

JUSTICE FOR CHILDREN TASK FORCE

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PURPOSE

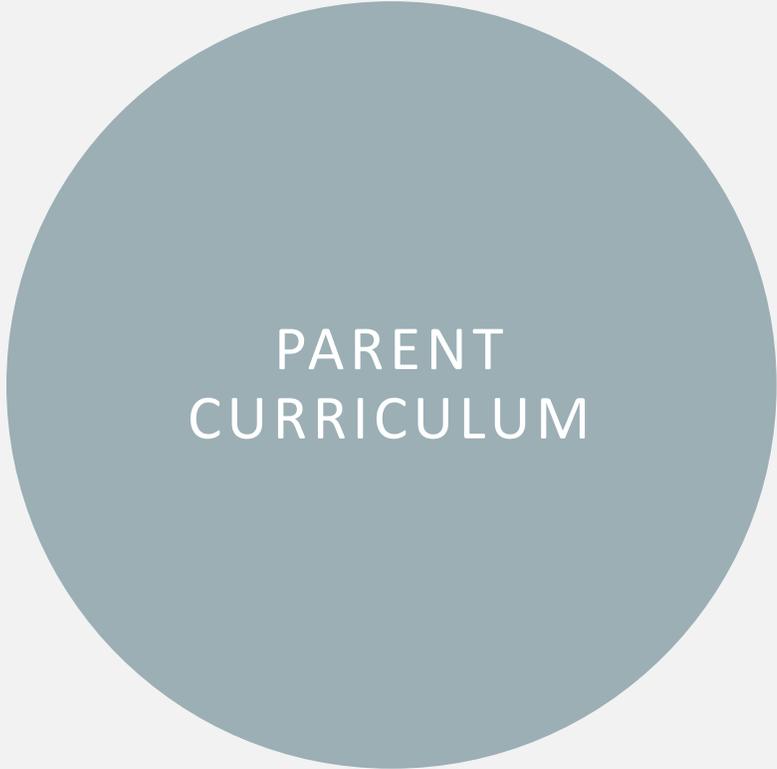
The Maine Justice for Children Task Force (“the Task Force”) is hereby continued as a collaborative, multidisciplinary Task Force to **improve safety, permanency, and well-being for children in the State of Maine child welfare system**. It is anticipated that the work of the Task Force will regularly occur in conjunction and collaboration with the work of the Executive and Legislative Branches, along with appropriate child welfare entities. This collaboration may include joint meetings designed to maximize the experience of the membership of each committee, prevent redundancy, and be respectful of members’ work schedules.

- Implementation of a virtual child welfare parent curriculum.
- Race and Equity Data Assessment Project.
- Continuing education for all system stakeholders.
- Interagency data sharing.
- Parent Attorney/GAL Recruitment and Retention.



STRATEGIC
PLAN

- Free virtual informational sessions for parents involved in Maine's Child Protective Courts (CPS).
- **Child Protective Services 101: For Parents, By Parents** aims to help inform parents about the Maine Child Protective System and provide tips on how to best navigate the system at its earliest stages.
- The informational sessions include:
 - An introduction to child protective service professionals including: a caseworker, parent attorney, guardian ad litem, assistant attorney general, and judge.
 - Explanation of the court process.
 - Tips for how to successfully engage in the process.
 - Contact information for helpful resources and information.
- The goal of **Child Protective Services 101** is to engage parents by providing information as facilitated by parents who have experienced child protective services or navigated multiple complex systems.



PARENT
CURRICULUM

PARENT CURRICULUM SEPTEMBER 2023 UPDATE (AS OF 8/15/2023)

	Pre-CPS 101 (86)	Post-CPS 101 (86)
I understand how the child protective system works.	2.7	4.1
I understand who is on my child protective services team and what they each do.	3.1	4.3
I understand what I need to do to reunify my family.	3.3	4.1
I feel hopeful about my child protective services involvement.	3.0	3.8

5-point scale 1 (strongly disagree), 2 (disagree), 3 (neutral), 4 (agree), 5 (strongly agree)

PARENT CURRICULUM

- To date, there have been approximately 105 parent participants in the program.
- Additionally, since our last meeting, CPS 101 has been presented to:
 - The G.E.A.R. Parent Network
 - Recovery coaches;
 - Community Care Visitation Services; and
 - Maine Judicial Branch Clerks.

PARENT CURRICULUM

- Maine Judicial Branch will provide funding for the program through June 2024 when OCFS funding will be available.
- Working on developing CPS 201 that expands on information provided in CPS 101.
- Sent out fliers to all courts for posting and distribution.
- Printed resource packets for participants to receive after attending the session.

CONTINUING EDUCATION SUBCOMMITTEE

- Meets throughout the year to plan the annual Maine Judicial Branch Child Welfare Conference.
- Attendees at the conferences include:
 - Parent's attorneys;
 - Guardians ad litem;
 - Assistant Attorney Generals;
 - DHHS caseworkers;
 - Judges; and
 - Other system partners.

MAINE JUDICIAL
BRANCH 2024 CHILD
WELFARE CONFERENCE

Subcommittee has met to begin planning for 2024.

- Current theme focuses on the life of a protective custody case beginning with the investigation and ending with aftercare.
- Focusing on the different perspectives and best practices throughout the life of a case.
- Training will be April 4th and 5th with the possibility of adding on an additional day to focus on juvenile justice issues and dual-system involved youth.

PARENT ATTORNEY/GAL RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION SUBCOMMITTEE

- Created upon recommendation from the 2022 Maine Child Welfare Advisory Panel (MCWAP) Annual Report.
- Membership includes:
 - Office of the Attorney General;
 - Maine Commission on Indigent Legal Services;
 - Cumberland Legal Aid Clinic;
 - Parent attorney;
 - Guardian ad litem;
 - Pine Tree Legal Assistance;
 - Maine Judicial Branch (administration and court clerk); and
 - Maine Coalition to End Domestic Violence.

PARENT ATTORNEY/GAL
RECRUITMENT AND
RETENTION SUBCOMMITTEE

Mission: Identify system improvements to increase the recruitment and retention of Maine child welfare parent attorneys and guardians ad litem and implement change where possible.

Current Items of Discussion:

- Engagement of legal aid organizations to provide representation;
- Use of law school interns in private/small firm practices;
- Child welfare expert certification;
- Statewide incubator programs;
- Court scheduling; and
- Service availability to parents and children involved in the child welfare system.

QUESTIONS?