

2025-2026 Action Plan

The Child Protection Accountability Commission (CPAC) and the Maternal and Child Death Review Commission (MCDRC) convened a Joint Retreat on September 19th, 2025. The recommendations from the 2026 Joint Retreat stem from the review of 121 child abuse and neglect death and near-death cases approved by CPAC for incidents that occurred between January 2023 and December 2024. The result was 269 findings and 236 strengths. The 2025-2026 Action Plan was approved by CPAC on February 18th, 2026, and by MCDRC on March 31st, 2026. All the recommendations below will be assigned to the appropriate entity and monitored by the CPAC Grants Oversight Committee. Updates will be provided to CPAC and MCDRC at least semi-annually.

Prioritized Recommendations from 2025 Joint Retreat (11)		
Medical Response Recommendations (4)		
1. Enhance medical response to child poisoning via drug ingestion and exposure cases. SOURCE: Similar recommendations made in the 2023-2025 Joint Retreats		
ENTITY RESPONSIBLE: CPAC Training Committee – Medical Response to Child Abuse and Drug Ingestion Workgroup		
Actions	Anticipated Completion Date	Status Updates
a. Enhance and expand advanced medical training on child poisoning via drug ingestion and exposure, which should include: i. Best practices for the medical and MDT response to child poisoning via drug ingestion and exposure cases with an emphasis on emergency and urgent care personnel. ii. Utilization of child poisoning via drug ingestion and exposure case studies from CAN. iii. Partner with Nemours Children’s Health to support research on child drug ingestion case studies through a Data Use Agreement and shared data framework.	On-going	

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Prioritized Recommendations from 2025 Joint Retreat (11)

Medical Response Recommendations (4)

2. Enhance existing medical response training for child physical, sexual abuse, and juvenile trafficking cases.

SOURCE: Similar recommendations made in 2015-2025 Joint Retreats

ENTITY RESPONSIBLE: CPAC Training Committee – Medical Response to Child Abuse Workgroup

Actions	Anticipated Completion Date	Status Updates
a. Periodically review reporting breakdowns by medical professionals and construct targeted or advanced training to improve compliance.	12 months	
b. Develop specialized and advanced targeted training to various medical groups and utilize case studies to establish relevance. i. Develop supplemental trainings on medical child abuse and failure to thrive/growth faltering. ii. Develop medical supplemental training on juvenile trafficking	24 months	
c. Adapt and incorporate Nemours' standardized pathway flow chart to be utilized as a tool in training emergency room medical professionals on how to assess for child abuse or neglect.	12–18 months	

3. Provide opportunities for medical professionals to consult with a child abuse medical expert and promote and secure resources for medical child abuse expertise downstate.

SOURCE: Similar recommendations made in 2020-2025 Joint Retreats.

ENTITY RESPONSIBLE: CPAC Grants Oversight Committee and Nemours VOCA Grant Advisory Board

Actions	Anticipated Completion Date	Status Updates
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Prioritized Recommendations from 2025 Joint Retreat (11)		
Medical Response Recommendations (4)		
a. Design and promote information to downstate medical professionals on how to contact and consult with Delaware child abuse medical experts.	Ongoing	
b. Partner with Nemours to expand CARE Team coverage downstate.	Ongoing	
c. Identify and provide additional child abuse medical resources for Kent and Sussex Counties.	Ongoing	
4. Improve education and prevention efforts related to infant deaths and near deaths due to abuse, neglect, and caregiver impairment. SOURCE: Similar recommendations made in the 2023-2025 Joint Retreats.		
ENTITY RESPONSIBLE: MCDRC, CPAC Drug Ingestion Workgroup and Medical Response Workgroup		
Actions	Anticipated Completion Date	Status Updates
a. Develop or improve messaging to families with unsafe sleep deaths and impairment.	12 months	
b. Continue work of CPAC/MCDRC Drug Ingestion Workgroup to reduce and prevent child poisoning via drug ingestion or exposure in children by: i. Continuation of the Out of Reach Delaware Campaign ii. Promoting safe drug storage for parents and caregivers through the distribution of safe storage materials (i.e., lockboxes and lockbags) iii. Increasing awareness and education for parents, caregivers, first responders, medical providers, and the public.	Ongoing	

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Prioritized Recommendations from 2025 Joint Retreat (11)

MDT Response Recommendations (3)

1. Provide regular, standardized MDT training on the Delaware MDT MOU to ensure consistent compliance with MDT roles, responsibilities, and coordination requirements across all MDT member agencies.

SOURCE: Similar recommendations made in the 2016-2025 Joint Retreats

ENTITY RESPONSIBLE: Office of Investigation Coordinator, The Children’s Advocacy Center and the CPAC Training Committee – Mandatory Reporting and CAN Best Practices Workgroups

Actions	Anticipated Completion Date	Status Updates
a. Train and coach smaller law enforcement agencies with limited training resources on the DE MOU.	Ongoing	
b. Provide regular advanced training to improve MDT response to serious physical injury and death cases.	12 months	
c. Enhance standard MDT training to emphasize effective communication and collaboration with medical providers.	12 months	
d. Add the CAC’s MDT Protocol for Scheduling Forensic Interviews for Child Victims into the MOU App to enhance MDT access to the referral process.	12 months	
e. Develop and deliver Growth Faltering (Failure to Thrive) and Medical Child Abuse training to investigative and prosecutorial agencies to enhance understanding and the handling of cases.	12 months	

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Prioritized Recommendations from 2025 Joint Retreat (11)		
MDT Response Recommendations (3)		
f. Review the Committee on the Investigation, Prosecution and Treatment of Child Sexual Abuse Cases final report and enhance frontline MDT training on topics regarding sex abuse, such as extrafamilial sex abuse, best practices, and historic reports.	18 months	
g. Provide advanced training to improve MDT investigative response to child poisoning via drug ingestion or exposure, which highlights the difference between evidentiary and medical blood draws.	12 months	
h. Develop and deliver MDT training on existing chain-of-custody practices related to the transportation and handling of child deaths, emphasizing role clarity, documentation expectations, and coordination among medical providers, law enforcement, DFS, and the Medical Examiner's Office.	24 months	
2. Strengthen and enhance the MDT system response to juvenile trafficking cases through coordinated protocols, training, and cross-system collaboration. SOURCE: Similar recommendations made in the 2023-2025 Joint Retreats.		
ENTITY RESPONSIBLE: DSCYF, CPAC Training Committee – Mandatory Reporting Workgroup and CAN Best Practices Workgroup, Department of Education, Delaware Anti-Trafficking Action Council		
Actions	Anticipated Completion Date	Status Updates
a. Improve the MDT response to juvenile trafficking by:	12 months	

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Prioritized Recommendations from 2025 Joint Retreat (11)		
MDT Response Recommendations (3)		
i. Developing training which enhances the identification of, reporting of, and response to suspected juvenile trafficking. ii. Utilizing case studies and findings identified by the CPAC Juvenile Trafficking Oversight Team (JTOT), which highlight system gaps and strengths in the response to juvenile trafficking. iii. Coordinating with the Delaware Anti-Trafficking Action Council (DATAC) and its juvenile committee to ensure consistent education and training resources, and to avoid duplicative efforts or contradictory information. iv. Implementing a state-wide trafficking identification tool.		
b. Finalize and operationalize JTOT duties and responsibilities pursuant to 16 Del. C. § 932A to support coordinated oversight and accountability in Delaware’s juvenile trafficking response.	18 months	
c. Address the limited availability of secure housing for at-risk and trafficked youth by: i. Identifying current placement options in Delaware, ii. Investigating national best practices, and iii. Exploring resources utilized in other states.	18 months	
d. Review and explore potentially modifying the LEISS report to include the following:	18 months	

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Prioritized Recommendations from 2025 Joint Retreat (11)		
MDT Response Recommendations (3)		
i. Add a standardized intake flag or checkbox for suspected juvenile trafficking to ensure timely cross-reporting and prompt activation of appropriate MDT partners. ii. Reevaluate the standard questions prompted upon recovery of a runaway or missing juvenile.		
3. Strengthen and enhance Delaware’s Civil Response through coordinated protocols, training, and cross-system collaboration. SOURCE: 2025 Joint Retreat		
ENTITY RESPONSIBLE: DSCYF, CIP Steering Committee, and the Delaware Family Justice Center		
Actions	Anticipated Completion Date	Status Updates
a. Develop clear policy and procedural guidance to manage youth placement refusals and initial phone restrictions in a manner that protects youth safety while upholding their rights, ensuring family contact, and avoiding unnecessary system escalation or criminalization.	18 months	
b. Develop additional kinship care opportunities by researching best practices in other jurisdictions and creating financial equity to ensure Delaware families receive comparable support to external and out-of-state programs.	12 months	
c. Partner with the Delaware Family Justice Center to strengthen cross-system collaboration, build family trust, and improve access to supportive services.	18 months	

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Prioritized Recommendations from 2025 Joint Retreat (11)		
MDT Response Recommendations (3)		
d. Strengthen advocacy for expanded resources and supports for victims and youth in foster care to ensure safety, stability, and equitable access to services statewide. i. Continuation of the Stockley Project, allowing the facility to remain open and serve as a placement resource for youth experiencing foster care.	18 months	

Prioritized Recommendations from 2025 Joint Retreat (11)		
Legislative Recommendations (2)		
1. Review and update child sexual abuse laws and Delaware’s sentencing guidelines regarding protecting students in school settings, enhancing crimes and penalties for child sexual abuse, overseeing juvenile trafficking cases, and researching national best practices. SOURCE: 2023-2025 Joint Retreat and the 2023 CPAC Final Report on the Investigation, Prosecution, and Treatment of Child Sexual Abuse		
ENTITY RESPONSIBLE: CPAC Legislative Committee		
Actions	Anticipated Completion Date	Status Updates
a. Partner with the Department of Education to draft and pass student services permit legislation.	12 months	
b. Review and update SENTAC guidelines for sexual crimes against children, including enhancing sentencing penalties for the crime of Rape involving a child to include a life sentence.	24 months	

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Prioritized Recommendations from 2025 Joint Retreat (11)		
Legislative Recommendations (2)		
c. Examine sex crimes against children and update code as needed, with a particular focus on age of consent laws and prosecutorial barriers.	24 months	
d. Develop a multidisciplinary workgroup to review and create recommendations to address cases involving professional and repeat perpetrators in child physical and sexual abuse, with the goal of identifying system gaps, strengthening investigative coordination, and informing policy and training needs.	12 months	
e. Review national practices and laws regarding restricting minors' access to pornography.	12 months	
f. Assess national practices and legal frameworks that incentivize the recruitment, training, and retention of qualified mental health providers serving child sex offenders and sexual abuse victims.	12 months	
2. Continue reviewing and updating child physical abuse laws and Delaware's sentencing guidelines regarding criminal child physical abuse cases. SOURCE: Similar recommendations made in the 2015-2025 Joint Retreats.		
ENTITY RESPONSIBLE: CPAC Legislative Committee		
Actions	Anticipated Completion Date	Status Updates
a. Review civil and criminal definitions of abuse and neglect.	12 months	

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Prioritized Recommendations from 2025 Joint Retreat (11)		
Funding and Resources Recommendations (2)		
1. Advocate for an increase in funding and resources for the Department of Justice for the Special Victims Unit and the Juvenile Trafficking Unit. SOURCE: Similar recommendations made in the 2023-2025 Joint Retreats.		
ENTITY RESPONSIBLE: CPAC Executive Committee		
Actions	Anticipated Completion Date	Status Updates
a. Advocate for the Department of Justice’s budgetary requests for additional Victim Service Specialist positions.	12 months	
2. Advocate for compensation and benefit modifications for all DFS employees. SOURCE: 2023-2025 Joint Retreat		
ENTITY RESPONSIBLE: CPAC Executive Committee		
Actions	Anticipated Completion Date	Status Updates
a. Partner with DSCYF to explore strategies and funding options to address compensation gaps for program administrators and other non-union positions, ensuring more equitable and competitive pay structures across the workforce.	12 months	