



RECOMMENDATIONS

RECOMMENDATIONS

[FOR OHIO POLICY MAKERS]

While the reader will realize that Ohio's child welfare system has reformed our work to keep children safe and in stable, permanent homes, and that we have promising outcomes and momentum to continue our work – we know certain policy changes will make a difference for success. Thus, PCSAO makes the following recommendations:

1. Maintain Ohio's current investment in child welfare.

Already the lowest state investment in the nation, Ohio cannot afford to reduce its investment in child welfare and local funding inequities require baseline funding.

2. Complete a sustainable fix, replacing lost local revenues when the Tangible Personal Property tax was eliminated.

State funds to Public Children Service Agencies eroded to \$50.5 million per year in State Fiscal Year 2010. We cannot endure a loss of \$31.5 million per year in local revenues due to TPP losses, without reinvestment from the new world of state taxation revenues.

3. Maintain the Kinship Permanency Incentive Program at \$5 million per year.

Ohio's KPI program, supporting 8,000 children in safe kin environments, demonstrates that providing a modest fiscal investment facilitates safe and permanent homes for our children.

4. Integrate health and behavioral health services.

PCSAO supports continued integration of health and behavioral health services and treatment for children and parents through home visitation, early childhood mental health consultation, the Pediatric Psychiatric Network and inclusion of In-Home Based Services in Ohio's Mental Health Medicaid Plan.

5. Pass a budget-neutral Kinship Policy.

Extend the successful Grandparent Power of Attorney and Caregiver Authorization Affidavit policy to relative and other kin caregivers and streamline other legal paths for temporary and permanent relative/kin custody.

6. Enact Child In Need of Protective Services (CHIPS) Legislation

CHIPS legislation, a product of the Supreme Court of Ohio Advisory Committee / Subcommittee process will better organize our Ohio Revised Code for child maltreatment laws, improving practice and legal reviews and decisions.

7. Continue state SACWIS infrastructure investments that can only be done by the State.

The state SACWIS team has demonstrated capacity to make critical enhancements and fixes to the system to improve immediate safety information and federally required outcomes data. Connecting SACWIS to Results Oriented Management (ROM), a subscription free child welfare performance system, will allow Ohio counties to better track our services and outcomes.

8. Prevent Teen and Unintended Pregnancies.

Pass Prevention First Legislation to ensure teens have critical, responsible decision making skills and victims of sexual assault can access immediate treatment.

RECOMMENDATIONS

[FOR FEDERAL POLICY MAKERS]

1. Allow budget-neutral Title IV-E Waivers to additional States.

It is time for Congress to allow additional states to seek Title IV-E Waivers. Allowing flexible use of federal funding improves child outcomes as demonstrated by the four states (including Ohio) that have budget neutral IV-E Waivers, which allow reinvestment of available funds to support and strengthen birth and kinship families, rather than traditional Title IV-E funding which only pays for placement in out of home care.

2. Allow flexible federal Title IV-E Funding.

Reform federal Title IV-E funding to support the continuum of prevention, diversion, temporary and permanent placement services for which child welfare is responsible. This has been shown to improve child and family outcomes.

3. Eliminate the 1996 AFDC income standard for Title IV-E eligibility.

Basing a child's eligibility for Title IV-E on the antiquated 1996 Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) standards, also known as the "look back," is rapidly discriminating federal financial support against many low income children that need help.