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FOR OHIO'S FAMILIES

## OFC policies and supports should be strength-based and recognize the uniqueness of each community and agency.

# OFFICE OF FAMILIES & CHILDREN

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### From OFC Deputy Director Jennifer Justice – 9/5/14

I spent many days on the road last month and found myself thinking a lot about time — or, more precisely, my lack of it. When looking at my calendar or piles of paperwork, it's easy to think of time away from the office as a burden. But, like exercise, I always am really glad that I took the time to do it after the fact. Any time I interact with others who do this work, I am reminded of how important it is for me to understand the experiences of my state-level colleagues, front-line professionals, and the families and children we all serve. I always walk away with a new idea, a solution to an issue or a whole new challenge to contemplate, so it really can't be considered time squandered. It is time well-invested.

While I was traveling last month, I got to attend many great meetings and events. The Public Children Services Association of Ohio (PCSAO) Metro Meeting was a great experience. PCSAO hosts these meetings to give metropolitan-based agencies the opportunity to examine various topics from a shared perspective. Peter Watson, of the National Resource Center on Organizational Improvement, helped attendees think about continuous quality improvement as an extension of our everyday work. I was impressed to hear about the excellent systems many counties already have in place; they show that we have much

to build on as we enhance our state-level efforts.

I participated in my own peer-to-peer sharing as a member of the team that traveled to Bethesda, Maryland, to participate in the Prescription Drug Policy Academy sponsored by the U.S. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. Ohio's team included representation from the Office of the Ohio Attorney General, the Ohio departments of Health and Mental Health and Addiction Services, the County Commissioners Association of Ohio, the Drug-Free Action Alliance, and other service providers. The academy focused on increased opiate addiction as related to over-prescription of medication. Ohio is doing a lot of innovative work on this issue that other states are interested in.

I especially enjoyed spending a morning with staff in the Toledo field office, where we had great dialogue on various ways OFC might improve services. These staff always are on the road and thinking about time, so I appreciated their willingness to sit down with me.

Every Thursday, I participate in the Child Protective Services Funding and Adult Protective Services Funding workgroups, both established as part of the Mid-Biennium Review (House Bill 483). Each of these

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groups is comprised of advocates from across the state, representing various stakeholder groups. Many group members travel hours each way to participate in each two-hour meeting. I continue to be impressed with the thoughtfulness each group brings to their tasks and am excited to see where this work will lead.

I highly encourage each of you to use out-of-office time to expand your knowledge and experiences. A great place to start is participating in the regional meetings that several OFC technical assistance teams are planning for public and private agencies. If you don't receive information directly from your team, logistics are posted on the OFC event calendar at <http://www.odjfs.state.oh.us/ocfcalendar>. Teams always are looking for topic

suggestions to keep meetings relevant for attendees.

Finally, I'd like to thank those who participated in the federal SACWIS Assessment Review last month. I'd like to give a special shout out to June Cannon (Miami PCSA), Julie Harmon (Miami Juvenile Court), David Jenkins (Shelby PCSA), Julie Barnes (Summit PCSA) and their fabulous staff for hosting the on-site visits and for their leadership in embracing data integrity and accountability in Ohio's SACWIS system. Read on to learn more about the assessment and other initiatives, as this First Friday highlights activities of the bureaus of Automated Systems and Child and Adult Technical Assistance.

## CPOE Stage 10

As summer draws to a close, a new Child Protection Oversight Evaluation (CPOE) cycle is about to begin. CPOE is a quality assurance review of Ohio's 88 PCSAs. This review is required by Ohio Administrative Code 5101:2-33-02. It was established in the early 1990s as a result of the Roe v. Staples Consent Decree of 1986. Early CPOE reviews were based on an 18-month cycle. This changed to a 24-month cycle in 2006.

In August 2008, Ohio underwent the second round of the federal Child and Family Services Review (CFSR), which determined that Ohio's CPOE reviews should be more compatible with the CFSR. This would allow Ohio to more accurately capture and report child welfare data, as required by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Children's

Bureau. Revising the CPOE process also helped Ohio achieve its Program Improvement Plan goals while maintaining requirements established in the Roe v. Staples decree. This structural change began with CPOE Stage 8 in 2010.

For the CPOE Stage 8 and 9 reviews, the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS) used a modified version of the Round 2 Federal Onsite Review Instrument to review in-home and substitute care cases. Quarterly county case sample sizes were reflective of the CFSR sample sizes.

CPOE Stage 10 will begin in October 2014. To prepare for Ohio's third round of the CFSR in 2017, ODJFS will use the new CFSR Onsite Review Instrument and a new Supplemental Review tool. The CFSR instrument can be accessed through the

"Instruments and Guides" section at <https://training.cfsrportal.org/resources/3044>.

CPOE Stage 10 will again review in-home and substitute care cases, but county sample sizes likely will increase. PCSAs scheduled for review between Oct. 1 and Dec. 31 include Belmont, Champaign, Clark, Clinton, Fayette, Franklin, Harrison, Holmes, Logan, Lorain, Monroe and Noble counties.

CPOE Stage 10 also will include a review of the 41 juvenile courts that have contracted with ODJFS to receive Title IV-E funds and that function as IV-E courts. The review schedule and sample sizes for these courts are being developed.

If you have questions about CPOE Stage 10, email [Susan.Shafer@jfs.ohio.gov](mailto:Susan.Shafer@jfs.ohio.gov).

## Conference Registration Now Open!

How do you make a great conference even better? You combine it with another outstanding event! Don't miss "Fostering Pathways to Success: A Conference for Transitioning and Emancipated Foster Youth and Supporters." This conference combines the annual Ohio Reach Summit and the annual Connecting the Dots from Foster Care to Employment and Independent Living Conference. Fostering Pathways to Success carries on the goals of its predecessors: to help improve social, educational and employment outcomes for youth in foster care. It will take place Oct. 17, 2014, at Xenos Christian Fellowship in Columbus. Click [here](#) for more information and to register.

## Federal SACWIS Assessment Review

Ohio's first federal SACWIS Assessment Review was held last month. Six reviewers from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Administration for Children and Families assessed Ohio's SACWIS system against more than 90 federal standards.

The week-long onsite review came after months of preparation by Ohio's state-county SACWIS team, including the advance submission of extensive background information and system documentation. During the visit, federal reviewers assessed Ohio's system for the following:

- Functionality requirements
- Support of child welfare business practices throughout the state
- Usage by state-identified system users, including front-line workers, supervisors, managers and others

Reviewers visited Miami, Shelby and Summit counties to observe caseworkers as they used SACWIS. Because Ohio's Title IV-E program includes 41 courts that function in the capacity of a Title IV-E child welfare agency, reviewers also met with representatives of Miami County Juvenile Court's IV-E court.

Although findings from the assessment have not been shared officially, federal reviewers informally noted several strengths and challenges:

### Strengths:

- County staff appreciate the system and they have increased efficiencies thanks to availability of state-wide historical child abuse and neglect information.
- SACWIS data makes assessments more accurate.
- Some county staff use SACWIS to assess the quality of their work.
- County staff said SACWIS supports more standardized state-wide casework practice.
- Linkages between the original case and the adoption case support greater understanding of long-term case outcomes.
- SACWIS design supports usability. (Examples: pre-populating data, informational icons, edit auditing, tracking information and preemptive data entry error assistance.)
- Ohio strives to improve SACWIS. Federal staff noted that most issues they previously identified have been addressed.
- Miami County Juvenile Court staff felt supported in learning.

- Miami, Summit and Shelby counties universally commended the SACWIS Help Desk staff.
- Federal staff noted state efforts to increase report availability over the past year.

### Challenges:

- The interface design could be improved and, in some instances, needs to be completed.
- The system still lacks an automated financial reconciliation feature, largely because of the county-administered structure.
- Some county staff still document information outside SACWIS (via spreadsheets or other systems), and some users find that entering information is difficult.
- Notification of hearing functionality and reports would be helpful.
- Some areas permit data to be changed without ensuring that it is internally consistent in all areas of the application.
- Additional training is needed; several users did not know certain functionality was available to them and/or preferred to use a manual process.

We are working with the Administration for Children and Families to schedule the exit conference and will receive a formal report in the coming months. After that, we will work collaboratively with counties and the Administration for Children and Families to develop a corrective action plan for the remaining compliance issues. Thank you to state and county staff who continue to share their talents and dedication to improve SACWIS, child welfare data integrity and overall accountability in Ohio's child welfare system.



Federal reviewers meet with Ohio's state-county SACWIS Assessment Review team to discuss Ohio's system. Pictured federal reviewers include, left to right: Dian Carroll (blue jacket), Peter Howe (yellow shirt), Barbara Putyra (purple shirt), Patricia Mellen and Christy Lamble. Not pictured: Joseph Castro.

## Reminder: Federal Report Year Ending Soon

Our thanks go out to county staff who continue to work toward statewide compliance with federal reporting requirements. With the federal report year ending on Sept. 30, timely data entry is especially critical to avoid losing federal revenue. Below are details on three federal measures that may need attention:

### Monthly Visitation for Foster Youth

Title IV-B of the Social Security Act requires states to collect information about monthly caseworker visits and report it to the Children's Bureau of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Administration for Children and Families. As stated in federal regulations, the number of monthly caseworker visits during a fiscal year must not be less than 95 percent of the number of visits that would occur if each child were visited once a month while in care. Ohio's most recent monthly statewide visitation rate for children in foster care was 89.28 percent. We suspect this may be due to a data entry lag, as percentages for October 2013 through March 2014 show performance exceeding 95 percent. Please work with your colleagues to ensure that activity logs are entered timely, and thank you to everyone who has shown leadership in this area. *Note: This measure differs*

*from the CFSR visitation measures, which examine frequency of visits for children in both in-home and out-of-home placements, as well as qualitative documentation of safety and case plan compliance.*

### National Youth in Transition Database

The National Youth in Transition Database (NYTD) stores data on youth who receive independent living services paid for or provided by state agencies. It includes both demographic and outcome information. (For more on the NYTD, see [First Friday May 2014](#).) Thank you for your continued efforts to connect with eligible youth and to encourage data completion. It's making a difference; NYTD compliance has been better; let's continue the trend for September!

The following are the participation rates for youth who turned 17 between April 1, 2014, and the following dates:

- September 30: 49 percent (259 participated, 269 did not)
- August 31: 58 percent (257 participated, 186 did not)
- July 31: 66 percent (244 participated, 125 did not)

### Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System

The Administration for Children and Families' Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System (AFCARS) collects case-level information on all children in foster care who are placed, cared for or supervised by a Title IV-E agency. It also collects information about children whose adoptions are facilitated by PCSAs. Ohio currently is in compliance with all AFCARS elements for the reporting period ending Sept. 30, 2014, with the exception of the "previously adopted" element. "Previously adopted" questions ask if a child in foster care ever has been legally adopted and, if so, the age of the child when the adoption was legalized. Please make sure this information is entered into SACWIS. Federal compliance standards for AFCARS require that each element be reported for 90 percent of children who are in care for 30 days or longer during the reporting period.

Online data quality reports are being developed to help monitor federal report compliance. If you need help understanding your county's performance, please contact the SACWIS Help Desk at [SACWIS\\_HELP\\_DESK@jfs.ohio.gov](mailto:SACWIS_HELP_DESK@jfs.ohio.gov).

## Did You Know? Fiscal Rule Update

The Alternative Response Experiential Learning fiscal rule has been replaced with the Child Welfare Experiential Learning (CWEL) fiscal rule. The CWEL fund allows counties to offer and participate in cross-county, face-to-face learning opportunities.

Peer-to-peer activities such as coaching, mentoring, shadowing and networking are key aids in implementing new practices. These were invaluable tools during Ohio's Differential Response rollout. The new fiscal rule supports the continuation of these opportunities, as well as Permanency Roundtables and other innovative child welfare practices.

We also are pleased to announce that, through the

CWEL fund, ODJFS is awarding up to 20 conference scholarships for the ninth annual National Conference on Differential Response in Child Welfare. This year's conference will be held Nov. 12 through 14 in Seattle.

CWEL funds are available to PCSAs through the generous support of Casey Family Programs. We are grateful for their partnership with Ohio! For more information, please see OAC 5101:9-6-33 and Family, Children and Adult Services Procedure Letter 292, "Instruction for Public Children Services Agencies Regarding Child Welfare Experiential Learning." You also may contact Sonia Tillman at [Sonia.Tillman@jfs.ohio.gov](mailto:Sonia.Tillman@jfs.ohio.gov) or (614) 752-0050.

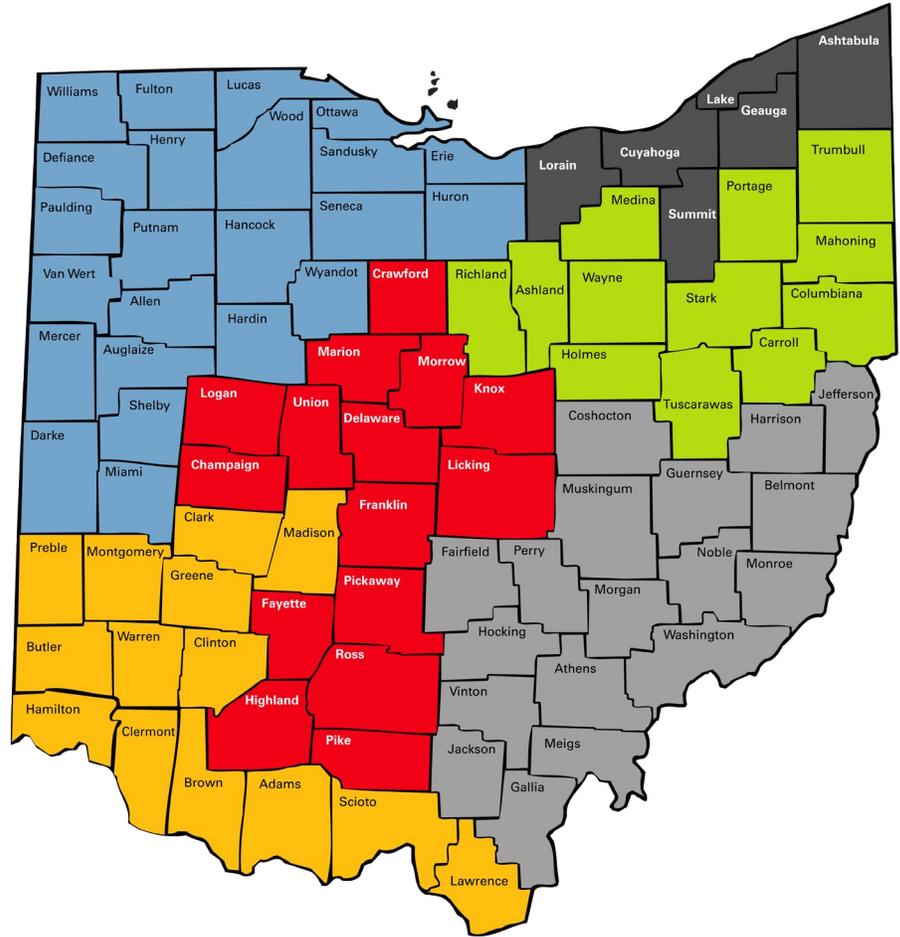
## Ohio's Trauma-Informed Care Initiative

The Ohio departments of Mental Health and Addiction Services (OhioMHAS) and Developmental Disabilities (DODD) recently launched a statewide Trauma-Informed Care (TIC) initiative. The TIC initiative was designed to increase knowledge about the impact of trauma, promote use of effective practices, and facilitate appropriate agency responses to clients.

As part of the initiative, six regional TIC collaboratives are being formed (see map below). The regional collaboratives will identify strengths, gaps and barriers associated with TIC implementation at the local level; develop a repository of expertise and shared resources; participate in and/or conduct training of effective TIC interventions; and promote the use of effective strategies targeted to specific populations (such as individuals with developmental disabilities, children, older adults and those challenged by substance abuse).

If you are interested in joining or learning more about the collaborative in your region, contact one of the regional staff members listed below.

To learn more about the TIC Initiative, visit <http://mha.ohio.gov/Default.aspx?tabid=104>.



### Did You Know? Trauma-Informed Classrooms

The National Council for Adoption has a free monthly publication for policy makers, families, child welfare specialists and others focused on adoption and other child welfare issues. The lead story in September is titled "Creating Trauma-Informed Classrooms." To download this or earlier issues, visit <https://www.adoptioncouncil.org/resources/adoption-advocate>.

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Southeast			
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OhioMHAS	John Hurley	john.hurley@mha.ohio.gov	(614) 466-6682

## New Technical Assistance Opportunities for Public and Private Agencies

The Foster Care Licensing Section (in OFC's Bureau of Child and Adult Technical Assistance) is updating its Standard Operating Procedure Manual to better support OFC's mission: To partner with public and private agencies and support the delivery of services to improve outcomes for families and children. The manual's new sections are:

- **Technical Assistance Visits:** This section establishes a process for OFC licensing specialists to conduct on-site visits to public and private agencies solely to provide technical assistance. These visits should be scheduled between reviews and are not subject to formal review requirements. They allow licensing specialists and agency staff to maintain an open dialogue, conduct troubleshooting and assess files. We hope that any agencies with new staff, new processes or topic-specific concerns will view this as an opportunity to improve practice.
- **Cross-Referral Assistance:** This section sets out

new processes to clarify and streamline how OFC is notified when there has been an allegation of abuse or neglect in out-of-home care. It was developed as the result of an activity in OFC's five-year Child and Family Services Plan.

For more information about upcoming changes to the manual, email [Renee.Williams@jfs.ohio.gov](mailto:Renee.Williams@jfs.ohio.gov).

Both of these new processes grew from suggestions provided during the Partners for Ohio's Families' (PFOF) regional forums and OFC's internal STEP (Solutions Through Empowerment and Partnership) team. The Bureau of Child and Adult Technical Assistance continues to seek ways to support public and private agency partners. If you have ideas, contact your technical assistance or licensing specialist, contact your PFOF Advisory Board representative, or volunteer to be a part of a continuous improvement work group.

### September 2014 Global Emails

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

- 8/8/14** - Level of Care Tool Pilot Invitation
- 8/18/14** - SFY 2015 Adoption Incentive Allocation Awards

### Rule Review Update

The following Ohio Administrative Code (OAC) rule will be posted for 30 days at [www.ohiorulereview.org](http://www.ohiorulereview.org):

OAC 5101:2-5-33, "Foster Caregiver Preplacement and Continuing Training."

This rule will be posted from Aug. 21 through Sept. 21, to comply with House Bill 2143. The comment period 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 2,161 hits in July 2014.

### Field Notes: Licensing Specialist Activities

*This new recurring First Friday feature provides monthly updates on field office activities and district issues. This month, Monica Kress — who supervises OFC licensing staff in Akron and Cleveland — shares some of the activities licensing specialists there have been undertaking in addition to their daily work:*

#### Upgrading the Licensing Web Pages

We've been working closely with the ODJFS Office of Communications to revamp the "Foster Care Licensing" section of the OFC website, [www.jfs.ohio.gov/ocf](http://www.jfs.ohio.gov/ocf). In addition to becoming more user-friendly, the revised section will have web pages for both prospective foster parents and prospective foster care agencies. It will provide basic information, as well as links to contact information, policies, forms and other useful resources. Stay tuned for our grand unveiling!

#### Enhancing the Ohio Foster Care Licensing FileNet System

Licensing specialists have been working with technical support staff to add "technical assistance," "cross-referral" and "self-report" categories to FileNet, the system used to document on-site review results. This will give licensing specialists enhanced ability to provide technical assistance without having to issue findings or require corrective action.

## Judicial College, Juvenile Judges Develop New Curriculum

The Supreme Court of Ohio Judicial College has developed a juvenile court curriculum for judges that is winning praise for bringing more consistency to the judicial education process.

Christy Tull, manager of curriculum development for the Judicial College, said Ohio is on the leading edge among a handful of states that are using an overarching educational curriculum to develop judicial courses, rather than having instructors plan each course year to year.

“By using this approach, we can ensure that learning occurs in an intentional and comprehensive way,” Tull said. She added that individually planned courses sometimes result in knowledge gaps and can place a burden on instructors, who have to remember and re-create course content from previous years.

The college developed the curriculum in partnership with the Ohio Association of Juvenile Court Judges, at the request of Jackson County Probate/Juvenile Court Judge Stephen D. Michael, who was serving as president of the association at the time. The effort took three years.

Judicial College Education Program Manager James Landon recently gathered juvenile court judges and magistrates for an annual judicial education course planning session. This was the first year the group was able to use the completed curriculum as a guide.

“The new process helps us plan a much more thoughtful,

thorough and complete course plan, which we believe will truly benefit the children and families that become involved in juvenile court proceedings,” Landon said.

The juvenile court judge curriculum is designed to build new judges’ core competencies in the following seven subject areas: Abuse, Neglect and Dependency; Delinquency and Unruly; Child Support, Custody and Parentage; Administrative Duties; Traffic; Community Outreach Duties; and Other.

Montgomery County Juvenile Court Judge Anthony Capizzi served as chair of the committee that developed the curriculum and is on the Judicial College faculty.

“I’m a big believer in the importance of education at both the local and national levels,” Judge Capizzi said. “There is so much for new juvenile judges to learn and for longtime judges to know that sustained, consistent curriculum that covers the same topics year after year is not only beneficial but necessary.”

The curriculum development committee included juvenile judges from Montgomery, Ottawa, Athens, Wood, Lucas, Jackson, and Hocking counties. ODJFS and PCSAO were consulted during the process and given the opportunity to provide input.

For more information about juvenile judge and magistrate education, email [james.landon@sc.ohio.gov](mailto:james.landon@sc.ohio.gov).



The Judicial College’s juvenile judge and magistrate course planning committee met on Aug. 1 to establish the 2015 education schedule, based on the new curriculum.

## PFOF Advisory Board Update

The PFOF Advisory Board's summer quarterly meeting in August opened by acknowledging several changes in membership. An updated list of members is available [here](#). Stephanie Hess, director of Court Services for the Supreme Court of Ohio, will serve until a new manager of the court's Children and Families Section is named.

To further explore how escalating rates of opiate addiction have been affecting Ohio's child welfare system, the board asked Orman Hall, director of the Governor's Cabinet Opiate Action Team, to discuss state-level efforts to address opiate use and options for intervention. Of special interest was a conversation regarding medically assisted treatment. You can view Director Hall's presentation to the board [here](#).

The board also discussed distribution options for a guide for resource parents (kinship or relative caregivers, foster parents, respite providers, and/or adoptive parents) and provided updates on several relevant state initiatives. The next meeting is scheduled for Nov. 12 and will include an examination of new measurements for the Child and Family Services Review.

Do you have topics or issues you would like to see the PFOF Advisory Board address from a solution-focused perspective? Share your thoughts with any member or send them to [Kristin.Gilbert@jfs.ohio.gov](mailto:Kristin.Gilbert@jfs.ohio.gov).

### Principle of the Month

OFC policies and supports should be strength-based and recognize the uniqueness of each community and agency.

### 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](mailto: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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