

# Frequently Asked Questions about the New Mexico Child Abuse and Neglect Citizen Review Board

## **What is the Child Abuse and Neglect Citizen Review Board (CRB)?**

CRB consists of over 35 boards around the state made up of concerned community volunteers who, on a monthly basis, review cases of children in state custody due to abuse and neglect.

These community volunteers are trained to review cases and formulate relevant recommendations. They are required to view training videos, an experienced board member is assigned to them as a mentor, and participate in annual training, both on site with each local board, and in larger settings (such as regional training and statewide conferences.)

## **What happens during the Review Board session?**

The CRB members read case information provided by the permanency planning worker and others involved in the case before the review day. By doing this preparation, the volunteers are ready to listen to the interested parties and ask informed, clarifying questions.

Each interested party is asked to speak about the child's current situation and what they believe is in the best interest of the child. CRB members listen and ask questions in order to make appropriate recommendations for the child's care.

## **Who attends the Review Board sessions?**

Attendees include people involved in the child's case. These interested parties may include permanency planning workers, permanency planning worker supervisors, parents, foster parents, guardian ad litem, youth attorneys, CYFD attorneys, Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA volunteers), parents' attorneys, other relatives of the child, treatment providers, representatives from the tribe if a Native American child is involved, and the child (when age-appropriate).

## **What happens after a Review Board session?**

After a case is reviewed, the Board members deliberate with a staff member to prepare a report that presents those factors that appear to be either hindering or facilitating the child's expeditious placement in a permanent, safe, and loving home. Additionally, the Board's report includes recommended actions, which may include changing CYFD's permanency plan.

The completed report is then sent to the following parties: the judge presiding over the case, the permanency planning worker, the permanency planning worker's supervisor, all attorneys involved in the case, the CASA volunteer (if one has been appointed), the foster parents, and the tribe if a Native American child is involved.

# Frequently Asked Questions about Systemic Initiatives

## **How does the CRB generate recommendations for system improvement?**

After each case review, comprehensive data is gathered on each child in custody. This data is entered into the CRB database. All data is confidential, and is only used to track trends and make systemic observations and recommendations. This data serves as the basis for this and other CRB reports.

The CRB Statewide Advisory Committee (SAC), as determined by statute, is comprised of a representative from each local board, SAC officers and regional representatives, and three public members. SAC meets throughout the year and monitors what is happening to the children in custody by hearing from the local board representatives and by reviewing data.

## **How does the CRB bring attention to these important issues?**

The CRB and SAC perform various public education functions. SAC identifies relevant data elements and issues affecting the children and the system during the fiscal year, and reports the data and anecdotal information through CRB Interim Reports that spotlight a single issue. SAC also uses its expertise to assist in the CRB Annual Report and Recommendations that reports statewide and county information. In addition, CRB maintains a website ([www.nmcrb.org](http://www.nmcrb.org)) that includes information, data, and links to relevant sites. The CRB and SAC are frequently called upon to testify before legislative committees on its data, observations, and recommendations.

## **Does the CRB facilitate any independent research that is separate from the review day?**

The SAC identifies issues that need further research and the CRB staff and SAC determines how to gather the needed data. Outside experts are consulted to develop the best methods to obtain pertinent information. Methods utilized have included surveys, interviews, and focus group discussions. The data is then gathered from around the state, analyzed, and distributed through the CRB Interim Reports and CRB Annual Report and Recommendations.

## **Does the CRB do other work?**

The CRB is advised by its Statewide Advisory Committee (SAC). Subcommittees of SAC work on various projects. For example, New Mexico Friends of Foster Children Fund (NMFFCF) was created in September of 2003 to help meet certain needs of New Mexico's foster children that are not funded by state or other programs.

More information about NMFFCF is available at [www.nmcrb.org](http://www.nmcrb.org) or by contacting CRB at 1-866-857-2976. For more information see page 18.