

**Normalcy Task Force Meeting**  
November 2, 2016  
1:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.  
Southeast Community College, Rooms V-107 & 109  
8800 O Street, Lincoln, NE 68520

**I. Call to Order**

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The Normalcy Task Force (Task Force) of the Nebraska Children’s Commission was called to order at 1:07 p.m. by Co-Chair Sarah Helvey.

**II. Roll Call and Introductions**

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*Task Force Members present (15):*

Payne Ackerman	Anna Brummer	Sarah Helvey
Erin Bader	Nathan Collier	Nikki Novak (1:13)
Marti Beard	Vernon Davis	Nicole Paul
Cassy Blakely	Patricia Frost (1:13)	Stacey Scholten
Ashley Brown	Kim Hawekotte	Deb Shuck

*Task Force Members absent (6):*

Heather Colton	Claudette Grinnell-Davis	Lisa Story
Jude Dean	Mickey Sampson	Juliet Summers

*Ex Officio and Resource Members present (2):*

Jim Bennett	A’Jamal Byndon
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*Ex Officio and Resource Members present (3):*

Karen Authier	Timoree Klingler	Ronda Newman
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A quorum was established.

*Guests in Attendance (11):*

Amoreena Brady	Administrative Office of Probation, Juvenile Services Division
Deanna Brakhage	DHHS, Division of Children and Family Services
Becca Brune	Nebraska Appleseed
Bethany Connor Allen	Nebraska Children’s Commission
Amanda Felton	Nebraska Children’s Commission
Michele Lueders	Administrative Office of Probation, Juvenile Services Division
Tom McBride	Nebraska Juvenile Justice Association
Felicia Nelsen	Nebraska Foster and Adoptive Parent Association
Angie Pick	Nebraska Families Collaborative
Julie Smith	Administrative Office of Probation, Juvenile Services Division
Lana Verbrigghe	Child Saving Institute

*a. Notice of Publication*

Recorder for the meeting, Amanda Felton, indicated that the notice of publication for this meeting was posted on the Nebraska Public Meetings Calendar website on August 26, 2016 in accordance with the Nebraska Open Meetings Act. The publication will be kept as a permanent attachment with the meeting minutes.

*b. Announcement of the placement of Open Meetings Act information*

A copy of the Open Meetings Act was available for public inspection and was located on the sign in table to the side of the meeting room.

### III. Approval of Agenda

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It was moved by **Cassy Blakely** and seconded by **Kim Hawekotte** to approve the agenda with amendments including shifting the **Trafficking Report** to be the last Subcommittee report, changing the presenter for the **Community and Family Voice Subcommittee Report** to **Cassy Blakely**, and having **Stacey Scholten** report on **Normalcy funding**. There was no further discussion. Roll Call vote as follows:

**FOR (13):**

Payne Ackerman	Anna Brummer	Nicole Paul
Erin Bader	Nathan Collier	Stacey Scholten
Marti Beard	Vernon Davis	Deb Shuck
Cassy Blakely	Kim Hawekotte	
Ashley Brown	Sarah Helvey	

**AGAINST (0):**

**ABSENT (8):**

Heather Colton	Patricia Frost	Lisa Story
Jude Dean	Nikki Novak	Juliet Summers
Claudette Grinnell-Davis	Mickey Sampson	

**ABSTAINED (0)**

**MOTION CARRIED**

For the purpose of the minutes, all items will be written in the order of the original agenda.

### IV. Approval of Meeting Minutes

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It was moved by **Kim Hawekotte** and seconded by **Payne Ackerman** to approve the minutes of the **September 1, 2016 meeting** as presented. There was no further discussion. Roll Call vote as follows:

**FOR (13):**

Payne Ackerman	Anna Brummer	Nicole Paul
Erin Bader	Nathan Collier	Stacey Scholten
Marti Beard	Vernon Davis	Deb Shuck
Cassy Blakely	Kim Hawekotte	
Ashley Brown	Sarah Helvey	

**AGAINST (0):**

**ABSENT (8):**

Heather Colton	Patricia Frost	Lisa Story
Jude Dean	Nikki Novak	Juliet Summers
Claudette Grinnell-Davis	Mickey Sampson	

**ABSTAINED (0)**

**MOTION CARRIED**

### V. Co-Chair Report

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Sarah Helvey, Child Welfare Program Director with Nebraska Appleseed, introduced herself and explained her role as Co-Chair of the Task Force. She discussed the hearing for LR529 that occurred on October 13<sup>th</sup>, indicating that it went well. She thanked the many members of the Task Force and its Subcommittees for all of their time and effort on the reports that would be reviewed at the day's meeting.

## **VI. Review of Subcommittee Reports**

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Co-Chair Helvey invited each of the five subcommittees to provide an update to the group for feedback. It was noted that the updates would be included in the report shared at the November 15<sup>th</sup> Nebraska Children's Commission meeting for final approval.

*a. Training Subcommittee*

The update for the Training Subcommittee was given by Ashley Brown, Co-Chair of the Subcommittee and Vice President of KVC Nebraska. Ms. Brown explained that no changes had been made to the document since the previous meeting. The floor was opened up for any final changes or discussion. No changes were noted for the Subcommittee report, but Ms. Brown pointed out a necessary change to the Annual Report to correct the listed Co-Chair of the Training Subcommittee to read Tracey Pearson rather than Nikki Novak.

*b. Trafficking Subcommittee*

Present to give the trafficking update was Nikki Novak, Foster Family Services Supervisor with Boys Town. Ms. Novak let the Task Force know that updates were made to expand on several issues within the document. She touched on the screening tool that was in the works that would assist frontline staff in communicating with youth when returning from care. The group also planned to continue the work to address the logistical issues surrounding the release of a photo for a youth who is missing from care.

Other additions to the report included a recommendation for all foster parents to complete training on trafficking prevention and signs within their first year of licensure. The final change that Ms. Novak noted was the placeholder discussing the need for the Administrative Office of Probation and the Department of Health and Human Services to provide reports on youth who were or showed signs of trafficking to the Foster Care Review Office. Communication between entities had begun and work to meet this statutory requirement was in progress. No further changes were suggested for the report.

*c. Normalcy Subcommittee*

The Normalcy update was given by Co-Chair Tom McBride, Executive Director of the Nebraska Juvenile Justice Association. Mr. McBride commented on the changes included in the report from the previous meeting. Information on how normalcy can be used to support the goals of the Indian Child Welfare Act, the addition of youth access to sexual healthcare, and the inclusion of the refugee and immigrant population as a special population were the noted changes. No additional changes were recommended by the members.

*d. Grievance Subcommittee*

Kim Hawekotte, Co-Chair of the Grievance Subcommittee and Executive Director of the Foster Care Review Office, provided an update on the work of the group. She began by reviewing the recommendations that the Subcommittee had reached consensus on. These included a recommendation for increased legal representation for youth and the creation of a uniform brochure for youth that is available both in hard copy and digital format that explains the process for filing a grievance in an age and developmentally appropriate manner.

The group had also worked to outline principles and basic components of an effective grievance process. Ms. Hawekotte noted that the group would continue to work on the ideal grievance process and would release more detailed recommendations, including relating to a Central Navigator, in the following sixty days.

While no changes were suggested to the current document, several issues arose in discussing the next steps for the Subcommittee. The timeline for the grievance process was noted as a difficult item to resolve. Depending on the complexity of the complaint, the time since the initial grievance occurred, and other factors, the length of time necessary to reach a resolution could vary greatly. There was also discussion of the need to acknowledge the complaints that occur in an informal setting, but the group struggled with the feasibility to collect data from those instances. The group also discussed the need to ensure that there was an external entity factored into the appeals process for when a youth is unsatisfied with the response to their grievance.

e. *Community and Family Voice Subcommittee*

The floor was given to Cassy Blakely, a member of the Community and Family Voice Subcommittee and Assistant Vice President of Youth Policy with Nebraska Children and Families Foundation. Ms. Blakely took a moment to acknowledge the Subcommittee Co-Chairs, Jude Dean and Mickey Sampson, who had worked hard to pull together information for the recommendations. She also thanked Becca Brunne with Nebraska Appleseed for her assistance in making the Youth Bill of Rights survey successful. A brief overview was given of the report which focused on the Youth Bill of Rights (YBOR). Ms. Blakely noted the theme of honest communication that emerged throughout the YBOR. While the YBOR provided a strong foundation of rights for youth, the group acknowledged the need for continued work in making the information accessible to youth. Work would need to be done to address how training would be implemented to inform all involved parties of the document. No changes to the report were suggested.

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## **VII. Approval of Normalcy Task Force Annual Report**

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Co-Chair Helvey drew the members' attention to the Annual Report of the Task Force. The report highlighted the overarching themes of the work of the Task Force: cross system communication, culture change, family and youth voice, and transition to adulthood. The layout provided details on the activities of the subcommittees, highlighted the recommendations, and directed readers directly to the reports of each subcommittee. The aim of the report was to provide an easy, readable resource to stakeholders, legislators, and the public on what the Task Force had identified as areas of importance in implementing the Strengthening Families Act in Nebraska.

**It was moved by Nicole Paul and seconded by Cassy Blakely to approve the Normalcy Task Force report with the caveat that grammatical corrections would be made prior to submission to the Nebraska Children's Commission.** No further discussion occurred. Roll call vote as follows:

**FOR (14):**

Payne Ackerman  
Erin Bader  
Marti Beard  
Cassy Blakely  
Ashley Brown

Anna Brummer  
Nathan Collier  
Vernon Davis  
Patricia Frost  
Sarah Helvey

Nikki Novak  
Nicole Paul  
Stacey Scholten  
Deb Shuck

**AGAINST (0):**

**ABSENT (7):**

Heather Colton  
Jude Dean  
Claudette Grinnell-Davis

Kim Hawekotte  
Mickey Sampson  
Lisa Story

Juliet Summer

**ABSTAINED (0)**

**MOTION CARRIED**

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## **VIII. Review of Task Force and Subcommittee Structure**

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Co-Chair Helvey drew attention to the structure and scope of the Task Force and its subgroups. The Task Force currently operated with the five subcommittees, Community and Family Voice, Grievance, Normalcy, Trafficking, and Training. She raised the question as to if the subcommittees should continue in their current form. A majority of the subcommittees had outlined next steps and the Task Force indicated the consensus for Trafficking, Normalcy, Grievance, and Community and Family Voice to all continue with their efforts. The Training Subcommittee proved more complicated in its structure moving forward.

Ashley Brown, Co-Chair of the Training Subcommittee, emphasized the difficulty of coordinating the more detailed training elements for the other subject areas. It was suggested to have each subcommittee fold in training issues to their discussion and recommendations to ensure an accurate representation of their work. The other option would be to designate Training Subcommittee members to attend each of the other Subcommittee meetings in order to bring back

information to the Training group. There was concern with both overloading members and the issue of information getting diluted in translation.

The Task Force members were hesitant to eliminate the Training Subcommittee. Many of the Subcommittee members held the logistical and network information that was imperative in implementing training components. The group reached consensus that the Training Subcommittee would continue. Ms. Brown would arrange for a brief meeting with the Subcommittee to discuss their next steps and a standing agenda item would be kept on future Task Force meetings to review training elements. The status of the Training Subcommittee would be examined continually as the year progressed.

The Co-Chair also reminded the members of previous discussions on the formation secondary subgroups once the priority issues had been addressed. Those workgroups included a group to focus on the availability of resources to youth, family, and stakeholders as well as a group to look more in depth at the issue of APPLA, Another Planned Permanent Living Arrangement. The group decided that an APPLA Subcommittee would be beneficial. Nicole Paul expressed interest in the Co-Chair position for the Subcommittee. Other suggested members included Erin Bader, Mary Furnas, and representatives from Right Turn, Probation, and the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS).

After lengthy discussion, the Task Force agreed that there was no need to create another group to examine resources, as the Community and Family Voice Subcommittee had indicated this as a next step they would focus on. Members expanded on the next steps for the Community and Family Voice Subcommittee. Ideas mentioned included expanding the reach of the group to populations that may not be aware of the Task Force efforts, utilizing technology to include members outside of the metro area, and a push to make sure that all involved stakeholders were sharing the information from the Task Force efforts.

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## **IX. Normalcy Funding**

Stacey Scholten, Service Delivery Administrator with the Division of Children and Family Services, gave an update on Normalcy Funding. She explained that Jude Dean had presented the issue of Normalcy funding to the Foster Care Reimbursement Rate Committee (FCRRC), a subgroup of the Nebraska Children's Commission. The members of the FCRRC indicated that the current reimbursement rates had factored in such activities and that they felt that they were sufficient to meet current needs.

This prompted discussion of placements that may not be able to provide Normalcy activities to their foster youth even at the current rate. Interest was voice to take another look at the reimbursement rates, especially for low income and kinship and relative placements. Kinship and relative placements in particular may not receive the same supports as traditional foster parent placements. With relative and kinship placements on the rise, this is a population that must be kept in mind. This emphasized the need for a database or listing of community resources, which was indicated as next step of the Community and Family Voice Subcommittee.

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## **X. Next Steps**

Focus areas for future work included the following:

- The Training Subcommittee would meet, and discuss their role moving forward.
  - A standing agenda item regarding Training would be included in future meetings.
- The Trafficking, Normalcy, Grievance, and Community and Family Voice Subcommittees would continue their work on the next steps outlined in their reports.
- An APPLA Subcommittee would meet and begin work to identify scope and initial recommendations.
- Continue to examine the effects of the cost of Normalcy activities for foster homes with emphasis on relative and kinship placements.

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## **XI. Public Comment**

Co-Chair Helvey invited any members of the public to speak. No public comment was given.

## **X. Future Task Force Meeting Dates**

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The Co-Chair shared the upcoming meeting dates:

- a. February 1, 2017 – 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.
  - i. Southeast Community College, Rooms V-103 & 104, 8800 O Street, Lincoln, NE 68520
- b. May 3, 2017 – 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.
  - i. Location TBD
- c. August 2, 2017 – 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.
  - i. Location TBD

She informed the members that locations for the May and August would most likely continue at Southeast Community College, but would be contingent on availability. Information would be sent out at a later date.

## **XI. Adjournment**

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**It was moved by Nathan Collier and seconded by Nikki Novak to adjourn the meeting.** The motion carried by unanimous voice vote. The meeting adjourned at 2:32 p.m.

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