

**New York City CRP meeting
Minutes of the Meeting
April 3, 2007**

Attendees:

Gerard Papa	David Lansner	Jocelyn Brown
Eric Brettschneider	Mathea Rubin	Marion White

OCFS Staff: Renee Rider Jamie Greenberg

ACS Staff: Commissioner John Mattingly Ex. Deputy Commissioner Zeinab Chahine
Katie Stoehr, Commissioner's office Dominique Jones, Commissioner's office

SCAA Staff: Karen Schimke Diane Mastin

Guests: Tim Hill Anthea McLaughlin

Handouts:

- Meeting Agenda
- NYC CRP 2006 Annual Report
- Draft letter of invite to Panel's next meeting
- Draft CRP Operating Guidelines
- 2007 Joint Panel Meeting Survey
- ACS Publications: Safety Reforms Update, Preparing Youth for Adulthood
- ACS PowerPoint Presentation: Improved Outcomes for Children
- CRP Recommendations and the Executive Budget Chart
- Testimony provided by Gladys Carrion to the Joint Legislative Fiscal Committee
- Child Welfare Watch* Volume 13 Winter 2006-07
- Families' Connections to Services in an Alternative Response System*, The Urban Institute
- Information on the Kinship Navigator
- Articles:
 - When Is Lack of Supervision Neglect?*, *Pediatrics*, 3/27/07
 - New York Acts to Ease Process in Foster Care*, *The New York Times*, 3/22/07
 - Helping Young Mothers Help Their Babies and Themselves*, *Gotham Gazette*, 3/12/07
 - Ranks of Child Welfare Caseworkers Swell*, *The New York Times*, 2/28/07
 - Mentally Ill Parents See Assistance from N.Y. Legislators*, *Journal News*, 3/16/07
- January 4 Meeting Minutes

The meeting began with introductions and approval of the minutes from the January 4th panel meeting by a vote of 5 to 1.

The attendees then moved to a discussion with OCFS staff and ACS staff about the panel's 2006 recommendations beginning with the first recommendation regarding a system of community child protection which includes differential response to reports, increased preventive services in neighborhoods, and increased use of family engagement strategies. OCFS is conducting internal discussions related to differential response but has not taken a position on proposed legislation yet. ACS is expanding their community initiatives to an additional four communities. This plan integrates child safety, family conferences, support for caregivers and other services. ACS does not have the capacity to implement a differential response at this time while implementing the reforms already planned. Panel members were encouraged to consider funding considerations with their recommendations. Local districts will need help with the 35% local share to fund services under a differential response system. More information on differential response can be found at www.iarstl.org.

Comments offered by panel members included: 1) an interest in having guidelines or regulations which address the issue of diversion of the workforce away from serious child abuse cases, 2) the need to trim the system back to focus on only a small number of serious cases, 3) lack of comprehensive assessments and services, 4) the need to exercise restraint when exercising such power, and 5) challenging workforce issues which include workers who are not following directives.

ACS reforms involve switching from an emphasis on compliance to one that tracks results and outcomes for children and families. Commissioner Mattingly just announced a major overhaul of how ACS will provide foster care, focusing on strengthening foster care agencies, providing technical assistance, participating in decision making, and providing increased services to children and families. Family conferences will be held when a child is removed and again at 30 days, and every three months thereafter. All family conferences will be facilitated by a person with a master's degree. ACS has piloted the use of family conferences in Harlem and will use them system wide within 18 months. In addition, ACS will be in the room when every major decision is made on each case. Beginning July 1st, ACS will implement a new funding strategy based on the number of children served. Agencies will be given a two year budget with one funding pot for after care, foster care support, and preventive services allowing more flexibility. Agencies will be asked to demonstrate outcomes. Information will be accessed through the web for better tracking. ACS will close down their monitoring unit and open 500 new master's level positions in order to provide this oversight of case management and technical assistance to agencies providing foster care services.

Comments offered by panel members included: 1) difficulty in placing sibling groups in one home, 2) positive change that should result in improved dynamics between parents and foster parents, 3) concern about the adequacy of screening of potential foster families, and 4) support for this change.

ACS has been challenged with placing sibling groups of six or more children. ACS has had some problems with delays with the federal background checks they are required to do. There is a need for a better statewide system to support their efforts. There is a need to strengthen the screening processes used by foster care agencies. ACS wants to encourage the smaller agencies, in particular, to accept assistance from ACS with their processes. The Special Investigation Office now has a new manager and can be helpful with analysis. Until recently, that office did not have access to Connections.

In response to a question about a specific case the panel reviewed, ACS staff stated that they would not discuss that particular case. The panel did convey frustration regarding the case records received from ACS and asked that ACS provide a summary of cases when providing case records. Panel members have been disappointed that they only received records for the first 60 days of a case, that the records lacked order, and that they did not contain information about other systems involved in the case.

Commissioner Mattingly noted the panel's dissent in its annual report and his concern in working with panel members to make system improvements. Commissioner Mattingly stated his willingness to consider the provision of case records that contain a broader scope of information but asked the panel to submit something in writing to him outlining the boundaries within which the panel will work with that information. The comment was made that the condition of those records received by the panel increased panel members' frustration and led a majority of the panel to adopt the dissent found in the annual report.

Panel members voted to keep their next meeting on May 3rd by a vote of 5 to 1. They approved a letter of invite for the meeting. A discussion about the Governor's Civil Confinement Panel will be part of the agenda as well as invited guests from the Mayor's Interagency Task Force to discuss implementation of recommendations made in their report. All six panel members voted in favor of holding a joint panel

meeting that included a discussion on differential response on the agenda. SCAA was asked to consider inviting representatives from Westchester County to that meeting to discuss differential response.