

**INCARCERATED PARENTING PLAN STUDY COMMITTEE  
Microsoft Teams Video Conference  
And In-Person  
Nashville, Tennessee**

**Minutes  
August 28, 2024**

The Incarcerated Parenting Plan Study Committee met this day at 1:00 PM CT for a meeting both in person and utilization of a Microsoft Teams forum. Notice being given seven (7) days prior on the Tennessee Department of Correction and TN.GOV website. Roll was called and a quorum was established, with the following members present:

**MEMBERS PRESENT**

Representative Jody Barrett	Representative John Ray Clemmons
Suzanne Carr	Gail Fenkell
Kenlyn Foster <sup>1</sup>	Darren Goods
Richard Kennedy	

**MEMBERS ABSENT**

Anne-Louise Wirthlin

**GUESTS PRESENT**

Ashley Fuqua, Department of Correction, Legislative Director

Rose Naccarato, Department of Correction, Director of Research & Planning

**AGENDA**

**Welcome and Call to Order.<sup>2</sup>**

**Discussion of Current State Resources, Fenkell**

1. TDOC Resources for Incarcerated Parents, Fenkell shared a presentation with the group as well as discussed programs for incarcerated parents available through TDOC and its facilities.<sup>3</sup> This includes the overnight stays, parenting classes, and a father daughter dance. There were brief comments about the roll out of tablets that may assist with visitations. Ms. Fenkell also provided her thoughts about what a recommendation report should encompass.
  - a. Kennedy asked about current capacity for overnight visitations.
  - b. Rep. Clemmons asked about consideration of TDOC placement to alleviate strain on

<sup>1</sup> Kenlyn Foster participated by electronic means through a Microsoft Teams forum.

<sup>2</sup> At this time, a quorum did not exist in person so no formal business could take place. Ms. Fenkell began by sharing information about the Department of Correction and current resources for incarcerated parents.

<sup>3</sup> The presentation will be made available on the meeting posting.

families and the ability for children to visit inmates.

**Discussion of Legislative Intent of Public Chapter 1068**, Foster

What is the legislative intent? As Juvenile Judge representative, is the bill pertaining to Title 36 or 37. Title 36 is a parenting plan as you would think-coparenting- or is the application to Title 37 involving dependency and neglect. DCS handles permanency plans. Also, does this apply to TDOC inmates in prisons or TDOC inmates in local jails or all incarcerated parents in general. It is unclear by the bill's language.

Ms. Fuqua read the public chapter to have it on record. She suggested members could watch testimony from when the bill was presented during the 2024 session. and told the committee it was up to the study committee members to decide what information they felt pertinent to include in the recommendation report to the General Assembly.

An in-person quorum was established.

**Roll Call & Meeting Logistics**, Fuqua

- Roll Call. 7 members were present, 1 member was absent at the time of the roll call. A quorum was established.

**New Business**, Fenkell

1. Election of the Chair.
  - a. Foster moved to take a vote on the positions.
  - b. Discussion, Richard Kennedy made the nomination of Kenlyn Foster to serve as Chair. Gail Fenkell made a second to the motion.

Foster accepts the nomination. Voting in the affirmative:

- a. Rep. Barrett
- b. Suzanne Carr
- c. Rep. Clemmons
- d. Gai Fenkell
- e. Darren Goods
- f. Richard Kennedy

2. Election of the Vice-Chair.

- a. Rep. Clemmons makes the motion that Richard Kennedy serve as Vice-Chair. Gail Fenkell made a second to the motion.

Kennedy accepts the nomination. Voting in the affirmative:

- a. Rep. Barrett
- b. Suzanne Carr
- c. Rep. Clemmons
- d. Gail Fenkell

- e. Kenlyn Foster
- f. Darren Goods

Richard Kennedy abstains from the vote as he is the nomination.

#### Discussion of Current State Resources

1. Commission on Children & Youth, Kennedy shared there is a broad mission for the commission which was created by the General Assembly. Mr. Kennedy provided an overview of the commission and systems improvement as well as spoke about the counsel members. The Commission creates learning opportunities as well as serves as the state advisory group for Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention. Discussion of grant funding for nonprofits as well as reports and research and data. There is an Annual State of the Child report each year. Review of all state and federal dollars spent on children in the state. Second Look Commission is a statutory facet assigned to the committee where they look at abuse of children and provide recommendations to the General Assembly. The biggest component of the Commission is the collaborative arm. This is where the Commission may be able to provide information to the study committee. TDOC's overnight visitation was born out of this type of work. Children with incarcerated parents would influence the well-being of the child.
2. Department of Human Services, Carr shares that the most relevant work DHS is doing in this realm is its Office of Reentry for child support. DHS has created a fatherhood program that assists nonprofits with grants across the state. DHS thinks there is room to bridge the gap for families that are incarcerated.
  1. Fenkell asked if DHS had funding available for recently released moms for childcare.
3. Department of Children's Services, Goods said the focus of the department is on the child. We must be careful if children have been victims of abuse. Focus is not on incarcerated parents at this point but on children. Mr. Good discussed some of his work with the Casey Family Foundation and its focus on fatherhood. DCS does provide wrap around services to assist so that children do not come into DCS custody.

#### Housekeeping, Chairlady Foster

1. Secretary position, Chairlady Foster, Is there a need for a secretary? Ashley Fuqua agreed to record the minutes. Vice-Chair Kennedy agreed that Ashley could record the minutes and minutes would be an addendum to the official recommendation report to the General Assembly.
2. Contact Sheet, Chairlady Foster asked that a member sheet be compiled. Ms. Fuqua will compile a member contact information sheet and send to members.<sup>4</sup>
3. Future meeting dates, Chairlady Foster asked if these had been given consideration. Ms. Fenkell said yes, TDOC chose dates to assist with the study committee's business and the report being finalized. Ms. Fuqua clarified selected dates on the agenda. The future meeting dates and calendar invites will be sent by Ms. Fuqua. Ms. Fuqua volunteered to continue provide

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<sup>4</sup> Contact Information for each member will serve as an addendum to the August minutes.



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administrative support for the study committee.

- a. Chairlady Foster asked for motion to accept future meeting dates printed on the agenda. Vice-Chair Kennedy seconded motion. Motion was approved by acclamation.
- b. September Agenda Items, Chairlady Foster asks that all members bring to the September meeting wants, desires, barriers. Fenkell agreed-where are gaps, do we know any industry best practices, and how do we tie it together with this collaboration. Kennedy asked for a presentation for incarcerated individuals-age, how many have children. Rose Naccarto did discuss data the department had collected over time. Chairlady wants to note in the final report that this may be a place we need more data and reporting. Kennedy wants to know incarcerated population in jails, prison, contract facilities which will help frame data and report. Goods did say it may be difficult to collect data from local jails since no unified reporting system within courts. Clemmons asked if state would not know those numbers. Fenkell said if not state inmates, information is self-reported and may not be known.
- c. Data Sharing, Rep. Clemmons wants to know if a mechanism for data sharing.
  - i. Chairlady Foster asked about agenda setting and a shared file for information.
  - ii. Suzanne Carr suggests agenda items or information be sent to Ashley Fuqua for distribution since she is acting as coordinator for the study committee and no meeting will be conducted outside of the public meeting laws.

**Announcements**, Chairlady Foster

There was no additional new business. There were no public comments.


Chairlady Foster made a motion to Dismiss as business has been concluded. The motion was seconded by all other members present.

The meeting adjourned at 1:59 p.m.

Approved:

  
Chairlady Kenlyn Foster

10/29/2024  
Date

  
Vice-Chair Richard Kennedy

10/31/2024  
Date

**Addendum 1**

**Incarcerated Parenting Plan Study Committee Members  
Contact Information**

1. Kenlyn Foster, Chair  
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2. Richard Kennedy, Vice-Chair  
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3. Representative Jody Barrett  
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4. Representative John Ray Clemmons  
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5. Suzanne Carr  
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6. Gail Fenkell  
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8. Anne-Louise Wirthlin

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