

Office of the Child Advocate
Childhood Trauma Task Force Meeting Minutes
Monday, June 9, 2025
1:00pm-2:30pm
Meeting held virtually

Task Force Members or Designees Present:

Maria Mossaides (OCA)
Beth Schatzel-Murphy (DYS)
Laura Brody (DCF)
Rachel Wallack (Juvenile Court)
Jimmy Quinn (Probation)
Keesha LaTulippe (DPH)
Andrea Oliviera (DMH)
Kate Lowenstein (CfJJ)

OCA Staff:

Audrey Smolkin (CCWT)
Alix Rivière
Arianna Turner
Kerin Miller
Christopher Baidoo

Other:

Amy Whitehead-Pleaux (EEC)
Carisa Pajak (MassHealth)
Carmel Craig (ABH)
Alison Morrissey (Baystate Health Center)
Kathleen Bitetti (OSA)
Rueben Ferreira (DCF)
Sarah Levy (SCCLS)
Avery Brien (DPH)
Magui O'Neill-Arana (DMH)
Emma Breen (SAO)
Daijah Scott (CfJJ)
Shaleen Title

Meeting Commenced: 1:05 PM

Welcome and Introductions

Ms. Rivière welcomed attendees to the Childhood Trauma Task Force (CTTF) meeting and asked named members to introduce themselves.

Review and Approval of Minutes from December 16, 2024 and March 10, 2025 Meetings

Ms. Rivière held a formal vote on the approval of the December 16, 2024 meeting minutes. Maria Mossaides, Laura Brody, Jimmy Quinn, Kate Lowenstein, Keesha LaTulippe, and Beth Schatzel-Murphy all voted in the affirmative. Andrea Oliveira and Rachel Wallack abstained. No one opposed. The meeting minutes for December were approved.

Ms. Rivière held a formal vote on the approval of the March 10, 2025 meeting minutes. Maria Mossaides, Laura Brody, Jimmy Quinn, Rachel Wallack, Keesha LaTulippe, and Beth Schatzel-Murphy all voted in the affirmative. Andrea Oliveira and Kate Lowenstein abstained. No one opposed. The meeting minutes for March were approved.

Ms. Rivière then reviewed the agenda for the meeting, which included:

- Updates on Center on Child Wellbeing and Trauma (CCWT) Activities
- Presentation of State Agencies' Trauma Training Requirements and Opportunities Project

Update: CCWT Activities

Ms. Rivière then welcomed Ms. Smolkin to present on CCWT activities. Ms. Smolkin presented information on the Trauma and Racial Equity Empowerment (TREE) Academy as well as a new Sustaining Professional Development TREE Academy Train-the-Trainer program. She also shared an update on Strategies for Trauma-Responsive Early Educator Training (STREET) in partnership with Department of Early Care and Education (EEC), emphasizing the expansion of the training modules into new languages and sharing an update on an EEC initiative to ensure their entire organization is trauma-informed.

Ms. Smolkin welcomed questions on the information presented. None were raised.

Ms. Smolkin then continued presenting, sharing information on the CCWT partnership with the Executive Office of Healthy and Livable Communities (EOHLC).

Ms. Smolkin welcomed questions on the information presented and shared her gratitude for state agency partnerships in the work of CCWT. None were raised.

Update: State Agencies' Trauma Training Requirements and Opportunities Project

Ms. Rivière then welcomed Ms. Miller to present an update on the State Agencies' Trauma Training Requirements and Opportunities Project.

Ms. Miller introduced herself and began presenting information about the project, including:

- Project Goals
- Project Methodology
- Limitations of Research and Findings

- Key Takeaways from State Agency Interviews and Training Document Analysis, including:
 - Promising Practices and Gaps
 - Common Barriers to Addressing Training Gaps
- Focus on Three Research Domains
 - Content and Delivery
 - Audience
 - Cross-agency Collaboration Structure
- Training Content:
 - Big Picture Findings
 - Broad Categories – align with the TIR principles of the CTTF

Ms. Miller emphasized that the broad training categories align with the trauma-informed and responsive principles of the CTTF. She then welcomed questions and comments on the information presented.

Ms. Mossaides shared background information on the establishment of the CTTF and the early work of the group, emphasizing the importance of ensuring that all families have a uniform and positive experience when interacting with state agencies, especially during a time of budget funding uncertainty.

Ms. Miller then continued presenting on training content, including a spotlight on trauma and resilience training “wish list” and a spotlight on variations in trauma and resilience training and depth delivery.

Ms. Rivière welcomed discussion on the training content and delivery portion of the presentation.

One member asked if the Office of the Child Advocate (OCA) had asked interviewees about employing healing-centered engagement or promoting positive childhood experiences (PCEs). They also asked whether consideration was given to how systems of oppression are being addressed within concepts of trauma in the context of this project.

Ms. Smolkin shared that the CCWT focuses heavily on PCEs, specifically on how PCEs can outweigh adverse childhood experiences. She also shared that the CCWT acknowledges the systemic issues and their responsibilities to address those issues individually and system wide. She added that many agencies are doing this work already, but there is no uniformity.

Ms. Miller shared that the OCA’s research process took a wide approach and was not prescriptive about models and approaches when talking to interviewees. She added that she will conduct a review of what the OCA has heard and determine whether PCEs or healing-centered engagement have come up.

Ms. Miller then shared that the broad categories matrix does have limitations, specifically in regard to not sufficiently addressing intersectionality; this is a nuance that the OCA is continuing to think through.

One member asked how the project is assessing the ways in which the trainings impact clients.

Ms. Miller shared that state agencies do not currently have the capacity to assess effectiveness in this way.

One member shared that they would like to see the development of an evaluation tool to determine the effectiveness of the various state agency trainings and measure if families are positive impacted.

Ms. Mossaides shared that the CTTF's work has spanned two areas: red envelope programs, where children who have a difficult situation going on at home are given a red envelope to bring to school to signal they need to be handled with care that day, and training educational specialists on how to manage parents with strong emotions during Individualized Education Plan (IEP) meetings. She emphasized the importance of building trust with families to best support them.

One member added that if trainings are not standardized across agencies, it will be difficult to compare their effectiveness.

Another member shared the importance of studying training models that have demonstrated effective outcomes, specifically looking for indicators of equity and their connection to desired experiences for families.

Ms. Miller shared that the OCA is establishing the core competencies that they would like to see implemented and promoted across child-serving sector trainings and that the next phase of the project will be delving deeper into specific evidence-based models. Ms. Mossaides added that the OCA is committed to external evaluations of their work.

Ms. Miller then continued presenting on the state agencies training project, including information on:

- Training Audience
 - Big Picture Findings
 - Spotlight: Creating a Common Language and Framework

Ms. O'Neill-Arana then shared information on the work of the Children's Behavioral Health Knowledge Center, including an overview of several trainings that they offer. Ms. Oliveira then shared information on trainings on infant and early childhood mental health.

Ms. Rivière welcomed members to share comments and questions on training audience for consideration during the recommendations phase of the project.

Ms. Miller then continued presenting on the state agency training project, including information on:

- Cross-Agency Training Collaboration:
 - Big Picture Findings
 - Gaps

Ms. Rivière welcomed discussion on cross-agency collaboration.

Members shared examples of cross-agency projects that they have worked on. Several members also mentioned work outside of state government with organizations such as My Life My Choice, More Than Words, and the Theatre Offensive.

Ms. Rivière then reviewed the next steps for the project.

Closing Comments

Ms. Rivière shared that the next meeting of the CTTF will be held on September 8, 2025 at 1pm. She thanked members for their participation and attendance and adjourned the meeting.

Adjournment: 2:26PM