

ANNUAL REPORT
OF THE
CHILD SERVICES OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE



Indiana Legislative Services Agency
200 W. Washington Street, Suite 301
Indianapolis, Indiana 46204

October, 2013

INDIANA LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

2013

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CHILD SERVICES OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE

Membership Roster

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South Bend

Christopher Burnham
Martinsville

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Larry Landis

Laymembers

Staff

Eliza Stephenson
Attorney for the Committee

K.C. Norwalk
Attorney for the Committee

Bill Brumbach
Fiscal Analyst for the Committee

A copy of this report is available on the Internet. Reports, minutes, and notices are organized by committee. This report and other documents for this Committee can be accessed from the General Assembly Homepage at <http://www.in.gov/legislative/>.

I. STATUTORY DIRECTIVE

The Indiana General Assembly enacted IC 2-5-36.1-8 directing the Committee to do the following:

- (1) Review quarterly data reports from the Department of Child Services (DCS).
- (2) Review annual reports from the Department of Child Services Ombudsman.
- (3) Make recommendations to the Commission on Improving the Status of Children in Indiana to improve the delivery of child protection services in Indiana.

II. SUMMARY OF WORK PROGRAM

The Committee met two times during the 2013 interim, on July 31 and October 23. The meetings were held at the State House in Indianapolis.

III. SUMMARY OF TESTIMONY

For a more detailed account, minutes from the Committee can be accessed from the General Assembly Homepage at <http://www.in.gov/legislative/>

The first reference to a witness includes the name of the witness and the person or organization the witness represents. For brevity, any subsequent reference includes only the name of the witness. A witness list is included at the end of the report.

July 31, 2013 Meeting

Introduction of the New Director of the Department of Child Services Ombudsman Bureau

Ms. Alfreda Singleton-Smith, Director of the DCS Ombudsman Bureau (Bureau), discussed her background, the Bureau's 2012 annual report, and the Bureau's activities in 2012. She also discussed the Bureau's budget and the Bureau's work in increasing public awareness of the Bureau.

Introduction of the New Director of DCS

Ms. Mary Beth Bonaventura, Director of DCS, discussed her background and that DCS has identified three areas of child welfare to improve upon, including: (1) child support; (2) providing services to address trauma that children may experience when entering the DCS system; and (3) improving recruitment and retention of DCS staff.

Presentation of the DCS Quarterly Data Report

Ms. Lisa Rich, Deputy Director of Services and Outcomes, DCS, discussed the following topics from the quarterly report:

- (1) Usage of the DCS hotline.
- (2) The number of child in need of services informal adjustments.
- (3) The number of child in need of services out-of-home placements.
- (4) Sibling placements.
- (5) The absence of repeat maltreatment.
- (6) The amount of family case manager turnover.
- (7) The percentages of child support collected, paternity established, support orders established, and cases paying on arrears.

Presentation on the Mental Health Pilot Program

Ms. Rich discussed existing mental health services and steps DCS is taking to improve access to mental health services. She also explained the Children's Mental Health Pilot project and discussed rolling out the project statewide.

Update on New DCS Staff and the Regional Hotline Centers

Ms. Doris Tolliver, Chief of Staff for DCS, discussed the progress DCS has made in trying to hire the number of new staff recommended by the 2012 DCS interim study committee and explained the actions DCS is taking to recruit and retain staff. She also described the possible locations, time line for opening, and staffing of four regional hotline offices. In response to questions from Committee members, Ms. Tolliver discussed cross-training hotline staff and said that DCS performs electronic exit surveys of staff leaving DCS employment.

October 23, 2013 Meeting

Introduction of the New State Child Fatality Review Coordinator

Ms. Gretchen Martin, State Child Fatality Review Coordinator, State Department of Health, discussed the following:

- (1) That legislation passed last year that moved local child fatality review teams and the Statewide Child Fatality Review Committee from Title 31 to Title 16 in the Indiana Code and created the state child fatality review coordinator position.
- (2) Requirements regarding establishing a local child fatality review team.
- (3) The status of each county in establishing a local child fatality review team.
- (4) In response to a Committee member's question, Ms. Martin would be following up with any counties that had not established or contacted her about establishing a child fatality review team.

Presentation of Information Requested at the July 31, 2013 Meeting

Ms. Brady Brooks, Legislative Director, DCS, provided to Committee members a handout with information relating to questions and information requested at the Committee's July 31, 2013, meeting and offered to answer questions.

DCS Ombudsman Bureau Report Recommendations

Representative Gail Riecken provided Committee members with information concerning case examples and recommendations from the DCS Ombudsman's 2012 report that she believed were relevant in considering systematic issues.

Ms. Singleton-Smith discussed the recommendations and Ms. Brooks explained DCS's response to each recommendation. Ms. Kaarin Lueck requested that DCS consider expanding the nursing unit to help with juvenile delinquent cases.

Update on the Children's Mental Health Initiative

Ms. Gina Ashley, Deputy Director of Placement Support and Compliance, DCS, discussed the background and purpose of the Children's Mental Health Initiative (CMHI) and the services provided under the program. Ms. Ashley and Ms. Bonaventura indicated that DCS had received positive feedback about CMHI. Mr. Sean McCrindle noted that the comments he had received regarding CMHI had been encourage and that if the program continues to go as well as it appears, there may be funding issues later on.

Presentation on Safely Home - Families First

Ms. Ashley discussed DCS's vision, mission, and values. She also explained the practice model for DCS and Safely Home, Families First. In response to a question from a Committee member, Ms. Bonaventura stated that DCS has no mechanism to go back and check on a family where there has been no filing or informal adjustment. In response to a question from a Committee member, Ms. Bonaventura said that the court can decide whether other individuals, such as grandparents, can be involved in a case.

Ms. Lueck stated that, in a relative placement situation, it would be helpful if DCS documented that DCS had considered a relative placement and had chosen not to place the child with that relative. Ms. Bonaventura indicated that the parent may not provide DCS with information that there is an available relative care giver but that Ms. Lueck's point is well taken. Ms. Lueck also noted following up with families may be helpful and that families may be unclear about how binding a DCS suggestions are.

In response to a question from a Committee member, Ms. Bonaventura indicated that there is no policy or law on how many times a child may be returned to a home in a situation where there has been abuse or neglect.

Collaborative Care

Ms. Alishea Hawkins, Assistant Deputy Director of Services and Outcomes, DCS, discussed the background, Indiana's approach, and eligibility for the Collaborative Care program. She also noted that Indiana is receiving national attention concerning the Collaborative Care program. Judge Christopher Burnham noted that it would be interesting to have feedback about how the individuals in the Collaborative Care program are doing in five years.

Discussion of the Recommendations to the Commission on Improving the Status of Children in Indiana

Representative Riecken explained the recommendation regarding studying system response to newborns with drugs in their systems

IV. COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

By a vote of 10 to 0, the Committee approved making the following recommendations¹ to the Commission on Improving the Status of Children in Indiana:

- (1) To study system response to newborns born with drugs in their systems.
- (2) To continue to monitor and review the changes that have been recommended to the Department of Child Services, which the Department of Child Services has begun to implement.

¹ Exhibit A (The memorandum of recommendations to the Commission on Improving the Status of Children in Indiana).

WITNESS LIST

Ms. Alfreda Singleton-Smith, Director, DCS Ombudsman Bureau

Ms. Mary Beth Bonaventura, Director, DCS

Ms. Lisa Rich, Deputy Director of Services and Outcomes, DCS

Ms. Doris Tolliver, Chief of Staff, DCS

Ms. Gretchen Martin, State Child Fatality Review Coordinator

Ms. Brady Brooks, Legislative Director, DCS

Ms. Gina Ashley, Deputy Director of Placement Support and Compliance, DCS

Ms. Alishea Hawkins, Assistant Deputy Director of Services and
Outcomes, DCS

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Exhibit A, Final Report 2013

To: The members of the Commission on Improving the Status of Children in Indiana

From: The members of the Child Services Oversight Committee

Date: October 23, 2013

Re: Report of recommendations to improve the delivery of child protection services

I. Directive to the Child Services Oversight Committee

The Child Services Oversight Committee (Committee) is required under IC 2-5-36.1-8(a) to submit to the Commission on Improving the Status of Children in Indiana (Commission) an annual report before November 1 making recommendations regarding improving the delivery of child protection services in Indiana.

The Committee met two times in 2013, on July 31 and October 23. The final report and other documents for the Committee can be accessed from the General Assembly Homepage at <http://www.in.gov/legislative/>.

II. Recommendations to Improve the Delivery of Child Protection Services in Indiana

The Indiana statutes establishing the Committee and Commission came into effect on July 1, 2013. Given the limited amount of time that the Committee has had to review information regarding the delivery of child protection services and that the Department of Child Services has had to implement changes recommended during the 2012 interim and 2013 legislative session, the members of the Committee have only two recommendations, as follows:

- (1) Study system response to newborns born with drugs in their systems.
- (2) Continue to monitor and review the changes that have been recommended to the Department of Child Services, which the Department of Child Services has begun to implement. A list of these changes is attached as Attachment A.

The members of the Committee approved these recommendations to the Commission in a vote of 10 to 0 at the October 23, 2013 meeting.