

**Implementation Sub-Committee of The Task Force on
Federal Legislation Of the Children's Cabinet**

MEETING MINUTES

June 24, 2005

Meeting was called to order at 9:00 AM.

Linda Katz announced that this was Sherry Campanelli's last meeting as the Associate Director of the Division of Individual and Family Support. Sherry is retiring. Linda applauded Sherry for her tireless efforts on behalf of the people in need of assistance. She has been at the forefront of welfare reform and a great advocate of working in concert with the community. Linda and others at the meeting voiced their appreciation for her work and added that they were sorry to see her leave. All were invited to the coffee hour that would be held that afternoon to honor Sherry.

1. The 5/6/05 minutes were reviewed and approved as written.

2. Teen Parents (ASSC PROVIDERS) - General Discussion Of Program Issues, Concerns

Donalda Carlson gave a brief overview of the ASSC programs and their recent discussions and findings concerning the teen parent population. The representatives of the ASSC programs recently held

a planning meeting. Many of who were in attendance at this meeting. There are five ASSC that include eight programs funded with State and TANF funds. These programs focus on educational achievement, parenting and pregnancy prevention. Compared to national data Rhode Island's teen birth rate is lower but compared to New England birth rates Rhode Island ranks the highest. Rhode Island also has the highest poverty rate, school dropout rate, and the most barriers to family planning. Two major FIP policy issues were raised that were counter productive to successful outcomes for teen parents. They are: The FIP two-parent policy applies to families with parents aged 18 and 19. One parent must be employed 35 hours per week and the other parent can finish their education. This usually results in the teen mom staying in school while the teen dad works even though he has not completed his education. This results in fathers with limited earning potential. A result that is not desirable. A side-by-side review of New England state policies, provided by Susan O'Donnell, discloses that Rhode Island is the only New England state that has this policy. The second policy that requires change is the exemption from work requirements for mothers with children under the age of one while their 60-month time limit does continue. This is viewed as poor policy for all moms but particularly harmful to 18 and 19 year old moms. Most of these moms opt to stay home and do nothing and often become pregnant again during this period. Many refuse to allow ASSC providers into their homes. The group would like to see this exemption from work activities lifted for all FIP parents. They consider this policy as enabling teens to avoid responsibility and

enabling them to waste up to 12 months of their 60 months of cash assistance. Leaving the teen with less time to reach a level of personal and fiscal independence.

The group, having identified these two issues, decided that there was a need to make policy and program changes in order to address their concerns. It was decided they needed to share their concerns with policy makers so that they could influence policy making. The first step in informing policy was attending the WRITF meeting to share their thoughts and concerns about program policies and operations. Another issue raised is the that local school departments are not only not meeting their obligations with regard to these students but sometimes act in very self serving ways. Examples were departments that refused to allow students under 16 to enter GED programs until the student turned 16 so that they could continue to receive funding for the student. Even though the student was not in any education program in the interim. In addition departments are not providing home tutoring for teen moms who might qualify for the mandated service.

A discussion ensued about the ramifications of changing two-parent policy to allow 18 and 19-year-old parents in two parent families to both complete their education. It was decided that the feasibility of the option should be explored. It was also decided that a review of the work activity exemption for women with children under age one should also be studied to identify the best way to modify this

exemption. Both policy changes will be included in the TANF reauthorization meetings.

3. Update On Legislation

§ The full family sanction was changed. Legislature approved applying the full family sanction to families whose head of household has accumulated 18 months of sanction. This is a reduction from 24 months of sanction to 18 months of sanction.

§ Four Million dollars has been slated for adult education at DLT.

§ Rite Care will exempt pregnant women and infants from the co pay requirement.

§ The combination of 10 hours of education and training with 20 hours of employment after 24 months of the receipt of FIP has not been adopted.

§ One hundred thousand dollars has been designated for Food Stamp outreach.

4. Other Issues

Information was distributed regarding the changes in the Woonsocket RIPTA routes.

Randy Rosati presented a statistical analysis of the number type of data requests that Sherry Campanelli has made. The numbers were astronomical and the requests complex. Randy's analysis was very funny and enjoyed by all.

The meeting was adjourned and the next meeting was scheduled for 9AM on July 8. 2005.

Respectfully submitted,

Gabriella K. Barros