

Domestic Violence Coordinating Council
Children and Domestic Violence Committee

August 28, 2017

The Children and Domestic Violence Committee met on August 28, 2017, 10a.m. at the Department of Services for Children Youth and their Families in New Castle County. In attendance were Colleen Woodall (DFS), Carla Benson-Green (DFS), Taneka Purnell-Tingle (Peoples Place), Erin O'Connor (Peoples Place), Susanne Miller (Child Inc.), Sonya Tull (Child Inc.), Mariann Kenville-Moore (DCADV) and Natasha Smith (DVCC Staff). Present via phone were Blanche Creech (Peoples Place), Claire DeMatteis (Family Court), Regina Johnson (DPBHS), and Ellie Torres (Family Court).

Called to Order: Secretary Manning called the meeting to order.

Introductions: Introductions were made by those in attendance.

Minutes from April 24, 2017: Minutes were approved as written.

Old Business:

Family Court Enhancement Project

Claire DeMatteis stated that the Family Court Enhancement Project has received a no cost extension on the grant that will extend the project to September 30, 2018. Claire states that Family Court Mediators will receive Phase 2 of their training that will focus on conflict resolution. Kent and Sussex counties will begin using the same script used in New Castle County on PFA Days in October 2017. New Castle County will expand PFA days to twice a week (Wednesdays and Fridays). Self-help materials are being worked on with the Delaware Law School. These materials would include child custody packets as well as PFA materials. The project is also considering videotaping the Lead Commissioner in each county for the self-help process. Claire also stated that revisions of the Commissioner's PFA day script are underway and she will forward it to Natasha Smith (DVCC) once completed.

Next Steps – Safe and Together Model

The Domestic Violence Coordinating Council has reached an agreement and has received a signed contract from David Mandel of the Safe and Together Institute. This project will focus on the co-located DV Liaisons and ways to utilize current Delaware resources. More information will be provided in the coming months.

Definition of a Perpetrator of Domestic Violence and Rebuttable Presumption

Ellie Torres (Family Court) has drafted options for possible changes to the definition of a perpetrator of domestic violence and rebuttable presumption statute. Once the drafted language is completed and discussed at the next Family Court Judges meeting it will be circulated to the DVCC Children and Domestic Violence Committee.

Divorced and Separating Parents Curriculum

Those present discussed some of the barriers for those taking the Separating and Divorcing Parenting Class such as the cost of the class, time, transportation and childcare. The group also discussed whether or not there is enough domestic violence education in the basic curriculum. Regina Johnson (DPBHS) offered the suggestion that perhaps all curriculums be required to have domestic violence education included in all classes. Blanche Creech (People's Place) raised concerns regarding some practitioners' ability to deliver the domestic violence material effectively.

Additional questions were raised regarding whether or not the Separating and Divorcing Parenting Class helps to keep children and families safer. The group also discussed alternatives to taking the class in person, such as an online course. And the question of what other states do about separating divorcing parenting classes was mentioned.

Given the number of questions as well as discussion on this topic, some additional follow up items were requested during the meeting:

Ellie Torres (Family Court) – believes that National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges (NCJFCJ) may have some information on this topic as well as options for online courses. Ellie will provide an update on the information she found at the next meeting.

Regina Johnson (DPBHS) will pull any aggregate data from the Separating and Divorcing Parenting surveys for the next meeting.

Mariann Kenville-Moore (DCADV) will work on a bench card or one-pager for Family Court Judges on this issue.

New Business

Mariann Kenville-Moore (DCADV) received information from the Quality Improvement Center on Domestic Violence in Child Welfare (QIC-DVCW) regarding a grant for research and capacity building project to help build evidence for a collaborative, adult and child survivor-centered approach to helping families who involved in the child welfare system and experiencing domestic violence. Mariann stated that she will be listening in on the grant call scheduled for September 1, 2017 and will provide additional information at the next meeting.

Announcements

The Domestic Violence Awareness Month Proclamation Signing will take place on 10/4/17 at 11am in the Wilmington Governor's Office.

The DVCC Quarterly meeting is scheduled for Monday, September 11, 2017 at 1pm at Buena Vista.

Next meeting Date: December 4, 2017 at 10am University Plaza Conference Room