



**STATE OF TENNESSEE  
TENNESSEE COMMISSION ON CHILDREN AND YOUTH**

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**CHILDREN'S SERVICES COMMITTEE**  
Beersheba Springs Assembly, Eastside, Banks  
Thursday, November 7, 2019  
1:00 – 2:00 p.m.

**MINUTES**

**Members Present**

Amy Jones, Chair  
Kelly Drummond  
Steven Neely 1:35 pm

**Members Absent**

Hailey Brooks  
Jennie Harlan  
Rob Mortensen  
Wendy Shea  
Glenda Terry

**Staff Present**

Cory Bradfield  
Jennifer Drake-Croft  
Laritha Fentress  
Craig Hargrow  
Sumita Keller  
Melissa McGee  
Jerri Moore  
Jill Murphy  
Gerald Papica  
Steve Petty

I. Welcome and Introductions – Amy Jones, Children's Services Committee Chair

Jones called the Children's Services Committee meeting to order at 1:10 p.m. There was a quorum for the meeting. Three of eight commission members were present.

II. Approval of Minutes

**IT WAS MOVED (NEELY) AND SECONDED (DRUMMOND) TO APPROVE THE AUGUST 15, 2019 CHILDREN'S SERVICES COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES. UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED.**

III. Ombudsman Program Update – Gerald Papica

From August 1, 2019 to September 30, 2019, the TCCY Ombudsman Program received 23

new referrals. This figure is consistent with 26 referrals received for the same reporting period last year. The case types are as follows: 22 (95.5 percent) Open/Active Cases and 1 (4 percent) Information-Only case. Thirteen referrals or 57 percent came from three regions (Northeast, Knox and South Central), six referrals or 26.1 percent were logged for three regions (Davidson, Mid-Cumberland, and Smoky Mountain), and four referrals or 17.4 percent were received from four regions (Shelby, Southwest, TN Valley, and Upper Cumberland). No referrals were received from East TN and Northwest regions.

Please refer to handouts distributed to the Children’s Services Committee covering a span of three months.

Dr. Papica spent the last few months preparing for the Ombudsman Program Four-Year Report covering 2015 to 2019. The document was published on the TCCY Ombudsman Program website. He also sent copies of the report to all 12 DCS regions and CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocates) offices. Highlights of the narrative during the Children’s Services Committee meeting included Ombudsman Executive Summary, total number of referrals, trends, metrics, referrals by region, placements, legal representation of children, case outcomes, child outcomes, and recommendations on strengths and opportunities.

As mentioned in the last Commission Meeting, Dr. Papica was re-elected to the USOA Board of Directors for FY 2019-2021. The newly elected board of directors have unanimously re-assigned him as the vice president.

Discussion:

Jones commented, “A lot of work. Thank you very much.”

#### IV. Youth Transitions Advisory Council Update – Steve Petty

The Youth Transitions Advisory Council (YTAC) met October 3 for its final 2019 meeting. The Council had updates from the Departments of Children’s Services and Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services. Youth Connections from Nashville and the River City Youth Collective from Chattanooga represented the Resource Centers and Youth Villages also provided an update on the YV LifeSet program.

Scott Ridgway presented on the Tennessee Suicide Prevention Network’s recent expansion to allow them to provide staff in each region across the state.

The YTAC Annual Report was completed and delivered to the General Assembly October 31. Significant efforts were made this year to reduce the length and increase the readability of the report. A subcommittee of the Council reviewed the recommendations and reduced them to ten. Staff made the decision to post the Council meeting summaries on the website instead of including them in the report. Naccarato helped assemble and layout all the pieces of the report, then Russette Sloan proofed the entire report. The results of these changes reduced the report by almost 100 pages.

Highlights from the YTAC Annual Report:

In 2019, 876 youth aged out of DCS custody with 741 eligible for Extension of Foster Care Services. Of the 741, 44 percent or 332 accepted the services.

There are two scholarship programs available: The federally funded Education and Training Voucher and the State Bright Futures Scholars. In 2019 there were a total of 708 young people receiving these scholarships, a significant increase from 2018's 541.

There are two primary reasons youth do not accept EFC services: Academically ineligible (23 percent) and simply refused (23 percent.)

The Youth Transitions Advisory Council set the following meeting dates for 2020: April 30, June 18 meeting jointly with Council on Children's Mental Health, August 6, and October 1, 2020. The location will be determined closer to the meeting date.

Discussion:

1. Drummond asked, "Could they have a scholarship and not be in Extended Foster Care?" Petty replied in the affirmative.
2. Comments were made by Petty, Jones, and McGee about DCS' inability to locate children in state custody. The status or whereabouts of these missing children are not documented in TFACTS.

#### V. Building Strong Brains Update – Jennifer Drake-Croft

##### Training for Trainers

Since August, TCCY has conducted 3 Training for Trainers events bringing the total number of BSB Trainers to 1,073. TCCY conducted two special T4T's with Child Care Resource and Referral and Rotary Clubs in the Shelby County/Mississippi area. These trainings were to advance specific training goals related to BSB activities. TCCY staff also reviewed 250 applications for 108 T4T slots available for the Fall 2019 T4T's. In an effort to prioritize the rural/distressed counties, the first of these trainings occurred in Blount County on October 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup>. Two upcoming trainings include one T4T event in Grundy County on November 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> and another in Madison County on December 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup>. Reports indicate that trainers have presented to over 50,000 additional individuals.

##### Webinar Series

Drake-Croft oversees the execution of a webinar series to further the professional development of the BSB TN learning collaborative. In September, Judge Sheila Calloway and Court Administrator Kathy Sinback conducted a webinar detailing their work to build a trauma-informed Juvenile Court in Davidson County. In October, Dr. Mary Crnabori presented a webinar on how Metro Nashville Public Schools is supporting district-wide systems change to promote trauma-informed policies and practices in schools. Each webinar is recorded and uploaded to TCCY's YouTube page.

##### Social Media Campaign

Drake-Croft continues work on the BSB TN social media campaign. The goal of this campaign is to continue to advance public understanding of early brain development, serve and return interactions, toxic stress, adverse childhood experiences, and strategies to promote resilience. A group of communications professionals from partner organizations helps to develop content for the campaign. Since April, TCCY's twitter posts related to the social media campaign have made 140,103 impressions and Facebook posts have reached 48,726 people.

Other early childhood efforts:

Drake-Croft was asked by Amerigroup to provide a presentation to their Leadership Team on strategies to address ACEs using Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health practices. Drake-Croft provided this presentation with Alison Peak, CEO of Allied Behavioral Health, on October 3rd. As a result, Amerigroup asked for the submission of a pilot proposal. Alison Peak will take the lead on proposal development and Drake-Croft will continue to be engaged and support the work.

#### VI. Council on Children's Mental Health and System of Care Updates– Melissa McGee

CCMH has held two meetings since the last Commission meeting, August 22<sup>nd</sup> and October 10<sup>th</sup>. The August 22<sup>nd</sup> meeting focused on issues of immigration for children and families with 92 in attendance, and the October 10<sup>th</sup> meeting focused on school-based mental health services and supports with 67 in attendance. These meetings were held at the new, state-of-the-art Family and Children's Services' Honey Alexander Center.

CCMH has identified stakeholder meeting dates for 2020, they are:

Thursday, February 13, 2020  
Thursday, April 23, 2020  
Thursday, June 18, 2020  
Thursday, August 20, 2020  
Thursday, October 15, 2020

In early October, Jerri Moore, who served as the first and only SOCAT Divisional Coordinator for West Tennessee, transitioned into the Southwest Regional Coordinator position with TCCY. While SOCAT is sad to lose her, we are pleased she remains with TCCY. In consultation with TDMHSAS it was determined that TCCY will not fill the West Tennessee SOCAT Divisional Coordinator position with less than a year remaining of guaranteed funding. Moore continued to attend the variety of regular Community Advisory Boards, Health Councils, and other committees and serves as the Secretary of the Jackson-Madison Prevention Coalition and co-chairs the TDMHSAS Region VI Children's Committee. Moore supports TCCY staff work on Building Strong Brains and Knowledge Mobilization Teams and provides feedback on T4T applicants.

Laritha Fentress, Middle Tennessee Divisional Coordinator, had a busy season since the last Commission meeting with 15 SOCAT presentations with a total of 131 in attendance. Fentress is a Certified Family Support Specialist and recently completed a two-day intensive training-for-trainers, as well as a three-day follow up observation training, in an effort to become one of two Tennessee trainers for supervisors of CFSS personnel. And Jill Murphy, East Tennessee Divisional

Coordinator, has returned to work after an extended leave of absence and continues to support SOCAT teams in her division as well as work with TCCY Regional Coordinators to further the Knowledge Mobilization Team efforts in their respective regions.

VII. Home Visiting Leadership Alliance Update – Sumita Keller

HVLA met once on October 29th since our last Commission meeting. At the October 29th meeting, our partners at the Tennessee Department of Health (TDH) provided an update on the activities of TDH to the HVLA, including additional proposed funding for counties/expansion that emerged as higher risk through the needs assessment. TDH also alerted the group they would begin using capacity and retention data to determine funding beginning in fall of 2020. The afternoon was spent in facilitated discussion “visioning” for the goals of the HVLA. The group identified two areas of focus for their work – Capacity & Retention and Workforce Development. The next scheduled HVLA meeting is scheduled for January 14, 2020. The membership will use this time to further explore the two identified topic areas.

VIII. Tennessee Young Child Wellness Update – Cory Bradfield

A full TNYCWC meeting was held 09/10 at Family and Children’s Service. The first half of the meeting was spent in Action Team breakouts. Afterward, the meeting consisted of updates from a variety of partners including the TN Dept of Health, AIMHiTN, and TCCY. The next full TNYCWC meeting is scheduled for 12/11 from 10-2 at Family and Children’s Service and will feature a presentation from Child Trends on integrated early childhood data systems, a key priority of the TNYCWC Data Action Team. The steering Team met via conference call on 08/13, with their next meeting scheduled for 11/13. The three Action Teams – Communications, Data, and Policy – are working on the strategic plan and have each met once via conference call in addition to the breakouts at the 09/11 meeting:

- Communications – 08/05
- Data – 08/21
- Policy – 09/04

The TN Department of Health (TDH) is contracting with Consilience Group and the Early Success Coalition (ESC) to conduct trainings for cohorts of CHANT teams and Evidence Based Home Visiting providers in order to foster collaboration in community-based referrals to early childhood supports and services. TDH views the TNYCWC as a potential venue for collaboration among these entities, and the ESC and Consilience are distributing a TNYCWC-authored community referral toolkit to their trainees as part of this project. Quarterly report and End-of-Year report were submitted to TN Department of Health 10/15

IX. Second Look Commission Update – Craig Hargrow

The Second Look Commission (SLC) held a meeting on October 8, 2019. During the open quarterly meeting, SLC members discussed changing how the SLC report is shared so it reaches more people. SLC reviewed the preliminary findings and recommendations through August. SLC members also discussed changing the format of the annual report.

The SLC held an investigatory meeting on October 8<sup>th</sup> as well. SLC members made several preliminary observations, findings and recommendations.

- Additional investigation classifications may more accurately describe the results of an investigation. Specifically, SLC talked about adding a classification such as “Unsubstantiated with Concerns.”
- Investigations could be improved if DCS employees who previously investigated a family investigate additional referrals involving the same family when possible.
- Foster parents would benefit from ongoing training, to include training to help prevent foster parents from coaching disclosures from foster children.
- The mental health needs of the family, including the alleged perpetrator, need to be appropriately addressed. Mental health services are more than medication management.
- Global assessments should be administered in every investigation.
- Tennessee needs to continue to educate families about the use of long-acting reversible contraception.
- SLC members discussed the importance of prenatal care to the health of all children and particularly drug exposed infants. SLC members stated barriers to such care must be reduced or eliminated.
- SLC members discussed case classification inconsistency throughout the state. In particular, SLC members discussed how Drug Exposed Child/Infant cases with similar facts may be severe child abuse in one jurisdiction and non-severe child abuse in another jurisdiction.

Hargrow continues to serve as an active member of the Joint Task Force on Children’s Justice and Child Sexual Abuse (Court Improvement Committee) and as a member of the AOC’s Court Improvement Program.

X. Other Business

**DRUMMOND MOVED TO ADJOURN THE MEETING. NEELY SECONDED. UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED.**

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 2:02 p.m.

Minutes submitted by:

Minutes approved by:

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Gerald R. Papica, Ombudsman Program Director

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Amy Jones, Committee Chair