



Safe Children, Stable Families, Supportive Communities

## OHIO'S TITLE IV-E WAIVER & FAMILY FIRST PREVENTION SERVICES ACT

Ohio was one of the first states to implement a waiver demonstration in 1997. It has operated continuously since then, providing a unique context for understanding both the short- and long-term impacts of flexible funding on service delivery systems and child- and family-level outcomes. By design and for evaluation purposes, Ohio's waiver was not statewide but rather included a subset of counties and an equal number of comparison counties. Of Ohio's 88 counties, 15 are currently participating in the waiver demonstration known as "ProtectOHIO" and 16 are comparison counties.

Ohio does not want to retreat from the policies and practices that have led to these improvements. The Public Children Services Association of Ohio (PCSAO), a membership-driven association of Ohio's county public children services agencies, embraces the spirit and intent of the Family First Prevention Services Act (FFPSA) to continue reshaping the children services system to focus on keeping children and families together.

PCSAO believes that transitioning from the current waiver to FFPSA will require a significant re-vamping of the current system, but that it is possible, if there is sufficient time afforded. We do not believe that the timeline included in the Act is adequate to make these changes and would undermine Ohio's efforts on behalf of vulnerable children and families.

Therefore, *PCSAO is requesting Congressional action to provide for a multi-year transition under current terms and conditions of the existing IV-E waivers in order to ensure that the critical services Ohio is providing to these children and families are not interrupted.*

### **Ohio's IV-E waiver demonstration includes the following components:**

1. **Family Team Meetings<sup>i</sup>** are a method of engaging family members and other key people who can support the family in a process of collaborative case decision-making.
2. **Kinship Supports Intervention<sup>ii</sup>** is a method designed to promote kinship placements as best practice by ensuring kinship caregivers have the support they need to meet the child's needs and are often provided without having a formal case open with children services.

In addition to implementation of the specific waiver strategies above, the flexibility in funding provided through Ohio's waiver has supported county public children services agencies in implementing aligned practices and overarching system improvements, including:

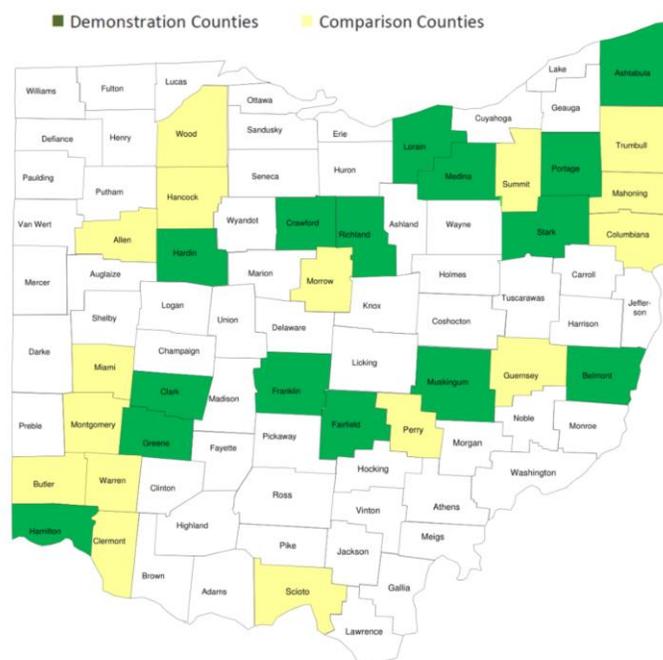
- **Expanding the array of community-based child welfare services and programs** such as enhanced visitation, intensive permanency efforts, Strengthening Families, school-based staffing, and family search and engagement.

- **Implementing a wide variety of strategies** to integrate child welfare with other health and human services programs such as mental health, substance abuse services and drug courts.
- **Enhancing system efficiency and effectiveness** by relieving pressure on ongoing service caseloads such as differential response, Safe Teams, and intensive reunification.

Because of these efforts, ProtectOHIO has accomplished the following **positive outcomes for children and families**:

- Decreased number of children in out-of-home care (led the nation a decade ago in safely reducing the number of children in care by 42%)
- Decreased placement days
- Increased permanency
- Decreased recurrence of maltreatment
- Decreased re-entry to care
- Greater placement stability
- More likely to be placed with kin
- Improved child and family well-being<sup>iii</sup>

Figure 1.1: Map of ProtectOHIO Counties



<sup>i</sup> ProtectOHIO Family Team Meetings, Human Services Resources Institute, July 2016, [https://www.hsri.org/files/uploads/publications/ProtectOHIO\\_Family\\_Team\\_Meetings\\_Evaluation\\_Brief\\_July\\_2016.pdf](https://www.hsri.org/files/uploads/publications/ProtectOHIO_Family_Team_Meetings_Evaluation_Brief_July_2016.pdf).

<sup>ii</sup> ProtectOHIO Kinship Supports, Human Services Resources Institute, July 2016, [https://www.hsri.org/files/uploads/publications/ProtectOHIO\\_Kinship\\_Supports\\_Evaluation\\_Brief\\_July\\_2016.pdf](https://www.hsri.org/files/uploads/publications/ProtectOHIO_Kinship_Supports_Evaluation_Brief_July_2016.pdf)

<sup>iii</sup> Final Evaluation Report: ProtectOHIO – Third Waiver Period, Human Services Resources Institute, February 2016, <https://www.hsri.org/publication/final-evaluation-report-protectohio-third-waiver-period>.