

# ADMINISTRATIVE UPDATES

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

Department of Human Services

### Bureau of Policy, Programs and Operations Personnel Updates

Teresa Musser, Division of Programs, has accepted a promotion to Human Services Analyst Supervisor (HSAS) and will serve as the HSAS for the Statewide Adoption and Permanency Network (SWAN) and Independent Living (IL) Unit. Teresa has over 30 years of experience serving children and families through various roles in both the private sector and as a public servant for the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. Teresa has worked for OCYF for the past nine years and most recently in the SWAN/IL Unit where she served as the Acting Director for SWAN and as a Human Services Analyst. In these roles, she led the SWAN contract and served as Pennsylvania's IL Coordinator where she managed the Chafee Education and Training Grant, FosterEd program, National Youth in Transition Database, among other duties. Teresa can be reached at [temusser@pa.gov](mailto:temusser@pa.gov).

Diane Michel, Division of Programs, has been hired to fill the role of Human Services Analyst Supervisor. Diane Michel is joining the OCYF team with over 30 years of experience serving children, families and vulnerable populations through various roles and agencies, including her own business. In her new role, she will be responsible for the management of the contract with the Child Welfare Resource Center (CWRC), Child Welfare Education for Baccalaureates (CWEB and Child Welfare Education for Leadership (CWEL) programs, Administrative Office of Pennsylvania Courts (AOPC), Kinship Navigator program, Family Reunification grants, PA Family Support Alliance Mandated Reporter contracts and Accurant, among other duties. Diane can be reached at [dmichel@pa.gov](mailto:dmichel@pa.gov).

Jillian Schreib, Division of Policy, has accepted a promotion as Human Services Analyst Supervisor. Jill started her career with the Division of Policy as a Human Services Program Specialist in 2018. In her new role, she will supervise and manage the planning, development, implementation, and technical assistance for child welfare policy as it relates to prevention services, foster and kinship

care, medical foster care, physical and behavioral health service delivery, education-related services, permanent legal custodianship, adoption assistance, and the Citizen Review Panels. Jill can be reached at [jschreib@pa.gov](mailto:jschreib@pa.gov).

Nancy Kent, Division of Operations, became the Data Management Supervisor in the Systems and Data Management Section, in September. Previous to coming to DHS-OCYF, Nancy served in various roles throughout her 23-year career with the Commonwealth, in the Pennsylvania State Police-Firearms Division, where she worked closely with the Pennsylvania Instant Check System (PICS) and related systems.

Kristina Harris, Division of Operations, has been hired as the Systems Section Supervisor within the Systems and Data Management Unit. Kristina began her career with OCYF in 2017 as a contractor. As an OCYF Contractor, Kristina worked as the Regional Offices Workload Manager. During Kristina's time as the Regional Offices Workload Manager, she spent much of her time on OCYF's incident management system, HCSIS. Kristina is eager to use her past experience to strengthen OCYF's information technology systems to better serve children, youth, and families across Pennsylvania.

Brandi Webster, Division of Operations, has been hired as a Human Services Analyst and will function as a training officer for the Division of Operations staff. Brandi worked as a Hotline worker for the Healthy Baby/Healthy Kids/Adult Basic Helplines for approximately three years screening callers for appropriate services and supports. Brandi joined ChildLine in 2015 as a ChildLine Caseworker. Brandi was promoted to the ChildLine Supervisor position in November 2019. Brandi has been working with her team to build their existing skill sets. Throughout her career, Brandi has enjoyed mentoring new employees and excited about her next chapter at ChildLine.

### **Trauma-Informed Workgroup**

The OCYF Trauma Team has been hard at work to ensure that child welfare staff are certified as trauma aware by the end of 2021. The team is happy to announce that all current OCYF staff have been trained and certified as trauma aware as of December 28, 2021. Collaboration continues at this time with the Child Welfare Resource Center to develop training curricula for the county children and youth agencies to become trauma aware and meet the standards set forth in the Governor's HEAL PA Plan. Estimated completion time is Summer of 2022 for the release of this web-based training. The OCYF trauma team also continues working together with the HEAL PA Training team, to solidify the core principles of trauma awareness trainings and the team is reviewing the final draft of this language. This work will continue as the trauma continuum is modified through Heal PA and the Office of Advocacy and Reform.

### **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 [here](#).

### **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:

- 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.
- Create meaningful change within the culture of OCYF by incorporating a racial equity lens in all OCYF initiatives and processes.
- 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.

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

The American Bar Association Center on Children and the Law 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](mailto:Heidi.epstein@americanbar.org).

County agencies interested in the Education Barriers to Permanency Project should contact Kathleen McNaught at [Kathleen.mcnaught@americanbar.org](mailto:Kathleen.mcnaught@americanbar.org).

### **Plans of Safe Care Grants**

Forty-one county child welfare agencies are receiving Plan of Safe Care Support Grants. The grants are funded by federal CAPTA funds targeted specifically to support Plans of Safe Care. County child welfare agencies can use the funds to:

- Provide training and/or technical assistance to health care providers who are required to notify CCYAs of substance affected infants;
- Create and disseminate information on Plans of Safe Care to families, private child welfare agencies, and community providers;
- Develop and implement Plans of Safe Care data collection policies and practices; and
- Fill gaps in health and substance use disorder treatment to meet the needs of the infant and affected family or caregiver.

Questions can be directed to Michele Walsh, Ph.D., at [michelewal@pa.gov](mailto:michelewal@pa.gov)

### **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 21-22 academic year has been extended from December 31, 2021 until May 1, 2022.

The application for the 2022-2023 academic year will not be available on the Pennsylvania Higher Education Assistance Agency's (PHEAA) website until early 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 students' 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](mailto: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. 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 post-secondary education institution is required to have their identified POC listed on their website. A list of PCOs can be found on the Center for Schools and Communities [website](#).

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

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

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

The National Youth in Transition Database (NYTD) collects information in the following areas: Baseline Population (every youth in foster care who reaches age 17), Served Population (**any youth or young adult receiving independent living services regardless of age**) and Follow-up Population (youth surveys at age 19 and 21 depending on Cohort period). Pennsylvania is currently in Cohort 4 for 19-year-old Follow-up Surveys as of October 1, 2021 through March 31, 2022 (2022A). Counties have until April 15, 2022 to submit their follow-up surveys as well as served population data. Counties can log onto [www.getnytdpa.org](http://www.getnytdpa.org) to enter their served and survey data. NYTD questions can be directed to Teresa Musser, Office of Children, Youth and Families, at [temusser@pa.gov](mailto:temusser@pa.gov) or 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](mailto:getnytd@pcgus.com).

### **Pennsylvania KinConnector Program**

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

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

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

### **Accurint**

Accurint is an online search tool available to every county throughout the state. It is able to assist with family finding efforts, contact information, criminal checks and identifying individuals for any type of family engagement meeting. Please be aware that only county employees may be an Accurint Administrator for your county's account. If you or your staff would like training in the Accurint software, please contact Accurint Education Consultant Bill News at [William.news@lexisnexisrisk.com](mailto:William.news@lexisnexisrisk.com) or 215-285-7108. Additionally, you can look up trainings at National Training Calendar Courses. Click [here](#) for our training calendar.

If you have any questions about Accurint, please contact W. Donald Dickinson at [wildickins@pa.gov](mailto:wildickins@pa.gov) or 717-787-2726.

### **Credit Reports**

Did you know that every Credit Bureau has a specific contact person and process to ensure foster care youth credit history checks are completed appropriately? If you are unsure of this information, have questions regarding the credit report history of foster care youth or are having issues obtaining a credit history from one of the Credit Bureau's, please contact W. Donald Dickinson at [wildickins@pa.gov](mailto:wildickins@pa.gov) or 717-787-2726 for assistance.

### **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 \(pafsa.org\)](http://MandatedReporterTraining|PennsylvaniaFamilySupportAlliance(pafsa.org))

For questions or to schedule a session specifically for your organization, please email PFSA at [training@pa-fsa.org](mailto:training@pa-fsa.org)

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

### **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 [psrfa.org](http://psrfa.org)

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

### **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 a colleague's advice and announce upcoming events. Anyone wishing to join the group must be an employee of a county children and youth agency, SWAN affiliate agency or IL provider. If interested, please contact Bobbi Whary by email at [bwhary@diakon-swan.org](mailto:bwhary@diakon-swan.org) or 717-558-1223.

### **Interstate Compact Unit**

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

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

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

Fax: 717-425-5562

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

**CHILDLINE – 1-800-932-0313**

ChildLine is the child abuse reporting hotline for the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. Trained specialists are available 24/7 to receive referrals of suspected child abuse and general child well-being concerns. Mandated reporters are individuals who are legally required to report suspected child abuse if they have reasonable cause to suspect that a child is a victim of physical, sexual, emotional abuse or neglect. Each report is handled by a trained specialist who determines the most appropriate course of action forwarding the report to:

- County children and youth agencies or the Office of Children, Youth and Families (OCYF) Regional Offices for investigation or assessment
- Law enforcement officials for investigation
- Department of Human Services program office for review and possible licensing action

When making a report of suspected child abuse or general child well-being concerns, it is important to provide as much information as possible. Please see above for a general idea of what information you will be asked when making a report. As a

foster, adoptive parent, or a provider there is specific information that will be requested of you to ensure proper assignment of the report to an investigating agency:

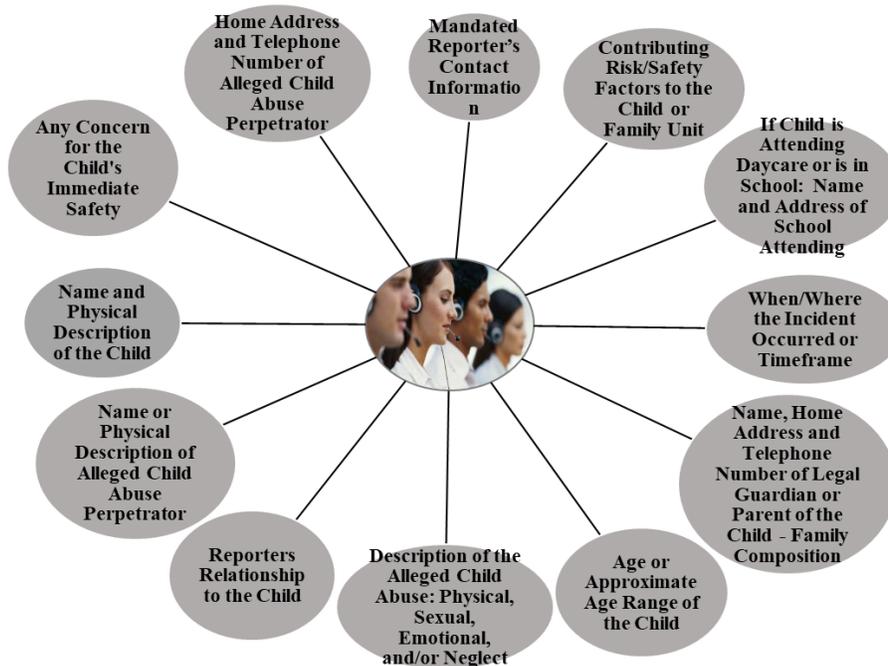
- Include the name of who or what entity has/had custody of the child at the time of the report and/or at the time of the incident; and
- Include the address of who or what entity has/had custody of the child at the time of the report and/or the time of the incident.

As a reminder, mandated reporters have the option to submit their reports through the online portal for ChildLine review and processing.

Please remember, if you do not have all the information listed above, it should not prevent you from making a report of concerns for a child in need. ChildLine staff take all information and are trained to lead you through the process.

ChildLine has moved their new location to 2525 North 7<sup>th</sup> Street, Harrisburg, PA 17110. The majority of our staff are continuing to telework at this time.

**ChildLine staff, thank you for all your dedication and the amazing work you do for children and families of the Commonwealth!**



**Office of Children, Youth and Families (OCYF)**  
 P.O. Box 2675  
 Harrisburg, PA 17105-2675  
 717-787-3984  
[www.dhs.pa.gov](http://www.dhs.pa.gov)

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

### **SWAN Portal 3.0**

The SWAN prime contractor is pleased to report that development of the SWAN Portal Version 3.0 is continuing steadily. Most recently, we have completed the design of the new child record, and the development of the family record is now underway!

Very soon, several affiliates and counties will have the opportunity to view and test the child record features. Stay tuned for further testing opportunities.

We recognize that the SWAN Portal is a crucial tool for the network, and we are dedicated to maintaining and improving this important resource for you.

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

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

#### SWAN LSI Incarceration Resource Manual (IRM)

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

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

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

#### SWAN LSI Diligent Search Packet

SWAN LSI is finalizing updates to the *SWAN LSI Diligent Search Packet*, so stay tuned for the 8th Edition, coming soon! The SWAN LSI Diligent Search Packet contains vital information and forms to help paralegals and agency staff search for permanent resources for children in the

Pennsylvania child welfare system and comply with federal and state mandates in their diligent search efforts.

The SWAN LSI Warmline ([lsiwarmline@diakon-swan.org](mailto:lsiwarmline@diakon-swan.org)) is available to answer questions about the packet and searching. To seek training or assistance with diligent search, contact your assigned SWAN LSI coordinator (counties) or SWAN regional technical assistant (affiliates).

### **SWAN LSI Diligent Search in Action**

SWAN LSI diligent search is a search conducted to locate parents, relatives or other potential permanency resources or connections for a child who is receiving services from or who is in the custody of a child welfare agency. SWAN LSI diligent searches use multiple tools and methods which are described in the *SWAN LSI Diligent Search Packet*.

During the first four months of the 2021-2022 state fiscal year, SWAN LSI paralegals completed 7,565 diligent searches on behalf of 4,738 children. Diligent searches were completed in 54 counties by 162 different SWAN LSI paralegals. Of the over 7,500 searches, 3,928 were completed to locate missing parents; 1,986 were completed to comply with the location and notification requirements of the Fostering Connections to Success Act; 1,492 were for Act 55 compliance; and 159 were for other designated reasons.

Through SWAN LSI's diligent searches, thousands of connections and resources for children in Pennsylvania's child welfare system have been identified. County children and youth agencies rely on these connections and resources to ensure children can maintain connections with family and other kin. Additionally, SWAN LSI paralegals have used their search expertise to assist in locating older youth (ages 19 and 21) who have been identified to participate in the National Youth in Transition Database follow-up surveys.

### **Recruiters Seize Presentation Opportunities**

Throughout 2021, 98 different recruiters created and gave 329 presentations on behalf of 218 Pennsylvania youth in need of permanency at both virtual and in-person events. Well done to all involved! We encourage recruiters to continue taking advantage of opportunities to present children and youth at recruitment events and meetings.

We encourage you to check out [adoptpakids.org](http://adoptpakids.org) and/or [diakon-swan.org](http://diakon-swan.org) for more opportunities to present children at matching events. You can also contact SWAN staff in your region to learn more about recruitment opportunities in your area.

### AdoptPAkids.org Photo Guidelines

As part of the ongoing efforts to update and improve adoptpakids.org, the Governor's Office will implement guidelines regarding acceptable photos of waiting children on the site. This guidance outlines the new photograph criteria shared at the 2021 Fall Quarterly meetings and is effective February 1, 2022.

*Profile photos for children/youth on adoptpakids.org need to meet the following 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 backwards, holding something up over their face, or any other obscuring methods are acceptable); and*
- *Should be as high resolution as possible.*

*Profile pictures that do not include some portion of the child will be replaced with a non-descriptive Department of Human Services approved icon.*

We ask that you update existing photos accordingly to comply with these new requirements. New photos can be added through the SWAN Portal or by contacting your Pennsylvania Adoption Exchange (PAE) coordinator.

### Removing References to Social Media and Gaming Platforms

Effective immediately, AdoptUSKids implemented a new 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 mentions.

PAE coordinators are working with recruiters to adjust both public and private narratives for Pennsylvania children to comply with this standard. Moving forward, workers writing these narratives take note to omit these specific references and replace them with general references that still help families get to know the youth by showcasing their talents and interests in a strengths-based way.

Examples of how to make this change include:

**Instead of:** "In his free time, Robert loves to play Minecraft on Xbox live with his friends."

**Write:** "In his free time, Robert loves playing video games with his friends. He especially likes sandbox-style games that let him flex his creative muscles."

**Instead of:** "Jen is a natural performer and loves

showcasing her talent on Youtube and Tiktok."

**Write:** "Jen is a natural performer and also loves to experiment with video creation and editing to showcase her talents."

**Instead of:** "Rachel loves watching funny Youtube videos."

**Write:** "Rachel loves finding interesting and funny videos from independent content creators."

If you have any questions about these guidelines, please contact your PAE coordinator.

### Updates and Reminders Regarding SWAN Post-Permanency Services

- All Post-permanency benchmarks were revised in July of 2021 to clearly define the main numerical steps or "buckets" for each unit of service. These revisions provide an opportunity for a more accurate collection of cost and time data and will allow for a thorough review of that data as adjustments to reimbursement rates are being considered. There are a few details worth noting, as listed below.
- Affiliates will be required to complete cost and time data using these numerical steps or "buckets" as of January 2022 invoicing (due by February 7<sup>th</sup>). This data must be tracked and entered into the SWAN Portal to successfully invoice for the Post-permanency Units of Service.
- All affiliates who provide Post-permanency services are required to complete these benchmarks.
- Additional benchmark trainings will be available on February 2 and March 2, 2022 at 10 AM.

#### Respite Unit of Service

- As a reminder, the Family Support Plan (FSP) drives the Post-permanency services a family receives. Respite is one of the units of service that can be selected and referred to help a family achieve the goals identified in their FSP.
- Note that the SWAN Respite Unit of Service was not intended to give money directly to a family or to purchase specific durable goods to be used by the family. However, due to COVID-19, the SWAN affiliates recommended that an exception be made so that families could purchase approved durable goods to be used for activities that would provide an opportunity for respite while the family could also stay safe at home. Allowing for the use of respite funds in this way will remain in effect until the COVID-19 public health emergency declaration is lifted.

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- In order to track the expenses associated with the respite funds used for durable goods, cost and time details must be added when completing the Respite benchmarks. This includes miles, parking/tolls and purchased services, such as hourly respite, overnight respite, and non-traditional respite activities.

If you have any questions regarding any of these items, please contact your SWAN Post-permanency technical assistant.

**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](http://www.diakon-swan.org)  
[www.adoptpakids.org](http://www.adoptpakids.org)



## Upcoming SWAN Prime Contact Trainings

The SWAN prime contractor will be offering several virtual trainings this spring. Invitations to these sessions will be arriving shortly.

### Assessment Tools Training

February 3, 2022  
February 10, 2022  
February 17, 2022

### Behavioral Interviewing and Strengths-Based Language

February 16, 2022  
10-11:30 a.m.  
April 13, 2022  
10-11:30 a.m.

### Zoom Into Practice: Back to Basics

*Assessment*  
March 1, 2022

*Advocacy*  
March 8, 2022

*Respite*  
March 15, 2022

*Support Group*  
March 22, 2022

*Family Support Plan*  
March 29, 2022

*Dear Post-perm TA*  
April 5, 2022

### Review of the Child and Family Addendum Protocols

March 17, 2022  
10-11:30 a.m.

May 4, 2022  
10-11:30 a.m.

If you have any questions about these sessions, please contact your SWAN RTA.

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

### **Independent Living (IL) Networking Sessions**

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

### **SAT Waivers**

Fee waivers for both the SAT Reasoning Test and the SAT Subject test are available for *current high school students* who cannot afford to pay the test fees. Please be sure to indicate on the SAT Waiver Request Form which test your youth wishes to take. SAT Waivers are available for students who are *currently* in high school. If a youth already graduated or did not graduate, but received their GED, the College Board will not accept the fee waiver. There are also a limited number of college application fee waivers. Eligible students can receive a total of 4 SAT fee waivers during their academic career – 2 for the SAT Reasoning Test and 2 for the SAT Subject Tests. Fee waivers for the SAT Reasoning Test are available for *juniors and seniors only*. Fee waivers for the SAT Subject Test are available for *freshmen, sophomore, junior, or senior years*. A fee waiver can cover as many as 3 Subject Tests on one test day. Students who are not yet in ninth grade may not use the subject test fee waivers. If you need to obtain either waiver, please contact Frank Revesz [frevesz@pitt.edu](mailto:frevesz@pitt.edu) at the Child Welfare Resource Center. To learn more about SAT test-day requirements and general SAT questions, please visit the [SAT website](#).

### **PA Youth Advisory Board Resources**

Over the last year, the Youth Advisory Board identified the need for multiple resources in a variety of areas. The following resources have been developed or are in development:

**Know Your Rights Guide:** The Know Your Rights Guide is a tool to help youth understand their rights while in foster care. YAB wanted to ensure this resource was available to all youth, therefore YAB created a Spanish version. Both the English and Spanish versions are now available on the [YAB website](#).

**Bill of Rights Coloring Books:** The YAB identified a need for younger youth and youth with intellectual disabilities to understand their rights

while in foster care. The Bill of Rights coloring book was created to simplify information shared in the Know Your Rights Guide. Two coloring books were created, one for youth ages five to seven and another one for youth ages eight to ten. Along with the coloring book is a message for caregivers which stresses the importance of the information in the coloring book and how they can help children understand the information by completing different pages.

**Voting Campaign:** YAB recognized that many youth did not understand the election process or the importance of local elections. Therefore, they created a digital marketing campaign to educate youth on local and national elections. Every edition of the BLAST (the YAB newsletter) features information related to voting including terminology, how to register, election dates and other relevant voting resources. This information is also highlighted on the YAB Facebook page.

**Youth Questionnaire:** YAB created a Youth Introductory Questionnaire which is an online resource that provides a platform for youth to introduce themselves to potential resource families in their own words. The YAB wanted to ensure this tool was also available for Spanish-speaking youth, therefore it can now be accessed in both English and Spanish on the [YAB website](#).

Over the next year, the YAB is working on the following resources:

**National Youth in Transition Database (NYTD) Campaign:** In an effort to reinvigorate our NYTD efforts as a State and to re-engage youth, the YAB felt it was important to educate youth about the NYTD survey and help them understand its purpose and the importance of it. Currently, the YAB is focusing on a media campaign that will include an NYTD brochure, NYTD videos, as well as ensure that NYTD is a standing item in the BLAST newsletter as well as on the YAB Facebook page.

**Independent Living Site Visit Resources:** Because youth voice is an integral part of the IL site visit process, YAB is developing resources to provide an overview of the process for youth, explain the purpose of the visits and help youth understand their role if invited to participate in the site visit.

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

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