

Children's Code Task Force  
Thursday, February 16, 2023  
4:00–5.30 p.m.

**I. Welcome from Judge Catherine Begaye, Task Force Chair**

Judge Catherine Begaye, Presiding Children's Court Judge, Second Judicial District, called the meeting to order and welcomed the task force members to the meeting. During her remarks, Judge Begaye made the following points:

-She is still working with IT personnel at the Judiciary on a platform for future meetings; and

-She welcomed a new Task Force member, Diana Garcia. Ms. Garcia is a Deputy District Attorney and her initial thoughts regarding needed reforms is to better align the Children's Code with the Children's Court Rules.

**II. Recap: Kathleen Sabo**

Ms. Sabo briefly re-capped the first task force meeting, which was held on January 19, 2023. She noted that the Children's Code Task Force will focus its initial efforts on a review of welfare provisions in the Children's Code.

During the first meeting, we heard from David Schmidt and Tony Ortiz, who both worked on the drafting of the original Children's Code in the early 1990's. Mr. Schmidt and Mr. Ortiz cited the following as lessons learned from that previous effort:

-It was vitally important to have Native American representation on the sub-committees that supported development of the Children's Code;

-The task force will need to determine a process for developing its recommendations. Consensus-building is the key to success;

-As societal and cultural values evolve, those changes should be reflected in a revamped Children's Code;

-Inclusiveness and civil discourse are vitally important; and

-Emerging research on substance abuse and brain development in youth will inform our work.

### **III. Sub-committees**

Ms. Sabo advised that the task force will initially create two sub-committees that will focus on: 1) improving responses to poverty and substance abuse; and 2) crossover youth who have contacts with the child welfare and juvenile justice systems. Both sub-committees will intentionally fold in issues that impact Native American children and families.

Next, task force members selected the sub-committees they want to work on.

#### **Improving responses to poverty and substance abuse:**

Beth Gillia  
Catherine Pavelski  
Leslie Jones\*  
John Romero  
Dennica Torres  
Judge Alma Roberson  
Shelly Bucher  
Mary McQueeney  
Jacqueline Yalch  
Shira Greenberg  
Alison Endicott-Quinones

\*Leslie Jones volunteered to be the point person (not necessarily the Chair) for the purpose of organizing the initial sub-committee meeting.

#### **Crossover youth who have contacts with the child welfare and juvenile justice systems:**

Jesse Clifton  
Dennica Torres  
Judge Alma Roberson  
Brandi White  
Shelly Bucher  
Bette Fleishman

Rosenda Chavez-Lara  
Diana Garcia\*

\*Diana Garcia volunteered to be the point person (not necessarily the Chair) for the purpose of organizing the initial sub-committee meeting.

**IV. Brainstorming on stakeholders who we want to invite to address the task force (system-impacted youth, families with lived experience, tribal representatives, law enforcement, social workers working with youth and families, etc.)**

- System-impacted youth
- Judge Kim McGinnis
- Dr. George Davis
- parents with lived experience
- state agency representatives
- Public Knowledge
- a stakeholder with knowledge regarding how the behavioral health system overlaps with Medicaid and child welfare systems
- New Day Youth and Family Services
- Workers at methadone clinics and staff who provide mental health services
- Representatives from Drug Courts
- Representatives from “Healing to Wellness” programs that are administered by tribes in New Mexico
- Mental health providers for parents and children
- Foster parents
- a stakeholder who is familiar with the Juvenile Detention Alternative Initiative
- Juvenile probation officers
- The La Plazita Initiative
- Law enforcement officers
- Social workers

- The National Juvenile Justice Institute
- former and current employees at the Children, Youth and Families Department
- LGBTQ families
- Non-citizens
- Youth who have aged-out of the child welfare and juvenile justice systems
- Casa Q
- Stakeholders who can speak to language issues and use of American sign language in child welfare and juvenile justice systems
- The Transgender Resource Center

## **V. Upcoming meetings**

Kathy Sabo and Tony Ortiz will contact Leslie Jones and Diana Garcia to organize the initial meetings of the sub-committees.

The next meeting of the Children's Code Task Force will be held on March 30th, 2023, from 4:00 p.m.-5:30 p.m.

The Children's Code Task Force will report to the Children's Code Improvement Commission at the commission's quarterly meeting, on April 20<sup>th</sup>, 2023, from 11:00 a.m.-2 p.m.