

Children's Services Committee

Location: **William R. Snodgrass, TN Tower**

Date: Thursday, 5/16/2024

Time: 2:45 P.M. CST

Staff Present: Richard Kennedy, Exec. Dir., Jeni Davis, Jerri Moore, Kristi Paling, Lindsey Cody, Melissa McGee, Steve Petty, Craig Hargrow, Marissa Player – Montgomery, Psasha Taylor, Russette Marcum - Mabry, Sujit Das, Zanira Whitfield, Rose Naccarato, Wendy Pickering, Gabriella Smith, Cory Bradfield, Rob Burke, Jonquil Newland, Brian Jefferies, Marquita Moore, Lea Brandon, Jordan Walley, Kylie Graves, Dana Cobb.

Staff Absent: Rob Burke, Linda Copeland, Bill Latimer, Therese Sipes.

Commission Members: Amy Jones, Chair, Judge Robert Philyaw, Randy Butler, Raymond Jenkins, T.J. King, Matt Marshall, Tracey Silverman, Charmaine Kromer, Letecia Rosas, Jennifer Donnals, Judge Sharon Greene, Elaina Francisco, Ella Britt.

Virtual Attendees: Allan Sterbinsky, Dr. Altha Stewart

Commission Members Absent Brandon Smith, Billy Worsham,

Guests: Alice Rolli

1) **Call to Order – Amy Jones, Chair**

Jones began the meeting at.

2) **Approval of February 2024 Children's Services Minutes (ACTION)**

Jones asked for a motion to approve the Children's Services minutes from the February 2024 Committee Meeting.

Philyaw moved to approve the minutes from February 2024.

Butler seconded. Unanimously Approved.

3) **Staff Updates**

Home Visiting Leadership Alliance (HVLA) Steve Petty for Rob Burke

This past quarter, HVLA was convened on 1/25/24 with a virtual event with 71 in attendance. Updates were provided in the first half of the meeting by Tennessee Department of Health (TDH) and TCCY. Consilience Group provided an update on the Tennessee Early Connect Project and TCCY presented the State of the Child Report. During the second half of the meeting, attendees met in their selected Action Teams: New Member Orientation/ Healthy Families TN Advisory Board, Workforce Development, and Common Language, and a report out from each Action Team took place.

The next meeting will be held on 5/2/24 (rescheduled from 4/11 due to a conflict with the AIMHiTN Conference), which will be completely virtual. Additionally, all Council dates have been scheduled for the remainder of 2024 as follows: 8/22/24 (virtual), and 11/14/24 (in-person).

The Director of TNYCWC has continued/ joined the work of:

- Meeting with the Program Director at TDH to plan and execute the work of the YCWC.
- Serving as the co-chair of the TN IECMH Financing and Policy Team, Action Team 4.
- Joined in the work of the TN IECMH Financing and Policy Team, Action Team 1 to discuss support of EBHV, to include sustainability, workforce development, limited resources in rural areas, and communication barriers.
- Participating on the Tennessee Preschool Commission.
- Serving as the TCCY Innovation Committee Chair.
- Participating on the *Built for Babies* Zero to Three Technical Assistance Grant team.
- Partnering to combine the work of HVLA's Workforce Development Action Team with the TN IECMH Action Team 5 to more efficiently achieve goals and tear down silos.
- Developing and leading a committee for the advocacy of a statewide Paid Family Leave program.

Partnering with TDH, the Director of TNYCWC-HVLA has developed, coordinated, and convened monthly COPs for supervisors of evidenced-based home visiting programs to support and train staff in leadership skill and development. The topic of "Utilizing Staff Skills" was presented at the January CoP by Mark Kenny and the topic of "Safety and

Stretch” was presented in February by Heather Taylor-Griffith. There was no CoP in March as the presenter cancelled due to illness on the day of the event.

The following topics have been scheduled for the remainder of the year:

- 4/30/24 Coaching teams through performance, change, and improvements.
- 5/28/24 Improving practices of reflective supervision for leadership.
- 6/25/24 Peer Support.
- 7/30/24 Inclusive leadership.
- 8/27/24 Ghosts in the Nursery.
- 9/24/24 Psychological safety.
- 10/29/24 Addressing concerns and conflicts through a trauma lens.
- 11/26/24 Using technology to engage others.
- CoP does not meet in the month of December.

Tennessee Young Child Wellness Council Steve Petty for Rob Burke

TN Young Child Wellness Council meeting was convened on 2/22/24 with a virtual event due to illness with 101 total attendees. Dr. Robert Sege provided a one-hour HOPE Framework training, followed by updates by Tennessee Department of Health (TDH) and TCCY. TCCY also presented the State of the Child Report and the Director of TNYCWC provided a presentation on the newly created Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), Strategic Plan, and Policy Evaluations Guidelines tool.

The next meeting will be held on 5/9/24. Additionally, all Council dates have been scheduled for the remainder of 2024 as follows: 9/12/24 and 12/12/24. All Council meetings are scheduled to be hosted in a hybrid format.

The Steering Committee continues to meet virtually on the first Thursday of the month, following the guidelines recently established in the Committee’s Guiding Document. The following was discussed:

3/7/24:

- Committee provided feedback on Children’s Advocacy Days as well as the TNYCWC meeting that took place on 2/22.
- Committee decided on its representation on each of the TNYCWC Action Teams.

4/4/24:

- Topics for future TNYCWC meetings were discussed.

- Planning for TNYCWC meetings for the 5/2 and 9/12 dates took place.

5/2/24:

- This meeting was postponed until June due to a conflict with the rescheduling of HVLA on the same date. (The HVLA date was moved due to a conflict with the AIMHiTN Conference).

As you may recall, the Early Childhood Advisory Council (ECAC) Symposium occurred on October 2-4, 2023. This is a first of its kind event, which was developed here in Tennessee. Monthly Communities of Practice (CoPs) have been hosted by the Director of TNYCWC.

- February's CoP covered the topic of "How your Council provides meaningful recommendations/ impact", and the following **10 states** attended: *Tennessee, Nevada, South Carolina, Oregon, Texas, Arizona, Alaska, Minnesota, Wisconsin, and Indiana.*
- March's CoP discussed national partners and **10 states** attended: *Alaska, South Carolina, Tennessee, Vermont, Arizona, Wisconsin, Idaho, Nevada, New Mexico, and Colorado.*

The bi-annual symposium was held on April 26. National partners BUILD Initiative and Prenatal to Three Policy Impact Center at Vanderbilt University presented. There were **8 states** in attendance: *Colorado, Nevada, Wisconsin, Idaho, Tennessee, Minnesota, Oregon, and South Carolina.*

Following the Symposium in April, 22 different states have attended either the Symposium or a CoP: **MI, OH, NY, VT, NH, RI, IL, OR, IN, TN, CT, AK, CO, WI, MN, NV, IO, NM, TX, AZ, ID, and SC.**

Eight other states have responded that they are in support of such work and plan to attend in the future, including: **PA, MD, MS, OK, NE, ND, WY, and UT.**

The Director of TNYCWC has continued/ joined the work of:

- Meeting with the Program Director at TDH to plan and execute the work of the YCWC.
- Serving as the co-chair of the TN IECMH Financing and Policy Team, Action Team 4.
- Participating on the Tennessee Preschool Commission.
- Serving as the YCWC Policy Action Team Chair.
- Serving as the TCCY Innovation Committee Chair.
- Participating on the *Built for Babies* Zero to Three Technical Assistance Grant team.
- Leading the work of the statewide Family Paid Leave Policy Council.

- Continued to serve on the ACE Nashville Policy Workgroup.
- Met with the Casey Foundation to discuss Tennessee's 2Gen approach and grant opportunities.
- Met with Head Start, Early Success Coalition, Nurture the Next, and Centerstone to discuss the ability to collaborate to create a statewide parent advisory council.
- Developed a Parent Engagement Action Team under the auspices of the TN Young Child Wellness Council to lead the work of the development of a statewide Parent Advisory Council.
- Joined Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Finance and Policy Action Team 1 to collaborate with partners regarding maternal and infant health.
- Working to reimagine TCCY's Children's Advocacy Leadership Academy to create and sustain a more robust Academy for leaders in the child-serving/ children's advocacy communities across the state.
- Joined the monthly Parent-to-Parent Networking and Advocacy meeting hosted by Centerstone.
- Met with Davidson County Juvenile Court to discuss their development of a parent advisory council.

Ask of the Commission:

- I would love for the TNYCWC Steering Committee to have representation from all child-serving state agencies and the General Assembly. To achieve this goal, we need representation from the following groups. Are you able to leverage your relationships to assist the Steering Committee in reaching this goal?
 - DCS
 - DIDD
 - TennCare
 - Legislative contact
- The TNYCWC meeting on September 12th is planning to feature child-serving state agency Commissioners with Dr. Alvarado at TDH already agreeing to join. If possible, I would love for you to attend and would appreciate assistance with leveraging your networks to have:
 - All Commissioners attend to provide a brief presentation of their program.
 - Members of the General Assembly attend.

Resilient Tennessee Collaborative Melissa McGee

The Resilient Tennessee Collaborative Coordinating Team began work with Aurrera Health Group for the strategic planning process with a kickoff, in person event in Nashville on February 12th. Since that kickoff event, Aurrera Health leads the monthly

coordinating team meeting to further work on the strategic plan and meets every other week with TCCY RTC leadership for further discussion. A new mission and vision and have identified, as have four key areas of work – Funding, Policy, Multi-System and Sector Engagement, and Measures and Data. Work continues narrowing and securing strategies and actions steps with completion by the end of the fiscal year, June 30th.

TCCY recently submitted our budget request to DCS for FY25, totaling \$75,000, including support for ongoing networking meetings, regional and annual summits, strategic plan implementation with Aurrera, partnership work, in addition to other requests.

Community

McGee continues to educate partners through various engagements statewide. McGee has recently joined with the Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC), Department of Children’s Services (DCS), and Tennessee Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services (TDMHSAS) to train the eight new Safe Baby Court locations as they get up and running for service to families. McGee has already been to Hamilton, Perry and Bradley Counties and will participate in DeKalb, Johnson City, and Sevier on future dates. McGee also did a Building Strong Brains presentation for the statewide parent support group in Ohio in early April. She attended the AIMHiTN Conference in Jackson and then a training on Trust Based Relational Intervention (TBRI) in Cleveland.

She continues to participate in the advisory councils, task forces, and other groups supporting improving family and children’s lives in Tennessee. McGee provided support for the annual Children’s Advocacy Days, and continues to support internal TCCY related efforts, including other statewide partnership meetings – Young Child Wellness Council, Home Visiting Leadership Alliance, Council on Children’s Mental Health and Youth Transitions Advisory Council.

Events

Over the course of FY24, RTC continues its emphasis on supporting local, regional, and statewide efforts through quarterly networking meetings regional summits. The East Tennessee Regional Summit was held in November, while the West Tennessee Regional Summit - Building Bridges: West Tennessee’s Path to Resilience and Empowerment. The event was held in Jackson, Tennessee, on April 4th and saw over 150 attendees for the in-person session. The Regional Summit presenters included McGee, presenting on the foundational work of Building Strong Brains, Becky Haas then shared about Resilient

Communities - Creating Trauma Informed Multidisciplinary Teams, Jaime Harper with TDMHSAS' Office of Faith-Based Initiatives, Brian Straessle of The Sycamore Institute, as well as several highlights from persons and groups addressing these issues through various methods – Angel Roberts and John Roberts, with Carroll Academy, Chloe Amick, Miss Bethel University Volunteer, and Richard Bragg, Pastor of Poplar Heights Baptist Church. The closing session of the day brought together a panel of community leaders for discussion on taking words to action and included Mayor AJ Massey of Madison County, Mayor Scott Conger of Jackson, Charlie Caswell, Chair Pro Tempore of the Shelby County Commission, Dr. Vicki Lake with West Tennessee Healthcare, and Mayor Jake Bynum of Weakley County.

The Second Annual Resilient Tennessee Collaborative Summit is planned for Wednesday, May 8th, at Trevecca's Boone Convocation Center (same location as last year and as CAD this year) from 9 am – 4 pm CT. There will be watch party locations in Knoxville and Chattanooga. The agenda boasts national, state, and regional leaders and there are currently over 250 registered for Nashville, and around 20-30 in each of the watch party locations.

RTC Networking Meeting – The February networking meeting was held virtually due to an increased occurrence of COVID during that week and highlighting education initiatives supporting resilience building in children and adolescence. Presentations included information from Colleen Mall, President of the Trauma Informed Community Alliance of Upper Cumberland, Janice Cook and other staff from Knox County Schools Department of School Culture, ETSU's Strong BRAIN Institute and Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis, Dr. Megan Quinn and Dr. Ginger Christian, TDOE's Project AWARE Director – Jaime Grammer, Dr. Mary Crnabori and staff from MNPS' Trauma-Informed Schools and Advocacy Centers Initiatives, and Mariechelle Bonifacio with MNPS' Grow Together. We had 137 unique attendees join for the meeting. The next networking meeting will be on August 21st at Ed Jones Auditorium at Ellington Agricultural Center and Dr. Robert Sege, author of the Healthy Outcomes from Positive Experiences (HOPE) Framework, will be present to provide content and discussion on implementing and expanding the HOPE Framework in Tennessee. His attendance and meeting support is provided by Centerstone.

Youth Transitions Advisory Council Jordan Walley

The Youth Transitions Advisory Council (YTAC) of Tennessee serves as a pivotal forum dedicated to addressing the multifaceted challenges faced by youth transitioning from

the foster care or juvenile justice systems into adulthood. YTAC collaborates with key stakeholders, including government agencies, community organizations, and advocacy groups, to develop and implement strategies aimed at enhancing support networks, resources, and opportunities for these vulnerable youth populations. By fostering dialogue, sharing best practices, and driving policy recommendations, YTAC endeavors to empower transitioning youth with the necessary tools and support systems to achieve positive outcomes and thrive in their adult lives.

The second quarterly meeting of the Youth Transitions Advisory Council (YTAC) of 2024 convened at the Lentz Public Health Center, utilizing a hybrid-style format that facilitated both in-person and virtual participation of approximately 50 individuals. The agenda included routine updates from key stakeholders, including the Department of Children's Services (DCS) Office of Independent Living, YV Lifeset program, Tennessee Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services (TDMHSAS), and the Governor's Faith-Based and Community Initiative. A significant addition to the meeting was the inclusion of Church of the City (COTC) representatives, who provided an insightful overview of their initiatives aimed at extending outreach and services to foster families and children in Tennessee. Specifically, COTC shed light on their Cars Ministry, a program designed to offer free transportation to individuals in need.

The next YTAC meeting is slated for June 20, 2024, to be held at the Ed Jones Auditorium at the Ellington Agricultural Center, as well as virtually. This session will feature a joint meeting with the Council on Children's Mental Health (CCMH).

Upcoming 2024 YTAC Meeting Dates:

- June 20, 2024 (joint with CCMH) – Ed Jones Auditorium at Ellington Agricultural Center
- October 3, 2024 – Lentz Public Health Center

YTAC remains open to the participation of all interested individuals.

Jordan Walley actively engages in various community and statewide forums dedicated to supporting youth transitioning from the foster care system into adulthood. This involvement spans participation in the Policy and Planning Council, Independent Living Council, Health Council, Injury Prevention Coalition, and DCS's Spotlight on Youth series, which showcases young adults who have recently aged out of foster care in Tennessee. Throughout the first quarter of 2024, Walley has prioritized fostering relationships with individuals and groups committed to enhancing outcomes for Tennessee's transitioning youth from child welfare or juvenile justice systems.

Walley is initiating discussions with YTAC participants and the Director of Statewide Partnerships to explore avenues for enhancing participant engagement within YTAC, including the establishment of potential working groups and a steering committee.

Council on Children’s Mental Health (CCMH) Jordan Walley

The Council on Children’s Mental Health (CCMH) was established as a collaborative effort between the Tennessee Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services (TDMHSAS) and the Tennessee Commission on Children and Youth (TCCY) to support and develop a comprehensive statewide system of care. CCMH fosters community engagement and networking statewide, while also overseeing the Systems of Care Across Tennessee (SOCAT) initiative in partnership with TDMHSAS.

The inaugural quarterly meeting of CCMH took place on February 8, 2024, both in-person at the Metro Nashville Police Precinct West and virtually via Microsoft Teams, drawing approximately 130 participants. The meeting featured updates on the proposed 2024 budget from the Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services, along with insights into peer support programs from the Office of Youth and Young Adult Initiatives. Kylie Graves from TCCY delivered a legislative update on bills affecting Tennessee youth.

The upcoming CCMH meeting will be a joint session with Youth Transitions Advisory Council (YTAC) and is scheduled for June 20, 2024. This meeting will be held at the Ed Jones Auditorium at the Ellington Agricultural Center, also accessible virtually.

Future CCMH meetings are planned for September 19, 2024, and November 8, 2024, all to be held at the Ed Jones Auditorium at the Ellington Agricultural Center. These meetings remain open to all interested participants.

The CCMH Director actively engages in various community and statewide initiatives supporting children’s mental health in Tennessee, participating in forums such as the Policy and Planning Council, Independent Living Council, Mental Health Collaborative, Health Council, Anderson County Health Council, and Injury Prevention Coalition. The director’s focus for the first quarter of 2024 has been on gaining a comprehensive understanding of the System of Care Across Tennessee and its extensive services.

CCMH is co-chaired by the commissioner of TDMHSAS and the Executive Director of TCCY. The TDMHSAS SOCAT Network Grant continues to provide 49% support for the

CCMH Director's position. CCMH is closely collaborating with TDMHSAS regarding the scheduled conclusion of the SOCAT Network Grant on 9/29/2024.

In anticipation of the SOCAT Network grant conclusion, the Executive Director of TCCY has submitted a letter of commitment to TDMHSAS for the Grants for Expansion and Sustainability of the Comprehensive Community Mental Health Services for Children with Serious Emotional Disturbances, Children's Mental Health Initiative (CMHI) Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) No. SM-23-013, specifically for the System of Care Across Tennessee: Children's Crisis Resiliency Network. This grant, in partnership with the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), aims to uphold the long-term partnership between TDMHSAS and TCCY as co-chairs of CCMH, which will continue to serve as the governance structure for SOCAT. TCCY's Director of CCMH, Director of Statewide Partnerships, and Executive Director are providing consistent communication and support to TDMHSAS throughout the grant closeout process. The CCMH Director has compiled and provided attendance data to TDMHSAS for events such as CCMH meetings and Children's Advocacy Days (CAD).

Second Look Commission Kylie Graves

The Second Look Commission met on February 13th. Members reviewed four cases from FY2023, two abuse death cases, one sexual abuse and one additional case.

The Comptroller's office has wrapped up the field work portion of their audit of the Second Look Commission. Graves continues to be in contact with the Comptroller's office regarding any questions or additional documentation they may need as they develop their report.

In April, Graves presented the 2023 findings and recommendations to the Joint Task Force on Children's Justice.

Preliminary Findings from the February meeting include:

- Members were encouraged to see all of the partners involved in the case (CPIT, DCS, Sheriffs, and District Attorneys) collaborate effectively and efficiently, leading to positive outcomes for the children involved in the

case.

- In one case, there were six kids in a foster home. Members had concerns that this made it difficult for the parents to monitor all of the children.
- Members questioned if there was a hotline for foster parents to use as a translator for foster youth who do not speak English. Members discussed the different needs of a translator for interviews and court appearances versus day-to-day interactions.
- Members noted that the delay in getting an autopsy impacted the investigation and prosecution of case.
- Members noted it was odd to include the term “reasonable degree of medical certainty” in a dcs report as that is typically a legal term.
- Members noted that the mother did not inform medical professionals treating the child of falls that had occurred.
- Members noted that although secondary brain bleeds can occur after a minor injury, they are not often fatal.
- Members stated that due to the lack of information available it was difficult to determine if the injury was accidental or inflicted.
- There were concerns about the number of sexual abuse allegations and sexually reactive behavior that was being displayed by children in the case.
- Members noted that the alleged child victims appeared to be seen as non-reliable narrators.
- Members expressed concerns with the changing of a CPIT disposition without bringing the case and all CPIT members back together. Additional evidence was heard from the public defenders, guardian ad litem and district attorney in separate meetings. Members felt that all of this evidence should have been presented together in one hearing.
- Members were concerned that the significant neglect occurring by the father did not appear to be addressed until it was brought up in a meeting with the child’s public defender.

4) **Additional Items or Comments**

