

# Children's Justice Task Force



Council on Child  
Safety and  
Family Empowerment

# Children's Justice Act

- Administered by DOJ, OVC
- Focuses on
  - Investigation, prosecution judicial handling of child abuse and neglect
  - Limiting add'l trauma to child

# Legislative Intent

- Reduce trauma to the child victim
- Increase the chances of successful prosecution of the abuser
- Improve the procedures for protecting all children from maltreatment

# Arizona Funded Programs

- Training for Child Abuse Investigators
  - Law Enforcement
  - DCS Investigators
  - Forensic Interviewers
  - Prosecutors

# Arizona Funded Programs

- Children's Justice Coordinators
  - Housed at Child/Family Advocacy Centers
  - Staff Multi-Disciplinary Teams (MDTs)
  - Provide Mandatory Reporting Training to Community
  - Coconino, Gila, Maricopa, Pima (Southern Arizona), Yavapai, and Yuma County

# CJTF

- Serves as Arizona's Multidisciplinary Task Force on Children's Justice
- Comprised of representatives from selected disciplines involved in handling child abuse and neglect cases.
- **Conducts the Three-Year Statewide Assessment**
- Review and evaluate state investigative, administrative and both civil and criminal judicial handling of cases of child abuse and neglect.

# CJTF

- Provide Policy and Training Recommendations
- Provides system improvement recommendations to the investigation and prosecution of serious child abuse cases, as defined by federal statute.

# Focus Areas

- Support Child And Family Advocacy Centers
- Training for Investigators/Prosecutors
- Multidisciplinary Teams (MDTs)
- Information Technology That Improves Case Tracking And Reporting at Advocacy Centers
- Equipment To Conduct Investigations



# 3-Year Statewide Assessment

- Before receiving funding, adopt recommendations of the CJTF re
  - Investigative, administrative, and judicial handling of cases
  - Cases involving suspected child maltreatment related fatalities
  - Cases involving a potential combination of jurisdictions
- In a manner which
  - Reduces additional trauma to the child and child's family
  - Ensures procedural fairness to the accused

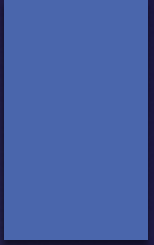
# 3-Year Statewide Assessment

- Experimental, model, and demonstration programs
  - Innovative approaches to help the prompt and successful resolution of civil and criminal court proceedings or enhance the effectiveness of judicial and administrative action
  - Enhancement of performance of court appointed attorneys and GALs
  - Reform of State laws, regulations, protocols, and procedures to provide comprehensive protection for children

# One Example

- Therapy and Rxs are primary treatments for mental health care.
- Shortage in mental health professionals who can prescribe meds is shifting mental healthcare assessment, diagnosis, and treatment to medical professionals.
- There are around 9 child psychiatrists for every 100,000 children in Arizona.
- Some kids are waiting up to 6 months to see a psychiatrist
- Professionals with prescriptive authority is decreasing and the *need* for comprehensive mental healthcare is increasing.

**Questions?**



# Justice for Victims of Child Sexual Abuse Task Force Recommendations



1660

# Orders of Juvenile Court take precedence except

- ▶ Criminal court order that governs a defendant's ability to contact the victim or family or other minor children if criminal court finds that contact with other minor children would pose risk.



# Children placed in out of home care

- ▶ Those 8 and up must receive age/developmentally-appropriate materials about sexual abuse/trafficking/exploitation.
- ▶ Shall include methods for reporting abuse.
- ▶ Amendment: Unless doctor/therapist recommends otherwise.



# Report number of lawsuits

- ▶ Clerk shall file report listing lawsuits filed concerning sexual abuse/failure to report.

No Statute of Limitations for Child  
Sex Trafficking.



# Position of Trust Expanded

- ▶ Grandparent, aunt, uncle.
- ▶ Teacher OR ANY SCHOOL EMPLOYEE OR VOLUNTEER AT THE MINOR'S SCHOOL WHO IS 18 OR OLDER.



# Position of Trust Expanded

- ▶ Coach or instructor, whether the coach or instructor is an employee or volunteer.
- ▶ Clergyman or priest OR ANY PERSON WHO IS AT LEAST 18 AND WHO WORKED OR VOLUNTEERED FOR A RELIGIOUS ORGANIZATION THAT HOSTED EVENTS OR ACTIVITIES WHERE THE MINOR WAS IN ATTENDANCE.
- ▶ Engaged in a sexual or romantic relationship with the minor's parent, adoptive parent, GRANDPARENT, STEPGRANDPARENT, AUNT, UNCLE, legal guardian, foster parent or, stepparent OR SIBLING.



# Position of Trust Expanded

- ▶ RELATED TO THE MINOR BY BLOOD OR MARRIAGE WITHIN THE 3RD DEGREE AND IS AT LEAST 10 YRS OLDER THAN THE MINOR.
- ▶ THE MINOR'S EMPLOYER.
- ▶ AN EMPLOYEE OF A GROUP HOME OR RESIDENTIAL TREATMENT FACILITY WHERE THE MINOR RESIDES OR HAS PREVIOUSLY RESIDED. FOR THE PURPOSE OF THIS SUBDIVISION, "GROUP HOME" MEANS A CHILD WELFARE AGENCY THAT RECEIVES FOR CARE AND MAINTENANCE A CHILD WHO HAS BEEN ADJUDICATED DEPENDENT.



# Limit when pro se defendants question child victims. (ARS 13-4254)

- ▶ D charged under Ch 14, 35.1, 13-3206, 13-3212, or 13-3623
- ▶ Cannot directly question minor victim
- ▶ If court determines that it would prevent victim from being able to reasonably communicate.

# Best practices re social media/cell phones

- ▶ Bd of Ed shall
  - ▶ Establish best practices for social media and cell phone use between students and school personnel.
  - ▶ Encourage district/charter school governing boards to implement.
  - ▶ Make these available to private schools.



# Consistent Mandatory Reporting Law Training

- ▶ APAAC shall develop statewide training curriculum for public school personnel.
- ▶ Public school shall require personnel to complete.
- ▶ DOE shall provide resources for schools/parents/students re Mandatory Reporting to public and private schools.



Yet to  
do

# Recommendations - Civil

- ▶ Assist GOYFF in spreading awareness of new law lifting civil S of L
- ▶ Funding competitive grants for organizations, including FACs to provide services for Vs of sexual abuse, sex trafficking.
- ▶ Funding for 24-hour hotline to report abuse
- ▶ Work with universities to study extending S of L



# Recommendations - Education

- ▶ Expand DOE jurisdiction to uncertified educators (currently approx. 6K)
- ▶ Fund additional DOE investigators to lower caseload from 120-150 to 50.

# Recommendations - Education

- ▶ Require DCS/DOE to come up with program for schools to teach prevention and awareness to teachers and students.
- ▶ Spread awareness in schools of 24-hour hotline.



# Recommendations

- ▶ Special probation terms, including
  - ▶ Not enter any school grounds unless registered as a student at that school.
  - ▶ Obtain prior written approval of the APD before going within 500 feet of any shelter, safe house, group home or similar facility.
  - ▶ Not go to a hotel or motel without the prior written approval of APD.
  - ▶ Not loiter in the area of 27th Ave btw Indian School and Northern.



# Other Recommendations - Criminal

- ▶ Funding mechanism for forensic interviews
- ▶ Funding mechanism for cold cases units
- ▶ Have DPS study creation of statewide database for LE