

## Jackson County 2009 Annual Report

### Panel Members (as of 9/30/09):

Name	Agency
<i>Chair:</i> Roxann Jones	Senior Project Coordinator Commission on Children & Families
<i>Support Staff:</i> Lorna Conroy	Administrative Secretary Children's Advocacy Center (CAC)
Jan Hall	Intake Supervisor DHS Child Welfare
Mary-Curtis Gramley	Executive Director Family Nurturing Center
Diana Hamilton	Program Manager Jackson County Victim Witness
Jennifer Mylene	Executive Director, CASA
Marlene Mish	Executive Director Children's Advocacy Center (CAC)
Michelle Pauly	Deputy District Attorney Jackson County
Rene' Wold	Program Coordinator The Job Council
<i>New Members:</i>	
Lisa Lewis	Branch Manager DHS Self Sufficiency
Cydne Collins	Supervisor Teen Team DHS Child Welfare
<i>Other Attendees:</i>	
Violetta Ibarra	Academy Supervisor DHS Child Welfare
Karla Carlson	Supervisor for Screeners DHS Child Welfare
Dr. Kerri Hecox	Physician Children's Advocacy Center
Adrienne Auxier	Independent Living Program Coordinator Community Works
Jennifer Henderson	Transitional Living Program

	Coordinator Community Works
Heather Mowry	CAPTA Grants Coordinator DHS Child Welfare

## Meetings

<i>Date</i>	<i>Time</i>	<i>Location</i>
Monday, October 20, 2008	3:30 pm – 5:00 pm	CAC
Monday, December 15, 2008	3:30 pm – 5:00 pm	CAC
Monday, February 23, 2009	12:00 pm – 1:30 pm	CAC
Monday, March 16, 2009	12:00 pm – 1:30 pm	CAC
Thursday, June 11, 2009	12:00 pm – 1:30 pm	CAC
Monday, August 17, 2009	3:30 pm – 5:00 pm	CAC

## Activities

1. The Jackson County CAPTA panel in partnership with the Jackson County Fatality Review Team sponsored and distributed 30,000 English and 2,000 Spanish Life Savers flyers though out Jackson County. The Life Savers flyer was able to provide our community with information and resources on the prevention and intervention of activities that might lead to a child fatality. Topics for the flyer are based upon the child fatality reviews in Jackson County, most notably was a spike in youth suicides over the past two years. Jackson County had 18 teen suicides between 1990 and 2006, whereas five teens completed suicides in 2008 and as of September 2009 an additional four teens had completed suicide.
2. Our panel strongly endorsed the joint effort between Jackson County Health Department and the Children’s Advocacy Center in their successful application to the Children’s Trust Fund of Oregon to implement in Jackson County “The Period of P.U.R.P.L.E Crying” child abuse prevention program for all new parents, with particular targeting of high-risk groups.
3. We reviewed 3 cases of teen parents in the foster care system, and discussed possible gaps in services as well as potential partnerships for enhancing the system for this special population. One area of discussion was the need for mentoring relationships for these young

parents who have been abused or neglected, resulting in a host of emotional and developmental needs. Not only must a pregnant or parenting teen change her role to motherhood, but their involvement in the foster care system may lead to frequent transitions and instability. Additionally, the role of the foster parent and their need for training opportunities specific to the needs of adolescents in care and providing opportunities for youth to develop healthy relationships was an area of interest in our discussion.

The coordinators of the Independent Living Program (ILP) and Transitional Living Program (TLP) contracted through Community Works attended one meeting to explore what resources were already available for older youth in the foster care system as well as youth at-risk. TLP and ILP host a Life Skills class every week where youth are provided a variety of opportunities to develop self-sufficiency skills. One area of potential collaboration was to explore curriculum that focused on developing healthy relationships and boundaries.

Our panel was joined by the Child Welfare teen team case manager and Self-Sufficiency branch manager providing their expertise regarding their systems response to adolescents.

4. We continued to support the county-wide collaborative to roll-out “Stewards of Children” as a county-wide child sexual abuse prevention program. The program seeks to protect children from sexual abuse by placing responsibility for protecting children squarely on adult shoulders. Our goal is to educate adults to prevent, recognize and react responsibly to child sexual abuse.

Materials to provide the training in English and Spanish free of charge to our community were provided through CAPTA funds and a grant from Jackson County Health & Human Services. The Commission on Children and Families provided staff support for the coordination of the trainings in the community until September 2009, where the Children’s Advocacy Center (CAC) assumed responsibility for the coordination of the program in Jackson County. Through a commitment from the CAC to obtain certification to be a train the trainer for “Stewards of Children” we now have the capacity to train additional trainers. To date over 600 Jackson County residents have participated in the “Steward of Children” training representing the

- following: foster parents; child care providers; youth and family serving agencies staff; volunteers; school personnel; volunteers; and students in the Human Service track at the local community college and university.
5. For April Child Abuse Prevention month our panel participated in the planning and coordination of a public awareness event to “bring a voice” to the 760 confirmed victims of child abuse and neglect in Jackson County from the previous year. As part of a long-term response to child abuse and neglect in our community the Jackson County Child Abuse Network initiative was born. The mission of the network is to involve agencies and the broader community in addressing the following three areas: 1) Prevention; 2) Community Awareness; and 3) System Coordination.
  6. Our panel has formed a sub-committee and contracted with a local television station to develop and deliver media messages to improve public education relating to the role and responsibility of the child protection system and the nature and basis for reporting suspected incidents of child abuse and neglect. Our messages will be part of the broader Jackson County Child Abuse Network “Don’t Turn Away” community awareness campaign. Additionally, our sub-committee held a focus group in October 2009 with Child Welfare screeners to gather their input regarding messaging and discuss what resources they might need to help meet an increase in child abuse calls.

### **Future Plans/Next Steps**

1. Explore opportunities to increase case review as an activity for our panel. Gather information from local Citizen Review Panels regarding trends that they may be seeing in their case reviews as well as work with Child Welfare Consultant to bring forward cases.
2. Proceed with media campaign to raise awareness and developing a strong community responsibility to reduction child abuse and neglect in Jackson County.
3. Explore focus groups with teens in foster care to gather information about their needs, what gaps in services exists, and how can we as a system better coordinate our efforts.

4. Endorse the use of programs like “Stewards of Children” and “The Period of P.U.R.P.L.E Crying” as education tools for building a stronger healthier community for children. Explore opportunities to include trainings like the aforementioned ones into pre-existing training programs (e.g., foster parent and youth serving programs).
5. Initiate a conversation with Child Welfare and community partners to assess the available community expertise available and explore creating and enhancing existing relationships to strengthen services for children and families in Jackson County.

## **Recommendations**

1. Our panel recommends that DHS/Child Welfare consider the development of training specific to foster parents who are fostering a teen with a child of their own in the home. Explore mentor type relationships that allow the teen to be the primary caretaker of their child with the guidance and support of the foster parent.

***Response:** This recommendation is consistent with the needs and development of teens and especially of teen parents needing to develop parenting skills. It will be forwarded to the Foster Care Program and to the Portland State University Child Welfare Partnership which provides training for foster parents.*

2. Following up on our first recommendation, the panel recommends that DHS/Child Welfare explore training curriculums for foster parents who are fostering teens to help them better understand the uniqueness and issues of adolescents to better prepare foster parents for teens in the foster care system.

***Response:** The Portland State University Child Welfare Partnership provides a variety of training for foster parents. Some of the trainings are specifically for those parenting teens others are more generic but have components specific to fostering teens.*

*Foster Adopt Relative Parent Trainers provide the following:*

- *Ten Tips for Parenting Teens*
- *Child Development: Tweeners through the Teen Years*

- *Enhancing Teen Attachment (debuting via NetLink in July)*

*They also contract with these trainers for the following topics:*

- *Kathy Nordahl- Preparing for Adulthood*
- *Gary & Jean Lasater- Creating Positive Behaviors in Teens*
- *Sarah Duval- Common Mental Health Disorders in Teens*

3. We recommend that DHS/Child Welfare conduct geographical focus groups of youth in foster care to gather information from youth on how better to meet their needs and system improvement.

***Response:*** *The Independent Living Program in conjunction with the Portland State University Child Welfare Partnership recently completed research regarding foster teens' views about permanency. Five focus groups were held statewide involving a total of 37 youth ranging in age from 14- 22.*

*While the group focused primarily on youths' understanding of permanency options extensive feedback was also provided by the youths about their perceptions and experiences in foster care and suggestions for DHS.*

*ILP is also in the process of surveying youth and adults regarding which ILP services they value most. The link is listed below if any advisory group members would like to take the survey or share it with youth in their area who have been involved with ILP. There are 71 responses - 51 are youth (up to age 23) and 20 are adults. End date of the survey is June 10th.*

<http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/8992NS9>

*The Independent Living Program works extensively with two organizations- Oregon Foster Youth Connections and FosterClub, Inc. which are made of youth either currently or formerly in foster care. These groups are actively involved in advocating for the needs of teens. They have been successful in making systemic changes including extended OHP health and mental health care coverage for teens leaving foster care.*

4. Parents with infants that come to the attention of the system/enter the system should be provided with education about Shaken Baby Syndrome (e.g., “The Period of P.U.R.P.L.E Crying” information and video).

***Response:** Both the CPS and FBS Programs will explore opportunities to provide this information to parents of infants involved with child welfare. The FBS Program is initiating new in-home services that would provide a good opportunity to include this information.*

5. DHS/Child Welfare should explore creating an on-line/interactive recognizing and reporting child abuse training.

***Response:** Professional groups representing mandatory reporters are responsible for arranging training for their constituents. DHS is not funded to develop new mandatory training materials. There are training materials, including a video, currently available on the DHS website.*

### **Looking Ahead**

We look forward to being informed of DHS’s responses to our local CAPTA panel recommendations in a written report as information becomes available. We appreciate the opportunity to assist the State of Oregon in improving our child protective services system, to be accountable for safety, permanency, and well-being of children.