

Joint Panel Meeting Minutes

Friday, June 27th 2025 2-3pm

Attendees

Eastern Panel: Kathy Halas (Co-Chair), Mary McCarthy (Co-Chair), Sharon Chesna, Eunju Lee, Carrie Smith

Western Panel: John Treahy - (Co-Chair), Linda Brown, Ellen Kennedy

New York City Panel: David Lansner (Co-Chair), Jocelyn Brown (Co-Chair), Wayne Ho, Jorge Saenz de Viteri

Office of Child and Family Services (OCFS): Dr. DaMia Harris-Madden (Commissioner), Laura Derman, Patti Efner, Alyson Grant Tarek, Gail Pratt, Tracy Swanson, Alexis Young

Prevent Child Abuse - New York (PCA-NY): Tamaé Memole, Elizabeth Stephenson

Agenda Item	Discussion (Decisions, Future Action, Highlights)	Decisions and Next Steps
Commissioner Goals for 2025 & Plan for Measuring Progress and Success	OCFS provided feedback to the Panel questions in written response on June 27th (attached)	
SCR Compliance	OCFS is working with educators to engage families early, positioning the State Central Register (SCR) as a last resort rather than the first response.	

SCR Compliance (Continued)	• OCFS updated the Mandated Reporter Training to emphasize trauma-informed practice, ACEs, and avoiding the equation of poverty with neglect. The training promotes the message: "You don't have to report a family to support a family." • The HEARS Line provides alternative access to economic and concrete support. It is open to families as well as the provider community. • OCFS partnered with State Education to establish Family Opportunity Centers (FOCs) in schools to focus on upstream support. FOCs are supported by federal grants. There is currently no reduction planned for funding FOCs, but OCFS is looking into options available in case funding gets removed.	• OCFS will provide data on the HEARS line. (i.e. call volume, types of calls received (ex: related to housing, crib, mental health) tracking how many cribs are provided to callers)
Elimination of Anonymous Reporting	• OCFS provided feedback to the Panel questions in written response on June 27th (attached).	
Concerns Over Practices	Research and Evaluation by OCFS: • There are existing partnerships. OCFS has been looking at groups with lived experiences. It is a vast system and it is difficult to get an adequate sample size. OCFS is looking into partnering with CRPs for this work. OCFS would appreciate the opportunity to engage in dialogue. • OCFS is partnering with Westchester, Onondaga, and Monroe counties on a pilot program in collaboration with the University of Kentucky. The initiative explores a research-informed approach to supporting families and preventing child welfare involvement. Participating families receive a \$500 stipend intended to address economic stressors and promote stability. OCFS is overseeing implementation and evaluating outcomes to inform potential statewide strategies.	

Concerns Over Practices (Continued)	Strip searching: • OCFS has had conversations with ACS in ensuring there is alignment with what is outlined in the child welfare manual. • OCFS will be piloting a "Know Your Rights" campaign to inform families of their rights during child welfare involvement. A draft brochure has been developed to support the initiative. The goal is to launch the pilot Fall 2025. CRP Member Vacancies: • OCFS is working diligently to support the filling of all vacancies. • PCA-NY passed along nominations and is developing a streamlined nominations process for the supporting organization. Mobile Response Van: • OCFS piloted the Mobile Response Van in several counties. They provide immediate, on-site support to families at risk of entering the child welfare system. The counties themselves do the messaging about the program. And referrals go through the counties as well. • This is not to be confused with the mobile crisis van - under licensure of the Office of Mental Health.	
Next Meeting	• Dr. Harris is open to meeting quarterly with CRPs.	