



# Commission on Improving the Status of Children in Indiana

## Meeting Minutes

Commission on Improving the Status of Children in Indiana  
Wednesday, December 10, 2025  
Indiana Government Center South

- Audrey Arbogast, Chief of Staff, Indiana Secretary of Health & Family Services
- Emma Blackwell, Youth Representative
- Bernice Corley, Executive Director, Public Defender Council
- Jada Cuttriss, Youth Representative
- Terrie Decker, Executive Director, Division of Youth Services, Indiana Department of Correction
- Representative Dale DeVon
- Senator Stacey Donato
- Aaron Hood, Chief Administrative Officer, Indiana Office of Judicial Administration
- Dr. Katie Jenner, Secretary, Indiana Department of Education
- Hon. Dana Kenworthy, Court of Appeals of Indiana
- Adam Krupp, Director, Indiana Department of Child Services
- Chris Naylor, Executive Director, Indiana Prosecuting Attorneys Council
- Mitch Roob, Secretary, Indiana Family and Social Services Administration
- Chad Ranney, Indiana State Budget Director
- Todd Rokita, Indiana Attorney General (non-voting member)
- Sarah Sailors, Director, Division of Mental Health and Addiction
- Representative Vanessa Summers
- Eden Bezy (non-voting member for Dr. Lindsay Weaver, State Health Commissioner, Indiana Department of Health)
- Senator Shelli Yoder

### 1. Welcome & Introductions

Judge Kenworthy called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m. and shared a story about her recent connection with a young person she met at a traveling oral argument.

### 2. Consent Agenda

**Action:** To approve the minutes from the August 2025 meeting, motioned by Representative DeVon, seconded by Jada Cuttriss, and approved unanimously 10-0.

### 3. 2026-2028 Commission on Improving the Status of Children Strategic Plan

**Mark Fairchild, Executive Director**

The presentation can be found on slides 5-17 of the [meeting slides](#). Mark Fairchild explained the robust process that went into creating the [2026-2028 strategic plan](#). He walked through the overarching principles, emphasizing the intentional language used. Mark explained the administrative process of how the Commission does its work.

Mark explained the purposes of the Commission's committees and Task Forces, highlighting the addition of the Youth, Family, and Caregiver Voices Committee and the Data Committee. Mark mentioned the integration of the Youth Justice Oversight Committee and how it will slowly merge with the Juvenile Justice Task Force. Mark moved into discussing strategic objectives and goals. He went through the goals of the Child Health and Safety Task Force, the Mental Health and Substance Use Task Force, the Educational Outcomes Task Force, the reframed Multi-System Youth Task Force, and the Suicide Prevention, Bullying, and Online Safety Task Force. Mark clarified that the secondary groups within the Task Forces will now be referred to as Work Groups. Mark also noted the language change of "vulnerable youth" to strength-based, person-first language when referring to youth who are involved with state systems.

**Discussion:**

Sarah Sailors asked Mark if there is a master list of the members of the Commission's committees. Mark informed Sarah that Blane is working on updating the list and the lists are posted on the website. Representative DeVon asked if goal #3 of the Child Health and Safety taskforce would include child sex trafficking. Mark explained there is a separate group that addresses child sex trafficking specifically. Eden Bezy asked about goal #1 of the Educational Outcomes Task Force. Mark explained that the goal is to look at the aspects of the educational environment for children entering primary education. Eden noted a concern that the language is so broad it makes it difficult to determine what success would entail. Mark explained that to provide accountability for the Task Forces, they present their findings and work yearly and get feedback from the Commission on items to fine tune. Representative Summers asked Eden if she thinks it would be better to stay broad or specify issues. Eden replied that she thinks it would be better to specify items. Mark discussed how the vetting processes within the Commission ensure the Task Forces are staying within the goals of the Commission. Eden asked about goal #5 of the Multi-System Youth Task Force and if it is youth-focused or systems-focused. Mark said it is focused on improving the systems which would then be evident in the improvement of the youths' experiences within the systems. Representative DeVon asked the Youth Representatives if they think more could be done to help youth who are transitioning from systems. Jada Cuttriss explained that the main problem is the lack of communication between systems leads to youth getting lost in their transitions to adulthood. Sarah Sailors clarified that the Multi-System Youth Task Force Task would be looking at the continuum of care for transitioning youth, not solely youth exiting care. Representative DeVon brought up the recommendation of restricting social media access for youth 16 and younger.

**Action:** To approve the 2026-2028 Commission on Improving the Status of Children Strategic Plan, was motioned by Representative DeVon, seconded by Director Krupp, and passed unanimously 10-0.

#### 4. Legislative Engagement Update

**Mark Fairchild, Executive Director**

The presentation can be found on slides 18 and 19 of the [meeting slides](#). Mark reminded members of the Commission's bill, authored by Senator Donato, guaranteeing family visitation rights to youth who are incarcerated. He reviewed the procedures to follow for the Commission to support bills during the session. Mark described HB 1046 which establishes a fund for problem-solving courts. He explained SB 15 which establishes a foster youth bill of rights, put forward by Foster Success, a community partner of the Commission. Mark opened the floor for members to suggest bills that should be on the list for support going into the session.

**Discussion:** Director Krupp offered support for SB 15.

**Action:** To approve the Legislative Engagement Agenda, motioned by Representative Summers, seconded by Representative DeVon, and passed unanimously 10-0.

#### 5. Task Force Updates

**Blane Cook, CISC Coordinator, Rebecca Frasier, DoE, Judge Holly Harvey, Monroe Circuit Court, Nancy Wever, IOCS, Tanya Merritt-Mulamba, FSSA**

The presentation can be found on slides 20-35 of the [meeting slides](#). Blane explained that he is here on behalf of the Task Force chairs who could not make the meeting today. He thanked the co-chairs and Task Force and Committee members for the work they voluntarily do for the Commission. Blane introduced the Child Health and Safety Task Force, co-chaired by Sonya Rush, DCS, and Olivia Shaw, IDOH. The Task Force worked to support the IU School of Medicine Grassroots Maternal and Child Health Initiative. They also partnered with DCS, The Villages, and many others to better support the needs of kinship caregivers. They encouraged models to encourage healthy teen relationships and prevent unplanned pregnancies. Lastly, they assisted the Commission with further incorporating Lived Experience. Blane next introduced the Suicide Prevention, Bullying, and Online Safety Task Force, co-chair by Brooke Lawson, Carmel Clay Schools, and Caitlyn Short, DMHA. The Online Safety Work Group has been researching risks for youth and wants to collect more data. The Suicide Prevention Work Group compiled secondary data, determined actions for the coming year, and are looking to develop resources to help professionals be more youth friendly and resources for crisis prevention, intervention, and postvention. The Bullying Work Group is in the process of reviewing data from the Youth Risk Behavior Survey. Blane continued onto the Data Sharing and Mapping Committee, chaired by Nikki Ford, DCS, and Josie Fasoldt, Central Indiana Corporate Partnership. Blane explained this group fulfills data requests from Task Forces, they work to make data more accessible to the public and consistent across agencies and geographic areas. Rebecca Frazer, co-chair of the Educational Outcomes Task Force, reported they have been promoting the use of restorative practices within schools, ensuring the high school diploma redesign is inclusive of all students, working on chronic absenteeism, collecting data from youth who are in facilities or in care, and increasing involvement with community partners. Nancy Wever and Judge Harvey introduced the Juvenile Justice and Cross System Youth Task Force and reported that the CSEC Work Group has been working on updating the screening tool for human trafficking for utilization in probation departments, conducting trainings on human trafficking, and developed quick-indicator cards for law enforcement officers to quickly identify indicators for potential trafficking. Nancy Wever reported that the Work Group on chronic absenteeism and truancy have been working on a report and will sunset the Work Group after the report is completed. Nancy explained that the Work Group on outcomes for children with an incarcerated parent, partnered with another Work Group to get the required visitation standard for incarcerated youth legislation in front of the Commission. Tanya Merritt-Mulamba presented for the Mental Health and Substance Use Task Force. Tanya reported that the Task Force has been focusing on supporting the implementation and roll out of Multi-Systemic Therapy.

## **6. Youth, Family, and Caregiver Engagement Updates**

**Adrianna Lingren, CISC Engagement Coordinator**

The presentation can be found on slide 36 of the [meeting slides](#). Adrianna introduced herself and role. She reviewed HB 1098, charging the Commission to develop a state-wide plan to support youth, family, and caregiver engagement in the state policy making process. Adrianna noted that the Commission is in the initial development stage of this plan but anticipates around 5 categories of information within the plan. These categories include: the most up to date research on lived expert engagement within policymaking, best practices on engaging youth representatives in advocacy, a guide on who in Indiana is championing lived experience engagement work, priority areas for lived expert engagement, areas for improvements and next steps for policymakers. Adrianna noted collaborating with the Youth, Family, and Caregiver Voices Committee when developing this plan. She explained the vision for the committee to be a support space for lived experts and a vetting and development body that informs and oversees work. Adrianna mentioned that the Day of Child is coming up on February 16<sup>th</sup>.

## **7. Dates for 2026 Commission Meetings**

February 4, 2026

April 22, 2026  
June 17, 2026  
August 19, 2026  
October 21, 2026  
December 9, 2026

**8. Commission Member Announcements & Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 11:40 a.m.

DRAFT