

# ADMINISTRATIVE UPDATES

## From the Office of Children, Youth and Families (OCYF)

*Department of Human Services*

### National Adoption Month

November is National Adoption Awareness Month. This is also a terrific opportunity for agencies to celebrate children and Families and promote permanency. For more information on National Adoption Month 2022, please see [here](#).

If you are having an event that you would like to have featured on the SWAN Facebook page, please contact Teresa Musser at [temusser@pa.gov](mailto:temusser@pa.gov). All requests must be in the form of a picture (.jpg or .png).

### Trauma Training Available for Child Welfare Professionals

In partnership with the Office of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services, the Office of Children, Youth and Families (OCYF) is funding trauma training opportunities for all child welfare professionals in Pennsylvania via Lakeside Global. During the time period of October 1, 2022 through September 30, 2023, Pennsylvania child welfare professionals serving children in the state are able to take advantage of **FREE** trainings facilitated by the team at Lakeside Global to become trauma-aware, trauma-sensitive, trauma-informed or healing-centered. This also includes Train the Trainer sessions to support trauma-informed sustainability within a child welfare organization.

Please take advantage of this opportunity. Within the next few weeks, OCYF will distribute information about these FREE trainings and registration details.

### Trauma-Informed Workgroup

The OCYF Trauma Team continues to distribute the Trauma Newsletter. This newsletter will continue to provide the most current information regarding the status of OCYF's trauma-informed initiative. We encourage continued communication to all providers through informative newsletters, updates such as this, and by utilizing the resource account [RA-PWOCYFTRAUMA@PA.GOV](mailto:RA-PWOCYFTRAUMA@PA.GOV).

OCYF regional staff will begin partnering with all

CCYAs, and licensed foster care and adoption providers towards the end of October to complete an organizational assessment utilizing the trauma-informed care assessment tool. This tool is designed to assist OCYF in offering feedback, technical assistance, support and guidance as they partner with the CCYAs and licensed foster care and adoption providers.

The Child Welfare Resource Center (CWRC) has developed a trauma-informed curriculum that will include the information required to become trauma aware. This voluntary, free online training is now available to all county children and youth, foster care and adoption agencies through the E-Learn platform. Agencies may use other resources to meet the training requirement if the resource meets the minimum training standards for trauma awareness as provided by Heal PA.

### Family First Prevention Services Act

The Office of Children Youth and Families has added Family First-related content to the Keep Kids Safe Website. For Pennsylvania-specific Family First information, see [here](#).

For PA Family First email updates, please subscribe [here](#).

### Chafee Education and Training Grant Programs

The Pennsylvania Chafee Education and Training Grant (ETG) application and instructions for the 2022 – 2023 academic year can be found online [here](#).

As a reminder, current ETG award recipients will be automatically enrolled for the next academic year and do not need to complete another ETG application. The ETG award amount cannot exceed the students cost of attendance.

Please contact PHEAA at 1-800-831-0797 with questions about the Chafee applications or a youth's current application status. Questions regarding the ETG program can be directed to Teresa Musser at [temusser@pa.gov](mailto:temusser@pa.gov) or 717-214-7385.

### **Fostering Independence Tuition Waiver Program**

The Fostering Independence through Education Program, known as FosterED, requires Pennsylvania postsecondary institutions to award a waiver of tuition and mandatory fees for Pennsylvania resident youth who meet Chafee ETG eligibility requirements and have applied for all available federal and state grants. Tuition and mandatory fee waivers apply to both public (state) colleges and universities, community colleges, private post-secondary institutions, and other eligible schools. Youth are eligible to receive the waivers for five years, which need not be consecutive, or until age 26.

In addition to the waivers, each post-secondary institution must appoint a Point of Contact (POC) to assist youth with eligibility, technical assistance, and other resources that may be available to them on and off campus. County and private provider IL caseworkers/coordinators may be contacted by the POC to verify a youth's eligibility. This is a critical step in assisting youth with verifying their eligibility when entering post-secondary education and financial aid packages being awarded.

Each post-secondary education institution is required to have their identified POC listed on their website. A list of POCs can be found on the Center for Schools and Communities [website](#).

Additional information about the tuition waiver can be found at [PHEAA.org/FosterEd](https://PHEAA.org/FosterEd).

Questions related to the FosterED program can be directed to Teresa Musser at [temusser@pa.gov](mailto:temusser@pa.gov).

### **National Youth in Transition Database**

The National Youth in Transition Database (NYTD) collects information in the following areas: Baseline Population (every youth in foster care who reaches age 17), Served Population (any youth or young adult receiving independent living services regardless of age) and Follow-up Population (youth surveys at age 19 and 21 depending on Cohort period). Pennsylvania is currently in Cohort 5 for Baseline Surveys as of October 1, 2022, through March 31, 2023 (2023 A Period). Counties have until April 15, 2023, to submit their baseline surveys as well as served population data. Counties can log onto [www.getnytdpa.org](https://www.getnytdpa.org) to enter their served and survey data. NYTD questions can be directed to Teresa Musser, Office of Children, Youth and Families, at [temusser@pa.gov](mailto:temusser@pa.gov) or 717-214-7385.

If you have new staff, need assistance with resetting your password, forgot your username or have other technical assistance questions related to NYTD, please contact the NYTD Help Desk at (800) 436-4105 or [getnytd@pcgus.com](mailto:getnytd@pcgus.com).

### **American Bar Association (ABA): Pennsylvania Permanency and Education Barriers Initiatives**

The American Bar Association Center on Children and the Law Permanency Barriers Project is actively seeking new project or technical assistance counties. Technical assistance can range from one training to a few month engagement. Please reach out if you would like to discuss the ways in which we may be of assistance. Areas in which the ABA is available to help include:

- Improving collaboration and communication between CYS, court, attorneys, and local providers;
- How to create a true kin first culture in your county;
- Assessing current practices and exploring solutions with a race equity lens;
- Achieving relational and legal permanence for older youth;
- Implementing effective concurrent planning; and
- Conducting a successful testifying workshop for caseworkers.

For more information on Permanency Barriers technical assistance please see [here](#) or contact Heidi Redlich Epstein at [Heidi.epstein@americanbar.org](mailto:Heidi.epstein@americanbar.org).

### **Act 1 of 2022 - Assisting Students Experiencing Education Instability**

[Act 1 of 2022](#), known as "Assisting Students Experiencing Education Instability" was approved by Governor Wolf earlier this year. The Act strengthens school supports and increases education equity to foster academic achievement and graduation for certain students experiencing education instability. The law is applicable to students who have had one or more changes in school enrollment during a single school year as a result of dependency, delinquency, homelessness as defined by the McKinney Vento Act, or a court ordered voluntary placement agreement or court ordered custody agreement. It applies to students returning to their former school, starting at a new school, or re-engaging in school after an extended absence. On August 1, the Pennsylvania Department of Education issued a Basic Education Circular providing guidance to schools. The guidance can be found [here](#). Child welfare staff are advised to identify and advocate for eligible students to receive supports required to be provided by schools under this new law.

### Interstate Compact Unit

The PA Interstate Unit does not have the ability to process USPS, FedEx, or UPS “paper mail”. When providing any case documents to the Interstate Unit, please use the unit’s Resource Accounts, fax, or the Interstate/County DocuShare collection. Case documents include request packets, completed ICPC home studies, 100Bs, supervisory reports, ICAMA documents, etc.

[RA-PA-ICPC@pa.gov](mailto:RA-PA-ICPC@pa.gov) for ICPC cases

[RA-PA-ICAMA@pa.gov](mailto:RA-PA-ICAMA@pa.gov) for ICAMA cases

717-425-5562 fax

As always, in a runaway situation, continue to email both Amanda Behe at [abehe@pa.gov](mailto:abehe@pa.gov) and Natalie Primak at [nprimak@pa.gov](mailto:nprimak@pa.gov) directly.

### Pennsylvania State Resource Family Association (PSRFA)

PSRFA began as a small group in 1974. Since then, they have grown to support children and families involved with foster care, adoption and kinship care along with local foster parent associations and agencies who care for the children they serve throughout the state. PSRFA are supporters for legislation and advocacy for family resource care and provides training and education for those seeking guidance. They are a fantastic resource for children and families in these scenarios.

You can learn more about the PSRFA at [psrfa.org](http://psrfa.org).

If you have any further questions, you can contact PSRFA Office at 1-800-951-5151 or email [dkinard@psrfa.org](mailto:dkinard@psrfa.org) or [klramper@psrfa.org](mailto:klramper@psrfa.org).

### Pennsylvania Kinship Navigator Program, KinConnector

The PA KinConnector Program offers kinship families and professionals who work with kinship families support, guidance, and resources. Kinship families you work with can be referred to the Kinconnector website at, [www.kinconnector.org](http://www.kinconnector.org) or their helpline at 866-546-2111 for additional support and assistance.

The website includes a comprehensive, guided search feature of resources in the following topic areas: childcare, clothing, financial assistance, food, legal, medical, school, and support groups. Also available on the website are training opportunities for both professionals and kinship families, resources that agencies can print out and make available to kinship families, a kinship blog section, a podcast series called “Kindred Voices,” and a newly established virtual Support Group called “Kindred Spirits.”

OCYF encourages all county and provider agencies to outreach to the KinConnector program to learn

more about the services they offer, to provide new resource information to be included on the website, and to form partnerships that could help inform how this program can grow. Any questions regarding this program can be directed to Diane Michel at OCYF at [dmichel@pa.gov](mailto:dmichel@pa.gov) or 717-705-2911.

### Accurint

Accurint is an online search tool available to every county throughout the state. It is able to assist with family finding efforts, contact information, criminal checks and identifying individuals for any type of family engagement meeting. Please be aware that only county employees may be an Accurint Administrator for your county’s account. If you or your staff would like training in the Accurint software, please contact Accurint Education Consultant Melanie Todd at [melanie.todd@lexisnexisrisk.com](mailto:melanie.todd@lexisnexisrisk.com) or 937-580-6167.

If you have any questions about Accurint, please contact Diane Michel at OCYF at [dmichel@pa.gov](mailto:dmichel@pa.gov) or 717-705-2911.

### Credit Reports

Did you know that every Credit Bureau has a specific contact person and process to ensure foster care youth credit history checks are completed appropriately? If you are unsure of this information, have questions regarding credit report history of foster care youth or are having issues obtaining a credit history from one of the Credit Bureau’s, please contact Diane Michel at OCYF at [dmichel@pa.gov](mailto:dmichel@pa.gov) or 717-705-2911 for assistance.

### Identification of Students in Foster Care to Schools

The Pennsylvania Office of Children, Youth and Families (OCYF) recently issued a [memo](#) to advise County Children and Youth Agencies (CCYA) about information sharing with schools. CCYAs are encouraged to maintain continued communication and collaboration with schools to support students while maintaining that confidential information is kept confidential. CCYAs are advised to utilize the Identification of Students in Foster Care to School Points of Contact form to notify K-12 schools of a student’s entry into foster care or change in foster care placement. The form, which can be found on the Department of Human Services Education of Students Served by Pennsylvania County Children and Youth Agencies [web page](#), should be provided to school points of contact.

If you have any questions or concerns related to the memo or form, please contact [RA-PWOCYFEDUCATION@pa.gov](mailto:RA-PWOCYFEDUCATION@pa.gov).

### Mandated Reporter Training

Pennsylvania Family Support Alliance (PFSA) continues to offer virtual Mandated Reporter Trainings at no cost to mandated reporters in Pennsylvania. Trainings include, "Recognizing and Reporting Child Abuse," which meets all the requirements for training on recognizing and reporting child abuse as well as a new training, "Responding to Disclosures of Child Abuse" for mandated reporters who have taken training before and need to take it again. The "Responding to Disclosures of Child Abuse" training is designed to help professionals and volunteers respond to disclosures of child abuse in a way that is sensitive and supportive to the child, but without tainting the child's memory.

Both trainings are three-hours and available virtually. They are approved by the Departments of Human Services, Education, and State and meets all requirements for training on recognizing and reporting child abuse (to include Act 126 for school employees). The trainings are also approved for continuing education credits under Act 31 (Department of State for health-related licenses) and Act 48 (Department of Education for teachers) at no cost. PFSA will submit your training verification to the Department of State or Education as appropriate on your behalf (details provided during training).

Additional information and training dates can be found at Mandated Reporter Training | Pennsylvania Family Support Alliance ([pafsa.org](http://pafsa.org)). For questions or to schedule a session specifically for your organization, please email PFSA at [training@pa-fsa.org](mailto:training@pa-fsa.org)

If you are in the medical profession and wish to schedule training with the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) for the Educating Physicians in their Communities-Suspected Child Abuse and Neglect (EPIC-SCAN), contact AAP at [scan@paaap.org](mailto:scan@paaap.org) or at 866-823-7226.

### SWAN/IL Google Groups

There are over 700 members of the SWAN/IL ListServ through Google Groups. This is a great way to share confidential information across the network to seek colleague's advice and announce upcoming events. Anyone wishing to join the group must be an employee of a county children and youth agency, SWAN affiliate agency or IL provider. If interested, please contact Bobbi Whary by email at [bwhary@diakon-swan.org](mailto:bwhary@diakon-swan.org) or 717-558-1223.

### Clearance Verification Unit

The Department of Human Services, Division of Operations, Child Verification Unit (CVU), ChildLine provides eligible individuals with the following three clearances: Child Abuse History Clearance, FBI Fingerprint Clearance and – National Sex Offenders Registry (NSOR). The Pennsylvania (PA) Child Abuse History clearance can be submitted and paid for online through the Child Welfare Information Solution (CWIS) self-service portal at [Pennsylvania Child Welfare Information Solution](http://Pennsylvania Child Welfare Information Solution). Applicants are able to view and print their results online.

CVU will also accept PA Child Abuse History Clearance applications in paper format for anyone who may not have access to the internet. Results for paper application are mailed to the appropriate address noted on the form and within 14 days from the date that application is received in CVU.

The Commonwealth's vendor for digital fingerprinting is IDEMIA (also referred to as IdentoGo or MorphoTrust). The fingerprint-based background check is a multi-step process. For general questions about FBI clearances, please contact the FBI Background Check Unit at 1-877-371-5422. For IDEMIA registration, processing, or billing questions, please contact IDEMIA/IdentoGo at 1-844-321-2101. To register online go to [www.Identogo.com](http://www.Identogo.com) or call 1-844-321-2101 and listen to the options menu.

CVU is responsible for processing out of state clearances for resource parents, including adoptive and foster parents when a resource parent has resided outside of Pennsylvania within the past five years. Effective March 2022, prospective foster and adoptive parents required to obtain an Out-of-State Child Abuse clearance are **no longer required** to submit the clearance to ChildLine for interpretation, **IF** the clearance shows *no result (or no record)*. Out-of-State Child Abuse clearances with **ANY** result or record, **are required** to be submitted to ChildLine for interpretation.

Please visit our website at [www.keepkidssafe.pa.gov](http://www.keepkidssafe.pa.gov) for additional information regarding the clearance or call us at 877-371-5422.

### Office of Children, Youth and Families (OCYF)

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[www.dhs.pa.gov](http://www.dhs.pa.gov)



**From the SWAN Prime Contract**  
*Diakon-SWAN, LLC/Voce*

### Revised Placement Unit of Service

The Placement unit of service has been revised to focus heavily on pre-placement work. This unit of service is being featured at the SWAN Fall Quarterly morning session where we consider the significant benefits of the service, including building a strong foundation for families, supporting all who are involved in the placement process, engaging the family and minimizing trauma for the child, all of which can make disruption less likely. Additional training will be offered on this revised unit of service in the coming months, starting with a virtual training on the use of the new Individual Permanency Service Plan (IPSP) on December 15. Watch for announcements about these upcoming trainings. Contact your SWAN regional technical assistant if you have any questions.

### Meet the Staff at the SWAN Helpline

The SWAN Helpline answered 17,893 calls for information about foster care, adoption and post permanency services last fiscal year. In addition, the SWAN Helpline monitors the SWAN Facebook page and answers email for the AdoptPAkids, AdoptUSkids and Adoption.com websites. The SWAN Helpline is staffed by four SWAN technical specialists and is managed by a lead coordinator.

*Let's meet the staff!*

- **Jan Scherer** is the managing SWAN Helpline lead coordinator and has been with the SWAN Helpline for 23 years. She is a graduate of Penn State University with a BS in Psychology. Prior to coming to the SWAN Helpline, she worked in the Neuro-Psych Unit at a Head Injury Recovery Center and was Associate Director of Residential Mental Health services for Susquehanna Developmental Services.
- **Jennifer Bornman** is a technical specialist and has been with the SWAN Helpline for 18 years. She is a graduate of Bloomsburg University with a BA in Social Work. Prior to working with the SWAN Helpline, she worked with the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP)/Healthy Baby Insurance program.
- **Lynette Lemke** is a technical specialist and has been with the SWAN Helpline for eight years. She is a graduate of Siena Heights

University with a BA in Art and Marywood University with a MA in Art Therapy. Before coming to the SWAN Helpline, she worked in residential treatment facilities with adolescents and was also a mobile therapist for foster children.

- **Jayme Stryker** is a technical specialist and has been with the SWAN Helpline for just over a year. She graduated from Millersville University with a BA in English, and then she obtained a teaching certificate. Before coming to the SWAN Helpline, she taught seventh grade English and worked in the human services field.
- Lastly, we are excited to introduce **Megan Aguilera**, the SWAN Helpline's newest technical specialist. She is a graduate of Penn State University with a BS in Psychology. Prior to joining the SWAN Helpline, she worked in various caseworker positions within the child welfare field.

The SWAN Helpline takes live calls Monday through Friday from 8:30 am to 4:30 pm EST at 1-800-585-7926.

### SWAN Family Matching Unit of Service

In July and August, the SWAN prime contractor provided six virtual SWAN Family Matching unit overview trainings to about 300 participants. We will also be offering an in-person, three-part training series titled, "SWAN Family Matching – A Closer Look." The series will dive deeper into the practical applications of the SWAN Family Matching Benchmarks. The following individual session descriptions provide more detail.

#### *SWAN Family Matching – A Closer Look series*

- The initial session will take an in-depth look at completing the Family Matching Plan in collaboration with the family. The process of requesting and reviewing information when a potential match is identified will be addressed. The session will explore techniques guiding how to present and discuss this information with families, including the use of the Prediction Sheet. This session is being offered in the afternoon at the 2022 SWAN Fall Quarterly meetings.
- The second session in the series will take a thorough look at the selection process after a child is identified for a family. This includes providing family support during decision making, the county interview process and Post Adoption Contact Agreement

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implications. We will also look closely at the Family Matching Extension, Family Matching Assessment for Unmatched Families and the Child/Family Match Confirmation form. This session will be offered at the 2023 SWAN Winter Statewide meeting.

- The third session will dive deeper into how to use tools and activities for matching, including the use of display tables, family flyers, electronic matching, SWAN/IL listserv, matching events, SWAN Connect, websites and family Lifebooks/videos. This session will be offered at the 2023 Spring Quarterly meetings.

In addition, virtual training on Electronic Matching, an activity within the Family Matching Plan, will be offered on November 29, 2022 and December 9, 2022.

The SWAN prime contractor encourages affiliates to continue to refer eligible families for the SWAN Family Matching unit of service. Families who are waiting to be matched with a child need extensive engagement and development. The Family Matching unit includes ongoing efforts in these areas as well as activities to identify a child for placement with an eligible SWAN family through the implementation of a Family Matching Plan.

Eligible families will:

- Have a current, approved SWAN Family Profile
- Be registered with the Resource Family Registry as an adoptive family or any variation that includes an adoptive family
- Not have an identified child for adoption
- Be interested in Pennsylvania children awaiting adoption and who are in the custody of a county AND meet one or more of the following criteria:
  - ⇒ Searching for children over the age of ten years
  - ⇒ Searching for children with significant medical, physical, cognitive or emotional challenges
  - ⇒ Searching for sibling groups

For more information on referring the SWAN Family Matching unit and upcoming trainings, please contact your regional technical assistant.

### **SWAN Post-permanency Support Group Changes**

SWAN Post-permanency support group rates have increased as of the beginning of fiscal year 2022-23. Previously, the rate for each unit was \$500 for a six-month time period; or \$250 for each instance. That rate has now increased to \$1000 for each unit or \$500 for each instance. Now is the perfect time for affiliates to discuss support group ideas with their Post-permanency technical assistant. In-person, virtual and hybrid groups for all family members are encouraged. Contact your Post-permanency technical assistant with questions or to brainstorm ideas.

### **SWAN Post-permanency Cost/Time Reminders**

SWAN Post-permanency services have been updated to include cost/time tracking. These changes have been previously reflected in the other SWAN units of service. Post-permanency workers are encouraged to keep a copy of the benchmarks with them as they complete their own cost/time logs. This allows the worker to keep a more accurate accounting of their time. Workers are encouraged to complete cost/time logs ongoing instead of at the end of an instance or unit. Accurate accounting of cost and time is important since this allows the state to have a more precise knowledge of the delivery of services.

### **In-person Matching Events**

With National Adoption Month in mind and many matching events moving back to in-person, we would like to share some reminders, tips and resources:

- When creating flyers for matching events, remember to include both child and family PAE numbers on their respective flyers. Reach out to a PAE coordinator for support in getting a youth registered with PAE and your RTA to register a family with the RFR.
- Take advantage of SWAN's volunteer photographers for your event—obtain great photos for flyers and social media. You can access that list [here](#).
- Avoid references to social media and gaming platforms in child narratives, flyers and other recruitment strategies. AdoptUSKids implemented a new practice to ensure the safety and well-being of youth online. Any reference to specific social media, video games,

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or gaming platforms in a child's narrative must be omitted and replaced with general mentions. PAE coordinators are working with recruiters to adjust both public and private narratives for Pennsylvania children to comply with this standard.

- *There are a few different options available to help you advertise upcoming matching events:*
  1. Send a notice about the event out through SWAN/IL Google Groups.
  2. Ask your PAE coordinator to feature your event on [adoptpakids.org](https://adoptpakids.org) and [diakon-swan.org](https://diakon-swan.org).
  3. The SWAN Helpline will share info about your upcoming event with waiting families via email.

For additional strategies and tips about matching events in general, check out the [Strategies for Permanency](#) as well as SWAN's [Adoption Awareness Event and Matching Planning Guide](#) for an in-depth guide to planning events.

As always, you can reach out to your PAE coordinator with any questions about these tips.

### **SWAN Connect Resources Updated**

The SWAN Connect brochure has been updated to a flyer, which is now available in the SWAN Toolkit. SWAN Connect is a service available through the SWAN Helpline. It helps approved adoptive families who are registered with the Pennsylvania Resource Family Registry or AdoptUSkids connect with Pennsylvania's children who are in need of permanency.

You can view and download the new flyer [here](#).

### **OCMI: Move to Electronic Surveys**

Older Child Matching Initiative (OCMI) surveys have begun to be distributed electronically in the new fiscal year. These surveys are for families, youth and affiliate agencies, and they are completely anonymous. SWAN affiliates should remind and encourage families and youth to complete these surveys. They are designed to help evaluate and improve programming. Participants may complete the surveys on paper if they wish to do so. If you have any questions, please contact Karen Knodel at 610-682-1527 or [knodelk@diakon.org](mailto:knodelk@diakon.org).

### **National Adoption Month: Less than a Month Away**

National Adoption Month is right around the corner in November! During National Adoption Month, our network celebrates permanency through adoption, enhances awareness about the need for permanent

families and hosts matching events to promote opportunities for children and youth to experience the belongingness, security and the love of a forever family. The SWAN prime contractor has two resources to help plan National Adoption Month events: [Adoption Day Events: A Planner's Guide](#) and [Adoption Awareness and Matching Events: Planning for Success](#). Both guides are housed in the *SWAN Permanency Toolkit*. As the network looks forward to planning this year's festivities, the SWAN prime contractor would like to recognize the collaboration and ingenuity of the courts, counties and affiliate agencies who have been very creative in their efforts to celebrate children, families and permanency. Over the last several years, Governor Wolf has provided advocacy and awareness for adoption by proclaiming November as Adoption Month in Pennsylvania. A copy of the 2021 proclamation can be found [here](#).

### **SWAN Legal Services Initiative Vital to Expediting Permanency**

During State Fiscal Year 2021-2022:

- 31,314 children had at least one SWAN LSI activity (Diligent Search or court-related activity).
- 11,083 children had a SWAN LSI Diligent Search.
- 1,010 children had an Adoption Petition prepared by a SWAN LSI paralegal.
- 2,608 children at least one Termination of Parental Rights Petition completed (voluntary or involuntary).

The SWAN prime contractor appreciates its collaborative partnership with county agencies and recognizes the vital work of SWAN LSI paralegals in the counties. This collaboration is necessary to overcome barriers and expedite permanency on behalf of the children in Pennsylvania.

### **Legal Services Initiatives Resources Available to Network**

The SWAN Legal Services Initiative (SWAN LSI) would like to highlight two resources designed to support better outcomes for kids. These resources can be accessed in the [SWAN Permanency Toolkit](#).

*SWAN LSI Incarceration Resource Manual (IRM)*

The [IRM](#) can assist caseworkers and supervisors as they plan with incarcerated parents, as well as be a resource to support the counties' efforts to engage with these parties. Additionally, the information contained in the IRM can aid the child-parent connection by supporting:

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- Contact between the incarcerated parent and child by detailing guidelines and nuances regarding written and telephone communication.
- Parent-child visitation by providing details on visitation schedules or video visitation.
- Permanency by listing services available for the incarcerated parent and re-entry information.

Links to additional resources, such as state and federal facilities, are also included in the manual. Updates about county prison policies and procedures or questions may be forwarded to [lsirmupdates@diakon-swan.org](mailto:lsirmupdates@diakon-swan.org).

#### *The SWAN Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) Search Guide*

The guide is designed to help children and youth agencies across the United States comply with federal laws, regulations and guidelines when working with an Indian child or family. Child welfare professionals may need to perform a comprehensive ICWA search when a child in care could have tribal connections. SWAN defines an ICWA search as a search completed to identify and locate potential tribal connections in order to allow the tribe to determine eligibility and placement under the Indian Child Welfare Act and to regulate placement proceedings involving Indian children, including Alaska Natives, who are unmarried and under the age of 18 (25 U.S.C. § 1901 et. seq.). ICWA regulations require “active efforts” to maintain and reunite an Indian child with their family or tribal community. For that reason, an ICWA Diligent Search must be conducted to “identify, notify and engage” representatives of the child’s tribe. The *SWAN ICWA Search Guide* is a tool that will help streamline this process and ensure compliance with ICWA requirements. The [SWAN ICWA Search Guide](#), accessible from the *SWAN Permanency Toolkit*, is intended to be used in conjunction with the law and as a supplemental tool within the full Diligent Search process.

#### **SWAN Prime Contract**

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[www.adoptpakids.org](http://www.adoptpakids.org)



**From the PA Child Welfare Resource Center (CWRC)  
Independent Living (IL) Project**  
*University of Pittsburgh*

#### **IL Specialization**

The Child Welfare Resource Center has restructured the approach for practice improvement specialists conducting Independent Living site visits. The restructuring will allow for four practice improvement specialists to provide better support and technical assistance related to older youth efforts in the counties, regionally and statewide. These specialists will work directly with counties to schedule IL Site Visits. The assigned Child Welfare Resource Center Regional Team Supervisor will contact counties to provide specific details about this restructure and next steps. These changes are only related to Independent Living Services in your county. If you have questions regarding specialization, please feel free to contact Meghan O’Hare [meo43@pitt.edu](mailto:meo43@pitt.edu) or your assigned county Practice Improvement Specialist.

#### **IL Networking Sessions**

IL networking sessions are offered across the state in all regions to support both new and seasoned IL staff in working with older youth. The meetings are driven by staff learning needs and include opportunities to share information, bring in relevant presenters and brainstorm with other staff how to address issues you are experiencing or may need additional support in. If you are interested in connecting with your regional IL networking group, please contact Meghan O’Hare [meo43@pitt.edu](mailto:meo43@pitt.edu).

#### **Older Youth Training and Resources**

There are several sources of information related to older youth maintained by the Child Welfare Resource Center. These include:

PA Youth Advisory Board website which includes information for youth and staff <http://www.payab.pitt.edu/>

PA Child Welfare Resource Center website <http://www.pacwrc.pitt.edu/>

Including webinars specific to older youth <http://www.pacwrc.pitt.edu/Webinars.htm>

PA Youth Advisory Board Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/PAYouthAdvisoryBoard>



## **SAT Waivers**

Fee waivers for both the SAT Reasoning Test and the SAT Subject Test are available for *current high school students* who cannot afford to pay the test fees. Please be sure to indicate on the SAT Waiver Request Form which test your youth wishes to take. SAT Waivers are available for students who are *currently* in high school. If a youth already graduated or did not graduate, but received their GED, the College Board will not accept the fee waiver. There are also a limited number of college application fee waivers. Eligible students can receive a total of four SAT fee waivers during their academic career – two for the SAT Reasoning Test and two for the SAT Subject Tests. Fee waivers for the SAT Reasoning Test are available for *juniors and seniors only*. Fee waivers for the SAT Subject Test are available for *freshmen, sophomores, juniors, or seniors*. A fee waiver can cover as many as three Subject Tests on one test day. Students who are not yet in ninth grade may not use the subject test fee waivers.

If you need to obtain either waiver, please contact Sherri Krodel [slk114@pitt.edu](mailto:slk114@pitt.edu) at the Child Welfare Resource Center. To learn more about SAT test-day requirements and general SAT questions, please visit [sat.org/fee-waivers](http://sat.org/fee-waivers).

## **YAB Resources**

### *Youth Questionnaire*

The Pennsylvania Youth Advisory Board has developed many useful resources aide in supporting older youth in care. One resource is The Youth Questionnaire. The purpose of this questionnaire is to help resource parents get to know youth as an individual from the youth's perspective. It's an additional resource separate from the official documents that follow youth as they transition into a more permanent setting. The questionnaire gives a potential resource family an idea of who and where youth are currently in their transition. It can also help begin a conversation when meeting with a new resource family. The PA Youth Advisory Board encourages all youth to complete the questionnaire with individuals from their support team. The questionnaire is available to complete or print on the [YAB website](http://YAB website). This resource is also available in Spanish.

### *The Permanency Game*

The PA YAB wants to support educating youth to ensure they understand permanency goals. One way of achieving this goal is with the Permanency Game. The purpose of the Permanency Game is to help youth by teaching them while increasing their knowledge about permanency goals. Youth have expressed that they often feel misinformed due to a lack of communication and or explanation

regarding permanency goals and their hierarchy. The Permanency Game gives youth a hands-on experience about the challenges and benefits on the road to permanency. While playing the game, youth will work as a team of siblings to navigate around the board to make it "home." Keeping in mind the goal for all youth in care is to transition safely and legally with a permanent family. The Permanency Game is designed to help stakeholders educate youth about permanency goals in a youth-friendly and engaging manner. This resource is available online to play with youth on the [YAB website](http://YAB website).

### *Bill of Rights Coloring Books*

The Pennsylvania Youth Advisory Board created the Bill of Rights coloring books to support children ages 5-7 and 8-10 and youth with intellectual disabilities in foster care. The coloring books are intended to help educate children about their rights in an informative, but highly interactive way. The activities in the books address some of the experiences children can expect while in care, such as visits with siblings, going to court, and most importantly, children will learn about all the people involved to support them. This resource can be utilized by caretakers and those working with this population including resource families, SWAN affiliates, Guardian Ad Litem, child advocates, and child welfare professionals. We encourage you to have open and honest discussions with your youth and be available for any questions or opinions they may have as they navigate through the coloring book.

There are currently a limited number of printed books available. As a reminder, they are intended to be used as a resource for children currently in care. If you are interested in receiving copies of the coloring books, please contact Sherri Krodel at [slk114@pitt.edu](mailto:slk114@pitt.edu).

### **PA Child Welfare Resource Center (CWRC)**

403 E. Winding Hill Road  
Mechanicsburg, PA 17055

717-795-9048

[www.payab.pitt.edu](http://www.payab.pitt.edu)

# PALS

## Pennsylvania Adoptees Longitudinal Study



### Growing Up Adopted:

#### CHILDREN AND PARENTS INVITED TO SHARE THEIR PERSPECTIVES IN NEW STUDY

##### ABOUT THIS STUDY

The Pennsylvania Adoptees Longitudinal Study (PALS) is a developmental study of children adopted from the child welfare system between the ages of 4 and 10. The goal is to identify factors that predict both positive and negative outcomes for these children later in life.

##### WHO CAN VOLUNTEER?

1. Children between the ages of 4 and 10 and their primary caregiving parent.
2. Finalization of the adoption must have occurred within 12 months of beginning participation in PALS.
3. Adoptive parent must not be biologically related to the child. International adoptees are not included in this study.
4. The child's estimated IQ must be above 70. Children diagnosed with an intellectual disability are not included in this study.
5. Families able to complete at least one visit remotely via Zoom.

##### WHAT WILL VOLUNTEERS DO?

The child and parent will be asked to complete interviews, questionnaires and various tasks. Parents may also be asked to complete questionnaires online. The research team from Penn State College of Medicine's Department of Pediatrics will collect all data in a remote study visit, at the Transforming the Lives of Children (TLC) Center in Hershey, PA and in person at the child and parent's home.

Participation will last for one year and will include the following:

- One visit occurring remotely on Zoom
- One visit at the Transforming the Lives of Children Center in Hershey, Pa., four weeks after Zoom visit (optional)
- Final visit at home will occur one year after the first Zoom visit

Compensation is provided to eligible participants.

##### BENEFITS

There is no direct benefit to you, however, results may guide future treatment of adopted children and families by helping to identify influential factors in healthy development of adopted children.

##### FOR MORE INFORMATION OR TO PARTICIPATE

Email the research coordinator at [PALS@pennstatehealth.psu.edu](mailto:PALS@pennstatehealth.psu.edu) or call **717-531-0003, extension 321713**.



**PennState**  
College of Medicine

##### STUDY DIRECTOR

Dr. Brian Allen  
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This research has been approved by the Institutional Review Board, under federal regulations at Penn State Health Milton S. Hershey Medical Center and Penn State College of Medicine.

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