



Mandated Reporting to Community Supporting Task Force

*Communities Keeping Children Safe
and Families Together*

Welcome!

Mandated Reporting to Community
Supporting Task Force Members,
Subcommittee Members
and Public Participants

November 13, 2023

- The agenda and other documents will be in the chat.
- There are no scheduled breaks. Self-break as needed. Please mute & turn off camera.
- We will take public comment at the opening and closing of the meeting.
- Chat is enabled for all participants:
 - Please use good chat etiquette.
 - Chat is not on public record.
 - We can't respond to public chat questions/comments.
- Subcommittee meetings will be held in breakout rooms. Public participants may select ONE session to attend. A list is in the chat.
- For meeting tech support, direct chat CalTrin.
- Meeting materials are on the Child Welfare Council website. See link in the chat.

Agenda

- Welcome
- Public Comment
- Grounding the Work in Data
- External Communications
- Subcommittee Meetings
- Public Comment
- Next Steps

Full Group Connections

- We invite everyone to participate
- Use the **link in the chat** to help us connect through our collective hopes and concerns
- **WORD CLOUD QUESTIONS:**



*REVIEW AND REFLECT BETWEEN
QUESTIONS*

Public Comment



- Raise your virtual hand
- Come off mute. Turn on your camera if you like
- Maximum of 2 minutes for comment which will go on public record
- No response will be provided

Grounding the Work in the “Why”

- The “**Why**” of the Work
- Janay Eustace
 - **Current:** Executive Director, California Youth Connection (CYC)
 - **Congratulations!** President & Chief Executive Officer, Child Abuse Prevention Center (CAPC)

Grounding the Work in the Data

- Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) Summary & Discussion

Draft KII Topline Learnings & Applications



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METHODOLOGY

- The Mandated Reporting to Community Supporting (MRCS) Task Force Advisory Team outlined and agreed to a phased approach to gathering quantitative data through a set of Key Informant Interviews (KIIs).
- Phase I: KIIs with a small group of Child Welfare Council members to
 - Timing: May/June 2023
 - Interviewees: Members of the Child Welfare Council (see list below)
 - Purpose: To solicit input from CWC members relating to the composition, task force process, anticipated challenges and opportunities for the paradigm shift, and to solicit recommendations for additional stakeholders for subsequent interviews and listening sessions (Phase II).
- Phase II: Mandated reporters and individuals with proximity to the system and solutions.
 - Timing: June - September 2023
 - Interviewees: Stakeholders representing policymakers, implementers, advocates, etc.
 - Purpose: To inform development of Task Force recommendations, better understand concerns from potential detractors, and help shape the narrative shift from mandated reporting to community supporting.
- Interviews were conducted virtually (phone or zoom) by:
 - Laurie Kappe, i.e. communications (lead)
 - Beth Kuentler, Outside Voice (co-lead)
- Research was funded by: Safe & Sound and Casey Family Programs

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TOPLINES

- Close to unanimous support for the goals of the Task Force.
- However, the majority of key informants anticipate **significant challenges** to adoption of the paradigm shift from mandated reporting to community supporting.
- Essential to moving the work forward and addressing detractors:
 - Narrative shift
 - Increase understanding of who makes reports, how those reports are handled, and the resulting impact on families.
 - Remove blame from parents and families (and children)
 - Increase trust with families and communities.
 - Address perceived tension between paradigm shift and child safety.
 - Consistently and clearly stating the implicit, interpersonal, institutional, and structural racism in the system that leads to more reporting and harm for African American, Native American, and Latino/Latina children and families.
 - Address the fear of liability and punishment if you don't report.
 - Deepen the understanding of General Neglect—what it is vs. physical/sexual/emotional abuse—and the data that shows how it can be addressed with money (universal income), direct supports, and comprehensive community supports.
- Need to be aware of community resources, coordinate and track access to these services, and build capacity to ensure that community resources can meet the need.
- Although mandated reporters represent many sectors, key informants identified several challenges and opportunities to implement this paradigm shift among schools and educators.
- There is no single solution. This will take policy, legislation, and narrative work, as well as on the ground organizing.

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Legal & Liability Issues Subcommittee

Based on the topline learnings, the subcommittee should consider:

- Including not only legislative changes but also changes to policy and practice.
- Also addressing the fear from child welfare agencies that a reduction in reporting will cause greater child maltreatment.

Opportunities	Challenges	Recommendations	Comments
	The current codes are an obstacle. Codes will need to be amended to conform to the new paradigm, for example Penal code 1165.		<p>KII comment: “Funny thing about liability for not reporting—as far as I know there has yet to be a court case where anyone who has been held liable. In my opinion, the fear of liability for mandated reporters is a FAUX FEAR ”</p> <p>KII comment: “The fear is real for social workers as mandated reporters. They may not be fined or charged criminally, but it’s used in policy and procedure, and supervisors hold it over and reprimand, and it affects reviews and employment.”</p>

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Policy & Practice Reforms Subcommittee

Based on the topline learnings, this subcommittee should consider:

- Including specific reforms, training, and supports for public schools.
- Also identifying the financial and other resources needed to accomplish a paradigm shift from mandated reporting to community supporting as well as where and for what purpose those resources should be directed.

Opportunities	Challenges	Recommendations	Comments
<p>We know that schools work in silos from other systems. Community schools bring in family and community voice to build authentic engagement and support.</p> <p>Change the financing to support families in communities. So much of financing flows through the child welfare system that has failed lots of kids, and then needs more money for their investigation, placement and other services. Simplify and figure out what families need— and then we would have the resources for the family, and not spend it on the system.</p> <p>Create the resources without so much regulation and nit picking and all of the requirements, and instead focus on the outcomes we want to incentivize.</p>		<p>What if the state could fund a “team” that would be available for timely response, and offer unbiased expert advice to a pediatrician—or to any other mandated reporter. They may then guide us to get the additional information to make a decision, etc.</p> <p>Develop a new model with trained facilitators who are accountable and community based with flexible money, and adopt whole family practices led by family decision making and plans.</p>	<p>KII comment: “We over-report so much that parents do not seek support in schools.”</p> <p>KII comment: “I think the biggest win would be if the education system learned when and when not to make hotline calls. In my experience, that is the main source of referrals.”</p> <p>KII: “There needs to be some sort of best practice mandated for community support.”</p> <p>KII: “[T]he message/framing to mandated reporters (eg., teachers, et al.) is that you are part of this child’s community, don’t just hand this off—making it someone else’s problem--this is about our entire national culture, not just child welfare.”</p>

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Narrowing the Legal Definition of Neglect Subcommittee

Based on the topline learnings, this subcommittee should consider:

- Focusing on the definition of general neglect, including best practices for addressing different types of general neglect, and being sufficiently specific to guide practice.

Opportunities	Challenges	Recommendations	Comments
<p>AB 2085 - How can the Task Force support and advance the implementation?</p> <p>Narrative shift: Common ground with detractors - "Yes, general neglect does harm children. However, supports in communities can address general neglect. System involvement harms children more."</p>		<p>Standardization of CPS response. There is too much response variation depending on the where, when and who of reporting.</p> <p>More clarity and consistency on what is reportable</p>	<p>KII comment: "The focus of this reform is on developing a compassionate response to "poverty related" neglect , where parents need support not punishment."</p> <p>KII comment: General neglect, whether related to poverty or whatever the cause (mental illness or substance use by parents), <u>does harm children</u> and support and <u>services should be offered without involvement of child protective services</u>.</p> <p>KII comment: "Frame as an effort to shift the "neglect" part of child welfare from a reportable offense, to a supportable "offense"</p>

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Curriculum & Training Subcommittee

Based on the topline learnings, this subcommittee should consider:

- Including an equity lens that considers the systemic factors impacting each family.

Opportunities	Challenges	Recommendations	Comments
“Examine our approach. Currently, we use a forensic lens—an investigation focus, while a reflective lens might take the perspective of looking at the systemic factors that created the situation. From a reflective lens, we could approach the situation differently and a next step could be to engage the family.”		Give equal time to how to support versus the current total focus on reporting and liability issues.	

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Research & Data Subcommittee

Based on the topline learnings, this subcommittee should consider:

- Leveraging existing resources to identify the evidence base related to the definition of neglect and community resource needs, and presenting the data in a way that is clear and feasible to track over time.

Opportunities	Challenges	Recommendations	Comments
	<p>Comprehensively unpacking neglect will take time and money. The data is there, now we need the resource commitment to use it.</p>	<p>Use data such as from Evident Change (i.e., SDM), CANS, and newly-added CWS/CMS fields to help unpack the notion of 'neglect.'</p> <p>Put the numbers into perspective for people. What are the 2 - 3 key stats that we need to consistently lift up to shift the narrative.</p> <p>Need to develop, resource and coordinate community pathways/alternatives—i.e. need to be aware of community resources, coordinate access to them, and track referrals, service use, outcomes, etc. (will need data to support each step).</p> <p>Need to agree to the top 5 things we want to track on a regular basis. How does this change as we work to change the mandated reporting system?</p>	<p>KII comment: "Currently, the accountability is all about families being accountable to systems. What about the inverse: the state and its systems, e.g., child welfare, schools are accountable to families."</p> <p>KII comment: "Shift "neglect" ...from a reportable offense, to a supportable "...mandated supporting... trigger a support/service (e.g., instead of taking an intoxicated person into jail... take them to detox)."</p> <p>Kii comment: "Let the CBOs assist—we know the community and resources..."</p>

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The following individuals generously provided time to be interviewed to help inform the formation and work of the MRCS Task Force

Child Counsel

Leslie Heimov, Executive Director, Children's Law Center and Child Welfare Council member
Luciana Svidler, Director of Policy and Training, Children's Law Center of California,

Parent counsel

Brian Okamoto, Public Defender, Orange County

County Counsel

Jen McLaren, County Counsel, Sacramento County Counsel

Child Welfare

Diana Boyer, Director of Policy, CWDA

Providers

Chris Stoner-Mertz, Executive Director, CACFS California Alliance
Debbie Manners, CEO, Sycamores/Hathaway
Dianna Daly, Consultant, First Five Orange County, Public Health

Behavioral Health

Ken Epstein, Consultant and Former BH Director
Shefali D'Sa Vice President, Clinical Programs, School Based Mental Health, Sycamores

Pediatrician/health Professions:

Dr. Deirdre Bernard-Pearl, Pediatrician

Education

Dr. Laurel Bear, Consultant (K-12)
Sarah Neville Morgan, Deputy Superintendent, CDE
Hannah Epstein, School Social Worker

Law Enforcement

Christina Riehl, Deputy AG

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS (continued)

Poverty/Homelessness

Shellena Eskridge, CEO, Homeless Prenatal Program

Tribal Families

Cheryl Douglas, Wilton Rancheria

Advocates

Kris Weber, Senior Director of Child Welfare at the *National Center for Youth Law*

Janay Eustace, Executive Director, California Youth Coalition (CYC)

Child Care

Michael Olenick, President & CEO, Child Care Resource Center

Academic

Daniel Webster, Project Scientist and Principal Investigator, California Child Welfare Indicators Project (CCWIP), University of California, Berkeley,

California Department of Social Services

Kim Johnson, Director, California Department of Social Services

Domestic Violence

Chris Negri, Policy Director, CPEDV

DV/Child welfare: August 2 committee meeting on AB 2085 which included Sharon Balmer Cartagena and Lindsay Verity, Public Counsel, Shuray Ghorishi, FVAP, Stephanie Davidson, LA FLA, Zakia Afrin, MATRI, Tina Rios, Reimagining Child Safety, and Eve Sheedy.

External Communications

North Star

We Believe...

Background Statement



**Mandated Reporting to
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North Star

Our **North Star** is to keep children and families together, safe, well, and strengthened by the resources they need to thrive.



We Believe That...



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- All children deserve the right to grow up free from harm in their own family and thriving in their own strong communities that are well resourced.
- Moving from mandated reporting to community supporting will greatly help California children grow up healthy, happy and free from harm.
- The current child welfare mandated reporting system steals hope and personal power from families, minimizing their natural ability and strength to keep their children well and safe. This is especially true for African American, American Indian, and Latino families who disproportionately experience the trauma of intrusive investigations and sometimes harmful separation.
- The child welfare system must be free from racial and cultural bias. The structure of the current system results in a disproportionately negative impact on African American, American Indian, and Latino families. This must be fixed by better understanding how mandated reporting contributes to racism, and by recommending actions for change.
- Families and communities are the best agents of their own change and must be respected and trusted.
- Parents want to do what is best for their children and sometimes need help because they may lack the networks, supports, and services needed to bring about what they want for their children and their families.
- Communities must be well-resourced to be able to provide quality services to help families stay together and keep children well and safe.

External Statement on the Mandated Reporting to Community Supporting Task Force



Mandated Reporting to Community Supporting Task Force

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The name of our task force describes our goal of a child welfare system that shifts from *Mandated Reporting to Community Supporting* so all of California's children are well and safe, with families together and strengthened by the resources they need to thrive.

Together with a broad and diverse set of stakeholders, many of whom have personally experienced the negative impact of the current child welfare system, the Task Force will examine the policies, practices, and public beliefs that are driving the overuse of mandated reporting. The Task Force will make statewide policy and practice recommendations to help shift from overreporting families into a system, to supporting families in their communities that are well-resourced so they can thrive.

Most families can remain safely together when they have access to resources and community support. We know this because the data shows that a majority of child maltreatment reports in California are based on general neglect and often related to poverty conditions, with 85% of those reports never being substantiated for abuse or neglect. The current overuse of mandated reporting results in traumatic experiences instead of providing the needed supports. The trauma of overreporting falls disproportionately on African American, American Indian, and Latino children and families.

In addition to reforming policy and practice, the Task Force will help develop, disseminate, and reinforce a new statewide narrative to shift from fear-based reporting to community-based supporting, and build awareness of the better outcomes for children when they are raised by parents and families, not systems.

Everyone who cares about the future of our children and families has a role to play—teachers, health care providers, police, ministers, domestic violence experts, family members, neighbors, friends and journalists. Together we can move from mandatory reporting to community supporting and keep California's children well and safe with families together and strengthened by the community resources they need to thrive.

Add a story about how you became involved and stress that everyone has a role in keeping families safely together.

The Mandatory Reporting to Community Supporting Task Force was established in March 2023 by the California Child Welfare Council and members were selected and announced in August 2023. The Task Force has 35 members from diverse backgrounds and areas of expertise. Meetings of the task force are open to the public with a schedule and materials posted on the [Child Welfare Council website](#).

Subcommittees



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Subcommittee Overview

- We now have 101 people dedicate to the work of the Task Force
- 35 Task Force members
- 66 non-Task Force subcommittee members

Actions Since the October Task Force Meeting

- Appointed co-tri-chairs
- Thoughtfully and thoroughly deliberated about subcommittee member selection based on the 200+ applications we originally received
- Set agendas
- Begun to frame the work

First All-Member Subcommittee Meetings

- Select the breakout room that corresponds to your Subcommittee
- Public Participants - Please choose ONE Subcommittee meeting to attend. List is in the chat.
- Agendas will be provided in each breakout
- You have 75 minutes for subcommittee meetings
- We will NOT have time for a debrief after the breakouts. Subcommittees will take their next steps into their follow-up meetings.

Next Steps



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- **Subcommittees:**
 - Hold 1 – 2 working meetings prior to December 5 Task Force meeting
 - Chairs work with Staffers on all follow-up items
 - There will be a debrief and planning meeting coming up for all chairs, staffers, and advisors – watch for the doodle
- **Communications:** Please start using the Key Messages and let Beth and Kathy know if you have questions or need support.
- **Upcoming meetings**
 - December 5, 12 - 4pm (Task Force members in-person, Sacramento)
 - 2024 meeting dates will be set and sent by Friday, 11/17
- **Task Force Materials** are on the Child Welfare Council website on the MRCS Task Force page, <https://www.chhs.ca.gov/home/committees/california-child-welfare-council/#mandated-reporting-to-community-supporting-task-force>

Public Comment



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Thank you!

