



**POLICY COLLABORATIVE
FOR CHILDREN
& FAMILIES**

12-7-2022 Mandatory Reporting Task Force Meeting Jamboard Themes

What is your biggest concern about Colorado's mandatory reporting system?

Note: This captures all of the responses – some repeat because they fit under multiple themes

A flawed system

- No discretion for MR who have the capacity to help without DHS involvement
- Lack of prevention lens
- Insufficient resources to respond to underlying concerns
- Unwillingness to report (for many reasons)
- Long hold times on hotline, problematic for reporters who are on the job
- Confidentiality in small communities
- Balancing child safety while also supporting families.
- MR are too worried about CYA
- Hierarchy and nepotism. hesitation to report
- Violates autonomy
- Lack of clarity for organization capacity
- Concerns around confidentiality of reporters and subpoenas to testify in court
- Getting investigated is actually scary and traumatic and all of us on this zoom would want an attorney if we got that knock on the door - but we act like it's normal
- Rural seems to pick and choose which case is reported based on who they know, or want to protect
- Repetitive calls for same youth and families
- Mandated Reporters are worried for families but don't know how to engage or help them, so they report to DHS, trying to fit their concerns within the parameters of child abuse/neglect
- Too many professionals are mandatory reporters and most are poorly trained.
- A culture of systemic oppression leads to disparate outcomes for children and families of color
- Failure to provide timely/informative response to reports
- Teachers who are not from an education background working on emergency waivers do not understand the law
- Programs working together; public schools, DHS, SW, etc.
- Undocumented parents fear of deportation, do not report-also creates huge language barrier to communicate
- Viewed as govt vs parenting rights
- The potential impact on quality of representation when a person is represented by an interdisciplinary legal team
- There is a disconnect between the intention of the policy and the impact it has on families
- Language/requirements unclear

- The statute is overly broad, casting too wide of a net and catching too many families in the child welfare system.
- Mandatory reporting prevents service providers from helping families because of their obligation to involve CPS.
- Antagonistic interactions with investigators in programs. Assumption of guilt, public announcement requirements prior to findings.
- Can sever client/professional relationship
- It has become a complicated patchwork over time with inconsistent application and understanding.
- Generational families of the system
- Lack of involvement when the child/family wants or needs involvement but involvement at minimal things
- So many categories of professionals

Bias and Disproportionate Impact

- Implicit bias and ambiguity impacting decision-making
- Reporting is too subjective and allows for implicit bias and racism to influence calls
- Children and families of color being disproportionately being reported and no awareness of reporting parties, their implicit bias.
- The current workforce in Colorado is culturally disconnected and does not meet the needs of communities of color
- That the current system over surveillances communities of color.
- Families are not supported to prevent & those reported on tend to be Blk/Brown/other from the reporter.
- Implicit bias impacting mandatory reporters
- Implicit bias leads to families of color and those experiencing poverty being investigated when reports on other families are overlooked.
- Rural seems to pick and choose which case is reported based on who they know, or want to protect
- A culture of systemic oppression leads to disparate outcomes for children and families of color

Unclear Outcomes/Impact/Resolution

- Lack of follow up/feedback to MR's - difficult to know the impact
- No notification to the MR of what aspired from the report, feels as though it is all for nothing
- If the consequences for reporting OR failing to report are too severe or unclear, people are less likely to report.
- Often there is no coordination and/or feedback loop to ensure reporters also can help be part of solutions for children and families.
- Failure to provide timely/informative response to reports
- Concerns around confidentiality of reporters and subpoenas to testify in court
- There is a disconnect between the intention of the policy and the impact it has on families

Lack of Family Support/Need for Alternate Resources

- Poverty is equated to CPS concerns when families simply need resources
- That people don't know they are mandatory reporters, and that families who lack resources are reported for alleged neglect.
- Barrier for families in accessing supportive services and resources needed for their families
- Destigmatize mandatory reporting
- Clearly understanding the difference between suspected abuse and neglect vs. Lacking support or resources to no fault of the caregiver.
- Minimal resources once involved with the system, and harm is being done
- A lack of coordinated supports for families that are outside of the child welfare system
- To help get more resources in place in order to help parents get support rather than report on them
- Families are not supported to prevent & those reported on tend to be Blk/Brown/other from the reporter.
- Poverty is frequently seen as neglect - if money solves the problem, it's not neglect
- Lack of alternative resources or strategies apart from reporting first
- Lack of resources for rural communities
- Child abuse/neglect experts see most concerns through that lens - there are other important ways to help people that don't require investigation and policing
- Poverty is too often viewed as neglect.
- Lack of involvement when the child/family wants or needs involvement but involvement at minimal things

Policing

- State campaigns create fear about child abuse (posters, CPR ads on calling in on your neighbors)
- People report rather than talk with families
- Reporters become investigators
- The community is charged with surveillance rather than support, and support is where they are best poised to serve children and families.
- Resources continue to go to carceral systems rather than us funding community-based support networks
- Child welfare is not seen as a helper but as a surveiller

Lack of clarity in training, oversight, and processes

- Implicit bias and ambiguity impacting decision-making
- Lack of consistent training for mandatory reporters
- Lack of communication between Mandatory reporters and local counties. Ambiguity in the statute around what is "immediate" reporting.
- There is not consistent oversight for mandated reporters that is tracked on an ongoing basis

- That people don't know they are mandatory reporters, and that families who lack resources are reported for alleged neglect.
- Definition of "immediately"
- Mandatory reports confused with reporting and/or investigating
- Children and families of color being disproportionately being reported and no awareness of reporting parties, their implicit bias.
- Counties differ so much - hotline in Denver will reject a case that Adams will accept.
- Feeder systems are not properly trained on their duty to report
- Undertrained mandatory reporters
- The current workforce in Colorado is culturally disconnected and does not meet the needs of communities of color
- Inconsistent intake, response and resolution
- MRs are confused about what they are required to report.
- Lack of clarity with regard to obligation to investigate circumstances prior to reporting
- Implicit bias leads to families of color and those experiencing poverty being investigated when reports on other families are overlooked.
- Rural seems to pick and choose which case is reported based on who they know, or want to protect
- Too many professionals are mandatory reporters and most are poorly trained.
- Teachers who are not from an education background working on emergency waivers do not understand the law
- Clear guidelines that define "abuse" - emotional, physical
- Unclear elements of the crime of failure to report and unclear duties for mandatory reporters in law
- Confusing and hard to interpret laws
- It has become a complicated patchwork over time with inconsistent application and understanding.
- Clear guidelines about who and where reports should be made.
- Clear definitions about when to make a report. A child "lost" for one minute is not abuse/neglect.
- So many categories of professionals

Domestic violence response

- Parents experiencing interpersonal violence can't seek resources for fear that it will trigger a report
- Survivors of domestic violence are afraid to seek services knowing that victim advocates, doctors and others are mandatory reporters.
- Lethal outcomes in cases where dv survivors hesitated to seek support
- Mr allows abusers to continue to use systems to exert coercive control over the victim parent.
- CPS relies on domestic relations cases to resolve serious child welfare concerns assuming that the issues are just a "high conflict divorce."