

## CHAPTER 130

AN ACT concerning child abuse and neglect and amending P.L.1994, c.119.

**BE IT ENACTED** *by the Senate and General Assembly of the State of New Jersey:*

1. Section 2 of P.L.1994, c.119 (C.9:6-8.75) is amended to read as follows:

C.9:6-8.75 “New Jersey Task Force on Child Abuse and Neglect,” established, purpose; powers, duties.

2. There is established the "New Jersey Task Force on Child Abuse and Neglect."

- a. The purpose of the task force is to study and develop recommendations regarding the most effective means of improving the quality and scope of child protective and preventative services provided or supported by State government, including a review of the practices and policies utilized by the Division of Youth and Family Services and Division of Prevention and Community Partnerships in the Department of Children and Families in order to:

- (1) optimize coordination of child abuse-related services and investigations;
- (2) promote the safety of children at risk of abuse or neglect;
- (3) ensure a timely determination with regard to reports of alleged child abuse;
- (4) educate the public about the problems of, and coordinate activities relating to, child abuse and neglect;
- (5) develop a Statewide plan to prevent child abuse and neglect and mechanisms to facilitate child abuse and neglect prevention strategies in coordination with the Division of Prevention and Community Partnerships;
- (6) mobilize citizens and community agencies in a proactive effort to prevent and treat child abuse and neglect; and
- (7) foster cooperative working relationships between State and local agencies responsible for providing services to victims of child abuse and neglect and their families.

- b. The task force shall receive, evaluate and approve applications of public and private agencies and organizations for grants from moneys annually appropriated from the “Children's Trust Fund” established pursuant to section 2 of P.L.1985, c.197 (C.54A:9-25.4). Any portion of the moneys actually appropriated which are remaining at the end of a fiscal year shall lapse to the “Children's Trust Fund.”

Grants shall be awarded to public and private agencies for the purposes of planning and establishing or improving programs and services for the prevention of child abuse and neglect, including activities which:

- (1) Provide Statewide educational and public informational seminars for the purpose of developing appropriate public awareness regarding the problems of child abuse and neglect;
- (2) Encourage professional persons and groups to recognize and deal with problems of child abuse and neglect;
- (3) Make information about the problems of child abuse and neglect available to the public and organizations and agencies which deal with problems of child abuse and neglect; and
- (4) Encourage the development of community prevention programs, including:
  - (a) community-based educational programs on parenting, prenatal care, prenatal bonding, child development, basic child care, care of children with special needs, coping with family stress, personal safety and sexual abuse prevention training for children, and self-care training for latchkey children; and
  - (b) community-based programs relating to crisis care, aid to parents, child abuse counseling, peer support groups for abusive or potentially abusive parents and their children,

lay health visitors, respite of crisis child care, and early identification of families where the potential for child abuse and neglect exists.

The task force shall, in awarding grants, establish such priorities respecting the programs or services to be funded and the amounts of funding to be provided as it deems appropriate, except that the task force shall place particular emphasis on community-based programs and services which are designed to develop and demonstrate strategies for the early identification, intervention and assistance of families and children at risk in order to prevent child abuse and neglect.

The task force shall adopt such rules and regulations pursuant to the “Administrative Procedure Act,” P.L.1968, c.410 (C.52:14B-1 et seq.) to govern the awarding of grants pursuant to this subsection as may be necessary to establish adequate reporting requirements on the use of grant funds by recipient agencies and organizations and to permit the task force to evaluate the programs and services for which grants are awarded.

c. The task force shall establish a Staffing and Oversight Review Subcommittee to review staffing levels of the Division of Youth and Family Services in order to develop recommendations regarding staffing levels and the most effective methods of recruiting, hiring, and retaining staff within the division. In addition, the subcommittee shall review the division’s performance in the achievement of management and client outcomes, and shall issue a preliminary report with its findings and recommendations no later than January 1, 2007, and subsequent reports annually thereafter with the first full report due no later than July 1, 2007. The subcommittee shall directly issue its reports to the Governor and, pursuant to section 2 of P.L.1991, c.164 (C.52:14-19.1), to the Legislature.

2. This act shall take effect immediately.

Approved August 6, 2007.