



PARTNERS  
FOR OHIO'S FAMILIES

Policies and supports should be **strength-based** and recognize the **uniqueness** of each **community** and agency.

OFFICE OF FAMILIES & CHILDREN

## Welcome to the March 2021 First Friday Bulletin!

### A Message from OFC Deputy Director Jeff Van Deusen



Jeff Van Deusen

March is ***Social Work Month*** and I hope you will join me in celebrating and raising awareness about this great profession. The theme this year is "***Social Workers are Essential.***" Social workers are essential to the work we do here at ODJFS as well as social workers working in the various disciplines. Social workers are often the unsung heroes and their deep commitment and expertise to bettering the lives of individuals and families is the backbone of the work we do every day. I want to say thank you and I encourage you to express your appreciation to a social worker and make them feel valued and special not just this month, but throughout the year.

In addition to ***Social Work Month***, today is also ***National Employee Appreciation Day***. I want to take a moment and thank each of you in our partnering agencies. I know this work is difficult and employees are in this field because they want to help people. I continue to be impressed by your dedication and commitment to ensure the safety, permanency and well-being of families and children in Ohio. Thank you for caring and making the lives of others better.

I want to congratulate Kristi Burre on her new role as the Director of Children's Initiatives with Governor DeWine's Office. Kristi has served as the Director of the Children Services Transformation (CST) Office for the past two years where she led the work that resulted in the Children Services Transformation Advisory Council recommendations. Kristi is a tremendous advocate for children and families, and we look forward to continuing our work with her to evaluate and implement the recommendations from the Children Services Advisory Council. Karen McGormley, who has been working with Kristi in the CST office, will transition back to OFC and continue in her project manager role overseeing the 37 CST Advisory Council final recommendations.

We are also excited to share an addition to our OFC Senior Team. Vince Ciola was recently promoted to Bureau Chief, overseeing the Bureau of Systems and Practice Advancement. Vince most recently served as the project manager of the Quality Improvement Center for Workforce Development (QIC-WD) project, Helping Ohio Parent Effectively (HOPE), and the state's continuous quality improvement efforts. As a member of the CPS policy team previously, his leadership contributed to the success of the CAPMIS Infusion work related to the CFSR PIP.

In this issue we are highlighting Ohio's University Partnership Program (UPP) and the important work they are doing to improving outcomes for children and families by strengthening its child welfare workforce.

### **The University Partnership Program (UPP)**

The University Partnership Program (UPP) was established in 2002. It is part of Ohio's commitment to improving outcomes for children and families by strengthening its child welfare workforce. It is a unique and beneficial partnership among the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS), eight of Ohio's public university schools of social work\*, Ohio's University Consortium for Child and Adult Services (OUCCAS), the Public Children Services Association of Ohio (PCASO) and Ohio's 88 Public Children Service Agencies (PCSAs). The purpose of UPP is to bolster Ohio's professional child protection workforce by increasing the number of well-trained graduates with both bachelor's and master's degrees in social work who enter the field. Studies show that those graduating from a program such as UPP stay longer and are more satisfied than those who did not complete such a program prior to employment.

The partnership has four primary purposes:

1. Recruiting social workers to the field of child welfare.
2. Preparing graduates for entry-level work in child welfare (minimizing time and money in training).
3. Increasing retention of child welfare staff.
4. Professionalizing the field of child welfare in the state of Ohio.

UPP students take special courses on child protection, complete a field placement at a PCSA, and upon graduation receive partial tuition reimbursement after accepting a casework position in an Ohio PCSA. Those who complete the program may not have to take the required core training (102 hours) that all other new caseworkers must complete within their first year of employment. UPP graduates have become regularly sought after for open PCSA caseworker positions.

Each year, between 50 and 60 UPP students successfully complete the program and a large majority of these graduates seek PCSA employment. Since 2002, over 782 students have graduated from UPP at one of the eight participating universities and 629 of those graduates found employment and completed their field practicum in 79 of Ohio's 88 PCSAs.

\*Participating universities include:

1. University of Cincinnati
2. University of Akron
3. Cleveland State University
4. The Ohio State University
5. University of Toledo
6. Wright State University
7. Youngstown State University
8. Ohio University

PCSAs can search for recent UPP graduates in their area here: [PCSAO - Employment](#). More information on the UPP can be found here: [PCSAO - University Partnership Program](#).

If you have any questions regarding the UPP, please contact:

Stacey Saunders-Adams, email [saundes3@ohio.edu](mailto:saundes3@ohio.edu) or

Laura Graf, email [laura.graf@jfs.ohio.gov](mailto:laura.graf@jfs.ohio.gov).

## **OCALM Officially turns One-Year-Old**

The Ohio Certification and Licensing Management System (OCALM), which we first announced in the March 2019 First Friday, had its first birthday January 2021. The system gives current and prospective ODJFS-certified private and public foster care agencies the ability to upload, complete, and update required documents online, without the need for paper forms. Throughout the two years of development, OFC Staff worked feverishly to develop a system that would meet the needs of ODJFS' agencies and OFC Licensing Staff and the final phase of initial roll-out was January 6, 2020. Little did everyone know a mere two months later, the world would change requiring staff to work from home, limit contact with others, and field work would briefly stop!

The COVID-19 pandemic has impacted every facet of life, and for the ODJFS Bureau of Foster Care Licensing, it changed their work in an instant. This group quickly learned to use Skype, Teams, and Zoom meetings to help agencies get logged into OCALM and trouble-shoot issues. Licensing Specialists also identified creative ways to assist other licensing staff and agencies with learning the system. Since OCALM's launch, OFC has also been involved in multiple system enhancement activities to address Family First, Foster Care Model Standards, House Bill 8 and other rule changes impacting ODJFS licensed agencies.

In November of 2020, OFC experienced a reorganization and OCALM's owner changed from Licensing to the Bureau of Automated Systems. Automated Systems Business Analysts jumped right into the role to learn OCALM and assist licensing staff. Their assistance has been invaluable and a welcome addition to the licensing team. Additionally, agencies have been helpful in providing feedback to improve and enhance the community user side of the system. It has certainly become a team effort! We look forward to 2021 as a year that "settles down" as we continue to work toward a more user-friendly, enhanced OCALM experience with the help of internal and external partners, OIS support, and good old-fashioned teamwork. For more information, click on the "Foster Agency Licensing" button on OFC's website or email the OFC Help Desk.

## **Statewide QRTP Accreditation Teams Event: March 18, 2021**

The Family First Qualified Residential Treatment Program (QRTP) Readiness Workgroup has been diligently working to develop learning opportunities for child-serving residential agencies certified by the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS) and the Ohio Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (OhioMHAS).

We will be hosting a third accreditation forum on **March 18, 2021 from 9:30 a.m. to 4 p.m.** Existing and prospective residential agencies will receive information and have an opportunity to ask questions about the accreditation requirements outlined in the Family First Prevention Services Act of 2018. Participants will also have an opportunity to attend separate breakout sessions with each of the accrediting bodies (The Council On Accreditation, Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities, and The Joint Commission), and with staff from ODJFS and OhioMHAS, as well as representatives from the QRTP Agency Readiness Workgroup.

Please register [here](#).

If you have questions, please contact Felicia Saunders [Felicia.Saunders2@jfs.ohio.gov](mailto:Felicia.Saunders2@jfs.ohio.gov)

## New Agencies in 2020

New Agency Name	Location	Certification Date	Function
City of Refuge dba One Way Farm	Dayton	1/27/2020	(GH)
Restoration Ranch of Ohio	Dayton	1/27/2020	(IL) (CRC) (FC) (RecFFH) (RecTx FH) (Adopt Placement)
Inspiring L.I.F.E.	Dayton	2/28/2020	(GH)
Guiding Path for Girls	Dayton	2/28/2020	(GH)
Adonai's Haven of Rest, LLC,	Dayton	3/24/2020	(GH)
Life's Right Direction, Inc.	Cleveland	4/16/2020	(GH)
Grace Hearts	Dayton	6/8/2020	(GH) (IL)
Self-Reliance River-View South, LLC	Cleveland	6/10/2020	(GH) (IL)
KROWN Solutions, LLC	Dayton	6/18/2020	(GH)
1 Trust Group Home, LLC	Dayton	8/5/2020	(GH) (IL)
Here-4-You Youth Services, Inc.	Dayton	8/6/2020	(GH) (IL)
Turning Point Residential Services	Toledo	8/17/2020	(GH)
RAD Homes	Dayton	8/25/2020	(GH)
Family-To-Family Homes	Dayton	8/26/2020	(GH) (IL)
Acts 1:8 Housing	Dayton	9/2/2020	(GH) (IL)
New Beginnings Group Home	Dayton	9/2/2020	(GH)
A Life's Purpose	Toledo	9/14/2020	(GH)
Legacy Residential Homes	Dayton	9/15/2020	(GH) (IL)
Reflections Group Home	Dayton	9/17/2020	(GH)
Cotillion Home Nonprofit LLC	Dayton	9/25/2020	(GH) (IL)
Healing Pathways Transitional Homes, Inc.	Dayton	9/25/2020	(GH) (IL)

## **Closed Agencies in 2020**

- **BJM&R Liberty Management LLC** – February 1, 2020
- **Consumer Support Services** – February 11, 2020
- **Your Road to Success, Inc.** – March 1, 2020
- **DOY Services, Inc.** – March 2, 2020
- **Compassion Care, LP** – April 20, 2020
- **The Mustard Seed Foundation** – May 5, 2020
- **Kendra's House** – September 1, 2020
- **One Way Services for Youth, Inc.** – September 2, 2020
- **Adoption by Gentle Care** – November 9, 2020
- **Striving for Greatness** – November 20, 2020

## **Family First Prevention Services Act**

As we continue working toward implementation of the Family First Prevention Services Act (FFPSA), the Office of Families and Children (OFC) has created a number of tools for communities to learn more about FFPSA and begin preparing for implementation of Prevention Services.

An FFPSA Overview power point is available on the Family First [website](#). This presentation was created for communities to use and can be shared with stakeholders to provide high level information about FFPSA. OFC also completed FFPSA Overview and Rules and Tools trainings in October 2020. These trainings provided an overview of Family First and draft Prevention Services rules. The training was recorded and is also available on the Family First [website](#).

The Prevention Services pilot is scheduled to begin on April 1, 2021. Seven counties and one IV-E Court have agreed to participate. Our first pilot training was held on Jan. 27, 2021 and the second training was held on Feb. 17, 2021. These trainings covered FFPSA philosophy, important definitions, implementation considerations, rule requirements, and SACWIS screens.

In addition to the pilot trainings, OFC is also creating resource documents for pilot counties to utilize. These resource documents are intended to help counties think through implementation considerations, explain FFPSA Prevention Services to families, and communicate the FFPSA changes to their community stakeholders. These trainings and resource documents will be made available to all counties after the start of the pilot.

Our CPS Prevention Services rules were Original Filed on Jan. 7, 2021. These rules will be effective on April 1, 2021, allowing counties to begin implementing Prevention Services. Title IV-E Prevention Services rules came out of Clearance on Jan. 29, 2021. IV-E Policy will address any outstanding comments and prepare the rules for Original File. These rules will be effective on Oct. 1, 2021.

SACWIS has finished design sessions for the first phase of Prevention Services which will be deployed on March 18. The items in the first phase include: Evidence-based practice services, adding functionality to document which providers are approved to provide which EBP, Prevention Services Case Category and ability for agencies to maintain the case category, updates to Family Assessment for transferring a case to Prevention Services, Family Case Plan updates to incorporate a Prevention Services Plan and document youth who are in custody and parenting, allowing EBP to be associated to a child when the parent is the one receiving the service, Prevention Services Eligibility tool, and updating Activity Logs for Prevention Services cases. The development of these items is currently on track for the scheduled deployment.

The Center of Excellence vendor has been chosen. The Ohio Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (OhioMHAS) is notifying the vendor and will begin working on the contract. Once the contract is in place, we will make an announcement. This vendor will be responsible for building and maintaining capacity for Evidence-Based Practices (EBPs), fidelity and evaluation monitoring, processing Transition Act payments to EBP providers, and providing training and technical assistance. We are confident that our work with this vendor will strengthen our Prevention Services work and our cross-system collaboration efforts.

## **START 2020 Impact Report**

Ohio START released its 2020 impact report which highlights data about the program and impact stories. You can read the report [here](#).

## **Virtual Reality Resources Coming Soon!**

Among our highest priorities is the recruiting, preparing, and retaining of our public children service agency (PCSA) front-line staff. In our continued efforts to better prepare staff for their important work we are introducing a new method, AVEnueS (the Accenture Virtual Experience Solution) which will utilize virtual reality to augment our current training and hiring activities. Leveraging Virtual Reality (VR) technology, AVEnueS provides an immersive experience that puts you in the shoes of a child welfare caseworker. In partnership with Accenture, we will begin using VR to enhance our current training and hiring activities for caseworkers at PCSAs. We believe by putting child welfare applicants and caseworkers into a no-risk but very realistic experience of working with families we can more quickly prepare them for the field.

The AVEnueS technology will be made available for caseworker training through the Ohio Child Welfare Training Program (OCWTP) with trainers who have been prepared to facilitate the VR experience and follow-up sessions. There will be three scenarios that address: Safety Assessments, Safety Plans, and Race Equity in Child Welfare. The integration of the experiences and follow-up seminars will allow the employee to consider and discuss ways that child welfare concepts are used when interacting with families. This additional training component has the goal of preparing new staff for field work and improving practice.

Utilizing VR technology as a method for vetting candidates has been proven to increase the retention of child welfare caseworkers. In fact, by using the tool in the hiring process Indiana has reduced its turnover rate, from over 50% of their team leaving in their first year to under 20%. This technology is now being made available for use with Ohio's public children services agency caseworker applicants. A PCSA will be able to schedule with the RTC for the applicant to go through a VR experience involving the safety assessment of a 7-year-old girl named Sophia. Afterward, applicants will be asked to participate in a debrief activity about their experience and feedback will be provided to the referring PCSA.

More information will be shared as these opportunities roll out. You can learn more about AVEnueS by visiting [www.accenture.com/AVEnueS](http://www.accenture.com/AVEnueS)

If you have questions, please contact Cindy Ricketts at [Cynthia.Ricketts@jfs.ohio.gov](mailto:Cynthia.Ricketts@jfs.ohio.gov)

**Save the Date!** – The Ohio Children's Trust Fund invites you to join us as we kick off April Child Abuse Prevention Month with a virtual event on Thursday, **April 1, 2021** from **10 – 11:30 a.m.** Further details and registration link will be forthcoming. Additionally, **Wear Blue Day** this year will be on **April 14**. Visit [OCTF.Ohio.Gov](http://OCTF.Ohio.Gov) for more information about the Virtual April Kickoff event, the Everyday Ohio Heroes campaign, prevention partner spotlights and more! Visit OCTF on Facebook [@OhioChildrensTrustFund](https://www.facebook.com/OhioChildrensTrustFund).

## Rule Review

The following Ohio Administrative Code (OAC) rules were posted to [ohiorulereview.org](http://ohiorulereview.org) in February:

**For 30 days from Feb. 3, 2021 through March 5, 2021:**

Chapter 5101:2-47 Title IV-E Foster Care Maintenance

- 5101:2-47-23.1 Title IV-E agency contracting and contract monitoring

**For 14 days from Feb. 24, 2021 through March 11, 2021**

Chapter 5101:2-47 Title IV-E Foster Care Maintenance

- 5101:2-47-07 Notice of right to a hearing for foster care maintenance

**For 14 days from Feb. 25, 2021 through March 12, 2021**

Chapter 5101:2-42 Substitute Care

- 5101:2-42-12 Assessment to determine child's placement into a qualified residential treatment program

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 1,331 page views during February 2021.

## Missed an issue of First Friday?

No problem. All First Friday updates are posted on the OFC website under the Partners for Ohio's Families button. [Click here](#) to check them out!

## Global Communications

The following emails were sent in December to PCSA directors and/or private agency directors:

Feb. 1, 2021	OWF & KSP Clarification
Feb. 5, 2021	Trauma Informed Care Certificate
Feb. 5, 2021	OFC 'First-Friday' Bulletin - February 5, 2021
Feb. 8, 2021	New - Children Services Monthly Data Reports
Feb. 12, 2021	Update: Consolidated Appropriations Act- Youth Aging Out of Foster Care
Feb.12, 2021	Invitation for Help Me Grow Overview for PCSAs March 10, 2021 Webinar
Feb. 12, 2021	OFC Touchpoint Meeting with PCSA, Private Agency and IV-E Courts
Feb. 16, 2021	Kinship Support Program Policy and Practice Guidance Document - Becoming a Foster Caregiver after KSP
Feb. 25, 2021	Join Us for Ongoing and Adoption CQI Reporting Webinar 3/9/2021
Feb. 26, 2021	Communities of Support Grant Extension