

Children's Services Committee

Location: **Microsoft Teams meeting**
Join on your computer or mobile app

Date: Tuesday, 8/2/2022

Time: 1:00 P.M. CST/2:00 P.M. EDT

Staff Present: Cory Bradfield, Kylie Graves, Jeni Davis, Craig Hargrow, Richard Kennedy, Bill Latimer, Russette Marcum Embry, Melissa McGee, Jerri Moore, Steve Petty, Rob Burke, Carla Walker

Staff Absent: None

Commission Members: Amy Jones, Glenda Terry, Randy Butler, Ella Britt, Charmaine Kromer, Rob Mortensen, Kelly Drummond, Rob Philyaw

Commission Members Absent:

Guests: None

1) **Call to Order – Amy Jones, Chair**

After ascertaining there was a quorum, Jones called the meeting to order at 1:12 p.m. Jones identified all members present for the Teams meeting. Jones asked for any new persons to introduce themselves, TNYCWC/HVLA Director Rob Burke did so after being introduced by Kennedy.

2) **Approval of August Children's Services Minutes (ACTION)**

Jones asked for a motion to approve the Children's Services minutes from the May 2022 Committee Meeting.

Neely moved to approve the minutes from May 2022.

Butler seconded. Unanimously Approved.

3) **Staff Updates**

Home Visiting Leadership Alliance (HVLA)

Moore has been managing the duties of the Home Visitation Leadership Alliance (HVLA) due to the position vacancy. Moore has been distributing updates and information to HVLA participants. Moore is ending her tenure as coordinator of the Home Visitation Leadership Alliance as a new HVLA Director prepared to begin in July 2022. This quarter Moore has worked on updating the HVLA email list due to statewide workforce vacancies and distributing data, training information, and updates to all HVLA participants on all pertinent topics to home visitation and early childhood. Moore will be working with Rob Burke, the new HVLA Director to ensure a smooth transition.

HVLA is partnering with Tennesseans for Quality Early Education (TQEE) in their “Loud Voices for Little Kids” initiative.

Youth Transitions Advisory Council

The Youth Transitions Advisory Council met June 23 in conjunction with the Council on Children’s Mental Health at the Tennessee State Library and Archives. Over 50 people attended in person and 60 people attended virtually. The Office of Independent Living at the Department of Children’s Services provided information about the Federal Assistance provided youth in Extension of Foster Care Services through the work of DCS and Youth Villages LifeSet program.

Earlier this year the General Assembly expanded the eligibility for Extension of Foster Care Services to include youth working up to 80 hours a month or those participating in activities preparing for employment. Presentations by DHS’s office of Vocational Rehabilitation and Department of Labor and Workforce Development Staff provided information to assist DCS staff with this change.

The Councils also heard presentations from the DCS Resource Centers and the Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services Division of Housing and Homeless Services.

The next meeting of YTAC will be held August 11th, featuring the regular presenters plus a presentation from the Omni Family Foundation.

Cory Bradford will assume duties as director of YTAC.

Building Strong Brains Tennessee

TCCY continues the strong partnership with DCS in leadership of Building Strong Brains

Tennessee as it transitions into *Resilient Tennessee Collaborative*, the re-envisioned focus for the next phase of Building Strong Brains, shifting towards emphasis on resilience. This shift will continue to rely on the Coordinating Team, a 10-12 member body comprised of a leader from child-serving state departments and public sector organizations.

TCCY continues to coordinate meetings of the BSB Coordinating Team as direction support for Resilient Tennessee Collaborative.

TCCY has engaged Strategy and Leadership LLC for an internal session to further solidify the path forward for the agency. TCCY leadership and McGee, Dana Cobb and Lindsey Cody will participate in a strategy session on Thursday, July 14th.

Training for Trainers

TCCY staff completed four rounds of two-day Training for Trainers during Spring 2022, including a focus on general population, business leaders, faith leaders, early childhood and Drug Endangered Children staff. A total of 113 persons were trained during these four events.

McGee and the TCCY BSB team continue regular meetings and to ensure training material and presentations are accurate and updated. The Strategy session for Thursday, July 14th will address the future of Training for Trainers within TCCY as well.

Building Strong Brains – Community

Kennedy and McGee provided a presentation on *Resilient Tennessee: Building Strong Brains* for the May meeting of CCMH/HVLA/YCWC.

The kickoff meeting for the Resilient Tennessee Collaborative hosted approximately 250 participants in-person and hybrid on July 20th from 1 – 4 pm. TCCY has engaged Melissa Oomer to provide a refresher course on Collective Impact, as well as a kick off of affinity groups. She will work with the team on a follow-up survey for the meeting participants. Other state level agencies and leaders, as well as BSB innovation grant recipient participated.

McGee provided a webinar for the Rural Health Association of Tennessee in May and

submitted a proposal with Kylie Graves, to the Rural Health Association of Tennessee for a presentation at their annual conference in November.

Kennedy added information about an upcoming policy summit focused on resilience and being trauma-informed, being organized by Lauren Block, formerly of the National Governors' Association.

The Council for Trauma-Informed Policy and Practice (CTIPP) is partnering with the National Prevention Science Coalition to Improve Lives and PACEs Connection to launch PressOn, a coalition of trauma-informed coalitions to coordinate and advance the movement from the national level to the grassroots. Kennedy and McGee are exploring the possibility of TCCY's participation in the coalition.

Second Look Commission

Second Look Commission (SLC) duties will be assumed by Kylie Graves, along with Youth Policy Advocate duties.

The SLC met on June 14, 2022. During the open meeting, SLC members discussed the following agenda items: Proposal to Estimate the Cost of Child Abuse in Tennessee Discussion and Interrupted Caregiving and Trauma Informed Parenting Discussion. The proposal is based on a similar initiative in Alabama. Estimated start date for the third party contractor: August 15th. Findings will focus on both long-term and short-term costs and will include county-level data. The report will also include an executive summary, infographic, and accompanying presentations. The cost of the estimate will be approximately \$101,000.

The investigatory meeting was dedicated to reviewing a case reviewed during the April 2022 meeting and two additional cases. SLC members made preliminary findings of facts and recommendations. The findings, observations and recommendations included the following:

April 2022 Case

- SLC members questioned the availability of counseling services for former foster parents, particularly when a child the foster parent cared for dies.
- SLC questioned whether a toxicological screen was conducted on the child.
- SLC questioned why the child was returned to the parents the last time.

SLC may recommend additional factors to consider when returning a child to the parents. An “imminent risk of harm” standard was discussed.

- SLC members noted limited interaction with the father in this matter.

June 14, 2022 Cases

- SLC members questioned when is appropriate to request a hair follicle test in addition to or instead of a urine drug test.
- In one matter, SLC members thought an investigation should have been substantiated despite the absence of an interview with the alleged perpetrator.
- CPIT and DCS should have an additional classification category. Substantiated and Unsubstantiated may not accurately reflect the findings of an investigation.
- SLC members recommended DCS should take law enforcement with them anytime the investigation involves allegations of criminal acts.
- Individuals continue to fail to report child abuse without consequence.
- SLC members questioned what constitutes Psychological Harm. SLC members believed the facts of a case were enough to substantiate a Psychological Harm allegation. However, that allegation was not substantiated.

Council on Children’s Mental Health (CCMH)

The third meeting of the Council on Children’s Mental Health was a joint meeting with the Youth Transitions Advisory Council with a focus on transition age youth needs and services. The meeting was held in person at the Tennessee State Library and Archives on June 23rd, and virtually via Microsoft Teams, from 10 am – 2 pm. Approximately 75-100 were in attendance in-person and virtually.

McGee has continued to support TDMHSAS and the SOCAT work statewide through targeted meetings with TDMHSAS/TCCY leadership, general meetings and presentations. As Cory Bradfield transitions into the CCMH/YTAC position, McGee will provide assistance as needed.

McGee and Bradfield attended the SOCAT retreat at Pickwick Landing State Park in June, where Bradfield was able to meet TDMHSAS and community agency SOCAT staff, learn more about the work of System of Care in Tennessee, and McGee provided a training on Boundaries and Ethics for attendees.

Both McGee and Bradfield continue to participate in community and statewide meetings supporting children's mental health in Tennessee.

Ombudsman Program

Marcum-Embry reported 20 new referrals were received for the months of April – June 2022. This number of referrals is consistent with the number for the same reporting period in 2021. As of the end of June, there were 35 cases open in the Ombudsman Program data base. Marcum-Embry continues to learn the role of Ombudsman Program Director for TCCY while maintaining those of the CASA Grants Manager. She attended Rule 31 Family Mediation training in July and will be attending the USOA National Conference in September.

Marcum-Embry assisted in conducting *Building Strong Brains Tennessee* Training-for-Trainers in June at TBI headquarters for representatives from the TN Alliance for Drug Endangered Children and Child Care Resource & Referral Network.

Marcum-Embry is preparing for two interns from the University of Tennessee College of Social work to join TCCY for the fall semester.

Marcum-Embry continues to serve on the Wilson County Foster Care Review Board, the UT College of Social Work Field Advisory Committee, the Children and Families Chapter of the USOA, and as TCCY/Kennedy's representative on the Council on Developmental Disabilities.

Tennessee Young Child Wellness Council

After TCCY leadership's decision to combine the Tennessee Young Child Wellness Council (TNYCWC) and Home Visiting Leadership Alliance (HVLA) directorship into one position and the Council on Children's Mental Health (CCMH) and Youth Transitions Advisory Council (YTAC) directorships into another, Bradfield accepted the opportunity to transfer to the CCMH/YTAC position. Bradfield is prepared to assist the new TNYCWC Director in becoming acclimated when the position is filled.

The last general meeting of the Tennessee Young Child Wellness Council (TNYCWC) meeting of the was a joint meeting with the Council on Children's Mental Health and Youth Transitions Advisory Council, focusing on infant and early childhood mental

health as well as transition age youth needs and services. The meeting was held in person at the Tennessee State Library and Archives, and virtually via Microsoft Teams, from 10 am – 2 pm. The next TNYCWC meeting will be held on 09/21.

The TNYCWC Newsletter continues to be issued monthly. The newsletter features upcoming webinars, job postings, issue spotlights, and profiles of participating agencies.

The Steering Team met on 06/02. Bradfield informed the Steering Team of the upcoming change in leadership.

4) **Additional Items or Comments**

Drummond asked the Commission about COVID-related needs. Kennedy notes the effect COVID had of slowing the implementation of the new strategic plan. Unexpected levels of staff turnover had a similar effect. Agency leadership is currently focused on issues around office space/occupancy in light of increased utilization of AWS work. Kennedy noted the importance of staff wellbeing, and referred to a survey issued by Hargrow measuring the same.

The agency is currently determining budget improvement requests for the legislature and governor. As new positions have been foreclosed, Kennedy suggests seeking salary improvements for current staff.

Hargrow described the response leadership has taken to the survey results, which includes replacing the previous mandatory staff meeting with an open Teams meeting hosted by himself.

5) **Motion to Adjourn**

Britt moved to adjourn the meeting. Butler seconded and all approved.