



PARTNERS
FOR OHIO'S FAMILIES

OCF seeks and supports strategies to strengthen the voices of youth and families for its work.

OFFICE OF FAMILIES & CHILDREN

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From OFC Deputy Director Jennifer Justice: March 6, 2015

If you are any level of manager in virtually any organization, you spend a lot of time in meetings. I sure do! But I don't think of this as taking time away from work; I see coming together and sharing ideas as the basis of our work. OK, truth in advertising: Not all meetings are equal, and I certainly have spent my share of them thinking off-topic. But to paraphrase a quote I once read, we never will see eye-to-eye if we never meet face-to-face. Haven't you ever read an email and wondered what the sender meant? Sometimes it takes old-fashioned, in-person inflection, emotion and expression to convey our meaning.

I participated in a number of great meetings last month. The Partners for Ohio's Families (PFOF) Advisory Board held its first meeting of 2015 and welcomed new members Kristi Burre (Fairfield County PCSA) and Stephanie Graubner Nelson (Supreme Court of Ohio). Although the board initially was established to oversee OFC's federal grant with the Midwest Child Welfare Implementation Center, it elected to continue with a revised purpose: to better understanding our common issues. In addition to providing updates about important news and ongoing initiatives, the meeting featured member-driven roundtable discussions. Scott Britton (Public Children Services Association of Ohio [PCSAO]) and Steve Howe (University of Cincinnati) led an interesting dialogue about the preliminary findings from PCSAO research to update caseload recommendations. We also had great conversation around Ohio Fostering Connections. Thanks to Mark Mecum (Ohio Association of Child Caring Agencies) for the informative [presentation](#). Let a [board member](#) know if you have a discussion suggestion.

The Supreme Court of Ohio's Subcommittee on Responding to Child Abuse, Neglect and Dependency welcomed a new chair at its meeting in February. Congratulations to Pam Meermans (Clark County). This hard-working multidisciplinary group exemplifies how long-term relationships can drive positive outcomes. We in child welfare participate in numerous surveys and focus groups to provide opinions, but you can read more about one opportunity in particular on page 7 that really will make a difference. I encourage you and your colleagues to participate.

Another great meeting concerned Cincinnati-based Lighthouse Youth Services' federal planning

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grant to prevent homelessness among youth aging out of foster care. During the process evaluation of this initiative, participants indicated that it is thoughtful, well-organized and sincerely designed to capture the insight of youth, families and community members. I especially appreciated that youth had been integrally engaged every step along the way. We all want to incorporate the voices of youth and families but can find a lot of reasons why it

won't work. This grant is an example of the rewards that come when we find ways to do so.

This First Friday looks at two programs that show how actively engaging families in our work results in better outcomes. Ohio's primary parent partner programs continue to demonstrate that families who have experienced the child welfare system can help others raise healthy families (see below). And on page 4, we examine an initiative to expand the reach of family drug courts in Ohio.

Primary Parent Partners

The [July 2014 First Friday](#) introduced Helping Ohio Parent Effectively (HOPE), Ohio's primary parent partner workgroup, and identified the recipients of three Primary Parent Partner Planning Grants. PCSA staff from Cuyahoga, Richland and Trumbull counties all spoke with enthusiasm of their plans to design and implement their own primary parent partner programs. Lucas County Children Services, which has operated a successful primary parent partner program, joined the project in an advisory capacity. All three grant recipients have been busy, and a lot has happened since July.

During the six-month planning process, each county conducted a series of listening sessions with parents, staff, resource parents and community partners. These sessions allowed counties to share their program goals, gather feedback about participants' experiences with the agency and hear their suggestions. All three counties adopted the name HOPE Partners for their programs.

However, each program will be tailored to local needs:

Trumbull County Children Services plans to phase in parent orientation sessions, co-facilitated by Trumbull County's quality assurance supervisor and a HOPE partner. These sessions will help families who are new to the child welfare system understand their rights and what they can expect of the agency. The agency also will host both youth and parent support groups, each co-facilitated by a HOPE partner and a mental health professional. Eventually, the program will offer family-to-family matching.

Cuyahoga County Children and Family Services also plans to offer parent orientation sessions, during which families will have an opportunity to share their grief and loss. HOPE partners will share their involvement with the child welfare system, and child welfare staff will share their perspectives on the difficulty of removing a child from a parent or caregiver. Substitute caregivers will

Helping Ohio Parent Effectively



offer insight into their role in providing temporary care for children. Like Trumbull County, Cuyahoga County would like to incorporate family-to-family matching as their program progresses.

Richland County Children Services plans to pair HOPE partners with families that have not identified a support person to accompany them to team decision-making sessions. HOPE partners also will attend agency staff meetings to provide feedback on ways the agency could improve family engagement and provide better outcomes for ongoing cases.

Ohio's HOPE initiatives are possible through the support and collaboration of Casey Family Programs, PCSAO, Lucas County Children Services and Ohio's HOPE Partners workgroup. OFC offers its congratulations to the individuals involved in Trumbull, Cuyahoga and Richland counties' successful planning grants. Their hard work and positive outcomes have led Casey Family Programs not only to invest in the implementation of these programs, but also to partner with PCSAO to support an additional pilot site in 2015. Welcome and congratulations also to the Stark County Department of Job and Family Services, which also will receive a HOPE planning grant.

What is a Primary Parent Partner?

Primary parent partners are birth, adoptive or foster parents who have had an open child welfare case with a successful resolution for their children. These parents worked with their caseworkers, guardians ad litem, community supports, and their children's foster or kinship caregivers to reach the best possible outcomes for their children, whether that was through reunification or placement with other caregivers. Counties that implement primary parent programming recruit, train and prepare these parents to serve as resources for other parents. Primary parent partners are able to use their own experiences to connect as advocates and mentors with parents who have open child welfare cases, and help in a way that is affirming, fear-reducing and solution-focused.

Building a Better Future Training

Did you know that February was National Parent Leadership Month? Casey Family Programs, PCSAO and OFC highlighted the importance of parent leadership by sponsoring a three-day family engagement training called "Building a Better Future," or BABF. The event was held Feb. 9 through 11 at Richland County Children Services. It was attended by 27 primary parent partners, parents training to become primary partners, foster care alumni, resource parents and child welfare staff from Ohio's HOPE Partner sites (see page 2).

"This interactive training helps

participants to identify their individual and family strengths and to recognize the strengths of the families they'll be assisting," said OFC staff member Colleen Tucker-Buck, who co-facilitated the training with La Toyia Conway-Hampton, a national primary parent consultant and CEO of Two-Lifestyles, Inc.

A New York primary parent partner developed the training with support from the Annie E. Casey Foundation. Topics include the rights of parents involved in the child welfare system, state and federal laws that govern Ohio's child welfare programming,

the best ways to approach and resolve issues that arise between parents and child welfare agencies, tools to increase family engagement, conflict management and problem-solving, and how individuals' communication styles can impact others' perceptions of them.

To support sustainability of the BABF curriculum in Ohio's HOPE Partners sites, a train-the-trainer session will be offered to primary parents and agency staff in Cuyahoga, Richland and Trumbull counties this spring. Email Colleen.Tucker@jfs.ohio.gov for more information.

Learning in Los Angeles: Parents in Partnership

Primary parent programs value peer learning so it was only natural for Ohio's HOPE Partners programs to seek information from similar programs when planning their own. With support from Casey Family Programs and PCSAO, representatives from the three pilot sites traveled to Los Angeles from Dec. 15 through 17, 2014, to learn more about that city's successful Parents in Partnership (PIP) program.

PIP was started in 2006 by a group of dedicated children services staff and passionate primary parents who saw the benefit of pairing individuals previously involved with the child welfare system with families currently involved in it. Since then, PIP has developed into a successful, multi-faceted parent engagement program. Data show that families who receive PIP services are 22.6 percent more likely to reunify with their children than parents who do not.

The broad array of PIP services includes the following:

- **Lobby and Community Outreach:** Primary parent partners are on-site at child welfare offices, courts and other community locations to engage with parents and provide information and resources.
- **Parent Warm Line:** Primary parent partners respond to calls from parents who need answers, guidance or an understanding listener.
- **Parent Orientations:** Primary parent partners and agency staff co-facilitate sessions for parents who are new to the child welfare system. The sessions give parents information about

their rights and how to navigate the child welfare system. They also address parents' concerns and explain the steps to reunification.

- **Parent Support Groups:** Primary parent partners facilitate group discussions for parents with children under the agency's supervision, either in-home or out-of-home.
- **Team Decision-Making Support:** Primary parent partners provide support to families during child and family team meetings.

With this wealth of information at our disposal, OFC is excited to partner with Ohio's pilot sites in implementing these concepts. Many thanks to Casey Family Programs and PCSAO for making this learning opportunity available, and to Ohio's dedicated staff and parents who are contributing to this work.



Above: Representatives from OFC, Casey Family Programs and Cuyahoga, Trumbull and Richland counties attended a site visit in Los Angeles, along with staff from a program in Denver, who also were visiting.

Ohio Receives Grant to Examine Family Drug Courts

Ohio has learned it is one of five states nationwide that will receive competitive federal funding to increase the scale and scope of family drug courts.

Ohio will receive \$309,115 from the U.S. Department of Justice's Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, as part of the Statewide System Reform Program (SSRP). The state also will receive technical assistance from [Children and Family Futures](#), a leading national researcher on the effects of substance abuse on children and families.

SACWIS data indicate that more than 42 percent of parents who come in contact with Ohio's child protective services have identified substance abuse issues. Even though research shows positive outcomes for families that participate in family drug courts, only a limited number of families access these services. (You can read more about this in the attached "Research Update on Family Drug Courts.")

"The increase in opiate abuse is taking a toll on Ohio's families," Supreme Court Chief Justice Maureen O'Connor said. "Our family drug courts can provide families stability and increase well-being through court-monitored treatment.

We will use this grant to identify the barriers that limit families' ability to access the assistance drug courts provide. Removing these barriers is fundamental to participation and success."

The Supreme Court of Ohio's Specialized Dockets Section and Advisory Committee on Children & Families developed Ohio's grant application in partnership with the Ohio Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (OhioMHAS) and ODJFS. Although the Supreme Court of Ohio is the designated lead agency, OhioMHAS and ODJFS are core partners. Together, the three agencies will collaborate as a joint Supreme Court of Ohio subcommittee (see page 5).

In February, subcommittee members traveled to Washington, D.C., to meet other grant recipients and experts from Children and Family Futures. Over the next two years, they will develop a multi-year strategic plan. At the end of that time, Ohio will be eligible to apply for a multi-year implementation grant to put its plan into action.

The Judicial Symposium on Addiction and Child Welfare (see page 6) is certain to spark (continued on next page)

What is a Family Dependency Treatment Court?

Family dependency treatment courts help parents successfully complete substance abuse treatment and other child welfare service goals. They address parents' chemical dependency as the root cause of the dependency, neglect or abuse that led to the family's involvement in the child protection system and juvenile court.

Family dependency treatment courts are similar to adult drug courts. Both have regular, frequent hearings, intensive judicial monitoring, timely referral to substance abuse treatment, frequent drug testing, and incentives and sanctions. Family dependency treatment courts are designed to help parents become self-sufficient financially, emotionally and personally, and to help them develop parenting and coping skills.

Members of the joint subcommittee pose with Children and Family Futures Executive Director Nancy Young at the SSRP kickoff meeting in early February in Washington, D.C.. (Left to right) Joani Moore, (OhioMHAS) OFC's Kristin Gilbert, Christine Raffaele (Supreme Court of Ohio), Judge Denise McColley, Judge Theresa Dellick, Stephanie Nelson (Supreme Court of Ohio) and Nancy Young.



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discussion of how communities can best collaborate to address the addictions of parents who come to the attention of juvenile courts.

For more information about Ohio's SSRP grant, email Christine.Raffaele@sc.ohio.gov. To learn more about the other grant recipients, click [here](#).

Joint Subcommittee Members

Supreme Court of Ohio

Stephanie Nelson, Christine Raffaele, Stephanie Hess, James Landon, Tasha Ruth, Colleen Rosshirt, Ashley Gilbert and Kris Steele

OhioMHAS

Joani Moore

ODJFS

Sue Williams and Kristin Gilbert

Ohio Juvenile Courts

Judge Theresa Dellick, Judge Connie F. Zimmelman, Judge J. Mark Costine, Magistrate Susan House, Judge Charlotte Coleman Eufinger, Judge Deborah Alspach, Judge Denise McColley, Doug Schonauer and Kristen Blake

PCSAO

Angela Sausser

Ohio Council of Behavioral Health and Family Service Providers

Lori Criss

Ohio Association of County Behavioral Health Authorities

Denise L. Martin

Casey Family Programs

Crystal Ward Allen

County Commissioners Association of Ohio

Laura Abu-Absi

Ohio Court Appointed Special Advocates

Doug Stephens

Clermont County Children's Protective Services

Tim Dick

Did You Know? Specialized Dockets

Specialized dockets are particular types of courts that offer a therapeutic-based approach to providing court supervision and treatment.

Since the establishment of the Hamilton County Drug Court in 1995, Ohio has been recognized as a national leader in the implementation of specialized dockets. In 2001, the Supreme Court of Ohio created a Specialized Dockets Section to help expand this practice model statewide. Today, more than 159 specialized dockets operate in Ohio, including drug courts, mental health courts, reentry courts, Operating a Vehicle Impaired (OVI) courts, sex offender courts, felony nonsupport courts and domestic violence courts.

Rule 36.02 of the Rules of Superintendence for the Courts of Ohio includes 12 standards that create a minimum level of uniform practices while still allowing courts to tailor their operations to meet local needs. The standards became effective January 1, 2013. Among other things, they require courts to use a non-adversarial approach, hold regular treatment team meetings and conduct regular status review hearings.

Ohio has 16 juvenile courts with certified family dependency treatment courts. These are in Belmont, Delaware, Clermont, Coshocton, Fairfield, Franklin, Hardin, Lorain, Lucas, Mahoning, Marion, Morrow, Ottawa, Summit, Trumbull and Union counties.

Supreme Court of Ohio Forms Joint Subcommittee

The Supreme Court of Ohio's Specialized Dockets Section and Advisory Committee on Children & Families established a joint subcommittee to oversee SSRP grant activities. Because of the far-reaching nature of the grant, membership is diverse. It includes representatives from the courts, core state agency partners and key stakeholders. (For a full list of members, see the box at left.)

The first joint subcommittee meeting was held on Jan. 8 at the Thomas J. Moyer Ohio Judicial Center in Columbus. Two representatives from Children and Family Futures – Executive Director Nancy Young and Senior Program Associate Sanford Robinson – provided an overview of the grant and its goals. To kick off the planning process, members then brainstormed the current system's strengths and weaknesses. They agreed on the following needs:

- Multidisciplinary and cross-system education of key community stakeholders.
- Marketing the concept of family dependency treatment courts, particularly outreach to such non-traditional stakeholders as funders, educators, physicians and faith-based programs.
- Institutionalized cooperation and collaboration among the courts, treatment providers and child welfare professionals.
- Establishing family dependency treatment court practices as the accepted standard when families with addiction issues come to the

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attention of courts.

- Allocated resources, including funding for standard services.
- Data collection and analysis.

Members affirmed the value of peer interventions and support, support for families, and recovery support. Their next order of business is to finalize Ohio's SSRP project structure.

The joint subcommittee meets monthly. For more information, email Christine.Rafaelle@sc.ohio.gov.

Free Regional Training on Human Trafficking

The Ohio Network of Children's Advocacy Centers is hosting a free training called "Human Trafficking: A Multidisciplinary Approach " in five regional locations. Presenter information is attached. Follow the links below to register for your region's session.

March 24	Northwest Ohio (Findlay) Register Now!
March 25	Southeast Ohio (Cambridge) Register Now!
March 27	Northeast Ohio (Akron) Register Now!
May 20	Southwest Ohio (Cincinnati) Register Now!
May 22	Central Ohio (Columbus) Register Now!

Questions? Email Amy Roberts, chapter director of the Ohio Network of Children's Advocacy Centers, at aroberts@oncac.org.



Free Resources

The National Alliance for Drug Endangered Children (National DEC) defines drug-endangered children as those at risk of suffering physical or emotional harm as a result of illegal drug use, possession, manufacturing, cultivation or distribution. The designation also may include children whose caretakers' substance misuse interferes with their ability to parent and provide a safe and nurturing environment. National DEC helps break the cycle of abuse and neglect by empowering practitioners to

identify and respond to children living in dangerous drug environments.

National DEC's website offers quick access to expert consultation and a range of resources and webinars related to children who are exposed to alcohol and drugs. Through this site, www.nationaldec.org, you also can sign up to receive notice of training and resource opportunities. OFC encourages you to use these free resources to help support better outcomes for children and families.

Have You Saved This Date? June 23, 2015

The Judicial Symposium on Addiction and Child Welfare will be held June 23 in Columbus. This free, day-long event will build on the success of last year's Ohio Judicial Symposium on Opiate Addiction, when almost 900 local officials and stakeholders representing 83 counties convened. Many who attended last year's event continue to implement the plans they developed to address opiate and heroin addiction.

This symposium will examine issues surrounding addiction as they relate to parents and caretakers involved in child welfare cases. In advance of the event, juvenile judges will be asked to convene county teams of up to five child welfare, behavioral health and judicial professionals whose work directly impacts families who come to the attention of courts because of substance abuse.

Teams will hear from state and national experts and discuss how to apply what they learn at the local level. Participants will be asked to identify core local needs and limitations, steps they can take to support their community partners' work, and resolve conflicting demands.

The symposium will be hosted by the Ohio Association of County Behavioral Health Authorities, the Supreme Court of Ohio, OhioMHAS, ODJFS and PCSAO. Look for the logo below in next month's First Friday to learn more.



JUDICIAL SYMPOSIUM
on Addiction & Child Welfare

CAND Subcommittee Welcomes New Chair

Congratulations to Pam Meermans, deputy director of Clark County Family and Children Services, on her recent appointment as chair of the Supreme Court of Ohio's Subcommittee on Responding to Child Abuse, Neglect and Dependency (CAND). The Supreme Court of Ohio's Advisory Committee on Children & Families established CAND in 2004 to do the following:

1. Determine if Ohio's statutory guidelines for the investigation and prosecution of child abuse and neglect properly serve children and families who need government intervention;
2. Make statutory and administrative recommendations to improve Ohio's system for accepting and investigating reports of child abuse and neglect; and
3. Make recommendations to standardize Ohio statutes regarding abuse, neglect and dependency cases.

Under this charge, CAND oversaw the early report, pilot study and statewide implementation of Ohio's

Differential Response system. Its activities now are focused on three areas:

1. Investigative, administrative and judicial handling of child abuse and neglect.
2. Support of experimental, model and demonstration programs for testing innovative approaches and techniques.
3. Reform of state laws, ordinances, regulations, protocols and procedures to provide comprehensive protection for children.

CAND soon will oversee a three-year assessment of issues that might be appropriate for its future consideration. Watch your mailbox and First Friday for more information, including opportunities to participate in surveys and focus groups. This may be your chance to mention an issue or program that you believe merits attention.

Learn more about CAND's membership and work [here](#). Email Kristin.Gilbert@jfs.ohio.gov or Stephanie.Nelson@sc.ohio.gov for more information.



Above: CAND chair Pam Meermans.

Below: CAND members meet Feb. 11.



Did You Know? Services for Youth

[Ohio Administrative Code \(OAC\) Rule 5101:2-42-19.2](#), "Requirements for provision of independent living services to young adults who have emancipated," requires each PCSA to provide services and support, upon request, to former foster youth ages 18 to 21 who emancipated from agency custody at age 18. It is important to note that this does not apply to former foster youth who terminated custody before age 18.

These important independent living services include Educational Training Vouchers (ETV), which help pay for secondary education; GED preparation courses and other educational supports; career exploration services; employment programs or vocational training; and training regarding housing, education and home management, such as how to find housing, prepare food, do laundry and perform basic home maintenance.

Caseworkers should make sure that youth understand how these services and supports might impact their future. OFC recommends that PCSAs educate judicial officers about these services, to help them make knowledgeable decisions on behalf of emancipating youth who appear in the courtroom.

CFSR Measure of the Month

Each month, First Friday features one federal Child and Family Services Review (CFSR) measure in our “Measure of the Month” series. March’s measure is “Permanency in 12 Months for Children in Foster Care 12 to 23 Months,” one of seven data indicators that the CSFR evaluates for each state. Because the CSFR “looks back” at prior years’ activities, the work we do today will impact Ohio’s performance on the 2017 CSFR. It is critical that stakeholders fully [understand the CSFR process](#) and assess current performance.

Three permanency measures are related to the time children spend in custody. Each measure assesses our performance in achieving permanency for one of three distinct populations: children who have been in care for 12 months or less; children who have been in care for 12 to 23 months; and children who have been in care for at least 24 months. These data indicators measure one of child welfare’s most critical obligations to the children and families it serves: timely reunification or placement in safe and permanent homes.

We featured the first permanency measure [last month](#), which looks at the percentage of youth who achieve permanency within 12 months. This month’s focus on the second category examines Ohio’s success in achieving permanency for those children who stay in foster care between 12 and 23 months.

In previous CSFR Rounds, the Children’s Bureau calculated permanency by assessing the percentage of reunifications achieved within 12 months and adoptions within 24 months. While the current measure is comparable to the old, it examines permanency in a more holistic fashion. Under the new measure, permanency now includes a range of outcomes, including a child’s discharge from foster care to a relative or legal guardianship, adoption, and reunification with parents or a primary caretaker.

This measure selects children who were in care on April 1 of each year and have

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Rule Review Update

The following OAC rules will be posted to Ohio’s Families and Children Rule Review website, www.ohiorulereview.org, for the times specified below.

From Feb. 3 through March 6:

- OAC Rule 5101:2-5-02, “Application for an agency to perform specific functions; amended applications.”
- OAC Rule 5101:2-5-03, “Certification of an agency to perform specific functions.”
- OAC Rule 5101:2-5-05, “Agency appeal of findings of noncompliance.”
- OAC Rule 5101:2-5-06, “Corrective action plans.”
- OAC Rule 5101:2-5-07, “Denial or revocation of an agency’s certificate or certification to perform specific functions; temporary certificates.”
- OAC Rule 5101:2-5-08, “PCPA and PNA governance and administration.”
- OAC Rule 5101:2-5-10, “Child records.”
- OAC Rule 5101:2-5-16, “Consideration to be given to child’s religion.”
- OAC Rule 5101:2-5-17, “Discharge summary.”
- OAC Rule 5101:2-5-22, “Recommendations for initial foster home certification.”
- OAC Rule 5101:2-5-25, “Changing the certification of a foster caregiver from one type of foster home to another.”

Purpose: Five-year review

From Feb. 13 through Feb. 27:

- OAC Rule 5101:2-42-88, “Requirements for substitute care placement disruptions.”

Purpose: To reflect changes in federal human sex trafficking laws.

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 1,380 hits during January 2015.

March 2015 Global Emails

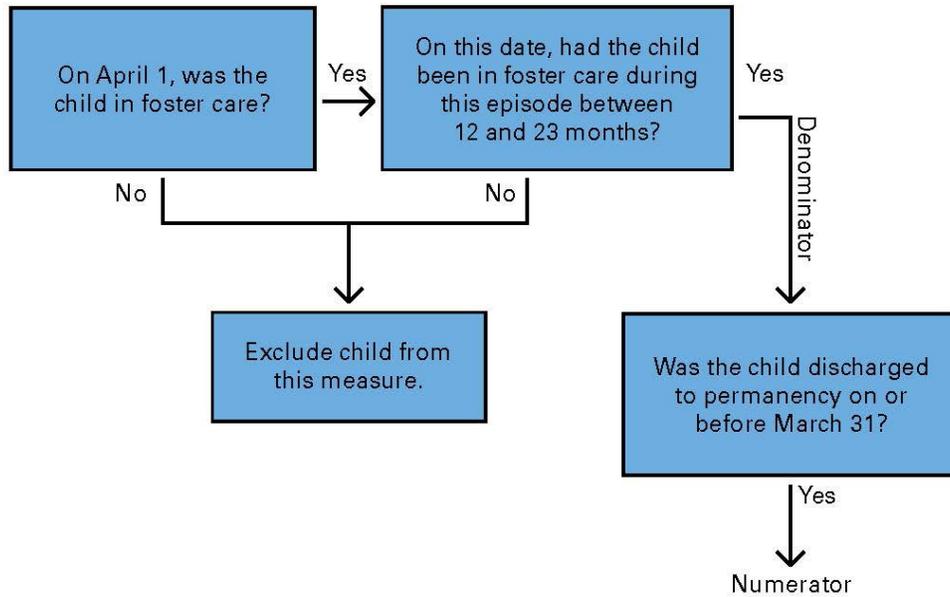
The following emails were sent in February from Jennifer Justice to PCSA directors and/or private agency directors. They are organized below by mailing date and key word.

2/27/15 - Invite—Ohio Minds Matter

(continued from previous page) been in care between 12 and 23 months. This group is monitored to determine the percentage discharged to permanency by March 31 of the following year. Youth who are at least 18 years old on April 1 are excluded. Similar to last month's measure, trial home visits that are more than 30 days long are discounted from the length of stay in foster care. Additionally, youth ages 18 or older on the first day of the 12-month period are excluded from this measure.

Performance is risk-adjusted by the child's age on April 1. The National Standard is 43.7 percent. Our risk-adjusted performance is 44.3 percent, which is slightly better than most states. In other words, of all the children in care between 12 and 23 months on April 1 in a given year, 44.3 percent obtained permanency by March 31 of the following year.

Please stay tuned as we feature other CFSR measures in future editions!



Principle of the Month

OFC seeks and supports strategies to strengthen the voices of youth and families for its work.

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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