



Mandated Reporting to Community Supporting Task Force

Communities Keeping Children Safe and Families Together

Mandated Reporting to Community Supporting Task Force Meeting October 16, 2023, 1:00 to 4:00 pm Meeting Minutes

[Meeting Recording](#)

[Meeting Slide](#) and [Data Slides](#)

In Attendance	Wendy Alvarez Dana E. Blackwell, Co-Chair Diana Boyer Charity Chandler-Cole André Chapman Sarah Cook Dr. Khush Cooper Elena Costa Roger De Leon Jr., Co-Chair Mercie DiGangi Diane Elias Kelly Graesch Shane Harris Tamara Hunter	Hilary Kerrigan Hillary Konrad Shelley Lopez Danielle Lowe Joan Miller Kathryn Miller Jenny Pearlman Tina Rios Zoila Perez Sanchez Jason Sharpe Melinda Sokolowski Luciana Svidler Arati Vasan Daniel Webster
Not in Attendance	Teresa Castillo Raina Perez-Diaz Janay Eustace Christina Riehl Erika F. Torres	
Opening Public Comment	None	

<p>Welcome and Introductions Approval of Minutes</p> <p>Co-Chairs Roger De Leon Jr. and Dana Blackwell</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Co-Chairs Roger De Leon Jr. and Dana Blackwell welcomed the Task Force members and guests. Dana made a land and labor acknowledgement, which will occur at the beginning of each Task Force meeting. ● Melinda Sokolowski moved to approve the minutes of the September 18, 2023 MRCS Task Force meeting and Khush Cooper seconded the motion. All voted in favor. ● Members introduced themselves by name and the role they represent on the Task Force.
<p>Legislative Updates</p> <p>Assembly Bill 2085</p> <p>Hillary Konrad</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Before AB 2085 and SB 1085, the Child Abuse and Neglect Reporting Act required mandated reporters to report known or suspected child abuse or neglect to child welfare services or law enforcement agencies and defined general neglect as: “the negligent failure of a person having care or custody of a child to provide adequate food, clothing, shelter, medical care, or supervision where no physical injury has occurred to the child.” ● Under this broad definition, the county child protection hotlines often receive calls alleging general neglect when parents are struggling to meet the basic needs of their children. General neglect and poverty related issues often intersect with racial disproportionality, where historically marginalized communities of color and tribal families continue to face systemic barriers that impede their access to basic resources and opportunities. ● However now that AB 2085 was enacted in January of 2023, the definition of general neglect has been amended to specify that a child must be at substantial risk of suffering serious physical harm or illness. The law also amended the Penal Code to say that general neglect does not include apparent economic disadvantage. ● There is also SB 1085, which amended sections of the Welfare and Institutions Code to ensure that children are not subjected to the jurisdiction of the juvenile court solely due to financial difficulties. The bill explicitly states that poverty and ability to provide essential items or the lack of emergency shelter should not be the sole reasons for court intervention. ● How do these laws intersect with the work of the Task Force? First, they set the stage to reform the mandated reporter system. Also, the laws align with the Task Force goals of implementing a community support model, as the bills emphasize the importance of diverting families from the child welfare system, referring families to services and utilizing community resources. Finally, the laws support the Task Force in rethinking when a hotline referral is absolutely necessary and when there are alternative ways that we can address the needs of the family, especially in situations where the issue is financial difficulty.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Regarding State guidance for these laws, CDSS is in the process of reviewing stakeholder feedback and final internal review. Guidance for implementing AB 2085 And SB 1085 should be released in December.
<p>Data Discussion: Ground the Work</p> <p>Daniel Webster</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● All the data shared today is from the UC Berkeley Child Welfare Indicators website. It is an extremely rich data source. Unlike any other around the country. ● Half a million children statewide are reported for maltreatment each year. In 2022, 441,000 children were the subject of a maltreatment report. This is unduplicated children. 200,000 kids every year were reported for general neglect. ● In 2022, CA had 441,000 children who were reported for maltreatment. 12% of those reports or 54,000 were substantiated. Over 350,000 reports were not substantiated. For education reporters, only 5% of the 100,000 reports were substantiated, that is approximately 5000 kids. The largest proportion of maltreatment reports that are substantiated come from law enforcement/legal. Almost three out of four maltreatment reports by law enforcement/legal do not get substantiated. ● Black children and Native American children are much more likely to be reported as a proportion of their presence in the population, compared to Latinos, Whites and Asians. For example, black children in 2022 had a rate of being reported of about 120 per 1000 as opposed to the white children who had a reporting rate of 40 per 1000. Black children are about three times more likely to have maltreatment reports compared to white kids when you're looking at in terms of their presence in the general population. ● There is a wide variability across the counties. There is also variability within counties. For example, Los Angeles has a lower rate than the State, however if you break it apart by zip code, or census block or census tracts, some places are much higher than the State. ● In this next graph instead of using the general child population as the denominator, we use the population of children in poverty as the underlying denominator. Basically, the takeaway here is that when you control for poverty, there is still a higher rate of blacks and Native American children investigated, substantiated, and entering care than white children. ● We linked in some Structured Decision Making data to look at interfering drug use for children who were investigated in 10 counties. Basically, the takeaway here is that over a quarter of the time children are subject of an investigation, there's some kind of interfering drug use is going on. It is important for us to know as we are developing a community pathway, that over a quarter of those investigated have substance use as an issue. And we need to break it down by other factors, such as economic insecurity, mental health issues, domestic violence. ● Moving forward, my hope is we'll unpack the data in a much more detailed way along the lines of geography, work, zip code or census tract, age and ethnicity.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Q&A
<p>Communications Development</p> <p>Kathy Bonk Beth Kuenstler</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Beth: We will be sharing a lot of qualitative data probably at our next meeting. We conducted key informant interviews and bringing those together with the data is important. Our next section is communications and building a consistent, clear framework, within which we can start to bring in both qualitative and quantitative data, to make our communications even stronger. We have done two communications workshops since our September meeting. Thank you to everyone who participated in one or both of those workshops. Our goal of the breakouts today is to discuss and finalize our North Star, our “we believe” statements and a starting point for our elevator background message. The elevator message articulates where we are as a Task Force right now and it will evolve over time. Our public participants who have joined us today will also be going into a separate breakout with a facilitated conversation. ● Report outs on North Star from break-out sessions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ “All children and families living in California have the resources and support they need to support their health, well-being and thrive.” It was important to include the word children to specifically call out that we are here to support children and our work is to ensure the safety, permanency and well-being of children. We also wanted to emphasize resources because mental health, wellness and having the ability to thrive requires a specific investment in resources if this is going to work. ○ We didn't think that “well-being” is the right word and we want to uplift the power of the community. We also felt that “safety” can be very subjective and safe and together is not mutually exclusive. ○ “Keep children and families safely together and thriving.” Safety also had some baggage and there was a strong desire to include thriving. We also talked about adding “with supports” but wanted it to be clear that doesn't mean surveillance. We liked having children and families next to each other. ● We Believe Statements: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Andre: We were thinking about how best to deal with headwinds that are going to come our way when people raise concerns about child safety. And the way that I've always looked at this is that we want the right kids to be in child welfare. We know there are kids out there who are abused, and we want those kids to be in the child welfare system. But unfortunately, we have a lot of kids that shouldn't be in the system. We are trying to serve the right kids. I also want to challenge us about the term “all children” shall have resources because we know more marginalized and underserved communities and under-invested communities are the ones we're talking about. But we are not saying it. Are we being very intentional and calling out kids that we know are coming into the child welfare system and negatively impacting those communities because they don't have resources?

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Dana: I want to put an exclamation point on what Andre said that this Task Force is not about abolishing mandated reporting. It is about right sizing. When Andre talks about those headwinds, I think we need to be realistic about the detractors from this effort, and we need to be very clear beyond our North Star about what we're not doing, what our goals are not and so we need to do some level of myth busting. And because we don't want groups to emerge that are going to counter our efforts, because I think ultimately, we all want the same thing. And we want kids to be safe. I think it'll be important for us to articulate that in our messaging. ○ Tina: We saw the data that shows a disproportionate impact on black families and Native American families. I think we should highlight black and indigenous families. Also, we are afraid of what the naysayers might say but this should not limit us doing what's right for black and indigenous families whose children are ripped apart from their families and not allowed to be breastfed and not allowed to have their cultural group growing up. We want to be sensitive to the naysayers but we also must do what's right. ○ Khush: There is a sequencing matter here and I don't know how to make it come alive in words, but until we resource communities and families adequately, we won't know which the right children are. It's all sort of in one big gordian knot. We have to support communities and families first and then be able to assess correctly how we can right size the system.
<p>Subcommittee Formation and Planning</p> <p>Roger De Leon Jr Dana Blackwell Task Force Members</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Sub-committee Break-outs: The work of the subcommittee is the work of the Task Force. Task Force members will go into breakout sessions based on their chosen subcommittees. They will discuss subcommittee composition, co-chairs, and immediate next steps to get their work launched. The public participants will again go into their own breakout room for a facilitated conversation. <p><u>Report Outs:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Policy and Practice: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Subcommittee meetings will be open to the public because we had over 38 other applicants who were not selected to sit on the subcommittee. We will have a public comment at the beginning of our policy subcommittee meetings to allow input from the public. ○ Three co-chairs: Shane Harris, Luciana and Charity Chandler-Cole – diverse experiences and perspectives ● Data and Research: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ We are going to review the full list of subcommittee applicants. ○ Tri-chairs: Sabrina Forte, Jason Sharpe and Daniel Webster

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Comment: Are Data and Research meetings going to be at the same time as other subcommittee meetings? We will need them sprinkled into each of the subcommittees for support. ○ Beth: Each subcommittee will figure out your own schedules and the hope is that there you're not meeting at the same time because there's going to be so much cross pollination as we go. ○ Dana: It will be important that the staffers of each subcommittee share what the needs are across the subcommittees so that there can be cross-pollination. That will be one of the roles for the staffers. ● Legal/Liability: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Co-chairs will be Arati Vasan and Jenny Pearlman. ○ We are going to meet on Friday to make some final decisions about subcommittee composition. ○ We talked about also that this group, along with some of the other groups have a tremendous amount of overlap. When we are discussing legislative fixes, in particular, it will be important for us to work together. We also recognize that there are many groups in California who are already doing a lot of legislative work, including the people who helped to get AB 2085 passed. It will be important for us to connect with them and ensure we are not doing our work in a vacuum. ● Curriculum & Training <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ We are comfortable with the subcommittee size of 24 and feel we have a variety of experience and backgrounds. We want to keep the remaining 30 optional group members, for a town hall or survey input. ○ Co-Chairs: Danielle Lowe and Melinda Sokolowski ○ Focus points: (1) address the bias piece, (2) adult learning, (3) coaching elements of training and curriculum, and (4) stay aligned with the other subcommittees so possibly leaning on more data to help us stay focused. ● Legal Definition of Neglect <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ We had a little blip in the action and that our seat categorization on the subcommittee list was a little bit jumbled up. ○ Co-chairs: Tina Rios. We will choose two others once the categories are fixed and looking for chairs in the areas of domestic violence, healthcare, legal, or lived experience. ○ We think 18 is a good size for our subcommittee but we wanted to look at the other 27 to fill any needs for additional expertise. ● Public breakout: Feedback on issues including liability and partnering with community-based organizations. Also discussed the historical context of systems that have harmfully impacted black and tribal families.
<p>Next Steps & Announcements</p> <p>Beth Kuenstler</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● We are going to fine tune the elevator speech and the “we believe” statements and finalize our North Star based on feedback.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● We will be working to stand up the subcommittees and provide support to the Chairs. ● Next Task Force meeting is virtual on November 13, 2023. ● The following meeting will be in person in Sacramento on December 5, 2023. We will have a hybrid opportunity for public participation. ● There is a link on the Child Welfare Council site for Mandated Reporting Community Supporting Task Force that has all the materials from previous meetings and upcoming meetings.
<p>Closing Public Comment</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Public Comment 1: I just wanted to bring up the issue of the historical context. And we have historically believe that certain institutions, whether it's law enforcement, whether it's child welfare, whether it's the courts have been designed to help victims and I can say emphatically that that has not been my experience nor the experience of protective of mothers who have tried to protect their children through these various systems, particularly family court and child welfare. These systems must be understood from the historical context that they were founded in. Child welfare did not always serve black families and once they did in the 1960s, there began a procedure for removing the children from the families as opposed to when they were servicing only white families in the 1940s and the 1950s when they were focused on keeping those families intact. I think the historical context should be pivotal and intrinsic to recognizing that how we move forward is from a foundation of just rethinking the entire system as opposed to reforming our way through it. That historical context is important. ● Public Comment 2: We know that white children are less likely to be reported due to racism and economic resources such as bigger homes, private insurance, private school attendances. I'm a black woman and retired from the US Army with lived experience with the systems. I'm also a protective parent. And with the statement that we were trying to choose, I'm like keeping the word children and families next to each other.
<p>Closing Roger De Leon Jr Dana Blackwell</p>	