

Child Protection Accountability Commission

Caseloads/Workloads Committee

Wednesday, February 16, 2017

Minutes

ATTENDEES:

Carla Benson-Green	Division of Family Services
Islanda Finamore, Esq.	Department of Justice
Maureen Monagle	Domestic Violence Coordinating Council
Rosalie Morales	Office of the Child Advocate
Susan Murray	Division of Family Services
Rachael Neff	Family Court
Anne Pedrick	Child Death Review Commission
Trinette Redinger Ramsey	Division of Family Services
Shirley Roberts	Division of Family Services
Brittany Willard	Office of the Child Advocate

I. Welcome & Introductions

Shirley Roberts chaired the meeting welcoming everyone and facilitating introductions.

II. CPAC Charge to Committee

The Committee is charged with evaluating the caseloads and workloads of the Division of Family Services (DFS) treatment workers and providing recommendations for change to CPAC, as appropriate. The caseloads and workloads of the DFS investigation workers will also be explored.

III. History of the Committee

Ms. Roberts shared the history of the Committee. In 2006, CPAC agreed to reconvene the Committee to evaluate the caseloads and workloads of the DFS workers. In 2007, legislation was introduced lowering the DFS investigation caseloads from 14 to 11. The Committee met for two years and presented its final report to CPAC in April 2008. At the time, it was recommended that the DFS treatment caseload standard be lowered from 18 to 12. However, the fiscal climate prevented the group from moving forward with this recommendation.

IV. Election of Chair

Carla Benson-Green agreed to Co-Chair this Committee. Rachael Neff and Judge Hitch were recommended from Family Court as the potential Co-Chair. Ms. Neff will discuss with Judge Hitch and provide an update at the next meeting.

V. Impacts on Caseloads

The DFS representatives agree that the issues listed in the report continue to be factors that impact the caseloads/workloads. However, there are additional DFS initiatives and

Federal mandates that have been implemented since 2008. Additionally, stakeholder expectations may have increased and these should also be considered by the Committee. Court expectations, reviews by the Child Placement Review Board and involvement by the Office of the Child Advocate and Court Appointed Special Advocates were mentioned as examples. Record requests are also time consuming.

VI. Current DFS Treatment Caseloads

Brittany Willard distributed a handout with the DFS treatment caseloads over a two-year period. At the end of December, all regions, with the exception of Sussex County, were over the caseload standard of 18.

There was discussion about jurisdictions that only transfer high and very high cases to treatment. However, many of these jurisdictions have other pathways for the cases that are not transferred. In Delaware, cases are referred to Promoting Safe and Stable Families from the Report Line, but not from investigations. This will be explored further by the Committee.

In addition, the group discussed the Family Assessment and Intervention Response (FAIR). Ms. Roberts provided an overview of how the Division has implemented FAIR. In the future, DFS would like to expand it to other populations, but caseloads would have to be smaller. Family assessments require more time.

The Committee inquired about the need for a workload study. The University of Delaware and Janice Barlow at KIDS COUNT will be contacted to explore a potential partnership.

VII. Next Steps

Family Court

- Contact Janice Barlow at KIDS COUNT
- Create list of court expectations for each hearing
- Determine if the court has data on the children involved in both dependency/neglect and criminal cases and parent involvement in other hearings

DFS

- Identify new initiatives, administrative tasks, and Federal mandates impacting caseloads/workloads
- Provide data on rate of transfer, transfer by risk level and permanency goals
- Contact other jurisdictions, Safe and Stable Families, and Dr. Vicky Kelly at the Child Welfare League of America (CWLA)

OCA

- Contact research centers at University of Delaware and CWLA representative from the 2016 National Conference on Child Abuse and Neglect

VIII. Next Meeting Date – May 3, 2017 from 1:30 pm to 3:30 pm