
MISSOURI TASK FORCE ON CHILDREN'S JUSTICE

2005-2007 STRATEGIC PLAN

September 5, 2005

Section I: Introduction & Overview

The Task Force on Children's Justice was established under the federal Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA) in 1991. All states that receive funding under CAPTA are required to maintain a state, multidisciplinary task force on children's justice. Missouri's Task Force is comprised of 21 members representing most urban and metropolitan jurisdictions, as well as rural locations in the State, and includes law enforcement; judges and attorneys involved in both civil and criminal child abuse and neglect proceedings; child advocates; court appointed special advocates (CASA); health and mental health professionals; individuals representing child protective service agencies; individuals experienced in working with children with disabilities; and representatives of parents' groups (See Appendix A for a list of current members of the Task Force).

Missouri's Task Force on Children's Justice has worked diligently to make recommendations for improving the child protection system (CPS) over the years. Recent examples of the Task Force's initiatives include: (1) supporting legislation to increase background criminal checks on potential foster and relative placement providers; (2) supporting implementation of Structured Decision Making, research based policy and practice within the child abuse/neglect hotline unit, as well as in the field; (3) opposing legislation that mandated child abuse/neglect reporting of sexually active teenagers; and (4) supporting legislation to provide for voluntary placement agreements for parents of children with (non child abuse/neglect) mental health issues. Further, in 2004-2005, the Task Force funded the following projects:

- Prevent Child Abuse Missouri "Colleagues for Children" newsletter
- Finding Words statewide forensic interviewing training
- Missouri Juvenile Justice Association Spring Conference scholarships
- Office of State Courts Administrator (OSCA) training for judges
- Midwest Foster Care Coalition Conference
- Missouri Juvenile Justice Association Fall Conference
- State Technical Assistance Team statewide multidisciplinary team training

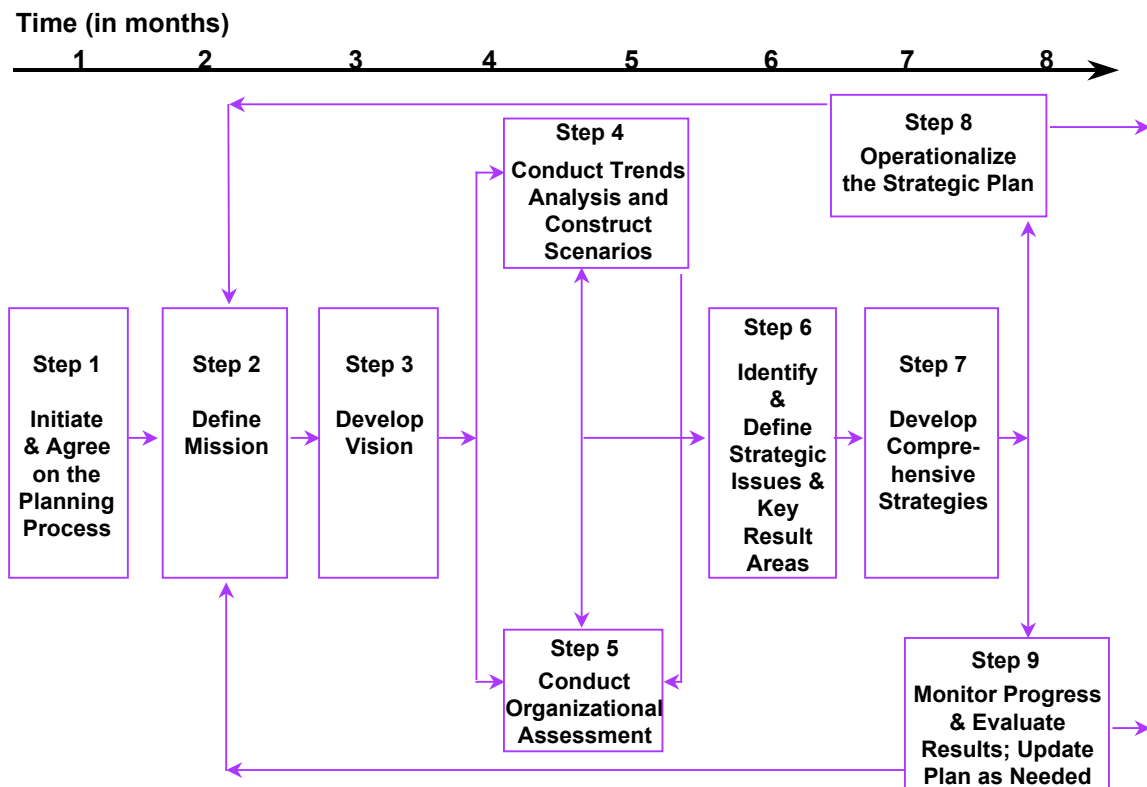
In 2004, House Bill 1453 was passed into law, which requires numerous changes to Missouri's child protection system. Consequently, the Missouri Department of Social Services (DSS), Children's Division (CD) recognized the need to fully utilize the Task Force, and hence re-commissioned the membership in late 2004.

As the Task Force began its work together, it identified a need to develop a strategic direction and priorities for the Task Force. In short, a strategic plan would set forth a strategic roadmap to the future, and help the Task Force deal with long-term issues and "stay the course."

Dr. Brenda J. Wagenknecht-Ivey of PRAXIS Consulting, Inc., located in Denver, Colorado, facilitated the strategic planning process, which consisted of three, two-day strategic planning meetings in June, July, and August 2005. Nationally recognized for her expertise in long-range strategic planning, Dr. Wagenknecht-Ivey assisted the Task Force and staff in developing a three-year Strategic Plan that sets forth the Task Force’s strategic priorities and action agenda for improving the Child Protection System in Missouri.

Below is the nine-step strategic planning model that the Task Force used to complete its strategic plan.

A Nine-Step Strategic Planning Model Long Range Strategic Planning Process



The Strategic Plan includes the following:

1. Mission of the Task Force;
2. Desired vision of Missouri’s Child Protection System;
3. An overview of a trends analysis and system assessment;
4. Long-range strategic issues, goals, objectives, and first-year strategic priorities; and
5. Conclusion.

Section II: Mission & Vision of the Task Force on Children's Justice

Mission: A *mission statement* expresses the fundamental purpose of an organization, or the Task Force. It explains why the Task Force exists. The mission of the Task Force, which is set forth in its bylaws, is as follows.

Task Force on Children's Justice Mission Statement

(From Bylaws – June 2005)

The purpose of the Task Force is to advocate for improvements in the Child Welfare System in Missouri....by making recommendations on (1) DSS policy and practices; (2) family and juvenile court practices; and (3) collaborative efforts with community child welfare and other nonpublic entities.

The Task Force also is to:

1. Examine administrative, investigative, & criminal/civil processing of cases involving child abuse & neglect;
2. Review, provide input, & evaluate the priorities/progress of the DSS Children's Division;
3. Make policy, legislative, & training recommendations;
4. Monitor progress on recommendations included in the Supreme Court Commission Final Report (June 2003) & subsequent reports;
5. Assist in developing public awareness strategies for the Children's Division; and
6. Serve as a Citizen Review Panel.

Vision of the Future: A *vision statement* defines a preferred future of an organization, or in this case the Missouri Child Protection System. It describes what Task Force members desire the system to become or do in the future: what it should be at its best. A vision statement should be compelling, bold, inspirational, and convey a sense of urgency. It also should be believable and achievable.

Below is the Task Force's vision of the Child Protection System in Missouri.

**Task Force on Children's Justice
Vision Statement
(June 2005)**

1. Children are safe in their homes and communities.
2. Missouri's Child Protection System provides a comprehensive continuum of services including traditional and expanded services such as prevention, assessment, protection, support, treatment, health, and education.
3. Agencies, partners, and stakeholders communicate, cooperate, coordinate, and collaborate effectively.
4. The public understands, supports, recognizes, and values the contributions of the Child Protection System.
5. Communities are actively involved in keeping children safe.
6. The Child Protection System has adequate, stable, and flexible funding, and is accountable for the use of its resources.
7. Staff are competent, motivated, and valued.

SECTION III: OVERVIEW OF TRENDS ANALYSIS & SYSTEM ASSESSMENT

A *trend* is a series of related events or activities that appear to have a demonstrable direction over time. There are many types and categories of trends such as continuation, cyclical, or emerging as well as social, economic, political/policy, and technological trends.

Conducting a trends analysis is an important step in a strategic planning process. It helps assess: (1) the nature, magnitude, and sources of demands likely to be placed on the Child Protection System in the upcoming years; and (2) the implications of the demands on the system.

The Task Force identified a variety of trends impacting, and assessed potential implications on, Missouri's Child Protection System. A few of the most significant implications are listed below. (See Attachment B for a complete summary of the trends analysis conducted by the Task Force.)

1. The Child Protection System in Missouri will likely experience increased demands for services, but will have fewer resources. In all there will be both a scarcity of services and resources.
2. The Child Protection System will not be able to adequately address the needs of children and families in Missouri.
3. There will likely be an increase in child abuse.
4. There will likely be an increase in foster care drift (e.g., reduction in permanency, reduction in relative care, and an increase in institutional care).
5. Each case will be more complex and multi-dimensional.
6. There will be an increasing need for prevention and early intervention.
7. Needs assessment will become increasingly important.
8. The System will need to employ "super workers" and "super care providers" to do their jobs well given the pressures, demands, and stress.

Next, the purpose of a System *assessment* is to evaluate the system's capacity both now and in the future to move toward the vision in light of the demands it will likely experience in the years ahead. A SWOT analysis is a process of identifying the system's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (i.e., SWOT) given the vision and implications of a variety of trends.

The SWOT analysis included a critical look at the following elements of the Child Protection System in Missouri:

1. Legislation, Policies and Procedures, & Court Rules;
2. Achievement of System Outcomes (Results);
3. Case Management and Work Processes and Practices;
4. Use of Technology, MIS, & Use of Data and Information;
5. Collaboration with Partners and Access to and Use of Community Resources;
6. Public/Community Image and Support;
7. Resources: Funding, Staffing Levels, etc.;
8. Work Environment and Morale of Staff.

The analysis revealed that the current Child Protection System has many strengths – many things are in place and many things are done well. However, the SWOT analysis also revealed some weaknesses – or areas for improvement in the future. (See Attachment C for a complete summary of the strengths and weaknesses of the System.)

Given the results of the assessment, below are some of the opportunities and threats facing the Task Force and the Child Protection System in the years ahead. (See Attachment C for a complete list of the possible opportunities and threats.)

Some of the opportunities include:

1. Educating decision-makers and the public on how the system works.
2. Advocating for positive collaboration among all players at the state and local levels.
3. Proactively reporting on successes.
4. Pursuing innovative funding (e.g., grants, private/public partnership).
5. Helping create/shape effective delivery of services.
6. Advocating for workers/staff and helping to resolve issues.

A few of the biggest threats include:

1. Lack of stable, adequate, and flexible short and long-term funding; lack of sustainability of funding; competing needs; and lack of private funding.
2. Turf issues that impede true collaboration.
3. Turnover of staff.
4. Lack of statistics/data that show progress; failure to use the data to make better decisions.
5. Perception of quick fix.

SECTION IV: STRATEGIC ISSUES, GOALS, STRATEGIES, & ACTION AGENDA

Strategic issues are internal or external issues that are fundamentally important to the Task Force over the long-term. They are often the underlying or more encompassing issues of what superficially appear to be numerous unrelated or loosely related problems that significantly impact the Task Force's long-term success.

Strategies are comprehensive, institutional responses to the strategic issues. Strategies should include (1) several complementary *goals*, which are broad statements that define the desired, end targets that the Task Force will strive to achieve over the next three years, for each of the issue areas, and (2) several objectives for each of the goals. *Objectives* are general statements that describe the manner in which the end result – or goal – will be achieved. *Priority projects* are the shorter-term (6 to 18 months) strategic and operational priorities – or the action agenda – of the Task Force. As they are completed, the Task Force should be making progress on fulfilling its mission, achieving the vision, accomplishing the long-range goals and dealing with each of the respective issue areas.

Below are four strategic issues that emerged from the strategic planning process. A description of each issue as well as the goals, objectives, and strategic action agenda are presented next.

Task Force on Children's Justice Strategic Issue Areas (August 2005)

1. Adequate, Stable, & Flexible Funding
2. Improved and Expanded Services
3. Staff Development & Positive Work Environment
4. Positive Image & Public Support

Adequate, Stable, & Flexible Funding

Summary: Missouri's Child Protection System needs to be adequately funded if it is to keep children safe in their homes and communities. Further, it needs stable and flexible funding to be able to provide a comprehensive continuum of services to children and families. Currently, the system is not adequately funded, and the funding is unstable and not very flexible. Further, there is a lack of innovative funding in the Child Protection System. There are insufficient private, public, and other partnerships to help fund or provide resources to the System.

Detailed Description: In recent years, funding for the child protection system has fluctuated. The overall budget for the Children's Division has increased from \$508.7 million (FY04) to \$534.4 million (FY06); however, the core budget funding has been reduced for certain program areas. Further, additional mandates are now required and discretion and flexibility of spending authority have been reduced. Specifically, HB 1453 was signed into law on June 29, 2004. Among other things, this Child Welfare Reform bill mandates courts proceedings within three business days of a child's removal from the home; timeframes for hearings in child abuse and neglect cases; and open hearings and open records in child abuse/neglect and termination of parental rights cases. HB 1453 expands requirements statewide without additional funding. An example of the reduction in flexible spending occurred during the 2005 legislative session. In this example, the Children's Division's authority to spend the Federal Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (including Task Force on Children's Justice dollars) was removed and directed to the Child Advocacy Centers, where forensic interviews and treatment for child victims are provided. In sum, inadequate, unstable, and inflexible funding hampers the System's ability to protect Missouri's children from abuse and neglect.

Some members of the Executive, Legislative, and Judicial Branches do not seem to understand the needs of DSS and the Child Protection System as a whole. And, there are philosophical differences among leaders in what should be funded and how limited fiscal resources should be used. In particular, a recent evaluation¹ of 600 judges, clerks, juvenile officers, Children's Division employees, attorneys for parents and children, and Court Appointed Special Advocates who attended regional Comprehensive Child Welfare Conferences² (CCWC), revealed strong opinions about the current gaps in child welfare policy in Missouri. Attendees stated there is a need for a coherent child welfare policy, there is a need for a legislature that truly understands child welfare issues, the rules of new statutes are contradictory, and there is a lack of regard for the process impacts caused by legislation.

As a result, it can be construed that children and families in the State of Missouri are not a high priority. Possible causes to this problem might be a lack of understanding of (1) the role, benefits, and significance of an effective child protection system, and (2) the cost/benefits of all aspects of the programs and services including the cost savings associated with prevention. Finally, the priorities of the state's leaders' change frequently and there are many competing

¹ Dr. Lilliard Richardson and Shannon Daily Stokes, *Comprehensive Child Welfare Conference: An Evaluation of Interagency Learning*, 2005.

² In an effort to improve the coordination and problem solving abilities of teams at the local level, the Department of Social Services and the Office of State Courts Administrator funded, developed, and implemented a series of regional conferences in the spring of 2005.

demands for limited resources. Because of the revenue shortages and budget problems in Missouri, the legislature, the Governor's Office, and all state agencies are being forced to make difficult budget decisions and to adjust to budget reductions.

Finally, innovative funding sources including grant opportunities are pursued currently only on a limited basis. It is frequently not known what is available and the Children's Division lacks staff to research or pursue opportunities that exist. It should be noted, however, that the Children's Division has recently applied to the Federal Administration for Children and Families for a grant, the first in over five years, to replicate the Jackson County Newborns Exposed to Substance Abuse initiative. Finally, the state has developed only a few formal and informal partnerships with private or community organizations across Missouri to assist in providing needed resources for children involved in the Child Protection System (e.g., clothing for foster children). Consequently, the state is required to provide these necessities.

Below are the long-range goals, objectives, and strategic action agenda for this strategic issue area.

Goal 1: The Child Protection System will be adequately funded to ensure children are safe in their homes and communities.

Objective 1: Advocate for increased and stable funding to meet the System's needs.

Objective 2: Educate executive, legislative, judicial, business, and community leaders about the needs, roles, benefits, and significance of the Child Protection System.

Objective 3: Build support for the Child Protection System within the Executive, Legislative, and Judicial Branches and business/community.

Goal 2: Innovative funding sources will be developed to provide resources for children and families in the Child Protection System.

Objective 1: Form partnerships with private businesses, not-for-profit organizations, and other public entities (e.g., universities).

Objective 2: Pursue and secure innovative funding sources.

Goal 3: Flexible funding will continue in this State.

Objective 1: Advocate for the continued ability to use appropriated funds flexibly.

Strategic Issue #1: Adequate, Stable, & Flexible Funding
Final Strategic Action Agenda/Projects
(August 24, 2005)

1. Make presentation(s) to/develop ongoing dialogue with the legislature & budget committees on need for adequate funding of core services.
2. Recommend & advocate for/with DSS & Legislature: 1 FTE dedicated/ trained resource development specialist (to do grant writing and research, government & private sources).
3. Children's Division to educate the Task Force on CD's budget and sources with recommendations on increased and flexible funding.
4. Develop collaboration with higher education institutions for innovative projects & funding.

Improved & Expanded Services

Summary: The Task Force’s vision for the Child Protection System in Missouri includes providing a continuum of public and private services ranging from prevention to permanency. This array of private and public services specifically includes prevention, assessment, protection, support, treatment, mental health, health, and education. There is a need to expand services, improve existing services, evaluate services, identify best practices, and consistently implement policies, procedures, and best practices throughout all areas of the state.

Detailed Description: There are several parts to this strategic issue area. First, existing programs and services need to be improved and expanded to meet the needs of children and families in the state. Currently, the state’s Child Protection System lacks a comprehensive continuum of services. For example, existing funding does not fund prevention services and programs. Similarly, other services such as intensive in-home treatment or affordable medical and dental services are not considered integral to the Child Protection System and thus, are under-funded or not funded at all.

In addition, existing services such as educational, medical, and mental health assessments need to be improved. In particular, according to the 2004 reassessment of the Juvenile Court Improvement Project (JCIP), only 44 percent of judges/commissioners and 30 percent of juvenile officers reported community services as adequate to meet the need, a decline from 1996 when 55 percent of judges/commissioners and 41 percent of juvenile officers reported that community services were adequate. The most frequently named service delivery gaps were in the areas of counseling/mental health services, substance abuse treatment, parent aides, parenting classes, affordable medical and dental services, and other needs such as housing, transportation, foster resources, and intensive in-home treatment. Further, in the evaluation of the CCWC, team members representing each of the 45 judicial circuits noted similar service delivery gaps. They identified the failure of Department of Mental Health (DMH) personnel to follow-up as the primary contributing factor to a lack of mental health services. Other services needed included additional foster homes, in-home assistance, transportation, and access to attorneys.

In addition, (1) it is not easy to access information about available resources; (2) there is a lack of service resources in some areas of the state; and (3) too often a “cookie cutter approach” to services (e.g., in treatment plans, court orders) is used where in fact different children, families, and communities have different needs (e.g., rural vs. urban). Examples of a lack of service resources in some areas of the state, that were identified during the Circuit Self Assessment process of the Federal Child and Family Service Reviews (CFSR), include an overall lack of dental care readily available for people with Medicaid, a lack of public transportation in most counties, and a limited number of soup kitchens and food pantries in many counties. Finally, judges and court staff need to better understand what services are available and how to access them.

Second, research and evaluation is needed to identify best and promising practices. The System would benefit from tapping national research or evaluating existing programs within Missouri to identify best or promising practices for preventing child abuse and neglect, or using effective programs, services, and practices for working with abused and neglected children and keeping

them safe. Benefits also would be gained by a more systematic sharing of information across the state.

Third, policies, procedures, and best practices need to be implemented consistently throughout the state. Currently, there are inconsistencies across the state in how policies, procedures, and best practices are implemented. Some of the reasons for the inconsistencies include:

- Inadequate supervision and management
- A lack of skills-based training and a need for quality, not quantity
- High turnover in the Children's Division and legislature
- Differences in the resources of urban and rural jurisdictions
- Lack of education on and understanding of issues (e.g., judicial officers)
- Lack of timely response to proposed legislation
- The legislature wants a quick solution/immediate change, which does not give the Children's Division time to evaluate.

While consistent implementation of policies, procedures, and practices is needed throughout the state, there also needs to be flexibility in providing services at the local level to ensure that the services provided actually meet the needs of children and families in the respective communities. Creative, outside the box thinking is needed to make this happen.

Below are the long-range goals, objectives, and strategic action agenda for this issue area.

Goal 1: A continuum of services from prevention to permanency will be provided to all children and families in need in Missouri.

Objective 1: Determine existing service and resource gaps in the Child Protection System.

Objective 2: Collaborate with private, public, and not-for-profit organizations to help fill the service and resource gaps and/or to expand the array of services provided throughout Missouri.

Objective 3: Build support among leaders in the legislative, executive, and judicial branches and private and not-for-profit organizations for improved and expanded child protection services.

Goal 2: Services will be of the highest quality and meet the specific needs of children and families across the state.

Objective 1: Ensure that policies, procedures, and practices are implemented consistently throughout the state.

Objective 2: Adopt and implement best practices and performance standards throughout the state.

Objective 3: Recommend changes to improve the quality of services provided to children and families.

Strategic Issue #2: Improved & Expanded Services
Final Strategic Action Agenda/Projects
(August 24, 2005)

1. Conduct a “service gap analysis” (begin by using existing evaluations) & make recommendations to fill gaps.
2. Review outcomes of the Children’s Division Quality Assurance Program & make recommendations to improve the effectiveness of services (includes the study of consistency issues.)
3. Develop a comprehensive Child Protection System Resource Guide (state and local).
4. Prioritize service area with deficiencies & use research on best practices to address issues.

Staff Development & Positive Work Environment

Missouri's Child Protection System will only be as good as its staff. After all, they are the ones who serve children and families across the state. To that end, it is essential for DSS staff, court staff, and private/contract providers to be competent and motivated. They must feel valued if they are to excel in their stressful, difficult, and important jobs. Currently, for DSS and private/contract providers in particular, it is difficult to recruit, retain, and motivate the workforce and the work environment needs to be improved. The Children's Division turnover rate increased from 19% in FY03 to 20% in FY05.

In particular:

- Pre-service training is available and builds competency, but ongoing training to improve skills and provide for ongoing professional development needs to be more available.³
- Cross-training of professionals in child protection is available but needs to be sustained locally and made available regularly.
- The office facility and leadership affect the physical and emotional work environment.
- Promotion opportunities are generally limited to supervisory/administrative positions. Thus, there are inadequate promotional opportunities for staff who want to remain in direct services.
- Rewards should be available for educational, high risk professional growth, tenure, etc.
- Recruitment strategies need to be broad based and include universities as an ongoing recruitment tool. Universities should tie funding to recruitment (e.g., encourage child protection as a profession).
- External/internal recognition of successes needs to be established.
- Legislative mandates, agency policies, and supervisory oversight need to support practice without micro-managing.
- Caseloads need to be reduced and caseload standards need to be established. Performance should be tied to funding.

Further, staffing levels at DSS, the courts, and private/contract providers must be sufficient to handle the burgeoning caseloads/workloads. For example, according to the 2004 Juvenile Weighted Workload system⁴, the juvenile courts were short 157 direct service deputy juvenile officers required to effectively screen, process, and supervise youth. This number is even more staggering when it is realized that ongoing child welfare/protection and foster cases are currently excluded from that estimate while at the same time HB 1453 has actually increased the level of court activities for these types of cases. Since 1997, there have not been any new allocations of juvenile officer positions.

³ In the Judiciary, the education budget has been reduced from \$2.4M in FY03 to \$1.4M in FY06. The Division of Judicial Department Education is responsible for coordinating training service for almost 4,000 state court personnel.

⁴ The Juvenile Weighted Workload (JWWL) system estimates the need for additional direct service deputy juvenile officers in Missouri's 35 multi-county circuits. The JWWL compares the number of staff hours required to screen and process juvenile court referrals and supervise youth in accordance with the Standards for the Administration of Juvenile Justice, with the actual number of staff hours available to juvenile courts to complete these direct service activities.

Below are the long-range goals, objectives, and strategic action agenda for this issue area.

Goal 1: Staff will have the knowledge, skills, abilities, and supervisory support to do their jobs well.

Objective 1: Assess the skill level and training needs of staff.

Objective 2: Assess and evaluate existing training programs to make sure the requisite knowledge, skills, and abilities are being taught.

Objective 3: Advocate for additional training and development opportunities for staff and management.

Objective 4: Form partnerships to provide skills-based training for the Child Protection System.

Objective 5: Advocate for sufficient supervisory staff.

Goal 2: The workloads of all staff (public and private contractors) will be of manageable size and nature to best meet the needs of children and families.

Objective 1: Determine an optimal size and nature of caseloads/workloads.

Objective 2: Advocate for a manageable caseload/workload for staff and management.

Goal 3: Staff will feel valued and supported.

Objective 1: Develop innovative ways to formally and informally recognize staff performance.

Objective 2: Advocate for improved pay, benefits, incentives, and equipment for staff.

Objective 3: Advocate for improvements to work facilities and physical work environment.

Strategic Issue #3: Staff Development & Positive Work Environment
Final Strategic Action Agenda/Projects

(August 24, 2005)

1. Analyze existing studies/data relating to optimal size & nature of caseloads & make recommendations.
2. Recommend that the Children's Division evaluate the feasibility of a dual, career-track program with pay incentives.
3. Recommend that the Children's Division conduct a workplace study to determine employee needs regarding a professional and safe environment.
4. Recommend that the Children's Division evaluate the effectiveness of the structured decision-making model as it effects case management and caseload.

Positive Public Image & Public Support

Summary: The Child Protection System is an integral part of Missouri's support system for children and families in need. The System's future will be enhanced if it has a more positive public image and thus, receives more public support. To accomplish this goal the System must be accountable, educate and inform others, and foster positive public relations.

Detailed Description: There are several ways to improve its public image and gain support. First, the Child Protection System must be and demonstrate that it is accountable. It must be fiscally responsible and accountable and it must demonstrate that it is achieving positive social and fiscal outcomes for families, taxpayers, and society as a whole. It must overcome perceptions that the System is not accountable currently.

Demonstrating accountability is difficult as outcomes/results are difficult to define and measure. And, in some cases, there is a lack of data to demonstrate effectiveness. However, it should be noted that while accountability is difficult to demonstrate, both the Children's Division and the courts are taking affirmative steps to be more responsible and accountable for achieving desired outcomes. For example, DSS is implementing its Program Improvement Plan to address issues identified during the Federal CFSR. Among other things, it is updating the contracts of all provider agencies (e.g., Foster parent Licensing contract, Crisis Nursery contract, Case Management privatization contract) to include performance-based measures.

In addition, the Courts are implementing the Judicial Information System (JIS),⁵ which will significantly improve efficiencies, access, and timeliness across the state. By June 30, 2005, JIS was installed in 34 of the state's 45 judicial circuits, incorporating 82 of the state's 115 counties and the independent City of St. Louis. Also, the Supreme Court recently adopted (June 30, 2005) new rules⁶ pertaining to mandatory three-day proceedings following a child's removal from home; timeframes for hearings in child abuse/neglect cases; untimely hearings; continuances; open hearings; and open records. Also adopted was a court operating rule requiring presiding judges to submit quarterly reports of all hearings that are not held within the required timeframes. The courts are using a new tool called Cognos Connection to make better use of existing data through improved reports (e.g., milestone reports, workload reports, exception reports). Finally, the Missouri Juvenile Justice Information System (MOJJIS), which was created out of the 1995 Juvenile Crime Bill, enables multiple state agencies providing services to delinquent and abused/neglected youth to share information and coordinate services. MOJJIS has improved assessment, intervention and treatment services, and tracking across agency boundaries throughout the state.

⁵ JIS is an automated case management system being implemented in Missouri courts to provide statistical and management information.

⁶ Developed under the Missouri Supreme Court Family Court Committee, the Juvenile Court Rules Workgroup was assigned responsibility for drafting revisions to the Rules of Practice and Procedure in Juvenile Courts. Included in the Workgroup's charge was the instruction "to advise the Family Court Committee on appropriate revisions to existing rules necessary to comply with all the directives of HB 1453 and to address any inconsistencies in the current rule."

Second, the System must educate and inform others about the role, benefits, and outcomes of its programs and services. Specifically, executive, judicial, and legislative decision makers must understand the Child Protection System. They need to be informed of what the System does, how it serves and protects children and families, and why the services and programs are vital to the overall “health” of Missouri. Among other things, term limits, apathy among leaders, and competing demands make this challenging. Currently, information is not shared with these leaders in a formal, systematic manner, there are not forums to educate and inform them, and the System does not proactively share successes/results.

The public, participants, and users of the system also need to be educated and informed about the Child Protection System. They too need to understand what it does, why it is important, and the vital role it plays in protecting children from harm. The System currently does not use innovative approaches to educate and inform the public and others, appealing to values and the common good.

Finally, the System does not currently have positive public relations and does not presently have a mechanism for sharing information between the System and media without compromising family confidentiality. Specifically, the System currently does not: (1) report on its progress and accomplishments; (2) proactively showcase its results and demonstrate its overall value to citizens of the state; or (3) use other effective media for gaining positive press. In short, it does not have a consistent, positive message (e.g., marketing/public relations campaign, spokesperson) that will help build support for the System.

Below are the long-range goals, objectives, and strategic action agenda for this area.

Goal 1: The Child Protection System will be accountable.

Objective 1: Measure outcomes more effectively.

Objective 2: Demonstrate the positive programmatic and fiscal outcomes that are achieved for children and families.

Objective 3: Effectively communication positive outcomes to the public.

Goal 2: Government leaders will be informed about and knowledgeable of the role, benefits, and importance of the Child Protection System.

Objective 1: Provide regular and frequent information to government leaders about the Child Protection System.

Objective 2: Gather feedback from government leaders about the Child Protection System.

Goal 3: The public, stakeholders, and families of the Child Protection System will be informed about and knowledgeable of the role, benefits, and outcomes of the System.

Objective 1: Develop and market a positive “brand” image.

Objective 2: Develop a positive relationship with the media.

Objective 3: Disseminate information on the role, services, and benefits of the Child Protection System.

**Strategic Issue #4: Positive Public Image & Public Support
Final Strategic Action Agenda/Projects**

(August 24, 2005)

1. Develop Public Relations strategy (in partner with universities, public, corporations to create media campaign).
2. Educate key legislative decision-makers on positive outcomes of CPS (by touring hotline, shadowing Children’s Division & Juvenile Court workers, etc.)
3. Establish relationships and increase understanding and cooperation with media to disseminate positive outcomes.
4. Obtain and use data on permanency outcomes and cost effectiveness associated with timely permanency vs. children that have not achieved timely permanence.
5. Establish a procedure for communicating information on positive CPS outcomes including Task Force vision/priorities on an ongoing basis.

SECTION V: CONCLUSION – TAKING ACTION & MAKING A DIFFERENCE

The members of Missouri’s Task Force on Children’s Justice invested many hours and collaborated extensively in developing this Strategic Plan, demonstrating a relentless commitment to improving the Child Protection System and ultimately, the lives of children and families throughout the state. An ambitious short-term action agenda and long-term roadmap are outlined above. Working collectively, the Task Force along with its many partners throughout the state, will make a difference – leaving a lasting footprint – in expanding and improving the services provided to children and families in need.

To ensure implementation and follow-through, the Task Force has formed four strategic action implementation teams around each of the strategic issue areas. The charge of the teams is to develop and execute a plan to achieve the strategic projects in their respective areas. The teams, which will be comprised of a team leader and team members, will report on their progress and accomplishments regularly and where appropriate, coordinate their efforts with those of the other teams. Each year, the Task Force will review, celebrate, and communicate progress and accomplishments, and establish a new strategic action agenda for the upcoming year.

Finally, the Task Force needs assistance and support from many state and local partners to succeed. Thus, it will share the Strategic Plan, communicate and build support for its strategic action agenda, and enlist the assistance of its many partners in the months ahead. Working together, significant improvements will be achieved.

Attachment A: List of Task Force Members

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13th Judicial Circuit
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Harold Bengsch
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Springfield, MO

Alinda Dennis
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Attachment B: Trends Analysis

Below are the trends that the Task Force believes will most impact Missouri generally and the Child Protection System specifically in the years ahead. Identifying the trends alone is not the most important part of a trends analysis. Rather, given the many trends, it is most important to anticipate the implications of the trends on the Child Protection System in Missouri. A few of the potentially many implications are listed at the end of this section.

Social/Demographic Trends

Social trends describe changes in the composition, order, and structure of interactions among individuals within society. In large part, they define the size and nature of the justice system and human services client population. The social and demographic trends most likely to impact the Child Protection System in Missouri are as follows.

1. Population aging
2. Generation Y comes of age (born between 1979 –1994 representing 60 million people)
3. Increasing numbers of minority and non-English speaking populations (e.g., Hispanic, Asian, Bosnian, Russian)
4. Polarization of people by class, race, age, ethnicity, and life styles
5. Alterations in family composition
6. Continued increases in geographic mobility
7. Shifting population centers in the Cities/Counties/States
8. Increase in domestic and/or family violence (or reports of domestic and family violence)
9. Continued widespread substance use and abuse
10. Continued break-up of traditional families
11. Increasing conflicts regarding alternative lifestyles
12. Increasing government intervention in what were once thought to be personal lifestyle choices (e.g. smoking)
13. Greater expectations placed on public organizations/service providers (e.g., customers demanding better services; more informed consumers)
14. Increasing demand/need for health care for all people and families
15. Increasing demand for institutional and organizational accountability
16. Increasing need for mental and behavioral health services

Economic Trends

Economic trends describe changes in the relationships among individual well-being, the nature and composition of work and the work force, and societal prosperity. Economic trends directly affect the composition of caseloads, shape the basic resource foundations of the human services system, courts, and justice system, and they shape basic societal conditions. Below are the economic trends likely to impact the Child Protection System in Missouri in the years ahead.

1. A growing service industry and thus, more service-related jobs, which tend to be

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- relatively lower paying
 2. Rising housing costs
 3. Increase in globalization of business
 4. Increasing stratification between higher and lower incomes; shrinking middle class
 5. Increasing use of part-time, temporary, and contractual employees
 6. Continued urban sprawl and movement to suburban communities – looking for safe neighborhoods for families and children
 7. Continued demands on employers to provide employees with benefits and conditions other than money, such as increased participation in managing work, control over work assignments, developing structures for working in teams, training/educational benefits, flexible work schedules, and telecommuting
 8. Increasing difficulties of public sector organizations to recruit and retain highly competent people given the wage/benefit disparities and potential between the public and private sectors
 9. Negative unemployment rate in some professions (e.g., information systems and technology, skilled labor, nursing) and higher unemployment rate in other professions
 10. Increasing pressure for cost containment of health care services
 11. Increasing cost of health care; shifting of health care costs
 12. Worldwide leveling of economics
 13. Changes in business – layoffs, downsizing, etc.

Technological/Scientific Trends

Technological and scientific trends describe changes in the composition, application, and broader social effects of tools, and scientific developments and breakthroughs. Technological trends shape the types of demands confronting service organizations and hold the potential for dramatically altering the way organizations do their work. Scientific trends shape new litigation areas and the need for specialized expertise. Below are some of the technological trends likely to impact Missouri's Child Protection System in the future.

1. Continued developments/rapidly developing telecommunications and information technology
2. Increasing networking of information
3. Greater demands and expectations for access to information from remote locations
4. Greater demands for service 24 hours a day, 7 days a week (24X7)
5. Increasing numbers of home-based operations and work arrangements (telecommuting)
6. Growth in "security" technology
7. Increase in distance learning (e.g., video-conferencing)
8. Internet stalking/identify theft
9. Increasing exclusion of people who do not have access to the use of technology (e.g., technological prejudice by requiring online application for jobs)

Policy/Political Trends

Policy trends describe the structure, receptiveness, responsiveness, priorities, and effectiveness of forums for collective, public decision-making, and for resource distribution. They also describe preferred responses to societal problems and the appropriate roles of individuals in developing, implementing, monitoring, and modifying actions to group responses. The policy/political trends likely to impact the Child Protection System in the future include the following.

1. Increasing political disorganization and increasing political competition
2. Increasing position polarization among the two major political parties
3. More tension between local control and regionalization of services
4. Increased scrutiny on how public tax dollars are spent
5. Increasing attention paid to youth and family issues
6. Increasing demand for and/or experimentation with privatizing public services, ultimately demanding greater accountability
7. Increasing use of term limits for legislators and other elected officials (this may be reversing)
8. Continuing discussion about the need for health care reform
9. Increasing criminalization of some behaviors (e.g., laws identify certain crimes that prohibit judges from placing back in homes)
10. Reduction in government intrusion (e.g., custody, diversion)
11. Increase in personal responsibility (e.g., have your own healthcare, basic human rights)
12. Declining role of government in providing health care

Other Trends in Missouri that will impact the Child Protection System

In addition to the trends noted above, Task Force members identified a few additional trends in Missouri that will impact the Child Protection in the future.

1. Increase in the number of methamphetamine labs across Missouri
2. Downsizing of state government
3. Increased information sharing (e.g., on alerts such as Amber alerts, protective service alerts, children available for adoption)
4. State is taking less of role in providing health care
5. Judicial officers are increasingly using treatment options

Implications of Trends on the Child Protection System

The trends noted above will *not* occur in isolation. Rather, they will interact together to impact Missouri's Child Protection System. While there are many possibilities, below are some of the biggest implications of the interacting trends on Missouri's Child Protection System.

1. The Child Protection System in Missouri will likely experience increased demands for services, but will have fewer resources. In all there will be both a scarcity of services and resources.
2. The "System" is having to do more with less.
3. The System will not be able to adequately address the needs of children and families in Missouri.
4. There will likely be an increase in child abuse.
5. There will likely be an increase in foster care drift (e.g., reduction in permanency, reduction in relative care, and an increase in institutional care).
6. The caseloads might be higher.
7. Each case will be more complex and multi-dimensional.
8. There will be an increasing need for prevention and early intervention.
9. Needs assessment will become increasingly important.
10. The System will need to employ "super workers" and "super care providers" to do their jobs well given the pressures, demands, and stress.
11. Increasing need for health care.
12. Increasing pressure on public policy makers to "fix" the System.
13. Increasing pressure for the public/private system to be more accountable for outcomes; achieve better outcomes for the money; get and show results.
14. Increasing need to increase collaboration with the local community/community organizations.
15. Greater responsibility to provide services at the local/grass roots level.

Attachment C: System Assessment

Task Force members identified a variety of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats of Missouri’s Child Protection System. Below is a complete summary.

Table 1: Legislation, Policies & Procedures, & Court Rules	
Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The Children’s Division has policies, which are available online ▪ Juvenile/family courts are trained in best practices ▪ Courts have timelines/emphasize permanency ▪ Use of structured decision-making as a tool for assessing risk and safety ▪ Bench Card training (<i>Resource Guide for Best Practices in Child Abuse and Neglect Cases</i>) ▪ Multidisciplinary training is provided ▪ The state has some progressive legislation ▪ There are promising practices being used in some communities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Policies are not followed or known ▪ There are too many unfunded mandates ▪ No consistency of use of best practice by juvenile/family courts ▪ There is a reduction in eligibility of foster care/adoption subsidies ▪ Policies/procedures are applied inconsistently across the state ▪ There is too much disagreement among legislators ▪ There is a lack of implementation across the state ▪ Some legislation is inconsistent legislation & some is too prescriptive – limits judicial discretion

Table 2: Achievement of System Outcomes (Results)	
Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The Federal Program Improvement Plan, which should bring about more collaboration among the various agencies ▪ The state is working toward accreditation ▪ Office of Child Advocate ▪ Pilot project in Jasper County RE: chronic neglect/reduction of recidivism ▪ Hotline automation ▪ Juvenile Court Reassessment (OSCA) ▪ Juvenile Court Improvement Project (OSCA) ▪ Use of structured decision-making as a tool ▪ The regulatory agencies have the best interest of the child in mind ▪ Practice Development Review - assesses the performance of the System (QA) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ There is no ongoing external evaluation ▪ There is a lack of future funding ▪ There is a lack of collaborative evaluation ▪ There are different definitions from one jurisdiction to another (not consistent) ▪ State contracts are not performance based ▪ Conflicts exist among Children’s Division worker, juvenile officer, and Guardian ad Litem

Table 3: Case Management & Work Processes & Practices	
Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ More structured/more focused on outcomes ▪ More family-focused than previously ▪ Creation of Children’s Division ▪ Family Court model ▪ Accreditation ▪ There is better communication of various roles within the Children’s Division and between the Children’s Division and courts ▪ Family Support Teams ▪ The courts use/adhere to time standards ▪ Family centered out-of-home care ▪ Growing collaboration between the Children’s Division and Department of Mental Health ▪ The Children’s Division has streamlined work processes through new computer system 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Not as structured or focused as we need to be ▪ Sufficient resources are lacking to manage cases well ▪ Family courts don’t always function as they should ▪ Not enough interest in being a Family Court judge ▪ There is a lack of supervisor skills/training and support ▪ There are too few workers and support workers ▪ Clear roles for juvenile office and the Children’s Division are lacking ▪ There is blurred responsibility between the Children’s Division and private case managers ▪ A cookie cutter approach is used (e.g., cookie cutter court orders and treatment plans)

Table 4: Use of Technology, MIS, & Use of Data & Information	
Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The Missouri Juvenile Justice Information System ▪ Electronic sharing of information among agencies ▪ Quicker response ▪ The Children’s Division policies are available online ▪ Workers use laptops ▪ Longitudinal/other data are available ▪ Adoption photos are now available online ▪ Kansas City integration pilot project 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ There is alack of total integration among agencies/Children’s Division ▪ Not all agencies share information electronically ▪ There is a lack of critical focus on information being shared ▪ HIPAA ▪ Don’t always use information gained from evaluations ▪ There are some gaps in data ▪ Data are not communicated ▪ Don’t use available information to make improvements in system

Table 5: Collaboration with Partners & Access to & Use of Community Resources	
Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Collaboration creates greater community awareness ▪ Faith-based opportunities exist ▪ Local communities are putting money into local resources ▪ There are some effective community partnerships; for example: CHART (health initiative), Greenbook (domestic violence partnership), Children’s Trust Fund initiatives, Private sector initiatives, Casey – Clark ▪ Youth Opportunities Tax Credit ▪ Child Fatality Review Team ▪ Privatization ▪ Children’s Division pilot initiatives (i.e., Independence school partnership) ▪ Division of Youth Services – DMH ▪ Supreme Court Task Force (Missouri Supreme Court Commission on Children’s Justice) ▪ Increased collaboration between the Children’s Division and DMH 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Requires recommitment ▪ Turf issues are present/pose a risk ▪ HIPAA restricts communication ▪ There is no comprehensive, integrated plan to provide mental health services to children/families involved in the child protection system ▪ Collaboration and information sharing among agencies/partners needs to be improved (e.g., DMH). ▪ Lack of resources for teens ▪ Lack of adequate funding ▪ Lack of evaluation mechanism ▪ Privatization ▪ Lack of comprehensive, integrated plan to provide mental wellness/mental health services where child abuse/neglect and families are concerned

Table 6: Public/Community Image & Support	
Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The System is available when there is a need ▪ Public does not feel there is a \$ cost for service ▪ Public believes there is a safety net for abused/neglected kids ▪ Separation from Family Support Division ▪ Some communities run positive media campaigns RE: Child Protection Services ▪ Open hearings/open records ▪ Public image is positive 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Looked at as “baby-snatchers” ▪ The Children’s Division is not looked upon as helpful to keeping families together or solving problems by law-enforcement, public, schools ▪ System is often used or misused ▪ Public doesn’t want to pay for cost (higher taxes) ▪ Media hype (high profile cases); media doesn’t adequately cover issues; media sensationalizes ▪ Media coverage doesn’t reflect all the facts because they don’t have all the information to report accurately ▪ The public is misinformed/uneducated because of the lack of clarity of the role of

	<p>child protection services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The Children’s Division doesn’t toot their own horn ▪ Not all Legislators understand the System ▪ Open hearings/open records ▪ Businesses assume government is providing all of the services needed
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Table 7: Resources: Funding, Staffing Levels, etc.	
Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Moving toward accreditation that will result in lower caseloads ▪ Professionalization of staff ▪ Some mentoring services are available 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Caseload is high and complex ▪ Compensation of staff is low ▪ Entire system is under-funded ▪ Federal funding is not flexible ▪ There is a lack of training and a lack of money for training ▪ Avoidable turnover exists ▪ There is a lack of general understanding of private, state, and federal grants ▪ There is no retention/recruitment plan/funding ▪ Sustaining funding is difficult ▪ Workers no longer provide supportive services to families ▪ There is not enough funding to complete accreditation

Table 8: Work Environment & Morale of Staff	
Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Workers are dedicated ▪ Staff have/use technology (more than before) ▪ Staff are more aware of child welfare issues ▪ Staff are making a difference ▪ Clarity of roles creates better work environment ▪ Pay for limited numbers of staff to get higher graduate degree ▪ The state offers an Employee Assistance Program 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Staff believe there is poor public perception ▪ There is high turnover (CD, all agencies) ▪ Compensation is low; there are few rewards; the compensation is insufficient compensation to keep qualified staff (CD) ▪ There is a lack of technology ▪ Staff have concerns for personal safety ▪ There is a lack of clarity of roles which creates tension, distrust, turf issues ▪ The system does not allow staff to spend monies flexibly ▪ Caseloads are not manageable ▪ There is a lack of support personnel

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The work is stressful and there is a lack of crisis support for staff ▪ There is no broad tuition assistance for all staff ▪ Decreased funding/shifting of resources have resulted in staff layoffs and increased expectations of current staff – had an adverse impact on staff morale ▪ Private providers have had to lay off staff because resources were diverted to other contractors – had an adverse impact on staff morale
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In addition to strengths and weaknesses, there are a variety of opportunities and threats facing the Missouri Child Protection System. They are summarized below.

Opportunities include:

1. Educating decision-makers and the public on how the system works.
2. Advocating for positive collaboration among all players at the state and local levels.
3. Proactively reporting on successes.
4. Evaluating innovations.
5. Pursuing innovative funding (e.g., grants, private/public partnership).
6. Helping create/shape effective delivery of services.
7. Advocating for workers/staff and helping to resolve issues.

Biggest threats include:

1. Lack of stable, adequate, and flexible short and long-term funding; lack of sustainability of funding; competing needs; and lack of private funding.
2. Downsizing of government.
3. Turf issues that impede true collaboration.
4. Turnover of staff.
5. Polarization based on different ideologies, philosophies, and attitudes (e.g., debates over the haves/have nots and the appropriate role of government).
6. Lack of statistics/data that show progress; failure to use the data to make better decisions.
7. Perception of quick fix.
8. Term limits resulting in the turnover of legislators.
9. Negative/sensational media stories that tarnish the image of the Child Protection System.