



# Children’s Justice Act (CJA) Task Force Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, February 6, 2024

In-person meeting

9:00 am- 12:00 pm

*Task Force Members:*

	<b>CASA Jenna App</b>	xx	<b>CAMI AC Member Gil Levy</b>
xx	<b>Prosecuting Attorney Stacy Neil</b>	xx	<b>CAMI AC Member Marilyn Reilly</b>
xx	<b>Person with Experience Working with Children with Disabilities</b> Shawna Clowser	xx	<b>Person with Experience Working with Homeless Children and Youth VACANT</b>
	<b>Criminal Court Judge</b> Hon Andrew Erwin	xx	<b>Lived Experience Expert</b> Sherree Rodriguez
xx	<b>Law Enforcement Amy Ford</b>	xx	<b>Parent Patty Terzian</b>
xx	<b>Mental Health Professional</b> Damon Holland		<b>Attorney for Children Rahela Rehman</b>
	<b>Civil Court Judge VACANT</b>	xx	<b>Child Protective Services Deena Loughary</b>
xx	<b>Health Professional Patti Kenyon</b>	xx	<b>Defense Attorney Matthew Muenzen</b>
xx	<b>CAMI AC Member Tina Morgan</b>		<b>CAMI AC Member Beatriz Lynch</b>
		xx	<b>CAMI AC Member Natalya Miller</b>

*Guests:*

xx	Sonya Buckholz, Oregon Department of Human Services (ODHS), Child Welfare Division	xx	Caroline Olfert, CVSSD
xx	Pamela Heisler, Oregon Child Abuse Solutions (OCAS)	xx	Shelly Smith, OCAS

*CVSSD DOJ Staff:*

xx	Robin Reimer, CAMI Fund Coordinator		Kim Kennedy, GMS Section Manager
xx	Amanda VanTil, Grant Specialist		Shannon Sivell, CVSSD Director

**Welcome and Introductions**

Robin welcomed everyone and the August meeting minutes were approved without edits.

**Three Year Needs Assessment Update:**

Robin reviewed the CJA funding cycle with the application due in May 2024. From previous discussions, the group agreed to expand the needs assessment survey to include feedback from survivors, parent groups, and populations serving children experiencing disability or homelessness. These subsets of people are not only difficult to reach but also the existing survey materials are written for professionals. Robin and Caroline met with Sherree, Shawna, and Patty Terzian who represent survivors, parents, and those who work with children with disabilities on the Task Force. After reviewing resources and speaking with contacts for these populations, they decided to create a tailored survey. Robin presented the draft survey to Kelly Barber, Oregon’s



Strategic Engagement Advisor and Antonio Tores from Oregon Equity Services who recommended inviting community members to participate in the creation of the survey as well as strategic methods to maximize participation while avoiding technological, cultural, or language barriers. Caroline shared the newest portion of the assessment survey with the group. The survey will use logic to move the respondent through the survey efficiently depending how each question is answered. Sherree recommended an affirmation statement at the end of the survey for parents and survivors of abuse. Robin will bring the completed survey to Antonio Tores for feedback as a representative of nondominant culture. He will also translate the survey to a couple other widely used languages.

The group gave feedback on the current questions such as defining professional terms or expanding on the phrasing of the questions. Robin explained that the survey will be distributed to respondents by way of a known source (ODHS community contacts) for the respondents. The group recommended the inclusion of follow up resources for some of the questions.

Robin asked the group if CJA funds could be used to complete the work of the needs assessment survey. The costs may include the translation work, recognition to Kelly Barber and Antonio Tores for their time and expertise, and to contract a Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) consultant to assist with work on the needs assessment.

Robin will follow up on funding for this project.

The group agreed to add a non-statutory role of a person with experience with inclusion work to the Task Force.

Caroline reviewed the final portion of the survey used for prior needs assessments. Robin reminded the group that CJA funding focuses on systemic change and therefore seeks feedback from the field for legislative changes in regard to the work with child abuse services.

As with the last needs assessment, each Task Force member will interview three constituents or conduct focused research within their represented role to present at the next meeting. Regarding timeline, distribution of the survey will begin in early March with results completed by May 1. The CJA application and reports are due the end of May.

**Outcome Measurement System (OMS) survey:** Accredited Child Advocacy Centers (CAC) distribute client and multidisciplinary team (MDT) feedback surveys at the end of a Center visit and then again two weeks later. Centers have been innovative by using texting or written survey questions to make the surveys easy to complete and submit. Oregon Centers are using a free survey tool provided by National Childrens Alliance (NCA) to member Centers. Robin received the collected data from these surveys from OCAS and would like to include this in the CJA report. With approval from the Task Force, Robin will invite Erin Cassey from NCA to attend a future meeting to inform the group of the survey and future changes to the survey. The group is also interested in data comparison with other states on OMS responses.



## **Oregon Child Forensic Interview Training (OCFIT) Longitudinal Evaluation: Shelly Smith and Pamela Heisler (Appendix A)**

Pamela reviewed the Kirkpatrick Model of evaluation used at OCAS over the past 14 months with the OCFIT training program. Applying the Kirkpatrick model pushes trainers to evaluate programs and adjust for desired outcomes and behavior change. The group learned this same methodology may be presented to ODHS trainings in the future. Stacy Neil complimented OCAS on their current training as well as the prospect of advanced trainings. She also recommended training for Prosecutors. Shelly identified existing collaborations that are discussing such trainings. Regarding school systems trainings, Gil recommended pulling in community partners that can be utilized or interested in participation. The group discussed the role of Crime Victim Advocates in the court system.

Shelly spoke to the group about CJA funds which support OCAS projects and goals and presented recommendations for future funding.

### **Member Updates:**

Umatilla County has begun a Child Abuse Conference on the heels the Clackamas County Child Abuse Summit which was eliminated in recent years.

Meeting adjourned 12:00pm

**Next meeting: Thursday, May 2, 2024, 1pm-4pm via Teams**

<b>Action Items:</b>		
<b>Item</b>	<b>Assigned to</b>	<b>Status</b>
Circulate list of existing data and information resources for input.	Robin	
Contact Shelly regarding OMS data presentation.	Robin	

**OCFIT Comprehensive Evaluation****CJA Executive Summary****February 2024****Background & Methodology**

Oregon Child Abuse Solutions is an organization committed to continuous improvement. As part of this commitment, all staff members were enrolled in the nationally recognized Kirkpatrick method of comprehensive evaluation in 2021 and 2022. Kirkpatrick is a model of evaluating performance that goes beyond training reactions and seeks to see real learning that leads to behavior change and ends in results. To establish a baseline for OCFIT, OCAS used several methods to obtain information: revised daily evaluations, a longitudinal survey of all OCFIT participants over the past two years, focus groups and finally, interviews.

- Pre and Post OCFIT Knowledge Tests
- Daily training evaluations: 100% response rate
- Longitudinal survey: 51% response rate
- Focus Groups: Law Enforcement, Child Welfare, Forensic Interviewers
- Interviews: Current and Former CAC Executive Directors, Prosecutors
- Outcome Measurement System (OMS): 2023 Caregiver Initial Surveys; 2023 Youth Surveys

*Note: Longitudinal survey results were challenging to assess due to field responders answering questions intended only for forensic interviewers, resulting in skewed initial data. This necessitated additional steps to clarify information.*

**Notable Findings & Key Takeaways**

When interviewing former CAC Executive Directors and Forensic Interviewers who were in the field before the creation of OCFIT, it became clear that OCFIT was originally launched in order to:

- Provide children with a safe space to tell their stories, followed by the appropriate response
- Standardize and create consistency in forensic interviews across the state
- Increase objectivity in interviews
- Reduce costs and barriers to forensic interviewer training

Some additional results of OCFIT, determined by this evaluation process, include:

- Improvement in investigation, prosecution, and judicial handling of cases
- Improved collaboration among MDT partners around a child's experience
- Improved trust with MDT partners
- Increased credibility of forensic interviewers in trials

The longitudinal survey proved incredibly informative in assessing a forensic interviewer's confidence and transfer of knowledge. For example, one question was designed to understand their feelings of preparation on the job as a result of participating in OCFIT: 69% felt *very prepared* or *prepared* to conduct forensic interviews. Using 10 questions referring back to essential OCFIT knowledge, forensic interviewers reported rates *between 73% and 100%* of using the information in their daily work *all of the time* or *most of the time*. 91% feel supported by their staff teams and that their workload is manageable, and 84% believe they are making a difference in kids' lives. This belief is supported by youth survey responses captured in the 2023 Outcome Measurement System (OMS)- 99% of youth felt CAC staff were *very good* or *good* at listening to them, and 97% felt that CAC staff was *very helpful* or *helpful* in making them feel safe. Likewise, 90% of

caregivers strongly agreed their child felt safe at the CAC and 93% *strongly agreed* or *somewhat agreed* that they knew what to expect with the situation facing them and their child after the visit. Forensic interviewers expressed several areas for growth: support to adjust questioning for different developmental groups; responding to reluctance; access to peer review; refresher courses; and additional interview practice sessions.

*“I've been to multiple trainings throughout the United States regarding child forensic interviewing, and **this by far is the best.**”*

- OCFIT Forensic Interviewer Participant

When field responders were asked how prepared they were to conduct field interviews after attending OCFIT, child welfare reported 75% *very prepared* and 25% *prepared*. Law enforcement reported 50% *very prepared* and 50% *prepared*. Prosecutors interviewed indicated that OCFIT helps investigators understand the importance of corroboration in child abuse cases, leading to more efficient investigations and quicker decision-making. Having OCFIT-trained investigators significantly strengthens the prosecution's case, resulting in a higher rate of resolving cases without trial. Further, they indicated that having a forensic interview conducted by a trained forensic interviewer at a Children's Advocacy Center (CAC) is crucial for their decision to file charges, as it provides significant evidence and details that can be used in prosecution and trial. The forensic interviewers not only impact the evidence by obtaining important information from the child, but they also serve as expert witnesses in court, helping to educate the jury on relevant topics.

Current and former CAC Executive Directors have observed improved consistency across the state and the quality of forensic interviews overall since OCFIT was created. It also helped with MDT partnerships in the collection and defense of evidence. OCFIT has helped improve trust and made interviewing more objective.

#### **Recommendations for Program Improvement:**

As a result of data collection over a 12-month period, OCAS has identified several recommendations to be implemented pre, during, and post OCFIT.

#### **Pre-OCFIT:**

- Explore streamlined and standardized onboarding process for forensic interviewers, with an emphasis on supporting rural CACs.
- Return fully to in-person OCFIT sessions barring a significant crisis such as a pandemic requiring a virtual session.
- Ensure that all new DHS caseworkers participate in a Collaborative Child Abuse Response Training (CCAR) as an initial step in their onboarding process.
- Ensure that all officer who may come into contact with a child abuse case, at a minimum, take CCAR. If they are a detective investigating child maltreatment cases and their MDT has identified them as an appropriate individual to conduct forensic interviews, then it is recommended that they apply to OCFIT.
- Continue with fully in-person OCFIT sessions, barring a significant crisis such as a pandemic requiring a virtual session

**During OCFIT:**

- Curriculum should address appropriate attire (uniforms and weapons) in a forensic interview.
- Utilize non-participant actors during OCFIT for the practice interview section of the curriculum.
- Expand the Court Testimony module to deliver a more advanced curriculum.

**Post OCFIT:**

- Development of an OCFIT refresher course to provide additional training/updates for OCFIT participants in a safe training environment.
- Increase and diversify access to peer review for forensic interviewers.
- Engage the Department of Public Safety Standards and Training (DPSST) and the Oregon Department of Human Services/Child Welfare (ODHS CW) in the development of coaching and feedback opportunities for field interviewers.
- Implement additional practice interview sessions post OCFIT.
- Host additional practice interview sessions approximately 30 days after each OCFIT session.
- Increase communication about the time, place, and mode of peer reviews to improve access and attendance.

**In Closing:**

Forensic interviewers require highly specialized, consistent training and many years to hone their skills. Our goal for each OCFIT training is to make sure every participant walks away with the foundational knowledge, skills, and resources to interview children according to best practices, following the Oregon Interviewing Guidelines. This comprehensive evaluation was intended to assess whether OCFIT is meeting these expectations and is improving consistency and quality statewide, as well as improving case outcomes and increasing participant confidence. The data obtained through this evaluation process indicates that OCFIT is successfully meeting its program goals. In recognition of OCAS' commitment to continuous improvement, recommendations resulting from this process will be given priority in coming years.

**View Initial Survey Results Here:**

*\*Note to Reader: The survey is split into two tracks that do not appear in the view only version, it displays as duplicate questions. Additionally, the narrative sections will not appear in this format\** [https://www.surveymonkey.com/results/SM-RRJ5B8eIqMladBl8JDME2Q\\_3D\\_3D/](https://www.surveymonkey.com/results/SM-RRJ5B8eIqMladBl8JDME2Q_3D_3D/)