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FOR OHIO'S FAMILIES

There is urgency and importance to OFC's work.

OFFICE OF FAMILIES & CHILDREN

### From OFC Deputy Director Jennifer Justice – 11/6/15

How many of us can lay claim to 35 years as a child welfare advocate? The Public Children Services Association of Ohio (PCSAO) can! I know that many of you attended the

fabulous PCSAO conference last month and participated in its anniversary celebration. Of course, the celebration included a trip down memory lane, with remarks from current and former staff. As the tribute reviewed PCSAO's growth and evolving sophistication since it formed in 1980, I thought about how much the child welfare field also has changed since then.

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The Adoption Assistance and Child Welfare Act established Title IV-E in 1980, and Congress really began thinking about child welfare oversight and how children entered and remained in the system. This also was the first year we heard the term "reasonable efforts," and the first year courts were required to review child welfare cases regularly. The Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA) – the first significant federal child abuse and neglect legislation – had been enacted just six years prior, providing financial incentives to states for establishing reporting procedures and investigation systems. A lot has changed since 1980!

But even though our system and the struggles of families may be infinitely more complex now, many of the social debates remain the same as 35 years ago. For example, the cost of care, reasonable caseloads, funding for services, parental versus children's rights, multidisciplinary roles, and the best way to achieve permanent connections for children in care all continue to be key issues in our field.

You can't talk about system progress and the need for ongoing, persistent attention without noting the other benchmark celebrated at the conference: Gayle Channing Tenenbaum's nearly 30 years of service with PCSAO. Her tribute included a terrific montage of messages from colleagues and PCSAO supporters, including several of Ohio's governors. Gayle is leaving PCSAO, but not her mission. I have no doubt that we will have frequent interaction as she settles into her position at the newly established Center for Medicaid Policy at The Center for Community Solutions.

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Congratulations to PCSAO on another successful conference, the organization's 30th. It featured tons of great workshops and a much-needed theme of permanency. For my part, I most appreciated the opportunity to interact with conference participants and better understand the issues being faced by caseworkers, supervisors and families. And, of course, it was wonderful to be reminded of the successes – big and little – that happen every day.

Cheers to each of the individuals honored during the luncheon ceremony. You are both an inspiration and a reminder of the importance of the work that we do.

Don't forget that November is National Adoption Month. We've included a number of articles about adoption programming throughout the state. Let us know about your local events so that we can help spread the word!

## Opening Day: A Look Back

The November 2014 First Friday described the 25-year-long effort of adoption advocates to make birth certificates available to all Ohio-born adoptees. Prior to the passage of Substitute Senate Bill 23 and its signing by Gov. Kasich in December 2013, Ohio adoption records dated 1964 to 1996 were sealed. That all changed on "Opening Day" – March 20, 2015 – when the Ohio Department of Health began accepting adoption record requests from those born between Jan. 1, 1964, and Sept. 18, 1996. The new law affected more than 400,000 people.

During the 90 days between the governor's signature and the law's effective date, OFC worked with advocates to create three new forms for birth parents. One form allows birth parents to state their contact preferences, another allows them to request that their names be redacted, and a third allows them to provide their family's social and medical history. The law also included a 12-month waiting period to ensure that the infrastructure was in place to support the anticipated demand for records.

Media coverage of "Opening Day" began weeks in advance. More than 175 news features about Ohio's new law appeared nationwide from mid-February to mid-May. Highlights included in-depth coverage in Al Jazeera America and an April 29 episode of "Nightline" that followed an adoptee from the time she opened her birth certificate at an Adoption Network Cleveland support meeting until she met her birth mother in Florida.

As of Aug. 20, 2015, nearly 6,400 Ohio adoptees have requested their original birth records.



Above: An Ohio adoptee signs a banner celebrating Opening Day.

## They ROARed

Ohio's broad-based coalition supporting Substitute Senate Bill 23 collectively called itself Restore Ohio Adoptee Rights (ROAR). Here are a few messages Ohio adoptees wrote on a celebratory banner (below left) the night before Opening Day:

"43 years of not knowing anything, finally I will get the answers I have longed for."

–Sandra

"Finally a small but important piece of my puzzle...thank you."

–Shannon

"Thank you to everyone involved to make this day happen. Think about how many lives you will change. I am so grateful!"

–Kristin

"Keep on helping other states with closed records!"

–Pam

"I am so honored to be a part of this historic day for Ohio. Thanks to all who worked for so many years to make this day possible."

–Becky

"The end of an error March 20, 2015 Thank you!"

(anonymous)

"You've helped me fill a huge void in my life and have given me a gift that could never be matched."

–Steve

"It seems I have waited for this day forever. Thank you to everyone who made this possible. It's about time."

–Heather

## The Ohio Adoption Photolisting

Have you visited the Ohio Adoption Photolisting (OAPL) [website](#) recently? It is a great resource used by many PCSAs as a recruitment tool to find permanent families for children in their care. Re-launched in November 2010, the site displays agency-created profiles and photos of children who are waiting for a forever family. Prospective adoptive families can browse the site, identify potential matches and connect with the child's custodial agency. The site currently has 295 active individual profiles and 29 active sibling group profiles.

The site is simple to use. The Family and Youth Law Center (FYLaw) helps manage PCSA accounts and can help caseworkers and adoption specialists to set up an account, create effective profiles, add photos, and provide other technical assistance. A June 2015 recorded webinar is available to help users better understand the mechanics and features of the site.

OAPL offers many other great resources for adoptive and prospective adoptive families, including support groups and a forum to share information about resources and educational sessions. The site also links to a number of other resources and websites, including OFC's rule review website. It's definitely worth a visit!

For more information about setting up an account, to

**THE OHIO ADOPTION PHOTOLISTING WEBSITE**

Home About Us Resources FAQs Contact Us

**Meet the Children**  
View All  
Advanced Search  
Name Search  
ID Search  
Adoption  
Foster Care  
Success Stories  
Contact Us

**Featured Child**  
**Cortney**  
Cortney is an active 16 year old teen who loves to live a healthy life style and play sports. She enjoys being outdoors and doing all kinds of activities. She enjoys playing volleyball and basketball. She also enjoys things other typical teenage girls enjoy. She loves to coordinate her outfits and her appearance is very important to her. She likes to shop and socialize with other teens. [view profile >](#)

**Welcome to The Ohio Adoption Photolisting: You Can Make a Difference!**

*On any given day, over 11,000 Ohio children are living in foster families or in another out-of-home placement setting. These children, who reside in the custody of local children service agencies, may be dealing with issues of past abuse, neglect, and/or dependency. These children need permanent families through adoption.*

Every child has a right to a permanent family - a family where they can be loved, cared for, and kept safe. Unfortunately, in Ohio many waiting children do not have families to call their own. The Ohio Adoption Photolisting is designed to assist individuals and families interested in learning more about the adoption process and to provide information on waiting children in Ohio.

**Using this Site**

There are two ways to view Ohio's children:

- You may **MEET THE CHILDREN** by viewing a list of all Ohio waiting children.
- You may create a **SEARCH** to define the profile of children you would like to adopt.

Here are some tips for using this site:

- Write down the name and identifying number of the child(ren) about whom you would like more information.
- Visit the **ADOPTION** section of our website to learn more about adoption in Ohio.
- Click the **CONTACT US** link at the top of this page to ask questions by email.
- Visit [AdoptOKids.org](http://AdoptOKids.org) to view a national photolisting of waiting children.

When requesting more information on a child, please be aware that you may not be given any identifying information until the agency has received a copy of your Homestudy and has determined your family is a potential match for the child.

**Things to Remember**

Many of the children available for adoption in Ohio have been removed from their homes due to neglect, physical and/or sexual abuse, emotional abuse, and/or the inability of their parents to care adequately for them. This photo listing is a very

share any suggestions for enhancements to the site, or if you have information that should be added to the resource page, please contact FYLaw staff attorney Megan Heydlauff at [mheydlauff@law.capital.edu](mailto:mheydlauff@law.capital.edu).

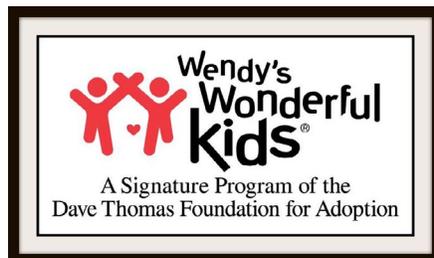
## Adoption Support Meetings Offered

To support individuals with adoption connections, Adoption Network Cleveland has expanded its outreach to offer open-discussion support meetings not only in northeast Ohio, but throughout the state. Four meetings are held monthly in northeast Ohio, four meetings are held monthly in other Ohio regions, and a virtual meeting is held monthly via webcam. The meetings provide a safe place for anyone interested in better understanding adoption and/or share their feelings and experiences. To learn more about these and other resources, visit <http://www.adoptionnetwork.org/>.

## Wendy's Wonderful Kids: A Successful Partnership for Children

November is National Adoption Month, a time to both celebrate success and elevate awareness about children in Ohio and across the nation who are waiting to be adopted. One success to celebrate this month is the partnership between ODJFS and the Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption.

Since late 2012, ODJFS has committed to implementing the foundation's signature program, Wendy's Wonderful Kids (WWK), throughout the state in order to find permanent homes for older children who have been lingering in foster care. Research shows that children referred to the program are up to three times more likely to get adopted. Ohio's results have further proven the program's success, and the state's partnership with the Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption has been a model for several other states and a Canadian province.



The Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption trains and oversees 45 WWK recruiters in Ohio. Each recruiter has a caseload of 15 to 20 children ages 9 or older who have been in care two or more years. The recruiters meet monthly with each child; are in frequent contact with foster parents,

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teachers and others in the child's life; diligently search for potential adoptive parents; and prepare children and potential adoptive parents for adoption.

As of Sept. 30, 1,002 children have been on Ohio's WWK caseloads. Of those, 478 (47 percent) have been matched with families, and 205 (20 percent) have been adopted.

Of the children adopted, the average age was 12 (33 percent were 14 or older), 46 percent were part of a sibling group adopted together, and 61 percent were males.

Currently, 629 children are on Ohio's WWK caseloads. Before being involved with a WWK recruiter, they had spent an average of 2,084 days (nearly six years) in care. Of these children:

- 10.7 percent are in pre-adoptive placements
- 40 percent are 16 or older (average age is 14)
- 57 percent are part of a sibling group
- 64 percent have at least one identified special need
- 42 percent are in a group home, institution or juvenile detention center
- 10 percent had experienced 10 or more placements prior to WWK involvement
- 11 percent had a failed adoption prior to WWK involvement

Older children, children in sibling groups, children with



disabilities and children who have lingered for years in care are most likely to age out of care without adoptive families. WWK makes a difference and proves that no child is "unadoptable." The Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption supports 211 recruiters in all 50 states, Washington, D.C., and six provinces in Canada. Because of its work, more than 5,000 children have been adopted.

The Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption has a variety of free materials for individuals and agencies, including a guidebook called "Finding Forever Families: A Step-By-Step Guide to Adoption," videos ("Youth Voices: Life after Foster Care" and "Unadoptable is Unacceptable") and public service announcements ("When I First Met My Child"). All can be ordered or downloaded at [www.davethomasfoundation.org](http://www.davethomasfoundation.org). The foundation also encourages employers to offer foster care and adoption benefits through its Adoption-Friendly Workplace Campaign. To learn more about any of the foundation's programs, its website or follow it on Facebook or Twitter.



Above: Dave Thomas, founder of Wendy's and the Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption, surrounded by children. An adoptee himself, Dave often noted that children available for adoption "are not someone else's responsibility; they are our responsibility."

## More than Numbers

Numbers are important for providing proof of a program's success. To really understand the impact of Wendy's Wonderful Kids, however, nothing beats an actual success story. Here are a few. (Names have been changed for confidentiality.)

**In Clermont County, Katelyn was adopted at age 15.** Katelyn's birth family had a lengthy involvement with children's services, and she moved seven times between her family and foster care in just over eight years. During her time in care, she was diagnosed with several mental health disorders and experienced additional abuse and neglect in her placements. After trying unsuccessfully to locate a family member willing to adopt

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her, the recruiter began to search for a family that would be a good fit for her needs and interests. She found a family who fell in love with Katelyn. The recruiter spent time talking with the family, getting to know them and helping prepare them for Katelyn. Katelyn referred to her adoption as her "dream come true." She is thriving in her new home, excelling in school and making many new friends.

**In Columbiana County, Jackson was adopted at age 17.** Jackson spent 2,933 days – just over eight years – in foster care. He experienced 12 placements and was diagnosed with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, oppositional defiant disorder, bipolar disorder, adjustment disorder and autism spectrum disorder. Jackson had given up on being adopted, but the recruiter worked with him and encouraged him to keep hoping. She received a call from a family who had adopted three children and was hoping to adopt one more. The recruiter immediately thought of Jackson. She arranged a casual meeting with the family, which ultimately led to a pre-adoptive placement. Life in his adoptive

home has had its ups and downs, but Jackson is doing amazingly well with the support and unconditional love of his new adoptive parents.

**In Licking County, Damien was adopted just before his 15th birthday.** Damien had been in foster care multiple times since 2002 and in 2012 was placed in permanent custody. His birth parents' substance abuse, his birth mother's mental health needs, transiency and neglect all factored into his journey through foster care. Eventually, his birth mother was incarcerated, and Damien went to live with a relative who was not prepared to adopt him. Damien then moved to a foster home, where he struggled with birth family loyalties, low self-esteem, self-mutilation and theft. His recruiter helped facilitate counseling and worked with his foster family to support him through his hurt and anger. Eventually, the foster family decided to adopt him. Damien is an intelligent, funny, outgoing young man who has embraced his new family. They not only became his parents, but also welcomed members of his birth family into their home, providing an important link in Damien's life.

## Check Out These Resources!

The National Center on Substance Abuse and Child Welfare has released an enhanced and updated online tutorial for child welfare professionals. This free tutorial provides an overview of substance abuse disorders and how they impact families. It also helps participants better understand how cross-system collaboration with substance abuse treatment and court professionals can improve families' outcomes. You can receive 4.5 continuing education units through the National Association of Social Workers after completing the course. Click [here](#) to access this and other free online tutorials, as well as a wide range of resource materials.

[Children and Family Futures](#) is offering a free webinar, hosted by Executive Director Nancy Young, called "Identifying Substance Use as a Risk Factor in Child Welfare Cases and Understanding How to Respond." The Nov. 12 webinar will be held from 1:30 to 3:30 p.m. and will provide an overview of UNCOPE, a six-item screening tool designed to provide a fast, easy way to identify risk for substance abuse and dependency. Register online [here](#), or email questions to [fdc@cffutures.org](mailto:fdc@cffutures.org).

## An Open Heart for Families of all Kinds

In 2008, Ralph Dempsey was a single biological father to two adult children and a foster parent to many. When he found it too difficult to see the foster children leave his home, he decided to pursue a path to permanency for them through adoption.

Ralph first approached the Cuyahoga County Division of Children and Family Services and was referred to Julius Jackson, an adoption navigator with Adoption Network Cleveland. Julius advocates for prospective parents; keeps them engaged in the process of training, application, home study and placement; and helps remove barriers to adopting.

In 2009, Julius took Ralph to an adoption mixer, where he met two young siblings. Soon, these two were in Ralph's home as a permanent family. But Ralph's big heart was still open, and he looked to adopt another sibling group. Two sisters and their younger brother became his third, fourth and fifth adopted children.

Whenever possible and appropriate, Ralph always has been open to contact between his children and their birth families.

"Ralph is a perfect example of the kind of parent who understands the importance of and supports his children's need for contact with their birth families, despite some rough beginnings," Julius said. "The biological grandmother of some of his children is going on vacation with them soon, and their biological dad also has a role in their life. As long as the contact is appropriate, Ralph has no problem with them in each other's lives."

Today, Ralph is working with Julius again, this time to adopt a young teen. He hopes that this young man will join his family later this year.

## Congratulations, Ohio Commission on Fatherhood!

Ohio will receive nearly \$10 million over the next five years to help low-income new and soon-to-be fathers ages 16 to 24 become more effective and nurturing parents, improve their long-term economic stability, and build strong and lasting relationships with their children.

The grant, from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, will fund the "New Beginnings for New Fathers" program in Franklin, Clark, Cuyahoga, Hamilton and Montgomery counties. Participating fathers will receive job training, parenting classes, and healthy marriage and relationship education.

"This grant will allow us to reach fathers early, just before or after their first children are born," said Kim Dent, executive director of the Ohio Commission on Fatherhood. "It will allow us to break the cycle of

father absence before it begins by giving new and expectant fathers the tools they need to become and remain responsible fathers. We also expect the program to help reduce infant mortality in Ohio, by educating fathers about the importance of not smoking, safe sleep environments and other important health concerns."

Research shows that children whose fathers are present in their lives require less special education, repeat grades less often, have fewer behavioral problems in school, are more likely to graduate, and are less likely to be involved in the criminal justice system. The Ohio Commission on Fatherhood will administer the grant and will partner with the following local programs to recruit and serve fathers:

- Action for Children (Franklin County)

- Passages Connecting Fathers and Families (Cuyahoga County)
- Talbert House (Hamilton County)
- Urban Light Ministries (Clark and Montgomery Counties)

The Ohio Commission on Fatherhood seeks to improve the well-being of Ohio's children by helping fathers become better parents, partners and providers. Commissioners include the directors of several state agencies, bipartisan members of the Ohio House and Senate, and citizens appointed by the governor. The commission is housed within ODJFS and strengthens vulnerable families by funding programs that serve low-income fathers.

To learn more about the Ohio Commission on Fatherhood and the resources it offers, visit <http://fatherhood.ohio.gov>.

## Spotlight on the Child Protective Services Policy Section

OFC's Child Protective Services (CPS) Policy Section focuses on the most fundamental of our obligations: the safety of Ohio's children.

The CPS Policy Section is supervised by David Thomas. It includes registry staff Barbara Parker and Janice Blue and policy staff Denielle Eil-Rittinger, Toni Gillette, Catherine Lawhorn and Dorothy Striker. Together, they develop child protection programs and policies. They support PCSAs in interpreting and applying policies. This includes providing technical assistance and developing such tools as the caseworker manual, safety and risk assessment field guides, and screening guidelines. They also ensure that Ohio complies with the requirements of the federal Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act, Adoption and Safe Families Act, Child and Family Services Review, and the National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System.

Section staff manage Ohio's confidential child abuse and neglect database. In an average two-week period, they resolve nearly 900 requests for searches! They search the database to provide federally and state-required determinations about whether individuals have been the subject of abuse or neglect reports. They also search it to provide information to PCSAs in other states as they investigate local reports of maltreatment and to give individuals information about the status of their



Left to right: Toni Gillette, David Thomas, Dorothy Striker, Denielle Eil-Rittinger, Janice Blue and Catherine Lawhorn. Not pictured: Barbara Parker and Toni Gillette.

names. Each search requires a diligent examination and written follow-up notification. Staff also help maintain the Putative Father Registry and conduct searches to determine whether a putative father has registered for

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notification of an adoption involving a child he may have fathered. Finally, section staff help manage the Adoption Assessor Registry, which tracks the certification, training, and educational and employment qualifications of Ohio's adoption assessors.

In addition to its ongoing work, this busy section is engaged in a number of special initiatives:

- Restructuring Ohio's Citizen Review Panels, in collaboration with The Ohio State University.
- Overseeing an evaluation of the Comprehensive Assessment and Planning Model Interim Solution (CAPMIS). This evaluation will conclude at the end of December 2016. Stay tuned for more information

about what is learned from this important process.

- Working closely with SACWIS staff to address workforce and program needs, including CPS-related SACWIS edits, user functionality and CAPMIS tool utility.
- Collaborating with the Institute for Human Services in developing a CAPMIS training series for PCSA caseworkers and supervisors. Currently, modules are available on safety assessment, safety planning, and strengths and needs risk assessment. Coming in 2016: case planning, case review and reunification assessment.

To learn more about these and other CPS activities, email [David.Thomas@jfs.ohio.gov](mailto:David.Thomas@jfs.ohio.gov).

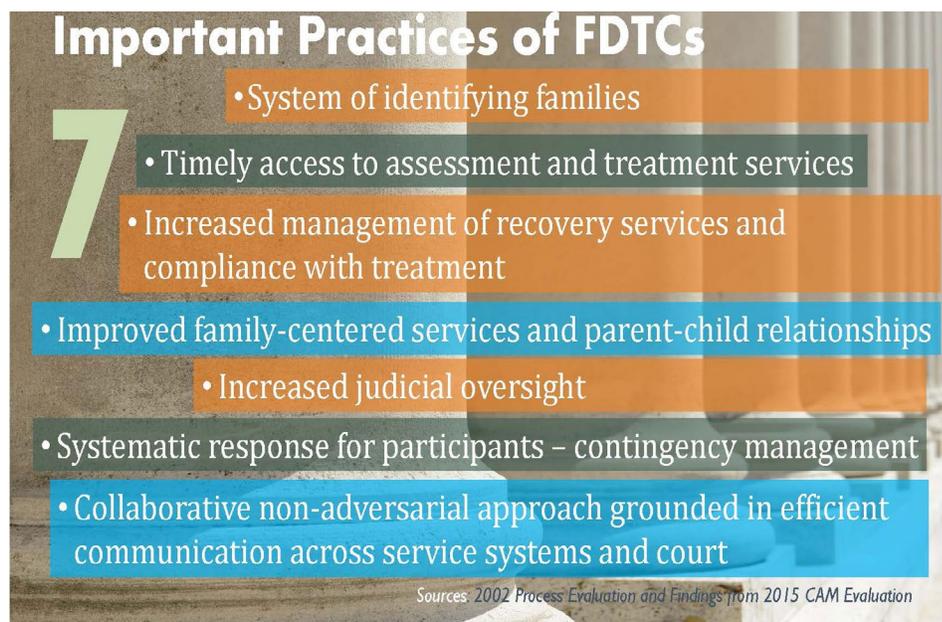
## Family Dependency Treatment Court Update

The [March First Friday](#) announced that Ohio was one of five states in the nation to receive competitive two-year federal funding to increase the scale and scope of family drug courts. Ohio received \$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 \(SSRP\)](#).

Significant progress has been made over the past seven months. For example, Ohio recently learned it will receive an additional \$317,587 for a third year of planning. The state also is eligible to apply for a \$5 million, five-year implementation grant at the conclusion of the planning period in 2017.

The grant requires states to designate the state court agency as the project lead and also to demonstrate buy-in from child welfare and treatment agencies. The Supreme Court of Ohio has established a core team comprised of representatives from the court, OFC and the Ohio Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services, as well as the joint subcommittee described in March's First Friday. Members have been hard at work!

The three-year planning period will allow Ohio's team to develop long-term strategies, a detailed



implementation plan and sufficient infrastructure to support statewide system change. Among other things, participants will examine the capacity of Ohio's 20 existing family drug courts and determine whether their scale and scope can be expanded to more broadly meet the needs of children and families.

Twelve counties have been selected as demonstration sites (see "Congratulations, SSRP Demonstration Sites!" on page 8). Some will explore expanding the number of drug courts in their area. Others will explore the concept of

"infusion," in which the essential ingredients of family drug courts are incorporated into day-to-day child welfare work (see the graphic above). Infusion could be helpful in smaller counties, where family drug courts may not be practical, as well as in larger counties as a complement to existing family drug courts.

Ohio's planning period will have three overlapping stages:

1. Identify strategies.
2. Pilot and test strategies.
3. Develop a multi-year plan.

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The following four workgroups have been established:

- **Infusion Workgroup:** Co-chairs Judge Denise McColley (Henry County) and Stephanie Nelson (Supreme Court) will lead the group in collecting information about the progress and needs of demonstration sites, each of which will have a representative in the group.
- **Inter-Disciplinary Training Workgroup:** Chair Doug Schnauer (Coshocton County) will lead the group in identifying the skills, competencies and resources needed to support effective implementation of the strategies.
- **Data Workgroup:** Chair Brian Farrington (Supreme Court) will lead the group in developing evaluation standards to determine the success of demonstration site strategies and supporting other workgroups as needed.
- **Expansion Workgroup:** This group will track the progress and support the needs of the expansion demonstration sites. Each expansion site will have a representative in the group. Leadership will be determined as the work evolves.

## Congratulations, SSRP Demonstration Sites!

Congratulations to the 12 counties selected as demonstration sites for Ohio's federal SSRP grant! The grant will allow Ohio to expand family drug court services throughout Ohio and implement best practices for parents not able to support or supervise their children because of substance abuse disorders. Demonstration sites will pilot strategies for either "expansion" (expanding the number of family drug courts in an area) or "infusion" (incorporating family drug court practices in child welfare work).

The project will go live in two phases, with Phase 2 sites building on the experiences of the Phase 1 sites.

### Phase 1: Fall 2015

1. Clermont (expansion)
2. Lucas (expansion)
3. Union (expansion)
4. Ashtabula (infusion)
5. Coshocton (infusion)
6. Henry (infusion)

### Phase 2: Summer to Fall 2016

1. Hardin (expansion)
2. Summit (expansion)
3. Delaware (infusion)
4. Hancock (infusion)
5. Ross (infusion)
6. Wayne (infusion)

All sites will be in frequent communication to learn from each other's experiences. They also will receive training and technical assistance in the following:

- Evidence-based practices to improve family outcomes
- County-wide data analysis of current practices
- Administrative data collection for program monitoring

Over the next two years, the sites will test strategies and provide feedback to guide the development of a detailed five-year implementation plan. The process will kick off on Nov. 16 with an orientation training in Columbus. The event will feature speakers from Children and Family Futures, a California-based research institute, and will focus on best practices for screening, intervention and data collection for child welfare agencies and family drug courts.

Congratulations to each of these 12 counties on their successful applications, their collaboration and their commitment to improving outcomes for families affected by substance use disorder. We will continue to follow their progress in First Friday. For additional information, email [Sarah.Jeu@sc.ohio.gov](mailto:Sarah.Jeu@sc.ohio.gov).

## Join the CQI Webinar!

Have you ever wondered how other agencies are using data and evaluating their work to enhance their practices and procedures? Have you thought your agency might benefit from a structured approach to Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI)? Are you curious about what the state is doing to enhance child welfare practice? Learn the answers to these and other questions at the "CQI Statewide Community: Shine the Light and Lead the Change" webinar from 10 to 11 a.m. on Dec. 2. All child welfare professionals are welcome to participate, including staff from local public and private agencies, statewide associations, juvenile courts, state agencies, and treatment facilities. To register online, click [here](#).

## Foster Care and Adoption Rule Alignment Is Here

In [November 2014](#), we announced efforts to address the long-term disconnect between the home assessment processes for foster care and adoption (“Adoption and Foster Care Rule Alignment”). This issue was raised repeatedly during OFC’s comprehensive rule review initiative. Although basic differences between foster care and adoption prevented a complete alignment of the home assessment processes, significant changes were made. The new rules and forms became effective Nov. 1.

In many cases, the language describing home assessment processes for foster care and adoption is now identical. Because more than half of each rule was revised, the existing rules had to be rescinded and issued as new rules. As a result, the entire rule will show as underlined (new) text on eManuals.

The new rules were presented during an Aug. 12 statewide training, which also included information about many other foster care and adoption rules. Click [here](#) to view the recorded training and access the session’s PowerPoint slides. Transmittal Letter 349 and Procedure Letter 282 were published in eManuals on Oct. 7 announcing the new alignment.

Anyone with questions should email OFC’s adoption policy developer, Tara Shook, at [Tara.Shook@jfs.ohio.gov](mailto:Tara.Shook@jfs.ohio.gov).

## Rules Effective Nov. 1

The following rules and forms were revised to align the foster care and adoption home assessment processes.

### Ohio Administrative Code Rules

<u>Topic</u>	<u>Foster Care Rule</u>	<u>Adoption Rule</u>
Home study	5101:2-5-20	5101:2-48-12
Recertification/Update	5101:2-5-24	5101:2-48-12.1
Amendments	5101:2-5-30	5101:2-48-12.2
Transfers	5101:2-5-31	5101:2-48-19
Adoption of a foster child	(No equivalent)	5101:2-48-11.1
(Rule rescinded)	5101:2-5-21	(No equivalent)

### JFS Forms

JFS 01318	SACWIS Private Agency Provider Request
JFS 01318-I	Instructions for Completing JFS 01318, SACWIS Private Agency Provider Request
JFS 01331	Notice Expiration and Reapplication for a Foster Home Certificate or Adoption Homestudy Update/Amendment
JFS 01334	Recommendation for Transfer
JFS 01348	Safety Audit of a Family Foster Home
JFS 01385	Assessment for Child Placement Update
JFS 01530	Multiple Children/Large Family Assessment
JFS 01673	Assessment of Child Placement
JFS 01673-I	Instructions for Completing JFS 01673, Assessment of Child Placement
JFS 01680	Verification of Assessor Qualifications
JFS 01691	Application for Child Placement
JFS 01692	Application for Adoption of a Foster Child
JFS 01698	Step-Parent Adoption Homestudy

## Rule Review Update

Currently, no rules are posted on Ohio’s Families and Children Rule Review website, [www.ohiorulereview.org](http://www.ohiorulereview.org).

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 2,168 hits during September 2015.

## Correction

The October 2015 First Friday article “New Laws, New Rules” provided an effective date of Nov. 1 for OAC Rule 5101:2-42-68, “Necessity for continued substitute care placement: court reviews and hearing requirements.” Due to an unforeseen delay, this rule’s effective date has been changed to Dec. 1, 2015. We apologize for any confusion this may have caused. If you have questions, email [Elaine.Early-Hall@jfs.ohio.gov](mailto:Elaine.Early-Hall@jfs.ohio.gov).

## Needed: Regional Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention Coordinators

The Ohio Children's Trust Fund is looking for individuals or entities to serve as regional child abuse and neglect prevention coordinators.

The trust fund is the state's sole public funding source dedicated to preventing child abuse and neglect. Housed within the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services, it partners with statewide and county entities to serve all Ohio communities. The trust fund supports prevention programs that recognize and build on existing strengths within families and communities to effectively intervene long before child abuse or neglect occur.

Because of new legislation, starting in state fiscal year 2016, local trust fund prevention efforts will be led by eight regional prevention councils. Each council will be directed by a regional prevention coordinator or coordinating entity. The coordinator will be selected through a competitive process and will provide administrative support to the council, convene meetings, establish workgroups, and contract with local service providers to offer child abuse and neglect prevention services to families and children.

Together, the coordinator and council will develop and implement a regional, data-based prevention

plan that outlines strategies and needed funding. Each council then will submit its plan to Ohio Children's Trust Fund for funding consideration. Councils also will develop regional activities for Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention Month in April and report the results of those activities to the Ohio Children's Trust Fund.

Anyone interested in serving as a regional prevention coordinator, or as part of a coordinating entity, can apply before Nov. 30. Click [here](#) for details on how to apply. For more information, email Kristen Rost, Ohio Children's Trust Fund executive director, at [Kristen.Rost@jfs.ohio.gov](mailto:Kristen.Rost@jfs.ohio.gov).

## Reminder: Regional Thanksgiving Celebrations

Don't forget: ACTION Ohio's regional Thanksgiving celebrations are coming up. These dinners give current and former foster youth (ages 14 and older) the opportunity to come together as a family and celebrate their common bond during the Thanksgiving holiday.

This year, regional dinners will be hosted in southeast, southwest, northeast and central Ohio. Public and private agencies are asked to encourage youth in their care to attend, and to help with any transportation barriers. Learn more at <http://thanksgivingtogether.wikispaces.com>.

### November 2015 Global Email

The following email was sent in October from Jennifer Justice to PCSA directors and/or private agency directors.

**10/6/15** - Adult Protective Services Planning Grant

### Principle of the Month

There is urgency and importance to OFC's 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](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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