

# THE HeartBeat

The Newsletter of the Public Children Services Association of Ohio

Issue 5, 2010

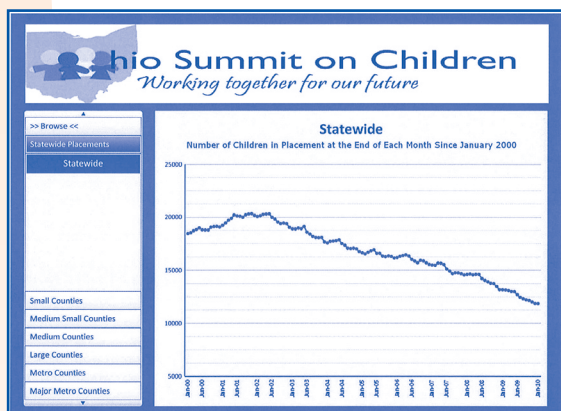
## Ohio Child Welfare - Past and Present



By Crystal Ward Allen,  
Executive Director, PCSAO

The 2010 PCSAO Thanksgiving Progress Report showed amazing positive outcomes by Ohio's child welfare system in recent years. The 42% Safe Reduction of Children in Foster and Group Care between 2002-2010 is nothing short of remarkable. It was not an

accident, however, but the result of intentional local and state efforts to invest scarce resources in Ohio's families, and to build essential systemic supports to accomplish our mission for safe children, stable families and supportive communities.



Graph from Roger Ward, Data Project Manager for the Supreme Court of Ohio's ourt Improvement Project and ODJFS

My assessment of key contributors includes the following:

- **CAPMIS** – our carefully crafted practice tool for safety and risk assessment and ongoing family planning.
- **SACWIS** – caseworkers now have access to critical statewide safety information to make immediate decisions for our children and families. Yes, it is a work in progress, but hats off to ODJFS leadership and the SACWIS team to get this up and running and to continue to work with county agencies to address flaws and deliver management reports.
- **Differential Response** – the partnership between the Supreme Court of Ohio, ODJFS, other partners and lead counties has brought effective reform for our approach and partnership with struggling families that desperately want to safely care for their own children.

- **Kinship Identification and Supports** – while Ohio has a long history of connecting children in need with extended family, we have worked to develop a policy continuum for kin – the Kinship Permanency Incentive Program is a great part of it – a cost effective \$5 Million/year currently supports safe, familiar families for nearly 8,000 Ohio children!
- **Flexible Funding** – Local Levies, federal Title IV-E ProtectOhio Waiver, and the State Child Protection Allocation – all allow counties to invest funds for the continuum of services – from initial assessments to family strengthening services to support kin, foster, adoptive families to assisting transitioning youth – flexible funds make the difference. *And Ohio just learned we once again passed our federal Title IV-E Review with flying colors – 96% compliance rate!*

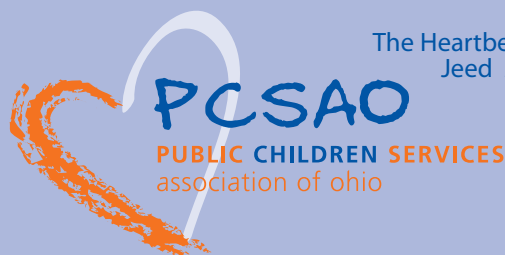
Of course we also have to recognize our great Ohio Child Welfare Training Program that prepares our workforce; also our private providers and community based partners.

So – have we accomplished a perfect system? No, we are far from it – we are dedicated to further improving outcomes and we know that requires a multi-pronged approach. *Priorities, as endorsed by the Executive Membership in PCSAO's 2011-12 Strategic Plan*, direct us to invest in the following:

*continued on page 3*

### In This Edition

- Cover: • Ohio Child Welfare - Past and Present
- Page 2: • Times of Ending and Beginning But the Work Goes On
- Page 3: • 2011-2012 Legislative Advocacy: Taking a page from Child Welfare's Concurrent Planning Playbook
- Page 4: • Alternative Response Becomes Differential Response and Grows in 2010



The Heartbeat Editor:  
Jeed Jitprasert

510 E. Mound St., Suite 200 • Columbus, OH 43215  
P: 614.224.5802 • F: 614.228.5150 • www.pcsao.org

## Times of Ending and Beginning But the Work Goes On



*Gayle Channing Tenenbaum  
Director of Policy and Governmental  
Affairs, PCSAO*

This month, after four years of supporting programs and policies supportive of children and families, Governor Strickland and his administration will leave the Statehouse. He did this in very difficult economic times, trying to help families experiencing greater hardships.

Specifically, in the area of child protection, the following were achieved and/or begun, and will be built upon in the Kasich Administration:

- Expansion of Differential Response to 25 counties.
- Renewal of the IV-E Waiver for five more years.
- Support of 8,000 children in permanent relative/kin families as part of the Kinship Permanency Incentive Program.
- Reduction of out-of-home placements by 42% over a nine year period.
- Expanding the Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation Program to Child Protection Agencies serving children ages 0-5.
- Filing Medicaid plan amendments at the federal level to allow reimbursement of Targeted Case Management for Ohio's Home Visitation program.
- Work to file a plan amendment through ODMH for Medicaid reimbursement for Intensive Home Based Services.
- Creating a Children's Psychiatric Network to provide psychiatric services to children in parts of the state with no clinical staff.
- Developing simplification practices, such as Presumptive Eligibility, which allow counties to enroll eligible children for health care in much easier ways for parents and the counties administering the programs
- Extending health care benefits for youth in foster care ages 18-21.

These are but a few of the initiatives and programs for which we will remember the Strickland Administration, as well as cabinet directors such as: Doug Lumpkin, Ohio Department of Job and Family Services; Sandy Stephenson, Ohio Department of Mental Health; John Martin, Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities; Angela Cornelius Dawson, Ohio Department of Alcohol and Drug Addiction Services; Mary Jo Hudson, Ohio Department of Insurance; Doctor Alvin Jackson, Ohio Department of Health; and Director Pari Sabety and Assistant Director David Ellis, the Office of Budget Management.

We also want to recognize policy staff in the Governor's office: Janetta King, Robin Harris, Kris Long, as well as Alicia Leatherman, Director of the Early Childhood Cabinet, and Angela Sausser Short, Director of the Family and Children First Cabinet. Finally, we commend Maureen Corcoran who led all of the many efforts in Medicaid to help fund and create funding opportunities for programs for children and youth.

We are very grateful for all Governor Strickland did as Governor of Ohio, and as a Congressman before that, for children and families. The PCSAO family wishes him and his wife Frances, who so ably chaired the Family and Children First Council, the very best in their next endeavor. As one of the Governor's favorite songs, by Harry Chapin, says:

"All my life's a circle  
I can't tell you why  
Seasons spinning round again  
The days keep going by"

Now that circle brings us a new administration with a new Governor, John Kasich. Those of us on the PCSAO team have had excellent meetings with Governor-Elect Kasich's transition team members, and some of his staff. Although, they have not yet appointed the various cabinet or policy people with whom we will be working on specific child and family issues, we have been getting a sense of how they are preparing for governing.

Kasich, in several speeches and at both gubernatorial debates, mentioned that one of the things troubling to him was the continuing increase in Ohio's poverty rate—more and more Ohioans are living at poverty levels, trying to support their families. The Governor and the people around him understand that many of the people we serve in child protection and the other health and human services programs (i.e., mental health, developmental disabilities, and seniors, persons needing safety net services such as food, housing and health care) are living in poverty. We have been asked to bring well thought out plans and ideas, and to identify which programs are now working to serve these populations. They need us to determine whether there are ways that we can provide services in a more efficient manner, and ascertain how we continue to provide these services in the context of a \$ 6-8 Billion deficit for SFY 2012-2013.

PCSAO helped organize and participated in a briefing with the Kasich Health and Human Services Transition Chair, Speaker Jo Ann Davidson and Greg Moody earlier this month. This was an excellent opportunity to exchange ideas and information about the fabric of our state's health and human services network, and to learn from them some of the issues they were facing as a new administration. There was particular interest in learning about programs that are working, particularly those with strong data to show outcomes.

We think the new Kasich Administration will give us the opportunity to look across all health and human service systems at the state and local level and take the best from what we have learned, continue and build on that work, and find ways to better serve the children and families of Ohio. PCSAO welcomes the opportunity and wishes Governor-Elect Kasich and his new team all the success in his new role as governor of Ohio.

"All my life's a circle  
Sunrise and sundown  
The moon goes through the night time  
While the daybreak comes around"

The "daybreak" has come around for Governor-Elect Kasich and we wish him well. ♥

## Ohio Child Welfare...continued from cover

- **Practice** – Expand the Differential Response approach beyond the current 25 counties. Improve permanency outcomes for adolescents lingering in care with Family Search and Engagement and Permanency Roundtables strategies – we must reduce the over 1,000 youth / year who emancipate out of our custody without a permanent family. Further develop the continuum of supports for children fortunate enough to be cared for by kin caregivers – legal paths for permanency are especially challenging. Build targeted, timely, partnerships with other systems for improved child outcomes – onsite behavioral health assessments; focus on education outcomes for youth.
- **Advocacy** – Membership charged PCSAO to aggressively advocate on the state and federal levels for sound policies, regulatory and bureaucratic relief, and necessary flexible revenues to support the child welfare mission. Greg Kapcar has an article in this HeartBeat edition with more detail.
- **Innovations** – efficiency in all we do is critical in today's world. PCSAO Membership is creative and serious about this, and developed a menu of strategies to improve outcomes while managing budgets. Revenue maximization strategies, sharing workforce for administrative and select practice areas, bringing consistency to data entry, focusing cross system collaborations for targeted and timely access to services, piloting and evaluating innovative strategies to see what works.

I continue to be very proud of Ohio's child welfare performance. Even as our families and citizens are struggling in a difficult economy, we continue to intentionally invest in birth and kin families and children, knowing this reduces trauma for children (and further long term costs) and helps to manage our local budgets. Happy New Year and get prepared for more work. ♥

## 2011-2012 Legislative Advocacy: Taking a Page from Child Welfare's Concurrent Planning Playbook



Greg Kapcar  
Legislative Director, PCSAO

As we look toward the 2011-2012 state budget and legislative, and federal level advocacy agendas, I'm reminded of the child welfare permanency practice of concurrent planning, which considers all reasonable options for permanency at the earliest possible point following a child's entry into foster care. With concurrent

planning, alternate permanency goals are pursued at the same time. Similarly, our advocacy agendas pursue multiple goals in the short- and long-term.

At the recent PCSAO Executive Membership meeting held in December, members expressed support and continued confidence in our legislative team and proactive approach to legislative advocacy efforts, seeking windows of opportunity to advance key agenda items. Here's a summary of some of PCSAO's 2011-2012 legislative advocacy initiatives:

- **Improve budget neutral legal policies for relative and other kin caregivers** – more and more children are being raised by relatives and other kin (informally and w/ involvement of children services and the courts). PCSAO has long led in low cost and budget neutral solutions for these caregivers. We will re-introduce kinship care legislation to expand legal forms (for school enrollment, medical care, etc.) beyond just grandparents to other relatives/kin; and work with the Supreme Court of Ohio Advisory Committee on Children, Families and the Court to examine challenging legal issues for kin caregivers and local service providers.
- **Focus practice and legal procedures on the needs of children** – within the philosophy of engaging and strengthening families; re-introduce improved CHIPS legislation as a result of PCSAO membership and stakeholder informed and valuable input.

- **Improve permanency outcomes for youth lingering in foster care** – Ohio has too many youth lingering in permanent custody and planned permanent living arrangement (3,657 youth ages 12+ were lingering in custody without permanent families, as of Jan 1, 2010). While we believe all children and youth are adoptable, and we believe permanency should happen in a timely manner, Ohio continues to have over 1,000 youth per year to emancipate out of foster/group care without a permanent family. Adult adoption might be a viable permanency route for some of these youth. In the New Year, PCSAO's legislative committee will advance work on a policy proposal in this area and drafting it into proposed legislation.
- **Prevention of teen and unintended pregnancy** – re-introduce Ohio Prevention First legislation; and coordinating activities with Human Trafficking awareness and prevention.
- **Proactive legislative proposal/fixes** to improve child welfare practice in Ohio, as opportunities become available.

At the federal level we will continue to work on flexible child welfare financing reform. Plus, beyond continuing resolutions, it's time for Congress to reauthorize the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) block grant as we continue to see increases in American families needing safety net supports with unemployment remaining high and more families and children (1 in 4) living in poverty.

While we have what seem like mountainous tasks related to the 2012-13 budget alone, a number of opportunities present themselves to make meaningful and innovative policy and practice improvements in our child welfare system. It will require juggling a number of things at one time (remember the child welfare practice of concurrent planning) and setting short- and long-term goals with very specific tasks.

It seems appropriate to close with this anonymous quote: "Nobody trips over mountains. It is the small pebble that causes you to stumble. Pass all the pebbles in your path and you will find you have crossed the mountain!" ♥

## Alternative Response Becomes Differential Response (DR) and Grows in 2010-2011



*Rhonda Reagh, PhD  
Assistant Director, PCSAO*

It is hard to imagine that just a few short years ago, Alternative Response (now Differential Response) was just a dream in the minds of 10 Round-1 pilot counties (Clark, Fairfield, Franklin, Greene, Guernsey, Licking, Lucas, Ross, Trumbull and Tuscarawas), and their ardent supporters and champions. Each year since July 2007 (when the first pilot work started), it has been packed with activities and significant practice changes. This past year was no exception. Following is a brief recap of key implementation activities in three key areas:

### Supreme Court Sub-Committee on Responding to Child Abuse, Neglect and Dependency

- April 2010 – The AIM Team's Final Report on the original pilot was presented to the Supreme Court's Sub-Committee on Responding to Child Abuse, Neglect and Dependency. The report was accepted and the Sub-Committee unanimously voted to recommend a statewide expansion of DR to the Supreme Court Advisory Committee on Children, Families and the Courts, who also unanimously recommended expansion.
- July 2010 – The Sub-Committee continued review of specific recommendations germane to their charge, and recommended approval to the Advisory Committee in September. These recommendations were also approved by the committee.
- Moving forward, the Sub-Committee will continue to provide important oversight to Ohio's expansion efforts.

### Expansion Efforts in the Counties

- September 2010 – Six Round-2 counties (Champaign, Clark, Madison, Montgomery, Richland and Summit) launched as part of the Federal Quality Improvement Center Project. These counties will continue to add to the knowledge base of DR in Ohio through a rigorous evaluation.

- October 2010 – Ten Round-3 counties (Ashtabula, Athens, Coshocton, Erie, Hamilton, Hocking, Huron, Mahoning, Medina and Washington) launched as part of the state's expansion plan.
- January 2011 – Anticipated release of the next Request for Applications for 10 additional counties to launch in the summer of 2011.

### Infrastructure Changes

- The DR Leadership Council is in the throes of changing its structure and charge to better enable it to lead Ohio's expansion efforts moving forward.
- The Ohio DR Implementation Team (comprised of representatives of all 3 rounds of pilot counties, ODJFS, OCWTP, and the Supreme Court) have had their first meeting with Alison Metz of the National Implementation Research Network (NIRN). This group will be working on building the implementation platform for Ohio's expansion.
- ODJFS is busy with the transition activities that will eventually have American Humane transfer its role in DR to ODJFS. Continued work is being done by SACWIS and Policy staff to support DR work in the counties, and discussions have already started with the OCWTP about its role in the future. A new opportunity for experiential learning with Round-1 counties is also available to the current pilot counties.
- ODJFS has hired Carla Carpenter, formerly of NCALP and the chronicler of the first pilot, to be the DR lead staff person.

This level of activity and commitment illustrates the importance of Differential Response to the future of child welfare in Ohio. This is an amazing partnership between ODJFS, the Supreme Court, the counties, the AIM Team and now NIRN to take a practice change to scale. But nothing speaks more profoundly than the evaluation results that have shown that families find this approach to be more effective and satisfying, children are safe, placements are down and staff feel like they are making a difference for families in a more family friendly way. Stay tuned! Ohio is on the move! ♥