

●●●●● PCSAO ●●●●●  
**FCNBcps CLIFF NOTES**

**Issue No. 1 - August 1997**

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This publication is the first of a series created to assist PHASE II counties with implementation of family-centered, neighborhood-based child protection services. The tools and helpful hints produced herein are a by-product of the materials and documents provided to PCSAO by staff at the Cuyahoga County Department of Children Services; the Hamilton County Department of Human Services; the Annie E. Casey Foundation and Institute for Human Services (IHS). In some instances these materials have simply be reproduced. In other instances we have taken the liberty of interpreting and reformatting the information to enhance its usefulness. Included with each publication will be a feedback form. To help us know whether or not the publications are useful, we encourage the reader to complete the form and return it to PCSAO within 3 weeks of receipt of each issue.

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THIS ISSUE IS DEVOTED TO TWO KEY FCNBcps IMPLEMENTATION TOPICS: FORMING YOUR  
LOCAL SELF-EVALUATION TEAM AND  
GETTING STARTED WITH STAFF

*The following information has been reformatted using handouts presented by Dr. Lynn Usher at the May 29, 1997 inter-active video session and materials provided by Cuyahoga and Hamilton counties.*

## **I. CREATING YOUR LOCAL SELF-EVALUATION TEAM**

The Standards For Effective Practice that link to this topic include:  
Standard 1.11: Program Evaluation and Standard 1.17: Evaluation of Services

The agency should create a local Self-Evaluation Team comprised of at least one Program staff, one Data Staff and one member of your Quality Assurance program [if available]. The total Team should not have more than 6-8 professionals. If the agency does not have data or QA experts, it should consider individuals outside of the agency who are trustworthy [will keep the data within the group and not share outside of the agency], "filling the gaps" that exist as a result of the agency's size and/or structure.

Once the Team members are identified, the agency should develop the team development documents that will assist the Team in orienting to their new charge. The orienting materials should include: a Self-Evaluation Team PURPOSE statement; a list of member responsibilities; and the Team's initial assignments.

### **Self-Evaluation Team PURPOSE Statement**

The purpose of the local Self-Evaluation Team is to gather and analyze local and state generated data; to report the findings from the Team's analysis to agency staff; and to work with staff to develop recommendations, based on the data findings, regarding agency and community interventions for improved family-centered, neighborhood-based child protection services.

### Self-Evaluation Team MEMBERSHIP Responsibilities

The agency Self-Evaluation Team is critical to the health and well-being of the agency. As such, there must be a commitment by each member to attend scheduled meetings, complete assignments and actively participate.

Membership responsibilities include: a. attending all twice monthly Self-Evaluation Team Meetings; b. completing committee assignments in a timely manner; c. coming prepared to participate in the meetings; d. acting as a champion of family-centered neighborhood-based Child Protection Services in the agency and community.

### Initial Self-Evaluation Team Assignments

There are many exciting data evaluation assignments that the Team will want to take on as it gains experience with reviewing and discussing data.

**A first assignment** might be to have the Team review the data reports generated for: CPOE; Dr. Usher's Demographic Report [provided 5/28/97 - additional copies available upon request]; the ODHS Bench mark Report released 7/1/97] and the Zip Code Report furnished by ODHS through PCSAO in August 1997. In addition, the Team will want to review data reports available through the agency's local data system [automated or manual].

The Team needs to ask the following types of questions to create a profile for program staff to consider when initiating enhanced family-centered, neighborhood-based Child Protection Services:

- A. What are the geographic areas where most of the children are removed from their homes and what are the geographic areas where most children are placed? Are the same?
- B. What area has the most licensed foster homes?
- C. What percentage of the children remain in the county as opposed to placed outside of the county?
- D. What is the length of stay for children in county, out-of-county, agency foster homes, contract foster homes?
- E. How many children are temporary custody (TC) as opposed to permanent custody (PC)?
- F. What % of children in TC are placed with paternal resources? Maternal resources? What do you attribute this to?
- G. Based on the data, is there a correlation with the level of involvement of the birth family in the case planning process, visitation [or lack thereof], etc.
- H. What impact does current practice have on the # of foster homes; length of stay; unplanned re-entries into care; length of time between PC and adoption finalization, etc.?

### Initial Self-Evaluation Team Assignments

**A second assignment** might include deciding the measures the Team wants to track for evaluating the agency's success in implementing enhanced family-centered, neighborhood-based Child Protection Services. For example you might want to track and analyze the following once you get going.

Example:

Goal: Develop a network of family foster care that is neighborhood based, culturally responsive and located primarily in the communities where children live.

Indicators:

1. Children (% , #) placed in the same neighborhoods as their families [new placements];
2. Number of children placed in foster care (1) outside of the neighborhood; (2) outside the county [including networks];
3. Reasons for such placement [age, race, sibling group, special needs; lack of regular beds, etc - use to guide recruitment];
4. Number of foster homes/beds available in F2F sites by race/ethnic background [reflecting cultural makeup of the county's child population];
5. Attendance of parents, other family members, social workers, homefinders, foster parents, support staff, service providers in meetings [staffings, family team meetings, case planning, SARs, etc.] where decisions about families are made;
6. Parental inclusion in discussion: feelings of being listened to, their strengths recognized and built on, ownership of case plan, satisfaction with services, feelings about foster parent relationship, benefits to children etc, [interviews, questionnaires].

**See the HANDOUT section of this publication for the Hamilton CDHS F2F Measurement Indicators Memo**

### Initial Self-Evaluation Team Assignments

**A third assignment** might be to have the Team decide what additional data needs to be gathered to make informed programmatic recommendations. Normally, agencies collect all sorts of data electronically and by hand to maximize small group discussions and problem-solving sessions for systematic decision-making. Can the Team identify, based on the type of data it seeks to collect, what data is available and can be gathered regularly for analysis; and identify additional data collection mechanisms needed for targeted problem-solving and decision-making?

With all of this data, the Team will definitely want to educate itself as to the use of different DATA SOURCES. Remember the materials provided by Dr. Usher [PCSAO has additional copies - call if you need an additional set]? Provide these to the Team members and make sure the Team is clear about the type of data source it is using and why.

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### Alternative Data Sources

The Self Evaluation Team has to decide the way in which it will look at/collect its data. ODHS reports data mostly using Entry cohorts rather than Exit cohorts.

**Remember:**

- Snapshots: Profile of the children on a given day [aka: cross-sectional or point in time data].
- Exit Cohorts: Children leaving care during a given period of time.
- Entry cohorts: Children who enter out-of-home care for the very first time during some defined period of time.

*The following information has been reformatted based on information from documents provided by the Cuyahoga County Department of Children Services.*

## II. GETTING STARTED WITH STAFF

The Standards For Effective Practice that link to this topic include: 1.4: Staff Orientation and Training; 2.3: Case Staffings; 2.4: Placement Transitions; 3.9: Safety Plans; 4.1: The Child and Family Assessment; 4.2: Developing The Case Plan; 4.3: Face - To - Face Contact; 6.2: Retention and Recruitment of Foster Care; 6.5: Foster Care; Standards 5.0: Intensive Family Home -Based Services

It's important to make sure all staff are on board and ready to do the hard work of converting current thinking and practice to that of a more family-centered, neighborhood-based CPS approach. Scheduling a meeting/series of orientations with staff to present the philosophy of Family-Centered, Neighborhood-Based Child Protection Services and to present the data findings analyzed by your Self-Evaluation Team would be a good first step [examples of Agendas, Staff Survey instruments and Orientation outlines are included in this publication in the Handout section: Getting Started with Staff].

When meeting with staff, **ALWAYS** start any discussion regarding service delivery by linking it to the **MISSION** of the agency. Why we are here and how that purpose links with [in this case family-centered, neighborhood-based CPS]. You might facilitate a brainstorming session as to HOW THINGS MIGHT LOOK IF THE AGENCY WERE MORE FAMILY-CENTERED AND NEIGHBORHOOD-BASED. Try conducting a Current State...Goal State activity. If staff are not clear on the difference between current practice and practice as a result of being more family-centered and neighborhood-based, [rather than brainstorming their response], you could hand out the following and lead a discussion. Things they might come up with [or that you might pass out] include:

**During the Investigation of a report:**

**Current State:** Staff Tell You...

**Goal State:**

- a. Staff consistently contact neighbors, teachers, pastors, law enforcement officials for information or sharing resources;
- b. Staff consistently consult with relatives [paternal too], neighbors, pastors, the local neighborhood center, etc. on the level of risk and possible solutions;
- c. Staff always involve the family in the decision making process regarding child safety [and safety plans] and the case;
- d. Staff schedule a case staffing whenever a removal is imminent and when a removal must be immediately made - scheduling a staffing the very next day.

**Holding Case Staffings:**

**Current State:** Staff Tell You...

**Goal State:**

- a. Staff consistently contact family support persons to attend the case staffing [relatives, neighbors, resource people];
- b. Staff conduct the case staffing in the community;
- c. Staff invite [with the parents permission] children who are articulate and of an age to participate;
- d. Staff consult with resources prior to the meeting-inviting these people to the meeting too;
- e. Staff set up a first visit for children, family and foster family whenever possible at the placement staffing.

**Developing/Using The Case Plan:**

**Current State:** Staff Tell You...

**Goal State:**

- a. The expectation is that staff create the first draft in the family home with family members and others;
- b. Staff always ask [age appropriate] children [as well as parents] their perceptions of the issues and what they need;
- c. Staff invite neighbors, foster parents, teachers...to assist in the development;
- d. Staff are expected to look first at neighborhoods and culturally appropriate resources, supports, etc. to provide for the family's needs;
- e. Staff review the case plan at each visit to celebrate progress and to resolve barriers interfering with successful completion of the case goals and objectives.

**Relating to Foster Parents:**

**Current State:** Staff Tell You...

**Goal State:**

- a. Staff send a copy of the case plan to the foster parents and review its content at the first scheduled visit following the mailing of the case plan.
- b. Staff review the concept of neighborhood-based foster care [use the Cuyahoga County BRIDGES document];
- c. Staff always discuss the importance of contact between the birth family and children - determining where the foster parent will be on the "BRIDGE" [Cuyahoga Handout included in this publication under the Handout section: Getting Started with Staff];
- d. Staff discuss and set up Family Team Meetings;
- e. Foster parents are informed of case plan progress and the planned date for reunification;
- f. Foster parents are provided with a written schedule [parent/child visits [after consultation with the foster parents].

**Relating to the Birth Parents:**

**Current State:** Staff Tell You...

**Goal State:**

- a. The family is always involved in the decision-making process; family members and people who know the family well are involved with the decision-making process.
- a. The agency sets up parent/child visits in the most familiar and natural environment where the child can be protected;
- b. Parents are routinely called between visits to see how it's going and to provide encouragement;
- c. Staff check with neighborhood/relative supports for progress and concerns.

**Finding A Placement:**

**Current State:** Staff Tell You...

**Goal State:**

- a. Children are routinely asked about what they need; fear; want; what's going to happen;
- b. Children are routinely asked what they want to take with them;
- c. Staff ask the parent to reassure the child and to provide the child with any favorite toys;
- d. Staff have a picture of the parent taken at the staffing for the child to take with him;
- e. Staff talk with the mom and any significant person whom the child mentions about placement;
- f. Staff discuss school issues with the child: what's best, worst, where they go, who's the teacher;
- g. Staff discuss medical issues with the parent and child [medications, doctors...];
- h. Staff arrange for a pre-placement visit even on emergency placements.

**Working with Communities:**

**Current State:** Staff Tell You...

**Goal State:**

- a. Meetings with groups [teachers; pastors; etc.] are regularly arranged to discuss who we are; what we do and requesting/offering help;
- b. Agency personnel listen to, and consult with neighbors, professionals, and relatives - asking their opinions and responding to them;
- c. Staff knock on doors to ask/learn and reach out [Is there a food pantry in this area...would you recommend the ABC child care center; Is there someone who could drop in on Mrs X and her baby at meal time?];
- d. Staff invite the area members to assist with the safety and permanency needs of the children in their area by sharing information legally possible and responding to their offers of help;
- e. Local representatives are involved in supporting both the biological family and the foster family and are invited to decision making staffings;
- f. Foster parent recruitment is targeted to neighborhoods in which the children live who are at risk of C/AN so that children can be placed as close to their parents home as possible. Local community support is critical for this recruitment effort [staff must shed middle-class values that interfere with child safety and care in the child's bio. neighborhoods: just because a foster parent cannot read and is poor does not mean s/he cannot love and care for a child - it does mean more effort on the agency and community's part];
- g. Staff recruit, assist and support the area's members in becoming foster or adoptive parents by: assisting with paperwork, accessing the items they may need; help walking through the bureaucracy, treating them as a "neighbor" and a valuable resource;
- h. Staff keep all appointments and being consciously respectful of the time and work of others.

Orienting and reorienting staff to the philosophy and practice of family-centered, neighborhood-based CPS should be seen as an ongoing process **NOT AN EVENT**. Finding new and innovative ways to "make the point" with staff is what you want to shoot for.

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**SOME IDEAS TO USE WITH YOUR STAFF INCLUDE...**

1. Call for volunteers or hold a series of contests on "sore" performance topics to develop slogans and statements that are fun but make a point. Post these around the agency, wherever staff convene [meeting rooms, lunch/break rooms, employee restrooms]. For example: "Make your Foster Parents happy - return their calls in 24 hours"; "Don't let a child go naked today...complete and submit the clothing order"; "Assist your family in closing their case - review their case plan at scheduled visits and brainstorm solutions to case plan barriers".

**SOME MORE IDEAS...**

2. Have some staff identify one or two families/ foster families that are particularly articulate, with good ideas and who want their children safe/reunified with the birth family. Call the parents together for a focus group on things the agency can do to partner for a speedy and safe return of the children in out-of-home placements. Provide refreshments and a small incentive stipend to increase attendance.

3. Use the pre and post tests in the OCWTP Self-Directed TOOL manual for caseworkers. Have staff complete the Permanency Planning tests and meet for a brown bag luncheon on permanency planning and family-centered, neighborhood-based CPS. Pull out your Local Self-Evaluation Team data analysis and reports to discuss ways to improve service delivery to children and families and build stronger partnerships in the communities you serve.
  4. Review the Standards for Effective Practice in small groups [unit meetings; All Staff meetings...], lead an informal discussion as to what you are/aren't doing and how it impacts family-centered-neighborhood-based CPS services. Likewise, pull out the new Foster Parent Training curriculum, see where staff line up with the philosophy of foster/birth parent relations.
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***LOOK FOR THE NEXT ISSUE OF FCNBcps CLIFF NOTES***  
***WE WILL SHARE IDEAS AND INFORMATION REGARDING:***  
***GETTING STARTED IN YOUR COMMUNITIES***

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## ACCOMPANYING HANDOUTS

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**DATA - RELATED  
HANDOUTS**

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# GETTING STARTED WITH STAFF HANDOUTS



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## FEEDBACK FORM

PLEASE COMPLETE THE FOLLOWING AND RETURN IT TO PCSAO: [ATT. S.A. SAUNDERS]  
W/IN 3 WEEKS OF RECEIVING THIS PUBLICATION. WE HOPE IT IS USEFUL - LET US  
KNOW WHAT YOU THINK...

	Absolutely	Somewhat	It's OK But...	Not at all
1. This is publication is just what we've been wanting to help us get started	_____	_____	_____	_____
2. This publication has answered some questions we had about the subjects covered	_____	_____	_____	_____
3. We would like this publication to continue	_____	_____	_____	_____
4. Topics we are interested in for future issues include:				
5. Suggestions we would like to make include:				