



PARTNERS
FOR OHIO'S FAMILIES

It is OFC's responsibility to provide leadership and maintain organizational and professional competence.

OFFICE OF FAMILIES & CHILDREN

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From OFC Deputy Director Jennifer Justice – 8/1/14

It's August! Everyone with school-age children knows that August marks the end of the summer. My family and I will be shopping for school supplies in two weeks and back to a regimented schedule in three. Part of my routine is the nightly backpack inspection. I have learned how important this is to avoid the otherwise inevitably missed homework assignment, birthday invitation, note from the teacher or last-minute trip to school. (You are supposed to bring 36 cupcakes today?) My boys have come to expect and rely upon this ritual as a means to discuss their day, and it has turned into an opportunity for me to better understand how everything is going. Until this First Friday's articles on continuous quality improvement (CQI), I hadn't thought of backpack checks as a part of my household CQI, but – if you consider the daily accumulation of stuff that my children bring home as my data – it has the same benefits and hallmarks.

Of course, our household habits differ significantly in scale and complexity from the processes that our child welfare system needs to adequately assess, monitor, plan for and improve the outcomes for our children and families. It does show,

however, how we individually implement these processes in our own lives, because we intuitively recognize both the value and the cost of failing to do so. I am excited to see how Ohio's state-level CQI system evolves over the life of the five-year Child and Family Services Plan (see page 2). This is a terrific beginning, but we still have much to discover and develop. I look forward to collaborating with, and learning from, the public and private child welfare agencies in Ohio who have well-functioning CQI systems.

I also look forward to recognizing and working with agencies that are performing well on specific measurements. Sharing the lessons gained from high-achieving programs is an important component of CQI, and we recently expanded funding through Child Welfare Experiential Learning (OAC 5101:9-6-33) to better support public children services agencies (PSCAs) that would like to explore more peer-to-peer learning. In this First Friday, we highlight several counties that have been successful in ensuring that child and parent visits comply with state requirements. My thanks go out to these agencies for their contributions to this month's edition.

Off and Running: Ohio's 2015-2019 Title IV-B Child and Family Services Plan

At the end of June, staff from OFC's Bureau of Federal and State Child Welfare Initiatives put the finishing touches on Ohio's Title IV-B Child and Family Services Plan (CFSP) for submission to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Children's Bureau. This five-year strategic plan details the vision, goals and action steps the state will implement to improve outcomes for children and families. It addresses Ohio's continuum of child welfare services, including prevention, intervention, treatment, family preservation and support, out-of-home care, permanency, and services for transitioning youth. Completing the CFSP is necessary for Ohio's continued federal funding for Title IV-B activities, Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act programming, the state's Chafee Foster Care Independence Program allocation, and education and training vouchers for youth exiting care.

The plan also is integrated with the federal Child and Family Services Review (CFSR). Although Ohio is not scheduled for Round 3 of the federal CFSR until 2017, developing the CFSP provided an important opportunity to begin preparing for the CFSR.

Whether you were aware of it or not, your feedback and ideas were

fundamental to the development of the CFSP! OFC incorporated many recommendations from our partners and considered constructive feedback from a number of groups, including:

- Partners for Ohio's Families (PFOF) Advisory Board
- Differential Response Leadership Council
- Primary Parent Workgroup
- Ohio Family Care Association
- Supreme Court of Ohio's Advisory Committee on Children, Families and the Courts
- OFC regional technical assistance teams
- ProtectOHIO Consortium
- Ohio Youth Advisory Board
- Public Children Services Agencies of Ohio (PCSAO)
- Ohio Job and Family Services Directors' Association
- Ohio Association of Child-Caring Agencies

Ongoing conversations with our partners will continue to shape our vision, goals and strategies over the next five years. We will provide regular updates on the plan's progress and continue to seek your feedback. For further information about Ohio's CFSP, please email Carla.Carpenter@jfs.ohio.gov.

OFC's Continuous Quality Improvement Initiative

The message from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Administration for Children and Families to state child welfare agencies is clear: We need to enhance accountability by implementing state-level CQI systems.

Casey Family Programs and the National Child Welfare Resource Center for Organizational Improv-

ement describe CQI as "the complete process of identifying, describing and analyzing strengths and problems and then testing, implementing, learning from and revising solutions."¹ CQI challenges us to continuously ask, "How are we doing?" and "Can we do it better?"

The federal emphasis on CQI aligns with OFC's focus on data-informed decision-making (see "Meeting

Ohio's CFSP Goals for 2015-2019

The CFSP is a comprehensive plan that includes a variety of objectives and activities aimed at improving outcomes for children and families over the next five years. Five overarching strategic goals anchor the plan:

1. Ohio will strengthen its statewide CQI child welfare system to drive practice improvement, resulting in better outcomes for the safety, permanency and well-being of Ohio's children and families.
2. Abused and neglected children will not experience repeat maltreatment in their own homes or maltreatment in foster care.
3. Families will have enhanced capacity to provide for their children's needs so children do not enter placement unnecessarily or experience prolonged stays in out-of-home care when placement is needed to ensure safety.
4. Children placed in out-of-home care will have stable living situations, continued connections to their families and communities, timely pathways to permanency, and appropriate services and supports as they exit care.
5. Partners jointly design and coordinate policies, practices and services to improve the well-being of children, youth and families.

The complete CFSP, including all planned activities, is available on the [OFC website](#).

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¹"Using Continuous Quality Improvement to Improve Child Welfare Practice – A Framework for Implementation," Casey Family Programs and the National Child Welfare Resource Center for Organizational Improvement, May 2005.

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OFC's Mission," right) and our desire for proactive, ongoing improvement. This spring, OFC established a CQI advisory team to ensure that a CQI lens was applied throughout the development of Ohio's CFSP. To select CFSP strategies, the team used feedback from OFC partners and data from a variety of sources, including Ohio's current CFRS and performance trends, Child Protection Oversight and Evaluation (CPOE) results, Differential Response and ProtectOHIO evaluations, and SACWIS reports.

Now, the team will begin implementing the plan and developing recommendations to strengthen Ohio's CQI system for child welfare. Although Ohio is in the early stages of its statewide CQI initiative, we already have several elements in place:

1. Quality assurance through CPOE
2. A data-driven focus
3. Well-established partnerships

and stakeholder feedback loops

4. A robust practice model, defined through the Ohio Differential Response Practice Profiles
5. Strong local CQI systems

The CQI initiative will help strengthen the connections between all of these elements. It is the heart of the CFSP and will help us achieve each of the plan's major goals. The CFSP includes several CQI objectives designed to improve outcomes for children and families, including:

- Further develop Ohio's statewide CQI infrastructure
- Increase SACWIS data accessibility and improve data integrity to support CQI activities
- Further integrate CQI into Ohio's technical assistance and CPOE review processes
- Improve casework practice and

OFC's Five-Point Plan

OFC's Solutions Through Empowerment and Partnership (STEP) internal advisory team established five priorities to focus on during the development of the Partners for Ohio's Families initiative. These priorities continue to guide OFC's work with Ohio's public and private agencies and will support our work in building a child welfare CQI system:

1. Building a team approach
2. Building institutional behavior
3. Establishing structured communication
4. Building a knowledge base
5. Supporting agencies to self-assess

supervision using CQI principles

- Implement innovative and evidence-based or evidence-informed child welfare practices to improve safety, permanency and well-being outcomes for children and families

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CQI advisory team members worked hard to establish a statewide CQI system for child welfare. OFC would like to take this opportunity to thank Barbara Cline, Athens County Children Services; Linda Peters, Franklin County Children Services; Kristine Monroe and Tresa Young, OFC Bureau of Automated Systems; Leslie McGee and Lisa Wiltshire, OFC Bureau of Child and Adult Protective Services; Carla Carpenter, Colleen Tucker-Buck, Joan Van Hull, Roger Ward and Susan Williams, OFC Bureau of Federal and State Child Welfare Initiatives; and Gina Velotta and Anna Wyss-Zilles, OFC Bureau of Child and Adult Technical Assistance, for all their efforts.

Pictured: OFC Bureau of Federal and State Child Welfare Initiatives staff and CQI advisory team members Colleen Tucker-Buck, Susan Williams, Roger Ward, Felicia Saunders and Carla Carpenter. (Not pictured: Joan Van Hull.)



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Some CQI activities in the CFSP are:

- Develop a written CQI framework for the state
- Establish a mechanism for the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services, PCSAs and private child-placing agencies to share CQI policies, protocols, tools and resources
- Update standardized data reports to reflect the new federal CFSR measures and develop user-friendly reports to show state and county performance on critical child and family outcomes; share these regularly with stakeholders
- Integrate SACWIS training into the Ohio Child Welfare Training Program to improve data entry and integrity
- Promote fidelity to practices detailed in Ohio’s Differential Response Practice Profiles
- Incorporate CQI practices into OFC’s regional technical assistance process

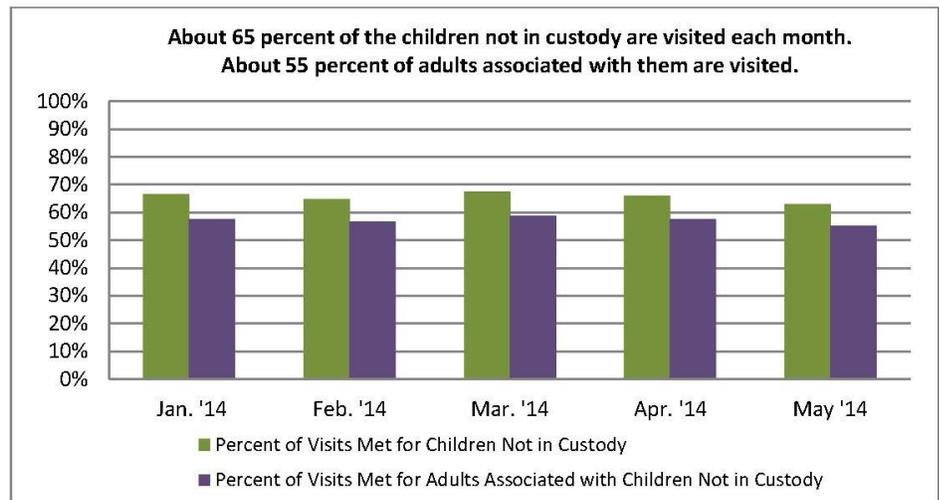
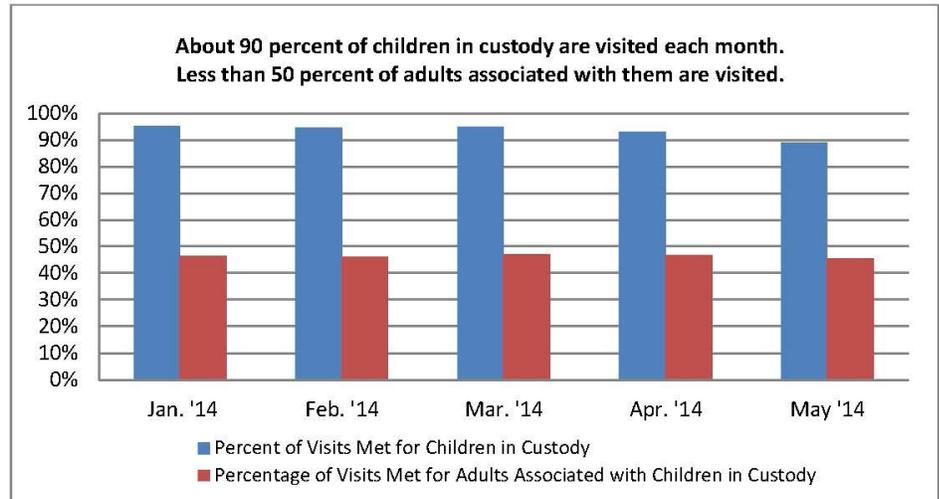
Ohio’s CQI plan is included on pages 116-128 of the [CSFP](#). For additional information about CQI or to participate in OFC’s CQI work, email Carla.Carpenter@jfs.ohio.gov.

Did You Know?

The Ohio Administrative Code (OAC) requires that caseworkers visit all children with an open case plan at least monthly. (Cases assigned to an Alternative Response pathway require twice-monthly visits.) Although more than 90 percent of children in agency custody are visited each month, only about 65 percent of the children who are not in agency custody receive monthly visits.

Applying a CQI Lens to Caseworker Visits with Parents and Children

The first step in the CQI process is to identify areas of strength and weakness through data analysis. The graphs below show statewide data for completed visits with children and parents from January 1 through May 31 of this year. (June and July were not included to account for possible delays in data entry.)



The next step is working with our partners to better understand the data and the factors impacting performance. Here, it is clear that a number of variables affect statewide performance on monthly visits. OFC continues to work with PCSAO to complete a child welfare workload study, and we look forward to examining the results with our county partners to further understand the story behind these numbers.

Because the quality and frequency of caseworker visits with parents and children are so vital, improvement on this measure is a component of Ohio’s CFSP. This will be an ongoing topic of discussion as we work jointly with county and private agency partners to develop, implement, test and revise solutions over time.

County Spotlight: Success with Caseworker Visits

Congratulations to Auglaize, Butler, Greene, Muskingum, Van Wert and Wayne counties for their consistently high performance on caseworker visits with parents and children for both custody and non-custody cases. When asked which factors contribute to this success, staff from each county said they regularly monitor statuses, prioritize visits with parents and work respectfully with families to schedule visits. They also provided these details:

- Auglaize County Children Services Administrator Michelle Bowen credits most of the agency's success to dedicated staff. At the beginning of each month, workers schedule that month's visits with children and parents to occur during the first two weeks of the month, and they work to accommodate the families' schedules. This allows room to reschedule visits in the second half of the month if needed. She and her managers value the workers and strive to provide an environment in which staff feel supported and appreciated.
- According to Bill Morrison, temporary assistant director at Butler County Children Services, the agency prioritizes caseworker visits with families and evaluates caseworkers based on their completion of visits. In addition, Butler County Ombudsman Shannon Glendon emphasized that caseworkers take pride in successfully completing visits. Shannon also credits the agency's semiannual review process as a key component of their good performance.
- Greene County's managers produce and review SACWIS visitation reports twice a month to identify potential issues related to timely completion of visits. In addition, staff are encouraged to schedule visits around families' needs, including early in the morning, after 5 p.m. or on weekends, if necessary. Flexible scheduling helps the agency meet visitation requirements and demonstrates its respect for families' time and needs. This,

in turn, helps foster a stronger commitment from families. The agency also sends reminder letters and pocket calendars to families to help with time management and keeping scheduled appointments.

- "Caseworkers must collaborate if this mandate is to be met," said David Boyer, director of Muskingum County Adult and Child Protective Services. "Becoming a colleague's eyes and ears is a mandate-achiever and a morale-booster. In addition, two decades ago our leadership team made a commitment to keep caseloads as close to single digits as possible...It is patently easier to case manage and meet all mandates required with a caseload of nine families and 14 children versus 18 families and 31 children."
- "Caseworkers know that positive interaction with the family makes the family more comfortable and more willing to work with the agency," said Sandy Honigford, deputy director at the Van Wert County Department of Job and Family Services. "Caseworkers work around family schedules, which might mean that they are meeting with family members early in the morning or late in the evening."
- "A report is sent out weekly [to let] supervisors know what visits still need to be documented in SACWIS," said Wayne County Systems Administrator Connie Imhoff. "This consistent support and encouragement goes a long way in keeping supervisors aware of the visits that still need to be completed and documented in SACWIS." Wayne County PCSA Director Deanna Nichols-Stika also credits support from the agency's IT department, family team meetings that help with engagement and relationship-building between caseworkers and families, supervisors supporting their staff's visit schedules, and caseworkers helping each other complete visits when time runs short.

To read more about how these counties are working to maintain high performance on visits with children and parents, see the attached "County-to-County Tips for Success with Caseworker Visits."

Additional Resources

SACWIS

County-specific data on caseworker visits with parents and children is available through the "Comprehensive Visitation Report," available under the "Administration" tab in SACWIS. This report shows which cases require a parental or child visit each month. Instructions on how to generate the report are available in [this](#) SACWIS Knowledge Base article.

Additional resources are available in the [SACWIS Knowledge Base](#). You can type "visit" in the search field to view the following articles:

Partnership Guide, Strategies to Build Rapport, Guidance Article on Effective Home Visitation Between Caseworker and Child, Effective Visitation Between Caseworker and Parents, and Substitute Care: Effective Visitation Between Parent and Child. A related guidance article, [Maintaining Sibling Connections When a Child is in Substitute Care](#), is available as well.

Center for Human Services at University of California, Davis

The University of California, Davis' Center for Human Services has made available a wealth of information and resources on quality casework visits at its [website](#).

ProtectOhio Expansion?

Since 1997, Ohio has participated in a Title IV-E waiver called ProtectOHIO, which allows federal Title IV-E funds to be used for a range of child welfare purposes to prevent placement and promote permanency for children in out-of-home care. Ohio is the only state that has operated a Title IV-E waiver continuously since 1997.

The current waiver became effective October 1, 2010, and will continue through September 30, 2015. Ohio's renewal application is due in March 2015, and OFC already is preparing to submit it to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. If approved for renewal, it would be the fourth phase of the ProtectOHIO waiver.

The ProtectOHIO strategies have yielded positive results:

- Between October 1, 1997, and March 31, 2014, 11 of the original 17 demonstration counties have reduced the total number of placement days by more than 1,486,587. (That's 4,072 years of placement.)
- During Phase II of Ohio's waiver, the demonstration counties accumulated approximately \$27.9 million in savings, with \$22 million being reinvested in innovative strategies, strategic programs and targeted services. These include family team meetings, Alternative Response services, community-based care and kinship supports.

In May 2014, the subcommittee distributed a brief survey to all PCSAs to assess their knowledge of and interest in Ohio's waiver. Based on the positive response, the subcommittee will begin outreach to agencies that have indicated an interest in joining the consortium. In addition, it will

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Rule Review Update

The following OAC rules have been or will be posted for the specified time frames to the OFC rule review website at www.ohiorulereview.org.

For 10 days, from June 25 through July 5:

- OAC 5101:2-38-09, "PCSA Requirements for Completing the Case Review." Purpose: Amendments due to House Bill (HB) 130.
- OAC 5101:2-38-10, "Requirements for Completing the Semiannual Administrative Review." Purpose: Amendments due to HB 130.

For 30 days, from June 25 through July 25:

- OAC 5101:2-39-01, "Removal of a Child from the Child's Own Home." Purpose: Amendments due to HB 130.

For 14 days, from July 18 through August 1:

- OAC 5101:2-42-90, "Information to be provided to caregivers, school districts and juvenile courts; information to be included in individual child care agreement." Purpose: Five-year review (FYR).

For 14 days, from July 22 through August 5:

- OAC 5101:2-48-15, "Provision of information to a prospective adoptive parent matched with a specific child." Purpose: Foster care and adoption rule alignment.
- OAC 5101:2-40-04, "Kinship permanency incentive (KPI) program." Purpose: Compliance with HB 213.

For 30 days, from July 23 through August 23:

- OAC 5101:2-47-11, "Reimbursement for foster care maintenance costs for children's residential centers, group homes, maternity homes, residential parenting facilities, and purchased foster care homes"
- OAC 5101:2-47-26.1, "Public children services agencies (PCSA), private child placing agencies (PCPA), private noncustodial agencies (PNA): Title IV-E cost report filing requirements, record retention requirements and related party disclosure requirements"
- OAC 5101:2-47-26.2, "Cost report 'Agreed Upon Procedures' engagement"

Purpose for all three: FYR and incorporation of changes to cost-reporting requirements

The comment period for some of the above rules has closed, but please continue to visit the site periodically for new postings. We welcome your input and hope you use this opportunity to share your experiences.

The website received 1,466 hits during June 2014.

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continue exploring expanding the waiver to include additional counties or all Ohio counties.

The current demonstration counties plan to host regional meetings this fall to educate others about the process for applying to participate in the waiver. To help agencies

assess whether joining ProtectOHIO is right for them, meeting coordinators will provide fiscal analyses based on each county's demographics.

More information is coming soon, but if you are interested in learning more about joining ProtectOHIO, contact Lakeisha Hilton at (614) 644-1125 or Lakeisha.Hilton@jfs.ohio.gov.

August 2014 Global Emails

The following emails were sent in July from Jennifer Justice to PCSA directors and/or private agency directors. They are organized below by mailing date and key word.

- 7/17/14** - Title IV-E Program Improvement Efforts
- 7/22/14** - Amended Substitute H.B. 484
- 7/22/14** - Statewide Rule Training Meeting Notice
- 7/30/14** - Public Disclosure of Information Regarding Child Fatalities and Near Fatalities
- 7/31/14** - FCM Rates Survey-Submission Deadline

Staying Connected to Incarcerated Parents

It's estimated that 15 to 20 percent of all children nationally entering the child welfare system have incarcerated parents. While visits with incarcerated parent(s) are important, especially when the permanency goal is reunification, such visits require careful planning, preparation and resource investment.

Some challenges inherent to these visits can be lessened through programming that promotes positive interaction. One example of this is the children's reading rooms in each prison run by the Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction (ODRC). The reading rooms encourage family literacy by providing a variety of children's books in a pleasant and comfortable setting. An inmate narrator reads to the visiting children twice a day, in a manner similar to children's story time at a public library. Most of the rooms also feature a variety of donated art and craft supplies.

ODRC reading rooms help dispel the myth that when children visit incarcerated parents, they are separated by bars or glass. Thanks to these reading rooms, children are able to interact with their parents one-on-one to foster ongoing relationships.

When face-to-face interaction is not possible, caseworkers and caregivers should seek alternative options to support children's relationships with their incarcerated parents. Such options could include:

- Making concerted efforts for incarcerated parents

to speak to their children by phone; incarcerated parents could be given pre-paid phone cards for pre-approved phone numbers.

- Exploring alternate ways for incarcerated parents to participate in their child's semiannual and administrative reviews, and ensuring they receive copies of these reviews, as well as case plans and medical/educational forms, per OAC rules.
- Collaborating with the facility's social worker to ensure that available services are provided and barriers minimized.
- Giving the incarcerated parent a monthly update of his or her child's achievements, developments, activities and event participation.
- Asking the incarcerated parent to write letters, draw pictures or maintain a journal that can be shared with the child.
- Giving the incarcerated parent pre-addressed, stamped envelopes for mailing written correspondence to the agency.
- Encouraging incarcerated parents to use email, Skype, [JPay](#) or other electronic communication to maintain contact with their children.

For more information about children's visitation with inmates, and to see photos of each the reading rooms at each facility, please visit the [ODRC visitation website](#).

Title IV-E Q & A

Q: I want to make sure that court orders in our delinquency matters comply with all legal requirements when we place juveniles in our Title IV-E-funded group homes. Is there sample Title IV-E eligibility language for these matters?

A: The Title IV-E requirements are the same for all children. At each step in the child's case, the following must occur:

- The first court order that removes the child from the home must state that removal is in the child's best interest and that remaining in the home is contrary to the child's welfare.
- Within 60 days of the child's removal, a court must determine that reasonable efforts to prevent removal

al have been made or that reasonable efforts are not required because of emergent circumstances.

- Within 12 months of the child's removal, and annually while the child is in agency custody, a court must determine that the agency made reasonable efforts to finalize the child's permanency plan. This requirement was statutorily mandated in Ohio Revised Code 2151.417, effective September 15, 2014.

If a court has not documented each determination, the child is not eligible for Title IV-E funds for the entire custody episode, even if the child's placement has changed from the time of initial removal.

For additional information or clarification, email [Dan. Shook@jfs.ohio.gov](mailto:Dan.Shook@jfs.ohio.gov).

Principle of the Month

It is OFC's responsibility to provide leadership and maintain organizational and professional competence.

Feedback and Subscriptions

If you want to subscribe to First Friday, have comments or ideas about content, or wish to be removed from the mailing list, please send an email to First.Friday@jfs.ohio.gov. For additions to or removals from the list, be sure to include your name, organization and email address.



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