

PCSAO Weekly Update

January 31, 2012



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Advocating for safe children, stable families, and supportive communities

SCO RULING – on January 25th, the Supreme Court of Ohio ruled that when a biological parent of a child has failed, without justifiable cause, to make any court-ordered monthly child support payments for at least one year prior to the filing of another person's petition to adopt that child, **small monetary gifts made by the parent directly to the child during that year do not constitute payment of "support and maintenance as required by law or judicial decree,"** and therefore, pursuant to state adoption laws, **a probate court may approve the child's adoption without the consent of the biological parent.** [Click HERE to read more.](#)

NEW FEDERAL POVERTY GUIDELINES - HHS published the 2012 poverty guidelines on Jan. 26 in the *Federal Register*. See below, for each additional person beyond four, add \$3,960. (\$3,820 was added for each additional person in 2011.)

Family Size	2012 Poverty Guidelines	2011 Poverty Guidelines
1	\$11,170	\$10,890
2	15,130	14,710
3	19,090	18,530
4	23,050	22,350

USE OF PSYCHOTROPICS AMONG CHILDREN IN FOSTER CARE WEBINARS — Georgetown University Center for Child and Human Development will be hosting a three part series to address psychotropic medication use among children in foster care. Throughout the series of webinars, HHS will introduce data and research on the topic and present a selection of best practices for monitoring and oversight. On **Monday, Feb. 13th from 3:30-5pm (EST)** presenters will partake in part 2 of the series: *Clinical Management and Monitoring of Psychotropic Medications*. Presenter include: **Christopher Bellonci, M.D.** Assistant Professor, Tufts University School of Medicine, Attending Psychiatrist Tufts Medical Center and **Stephen Crystal, Ph.D.**, Board of Governors Professor; Director, Center for Health Services Research on Pharmacotherapy, Chronic Disease Management, and Outcomes, and Center for Education and Research on Mental Health Therapeutics Institute for Health, Health Care Policy, and Aging Research, Rutgers University. Dates for part 3 of the webinar series will be announced at a later date. To access this webinar **you must register** at: <http://bit.ly/ya9OT0> Complete audio and power point presentations from part 1 of the series are available at: <http://bit.ly/zAsdf0>

COUNCIL ON ACCREDITATION – Some counties whose accreditation is about to expire may be considering against reaccreditation with COA because of the cost and staff time involved. Before making a final decision, be sure to check out COA's streamlined reaccreditation process. COA is offering a [webinar on Feb. 14](#) to help agencies understand the lower burden and cost of its reaccreditation process. Questions about COA can be directed to Scott Britton at scott@pcsao.org, or check out the [COA section of PCSAO's website](#).

EDUCATIONAL STABILITY FOR KIDS IN FOSTER CARE – Ohio Supreme Court Justice Yvette McGee Brown has convened a task force to improve educational outcomes for children in the child welfare system. Scott Britton attended the second meeting of the task force on Jan. 30 along with stakeholders from the Ohio Department of Education, the courts, and ODJFS. Moira Weir, director of Hamilton County DJFS, also attended. Hamilton is a leader in this area. Moira's office and her partners at Legal Aid Society of Southwest Ohio and the local magistrate court have received a federal grant from the Department of Health and Human Services to expand their Kids in School Rule! program. Working closely with the courts, Kids in School Rule! places an educational specialist in each school in the Cincinnati Public Schools district to help meet the needs of students in the foster care system. The task force will rely on models like this and on successful initiatives in other states to better implement the Fostering Connections Act of 2008, ensuring that children in foster care can remain in their home school if they choose, or have their school records transferred in a timely manner so that they can enroll immediately in a new school, and receive the support they need to maintain good grades, attendance, and graduation rates.

BENEFITS FOR AGENCY EXECUTIVES – PCSAO has updated its [list of benefits and services](#) specifically targeted to agency executives, child welfare administrators, and senior staff. Among the many benefits available to agencies and agency staff as a whole, we provide a number of services specially designed for executives, and the only cost associated with most services relates to travel, food, and accommodations. [Learn more](#) about orientation, meetings, coaching, the listserv, webinars, and the scholarship fund.

2012 NEW EXECUTIVES' ORIENTATION SCHEDULED FOR APRIL 25-26 – If you are a new executive or senior leader in a PCSA or even a seasoned executive or senior leader, don't miss this great opportunity to be oriented to the ins and outs of child welfare in Ohio. This year's orientation includes presentations on PCSAO's child welfare practice and policy agendas, a panel of current executives sharing their leadership lessons, lunch with key stakeholders, fiscal and data segments personalized for your county and plenty of time for networking with your peers. This is a two day event. The cost to you is \$50.00 to defray the costs of food and materials, and travel expenses are on your own. If you are interested in signing up or have a question, please email Rhonda Reagh at rhonda@pcsao.org. Detailed information will be going out at the end of February. We hope to see you there!

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 13th, 2012: ADOPTION TAX CREDIT AWARENESS DAY – Let's ensure that all adoptive families eligible to receive this benefit are informed about how to claim the credit. PCSAO is joining with adoption organizations, state agencies, adoptive families, advocates, and other interested parties to raise visibility of the adoption tax credit – please share on email and using other methods with adoptive families in your community.

The Facts:

- Since 2003, families who adopted a U.S. child with special needs from foster care could claim a federal adoption tax credit *even if they had no adoption expenses* (as long as they met the fairly generous income requirements).
- Children who receive adoption assistance/subsidy benefits are considered children with special needs. Even families who receive a deferred subsidy (\$0 per month but medical coverage through the subsidy program) are eligible.
- All adoptive families (except those who adopted a step-child) are eligible for the credit, but those who adopt children other than those with special needs must have—and be able to document, if requested by the IRS—qualified adoption expenses.
- For 2010 and 2011 the credit was made refundable. If parents who adopted as long ago as 2005 had credit to carry forward into 2010, that amount of the credit also became refundable. In 2010 and 2011, parents can claim the credit even if they don't have income or any tax liability.
- The amount of the credit for 2011 is \$13,360 per child.

The Information:

- IRS Form 8839 Instructions: www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/i8839.pdf
- IRS Form 8839: www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/f8839.pdf
- IRS – adoption tax credit FAQ's: www.irs.gov/individuals/article/0,,id=231663,00.html
- Voice for Adoption's distributable postcard: http://voice-for-adoption.org/adoption_tax_credit
- [Tools & Resources](#) from the North American Council on Adoptable Children (NACAC):

MAY 2, 2012: NATIONAL DAY TO PREVENT TEEN PREGNANCY – Mark your calendars!

The message of The National Day is straightforward: *Sex has consequences*. On The National Day to Prevent Teen Pregnancy and throughout May, teens nationwide will be asked to go to StayTeen.org to participate in a number of online activities—including the popular National Day Quiz. Join in on National Day activities and plan to talk to your teen community members, clients, friends and family about preventing teen and unplanned pregnancy this May. For more information and abundant resources, visit <http://www.thenationalcampaign.org/>.



HUMAN TRAFFICKING PREVENTION & AWARENESS COMMITTEE – met Thurs, Jan. 26. Lots of activity, summary below. The full OAG Human Trafficking Commission will meet Feb. 8.

- **PCSAO Human Trafficking webpage** - www.pcsao.org/HumanTrafficking.html . This is full of great info.
- **Human Trafficking Awareness Day Jan. 12, 2012** – it was great, many thanks to Senator Fedor, OAG DeWine, Michelle Hannan and others. You can link to materials from the PCSAO webpage.
- **HT Public Service Announcement** – Gov. Kasich will personally do a PSA, promoting use of the National Human Trafficking Resource Center hot line number, 1-888-3737-8888.
- **ODE Webinar plan** – expect awareness webinars for educators, students, families/communities in the spring.

HUMAN TRAFFICKING LEGISLATIVE SUBCOMMITTEE – chaired by Rep. Teresa Fedor (sponsor of the Safe Harbor for Exploited Children Bill, HB 262) the subcmte met Thursday, Jan 26th. Greg Kapcar participated on behalf of PCSAO along with reps from the AG's office, anti-human trafficking advocates, Prosec Attnys Assoc and others as the subcommittee considers legislative proposals to improve Ohio's response to victims of trafficking. Several resources on human trafficking are available on PCSAO's website. [Click Here.](#)

CHILD WELFARE IN THE NEWS – Child Welfare in the News highlights important child welfare news and articles that focus on a positive program or effect of an Ohio public children services agency and other agencies across the country.

- [PCSAO Receives Grant to Study Children in Foster Care](#) – Public Health Law Research (PHLR), a national program office of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF), awarded Public Children Services Association of Ohio (PCSAO) and the Research Foundation of State University of New York on behalf of University at Buffalo (SUNY-Buffalo) a two-year grant to study how to make tax dollars used for child welfare services work most effectively for children. *The Hannah Report, 1/31/2012.*
- [Challenges, rewards of fatherhood get attention in Cleveland-filmed documentary](#) – Rob Cepek spent a few moments recently at MetroHealth Medical Center teaching a group of new dads, some of whom had never held a baby, the best way to pass their newborns to another person. *By Stan Donaldson, The Plain Dealer, 1/30/2012*
- [Dental Clinic offers option for youth dental care despite tough times](#) – Randi Latham, of Coshocton, had her three children visiting the dentist for the first time recently, and it was at the same clinic she went to as a child. *By Leonard Hayhurst, CoshoctonTribune.com, 1/24/2012.*

JOB OPENINGS – For more information, please visit www.pcsao.org/employment.htm. For PCSA agencies – if you're looking at hiring graduates from the University Partnership Program (UPP), please visit the list of [UPP graduates](#) who look for employment in an Ohio public children services agency.

Posted Date	Organization	Available Position
1/31/2012	KidsOhio	Education Policy Analyst
1/31/2012	Wood County DJFS	Social Services Worker III
1/16/2012	ODJFS	Child Welfare Policy Staff
1/23/2012	Franklin County Children Services	Services Desk Supervisor
1/12/2012	Gracehaven	Lead Residential Counselor , and Residential Counselor
1/10/2012	Washington County Children Services	Executive Director
1/8/2012	Ashland County DJFS	Social Services Worker II
1/8/2012	Stark County DJFS	Fiscal Officer

UPCOMING MEETINGS

WHEN	WHAT	WHERE
February 1	PCSAO Trustees Meeting	PCSAO
February 2	CORTC/PCSAO District meeting	FCCS
February 3	PIO Committee	Conference Call
February 14	NW/Findlay – District Meeting	Hancock County DJFS
February 20	Presidents' Day	Holiday – PCSAO will be close.
February 22	HR/Safety Committee	PCSAO
February 27	Legislative Committee	FCCS
February 27	NE/Cleveland– PCSAO District Meeting	Days Inn and Suites, Richfield
March 2	PIO Committee	Contact: Scott, scott@pcsao.org



GREEN LIVING TIP – Consider reusing (rather than immediately recycling) greeting cards. The fronts can be donated to local schools for crafts. Read how St. Jude's Ranch for Children in Nevada has benefitted from this idea [here](#). Buying cards made from recycled paper is also helpful.

CHARITABLE CONSUMERS – Visit www.sanctuarysprings.com to buy a hand-crafted greeting card. Not only will they be treasured by those who receive them, but the purchase will go directly towards helping survivors of sex trafficking in the Philippines. (And no worries, they use recycled material).

TODAY IN HISTORY – The 13th Amendment to the Constitution is passed on January 31, 1865, abolishing slavery in America. Go to www.history.com/this-day-in-history for more tidbits, or read the related article [here](#).

THOUGHT OF THE WEEK – “Everyone has inside of him a piece of good news. The good news is that you don't know how great you can be! How much you can love! What you can accomplish! And what your potential is!” ~ *Anne Frank*