

ADMINISTRATIVE UPDATES

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

Department of Human Services

April is National Child Abuse Prevention Month

Pennsylvania Family Support Alliance (PFSA), in partnership with OCYF, has planned several activities and events during April, Child Abuse Prevention Month. Additional activities and information about Child Abuse Prevention Month can be found at pafsa.org.

Throughout April: Blue Ribbon Campaign

The symbol for child abuse prevention is the blue ribbon. Wearing a blue ribbon during the month of April is a visual way for individuals to demonstrate they are taking a stand against child abuse and encouraging others to do the same.

Wednesday, April 2, 2025

- Wear blue in support of "Turn Pennsylvania Blue", as blue is the national symbolic color of child abuse prevention.
- Flag planting from Front Street to the Capitol steps in Harrisburg at 9:00 a.m.
- Annual PA Blue Ribbon Champions for Safe Kids Awards & Child Abuse Prevention Month Ceremony at the Capital Building Rotunda in Harrisburg at 10:30 a.m.

May - National Foster Care Month

May is National Foster Care Month. This year's theme from the Children's Bureau is "Centered on Family, Strengthened by Connections," and will honor the importance of family connections and authentic family engagement in decision-making. Listening to families and supporting the relationships they value most can enhance trust and improve the well-being of children and families.

Once again, OCYF will be issuing \$65,000 in mini grants to agencies and coalitions across the state to support recruitment and/or awareness events during the month of May. If you are having an event that you would like to have featured on the SWAN Facebook page, please contact Teresa

Musser at temusser@pa.gov or Lindsey Glezen at lglezen@pa.gov. All requests must be in the form of a picture (jpg or png).

To celebrate National Foster Care Month, Pennsylvania State Resource Family Association will be hosting two events during May for resource families:

- Harrisburg Senators Baseball Game and buffet picnic on May 24, 2025.
- Pittsburgh Pirates Game on May 10, 2025.

For tickets and information resource families can call 1-800-951-5151.

Child and Family Services Review – 2026

The Pennsylvania Department of Human Services, Office of Children, Youth and Families (OCYF), in partnership with the Child Welfare Resource Center (CWRC) has been planning and preparing for Round 4 of the Child and Family Services Reviews (CFSRs). The US Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Children's Bureau, oversees and administers CFSRs. While Pennsylvania's Round 4 onsite review of the CFSR is scheduled to be in 2026, OCYF and CWRC are engaging system and community partners in preparation for the upcoming CFSR. Please refer to the attached flyer on page 9, which provides a foundational overview of the CFSR process and requirements.

Child Abuse Recognition and Reporting Trainings

Effective January 1, 2025, the Department of Human Services (DHS) will no longer accept new Child Abuse Recognition and Reporting Training Curriculum for review and approval. All Child Abuse Recognition and Reporting Trainings that are currently approved by DHS will maintain approval.

All Child Abuse Recognition and Reporting Training Curriculum that were submitted to DHS prior to January 1, 2025 will be reviewed as outlined in the [Curriculum Approval Guidelines](#). All approved providers must update their curriculum and submit for DHS approval when legislative changes occur to the Child Protective Services Law.

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Individuals or organizations who need to take a Child Abuse Recognition and Reporting Training may still use any of the curricula that are on [the approved list of courses](#).

Additional information related to approved providers of Mandated Reporter Training can be found on the Keep Kids Safe website. DHS will continue to monitor the number of approved curricula to ensure there is sufficient training available for mandated reporters.

Promoting Educational Stability for Youth

The Division of Policy continues to facilitate quarterly meetings with county children and youth agencies (CCYAs) and the Office of Children, Youth and Families Regional Office to provide technical assistance, promote collaboration, and highlight new initiatives and successes promoting educational stability for children involved with dependency court. Quarterly sessions also help to bridge communication gaps when identified and support [the roles and responsibilities](#) of CCYAs. For more information, please visit [Education Stability by Child Welfare Services | Department of Human Services | Commonwealth of Pennsylvania](#).

To be added to the quarterly sessions or for general inquiries or requests for assistance regarding educational stability for youth served by CCYAs, contact RA-PWOCYFEDUCATION@pa.gov.

Additionally, The Pennsylvania Department of Education, the Pennsylvania Department of Human Services, and the Center for Schools and Communities continue to work together to ensure school stability and school success for children and youth in foster care.

For Pennsylvania foster care education training and technical assistance, please visit pafostercare.org. For general inquiries or assistance, please contact [Education Stability for Children and Youth in Foster Care in Pennsylvania](#).

Final Rule, Separate Licensing Standards for Relative or Kinship Foster Family Homes

On September 28, 2023, the Children’s Bureau, Administration for Children and Families (ACF) issued a final rule amending regulations to allow Title IV-E agencies to claim Title IV-E federal financial participation for the cost of foster care maintenance payments on behalf of an otherwise eligible child who is placed in a relative or kinship licensed or approved foster family home when the agency uses different licensing standards for relative or kinship foster family homes and non-relative/non-kinship foster family homes. Prior to the publication of this new rule, federal regulations required Title IV-E agencies to use the same licensing standards for both kin and non-kin

caregivers, disregarding the unique needs of kinship homes.

This new rule encourages Title IV-E agencies to develop separate kinship-specific licensing standards that place as few burdens on relative and kinship families as possible, limited to federal requirements only, such as the safety requirements in sections 471(a)(10)(A) and (a)(20) of the Social Security Act. In addition, the new rule requires Title IV-E agencies to provide all licensed or approved relative or kinship foster family homes with the same amount of foster care maintenance payments that would have been made if the child was placed in a licensed or approved unrelated foster family home.

According to the federal rule, states may elect to establish separate kinship-specific licensing standards that are in accord with recommended standards of national organizations for foster family homes related to:

- Admission policies, safety, sanitation, and protection of civil rights,
- Use of the reasonable and prudent parenting standard; and,
- Procedures for criminal records checks, including fingerprint-based checks of national crime information databases.

OCYF consulted with DHS Executive Offices, including the Office of General Counsel, Office of Legislative Affairs, and the DHS Executive Policy Office on the process to implement separate kinship-specific licensing standards. Upon consultation, it was determined that a legislative amendment would be required to allow for the implementation of separate kinship-specific licensing standards.

OCYF continues to work closely with these offices on the process to introduce a legislative amendment. OCYF intends to share the proposed standards for comment and feedback from community partners. More information will be forthcoming in the next several months.

Voluntary Resolution Agreement Between Pennsylvania Department of Human Services and the Federal Office of Civil Rights

In July 2023, the Department of Human Services (DHS) and the Federal Office of Civil Rights (OCR) entered into a Voluntary Resolution Agreement (VRA) to resolve a complaint filed alleging discrimination, specifically withholding participation in services, based on an Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)-defined condition. DHS, and by extension, the Office of Children, Youth and Families (OCYF) receives federal funding, including Foster Care Title IV-E and Social Services Block

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Grant from the Administration of Children and Families.

As a recipient of federal financial assistance, DHS OCYF and its program offices, including county children and youth agencies (CCYAs) and agencies with which they contract, are obligated to comply with federal civil rights laws and is subject to Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and its implementing regulations. Section 504 prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability in all operations of any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance. Additionally, as a public entity providing state government services, DHS OCYF is obligated to comply with Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act and its implementing regulation. Title II prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability by state and local government agencies, including denying opportunities to benefit from services and failing to reasonably modify policies and procedures. By entering into the agreement DHS OCYF affirmed that it will comply with all provisions of Section 504 and Title II of the ADA. To ensure compliance by DHS OCYF and the county children and youth agencies, OCR outlined several requirements that apply to OCYF and the county children and youth agencies. To transmit these requirements to CCYAs, OCYF has issued a series of Special Transmittals.

OCYF and CCYAs have been working to meet the requirements set by the VRA. The first Special Transmittal, released on September 1, 2023, provided CCYAs with information on the development of a Notice of Nondiscrimination and the Grievance Procedure. The second Special Transmittal, released on December 21, 2023, provided CCYAs with information on the development and implementation of the county's Nondiscrimination Policy and Procedure. The third Special Transmittal, released on April 9, 2024, outlines requirements for staff training and verification of training. These training requirements extended to CCYAs and the agencies with which they contract. All staff involved in the provision of child welfare services to children and families were required to take the approved training, *Supporting Children and Families with Disabilities*, by July 31, 2024. OCYF worked in collaboration with CWRC to create the *Supporting Children and Families with Disabilities* training. This training has been approved by the federal OCR and meets the requirements of the VRA.

Pennsylvania has entered the second and final year of the Voluntary Resolution Agreement ([PA VRA](#)). The agreement stipulates that all child protective services programs, services, and activities that DHS administers, oversees, or provides directly or through the CCYAs or through sub-recipients or contractors take the Supporting Children and Families with Disabilities Year 2 training before July

30, 2025. Those who took the training in Year 1 must take the training again in Year 2, along with new staff who meet the requirement criteria. The Year 2 VRA training can be accessed via [Supporting Children and Families with Disabilities - e-learn.pitt.edu](#). Contracted agencies are required to use the new attestation form for year two to attest that all required individuals from their organization have taken the training. The form can be located at [Attestation of Supporting Children and Families with Disabilities Training - Year 2 \(office.com\)](#). If you have any questions about the training or the VRA, please reach out to ra-pwocyf-adaresource@pa.gov.

Act 114 of 2024

On March 4, 2025, OCYF Bulletin 3800-25-01, entitled "Act 114 of 2024 – Pregnant, Laboring, Or Postpartum Children In Facilities" was released. This Bulletin contains the most current information regarding pregnant, laboring, or postpartum children in Chapter 3800 Child Residential and Day Treatment Facilities, Youth Development Centers, and Youth Forestry Camps, and rescinds and replaces OCYF Bulletin 3800-10-01.

With the implementation of Act 114 of 2024, OCYF has revised its guidance and corresponding CY-978 Pregnant, Laboring, or Postpartum Child Restraint Reporting Form. This Bulletin reflects the following changes: prohibits placing a pregnant, laboring or postpartum child in seclusion, prohibits restraints and body cavity searches unless certain criteria are met (including reporting requirements), outlines new training criteria for staff and pregnant children, and requires a trauma-informed approach. The Bulletin also introduces menstrual hygiene and maternal health requirements.

OCYF's goal in releasing the updated guidance is to provide a document with all relevant information in one location. Please replace the previous version of the Bulletin and CY-978 Restraint Reporting Form you may have saved so you have the most accurate documents for reference and reporting.

OCYF Trauma Team

The OCYF Trauma Team would like to remind everyone about the release of trauma-sensitive training for Congregate Care providers entitled, Developing Trauma Sensitivity for Congregate Care Staff. This training can be found on the Child Welfare Resource Center's E-learn Catalog #2506. Trauma-sensitive training for foster care and adoption providers will be available in 2025.

Work continues on the [DHS Trauma-Informed Care](#) webpage. The webpage is currently under construction and will soon feature additional

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resources and information, along with a visual update.

During the 2025 Pennsylvania Permanency Conference, the OCYF Trauma Team, in collaboration with DHS, will host a Sensitivity Suite, an environment to unwind and regain balance. We invite you to make use of this space at your discretion during the 2025 Pennsylvania Permanency Conference. Enjoy your time in the suite and return to the conference feeling refreshed.

For any inquiries related to the OCYF Trauma Team's work, please contact the resource account at RA-pwocfytrauma@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 and Substance Abuse Services in contracting with Lakeside Global Institute to provide Pennsylvania child welfare professionals with **FREE trauma training**. A child welfare professional includes anyone who serves children and families who live in Pennsylvania. This applies to professionals or organizations that work to improve the lives of children and families.

Register now through September 2025.

Interested in workshops? [Click here.](#)

Interested in the Intensive Courses? [Click here.](#)

Questions relating to any of these trainings, shall be directed to Beth Hall at: bethh@lakesidetraining.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. OCYF received ACF's findings and recommendations on September 16, 2024. OCYF leadership is working with ACF to implement recommendations and strategies to improve PA's NYTD data collection. Questions related to the NYTD Review can be directed to Teresa Musser at temusser@pa.gov.

National Youth in Transition Database (NYTD)

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 5 for 19-year-old Follow-up Surveys. The 2025 A period ended on March 31, 2025, with all data from follow-up surveys and served population for this reporting period due by April 15, 2025. Counties can log onto www.getnytdpa.org to enter their served and survey data. The 2025 B period started immediately following the A period on April 1, 2025, with all data to be submitted by October 15, 2025. NYTD questions can be directed to Lindsey Glezen at linglezen@pa.gov or 717-787-7056.

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 2025-2026 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)) mid to late April. Once the application has been released, OCYF will issue an announcement on the IL listserv and SWAN/IL Google Groups listserv.

As a reminder, current ETG award recipients will automatically be enrolled for the next academic year and do not need to complete another ETG application. The ETG award amount cannot exceed the student's cost of attendance.

Questions regarding the ETG program can be directed to Lindsey Glezen at linglezen@pa.gov or at 717-787-7056. Youth who have questions related to their ETG application can contact PHEAA at 1-800-831-0797.

Fostering Independence Tuition Waiver Program

The Fostering Independence through Education Program, known as FosterEd, requires Pennsylvania post-secondary 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.

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

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 POCs can be found on the Center for Schools and Communities website at [Foster Care Contact Directory \(center-school.org\)](http://FosterCareContactDirectory(center-school.org)).

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

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](#). Each Credit Bureau has a specific contact person and process to ensure foster care youths' credit history checks are completed appropriately. If you have questions regarding credit report requirements or need assistance obtaining a credit history from one of the Credit Bureaus, please contact Lindsey Glezen at linglezen@pa.gov or at 717-787-7056.

New Student Loan Repayment Loan Options

The US Department of Education announced the [reopening of two student loan repayment plans](#) to give borrowers more options to keep their payments affordable. Please share with anyone who might benefit from having this information.

The Income-Contingent Repayment (ICR) and Pay As You Earn (PAYE) repayment plans offer income-driven repayment (IDR) and credit for Public Service Loan Forgiveness (PSLF) to eligible borrowers enrolled in the currently [enjoined Saving on a Valuable Education \(SAVE\) Plan](#), as well as other terms that borrowers may wish to consider.

- As income-driven repayment plans, ICR and PAYE set monthly payments based on borrowers' earnings and family size and have allowed borrowers to earn loan forgiveness after 20 to 25 years. Many public servants use them to keep their payments low as they work to earn PSLF after just 10 years.

- The ICR and PAYE applications are available at StudentAid.gov/idr.
- To apply, borrowers need to log into their StudentAid.gov account and upload income information.
- The US Department of Education authorized new enrollments in the plans through regulatory changes.
- ICR and PAYE plans will remain available to new enrollments until July 1, 2027.

Pennsylvania Permanency Barriers Initiatives – American Bar Association (ABA)

The ABA's Center on Children and the Law Permanency Barriers Project is actively seeking new projects 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 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: [PA Permanency Project \(americanbar.org\)](http://PAPermanencyProject(americanbar.org)) or contact Heidi Redlich Epstein at heidi.epstein@americanbar.org.

For more information on the Education Barriers to Permanency Project please see: [Education Barriers to Permanency Project \(americanbar.org\)](http://EducationBarriersToPermanencyProject(americanbar.org)) or contact Kathleen McNaught at kathleen.mcnaught@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

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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 \(psrfa.org\)](#).

If you have any questions or would like additional information, you can contact the PSRFA office at 1-800-951-5151 or email dkinard@psrfa.org or klramper@psrfa.org.

CWEL and CWEB Programs

Child Welfare Education for Leadership (CWEL)

The CWEL Program strengthens Pennsylvania public child welfare services by providing graduate-level educational opportunities for current public child welfare professionals at 13 partner graduate schools. Counties and OCYF approve students for either full-time or part-time participation; all students accepted into the program receive tuition and fees at the in-state rate, reimbursement for books, and other benefits. Full-time students are also granted an educational leave from their jobs and their county employers receive reimbursement for the student's salary and benefits. Upon graduation, a work commitment at their county agency is required. In fall 2024, 51 new students were admitted to the CWEL program.

Additional information is available at: [Child Welfare Education for Leadership \(CWEL\) | School of Social Work | University of Pittsburgh](#).

Child Welfare Education for Baccalaureates (CWEB)

For the 2024-2025 academic year, seven new schools were added to the statewide CWEB consortium. The partnership has expanded to include these undergraduate social work programs:

Alvernia University, Cedar Crest College, Elizabethtown College, Juniata College, Lancaster Bible College, Messiah University, and Misericordia University.

The CWEB program is now present in 22 schools across the state, which provides additional opportunities for senior social work majors to prepare for public child welfare employment. CWEB student's complete child welfare coursework, enroll in Foundations training, and engage in a child welfare practicum in one of the 67 county child welfare agencies. They are ready to join the workforce immediately following graduation. Students accepted into the program receive tuition and fees at the in-state rate for their senior year, fellowship payments during their internship, a bonus upon graduation, and more. Upon graduation, a one-year work commitment in a Pennsylvania public child welfare agency is

required. In fall 2024, 38 new students were admitted into the CWEB program.

For more information, visit [Child Welfare Education for Baccalaureates | School of Social Work | University of Pittsburgh](#).

The CWEL and CWEB Teams are available to provide presentations to County Commissioners, Advisory Boards, Agency Leadership Teams, Agency Staff Members, and Independent Living Programs. For more information and to schedule a presentation, please contact Laura Borish, CWEL Agency Coordinator at lbb14@pitt.edu or 412-334-9122.

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 Kinconnector.org and the 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 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 on the Accurint software, please contact Accurint Education Consultant Bill News at William.News@lexisnexisrisk.com or 215-285-7108.

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Additionally, you can look up trainings on the National Training Calendar ([Learning Center | LexisNexis Risk Solutions](#)). If you have any questions about Accurint or to set up a non-user administrator account, please contact Jessica Andrews-Slagel at jandrewssl@pa.gov or 717-787-2726.

Mandated Reporter Training

Pennsylvania Family Support Alliance (PFSA) offers virtual and in-person, three-hour, Mandated Reporter Trainings (MRT) at no cost to mandated reporters in Pennsylvania. PFSA also offers trainings with Spanish translators, American Sign Language and Certified Deaf Interpreter translations.

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" and "Recognizing and Responding to Child Abuse and Neglect", for mandated reporters who have taken Mandated Reporter Training before and need to take it again. The "Responding to Disclosures of Child Abuse" training is designed to help participants respond to disclosures of child abuse in a way that is sensitive and supportive to the child, but without tainting the child's memory. The "Recognizing and Responding to Child Abuse and Neglect", helps participants recognize the signs of neglect, determine when and how to make a referral, and increase understanding of General Protective Services and agency procedures.

All trainings utilize a child abuse recognition and reporting training curriculum approved by DHS in consultation with the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) as well as approved by the Department of State (DOS) for persons requiring continuing education credit toward licensure or certification.

PFSA also offers a specialized Residential Care Facility Training (RCFT) for individuals who are employed by organizations and agencies licensed under Title 55, Chapter 3800, Child Residential and Day Treatment Facilities. The RCFT Program provides information to appropriately identify recordable, reportable, and suspected child abuse incidents, as well as information about documentation, minimal facts interviewing and development and implementation of plans of supervision for staff who are under investigation of suspected child abuse. Additional information and training dates can be found on the PSFA website at pafsa.org. For questions or to schedule a specific session for your organization, please email PFSA at training@pa-fsa.org.

The Pennsylvania Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics (PA-AAP) offers Mandated

Reporter Trainings, specifically for Primary Care Physicians (and their staff), Hospitals, Emergency Medical Services and School Nurses, through their Suspected Child Abuse and Neglect (SCAN) program. To schedule in-person or virtual training for medical professionals, contact PA-AAP at scan@paaap.org or call 866-823-7226.

Media Campaign

The #MeetTheKids media campaign is designed to recruit foster and adoptive families across Pennsylvania. The campaign started airing on network and cable television in November 2024 and will continue through February 2025. It will resume in May 2025 and will be broadcast in all six media markets in Pennsylvania. Radio advertisements began in November 2024, continued through December 2024, and will air again in May 2025. In addition to television and radio, the media campaign includes online media ads on Google, Hulu, Facebook, Instagram and Cumulus will also start in November and will continue through February 2025 and then again in May 2025.

While this media campaign airs, agencies should be prepared to promptly respond to phone calls from prospective foster and adoptive families.

Waiting Child Segments

OCYF is pleased to inform the network that two additional television stations will feature waiting child segments. Effective immediately, WJAC (serving the Johnstown area) and WSEE/WICU (covering the Erie area) have agreed to partner with DHS/OCYF and are ready to schedule and air waiting child segments. These new partnerships provide the opportunity to enhance child specific recruitment efforts across the Commonwealth.

Please contact, Katie Juliana at kjuliana@diakon-swan.org to schedule children or youth to be featured on WJAC and Nic Landon at nlandon@diakon-swan.org to schedule children or youth to be featured on WSEE/WICU.

All agencies are encouraged to utilize these new waiting child segment partners and to continue to utilize KDKA, WHTM and WBRE. Waiting child segments have proven to be successful over the years in helping find permanent homes for children in foster care.

As a reminder, *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.

If you have a child you would like featured on KDKA's Waiting Child, please contact Ja-Neen

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Jones at TRAC Services for Families at jjones@tracpgh.org or Nikita Lewis at nlewis@diakion-swan.org.

If you have a waiting child you would like featured on WHTM's Val's Kids, please contact Alfredo Gonzalez at algonzalez@diakon-swan.org.

If you have a waiting child you would like featured on WBRE's A Little Love, please contact Crissy Crawford at ccrawford@diakon-swan.org.

SWAN/IL Google Groups

The SWAN/IL Listserv, hosted through Google Groups, serves as an excellent platform for network members to share confidential information, waiting families, waiting children, matching events, and post-permanency resources. It also provides opportunities to seek advice from colleagues and announce upcoming events. Membership is limited to employees of county children and youth agencies, SWAN affiliate agencies, or IL providers. 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 Interstate Compact for the Placement of Children (ICPC) home studies, 100Bs, supervisory reports, Interstate Compact on Adoption and Medical Assistance (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) Mwaniki at nmwaniki@pa.gov.

Clearance Verification Unit

Childline's Clearance 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). Applicants can 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 applications 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.Indentogo.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 [Keep Kids Safe | Department of Human Services | Commonwealth of Pennsylvania](#) 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

CFSR Round 4 is Coming to Pennsylvania!

Child and Family Services Reviews (CFSRs) are a joint local, state, and federal effort designed to:

Ensure compliance with federal child welfare requirements;

Learn what is happening with children and families in the child welfare system; and

Help states to achieve safety, permanency, and well-being for children and families.

CFSR involves the following phases:

STATEWIDE ASSESSMENT

This phase collects and provides evidence to the federal government to demonstrate the effectiveness of the state's child welfare system.

ONSITE REVIEWS

Assess the state's child welfare outcomes through case reviews and stakeholder interviews.

PROGRAM IMPROVEMENT PLAN (PIP)

Develop a plan to address the state's areas needing improvement, implement it, and monitor our progress.

Planning and preparations are underway for CFSR Round 4 to begin in 2026.

Look for more information to come as planning continues!



Pennsylvania
Department of Human Services
Office of Children, Youth, and Families



To learn more now, go to [Understanding the CFSRs](#).

Email PACFSR@pitt.edu with any questions or requests for additional information.

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

Thanking the Network for Support at SWAN Events

The Pennsylvania Adoption Exchange (PAE) would like to extend our thanks to everyone who helped make SWAN's display at the 2025 Farm Show a success. Thirteen affiliate agencies joined prime contract staff at the SWAN booth. We talked to nearly 1,300 families and gave away 2,104 rubber ducks.

We also want to express gratitude for a successful Winter Statewide SWAN/IL Matching Reception. This was one of the best-attended Winter Matching Receptions on record; 22 families registered and 19 families attended. Additionally, 66 affiliate agencies attended and provided a matching table. These successes in outreach to families couldn't have happened without you!

Practice Tip Regarding PAE Status

When asking a PAE coordinator for children/youth to no longer be on "active" status, we'd like to remind caseworkers to share the reasons for that change. This accelerates the process and avoids having to reach back out with questions. Some reasons may still prompt a response from the coordinator, but providing a reason helps us formulate the next steps.

Some common reasons include:

- The child/youth is now considered matched. *(If so, great! Please tell us the family's name and PAE # and how the match occurred);*
- There's overwhelming interest in the child/youth, and you need time to sort through the mountain of interested families. *(If so, we will follow up in three weeks to see if the child/youth needs to be made active again or if a family has been identified);* or
- Child/youth has been hospitalized or is otherwise "unstable" *(If this is the case, know that we advocate for ongoing recruitment; it's a process and shouldn't stop just because the child/youth is going through a rough spot.)*

If you have any questions about PAE statuses, contact your county's PAE coordinator.

Permanency Roundtables (PRTs) See Continued Successes

In the last quarter of state fiscal year 2024-25 (October to December 2024) 18 counties actively participated in PRTs, with Butler County newly implementing the practice. A total of 91 children

were reviewed, including four newly introduced to PRTs. Six youth achieved permanency through adoption, permanent legal custodianship (PLC) or reunification. In the current fiscal year, 11 children achieved permanency and 191 have been served.

Notable success stories this quarter include the involvement of key kinship resources in PRT collaboration meetings and advocacy from county caseworkers to ensure access to essential mental health services. These efforts highlight the ongoing work across the Commonwealth to provide comprehensive support to children and youth in care. PRT meetings continue to facilitate case planning and follow-ups for youth working toward permanency.

Counties interested in participating should reach out to their SWAN regional technical assistant for more information.

SWAN LSI Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)

The SWAN LSI MOU (agreement to implement the SWAN LSI program) was deployed to county children and youth agencies (CCYAs) in January 2025. For the first time, this process was streamlined for many counties by using DocuSign technology. The agreement will remain in effect until the next MOU is signed by all parties, and at the discretion of DHS, the term may be renewed automatically for two six-month periods (from July 1, 2025 to December 31, 2025 and January 1, 2026 to June 30, 2026).

The prime contractor wants to thank CCYAs that have already reviewed and signed off on the current MOU. SWAN LSI coordinators and division managers are available to support counties who have not yet completed the MOU process. CCYAs can contact their assigned SWAN LSI coordinator with questions about the MOU process or other LSI-related matters.

Coming in 2025: SWAN LSI Incarceration Resource Manual, 5th Edition

SWAN LSI is on track to release the 5th edition of the *SWAN LSI Incarceration Resource Manual (IRM)* in 2025. SWAN LSI released the original IRM to help address the impact of parental incarceration on children in the child welfare system. The IRM was developed as a comprehensive tool for child welfare professionals to use for case planning with incarcerated parents and as a resource to support the county agencies' efforts to engage with these parties. The information contained within can be applied in many ways to strengthen the child/parent connection, including contact between the incarcerated parent and child, parent-child

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visitation and permanency. The IRM 4th edition is available in [the SWAN Permanency Toolkit](#). If you have any updates about county prison policies or procedures, email lsi-irmupdates@diakon-swan.org.

Legal Training Supporting IRM Update

To support the release of the newest edition of the SWAN LSI Incarceration Resource Manual, we want to highlight the ongoing legal training opportunities available. These sessions are designed to bolster understanding of critical legal intersections and equip participants with the tools necessary for effective advocacy.

For example, the training, *The Intersection of Criminal Law and Child Welfare*, is crucial for understanding how criminal proceedings impact dependency cases. This training provides participants with essential knowledge on topics such as the interplay between Pennsylvania's crimes code and child welfare laws, the impact of criminal proceedings on permanency planning, and relevant legal terminology. This training was delivered at the SWAN/IL Winter Statewide Meeting, and will be offered at the upcoming Summer Statewide Meeting. Take advantage of this training opportunity to maximize your use of the new manual and strengthen your practice.

For further information, or to have this training brought to a county near you, please contact your SWAN LSI coordinator.

SWAN LSI Diligent Search Packet Supports Concurrent Planning and Legislative Mandates

Concurrent planning is foundational to casework practice. The four goals of concurrent planning align with the efforts of SWAN, and specifically, the activities conducted by SWAN LSI paralegals:

- To promote the safety, permanency and well-being of children and youth in out-of-home care;
- To achieve timely permanency for children and youth through early permanency decisions;
- To reduce the number of moves in the foster care system for children; and
- To engage families and relatives early and foster significant relationships between children in out-of-home care and their family/kin.

SWAN LSI paralegals can support searches for: locating parents, Fostering Connections (within 30 days of a child entering care), connections for older youth, locating connections for case planning, child specific recruitment or OCMI referrals and compliance with the *Indian Child*

Welfare Act. Nearly every child involved in child welfare services will benefit from search activities at some point in their case.

The SWAN LSI Diligent Search Packet is a tool developed for the network to support concurrent planning, search and engagement and best practice. *The Diligent Search Packet* is the go-to resource for anyone conducting a search for missing parents, or to locate and engage kin in case planning, or if out-of-home placement is needed. A current edition of *The Diligent Search Packet* can be found on the [SWAN Permanency Toolkit](#).

If you would like to request training on diligent search, contact your assigned SWAN LSI coordinator (counties) or SWAN regional technical assistant (affiliates).

SWAN LSI Remains Consistent in its Mission to Overcome Legal Barriers to Permanency

Recent data reviews and analysis of trends over the last five years show that SWAN LSI paralegals continue to be a force in the battle to break down legal barriers to permanency for Pennsylvania children in foster care.

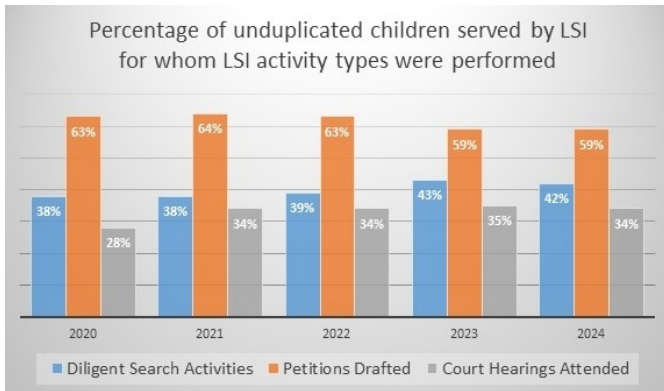
- From January 1 through December 31, 2024, LSI paralegals performed **18,760** total diligent search activities for **10,326** unique children. This represents **42%** of the 24,650 children who had LSI involvement during this time period. This percentage of children who received diligent search intervention **is up 4%** over the last five years, as illustrated in the graph below.
- During the same 2024 calendar year, LSI paralegals prepared **37,970** combined Juvenile and Orphans' Court petitions for **14,510** unique children. This means that at least one petition was drafted **for 59%** of all LSI-involved children. Additionally, LSI paralegals attended Court hearings for **8,364** unique children, representing **34%** of all LSI-involved children.
- Five years ago, LSI paralegals attended Court for only 28% of all involved children, so it is encouraging to see that CCYAs and the Courts are increasingly taking advantage of the special training and expertise of LSI paralegals for support in the courtroom.

The full five-year breakdown for these three LSI activity types can be viewed below, each bar represents the percentage of all children served by LSI for whom each activity type was performed.

In 2025, SWAN's Research and Quality Assurance Division will continue to assess LSI program data to determine where the program is having the greatest impact and identify areas where SWAN

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LSI can provide additional support to CCYAs to help overcome legal barriers to permanency.



Spring 2025 “Zoom In On Practice” Virtual Training

Hone your permanency practice at the upcoming spring virtual trainings featuring:

- SWAN Family Matching**
 Family Matching training will focus on practice implementation of the SWAN Family Matching Benchmarks. The training will address completion of required documents and the process of exchanging, requesting and reviewing information with waiting families. Then, participants will explore the interview, selection and decision-making process that happens after a child is identified.
- SWAN and Permanency: A Collaborative Journey**
 This interactive training is designed to be presented to individuals unfamiliar with the SWAN program or as a refresher for experienced staff. The training explores the importance of permanency for all youth placed in out-of-home care and how incorporation of the SWAN Units of Service support the permanency journey. An introduction to PRTs as a tool to expedite legal permanency is included.

An invitation with upcoming “Zoom In On Practice” training dates and times and registration info will be sent to agency SWAN contacts. If you have any questions about registering, please contact your SWAN regional technical assistant.

ACT 101 Training: Save the Date

The next *Act 101 of 2010 Training Program for Court and Agency Appointed Authorized Representatives* is planned for **Wednesday, January 7, 2026, from 9:00 am – 4:00 pm** at

300 Corporate Center Dr.
 Camp Hill, PA, 17011

(Note: This meeting space is in the building adjacent to the SWAN prime contractor’s office.)

Per Act 101, counties and agencies shall appoint an Authorized Representative to fulfill the duties of Act 101 regarding adoption searches and requests for information. This training is designed for PA’s newly appointed Authorized Representatives.

Please mark this date on your calendars. A registration link will be provided closer to the training by your SWAN RTA. Questions about the Act 101 Training can be directed to Technical Assistance Division Manager Kelly Weston at kweston@diakon-swan.org.

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 /adoptpakids
 /adoptpa

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

Older Youth Retreat

Please save the date for the 2025 Older Youth Retreat, which will be held July 28 – August 1st, 2025. Additional information regarding the event can be found at <https://www.payab.pitt.edu/ILRetreat.htm>.

Independent Living (IL) Worker of the Year Award Nomination Form

New this year at the Older Youth Retreat, an award will be given to recognize an IL worker of the year. The *Independent Living Worker of the Year Award* is an opportunity for youth to recognize an exceptional Independent Living professional in Pennsylvania who has positively impacted their life. The IL professional can be nominated by any youth or alumni of the child welfare system ages 14-23 who currently receive IL or aftercare services through a county children and youth agency or private provider agency. To nominate an IL professional, youth must complete the nomination form, which can be accessed through the QR code below, no later than May 2, 2025.



Older Youth Services Agency of the Year Award Nomination Form

The *Older Youth Services Agency of the Year Award* will recognize an agency in Pennsylvania that is exceptional and positively impacts the lives of older youth and alumni. An agency can be nominated by any youth or alumni of the child welfare system ages 14-23 who currently receives

services through a county children and youth agency or private provider agency in Pennsylvania. To nominate an agency, youth must complete the nomination form which can be accessed by the QR code below, no later than May 2, 2025.

Both awards will be presented at the 2025 Older Youth Retreat. If you have any questions regarding the either form or nomination process, please contact Meghan O'Hare at meo43@pitt.edu.



Youth Advisory Board (YAB) Leadership Summit

The PA YAB will hold its 2025 Leadership Summit June 11 – 12th, 2025, at the Child Welfare Resource Center. This event allows youth from across the state to participate in trainings, workshops, and networking opportunities with youth and staff from different regions across the state. This event is youth-led and continues to be an opportunity for youth to display leadership skills, develop youth friendly resources, and improve public speaking skills. If you have questions regarding this event or have youth who would be interested in attending, please contact your YAB Regional Coordinator <https://www.payab.pitt.edu/YABRegions.htm>.

YAB members play an active role in shaping policy recommendations and advocating for systemic change. They speak up about the challenges youth in care face and directly participate in developing solutions at the county, regional and statewide levels. Through meetings, forums and discussions with child welfare professionals and policymakers, YAB ensures that youth voices are heard where decisions are being made. By actively engaging in these spaces, youth influence policies that impact

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their lives, helping to create a more youth-centered child welfare system. *Please like and follow us on Facebook and Instagram.*

YAB and CRP: Empowering Foster Youth for Independence

The Youth Advisory Board (YAB) is a vital part of the Citizens Review Panels (CRP) and is one of four panels across the state that assess and improve the child welfare system. YAB consists of young people with lived experience in foster care who advocate for policy changes that directly impact youth in care, ensuring that youth perspectives shape the panel's broader mission.

The CRP is a federally mandated group responsible for evaluating child welfare practices and ensuring they are effective, transparent and responsive to the needs of youth and families across Pennsylvania. Currently, the YAB is focusing on key initiatives, including pregnant and parenting youth, normalcy, banking and budget management and an additional area aimed at improving the experiences of youth in care.

NYTD Council for Youth

The NYTD Council for Youth is an exciting new initiative aimed at empowering youth with lived experience in foster care to provide valuable feedback and insights that will influence state-level policy decisions. The council will allow youth to engage in discussions about their needs, challenges and opportunities, giving them a platform to shape the future of youth services. By fostering a sense of community and shared purpose, the council will also focus on developing leadership skills, advocacy and providing a space for peer support. This new initiative underscores the importance of youth participation in policymaking and ensures that youth voices are integral in shaping the programs and services that affect them. More information will be provided as the council develops and as resources become available.

YAB Resources

The Statewide Youth Advisory Board recently finalized the following documents that can be found at <https://www.payab.pitt.edu/Resources-Permanency.htm>.

Essentials For Youth Entering Foster Care

Entering foster care can be a challenging and emotional experience but understanding your rights and knowing where to find support can help make the transition smoother. This guide will

provide essential information to help youth navigate the foster care system, covering important aspects such as establishing safety plans, managing personal belongings and understanding your educational rights. It highlights the significance of accessing mental health resources, advocating for yourself legally and staying connected with family members and support networks. This resource also emphasizes opportunities for stipends, connecting with peers, and the role of services like SWAN. With these tools and resources, youth can feel empowered to advocate for themselves, maintain their identity and transition more confidently toward independence.

Guiding Youth Through the Transition Out of Foster Care

The transition out of foster care can be a complex and challenging process, but with the right tools and resources, youth can successfully navigate their journey to independence. This guide will highlight key resources that support youth in areas such as education, career planning, financial management, housing and mental health services. It empowers youth to understand their rights, advocate for themselves and build strong, supportive relationships with peers, mentors and community resources. The guide also covers important aspects such as reentering foster care if eligible, the National Youth in Transition Database (NYTD) survey for feedback, and specific support for parenting youth. It includes essential tools like the Aftercare Checklist, educational programs, housing resources, Independent Living (IL) aftercare services and advocacy support. By utilizing these resources, youth can build resilience, develop life skills, and transition into adulthood with confidence, ensuring they have the support and knowledge necessary to thrive in their next chapter.

The Benefits of Staying in Care: A Pathway to Success

This document will emphasize the numerous advantages of remaining in foster care in Pennsylvania, showcasing the critical role that extended care plays in supporting youth as they transition into adulthood. By staying in care until age 21, youth gain access to a variety of essential resources and services that help them build a strong foundation for independent living. These include emotional support, stability, educational opportunities, health and wellness services and life skills development, all aimed at ensuring a successful and secure future. Key benefits include consistent emotional support from mentors, caseworkers and professionals, which fosters

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strong, trusting relationships that provide a sense of stability. Youth who remain in care are more likely to experience stable housing, financial independence and higher education success, with significantly improved rates of high school graduation and college enrollment compared to peers who age out at 18. Extended foster care also offers access to crucial health services, including regular checkups, mental health support, and continued coverage under Medicaid through the Affordable Care Act (ACA) until the age of 26. Additionally, programs like the Chafee Foster Care Program, the Pennsylvania Independent Living Program (ILP), and CareerLink provide financial literacy, housing support, career counseling, and job training that equip youth with the skills necessary for successful independence.

Staff Updates

Please join us in welcoming our newest staff member: **Carl Butler IV**, Youth Quality Improvement Specialist. Carl's role focuses on providing project management for the PA YAB and working closely with our two Youth Ambassadors. Please contact Carl with any YAB related questions CLB379@pitt.edu.

The Child Welfare Resource Center is seeking YAB Regional Consultants for the Northwest, South Central, and North Central regions. The purpose of the YAB consultants is to ensure grassroots advocacy efforts for older youth initiatives are supported at the local and regional levels. The consultants coordinate all activity and communication for the regional YABs including quarterly meetings, statewide YAB meetings, community service events and legislative initiatives. Each regional YAB is allocated funding to support advocacy efforts within their regions. The consultants assist with managing the funding, including documents, stipends, reimbursements and other purchase-reimbursable items.

Additionally, the consultants provide mentoring and coordinate professional development opportunities for the regional YAB. Please contact Cindy Gore at icg7@pitt.edu for additional information.

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:
Heidi Redlich Epstein, 202-662-1725
Heidi.Epstein@americanbar.org

This project is funded by the Pennsylvania Department of Human Services, Office of Children, Youth and Families.

ABA Education Barriers

to Permanency Project

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

The **ABA Education Barriers to Permanency Project** improves school experiences and outcomes for children in foster care to promote permanency and life success.

Key Principles

1. **School stability strengthens placement stability** and often speeds permanency for children and families.
2. **School success guides life success.** Focusing on the full educational experience (including needs and supports) improves school and life outcomes.
3. **Child welfare agencies, schools, and courts must work together** to create a support network for students in foster care.

How the Project Helps

The Education Barriers project can:

- ✓ **Identify strengths and challenges** child welfare agency, education, and court systems experience supporting education success for children in care.
- ✓ **Develop strategies, practices, and policies** to address challenges and improve education success for children in care.
- ✓ **Provide targeted technical assistance** to address needs and train educators, child welfare staff, and the legal community.
- ✓ **Collaborate on a long-term reform strategy** to address barriers and needs and implement reforms (see Full project components, right).

A Collaborative Approach



Full project components:

1. Identify education barriers.
2. Recommend and implement changes.
3. Work with child welfare, education, and court systems to develop and implement new policies and procedures.
4. Monitor improvements and changes.
5. Measure and report project results.

Get started today

The ABA Education Barriers to Permanency Project can work with your jurisdiction to promote permanency for children in foster care by addressing children's education needs. Contact us to get started or to learn more.



Kathleen McNaught, 202/662-1966



Kathleen.McNaught@americanbar.org



<http://www.abaeducationbarriers.org>