

Citizen Review Panels (CAPTA panels): Jackson, Multnomah and Malheur Counties

Citizen Review Panels or CAPTA Panels, as they are known in Oregon, work on local systemic issues related to child abuse and neglect within the three designated geographic areas (Jackson, Malheur and Multnomah counties) and provide feedback and recommendations to DHS.

Citizen Review Panel Overview

Purpose

The Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA) was originally enacted in 1974 to provide annual federal grants to states, based on the population of children under the age of eighteen, in order to improve the child protective services system. An amendment in 1996 added a new eligibility requirement for states to establish citizen review panels. CAPTA panel members are volunteers who broadly represent the community in which the panel is established. The mandate of these panels is to “evaluate the extent to which the agencies (state and local) are effectively discharging their child protection responsibilities”. The panels examine policies, procedures, and where appropriate, specific cases handled by state and local agencies providing child protective services. The panels also “prepare and make available to the public, on an annual basis, a report containing a summary of the activities of the panel”.

The act was most recently amended in June 2003 when “Keeping Children and Families Safe Act,” Public Law 108-36, was signed by the President. The law reauthorized CAPTA through federal fiscal year 2008. Public Law 108-36 revised citizen review panel duties to include: 1) requiring each panel to examine the practices (in addition to policies and procedures) of the state and local child welfare agencies, 2) providing for public outreach and comment in order to assess the impact of current procedures and practices upon children and families in the community, and 3) requiring each panel to make recommendations to the state and public on improving the child protective services system. In addition, the appropriate state agency is required to respond in writing no later than six months after the panel recommendations are submitted. The state agency’s response must include a description of whether or how the state will incorporate the recommendations of the panel (where appropriate) to make measurable progress in improving the state child protective services system.

Background/History

Citizen Review Panels were established in three counties in Oregon: Multnomah, Jackson, and Malheur. The counties were selected to reflect the demographic, economic, social and political conditions found in different areas of Oregon. Together the panels provide a significant depiction of the varied conditions of child protective services in Oregon. Technical assistance, guidance and coordination are available to the panels through the Grants Coordinator for Family Based Services, Children, Adults and Families (CAF). CAF has contracted with the child abuse intervention (assessment and advocacy) centers in each of the selected communities to provide facilitation and staff support for the panels.

Citizen Review Panel Annual Reports

Oregon CAPTA Panel Annual Report

County: Malheur

Date: 2008 Annual Report

Time Period

October 1, 2007 – September 30, 2008

CAPTA Panel Members:

Jeana Critchfield, Executive Director-Project Dove

Amy Grosvenor, Shelter/Transitional Housing Coordinator

Keely Ponce, STAR Center Coordinator

Christina Bautista, SART Advocate, STAR Center

Bobbi Rudell, CASA P.O. Box 1355 Ontario, Oregon 97914

Jane Pagett, DHS

Kelly Poe, Executive Director Malheur Commission on Children and Families

Angie Uptmor, Malheur Commission on Children and Families Ontario

Suzi Douglas Sapp, Ontario Middle School, Ontario OR

*Keely Ponce resigned her position on September 19, 2008

*Christina Bautista resigned her position on September 30, 2008

Meetings:

November 7, 2007

December 12, 2007

January 9, 2008 (Planning session for April Events)

February 6, 2008, February 20, 2008, (Planning session for April Events)

March 5, March 12, March 26, 2008 (Planning session for April Events)
April 9, 2008 (Finalization Session for April Events)
May 21, 2008
June 11, 2008 (Quarterly meeting)
August 20, 2008 (World Child Abuse Prevention Planning session)
October 1, 2008 (CAPTA recruitment and information meeting for World Prevention Day)

Activities:

Throughout the year the train the trainer, “How to Protect your Children: Advice from a Child Molester” presentation has been utilized and presented. The presentation was done for the Ontario School District Administrative personnel and they were very interested in providing this training to more of their teachers, staff and parents. Scheduling the training and presentations has been more difficult. Two trainings were scheduled for the Four Rivers Cultural School, a charter school in our community. One was cancelled due to lack of attendance and one was attended by a small group of parents.

For the 2008 April Child Abuse Awareness Month, CAPTA engaged in several activities to involve all members of our community and raise awareness regarding child abuse and neglect. CAPTA provided the Ontario Chamber of Commerce an educational presentation regarding the statistics and types of abuse and neglect most commonly seen in our area as well as what to do if they suspect abuse and neglect and resources that they could use. Each Chamber meeting during the month of April we honored an individual who was nominated by community members/agencies who provided services to children and families in reducing the effects of child abuse and neglect. We honored four individuals with the “Making a Difference” award. During the month of April we provided two free presentations, one in English and one in Spanish, on “How to protect your Children: Advice from a Child Molester”. Thirty parents/adults attended the English presentation and 12 adults attended the Spanish session. We provided a family fun run/walk where there were drawings for bikes and various other prizes. This event was sponsored by many organizations and businesses in our community. We were able to provide a t-shirt to every participant and we had 250 participants.

During the month of May, CAPTA provided information at Nyssa, OR kids fair. Brochures, bracelets, and necklaces were distributed at the Kids Fair. In June a similar Kids Fair was held in Ontario, OR at the County Fair grounds. Similar brochures, bracelets and necklaces were distributed.

June 17, 2008 CAPTA sponsored a training presentation on the Relief Nursery model and how it could work in our community to prevent child abuse and neglect.

Subcommittees:

None for this period.

Future Plans/Next Steps:

CAPTA plans to participate in the World Child Abuse Prevention Day November 19th, 2008. CAPTA plans to utilize the information that is provided as well as add specific data and information specific to our county. In addition to this, CAPTA plans to assist the local FAPA (Foster Adoptive Parent Association) with their annual Christmas Toy Drive for foster and adopted children in our community.

CAPTA plans to continue educating the community, parents especially, regarding protecting their children from child molesters. We strongly believe that this is an issue that needs to be addressed in our community and that responsibility to protect children needs to be on the shoulders of adults. Unfortunately we had two of our presenters for this training resigned their positions with Project DOVE and the CAPTA panel. Reorganization and commitment from remaining trainers needs to be renewed.

CAPTA looks forward to activities in April 2009 for Child Abuse Awareness Month. The planning will begin in January and we hope to form new partnerships and renew old relationships with community organizations in order to include a variety of activities that are unique and informative to the public regarding the effects of child abuse and the need to prevent such abuse. With the success that we experienced in 2008 we hope to continue to encourage the growth of this event.

Recommendations:

Malheur CAPTA Panel makes the following recommendations:.

CAPTA Area #7- Surveying workers who have been in the child welfare system for five or more years and identify coping strategies, trainings and personal self-care practices that allow them to continue working in a difficult population and field is key. There are those workers who have maintained in the child welfare system for many years and who continue to work tirelessly to assist children and families. What makes these individuals different from those who burn out quickly

and how can DHS recruit workers that will be able to sustain and maintain in a high stress career and make the difference needed?

CAPTA Area #8- We recommend that at both the County and State level more trainings are conducted for professionals and paraprofessionals in schools, private non-profits that work with children and families, individual counselors or behavioral mental health agencies that come into contact with children and families be required to have additional trainings in the area of mandated reporting and that protocols are more “spelled” out for reporting child abuse or neglect.

Looking Ahead:

We would request that our recommendations and feedback come in the form of written or oral reports quarterly from our local County DHS agency.

Acknowledgments:

We have several that deserve to be recognized for their contributions in our efforts to educate and prevent child abuse and neglect. Our local Walmart in Ontario has been a consistent partner in assisting us with space to educate patrons in our community and provide donations for our events. Ontario Police Association provided support and bike donation for our Family Fun Run/Walk in April. Safe Kids of Malheur County also partnered with CAPTA in order to provide activities for kids and parents at the Family Fun Run/Walk. Malheur Commission on Children and Families assisted with the training presentation on the Relief Nursery. Malheur Department of Human Services allows us to meet for CAPTA meetings in their building as needed. We also appreciate our CAPTA Panel members who continue to give of their time and assist in our efforts to prevent child abuse and neglect.

RECOMMENDATIONS AND RESPONSES

Malheur County CAPTA Panel

Recommendation 1

CAPTA Area #7- Surveying workers who have been in the child welfare system for five or more years and identify coping strategies, trainings and personal self-care practices that allow them to continue working in a difficult population and field is key. There are those workers who have maintained in the child welfare system for many years and who continue to work tirelessly to assist children and families. What makes these individuals different from those who burn out quickly

and how can DHS recruit workers that will be able to sustain and maintain in a high stress career and make the difference needed?

DHS Response 1

The McKenzie Group was hired by DHS to study and make recommendations about changes to the Departments organizational structures including Child Welfare. McKenzie was specifically charged with examining the workload of child welfare caseworkers and staff turnover. Their work included a survey of child welfare staff and an examination of the percentage of time that caseworkers spend to accomplish required duties. They also examined factors that assist in retaining staff.

The McKinsey Corporation analyzed the manner in which case work is performed in Oregon's child welfare system and examined how casework could be performed in the most efficient manner. They reviewed tasks of every position from the caseworker to support staff by reviewing work processes. The results quantified and documented, in a way never done before, the over-burdened work of frontline staff. The report showed, in a different, more thorough manner than case-staffing numbers previously used, what level of work is needed by staff for each child and family on their caseload.

The workload assessment study resulted in a list of areas for improvement. The study found that consistent approaches are not used throughout the state to help children in care, nor is there an easy way to share best practices among districts. Some areas have more local resources than others. Staffing standards are outdated and staff-to-case ratios vary among districts. The workload study demonstrated clearly the need for additional staff and that many caseworkers lacked equipment, such as laptops and Blackberries that could help them be productive while traveling or waiting for court hearings.

Various studies addressing the challenges new social workers face and describing strategies to recruit and retain child welfare workers provide insight into long-term retention. One study "Rookie Burnout: Eager College Grads Hit Culture Shock with Poor Urban Kids" discusses the challenges new social workers face when confronted with troubled youth and families, and describes strategies to recruit and retain new front-line staff. Strategies for preventing burnout include being up-front about the rigors of the job, looking for applicants with real-world experience, providing orientation and classroom training and supporting staff.

A Children and Youth Services Review study from University of Georgia, examined Child Welfare (CW) workers intent to remain in child welfare and the role of human caring, self-efficacy beliefs and professional organizational culture. Core findings revealed human caring as an important and new variable linked to CW employees' intentions to remain employed in CW. Many factors contribute to child welfare employees' decisions to remain in or leave their jobs such as personal characteristics, organizational constraints, low salaries and benefits, lack of career mobility and opportunities for advancement, and many other factors.

Recommendation 2

CAPTA Area #8- We recommend that at the County and State levels more trainings are conducted for professionals and paraprofessionals in schools, private non-profits that work with children and families, individual counselors or behavioral mental health agencies that come into contact with children and families. These groups would be required to have additional trainings in the area of mandated reporting and that protocols are more “spelled” out for reporting child abuse or neglect.

DHS Response 2

The “The Role of Mandatory Reporters in Child Abuse Cases” (A video guide for mandatory reporters) was revised in 2007 and DVD copies were distributed to the superintendent all school districts in Oregon.

Copies of the “What you can do about child abuse” booklet are available by calling DHS, Juanita Raymond at (503) 945-6624 or Lisa Zacharias at (503) 945-5683. The first five (5) copies are available at no cost; additional copies are available for one dollar each.

The video of “The Role of Mandatory Reporters in Child Abuse Cases” (A video guide for mandatory reporters) is available at the following website <http://www.oregon.gov/DHS/children/committees/capta/capta.shtml>.

MDTs routinely provide training in their counties concerning the responsibilities of Mandatory Reporters.