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I. Task Force Overview

The Children’s Justice Act (CJA) provides grants to states to develop, establish, and operate programs designed to improve the investigation, prosecution, and judicial handling of cases of child abuse and neglect, particularly child sexual abuse and exploitation, in a manner that limits additional trauma to the child victim. To be eligible for CJA funds, states are required to establish and maintain a multidisciplinary Task Force. Every three years, the task force is required to review and assess the state’s response to abuse, neglect, and dependency cases and make recommendations for improvement. The Task Force must make recommendations in the following areas:

A. Investigative, administrative and judicial handling of cases of child abuse and neglect, particularly child sexual abuse and exploitation, as well as cases involving suspected child maltreatment-related fatalities, and cases involving a potential combination of jurisdictions, such as interstate, federal-state, and state-tribal, in a manner which reduces additional trauma to the child victim and the victim’s family, and which also ensures procedural fairness to the accused.

B. Experimental, model and demonstration programs for testing innovative approaches and techniques which may improve prompt and successful resolution of civil and criminal court proceedings, or enhance effectiveness of judicial and administrative action in child abuse and neglect cases, particularly child sexual abuse and exploitation cases, including enhancement of performance of court-appointed attorneys and guardians ad litem for children, and which also ensure, procedural fairness to the accused.

C. Reform of state laws, ordinances, regulations, protocols and procedures to provide comprehensive protection for children from abuse, particularly sexual abuse and exploitation, while ensuring procedural fairness to the accused.

The Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS), Office of Families and Children (OFC) has been designated as the Ohio’s CJA grantee. In 2004, the Supreme Court of Ohio’s Advisory Committee on Children and Families established the Subcommittee on Responding to Child Abuse, Neglect, and Dependency (CAND). Since 2004, CAND has served as the multidisciplinary task force for both the Ohio Court Improvement Program (CIP) and CJA. The task force is co-chaired by a juvenile court judge and ODJFS’s state children services director. The purpose of the task force is to assess the state’s systems response to the investigation, prosecution and judicial handling of child abuse, neglect, and dependency cases; make recommendations for improvement and provide oversight and guidance for the implementation of recommendations.

II. System Improvements from 2018-2021 Three-Year Assessment
Highlights of progress on 2018-2021 recommendations in the statutorily required CJA categories are listed below:

1. **Investigative, administrative and judicial handling of child abuse and neglect.**
   a. Provide regional, multidisciplinary training opportunities that encourage stakeholder-driven action planning.
      • Four regional Dual Status trainings events were held in April 2019. The training was presented by the Robert F. Kennedy National Resource for Juvenile Justice and included a panel presentation by the Mahoning County Juvenile Court Crossover Team. Multidisciplinary teams of juvenile judges, child welfare directors, and other community partners received a comprehensive overview of the best practices and approaches of a multi-system, coordinated effort to improve both outcomes and system performance for dual-status youth. Teams were also given an opportunity to develop a plan to implement a coordinated and integrated system of care for dual-status youth and their family members.
      • Thirteen county teams participated in the Abuse, Neglect and Dependency Caseflow Management Course hosted by ODJFS and the Supreme Court of Ohio on March 21, 2019. The training gave each team the opportunity to examine their local practices in abuse, neglect and dependency cases that come to the attention of the juvenile court. Each team included a juvenile court judge, PCSA director and other key leaders. Together, they examined local policies and procedures and identified possible improvements. Each team committed to a plan for improving and assessing local practices while strengthening case oversight and improving the CSFR measures. They also discussed barriers to the juvenile dependency case process including frequent continuances, engagement of parties in a case, and achieving permanency in 12 months.
   b. Identify and promote best practices for attorneys who represent clients in child abuse, neglect, and dependency cases.
      • Partnered with Ohio CIP to provide the National Association of Counsel for Children’s (NACC) Red Book training to over 560 judges, magistrates, prosecutors, CASA/GAL, and children services staff/attorneys. CIP contracted with the NACC to develop and train an Ohio specific Red Book curriculum. This training was offered to all 560 staff who participated in the NACC’s national Red Book training.
2. Support of experimental, model and demonstration programs for testing innovative approaches and techniques.

a. Support experimental, model and demonstration programming that addresses substance use disorders within the families that come to the attention of the children services system.

- To support the children services agency’s role in improving outcomes for families that come to the attention of the children services system experiencing a substance use disorder (SUD), Casey Family Programs and CJA jointly sponsored allocations to PCSAs with a Family Dependency Treatment Court (FDTC) in order to build upon the experience and collaborative working relationship of a proficient or emerging FDTC. Awardees committed to continue to work with members of the county family dependency treatment court to collaboratively support the key principles of a family dependency treatment court as identified through the Supreme Court of Ohio certification process.

b. Support court-connected strategies that are included within Ohio’s Round Three Program Improvement Plan

- Dr. Alicia Summers analyzed data from recorded court hearings and made recommendations to improve the quality of hearings and court practices. Based on recommendations, the quality hearing workgroup developed a bench guide and SACWIS court report. The court report provides data to assist court officers with making Reasonable Efforts findings. The entire report is self-generated from existing SACWIS information with the exception of one new narrative portion. The court report addresses a variety of topics, including but not limited to: ICWA, normalcy, historic and current agency custody information, barriers preventing the child from returning home, safety/risk factors, parenting time/visitation, permanency planning, and reasonable efforts. The workgroup also drafted a bench guide (both a long and short version) that mirrors the report; this guide contains meaningful questions to assist the Judge or Magistrate with obtaining necessary information during the hearing.

- In January, a multidisciplinary parent legal representation pilot was implemented in Summit county. The goal of the pilot is to reduce the length of time for cases to move through the child welfare court system and to more effectively engage parents in the court process with beneficial services. In May 2021, Ohio CIP released a competitive request for applications (RFA) to expand the pilot project. This funding opportunity is open to Ohio Juvenile Court, Ohio County Public Children Services Agency,
Ohio Regional Legal Aid Office, Ohio County Public Defender’s Office, Ohio Law School, Ohio Social Work School or University, or any Ohio community entity that is positioned to support the pre-petition and/or multi-disciplinary legal representation model. The pilot expansion will be co-funded by CIP and CJA dollars.

3. Reform of State laws, ordinances, regulations, protocols, and procedures to provide comprehensive protection for children.

a. Re-examine the proposed Child in Need of Protective Services (CHIPS) legislative language.
   - A CHIPS workgroup was established to develop a comprehensive CHIPS legislative proposal. The group is finalizing the CHIPS framework and working to secure support from stakeholders and legislators. The CHIPS work is ongoing and will therefore be included as an activity for the 2021-2024 workplan.

b. Review and recommend revisions to Rule 48 of the Rules of Superintendence as related to juvenile application
   - Rule 48 of the Rules of Superintendence for the Courts of Ohio that governs guardian ad litem was revised to increase the number of pre-service and continuing education requirements. Implementation of this rule is included as an activity for the 2021-2024 workplan.

c. Recommend a Qualified Residential Treatment Program (QRTP) court oversight and training plan.
   - QRTP Court Oversight workgroup developed a toolkit and bench card to provide guidance and sample forms for Ohio juvenile court officers. The toolkit and bench card will help to create uniformity across counties. After extensive research and feedback from judges, attorneys, and other stakeholders, the group submitted a draft for review and approval. Once approved, the workgroup will finalize and implement the training plan.

III. Assessment Process Overview

The task force’s 2021-2024 Three-Year Assessment consisted of a series of data collection and review activities that included:

1. Review of 2018-2021 recommendations
2. Stakeholder Survey
3. Recommendations from other work groups and stakeholder groups
Review of 2018-2021 recommendations

The task force reviewed the status of its 2018-2021 recommendations to assess and identify activities near completion but require additional attention and support. Six activities were identified:

1. Identify and promote best practices for attorneys who represent clients in child abuse, neglect, and dependency cases.
2. Identify strengths and opportunities for growth within case handling of abuse, neglect, dependency cases statewide and promote guidelines and best practices related to areas of improvement.
3. Explore current practice in statewide abuse, neglect, and dependency cases and identify strengths and opportunities for improvement.
4. Re-examine the proposed Child in Need of Protective Services (CHIPS) legislative language.
5. Provide support to ensure that child victims of human trafficking or children at risk have access to skilled and competent services regardless of geography.
6. Develop and recommend a Qualified Residential Treatment Program (QRTP) court oversight and training plan.
7. Support the evaluation and expansion of the Dual Status Youth Program.

Stakeholder survey

In the fall of 2020, the task force reviewed existing initiatives, priorities and needs to develop an 11-question survey designed to solicit stakeholder feedback regarding Ohio’s children services system. As a result, survey questions were developed to address the following areas: CHIPS framework, caregiver involvement and needs, sibling visitation and placement, youth voice in court, minority representation in child welfare, mandated reporting, information sharing, and multidisciplinary representation.

The survey, open from November 1 to December 7th, was distributed by both the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS) Office of Families and Children (OFC) and the Supreme Court of Ohio to children services professionals, attorneys, court staff, judicial officials, caregivers, and foster alumni. A link to the survey was also included in the OFC monthly newsletter. The survey yielded 554 responses; a 105% increase compared to responses from the 2018-2021 survey. Of the 554 respondents, 24% were PCSA employees; 18% were CASA/GALs; 16% were judicial officials; 12% were child welfare attorneys; 18% were “other”; and the remaining 12% of respondents were law enforcement, behavioral providers, foster alumni, and caregivers. Responses were captured in Qualtrics and analyzed by Capital Law School’s Family and Youth Law Center.

Survey responses yielded the following themes for consideration:
- Increased diversity, equity, and inclusion training and informed practice in all professional areas of child welfare.
- Increased focus on sibling-centered care and placement.
- Improved mandated reporter training and requirements to include more situational/occupational guidance.
- Overall need to better the court system in the areas of amplifying youth voice and improve legal representation of parents and children.
- Necessity of working effectively among different disciplines and agencies as it relates to multidisciplinary team representation and collaboration, as well as more traditional casework.

Survey results and brief recommendations were presented to the task force in March of 2021. A copy of the survey questions and presentation are appended.

**Recommendations from other work groups and stakeholder groups**

In 2019, Governor Mike DeWine created the Children’s Services Transformation (CST) Advisory Council assess and develop clear recommendations and guidelines for the state of Ohio to improve the children services system. Council members, which included the task force co-chair, were chosen to use their firsthand experiences, system knowledge and collective advocacy to lead change for children, families, caregivers and the children services workforce. State staff traveled across the state to hear testimony from nearly five hundred Ohioans at ten community forums about their experiences with Ohio’s foster care system.

After fourteen Council meetings, the Advisory Council issued its final report in November 2020, with thirty-seven recommendations including a recommendation that Ohio commit to formally addressing the racial injustices and implicit biases that lead to inequities and disproportionality for children and families of color. Of the thirty-seven recommendations, six recommendations were specific to the juvenile justice system.

The Children’s Services Transformation report and recommendations are appended.

**IV. Policy and Training Recommendations**

The CJA, in accordance with Section 107(a) of CAPTA, provides grants to States to develop, establish and operate programs designed to improve the investigation, prosecution, and judicial handling of cases of child abuse and neglect. Based on the collective assessment, the following recommendations were developed and are grouped under the appropriate subsection of CAPTA in order of importance under each subsection:
(A) Activities to improve the investigative, administrative, and judicial handling of cases of child abuse and neglect, including child sexual abuse and exploitation, as well as cases involving suspected child maltreatment related fatalities and cases involving a potential combination of jurisdictions, such as intrastate, interstate, Federal-State, and State-Tribal, in a manner which reduces the additional trauma to the child victim and the victim's family and which also ensures procedural fairness to the accused;

- Identify and promote strategies and best practices for stakeholders to improve the investigative, administrative, and judicial handling of child abuse and neglect cases and achieve greater accountability.
- Continue support for statewide expansion of the Safe & Together model to increase positive outcomes for domestic violence survivors and their families.

(B) Support of experimental, model, and demonstration programs for testing innovative approaches and techniques which may improve the prompt and successful resolution of civil and criminal court proceedings or enhance the effectiveness of judicial and administrative action in child abuse and neglect cases, particularly child sexual abuse and exploitation cases, including the enhancement of performance of court appointed attorneys and guardians ad litem for children, and which also ensure procedural fairness to the accused; and

- Support experimental, model, and demonstration programming that addresses a multidisciplinary legal representation approach for families.
- Provide support to ensure that child victims of human trafficking or children at risk have access to skilled and competent services regardless of geography.
- Support experimental, model, and demonstration programming that promotes a multidisciplinary approach to improving outcomes for dual status youth.

(C) Reform of State laws, ordinances, regulations, protocols, and procedures to provide comprehensive protection for children, which may include those children involved in reports of child abuse or neglect with a potential combination of jurisdictions, such as intrastate, interstate, Federal-State, and State-Tribal, from child abuse and neglect, including child sexual abuse and exploitation, while ensuring fairness to all affected persons.

- Support development and implementation of legislative framework for handling child welfare cases that replaces the current abuse, neglect, dependency model.

V. Description of Activities to Support Task Force Recommendations
Below is a preliminary list of activities that will be undertaken over the next three years to address recommendations.
• **Identify and promote strategies and best practices for stakeholders to improve the investigative, administrative, and judicial handling of child abuse and neglect cases and achieve greater accountability.**
  o Implement new amendments to Rule 48 of the Rules of Superintendence related to the guardian ad litem oversight and court processes.
  o Review and make recommendations regarding the mandated reporter requirements and guidelines to address concerns reported in the survey, including cultural competency and timing for reports.
  o Partner with the Supreme Court of Ohio to review data regarding extensions, refiled proceedings, continuances, and appeals. Update guidance and improve education to courts and PCSA staff regarding the use of extensions and the negative impact that unjustified extensions have on children and families. Explore options to utilize the Supreme Court of Ohio’s public-facing dashboard, as well as other data-reporting mechanisms, to promote better outcomes and uniformity across counties.
  o Review PCSA legal representation structures throughout the state to evaluate county models for legal representation. Determine best practices and opportunities for strengthened county partnerships that result in accountable, collaborative decision-making processes.
  o Review and evaluate court-appointed special advocate and guardian ad litem programs to identify opportunities for recruitment and expansion. Explore current court-appointed special advocate and guardian ad litem programs to understand their strengths, weaknesses, training needs, and expansion opportunities.
  o Finalize and implement the QRTP court oversight and training plan.
  o Develop a set of age and developmentally appropriate guidelines for youth involvement in court/multidisciplinary teams/other processes.
  o Develop guidelines or tips for parents and children involved in the children services processes.
  o Identify cultural competency training and resources for individuals involved in the children services system, including competency regarding poverty, race, ethnicity, and LGBTQIA.

• **Continue support for statewide expansion of the Safe & Together model to increase positive outcomes for domestic violence survivors and their families.**
  o Continue the training of child welfare professionals throughout the state on the Safe & Together model to increase positive outcomes for domestic violence survivors and their families.
• **Support experimental, model, and demonstration programming that addresses a multidisciplinary legal representation approach for families.**
  
  o Support the implementation and expansion of a multidisciplinary model for all stages of child services cases, including pre-petition, which can function effectively in all of Ohio’s diverse counties. The model should include guidelines for how to effectively work with members of other disciplines to achieve the common goal of keeping families together when it is in the best interest of the child.

• **Support development and implementation of legislative framework for handling child welfare cases that replaces the current abuse, neglect, dependency model.**
  
  o Support the Supreme Court of Ohio Advisory Committee on Children and Families’ recommendation to implement a Child in Need of Protective Services (CHIPS) court framework to replace Ohio’s current abuse, neglect, and dependency court system. Continue partnering with the Supreme Court of Ohio to implement a CHIPS model that provides a child-centered, family-focused alternative to the abuse, neglect, and dependency model currently utilized.

• **Provide support to ensure that child victims of human trafficking or children at risk have access to skilled and competent services regardless of geography.**
  
  o Contribute to the development of a statewide infrastructure that serves human trafficking and exploitation child victims and children at risk of becoming victims through skilled professionals with specialized expertise regardless of geography.

• **Support experimental, model, and demonstration programming that promotes a multidisciplinary approach to improving outcomes for dual status youth.**
  
  o Support the expansion and evaluation of Ohio’s Dual Status Youth Program.
Q1 - Which best describes your role in the child protection system

- Former foster youth
- CASA/GAL
- Judge
- Magistrate
- PCAS attorney
- Prosecutor
- Court appointed attorney
- PCSA administrator
- PCSA caseworker
- Residential provider
- Foster parent
- Kinship caregiver
- Law enforcement
- Behavioral other provider
- Other: Please explain

#  | Field                                           | Minimum | Maximum | Mean | Std Deviation | Variance | Count
---|-------------------------------------------------|---------|---------|------|---------------|----------|-------
1  | Which best describes your role in the child protection system - Selected Choice | 1.00    | 15.00   | 7.61 | 4.59          | 21.07    | 554   
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<td>Judge</td>
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Q1_15_TEXT - Other: Please explain

Other: Please explain

Director of a Community Mental and SUD Outpatient Facility

Intake Supervisor

ODJFS - Technical Assistance Specialist

foundation

Children's Advocacy Center Director

Child Welfare Professional

PCSA Supervisor

therapist
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<td>Former PCSA Caseworker</td>
<td>Advocate for aged out youth and children/adults w trauma backgrounds, adoptive parent if sibling group of 4 placed w us 15 years ago by Cuyahoga</td>
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<td>Forensic Examiner/Evaluator</td>
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<td>Various</td>
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<td>Clerical staff at PNA</td>
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<td>Front Desk Receptionist</td>
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<td>PNA Caseworker</td>
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<td>I was asst pros. for 14 years and represented DHS</td>
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<td>Provide Network provider</td>
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<td>Parent</td>
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<td>Family Treatment Court Facilitator</td>
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<td>Clinical Social Worker/MH Therapist</td>
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<td>I am a GAL, court appointed attorney, and foster parent</td>
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<td>court appointed counsel and/or GAL</td>
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<td>foster care network administrator</td>
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<td>Clinical Supervisor of Treatment Foster Care families and behavioral health counselors and social workers</td>
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<td>State Coalition staff</td>
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<td>Kinship and adoption navigator program administrator</td>
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Q2 - The Subcommittee Responding to Abuse, Neglect and Dependency has been working on a new statutory framework to replace the current statutory requirements for Abuse, Neglect and Dependency. This framework is called Child in Need of Protective Services (CHIPS). Are you familiar with the CHIPS framework?

Yes: 41.47%  226
No: 58.53%  319

Showing rows 1 - 3 of 3
Q2A - If yes, do you have questions or comments about:

- The impact on caseworkers
- The court process
- The impact on families
- The impact on children
- Other Question(s) or Comment(s)

### Choice Count

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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The impact on caseworkers</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>19.38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The court process</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>24.23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The impact on families</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>18.06%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The impact on children</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>25.99%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Question(s) or Comment(s)</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>12.33%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Q2A_10_TEXT - Other Question(s) or Comment(s)

- I feel like it could be an impact on all of these areas.
- I support the concept
- Just hoping the past “stigma” is not a deterrent to the newly revised efforts, which are needed!
- No
- I am not in favor of changing the current laws on child abuse and neglect. I believe the new rules will make it harder to protect children that need it.
My daughter was wrongfully removed from my care. She was not in imminent harm. She was in a hospital that my son, who had control of her at the time, took her to. I had no phone. Was living in a hotel. I went out of town overnight to get help with my phone issues. I wasn't even gone 24 hours. And she was taken away because my son was not given consent to treat her when she has had all this trauma and has been hospitalized prior. And they could not get ahold of me. They did however show up at my mom's house to hand me a subpoena 1.5 hrs prior to the hearing. Not the customary 24 hour notice. She went into foster care right after being discharged from the hospital. Time lines were not followed. Dispositional hearing was not started until May 12 2020 7 months after this case started. She was placed in a foster home where she was 1 of 10 children living in filth and animal as well as human excrement. She was abused and neglected at the hands of the foster parents as well as the children living there. An emergency ex-parte order was filed in February. But was never heard and was dismissed at the dispositional hearing May 12. She was returned to me after 7 months of being taken away. But because of her being in foster care she is more messed up now, than she was when she went into foster care. And for that we still have an open case. My daughter has not received proper treatment for all the trauma she has gone through. The counseling agency was court ordered despite the fact we were going there on our own three years prior to her being placed in foster care. They will not let me change providers to get the services she needs. They have done one session of family counseling. No trauma focused counseling. We were told instead of me being allowed to put her in a PHP program at Akron Children's Hospital that they would increase her counseling to 3 x week. That lasted 1 week. They then reduced her down to once per week. And now once every other week. The counselor is too busy to see her any more than that. I was court ordered to sign any and all releases that any person that was involved in our case asked for. Including Psychotherapy notes that are to be kept confidential. And require a separate authorization to release the information. Which was not done and is a HIPAA violation. But I signed them because if I didn't they threatened to put me in jail. Then the next time in court, the judge stated that he only requested that of my daughter and not myself. The court order clearly states otherwise. Because of the QIC Initiative this provider is contracted with the local hospital and we sit in the ER for hours before being assessed. This provider is used by the judicial system to the point that money is more important than the best interest of the child. In other words they are too busy to offer her the trauma focused counseling she need as well as counseling more than once every other week. My daughter has been hospitalized 12 times in the last 14 months. Most admissions occurred during or after foster care.

I think it would be great to focus on CHIPS.

I think it will reduce confusion. Parents often ask about the nature of the charges and view the case like a criminal case.

All of the above.

I think the issue of jurisdiction following the ending of a CHIPS (or any CPS case) should also be address. Some counties require a juvenile court to retain jurisdiction over a youth even 10+ years later. The statute should be clear as to any continuing jurisdiction a CHIPS Court will have following a successful or unsuccessful closure.

No questions

I have heard of CHIPS. But do not enough to comment

I do not agree with the supposed need to change the terminology in the statute from Dependency, Neglect and Abuse. Any rare conflicts in the statutes can be harmonized by brief revisions.

Hopefully the process will be streamlined to assist all parties in the stream of providing better protection for children.

no

Impact on Permanent Custody cases

none

I support the concept.

How will CHIPS affect practice? What OAC rules will change?

Unnecessary. Why do we need it?
Children who cannot speak for themselves, especially due to disability or medical condition often do not have their needs well represented in court.

No

The concept of CHIPS is interesting and has some value, however, there is a concern that if CHIPS comes to fruition that this will widen the net of families and youth that the community will expect to have court oversight. This raises issues/concerns related to capacity and community expectations in respect to the role of child protection.

We are concerned that, by removing the labels of neglect, abuse and dependency from the parents, and shifting to calling the youth in need of services, that this shifts the stigma and blame onto the youth.

No

NO

No question. Thank you.
Q3 - In Ohio, certain professionals are mandated to report child abuse and neglect as outlined in R.C.2151.421. Please select all the ways you believe mandated reporter requirements can be improved.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Field</th>
<th>Choice Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Creation of standard mandated reporter curriculum</td>
<td>38.72% 350</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Mandated reporter training should be updated to include implicit bias, equity, and inclusion</td>
<td>31.53% 285</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Additional professions should be included in the definition of mandated reporters</td>
<td>22.12% 200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Some professions should be removed from the definition of mandated reporters</td>
<td>2.21% 20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Other: Please explain</td>
<td>4.09% 37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>I am not a mandated reporter, so this does not apply to me</td>
<td>1.33% 12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Showing rows 1 - 7 of 7

Q3_5_TEXT - Other: Please explain

Other: Please explain
 Definitely training about poverty and the fact that being poor does not equate to abuse. Also being in foster care or removed doesn't solve all problems. The trauma of removal and other aspects should be part of training.

Anyone who is in contact with children in the system

Statues should include that employers may not interfere with an employees obligation as a mandated reporter

Better education as to when reporting is required.

Mandated reporter letters should always go out. Everyone who is a mandated reporter who also has a professional education requirement should be required to take annual training on mandated reports.

Mandated reporters should be protected by the law from retaliation by employers who may disagree that a report was necessary.

Better guidelines, timesframes for mandated reported…example…schools not reporting CAN until the end of the day or after child has left school if there was a disclosure of CAN earlier in the day

Address removing all internal policies and procedures are removed for institutions employing mandated reporters. Address mandated reporting as requirement for all and remove limitation within employment of how the mandated reporter should report concerns. (Many schools implement requirements in which only administrator or principal is to report when a teacher has first hand information. Often information is misreported or not reported all.

I think Ohio should examine the classification of mandatory reporters. I believe it is unnecessary reports with a netwidening impact. netwidening

clarification should be made as to whether this duty is fulfilled by reporting to your supervisor pursuant to employer’s rule - many employers require that employee reports abuse to them. concerns dont always get passed along by employer -or critical details are missing.

Need clarification as to professional development regarding mandated reported for different professions/ licenses. (i.e. Social Workers, Teachers, Counselors, etc.)

Schools and other organizations should receive specific instruction that reporting to a supervisor/contact in the organization itself is insufficient. Personal knowledge should be reported directly to law enforcement or PCSA.

Failure to report should have consequences

I believe the present mandated reporter statute is appropriate

All teachers and school counselors receive training from the CPS staff in their county.

I do not see a need for change to the current law in this area.

A list of what a caseworker considers investigation worthy. Nine times of out 10, I will receive a declination to even do a home visit.

Where mandated reporting intersects with other children in the home of my adult child's half-siblings.
Other: Please explain

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Requirement</th>
<th>Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mandated reporter requires are clear. CAN screening is different across the 88 different counties</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A clearer definition of when to report.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standard way to report, perhaps by online submission or other written form.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There should be additional training for the CPS workers who take the hotline calls.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I understand my obligations as a mandated reporter, but I have no idea what everyone else's obligations are to suggest any changes.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>stay same</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>addressing issues of dual roles which often leads to lack of reporting</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agency's do not seem to show genuine concern when mandated reporters make reports. Concerns over not being heard although required to report.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I think schools wait too long to report scholastic problems. Often times we are inundated with children services filings at the end of school year just before summer break.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clean training when hired re: what should be reported, and what information to have available when reporting. Electronic system of reporting would be helpful as well.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current requirements are adequate.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I don't think there is a problem with the current mandated reporter system</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Better local processes for providing mandated reporters with the follow up information that they are entitled to.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I often come across people in this profession who do not even know they are mandatory reports. Furthermore, when something does need to be reported, many people do not even know who to call or if it is serious enough to report. I think there should be a training or at least notice to mandatory reporters that the reports are mandatory and how the events should be reported.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Include emotional abuse. It's too subjective. Don't change the AP, ACV designations.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Simplicity of how to report (Dial 922 for example)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Better understanding of PCSA screening guidelines</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I would suggest that mandated reporters not be permitted to report anonymously</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Q4 - In your practice, do you experience cases that require sharing of information or documents across jurisdictions, either county to county or state to state?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Field</th>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std Deviation</th>
<th>Variance</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>In your practice, do you experience cases that require sharing of information or documents across jurisdictions, either county to county or state to state?</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>1.25</td>
<td>0.59</td>
<td>0.35</td>
<td>516</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Field</th>
<th>Choice Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>83.53% 431</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>8.33% 43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>I do not have the kind of professional practice that requires me to share information</td>
<td>8.14% 42</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Q4A - If yes, please describe specific challenges involved with sharing information or documents. Do you have any suggestions for practice/policy changes to address this challenge?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Challenge</th>
<th>Suggestion/Recommendation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ICPC has improved state to state sharing. SACWIS and TRAVERSE has improved county PCSA-PCSA sharing. All other sharing of documents is on case by case basis and typically done through traditional mail services.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We are in need of clear guidance on how to legally share information with other states that do not have the same HIPAA or PHI rules</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There are some agencies who are reluctant to share information with our agency even though they are a child protection agency.</td>
<td>Standard Release Forms would be beneficial.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No personal experience</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NO</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There are some agencies who are reluctant to share information with our agency even though they are a child protection agency.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standard Release Forms would be beneficial.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No personal experience</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NO</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Criminal data from other counties/jurisdictions is sometimes difficult to obtain through public records. Also, some public professionals such as probation officers are reluctant to share information. Perhaps a standard for information sharing along with a mechanism to implement information sharing should be considered.</td>
<td>The biggest challenge I faced was that the caseworkers at times didn't know what they could/should or not share.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The biggest challenge I faced was that the caseworkers at times didn't know what they could/should or not share.</td>
<td>Time limits for each state to respond in providing case/treatment information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is difficult to determine what information can be released as it is dependent on the 1) type of information requested, 2) who is requesting the information, 3) what information can be released, and 4) can the requesting person receive the information they are requesting. I would like more information on releasing another agency's report (such as an AOD assessment).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>no real challenges</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>no</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>no</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State to State is the biggest challenge due to the differences in privacy laws as well as requirements for subpoenas for records. It would be helpful to have a more uniform policy or statute for releasing records especially Children's Services or Job and family services. Additionally, provisions should include accessing child support orders whether court or administrative as well as paternity establishment. Sorting out point of contact for children's services records custodians in other states is overly burdensome and not easily accessed.</td>
<td>A universal release of information with other public agencies and specifically for separated children services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A universal release of information with other public agencies and specifically for separated children services</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More training/reassurance of what can be shared to prevent any delay</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
States have different standards/procedures/expectations on how to respond to child abuse/neglect/dependency

Interstate compact for placement of children is slow.

CPS records from other jurisdictions should be available to GALs with valid appointment orders

Barriers to sharing documents and information across counties in Ohio should be removed. I practice in SW Ohio, and many families move across county lines. The logistical barriers accompanying a 5 mile move can be daunting. This seems unnecessary.

no

working with the parent to explain this is a resource

many gray areas

We frequently find agencies won't share information because of their own policies.

It takes much longer

county workers case loads are very high and it is hard for them to remain connected to the kids I serve

We work with children who may be living outside out county. Similar services exist in other counties, but it is difficult to know who to go to, i.e. respite providers.

Takes too long to get records form other county agencies

None

Psychiatrists, Psychologists, & Counselors seldom cooperate, or do kicking and screaming

HIPPA rules prevent the release of information that makes the states job more challenging when parents are uncooperative with their attorneys and/or state.

how to keep confidential

Streamlining ICPC investigations to make them MUCH quicker!

Each agency is run differently, so it is hard to know who to contact for the most accurate information, which is typically time-sensitive.

Recently, a neighboring state said they would not release a prior TPR decision without a court-order from their own judge and refused to comply with a subpeona

Every agency has a different requirement

no

It takes too long to get interstate responses

Different computer systems and difficulty getting documents from other counties/entities
If yes, please describe specific challenges involved with sharing information:

- Some jurisdictions are very hesitant or reluctant to provide relevant information.

Retrieving documents:

- Not getting them in a timely manner.

ICPC needs to be more uniform:

- Timeliness in receiving documents

The documents may not all be housed in a single location; e.g., some may be at the court while others are with an agency, and still others may be with a GAL.

FERPA, HIPAA confidentiality, people don't know the difference and default to never sharing anything

Working with other CSB agencies in other states:

- We need a change so that law enforcement is required to as part of the Miranda warnings include the right of a juvenile to consult with an attorney, parent, or other adult. J&F&S and law enforcement interviews of children should be recorded so that defense experts can review them. In alternative the defense should have the right to have a defense expert interview the children.

Clarify if, when and where info can be shared:

- It often takes months to share information. There should be federal time frames (and funding for) the sharing of information across state lines.

The ICPC process seems to go smoothly. I wish there was a similar process for families in Ohio with prior contact with out of state children's services. It is sometimes difficult to get information from other state's regarding children's educational, medical, and other out of state records.

If other jurisdictions are not willing to share the information:

- There is a delay in getting child welfare information from out of state agencies. A country-wide system, like our state-wide system, would be extremely beneficial.

When sharing across systems, from behavioral health to medical, there are often barriers in obtaining needed records to accurately assess client needs which limits appropriate planning and linking of services.

In some cases it takes an extensive time frame for law enforcement departments to provide police reports to Children Service agencies. I realize each agency has different mandates, however when gathering information, the collection of all information in a timely manner would be beneficial.

- Reduce the amount of red tape to get additional information

Difficulty communicating -- creating an open share system for information

State-to-State information sharing can be challenging. Sometimes little information is shared.

County to county information sharing is quite complicated for all parties - GALs, foster parents, the courts, and the minor child. On the other hand, information related to domestic violence and child safety sometimes should not be shared with the agency or other attorneys because it jeopardizes safety of the family and foster parents.
If yes, please describe specific challenges involved with sharing information...

A nationwide site where agencies can go to track down who to report allegations to and how they handle child abuse/neglect cases. Example: I come from a county with shared border with 2 states, each one conducted investigations different from us and different from each other. After years of transferring information I recently learned that one of the states uses different language and definition of what a “case” is. In Ohio a case is opened the minute we select “screened in”, in that state a case is not opened until it goes to ongoing; prior to that it is called an investigation.

It should be easier to share and receive info from law enforcement, prosecutors during investigations.

Sometimes it appears other agencies or courts do not want to get involved for fear that they will now have jurisdiction over the child.

Jurisdiction between Juvenile courts must be addressed. Often families move while having an open court case. As children are born or there are concerns the PCSAs are limited in the ability to file with a juvenile court, representing attorneys and prosecutors refuse to file, or there is no agreement for venue. PCSAs are unable to maintain safety of a child in which there is a refusal to hear a case based on differences of who/where a filing should occur.

Occasionally I communicate with others regarding issues in my case. I generally do this telephonically.

Obtaining releases

Too much county to county differences

ability to create MOUs that shorten/streamlines the process of sharing information

It is cumbersome to share information from state to state to other stakeholders

It does require knowing the law and if the entity is entitled. Often agencies think just by having a person sign a release they are then entitled to the info.

Comprehensive way to do this across all counties; different counties have different ways of sharing information / requests so an all around way to do this would be easier.

I feel that with the many independent data bases which may contain information on the families we serve the systems need to communicate. For example the public assistance program may have information pertaining to the household composition or the CSEA system may contain paternity information which would be pertinent to the CPS case. There may be information regarding the address and location of the family in both system. This lack of communication between these systems could potentially prevent necessary intervention putting children at risk. The lack of information sharing regarding house hold composition could also potentially place CPS staff at risk when initiating a case.

N/A

What it is that you can send and there needs to be a way of explaining things not to look so bad or not enough description

Not a party to full case

State Interstate Compact Offices take too long to respond to other state requests. Ashtabula County works with PA quite a bit and you are talking, at least, a 6 month response time.

As a PCSA director, sometimes it gets frustrating due to our assistant prosecutors wanting us to share information that 5101:2-33-21 does not permit us to share. This would be both with the assistant prosecutor and other professionals.

HIPPA creates many challenges, so lightening restrictions in that respect would be very helpful.

PCSA's have one central system that contains state-wide information. It would be great if all court systems could have a similar program.
If yes, please describe specific challenges involved with sharing information.

Other agencies not cooperating.

Difficulty in getting responses from other agencies to gather necessary information.

when different states have different rules, the time it takes to get a response

No ROI’s present a challenge when we are all here for the same purpose

None

It is occasionally difficult to sort through the information from other jurisdictions and to know what parts of this information are accurate and what parts may not be accurate. I know of no system that would help in making this determination.

legislation that would allow us to share easier

Sharing information can be quite challenging. I think there should be a statewide system that holds all of the relevant data to assist in keeping children safe instead of each county having their own systems.

Procedural requirements appear to differentiate from county to county.

Cooperation challenging.

Given the confidential nature of our records, there is always concern when releasing information to law enforcement agencies conducting investigations in other counties. While willing, able and wanting to share the information as requested, the concern for the information to be re-released and shared beyond always exists. We've been sued in the past due to this very scenario. The relationship with Mental Health and Drug & Alcohol service providers is also often strained due to restrictions on information sharing. This is a significant problem given the ever increasing number of cases involving these providers. The HIPAA privacy rule, standards and associated laws are absolutely necessary protections, but often times also prevent the coordination of effective and efficient services to those in need; delaying meaningful treatment, preventing future harm/injury, etc.

Our only challenge is information sharing with Children's Services. They want everything we have but when we need important and quick information, they will not share the information they have.

Getting the correct permissions from clients to share or request the information, different places requiring their own releases (when it is already hard to get one signed, you have to have their agency’s signed), providers not understanding workers inability to share all information.

ICPC has vague timeliness requirements for responses. A “within 30 days of request for information” type of requirement would be reasonable and help with this.

When youth are involved in multiple systems such as juvenile justice and children services.

Logistics. Never know if all info is exchanged

Many states will not accept court orders from out of state to allow me to get or share information

Different counties have different standards, deadlines, requirements

It is important as a CASA to be able to obtain information involving cases when clients move from one county to another, which can happen frequently when you live in a more rural community.
If yes, please describe specific challenges involved with sharing information.

There are some states that have a centralized intake and other that are county to county like Ohio is. This can be confusing at times and it would be nice to have a list of all of the states that are centralized and the contact information for those states.

Information is available to other counties in SACWIS and you can't tell who is viewing the information.

It is sometimes difficult or very slow to get documents from one court to another. Sometimes there are jurisdictional battles between counties in which both counties refuse to take jurisdiction.

Transportation of evidence that cannot be mailed or emailed

Multi-System (MSY funding) releases of information have been comprehensive and helpful - may be worth exploring

state to state, ICPC are most challenging

Differences in levels of technology among Ohio jurisdictions

Not everyone has access to the same systems or frameworks. For example, the Court has one system and Children's Services has another and the two do not interface.

Cooperation between various entities. Some are willing to share, others are not.

No clear rules on sharing records with other courts/prosecutors for other related cases (CPO, custody/visitation/guardianship of siblings, etc)

Locating the agency that is needed and the worker within that agency.

Eliminate the need for signed releases of information. Instead, agencies should greatly expand memos of understanding.

Typically the custodian allows us to share the records across jurisdictions and we do not run into this issue much.

I think it is a struggle at times when Children Services cannot provide information to certain entities within the County.

Info from SACWIS into private agency software systems is mostly prohibited; private sector agencies are not well integrated into public data systems, yet the agencies must be integrated into the public service delivery system

not sent timely, not fully sharing important information,

this does not occur often.

When dealing with sister counties or states; delays can be great in coordinating efforts.

Especially difficult to share across State Lines as every State has its own process and trying to track down the correct one can be time consuming and place children at risk

There should be more professions that there is a federal MOU that agencies can share information.

Based on the level of intricate involvement with the juvenile justice system and the school system, it would be nice to be able to allow certain information be shared with those two without confidentiality getting in the way. Additionally, would like to see juvenile justice, the schools, and law enforcement be bound by the same confidentiality rules as child welfare when dealing with sensitive victim information and CAN reports.

Release of information often presents a barrier. One agency may have a release but the other does not. This should be looked at.
If yes, please describe specific challenges involved with sharing information...

Some agencies do not accept our release of information for sharing information which creates a barrier to obtaining needed information from providers.

I do not know enough about it

Just the sharing of information in general. It could always stand improvement.

Takes a long time to get it sometimes, the need for releases when people wont sign them

We cannot always receive information from law enforcement through email. Also Michigan laws state jurisdiction is where the incident occurred, while Ohio law states jurisdiction is where the custodian lives.

Mandated reporters do not realize they need to share the documents that are relevant when making reports. Training could improve this.

Other parties giving out the information that is provided to legal professionals.

In state it is much easier with SACWIS. The concern with out of state are the differing rules for sharing state to state.

Obtaining accurate releases of information. I do placements and a lot of providers prior to accepting youth want to review any mental health assessments which we are typically not able to re-release with an ROI which causes barriers for emergency placements.

Hard to get information with details from out of county or state childrens services cases

At this time all Children Services agencies are to be using the Traverse Documentation system. Many files have not been uploaded to that system across the state. It is hard to obtain some of that information as county's are busy doing the mandatory work and aren't always finding the time for gathering documentation.

Difficulty getting approval to share info, and discernment regarding confidentiality.

Knowing whom to contact.

Each agency believes their information is confidential. It seems to me that if we are talking about the same case then the information should be shared across agency lines.

Sometimes just making contact is difficult. Calls aren't returned. Emails are not answered. Etc. And Covid restrictions virtually eliminate all face to face contact.

Ohio has statewide system for child welfare but law enforcement records are more challenging

Parents are not always willing to sign a release of information - hindering investigations, safety/risk reduction and sharing of information to important service providers. It would be helpful to the protection of children if this could be would not be so restrained.

Simple bureaucratic red tape ant extreme caution with personal information by entities

Getting in touch with and obtaining records with other state PCSAs, knowledge of whether the family has CPS history in other states

Being accused of breaking confidentiality [assumptions] because they don't understand the role of a GAL

Children's services agencies from distant counties are reluctant to share records or make it difficult to obtain the records
If yes, please describe specific challenges involved with sharing information:

As a foster parent Nationwide Children’s Hospital has repeatedly refused to give me office visit summaries on the child in my care. One consent form for all, signed when a child is placed.

Each State has different requirements and different access points. A uniform access system would facilitate communication and access allowing less faxes and more emailing would save a ton of paper.

Getting required releases or Court orders to share necessary info

It usually involves Child Protection Agencies sharing information regarding placement of children across state lines. Some exchange would be necessary for the proper placement of the children.

Some states will share nothing, citing privacy or confidentiality. Agencies often follow the lead of local courts.

Jurisdictional issues are subjective and each jurisdiction interprets ORC/OAC differently thereby impacting how or what information is shared.

Secure digital platform to utilize across state lines to efficiently share information.

Agency specific policy/procedure is different and not always allowing for information to be shared.

CPS agencies are slow to respond, if at all, to issues or questions raised by the GAL. Agencies should be required to respond within 48 hours.

Out of state ICPC process is complex and takes quite a bit of time. Requirements for asking assistance from another state should be simplified.

We can not get out of state documents. Local agencies require in state subpoenas.

No challenges. In most case we are sharing information with another PCSA.

The challenge I have experienced is one of coordination. Interstate and intrastate jurisdictions need to obviously coordinate. Compact forms such as the ICPC exist. The process is slow, perhaps because it involves completion of paperwork. Can paper trail verification be handled virtually?

More education for CSB caseworkers on BH workers limitations around confidentiality (IE can’t release information)

As GAL I am supposed to keep all information confidential. Sometimes this is an impediment to serving the Best Interest of the Child.

Court to court policies (either in written policies or in practice differ as to who are appropriate viewers of confidential information. Some times we have issues with getting info to people who need it and sometimes it may be too freely given. Clarity would help with the decision making process.

This involves other Judges if dealing with jurisdiction or which is convenient forum

Follow up

Interstate Compact can be challenging at times

Recognition of court orders/releases/local practice vs. state standard

Letters sent at the end of an investigation are vague and contain little info, leaving another jurisdiction guessing as to what happened.
If yes, please describe specific challenges involved with sharing information:

- Delays while releases are signed.
- Different terminology from state to state and different documents.
- Differences in forms of documentation; Timeliness.
- It has usually worked very well.
- Requirement to notify the court of placement changes are not always met; an easier method by which to share information on children in both child welfare and juvenile justice systems when documents are requested and there is no open case in juvenile court. Explaining to the attorney or the Judge from another county I need a court order to release records.
- Each entity involved needs to assure the information they are providing is complete and correct.
- Universal releases.
- Just basic transmittal issues. Administrative not substantive matters.
- The current federal ICPC process remains slow and requiring an extra layer of processing at the state level instead of county.
- No consistent form or language and each jurisdiction has their own set of standards and requirements.
- Medical and behavioral health do not want to share information, schools want to use the information in a non-professional way, across state lines is impossible.
- There is concern about how secure information is being transferred electronically and stored. Given our agency is small, the resources to tap into our limited.
- Sharing of information has gotten easier with implementation of NIECE (state to state) and Traverse (Northwoods). I can't think of specific challenges now.
- None.
- Sharing documents with MDT members is challenging due to different rules regarding confidentiality i.e. Law Enforcement file becomes public record at conclusion of case.
- I have little difficulty as I have resources to call upon.
- N/A.
- None that I can think of.

State to state sharing is difficult and time consuming when trying to find the appropriate contact and jurisdiction. Sharing of information across disciplines is also difficult, especially due to confidentiality laws. It would be great if there were specific purposes designated (safety of children) that would allow the sharing of information without a signed release of information.
The biggest challenges I have found are related to timing and communication. Some states move more slowly than others in doing home studies or background checks. This makes the child's future uncertain for a longer period of time. In regards to communication, I have seen state to state communication completely lacking in some cases, making standards for communication necessary.

The time involved in obtaining this information is not as quick as it always should be. In some instances information is shared via phone calls that is not in the documentation or noted otherwise. Not all counties operate the same way, some information is not always available and some obsolete.

privacy and different compliance policies

Perhaps this is not a question for you to ask me. As a GAL, I don’t typically have problem getting the information I seek. Everyone who witnesses or suspects abuse almost always talks to me on the QT, law or no law.

Some agencies do not want to share information with other outside agencies.

Court to Court has generally not been a problem.

development of Traverse has greatly improved this

lack of cooperation between counties

As a private agency there is no shared electronic system and HIPAA prevents us from sharing without authorization unless we receive a subpoena.

As a CASA GAL, I am required to document the wellbeing of my charges locally to administrators as well as serve my charges when outside my locale. The sharing of my information through court systems and counties is predicated on and through the advisement of CASA

A generalized release of information which all must utilize to streamline sharing of information would be extremely helpful in breaking down barriers.

Over all there are no issues. Sometimes out-of-state guidelines are different, therefore making receiving information or giving information difficult.

lack of communication and follow through, high turnover of personnel

Sometime others are afraid to share because they might get into legal trouble. When in fact its all in the best interest of the child.

The challenges are less frequent since we have access to SACWIS.

It would be very helpful to have a standard release of information form that all organizations could use. Our Department of Job & Family Services is a quadruple combined agency and they are not permitted to use information obtained in one program area in other program areas. Expanding the use of information across departments/organizations will often enable individuals to have better access to the legal system as contact information can change several times throughout a case.

We have been rather successful in this process.

The problem is the time table to get a placement approved in another state. The documentation has to from Ohio's state capital to the state where the individual lives then to the county department of children and family services. Then a social worker is assigned to do the home study. The paper work is then sent back in the same path that it got there. In may cases this takes 6 months. This is very problematic for the court process and to the child.

Some jurisdictions refuse to respond

Clear index with contact information to report concerns of a statewide online system to submit concerns.
I have had cases as a GAL where children were placed out of state and it was difficult to obtain information despite having court orders that satisfied HIPAA.

I am a DA/N magistrate. Sometimes parents move to other counties/states, or have moved to this county from other places. It is difficult to get information from the other counties and is sometimes difficult to transfer the case to the parent's new county of residence. I do not have any good suggestions for a remedy, but almost always the move to another county/state greatly hinders reunification efforts.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lack of cooperation between entities</th>
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Difficult to provide info when it is now kept electronically.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Standard protocols across jurisdictions would help</th>
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<tr>
<th>Privacy policies and/or concerns regarding client/attorney privilege</th>
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<tr>
<th>Creation of a secure database.</th>
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<tr>
<th>Timeliness and ability to reach the correct person to talk with to get the information.</th>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Confidentiality, time frames, and competing practices can be challenges regarding sharing information.</th>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>Whether material is confidential or should be shared to effectuate due process</th>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>HIPAA</th>
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Everything we do has to be shared via Interstate Compact which is not always timely and requires communication with a third party. It is much easier to communicate directly with parties to ensure all information is accurate and detailed. It is also hard to identify the correct department/agency to contact for law enforcement and/or children's services across state and counties lines. The systems are often organized differently and use different terminology. Getting everyone to use the same terminology would be a good starting point.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Difficulty obtaining information with our Court's Order w/o simultaneous Order from other jurisdiction Court</th>
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<tr>
<th>Family not always willing to sign releases of information to allow us access to info</th>
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</table>

State to State is difficult to navigate due to conflicting laws. A referral for services to another state should be taken in order of request versus the perceived bottom of the list.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Inter-agency (county JFS to county JFS) transfers are unnecessarily slow and complicated, often based on needless territorialism.</th>
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</table>

Not all records are in electronic format, making the process of sharing cumbersome and time consuming. The ability to share access of electronic documents across counties using Traverse would be a great asset.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
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</table>

I think it can be difficult to collaborate as a team approach with each agency having a different release of info.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Releases should not be necessary to share Judgment Entries relating to DNA Cases with other courts or JFS'.</th>
</tr>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A parent or interested grandparent living in another state - problems with vastly different procedures in Ohio counties</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
If yes, please describe specific challenges involved with sharing information:

None

- Confirming information is received in a timely manner & follow up/confirmation once received.

- Agencies do not work with each other and very untimely

- It would be nice to see some CLE offered on how to handle multi jurisdiction issues in these cases and on how different counties handle these types of cases. Finding quality CLE's that address more than the basics is a general difficulty as a new attorney but highly applicable to this issue.

- When sending the info to other jurisdictions, it often times does not get addressed in a timely manner, if at all.

- Response time. Lack of response at all

- Court filings. Background checks

- Confidentiality even between attorneys for same parent/gal

- Lack of understanding with other smaller jurisdictions

- The biggest challenge is ensuring proper releases are in place so that information can be shared timely.

- Clarify what is confidential or can be shared, and by which agency or court… as some require a motion or court action, and some do not.

- Inconsistency across states on how to obtain needed information, what information is released and the time frames for receiving requested information

- Some states will not acknowledge my appointment(s) from an Ohio court, and, on that basis will not share information with me even when I present my credentials to the appropriate officials.

- County DJFS Offices have "discretion" to provide requested materials from a GAL in another County. This makes gathering all pertinent information/records sometimes difficult.

- As a GAL I would like better access to state-wide criminal records.

- CPS agencies are often hesitant to share their records with out Counties or pursuant to Court orders from other Courts

- None

- so many passwords and logins - a universal system would be nice

- Sharing and collaborating between agencies and offices is challenging in general, but sharing with different jurisdictions or out of state is even more challenging.

- Agencies who fail to respond to repeated requests for information.

- In a word----pettiness.

- Policy should be set, maintained and administered at State level not county level.
If yes, please describe specific challenges involved with sharing information...

HIPAA is challenging sometimes

every county is different

HIPAA prevents sharing of certain documents and information which provides barriers in some cases. I suggest a mandate that HIPPA does not apply to giving information and documents to GALs, but applies to GALs providing them to others.

It is difficult at times to receive information from providers regarding clients even if a release of information has been signed.

Judges in certain states will ignore the law in regards to ICPC and UCCJEA dumping cases onto jurisdictions that actually do the work and follow the laws.

Professionals are often confused on what can and cannot be released with or without a release of information. Creating a more clear standard of sharing could assist in this.

Foster parents/networks input has not always been accepted by court systems.

Frequently, I am prohibited from sharing confidential or sensitive information with other jurisdictions. Our cases frequently cross county lines and most often information is passed by way of a new referral in that county.

I have seen counties not accept referrals and refer to a different county and as a result of these back and forth the family is not getting seen in the process and could be at risk.

So far all the Counties I have worked with will share information once the proper signatures are obtained. Presently having difficulty getting information from Buckeye Ranch in Franklin County. They will not respond to emails and have not attempted to make contact with our agency.

Not always being clear on what is appropriate to share

ICPC's are always a challenge.

As a worker in a private foster care agency, we are given very few details.

The ICPC process for establishing an out of state placement for a child can take a prohibitively long time - increasing efficiency would benefit the children greatly.

Challenges include being aware of HIPPA and getting the correct documentation signed by the custodial agency; caseworkers being overwhelmed by large caseloads and not responding to requests for signatures. I wish I did have some suggestions to help out this situation.

A solid data collection system.

Specific statutory exceptions

Counties and states have varying software systems which makes secure document sharing difficult and cumbersome.

It would make sense that a person/title be determined on the county level so all counties know who to interact with.

ICPCs can take too long
If yes, please describe specific challenges involved with sharing information...

**Confidentiality**

Not all states are using the NEICE system

NA

It's hard to share information that can protect a child but it violates HIPPA or other statutes

out of state agencies not as responsive to requests for information as are agencies in my area with which I regularly work

We are not to distribute information to GALS/Counsel received from SACWAS from other agencies

Timeliness of receiving the information.

Non-conformity across state lines makes sharing information difficult.

We always have questions when the sharing of information involves another state - Our staff are always unsure as to the requirements.

Information should be shared from county to state to assist in protecting the victim. Putting victims back with the abuser because they are a minor and then having to wait until JFS discovers or is alerted to a 'situation or additional abuse' is not helpful to the victim and healing their trauma.

At times, it is difficult to get important information that is needed in a timely manner. Moving towards a shared paperless system is beneficial but only if all counties use the system.

When a parent has criminal history or a past history involving abused, neglected, or dependent children, often the only way to get the records is to send a certified letter. Some counties are good at responding, but many times it is more difficult to get these out of state records than any other type. I have had cases where we cannot even prove parents have had previous children permanently committed to the department or have been found to be severely abused. I often talk to coworkers about how great it would be to have a centralized system or at least some way of making sure these records can be obtained.

More transparency between counties. Easier access to other counties court records.

No concerns with cooperation, just the timeliness of receiving the information.

Even though we are county administered there needs to be a more uniform standard in regards to documentation and the sharing of information.

I personally have not had difficulty. I have witnessed other coworkers who have. It really depended on the person/agency receiving the request.

Working with multiple counties that have different procedures for the same thing is a time navigating the differences.

Releases of information modified for multi-disciplinary teams working with children and families

keeping confidentiality- assuring safe sends

Due to confidentiality it can be hard at times as you need a release of information

Foster parents routinely have foster children who've gone into care in multiple counties, or who have siblings in placements in other counties. Right now my current placement is asking for visitation with a bio sibling in another county, for example. County is denying visitation but isn't able to tell me why. I of course understand that there are privacy concerns, but we can't deal with our foster daughter's mental health needs without knowing the context.
If yes, please describe specific challenges involved with sharing information.

SACWIS is really useful but can be tricky and time consuming to navigate history. Older history is even more difficult to sort through due to conversion. State to state sharing of info can be cumbersome.

We use Traverse to allow sharing of documents.

Standard ROI’s should be create and presented to families early on to expedite wrapping families in services.

No challenges thus far.

Working with different agencies in different areas. There policies may be different.

Privacy, knowing who you can share what information with, needing ROI’s from clients who refuse.

Lack of understanding on what information is allowed to be shared, and with whom. It would be helpful to have a cross-collaborative understanding of everyone’s role and reporting requirements as well as confidentiality and communication requirements.

Challenges include that each county has different criteria for screening based on their size, capabilities, and community partners expectations.

I have issues with getting records from other states due to them requiring notarized documents or fees for requests. I also run into issues with some agency not accepting ROIs signed by clients for my agency and requiring the use of their ROI, which means me having to get extra paperwork filled out or relying on the client to fill it out on their own.

Obtaining releases of information is often a challenge. Confidentiality can be a barrier.

Current laws are sufficient; this is information that should not be shared lightly, especially with the variance in how they are applied across counties. Correction might be made in how they are applied. It is not accurate to say “confidentiality laws prohibit the sharing of this information,” when it clearly is in the best interests to do so.

When families have been referred to legal services for assistance in obtaining custody, CSB workers are reluctant to share information or assist in providing support.

From the PCSA perspective I review and apply relevant OAC in each situation. I feel that the OAC provides all necessary guidance.

HIPAA FERPA Other professionals misunderstanding of confidentiality A standard interdisciplinary training on confidentiality/privacy and a tool to assist professionals would be great. Additionally there should be consequences for professionals who fail to share relevant information. The current culture is CYA for professionals, to the detriment of children.

Difficulties include not receiving responses from another state or agency in a timely manner. If there was a national database for information sharing, or if each agency easily had a contact person for other states/agencies, it would be helpful.

Many cross county child welfare systems are reluctant to provide information to Courts, and only refer local systems to sacwis.

The largest challenge is confidentiality requirements. I don’t believe this should change as families deserve a right to privacy unless they sign a release of information.

There are challenges sharing information within the JFS system, even in combined agencies. There should be a free flow of information within the JFS system (CSEA, Public Assistance programs, etc.)
Q5 - In my experience, processes during and/or leading up to court proceedings present challenges pertaining to the placement of siblings.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Field</th>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std Deviation</th>
<th>Variance</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>In my experience, processes during and/or leading up to court proceedings present challenges pertaining to the placement of siblings.</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>1.43</td>
<td>0.69</td>
<td>0.47</td>
<td>495</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Field</th>
<th>Choice Count</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>68.28%</td>
<td>338</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>20.40%</td>
<td>101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>My profession does not involve placing siblings or advocating for placing siblings</td>
<td>11.31%</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Showing rows 1 - 4 of 4
Q5A - If agree, please share a concrete suggestion that would improve the processes pertaining to the placement of siblings.

Sibling rights need to be statutorily provided. They should not be disrupted in Permanent Custody matters. Sibling visitation should be prioritized if siblings are separated.

Sibling placement should not supersede a parent's right to placement

Children should be together if possible

more options for foster placement

The limited number of foster homes and foster homes not being permitted to have more than six children is a barrier for large sibling groups to stay together. The foster care rules need to be reviewed to determine how to license a home for large sibling groups.

Financial help to recruit more foster homes

More aggressive foster parent recruiting, and training/licensing small aggregate care facilities

Kinship caregivers are often asked if they can help care for children. They sometimes think it is a short-term commitment. When reunification is still the goal, it can be short-term, but once that is off the table, sometimes those caregivers are not willing to be there for the long haul. So, I think clearly defining what they are undertaking is necessary.

Need more placement opportunities to avoid separation of siblings.

Determining in advance whether a foster parent or kinship placement can take all siblings

Homes that are able to take more children or more available homes in general

Process takes too long and bio parents get too many chances.

Large sibling groups are hard to place; more recruitment of people willing to take large groups

More efforts to find kinship and family options should occur by DJFS. They are reluctant to explore all options.
If agree, please share a concrete suggestion that would improve the process...

**Foster parents are only licensed for certain age groups, or number of children.**

**a regional database of potential foster placements to include adjacent counties.**

**Require placing together unless a sib is a perp**

I have no suggestions, There is a huge need for families that can take sibling group

In my experience sibling separation was mostly due to a older child preferring to live with the other parent. I don't see how you could reduce the separation without impacting a child's right to have a voice in where they live

Provide more supports for foster families to take a sibling group.

The 30 days to family program works really well. I wish this was available to more families.

It is often difficult to find placement for children with severe behaviors, diagnoses, etc. This is due to the lack of services some states are able to provide. In addition, shortages of foster homes sometimes plays a role in having to separate siblings.

increase the amount of placement options for children

All efforts should be made to place children in a home where the siblings can also be - if, and only if, it is safe to do so. Too often, children are piecemeal placed as they are removed and never put together or even in close geographic proximity to improve maintaining relationships.

Try to get names and phone numbers for all locale family members from the parents at intake.

keep siblings together as much as possible

More thorough vetting of potential homes

special need sibling in a sibling group; large sibling groups

My suggestion would be to make sure that contacted between siblings in scheduled and mandated when siblings can't be placed together.

Having more resources/homes willing and able to take sibling groups

In my position we always strive to place siblings together, however this is often times difficult due to the capacity of the placement setting, the availability of beds, and in some cases the behaviors of the siblings prevents this from being an option.

Creating a way for a family to be able to take on all the siblings, through help either monetary or other resources to provide for the immediate placement of children.

Mandatory Monthly visits unless specific documentation that it is not in their best interest

Whether there is one sibling or several there are just not enough foster homes/kinships to take children.

Clear requirements on placement with relatives after a long term placement with a foster parent should be done.

increase the number of foster homes along with a wide acceptance criteria of those homes. Many of our homes only want 0-9 or younger children.
If agree, please share a concrete suggestion that would improve the process...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Suggestion</th>
<th>Details</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I understand that sometimes sibs can't be placed together at first however it often appears that people forget after the initial placement and are not diligent and don't keep trying.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>there is a need to find more foster parents</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recruiting and training foster parents that are willing to take sibling groups</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Often there are many fathers and schedules. If the agency doesn't have custody, then they don't supervise or facilitate visitation at their facility. If they did that, it would be very helpful.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>better utilization of relatives and when not possible saving foster homes that are able to accommodate a large sibling group open instead of filling the home one child at a time</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More foster homes</td>
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<tr>
<td>As a PNA we don't always have the access to sibling visitation that would help the children we care for. (i.e adoption situations that don't allow for visitation.)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I believe that there is a stronger presumption of the need to place all of the children of a relationship in the same home. Greater emphasis should be placed on the best interest of the individual children, rather than the need to place them together.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>we are in need of foster homes</td>
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<tr>
<td>More supports within the foster care field when sibling placement is required. As an agency we provide as much as possible, but oftentimes we do not have the resources and/or financial abilities needed.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Investigate family and or friends more enthusiastically.</td>
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<tr>
<td>One agency to oversee and kin to be notified</td>
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<tr>
<td>Keeping fosters that can take sibling groups open for only sibling groups and now giving them multiple individual kids.</td>
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<tr>
<td>I don't have a suggestion.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>If siblings cannot be placed together, there should be a requirement for them to visit with each other more than one day per week.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thorough GAL training and report??</td>
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<tr>
<td>GAL's need to be more included in the placement process. Children's Services does not listen to GAL's when it comes to placement concerns.</td>
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<tr>
<td>having homes specifically for sibling groups or large sibling groups along with trainings on how to deal with gaps in ages, children used to having the parenting role,</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Unsure what the answer is.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Separation typically occurs when different fathers and their families only desire placement of their blood relative. I don't believe there is a solution to this. IF the family member is willing to take the sibling, we would gladly place with them.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
If agree, please share a concrete suggestion that would improve the process...

The arrangement of placement placement, including facilities, should concentrate sibling placement. While entering into agreements with placement options, sibling placement needs to be discussed. Also, for foster placement, maybe examining the possibility of incentivizing families for accepting sibling placement.

I do not have a good suggestion. We need more foster parents!

Court Entry should include a mandated description of the status of siblings, and what consideration was given by the court, counsel, and agencies to reunite them

Keep them all together; however, that's getting harder to do with the number of out of home placements in the recent past.

CPS required to show substantial efforts to place sibs together

An outline of best practice

Listen more to the caseworkers that work daily and weekly with these families and what would be best.

Specifying that need at the time of licensure to assure that the family would be ready and equipped for the need.

Lucas County Children Services now has a unit doing family searches.

keep them together

There are certainly challenges, but ultimately the process is child and family centered.

From a child welfare perspective we are in need of more foster parents.

the court understanding that there are times when it's not in the children's best interest for them to be placed together because of safety concerns (violence or sex abuse)

Large sibling groups need more pre-complaint time to consider placement options

Siblings are separated, they need to stay together

I am not a social worker and I think I do not know how to improve the system, I just think it needs to be improved

Require siblings be placed together or in the case or large sibling sets (5 or more) they are placed in no more than two homes

Requiring placement to be within certain distance of sibling so as not to further complicate future sibling visitation if not placed together

Taking children out of their home should be a last resort. If necessary, kinship placement should be accelerated.

Courts allow child welfare agencies to make these decisions. Courts should not be making placement recommendations unless they are paying for the placements.

overly demanding standards for relatives seeking custody or temporary safety plan

Available placement options and quicker home study process.
If agree, please share a concrete suggestion that would improve the process...

increased funding for kinship placements to assist with the addition of family members.

Children of appropriate ages should be included in all discussions involving placement. Not all siblings do well together especially with step parents and step siblings.

Foster homes that can take larger sibling groups, additional resources to help family members take large sibling groups - financial resources.

I have no suggestions.

Have all the siblings attend therapy at same agency (not same clinician, but same agency)

It is difficult to find placements for large sibling groups. Many blended families cause children to be separated into different kinship placements. Decisions sometimes have to be made within hours of a crisis.

Require that all siblings be placed together unless a court finds extenuating circumstances that prevent, such as abusive behavior by a child toward another child.

Default should place siblings together.

Siblings placed together tend to have better outcomes, courts should strive to have a visitation plan when children cannot be placed together.

seeking foster homes that specifically would accept large sibling groups

I don’t know that there are any good solutions, caregivers can only take so many kids, and sometimes there is one child with extreme behaviors who requires a different placement.

Placement matching to insure stability and commitment to the sibling group. Policy interventions that promote positive sibling relationships regardless of placement and that provide for a level of positive family engagement between the sibling group.

Due to the fact that there is a scarcity of foster homes at this time, I do not know how to effectively improve the process.

recruiting foster homes with sufficient room for multiple children. Also, have a system (kind of an ancestry.com) to search for relatives, maternal and paternal relatives.

since these issues have only arisen in cases with different fathers, a more standardized approach needs to be developed where siblings face this challenge.

Look to place with siblings immediately if possible at the intake level, not later at adoptive placement after the infant has bonded to the first family but now we learn of a sibling who was in a home always available for placement.

Agencies should not be mandated that they can not place children into other placements unless they have the court approval. I’ve seen cases where everyone agreed, but approval was needed from the court. The court could not hold a hearing for several months to make this happen. In turn, behaviors have escalated along with the trauma.

not sure

Having exceptions for siblings that have never lived together

Recruitment of families who will accept sibling placements
If agree, please share a concrete suggestion that would improve the process...

be sure they have regular visits if cant be placed together

not sure

I am only involved after the fact, but it seems that a full search for family is not done quickly or thoroughly.

The need for more resources for Kinship families as this poses challenges in keeping sibling together. Also the need for more foster homes as well as more specialized/treatment foster homes that can take siblings if experiencing special needs. This is sometimes a factor in taking some of the children but not all of the children together

They should remain together unless it is unsafe to do so not just because a family doesn't want the "difficult" child

Most of my siblings are placed together 99% of the time. I can think of 2 instances were they were intentionally separated 1) due to a serious safety issue and 2) where it was in the best interest of both children. But everyone understood the importance of at least some sibling visitation. That happened and all ended well in both cases.

Try to keep together. If not possible, provide maximum opportunities for siblings to maintain contact with each other.

additional benefit to caregivers/foster parents

Greater opportunities for half-siblings and step-siblings to be placed together

More qualified residential options beyond foster homes that are not RTC - example Ohio CRCCF - children's crisis care facilities which allow admission of sibling groups while in parent custody (voluntary) or emergency custody until long term care is established

due diligence in keeping siblings together

When siblings are separated, it is through my experience that an investigation into the agenda of the stakeholders present, should be conducted. Not just concocted allegations or theories based on past incidences of other foster children. I believe the foster parents need to undergo evaluations (mental, sociological and the like regularly). As a CASA the initiative is to keep siblings together, however I have experienced that sometimes one child is prefered over another in a household and the challenge to maintain equity is a hard fix. Parental evaluations should be a regular mandate.

it is a grey area, as the goal is to place together; however many times sibs have vastly different needs which may not be met all in one home. Having more supports for transportation services to best ensure ongoing sibling engagement with one another is needed; along with more active CASA or GAL personnel.

approval of family members should be paramount. too many sibling groups are moved counties away from each other when there are willing relatives

The question often comes down to a kinship placement for some children, but not others (due to a variety of different circumstances). What would be helpful would be a statutory or rule framework that gives priority to either keeping siblings together, or some in kinship versus others that are not. Clearly the preference would be all children together in a kinship placement. However, that is rarely the case. Having a framework (similar to a best interests standard found in 3109.04(E) and (F) would be helpful to determining, based on data, what the best option is.

requiring all professionals to discuss concerns immediately after the removal of children

I think that the licensing for foster parents should be reviewed to incorporate more flexibility to keep sibling groups intact.

The lack of foster placements that will take sibling groups as well as older children.

I am not sure it can be approved. Many times parents do not give the names of relatives who could care for the children prior to the children's removal. Then there needs to be an investigation of the persons named to be sure that they are appropriate. teh a social wokre
If agree, please share a concrete suggestion that would improve the process:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Broaden kinship guidelines</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Visitation between siblings placed in different homes should be mandatory unless the child's mental health professional does not believe it is in their best interest or one sibling has been convicted of crime against the other.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

That is done prior to coming to court, but it is sometimes hard to find foster placements for sibling groups

| Difficult to find placements that will take the siblings, especially when on child of the group may have more serious behavior issues. |

Unbiased reviews and interviews, along with extensive background check on potential foster parents.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Increase in foster care placement availability</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>recruit/train more foster parents</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Having a comprehensive list of alternative placements for multiple siblings |

Specific designated foster homes should be set aside for siblings.

| Sibling visits should always be a high priority, if they must be placed apart. |

The question is not clear but placing children with the right person or family is always an issue

| More local foster homes for children who do not have the ability for local family placement |

Agencies should consider family placements (especially father) before coming to court and should work on racial bias

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Available placement options</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Most family foster homes are unable to accommodate sibling Groups. Kinship placements cannot manage sibling groups based on lack of financial support and the cost of Child Care that is NOT subsidized by JFS.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| implementing more consistent procedures within different Ohio counties |

Standard rate setting negotiated by ODJFS for all agencies in Ohio. Larger agencies can pay more money and consequently are in a better position to get open beds.

| Open line of contact if separated. |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>lack of foster homes available in all jurisdictions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In my limited experience, this would be a case by case issue. I do not have a broad spectrum suggestion.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Increase in transitional housing and/or group homes for older teens to support goals of Independence which would free up foster homes for sibling group placement. |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Focus less on keeping with family and more on safety</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>do whatever is necessary to keep siblings together. Reopen state run facilities.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
If agree, please share a concrete suggestion that would improve the process...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Suggestion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>better assistance for foster families, and kin, so they are more able to handle siblings... both financial, and otherwise, ie. training, respite availability, physical items, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Making placement decisions utilizing appropriate social work protocols but communicating those decisions and the reasons supporting them to all the parties involved as soon as possible.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Space limitation of foster homes or residential placements.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Make sure foster placements are as close as possible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>increase number of foster homes in this community who will foster for the County.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide an enforceable right of visitation that survives permanent custody and adoption</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>placing them together should be the priority. If this cannot be accomplished then visitation should occur between siblings a few times per week.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If the statute provided for more time to complete adjudications and dispositions it would be easier to place children because there wouldn't be as much of a rush.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>As much notice as possible at the time of referral for placement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When there are multiple children in a case, there are always challenges involved in placement. Trying to explain the challenges in one or two sentences would not do justice to the issue.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>planning sibling visits if one sibling is in custody - exceptions and supports to place siblings together</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Make sure placement is safe. Medically fragile/Special needs children need to be placed in appropriately trained homes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implement Tiered Treatment Foster Care as developed by PCSAO and ODJFS workgroups.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Having more foster homes that can accommodate large sibling groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I clicked on agree because I thought there may be some for custodial agencies. I am not sure if there is a problem.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There are never enough places for youth to go. Placing kids should be the last resort.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More foster homes that will take sibling groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finding a placement that can handle multiple siblings from a family is difficult. Even kinship placements can be an issue. Guidelines such as bedroom requirements, etc. may need to be flexible and allowed for in requirements section.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increased emotional and monetary support for all caregivers (relative, kin, foster, adoptive, etc.); increased recruitment efforts for placement providers that will accept older youth and sibling groups.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improve access and outreach to potential kinship providers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language in the laws needs to be stronger regarding keeping siblings together. When not possible to keep siblings together, appropriate visitation needs to be a part of the court-ordered case plan and not at the convenience of adults</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
If agree, please share a concrete suggestion that would improve the process...

Recruitment of foster families willing to serve large families with older siblings. Better training to provide realistic examples to foster families. Helping foster families understand the role of partnering with birth families for reunification.

More temp placements for removed youth

Siblings should be placed together or locally to ensure bonding unless there is risk involved

If children need to be placed immediately, ongoing work needs to be done to continue to place them together. Once siblings are separated there is not typically much work done to continue to seek a placement to take all of them together and they stay split up.

We need more foster homes that are willing to take larger sibling groups.

At times, siblings may not share both parents. There are barriers in placement of children do not share blood relations to possible placement to be placed together. For example, a child is placed with their grandmother but the grandmother is not the siblings relative. We have had foster parents obtain custody over placement with the sibling/non relative. We need to emphasis the importance of sibling relationships by removing the difficulty in non relatives placements. We have to get court approval for the non relative placement and have had CASAs and GALs block this attempt.

Require an explanation from PCSA when siblings cannot be placed together.

Remove option. Hold Service teams accountable when it's not working.

Decline relative and/or kinship placements that will not accept entire sibling group and include maintaining sibling group as a factor in seeking least restrictive placements

I do not have any suggestions- placing siblings is always difficult due to some homes not having the placement

There was a case where one sibling (infant) was removed from the home, but another sibling (age 10) was not. When this occurs, there should be a structure in place to require consideration of the ongoing safety of the sibling remaining in the home to ensure that continues to be the best place for him/her.

Information sharing across county lines is desperately needed. Right now if siblings are split up, the multiple sets of foster parents have to find this out on their own and work out arrangements for sibling support on their own.

Having a court recognize a kinship placement in order to keep sibs together

Increased recruitment of qualified foster parents.

We need better recruitment of foster homes willing to accept sibling groups.

It is hard to find foster homes that will take sibling groups of three or more. That means splitting up families. I believe having more foster homes that take sibling groups would be a big help.

Inclusion of youth in the process and potentially exploring rights to maintain sibling contact for youth.

if siblings cannot be placed together, there should be regular contact such as telephone and zoom

Require CPA to demonstrate reasonable efforts to place together.

Recruitment of foster families that would accept sibling groups. Providing funds (including a stipend) to kinship caregivers so they can accommodate the children in their homes.
If agree, please share a concrete suggestion that would improve the process...

Little is done to develop and promote placement options in our community.

Due to confidentiality prior to placement, we are not able to search for kinship until after court involvement if the family is not willing to sign a release of information.

Judges must consider the rules underlying the law, not just the ORC.
Q6 - In my experience, when siblings are not placed together as a result of a court mandate, implementing sibling visitation is a challenge.

My professional does not involve implementing sibling visitation

---

**Field**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Field</th>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std Deviation</th>
<th>Variance</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>In my experience, when siblings are not placed together as a result of a court mandate, implementing sibling visitation is a challenge.</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>1.40</td>
<td>0.70</td>
<td>0.49</td>
<td>484</td>
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**Choice Count**

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<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Field</th>
<th>Choice Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>71.90% 348</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>15.70% 76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>My professional does not involve implementing sibling visitation</td>
<td>12.40% 60</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Showing rows 1 - 4 of 4
Q6A - Please share a concrete suggestion to improve the practice of implementing sibling visitation when siblings are not placed together through a court mandate.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Suggestion</th>
<th>Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Who is going to file contempt if this is not occurring?</td>
<td>GAL's come off cases after permanent dispositions. CASA's have no idea what they are doing 99% of time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Place them close together geographically and allow the respective foster parents to visit outside of agency times.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Condition custody on following a visitation schedule</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There are many moving parts when children are placed in separate homes. They may attend different schools and be involved in different activities making it difficult to set aside a consistent time and day for visitation. Some children may not want to visit with siblings. It would help if someone could meet with all parties routinely and assist with ensuring visitation is taking place - including providing scheduling flexibility.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>n/a</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Make it a required part of the case plan.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mandate weekly visitation for siblings</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>more flexibility by foster care providers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agencies need to ensure that siblings are placed in close proximately so that the foster parents can ensure regular face to face contact. If that is not possible then the agency must facilitate the visitation. The state should investigate funding to open independent visitation centers that can facilitate visitation and transportation to visits. The larger counties in Ohio need more than one such center to ensure that parents can access the facilities.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ability to combine sibling visits even if they have different mother/father with parent child visitation. Ability and resources to utilize a third party for supervising visitation.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foster parents should be paid and then expected to assist in transportation. More aggressive recruitment can also limit our=t of county placements.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>have dedicated space and scheduled times for visits with supervision as appropriate; contract with visitation centers if needed for safe mutual space for siblings to spend time together</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>these visits need to be a priority and support needs to be in place to help them navigate how to engage in these visits.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It should be at the discretion of the caregivers, working together to sync schedules.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Idk</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Siblings should be afforded at a minimum a weekly visit or 2 hours or more</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Requiring Children Services Agencies to facilitate it</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Please share a concrete suggestion to improve the practice of implementing...

Placing the children closer to each other

- Provide resources to placement families to help facilitate visitation (transportation, off-site supervision, etc)

Casework should be in charge of coordinating the visits, not caregivers.

- statutory or rule directive that 1. siblings should be placed together whenever possible. If not possible, then 2. ensure they are placed in fairly close geographical proximity and 3. require visitation orders include coordinated sibling visitation or regular sibling visitation and contact.

DJFS should always try to arrange sibling and parent visitation (if appropriate)

- Fund/ adequately staff all CPS agencies so they can meet this mandate

In my experience there are two main reasons for sibling separation 1. a child changing the parent they live with due to child's preference. 2 women having children by more than one partner and resulting custody battles. I lost count of the number of custody battles where an older child wanted to live with his/her other parent due to drug abuse, multiple boyfriends, and younger siblings are stuck with mom because their fathers don't know about the situation or don't care

Implementation of technology to allow meaningful virtual visits.

Better funding for foster parents.

Most caseworkers I've worked with leave it up to the discretion of the caregiver as to whether to allow sibling visits. Often times, children with paternal relatives may not see their siblings who are with their own paternal relatives. Visitation orders should grant children the right to at least phone calls or virtual visits. Siblings with a history of incest between them should have some kind of options for healing and closure that includes something other than just severing the relationship. That is obviously necessary in some cases, but in other cases the siblings may be able to process the abuse better if they have some joint professional services. No contact orders should not be so freely granted between siblings and should be reviewed regularly to determine progress towards resolution.

More supervised visitation centers and more funding to support them.

- our agency implements sibling visitation, closeness of foster placements, school settings if possible

increase the amount of supervised locations for visitation

In my experience, sibling visitation is left to the agency or really left to the foster parents to figure out and often includes travel and difficult logistics to work around other necessary appointments for the children.

My experience only involved court mandates to place siblings apart if one of them posed a threat of harm to their siblings.

There has to be one central agency (CSB) who would be responsible to coordinate visits.

- better coordination of visits

A central non sterile visitation center

- more frequent visitation

Should be mandated immediately
Having additional resources available to transport and supervise visits

When siblings are placed at different places, it makes it harder to do visitations and family time due to having to work around all different schedules of all members to the case and/or family.

Again, there are times when the lack of available or appropriate placement settings make it very challenging to facilitate visitation between siblings.

Sometimes family members do not want to work together.

It is hard to get coordination between foster parents, parents and children's schedules, based on what needs to be monitored and then having a child be as "normal" in a setting as possible. There are a lot of times that the foster parents schedules cannot accommodate the number of visits due to the number of people in a home/foster children/therapies, etc....

Putting the responsibility on foster care agencies

I only work with Ashtabula County Children Services Board and, in general, that Agency is terrible in all areas including keeping sibling relationships active.

Again, increased number of foster parents would assist with this as well. If we could not place all siblings in the same home, if we had homes within close proximity of each other, visitation would be much easier to coordinate.

don't allow excuses about transportation

do everything possible to keep siblings together

Our court does not mandate separation of siblings

As before, if the agency facilitated and supervised those visits. In my county, they only do so if they have custody and just leave it to the custodians otherwise.

When siblings are split up, each placement should be required to sign a form stating they will comply with insuring visitation takes place

More visitation sites. More people to supervise the visits.

the children services agency needs more staff to provide more visitation

creating a set visitation schedule and enforcing the visits

Transportation needs and flexibility to meet.

Need to get all system partners on board that sibling visitation vital. Comes down to not enough resources available to assist to execute siblings visits.

More coordination with Agency and placements to facilitate visitation.

I think there should be a designated place where children can be together with their siblings but feel safe to do so. I also think they should have privacy to talk or just be together to express feelings.

mandated and extra training for the foster parents of any siblings that are split
Please share a concrete suggestion to improve the practice of implementing...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Push the initiative to create foster care availability specifically designed to accommodate sibling placements.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agency shall arrange visits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mandate a date and time just as we would for parents. If parents don't follow through on their visit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Having a home environment is important for sibling visitation. If foster parents are in agreement, it would be good for the children to visit in one of the foster homes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>location and time implementation would be helpful</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Siblings should be required to see each other more than once per week, as long as there are no safety threats or conflicts to this type of contact.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Make it clear to foster parents, kinship placement, etc. that it is imperative that the siblings visit with each other and that placement is contingent upon this</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>court order sibling visits so bio, kinship, and foster parents can't argue about it- who, what, where, when, why and how</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>unknown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Revamping foster care provider usage, ie, have designated families who will only take siblings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children's Services needs more times to accommodate visits and more people to supervise visits.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sibling visitation should be mandated unless it presents a clear risk of harm to any of the children. Otherwise, the CPS agency is deciding it and i find that visits are happening, at most, monthly.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Offering visitation on Saturday. Most caregivers are less busy on Saturdays.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tougher enforcement practices on PCSAs/courts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>get both sets of foster parents together to come up with a schedule for visits which may include sleepovers, or foster parents trading off on who supervises those visits, placing children with foster families that understand the importance of maintaining sibling connections and are willing and able to facilitate visits, and transportation to those visits, providing specialized training on conducting visits, issues children may face after the visit and the like.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Siblings should be placed together except in exceptional circumstances. When otherwise, they should be placed ONLY with persons who will facilitate visitation among siblings.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mainly happens when siblings only have 1 common parent.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Once multiple placements are involved, the travel required to get to parent visitations is a priority. Sibling visitation is least prioritized. Additionally if family members have one child, and foster parents have another, there are no mandates in place our court orders to impose on family members if their case subsequently close and the sibling remains in care. Oftentimes, this relationship is just dissolved completely once multiple placements, future/subsequent children are born and placed elsewhere, siblings are often spread out and lose touch forever.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am not knowledgeable enough, but I would hope that this would start with an effort to convince caretakers to implement a system for regular visitation, but then intervention by an agency when visitation is not accomplished.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have no suggestions sadly.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Please share a concrete suggestion to improve the practice of implementing...

more funds/more staff to order to make sibling visits easier. It is already hard to have coverage for all the visits we are mandated to complete.

require cps to facilitate sibling visits as part of court order

A specific Visitation schedule, originating with the on-going Caseworker and enforced.

keep them together

Providing foster and kinship families with more transportation options would be helpful.

Siblings need to see each other at regular intervals - this should be accommodated around parental visits. Also, virtual avenues can be implemented by foster parents/caretakers.

caseworkers complain about how much additional time it takes to set up sibling visits & provide transportation

Make court orders apply to foster families and residential facilities and REAL penalties when they don't comply

Mandate it, don't let CPS get away with it

Have a court order requirement for it.

Require placement providers to provide sibling visits in order to receive financial payment (foster) or assistance (kinship)

Establishing a visitation monitor at case onset and implementing visitation schedule between siblings immediately, instead of waiting until parent or other relative initiates visitation to start questioning when siblings are having contact.

Absent extenuating circumstances, sibling visitation should be ordered by the court.

I can't think of any at this point.

If parental visitation is not allowed, substitute it with sibling visitation; if parental visitation is not allowed or is less than every two weeks, mandate sibling visitation as part of the case plan.

The challenge comes from needs of the placements is setting up the visitation. I do not have a concrete suggestion that broadly addresses the majority of circumstances.

First, I do not think it is usually a court mandate that separates the children but other factors. It is typically the distance between the siblings and the different caregivers that are the issues in visitation. Prioritizing sibling visitation and transportation for such visitation would help implement the visitation

small community/limited agency funding makes weekend visitations difficult: transportation to/from visitations can also be a barrier depending on where the siblings are placed

More funding for additional visitation centers with longer hours.

None, siblings are usually not placed together b/c of a lack in foster homes available not b/c of a court mandate.

The agency has to actually arrange the visits.

I do not have a suggestion at this time.
family therapy

Transportation of the siblings by professionals would be very helpful. Sometimes foster parents or kinship placements cannot take on this extra task.

Don't break them up. However, foster parents or facilities need to accept the separated siblings with the understanding that they will be obligated to get them together as frequently as is necessary. We rightly consider the convenience of the foster parents or agency, but often place it ahead of the children's well being in this area.

Agencies should receive help to try to place siblings together

require visitation and create better ways to accomplish it. Make the foster parents parties to the case so they can make decisions about visits and not wait on an agency to arrange it.

Scheduled visitation.

Courts should not assign Child Protective Services caseworkers to being responsible for these visits. Additional community, and court, supports should provide a means for these children to be brought together.

Provide specific funding to CPS for this purpose. Many issues regarding visitation fail due to not having the funding for more visitation.

Agency provides transportation door to door

Scheduled virtual meetings when appropriate; scheduled phone contact; training of foster parent on the importance of promoting the sibling relationship and how to best accomplish; counselling sessions with the sibling group

Require a written commitment from foster parents and kinship placements that they will facilitate sibling visitation.

Again, it goes back to the issue of half siblings, which needs to be addressed separately.

Sibling visitation doesn't happen unless the parent is also visiting. Rarely can we get HCJFS to do regular sibling visits without court order.

have same caseworker

Often the siblings are placed far apart and it may be difficult getting them to visits. Having visitation sites that multiple counties could use so there wouldn't be so much travel time for young children to be able to visit their siblings.

Placing agencies and custodial agencies must make it a priority to arrange these visits, it should be part of the ICCA/Contracting

Foster/resource parent buy in/follow through/commitment to all that is involved with regular contact (i.e. travel, behavioral issues after contact etc).

make it a priority

Try and place siblings closer together or in the same county

Permitting supervised visitation between siblings where safety concerns can be mitigated

Transportation and a safe, supervised location is always the issue. Keeping siblings closer in location and providing funds for more supervisors or supervised visitations locations is needed.
Having more resources available to ensure contact is appropriate. Not all kinship providers or foster parents are comfortable supervising contact in which the court has mandates siblings not be placed together. In my experience this is typically due to sexual abuse or physical aggression.

place all siblings together

It should be as important as parent visitation and scheduled as such

As indicated above, in the year 2020, everyone understands the importance of sibling visitation. I can't think of any issues that weren't temporary school / extracurricular / transportation issues that were quickly resolved with additional planning.

transportation is what I see as a big problem when trying to implement visitation

Mandated ongoing and frequent visitation, preferably at the home of a relative or close family friend.

foster parents are the issue if separated, arrangement is a struggle. Court ordered with specific date/times/locations

JFS should adopt a uniform guideline of expectations and clearly communicate it to foster placements

Because siblings may be separated into different counties, the flexibility of Zoom or other approved electronic visits should be allowed for sibs

in general, transportation or outside of county placements hinder visits

Regularly scheduled and adhered to visitation is necessary UNLESS there are negative behaviors or health related incidence that predicstes caution.

Agencies are often over-whelmed with visits as well as number of children they are working with. Having visits when the children are not in close proximity is challenging. I am not sure if there is a concrete way to improve when often homes and facilities are minimal.

A memorandum of understanding between placements of siblings and agencies responsible for the placements could be utilized to emphasize the significance of and give structure to the accommodation of visitation.

Have designated workers for more time slots for visitation

Sibling visits should be mandatory for all cases unless there is a safety reason not to have them

Agency does not take motivation to ensure visitation occurs. Often Magistrate must address and order/question if occuring.

The agency should have training for foster parents to emphasize importance of sibling frequent contact

Mandate that placement agencies participate in the transportation of these visits.

You need to have sufficient funding so that there are enough staff members at the department of children and family services to do the visits. In the alternative you could make it part of the contract with the placement that they are required to transport and have sibling visits in their home.

Put it explicitly in the case plan

Update oac, orc and best practices guidance

I think this is an issue of transportation and distance between placements
Please share a concrete suggestion to improve the practice of implementing...

There should be state-mandated visitation for siblings. The court should have jurisdiction to order that parent/caregiver of sibling outside of state's care comply.

Making sibling visits, where beneficial to the siblings, should be mandated along with parent visits

Avoid splitting them.

Lack of time for case workers to to be able to provide the sibling visitation. Distance between different placement may also be a barrier.

Quality, regular, observed meetings at quality environments to relax and engaged with each other.

Pressure needs to come from the Court. It does not seem a priority to Children's Services

Requiring sibling visits at a designated location.

Spell out the visitation and responsibilities, in the case plan.

Don't have a good suggestion

An understanding that each foster family must prioritize the visits which is understandably difficult due to household schedules.

Transportation vouchers.

Provide additional training and support to caregivers regarding the importance and requirement of sibling visitation.

Partner with community organizations to create more space to visit

visit supervisor, transportation when it's an out of county placement

have the CASAs directly support this visitation by supervising/helping with transport

Resources are not available to have transportation, location, and a supervisor available for sibling visits. Requiring stressed foster parents / kinship to provide this service is unreasonable.

providing the CASA/Gal with more information re: the case

use best practices for virtual visits as a supplement to face-to-face visits

Often visitation does not take place because a parent or, in the case of a relative placement, the caregiver does not have money for gas or have a car. They are required to take affirmative actions to obtain gas vouchers or make transportation arrangements. These caregivers are often marginalized in other ways that make this process difficult (no phone, illness, lack of knowledge of how to ask for help, etc.) and the kids don't get a visit. I believe the caseworker should be mandated to make the sibling visits occur through whatever means so kids aren't losing out because of system failures aka red tape. To that end, DJFS must be given funds to achieve this.

Provide transportation and/or electronic services to complete visit.

Separated siblings should be placed in near proximity to allow for more frequent contact

The primary issue right now is Covid. I think there needs to be a standard video conferencing tool available for children to stay in touch with siblings they are not able to see in person.
Please share a concrete suggestion to improve the practice of implementing...

Creation of a standard visitation policy/guideline, to ensure the children continue their relationship and see each other.

Visitation centers

Keep the siblings together- this should not be an issue.

agency won't facilitate, foster homes don't have time to do additional visits

Court ordered visitation monitored by the GAL or CASA to insure compliance

specific visitation plans need to be ordered by the court as in shared parenting cases. This would prevent parties from being uncooperative in regards to visits.

Need more safe visitation locations, with longer hours and better availability to accommodate schedules.

Again, communicating when sibling visitation will begin and the circumstances under which it will proceed with all parties as soon as possible.

give them all a device they can video chat with (useful for online school activities too)

Utilizing a uniform place/space to facilitate visits.

It needs to be a priority along with other required visits and appointments.

There needs to be a court order that specifies sibling visitation and not just recommend that it take place without outlining how it should work.

sibling visitation should be required as is parent visitation

expanded staff to supervise the visits in agency

Have enough workers so that a single caseworker does not have to be responsible for all the children

Education of the importance of the sibling bond at all levels.

Mandate said visits

keeping siblings together as primary rule

Courts need to order a specific visitation schedule. Some foster families do not want to allow for the visits between siblings due to the inconvenience of transportation for it. However, it is extremely important and Courts need to explain it will be ordered. If they cannot follow it they should not be foster parents.

I believe a Team meeting requiring all case member participants that are involved with sibling visits should be present to arrive at a solution and adhered to.

It would be helpful if the court ordered the visitation and put enforcement teeth behind it to ensure it happened.

Coordination with all involved parties as early as possible
Please share a concrete suggestion to improve the practice of implementing...

It would be beneficial to have some sort of standardization. While this will prove difficult for PCSAs the standard structure could reduce the ambiguity that comes with each unique situation. This is far from a foolproof suggestion but I do think structure could be key.

- establishing regular phone calls and or video chats in addition to in person visits
- Work as a team to make it happen.
- visitation centers need to hire more so that they can provide a better variety of time slots
- Kinship placements are not always willing to cooperate with visitation with siblings even though they claim they will at the time of placement. Having back up from the court ordering this visitation would be helpful.
- Currently complicated by the pandemic. Otherwise, transportation availability could be improved upon in our county.
- The main issue is getting the different foster parents together, as their schedules do not always match up.
- More concentration on sibling visits in foster care training
- I believe it should be part of the case management plan that this HAS to happen instead of it would be nice if the foster parents can do this. It has to be more of a directive like visits with birth parents are a directive.
- Try and not place the kids. Keep them in the home.
- A standard policy on frequency of sibling visits and the staff to implement it
- Distance and scheduling can be very difficult.
- If siblings were placed separately, make diligent efforts to place them in close proximity to one another and ensure each respective placement is willing and able to accommodate frequent visitation. It would be beneficial if both placements were familiar with one another and already have a connection.
- Ensuring siblings have transportation, that such visitation is conducted as naturally as possible rather than in a formal place for visitation
- Increase the mandated volume of weekly contact between siblings.
- The frequency and length of sibling visits needs to be mandated. Foster caregivers need to receive stipends to have sibling visits at their homes.
- Siblings should be placed in close proximity, same school district etc...to promote regular contact
- It should be required and enforced by the county for siblings to visit together. Not based on foster parents' opinions/convenience. I also think having therapists available during the visits would be so valuable to work with children to process challenging sibling dynamics.
- When parents do not consistently visit with their children, they often bring up that the foster parents or kinship placements have different schedules and therefore the parent has separate visiting times with different children and has to have a lot of free hours in order to fully attend all visits with all children. My personal thoughts on their priorities aside, some Magistrates and Judges do feel for a parent when that is the case. However, it is the children being affected by the missed visits that is actually important.
- Transportation is a barrier and lack of visitation centers.
- Workers have to justify why they are not facilitate visitation.
Please share a concrete suggestion to improve the practice of implementing...

| It's challenging c there are other things in play. Workers and supervisors don't understand the value of it. There is no administrator ensuring this happens. Also, if the needs of the children dictate no visit can occur? The person that determines that varies with no concrete plan to work towards that and sometimes the reasons for it is unclear. That needs to change. Foster parents can opt out of visiting. They also facilitate the kids saying they don't want to go. |
| Ohio foster care youth and alumni have been advocating for Sibling legislation. |
| Out-of-home placements to facilitate sibling visitation as a condition of placement |
| Transportation is an issue and also they are not placed in close proximity, time |
| Sharing information across county lines so that caseworkers and foster parents can together make an informed decision. |
| Visitation centers and more accountability to agencies to ensure siblings visit consistently. Better education of caregivers on the importance of sibling contact even if it does create challenges. |
| Court ordered visitation |
| School, counseling, and transportation create barriers. Provide funding to PCSAs to contract with visitation centers for weekend hours. |
| distance is the biggest struggle due to transportation. |
| Additional funding for additional staff would be necessary to have the time for transportation along with supervision of the visitation. |
| The courts needs to leave sibling visitation up the discretion of the agency rather than court ordering visitation with concrete times or durations. Sometimes were are able to give more than the court order and sometimes we, unfortunately, cannot always abide by what the court expects. |
| allowing virtual visitation when distance is a barrier |
| regular contact should be standard and not something that has to be fought for |
| Holding case reviews on a regularly scheduled basis would hold all parties accountable. |
| Create financial consequences for failure to provide visitation. The cost of mileage and staff time are frequently the barriers. Make it cost prohibitive to not find the time. |
| If one child is in a residential setting, the foster parents of siblings need to sign a contract that they are willing to drive siblings to visits. If in separate homes, again, the foster parents need to sign contracts that they will facilitate sibling visits. Agency staff also need staff dedicated to transportation and supervision of visits so there are no excuses for visits to not occur. |
| child welfare should always prepare better for this when coming into court, often do not show reasonable efforts and best interest. |
| Provide a requirement regarding sibling involvement which will provide requirement to out-of-home placement to comply. |
| permit virtual, telephonic, or other means of sibling visitation |
Q7 - Meaningful and appropriate youth engagement in all aspects of court proceedings leads to improved outcomes for families. Of the strategies below, which do you believe would increase or improve youth engagement in court proceedings:
Youth is required to attend hearings

Youth is given the option to attend hearings.

Youth has the option to attend through virtual means or in person.

Schedule hearings for times that work with youth's schedule.

Preparing the Court on the behavioral health or developmental limitations of a youth who is expected to attend a hearing.

Preparing a youth on Court procedure and etiquette prior to the start of the hearing.

Transportation.

Option for the youth to provide written or oral statement.

Option for the youth to provide written or oral statement.

Court addresses youth directly regarding wants and needs.

Youth receives debriefing after the hearing.

Other (please explain)
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Field</th>
<th>Choice Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Youth has the option to attend through virtual means or in person</td>
<td>11.43% 281</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Schedule hearings for times that work with youth's schedule</td>
<td>8.14% 200</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>Preparing the Court on the behavioral health or developmental limitations of a youth who is expected to attend a hearing.</td>
<td>9.60% 236</td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Preparing a youth on Court procedure and etiquette prior to the start of the hearing</td>
<td>10.70% 263</td>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Transportation</td>
<td>9.93% 244</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Option for the youth to provide written or oral statement.</td>
<td>10.94% 269</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Option for the youth to provide written or oral statement.</td>
<td>4.76% 117</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Court addresses youth directly regarding wants and needs.</td>
<td>10.29% 253</td>
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<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Youth receives debriefing after the hearing.</td>
<td>10.46% 257</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Other (please explain)</td>
<td>1.75% 43</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Showing rows 1 - 13 of 13

Q7_12_TEXT - Other (please explain)

Other (please explain)

In-camera hearings more regularly.

When age and developmentally appropriate it, youth involvement is key to helping them be seen, heard and valued.

I think the current system of having children available for in camera interviews works well. I don't think children should be at every hearing. Especially, if the hearings involve real estate, pensions, "adultly" issues

This is a mixed bag. The observation of court proceedings by children can be confusing and can interfere with therapeutic interventions. Older children should have the right to attend proceedings if they desire.

GAL, CASA are mandated to meet with, talk with youth before day of court hearing. There should be more then one contact with a Youth by GAL and or CASA before they appear to court to make their report.

If youth is required to appear as in many states, then youth can ask to be excused if necessary and for a variety of reasons to meet a youth's particular needs.

Youth has the ability to share their wants with the court, outside of the hearing. Kids are not comfortable talking while in court.

It is very intimidating for a youth to attend a hearing and being honest when they are faced with their parents, their foster parents/kin, caseworker and others in a very cold and unwinviting way in the court proceedings. It's always a win/lose situation in the child's eyes in the court system. They don't feel like they are being heard, even when a GAL or CASA is suppose to be their voices.

Through out our case my daughter and I were not allowed to discuss the case. There were lies after lies told and not once has my daughter or myself been able to speak in court. To tell our stories and to clarify the lies that were being told from the investigator and mostly the social worker. Things were twisted, told incorrectly and just down right made up.
Would be beneficial to devise a plan for youth to share wants and needs without others present to influence what the child says. i.e. we have children who worry the parents will find out what they share if the CASA is present and believe CASA will share with the parent.

Anything that increases communication with the youth- don't know that I necessarily agree with putting them on the spot in the courtroom in front of parents and others present, but giving them multiple one on one opportunities to talk to GAL and judge/ magistrate.

I believe older children should have a say and perhaps even younger ones depending on their emotional/mental abilities. I also believe that all parties need to be cognizant of how the information is presented.

This would need to be age/developmentally appropriate for the child. Not every child should be expected or required to do this. However there are plenty of times the child's wishes are not heard, even with an attorney or guardian appointed for them. Sometimes those people are too focused on their own opinion of what should happen instead of focusing on what the child wants.

I believe that once a youth is old enough to understand the proceedings (around 10 to 12) they should be present for hearings.

Option for youth to provide a written statement [not oral, unless it's made to the GAL/CASA]

Kids should not be at Court. Some of their parents don't show up or are really shitty, and we risk traumatizing kids more when they have to care that reality all over again.

I disagree with the premise.

Children do not participate in our Treatment Court hearings.

Attendance at hearings should be case dependent.

Usually, in an abuse/neglect/dependency case, I don't think it is healthy for a child to sit in court & listen to adults argue over him/her, or to listen to details of adult abuse/neglect. I think it is better to speak through a guardian ad litem, or in an in camera interview. If the youth is in court, perhaps he/she should attend only an appropriate portion of the hearing.

I believe young children need to be insulated from adult proceedings. Allowing young children to be present for adversarial proceedings involving their history is institutional abuse. Once a child is old enough to understand the process, however, they absolutely should have the right to attend.

Increase the use of in camera hearings. Magistrates and judges should meet each child regardless of age and without there being a specific request for the hearing. The informal setting is a better place for a child's honest input than a courtroom filled with people.

GAL has direct and more frequent/meaningful contact with the youth.

More education required for sitting judicial personnel, attorneys, GAL & CASA workers on trauma and effects upon youth.

I do not believe that children should attend court hearings. When needed, an in camera interview works well.

Not in favor of a blanket requirement that youth participate. Depends on age and maturity of the youth.

I disagree with premise.

This depends on the age of the Child and type of hearing. I do not see any type of "improved outcome" for a Child to hear their parents are non-compliant with JFS, court orders, etc. Our court encourages and accommodates Children who wish to participate in hearings.

Youth should NOT attend the actual hearing with his/her mom and dad.
I do not think that the current situation should change. There is a process for youth involvement, when appropriate. Depending on age, health, mental status, etc., it is not always appropriate for the youth to be involved. In addition, not all youth want to be involved. Finally, youth should be in school and focusing on their job...being a student. The GAL and attorney for the child are the child's voice in court (unless it is a delinquency). Otherwise, an in camera interview is a means for the child to be engaged in a trial.

These options are all dependent upon the youth's age and maturity. I think it is important for the GAL/CASA and potentially the social worker as well to prepare the youth for what to expect at court if they choose to appear. I do not think it is appropriate to require the youth to appear or make a statement if they do not wish to do so. I feel there are limited circumstances where it may be appropriate for the court to address the youth directly about wants and needs. However, if the GAL/CASA has done their job appropriately, they should be able to represent the youth's wishes appropriately unless the youth wishes to speak personally.

Youth currently have adequate methods to participate in hearings.

I do not believe youth attending the hearing would be beneficial to the youth or the process. The youth have an advocate in the CASA/GAL.

These issues should already be addressed through the appointment of a GAL or CASA who can ask the court on behalf of the child to make more specific orders for in camera interviews. Minors should not be attending A and D hearings.

Reliance on the GAL should be the go to here. If the GAL believes the child has an appropriate understanding of their situation then let them appear on anyway the court seems necessary depending on the circumstances.

When the child is unable to speak for themselves, taking special care to appoint a GAL/CASA that understands and can represent the child's needs, i.e., developmental and or medical.

At least in our jurisdiction, the Court will entertain many avenues for youth involvement. Specifically, the youth has the option to attend hearings or provide a statement to the court. If we feel as though it needs to be included in a written motion, I have submitted multiple motions for in camera interview of the minor child. If there happens to be a situation where it may be better for a child to not be present, the Magistrate will ask them to step out.

Require youth to attend if it is age appropriate and developmentally appropriate. Allow the youth to talk one on one with the judge or magistrate and their attorney, if possible, to give a statement. Orient youth to court process. Debrief youth after hearing. REQUIRE GALS TO MEET WITH THE CHILD BEFORE THE HEARING - STOP CONTINUANCE B/C GAL HASN'T HAD TIME TO MEET WITH YOUTH

Children should be required to have in camera hearings prior to adjudication. Having a child testify can be detrimental to reunification and incentivize false testimony. If the kid can tell the court their story without the parents knowing then, and only then, can the court know what really occurs in a home.

I do not think the youth should attend the hearing.

An advocate present with the youth with the sole purpose of acting as a support to the youth during the youth's testimony and to answer questions the youth has about the process

Youth have shared that, when they are not in court in person, what they receive is secondhand information about their firsthand life.

The court welcoming the attendance and participation of youth. Our court barely has parents go into court and is not usually welcoming of youth attending.
Q8 - Ohio is working to improve the engagement of caregivers in hearings. This includes opportunities for foster, kinship and potential adoptive caregivers. Please rate the following statements based on your experience.

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<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Field</th>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std Deviation</th>
<th>Variance</th>
<th>Count</th>
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<td>1</td>
<td>Caregivers receive notice of hearings</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>1.62</td>
<td>0.60</td>
<td>0.36</td>
<td>446</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Caregivers are given the opportunity to be heard in court</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>1.79</td>
<td>0.58</td>
<td>0.33</td>
<td>440</td>
</tr>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Field</th>
<th>Always</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Never</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Caregivers receive notice of hearings</td>
<td>43.95%</td>
<td>50.00%</td>
<td>6.05%</td>
<td>446</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>Caregivers are given the opportunity to be heard in court</td>
<td>29.32%</td>
<td>62.27%</td>
<td>8.41%</td>
<td>440</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Showing rows 1 - 2 of 2
Q9 - Based on your experience, what services are most useful for kinship caregivers?

- Training for kinship caregivers
- Support groups for children/teens in kinship care
- Therapy for children in kinship care
- Therapy for kinship caregivers
- 24-hour hotline for kinship families
- Online resources available on a website
- Crisis intervention
- Legal support services, including assistance with custody or guardianship
- Education advocate
- Day treatment services (all day school for kids with special needs)
- Assistance with childcare/daycare costs
- Respite services
- Specialized camps (summer camp, sports, serves kids with special needs)
- Mentoring for children/teens in kinship care
- Facilitation of contact with birth families
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Field</th>
<th>Choice Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Training for kinship caregivers</td>
<td>7.18% 244</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Kinship caregiver support groups</td>
<td>6.21% 211</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Support groups for children/teens in kinship care</td>
<td>4.47% 152</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Therapy for children in kinship care</td>
<td>8.59% 292</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Therapy for kinship caregivers</td>
<td>4.59% 156</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>24-hour hotline for kinship families</td>
<td>5.36% 182</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Online resources available on a website</td>
<td>3.83% 130</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Crisis intervention</td>
<td>7.47% 254</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Legal support services, including assistance with custody or guardianship</td>
<td>8.36% 284</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Education advocate</td>
<td>3.88% 132</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Day treatment services (all day school for kids with special needs)</td>
<td>4.97% 169</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Assistance with childcare/daycare costs</td>
<td>9.03% 307</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Respite services</td>
<td>9.48% 322</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Specialized camps (summer camp, sports, serves kids with special needs)</td>
<td>4.89% 166</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Mentoring for children/teens in kinship care</td>
<td>5.68% 193</td>
</tr>
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<td>16</td>
<td>Facilitation of contact with birth families</td>
<td>4.50% 153</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Other: please explain</td>
<td>0.59% 20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>I have no knowledge of what services would be most useful to kinship caregivers</td>
<td>0.91% 31</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Showing rows 1 - 19 of 19

Q9_17_TEXT - Other: please explain

Other: please explain

Financial support for caregivers
I really don't like grandparent or kinship care affidavits. To me they are commonly used by custodial mom's to give custody to grandparents. Almost always the statutory requirement that both parents sign is not followed. The mom then moves to or continues to live with boyfriend and collect child support while her parents support the children. Too often the grandparents failed to follow the visitation orders. In my experience ALL these cases should be sent to the CSEA for a support review.

I believe the parents should have more input. The people involved in our case treat the parents like they have no parental rights at all. They are not included in meetings regarding their Child's medical care, mental health care or any aspect if their life after placed in foster care.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Monetary support.</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Better stipend and availability of agency support through private or public</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial help</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In home supportive services to strengthen the kinship family</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Money/ financial assistance for teens especially to have reasonable and prudent childhood experiences (help with insurance and driving costs so teens can drive), day care, school clothes, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expand KPIP to all caregivers or make those in the lowest income bracket have KPIP through age 18.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>plus all of the above</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Money to send kids to camps etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Based on case by case implementation of services. Not all services fit all cases.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kinship providers should receive financial support equivalent to foster placement. Additionally, child care for kinship families should be 100% subsidized by the State - even after a legal custody change.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>including relatives other than grandparents in caretaker affidavit and grandparent POA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>communication with caseworkers. prompt responses from case workers with accurate information regarding the children.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Help navigating the system.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial assistance where appropriate.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>clothing allowance and daycare as most Kinship caregivers are retired on a limited income.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial assistance</td>
</tr>
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</table>
Q9A - Of the useful services you identified in the previous question, which are most needed in your community?
<table>
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<th>#</th>
<th>Field</th>
<th>Choice Count</th>
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<td>1</td>
<td>Training for kinship caregivers</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Kinship caregiver support groups</td>
<td>5.94% 98</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Support groups for children/teens in kinship care</td>
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<td>Therapy for kinship caregivers</td>
<td>3.21% 53</td>
</tr>
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<td>24-hour hotline for kinship families</td>
<td>6.00% 99</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>Online resources available on a website</td>
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<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Crisis intervention</td>
<td>9.63% 159</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Legal support services, including assistance with custody or guardianship</td>
<td>10.36% 171</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Education advocate</td>
<td>3.09% 51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Day treatment services (all day school for kids with special needs)</td>
<td>4.48% 74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Assistance with childcare/daycare costs</td>
<td>10.90% 180</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Respite services</td>
<td>11.99% 198</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Specialized camps (summer camp, sports, serves kids with special needs)</td>
<td>4.00% 66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Mentoring for children/teens in kinship care</td>
<td>4.66% 77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Facilitation of contact with birth families</td>
<td>2.42% 40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Other: please explain</td>
<td>0.55% 9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Showing rows 1 - 18 of 18

**Q9A_17_TEXT - Other: please explain**

Other: please explain

child care

Pediatric Psychiatrist and intensive trauma focused counseling.

Financial help

money

none of these are available

Money to send kids to camps etc.
Not sure of all the programs that are available today as these programs seem to come and go based on grant funding. Different counties have different levels of supplemental resources as well.

I believe all services should be mad available to kinship. Depending on underlying issues with individual cases, thorough delving into all particulars of child welfare must be considered.

Money for caregivers
Q10 - Multidisciplinary Collaboration has been shown to be an effective strategy in many aspects of child protection practice, for example in treatment courts. Please consider the following elements of child protection practice, and identify if you believe they would benefit from multidisciplinary collaboration (e.g.: social worker, attorney, family peer mentor).

- **Prevention services, coordinating services to assist a family in need.**
- **Pre-filing, services provided before filing a formal court case**
- **Post permanency, services provided after children have achieved permanency in order to maintain the permanent situation (reunification, legal guardianship, adoption)**
- **Parental representation, attorneys working with social workers/peer support from adjudication through final disposition**
- **Child representation, attorneys working with social workers from adjudication through final disposition**
- **Do not have enough experience in child protection practice to answer this question.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Field</th>
<th>Choice Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Prevention services, coordinating services to assist a family in need.</td>
<td>25.98% 319</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Pre-filing, services provided before filing a formal court case</td>
<td>16.69% 205</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#</td>
<td>Field</td>
<td>Choice Count</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Post permanency, services provided after children have achieved permanency in order to maintain the permanent situation (reunification, legal guardianship, adoption)</td>
<td>20.36% 250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Parental representation, attorneys working with social workers/peer support from adjudication through final disposition</td>
<td>15.88% 195</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Child representation, attorneys working with social workers from adjudication through final disposition</td>
<td>18.24% 224</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>I do not have enough experience in child protection practice to answer this question.</td>
<td>2.85% 35</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
My County PCSA already does the multidisciplinary work you discussed at all levels of the case. It is very important for the team to come together with the family and child if appropriate to work through the case together.

The key to kinship placement is that they can obtain early legal services. Giving them a batch of forms to fill out just adds to their anxiety. If legal services are unnecessary, why do people with resources hire attorneys? That is a rhetorical question, of course. Legal services as we had 20 years ago was an important gatekeeper, to keep out bad cases that had no merit, and to speed up those that needed court attention.

I would like for all of the courts to be required to take mandatory training on child abuse/neglect/dependency hearing processes as part of being a judge and/or magistrate for initial and every two years. The same type of training should also be required for the PCSA legal representative (prosecutor, agency attorney, or contracted attorney). In addition, the length of time an unruly/delinquent youth can be under a PCSA’s custody should be time limited (except for DYS commitments). I would also like to see a requirement for any child/youth under a PCSA’s custody to be appointed a GAL/CASA throughout the life of the case (not just for those adjudicated as abused or neglected). This should also require the appointment of GAL/CASA to continue when the child/youth is PCC to an agency. I would also like the Ohio Supreme Court to have a review of each county’s court processes to ensure that ORC is being followed (timeframes, procedures, annual court reviews, etc.).

Children's services schedules SARs and staffing meetings without considering the schedules of parents and professionals involved. Triage of a family's needs before a court case is opened. Use the triage to identify priority needs and needs that can be addressed after priority needs. Training for case workers and social workers on all available community resources including what information and documentation is necessary to access the service. Families often need assistance with obtaining birth certificates, shot records and social security numbers, workers should know how to access those records and assist the family with maintaining those records in a safe manner.

What is needed is more funding, to implement these improvements. In addition, kinship and “interested person” placements need trained, licensed and paid for their efforts.

Multi-disciplinary teams work best when all parties have a common goal, are working through differences in perspective, and respect the differing views on the committee. They are strained when used to rubber stamp one agency’s requests or to gather information to then be used to the detriment of one of the parties.

This might provide for increased costs.

Our county does not have a strong Family and Children First

For many of the issues faced by families and children a multidisciplinary approach is the best solution. In my experience there are some entities who take advantage of the authority provided to them through the ORC to pass the issue off to other entities and not participate in the solution which eliminates the potential for a multidisciplinary collaborative solution to this issue at hand. Specifically Juvenile Courts should not possess the authority to order custody of an adjudicated delinquent child to a PCSA.

N/A

It takes everyone working with the family to see what they feel that their needs are and listen to them. They don't feel like that they are being heard and that services are better when the children are in care instead of being with their caregivers, whether their kin or not kin.
I was assigned an attorney months after the case was started and several hearings had gone by. My attorney is not fighting my case. Instead he us collaborating with the other providers in the case to make deals. Instead of defending me. He will not file motions I ask him to file. I have met with him one. And had 1 maybe 2 phone calls with him. Most communication is through email. In which a lot of times I do not even get a reply. My daughters attorney on the other hand. Has increased the litigation to the point that an emergency ex-parte order is filed every month. Because this attorney is filling my daughters head with crap. And foles complaints against me that are not true and even investigated and found not true. The problem is that they have taken away all of my parental rights. And my daughter has now become umuley. Running away from home. Smoking pot. Drinking. When the problem is they wanted to emancipate her. But she is not capable of that. And she has been told by many involved in this case that she pretty much is in the drivers seat. That what she says goes. That he word speaks volumes. Etc. So I now gave a daughter that doesn't want to live at home. She says she can live on her own. That she is a big girl. And since the court won't emancipate her. And JFS won't remove her from my care. She is making up abuse allegations so she can be removed. But with each claim that is investigated, they do not remove her. Because the claims are unfounded and not true! My experience with JFS and the Judicial system has been a total nightmare. Something I would not wish in my worst enemy. Until this case is closed and the government is no longer involved. My daughter and myself continue to suffer. The new way of doing business with QIC. Is just that. A business. They don't care about the child or the family. Or even about their Civil and parental rights. They violated my right to not disclose protected health information. And worst of all they are tearing myself and my daughter appart. Causing strife and reeking havoc on our lives. And it needs to stop. For my daughters sake. Before something terrible happens to her.

No comments

Need to balance the cost of multidisciplinary collaboration with the need and benefit for such participation.

None at this time.

We've had a Multidisciplinary Team for years now, and it has not only improved outcomes for the children we serve but also greatly strengthened our relationships with local law enforcement agencies and other service providers.

No comment

It would be great to have this collaboration, however, everyone involved has to be willing to meet regularly and put in work to make these collaborations a success.

It's what we do at FCFC! When it works, it really works and is rewarding to be a part of.

I was an attorney in the Franklin County Public Defender office, Juvenile Unit. This unit has had a model of staff attorneys and staff social workers assigned together on cases for about 40 years.

n/a

It should include law enforcement if they were involved in the case at any point.

N/A

Child Welfare social workers in schools would be a great prevention collaboration. Additionally, a child welfare social worker in the juvenile court setting working with juvenile probation could also be a great benefit for prevention of muti-system youth from entering foster care due to behaviors/ criminality. The foster system is ill-equipped for these types of placements.

Resources and costs are naturally an issue. Improving caliber of Children's Services employees must be a priority. High workload and low pay seem to demoralize FCCS employees who become more interested in checking boxes and closing cases than ensuring the longterm wellbeing of a child and family.

Supportive services after case closure would ensure parents continue to receive support to improve long term outcomes for their children.

NA

Our county is very proactive in this regard and its very helpful
Please share any comments related to Multidisciplinary Collaboration:

Wayne County has a good system, and Judge in place and we have the time to address these cases with the time and attention they need. We are a model for handling these types of cases.

Making CPS about the child and not allowing parents drag out cases when they are not following the plan. A child has a right to have a healthy loving family be secured as soon as possible.

Collaboration is important, but there needs to be a point person who is designated as leading the coordination- otherwise it can be difficult to get anything done without a clear lead.

I see it often in Franklin County.

It can be helpful but I have seen disputes arise regarding minor issues.

The more individuals involved will give more options/opportunities to use or learn about resources.

GAL s are an essential part of a child's life and should be included in collaborations.

Agree with effectiveness

None at this time.

As GAL I already feel I am doing this piece.

I think it would be helpful to have an attorney appointed to work with a family prior to CPS becoming court involved to assess their situation and let them know what to expect if they do end up in court.

Although there is some Multidisciplinary Collaboration in my county, there could be more sharing of costs and responsibility in finding placements and implementation of services.

All partners need to have the same fundamental/foundational understanding of child protection (role, values, importance of family preservation, etc). All partners need to be invested in the process.

I think the teams need to work more closely with one another and the families for a smoother transition into the court process as well as better coordination of services.

Our experience with MC is limited particularly because we are a small nonprofit and systems frequently do not engage informal community supports in their collaborative decision making

More multidisciplinary collaboration the better for children and parents

As a CASA, I am placed within a network of disciplines to assist in achieving better if not best outcomes for my charges. I believe and have experienced situations where a sibling had been un respite due to questionable allegations presented. Agencies worked together to find suitable circumstance to reunite brothers and to carefully monitor behaviors to prove or disprove allegations. My charges are now placed in an adoption status whereby awaiting permanence.

ensuring that all personnel have a stake in the process and making sure it is streamlined as much as possible to promote positive communication and results.

I think it would help to have each county JFS with legal representation other than their local prosecutor's office to assist with much of the pre-filing and pre-adjudication assistance. This would allow the prosecutors to focus on adjudication and disposition, but allow JFS to work with their own legal counsel to provide various services prior to filing, a the way through post disposition. It would remove a potential conflict for the prosecutor, and more specialized assistance to JFS. I realize that is heavily dependent upon county resources, but it would help a lot.
Please share any comments related to Multidisciplinary Collaboration:

The more collaboration that occurs almost always the better the outcomes. The ability of parties to have the time to collaborate is the biggest obstacle.

Many different lenses to look through enhances the service provided.

Multidisciplinary Collaboration helps systems understand one another and work towards a common goal of assisting families and children. Who is at that table, and their motivation, are key to the success of the collaboration.

The more resources and support provided to the casegiver and child throughout the process is better. They should always have a way to get questions answered and feel supported.

Mediation with all parties except children is proven to be helpful.

Multidisciplinary Collaboration should be used as much as possible. I think attorney's benefit from a better understanding of the social work side. It is helpful to have everyone work together so that we are on the same page as far as a family's needs and support that may be available.

when organized well with good communication by ALL parties it is the most beneficial for the family

Multidisciplinary groups appear to work effectively together at this time.

We do well in the middle of the case... but not before, or after. Concentrate any new efforts on pre and post.

We need CLE's on upcoming changes in the law

Prevention can go a long way to keeping kids in homes.

This type of collaboration works when groups have the same goals. In our system the goals are not the same. The legal obligations and constrictions are not the same.

Avoid duplication and avoid gaps in service

Behavioral health needs to be a primary consideration, but other disabilities and medical issues need to be considered by a multidisciplinary approach.

We do frequently engage in multidisciplinary collaboration with law enforcement and our children services workers.

my biggest suggestion is better work by the GALS to see the children before the court hearings

The goal should always be what is best for a child!

We believe that cases involving High Fidelity Wraparound have improved outcomes

Children are best served when the providers involved work as a team and communicate effectively.

It is imperative to have a strong Multidisciplinary team to best support families.

The biggest thing is to have all members of the child's/family's team working together on a daily/weekly basis. Right now with different agencies doing different things the right hand often does not know what the left hand is doing. Plus, all the agencies have their own agendas and guidelines. Sometimes these agendas conflict between agencies.
Please share any comments related to Multidisciplinary Collaboration:

- **not enough communication among agencies**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Comment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>As a foster parent we feel as though we are not kept up to date with information regarding the child. We have been treated like a tool for JFS instead of a partner.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Too often youth voice is left out of decisionmaking that directly impacts their future</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I do not have any</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It always goes better when attorneys are willing to collaborate with the agency/caseworker.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **Child advocacy centers are a key part of this puzzle, as CACs host and facilitate multidisciplinary team meetings and provide ongoing support to families. There is a need for CACs to be represented in this planning process.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Comment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Better education for collaborating partners on the child welfare system</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Team decision making needs to be trauma informed and family and solution focused to avoid negative groupthink. The family members need to be part of the team.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clear rules and boundaries for information sharing, and consequences for both under and over sharing are needed. And training for all involved staff. Attorneys/court staff often believe they understand the parameters, and frequently they are mistaken.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is difficult to communicate with GAL's, and unheard of speaking with a client's attorney as all communication goes through the agency's prosecutor. Caseworkers need better training on this.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We find DJFS does not want others directing them or involved prior to adjudication, they are very old school and need to grow with the times.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Q11 - Nationally, children and families of color are overrepresented in the child protection system. In addition, children of color, especially African American and American Indian children, experience significantly worse outcomes in the child protection system than do non-minority children. Please indicate where, within the child protection system, you think attention should focus in future research or policy-development that would improve equity and reduce disproportionate minority representation.
Referral process
Initial Screening Process
Kinship placement
Foster Placement
Public Defender
Prosecutor
Guardian ad Litem
Case Planning
Case Review
Safety Plans
Programming that develops or improves parenting skills
Custody Decisions
do not think Ohio's existing child protection system needs to address racial/ethnic inequity.
Other (please explain)
CASA
<table>
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<th>Field</th>
<th>Choice Count</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Referral process</td>
<td>8.80% 154</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Initial Screening Process</td>
<td>11.83% 207</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Kinship placement</td>
<td>10.69% 187</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>Foster Placement</td>
<td>7.31% 128</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>Public Defender</td>
<td>3.66% 64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>Prosecutor</td>
<td>4.06% 71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>Guardian ad Litem</td>
<td>7.26% 127</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>Case Planning</td>
<td>7.60% 133</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>Case Review</td>
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<td>27</td>
<td>Safety Plans</td>
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<td>28</td>
<td>Programming that develops or improves parenting skills</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>Custody Decisions</td>
<td>7.83% 137</td>
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<td>31</td>
<td>I do not think Ohio's existing child protection system needs to address racial/ethnic inequity.</td>
<td>1.54% 27</td>
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<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td>Other (please explain)</td>
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<td>33</td>
<td>CASA</td>
<td>5.83% 102</td>
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<td><strong>Showing rows 1 - 16 of 16</strong></td>
<td><strong>1750</strong></td>
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Q11_32_TEXT - Other (please explain)

Other (please explain)

Although, I am familiar with the state numbers for disproportionality, I do not see the same issues in our county. We do not have a disproportionate number of AA youth or family involvement.

Legal services

In the African American families I have worked with, many of the issues are multi-generational. Whether or not the child's parents grew up in foster care, were adopted or were in a group home, the biological parents are still important to them. I have also seen more medical and mental health issues (including those with drug addiction) with these families - much of it also multi-generational. I’ve learned that children love their parents - even if they are unable to provide for them. Perhaps the system needs more compassion - for the biological parents as well as the child.

There are often language barriers. All documents created by the agency should be available to the parents in their native language as well as English. Assistance with accessing English as a second language classes would help. Having Guardian ad Litem's who can speak with parents and children in their native language.

Intervention among poor and/or dysfunctional families needs to occur much sooner. Supportive services can reduce the number of incidents that bring families before the Court.
Other (please explain)

DEI training to assess risk without bias

The demographics in my county are 95% caucasian, so we do not have that overrepresentation problem, but I know it exists.

Improving education for children that are in placement so they do not fall behind their grade level.

Finding fathers.

The county in which I am employed does not have a large representation of ethnic groups, so I do not have enough information to answer this question.

I think that all professionals within the system need to have training in this area. I am, however, adamantly opposed to the setting of numerical or percentage based goals. Every child of every race who needs protection should receive the benefits of the child protection system.

I currently work in a county that does not have a lot of minorities in the county, however I formally worked in a metro that did have a large number of inner city cases. I think the biggest area that needs addressed for all counties is the community. Often referrals are based on socio-economic reasons which unfortunately there is an over representation from minority groups.

I don't believe that there is injustice in racial/ethnic inequity. Just because there may be more cases of one race over another. That doesn't mean that there was an injustice done to that particular race. I do believe that there is an injustice within the legal system. Lots of cases where children are taken away from caring living homes and placed in danger with foster families. Most are take due to the opioid epidemic with no just reason to do so. Except for the financial gain that all involved get in federal grant money for doing so. At the expense of innocent traumatized children and the families that live them.

I don't see that issue in our County

This a very complicated issue. All of the above could better or worse in any given case. Ultimately, each child needs to connect with a significant person that will provide safety, structure and support to end the cycle of abuse and neglect while helping the child succeed in effectively living in a family setting, gain an education and begin a career path.

I think that it needs to be addressed in society before a family ever reaches the point of having contact with child welfare providers.

If CPS ITSELF is racist - fix it. If not, do not skew procedures to try to fix racism from other arenas.

PREVENTION, PREVENTION, PREVENTION

Interventions/coaching not made early enough

I do not believe this is a problem in our county.

Addressing literacy is a barrier & inappropriate generational parenting methods. I've been in the field for almost 30 years & have worked with 3 generations in the same family with essentially the same issues.

We need more POC foster homes. My county does not have a high population of POC, but been we can use POC fosters.

Guardian ad litems of color

Although there is disproportionate minority representation on the child protection system, there is not within our treatment court. I would like to explore ideas as to why this is and offer more opportunities to for engagement.
I pay attention and I have not seen a systemic problem in this area. There are biased individuals in the system, peppered throughout, as a matter of fact. If anyone can come up with a way to eliminate individual biases, I am all for it.

Programming that develops self sufficiency and parenting foresight. There needs to be more engagement with parents to work with the reunification plan. For example, instead of instructing a parent to get a medical card, make an appointment, sit down and walk through the process with them. Rather than telling parents to take a parenting class, meet with them talk about options and schedule it together. Knowledge of the individual will help both minimize bias and provide a more effective plan.

I think my previous answer would help in this situation, an attorney appointed before becoming court involved to advise parents to comply before the court gets involved.

This is pervasive and needs all aspects of us all digging deeper to get to the root cause.

This question is way to complex to be forced into a box with preset answers.

Um, stop the systemic cycle of poverty, racism, and social injustice which fuels these cases. Improve access to low income housing in middle-class neighborhoods with solid schools where kids actually can go to learn in safe, nurturing environments with culturally sensitive teachers.

My experience had been different. There were always more white children by far.

The real problem is the lack of fathers in the black community. Until we can teach individual responsibility there will be no change. Please see statistics on single mothers in the black community today versus 1964.

Father roles in the affected families

birth control

This is solely for my county. I am unaware of the numbers/cases in other counties.

I do not see this as a local issue in my area.

I do not have enough experience in this area to offer comments.

I represent children in my county which is 99% white. I do not have experience in this county with overrepresentation of other races.

There needs to be a higher understanding of cultural and racial issues at every level. More high quality diversity training please!

While I understand the survey need to have a quantifiable, specific answer to this question, that would be a foolish minimization of the larger conversation regarding a very complicated topic. I don't know how to fix the potential for racial/ethnic inequity within the child protection system. As previously stated, it is a large complex issue that likely needs to be addressed by society as a whole. 95% of the cases where I am involved are heard by an African American Magistrate who I feel does a great job of being deferential in situations that could be sensitive to racial issues, while also being firm when necessary.

Implicit biases inherent in the community and those who are make ca/n referrals. The disproportionality of data within SACWIS begins with a disproportionate number of black children and other minorities being referred to the children services system. "Blind Screening" where the screener does not know the race of the family and child could also potentially help.

I think it is a much wider problem than just with child welfare.

Trauma-informed & brain-based parenting skills for biological families. We receive this as foster parents/are aware that it exists, but biological families would greatly benefit from these same high quality trainings/information to parent their children when many of them have already experienced trauma/have neurodiversity prior to coming into foster care.
I do notice a higher volume of minority children terminated from permanent custody of planned permanent living arrangements due to not being successful, however, I feel like it is due to more lenience towards minority families on the front end. I often notice social workers and GALs being more lenient towards minorities when abuse, family fighting, drug use, and firearms are involved. If social workers and GALs would be just as strict with minority families and the requirements of a "safe environment," then kids would be out of bad situations sooner and parents would get the help they need before being reunified.

Why is there an option to say I don't think Ohio doesn't need to address this? The data flatly points out that it does.

There need to be higher standards to hold GALs accountable to meet more frequently with the youth they represent in court.

I feel this is a poorly worded question. "experience significantly worse outcomes" what is this concerning? If you are talking about over-representation in the minority community, I will encourage and need information about the cases held to a different standard for that of minorities. However, the only option I am given in this question is, "inequity does not need to be addressed." I can't entirely agree with this. Is this due to their intake situation, or is it happening while the child is in care? Is the question being asked of me, "what do I feel would be the most effective method to keep minority children out of the child protection system to achieve equal representation across all races and cultures?" I believe the answer to this would be the same for any and every race/culture.

Adultification of BIPOC Children

There needs to be an expectation that reduced risk and increased child protection is the desired outcome. We cannot achieve risk-free outcomes, and we need to accept that families belong together even when the situation is not perfect.

Blind case reviews to make removal decisions have been associated with a 50% reduction in removals of Black children in some areas.
Q11A - Of the strategies below, which do you believe would have the most impact on promoting equity and inclusion in the child protection system?

1. Targeted mandated reporter training in areas with high rates of disproportionate referrals.
2. Additional training for GAL/CASA.
3. Additional training for attorneys representing parties in child welfare/protection matters.
4. Additional training for judges and magistrates adjudicating child welfare/protection matters.
5. Increased training on race/ethnicity for mandated reporters.
6. Targeted recruiting to increase diversity for GAL/CASA.
7. Data reporting requirements for courts and PCSAs specific to equity/disproportionality.
8. Targeted recruiting to increase diversity on workgroups, subcommittees, advisory committees, etc., which address child welfare/protection.
9. Increased training on race/ethnicity for Ohio County Child Protection employees.
10. Other (please explain)

#  Choice Count
5  Targeted mandated reporter training in areas with high rates of disproportionate referrals. 9.79% 143
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<th>Field</th>
<th>Choice Count</th>
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<td>6</td>
<td>Additional training for GAL/CASA.</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>Additional training for attorneys representing parties in child welfare/protection matters.</td>
<td>10.47% 153</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Additional training for judges and magistrates adjudicating child welfare/protection matters.</td>
<td>10.95% 160</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Increased training on race/ethnicity for mandated reporters.</td>
<td>11.64% 170</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Targeted recruiting to increase diversity for GAL/CASA.</td>
<td>11.02% 161</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Data reporting requirements for courts and PCSAs specific to equity/disproportionality.</td>
<td>7.94% 116</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Targeted recruiting to increase diversity on workgroups, subcommittees, advisory committees, etc., which address child welfare/protection.</td>
<td>11.29% 165</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Increased training on race/ethnicity for Ohio County Child Protection employees.</td>
<td>14.58% 213</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Other (please explain)</td>
<td>2.05% 30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Showing rows 1 - 11 of 11

Q11A_18_TEXT - Other (please explain)

Other (please explain)

Diversity training for social workers.

Providing legal services to those in need of them

All of these may help - but training tends to miss the mark in terms of how someone relates to that training. Active recruitment of individuals who were children raised in foster care, kinship care, etc. or family members of these children to assist in training or speak at workshops would provide insight and depth to the training.

The problem is poverty, lack of education, and marginalization of communities of color and low economic status. The training has been done. Those who choose to work in this field know all there is to know about bias. Let's stop wasting their time with "training" and let them do their work.

Parents knowing the effects their decisions have on the lives of their children.

As stated previously for me, I am employed in a county that does not have a large representation of different ethnic groups, so I do not have enough information to answer this question.

As I said, training and understanding is essential. Data that can potentially drive a decision regarding a child that is based on data rather than the needs of the child is DANGEROUS.

I don't see this issue in Greene County.

I don't know

Training to focus on character and behavior irregardless of skin color.
"blind screenings" where the race of the child(ren) is not presented to the person or group determining the path (or not) of the case. That removes initial biases.

Having POC fosters. Biggest difference maker.

Your questions are biased. The assumption seems to be that numbers tell us all we need to know. What about individual justice for the child in front of you? When I started doing this about 40 years ago, I rarely saw any persons of color involved in child protection cases. (Our county is about 12% in terms of racial minorities.). Then crack came along and the world changed a bit. Anyway, it is about the child in front of you, no matter his color, if a child needs help, help should be provided.

inequity is due to poverty and insufficient social services to those targeted groups

Increased Kinship and foster care parents with ethnic backgrounds.

Again, too complex of a question/pervasive issue to answer w/a menu item of answers.

Training can be increased in all areas but if there be bias, there is no training in existence to wipe away preconceived notions of who the other is or should be or can never be.

Increased understanding of minimum sufficient level of care and what is looks like in everyday homes.

I do not see this as an issue in our local area.

Learn from other jurisdictions who have been successful in reducing racial bias and disproportionality in child welfare

Recruiting GALs and Caseworkers of Black, Latino, and other minorities

Methods to improve parenting skills.

Targeted recruiting for new hires out of college in the social services and agency areas...

Training for prosecutors as well as reducing or eliminating their immunity from lawsuits. I also recommend that anyone working as a prosecutor should be required to serve one year as a defense counsel to teach them compassion and empathy

All of the above

Parent classes and training to address the needs that children have.

Blind Removals: Letting removal decisions be decided by a committee that does not have information regarding the family's ethnicity or neighborhood (socioeconomic status).

Training absolutely has to include systemic racism and tools to combat it

Community outreach and training
Q12 - How would you rate the potential impact of the following proposed strategies to improve child/parent legal representation in Ohio:

- Strong positive impact
- Somewhat positive impact
- No impact
- Somewhat negative impact

- Creation and enforcement of standards to evaluate the quality of attorney performance
- Appointment of parent attorneys prior to shelter care hearing
- Reformed method of appointment
- Increased access to child protection specific training
- Increased access to implicit bias, diversity, and inclusion training
- Increased mandatory training requirements
- Child welfare law specialist certification (i.e. NACC)
- Creation of case load standards
- Revised compensation structure
# Field | Minimum | Maximum | Mean | Std Deviation | Variance | Count
---|--------|--------|-----|--------------|---------|------
1 | Creation and enforcement of standards to evaluate the quality of attorney performance | 1.00 | 6.00 | 2.11 | 1.25 | 1.57 | 407
2 | Appointment of parent attorneys prior to shelter care hearing | 1.00 | 6.00 | 2.12 | 1.33 | 1.77 | 406
3 | Reformed method of appointment | 1.00 | 6.00 | 3.11 | 1.68 | 2.82 | 391
4 | Increased access to child protection specific training | 1.00 | 6.00 | 1.87 | 1.01 | 1.02 | 400
5 | Increased access to implicit bias, diversity, and inclusion training | 1.00 | 6.00 | 2.09 | 1.16 | 1.35 | 401
6 | Increased mandatory training requirements | 1.00 | 6.00 | 2.27 | 1.28 | 1.65 | 395
7 | Child welfare law specialist certification (i.e. NACC) | 1.00 | 6.00 | 2.26 | 1.37 | 1.89 | 396
8 | Creation of case load standards | 1.00 | 6.00 | 2.16 | 1.27 | 1.61 | 396
9 | Revised compensation structure | 1.00 | 6.00 | 2.09 | 1.47 | 2.15 | 396

# Field | Strong positive impact | Somewhat positive impact | No impact | Somewhat negative impact | Negative impact | Don't know / have no opinion | Total
---|------------------------|------------------------|----------|------------------------|----------------|---------------------------|------
1 | Creation and enforcement of standards to evaluate the quality of attorney performance | 33.66% | 43.98% | 12.29% | 2.46% | 2.70% | 4.91% | 20 | 407
2 | Appointment of parent attorneys prior to shelter care hearing | 34.24% | 45.32% | 10.84% | 1.23% | 0.74% | 7.64% | 31 | 406
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Field</th>
<th>Strong positive impact</th>
<th>Somewhat positive impact</th>
<th>No impact</th>
<th>Somewhat negative impact</th>
<th>Negative impact</th>
<th>Don't know/ have no opinion</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Reformed method of appointment</td>
<td>14.58%</td>
<td>27.37%</td>
<td>34.27%</td>
<td>1.53%</td>
<td>0.77%</td>
<td>21.48%</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Increased access to child protection specific training</td>
<td>37.25%</td>
<td>50.00%</td>
<td>8.25%</td>
<td>1.00%</td>
<td>0.25%</td>
<td>3.25%</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Increased access to implicit bias, diversity, and inclusion training</td>
<td>31.17%</td>
<td>45.39%</td>
<td>16.46%</td>
<td>1.50%</td>
<td>0.75%</td>
<td>4.74%</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Increased mandatory training requirements</td>
<td>30.89%</td>
<td>35.95%</td>
<td>21.01%</td>
<td>4.56%</td>
<td>2.78%</td>
<td>4.81%</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Child welfare law specialist certification (i.e. NACC)</td>
<td>32.83%</td>
<td>36.62%</td>
<td>19.44%</td>
<td>2.02%</td>
<td>1.52%</td>
<td>7.58%</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Creation of case load standards</td>
<td>32.58%</td>
<td>41.41%</td>
<td>16.41%</td>
<td>3.03%</td>
<td>1.52%</td>
<td>5.56%</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Revised compensation structure</td>
<td>43.94%</td>
<td>34.09%</td>
<td>10.35%</td>
<td>1.77%</td>
<td>0.51%</td>
<td>9.34%</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Showing rows 1 - 9 of 9
Q12A - Please share comments related to the issue in the previous question (proposed strategies to improve child/parent legal representation in Ohio):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Comment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Please share comments related to the issue in the previous question (propos...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-parents need access to legal help instead of just a bunch of forms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I'm unfamiliar with some of the current standards/training, etc., but there appear significant differences in how attorneys address the needs of their clients. Legal assistance prior to shelter care hearing would be beneficial to parents especially if they have not had any contact with Children's Services prior.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More coordination is needed between the Court, the Bar and the PSAs. In my county there is NO cooperation from the PSA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It would be so much better if we got a monthly flat rate for handling open cases on our dockets. The billable hour model is outdated and creates too much administrative work for everyone. It is better to just require GAL's to handle a certain number of open cases competently for a set fee. Also, it is frustrating to see my hourly rate is less than the hourly rate for paralegals at local firms. If you consider the GAL or Child's attorney a valuable resource, than make it easier to earn a living in this profession. It seems like good attorneys are withdrawing from representing kids as attorney and GAL to pursue other work. Keeping competent and hardworking attorneys on the appointment list is not a good plan. Once an attorney demonstrates competency in this area, the court should offer that attorney a contract for services.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If the compensation structure does not change, efforts to increase training and decrease caseloads will only remove attorneys from available appointment lists and exacerbate the existing problems.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training is the best tool.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There are new and innovative practices being implement in child protection, but when those are presented in court there are sometimes viewed through an archaic lens. For example in child protection it is accepted that completion of a case plan goal does not increase child safety. Rather, it is the display of positive behavioral change obtained from the participation in whatever case plan service was recommended. However, when presented in court it seems to be viewed as a checklist and once the checklist is complete the case needs to close.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The same attorneys are always appointed as a limited number of attorneys will take appointments out of Juvenile Court. After awhile the attorney's efficacy diminishes to the detriment of the children/families.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attorneys are suppose to work for the client to remove them from the situation. Not work in collaboration with other attorneys. JFS . And all involved to come to a mutual agreement as to what should happen to the child and the family vased on their opinion. This is a court if law. And the law should be upheld. The clients right to be represented in these court procease and their rights faught for. Instead of bargaining with the opposition. and stringing the case along. All for the sake of money. If less money was involved they might fight harder to close a case instead of dragging it out.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No comments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not familiar enough to give a valuable answer.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Issues are with parents who dont participate with services provided</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qualified attorneys dont want to take these cases because often you work for no fee or less than min wage.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Parents should be given attorneys at the first hearing, they should not have to have any hearings without representation if they would like representation. There should be increased training regarding bias. Training will allow workers to become more knowledgeable about the field. There should be caseload standards because high caseloads lead to a gap in needed services. There are not a lot of trainings specific to the child welfare system and the system as a whole could benefit from more trainings specific to this job because many majors in undergrad do not focus on child welfare.

I have been doing court appointed work since 2004. I have not had any raises. Court appointed attorneys and GALs need and deserved better pay. I have significantly cut back my the amount of work I do in these areas because of the pay.

Required trainings would benefit the new lawyers that often do these cases. And attorney compensation is abysmal - it hasn't changed in our county in several years.

This is a difficult area when you live/work in a rural county with not a lot of diversity.

I think most solo practitioners stay away from juvenile cases because the compensation is low.

We are good attorneys handling these cases- driven by love of kids and desire to make a difference

Attorneys should not be GALs. Social workers, counselors should be. Attorneys do not understand family/child development

The single most common reason for continuing cases was parents counsel being unprepared for court- requiring parents counsel to meet with the client and prepare prior to scheduled hearings (non-emergency) would be very helpful in preventing significant delays that leave children without permanency too long

I think that the focus should be on training

We have a shortage of attorneys willing to do this kind of work. Any effort to increase training or scrutiny will shrink those numbers even more unless we attract more attorneys by way of compensation. Absent a massive increase in compensation, none of the proposals will work. In fact, the proposals will drive attorneys away, reduce the availability of counsel, increase delays, and diminish the quality of service.

We have issues with prosecutor's not understanding child welfare and being very punitive towards parents.

Increased training only works if attorneys want to do this area of practice in the first place. Hourly rates are so low that it is often not an attractive area of law.

Representatives in this child welfare field are the lowest paid in the legal field. Funding sources need to be educated about why adequate legal representation is so important.

Some of the suggestions above do not take into account logistics such as appointing counsel prior to Shelter Care.

Few attorneys are equipped to provide parent representation without special training. This should be standardized training.

Perhaps if the parents receive legal representation prior to shelter care hearings, they would engage in the process more. Rating the attorneys’ performance may give a measurement of those attorneys that should be appointed in the future to represent clients. Maybe appointing attorneys by a different method would provide a better “match” for the issues within each family. I think we could all use more training on implicit bias, diversity and inclusion training. Perhaps case load standards would improve the quality of the services each family receives.

All attorneys need to understand and be trained the same as child protection professionals. They should be required to operate under these foundational tenets vs personal opinion of how the world should look.
Caseloads are very high at this time which causes a lot of stress for agencies. The rate of pay is not always competitive to other opportunities with less stress and with working normal business hours. I think that attorneys do not always know juvenile law and do not always present information how it needs to be presented in a court. I also think there is a delay in appointment of legal representation for parents which leads to delays in adjudicatory and dispositional hearings, therefore possibly delaying permanency. GAL's do not always see their families on a regular basis which then leads to questionable recommendations being made in court.

IMPROVE MY PAY SO THAT I CAN ACTUALLY MAKE A LIVING ACCEPTING THESE CASES RATHER THAN TREATING COURT APPOINTED ATTORNEYS LIKE WE OWE THE GOVERNMENT PRO BONO HOURS. OHIO COURTS TREAT US LIKE INDEBTED SERVANTS AND YOU GET THE OUTCOMES OF ATTORNEYS WHO ARE FORCED TO WORK LIKE SLAVES TO FEED OUR OWN FAMILIES.

The compensation is so low compared to private hourly rates that, except for a few altruistic attorneys, most appointed attorneys tend to be either new or marginal. Attacting more experienced attorneys should improve the quality of outcomes.

Once again, if the stakeholders are represented well and shown equity better, then children will be better. If lack of care and concern toward one group, disenfranchises the whole.

I think that we have to appreciate the value of the relationships that are built between youth, families and social workers. I think that it would be really helpful to have a simplified “matching” process between the social worker and the youth/family to try to find out what each likes/values in approach to help start the relationship off strong.

This is not a race issue.

Increased training for attorneys representing parents and Children's Services. Prepare simple materials to give to parents going through the process.

Incentives, either CLE's or compensation to keep competent lawyers in the juvenile system

I'm hesitant to recommend training requirements as the existing requirements are already making it very difficult for small and medium sized counties to maintain lawyers across multiple case types.

Lack of compensation is a major factor in why quality attorneys do not do these cases for very long.

Court appointed counsel and GALs should at a minimum have their fees doubled

This is already a niche area of the law where often times it is a struggle to find attorneys to take cases. If you up the requirements it may have an undesirable effect of persuading attorneys to spend their time in other avenues and ultimately lead to a burdening of those already representing parties in the system

Enforcing requirements for GALs and parent attorneys to see their clients before the court hearing. Discourage continuances. Require attorneys to demonstrate multiple attempts to engage with clients before a hearing in order to grant a continuance based on attorney or GAL having not had time to prepare with parent or child.

Yes to standards evaluating quality of attorney performance. The biggest joke in the foster care world is often guardian ad litems. So many have never met the kids, never contact foster parents, never visited the home the child is in prior to or after removal and then they have an wildly inaccurate influential voice in the courtroom.

the attorney's that are representing parents are not always knowledgable about the case and do not seem to advocate for the parents. Raise the standards and expectations of legal counsel.

a lot of defense panel attorneys are in it for the money. I know that sounds harsh, but it's one of the biggest frustrations in the system. They do not care about the welfare of parents or children. I have had more than one attorney ask to remand or to place kids with a custodian who do not want the kids. Everyone in my office knows certain attorneys who ask for pretrials over and over to add that time on their pay slip, but delay an adjudication or disposition for months due to these unnecessary hearings. I understand they need to be paid well to give parents adequate representation, but I strongly believe there should be better evaluations put in place to make sure they are actually being effective and not doing the bare minimum or harming the case just to make more money.
There needs to be reform in the law as well as training for social workers. In our experience their primary focus is to get the child placed with family as soon as possible. Regardless of the specific situation. The communicate is horrible amongst caseworkers/supervisors/foster care givers.

CASAs have more time to dedicate to meeting with a youth and can play a key role in safeguarding them from further abuse.

None of these proposed strategies mean anything to me because simply “increasing training” or a change in policy does not give me enough information of what would change. Every encounter I have had with any agency worker, CASA/GAL, Judge, or representative has been wonderful. Unclear on the changes being offered and how they would be implemented on a national level, I cannot offer credible options to this question.

NA

Increased pay and manageable workload for frontline advocates and workers.

Training in child welfare law for attorneys representing parents and children.

Incentive to encourage attorneys to enter this field of practice. Should be linked to standards. I did not check standard above because there already are practices & standard but courts don’t hold attorneys accountable. People aren’t exactly rushing to enter... or more importantly stay in juvenile court.

Parents need the same quality of representation enjoyed by PCSAs.

Rural areas are extremely challenged to find competent attorneys willing to take on the high volume of these most complex cases.

End of Report
Review of CJA Survey Results
March 2021

Presented by Victoria Smith, Esq., Staff Attorney at the Family and Youth Law Center
Presentation Structure

- Question by question breakdown
  - Responses given
  - Categorization of “Other” responses
  - Selected comments
- Recommendations for direction for committee groups
Survey Respondents

554 RESPONSES RECORDED

- CASA/GAL – 102
- PCSA administrator – 86
- Magistrate – 62
- Court appointed attorney – 47
- PCSA caseworker – 46
- Judge – 30
- Foster parent – 15
- Residential Provider – 14
- Prosecutor – 14
- Behavioral provider – 9
- Law enforcement – 8
- PCSA attorney – 8
- Former foster youth – 7
- Kinship caregiver – 4
- Other – 102
Survey Respondents

- Former foster youth: 1%
- CASA/GAL: 18%
- Judge: 5%
- Magistrate: 11%
- Court appointed attorney: 9%
- PCSA administrator: 16%
- PCSA caseworker: 8%
- Residential provider: 3%
- Foster parent: 3%
- Kinship caregiver: 1%
- Behavioral provider: 2%
- Other: 18%
- Law enforcement: 1%
- Prosecutor: 3%
- PCSA attorney: 1%
- Prosecutor: 3%
- Kinship caregiver: 1%
“Other” Survey Respondents

- Court staff - 21
- Other attorney – 9
- Other PCSA employee – 7
- Former/retired CW workers – 6
- Foster care worker – 5
- Mental health workers – 5
- Other advocate – 5
- Non-profit employee – 4
- JFS employee – 4
- Other admin – 4
- Corrections - 4

- Social worker – 3
- CW worker – 3
- PNA staff – 2
- Family assessor – 2
- State employee – 2
- Victim advocate – 2
- Educator – 2
- Forensics – 1
- Kinship care – 1
- Parent – 1
Q1. CHIPS Framework

ARE YOU FAMILIAR WITH CHIPS FRAMEWORK?

Yes 41%
No 59%
Q1A. CHIPS Impact Concerns

- Children: 26%
- Court process: 24%
- Caseworkers: 20%
- Families: 18%
- Other: 12%
Q1. Other CHIPS Impact Concerns

- Stigma associated with adjudication labels and court processes
- Jurisdiction
- Streamlining/timing
- Permanent custody
- OAC
- Children with disabilities
- Capacity/effectiveness of the court
Q1. CHIPS Impact Comments

- “[C]oncerned that, by removing the labels of neglect, abuse, and dependency from the parents, and shifting to calling the youth in need of services, that this shifts stigma and blame onto the youth.”

- “If CHIPS comes to fruition, this will widen the net of families and youth that the community will expect to have court oversight. This raises issues/concerns related to capacity and community expectations in respect to the role of child protection.”

- “CHIPS should be clear as to any continuing jurisdiction a CHIPS court will have following a successful or unsuccessful closure.”

- “I do not agree with the supposed need to change the terminology in the statute from Dependency, Neglect, and Abuse. Any rare conflicts in the statutes can be harmonized by brief revisions.”
Q2. Mandated Reporter Improvements

- Creation of a standard curriculum: 39%
- Training updated to include implicit bias, equity, and inclusion: 32%
- Additional professions: 22%
- Removal of some professions: 2%
- Other: 4%
- Respondent not mandated reporter: 1%
- Other: 4%
Q2. Other mandated reporter improvements

- Limit employer interference/retaliation with a mandated reporters duty
- Improve overall education and training
- Clear, sufficient guidelines for reporting based on setting (school, other professions)
  - Including who reports when, requirements for schools
- Standardized online reporting form
- Remove anonymity in reporting
Q2. Mandated Reporter Improvement Comments

- “Better guidelines, timeframes, for mandated reporters... example... schools not reporting CAN until the end of day or child has left school if there was disclosure of CAN earlier in the day.”
- “Additional training for CPS workers who take hotline calls.”
- “Clear training when hired re: what should be reported, and what information to have available when reporting. Electronic system of reporting would be helpful as well.”
Q3. Information Sharing

Do you experience cases that require sharing of information across jurisdictions?

- Yes: 84%
- No: 8%
- Profession does not require information sharing: 8%
Q3. Suggestions for Improving Information Sharing

- Guidance for how to handle ICPC – 49
- Ohio jurisdictional differences – 35
- Standardized mechanism/system – 28
- Clarification with what can/cannot be shared – 26
  - Confidentiality concerns - 23
- Time limits/lengths for providing information – 21
- Guidelines for sharing across professions – 17
- Best practices for agency policy – 16
- Standardized release forms – 14
- HIPPA exceptions – 11
- Guidelines/improvements for sharing across public/private sectors – 3
- Ease of accessing law enforcement records – 3
- Transportation of evidence – 1
- Accessing older history - 1
Q3. Suggestions for Improving Information Sharing

- “Systems are often organized differently and use different terminology. Getting everyone to use the same terminology would be a good starting point.”
- “As a private agency there is no shared electronic system and HIPPA prevents us from sharing without authorization unless we receive a subpoena.”
- “Sharing documents with MDT members is challenging due to different rules regarding confidentiality—i.e. law enforcement file becomes public record at conclusion of case.”
- “Each state has different requirements and access points. A uniform access system would facilitate communication and access.”
- “Not everyone has access to the same systems or frameworks, and they don’t interface.”
Q3. Suggestions for Improving Information Sharing

- “There are some states that have a centralized intake and other that are county to county like Ohio is. This can be confusing at times and it would be nice to have a contact list.”
- “We are in need of clear guidance on how to legally share information with other states that do not have the same HIPPA or PHI rules.”
- “It is difficult to determine what information can be released as it is dependent on the 1) type of information requested, 2) who is requesting the information, 3) what information can be released, and 4) can the requesting person receive the information.”
Q4. Sibling Placement Challenges

Processes during and/or leading up to court proceedings present challenges pertaining to the placement of siblings.

- Agree: 68%
- Disagree: 21%
- Does not place: 11%
Q4. Suggestions for Sibling Placement Challenges

- Deeper kinship exploration – 27
- More options for foster placement – 25
- Sibling group focused foster care – 23
- Sibling statutory rights – 14
- Streamlining placement – 14
- Financial assistance to prospective families – 12
- Geographic requirements – 6
- Mandate sibling placement – 6

- More services for prospective families – 6
- More GAL involvement – 5
- Requirement for CPS to show substantial efforts – 4
- Standardize cases with different fathers – 4
- More reunification diligence – 3
- Outline of best practice – 3
- Regional/statewide placement database – 1
Q4. Suggestions for Sibling Placement Challenges

- “Sibling rights need to be statutorily provided. They should not be disrupted in Permanent Custody matters. Sibling visitation should be prioritized if siblings are separated.”

- “All efforts should be made to place children in a home where the siblings can also be – if it is safe to do so. Too often, children are piecemeal placed or not in close proximity.”

- “Recruiting and training foster parents that are willing to take sibling groups.”

- “Require siblings to be placed together, or in large sets (5+), no more than two homes.”

- “Standard rate setting negotiated by ODJFS for all agencies in Ohio. Larger agencies can pay more money and consequently are in a better position to get open beds.”
Q5. Sibling Visitation Challenges

When siblings are not placed together as a result of a court mandate, implementing sibling visitation is a challenge.

Agree 72%
Disagree 16%
Does not place 12%
Q5. Sibling Visitation Suggestions

- Visitation coordinators/centers – 28
- Require via case plan/statute – 28
- Geographic requirement – 20
- Transportation support – 19
- Scheduled by court – 18
- Foster parent support/training – 17
- Agency to prioritize visitation – 12
- Party flexibility/communication – 11
- Technology for virtual visits - 11
- More agency resources – 11
- Condition custody on visitation – 9
- Mandate sibling placement – 7
- Uniform guideline of expectations – 7
- Multi-day per week visits – 6
- Sibling-centered foster care – 5
- Increase in number of placement homes – 3
- CASA/GAL monitoring – 3
Q5. Sibling Visitation Suggestions

- "Agencies need to ensure that siblings are placed in close proximity so that foster parents can ensure regular face to face contact. If that is not possible then the agency must facilitate visitation. The state should investigate funding to open up independent visitation centers that can facilitate visitation and transportation."

- "Revamping foster care provider usage, i.e. have designated families that will only take siblings."

- "MOU between placements of siblings and agencies responsible for placements could be utilized to emphasize the significance of and give structure to the accommodation of visitation.

- "It would be helpful if the court ordered visitation and put enforcement teeth behind it to ensure it happened."
Q6. Strategies to Improve Youth Engagement in Court

- Court addresses youth directly
- Written/oral statement
- Prepare youth on court procedure
- Transportation
- Youth given option to attend
- Prepare court on youth limitations
- Debrief youth after hearing
- Other
- Youth required to attend
- Youth schedule
- Virtual option
Q6. Suggestions to Improve Youth Engagement in Court

- Increase use of *in camera* hearings – 10
- Increase CASA/GAL contact and involvement – 9
- Against any youth involvement in court hearings – 7
- Create age and developmental guidelines for how to approach – 7
- Allow youth to attend only some hearings – 3
- Multi-disciplinary trauma training – 1
Q6. Suggestions to Improve Youth Engagement in Court

- “Youth have shared that, when they are not in court in person, what they receive is secondhand information about their firsthand life.”

- “Reliance on the GAL should be the go to here. If the GAL believes the child has an appropriate understanding of their situation then let them appear any way the court deems necessary.”

- “Usually, in AND cases, I don’t think it’s healthy for the child to sit in court and listen to adults argue over him/her, or to listen to details of adult abuse/neglect. I think it is better to speak through a GAL, or an in camera interview. If the youth is in court, perhaps he/she should attend only the appropriate portion of the hearing.”
Q7. Caregiver Involvement

- Caregivers given chance to be heard in court
- Caregivers receive notice of hearings

Legend:
- Never
- Sometimes
- Always
Q8. Most Useful Kinship Caregiver Services
Q8. Most Needed by Kinship Caregiver
Q9. Multidisciplinary Collaboration

Areas that could benefit from multidisciplinary collaboration:

- Parental representation: 16%
- Pre-filing: 17%
- Child representation: 19%
- Prevention services: 27%
- Post permanency: 21%
Q9. Multidisciplinary Collaboration

- Comments very diverse, most frequent concerns in the following areas:
  - Increasing relationships among members of multi-disciplinary teams in order to increase efficacy
  - Increase county/agency focus on multidisciplinary approach
  - Increase education for social workers, judges, and attorneys
  - Increase services to families through the multidisciplinary team
Q9. Multidisciplinary Collaboration - Comments

- “Multi-disciplinary teams work best when all parties have a common goal, are working through differences in perspective, and respect the differing views on the committee. They are strained when used to rubber stamp one agency’s requests or gather information to then be used to a party’s detriment.”

- “Have all members working together on a daily/weekly basis. Right now with different agencies doing different things, the right hand often does not know what the left is doing. Plus, all agencies have their own agendas and guidelines.”

- “Too often the youth voice is left out.”

Note: No respondents said they were against implementation or expansion of MDTs.
Q10. Disparate Minority Representation – Areas of Future Focus
Q10. Disparate Minority Representation – “Other” Suggestions for Focus

- Parenting interventions/engagement – 4
- Diversity, ethics, and inclusion training – 4
- Preventative support services – 4
- Explore reasons for disparity – 3
- Kinship connections – 2
- Community support services – 2
- Proper placement – 2
- Drug addiction support - 2

- Legal services – 1
- More systematic compassion – 1
- Addressing language barriers – 1
- Strengthening educational support for children – 1
- Birth control – 1
- Adultification of BIPOC children – 1
- Blind case reviews – 1
Q10. Disparate Minority Representation – Comments re. Suggestions for Focus

- “Programming that develops self-sufficiency and parenting foresight. There needs to be more engagement with parents to work on the reunification plan. For example ... rather than telling parents to take a parenting class, meet with them and schedule it together after presenting options. Knowledge of the individual will help minimize bias.”

- “There are often language barriers. All documents created by the agency should be available to the parents in their native language as well as English. Assistance with accessing ESL classes would help. GALs who can speak to the children and parents in their native language.”

- “There needs to be a higher understanding of cultural and racial issues at every level. More high quality diversity training, please!”

- Note: 10 respondents explicitly stated that racial disparity was not a problem in their county or in Ohio.
Q10A. Disparate Minority Representation – Strategies with Largest Potential Impact
Q10A. Disparate Minority Representation – “Other” Impact Suggestions

- Diversity training – 5
- Other trainings – 3
- Recruitment of POC in system – 3
- Blind Screening – 2

- Social services – 2
- Training for workers on parent sufficiency – 2
- Legal services – 1
- Parental education – 1
Q10A. Disparate Minority Representation – Impact Comments

- “The problem is poverty, lack of education, and marginalization of communities of color and low economic status. The training has been done. Those who choose to work in this field know all there is to know about bias. Let’s stop wasting their time with “training” and let them do their work.”

- “Having POC fosters. Biggest difference maker.”

- “Increased understanding of minimum sufficient level of care and what it looks like in everyday homes.”
Q11. Impact of Proposed Strategies on Child Welfare Sector

- Increased child protection training: Strong/somewhat positive
- Appointment of attorneys pre-shelter care: Strong/somewhat positive
- Attorney performance standards: No impact
- Revised compensation structure: Strong/somewhat negative impact
- Increased DEI training: Unsure
- Creation of case load standards: No impact
- Child welfare law specialist cert.: Strong/somewhat positive
- Reformed method of appointment: No impact
- Increased mandatory training requirements: Strong/somewhat positive
Q11. Impact on Proposed Strategies - Suggestions

- “Attorneys need to understand and be trained the same as child protection professionals. They should be required to operate under these foundational tenants.”

- “Non-parents need access to legal help instead of being handed a bunch of forms.”

- “Enforcing requirements for GALs and parent attorneys to see their clients before the court hearing. Discourage continuances. Require attorneys to demonstrate multiple attempts to engage with clients before a hearing in order to grant a continuance based on attorney or GAL not having had time to prepare.”
Recommendations

Attorney Training Workgroup
- Develop a cultural competency training for individuals involved in the child welfare system, specifically Ohio Child Protective Services workers
  - Race/ethnicity, poverty, LGBTQIA
- Creation of standards for attorneys in child welfare, including GALs
  - Potential trainings from these standards, or overlap with existing trainings in field.

Pre-Petition Representation Workgroup
Recommendations

Multi-Disciplinary Collaboration Workgroup
- Collaborate to develop new trainings (competency)
- Develop guidelines for multidisciplinary teams to increase efficiency and focus on improved outcomes for children and families

*NEW* Youth Centered Workgroup
- Develop a set of age and developmentally appropriate guidelines for youth involvement in court/multi-disciplinary teams/other processes
- Develop sibling-centered foster care training and recruitment strategies
Questions?

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Final Recommendations of the Children Services Transformation Advisory Council

November 2020

Dear Fellow Ohioans:

Tragically, every single day, thousands of Ohio children are not able to live with their families because it is not safe for them to do so. I am grateful to the foster and kinship caregivers who have opened their homes to these young people in need.

We, as a state, must give our most vulnerable children the opportunities they deserve to succeed and live fulfilling lives. That is why I have made it a priority in my administration to reform Ohio’s foster care system and, shortly after being sworn in as Governor, signed an executive order to elevate foster care needs in Ohio.

While it is important that my administration works hard to provide better outcomes for kids, I believe it is crucial that we make changes based on the feedback from those who have experienced the children services system first-hand. Late last year, I announced the creation of the Children Services Transformation Advisory Council, whose members traveled across the state and listened to individuals as they told their stories, their struggles, and offered their recommendations for improving the children services system. I thank the courageous Ohioans who shared their stories with our council members. Their testimony was a critical part in creating the recommendations in this report.

I also express my sincere appreciation to all members of the Children Services Transformation Advisory Council for their selfless work for making a difference in the lives of so many Ohio children. I believe by fulfilling the recommendations included in this report, as a state, we can improve the lives of our children -- no matter where they grow up.

Very respectfully yours,

Mike DeWine
Ohio Governor
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Kathryn Whittington, Ashtabula County Commissioner
As Director of the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services’ Office of Children Services Transformation and co-chair of the Children Services Transformation Advisory Council, I applaud Governor DeWine’s commitment to improving the lives of children and families. In my 20 years of work in children services, I have never been prouder of an administration’s leadership and dedication to helping vulnerable children and youth and strengthening families and communities.

It is hard to believe that one year ago, our Children Services Transformation Advisory Council members were chosen by Governor DeWine to use their firsthand experiences, system knowledge, and collective advocacy to innovate change for children, families, caregivers, and the children services workforce. Little did we know the challenges we would face in the months ahead. Although the COVID-19 pandemic shifted the timeline slightly, these dedicated council members have remained steadfast in prioritizing the work of the council and delivering a set of recommendations to Governor DeWine. The new health and economic consequences of the pandemic, and the continued social injustices throughout our communities, have only intensified the need for systemwide reform.

This final report picks up where the council’s Initial Findings Report left off in February. At that time, the council had just finished the most crucial part of its work – traveling the state to hear testimony from nearly 500 Ohioans at 10 community forums about their experiences with Ohio’s foster care system. Since that time, we have continued to review hundreds of testimonials. I am extremely thankful for all the current and former foster youth who bravely shared their stories to advocate for change and a brighter future for children currently in the system. Their lived experiences and leadership must continue to be at the forefront of all our work moving forward. We cannot and will not do this without them!

This report and recommendations represent a collective vision for a children services and foster care system that promotes safety, permanency, and well-being by strengthening families and communities. This vision depends on a public and private continuum of care that prioritizes children’s existing networks and requires sensitive consideration of their diverse racial, cultural, and economic identities. We are committed to maintaining these goals so we can achieve a thriving future for Ohio’s children.

Kristi Burre
Director
Office of Children Services Transformation
Ohio is one of nine states with a state-supervised, county-administered children services system. The Ohio Department of Job and Family Services oversees the delivery of children services across the state and provides training, technical assistance, and supervision to each of Ohio’s local public children services agencies (PCSAs). Each county has its own PCSA, which is responsible for providing direct services to children and families in their county to ensure safety, permanency, and well-being.

Upon coming into office, Ohio Governor Mike DeWine committed to comprehensively reviewing Ohio’s children services system and prioritizing needed reforms. Just moments after being sworn in as Ohio’s 70th Governor, Governor DeWine signed Executive Order 2019-04D, elevating the priority of children services within the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services. From its inception, the Office of Children Services Transformation has been committed to re-envisioning Ohio’s children services system, in partnership with Ohio’s PCSAs, to ensure that every child who connects with it is afforded the same services and opportunities for lifelong success.

In November 2019, Governor DeWine created the Children Services Transformation Advisory Council to conduct a comprehensive review of the children services system. Twenty-one members were appointed to carry out this work, spanning families, foster youth, and subject matter expertise from across the state. Members were tasked with:

1. Traveling the state to better understand local barriers and best practices.
2. Promoting a shared state and county vision for agency purpose and practice.
3. Reviewing data, trends, and policies regarding the foster care system.
4. Providing recommendations and strategies to strengthen all areas of the system, including kinship, foster care, adoption, workforce, and prevention.
From November 2019 to January 2020, the Children Services Transformation Advisory Council held 10 regional community foster care forums throughout Ohio to listen to public testimony on challenges and suggested solutions to improve the children services system. The forums were followed by 14 additional council meetings, held from January to October 2020, to review additional written testimony and develop recommendations. The dedication of this council, to fulfill this critical task from the Governor despite a global pandemic, is highly commended and appreciated.

Below is a summary of each Advisory Council meeting.

**Meeting 1: November 4**

Governor DeWine held a press conference announcing the formation of the Children Services Transformation Advisory Council and introduced the appointed members. Following the press conference, the council met for an official welcome, to review the charter and executive order, and to prepare for the regional community foster care forums.

**Meeting 2: January 27**

The council met via conference call to review the foster care forum feedback and discuss future meeting dates and next steps.

**Meetings 3 and 4: February 4 and 18**

The council was given an overview of the Initial Findings Report, a report summarizing themes heard during the foster care forums. Members were then separated into workgroups to discuss each of the following action areas: prevention, workforce, practice, kinship, foster care, adoption, and juvenile justice. Afterwards, the council identified the top three to five issues/gaps in each action area. The meeting concluded with a discussion of goals and next steps.

**Meeting 5: March 3**

The meeting began with a discussion on criteria for generating recommendations, emphasizing that members should be bold and think big. The council was divided into small groups to develop recommendations in three action areas: prevention, workforce, and practice. The council built consensus around common and unique recommendations from each action area.

**Meeting 6: May 20**

The meeting began with a discussion of the impact of COVID-19 on the council’s work, including the move to virtual meetings. Members reflected on the heightened importance of their work. They examined the final draft recommendations in each of the three action areas discussed at the March meeting and agreed on four prevention, five workforce, and three practice action area recommendations. The group learned about the new virtual format for future council meetings. Members agreed that going forward they would meet in smaller workgroups where they would brainstorm ideas, and later meet as a whole to build consensus on the recommendations.
Meetings 7 and 8: June 8 and July 13

The council met virtually in four workgroups to discuss the kinship action area. The workgroups discussed the following related topics: resources, communication, and family-finding efforts. Later, the council met to discuss workgroup recommendations. Members agreed on five kinship action area recommendations and addressed related recommendations in other action areas.

Meetings 9 and 10: July 27 and August 17

The Council met virtually in four workgroups to discuss the foster care action area. Workgroups discussed the following related topics: guidance/support for foster parents, the need for consistency, and normalcy for youth in care. The entire council then met to discuss workgroup recommendations. Members agreed on eight foster care action area recommendations.

Meetings 11 and 12: August 24 and September 14

The council met virtually in four workgroups to discuss the adoption action area. Workgroups discussed the following related topics: permanency timeliness, adoption subsidies, and supports/resources for post-adoptive families. The council later met as a whole to discuss workgroup recommendations. Members agreed on six adoption action area recommendations.

Meetings 13 and 14: September 21 and September 30

The council met virtually in four workgroups to discuss the juvenile justice action area. The workgroups discussed the following related topics: expectations and accountability of guardians ad litem and court-appointed special advocates and the need for consistency across court systems. The entire council later met as a whole to discuss workgroup recommendations. Members agreed on six juvenile justice action area recommendations.

Meeting 15: October 26

The council met virtually for a final meeting to celebrate their accomplishments before issuing this final report. Several members spoke about their experiences serving on the council and Governor DeWine expressed his heartfelt appreciation for the expertise and dedication to the Children Services Transformation Advisory Council.
Under the leadership of Governor DeWine and through the historic investments in Ohio’s children services system through the 2020-2021 operating budget, many initiatives to improve Ohio’s child-serving systems are already underway.

Shortly after being sworn in Governor DeWine created the Governor’s Children’s Initiative to advance children’s issues and align programming across Ohio’s child-serving agencies. The priorities of the Governor’s Children’s Initiative include, expanding home visiting services, enhancing the quality of child care, increasing access to children’s mental and physical health services, and reforming the foster care system.

Each of these priorities requires the collaboration of numerous cabinet agencies, boards, and commissions, and the efforts detailed in this section demonstrate the many cross-agency efforts underway to better serve Ohio’s vulnerable children and families. The recommendations of the Children Services Transformation Advisory Council build upon these investments and efforts.

**Family First Prevention Services Act (Family First)**

The federal Family First Act changes the way children services systems are funded across the nation, prioritizing preventative services that, to the extent possible, keep children out of foster care and with their families or relatives. Families can provide safe and loving care if given access to needed mental health services, substance abuse treatment, or improved parenting skills. Family First, along with the efforts of the Children Services Transformation Advisory Council, has the potential to transform how Ohio administers children and family services.

**Tiered Treatment Foster Care**

All children deserve to live with a loving family. Sadly, too many Ohio youth live in residential institutions, rather than with families. To reduce Ohio’s reliance on congregate settings, Ohio will expand levels of foster care beyond “traditional” and “treatment” to a multi-tiered system that better reflects the needs of today’s foster youth. This project will establish a range of tiers; standardize the core features of quality treatment foster care and the range of skills, supports, and training that will be needed at each level; and address recruitment and retention strategies and interaction with birth families.
OhioRISE (Ohio Resilience through Integrated Systems and Excellence)

OhioRISE, part of the Ohio Department of Medicaid’s managed care procurement, is a specialty managed care program designed to create a child- and family-centric delivery system specifically for Ohio children with complex behavioral health and multi-system needs. OhioRISE will feature enhanced care coordination and behavioral health services targeted toward this population.

Ohio Family and Children First

Ohio Family and Children First (OFCF) is a partnership of state and local governments, communities, and families that enhances the well-being of Ohio’s children and families by building community capacity, coordinating systems and services, and engaging families. OFCF’s vision is for every child and family to thrive and succeed within healthy communities. Locally, county commissioners establish the 88 Family and Children First Councils to eliminate redundancy and bring resources together for planning, monitoring, and improving outcomes for families and children.

Multi-System Children/Youth Technical Assistance

Through investments in the 2020-2021 state operating budget, the Ohio Departments of Job and Family Services and Medicaid funded a state-level program to prevent custody relinquishment of children and youth solely for the purpose of obtaining needed treatment. State staff provide technical assistance to county Family and Children First Councils to better support the needs of multi-system youth, while eligible families can receive financial assistance to cover the costs of their child’s needed care.

Help Me Grow Home Visiting

Help Me Grow is a voluntary home visiting program that supports vulnerable children and families. Home visiting is a two-generational service that can improve outcomes for both children and their families. Home visiting can reduce parent stress, improve parenting skills, and help caregivers set and keep goals, such as pursuing an education. Home visitors also work with children to achieve developmental milestones, such as walking, speech development, and motor skills so that they are ready for kindergarten.

Statewide Training

The Ohio Child Welfare Training Program is a comprehensive, competency-based, in-service training system for PCSA staff, managers, and resource families. Training is critical to the development of a skilled children services workforce and to achieving safety, permanency, and well-being outcomes for children. The Ohio Department of Job and Family Services is enhancing trainer and coaching supports, increasing access to topically relevant trainings, advancing new training content, and developing an on-demand onboarding process.
The Children Services Transformation Advisory Council recommends that Ohio commit to formally addressing the racial injustices and implicit biases that lead to inequities and disproportionality for children and families of color. Any transformation of Ohio’s children services system must include, goals that create a culture of inclusion, formalize equity strategies, and model anti-racist behaviors and decision-making.

This effort must begin with raising awareness and creating spaces for honest, transparent conversations about racism and inequities. The voices and experiences of those directly impacted must be at the core of all discussions and transformation planning, with a vision that embraces diversity and inclusion to better serve future generations.

Actionable, systemic change will require (1) education, (2) leadership development, (3) hiring and recruitment strategies, (4) policy and practice reviews, (5) empathy training, (6) access to racially and culturally competent services, (7) and communities of support. Most importantly, all transformation efforts moving forward must utilize data to tell stories, measure access and outcomes, create meaningful benchmarks, monitor progress, and promote transparency and accountability. The 37 recommendations outlined in this report must be implemented with an equity lens to improve outcomes for racial, ethnic, and underserved populations now and in the future.

In Ohio, children of color are overrepresented in foster care, making up 32% of kids in custody when they are only 14% of Ohio’s child population.

**Compared to white youth, Black youth are:**
- 2.2 times more likely to be referred to children services
- 2.8 times more likely to have a report screened in for investigation
- 3 times more likely to enter out-of-home care.

**Compared to white youth, Multi-Racial youth are:**
- 1.8 times more likely to be referred to children services
- 2 times more likely to have a report screened in for investigation
- 2.7 times more likely to enter out-of-home care.

(Source: Ohio ROM Report, Ohio Department of Job and Family Services, Decision Point Report, January 2020)
Recommendations

The Children Services Transformation Advisory Council has prioritized the following 37 recommendations to improve Ohio’s children services and foster care system. These recommendations align with seven core action areas identified during the 10 forums as needing to be addressed.
Prevention

All children should be raised in family-based settings and have a family to call their own prior to becoming an adult. Preventing child maltreatment requires a commitment to strengthening and supporting families so children can safely remain in their own homes and communities when possible. Nationally, the number of children in foster care has risen steadily since 2012. Ohio is no different, with nearly 30% more children in out-of-home care compared to less than a decade ago. A growing number of these children are infants, suggesting a link to Ohio’s drug epidemic and highlighting the need for a preventive, community-based approach.

Families of color experience disproportionate involvement with children services and, once involved, unequal outcomes. As Ohio prioritizes prevention services, it will be imperative to create a culture of inclusion, to formalize equity strategies, and to model anti-racist behaviors and decision-making when addressing each following recommendation.

Recommendations

- **Invest in services, training, and supports for parents.**
  Develop a collaborative strategy that includes the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services and partner agencies to ensure that a broader array of support services – including trauma-informed care training, therapeutic services, and other supports – are available to families in their communities to help address stressful situations without the need for children services intervention.

- **Integrate and expand peer parent partner work in Ohio.**
  Expand access to peer mentoring services from parents who have lived experience with children services, to empower families and prevent children from entering foster care.

- **Elevate prenatal-to-three prevention and early intervention efforts.**
  Enhance prenatal-to-three prevention and early intervention efforts across Ohio’s many child-serving systems. This should include the identification of barriers and efficiencies to increase enrollment, improve service delivery, and better coordinate care.

- **Establish a statewide, multisystem data exchange.**
  Establish a statewide data exchange platform to support at-risk families. Seamless state and local data sharing will enable government to make data-driven decisions and better support the needs of children and families.

Workforce

Positive outcomes for children and families involved in the children services system are often due to the strong commitment of a dedicated children services workforce. Building and maintaining a diverse, high-quality, professional, and stable workforce is integral to a children services agency’s ability to protect children from abuse and neglect. However, recruitment and retention of high-quality staff are constant challenges in Ohio and across the country.

Caseworkers must often make critical decisions about the lives of vulnerable children and families, while working in stressful environments. Caseworkers can face high caseloads, inadequate supervision, safety concerns, and limited training and resources, all of which can affect the recruitment and retention of qualified staff.
The advisory council recognizes the need to improve caseworker readiness and retention through supportive work environments, removing administrative barriers, decreasing workers’ safety risks, and clearly communicating expectations and standards.

**Recommendations**

- **Review and evaluate the University Partnership Program.**
  
  Review and evaluate the University Partnership Program to identify new opportunities to engage college students in the protective services system. The Ohio Department of Job and Family Services should leverage the Public Children Services Association of Ohio and the established University Partnership Program in this work. The program provides students with meaningful experiences that build commitment to the children services system and quality practice. The University Partnership Program has demonstrated success in attracting and retaining a high-quality workforce.

- **Establish a consistent onboarding program.**
  
  Launch a statewide onboarding program to ensure consistent integration of new staff into Ohio’s public children services agencies.

- **Create a tiered program for caseworkers to help expand career pathways in children services.**
  
  Create expanded career pathway programs that empower children services caseworkers to continue learning and growing in their profession. The Ohio Department of Job and Family Services and partner agencies should build on best practices and successful approaches to create a tiered program that promotes career longevity.

- **Reduce organizational and state level red tape.**
  
  Evaluate unnecessary policies and regulations to expedite processes and decision-making. This will allow caseworkers to focus on improving outcomes for families and children.

- **Explore and identify technological solutions and support for caseworkers.**
  
  Identify technological solutions to support caseworkers and to better meet the unique needs of children and families involved with children services. This will enhance practice and support the workforce while ensuring better coordination of care.

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**Practice**

Promoting outcomes that strengthen children and families begins with a diverse workforce who can do their jobs efficiently, safely, and to the highest quality. Constituent engagement, foster care forum testimonials, and county children services agencies themselves indicated continuing concerns about inconsistent practice throughout the state and the need for additional guidance and support from the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services.

The organizational framework for children services varies from state to state, and that structure determines the balance of authority between state and local agencies. As indicated earlier, Ohio is one of nine county-administered states, which means counties have a considerable level of authority. This structure provides opportunities for the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services to focus on consistency in practice, articulating standards of excellence, and supporting continuous improvement of service delivery.

Practice is an action area that will continue to evolve over time and will require ongoing evaluation to support practices that are strength-based, family-centered, trauma-informed, and respectful of families’ culture, values, customs, beliefs, and needs.

**Recommendations**

- **Create regional best practice hubs to drive training, technical assistance, coaching, communication, innovation, and collaboration.**
  
  Create regional hubs that maximize training, technical assistance, coaching, communication, innovation, and collaboration that align with specific state priorities, regional priorities, and the needs of children and families. This will help ensure that county agencies have strategies to support their workforces and enhance their organizational culture through policy and practice improvements.
**Strengthen consistent screening decision-making.**

Establish a team to review and evaluate screening decision-making practices throughout Ohio to create consistency through statewide standards for critical screening decisions.

**Institute a statewide children services ombudsman.**

Establish a state-level ombudsman to independently investigate and resolve complaints made by or on the behalf of children and families involved with children services. Ohio should have an independent outlet for individuals to voice their concerns with the foster care system.

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**Kinship**

Research in Ohio and nationwide shows that children placed with kinship caregivers have greater stability, achieve permanency in fewer days, and are less likely to experience subsequent abuse or neglect. Children placed with kinship caregivers also experience less trauma and maintain meaningful connections with family members and kin. However, only about 27% of Ohio youth in care are placed with kinship caregivers. As children enter foster care, it is imperative that agencies improve efforts not only to locate kin, but to also better engage with them.

Kinship caregivers are a vital resource that historically have not received the same supports as other caregivers. Many kinship caregivers are asked to take on the full-time care of youth with little notice and minimal information. They often receive no training, little or no financial support, and insufficient information regarding the youth they are being asked to care for. Kinship caregivers should know what is expected of them and how the child has been or may be impacted from trauma.

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Work has already begun to support a kinship culture in Ohio that prioritizes collaboration, advocacy, and supports. 30 Days to Family® Ohio is an intense, short-term intervention that aims to place children with safe and appropriate relatives within 30 days of entering care. The Ohio Kinship and Adoption Navigator Program (OhioKAN) supports formal and informal kinship caregivers and adoptive parents by providing information and referrals to supportive services. Additionally, the Department of Job and Family Services is developing a licensure path for kinship caregivers, opening the opportunity for an array of services and supports. This path will allow for waivers of certain licensure requirements. The advisory council recognizes the need to elevate the importance of kin and a child’s family of origin.

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**Recommendations**

- **Integrate targeted kinship caregiver training through the Ohio Child Welfare Training Program.**

  Create a new trauma-informed training program for kinship caregivers that emphasizes the importance of supportive birth parent and kinship relationships, along with co-parenting best practices.

- **Establish statutory requirements and tools for family-finding and due diligence.**

  Prioritize family connections for children by requiring the identification and engagement of kin from the onset of children services involvement, especially when out-of-home placement is needed. Family-finding efforts should: (a) prioritize father engagement, (b) utilize search engines to locate kin, (c) take into consideration the expectations of the court for review and documentation, (d) and clarify the circumstances under which family-finding efforts may be discontinued.

- **Identify collaborative strategies for family-finding in other systems.**

  Review current family-finding efforts across other systems, such as child support, and use these opportunities to strengthen Ohio’s family-finding process.

- **Establish a federal Kinship Guardianship Assistance Program (KGAP).**

  Explore federally-subsidized KGAP, which can promote permanency for children who cannot return to their parents. KGAP provides ongoing financial support to kinship caregivers who commit to legal guardianship of a child in their care. Successful implementation of KGAP in Ohio requires a plan to license kinship caregivers.
Incorporate the terminology “resource parents” to define kinship and foster families involved in the children services system.

Understanding the importance of language and its impact on children and families involved in the children services system, the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services should align with federal guidance and prioritize using the term “resource parents” to define those who are providing care to youth in the foster care system.

Foster Care

Children enter foster care when they cannot remain safely at home or with a kinship caregiver. The foster care system is designed to be a support for children and their families, in order to achieve reunification. Unfortunately, the very act of entering foster care results in trauma for children. Agencies must strive to address not only children’s safety needs, but also their well-being and permanency needs. Without the understanding that all three needs are fundamental and interconnected, children entering foster care will continue to be further traumatized by the very system meant to protect and care for them.

On April 29, 2020, the federal Children’s Bureau issued Information Memorandum ACYF-CB-IM-20-06, “Foster Care as a Support for Families.” It details the opportunity states have to change the foster care experience for children and parents, moving from a system that compounds trauma and prolongs permanency to one that supports healing, promotes timely reunification, and strengthens families. Adopting this new vision requires changing Ohio’s current system in a variety of ways. A child’s best interests must be central to any permanency decision, but reunification should be actively supported by all involved in the child’s life. This includes agency staff, judges, attorneys, service providers, foster parents, and others.

Current and new foster parents must understand that they have a responsibility to assist in the reunification process, in addition to providing care for the child. Positive relationships between birth and resource families lead to open communication, maintenance of a child’s routines and traditions, and stronger bonds between youth and their families.

Foster families also must be supported and recognized for the important role they play in the lives of the entire family. Foster parents need proper trauma-informed training, supports to assist in children’s day-to-day and treatment needs, and recognition as skilled members of the team. The recent passage of House Bill 8 of the 133rd General Assembly, signed into law by Governor DeWine on October 20, 2020, will ensure that foster parents receive quality training to support the youth in their homes.

For youth, foster care should not just provide them with a safe place to live, in a family setting whenever possible, but also ensure that they have a voice in their care and an opportunity for a normal childhood. Many youth in foster care report that they are unable to participate in age-appropriate activities. This denies them opportunities to develop the critical skills they need to transition into adulthood. Evidence shows that youth who age out of care have poorer outcomes, often stemming from inadequate preparation for transitioning into adulthood.

Recommendations

- **Establish a Foster Youth Bill of Rights.**
  Codify a clear set of rights that youth in foster care may expect of the children services system.

- **Establish a Resource Family Bill of Rights.**
  Codify a clear set of rights that kinship and foster caregivers may expect of the children services system.

- **Strengthen required normalcy standards for youth in foster care.**
  Strengthen Ohio statutes to ensure that all children in foster care can engage in a range of developmentally appropriate experiences necessary for healthy emotional and social development – called normalcy activities – as these experiences help youth build relationships and develop skills to prepare for adulthood.

- **Strengthen relationships between birth families and foster parents.**
  Refocus foster care recruitment, training, and rules to develop relationships between birth families and foster parents.
Develop trauma-informed training for all involved in the system, including resource families, caseworkers, agency staff, courts, service providers, mandated reporters (such as teachers and counselors), kinship caregivers, and parents.

Having a shared understanding of trauma and how it relates to children and families is vital among all who are impacted by the children services system. Trauma-informed training, at a minimum, must include information about trauma and its impact on development.

Establish a statewide technology resource that can be easily accessed to find information, benefits, and resources for youth and resource families.

Explore developing a tool to connect youth and caregivers to needed resources and information.

Elevate foster youth and caregiver recognition and appreciation.

Establish a statewide campaign to recognize and celebrate foster youth and caregivers throughout Ohio.

Establish requirements for concurrent planning.

Codify the requirement to pursue more than one permanency goal simultaneously, with full knowledge of all involved, to increase permanency outcomes so children do not linger in foster care. Foster caregivers who have cared for a child for an extended period of time could be considered kin for permanency purposes.

“Supporting people earlier in their lives will set them up for the rest of their lives to be independent and rely less on the others just to get by. Please consider looking at what we can do to better the lives of foster youth and to give us a fighting chance at normal and successful lives.”

– Jeremy Collier, Foster Alum

Adoption

All children deserve a safe, loving, and permanent home before exiting agency custody. About 3,000 Ohio children are awaiting adoption on any given day, and over 500 more are in planned permanent living arrangements (PPLA), at risk of aging out of care. Research shows that children who age out of the foster care system without permanency have poorer outcomes compared to other young adults.

When children cannot achieve permanency by reunifying with a parent or guardian, it is imperative that efforts continue to achieve permanency through adoption or legal guardianship. The state has implemented a variety of programs to help youth – particularly older youth – achieve permanency. About 65% of children in foster care are adopted by their foster parents each year. When a family makes the commitment to adopt a child, they should be supported both during and after the adoption process, to ensure that the unique needs of the child can be met long-term.

The advisory council recognizes the need to remove barriers to permanency by increasing the pool of adoptive families, building the workforce to process adoptive family applications, better informing and educating older youth about their options, and improving consistency in the adoption subsidy negotiation process.

Recommendations

Ensure that permanency education and youth voice are incorporated into a Foster Youth Bill of Rights and the Foster Youth Rights Handbook.

Partner with youth organizations, Public Children Services Agencies, and other stakeholders to develop educational materials for older youth about their permanency options, including relational permanency. Ensure that youth are prepared for and invited to participate in meetings and court hearings.
Expand child-centered recruitment efforts.

Build on Ohio’s successful investments in child-centered permanency, such as Wendy’s Wonderful Kids and Youth Centered Permanency Roundtables. The Ohio Department of Job and Family Services should continue to work with both the Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption and Kinnect to expand these programs and increase legal and relational permanency for youth.

Promote permanency planning by limiting the Planned Permanent Living Arrangement option.

The Planned Permanent Living Arrangement (PPLA) is essentially long-term foster care and does not represent legal permanency for children. The state should reinforce existing statutory limits for PPLA, while also assessing the need to further limit this legal status.

Ensure the successful implementation of the Statewide Foster Care and Adoption Assessor Registry.

For many prospective adoptive families, the wait to become certified can take months. The state should evaluate the current home assessor workforce, develop home study completion measures, and adjust requirements for assessors, if needed.

Strengthen and standardize adoption subsidy negotiation processes.

The current adoption subsidy negotiation process for counties and new adoptive parents is burdensome and inconsistent. Consider a state/county hybrid model that prioritizes necessary long-term support, while preserving children’s permanency. Also consider implementing a non-retaliation provision in the Ohio Revised Code or Ohio Administrative Code.

Evaluate the option of having the Post Adoption Special Services Subsidy (PASSS) administered by the Ohio Kinship and Adoption Navigator Program (OhioKAN).

Explore moving the administration of the PASSS program to the state level to ensure consistency for adoptive parents throughout the state.

Juvenile Justice

The judicial branch is a valuable partner to the children services system. Children services agencies and Ohio’s courts work together to make decisions in the best interest of children and families, when court involvement is necessary to protect children. As Ohio continues its transformation efforts, the judicial branch’s engagement and support will be critical. Removing the stigma associated with abuse and neglect allegations can increase family engagement, reduce time to permanency, reduce litigation time, facilitate a focus on solutions and services, and normalize the process of requesting help.

Professionals representing both the children and the parents must be able to provide accurate and detailed information to the court. Youth in foster care deserve to have those looking out for their best interest gather all needed information before filing a recommendation to the court. Additionally, everyone involved must understand court timeframes and their impact on securing timely permanence. Increased support to achieve permanency for a child within these timeframes must be a collaborative effort by everyone involved.

The Advisory Council recognizes the need to work in partnership with the judicial branch to ensure that all parties are well-represented at court hearings, are informed about timeframes, and are working together to strengthen families and achieve permanency.

Recommendations

Collaborate with the Supreme Court of Ohio’s Advisory Committee on Children and Families to identify strategies to achieve greater accountability and increased communication with guardian ad litem programs to ensure better outcomes for children and families with children services court cases.

The Ohio Department of Job and Family Services
Review and evaluate court-appointed special advocate and guardian ad litem programs to identify opportunities for recruitment and expansion.

Explore current court-appointed special advocate and guardian ad litem programs to understand their strengths, weaknesses, training needs, and expansion opportunities.

Support continued strategic collaborative efforts between the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services and the Supreme Court of Ohio’s Advisory Committee on Children and Families to create an implementation plan for multidisciplinary legal representation for parents.

Quality legal representation on behalf of all parties in the children services system improves outcomes for children and families. The Ohio Department of Job and Family Services and the Supreme Court of Ohio should explore the creation of a multidisciplinary legal representation model that mirrors the program designed by the Children’s Bureau, within the United States Department of Health and Human Services.

Strengthen guidance for all involved systems and parties in children services court cases to reinforce the established 12-month requirement for reunification and permanency, with possible six-month extensions when justified by family-specific needs.

Partner with the Supreme Court of Ohio to review data regarding extensions, refiled proceedings, continuances, and appeals. Update guidance and improve education to courts and Public Children Services Agency staff regarding the use of extensions and the negative impact that unjustified extensions have on children and families. Explore options to utilize the Supreme Court of Ohio’s public-facing dashboard, as well as other data-reporting mechanisms, to promote better outcomes and uniformity across counties.

Review Public Children Services Agency legal representation structures throughout the state.

Partner with the Public Children Services Association of Ohio, County Commissioners Association of Ohio, Ohio Prosecuting Attorneys Association, and Ohio Association of Juvenile Judges to evaluate county models for legal representation. Determine best practices and opportunities for strengthened county partnerships that result in accountable, collaborative decision-making processes.

Support the Supreme Court of Ohio Advisory Committee on Children and Families’ recommendation to implement a Child in Need of Protective Services (CHIPS) court framework to replace Ohio’s current abuse, neglect, and dependency court system.

The Ohio Department of Job and Family Services should continue partnering with the Supreme Court of Ohio to implement a CHIPS model that provides a child-centered, family-focused alternative to the abuse, neglect, and dependency model currently utilized.

“In December, our county was fortunate to host a site for the Foster Care Transformation meetings which afforded some of our volunteers an opportunity to attend the event. The testimonies given were quite moving. Our court has increased efforts to ensure foster parents are notified of hearings, their right to attend and/or make a statement. Our CASA volunteers have been pleased with this push, feeling that the transformation may have played a part in it. Many CASA volunteers have even facilitated getting the foster parents’ statements in front of the jurists.”

– Melissa Perduk, Executive Director of Warren County CASA
I am 100% committed to these efforts. Next steps will include communicating a core governance structure to help us lead this work, define the implementation strategies, ensure community involvement, and design the necessary metrics to monitor improved outcomes. Again, I thank the Children Services Transformation Advisory Council members for their dedication to Ohio’s children and families. I look forward to the next phase of our journey toward transformation.

Kimberly Hall
Director
Ohio Department of Job and Family Services
Safe Children.
Stable Homes.
Strong Communities.

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CHILDREN SERVICES
TRANSFORMATION

Final Recommendations of the
Children Services Transformation Advisory Council

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