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FOR OHIO'S FAMILIES

It is our **responsibility** to provide **leadership** and  
maintain **organizational** and **professional competence**.

OFFICE OF FAMILIES & CHILDREN

## Welcome to the May 2021 First Friday Bulletin!

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



*Jeff Van Deusen*

As the old saying goes, “April showers bring May flowers.” This year, we should say, “April snow showers bring May flowers.” I always look forward to May as the precursor to my favorite season, summer!

Governor DeWine and Lt. Governor Husted designated May 2021 as Foster Care Month. This is a great opportunity to recognize foster care and the tremendous responsibility and work that our foster caregivers do every day. As you know, Ohio is implementing the federal Family First Prevention Services Act (FFPSA), which will help support and strengthen families and ensure that families and youth have a voice and are involved in prevention services and permanency planning. While we continue to focus on the importance of keeping children in their own homes when possible, we also want to shine the light on the foster caregivers who provide support to families by providing a safe and stable home life for children and youth who cannot safely remain in their own homes.

The key aspects of the Family First and the Children Services Transformation recommendations are continuing to drive our work as we focus on opportunities to enhance foster parent recruitment and retention while also providing needed supports to kinship and adoptive families. You will read more about the Family First and Children Services Transformation work in this issue.

### May is National Foster Care Month

May is National Foster Care Month, and this year’s theme is “Foster Care as a Support to Families, Not a Substitute for Parents.” Currently, Ohio has more than 8,000 certified foster families who have committed to providing a temporary safe haven for children when it is not safe for them to remain in their own homes. Because parents, kinship caregivers, and foster caregivers have worked together, it has been possible for over 7,700 children and youth to be reunified with their families in 2020!

Throughout this past year, we recognize Ohio foster parents have been doing extraordinary work during the COVID-19 crisis. We thank every foster parent for their commitment to Ohio’s children and families

during this unprecedented time. We have seen the need for more loving foster parents in every community across the state to be available to care for our children. We thank those who have stepped up to provide care for children and partner with their families to work towards the best possible outcomes for Ohio's most vulnerable youth. For ways you can recognize National Foster Care Month, please visit <https://childwelfare.gov/fostercaremonth>.

## **Imagination Library**

You should have received a recent email with details and information about the Imagination Library. First Lady Fran DeWine partnered with Dolly Parton's Imagination Library to send one age-appropriate book each month to all Ohio children under age 5 at **no cost to the family**. To bring this program to all 88 Ohio counties, First Lady Fran DeWine partnered with the state legislature in 2019.

The books chosen by Dolly's Imagination Library are high quality and come with reading tips for parents on the inside cover. Here is the 2021 book list: <https://imaginationlibrary.com/usa/book-list/>.

Though the program has been in Ohio since 2019, many caregivers are unaware it exists. Encourage your caregivers to enroll children ages birth to 5 today! A child enrolled at birth will begin kindergarten with 60 high-quality books at no cost. We want all Ohio children to receive the benefit of the Imagination Library.

Caregivers can visit <https://ohioimaginationlibrary.org/> to enroll today! A child's first name and last initial, birth date, and an address are all that is needed to start receiving books in the mail. Stay tuned for more information in future First Friday issues.

## **Public Children Service Agency Onboarding for New Caseworkers and Supervisors**

We are excited to FINALLY announce the contract with Accenture has been finalized to create "Just in Time" online, an on-demand platform and curriculum for the new case worker and supervisor onboarding program. The onboarding training will be for use by PCSAs upon hiring new caseworker and supervisor staff. The training will not replace the requirement of caseworkers and supervisors attending CORE, and counties will not be required to implement the onboarding training; however, it will be an available resource for each PCSA's training process. Once the purchase order is issued, developing the curriculum can commence. Additional details will be shared as this work moves forward.

## **Resource Home Recruitment and Assessment**

This request for proposal (RFP) posting has ended and ODJFS is in the process of selecting a vendor(s). As a reminder, this RFP has two distinct components. The first is to support regional and/or statewide activities to recruit foster and adoptive homes to assist public children service agencies, private child placing agencies, private noncustodial agencies, and Title IV-E Juvenile Courts in finding homes for children living in out-of-home placements. The second component is to create a regional pool of certified Tier I and Tier II Assessors to assist in the initiation and completion of foster care and adoption

home studies for public children service agencies, private child placing agencies, private noncustodial agencies, and Title IV-E Juvenile Courts. With the recent passage of Senate Bill 310, the Office of Families and Children recognizes the urgent need to begin licensing kinship homes as foster parents and that drives the work of this RFP.

## Family First Update

In partnership with seven counties and one Title IV-E court, ODJFS began to pilot prevention services on April 1. Participants in this project include Butler, Fairfield, Knox, Licking, Lucas, Stark, and Trumbull counties and Ashtabula's Title IV-E Court.

The pilot counties are utilizing the five evidence-based practices services identified in Ohio's Prevention Services Plan: Multisystemic Therapy, Functional Family Therapy, Ohio START, Healthy Families America, and Parents as Teachers. The counties are piloting prevention services in children services casework practice from April 1, 2021, through Oct. 1, 2021. Throughout this time, counties will provide feedback on prevention services implementation, system functionality, and assessment monitoring tools in their work with families. The pilot will inform any modifications needed before full, statewide implementation in October.

Ohio also recently re-submitted the state's Title IV-E Prevention Services Plan. The plan was revised based on feedback from our federal partners.

## Children Services Transformation Recommendations Update

OFC has received many questions regarding the implementation plan for the 37 Children Services Transformation Advisory Council recommendations. We are working to implement these over the next two years and are happy to share the timeline below. Please note these dates are subject to change as the work moves forward. We expect to make refinements as the individual recommendations are implemented.

### Children Services Transformation Tentative Timeline

**Prevention   Workforce   Practice   Kinship   Foster Care   Adoption   Juvenile Justice**

<i>Timeline</i>	<b>SFY21</b> <b>July 1, 2020 – June 30, 2021</b>	<b>SFY22</b> <b>July 1, 2021- June 30, 2022</b>	<b>SFY23</b> <b>July 1, 2022 – June 30, 2023</b>
<b>Quarter 1</b> (7/1 to 9/30)	Implementation Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Invest in parent services/training/supports</li> <li>Reevaluate Post-Adoption Services (PASSS)</li> <li>Strengthen consistent screening decisions</li> <li>Institute a statewide Ombudsman</li> <li>Establish family finding requirements and tools</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Create tiered caseworker career pathways</li> <li>Promote permanency planning by limiting PPLA</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish a federal KGAP</li> <li>• Expand WWK and Permanency Roundtables</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review/expand CASA best practices</li> </ul>
<b>Quarter 2</b> (10/1 to 12/31)	Implementation Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Integrate a statewide kinship caregiver training</li> <li>• Reduce organizational red tape</li> <li>• Strengthen GAL accountability/communication</li> <li>• Ensure 12-month permanency timelines</li> <li>• Strengthen foster youth normalcy standards</li> <li>• Explore the CHIPS framework with SCO</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explore technology solutions for caseworkers</li> <li>• Establish a statewide cross-system data exchange</li> <li>• Strengthen adoption subsidy negotiation processes</li> <li>• Establish a statewide information resource</li> </ul>
<b>Quarter 3</b> (1/1 to 3/31)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish a consistent onboarding program</li> <li>• Incorporate “resource parent” terminology</li> <li>• Establish a Resource Family Bill of Rights</li> <li>• Establish a Foster Youth Bill of Rights</li> <li>• Ensure permanency education &amp; youth voice</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review PCSA legal representation structures</li> <li>• Expand peer parent partner work</li> </ul>	End of 22/23 Budget

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Elevate foster youth/caregiver recognition</li> <li>Implement a Foster/Adoption Assessor Registry</li> </ul>		
<b>Quarter 4</b> (4/1 to 6/30)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strengthen relationships between parents and caregivers</li> <li>Elevate prenatal-to-three early interventions</li> <li>Develop trauma-informed training for all</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review/strengthen the University Partnership Program (UPP)</li> <li>Identify family finding cross-system strategies</li> <li>Establish concurrent planning</li> <li>Support multidisciplinary parental legal representation</li> <li>Create regional best practice training/TA hubs</li> </ul>	End of 22/23 Budget

## Ohio Kinship and Adoption Navigator Program

The Ohio Kinship and Adoption Navigator Program (OhioKAN) has already served over 500 families. To continue the expansion of services for families, OhioKAN is offering the Training for Adoption Competency beginning in June. This training is a multiple training series intended for clinical staff working with children and families experiencing permanency through adoption or legal custody. A date will be announced soon. For more information, email [veronica.burroughs@jfs.ohio.gov](mailto:veronica.burroughs@jfs.ohio.gov).

## House Bill 8 Update

Due to the passage of Substitute House Bill 8 in October 2020, ODJFS created a procedure letter and will be finalizing the associated rule, which will reduce the number of training hours required for foster caregivers and applicants and give flexibility to the manner in which trainings are offered. OFC will implement HB 8 in a two-phase approach and use it as an opportunity to reimagine foster parent training.

Currently, we are in Phase 1, which will bring an immediate reduction in preservice training hours from 36 to 24, with an option allowing agencies to continue with 36 hours if they choose. Phase 1 also includes a reduction in ongoing training hours to 30 for family foster homes and 45 for specialized foster homes.

Phase 2 is scheduled to be completed in late summer or early fall of 2021. We will solidify the 24-hour preservice topics and add a foster parent training block during the first certification period, with more in-depth training on several topics introduced during preservice. Phase 2 will remain steady for required ongoing training hours at 30 for family foster homes and 45 hours for specialized foster homes. A huge thank you to all the stakeholders who are helping us determine Phase 2 details. Your input into this work is invaluable and appreciated.

Phase 1 includes a reduction in ongoing training hours for currently certified foster caregivers:

Training Type	Previous Hours	Current Hours
Pre-placement	36	24
Continuing –Family Foster Homes	40	30
Continuing – Specialized Foster Homes	60	45

## Third-Party Liability and Medicaid Coverage

As some of you are aware, Medicaid is health care coverage of last resort; federal regulations require payment by other insurers first. This is known as third-party liability. Recently, potential safety risks were identified associated with required third-party liability processes. Specifically, it was found that parents/guardians would be able to identify a child's foster placement location based on their insurance company's documentation of services rendered and billing practices.

To remedy these concerns, the Ohio Department of Medicaid submitted a request to the U.S. Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) for a good cause exemption from all third-party liability activities for children in the custody of a PCSA. In turn, CMS granted a blanket waiver of third-party liability requirements for these children with two exceptions: when medical support orders and/or similar legal documentation exists requiring non-custodial parents to provide insurance coverage.

As a result, Medicaid providers will no longer be required to first submit claims to third-party insurance companies for care given to children in agency custody whose treatment is not subject to such orders. The effective date of this policy change was May 1, 2021. The update to the Medicaid claim payment system and SACWIS/MITS interface will be implemented on May 12, 2021. Should the care of a child in custody be subject to medical support or other similar legal orders, the PCSA must document the order under the Legal Actions section in SACWIS as a ruling received. If you have questions, please contact [CiCTATeam@medicaid.ohio.gov](mailto:CiCTATeam@medicaid.ohio.gov).

## 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 April to PCSA directors and/or private agency directors:

4/2/21	OFC 'First-Friday' Bulletin - April 2, 2021
4/7/21	Permanency Docket Quarterly (PDQ) Quarter 4 - County and State
4/9/21	Policy and Practice Guidance Document (PPGD) #007- Mandated Animal Abuse
4/12/21	Families & Children Letter (FCL) # 004 Virtual Experience Solution

4/16/21          April, 2021 OFC Touchpoint Meeting  
4/30/21          May - Foster Care Month Resolution

## **Rule Review Update**

The following Ohio Administrative Code rules were posted to the [Rule Review website](#) in April:

**For 14 days from April 12, 2021 through April 27, 2021:**

Chapter 5101:2-33 Administrative Requirements

- 5101:2-33-70 Statewide automated child welfare information system (SACWIS) access

Chapter 5101:2-48 Adoption

- 5101:2-48-09 Application process and preservice training

**For 14 days from April 14, 2021 through April 29, 2021:**

Chapter 5101:2-1 Children Services Definition of Terms

- 5101:2-1-01 Children services definition of terms

**For 14 days from April 21, 2021 through May 6, 2021:**

Chapter 5101:2-9 Children's Residential Centers, Group Homes, and Residential Parenting Facilities

- 5101:2-9-21 Care, supervision and discipline

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 1,450 page views in April.