



State of Connecticut  
GENERAL ASSEMBLY



Commission on Children

## Connecticut Commission on Children Minutes of Meeting

Room 1-C, Legislative Office Building, Hartford

Tuesday, September 11, 2007

**Voting members present:** James P. Cordier, Alison Hilding, Josh Piteo, Senator Mary Ann Handley, Mary Grace Reed, Laura Lee Simon, Judith Busch, Mary K. Fox, Representative Andrew M. Fleischmann, Dr. Alex Geertsma, Senator Jonathan Harris, Jonathan Yrchik, and Dr. Alex Geertsma.

**Ex-officio members (or designees) present:** Department of Correction (Mary Marcial), Department of Children and Families (Susan I. Hamilton and Rudy Brooks), Office of Policy and Management (Anne Foley), Charlene Russell-Tucker (Department of Education), and Department of Social Services (Peter Palermino.)

**Members absent:** George A. Coleman, Representative Mike Lawlor, Leslie Wolfgang, Attorney General designee, Department of Public Health designee, Department of Mental Retardation designee, Department of Social Services designee, Department of Public Health designee, and Chief Court Administrator designee.

**Vacancy:** Appointee of Senate minority leader

**Commission staff present:** Elaine Zimmerman, Thomas R. Brooks, Elizabeth C. Brown, Patricia Estill, Dawn Homer-Bouthiette, Rachel Levy, and Edie Luciano.

**Handouts:** Agenda; "Results-based Accountability (RBA) for Communities and Programs that Want to Get from Talk to Action," by the Fiscal Policy Studies Institute of Santa Fe, New Mexico; Connecticut Commission on Children newsletter of August 7, 2007; newspaper article headlined "NCC Children's Program Impresses Singapore Delegation," from the July 25, 2007 edition of *The Advocate* of Stamford; "Department of Social Services Health Care Changes for SFY 2008 & 2009"; and two Department of Correction documents on the Multi-Agency Working Group on Youth.

### Meeting Convened

Chair James Cordier called the meeting to order at 10:05 a.m.

### Honoring 9/11: The children's perspective

The Commission watched highlights from homeland security events that it has held annually since the September 11, 2001 terrorist's attacks. At these events schoolchildren have expressed their feelings about

terrorism, as well as their general safety, through artwork and writing. Commission Executive Director Elaine Zimmerman noted that Connecticut is the only state to hold such an event.

**Trends and issues facing children**

The Commission heard brief presentations from key lawmakers as well as state agency heads regarding trends and issues that are likely to be addressed during the next session of the General Assembly:

-- Senator Jonathan Harris, Co-Chairman of the legislature’s Human Services Committee, said he would like to see a review of taxing and spending policies. Apart from the direct effect of state dollars, Harris noted that tax credits can assist parents who work multiple jobs and want to provide childcare for their children.

-- Senator Mary Ann Handley, Co-Chairwoman of the legislature’s Public Health Committee, said she would press for an evaluation of Connecticut’s mental-health services for children noting that hospital emergency rooms currently serve as the only resource for many families.

-- Representative Andrew Fleischmann, Co-Chairman of the legislature’s Education Committee, spoke to giving the state Department of Education more power to address needs of struggling schools. He suggested that this could include giving SDE funding for positions to oversee and assist schools in need.

-- Education Commissioner Mark McQuillan said his department is working hard to reorganize itself to become more accountable and to help schools improve. He added that SDE will hold a “reading summit” in November to address school reading scores. McQuillan acknowledged that these scores need improvement.

-- Mary Marcial of the Department of Correction reported that 17,500 children in Connecticut have an incarcerated parent. She reported that the department is implementing multiple programs to assist the prisoners and their children. In this regard she indicated that a particular focus is being placed on ensuring that the children avoid replicating the incarceration patterns of their parents.

**Approval of minutes**

The Commission unanimously approved the minutes of the May 8 and June 12 meetings.

**Adjournment**

Mr. Cordier closed the meeting at 12:01 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Alison Hilding,  
Secretary