

# Joint Task Force on Child Safety Work Plan

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## MEMBERS

Senator James Hargrove, Senator  
Representative Bill Hinkle, Representative  
Representative Ruth Kagi, Representative  
Senator Joyce Mulliken, Senator  
Gary Malkasian, Foster Parent Representative  
Danielle Baxter, Foster Parent Association of Washington State  
Michael Petcu, Birth Parent Representative  
Hon. Margie Hutchinson, Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation  
Shelly Lacey, Tulalip Tribe of Washington  
Laurie Lippold, Children's Home Society of Washington  
Charlotte Booth, Institute for Family Development  
Joan Sharp, Washington Council for the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect  
Linda Katz, CASA  
Yolanda Duralde, M.D., Mary Bridge Childhood Abuse Intervention  
Byron Manering, Brigid Collins  
Robin Arnold-Williams, Department of Social and Health Services  
Joanne Moore, Office of Public Defense  
Mary Meinig, Office of the Family & Children's Ombudsman  
Chief Colleen Wilson, Sumner Police Department  
Melissa Allen, Department of Health  
Steve Hassett, Attorney General's Office  
Hon. Diane Woolard, Clark County Superior Court  
Amy Kernkamp, Department of Social and Health Services  
Linda Collins, Department of Social and Health Services  
Crystal Connor, Foster Child Advisor

### **Legislative Staff:**

Sonja Hallum, House Office of Program Research  
Edith Rice, Senate Committee Services  
Donna Veley, House Office of Program Research

## WORK PLAN

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### Target Dates

**Preliminary Findings and Recommendations:** December 31, 2005

**Final Report:** September 1, 2006

### Background

In 2005, the Legislature enacted SHB 2156 which establishes the Joint Task Force on Child Safety for Children in Child Protective Services or Child Welfare Services to make recommendations to the legislature and the governor on improving the health, safety, and welfare of Washington children in child protective services or child welfare services. The Task Force was directed to review the following:

- (a) State and federal statutes regarding child safety, placement, removal from the home, termination of parental rights, and reunification with parents;
- (b) Current and ongoing department of social and health services work groups or work plans regarding child safety, placement, removal from the home, termination of parental rights, and reunification with parents;
- (c) The purpose and value of child protection teams and determine whether any changes should be made;
- (d) Best practices regarding children removed from parents at birth and placed in out-of-home care, transition services for families with children in out-of-home placement for an extended period of time, and standards for return to home placement when a child has been placed out-of-home including situations where a child has been placed out-of-home and returned to home multiple times;
- (e) The training that is offered to social workers regarding child development and determine whether any changes should be made;
- (f) Best practices regarding sharing of accurate, complete, and relevant medical, mental health, and substance abuse information between case workers, supervisors, the courts, child protection teams, counsel, guardians, parents, and other relevant participants in child placement decisions;
- (g) Best practices for assessing and addressing chemical dependency issues of parents;
- (h) The effectiveness of current home-based service providers currently used and determine whether any changes should be made;
- (i) Best practices addressing family cultural and tribal issues and the role, if any, of social worker training or bias in safety assessment and placement decisions; and
- (j) Other issues deemed relevant to improving child safety outcomes.

The Task Force membership includes the following:

- (a) One member from each of the two largest caucuses of the senate, appointed by the president of the senate;
- (b) One member from each of the two largest caucuses of the house of representatives, appointed by the speaker of the house of representatives;
- (c) A representative from the Washington council for prevention of child abuse and neglect;
- (d) One representative from each of the four most recent child fatality review committees;
- (e) The secretary of the department of social and health services or the secretary's designee;
- (f) The executive director of the office of public defense or the executive director's designee;
- (g) The director of the office of family and children's ombudsman or the director's designee;
- (h) A representative of the Washington association of sheriffs and police chiefs;
- (i) The secretary of the department of health or the secretary's designee;
- (j) A representative of the office of attorney general;
- (k) A representative of the superior court judges association;
- (l) One representative each from social workers for child protective services and social workers for child welfare services, appointed by the secretary of the department of social and health services; and
- (m) A representative from a statewide foster parents association and a foster parent not affiliated with the statewide foster parents association;
- (n) A representative from a statewide birth parent organization or a birth parent who has been involved in the child welfare system;
- (o) Two representatives of Washington state Indian tribes as defined under the federal Indian welfare act (25 U.S.C. Sec. 1901 et seq.); and
- (p) One representative each from two different organizations that primarily provide services to children and families involved with the child welfare system.

**Tentative Meeting Dates/Agendas**

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**August 23, 2005 (Tuesday), 1:30 - 5:00 p.m., Olympia**

Work Session:

- Child Welfare Overview
  - Child Fatality Review Overview
  - Task Force Organization
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**September 29, (Thursday) 2005 , 1:30 - 5:00 p.m., Olympia**

Work Session/Public Hearing: Issues to be Determined

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**October 24, 2005, (Monday) 1:30 - 5:00 p.m., Olympia**

Work Session/Public Hearing: Issues to be Determined

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