



PARTNERS
FOR OHIO'S FAMILIES

OCF seeks and supports strategies to strengthen
the voices of youth and families for its work.

OFFICE OF FAMILIES & CHILDREN

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From OFC Deputy Director Carla Carpenter – 2/2/18

What other way could I open this First Friday than to shout “Welcome to Bridges!” After much planning and preparation, yesterday marked the start of our new program for young adults aging out of foster care.

Bridges is unique for many reasons: It’s the nation’s first state-administered child welfare program in a county-administered state. It also has required a shift in approach and roles. Although Title IV-E is a federal child welfare funding stream, Bridges enrollees are young adults who must volunteer to participate and then have a new level of choice, self-direction and independence.

As with any new program, there are sure to be hiccups, but our foundation is strong, and our leadership is passionate and committed. We will continue to update you on our Bridges experiences. For now, congratulations Bridges Team! You did it!

As always at the beginning of a new year, my January held lots of meetings and important kickoffs, including our inaugural meeting with the federal Quality Improvement Center (QIC) for Workforce Development. You can read more about this on page 5. OFC staff worked extremely hard against very stiff national competition to be included in a national recruitment and retention research project. We’ve heard so many stories of agencies’ staffing struggles and know that

a stable and trained workforce is critical to our system goals.

I’m extremely excited to roll up our sleeves and identify some doable and replicable strategies. Next time you see someone from one of our volunteer counties, be sure to thank them for their work. This project includes some familiar faces from the former Midwest Child Welfare Implementation Center so we know we’re in great hands.

A casual conversation after a recent PCSAO executives meeting gave me the opportunity to spend some time last month with Crawford’s impressive PCSA staff. A shout-out for their gracious invitation and candidness about their challenges.

January also marked the first Program Improvement Plan meeting for state and county Child and Family Services Review (CFSR) partners. We haven’t yet received our final federal report but feel confident in our planned approach. Rather than initiating a slew of new projects and initiatives, we want to focus on select activities that will impact many CFSR measures. Our focus will be on assessment, case planning and visitation.

Our Practice Profiles Webinar Series – which could be called “Back to Basics” – should help. January’s session provided an overview; the Feb. 28 webinar will review engaging. See page 7 for more info.

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At January's OHIO Youth Advisory Board meeting, I got the opportunity to facilitate a conversation of Allen County's youth advisory board. As always, I walked away impressed with these young adults. I know I'll be thinking about what I heard, and the youth I met, for quite some time.

In January, Casey Family Programs introduced members of the ProtectOHIO Consortium to the concept of the Title IV-E Waiver Learning Lab. Casey staff are convening seven of the current waiver states – including Ohio— to share stories and prepare for the end of the federal waiver. This will be an excellent opportunity to identify lessons learned and plan our way forward.

The Regional Judicial Opioid Initiative State Team led by Supreme Court of Ohio Chief Justice Maureen O'Connor held a day-long retreat in January. This group includes a wide range of agencies working together to identify strategies for addressing Ohio's opioid crisis, in collaboration with nine surrounding states. More to come on this!

This First Friday takes a look at OFC's Child Protective Services Section and a few of the important projects they're working on. We also take a moment to give an overdue welcome to new section chief Denielle Rittinger. If you see her, give a congratulations!

Missed an issue of First Friday?

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

Meet OFC's Child Protective Services Section

OFC's Child Protective Services (CPS) Section is a busy program area responsible for Ohio's child protection policy framework, including everything from screening child abuse and neglect referrals through reunification and/or case closure. Among many other things, the CPS team is responsible for:

- Maintaining Ohio's child protection policies, which guide PCSAs in their response to child abuse, neglect and dependency referrals
- Maintaining Ohio's Comprehensive Assessment and Planning Model (CAPMIS), which guides the casework process
- Providing consultation and training to PCSAs
- Acting as a liaison to other areas of OFC, other state agencies, local agencies, elected officials, and professional and community organizations to promote performance standards and coordinated service delivery to Ohio's children and families



(Left to right) Front row: Dorothy Striker, Renee Lupi. Back row: Catherine Lawhorn, Denielle Rittinger, Lisa Higley, Janice Blue, Deanna Herold. Not pictured: Barbara Parker and Jason Rousch.

- Overseeing and administering SACWIS search requests
- Maintaining the Putative Father Registry

Section Chief Denielle Rittinger leads this work, with the able assistance of Human Service Developers Deanna Herold, Catherine Lawhorn, Renee Lupi

and Dorothy Striker and Human Service Specialists Janice Blue, Lisa Higley, Barbara Parker and Jason Rousch.

If you have questions about things they do or oversee, email **Denielle. Ell-Rittinger@jfs.ohio.gov**. For more about the CPS group's responsibilities, see the stories on page 3.

SACWIS Search Requests

The federal Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA) requires states to ensure the confidentiality of all child abuse and neglect records and to maintain an expungement process. This information is carefully regulated to ensure that it is not used for unauthorized purposes.

CAPTA permits SACWIS case record information to be searched to help PCSAs assess children's safety and risk. CAPTA also allows the release of findings that an individual maltreated a child (substantiated or indicated) for limited purposes, such as foster care licensing, kinship care approval or adoption home studies.

CAPTA does not permit unsubstantiated reports of child abuse or neglect or alternative response history to be used for any purpose other than a PCSA's assessment of safety and risk in response to an allegation of child maltreatment.

Ohio's Putative Father Registry

The Ohio Putative Father Registry is a database that allows a male to register if he believes he may have fathered a child and wants to be notified if the child is placed for adoption. The registry is routinely searched prior to adoption proceedings. If a child is placed for adoption and a putative father is listed in the registry, the putative father will be notified. The putative father can then seek legal counsel regarding his rights to the child. In addition, interested parties can request that the registry be searched to identify possible putative fathers.

Who is a putative father?

A putative father is a male who may be a child's father, but who:

- Is not married to the child's mother on or before the date the child is born

Perpetrator searches conducted at the state level occur primarily after two types of requests: out-of-state/private agency requests and individual requests.

Out-of-State and Private Agency Requests

Out-of-state public and private children services agencies request alleged perpetrator searches from Ohio's SACWIS to evaluate the suitability of prospective foster and adoptive parents. Out-of-state public agencies also may request child abuse/neglect history for families they are working with who previously lived in Ohio.

Private agencies can now enter alleged perpetrator search requests directly into SACWIS. OFC staff conduct the search, and SACWIS generates a letter containing the results. When the search results are completed and added to the provider record, SACWIS also automatically notifies the agency. In general, the searches take 24 to 48 hours.

Individual Requests

Individuals may request SACWIS searches to see whether their name is listed as an alleged perpetrator. These requests must be submitted to ODJFS in writing, with an original signature. The requests must either be notarized or include a copy of two forms of identification, such as a Social Security card, driver's license, birth certificate, passport or visa.

After the search is completed, a results letter is generated and sent via mail to the individual's home address. If a match is found, the letter contains the agency information where the investigation and findings occurred, along with the abuse type, disposition and disposition date. Person record requests typically take up to 30 days but can be expedited in some circumstances – for example, if an adoption court date is approaching.

For more information about either type request, email **Barbara.Parker@jfs.ohio.gov**.

SACWIS Searches at a Glance

In 2017, CPS staff received 22,586 SACWIS records requests. Most came from individuals. Others were from public and private agencies in Ohio, 48 states and Canada!

Did You Know?

A new state law (HB 49) requires PCSAs to conduct SACWIS searches prior to hiring employees, interns and volunteers. We encourage PSCA staff to review Ohio Revised Code 5153.113 to incorporate this requirement into their internal processes and workflow. If you have questions, please contact Dorothy Striker at **dorothy.striker@jfs.ohio.gov** or (614) 752-1256.

- Has not established paternity of the child in a court or administrative agency proceeding in this or another state before the date the child is to be adopted
- Has not completed an acknowledgment of paternity affidavit before the filing of an adoption petition for the child

In Ohio, putative fathers have up to 15 days after the birth of a child to register, or the child could be legally adopted without the putative father's knowledge or consent.

Registrations may be submitted online at **pfr-pub.jfs.ohio.gov** or by filling out the JFS 01694, "Putative Father Registry Registration Form," and sending it to P.O. Box 183204, Columbus, Ohio 43218 or **OhioPFR@jfs.ohio.gov**. The form can be obtained at **Forms Central** or by calling (888) 313-3100.

New Places and New Faces

Please join us in giving a big congratulations and welcome to staff who have joined or moved within the Bureau of Child and Adult Protective Services over the past year.

Domonique Chapman



Domonique joined OFC in April as a management analyst in the Transitional Youth/ Independent Living Section. Prior to that, she was a property/

project manager and housing coordinator responsible for community outreach and case management services for women seeking treatment for chemical dependency. Dominque currently is lending her talents and time to the Bridges Team as it rolls out Ohio's newest programming. She has a master's degree in Health Administration from Franklin University.

Nashawn Lariviere



Nashawn joined OFC in May as a management analyst in the Transitional Youth/ Independent Living Section. He jumped right in, as his first day was OFC's annual

Statewide Transitional Youth meeting. Nashawn has held leadership roles with several of our partner organizations, including Engage, Youth Move Ohio and the National Alliance on Mental Illness. He has a passion for improving the foster care experience for youth and is excited for the opportunity to work with the new Bridges programming. Nashawn currently is working on a bachelor's degree in Communications from Bowling Green State University.

Renee Lupi



Renee joined the CPS Section as a human services developer in October. She brings a wealth of experience to the job, having spent the past 15 years working in child welfare and adult protective services. Prior to joining OFC, she worked for 10 years as the in-house legal counsel for the Morrow County JFS. She also worked as an ongoing supervisor and oversaw the county's transportation/visitation system and child care program. Over the years, she's had the opportunity to work with OFC staff on many workgroups and task forces. She's a graduate of Kent State University and Capital University Law School

January Reggins



January joined the Substitute Care and Permanency Section in May to work as an administrative professional with the Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children. Prior to that, she spent five years at the Office of Unemployment Insurance Operations. January is married with three children: two daughters, ages 10 and 6, and a 5-year-old son. In case you're wondering, she was not born in January!

Denielle Rittinger



We are pleased to formally announce Denielle Rittinger as the new Child Protective Services section chief. The promotion is well-earned. Denielle

has been a CPS policy developer for more than 12 years and has worked on many significant projects, including the development of CAPMIS in SACWIS, the CAPMIS evaluation from 2015 through 2017, and the development of Ohio Child Welfare Training Program curriculum.

Currently, Danielle leads a multi-team collaboration to develop and implement the recommendations from the CAPMIS evaluation, including safety and risk assessment tools and SACWIS integration. She and her policy team also conduct trainings throughout the state on topics related to CAPMIS, mandatory reporting and safety planning. She says she plans to focus on "individual staff empowerment and the enhancement of team collaboration with other OFC areas and external stakeholders."

Rule Review Update

No rules are currently posted for review at ohiorulereview.org, but please continue to visit the site periodically for new postings. We welcome your input and hope you use this opportunity to share your experiences and suggestions. The website received 619 page views in January.

Principle of the Month

We seek ways to include the voices of youth and families in our work.

Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act Update

The federal Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act (CARA) has been the subject of much discussion since it was signed into law in July 2016. It is wide-reaching, bipartisan legislation, enacted to address the effects of substance abuse disorders on infants, children and families through the promotion of treatment, recovery, prevention and new law enforcement strategies.

CARA authorizes \$181 million annually in additional resources for a comprehensive response to the heroin and opioid epidemic. It affects the requirements of the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA), which is part of Ohio's Title IV-B program plan. It also affects a variety of federal discretionary funding streams. These include the CAPTA (Basic State), Children's Justice Act and Community-Based Child Abuse Prevention grants.

OFC staff have been working to ensure that Ohio is CAPTA-compliant with the new CARA provisions, resulting in some changes to rules

and practices for PCSAs. Here is an update on some of them:

Revisions to OAC 5101:2-36, "Screening and Investigation"

The Joint Committee on Agency Rule Review is expected to conduct a hearing on the revised rules this month.

NCANDS Data

SACWIS is being enhanced to enable the collection of newly required data for the National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System (NCANDS). The initial updates will primarily affect data collection during the intake process. They're scheduled to be deployed May 1.

Education

OFC's Child Protective Services staff have been traveling around Ohio presenting information about CARA and its impact on child welfare practice to groups of administrators from multiple counties. If your county is interested in scheduling a session or if you have questions about CARA, email Deanna.Herold@jfs.ohio.gov.

Calling All Everyday Heroes!

In advance of Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention Month in April, the Ohio Children's Trust Fund is seeking nominees for its "Everyday Hero" award, which will honor Ohioans who have committed their time, effort or even their entire lives to the noble cause of preventing child abuse and neglect.

A nomination form with more details is attached to this month's First Friday. All nominations must be received by 3 p.m. on Friday, Feb. 16. Winners will be announced in March and recognized during a Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention Month kickoff event on April 5. Questions? Email octf@octf.ohio.gov.

The Ohio Children's Trust Fund is the state's sole public funding source dedicated to preventing abuse and neglect. Housed within OFC, it works with its partners in every county to serve all Ohio communities.

Ohio Chosen to Participate in National Research Project

Over the next four years, Ohio will take part in a national research project designed to improve recruitment and retention of child welfare staff.

Turnover at child welfare agencies is typically up to six times the national average turnover rate for all industries. To support PCSAs in their efforts to address that, OFC applied to participate in the project, which is being led by the Quality Improvement Center for Workforce Development (QIC-WD).

The QIC-WD was established in 2016 and is funded through a five-year cooperative agreement with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Children's Bureau. It chose eight sites nationwide through a competitive

selection process. Applicants had to demonstrate their workforce needs and willingness to participate.

"It is an honor to be chosen," said ODJFS Director Cynthia Dungey. "Ohio is one of only a handful of states with a state-supervised, county-administered child welfare system. That and our diverse geography put us in a unique position to contribute insights into worker turnover and staffing challenges, which impact every aspect of a child welfare agency's work. We're excited to help strategize solutions."

The following PCSAs will partner with ODJFS in this effort: Champaign, Clark, Crawford, Hamilton, Knox, Montgomery, Summit, Trumbull and Wayne.

"This was a very competitive process," said Dr. Michelle Graef, QIC-WD director. "Ultimately, a stronger workforce with less turnover and more supportive organizational environments should improve the outcomes of the vulnerable families and children served by the child welfare system."

The QIC-WD is led by the University of Nebraska-Lincoln and includes experts in child welfare, workforce, implementation, evaluation and dissemination. It is committed to using the best available research from a variety of fields to identify workforce strengthening strategies.

Your Input Needed!

Every three years, the federal Children’s Justice Act requires states to evaluate their laws and procedures related to the investigation, administration and judicial handling of child abuse and neglect cases, to develop demonstration programs, and to recommend reforms. To lend your voice to this discussion, please complete the short survey at the following link:

surveymonkey.com/r/CX2R56Z

Results from past evaluations have led to such projects as the **Ohio Intimate Partner Violence Collaborative**, anti-human-trafficking workgroups, and related programming and statutory recommendations. As in years past, Ohio’s assessment and recommendations are being led by the Supreme Court of Ohio’s Subcommittee on Responding

to Child Abuse, Neglect and Dependency, which is committed to tackling changes that can have impact. This subcommittee serves as Ohio’s multidisciplinary Children’s Justice Act Task Force, a criteria for receiving federal funds.

The subcommittee will develop a three-year implementation plan based on suggestions received. We’ll run an update in a future edition of First Friday!

CQI Corner: Spotlight on Muskingum County

The CQI Corner is a recurring column promoting continuous quality improvement (CQI) in child welfare. CQI is an ongoing cycle of evaluation, improvement and implementation. Most child welfare professionals are familiar with CQI on a macro level – for example, to monitor new programs – but CQI is equally effective on a daily casework practice level. In this month’s column, we highlight Muskingum County Adult and Child Protective Services’ use of CQI to improve performance of a fundamental case work practice: engagement.

**By Lori Moore,
Social Services Director**

Muskingum County Adult and Child Protective Services (MCACPS), like most everyone across the state of Ohio, has struggled with the impact of the drug epidemic on child safety. Not only has this impacted the workloads within the county, but it has taken a toll on staff’s optimism regarding their ability to impact change. Recognizing that frontline caseworkers have the most opportunity to impact change with the families that we have the privilege of working with, MCACPS has recommitted to “going back to the basics” of social work practice. To accomplish this goal, MCACPS is revisiting Ohio’s Practice Profiles (JFS 08301) throughout 2018, beginning with engagement.

Newly hired staff are spending time during the job-shadowing phase of their tenure building their skill set related to engagement. New staff

members are being taught the value of relationship building as the most effective tool in their tool kit. They are given assignments to recognize “ideal” strategies to join with families to establish common goals, and they are further identifying unacceptable practices and learning to guard against them. New staff are challenged to identify acronyms or terminology used by others within the agency that are unclear or confusing.

In addition, MCACPS has dusted off the JFS 01055, “Caseworker Self-Assessment and Field Tools,” as well as the JFS 01056, “Coaching and Supervision Tools,” for utilization in this endeavor. Workers are asked to complete the self-assessment sheets at the conclusion of their focus on the specific profile and to take

the handouts with them into the field when observing others to document “ideal” engagement strategies they observe. They are also given copies of some of the handouts, such as the “Three Houses,” to experiment with and consider incorporating into practice.

Administration throughout the agency is focused on “catching people doing something right” and stressing the little things of customer service that promote engagement, such as returning phone calls within one business day. Additionally, the entire caseworker staff is being encouraged to participate in the Practice Profiles Webinar Series running throughout the year! (Be sure to sign up [here](#).)



A family is the most important visitor on our premises.

They are not dependent on us.

We are dependent on them.

They are not an interruption to our work.

They are the purpose of it.

They are not an outsider to our business.

They are part of it.

We are not doing them a favor by serving them.

They are doing us a favor by giving us the opportunity to do it.

Bridges: From the Mailbox

Each month we share a few questions emailed to Bridges@jfs.ohio.gov or asked during public forums. Thanks to everyone who has taken the time to share questions, opinions and ideas.

Q: Can all young adults who qualify for Bridges enroll in the program or will it be “first come, first served,” based on available funding?

A: All young adults who meet Bridges eligibility criteria will be eligible to receive services. There is no maximum number of participants.

Q: Our PCSA has an established independent living/emancipation program. Is our agency still responsible for providing post-emancipation services through our independent living coordinator, or should we refer youth to Bridges when they contact us for assistance?

A: You must offer Bridges as an option to all young adults who will be emancipating at age 18 or older, or who already emancipated but are not yet 21, and who request post-emancipation services. If a young adult contacts you for post-emancipation services, seems to meet Bridges eligibility criteria and would like to learn more, you should make a referral to the appropriate regional Bridges agency.

However, not all young adults will meet the Bridges eligibility criteria.

In addition, some will not want to enroll in Bridges, and some may need post-emancipation services during the Bridges application and approval process. In all of those cases, OAC Rule 5101: 2-42-19.2 is still in effect, requiring you to provide independent living services to emancipated youth who request help. Ideally, these services will help them become eligible for Bridges so they can get additional supports toward independence.

Q: Can you explain the Bridges referral process please? I am confused.

A: We understand that Bridges establishes something very new to Ohio! To clarify the process, we created two flow charts: one showing the referral process for youth **currently** in custody and one showing the referral process for youth **formerly** in custody. Both are attached to this month’s **First Friday**.

To learn more about Bridges, visit BridgestoSuccess.jfs.ohio.gov!



Global Emails for January

The following emails were sent in January to PCSA directors and/or private agency directors. They are organized below by mailing date and key words.

1/8/2018 – 2018 Practice Profiles Challenge

1/9/2018 – Medicaid Research

1/12/2018 – Medicaid Research – Follow-up

1/20/2018 – Kinship Permanency Incentive Program Recipient Payment Schedules

1/23/2018 – Request for Help from the Cuyahoga County Medical Examiner’s Office

1/24/2018 – Additional Information: Medicaid Research Project

1/29/2018 – Safety Citizen Review Panel

1/30/2018 – Title IV-E Foster Care Maintenance Eligibility Training

How to Join the Feb. 28 Practice Profiles Webinar

You’ve read about the Practice Profile Webinar Series. Want to join? It’s simple! February’s topic is “Engaging,” the practice of effectively joining with the family to establish common goals concerning child safety, well-being and permanency. To register, [click here](#).

To receive articles and tips related to the CQI process and practice profiles, we encourage you to email the Ohio Child Welfare Learning Collaborative at OCWLC@jfs.ohio.gov and ask to be added to their mailing list. If you have any questions, please contact Lindsay Williams at (614) 387-8629 or Lindsay.Williams@jfs.ohio.gov.