

2010 – 2012 Children’s Justice Act Project Task Force Recommendations

Approved April 24, 2009

Grant funds should be used to implement state Task Force recommendations in the following three categories:

- A. Investigative, administrative, and judicial handling of cases of child abuse and neglect, particularly child sexual abuse and exploitation; cases involving children with disabilities; cases involving suspected child maltreatment related fatalities; and cases involving a potential combination of jurisdictions, such as interstate, Federal-State, and State-Tribal, in a manner which reduce the additional trauma to the child victim and the victim’s family and which also ensures procedural fairness to the accused.

Recommendations

1. Provide MDTs with adequate support, training, and networking opportunities, so they will stay well-engaged and coordinated.
2. Support local and statewide multidisciplinary training for child-protection professionals on one or more of the following topics: Disabilities, Permanent Managing Conservatorship (PMC), Substance Abuse, Cultural Competency, Engaging Families and Youth, Mental and Behavioral Health, Sexual Exploitation, and Child Trafficking.
3. Support the development and promotion of training for first responders.
4. Ensure forensic interviewers are adequately supported and trained, including opportunities for more peer reviews.
5. Support strength-based, family-focused initiatives.
6. Support training opportunities for CPS staff designed to strengthen levels of accountability, enhance staff support, and improve workforce retention.
7. Develop and strengthen collaborative partnerships.

- B. Experimental, model, and demonstration programs for testing innovative approaches and techniques which may improve the prompt and successful resolution of civil and criminal court proceedings or enhance the effectiveness of judicial and administrative action in child abuse and neglect cases, particularly child sexual abuse and exploitation cases, including the enhancement of performance of court-appointed attorneys and guardians ad litem for children and which also ensure procedural fairness to the accused.

Recommendations

1. Support the use of specialists with expertise on disabilities to serve as single, consistent advocates for children with disabilities through the entirety of their case.
2. Support the used of specialized child-protection professionals to focus on children in PMC.
3. Support the creation and/or expansion of coordinator positions to help the child victim and the victim’s family access and complete services.
4. Encourage the use of specialized courts or highly committed, specialized judges to hear child abuse and neglect cases.

C. Reform of state laws, ordinances, regulations, protocols and procedures to provide comprehensive protection for children from abuse, particularly sexual abuse and exploitation, while ensuring fairness to all affected persons.

Recommendations

1. Encourage the revision of investigative protocols for dealing with children with disabilities.
2. Encourage the revision and/or development of protocols, policies, or best practices for first responders and schools.
3. Support policies that retain CASAs and AAL after Permanent Managing Conservatorship (PMC) has been awarded.