



Commission on Youth NEWSLETTER



Chairman's Notes

Virginia has over 1.8 million children under the age of 18. This number represents almost 25% of the Commonwealth's population. Correspondingly, a significant percentage of our state budget goes directly to services for these youth and their families. Children's services are divided among 12 state agencies and three Secretariats.

Fortunately, the Commission on Youth provides a forum for review and study of youth policies and services. The Commission collaborates with Virginia's numerous child serving agencies and organizations to develop policies and initiatives that protect and advance the Commonwealth's most valuable asset, its youth and families. Whether you are a member or staff of the General Assembly, a government official, service provider, educator, parent/caregiver, or interested member of the public, I know you will find the Commission to be a resource on a host of issues, such as child welfare, juvenile justice, children's mental health and education.

I encourage you to familiarize yourself with our work and to let us know whenever we can be of assistance to your child, family or community.

Chris Peace

Announcements

I was honored recently to be elected by the Commission to serve as Chair. Senator Harry B. Blevins was elected as the Commission's Vice Chair.

I would also like to announce the appointment of two new members:

Senate of Virginia: The Honorable Stephen H. Martin

House of Delegates: The Honorable Peter F. Farrell

Upcoming Meetings

Comparison of Academic Achievement in Virginia with Leading Industrialized Countries Advisory Group Roundtable

Tuesday, June 26 at 10:00 a.m.
House Room 3 of the Capitol

Restoration of Parental Rights Advisory Group

Monday, August 20 at 10:00 a.m.
5 East Conference Room, General Assembly Building

Definition of Kinship Caregivers Advisory Group

Monday, August 20 at 1:00 p.m.
5 East Conference Room, General Assembly Building

*Virginia Commission on Youth meetings are open to the public.
For Commission notices and to be added to our mailing list, please visit
<http://vcoy.virginia.gov>.*

MEMBERS

Virginia House of Delegates

Christopher K. Peace, *Chair*
Mamye E. BaCote
Robert H. Brink
Anne Crockett-Stark
Peter F. Farrell
Beverly J. Sherwood

Senate of Virginia

Harry B. Blevins, *Vice Chair*
Stephen H. Martin
Yvonne B. Miller

Gubernatorial Appointments

Gary L. Close (Culpeper)
Anthony L. Dale (Alexandria)
Joy L. Myers (Arlington)

STAFF

Amy M. Atkinson
Executive Director

Joyce Garner
Executive Assistant

Leah Hamaker
Senior Policy Analyst

OFFICE

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2012 Legislative Initiatives

Comparison of Academic Achievement in Virginia with Leading Industrialized Countries – Year 2

The Commission on Youth is examining how Virginia students compare academically to students in other countries. This study originated from legislation introduced during the 2011 General Assembly Session by Senator Yvonne B. Miller (SJR 320). The Senate reported the resolution; however, members of the House Committee on Rules did not.

Definition of Kinship Caregivers

The Commission on Youth will convene an advisory group of representatives from impacted agencies and stakeholder organizations to clarify the definition of kinship caregivers and formulate recommendations for the Commission on Youth prior to the 2013 General Assembly Session.

The Commission previously studied Barriers to Kinship Care in Virginia (2010) and School Enrollment Practices for Virginia's Kinship Caregivers (2011).

Restoration of Parental Rights

The Commission on Youth is studying the feasibility of creating a procedure for the restoration of parental rights for parents whose rights to their child/children were previously terminated.

This study originated from legislation introduced during the 2012 General Assembly Session (HB 450, Toscano; SB 218, Barker; SB 555, Favola). The Senate and House Courts of Justice Committees requested the Commission on Youth to study the provisions in the legislation and carried the bills over to the 2013 General Assembly Session.

An advisory group will be convened and recommendations will be presented to the Commission on Youth prior to the 2013 General Assembly Session.

Collection of Evidence-based Practices for Children and Adolescents with Mental Health Treatment Needs

The 2002 General Assembly, through Senate Joint Resolution 99, directed the Virginia Commission on Youth to coordinate the collection of evidence-based practices for children, including juvenile offenders, with mental health treatment needs. The Commission publishes the document biennially and disseminates it via web technologies.

The Commission is in the process of reviewing state and local training initiatives regarding the utilization and dissemination of evidence-based practices in the field of children's mental health and identifying additional partners and participants for the upcoming biennial update.

The 4th Edition of the *Collection of Evidence-based Practices for Children and Adolescents with Mental Health Treatment Needs* is tailored to family members, advocates, health care providers and policy makers seeking information on effective mental health treatments for youth. It can be accessed at <http://vcoy.virginia.gov>.

COMMISSION ON YOUTH ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Developed Virginia's first Youth Suicide Prevention Plan.

Introduced legislation to prohibit the use of suspension/expulsion if truancy is the only disciplinary violation to reduce chronic truancy.

Recommended a plan be developed for Virginia's kinship caregivers to assist them in locating available resources and social service programs.

Introduced legislation to enhance transition services for juvenile offenders prior to their release by increasing from four weeks to 90 days when the juvenile justice system must consult local departments of social services for juveniles who were previously in foster care.

Introduced legislation requiring quarterly reporting on the number of licensed and staffed residential treatment and acute care inpatient psychiatric beds for children and adolescents.

Developed Virginia's Collection of Evidence-based Practices for Children with Mental Health Disorders, a nationally recognized publication that is Virginia's first and only resource on best practices in children's mental health.

Streamlined and obtained funding for Virginia's 2-1-1 system, which offers health and human resource information and referral, services 24 hours a day/7 days a week.

