



A Message from OFC Deputy Director Jennifer Justice

By the end of this month, each OFC staff member will have participated in a three-day training session titled “Six Principles of Partnership.” This has been a big investment of OFC’s most valuable resource – our staff – but the STEP Team believes it will pay large dividends.

Each of us, whether new to the field or a long-time child welfare professional, has seen initiatives come and go. Implementation science tells us that initiatives don’t succeed or fail simply on the basis of merit; sustainability requires attention to certain details. The STEP Team is focusing its attention on the aspects of implementation that are needed to move its plan from “project” to “the way we do business.”

The three-day training is intended to establish a common foundation and common expectations across OFC, both for the way staff work together and for the way they work with our public and private partners. To learn more about the six principles, go to http://fcrp.unc.edu/tm/tm_vol4_no3/six_principles.pdf.

New to OFC: Event Calendar

Have you ever heard about a training event that you would have attended if you’d known about it *before* it happened? Have you ever been asked to attend multiple meetings scheduled at the same time? Or have you ever wished you knew where to find more information about an event? These were common problems identified at both the regional forums and focus groups.

In response, we now have an OFC Event Calendar, which includes activities scheduled for all OFC bureaus, and which is accessible to both public and private agencies. The calendar can be found at <http://www.odjfs.state.oh.us/ocfcalendar/>. For easy access, create a shortcut on your desktop.

The calendar is color-coded to make it easier to find what you need. If you have ideas for ways it can be improved, please let the STEP Team know.

Spotlight on OFC’s Guiding Principles in Action: Rita Jackson

Quietly seated on the sixth floor of the Lazarus Building in Columbus is OFC’s superstar of customer service: Rita Jackson.

Rita’s job is to quickly process foster-care licensing information for public and private agencies in Ohio. That means she spends a great deal of time answering questions, which she does with the utmost care and patience. Her kindness and diligence have won her many friends over the years, since she first took the job in 2001.

“Rita has patiently, even happily, answered all of my questions, no matter how simple or obvious the answer may have been,” said Ed Miner, a training and licensing coordinator with Youth Advocate Services, a Columbus-based firm that provides adoption and foster care services. “I have appreciated her guidance, kindness and commitment to doing her job well. Rita Jackson has been an asset to our agency and to the work of ODJFS.”

Adds Laura Baxter, an administrator with A New Leaf, Inc., a Circleville-based nonprofit: “Rita is always friendly on the telephone and is quick to answer any questions that I may have. She is a phenomenal woman, and she always maintains a positive attitude.”

We asked Rita a few questions about her job, and her advice for agencies submitting foster care licensing forms, so that others may benefit from her expertise:

Q. What is the most frequent reason people call you?

A. Alice Lignon and I enter data from the forms “Recommendation for Certification/Recertification of a Foster Home” (JFS 1317) and “SACWIS Private Agency Provider Request” (JFS 1318) into SACWIS to certify foster and adoptive resource homes. These forms arrive daily, and we enter the data in the order that the forms are expected. Frequently, a county will need to make a placement into a private agency home more quickly than expected and will call us to see if we can prioritize entry. Alice and I believe these forms are more than just paper; each form represents a child’s placement opportunity, so we do what it takes. It slows the overall process, but we understand that sometimes caseworkers just can’t predict what is going to happen.

Q. Are there any frequent mistakes that people could avoid and prevent delay in processing?

A. Often foster parents’ Social Security numbers are missing or incorrect; just verifying the Social Security number before submitting the form could speed the process. Another frequent problem is a difference between the transaction and usage codes. On the first page of the JFS 1318, agencies are asked to supply a transaction code and, for example, will enter 01, which signifies a foster home. Sometimes when we get to the end of the JFS 1318, the agency will have completed information for an adoptive home. Rather than send the form back for correction, or assume they only want a foster home, we usually will call to see if the agency really wanted to seek certification both as a foster and adoptive home. It takes time and slows down the process though.

Q. Are there other ways to correct mistakes?

A. Lots of times, public agencies will look in SACWIS and see that something is missing or they can’t complete a task they are trying to do. The fastest fix is to call the SACWIS Help Desk: 1-800-686-1580.



Rita Jackson, Administrative Professional 2

January 2012 Global Emails

What do public agencies, private agencies, state agencies and all levels of staff have in common? Overflowing mailboxes! *Better* communication often means *more* communication – but we don't want our communications to get lost. For that reason, each *First Friday* will include a list of the past month's emails from Jennifer Justice to PCSA directors and/or private agency directors, along with the mailing date and key word. Here is this month's list:

- 1/05/12** – Ohio Here To Help Webinar Training
- 1/09/12** – Assessment of Safety (CAPMIS) Training
- 1/13/12** – National Youth in Transition Database Cohort Study Group
- 1/17/12** – Immigration Law and Social Work Free Online Training
- 1/17/12** – CFSR Round 2 Aggregate Report
- 1/18/12** – MEPA Biennial Comprehensive Self-Assessment Report
- 1/24/12** – Distance Learning Opportunity - OCWTP

PRINCIPLE OF THE MONTH:

There is urgency and importance to our work.