

ADMINISTRATIVE UPDATES

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

Department of Human Services

Voluntary Resolution Agreement

On December 21, 2023, OCYF released Special Transmittal "Voluntary Resolution Agreement Requirements – Nondiscrimination Policy and Procedure." The issuance of this Special Transmittal provides requirements for the development and implementation of a Nondiscrimination Policy and Procedure by county children and youth agencies (CCYAs). CCYAs must submit a new or updated policy containing the minimum requirements of the VRA to OCYF via the ADA Resource Account (RA-PWOCYF-ADARESOURCE@pa.gov) by January 17, 2024. Information sessions and the process for tracking VRA Training will be available by February 2024. Please note that all individuals contracted involved (paid by county or contracted) in the delivery of children and youth services will need to take the training.

OCYF Trauma Team

The OCYF Trauma Team is working diligently to offer technical assistance related to the trauma-awareness phase of the Trauma-Informed PA (TIPA) Continuum, ensuring that all county children and youth agencies (CCYAs) and licensed foster care and adoption providers become trauma-aware. As defined in the TIPA Plan, trauma-awareness occurs when, "the entity becomes aware of trauma, the prevalence of trauma and considers the potential impact on customers and staff."

The online training, "Developing Trauma Sensitivity in Therapeutic Foster Care", released in August 2023, has been made available in the Child Welfare Resource Center's E-learn Catalog, [ID# 2412](#). This training explores child welfare practice, specifically relating to therapeutic foster care, through a trauma-sensitive lens. This module is the second in a series designed to promote Trauma Informed and Healing Centered practice in Pennsylvania's child welfare organizations. The sections within this module focus on fundamentals of trauma sensitivity; attachment, relationships, and the brain; signs and symptoms of trauma;

implementing trauma-informed principles to respond to trauma; self-care; and resources. This training is designed for therapeutic foster care staff and therapeutic foster care families. This course is eligible for up to three Continuing Education Credits. The second iteration of the trauma-sensitive training, specific to administrative staff is currently under development.

Lastly, the OCYF Trauma Team Tip Sheet continues to be offered monthly to promote staff competency related to trauma sensitivity as well as self-regulation and care. Any questions related to the work of the OCYF Trauma Team can be sent to the resource account at RA-pwocyftrauma@pa.gov.

Trauma Training Available for Child Welfare Professionals

OCYF is pleased to announce the continuation of our partnership with the Office of Mental Health & Substance Abuse Services in contracting with Lakeside Global Institute to provide PA Child Welfare Professionals **FREE trauma training**. What is considered a PA Child Welfare Professional? Anyone who serves children and families who live in Pennsylvania. If your work touches on improving the lives of children and families, this applies to you and your organization!

Interested in workshops? Click here: <https://lakesidelink.com/training/lgi-trauma-workshops-2024/>

Interested in the Intensive Courses? Click here: <https://lakesidelink.com/training/course-registration-dhs-2024/>

Questions relating to any of these trainings, shall be directed to Beth Hall at: bethh@lakesidetraing.org

National Youth in Transition Database (NYTD) Federal Review

Pennsylvania participated in a modified NYTD Review by the Administration of Children and Families (ACF) on January 17-18, 2024. The modified review focused on the technical data reporting aspects of NYTD. This modified technical data review will allow Pennsylvania the opportunity to address identified technical challenges to better improve NYTD data collection. ACF will provide OCYF with their findings and recommendations to

improve NYTD data collection. Additional information will be provided in the near future. Questions related to the NYTD Review can be directed to Teresa Musser at 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 4 for 21-Year-old Follow-up Surveys as of October 1, 2023 through March 31, 2024. Counties have until April 15, 2024, 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 Lindsey Glezen at liglezen@pa.gov or 717-878-7056.

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.

Chafee Education and Training Grant Programs

The Pennsylvania Chafee Education and Training Grant (ETG) application and instructions for the 2024 – 2025 academic year will be available on PHEAA's website at [Chafee Education and Training Grant Program \(pheaa.org\)](http://Chafee Education and Training Grant Program (pheaa.org)) in April. The application deadline for the 2023-2024 academic year was December 31, 2023.

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 students cost of attendance.

Please contact the 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 Lindsey Glezen at liglezen@pa.gov or at 717-787-7056.

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 5 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.

All youth who apply for Chafee ETG are automatically evaluated for FosterEd. This is no separate application.

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 at <https://directory.center-school.org/fostercare/highereducation/search>.

Additional information about the tuition waiver can be found at PHEAA.org/FosterEd located at [PA Fostering Independence Tuition Waiver Program \(pheaa.org\)](http://PA Fostering Independence Tuition Waiver Program (pheaa.org))

Questions related to the FosterED program can be directed to Lindsey Glezen at liglezen@pa.gov or at 717-787-7056.

Credit Reports

All CCYAs are required to run a credit check for all youth in foster care beginning at age 14 from each of the three Credit Bureaus as required by the Social Security Act §475 (5)(I). [Social Security Act §475 \(ssa.gov\)](http://Social Security Act §475 (ssa.gov)). Each Credit Bureau has a specific contact person and process to ensure foster care youth credit history checks are completed appropriately. If you 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 Lindsey Glezen at liglezen@pa.gov or at 717-787-7056.

Act 118 of 2022

Act 118 of 2022, signed by Governor Wolf on November 3, 2022, amends Title 67 (Public Welfare) and Title 42 (Judiciary and Judicial Procedure) to include provisions relating to family finding, Another Planned Permanent Living Arrangement (APPLA), transition planning and data collection. Act 118 requires County Children and Youth Agencies (CCYAs) to submit data to the

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Department when the court terminates jurisdiction of a child/youth, age 18 years of age or older. Data for a child/youth who returns to care after terminating court jurisdiction, shall be reported to the Department again following termination of court jurisdiction. Requirements related to the specific information that needs to be reported to the Department are outlined within the Special Transmittal, OCYF Special Transmittal-Act 118 (APPLA), released on June 28, 2023. If you have questions related to submitting your data, please contact Lindsey Glezen at linglezen@pa.gov or 717-787-7056.

Act 131 of 2022

The Office of Children, Youth and Families (OCYF) Bulletin #3700-23-01, entitled Implementation of Act 131 (Resource Family Legislation Act), repeal of Act 68 of 2005 (The Resource Family and Adoption Process Act), and repeal of Act 73 of 2005 (The Resource Family Care Act), was issued on June 28, 2023. Act 131 defines “resource family”, addresses the legal responsibilities of public and private children and youth agencies, and protects a resource family’s fair consideration as a permanent resource. Bulletin #3700-23-01 provides clarification and direction to both public and private children and youth agencies regarding the implementation of Act 131. This Bulletin rescinds and replaces Bulletin 3700-08-01 Implementation of Act 68 of 2005 (The Resource Family and Adoption Act), Act 73 of 2005 (The Resource Family Care Act) and Act 76 of 2007.

Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE)

Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) issued guidance to school entities on August 30, 2023, regarding, *Change in Age of Eligibility for Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE)*. The communication informed school entities that effective no later than September 5, 2023, all students entitled to FAPE and the rights and procedural safeguards under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and Chapter 14 of Title 22 of the Pennsylvania Code may remain enrolled in public school until they turn 22 years of age. This includes students who turned 21 and exited during or after the 2022-2023 school term. PDE will be contacting students with disabilities who turned 21 and exited during or after the 2022-2023 school term. Local Education Agency (LEA) should also contact those students and provide them the option to re-enroll and access FAPE until their 22nd birthday.

How does this apply to youth in care with County Children and Youth Agency (CCYA):

If you have a student who is eligible under IDEA,

they are entitled to FAPE until last day of the age of 21. If you have a student on or around the age of 21, contact education decision makers and school entities regarding Individual Education Plan (IEP) re-evaluations and revisions, to assure their plans reflect the new changes.

CCYAs and Independent Living (IL) workers are encouraged to coordinate IL services with a student’s IEP transition planning team to maximize the benefit to the youth. Transition services within the IEP often overlap with service plans within IL services. The IEP and IL transition plan must include appropriate measurable postsecondary goals related to training, education, employment and, when appropriate, independent living skills. Both transition plans must be based on the student’s needs and interests, and for IEPs, must be updated every year. Transition services can include instruction in using public transportation, budgeting, cooking, access to college preparation programming (including information on application for Chafee Grants and other financial aid resources), high school and post-secondary vocational programming and linkages to OVR.

While FAPE under the IDEA does not include education beyond grade 12, there is a requirement to continue to offer to develop and implement an IEP for eligible students with a disability who graduates from high school with a credential other than a regular high school diploma until the student has exceeded the age of eligibility for FAPE.

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 check out <https://www.dhs.pa.gov/KeepKidsSafe/FamilyFirst/Pages/default.aspx>.

For email PA Family First email updates, please subscribe to at <http://listserv.dpw.state.pa.us/Scripts/wa.exe?SUBED1=pa-familyfirst-updates&A=1>.

American Bar Association (ABA): Pennsylvania Permanency Barriers Initiatives

The ABA’s 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 months of 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

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providers

- How to create a true kin-first culture in your county
- Implementing a race equity lens to child welfare work
- Achieving relational and legal permanence for older youth
- Implementing effective concurrent planning
- Conducting a successful testifying workshop for caseworkers

For more information on Permanency Barriers technical assistance please see:

https://www.americanbar.org/content/dam/aba/administrative/child_law/pa-permanency-barriersoverview.pdf or contact Heidi Redlich Epstein at Heidi.epstein@americanbar.org

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

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

Pennsylvania Kinship Navigator Program, KinConnector

The PA KinConnector Program offers kinship caregivers and professionals who work with kinship caregivers support, guidance, training and resources. Please provide kinship caregivers with information about PA KinConnector. The PA KinConnector website is, www.kinconnector.org and helpline can be reached at 866-546-2111.

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 caregivers, printable resources, a podcast series called "Kindred Voices," and a virtual Support Group called "Kindred Spirits."

OCYF encourages all county and provider agencies to connect to PA KinConnector and learn more about the services offered, provide new community resource information for website inclusion and to establish partnerships for program growth across the state. Any questions regarding this program can be directed to Diane Michel at 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. Each county must have a county employee who is designated as their Accurint administrator. Administrators can be Accurint users or non-users. Non-user registered administrators do not count toward the county's allotment of users. Counties may have more than one Accurint administrator. If you or your staff would like training in the Accurint software, please contact Accurint Education Consultant Jessica Kraft at Jessica.Kraft@lexisnexisrisk.com or 937-286-7660.

Additionally, you can look up trainings on the National Training Calendar. If you have any questions about Accurint, please contact Jessica Andrews-Slagel at jandrewssl@pa.gov or 717-787-2726.

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, "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. PFSA, third training, "Recognizing and Responding to Child Abuse and Neglect" assists professionals and volunteers to better understand child neglect and how best to respond. This training helps participants to recognize signs of neglect in children, determine when and how to make a referral, understand General Protective Services and agency procedures, and develop prevention and intervention strategies.

The trainings are three-hours and available virtually. They are approved by the Departments of Human Services, Education, and State and meets

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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). PFSA is now scheduling trainings that include American Sign Language and Certified Deaf Interpreter translations.

Additional information and training dates can be found on PSFA website at 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 (including Emergency Medical Services and School Nurses) and wish to schedule training for medical professionals with the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) through their Suspected Child Abuse and Neglect (EPIC-SCAN), contact AAP at scan@paaap.org or at 866-823-7226.

SWAN/IL Google Groups

There are over 1,100 current 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 Isabel Madrigal at imadrigal@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.

Resource Accounts:

- RA-PA-ICPC@pa.gov for ICPC cases
- RA-PA-ICAMA@pa.gov for ICAMA cases

Interstate Unit Fax Number:

717-425-5562

In a runaway situation, email Amanda Behe at abehe@pa.gov or Natalie Primak at nprimak@pa.gov.

Clearance Verification Unit

Childline's, Child Verification Unit (CVU), 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 \(state.pa.us\)](http://Pennsylvania Child Welfare Information Solution (state.pa.us)). 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 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. 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.

Visit www.keepkidssafe.pa.gov website 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

SWAN Prime Contractor Office Move

As of November 2023, the SWAN prime contractor has relocated. The new office address is:
200 Corporate Center Drive, Suite 100B
P.O. Box 959
Camp Hill, PA 17011

SWAN Portal Version 3.0

The SWAN prime contractor continues to work toward completion of the SWAN Portal Version 3.0. The new portal design includes enhancements while retaining all features of the existing system. During the SWAN/IL Winter Statewide Meeting (WSW), affiliates and counties can preview the updated portal from 4 to 6 p.m. on Wednesday, January 24 in Room 116.

Following the SWAN Portal development completion, the SWAN prime contractor will work with a group of affiliates and counties to pilot the new system. Implementation will follow.

Stay tuned for updates as we navigate this milestone for the network.

2023 Cost & Time Review

The SWAN prime contract is compiling the SWAN Units of Service cost/time data reported in calendar year 2023. This is an annual initiative to inform SWAN service rates for the coming fiscal year. Once approved by DHS, updated rates will be shared at the SWAN/IL Summer Statewide Meeting.

SWAN LSI Stakeholder Survey Coming in Spring 2024

The SWAN prime contractor's Research and Quality Assurance (RQA) Division is anticipating the release of the SWAN Legal Services Initiative (LSI) Stakeholders Survey in Spring 2024. SWAN LSI was developed in 2002 to eliminate or reduce barriers in the legal processes that delay permanency for children in the child welfare system. Since its implementation, a stakeholder survey has been released during each five-year contract cycle; the last was released in late 2018. Responses from these surveys help assess LSI implementation and potential county barriers to permanency. In the next few weeks, LSI coordinators will be working with county children and youth agencies to identify respondents to whom the survey will be sent.

SWAN LSI Off to a Strong Start in State Fiscal Year 2023-2024

SWAN LSI paralegals have continued to positively impact the lives of Pennsylvania children in foster care throughout the first five months of state fiscal year 2023-2024. Through ongoing collaboration with county children and youth agencies (CCYAs), and by providing essential legal services, LSI paralegals have made substantial contributions at all stages of children's permanency journeys. From July 1 through November 30, LSIPs logged activities for 16,913 unique children. LSIPs completed more than 80,000 total activities, among them 7,606 diligent searches; 59,110 Juvenile Court related-activities; and 11,026 Orphans' Court related-activities.

When reunification is not a viable goal, SWAN LSIPs are a driving force in moving cases toward termination of parental rights (TPR) proceedings and adoption finalization. Between July 1 and November 30, LSIPs drafted 1,577 TPR petitions and prepared documents related to adoption for over 600 children. Of the children for whom adoption documents were prepared:

- 53% under the age of 6
- 81% under the age of 12
- 19% over the age of 12
- 5% over the age of 16.

Resource Family Registry Drop-In Session

Do you work with foster, kinship, or adoptive families? Then you have a role in keeping Pennsylvania's Resource Family Registry (RFR) accurate and up to date! PAE family coordinator Russ McCurdy will be hosting an RFR drop-in center at the SWAN/IL WSW from 4 to 6 p.m. on Wednesday, January 24th in Room 115. This is a great opportunity to schedule a review of your families or ask questions about the process. For more information, contact Russ at mccurdy@diakon-swan.org.

PAE Offers Virtual Training Series

The PAE team is offering twelve interactive one-hour Zoom training sessions from 10 to 11 a.m., approximately every other Wednesday, starting January 31st. All topics are directly applicable to child recruitment as well as family recruiting. Topics range from how to navigate the SWAN Portal to when to put a child on "hold" and integrating other units of service, such as the Placement Unit, to move a child toward permanency. Workers and supervisors should review and sign up for specific sessions or the entire series. Contact any PAE coordinator for additional details and registration information.

Legal Training Staff Update

The SWAN legal training specialists are excited to welcome **Shawn Sangster, Esq.** back to the team! Attorney Sangster has devoted his legal career to child welfare law. He first joined the SWAN prime contractor in 2014 and later served as a SWAN legal training specialist, a position he held for over five years. Most recently, he served as the solicitor for Jefferson County Children and Youth Services, where he had an opportunity to represent the agency in court proceedings and provide continued legal advice to agency staff. Shawn will join the existing trainers in responding to Warmline inquiries, drafting monthly legal reports, and delivering trainings across the state.

New Year, New Searches to be done!

As the new year begins, SWAN LSI is celebrating with the soon-to-be-released 9th edition of the SWAN LSI Diligent Search Packet. The packet contains vital information and forms to help paralegals and agency staff search for permanent resources for children in the Pennsylvania child welfare system, as well as comply with federal and state mandates in their diligent search efforts. The packet can be downloaded from the SWAN Permanency Toolkit. The SWAN LSI Warmline (lsiwarmline@diakonswan.org) is available to answer questions about the packet and searches. To seek training or assistance with diligent search, contact your assigned SWAN LSI coordinator (counties) or SWAN regional technical assistant (affiliates).

What can the SWAN Helpline do for you?

The SWAN Helpline is a central pathway of support for families throughout the permanency process. The SWAN Helpline provides information to families and makes referrals on their behalf to other agencies. The SWAN Helpline is also the first stop for families using the SWAN Connect service or accessing SWAN Post-permanency services.

The SWAN Helpline is staffed by technical specialists who are available Monday through Friday from 8:30 am to 4:30 pm at 1-800-585-SWAN (7926), as well as by email at swanhelpline@diakon-swan.org.

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

 /adoptpa

 /adoptpakids

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

Older Youth Services Certification Series

The purpose of the Older Youth Services Certification series is to provide individuals working with adolescents with the knowledge, skills, techniques, and confidence to engage and empower youth involved in the child welfare system and their support. The courses within this series include foundational level information for working with older youth, and the certification track is a total of 13 credit hours. Courses will be offered mainly online via E-Learn with one instructor-led training. This certification series is eligible for all agencies and all position levels to enroll.

Courses include:

- Independent Living Services: An Overview – Module 1 Purpose and Policy (online) – 2 credit hours (PLEASE NOTE: This module is a prerequisite to the instructor-led session)
- Independent Living Services: An Overview – Module 2 Adolescent Issues: Risk and Resiliency (online) – 2 credit hours (PLEASE NOTE: This module is a prerequisite to the instructor-led session)
- Independent Living Services: Engaging Older Youth (online prerequisite) – 1 credit hour
- Independent Living Services: Engaging Older Youth (instructor-led session) – 6 credit hours
- Implicit Bias in Child Protection (online) – 2 credit hours

To register for this certification series, you can self-enroll in the courses or contact the Registration Account at cwtpreg@pitt.edu.

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. 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 4 SAT fee waivers during their academic career – 2 for the SAT Reasoning Test and 2 for the SAT Subject Tests. If you need to obtain either waiver, please contact Sherri Krodell slk114@pitt.edu at the Child Welfare Resource Center.

Youth Advisory Board Resources

The Statewide Youth Advisory Board recently completed two projects that can be found on the YAB website <https://www.payab.pitt.edu/>.

Connect, Restore, Resurface: Tips for Caseworkers

As youth, we struggle with many different things, from learning to fit into society to figuring out who we are as a person. Here are some important tips that will help you connect and engage better with youth as a caseworker. We believe that improving these relationships will help us become more independent, thrive as a people, and help us build strong, healthy relationships with others.

There are three parts to this resource, including a one page tips resource, a bookmark containing the tips and a video created by youth explaining why this resource was developed <https://www.payab.pitt.edu/TopTipsCaseworkers.htm>.

Protecting Crowns: A Guide to Caring for Black and Brown Hair

Black and brown youth, when removed from their homes, can be placed into environments where their culture is not reflected. These placements may be in rural areas without access to hair products and salons catering to textured hair. This guide is a resource intended to assist families, workers, and even youth to care for and protect their crown. <https://www.payab.pitt.edu/files/ProtectingCrowns.pdf>

PA Child Welfare Resource Center (CWRC)

403 E. Winding Hill Road
Mechanicsburg, PA 17055
717-795-9048
www.payab.pitt.edu

ABA Permanency Barriers Project

A project of the American Bar Association, Center on Children and the Law

The ABA Permanency Barriers Project works with you to reduce the time children spend in foster care before achieving permanency.

Principles

1. Permanency begins on Day 1.
2. Small steps add up to change.
3. Full stakeholder engagement is key to realize and maintain system reform.

Project Approach

1 Focus on System Change

ABA staff help local stakeholders develop individualized county action plans. The action plans are based on a thorough assessment of needs, which includes:

- Case file review
- Court observation
- Data analysis
- Focus groups with stakeholders

2 County-Driven, County-Owned

Each jurisdiction encounters unique challenges. We form a county Advisory Board and issue-based subcommittees made up of lead decisionmakers, including:

- Child welfare agency administrators and staff
- Behavioral health providers
- Juvenile and family court judges
- School administrators
- Agency, parent, and children's attorneys
- Others, as identified by county

3 ABA as Neutral Facilitator and Strategic Partner

ABA staff are on site monthly working to develop and implement reforms.

- Our attorneys bring extensive firsthand knowledge and national perspective to guide your county.
- We ensure all stakeholders join the effort as equal partners.
- We focus on system barriers and engagement between the legal and nonlegal communities at both the county and state level.
- We provide individualized attention, which can include refining court and agency procedures, providing legal analysis, and conducting trainings.

4 Improved Outcomes

At the end of this two-year project, you will see:

- More efficient and effective pathways to permanency for every case;
- A reduction of time in foster care for children in your county; and
- Improved communication, network building, and stakeholder collaboration.

Measurable Results

At the end of the two-year project each county receives a final project report that summarizes results and provides recommendations to sustain system change. To date, the project has:

- ✓ served **55** different counties in **four** states,
- ✓ reduced the time children spend in foster care in all four states by an average of **nine months**,
- ✓ realized a positive impact on more than **3,000** children,
- ✓ saved counties and states over **\$30 million** in foster care costs.

Targeted Technical Assistance

As an alternative to the two-year model, we provide targeted technical assistance on permanency matters through on-site trainings, developing local protocols, facilitating meetings, and other solutions to address local challenges. ABA technical assistance can range from a one-day training to a multi-month engagement.

Get Started Today

The ABA Permanency Barriers Project can work with your county to promote permanency for children in foster care.

For more information, contact:
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