



# Commission on Improving the Status of Children in Indiana

## Meeting Minutes

Commission on Improving the Status of Children in Indiana  
Wednesday, June 18, 2025  
Indiana Government Center South

- ☒ Bernice Corley, Executive Director, Public Defender Council (via Zoom)
- ☐ Terrie Decker, Executive Director, Division of Youth Services, Indiana Department of Correction
- ☒ Representative Dale DeVon
- ☐ Senator Stacey Donato
- ☐ Justin Forkner, Chief Administrative Officer, Indiana Office of Judicial Administration
- ☒ Kory George, Chief Probation Officer, Wayne County Probation Department
- ☐ Senator La Keisha Jackson
- ☐ Dr. Katie Jenner, Secretary, Indiana Department of Education
- ☒ Hon. Dana Kenworthy, Court of Appeals of Indiana
- ☐ Adam Krupp, Director, Indiana Department of Child Services
- ☒ Aly Leonard, Youth Commission Member
- ☐ Chris Naylor, Executive Director, Indiana Prosecuting Attorneys Council
- ☒ Eric Miller (non-voting for Mitch Roob, Secretary, Indiana Family and Social Services Administration)
- ☐ Todd Rokita, Indiana Attorney General (non-voting member)
- ☐ Sarah Sailors, Director, Division of Mental Health and Addiction
- ☒ Julia Stumler, Youth Commission Member
- ☒ Representative Vanessa Summers
- ☐ Dr. Lindsay Weaver, State Health Commissioner, Indiana Department of Health

### 1. Welcome & Introductions

Judge Kenworthy called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m. and welcomed guests, asking members to introduce themselves and their role. She also thanked Aly and Julia for their many contributions to the Children's Commission over their term as youth representatives.

### 2. 2025 Kids Count Data

#### **Ashley Haynes, Indiana Youth Institute, Vice President of Data and Communications**

The presentation can be found on slides 5-37 of the [meeting slides](#). Ashley Haynes introduced herself and the Indiana Youth Institute (IYI). She outlined the many data sources compiled and their topic areas. Ashley shared where Indiana ranks compared to other states in areas of overall well-being, family and community, health, economic well-being, and education. Positive trends showed teen births and child poverty and increases in employment. Some concerns included enrollment rates in early childhood education, food insecurity increases, and youth mental health. In the family and community category, she shared statistics around physical activity, access to amenities, the number of youth in foster care and their permanency outcomes. In the health domain, Ashley shared that substance use is at a 30-year low and data around depressive symptoms and suicidal

ideation. In the economic domain, she outlined data surrounding food insecurity rate increases, workforce development increases among older teens, and graduation rates. In the education domain, she outlined data involving early education access and enrollment, high school dropout rates, and college enrollment.

**Discussion:** Bernice Corley asked if recent cuts to food programs have affected these data sets. Ashley shared that while funding streams may have changed or disappeared, some of the same programs exist and are funding other funding sources. Representative DeVon joked that the Commission and its staff should be credited for any improvements in the data. Ashley also shared she could arrange physical copies for those interested.

### 3. Court Improvement Program Data and Partnerships

#### **Colleen Saylor, Court Improvement Data Analyst**

The presentation can be found on slides 28-55 of the [meeting slides](#). Colleen introduced herself and prefaced her presentation by explaining that court measures are exit cohorts while DCS data sets are ongoing. She also shared that outliers cause the courts to use median data instead of averages. Showing a timeline, Colleen shared the many data types that counties are required to report quarterly and when they started being reported. Colleen shared that median time to permanency decreased, termination orders within the first 180 days of a case increased, reunification made up 56 percent of cases with a median of 390 days, and the total number of CHINS cases filed. She also outlined adjudication and disposition timelines, permanency hearings, termination of parental rights (TPR) filings and completions, and permanency outcomes by type. She showed a map that compared Indiana to surrounding states in time to permanency and adoption rates. Colleen shared some of the grants and scholarships that the Court Improvement Program awards to Indiana counties and cross-agency collaborative activities currently active. She showed a sample of the dashboard that is available online and highlighted its ability to sort by county, year, region, or judicial district. She shared a few other resources, training, bench cards, and toolkits, and opened for questions.

**Discussion:** Julia asked what might be causing the gap in time between TPR petitions and their completions. Colleen shared that judges must be certain that termination is necessary and services will continue in the meantime. Judge Kenworthy added context by describing the entire TPR process and added how fact-finding hearings require more time. Judge Kenworthy thanked Colleen for her work on her project and thanked the judges across the state for taking the time to collect their data and reflect on what is going well and areas for improvement.

### 4. Executive Director Report and Legislative Affairs Update

#### **Mark Fairchild**

The presentation can be found on slides 56-65 of the [meeting slides](#). Mark thanked the Commission's data partners for providing the information that guides the Commission's work. He introduced House Bill 1098, which codifies staff support for lived experience engagement statewide, which he shared was largely inspired by Commission members, especially its youth representation. Mark outlined House Bill 1403, which clarifies the next steps for the Youth Justice Oversight Committee (YJOC), helps streamline the grant funding process for Indiana communities, and support direct experience consultation. Next, Senate Bill 482, was described to create a definition for chronic absenteeism, sets data tracking guidelines for the Department of Education, and establishes some best practices for intervention. Mark then described House Bill 1605 and mentioned its many parts are aimed at improving time to permanency. He outlined the CISC's budget after session, highlighting that no cuts were made to lived-experience integration and outlined plans to hire a contractor to help with the implementation of House Bill 1098. Mark mentioned that CISC task forces have begun discussions around strategic planning as the current one is set to expire at the end of 2025 and outlined some of the planned activities. Last, Mark listed the next steps for the BEST Youth Initiative and its upcoming activities for the summer. Mark concluded by thanking Aly and Julia for all their contributions. He highlighted how much work they do behind the scenes with Commission staff that goes unseen.

**Discussion:** Bernice Corley introduced Julia Stevens and reminded members about recent listening sessions from a previous meeting. Julia referenced the CIP report that mentioned that communication was a barrier between clients and their public defenders. She shared that the IPDC met and developed some training for their staff to participate in and is looking into national training supports to offer. Representative DeVon asked members if scheduling a different day or time would help with meeting attendance. Judge Kenworthy shared that she would work with CISC staff to help with this before next meeting.

## **5. Commission Member Announcements & Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 11:44 a.m.

### **Next Meeting**

Wednesday, August 20, 2024, 10:00 a.m. – 12 p.m. Indiana Government Center South, Conference Room B, 302 W. Washington St., Indianapolis, IN 46204.