

**Task Force Policy and Training Recommendations and Implementation Plan**  
**Based on FY2024 Three-Year Assessment**

Based on the information obtained during the 2024 Three-Year Assessment, including the status of system improvement, the following recommendations and implementation plans were formulated by the Children's Justice Task Force. The Task Force also endorsed the carryover of prominent recommendations from the prior FY 2021 Needs Assessment into the FY 2024 Needs Assessment. The recommendations are organized in the Children's Justice Act (CJA) categories described in Section 107(e)(1)(A)(B) and (C) of the Act.

(A) To improve the investigative, administrative, and judicial handling of child abuse and neglect, including child sexual abuse and exploitation, as well as cases involving suspected child maltreatment related fatalities and cases involving a potential combination of jurisdictions, such as interstate, Federal-State, and State-Tribal, in a manner which reduces the additional trauma to the child victim and the victim's family and which also ensures procedural fairness of the accused, the Alabama Children's Justice Task Force developed the following recommendations and plans for implementation into CJA work:

- **Recommendation: Support plans for improving child safety outcomes developed by the Alabama Department of Human Resources (DHR)**  
Plans to Incorporate Recommendation into CJA Work:
  - DHR will provide child safety information to the Children's Justice Task Force on DHR's Child and Family Services Plan (CFSP) and the Annual Progress and Services Report (APSR) as the reports are made available;
  - Participate in planning/collaboration committees developed by DHR; and,
  - Develop/support Children Justice's projects which assist in DHR's plans to improve child safety outcomes.
  
- **Recommendation: Provide training opportunities for disciplines involved in the assessment, investigation, and prosecution of child abuse and neglect**  
Plans to Incorporate Recommendation into CJA Work:
  - Seek to provide training opportunities in the subject areas identified in the FY 2024 Needs Assessment Survey, namely cases involving physical abuse, sexual abuse, domestic violence, substance abuse, testifying in court, medical aspects training, interviewing children with special needs and child trafficking;
  - Explore resources, such as the Alabama Office of Prosecution Services or other appropriate entity, to secure training on Alabama's child abuse laws, including criminal laws;
  - Provide cross-discipline trainings as appropriate;
  - Enhance the assessment, investigation, and prosecution of complex child abuse and neglect reports, namely family violence, substance abuse, physical and sexual abuse of child victims, child trafficking and testifying in child maltreatment cases;

- Provide training opportunities to increase the knowledge of multidisciplinary team members on building a case for successful prosecution through such training topics as: importance of thorough investigations, properly gathering and maintaining evidence, understanding medical indicators of physical and sexual abuse, understanding medical reports, understanding child trafficking situations and testifying in courts, etc.; and,
  - Participate, as appropriate, in the development of trainings, protocols, and other information-sharing materials to facilitate the handling of child abuse and neglect cases.
- **Recommendation: Provide team building opportunities and training to improve and enhance local multidisciplinary team’s intervention in child abuse cases**  
Plan to Incorporate Recommendation into CJA Work:
    - Continue mini-grants to local multidisciplinary teams to support team building and training opportunities;
    - Encourage cross-discipline attendance and provide such training opportunities; and
    - Continue to assess needs of multidisciplinary teams and opportunities to further support the teams’ work.
  - **Recommendation: Support the services and initiatives of the Alabama Network of Children’s Advocacy Centers (ANCAC)**  
Plans to Incorporate Recommendation into CJA Work:
    - Continue to support, through mini-grant procedures, opportunities for CACs to help assist the local multidisciplinary teams;
    - Evaluate the needs for program expansion to allow for timely accessibility for interviews; and
    - Work in partnership with ANCAC to enhance the services of CACs, including the availability of interviews to include nights, weekends, and holidays.

(B) To improve the prompt and successful resolution of civil and criminal court proceedings or enhance the effectiveness of judicial and administrative action in child abuse cases, particularly child sexual abuse and exploitation cases including the enhancement of performance of court-appointed attorneys and guardians ad litem for children, and which also ensures procedural fairness to the accused through establishing experimental, model or demonstration programs for testing innovative approaches and techniques, the Alabama Children’s Justice Task Force developed the following recommendation and implementation plan:

- **Recommendation: Continue supporting reform, as deemed appropriate, of identified criminal, civil, and juvenile statutes, rules, and regulations applicable in child abuse and neglect cases.**  
Plans to Incorporate Recommendation into CJA Work:

- Remain vigilant in the monitoring of proposed legislation, rules, and regulations having an impact on child abuse and neglect cases;
- Propose legislation, rules, and regulations needed to improve the judicial system in the areas of child abuse and neglect;
- Coordinate and support an advocacy role in areas of legislation, rules, and regulations having an impact on child abuse and neglect issues; and
- Monitor and support expansion and increased utilization efforts of the drug and other specialty court programs by the Alabama Administrative Office of Courts.

- **Recommendation: Monitor prosecution and outcomes, including sentencing, of criminal child abuse /neglect cases in order to evaluate the system's needs**

Plans to Incorporate Recommendation into CJA Work:

- Continue utilizing the current procedure of obtaining prosecution and outcomes information, including sentencing and timeframes from filing to disposition of criminal child abuse/neglect cases from the Alabama Administrative Office of Courts annually; and
- Utilize this court information to provide feedback and recommendations.

- **Recommendation: Support the guardian ad litem training program provided by the Alabama Administrative Office of Courts**

Plans to Incorporate the Recommendation into CJA Work:

- Monitor the guardian ad litem training program and availability of this training for the purpose of identifying any type of support needed.

(C) Regarding reform of State laws, ordinances, regulations, protocols and procedures to provide comprehensive protection for children from abuse, including sexual abuse and exploitation, while ensuring fairness to all affected persons, the Alabama Children's Justice Task Force developed the following recommendation and plan for incorporating in CJA work:

- **Recommendation: Support changes in child pornography and child abuse laws to include images created through the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI)**

Plans to Incorporate the Recommendation into CJA Work:

-Work in unison with the Alabama Administrative Office of Courts (AOC), the Office of Prosecution Services and other partners to determine the language needed to encompass the creation and distribution of child pornography generated with the use of Artificial Intelligence into pornography laws; thereby, strengthening these laws to further protect children.

-Explore with the Office of Prosecution Services and the Alabama Administrative Office of Courts training opportunities to train law enforcement, district

attorneys/prosecutors and judges on any changes made to laws regarding pornography.