

Ohio Child and Family Services Plan Final Report (FY2000 – 2004)



Ohio Department of Job and Family Services
Office for Children and Families

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OHIO: CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES PLAN FINAL REPORT FY2000-2004

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I. OVERVIEW

Over the past five years the State of Ohio has initiated numerous changes in the area of child welfare which have had a positive impact on children and families served by the child protection system. Changes were in the areas of state legislation; continuous building of cross-systems partnerships; focused initiatives for special populations served by the child protection system; approaches to child welfare practice; court practices; training and staff development; evaluation and monitoring; the Child and Family Services Review (CFSR); and the subsequent Program Improvement Plan (PIP). As result of these changes, ODJFS has developed the State's Child and Family Services Plan (CFSP) for FYs 2005 – 2009, which is in part an integration and enhancement of the CFSR PIP and CFSR PIP Quarterly Report (April 2004).

II PROGRESS TOWARD MEETING GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

In implementing the programs and service delivery system changes outlined in Ohio's five year Child and Family Services Plan (CFSP), collaborative efforts across state departments, and public and private children services agencies were guided by the ODJFS and PCSAO joint state and county planning and implementation efforts for children, adult and family services in Ohio. This collaboration process continues the work of the Child Welfare Reform Shareholders Group (initiated in 1999); considers issues facing at-risk adults; and focuses on improving the ways we serve Ohio's most at-risk children and families, and their communities. This effort responds to the ongoing need to consciously accelerate our system's capacity to deliver effective services that are guided by federal and state laws, best practice standards, and federal and state outcome measures.

In December 2001, OCF convened an Executive Leadership Forum to discuss the strategic planning model. This group included top level administrators from several state agencies, advocacy groups and professional organizations. These leaders were asked to support the planning process by committing staff time for leadership/guiding activities and by communicating the process and encouraging their partners and constituents to become involved in the community environmental scans.

A Guiding Group was formed to lead the development and full implementation of the strategic program plan in the years ahead. The Guiding Group is composed of approximately 40 people and includes the Deputy Director of the Office for Children and Families and other administrative and program personnel. It also includes representatives from many segments of the public children, adult and family services system and key stakeholder groups, such as foster parents, providers, child advocates, Child Welfare Reform Shareholder Group members, and others with an interest in improving our system.

A two-year strategic planning process for children, adult and family services began with a series of fifteen Environmental Scans in January 2002. Over 500 individuals attended these scans and provided information on their hopes for Ohio's children, adults, families and communities. They also identified the strengths and weaknesses of the children, adult and family services system. They then identified the opportunities and barriers that are present in the current economic, social and political environment. The data compiled from these scans were used by the Guiding Group in developing the strategic plan.

To help ensure that the strategic planning process supports achieving federal and state priorities related to child welfare, the first guiding group meeting began by reviewing the outcome measures used for the Federal Child and Family Service Reviews (CFSR) and Ohio's Commitments to Child

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Well-Being. The federal measures include three areas - Safety, Permanency and Well-being. These federal goals reflect many of Ohio's Commitments to Child Well-Being as outlined by Governor Taft. Ohio's commitments are broad based and achieving them will take the concerted efforts of state and local governments and their partners and stakeholders. These commitments are:

- Expectant parents and newborns thrive.
- Infants and toddlers thrive.
- Children are ready for school.
- Children and youth succeed in school.
- Youth choose healthy behaviors.

ODJFS is currently working on revisions to the 2002 – 2004 Strategic Plan and will incorporate the findings and goals stated in the Child and Family Services Review and our federally approved Program Improvement Plan. In addition, these findings and goals have been incorporated into the Child and Family Services Plan for FY2005 - 2009. The Child and Family Services Review and the Program Improvement Plan have assisted ODJFS in the coordination of efforts aimed at the Safety, Permanency and Well-being for children and families. This coordination has targeted strategies both statewide and regional in implementing and accomplishing the goals and objectives of the CFSP for FYs 2000 - 2004 and will continue through the life cycle of the CFSP for FYs 2005 - 2009.

This section reports the accomplishments made over the past five years and the progress the state has made in meeting identified goals and objectives of the CFSP for FYs 2000 -2004.

Goal 1: **To protect children by providing screening, timely assessments/**
Protection **investigations, inter-agency assessments and comprehensive supportive**
 services to families coming to the attention of public children services
 agencies (PCSA) and other child care systems. (CAPTA)

Objective 1: To increase state collaboration on child abuse and neglect prevention activities.

Objective 2: To implement a screening model.

Objective 3: To have all child abuse and neglect assessments/investigations completed within 30-45 days of receipt of the report.

Objective 4: To promote inter-agency coordination to protect children from abuse and neglect and to encourage more effective delivery of services to families in all counties.

Objective 5: To provide coordination of the ProtectOHIO, Title IV-E Wavier Project.

Objective 6: To promote strength-based, family focused children's protective services casework practice.

Objective 7: To provide leadership in policy development to address the problem of child abuse and neglect.

Objective 8: To promote statewide child abuse and neglect prevention through public education and public awareness campaigns.

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Progress/Accomplishments:

Protection of children starts prior to the receipt of a report of child abuse and neglect by PCSAs or local law enforcement agencies. It is at that point in which the community has sufficient resources and services available to families to prevent the occurrence of child abuse or neglect where protection of children first occurs. However, when a report of child abuse or neglect is received by the PCSA it is now the agency's responsibility, along with the community, to determine risk to the child for further abuse or neglect and to ensure adequate support and services are made available for families in order to reduce future risk to the child.

Since 1996, there has been a steady decrease in the number of child abuse and neglect reports received. The following table presents information over the past eight years on the number of reports received by year.

REPORTING YEAR	NUMBER OF REPORTS RECEIVED
1996	94,815
1997	90,440
1998	84,398
1999	79,261
2000	73,729
2001	72,227
2002	71,258
2003	70,725

Child neglect has consistently been the most prevalent type of report received followed by physical abuse, sexual abuse, and emotional abuse. However, there has been a slight increase in the number of reports of emotional maltreatment. An increase in the number of reports of emotional maltreatment may be attributable to a state statute now providing a definition of "mental injury." The following Table presents data on a number of reports received by allegation type.

INCIDENTS	NEGLECT	PHYSICAL ABUSE	SEXUAL ABUSE	EMOTIONAL MALTREATMENT	OTHER
1996	44,015	32,295	15,470	3,014	21
1997	41,460	31,333	15,000	2,619	28
1998	38,787	28,737	14,223	2,323	328*

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INCIDENTS	NEGLECT	PHYSICAL ABUSE	SEXUAL ABUSE	EMOTIONAL MALTREATMENT	OTHER
1999	36,476	26,330	13,217	2,867	371*
2000	32,352	24,983	13,085	3,296	13*
2001	31,646	24,089	12,970	3,490	32*
2002	31,174	23,001	12,918	4,150	15*
2003	31,514	22,641	12,018	4,521	31*

* Also included some missing data from counties

The following activities have occurred to accomplish **Goal 1: Child Protection** and to continue to reduce the incidents of abuse and neglect of children in Ohio.

Collaboration: Many of the activities and programs in Ohio's CFSP have resulted from recommendations from the Governor's Task Force on Investigation and Prosecution of Child Abuse. This multi-disciplinary gubernatorial appointed Task Force was established to review and evaluate the state's handling of child abuse and neglect cases and to make recommendations to the Director of the ODJFS. Members of the Task Force represented:

- Ohio Department of Health Forensic Training Institute
- County & City Prosecutors
- Ohio Attorney General's Office
- Pediatricians
- County Public Children Services Agencies
- Psychologists
- Child Advocacy Centers
- Ohio Department of Public Safety
- Ohio Senate
- Health Care Providers
- Child Abuse Prevention
- Law Enforcement
- Attorneys Judges (Juvenile, Probate, Municipal)
- National & Ohio CASA/GAL Associations
- Local Public Defender's Office

A sample of activities that have been implemented over the past years as a result of recommendations from the Governor's Task Force is:

Interdisciplinary Training: ODJFS has supported efforts that promote use of the OCWTP RTC for interdisciplinary instruction. This has included establishing a state program for team training interdisciplinary techniques for investigating and prosecuting child abuse cases, as well as various

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topic-specific workshops and seminars

Family Drug Courts: HB 484 (1999), Ohio's implementation of the Adoption and Safe Families Act (ASFA) reinforced the need for the state to better coordinate child welfare and substance abuse intervention efforts. The tightened permanency time frames handed down by ASFA, as well as, HB 484's specific language regarding coordinated efforts, required new approaches on behalf of families involved in the child welfare system who are challenged by substance abuse and/or addiction.

ODJFS and ODADAS identified Family Drug Courts as one option available to address this difficult issue. A Family Drug Court has a specialized docket which focuses on parents who abuse or neglect their child (ren) as a result of substance abuse or addiction. At the time of ODJFS' initial support, Ohio had two Family Drug Courts in early stages of development. Ohio leads the nation in Family Drug Courts, with 11 in operation and additional counties exploring feasibility. There are a total of 57 drug courts in Ohio; 18 of these are juvenile drug courts serving many of the same juveniles seen in the dependency system. The adult drug courts also can be assumed to have a substantive cross-over.

Partnerships for Child Safety: A concurrent activity, ODJFS, ODADAS, Ohio Judicial Conference (OJC) and the Ohio Association of Juvenile and Family Court Judges, this of workshops is intended to strengthen working relationships among local public agencies, with emphasis on the courts, substance abuse treatment providers and public children services agencies. These day long workshops are held upon request of local courts and focus on strengthening teamwork and communication skills of staff working with families experiencing child abuse and neglect and problems with substance abuse and addiction. Workshops have proven to be springboards to counties initiating exploration of Family Drug Courts.

Child Advocacy Centers: ODJFS worked to establish and continues close collaboration with the Ohio Network of Child Advocacy Centers (CAC) to develop a state system of these multi-disciplinary service centers. CAC provide a comprehensive, child-focused program based in a facility that allows law enforcement, child protective services professionals, prosecutors, and the mental health and medical communities to work together to handle child abuse cases. The over-arching goal of all CAC is to make sure that children are not further victimized by systems designed to protect them.

Forensic Interviewing: ODJFS has established a state system that all professionals that interview children have geographic and financial accessibility to forensic interviewing instruction.

Interdisciplinary Case Management and Data Collection: ODJFS has worked through the Ohio Network of Child Advocacy Centers to ensure that all professionals that investigate child sexual abuse cases through the CAC model have immediate access to all reports and data necessary to effectively perform job functions and make decisions.

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Court Appointed Special Advocates: ODJFS initiated the establishment of a state Ohio CASA/GAL Association office and has offered financial and program support since that time in an effort to promote the state-wide development of local programs and the quality assurance for programs' operation.

ODJFS also works in close partnership with the Supreme Court of Ohio. Over the past five years collaborative efforts have focused on the following activities:

- **Advisory Committee on Children, Families and the Courts:** Chief Justice Thomas Moyer has established this 20-member standing committee, comprised of judges, magistrates, and various professionals who specialize in child and family issues, to make recommendations on court reform matters related to family law.
- **Judicial Training and Cross Training:** The Ohio Judicial College has established a Family Law Specialist to develop training programs and curriculum to improve judicial intervention in family matters. The Family Law Specialist works with judicial representatives and ODJFS in course development and to identify ongoing training needs.
- **Data Collection:** The Juvenile Data Network is a project led by the juvenile court judges of Ohio to collect extensive, timely information on juvenile court cases in a central repository. The intent of the repository is to make data to track juveniles statewide and follow juvenile court trends available in Ohio.
- **Ohio Family Law Statutes:** The Family Code Task Force was appointed by Chief Justice Thomas J. Moyer to review all existing Ohio statute pertaining to families and to draft *Ohio Family Law Statutes* which integrates components of existing code into a simplified and non-conflicting text.
- **Pilot Sites:** Technical assistance and limited financial support is available to courts wishing to improve processing of family law matters. Common themes include expanded mediation, central intake of cases for all jurisdictions, innovative uses of technology, and expanded court services.
- **Mediation in Child Abuse and Neglect:** Technical assistance and competitive financial support is available to courts interested in using mediation in child abuse and neglect cases, both as alternative to traditional pathways and as a supplement to services.
- **Unified Family Courts:** All courts applying to the SCO for additional judgeships are being asked to consider the concept of a "Family Judgeship" in their application.

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- **Attorney Certification and Specialization:** The SCO and ODHS will be working with the Ohio State Bar Association to explore training and certification procedures for attorneys who practice family law, including both prosecution and defense work.
- **Standards for Guardians *ad litem*:** Through its Advisory Committee of Children, Families and the Court, the SCO is examining how best to implement the recommendations of the Guardian ad litem Standards Task Force convened by Chief Justice Thomas J. Moyer. The task force recommended standards in the following areas: services and duties; training; reports; funding and payment; and, monitoring and enforcement.
- **Case Management and Processing:** The SCO offers on-site analysis and technical assistance to courts interesting in improving case processing.
- **Judicial Assignment:** In anticipation of the increased hearing demands created by the heightened time frames of the Adoption and Safe Families Act, Chief Justice Thomas J. Moyer has established a pool of experienced juvenile law judges that are available for assignment to courts experiencing increased or extended caseloads
- **Expedited Appeals for Termination of Parental Rights:** The SCO has implemented rules to streamline appeals involving termination of parental rights and adoption issues. The rules require the 12 Ohio appellate courts and the Supreme Court to give priority to these cases.
- **Cross Disciplinary Communication:** The SCO and ODJFS produce a quarterly bulletin on family law issues that is distributed to all Ohio common pleas judges, magistrates, and court administrators; public children service agency directors; and, other relevant agencies. Additionally, SCO and ODJFS have produced a series of videos regarding drug courts created in cooperation with the Ohio Department of Alcohol and Drug Addiction Services and the Ohio Judicial Conference.

Community Evaluation Team (CET)

Ohio implemented the CAPTA requirement for Citizen Review Panels by establishing Community Evaluation Teams (CETs). ODJFS provided funding for three Community Evaluation Teams in Athens, Logan and Stark counties from 1999 to 2002. Three additional counties (Lorain, Marion and Scioto) were selected to organize teams in 2001, and were funded from 2001 through 2004. Although each team developed and implemented programming based on their individual county's needs, there were some activities that were common across all six (6) teams. ODJFS provided intensive technical assistance and support during the development phase for the teams which included attendance at the team meetings. Once

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teams established meeting schedules and project plans for the year, technical assistance from ODJFS was provided on an as needed and requested basis.

All of the teams conducted activities to educate their communities regarding child protective services (CPS) and issues of child abuse and neglect; reviewed local CPS policy, procedures and issues in their communities which enabled them to identify unmet needs; analyzed data regarding custody, school placements; and made recommendations to the CPS agency regarding program development, enhancement and policy revisions.

It was the intent of the Department to establish and fund new teams every three (3) years which, over time, would provide as many communities as possible with the opportunity to operate a CET. ODJFS limited the funding period to three (3) years, with the expectation that teams would continue to operate under their own momentum after state funding ended. This did not occur in two of the three initial counties. In addition, funding for the CETs has always been provided via allocations to the CPS agencies, and teams began looking to the CPS agency representatives to facilitate, coordinate and guide team activities.

These two issues combined with the requirements added in the CAPTA re-authorization prompted ODJFS to consider re-structuring the program, and the Department decided to explore other options for operating CETs beginning with State Fiscal Year (SFY) 05. The most promising of those options is to use existing Citizen Review Boards (CRB), statutorily authorized and operated by county juvenile courts.

In addition to funding three CETs through the CPS agencies in 2004, ODJFS pursued contracts with two county juvenile courts (Lucas and Montgomery) to have their volunteer CRBs review cases, make recommendations relative to improving practice and implement the remaining CAPTA requirements for Citizen Review Panels. Both CRBs will conduct case reviews to gather data on the length of time in custody, effectiveness of services, and barriers to provision of services. Montgomery County's CRB will also track the frequency of worker visits. The contracts with the CRBs are for one year only and are considered a pilot project. If the CRBs are able to meet all of the CAPTA requirements, other juvenile courts will be given the opportunity to bid for a contract in SFY 06.

Highlights from the Lorain, Marion and Scioto teams which operated during SFY 04 are outlined below. Copies of the teams' reports are included in the appendix of this report.

[Lorain County Community Evaluation Team](#)

In 2004, the team learned that participants were interested in knowing more about Independent Living and related supportive services offered. A program overview was given by the supervisor of the IL Unit addressing:

- assessment instruments
- continued education

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- life skills
- youth challenges

Discussions during CET meetings showed that several members of the Lorain county community have a better understanding of how CPS fits into the safety net for children and families including the roles/outcomes for which the agency should (and should not) be held accountable. Records reviewed showed that most children removed from their home are placed within the Lorain and Elyria community. Efforts continue to minimize the removal of children from their school district.

The CET attempted to identify correlations between child placement and the level of involvement of the birth family in visitation and case planning but found no way to measure this. Other team activities conducted in 2004 include: looking at records of family attendance at SARs which was found to be low; review of the Child Protection Oversight and Evaluation (CPOE) reports by management, supervisors and the agency's Board Members; discussions about agency practice regarding teens in custody and those who have emancipated from agency custody; and surveys of clients and others were conducted. Attempts to connect with the faith community received a minimal response.

Following are recommendations made by the team to contribute to the long term success of children:

- Follow-up after the closing of a case
- Help relatives get legal status more quickly
- Provide comprehensive assessment/counseling
- Mentoring (faith-based, schools)
- Public transportation (jobs, services, social outlets)
- Support groups for elementary and junior high children
- Education supports; more of them and start earlier
- Mentors to help with case plans
- More support with housing, daycare, etc.
- Better education about the availability of support services
- Follow children to age of 18, even after closing case
- Create a more family friendly atmosphere at the agency
- Peer group in community to help before agency gets involved
- Education: fast track assessments for children

[Marion County Community Evaluation Team](#)

During the past year, the Marion CET continued development of a protocol for dealing with mothers who test positive to drugs at the time of delivery of a child. The team reviewed the Young Person in Care survey that will be used to evaluate the foster care program and discussed a process for follow-up on negative survey responses. The team also decided to look at the case planning process and the extent to which foster parents and birth parents are involved.

[Scioto County Community Evaluation Team](#)

This past year, the team reviewed statistical data that led to the

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establishment of a subcommittee to address unruly/delinquent youth issues. There are ten different school districts and each one handles unruly and delinquent youth differently. A Collaborative Contract between Scioto County Children Services and Portsmouth City School District was established to improve communication and to address any conflicts. Representatives from the school system want mandated reporters to be able to make anonymous referrals, some wanted to be involved in investigations and some wanted more case information.

Another subcommittee was established to discuss issues related to infants born drug affected. The subcommittee recommended a policy and procedure for referrals from the hospital to the agency. Elements of the procedure include:

- Scioto County Children Services has one investigator to handle all drug affected family cases
- Hospital created referral forms
- Counseling Center and REACH send representatives to the hospital for screening and referral
- Hospital will provide meeting space for team meetings with the family

The team participated in the survey conducted by Blake Jones of Kentucky University.

Screening:

Because Ohio is a state-supervised, county administered child protective services system, screening criteria and procedures are developed by each individual PCSA in accordance with the community standards, Ohio Revised Code and Ohio Administrative Code definitions of child abuse and neglect, and agency policy. ODJFS developed a screening model for Ohio's 88 PCSAs to assist in the screening of reports of alleged child abuse and/or neglect in 1999. The intent was to implement the screening model statewide; however, this was never accomplished. It was distributed as a tool to assist PCSAs and several agencies adapted the model as their internal screening policy. The concepts that were included in the ODJFS screening model are also included in the practice standards for screening developed by the Public Children Services Association of Ohio (PCSAO).

The Ohio CFSR Final Report issued January 2003, noted concerns regarding Ohio's screening practices including: interpretation of state policy on screening CA/N referrals varies widely from county to county; definitions of child abuse and neglect are county specific creating a disconnect between agency authority to intervene and types of situations agencies are expected to handle based on community standards; the large number of reports that are not assigned for a full assessment/investigation and the absence of clear and consistent statewide criteria for making the screening decision; and the practice of classifying some child maltreatment reports as "informational with contact" and not completing a full assessment.

As a result of the findings of the Child and Family Service Reviews, a report

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from the National Resource Center on Legal and Judicial Issues, and the information obtained from the national forum in Minneapolis (detailed later in this section), Ohio convened a task force to look at issues related to screening reports of alleged child maltreatment. This task force, operating as a sub-committee under the Ohio Supreme Court's Advisory Committee on Children, Families and the Courts, is charged with developing recommendations for changes to ORC and OAC including statutory definitions of child abuse and neglect as well as procedures for screening and investigation of reports.

ODJFS also added activities to the statewide CPOE Stage 5 review to gather data on CA/N screening practices. Upon the completion of Stage 5 reviews (December 31, 2004) the aggregate data will be analyzed and program decisions as to what screening practices are working and appropriate as well as what practices need to change will be determined. This information, in combination with the recommendations from the Supreme Court's sub-committee, will provide the foundation for developing a statewide screening policy.

Over the time period covered by this plan, ODJFS staff provided multiple training presentations to mandated reporters and county PCSA staff on child abuse and neglect reporting statute and rules. Information on screening reports involving out-of-home alleged perpetrators was provided to PCSA staff during an overview of revisions to the Family Decision Making Model (formerly entitled the Family Risk Assessment Model) in 2000. In addition, ODJFS staff provided and attended other training presentations related to screening and investigations. A list of applicable training activities follows:

- [STARS \(Seniors Teaching and Reaching Students\)](#) - spring 2000: Training on the mandated reporter statute was provided to program coordinators working for the STARS program operated by the Ohio Department of Aging. STARS is a statewide program which utilizes senior citizen volunteers as tutors and mentors in local school systems. In addition to information on the mandated reporter statute, the training also covered indicators of abuse and neglect; how to make a referral of suspected child maltreatment; and how CPS agencies respond to reports accepted for investigation/assessment.
- [Giving Tree \(Port Clinton, Ohio\)](#) – spring 2001: Training on the mandated reporter statute, when and how to report child abuse and neglect and indicators of child maltreatment was provided to community professionals in Ottawa County. Participants were provided with handouts and information on how PCSAs screen referrals. The training was sponsored by The Giving Tree, an outpatient drug and alcohol treatment program in Port Clinton, Ohio. The attendees included court personnel, mental health counselors, educators and social workers who work with at risk children and their families.
- [TOPS in Job and Family Services Program](#) – fall 2001: Training on the mandated reporter statute, including when and how to report

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child abuse and neglect, was provided to trainers from the program. Participants were provided with handouts and information on how PCSAs screen referrals, how a case progresses through the CPS system and the confidential nature of reports.

- [School Nurse Orientation \(Ohio Department of Health\)](#) – fall 2002: ODJFS presented two-hour Mandated Reporter training in 2002 to approximately 100 newly hired school nurses. The training included information on the indicators of child maltreatment; an overview of CPS as a system and how cases are handled from the point of referral to case closure; their obligation as mandated reporters to report suspected child abuse and neglect; and the methods for reporting. Evaluations indicated that this training was very helpful.
- [Differential Response National Forum Program \(Minneapolis\)](#) - August 2002: One CPS staff member attended the forum, sponsored by the McKnight Foundation and the Minnesota Department of Human Services. The forum included presentations on planning for differential response systems, child welfare assessments, state experiences in implementing a differential response system and structured decision making among others.
- [Caseworker Core Training](#) – Ongoing: This training series, which is provided to both CPS and public assistance workers, has several training modules with curricula on child protective services including: Legal Aspects of Family-Centered Child Protection, Family-Centered Child Protective Services, Case Planning and Family-Centered Casework, The Effect of Abuse and Neglect on Child Development, and Separation, Placement, and Reunification. The training enables CPS and public assistance workers to more effectively identify, recognize and screen reports of abuse and neglect. Core training is offered through the regional training centers every quarter.
- [New Safety Assessment Protocol](#) – fall 2002: As part of the training to be provided to CPS staff and managers, a preliminary training was held at the Public Children Services Association of Ohio (PCSAO) Annual Statewide Conference held every September. The presentation provided 50 individuals from various public children services agencies (PCSA) and other child serving agencies an overview of the development of Ohio's new Safety Assessment protocol. Comments and suggestions made at this presentation were taken back to the workgroup developing the protocols for further review.

Examining Definitions of Child Abuse and Neglect:

All children and families should have equal access to skilled and appropriate intervention, regardless of where the child resides or the abuse occurs. Disparity in the provision of child protection services between geographical jurisdictions is an inevitable struggle within a county-based system and Ohio is aware that other state-supervised/county-administered states also grapple with how to ensure statewide quality while maintaining

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local integrity and control. Two recent documents, however, have prompted further examination of this issue:

- In its January 2003 Child and Family Services Review Final Report, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services charged that “Ohio is not consistent in its efforts to protect children from abuse or neglect” and expressed concern regarding “...the absence of clear and consistent statewide criteria for making (the) initial screening decision.”
- A report authored by Howard Davidson, Director, American Bar Association Center on Children and the Law, asserts, in part, that “[t]he fragmentation of child maltreatment definitions among various sections of Ohio law and the lack of comprehensive statewide policies to guide counties in taking uniform action in screening reports of maltreatment, are major factors in the discrepancy among county responses...” The report also asserts that “...flaws in the definitional framework for case determination labels contribute to inconsistencies among counties in investigative decision-making and follow-up responses.”

Since Ohio’s statutory definitions are the linchpin of Ohio’s child abuse investigation and prosecution –both establishing the parameters of the state’s intervention on behalf of children and families and significantly impacting a recurring concern regarding the disparity of response between geographic jurisdictions -- this issue has been selected as the focus of a three year study. The highly sensitive nature of this study and its wide political ramifications have made it most effective for the study to occur under the jurisdiction of an unbiased and objective entity, the Supreme Court of Ohio. Its formal title is *Subcommittee on Child Abuse, Neglect and Dependency*.

A Request for Proposal was released to secure consultation services for the task force. A joint proposal from the American Bar Association (contact: Howard Davidson) and the National Center for Adoption Law at Capital University (contact: Kent Markus) was selected after written and oral presentation to task force members. The following specifications describe the activities and responsibilities that are expected of the American Bar Association (ABA) and National Center for Adoption Law at Capital University (NCAL):

- Develop and implement a written plan for the report. The report must include the following:
 - A review of Ohio’s civil and criminal statutes regarding the investigation and prosecution of child abuse, neglect, and dependency to identify;
 - Archaic and inconsistent language;
 - Ambiguities in statutory language that contribute to the absence of consistent statewide criteria for investigating and prosecuting child abuse, neglect and dependency;
 - Ambiguities in statutory language that lead to conflict or chronic variance in court interpretation between jurisdictions;

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- If current language offers public entities (e.g. child welfare, law enforcement, judicial) the most appropriate and/or effective options to serving families;
 - If current language promotes investigative and judicial handling of cases in a manner that reduces additional trauma to the child victim and the child victim's family;
 - If current language promotes investigative and judicial handling of cases in a manner that ensures procedural fairness to the accused.
- A review of the dispositional categories of child abuse, neglect and dependency (substantiated report, unsubstantiated report, indicated report) defined in Ohio Administrative Code 5101:2-1-01 to identify:
 - Ambiguities in language that cause a disparity in case handling between counties;
 - If criteria for dispositional decision-making is sufficiently defined to permit entry of the public children services agency's findings in court proceedings.
- A comparative review of other states' "model" statutes and/or alternative practices, when appropriate
- An analysis of current Ohio practice.
- ABA/NCAL shall work under the general oversight of the task force. The task force is comprised of selected Ohio practitioners representing the disciplines that will be primarily impacted by the outcome of the report. The task force will be available to ABA/NCAL to solicit outside contacts, provide appropriate information, and assist ABA/NCAL's activities as appropriate.
- ABA/NCAL shall develop a final report that has been approved by the task force that does the following:
 - Describes the activities of the study;
 - Proposes statutory changes, including specific language, to address items identified in the report;
 - Proposes changes to the Ohio Administrative Code or the Rules of Superintendence to address items addressed in the report;
 - Proposes practice and/or administrative changes that address items identified in the report;
 - Makes recommendation regarding experimental, model and/or demonstration programs;
 - Identifies a fiscal impact analysis of proposed recommendations, including both direct and indirect cost benefits and costs;
 - Sets forth necessary steps for implementation of recommendations, including possible training needs; and

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- May set forth a plan for an evaluative pilot site phase to follow, which shall include:
 - Number of pilot and control sites and selection methodology or recommendation;
 - Data collection instrumentation and required training;
 - Implementation methodology;
 - Training requirements;
 - On-site technical assistance;
 - Time frames;
 - Estimated costs;
 - Any projected products.
- ABA/NCAL shall participate in five public information activities designed to either solicit outside input and/or present report findings

Ohio Network of Child Advocacy Centers:

Child Advocacy Centers (CAC) are an established and highly effective approach to provide coordinated services to abused and neglected children and their families. Over the past five years, ODJFS has been working with representatives of the full and emerging child advocacy centers throughout Ohio to establish a state association and central office. The Ohio Network of Child Advocacy Centers (ONCAC) is now incorporated in the state of Ohio as a private, not for profit, 501 [C] 3 agency. It has established offices in downtown Columbus and is an Accredited Chapter of National Children's Alliance, participating in all National Children's Alliance activities. Two National Children's Alliance Board members are from Ohio, Matt Heck, Prosecutor for Montgomery County and Dr. Robert Shapiro, Medical Director of the Mayerson Center. The Executive Director serves on the National Children's Alliance Cultural Competency Committee, is a National Children's Alliance site visitor for accreditation studies and served as a grant reviewer for National Children's Alliance special projects grants.

ONCAC is governed by a ten member board of directors. The board meets quarterly and has concentrated over the past year on diversifying the membership to include different disciplines and geographic areas. A committee structure has been developed for the work of the board.

Association membership criteria and member services have been established. The criteria are based on National Children's Alliance standards and are published in ONCAC's brochure and on its web site. Thirteen agencies paid membership dues for 2003-2004.

Primary to ONCAC's mission is providing technical assistance and support to communities exploring the feasibility of CAC. The following chart illustrates the progress that Ohio has achieved in the past five years:

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ONCAC Status	May 1999	May 2004
Accredited Member	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Canton (Stark) 2. Chillicothe (Ross) 4. Dayton (Montgomery) 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Canton (Stark) 2. Chillicothe (Ross) 3. Cincinnati (Hamilton) 4. Dayton (Montgomery) 5. Ravenna (Portage) 6. Springfield (Clark)* 6. Steubenville (Jefferson) 7. Toledo (Lucas) 8. Youngstown (Mahoning, Trumbull, Columbiana)* <p>* Application filed: awaiting site visit</p>
Associate Member	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ravenna (Portage) 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Akron (Summit) 2. Athens (Athens) 3. Columbus (Franklin) 4. Newark (Licking) 5. Wooster (Wayne)
Developing Center		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Bellefontaine (Logan) 2. Cambridge (Guernsey) 3. Findlay (Hancock) 4. Lima (Allen) 5. Sandusky (Erie)

In addition to increasing the number of child advocacy centers available to serve Ohio's children and families, ONCAC also:

- Provides technical assistance and support to existing and developing CAC, as well as to communities interested in exploring the establishment of a CAC.
- Established membership in the National Children's Alliance, making Ohio eligible to receive national CAC state funding.
- Developed a state-wide training and education system for CAC.
- Promoted the development and implementation of a state-wide uniform data collection and case management system.
- Established a program to implement and monitor performance standards on a state-wide basis.
- Developed and implement a standardized forensic interviewing program.
- Provided a range of membership services such as legislative monitoring, advocacy, and information-sharing.

**Ohio
Pediatric
SANE &**

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Telemedicine

Program:

The ODJFS, in collaboration with the pediatric Medical Centers of Excellence, has initiated a project to improve services to victims of child sexual abuse in medically underserved communities through telemedical services. Its objectives are to:

- Provide child victims of sexual abuse and assault with expert evidence evaluation in a timely manner and within their own community;
- Ensure expert diagnoses by knowledgeable physicians;
- Support linkages between the evidence gatherers, medical experts, local children's services and law enforcement.

This is accomplished by:

- Training Ohio nurses to become expert in evidence collection in sexual abuse and assault cases (Pediatric SANE);
- Enabling communities in Ohio to provide expert evidence collection in these cases by utilizing the services of the Pediatric SANE.

The preparation tasks for a program to be operational are extensive, requiring not only significant allocation of manpower but often unanticipated investment of facilitation to reach political acceptance. In order for the Pediatric SANE to work within a community:

- Interested nurses needed to be identified and trained;
- Medical backup and expert child abuse mentorship must be identified;
- Procedures for patient evaluations, care and reporting must be created;
- A facility for patient care delivery must be found;
- Coloposcopic recording equipment must be purchased;
- Pediatric SANE must learn how to use the equipment and, in some instances, learn how to work via telemedicine with the expert child abuse physician; and,
- Nurses must be given regular and ongoing opportunity for continuing education.

Since inception two years ago, The Ohio Pediatric SANE and Telemedicine Program (SANE) has developed initial and ongoing training programs; process and clinical protocol; and recruited, trained, equipped and enrolled 11 communities. The first of the recruits are further along in this process and are functioning more productively than those programs which were recruited more recently. All of the programs still are evolving to become more productive and serve greater numbers of victims. Each community has created an individualized program to meet community-specific needs. Some of the programs rely on on-site medical expertise and some of them rely on a telemedicine connection with their expert. The Pediatric SANE in some of the sites are assuming more patient responsibility than others. In all cases where the Pediatric SANE program has advanced to providing patient/victim care, access to care has increased and the quality of care has improved. Over the past two years:

- Eleven programs have been established in 11 Ohio counties.

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- Three one-week training sessions have been conducted in Cincinnati.
- Forty-one nurses have been trained to be Pediatric SANE (P-SANE).
- Equipment has been provided to nine programs.
- Six (quarterly) peer review continuing education internet-based trainings have been conducted.
- Six programs have been providing care to child victims by Pediatric SANE trained nurses.

Current efforts are focused on:

- Recruitment of new Pediatric SANE sites in underserved Ohio communities County
- Program Development
- Training
- Development of clinical competencies in collaboration with the Ohio Academy of Pediatrics

SANE currently is working with seven additional communities. It can be expected that some of these seven programs will halt their progress towards providing patient/victim care while others will progress into fully functional programs. It is anticipated that by the end of the next reporting period, Ohio will have a minimum of 15 operating Pediatric SANE sites.

The Mayerson Center for Safe and Healthy Children has completed contract negotiations with Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center to create a clinical course for Pediatric SANE advanced training. Nurses can now schedule clinical time with the Mayerson Center to complete clinical Pediatric SANE training. This nursing course is actively advertised, with nurses scheduled and expectation to begin the clinical RN training of other nurses soon.

The program currently is working with its telemedicine consultant to identify state-of-the-art, inexpensive and HIPPA compliant video conferencing equipment. Once a vendor is selected, videoconferencing equipment will be purchased and disseminated to SANE sites. This will pave the way to begin video didactic training

Beyond the Silence:

Over the past three years, ODJFS has overseen activities to establish a state system for making forensic interviewing instruction financially and geographically accessible to all professionals that interview alleged child abuse victims. Acting through an advisory group comprised of multidisciplinary representation, the Childhood Trust, University of Cincinnati, was contracted to develop the participants' and trainers' curriculum. Initial curriculum development was completed in December 2003.

ONCAC and Childhood Trust jointly engaged in the recruitment and selection of a pool of state-based trainers representing the various

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disciplines involved in child abuse investigations and prosecutions. ONCAC will be responsible for the scheduling, regular update and periodic evaluation of trainers.

A *training of trainers* was conducted by Childhood Trust in late January 2004, with fifteen instructors completing the course. Participants were required to absorb curriculum content, participate in modeled interviewing, develop and present course lecture, and participate in peer critique of personal videotape. The selected instructors represent law enforcement, child protection, prosecution, medical and mental health professions.

Each of the course's 2 ½ day sessions will be led by two trainers and an ONCAC staff member. Participation will be limited to twenty trainees. The target audience is child protective service workers and law enforcement officers who interview child abuse victims. Other professionals can attend if space permits. The initial sessions are scheduled for Lucas County (Toledo) in May 2004, Trumbull County (Warren) and Athens County (Athens) in June 2004, and Franklin County (Columbus) in July 2004

Additional information regarding Ohio's forensic interviewing program, "Beyond the Silence," is available at oncac.org.

Risk

Risk Assessment:

A risk assessment curriculum for Community Education and Collaboration was developed through the Ohio Child Welfare Training Program (OCWTP); however, most PCSAs conducted their own training presentations for community stakeholders and service providers. From the early implementation of risk assessment, county agencies experienced resistance from the court/legal arena where the focus remained on taking punitive action against parents and/or alleged perpetrators. Judges, prosecutors and CASAs were the least supportive of the model while human services, mental health, MR/DD and school systems welcomed the opportunity to become more involved with the case management and case planning processes.

In an effort to maintain collaboration with state level stakeholders, ODJFS staff attended the annual trainer meeting for the OCWTP Core trainers each year. A presentation was provided to the OCWTP Caseworker Core trainers in December 2000; following revisions to the Family Risk Assessment Model (renamed the Family Decision Making Model). The training was well received and as a result, risk assessment trainers requested to be more involved with the Statewide Risk Assessment Committee. This committee, comprised of ODJFS and county PCSA staff, had been responsible for assisting the department in the development and implementation of risk assessment throughout Ohio until its dissolution in Fall 2001. When development of the safety assessment protocol began in January 2002, a representative from the OCWTP was asked to sit on the workgroup.

Overviews on the new Safety Assessment Protocol were provided to the public children services agency staff at the Public Children Services Association Of Ohio Statewide Child Welfare Conference and the Child

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Welfare Managers' Meeting in Fall 2002. The Department staff also presented an overview to the Ohio Child Welfare Training Program (OCWTP) Trainers in December of that same year. The pilot of the Family Assessment and Planning Model (revised Family Decision Making Model including the addition of a safety assessment protocol) began in Summer 2003. Two of the four pilot agencies requested that training on the model be provided to key community stakeholders (e.g. law enforcement, school personnel, magistrates, CASA, etc.) in addition to their agency staff.

CPS **Caseworker** **Practice:**

ODJFS hosted Risk Assessment Problem Solving Sessions (RAPS) on a quarterly basis from 1997 through 2001 to assist agencies with the implementation of risk assessment. The sessions provided county representatives an opportunity to share the successes and challenges the experiences with risk assessment, and afforded the state an opportunity to provide consistent feedback and technical assistance to several county agencies at one time. The issue of assessing safety and using the Safety Plan form were major topics of discussion during RAPS meetings.

In 2001, ODJFS requested a comprehensive review of the CPS rules pertaining to screening, investigations and assessments and provision of on-going services from the National Resource Center on Child Maltreatment (NRCCM). As part of the review, the NRCCM was also asked to provide ODJFS with recommendations on how to clarify and differentiate between mandates and best practice issues. A key finding from that review was that OAC rules did not address safety assessment sufficiently to meet ASFA requirements.

In January 2002, Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS) began the process of developing a Safety Assessment Protocol and tool(s). This protocol was developed to provide a structured process for assessing safety throughout the life of a case beginning at the referral stage. Terri Roe Lund from the National Resource Center on Child Maltreatment (NRCCM) conducted a Safety Assessment and Planning Workshop to assist workgroup members in obtaining the background and foundation necessary to develop Ohio's protocol. Barry Salovitz of the NRCCM and Child Welfare Institute (CWI) facilitated work group meetings to share his knowledge and expertise in developing and implementing safety and risk assessment protocols.

Two workgroups consisting of PCSA and state staff, one for the Safety Assessment and the other for the Risk Assessment, worked concurrently to develop the new and revised protocols. The workgroups concluded their work in February 2003. The Safety Assessment Workgroup developed two new tools, the Safety Assessment and the Reunification Assessment, and revised the existing Safety Plan. The Risk Assessment Workgroup revised the Family Assessment (formerly the Family Risk Assessment Matrix) and developed the Case Review tool. The new model was entitled the Family Assessment and Planning Model (FAPM).

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Descriptions of each new tool are outlined below:

Safety Assessment: assists workers in identifying immediate safety threats, the family's ability or inability to control identified threats and the level of immediate intervention necessary to protect a child.

- Assessment of fifteen safety threats, child vulnerability and protective capacities
- Tool is completed within four days of acceptance of a report

Family Assessment: assists workers in determining the likelihood of future maltreatment or re-maltreatment and identifies the conditions or circumstances which must change in order to reduce risk.

- Completed 30 days from receipt of a report (extension to 45 days with justification)
- Assesses contributing factors and underlying conditions for child maltreatment

Case Review: assists workers in re-assessing safety, emerging danger and risk contributors; reviewing the impact of services on reducing risk; and determining the need for continuing, modifying or terminating services.

- Completed every 90 days; first review due 90 days from date of disposition, placement or court filing (whichever occurs first).
- Every other review is completed in conjunction with the Semiannual Administrative Review

Reunification Assessment: assists workers in identifying when significant changes have occurred that would allow the child to safely return home, or be placed with another interested party, with or without interventions (i.e., increase in protective capacities, decrease in child vulnerability or threats of harm).

- Completed 30 days prior to planned reunification
- Identifies services needed to support reunification
- Provides documentation for court when recommending or opposing reunification

The FAPM was piloted by four (4) PCSAs from July 2003 through March 2004. Training of the PCSA staff in Greene, Hancock, Muskingum and Summit counties for implementation of the pilot was held in May, June and July 2003. Two, three day trainings were held for each pilot site. One of the pilot sites, Summit County Children Services Board, never implemented the pilot due to other agency priorities that arose after the training was completed. Lorain County Children Services Board, which participated on the Risk Assessment Workgroup, expressed an interest in joining the pilot as the metro county representative. This agency was trained on pilot tools and protocols in October 2003 and implementation began November 1, 2003.

Statewide implementation of the model is an integral part of Ohio's proposed Program Improvement Plan, and was initially scheduled for

Winter 2006. Although development of the model began prior to the CFSR, the tools in the model do address the outcomes and several of the key items in the CFSR. Specifically, the Safety Assessment is expected to assist in addressing issues related to repeat maltreatment; the Family Assessment is expected to improve the risk assessment process and assist agencies in better identifying service needs for children and families; the Case Review will provide a process for more timely review of the appropriateness or effectiveness of services provided to children and families; and the Reunification Assessment is expected to impact timely reunification as well as safety at the time of reunification.

Caseload Analysis

The Case Load Analysis (CLA) initiative began in 1997 as a practice strategy for the Title IV-E Waiver demonstration project, ProtectOHIO. In May 1998, at a CLA retreat, the CLA Implementation Leadership Forum (ILF) was created and launched. The ILF was designed to provide leadership to the CLA initiative. The ILF was charged with developing and documenting a best-practice approach for child protection; implementing the approach across a range of counties; supporting the approach by measuring its effectiveness; working to continuously improve the approach; and developing and documenting a framework and approach for implementation that other counties, states etc. could adapt.

The CLA initiative is focused on family-centered, strength-based practice in the delivery of child protective services to children and their families. To this end there was an effort to enhance assessment tools and develop quality and compliance tools to measure improvement. Throughout the past five years, the ILF has worked on the development of practice technologies including family assessment and service planning while striving to balance workload and available hours. Additionally, the ILF concentrated on organizational development emphasizing fiscal management, data-driven decision-making, collaboration with community resources and continuous quality improvement in both practice and outcomes. The concept of continuous quality improvement has been an underpinning guiding the initiative. The consideration of data and outcomes became common practice among the ILF agencies over the past five years.

Four PCSAs that were involved in the CLA initiative from the onset have remained involved (Athens, Greene, Guernsey, Muskingum) and currently comprise the ILF. These four PCSAs continue as a collective in the development and implementation of agreed upon practice standards and methodologies. Although the degree to which all four PCSAs have implemented the practice standards varies, there remains a shared consensus in regard to the eventual implementation of all CLA standards and processes.

Over the past four years, five PCSAs (Ashtabula, Hamilton, Medina, Portage, and Richland) have withdrawn from the CLA initiative citing local priorities and resource issues as factors that contributed to the decision. However, the agencies report they have continued the CLA philosophy and practices within their agencies.

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In early 2003, the ILF presented the CLA model to the Public Children Services Association of Ohio (PCSAO) and the Ohio based Institute for Human Services (IHS) in an effort to gain support and additional funding for the initiative. Both IHS and PCSAO found value in the model which resulted in IHS offering staff resources to support research and training while PCSAO financially supported expansion of the model to other Ohio PCSAs. ODJFS agreed to continue working with the ILF to provide technical assistance and guidance to additional Ohio PCSAs that could benefit by incorporating the CLA model as a framework for agency child welfare practice.

Athens, Guernsey, Greene and Muskingum continued the CLA initiative and each contributed \$7,000.00 from their agency budgets toward continuation of the initiative. In addition, ODJFS allocated \$21,000.00, and PCSAO provided \$28,000.00 to assist the ILF in expanding the CLA model to other Ohio PCSAs.

As a result of the training and information sessions held in 2003, five new counties (Butler, Coshocton, Jefferson, Logan and Tuscarawas) joined the CLA initiative in SFY 04 with the focus on implementation of the CLA tools and quality standards. In the meantime, the ILF continued to develop and refine standards for Case Plan development and evaluation, Concurrent Case Planning, Semi-Annual Case Review and Workload Management which includes: Classification of Family Needs and Level of Service.

In year six, the four CLA ILF counties continued their collective work on the methodology to drive safety and permanence in CPS and to support consistent, systematic delivery of family-centered, strength based services. Meanwhile, the five Track Two Expansion counties focused on implementation of the CLA tools. During this reporting period, there were 16 meetings of the ILF and 12 measures team meetings. Also, on January 15, 2004, a presentation of the CLA Model and CLA tools was presented to ODJFS Central and Field Office staff by Alden Leadership Inc.

During Year 6 (SFY 04) the ILF concentrated on continued development of the practice model. A summary of the ILF's Year 6 Annual Report follows:

Classification of Family Needs: The ILF continued work on Classification of Family Needs tool with a great deal of discussion around how cases are classified at the time of the report. The concept of "diagnosing" cases to enable an accurate assessment and identification was driven by the Family Risk Assessment Matrix (FRAM), adult characteristic elements as well as the risk to children given the identification of certain parental characteristics.

The four classification categories adopted by the ILF are: Transient, Emergent, Limited Situational and Multiple Needs. Each classification has its own definition and clarifying language. The ILF counties began collecting classification data in early 2003. During year six of the initiative, the data was analyzed in an attempt to further develop the classifications and create specificity for classifying cases. CLA agency supervisors were convened as

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a work group to further develop the classifications.

Case Planning; Quality and Compliance Measures: Quality assurance tools were developed to assure compliance and quality for Case Plan; Parts A and B in conjunction with the family assessment guided by the FRAM. Compliance standards required as outlined in the Ohio Administrative Code rules that govern Case Planning were incorporated into the quality assurance tools. During year six, this expanded to include concurrent case planning.

Workload Management: The ILF revised the "Pitchfork Model" and moved the Workload Management element to the fulcrum as workload impacts all child welfare functions. A Workload Management Model per se was not completed in its entirety, but rather components of capacity and workload management were addressed. A workload management software module that was implemented by several ILF counties provided data to further refine this component of the model.

The PCSAs that have comprised the ILF report the CLA initiative has assisted them in "raising the bar" regarding their practice. Of the counties that tracked placement data they report a reduction in the number of children entering substitute care, a reduction in the number of days children remain in substitute care and an increase in the number of children placed with relatives and kin.

In December 1999, a workgroup of county and ODJFS staff was formed to develop the Request for Proposal for a researcher/evaluator to design and implement a psychometric study of the reliability and validity of Ohio's risk assessment matrix as used throughout the life of the case. Hornby Zeller and Associates was awarded the contract in 2000 and completed the study over an 18 month time period. The study found the matrix to be valid and reliable as used at the Intake (investigation/assessment) phase, but did not find it valid or reliable for use at other key decision making points (i.e., removal or reunification of a child, case closure).

Recommendations from the study were:

- The initial risk assessment should remain in its current form;
- Some factors should be eliminated for assessments conducted after the initial one, and one factor should be added for those assessments;
- The frequency with which the [risk assessment matrix] is performed should be reduced;
- The baseline score, but not its individual elements, should be eliminated.

These recommendations were taken into account when the ODJFS began development of the Family Assessment and Planning Model in 2002.

Central Registry:

ODJFS is required by Ohio Revised Code (ORC) to maintain the Central Registry and that it contain identifying information for tracking purposes. In an effort to determine what, if any, revisions to ORC were necessary,

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ODJFS conducted several activities designed to gather information to make the Central Registry an efficient and effective tool for public children services agencies.

In 2001, ODJFS conducted a survey of 16 states to assess how the registries are used in those states. Results showed a wide variation in uses, with some states maintaining only non-identifying demographic information for reporting purposes while other states kept detailed information on all parties involved. Expunction time frames also varied from state to state, ranging from expunctions occurring immediately upon the completion of the investigation to processes where an expunction required a court order. Ohio Administrative Code Rules were revised in 2001 to ensure that expunctions occurred in a timely and consistent manner without impacting the system's ability to maintain information on children who are receiving on-going services.

During the time period of this plan, statistical data was collected to evaluate the primary Central Registry searches were being requested (e.g., screening, locating families or alleged perpetrators, etc.). It was determined that, on average, more than half of the searches each year are requested for the purpose of adoption or foster care applicant screening. Because of this, ODJFS issued policy guidance in 2002 to all public and private child placing agencies in the state to clarify the reasons the Central Registry should not be relied upon as a screening tool and to reassert that the use of the Registry for this purpose is inappropriate. ODJFS also contacted the Bureau of Citizenship and Immigration Services (BCIS) to request the requirement for Registry searches on all international adoption applicants be waived for Ohio applicants since the Registry was not designed to be used to conduct background checks. Although BCIS responded that the request was valid and warranted further discussion, the Bureau was not in a position to waive the federal regulatory requirement to check available child abuse registries for foreign adoptions.

Public Awareness:

Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention Month Activities

In November 2000, a committee comprised of representatives from public children services agencies; various private agencies specializing in parenting, child abuse and neglect prevention and education; Family and Children First Council; Ohio Department of Health; and ODJFS was developed to assist in implementing the plans for Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention Month as well as various year round activities. This committee became known as the Prevention Partners Leadership Group (PPLG) in 2002 and continues to meet on a quarterly basis to share information regarding child abuse and neglect prevention and plan for activities and events, specifically focusing on those occurring during the month of April.

The theme for the Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention Month campaigns for 2000, 2001, 2002 and 2003 was "Help Paint Ohio's Future Bright! Prevent Child Abuse and Neglect!" Also integrated into this theme was the Governor's Six Commitments to Child Well Being:

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- Expectant Parents and Newborns Thrive
- Infants and Toddlers Thrive
- Children are Ready for School
- Children and Youth Succeed in School
- Youth Choose Healthy Behaviors
- Youth Successfully Transition into Adulthood

In 2001, using the theme and the Governor's commitments, local Family and Children First Councils assist ODJFS in sponsoring a statewide art contest for fifth grade students. The art work of the county finalists was displayed at "Power of Partners: Ohio's Summit on Child Well-Being." Participants at the Summit were able to vote on art work and the fifteen winners earned a full page color layout in the 2002 Family Well-Being Calendar published by ODJFS. The calendar was distributed to a variety of private and public agencies, including parenting advocacy groups, Head Start, maternity hospitals and PCSAs.

In 2002, information packets were distributed to Ohio's Legislators educating them on child abuse and neglect. These packets included statistical information from their respective districts, a letter from a fellow legislator, the Governor's proclamation and a blue ribbon pin.

In 2003, the PPLG and Ohio Children's Trust Fund jointly created the "Beyond the Blue Ribbon" Prevention Awards to recognize professionals, volunteers, prevention programs and business and media contributors that have made meaningful contributions to the prevention of child abuse and neglect. The winners of these awards were announced during the luncheon at the Ohio Statehouse in April. In addition, educational booklets on toilet training, temper tantrums and child neglect were provided to PCSAs, Family and Children First Councils, Family Resource HUBs and Head Start agencies.

In 2004, the theme for the Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention Month was changed to "You are the Key to Preventing Child Abuse and Neglect." Like the previous year, the "Beyond the Blue Ribbon" Prevention Awards took place during the luncheon at the Ohio Statehouse in April.

In 2000-2004, ODJFS allocated \$2,000.00 to each PCSA to use for their local Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention Month activities. In addition, the State provided counties with posters, educational materials and public services announcements. A Prevention Month public relations "kit" was made available to PCSAs through the ODJFS website and could be downloaded and customized for local use. Promotional items/educational materials were provided each year to PCSAs, Family and Children First Councils and Family Resource HUB Grantees.

Using information provided by county agencies, in 2000-2004, ODJFS compiled a list of activities that agencies sponsored or co-sponsored to raise local community awareness of child abuse and neglect prevention. A "Parent's Pledge" to their child's well-being was also facilitated in 2000-2004 through various early childhood education agencies and parenting

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groups. The Governor's office issued a proclamation designating April as Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention Month each year from 2000 through 2004.

Ohio's Safe Haven Program

In April 2001, Ohio's Safe Haven (Deserted Child) Law became effective. This law encourages the placement of newborns in a safe environment as opposed to being abandoned or left unsafe. ODJFS developed two information pamphlets: one designed for the general public to provide information regarding the Safe Havens program, and another designed for parents who have deserted their child per the specifications of the law. The parents' pamphlet outlines available services to assist parents and newborns, provides information regarding adoption and parental rights and includes the voluntary medical information form. ODJFS also partnered with law enforcement organizations, hospitals and PCSAs regarding implementation of the Safe Haven Law.

Publications

ODJFS publishes three booklets pertaining to child abuse and neglect to use for education and training purposes. One booklet provides the public with information in regards to defining, preventing, identifying and reporting child abuse and neglect. Each of the other two booklets contains the same information with a specific focus – medical professionals or educational professionals. The general public and medical professionals' booklets were out of date and needed to be modified. The medical professionals' booklet was revised by The Mayerson Center for Safe and Healthy Children and was made available in Summer 2003. A copy of the medical professionals' booklet is available on the ODJFS website <http://jfs.ohio.gov/ocf/publications>. The general public booklet is currently being revised and is expected to be published and released in Summer 2004.

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**Goal 2:
Support** To respect and enhance families' ability to create safe, intact and family nurturing homes and communities that improve the quality of family life by promoting the healthy development and well-being of each family member.

Objective 1: Provide needed services to families coming to the attention of the PCSA.

Objective 2: Decrease protective services dependency by families.

Objective 3: Strengthen community collaboration for family support services.

Objective 4: Identify service utilization by PCSA clients.

Objective 5: PCSAs and ODJFS evaluate family service outcomes.

Progress/Accomplishments:

Services are made available to children and their families in many different ways. They are provided directly by the PCSA, or through partnership with other community agencies through information and referral, or contractual agreement,

Many activities have been implemented to accomplish **Goal 2: Support** so that children could continue to remain safely in their own homes or be returned safely to their own homes. These include supportive services, TANF/PRC, Help Me Grow! (HMG), the Family Stability Incentive Fund, Medical Insurance, the Semi-Annual Review process, Kinship Care, and Adoption Assistance.

Supportive Services:

Supportive services are provided by PCSAs in order to maintain family units and prevent the unnecessary placement of children, or to reunify families who have been separated due to family issues and to maintain that reunification. Supportive services also serve as the foundation for compliance with federal and state reasonable efforts provisions. Based on the requirements in Ohio Administrative Code (OAC) rules 5101:2-39-07 and 5151:2-39-073, services must be provided when it is determined an emergency exists and when such services are necessary to reduce the risk of abuse or neglect of the child. Supportive services are provided based upon the PCSA's assessment of risk to the child and are made available at the following times:

- at the receipt of a report of child abuse and neglect;
- during the assessment/investigation process;
- during the supervision of a child in his own home without court order;
- during the protective supervision of a child as ordered by the court;
- during a child's substitute care placement;
- when reunification occurs; or,

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- when permanent placement of a child occurs.

Within 24 hours (or the next working day), agencies must make the following mandated services available, as appropriate:

- case management services;
- therapeutic services;
- homemaker or home health aide services;
- protective day care services;
- counseling services;
- diagnostic services;
- emergency shelter services; or,
- substitute care.

Within 14 days from the date a case plan has been approved by the parent, guardian, or custodian and the court, the PCSA must make the above mandated services contained in that case plan available. When the case plan includes the following services, the agency must provide them within 30 days from the date the plan has been approved: adoption services; information and referral; independent living and transitional life skill services; and unmarried parent services.

OAC rules also require PCSAs to make available a minimum of three of the following supportive services:

- community education services;
- crisis services;
- emergency caretaker services;
- employment and training services;
- environmental management services;
- parent aide services.

Evaluation:

In December 1999, a workgroup of county and ODJFS staff was formed to develop the Request for Proposal for a researcher/evaluator to design and implement a psychometric study of the reliability and validity of Ohio's risk assessment matrix as used throughout the life of the case. Hornby Zeller and Associates was awarded the contract in 2000 and completed the study over an 18 month time period. The study found the matrix to be valid and reliable as used at the Intake (investigation/assessment) phase, but did not find it valid or reliable for use at other key decision making points (i.e., removal or reunification of a child, case closure).

Recommendations from the study were:

- The initial risk assessment should remain in its current form;
- Some factors should be eliminated for assessments conducted after the initial one, and one factor should be added for those assessments;
- The frequency with which the [risk assessment matrix] is performed should be reduced;
- The baseline score, but not its individual elements, should be

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eliminated.

These recommendations were taken into account when ODJFS began development of the Family Assessment and Planning Model in 2002.

Family Stability Incentive Fund:

The Family Stability Incentive Fund focuses on reducing the number of children unnecessarily entering out-of-home care by implementing cross system child placement diversion activities and financing only positive measurable outcomes. Flexibility is the key to Ohio's remarkable success. Each county designs strategies to stabilize families in crisis and provides alternatives to removing children from their homes and schools based on local needs and existing resources. Services include but are not limited to financial assistance, family support, crisis counseling, school-based mental health services, youth mentoring, Multi-Systematic Therapy (MST), wrap-around service planning, respite care and intensive family reunification support and case management. Grant money is paid only after placement reductions are achieved.

The target population is youth at risk of being removed from their homes. This population includes youngsters from all local systems - juvenile justice, child welfare, mental health, mental retardation and developmental disabilities, education, and alcohol and drug services. Youngsters discharged from placements are also included so placement re-entry is averted. All placements in all systems are counted. These include all secure placements such as detention and inpatient psychiatric stays.

The first grant cycle implemented in 1996 included 17 counties: Brown, Clark, Cuyahoga, Franklin, Greene, Guernsey, Hamilton, Jefferson, Knox, Lorain, Madison, Montgomery, Portage, Ross, Stark, Summit and Washington Counties. This cycle ended in June 1999 after four years of funding, most counties are maintaining their diversion programming with local funds. There were 13 Cycle 2 counties: Clermont, Darke, Lawrence, Scioto, Licking, Mahoning, Morgan, Muskingum, Preble, Seneca, Sandusky, Wyandot and Trumbull Counties. Cycle 2 ended funding in March 2001. These counties, like Cycle 1, achieved an annual 10% placement episode reduction. Most counties exceeded this goal. These counties are sustaining their effective grant-initiated practices and programs with local resources. In 2000, two new cycles were launched. In January 2000, 19 new county cross-system experiments started in Allen, Ashtabula, Athens, Auglaize, Clinton, Coshocton, Delaware, Fairfield, Geauga, Hancock, Hardin, Hocking, Miami, Morrow, Pickaway, Putnam, Shelby, Vinton and Wayne Counties. A fourth cycle, started in July 2000, included Butler, Carroll, Champaign, Columbiana, Crawford, Erie, Gallia, Harrison, Highland, Holmes, Huron, Lucas, Marion, Mercer, Noble, Ottawa, Paulding, Richland, and Wayne Counties. With this cycle, 87% of the state's children have been potentially covered by this initiative.

The Family Stability Incentive Fund reflects the belief that families should be supported in raising their children, whenever that is feasible and safe for each child. This belief drives an effective strategy for reducing costs both from an economic perspective and human toll. The goal of the Family Stability Incentive Fund is to reduce the actual number of out-of-home placements by 35 percent over three and a half years in each county compared to baseline year. As "bridge financing" this grant helps counties refinance placement cost savings for sustained diversion programming. Counties have discontinued practices proven ineffective and are relying on more evidence-based models.

The Ohio Department of Mental Health, in collaboration with the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services, administers the Family Stability Incentive Fund. Unique to this grantsmanship has been the work of the State Family Stability Committee, which has managed the implementation of this initiative since its inception. Managers from the Ohio Department of Alcohol and Drug Addiction Services, the Ohio Department of Education, the Ohio Department of Health, the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services, the Ohio Department of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities, the Ohio Department of Youth Services and the Governor's Office Ohio Family and Children First, join county delegates and the Ohio Department of Mental Health monthly to guide program implementation and to provide technical assistance, quality assurance and evaluation to county sites, and model cross-agency collaboration. In the majority of sites, interagency teams composed of individuals from both public and non-profit agencies, along with family advocates, provide service guidance. County Family and Children First Councils provide program monitoring.

A growing feature of this initiative is a cadre of trainers and practice experts plus the availability of tools for statewide usage. Consultants are available upon county request to provide training and problem-solving assistance on a county-specific basis. In 2003, to support increases in kinship care and to promote linkage to the local kinship navigators, 5,000 subscriptions of *Relatively Speaking*, an 18 issue kinship family newsletter are being distributed. *Relatively Speaking* is an "age and stage" prevention informational piece to be mailed to kinship families at each age and stage of their youthful charges. The publication has been written by health professionals working at a children's hospital in Columbus and staff from a local mental health association

There are over 17,000 fewer out-of-home placements in the Cycle 1 sites when compared to 1995 county placement baseline figures. Cycle 2 counties reduced placements by 15% in 1998, 20% in 1999, 21% in 2000, 20% in 2001 and 19% in 2002 and 2003. Nearly 4,000 fewer placements have occurred over the life of the project. In Cycles 3 and 4, there has been a greater than 10% reduction in placements in the first and second grant years. Nearly 5,000 fewer placement episodes have been counted.

A significant number of youth have avoided incarceration and other congregate care arrangements, school disruption and placement recidivism. Families in crisis have had more control, choice and immediacy in planning

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and receiving needed supports. The Family Stability Incentive Fund has proven to be a valuable tool in translating zero tolerance for school violence policies into actual practices linking schools, youth and their families to beneficial community services. Substantial gains have been made in transforming service delivery efforts into family support networks, in collaborating with front line workers and managers, and in blending various service revenues to fund what family's need, when they need it.

The Family Stability Incentive Fund comes from the federal Title IV-B, Part 2 monies and state general revenue funds. Total federal funding for SFY 2002 and SFY 2003 is \$1.9 million per year. Unfortunately, due to budgetary constraints loss of general revenue funds for SFY'40-'05 Biennium resulted in the Family Stability Incentive Fund to discontinue.

Family Drug Courts:

Perhaps no area demands a greater coordination of efforts than the provision of substance abuse services to adults whose families are engaged in the child protection system. These families quickly find themselves facing competing time frames –the life-long recovery process promptly encounters the shortened Adoption and Safe Families Act (ASFA) and TANF time frames, as well as the child's own heightened processing of time. Without concentrated efforts to ensure that interventions are provided in a timely, appropriate and non-competing fashion by all service providers, families have little opportunity for success.

House Bill 484, Ohio's implementation of ASFA enacted in 1999, statutorily reinforced the need for Ohio to better synchronize child welfare and substance abuse intervention efforts. Clearly the tightened permanency time frames handed down by ASFA, as well as House Bill 484's specific language regarding coordinated efforts, required new approaches on behalf of families involved in the child welfare system and challenged by substance abuse and/or addiction.

ODJFS and the Ohio Department of Alcohol and Drug Addiction Services (ODADAS) identified Family Drug Courts as one option available to address this difficult issue. A Family Drug Court is a specialized docket that focuses on parents who abuse or neglect their child (ren) as a result of substance abuse or addiction. Family Drug Courts are based upon the concepts of traditional adult drug court: frequent and regular oversight by the court; specific and strictly enforced conditions to diversion; regular drug testing; and, accessible and mandated ancillary treatment services. In 1999, Ohio had two Family Drug Courts; there now are 11 operational Family Drug Courts with other counties exploring feasibility. Ohio now leads the nation in developing Family Drug Courts.

Studies conducted by the National Center for Juvenile Justice (NCJJ) in Ohio's courts indicate the likelihood that families with a dependency filing also have multiple filings simultaneously occurring in other judicial jurisdictions. Ohio has 57 operating drug courts; 18 of these are juvenile drug courts. In light of the NCJJ study and estimates of the percentage of

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families that come to the attention of the child welfare system with substance abuse and/or addiction problems, it is assumed that a substantive number of children and families that are before Ohio's dependency courts also are engaged in these other drug courts.

For counties that have not yet initiated Family Drug Court efforts, ODJFS, ODADAS, OJC and the Ohio Association of Juvenile and Family Court Judges joined together to co-sponsor a series of inter-branch workshops entitled: *Building Partnerships for Child Safety*. This one-day workshop brings together the local juvenile justice communities, local alcohol and drug treatment providers and local child welfare advocates to discuss and share insights into the problems related to helping families impacted by addictions.

Overall, these workshops are designed to strengthen communication skills, to increase mutual understanding and cooperation between the courts and service providers, and to increase public confidence in the state's courts and child welfare systems. Judicial leadership is a key component to this task. The local juvenile judges invite the participants to these workshops. It is in the courtroom where the interests of child advocacy and family drug addiction intersect, with the judge as the lynchpin of the process. While each county in Ohio has at least one judge with juvenile court jurisdiction and a single PCSA, treatment providers and child advocacy professionals sometimes cover multiple counties. Each workshop has included teams from the multiple counties under the jurisdiction of the treatment provider.

The workshops represent a commitment from all parties to collaborate for the restoration of families. The state agencies provide expert facilitators, coordinate logistics and handle any administrative needs, such as educational credits by field. The joint nature of the program is essential since the workshops are conducted locally for the benefit of the participants away from central offices.

While strengthening teamwork and communication skills, the workshops also provide staff from ODJFS and ODADAS the opportunity to discuss funding and treatment priority requirements mandated by state law. The need to understand ASFA requirements and H.B. 484's impact on the operations of the courts and the local communities is the genesis for this effort. It is hoped that this type of workshop can be used by other state agencies to meet the needs of local communities whenever issues arise that cut across agency lines.

Medical Insurance:

Ohio has been a member of the Interstate Compact on Medical Assistance (ICAMA) since March 1999. The Compact provides a mechanism which ensures that medical coverage and other adoption services for eligible children continue in the child's state of residence. Currently, 46 states are members of ICAMA.

Through the use of ICAMA, ODJFS ensures that geographical location is

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not a barrier to parents trying to meet the needs of their adopted children. Technical assistance is provided to Ohio's 88 County Department of Job and Family Services (CDJFS) agencies, adoptive parents, and ICAMA member and non-member states. In addition to providing technical assistance to the adoptive parents, in 2001, ODJFS amended the existing adoption subsidy brochure to include a description of ICAMA so that families are aware of the ICAMA program and its benefits.

In the Fall of 2001, ODJFS conducted a statewide ICAMA training providing agencies with materials and technical assistance for implementation of the ICAMA program.

During years 2001-2002, the Adoption Section revised the Ohio Administrative Code (OAC) to reflect mandates of ICAMA. The ICAMA process has now been incorporated into the state Medicaid and adoption rules allowing for easier and more efficient processing of Medicaid cases involving state-funded adoption assistance agreements.

ODJFS conducted a statewide video-conference training in January 2003 to inform agencies of the revised Ohio Administrative Code (OAC) rule 5101:2-44-05.2 "Covered families and children Medicaid eligibility for state adoption subsidy recipient moving from or to Ohio." The OAC rule 5101:2-44-05.2 became effective on May 1, 2003 and additional statewide training was provided to public and private adoption agencies throughout the Summer and Fall of 2003. A workshop on ICAMA was also presented in November 2003 at the annual ODJFS Adoption and Foster Care Conference; the conference registrants consisted of foster care and adoption workers as well as foster and adoptive parents.

ODJFS participated in the Association of Administrators of the Interstate Compact on Adoption & Medical Assistance (AAICAMA) survey in 2003. The survey requested the state's profile information regarding Ohio's adoption assistance programs so that the state's profile could be included on the AdoptUSKids website.

ODJFS maintains an updated list of state ICAMA administrators and Ohio ICAMA coordinators. An internal training manual was developed in August 2003 and internal training was provided to ODJFS Adoption Section staff in the Summer of 2003 and Spring of 2004.

ODJFS will provide statewide training via videoconference in June 2004. The statewide training will encompass administrative rules which allow adoptive families moving into the state of Ohio to efficiently access Medicaid when there is a state-funded adoption assistance agreement in effect.

Ohio renewed its membership with the Interstate Compact on Adoption and Medical Assistance in 2004. ODJFS will attend the AAICAMA Annual Conference in July 2004 for additional training and to further collaborate with other states.

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Semi-Annual Review:

As the supervising agent of Ohio's child protection program, ODJFS monitors the compliance of the 88 PCSAs and 43 PCPAs with the time frames for conducting Semi-Annual Administrative Reviews (SARs), as required by Ohio Administrative Code rule 5101:2-42-43. This is accomplished by accessing the information collected from the PCSAs and PCPAs in Ohio's statewide Family and Children Services Information System (FACSIS). FACSIS EVENTS 104 and 228 capture information about the date of and decisions made at the SAR. If the information in FACSIS indicates that an agency is having difficulty complying with the required time frames for the SAR, ODJFS Regionally-based Field Office staff are able to provide technical assistance and work in collaboration with the agency to develop an improvement plan.

OAC rule 5101:2-42-43 requires PCSAs and PCPAs to complete the SAR for the case plan no later than six months after the date for which the earlier of the following occurs:

- The date the original case plan was completed for in-home voluntary supportive services, no court order;
- The earlier of either the date on which the complaint was filed or the child was first placed in substitute care;
- The earlier of either the date on which the complaint in the case was filed or the court issued an order pursuant to Section 2151.414 or 2151.415 of the Ohio Revised Code regarding when the case has been terminated and an extension requested; or,
- The earlier of either the date on which the complaint was filed or the court issued an order of protective supervision pursuant to Section 2151.353 of the Ohio Revised Code.

After the initial SAR, the PCSA or PCPA is required to conduct an SAR no later than every six months after the most recent SAR. Per OAC Rules 5101:2-39-08 and 5101:2-39-081, the purpose of the SAR is to:

- Assess and update, as needed, the permanency plan for the child which can include, but is not limited to: maintaining the child in their own home/preventing removal, independent living, a planned permanent living arrangement, or adoption;
- Evaluate the overall level of risk to the child;
- Assess the appropriateness of supportive services offered and provided to the child, parent/guardian/custodian, or pre-finalized adoptive parent, and substitute care giver, when applicable;
- Evaluate whether services provided to the child, parent/guardian/custodian will help the child return to a safe environment, when applicable; and,
- Assess the continued safety and appropriateness of the child's placement.

Kinship Care: According to the 1998 University of Cincinnati Institute for Policy Research report completed for the Ohio Department of Aging Grandparents Raising

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Grandchildren Task Force:

- 10% of Ohio households, or 32,340 grandparents, are raising children in homes without a parent present.
- 8,284 other relatives are raising children in homes without a parent present.
- The average number of children per household is 1.8.
- The total number of children being raised by kinship caregivers is 73,300.
- 89,833 grandparents are raising 165,000 children in homes with the parent present.
- The average age of the caregiver is 55.
- 51% of the caregivers have annual household incomes below \$30,000; 25% have annual incomes of less than \$15,000.

According to the 2000 U.S. Census, Ohio has 181,000 children living in households headed by grandparents or other relatives. Grandparents are the primary caregivers in 86,000 of these households. Ohio has approximately 20,000 children in formal foster care placements, for which public children services agencies are responsible for the cost. The December 2003 statistics on "child only" TANF cases show that there are 38,500 assistance groups, serving 59,500 children. These children and the remaining 120,000 children who are not receiving the "child only" cash assistance are not part of the formal child welfare system. Kinship placements that are outside of the public children services agencies' legal and financial responsibilities allow the resources that would be used to care for them to be used to provide care for children who have been identified as needing the involvement of the child welfare system. However, many of these families need considerable support to avoid bringing these children into the care of the child welfare agencies.

In recognition of the growing number of kinship caregivers and the needs of these families, the 123rd Ohio General Assembly passed Am. Sub. H.B. 283, the SFY 1999-2000 Biennial Appropriations Bill, which established the Kinship Care Services Planning Council. The purpose of the Planning Council was to develop recommendations that specify the types of services that should be included as part of a statewide program providing support services to kinship caregivers. The legislation required the Planning Council to submit its recommendations to the Director of ODJFS by December 31, 1999. The Planning Council submitted eleven recommendations. In response to the importance of recognizing kinship care as the most preferable placement option when children must be removed from their homes, the Director agreed to begin implementation of four of the recommendations. The following is the status of these recommendations.

Recommendation #1: Create a kinship "caregiver affidavit and power of attorney."

Status: With the support of ODJFS, a bill was introduced in 2001 to permit the execution of a power of attorney or caretaker authorization affidavit permitting specified persons with whom a child resides authority over their

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care, custody and control of the child for enrollment in school and to obtain medical services, without having to obtain legal custody of the child. After many meetings to discuss the concerns of the juvenile court judges and state school board and testimony provided by caregivers, H. B. 130 was passed and signed by the governor on April 19, 2004. A copy of HB130 is included in the appendix of this report. Once the bill becomes effective on July 18, 2004, grandparents will be able to enroll the children in their care in school and access medical care, without assuming legal custody.

A "pro bono" group of state agency attorneys was formed by the Governor to develop the implementation plan for this bill.

Recommendation #2: Develop an information and referral service.

Status: In 2001, ODJFS developed "Relatives Caring for Children: Ohio Resource Guide" which provides general program information on services available to families and county-specific service information. The guide is available through the public children services agencies, the statewide information and referral system, Help Me Grow and ODJFS website: http://jfs.ohio.gov/ocf/kinship_care.stm. Since the initial printing, 40,000 copies have been distributed. The current revision and reprint of 30,000 copies of the guide have been funded with adoption incentive dollars.

In 2002, Ohio's statewide information and referral system, Help Me Grow, added kinship care to the menu of options for information individual callers can request. Callers receive a packet of information that includes "Relatives Caring for Children: Ohio Resource Guide" and information about various caregiver options, i.e., foster care, adoption, guardianship.

In 2003, ODJFS entered into an interagency agreement with the Ohio Department of Mental Health to publish and distribute "Relatively Speaking" a series of 18 newsletters addressing child developmental stages providing free subscriptions to 6,000 kinship caregivers statewide. This project was funded with adoption incentive dollars.

Recommendation #3: Create a statewide Kinship Care Advisory Board.

Status: The Kinship Care Advisory Board was created and began meeting September 2000 and continues to meet quarterly. The purpose of the Advisory Board is to ensure the quality of Ohio's kinship care program by assessing Ohio's kinship policies and providing the Director with recommendations and feedback on the implementation of the recommendations of the Kinship Care Services Planning Council. The membership includes representatives from public and private child serving agencies, state and area Agencies on Aging, Ohio Family and Children First Council, legal aid, and kinship caregivers.

The Kinship Care Advisory Board has developed a five year strategic plan to address the issues and direction of kinship care in Ohio.

Recommendation #4: Identifying and supporting a statewide network of

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"kinship navigators."

Status: \$3.1 million in Title IV-B funds were allocated for SFY 2001 to all 88 public children services agencies, providing them with the opportunity to implement a kinship navigator program. The kinship navigator assists kinship families in the county with identifying and accessing available community services.

\$3.0 million in TANF funds replaced the IV-B funding for SFY 2002-03 in allocations to the 88 counties, earmarked for kinship navigators. The use of TANF dollars resulted in increased eligibility requirements for some services for caregivers. At the end of the fiscal year, 78 counties had implemented navigator programs.

\$3.0 million in TANF funds were allocated for SFY 2004-2005 to all 88 public children services agencies, providing them with an opportunity to implement or continue implementation of a kinship program. The current funds are not earmarked for navigator services, but can be used flexibly for kinship programming, at the agency's discretion. As a result of the change to more flexible use of the dollars and the public agencies' evaluations of the effectiveness of the programs, approximately 67 public children services agencies are presently implementing a kinship program. Statewide data for October 2001 through December 2003 indicates that the kinship program has provided services to over 5,000 kinship families with over 7,000 children.

In addition to these initiatives, the following also impact kinship in Ohio:

Kinship Program Coordinator

In 2001, ODJFS identified the position of statewide kinship program coordinator. The role of this individual is to provide information about kinship and available services, and technical assistance to county agencies and kinship caregivers; keep current with the national trends, information, resources and legislation; provide data and information to the state legislature; network and collaborate with other state agencies to develop and access services for kinship caregivers; and be a liaison to the Ohio Grandparent/Kinship Coalition, state Pro Bono workgroup, and the statewide Kinship Care Advisory Board.

Ohio Grandparent/Kinship Coalition

In 2000, a statewide non-profit organization, comprised of caregivers and agency representatives, was developed through a grant to the Center for Healthy Communities, Wright State University. The current activities of the coalition are quarterly meetings held to discuss and recommend solutions addressing issues of kinship caregivers, a statewide newsletter and an annual statewide picnic/family reunion, which has been held since 2002.

ProtectOhio

Ohio's 5 year Title IV-E Waiver Demonstration Project, initiated in 1998, has afforded 14 Ohio counties the flexible use Title IV-E dollars to experiment, innovate and improve practice. The fourteen demonstration counties have

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expanded preventive services, improved planning due to prospective payments, and helped families and children without taking custody. This has enabled these counties to focus on the identification, utilization and support of kinship resources, which has ultimately resulted in a reduction of care days and fiscal savings. The waiver is currently being considered for renewal.

CSFR Program Improvement Plan

Ohio's CSFR identified an area in need of improvement is Permanency Outcome: Reunification, guardianship or permanent placement with relatives.

This item was assigned an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement. The 2000 State Data Profile indicated that the percentage of reunifications occurring within 12 months of entry into foster care for the state was 74.0% which does not meet the national standard of 76.2%. The Statewide Assessment also reports that over the previous three years there has been an increase in the number of children reunified with their families within 6 and 12 months, which was attributed to the provision of intensive services to children and families. Factors identified as contributing to non-conformity are:

- Limited availability of mental health, drug and alcohol, and other identified service needs to families.
- Lack of early identification and assessment of kinship resources in the case planning process.
- Lack of early and appropriate assessment of family strengths.
- Lack of timely determination of a permanency goal and implementation of concurrent case planning.
- Lack of caregiver effort to comply with the case plan.
- Lack of adequate post-placement supports to permanent caregivers.

Ohio's PIP proposes in two years, to increase the percentage of timely reunifications, guardianships or permanent placements with relatives within 12 months of entry into foster care from 2002 baseline data of 73.0% to 75.4%. The action steps which will be implemented to achieve this goal are:

- Standardize or increase the consistency of the use of concurrent case planning.
- Standardize the process of apprising parents of their rights by providing a pamphlet to parents on parental rights, inclusive of involvement in case planning process, to be provided by the worker at the time of initial contact.
- Participate in the Ohio Child Welfare Training Program development of competencies for the early identification, assessment and involvement of kinship caregivers in the placement selection and case planning process.
- Assess and provide county specific, focused technical assistance to Franklin and Cuyahoga county children services agencies in order to improve practice and impact overall statewide

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performance.

- Ensure that services are accessible to families during placement and post-placement.

The initial PIP Quarterly Status Report was submitted which provided the following updates:

- A request for TA regarding concurrent case planning has been made to the National Resource Center for Foster Care and Permanency Planning and approved the request for 10 days of TA on concurrent case planning, family case conferencing and family engagement. ODJFS is working with the center to establish dates.
- ODJFS received samples of pamphlets apprising parents of parental rights and case plan processes from other states and several Ohio agencies. Work is currently being done on development of the pamphlet.
- The Institute for Human Services (IHS), contractor for child welfare curricula development in Ohio, and ODJFS staff worked together in November 2003 to develop a set of standard competencies for kinship caregivers. In addition, IHS will participate in the meetings with the National Resource Center in the development of training on the concurrent planning.
- Data reports were produced for the CPOE outcome indicator: *Length of time to achieve reunification*. Based on a multi-faceted analysis of this data, it was determined that two counties (Franklin and Cuyahoga) will be targeted for technical assistance. These two counties represent the largest child population base in Ohio and current data shows that these two counties combined have nearly 40% of the children in substitute care and, as a result, have the greatest overall statewide impact for all data indicators.

Arrangements are being made with both agencies to initiate focused technical assistance to coincide with the CPOE review process.

Adoption Assistance:

Ohio has provided support to children with special needs, who are available for adoption, through the Title IV-E adoption assistance (AA) program and the State Adoption Maintenance Subsidy (SAMS) program. Children who do not meet the eligibility requirements for AA may be eligible to receive SAMS which is based upon the adoptive family's income and the number of dependents.

The amount of IV-E AA has increased from \$13,200,000 in the January to March 2000 quarter to \$19,200,000 for the October-December 2003 quarter for an average monthly number of 18,910 children.

In 2000, Ohio conducted a review of the IV-E AA rules and made clarifying changes to many of the rules.

In the spring of 2001, Ohio completed a major rewrite of the Title IV-E AA rules to comply with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services January 23rd Policy Announcement ACYF-CB-PA-01-01. This policy

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clarification significantly changed the manner in which Ohio had previously interpreted federal guidelines. One of the changes resulted in children in the custody of private adoption placement agencies being ineligible for Title IV-E AA. ACYF-CB-IM-01-08, issued November 6, 2001, reversed this provision to permit IV-E AA eligibility for children in private agency custody under certain circumstances. Other significant changes were: the date used in the previous rules to determine ADC-relatedness was in the removal month or 6 months prior, which was changed to in the removal month only; and in the previous rules, ADC-relatedness was only established in the removal home, which was changed to add at the time of the adoption.

Members of Ohio's private provider network had concerns that children and families would be adversely impacted by the policy change. It was their contention that either more special needs children who were previously served by private agencies would be placed in public agency custody or families adopting special needs children would not have the needed resources to address the needs of the child. The issuance of ACYF-CB-IM-01-08 addressed these concerns.

In 2003, ODJFS began rewriting the entire section of Title IV-E AA rules with the intent to clarify eligibility requirements and revise the special needs criteria to better meet the intent of the federal adoption assistance program. These changes were a result of the recommendations of a statewide Executive Leadership Committee adoption subsidy workgroup comprised of county agency representatives. The changes will result in funds being directed to those eligible children who are most in need of an adoptive placement.

Several meetings were held with the private provider networks to discuss their concerns about eligibility for infants, who may be at risk for acquiring special needs, placed for adoption by their agencies. Concerns by the private provider network have been addressed by providing an "at risk" special needs category and a deferred adoption assistance payment agreement for these cases. Training is planned for fall of 2004.

Ohio places emphasis on the state adoption subsidy programs that assist and maintain adoptive families' pre and post legalization of the adoptive placement

Families ineligible for federal adoption assistance (IV-E) may be eligible to receive the state adoption maintenance subsidy (SAMS) which is based upon the adoptive families' income and the number of dependents.

During federal fiscal year (FFY) 2003, Ohio Administrative Code Chapter 44 Rules, Management and Administrative, State Adoption Subsidy, were revised as a result of the Five-year Rule Review process mandated by House Bill (HB) 473 of the 121st General Assembly. The revised Chapter 44 rules became effective May 1, 2003, and statewide training was provided in the Summer and Fall of 2003.

In the Spring of 2004, ODJFS completed the adoption subsidy guide which

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informs foster families of their rights and available supports. The subsidy guide was posted on the ODJFS website on May 18, 2004.

Families receiving federal or state adoption maintenance subsidies may be eligible to receive funding reimbursement or payment for services under the state adoption special services subsidy until July 1, 2004 due to a change in state legislation (i.e., House Bill 95). The state adoption special services program provides funds to address the rehabilitative needs of special needs children adopted via a public or private children services entity. Agencies must determine that services requested by families are beyond the economic resources of the family to provide payment.

House Bill 95 was introduced by Representative Calvert of the 125th General Assembly in February 2003. The Bill passed the House and Senate and became effective on June 26, 2003 after being signed by Governor Taft.

HB 95 repeals the state adoption special services subsidy program effective July 1, 2004. The legislation being repealed enabled counties to enter into agreements with families to address the rehabilitative needs of special needs children adopted via a public or private children services entity. Although HB 95 repeals the state adoption special services program, the Bill states that a public children services agency may, at its option, continue providing the state adoption special services subsidy program for existing subsidies approved prior to July 1, 2004.

In order to implement HB 95, the Ohio Administrative Code rules Chapter 5101:2-44 were revised in the Spring of 2004 and will become effective on July 1, 2004. ODJFS met with its training vendor in April 2004 to ensure new provisions of the state adoption special services subsidy is now included in the Adoption Assessor Training Curricula. Statewide training of Chapter 5101:2-44 rules will be provided to public and private adoption agencies in June 2004.

PASSS is a subsidy program unique to Ohio. In the early 1990's, Ohio began an initiative designed to develop and expand post adoption services. As a result of this initiative, the PASSS program was created and implemented in 1992. The purpose of this program is to provide specialized services that meet specific needs in order to preserve families and avert disruption. These specialized services include, but are not limited to, medical, surgical, psychiatric, psychological and counseling services, including residential treatment, for special needs adopted children. PASSS is the only adoption subsidy program designed to allow families to apply for services after the adoption legalization. PASSS funds are dispensed to eligible families on a first come, first serve basis and are available to all adoptive families, regardless of the type of adoption (international, attorney, public or private). PASSS funds are to be used as a last resort, after other resources have been explored and are either not available or the family is deemed ineligible.

PASSS is funded 75% through Title IV-B, Part II and 25% through General

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Revenue Funds (GRF); therefore, the yearly amount allotted to the program is subject to change depending on the status of the state's budget bill. However, for the past five years, \$3.7 million has been made available for this program each of those years.

During the last four years, several major changes have been made to the PASSS program. In 2000, ODJFS amended the Ohio Administrative Code rules that govern the PASSS program to provide further clarification on eligibility and increased the number of children who could be served by the program by reducing the amount each child was eligible for from \$20,000 to \$15,000 per state fiscal year (SFY). In 2001, residential treatment services, minus the educational costs, were reinstated into the rule as a service covered under the PASSS program. In 2003, Ohio Administrative Code Chapter 44 rules, which included the Post Adoption Special Services Subsidy rule, were reviewed for revision as a result of the five year rule review process.

For the last three years, the \$3.7 million allotted to the PASSS program has been exhausted prior to the end of the SFYs. Families in need of services were left with very few alternatives for funding for services for their children in need. This caused a reevaluation of the entire PASSS program including the application process, eligibility and administration of the program.

In 2002, ODJFS began soliciting input from PCSAs, private adoption agencies and adoption advocates throughout the state to begin revamping the PASSS program. The main change the committee wanted to make was to return the program to its original intent: to provide specialized services that met specific needs in order to preserve families and avert disruption. In addition to this change, ODJFS placed limits on medical and mental health respite and disallowed services originally covered under PASSS such as orthodontia, purchase of computer equipment, camp and other recreational activities that would not avert disruption. In 2003, HB 95 was passed and once again the amount of funding each child was eligible for was reduced from \$15,000 to \$10,000 per SFY unless extraordinary circumstances existed. HB 95 also required families to pay a 5% co-payment if their gross income was not less than 200% of the federal poverty guideline. The changes mandated in HB 95 will be effective July 1, 2004.

Over the last four years, the PASSS program has provided services to an average of 900 children per SFY. The majority of the applications received were for children between the ages of 4 and 18 who were adopted through Public Children Services Agencies (PCSAs). These children in need of services were mostly diagnosed with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), Severe Behavioral/Emotional Disorder and/or Reactive Attachment Disorder (RAD). The main services requested were for residential treatment, counseling, respite, and reactive attachment therapy.

Below is a four year average of the amount spent for each allowable service:

Service	Four Year Average
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Attachment Therapy	\$501,958
Biofeedback	\$14,845
Medical Equipment	\$105,582
Medical Respite	\$50,911
Medication	\$102,656
Mental Health Respite	\$754,907
Occupational Therapy	\$125,731
Orthodontia	\$222,028
Physical Therapy	\$32,286
Psychiatric Counseling	\$202,228
Psychological Counseling	\$670,422
Psychological Equipment	\$160,86
Residential Treatment	\$853,670
Speech Therapy	\$87,914
Substance Abuse Counseling	\$17,863
Surgery	\$13,097
Other	\$254,273

As stated earlier, the post adoption special services subsidy is available to all adoptive families, regardless of the type of adoption (international, attorney, public or private). An average of 115 families who adopted internationally have utilized the PASSS program over the last four years.

During March/April 2001, ODJFS offered four separate trainings to public and private agencies regarding federal and state subsidy rules, including PASSS that were in effect at that time. More than 250 attended the training and the content was well received by all participants.

During September 2003, ODJFS held statewide trainings on the adoption program and policy rules as well as the state subsidy rules. These trainings were held regionally and were well attended. Since there were no changes to the PASSS rule during this time, agencies were informed about the proposed changes that would be effective July 1, 2004.

ODJFS has just completed an Adoption Subsidies Guide for prospective adoptive parents. This Guide provides an overview of the different types of adoption subsidies, including the PASSS program, available to assist in the adoption of Ohio's special needs children, the eligibility criteria for each program and information regarding the application process. With the completion of the Adoption Subsidies Guide, Ohio has satisfied one of the action steps of the Program Improvement Plan required as a result of the Ohio Child and Family Services Review.

ODJFS has scheduled statewide training on the new PASSS rules that will become effective July 1, 2004, for the following dates:

- June 9, 2004 Field and Central Office Staff only
- June 15, 2004 Executive Briefing (PCSA Directors only)
- June 21, 2004 Adams through Lawrence Counties
- June 28, 2004 Licking through Wyandot Counties

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- June 29, 2004 Make-up session (if necessary)

As stated earlier, major changes to the rule include a 5% co-payment, decrease in amount each child is eligible for, and covered services. With these new changes, we will be better able to focus on families that are truly in crisis. These new changes should also prevent the early exhaustion of allotted funds thus keeping the program open during the entire SFY.

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Goal 3: Preservation Permanence To empower at risk families by building on their strengths, to protect, care and support their children, when possible, or identify permanent alternative arrangements when family preservation is not possible:

Objective 1: Increase the number of counties using cross-systems decision-making regarding emergency substitute care placements.

Objective 2: Decrease the length of time between initial custody and permanent placement.

Objective 3: Ensure all eligible children participate in independent living programs.

Objective 4: Increase each agency's performance by 3% in reducing the number of children in long-term foster care.

Progress/Accomplishments:

Goal 3: Preservation/Permanence focuses on maintaining the child safely in his own home, reunifying children with their families, or locating a permanent placement for the child.

Termination of Parental Rights:

Ohio Revised Code sections 2151.27 and 2151.413, and Ohio Administrative Code rule 5101:2-42-95 (see appendix) require that once a child has been in temporary custody 12 months out of a consecutive 22 month period, the PCSA or PCPA holding custody must file for the termination of parental rights unless there is a compelling reason not to. ODJFS continues to provide training to public and private agencies regarding these rules during caseworker core training and through one-on-one technical assistance. Agencies can also download from the FACSIS system a listing of all the children in their temporary custody that meet the 12 month deadline. Agencies use this list as a resource in deciding which cases should be reviewed for the filing of a motion to terminate parental rights. ODJFS case plan and review forms have been updated to include an explanation of the compelling reasons for not filing for the termination of parental rights. Currently there are no plans to revise this rule.

Court

Collaboration: ODJFS has worked closely with the Supreme Court of Ohio (SCO) to improve the interaction between child welfare and judicial systems and the effectiveness of intervention in family-related court cases. Under the umbrella of an Interbranch Agreement that formalizes the intent of these two branches of government to work together on behalf of Ohio's families, ODJFS and SCO have jointly implemented a range of activities:

- Judicial Training and Cross-Disciplinary Training
- Data Collection

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- Expansion of CASA/GAL Programs
- Guardian ad Litem Standards
- Family Drug Courts
- Pilot Sites
- Child Protection Mediation
- Community Team Building
- Cashflow Management
- Court Technology
- Children, Families and the Courts Bulletin

Over the past five years, Chief Justice Moyer has fully implemented a range of recommendations brought to the Supreme Court of Ohio through interagency collaboration. Recommendations have originated from sources such as the Shareholders Committee, Family Court Feasibility Study, and Governor's Task Force in the Investigation and Prosecution of Child Abuse. Recommendations include:

- [Appoint a standing committee to direct statewide efforts.](#) Chief Justice Moyer formed the Supreme Court Advisory Committee on Children, Families and the Courts. The 20-member committee is a permanent, standing committee made up of judges, magistrates, and various professionals who specialize in child and family issues. Its charge is to advise the Chief Justice on court reform matters related to family law. In his announcement of the committee, Chief Justice Moyer noted that advisory committees help the court system adapt and reform to meet the needs of the future: "The committee will make recommendations on how to best implement various family-law initiatives. Their input will help how the Ohio family court system can best serve children and their families." Chief Justice Moyer appointed a Public Children Services Agency Executive Director to co-chair the advisory committee. The appointment of a PCSA Executive Director as a co-chair marks the first time that a non-judicial representative has chaired a Supreme Court Committee. In his instructions, Chief Justice Moyer suggested the committee review a number of topics, including the Task Force's recommendations on the Juvenile Data Network, Family Code, and Guardian ad litem Standards
- [Establish a workgroup for automation/information sharing.](#) Chief Justice Moyer has established the Technology Advisory Committee.
- [Establish a Family Court Services Office.](#) The Supreme Court of Ohio has established the Office of Judicial and Court Services, and continues to make progress on the other recommendations included in the report.
- [Standards for Guardians ad litem.](#) Chief Justice Moyer appointed a multidisciplinary committee to develop standards for all guardians that represent children. The final report of this committee was reviewed and accepted by the Chief Justice, and assigned to the Advisory Group for implementation strategy. Perhaps most difficult to address is the proposed standard requiring all guardians ad litem to receive training in specified areas prior to court appointment and in-service training on an annual basis thereafter. Although provisions for volunteer guardians

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appointed through Court Appointed Special Advocate programs offer training that far exceeds the proposed standards, most Ohio judicial jurisdictions do not have provisions for attorney guardians ad litem. The need to balance requirements that serve to enhance guardians' ability to effectively represent children's best interest with the need to not create a system so unwieldy as to discourage attorneys from participation was paramount. In response, it was the subcommittee's decision to establish a statewide system of training that met the standard's criteria and was financially and geographically accessible to all attorneys wishing to serve as guardians' ad litem. The subcommittee has prepared a Request for Proposals that seeks assistance to:

- Develop a six hour pre-service training curriculum for attorneys seeking appointment as a guardian ad litem.
- Develop a Trainers Guide for course presentation. The Trainers Guide is to be presented in a manner that ensures that the curriculum is offered statewide in a consistent and uniform method.
- Assist the Training Coordinator in establishing a qualified pool of trainers to offer this course on a statewide basis. At a minimum, this will entail:
 - Identifying professional competencies and/or experience required for each curriculum module.
 - Helping to recruit and evaluate qualified trainers to conduct workshops.
 - Offering between one and three "train the trainer" sessions on the curriculum. These sessions shall include basic information on effective presentation skills based on adult learning principles, as well as curriculum content.
 - Opportunity for trainers to demonstrate presentation skills or curriculum content.
 - Development of a trainer evaluation and review process.
 - Oversight/participation in between one and three initial presentations to ensure the curriculum is being consistently and appropriately presented.
- Develop a Trainer Orientation Packet containing background information, relevant articles, and other information and/or documentation identified as appropriate.
- Develop a long-term plan for periodic curriculum review, revision and trainer update.

Court-Related CFSR

Activities:

Implementation of the court-related aspects of Ohio's Program Improvement Plan has been a major focus of the ODJFS/SCO collaboration over the past two years.

Development of specific PIP strategies to address the court-related issues

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that contributed to non-conformity in Ohio's CFSR was especially difficult. For awhile court-related comments were frequent in the CFSR Final Report, observations were, for the most part, anecdotal and generalized. For this reason, Ohio elected to focus its initial PIP efforts on data collection. Through a combination of on-site review, self-reporting, and analysis of available state-level data, ODJFS and SCO hope to gain a more specific and well-founded view of Ohio's family-serving courts. Initial efforts will address CFSR concerns.

Court-related comments in the CFSR fall into one of two general classifications: issues regarding case processing --the way cases proceed through the court system-- and issues regarding system interface --the way child welfare and legal systems interact at their points of intersecting jurisdiction. In response, Ohio has proposed three goals, each with a series of supporting action steps:

Goal 1: To increase ODJFS' ability to identify the percentage of children (in its custody) who have had timely hearings.

Especially problematic was the state's inability to validate or refute the CFSR assumption that, state-wide, children are failing to receive required hearings in a timely manner. Long-range efforts continue towards the development of an information management system that facilitates analysis of aggregate data. Short-term, the PIP proposes the development of a formal process for identifying courts that consistently exceed prescribed time frames for judicial hearings. ODJFS and SCO have been collaborating to retrieve data that assists courts and communities better evaluate their own performance. All juvenile judges have been supplied county-specific information on CFSR and court-related performance items.

Goal 2: To examine the efficacy of the state system of juvenile court case processing and to identify steps for issues requiring ameliorative action.

The CFSR Final Report attributes three case processing issues as causing children to not receive timely hearings

Over-crowded dockets. Although the most frequently suggested factor, no data to support this statement is provided, nor is there a suggestion as to why, if this is a valid concern, over-crowding of dockets has occurred (e.g., whether it results from specific case management practices or case numbers).

Excessive continuances. Ohio Rules of Court-Rules of Superintendence for the Courts of Ohio (Rule 56) govern the granting of continuances. It is not possible to determine from the CFSR findings if "excessive" is in violation of Rule 56 or simply a perceptual issue (e.g., improper judicial practice or unrealistic expectation of procedural law).

Appellate process. Ohio already has a provision in the Ohio Rules of Court -- Rules of Appellate Procedure (App. R.11.2) to streamline appeals involving the termination of parental rights and adoption issues, From the

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CFSR report, it cannot be determined if the appellate process is cited as a result of improper judicial practice or unrealistic expectation of procedural law (e.g. refusing to allow appeals).

ODJFS and SCO have engaged in a range of collaborative activities including on-site case review to determine the accuracy of this data. This began with the creation of a SCO staff position, Family Law Caseflow Manager (FLCM). CFSR-related activities of the FLCM included:

- Reviewing required quarterly court statistical reports to identify jurisdictions that have pending cases that exceed designated time frames.
- Identifying state trends or system barriers that contribute to extended case processing.
- Providing on-site analysis to courts that routinely exceed state-imposed time frames.
- Responding to requests for technical assistance from courts.

Goal 3: To address systemic barriers that impede effective interface of the child welfare and legal system.

Issues related to system interface often are more reflective of a mutual lack of understanding of roles, responsibilities and appropriate expectations than the effectiveness of the systems. These issues are best addressed through education and cross training. Ohio has been addressing systemic barriers that impede effective interface of the child welfare and legal system through a range of professional development activities that include:

- Developing Judicial Leadership. It is believed that no single entity has a greater ability to effect community action and collaboration than the judiciary. ODJFS, SCO and the Ohio Judicial College have established a three stage state-wide program to:
 - Identify common barriers to local practice as perceived by process stakeholders.
 - Identify state-relevant solutions to common barriers to effective practice.
 - Provide needed resources and support to local counties that need assistance.
 - Bring/convene appropriate stakeholders together and improve the court's working relationship with other stakeholders/community leaders.
 - Increase the number of courts using established best practices and tools (e.g., National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges' guidelines).
 - Define and encourage proper judicial leadership for serving abused and neglected children.
 - Work towards Ohio's compliance with the CFSR assessment in May 2005.
 - Identify educational needs in this area.

This program consists of three distinct and ongoing stages:

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- **Judicial Meetings.** The first stage is directed at Ohio's judiciary and is intended to clarify issues surrounding ethical conflicts, the need for intersystem efforts, and the judge's responsibility as a community leader. The first of these meetings was held on May 7, 2004 and featured various national and state leaders. Judicial leadership has selected to follow this statewide judicial meeting with regional judicial meetings. Their objective is to clarify and reinforce peer-to-peer, the purpose and intended outcome of this two year program.
 - **Regional Meetings.** A series of regional meetings will be held for Ohio's judicial and public children services agency leadership. The intent of these meetings is to bring together the two systems for the purpose of strategically planning the outcomes and formats for Ohio's community meetings.
 - **Community Meetings.** Community meetings consisting of all pertinent stakeholders will be convened locally to formulate and implement community action plans. Technical support and facilitation will be available through SCO and ODJFS.
- Assisting additional Ohio courts to become National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges' (NCJFCJ) "Model Courts" that work towards implementation of national best practice guidelines. Lucas County (Toledo) has received this designation.
 - Increasing judicial opportunities for family law education through continued support of the Ohio Judicial College and other appropriate venues. In the past five years, Ohio has created a Family Law Track and increased judicial training opportunities on family matters to 33 courses annually.

Sharing of Resources:

In Ohio more children become legally free for adoption than the public and private adoption agencies are able to place with families. Many are older children of school age, brothers and sisters who want to stay together, some with physical or emotional challenges. More than half are African American. They enter foster care and then wait, while private and county agencies seek permanent adoptive homes for them. Some of these waiting children never experience a permanent family.

ODJFS began the *AdoptOhio* program in SFY 1997 to help reduce the number of waiting children. At the outset, *AdoptOhio* consisted of a database, web site and several publications, which was known as the Ohio Adoption Photo Listing (OAPL); direct cash payments to offset agencies' adoption costs; promotional giveaway items for agencies' use; an annual Statewide Adoption and Foster Care Conference; an advertising campaign on radio and television and in newspapers; and a quality assurance evaluation program. The advertising and promotional campaigns and direct agency payments were curtailed due to budget constraints.

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This report provides an overview of the OAPL program for the five state fiscal years (SFY) from 1999 through 2004. The OAPL publications were published for four of those five years, SFY 2000, SFY 2001, SFY 2003 and SFY 2004. The publications were halted temporarily during SFY 2002, though the OAPL web site was maintained. Through SFY 2001 the Ohio Department of Human Services contracted with Lutheran Social Services of Central Ohio (LSSCO) to provide services, and LSSCO in turn subcontracted with Lorz Communications, Inc. (LCI) for these services. For SFY 2003 and SFY 2004, ODJFS contracted for these support services directly from LCI.

[The Ohio Adoption Photo Listing \(OAPL\):](#)

One way to help families find children to adopt is to use the *AdoptOhio* Photo Listing (OAPL) as a resource. During the period SFY 1999 through SFY 2004 significant innovation occurred in the OAPL program, and the OAPL publications themselves were halted and only the web site maintained for one year of that period, SFY 2002.

Ohio is unique in being a state that supervises adoption agencies but the counties (in most cases) actually have legal custody of the children. The OAPL services allow child custodial agencies to share information about children with other agencies and with prospective families who are looking for children. All county agencies are required by OAC rule to register all children in their custody with OAPL within 90 days from the date of permanent custody.

At its heart, OAPL consists of photographs, narrative descriptions and contact information about waiting children. This information is provided by custodial agencies, and is published on the OAPL web site and in OAPL publications. These publications have included:

- [Children Awaiting Adoption](#), a large, three-ring, tab-divided binder containing several thousand 8 ½" x 11" pages of information about waiting children;
- [Families Waiting to Adopt](#), a printed book, also on 8 ½" x 11" pages, containing photographs, descriptions and contact information about several hundred Ohio families with completed home studies who wanted to adopt;
- [Children Awaiting Adoption Update Packets](#);
- [Families Waiting to Adopt Update Packets](#); and
- [Features Books](#), 28-page booklets featuring fewer children though with more extensive narrative descriptions.

[The OAPL Children Awaiting Adoption Book](#): Initially ODJFS prepared a large binder that included three-hole punched pages, one for each child or sibling group. Tab sections divided the children by age, Tab A--0-6, Tab B--7-10, Tab C--11 and over, and Tab D--siblings. About 350 binders were produced, and were distributed to all 88 county agencies, all private adoption and foster agencies, area libraries, etc. Every two months an update packet was distributed to each recipient of a *Children Awaiting Adoption* binder. These update packets consisted of a list of children

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whose pages were to be deleted from the binder, as well as new pages for children recently added. In alternating months a new complete set of replacement pages and tabs was distributed. Recipients were instructed to discard the entire contents of the binder and substitute the new pages and tabs.

During SFY 2000 and SFY 2001 two major improvements were made to the *Children Awaiting Adoption* book. A lot more photographs were included, and a new Tab E section was created for children whose adoptive placement was "in process."

Previously, a shortcoming of the *Children Awaiting Adoption* book was the number of child pages that had only a narrative description of the child but no photograph. Experience had shown that a child's listing without a photograph received fewer inquiries than those with photographs. Through systematic, friendly follow-up with custodial agencies, several hundred photos were obtained and added to both the *Children Awaiting Adoption* book and to the OAPL web site, increasing the number of inquiries for those children.

At the request of agencies, a new Tab E "Placement in Process" section was added. Children whose adoptions were in process were moved from Tab A, Tab B, Tab C and Tab D to the new Tab E "Placement in Process" section. This reduced the number of pages in Tabs A-D, clarified some confusion about listed children whose adoption was not officially finalized but for whom social workers were not accepting further inquiries from persons interested in adopting them. This reduced calls to agencies about children who weren't really available and decreased parents' frustrations.

Although some agencies used the book extensively, others did not. Overall access to the Internet increased, more and more people used the OAPL web site to search for children, and printing costs were high. The *Children Awaiting Adoption* book was discontinued at the end of SFY 2003. To maintain widespread awareness of Ohio's waiting children, the number of issues of Features Books published per year was increased from 10 to 17.

AdoptOhio Database and Web Site:

The *AdoptOhio* Photo Listing is maintained on a database, and is published on the ODJFS web site at www.ifs.ohio.gov/oapl. Prospective families may select preferences of the child or children they are seeking. For example, they can call up a list of children with certain gender and age parameters. If there is interest in a child or children, inquiries are emailed to LCI who then forwards them to the agency that has custody. Custodial agencies then respond to the inquiries.

During the period SFY 1999 – SFY 2004 two innovations occurred in the OAPL database and web site. A monthly, comprehensive Index Report was initiated, by which agencies more easily could update information about children. This Index Report replaced a requirement that agencies fill out a separate form for each addition, deletion or revision of a child's data. And a new heart-shaped icon was used to identify those listed children for whom a

family already had been identified.

At the same time the new Tab E “Placement in Process” section was being added to the *Children Awaiting Adoption* book, a similar innovation was launched on the OAPL web site for the same purpose: to reduce the number of fruitless and frustrating inquiries from persons who thought every listed child was available for them to adopt. As with the *Children Awaiting Adoption* book, many children listed on the OAPL web site were children for whom a family already has been identified and whose adoption was in process.

The OAPL web site began including a heart-shaped icon—both on index pages that listed many children and on the individual pages of children whose adoption was in progress—to identify children for whom a family already had been identified. This improvement caused an immediate shift in the nature of inquiries received. Although the number of inquiries remained steady, there was a sharp increase in inquiries for truly available children and a sharp decline in inquiries for children for whom a family previously had been identified, which significantly reduced the frustration level for persons seeking unavailable children.

Other OAPL Web Site Services:

The OAPL web site also includes a statewide Calendar of Events, as well as several other resource materials, such as the Ohio Adoption Guide Booklet. It also features a Guest Book where site visitors may offer comments or raise questions. These guest book questions, as well as others received via email, are answered within 1-2 days.

Features Books:

Because the OAPL book was so large, many users were overwhelmed by the number of available children. Its size made it difficult to transport and use. An alternative book was developed to “feature” fewer children and serve as a marketing tool. It is a two-color, 28-page booklet that focuses on difficult to place children, often those who were 10 or older, or sibling groups. Adoptive family “success stories” also are highlighted. Photos were taken by professional photographers, and, generally, are of a better quality than those provided by the agencies. The narrative and presentation are similar to a “magazine” style. The Features Books stress that these children represent several children who are similar to them and are available as well.

Three Features Books were published at the end of SFY 2000, and 10 were published in SFY 2001 and SFY 2003. This number was increased to 18 per year for SFY 2004 and SFY 2005, though only 17 will be published in SFY 2004 due to a contract delay.

Since printing cost was much lower than for the larger *Children Awaiting Adoption* book, 3,000 Features Books could be printed, allowing broader distribution. For example, they could be handed out at events for potential adoptive families or to graphically show the available children and start the process of “thinking about” adoption.

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The books generally had statewide representation of children. Beginning in SFY 2001, ODJFS dedicated an occasional entire issue to large public agencies. Since then, "special" Features Books have been published for Cuyahoga, Franklin, Hamilton, Lucas and Montgomery counties. A special siblings only Feature Book was published in SFY 2001. In SFY 2004 three issues were printed as calendars, one statewide in scope and county-specific versions for Cuyahoga and Montgomery counties. As with the other Features Books general information about adoption was included.

Families Waiting to Adopt:

There has also been a *Families Waiting to Adopt* book in which approved and waiting Ohio families were listed with a family photo and description of the child's traits that the family might be interested in adopting. This *Families Waiting to Adopt* book was published on a monthly basis in a bound edition until it came out in a loose-leaf version in 2001. The intent of the book was to make public children services agencies aware of families waiting to adopt. Many families listed in the book were not accepting of the characteristics of the waiting children, thus many agencies stopped using the book.

Although the *Families Waiting to Adopt* book was intended for use by agencies with children seeking families, some have been used successfully with older available children to help them see the kinds of families seeking adoptive children. These older children take an active role in finding a family and many have given up hope or deny they want to be adopted.

No updates to the *Families Waiting to Adopt* book have been published since June 2003. The Department is currently reviewing how to best develop and utilize the family book so that it will be a more effective tool for families.

AdoptOHIO

Interagency

Collaboration: ODJFS continued to provide support to public children services agencies in finding adoptive families for children through the multi-pronged approach of AdoptOHIO. The program started as a pilot in 1997 and has three major strategies:

- enlist the aid of private adoption agencies to a degree not previously attempted;
- to provide a fee for service to agencies that place children into adoptive homes; and,
- improve the Ohio Adoption Photo Listing books and website.

The AdoptOHIO program represented a strong legislative, financial, and administrative commitment to reducing the number of children waiting for adoption. The foundation of the program was based on the fact that in order to be successful, collaboration between public and private agencies needed to be an integral component of the program.

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Prior to the implementation of AdoptOHIO only five private agencies were actively recruiting and assisting families to adopt children with special needs. When the program was revised in 2003 there were 58 private agencies and 52 public agencies active in recruiting and developing adoptive families for children in the custody of Ohio's eighty-eight public children services agencies.

There was consistent growth in the number of finalized adoptions in Ohio as follows:

Federal Fiscal Year Number of Finalizations

FFY 2000	1812
FFY 2001	2047
FFY 2002	2308
FFY 2003	2771

Since FFY 1999, there have been steady increases in the percentage of children adopted within 12 months of their date of permanent custody, from 24% in the middle of FFY 1999 to 37% in the middle of FFY 2003.

FFY 2003 is the second year in a row in which adoptions outnumber new children entering permanent custody. As a result the number of children awaiting adoption is down to 3,333, lower than at any time since the middle of SFY 1999.

Federal Fiscal Year Children Waiting for Adoptions

FFY 2000	3675
FFY 2001	3615
FFY 2002	3508
FFY 2003	3333

Agencies that actively participated in the AdoptOHIO program have produced higher proportions of sibling group adoptions than the nonparticipating agencies. During 2001, 48% of the children from contracting agencies who were adopted were sibling groups, while only 39% of children that were part of a sibling group were adopted via non-participating agencies.

As part of the AdoptOHIO program statewide quarterly regional meetings for public and private AdoptOHIO agencies were designed to provide opportunities for networking, team building and skill building. The quarterly meetings also included the sharing of available children and families between public and private agencies.

Unfortunately budgetary constraints resulted in a loss of GRF funding for the SFY04-05 Biennium that would support the AdoptOHIO program structure. The loss of state funding significantly affected ODJFS' ability to continue to promote and increase the number of adoptions through our

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current AdoptOHIO incentive structure. The decision was made not to continue AdoptOHIO, but to work with the counties on developing an alternative adoption support structure.

During SFY 04, private agencies were given the ability to request contracts for the finalization and post-finalizations services for the child (ren) and the families. This was for the purpose of phasing out AdoptOHIO and giving the private agencies the funding to complete the remaining stages of the adoption process.

ODJFS recognized the growing number of special needs children in the public child welfare agencies statewide, and in keeping with the goal to continuously strive to support programs that recruit and retain the largest number of adoptive families, ODJFS directed available TANF funding and federal Adoption Incentive Funds to create a new program entitled AdoptOHIO Kids. During the restructure, ODJFS met with several statewide groups including the Ohio Association of Child Care Agencies (OACCA), the Public Children Services Association of Ohio (PCSAO), the Executive Leadership Committee (ELC), which is comprised of 20 county agency directors, the PCSA Directors to collect input for the new restructure. Additionally, this concept was presented to public and private agency adoption managers at the April 23, 2003 Statewide AdoptOHIO Quarterly meeting and staff was afforded an opportunity to explore how new contracts could be developed.

AdoptOHIO Kids was implemented in SFY 04 as a statewide program in which all 88 counties received an initial unrestricted allocation of funds to work towards the AdoptOHIO Kids goals. PCSAs were eligible to receive additional incentive dollars based on meeting certain outcome measures. AdoptOHIO Kids goals include increasing the overall number of children adopted each year with a special emphasis on:

- Finalization of children who meet the Child and Family Services Review (CFSR) measure of 32 percent of the children's finalizations being within 24 months from their initial custody; and,
- Finalization of children who are both ages ten or older and who have been in the custody of the agency for 24 months or longer.

The following indicates the PCSAs successes with the SFY 04 AdoptOHIO Kids program

- 27 of the 86 PCSAs earned a total of \$137,943 (37% of the total amount available) for increasing the number of children finalized over age10.
- 43 of the 86 PCSAs earned a total of \$237,525 (64% of the total funds available) for increasing the percentage of children finalized within 4 months of their initial custody.
- Cuyahoga and Franklin earned \$500,000 together for increasing the number of children over age 10 who were adopted.

The AdoptOHIO Kids program for SFY 05 has been restructured once again

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to align with the federal Adoption Incentive Program and to recognize that although our largest counties are diligently working on the CFSR 24 Month requirement, due to their intensive efforts to finalize older children that their percentage of the finalizations within 24 months may be skewed. The proposed revisions are as follows:

- A total of \$5 million is available for the state fiscal year for adoption incentives to counties. The funds are being disseminated in a manner which overcomes past issues and promotes specific adoption goals. One of the past issues is the amount of time it took for counties to receive the funds. This year a portion of funds will be disseminated based on all county adoptions achieved by June 30, 2004. The specific adoption goals are two-fold: one is to increase the number of older children who receive permanent homes, the target age being nine and above. The second is to address one of the needs identified in the CFSR, to reduce the length of time it takes to get children adopted, specifically to two years or less.

Thus, there are three components to the adoption incentives:

- Incentives to all counties who exceed baseline performance for all adoptions by the end of June 2004
- Incentives to all counties except Cuyahoga and Franklin who exceed baseline performance for specific target groups:
 - Children ages 9 and older.
 - Children adopted in less than 24 months
- Incentives to Cuyahoga and Franklin Counties for children ages 9 and older

[Incentives to all counties who exceed baseline performance by June 2004](#)

ODJFS will use \$1.5 million in TANF funds to provide incentives to public agencies based on performance achieved by June 30, 2004. All 88 public agencies will be eligible. Funds will be divided among counties who exceed the baseline number of adoptions in state fiscal year 2004. The baselines are calculated as an average of all children finalized over three previous state fiscal years. Each public agency will receive a proportionate share of the total amount available based upon the number of children who exceeded the baseline in its agency. For example, if there were 500 children over the baseline in the whole state, finalization of each child would have a value of \$3000 (\$1.5 million divided by 500). If a given county had 30 children over the baseline the incentive for that county would be \$90,000 (\$3000 x 30). The maximum will be \$5000 per child. Any funds that are not expended will rollover into subsequent categories below. These funds will be distributed after data is reviewed in August, 2004 to assist in payment for the SFY05 adoption activities.

[Incentives to counties who exceed baseline performance for targeted groups](#)

The new incentives will be targeted at two statewide goals, increasing the number of adoptions of children over the age of 9 and increasing the number of children adopted within 24 months. Generally that means that

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counties will be focusing on two populations that tend to be distinct, the older children who often have been in the system longer and the frequently younger children who are relatively new to the system.

ODJFS will allocate \$750,000 in incentive monies for each of the two groups for the 86 counties, excluding Franklin and Cuyahoga, for a total of \$1.5 million. As in the example above, all of the qualifying children for each category will be divided into the total amount available to arrive at a value for each child. That figure will be multiplied for each county by the number of qualifying children in that county to arrive at the total grant. The baselines and award calculations will be made separately for:

- Children ages 9 and older
- Children adopted in less than 24 months

The baseline for the 9 and older incentive has been calculated by averaging the number of children finalized in state fiscal years 2001, 2002 and 2003 who were age 9 or older at the time of their finalization. The baseline score for children adopted in less than 24 months has been calculated by averaging the numbers of children adopted in less than 24 months in state fiscal years 2001, 2002 and 2003.

For Franklin and Cuyahoga counties, ODJFS will allocate \$2 million in incentive funds for the adoption of children ages 9 and older. Cuyahoga would receive \$1,250,000, plus the first incentive for overall increase in number of total adoptions. Franklin would receive \$750,000 plus the first incentive.

Adoption 2002:

Although Ohio did not double the number of adoptions within the past five years, there continues to be growth in the number of adoption finalizations since the implementation of Adoption 2002 Incentive funding.

The AFCARS data displays the following numbers for Ohio finalizations:

<u>Federal Fiscal Year</u>	<u>Number of Finalizations</u>	<u>Percent Increase</u>
FFY 1997	1344	
FFY 1998	1424	10.6%
FFY 1999	1577	10.7%
FFY 2000	1777	12.6%
FFY 2001	2008	12.9%
FFY 2002	2185	08.8%

There was a 62% increase in the number of adoptions from FFY 1977 to FFY 2002.

Adoption Timelines:

Ohio did not achieve substantial compliance on the CFSR Outcome Measure (Finalized-Adoptions within 24 Months) - 32% of the children finalized should be finalized within 24 months of their initial custody.

While Ohio had an initial rating of 29.2% in FFY 2000, the following year

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(FFY 2001) the percentage dropped to 25.7%. Since FFY 2001, there has been an increase in each subsequent year, the first year being a much larger increase than the second year. In FFY 2002 Ohio achieved a rating of 28.2%, and in FFY 2003, 28.3%.

ODJFS believes that the method of using exit cohort data for this CFSR outcome is not an accurate or desirable measure to evaluate how any state is improving its rate at which adoptions are occurring. Exit cohort analysis only considers those children adopted within a given time period, so it is biased towards easy to place children. This may produce pressure to focus on the new children entering permanent custody and to concentrate less on those children who have been waiting the longest. Children who are never adopted do not affect the indicator.

The preferred way of examining outcomes is based on entry cohorts and time elapsed since permanency custody. Examining entry cohorts would allow us to see, of the children who enter custody, how many of those children are finalized within 24 months. With the current exit cohort analysis, there are complicated mixtures of children who have been in the system for varying lengths of time. If a county devotes time to recruiting families for the children who have been waiting the longest and is successful at finding families for these children, the increased numbers of those finalizations skews the numbers and reduces the percentage of the total children who were finalized within 24 months.

Examples of how such concerted efforts to placed older children skews the 24 month measure can be seen in the description of activities in Cuyahoga and Franklin counties.

Cuyahoga County

Cuyahoga County Department of Children and Family Services (CCDCFS) for the last two years has made a concerted effort to find families for children who have waited the longest in the system. They have contracted with Casey Family Services to review children's records to find relatives who may be able to now adopt. They have trained social workers on how to interview and look for kin or other individuals connected with the child who may be able to adopt the waiting children. During the past three federal fiscal years, CCDCFS experienced its greatest increases in the finalizations of children ages 10 to 15. Comparing FFY 2001 with FFY 2003, the numbers within these age categories nearly doubled.

Age of Child	FFY 2000	FFY 2001	FFY 2002	FFY 2003
10-12	59	87	124	122
13-15	45	35	77	72
16-18	7	16	30	29

Additionally, CCDCFS experienced an increase in children finalized who had been waiting over three years. For the category over 3 years, CCDCFS significantly increased the number of finalizations when one compares FFYs 2002 and 2003 with previous years.

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Time in Custody	FFY 2000	FFY 2001	FFY 2002	FFY 2003
2 - 3 years	137	174	158	186
Over 3 years	295	274	438	366

Franklin County

Franklin County Children Services (FCCS) has had an increased emphasis on placement of older children through offering monetary incentives and provision of post finalization adoption services. FCCS continues to indicate that as increased efforts in placement of older children are successful, the agency tends to decrease in the 24 month measure. FCCS achieved the FFY 2004 AdoptOHIO Kids incentive for increasing the finalizations of children age 10 and over; however did not achieve the incentive for the 24 month measure. During the past three federal fiscal years Franklin County Children Services (FCCS) experienced its greatest increases in the finalizations of children ages 10 to 18. Finalizations for children between 13 and 18 nearly doubled between FY 2002 and 2003

Age of Child	FFY 2000	FFY 2001	FFY 2002	FFY 2003
10-12	11	35	50	64
13-15	10	21	25	47
16-18	7	8	8	15

FCCS almost doubled the finalizations of children who had been waiting over three years between FFY 2000 and 2003. These figures display the intensive efforts that FCCS has directed to the waiting children

Time in Custody	FFY 2000	FFY 2001	FFY 2002	FFY 2003
2 - 3 yrs	38	55	85	80
Over 3yrs	92	163	148	182

Focused Technical Assistance with Cuyahoga and Franklin Counties

Under the Program Improvement Plan (PIP), ODJFS has determined that focused technical assistance will be provided to the two counties which have the largest negative impact on the 24 month measure, Franklin and Cuyahoga. The first meeting with Cuyahoga was held on April 21, 2004. The agency was very receptive and critical staff from all effected programs including Protective, Placement, Recruitment, Information Systems, and the Adoption participated in the meeting.

CCDCFS indicated that the following activities assisted the agency in

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achieving adoptions within 24 months of initial custody:

- Proceed directly to a straight filing for permanent custody (PC), if there is a previous history of children removed from the family and being permanently committed.
- Established two Caregiver Units in 1999. If the child is identified as a foster to adopt, a social worker from the Caregiver Unit is assigned at the time of PC filing. The caregiver social worker completes the adoption homestudy, and negotiates the adoption subsidy prior to PC, so that within 90 days of receiving PC the placement can move to finalization. This will assist the child in moving more quickly from PC to finalization; however, if the PC was not granted timely it will not necessarily result in an increase in the 24 month measure.
- Established an internal policy that cases of children who are permanently committed should be transferred to the Adoption Unit with 40 days of the date of the PC hearing. A checklist has been developed of all of the items that must be in the case before it is transferred to the adoption unit. This includes the Child Study Inventory, Social and Medical History Form, birth information including birth certificate, documentation of good-bye visits, etc.
- Developed a report that the Adoption Chief can generate which lists the cases that have been PC'd over 40 days and have not been transferred to the Adoption Unit.

As a result of our first meeting, the CCDCFs MIS is going to develop the list of children who were finalized within 24 months of initial custody and compare the demographics of the children with those who were not finalized within 24 months.

The barriers to achieving adoption within 24 months of initial custody generated from the meeting included:

- Many initial cases are not heard in 90 days and therefore must be re-filed for custody. It was suggested that this practice is fairly common in Cuyahoga.
- Appeal cases generally take 180 days to 2 years to resolve.
- Cases are not transferred in a timely manner due to documentation of cases not complete (this issue is being addressed with the policy stated above).
- Certified copy of the birth certificate is frequently lost; the certified copy is needed to finalize an adoption. The case can be transferred to the Adoption Unit if the Ongoing Unit has requested the birth certificate at least 40 days before the transfer. If the child is born out of state, or if the child is not born in a hospital, this can significantly delay the agency's ability to obtain the certified birth certificate.

ODJFS staff will meet with CCDCFs in July to continue planning for focused technical assistance.

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ODJFS has a tentative date of July 1, 2004 to meet with Franklin County Children Services to begin the discussions for the provision of focused technical assistance.

Reports Provided to All Agencies

ODJFS has also analyzed and provided information to agencies on the impact the length of time it takes to achieve permanent custody has on the agency being able to meet with CFSR measure

Two reports were prepared to analyze the length of time it takes to complete the permanent commitment process. The first report was completed on December 30, 2002, and the second report was completed on June 30, 2003. The outcomes derived from the first report were presented at the November 2003 Statewide Foster and Adoption Conference, which included public and private child welfare agency personnel and adoptive and foster parents.

Both reports examined Ohio's population of children legally free for adoption. The statistical data revealed that 61% of children adopted in FFY 2002 were permanently committed within 18 months.

The report included information on the variances in the largest counties' performances in achieving permanent commitments within 18 months for children adopted in FFY 2002. (by the metro counties.)

County	Variance in Performance
Cuyahoga	52%
Franklin	45%
Hamilton	60%
Lucas	75%
Montgomery	45%
Stark	57%
Summit	85%

The CPOE discussions with Franklin County Children Services (FCCS) indicated that children are maintained in temporary custody for two years before Permanent Court Commitment (PCC) is granted and that most PCC cases are appealed. FCCS uses concurrent case planning, which keeps permanency for the child in the forefront of the case. Cuyahoga CDJFS CPOE discussions identified the court system as a significant barrier that impedes their ability to achieve a higher rate of commitments within 18 months. Summit County Children Services (SCCS) on the other hand, does not view court delays as a problem; however, it does take 15 to 18 months for the appeals court to render a decision on any appeal. SCCS files a concurrent plan at the point of adjudication. The family is made aware of the concurrent plan and the court looks closely at the ten-month review and speaks openly with the family regarding the 12-month custody requirements.

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Information regarding the impact of timely permanent commitment has on the CFSR measure of finalizing 32% of children adopted within 24 months was presented to the Judicial College on May 16, 2003. The Judicial College is comprised of Probate and Juvenile judges throughout Ohio.

AdoptOHIO

Recruitment: In FFY 99, ODJFS developed a statewide adoption marketing and recruitment plan based on data collected from a comprehensive marketing research program. Highlights of the subsequent campaign included the development and implementation of a multi-faceted recruitment campaign with ads that were designed to inform the general public of the need for adoptive parents. They depicted the children who were truly waiting. Callers were directed to an 800 number where additional information was provided.

Two 30-minute adoption videos were produced for television shows that reached approximately 500,000 homes. In addition there was the production of an "Adoption Basics" video to be used by agencies as a recruitment tool. A copy of the video was given to all public and private agencies. The AdoptOHIO vendor provided media technical assistance as well worked with agencies and drafted materials in a variety of formats suitable for a local agencies to customize for their own media markets. Promotional items (travel mugs, canvas bags, and pens) were designed and purchased for agencies to use for National Adoption month activities. Also, there was the development and statewide distribution of a new "Introduction to Adoption" brochure and "take-one" easels as well as "Consider Adoption" posters.

ODJFS took the following steps to recruit potential adoptive families:

Statewide Features Booklets designed to assist agencies with highlighting available children across the state. They reflect the racial and ethnic diversity of the children in custody. The books were published six times a year, alternating with the larger OAPL book. The AdoptOHIO vendor traveled to meet the child took the photos and completed the narrative of the child.

County Specific Features Books, in addition to the statewide features book, were developed for each of the three metropolitan agencies (Franklin County, Cuyahoga County and Lucas County) with the highest number of children in custody.

National Adoption Month Advertising Campaign was held in November and was the focus of a major media advertising campaign, special events in major markets, distribution of promotional items to agencies, and significant marketing and recruitment technical assistance to several large county agencies.

Advertising and Marketing Campaign was launched and consisted of television and radio spots and newspaper display adds. The AdoptOHIO

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vendor customized several radio spots for use by local agencies. Twelve agencies received direct technical assistance.

Special Events: Several Metro counties requested additional assistance to implement special events to focus on National Adoption Awareness Month.

Incentive Funds: ODJFS received federal incentive funds as a result of the state's progress in meeting its Adoption 2002 goal. These funds were used to fund a more aggressive statewide recruitment plan that focused on the recruitment of potential adoptive families which reflected the ethnic and racial diversity of children in the state for whom adoptive homes were needed. Ohio continued its efforts to recruit families for teens and sibling groups including the implementation of a "child specific" recruitment pilot program.

ODJFS and the AdoptOHIO vendors developed a software package for public and private adoption agencies to use in tracking the families and children they serve. The software allowed agencies to track both children and families in various stages of the process, starting with the initial inquiry or the date a child enters permanent custody. The software package was successfully loaded on Ohio's Wide Area Network allowing all public agencies to download the software and network the database within the agency. Agencies that used the tracking system were provided intensive training on the use of the system, detailed users manuals, desk guides and on going technical assistance. Thirty-seven agencies actively used the software system.

ODJFS and the AdoptOHIO vendors provided an unprecedented amount of technical assistance to agencies on issues of tracking data and clinical support. Highlights including direct work with Cuyahoga County to develop a computer system by which two of the county's existing systems would be partnered to facilitate the child/family matching process. Clinical technical assistance was provided on permanency issues with older teens, preparing children for permanency, and post placement supportive services and statewide.

The AdoptOHIO Quality Assurance vendor issued an AdoptOHIO Performance Report every six months and was distributed to all the AdoptOHIO agencies and other public children services agencies. This is a comprehensive report that measures Ohio's success rate in finding permanent homes for waiting children and illustrates patterns and trends to help adoption professionals plan for the future. There are numerous sources of data which were used in developing this report, including county surveys, telephone interviews with existing and prospective adoptive families, information supplied by the Help Me Grow line (the statewide 1-800 number for families seeking basic information regarding services for children), the ODJFS website and Family and Children Services Information System (FACSIS). The first report was issued in June 1999, and a second report was issued in January 2000. In the conclusion of the report was a section entitled "Strategies for Changing the Adoption System."

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In addition, to help counties measure their performance in finding permanent homes for waiting children, ODJFS issues a semiannual "report card" to counties which allows them to compare their progress toward meeting their own 2002 goal to statewide achievements.

Adoptive Marketing and Recruitment 2001

Marketing and Public Awareness:

ODJFS continued to manage, maintain and further develop the Ohio Adoption Photo Listing and implemented a public awareness and general marketing plan and reviewed progress at monthly project meetings. ODJFS implemented the MEPA training plan that was utilized in those agencies where the need was identified and continued conducting site visits for the purpose of monitoring and determining technical assistance needs. AdoptOHIO agencies were required to submit quarterly reports containing the following information:

- the number of families who inquired about adoption
- the number of families who attended orientation
- the number of adoption applications submitted
- a breakdown of the characteristics of individuals applying to adopt including age, race, ethnicity, and marital status
- a breakdown of preferences of couples/individuals applying to adopt including relative, foster child, noncreative, age, and race of preferred child(ren)
- the number of home studies completed
- the number of home studies approved
- a breakdown of the characteristics of individuals with approved home studies including age, race, ethnicity, and marital status
- a breakdown of preferences of couples/individuals with approved home studies including relative, foster child, nonrelative, age, and race of child(ren)

Diligent recruitment of potential adoptive families that reflects the ethnic and racial diversity of children in the state

Adoptive:

Statewide, there was a sizeable increase the percentage of African American children adopted. In FFY 98, 41% of the children who were adopted were African American, in FFY 99, 48% of the children adopted were African American, and in FFY 00, 50% of the children adopted were African American.

ODJFS developed an eye catching poster that agencies can use to encourage the public to become aware of the needs of children in care and how they can help to meet those needs.

AdoptOHIO 2001:

In FY 01, ODJFS implemented a multi-faceted recruitment campaign that aired on television and radio encouraging Ohioans to "Consider Adoption."

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The ads were designed to inform the general public of the need for adoptive parents, and more importantly, they depicted the children who were truly waiting. ODJFS focused the vast majority of its radio and newspaper advertisement on those outlets which had a predominately African American audience.

Another highlight was the design, purchase and distribution of promotional items (travel mugs, canvas bags, and pens) for agencies to use for National Adoption Month activities.

Adoptive Marketing and Recruitment 2002:

ODJFS implemented a Statewide Recruitment Committee to provide input into ongoing recruitment and retention efforts. ODJFS focused on efforts to develop Resources Families and emphasized more foster-to-adopt placements.

ODJFS launched a series of site visits to public adoption agencies across Ohio. Specifically, staff from the Adoption Section, along with a representative from the Local Operations/Regional Field Offices met local adoption and recruitment staff to review agency policies on adoption and recruitment. In addition, staff reviewed documents such as the agency adoption policy manual, recruitment materials, and standardized matching forms. Lastly, staff reviewed the following data:

- number of children awaiting adoption;
- racial composition of the children awaiting adoption;
- number of prospective adoptive families;
- list of all approved adoptive families including child preferences (racial/ethnicity);
- number of adoption placements and finalizations for the most recent 12 month period;
- number and type of signed adoption assistance agreements;
- number of transracial adoptive placements and finalizations for the most recent 12 month period; and
- other information pertinent to understanding how the agency moves a child from intake to adoption.

Federal Adoption 2002 Incentive funds were allocated to agencies for development of their recruitment and retention programs. Following are examples of activities that individual counties pursued with ODJFS funding:

- Community Based Targeted Recruitment project provided funds for targeted recruitment efforts in the six largest metro counties because they have 70% of Ohio's waiting children in their custody. These funds were distributed in the following manner: Cuyahoga - \$80,000, Franklin and Hamilton - \$60,000, Montgomery, Summit and Lucas - \$50,000. Also, each of these counties received an additional \$25,000 for recruitment and retention related activities. Counties used this funding to expand their recruitment efforts including production of fliers in

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Spanish, production of television, radio advertisements, a recruitment video to be used to develop greater community awareness, purchased equipment which allowed the county to set up a link on the website to feature over 100 children in a "video stream."

- Cuyahoga County Kinship Adoption Initiative was designed to increase the number of children in permanent custody adopted by their relatives by conducting a thorough search for relatives at each stage of custody, training staff in the basic methodology and techniques for locating relatives, developing targeted information materials for relatives, developing a targeted recruitment campaign in the community to let relatives know that adoption is an option and providing funds to assist relatives to come into compliance to become adoptive parents. Cuyahoga County reported an increase of 18 % in adoption finalizations for CY 2001. Of these, 186 (or 25 %) of the total placements were relative adoptive placements. Cuyahoga County utilized the funds to contract for the services of two full time parent relative locators who are training all staff, on a continuing basis, on their responsibilities for finding parents and relatives for all children. Additionally an adoption support group was created to assist relatives who are considering adoption, or have adopted.
- Montgomery County reported a 69% increase in their adoptions. Summit County reported an increase in the number of adoption inquiries. During 2001, they received 257 adoption only inquiries and 728 foster/adopt inquiries. This number drastically increased in November and December after their media blitz.
- Community Based Targeted Recruitment in Non Metro Counties funds were provided to the non-metro counties for targeted recruitment. Although the non-metro counties have custody on only 30% of the children, they are rich in resources for entire state's children.
- Logan County Community Evaluation Team expanded their efforts in the Bellefontaine, Western and Chippewa neighborhoods in 2001. Support from several agencies allowed the team to rotate the location and responsibility for hosting the quarterly team meeting. The CET has supported: hosting a booth at the Logan County Fair, participating in the Indian Lake Harvest Festival and the Ring of Lights Program at Blue Jacket Park, Library Displays, and assembling and distributing school informational bags to 756 teachers, counselors, and aides in Logan County.
- Wayne County retained a marketing/public relations consultant who has developed a plan with agency staff to significantly increase their general and child specific recruitment efforts for children in permanent custody.

Diligent recruitment of potential adoptive families that reflects the ethnic and racial diversity of children in the state:

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OAC 5101:2-48-05 required that an agency have a written plan describing strategies for adoptive parent recruitment. The requirement specifies that recruitment of and acceptance of prospective adoptive families shall be an ongoing program of a PCSA, PCPA, or PNA. Agencies were required to develop a comprehensive recruitment plan that shall include, but is not limited to:

- A description of the characteristics of children available for adoption, including their developmental, emotional, physical and cultural needs;
- Specific strategies to reach all parts of the community;
- Diverse methods of disseminating both general and child specific Strategies for assuring that all prospective parents have access to the homestudy process, including location and hours of services that facilitate access to all members of the community;
- Procedures for assuring that all prospective parents will receive information regarding adoption procedures within seven days of inquiry;
- Strategies for training staff to work with diverse cultural, racial, and economic communities;
- Strategies for dealing with linguistic barriers;
- Procedures for the provision of adoption homestudy services and preservice training to families in other counties;
- Nondiscriminatory fee structures;
- Procedures for a timely search for prospective parents for a child in the permanent custody of the agency, including the use of exchanges, OAPL, AdoptOHIO web page and other interagency efforts;
- Procedures for a timely search of prospective adoptive families;
- In addition, each agency is required to enclose a statement of assurance with its adoption policy that all recruitment activities and materials shall be in compliance with the Multiethnic Placement Act, as amended.

In August 2001, the adoption policies and recruitment plans for all 88 counties were reviewed by ODJFS for compliance. Areas of the policies and plans that were inconsistent with MEPA as amended, ASFA, and/or ICWA were brought to the attention of each individual agency. If noncompliance was identified, the ODJFS Regional Field Office or licensing specialist notified the agency of noncompliance. The notification included a statement of the noncompliance, what must be done to correct the noncompliance, and the date by which the compliance must be completed.

In addition to reviewing agencies, ODJFS has also presented training on MEPA, as amended to statewide conferences, regional meetings and statewide Protective/Foster/Adoption Managers' meetings. The Adoption, Legal and Regional Field staff of ODJFS had been available to all public and private agencies to provide technical assistance regarding MEPA, as amended.

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AdoptOHIO 2002:

In SFY 2001, ODJFS implemented a comprehensive statewide marketing and recruitment plan. Highlights include the development and implementation of the Child Specific Recruitment Pilot Project. The pilot concluded on December 31, 2001. Several children were placed into adoptive homes as a result of the Child Specific Recruitment efforts. In 2002, ODJFS launched a statewide targeted recruitment campaign, inclusive of the child-specific model used in 2001. On May 17, 2002, ODJFS met with 25 recruitment specialists and adoption administrators to lay the groundwork for a newly revised Child-Specific campaign for the state of Ohio.

In addition, use of the ODJFS AdoptOHIO booth was displayed at several events around the state in an effort to raise awareness and recruit potential adoptive families.

Adoptive Marketing and Recruitment 2003:

During July 1, 2002 and June 30, 2003, ODJFS produced 12 "Features Books" which are magazine style books featuring 30 to 40 children. These books were utilized by the county agencies to recruit families for the most difficult to place children. Additionally five books listing approved families were produced and distributed to the county agencies.

ODJFS held several Focus Groups with prospective adoptive parents and adoption professionals to evaluate the effectiveness of the Recruitment tools. The consensus of the focus groups was that the large book in unwieldy and difficult to read. Concerns about the Photo Listing included listing of children who had potential families already identified and the quality of the pictures. The only concern stated about the Features books was that they did not appear to have a wide enough distribution. Suggestions for additional places to distribute the books were churches, adoptive and foster parent support groups, schools (especially teacher lounges).

Due to budgetary constraints, ODJFS no longer produced the large OAPL Children Book effective July 1, 2003. However, all children continued to be listed on the AdoptOHIO Web site. ODJFS increased the number of Features Books to 18 regional books and continued to produce the Families Waiting to Adopt book five times a year. ODJFS worked towards enhancing this web site based on recommendations from the Focus Groups and internal research.

To ensure diligent recruitment of potential foster and adoptive families that reflect the ethnic and racial diversity of children in the state for whom foster and adoptive homes were needed, Ohio must work to increase the number of African-American parents who apply and ultimately adopt until the overall pool of family resources reflects the ethnic and racial diversity of children in the state for whom foster and adoptive homes were needed. In order to do such, Ohio has:

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- Implemented procedures to better assure child and family information in FACSIS is accurate and up-to-date;
- Initiated development of market analysis information for counties to assist counties in driving effective recruitment campaigns;
- Enforced the implementation of the Comprehensive Recruitment Plan requirement and MEPA Bi-Annual Recruitment Report through administrative code;
- Set-aside a portion of state-available funds to help counties in their recruitment and retention efforts of minority families through Faith-Based and Child-Specific venues;
- Promoted "Best Practices" relative to recruiting and retaining African-American families; and
- Offered training and technical assistance to counties, their networks and mental health providers serving adoptive families.

AdoptOHIO 2003:

To ensure compliance with federal and state laws, ODJFS launched a series of site visits to public adoption agencies across Ohio. Specifically, staff from the Adoption Section, along with a representative from the Local Operations/Regional Field Offices met local adoption and recruitment staff to review agency policies on adoption and recruitment. In addition, staff reviewed documents such as the agency adoption policy manual, recruitment materials, and standardized matching forms. Randomly selected child and family case records which were reviewed as well. Lastly, staff reviewed the following data:

- Number of children awaiting adoption;
- Racial composition of the children awaiting adoption;
- Number of prospective adoptive families;
- List of all approved adoptive families including child preferences (racial/ethnicity);
- Number of adoption placements and finalizations for the most recent 12 month period;
- Number and type of signed adoption assistance agreements;
- Number of transracial adoptive placements and finalizations for the most recent 12 month period; and,
- Other information pertinent to understanding how the agency moves a child from intake to adoption.

Based on the review of the materials listed above and the findings of the case record reviews, ODJFS staff developed a report detailing areas where they believe technical assistance was needed. The report was then

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forwarded to the local agency for review and comment. In 2002, ODJFS staff completed 14 adoption related site visits to individual adoption agencies in Ohio with a specific focus on MEPA compliance.

ODJFS continued implementation of its comprehensive marketing and recruitment plan. In October 2002, ODJFS reconvened the Statewide Adoption Recruitment Committee to assist ODJFS in accurately identifying, recruiting and ultimately retaining adoptive families for harder to place children. \$300,000.00 of the projected Adoption 2002 Incentive Funds was set aside for this purpose. Over 25 AdoptOHIO recruiters across the state collaborated with ODJFS to launch two targeted initiatives: The Child-Specific and the Faith-Based Recruitment campaigns.

Child-Specific Recruitment - Continuing with a model used in 2002 and acting upon performance evaluations obtained at the conclusion of the model, the Statewide Adoption Committee laid the groundwork for the 2003 Child-Specific campaign. Cuyahoga County - Ohio's largest metropolitan county, (Cleveland area), which constitutes over 50 percent of the waiting children in the state was awarded funding to supplement existing child-specific activities. Cuyahoga County Department of Children and Families (CDCFS). CDCFS' Child Specific Recruitment Project solicits the assistance of persons already known to children (e.g. relatives, friends of foster parents, teachers, coaches, health care professionals), in helping to find adoptive families for the waiting child. To implement this plan, training of staff, community partners and agencies that work in conjunction with CDCFS is required. A specific training manual designed for Child Specific Recruitment is being utilized. CDCFS was allocated \$ 150,000 in February, 2003, for Child Specific Recruitment. Additional funds would continue to support the CDCFS Kinship Locator Program and "One Church, One Child" campaign.

Allocations were awarded to Franklin County Children Services (\$100,000) and Hamilton County Department of Job and Family Services for child specific recruitment program (\$100,000). Smaller allocations focused on child specific recruitment were made to Auglaize County for camera equipment and local advertisement; Butler County Children Services for "Family Fun Fest" and matching party; Allen County Children Services for producing payroll inserts and securing speaking engagements for the local Chamber of Commerce audience; Athens County Children Services for the annual Adoptive Family Retreat Weekend; Lucas County Children Services for luncheons and speakers at various recruitment venues; Washington County Children Services for child specific recruitment fliers (\$1,000); and Wayne County Children Services for a Marketing Consultant who will guide child specific recruitment activity (\$35,000).

Faith-Based Recruitment

In an effort to increase awareness within the religious community regarding the need for foster and adoptive families, ODJFS unveiled a foster care and adoption campaign titled, “**Churches United to Achieve Permanency for Children**”. Hundreds of leaders from various churches and synagogues were invited to a kick-off brunch, hosted by ODJFS and held at the onset of the 2002 Annual Foster Care and Adoption Conference, on Friday November 15, 2002. The kick-off was facilitated by a renowned recruiter; Mr. Zena Olgesby who has facilitated strategic planning for church-state collaboration at all levels, and has consulted on these matters in 35 states. A variety of models were shared with a non-denominational assembly of sixty religious leaders from across the state who shared an interest in supporting foster care and adoption.

Following the kick-off, twenty-two counties applied for faith based initiative funds in the amount totaling \$321,079.86. Given the funding limitations, ODJFS funded each agency at 70 percent of the amount requested and approved. Noted projects approved and funded were:

- Counties which currently have Faith Based active partnerships with local churches, such as Lucas, Franklin and Hamilton counties;
- Cuyahoga County Department of Child and Family Services which contracts with a “One Church, One Child” Coordinator (c/o Mt. Sinai Church, Cleveland) to work with the churches in the Cleveland area. Cuyahoga has had tremendous success with this program since the coordinated efforts were funded last year through Cuyahoga County. The coordinator made 500 presentations on foster care and adoptions by working with a committee consisting of volunteers currently partnered with private providers. They will host three support groups to lend support to families who have adopted children and families in the process of adopting. The coordinator has recruited 22 mentors who will mentor youth waiting for adoptive homes and has met the goal of having 22 families approved of adoption as a direct result of their efforts.

Adoptive Marketing and Recruitment 2004:

ODJFS has been working with AdoptUSKids on intensive efforts to recruit adoptive families. ODJFS staff attended the AdoptUS Regional meeting in February of 2004. Currently six PCSAs are listing children on the AdoptUS Kids website. Ohio selected its Rapid Response Team, The Ohio Foster Care Association (OFCA), to handle the National AdoptUS Kids inquiries and to refer these inquires to Ohio public or private agencies.

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ODJFS conducted the Adoption and Foster Care Conference and incorporated special training for mental health providers which should prove to be an incentive to recruiting adoptive families since they will be more likely to adopt knowing that there are improved support services after the adoption is finalized. The Annual Adoption and Foster Care Conference was held on November 13th, 14th and 15th. Over 400 public and private agency staff and foster, adoptive and kinship families attended the conference. The plenary session included a discussion of civil rights in foster care and adoption led by Jerome Mietes of the Office of Civil Rights, HHS Region V, and David Simmons of the National Indian Child Welfare Association.

Participants had a wide array of workshops to choose including attachment and separation issues, chemical abuse issues, understanding the African American Family, AdoptUS, expediting permanency for children, current legal issues, and the Hip Hop Culture. ODJFS also presented a workshop on the CFSR/PIP.

To improve attendance, both Lynette Cole, former Miss USA (2000,) and Chester Jackson, of the New York Agency, "You Gotta Believe," (which has been particularly successful with the adoption of teenagers), delivered keynote speeches at the Community Awards Luncheon on November 14th.

On November 14th, the second annual Faith Based Brunch occurred. Flonzie Wright Brown, founder of "Yes We Care" faith based initiative in Montgomery County, was the guest speaker and shared practical advice on the building and strengthening of faith based partnerships. There were also three moving testimonials from clergy around the state regarding their personal experiences with adoption. Approximately 60 clergy and agency staff attended the brunch.

ODJFS ordered shipment of pens engraved with the AdoptOHIO logo. These pens will be used for as promotional items at the Ohio State Fair and during National Adoption Month.

Adoption Training:

Senate Bill 27 was introduced by Senator Mumper of the 124th General Assembly in January 2001. The Bill passed the Senate and House unanimously, was signed by Governor Taft on December 14, 2001 and became effective in March 2002.

Senate Bill 27 provides consistency in the law by giving adoptive parents the same rights as foster parents with regard to receiving background information prior to a child being placed in the home. The bill requires a public and private entity that places a child, to provide full disclosure to prospective adoptive parents about a child's prior adjudications and known acts of violence prior to the adoptive placement.

ODJFS convened a SB 27 Task Force composed of mental health professionals with expertise in evaluation of at-risk or special needs

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children, child welfare workers, and representatives of other organizations deemed appropriate. The SB 27 Task Force presented its findings and recommendations to the General Assembly in July 2002 and a follow-up report was provided to the General Assembly in December 2002.

As a part of SB 27 implementation, ODJFS and the Ohio Department of Mental Health (ODMH) collaborated to ensure Ohio's mental health providers were cognizant of best practices in adoption. In November 2002, ODJFS sponsored a one-day Mental Health Institute focusing upon adoption issues. ODJFS also held a Mental Health Institute workshop during the 2003 Adoption and Foster Care Conference. Over twenty (20) professionals attended the workshop and Suzanne Harvey, a practicing therapist at the Oakland Psychological Clinic in Southfield, Michigan, as well as a national trainer and consultant for Spaulding for Children, was the presenter.

In order to implement additional requirements of SB 27, the OAC adoption rules were revised to include information disclosure. The rules became effective on September 1, 2003 and statewide training was provided in the Summer and Fall of 2003.

ODJFS developed a standardized disclosure form, per Section 3107.017 of the Ohio Revised Code, and disseminated the form to the public and private adoption agencies during the Summer and Fall 2003 statewide training. ODJFS Adoption staff provides ongoing technical assistance to adoption agencies and other constituents.

Annual Adoption and Foster Care Conferences

In FFY 2000, ODJFS was unable to hold a statewide adoption and foster care training due to budget constraints.

In FFY 2001, ODJFS sponsored the Ohio Statewide Adoption and Foster Care Conference, *Permanency For All Children*, on November 2, 3, and 4, 2000. The participants had the opportunity to engage in a variety of workshops to explore current and emerging issues relevant to permanency for all of Ohio's waiting children. The conference was a forum for networking, brainstorming, sharing and learning from one another and from nationally recognized speakers. The conference either met or exceeded the attendees' expectations.

In FFY 2002, ODJFS co-sponsored the Child Welfare League (CWLA) National Child Day Care Conference, *Cleveland Rocks: The Times - They Are A Changin'*, on October 31, November 1 and 2, 2001. The purpose of the conference was to help child welfare professionals renew their vision, refresh their spirit, and sharpen their skills. Cutting-edge workshops, plenaries, and pre-conference sessions focused on the workforce crisis, visionary leadership, supporting caregivers, innovative collaborations, and juvenile justice issues in the Mid-West and beyond.

In FFY 2003, ODJFS sponsored the Ohio Statewide Adoption and Foster

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Care Conference, *Sharing Practices That Work*, held on November 14, 15 and 16, 2002. The attendees were given the opportunity to engage in a variety of workshops to explore current and emerging issues relevant to permanency for all of Ohio's waiting children. The conference held a forum for networking, brainstorming, sharing and learning from one another. Workshops were focused on adoption and foster care workers and emphasis was placed on families.

There were 400 attendees who participated in three plenary sessions and/or thirty-three specialized workshops. Some of the workshops addressed adoption assistance and home study process. The participants indicated they were exposed to new ideas, learned new skills and increased their commitment and motivation. They gained more insight on financial support, error reports and the importance of correct data entry. They also indicated better understanding of home studies and gained a lot of ideas for the interviewing process.

The conference allowed an opportunity to share and to learn how others have successfully and creatively overcome similar changes. The conference either met or exceeded expectations.

In FFY 2004, ODJFS sponsored the Ohio Statewide Adoption and Foster Care Conference, *Building Permanent Connections* that was held at the Radisson Hotel in Worthington, Ohio on November 13, 14 and 15, 2003. The conference was intended to give private and public agency professionals and adoption care advocates and families an opportunity to learn, to network and to share resources.

The conference planning committee consisted of child welfare consultants and various child welfare agency representatives. They organized 42 sessions covering topics from adoption laws to how to integrate art and music into the care of foster and adoptive children. Presenters ranged from social work and adoption professionals to hip-hop performers. Support for the conference was sought and received from several organizations. Donations were provided by the following: AdoptUSKids; Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption; Highlights for Children; Ohio Department of Job and Family Services; State Library of Ohio; and the Worthington Chamber of Commerce.

The conference was attended by 347 people. Of the 102 attendees who completed evaluations forms for the conference overall, 37 percent were foster or adoptive parents, 30 percent were adoption or foster care professionals working for the state or a public agency and 33 percent work for a private agency. The majority, 62 percent, had attended the conference in past years.

Conference attendees were asked to complete an evaluation form to assess the conference in each individual session attended. The attendees found the "Negotiating Adoption Subsidies" as the most valuable workshop.

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Foster and adoptive parents reported that they benefited most from workshops geared toward how better to deal with their children, doctors, agencies, courts and birth families. Professionals in the adoption and social work field reported that they benefited most from the recruitment, ethics and stress management workshops. Both families and professionals found the adoption and legal updates very informative.

The attendees were also asked to make suggestions for the next year's conference. Many topics were recommended for the 2004 conference. They also identified speakers they would like to see featured at future conferences.

The primary motivation for people to attend the conference was first, to be exposed to new ideas and second, to learn new skills. The conference either met or exceeded expectations for all but six or seven percent of the people attending.

Training on Adoption Related Ohio Administrative Code Rules

During FFY 2004, ODJFS developed and presented an Ohio statewide regional training on the revised adoption policies. The training was held at the different regional training sites: Hancock CDJFS, Central, Southwest, Southeast and Northcentral Ohio, on September 3 and 4, 2003. The training curriculum was designed to inform participants from all the PCSAs, PCPAs and PNAs in Ohio about the adoption rules changes, state and federal program updates and how these will affect the families and children we serve.

There were 309 attendees who represented PCSAs, PCPAs and PNAs in the field of protective, foster care and adoption, recruitment, subsidy and fiscal services. The attendees found the training to be very beneficial to them as learning the rules revisions will improve their knowledge in a more effective implementation of these rules in their day-to-day work with the children and families they serve.

Kinship Training

ODJFS sponsored a Statewide Kinship Navigator training on June 22, 2001. Sondra Jackson, nationally recognized for her work in kinship, conducted the training based on the kinship care curriculum she developed.

Training on Subsidies

ODJFS conducted statewide training on Title IV-E AA rule revisions to public and private child welfare agencies in FFY 2001 and again in FFY 2002.

In March and April 2001, ODJFS offered four separate trainings to public and private agencies regarding federal and state subsidy rules, including PASSS that were in effect at that time. More than 250 attended the training and the content was well received by all participants.

Training and the Provision of Technical Assistance on Multiethnic Placement Act (MEPA)

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ODJFS employs an unit comprised of a program administrator and several policy developers to address MEPA policy issues, monitor statewide compliance with MEPA and provide technical assistance and/or training relevant to state and federal requirements of MEPA.

The goal of the unit, since its inception in 2000, is to prevent loss of the IV-E funding by documenting efforts which ensure statewide compliance. One of the ways in which the unit accomplishes its goals is by providing training and technical assistance to county partners, and by serving as a clearinghouse for public and private agencies and other professionals engaged in the delivery of services to waiting children and adoptive and kinship families. The unit provides MEPA Training, TA and Policy Clarification to placement practitioners upon request, or as deemed feasible. Following, is a list of some of the training venues and activities the unit has participated in over the previous five years.

- In the year 2000, the unit received training from ODJFS attorneys in regards to MEPA and its impact in Ohio. Shortly after, the unit resumed monitor activities statewide.
- By 2001, for a 18-month period, MEPA staff were providing technical assistance and training to agencies as needed, upon request per agency or on a regional or statewide basis. Staff were involved in monthly regional exchanges and adoption meeting in the northeast, northwest and southern portions of Ohio. While on site visits to public children agencies for the purpose of monitoring MEPA, staff provided county specific technical assistance relevant to MEPA. Staff also participated in the rule training that involved revisions to the rules affected by MEPA. Staff also presented at the annual director's training conference.
- By 2002, staff had honed its MEPA training curriculum to include an overview of the federal laws, provisions and penalties of MEPA, and to include the state specific requirements for MEPA compliance in Ohio. During the summer of 2002, MEPA staff convened a three-hour training session on MEPA using the curriculum, before the North East Ohio Adoption Regional Exchange consortium. Over fifty adoption and placement professionals were in attendance.

During the fall, MEPA staff convened another three-hour training session at Richland County Children Services. Over thirty foster care, adoption and placement professionals were in attendance. Also, staff presented MEPA material at the OCF Statewide Managers' meeting on October 17, 2002. Nearly 150 workers, supervisors and or administrators were on hand for the training venue.

- As part of the 2002 Annual Foster Care and Adoption Conference, MEPA staff convened two training sessions at the 2002 Foster Care and Adoption Conference. The sessions covered the provisions of MEPA law in the areas of child placement and

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services to families. Hamilton County's MEPA Monitor and MEPA Investigator from the ODJFS' Bureau of Civil Rights were seated as panel members for the MEPA workshop.

- In 2003, MEPA staff were presenters at the Annual ODJFS' Directors Training Conference, in May. Staff co-presented a workshop on recruiting foster and adoptive parents along with a PCSA recruiter from one of Ohio's largest counties, and a recruiter from a PCPA involved in promoting community based promising practices in recruiting foster and adoptive families for children.
- Since the onset of the year 2004, MEPA staff, along with ODJFS Legal advisors presented a workshop at the statewide Civil Rights workshop on May 7, 2004. Target staff for the workshop were child welfare caseworkers, supervisors, administrators, adoption and foster care assessor, MEPA monitors and civil rights coordinators involved in either child placements, services to families, agency administration or recruitment.

Independent

Living:

Pursuant to Ohio Administrative code rules 5101:2-39-07 and 5101:2-42-19, independent living (IL) services are required for youth in the custody of a PCSA or private child placing agency (PCPA), and these services must be integrated into the youth's case plan. Administrative rules require that, through the case planning process, IL services be coordinated with other services that directly impact the case plan. This integration can include the youth's parent or guardian, the substitute caregiver, and various interdisciplinary service providers. All IL services provided to youth in care, and to emancipated young adults, must be entered into the Family and Children Services Information System (FACSIS).

IL funds are available for use by PCSAs based upon the number of children, 15 ½ years of age and older who are in substitute care in each county, as compared to the number of children in substitute care in the state. Refer to Section XIV, Page 117, Chafee Foster Care Independence Program and Education and Training Voucher Program for additional information regarding the CFCIP. Technical assistance is provided directly to agencies upon their request, by telephone or in person. Training opportunities have also been provided through quarterly managers meetings where the Chafee program and other independent living/transitional living issues have been discussed.

III TRAINING

ODJFS has continued to view training as an important component for effective child welfare practice. As major transformation has occurred in the field of child welfare, ODJFS has taken on a leadership role in the provision of training to PCSA staff. Recognizing the critical need for consistent standardized in-service training for child welfare professionals, ODJFS in collaboration with the Ohio Child Welfare Training Program (OCWTP) is in the process of reviewing and redesigning the standardized core training for caseworkers and supervisors. The redesign of the curricula is being done to assist in meeting the goals identified in Ohio's program improvement plan (PIP). This initiative was started in 2001, with the introduction of the child and family services review (CFSR) outcomes. In the first two years (2001-2003), the OCWTP conducted a statewide training assessment to: identify trends and conditions of Ohio's child welfare agencies and practices; and gain information to assist in the redesign of the core training program. To date, findings from the statewide training assessment and the OCWTP's Comprehensive Review of Core Curricula Report, the results from Child Protective Oversight Evaluation (CPOE) reviews and Ohio's Child and Family Services Review have been used to revise the core competencies to better address existing and emerging issues in child welfare practice with an emphasis on meeting the CFSR outcomes.

In July 2003, the revision of caseworker, supervisor/manager and family support worker competencies was completed. These competencies form the basis for the re-write of the OCWTP caseworker and supervisor/manager core curricula. The revised competencies reflect the latest best practice standards and emerging issues in child welfare. The competencies are more discrete, to allow staff members to precisely communicate their specific training needs. With the completion of the competencies, the OCWTP began re-design of the caseworker and supervisory core curricula in 2003, with completion expected in June of 2005. After completion of the re-design, implementation will begin in 2005, and continue through 2009. During this timeframe, additional work will also take place on system evaluation, training for foster caregivers, adoptive parents and expansion of the department's university partnership program. The mission of the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services and the Ohio Child Welfare Training Program is to provide a comprehensive, competency-based in-service training system that provides high quality, culturally responsive, family centered, job-related training for staff in public child welfare agencies throughout Ohio. The OCWTP is a model program that includes these essential elements:

Use of a "Universe of Competencies"

Competencies are statements of the knowledge, skills and values required for workers to do their jobs.

The Utilization of an Individual Training Needs Assessment Instrument (ITNA)

The (ITNA) is used to identify each worker's training needs. The Universe of Competencies and the ITNA forms the basis for curriculum development. ITNAs are completed jointly between caseworker and supervisor bi-annually at all public children services agencies.

The Development and Certification of Competent Trainers

OCWTP trainers must have appropriate course content knowledge. The necessary adult training skills and the ability to promote family-centered culturally competent practice.

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Development of Job-Related Training Content

Training content relevance is assured by using the OCWTP's "universe of competencies" as the guide to curriculum development.

The Utilization of Transfer of Learning (TOL) Activities

Transfer of learning activities promote the effective and continuing application, by trainees to their jobs, of the knowledge and skills gained in training.

A Statewide System for the Delivery of Training

Training is developed and delivered based upon data gathered from ongoing training needs assessment of workers in each region.

Core training for child welfare workers was also initiated in 1986. All Core workshops offered through the Ohio Child Welfare Training Program have standardized Ohio specific curricula. In 1987, ODJFS mandated, through Ohio Administrative Code rule, that all PCSA caseworkers complete a minimum of sixty hours of in-service training. Training requirements had to be fulfilled by taking courses offered through the Ohio Child Welfare Training Program.

The requirement was critical since the state wanted to implement standardization of practice across the state. Currently, Core involves a 15-day curriculum. The following workshops are mandated in Core: Legal Aspects of Family-Centered Child Protection Practice; Family-Centered Child Protective Services; Case Planning and Family-Centered Casework; Effects of Abuse and Neglect on Child Development and Separation, Placement and Reunification. To fulfill additional training hour requirements, caseworkers can attend the following specialized workshops: Adoption and Foster Care; Working with Adolescents; Sexual Abuse; Intake and the Assessment of Risk; Legal Issues in Child Welfare; Services to Single Parents; or Family-centered Assessment and Intervention. Caseworkers may elect to take the following related workshops: Treatment Strategies and Intervention, Family System Theory and Family Therapy; Casework with Children; Recognizing and Assessing Developmental Delay and Disability; Parenting Skills; Collaborative Interdisciplinary Services to Families; Cultural Competence; Adult Psycho pathology; Substance Abuse; Family Violence; Understanding Psychological Evaluations; Group Work Skills; Time and Stress Management: Personnel Safety; Human Sexuality; Writing Skills for Case Documentation; and Health and Medical Issues. Other specialized workshops are offered based on ITNA data.

In November 1997, H.B. 274 mandated caseworkers complete ninety hours of in-service training during the first year of employment and thirty-six hours of in-service training annually. Training topics were also identified in this bill.

In 1989, the program finalized competencies for child welfare supervisors and managers. Full implementation occurred in 1990. "Core" courses currently offered to supervisors and managers include: Managing within a Child and Family Serving System; Managing Work Through Other People: Diversity in the Work Place; Transfer of Learning: The Supervisor's Role in Developing Staff; and Supervising and Managing Group Performance: Developing Productive Work Teams. Specialized courses for supervisors and managers include: Supervising Case Plan Development and Implementation; Supervising Sexual Abuse

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Services; Supervising Services to Adolescents; Supervising Adoption and Foster Care Services; Supervising Intake, Risk Assessment, and Initial Family Assessments; Supervising In-Home Family Services; and Legal Issues in Child Welfare. Related workshops offered include: Planning and Decision-Making; Effective Use of Power; Supervising for Optimal Job Performance; Employee Performance Evaluation; Management of Conflict; Public and Community Relations; Time and Stress Management; Team Development and Facilitation; Budgeting and Fiscal Operation; Staffing the Agency; Supervising Difficult Employees; Managing Change; and Managing Cultural Diversity.

Based upon ITNA data other workshops are offered to supervisors and managers. H.B. 274 required supervisors to complete sixty hours of in-service training during their first year as a half as a supervisor and 30 hours of in-service training thereafter.

From 1994 to present, 174,018 caseworkers participated in workshops offered by the Ohio Child Welfare Training Program. A total of 633,492 training hours were provided. From 1994 to the present there were 12,556 supervisory participants with 89,552 hours of training provided. The following table presents information on caseworker and supervisory training by year.

CASEWORKER AND SUPERVISOR TRAINING					
YEAR	Total Number of Workshops Presented	Caseworker Training Participants	Caseworkers Trained	Supervisors Training Participants	Supervisors Trained
July 1, 1994 - June 30, 1995	1434	10,906	2,837	1,544	449
July 1, 1995 - June 30, 1996	1,568	11,461	2,962	1,436	472
July 1, 1996- June 30, 1997	1,921	16,570	3,568	2,440	575
July 1, 1997- June 30, 1998	1,590	14,070	3,585	1,741	544
July 1, 1998 - June 30, 1999	1,316	10,171	3,210	1,339	492
July 1, 1999 - March 31, 2000	1,180	21,636	4,629	1,097	630
July 1, 2000 - April 30, 2001	1,187	23,450	3,837	1,126	695
July 1, 2001- May 31, 2002	1,377	23,855	3,406	922	412
June 1, 2002 - May 1, 2003	1,686	28,514	3,797	1,448	557
July 1, 2003 – May 31, 2004	1,990	28,939	3,548	1,511	559

Child welfare practice in Ohio has undergone multiple changes since the inception of the OCWTP in 1986. Since that time, those involved in the OCWTP have recognized the need

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for institutionalization of a continuous cycle of assessment, planning, implementation, and evaluation.

This cycle is necessary for the OCWTP to ensure relevance of training to practice and to ensure the training program assists agencies in achieving the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) child and family services outcomes.

The OCWTP has taken on that challenge and as mentioned above, conducted a comprehensive training needs assessment. This assessment along with other factors has helped to determine the accuracy in which the OCWTP's Universe of Competencies reflects the knowledge and skills needed to meet the needs of families and children today. In addition, this will help Ohio achieve the outcomes and systematic factors required in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Child and Family Services Review.

The assessment also helped to identify the extent to which OCWTP products coincide with the learning styles of today's child welfare professionals. Once the assessment data had been obtained, OCWTP had the necessary information to revise, edit and/or add/delete competencies from the current listing of competencies. Based upon the new listing of competencies, learning styles, and other information obtained as a result of the training needs assessment, caseworker and supervisory core will be edited, enhanced and restructured to include specific information related to the outcomes of the child and family services review as well as information that will put more emphasis on skill building techniques in the supervisor core curriculum. The timeframe for the total completion of the revamp of both the caseworker and supervisor core curricula will be two years (End of the current contract 2005).

In 1996, as a result of House Bill 419, all workers engaged in the provision of adoption services were required to be certified as adoption assessors and participate in mandatory training offered by ODJFS. In March 1996, the following workshops were offered for adoption assessors to complete Tier I Adoption Assessor Training: Birth Parent Services; Family and Child Assessment; Placement Activities; Pre-finalization Adoption Services; Adoption Assistance; and Post-finalization Adoption Services. Adoption Assessors had to complete the following workshops in Tier II: Permanency thru Interagency Collaboration; Cultural Issues in Permanency Planning; Openness in Adoption; and Gathering and Documenting Background Information. From March 1, 1996 to May 1, 2004 a total 1,670 workshops have been offered. Thirty-two thousand sixty-one (32,061) participants attended training. Fifty percent (50%) were from private adoption agencies. During the current contract period, three additional curricula in the area of post-finalization have been developed and will be available to adoptive parents during the program's next contract period.

The following table presents information on the number of workshops offered, hours of training and total number of participants who have attended adoption assessors training.

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ADOPTION ASSESSOR TRAINING - TIER I			
Workshop	Total # of Workshops	Total # of Participants	Total Hours of Training
Birth Parent Services	176	3,480	1,092
Family and Child Assessment	187	3,600	2,181
Placement Strategies	168	3,454	513
Pre-finalization Adoption Services	176	3,599	1,048
Adoption Assistance	162	3,490	488
Post-finalization Adoption Services	164	3,350	931

ADOPTION ASSESSOR TRAINING - TIER II			
Workshop	Total # of Workshops	Total # of Participants	Total Hours of Training
Permanency thru Interagency Collaboration	210	4,104	1,092
Cultural Issues in Permanency Planning	150	2,416	1,743
Openness in Adoption	143	2,340	1,677
Gathering and Documenting Background Information	134	2,228	798

As a result of House Bill 95 of the 125th Ohio General Assembly, the Ohio Child Welfare Training Program was given the responsibility for the development of workshops designed to meet the training needs of foster caregivers/kinship caregivers through OCWTP's regional training centers. Training through the OCWTP for this population began January 1, 2004. By law, all new family foster caregivers are mandated to take the following preplacement training courses: The legal rights and responsibilities of foster caregivers; Agencies' policies and procedures regarding foster caregivers; ODJFS requirements for certifying foster homes; the effects of placement, separation and attachment issues on children, their families and foster caregivers; substance abuse and dependency; symptoms of mental illness and learning disorders; and developmentally appropriate activities for children. Tracking of training courses for foster caregivers will be done through the Foster Caregiver Recording Educational Database (FRED).

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The OCWTP continues to offer an Investigative Mentoring Program for Ohio Prosecutors, law enforcement officers and child welfare professionals.

Other states and Canadian provinces have modeled their child welfare training program after Ohio's training model. The following states and provinces developed their training system based upon the OCWTP model: Pennsylvania; Arizona; Alaska; Nevada; New Hampshire; Virginia; Oklahoma; select counties in California; New Mexico; Minnesota; Indiana; Wisconsin; Manitoba, Canada; Ontario, Canada; New Brunswick, Canada; Newfoundland, Canada; Quebec, Canada; Buffalo, New York; and the Cayman Islands. As a result of other states and provinces using the OCWTP model as the basis for their training system, Ohio has benefited from other states enhancements to the curriculum.

Training activities which will be cost allocated to Title IV-E, has been attached as an Appendix.

IV QUALITY ASSURANCE AND EVALUATION

The Child Protection and Oversight Evaluation (CPOE) quality assurance system was based on modern quality methods, such as continuous quality improvement and the incorporation of automated child welfare process and outcome measures. The system was designed to improve the services and outcomes for families and children coming to the attention of PCSAs. It focuses on key delivery processes and essential client outcomes within a continuous quality improvement framework. Improvement opportunities for the PCSAs were supported through the provision of technical assistance by ODJFS staff.

Critical operative concepts of CPOE include regular data collection, analysis and verification, and continuous feedback. On-site activities focus on data validation, outcome indicator discussions and other review activities. Initial discussion with key county personnel focuses on exploring the factors that contribute to and explain the measures in each county. It was anticipated that in addition to ongoing data reports, management letters, correspondence, and formal on-site joint assessment activities, ODJFS staff will periodically meet with county staff to offer technical assistance and solve challenging service delivery issues.

The effectiveness of these activities was critical to the overall quality improvement of the statewide child protection system. Application of these findings within the ODJFS program/policy areas was necessary for planning, training, budgeting, and technical assistance.

Each review period was known as a Stage and the review period was for 18 months. The following CPOE Stage reviews were completed during the past five years:

Stage 2	1/1/99-6/30/00
Stage 3	7/1/00-12/31/01
Stage 4	1/1/02-6/30/03
Stage 5	7/1/03-12/31/04

QUALITY IMPROVEMENT PLANS (QIPS)

In response to the on-site CPOE review, QIPs were required to indicate each PCSA's planned course of action to effect positive change in their agency during the 18-month period between formal CPOE on-site reviews. The QIP indicates:

- Desired change or outcome;
- Activities to be done to effect the desired change or outcome;
- Staff responsible for the stated activities;
- Level of anticipated or requested technical assistance from ODJFS to help achieve the desired change or outcome;
- Anticipated time frames for implementing the stated activities.

CPOE STAGE TWO REVIEW COMPONENTS

The CPOE Stage Two review components comprised a review of basic Health and Safety Issues and a qualitative review of initial Family Risk Assessment Matrixes compared against the Field Guide.

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Outcome Indicators Reviewed:

Emergency Assessments initiated within one hour of notification. This measure demonstrated the number and percentage of all incidents and emergency incidents in a given six month time frame that had an assessment initiated and those whose assessment was initiated within 1 hour.

Receipt of subsequent CAN report with case resolution or disposition. This measure examined the extent of repeat case resolution or dispositions for child abuse and/or neglect reports on a six month cohort of children across a period of four years.

Proportion of CAN cases where children are removed from their homes. This measure indicated the percentage of children who were not able to remain in their current environment given a report for investigation.

Number of days a child remains in out of home placement. This measure illustrated the length of stay for groups of children who enter an out-of-home placement.

Number of moves a child experiences in an out of home placement episode. This measure demonstrated a break down of the number of moves children experience by examining all children entering a placement episode during a given time period.

Length of time between the date of PC and the date of the adoptive placement agreement. These measures examined the length of time from a child entering Permanent Custody status and the point of being placed in an adoptive placement (or removal from permanent custody status).

Data Validation

To measure the accuracy of the data entered into the Family and Children Services Information System (FACSIS), data validation activities between the case record and the local FACSIS system were examined. Information on the events/activities used to derive the indicator measurements is compared between FACSIS and each selected sample case. Two discrete samples, an intake/investigation sample and a placement sample, were pulled to encompass the FACSIS events. The compliance rate was 90% or greater for each element.

Quality Improvement Plans

The QIP process had been reviewed to make the process a more useful tool that agencies could use for long-range strategic planning.

CPOE STAGE THREE REVIEW COMPONENTS

For Stage Three, the department began aligning requirements of the Child and Family Service Reviews (CFSR) with the CPOE Quality Assurance System. The CFSR was the most current method for evaluating outcome measures and practice. Outcome indicators prescribed by the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) were incorporated into our Stage Three review and the indicators became our core review indicators for our Stage Four review.

Outcome Indicators Reviewed:

Investigations completed within 30 and 45 days. Child and abuse reports are expected to be investigated within 30 days of receipt of a report. Extenuating circumstances may extend this time frame by an additional 15 days.

Proportion of CAN cases where children are removed from their homes. This measure indicated the percentage of children who were not able to remain in their current environment given a report for investigation.

Number of days a child remains in Temporary Custody. This measure illustrated the length of time in temporary custody status for groups of children who enter such status.

Number of moves a child experiences in an out of home placement episode. This measure

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demonstrated a break down of the number of moves children experience by examining all children entering a placement episode during a given time period.

Number of times a child is removed from his/her home. This measure indicated the number of removals children experience by examining all children entering a placement episode during a given time period.

Length of time in placement before entering permanent custody. This measure examined the length of time from a child's removal from home until the beginning of permanent custody.

Data Validation

To measure the accuracy of the data entered into the Family and Children Services Information System (FACSIS), data validation activities between the case record and the local FACSIS system were examined. Information on the events/activities used to derive the indicator measurements was compared between FACSIS and each selected sample case. Two discrete samples, an intake/investigation sample and a placement sample, are pulled to encompass the FACSIS events. The compliance rate was 90% or greater for each element.

Quality Improvement Plans

Quality Improvement Plans were required for items determined by the reviewer as needing improvement.

CPOE STAGE FOUR AND STAGE FIVE REVIEW COMPONENTS

Outcome Indicators Reviewed:

Two performance indicators were assessed to evaluate achievement of the Child Safety Outcome and four performance indicators were assessed during the reviews to evaluate achievement of the Permanency Outcome. The outcome indicators for the Stage Four and Five reviews were as follows:

Investigations completed within 30 and 45 days. Child and abuse reports were expected to be investigated within 30 days of receipt of a report. Extenuating circumstances may extend this time frame by an additional 15 days. A county would be in substantial conformity with this indicator if 85% of child abuse and neglect reports received during the period under review were investigated within 45 days of receipt of the report. This indicator was used only for Stage Four. For Stage Five, this indicator was replaced by Indicator 2D, which measures recidivism of substantiated and indicated CA/N reports on a 6 month cohort of children. The remaining indicators were the same for Stage Five except the indicators were measured against the national standard.

Incidence of reports of CA/N while in substitute care. A county was in substantial conformity with this indicator if, of all children in foster care during the period of review, the percentage of children who were the subject of a substantiated or indicated report of child abuse or neglect by a foster parent or facility staff is 0.57% or less.

Stability of foster care placements. A county was in substantial conformity with this indicator if 85% or more for Stage Four and 86.7% or more for Stage Five of the children who have been in foster care less than 12 months from the time of the latest removal had no more than two placement settings.

Foster care re-entries. A county was in substantial conformity with this indicator if, of all children who entered foster care during the year under review, 12% or fewer for Stage Four and 8.6% or fewer for Stage Five of those children re-entered foster care within 12 months of a prior foster care episode.

Length of time to achieve reunification. A county was in substantial conformity with this indicator if, of all children who were reunified with their parents or caretakers at the time of discharge from foster care, 76.2% or more children were reunified in less than 12 months from the time of the latest removal from the home.

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Length of time to achieve adoption. A county was in substantial conformity with this indicator if, of all children who exited foster care during the year under review to a finalized adoption, 27% or more for Stage Four and 32% for Stage Five of the children exited care in less than 24 months from the time of the latest removal from their home.

Data Validation

To measure the accuracy of the data entered into the Family and Children Services Information System (FACSIS), data validation activities between the case record and the local FACSIS system were examined. Information on the events/activities used to derive the indicator measurements was compared between FACSIS and each selected sample case. Two discrete samples, an intake/investigation sample and a placement sample, were pulled to encompass the FACSIS events. The compliance rate was 90% or greater for each element.

Case Record Review

A review of case records was completed, to ensure compliance with Ohio Administrative Code (OAC) rules and federal requirements. The expected level of rule compliance was 75% or greater for Stage Four and 90% or greater for Stage Five, for each rule reviewed. A Quality Improvement Plan was required for any rule that was less than the compliant rate. The case record review components were as follows:

- *Assessment/Investigation* - The Assessment/Investigation Case Record review had 16 review elements;
- *Substitute Care* - The Substitute Care Case Record review had 45 review elements for Stage Four and 55 review elements for Stage Five. (Stage Four included a Multi-Ethnic Placement Act (MEPA) review component. A MEPA review continued to be conducted by another bureau within ODJFS). This review looked at the Case Plan, Health and Education information, Visitation, Independent Living and SARs. Stage Five had a more in-depth look at Visitation and Health and Education Information;
- *Adoption* - The Adoption Case Record review had 10 review elements. (Stage Four included a MEPA component and Stage Five did not);

In addition to the above, Stage Five added the following additional components:

- *In-Home Supportive Service for Protective Supervision and for No Court Order* - This review looked at the Case Plan, Visitation, SARs and Protective Supervision Extension/termination;
- *Supportive Service Tracking Sheet* - This looked at the services planned or provided and problems and outcomes identified;
- *Screening Procedure Review* - This instrument gathered information regarding the county's screening procedures. (This instrument was not meant to evaluate those procedures);
- *Guided Outcome Indicator Discussion Questionnaire* - A questionnaire was developed to help guide the outcome indicator discussion to focus in on specific Child and Family Service Reviews/Program Improvement Plan (CFSR/PIP) concerns.

Quality Improvement Plans

During Stage Four, QIPs were required from PCSAs for each outcome indicator that did not meet Ohio's Substantial Conformity Standard. For some outcome indicators the national standards established by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services were used to measure Ohio's performance for the outcome indicator. For Stage Five the national standard was used for measuring compliance for all outcome indicators.

V MANAGEMENT INFORMATION SYSTEMS

Progress/Accomplishments:

- SACWIS Interim Solution (SIS) implemented in 82 Micro FACSIS counties;
- Maintain SIS helpdesk to resolve county issues and identify Task Incident Reporting (TIR) for SIS resolution;
- Provide on-site county technical assistance as necessary;
- Release Report Generator;
- Completed SIS implementation survey of counties;
- Developed SIS Report Generator for counties; and
- SACWIS vendor recommended.

Upcoming Activities:

- Continue project support for SAWCIS Interim Solution (SIS);
- Project Kick-off meeting with vendor;
- Execute SACWIS project management plan;
- Statewide Implementation;
- Obtain Federal Approval; and
- Complete post implementation.

SACWIS Interim Solution (SIS)

In FFY 03 SIS was developed by blending the Family Assessment and Planning Tool (FAPT) software and all functionality that existed in the legacy Micro FACSIS application. Conversion, training and implementation of SIS was complete in all 82 Micro FACSIS counties by November 03. The remaining six counties maintain their own locally developed systems, because SIS is optional. This system supports the readiness of both the state and caseworker staff for SACWIS.

The SIS helpdesk has proven valuable in identifying issues with system performance and business rules. The Helpdesk is staffed by Business Analyst's who work closely with Programmer Analysts for resolution of each of the issues. Task Incident Reporting (TIRs) are often identified through the Helpdesk. New SIS builds may result from the identification of the TIRs. In addition, on-site technical assistance is available to counties at their request.

In December 03 an SIS Integration survey was sent to all county's that implemented SIS. The purpose of the survey is to ensure consumer satisfaction. The survey addressed issues regarding the county's SIS implementation such as communications between the State Business Analyst and the county agency, training received on the application, friendliness of on-site staff on the day of implementation and the implementation process itself. The results are currently being analyzed and will be utilized as lessons learned for the SACWIS project.

Report generator is a tool that was developed to allow users to create individualized reports using information related to specific Client, Families and Resources according to the user selected criteria. Report generator allows more flexibility to address the individual needs of their agencies, including the ability to report on data from agency defined events.

SIS will continue to operate in 82 micro FACSIS counties until SACWIS is deployed to each county site. Support by project staff will continue through help desk efforts and technical assistance.

SACWIS

Approval of Ohio's IAPD was received from Administration of Children and Families (ACF). Project staff has proceeded to secure a purchase order to initiate the SACWIS contract with vendor. The recommended vendor for the SACWIS project is Dynamics Research Corporation (DRC).

ODJFS is committed to the implementation of Ohio's SACWIS and has dedicated business and MIS staff assigned to the project who understand the need to work closely and harmoniously with the contractor. The overall success of the Project will depend on the development of a close working relationship including ongoing communications at all levels between the Contractor and State.

The project management team is comprised of State and Contract staff. They are responsible for assuring that Ohio's SACWIS project is effectively coordinated in order to achieve the identified deliverables.

Project management activities encompass a broad range of project planning (e.g., Integrations Management, Communications Management, Scope Management, Time Management, Quality Management, Cost Management, Risk Management, Configuration Management), occurring at project initiation through post implementation support.

A contract kick-off meeting will be held for the full State and Contractor project team to formally announce project initiation. The meeting will address the responsibilities of the contractor and working relationships and interactions among the contractor and state staff. The contractor will present and review the updated project work plan, project schedule, project methodology and documentation standards.

Seven separate project tasks will commence at contract kick-off inclusive of: project management, change management, system analysis & design, conversion, system development, system testing and training. Each of these tasks or project phases are detailed in a project schedule using Microsoft Project 2002.

The approach to deliver a single, complete release of Ohio SACWIS includes the following:

- Complete release of Ohio SACWIS to a pilot county within eighteen (18) months;
- Ninety day implementation pilot; and
- Statewide implementation within eight (8) months.

Upon the successful implementation of Ohio SACWIS, the state will submit Ohio's SACWIS for federal approval. Following the state's acceptance of the final Ohio SACWIS implementation report, Contract staff will assist the State Project team with the provision of post implementation support for twelve months. Prior to the end of the mandatory post implementation period, the state may elect the option to extend the post implementation support period for an addition twelve months.

VI ADDITIONAL STATE INITIATIVES TOWARD MEETING GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Other initiatives undertaken by ODJFS, other state departments, and the Public Children Services Association of Ohio (PCSAO) have assisted ODJFS in achieving the **CFSP goals and objectives**.

Help Me

Grow:

Beginning in SFY 2002 three separate early childhood initiatives were merged into one comprehensive program called Help Me Grow (HMG). The Help Me Grow program is a collaborative effort between ODJFS and the Ohio Department of Health, Ohio Family & Children First, and the Ohio Department of MR/DD and was administered at the local level by the Family & Children First Council.

The purpose of HMG was to strengthen Ohio's investment in prevention and early intervention by identifying and supporting infants and toddlers who are at-risk of child abuse/neglect or developmental delay. The target populations are pregnant women and children under the age of three. Program components included: prenatal and newborn home visits, home visiting services to assist for risk factors and developmental delays, and on-going intervention to address risk factors and developmental delays.

To enhance efficiency and administrative consistency, all programs, which were supported by TANF funds, were centralized in the Office of Family Stability at the beginning of SFY 2003. The Office for Children and Families no longer has responsibility for the Help me Grow prenatal, newborn and early childhood program.

While the Office of Children and Families is no longer responsible for the specific programs mentioned above, OCF still collaborates by responding to calls made to the Help Me Grow Hotline. Clients may call the Hotline and access the menu option for foster care and adoption. Constituents are directed to contact their local county children service agencies for general information regarding foster care and adoption.

**Family-
Center,
Neighborhood-
Based**

Services:

The family-centered, neighborhood based philosophy is practiced throughout the state. This practice, introduced in Ohio by Anne E. Casey, is based on the principle that the first and greatest investment in time and resources should be made in the care and treatment of children in their own homes and, when this is not possible, in their own communities.

Formally, counties across Ohio began participating in the Family to Family

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Initiative in 1993. This approach focused on developing family-centered, neighborhood based services and supports for birth and foster parents. ODJFS had partnered with PCSAO (Public Children Service Association) by supporting and providing technical assistance with their efforts to integrate Family-to Family.

Counties focused on connecting families to their communities, working closely with relatives and other kin, and getting services into homes to strengthen families (whether birth, kin, foster or adoptive.)

Based on this premise and effort to support placing children with relative/nonrelative or kin when appropriate, in March of 2003, ODJFS revised rule 5101:2-42-18 "PCSA and PCPA approval of placements with relative and nonrelative substitute caregivers" (see appendix). This revised rule allows PCSAs and PCPAs to make placements of children with relatives and nonrelatives who do not choose to become licensed as foster homes. This rule allows the flexibility of considering other family members or kin when placing children as long as the placement is safe and appropriate, and that the relative or nonrelative has the ability and the willingness to properly care for the child.

The family centered, neighborhood based philosophy has also been supported through the ProtectOhio waiver. For the past five years, this waiver has allowed counties to use federal dollars to provide support services to families in their communities in an effort to minimize over-dependence on foster care. These federal funds were effectively used to provide services to prevent some out-of-home placements, support relative caregivers, return children home faster and support families once they reunify.

The family centered, neighborhood based philosophy has been introduced in the core curriculum for child welfare workers and is recognized throughout Ohio as a best practice.

FCNB has assisted the state in accomplishing **Goals 2 and 3 of the CFSP**.

**Children's
Trust
Fund:**

The Mission of The Ohio Children's Trust Fund is to take a leadership role and be a catalyst in preventing child abuse and neglect in Ohio. The Ohio Children's Trust Fund (OCTF) is the state's largest dedicated funding source for primary and secondary child abuse/ neglect prevention. The Trust Fund is governed by a Board, which formulates policy and develops a comprehensive biennial State Plan for child abuse/ neglect prevention. The OCTF Executive Director and staff, carry out day-to-day operations within the administrative structure of ODJFS.

OCTF allocates funding for local programs to prevent child abuse and

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neglect across Ohio's 88 counties. Each county's allocation amount is based on its percentage of the state child population under age 18, with the minimum allocation being \$10,000.

On a biennial basis, county-level Prevention Boards are responsible for assessing and prioritizing local prevention needs, issuing an RFA (Request For Applications), and selecting programs which can best address the identified priorities. The Local Prevention Boards also have responsibility for monitoring service provision, individual outcomes, customer satisfaction, and fiscal accountability. State-level OCTF staff provide oversight, training and technical assistance to the Local Boards.

In addition to the county allocations, OCTF also funds programs, which have statewide significance. During the past year, the Children's Trust Fund awarded a grant to Parents Anonymous for support and education groups with parents incarcerated in seven Ohio prisons.

Through its funding and oversight of programs to prevent child abuse and neglect, OCTF assists The Ohio Department of Job & Family Services (ODJFS) toward achievement of **Goal 1 of the CFSP**.

PCSAO:

The Public Children Services Association of Ohio (PCSAO) was established in 1980. PCSAO is a strong advocacy group for PCSAs and Ohio's children and families. Since its existence, PCSAO has collaborated with the state in developing the Child Welfare Training Program and other legislative and program initiatives. During the past years PCSAO has provided orientation for new executives of county PCSAs; facilitated the development of county strategic plans; expanded the Family-to-Family Initiative; provided on-site training focusing on governance and effective, appropriate duties of the board and executive; developed the Executive Leadership Institute; worked with individual counties on levy campaign development and implementation; worked with Attorney General Montgomery to develop "Risking Up and Moving on Recognition" programs; supported ODJFS' Child Welfare Reform Shareholders Group recommendations; instrumental in the passage of House Bill 484, Ohio's companion legislation for ASFA and mentoring programs at the neighborhood level; received the Congressional appropriation to develop state infrastructure for the purpose of connecting state and local child welfare agencies to increase child safety; championed passage of H.B. 332 (Foster Parent Training) and H.B. 448 (Fiscal Accountability, Child Death Review, OCWTP) ; supported Ohio's Kinship Navigator program, standardized placement approval process, national advocacy for federal support of relative caregivers; assisted OCF with the Federal Title IV-E Eligibility Reviews, the Federal Child and Family Services Reviews, and development of the Program Improvement Plan; and provided on-site consultation in a variety of areas. PCSAO has been

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instrumental in assisting the state in **achieving all CFSP goals and objectives.**

Access To Better Care (ABC):

The *Access to Better Care (ABC)* project was convened by the Public Children's Services Agency of Ohio (PCSAO) in the fall of 2003 and is currently being promoted by the Governor to specifically address behavioral health care programming issues. Partners in this effort include: ODJFS (Office of Ohio Health Plans, Office for Children and Families, and the Directors' Office), the Ohio Department of Mental Health, the Ohio Department of Health, the Ohio Department of Education, the Ohio Department of Alcohol and Drug Addiction Services, the Ohio Department of Youth Services, the Ohio Department of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities, Ohio Family and Children First, PCSAO, the Association of County Behavioral Health Providers, the Ohio Federation for Children's Mental Health, the Ohio Citizen Advocates for Chemical Dependency Prevention and Treatment, and the Center for Innovative Practice. The goals of this group are to: define needed services throughout the State by specific population groups; develop coordinated funding mechanisms among the child serving departments; and to promote effective, research-based interventions.

Intensive Home & Community Based Services:

The establishment of *Intensive Home and Community-Based Services* is currently being undertaken by ODJFS and the Ohio Department of Mental Health. An amendment to Ohio's Health Plan will be sought to enable the provision of Medicaid - reimbursable bundled mental health services that can be provided in the child's natural environment. The goal of this project is to increase the availability of local, holistic services which can be tailored to better address the unique needs of each family.

Networks for School Success

ODJFS is working with the Ohio Department of Education and the Ohio Department of Mental Health to promote the expansion of school-based mental health services via the *Shared Agenda and Mental Health Networks for School Success* projects. In addition, ODJFS is working with the Ohio Department of Mental Health and other partners to improve the provision of services to the 0-6 years of age population. The *Early Childhood Mental Health Initiative* is designed to promote healthy child social-emotional development, improve the detection of mental health problems, and provide necessary early intervention programming in a timely manner.

Health Partnership

ODJFS is working with the Ohio Department of Health to increase utilization of public health care services by families involved in the child welfare

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system. The goal of improving accessibility to oral health care is being particularly targeted in these efforts.

Family &

Children First: As was mentioned in the beginning of this report, the activities identified and implemented in Ohio's CFSP were guided in part by the principles of Ohio's Family and Children First (OFCF). Created in 1992 the OFCF Initiative is a multi-agency "umbrella" effort to focus a diverse group of agencies (Ohio Department of Education, Ohio Department of Health, Ohio Department of Alcohol and Drug Addiction Services, Ohio Department of Budget and Management, ODJFS, Ohio Department of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities, and Ohio Department of Youth Services) on achieving better results for children and their families. The goal of the OFCF Initiative is to ensure that all Ohio children enter school ready to learn. There are six key objectives: 1) Expectant parents and newborns thrive; 2) Infants and toddlers thrive; 3) Children are ready for school; 4) Children and youth succeed in school; 5) Youth choose healthy behaviors; and, 6) Youth successfully transition into adulthood.

OFCF has promoted coordination and collaboration among state and local governments, non-profit organizations, businesses, and parents for the benefit of Ohio's children. Key strategies which are used include the following: strategically investing in children; adopting measurable goals and objectives; committing to prevention and early intervention; promoting local flexibility and streamlined bureaucracy; creating new partnerships; and providing intensive technical assistance.

All counties have local Family and Children First Councils. Family members (consumers), representatives of public agencies, schools, courts, and private providers are included in their membership. Regional coordinators work directly with local councils to provide technical assistance.

H.B.274 of the 119th General Assembly, required councils to develop a county service coordination plan that contains procedures designating service responsibilities among the various state and local agencies that provide services to children and their families, and a dispute resolution process that is local and binding to resolve service disputes between those agencies. Disputes between agencies may ultimately go before the court for final resolution.

H. B. 57 of the 124th General Assembly signed into law on November 20, 2001, went into effect February 20, 2002. This legislation requires the local Family and Children First Council members to amend their joint service coordination plans and address the service needs of children who are unruly, alleged unruly and at risk of being unruly and include a method to

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divert these children from the juvenile court system.

OFCF has been instrumental in assisting the state in **achieving all CFSP goals and objectives.**

VII UPDATE ON DILIGENT RECRUITMENT OF POTENTIAL FOSTER AND ADOPTIVE FAMILIES THAT REFLECTS THE ETHNIC AND RACIAL DIVERSITY OF CHILDREN OF OHIO

Foster:

Ohio's continued effort in diverting children from placement and maintaining children safely in their own homes when appropriate is the philosophy that has been carried throughout the state.

Recruitment for resource families primarily occurs at the local level by PCSAs or PCPAs. Ohio Administrative Code (OAC) Rule 5101:2-5-13 Required Agency Policy (see appendix) to develop written policies which describe strategies for foster caregiver and adoptive parent recruitment. All recruitment plans are reviewed by ODJFS' district offices.

ODJFS statewide recruitment effort is underway in collaboration with Adopt U.S. Kids. In 2004, the Department agreed to partner with the Adopt US Kids initiative to increase the resource families available for children and to promote permanency. The first strategic planning session was held on March 17 and March 18 of 2004 in partnership with the Ohio's major metropolitan counties. These counties have the largest number of children in custody. The Department, as well as each county represented, developed goals to begin working toward retaining existing foster families and diligently recruiting new foster families. The goals such as increasing the stability of children in foster care placements and preserving connections and relative placements are congruent with ODJFS' commitments in its Program Improvement Plan developed in response to its Child and Family Services Review.

Ohio, in its commitment to the recruitment of resource families to meet the needs of children in care, has and will continue to support local agencies in their efforts and ensure agencies are complying with state and federal laws and regulations. This is realized through the development of statewide policy in the form of administrative rules, and guidance letters monitoring for compliance and ongoing technical assistance.

OAC 5101:2-42-18 "PCSA and PCPA approval of placements with relative and nonrelative substitute caregivers" (see appendix) was revised to allow PCSA's and PCPA's to make placements of children with relatives and nonrelatives who do not choose to become licensed as foster homes provided that there are certain safety assurances. The revision of this rule is in keeping with Ohio's commitment to preserve family and kinship connections.

A guidance letter (see appendix) containing background information regarding the Indian Child Welfare Act and a protocol for contacting Tribal representatives was drafted and a statewide videoconference for local public and private children services agencies was held in April 2004 in collaboration with the National Indian Child Welfare Association. The Department will be following up with an analysis of its statewide data to

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determine the number of children identified as having Indian heritage and will continue to provide any needed technical assistance to counties in complying with the Act.

In addition to policy development and provisions of training, ODJFS has annually provided public awareness materials to local agencies to supplement their efforts to recruit Resource families during May, which is Foster Care Month.

Finally, the commitment is realized through the support of training to resource families. Foster and adoptive families continue to need training and support to be able to provide appropriate services to the children in their care, particularly those with serious emotional or behavior problems. Training and educational opportunities were provided to foster families to enhance the skills to meet the needs of children as away of preventing placement moves and retaining families. ODJFS contracted with the Ohio Family Care Association, a specialized organization consisting of child welfare professionals as well as foster-to-adoptive, respite, kin and adoptive families to provide continuing education conferences on an annual basis to resource families. Throughout the years this organization has been able to provide families with training, education and information that enhances the skill level of those that have children placed in their care.

ODJFS continues to utilize Ohio's "Help Me Grow" program, to promote prevention and early intervention to infants and toddlers at risk of child abuse or neglect or developmental delays. "Help me Grow" is a communication umbrella for foster care and adoption information and public awareness. This initiative was organized in February 1995 by the Ohio Family and Children First Initiative, in consultation with ODJFS, the Ohio Department of Health, and the state's health care, public health, social services, and business communities. Help me Grow's statewide toll-free helpline responds to inquiries for information on health and social programs, including foster parenting and adoption. The helpline's trained referral specialists provide personal assistance and referral packets to callers within their own communities.

Adoptive:

According to the CFSR, Ohio does not conform to the federal diligent recruitment requirements, as Ohio's statewide pool of foster and adoptive families do not reflect the ethnic and racial diversity of the children for whom homes are needed. Data indicates that the majority of waiting children are of African American descent, older, and/or part of a large sibling group. In comparison, the statewide pool of foster and adoptive consists of a significant percentage of prospective adoptive parents of the Caucasian descent, with a preference to parent a Caucasian child with no perceived special needs, such as white infant or an international child. Of the remaining, race data was missing for a large percentage of approved applicants and/or adoptive parents contained in the overall pool.

A portion of this disparity involves data that has not been updated. One of ODJFS' action steps in the PIP is to "Implement procedures to better assure FACSIS information regarding resource families is accurate and up-to-

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date.”

On January 14, 2004, a report was developed and distributed to PCSAs and private child placing agencies (PCPA) which contained a listing of all open adoptive family resources in FACSIS. PCSAs were instructed to enter the FACSIS Event 760: Close Adoptive Home to remove families who were no longer active with the agency

Assuring the accuracy of adoptive family data will increase ODJFS' ability to accurately compare the demographics of the approved adoptive family population and the children awaiting adoption. Future reports will assist ODJFS in determining which counties will be provided with technical assistance.

In March 2004, the updated report reflected that 3,000 of the 8,000 open adoptive resources had been closed. This data is being analyzed to determine if there have been significant changes in the comparison in the diversity within the two populations.

ODJFS has begun to have this ability to analyze the demographic information on adoptive resources and as data continues to be updated, a more accurate picture will emerge of the comparison of diversity of the two populations.

ODJFS will extend its recruitment efforts beyond Ohio's borders by establishing a partnership with AdoptUSKids. The first strategic planning session with AdoptUSKids was held on March 17-18, 2004 in collaboration with Ohio's major metropolitan counties, or the counties representing the largest number of children in permanent custody. ODJFS, with assistance from county representatives, developed objectives aimed at securing an adequate pool of resource families for Ohio's waiting children. Adopt US Kids has also provided training to several larger counties regarding the AdoptUS Kids Photo Listing website. Six PCSAs are currently registering children on the site. ODJFS has appointed an AdoptUS Kids coordinator who administers the Photo Listing web site registrations in Ohio.

Additionally the ODJFS is working closely with the SACWIS team to assure that Ohio's SACWIS will allow the PCSAs to view all home studies from other Ohio agencies. Additionally the system will allow for an electronic registration of the children on the AdoptOHIO Photo Listing

OAC 5101-2-48-05 (See Appendix) requires that an agency have a written plan describing strategies for adoptive parent recruitment. All recruitment plans are reviewed by ODJFS Regional Field Office staff.

VIII UPDATE ON USE OF CROSS-JURISDICTIONAL RESOURCES TO FACILITATE TIMELY ADOPTIVE OR PERMANENT PLACEMENTS FOR WAITING CHILDREN

ICPC &

ICAMA: ODJFS continues to work with other states and agencies to facilitate timely placements for waiting children. Ohio is a member, pursuant to Ohio Revised Code section 5103.20, of the Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children (ICPC). All 50 states are members of this compact that facilitates the placement of children across state lines for adoption or substitute care by ensuring that all placements are made expediently, efficiently, and in accordance with regulations ensuring the safety, permanency and well-being of the child being placed.

In February of 2002, the Ohio Administrative Code (OAC) rules governing the ICPC were revised so that they would provide greater clarity to county and private agency staff wishing to place children across state lines. The rules, OAC sections 5101:2-42-20 through 5101:2-42-23, also address the responsibilities of the agency once the child is placed across state lines, as well as the responsibilities of PCSAs when a child is placed into Ohio. ODJFS also developed a form to be used in providing information related to financial responsibility for a child placed through the ICPC, which became effective August 2003. This form, required to be used by all who wish to place a child across state lines through the ICPC, indicates who will have responsibilities for the costs related to the placement, education, and medical care of the child.

The ICPC unit staff at ODJFS provides technical assistance to PCSAs and private agencies, families, and attorneys that are placing children across state lines. Each year, Ohio manages the ICPC requirements regarding the placement of more than 7000 children. Staff in the unit also provides direct training for local agency staff regarding processes and implementation of the compact. In 2003, the ICPC staff conducted nine regional training sessions across the state related to the proper utilization of the ICPC. More recently, training was provided on May 17 and 18 of 2004 to more than 33 public and private agencies via videoconference. The ICPC staff also act as a central compact administration area for the placing of children into or out of the state.

Ohio has been a member of the Interstate Compact on Medical Assistance (ICAMA) since March 1999. The Compact provides a mechanism which ensures that medical coverage and other adoption services for eligible children continue in the child's state of residence. Currently, 46 states are members of ICAMA.

Through the use of ICAMA, ODJFS ensures that geographical location is not a barrier to parents trying to meet the needs of their adopted children. Technical assistance is provided to Ohio's 88 County Department of Job and Family Services (CDJFS) agencies, adoptive parents, and ICAMA member and non-member states. ODJFS provides technical assistance to Ohio subdivisions and collaborates frequently with other states to determine Medicaid eligibility for children moving from Ohio to another state. In addition to providing technical assistance to the adoptive parents, in 2001, ODJFS amended the existing adoption subsidy brochure to include

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a description of ICAMA so that families are aware of the ICAMA program and its benefits.

In the Fall of 2001, ODJFS conducted a statewide ICAMA training providing agencies with materials and technical assistance for implementation of the ICAMA program.

During years 2001-2002, the Adoption Section revised the Ohio Administrative Code (OAC) to reflect mandates of ICAMA. The ICAMA process has now been incorporated into the Ohio Administrative Code (OAC), Medicaid and Adoption, rules allowing for easier and more efficient processing of Medicaid cases involving state-funded adoption assistance agreements. The ICAMA process was posted on Ohio Health Plans' (Medicaid) Consumer Access Flash Bulletin website to ensure post adoptive families were aware of the program.

ODJFS conducted a statewide video-conference training in January 2003 to inform agencies of the revised OAC rule 5101:2-44-05.2 "Covered families and children Medicaid eligibility for state adoption subsidy recipient moving from or to Ohio." The OAC rule 5101:2-44-05.2 became effective on May 1, 2003 and additional statewide training was provided throughout the Summer and Fall of 2003.

ODJFS will be providing additional statewide training via videoconference in June 2004. The statewide training will encompass administrative rules which allow adoptive families moving into the state of Ohio to efficiently access Medicaid when there is a state-funded adoption assistance agreement in effect.

IX UPDATE ON MEASURES TO COMPLY WITH INDIAN CHILD WELFARE ACT (ICWA)

Although there are no federally recognized tribes in Ohio, agencies are bound by the law to uphold the practice and law regarding Native American Children and their families. The North American Indian Cultural Center (NAICC) serves as a local resource for Ohio's Indian population.

Ohio complies with the Indian Child Welfare Act of 1978 through its Administrative Code (OAC) [rules 5101:2-42-52 through 5101:2-42-58] mandating PCSAs, PCPAs, and private non-custodial parents (PNA) to comply with ICWA. Preferred practice is to involve the Indian child's parent or custodian, extended family members, nonrelatives who have a relationship with the child and/or family as early as possible in the case planning process to facilitate the coordination of resources which may prevent the child from coming into an agency's custody or later than at the time that placement occurs, either through a request for temporary custody of a child or through a permanent surrender agreement. The PCSA, PCPA or PNA determines if the parent has Indian background, if she/he is eligible for tribal membership, or is currently enrolled in a tribe.

ODJFS continues to remind PCSAs of the requirement of the ICWA through technical assistance provided in state-wide meetings and through interfaces with the Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children. While this practice has been in effect for quite sometime, the results of the Child and Family Service review indicated that Ohio did not meet substantial conformity in this area. Therefore, methods were undertaken to ensure that agencies understood and were able to follow the law. A guidance letter (see appendix) containing background information regarding the Indian Child Welfare Act and a protocol for contacting Tribal representatives was drafted by the Office for Children and Families, who partnered with the National Indian Child Welfare Association (NICWA) and held a statewide video conference in April of 2004. This video conference provided information and guidance concerning the historical context for the development of ICWA and practice considerations

X UPDATE ON THE INTERCOUNTRY ADOPTION ACT (ICAA) REQUIREMENTS

Ohio provides inter-country services to international agencies and families adopting abroad. During this report period, hundreds of children have been placed without incident, with adoptive parents residing in Ohio. Three descriptive areas in which ODJFS actively participates in intercountry adoption are: through regulatory compliance; the provision of information; and through the provision of post-adoption services. These services are provided to adoptive agencies, adoptive applicants pursuing an homestudy assessment, and to the adoptive child and his/her family beyond finalization.

Regulatory Compliance

Each agency involved in international adoption is mandated by Ohio Revised Code to be licensed and certified by the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services to perform adoptive placement duties. Such agencies are monitored on a regular basis by ODJFS to ensure compliance with Ohio Administrative and Revised Codes. ODJFS monitoring activities include periodic reviews of each agency's policy, a sample of its case records and placement procedures. Agencies are required to adhere to placement rules, including collaboration, pre and post placement activities. For example, agencies are only permitted to collaborate with and or accept homestudies and post-placement services from other providers licensed in accordance with state regulations. Adoption studies are conducted by an assessor in the employment of or under the contract of a licensed PCSA, PCPA or PNA. All applicants pursuing adoption, including those adopting abroad must complete pre-service training.

In addition to adhering to state rules and regulations, agencies involved in international adoptions must comply with the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Services requirements leading to and succeeding finalization in the child's country of origin. As a measure to continue collaboration and compliance with these requirements, ODJFS will seek to incorporate federal standards such as those expressed by the Hague Convention on Intercountry Adoption, once fully enacted, for adoptions covered by the treaty.

Provision of Information

Through the statewide website and other adoption guides published by ODJFS, Ohio provides information to families, agencies, and states interested in international adoption. In addition, in SFY 2003, ODJFS implemented a HELP-Desk, to respond to general inquiries about adoption including those pertaining to international adoption. To ensure effectiveness of these venues, and to continue to provide information to agencies and persons interested in adopting internationally, ODJFS will seek to track the data pertaining to international adoption. For example, ODJFS is interested in the number of children adopted from other countries; children who enter into State custody as a result of the disruption of a placement for adoption or the dissolution of an adoption; the identity of agencies handling the placement or the adoption; and the plans for the child, and the reasons for the disruption or dissolution.

Provision of Post-Adoptive Subsidy

Contingent upon the availability of funding ODJFS has made available post-adoption special service subsidy to families that reside in Ohio, who have adopted a special needs child, including those families that have adopted abroad for the last five years. International families constituent one of the largest categories of family type utilizing PASSS. In SFY

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2003, over 300 families with special needs children adopted abroad utilized PASSS funding.

XI UPDATE ON THE CHILD WELFARE DEMONSTRATION PROJECT UNDER SECTION 1130 OF THE ACT

j) For states operating a child welfare waiver demonstration project under section 1130 of the Act, a description of the accomplishments and progress in the demonstration project as they relate to the goals and objectives in the State's CFSP.

The fourteen IV-E Waiver (ProtectOHIO) counties have concentrated on a variety of structural, organizational and programmatic initiatives with the overall goals of increasing the efficiency and effectiveness of the child welfare system. The work of the agencies focused on maintaining children safely in their own homes, reducing out-of-home placements, increasing reunification and permanency and improving services to children and families.

Because Ohio's child welfare program is operated and administered at the county level, the demonstration saw a substantial variation in county program initiatives resulting from the flexibility the demonstration provided. Each participating county undertook somewhat different approaches to reform, varying in nature and intensity of effort to provide services tailored to address the needs of the families involved with their agencies. Some of the initiatives occurred systematically across the state and some were unique to one or a few sites. Findings of the demonstration's evaluator are summarized below.

Fiscal Study

Using a strict test of statistical significance, the Fiscal Study found no significant differences between demonstration and comparison counties in the patterns of change in child welfare spending over the course of the demonstration. However, in two areas, the patterns of change were close to significant and thus important to highlight:

- **Growth in foster care spending:** Data suggested that demonstration counties may have been able to contain foster care growth more than comparison counties.
- **Growth in non-foster care expenditures:** Most of the demonstration sites generated some revenues from the demonstration that could be used for such new spending on other child welfare activities. Ten of 11 demonstration counties spent more than their demonstration savings to increase other child welfare expenditures. These findings suggested that demonstration counties took advantage of the flexibility of the demonstration to expand their activities in areas other than foster care board and maintenance. Services other than foster care board and maintenance included all county program and administrative staff performing child protective, foster care case management, adoption and family preservation functions. These expenditures also included the costs of family preservation, family support and mental health services provided by other public or private agencies, adoption services and subsidies, cash and material support to families and relatives.

Programmatic Study

In five areas, the demonstration appeared to have lead to important changes in the demonstration sites that were not matched by the comparison counties:

- **Service Array:** Demonstration counties, more so than comparison sites appeared to target new prevention activities to areas of insufficiency. Twelve demonstration

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sites and nine comparison sites had identified at least one insufficient prevention service in Year 3. Of the 37 service insufficiencies identified by the 12 demonstration counties, in 20 instances the county created a new service of that particular type (54%); by contrast, only ten of the comparison counties' 28 insufficiencies (36%) were targeted by new service development. Consistent with this finding, more than twice as many demonstration counties (nine) as comparison counties (four) appeared to be targeting their new services. In addition, demonstration sites appeared to focus on prevention activities, with more of them both expressing a strong commitment to prevention and increasing spending on non-foster care at a rate above the median of all counties.

- **Targeting:** Initial exploration indicated that demonstration counties more often target their new service development to areas of noted insufficiency and generally reported more targeting of new initiatives to particular populations, than comparison sites. Examples of counties that targeted services include:
 - Greene County reported expanding their family preservation program and adding more social workers in local schools.
 - Stark County reported creating new services for three out of four insufficient services. Stark now has CARE teams in the Fairless School District. CARE is a collaborative effort that includes teachers, a mental health therapist, an alcohol and drug mentor, a representative of the sheriff's department, a family mentor, tutors, and after school programming to assist families in greatest need.
- **Quality Assurance and Data Management:** Demonstration sites gave moderately more attention to outcomes data, more often systematically gathering outcome information, sharing it with staff and using it in management decisions. During the early years of the evaluation, nearly all counties in both groups reported using data generated by the Child Protection Oversight and Evaluation quality assurance system, (CPOE)(managed by ODJFS), but few comparison sites moved beyond that basic attention to outcomes. In contrast, substantially more demonstration counties reported efforts to measure client outcomes, use outcomes data to modify practice and incorporate outcomes-based performance measures in contracts. Some of the concrete ways that demonstration counties use the outcome data they have collected include:
 - Using data to better understand placement trends, thus enabling them to focus on developing new options for particular groups of children or recruiting more placements of a particular type (e.g., agency foster homes for children under five);
 - Sharing data with community partners to increase their understanding of the agency's efforts and how they can coordinate their own activities for the most cumulative effect in the community; and
 - Aggregating data by neighborhood to identify locales generating the most referrals and working with the municipal Planning Board to focus housing renewal efforts those locales while the child welfare agency concomitantly targeted increased service delivery.
- **Overall Use of Managed Care Strategies:** In Year 4, the average demonstration county score was higher than that of comparison sites for seven out of the eight

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managed care components. The financing structure of the demonstration, and the demonstration's fiscal flexibility, allowed, and in some instances encouraged, participating counties to experiment with the use of managed care techniques. Capitation and risk are important tools of managed care, which are difficult to use without the flexibility in funding offered by the demonstration. Demonstration counties experimented with managed care contracts that employed both capitation and risk, in varying ways. Among the approaches used with external providers were management services contracts, capitated contracts, and case rates. Internal controls used by demonstration counties included active and increased emphasis on utilization review.

- **Interagency Collaboration:** County child welfare agencies view other community-based agencies, both public and private, as important and necessary collaborative partners to their own business success. As a group, community agencies in demonstration counties viewed their collaboration with the demonstration child welfare agency as more successful than their counterparts serving comparison counties view their collaborative relationships with the local county child welfare agency in the their county. Further, the fiscal flexibility afforded by the demonstration meant that demonstration counties were somewhat more likely to create joint funding mechanisms with other community-based agencies than is the case in comparison counties. Demonstration counties also took substantial steps to introduce and expand team conferencing methods.

Additional Findings

The safety of children was maintained: Demonstration counties maintained the safety of children returned home at the same level that would have been without the demonstration, thus alleviating the concern that a focus on reducing placement usage might lead to children being returned home too soon and needing to re-enter care.

- **Use of relative placement resources:** Granting custody to relatives appears to have increased more in demonstration counties, than in comparison counties.
- **Time to adoption:** In two demonstration counties, children waiting to be adopted had shorter "wait" times over the course of the demonstration.
- **Case mix:** Preliminary findings indicate that little change occurred during the demonstration period in the proportion of children served in-home; both demonstration and comparison counties maintained a pattern of serving approximately 3/4 of cases in-home - though the financing flexibility afforded by the demonstration arguably allowed a broader service array to be delivered in demonstration counties.
- **System reform:** Two demonstration counties share a pattern of strong leadership and careful planning of systemic reforms. Both demonstrated an early and ongoing commitment to expanding resources for child welfare activities other than foster care board maintenance, well beyond the financing flexibility flowing from participation in the demonstration - though that was, and remains, an critical catalyst in those efforts. They also sharply reduced placement utilization; instead serving children in-home, or through referral to local community-based agencies with who they collaborate.

During this last year of this CFSP, the waiver has continued to operate under bridge extensions. The most recent extension began April 1, 2004 and will end on September 30, 2004.

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For the period ending FFY '03, the demonstration was over-capitated approximately \$2.35 million FFP. This overage resulted principally from the fact that the cost neutrality group experienced a lower rate of placement day growth than had been forecast; 0.29% actual vs. 2.51% forecast. For the same period, however, the demonstration group decreased its placement day utilization 3.19%.

Human Services Research Institute (HSRI) continued as the vendor conducting the evaluation activities of Ohio's Title IV-E Waiver. During this reporting period, two no cost amendments were made to the contract that has been extended to September 30, 2004 to coincide with the most recent approved bridge extension. The final evaluation report was submitted to HHS in June 2003. In September, the Evaluation Team provided a briefing for staff of the department and the demonstration and comparison counties. Members of the Evaluation Team have participated in some Consortium Meetings; however, since the department is operating the waiver only under a short term extension, no substantive evaluation activities have taken place.

The ProtectOHIO Consortium continued to meet every other month (July, September, November 2003 and January, March and May 2004). The Consortium consists of agency directors and/or upper administrative staff of the 14 counties participating in the Waiver, ODJFS staff and members of the evaluation team. The Consortium continues to be an important component of the project and meetings continued to be county driven. These meetings provided an opportunity for Consortium members to share the different programs/projects that are being implemented and/or planned as well as the benefits and challenges, receive information about the evaluation and fiscal/placement days. Discussions also focused on developing hypotheses that could be explored if the waiver is extended.

ProtectOHIO continues to enjoy the unanimous support of ODJFS, the demonstration counties and the communities they serve and has assisted ODJFS in accomplishing CFSP Goal1, Child Protection and Goal 2, Family Support. Semi-annual progress reports on the waiver have been submitted to HHS Chicago Regional Office within the prescribed time frames.

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XII UPDATE ON THE ADOPTION INCENTIVE FUNDS

ODJFS has been awarded the following amounts in Adoption 2002 Incentive funds for the past four years.

Federal Fiscal Year	Amount Awarded
1999	\$1.13
2000	\$1.3
2001	\$1.1
2002	\$1.5

Ohio was one of twenty-three states (and Puerto Rico) that continued to increase the number of adoptions in FFY 2002 and was eligible to receive incentive funds.

Based on FACSIS analyst, ODJFS will see an increase in overall adoptions for FFY 2004. There was an increase of 132 children over age 9 adopted which should qualify Ohio for FFY 2004 Incentive funds.

During FFY 2004, Adoption Incentive funds were used to primarily support the AdoptOHIO Kids program and to fund 33 PCSAs to develop or strengthen existing faith based partnerships for the purpose of recruitment and retention of adoptive resources. Through the faith based funding, Cuyahoga County Department of Children and Families was able to continue their One Church One Child contract with Mt. Sinai Church which has made over 500 presentations on foster care and adoption in the community. Additionally Mt. Sinai Church has administered three regional adoptive parent support groups recruited 22 mentors who will mentor youth waiting for adoptive families. Mt. Sinai's goal of recruiting families and seeing at least 20 families through the process to the approval stage has been met this year.

Several PCSAs hosted events for area church clergy and their congregations to hear Reverend W.C. Martin speak regarding his adoption successes and recruitment strategies which led to the adoption of over 70 children within his own church community in Possum Trot Texas.

XIII REQUIREMENTS UNDER CHILD ABUSE PREVENTION AND TREATMENT ACT (CAPTA)

2000 - 2004 CAPTA Update: Progress/Accomplishments

Key Point 1: Intake, assessment, screening and investigation of reports of abuse and neglect

The Ohio Administrative Code (OAC) rules governing child protective services had not been reviewed as one comprehensive package in several years. Over time, rules had been individually written and revised to incorporate and implement federal and state mandates while also striving to outline minimum best practice standards. The result is that the rules had become unclear and difficult to understand.

Ohio received approval from USDHHS in 2001 for technical assistance from the National Resource Center on Child Maltreatment (NRCCM) to complete a comprehensive review of the CPS rules. It was through this review that ODJFS began to recognize the need for a safety assessment protocol and revisions to the existing risk assessment model.

In FFY 02, Ohio received consultation and technical assistance from the NRCCM and the Child Welfare Institute (CWI) to develop a safety assessment protocol and instruments. The model that was developed, the Family Assessment and Planning Model (FAPM), was piloted in four Ohio counties from July 2003 through March 2004. Revisions are being made to the protocol and tools based on feedback from the pilot. An evaluation of data and other information collected from the pilot will be submitted to the Department by CWI in June 2004. This report will outline how the pilot agencies implemented the protocols and tools; the agencies staff's perceptions of the FAPM, including its applicability and efficacy; and will provide direction for revisions to the protocol and tools.

In the interim, Ohio is also reviewing information about other risk assessment technologies (i.e., actuarial) which may be appropriate for practice in this state. A risk assessment model/technology will be selected by ODJFS administrators in Fall 2004 with a tentative statewide implementation date of 2007.

Another safety-related initiative that Ohio has begun to address is the screening of child abuse/neglect (CA/N) reports. Ohio received technical assistance from the National Resource Center on Legal and Judicial Issues regarding Ohio's definitions of child abuse, neglect and dependency and screening of CA/N reports. The subsequent report, authored by Howard Davidson J.D., highlighted concerns with Ohio's statutory definitions of CA/N as well as other language contained within the Ohio Revised Code. The report also noted issues with Ohio's CA/N disposition categories and recommended Ohio's screening rule be more prescriptive.

During Ohio's Child and Family Services Review, issues related to screening of cases at intake were identified as an area of practice where improvements was needed. Activities to address this issue are part of Ohio's proposed Program Improvement Plan (PIP).

Key Point 2(A): Creating and improving the use of multidisciplinary teams and interagency protocols to improve investigations

Community Evaluation Teams

ODJFS provided funding for three Community Evaluation Teams in Athens, Logan and Stark counties from 1999 to 2002. Three additional counties (Lorain, Marion and Scioto) were selected to organize teams in 2001, and were funded from 2001 through 2004. Although each team developed and implemented programming based on their individual county's needs, there were some activities that were common across all six (6) teams.

ODJFS provided intensive technical assistance and support during the development phase for the teams which included attendance at the team meetings. Once teams established meeting schedules and project plans

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for the year, technical assistance from ODJFS was provided on an as needed and requested basis.

The activities conducted by CETs to recruit team members expanded community awareness and understanding of issues related to child abuse and neglect. In every county where a CET operated, community members have been educated on issues of child abuse and neglect including reporting and investigation. This in turn helped citizens understand what to report, who and when to call to make a report, the types of services that are available and where to receive services. While CETs worked with the public children services agencies (PCSAs) to review investigation procedures and the impact of investigations on the community, other child and family serving agencies (e.g., day care, law enforcement, etc.) also worked with the PCSAs to conduct dual interviews and team investigations.

The teams reviewed local child protective services agency policy and procedures; conducted reviews of in-house programs which enabled the teams to identify unmet needs in their communities; analyzed data regarding custody and school placements; and provided recommendations to the PCSAs regarding program development, enhancement and policy revisions.

Funding for the CETs was provided via allocations to the CPS agencies and, as a result, teams began looking to the CPS agency representatives to facilitate, coordinate and guide team activities. This, combined with the requirements added in the CAPTA re-authorization, prompted ODJFS to consider re-structuring the program, and the Department decided to explore other options for operating CETs beginning with State Fiscal Year (SFY) 05. The most promising of those options is to use existing Citizen Review Boards (CRB), statutorily authorized and operated by county juvenile courts.

In addition to funding three CETs through the CPS agencies in SFY 04, ODJFS pursued contracts with two county juvenile courts (Lucas and Montgomery) to have their volunteer CRBs review cases, make recommendations relative to improving practice and implement the remaining CAPTA requirements for Citizen Review Panels. Both CRBs will conduct case reviews to gather data on the length of time in custody, effectiveness of services, and barriers to provision of services. Montgomery County's CRB will also track the frequency of worker visits. The contracts with the CRBs are for one year only and are considered a pilot project. If the CRBs are able to meet all of the CAPTA requirements, other juvenile courts will be given the opportunity to bid for a contract in SFY 06.

Key Point 3: Case management and delivery of services to children and their families

Caseload Analysis (CLA)

For the past five years, the CLA Implementation Leadership Forum (ILF) has focused on development of practice technologies including family assessment and service planning while striving to balance workload and available hours. In addition, the ILF concentrated on organizational development, emphasizing fiscal management, data-driven decision-making, collaboration with community resources and continuous quality improvement in both practice and outcomes. The concept of continuous quality improvement has been an underpinning guiding the initiative and the consideration of data and outcomes became common practice among the ILF agencies.

Four of the PCSAs involved in the CLA initiative from the onset (Athens, Greene, Guernsey, and Muskingum) have remained active and currently comprise the ILF. These four PCSAs have continued the development and implementation of agreed upon practice standards and methodologies. Although the degree to which all four PCSAs have implemented the practice standards varies, a shared consensus in regard to the eventual implementation of all CLA standards and processes remains. During the past five years, several of the original ILF member PCSAs (Ashtabula, Hamilton, Medina, Portage, and Richland) withdrew from the ILF citing other agency priorities and resource issues as factors that contributed to the decision. However, the agencies reported that they continued the CLA philosophy and practices within their agencies.

In early 2003, the ILF presented the CLA model to the Public Children Services Association of Ohio (PCSAO) and the Ohio based Institute for Human Services (IHS) in an effort to gain support and additional funding for the

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initiative. Both IHS and PCSAO found value in the model which resulted in IHS offering staff resources to support research and training while PCSAO financially supported expansion of the model to other Ohio PCSAs.

ODJFS agreed to continue working with the ILF to provide technical assistance and guidance to additional Ohio PCSAs that could benefit by incorporating the CLA model as a framework for agency child welfare practice.

Athens, Guernsey, Greene and Muskingum continued the CLA initiative and each contributed \$7,000.00 from their agency budgets toward continuation of the initiative. In addition, ODJFS allocated \$21,000.00, and PCSAO provided \$28,000.00 to assist the ILF in expanding the CLA model to other Ohio PCSAs.

As a result of the training and information sessions held in 2003, five new counties (Butler, Coshocton, Jefferson, Logan and Tuscarawas) joined the initiative as "Track Two" or "expansion" counties in SFY 04 with the focus on implementation of the CLA tools and quality standards.

In year six, the four CLA ILF counties continued their collective work on the methodology to drive safety and permanence in CPS and to support consistent, systematic delivery of family-centered, strength based services. Meanwhile, the five Track Two Expansion counties focused on implementation of the CLA tools. During this reporting period, there were 16 meetings of the ILF and 12 measures team meetings. Also, on January 15, 2004, a presentation of the CLA Model and CLA tools was presented to ODJFS Central and Field Office staff by Alden Leadership Inc.

During Year 6 (SFY 04) the ILF concentrated on continued development of the practice model. A summary of the ILF's Year 6 Annual Report follows:

Classification of Family Needs: The ILF continued work on Classification of Family Needs tool with a great deal of discussion around how cases are classified at the time of the report. The concept of "diagnosing" cases to enable an accurate assessment and identification was driven by the Family Risk Assessment Matrix (FRAM), adult characteristic elements as well as the risk to children given the identification of certain parental characteristics.

The four classification categories adopted by the ILF are: Transient, Emergent, Limited Situational and Multiple Needs. Each classification has its own definition and clarifying language. The ILF counties began collecting classification data in early 2003. During year six of the initiative, the data was analyzed in an attempt to further develop the classifications and create specificity for classifying cases. CLA agency supervisors were convened as a work group to further develop the classifications

Case Planning; Quality and Compliance Measures: Quality assurance tools were developed to assure compliance and quality for Case Plan; Parts A and B in conjunction with the family assessment guided by the FRAM. Compliance standards required as outlined in the Ohio Administrative Code rules that govern Case Planning were incorporated into the quality assurance tools. During year six, this expanded to include concurrent case planning.

Workload Management: The ILF revised the "Pitchfork Model" and moved the Workload Management element to the fulcrum as workload impacts all child welfare functions. A Workload Management Model per se was not completed in its entirety, but rather components of capacity and workload management were addressed. A workload management software module that was implemented by several ILF counties provided data to further refine this component of the model.

Case Management

As part of the revisions to the current risk assessment model/development of the FAPM, a Case Review tool was created. The Case Review instrument is designed to re-examine safety and risk and to discuss the impact that services provide had or are having on the child and family. The review is completed every 90 days throughout the life of the case and is combined with the Semiannual Administrative Review every 180 days. Use of this tool will enable agencies to determine whether revisions to the service plan are needed and assist them in attaining permanency for children in a more efficient and timely manner. The Case Review was part of

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the FAPM pilot in 2003 – 2004. Although the philosophy and concept of the Case Review was embraced by the staff from the pilot agencies, there will be major structural and format revisions to the tool as a result of feedback from the pilot.

The Child and Family Services Review (CFSR) held in May 2002 found that PCSA caseworkers did not consistently meet policy requirements for conducting visits with parents. Furthermore, the quality of the visits with parents was not sufficient to promote the safety and well-being of the children.

ODJFS is working to enhance the capacity of families to provide for their children's needs by providing guidelines for workers regarding frequency and purpose of visits with each parent involved in the case plan. In February 2004, ODJFS established a baseline for outcomes using CPOE data regarding frequency of visits. In March 2004, ODJFS contacted the National Resource Center for Foster Care and Permanency Planning to obtain assistance in developing discussion tools to assist caseworkers in conducting outcome focused visits with parents. These tools will then be integrated into the Ohio Child Welfare Training Program curricula.

To enhance worker visitation with parents, ODJFS will also be revising Ohio Administrative Code (OAC) rule 5101:2-39-08 to provide clear guidelines on the frequency and purpose of worker visits with parent(s) for those cases opened for agency services voluntarily. These guidelines were established in rule for court involved and substitute care cases in December 2001. OAC rules 5101:2-39-08 and 5101:2-39-08.1 will also be revised to clarify expectations for caseworker visits with the non-custodial parent. These rules are expected to be revised in June 2004.

Key Point 4: Enhancing the general child protective system by improving risk and safety assessment tools and protocols, automation systems that support the program and track reports of child abuse and neglect from intake through final disposition and information referral system.

ODJFS hosted Risk Assessment Problem Solving Sessions (RAPS) on a quarterly basis from 1997 through 2001 to assist agencies with the implementation of risk assessment. The sessions provided county representatives an opportunity to share the successes and challenges the experiences with risk assessment, and afforded the state an opportunity to provide consistent feedback and technical assistance to several county agencies at one time. The issue of assessing safety and using the Safety Plan form were major topics of discussion during RAPS meetings.

In 2001, ODJFS requested a comprehensive review of the CPS rules pertaining to screening, investigations and assessments and provision of on-going services from the National Resource Center on Child Maltreatment (NRCCM). As part of the review, the NRCCM was also asked to provide ODJFS with recommendations on how to clarify and differentiate between mandates and best practice issues. A key finding from that review was that OAC rules did not address safety assessment sufficiently to meet ASFA requirements.

ODJFS developed a safety assessment protocol and tools in cooperation with county representatives, staff from the NRCCM and Child Welfare Institute. The workgroups developed a Safety Assessment, revised the Safety Plan, revised the Risk Assessment, developed a Case Review (combined with the Semiannual Administrative Review), and developed a Reunification Assessment.

Each tool in the new model, the Family Assessment and Planning Model (FAPM) was designed with a specific focus to assist workers in gathering and documenting the information they need to support the key decisions made throughout the life of the case. The model also includes quality assurance instruments that help supervisors to assist workers in developing skills necessary to complete the assessment tools.

The FAPM was piloted by four (4) PCSAs from July 2003 through March 2004. Overall, the FAPM is seen as an improvement over the existing risk assessment model in several ways. First, the model more clearly addresses safety as a separate and distinct entity from risk; and workers in the pilot agencies found the model to be more efficient and applicable to the key decisions being made throughout the life of a case.

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Once revisions as a result of the pilot have been completed and the FAPM is ready for statewide implementation, the model will be incorporated into Ohio's SACWIS currently under development.

Key Point 5: Developing, strengthening and facilitating training opportunities and requirements for individuals overseeing and providing services to children and their families through the child protection system

ODJFS uses Basic State Grant funds to support the Bureau of Family Services' quarterly statewide managers' meeting. The meetings provide program updates, overviews and training for professionals from the public and private agencies and cover topics addressing the entire continuum of child protective services.

Grant funds have also been used to cover costs for ODJFS staff to attend national meetings and conferences (e.g., the Differential Response National Forum in 2002) to obtain information on new initiatives and projects related to improving or enhancing the CPS system.

In addition to financially supporting meetings and learning opportunities, ODJFS also presents multiple training workshops and overviews for county CPS staff on an ongoing basis.

ODJFS staff conducted workshops on safety assessment protocols at the PCSAO Annual Statewide Conference in September 2002 and at the Statewide Child Welfare Managers' Meeting in October 2002. An overview of the FAPM was also provided for a representatives from public children services agencies and PCSAO in March 2003.

Training and technical assistance regarding the concepts, protocols and tools in the FAPM was provided to staff from the four (4) agencies participating in the pilot. In addition, ODJFS staff, along with representatives from the pilot counties, presented workshops on the FAPM at the PCSAO Annual Statewide Conference in September 2003; the Court Appointed Special Advocate/Guardian Ad Litem (CASA/GAL) Annual Statewide Conference in October 2003; the PCSAO Executives Only meeting participants in February 2004; and the Risk Assessment Symposium in May 2004.

Key Point 7: Developing, strengthening and supporting child abuse and neglect prevention, treatment and research programs in the public and private sectors.

Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention Month Activities

In November 2000, a committee comprised of representatives from public children services agencies; various private agencies specializing in parenting, child abuse and neglect prevention and education; Family and Children First Council; Ohio Department of Health; and Ohio Department of Job and Family Services was developed to assist in implementing the plans for Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention Month as well as various year round activities. This committee became known as the Prevention Partners Leadership Group (PPLG) in 2002 and continues to meet on a quarterly basis to share information regarding child abuse and neglect prevention and plan for activities and events, specifically focusing on those occurring during the month of April.

The theme for the Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention Month campaigns for 2000, 2001, 2002 and 2003 was "Help Paint Ohio's Future Bright! Prevent Child Abuse and Neglect!" Also integrated into this theme was the Governor's Six Commitments to Child Well Being:

- Expectant Parents and Newborns Thrive
- Infants and Toddlers Thrive
- Children are Ready for School
- Children and Youth Succeed in School
- Youth Choose Healthy Behaviors
- Youth Successfully Transition into Adulthood

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In 2001, using the theme and the Governor's commitments, local Family and Children First Councils assist ODJFS in sponsoring a statewide art contest for fifth grade students. The art work of the county finalists was displayed at "Power of Partners: Ohio's Summit on Child Well-Being." Participants at the Summit were able to vote on art work and the fifteen winners earned a full page color layout in the 2002 Family Well-Being Calendar published by ODJFS. The calendar was distributed to a variety of private and public agencies, including parenting advocacy groups, Head Start, maternity hospitals and PCSAs.

In 2002, information packets were distributed to Ohio's Legislators educating them on child abuse and neglect. These packets included statistical information from their respective districts, a letter from a fellow legislator, the Governor's proclamation and a blue ribbon pin.

In 2003, the PPLG and Ohio Children's Trust Fund jointly created the "Beyond the Blue Ribbon" Prevention Awards to recognize professionals, volunteers, prevention programs and business and media contributors that have made meaningful contributions to the prevention of child abuse and neglect. The winners of these awards were announced during the luncheon at the Ohio Statehouse in April.

In 2004, the theme for the Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention Month was changed to "You are the Key to Preventing Child Abuse and Neglect." Like the previous year, the "Beyond the Blue Ribbon" Prevention Awards took place during the luncheon at the Ohio Statehouse in April.

In 2000-2004, ODJFS allocated \$2,000.00 to each PCSA to use for their local Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention Month activities. In addition, the State provided counties with posters, educational materials and public services announcements. A Prevention Month public relations "kit" was made available to PCSAs through the ODJFS website and could be downloaded and customized for local use. Promotional items/educational materials were provided each year to PCSAs, Family and Children First Councils and Family Resource HUB Grantees. In 2003, educational booklets on toilet training, temper tantrums and child neglect were provided to PCSAs, Family and Children First Councils, Family Resource HUBs and Head Start agencies.

Using information provided by county agencies, in 2000-2004, ODJFS compiled a list of activities that agencies sponsored or co-sponsored to raise local community awareness of child abuse and neglect prevention. A "Parent's Pledge" to their child's well-being was also facilitated in 2000-2004 through various early childhood education agencies and parenting groups. The Governor's office issued a proclamation designating April as Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention Month in 2000-2004.

Ohio's Safe Haven Program

In April 2001, Ohio's Safe Haven (Deserted Child) Law became effective. This law encourages the placement of newborns in a safe environment as opposed to being abandoned or left unsafe. ODJFS developed two information pamphlets: one designed for the general public to provide information regarding the Safe Havens program, and another designed for parents who have deserted their child per the specifications of the law. The parents' pamphlet outlines available services to assist parents and newborns, provides information regarding adoption and parental rights and includes the voluntary medical information form. ODJFS also partnered with law enforcement organizations, hospitals and PCSAs regarding implementation of the Safe Haven Law.

Publications

Ohio Department of Job and Family Services publishes three booklets pertaining to child abuse and neglect to be used for education and training purposes. One booklet provides the public with information in regards to defining, preventing, identifying and reporting child abuse and neglect. Each of the other two booklets contains the same information with a specific focus- medical professionals and educational professionals. The general public and medical professionals' booklets are out of date and need to be modified. The medical professionals' booklet was revised by The Mayerson Center for Safe and Healthy Children and was made available in the summer 2003. A copy of the medical professionals booklet is available on the ODJFS website <http://jfs.ohio.gov/ocf/publications>. The general public booklet is currently being revised and completion is expected in the summer 2004.

Key Point 9: Developing and enhancing the capacity of community-based programs to integrate shared leadership strategies between parents and professionals to prevent and treat child abuse and neglect at the neighborhood level.

As a result of participating on county Community Evaluation Teams or CETs (see Key Point 1), parents have become aware of their local child protective services (CPS) agency's policies and procedures and services available within their communities as well as the service needs of their communities. Parental involvement and leadership is discussed in CET meetings and at community stakeholder meetings with teachers, counselors and foster parents. Parents work along side community professionals and other volunteers to review local CPS agency practice and make recommendations to assist the agencies in the prevention and treatment of child abuse and neglect in their communities.

XIV CHAFEE FOSTER CARE INDEPENDENCE PROGRAM (CFCIP)

PROGRAM REPORT - CFCIP (OHIO) FY2000 – 2004

I. ACTIVITIES AND SERVICES PROVIDED

ODJFS is the state agency that administers, supervises, and oversees the programs carried out under the Chafee Foster Care Independence Program (CFCIP) plan. ODJFS is the single Ohio agency administering the Title IV-E program and administers the CFCIP under Section 477 of the Social Security Act. Ohio is a state-supervised, county-administered system where service provision is carried out by 88 county public children services agencies (PCSAs). ODJFS staff supervises and provides technical assistance to the local Independent Living (IL) programs administered by these PCSAs.

The structure of individual IL programs is not overtly prescribed by ODJFS, so there is diversity among the 88 counties with regard to the components of their programs. Under current OAC rules (5101:2-42-19, 5101:2-39-09, and 5101:2-39-11), PCSAs and PCPAs must, within the case plan, identify the programs and life skill services that will be provided to assist the child in preparation for transition from substitute care to independent living. While each of Ohio's local PCSAs must evaluate the need for, and provide the commensurate life skill services to youth in their custody and to those emancipated from their custody, the structure of the local agency's independent living (IL) program is not regulated by ODJFS. In broad measure, ODJFS requires PCSAs and private agencies holding custody (private child placing agencies - PCPAs) to make available services to youth who are likely to remain in foster care until age 18, or who have emancipated from care.

Local discretion and individual assessments and evaluations of youth aid in determining which youth under 16 are likely to remain in foster care until age 18, and when to begin assessing and providing services for them. In working with PCSAs, ODJFS staff has identified several factors such as age, presenting problems, case history, and case plans/goals as items to be examined when determining if a youth is likely to remain in foster care until 18. Agencies are responsible for conducting a life-skills assessment for each youth in substitute care who has attained the age of 16 or whom the agency feels is ready to receive IL services. The assessment establishes the need for certain services, and is based on an objective tool completed by the youth (or on the youth's behalf), with documented input from the youth, his/her caregiver, and the case manager. The assessment is to be completed no later than 90 days after the youth turns sixteen years old or 90 days from entering into agency custody. For emancipated young adults, agencies are directed to develop a mutually agreed upon written plan for the provision of services identified as being needed based on an evaluation of the young adult's strengths and needs. This plan is to outline the responsibility of the young adult and the agency, and is signed by the young adult and a representative of the agency as an indication that the young adult will take personal responsibility for achieving independence.

Ohio law allows for the use of concurrent planning as a tool to be used by caseworkers when they are working with families. In the case of youth in care, concurrent planning is a valuable tool. It allows for the worker, the youth, and the youth's family to make decisions as a group. Permanency can be best achieved if all parties involved understand that the decisions made are in the youth's best interest. Therefore concurrent planning is encouraged for all youth in care so that should parental rights be terminated, each youth will have the opportunity for stability and permanence. Since 2000, many PCSAs have employed the concept of family group conferencing to achieve the goals of concurrent planning.

Since 2000, Ohio law has made it possible to reinforce the training of foster families and agency workers. For those families who work with youth transitioning to adulthood, OAC rules require that training be provided relative to the needs and issues of such youth. ODJFS recognizes that working with youth in care is different than working with children under the age of 16. Therefore, foster parents and workers have continuously been trained on how to address the specific issues of adolescents, and how to function as mentors and teachers for youth transitioning to adulthood. Treatment foster homes, which only accept children and youth with a very high level of need, have also been equipped to address transition issues.

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PCSAs are encouraged to coordinate with other child and family serving agencies, within and among counties, to develop service systems that meet the needs of youth in care. Many county agencies have developed formal protocols related to service provision for youth in care and those returning after emancipation. For example, some PCSAs and their local Workforce Investment Act (WIA) boards have forged strong communication links over the last four years so that they can refer clients to one another for services. At the state level, ODJFS and WIA bureau staff provide assistance to local agencies on how they can best work together and develop good service plans for young people.

Pursuant to Ohio Administrative Code (OAC) rules, PCSAs and PCPAs are required to provide services such as:

- outreach, individual and group counseling;
- education and vocational training (i.e., preparation for a General Equivalency Diploma (GED), or for higher education, job readiness, job search assistance and placement programs); counseling and instruction in basic living skills, parenting, health care (e.g., preventative health care, substance abuse prevention, family planning, etc.);
- access to community resources;
- transportation;
- housing options (and optional "room and board" assistance for emancipated youth up to age 21);
- counseling and training on such subjects as self-esteem and self-confidence, interpersonal and social skills training and development;
- matching each youth with an adult/peer who can serve as an advocate, resource, and mentor in daily living skills;
- culture and gender specific activities; and,
- school dropout prevention programs.

Based on the goals listed in Ohio's 2001 – 2004 CFCIP Plan, the following is a description of the services that youth and young adults aged 18-21 received during the past five years.

A. Goal: To enable participants to seek a high school diploma or its equivalent or take part in appropriate vocational training.

Youth and young adults were assisted by PCSA staff in completing high school, receiving their GED, or completing vocational school. Tutors in remedial education and/or computer-assisted programs provided assistance. PCSAs also assisted youth in continuing their education or obtaining job training by participating in career and vocational programs that helped identify and set personal goals. In many counties, as mentioned above, strong working relationships have been developed between the PCSA and the local WIA board.

In addition to assistance with the attainment of a diploma or GED, ODJFS has been working to assist youth who wish to continue their education after high school. In 2004, through a federal grant under the Education and Training Voucher Program (ETV), ODJFS contracted with the Orphan Foundation of America to administer a program which will assist young adults in obtaining post secondary education and training. Under the contract, the foundation's responsibilities include the following:

- Verifying the eligibility of participants and institutions
- Processing applications for ETVs
- Issuing vouchers in accordance with the guidelines of federal law
- Monitoring and supporting student progress
- Utilizing volunteers to provide adjunct services to students
- Providing regular program reports to ODJFS staff
- Monitoring and reporting on the intended outcomes of the program

The foundation has also developed and begun implementation of community awareness and outreach

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programs directed toward soliciting qualified applications. Thus far, 52 young people have been awarded funds to pursue higher education.

B. Goal: To provide training in daily living skills, budgeting, locating, and maintaining housing and career planning.

1. PCSAs provided hands-on experience through supervised living arrangements to develop and enhance the adult living skill levels of participating youth, including those who completed a transitional living experience and those who participated in either a summer emancipation camp experience or a youth retreat. Group training programs helped eligible youth acquire skills needed for independent living.
2. PCSAs provided computer-assisted IL skills instruction, courses on homemaker services to teach and implement effective home management skills, and laboratory experiences where youth had a daily agenda of activities to accomplish, including employment and housing searches.
3. Many PCSAs provided assistance with room and board to young adults 18-21 in the form of assistance with rent and utility deposits/payments, and the purchase of groceries and household items. Assistance was also provided in negotiating with landlords for manageable rent payments and safe living conditions.

C. Goal: To provide for individual and group counseling.

All youth and returning young adults received individual and/or group counseling. PCSAs are responsible for the provision of case management services to all participating youth during and after group training sessions. PCSAs provided, or made arrangements for, counseling and/or therapy services for those youth who experienced emotional difficulties.

D. Goal: To integrate and coordinate services otherwise unavailable to participants.

1. In 2001, the state legislature passed House Bill 38, commonly referred to as the Independent Living Bill. This bill was signed into law by Governor Taft, and had across-the-board, bi-partisan support in both chambers of the legislature. The law requires the provision of independent living and work force development services and activities for youth in care, as well as young adults emancipated from care, so they may become independent adults.

In short, House Bill 38:

- a. Requires agencies to provide independent living services to youth who are in the temporary or permanent custody of, or being provided care in a planned permanent living arrangement by, a PCSA or PCPA. The legislation refers to IL services as assisting with housing, training in decision making skills, daily living skills, referrals for education, training, or employment skills, relationship development and community connection skills;
- b. Requires PCSAs and PCPAs to enter into a written agreement to provide IL services to certain young adults (ages 18-21), on the young adult's request, and requires certain other entities that determine a young adult is eligible for their services to enter into an addendum to that agreement to govern the services provided. ODJFS is directed to create "model" written agreements;
- c. Requires ODJFS to provide matching funds for purposes of obtaining federal funds to facilitate the provision of independent living services;
- d. Permits the Director of ODJFS to submit to the United States Secretary of Health and Human Services an amendment to Ohio's Medicaid plan to make an individual receiving independent living services eligible for Medicaid;
- e. Makes changes to Ohio's workforce development system by requiring workforce development plans to

give priority to youth (ages 16-21) receiving independent living services when determining distribution of resources and funding. Workforce development plans must accomplish certain things, such as: 1) identifying workforce investment needs of businesses in the local area, projected employment opportunities, and job skills necessary to obtain these opportunities; 2) determining the distribution of workforce development resources and funding for each workforce development activity to meet identified needs; and, 3) establishing performance standards for service providers that reflect local workforce development needs.

2. Independent living services continued to be integrated into agency case plan documents. Several PCSAs worked to recruit specialized foster homes, offering training to prepare foster caregivers to become independent living foster caregivers. For emancipated young adults, written agreements were drawn up between the young adult and the agency to assure that both parties were working toward helping the youth become self-sufficient. Ohio Administrative Code rules require that IL services be coordinated with other services that directly impact a youth's case plan or a young adult's plan for self-sufficiency. This integration of services has included the youth's parent or guardian, the substitute caregiver, and various inter-disciplinary service providers.

E. Goal: To provide for the establishment of outreach programs designed to attract individuals who are eligible to participate in the program.

1. PCSAs provided program components where youth and their parents improved their relationships during the transition from substitute care to returning home or moving into an independent living situation. Participants and caregivers were also provided with other services and assistance designed to improve a teen's transition to independent living such as:
 - a. the provision of group training experiences for parents/caregivers preparing the youth for independent living;
 - b. training of professional therapy/social service staff and direct caregivers in effective and engaging methods to teach youth necessary independent living skills; and,
 - c. mentoring programs within foster care, including recruitment and development of mentor foster care givers and alternative interdependent living arrangements for appropriate youth.
2. Other outreach programs included:
 - a. the provision of orientation programs regarding career/vocation opportunities to assist youth in securing desired and realistic goals;
 - b. the development of community-based independent living recruitment training, apartment placement programs and mentoring services; and,
 - c. the provision of orientation programs regarding career/vocation opportunities to youth in meeting desired and realistic goals.
 - d. Working with the Orphans Foundation on the ETV program

F. Goal: To provide each participant with a written transitional independent living plan which is based on an assessment of the youth's needs, and which is incorporated into his/her case plan, as described in section 475(1).

PCSAs provided a differential assessment/evaluation method, which identifies independent living skill deficits in youth, or utilized pre- and post-test assessment tools to measure the skill attainment level of youth. Ohio Administrative Code rules direct agencies to provide these assessments for youth that are likely to remain in care until the age of 18. Services are then provided based on the outcome of the assessments.

In regards to emancipated youth, OAC rules make it the responsibility of the agency that the youth emancipated from to provide services. In those cases where a young adult has emancipated and moved to another county, the county where the youth emancipated is still responsible. ODJFS currently provides technical assistance regarding agency collaboration and service provision in these instances. County PCSAs work with each other

to ensure that the young adult receives services.

OAC rules also address eligibility for services. Agencies are directed to, when requested, provide a range of services and support for former foster care recipients who emancipated from the agency's custody due to attaining age 18. The agency is required to evaluate the current needs of the young adult to determine the range of services to be provided. Services and support are to complement the young adult's own efforts to achieve self-sufficiency, and are to be provided as needed up to their 21st birthday. Agencies are directed to develop a mutually agreed upon written plan for the provision of services, and are to coordinate services with community resources as available. The option of providing room and board has been passed on to PCSAs to utilize at their discretion.

In Ohio, assistance with room and board is defined as including, but not limited to; assistance with rent, initial rent deposit, utilities, and utility deposits for youth ages 18 - 21. Ohio allows PCSAs to use no more than 30% of their IL allocations for assistance with room and board. Since the inception of the CFCIP, this option has been exercised locally by PCSAs based on the needs of the young people they serve. Many counties opt not to use any funds for this purpose because their local needs dictated the need to use all of their allocation for services other than room and board. Some counties have established programming where they provide "seed money" from these funds to get a young person on their feet and set up in their own household. Many PCSAs provided assistance with rent and utility deposits/payments, and the purchase of groceries and household items. Assistance was also provided in negotiating with landlords for manageable rent payments and safe living conditions. OAC rules state specifically that under no circumstances shall the PCSA use any of its independent living allocation for room and board for youth under the age of eighteen or beyond the young adult's twenty-first birthday.

II. INCORPORATION INTO A COMPREHENSIVE STATEWIDE DELIVERY SYSTEM

Since 2000, ODJFS has continued to work to assist agencies in meeting the requirements of CFCIP by participating in and encouraging greater collaboration between state departments, local agencies, and service providers. The development of a more comprehensive statewide delivery system has been encouraged through statewide conferences, interagency agreements, and the facilitation of youth focus groups across the state, and by ODJFS working collaboratively with other state level departments.

Statewide Conferences

ODJFS-sponsored statewide Independent Living Conferences were held in 2000, and 2003. In 2001, ODJFS sponsored a statewide Adoption, Foster Care, and Independent living conference. Each of these conferences had in attendance child welfare workers, other social workers, foster parents, current and former foster and independent living youth, and service providers from the juvenile justice and mental health systems. Attendees also included professionals from the Ohio Department of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities (ODMR/DD), county agencies, private agency executives, and state administrators. Having this dual audience of direct service providers as well as youth, offered a unique challenge and opportunity to provide training and education.

Themes for the conferences included: "Stepping into the Future" (2000), "Facing the Unknown: The Challenge of Independence" (2003, which was a collaborative effort of ODJFS, Franklin County Children Services, Ohio Association of Youth Crisis Centers with Lighthouse Youth Services, and Ohio Independent Living Association (OHILA). Various dynamic speakers participated as keynoters and workshop presenters, including past and present IL youth who spoke their experiences with Ohio's IL programs and how these programs helped them prepare for their transition to independent living. Workshops presented during the conferences covered such topics as financial assistance, housing, counseling, employment, education, gender identity issues, self-esteem, and other appropriate support services. Evaluations received indicated that both the conferences as a whole, as well as the individual workshops, were very well received.

As part of the intent to raise awareness about the needs of youth, and ultimately increase more effective service provision, there were panel discussions held that demonstrated and emphasized the need for collaboration

among systems. At one conference, a panel discussion included a group of IL professionals from various parts of the state along with an administrator from the Workforce Investment Act (WIA). During the discussion, ideas were exchanged and common ground was discovered related to such areas as assessment, employment planning, leadership, tutoring, and occupational and employment training skills. Information emphasizing the cross between WIA programming and IL programming was also shared. Another conference offered a discussion with state level administrators from independent living and mental retardation/developmental disabilities. This group addressed ways the two systems can collaborate. Areas of common ground emphasized were assessment, sharing of information, sharing of resources and joint payment of services.

ODJFS continuously encourages the formation of Youth Advisory Boards (YAB) in local county agencies. Because Ohio is mostly a rural state, it is most advantageous to regionalize YABs. To that end, the 2003 statewide conference included a special event -- a workshop entitled "What Leaders Know." This three-hour workshop focused on the principles that great leaders make a part of their everyday lives and practice in their interactions with others, and youth were encouraged to take the next step in forming YABs.

ODJFS and the Ohio Department of Natural Resources

During the first two years of the CFCIP, an interagency agreement existed between ODJFS and the Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR) to provide funds for assisting in supporting the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) IL Aftercare Program. Funding from the agreement was used to recruit and enroll youth who were either emancipated from care, or still in care but age eligible. All youth were provided a vocational assessment, training at a residential training academy, and ongoing support from team leaders and camp managers. Youth received a stipend equal to a minimum hourly wage and were covered by worker's compensation. Youth who did not have their GED were encouraged to enroll in a residential camp where they could attend classes.

Youth in CCC worked on conservation projects while engaging in education, career, and personal development activities. Projects included restoration of historic structures, construction of parks and recreation facilities, hiking and biking trails, erosion control, landscaping, planting trees, and providing disaster relief services.

The interagency agreement allowed youth to accomplish their personal goals by assessing their aptitudes and career interests. While the specific program in each camp was designed to meet local needs, all new enrollees attended a weeklong residential "Training Academy." During the first two months, corps members underwent career, academic, and life skills assessment, and created academic development plans and/or individual career plans and portfolios. All corps members participated in formal education activities while in CCC, and approximately half took college courses. Others worked to complete their GED or enrolled in vocational courses. Participants received follow-up tracking and support once they exited the program. Of the various individuals enrolled in CCC, more than half were eligible for Independent Living Assistance. Of the total group, 12 percent enrolled in CCC upon exit from juvenile justice institutions, 42 percent did not hold a GED or high school diploma, 47 percent indicated that they had never been employed or had a length of stay less than 3 months with their previous employer, and 49 percent did not hold a valid Ohio driver's license. Additionally, corps members disclosed that the following are what they believe to be barriers to their employment success:

- court involvement
- current educational level
- homelessness
- lack of child or dependent care
- learning disabilities
- substance abuse
- transportation problems
- need for training and/or job skills.

During the existence of the interagency agreement between ODJFS and DNR, corps members completed conservation-based community service benefiting 58 Ohio counties. One-third of the corps members exiting the program with 60 days or more of service earned their GED or significantly advanced toward earning it, nearly one-half received vocational certification, one quarter earned college credit, and 60 percent were enrolled in

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continuing education and/or employed at exit. The success of the CCC in Ohio has been nationally recognized: in September 2000 CCC was honored by the Department of Labor as one of ten effective youth employment and training programs in the nation based on criteria established by the National Youth Employment Coalition Promising and Effective Practice Network

Inter-Departmental Collaboration for Youth with Disabilities

ODJFS continues to work cooperatively with other state level departments¹ in Ohio to establish policy and direction in order to bring about system change that will improve transition services for youth with disabilities. This collaboration is committed to changing the systems involved in delivering school-to-adult life transition within the areas of employment, post-secondary education, residential living, recreation, health care, and transportation. Staffs from the various departments continue to meet as needed to work toward agreements and programming that will enhance the delivery of services to youth and young adults.

Working with the Workforce Investment Act (WIA)

Because the majority of Ohio's counties are rural in nature, the regionalization of services is encouraged so that barriers such as unavailability or inaccessibility of services can be decreased. PCSAs are encouraged to work together to develop service systems that will meet the needs of youth in care. An example of this collaboration can be found between the PCSA and the local Workforce Investment Act (WIA) boards. Also, ODJFS and WIA state staff have begun providing assistance to local agencies on how they can best work together and develop good service plans for youth in care and for youth who have recently emancipated. This will continue over time as needed by local agencies.

Youth Focus Groups and Participation in Planning

Young people represent a frequently untapped resource for information about what works and what does not work in preparing them for adult life. In recognition of this fact, ODJFS has significantly involved youth in the design of those aspects of the IL program that most affect them. During 2001 and 2002, youth focus groups were held in several areas of the state. Many constructive, and sometimes surprising, suggestions made by the youth presented in the focus groups, include:

- Ohio should set up different levels of privileges, which extend beyond those traditionally held by group home operators.
- Youth in care should be provided with more information regarding their foster parent placement. What is the family's personality like? What are the rules of the foster home, what are the expectations of the foster parents?

Many of the suggestions made were passed along to the state training coordinators at the Ohio Child Welfare Training Program to be integrated in the state's training curriculum.

III. PURPOSE FOR WHICH FUNDS WERE EXPENDED

Ohio passed through 90 percent of its base allocation to the local PCSAs. The remainder was used for administration and discretionary programs. The ODJFS Office of Fiscal Services, Reports and Statistics Section continues to utilize a quarterly statistical form which all 88 county agencies complete. This form allows IL staff to collect data on the number of youth who are being served and the cost connected for the services.

¹The Ohio Department of Education, Ohio Department of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities, Ohio Department of Health, Ohio Department of Mental Health, Ohio Department of Youth Services, the Ohio Department of Alcohol and Drug Addiction Services, and Ohio Department of Rehabilitation Services Commission.

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IV. STATISTICS REGARDING YOUTH SERVED

The information beginning on the following page reflects the number of youth in Ohio served by the CFCIP and Ohio's IL program since FFY 2001.²

KIDS RECEIVING IL SERVICES BY AGE (Figure 1)	FFY '00	FFY '01	FFY '02	FFY '03
15	1471	1509	1451	1460
16	1577	1706	1582	1550
17	1454	1567	1591	1501
18	541	638	638	528
19	157	182	170	123
20	20	62	46	54
21+	26	31	29	28

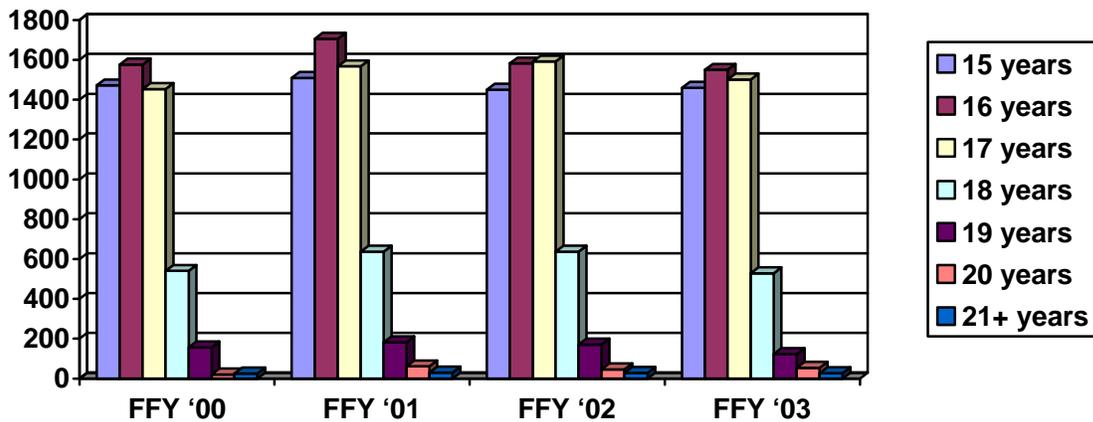


Figure 1

²This information is based on Family and Children Services Information System (FACSIS) data.

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GENDER (Figure 2)	FFY '00	FFY '01	FFY '02	FFY '03
FEMALE	2590	2855	2681	2528
MALE	2687	2840	2826	2716

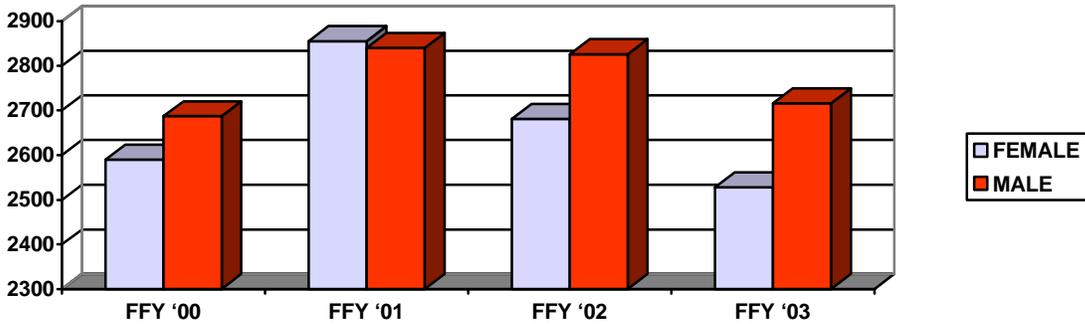


Figure 2

RACE (Figure 3)	FFY '00	FFY '01	FFY '02	FFY '03
WHITE	2805	2933	2852	2703
AFRICAN AMERICAN	2363	2621	2535	2460
AMERICAN INDIAN/ALASKAN	15	24	23	21
OTHER	69	117	97	47

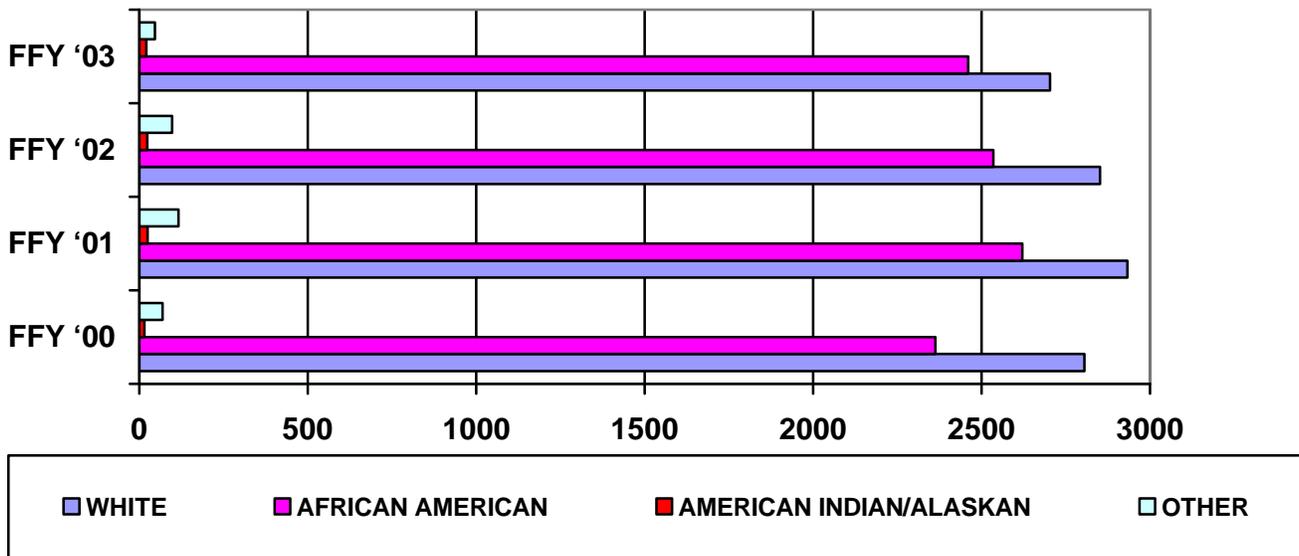


Figure 3

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LIVING ARRANGEMENT BY TYPE				
<i>(Figure 4)</i>				
	<i>FFY '00</i>	<i>FFY '01</i>	<i>FFY '02</i>	<i>FFY '03</i>
ADOPT	36	45	70	77
FOSTER HOME	2660	2875	2800	2638
GROUP HOME	666	710	641	608
INDEPENDENT LIVING	123	149	180	184
OTHER ³	202	247	194	91
RELATIVE/KINSHIP HOME	417	492	439	532
RESIDENTIAL CENTER	1173	1177	1183	1096

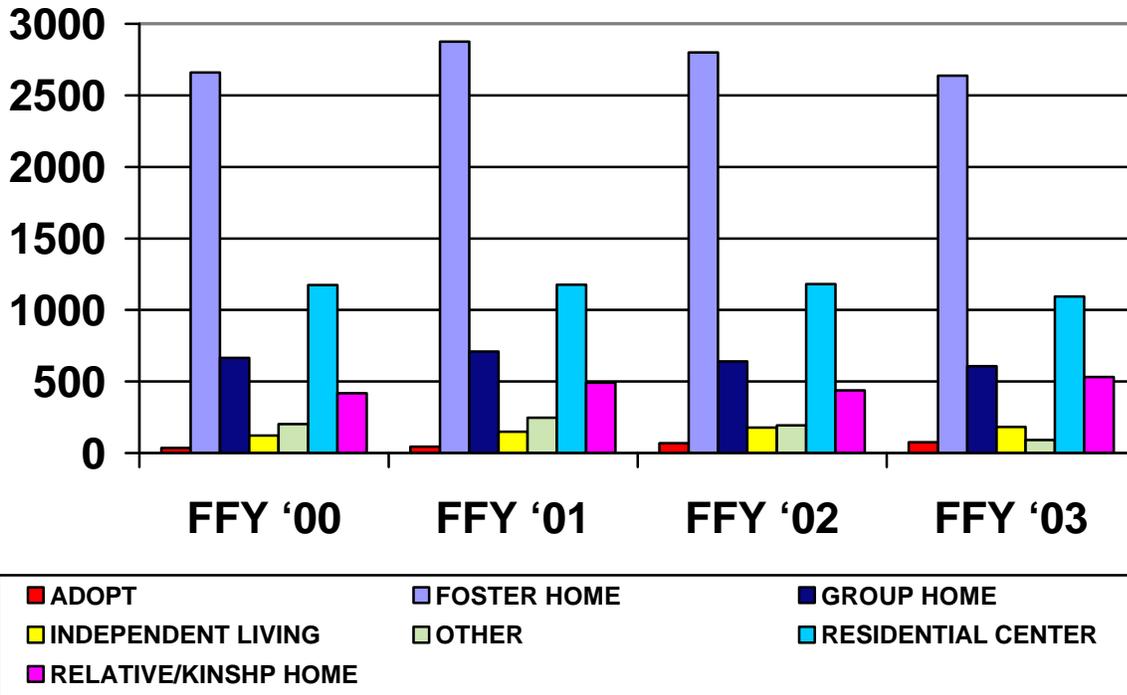


Figure 4

³ Other living arrangements include detention, hospital, maternity homes, and nursing homes.

LENGTH OF CUSTODY (Figure 5)	FFY '00	FFY '01	FFY '02	FFY '03
LESS THAN 6 MONTHS	961	975	915	980
6 MONTHS – 1 YEAR	759	887	751	661
1 – 2 YEARS	949	1095	998	917
2 – 3 YEARS	625	683	714	648
3 – 4 YEARS	519	498	525	509
4 – 5 YEARS	370	390	391	360
5 – 7 YEARS	440	516	514	509
7 – 10 YEARS	354	392	401	388
10 – 12 YEARS	159	150	131	111
12 – 15 YEARS	87	108	120	111
15+ YEARS	54	61	47	50

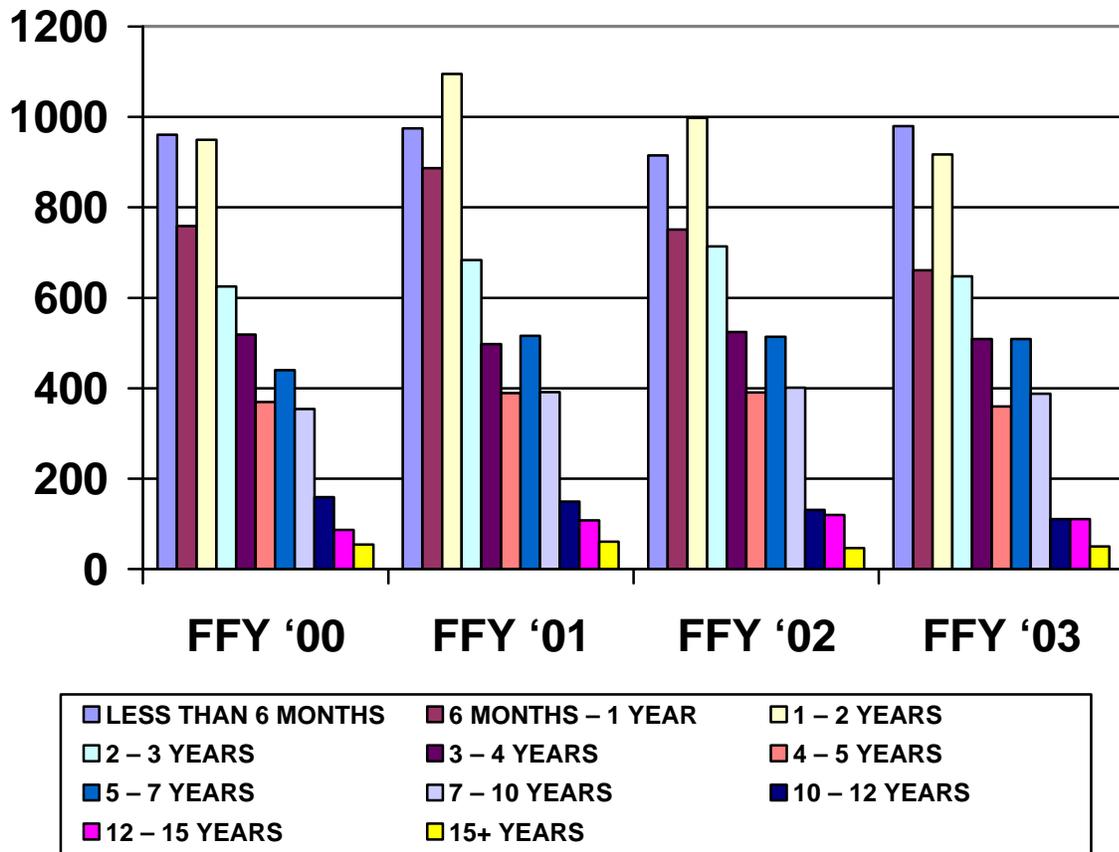


Figure 5

OHIO: CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES PLAN FINAL REPORT FY2000-2004

CUSTODY TYPE (Figure 6)	FFY '00	FFY '01	FFY '02	FFY '03
TEMPORARY CUSTODY			2110	2046
PERMANENT CUSTODY			1165	1117
PLANNED PERMANENT LIVING ARRANGEMENT			1035	1940
COURT			148	0
OTHER			19	4

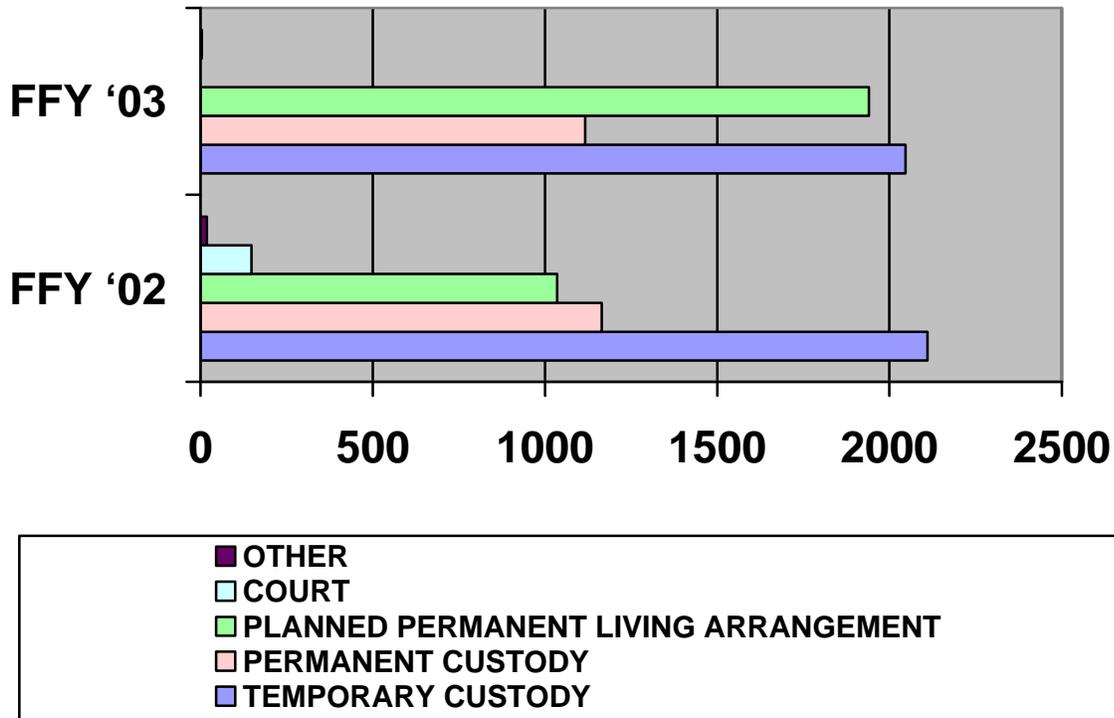


Figure 6

IV-E FCM OR AA ELIGIBLE? (Figure 7)		
	FFY '02	FFY '03
YES	3619	3493
NO	1888	1751

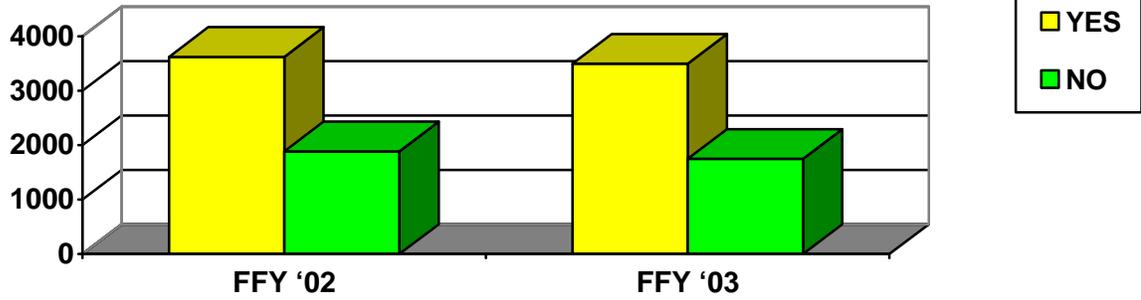


Figure 7

APPENDIX

