

ADMINISTRATIVE UPDATES

From the Office of Children, Youth and Families
Department of Human Services

Staffing Changes

The Office of Children, Youth and Families (OCYF) is pleased to welcome **Tina Phillips** as director of the Bureau of Policy, Programs and Operations. Tina has 27 years of experience in the child welfare field. She began her child welfare career at Lebanon County Children and Youth and previously worked for OCYF as a ChildLine caseworker, a program specialist and a program specialist supervisor. After leaving OCYF, she worked for the Child Welfare Resource Center, the National Center for Child Death and for PA Family Support Alliance.

Chief of Staff **Amy Grippi** will continue to oversee the Division of Operations and should remain its point of contact. Amy can be reached at agrippi@pa.gov.

As most of you are aware, **Dori Barnard** joined OCYF in February 2016 as director of the Division of Operations, overseeing the hotline, child abuse clearance unit, appeals unit, data and technology unit, quality assurance unit, and interstate. Please contact Dori at dbarnard@pa.gov.

We are also pleased to announce that **Caitlin Vachon**, formerly a ChildLine supervisor, is acting as interim ChildLine manager. She has been with OCYF for approximately 10 years and will have primary oversight of hotline functions. Caitlin can be reached at cvachon@pa.gov.

National Youth In Transition Database

National Youth in Transition Database (NYTD) implementation is ongoing with the Baseline Population (every youth in foster care who reaches

age 17) and the Served Population (any youth receiving an IL service regardless of age). NYTD questions can be directed to Joe Warrick at jwarrick@pa.gov or 717-214-6765.

April is National Child Abuse Prevention Month

Don't forget to wear your blue ribbons throughout April in honor of National Child Abuse Prevention Month! OCYF, in partnership with Pennsylvania Family Support Alliance (PFSA), is planning the following activities during April:

- **April 5** - The first PA Blue Ribbon Champion for Kids Rally and Award Presentation will take place at 12 p.m. at the State Capitol in Harrisburg, PA.
- **April 11** - A Painting for Prevention mural will be created at Antioch Baptist Church in Williamsport, PA.
- **April 21** - PA Blue Ribbon Champion for Kids winners will be honored at the Senators game in Harrisburg, PA.

We'd love to see you at these events in support of Child Abuse Prevention Month! For more information visit www.pablueribbonchampion.org, and for prevention ideas and resources visit www.childwelfare.gov/topics/preventing/preventionmonth.

Mandated Reporter Training Available

Mandated reporter training is available for free to all mandated reporters. OCYF manages two different contracts for in-person mandated reporter training: Pennsylvania Family Support Alliance (pa-fsa.org), which offers training to any mandated reporter, and the Pennsylvania Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics (pascan.org), which offers training specifically to mandated reporters in the medical field. Additionally,



individual online training is offered through the Pennsylvania Child Welfare Resource Center (www.reportabusepa.pitt.edu). For more information about all mandated reporter training options, visit www.keepkidssafe.pa.gov.

Accurint®

Accurint is a useful tool for obtaining an individual's address and phone number (landline). But did you know that you can search for cellphone numbers too? By running a separate search called Real-Time Phones, you can access phone records in real time. All Accurint users can use the Real-Time Phones Search. Try it out and greatly improve your search efforts! For more information about Accurint, contact Belinda Eigen at beigen@pa.gov or 717-787-2726.

Credit Reporting Requirements

Federal legislation requires that all youth in foster care age 14 and older must receive a copy of their credit report annually and be given a copy of their credit history upon exiting care. If you are having trouble obtaining credit reports from Equifax®, Experian® or TransUnion® or have any credit-reporting questions, contact Belinda Eigen at beigen@pa.gov or 717-787-2726.

Safe Haven

We need counties to help in tracking newborn relinquishments. Please contact our office if you have questions about how the Newborn Protection Act affects your county and/or where to obtain relinquishment forms. If your agency has not provided relinquishment forms on any Safe Haven newborns, please be sure to do so as soon as possible. Safe Haven questions can be directed to Belinda Eigen at beigen@pa.gov or 717-787-2726.

National Foster Care Month

May is National Foster Care Month, in which we acknowledge foster parents, family members, volunteers, mentors, policymakers, child welfare professionals, and other members of the community who help children and youth in foster

care find permanent homes and connections. If you would like to have your Foster Care Month event featured on the SWAN Facebook page, please contact Joe Warrick at jwarrick@pa.gov or 717-214-6765.

SWAN Google Groups

The SWAN ListServ through Google Groups is comprised of county children and youth agency workers and SWAN affiliate agency workers. The goal of the group is to facilitate special needs adoptions throughout Pennsylvania. All information posted on this site is confidential. Anyone wishing to join this group must be an employee of a county children and youth agency or SWAN affiliate agency. If interested, please contact Joe Warrick by email at jwarrick@pa.gov or at 717-214-6765.

Pennsylvania Chafee Education and Training Grant Program

The Pennsylvania Chafee Education and Training Grant (ETG) application for the 2016–17 school year, and directions on how to apply are available online at www.pheaa.org/funding-opportunities/other-educational-aid/chafee-program.shtml. The 2017–18 maximum ETG award has yet to be determined; however, the amount per student in 2016–17 was \$5,000. All current ETG award recipients will be automatically enrolled for the next academic year and do not need to complete the ETG application. Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) renewal forms must be completed every year. Applications for the 2017–18 school year will be available after April 1, 2017. For questions about current Chafee applications or a youth's status, please contact PHEAA at 1-800-831-0797. If you have questions regarding the ETG program, contact Joe Warrick at jwarrick@pa.gov or at 717-214-6765.

SWAN/IL Network News

Tell the Network about all of the wonderful things you, your agency, your community, a youth or a colleague are doing to promote improved outcomes for PA's foster youth. If you have something exciting, interesting or informative to share with your colleagues, please forward your articles,



success stories, matching events or ideas to Jennifer Casner-Hockenberry at jcasner-hockenberry@diakon-swan.org. Pictures are always a great addition to any article. You can find the latest and past editions of this newsletter at www.adoptpakids.org under the **Network Newsletter** link.

SWAN Media

Filming wrapped on the next round of the media campaign, #MeetTheKids, and is in the editing room of our production company. The campaign, once completed, will feature three commercials of waiting youth and one commercial featuring adoptive families (#MeetTheFamilies). The expected release date for the final product is June 2017.

The current campaign has been airing on network and cable television in the Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, and Harrisburg/Lancaster markets and will end on June 30, 2017, along with online media ads on Pandora Radio, Google/Yahoo/MSN searches and Facebook.

While this media campaign airs, agencies should be prepared to promptly respond to phone calls from prospective foster and adoptive families. Please contact Joe Warrick for additional information at jwarrick@pa.gov or 717-214-6765.

Waiting Child Segments

SWAN's media contract provides funding for three waiting child segments across the state designed to find adoptive families for older youth in need of families. *Waiting Child* is aired on KDKA-TV, channel 2, a Pittsburgh CBS affiliate; *Val's Kids* is aired on abc27 WHTM in the Harrisburg area; and *A Little Love* is aired on WBRE-TV, channel 28, a Wilkes-Barre NBC affiliate. Waiting child segments have proven to be successful over the years in helping find permanent homes for the children of PA.

If you have a child you would like featured on KDKA's *Waiting Child*, please contact Ja-Neen Jones at Three Rivers Adoption Council at jjones@3riversadopt.org.

If you have a waiting child you would like featured on WHTM's *Val's Kids*, please contact Robert Brockman at rbrockman@diakon-swan.org.

If you have a waiting child you would like featured on WBRE's *A Little Love*, please contact Rachel Paashaus at rpaashaus@diakon-swan.org.

Interstate Compact

For your convenience, the PA Interstate Compact Section is now accepting the submission of interstate request packets via email as well as by regular mail. The packets may be scanned and emailed to RA-PA-ICPC@pa.gov. Please do not copy individual staff members on the email. We ask that you not mail any packets that have been sent to the resource account to avoid duplication of work efforts.

CWIS Update

The Child Welfare Information Solution (CWIS), which was implemented in December 2014, has streamlined the child abuse history clearance processing for those who work or volunteer with children. Over a two-year period beginning in January 2015, there were approximately 2.4 million clearance applications submitted electronically through the CWIS Child Welfare Portal. Most clearance applications submitted online are processed the same day. When combined with paper applications the average processing time in 2016 was six days.

The Child Welfare Portal also allows mandated reporters to submit reports of child abuse electronically. For each of the last two years, approximately 21 percent of child abuse reports were submitted to ChildLine electronically. Ten statewide focus groups were held recently to solicit feedback from mandated reporters to determine how the on-line reporting experience could be improved. The groups, which included 75 participants, focused on gathering suggestions on how to enhance Self-Service to make it more user-friendly and a mandated reporter's first choice for reporting. The results are being reviewed and analyzed to determine future enhancements to Self-Service.



In addition to the public-facing Child Welfare Portal, CWIS is also used by ChildLine staff to gather and process reports of alleged child abuse and general protective services reports. The outcomes of those reports are then maintained in the statewide database according to the Child Protective Services Law. County Children and Youth Agencies exchange information electronically with CWIS and are able to directly access CWIS to obtain information related to an investigation. Since implementation in 2014, enhancements have been made to address new or changing legislation and to improve worker efficiencies.

ChildLine

During the last year, ChildLine has increased staffing to ensure that we can answer phone calls and transmit reports to the local children and youth agencies in a timely manner. We currently have 72 ChildLine caseworker positions and nine ChildLine caseworker supervisors that operate our 24/7 call center. In June, we met our goal to reduce our dropped/abandoned rate to below 4 percent despite a substantially higher call volume, and successfully maintained this goal through December 2016. ChildLine answered 155,911 calls in 2016. In January 2017, we have already answered 3,034 more calls than in January 2016. Additionally, we received 47,683 Self-Service reports from mandated reporters in 2016.

2017 PENNSYLVANIA PERMANENCY CONFERENCE



statewide adoption and permanency network

independent living services

June 28–30, 2017
Kalahari Resorts & Conventions
Pocono Manor, PA 18349

Office of Children, Youth and Families
P.O. Box 2675
Harrisburg, PA 17105-2675
717-787-3984
www.dhs.pa.gov

From the SWAN Prime Contract

Diakon-SWAN, LLC/Family Design Resources, Inc.

Affiliate Contract Renewals Due

To all affiliate agencies: It will soon be time to renew the purchase of service agreements between Diakon-SWAN, LLC and the provider affiliate agencies. Please look for the state fiscal year 2017–18 agreements to arrive at the end of April or early in May 2017. Agreements should be signed and returned to Diakon by June 30, 2017. We look forward to working with all of you again in the coming fiscal year!

Affiliate Reminder: Reporting Invoice Issues

On occasion, the SWAN prime contract, Diakon/FDR, has been notified of SWAN Portal invoicing issues that inhibit invoice submission. In most circumstances the issue is reported, and we work to resolve the situation quickly to prevent invoicing and subsequent delayed payments.

To continue our commitment to timely invoicing and payment, Diakon/FDR respectfully requests that SWAN Portal invoicing issues be reported to the SWAN regional technical assistant (RTA) **no later than noon on the invoice due date**. This will allow Diakon the necessary time to resolve the problem. Issues that are not reported as requested **may** not be resolved, resulting in agencies having to submit services on the following month's invoice.

Diakon/FDR is dedicated to assuring the functionality of the SWAN Portal as a resource supporting permanency services. We appreciate you working with us to uphold this request. Thank you.

Online Photo Gallery Expands

Pennsylvania's Heart Gallery was a traveling display of professional photographs of a few children, but in order to encompass as many children as possible, several years ago it was moved online to www.adoptpakids.org. Workers representing children who were registered and active with the Pennsylvania Adoption Exchange (PAE) could

request professional photographs for them—but the list of volunteer photographers was short.

Recently, a call for more photographers had a plethora of responses. The Online Photo Gallery now has nearly 400 volunteer photographers serving all 67 counties. This means we can offer professional photographs to all PAE-registered children. The worker can review the list of available photographers online, contact them, provide the child's name and PAE number, and schedule a photo shoot. The photographer will provide the information about the photoshoot to PAE.

This is a valuable tool to those doing concurrent planning. Any child in placement with a primary or concurrent goal of adoption can be registered with PAE. Every PAE-registered child is entitled to one professional photo session per year.

If you are not sure whether a child is registered with PAE, contact your PAE coordinator. They can work with you to determine if unregistered children can be registered, obtain the PAE number for registered children, and discuss any other questions you may have.

This is one of those "use it or lose it" resources; the most cited reason for photographers dropping off the list was that they were never contacted. So we encourage you to take advantage of this opportunity to provide your child or youth with professional photographs that can help them find permanency.

Administrative Update: SWAN Legal Training Division

Have you ever wondered what the SWAN legal training specialists are doing when they aren't researching, developing and delivering trainings to you? Among many other tasks, they are also analyzing Legal Warmline questions and compiling the Monthly Legal Report!

In 2016, the legal training specialists researched and responded to more than 127 legal child welfare-related questions. The Warmline accepts inquiries from all people involved in the child welfare system, including paralegals, child welfare attorneys, child welfare workers, resource parents, ▶

biological parents and Diakon-FDR staff. Popular topics include adoption, adoption assistance, dependency, subsidized permanent legal custodianship, termination of parental rights, the Indian Child Welfare Act, immigration, notice and standing. Questions are answered as soon as possible based on volume, availability and complexity, so do let us know if you have a deadline. Inquiries can be submitted by phone (888-793-2512) or email (lsiwarmline@diakon-swan.org).

In addition to responding to case-specific questions, every month the SWAN Legal Services training specialists prepare a report on current legal developments impacting child welfare practice. The report includes summaries of the key facts, holdings and rationale of Pennsylvania state and federal court decisions, as well as any new statutes, court rules or regulations that are released. The report consolidates the legal information in one easy-to-read document to help your agency comply with new and existing laws and also helps to complete legal research. Each legal report can be found on the SWAN website, www.diakon-swan.org, under the Publications tab. If you have any questions about the report, feel free to contact the LSI Warmline at lsiwarmline@diakon-swan.org.

Finalization Update

SWAN Finalization is the last legal step in the adoption process. During the second quarter of state fiscal year (SFY) 2016–17 (October–December 2016), 390 children, including 52 older children (age 13 and older), completed the SWAN finalization service.

While 70% were younger children (0–8 years old), older children demonstrated better outcomes in this quarter, in comparison with the second quarter of SFY 2015–16.

- The percentage of children aged 13 and older among all finalized children increased from 9% to 13%.
- The number of children aged 13 and older completing the SWAN finalization service increased by 54%, from 28 to 52.

UPCOMING EVENTS

2017 SWAN/IL Spring Quarterly Meetings

March 29, Scranton

April 5, Clarion

April 6, Monroeville

April 12, Philadelphia

April 13, Lansdale

April 25, Enola

2017 SWAN/IL Summer Statewide Meeting

June 27–28

Kalahari Resorts & Conventions,
Pocono Manor

25th Annual Pennsylvania Permanency Conference

June 28–30

Kalahari Resorts & Conventions
Pocono Manor

www.diakon-swan.org/swan/events/upcoming/



[/adoptpa](https://www.facebook.com/adoptpa)



[/adoptpakids](https://www.youtube.com/adoptpakids)

www.adoptpakids.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

**From the PA Child Welfare Resource Center
Independent Living Project**
University of Pittsburgh

The YAB Blast

The newest edition of *The Blast* is available on the Youth Advisory Board website at www.independentlivingpa.org/Blast.htm. The *YAB Blast* contains important news and updates related to older youth initiatives in Pennsylvania. There are many things happening through the Older Youth Project that are also highlighted. You can find information including save the dates, youth submissions, and national opportunities for older youth.

Older Youth Collaborative Webinar Series—Save the Date

The CWRC is partnering with county and provider agencies to offer the Older Youth Collaborative Webinar Series. These webinars will highlight those who are in the field and can speak to direct practice. The webinars will be held about every other month from 10–11:30 a.m. You can find additional information on upcoming webinars and how to register at www.independentlivingpa.org.

The following webinars are currently scheduled:

4/17/2017 — Cross-System Collaboration and Transition Planning, Lori Chaffers, Lackawanna County Office of Youth and Family Services

7/24/17 — Developing a Local Youth Advisory Board

Please register with Rachel Ickes at cwtpreg@pitt.edu

Normalcy and Reasonable and Prudent Parent Standard Flyers

Youth-friendly flyers on normalcy and Pennsylvania's Reasonable and Prudent Parent Standard are now posted at www.independentlivingpa.org/Youth-Friendly-Flyers.htm. The website has PDF and JPEG versions of the flyers. There are also pictures that

can be shared across social media! Don't forget to tag your posts with #normalcypa!

The 2017 Older Youth Retreat

This year's Older Youth Retreat will be held at the University of Pittsburgh, Johnstown Campus from August 7–11, 2017. This weeklong event is for current or former PA foster youth ages 16–21. The theme for this year is *Even the Stars Need Darkness to Shine*. Registration will begin in May and will be sent to county independent living coordinators. If you have a youth who may benefit from this experience, please reach out to the assigned IL coordinator. Youth can learn more about the annual retreat at www.independentlivingpa.org/ILRetreat.htm. Contact Meghan O'Hare (meo43@pitt.edu) with any questions.

Youth Ambassadors

The Pennsylvania Child Welfare Resource Center currently has vacant positions for Youth Ambassadors in the Southeast, Northeast, and Western regions of the state. The purpose of the program is to provide youth enrolled in post-secondary education with the opportunity to share their unique perspective of the Pennsylvania Child Welfare system. The program is open to current and former foster care youth. Please share this information with youth or stakeholders who work with youth.

Youth may apply at

- **Western Region** youth ambassador posting: www.pittsource.com/postings/129499
- **Southeast Region** youth ambassador posting: www.pittsource.com/postings/129501

Please ensure youth are applying to the correct region. Please contact Cindy Gore (lcg7@pitt.edu) with questions.

PA Child Welfare Resource Center
403 E. Winding Hill Road
Mechanicsburg, PA 17055
717-795-9048
www.independentlivingpa.org