



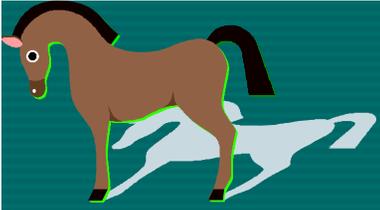
Important Topics for Citizen Review Panel Evaluations

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May 2006 CAPTA Guidance

- *Evaluate:* Is any attorney or guardian ad litem being appointed by a judge BEFORE they've received training appropriate to their role?
- *Evaluate:* Are “health care providers” formally notifying CPS of all babies born drug-exposed? What's being done to remove barriers to this? Have hospitals been given the option of “referring” babies affected by alcohol-exposure to CPS?
- *Evaluate:* Who is developing “safe care plans” for these children and parents, with appropriate services?



- *Evaluate:* What's being done by CPS to assure workers notify parents of "allegations" at their initial time of contact with them, both in investigative and "alternative" responses?
- *Evaluate:* Who is conducting the "screening" for each "substantiated" child abuse/neglect victim under 3 to determine "disabilities" that justify a referral to the Part C, Early Intervention Program?
- *Evaluate:* Are criminal background checks being done on *all* prospective foster & adoptive parents, and others in their households?



New Guidance to Citizen Review Panels

- HHS expects CRPs to “reach out to the immediate community” in evaluation/survey work – tailoring this outreach to “meet the needs of the panel in achieving its goals” (cites example of surveying foster parents, if they’re looking at recruitment and retention issues)
- HHS says there is no requirement that families involved with CPS be made a part of the CRP



An Example of One State “Controversy” that Other CRPs May Want to Examine

- On-going Kentucky investigations regarding inappropriate removals of children and “Quick Trigger” terminations of parental rights and “fast” adoptions (i.e., misuse of ASFA law’s guidelines and timelines) – is particularly an issue with allegedly unwarranted interventions against moms who are victims of domestic violence

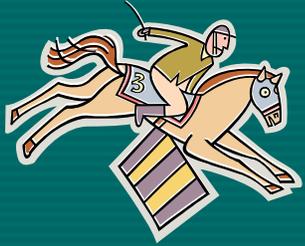


Another Issue: Monitoring How Courts Are Planning to Develop Performance Measurement Systems

- New “Strengthening Courts” Law, in Deficit Reduction Act of 2005, February 8, 2006 – 5 years of new funding
 - Beginning with applications submitted to HHS by State Supreme Courts/State Court Administrators this summer, two new \$10 million/year grants to states, with money released this fall
 - *First* is to improve court data collection and analysis, including court/child welfare agency collaboration and joint planning in collecting and sharing relevant data to improve case tracking that produces safe and timely permanency decisions



- *Second*, is a new \$10 million/year program for courts to improve their training of judges and attorneys (including use of cross-training), and part of this money must be used for cross-training initiatives jointly planned and executed with the state child welfare agency (e.g., some training for judges/attorneys held jointly with training of CPS case workers)
- In order to get this and ANY federal child welfare money, states must also demonstrate “substantial, meaningful and ongoing collaboration” among the courts in the state and the state child and county welfare agencies



On the Horizon: New Attention to Interstate Child Placement Issues

- *Issue to Evaluate:* How can we reduce delays, while assuring safety, in the placement of children with families across state lines?
- **Developments:** Revision of Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children (ICPC) being developed by the National Public Human Services Association; Bills in Congress, H.R. 5403 (DeLay), “Safe and Timely Interstate Placement of Foster Children Act of 2006” (e.g., complete home studies within 60 days of request; state 30-day home study incentive grants; other reforms on caseworker visits, child health records, right of foster and kinship care providers to participate in court hearings; interstate court cooperation; clearer consideration of out-of-state placements)



Other Federal Bills That Suggest New Areas of CRP Work

- *Issue:* When and how should child welfare agencies take responsibility for the placement and supervision of unaccompanied alien children?
 - S119/HR1172 would address placement of children in child welfare systems with adults deemed suitable, preference for relative or foster family homes, and guardian ad litem appointment for child
- *Issue:* How can we expand availability of early childhood home visitation for families in need?
 - Education Begins At Home Act (S503)



- *Issue:* How can we better support the needs of youth who have been in the foster care system?
 - FOSTER Act (HR2508) and other bills to give grants to higher education programs to support success in college, including support in obtaining financial aid
- *Issue:* How can we better support, in the community, the mental health needs of children?
 - Keeping Families Together Act (S380/HR823) to provide state family support grants to end practice of parents having to relinquish custody to get help to children with serious emotional disturbance



- Family Opportunity Act (S183/HR1443) to expand Medicaid coverage for children with severe mental or physical disabilities, and help expand home and community-based services so children can leave inpatient psychiatric facilities
- *Issue:* How can we better support grandparents and other relatives raising children?
 - Kinship Caregiver Support Act (S.985) would set up a Kinship Navigator Program to link caregivers to support groups and services they need, establish a Guardianship Assistance grant program for subsidized guardianship programs, require relative notice when kids enter foster care, and permit separate licensing standards for relative homes with safety protections.



Other Issues With Recent Developments

- What is your state doing about children who are missing from child protection agency care and supervision?
 - 2002 Florida disappearance of Rilya Wilson (never found) garnered national headlines, as state had almost 400 such children unaccounted for
 - Children running away from care can subject them to great danger
 - In 2005 the Child Welfare League of America issued *Best Practice Guidelines for Children Missing from Care*



- What is your state doing to help families at risk of having a child enter the child protection system find housing in which they can be safe?
 - Safe and stable housing is a core child protection issue; poverty and homelessness place children at high risk of CPS interventions; inadequate housing has been shown to be a major contributing factor in placing and retaining children in foster care
 - Federal Family Unification Program provides housing vouchers for families facing child's foster placement or difficulty reunifying with children
 - 2005 Child Welfare League of America report, *Keeping Families Together and Safe: A Primer on the Child Protection-Housing Connection*



Some Kudos Based on Your 2005 CRP Reports

- Congratulations, Arizona, on using your website to solicit comments from the public about CPS, and for your formal plan for mutual and periodic feedback to and from your CPS agency, and on using superior and problem cases you review for agency worker training
- Congratulations, Delaware, on the continued work of your Child Protection Accountability Commission, including ASFA timelines issues and CPS caseloads/workloads monitoring, and foster child education access issues



- Congratulations, Idaho, for court practice reform recommendations, shadowing case workers & doing exit interviews with them, and participating in permanency meetings & family group decision-making training
- Congratulations, Illinois, on addressing foster youth involved in juvenile justice or runaway cases & the training needs of mandated reporters – and for a 4-page CPS response to your recommendations
- Congratulations, Minnesota, for studying CRP effectiveness, a terrific report, and a focus on CAPTA compliance and youth aging out of care



Congratulations, New Mexico, for a great review and analysis of CPS data and its implications

- Congratulations, New York, on a great report and thorough recommendations
- Congratulations, Virginia, for developing a CPS prevention plan and review of new CPS regulations
- Congratulations, Wyoming, for a great report & recommendations
- And congratulations to Blake and KY CRPs 45-page report detailing CPS responses to CRP recommendations; Also admire its focus on the “wellness” of CPS workers and supervisors & those who have experienced a child who died