**State of Louisiana**

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OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

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P.O. BOX 94004 BATON ROUGE 70804-9004

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**Jeff Landry**

Governor

**Children’s Cabinet Meeting**

**Unapproved Minutes**

**February 22, 2024**

**Members Present**

Kenneth Loftin, Office of Juvenile Justice

Secretary David N. Matlock, Department of Children and Family Services

ReShonn Saul, Children’s Cabinet Advisory Board

**Representatives Present (Not included in Quorum)**

Sabre Masters, representing Superintendent of Education, Dr. Cade Brumley

Drew Maranto, representing Secretary Dr. Ralph Abraham, Louisiana Department of Health

Sonya Williams, representing Secretary Susana Schowen, Louisiana Workforce Commission

**Special Guests**

Debbie Solcher, MSE

Holly Tupper

LaVondra Dobbs

Sherrard Crespo

Ursula Anderson

Ashle’ Young

**Staff:**

Jolie V. Williamson, Children’s Cabinet Executive Director

Michele Rabalais, LCTF/CC Exec. Assistant

**Call to Order**:

Jolie V. Williamson, Children’s Cabinet Executive Director, called the meeting to order at 10:11 a.m. and introductions were made.

**Roll Call:**

Michele M. Rabalais, Executive Assistant, called roll.

**Welcome and Opening Remarks: J**olie V. Williamson, Children’s Cabinet Executive Director, welcomed members of the Children’s Cabinet to the first Children’s Cabinet meeting of the new administration and provided the opening remarks.

ReShonn Saul, Children’s Cabinet Advisory Board Chair, discussed the Children’s Cabinet Advisory Board and explained the mission of the Advisory Board to the new Children’s Cabinet members.

The Children’s Cabinet Advisory Board (CCAB) is a group that gets together to advise the Children’s Cabinet. CCAB gets together to discuss budget items, budgetary priorities, and programmatic issues and advances.

Once a year CCAB provides the Children’s Cabinet with a budgetary priority list to provide information about how funding should be allocated in response to the needs of the children and families in the state of Louisiana.

Most recently the CCAB had a huge win in bringing back Early Childhood Support and Services (ECSS) which provides mental health services for children.

The Early Childhood Supports and Services (ECSS) program serves children and families at risk for negative outcomes due to child mental health/behavioral concerns, child/parent attachment issues, the environmental impacts of exposure to trauma, family and community violence, parental behavioral health concerns, and social determinants of health such as family housing, employment, and food security.  The program will combine high-quality mental health treatment, working with the parent/infant dyad to improve the caregiving relationship, with care coordination and support to reduce the family’s experience of adversity, so families are better able to focus on caregiving relationships. Discussion followed.

**Approval of Minutes**: Quorum not present.

**BCFS (Baptist Child and Family Services):**

Holly Tupper, Director, Unbound Now and Debbie Solcher, BCFS Common Thread presented on behalf of both of their organizations.

In 2022 Act 662 was passed by the Louisiana State Legislature and what that did was to create a care coordination model that mandated advocacy services here in Louisiana. BCFS and LA Unbound Now. Both organizations have contracted with DCFS (Department of Children and Family Services) to provide advocacy for survivors in Louisiana. Unbound Now covers the Baton Rouge and Orleans region(s) whereas BCFS is a statewide program and provides back up to region(s) 1 and 2.

Advocates use two evidence-based practices when dealing with survivors. These include: T.B.R.I. (Trust Based Relational Intervention) and Motivational Interviewing.

There is a 24/7 crisis line and services are offered to youth up to 18 years of age. Services are available 24/7 with approximately 12 youth per advocate.

Common Thread, a relational advocacy and case management program, is comprised of highly trained advocates, social workers and Survivors, providing long-term support to Survivors of trafficking. Operating with the understanding that long-term, dependable, positive adult relationships are the key to recovery.

BCFS Health and Human Services is a nonprofit established in 1944 specializing in community-based care for at-risk families and children, prevention and early intervention services, housing for young adults aging out of the foster care system, mental health and life skill services, advocacy and case management coordination for survivors of human trafficking, medical programs for women who are pregnant or post-partum, and once-in-a-lifetime experiences for families who have children with a disability or special need. For more than 79 years, BCFS Health and Human Services has profoundly impacted the lives of thousands of youth, children and families in a positive and caring way. Discussion followed.

**Via Link, Inc./PCAL :**

Sherrard Crespo, Director of Prevent Child Abuse Louisiana, and LaVondra Dobbs, Via Link President and CEO presented information regarding Via Link/Prevent Child Abuse Louisiana (PCAL).

Via Link provides crisis support, connects people to resources and services, and provides vital data and trend information to ensure policies and programs meet community needs.

Via Link is a nonprofit organization that provides a range of services to the people of Louisiana.  The organization provides counseling to those in crisis, helps people to connect with critical services, and provides suicide intervention, opioid counseling and more.  These services are provided by phone, text, and online chat services 24/7, 365 days a year.

Via Link provides the following services:

1. 24/7 phone, text and chat lines are a safe space for anyone who is going through a hard time, having thoughts about suicide, or just needs to talk.

## Suicide Intervention: Part of VIA LINK’s suicide prevention work involves answering the 9–8–8 system for the 225, 504, and 985 area codes. VIA LINK specialists are available 24/7 to provide emotional support, crisis intervention, and suicide prevention. Callers can also receive referrals to local behavioral health agencies/facilities.

## Community Trainings: provides trainings for clinicians and community members on the topics of:  Crisis Intervention/De-Escalation, Trauma, Grief, Self-Care, Child Abuse Prevention, and Adverse Childhood Experiences Scale (ACES).

## Real Talk is a weekly support group that can be provided for schools or agencies who work with adolescents who may be experiencing students/clients with thoughts of suicide.  When contacted, VIA LINK can provide an 8-week support group for the selected group of adolescents.  The support group will provide a safe space to talk about what they’re really going through and to develop understanding of their suicide ideation and create coping mechanisms.

## Louisiana Parent Line: Louisiana Parent Line specialists can offer emotional support, de-escalation, crisis intervention, information & referral, and plans for coping. Follow up calls can also be offered to parents to increase their circle of support. The phone number is 833-LA-CHILD (833-522-4453) or parents can also text at (225) 424-1533.

## In addition to these services Via Link houses the Louisiana affiliate for Prevent Child Abuse America, Prevent Child Abuse Louisiana (PCAL). PCAL provides outreach and advocacy as well as primary prevention to families throughout the state. Discussion followed.

## CCAB Budget Priority Recommendations:

## Other Business:

## Public Comments:

## Child Abuse Prevention Conference, Lafayette, LA., April 22, 2024, Cajun Dome Conference Center

## Louisiana Children’s Caucus, 2025-2030 Louisiana Children’s Trust Fund (LCTF) State Plan

## Coffee and Conversations, 3rd Wednesday of the month from 12 to 1 p.m.

## LCTF will once again design and distribute coloring books that cover bullying, stranger dancer and cell phone/social media safety

## Next Meeting: April 8, 2024