

# Accomplishments

## Initiatives, Budget Advocacy, Legislation, Practice and Public Education

With the help of an active association membership and many key partners, much has been accomplished in 2007-2008. Our mission has guided our work:

*"PCSAO is a membership driven association serving Ohio's 88 County Public Children Services Agencies through the support of program excellence and sound public policy for safe children, stable families and supportive communities. We do this through member dialogue, active sharing of information, building partnerships, research, training and technical assistance, and advocacy at the state and federal level."*

### Major Child Welfare Initiatives

#### **PL 110-351 Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act**

New federal law creates new kinship caregiver supports; extends assistance to foster youth up to age 21; ensures all children are eligible for adoption assistance.

**SACWIS** – PCSAO has brought together key county and state leaders / experts to address functionality and enhancements for the Statewide Automated Child Welfare Information System.

**Safety and Risk Assessment** – Ongoing use and evaluation of Ohio's new tool, the Comprehensive Assessment and Planning Model Interim Solution (CAPMIS), combines clinically based assessment / planning and actuarial structured decision making.

#### **OHIO Youth Advisory Board** –

Formed by current and former foster youth, PCSAO is a proud supporter of the **Overcoming Hurdles In Ohio Youth Advisory Board**; active in policy discussions and giving a voice to foster children across Ohio.

#### **Evidence Informed/Based Practice**

–PCSAO has been active in advocating for data analysis, evaluation and research; supporting robust field and academic partnerships; and identifying critically needed funding.

#### **Agency / Court Collaboration** –

Ohio's *Beyond the Numbers* process and 2008 Children's Summit hosted by Governor Strickland and Chief Justice Moyer has resulted in improved court related timeliness for our children.

### Budget and Legislation

**2008/09 Biennial Budget** – State Child Protection Allocation increased by \$9.1 million per year; state base for Adoption Assistance increased from \$250 to \$300 per month; Medicaid healthcare extended to former foster youth up to age 21; Kinship Permanency Incentive program supporting up to 6,000 children in permanent kin families; and additional funds for behavioral health services.

#### **HB 214 Foster Care Training & Supports**

– Enhances training experiences for foster parents; improves child welfare and MRDD partnerships; protects foster parent identifying information.

#### **SB 163 Foster Care Fingerprint & Safeguards**

– Key screening and monitoring policies enhanced.

**HB 7 Adoptions** – Reduces barriers and streamlines adoptions processes.

**SB 304 Safe Havens** – Extends infant age for use of Safe Havens to 30 days; and adds an education plan to inform at-risk populations.

**SB 20 State Adoption Tax Credit** – Ohio's adoption tax credit increased from \$500 to \$1500.

**SB 144 Shaken Baby Prevention** – Prevention strategies to educate new parents against shaking a baby; PCSAO ensured SACWIS designed to track shaken babies – it does.

#### **HB 79 Educator License/Teacher Misconduct**

– Ensures effective procedures exist for when a PCSA should share child maltreatment findings

about an educator with ODE.

#### **SB 116 Mental Health Parity**

– Requires equitable coverage for physical and behavioral healthcare benefits, allowing more families to access critical services for their child without being placed in foster care; similar federal legislation passed in 2008.

### Training, Workforce and Organizational Excellence

**PCSAO Annual Conference** – Each year, nearly 600 child protection professionals gather to expand their skills, knowledge and inspiration for the important work of protecting children.

#### **Ohio Child Welfare Training Program**

– PCSAO co-chairs this statewide program that trains caseworkers, supervisors, adoption assessors and resource families. OCWTP updated core curriculums, and launched E-track to assist with scheduling and tracking.

**Council on Accreditation** – In 2007, funds support accreditation activities and training for agencies in the accreditation process. Twenty-two local PCSAs are accredited, comprising 60% of Ohio's child population.

#### **University Partnership Program**

– Ohio universities, ODJFS, the Institute for Human Services and PCSAO partner to support a tuition reimbursement program for future public child welfare professionals.

### Public Awareness Successes

#### **PCSAO 9th Edition Biennial Factbook**

– Provides clear data for vulnerable children and families in 88 counties and the state of Ohio. Recommendations based on the data are provided.

#### **PCSAO Weekly Update & HeartBeat Newsletter**

– The electronic Update provides quick reads / linkages for more information. The HeartBeat reaches thousands of child welfare partners at the local, state and federal levels, examining key child welfare topics.

**My Story Project** – Current and former foster youth explain why federal child welfare finance reform would have made a difference in their lives. The Film Festival premiered at the 2007 PCSAO Conference, also available at [www.mystoryproject.org](http://www.mystoryproject.org).