



## **A Message from OFC Deputy Director Jennifer Justice**

All OFC staff recently completed training on the Six Principles of Partnership. Each of us gained insight about the social styles that guide individuals' actions, and the specific ways we can adapt our approach to achieve better results.

While these and other courtesies of behavior are nothing new, comments from the regional forums and focus groups repeatedly referenced concepts such as “respect,” “judgment” and “power.” It serves us well to be reminded of how these principles manifest in the workplace and how outcomes improve when individuals are treated in a respectful manner.

So what's next? Our challenges now are to carry this learning into the way we approach our daily responsibilities *and* to recognize improvement when it presents itself. I am encouraged by the many ways OFC staff members are reaching out to give both each other and our partners the opportunity to be heard, so we can benefit from each others' experience and talents, and initiate relationships that support partnerships.

For example, we're undertaking a rule review that, if successful, could establish a joint oversight for how we conceptualize and develop rules. In addition, our Bureau of Fiscal Accountability is establishing time-limited “think tanks” that tap the knowledge and experiences of our public and private partners. The first of these is examining the Kinship Guardianship Assistance Program. Other groups will examine the use of the Title IV-E Cost Report and audit procedures, contract processing for placement of children, and methods for identifying levels of care for children across Ohio.

A better understanding and some resolution of the barriers that impede the success of families will improve our ability to support public and private agencies. How we best provide that support is being examined by three pilot teams that include staff from several OFC bureaus and partners from volunteer sites in Allen, Licking and Ross/Vinton Counties.

The nature of our work will ensure an ample supply of challenges, but we're making a great deal of progress. Congratulations and thank you to the many staff from OFC and our public and private partners who are investing their time and talent to put our principles into practice on behalf of Ohio's families and children.

## **Spotlight on OFC's Guiding Principles in Action: Anna Wyss-Zilles**

In order for our improvement initiatives to be successful, we need leadership and one of the outstanding leaders in our organization is Anna Wyss Zilles. Anna is a technical assistance specialist in the Tiffin office of OFC's Bureau of Child and Adult Technical Assistance. She's also co-chair of the Resource Home and Certification Approval Team. This is a team reviewing the rules governing where children can be placed and the standards for placing them, in order to reduce duplication, streamline rules when appropriate and improve clarity.

“The first time I met Anna was at the first MCWIC (Midwest Child Welfare Implementation Center) workgroup I attended in August 2011,” said Kim Romeo, a compliance specialist with Ed Necco & Associates, a private organization dedicated to helping at-risk youth in Ohio, Kentucky and West Virginia. “I wasn't sure what to expect

with the workgroup, but Anna quickly took charge and had everyone feeling comfortable and welcome. She has been on top of organizing our workgroup, and is prompt and thorough with sharing information, agendas, scheduling, etc. Anna is very professional, friendly and fair. She includes the group in all decision-making and is just, overall, an exceptional leader.”

Tracy Roberts, licensing and training director for Pathway Caring for Children, co-chairs the Resource Home Certification Team with Anna.

“Although we had never met until the first meeting, I felt much better about my commitment once I met her and had one conversation,” Tracy said. “She instantly was professional and witty and from day one empowered me that together we would accomplish the mission. I am very thankful for her guidance in this process and have enjoyed getting to know her as a new friend.”

We asked Anna a few questions about her work with the Resource Home and Certification Approval Team, so that others might benefit from her insights:

**Q. How did you end up as co-chair of the Resource Home and Certification Approval Team?**

A. When I first volunteered, I was a licensing specialist. I had been a member of the ODJFS public-private workgroup that established the framework and review criteria and thought I would volunteer as a co-chair for continuity. I guess it transcends job titles.

**Q. How does your team review rules?**

A. Team members review each rule before we meet. As a group, we begin each rule’s review by discussing every comment that has been submitted on the website. Then we compare our responses. And then we start looking at the rule, asking “What do we want to do here?”

**Q. So those comments do get considered?**

A. Yes, even if a comment may not really apply to the current discussion, we will note and hold it until it does.

**Q. It doesn’t sound like a quick process.**

A. Not really, although it does become faster as members become familiar with the criteria and the process. Some rules we complete in an hour; in others, a single section may take that long. We work to reach a consensus, a resolution everyone can live with. And if there is something that a member really is adamant about, the clearance process remains an option.

**Q. Everyone is waiting to see how many rules you eliminate.**

A. I will be surprised if we eliminate 10 percent in my group.

**Q. Why?**

A. We often find ourselves in discussion about a specific event or occurrence when things went wrong. We’ve learned to stop and say, “If we make a change to this rule, would it have changed the situation?” Usually not. Then we find ourselves saying, “How can we make it work? How can we make it better? Can we simplify?” For example, we now are focusing on aligning the adoption and foster care rules. It’s a huge undertaking, but it will be a big improvement for people. Not being eliminated doesn’t mean a rule won’t be a lot better.

**Q. OK, last question: what has been your biggest surprise?**

A. The passion that people have. They are so passionate about their work, our children and the families we serve. No one is taking this responsibility lightly. No one is just going through the motions.



Anna Wyss-Zilles,  
Technical Assistance Specialist

### **February 2012 Global Emails**

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

- 2/24/12** – FFY 2012 Monthly Visitation Standard
- 2/23/12** – Grant Writing Seminars
- 2/22/12** – FCM Rates Survey Reminder
- 2/21/12** – Interim DR Extended Evaluation Findings
- 2/17/12** – Webinar on Improving Supervision by Collaboration,  
Transparency & Accountability (National Child Workforce Institute)
- 2/15/12** – Medicaid School Program
- 2/07/12** – State Adoption Loan Fund
- 2/03/12** – First Friday

### **PRINCIPLE OF THE MONTH:**

Partners are given voice in a decision-making process.