Meetings
- Circles of Support
- Family Group Conferencing
- Judicial Commission
- Statewide Parent Collaboration group
- Star health medical passport
- CPS Courts

3. What are weaknesses or continuing needs within the child-protection system in Texas?

- Judicial inconsistency
- Worker Retention
- Coordinating CPS and Law Enforcement Investigations
- Judicial education
- Attorney education
- Forensic Interviewer Education (changing policies and legislation, children with disabilities)
- Increased MDT Facilitation needs
- MDT Facilitator Education
- Caseworker training
- Law enforcement training

- Implementation of ICPC
- Inadequate placements (children with disabilities, proximity, cultural sensitivity)
- Methods to address internet crimes (cross-jurisdictional issue)
- Training for attorneys representing parents
- Increased need for advocacy services, especially for non-offending parents
- Emergency removals more difficult due to Gates and resultant policy changes, esp. rural areas.
- Lack of mental health services
- Lack of substance abuse treatment
- AAL and GAL Training
- Cross-systems training
- Examine CPS visitation policy

Assessment Workgroups

Working Group #1: Improving Investigations/Interventions:

Task Force Members:	Other Participants:
Cathy Crabtree	
Cozette Fogus	
Margaret Lalk	
James Lukefahr, MD	

Working Group #2: Conservatorship:

Task Force Members:	Other Participants:
Joe Gagen	Cathy Cockerham
Joyce James	Liz Kromrei
Gerry Williams	Jackie Bowman

Working Group #3: Improving Assessments & Access to Services:

Task Force Members:	Other Participants:
Roy Block	Latanya Tatum
DeShaun Ealoms	
Rolf Habersang, MD	
Dan Powers	

Working Group #4: Improving Courts:

Task Force Members:	Other Participants:
Fred Chavez	Tina Amberboy
Jon Evans	
Denise Hyde	
Valerie Milholland	
Fairy Rutland	
Larry Thorne	