



OSWEGO COUNTY Department Of Social Services

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INFORMATIONAL MEMORANDUM

- Subject:** Annual update from the Oswego County Child Protection Advisory Council.
- Purpose:** To provide the Health & Human Services Committee and the Oswego County Legislature with an update of the activities performed by the Child Protection Advisory Council (CPAC) through June 2012.
- Summary:** The Oswego County Child Protection Advisory Council (CPAC) has been functioning since March 2010. During the past year, CPAC has continued to approach its mission and goals with fluidity, understanding its role more clearly and making the appropriate adjustments to its process and procedures. CPAC has solidified its mission as an advisory council and its role with the Department and Child Protective Services. CPAC maintains its commitment to:

“Our County, Our Children, Our Future, It’s Our Responsibility”.

CPAC focused on the following areas of practice and service performance during the 2011-2012 review period:

- Family Assessment Response (FAR) implementation: CPAC is a significant supporter of the Department’s efforts to implement FAR as part of Child Protective Services. CPAC members see the value in this model of engaging and partnering with families to achieve stability and increased safety for children. FAR was implemented on March 1, 2012 with a second team deployed on June 1, 2012.
- Community Forums: completed in 2010. CPAC continues to evaluate and process information received in the forums, specifically surrounding the isolation of families in need and building a “culture of community” across the county.
- Janet Clerkin and Kelly Jordal from Tourism & Planning are in regular attendance at CPAC meetings. They act as CPAC’s media and outreach consultants, preparing press releases and working on a webpage for the County website focusing on child protective tips, information, and referrals. Janet and Kelly also guide CPAC and the Department through effective use of media to improve the image of Child Protective Services.
- CPAC has the opportunity to review performance statistics for Child Protective Services and comment on the unit’s progress towards quality care/services, and compliance.
- CPAC has participated in complex case presentations during this review period. This opportunity gives CPAC members a clear understanding of the challenges of child protective investigations and family/youth services cases.
- CPAC is strongly invested in the Department’s concerns with family court and makes regular suggestions for improving communications or alternate decision making. CPAC was consulted, reviewed and approved the Department’s decision to withdraw from the Oswego County Court Collaborative. Two of CPAC members will join County Departments and School Districts in the June meeting with the NYS Office of Court Administration staff and the Oswego County Family Court Judge.

- CPAC has been attentive to its membership and the business of filling vacancies. By-laws are being reviewed and a process for vetting new members is being created. Recommendations for new members, including their qualifications and potential contributions, will be brought to the Health & Human Services Committee. Membership has remained stable throughout this reporting period with regular attendance by all members.
- Commissioner has used CPAC as consultants for a contracted services review. CPAC has been encouraged to comment on Department ideas to more fully meet the needs of families in this community. Discussion will continue into 2013.
- Commissioner is bringing important child welfare legislation to CPAC for discussion and to review the potential impact to child safety and care in our County. This process is helping CPAC to understand how changes to Social Services Law or Family Court Act can impact the Department's approach to investigations and provision of services.
- CPAC is also reviewing educational outreach opportunities that can be provided in Oswego County. Outreach & education being an essential goal of CPAC, the members review appropriate training programs or on line education that can be promoted to the community on child safety and reporting.

**Recommendations
for continued work:**

- Further discussion and development of cross systems collaboration focused on child safety & family stability/self sufficiency.
Collaboration may include:
 - DSS, Probation, Mental Hygiene, Sheriffs Dept. State/Local Police, County/District Attorney, Child Advocacy Center (MDT), and local non-profits organizations in the areas of: case management, mental health/family counseling, chemical dependency services, advocacy, housing, and independent living skills training.
 - Utilize collaboration to define an informal/voluntary continuum of services for families at risk of abuse/neglect issues.
- Media & on line promotion: webpage on DSS/County site.
- Promoting CPAC membership
 - Possibly regional subcommittees to address rural concerns.
- Consult with DSS on service improvements, identifying gaps.
- Continue case reviews quarterly.
- Continue statistics review quarterly

Recommended The Child Protective Advisory Council respectfully requests approval by the Health & Human Services Committee and the Oswego County Legislature of this annual summary of activities for the Oswego County Child Protection Advisory Council.