



Administrative Update

2015 WINTER STATEWIDE MEETING

Good Pictures Do Make a Difference

Making sure that your child has a photo—even a non-identifying photo—on the Pennsylvania Adoption Exchange (PAE) website at www.adoptpakids.org dramatically increases the chances of someone viewing the child's photo and then reading their narrative information. The feedback we have received from waiting families clearly states that they typically skip past the narrative information of children where there is only a silhouette.

Now that cell phones can take good photos, many people wonder why

they should still use a professional photographer. The early days of Pennsylvania's Heart Gallery made very clear the striking difference between an amateur and a professional photograph. The role of a professional photographer is to capture the personality, charm and essence of the child.

Pennsylvania has an extensive list of photographers in nearly every county who volunteer their time to help our children be seen in the best possible light. The only requirement is

that a child is registered with the PAE and is seeking permanency. Find a photographer near you on the Diakon-SWAN website at www.diakon-swan.org under Publications and then Photographer.

Photographers will take pictures of a child in a non-identifying way for those who are not yet legally free. Copies of the pictures are mailed to the child's caseworker and shared with the PAE.

For more information on this recruitment tool, contact Karen Lollo at KLollo@diakon-swan.org.

Special Points of Interest:

- **Pro photographers still make a difference**
- **Even non-identifying photos are better**

U.S. Meetings Year in Review

The Statewide Adoption and Permanency Network's Unit of Service (US) meetings had an exciting and productive 2014.

The group looked at how Lifebooks address Child Preparation goals and as a network developed Lifebook guidelines that are on the website at www.diakon-swan.org under Forms. In December, Pennsylvania Adoption Exchange staff joined to continue

developing child specific recruitment activities.

Post-permanency US meetings looked at adoption competent services, post-permanency services for kinship families and involving youth in post-permanency planning.

At future meetings, we will continue to update forms that go with the new benchmarks, including the Family Profile template and guidelines and a new template for the

supervisory report in the Finalization unit.

All revised templates and guidelines can be found on the website under the Benchmark tab. They will continue to be updated as new forms are approved.

Don't miss out on your chance to have an impact on how the network works! Join us at the next unit of service meeting! Registration information about the meetings is emailed to all affiliates.

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Older Youth Matching Event at Philly Stadium

On Saturday, March 28, 2015, the National Adoption Center and the Statewide Adoption and Permanency Network will co-sponsor an Older Youth Matching Event at Citizens Bank Park (home of the Phillies!). This event is a chance for Pennsylvania youth ages 12 and up to get acquainted with approved families who have expressed an interest in adopting an older child.

The families and youth will have a chance to

meet one another in a fun environment. The activities that are planned will be engaging and interactive. Families who attended past events said how much they enjoyed interacting with the youth and hearing them speak about their feelings.

Social workers have said they like the low pressure environment and the chance to give youth a voice in front of families. Youth in the past have had lots of fun and said they have liked meeting

families. They also liked learning about other teens who want to be adopted.

The majority of the youth who attended past events have received inquiries from interested families, and several adoptions have occurred as a result.

We are looking forward to a *Phabulous, Phantastic* day at the home of the Phillies!!!!

Please visit our new website at

www.diakon-swan.org

Post-Permanency Services for Many Families

Families providing permanency in Pennsylvania are eligible for post-permanency services through the Statewide Adoption and Permanency Network (SWAN). This includes adoptions finalized in Pennsylvania as well as those finalized elsewhere if the family now lives in Pennsylvania and the child is under 18.

This eligibility includes permanency through adoption (including domestic and international private adoptions), permanent legal custodianship (PLC) and formal kinship.

Formal kinship families are those families who provide permanency as the result of a court-ordered placement. According to the SWAN

Bulletin, this includes children who are placed with a "fit and willing relative." These kinship resources should be made aware that post-permanency services are available to them.

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SWAN LSI Paralegals Make a Difference

In September 2014 the prime contractor surveyed SWAN Legal Services Initiative (LSI) stakeholders about LSI's impact on children's ability to make connections and achieve timely permanency; if LSI activities positively affect permanency services, and the extent that LSI meets the counties' needs.

Surveys were sent to 308 stakeholders and included judges, masters, solicitors, administrators, case managers and caseworkers. 120 surveys were returned for evaluation.

The responses reported:

- 90% said LSI had a positive impact on finding parents and relatives (agreed and strongly agreed to statement).

- 85% thought LSI had a positive impact on achieving permanency faster.
- 90% said LSI paralegals expertly performed search activities to identify adult relatives.
- 90% said LSI paralegals promptly and properly prepared court documents.
- 81% said LSI paralegals testimony in court is clear and concise and effectively assists attorneys. (Note: approximately 80 respondents indicated not applicable (n/a) for this statement).
- 90% stated the LSI paralegals, coordinators and division managers actively participate in collaborative meetings and workgroups.

- 86% thought the LSI legal training specialists provide effective trainings to CYS and SWAN staff.

Lastly, 88% indicated that all children placed in out of home care receive assistance from LSI staff, and 83% responded their LSI program is tailored to their county needs.

The prime contract has initiated several LSI stakeholder surveys since its implementation in 2002, and responses continue to indicate that LSI services are well received and assist in the permanency work counties perform.

For more information about the stakeholder survey, contact Mike Kovacevic, research and quality assurance manager, at mkovacevic@diakon-swan.org.

CY 890 Submissions Processed by PAE

As of January 12, 2015, CY890 forms are processed by the Pennsylvania Adoption Exchange (PAE). Please continue to submit CY890 forms through the SWAN portal or mail them to the address

shown on the form. Entering forms through the SWAN portal assures the most efficient transmission of information.

If you have any questions, please

contact your SWAN regional technical assistant.

Finalization Report

During calendar year 2014, 1,177 finalization units of service were completed. This compares quite favorably to the number completed 10 years earlier in calendar year 2004 where only 509 units of finalization were used in Pennsylvania.

SWAN finalization services are used for all ages of children from birth through age 18. Listed below are facts comparing how the service was used in 2004 and 2014.

- 106 teenagers received the finalization unit of

service in 2014. This is a 68% increase over the number of teenagers receiving this service in calendar year 2004 (N-63).

- The goal of the network is to move children to permanency more quickly. The average age of children for whom the finalization unit of service is used continues to get younger. In 2014, 561, or 48%, of the children finalized through SWAN were age 0–4. In 2004, 187 children age 0–4 received the finalization

unit of service. This is a 200% increase in the use of this unit of service for this age group.

- Children ages 5–12 represented 43% of all children finalized through SWAN in 2014 with 510 finalizations. This represents a 98% increase in the use of the finalization unit of service over 10 years. In 2004, 257 children ages 5-12 were finalized through SWAN.

No Old Forms!

As of January 1, 2015, the Pennsylvania Adoption Exchange (PAE) is no longer accepting outdated versions of the PAE registration forms. These are the Child Registration/Update Form (CY130) and

the Resource Family Registration and Update Form (CY131).

Current copies of the forms and instructions on how to complete them are at www.adoptpakids.org.

Please make copies of these current forms and destroy any CY130 and CY131 registration forms with a revision date prior to April 2014.



Visit us at

www.diakon-swan.org

Phone: 717-236-8490
Fax: 717-236-8510
471 JPLwick Drive
P.O. Box 4560
Harrisburg, Pa. 17111