

Why Is Reform Needed in Ohio?

With 4,000 additional children in foster care today than just five years ago, Ohio's children services system is in crisis. They come with more trauma and more complex needs, and they stay in care longer. If trends continue, by 2020, Ohio could have 20,000 children in foster care on any given day and spend more than half a billion dollars just for out-of-home placement. Ohio can—and must—do better. PCSAO is proposing system-wide reform that will create a continuum of services for children and their families. We can get better outcomes and, ultimately, spend less.

Opioid Epidemic Devastation



Ohio is one of the worst-hit states in the nation for overdoses, and these adults are of child-bearing age. More kids are coming into foster care due in large part to the epidemic.

- 27% increase in number of children in care since 2013
- More than 16,000 children in custody on any given day in July 2018
- 20% increase in placement costs alone (\$55 million increase)
- 7,200 licensed foster homes unable to meet the demand
- Average child spends a month longer in care because of parent relapse

Ohio's biggest challenges:

- Kids are unhealthy, unable to overcome their trauma
- Kids are being raised in institutions, not with families
- Kids are being placed with foster families that are not near their home
- Kids are being placed out of state for residential care
- Kids are staying in care longer

Workforce Impacts



Children services caseworkers strive for reunification, but as caseloads rise and children get stuck in foster care, caseworker morale plunges.

- In 2016 and 2017, 1 in 4 caseworkers left their positions
- Cost of turnover estimated at \$24.3 million
- Research shows that caseworker turnover has a direct impact on kids spending longer in foster care

Residential Care for Complex Needs



Many children in residential (congregate) care settings came into the system not because of abuse or neglect but because other systems—juvenile justice, mental health, developmental disabilities—are unable to meet their complex needs.

- 14% increase in residential and 7% increase in group home placements since 2014
- Children in out-of-state residential placement stay in custody for 559 days (median) vs. 318 days for in-state
- 15% of children in congregate care are under the age of 13

Funding Inequities



Even with a 2017 increase from the state legislature, Ohio pays the smallest share of child protection costs of any state in the nation.

- Ohio contributes only 10 cents on the dollar, and just 5 cents of that goes to counties (SFY16)
- Counties bear the lion's share, 52 cents on the dollar; federal government share is 38 cents (SFY16)
- \$175 million more will be needed by 2020 just for out-of-home placement costs

Children's Continuum of Care Reform

Children deserve to be safe in their homes, and they do better living with families than in institutions. Ohio can do a better job of preventing children from entering foster care in the first place with community-based, short-term crisis stabilization services. If children have to be removed from their families, we need a robust foster care system that can support the challenging needs of kids in a family-based setting while focusing on reunification. Join PCSAO and our supporters in redesigning Ohio's children services and foster care system using these four strategies to keep kids safe, stable and healthy.

Prevention, Intervention, Crisis & Diversion Services



Increase services so that children can remain with their families and not come into foster care in the first place

- High-Fidelity Wraparound
- Intensive Home-Based Treatment
- Trauma-informed short-term crisis options
- Juvenile court diversion programs
- Community-based supports to meet basic needs
- Peer mentors
- Family search and engagement
- Evidence-based mental health, substance abuse and parenting education programs

This plan is designed to reduce:

- Number of children entering foster care
- Length of stay in foster care
- Reentry into foster care
- Residential placement
- Children experiencing trauma
- Cost to taxpayers

Appropriate Residential Care



Decrease Ohio's use of congregate care (residential, group homes) settings and, when needed, ensure that high-quality residential treatment facilities can meet the needs of children and are available in proximity of family

- Available, affordable and accessible high-acuity placements
- Short-term, individualized, trauma-informed facilities
- Expanded options

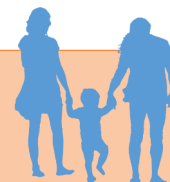
Professional Foster Care



Create a robust foster care system that can meet the variety of challenging needs of children while focusing on reunification efforts

- Targeted caregiver recruitment
- Foster and kinship family retention supports
- In-home treatment services
- Defined expectations with aligned supports, policies and compensation
- Value-based incentives

Aftercare & Reunification Services



Increase availability and accessibility of services so that children can safely return to their families and achieve sustained permanency

- Meaningful supports for families
- Various levels of care accessible to all counties