The Opioid Epidemic’s Impact on Children Services in Ohio

December 2017
Ohio’s Children Services System Is Strained

More children are entering foster care at alarmingly higher rates than ever before

67% of children in foster care are 12 and younger; 28% are 3 and younger.

23% increase overall; 13% increase in 15 months

Source: ODJFS SACWIS special data run, received Nov. 2017.
Ohio’s Children Services System Will Explode

If the opioid epidemic continues at its current pace, Ohio will have over 20,000 children in foster care by 2020

Est. Number of Children in Foster Care on a Given Day


Only 7,200 foster homes available; not increasing at the same pace – 2.5% increase/year
Ohio’s Children Services System Is Strained

Placement costs have increased dramatically due to more children in care and their needs are more complex

Source: ODJFS SACWIS special data run, received Jan. 2017. Additional calculations by PCSAO.

66% paid with local dollars, 34% paid with federal dollars

Source: ODJFS SACWIS special data run, received Jan. 2017. Additional calculations by PCSAO.
Ohio’s Children Services System Will Explode

The skyrocketing cost of foster care in Ohio is reaching levels that will require substantially more State resources.

An additional $175M will be needed in 3 years - just for placement costs!

Source: ODJFS SACWIS special data run, received Jan. 2017. Additional calculations by PCSAO.
How Children Services is Funded in Ohio

Counties fund over half of children services expenditures by relying on local government funds and dedicated levies.

48 counties have a dedicated children services levy.

Ohio Ranks 50th in Nation for State Share

Even if the State’s share for children services spending doubled, Ohio would still be 50th in the nation

While Ohio is the 7th largest state, it ranks 15th for overall children services spending

2014 Comparison of Children Services State Spending

National Average for State Spend: 40%
Ohio’s State Spend: 7%

Ohio’s Children Services System Is Strained
Caseworkers are first responders in these opioid-related case, leading to secondary trauma in our workforce

In 2016 …..

➢ 1 out of every 7 public children services caseworkers left their job...

➢ Costing $54,000 to replace a single worker; $24.3 million statewide...

➢ Causing children to linger in foster care longer

Source: Data from PCSAO Caseload Survey, 2016. Additional calculations by PCSAO.
Impact of Opioid Epidemic on Children

50% of children taken into custody in 2015 had parental drug use

Impact of Opioid Epidemic on Children

28% of children taken into custody in 2015 had parents who were using opioids at time of removal

The Attorney General Responded

Ohio’s Sobriety, Treatment and Reducing Trauma (Ohio START) Pilot Program

➢ Over $5 million in Victim of Crime Act funds

➢ Timeline: April 1, 2017 – September 30, 2019

➢ Focused on supporting parents in recovery with peer mentors and assisting children who have been traumatized

➢ Goal: Children can remain in their own homes or return home sooner

Pilot in 14 Southern Counties; evaluated by OSU & OU
Ohio’s Legislature Responded for SFY 18-19

➢ $15 million/year added to the State Child Protection Allocation (ODJFS Line-600523) to assist county PCSAs

➢ $15 million/year from the TANF Block Grant to establish a Kinship Child Care Program

➢ Created the ODJFS Foster Care Advisory Board to make recommendation on recruiting and supporting foster parents
What Ohio’s Kids Need Now & In the Future

More attention, more resources:

➢ Recruit additional foster and adoptive homes

➢ Provide additional support to kinship and foster families

➢ Pay rising foster care placement costs (foster homes, group homes, residential care)

➢ Recruit and retain a vital workforce
Contact PCSAO for More Information

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