

Office of the Child Advocate
Childhood Trauma Task Force Meeting Minutes
Monday, June 10, 2024
1:00pm-2:30pm
Meeting held virtually

Task Force Members or Designees Present:

Maria Mossaides (OCA)

Shawna Boles (DYS)

Laura Brody (DCF)

Kate Lowenstein (CfJJ)

Mia Alverado (CLM)

Andrea Oliveira (DMH)

Keesha LaTulipee (DPH)

Claudia Dunne (CPCS)

OCA Staff:

Melissa Threadgill

Alix Rivière

Arianna Turner

Audrey Smolkin (CCWT)

Joy Cohen (CCWT)

Melinda Kneeland (CCWT)

Jon Eyberse (CCWT)

Other:

Kyla McSweeney (EEC)

Amy Whitehead-Pleaux (EEC)

Aimee Smith Zeoli (EEC)

Krysta Parrell (Family Aid Boston)

Rayna Hill (MA Commission on LGBTQ+ Youth)

Andrea Parker (Federation for Children with Special Needs)

Katherine Hughes (Parent Child Trauma Resources)

Madi Wachman (MassHealth)

Kathleen Bitetti (OSA)

Anat Weisenfreund (MassAIMH)

Meeting Commenced: 1:03 PM

Welcome and Introductions

Ms. Rivière welcomed the attendees to the Childhood Trauma Task Force (CTTF) meeting. CTTF members and guests introduced themselves.

Review and Approval of Minutes from December 4, 2023 Meeting

Ms. Threadgill held a formal vote on the approval of the December 4, 2023 meeting minutes. Shawna Boles, Andrea Oliveira, Laura Brody, and Mia Alvarado all voted in the affirmative. Kate Lowenstein abstained. No one opposed.

The meeting minutes for December were approved.

Ms. Threadgill then reviewed the CTTF leadership transition, sharing that leadership of the task force is transitioning to staff at the Center on Child Wellbeing and Trauma (CCWT).

Ms. Threadgill then welcomed Ms. Rivière to speak about the CTTF's work and celebration of its five-year anniversary.

CTTF Celebrates 5 Years!

Ms. Rivière reviewed CTTF's accomplishments to date, the task force's legislative mandate, and its work towards that mandate. She also highlighted areas of the legislative mandate that the task force is continuing to work on over the next few years.

Ms. Rivière then shared the CTTF 2024-2025 work plan for building a trauma-informed and responsive (TIR) Commonwealth, which will be informed by what CTTF members shared in interviews with the OCA and work that other states are doing in this space.

Presentation on Other States' Trauma-Informed and Responsive (TIR) Strategies

Ms. Rivière then began presenting on what other states are doing to become trauma-informed and responsive (TIR), sharing that the task force researched governance models that focus on trauma and/or resilience as well as looking at national, state, and local policies and programs.

Ms. Rivière then highlighted initiatives from the following states:

- California's Master Plan for Kids' Mental Health
- New Jersey's Trauma-Focused Governance Efforts
- West Virginia's Handle with Care (HWC)

Ms. Rivière welcomed questions and comments from attendees.

Members discussed the HWC program and their observations and beliefs about its current and future implementation in Massachusetts. Ms. Smolkin shared that HWC is mostly implemented at the local level and that the CCWT worked on a successful pilot program in Massachusetts that incorporated emergency response teams to the school-law enforcement collaboration. Ms. Smolkin also shared that the school systems that have implemented it have seen success.

One member expressed interest in New Jersey's Office of Staff Health and Wellness. Ms. Smolkin offered to connect them to the group in New Jersey.

Several members expressed interest in learning more about California's initiative. Ms. Smolkin offered to share more information upon request.

Ms. Cohen then reviewed what CTTF members have shared in interviews with the OCA about what a TIR Massachusetts would look like. She stated that members had many thoughtful ideas, specifically across the following three categories:

- Supports for children
- Supports for parents and caregivers
- Supports for staff

Discussion of CTTF 2024-2025 Work Plan

Ms. Rivière then conducted a virtual poll of attendees about the CTTF 2024-2025 work plan, asking the following questions:

- “What population would you like the CTTF to focus on in the coming year?”
 - Children
 - Parents and caregivers
 - Staff and workforce
- “What sector would you like the CTTF to focus on in the coming year?”
 - Early childhood (0-5)
 - K-12 schools
 - Health care
 - Juvenile justice
 - Child welfare
 - Community level

One attendee mentioned that the poll options did not include topics about child sexual abuse and exploitation and noted their interest in addressing those issues.

Members discussed the inherent interconnectedness of the populations listed and noted that the choice to focus on one group does not mean neglecting the needs of another. Members voted on their preferred populations and sectors of focus for the 2024-2025 Work Plan. Ms. Cohen explained that the results, in addition to Task Force member interviews, will inform the development of the Work Plan.

Presentation of CCWT/Department of Early Education and Care (EEC) Collaboration on Building Trauma-Informed and Responsive Early Childhood Education

Ms. Smolkin then presented the mission of the CCWT and how the center achieves that mission. She reviewed CCWT partnerships to date and shared partnerships that are forthcoming, such as with Thriving Minds and the Department of Youth Services (DYS). She welcomed questions.

Ms. Smolkin then welcomed Ms. Cohen to present on the partnership between CCWT, EEC, and OCA to create trauma and resilience trainings and resources for early childhood educators. The goals of these professional development opportunities are for educators to:

- Understand childhood trauma and resilience, and their impact on childhood development
- Be able to identify common signs of trauma in young children
- Learn concrete trauma-informed and responsive strategies to promote resilience

Ms. Cohen then welcomed Ms. Zeoli and Ms. McSweeney from EEC to explain these efforts further.

Ms. McSweeney and Ms. Zeoli then reviewed the various efforts that are underway in the collaboration, including:

- Trauma Supports for EEC Licensors
- Increased IECHM Support
- PDC Train the Trainer
- Revised Child Care Licensing Regulations
- Deeper Dives Trauma Training for EEC Educators
- Six-Module Series through LMS for All EEC Educators
- New Guidelines for Prevention of Exclusionary Practices

Ms. Zeoli then welcomed questions, and none were raised.

Closing Comments

Ms. Cohen shared that the next CTTF meeting will be held virtually on September 9th at 1pm and welcomed attendees to reach out to her with questions and comments. Ms. Cohen thanked attendees for their participation and continued efforts and adjourned the meeting.

Adjournment: 2:14 PM