

CHILD PROTECTION SERVICES
STANDARDS FOR EFFECTIVE PRACTICE

STANDARDS FOR CHILD ABUSE NEGLECT AND PREVENTION

1.6 INTER-SYSTEM SERVICE COORDINATION PLANNING

Council on Accreditation Standards

The Council on Accreditation Standards G8.4 (Service Planning); G9.9 (Service Community Involvement and Collaboration); S38 (Prevention Services) and S38.1 (Access to Services) link to and support Standard 1.6 *Inter-System Service Coordination Planning*.

Administrative Code

The Ohio Administrative Code Rule 5101:2-34-38 (Confidentiality and Dissemination of Information Relating to Child Abuse and Neglect) addresses Standard 1.6 *Inter-System Service Coordination Planning*. This standard is also supported by sections 121.37 (Family and Children First Cabinet Council; County or Regional Councils; County Service Coordination Mechanism and Comprehensive Joint Service Plan) and 121.38 (Resolution of Agency Disputes Concerning Services or Funding) of the Ohio Revised Code.

I. Philosophy

Public CFSAs are mandated to respond to issues involving the safety of children in our communities. As a result, public CFSAs are often the first link in assessing the needs of children and families and are in a unique position to identify at-risk youth before they enter a system for formal intervention. However, the child welfare system does not bear the sole responsibility for addressing all identified needs and more often than not, lacks the resources and capacity to provide a full continuum of prevention services.

Inter-system service coordination planning may be a beneficial process to assist families in caring for children who are experiencing physical, emotional, behavioral, and learning-related difficulties. In such circumstances, CFSAs have the opportunity to refer families seeking voluntary service coordination planning.

There are many different needs served by public systems, and all such needs represent potential barriers to the healthy development of young people moving from birth to maturity. The education, juvenile justice, child welfare, health, mental health, mental retardation and developmental disabilities, drug and alcohol, and public assistance systems have each taken unique approaches in response to the needs of children, adolescents, and their families. Service coordination planning attempts to quickly remove barriers that prevent children and families from accessing integrated community services. This is intended to prevent the need for more costly and intrusive intervention later.

The Ohio Revised Code (Section 121.37) mandates that plans are developed to coordinate services for children and their families. This includes planning for children who are abused, neglected, dependent, unruly or delinquent, and families who voluntarily seek services.

In 1996, all 88 Ohio counties submitted service coordination plans to the Ohio Family and Children First Cabinet Council. These service coordination plans were practical tools to assist local communities in the difficult process of creating and coordinating more responsive, family-friendly, and cost-effective child and family service delivery systems. Furthermore, HB 57 (effective 2/19/02) required counties to revise their service coordination plans with specific emphasis on youth at risk to be unruly, alleged unruly, and adjudicated unruly. Counties, through the leadership of each local Family and Children First Council, modified their

plans to improve services for unruly youth, including the development of programming to serve the target population, and the coordination of a resource strategy to support services for unruly youth.

II. Outcome

Unserved families with multiple needs have access to inter-system service coordination to support and enhance the stability of the family.

The county Family and Children First Council develops and implements a process that annually evaluates and prioritizes services, fills service gaps where possible, and invents new approaches to achieve better results for families and children.

III. Evaluation

FACSIS events, CPOE and the Federal Health and Human Services outcomes may be considered when evaluating this standard. In addition, the CFSA may consider the following:

- local and statewide data on abuse, neglect, dependency, emotional maltreatment, unruly/delinquent behavior;
- local and statewide data on poverty, substance abuse, mental health, affordable housing, teen parenthood, and other conditions that affect abuse and neglect;
- local and statewide data on the availability of support services such as mental health services, alcohol and drug addiction services, cash assistance, nutrition assistance, subsidized child care, health insurance, and child support;
- local or statewide needs assessments which point to gaps in services;
- information and data on local members of the county Family and Children First Council and the extent to which they support the needs of the community.

IV. Standards for Implementation

- 1) The executive director of the public CFSA county agency responsible for the administration of children services is a mandated member of the county Family and Children First Council (per ORC) and should make participation on the council a priority.
- 2) The PCSA director (or a designee) should participate in the development of the county service coordination mechanism to ensure the inclusion of a protocol for addressing issues of multi-need families who are not already actively involved with a human service agency or who require the involvement of multiple agencies to prevent future system intervention.
- 3) PCSAs should serve as a catalyst for expanding the county Family and Children First Council's collaborative capacity to address prevention issues. This includes providing leadership in developing protocols which link at-risk children and families who are not formally engaged in a specific service system with inter-system resources and services as needed.
- 4) Child and Family Services Agencies (CFSAs) and the county Family and Children First Council should develop and implement an outreach plan which outlines how families may access the inter-system service coordination process.
- 5) The staff of the CFSA should be responsible for ensuring that unserved, multi-need families gain access to available inter-system resources. Staff should

advocate for families trying to access the services and resources available from the Family and Children First Council member agencies.

- 6) All appropriate CFSA staff should receive training regarding the county service coordination mechanism.
- 7) CFSA's, under the leadership of the agency director, are encouraged to contribute to community planning and collaborative initiatives, taking a leadership role if necessary.
- 8) The staff of the CFSA should stress the importance of the involvement of all other partner systems in the intersystem collaborative.
- 9) CFSA staff should stress the importance of early, "pre-crisis" access to support services.
- 10) Before council services or resources are sought, the assigned CFSA staff should discover whether a family is utilizing any existing support services, and if all other available community resources have been explored and exhausted.
- 11) Appropriate CFSA staff should ensure that the collective services and resources of the Family and Children First Council member agencies are utilized as early as possible to help families in need receive services to support the safety of their children.
- 12) CFSA's should seek opportunities for pooled funding to leverage additional support services for families in need.
- 13) CFSA's should focus on the needs of families as they relate the ability of caregivers to safely care for their child(ren).

V. Financial Implications

The costs associated with Inter-System Service Coordination Planning duties are an important part leadership a public CFSA. These costs are included in Standard 10.1 *Management of the CFSA*. If activities are delegated to other staff, costs may be estimated according to the figures in Standard 10.1 *Management of the CFSA* which cites the average cost per worker as \$33,270. The costs for policy development are estimated at \$71 per hour based on a hypothetical agency operating according to data from the 2001 PCSAO Salary Survey.

Comments:

1. Collaboration may enhance opportunities for pooled funding.
2. This process may also lead to reduced placement costs for the agency.