



PARTNERS  
FOR OHIO'S FAMILIES

**Each OFC staff member has a responsibility and commitment to the agencies and individuals that OFC serves.**

**OFFICE OF FAMILIES & CHILDREN**

### **A Message from OFC Deputy Director Jennifer Justice – December 7, 2012**

Recently, I have had frequent discussions about the University Partnership Program (UPP), the collaboration between the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS), the Public Children Services Association of Ohio, the Ohio Child Welfare Training Program and eight Ohio universities. This initiative gives undergraduate and graduate students who are considering a future in child welfare the opportunity to take practical courses relevant to this work and to participate in a field placement that gives first-hand exposure to the job's daily expectations. It doesn't surprise me that UPP graduates are more satisfied and stay in child welfare positions longer than those who don't have this experience.

I am not sure that anyone can fully comprehend the rigors, demands, joy and personal satisfaction of this work without first experiencing it. How do you explain in words what it feels like to sit in your car at a curb, preparing to knock at the door of a family being investigated for possible child abuse? It is easy to focus on the immense fulfillment that comes from positive experiences, like safely reuniting a family, linking a waiting child to an adoptive family, or protecting a child from harm. But this also is a difficult job, one that can be heartbreaking and thankless, with intense schedules and crises. And it can be dangerous. Our thoughts are with Lake and Cuyahoga counties and the many people who counted Lisa Knoefel as a friend and colleague.

I want to express my thanks for the many hardworking and dedicated individuals across Ohio who work in this field. Please know that you are appreciated, and that it is the mission of this office to support you in delivering needed services to families and children. Our work as partners *is* improving outcomes.

OFC recently submitted the eighth quarter report of Ohio's Program Improvement Plan (PIP), the two-year plan for responding to the findings of Ohio's 2008 Child and Family Services Review. The May 2009 final report prepared by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services showed that Ohio was not meeting seven outcomes and seven systemic factors. We believe Ohio now fully meets four of these outcomes and all seven systemic factors. Though this is a tremendous accomplishment, much work still needs to be done. Read on to learn more.

The good news is that we are making sure that people are in place to collaboratively continue this work. We are introducing several new faces in this month's issue, and I hope you take the time to reach out and introduce yourself to them. Along with their fellow child welfare professionals across the state, each is committed to making a difference.

## **Frequently Asked Questions about Ohio's Child and Family Services Review**

### *What is the difference between a goal, an outcome and an item in the Child and Family Services Review (CFSR)?*

CFSR terminology can be confusing. States are reviewed on three *goals* (safety, permanency and well-being) and seven *systemic factors* (which relate to the state's case review, information, quality assurance and training systems, as well as its service array, community responsiveness and work with foster and adoptive parents). There also are seven *outcomes*, each of which is assigned to one of the three goals. Each outcome is comprised of a number of national standards or indicators called *items*. For a state to be "in substantial compliance" – that is, to meet an outcome – each item must be met.

For example, there has been a lot of communication recently about Ohio's struggles to meet the recurrence item, which is part of the "Children are, first and foremost, protected from abuse and neglect" outcome, found under the safety goal. This could result in a financial penalty for failing to meet this safety outcome, even though Ohio is in compliance with the outcome's other items.

### *Where does Ohio continue to struggle?*

Ohio is out of compliance in three outcomes, the first being the aforementioned safety outcome.

The second outcome, under the permanency goal, is "Children have permanency and stability in their living situations." Two of this outcome's items have been challenging for Ohio. Both are related to the alignment of case plan goals and each child's actual circumstances and services. For example, a disconnect exists when a child is in permanent custody and the case plan goal is cited as "reunification." Similarly, if a child's case plan goal is "planned permanent living arrangement," services associated with this placement should appear in the case plan. Ohio's noncompliance may be a matter of correcting documentation in SACWIS.

Finally, Ohio has been challenged by the well-being goal's first outcome: "Families have enhanced capacity to provide for their children's needs." The state currently is not in compliance with three of the four items, which are paraphrased as "effort has been made to assess the needs of children, parents and foster parents;" "children have been visited by caseworkers within required time frames;" and "parents have been visited by caseworkers within required time frames." As with the outcome under the permanency goal, Ohio's noncompliance may be the result of a failure to document caseworkers' activity. It also appears that issues may be related to face-to-face visits specific to the father or visits that occurred but fell just outside the monthly requirement.

### *Ohio already has completed the eighth quarter of its CFSR Program Improvement Plan (PIP). What can be done now?*

Because compliance is measured on a "look back" basis, activities, assessments and visits conducted now will not be considered in the compliance calculation. However, for those cases in which the activities have been conducted but were not documented or updated, some concentrated effort can make the difference in Ohio's compliance rating.

Ohio's performance on these items will be measured through the regular Stage 9 Child Protection Oversight and Evaluation (CPOE) reviews that are occurring between October 1, 2012, and September 30, 2013.

Agency staff should review case records to verify that:

- Case plan goals reflect the current actions and services related to the case.
- Services provided are documented and linked to the issues that caused the intervention.
- Visits with children and both parents are documented.

Judicial officers can make it a regular practice to ask:

- What is the case plan goal for the child? Does the goal align with the actions?

- For children in planned permanent living arrangements, what is being done to prepare them for independence?

*Is there a financial penalty for not meeting all three performance goals?*

Ohio's financial penalty would be calculated based on a variety of factors, some of which are variable. Ohio has been informed that it will be financially penalized for each outcome that it does not meet.

## **Youth Independent and Transitional Living Update**

Thank you to the nearly 100 individuals who participated in the Independent Living and Transitional Youth Information Session on November 29, 2012. It is helpful to learn about the services that are offered – and needed – across the state. Keep sending us your feedback regarding the type(s) of independent living assessment tools your agency uses, along with any barriers you have encountered.

Don't forget the upcoming regional independent living/transitional youth meetings. These are for independent living staff and any caseworkers who have young people ages 16 and older on their caseloads. They are an excellent opportunity to exchange information about services available to youth throughout Ohio related to education, housing, employment, and health and mental health services.

The meeting dates for the following areas are listed below. All meetings will be held from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Central Ohio: December 10, 2012  
Southwest Ohio: December 14, 2012  
Northwest Ohio: December 20, 2012  
Southeast Ohio: January 8, 2013  
Northeast Ohio: January 11, 2013

For additional information, including sites and registration, contact Laurie at [Laurie.Valentine@jfs.ohio.gov](mailto:Laurie.Valentine@jfs.ohio.gov) or (614) 752-1122, or Susan at [Susan.Halter@jfs.ohio.gov](mailto:Susan.Halter@jfs.ohio.gov) or (614) 752-0088.

## **Foster Youth Advocacy Clinic**

Current and former foster youth have a new resource: the Foster Youth Advocacy Clinic (FYAC), located at Capital University Law School's National Center for Adoption Law and Policy. FYAC fills a gap in available resources by providing free services that fall outside the scope of those provided by guardians ad litem, children services, and/or biological or foster parents. Most importantly, FYAC services and supports are available after emancipation, when youth typically lose access to the full array of public child welfare services and when they often are most in need of support to face the daunting challenges of successful independent living.

FYAC is staffed by law school faculty, clinical attorneys, provisionally licensed Capital University Law School students and Capital University social work student externs. Available services include counseling on credit management, identity theft, proper social media usage, juvenile criminal records management, accessing higher education and affordable housing, understanding and negotiating contracts, and preparing life-planning tools such as wills and health care powers of attorney. FYAC does not provide representation on criminal matters or in civil actions in which the youth is a defendant. Although most FYAC clients are from the Central Ohio area, many services are available to youth throughout the state.

Marsha Wickliffe, FYAC's clinical director, related the story of one youth who was helped by the clinic's services. This young man contacted FYAC after moving to Ohio. He sought to reunify with his biological father, become employed and eventually join the military. His immediate issue, however, was homelessness. FYAC was able to identify emergency housing, which soon led to a more permanent

placement. With that added stability, the young man was able to focus on other issues, including juvenile records that interfered with his military aspirations. FYAC is working with him to have the records sealed, and continues to help him take charge of issues that prevent him from achieving his goals.

Public and private foster care agencies interested in getting involved with FYAC may contact the National Center for Adoption Law and Policy's executive director, Denise St. Clair, at [dstclair@law.capital.edu](mailto:dstclair@law.capital.edu) to discuss scheduling a no-cost session. Youth in need of services, or those referring youth in need of services, may contact FYAC by phone at (614) 236-6768 or by emailing [fyac@law.capital.edu](mailto:fyac@law.capital.edu).



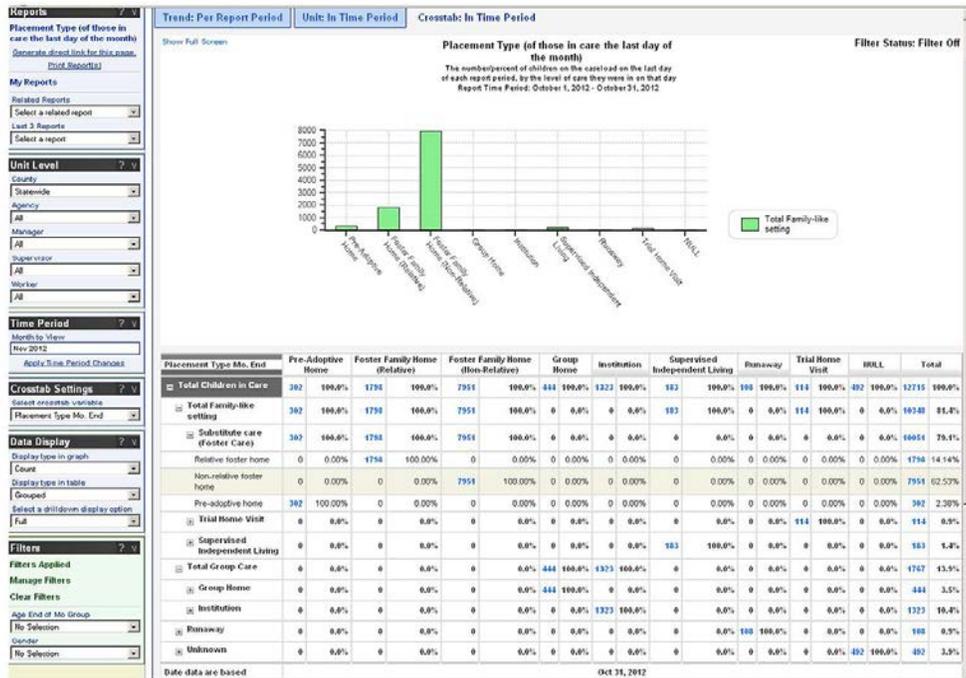
**FYAC students and staff.**  
Left to right: Alexa Manes, Rosemary Pomeroy, Ryan Preston and Ashleigh Henry.

### **Using Data to Self-Assess: The “Placement Type Report” in ROM**

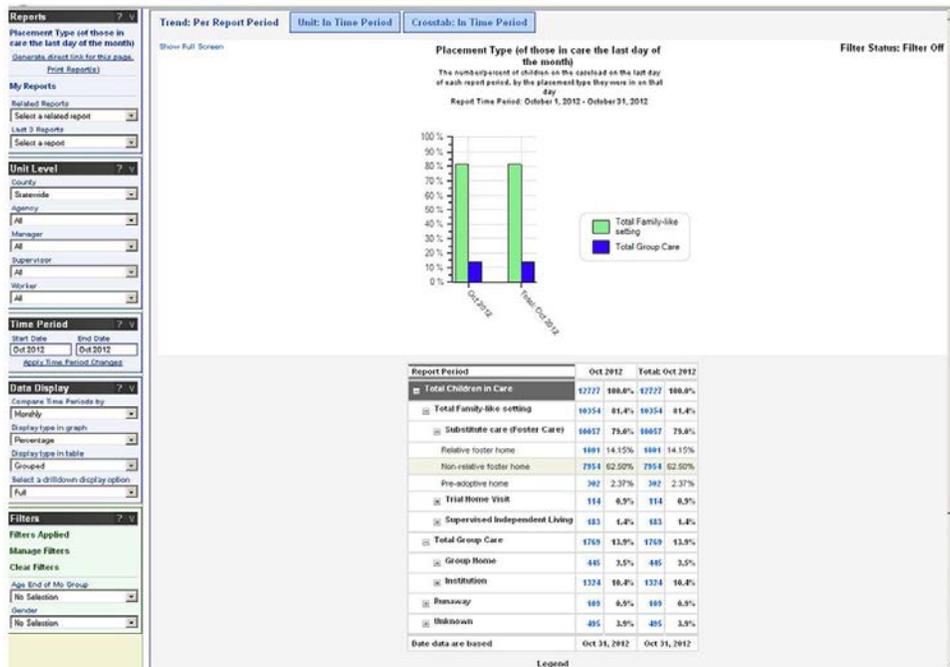
The *Placement Type Report* in the web-based Results-Oriented Management (ROM) tool is a moment-in-time snapshot of the number of children in agency custody by placement type, as calculated on the last day of each report period. There are two categories: family-like settings and group care placements. Family-like settings include relative foster homes, non-relative foster homes and pre-adoptive homes, as well as children on trial home visits and youth in supervised independent living placements. Group care includes all group homes and institutions.

It is a good idea to check this report once a month. It can be useful in keeping track of agency placement trends, as well as looking at the population of a specific placement setting to see how it is being used and to ensure that children are being placed in the least restrictive level of care.

The Crosstab view of this report allows agency staff to assess agency placement trends and recruitment needs. To view this information, set the Crosstab setting to "Placement Type Mo. End" and the Display Type to "Count." See the image below for an example.



The "Trend: Per Report Period," below, provides an easy way to assess the number of children (statewide or at a county agency) who are placed in family-like settings and group care settings.



To obtain access to ROM, please email [Kristine.Monroe@jfs.ohio.gov](mailto:Kristine.Monroe@jfs.ohio.gov) or [Tim.Doyle-Wenger@jfs.ohio.gov](mailto:Tim.Doyle-Wenger@jfs.ohio.gov).

## **New Places, New Faces**

Like most public agencies in Ohio, OFC experienced staff changes in 2012. Retirement of long-time employees brings the loss of historical knowledge that can be difficult to overcome, but movement within the office has given existing staff opportunities to advance or contribute in new ways. And though we're sad to say goodbye to colleagues who have taken new positions outside OFC, we wish them the best of luck in their endeavors.

OFC is pleased to introduce new staff members and to reintroduce some familiar faces in new roles. Together they bring a wide range of qualifications, experiences, perspectives and personal interests. Read on to learn a little more about each of them.



**Back row, left to right:** Rebekah Murray, Tara Campbell, Tim Hershman, Sayeh Shirvani, Sally Buccieri, Mariella Richardson and Kimberley Stewart.  
**Front row, left to right:** Bianca Hickey, Joanna Valentine, Amy Reinhart, Sonia Tillman, Holly Hinderer and Jennifer Kobel.  
**Not pictured:** Olympia Boyce-Taylor.

### Deputy Director's Office

**Joanna Valentine**, Program Administrator. Joanna has seven years' experience with ODJFS in the Office of Family Assistance (OFA). Before that, she was employed as a manager with a subsidiary of Campbell's Soup Company. Jo graduated from Ohio University and spends most of her spare time with her grandchildren or listening to live music.

### Child and Adult Protection Services

**Olympia Boyce-Taylor**, Human Services Developer. Olympia works in both child and adult protection and is on the Northwest Regional Team. She comes to OFC from OFA, where she was a human service program consultant with the Work Activity Division. She is a graduate of Capital University and has a master's degree in health services administration from Central Michigan University. Olympia enjoys traveling with her family.

**Tim Hershman**, Administrative Professional. Tim has worked for the state of Ohio for more than nine years and was recently in the ODJFS Office of the Chief Inspector. He learned skills there that will come in handy in his new position in the Substitute Care and Permanency Section, where he works with the Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children. Tim enjoys outdoor activities such as biking and hiking.

**Jennifer Kobel**, Human Services Developer. Jennifer is a familiar face within the Bureau of Child and Adult Protection, where she formerly worked on the Putative Father Registry. In her new position, she is a member of the Northwest Regional Team and works on issues related to the Interstate Compact on Adoption and Medical Assistance, and other issues that concern children in care. Before coming to ODJFS, she was a caseworker at Belmont Children Services Board. Jennifer is working on her master's degree in social work.

**Rebekah Murray**, Human Services Developer. Rebekah is not really "new" to OFC. She was a program developer with the department from 2004 until 2011, with a brief stint as a business analyst in 2009. She has returned to OFC after spending a year and a half at the Ohio Department of Mental Health. She is happy to get back to her child welfare roots in the Substitute Care and Permanency Section.

**Sayeh Shirvani**, Human Services Program Administrator. Sayeh has joined the Child Welfare Initiatives Section, where she will work on collaborations with our partner cabinet agencies. She has a master's degree in allied medical professions from The Ohio State University and has completed coursework towards a doctorate degree in public health. Sayeh comes to OFC from the Ohio Department of Health. She loves spending time with her husband and two children and taking yearly vacations to Southern California to visit family.

**Sonia Tillman**, Differential Response Coordinator. Sonia has more than 18 years of experience in child welfare, having worked at both the Hamilton and Montgomery county departments of job and family services. She has been an instructor for the Ohio Child Welfare Training Program, and has provided the Differential Response Primer training for several Ohio counties. She also has co-presented at two national Differential Response conferences and the 2011 Public Children Services Association of Ohio Conference.

### Child and Adult Technical Assistance

**Sally Buccieri**, Licensing/Certification Specialist (Canton). Sally has worked in range of positions since beginning her child welfare career at Ottawa County Department of Human Services 18 years ago. She also has worked for the Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Corrections, OFA's Division of Child Care and Development and OFC's Bureau of Child and Adult Technical Assistance. She says she "couldn't be happier" to return to OFC.

**Tara Campbell**, Licensing/Certification Specialist (Columbus). Tara spent four years as a military police officer in the Marine Corps and three years in the Army Reserve as a civil affairs specialist. She has a bachelor's degree in social science from the University of Rio Grande and a master's degree in criminal justice from the University of Cincinnati. Most of her career has been spent in the child welfare system, both at the county level and at a private agency for juvenile offenders. She and her husband live on a farm in Highland County.

**Bianca Hickey**, Licensing/Certification Specialist (Columbus). Bianca comes to OFC from the national Youth Advocate Program, where she worked as both a caseworker and supervisor. She is a licensed social worker, with both bachelor's and master's degrees in social work from The Ohio State University.

**Holly Hinderer**, Licensing/Certification Specialist (Cleveland). Holly is a graduate of Kent State University and also has a master's degree in education from Cleveland State University. She has spent the majority of her career working in foster care and adoption, both in the public and private sectors. Holly lives in rural Lorain County with her husband.

**Amy Reinhart**, Technical Assistance Specialist (Tiffin). Amy brings considerable county knowledge and experience to the office. She joins OFC from the children services office at the Sandusky County Department of Job and Family Services, where she was a supervisor for more than 20 years. She is married and has three children.

**Mariella Richardson**, Human Services Program Administrator (Cincinnati). Mariella graduated from Central State University with a bachelor's degree in communications, and she began her career as a reporter with the Dayton Daily News. She now is a licensed social worker with a master's degree from the University of Cincinnati. She also has extensive experience with child abuse and neglect, trauma, juvenile justice, the education system, inpatient and residential psychiatry, state and community mental health, and oversight of foster care and child welfare agencies, all gathered while working in mental health at Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center. She intends to use this experience to teach the next generation of practitioners.

**Kimberley Stewart**, Licensing/Certification Specialist (Toledo/Maumee). Kimberley brings more than 10 years of experience in child welfare and juvenile and adult corrections. She has a bachelor's degree in social work from The Ohio State University and is working on getting a master's degree in social work. She also is a trained classical ballerina who teaches ballet, tap, jazz, hip hop and cheerleading for the local YMCA, and she coaches the drill team for the Toledo Scott High School Marching Band.

### **Differential Response Update**

Ohio has much to be proud of in its implementation of Differential Response, which demonstrates the power of collaboration between county and state partners. The quality of Ohio's Differential Response partnership was particularly evident at the 2012 National Differential Response Conference held November 14 through 16 in Henderson, Nevada. This year's seventh annual national conference was attended by more than 300 individuals from various U.S. states, Canadian provinces and American Samoa. From Ohio, 67 participants represented ODJFS, county agencies and partnering organizations.

The conference provided an opportunity for Ohioans to learn from and engage in discussion with others who have had varying perspectives and experience with Differential Response. Several states planning to implement Differential Response expressed a strong interest in the work being done in Ohio and looked to us for information and lessons learned.

Ten presentations were directly connected to Ohio's Differential Response implementation and research efforts. County and state partners covered a wide range of topics. Congratulations to Champaign, Clark, Delaware, Montgomery, Summit and Trumbull counties for their contributions.

In Ohio, 48 counties are implementing Differential Response, and another 11 are preparing to implement it in early 2013. A statewide rollout schedule has been developed, with full implementation planned by June 2014. A call for presentations for next year's conference is expected to be released in February 2013.

### **Rule Review Update**

This month's rule review update concerns Ohio Administrative Code (OAC) rule 5101:2-5-20, "Initial application for child placement in foster care," and OAC rule 5101:2-5-21, "Agency assessment of an initial application for a foster home certificate."

Because these rules paralleled each other and duplicated information and processes, the rule review team recommended combining them into one compact, precise rule. The new recommended rule is OAC 5101:2-5-20, "Initial Application **and Agency Assessment** for Child Placement in Foster Care."

The most significant change in this rule was the addition of the requirement to contact all of the applicant's adult children, regardless of whether they live in the home. New language is excerpted below:

References are required and shall be contacted by the agency prior to making an initial recommendation for certification of a foster home:

- (a) The names of three people unrelated to the applicant that do not reside with the applicant and can be contacted by the agency as references.
- (b) The agency may require the person to provide the names of the references and any signed release of information statements before the person participates in any pre-placement training required by rule 5101:2-5-33 of the Administrative Code.
- (c) The agency shall require each applicant provide the name of any other agency or organization the applicant has been previously recommended for certification as a foster caregiver or provided care and supervision of children, as well as a written and signed release of information statement so the reference may be contacted.
- (d) The agency shall contact all adult children not residing in the home
- (e) Prior to approving the homestudy, the agency shall contact any other agency or organization the applicant has been previously approved as an adoptive parent.
- (f) All contacts with references shall be documented in the narrative section of the JFS 01673.

#### **November 2012 Global Emails**

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

- 11/5/12 - Final SACWIS Access, Research, and Confidentiality
- 11/8/12 - Update on Maltreatment Recurrence Federal Standard
- 11/15/12 - Transitional Living Video Conference
- 11/19/12 - Family Search and Engagement Lessons Learned
- 11/20/12 - Crossover Youth Practice Model (CYPM)

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

Each OFC staff member has a responsibility and commitment to the agencies and individuals that OFC serves.

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