

Eastern Citizen Review Panel
Minutes of the Meeting
September 19, 2008

Attendees:

Lance Jackson	Carrie Smith	Ed Blatt
Mary McCarthy	Dianne Meckler	Julia Bielawski
JoAnn Merriman		

OCFS Staff: Terry Palumbo

SCAA Staff: Diane Mastin

Handouts:

Agenda

Child Welfare Financing PowerPoint

OCFS Web Site page: Family Assessment Response

2008 Child Welfare Legislation update

Governor's Press Release: Governor Paterson Announces Agreement with Legislature to Enact an over \$1 billion, two-year savings plan at Special Economic Session

OCFS Budget Cut Information

ECRP Talking Points for Advocacy Visits

NYS CRP 2008 Report and Recommendations Content Suggestions and Timeline

NYS CRP 2008 Recommendations Working Document

Minutes from the June 6th meeting

CRP Travel Claim

Felitti Presentation Announcement

Article: *Evaluating Children's Advocacy Centers' Response to Child Sexual Abuse*, *Juvenile Justice Bulletin*, August, 2008, www.ojp.usdoj.gov/offdp

Present, Engaged, and Counted for: The Critical Importance of Addressing Chronic Absence in the Early Grades. The Critical Importance of Addressing Chronic Absence in the Early Grades, National Center for Children in Poverty, Hedy N. Chang and Mariajose Robero, Sept. 2008

The meeting began with a welcome by acting panel chair Lance Jackson and an election of a new panel chair and vice chair. Nominated and elected by acclamation were Mary McCarthy for Chair and Carrie Smith for Vice Chair.

Karen Schimke, Schuyler Center for Analysis and Advocacy, gave a presentation to the panel on child welfare financing. New York's law is due to sunset in June, 2009 and will certainly be addressed in the next legislative session. Her overview included a history of child welfare laws in New York State and questions that have emerged over time. New York State's law in 1979 became a model for the country and served to clarify permanency outcomes for children. It intended to reduce the use of foster care, advert entry into the system when possible and offered a carrot and stick approach toward accomplishing the law's goals. Additional changes took place in 1995 with the Foster Care Block grant, 1998 with TANF funding used for child welfare in the state, and 2002 legislation which offered further changes to funding. In addition, New York has lost federal IV-E funding over time due to the foster care lookback provision.

Ms. Schimke offered a means test for any further reforms: would families notice any change or difference? It is important that any future changes positively impact families.

Changes could be made that would offer greater flexibility for local districts to use the funds, open the donated funds provision to other counties, and allow for more evidenced based preventive services to be used. There needs to be more emphasis placed on post-adoption services and new approaches to residential services. Concern continues as to how best to serve kids whose needs cross systems, to serve those kids aging out of foster care, and to support kinship care providers. New York lacks data as to how funds are used across the state and how much need exists for services.

Panel members agreed to support an extension of the current child welfare financing law as part of their legislative agenda.

Panel members received an update from Jamie Greenberg, OCFS, regarding implementation of the Family Assessment Response (FAR) in six counties in New York. Three will begin implementation in November and three in January. In addition, six other counties have now expressed interest and representatives from those counties will attend an upcoming conference in Ohio to learn more about the response. There is a great deal of variance among the counties in terms of the populations each will serve with FAR, the types of cases to be offered this response, and their plans for implementation. Each county's proposal is available on the OCFS web site. The Marguerite Casey Foundation is offering some financial support to counties for wrap around services. The American Humane Association will offer individualized training. Additional funding would be helpful towards implementation and evaluation.

Discussion included the work and lessons learned from OCFS's Teaming Approach as informative to the work and process used for FAR. Questions included whether or not there will be a cost/benefit analysis to the evaluation. The evaluation will include client and provider satisfaction surveys but may be limited in scope due to lack of funds.

Panel members received updates on federal legislation, the Children's Cabinet and Advisory Board and former NYC panel member Eric Brettschneider's work on system reform for OCFS. Panel members asked that Mr. Brettschneider be invited to a future meeting to talk about the scope and plans for this work. Members would also like to have representatives from counties in their region who are implementing FAR to attend a future panel meeting.

The remainder of the discussion centered on possible panel recommendations for this year's report. Panel members approved the content for the report as presented. Panel members agreed to the following two points as critical to their recommendations:

- 1) Evaluate pilots so you know whether or not you want to bring to scale.
- 2) Evidenced based practices should be held harmless.