



PARTNERS
FOR OHIO'S FAMILIES

Partnerships and collaboration enhance the quality of outcomes.

OFFICE OF FAMILIES & CHILDREN

Table of Contents

| | |
|---|---|
| From OFC Deputy Director Jennifer Justice – 12/5/15..... | 1 |
| Celebrating Eight Years of Successful Partnership..... | 2 |
| New Differential Response Resources Available..... | 3 |
| New Primary Parent Partner Opportunities Coming..... | 4 |
| Child Welfare Experiential Learning..... | 4 |
| Youth-Centered Permanency Roundtables..... | 4 |
| Some Forms Now Available in Five Languages..... | 6 |
| ProtectOHIO..... | 6 |
| New Privacy Rule Adopted..... | 7 |
| Rule Review Update..... | 7 |
| COI Corner: Risk Review Team..... | 7 |
| Global Emails..... | 8 |

From OFC Deputy Director Jennifer Justice – 12/5/15

Do you think that the holiday season is starting earlier and getting more hectic? I do! At work, projects and reports often are due at the end of the year. Quarterly events all hit within a two-month period, and everyone is trying to squeeze in one more meeting before the holidays. At home, it seems as if we've been negotiating the seasonal celebrations, school functions and gift lists for months already. And through it all, I hear my internal voice saying, "Blink and these days will have flown by." When did my boys' gift lists stop including toys?

Of course, we talk about the clock all the time when discussing the well-being of the children in our care. But don't you feel the urgency a bit more this time of year as we focus on our own connections with friends and family? It's important to appreciate the "now" of our own

lives, but we also must remember the "now" for the children and families who depend on us, and the missed opportunities that each day marks for them.

Thanks to ACTIONOhio and the many other supporters of the five early Thanksgiving dinners that were held across the state for current and former foster youth. I'm told they were highly successful. These events are joyous occasions that highlight the talents, insights and mutual support that these young adults share. They also remind us that too many of our youth must find their own seat at a table, having been sent into young adulthood without permanent and lifelong connections.

Last month, I was honored to represent the state perspective on permanency at a congressional briefing sponsored by the Congressional Coalition on Adoption Institute. Wanda Marino (North Carolina) presented the county perspective, and Barbara Needell (Casey Family Programs)

(continued on next page)



Left: Nicole Dobbins (Voices for Adoption), Becky Weichhand (Congressional Coalition on Adoption Institute) and OFC's Jennifer Justice at the coalition's congressional briefing.

(continued from previous page)

gave a national view. Other presentations included a national look at adoption trends from Nicole Dobbins (Voices for Adoption) and a family perspective on the need for post-adoption support services from an adoptive mother. It's good to know these are important topics

in Washington. The event was sponsored in part by Casey Family Programs, which works to keep adoption-related conversations happening nationwide.

Ohio's partnership with Casey Family Programs began in 2007, with its support of Ohio's Alternative

Response pilot sites. This issue of First Friday highlights a few of our current and planned initiatives that Casey has supported over the years.

Stay safe and warm throughout this holiday season! I hope each of you is able to spend time with those most important to you.

Celebrating Eight Years of Successful Partnership

You probably know that Casey Family Programs (CFP) played a vital role in the design, piloting and statewide implementation of Ohio's Differential Response system, but you may not be aware of CFP's broader financial and program support. Since 2007, CFP and Ohio have enjoyed a dynamic collaboration with a shared vision of reducing the number of children in care and improving outcomes for families. For some insight into this partnership, we asked Ohio's CFP consultant, Crystal Ward Allen (senior director of Strategic Consulting for CFP), to share her thoughts.

It has been such a pleasure to work in partnership with my many friends and colleagues in Ohio. Of course, my passion for safe children, stable families and supportive communities has never waned, nor has my admiration for and inspiration from the many child welfare heroes I have met over the years in Ohio – caseworkers; directors; foster youth and alumni; birth, kin and foster/adoptive parents; provider agencies; and interdisciplinary partners that interface with our families.

CFP is very data-driven in its work. Thus, efforts in each state are tied to improving key outcomes: safely reducing the number of children in foster care by strengthening families, improving child and youth well-being outcomes, and engaging supportive communities. Ohio has offered a range of opportunities to collaborate with state and local partners to further these goals. These initiatives will continue to be a focus over our upcoming year:

Addressing the impact of opiates and other drugs:

In its efforts to find better ways to work with families that are experiencing substance use disorders, CFP teams with state-level partners, including the Supreme Court of Ohio (SCO), and various professional associations and community representatives that are touched by this difficult issue. Supporting the statewide Judicial Symposium on Child Welfare Addiction to inspire local collaborative planning was a great way to support community conversations. CFP also has been participating in conversations with state and national leaders regarding the development of policies for the use of medication-assisted treatment and is supporting pilots in volunteer communities that wished to bolster

their child welfare practice in coordination with their local family drug courts. CFP is an active member of the advisory subcommittee for SCO's federal Statewide Systems Reform Project to expand the scale and scope of family dependency treatment courts and to infuse effective family drug court practices into child welfare cases not in drug courts but impacted by drug use.

Helping Ohio Parent Effectively (HOPE) Parent Partners:

Four innovative counties have volunteered for this effort to engage parents who have experience with the child welfare and judicial systems to inspire and guide parents who are newly involved in the child welfare system. CFP is a strong supporter of peer-to-peer learning and was able to support program representatives' travel in 2014 to Los Angeles to experience how that community has successfully embraced parents as part of its system. (For more on HOPE Parent Partners, see page 4.)

Permanency Roundtables (PRTs):

CFP has supported partnerships with volunteer counties and the targeting of counties with the largest populations of long-staying youth. Innovative leaders have held blitzes of PRTs for all long-staying youth in their care and followed up with youth-centered PRTs. It is exciting to see accelerated permanency outcomes for youth in the involved counties. (Read more about youth-centered PRTs on page 4.)

Accessing behavioral health care for our children, youth and families:

CFP has been proud to support the Public Children Services Association of Ohio (PCSAO) Behavioral Health Leadership Group as Ohio embraces managed care for children in foster care. What's next? Building on the impressive trauma screening and functional assessment work done in Cuyahoga, Franklin and other counties. CFP hopes to help Ohio develop a better profile of the community-based and placement services children and their families need, and to show how those services impact child well-being. Ultimately, CFP hopes to achieve a better understanding of how to more

(continued on next page)

(continued from previous page)

effectively match children with placement and service providers. This information will inform the public and private child welfare communities, as well as our managed care providers that will have responsibility to provide behavioral health care in 2018.

Leadership development:

CFP believes successful outcomes start with leadership, and we support a variety of opportunities for leaders to learn from each other and collectively seek solutions to shared issues. These include such CFP-supported initiatives as the Metro Strategy Group, the Supervisor Pre-Conference Day and Child Welfare Experiential Learning (see page 4). Of course, working with Jennifer

Justice and her team at OFC, Angela Sausser and her staff at PCSAO, and many county child welfare leaders throughout Ohio offers tremendous opportunities for CFP. Ohio is rich in leadership, collaborative spirit and expertise. Federal, state and local policy makers recognize this and often look to Ohio to blaze the trail.

Thanks to the many partners who engage with CFP to support Ohio's strategies. It is a pleasure to jointly strive for shared goals: Let's safely reduce the number of children in care by strengthening families, let's improve our children's well-being, and let's effectively partner with our community experts in physical and behavioral health care, education and more.

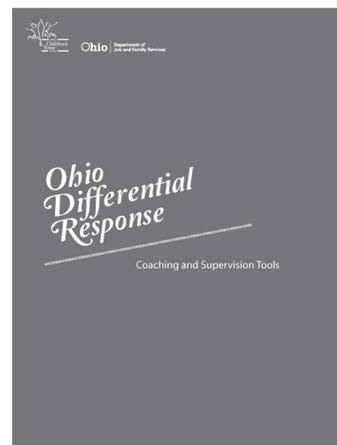
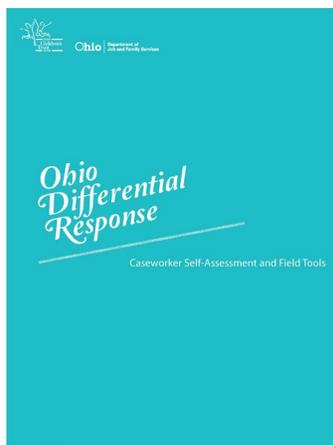
New Differential Response Resources Available

The [July 2014 First Friday](#) highlighted Ohio's Differential Response (DR) Practice Profiles, which were developed to support caseworkers and supervisors when working with clients. The profiles describe 10 core behaviors that guide best casework practice: engaging, assessing, partnering, planning, implementing, evaluating, advocating, demonstrating cultural and diversity competence, communicating, and collaborating. The profiles can help supervisors coach behavior-specific skills and identify issues with both worker-specific training and the system as a whole that may be inhibiting ideal practice. Email Sonia.Tillman@jfs.ohio.gov to order copies or search for JFS 08301 in [ODJFS Forms Central](#).

Ohio's DR Implementation and Practice Advancement Team (previously called the Statewide Implementation Team) is a workgroup formed by Ohio's DR Leadership Council. It assesses Ohio's DR implementation and makes recommendations that increase the likelihood of consistent, high-fidelity implementation statewide. The team recently partnered with county agency supervisors to develop new and update existing resources that support DR practitioners. They are listed below:

- **Caseworker Self-Assessment Workbook:** Caseworkers can use this collection of supplemental tools to enhance their work with families during assessments and ongoing casework. It includes detailed self-assessments for each of the 10 Practice Profiles skills, as well as scaling guides, solution-focused assessment questions and other interviewing techniques for use with families.
- **Supervisory Coaching Toolkit:** Supervisors can use this flexible set of tools over time to encourage staff's fidelity to the Practice Profiles and to help with their professional development. This tool set includes supervisory coaching prompts that can be used during individual or group supervision, a field observation tool that can be used during home visits or in court, and a case review tool. [Click here](#) to hear some ideas from Kelley Hickle-Lenz (ongoing supervisor, Wood PCSA) and Ashley Bowers (intake supervisor, Franklin PCSA) about how this toolkit can be used.
- **Ohio Child Welfare Training Program (OCWTP) resources:** [This document](#) maps OCWTP training competencies to each of the skills identified in the Practice Profiles. Supervisors and caseworkers can use this resource to locate skill-related workshops.
- **Differential Response for Families brochure:** Ohio's DR brochure (JFS 01424) has been updated to better reflect the 10 key skills of best practice. It is designed to be shared with families during assessments and is available to PCSAs through [ODJFS Forms Central](#).

Have questions about Ohio's DR System? Contact Sonia Tillman, DR and special projects manager, at Sonia.Tillman@jfs.ohio.gov.



New Primary Parent Partner Opportunities Coming

Primary parent partners are birth, adoptive or foster parents who have had open child welfare cases that were resolved to achieve the best possible outcomes for their children, whether that was reunification or placement with other caregivers. PCSAs that implement primary parent programming recruit, train and prepare these parents to serve as resources for other parents. Ohio's primary parent partner project sites, along with Lucas PCSA as a peer resource, are known collectively as Helping Ohio Parent Effectively (HOPE).

Much has happened since the [March First Friday](#) article about Cuyahoga, Richland and Trumbull PCSAs' plans

to develop primary parent partner programs and Stark PCSA's selection as a new primary parent partner planning grant recipient. Cuyahoga, Richland and Trumbull PCSAs all have made progress toward implementing their HOPE partner programs. Each agency will receive \$10,000 to support continued implementation activities and development of sustainability plans. Stark PCSA has completed its planning phase and will receive \$20,000 in implementation funding after its plan is approved.

If you work in a county that does not have a primary parent partner project, and you think you may be interested in developing one, watch your mailbox for a January announcement about

Helping Ohio Parent Effectively



opportunities for two new grant recipients. In addition to \$15,000, new sites will have HOPE members' experience and resources to guide them through the planning process. Thanks to Casey Family Programs for its ongoing financial and expert support, which have made this important work possible.

Send questions about HOPE to Colleen.Tucker@jfs.ohio.gov.

Child Welfare Experiential Learning

The most widely used resource made available through Ohio's collaboration with Casey Family Programs is Child Welfare Experiential Learning (CWEL) funds. "Experiential learning" is an umbrella term used to describe the transfer of learning among child welfare colleagues through such peer-to-peer activities as coaching, mentoring, shadowing and networking.

Casey initially established CWEL to financially support knowledge sharing between new and experienced DR counties. Now, however, it can be used to address a wide range of staff development and administrative, organizational, community and service needs. CWEL dollars also may be earmarked to support participation in activities that align with OFC initiatives and Casey Family Programs priorities. Many counties use CWEL funds to support permanency roundtables (see right), including the costs associated with outside consultants, as well as expenses related to participation in caseworker and supervisor in-person meetings.

CWEL can be used in many ways to support agency activities. For example, 10 agencies recently were awarded CWEL scholarships to attend the Kempe International Conference on Innovations in Family Engagement in Minneapolis. Have you been considering an experiential learning activity? If so, check out CWEL!

According to Ohio Administrative Code rule 5101:9-6-33, PCSAs may receive reimbursement for pre-visit preparation and planning, hosting, or participating in an activity that has been pre-approved by ODJFS. This pre-approval step ensures that planned activities match the intended purpose of CWEL funds. To get an activity pre-approved, just email Sonia.Tillman@jfs.ohio.gov with an explanation of the event, its purpose and who will be participating.

Youth-Centered Permanency Roundtables

Permanency roundtables (PRTs) give PCSAs a structured process for identifying individualized and realistic strategies for overcoming the obstacles to permanency that youth in their care may be facing. The three goals of each PRT are to (1) expedite legal permanency for the child, (2) stimulate thinking and learning about ways to accelerate permanency, and (3) identify and address systemic barriers to timely permanency.

Casey Family Programs has continuously supported Ohio's PRT work, beginning in 2014 with a six-county pilot, through the addition of five counties in 2015. Casey's support has made it possible for the pilot counties to receive specialized training, expert consultation and peer-to-peer connections with other areas that have used PRTs successfully.

The 11 participating PCSAs – Athens, Butler, Clark, Fairfield,
(continued on next page)

(continued from previous page)

Guernsey, Hamilton, Mahoning, Montgomery, Summit, Stark and Trumbull –are partnering with OFC, Capital University's Family and Youth Law Center and PCSAO to lead the implementation of this practice model.

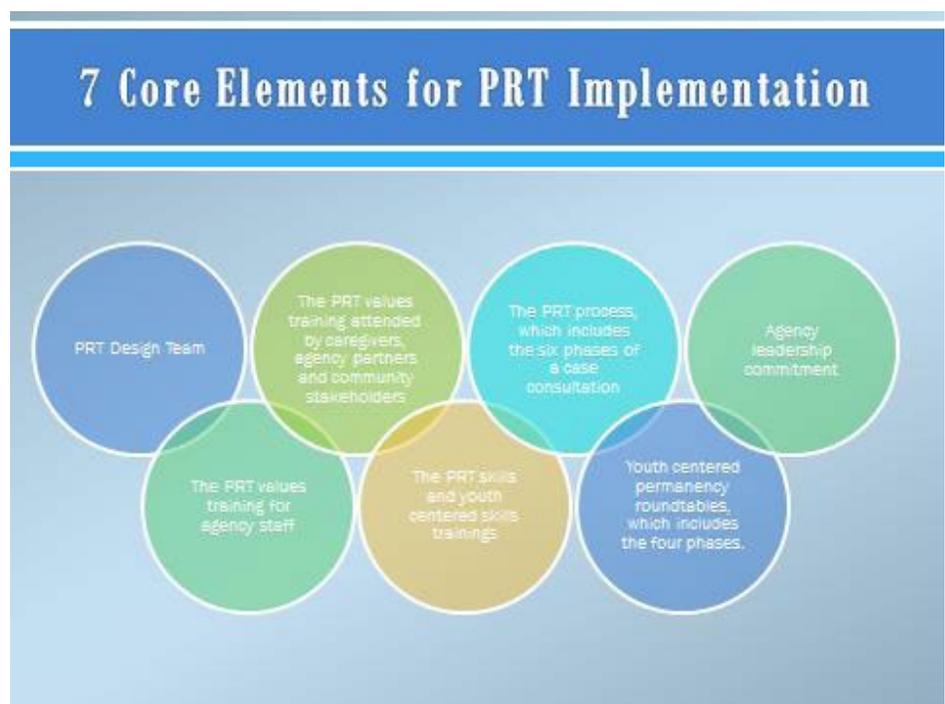
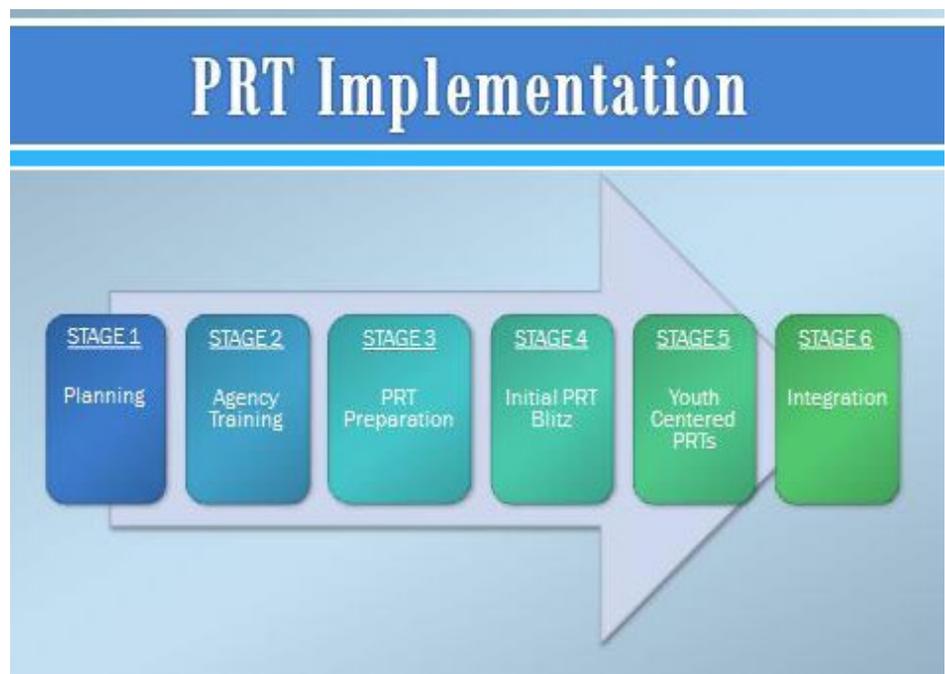
The Ohio PRT project focuses on youth 12 and older who have been in care for at least 17 months. The process is two-part and youth-centered. It begins with an internal agency meeting to discuss the youth's history, identify future goals and create a permanency action plan. This plan is shared with the youth for input. The youth's involvement is considered vital to the process, and no meeting after this point occurs without the youth's participation. The second phase is a facilitated conversation (or conversations) between the youth and the professionals who seek to achieve the PRT goals. The following questions are explored:

- What will it take for this youth to achieve permanency?
- What can we do that has been tried successfully before?
- What can we do that has never been tried?
- What can we do concurrently to help this youth achieve permanency?
- How can we engage the youth in permanency planning?

An evaluation of the six-county pilot is looking at such outcomes as time to permanency, placement stability and reduction in restrictiveness of placement. Although the evaluation's final report is not yet available, two sites have shared data that show promise.

Fairfield PCSA's implementation began in August 2014 and involved 22 youths. After one year:

- 10 youths found permanency
- No youths were in planned permanent living arrangements (PPLAs). In a philosophical shift



agreed to by the Fairfield PCSA and the Fairfield Juvenile/Probate Court, PPLA is no longer discussed as a plan for youth.

- A second wave of PRTs for children 15 and older who had been in custody for eight months or more was begun. This focus on youth in custody for a shorter amount of time was recommended by the first group of participating youth, who reported that they wished PRTs

had happened sooner for them.

Montgomery PCSA's implementation began in June 2014, one month after the agency implemented DR. Since the implementation of both programs, the agency has seen many positive outcomes:

- A reduction in the number of children in placement, including:
 - » A reduction of PPLAs, from

(continued on next page)

(continued from previous page)

121 in June 2014 to 80 by August 2015

- » A three-year low of residential placements
- A 20 percent reduction in ongoing services caseloads (as of the fourth quarter of 2014)
- Improvement in customer satisfaction survey results
- Improvement in the use of adoption incentives, making the county a statewide leader

For more information about the PRT pilot, email Karen.McGormley@jfs.ohio.gov.

Some Forms Now Available in Five Languages

To benefit limited English proficient Ohioans, the Supreme Court of Ohio (SCO) has translated more than two dozen [domestic relations and juvenile forms](#) into five additional languages. In addition to English, the forms are now available in Spanish, Russian, French, Chinese and Arabic. When individuals visiting the court's [website](#) need a domestic relations form in one of these languages, they can click on "Select Another Language" to access both a Word document and PDF file in the desired language.

"The Supreme Court of Ohio is working on all fronts — domestic violence, children and families, and language services — to make justice accessible for all the families in the state of Ohio," Chief Justice Maureen O'Connor said.

This is just the latest action SCO has undertaken to improve services for individuals with limited English proficiency. Through its [Language Services Program Forms Translation Project](#), which began in 2010, SCO made 27 common court forms available in Arabic, Chinese, Russian, Somali and Spanish.

Read more about Montgomery County's success with youth-centered PRTs in [this](#) recent media coverage.

ProtectOHIO

In October, Ohio celebrated the 18th anniversary of ProtectOHIO, the demonstration project that allows 15 participating counties to use Title IV-E foster care dollars more flexibly, for such services as family team meetings and kinship support services, to see whether doing so results in better outcomes – and reduced foster care placements – for children. The results of flexible spending in the participating counties are compared with the results in 45 other counties.

The following two primary strategies are being implemented and evaluated:

1. **Family team meetings** bring together immediate family members, social service professionals and other important people in children's lives (such as friends and extended family) to jointly make crucial decisions regarding children in open and ongoing cases.
2. **Kinship supports** ensure that kinship caregivers and their families can meet children's physical, emotional, financial and basic needs. Supports include such things as home assessments, needs assessments, support planning, and service referral and provision.

From Oct. 1, 1997, through March 31, 2015, the ProtectOHIO demonstration counties reduced the total number of placement days by more than 1,629,476 (the equivalent of 4,464 years of placement). During Phase II of Ohio's waiver, the demonstration counties saved approximately \$27.9 million, with \$22 million being

reinvested in innovative strategies, strategic programs and targeted services.

On Nov. 19 and 20, 2015, members of the ProtectOHIO Consortium attended a Title IV-E Waiver Convening held by Casey Family Programs in Seattle. The event promoted peer-to-peer information exchange and presentations by key experts, including experts from Ohio.

Dan Shook (OFC), Tina Rutherford (Franklin PCSA), Jane Robertson (Lorain PCSA) and Crystal Allen (Casey Family Programs) led a breakout session titled "Implementation – Key Lessons Learned from Ohio's Experience." The session was attended by staff from other state-supervised, county-administered states. Ohio representatives shared the state's initial rationale for requesting the waiver. They also explained how the program has grown over the years and why other states and the U.S. Administration for Children and Families (ACF) view us as national leaders in this program.

"I could not be more pleased with how the panel gelled together to paint Ohio's story," Dan Shook said. "To hear the knowledge, wisdom and experience shared by my co-presenters on the panel truly made the session a success."

All child welfare waiver demonstration projects authorized by ACF must terminate operation by Sept. 30, 2019. Ohio has requested to renew its waiver through this date.

New Privacy Rule Adopted

The Supreme Court of Ohio has adopted an amendment to the Rules of Superintendence requiring local courts to protect sensitive personal information in the records of juvenile and domestic relations civil proceedings. The amendment codifies existing Ohio court practices, minimizes the risk of injury to children, and protects individual privacy rights while balancing judicial accountability and accessibility.

The final amendment comes after the court's Advisory Committee on Children and Families, co-chaired by OFC's Jennifer Justice and Judge Deborah A. Alspach (Marion), received public comment from 20 individuals and associations, including the Ohio Association of Domestic Relations Judges, the Ohio Public Defender and the Ohio Clerk of Courts Association. The new amendment requires each local court, in conjunction with the court's clerk, to determine how sensitive documents are designated and maintained.

The amendment, called Sup.R. 44(C)(2)(h), will restrict the following sensitive documents from public access by not defining them as case documents:

- Health care records
- Drug and alcohol reports
- Guardian ad litem reports
- Home investigation reports
- Evaluations and reports relating to child custody, allocation of parental rights and responsibilities, parenting time, companionship, and visitation
- Domestic violence assessments, not including petitions for civil protection orders or criminal charges in another court
- Supervised parenting time, companionship, visitation or exchange information

- Financial records and disclosure statements
- Asset appraisals and evaluations

The following records in these proceedings will remain accessible:

- Dockets
- Complaints
- Responses
- Answers
- Motions
- Decisions
- Judgment entries along with orders

The protected information will be accessible only to involved parties and their legal representatives in these proceedings. Similar to the way records in civil commitment proceedings in probate court are treated, clerks of court will continue to enter each document on the docket to maintain the integrity of the case record. However, non-parties will not have access to sensitive family information that relates to health, abuse, financial and familial history.

The amendment was proposed by the advisory committee's Subcommittee on Family Law Reform Implementation. The subcommittee researched practices in other states, surveyed Ohio courts regarding the current treatment of family information, and conferred with professionals in juvenile and domestic relations law. The amendment mirrors the [recommendations](#) of the Ohio Task Force on Family Law and Children and the Supreme Court's [Report and Recommendations](#) on Family Law Reform.

Only minor changes were adopted after the amendment's comment period, which lasted from December 2014 to February 2015. It will take effect on Jan. 1, 2016.

Rule Review Update

Currently, no rules are posted on Ohio's Families and Children Rule Review website, 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 1,391 hits during October 2015 and 1,017 hits during November 2015.

CQI Corner: Risk Review Team

In [October's First Friday](#), we announced plans for a new, recurring column featuring examples of continuous quality improvement (CQI) and ways we can work together to improve practice and outcomes. In this inaugural column, Shannon Hamichar, program and compliance officer at [Homes For Kids, Inc.](#), shares how her agency developed a process that used existing data in a new way to address an ongoing issue. Read on for Shannon's story:

While we already used incident reports as part of quality

improvement, the process of review helped us see their added value as a risk review tool. When clinical supervisors were discussing cases, it was observed that specific clients had multiple incident reports in a short time. Since Homes For Kids clinicians provide mental health services in families' homes, safety is a major concern.

As a management team, we established a Risk Review Team comprised of agency peers, supervisors and a quality

(continued on next page)

(continued from previous page)

improvement representative. If a client has multiple incidents that involve aggression, violence, police involvement or property damage within one month, the team reviews the case with the assigned clinician to assess the safety concerns and potential risks in that environment. This process is supportive and educational in nature, and intended to mitigate biases that might exist. Because they work closely with clients and their families, clinicians may develop a sense of false

security, become less observant of risk factors or overly defensive of family behaviors. Conversely, the clinician may feel unsafe in the home environment. The Risk Review Team gives recommendations for future treatment, crisis interventions and can recommend a case transfer if needed.

For example, the Risk Review Team assessed that, while incidents in one home were escalating, it wasn't only a result of the family dynamic. The family's awareness of the worker's sense of discomfort within the

home also was contributing to the environment. The team elected to transfer the case to another worker and continue to monitor the home's level of safety and risk. Through this process, Homes For Kids was able to continue services to a family and retain an excellent worker who no longer felt safe.

First Friday would love to share your experiences in using a CQI process to examine a problem within your agency or community. If you have an idea or experience, email Carla.Carpenter@jfs.ohio.gov.

December 2015 Global Emails

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

11/2/15 - November — Adoption Recognition and Recruitment Month

11/4/15 - Adult Protection Services Planning Process Funding

11/4/15 - Reporting Children Missing From Care to NCMEC

Principle of the Month

Partnerships and collaboration enhance the quality of outcomes.

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.



PARTNERS
FOR OHIO'S FAMILIES