



Mandated Reporting to Community Supporting Task Force

Communities Keeping Children Safe and Families Together

**Mandated Reporting to Community Supporting Task Force Meeting
December 5, 2023, 1:00 to 4:00 pm
Meeting Minutes**

[Recording](#)

[Slide deck](#)

In Attendance	TASK FORCE MEMBERS	ADVISORY/PROJECT MANAGEMENT	GUESTS/PRESENTERS
	<p><u>In person:</u> Dana E. Blackwell, Co-Chair Roger De Leon Jr., Co-Chair</p> <p>Diana Boyer Charity Chandler-Cole André Chapman Sarah Cook Dr. Khush Cooper Mercie DiGangi Janay Eustace Shane Harris Tamara Hunter Hillary Konrad Shelley Lopez Danielle Lowe Joan Miller Kathryn Miller Jenny Pearlman Raina Peres-Diaz Christina Riehl Tina Rios</p>	<p><u>In person:</u> Beth Kuenstler Katie Albright Juliet Cox Vanessa Spignoli Cheryl Treadwell Kathy Icenhower David Swanson-Hollinger Selena Childs Lori Clarke Wendy DeTata Alli Schisler Doris Tolliver</p> <p><u>Virtual:</u> Derek Slama Faiqa Ejaz Palak Shah</p>	<p><u>In person:</u> Rebecca Jones Gaston Jennifer Troia Justin Lee Sabrina Forte</p>

	Zoila Perez Sanchez Luciana Svidler Daniel Webster <u>Virtual:</u> Arati Vasan Diane Elias Erika Torres Janay Eustace Melinda Sokolowski		
WELCOME Roger De Leon Jr. and Dana Blackwell	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Co-Chairs Roger De Leon Jr. and Dana Blackwell welcomed the Task Force members and guests to our first in-person and hybrid meeting. ● Task Force members and guests introduced themselves ● Approved minutes from MRCS November 13th meeting 		
PUBLIC COMMENT	<p><u>Lakota Jackson:</u> She is a former foster parent of 8 years. Over the past three years, her children were removed from her and separated. She went back to school, received an AA and BA, and is now working on a masters degree to become a social worker and address the differences within this legal system and to prevent African American children from being taken at greater numbers.</p> <p><u>Dr. Lisa Pion-Berlin:</u> Parents Anonymous has a parent and youth helpline in collaboration with OCAP, open daily from 8 AM to 10 PM for people who are in crisis or just feeling stressed. Also, Parents Anonymous has been selected to run the national parent and youth helpline starting in 2024.</p>		
GROUNDING THE WORK: CALIFORNIA ON THE NATIONAL STAGE Dana Blackwell Doris Tolliver Rebecca Jones Gaston Jennifer Troia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Dana thanked Tennille Nicks from the California Department of Social Services who was integral in supporting the planning and implementation of the first in person meeting. Dana also recognized Selena Childs who staffs the research and data subcommittee from Casey Family Programs for her technical assistance with the meeting. ● Dana acknowledged some of the leadership and work in the prevention space: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ As the Co-Chairs of the Child Welfare Council’s Prevention and Early Intervention (PEI) committee, David Swanson Hollinger and Kathy Eisenhower took seriously the opportunity presented by FFPSA and AB 2085 and through the PEI committee made recommendations to translate the opportunity into action. ○ CDSS Branch Chief Cheryl Treadwell and OCAP Bureau Chief, Hillary Konrad contracted with Safe & Sound to examine the impact of mandated reporting and make recommendations to shift to community support. The issue brief that Jenny Pearlman and Katie Albright have championed has been a foundation to the work of this Task Force. ○ Juliet Cox who facilitates the California Citizen Review Panel did an excellent job finalizing mandated reporting recommendations to the State. 		

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Dana emphasized that she acknowledged these people because leadership matters. And it is the collective opportunity of this Task Force to influence change for children and families in California.● National prevention overview: Rebecca Jones Gaston, MSW, Commissioner, Administration on Children, Youth and Families (ACYF)<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ The Commissioner shared that she sits in the oldest child serving position in the federal government, created in 1912 to lead the Children's Bureau, which is the oldest federal level child service agency. As a person of color, and someone who has her own lived experience with child welfare, these facts give her pause. It is important to think about the foundations of the system which many of us have dedicated our lives to in a variety of ways. There is a lot that has not changed within the system, within the drivers, within the rules. The way the current system is structured and how it serves is not working for most of the community.○ The Commissioner challenged the folks without lived experience to let those that have it lead. People talk about community pathways as a new thing. However, communities have been taking care of themselves for a long time across different cultures and regions. Governmental systems should stay quiet and listen to the knowledge and wisdom that has been pushed aside and bring that to the forefront.○ There is a report that will come out in January which shows that approximately 75% of calls to hotlines are for neglect. When that neglect is directly tied to poverty, families aren't going to get what they need from the child welfare system because it is not structured or intended to help people who are experiencing the challenges that poverty brings. Additionally, the Commissioner urged looking at the disparities and disproportionality in communities which have been marginalized and harmed throughout the nation's history.○ Finally, the Commissioner shared that she is watching this Task Force and the work that California is doing in mandated reporting. Although the federal government is interested in this issue, based on her experience sitting at multiple levels of government, the things we are talking about will more likely happen from leadership at the County or State level. The local demonstration of what is possible will impact the federal legislation. She has confidence that California will be a leader in this space and stated that the Task Force can count on the Children's Bureau as thought partners and support on this journey.○ These materials were shared as related background and information: How the Child Welfare System Works, Child Welfare Acronyms, Child Welfare System Overview: Federal, State, and County Roles
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- California’s vision of prevention through a Community Pathway: [Jennifer Troia](#), Chief Deputy Director, California Department of Social Services (CDSS)
 - Chief Deputy Director Troia shared that she is an adoptive parent and a non-relative extended family member caregiver for her adopted daughter’s older biological sister. They have a very open and blended family that includes birth family, adoptive family, and informal caregiving. Troia brings the lens of her experience into these spaces.
 - CDSS’ vision for prevention includes a community pathway that:
 - Is integrated, comprehensive, and statewide
 - Provides safe, stable, and nurturing environments
 - Supports families prior to child welfare involvement
 - Prevents child abuse and neglect.
 - The CDSS theory of change recognizes that work must occur at multiple levels including policy, practice and community as well as across systems and programs at the State and local levels. CDSS administers programs across the array of supports and services beyond child welfare, including safety net programs that provide cash aid, nutrition support and childcare with the goal of integration so that families can have access to the full array no matter which door they enter. CDSS has reached historic levels of investment in safety net programs including doubling subsidized childcare.
 - Chief Deputy Director Troia shared that last year in CA, a black child was 3 times more likely and an American Indian child 2.5 times more likely than a white child to be the subject of an abuse and neglect allegation. Racial equity is a pillar of CDSS’ vision for prevention. CDSS is actively and intentionally applying a racial equity lens in support of the county prevention and community-based efforts. CDSS is also addressing the equity issues that are facing LGBTQ+ youth. Centering equity means working in partnership and engaging those with lived experiences. Director Johnson established the Office of Equity, which is leading the equity planning work across all of the divisions. CDSS has been prioritizing and lifting up the implementation of the Indian Child Welfare Act, including prevention-focused strategies and recognizing that a law on the books is not sufficient unless it is fully carried out with fidelity.
 - Chief Deputy Director Troia shared that California’s Family First Prevention plan was approved by the federal government. The State invested \$222 million in block grants to counties, communities and tribes to support prevention work and to bridge to the Family First funding. Forty-nine counties and two tribes submitted comprehensive prevention plans and 30 of those counties included a community pathway.
- Q&A
 - Commissioner stated some of the ways they are collaborating across agencies to meet the needs of kids and families include multi-department webinars that include grantees; collective brainstorming to ensure children

	<p>and families receive what they need before a crisis; and joint communications.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Commissioner addressed a question about barriers to discussing and addressing racial justice by saying that the President has explicitly said that his administration is going to focus on addressing racism, structural racism and equity. The systems have been built and coalesced over centuries so it is a matter of figuring out where to chip away to crack that foundation. And also being very intentional, clear and having agreement about what we are trying to achieve and what that looks like. ○ Chief Deputy Director Troia responded to a question about prioritizing disproportionality and disparity by expressing her gratitude to work for a Governor who is incredibly explicit about these goals and at all levels of leadership there is an understanding the goal is to disrupt poverty and racism. ○ Commissioner responded to a question about the need for an ICWA type law for African American families by stating that her focus is on changing behavior and systems rather than laws. And in the past 45+ years it has been demonstrated that the law doesn't change behavior. She would rather focus on the strategy or the lever to drive change in behavior and outcomes.
<p>GROUNDING THE WORK: RESEARCH & DATA</p> <p>Daniel Webster Justin Lee Sabrina Forte</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Daniel Webster, UC Berkeley CCWIP: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Half a million kids in CA are the subject of allegations due to neglect each year. Most allegations come from the education system. However, according to the data, during lockdown, the kids were not less safe. ○ There is a large number of kids who aren't being served when they are reported. We want to target our efforts at unpacking the needs of those families and meeting their needs so that the children don't become serially reported thereby increasing the risk of child welfare involvement. ○ Racial disparities when controlling for poverty: black kids are much more likely than white kids to become system involved at every point along the child welfare continuum: allegations, investigations, substantiations, entries and time in care. The same is true for Native Americans children. However, Latino and Asian children are not more likely than white children when you control for poverty. ○ We started a Substance Use Disorder Data workgroup to get a better handle on the kids that come to our attention under the neglect category. This data comes from 10 counties. There were over 130,000 children who were the subject of an investigation. Of those, the caretakers who had substance use disorder as a complicating factor was 27%. If we layer on domestic violence and mental health issues, this would cover a large portion of the children who had child welfare investigations. We want to provide services for these families rather than refer them to child welfare if

there's not a safety threat. We need to build community supports for these issues.

- Justin Lee, Casey Family Programs:
 - We have been talking in the Research & Data Subcommittee about how we weave together stories, data, and research to give us a bigger picture, to give us a more comprehensive understanding and how do we lift these up in a different way than they haven't been lifted up before.
 - Stories give us better understanding of what we know from research and data so it's a balanced perspective and also help us identify gaps in the data.
 - Data gives us those opportunities to analyze what we hear from the stories and at a macro level, test some of those hypotheses based on what we know from research, but then set goals and manage with data.
 - Research should not occur in a vacuum, it connects as the third leg of this stool by demonstrating what works and encourages critical thinking.
 - Stories, data and research together will provide a fuller picture of what we have to achieve when we're making that shift from mandated reporting, which we know harms families. We know it doesn't prevent child abuse and neglect. And we know we can do better. How do we pull that all together to say, here are strategies to prevent harm, rectify these situations, and get us on a path to transformation?

- Sabrina Forte, CDSS
 - In the Research & Data Subcommittee meeting today we are going to be developing a protocol for when you all are seeking stories, research, and data to inform your recommendations. We want to create a process by which you provide that research question to us and we quickly rally the expertise of the R&D subcommittee and feed information back to you.
 - Questions for the Subcommittees: How are you hoping to use stories, data and research in your subcommittee? What stories, data and research will inform the work of your subcommittee best?
 - Policy & Practice: We are being very intentional around implementation and practice. We want to know about available funding as well as opportunities to reallocate existing funds from programs that are not working to support policies and programs that would be more effective such as community support and investments.
 - Training & Curriculum: We want to consider the different platforms that mandated reporters utilize so we can see there is an impact. For example, if law enforcement are using virtual versus in person more, does that have an impact on the calls that are made in actual implementation of mandated reporting? Is there any research out there about that? Also, we wanted to look at a gold standard for length of time where people retain knowledge and information so we can make those recommendations on how to roll out trainings. Any data or research to support best implementation for learning.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Legal/Liability: What will change the mindset of mandated reporters? How do you change that bias from the outset? How do we move mandated reporters from a report report report mindset as the way to get support for children? How do mandated reporters then feel comfortable that they can actually connect the family to resources? Statutory research on legal liability will also be significant for our subcommittee. ● Comments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ How do we change the negative narratives that impact African-American communities? We are fighting against a tidal wave of negativity and imagery of black folks and families and Latino folks and families through media and television. I think that's a core question for all of us. How do we begin to change the narratives? ○ This work that we're all doing is so brand new that I'm wondering if the R&D Subcommittee could look at funding or grants for us to conduct new research. I actually don't know if you're going to find much out there that's going to apply to what we're doing because we are doing some groundbreaking work here. What are the questions that we can't answer with the existing research, data and stories? ○ One place that we need stories is where people were revictimized by proxy of the child welfare system. Domestic violence perpetrators know how harmful these systems are and they use it to hold over their victims and instead of helping these families they're torn apart. ○ One other thing that I would like to see are the nurturing factors. We talk about the risks of abuse but what about the protective factors? Maybe if we looked for nurturing factors, that would change our perspectives
<p>NEXT STEPS AND CLOSING REMARKS Beth Kuentler Dana Blackwell Roger De Leon, Jr</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Beth made quick announcements: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 2024 Task Force meetings have been set. Watch for the 2024 meeting schedule in your email. ○ All Task Force materials are on the Child Welfare Council website on the MRCS Task Force page: California Child Welfare Council - California Health and Human Services ● Dana made a labor and land acknowledgement and requested that the Subcommittees also start their meetings with such acknowledgements.
<p>SUBCOMMITTEE WORKING SESSIONS</p>	
<p>PUBLIC COMMENTS – SUBCOMMITTEE MEETINGS</p>	