



CITIZEN REVIEW PANELS

ANNUAL REPORT

for calendar year

2008

submitted by

Nevada Statewide Citizen Review Panel
Northern Citizens Advisory Committee

and

Southern Citizens Advisory Committee

to

The Nevada Division of Child and Family Services

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Statewide Nevada Citizen Review Panel (CRP) was established in 1999 under Nevada Revised Statutes (NRS) 432B.396 and has federally mandated responsibilities under Title I, Section 106, of the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA). The Panel has the following primary mission:

To ensure the protection and safety of children through an evaluation of the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act State Plan by examining State and local agencies' policies and procedures and specific cases where appropriate.

The Statewide Panel consists of members appointed by the Administrator of the Division of Child and Family Services (DCFS), whose designee also serves on the Panel. The group includes representation from community-based organizations and professionals with backgrounds related to child protective services (CPS), child advocacy, children's mental health, and foster parenting.

The Statewide Panel works toward fulfilling the following three primary goals:

1. Reviews the State's implementation of previous CRP recommendations.
2. Participates in ongoing Quality Improvement (QI) case reviews.
3. Considers and implements new areas of subject review within the CAPTA Assurances, Section 106.

In essence, the Statewide Panel's work consists of the review of internal policies and procedures within the CPS system, accomplished mainly through individual CPS case reviews. Each year, the Statewide Panel's findings are summarized in an Annual Report (this document) submitted to the federal government as part of the CAPTA requirements.

Nevada's second and third CRPs have been active since 2007. Two existing oversight groups focused on child welfare, the Northern and Southern Citizens Advisory Committees (CACs), were invited into the CRP process in late 2006. These groups have begun to examine specific areas of focus defined for CRPs by CAPTA, and to develop system improvement recommendations for inclusion in the Annual Report.

Primary Panel goals for 2008 included reviewing and beginning work in the following areas:

- Implementation of the Nevada Initial Assessment (NIA) including safety and risk assessments and timeliness of investigations.
- Training and implementation for the Child and Family Team approach.
- Involvement of biological parents in the child welfare process, with the goal of increased reunification.
- Adoption and Safe Families Act (ASFA) timeframe for reunification.
- Expansion of the QI process to focus on training, mentoring, practice development, and increased accountability for change.

During 2008, the Statewide Panel members discontinued serving as external stakeholders in quarterly case reviews implemented as part of the DCFS Quality Improvement (QI) system. In place of this, a new targeted case review process was undertaken that involves looking at specific factors of CPS cases that fall within the CRP's primary areas of review, rather than completing the comprehensive, multi-day case reviews that are required for the quarterly QI case review process.

Additionally, the CRP began preliminary involvement with Nevada's new cycle of the Child and Family Services Review (CFSR), scheduled for 2009. A presentation by DCFS staff was made to the CRP and the members were invited to be external stakeholders in the CFSR process. Ongoing areas of review for the Panel, along with implementation of the new targeted case review process, will be integrated with the CFSR process. This will provide another opportunity for CRP members to make recommendations for system improvement and have a voice as stakeholders within the child welfare system.

Statewide Panel recommendations for 2008 focus on compliance with risk assessments completed by CPS caseworkers. Additionally, the Statewide Panel received responses from DCFS based on its 2007 recommendations, which are summarized in this report.

Northern CAC recommendations for 2008 were not submitted, pending reorganization of the group and work beginning on the Washoe County Service Array Assessment. Southern CAC recommendations for 2008 focus on community provider collaboration, citizen participation in child welfare reform, client feedback, and legislative advocacy.

PANEL ACTIVITIES

Statewide Panel

The Statewide Panel is directly involved in the DCFS QI system and its members serve as external stakeholders in a newly-developed targeted case review process that allows members to focus on specific factors of CPS cases that fall within the CRP's primary areas of review. The Panel had to move away from the quarterly QI case review process because the time commitment was too great given the volunteer status of the CRP members. This change in the case review process is beneficial not only in creating a more practical timeframe for case review, but also in focusing the Panel more narrowly on particular areas of concern with the child welfare system. Panel members took part in a pilot targeted case review in November 2007, which was the first phase of their inclusion in the new process.

The Statewide Panel's recommendations for 2008 were developed as a result of participation in the pilot targeted case review process, and focus on compliance with the Nevada Initial Assessment (NIA) process and risk assessments completed by CPS caseworkers.

Northern CAC¹

The Washoe County Department of Social Services (WCDSS) originally had what was known as the Social Services Advisory Board, which serves as the Northern CAC. The Advisory Board dates back quite a number of years and was somewhat outdated in terms of its structure. During 2008, WCDSS worked to implement some changes in order to modernize the Advisory Board and make it more current with the WCDSS focus on child welfare. The Advisory Board has been meeting semi-annually since its inception in 1959, and there have been only minor modifications to County Ordinance 1362 that authorizes its work since it was established.

On April 4, 2008, the Washoe County Board of Commissioners approved the amendment of County Ordinance 1362, which expanded the Washoe County Social Services Advisory Board. Prior to this approval, the advisory board was made up of six members in the following categories: victims of domestic violence, children and youth, indigents in the community, social work, and senior citizens. There has been representation from each of these categories, along with two members representing indigents in the community. The amendment and adopted changes including expansion of the Board to consist of 12 members, one from each of the following groups:

1. Court appointed special advocates
2. Children's mental health

¹ Schiller, K. (2009). *Washoe County Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) 2008 Update*. Reno: Washoe County Department of Social Services.

3. Domestic violence service agencies
4. Local juvenile probation services
5. Parent advocate
6. Former participant in the child welfare system
7. Washoe County School District
8. Substance abuse services agencies
9. Attorney representing parents
10. Attorney representing children
11. Representative from an agency serving low income individuals
12. Representative of an agency who advocates for health care for low income families

Members serve three-year terms. A chair and vice-chair have been selected. Regular meetings will still be held semi-annually at a minimum, with no more than four meetings per year. The Advisory Board membership is now more reflective of WCDSS' expanded programs and represents the diverse needs of the populations served. This expanded membership has made the Advisory Board's role more valuable in assisting WCDSS in meeting the needs of the citizens of Washoe County.

After receiving approval of the Ordinance in April, the Board has been significantly involved in a collaboration with the National Child Welfare Resource Center for Organizational Improvement (NRCOI) and WCDSS in an effort to complete a service array assessment to improve services to children and families served by the Department. The Board continues to participate and lead collaboration with over 30 service providers within the community to include representation in the areas of education, mental health, medical services, domestic violence, the justice system, substance abuse treatment, foster care, public health, and child abuse and neglect prevention. The anticipated completion date is June 2009, in accordance with meeting the required outcomes of the federal Child and Family Services Review (CFSR).

Southern CAC²

During 2008, the Southern CAC collaborated with the Clark County Department of Family Services (CCDFS) to complete a comprehensive service array needs assessment designed to assess service capacity and the needs of CCDFS children and families. The CCDFS Service Array Needs Assessment was a nine-month project that involved developing a child and family data profile of Clark County and survey assessments with over 100 community stakeholders, 600 caseworkers, and 90 clients. The final report was issued in March 2008, and included a qualitative and quantitative analysis of Clark County's service capacity, as well as funding recommendations to meet the service needs of CCDFS client population.

The final report findings were unveiled at a community-wide meeting co-sponsored by CCDFS and the CAC, entitled *Nevada Children and Families Summit: Families Raising Healthy Hopeful Children*. The Summit was held on September 26, 2008, and included participation by

² Harris, J. and Bevacqua, J. (2008). *Clark County Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) 2008 Annual Report*. Las Vegas: Clark County CAC.

over 120 stakeholders from federal, State, and local governments; philanthropy and faith-based organizations; legislators; and community-based service providers.

The CAC is also actively involved in overseeing the implementation of DFS Safe Futures plan which encompasses the agency's strategic initiatives for overall system reform. Committee feedback and monitoring of the CCDFS Safe Futures plan provides an accountability mechanism for reporting to Clark County citizens.

The CAC is also a partner in the implementation of CCDFS Systems of Care (SOC) federal grant from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). The SOC grant is principally focused on assisting CCDFS with building an infrastructure to support kinship caregivers. The CAC established a subcommittee to ensure active participation in SOC grant implementation and has been involved in all strategic planning activities of the grant. CAC members were also active members of the SOC Coordinating Council and participated in the SOC Stakeholder Forums where a comprehensive *Relatives Raising Relatives* resource book was developed.

The CAC is also integrally involved in the CCDFS Policy and Procedure Redesign, which is designed to improve safety, permanency and, well-being outcomes for children and families. The Redesign initiative will provide operational clarity to CCDFS staff through a comprehensive and instructive policy and procedure manual. The development of agency policies and procedures will integrate federal and state law and regulation, the history and expertise of CCDFS professionals and stakeholders, and best practices in child welfare and public administration. The CAC Chair, Jackie Harris, is a member of the Executive Committee overseeing the implementation of the Re-design initiative

In partnership with the CCDFS, Casey Family Programs, Annie E. Casey Foundation, the Youth Law Center, and MGM Mirage, the CAC supported the CCDFS Developmentally Appropriate Visitation for Young Children in Foster Care Initiative to improve visitation between caregivers and young children, with the primary goal of facilitating visitation that meet the developmental needs of infants and toddlers. A national roundtable discussion was held on how to formulate specific recommendations in designing a viable program for developmentally appropriate visitations with young children.

In February 2008, CCDFS opened its Family Visitation Center on the Child Haven Campus and launched its first satellite visitation site in October 2008. The Family Visitation Center is designed to promote meaningful visitation between children and their caregivers in a safe, child-and-family-friendly setting that is conducive to assessing parent and child interactions; offering developmentally appropriate visitation activities; facilitating attachment and bonding; and maintaining the caregiver and child relationship.

The CAC also monitors and provides input into critical DFS programs and operational issues including:

- Status of DFS staffing, reorganization and budget allocations
- Clark County Foster and Adoptive Parent Association;

- Development of RFPs for Child and Family Team (CFT) facilitators and Family Preservation and Support Services
- Youth Law Center Resolution
- DFS Medical Wraparound Program
- DFS Independent Living Re-Design Initiative
- DFS Universal Psychosocial / Psycho-educational Assessments

During 2008, the CAC also provided a community forum to discuss the pending Medicaid cuts to treatment foster care and possible solutions to address a devastating issue impacting Clark County's children in care and foster care treatment providers. The CAC is also a stakeholder on the statewide Citizen Review Panel. Jackie, Harris, Chair, serves as the Southern CAC representative.

2008 Recommendations

Statewide Panel

CPS Staff Practices

Recommendation 1: CPS practices need to incorporate appropriate actions to promote safety, permanency, and wellbeing that are timely based on the child and family's immediate needs.

Discussion: The Panel members noted that CPS staff responses to the NIA and risk assessment do not demonstrate a sense of urgency to address the needs of the children and families involved, and do not demonstrate timeliness in connecting children and families to the services they need. The Panel members are concerned that in some of the cases reviewed, it appeared that months went by before any linkage to services occurred. Additionally, necessary referrals did not appear to be made at all in some cases, which suggests either a lack of appropriate referrals on the part of caseworkers, or poor documentation in the case records. The Panel members also expressed concern about time constraints for caseworkers based on large caseloads, and caseworkers' ability to complete the required assessments. The Panel acknowledges that there is a natural tension between good CPS practice and available staff time and resources. However, the members believe that improvement is needed in making timely and thorough responses to the needs of children and families.

Recommendation 2: CPS caseworkers need to increase their use of the Child and Family Team (CFT) model to provide a strength-based, solution-focused, family-driven process to jointly develop a case plan for children in the child welfare system.

Discussion: The Panel commented that while the CFT process has been in place for over 10 years, CFTs are still not being used widely or regularly by CPS caseworkers. Additionally, the Panel was informed that the CFT process was supposed to be implemented statewide as part of the DCFS Program Improvement Plan (PIP), and that training was provided to all CPS units statewide in 2006. As noted in Recommendation 2, the Panel again acknowledges that there is a natural tension between good CPS practice and available staff time and resources. However, the CFT approach is necessary to fairly and meaningfully involve families in their own case planning and efforts toward permanency.

CPS Staff Training

Recommendation 3: CPS caseworkers should receive additional training on the implementation of the Nevada Initial Assessment (NIA), with a focus on the use of safety and risk assessment instruments.

Discussion: The Panel is concerned that in some cases reviewed, it appeared that items on the risk assessment instrument were scored as zero without meeting or speaking with the parents. Lack of contact with families represents poor practice on the part of caseworkers, and is a significant concern when addressing safety and risk for children who are in danger of abuse and neglect. Additionally, some members noted that there were apparent scoring errors in the risk assessments completed for the cases reviewed. This suggests either data entry errors on the part of caseworkers, or a calculation problem within the UNITY system.

Recommendation 4: CPS caseworkers should receive additional training on identifying child and family needs related to mental health disorders, developmental disabilities, and substance abuse disorders, and then referring and actively linking children and families to needed services.

Discussion: The Panel members are concerned that caseworkers are making statements about lack of evidence for mental health disorders, developmental disabilities, and substance abuse disorders without adequate knowledge about these problems and without completing basic screening with parents and children. There appears to be a considerable variance in the education and background of caseworkers relative to mental health, substance abuse, and disabilities. This can be improved by providing specific training in these areas.

Recommendation 5: CPS caseworker training needs to reinforce the importance of data entry and case documentation so that the contents of case files are consistent and complete. Specifically, the UNITY system should require a standardized case summary indicating that the investigation has ended and the case is closed, including case disposition.

Discussion: This is a re-recommendation from prior years, and the Panel members continue to find deficiencies in case documentation as part of the case review process. During the 2008 case reviews, the Panel members continued to find inconsistent case documentation and data entry into case files and the State's UNITY system. Several specific problem areas were identified as follows:

- Documentation of supervisory input into cases is lacking. Based on some cases reviewed, Panel members did not see any documentation of supervisor consultation with staff or supervisor review of cases, as required by various policies and Program Improvement Plan (PIP) initiatives.
- Documentation of referral to services is lacking. This makes it difficult to determine whether this is a practice concern and caseworkers are not making necessary referrals for services, or if this is a documentation problem and referrals are not being tracked well through UNITY.
- In some cases substantiation or unsubstantiation of abuse or neglect was not apparent. Again, this makes it difficult to determine whether this is a practice concern or a documentation concern, as noted above.
- In some cases reviewed, there was no closing memo or case summary. Therefore, Panel members were unable to determine whether the case was actually closed. Specific information that should be included a case summary include basic information about what happened in the case, information on referrals for service, and final case disposition.

Targeted Case Review Process

Recommendation 6: The Panel recommends that DCFS continue inviting the CRP to participate in the Targeted Case Review Process and establish this as the new model for CRP stakeholder feedback.

Discussion: The Panel members agree that breaking down case reviews into half-day segments makes it a lot easier for members with demanding schedules to participate as stakeholders in the DCFS QI process. This approach takes away the scheduling and time burden of the multi-day case reviews required by the formal QI process.

Recommendation 7: The Panel recommends establishing a process through which recommendations can be made to DCFS on a more frequent basis than is allowed by the existing Annual Report process.

Discussion: Subsequent to the pilot targeted case reviews, the Panel expressed concern that some case findings and related recommendations should come to the attention of DCFS and the child welfare jurisdictions in a more timely manner, and not wait for submission and response only through the CRP Annual Report. Suggestions include the possibility of using meeting minutes as documentation for practice concerns, or issuing a quarterly letter to the DCFS Administrator from the CRP Chair that contains periodic recommendations.

Northern CAC

Based on the reorganization and expansion of the Northern Social Services Advisory Board, no recommendations will be submitted for 2008. When the service array assessment is completed in 2009, the Northern Social Services Advisory Board will resume making recommendations as part of the CRP process.

Southern CAC

Recommendation 1: Partner with community stakeholder groups who address shared issues and client populations in an effort to share information, leverage resources and collaborate on strategic solutions to improving the lives of Clark County's most vulnerable children and families (e.g., Clark County Mental Health Consortium, Policy and Fiscal Affairs Board)

Recommendation 2: Increase citizen participation and feedback on DFS initiatives and child welfare reform efforts

Recommendation 3: Develop a formal mechanism to obtain client feedback on customer service issues and incorporate feasible client suggestions in DFS business or system practices

Recommendation 4: Monitor and provide feedback on Clark County's Model Court Improvement Project (CIP)

Recommendation 5: Engage with and educate the SB3 Legislative Subcommittee Child Welfare and Juvenile Justice on salient child welfare issues affecting children and families in Clark County

Recommendation 6: Continue to participate in and monitor the development and implementation of DFS Policy and Procedures Re-Design Initiative

Recommendation 7: Develop a community strategy centered on improving support services to enhance child and family well-being

Follow-Up on 2007 CRP Recommendations

Follow-up on the 2007 Panel recommendations was based on formal responses from the DCFS Administrator, as follows:

Statewide Panel – CPS Staff Training and Practices

Recommendation 1: The Statewide Panel would like to receive ongoing updates from DCFS regarding core areas of needed improvement, which are regularly identified through the QI case review process:

1. CPS staff training needs to include and/or reinforce consistent, statewide definitions of the standard elements of child welfare practice.
2. CPS staff training needs to improve caseworkers' understanding of the safety and risk assessment tool and statewide consistency in its use.
3. CPS staff training needs to reinforce the importance of data entry and case documentation so that the contents of case files are consistent and complete.
4. CPS practices need to incorporate appropriate actions to promote safety, permanency, and wellbeing that are individualized based on the child and family's needs.

DCFS Response:

1. As statewide policies are revised and reformatted, policy definitions are being collected and QA'd for duplicate definitions or conflicts. A master list of policy definitions now exists, definitions referred to in revised policies should contain the same definition. Also a huge initiative to standardize definitions of child maltreatment also occurred in 2007. Statewide child maltreatment definitions have been approved by the Decision Making Group (DMG) and are now being analyzed for implementation into the UNITY system.

2. Sixteen, three day, CPS Investigation Safety Assessment trainings were provided by DCFS over the last year training 106 CPS workers, supervisors and/or administrators. In addition, Clark County provided an additional 10 sessions, training another 234 workers. Risk Assessment Training, was offered 7 times throughout the state training 200 workers statewide.

Items 3. And 4. Are included in the new statewide core caseworker training. The pilot training begins April 1, 2008. The training focuses specifically on safety, permanency and well-being throughout the life of the case. In addition, there are also specific sections on drafting good case notes, documentation of the case record in UNITY and what information should be included in the case file. On a daily basis, IMS cleans up data errors and streamlines business processes in conjunction with user needs, all in an effort to maximize accurate data collection.

Statewide Panel – QI Case Review Process

Recommendation 2: The Statewide Panel recommends that a random sample of cases from all rural regional offices should be pulled for quarterly QI case reviews when the process is rotated to the rural region.

DCFS Response: The Statewide Quality Improvement Committee (SQIC) with representatives from DCFS and the three child welfare jurisdictions are currently revising the Quality Improvement Framework. Included in this revision is how the rural region will be reviewed. The current consensus, while not finalized, is that a minimum of 24 cases will be randomly selected from each jurisdiction for a case review in the next year. In addition an over sample of 24 cases will also be randomly selected. For the rural region, this means that a minimum of 6 in home and 6 out-of home cases will be randomly selected from each district within the rural region to ensure that the entire jurisdiction is represented in future case reviews.

Recommendation 3: The Panel believes that an over-sampling of cases should always be done for quarterly scheduled QI case reviews.

DCFS Response: An over-sampling of cases is always randomly selected for each case review. The Statewide Quality Improvement Committee is currently meeting to revise the Quality Improvement Framework for future case reviews, including sample size.

In regards to the situation referenced above, an over-sample was randomly selected for the review. Although several cases from the original sample did not meet the criteria for review, the over-sample was actually used, resulting in no additional cases to review.

Statewide Panel – Expansion Into Other Areas of Review

Recommendation 4: The Statewide Panel is prepared to expand into other areas of review outlined in the CAPTA assurances now that the QI review process has become well-established.

DCFS Response: A portion of the newly adopted oversight methodology for the DCFS, Family Programs Office includes targeted reviews on specific federal indicators such as timeliness of investigations and ASFA timeframes for reunification. We expect implementation of the targeted review process to roll out in the fall 2008.

Northern CAC

Recommendation 1: The Washoe County Department of Social Services (WCDSS) should continue to explore a Division reorganization which integrates the “paired team” unit structure.

DCFS Response: WCDSS completed a draft organization chart reorganizing the Children’s Services Division into paired teams. Implementation date is scheduled for August 1.

Recommendation 2: The Department should expand efforts to provide a “family group conference” experience for all families that enter into the child welfare service delivery system.

DCFS Response: WCDSS sent six staff to the Family Group Decision Making conference hosted by the American Human Society in June to further staff understanding and competency regarding the model and philosophy. Family team meetings will be held on all removal cases within 72 hours beginning August 1, 2008. Two Social Worker III staff positions were reallocated as Family Team Facilitators and appointments were recently made. The two facilitators will be trained in a certified mediation program with an anticipated completion date of 12/08.

Recommendation 3: The Statewide Citizen Review Panel should work closely with the State and the evaluators to determine the effectiveness of the recently launched differential response program in Washoe County.

DCFS Response: WCDSS successfully launched the pilot project in January 2008 utilizing two community based organizations. Meetings are scheduled bi-weekly between DR and WCDSS staff to review progress and effectiveness. Community provides submit monthly progress reports for review. WCDSS participates in statewide meetings to provide input and information related to the evaluation process currently being developed. Additionally, WCDSS staff participates at a statewide level regarding SACWIS issues related to Differential Response.

Southern CAC

Recommendation 1: Both the Nevada Division of Child and Family Services (DCFS) and the Clark County Department of Family Services (CCDFS) should work with community stakeholders to advocate for additional funding for child welfare services at both the State and County levels.

DCFS Response: The statewide service array assessment process was implemented as a result of Nevada’s performance Improvement Plan (PIP). The first region to implement the services array process was Clark County, which began their assessment process in the fall of 2007. The Clark County Citizen Advisory Council (CAC) was a critical part of this process and was involved in both the evolution as well as execution of the process. In March 2008, Applied

Analysis (contractor from Clark County) completed their final report of the process which also documented the findings of the process.

Recommendation 2: The Clark County Department of Family Services (CCDFS) should overhaul its internal system of policy and procedure development so that current, consistent, and clear policies and procedures are available in writing and/or electronically to both staff and stakeholders for review.

DCFS Response: This initiative is organized into three phases to redesign ten service areas.

Phase 1	Phase 2	Phase 3
Intake	In Home Services	Clinical Services
Investigations	Foster Care	Medical Services
Placement and Shelter	Adoption	Child Haven
	Licensing	

The DFS Executive Steering Committee is comprised of representatives from the County Managers Office, DFS Administration, Service Employees International Union (SEIU) and external stakeholders charged with oversight of the Initiative. DFS Policy and Procedure Workgroups will be convened for each of the ten (10) service areas to draft policy and procedures for review and comment by DFS staff and external stakeholders.

DFS has completed Phase 1 with final approval of draft policies and procedures targeted for April 2008. DFS is entering Phase 2 of the re-design in March 2008.

Recommendation 3: Adequate training needs to be provided to Clark County Department of Family Services (CCDFS) caseworkers prior to child protective services (CPS) practice and case assignment, and needs to include meaningful follow-through with accountability, appropriate supervision, and additional training opportunities.

DCFS Response: The Nevada Partnership for Training is in the process of overhauling the entire CPS caseworker training curriculum and training delivery system. The training pilot in Reno is nearly complete and another pilot is planned for Las Vegas in late summer 2008. Roll out of the newly developed 10 week cps caseworker core training program is expected to occur in October 2008. The new 10 week training program, includes 5 classroom modules lasting 1 week each, in between modules caseworkers return to the field for a week of on the job training that includes mentoring, coaching, supervisor / caseworker skill building activities.

After caseworkers have completed the 10 week core training, a specialty core, (which has not been developed yet) will be available to them. Specialty Core training will emphasize, supervisor training and foster care / permanency issues.

By June 30, 2008 we will have 3 new interactive web-based online trainings available, they are: Ethics, MEPA, and ICWA.

Meeting Dates and Activities

During 2008, the Panel members participated in one of the quarterly QI case review sessions, two pilot targeted case review sessions, and met five times to conduct regular business.

<i>Meeting/Activity Date</i>	<i>Topics</i>
February 12, 2008 <i>Panel Meeting</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overview of Nevada Initial Assessment (NIA) safety and risk assessment instruments • Overview of DCFS Quality Improvement (QI) case review process and staff response to 2007 recommendations 2 and 3 • Overview of upcoming Child and Family Services Review (CFSR) activities • Review status of 2008 workplan topics
March 10 – 13, 2008 <i>On-site Case Reviews</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Panel participation in Washoe County CPS case reviews
April 8, 2008 <i>Panel Meeting</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presentation on Child and Family Teams (CFTs) including training and implementation and the involvement of biological parents in the child welfare process • Update up on changes to UNITY system recommended at February 11 meeting as a result of NIA overview • Feedback from recent Quality Improvement case reviews • Review status of 2008 workplan topics
July 22, 2008 <i>Panel Meeting</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presentation on Child and Family Services Review (CFSR) Statewide Assessment process • Formal review and discussion of DCFS response to CRP 2007 Annual Report recommendations • Review and discuss top 10 items for DCFS related to federal reporting • Review status of 2008 workplan topics
October 14, 2008 <i>Panel Meeting</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update on activities of Northern and Southern Citizens Advisory Committees (CACs) • Update on Child and Family Services Review (CFSR) Statewide Assessment process • Continue to review and discuss top 10 items for DCFS related to federal reporting; integrated discussion of 2008 workplan topics • Review and discuss DCFS risk assessment case review process and set pilot targeted case review date

<i>Meeting/Activity Date</i>	<i>Topics</i>
November 12 and 19, 2008 <i>Pilot Targeted Case Reviews</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Panel participation in pilot targeted case reviews focused on compliance with risk assessment.
December 9, 2008 <i>Panel Meeting</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update on activities of Northern and Southern Citizens Advisory Committees (CACs) • Update on Child and Family Services Review (CFSR) Statewide Assessment process • Review and discuss pilot targeted case review process • Review and finalize 2008 Annual Report • Officer election

APPENDIX A: OVERVIEW OF THE NEVADA CITIZEN REVIEW PANEL

Federal Requirements

As outlined in Public Law 104-235, Title I, Section 106, the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA) provides for a state grant program for the support and improvement of state child protective services (CPS) systems. This law sets forth a variety of eligibility requirements, including the establishment of citizen review panels. The purpose of the panels is “to provide new opportunities for citizens to play an integral role in ensuring that states are meeting their goals of protecting children from abuse and neglect.”

The citizen review panel system within a given state must meet certain operational requirements and meet a scope of responsibilities within the function of the panel. These are outlined as follows:

Scope of Responsibilities

Each citizen review panel is required to review the compliance of State and local CPS agencies in the fulfillment of their responsibilities with respect to the following:

- Work in accordance with the CAPTA State Plan.
- Examine State and local policies and procedures.
- Review specific cases, when appropriate.
- Review other criteria the panel determines important to the protection of children, including the following:
 1. Review of the extent to which the State CPS system is coordinated with the Title IV-E foster care and adoption assistance programs.
 2. Review of child fatalities and near fatalities.

State Requirements

As part of the CAPTA requirements, states are required to codify citizen review panels through state law. In Nevada, this was completed with the passage of Assembly Bill (AB) 158 during the 1999 legislative session. The relevant text of AB 158 was incorporated into Nevada Revised Statutes (NRS) under Chapter 432B.396. This law reads as follows:

The Division of Child and Family Services shall:

1. Establish a panel comprised of volunteer members to evaluate the extent to which agencies which provide protective services are effectively discharging their responsibilities for the protection of children.
2. Adopt regulations to carry out the provisions of subsection 1 which must include, without limitation, the imposition of appropriate restrictions on the disclosure of information obtained by the panel and civil sanctions for the violation of those restrictions.

During 2001, NRS 432B.396 was amended as a result of AB 248 to establish civil sanctions for violations of confidentiality on the part of citizen review panel members. This amendment includes additional language highlighted in subsection two as follows:

1. Establish a panel comprised of volunteer members to evaluate the extent to which agencies which provide protective services are effectively discharging their responsibilities for the protection of children.
2. Adopt regulations to carry out the provisions of subsection 1 which must include, without limitation, the imposition of appropriate restrictions on the disclosure of information obtained by the panel and civil sanctions for the violation of those restrictions. **The civil sanctions may provide for the imposition in appropriate cases of a civil penalty of not more than \$500. The Division may bring an action to recover any civil penalty imposed and shall deposit any money recovered with the State Treasurer for credit to the State General Fund.**

Statewide Citizen Review Panel

The Statewide Nevada Citizen Review Panel (CRP) operates with the following mission:

To ensure the protection and safety of children through an evaluation of the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act State Plan by examining State and local agencies' policies and procedures and specific cases where appropriate.

Prior to 2004, the Statewide Panel consisted of a maximum of 12 members appointed by the Administrator of the Division of Child and Family Services (DCFS), who also serves on the Statewide Panel. The group included representation from a variety of State and County agencies, community organizations, and professional backgrounds. Membership categories for the Statewide Panel are not federally mandated. However, they were originally based on the membership categories mandated under CAPTA for the Children's Justice Act (CJA) Task Force. The CJA Task Force functions in a complementary manner with the CRP, and therefore the membership was mirrored accordingly.

Recently, both the Statewide Panel and DCFS Administration have placed more emphasis on recruiting community members who are not directly affiliated with the child welfare service system, but still have a professional interest in the wellbeing of children. This includes recruitment from sectors including school districts, child care providers, nonprofit advocacy and service organizations, and professional medicine. As a result, Statewide Panel members from State and County agencies were asked to begin serving in an advisory capacity to the group. This change was made in 2003 prior to the beginning of the case record review process initiated by the Panel, so that members representing other disciplines would be able to provide more objective feedback on cases reviewed at that State and County level.

During 2004, the Statewide Panel underwent a major structural change and was reorganized as a subcommittee of the Children's Justice Act (CJA) Task Force. This was done for two primary reasons: 1) To increase the effectiveness of the Panel's work by joining with a larger advisory group whose work is most directly related to that of the Panel; and 2) to meet the requirements of new statewide advisory board restructuring done by the Division of Child and Family Services (DCFS) in order to reduce the amount of staff time and resources expended on the business completed by such groups. Prior to this restructuring, DCFS had a considerable number of advisory groups and other statewide committees, and it has become necessary to increase efficiency in the area of stakeholder contribution to the work of the Division.

Concurrent with this change, membership on the Statewide Panel has decreased as a result of member turnover. Some new members will be recruited to offset this turnover, and the participation of existing CJA Task Force members in the work of the Panel subcommittee will be encouraged in order to draw on the expertise of current members of the Task Force.

The Statewide Panel works toward fulfilling the following three primary goals:

1. Reviews the State's implementation of previous CRP recommendations.
2. Participates in ongoing Quality Improvement (QI) case reviews.
3. Considers and implements new areas of subject review within the CAPTA Assurances, Section 106.

In essence, the Statewide Panel's work consists of the review of internal policies and procedures within the CPS system, accomplished through individual CPS case reviews. Each year, the Statewide Panel's findings are summarized in an Annual Report (this document) submitted to the federal government as part of the CAPTA requirements.

During 2006, the Panel began undertaking expansion from one to three groups in order to come into compliance with the CAPTA CRP mandate based on the State's increased grant funding level. The CJA Task Force recommended that the existing Statewide CRP recruit the Northern and Southern Citizens Advisory Committees (CACs) to participate as new CRPs. Formal invitations were extended to these groups, with follow-up education about the purpose of the CRP process in Nevada and direct staff support to complete their inclusion. The Northern CAC has formally agreed to participate. Final approval for the Southern CAC is pending for January, 2007. Both groups are expected to become active in 2007 and contribute system improvement recommendations in the Annual Report.

Northern and Southern CACs

Background: Required Expansion of Nevada Citizen Review Panels

The Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA) requires each state that receives the Basic State Child Abuse and Neglect State Grant in excess of \$200,000 to have a minimum of three citizen review panels. Nevada began receiving more than this amount in 2006 through grant adjustments, and will probably continue to receive more than this amount in the future. Therefore, it was necessary that Nevada expand the number of citizen review panels to three in order to come into compliance with the federal requirements. According to CAPTA, Section 106, citizen review panels may function as part of other committees already in existence.

Existing CRP: Statewide Citizen Review Panel

Nevada's existing group, the Statewide Citizen Review Panel (CRP), has been established since 1999. It is federally mandated under CAPTA Section 106, and organized under Nevada Revised Statutes (NRS) Chapter 432B.396. The Statewide CRP is currently focused on the Division of Child and Family Services (DCFS) Program Improvement Plan (PIP) and the Quality Improvement (QI) process.

The Statewide CRP is focused on how well Nevada's child welfare agencies are performing their duties to protect children, through a review of the QI system that monitors the statewide implementation of the PIP policies and procedures at the case work level. The Statewide CRP has previously reviewed the DCFS child welfare data collection system, Unified Nevada Information Technology for Youth (UNITY), and its importance in tracking QI activities outlined in the PIP. The Statewide CRP also participates in case reviews to observe the implementation of policy and practice at the case work level, and to make recommendations for systemic improvements. The Statewide CRP will maintain these duties and areas of focus as part of its continuing function under CAPTA and NRS requirements.

New CRPs Formed Through the Northern and Southern Child Welfare Citizens Advisory Committees (CACs)

The Children's Justice Act (CJA) Task Force is federally mandated under CAPTA Sections 106 and 107, and focuses on front-end child protection and/or prosecution activities. The CJA Task Force met in December, 2005, to review and approve a proposal from DCFS for the expansion of CRPs in 2006. Upon review, the Task Force recommended that DCFS invite the existing Northern and Southern Child Welfare Citizens Advisory Committees (CACs) to serve as the second and third CRPs. The CACs currently operate at the County government level in Washoe and Clark Counties.

During the first half of 2006, staff conducted preliminary discussions with the Chairs of these two groups, and a formal letter was issued by the DCFS Administrator in May, 2006, inviting each of the CACs to serve as CRPs. A meeting was held between staff and the CAC Chairs in August, 2006, to formalize the plan for inclusion of the Northern and Southern CACs in Nevada's CRP process. Approval to join as a CRP was given by the Northern CAC in late 2006, and by the Southern CAC in early 2007.

Each of the CACs has re-focused some of its goals and workplans to begin developing recommendations for system change that can be incorporated into the statewide CRP process. Both CACs currently review areas of focus mandated for CRPs through CAPTA, which is a primary reason the CJA Task Force recommended their inclusion. Because the CACs are more closely tied to the CPS agencies in the north and south, which are the state's two largest population centers, they are ideally positioned to provide additional recommendations for system improvement in Washoe and Clark Counties. The Statewide CRP will maintain its broader focus, continuing to examine CPS across the entire state, while the CACs will be able to provide a deeper look at the CPS system through their respective ties to the County child welfare agencies. This will present new opportunities to make recommendations for more locally-focused system change that will rise up to the State level. This will also increase State and regional collaboration so that necessary changes can be actively addressed.

APPENDIX B: OVERVIEW OF THE STATE CHILD WELFARE SYSTEM

Prior to 2001, the child welfare system in Nevada was bifurcated between State and County agencies as a result of State law. Under Nevada Revised Statute (NRS) 432B.325, the law required that counties in which the “population is 100,000 or more shall provide protective services for the children in that county and pay the cost of all those services.” In Nevada there are two counties that meet this criterion: Washoe County in northern Nevada and Clark County in southern Nevada. As a result, there are three separate agencies that provide child welfare and child protective services (CPS):

1. State of Nevada Division of Child and Family Services (DCFS)
2. Washoe County Department of Social Services (WCDSS)
3. Clark County Department of Family Services (CCDFS)

These agencies work together through the CPS Statewide Managers Team, also known as the Nevada Child Protection and Permanency Planning Team. This team collaborates on pertinent law, regulation, and policy issues necessary to maintain statewide consistency for investigative and casework practices. The CPS Statewide Managers Team assists with the development and oversight of the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA) Basic State Grant.

The child protection agencies conduct child abuse investigations and may take children into protective custody and place them in licensed foster homes. Bifurcation occurred when the County child protection agencies transferred long term or other foster care or potential adoption cases to the State via DCFS. Children were transferred from their initial CPS placement in the County to the State agency’s licensed foster care home. The transfer included changes in social workers, court process, and service delivery systems.

However, during 2001, the Nevada State Legislature passed Assembly Bill (AB) 1 of the 17th Special Session, which provides for the integration of State and local child welfare services. This bill was intended to end the practice of transferring cases from the Counties to the State, thereby reducing the number of changes in placement for a child in protective custody. Integration means that the two larger Counties will incorporate the previously separate child welfare functions of foster care and adoptions into one continuous system of child protection. The following are directives of AB 1:

- Transfers certain duties of the Division of Child and Family Services (DCFS), under the Department of Human Resources (DHR), to agencies of Washoe and Clark Counties.
- Establishes a Legislative Committee on Children, Youth, and Families to oversee the system transition.
- Makes appropriations to fund the transition between State and County agencies.

The implementation of this transition was completed in 2004. WCDSS began implementation in April, 2002, and completed its transition in January, 2003. CCDFS began implementation in

October, 2003, and completed its transition in October, 2004. DCFS remains responsible for supervising and administering child protective and child welfare services in the remaining 15 rural counties. The integration of child welfare services in the two urban counties is intended to accomplish the following:

- Begin to eliminate the inefficiencies of the current system by reducing the number of placements of children in foster homes.
- Decrease the length of time that children remain in out-of-home care and ensure that children are placed in permanent homes as soon as possible.
- Establish rates for foster care reimbursement at a level that enables a provider of foster care to care for a child adequately. Rates should be standardized within each county and structured in a manner that avoids any unnecessary interruptions in foster home placements because of changing levels of reimbursements.
- Establish as a priority the fairness to employees affected by the integration of the child welfare system.
- Establish that DCFS and counties whose population is 100,000 or more have a shared fiscal responsibility for the costs of providing child welfare services, must be committed to ensuring through negotiation in good faith future maintenance of their efforts in providing these services, and must equitably share future costs for providing these services.
- Establish that integration of the child welfare system in Nevada will allow the placement of children in a child welfare system that is adequately funded and structured to avoid unnecessary interruptions in placement and will ensure that permanency is achieved for children in accordance with federal and state laws.

Subsequent to the integration of child welfare services within Washoe and Clark Counties, DCFS has moved into a new supervisory role for county-administered child protective and child welfare services. Supervision within the larger counties is being accomplished in a number of ways, including the development of a Decision-Making Group (DMG) comprised of the DCFS Administrator, DCFS Deputy Administrators, and the Counties' Child Welfare Agency Directors. This group was originally formed to address the findings of the Child and Family Services Review (CFSR), which include the determination that Nevada lacks standardized statewide policies.

Historically, each of the state's three regional service areas (north, south, and rural) operated independently and were allowed to develop and implement region-based policies. Additionally, during the integration process, Nevada had not previously clarified the roles of the State and Counties, and so the State has not been viewed as the accountable supervisory authority for child welfare service delivery.

Based on this, a collaborative Policy Development and Approval Process was established under the Program Improvement Plan (PIP), which responded to the CFSR. Collaborative Policy Teams have been established and are comprised of representatives from each regional service area, along with select internal and external stakeholders as needed. Each Policy Team may include subject matter experts, consumers, managers, supervisors, trainers, and community

partners. The role of the Policy Team members is to conduct research, provide content expertise, and develop draft policies that are provided to the DMG for final policy approval.

The Policy Teams are assigned specific activities in order to provide structure for the policy development process. Specific activities of the teams typically include the following:

- Review existing policies and procedures, comparing them to applicable federal regulations, Nevada Revised Statutes (NRS), and Nevada Administrative Codes (NAC); identify how the policies can be standardized and reflective of nationally recognized best practices.
- Develop new policies and where appropriate and include practice guidelines (field guides or practice manuals) to accompany each new policy developed. Streamlining documentation will be analyzed with each new policy developed.
- Present each new policy to the Decision-Making Group for approval. The Decision-Making Group will review all drafts submitted by the Policy Teams and will make recommendations for revision, or finalize and approve each new policy. The Decision-Making Group will provide oversight for the direction and implementation of the approved policies, and relevant procedures and practice guidelines linked to new policies.
- The Decision-Making Group will direct the Policy Teams to respond to any policy refinement needs discovered through the continuous quality assurance and improvement process.

Stakeholder involvement in policy development has also been promoted as part of the four plan strategies developed through the PIP and the new DCFS five-year plan, including: 1) Safety strategies, 2) engagement strategies, 3) case planning and management strategies, and 4) collaboration strategies. The fourth strategy was added in order to promote collaborative involvement in implementing changes within the first three areas. This includes collaboration with internal and external stakeholders across all program areas in the development of statewide policies, in order to improve safety, permanency, and wellbeing outcomes for children in Nevada.

Child Death Review Teams

The State of Nevada Division of Child and Family Services (DCFS) established the Children's Justice Act (CJA) Task Force in 1994, based on a federal mandate through the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA). The Statewide Child Death Review (CDR) Subcommittee, operating as part of the CJA Task Force, was formed as a partnership of professionals, organizations, and agencies in order to coordinate the statewide activities of child welfare agencies involved in the review of child death. Prior to 2003, the Statewide CDR Subcommittee engaged in several core activities:

- Reviewing cases of child fatalities to gain a better understanding of the causes of child death

- Identifying patterns of abuse, neglect, and other causal factors of child death that may respond to intervention
- Data collection and trends analysis surrounding child death
- Reviewing laws, policies, and practices
- Addressing statewide staff training needs
- Addressing public awareness and education needs

The primary goal of the Statewide CDR Subcommittee was to prevent future child maltreatment and deaths in Nevada by making recommendations for law, policy, and practice changes; staff training; and public education based on data from child death reviews.

While the Statewide CDR Team reviewed select cases of child death statewide in order to meet its goals, six regional CDR teams are required to review local child deaths throughout the State of Nevada as follows:

1. Clark County Team
2. Washoe County Team
3. District 1 – North (Elko Team): covers Elko, Eureka, Humboldt, Lander, Lincoln, and White Pine Counties
4. District 2 – West (Carson City Team): covers Carson City, Douglas, and Storey Counties
5. District 3 – East (Fallon Team): covers Churchill, Lyon, Mineral, and Pershing Counties.
6. District 4 – South (Pahrump Team): covers Esmeralda and Nye Counties

The purpose, organization, and functions of the regional CDR teams are mandated by Nevada Revised Statute (NRS) Chapter 432B, sections 403 through 407. Each of the teams reviews all child deaths within their region with the exception of the Clark County Team, which reviews State-mandated cases along with a selection of additional cases because of high caseload. Clark County accounts for approximately 71% of the state's population, and it is not feasible for the Clark County Team to review all child deaths in the area.

Regional CDR teams currently operate in the following manner:

- All autopsy reports sent for review from the coroner's office in the north are sent to WCDSS where they are disseminated to the appropriate regional CDR team. Likewise in the south, all autopsy reports sent for review from the coroner's office are sent to CCDFS where they are disseminated to the appropriate CDR team.
- Each CDR team meets to discuss these reports and each has a set of review forms that they keep for determinations by the team.
- At the end of the calendar year, data is processed and an annual report is generated.

Although there are some variations, the death review process is similar within each county. The general model tends to follow a six-step process, outlined as follows:

1. The coroner identifies the modes of death prior to any analysis or involvement by a Child Death Review Team. The coroner lists one of four modes of death on the death certificate: 1) accidental, 2) homicidal, 3) natural, or 4) undetermined.
2. The health district or a county health office forwards all child death information to the coroner, who then forwards it to the CDR team Coordinator. This is done the first of every month in counties where a death has occurred. In other counties, it occurs only on an as-needed basis.
3. The Coordinator sends out notification to all team members listing the children who will be reviewed at the next meeting.
4. Team members review each case from the perspective of their representative agencies or professional backgrounds to determine the necessity of further review.
5. The team meets on a monthly basis, or as needed, to discuss the facts surrounding the death and the involvement of various agencies. It then draws conclusions from these facts to assist responsible parties to take necessary actions. Verbal exchange of information at team meetings is informal and confidential. No minutes are kept. Data on number, type of cases, and recommendations are logged. Notes on protocol and policy issues are also recorded.
6. The team's review may be cursory or in-depth, depending upon the available information and the perceived need and basis of several risk factors including drug ingestion, undetermined cause of death, head trauma, malnutrition, bathtub drowning, suffocation, fractures, sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS), blunt force trauma, homicide, child abuse, neglect, burns, sexual abuse, gunshot wounds, stillborn or fetal death that may be drug related, and poisoning.

During 2002, the Statewide CDR Subcommittee developed recommendations for new laws relating to child death review. A primary goal was to give the six regional teams a mechanism to channel recommendations to appropriate agencies and maximize community resources so that future child deaths can be prevented.

These efforts resulted in a bill draft request supported by State Assemblywoman Sheila Leslie, who sponsored Assembly Bill (AB) 381 during the 2003 Nevada State Legislature. This landmark legislation was passed by the Legislature and allows for the implementation of significant changes in the child death review process. This legislation creates a clear purpose for the regional teams to review child death and make recommendations for the improvement of laws, policies, and practices; support the safety of children; and prevent future deaths. Other provisions of the legislation establish the confidentiality of information obtained and reviewed by the regional teams, including protection from disclosure, subpoena, discovery, and introduction into evidence for civil or criminal proceedings.

Additionally, this bill established two statewide oversight committees: 1) the Administrative Team and 2) the Executive Committee to Review the Death of Children. The Administrative Team reviews reports and recommendations from the regional CDR teams and makes decisions regarding the recommendations for improvements to laws, policies, and practices. The Administrative Team also makes recommendations about funding for improvements, initiatives, and public education requiring expenditures.

The Executive Committee, in turn, makes decisions about the funding recommendations from the Administrative Team. Additionally, per NRS, the Executive Committee adopts statewide protocols for the review of the death of children; designates the members of the Administrative Team; oversees training and development for the regional CDR teams; and compiles and distributes a statewide annual report, which includes statistics and recommendations for regulatory and policy changes. Funding for the work of the Committee was also established as a result of AB 381, and is derived from a \$1 fee collected from death certificates issued by the State. The funds are intended to be used for prevention efforts and training of the regional CDR teams.

In essence, the Administrative Team and the Executive Committee have taken over the functions of the original Statewide CDR Team, and now work together to prevent future child deaths in Nevada.

Substitute Care – Foster Care

The authority for the substitute care program is delegated to the Division of Child and Family Services (DCFS) by Nevada Revised Statute (NRS) 432.020, which establishes the Division's responsibility to support and maintain children placed in its custody, and NRS 432.032, which provides authority to adopt program regulations. NRS 432B.180 establishes the duties of DCFS including the requirement to plan, coordinate, and monitor the delivery of child welfare services provided throughout the State. NRS 432B.190 requires the Division to adopt regulations for the provision of child welfare services, including the following:

- Protection of the legal rights of parents and children.
- Emergency shelter for a child.
- The prevention, identification, and correction of abuse or neglect of a child in residential institutions.
- Evaluating the development and contents of plans submitted for approval under NRS 432B.395, which pertains to efforts to prevent or eliminate the need for removal of children from their homes, and to facilitate a safe return to homes where removal is necessary.

Substitute care is a family-focused service that provides for the temporary care of children in need of protection. Its services are aimed at changing behaviors in parents that have resulted in child maltreatment leading to out-of-home placement. The Division returns children who have been removed and may be safely restored to their families through the provision of services to the child and family. When reunification is not possible, the Division seeks alternative permanency options which best suit the child's needs. Specifically, the Division provides assessment and comprehensive case management services that support the child, the parents, and the caregivers.

The continuum of out-of-home care services includes emergency shelter care, foster family care (including placements with relatives), group home care, therapeutic foster care, respite care, residential treatment care both in and out of state, and independent living services. The Division

emphasizes the safety and wellbeing of children, recognizes the family as the fundamental foundation of child rearing, and acknowledges the importance of a comprehensive, community-based, child-centered, family-focused, and culturally competent teamwork approach.

The Division believes families offer children and young adults opportunities for permanency and family relationships that are intended to last a lifetime. Permanency affords the stability and security that children must have for building competency and self-reliance and for maximizing their cultural and spiritual growth. The Division supports collaborative efforts in every community to help assure permanence in the lives of all children.

DCFS began major child welfare reform in 1992 with the commitment to move from a protective authority to a family-centered approach in casework. The first phase was the adoption of a training series for social workers that incorporates the philosophy and principles of family-centered practice in the four major casework areas:

1. Child protective services (CPS)
2. Adoption
3. Foster care
4. Child welfare

In 1994, the second phase of this initiative included the creation of the Foster Care Statewide Steering Committee to address professionalization, training, and retention of foster caregivers. The goal was to improve the quality of foster care by means of a family-centered approach with foster caregivers. The yearlong efforts of this task force and its three subcommittees resulted in a number of improvements within foster care. These included the following:

- Implementation of a 36-hour pre-service foster parent training curriculum
- Involvement of foster care providers in case planning
- Promotion of the development of a Foster Parent Bill of Rights

To continue the efforts of this initiative and to address the quality of care standards required by the Adoption and Safe Families Act (ASFA), DCFS formed a Quality of Care Standards (QCS) Statewide Task Force. The Task Force reviewed current standards and suggested additional standards to improve services and practices. The QCS Task Force was composed of child welfare managers, supervisors, social workers, specialists, foster care providers, and representatives from County social services. The Task Force represented Nevada's three geographic regions: north, south, and rural. Five areas were addressed by the Task Force:

1. Foster care licensing
2. Training
3. Retention and support
4. Quality of care for foster children
5. Professionalization of foster caregivers

After an initial review and recommendation report was developed, the QCS Task Force membership was dissolved into other groups that continue to evaluate the five areas outlined

above and to recommend ways to improve the delivery of services and quality of care for children in foster care.

Specific to the training implemented by the Task Force, Nevada adopted a 36-hour pre-service training curriculum in 1997, which is required of all potential foster and adoptive families. The training is designed to provide families with knowledge and skills that can greatly contribute to their success. Some families will decide that foster care and/or adoption is not for them, while others will begin to gain an understanding of the role of their family and how additional children can enhance their family life.

The northern and southern regions have trainers on staff who provide the 36-hour pre-service training. The rural region contracts out to a local provider to recruit and train foster homes, using the same pre-service curriculum. This is an established curriculum developed by the Institute for Human Services in Columbus, Ohio, which is widely considered to be state-of-the-art training.

Beginning in 2002, since the implementation of the integration of child welfare services in Washoe and Clark Counties, the training now varies by region in terms of hours required and curriculum content, ranging from approximately 22 to 36 hours. However, since only eight hours are required by law, the regional training requirements significantly exceed the minimum established requirements.

APPENDIX C: PANEL MEMBERS

Statewide CRP Members

<i>Member</i>	<i>Affiliation</i>	<i>Representation/Region</i>
Capello, Mike	Northern Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC)	Child Protective Services – Northern Region
Crumrine, Betsey	Division of Child and Family Services (DCFS)	Designated Representative for Division Administrator – Statewide, DCFS Central Office
Earnest, Leanne	Desert Regional Center (DRC)	Mental Health – Southern Region
Fowler, Bill	Nevada CASA Association	CASA – Northern Region
Harris, Jackie	Southern Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC)	Child Protective Services – Southern Region
Lankford, Phil	Clark County Foster & Adoptive Parent Association (CCFAPA)	Foster Parent – Southern Region

Advisory Staff

<i>Member</i>	<i>Affiliation</i>	<i>Representation</i>
Marsh, Jeanne	Washoe County Department of Social Services (WCDSS)	Child Protective Services – Northern Region
Morton, Tom	Clark County Department of Family Services (CCDFS)	Child Protective Services – Southern Region
Walker, Marji	DCFS – Family Programs Office	Child Protective Services – Statewide, DCFS Central Office

Northern CAC Members

<i>Member</i>	<i>Affiliation</i>	<i>Representation</i>
Beye, Eric	Washoe County School District	School District
Cervantes, Frank	Washoe County Department of Juvenile Services	Juvenile Probation
Everett, Denise	Quest Counseling and Consulting, Inc.	Substance Abuse Service Agency
Gordon, Stuart	Family Counseling Services of Northern Nevada	Agency Serving Low Income Individuals
Herzik, Mary	CASA of Washoe County	Court-Appointed Special Advocates
Luke, Shirley	The Robison House	Children's Mental Health
Lunt, Jennifer	Washoe County Alternative Public Defender's Office	Attorneys Representing Parents
Martinez, Eddie	UJIMA Youth Services	Former Participant in the Child Welfare System
Rice, Sherri	Access to Healthcare Network	Advocates for Health Care for Low Income Families
Saathoff, Amy	Committee to Aid Abused Women	Domestic Violence Service Agency
Sabo, Karen	Washoe Legal Services	Attorneys Representing Children
Sandfer, Michael	Alliance Family Services, Inc.	Parent Advocate

Southern CAC Members

<i>Member</i>	<i>Affiliation</i>	<i>Representation</i>
Bevacqua, Jennifer	Olive Crest	Private Providers of Mental Health Services
Biggerstaff, Jan	State Board of Education	Education
Bragg, Lien	Clark County Department of Family Services (CCDFS)	Child Welfare

<i>Member</i>	<i>Affiliation</i>	<i>Representation</i>
Brooks, Chris	-	Youth with Foster Care Experience
Coleman, LaTrece	Housing Authority of the County of Clark, Nevada	Local Housing Agency
Harris, Jacqueline <i>Chair</i>	Bridge Counseling Associates	Substance Abuse Services Agencies
Lankford, Phil	Clark County Foster Parent Association	Foster and Adoptive Parents
Maxfield, Kathey	-	General Public
Merrifield, Patty	DCFS	Children's Mental Health Services
Miller, Patty	Nevada Division of Health Care Financing and Policy	Nevada Medicaid
Morton, Tom	Clark County Department of Family Services (CCDFS)	Child Welfare
Muscari, Carolyn	SAFE House	Domestic Violence Service Agencies
Parks, Sheila S.	CASA	Court Appointed Special Advocates – CASA
Reese, Fritz	Clark County Department of Juvenile Justice Services	Local Juvenile Probation Services
Serno, Susie	Clark County School District (CCSD)	Local School District
Sullivan, Frank	Clark County Family Court	Family Division of District Court
Westrom, Hilary	Children's Advocacy Alliance/Ritter Charitable Trust	Child Welfare Advocate
VACANT	-	Parent Advocates
VACANT	-	Participant in the Child Welfare System