

South Carolina Children's Justice Act Task Force
2024 Three-Year Assessment Report



Prepared by the Children's Law Center



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SC Children's Justice Act Task Force 2024 Three-Year Assessment Report

I. Task Force Overview

The federal Children's Justice Act (CJA) provides grants to states to develop, establish, and operate programs designed to improve the investigation, prosecution, and judicial handling of cases of child abuse and neglect, particularly child sexual abuse and exploitation, in a manner that limits additional trauma to the child victim. This also includes the handling of child fatality cases in which child abuse or neglect is suspected and some cases of children with disabilities and serious health problems who also are victims of abuse and neglect.

To be eligible for CJA funds, states are required to establish and maintain a task force on children's justice. In accordance with federal statutory requirements, membership must be multidisciplinary and must comprise at least one slot for each of a multitude of disciplines. South Carolina has maintained an active Children's Justice Act Task Force since 1994. The purpose and activities of the Task Force, as defined by its bylaws and federal statute, are as follows:

- To conduct an assessment of the state's systems responding to abused and neglected children at three-year intervals;
- To adopt recommendations in each of the CJA categories;
- To work towards implementation of these recommendations;
- To recommend to the state's grantee (S.C. Department of Social Services) projects to be supported by the CJA grant funds; and
- To express positions on legislation or state policy issues, consistent with its mission and recommendations.

The SC Department of Social Services has been designated the state's CJA grantee and contracts with USC's Children's Law Center as recommended by the Task Force. The Children's Law Center receives the CJA funding to support the Task Force and assist in implementation of its recommendations.

II. Accomplishment Highlights for 2021-2024

One of the larger accomplishments of the Task Force during this period is the completion of an on-line virtual training of the South Carolina Child Abuse Protocol document. This training contains the online modules, presented by state experts, required to complete the South Carolina Child Abuse Protocol training as outlined in the South Carolina Child Abuse Response Protocol Act. The training details mandated procedures for a Children's Advocacy Center (CAC) and Multidisciplinary Team (MDT) approach to child abuse by addressing the functions of the CAC/MDT, roles and responsibilities of each discipline, and the interaction of these disciplines during the child abuse response process. A coordinated, MDT approach

facilitates efficient interagency communication and information sharing, ongoing involvement of key individuals, support for children and families, and a successful legislative mandate for its use. The protocol document is housed on the website of the SC Network of Children's Advocacy Centers: <https://www.cac-sc.org/protocol>. The Child Abuse Response Protocol Act was signed into law by the Governor of South Carolina on May 6, 2021.

The following Task Force accomplishments were also achieved as a result of the recommendations formed pursuant to the 2021 state assessment:

- Reviewed South Carolina Best Legal Practices and provided suggested revisions to the state's Bench-Bar Committee
- Collaborated with USC Gould School of Law for modification and use of the SC Competency Tool – Assessing children's understanding of the duty of a witness to report
- Provided multidisciplinary training on communication strategies with children with limited communication skills and distributed consultation list of resource professionals
- Provided multidisciplinary training to improve skills when handling court cases with children who must testify, to reduce child's stress
- Developed and delivered the SC Child Abuse Response Protocol training for professionals statewide
- Conducted intensive child death investigation training for coroners and investigators
- Researched the Sexual Assault Forensic Excellence (SAFE) program and provided a letter of support for the training designation
- Collaborated with the Department of Social Services to include CJATF representation on the state's Racial Justice Action Team (RJAT)
- Supported the South Carolina Network of Children's Advocacy Centers (SCNCAC)
- Supported the operations of the Children's Law Center to provide applicable resources and trainings
- Provided training to improve the handling of cases of youth dually-involved with both the child welfare and juvenile justice systems

III. Overview of the 2024 Three-Year Assessment Process

Planning for the assessment began in September 2023 by engaging the CJATF Operations Committee which was facilitated by the CJA Coordinator. Seven CJA members served on this committee. The purpose of the committee was to examine the three-year assessment processes of the past, and to propose a plan for the 2024 assessment process. The committee's recommendation was to administer a small-scale survey utilizing Microsoft Forms and include key partner agencies and task force groups in an effort to align initiatives and promote agency collaboration. The proposal was presented to and approved by the full Task Force at the October 2023 meeting. The assessment survey was narrow in scope, only four questions, and was designed to target the partner groups' initiatives that fell under the scope of CJA parameters. The parameters of CJA projects were defined as programs that are designed to improve the investigation, prosecution, and judicial handling of cases of child abuse and neglect, as well as child sexual exploitation and child fatality cases. The survey was administered in November 2023 so that results could be reviewed in January 2024 as

part of the three-year assessment. Responses for consideration were received from the following groups:

- Children’s Law Center Court Improvement Program
- South Carolina Department of Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse Services
- South Carolina Chapter of American Academy of Pediatrics
- South Carolina Children’s Advocacy Medical Response System
- South Carolina Coalition Against Domestic Violence & Sexual Assault
- South Carolina Department of Children's Advocacy
- South Carolina Department of Education - Office of Special Education
- South Carolina Department of Health and Human Services - BabyNet
- South Carolina Department of Social Services
- South Carolina Foster Parent Association
- South Carolina Network of Children’s Advocacy Centers
- South Carolina State Child Fatality Advisory Committee
- South Carolina State Law Enforcement Division

The assessment survey consisted of the following four questions and responses were shared with Task Force members (see page 10). In addition, secondary analysis reports from various child welfare organizations were reviewed by the CJATF Coordinator and provided to Task Force members.

1. What are your agency’s initiatives/priorities that fall within CJA parameters?
2. What obstacles do you have or anticipate to attaining those priorities?
3. What collaboration barriers, successes, or expansion efforts do you have?
4. Any desired recommendations for system improvements?

At the January 2024 meeting, the Task Force members heard a general summary of the survey responses and had some discussion. The second portion of the assessment took place in February 2024 at a special in-person workday meeting. The Court Improvement Program, SC Network of Children’s Advocacy Centers, SC Department of Children’s Advocacy, SC Department of Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse Services, SC State Law Enforcement Division and a Senior Resource Attorney with the Children’s Law Center Investigation and Prosecution Team were asked to provide explanation of their submitted responses.

Instructions and limitations were provided to guide the recommendation drafting. Members were asked to consider the desired outcome, activities to be carried out, and how improvement could be measured, while drafting recommendations. The summary document of agency initiatives/priorities was provided again for reference. Task Force members were separated into three work-groups based on their prior preference. A Children’s Law Center staff member was assigned to each of the three groups to take notes and document the recommendation drafts. Each group drafted between seven and nine recommendations for consideration.

The Children's Law Center staff communicated with the Task Force Chair and Vice Chair to review the submitted draft recommendations and worked to clarify submissions. They were able to refine the list to 19 recommendations plus two standing and carry-over items. The 21 draft recommendations were then sent to the Task Force members, and they were asked to vote for their top selections. The results of that selection process yielded a final list of 17 recommendations plus the two standing/carry-over items. Those 17 recommendations were organized into the three required CJA categories and then those categories also serve as the committee topics for the 2024-2027 cycle: Committee A: Training and Judicial Improvements, Committee B: Model Programming, and Committee C: Child Protection Reform. The new committees met in virtual break-out sessions on April 26, 2024 to finalize their recommendations and plan preliminary activities.

IV. Recommendations for 2024-2027

The following recommendations were developed as a result of the 2024 three-year assessment process which will guide the work of the Task Force over the next three-year period:

Category A: Recommendations for investigative, administrative and judicial improvements, including training:

- 1.A** Support the development of an exploratory committee to investigate attorney representation of children in abuse and neglect cases.
- 2.A** Support the Attorney General's Office Education Coordinator related to training on technology related offenses, including but not limited to sexting and sextortion.
- 3.A** Continue to provide education on the Truth-Lie Task Tool to DSS attorneys, prosecutors, GALs, and the judiciary, and promote its use by these groups.
- 4.A** Provide training to child welfare professionals related to substance use disorders and state law related to the possession and use of illegal and controlled substances, and the Drug-Endangered Child Protocol regarding safety concerns for families.
- 5.A** Improve the response to children with special needs, especially children with autism, related to abuse or neglect. Trainings developed would focus on forensic interviewers, law enforcement, judges, and GALs.
- 6.A** Continue to build upon trainings regarding multidisciplinary child death investigations, including identifying and addressing barriers to effectively implementing the Child Death Investigation Task Force's (CDITF) rapid response.
- 7.A** Provide education to parents about the family court and DSS process.

Category B: Recommendations for experimental, demonstration and model programs:

8.B Support the training of professionals on the co-occurrence, or nexus, of child maltreatment and domestic violence.

9.B Support the improvement of the multidisciplinary team response to human trafficking cases through training. Continue Team response via CAC services, with modifications when necessary to meet child trafficking victims' needs.

10.B Support the assessment and reduction of overreporting by medical and child professionals with education and training.

11.B Support quality improvements across SCNCACs by forming a joint SCNCAC/CJA work group to provide input on potential SC accreditation standards.

12.B Support SCNCAC in continuing efforts to secure protections for forensic interview recordings in South Carolina through education, forensic interview evidence management system improvements, and legislation, if needed.

13.B Continue to provide support in the outreach and distribution of the virtual training of the SC Child Abuse Response Protocol Act.

Category C: Recommendations for reform of state laws, ordinances, regulations, procedures, or protocols:

14.C Develop a multi-disciplinary protocol for improved access to services or enhanced response to youth (status offenders and trafficking victims) with co-involvement in child protective services (DSS) and DJJ or other agencies, with a focus on appropriate placements.

15.C Encourage and support child serving agency examination of racial disparities of children involved with the child welfare system through representation on the state's Racial Justice Action Team and other forums.

16.C Explore the CAC and DSS tracking system's ability/functionality to include interventions with pre-post assessments.

17.C Review the following state statutes for possible reform and provide education in an impartial, objective manner.

- S.C. Code Ann. § 19-1-180. Out-of-court statements by certain children. (Hearsay Exceptions for abuse and neglect cases)
- S.C. Code Ann. § 63-11-550. Confidentiality of records and information. (GAL Confidentiality Statute)
- S.C. Code Ann. § 63-7-310. Persons required to report. (Mandated Reporter Statutes (§ 63-7-310 through -440))

Standard Carryover Recommendations

- ❖ Continue to support the SC Network of Children's Advocacy Centers including organizational capacity and infrastructural resources.
- ❖ Continue to support the operation of the Children's Law Center, a training and information resource center for professionals involved in child maltreatment proceedings. Operations include implementing the training recommendations in collaboration with the Task Force and providing research and logistical support.

V. Description of Recommendation Activities

The following preliminary activities are planned to address the recommendations:

Category A: Recommendations for investigative, administrative and judicial improvements, including training:

1.A Support the development of an exploratory committee to investigate attorney representation of children in abuse and neglect cases. The SC Bench-Bar Committee is supported by the Children's Law Center and will form a workgroup to lead this investigation. A CJATF member, who is also an attorney, will join the established workgroup to assist as the liaison.

2.A Support the Attorney General's Office Education Coordinator related to training on technology related offenses, including but not limited to sexting and sextortion. The Attorney General's Office on Human Trafficking has added an Education Coordinator. The CJATF Coordinator has been in contact and the CJATF will collaborate to develop and support trainings on this topic.

3.A Continue to provide education on the Truth-Lie Task Tool to DSS attorneys, prosecutors, GALs, and the judiciary, and promote its use. The Children's Law Center Senior Attorney also serves as the CJATF Committee A liaison. This staff member will reach out to court leadership about training for prosecutors and create an online, self-paced training for judges, along with a CJATF member who is also a prosecutor in the capital city.

4.A Provide training to child welfare professionals related to substance use disorders and state law related to the possession and use of illegal and controlled substances and the Drug-Endangered Child Protocol regarding safety concerns for families. CJATF committee members will obtain a copy of the most recent Drug Endangered Child Protocol to determine if updates should be recommended. One of our newest CJATF members with the SC Department of Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse Services will serve on this workgroup.

5.A Improve the response to children with special needs, especially children with autism, related to abuse or neglect. Trainings developed would focus on forensic

interviewers, law enforcement, judges, and GALs. CJATF members will review what guidance is currently provided for judges and will talk to the two member judges about what types of content they would find beneficial, to include what forensic interviewers, GALs, law enforcement, and judges need to know about how a child with special needs may communicate or may need in the courtroom.

6.A Continue to build upon trainings regarding multidisciplinary child death investigations, including identifying and addressing barriers to effectively implementing the Child Death Investigation Task Forces (CDITF) rapid response.

The subcommittee will review current trainings to determine where updates are needed based on child death trends and survey local law enforcement, coroners, and DSS about collaboration, communication, and coordination successes and opportunities.

7.A Provide education to parents about the family court and DSS process. The CJATF committee will reach out to DSS leadership about the process and resources currently available for distribution to build upon this recommendation.

Category B: Recommendations for experimental, demonstration and model programs:

8.B Support the training of professionals on the co-occurrence, or nexus, of child maltreatment and domestic violence. CJATF members will pull and analyze data on the number of cases from Children's Advocacy Centers that include domestic violence and then collaborate with the SC Coalition of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault on developing training series related to this topic.

9.B Support the improvement of the multidisciplinary team response to human trafficking cases through training. Continue Team response via Children's Advocacy Center (CAC) services, with modifications when necessary to meet child trafficking victim's needs. CJATF members will reach out to the SC Human Trafficking Task Force about ideas and partnering. There is a strong correlation between CAC programs and the need for incorporating human trafficking multidisciplinary teams.

10.B Support the assessment and reduction of overreporting by medical and child professionals with education and training. The SC Department of Social Services has analyzed data which indicates this overreporting trend, and in-turn, they have developed a workgroup. A Children's Law Center representative serving on the workgroup will help to inform how the CJATF can support.

11.B Support quality improvements across SCNCACs by forming a joint SCNCAC/CJA work group to provide input on potential SC accreditation standards. The SCNCAC Committee member is researching grants for this effort. CJATF will support by serving on the workgroup and providing expert trainers when appropriate.

12.B Support SCNCAC in continuing efforts to secure protections for forensic interview recordings in South Carolina through education, forensic interview evidence management system improvements, and legislation if needed. CJATF

members realize that keeping forensic interview recordings protected is essential for the safety and mental wellness of children. While this effort has been implemented in South Carolina, it still needs oversight.

13.B Continue to provide support in the outreach and distribution of the virtual training of the SC Child Abuse Response Protocol Act. The CJATF committee will reach out to the governor's office about the timeframe and process for appointing their protocol task force oversight committee, who will help provide oversight and inform the Protocol response and associated trainings.

Category C: Recommendations for reform of state laws, ordinances, regulations, procedures, or protocols:

14.C Develop a multi-disciplinary protocol for improved access to services or enhanced response to youth (status offenders and trafficking victims) with co-involvement in child protective services (DSS) and DJJ or other agencies, with a focus on appropriate placements. In late 2022, DSS in partnership with their monitoring team, and with the support of the Department of Juvenile Justice, conducted a series of case reviews and discussion groups in order to better assess and understand the experiences of children and youth who are concurrently involved with both the Department of Social Services and the Department of Juvenile Justice. Those joint review findings, along with other feedback, will drive the work of this recommendation.

15.C Encourage and support child serving agency examination of racial disparities of children involved with the child welfare system through representation on the state's Racial Justice Action Team, and other forums. The CJATF Coordinator will arrange for quarterly Racial Justice Action Team updates at scheduled CJATF meetings to inform the activities and direction of the task force.

16.C Explore the CACs and DSS tracking system's ability/functionality to include interventions with pre-post assessments. Currently the SCNAC's have a portal to ensure best practice services and timeframes. The CJATF will explore the portal's ability to include mental health assessments, which will provide more comprehensive outcomes.

17.C Review the following state statutes for possible reform, to then provide education in an impartial, objective manner. This CJATF committee includes two attorneys who will review certain statutes and identify problematic language and unintended consequences of how the statutes are currently written.

S.C. Code Ann. § 19-1-180. Out-of-court statements by certain children. (Hearsay Exceptions for abuse and neglect cases). Amend language; Add an exception for statements alleging abuse or neglect made to child forensic interviewers and mental health professionals.

S.C. Code Ann. § 63-11-550. Confidentiality of records and information. (GAL Confidentiality Statute).

Amend for clarity and to alleviate conflict with more recently enacted legislation.

S.C. Code Ann. § 63-7-310. Persons required to report.
(Mandated Reporter Statutes (§ 63-7-310 through -440).
General statutory review for consistency across the children's code.

Standard Carryover Recommendations

Continue to support the SC Network of Children's Advocacy Centers including organizational capacity and infrastructural resources.

Continue to support the operation of the Children's Law Center, a training and information resource center for professionals involved in child maltreatment proceedings. Operations include implementing the training recommendations in collaboration with the Task Force and providing research and logistical support.

2024 Three-Year Assessment Survey Results

I. DESIRED IMPROVEMENTS FOR CHILD WELFARE SYSTEMS

Increased understanding through continued training

- Continue statewide training on concepts and statutory guidelines for child death investigations and utilize the task force for all child deaths.
- Increase understanding of domestic violence dynamics and impacts on victims and their children (training, ongoing technical assistance).
- Increase communication between advocates and child welfare services case managers so each understands the requirements, regulations, and laws.
- Provide regular, mandatory training to child welfare professionals to understand substance use disorder to address it as a safety concern for families/children.

Improved utilization of the South Carolina Child Abuse Response Protocol

- Improve the utilization of the South Carolina Child Abuse Response Protocol and develop a system to measure the outcomes for children where the protocol was used versus where it was omitted.

Improved support for children with special needs

- Improve supporting children with special needs by providing more training to caregivers (foster parents, etc.).
- Have a better system to evaluate for abuse in children with limited communication.

Increased resources

- Develop an online portal for school professionals and families that provides information and available resources in an effort to promote awareness and support.

Improved quality

- Improve the quality of hearings; improve judicial inquiry; improve case manager practice; boost service array across the state; and inform the courts of available services in county and region.
- Develop quality improvement across the South Carolina Children’s Advocacy Centers by developing and implementing state accreditation standards that build off the minimum standards set by the National Children’s Alliance accreditation.

Increased data-driven efforts on fatality prevention

- Develop data-driven fatality prevention efforts. Locally led coroner child death reviews would need to be entered into a uniform case reporting system. This will allow the SC State Child Fatality Advisory Committee to draw trends to inform recommendations to the legislature to prevent child deaths.

Improved multidisciplinary team response to human trafficking cases at CACs

- Improve the multidisciplinary team response to human trafficking cases at Children’s Advocacy Centers in all 46 counties through training and funding initiatives.

Secured protections

- Establish secure protections for forensic interview recordings in South Carolina through education, forensic interview evidence management system improvements, and legislation if needed.

II. AGENCY SURVEY QUESTIONS AND RESPONSES

1. Summary of Initiatives/Priorities that fall within Children’s Justice Act parameters (alphabetically with available data submitted) and associated obstacles by agency Required parameters and categories for use of CJA funds.

SC Court Improvement Program

Initiatives/Priorities

- Improve the handling of child abuse and neglect hearings and case management.
- Expand on quality hearing training for case managers, attorneys, and judges.

Obstacles to Overcome

- Limited court time; overdue merits hearings; continued hearings; case manager performance in and outside of court; lack of information on availability of services; judicial inquiry of agency recommendations; lack of quality legal representation for parents and the agency; strained court-agency relations

SC Department of Alcohol and Drug Abuse Services

Initiatives/Priorities

- Implement/Utilize Screening, Brief Intervention, and Referral to Treatment.
- Assist other state agencies in the understanding of substance use disorder prevention, intervention, and treatment.

Obstacles to Overcome

- Lack of training for social service workforce specific to the identification and care of substance use disorders
- Stigma surrounding substance use disorders

SC Chapter of American Academy of Pediatrics

Initiatives/Priorities

- Improved child well-being

Obstacles to Overcome

- None listed

SC Children’s Advocacy Response System

Initiatives/Priorities

- Continued training and professional development of healthcare providers and members of state investigatory agencies on the medical aspects of child maltreatment
- Development of quality standards for the medical assessment of maltreatment and advocacy to remove barriers to medical services delivery

Obstacles to Overcome

- The state child abuse medical providers in some rural areas struggle to maintain a well-informed workforce.
- Need improved understanding and use of the multidisciplinary process and skills to assess child maltreatment.

SC Coalition Against Domestic Violence & Sexual Assault**Initiatives/Priorities**

- Improve outcomes for families who have experienced domestic violence and are also involved with child welfare services.

Obstacles to Overcome

- Collaboration across systems can be difficult due to confidentiality requirements and regulations in shelters.
- There is a lack of understanding of domestic violence dynamics in child welfare, law enforcement and other systems.

SC Department of Children's Advocacy Centers**Initiatives/Priorities**

- Increase the number of active volunteers such that all children have a court-appointed volunteer advocate.
- Recruit and retain staff in an effort to reduce existing workloads for staff.
- Improve staff's ability to actively recruit volunteers.
- Provide additional support for volunteers and the court system.

Obstacles to Overcome

- Low percentage of potential guardians ad litem starting and/or completing the required 30 hours of training

SC Department of Education - Office of Special Education Services**Initiatives/Priorities**

- Provide meaningful technical assistance and support to districts serving children with disabilities.
- Develop programs and initiatives to address critical areas of need for children with disabilities, with critical areas of need being early childhood literacy, graduation/drop-out rates, mental health crises, teacher/service provider shortage.

Obstacles to Overcome

- Conducting effective assessments of district needs; determining the best approaches to meet those needs

SC Department of Health and Human Services – BabyNet**Initiatives/Priorities**

- Provide training for families who are involved in the child welfare system, to include referrals, support around challenging behaviors, and developmental monitorship.

Obstacles to Overcome

- There is a need for more skilled providers to serve children and families in SC. There can be challenges in evaluating children when they are suspected of child abuse and neglect due to limited communication in some cases.

SC Department of Social Services

Initiatives/Priorities

- Reduce over reporting by legal, education, and medical professionals. Advocate for 21st century mandated reporting law.
- Reduce neglect allegations by improving neglect statute.
- Work with programs like CHAMPS to assist families; engage in discussions about how we build social determinants of health, so families are strengthened.
- Determine who is responsible and accountable for reducing drug use and gun violence, increasing actual livable wages, developing strong schools, and providing good mental health programs.

Obstacles to Overcome

- Lack of housing and high cost of housing
- Lack of mental health service array

SC Foster Parent Association

Initiatives/Priorities

- Training that applies later in the child welfare process

Obstacles to Overcome

- None listed

SC Network of Children's Advocacy Centers

Initiatives/Priorities

- Develop quality improvement across the Network by developing and implementing state accreditation standards that build off the minimum standards set by the National Children's Alliance accreditation standards.
- Improve the multidisciplinary team response to human trafficking cases at CACs in all 46 counties through training and funding initiatives.
- Secure protections for forensic interview recordings in South Carolina through education, forensic interview evidence management system improvements, and legislation if needed.

Obstacles to Overcome

- Development of state accreditation standards and implementation of the standards will require a large amount of funding. The Network is writing private endowment and foundations grants to help cover the cost of this large-scale quality improvement effort.
- There is sometimes a lack of understanding at the local multidisciplinary team (MDT) level of the different characteristics of a human trafficking case and the ways that local MDTs need to adapt approaches to meet the needs of children and families involved in these cases.

- There is some resistance from MDT partners about the need to secure forensic interview recordings.

SC Fatality Advisory Committee

Initiatives/Priorities

- Move towards a preventative and systemic focus by implementing a safety science approach to child fatalities.
- Improve locally/county led child death review data collection. The SC Fatality Advisory Committee has proposed coroners utilize the National Center for Fatality Review and Prevention's Case Reporting System to enter review data.

Obstacles to Overcome

- Differing opinions as to using the current review system or changing to a new review process
- Lack of capacity for current coroner staff to take on the additional task of data entry for case tracking

SC Law Enforcement Division – Special Victims Unit

Initiatives/Priorities

- Continue efforts of the Child Death Investigation Task Forces (CDITF) in furtherance of SC Code of Laws § 63-11-1900, which mandates that all child death investigations are accurate, thorough, and complete, and that the best approach is multi-disciplinary and multi-agency.

Obstacles to Overcome

- Lack of uniformity across the state in how child deaths are investigated due to lack of specialized training
- Underutilization of the Child Death Investigation Task Force

SC Joint Citizens and Legislative Committee on Children - Areas of Focus

S.34: Child Marriage

S.147: Domestic Violence Victim Confidentiality

S.160: Court Admissibility of Statements Made by Children

S.174: Exceptions to Definition of “Child Abuse or Neglect”

S.234 Parental Bill of Rights

S.278: South Carolina Juvenile Justice Reform Act

S.548: Parenting Plans and the Best Interest Standard for Visitation

H.3196: Allowance of Attorney Fees in DSS Abuse and Neglect cases

H.3217: Uniform Unregulated Child Custody Transfer Act

H.4232: Increase the Age Infants Can Be Left at a Safe Haven to Six Months

H.3230: Child Interrogation Requirements

2. SUMMARY OF COLLABORATION SUCCESSES AND EXPANSION EFFORTS

SC Court Improvement Program

The Court Improvement Program and Court Liaisons regularly share data with court partners and with the Department of Social Services - the Children's Bureau has seen this as a success for our state.

SC Department of Alcohol and Drug Abuse Services

The South Carolina Department of Alcohol and Drug Abuse Services (DAODAS) and Department of Social Services (DSS) drug screening consultation program is a success, as is the DAODAS crossover/liaison positions with DSS and Department of Mental Health.

SC Children's Advocacy Medical Response System

The South Carolina Children's Advocacy Medical Response System (SCCAMRS) network of medical providers has grown to include 29 fully trained providers statewide to expand coverage in response to the passing of the SC Child Abuse Response Protocol. The providers in rural areas are now all connected to an academic regional center of excellence for educational and peer discussion support. Another collaborative success is the partnership between the University of South Carolina's Children's Law Center and SCCAMRS to provide training sessions to investigatory partner agencies on subjects pertinent to the assessment and management of child maltreatment and child fatalities.

SC Coalition Against Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault

The SC Coalition Against Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault is working closely with the Department of Social Services (DSS) to expand training of all employees, and the Coalition has a liaison project funded through DSS which aims to build relationships between advocates and county-level caseworkers.

SC Department of Children's Advocacy

The Department of Children's Advocacy online training courses have made it easier for more guardians ad litem to attend training. Combined training and meetings with the Department of Social Services ensure we are all on the same page.

SC Department of Education – Office of Special Education Services

The South Carolina Department of Education – Office of Special Education Services successfully partners with a number of organizations across the state that serve individuals with disabilities and their families. Those organizations include, but are not limited to: Family Connection South Carolina, Able South Carolina, Transition Alliance South Carolina, Academic Alliance of South Carolina, Behavioral Alliance of South Carolina, and South Carolina Partnership for Inclusion.

SC Department of Health and Human Services – BabyNet

BabyNet works closely with the South Carolina Infant Mental Health Association and other agencies to provide training to early intervention staff who work with families. The hope is, by providing additional training to staff, they will be better prepared to support families and prevent abuse.

SC Department of Social Services

The South Carolina Department of Social Services (DSS) collaborates with Children's Trust of South Carolina for resource center work. DSS lists expansion and collaboration efforts for in-home service array and employment programs to address poverty.

SC Network of Children's Advocacy Centers

The South Carolina Network of Children's Advocacy Centers (SCANAC) is collaborating with foundation and endowment partners to provide funding and support for quality improvement. SCNCAC collaborates with the Department of Social Services and the SC Human Trafficking Task Force on many initiatives.

SC Fatality Advisory Committee

The South Carolina Fatality Advisory Committee is progressing and has collaborated with the University of Kentucky to identify the best practices for systemic case reviews. Also, we have had improved conversations and increased engagement with the Department of Health and Environmental Control.

State Law Enforcement Division – Special Victims Unit

The State Law Enforcement Division – Special Victims Unit (SLED-SVU) continues to encourage agencies to utilize the Task Force and multi-disciplinary approach. Agents offer all counties and agencies (law enforcement, coroners, Emergency Medical Services, Department of Social Services) free training on child death investigations and/or Child Death Investigations Task Force protocols. These trainings are catered to the agency's needs, time frame, etc. Agents also respond to child death scenes to assist law enforcement and coroners with the initial and subsequent investigation.