

ADMINISTRATIVE UPDATES

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

Department of Human Services

Bureau of Policy, Programs and Operations Personnel Updates

Samantha (Sam) Stalter has joined OCYF as the Executive Secretary to Deputy Secretary Rubin. Prior to joining OCYF, Sam worked in the private insurance industry. Sam started with OCYF in February 2022, and she can be reached via email at ssalter@pa.gov. All main OCYF phone numbers and RA email accounts remain the same.

Valerie Zitterbart, Division of Programs, has joined OCYF as the Human Services CQI Manager and will serve as Pennsylvania's Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) lead. Valerie comes to us from Venango County Children, Youth and Family Services where she was the quality assurance senior program specialist. Valerie's love for child protection and passion to improve quality services grew from a county perspective to a desire to make a greater impact across the Commonwealth. She is excited to use her skillsets in data analysis and strategic planning and to be directly involved in improving child welfare practice on a statewide level. Valerie enjoys spending time with her husband and twin boys, Evan and Brady and traveling. Valerie can be reached at vzitterbar@pa.gov.

Marielle O'Connor, Division of Policy, has joined OCYF as a Human Services Analyst. Marielle is assigned to topics under Chapter 3800 regulations. Marielle most recently worked at the Lehigh County Assistance Office as an income maintenance caseworker. In her free time, Marielle enjoys spending time with family and friends, napping with her two cats, and is most recently attempting to learn to make her own sourdough bread from scratch. Marielle can be reached at marioconno@pa.gov.

Michael Yakum, Division of Operations, has been hired as a Human Services Analyst and will function as a training officer for the Division of Operations staff. Mike comes to ChildLine with prior work experience at both the state and county levels in child welfare, most recently as an intake supervisor with Lebanon County Children and Youth. Mike is excited to have the opportunity to be back with DHS.

Melanie Eaton, Division of Operations, has been hired as a Human Services Analyst and will predominantly focus on quality assurance for the Division of Operations. Melanie gained experience in child welfare first in Tennessee as an assessment caseworker for the Tennessee Department of Children's Services. She joined the ChildLine team as a hotline caseworker in 2016 and was then promoted to the ChildLine supervisor position in June 2020. With this new opportunity as a human services analyst specializing in quality assurance, Melanie endeavors to further use her educational foundation of research and strategic planning to assist in ensuring expectations at ChildLine are clear, achievable and attainable.

April - National Child Abuse Prevention Month

April is National Child Abuse Prevention month. Pennsylvania Family Support Alliance (PFSA), in partnership with the Office of Children Youth and Families, is committed to working with professionals, families and communities across Pennsylvania to advocate and educate for the prevention of child abuse and neglect. Through collective and strategic partnerships, we believe that communities can be strengthened to help protect children and support families.

Throughout April, PFSA will host events to raise awareness and provide education on child abuse prevention in Pennsylvania. Please join in these events and learn more about what can be done and how you can help prevent child abuse and neglect in your community and across the commonwealth. Events include:

- **Annual Flag Planting:** On April 1, 2022, a group of PFSA staff, local board members, and stakeholders will plant blue flags along the Harrisburg State Capitol in honor of the children who were abused in the previous year. Photos of the event will be shared by PFSA.
- **Blue Ribbon Champions for Safe Kids:** PFSA will virtually honor Blue Ribbon Champions from across the Commonwealth who have gone the extra mile to protect PA children. These individuals are recognized for their exceptional contributions as we continue to make every effort to prevent child abuse and neglect throughout Pennsylvania.

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- ***Spotlight Speaker Series:*** PFSA will host its second iteration of the educational speaker series event titled the Spotlight Speaker Series. This speaker series includes four live webinars, with experts who provide relevant, innovative and timely presentations on topics related to child abuse prevention and neglect. Registration for this event is required and CEUs, CLEs and Act 48 creds will be available for anyone attending the live webinar. Register for this series at www.pafsa.org.
- ***Children’s Memorial and Interactive Data Map:*** PFSA will display child abuse and neglect data through an interactive map on www.pafsa.org, which will also be accompanied by a memorial video honoring the children who were lost due to child abuse and neglect.
- ***Virtual Fundraiser:*** PFSA invites everyone to participate in the second annual Blue Ribbon Virtual Fundraiser. This virtual fundraiser provides individuals and groups with an opportunity to donate a digital blue ribbon in honor of child abuse victims or their very own Blue Ribbon Champion. The virtual fundraiser will be live on the webpage April 1. You can locate the virtual fundraiser [here](#), under the tab titled “Virtual Fundraiser.”
- ***Painting for Prevention:*** PFSA is collaborating with its Community-Based Child Abuse Prevention (CBCAP) network to host a virtual, statewide Painting for Prevention program activity. This is the first time the Painting for Prevention program will be held virtually and statewide. The goal is to share this activity on social media to show unity in preventing child abuse and neglect across Pennsylvania. Check out PFSA’s social media throughout April to see this program in action!

For the most up-to-date information related to Child Abuse Prevention Month events please visit PFSA’s website (www.pafsa.org) or Facebook page. Also, please continue to visit www.KeepKidsSafe.pa.gov for information related to the protection of Pennsylvania’s children.

Trauma-Informed Workgroup

As previously shared, on July 30, 2019, Governor Wolf declared that Pennsylvania would become a trauma-informed state. The process is being implemented over a ten-year period in a phased approach. The four phases include trauma-aware, trauma-sensitive, trauma-informed, and healing-centered.

The OCYF Trauma Team is focusing on the first phase of this process, ensuring that all county children and youth agencies (CCYAs) and licensed foster care and adoption providers will become trauma-aware by the conclusion of 2023. As

defined in the Trauma-Informed PA Plan, trauma awareness occurs when, “the entity becomes aware of trauma, the prevalence of trauma and considers the potential impact on customers and staff.” OCYF will identify what training, tools, and resources are available to assist all CCYA staff and foster and adoption providers to accomplish this goal.

In the immediate future, OCYF staff will be reaching out to CCYAs and foster care and adoption providers through an online survey to obtain detailed information regarding any trauma-related training that is currently being used by agency and provider staff. OCYF will review current trauma training practices to determine if each CCYA and foster and adoption provider’s training meets the trauma-aware standard. OCYF will provide support for CCYAs and foster care and adoption providers who do not initially meet the trauma-aware standard.

If you have any questions regarding this process, please do not hesitate to reach out to our designated resource account, RA-PWOCYFTrauma@pa.gov.

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 information about Pennsylvania-specific Family First information, see [here](#).

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

American Bar Association (ABA): Pennsylvania Permanency Barriers Initiatives

The American Bar Association’s Center on Children and the Law’s Permanency and Education Barriers Project is actively seeking new projects or technical assistance counties. Please reach out if you would like to discuss the ways in which we may be of assistance.

- For more information on Permanency Barriers please see [here](#).
- For more information on Education Barriers please see [here](#).

County agencies interested in the Permanency Barriers Project or general technical assistance should contact Heidi Redlich Epstein at Heidi.epstein@americanbar.org.

County agencies interested in the Education Barriers to Permanency Project should contact Kathleen McNaught at Kathleen.mcnaught@americanbar.org.

Strengthening Equity Workgroup

Nationally, the overrepresentation of black children in the child welfare system has been well documented across numerous research studies. Understanding the impact of racial disparity in the child welfare system requires recognition of the points at which bias can enter the system and how inequities at each point can impact the trajectory of children and families as they move through the system. Racial disparity can often be found at the very point where families often first come into contact with the child welfare system.

As part of the Department of Human Services' racial equity initiative, the Office of Children, Youth and Families convened the Strengthening Equity Workgroup (SEW). SEW is represented by a diverse group of staff from across all bureaus within the program office. The purpose of the workgroup is to:

1. Identify areas of child welfare service where changes in policy and/or practice can reduce racial disparities. This will be achieved by an intentional review of child welfare data and practices.
2. Create meaningful change within the culture of OCYF by incorporating a racial equity lens in all OCYF initiatives and processes.
3. Establish next phases for racial equity work.

Some of the key areas of focus proposed by the group include increasing culturally relevant prevention efforts, building partnerships and opportunities within the community, and increasing cultural competency for responding to crises. The workgroup will devote significant time to review of existing and new data to further conduct analysis of apparent inequities and further identify root causes.

This work will take place over a two-year period and will be accomplished as a phased approach. Future updates regarding this initiative will be provided as they are available.

Chafee Education and Training Grant Programs

The Pennsylvania Chafee Education and Training Grant (ETG) application and instructions for the 2021–2022 academic year can be found [online](#). The application deadline for the 2021-2022 academic year has been extended from December 31, 2021 until May 1, 2022.

The application for the 2022-2023 academic year will be available on the Pennsylvania Higher Education Assistance Agency's (PHEAA) website at the beginning of April 2022. As a reminder, current ETG award recipients will automatically be enrolled for the next academic year and do not need to

complete another ETG application. The ETG award amount cannot exceed the student's cost of attendance.

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

Fostering Independence Tuition Waiver Program

The Fostering Independence through Education Program, known as FosterED, began with the fall semester of 2020. The FosterED program 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 postsecondary education institution is required to have its identified POC listed on its 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.

Questions related to the FosterED program can be directed to Teresa Musser at temusser@pa.gov.

Credit Reports

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

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 the age of 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 4 for 19-year-old Follow-up Surveys as of April 1, 2022 through September 30, 2022 (2022B).

Counties have until October 15, 2022, to submit their follow-up surveys as well as served population data. Counties can log onto 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 or at 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.

Pennsylvania Kinship Navigator Program, KinConnector

Pennsylvania's Kinship Navigator program, known as KinConnector, 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 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 form partnerships that could help inform how this program can grow. In addition, the Pennsylvania KinConnector's Advisory Committee is currently open to new members. If you would like to apply or know of someone, please contact Diane Michel at dmichel@pa.gov. Any questions regarding this program can be directed to Diane Michel at dmichel@pa.gov 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 or 937-580-6167. Additionally, you can look up trainings on the [National Training Calendar](#).

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

Mandated Reporter Training

Pennsylvania Family Support Alliance (PFSA) is continuing to offer virtual Mandated Reporter Training at no cost to mandated reporters in Pennsylvania. This includes a new training entitled "Reporting Requirements for Children Served in Residential Care Facilities" This three-hour virtual training is 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). It is 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 \(pafsa.org\)](#)

For questions or to schedule a session specifically for your organization, please email PFSA at 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 or at 866-823-7226.

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 supports 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 [Pennsylvania State Resource Family Association | Support For Foster, Adoptive, And Kinship Families \(psrfa.org\)](https://psrfa.org).

If you have any further questions you can contact PSRFA Office at 1-800-951-5151 or email dkinard@psrfa.org or ktramper@psrfa.org.

Regional Citizen Review Panel Rotation

This year OCYF will begin rotating Pennsylvania's Regional Citizen Review Panels (CRPs) to ensure representation of all regions of the Commonwealth over time. The counties to be represented within each region are proposed to be the same as those that make up the current [Youth Advisory Board \(YAB\) Regions](#). The rotation will begin by establishing a Southeast regional panel to include representation from members that live and work in our largest and most diverse population center. Recruitment for the Southeast panel will begin in April, with panel work beginning in January 2023.

As the new panel is established, the longest operating panel (South Central) will be wrapping up its current work and will disband in December 2022. Over the course of 2023 and 2024, new panels will be established in the North Central and Northwest regions, while work in the Northeast and Southwest panels will adjourn.

Each new panel will remain in operation for a period of five years until the cycle of re-establishing panels in the South Central, Northeast, and Southwest begins again in 2028. The order of establishing and disbanding panels will be determined based on the needs of the state as well as stakeholder input.

If you have questions related to Regional CRPs contact the CRP coordinator, Kari Coccagna, at KAC360@pitt.edu.

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 or 717-558-1223.

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 for ICPC cases

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 and Natalie Primak at nprimak@pa.gov directly.

Clearance Verification Unit

The Clearance Verification Unit processes the child background checks consisting of PA Child Abuse History Certification, FBI results for those applicants registered through DHS and the National Sex Offender Registry (NSOR) applications. While we do not offer the walk-in option applications and applicable payment may be placed in our drop box located at the front of our building, at 2525 North 7th Street, Harrisburg, PA. These applications will be processed, and the result mailed to the individual on the application unless a Consent/Release is attached. Please visit our website at www.keepkidssafe.pa.gov for additional information regarding the clearance or call us at 877-371-5422.

Office of Children, Youth and Families (OCYF)

P.O. Box 2675

Harrisburg, PA 17105-2675

717-787-3984

www.dhs.pa.gov

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

Coming Soon: SWAN Family Matching Unit of Service

We are excited to announce the new Family Matching Unit of Service. This service focuses on engaging families waiting to be matched and developing their capacity to provide successful permanency. The Family Matching unit also includes activities to identify a child for placement with an eligible SWAN family through the implementation of a Family Matching Plan. Referrals for Family Matching will begin in July with the start of the 2022-2023 fiscal year, so stay tuned for more information and upcoming training dates.

SWAN Portal Version 3.0 Update

Testing of the SWAN Portal version 3.0 is underway. In March, we opened access to the version 3.0 test site for several affiliates and counties to test the new child record features, which permit users to add, edit, and remove child information. Creating a child record (county only), entering transactions/forms, and updating child information are features of the child record. Testing is proceeding well, paving the way for continued development.

Another Search Resource on the SWAN Toolkit

The *SWAN Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) Search 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 Legal Services Initiative Vital to Expediting Permanency

During the first eight months of state fiscal year 2021-2022, SWAN LSI paralegals (LSIPs) have completed work on behalf of over 24,000 children involved in Pennsylvania’s child welfare system ranging from Diligent Search to the preparation of documents for adoption.

One of the primary areas of effort is assisting with the process of termination of parental rights and preparing court documents for adoption. Since July 1, 2021, SWAN LSIPs have assisted with termination of parental rights petitions (TPR) for 1,878 children. The represented children range in age from a few months old to 19 years old. The largest age group represented are children under the age of three (47%), and children with TPR documents prepared had a median age of four. Eleven percent of all children with termination paperwork completed are over the age of 12.

Since July 1, 2021, SWAN LSIPs have assisted with adoption paperwork for 677 children. Over 40% of the 677 children are under the age of three, and the median age of the children having adoption documents completed is five. There have been 103 children with adoption documents completed after their 12th birthday (15%).

While SWAN LSI paralegal work varies from county to county, it all focuses on expediting all forms of permanency for children. SWAN LSI is always proud to be able to collaborate with our county partners to continue serving Pennsylvania’s children and youth, and we look forward to continuing this work as we round out the fiscal year.

New Training Addresses Service and Notice Provisions

The SWAN legal training specialists have developed a training called *Take Notice: Laws and Practice Involving Notification and Engagement*. This training was developed in response to numerous notice-related questions received through the LSI Warmline and was first delivered at the 2022 SWAN/IL Winter Statewide Meeting. It takes a deep dive into the laws related to notice, family identification and family engagement and discusses the importance of each of these steps. Due to popular demand, this training will be offered again at the SWAN/IL Summer Statewide Meeting.

Electronic Matching for Sibling Groups

As a reminder, caseworkers and recruiters for children can run matches electronically in the SWAN Portal. The child must be registered and active with the Pennsylvania Adoption Exchange (PAE) to request a child match. This immediate access to information about adoption-eligible families allows recruiters to instantly review family narratives, the strength of the matching results and a history of previous matches. PAE suggests that child recruiters run these matches on a regular basis.

Electronic matches for siblings are a combination of individual matches run for each child. The results must match the demographics of each child 100% (including sibling composition), so even though the matches are run individually, they should still only include families who are willing to take siblings. The families included in these individual results may be the same families for each child in the sibling group, or they may differ. We recommend reaching out to **all** of the families included in the results, as historically we recognize that families demonstrate flexibility regarding their initial search parameters based on individual cases.

For siblings with a wide range of demographics/special needs/characteristics, or when electronic matching results have not been successful, the recruiter may want to reach out to the assigned PAE coordinator to request a customized match.

For instructions about how to complete the electronic match process, review the user guides in the SWAN Portal. The [Strategies for Permanency](#) document, found in the SWAN Permanency Toolkit, also includes a Tip/Technique for generating matches for PAE-registered children.

State Guidelines for the Child Narrative/Photo

Two new state guidelines for public narratives and photos on [adoptpakids.org](#) have been in effect for a few months. As a reminder, we are providing this guidance for those who may be new to recruitment:

1. PAE has implemented a practice to ensure the safety and well-being of youth online. Any reference to specific social media, video games, or gaming platforms in a child's narrative must be omitted and replaced with general references that still help families get to know the youth by showcasing their talents and interests in a strengths-based way. It is recommended that this guidance is also used when creating child flyers, presenting children as matching moments, and interviews for TV tapings.

2. Guidelines regarding acceptable photos of waiting children require that profile photos for children/youth on [adoptpakids.org](#) need to meet certain criteria.
 - Must be a photo. Graphics and clip art will no longer be acceptable;
 - Must include some portion of the child visible in the photo (photos of a child facing backward, holding something up over their face, or any other obscuring methods are acceptable). Profile pictures that do not include some portion of the child will be replaced with a non-descriptive, Department of Human Services-approved icon; and
 - Should be as high resolution as possible.

We want to thank the network for embracing these changes and encourage you to continue to recruit for children with these guidelines in mind. As always, feel free to reach out to your agency's SWAN regional technical assistant or the PAE coordinator assigned to the child's custodial county for assistance.

SWAN Prime Contract

P.O. Box 4560
471 JPL Wick Drive
Harrisburg, PA 17111-0560
Ph: 717-236-8490 | Fax: 717-236-8510
www.diakon-swan.org
www.adoptpakids.org



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

Older Youth Retreat

Please save the date for the 2022 Older Youth Retreat, which will be held August 1-5. Additional information regarding the event will be shared on our [website](#).

Youth Advisory Board (YAB) Leadership Summit

The 2022 YAB Leadership Summit will be held June 16-17 at the Child Welfare Resource Center. For additional information regarding this event, please see [here](#).

You can find additional information about statewide and YAB events on the [YAB website](#).

PA YAB Professional Development Opportunities

The PA YAB has put together a series of professional development opportunities for older youth. To learn more about each available training and register, please visit the YAB [website](#). Please note that registrations cannot be completed as a group and must be completed per individual attending. If you have any questions regarding the upcoming trainings, please email Shayla Jones at Shj93@pitt.edu.

Permanency Game Available Online!

The PA YAB wants to support educating youth to ensure they understand permanency goals. 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. Find the game [here](#).

Youth Ambassador Position

The Child Welfare Resource Center (Resource Center) is hiring! The Youth Ambassador will gain a representative perspective of Pennsylvania's older foster youth through extensive interaction with youth throughout the state who are or have been in substitute care. Based on these interactions, this individual will provide feedback to the Resource Center staff and other statewide stakeholders in efforts to enhance child welfare practices for better outcomes for children, youth and families throughout Pennsylvania. The Youth Ambassador must be able to effectively articulate experiences as a youth in out-of-home care and have the ability and willingness to share those experiences and make connections to other youth's experiences in a group context. The Youth Ambassador functions as a member of the Statewide Quality Improvement Department. The incumbent must be or have been in substitute care past the age of 14 and have been eligible for Independent Living services within the past three years. Potential candidates should access this [link](#) to apply and obtain additional information about the Youth Ambassador position.

PA Child Welfare Resource Center (CWRC)

403 E. Winding Hill Road
Mechanicsburg, PA 17055
717-795-9048
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 or call **717-531-0003, extension 321713**.



PennState
College of Medicine

STUDY DIRECTOR

Dr. Brian Allen
Associate Professor of
Pediatrics and Psychiatry
2626 N. 3rd St.
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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.

IRB #13344 • Pull by 04/30/2024 • RES-15303-20 128928 030221