

Children's Services Committee

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

Date: Tuesday, 5/3/2022

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

Staff Present: Cory Bradfield, Jeni Davis, Craig Hargrow, Richard Kennedy, Bill Latimer, Russette Marcum Embry, Melissa McGee, Jerri Moore, Steve Petty

Staff Absent: None

Commission Members: Amy Jones (joined at 1:15), Kelly Drummond, Glenda Terry,

Commission Members Absent: Randy Butler, Ella Britt, Charmaine Kromer

Guests: None

1) **Call to Order – Glenda Terry, Acting Chair**

After ascertaining there was a quorum, Jones called the meeting to order at 1:11 p.m. Jones identified all members present for the Teams meeting. Jones asked for any new persons to introduce themselves, Katie Cannon, TCCY intern, introduced herself to the group.

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

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

Terry moved to approve the minutes from February 2022.

Drummond seconded. Unanimously Approved.

3) **Staff Updates**

Home Visiting Leadership Alliance (HVLA)

Moore continues to manage the duties of the Home Visitation Leadership Alliance (HVLA) due to the current TCCY vacancy. Moore distributed 2021 Kids Count Data, 2022

Children's Advocacy Days announcements, statewide training announcements and various other pertinent information with HVLA participants. This quarter Moore partnered with McGee and Bradfield to host a joint meeting with Council on Children's Mental Health and Young Child Wellness Council on May 5th (in-person) to showcase how each council intersects and emphasize Children's Mental Health Awareness Week. Along with TCCY staff, the Department of Health staff and Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse contributed to the agenda to make the meeting informative and educational.

Council on Children's Mental Health (CCMH)

The first meeting of CCMH in the new year occurred on Thursday, February 24th. The meeting emphasized the work of SOCAT and expansion over the past year, as well as a legislative update from TCCY's Steve Petty and a keynote on the importance of advocacy with Carol Westlake. McGee continues to support CCMH while the Council's position is being posted and filled. The next CCMH meeting date was adjusted to Thursday, May 5th, to accommodate a joint networking meeting with the Home Visiting Leadership Alliance and Young Child Wellness Council, focused on early childhood wellness and development.

McGee continues to support TDMHSAS and the SOCAT work statewide through targeted meetings with TDMHSAS/TCCY leadership, general meetings and presentations. She participated in a series of trainings with Keri Virgo, TDMHSAS, to graduate students from Vanderbilt's Association for Behavioral Science. She continues to participate in community and statewide meetings supporting children's mental health in Tennessee and awaits information on her nomination to the Children's Justice Task Force. She continued to provide task supervision for TCCY's spring intern, SaVone Cole, from Union University. SaVone was with TCCY through mid-May and was able to coordinate, participate and learn about many aspects of TCCY's work.

Youth Transitions Advisory Council (YTAC)

The Youth Transitions Advisory Council met virtually Thursday March 24, 2022. Over 40 people participated in the meeting. The Department of Children's Services Office of Independent Living updated the Council on pandemic financial relief provided to youth in Extension of Foster Care through contracts with Youth Villages and on the increased number of youth served in Fiscal Year 2021. DCS also talked about expansion of Extension of Foster Care Services to youth working up to 80 hours a month funded in the Governor's budget. This fulfills a long-time recommendation of the Council. Youth

Villages provided information on their assistance to youth. The President of Viable spoke about connecting former foster youth and other special populations with employment. All four of the DCS funded Resource Centers participated and shared information on their activities and upcoming events. The Department of Health Children with Special Health Care Needs Initiative shared information on emergency preparedness. The Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services could not attend but provided information to share with the group.

Building Strong Brains Tennessee

TCCY continues the strong partnership with DCS in leadership of Building Strong Brains Tennessee. TCCY presented a re-envisioned focus for the next phase of Building Strong Brains, shifting towards emphasis on resilience and becoming *Resilient Tennessee: Building Strong Brains*. This shift will continue to rely on the Coordinating Team, comprised of a leader from child-serving state departments and public sector organizations. The Public/Private Group will become open to all interested and allow for increased networking and information sharing statewide. TCCY will also identify, organize and support specific affinity groups to further community and collective impact efforts.

Training for Trainers

McGee and the TCCY Building Strong Brains (BSB) team have resumed regular meetings and will continue to ensure training material and presentations are up to date.

Dates for Spring 2022 Training for Trainers:

March 29th – 30th – 33 participants

April 12th – 13th – 32 participants

May 17th – 18th

Two trainings have been completed to date, with some participation in April from business leaders, but this remains an area of concentration for continued work. The faith-based focused training in May has received good response and TCCY is working to inform this training specifically for this group. All sessions have received good feedback and appropriate suggestions for continued development. McGee and the TCCY BSB team have resumed regular meetings and will continue to ensure training material and presentations are accurate and updated. TCCY has also worked with UT evaluators to update already established post-test and also create a pre-test to provide more in-depth data on the training for trainers sessions.

Building Strong Brains – Community

Kennedy and McGee provided a presentation on Resilient Tennessee: Building Strong Brains for ETSU's Strong Brain Institute in February, with around 100 participants joining the webinar. McGee presented at the West Tennessee Faith-Based Leaders Forum in March, hosted by TDMHSAS and the Governor's Office of Faith Based Initiatives. She will also provide a webinar for the Rural Health Association of Tennessee in late May.

Second Look Commission

The Second Look Commission (SLC) met virtually on February 8 and in-person on April 12, 2022. During the February 8 open meeting, SLC members discussed the following agenda items: In-person Meeting Discussion, 2021 Report Discussion, FY 2021 Data Review, Case Review Strategy and Meeting Presentation Ideas. During the April 12 open meeting, SLC members discussed the following agenda items: Interrupted Caregiving and Trauma Informed Parenting Discussion and Other Meeting Presentation Ideas.

The February 8 and April 12 investigatory meetings were dedicated to reviewing the FY2021 Abuse Death cases on the list provided by DCS. SLC members made preliminary findings of facts and recommendations. The findings, observations and recommendations included the following:

- SLC members questioned whether a parent should have been charged criminally in an Abuse Death case in which the parent failed to make medically responsible decisions to address the child's known condition. In the other cases reviewed, SLC members questioned why the alleged perpetrators were not criminally charged;
- SLC members questioned whether it is in the best interest of the child to allow the alleged perpetrator designate placement for the child;
- In one case, the final autopsy report was completed approximately 15 months after the child died. There have been several cases reviewed by the SLC over the years that the autopsy has taken a substantial period of time to complete. In most instances, CPIT will not classify the case without the final autopsy report. During this time, if other children are involved, permanency may be delayed. Additionally, their safety may be compromised.
- Child was placed with a relative via a Protective Custody Order. At some point within an approximately five-year period, the child was returned to the mother. The provided records do not indicate how this happened.
- SLC members continue to see the need for birth control education, particularly

long-acting reversible contraception.

- SLC questioned whether a termination of parental rights petition should have been filed is an abuse death case to protect the other children. In this case, the documentation did not indicate the parents were in compliance with the permanency plan. The parents were partially compliant.
- SLC members questioned how the parents regained custody of the child when they were partially compliant with the permanency plan.

Ombudsman Program

Marcum-Embry has transitioned to the role of Ombudsman Program Director for TCCY. She is learning/navigating these responsibilities while maintaining those of the CASA Grants Manager, at least until the end of this fiscal year.

Marcum-Embry reported 13 new referrals were received for the months of January, February and March. For the same reporting period, there were 15 new referrals in 2020.

Marcum-Embry serves 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

The last general meeting of the Tennessee Young Child Wellness Council (TNYCWC) was held via WebEx on 02/23 and featured an update on Building Strong Foundations for Families from the Director as well as a legislative update from TCCY's Steve Petty. The next TNYCWC meeting will be held on 05/05, and will be a joint meeting with the Council on Children's Mental Health and the Home Visiting Leadership Alliance. The meeting will be in-person at the State Library and Archives.

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 has operated as the Core Team of the *Building Strong Foundations For Families* project for the duration of that grant period. The Steering Team met on 03/03 and 04/07. Now that the *BSFF* project is ending, the Steering Team will be re-evaluating its

meeting schedule, membership and purpose for the next phase of the council's work.

Zero to Three Technical Assistance Opportunity

The Building Strong Foundations for Families (BSFF) project came to an end in March. Funded by national nonprofit ZERO TO THREE, the project supported a cohort of states in building and strengthening comprehensive policies, programs and systems that ensure families with infants and toddlers have the resources and opportunities they need to thrive.

As part of the BSFF project, the TNYCWC hosted an Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health (I/ECMH) policy summit on. The summit aimed to familiarize policymakers with the basics of I/ECMH, the positive impact of I/ECMH-focused policies and programs and establish the TNYCWC and its partners as resources for I/ECMH policy expertise. Plans were underway to host the summit in person, but COVID concerns dictated that the summit be held virtually instead. However, ZERO TO THREE allowed TCCY to use the Building Strong Foundations for Families funds earmarked for the summit to sponsor Children's Advocacy Days.

The TNYCWC Director completed all required final reports for ZERO TO THREE with assistance from the Director of Budget and Administration on the final financial report. Additionally, the TNYCWC Director completed two interviews, one with ZTT and another with a consulting group contracted by ZTT's third-party funders, in which he reflected on the work of the TNYCWC during the BSFF grant period.

4) **Additional Items or Comments**

5) **Motion to Adjourn**

Terry moved to adjourn the meeting. Drummond seconded and all approved.