

**New York State's  
Child and Family Services Plan**

**Final Report  
(Revised)**

**FFY 2005-2009**

**And**

**Child and Family Services Plan**

**FFY 2010-2014**

**June 2009**

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**Vision:  
Safety, Permanence, and Well-Being  
For  
New York's Children and Families**

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**Mission Statement**

The Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS) serves New York's public by promoting the safety, permanency and well-being of our children, families and communities. We will achieve results by setting and enforcing policies, building partnerships, and funding and providing quality services.

**Agency Overview**

The New York State Office of Children and Family Services serves as the Title IV-B Agency for New York State. OCFS is dedicated to improving the integration of services for New York's children, youth, families and vulnerable populations; to promoting their development; and to protecting them from violence, neglect, abuse and abandonment. The agency provides a system of family support, juvenile justice, child care and child welfare services that promote the safety and well-being of children and adults.

OCFS is responsible for programs and services involving foster care, adoption and adoption assistance, child protective services including operating the Statewide Central Register for Child Abuse and Maltreatment, preventive services for children and families, and protective programs for vulnerable adults. OCFS is also responsible for the functions performed by the State Commission for the Blind and Visually Handicapped and coordinates state government response to the needs of Native Americans on reservations and in communities.

OCFS provides oversight and monitoring of regulated child care (family day care, group family day care, school-age child care and day care centers outside of NYC), legally exempt child care, child care subsidies, child care resource and referrals, and the Advantage After School Program, and also provides services and programs for infants, toddlers, pre-schoolers, and school-age children and their families.

OCFS is responsible for all elements of the state's juvenile justice programs, administering and managing residential facilities, community-based group homes, day-placement centers, and reception center programs for juvenile delinquents and juvenile offenders placed in the custody of the OCFS Commissioner.

OCFS operates twenty-four facilities, two reception centers, three community residential homes, and seven day-placement centers for youth placed in the custody of OCFS by family and criminal courts. There are also fifteen Community Multi-Services Offices statewide that are responsible for services to the youth and family from day one of OCFS placement. OCFS works closely with municipalities such as local social services districts and county youth bureaus so that adequate youth development services and programs are available at the local level.

The Executive Office of the New York State Office of Children and Family Services, encompassing the Office of the Commissioner, the Office of the Executive Deputy Commissioner, the NYC Executive Office, the Office of the Ombudsman, the Office of Equal Opportunity and Diversity Development, and Executive Services, provides overall leadership, management, coordination, and administration of agency operation and mission-driven priorities.

OCFS divides its responsibilities into two main areas: program and support. The program divisions/offices include: Division of Child Care Services (DCCS), Division of Child Welfare and Community Services (DCWCS), Division of Juvenile Justice and Opportunities for Youth (DJJOY), and the Commission for the Blind and Visually Handicapped (CBVH). The support divisions/offices include: Division of Administration (Admin), Division of Legal Affairs (Legal), Division of Information Technology (IT), Office of Communications (Communications), Office of Strategic Planning and Policy Development (SPPD), and the Office of Special Investigations (SI).

OCFS maintains regional offices in Buffalo, Rochester, Syracuse, Albany, Spring Valley, Long Island, and New York City to support agency programs and partnerships with stakeholders and providers.

## **Introduction**

The Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS) was established in 1998 to improve, strengthen and integrate services to the State's children, youth and other vulnerable populations. The creation of OCFS responded to a growing recognition of the

complexity and interrelatedness of today's problems and solutions. All children, youth and adults require the support of their families and communities. Fundamental to securing the safety and well-being of all State residents is the ability to access supports, without regard for funding sources, service capacities, or having to reconcile differing approaches to services among providers.

In addition to directly providing services, OCFS funds and supervises local social services districts, youth bureaus, child care programs and community and voluntary agencies in directly providing or collaborating with other agencies to provide a wide range of developmental, preventive and remedial supports to New York State's citizens. To succeed, OCFS must focus on efficiently and effectively maintaining and strengthening the self-sufficiency of families.

Under the leadership of Governor David Paterson and Commissioner Gladys Carrión, OCFS invests in, develops, and monitors programs that promote the self-sufficiency of families and individuals. The Governor has reinforced an agenda that encourages cooperation and collaboration between state agencies in an effort to maximize the benefit of public funds allocated to multiple service delivery responsibilities. A main focus of this plan will be to demonstrate how those collaborations work and, more importantly, how they benefit the children and families of New York State.

OCFS continues to specify and demand that outcomes be established and met for its substantial investment in the community. The ability to measure outcomes and define success continues to be a top priority for OCFS.

OCFS participates in many exciting initiatives that are detailed in this report. They reflect the efforts of countless committed professionals, families, volunteers and the communities in which they live and work. They reflect child care, youth development, juvenile justice, adult and child welfare and other services that are the responsibility of this agency. Most importantly, however, they reflect the diverse character and needs of the vulnerable populations found within the diverse regions of New York State.

OCFS serves to improve and integrate efforts to address the needs and build on the strengths of the State's children, youth and other vulnerable populations. OCFS responds to a growing recognition of the complexity and interrelatedness of today's problems and solutions. The ability to access supports without regard for funding sources, service capacities, or having to reconcile differing approaches to services among providers is fundamental to protecting the safety and well-being of all state residents.

The OCFS mission is to "serve New York's public by promoting the well-being, safety and permanency of our children, families and communities. We will achieve results by setting and enforcing policies, building partnerships, and funding and providing quality services." This mission statement guides OCFS' administration of public funds aimed at meeting its multiple service delivery responsibilities. OCFS is responsible for the administration and oversight of a continuum of human development, prevention, early intervention, protective, out-of-home placement and community re-integration services. State law establishes a number of mandates for OCFS, both direct responsibilities and

those that the local social services districts must provide under the supervision of OCFS. Direct responsibilities include:

- Providing fiscal support, technical assistance and oversight to municipal youth bureaus for the planning, coordination and funding of youth development services for the under-21-year-old population;
- Receiving and tracking through the State Central Register reports of child abuse and maltreatment;
- Providing fiscal support and oversight to the statewide juvenile detention system;
- Coordinating the provision of training and technical assistance to voluntary agency and local government agency staff;
- Operating and overseeing programs designed to foster independence of the blind and visually handicapped
- Licensing and supervising voluntary foster care agencies, domestic violence and child care providers;
- Operating the New York State Adoption Service including adoption subsidies, photo-listing, and administration of the Interstate Compact on Placement of Children;
- Administering the federal Indian Child Welfare Act; and
- Providing for the care and treatment of youth placed by the courts in OCFS custody.

OCFS supervises local administration of child welfare and adult protective services by fifty-seven counties, New York City and the St. Regis Mohawk Tribe. Services provided include child protective services, preventive services, foster care, adoption, protective services for adults, and child day care.

The following principles guide OCFS work.

*SERVICES SHOULD BE DEVELOPMENTALLY APPROPRIATE.* OCFS recognizes the importance of the stages of human development in guiding service delivery. The cognitive, emotional, physical and social skills of children, youth and adults are fundamental to their need for and ability to benefit from services. Recent studies in the separate fields of child development and youth development address the value of focusing on competencies rather than deficits. OCFS is committed to the use of strength-based approaches, with a focus on child and family strengths as opposed to problems or pathology. Building on individuals' strengths facilitates the efficacy of all services.

*SERVICES SHOULD BE FAMILY-CENTERED AND FAMILY DRIVEN.* Supporting families that foster the healthy development of their members requires serving the family as a whole, as well as individuals within the family. Research conducted on the development of children, from newborns through teens, emphasizes the crucial role of parents in the successful cognitive, emotional, physical and social development of their children. In fact, with the support of their communities, most families meet and exceed the expectations put on them. Strategies for family-centered services require family members, including youth, to participate actively with other stakeholders in identifying

the design of community based family supports. OCFS is committed to the practice of planning for one child and family at a time, based on individual strengths and needs, not program categories.

*SERVICES SHOULD BE COMMUNITY-BASED.* Communities play a critical role in supporting the growth and development of their children and the self-sufficiency of their adults and families. The involvement of community-based organizations, schools, businesses, childcare providers, health care facilities, faith-based organizations, law enforcement and courts promotes culturally competent supports for children, youth, adults and their families in their neighborhoods. Development of comprehensive, collaborative, integrated, long-term community-based programs that address the full spectrum of child, youth, adult and family needs represent a wise investment of resources.

The diversity of New York State dictates that OCFS provides localities flexibility in tailoring programs to meet their unique circumstances. By supporting the provision of supports and services in family and community settings, OCFS supports the reduction of over-reliance on restrictive and expensive out-of-home placements and the reduction of the disproportionate representation of families and children of color in the child welfare and juvenile justice systems.

*SERVICES SHOULD BE LOCALLY RESPONSIVE.* The development of effective services and supports for individuals and families requires family and community involvement in decisions about service priorities, strategies and program interventions. OCFS is committed to delivering services that are culturally competent, recognizing that a family's cultural background might affect the determination of appropriate services. OCFS is committed to providing care that is unconditional, embracing the idea that services are provided to all in need regardless of how, when, or where they come in to the system.

The OCFS regional infrastructure offers the capacity to assist localities in tailoring local service delivery systems to community needs. Integrated local planning by departments of social services and youth bureaus, with the involvement of community stakeholders, including families, has helped promote local public and private human services partnerships. The joint identification of local needs based on common definitions support program planning and development that addresses needs in a manner compatible with existing community resources and interests. The resulting shared outcomes and principles hold promise for effective service delivery and positive outcomes.

*SERVICES SHOULD BE EVIDENCE AND OUTCOME BASED.* The human services field has increasingly emphasized the use of outcomes for measuring program success. The move to outcome-based practice has resulted in a new series of questions about which practices most effectively produce desired outcomes. Too long guided by intuition and anecdote, human service providers and administrators now look for reliable and valid evidence to inform their service investments. OCFS specifies and demands that outcomes be established and met for its substantial investment in the community. The ability to

measure outcomes and define success continues to be a top priority for OCFS as it seeks to achieve its core goals.

### SERVICE CONTINUUM

Commissioner Carrión has championed a role that challenges and encourages local providers to take the initiative by preventing, rather than reacting to, family upheavals by intervening early with activities designed to reduce the need for removal of a child, youth or adult from the household. OCFS' focus on prevention is why the Service Continuum has its broadest effects in services meant to support families and individuals in their communities. Indeed, even when such broad-based supports fail to prevent problems, early interventions should be available to individuals in the context of their families and families in the context of their communities.

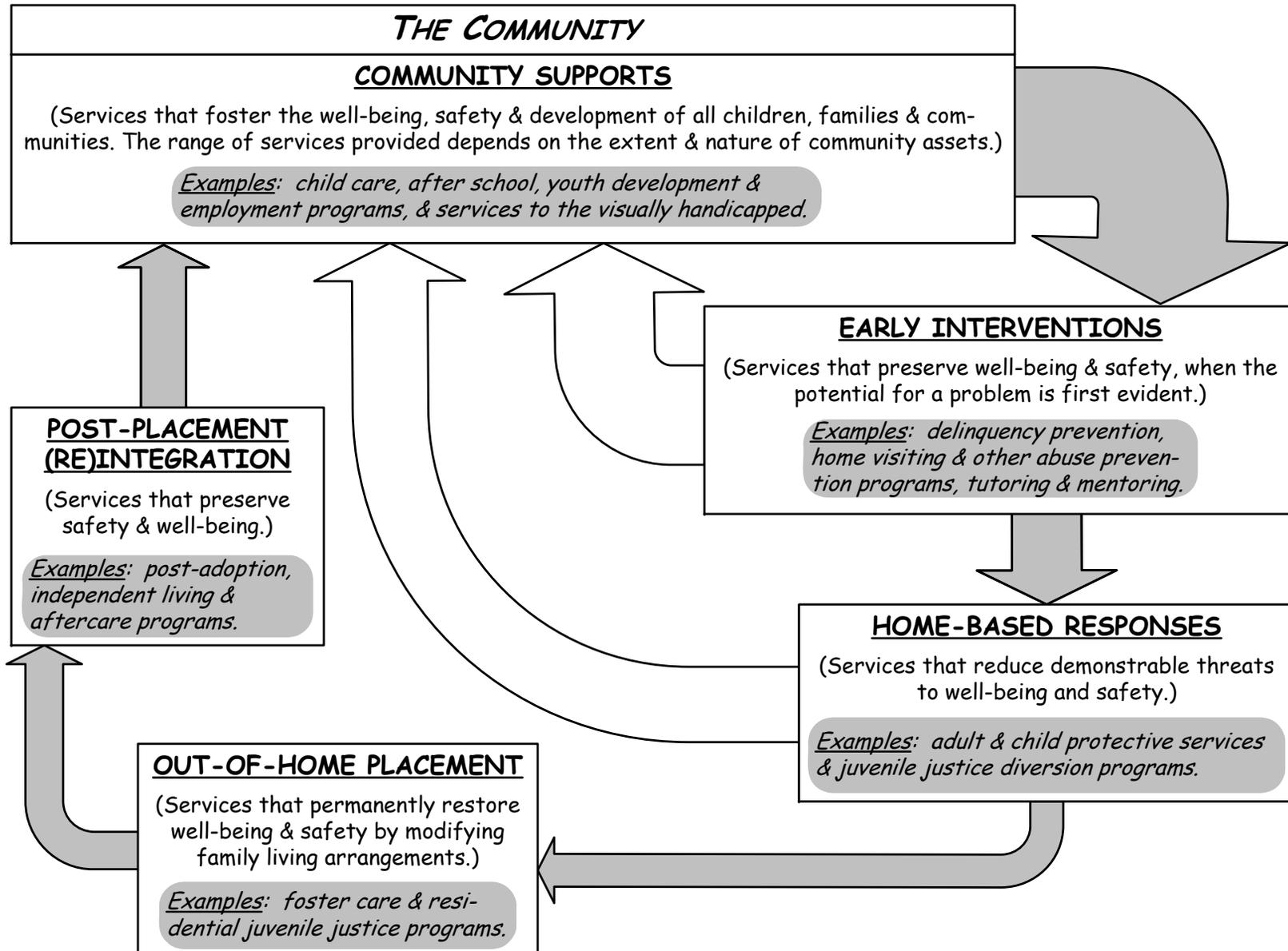
OCFS provides funds and oversees a wide range of services. One way to understand the interrelation among the totality these services is on a continuum that distinguishes them by the point of service delivery. The chart below, "The Children and Families Service Continuum," delineates some of the key features and gives examples of these services.

The ends of the continuum are connected, with the community as the beginning and end of service delivery, in recognition that the provision of effective services to children, youth, adults and families could not be separated from the community. Just as the success of efforts to prevent placement are dependent on the effectiveness of interventions offered prior to placement, successful return from out-of-home placement depends on the supports provided during and after families are reunified.

In the continuum diagram, arrow size indicates the relative number in a community moving between the five service categories. Arrow size progressively decreases for each movement away from Community Supports. This reflects the reality that almost all of a community's residents benefit from Community Supports, while increasingly smaller groups need the progressively more intensive services available through Early Interventions, and Home-based Responses. However, for a small minority, Out-of-Home Placement may be the only available solution and almost all of this group will need some sort of Post-placement Reintegration service. It should be noted that the more effectively a community can resolve problems earlier in the continuum, the smaller the population that needs to advance to the next more intensive service.

Community Supports promote and sustain the well being, safety and healthy development of all children, youth, adults and families. Community supports must be available to all community residents. However, the scope, type and nature of community supports vary widely among communities, reflecting the assets, strengths and needs of their residents. For example, communities with large proportions of preschool children should have more childcare programs than senior citizen communities that need other sorts of programs. For most community residents, these Community Supports meet their needs and obviate the need for more intensive services.

## The Children and Families Service Continuum



Invariably, community supports do not suffice for some community residents and more targeted and intense supports are required. For individuals and families at risk of such problems, OCFS supports Early Interventions. These programs aim at preserving the well being and safety of community residents, when the potential for a problem first becomes evident. Typical of an early intervention, Healthy Families New York Home Visiting Program engages at-risk expectant or new parents in a program of home visits focused on improving parent child interactions, healthy child development and self sufficiency, building on families' strengths. Similarly, successful education and support of the visually handicapped rely on early identification of visual impairments among individuals who lack sufficient supports to prepare them to achieve self-sufficiency.

For a smaller proportion of a community's individuals and families, these early interventions are not enough. For them, OCFS supports and oversees the provision of a third category of services, Home-based Responses. These aim to reduce demonstrable threats to the well being and safety of these individuals and families. Vulnerable adults, victims of domestic violence, and families working to keep their children safely at home are among those who benefit from home-based responses. Child welfare protective or preventive services signal the beginning of the permanency planning process, which emphasizes the right of children to be raised in safe and permanent homes, preferably with their birth families. Programs that divert youth, who have engaged in antisocial behaviors, from out-of-home placement by treating and supervising them in the community, represent another home-based response.

For an even smaller part of the population, whether because of abuse or neglect or for antisocial behavior and home-based responses are unable to preserve individual and/or community safety, OCFS funds, supervises and provides Out-of-Home Placement services for such circumstances. Out-of-Home Placement aims at developing a permanent outcome as expeditiously as possible. These outcomes include return home, living with a relative or other resource person, adoption and independent living.

Regardless of outcome, reestablishment of necessary community supports poses significant challenges. Furthermore, Community Supports alone often do not suffice to preserve safety and well being or to maintain the permanency of the living arrangement. Thus, Post-placement Reintegration interventions such as aftercare, post adoption and independent living services are necessary to promote individual and community safety as well as permanency for those returning from out-of-home placements.

Some programs meet needs at multiple points along the continuum of services. Childcare, for example, may function as a Community Support to enable a caretaker to enter the workforce. It is equally well suited as an Early Intervention for children requiring special attention. As a Home-based Response, it can be a valuable adjunct to other efforts to reduce risk of abuse/neglect. In Out-of-home Placement or as a Post-placement Reintegration service childcare can help promote healthy development while in foster care or during the period of reintegration with family and community. Likewise, effective

parenting programs may be a valuable component in all five service categories.

In preparation for this year's submission, as done in previous years, OCFS and ACF have maintained monthly conference calls to share information related to New York State's CFSP. These calls serve as both information sharing and plan guidance.

### **Quality Assurance and Program Support**

Quality Assurance and Accountability remains a priority. OCFS is committed to the principles of good management and accountability, both within its own operations and in those it supports. The approach must be coordinated to address the various funding mechanisms and partnerships with which OCFS is involved. The approved Child and Family Services Review (CFSR) Program Improvement Plan (PIP) is another process being incorporated into quality assurance activities to further strengthen the OCFS service delivery system. Guidance provided by the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) confirmed that the PIP is to be incorporated in the Annual Progress Service Report (APSR) and efforts continue to fully incorporate necessary elements of the PIP into the APSR as instructed.

New York's State-supervised, locally administered system requires quality assurance efforts for the state, local government, and not-for-profit entities. The OCFS Office of Audit and Quality Control's (AQC) audit function plays a role at all levels. In addition to conducting local district audits, AQC also performs risk assessments, audits and fiscal reviews of targeted contract agencies. Statutory and regulatory frameworks, coupled with specific contractual language, provide the standards against which performance of social services districts and contract agencies can be measured. In addition, AQC coordinates the review of the audited financial statements received from local districts and sub-recipient agencies that are required by the federal Office of Management and Budget, Circular A-133. Extensive internal controls are in place to support these activities. OCFS provides oversight and accountability to the local districts in support of the CFSP, CFSR, and the PIP. OCFS further insures that local districts as well as contracted private agencies who provide services to children and families are meeting performance targets. OCFS has built performance expectations into its Request for Proposal (RFP) process and Contract Management System (CMS) for those agencies with whom OCFS has contracts. Local district performance is specifically monitored by CWCS and Regional Offices. Local districts report on performance via the district Child and Family Services Plan, Annual Plan Updates, and the district CFSR.

AQC performs a variety of activities which contribute to the accomplishment of OCFS' safety, permanency and well being goals. AQC conducts the Title IV-E eligibility audits in local districts which stress the importance of identifying and achieving permanency for children in care. AQC conducts contract audits of entities involved in the provision of child welfare services throughout New York State. AQC also participates directly in annual Single State Audit activities which identify and help correct fiscal and programmatic findings of all local districts and not-for-profit agencies as needed.

AQC maintains offices in Buffalo, Rensselaer, and Manhattan. AQC audit staff at those locations audit the activities of social services districts related to eligibility for Title IV-E Foster Care. During the past year, the majority of the work in Title IV-E has centered on preparations for the upcoming federal Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) Administration for Children and Families (ACF) Second Primary Title IV-E Foster Care Eligibility Review (FCER). This review is scheduled for the week of August 31, 2009 through September 4, 2009.

AQC has partnered in various activities with many other OCFS staff to provide technical assistance to local departments of social services. These activities include monthly statewide Title IV-E conference calls during which Home Office and OCFS' Regional Office staff work together to resolve local district issues that, if not addressed, could result in non-compliance with Title IV-E requirements. AQC staff also participates in bi-weekly Title IV-E Workgroup meetings. Under the direction of the OCFS Title IV-E Unit, the focus of these meetings has been on the development and implementation of procedures in the Home Office that result in statewide compliance with Title IV-E. AQC has directly contributed to the Workgroup in its efforts to maintain and enhance Title IV-E compliance. These contributions include reviewing and providing comments on the Title IV-E Unit's technical assistance documents for OCFS and local district staff, reviewing Title IV-E cases submitted to OCFS by the local districts for the OCFS Dress Rehearsal, assisting in the provision of technical assistance sessions to the OCFS Regional Offices, and on-site review of local district Title IV-E cases.

Quality Assurance also is a priority for OCFS' Division of Child Welfare and Community Services (CWCS) (formerly the Division of Development and Prevention Services). The monitoring of social services district and contract agency compliance with program regulations and practice standards is a joint responsibility between home office in the Bureau of Program Monitoring and Performance Improvement (BMPI) and staff in the Regional Offices in the Office of Regional Operations and Practice Improvement (ROPI). As noted below, the Regional Offices and BMPI work together to plan and to conduct reviews of local child protective services programs, called On-going Monitoring and Assessments (OMAs), in upstate social services districts. Onsite case reviews focus on an assessment of the required activities during the course of a child protective investigation, including the assessment of immediate danger, initial safety and safety at investigation conclusion, safety interventions, adequacy of the investigation, determination decision-making, service provision, legal intervention, child removal, case closing decision making, and risk of future abuse or maltreatment. District-specific reports are developed as a result of these reviews that identify strengths and areas of concern as well as required and recommended actions, if necessary. The local district then develops a corrective action plan that identifies the activities the local districts will undertake to respond to the recommendations in the final report if corrective action is warranted. The Regional Offices have developed various individualized strategies to provide technical assistance to the local districts to facilitate program improvement. Technical assistance strategies include a "life of the case" review of specific cases to determine critical decision making points from intake to case closure, focused refresher training for safety and risk assessment, facilitation of supervisory case reviews,

management/organizational assessment, individualized casework review of challenging cases, checklist and other tool development to assist in managing caseloads, and review of regulations and laws as they relate to practice. Regional Offices will schedule follow-up activities as necessary and maintain regular contact with the local district supervisory and administrative staff to determine the level of program improvement. Additional case reviews may be conducted utilizing the OMA instrument to assess progress or less formalized mechanisms may be employed such as regularly scheduled on site meetings where identified program areas are discussed. The RO also utilizes data warehouse generated information on performance to help guide practice improvement discussions. Since 2000, CWCS has been monitoring social services districts' adherence to statutory and regulatory requirements and practice standards in foster care and adoption. This Safety and Permanency Assessment (SPA) assesses social services district performance in key areas related to Title IV-E of the Social Security Act through a case review of a year of casework activity for each youth in the sample. Areas to be reviewed included safety and risk, service provision, casework contacts, visitation, service planning and service plan review, and adoption and legal activity. The protocol for this review was significantly revised in 2006 to incorporate New York State law, Chapter 3 of the Laws of 2005, commonly referred to as the "Permanency Law", which increased the frequency of permanency hearings and required a detailed report of the status of every foster child's safety, permanency and well-being. A final SPA Report is then developed with findings that include strengths and areas of concern as well as required and recommended actions. The process of providing technical assistance to the local district is the same as outlined above for the OMA, although the scope of the program areas under consideration is broader. During 2008, SPAs were completed in six local districts, comprising a case review of 120 children and youth in foster care. For 2009, SPAs will be conducted in three local districts.

OCFS child protective services reviews are either comprehensive reviews or smaller sample Ongoing Monitoring and Assessments (OMA). Both include an examination of a random sample of cases to ascertain whether children are protected and whether adequate case assessments and decision-making occur during child protective investigations. All upstate districts and each New York City borough have been reviewed either through the Comprehensive or Ongoing Monitoring and Review process and continue to be reviewed on a four year monitoring cycle. The Bureau of Monitoring and Performance Improvement works with the Regional Offices to maintain an annual monitoring plan for OMA reviews. In 2008, a total of nine OMA reviews were completed. For 2009, an OMA will be conducted in 14 local districts.

### **New York City Regional Office's (NYCRO) ACS Monitoring and Activities**

In September 2008, the Foster Care/Domestic Violence Team assumed monitoring responsibility for ACS' Pre-Placement Services (PPS) from NYCRO Prevention, Program Assessment and Improvement (PPAI) unit. Two nightly unannounced visits were conducted in December 2008 and March 2009 as part of the quarterly monitoring visits, to review program and fire/safety standards. The visits included a review of the facility census, interviews with staff and a tour of the facility. The Team also prepares monthly data analysis reports of PPS Daily Statistics and examines placement patterns

and trends. In response to NYCRO efforts, PPS began entering placement data in the Child Care Review Service (CCRS) and Welfare Management System (WMS). The CCRS data includes all placements and movements from the facility and children whose last placement was at the Children's Center. In a related issue, the Team, NYCRO Regional Director, PPAI and ACS Pre-Placement administrators met to discuss ACS' proposed restraint policy and waiver request to OCFS' regulation on searches. The Team is working closely to provide technical assistance and continues efforts to resolve outstanding compliance issues around the agency's restraint policy draft and Automated Restraint Tracking System (ARTS).

Foster care staff worked diligently to improve and expand their knowledge of ACS' Improved Outcomes for Children (IOC) initiatives, which is a model of care that relies heavily on a Family Team Conference Model where parents, children, non-profit agency staff and ACS reach consensus on critical decisions regarding permanency goals, discharges, and other significant case activity, attending 15 monthly IOC implementation meetings in 2008 and the IOC Children Spring Forum whose purpose was to present the experiences and "lessons learned" from IOC Phase I agencies to the wider provider community. Foster Care staff also attended a number of meetings arranged by ACS including: ACS IOC Facilitator's debriefing, monthly ACS IOC workgroup of foster care agencies, Residential Care workgroup, Family Visiting and Parenting Education Task Force, and Pre-proposal conference held in the five boroughs for the provider agencies. The purpose of the conference was to discuss requirements for funding and approval, and announce the ACS decision to exclude Emergency Foster Boarding Homes from the model of care provided in IOC in an effort to reduce the number of placement disruptions a child experiences while in care.

The Deputy Regional Director also attended ACS' monthly meetings with the Directors of the nine foster care Phase I agencies involved in IOC, and ACS' data presentation relative to assessment and evaluation measures for the IOC initiative. In addition, the Deputy Regional Director also attended the bi-weekly Program Committee meetings concerning IOC and participated in OCFS' monthly Management Coordinating Committee (MCC) meetings providing input in the internal discussions on the data protocol relative to the status of IOC. Staff also reviewed ACS's IOC Phase II Implementation Plan, and the IOC foster care component of the ACS Family Team Conferencing protocol and raised issues relative to enhancing the protocol instrument in addition to providing comments for clarity and improvement on the Phase II Implementation Plan. Foster care staff also coordinated with ACS to observe and monitor individual Family Team Conferences.

Foster Care worked with other OCFS units in developing materials relative to significant issues of Step Ups, foster care youth who move up to congregate care, in the ACS IOC model, and key threshold points of IOC in response to ACS' request to move forward with expansion of IOC to a full system initiative.

Two joint reviews with ACS, which included testing their Provider Agency Measurement System (PAMS) instrument to assess agency performance and outcomes relative to

safety, permanency and well-being; and a joint review with the Agency Program Assistance unit of a provider agency congregate care program, were completed. In the new IOC model, the Foster Care PAMS instrument examines practice issues and is a component of the overall Scorecard used by ACS to measure agency performance.

Foster care staff observes the IOC Family Team Conferences and has attended agency "Meet and Greets." NYCRO continues to monitor the implementation of NY/NY III, a Supported Housing Program, a segment of which is available for youngsters leaving foster care.

**Bridges to Health:** Since the evolution of Bridges to Health (B2H) in 2007, there has been a close collaboration between B2H Quality Management Staff (QMS) and NYCRO's Foster Care unit. Early collaboration centered on obtaining NYCRO Foster Care Letters of Support for foster care agencies who filed Requests for Applications to become a Health Care Integration Agency. Other collaborative efforts included Foster Care's attendance at B2H planning meetings with ACS. This included meeting staff of the Health Care Integration Agencies (HCIA), the process of making referrals to the program, and monitoring the number of B2H enrollments in NYC. More recent activities included work on the Foster Care Permanency Panel Reviews, insuring that the agencies understood the benefits of B2H and how the use of B2H works to achieve permanency for the child and family. Finally, the QMS staff assisted Foster Care in case specific inquiries or complaints where the provisions of B2H services were identified as a potential benefit to the child and family.

Foster Care Director and staff attended ACS meetings with B2H HCIA agencies and Bureau of Wavier Management. OCFS' training for New York City foster care agencies relative to B2H and coordination between foster care representatives and B2H staff around the implementation of services were also conducted throughout 2008-2009.

**CONNECTIONS:** In addition, to regularly attending CONNECTIONS trainings in various areas of the system functions, Foster Care/Domestic Violence staff participated in monthly CONNECTIONS Bronx and Manhattan Regional Implementation Support Team (RIST) meetings to provide program support, clarifications on program improvements and determine agency responses to OCFS initiatives concerning program and CONNECTIONS modifications. Staff also provided resources at 10 teleconference training sessions for the Q3 Build, which focused on safety and risk assessment changes, and represented the regional office at the CONNECTIONS Prototype Presentation/Demonstration in Staten Island for ACS staff.

**Trainings, Conferences and Forums:** NYCRO Foster Care staff attended several trainings sponsored by ACS and OCFS for the purpose of expanding staff knowledge in various areas of practice including: educating the public on cultural diversity relative to lesbian, gay, bi-sexual, transgender, questioning, and inter-sex (hermaphrodite) youth in foster care and to explore necessary changes and improvements in the areas of domestic violence programs. Staff also attended a forum on the affects of substance abuse upon youngsters in foster care, their family members and the community and participated in

trainings concerning prenatal effects of alcohol use on children and the extent to which this population within the child welfare system is misdiagnosed with conduct disorders that ultimately affects treatment decisions and options

On September 25, 2008, Foster Care Representatives attended a ceremonial breakfast to acknowledge all of the individuals, organizations, and agencies that helped to launch the Foster Care Mental Health pilot project, which began in 2005. The purpose of this pilot project is to provide support to foster care agencies that are caring for children with emotional, behavioral, and mental health issues, in an effort to preserve placements and reduce the amount of movement children in care experience.

Foster Care staff participated in the Home Finder's conference at the Children's Center. This conference offered an in-depth look into the levels of support representatives from New York City Administration for Children's Services' Office of Placement Assistance unit need when locating placement for children and youngsters. Participants were given an in-depth look at how stakeholders can employ a shared effort to ensure that youngsters are appropriately matched and to help reduce the amount of movements a youngster(s) may experience while in care.

Foster Care staff participated in a workshop sponsored by Cornell University on Enhancing Safeguards for Children in Residential Care and offered an in-depth look into the changes in statute that affect the circumstances in which a restraint for a youngster is permissible. Participants also learned about the burden of proof needed to indicate a case of alleged abuse and/or maltreatment against program staff at the voluntary agencies.

Foster Care staff attended a workshop that focused on providing awareness to the community on Lesbian, Gay, Bi-sexual, Transgender, and Questioning youth in the foster care system. The workshop is aimed at preparing participants to educate the public about the LGBTQ youngsters and finding adoptive homes where the youngster can be supported.

**Multiple PIDs Training Committee:** There are currently 63,000 multiple person identification numbers in the CONNECTIONS system. These multiple numbers represent duplication of the same individuals. In an effort to re-train staff to decrease future multiple PIDs, the committee was designed to assess the training needs, curriculum, and any issues related to training supervisors, train the trainer staff, private agencies, technical support staff, foster care, and preventive staff, and ACS. The committee is composed of staff from the Division of Child Protection (DCP), ACS, OCFS Foster Care and Preventive, and Information Technology.

The NYCRO Foster Care and Domestic Violence team will continue plans to issue operating certificates for the two 4201 school residential programs. Staff, including fire safety, will review the programs for incorporation, licensing, and provide technical assistance.

In 2009 through 2010, the Foster Care and Domestic Violence team will continue processing and investigating foster boarding home complaints and increase their oversight of ACS' monitoring of the foster boarding home programs in voluntary

agencies. In addition, Voluntary Agency Reviews (VARs) will be conducted in seven (7) programs and three (3) Domestic Violence programs will be recertified. Foster care staff will conduct reviews of selected cases to determine regulatory compliance with casework contact and sibling placement requirements.

The Permanency Panel workgroup will develop regional agreements regarding permanency panel business practices. The panel will begin July 2009 and end December 2009.

In May 2009-April 2010, NYCRO Foster Care staff will participate in the development of strategies to monitor the implementation of IOC and the impact on service delivery, permanency, safety and well being outcomes.

The Foster Care and Domestic Violence team will continue working with ACS, the NYCRO Regional Office Project Associate (ROPA) and Center for Development of Human Services (CDHS) in the areas of training, recruitment of foster parents through Parent to Parent, provision of MAPP and recruitment of new foster parents to provide homes for adolescents, the LGBTQ population and large sibling groups.

NYCRO will monitor the implementation of NYC ACS' Program Improvement Plan (PIP) based on the findings of the federal Child and Family Services Review (CFSR).

#### **NYCRO Plans for 2010 - 2014**

Monitoring of ACS and the implementation of IOC will remain a priority as will the Voluntary Agency Reviews and Domestic Violence re-certifications during this plan period. Testing of the current revisions to the VAR instrument for reviewing sibling visitations, casework contacts, desk material submissions, transitional planning and new federal statutes will occur. Additional or necessary modifications to the instrument will be evaluated as reviews are completed. The VARs will evolve to become a more performance and outcome based process.

The Domestic Violence protocol draft instrument will be reevaluated as agencies are recertified.

The Permanency Panel process will continue to focus on sustainable and timely permanency outcomes and improved adolescent permanency options and outcomes.

#### **NYCRO Prevention, Program Assessment and Improvement: Plans for 2008 – 2009 and Projections for 2010 - 2014**

The Prevention, Program Assessment and Improvement (PPAI) Unit at NYCRO continued to conduct on-site monitoring visits to the provider agencies that contract with Administration of Children's Services (ACS) to provide preventive services in New York City. The visits included interviews of staff, reviewing preventive only cases and

providing technical assistance. In addition, cases at the provider agencies being provided with both preventive and protective services were reviewed on CONNECTIONS. The PPAI unit made visits to 192 community based programs covering 75 provider agencies from April 2008 to December 2008. An additional 22 site visits took place between January 2009 and May 2009. Of these 22 visits, 17 site visits were conducted with the purpose of providing technical assistance to the agencies based on the findings from the site visits of 2008.

In 2009, and the next four years, NYCRO will be monitoring the implementation of the ACS Improving Outcomes for Children (IOC) initiative. PPAI has begun that process by collaborating with Home Office in the OCFS IOC Preventive Services Review in February and March 2009. A total of 50 cases were reviewed from IOC Phase 1A agencies that piloted IOC beginning in 2008. Cases included both preventive and protective cases and preventive services only cases. Five of the 22 site visits conducted in early 2009 were for the purpose of reviewing preventive only cases for this review.

In addition to monitoring IOC, PPAI will continue to monitor the preventive provider agencies from 2009 to 2014 through site visits, targeted record reviews and technical assistance. PPAI will also monitor the preventive services offered directly by ACS' Family Services Units (FSU) and Family Rehabilitation Program (FRP) through targeted reviews and technical assistance.

PPAI staff will partner with ACS' Division of Child Protection (DCP) and the Division of Quality Assurance (DQA) to conduct quality assurance activities relative to joint QI DCP case reviews.

PPAI staff participates as the NYCRO statewide lead and co-lead in preparation for the Federal Department of Health and Human Services' (DHHS) Administration for Children and Families (ACF) Second Primary Title IV-E Foster Care Eligibility Review. The Review is scheduled for 8/31/09 to 9/4/09. In preparation, PPAI staff assisted in the Title IV-E Dress Rehearsal Review from October 2008 thru February 2009 with the findings letter for ACS dated March 23, 2009. In addition, PPAI staff has met with the ACS Title IV-E Liaison and staff in late February 2009 in preparation for the review and has been in constant communication with ACS providing support and technical assistance.

From 2009 to 2014, NYCRO will continue to monitor, provide technical assistance and support ACS in compliance with Title IV-E licensing and safety requirements. NYCRO PPAI staff will support the preparation for future Title IV-E Foster Care Eligibility Reviews.

### **NYCRO Child Protective Services and Institutional Abuse: 2008 – 2009 and Projections for 2010 - 2014**

NYCRO's Child Protective Services (CPS) staff monitored ACS' CPS Program, through the investigation of 223 complaints and 327 requests received from the public and private

sectors regarding ACS' investigation of SCR reports in familial, foster care and day care settings.

A prime activity of NYCRO's CPS is the monitoring function. During the review of ACS' investigation of child fatality reports, ACS staff received ongoing technical assistance from NYCRO CPS regarding the investigation of 78 child fatality reports registered by the SCR for the period 4/1/08 to 3/31/09 and for the 18 reports registered pursuant to 06-OCFS-LCM-13 which requires reports to be issued regarding the deaths of children in Open Child Protective or Preventive Cases. The monitoring of the 96 reports also involved the review of prior history for the families named in the reports. Of the 96 reports, 84 had prior history involving one or more prior cases or preventive services.

During the same period, the CPS Unit issued 100 reports inclusive of 31 reports from 2007 and 3 reports pursuant to 06-OCFS-LCM-13. Of these 100 reports, 92 have required Corrective Action Plans (CAPs) from the NYC Administration for Children's Services. CPS monitors the CAP submission and provides technical assistance regarding the completion of the CAPs.

Prospectively, the NYCRO CPS Unit will conduct targeted reviews using the Ongoing Monitoring and Assessment (OMA) Case Review tool that is being used statewide. The first of these reviews is tentatively scheduled for October 2009. The review will provide information to OCFS and ACS as to the performance of ACS CPS staff on components of CPS practice, specifically safety, completeness of investigations, appropriateness of determinations, risk assessments, provision of services, court involvement, removals to foster care, case closing decisions, "hand offs" and supervisory involvement. In addition to the aforementioned areas, the cases will be reviewed for unresolved child safety concerns, gaps in case activity and other ACS administrative issues.

The CPS Unit will also be responding to requests for technical assistance from various ACS Field Offices. Thus far, the CPS Unit has two sessions scheduled for early June and mid-July.

In 2009, CPS staff will be involved in the Title IV-E Eligibility Review and will also assist the Foster Care Unit in making visits to the ACS Pre-Placement facility as scheduled. The CPS Unit will continue to meet with the Division of Day Care Services and NYC Department of Health periodically to review the process and implement changes to improve the intake and investigation process related to Day Care Services reports.

The CPS Unit will resume quarterly meetings with ACS management regarding CPS Data Discussions. These discussions will revolve around the number of workers with more than 20 open CPS investigations, timeliness of Safety Assessments and report determinations.

As direct service Specialists, NYCRO's Institutional Abuse (IAB) staff continuously monitors the congregate care and juvenile justice detention programs through onsite

investigations of reports of suspected abuse and maltreatment of juveniles in residential facilities. These reports are filed with the New York State-wide Central Register of Child Abuse and Maltreatment (SCR). For this reporting period, the IAB Unit received more than three hundred reports.

In the coming year, the NYCRO IAB staff will be engaged in updated training in areas where the subject matter has direct impact on day to day activities. Staff will also be required to attend any mandated training sessions that will be offered in the coming period.

CWCS is also developing a specialized unit, “Continuous Quality Improvement” which focuses on data collection and utilization to assist OCFS and local districts identify trends and needs in child welfare. This is a fledgling effort, but is expected to be a critical function in our PIP development and monitoring.

### **OCFS Evaluation and Research**

The **OCFS Bureau of Evaluation and Research** designs and conducts research studies in a wide range of program areas in order to: (1) evaluate the effectiveness of policies, programs, and practices in achieving desired goals; (2) assess whether a program is consistent with best practices in the field; (3) improve understanding of the extent, nature, causes and effects of particular problems or issues; (4) measure the performance of OCFS in improving outcomes for children, youth, and families; and (5) develop and validate risk and needs assessments. The Bureau also approves outside research proposals involving children, youth, and families served by programs operated, regulated, or supervised by OCFS, and provides technical assistance on research methodology, sampling, performance measurement, and data collection and analysis to OCFS staff. Current research and evaluation in areas that support the goals and objectives articulated in this plan are presented within the goals sections.

### **Child and Family Services Review Program Improvement Plan (CFSR PIP)**

In May 2008, OCFS participated in Round 2 of the CFSR. OCFS is submitting a Program Improvement Plan (PIP) to address each of the outcomes and systemic factors determined through the Review to be out of substantial conformity. Three components of the CFSR are used to determine conformity: statewide AFCARS and NCANDS data, case record reviews, and stakeholder interviews. The PIP is required to be submitted 90 days after receipt of the CFSR Final Report from the Administration for Children, Youth and Families.

The Round 2 PIP is expected to build upon many of the Round 1 PIP initiatives, such as safety, family engagement, which includes: family meetings; family visiting, locating and engaging absent fathers, concurrent planning, and family connections; timeliness and permanency of reunification and timeliness of adoption, workforce and supervisor

development, and court collaboration. Widespread input from internal and external stakeholders will be sought throughout the entire two-year PIP development and implementation phase. Information, input, and data obtained via the CFSR process provides direction and collective feedback in the development of the CFSP. OCFS continues to work toward the seamless alignment of these processes.

Based on the preliminary findings shared by ACYF, OCFS began designing a draft PIP which focuses on three major themes: Safety, Permanency/Well-Being, and Workforce Development and Retention.

The draft PIP was vetted with the field in an effort to solicit feedback. OCFS' framework for addressing the outcomes was based on the premise that New York State's work needed to be "statewide and caseworker deep". Three questions were presented at each session with stakeholders:

- Does the CFSR PIP capture the work that needs to get done in order to improve the outcomes of safety (recurrence), permanency/well being (timeliness and services) and supporting the child welfare workforce?
- How can OCFS effectively implement the CFSR PIP with districts and agencies?
- What forms of communication would you find helpful in the sharing of information related to data and performance practice?

Sessions were held with the stakeholders at the following locations:

- September 17, 2008: Statewide Director of Services (White Eagle Retreat Center)
- September 29, 2008: Court Improvement Steering Committee (Rensselaer)
- September 30, 2008: Upstate Commissioners, Executive Directors of Voluntary Agencies, foster parents, foster youth, Judges, court staff, and advocates (UPS Leadership Summit – Rensselaer)
- October 31, 2008: Tribal Consultation (representatives from the St. Regis Mohawk Tribe, Seneca, Cayuga and Oneida Nations)
- November 19, 2008: Adolescent Services and Outcomes Workgroup (Rensselaer)
- November 24, 2008: New York City and Downstate County Administrators, Executive Directors of Voluntary Agencies, foster parents, a youth, court staff, and advocates (NYC Leadership Summit –Manhattan)

Overall feedback from the field indicated that the three outcomes outlined in the PIP are the right areas to focus on over the next several years. There was strong support for the workforce outcome, identifying it as being a critical component to achieving success in the safety and permanency/well-being outcomes.

Stakeholders noted that implementation of the PIP will require consistent and ongoing communication with all stakeholders in order for the practice strategies to take root statewide. Feedback indicated of a strong preference for face-to-face communication. This can be accomplished through the use of Regional Forums and Director of Services meetings on the state level, and supervisor to worker meetings on the local and agency

level. These suggestions will be incorporated into how OCFS works with the districts and agencies during the life of the PIP. Wherever possible, the latest in technology will be explored as a possible communication tool.

OCFS will continue our collaborative relationship with the Office of Court Administration (OCA) through meetings and our participation on the OCA Court Improvement Project Advisory Board.

On March 17, 2009, the final report from HHS/ACYF was received noting strengths and areas needing improvement.

The report highlighted the following:

Strengths:

- Item 1, which pertains to the timeliness of investigations, was rated as a Strength in 100 percent of applicable cases.
- Item 5, which pertains to foster care reentry, was rated as a Strength in 92 percent of applicable cases.
- Item 10, which pertains to meeting the permanency needs of children with a case plan goal of other planned permanent living arrangement (OPPLA), was rated as a Strength in both of the applicable cases.
- Item 11, which pertains to proximity of children's placements to their parents or close relatives, was rated as a Strength in 94 percent of applicable cases.
- Item 22, which pertains to meeting children's physical health needs, was rated as a Strength in 94 percent of applicable cases.
- The State also met the national standard for the data indicator pertaining to placement stability (Composite 4).
- New York was found to be in substantial conformity with the systemic factors of Quality Assurance (QA) System and Agency Responsiveness to the Community.

Areas needing improvement:

- Well-Being Outcome 1 (Families have enhanced capacity to provide for children's needs) was substantially achieved in only 34.4 percent of the 64 cases reviewed.
- Permanency Outcome 1 (Children have permanency and stability in their living situations) was substantially achieved in only 40 percent of the 40 foster care cases reviewed.
- Permanency Outcome 2 (The continuity of family relationships and connections is preserved) was substantially achieved in only 42.5 percent of the 40 foster care cases reviewed.
- New York did not meet the national standards for the safety-related data indicators pertaining to the absence of maltreatment recurrence and the absence of maltreatment of children in foster care by their foster parents or facility staff members.
- New York did not meet the national standards for the data indicators pertaining to the timeliness and permanency of reunification (Permanency Composite 1), the timeliness of adoptions (Permanency Composite 2), and achieving permanency for children in foster care for extended periods of time (Permanency Composite 3).

- With regard to individual items, the most critical concern identified pertained to achieving adoptions in a timely manner, which was rated as a Strength in only 18 percent of the applicable cases.
- For the following items, less than 50 percent of the cases were rated as a Strength:
  - Item 13—Visiting with parents and siblings in foster care (47 percent of applicable cases rated as a Strength)
  - Item 15—Relative placements (45 percent of applicable cases rated as a Strength)
  - Item 16—Relationship of child in foster care with parents (42 percent of applicable cases rated as a Strength)
  - Item 17—Needs and services of child, parents, and foster parents (36 percent of cases rated as a Strength)
  - Item 18—Child and parent involvement in case planning (43 percent of applicable cases rated as a Strength)
  - Item 20—Caseworker visits with parents (39 percent of applicable cases rated as a Strength)
- The State was not in substantial conformity on the following systemic factors: Statewide Information System; Case Review System; Training; Service Array, and Foster and Adoptive parent Licensing, Recruitment and Retention. Performance on the two systemic factors of Case Review System and Training, in particular, may have critical implications for the State’s performance with regard to achieving permanency in a timely manner, promoting sufficient attention to assessing and meeting the service needs of parents and children, and involving parents and children in case planning.

To address the areas needing improvement, OCFS has structured this PIP around three key outcomes: safety, permanency/well-being and workforce development. Under each of these outcomes is listed a series of practice strategies aimed at improving performance in each area. Several of these practice strategies cut across more than one outcome and will be listed more than once.

Within OCFS, the Division of Child Welfare and Community Services (OCFS/CWCS) is the statewide oversight entity for the locally administered child welfare system. OCFS/CWCS provides direct oversight of local districts and licensed voluntary agencies through a regional office structure. OCFS/CWCS provides oversight and support through each of the six regions in the state – Albany, Buffalo, NYC, Rochester, Spring Valley, and Syracuse.

Districts will be required to complete a local self-assessment using performance data and input from local stakeholders to assess strengths in their practice and service delivery system and areas needing improvement. Additionally, they will be required to implement a program improvement plan that at a minimum focuses on safety and permanency/well-being. OCFS/CWCS will provide enhanced support to the thirteen districts with the highest foster care population as a means of promoting improved outcomes for the majority of the children placed in out of home care and in receipt of preventive services.

The three outcomes and practice strategies are as follows:

State Outcome 1: Children who have been abused or maltreated will be protected from future abuse and maltreatment. Children will be safe from abuse or maltreatment in foster care.

Practice Strategies include:

- Strengthen the family engagement and cultural competency skills of child welfare caseworkers and supervisors as a means to strengthen the effective application of safety and risk assessment decision making tools.
- Implement and/or expand evidence-based or promising programs that reduce the recurrence of child abuse and maltreatment.
- Expand implementation of trauma-informed strategies for serving youth in congregate foster care.
- Expand physical restraint-reduction initiatives in congregate foster care.
- Strengthen certification/approval standards and training for foster family care.
- Other local innovations and initiatives.

State Outcome #2: Children will be placed in foster care only when other family and community based alternatives are not an option. For children who are placed in foster care, a focus will be placed on promoting their well-being and children will be discharged in a timely manner to safe, permanent homes. When discharge to a family is not possible, youth 18 or older will be discharged with permanent connections to a caring adult.

Practice Strategies include:

- Strengthen family engagement strategies that are culturally competent throughout the life of the case. Family engagement includes:
  - Early and ongoing identification, location and engagement of all parents, relatives and significant others in the child's life;
  - Use of family meetings and engaging other adult permanency resources in planning and caring for children (including their education, emotional and medical well-being);
  - Early, frequent and developmentally appropriate visiting between children in foster care and their parents, siblings and other identified permanency resources unless there is a compelling safety issue; and,
  - Utilization of concurrent planning strategies to engage families in early alternative permanency planning using full disclosure and early placement of children with a committed resource.
- Sustain and strengthen the partnership between child welfare and the court systems at the State and local levels with a focus on shared time-to-permanency data and collaborative improvement strategies.

- Strengthen standards for foster homes and support recruitment efforts that reflect the ethnic and racial diversity of the children in care.
- Other local innovations and initiatives.

State Outcome #3: The stability, competency and satisfaction of the child welfare workforce will be increased.

Practice Strategies include:

- Support effective workload management strategies, including the reduction of caseload size through funding, continued measurement of workload, and initiatives to support workforce stability and competency (including cultural competency), and supervisory capacity.
- Determine the feasibility of establishing maximum caseload sizes, including a review of federal and national policies and applicable federal and State law.
- Transform NYS' SACWIC system, CONNECTIONS, so that it is easier and less time consuming to use, including system support for compatibility with other case requirements.
- Provide supports for effective supervisory practice.
- Promote shared case decision making.
- Other local innovations and initiatives.

As indicated by HHS/ACFY at NY's exit conference, NY needs to focus their efforts on making sure practice initiatives are implemented statewide and drilled down the caseworker level. This will be a key theme in NY's PIP over the next two years. To that end, NY will focus on one primary practice principle- Family Engagement.

Family engagement is both a principle of practice and a set of specific methods by which families are involved in assessing their needs, charting the pathway for meeting those needs and assessing their progress. Starting at the first point of contact and continuing throughout the life of the case, family engagement will be the guiding principle for improving or establishing practices that include involving the parents and youth (and extended family if appropriate) in the assessment of safety, risk, needs and strengths, and in the case planning process through effective use of interpersonal skills, family-friendly local polices, family meetings. Also included as part of family engagement is concurrent planning, fostering family connections through visiting and the identification and location of all parents. This one key practice principle is the foundation upon which New York will base our practice improvement agenda.

## Practice Initiatives

### Infuse and implement family-centered principles into casework practice that promotes family engagement across all stages of the child welfare delivery system.

In 2003, New York State developed a Child and Family Service Review Program Improvement Plan (CFSR-PIP) which had, as its foundation, the advancement of child centered, family focused case practice. At the epicenter of this work is family engagement. National research, as well as New York State stakeholders, lead us to the conclusion that when a family is actively engaged in developing a plan to improve their family functioning, they are more likely to commit to the goals and the personal work required to achieve those goals. This year's CFSR-PIP continues New York State's commitment to family engagement as the focus of our efforts. While progress has been made toward the development of a family-led child welfare system, there is more that needs to be done to take this practice statewide.

Our decision is based on our belief that families are the experts in their own family, and best able to identify their own strengths. Solutions to family issues are most likely to be found within the context of the extended family. The nature of the casework relationship is the key to engaging families. The ability and willingness of families to participate in planning and working toward the common goals is directly related to the beliefs, values, attitudes and engagement skills of the caseworkers. The beliefs, values, attitudes, knowledge and skills of caseworkers that they bring to their work with the families and children with whom they are working will determine how well the caseworker is able to reach out to families and involve them productively in planning and working together toward common goals. Caseworkers need to exhibit empathy, genuineness, respect and cultural awareness in their everyday relationship with families. These core conditions for helping, along with interpersonal, assessment, critical thinking and decision-making skills require development, and reinforcement through effective supervision.

OCFS has committed to supporting and enhancing frontline case practice of family engagement. The CFSR-PIP is targeted at capacity building at the local level, including addressing basic underlying beliefs and principles of family engagement. Developing the caseworkers' and supervisors' knowledge base and skills, supporting cultural competency of frontline casework staff, and enhancing organizational culture and infrastructure are necessary to support family engagement.

Family engagement work begins with the knock on the front door by child protective services. Child protective investigations are usually perceived by families as adversarial as there is, by definition, a questioning of a parent's ability to adequately care for their children. The caseworker needs to engage the family as partners in identifying the resources and needs of the family, and in securing the safety and well-being of the children.

From the initial contacts and through-out the life of the case, family engagement is at the core of helping a family address their children's need for safety, permanency and well-being. In addition to the casework relationship itself (including regular and consistent

casework contact with the child and parent/caregiver with a focus on protecting the safety of the child) and the impact of that relationship on influencing change, stakeholders involved in developing the PIP identified several key aspects of casework where family engagement is particularly vital. Several of these began during our first program improvement plan and will continue during the current PIP.

### **Child and Family Services Plan**

The Child and Family Services Plan submission for June 2009 includes the combined Final Report FYs 2005-2009 and the new Child and Family Services Plan FYs 2010-2014. In New York State, services are a state-supervised, locally administered service delivery system. Fifty-eight social services districts (including the five boroughs of New York City), the St. Regis Mohawk Tribe, and county youth bureaus offer and fund services at the community level. A framework of regulation, policy and procedures is established by OCFS and operationalized by the 58 social services districts and the St. Regis Mohawk Tribe (hereinafter included in the term social services district). While OCFS has responsibility for direct oversight of some services and program development, the daily responsibility to serve the majority of clients accessing the various services available within the social services environment rests with the social services districts. Approximately one-third of New York State's counties are considered rural. OCFS works with these districts to fund and provide services and programs to address the needs of these rural populations.

Planning in New York State continues to be a joint activity, with the focus of activity occurring in the social services districts and youth bureaus. OCFS' role is to provide guidance to assist social services district planning efforts, including youth bureau involvement, to reflect the goals and performance targets established. In partnership with those social services districts, New York State continues in the direction of achieving the various outcomes established within the CFSP. This partnership between the social services districts, youth bureaus, stakeholders, state agencies and OCFS is critical to the achievement of outcomes noted in the CFSP. Described initiatives in this document include those supported with federal Child Welfare Services funds (Title IV-B, subpart 1, the Stephanie Tubbs Jones Child Welfare Services Program); federal Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment funds (CAPTA); federal Title IV-E funds, including the application for and other information regarding the Chafee Foster Care Independent Program; Runaway Homeless Youth Act; Child Care Development Fund; and other state and federal sources.

Title IV-B, subpart 2 funds, Promoting Safe and Stable Families, for providing service delivery of family preservation, community-based family support, time-limited family reunification and adoption promotion and support, as well as planning and service coordination, were requested and received by New York State. Additionally, the state does support various programs with other federal and state funds that by definition fall under these categories. This Plan is further evidence that New York State will take every opportunity to explore whether the State is eligible to receive such funds.

The Child and Family Services Plan (CFSP) and subsequent Annual Progress and Services Reports (APSR) will be made available to: social services districts; other state agencies involved in major joint projects with OCFS; and the Indian Tribes. OCFS will provide specific notification to related providers on the availability of the Report. In addition, the public will have access to these documents through local social service districts. Also, the Child and Family Services Plan will be made available on the OCFS website.

### **OCFS Data Warehouse**

The data warehouse initiative provides users, including local district, contract, regional, and State OCFS staff access to management reports and ad-hoc reporting on data in CONNECTIONS and legacy systems (child welfare-related data). Local districts and voluntary agencies are able to obtain summary reports at the worker, caseload, local district, regional, and state levels. The OCFS Data Warehouse provides a series of standard reports that can be produced on demand at different levels of aggregation and time-periods and tools by which local district and voluntary agency staff can produce ad-hoc reports on clients or caseloads. The end result is improved management and analytical reporting capabilities for the OCFS services system.

The OCFS Data Warehouse provides end-user access to users in a manner suitable for strategic analysis and decision support. Available pre-defined reporting areas include: CPS (Child Protective Services) Allegations, CPS Investigations, CCRS (Child Care Review Service), foster care cases and foster care homes, facilities' licensing and capacity, security, and CFSR PIP data. The OCFS Data Warehouse presents information needed by managers to monitor caseload trends and track compliance with State and Federal standards.

Because the Data Warehouse can replicate the Federal data profiles, it gives local districts the ability to view child level data for each submitted measure. The Data Warehouse is used as a data source in an increasing number of requests from districts, voluntary agencies, home office, the legislature, and general public.

Planned activities will focus on improving management reporting capabilities with CONNECTIONS. Additional users will be trained and brought into the Data Warehouse. Ongoing development efforts will continue to provide additional data tables, data marts, cubes, and reports to support state and local usage of data, particularly in the areas of Family Case and Financial Management.

OCFS continues to focus its data warehousing efforts on growing the Data Warehouse to include data not only on child welfare related individuals and cases, but on other individuals and cases served by the agency (for example, adults receiving protective services, and juveniles receiving youth services); and on controlling the growth of the warehousing environment through strict and strategic data acquisition.

## **Title IV-E Plan**

On December 21, 2007, OCFS submitted the Title IV-E State Plan Amendment as required by Administration for Children and Families (ACF) Directive ACYF-CB-PI-07-03 that directed states to revise and submit a Title IV-E State Plan Amendment to comply with all Title IV-E statutory and legislative changes. On February 12, 2008, ACF approved New York State's amendments to the Title IV-E Plan. OCFS is currently awaiting the pre-print for the next Title IV-E Plan.

## **Child Welfare Laws, Policies, and Procedures**

The OCFS Internet provides extensive information on pertinent statutes, regulations, policies and procedures. The program instructions for this CFSP, ACYF-CB-PI-09-06, describe a number of amendments to the Act affecting the CFSP were enacted as part of P.L. 110-351. These amendments (which became effective on October 7, 2008, unless otherwise noted) include:

- Re-naming the title IV-B, subpart 1 program as the "Stephanie Tubbs Jones Child Welfare Services Program";
- Requiring the title IV-B agency, in coordination with the State title XIX (Medicaid) agency and other health and child welfare experts, to develop a plan for the ongoing oversight and coordination of health care services for children in foster care;
- Adding a new title IV-E plan requirement for the State to negotiate in good faith with any Indian Tribe, tribal organization, or tribal consortium (Tribe) that requests the development of a title IV-E agreement with the State to administer all or part of the title IV-E program, including the CFCIP, on behalf of Indian children, and access to title IV-E administration, training and data collection resources;
- Adding a provision to allow Tribes that have title IV-E agreements with States or that are approved operate the title IV-E program directly to receive a direct allotment for CFCIP and ETV effective October 1, 2009;
- Creating a new title IV-E Guardianship Assistance Program (GAP) option for States (effective October 7, 2008) and Tribes (effective October 1, 2009);
- Adding a provision to permit title IV-E agencies to claim the costs of short-term training of relative guardians; private child welfare agency staff providing services to children receiving title IV-E assistance; child abuse and neglect court personnel; agency, child or parent attorneys; guardians ad litem; and court

appointed special advocates (with a transitional period from FYs 2009 to 2013 .during which the applicable Federal financial participation (FFP) rate is gradually increased from 55 to 75 percent);

- Amending the CFCIP to add the purpose of providing services to youth who after age 16 leave foster care for kinship guardianship or adoption; Permitting the title IV-E agency to waive on a case-by-case basis a non-safety licensing standard for a relative foster family home;
- Permitting the title IV-E agency to waive on a case-by-case basis a non-safety licensing standard for a relative foster family home;
- Re-authorizing and amending the Adoption Incentives Program by updating the "base year" used to measure increases to FY 2007; and by doubling incentive payment amounts for special needs and older child adoptions and creating a "highest ever" foster child adoption rate payment for exceeding the highest foster child adoption rate since 2002.

States were allowed delayed effective dates for certain provisions if the State certified that legislation was necessary to implement the specific provisions. Note that New York submitted its certification that statutory changes are not required for compliance with the Fostering Connections Act.

#### **CAPTA-related laws:**

Changes to the State's Provisions and Procedures for Criminal Background Checks for Prospective Foster and Adoptive Parents and Other Adult Relatives and Non-Relatives Residing in the Household:

**Chapter 623 of the Laws of 2008, effective October 1, 2008**, amended section 378-a (2) of the Social Services Law (SSL) regarding criminal history record checks for foster and adoptive parents. Effective October 1, 2008, certain convictions for crimes committed by applicants to be foster or adoptive parents will mandatorily disqualify them from becoming foster or adoptive parents. Furthermore, if already certified or approved foster or adoptive parents are convicted of these crimes after October 1, 2008, they must have their certification or approval revoked. The category of presumptive disqualifying crimes is eliminated by Chapter 623 of the Laws of 2008.

Chapter 623 of the Laws of 2008 does not impact persons who were fully certified or approved as foster or adoptive parents prior to October 1, 2008, for convictions that occurred prior to that date. Chapter 623 of the Laws of 2008 does not change in any way the requirements regarding crimes committed by household members age 18 and over. Discretionary consideration, based upon a safety assessment, remains the procedure when a criminal history record check reveals any arrests or convictions regarding any such persons.

Effective October 1, 2008, federal and New York State law and OCFS implementing regulations prohibit the certification or approval of a prospective foster or adoptive parent who has a felony conviction at any time for a crime involving abuse or neglect, spousal abuse, or a crime against a child, or for a crime involving violence. In addition, certification or approval of a prospective foster or adoptive parent is also prohibited if such person has been convicted within 5 years of such application for assault or a drug related offense. If any felony conviction for one of the above noted categories of crimes occurs after October 1, 2008, the certification or approval must be revoked. Opportunity no longer exists for such person to rebut the presumption that he or she be denied certification or approval or to rebut the presumption that his or her certification or approval be revoked. OCFS provided guidance to the field in an Administrative Directive, 08-OCFS-ADM-06, which is available on the OCFS website

**Other Statutory Changes:** The following Chapter Laws are relevant to Child Protective Services but do not affect New York's eligibility for CAPTA. They are included for informational purposes.

**Chapter 323 of the Laws of 2008:** Most prominent in Chapter 323 and the OCFS implementing regulations, which were filed on an emergency basis on January 16, 2009, are new definitions of an abused or neglected child in residential care. OCFS provided guidance to the field in 09-OCFS-INF-02, which is available on the OCFS website. This INF highlights some of the statutory and regulatory changes, including the new definitions, time frames and protocols regarding submission of reports to the New York Statewide Central Register of Child Abuse and Maltreatment (SCR) involving children receiving care in residential facilities.

**Chapter 366 of the Laws of 2008:** Chapter 366, effective upon signing on July 21, 2008, added persons credentialed by the NYS Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Services to the list of persons mandated to report suspected child abuse and maltreatment.

**Chapter 574 of the Laws of 2008:** Chapter 574, effective 180 days after signing on September 25, 2008, expands on the provision concerning Multidisciplinary Teams by clarifying which professions must be members of such teams (child protective services, law enforcement, district attorney's office, physician/medical provider, mental health professional, victim advocacy personnel and, if one exists, a child advocacy center), and that others may be included. It further clarifies those which are primarily responsible for conducting the joint child protective investigations (child protective services, district attorney and law enforcement. It provides that other members of the team shall provide advocacy, emotional support and access to medical and mental health care as appropriate to the child's needs. The specific role of such members is to be noted in any reports prepared by the team.

**Chapter 602 of the Laws of 2008:** Chapter 602, effective immediately upon signing on September 25, 2008, authorizes child protective services personnel in social services districts to have access to criminal history records of certain persons residing with children alleged to be abused, neglected or maltreated. OCFS is working with the NYS

Division of Criminal Justice Services to finalize policy guidance and procedure the field for carrying out these activities in order to obtain this important information that may impact on both child and caseworker safety.

### **Caseworker Visits**

Case Progress Notes Review: The OCFS CONNECTIONS Business Team was tasked with reviewing a sample of progress notes that were identified as having no contact in a particular month in hopes of identifying any overarching themes and possible technical solutions to help caseworkers better meet and/or document these requirements.

The Business Team looked at small, medium and large social services districts in each region, as well as New York City ACS. Beginning with August 2008, the team selected a number of cases (five for small districts, ten for medium, 20 for large and 25 for New York City ACS) that were identified as not having a successful casework contact with a child in foster care for that month. The team reviewed the progress notes for August through November to determine why the note was not counted (e.g. a contact was made, but incorrectly coded; no contact was made). After reviewing four months of progress notes in about 200 cases, the team was unable to find one prevailing theme across districts to account for missing casework contacts.

Among the findings in this sample were: The closer to the event date that the note was entered, the more detailed and substantive the note. Some districts had a substantial lag between event date and entry date; in a few cases, the note was recorded after the federal submission date and therefore could not be counted. In other instances, the child had actually left care, but that information had not been entered. Some districts seemed to be more likely to miss contacts with those children who are freed for adoption. Workers often chose the wrong type of note (e.g. collateral contact, summary) or did not choose multiple types when appropriate (e.g. visitation and casework contact when the worker was making substantive contact with the child before or after the visit).

Finally, the reviewers noted that the system enhancement that was implemented in the third quarter of 2008 which pre-fills the “focus” field with each selected family participant has reduced the number of unsuccessful contacts due to not selecting child as the focus.

In order to improve the documentation of caseworker visits/casework contacts with children in foster care, OCFS has developed and is in the process of implementing a plan that addresses three known areas of need, building on the recommendations coming out of the Progress Notes review and conversations with the field. Those recommendations are:

- Improve the availability of portable technology for local district foster care workers and staff in voluntary agencies that are responsible for making and documenting appropriate contacts are made and documented. The absence of

contemporaneous entry of progress notes is a significant issue and the availability of laptops for field work will be helpful in addressing it.

- The ability for supervisors to have easy access to “in the moment” casework contact information is critical. At the present time, OCFS’ reports do not allow for supervisors to readily act upon missing casework contact information and direct caseworkers to complete notes within the allotted period.
- Strengthen the role of the Implementation Specialists in providing training and technical assistance to LDSS and voluntary agencies with respect to casework contacts. Since the Business Team did not find a prevailing theme, the Business Team plans to meet with staff from OCFS Implementation to discuss the specific results from the districts reviewed. The Business Team Implementation Specialist should work with appropriate local district staff to develop a specific plan for recording successful casework contacts. The Business Team would recommend the development of a statewide, county by county plan to improve performance.
- Examine Common Core and Supervisory training modules to reinforce good practice in progress note writing.

During the second quarter of 2009, the OCFS Data Warehouse team released the Foster Care Children – No Successful Contact reports. The reports (summary and detail) help social services districts and voluntary agencies identify foster care children that have not had a successful casework contact recorded. Resources can be assigned to contact these children and steps taken to reduce the number of children that have not been contacted. In the short time the reports have been available feedback extremely positive.

Interim data for casework contacts between October 2008 and March 2009 show New York meeting the 10/09 projection for 45% of visits each and every month.

Target percentages: 10/1/08 15%, reported actual 21.3%  
10/1/09 45%  
10/1/10 75%  
10/1/11 90%

OCFS’ Plan for 2009-10 addresses the following three areas of need:

1. *Software Ease of Use:* Several barriers to successfully document foster care contacts have been identified in the CONNECTIONS application. A redesign construction and testing effort has been initiated to make this process more case worker friendly. Case Contact functionality within CMAP will include a screen where any worker that makes or attempts contact with the youth and/or family can input an entry. This will be part of the new Counseling/Case Management module, which is a 6-month effort spanning CMAP Phases 2 and 3. Case Contacts is scheduled to be done in Phase 3, with an estimated completion of June 2009.

In order to improve OCFS foster care contacts and reporting OCFS is in the process of creating data and reporting that supports foster care reporting. The benefits would include:

- Capturing and storing Foster Care data ‘over time’
  - Analysis of Foster Care performance by month and Fiscal Year to Date
  - Data access and reporting by districts and voluntary agencies
  - Creation of monthly ‘ACF Metrics’ (by District and Statewide)
  - Additional detail and summary Foster Care reports
  - Easier and faster creation of the annual ACF report
2. *Training:* The OCFS Child Welfare central and regional offices and IT Field implementation staff will provide training and a desk guide to foster care case workers on the proper entry of case work contacts. The regional staff will be responsible for assessing the outcomes via compliance report monitoring.
3. *Technology:* The procurement of approximately 1804 laptops equipped with wireless service to be provided to foster care caseworkers. OCFS is purchasing the laptops and the LDSS offices will be responsible for the air-cards. This would enable the caseworker to enter their contact information and progress notes while in the field versus having to return to the office to input the information. Furthermore, the use of laptops would afford caseworkers more time to be in the field meeting with a child and their foster family.

OCFS’ on-going monitoring and quality assurance in this area includes an assessment of each local district’s and voluntary agency’s practices related to casework contacts. OCFS Commissioner Gladys Carrión sent a letter to all local district commissioners on May 11, 2009, advising them of this upcoming review of a sample of Progress Notes in cases where casework contacts were not recorded. This initiative is underway and will conclude by September 30, 2009. The process will involve the case Progress Notes reviews, followed by a meeting between OCFS and the local district or voluntary agency to discuss the findings and develop a plan of action, as warranted.

### **Child and Family Services Plans (replaced Integrated County Planning)**

As previously indicated, beginning with the 2007-2009 three year county planning cycle, all counties in the state are required to submit a single county plan from LDSS and county Youth Bureaus. This was a culmination of the Integrated County Planning Project that was built from a pilot with sixteen counties to statewide implementation. Counties will be required to submit a new multi-year plan fall of 2010.

### **Accomplishments for 2005-2009**

- OCFS continues to enhance the infrastructure of the SharePoint site; an intranet site used to store, monitor, and access county plans and is working to

provide counties access to the site.

- OCFS has taken the feedback collected from the local districts on last year's conference call and is working to streamline the counties submission and reporting requirement.
- DPCA continues to jointly review and approve the PINS Diversion Component of the plan. The review and approval process was completed by way of teleconference between OCFS staff and DPCA staff allowing for shared dialogue, coordinated review/approval of plans, and direct

#### **Plans for 2010-2014**

- OCFS will continue to enhance the infrastructure of SharePoint site and will work to provide counties access to the site.
- OCFS is exploring collaborating with OASAS, to participate in using its on-line planning system. Currently, OASAS, OMRDD, and OMH have worked together to develop a common planning methodology utilizing this Web-based application that serves both the state and county level agency service systems.
- OCFS is currently working on an automation system to serve Title XX reporting data that is accessible to respective state and county personnel via program permissions.

#### **Consultation, Collaboration, and Service Integration**

The creation of OCFS was accompanied by a statutorily created Children and Family Services Advisory Board comprised of 24 members. The Board's purpose is to help OCFS construct a better system of services for New York's children, families and individuals. The Governor appoints twelve members and the State Senate and Assembly appoint six each. Its duties broadly include consideration of matters relating to the improvement of children and family services, review of proposed rules and regulations of the OCFS prior to their adoption, advocacy for OCFS programs, and liaison with local stakeholders.

OCFS routinely involves a wide range of agency staff in all discussions involving aspects of the delivery of services to children, youth and families. Typically staff representing policy, legal, program operations, fiscal, and training participate, as appropriate and by expertise, give input on issues encompassing the entire range of child welfare services, i.e. child protective services, foster care, adoption, preventive services, independent living, juvenile justice, and any of the Social Services Block Grant (SSBG or Title XX) services.

In addition to the broader avenues of input noted below, social services districts and voluntary authorized agencies interact with OCFS regional offices routinely for technical assistance, feedback on problem areas, and suggestions for improvement. Regional

offices share those concerns/suggestions with OCFS home office on an ongoing basis. Monthly meetings provide a vehicle for advising and discussing with OCFS home office field concerns and for comparing various regional issues to determine how broad the issue may be or whether geographic location or county population is a factor.

In a similar manner, the Native American Services (NAS) unit actively interacts with the Tribes to offer general forums for discussions of issues, as well as to address specific child/family circumstances and consult with the Tribal communities. Monthly meetings with Tribal representatives provide the opportunity for ongoing dialogue. As with regional office staff, the NAS unit provides feedback to OCFS home office. In addition, regional office staff and county welfare attorneys are involved and provide another conduit for feedback. The Native American Services unit is very active in supporting and sharing feedback from the Tribes and for facilitating meetings for direct feedback to home office.

OCFS is also committed to hearing the voice of youth impacted by service systems. To that end, OCFS has supported the development and growth of Youth in Progress, a statewide foster care youth leadership advisory board. This group of young people, accompanied by adult mentors, has provided ongoing input related to a wide range of topics that impact their experience in foster care and beyond.

OCFS seeks the input of its partners in the social services districts, youth bureaus and voluntary authorized agencies using a variety of methods. Communication occurs through state level associations - the New York Public Welfare Association (NYPWA), the Council of Family and Child Caring Agencies (COFCCA), the Empire State Coalition of Youth and Family Services (Empire State Coalition), the New York State Juvenile Police Officers Association (NYSJPOA), Foster and Adoptive Parent organizations and the Association of New York State Youth Bureaus (NYSAYB). OCFS staff participates in association meetings and conferences, and frequently communicate with individual members of sub-groups as needed and appropriate.

The New York State Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS) and Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance (OTDA) Faith- and Community-Based Partnership was formed in 1998 in response to the federal Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) Charitable Choice provisions. Both agencies have expanded the opportunities for all faith- and community-based organizations to help serve families and children in need. To support this partnership, with OCFS serving as the lead coordinating agency, each agency has designated faith-based coordinators and liaisons that act as a bridge between the two agencies and the faith- and community-based organizations. This partnership builds upon long-standing faith- and community-based activities, which have been developed throughout New York State.

### **2005-2009 Accomplishments:**

The partnership assists faith-and-community-based organizations groups to become high quality human services providers by maximizing the availability of information and

resources administered by OCFS and OTDA. The primary focus of this partnership is on helping small organizations gain access to any of the materials, resources, and technical assistance that may be available.

Under the auspices of the partnership, a Resource Development and Grants Writing Curriculum was developed in 2005. Approximately 25 highly requested workshops, One on One private consultation and Technical Assistance sessions with faith and community organizations, including with the use of interpreters, have been successfully conducted in areas across New York State. The curriculum includes, strategic planning, developing competitive proposals for state funding, understanding Outcomes Funding and basic information about evaluation strategies. The curriculum, which is in the process of revision, is being enhanced to include steps to take to obtain 501C3 not-for-profit status, How to build an effective infrastructure for service delivery, and How to build a legitimate and effective Board of Directors. Additionally, the Liaison provides one on one consultations and technical assistance sessions allowing faith and community organizations to discuss private program development activities, specific to their church mission and needs.

#### **Plans for 2010-2014:**

The OCFS Statewide Liaison also serves as the New York State White House Office of Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships. The Liaison will continue to share information regarding new federal funding opportunities, legal updates, new policy directions with faith and community-based organizations in New York State through the partnerships website and other means of communication.

Given the new and expanded focus of the new administration's faith-based agenda, which includes building enhanced partnerships between the faith-based community and state and federal government, it is anticipated the partnerships activities will continue for the next five years or more.

#### **Coordination and Service Integration Efforts**

OCFS staff is involved in several collaborative efforts related to a wide range of child, youth, and family services. OCFS is committed to working cooperatively with state agencies, community providers and advocacy groups to forge partnerships to develop and implement effective strategies to address issues that affect New Yorkers. These joint efforts may be formal interagency task forces and/or workgroups, efforts required by statute or regulation, or informal responses to an identified problem. All of these efforts have positive effects beyond the stated issues in forming working relationships and mutual understanding of approaches to populations and problems and have the continuing effect of improving communication and problem-solving ability, thereby promoting improved service delivery.

An example of these efforts is the Strategic Collaborative County Planning training held in Syracuse in June 2007. Staff from over 50 local districts attended this event and five state agencies were represented. The focus of the training was to promote county planning activities and reinforce successful efforts to integrate local planning processes.

In addition to these activities, the collaborative efforts noted in the chart beginning on the following page describe several coordination and service integration efforts that provide excellent opportunities for consultation, discussion, and input from various agencies and constituencies regarding a wide array of services to children, youth and families. The various groups, depending upon their charge, are comprised of representatives from State and local, public, and private entities.

### **Cross Systems Collaborations**

OCFS Commissioner Carrión stated in her article in the August 2007 OCFS newsletter titled, “Strengthening Partnerships”, that “...we have been diligently working to create partnerships with advocacy groups, community programs, and our sister state agencies working together to find common ground with our stakeholders and the community...the needs of our children and families call for a broader approach that includes the intervention of other state agencies.”

Collaborative Accomplishments 2005-2009:

In December 2007, a meeting of state agency commissioners serving children was held to discuss the need for cross system collaborations for children with service needs that involve more than one service delivery system. Commissioners from the following agencies attended: OCFS, the Office of Mental Health (OMH), the Office of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities (OMRDD), the Office of Alcohol and Substance Abuse Services (OASAS), the Department of Health (DOH), the Division of Probation and Correctional Alternatives (DPCA), the State Education Department (SED), and the Commission on Quality of Care and Advocacy for Persons with Disabilities (CQCAPD). The Commissioners meet quarterly to continue the discussion and to develop and implement joint solutions to improve the lives of children, youth and families.

Examples of collaborations with sister state agencies and/or local districts include:

The NYS DOH and OCFS have worked collaboratively to improve the collection and analysis of information available on child deaths. We look to broaden the OCFS perspective on child deaths from a view through the child welfare lens to a wide angle view that embraces a more community based and public health perspective. The purpose is to break new ground in addressing system issues to inform practice across disciplines to prevent child deaths.

A primary objective to the achievement of this goal is to create a formal partnership with DOH to expand and improve child fatality review and prevention efforts at the local and state levels.

The guiding principles for partnership include the following:

- Child deaths that are unanticipated by medical history are a community responsibility;
- Child fatality review requires multidisciplinary participation;
- Comprehensive review of all child deaths will identify those that are preventable;
- Information about preventable deaths will help communities identify risk factors; and
- This information will lead to actions to prevent child deaths, illness and injury.

A formalized partnership with the DOH provides the core strength for increased strategic action and the basis for a broader, state level, multi disciplinary child fatality reviews.

The second objective for the DOH fatality agenda includes an expanded and improved child fatality review and prevention system. This includes more robust legislative and policy support for existing child fatality review teams (CFRT's), an aggressive outreach campaign for the development of local CFRT's and the development of a formally supported statewide CFRT.

Our third objective is to examine the efficacy and wisdom of adopting use of the federal data collection system currently being used by 26 other states. Supported and maintained by the National Center for Child Death Review, this web based system houses information based on a public safety perspective and allows access to an even greater data pool than that afforded by NYS DOH.

In addition, OCFS participates actively on another workgroup with DOH that has been charged by the legislature to develop protocols for review of all unexpected child deaths that occur en route to hospitals in New York State, as part of the broader public health approach to review of child deaths.

Commissioners from the NYS Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance (OTDA) and OCFS have established operational work teams to address serious issues related to child care and child support, child-only Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) caseloads, limited English proficiency services, adult protective services, and fatherhood initiatives.

OASAS is working in collaboration with OCFS to align the delivery of drug and alcohol services for OCFS' juvenile justice facilities and aftercare services, as well as for local districts that need access to drug and alcohol treatment services to support family functioning, such as a co-location project described elsewhere in the plan.

OCFS, along with OMRDD and OMH are working jointly to reduce the use of physical restraints in child care settings, as well as to improve service delivery to cross-systems children who need support from multiple systems.

OCFS has been working collaboratively with SED to develop bed capacity within NYS to prevent placement of children with high service needs in out-of-state residential facilities and when appropriate, return children currently in out-of-state residential programs to services that are delivered close to home within NYS.

For the past few years, OCFS has worked closely with the NYS Office for the Prevention of Domestic Violence (OPDV) in several areas, particularly in the area of training. OPDV delivers the required two-day training on domestic violence to every CPS caseworker in NYS outside of NYC, which does the training itself. OCFS is also collaborating with OPDV in the planning of regional forums on working with fathers.

OCFS, OMH, OMRDD, and DOH continues to work to provide comprehensive services to children with cross-systems needs.

Bridges to Health Home and Community Based Medicaid Services Waivers (B2H)  
OCFS continues to work collaboratively with DOH on the implementation of the OCFS Bridges to Health Home and Community Based Medicaid Services Waivers (B2H) for children in foster care. B2H is a series of three separate waivers; one each serving children with B2H for children with serious emotional disturbance, B2H for children with developmental disabilities, and B2H for children with medical fragility. B2H began serving children on January 1, 2008.

B2H services are provided for children in foster care settings whose diagnosed conditions are sufficiently severe to warrant placement in an institution were it not for the supports provided by the B2H waiver. B2H services are not provided by the foster care system and are not supported through state or federal funding available for foster care services.

OCFS and DOH are responsible for the operation and oversight of the B2H waivers. All of the B2H services are intended to serve children in a community-based setting and within their support network, as children in foster care have many people involved in their lives- including birth families, foster and adoptive families, caregivers, LDSS, providers, clinicians, courts, and advocates. Available B2H services are as follows: Health Care Integration; Planned Respite; Skill Building; Day Habilitation; Family/Caregiver Supports and Services; Prevocational Services; Intensive In-Home Supports; Supported Employment; Special Needs Community Advocacy and Support; Immediate Crisis Response Services; Crisis Avoidance, Management and Training; Adaptive and Assistive Equipment; Crisis Respite; and Accessibility Modifications. Services needs are determined pursuant to an enrolled child's Individual Health Plan.

#### Office of Court Administration (OCA)

Permanent Judicial Commission on Justice for Children (Commission): The Commission is chaired by Chief Judge Jonathan Lippman. In addition to OCFS Commissioner Carrión, other members include judges, lawyers, advocates, physicians, legislators, and state and local officials.

NYS Child Welfare Court Improvement Project (CIP) began in 1994 and was administered from its inception through the fall of 2006 by the Commission. In 2006, the increased focus on court operational issues prompted the transition of the administration of the project to the Office of Court Administration's Division of Court Operations. The CIP continues to operate with the support, advice, and counsel of the Commission. OCFS and OCA have initiated a joint project to build more effective collaboration between the family courts and the social services districts with the highest foster care populations in the State. The newly formed statewide court collaboration team will design and oversee the implementation of court collaboration initiatives on the State and local levels. The project will support the development of enhanced family court practices and enhanced child welfare case work and legal practices to support the timely resolution of court cases so as to reduce children's time to permanency. The project is also providing a process by which data maintained by both local social services districts and courts can be shared to evaluate the impact of innovations that promote improved outcomes for children.

The specific strategies to achieve these goals will differ among social services districts but the hallmark approach will be the development of collaborative, interdisciplinary stakeholder groups in each targeted district. This recognizes that system collaboration is important not only at the State level but also at the local level – district by district and family court by family court. The strategies will include cross-training so that legal, judicial, social services staff and other stakeholders are trained on each others' core values and professional guidelines. Integrated training events and, local collaborative meetings will be opportunities for family court personnel, local district staff and other stakeholders to identify barriers to effective collaboration and to design effective local change efforts and best practices.

OCFS and CWCIP have designated key staff as members of a Statewide program Improvement Plan Court Collaboration Project Team to achieve the shared goals. The strategy leads from OCFS and CWCIP will utilize the resources available through the National Resource Centers for Organizational Improvement and Legal and Judicial Issues, the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges, the National Center for Substance Abuse and Child Welfare, the Northeast and Caribbean Child Welfare Implementation Center and other sources to support this work to enhance permanency outcomes for the children of New York State.

The Adoption Panels were very successful in getting workers from different disciplines to work together to find solutions and help to expedite the adoption of freed children. They have also provided a wealth of information to OCFS and OCA on systemic barriers to adoption.

The Statewide Permanency Planning Team (SPPT), was convened by OCFS in 2003, and was comprised of representatives of the Unified Court System, NYS Executive Branch agencies (OMRDD, DOH, OASAS, SED, OMH, DPCA, and OCFS), local government entities, institutions, and individuals who represent children and parents. This Team is discussed in more detail later in this document.

The Seneca Nation Peacemaker Courts Collaboration began in 2005 and includes judges and court personnel from the 8<sup>th</sup> Judicial District, the Seneca Nation of Indians and the Peacemaker Court judges. This collaboration provides a forum to discuss practices and procedures and provides a welcome point of contact for issues including the implementation of the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA), and the development of a tribal Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) program.

Child Protective Services (CPS)/Domestic Violence (DV) Collaboration Projects: The CPS/DV collaboration projects outstation a DV advocate from a local non-for-profit DV agency in the local CPS office to participate in joint home visits, joint safety planning and interventions, consultation, case conferencing, cross-training and protocol, and team development. OCFS currently supports 13 CPS/DV projects in 5 regions: one in the Rochester region, three in the Albany region, three in the Syracuse region, four in the Yonkers region, and 2 in the Buffalo region. (More information related to this project is noted in Goal 3)

In-Depth Technical Assistance (IDTA): In 2006, NYS was awarded an In-Depth Technical Assistance (IDTA) opportunity from the National Center on Substance Abuse and Child Welfare (NCSACW) following a joint application by OCFS, OASAS and OCA. The purpose of this work is to enhance collaboration to improve outcomes for families with substance abuse issues involved in the family court and child welfare system. The collaboration is called the New York State Partnership for the Family Recovery Project. The results of this work include *Gearing Up to Improve Outcomes for Families Collaborative Guide, Publication 5073*. This document provides a framework and guidance for districts to increase local collaboration between systems, and the development and identification of cross-systems training opportunities to increase the understanding by workers in each of the systems of each other's work. Also issued in early 2009 is the Desk Aid for Child Welfare workers.

#### Racial Equity and Cultural Competence Initiative

OCFS has implemented the Racial Equity and Cultural Competence (RECC) Initiative. The RECC Initiative has been developed to examine the issue of overrepresentation of Black and Latino children and their families in the state's child welfare and juvenile justice systems. In addition, this initiative is examining the under representation of the same populations in necessary services that can prevent out of home placements in other systems (i.e. child care, adult services, services to the blind and visually handicapped). This initiative began in December of 2007 as a committee known as the Disproportionate Minority Representation/Cultural Competence Committee. In February 2009, with commissioner approval, the committee name was changed to the Race Equity & Cultural Competence Committee. Each OCFS division has staff representation within this committee on behalf of the agency. OCFS has begun to engage our local partners in this effort.

Current OCFS data indicates that Black and Latino children and families consistently comprise 75% of the state's foster care cases and 80% of the juvenile justice placements.

In response to this situation, OCFS has begun to implement various activities at the state and local level to:

- assess relevant data;
- heighten public awareness of the issue of disproportionality;
- provide technical assistance and training to relevant stakeholders at the state and local level regarding RECC;
- identify strategies and funding opportunities which assist communities to address the issue; and
- Identify evidence based and/or best practice strategies and/or approaches which can be replicated in New York State to respond to the issue.

In response to the need for detailed data on the extent and nature of disproportionality in the child welfare and juvenile justice systems in New York State, OCFS' Bureau of Evaluation and Research has been analyzing OCFS child welfare data and population projection data to identify racial/ethnic disparities at different decision points in the New York State child welfare system. Similar analyses are being performed for the juvenile justice system, using data from OCFS, the Division of Criminal Justice Services (DCJS), criminal justice agencies in New York City, and population projections. In addition, the Bureau of Evaluation and Research has conducted a comparative analysis of child welfare data disaggregated to the county level in order to determine the areas of the state where disproportionality is most evident and the demographic factors that are associated with high levels of disproportionality. County-level DMR indicators were developed and included in the data packets that are being provided to local districts as part of the federal Child and Family Services Review Performance Improvement Plan process.

Ready By 21-Quality Counts Initiative: OCFS began this new initiative in September 2007 to support the work already in progress with New York State's Youth Development Team. OCFS is the lead intermediary agency working with The Forum for Youth Investment, The Center for Youth Program Quality (formerly High Scope Youth Development Group), Cornell University Assets Coming Together (ACT) for Youth Center of Excellence, and the NYS Department of Health (DOH) to improve youth development by improving program quality. Onondaga, Orange, Broome, and Rockland County are the initial counties OCFS is partnering with as this initiative began implementation. Ready by 21-Quality Counts' primary focus is to look at and improve program quality at the point of service between the youth and family, program landscape, policy, and youth worker training.

Child Welfare-Substance Abuse Collocation Project: In June 2006, OCFS and OASAS entered into an interagency collaboration to demonstrate and evaluate the effectiveness of coordinated assessment and referral to services for persons with substance abuse issues in order to improve permanency and well-being for children, youth and families. This cross-systems demonstration project is being piloted in eight social services districts in New York State.

The first point of entry into the child welfare system is often through reports of child abuse or maltreatment investigated by the local department of social services or through

the filing of Person in Need of Supervision (PINS) petitions with the court by parents or schools. It is typically through the investigation of the reports or referrals that the problem of substance abuse becomes known. The collocation of Certified Alcohol and Substance Abuse Counselors (CASAC) and Mentors within County Child Protective Services units has shown promise in improving the identification of substance abuse problems and in coordinating case assessment and service planning.

CASACs are responsible to conduct assessments of parents and youth suspected of having substance abuse issues, connecting individuals having positive substance abuse assessments with appropriate treatment and providing case support to increase engagement and retention in substance abuse services. Mentors are responsible to coordinate with a CASAC and project Prevention Specialist to provide support to parents and youth with substance abuse problems and link families with prevention services. Substance Abuse Prevention Specialist are responsible to compile and maintain inventories of prevention service providers and other community services, develop referral agreements with providers, provide prevention case management functions, and provide prevention specific services, as needed.

#### **Plans for 2010-2014**

B2H Waiver Program: This three- year waiver is currently in its second year and is, as of May 31, 2009, servicing over 650 enrolled children in the Rochester, Albany, New York City, Syracuse, and lower Hudson Valley areas, as well as appropriate youth referred to B2H from OCFS' Division of Juvenile Justice and Opportunities for Youth (DJJOY). During 2010, B2H services will be expanded to the Buffalo and Long Island regions, resulting in state-wide availability. By the end of 2010, a total of 3,305 B2H waiver slots will be available.

Child Welfare-Substance Abuse Collocation Project: State funds were not allocated for SFY 2009-10 for CDP. Existing funds will enable the eight CDP programs to continue operating until the end of December 2009. A final report on the implementation and preliminary outcomes of CDP will be produced by October 31, 2009.

Ready By 21-Quality Counts Initiative: Year two has begun with counties completing internal and external program assessments of providers utilizing the Youth Program Quality Assessment Tool, counties mapping their program and service landscape, and collaborating on their respective county plans. OCFS is developing state-wide capacity for sustaining this work by establishing a training plan through the Office of Youth Development within CWCS to have OCFS staff trained as Trainer of Trainers (TOTs) in various components of the Ready by 21 initiative in order to support counties across the state as they come on board, and allow for additional sister agencies to receive training.

## **Program Service Descriptions According to Goals**

### GOAL #1

FAMILIES, INCLUDING NUCLEAR, EXTENDED AND ADOPTIVE FAMILIES WILL BE STRENGTHENED AND SUPPORTED IN RAISING AND NURTURING THEIR CHILDREN; IN MAINTAINING THEIR CHILDREN'S CONNECTIONS TO THEIR HERITAGE; AND IN PLANNING FOR THEIR CHILDREN'S FUTURE

**Primary Strategy:** 1. Infuse and implement family-centered principles into casework practice that promotes family engagement across all stages of the child welfare delivery system.

National research, as well as New York State stakeholders, lead us to the conclusion that when a family is actively engaged in developing a plan to improve their family functioning, they are more likely to commit to the goals and the personal work required to achieve those goals. From the initial contacts and through-out the life of the case, family engagement is at the core of helping a family address their children's need for safety, permanency and well-being.

**Goal:** Increase the engagement of families in the assessments of needs and strengths, case planning and positive outcomes.

#### **Action Steps and Benchmarks:**

1. Obtain commitment from the 13 counties with the highest foster care population to adopt and implement a Family Engagement initiative.

Benchmarks 1.1(a) Letter sent to counties identifying Family Engagement as NYS key practice and to have each district adopt it as a key strategy in their PIP (submitted in a logic model format)

1.1(b) Develop and distribute CFSR data relative to safety, permanency and well-being.

Districts are required to complete a local self-assessment based on data and local stakeholder input that identifies any need for improvement in family engagement

1.1(c) Provide T/A to districts related to the understanding and use of CFSR data

1.1(d) Development and distribution of four sample family engagement logic model templates that assist districts in identify their needs and connect them to the strategy that best facilitates practice change

1.1(e) Provide T/A to districts related to the understanding and use of logic models. The needs in the area of family engagement differ by districts, therefore regional and home office support will be tailored to assist each district in selecting those strategies based on their identified needs.

1.2 OCFS will provide or coordinate training and technical assistance to the 13 counties in implementing family engagement strategies Benchmarks 1.2.(a) Review local district PIPs to identify the training and technical assistance to be responsive to the strengths, needs, and strategies in implementing Family Engagement  
1.2(b) Develop and distribute electronic versions of Family Engagement Toolkits to districts and agencies  
1.2(c) Family Engagement Specialists will provide training and coaching as needed  
1.2(d) CPS staff in the counties participating in FAR initiative will receive training in culturally competent family engagement from AHA

1.3 Expansion of Family Assessment Response (FAR has been implemented in six counties, four of which are part of the 13 counties.)  
1.3(a) FAR will be expanded to eight additional counties in Round 2. One of which is part of the 13 counties.  
1.3(b) Applications for round 2 received and approval letters provided back to the counties  
1.3(c) Planning calls held with round 2 counties  
1.3(d) district specific training provided by AHA  
1.3(e) FAR symposium held to afford knowledge exchanged between round 1 and 2 counties who are implementing  
1.3(f) FAR evaluation completed

1.4 Monitor LDSS's progress in implementation of family engagement strategies  
1.4(a) Develop and distribute quarterly reporting forms for districts to indicate the action steps they took during the quarter with respect to their Family Engagement activities.  
1.4(b) Review, analyze and provide feedback to each of the districts on their quarterly reporting forms  
1.4(c) Develop and administer online surveys of front line staff and supervisors to determine changes in knowledge, attitudes, skills and motivation around Family Engagement.  
1.4(d) Complete analysis of data and write report

**Primary Strategy:** 5. Redesign of the Statewide Information System

The Statewide Assessment noted concerns regarding the accuracy and currency of information relevant to a child's goals due to challenges surrounding the timeliness of data entry into New York's statewide information system (CONNECTIONS). OCFS has proposed several ways to promote more timely data entry of permanency planning information in CONNECTIONS that will increase the accuracy of the information available to caseworkers.

**Goal:** NYS' Statewide Information System will be user-friendly and provide timely and accurate child welfare data

## **Action Steps and Benchmarks**

5.1 Procurement and distribution of approximately 1,800 laptops to enable Foster Care workers to access CONNECTIONS to record casework contacts in a timely manner

5.2 Development and deployment of Share point technology that affords caseworkers and supervisors access to critical workload and performance measures.

5.2(a) Provide LDSS and VA users with training on Share Point technology.

5.3 Deployment of a new dot.net style of architecture that will allow caseworkers to easily navigate in and out of their workload, organize critical tasks, and maximize use of pre-fill options which will assist in the improving timeliness and accuracy of data

5.3(a) Provide LDSS and VA users with training on new transformation technology.

5.4 Develop and implement an enhanced dynamic Permanency Hearing Report

5.4 (a) Provide training to LDSS and VA users on the new Permanency Hearing Report

**Primary Strategy:** 7. Enhance training of voluntary agency staff participating in the Improved Outcomes for Children as initiated by the Administration for Children's Services.

OCFS will review and provide guidance related to the training and technical assistance offered by the Administration for Children's Services (ACS) to voluntary agency staff, who through the Improved Outcomes for Children initiative will be responsible for the case planning and management of child welfare cases (preventive and foster care). ACS's training and technical assistance will focus on Family Team Conferencing facilitation training. Refresher days will also be included.

**Goal:** Training will be provided to voluntary agency staff participating in ACS' Improve Outcomes for Children initiative.

## **Action Steps and Benchmarks**

7.1 Review and Monitor ACS' training to IOC agencies on Family Team Conference facilitation skills.

## **ASSESSMENT OF NEED AND CURRENT STATUS**

Between 1998 and 2005 admissions to foster care declined steadily. This trend changed in 2006, when there was a 25.2% increase in admissions. In 2007 admissions were down 4.6 % from 2006. For 2008 admissions are down slightly 0.14 % from 2007. The number of care days in foster care in 2008 also declined 1.7% compared to 2007.

An analysis of foster care admission data reveals that the two age cohorts most highly represented in the current foster care admission population are children under the age of two and children age 14 -17. This reflects the same age cohorts as 2007: Children under

the age of two (21.7%) and children age 14-17 (32.7%). The percentage for admissions for the age group 2-5 years, 6-9 years and 10-13 years was unchanged. The older age group is most likely to come into care after contact with the juvenile justice system.

The percentage of foster care readmissions as a function of all admissions remained stable. In the year 2004, readmissions were 14.4% of admissions. For 2005, 2006, and 2007 readmissions were 13.7%, 11.8%, and 11.9%. For the year 2008 readmissions increased to 14%.

### **2005-2009 PERFORMANCE TARGETS**

#### **Recurrence of Child Abuse and Maltreatment (CAM)**

A state meets the national standard for this indicator if, of all children who were victims of substantiated or indicated child abuse and/or neglect in the first six months of the reporting period, 6.1% or fewer children had another substantiated or indicated report within six months.

NEW YORK STATE PERFORMANCE:	2003	14.3%
	2004	14.0%
	2005	12.7%
	2006	13.7%
	2007	12.3%
	2008	12.1%

When the performance target is not met (on a local district level), there is a recommended 10% performance improvement target. New York State meets the performance improvement target.

Data Source: OCFS DATA WAREHOUSE

### **STATE AND LOCAL ACTIVITIES**

#### **Healthy Families New York (HFNY)**

Based on the national Healthy Families America (HFA) model, Healthy Families New York (HFNY) is a community-based prevention program that seeks to improve the health and well-being of children at risk for abuse and neglect through the provision of intensive home visitation services. HFNY offers systematic assessment of pregnant women and new parents for risks that may lead to child abuse and poor health/ development outcomes. Specially trained paraprofessionals, who typically share the same language and cultural background as participating families, deliver home visitation services to

families identified as being at high risk until the child reaches five or is enrolled in Head Start or kindergarten.

Home visitors provide families with support, education, and linkages to community services aimed at addressing the following goals: 1) to promote positive parenting skills and parent-child interaction; 2) to prevent child abuse and neglect; 3) to ensure optimal prenatal care and child health and development; and 4) to increase parents' self-sufficiency. Home visits are scheduled biweekly during pregnancy and weekly during the first six months or so of the child's life. As families progress through the service levels based on their needs, the frequency of home visits declines, from biweekly, to monthly, and then quarterly.

HFNY is administered by OCFS in partnership with Prevent Child Abuse New York (PCANY) and the Center for Human Services Research (CHSR) at SUNY Albany. The initiative is modeled after Healthy Families America (HFA), the most widely disseminated home visitation program in the nation. New York is one of a handful of states to have earned a HFA multi-site certification in a very rigorous credentialing process.

HFNY currently operates in 39 high need communities throughout New York State. All of the programs are located in high need areas. In 2008, 3,960 families were assessed and 5,569 families received 69,417 home visits. Since the HFNY program began in 1995, 22,880 families have been served and 669,424 home visits have been provided.

### **Accomplishments 2005-2009**

**Other Activities:** The NYS Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Services (OASAS) created a Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders (FASD) Task Force to help develop a comprehensive statewide strategic plan to reduce the prevalence of such disorders among New York's newborns. As a result of this planning process, the Buffalo Home Visiting Program was selected by the Task Force as one of three service delivery systems targeting women of childbearing age that OASAS focused on for this initiative. The project was funded by the federal Substance Abuse Mental Health Services Administration FASD Center for Excellence, through a contract with Northrup Grumman. The Task Force was charged with identifying and offering services to women who are at risk for alcohol exposed pregnancies. In 2006, the Buffalo Home Visiting Program implemented a focused approach to preventing FASD in the Buffalo Prenatal Program. This includes, screening each mother for alcohol use/abuse, providing education about FASD, providing education and referrals for effective birth control, and using the techniques of motivational interviewing, which has been successfully utilized with substance abusing individuals to encourage them to participate in treatment programs. Although funding for this pilot has ended, the Buffalo Prenatal Program continues to implement this approach and assisting OCFS with replication to other HFNY programs. A manual, to be used for replication in other HFNY programs, was developed and published in 2007.

In June 2008, HFNY held a full staff, 2 ½ day training seminar in Central NY. All staff of each program, as well as Central Administration attended. There were training tracks offered specific to each program staff role. Included in the training were workshops on breastfeeding, engaging parents, fetal alcohol syndrome prevention, domestic violence, teen parenting, communication, sign language, teen fathers, and parenting with Psychiatric Disabilities, just to name a few. The training institute also featured national speakers from the Humor Project, the Arizona Fathers and Families Coalition, and Jodi Pfarr who discussed strategies for dealing with the issue of families in poverty. Outside of the specific training offered there was an opportunity for staff to network and discuss challenges and strategies in working with families. Staff went back to their sites refreshed and equipped with new information and tools to use.

OCFS with the Capital District HFNY programs participated in a Safe Babies event at Crossgates Mall near Albany, NY, in November 2008. The event was geared to increase public awareness of injury prevention and tips to keep infants safe. Other HFNY sites participated in local safe babies events.

The State Budget for 2008-2009 included \$ 23,288,202.00 million dollars for HFNY. Ten new programs began serving families, four in New York City, one on Long Island, and the remainder in upstate NY. More information on grants to community agencies and program evaluation are available on the OCFS internet.

OCFS staff provides onsite and regional technical assistance and monitoring to the sites. During 2008, monitoring visits were conducted to all 39 programs with the 10 new programs receiving more frequent visits to provide technical assistance. OCFS staff focused their visits on the management of the program, community relationships, and ability of sites to meet HFA standards for providing quality home visits. OCFS staff reviews all of the sites' policy manuals and practices to determine if policies and practices are in compliance with New York State and HFA standards.

Over the past year, the Schuyler Center for Advocacy and Analysis has continued to bring together a group of OCFS, State Department of Health (DOH), and local county health departments and provider agencies to work towards developing a coordinated system of home visiting. The group developed a White Paper and disseminated it among interested parties. It supports the idea that all new families in NYS should receive assistance from a system of support and services that promotes optimal health, mental health, family functioning and self-sufficiency. Work has focused on coordination of existing services and exploration of increased funding to expand services including HFNY funding, Medicaid funding, TANF Block grant and Preventive Services funding. The collaborative group did submit a proposal to the federal government to assist with coordination of efforts and evaluation; however this proposal was not funded. OCFS will continue to work collaboratively with DOH to coordinate and expand home visiting services and assist localities to develop coordinated systems of care. The HFNY evaluation points to many positive health outcomes for participants including reduction of the incidence of low birth weight and increase in access to health care for both the

mothers and infants. OCFS staff will continue to inform local social services districts about the benefits of home visiting and available funding options.

HFNY evaluation results show that the program has positive outcomes for children when working with families early on in their pregnancy. HFNY has gathered information and developed a policy and guidelines along with tools for programs to reach families during this critical time in their pregnancy. A pilot using these tools with five programs began in the fall of 2008 and shows promising results.

Also as a result of evaluation, HFNY has drafted a guidebook for staff to use when working with families believed to be victims of domestic violence. The guidebook was reviewed by program staff and domestic violence experts, and was disseminated to the field and implemented during this year. More in depth training for staff in the dynamics of domestic violence is in the planning stages.

Training on motivational interviewing has been completed in all upstate programs with the plan to complete training for all sites in 2009.

### **Evaluation of HFNY:**

To assess the impacts of HFNY on parenting, child health and development, and parental life course development, in 2000, OCFS' Bureau of Evaluation & Research in collaboration with the Center for Human Services Research at the University at Albany initiated an evaluation of HFNY utilizing a randomized controlled trial in three counties with established home visitation programs (Erie, Rensselaer, and Ulster). The randomized trial includes 1,173 women who met the eligibility criteria for HFNY and were randomly assigned to either an intervention group (n=579) that was offered HFNY services or a control group (n=594) that was given information and referrals to other appropriate services. Mothers were interviewed in their homes at intake into the study and again at the time of the child's birth, and first, second, and third birthdays. The Year 3 follow-up also included videotaped observations of a subsample of 522 mothers interacting with their three-year-old children during a series of structured situations that imposed varying demands on mother and child. To minimize the potential for biased measurement, interviewers were independent of the HFNY program and were kept blind to the participant's group assignment. The rate of retention in the study was high, with 91% of the study participants who were interviewed at baseline re-interviewed at Year 1, and 85% re-interviewed at Year 2. In addition, data on reports of child abuse and neglect involving families participating in the study were collected through a review of Child Protective Services (CPS) records.

In fall 2006, OCFS was awarded grants totaling more than \$1.2 million from the National Institute of Justice and the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation to extend the HFNY randomized trial from three years to seven years in order to test the program's long-term effectiveness in preventing child abuse and neglect. Mothers in both the intervention and control groups were reinterviewed at the time of the target child's seventh birthday, and for the first time, the target children were interviewed. In addition,

videotaped observations of parent-child interactions were performed for a subset of the study's families. Data collection for the Year 7 follow-up study was completed in April 2009. Interviews were conducted with 947 mothers (81%) and 806 children, and 419 videotapes were completed. The research team is in the process of analyzing the data to examine the extent to which 1) HFNY prevents and/or reduces abuse and neglect of school-age children; 2) the program's effects on child maltreatment can be explained by its success in changing early parenting attitudes and behaviors and improving access to health care; 3) HFNY reduces precursors of juvenile delinquency, such as aggression, poor impulse control, compromised health and cognitive disabilities, among target children; and 4) the long-term benefits of HFNY outweigh its costs. In addition, the research team will conduct analyses on the entire data set to explore factors that may protect against or trigger the initiation and recurrence of child maltreatment, which, in turn, may lead to the development of more effective interventions to prevent child abuse and neglect.

### Key Evaluation Findings

A recently published article prepared by the HFNY research team found that Healthy Families New York (HFNY) cut the rate of low birth weight (LBW) babies born to low income women in half [Lee, E., Mitchell-Herzfeld, S., Lowenfels, A., Greene, R., Dorabawila, V., & DuMont, K. (2009). Reducing low birth weight through home visitation: A randomized controlled trial. *American Journal of Preventive Medicine*, 36(2), 154-160]. This finding is especially important given the negative consequences that can result from LBW, such as elevated risk for child maltreatment, foster care placement, developmental delays, health problems, and early mortality. Specific findings were as follows:

- Of the mothers who entered the randomized trial at 30 weeks of pregnancy or less, those who were offered HFNY were half as likely to have low birth weight babies as control group mothers (5.1% vs. 9.8%).
- The rate of LBW for mothers receiving HFNY met the goal of 5% set by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services in its Healthy Families 2010 initiative, despite the fact that HFNY targets communities with high rates of late or no prenatal care, infant mortality, poverty, and teenage pregnancy.
- HFNY was particularly effective in reducing LBW among black and Hispanic mothers—groups that persistently experience high levels of poor birth outcomes. For example, black mothers who were assigned to home visiting group were 70 percent less likely than black mothers in the control group to deliver LBW babies (3.1% vs. 10.2%).
- The earlier in their pregnancies that women were offered HFNY, the greater the impact of the program on LBW. For example, among women who entered the study at a gestational age of 16 weeks or less, women in the HFNY group were nearly 75 percent less likely to deliver low weight babies than women in the control group (3.6% versus 14.1%).

An article published in March 2008 examined HFNY's effectiveness in reducing child abuse and neglect during the first two years of life, using data drawn from CPS records and mothers' responses to a standardized questionnaire that asked about the frequency

with which they engaged in specific parenting behaviors in the past year and past week [DuMont, K., Mitchell-Herzfeld, S., Greene, R., Lee, E., Lowenfels, A., Rodriguez, M., & Dorabawila, V. (2008). Healthy Families New York (HFNY) randomized trial: Effects on early child abuse and neglect. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 32, 295-315]. The principal findings were:

*HFNY mothers self reported less child abuse and neglect and negative parenting practices than control mothers.*

- HFNY mothers reported marginally less neglect at Age 1 and 2.
- HFNY mothers reported engaging in fewer incidents of very serious physical abuse, minor physical aggression, psychological aggression, and harsh parenting at Age 1.
- HFNY mothers reported committing only one-quarter as many acts of serious physical abuse at Age 2 as mothers in the control group.

*HFNY worked especially well in reducing child abuse and neglect and negative parenting practices for “psychologically vulnerable” mothers and young, first-time mothers who enrolled in the study during pregnancy.*

- Mothers in the HFNY group who had marked depressive symptoms and/or a limited sense of control over their lives were only about a quarter as likely to report committing acts of serious abuse or neglect as similar mothers in the control group (5% vs. 19%).
- Compared to their counterparts in the control group, first-time mothers under age 19 who were offered HFNY early in pregnancy were markedly less likely to report engaging in minor physical aggression (51% vs. 70%) and harsh parenting (41% vs. 62%) at Age 2.

In July 2008, the research team prepared a working paper examining the effectiveness of HFNY in enhancing parenting competencies and preventing maladaptive parenting behaviors, based on data gathered from in-depth observational assessments of mothers interacting with their three-year-old children in a series of structured tasks [DuMont, K., Rodriguez, M., Mitchell-Herzfeld, S., Walden, N., Kirkland, K., Greene, R., Lee, E. (2008). *Effects of Healthy Families New York on maternal behaviors: Observational assessments of positive and negative parenting*. Rensselaer, NY: New York State Office of Children and Family Services (available at <http://www.ocfs.state.ny.us/main/reports/>)]. A condensed version of this paper was submitted to the journal *Child Abuse & Neglect* and is currently in revision. The key findings were:

- HFNY promoted the use of positive parenting skills that support and encourage children’s cognitive and social development. Mothers assigned to the HFNY group were more likely than those in the control group to be observed using parenting strategies that stimulated the child’s cognitive skills and were sensitive and responsive to the child’s needs and affective cues.
- Replicating the findings from Age 2, the observational assessments at Age 3 showed that HFNY was particularly effective in reducing harsh parenting practices for young, first-time mothers who were randomized during

pregnancy. First-time mothers under age 19 who were offered HFNY early in pregnancy were considerably less likely than similar mothers in the control group to engage in harsh parenting behaviors while interacting with their children during the structured tasks.

HFNY has also been shown to increase access to health care (New York State Office of Children and Family Services (2006). *Healthy Families New York: Early findings from the second year of the evaluation*. Rensselaer, New York: Author):

- At age 2, 10% more of the HFNY mothers had a primary care provider and 5% more of the HFNY mothers had health insurance than mothers in the control group;
- Twice as many children in the control group went without needed medical care during their second year of life as compared to children in the HFNY group.

Based on the evaluation's rigorous random assignment design and program's significant and positive effects on a range of outcomes, HFNY was designated as a "proven program" by RAND's Promising Practice network and an effective program by both Child Trends and the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention.

#### **Plans for 2010-2014:**

Plans for 2010-2014 include continuation and exploration of additional funding streams for the HFNY Program. The programs will continue to add families as they serve their current caseload.

HFNY is also working on developing specific data forms to collect information on the activities of Fatherhood advocates in our program and the work they do with fathers to see if specific outcomes can be measured. A grant has been applied for to assist in these efforts. Along with data collection, HFNY is planning a specific 1-2 day training seminar around working with fathers. The training will touch on engaging teenage and older fathers, curricula use, and may include nationally know speakers.

HFNY has been engaging and incorporating more information for fathers within the HFNY program. Currently HFNY programs employ 16 fatherhood specialists. Together with OCFS staff the group is working on sharing ideas, discussing data to be collected, and have participated in training and presented at New York's first Fatherhood Conference.

#### **Child Welfare-Substance Abuse Collocation Demonstration Project (CDP)**

Substance abuse is a serious problem among many families involved in the child welfare system. Parental substance abuse increases the risk of repeated maltreatment allegations for these families and the likelihood that their children will enter foster care. Once in the foster care system, parental substance abuse reduces the chances of reunification. In

response to this problem, OCFS and the Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Services (OASAS) initiated the Collocation Demonstration Project (CDP) in 2006 to demonstrate and evaluate the effectiveness of coordinated assessment and referral to services for persons with substance abuse issues in improving permanency and well-being for children, youth and families. This cross-systems demonstration project is being piloted in eight social services districts in New York State.

As the first point of entry into the child welfare system is often through reports of child abuse or maltreatment investigated by the local department of social services or through the filing of Person in Need of Supervision (PINS) petitions with the court by parents or schools, it is typically through the investigation of the reports or referrals that the problem of substance abuse becomes known. The collocation of clinical staff from substance abuse treatment agencies within County Child Protective Services units has shown promise in improving the identification of substance abuse problems and in coordinating case assessment and service planning. CDP uses a collocation model that places Certified Alcohol and Substance Abuse Counselors (CASAC) and Mentors at local social service district offices to assist child welfare staff with child protective service cases. The goals of CDP are to decrease the recurrence of child abuse and maltreatment reports, reduce the placement of children in foster care, and promote recovery from substance abuse. The project seeks to accomplish these goals by increasing the identification of CPS-involved families with substance abuse problems, facilitating access to treatment and prevention services, increasing engagement and retention in treatment, and improving service planning and coordination between substance abuse service providers and child welfare workers.

Unfortunately, the enacted State Budget for 2009-10 budget did not include funding for CDP. Existing funds will enable the eight CDP programs to continue operating until the end of 2009, ensuring an orderly close-out of program services.

### **Evaluation of CDP:**

The OCFS Bureau of Evaluation and Research designed and planned an evaluation of CDP that includes a randomized controlled trial in one of the largest project sites and an implementation study that encompasses all eight of the project sites. OCFS contracted with the Center for Human Services Research at the University at Albany to conduct the evaluation. In the randomized controlled trial site, approximately 600 families who met the eligibility criteria for the project were randomly assigned to either an intervention group that received services under the initiative or to a control group that received services as usual. The randomized trial was designed to assess the impact of CDP on the identification and assessment of substance abuse problems in the child welfare population; referral to, engagement in, and completion of substance abuse treatment; subsequent child abuse and neglect reports; and out-of-home placements.

Due to the termination of funding for CDP, it will not be possible to complete an impact evaluation. The Center for Human Services Research is preparing a final report on the implementation of CDP, with a scheduled date of completion of January 31, 2010.

## **Family Assessment Response (FAR) Demonstration**

### **Accomplishments 2005-2009**

The New York State Legislature passed legislation in 2007 authorizing OCFS to conduct a four-year demonstration project to test the feasibility of establishing an alternative child protective response system for cases involving allegations of maltreatment in family settings. The statute permits each county to establish its own criteria for selecting cases for the Family Assessment Response (FAR) system. Cases that are assigned to FAR are not subject to the usual requirements concerning investigation of reports of suspected abuse and neglect of children, including notification requirements. However, the county continues to be responsible for commencing an initial safety assessment within twenty-four hours of the receipt of the report, and for completing the safety assessment within seven days to determine whether all children in the home are safe in the home and to identify service needs and family issues that should be addressed. Where a county determines that a case is appropriate to be included in FAR, the county is required to conduct an assessment of the family's strengths, concerns and needs; offer assistance to stabilize the family; plan for and offer services responsive to the service needs of the family; and conduct an ongoing assessment of the family's progress.

OCFS began working with six local districts to develop and implement differential response pilots in each of those districts. OCFS entered into a contract with the American Humane Association to provide training in differential response and family engagement to these pilot counties.

In 2009, an additional six to nine counties are expected to begin development and implementation of a pilot program.

### **Evaluation of FAR:**

The OCFS Bureau of Evaluation and Research designed and is carrying out an evaluation encompassing a process study that will examine the implementation of the FAR Demonstration and an impact study that will analyze its effects on families. The process study will include all of the counties participating in the FAR Demonstration, and will address the following questions:

- What organizational, staffing and practice changes were made in order to implement FAR?
- How were cases identified and screened for assignment to the Family Assessment track?
- What were the characteristics, child welfare histories, needs, and strengths of the families assigned to the Family Assessment track, and how did they compare to families continuing on the investigation track?
- What types of services did caseworkers arrange for families on the Family Assessment track, and how closely did they match family needs and preferences?

- How did families assigned to the Family Assessment track perceive the way they were treated by caseworkers and how satisfied were they with the help they received?
- What were caseworkers' attitudes toward and satisfaction with FAR?
- What percentage of families assigned to the Family Assessment track were re-reported for child abuse and neglect and what were the allegations?

The impact study will assess whether the FAR Demonstration is effective at the following:

- Reducing the prevalence of subsequent reports of child abuse and neglect; and
- Reducing the severity of child abuse and neglect alleged in subsequent reports.

The impact study will be limited to two counties. One county has agreed to participate in a randomized controlled trial, in which families that meet the criteria for FAR established by the county will be randomly assigned to either the Family Assessment track or the Investigation track. A quasi-experimental design involving the selection of an historical comparison group will be utilized in the other county. The outcomes for the treatment and control groups will be tracked for a minimum of one year from the date of their random assignment. The impacts of FAR will be determined by comparing the outcomes for the treatment group to those for the control group.

#### **Plans for 2010-2014:**

In 2010 additional units within these counties are expected to begin delivering FAR services, and it is likely that four additional counties will begin implementation. Training and technical assistance will be provided to district administrators, managers, supervisors, and caseworkers so that pilot staff has the knowledge and skills necessary to implement an alternative response.

#### **Advantage After-School Program**

New York State created the Advantage After-School Program (AASP) in 2000, to provide quality youth development programming to school-age children and youth during the after school hours. AASP programs must offer a broad range of educational, recreational and cultural age-appropriate activities that integrate what happens in the school day. Each program represents a partnership between a community-based organization and a school. The total appropriation for SFY 2008-2009 is \$ 25.5 million to support over 25,000 students at over 224 program sites across New York State.

The Advantage After-School Programs are designed around four program outcomes, three performance targets, and established Program Standards of Excellence. The Advantage After - School Program Outcomes are:

- To improve the social, emotional, academic and vocational competencies of school-age children;
- To prevent and reduce the incidence of out-of-wedlock adolescent pregnancies;

- To reduce other negative behaviors such as violence and crime; tobacco, alcohol and substance abuse; disengagement from school; school suspension; and truancy and health-compromising behaviors; and
- To provide parents with a safe after school environment for their children.

Advantage After-School Programs have three performance target areas that relate to the achievement of these four program outcomes. The three performance target areas for all programs are:

- Child Performance – a measurement of how children that regularly attend the after school program will enhance their academic achievement
- Youth Involvement/Attendance - a measurement of program quality as demonstrated by the consistency of attendance by the children enrolled in the after school program.
- Parental/Guardian Involvement – a measurement of program quality as demonstrated by parent satisfaction and participation.

### **Training 2005-2009**

OCFS will continue the process of restructuring its training system for child welfare. OCFS has worked with the Child Welfare Institute, social services districts, and its university-training partners to implement a system of training that supports the development of outcome-focused practice skills. OCFS continues in the process of converting all of its child welfare training to be outcome-based. Training has been reorganized to provide all staff with a set of fundamental skills that are necessary to protect children and to develop families that are able to provide for children's safety, well-being, and permanency.

The Child Welfare/Child Protective Services Caseworker Common Core is the foundation component for line staff. Based on input from OCFS's Advisory Group, the Common Core program has been revised. The Supervisory Core was implemented in 1999, and was revised in 2007 and is currently under additional revisions to better support supervisors in the transfer of learning and in their role as coach and mentor. This program is the foundation for training supervisory staff. The Child Protective Services Response Specialty Component was implemented in 2001 and is currently under revision. The Adolescent Services Resource Network, designed to prepare youth for self-sufficiency, has been available since 2000. The Adoption Specialty "Best Practices in Achieving Permanency Through Surrenders and Termination" was piloted in 2005 and 2006 and implemented in 2007. The OCFS is currently working with the National Resource Center for Adoption to revise their Adoption Competency Curriculum for use in NYS in 2009. The rollout of the Family Preservation/Reunification Specialty training began in 2005. These trainings are designed to provide non-CPS child welfare caseworkers with the knowledge and skill to achieve expected outcomes. The Core Essential Skills for Experienced Caseworkers Specialty, developed specifically for experienced caseworkers, was fully implemented in 2002 in all regions of the state. This

eight-day residential program is designed to build practice skills in more experienced staff. This program will be revised to mirror the Common Core changes.

The Outcome-Based Training (OBT) System includes an on-the-job training component. This on-the-job component facilitates the transfer of learning from the classroom to the workplace and contributes to building a mutual commitment to clear, focused practice between supervisors and caseworkers. The OBT training system is building a set of interpersonal helping skills, assessment, planning, intervention skills and decision-making skills that will allow caseworkers and supervisors to address competently the unique needs of each family. OCFS believes that this combination of casework skills, applied in a context of a shared framework of practice among social services districts and voluntary agencies, will make a significant contribution toward the achievement of OCFS' goals and the federal outcomes. OCFS has made significant changes to the On-the-Job (OJT) training component. Changes include a 360 review of trainee progress in the classroom and in OJT, as well as a self-assessment and expanded OJT activities.

The child welfare-training program continues in transition. OCFS is continuously exploring ways to expand the use of computer and distance-based learning technologies to enhance accessibility to child welfare staff.

### **Training Provided in Federal Fiscal Year 2008-2009**

- **Casework Documentation Training**

This training program prepares caseworkers to effectively document on-going case activities, decisions and milestones with families and children in a manner consistent with the practice framework, policy, and procedures of NYS. The program provides a structure for the management of the case through assessment, service planning, implementation, and evaluation. A separate component of this project focuses on Family Assessment and Service Planning (FASP). An additional component focusing on Progress Notes was developed and delivered in 2008. Both support the implementation of CONNECTIONS Case Management Electronic Case Recording System.

2400 trainees  
293 training days

- **Working with Substance Affected Families -- Training For Child Welfare Staff**

This training program builds the knowledge and skills necessary to identify, assess, and plan with families affected by alcohol and substance abuse. Local district and voluntary agency child welfare caseworkers and supervisors develop competencies in recognizing the natural resilience of families, in utilizing strengths to motivate and facilitate change, and in supporting families throughout a member's treatment and recovery.

247 trainees  
12 offerings  
36 training days

- **Sexual Abuse Training Child Welfare Staff**

This statewide training is provided for caseworkers in all child welfare services program areas on the dynamics of sexual abuse as well as the treatment modalities currently utilized to protect and support victims and to treat and support the family. The program builds the knowledge base that caseworkers need to identify the presence of intra-familial sexual abuse, to make accurate and effective safety assessments, interventions, risk assessments and service plans to keep children safe and reduce the risk of future harm. This course is provided to a combined audience of Child Protective and other Child Welfare caseworkers. This year an additional 2.5 days of specialized training was provided to SCR intake staff and supervisors.

402 trainees  
16 offerings  
48 training days

- **Training for Experienced CPS Caseworkers**

This is advanced level training for child protective service caseworkers who have completed basic training. These trainings enable experienced caseworkers to strategically apply the skills they acquired in foundation training in a variety of critical areas of practice. The topics include Legal Issues, Medical Issues, and Sexual Abuse Interviewing. For those acting in an On-Call capacity, an online Learn-Linc class is offered.

960 trainees  
30 offerings  
2 Teleconferences  
54 training days

- **Child Protective Services Response Specialty**

This course completes the mandated core training for child protective staff. The course builds on a set of interpersonal engagement, assessment, and decision making skills and values learned in the Common Core and apply them to the CPS role and responsibilities in the context of the CPS Response. This course focuses on the principles and techniques of investigations, relationships with other investigative bodies, legal issues in child protection, and methods of remediation, diagnosis, treatment, and prevention

672 trainees  
28 offerings  
210 training days

- **Child Welfare/Child Protective Services Common Core**

The current program is required for all new CPS caseworkers and strongly recommended for all new caseworkers. The objective of the training is to equip new workers with the

knowledge, attitudes, and skills to practice effectively. The training provides caseworkers with opportunities to practice using a set of skills that research and best practice standards have shown to positively impact the achievement of child safety, permanency, and child and family well being outcomes. Twenty days of classroom training are provided for practice on interpersonal helping, decision-making and case management skills. There are two days of integrated CONNECTIONS Systems training for a total of 22 classroom days. The program also includes self-instructional materials and on-the-job training to impart knowledge on policies, procedures and casework practices that will prepare trainees for the skills-based classroom portion of the training. The program was redesigned and a pilot delivery begun in late 2008. Rollout of the redesigned Core will begin in mid to late 2009.

764 trainees  
31 offerings  
620 total training days

- **Child Welfare/Child Protective Services Supervisory Core**

Supervisory Core is composed of three components: Module I Foundations, a five-day course for all supervisors that focuses on leadership, supervisory effectiveness behaviors, and generic supervision. As noted above, the Module I Foundations is currently being revised. Module II A, the Child Protective Services Specialty, a six-day course for CPS supervisors focusing on supervising the child protective response; and Module II B, the Child Welfare Specialty, a five-day course for Child Welfare supervisors. Module I and Module II A have been developed and rolled out. Module II B is scheduled to be developed in 2009.

Module I  
111 trainees  
8 offerings  
40 training days

Module II A  
181 trainees  
9 offering  
45 training days

- **Child Welfare/Child Protective Services Core Essential Skills for Experienced Caseworkers**

This training program is designed for staff having two or more years of direct child welfare experience who did not attend the Common Core Training. The program provides experienced staff with a framework for their practice that defines workers as agents of change who use a professional helping relationship to engage families in the

assessment, service planning, and change process to achieve child welfare goals of safety permanency, and well being. This 8-day program builds skills consistent with those presented in the Common Core training and will be revised to mirror changes in the Common Core program.

180 trainees  
16 offerings  
124 training days

- **Outcome-Based Training and Technical Assistance**

Technical assistance is delivered in groups or on a one-on-one basis. Supervisors and caseworkers receive technical assistance to plan, implement and make operational the Outcome-Based Training system in their local districts. This includes pre, mid and post core conferences with caseworkers, supervisors and staff development coordinators to assess training skills learned in the classroom and on-the-job training components and to develop a plan to meet ongoing training needs. Technical Assistance can also include training of trainer activities follow-up training to large local districts that provide their own Core training. In 2008-2009, technical assistance resources were redirected to extensive curriculum revision.

35 days of technical assistance  
1891 pre, mid and post core conferences

- **Family Preservation/Reunification**

This is an 8-day specialty course for preventive, foster care and adoption staff. It follows the Common Core and is presented in two modules. This program builds upon the generic caseworker skills and abilities developed by trainees during their participation in the CWS/CPS Common Core training. It focuses on the strategic use of interpersonal helping, assessment and service planning skills to work with families to promote children's safety and to achieve rapid permanency. Module I is designed for Preventive, Adoption, and Foster Care caseworkers, and is a prerequisite for Module II. Module II is designed for Adoption and Foster Care caseworkers. In 2008, resources were diverted to other priorities, especially emerging needs in NYC.

Module I

41 trainees  
2 offerings  
10 training days

Module II

33 trainees  
2 offerings  
6 training days

- **Training and Technical Assistance to Support Local District/Voluntary Agency Implementation of Family Meetings and Family Engagement Strategies**

The focus of the training and TA is on the individual, unit and organizational practices that directly strengthen family involvement in assessment, service planning and plan implementation/family change efforts. The six Family Engagement Specialists develop and deliver a set of tool kits designed to promote family engagement, including engaging fathers, using visitation to promote permanency, concurrent planning training and technical assistance, along with district/agency specific training on family meetings and a wide range of other activities. This work with local districts is on-going.

- **Directors of Services Leadership Institute**

OCFS introduced the Directors of Services Leadership Institute (formerly the Local District Directors of Services Forum) in 2006. This is an annual two-day event (delivered in half day/full day/half day format) intended to provide local district Directors of Services with the knowledge and skills necessary to apply generic and program-specific management principles and skills to Child Welfare (Child Protective Services, Preventive Services, Foster Care, and Adoption Services). (This accomplishment also applies to Goal 2.)

75 trainees  
1 offering  
2 training days

- **Child Welfare Eligibility Training**

The purpose of this project is to provide social services districts with training so that staff will have the knowledge and skill needed to accurately, effectively, and efficiently determine eligibility for federal funding of child welfare and Medicaid programs. Topics include the history and rationale of federal funding streams, how to define and understand the distinct use of each category of eligibility, the use of the Welfare Management System (WMS) and how to identify and access the resources available to help accomplish these objectives.

470 trainees  
24 offerings

- **Training for OCFS and Local Social Services Districts' Attorneys**

This project provides legal training for OCFS, Social Services Districts' attorneys, and Family Court personnel to assist them in the understanding of technical and strategic aspects of child welfare and social service law and to manage legal actions on behalf of the children and families they serve.

Component I  
50 trainees  
1 training days  
2 offerings

Component II  
28 trainees  
2 training days  
1 offering

Component III  
548 trainees  
N/A training days  
13 offerings

### **Training Planned For Federal Fiscal Year 2010-2014**

Nearly all of the training programs provided in 2008-2009, as described in Goal 1 of the APSR, will be offered again in the coming year.

- Child Welfare Common Core provides outcome-based training for all new child welfare services (CWS) and child protective services caseworkers. It focuses on building skills that are most likely to lead to positive outcomes for clients and the achievement of program objectives. The training utilizes a variety of methodologies, including self-instructional materials, to impart knowledge on policies, procedures and practice concepts. A redesign of the program was begun in late 2008 and will continue in 2009. When the new program is rolled out in mid to late 2009, sixteen days of classroom training will be provided for practice of interpersonal helping, decision-making and case management skills. An enhanced on-the-job training component will be conducted by social services districts and authorized voluntary agencies to reinforce and integrate the knowledge and skills portions of the training with the realities of the job.

An additional feature of the core training is an enhanced trainee evaluation process. OCFS developed a feedback loop between core trainers and trainee supervisors to provide a developmental feedback on the trainees' participation in and progress through core. A midpoint and final conference will be conducted. Developmental progress will also be assessed through embedded evaluation instruments, which will help trainees, trainers and supervisors assess trainees' grasp of concepts and skills during training. A written assessment tool was developed in 2007 and was piloted and implemented in 2008.

In 2007, OCFS incorporated an enhancement to the classroom legal training: this component uses LearnLinc to introduce basic legal concepts and terminology to Common Core trainees. The purpose of the LearnLinc component is to better prepare participants for the classroom legal training. By covering some of the basic legal concepts and terms during the LearnLinc session should improve trainee understanding and retention of the

classroom material. Also in 2007, OCFS developed and piloted a LearnLinc component to enhance the Child Development segment of the Common Core.

837 trainees  
31 offerings  
576 training days

- Child Welfare Supervisory Core provides competency-based training for new and existing child welfare and child protective services supervisors. The Supervisory Core has three components: Module I Foundations, currently a five-day course for all supervisors (preceded by two LearnLinc sessions) will be revised in 2009; Module II A, the Child Protective Services Specialty, a six-day course for CPS supervisors; and Module II B to be developed in 2009, the Child Preventive Specialty, a five-day course for non-CPS supervisors. These courses focus on building skills in leadership and the supervision of CWS/CPS casework practice. Training will also be provided to supervisors and program managers statewide on their role in developing and assessing new staff through the on-the-job training component of the new caseworker and supervisor core program. Module I Foundations will be redesigned in 2009.

Module I, Foundations

360 trainees  
15 offerings  
75 training days

Module II A, CPS Specialty

250 trainees  
10 offerings  
60 training days

Module II B, CW Specialty

144 trainees  
6 offerings  
30 training days

- Technical Assistance (TA) will be delivered in groups or on a one-on-one basis and training on the Common Core, Supervisory Core, Core Essentials Skills, Family Preservation/Reunifications, Best Practices in Achieving Permanency, Building Adoptive Families as well as service plan review as well as Service Plan Review training to local districts. Supervisors and caseworkers will receive technical assistance to maintain Outcome-Based Training system in their local districts. This includes pre, mid and post core conferences with supervisors and caseworkers to assess training skills learned in the classroom and on-the-job training components and to develop a plan for ongoing training needs. Technical Assistance may also include training of trainer activities; providing training and follow-up training to large local districts that provide their own Core training.

425 Days of Technical Assistance  
4479 Pre, mid, and post-core Conferences

- **Child Welfare Casework Documentation Training**

This program continues to reflect and support CONNECTIONS. Through a process of guided self-instruction, classroom training, and small group workings, caseworkers will learn how to use case documentation to facilitate their case practice and meet requirements of child welfare legislation and regulation. The training will continue to incorporate modifications to reflect further development of CONNECTIONS as needed. At the direction of OCFS, case reviews will be conducted. These case reviews will provide for an evaluative approach to support the training and assess the transfer of learning. Training for this year has been expanded to include training and technical assistance on the Family Assessment and Service Plan (FASP). This training is delivered in collaboration with trainers who teach the navigation component. The purpose of the collaboration is to provide trainees with strategies to navigate efficiently through the CONNECTIONS Case Record.

5800 trainees  
290 training days

- **Family Preservation /Reunification**

This program provides specialized training for Foster Care, Adoption, and Preventive Workers. The training will build upon the generic caseworker skills and abilities developed by trainees during their participation in the CWS/CPS Common Core training. As a result of the Specialty training, Foster Care, Adoption, and Preventive Workers will acquire the competencies, knowledge and skills specific to their program areas. The content includes training on supporting families to make change, addressing the issues that led to placement or the risk of foster care and achieving permanency within Title IV-E timeframes. There are two components to this training: Module I is for Foster Care, Adoption, and Preventive Services caseworkers, and is five days in length. Module II is for Foster Care and Adoption caseworkers, and is three days in length.

Module I  
192 Trainees  
8 Offerings  
30 Training Days

Module II  
96 Trainees  
4 Offerings  
12 Training Days

- **Adoption and Adoption Specialty Training**

This project includes two courses; “Best Practices in Achieving Permanency Through Surrenders and Termination”. The Office is currently working with the National Resource Center for Adoption to revise their Adoption Competency Curriculum for use in NYS in 2009. Both courses are for adoption and foster care caseworkers and supervisors. This training will provide participants with the basic knowledge and skills to assess the effectiveness of diligent efforts; determine the appropriateness of setting a goal of adoption; prepare children for adoption; use the legal process to free children for adoption and to comply with Title IV-E and State statutes. This training will also include training delivered by an attorney on diligent efforts, how to obtain a TPR and take a voluntary surrender. Portions of the program will be delivered through LearnLinc or comparable technology.

Best Practices in Achieving Permanency Through Surrenders and Termination

120 Trainees  
5 Offerings  
30 Training Days

Building Adoptive Families

72 Trainees  
3 Offerings  
9 Training Days

- **Child Protective Services Response Training**

This course completes the mandated core training for child protective staff by building upon a set of interpersonal engagement, assessment, and decision making skills and values learned in the Common Core and applying them to the CPS role and responsibilities in the context of the CPS Response. This course focuses on the principles and techniques of investigations, relationships with other investigative bodies, legal issues in child protection, and methods of remediation, diagnosis, treatment, and prevention.

700 trainees  
28 Offerings  
210 Training Days

- **Training for Experienced CPS Caseworkers**

Advanced level training for child protective service caseworkers who have already completed basic training. These trainings enable experienced caseworkers to strategically apply the skills they acquired in foundation training in a variety of critical areas of practice. The topics include Legal Issues, Medical Issues, and Forensic Interviewing Best Practices. For those acting in an On-Call capacity, an online learn-linc

class is offered as well as the two-day traditional classroom offering. Additional offerings of the basic advanced courses as well as other topic areas are added this year to support the annual 6 hour in-service requirement.

1813 trainees  
75 offerings  
4 Teleconferences  
177.5 training days

- **Sexual Abuse Dynamics and Interventions Training for Child Welfare Staff**

Statewide training provided child welfare staff on the dynamics of sexual abuse as well as on the treatment modalities currently utilized to protect and support victims, and to treat and support the family. This course will be provided to a combined audience of Child Protective and other Child Welfare caseworkers.

500 trainees  
20 offerings  
60 training days

- **Foster/Adoptive Parent Training**

Foster/Adoptive Parent Training, in the year 2009-10, consists of an integrated, comprehensive series of training courses that will be available to foster and adoptive parents from pre-placement of a child to continuing placement. This project begins with training that prepares agency staff and foster parent teams to deliver a 10-week mutual Group Preparation and Selection (GPS) training program for prospective foster and adoptive parents. It also includes COMPASS training, an in-service foster-adoptive parent-training program that supports the GPS program, and continues with the provision of specialized training through the Therapeutic Foster Boarding Home training project. Foster/Adoptive Parent training also consists of modules that respond to the needs of foster/adoptive parents. Child development, communication, interpersonal helping skills and many other related topics are addressed in this program. In response to popular reception, the distance learning format i-Linc will be featured as a way to reach foster/adoptive parents in their homes via their own personal computers at times they are available for training.

310 offerings  
3701 trainees  
400 training days  
257 technical assistance days

- **Child Welfare/Child Protective Services Core Essential Skills for Experienced Caseworkers**

Provide training for experienced Child Welfare and Child Protective Services caseworkers. The training focuses on building skills most likely to result in positive outcomes for clients and the achievement of child welfare outcomes. This 8-day program builds core skills for experienced staff that are consistent with skills presented in the Common Core training, supporting staff's ability to achieve safety and permanency for children and will be revised to reflect the changes in the Common Core program. There will also be up to 20 one-day "Engagement for Supervisors" Skills Clinics. Other Skills Clinics will be developed as needed.

384 Trainees  
16 Offerings  
128 Training Days

- **Training and Technical Assistance to Support Local District/Voluntary Agency Implementation of Family Meetings and Family Engagement Strategies**

This component will provide training and technical assistance to local social services districts and voluntary agencies in support of their program improvement plans. The focus of the training and TA will be on the individual, unit, and organizational practices that directly strengthen family involvement in assessment, service planning, and plan implementation/family change efforts.

This component has two segments:

Segment 1 – Child-centered, Family-focused Practice: Training and Technical Assistance  
Segment 2 – Family Meetings: Training and Technical Assistance

- **Directors of Services Leadership Institute**

This component, introduced in 2006, is a two-day event (delivered in half day/full day/half day format) intended to provide local district Directors of Services with the knowledge and skills necessary to apply generic and program-specific management principles and skills to Child Welfare (Child Protective Services, Preventive Services, Foster Care and Adoption Services). (This component also applies to Goal 2.)

Possible topics may include, but not be limited to, measuring outcomes; how to assess the NYS Improving Child Welfare Outcomes initiative; use of service plan reviews; visitation; coaching; strengths-based child-centered, family-focused practice; how the case management model supports good practice; the Data Warehouse.

75 trainees  
1 offering  
2 training days

- **Training and Technical Assistance for Child Welfare Teams**

OCFS is piloting a model of service delivery by casework teams with 9 local districts. The project is designed to support local districts to provide effective and efficient

protective, preventive or foster care services by assigning casework teams instead of individuals. Training and technical assistance include team building, the process of group supervision and case conference facilitation, family engagement skills, and other strategies as identified by the individual pilot districts. Seven new districts are anticipated to participate in 2009-2010.

- **Family Assessment Response Training**

In response to recent legislation enabling NYS to pilot an alternative response to CPS investigations, OCFS is working with six local districts to develop and implement alternate response pilots in each of those districts. In 2009 an additional 6 to 9 counties are expected to begin development and implementation of a pilot program. In 2010 additional units within these counties are expected to begin delivering FAR services, and it is likely that 4 additional counties will begin implementation. Training and technical assistance will be provided to district administrators, managers, supervisors, and caseworkers so that pilot staff has the knowledge and skills necessary to implement an alternative protective response.

- **Child Welfare Eligibility Training**

The purpose of this project is to provide social services districts with training so that staff will have the knowledge and skill needed to accurately, effectively, and efficiently determine eligibility for federal funding of child welfare and Medicaid programs. Topics include the history and rationale of federal funding streams, how to define and understand the distinct use of each category of funding eligibility: Title IV-E; TANF-EAF; Title XX below 200%, Non-Reimbursable Payments; and Candidacy in Foster Care. The focus is how to determine and document each category of eligibility, the use of the Welfare Management System (WMS) and how to identify and access the resources available to help accomplish these objectives.

600 Trainees  
48 Offerings

- **Health Services for Children in Foster Care**

The purpose of this project is to provide OCFS out-of-home facility staff in social services districts, juvenile justice and voluntary agencies with training so that staff will be better informed on how to provide appropriate access and management of children's health services needs, identification of health risk factors integration of the new health standards into permanency planning and case management. The training to be offered in 2008 will address the need for a broader knowledge base on psychotropic medications and consistent application of the regulations and guidelines for consents in the health services field.

600 Trainees  
12 Days of Training  
3 Teleconferences  
1 I-Linc Training

- **Training for OCFS and Local Social Services Districts' Attorneys**

This project provides legal training for OCFS, local social services districts' attorneys, and Family Court personnel to assist them in the understanding of technical and strategic aspects of child welfare and social service law and to manage legal actions on behalf of the children and families they serve.

Component I  
400 Trainees  
10 Training Days  
10 Offerings

Component II  
23 Trainees  
7 Offerings  
7 Training Days

Component III  
495 trainees  
14 offerings

## GOAL #2

CHILDREN WHO ARE REMOVED FROM THEIR BIRTH FAMILIES  
WILL BE AFFORDED STABILITY, CONTINUITY AND AN ENVIRONMENT  
THAT SUPPORTS ALL ASPECTS OF THEIR DEVELOPMENT

**Primary Strategy:** 2. Continue collaboration with the Office of Court Administration to enhance court practice and share data.

OCFS and the Office of Court Administration (OCA) are committed to improving permanency outcomes for children in New York State. OCFS and the OCA Child Welfare Court Improvement Project (CWCIP) will work together to build effective collaboration between the Family Court and the social services districts with the highest foster care populations in the State. OCFS will support the development of enhanced court practices in the Family Courts and provide a process by which certain data maintained by both local departments of social services and Family Courts can be shared to evaluate the impact of innovations to promote improved outcomes for children.

**Goal:** Improve timeliness of adoptions and permanency for children in out-of-home placements.

### Action Steps and Benchmarks

2.1 Enhance and or implement a court and local districts (LDSS) collaborative in each of the 12 counties, (one of the 13 already exists) aimed at improving the timeliness of adjudications and dispositions for both abuse and neglect and TPR petitions.

2.1(a) Form a statewide OCFS/OCA workgroup to oversee the enhancement and implementation of local court and LDSS collaboratives

2.1(b) Disseminate resource materials to local courts and districts that supports local collaboratives

2.1(c) Share and provide technical assistance to the 13 Family Courts, relative to the Child Welfare Court Improvement Project Data Measures

2.1(d) Support statewide “kickoff” conference on court and LDSS collaboratives. Topics will include role of courts and districts in improving outcomes related to child permanency and well-being.

2.1(e) Provide technical assistance to each of the local court and LDSS collaboratives

2.1(f) Provide training to each of the local court and LDSS collaboratives on child welfare related topics

2.2 Monitor the implementation of the Local court and LDSS collaboratives

2.2(a) Development and dissemination of local court and LDSS collaborative reporting template

2.3. Pilot the integration the NYS Office of Alcohol and Substance Abuse Services and local treatment providers into the local court and LDSS collaboration process to support integrated planning in all cases involving the misuse of alcohol or other drugs.

2.3(a) Develop and pilot in three counties protocols for handling cases that intersect the family court, child welfare and substance abuse treatment systems.

**Primary Strategy:** 3. Expand trauma informed practice in congregate care  
New York is committed to the continued expansion of trauma informed practice as a means to reduce and prevent abuse or maltreatment, as well as to reduce physical restraints in residential foster care settings.

**Goal:** Reduce the occurrence of abuse and maltreatment in foster care

### **Action Steps and Benchmarks**

3.1 Five additional agencies will complete training on the Sanctuary Model (Ten agencies have already complete training and are moving towards certification in the Sanctuary model)

3.1(a) Agencies complete self-readiness assessments and forward to OCFS for review and selection

3.1(b) Training provided by Andrus Sanctuary Leadership Development Institute to each of the agency's Leadership teams

3.1(c) TA provided by Andrus

3.1(d) Participation in consortium conference calls

3.2 Evaluation of the implementation and outcomes of the Sanctuary Model in the five (Parsons, Baker Victory Svs, House of Good Shepherd, Green Chimney, and Children's Home of Poughkeepsie) round two agencies.

3.2(a) Data comparing the number of IAB reports and restraints will be tracked prior to the implementation of the Sanctuary Model and post implementation

**Primary Strategy:** 4. Improve Service Array

Meeting the mental health needs of children in out-of-home care is critical to promoting their well-being and permanency. The Bridges to Health (B2H) Home and Community Based Medicaid Waiver Program is designed specifically for children in foster care with significant mental health needs, developmental disabilities or who are medically fragile. With approval from the Department of Health and Human Services, B2H offers 14 uniquely designed services not otherwise available in the community to children with these complex medical conditions, and does so in the context of their often complicated family and caregiver network.

**Goal:** Children have access to an array of services.

### **Action Steps and Benchmarks**

4.1 Expand B2H services into the Buffalo and Long Island regions, bringing B2H statewide (currently in RRO, SRO, ARO, SVRO and NYCRO)

4.1(a) Provide training to counties on B2H services and enrollment process

4.1(b) Provide training to qualified service providers

4.1(c) Local district referral and enrollment begins

4.2 Enrollment slots expanded across NYS

4.3 Ongoing Support and Quality Assurance to Counties and HCIAS

4.3(a) Quarterly Forums conducted in 2010. Upon full implementation, forums will be held semi annually with counties, HCIA, and other stakeholders

4.3(b) Hold conference calls with HCIAS to share information and to resolve barriers

4.3(c) Quality review of cases to determine timeliness and appropriateness of services

4.4 Evaluation of implementation and outcomes of B2H

4.5 Participate in joint state initiatives, which includes – Children’s Cabinet on Disconnected Youth; and the Commissioners Committee on Cross Systems - OMH Children’s Plan aimed at improving accessibility and availability of resources

**Primary Strategy:** 6. Expand recruitment of foster and adoptive parents

Foster and adoptive parents play a critical role in providing permanency and well being for children entrusted to their care. Local districts and agencies should establish and maintain a pool of qualified, ethnically and racially diverse foster/adoptive parents. To assist local districts and agencies with the challenges of recruitment, OCFS has a training contract that provides foster/adoptive family recruitment and retention technical assistance, consultation, and materials development to local districts and agencies. This contract is designed to support the on-going recruitment and retention of ethnically, racially, and culturally competent foster and adoptive parents.

**Goal:** There will be sufficient numbers of foster and adoptive parents that can care for sibling groups, adolescents and that reflect the race and ethnicity of the children coming into care.

### **Action Steps and Benchmarks**

6.1 Work with training contractor to identify and share with districts the latest recruitment tools that address recruitment of foster and adoptive parents for sibling groups and adolescents, and that reflect the race and ethnicity of the children coming into care.

6.2 Review of data of the 13 districts determine difference in the race and ethnicity of foster/adoptive parents as compared to the children in care, siblings separated at placement and the number of youth not placed in foster boarding homes

- 6.3 Training and support provided to home finders and recruiters as identified by the RO
- 6.4 Recruitment Plans that are MEPA compliant of 13 districts will be reviewed for appropriateness
- 6.5 Hold conference call with Local District and Voluntary agency Home Finders to determine areas of confusion or where clarification is needed related to regulations and practice of licensing foster boarding homes
- 6.6 Updates and changes to Licensing of Foster Boarding Home handbook made, if needed
- 6.7 Regional Training of Home Finders held to go over areas of confusion and to clarify misunderstandings; updated handbook shared

### **ASSESSMENT OF NEED AND CURRENT STATUS**

On December 31, 2008, there were 25,925 children in foster care. This was a 1.6% decrease from the census of 27,191 children in foster care on December 31, 2007.

As of December 31, 2008, 77.4% of children in care statewide were in foster family care, including approved relative foster homes.

In 2008, the population of foster children in approved relatives' foster homes was 6,153 continuing an upward trend. The number of children in approved relatives' foster homes was 5,440 in 2005, 6,113 in 2006, and 6,164 in 2007.

In 2008, there were 12,099 children in care within New York State who were part of a sibling group, a decrease from 12,266 in 2007. Of these children 48.9% (5911) were separated from at least one other sibling in care. As of December 31, 2008, 5,443 (21.0%) of the children in care were in a placement outside of their county and 531 (2.0%) were in a placement outside of New York State. Of these, kinship placements accounted for 8.5% of the out-of-county placements and 44.6% of the out-of-state placements.

Of the children in care on December 31, 2008, 53.2% had a Permanency Planning Goal of return to parent or guardian.

There were 2,328 children discharged to adoption in calendar year 2008, the same percentage decrease of 8.1% from 2006 to 2007 when 2,686 children were discharged to adoption.

Of all children in care on December 31, 2008, 26.7% had a Permanency Planning Goal (PPG) of Adoption. This is the same as last year.

There were 5,487 children in care on December 31, 2008, with the goal of adoption.

Of adoptions finalized during 2008, 72.9% of the children for whom ethnicity was known were minority children.

Of children discharged to adoption in 2008, 96.0% received an adoption subsidy.

Of all children with a goal of adoption on December 31, 2008, 55.7% were not freed after 12 months of having the goal.

Of all freed children, 74.0% were not placed within 12 months of being freed.

Of all placed children, 44.6% had not had their adoptions finalized after one year.

For children under eight years of age, discharged to adoption in 2008, the length of time from the establishment of the goal of adoption to discharge, was less than two years for 69.4% of the children, between two and three years for 13.6%, and over three years for 17.0%.

For children over the age of eight, the time between goal setting and discharge was less than two years for 40.3% of the children, two to three years for 10.4% and over three years for 49.3%.

### 2005-2009 PERFORMANCE TARGETS

<b>Permanency Outcome 1: Placement Stability</b>	
National Standard	101.5
Performance as Measured in Final Report/Source Data Period	108.1
Performance as Measured in Baseline/Source Data Period	109.7

- New York State has achieved this outcome. New York State's target will be to maintain or better the national standard of 101.5.

### **State and Local Activities**

The diversity of the situations and needs that have brought children into care requires a system of care that is both intricate and flexible. New York State led the nation in reforming the foster care system of decades past into a community-linked resource driven by permanency planning for each child. However, while the goals set in the 1970's have not changed, the stresses placed on the system by increasingly troubled families and children has required even greater energy and innovation.

## **Kinship Care**

A central strategy for maintaining family and community ties for children requiring out-of-home care due to a lack of safety in their own homes is to promote the use of relatives as placement resources. New York State statute requires that judges direct social services districts to consider the availability of relatives as a placement resource, either as a direct custodian or foster parents, prior to placing a child in need of care in foster care with a non-relative.

The federal Adoption and Safe Families Act (ASFA) that amended Title IV-E of the Social Security Act authorized the exemption of children placed in foster care with relatives from the requirement that there must be a petition to terminate their parents' parental rights if they have remained in care for fifteen of the most recent twenty-two months. This is a recognition that children placed with their relatives may be in circumstances where legally freeing them may not be in their best interests. New York state regulations allow documenting that a child is in a kinship foster home as a justifiable reason for not filing a termination petition against the child's parents. However, case planners in New York are advised that a child in kinship foster care is not automatically exempt from ASFA termination requirements, and that every case must be assessed on its individual circumstances.

In kinship foster care situations where it is determined that children are unlikely to be returned home, exploration of the relative's willingness to adopt is generally the next best alternative. Kinship adoptions have increased over the last few years. However, there are other times when a relative is not interested in adopting her/his kin where the child may remain with the relative in foster care for a more extended period. While social services districts have had increasing success in decreasing lengths of stay for these kinship foster children, their lengths of stay in foster care remain higher, on average, than that of other foster children. Children residing in kinship foster care are increased in real numbers, and as a percent of the total foster care population for the first time in a number of years. More than 6,300 foster children are currently placed in foster care with a relative, which represents approximately 24% of the total foster care population. New York State does not yet have a subsidized kinship guardianship program as an alternative for children who cannot safely return to their birthparents, but who do not wish to be adopted, or whose committed caretaker relatives do not wish to adopt. However, under Article 6 of the Family Court Act, relative custody or guardianship is an option.

Approved relative and certified foster homes are governed by the same standards, except that there is the authority to waive a non-safety standard for an approved relative home, while there is no comparable provision for certified homes. The regulations allow approving relative homes on an emergency basis. OCFS also extended the maximum period of time when a home can be in that status from 60 to 90 days (although no Title IV-E funds are claimed during the "emergency" period). This regulatory provision allows for a single placement for a child when a relative is available at the time of an emergency child protective services removal, is able to provide safe care to the child, and can continue to provide care until the child can safely be returned home or another permanency outcome can be achieved. Additionally, the regulations permit more distant relatives, godparents or other persons with a positive pre-existing relationship with the family to be used as an emergency placement resource if such a home meets the

regulatory requirements that exist for relatives (again, no Title IV-E is claimed until final certification is completed).

### **Accomplishments 2005-2009:**

Regulations promulgated in 2005 expanded the circumstances in which a relative or other significant adult in a child's life may be approved or certified on an emergency basis. Formerly, such emergency approval or certification process was only permitted to occur for placements involving abuse or neglect, and only at the time the child was entering foster care. The regulatory amendments permit foster parents to be approved or certified on an emergency basis in any circumstance where a child is entering foster care. Moreover, foster parents may be approved or certified on an emergency basis when a child is already in foster care, there is a compelling reason why the child needs to move to a prospective foster parent, and there is insufficient time to approve or certify such relative or other significant adult as a foster parent using the non-emergency process.

In 2003, Chapter 657 of the Laws of 2003 was enacted. This law reinforced existing statutory requirements and policy that requires that relatives be sought and explored as possible placement resources in situations when a child may need to be removed from the child's home. Chapter 657 of the Laws of 2003 specified that the court must direct the local social services district to locate "all the child's grandparents" when placement is being explored. Moreover, it required the grandparents, and any other relative being explored as a placement resource is informed "of the opportunity for becoming foster parents or for seeking custody or care of the child, and that the child may be adopted by foster parents if attempts at reunification with the birth parent are not required or are unsuccessful." Chapter 671 of the Laws of 2005, which became effective on December 5, 2005, strengthened the requirements to actively seek out the existence of relatives who have played a significant role in a child's life, if a child needs out of home placement.

In 2006, the OCFS created the *New York State Kinship Caregiver Program* to assist persons caring for related children. A statewide network of supportive programs is used as an alternative to placing children in unfamiliar foster homes by promoting household stability and permanency through services for kinship caregivers and their kin.

Utilizing approximately \$2.15 million in state and TANF funds, the *New York State Kinship Caregiver Program* allows programs to deliver a wide range of services that address the multiple needs of caregivers and the children in their care including:

Counseling	Legal Information	Support Groups
Respite	Parenting Skills	Education Advocacy
Housing	Case Management	Referrals

Thirteen community-based organizations deliver these services to caregivers in 20 counties. Families in “informal” kinship care as well as those that are in kinship foster care are eligible for services. It is estimated that 6000 caregivers as well as 3 900 children have been served since 2006.

The New York State Kinship Navigator Program is among the 14 programs funded through OCFS. Developed jointly by OCFS and lead agency Rochester Catholic Family Center, the program is designed to creatively assist kinship caregivers and the children in their care in all counties in gaining access to information and community support services. Any caregiver residing in any part of the State is able to utilize a toll-free phone line or website to identify kinship care related services in their home locale. In addition, kinship specialists are available to assess caregiver needs and develop a plan of action.

Training and technical assistance was provided by OCFS to promote quality programs. In addition, steps have been taken to collaborate with state agencies, kinship care coalitions, the legal community and other stakeholders such as AARP to help develop coherent policies and coordinated services for kinship caregivers throughout New York.

As a joint project of the OCFS and the New York State Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance, a new publication is now available entitled “Having a Voice and a Choice: New York State Handbook for Relatives Raising Children.”

The handbook covers a range of subjects including

- how a child may come into a relative’s care;
- the role of the Department of Social Services;
- legal arrangements, such as informal care, direct placement, legal custody, temporary or permanent guardianship, foster care and adoption;
- the types of financial assistance available to relatives;
- health care provision and coverage for children in a relative’s care; and
- the child’s education.

A list of local, state, and national resources and websites is included.

This handbook was written for relatives who are raising, or considering raising, children in need of a stable home because their parents are unable to take care of them. Whether a child needs a placement outside the home because of safety concerns or because of individual circumstances in the family, the handbook provides information on the various options available to relatives so that relatives can make the best decision for their own situation.

Two new laws impacting relatives caring for children were enacted in New York. Chapter 404 of the Laws of 2008 clarified the authority of persons appointed guardian or awarded legal custody of a child, as well as created a new legal status, “permanent guardianship” of a child. Chapter 519 of the Laws of 2008 clarified placement options available for neglected or abused children by authorizing the Family Court Judge to place such children, in appropriate circumstances, pursuant to Article 6 of the Family Court

Act, which effectively eliminates the need for ongoing court jurisdiction and child welfare oversight when: the relative or another person is able to provide a safe and permanent home; it is in the child's best interests; and the child's safety will not be jeopardized without supervision or services. OCFS issued 09-OCFS-ADM-05, "New Statutes Affecting Kinship Care: Chapters 404 and 519 of the Laws of 2008" to advise child welfare practitioners of the provisions contained in both new laws.

In May 2009, OCFS partnered with the New York State Office of Court Administration to convene a Subsidized Kinship Guardianship Roundtable. About 80 attendees heard presentations from national experts on subsidized kinship guardianship, received information on the provisions of the Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act, other states' experiences with subsidized guardianship, background on federal and state funding, and data pertaining to New York's foster children currently in foster care with relatives. The invitees included local social services districts, judges, program and legal advocates, and budget staff. After hearing the presentations, attendees were divided into smaller groups to have in depth discussions on aspects of a prospective New York subsidized kinship guardianship program. The intent of the event was to try and develop as much consensus as possible about what the State's program ought to include.

#### **Plans for 2010-2014**

The primary undertaking over the next year will be centered on developing consensus that a state subsidized kinship guardianship program is a valuable addition to the state's child welfare permanency program, planning for legislation to create such an option, and developing plans to implement any new legislation. Should such a program come to fruition, policy guidance and training for child welfare practitioners will be necessary

Among other possible initiatives for the upcoming year and beyond include expanding the scope of the existing kinship navigator program and continued emphasis on making sure that relatives of children who need out of home placement and care are aware of the options that may be available to such relatives in terms of legal statuses, financial assistance and available services.

#### **Bridges to Health (B2H) Home and Community-Based Services Medicaid Waiver**

The B2H Home and Community-Based Services Medicaid Waiver Program provides expanded and enhanced services to children in foster care settings whose diagnosed conditions are sufficiently severe to warrant placement in an institution were it not for the supports provided by the B2H waiver. B2H serves three eligibility groups of children in foster care—children with serious emotional disturbance, children with development disabilities, and children who are medically fragile—so that cross-systems issues can be better integrated. The program also serves their families, including birth parents, foster parents, pre-adoptive parents, and siblings. Once children are enrolled in the program, they may be eligible for services until they are 21 years old.

All of the B2H services are intended to serve children in a community-based setting and within their support network, as children in foster care have many people involved in their lives- including birth families, foster and adoptive families, caregivers, LDSS, providers, clinicians, courts, and advocates. B2H services are not provided by the foster care system and are not supported through state or federal funding available for foster care services. Available B2H services are as follows: Health Care Integration; Planned Respite; Skill Building; Day Habilitation; Family/Caregiver Supports and Services; Prevocational Services; Intensive In-Home Supports; Supported Employment; Special Needs Community Advocacy and Support; Immediate Crisis Response Services; Crisis Avoidance, Management and Training; Adaptive and Assistive Equipment; Crisis Respite; and Accessibility Modifications. Services needs are determined pursuant to an enrolled child's Individual Health Plan.

### **Accomplishments 2005-2009**

#### **Evaluation of B2H:**

The OCFS Bureau of Evaluation and Research (BER) is conducting an implementation evaluation of the B2H program during its initial start-up years (beginning in January 2008) in three regions of the state (New York City and the Rochester and Albany regions). The intent of the evaluation is to identify any challenges to successful implementation as quickly as possible so that program staff may resolve problems early, and lessons learned can be shared with other sites for smoother implementation in other regions in future years. BER analyzes and reports on many interim process measures and short-term outcomes that are critical to achieving the initiative's long-term outcome of avoiding expensive hospitalizations. BER staff currently utilizes data from two OCFS administrative data systems (CONNECTIONS and CCRS) to routinely report to the Bureau of Waiver Management (BWM) and the Health Care Integration Agencies (HCIA) information about whether the program is enrolling and retaining the intended target population, the demographic and foster care characteristics of enrollees, and the frequency of authorized B2H services. BER also provides continuous monitoring of B2H retention, disenrollment, changes in level of care, and adoption status of B2H enrollees. In consultation with the BWM and eight HCIAs, BER has developed a B2H client satisfaction survey. This survey asks caregivers to rate each of the B2H waiver services for quality and effectiveness, as well as asking caregivers for their assessment of any changes in child and family functioning after six months of B2H participation. After program enrollment has stabilized, BER plans to use data from the Child Assessment of Needs and Services and the EMedNY billed services data to analyze outcomes by the level of service needed and the level of service provided.

The B2H three-year waiver is currently in its second year and is, as of May 31, 2009, servicing over 650 enrolled children in the Rochester, Albany, New York City, Syracuse,

and lower Hudson Valley areas, as well as appropriate youth referred to B2H from OCFS' Division of Juvenile Justice and Opportunities for Youth (DJJOY).

### **Plans for 2010-2014:**

During 2010, B2H services will be expanded to the Buffalo and Long Island regions, resulting in state-wide availability. By the end of 2010, a total of 3,305 B2H waiver slots will be available.

### **Foster Care and Adoption Recruitment and Retention Activities**

Throughout New York State, OCFS conducts and supports a variety of programs and initiatives to improve and expand the recruitment and retention of foster care and adoptive families. Much of this work is spearheaded by the six OCFS Regional Offices. Many of the most successful activities occur in most all of the Regions. A summary of these activities include:

#### Heart Gallery:

Heart Gallery is a traveling exhibit featuring portraits of foster children in need of adoption. Photographers donate their time and talent to create high quality portraits of children which are displayed in prominent venues to raise awareness about the hundreds of children available for adoption.

#### “Reel” Kids:

"Reel" Kids is a travelling exhibit featuring brief video clips of children sharing their thoughts about the hope of finding an adoptive family. Video clips are assembled by case work staff or by professionals who donate their time, resources, and expertise. Where “Reel” Kids exhibits are developed, they are combined with Heart Gallery exhibits at the same adoption event.

#### Permanency Panel Reviews:

These reviews target children that are in need of specific adoption recruitment efforts. Staff from local districts, courts, and voluntary agencies is often involved in these collaborative activities. Barriers facing these children are discussed and frequently individual adoption plans are developed for the child. This approach has resulted in permanency plans for many children.

#### Adoption Day, Week or Month Celebrations:

Celebrations associated with successful adoption activities occur throughout New York State. They provide an opportunity to highlight the collaborative work and supports needed to achieve adoption (especially for hard to place children) and generate positive publicity for ongoing adoption efforts. In 2008, the OCFS website began featuring videos of children available for adoption.

### Adoption Exchanges:

Adoption Exchanges provide a networking opportunity for adoption staff to share with each other and to exchange information about waiting children with prospective adoptive families.

### Training:

Training activities include specific topics such as the impacts of legislative and regulatory changes, targeted recruitment strategies, and techniques to utilize foster parents as recruiters. Additionally, training initiatives occur in each Region which addresses issues that are identified at the regional level.

### Publicity:

In conjunction with various media many programs and initiatives have been developed to inform the public of the number of children in New York State awaiting adoption. Many local television stations produce weekly segments highlighting children who wish to be adopted. Feature articles or series are found in many newspapers which not only identify children awaiting adoption but provide viewers and readers with resources if they wish additional information.

Additional information on recruitment and retention activities for foster care and adoptive families is available at the OCFS Internet site.

## **Adoption Opportunity Grant Award**

In October 2008, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services awarded OCFS a five-year Adoption Opportunities grant totaling 2.2 million dollars to support an initiative entitled “A Parent for Every Child” that is designed to promote the diligent recruitment of permanent families for freed children in foster care. This project will find permanent families for at least 50 youth who are legally freed because their parents’ rights have been severed and who reside in a facility licensed or operated by the Office of Mental Health or Office of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities, or in OCFS juvenile justice facilities. In addition, the target group includes youth residing in child welfare residential (congregate) care who are legally freed, and have a permanency goal other than adoption. The project will recruit a pool of families willing to adopt youth with special needs and will provide training to assist parents with special parenting requirements to meet the needs of these youth.

## **Evaluation of Parent for Every Child Project:**

The OCFS Bureau of Evaluation and Research developed an evaluation design for the project that calls for a randomized controlled trial to be conducted in each of the three project sites, and has contracted with the Chapin Hall Center for Children to assist in conducting the evaluation. Approximately 175 children who meet the eligibility criteria for the project will be randomly assigned to either an intervention group that will receive services under the initiative or to a control group that will receive services as usual. The randomized trial will address the question: “Do freed children with serious mental health,

mental retardation, or criminal justice histories who receive the specialized permanency intervention program achieve permanency at higher rates and sooner than other children with the same characteristics who do not receive the specialized services?" The evaluation will also assess the relative effectiveness of the various program strategies; alone, in combination, and for various subgroups of the target population. Lessons learned from this project will be disseminated to other states so that agencies across the country can benefit from the practices developed for waiting children within the mental health, developmental disability and juvenile justice systems of care.

## **Post Adoption Services**

The continued encouragement of timely adoptions of foster children has resulted in increased attention to the need for services following the adoption. Adoptive parents, service providers and advocates have underscored the importance of a broad range of services provided by specially trained professionals which recognize the unique needs of adoptive families.

In addition, social service districts provide preventive services to those adoptive families experiencing turmoil that threatens to result in placement of their child (ren). Two factors curtailed expansive and effective provision of these post-adoptive services: (1) lack of service providers with expertise to serve adoptive families and (2) reliance on social services districts to routinely develop and deliver (either directly or through purchase) specialized services.

Refinement of our understanding of the unmet service needs of adoptive families is important to OCFS and social service districts for developing programs to deliver services. The availability of uncapped 98% of 65% state reimbursements to social service districts for this purpose allows for targeted district investments in filling gaps in services.

On-going demand for post adoption services promise to distinguish for the state and its social services districts which services must be tailored to the unique circumstances of adoptive parents to achieve a suitable level of efficacy. For example, must a respite program incorporate information on adoption and its impact on family relationships to be effective? This question could be repeated for a wide range of health, mental health, educational and social services. The more information that is garnered through studies, demonstrations and research, the more programs can be provided to facilitate the ongoing success of adoptions.

The Child Welfare Finance Legislation, Chapters 53 and 83 of the Laws of 2002, enacted for a five year period, was extended by Chapter 57 of the Laws of 2007 to June 30, 2009 and by Chapter 57 of the Laws of 2009 to June 30, 2012. This provides local districts uncapped state matching reimbursement for local spending on protective, preventive, aftercare, independent living and adoption services. OCFS has conducted regional training to train on the implementation of this spending. Among other things, the

uncapped reimbursement allows districts to consider expansion of existing services or use of innovative strategies for supporting adoptive families.

### **The Adoption Album**

The Adoption Album is a web-based system which caseworkers throughout New York are using to photo-list children on the Internet, and register and photo-list potential adoptive families. In 2008, OCFS deployed a newly designed Adoption Album which interfaces with CONNECTIONS. The new Adoption Album allows caseworkers and photo listing contacts to continue the critically important recruitment work of photo listing children freed for adoption and registering families who have expressed an interest in adopting these children. The Adoption Album has always been a valuable resource as a first step in matching children with families and this redesign will encourage greater use of this valuable tool. The time required to photo list a child has been significantly reduced from weeks to days and workers are now able to upload digital photos. Families viewing children photo listed on the internet will notice a new look and find it easier to search for children recently photo listed. Additionally, New York State families with a completed and approved adoption home study can now register via the internet in the same manner out-of-state families can register. New York State families and out-of-state families interested in registering on New York State's Family Adoption Registry must: (a) complete the form online; and (b) submit the form to New York State Adoption Services (NYSAS) with the appropriate verification identifying that they have an approved home study. NYSAS reviews the registration and the supporting documentation and, if all materials are acceptable, the family is then placed into the Family Adoption Registry. This online form allows an out-of-state family to complete the registration online and electronically submit the information to NYSAS. The family will then mail the appropriate verification to NYSAS. Families can also digitally upload a photo that can also be placed on the Family Photolisting Registry. Once NYSAS receives and reviews the family's information, the family can be registered. The family will receive an e-mail message with notification that their family has been registered. Implementing the online registration eliminates the need for NYSAS to data enter the family's information into the Family Registry and helps to expedite the process of registration. The Adoption Album continues to be an invaluable recruitment tool for providing prospective adoptive parents the ability to view New York State children available for adoption online. The Album provides general information on the individual needs of each child. The internet version of the Adoption Album provides the name and phone number of each child's photo-listing contact on line. This provides prospective adoptive parents the information they need to make an initial inquiry of a child.

A series of distance learning iLINC trainings were conducted prior to deployment for caseworkers statewide. The goal of the training was to introduce caseworkers to the redesign and provide instruction on navigating this new application. These training sessions continue and are available monthly for caseworkers along with personalized one-on-one training by phone. OCFS Regional Office Adoption Specialists are also available to provide training and technical assistance.

There are currently 287 prospective adoptive families registered in the Family Registry. A total of 79 children were adoptively placed since deployment of the new Adoption Album and 212 children were photo listed.

### **“Adoption Now” Workgroup**

New York’s “Adoption Now” was a collaborative initiative among OCFS, the Office of Court Administration (OCA), New York City Administration for Children’s Services (ACS) and, ultimately, all social services districts to hasten the achievement of a safe and permanent home for the children in New York freed for adoption but not yet adopted. By working together to influence the respective systems, barriers that can delay or prevent adoption finalizations were identified in each system and strategies were developed to address them.

In addition, various activities focus on moving children to permanency through adoption. For example, in November of each year, during National Adoption Month, “National Adoption Day” is held. The Chief Judge and the Commissioners of both OCFS and ACS participate in the festivities honoring that success.

A major accomplishment of Adoption now was the creation of panels consisting of representatives from OCFS, the Court and ACS to review the status of adoption-ready children on a case-by-case basis. This is a very powerful and effective model that serves many purposes. It helps in the analysis of the children and families awaiting the completion of their adoptions; demonstrates to adoption agencies that all stakeholders are in this together and want to support their efforts to provide permanence through adoption, especially in these very difficult financial times; and helps the collaboration develop strategies focused upon ‘real time’ issues with achievable goals.

Adoption Now reviewed the functioning of the Interstate Compact for the Placement of Children (ICPC), the Adoption Subsidy Program, Criminal History Record Checks and the SCR. The initial findings suggest that the effective and timely provision of each of these services is dependent upon other sources. The ICPC depends significantly upon the cooperation of other states; the SCR requires local districts to provide case records to help them expedite their processes, etc.

### **State Central Register Database Checks**

Expediting processes for adoption-related cases for database checks against the SCR and for administrative reviews of cases involving indicated reports of child abuse or maltreatment. Additional training in search techniques is being provided to local districts.

### **Adoption Services**

Development continues on the comprehensive Adoption Discovery Project, a web based system designed to allow data sharing with many stakeholders. Additional enhancements to be accomplished include new functionality to comply with new ICPC provisions,

information sharing with other state ICPC offices, database designed for electronic submission of subsidy applications, links to the Putative Father Registry, management reports and analytical tools. Additional enhancements to the current Adoption Album include development of an integration system for audio and videos of photo listed children.

### **Adoption Subsidy**

Improvements in delivery of adoption assistance continue and include new provisions to provide adoption assistance to adoptive parents prior to finalization, changes to the statutory provisions of continuance of adoption subsidy in the event of the adoptive parent(s) death and recent progress on moving toward delivery of adoption subsidy payments by direct deposit and debit card methods .

### **Criminal History Review**

OCFS has expedited processes for criminal history background checks for adoption-related cases. Rapid turnaround of requests for current documentation is being provided as cases are identified through the case review process.

In addition to making improvements in its operational systems, OCFS is bringing additional supports to this effort.

### **Mediation**

New York's Quality Enhancement Funds are being invested in mediation programs to help move children through to permanency more quickly.

### **TPR Barriers**

A work group including attorneys, judges, social workers and OCFS convened from 2004 to 2008 to explore barriers surrounding the Termination of Parental Rights. This group identified one barrier to adoption related to unclear lines between custody and guardianship, the TPR process and the need to explore methods to expedite appeals. IN 2008 legislation was crafted by OCFS and was passed. It clarified the rights and responsibilities of custodians and guardians and crated a permanent guardianship.

**Other** initiatives aimed at expediting adoptions statewide included the following accomplishments:

- Revising the Lawyers Guide to Adoption for the purpose of publishing this document as a statewide guide of the responsibilities of attorneys in the adoption process.
- The Comprehensive Adoption Report (CAR) is now available online for use by local departments of social services and voluntary agencies. The CAR was developed to provide a standard model/template that will guide practice and

training on the contents of an agency's adoption report to be submitted to the court. The CAR provides a guide so that adoption reports prepared and submitted by agencies meet the requirements of State statute and the courts. In NYC, CAR training was provided to ACS, voluntary agency and the court personnel in an effort to initiate use of the CAR in all 5 boroughs.

- Collaborative effort to focus on the needs of older youth in foster care, the services available to them and improving permanency planning for these youth

#### Collaboration to AdoptUSKids:

The Collaboration to AdoptUSKids is a service offered by the Department of Health and Human Services' (DHHS) Children's Bureau. This is a national foster care and adoptive initiative to recruit new foster care and adoptive families for children in our foster care system. In 2003 AdoptUSKids launched a national recruitment campaign. A statewide collaboration of OCFS, NYC Administration for Children's Services (ACS) and the NYS Citizen's Coalition for Children, Inc. (NYSCCC) worked together to design and implement a formal statewide approach toward expanding current outreach and recruitment of foster and adoptive parents. Given New York's size and geographic complexity two Recruitment and Response teams were formed: one for NYC and one for Rest-of-State (ROS). Established in 2004, the Response and Recruitment Teams' responsibilities include:

- Responding to family inquiries within two (2) business days of receipt of contact information from AdoptUSKids.
- Linking families to the state/county/local agency responsible to provide pre-service training and home study process.
- Reconnecting with the families until they have an agency worker assigned to provide ongoing support.
- Reporting information back to AdoptUSKids within a defined period of time.
- Participating in ongoing and developmental training provided by AdoptUSKids.

The NYS Citizen's Coalition for Children operates the ROS Response Recruitment Team and has signed a Letter of Agreement with the Adoption Exchange Association (AEA)/The Collaboration to *AdoptUsKids* for 2007-2008. This collaboration continues through August 2009. OCFS has begun discussions with AdoptUSKids on the potential for integrating the New York State Adoption Album with the AdoptUS Kids photolisting site.

#### **NYCRO Recruitment & Retention Activities 2008-2009**

The Adoption Team played a key role in the planning and coordination of resources in NYC to support National Adoption Month in November 2008. The NYC Family Court

in cooperation with the NYC Administration for Children's Services (ACS) featured adoption finalizations during National Adoption Month. Family Court judges, from the five boroughs, Brooklyn, Bronx, Manhattan, Queens and Staten Island, participated in the 'Adoption Saturday' celebration, hosted by the Queens County Family Court. Over 150 adoptions were finalized. The celebration included refreshments, gifts to the children and adoptive parents, and entertainment. The presiding judges and court staff were honored to celebrate the finalizations with the children and their families. Strong collaborative efforts between NYCRO, the NYC ACS, and its contract agencies, the NYC Family Courts, the NYS Adoption Service and the Bureau of Training resulted in another very successful Adoption Week Event.

In addition during National Adoption Month, the Adoption Team hosted adoption information and recruitment displays at two NYS OCFS office sites in Manhattan and Brooklyn. Team members and staff from voluntary agencies were available to hand out information and answer questions about the children featured and Team members demonstrated operation of the re-designed electronic Adoption Album.

Two series of New York City Adoption Panel Reviews have been held in 2008 and 2009. The first series of Panel Reviews were held in July of 2008 and the second series in February of 2009. In total, the two reviews included 59 voluntary agencies representing 3900 children. Each panel member played a key role in expediting resolutions to permanency obstacles identified in their organizations during the review process. The Panel Reviews have continued to be a critical vehicle for targeting barriers to adoptive placements and finalizations. They are attended by representatives from the Adoption Team, the Office of Court Administration, NYC Family Courts, ACS, ACS funded adoption recruitment agencies, and ACS contract agencies providing adoption services. The panels have proven a very rich arena for the identification of case specific barriers to permanency through adoption, expediting the resolution of outstanding issues and providing significant opportunities for the development of effective collaborative strategies between these stakeholders. This model continues to be an excellent problem solving opportunity for expediting adoptions and permanency plans for children with a permanency goal of adoption. The second series of Panel Reviews for 2009 are being planned for September and will again utilize the model described above.

The Adoption Team facilitated a session of the OCFS Best Practices in Achieving Permanency Through Surrender and Termination for NYC voluntary agencies. The six day training was attended by 21 voluntary agency and LDSS staff. This was the first offering of much needed adoption training and the training was well received and highly evaluated by the trainees. To continue to address adoption training needs in NYC and statewide, OCFS is collaborating with the National Child Welfare Resource Center to deliver their Adoption Competency Curriculum statewide. This training will be facilitated through a four day Train the Trainer format and will be delivered in NYC in September. Additionally, Team members provided their Achieving Permanency Through Adoption training directly to 45 staff from three voluntary agencies. The training focused on preparation of families and children through exploration of separation and loss issues

and on the legal procedures in achieving adoption finalizations. The training was well received by both new and experienced staff in attendance.

Team members have held two permanency reviews for children in the ACS Specialized Care Unit which oversees permanency planning for children placed in OMH and OMRDD facilities and programs. The reviews are a continuation of previous adoption training provided to the staff of this unit with a goal of monitoring adoption and permanency planning for these children in terms of mandated photolisting and referrals to specialized recruitment agencies. Since the targeting of this unit for permanency planning, staff has become more knowledgeable and has made some gains in terms of adoptive and other permanency placements.

NYC ACS has continued recruitment efforts for NYC waiting children:

- Children are featured weekly in Wednesday's Child, made possible by a partnership between the Freddie Mac Foundation, WNBC News Channel 4 and the NYC ACS.
- Meet Our Kids: an interactive portion of the NYC ACS website that provides a database of photos and stories of children who are waiting for adoptive families has continued.
- The Heart Gallery N.Y.C., Inc. which involves a traveling photo exhibit featuring portraits of New York City foster children continues to play a prominent recruitment role for these waiting children. Accomplished and renowned photographers have continued to donate their time and talents to create museum-quality portraits of children, which are exhibited in public venues to raise awareness about children available for an adoption in New York City. During this period, the Heart Gallery was exhibited in Times Square with pictures of children appearing on the Jumbotron and the Heart Gallery also sponsored a matching event in the NYC Visitors and Convention Center in which waiting children and prospective adoptive parents mingled through a planned series of fun activities.
- Adoption Matching Conferences, where prospective adoptive parents are invited to meet with agency representatives to discuss the possibility of adopting a child presented during the meetings have continued. The conferences are coordinated by local recruitment agencies and are held in the afternoon and /or evening.

The Adoption Unit completed Recruitment Plan Questionnaires for the 30 voluntary agencies headquartered in New York City and contracted by ACS to provide foster care and adoption services. The questionnaires were completed to review the effectiveness of the Comprehensive Recruitment Plans required by the Multiethnic Placement Act of 1994 to generate a sufficient number of foster and adoptive families and submitted to the NYC Regional Office in 2008. Completion of the questionnaires was the culmination of the Teams' monitoring and support of agencies' recruitment efforts over the past months. The questionnaires provide a method to assess how well agencies were able to carry out their planned recruitment strategies, to assess agencies' strengths as well as

needs for technical assistance and training to support programming which expedites permanency planning for children.

NYC ACS continues to operate the downstate AdoptUsKids website. This is a project of the Children's Bureau, Department of Health and Human Services, contracted through the Adoption Exchange Association in collaboration with AdoptUsKids. This national adoptive family recruitment and retention strategy includes initiatives to encourage and support adoptive family support organizations and conducts a variety of adoption research projects.

The Adoption Team facilitated preparation for computer based training on ILinc on the re-designed Adoption Album for voluntary agencies in New York City. The Adoption Album is the NYS mandated photolisting site. Children who are free for adoption are mandated to be photolisted unless they meet specific criteria that allow for exceptions to the photolisting process. The Adoption Album has been re-designed and is now totally electronic in that hard copies of the Album have been eliminated, agencies are able to upload digital photos of children to Album and in addition demographic and other information on children is able to be uploaded from the state CONNECTIONS system of record. The redesigned album includes many user friendly features. With the elimination of the hard copy Album, the Adoption Team has asked that agencies incorporate into their adoption procedure manuals their plan for making the computer based Adoption Album available within their agencies for inquiries and information and orientation meetings.

The Adoption Team facilitated training on the Life Book tool for NYC agencies. Preparation of families and children for adoption is crucial for successful recruitment efforts and adoptive placements. A goal of the Life Book is to help children reconstruct the facts of their placement experience and the attendant feelings to help them resolve separation, loss and grief issues which are primary issues in the adoptive placement of the mostly older, traumatized children who are available for placement in NYC and NYS. Team members will follow-up with the agency staff who attended the training to learn about their experiences with using Life Books.

The Adoption Team participated in meetings of the ACS Directors of Homefinding meetings held by the NYC ACS. These meetings provide generalized information on ACS's program areas and policies, and technical information in the areas of recruitment, retention, and training. Members also participated in the NYC Recruiters Network meetings. These meetings facilitated by senior staff from the Foster and Adoptive Parent Recruitment and Retention Program at SUNY Albany focus on information sharing and transfer of knowledge among the NYC agency recruitment staff. Over the several years that this group has been meeting they have developed a relationship of trust which allows individuals to share concerns and develop strategies to address mutual issues.

NYC Children's Services continued to maintain support groups for foster and adoptive parents throughout New York City called 'Circles of Support'. These groups enable resource parents to increase their level of community support through networking,

building partnerships and information sharing. An Adoption Specialist presented at the Staten Island Circle of Support meeting on the Adoption Process. The participants found the information helpful in their daily dealings with foster care youth and agencies.

NYC Children's Services maintains the Families for Teens Speaker's Bureau. Teen and adult speakers talk with groups of prospective foster and adoptive parents and others to help these individuals to change their perspective on the needs of homes for teens and their preferences for the type of children they are interested in caring for.

At the NYC Adoption Exchange Meetings, Adoption staff present new and current information from OCFS to bring agencies and local departments of social services into compliance with regulations.

During this period, the Adoption Unit held 243 site visits to the NYC Administration for Children's Services and voluntary agencies, completed seven program reviews of new and existing authorized adoption agencies, and addressed over 100 complaints and requests for information, referral and technical assistance from individuals and organizations.

The NYCRO Adoption Team will assume greater responsibility around recruitment and retention activities of the voluntary agencies with the New York City wide implementation of the ACS Improved Outcomes for Children initiative in 2009. For example, the Adoption Team will assume planning for the state mandated bi-annual Adoption Panels, a responsibility formerly delegated to ACS downstate. This new role for the Adoption Team may allow for revisions to the process with the potential to broaden the scope of these reviews.

The Adoption Team will provide training on the CAR, Life Books, and the Adoption Competency Curriculum as requested and needed.

The Adoption Team will continue to facilitate and participate in recruitment and permanency initiatives for children who are free and have goals of adoption and are placed in the OMH, OMRDD and DJJOY systems providing training and technical assistance to these systems as needed.

#### **Planned Recruitment & Retention Activities – 2010 - 2014**

The Adoption Team will continue to request, review, monitor implementation and assess agency Comprehensive Recruitment Plans as required by the federal Multi-placement Act of 1994 (MEPA). The Team will review and evaluate the plans to determine that the proposed strategies would be able to generate a sufficient number of foster and adoptive families with the goal of achieving timely and appropriate placements for agency waiting children.

The Team will continue to introduce new and critical information on recruitment and retention to the LDSS and voluntary agencies.

### Faith and Community-Based Partnership

The OCFS and Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance (OTDA) Faith and Community-Based Partnership is working in conjunction with the OCFS Adoption Services, OCFS NYCRO and ACS to launch AdoptUSKids Faith-Based Foster and Adoptive Parent Recruitment events in New York City. Several additional Faith-Based Foster and Adoption Parent Recruitment events are being planned which will include several upstate areas.

Another example of ongoing recruitment activity involves the Muslim Family Partnership. The Partnership is a group of Islamic men and women who work in the field of sociology, psychology and education to improve the lives of Islamic people emigrating to the U.S. The Partnership currently is interested in working with OCFS and ACS to assist in the placement of foster children of the Islamic faith. The Partnership wishes to provide knowledge, understanding and training to the foster families of Muslim children. Staff from OCFS participated in a joint meeting in New York City with key ACS faith- and community based staff to develop a plan that would incorporate Muslim Family Partnership's members with recruitment of Islamic families as foster families for all children.

### TANF Funded Post Adoption Services

OCFS currently provides over \$3 million in TANF Prevention and Post Adoption funding to support programs and services for 13 not-for-profit agencies that provide post adoption services. Services were provided to over 1000 adopted children and over 600 adoptive families state-wide. All children and families served by the TANF funds must meet TANF income eligibility requirements. Post adoption services provided include but are not limited to: Information and referral "warm line" or self help hotline, advocacy, collaboration with local service providers including family court, crisis intervention including respite care, youth support groups, parenting skills, and adoptive parent support groups. OCFS plans to provide a third round of TANF Prevention and Post Adoption funding to continue support for the post adoption programs.

ADOPTION MONITORING SYSTEM  
 FREQUENCY COUNTS FOR STATEWIDE  
 WAITING CHILDREN (FREED NOT PLACED) – 1235  
 April 22 2009

Age Group	NUMBER	PERCENT
0 TO UNDER 2	31	2.5
2 TO 5	215	17.4
6 TO 9	235	19.0
10 TO 13	284	23.0
14 TO 17	403	32.6
OVER 17	67	5.4
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TOTAL	1235	99.9

Ethnic groups	NUMBER	PERCENT
WHITE	339	27.4
BLACK	440	35.6
HISPANIC	152	12.3
ASIAN	1	0.1
INTERRACIAL	40	3.2
OTHER	263	21.3
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TOTAL	1235	99.9

Sex	NUMBER	PERCENT
FEMALE	540	43.7
MALE	695	56.3
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TOTAL	1235	100.0
Number of siblings	NUMBER	PERCENT
01	1092	88.4
02	68	5.5
03	34	2.8
04	19	1.5
05	9	0.7
06	12	1.0
08	1	0.1
TOTAL	1235	100.0

### **Institutional Abuse/Maltreatment Investigations (IAB)**

#### **Accomplishments 2005-2009**

In 2008, a Governor's Program Bill was introduced and was approved by the legislature impacting Institutional Abuse practice and protocols. Chapter 323 of the Laws of 2008 took effect on January 17, 2009. This legislation changed definitions, practice protocols and outcomes of report investigations.

While OCFS continues to investigate and make determinations in those cases containing allegations of abuse or neglect of children in residential care that are registered by the Statewide Central Register of Child Abuse and maltreatment (SCR) concerning residential care facilities within New York State, it must do so under new standards. In those cases determined to be indicated, OCFS, through its regional offices, continues to promote the development and implementation of appropriate and effective plans of prevention and remediation. Additionally, there are several new requirements. It is now necessary to establish whether a familial case must be registered at the SCR, whether or not a crime may have occurred and whether a regulatory standard has been violated. In all circumstances, there is appropriate follow up activity required. IAB investigators remain empowered to send letters of concern to those agencies that are found to have programmatic issues regardless of the individual case determination. The new legislation enhances this requirement.

OCFS organized an IAB Quality Assurance Priority into three distinct areas. The first group focused on the development of an updated IAB manual for use by investigators and supervisors. The team determined that this could be accomplished most efficiently by updating the 1996 manual. Chapters were assigned to members and proposed revisions reviewed by the entire team. Due to the change in statute, the manual revisions are being reworked to incorporate necessary changes. The second team developed a Peer Review Process as a quality assurance mechanism. Quarterly IAB quality assurance case reviews are ongoing. The third team developed a Communication Strategy and staff development recommendation. The work of all three teams continued through 2007 and 2008. The

statutory changes were supported by statewide training in 2008 that will continue in 2009.

Staff from IAB is working closely with stakeholders in the field to continue to elevate trauma awareness and distribute information regarding trauma informed program models of residential care.

OCFS has also worked collaboratively with stakeholders in the field and in August of 2007, the Automated Restraint Tracking System (ARTS) was brought on line. Each Regional Office hosted a training site for the simultaneous statewide training of all voluntary agencies. This is a web-based system designed to capture critical information regarding each use of physical restraint in residential care agencies. As the database grows, it will help to inform practice and identify training needs for residential care providers.

OCFS continues to investigate and reach appropriate determinations in reports accepted by the SCR that concern children residing in New York State congregate care facilities. In addition, OCFS will continue its efforts with regard to the development and implementation of appropriate and effective plans of prevention and remediation. OCFS remains focused on improving the timeliness of determinations and feedback to agencies in order to support the development and implementation of meaningful plans of prevention and remediation. IAB continues to promote close, productive working relations between home office and the various regional offices; to maintain a close working relationship between investigative staff and staff with responsibility for foster care and licensing; to coordinate among OCFS and the various State agencies with which it interacts regarding institutional child abuse/maltreatment (State Education Department, Office of Mental Health, Office of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities, and the Commission on Quality of Care and Advocacy for Persons with Disabilities). Efforts are also focused on the development of ongoing training initiatives.

In order to support IAB activities, creation of an internal OCFS database and a tracking system for incidents of abuse and neglect in residential settings are being explored. This system would allow OCFS to track data elements regarding reports of institutional abuse. The potential exists for OCFS to be able to identify trends in types of allegations, reporting and determinations. This activity is being supported in the OCFS Data Warehouse. Eventually, the data could be analyzed to support activities related to prevention and remediation efforts. Additionally, a tracking system has been developed and revised to support activities relative to the administrative review and fair hearing process.

A comprehensive case review of all IAB cases determined in February of 2008 was completed. The objective of the review was to identify targeted training areas for all IAB staff statewide. This will enable a more focused and effective use of resources. Also in 2008, additional information and training supports were provided regarding trauma informed models of residential care. A three part teleconference series on Trauma and Mental Health was broadcast throughout 2008.

Since the beginning of 2008, OCFS Division of Legal Affairs has been reviewing all recommended determinations made in cases investigated by the Commission on the

Quality of Care and Advocacy for Persons with Disabilities. OCFS has been providing technical assistance and support to investigative staff at CQCAPD.

### **Safety of Children in Residential Care: Establishing Trauma-informed Facility Environments**

OCFS was successful in securing training supports to sponsor the participation of 10 voluntary agencies in training in the Sanctuary Model of residential care. This model is a promising practice of organizational change designed to create a therapeutic community milieu where children and adolescents who have been impacted by trauma in their lives can heal and move forward to positive futures

The first five agencies began the process in 2006. In 2008, five additional residential voluntary agencies and four OCFS facilities began the process of shifting their practices and procedures to trauma-sensitive environment and approaches through the adoption of the Sanctuary Model® for organizational change and continuous improvement. The Sanctuary Model®; an evidence based, trauma-informed initiative for residential childcare agencies, supports the program improvement strategy “Improving Child Welfare Outcomes” and helps agencies establish safe environments for staff, youth, families and administrators.

There is a heightened recognition within the child welfare field that a majority of the youth placed in residential care suffer from complex psychiatric conditions and have experienced traumatic events such as abuse, neglect, loss of loved ones, or family and community violence. Implementing the Sanctuary Model® is creating safe facility environments to help these young people heal by accepting what has happened to them and begin to move into lives of promise and fulfilment.

By involving everyone within the organization in comprehensive trauma training, adopting a common language and instituting multi-disciplinary teams that identify necessary changes and develop alternatives, the facility environments become less confrontational and become more focused on treatment. The features of Sanctuary Model® environments, in addition to the multi-disciplinary teams, include twice daily Community Meetings, Safety Plans for youth and staff, Red Flag reviews, psycho-education in trauma, team meetings, treatment planning conferences, a commitment to 7 program principles, and continuous feedback and self evaluation by staff and the resident youth.

As staff begins to better understand the causes of the behaviors of the youth in their care, they will improve and individualize their approaches and begin to see the youth for what has happened to them, as opposed to what they have done. The focus of staff shifts from reacting to facility behaviors, to helping youth learn to manage their emotions, therefore reducing violence and the need for physical restraints. There is a shift from an environment of control to one of collaboration. Children are taught how to make connections between their behaviors and their emotions and to find new ways to help them express themselves productively.

Each facility has a Sanctuary Model Steering Committee comprised of the top decision makers and a Core Group comprised of a broad representation of staff and disciplines within the agency. Within OCFS, a central - Home Office - Steering Committee has been established to support the work of the OCFS facilities in the project.

### **Evaluation of Sanctuary Model**

In fall 2008, the OCFS Bureau of Evaluation and Research initiated a multi-year process and outcome evaluation of the Sanctuary Model. Process evaluation activities will focus on monitoring changes in institutional culture and practices over time, and will assess the extent to which Sanctuary ideals and tools are being implemented with fidelity to the Sanctuary Model. The outcome evaluation will examine whether adoption of the Sanctuary Model is associated with reductions in: 1) the number of youth in congregate care (OCFS facilities or voluntary agencies) who are abused or neglected while in care; 2) the use of physical restraints; 3) the number of injuries sustained by youth in congregate care as a result of physical restraints; 4) the number of incidents of youth-on-youth and youth-on-staff violence; 5) the number of youth suicide watches; and 6) the number of youth grievances regarding staff misconduct and unfair treatment. The findings will help to identify areas in which the model is most successful in order to capitalize upon them and identify weaknesses in order to make improvements.

To gather information on how Sanctuary affects program climate, the evaluation team has developed two survey instruments – one for staff and one for program youth – that ask about staff-youth interactions, communication, perceptions of personal safety and well-being, and knowledge of Sanctuary tools and concepts. Surveys will be administered every six months at each of the 9 sites included in Cohort #2 of the Sanctuary Roll-Out (4 OCFS facilities, 5 voluntary agencies). The evaluation team plans to use OCFS administrative databases to monitor other outcomes of interest at Sanctuary sites (e.g., use of restraints, staff turnover).

### **Plans for 2010-2014**

Sixteen additional OCFS facilities will begin the process of adopting a Sanctuary Model® environment to create a residency milieu that supports improved safety and well being of children in their care. Additionally, OCFS anticipates adding five more voluntary agencies in 2010.

### **Training Provided in Federal Fiscal Year 2008-2009**

- **Training and Technical Assistance to Support Social Services District Permanency Planning**  
A regional, child welfare training resource project provides district-specific training and technical assistance to improve caseworker, supervisor, and managerial skills, enhance district foster parent recruitment and retention efforts, and to effectively use

the legal system to advocate for and obtain permanency for children. Also provides training consultation to OCFS Home Office.

- **Training for New York City Voluntary Agencies**

Training for New York City Voluntary Agencies, development and operation of a training consortium (a network of training providers), provides a competency-based foundation program for child welfare caseworkers and supervisors, and a variety of training resources to voluntary agencies. Technical assistance is provided. A one-day conference for child care staff was also delivered in NYC. In addition, the training project provides resources to support Children's Services Improved Outcomes for Children initiatives.

65 Training Days

- **Foster and Adoptive Parent Training**

This program consists of several components: Leader Certification, Foster/Adoptive Parent Preparation and Selection (GPSII/MAPP), Caring for Our Own, Shared Parenting, and Deciding Together. These training programs prepare local district and voluntary agency staff and foster parents to lead training groups in their areas on the topics above.

- **GPSII/MAPP:** A 30 hour preparation and selection program delivered over a period of 10 weeks by districts and agencies to prospective foster and adoptive parents to assess, develop, and strengthen the attitudes, skills, and knowledge needed by parents intending to foster or adopt children.
- **Caring For Our Own:** This five day leader certification develops program skills needed for local district and agency staff to prepare relatives of children in care for their role as care giver and to provide necessary support. The program is also delivered directly as needed.
- **Shared Parenting:** Provides a four day leader certification program prepares trainers to deliver the Shared Parenting Program to foster parents. The program is also delivered directly as needed.
- **Mini-MAPP:** Prepares GPSII/MAPP certified trainers to provide an overview of the basic concepts in the GPSII/MAPP training program to child welfare staff and foster and adoptive staff within the agencies.

- Deciding Together: Provides training to individual families to prepare them to foster or adopt.

9,536 trainees  
517 training days

- **Foster/Adoptive Parent In-Service Training**

This basic and advanced training program provided to trainers of foster parents and directly to foster parents. In addition, regional foster parent training seminars, training for foster/adoptive parent associations and technical assistance is offered statewide. Efforts continue with the redesign of the basic and advanced in-service training to complement and support Group Preparation and Selection (GPS), with linkages to the child welfare caseworker core training. Courses include COMPASS, an extensive in-service training program and “Fostering the Sexually Abused Child.”

- **Therapeutic Foster Boarding Home Training (TFBH)**

TFBH provides training and technical assistance in a set of core problem-solving and intervention skills for foster parents, agency workers, and trainers in therapeutic foster boarding home programs. This program was completely revised in 2008 to infuse trauma informed care throughout the curriculum.

500 trainees  
60 training days

- **HIV and AIDS Training**

HIV/AIDS training is offered to a broad child welfare audience, including local districts, voluntary agencies, foster and adoptive parents and respite care providers. The topics offered in this training resource system directly impact the populations being served who are affected by or infected with HIV/AIDS. Those serving this special needs population receive training on topics such as: agents of infection and modes of transmission; HIV transmission and prevention; Universal Precautions; stages of HIV disease; immune system function; medications for and adherence to HIV-related treatment; permanency planning/HIV case planning for families affected by HIV; talking with youth about HIV/AIDS; HIV risk assessment, counseling and testing regulations concerning foster care youth; and NYS HIV confidentiality and disclosure law.

700 Trainees  
170 Training Days

**Behavior Support, Crisis Prevention and Intervention in Residential Settings**

The program focuses on building the competencies of staff to work more effectively and in a positive, therapeutic manner, with children in institutional settings. The training includes techniques on preventing, de-escalating, and intervening in crisis situations. The training leads to certification of Therapeutic Crisis Intervention (TCI) trainers. In addition to the core program, refresher training and technical assistance is provided to previously certified TCI trainers, to assist them in keeping their certification current. This program also provides training on Institutional Abuse (IAB) Practice and Implications in New York to OCFS employees and staff from residential care agencies who work with IAB and residential care issues.

1,888 trainees

170 training and technical assistance days

- **Child Welfare Training and Technical Assistance**

Provide training and technical assistance to social services districts to improve casework practice and to overcome barriers to permanency for children in care. Provide training manuals and materials in support of OCFS policy and program initiatives.

214 training and technical assistance days

- **Foster/Adoptive Family Recruitment and Retention**

This project offers foster/adoptive parent recruitment materials development for specific county or regional use. Provides districts and voluntary agencies with training and technical assistance in the following areas: training foster/adoptive parents as local or regional recruiters; developing innovative regional area/other area partnerships to enhance recruitment/retention; recruiting and supporting families able to care for sibling groups, special needs children and adolescents; developing innovative recruitment plans and strategies at both the agency and regional level; planning recruitment activities in the context of concurrent planning, ASFA, Multiethnic Placement Act (MEPA), and other relevant statutes and directives; and assessing organizational development issues that may impact local recruitment/retention efforts.

250 training and technical assistance days

- **Post Graduate Certificate Program in Adoption Training**

The ten session post graduate certificate program in adoption therapy provides non-credit bearing advanced education and training for child welfare staff in specialized theories and practices for working with all members of the adoptive triad, including birth mothers and fathers; adoptive mothers and fathers; and the adopted person. The project includes a website to be used for announcement and recruitment purposes. The website also provides an overview of the course, an extensive bibliography and reading list as well as a complete listing of all students who have completed the course.

Up to 25 trainees  
1 offering  
15 training days

- **Health Services for Children in Foster Care**

This project teaches local district and voluntary agency child welfare staff how to facilitate access to health care services for children in care, and how to coordinate services, identify health risk factors and integrate the current health standards into their practice and case management.

475 trainees  
19 training days

### **Training Planned for Federal Fiscal Year 2010-2014**

- The training programs provided in 2009-2010, as described in Goal 2 of the APSR, have not only been judged effective, they continue to reflect an ongoing need. Therefore, all of these training programs will be offered in the coming year. In addition, the following programs will be offered or revised.
- The Office is currently working with the National Resource Center for Adoption to revise their Adoption Competency Curriculum for use in NYS in 2009.
- Supervisory Core Module I Foundations, the introductory course designed for all new supervisors, will be redesigned.
- Supervisory Core Module IIB, the Child Preventive Specialty, a five-day course for non-CPS supervisors, will be developed. This course builds on skills and knowledge learned in Supervisory Core Module I.
- The work of the Social Work Education Consortium will continue: OCFS has developed a Consortium of Schools of Social Work to work in partnership with the agency to elevate public child welfare practice. The Consortium activities include a full range of training and education activities including degree programs for state and local district staff, field instruction, curriculum development as well as short term training and workforce development.

- OCFS plans to continue to provide a wide variety of management and computer training, which is available to State and local staff from all programs. These courses are open to managers and staff in the child welfare area as well to those serving in administrative functions that support all programs.

**GOAL #3**

**VICTIMS OF FAMILY VIOLENCE, BOTH CHILD AND ADULT, WILL BE AFFORDED THE SAFETY AND SUPPORT NECESSARY TO ACHIEVE SELF-SUFFICIENCY (ADULT), AND/OR TO PROMOTE THEIR CONTINUED GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT (CHILD)**

**ASSESSMENT OF NEED AND CURRENT STATUS**

Local districts are required to provide emergency shelter and services to all victims of domestic violence regardless of financial eligibility.

All approved residential and non-residential domestic violence programs in the state are in compliance with the program regulations and offer the core services designed to provide safety and the supports needed to achieve self-sufficiency. NYS is fortunate to have a mandated funding stream and federal family violence funds to help support these initiatives.

**2005-2009 PERFORMANCE TARGETS**

- In eleven counties CPS and DV staff will continue to implement a joint protocol to improve safety outcomes for families affected by child abuse and domestic violence.

Baseline: 13 counties were funded to implement protocol to work jointly on cases with both domestic violence and child abuse in 2008.

- Approved residential and non-residential services will be provided to adult victims of domestic violence and their children in an effort to offer safety and self-sufficiency options.

Baseline: In 2008, 6,974 adults and 8,422 children were sheltered in residential programs and 32,384 adults and 10,086 children were served in non-residential programs. During that year there were 160 licensed residential programs with 2,930 beds (excluding safe home beds) and 87 approved non-residential programs.

- All CPS workers in NYS will receive the mandated DV training in accordance with Chapter 280 of the Laws of 2002.

Baseline: In 2008, 396 CPS workers were trained for a total of 1,752 CPS workers that have completed the mandated DV training since its inception in 2005.

- 5 county social service districts will be visited and provided with Domestic Violence Profiles. OCFS will assist these counties in planning and improving their domestic violence services after evaluating the profiles.

Baseline: County social service districts have not had access to the information on the profiles in one place and therefore, have not had the opportunity to review it and make plans for improvement of services. This past year one district has been visited and is in the process of reviewing plans for service improvement.

## **State and Local Activities**

### **Domestic Violence Services**

The prevention of and intervention in domestic violence is a central component of New York State's approach to preserving and strengthening families after the passage of the State Domestic Violence Prevention Act of 1987 (Social Service Law Section 459-a et. seq.), OCFS completed a multitude of regulatory, funding and licensing initiatives which resulted in major changes in the way domestic violence programs are funded and services are provided to victims of domestic violence. Social services districts are required to refer victims of domestic violence, whether eligible or ineligible for public assistance, to available licensed residential programs and reimburse such programs on a per diem basis which is established by OCFS and approved by the New York State Division of the Budget. Social services districts are also required to provide non-residential services for victims of domestic violence directly or to purchase such services from a residential or non-residential domestic violence program. As a result, domestic violence programs, over a multi-year period, have become increasingly mainstreamed into the social services delivery system. These programs continue to offer the safety and support needed to assist victims of domestic violence and their children in becoming self sufficient and living free of violence.

OCFS is responsible for funding, licensing, approving and monitoring these programs and providing the technical assistance needed to support quality and comprehensive services. This work requires on-going collaborative efforts with other state agencies, social services districts, service providers and Domestic Violence victims and their families.

## Accomplishments for 2008-2009

- Federal Family Violence Prevention and Services Act (FFVPSA) Funds – In 2008, OCFS received an FFVPSA award of \$4,043,125. Five percent of the funds (\$202,156) were applied to administrative expenses. \$274,000 supported continuation of CPS/DV collaboration projects, and the remaining \$3,566,969, in the amount of \$37,155 each, was issued to 96 approved residential and/or non-residential domestic violence programs. The grants support program maintenance, health and safety improvements and/or program enhancements.
- Domestic Violence Information System (DVIS) – During 2008, the Domestic Violence Information System, which is used to support the statistical requirements of the mandated annual report, continued to be refined. The goal of the system is to improve the accuracy and timeliness of the annual report and make related information more accessible to users and other stakeholders. DV providers entered their 2008 data directly into the system. The only exception being NYC providers who already report data to the Human Resources Administration (HRA) in NYC. Our data system was able to import data from the HRA system directly so these providers would not have to duplicate efforts.
- CPS/DV initiatives – During 2008, significant progress was made towards improving safety outcomes for families experiencing both domestic violence and child abuse and maltreatment.
  - 13 CPS/DV collaboration projects continued in 2008. The collaborations have an out stationed domestic violence advocate at the local CPS office. To facilitate reporting outcome data, common outcomes were used by the projects.
  - OCFS worked on coordinating the implementation of the CPS/DV co-location model and the Child and Family Services Review (CFSR) Program Improvement Plan strategy to improve safety outcomes for families impacted by both domestic violence and child abuse/maltreatment. An advisory group of representatives from the court, domestic violence and child protective services fields has created draft guidelines for domestic violence programs to collaborate with child protective services to improve outcomes for families impacted by both child abuse and domestic violence.
  - A 2-day mandated domestic violence training for CPS workers was again provided to local department of social services districts. OCFS contracts with The Office of the Prevention of Domestic Violence (OPDV) to provide the training. This training is designed to improve CPS capacity to intervene with families experiencing both domestic violence and child abuse and maltreatment.
  - A child welfare curriculum was developed, moving from knowledge-based training to skills-based training. The purpose of the training is to

assist foster care, preventive and adoption case workers when working with families experiencing domestic violence. Training for child welfare workers in local social services districts was begun in 2008.

- Non-residential Programming – Additional efforts were made to support the network of non-residential domestic violence programs across the state. In 2008, county plans updates were reviewed by OCFS. Included in the plans are the appendices for approving non-residential domestic violence programs. Also during this year, staff conducted site visits to many of the stand alone non-residential domestic violence programs. In response to site visits and county plan reviews, home and regional office staff, together with local districts, addressed regulatory, contractual and best practice issues
- Domestic Violence Regulatory Workgroup – OCFS has co-facilitated a Domestic Violence Regulatory Workgroup with OPDV and the Office for Temporary and Disability Assistance. The workgroup includes domestic violence program and local social services representatives, the intent of which is to review and recommend changes to the domestic violence regulations which have existed unchanged for approximately 20 years.
- Fatherhood Initiatives – OCFS has been working with national consultants and experts in the field of Fatherhood initiatives to bring the issue of DV into the forefront. The goal is to find ways to keep victims safe when DV is involved while still working with fathers to improve their parenting skills and interactions with their children. OPDV held three OCFS supported regional fatherhood forums for local department of social services staff across the state.
- Supervised Visitation – OCFS participated in the development of a supervised visitation protocol for domestic violence involved families. Partners included: The New York State Coalition Against Domestic Violence, The NYS Office for the Prevention of Domestic Violence, The NY Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children, and Oswego County Opportunities.

## **Plans for 2010-2014**

### Initiatives

- OCFS will continue to support CPS/DV collaborations. These collaborations are designed to improve safety for families experiencing both domestic violence and child abuse/maltreatment. Other anticipated outcomes include preventing reoccurrence of child abuse/maltreatment, and reducing out-of-home placements. Draft guidelines for domestic violence programs to collaborate with child protective services have been developed. These include screening questions to assist in identifying domestic violence and focus on new ways to work with

batterers while keeping safety of the victims of paramount concern. Office staff will continue to assist in the provision of domestic violence training to child protective workers and other child welfare workers across the state.

- A 2-day mandated domestic violence training for CPS workers will continue to be provided to local department of social services districts. OCFS contracts with The Office of the Prevention of Domestic Violence (OPDV) to provide the training. This training is designed to improve CPS capacity to intervene with families experiencing both domestic violence and child abuse and maltreatment.
- Non-residential Programming –The office will continue to support the network of non-residential domestic violence programs across the state. County plans updates are reviewed by OCFS. Included in the plans are the appendices for approving non-residential domestic violence programs. Staff will also conduct site visits to many of the stand alone non-residential domestic violence programs. In response to site visits and county plan reviews, home and regional office staff, together with local districts, will address regulatory, contractual and best practice issues.
- OCFS will continue to license and approve residential domestic violence programs and distribute Federal Family Violence Prevention and Services Act and TANF funds to support the viability of residential and non-residential programs.
- The internet based DV Information allows staff to identify information that will be useful to programs and communities in identifying trends and gaps to assist in further supporting and enhancing services for victims of domestic violence. OCFS will collaborate with other state agencies on collecting and reporting information that can support community development. Data collected will be used to provide Domestic Violence Profiles to each county social service district to assist them in evaluating the domestic violence services provided by their county. Also, this information will help them recognize any areas which may be lacking and assist them in planning and improving overall services for victims of domestic violence in their particular county.

The Office will review and approve county consolidated services plan updates as they relate to non-residential domestic violence services and will provide technical assistance to counties and programs as needed to comply with the non-residential program regulations and to provide quality services.

OCFS will continue to collaborate with other state agencies to help achieve consistency and coordination regarding funding and program quality. The office will participate in the OPDV Advisory Council and the data, prevention and funding subcommittees.

### **Foster Care/Domestic Violence – 2008-2009**

The Foster Care/Domestic Violence unit experienced significant changes and transitions during the 2008-2009 year. Under the leadership of the new management team, unit assignments were completed, strategic work plans were developed, team centered approaches to work practices were initiated, and performance enhancements were designed. The Foster Care /Domestic Violence team focused on several areas including: meeting Federal regulations on IV-E and IV-B goals, state program policy implementations, time to permanency issues through the Foster Care Permanency Panel pilot, and internal collaborations with NYCRO units. Staff participated in joint meetings to discuss the 2009 IV-E review and completed trainings to enable staff to perform reviewer roles during the May 2008 Child and Family Services Review (CFSR) and the upcoming federal Title IV-E review in August of 2008. Staff also participated in the OCFS sponsored Leadership Summit as a kickoff to the State CFSR PIP.

Throughout the year, foster care conducted numerous activities related to completing the unit's Core Functions such as Voluntary Agency Reviews, Domestic Violence recertification, child fatality report reviews, ACS monitoring, fire/safety inspections, processing requests for incorporation, investigation of consumer complaints related to foster care and ACS programs and technical assistance activities.

The NYCRO Regional Director and representatives of the Foster Care/Domestic Violence management team met with the Commissioner of the Department of Homeless Services and later the Human Resources Administration (HRA) Domestic Violence program executive directors to provide technical assistance around issues of program development and State regulatory standards. It should be noted that the domestic violence programs have seen a significant increase in requests for additional emergency domestic violence beds.

Statewide issues/concerns presented by OCFS' oversight of the State Education Department 4201 residential programs were discussed in 2008-2009 and foster care conducted preliminary site reviews and submitted reports concerning program and fire/safety compliance issues relative to licensing two of these facilities at the Lexington School and the New York Institute for Special Education.

Six fatality reports were finalized within the required six-month time frames. In addition, foster care staff worked closely with ACS to obtain all corrective action plans and provided technical assistance to voluntary agencies to complete foster care fatality reports. Foster care staff collaborated with other divisions in reviewing case information and made recommendations as necessary. Data observations noted in fatality reports were shared with the Division and Home Office staff. Staff participated in a training organized by the NYCRO CPS unit, which featured a presentation by the NYC Medical Examiner intended to strengthen staff knowledge.

Staff reviewed and provided comments on a draft ADM policy document regarding new Statutes Affecting Kinship Care: Chapter 404 and 519 of the Laws of 2008, attended a Public Hearing on the Oversight of Foster Care Services in New York City and prepared a summary of the events. ACS' decision to terminate its contracts with upstate voluntary agencies that serve New York City Juvenile Delinquents placed with OCFS generated

Foster Care conferences with DJJOY, Legal, the Albany Regional Office (ARO) and Spring Valley Regional Office (SVRO).

Foster Care/Domestic Violence Unit hosted a child welfare advocate visitor from France, the Directrice Centre Départemental de l'Enfance et de la Famille, arranged and escorted our visitor to Inwood House to provide a first hand observation of the program and an opportunity to speak with the administrator. NYCRO's Foster Care/Domestic Violence unit invited Adoption, CPS and PPAI units to present information relative to their program areas.

### Foster Care and Domestic Violence Reviews and Related Activities

Seventeen Voluntary Agency Reviews (VARs) were conducted and reports of findings issued. Fieldwork was completed on three additional foster care programs and draft reports were issued to the agencies. Foster care provided technical assistance in the area of revising voluntary agency procedures consistent with the State's Xctasy Law, OCFS policies, state regulations, ACS reporting procedures concerning missing foster care youth, procedures for assessing children's clothing and supply needs; and implementation of the Commissioner's initiative regarding "Babies Sleep Safer Alone". Foster care staff participated in a statewide videoconference on the rate setting process, joined the Domestic Violence work group to support revisions to the site review protocol instrument and provided input into the OCFS modifications to the Voluntary Agency Licensing Manual.

The impact of reducing congregate care populations in the city continued in 2008, and as a result, Foster Care staff worked with six agencies in closing several congregate care facilities. These closings represented 21 facilities: four agency operated boarding homes (AOBH), six group homes, one group residence, and 10 Supervised Independent Living Programs (SILPS). While numerous facility closings were conducted during this period, Foster Care developed four new programs that included a hard-to-place mother/child group home, a state education department (SED)/LDSS joint funded exceptional children's group residence and the licensing of two new domestic violence programs.

The Foster Care/Domestic Violence team continued their extremely high caliber assessments and licensing activities of domestic violence and foster cares programs. The program staff visited 41 foster care program sites and 43 domestic violence program sites. Ten domestic violence recertification reports were finalized and issued for domestic violence programs. Four additional program assessments were conducted.

Fire Safety Representatives completed a total of 603 inspections of our domestic violence and foster care programs providing technical assistance and ensuring that programs are operating in compliance with regulations and all other applicable laws. In addition, Fire Safety and program staff also investigated two agency reports of fires, requested

Emergency Preparedness Plans from all foster care and domestic violence agencies and plans to review, provide technical assistance, and approve the plans as they are submitted.

Foster care processed several agencies' requests for intensification rates in their therapeutic foster care or hard-to-place congregate care programs and approved the conversion of a three tiered hard-to-place forty-six bed program based on the sanctuary model that will provide short term diagnostic assessments as well as longer term stays, based on ACS' Rapid Assessment Model. The reduction in capacity from 58 beds to 46 hard-to-place beds has been approved. In accordance with the new Supervised Independent Living Program (SILP) regulations, Foster Care received 12 voluntary agency applications for approval to operate SILP programs. To date, four agencies have been approved, while the remaining 8 are waiting OCFS program compliance or Home Office approval.

Staff conducted a special review of 12 voluntary agencies' staff State Central Register (SCR) and criminal background history. Compliance rate for the SCR database verification was 88% and for the criminal attestation 93% for a sample of 218 individuals out of a universe of 1099. Foster Care representatives also noted that in addition to having staff sign attestations relative to their criminal history, 10 agencies in the sample also required, as a policy, fingerprinting and criminal background checks. Letters addressing agency noncompliance were sent to agencies by January 2009. A full review was conducted of one agency with a 40% noncompliance rate. Finding of the subsequent review revealed 100% compliance with SCR clearance.

Foster Care staff met with staff from the Spring Valley Regional Office (SVRO) to begin collaborative work towards updating the shared agency agreement and improved communications between the two regional offices. The SVRO Assistant Director and NYCRO Deputy Regional Director of Foster Care will work on drafting an updated shared agency agreement.

In 2008, foster care staff attended Permanency Hearings at various Family Courts throughout the five boroughs. Foster care staff also observed one hearing at a Family Treatment Court, which focuses on working with families where the parent(s)/caretaker(s) have substance abuse issues.

In early 2009, the Foster Care/Domestic Violence team conducted the Foster Care Permanency Panel pilot that reviewed cases of children in care for four or more years. The panels were intended to identify and expedite barriers to permanency. The pilot was a collaborative effort between the voluntary agencies, OCFS adoption, preventive, B2H, and family engagement staff, and ACS' Agency Program Assistance (APA) and Office of Youth Development.

### **Training Provided in Federal Fiscal Year 2008-2009**

- Domestic Violence Training for Child Welfare Caseworkers  
This training provides caseworkers with the knowledge to identify domestic violence within their caseloads, to conduct comprehensive safety and risk assessments, and to develop service plans that promote safety, permanency, and well being.

412 trainees  
18 offerings  
36 training days

- **Domestic Violence Training for Child Protective Services Caseworkers**

This training provides CPS staff and supervisors with the knowledge and skills to identify domestic violence within their caseloads, to conduct comprehensive safety and risk assessments, and to develop intervention strategies in cases where domestic violence is present that promote child safety, permanency, and well being. Chapter 280 of the NYS Laws of 2002 requires this mandatory training for all CPS workers.

279 trainees  
30 offerings  
60 training days

### **Training Planned for 2009-10**

The training provided in the current year has not only been judged effective but also continues to reflect an ongoing need. Therefore, the Domestic Violence and Child Welfare training, as described in Goal 3 of the last APSR, will be offered in the coming year. In addition, the following course is now complete and being offered to LDSS staff and supervisors as needed.

### **Domestic Violence Training for Child Protective Services Caseworkers**

This two-day training is designed to provide a comprehensive skill base for child protective workers. Course topics will include: The Nature and Dynamics of Domestic Violence; The Impact of Domestic Violence on Children; Harm Experienced by Children, Prevention of Foster Care Placement, Legal Remedies, Cultural Factors Involved in Responding to Domestic Violence, Obstacles to Leaving, and Coordination of Services and Community Resources Including Domestic Violence Service Providers. The training will be delivered to CPS workers in LDSS offices throughout the State.

425 trainees  
28 offerings  
56 training days

### **Domestic Violence Training for Child Welfare Staff**

Provides training in Domestic Violence including the dynamics of family abuse and safety planning interventions for child welfare caseworkers and supervisors who are working with families experiencing domestic violence. Special consideration is given to preparing these caseworkers to conduct case planning to meet the needs of children.

400 trainees  
20 offerings  
40 training days

## GOAL #4

ADOLESCENTS IN FOSTER CARE AND PREGNANT, PARENTING  
AND AT-RISK TEENS IN RECEIPT OF PUBLIC ASSISTANCE  
WILL DEVELOP THE SOCIAL, EDUCATIONAL AND VOCATIONAL SKILLS  
NECESSARY FOR SELF-SUFFICIENCY

### **Objective:**

OCFS will increase the number of foster care youth and former foster care youth who will be able to make a successful transition to self-sufficiency and who will be able to develop into healthy, functional citizens with permanent attachments to supportive adults, families and communities.

### **Actions and Benchmarks**

1. Workgroup will be formed to plan for the presentation of educational and vocational forums targeted to foster care youth, service providers, foster parents and the community, locations and dates of regional forums identified, materials to be distributed developed.
- 1.1a Six regional forums will be held and materials distributed.

## **ASSESSMENT OF NEED AND CURRENT STATUS**

In 2008 the number of youth with a goal of Independent Living now called *Another Planned Living Arrangement with an adult resource* or APLA was 3,099 or 12.3% of the total number of children in care. This number continues the upward trend from the previous year.

Of the youth discharged from care during 2008, 1,617 or 11.7% were discharged to APLA. This represents an increase from the previous year of 0.5 %.

The mean length of stay at time of discharge for youth with a goal of APLA is 6.3 years.

In 2008, 32.7% of the youth leaving care after their fourteenth birthday had spent three or more consecutive years in care. Thus, for these youth, their residential care experience extends over a period of time in their development when the acquisition of self-sufficiency skills is very important.

## STATE AND LOCAL ACTIVITIES

### **Independent Living Activities**

#### *Program Access*

The Independent Living Program for foster care youth is directly administered by OCFS for the facilities it operates, each of the 58 social services districts, and the St. Regis Mohawk Tribe (hereinafter included in the reference to social services district) in New York State. Social services districts have the option of providing independent living services to foster care youth either directly or through a purchase of services contract. Each social services district's Independent Living Program must have available the array of services described below.

The Independent Living Skills program provides youth in OCFS direct care facilities, which are found in several locations throughout the State, twice-weekly life skills training sessions. In addition, youth returning to the community continue to receive community living skills training.

The Education and Training Voucher program for foster care youth and former foster care youth, including youth currently in or discharged from OCFS direct care facilities, is directly administered by the Orphan Foundation of America under contract with OCFS, with the cooperation of local social services districts.

#### *PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION*

The New York State Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS) is the State agency responsible for administering the John H. Chafee Foster Care Independence Program (CFCIP), including the newly established Federal Education and Training Voucher program carried out under this plan. OCFS has a strong commitment to supporting positive youth development and assisting youth in their transition from foster care to self-sufficiency. OCFS and its predecessor agency have been responsible for administering the federally funded Title IV-E Independent Living Program for foster care youth in New York State since the program's inception in 1987.

#### *PROGRAM DESCRIPTION*

New York State has a state-supervised, locally administered child welfare system. New York's Independent Living Program and Education and Training Voucher Program for foster care and former foster care youth is administered by the social services districts. In addition, the Office has direct service responsibilities for the Independent Living Program for youth adjudicated as juvenile delinquents receiving care in our direct care residential centers.

## **Independent Living Program**

New York State's Independent Living Program for foster care youth, which is operational on a statewide basis, is designed to help youth who are under the responsibility of social services districts or the State to develop skill in areas that promote self-sufficiency. The Independent Living Program consists of the following service components:

- A. Assessment Services and Case Planning activities include the setting of a permanency planning goal and documentation of case planning and service provision in the Uniform Case Record, self-identified goals and activities of the foster child, and at a minimum, joint discussion of the plan semi-annually. Assessment services must include educational and vocational assessments as well as documentation of Life Skills competencies as a minimum, with semi-annual assessments and modifications of the plan to reflect continued growth and learning.

Upon discharge, the social services district, in consultation with the youth, must identify any persons, services or agencies that would help the child maintain and support himself/herself and must assist the child to establish contact with such agencies, service providers, or persons by making referrals and by counseling the child about these referrals prior to discharge. In addition, each youth who will be discharged to Independent Living must receive a written 90-day notification of discharge, including the established discharge plan. The plan developed in consultation with the youth also outlines coordination of services otherwise available to the youth.

- B. Educational Services are integral parts of the Independent Living plan in helping youth receive the education, training and services necessary to obtain employment.
  1. Academic Support Services are provided to assist youth in achieving literacy and basic academic skills required for completing a high school degree program or equivalency or, where appropriate, to help youth prepare for and enter post-secondary education institutions. Academic Support Services include, but are not limited to, educational and career assessment and counseling, tutorial and mentoring services, examination preparation and resource and referral services. These services, particularly the mentoring services, should provide personal and emotional support to youth and promote interactions with dedicated adults.
  2. Vocational Training, which should be selected on the basis of assessments of interests and aptitudes, is provided, where appropriate, to those youth in foster care who will not pursue post-secondary education or who may not graduate from high school before their 20th birthday. Remedial education is required prior to the provision of the vocational training for youth with

limited academic proficiency. Vocational training includes, but is not limited to, training programs in a marketable skill or trade or formal on the job training. Vocational training may include two-year college programs with specific vocational objectives, occupational training supported by other State or federal funds or provided by organizations, which have demonstrated effectiveness in providing such training. Agencies will advocate and arrange for youth with special needs to receive specialized assessments in order to qualify them as eligible for Vocational and Educational Services for Individuals with Disabilities (VESID), mental health or other specialized services.

3. Life Skills Training offers, at a minimum, job search, career counseling, locating housing/apartments, budgeting and financial management skills, alcohol and substance abuse prevention, preventive health activities, shopping, cooking and house cleaning.

Youth should be provided with experiential learning or practice opportunities in all areas under the guidance of coaches or mentors.

- C. Independent Living Stipends are provided to foster care youth who are actively participating in the Independent Living programs and serve as an incentive to participate in the program; provide money management experience; and provide the means where savings can accumulate to assist in the transition to independent living.
- D. Aftercare Services are provided to former foster care youth between the ages of 18 and 21 years and include financial, housing, counseling, employment, education and other appropriate support and services. Aftercare services are required for any youth over the age of 16 who is discharged to Independent Living through a trial discharge period. Trial discharge is required for every child discharged to independent living. Custody of the youth is retained for at least six months and certain requirements for casework contacts and service provision apply. The trial discharge period may continue until a youth reaches the age of 21. If a youth loses housing during the period of trial discharge, the social services district must assist the youth to find other appropriate housing or replace the youth in a foster care setting, if necessary. In addition, when custody ceases, the social services district must maintain supervision of the youth until the youth is 21 years of age. Supervision includes casework contacts, referral to needed services, including income and housing services, with sufficient follow-up so that the youth has begun to receive the necessary services.
- E. Room and Board Services, as defined include, but are not necessarily limited to, money for rent, ongoing maintenance (e.g. utilities), furnishings and start-up costs generally associated with renting an apartment, (e.g. money for security deposits on apartments or a utility deposit). For a residence to be considered appropriate under room and board services, there needs to be a reasonable expectation that the

housing the youth enters will be available to the youth for at least 12 months. Appropriate residence proposed will exclude shelter for adults, shelter for families, or any other congregate living arrangement that houses more than 10 unrelated persons, with the exception of college dormitories or new, innovative models which provide intensive employment or other supportive services in residential settings. In addition, youth receiving room and board services will be required to be supervised. Supervision will include at least monthly contact with the youth if the youth has not sustained adequate housing and income continuously for six months. Additionally, face-to-face quarterly contacts would be required. Quarterly casework contacts are required to be maintained for youth who have sustained adequate housing and income continuously for the past six months.

New York State's approach to room and board services affords social services districts the flexibility to determine how much of their Independent Living federal allotment (up to thirty percent) they will spend on room and board services and whether they will provide limited housing assistance (e.g. security deposits on apartments) or a more complete package of housing services. This approach will support the development of creative strategies to assist youth in a successful transition to adulthood. Social services districts that choose to provide room and board services must establish written policies and procedures for room and board services that address:

The categories of youth that will be provided room and board services; including if room and board will be provided to the optional category of eligible youth who left care before attaining the age of 18; the maximum levels of funding for the provision of room and board assistance to former foster care youth who aged out of foster care at 18, 19 or 20, but who have not attained the age of 21; and the expenses that will be covered under the room and board program; and

The maximum dollar amount that will be paid to any youth for room and board assistance; the length of time room and board assistance can be provided to eligible youth; and any stipulations related to employment or school for the provision of room and board

In addition, New York State provides preventive housing services, including rent subsidies of up to \$300 per month, and up to three years, to youth in foster care who have a goal of independent living when the acquisition of housing is needed to complete the discharge.

In New York State, social services districts have the option of providing room and board services for youth who left foster care because they attained 18 years of age, but have not yet attained 21 years of age. These services may be provided for youth upon discharge from foster care or at a later point in time, provided the youth has not yet attained the age of 21. In addition, social services districts have the option to provide room and board services to former foster care youth who were in foster care

and eligible for Independent Living Services while in care, but who left foster care before they attained the age of 18.

## **Services to Youth**

New York State has a state-supervised, locally administered child welfare system. New York's Independent Living Program and Education and Training Voucher Program for foster care and former foster care youth is administered by the social services districts. In addition, the OCFS has direct service responsibilities for the Independent Living Program for youth adjudicated as juvenile delinquents receiving care in our direct care residential centers.

## **OCFS Direct Residential Care**

OCFS directly operates the Independent Living Skills Program for its direct care residential population as part of the Focus Intervention Process-counseling program. Youth prescriptively receive Independent Living sessions based upon their risk evaluation scores. The program is designed to help youth improve their capacity to make good decisions and develop needed skill sets.

OCFS has identified nine life skill modules as primary interventions to address recidivism risk factors for youth in OCFS direct care juvenile justice settings to better prepare youth to transition to self-sufficiency. The modules include:

### *Making Good Decisions*

- Building Self-Esteem and Awareness
- Youth and the Law
- Employment
- Community Resources
- Relationships
- Parenting

To further meet the needs of youth at risk, an Independent Living Skills Community Based Curriculum was developed for those youth who have been released from residential care and are on aftercare status. The course is outcome based, highly interactive and includes a variety of learning strategies including discussions, experimental activities, and simulations. Facilitators are encouraged to have youth practice the skills taught in a community based setting and begin to develop community resources. This curriculum is a four-month program, which corresponds to the average length of stay for OCFS placed youth who are on aftercare status.

The following is a list of the modules in this curriculum:

- Developing Community Resources and Transportation Skills
- Developing Employment and Money Management Skills
- Developing Housing/Home Management & Healthy Living Skills

## Developing Media Awareness and Skills for Parenting

### **Services and Supports for Youth in local district custody**

#### **Accomplishments for 2005-2009**

New York State's Permanency legislation, Chapter 3 of the Laws of 2005, brought about many changes to laws that will affect adolescents. The law includes a requirement to provide life skills services to foster care youth beginning at age 14, regardless of the youth's permanency goal. Implementing OCFS regulations were initially filed on an emergency basis. These regulations became effective as final regulations on December 20, 2006. With these new regulations, the discharge-planning goal of independent living has been renamed "Discharge to another planned living arrangement with a permanency resource." This permanency planning goal is to assist foster care youth in their transition to self-sufficiency by connecting the youth to an adult permanency resource, equipping the youth with life skills and, upon discharge, connecting the youth with any needed community and/or specialized services. An adult permanency resource is a caring committed adult who has been determined by a social services district to be an appropriate and acceptable resource for a youth and is committed to providing emotional support, advice and guidance to the youth and to assist the youth as the youth makes the transition from foster care to responsible adulthood.

New York State addresses the needs of youth of various ages and at various stages of achieving independence through the following activities/services such as: assessment and case planning activities, after care services, self sufficiency training and room and board services.

OCFS' Supervised Independent Living (SILP) Program assists older youth in making the transition to self-sufficiency. On February 13, 2008, new OCFS regulations were adopted governing the approval and operation of Supervised Independent Living Programs and Supervised Independent Living units. The regulatory amendments implement the legislative change enacted by Chapter 160 of the Laws of 2004. The regulations enable authorized agencies that operated supervised independent living programs approved by OCFS to certify homes or apartments as supervised independent living units. The benefit of authorized agencies operating supervised independent living programs and certifying supervised independent living units, is to facilitate expanded use of supervised independent living programs and increase the number of older youth having access to and placed in these programs. In addition, the regulatory change adds the definition of a Supervised Independent Living Unit. Supervised Independent Living Unit means a home or apartment certified in accordance with OCFS regulations by an authorized agency approved by OCFS to operate a supervised independent living program for the care of up to four youth, including their children. Each unit must be located in the community separate from any of the authorized agency's other congregate dwellings. Youth under supervision live on their own in the community in apartments or homes that more closely approximate the type of living quarters youth will be residing in after they are discharged. To participate in the program, youth must be between 16 and 21 years of age, have been

in foster care for at least 45 consecutive days immediately preceding the placement in the program or have been in the care and custody or the custody and/or guardianship of the local commissioner of the social services district in a status of trial discharge. Youth must be visited in their unit at least twice per week. The services must provide youth with opportunities to achieve positive outcomes and make successful transitions to self-sufficiency.

To support the development of these skills by youth, OCFS currently offers its Independent Living Core Curriculum, "Introduction to Self-Sufficiency," to child welfare caseworkers in voluntary authorized agencies and social services districts, working with adolescents in foster care who will be discharged to independent living. This outcome-based training program is designed to give caseworkers and caregivers the knowledge, values, and skills that they need to prepare youth to lead self-sufficient and productive lives after they leave care. The Independent Living Core Training Program was developed in partnership with the Adolescent Services Resource Network staff (formerly known as the Independent Living Training Network), a network of four regionally based training centers, which provides training and technical assistance to those preparing youth 14-21 for self-sufficiency, and an advisory committee of social services district and voluntary authorized agency caseworkers, administrators and caregivers. The Independent Living Core is interactive and focuses on building the skills needed to achieve positive outcomes for youth through the use of case scenarios, group work and role-plays. The Independent Living Core is comprised of five days of classroom training, pre-training reading, and on-the-job training activities.

In addition to the Independent Living Core Training Program, OCFS provides a series of advanced courses for caseworkers that have completed the Independent Living Core. These programs highlight skill building around issues such as education and employment, and accessing community resources. Regionally requested training and technical assistance are also given through the Adolescent Services Resource Network. The Network offers regional training conferences and an annual "Youth Speakout" that gives foster care youth the opportunity to voice their concerns and feelings about being in placement, to State and local administrators, family court staff, and of course, their peers.

OCFS, in conjunction with the Adolescent Services Resource Network, conducts ongoing needs assessments of social services district and voluntary authorized agency training needs around working with youth in care. Additionally, OCFS Regional Offices provide periodic technical assistance and monitoring of Independent Living service provision. This allows programs to be responsive to emerging needs.

Foster and adoptive parents need many of the same skills and abilities that caseworkers need to prepare adolescents to live self-sufficiently. Using the Independent Living Core concepts, OCFS has developed in-service training that meets the specific needs of this group and the training curriculum for foster/adoptive parents is now available.

Staff working directly with youth in OCFS direct care facilities receives training on how to use the Independent Living Skills Curriculum and in innovative presentation

techniques. The Annual Training Symposium provides an additional two-day formal training opportunity for all direct care Independent Living Skills providers.

A practice guidance paper has been issued to provide local social services districts and voluntary agencies, and the OCFS Division of Juvenile Justice and Opportunities for Youth with a new framework for practice with adolescents to strengthen services to adolescents and improve their achievement of permanency. A tool for monitoring adolescent services has been revised and is being used by OCFS Regional Offices to help local social services districts strengthen services to adolescents. The new practice framework recognizes for adolescents to achieve functional independence they must be provided with life skills development and a connection with at least one adult permanency resource to assist them after they are discharged from foster care. Older adolescents in foster care must continue to be provided with opportunities to identify adoption resources and obtain a permanent home. The new practice framework also recognizes that youth who are discharged from placement settings should be provided with resources to support them moving into the community.

On April 16, 2008, the Office issued 08-OCFS LCM-03 advising local social services districts of the process for applying for FFY 2008-2009 Education and Training Voucher program funds, the process of selecting program participants, and information on eligible expenditures and match requirements. The priorities for selecting eligible participants for the Education and Training Voucher program for FFY 2008-2009 were as follows: (1) Priority is given to youth over the age of 21 who had received an ETV award in 2007-08 who continue to be enrolled in and attending a post-secondary educational or vocational training program and making satisfactory progress toward completion of that program; (2) Second priority is for any other youth who received an ETV award in FFY 2007-2008; (3) Third priority is for youth who are 20 years of age and will be 21 by September 30, 2008, and who are enrolled in and attending a post-secondary or vocational training program and are making satisfactory progress toward the completion of that program. These youth would not have received an ETV award in FFY 2007-08. (4) Fourth priority is for youth who are 17, 18, 19 and 20 years of age who are enrolled in a post-secondary or vocational training program and making satisfactory progress toward the completion of that program.

A White Paper on: Educational Opportunities for Youth in Care has been developed which provides statistics, background and research information on the importance of enhancing post-secondary education and vocational training opportunities for youth in care.

#### Youth in Progress (YIP)

The OCFS' new framework for practice also supports youth involvement in improving the child welfare system. Youth In Progress, commonly referred to as YIP, is the New York State Foster Care Youth Leadership Team. YIP was established in 2003 and is comprised of teams of youth leaders, each with an adult mentor, from each of the six regional foster care youth leadership groups. Activities of the regional groups are

supported by participation of OCFS Regional Office Liaisons, the New York State Adolescent Services Resource Network and other OCFS partners. The motto of YIP is “We are Today’s Youth, Tomorrow’s Leaders.” The mission of Youth in Progress is:

“To enhance and advance the lives of today’s and tomorrow’s foster care youth by supporting their sense of self and responsibility. To do this, we pledge to educate everyone involved in the various systems. Youth In Progress members represent, to the realities of this experience.”

The Ongoing Goals of Youth In Progress are to:

- Raise public awareness of the experiences of youth in care;
- Increase youth involvement in all systems that touch their lives;
- Empower youth through the development of leadership and decision-making skills;
- Improve policies and practices to assist youth transition out of foster care; and
- Increase awareness, availability, and participation in services provided to youth transitioning out of care.

From 2003 to the present, YIP has achieved an impressive number of results including:

- co-writing a handbook for youth in foster care;
- holding regional speak-outs;
- participating in the filming of a video to accompany the handbook;
- enacting regional distribution plans for the handbook;
- producing a video on clothing;
- developing a proposal on clothing in partnership with OCFS which was incorporated into an Informational Letter issued by OCFS to social services districts and authorized voluntary agencies on meeting the clothing needs of foster care youth ages 12 through 20 years of age;
- Producing a video to address issues related to the stereotyping of youth in foster care;
- Co-writing a pamphlet on law guardians for youth in foster care;
- Continuing to meet with state legislators and are participating in local, statewide and national/events featuring Youth Voice.
- Becoming trained and certified by Foster Club, a national organization, to teach other youth about the importance of permanency for older youth in foster care. This training is being used in New York State to train service providers as well as youth.

In addition, each year Youth In Progress in partnership with OCFS, produce four informational resource guides for youth in care. To date, we have developed pamphlets on: clothing allowances; privacy issues for all youth in care; sibling placement and pregnancy and parenting. Youth In Progress participates on the OCFS Adolescent Services and Outcomes Strategy Workgroup which meets on a bi-monthly basis to address the needs and challenges of youth in care and former foster youth. Youth In Progress is also represented on the Commissioner’s Youth Advisory Board which meets on a quarterly basis with OCFS Commissioner Carrion.

The major efforts in the coming year will be geared to enhancing the implementation of the Chafee Foster Care Independence Act of 1999 (CFCIP), including the Chafee Education and Training Voucher Program. OCFS will continue implementing the new policy framework through training and monitoring service provision to adolescents in foster care in order to strengthen and enhance positive outcomes for youth in care.

OCFS will be instituting a new, evidenced-based, strength-based Life Skills Training program throughout its direct care system as a key core component of the OCFS residential treatment program. Additional life skills interventions will be identified and prescriptively provided for youth in OCFS direct care programs from the newly developed "Counselor's Toolbox".

OCFS will continue to expand the number of independent living program sites serving youth in its custody and on aftercare status. Those youth who are in residential placement in OCFS operated facilities receive independent living skills as part of the Focus Intervention Process. This process is part of the OCFS counseling program, which addresses those risk factors that may lead youth to recidivate.

### **NYCRO - Adolescent and Youth Services**

Foster care participated in all the Adolescent work group meetings and provided input to modify and improve the Transitional Planning draft instrument and Medicaid letters required under the Federal Public Law 110-351, Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act of 2008. Foster care staff provided technical assistance and attended Summer Youth Employment registration and program activities to improve youth participation in the summer jobs program furthering the youth's job skills and work experience.

Youth in Progress (YIP) was established through the development of a partnership between OCFS, CWCS and Adolescent Services Resource Network (ASRN). Commissioner Carrion agreed to partner and support youth in our foster care programs by meeting with youth during speak-outs and on a quarterly basis with the expectation that with our support we will achieve better outcomes for youth in care. Foster Care is a member of the Adolescent workgroup actively partners with the ASRN on YIP efforts and activities. Outcomes: two summer interns will be assigned to respective offices, ASRN as a training resource, and Hunter ASRN library. OCFS will support the June 12, 2009 Educational Forum to be held at Hunter College, a mass mailing of YIP/ASRN/ETV/B2H information will be sent to foster care agencies by the YIP liaison, and two candidates were interviewed for ASRN summer interns.

## **OCFS Evaluation and Research Pertaining to GOAL #4**

### **Long Term Consequences of Delinquency: Child Maltreatment & Crime in Early Adulthood Study:**

In 2006, the National Institute of Justice awarded OCFS nearly \$300,000 to conduct a study that examines the percentage and characteristics of juvenile delinquents released from OCFS facilities who continue to engage in antisocial behavior, such as violent crime and child maltreatment, in early adulthood. The study follows a sample of 1000 youth who were released from OCFS facilities in the early 1990s and documents their involvement within the adult criminal justice and child welfare systems between the ages of 16 to 28.

The study makes several notable contributions to the juvenile justice and child welfare fields. First, the study examines long-term outcomes for delinquent girls, a growing but historically understudied segment of the juvenile justice population. Second, the study provides an unprecedented look at the long-term functioning of former OCFS youth, tracking youth over a 12-year period, from age 16 to age 28. Research documenting the number and type of juvenile delinquents who become abusive/neglectful caregivers is particularly lacking, even though available research suggests that delinquents, especially females, may be at higher risk for engaging in family violence. Third, the study examines recidivism within a developmental framework. Rather than treating all rearrested girls as a single, uniform group, the study uses a technique known as trajectory analysis to identify groups of youth whose patterns of early adult offending are similar in duration, timing, and frequency.

The study was completed in March 2009 and a final report was submitted to the National Institute of Justice. The citation for the report is: Colman, R.A., Kim, D., Mitchell-Herzfeld, S., Shady, T. (2009). *Long-Term Consequences of Delinquency: Child Maltreatment and Crime in Early Adulthood*. National Institute of Justice, NCJ Grant Report 226577 (available at <http://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/nij/grants/226577.pdf>). The study found that the percentage of youth who reoffended at least once during early adulthood was high. Eighty-nine percent of the boys and 81% of the girls were rearrested by age 28, and 83% of the boys and 69% of the girls were reconvicted. However, despite this high recidivism rate, trajectory analysis revealed that a sizable percentage of youth were never or only rarely arrested as an adult (32% of the girls and 22% of the boys). The analysis also showed that there were high offending groups that were responsible for a disproportionate number of adult arrests in the sample: 41% of the boys were responsible for 67% of the arrests in the male sample, and just 15% of the girls racked up almost half of the arrests in the female sample. Youth in the high-offending groups were more likely than their less frequently offending peers to have experienced childhood maltreatment and out-of-home placement and to come from homes characterized by some type of family dysfunction, such as parental substance abuse and family criminality. With respect to perpetration of child abuse and neglect, the study revealed that 17% of the boys and an astounding 64% of the girls were reported for having abused or neglected a child, and 9% of the boys and 42% of the girls were named as confirmed perpetrators of child

maltreatment. As with adult criminality, family factors were found to play an influential role in determining delinquents' level of perpetration of child maltreatment as adults.

Based on these findings, the study authors recommended that programs serving juvenile delinquents adopt a therapeutic, trauma-sensitive, and family-centered approach—lending support to the juvenile justice reform initiatives that OCFS has begun to implement. Specific recommendations include developing intake assessments that screen for indicators of child maltreatment, gathering information on family relationships and the risk status of key family members, and incorporating treatment modalities designed to address childhood trauma, the family system, and caregivers' maladaptive behaviors. The researchers also recommended that child abuse prevention programs, such as family planning, parenting education, etc. be routinely offered to delinquent youth in residential care.

### **Training Provided in Federal Fiscal Year 2008-09**

- Adolescent Services Resource Network for Training and Technical Assistance

This network of four regionally based training provides training and technical assistance to caseworkers, voluntary agency staff, foster parents and DJJOY staff who work with all youth ages 14-21 preparing them for self-sufficiency. A variety of specialized programs address regional needs around independent living services/skills. This includes the outcome based Adolescent Services Core Training “Introduction to Self Sufficiency” and the Adolescent Services “Toolbox” Skills Development Training that is delivered statewide. Youth leadership will be emphasized through youth forums and speak outs statewide. Additionally, supportive informational and training materials, curricula, videos, etc. are maintained in a central location to be loaned to persons working with youth and their caregivers. The New York State Adolescent Services Resources Network administers the Regional and Statewide Youth Advisory Leadership Team called “Youth in Progress” (YIP). YIP consists of a team of foster care youth, including youth in OCFS facilities who represent each of the six regions in New York State. SUNY Albany Professional Development Program coordinates this group.

918 training days

#### Adolescent Services Resource Network

The member contractors are SUC Buffalo, SUNY Albany, SUNY Stony Brook and CUNY Hunter College.

The Adolescent Services Resource Network provides resource materials, curricula and individualized training and consultation to support preparation of foster care youth for discharge and independent living. Each regional provider offers services in all competency areas of independent living services/skills. They assist workers with the skills needed to engage and motivate youth through the developmental steps required to

achieve self-sufficiency in the community. Services are provided through training, educational forums, technical assistance, materials distribution, newsletters, curriculum seminars, practicums, etc. The network provides an integrated delivery of coordinated services.

The outcome-based Adolescent Services Core Training called “Introduction to Self Sufficiency” is offered throughout the State. This outcome-based Core Curriculum will give caseworkers the knowledge, skills, and value base they need to prepare youth to achieve self-sufficiency. Some of the focus includes: using interpersonal helping skills with adolescents; special needs of youth leaving care; assessment and case planning; developing and enhancing supportive relationships; and identifying and building community supports. The Adolescent Services “Toolbox” training gives caseworkers, foster parents and DJJOY staff the tools needed to assist youth in developing competencies needed for transition to adulthood.

The statewide youth advisory group, Youth in Progress formed in August 2003, addresses and provides input into improving the CW and DJJOY systems. This group is composed of foster care adolescents and their adult mentors, including youth in OCFS facilities and representing each of the six regions in New York State. YIP focuses on making targeted improvements in the quality of foster care services and improving positive outcomes for children and families. YIP training activities for 2008 focused on strengthening the practice around permanency for youth in care. YIP youth continue to be trained by Foster Club which is part of the All American Program, to deliver the course “Getting Solid” which talks about permanency. YIP youth continue to serve as members of the CFSR PIP Adolescent Strategy Workgroup.

#### **Training Plans for 2010-2014:**

To offer outcome based Core Adolescent Services Core “Introduction to Self-Sufficiency” and Adolescent Services “Toolbox” Training, and customized regionally specific training and technical assistance in compliance with 1999 Chafee Legislation and to support the efforts of social services district and voluntary agency caseworkers, supervisors, foster parents, and Title IV-E funded OCFS facility staff to help foster care youth transition from care to self-sufficiency.

OCFS will continue to support the regional and statewide Youth Advisory Leadership Team, “Youth in Progress” (YIP) which consists of a team of foster care youth, including youth in OCFS facilities who represent each of the six regions in New York State. OCFS will accomplish this mission by listening to youth in care and by offering them guidance that will allow them to achieve success in their lives and to realize their full potential.

Hunter College maintains the statewide Adolescent Services Network Library consisting of nearly 4,000 items. Among them are more than 1,000 videos on various topics and numerous books, teaching games, curricula and a variety of other resource materials used in hands-on teaching of life skills to youth. Hunter also hosts the Adolescent Services

Network Website and the statewide Foster Care Youth Advisory Team “YIP” website presenting current information and issues as well as links to the websites of the other members. It is anticipated that this function will continue to increase and continue to:

Assess regional needs around adolescent services and program development.

Support local adolescent services programs through technical assistance and individualized agency assessment.

Each Network member presents an annual youth speak out and leadership development event that gives youth the opportunity to inform agency and OCFS and LDSS administrators, judges and elected officials of issues of youth in care.

The training programs that focus on adolescent issues support state and federal legislation including ASFA and the 1999 Chafee Foster Care Independence Act. These programs continue to reflect an ongoing need. Therefore, all of those training programs, as described in Goal 4 of the CFSP, will be offered in the coming year.

- Adolescent Services Core Training and Advanced Adolescent Services Courses

Designed for child welfare caseworkers in social services districts, voluntary agencies and foster parents working with adolescents in foster care and DJJOY staff to help them develop life skills needed to work toward self-sufficiency. This includes a competency-based, four-day program called “Introduction to Self Sufficiency” and “Adolescent Services Tool box” a two-day Course to further assist youth to develop competencies needed for self sufficiency. Support for regional youth speak outs and activities, Youth In Progress (YIP) youth leadership training, district/agency specific training and technical assistance will also be offered to each district and facility on how to improve their independent living programs. A library and website of materials to support training and youth development is maintained. Special events/workshops will be held statewide.

**GOAL #5**  
**NATIVE AMERICAN FAMILIES, INCLUDING NUCLEAR, EXTENDED**  
**AND ADOPTIVE FAMILIES WILL BE STRENGTHENED AND SUPPORTED**  
**IN RAISING AND NURTURING THEIR CHILDREN; IN MAINTAINING THEIR**  
**CHILDREN'S CONNECTIONS TO THEIR TRIBAL HERITAGE;**  
**AND IN PLANNING FOR THEIR CHILDREN'S FUTURE**

**ASSESSMENT OF NEED AND CURRENT STATUS**

The 60 Native American children in out of home placement on December 31, 2008 lived in ten upstate counties plus NYC and the St. Regis Mohawk Tribe Reservation, with the majority of those children being located as follows: 28.4% in Erie/Niagara counties; 30% in New York City; 11.6 % in St. Regis Mohawk Tribe Reservation; 8.31% in Cattaraugus County and .066% Onondaga County. This number of Native American children represents .23 % of the total foster care population.

There were fourteen Native American children with a goal of adoption in foster care on December 31, 2008. Seven had a goal of adoption but were not freed for an average of 3.7 months. Five were freed for adoption but were not yet placed in an adoptive home for an average of 18.0 months. On December 31, 2008, there were two Native American children who were placed in an adoptive home for an average of 4.4 months while waiting to be adopted.

OCFS is supporting this goal by involving tribal representatives in the Agency/Court Collaboration meetings and inclusion in other OCFS strategies such as Family Connections, which engages extended family to provide sustainable meaningful connections and cultural relevance. The St. Regis Mohawk Tribe has designated a representative for the OCFS Court Collaboration committee and has accepted training on the Family Assessment Response (FAR) model. In 2008, the Seneca Nation of Indians has increased their work with tribal families to include Family Engagement through Family Meetings. During 2008, 37 Native American children entered foster care and 29 Native American children were discharged from foster care. Of the 39 children in foster boarding homes or adoptive homes, 10 (25.7%) were in foster families whose ethnicity was also Native American.

All of the New York State Tribe's have been invited to participate in CORE caseworker training and other training opportunities to strengthen their skills in the child welfare field. OCFS also continues to build strong networking activities among tribal staff through quarterly stakeholder meetings sponsored by the Native American Services Unit.

## 2005-2009 PERFORMANCE TARGETS

### Indian Child Welfare

- Increase to 50% the number of Native American children who are placed in foster care families of the same ethnicity over a five year period.

Baseline: The number of Native American children who are placed in foster boarding homes or adoptive homes of Native American ethnicity in 2003.

2003: 23 Native American children of the 77 in placement (29.9%)

#### Current Data:

2004: 26 Native American children of the 75 in placement (34.6%)

2005: 36 Native American children of the 80 in placement (45%)

2006: 34 Native American children of the 65 in placement (52.3%)

2007: 45 Native American children of the 74 in placement (60%)

2008: 29 Native American children of the 60 in placement (48.3%)

#### Projected Targets:

2009: not below 50% \*

\*It is anticipated that the identification of Native American children will continue to increase based on extensive ICWA trainings from 2006-2008. It is not known if the number of licensed Native American Foster Homes will meet such increase of identified Native American children. Improved preventive efforts and kinship placements may factor into the performance targets.

OCFS reviewed this data by county in year one. Interim benchmarks are incremental: year two - 40%; year three -43%; year four -47%; and year five -50%.

Placement of Native American children and youth in Native American homes and programs whenever possible remains a state policy. Some of the data reported in this target comes directly from the field including contacts with Native American services agencies in New York State. As demonstrated by the data, we have been successful in our efforts to support our goal. The difference in current year data reflects more children properly identified as Native American, but a drop in placement resources that match the child's tribal heritage. Of the 59 Native American youth, 29 were matched with placements to support their tribal heritage. Ten of the 29 were placed in a Tribal Group Home, which met their higher level of need.

Many Native American children are not placed in Native American homes because of the type of placement required. These placements are often for youth and children with special needs. Some placements in non-Native homes have been reviewed by either tribal staff or Native American services agencies, which have approved the placements.

These placements, as well as “relative or kinship placements” are included in the data above. Three placements in non-Native Foster Care were a direct result of the geographic location to the birth mother, who supported non-Native Foster Care to enable her to maintain contact with her children. It was also found that Native American Service Providers were at 100% compliance in 2008 in placing Native American children in Native American placements (21/21). Tribal consultation **meetings held in 2008 and 2009 provided OCFS with input from Tribal leaders and their delegates on what we have done to strengthen this goal. The specific training activities and quarterly stakeholder meetings have also strengthened the ability to serve tribal families under ICWA**

Data Source to measure progress for the performance target above: Data Warehouse and OCFS Native American Services Unit\*

### **State/Tribal Relationship**

The St. Regis Mohawk entered into a State/Tribal Agreement with the predecessor of OCFS in August 1993 that was effective April 1, 1994. That Agreement contained two specific components: legal terms and conditions; and a service plan for the provision of foster care, preventive services and adoption services. The plan contained in the Agreement outlines strategies to: reduce the need for foster care through the of intensive preventive services; increase recruitment and certification of foster homes on the Reservation; and promote the provision of foster care services in a way that maintains cultural and Tribal values and permit the earliest return of the child to natural family. Children freed for adoption will be placed in adoptive homes that will meet their personal and cultural needs. The delivery of child and adult protective services is addressed through an amendment to the State/Tribal Agreement and the tribe’s updated services plan that became effective in April 2005. On-going meetings between the St. Regis Mohawk Tribe and OCFS to improve and expand services took place throughout 2001-2008. The result of the earlier meetings included a cooperative agreement to license the Akwesasne Youth Group Home in March 2001.

The Seneca Nation of Indians and their various administrations have expressed an interest in improving their working relationship with local districts. OCFS Native American Services Unit has been involved in an ongoing dialogue regarding such a relationship. Throughout 2001-2002 OCFS arranged for several training events to meet the needs identified by Seneca Nation. In 2002, the Seneca Nation developed and endorsed a tribal protocol for child protective services. Meetings between OCFS, local districts and Seneca Nation continue to refine this protocol.

Although the Oneida Indian Nation no longer accepts federal Indian Child Welfare funding, it staffs a Family Services Program and has continued to work closely with Native American Services on ICWA issues and training. OCFS responded to training needs identified by Oneida Nation. OCFS provided on-site Mandated Reporter training for Oneida Nation staff in December 2006.

The Tuscarora Nation, Tonawanda Senecas, and the Onondaga Nation do not operate ICWA programs on their reservations or accept federal funds.

The Long Island Tribes, the Shinnecock Tribe and the Unkechaug Nation, do not receive funds for and do not operate programs for other reasons, including a lack of sufficient numbers on the Reservations to qualify for funding.

The interactions that take place through Native American Services (NAS) are complemented and strengthened by ongoing interactions between the social services districts, OCFS and those who provide services to Native Americans.

In December 2004, an ICWA desk aid was developed for use by local districts and voluntary agencies. Copies were distributed to the Indian Nations and OCFS Regional Offices in January 2005. An update to include information on use of a Qualified Expert Witness was added to the desk aid in December 2005. The new desk aids were distributed to the local districts through 06-OCFS-INF-07 letter in October 2006 along with an updated list of tribal contacts.

In November 2006, OCFS responded to a variety of training needs identified by tribal representatives by offering a statewide Indian Child Welfare Conference. The first conference in 12 years drew more than 200 participants from Tribes and social service organizations from throughout the state. The 3-day conference provided a well-received forum to discuss best practices for ICWA compliance.

After a year of collaboration OCFS completed an IWCA DVD training tool in December 2006. The DVD titled “Indian Child Welfare Act: What Caseworkers Need To Know”, includes interviews with Tribal representatives including Chiefs, Clan Mothers, judges, attorneys, ICWA Directors and caseworkers. The DVD was developed with tremendous support from and collaboration with tribal stakeholders. The training tool was introduced to the local districts and voluntary agencies through 16 training events in 2007. At the request of ACF, a copy of this DVD has been forwarded to Region II offices.

To continue efforts to improve child welfare services in Native American families, additional training events were held to train local districts and voluntary agency staff on ICWA compliance issues throughout 2008-09. These initiatives were expanded to include Qualified Indian Expert Witness training to Tribal caseworkers.

#### Description of Native American Population in New York State

The Native American population in New York State resides in every county across the State in urban and rural areas, with concentrations near urban areas and near Reservations. Approximately ten per cent of the Native American population resides on Reservations. The Urban Centers are located in New York City, Buffalo and Niagara Falls, Syracuse and Rochester. Available data also reports that over 40% of the Native Americans living in New York State resides in the five boroughs of New York City.

The Native Americans who live outside of the Reservations seek services and social interaction at the Urban Centers or with other Indian Nations, if they are not located in close proximity to their own Tribe.

Native American Population in New York State as Reported by the Indian Nations/Tribes

Indian Nation	Reservation	Enrollment	Resident Population
Iroquois:			
Cayuga Nation of Indians	No reservation	491	0
Oneida Indian Nation	Oneida Nation Territory	1,000	74
Onondaga Nation	Onondaga Reservation	1,959	900
St. Regis Mohawk Tribe	St. Regis Mohawk	12,928	12,928
Seneca Nation of Indians	Total Tribal Enrollment	7,731	
	Allegany Reservation		1,378
	Cattaraugus Reservation		2,540
	Other		3,813
Tonawanda Band of Senecas	Tonawanda Reservation	1,100	600
Tuscarora Nation	Tuscarora Reservation	1,200	1,500
Algonquin:			
Shinnecock Tribe	Shinnecock Reservation	250	500
Unkechaug Nation	Poospatuck Reservation	128	250

St. Regis Mohawk Tribe

The St. Regis Mohawk territory, known as Akwesasne, "Land Where the Partridge Drums", is located in northern New York State and crosses the international border and the St. Lawrence River, extending into Canada. The St. Regis Mohawk Tribal Council is the duly elected and recognized government of the Mohawk people. The Tribe provides comprehensive services to the community through four basic divisions: Education, Environment, Health and Human Services, Planning and Economic Development.

Education programs include support for students enrolled in the public schools to encourage their continuation, Head Start, GED programs, higher education and vocational training, including college extension services and Job Training Partnership Act Program services. Health and Human Services include a medical clinic, opened in 1991 and serving more than 7,000 Mohawks, a Dental Clinic, WIC, alcohol/chemical dependency program, Teen/Women Health program, nutrition services and mental health services, and a program to empower young mothers. Human Services staff address the

needs of the children, senior citizens, families and disabled residents in the community while maintaining the integrity of the Mohawk family unit. Indian Child Welfare Act services provide support services for families at risk of dissolution, providing a vital link to families while insuring the maintenance of cultural values. The social services program provides mandated preventive, foster care, adoption, child protective services and adult protective services on the Reservation through the State/Tribal Agreement with OCFS. A Family Support program provides respite services for families of the developmentally disabled and supportive apartments provide services to allow developmentally disabled residents to transition from home to a sheltered, independent environment. OCFS has licensed a tribally operated Youth Group Home to serve 12 at-risk Native American youth.

### Seneca Nation

The Seneca Nation operates with an elected form of government. Elections for Tribal Council members and officers including President, Treasurer and Tribal Clerk occur every two years. The Seneca's judicial elections for Surrogate Judges, Peacemakers, and a Court of Appeals take place every 2 years opposite the general elections. Most judges serve four-year terms. The Tribal Council administers all Tribal programs on both the Cattaraugus and Allegany Reservations.

The Indian Health Services provides state-of-the-art health clinics on both Reservations. In addition, mental health, alcohol and substance abuse, domestic violence, job training, Head Start and day care programs, Indian education, housing, and a senior nutrition program are provided through staff that spends time alternating between the Cattaraugus and Allegany Reservations.

In addition to the above, the following Indian Nations or Indian organizations provide limited Indian Child Welfare services.

### Cayuga Nation

The Cayuga Nation operates a traditional form of government and provides limited ICWA services. The Tribe receives official tribal notification and attends court proceedings involving minor Cayuga children entering foster care or being freed for adoption. OCFS Native American Services unit also maintains trust accounts for minor Cayuga children and distributes tribal annuity payments three times a year.

### **Summary of Governmental Structures**

The Indian Nations in New York State have adopted a number of different forms of governmental and administrative structures. There is interaction and consultation between these structures in the decision making process which also includes the Clan Mothers. This respect and inclusiveness of differences within the communities has an impact on the decision-making process.

Indian Nation/ Tribe	Governing Structure	Administrative
Cayuga Nation of Indians	Hereditary Chiefs	Council of Chiefs One Selected as Chairperson
Oneida Indian Nation	Tribal Appointment	Representative Acts as CEO
Onondaga Nation	Hereditary Chiefs	Council of Chiefs One Selected as Chairperson
St. Regis Mohawk Tribe	Tribal Elections/Chiefs	Chiefs Council
Seneca Nation of Indians	Elections/ Tribal Council	Tribal Council with President
Tonawanda Band of Senecas	Hereditary Chiefs	Council of Chiefs One Selected as Chairperson
Tuscarora Nation	Hereditary Chiefs	Council of Chiefs One Selected as Chairperson
Shinnecock Tribe	Tribal Elections	Trustees Serve as President, Secretary and Treasurer
Unkechaug Nation	Tribal Elections/Trustee	Trustees Elected to 1, 2, 3 year terms

ICWA Funding:

Three of the Indian Nations receive ICWA funds to provide Indian Child Welfare Services. The following outlines the Indian Nations/Reservations that operate ICWA programs and the counties that are included in their service area.

Indian Nation/Reservation	County Service Area
St. Regis Mohawk Tribe/ St. Regis Mohawk Reservation	Franklin, St. Lawrence counties primarily, but also statewide for Mohawk children
Seneca Nation of Indians/ Allegany Reservation Cattaraugus Reservation	Erie, Cattaraugus and Chautauqua counties
Cayuga Nation are served through administrative staff; there is no Reservation	Cayuga members only, statewide,
Oneida Indian Nation,* Oneida Nation Territory	Oneida members only, Oneida, Onondaga, Herkimer, Chenango, Madison and Cortland

\*The Oneida Indian Nation declined their federal share of BIA/ICWA funding beginning federal fiscal year 1999, but still operates a Family Services program with Tribal revenues.

Urban Indian Centers

Local non-profit Urban Centers provide a wide range of programs, including job training, alcohol and substance abuse and services for the developmentally disabled. The New York City Urban Center programs include a Youth Council and Health Services. The Buffalo/Niagara Falls Urban Centers provides ICWA services including preventive counseling, foster care recruitment and certification, intervention, AIDS training and outreach, a program for seniors, youth and cultural programs.

Since 1997, the Urban Indian Centers do not receive federal Indian Child Welfare funding, but do provide services to the following service areas:

New York City	Queens, Bronx, Brooklyn, Manhattan, Staten Island, Nassau, Suffolk, Putnam, Westchester and Rockland counties.
Buffalo/Niagara Falls	Niagara, Erie counties (off-reservation)
Rochester	Orleans, Genesee, Wyoming, Livingston counties
Syracuse	Onondaga, Madison Counties.

The Buffalo Urban Center provides ICWA services including preventive counseling, foster care recruitment and certification, and intervention through a purchase of services contract with the local district.

### **Accomplishments for 2005-2009**

Throughout 2008-2009, the Native American Affairs Specialist met on a formal basis with various Tribal Leaders across New York. A formal protocol for regular and on-going dialogue and consultation with Tribal Leaders was established for 2007-2008. Two formal Tribal Consultation meetings were held in June 2008 and October 2008 with OCFS CWCS Deputy Commissioner.

Regular consultation with the Indian Nations regarding child welfare issues has occurred primarily at the service provider level or as it relates to specific issues and/or children and families. The NAS Specialist and OCFS Buffalo Regional Office staff continued facilitation of a multi-disciplinary workgroup with the Seneca Nation of Indians from 2001-2008, which included Child Protection workers from Erie, Cattaraugus and Chautauqua County. This resulted in the first written tribal protocol for CPS investigations for Seneca Nation families. The tribal protocol was presented to each county's Director of Services and continues in use.

Site visits are conducted to Indian Reservations in New York by the Native American Affairs Specialist. The primary purpose of the site visits was to assess the needs of the Indian Nation and to address concerns related to the delivery of child welfare services. As a result of the site visits, regular follow up meetings are held at the St. Regis Mohawk and Seneca Nation reservations.

The NAS Specialist continues to hold regular Indian Child Welfare meetings throughout New York State with tribal and social services staff members. The NAS Specialist has agreed to continue to chair the meetings of the well-formed network known as the Native American Family Services Commission. The meetings feature guest speakers from OCFS and other agencies that provide information on how to improve services to Indian children and families.

In 2008, we supported Indian Child Welfare compliance through Qualified Indian Expert Witness trainings offered at Seneca Nation on Sept. 3<sup>rd</sup>, Buffalo Regional Office on Nov. 17-18<sup>th</sup> and at the St. Regis Mohawk Tribe on November 24<sup>th</sup>.

OCFS also sponsored 13 tribal representatives to attend the Adult Abuse Training Institute in Albany on Sept. 24<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> to provide information to strengthen Tribal Adult Protection programs.

NAS offered technical assistance and compliance support to 187 ICWA cases identified by the local districts, voluntary agencies and Tribal staff in 2008.

#### OCFS Tribal Consultation

The Deputy Commissioner of Child Welfare & Community Services, the Native American Affairs Specialist and the Syracuse Regional Director participated in two Tribal Consultation Meetings with Tribal Leaders and delegates in 2008 and 2009. These meetings provided an opportunity for OCFS to present updates on initiatives for ICWA compliance. The Tribal Consultation forum allowed OCFS to engage the state's Indian Nations/Tribes in the Family Services Review (CFSR) and the development of the CFSP Plan. The meetings provided Deputy Commissioner Laura Velez the opportunity to meet with various Tribal representatives to discuss OCFS priorities and learn about specific needs of some Indian Nations. It was agreed to continue the meetings in 2009 and to schedule the April 2009 meeting in Home office to allow for a tour of the State Central Register for Tribal officials. The October 2009 meeting is scheduled to take place at the St. Regis Mohawk reservation to allow OCFS officials an opportunity to tour the community.

Native American Services also continued hosting quarterly meetings of the Native American Family Services Commission, which provides consultation with tribal stakeholders in both urban and reservation areas throughout NYS. These meetings helped to develop the training initiatives, provide input into the CFSP Title IV-B plan and to strengthen service delivery to Native American children and families. These meetings have also produced tribal volunteers to serve on the Agency/ Court Collaboration committee and support the OCFS Court Collaboration strategy. All planning for training initiatives, conferences and tribal meetings have been initiated through the dialogue with these tribal stakeholders. The members have contributed to the Foster Care recruitment and retention toolkit under development by the CWLA. The meetings have produced action steps for OCFS, including the development of Qualified

Indian Expert Witnesses and Positive Indian Parenting trainers. The meetings have also supported OCFS strategies for Engaging Extended Family and Family Engagement through Family Meetings.

With the support of the Center for Development and Human Services (SUCB), Native American Services was able to conduct five meetings with the Native American Family Services Commission in March, June, September, and November 2008 and March 2009. The Commission was expanded to include more tribal caseworkers and administrators from around the state, as well as local districts and voluntary agencies. The quarterly meetings provide an excellent forum to introduce other OCFS supported initiatives such as Protective Services for Adults, to Tribal and agency staff who need program support to serve their respective Tribal and Urban Indian communities. Other guest speakers this year were representatives from OASAS, Healthy Families New York, OCFS Domestic Violence Unit, National Indian Child Welfare Association and Casey Family Program Consultant Kathy Deserly.

The November meeting was scheduled over two days to allow attendees to learn more about the passage of the Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act of 2008 (PL 110-351) federal legislation and Foster Care recruitment and retention.

#### Tribal Training Initiatives

There were several ICWA training events sponsored or supported by OCFS beginning in late 2006 and continuing through 2009; the foremost being the statewide ICWA Conference in November 2006. The first statewide conference in 12 years brought together over 200 participants from Indian Nations, local districts and voluntary agencies for three days of plenary and workshop sessions to improve ICWA compliance in New York. The conference evaluation were extremely positive and indicated that this event was an overall success.

OCFS also supported a training request on behalf of the Tuscarora Nation to host a training event entitled "Positive Indian Parenting" in May 2007. Tribal and local district staff was able to participate in a 3-day Training of Trainers to utilize Indian Parenting curriculums developed by the National Indian Child Welfare Association.

Native American Services presented 16 Regional Indian Child Welfare training to child welfare workers in 2007, three of which trained tribal staff. The OCFS Native American Specialist also presented training on the ICWA DVD and its impact on ICWA compliance in New York State to audiences at the Annual National Indian Child Welfare Association Conference in April 2007, the United South and Eastern Tribes, Inc. Annual Conference in June 2007 and the Northwest Bureau of Indian Affairs Conference in August 2007.

OCFS was able to support the sponsorship of thirteen tribal representatives at the 2007 NYS Adult Abuse Training Institute last October. This is the fifth year of participation of tribal staff statewide in our effort to support more tribally based adult abuse prevention efforts.

The Native American Affairs Specialist also presented cultural competency training to the New York State OCA Judicial ICWA Conference in Buffalo in November 2007 and an overview of working with Native American families to OCFS Home Office staff also in November 2007.

### Indian Child Welfare Training Resources

- In November 2007, A Caseworker Guide was completed to accompany the ICWA DVD training tool. The two training resources were combined into an interactive training tool in March 2008. The web-based training will be made available to local districts, voluntary agencies and tribal organizations this year.
- In November 2006, OCFS completed the DVD entitled “Indian Child Welfare Act: What Caseworkers Need To Know”. The DVD features interviews with tribal experts including the author of the ICWA Handbook, Tribal Judge BJ Jones. The DVD includes six chapters providing a historical view of ICWA as well as the process to identify Native American children and provide proper tribal notification. The DVD also provides relevant information on active efforts and tribal court proceedings. The DVD was premiered at the Statewide ICWA Conference. A training guide to accompany the ICWA DVD was completed in December 2006, and was used to train local district and voluntary agency Case Supervisors. There was 16 Regional “Train the Trainers” sessions in 2007 to get the training tool to the front line of caseworkers.
- OCFS publication #4757 (Guide To Compliance with the Federal Indian Child Welfare Act in New York State) continued to be distributed to local districts and voluntary agencies in 2007. The guide was posted on the OCFS Native American Services website.
- The Proud Heritage booklet (OCFS publication #4629) is posted on the OCFS Native American Services website and continues to be distributed at various forums, local district activities and tribal meetings.

### Regional Office of Practice Improvement (ROPI) Teams Established

The Buffalo ROPI staff continued to work closely with Native American Services staff throughout 2008-09. Meetings of the Seneca Nation of Indians multi-disciplinary workgroup continued throughout 2007. This provided an opportunity for Buffalo Regional Office and Native American Services to assess how well the CPS Tribal protocol is working. The multi-disciplinary work group included representatives from Erie, Cattaraugus and Chautauqua Counties and Seneca Nation staff.

Two on-site training events were held at Seneca Nation in early 2008 to promote collaboration and cross training for tribal staff. The first session provided an overview of the OCFS – Seneca Nation multi-disciplinary workgroups accomplishments and updates to NYS regulations on permanency. The second session held in March 2008 focused on ICWA specific training and provisions that must be adhered to by New York State. Both sessions included tribal participants representing the Child & Family Services staff, tribal law enforcement and tribal court personnel. Local district staff was also invited to participate.

Albany ROPI staff and Native American Services continued meetings and site visits to the St. Regis Mohawk Tribe to address on-going child welfare program operational needs. OCFS Native American Services also distributes an electronic Tribal Newsletter to the tribes as well. This newsletter highlights state and federal legislation, funding opportunities, training, and meeting and consultation dates. (See summer newsletter in appendix).

Principles of ICWA will provide focus for any actions:

- Indian parents and tribes have the right to notice of and to intervene in state proceedings involving Indian children;
- special preference for placement of Indian children with (1) member of child's extended family, (2) other members of the child's tribe, or (3) other Indian families;
- active efforts to prevent breakup of the Indian family including use of tribal community services and culturally appropriate programs; and
- use of tribal courts in child welfare matters, tribal rights to intervene in state proceedings, or to transfer the proceedings to the jurisdiction of the tribe.

In 2008, a national study of ways to recruit/retain Native American Families was conducted and is now being incorporated in work to attract Indian Foster/Adoptive parents for available Native children.

To continue efforts to improve child welfare services for Native American families, a Caseworker Guide will be made available through an on-line training site accessible to local district and voluntary agency staff in 2008. On-going ICWA training will also be planned with a concentration in the New York City area in 2008-09.

Throughout 2008-2009, the Native American Affairs Specialist will meet on a formal basis with various Tribal Leaders across New York. A formal protocol for regular and on-going dialogue and consultation with Tribal Leaders has been established for 2008-2009 (Also, See Native American Affairs Specialist's Tribal Newsletter in appendices).

## **Plans for 2010-2014**

OCFS will continue to promote interaction with directors of services from social services districts to reiterate and strengthen awareness regarding the need to identify Native American children and to make the appropriate notifications with assistance from the NAS staff.

OCFS' Native American Services Unit will continue to participate in quarterly meetings with Tribal and local district representatives in both urban and reservation settings to improve ICWA services to this population.

OCFS will be available to support efforts of Tribes interested in establishing or expanding services under a State/Tribal Agreement.

New York State will continue to utilize existing structures to promote that appropriate federal Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) continued goals can be identified in consultation with the Tribal Leadership. There continues to be a need to reinforce social services district requirements to inform Tribes of involvement with Native American children and families.

OCFS will continue to support regional and statewide training to social services districts, other public and private agencies, tribal staff and community members to develop strategies to keep Indian families intact and to identify Native American resources to support at-risk families.

OCFS will continue efforts to improve child welfare services in Native American families, regional training events are being planned to address cultural competency and ICWA issues.

## **Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA)**

### **CAPTA Initiatives**

The federal Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA) (42 USC 5101, et seq) supports a number of activities designed to develop and strengthen child abuse and neglect prevention programs in New York State. CAPTA funds support the federal Children's Justice Act programs, and management of the Healthy Families New York (HFNY) Program, the William B. Hoyt Memorial Children and Family Trust Fund and the federal Community-Based Child Abuse Prevention program. In addition, funds support a statewide Prevention Information Resource Center that operates a 24-hour prevention helpline for parents and distributes printed child abuse and neglect prevention materials.

CAPTA project coordination provides that the state's utilization of CAPTA funds is in compliance with federal requirements and guidelines and that CAPTA projects meet stated objectives. The CAPTA Coordinator assumes the role of State Liaison Officer and works with the Office's policy and legal staff to fulfill that responsibility. The CAPTA Coordinator oversees the Children and Family Trust Fund, Basic State Grant, the Community-Based Child Abuse Prevention Grant, and coordinates activities with the Children's Justice and Assistance Grant, and the HFNY Program as needed. The CAPTA Coordinator also facilitates collaboration and integration with other child welfare and other services for children and families, responds to individual requests for information on programs available in New York State, and responds to complaints from individuals that are brought to the attention of the Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families (ACF).

Chapter 485 of the Laws of 2006 took effect on December 14, 2006. Amending section 422-b of the New York's Social Services Law (SSL), it added the ability of local and regional fatality review team to investigate fatalities where there was an open preventive services or CPS case and authorized such teams to investigate any unexplained or unexpected death of any child under the age of 18. It added to the required members of such teams: county health and Emergency Medical Technicians. It clarified that a mandated member must be a pediatrician or comparable medical professional, preferably with expertise in the area of child abuse and maltreatment. It added to the list of permissive members: domestic violence agencies, substance abuse programs and Family Court.

Subdivisions 4-6 of section 422-b of the SSL were added relating to access to records and meetings, qualified immunity of members of the team and the release of individual and annual reports by the team.

## **Accomplishments in 2005-2009**

OCFS continues a variety of strategies and initiatives to prevent and treat child abuse and maltreatment.

The Prevention Information Resource Center (PIRC) & Parent Helpline is PCANY's umbrella program for helping people throughout New York State understand how to prevent child abuse and maltreatment and to support strong, safe, nurturing families. Under that umbrella, the Prevention and Parent Helpline provides direct assistance, in the form of information and referrals, to parents, family members, service providers and other community members. During 2007-08, 3,328 New York families and professionals were directly assisted through the Helpline.

PIRC's public education includes a variety of outreach, from literature development and distribution, to presentations and exhibits, media activities, and website. More than 75,000 people received prevention information through these avenues this year.

The New York State Parent Education Partnership (NYSPEP) project was made possible by Prevent Child Abuse New York's involvement in the national PREVENT Child Maltreatment Institute, along with OCFS, NYS Department of Health, and the Children and Family Trust Fund. During 2008, the "Evidence and Evaluation survey" was developed and disseminated to almost 500 providers, resulting in 71 responses. Based on an initial analysis and report, information about research based programs was distributed through the partnerships e-newsletter. Seven conference workshops were also provided to approximately 244 parent education programs. The NYSPEP Steering Committee continues to lead this effort and through a workgroup process is focused on its mission of enhancing parenting skills, knowledge and behavior through a strong, statewide network that promotes and improves parenting education.

The annual New York State Child Abuse Prevention Conference, co-sponsored with the Children and Family Trust Fund, built the knowledge and skills of 536 professionals, advocates, community leaders, and parents who are concerned about preventing child abuse and assuring healthy growth and development for children. Returned evaluations indicated 90% - 95% of the participants found the conference relevant and that they gained new knowledge, skills and tools to take back to the community.

### **Federal Family Violence**

Federal Family Violence funding provides financial support to residential and non-residential programs experiencing low occupancy or needing health and safety enhancements to their residential program.

## **Children's Justice Act**

The federal Children's Justice Act (CJA) Program Grant continues to enhance OCFS'S ability to develop, establish, and operate programs designed to improve (1) the handling of child abuse and maltreatment cases, particularly cases of child sexual abuse and exploitation, in a manner which limits additional trauma to the child victim (2) the handling of cases of suspected child abuse and maltreatment related fatalities; and (3) the investigation and prosecution of cases of child abuse and maltreatment, particularly child sexual abuse and exploitation.

Children's Justice Act program funds are primarily used to promote start-up and/or improved functioning of local community coordination of the investigation, prosecution and treatment of child abuse and neglect cases, particularly sexual abuse cases and fatality cases. Through the implementation of local multidisciplinary investigation teams, child advocacy centers and child fatality review teams, child protective services, law enforcement, and prosecution, medical and mental health agencies are better able to coordinate, collaborate and communicate on cases. The goals of all funded programs are to reduce additional trauma to child victims after their disclosure and improve the handling of cases for all agencies involved and improve the skills and knowledge of all professionals involved.

The federal Children's Justice Act Program has allowed OCFS to expand its efforts to develop and maintain multidisciplinary investigation teams, child advocacy centers and child fatality review teams across the State. Beginning in 1996, OCFS funded the NYS Child Advocacy Resource and Consultation Center (CARCC). Services provided by CARCC include specialized and/or interdisciplinary training, team functioning analysis, and coordination of a statewide coalition of child advocacy centers and MDTs wishing to develop child advocacy centers (CACs). CARCC also assists MDTs throughout the state with access to current information and research on: child sexual abuse; child fatalities; child abuse and neglect data from a multidisciplinary perspective; training resources and opportunities, including a directory of discipline specific consultants and technical assistance material to assist in team development.

CARCC has provided information to professionals, students and concerned citizens across the state, and throughout the nation, responding to over 250 requests for information on issues related to child sex abuse, the multidisciplinary approach and especially The NYS Children's Justice Task Force Forensic Interviewing Best Practices (FIBP). CARCC's resource library has expanded and offers users a wealth of printed, audio and video materials.

Training Opportunities for the benefit of professionals involved in multidisciplinary teamwork. CARCC's trainings will be designed to strengthen both investigatory and team management skills. Other services and networks in which CARCC are involved include:

- New York State Children’s Alliance
- Case Tracking Database Project
- Forensic Interviewing Project

Training and other educational activities are also continuing. In the fall of 2007, CARCC organized and managed the Building Justice for Children Training Seminar. The three day event will provide expert presenters on all disciplines involved with the investigation, treatment and case management of child physical and sexual abuse cases.

#### New York State Children’s Justice Task Force Forensic Interviewing Best Practices Train the Trainer

The continued success of the Forensic Interviewing Best Practices Trainings relies on the actual teaching of the curriculum. To confirm the integrity and the reliability of the best FIBP Trainings, CARCC actively recruits professionals to become FIBP Trainers. This relieves some of the training demands and helps to perpetuate the level of skilled trainers as well as interviewers around the state. CARCC has implemented a selection process for all prospective trainers factoring such requirements as expertise, teaching style and demonstrated commitment to the children of New York State.

#### Child Abuse Prevention Evaluation and Treatment: A Toolkit for Medical Providers

From 2006-2008, CARCC, the Child Abuse Medical Provider Program (CHAMP), and a group of physicians, nurses, nurse practitioners, social workers, and other non-medical professionals in the child abuse field from across New York State have been working together with Dr. Ann Botash on a Toolkit for primary care, urgent care and emergency providers that addresses the issues of providing care to all types of abused children. This resource provides guidance on prevention methods, recognition, reporting methods, management and referral needs for the abused child. The website [www.ChildAbuseMD.com](http://www.ChildAbuseMD.com) may be accessed for more details.

#### Child Abuse and Disabilities Training Project

With administrative support from CARCC, the Children’s Justice Task Force supported development of a CD-Rom “Child Abuse and Children with Disabilities” for MDT investigators interviewing children with disabilities, one of the most vulnerable populations for all forms of abuse. The CD-Rom was released in 2005.

#### Marketing Program

CARCC continues to assist teams and centers with initiatives to support training and awareness events. The project co-sponsors such events by providing financial assistance for promotional materials announcing upcoming events and trainings. Teams and centers are eligible for monetary and in-kind support for promotional and event expenses, including postage and printing.

### Mentoring Program

CARCC continues to encourage and support the mutual benefits of mentoring matches between counties. These relationships are vital to the multidisciplinary team process as teams learn from each other and work through practical solutions to problems. To help facilitate this relationship, CARCC matches teams and provides financial support to both the traveling team and the host team by reimbursing for expenses such as travel and lodging.

### Toll Free Telephone

CARCC operates a toll free telephone number in order to accommodate those teams who have limited or no long distance access. This has helped facilitate program access to more professionals in the field.

### Child Advocacy Center /Multidisciplinary Team Program Standards

The CJA/NYS funds for multidisciplinary investigation teams are currently being used to fund 14 Tier I and 12 Tier II grants to assist counties in establishing or enhancing child advocacy centers and local multidisciplinary teams for the purpose of investigating reports of suspected child abuse or maltreatment--particularly cases of sexual abuse, physical abuse and family violence--in a manner which limits additional trauma to the child victim(s). Minimally, all teams investigate child sexual abuse cases. These projects have recently been categorized based upon quantifiable and qualifiable standards that support New York State expectations and the National Children' Alliance Standards. All projects must have accomplished or demonstrate significant progress towards achieving the 10 program standards for CACs which have been listed in earlier admissions of the APSR.

### Child Fatality Review Teams

The CJA/NYS funds for start-up or enhancement of child fatality review teams (CFRTs) are being used to fund three counties. These multidisciplinary review teams minimally include child protective services, police, District Attorney, a medical examiner or coroner, and a physician. The CFRTs review fatality cases reported to the Statewide Central Register of Child Abuse and Maltreatment and fatality cases where the child's custody has been transferred to an authorized agency. The primary activities of these teams include: developing a mission statement and goals; developing interagency protocols; implementing a review process; actively conducting reviews; and developing a mechanism for collecting and reporting data. Teams may also review all suspicious, unexplained or unexpected deaths, but grant monies may not be used for this purpose. Such reviews are paid for by CFRT agency members. On December 14, 2006, 06-OCFS LCM-13 Notification to OCFS of the death of children in open Child Protective or Preventive Services cases was released.

Children's Justice Act funds are also used to support the annual New York State Police Sex Offense Seminar, which is a five-day comprehensive training program for state and local police officers. CPS workers and other team members who work with police as an investigative team are also invited. The program reaches about 200 professionals a year. Starting in November 2006, this seminar was expanded to include child physical abuse training and will be presented as a two part "Crimes Against Children Training Seminar".

### Citizen Review Panels

Chapter 136 of the Laws of 1999, commonly referred to as the Governor's CAPTA (Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act), details the state's compliance with the federal Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act Amendments of 1996. CAPTA established three citizen review panels. One panel is established in New York City for the purpose of addressing issues particular to the City. The other two panels are located in Buffalo and Albany.

#### Citizen Review Panel Members:

- Must be volunteers who are broadly representative of the community, in which the panel is established, including members who have expertise in the prevention and treatment of child abuse and neglect. No person employed by federal, state, county or municipal agencies, which directly deliver child welfare services may be a panel member.
- Cannot disclose any identifying information about any specific child protection case to any person or government official. A member who knowingly violates this duty of confidentiality may be subject to a civil penalty not to exceed one thousand dollars and removal from the panel.
- Must elect a chairperson for each of their respective panels.
- Must meet not less than once every three months.

OCFS continues to provide technical assistance. As requested by the panels, each panel will maintain regular meetings and will continue to examine aspects of New York State's child welfare system to evaluate the extent to which the state and local child protective service agencies are effectively discharging their child protective responsibilities. It should be pointed out that the members of the New York State Citizen Review Panels have exhibited an enthusiastic willingness to commit themselves to the task for which they have volunteered, and have gone beyond the minimum federal mandate of quarterly meetings. Citizen Review Panels are required to submit an annual report of their activities, findings and recommendations. A copy of the most recent Citizen Review Panel report is with this plan submission (Appendix A).

## **William B. Hoyt Memorial Children and Family Trust Fund and Community-Based Child Abuse Prevention Program**

### **Accomplishments in 2005-2009**

Trust Fund priorities include support for research-based home visiting services such as the Parent Child Home Program, and Healthy Families New York home visiting programs, in addition to the continued support, expansion and development of the NYS Family Resource Center Network, services to support young parents and fathers, crisis respite/parenting education and support services, supervised visitation in domestic violence cases, school-based domestic violence and child abuse prevention programs, shaken baby prevention education, elder abuse prevalence study, and services for the elderly at risk of abuse in New York State. The Trust Fund provided a final year of funding for Healthy Families Clinton, Healthy Families Schenectady, and Healthy Families Sullivan during 2008 and continues to collaborate with Healthy Families New York through initiatives such as NY Loves Safe Babies and the NYS Parenting Education Partnership.

The Trust Fund supports two shaken baby syndrome (SBS) hospital-based education programs whose combined efforts expand outreach to all maternity and birthing hospitals in the state. The pilot project in the Western New York and Finger Lake regions was implemented in 1998, and the Hudson Valley Shaken Baby Prevention initiative began in 2004. The purpose is to educate all parents of newborns to the dangers of shaking and reduce the incidence of SBS. The Upstate Region reports a 45-50% sustained reduction in the incidence of SBS in the nine years since the program's inception. The Hudson Valley Region reported that in the five years prior to the program's inception, the region's hospitals referred one case of SBS every four months. In the 40 months since the program's inception there have been four cases of SBS referred for a 54% reduction. Replication of New York's model continues throughout the country and abroad. Pediatricians in both regions are partnering with both projects to disseminate the same information at the time of the first immunization or pediatric visit. Likewise, each site does follow up telephone surveys to obtain feedback from the target population about the program's effectiveness. The Hudson Valley region reports that close to 100% of parents surveyed, remembered viewing the SBS video. Expansion to NYC, Long Island and the remaining upstate counties will focus on the educational component of the program. Evaluation of the incidence of SBS will continue in the Western New York, Finger Lakes, and Hudson Valley regions.

Chapter 219 of the Laws of 2004, signed in October 2004, institutionalized the hospital-based approach by requiring every maternity hospital and birthing center to show the video, "Portrait of Promise" to all parents prior to discharge, and asking them to sign a consent form indicating they either viewed the video or declined to participate in the educational program. The state Department of Health with consultation from the Trust Fund and the SBS Program plan to develop a new video that is more reflective of New York families and will be translated into multiple languages. A New York Shaken Baby Prevention Program brochure was developed by the Trust Fund programs for

dissemination to the hospitals statewide, and will be translated into Spanish and Chinese in 2009. (Brochure can be seen on OCFS website)

The Trust Fund continues its sponsorship of the NY Loves Safe Babies Campaign with the Department of Health, NYS Center for SID (Sudden Infant Death) and Healthy Families New York Home Visiting Program. The Trust Fund maintains its work with state agency partners, local programs, the Trust Fund Advisory Board, and the Skipper Initiative to promote the safety of infants and children by educating parents and caregivers on how serious injuries can be reduced and/or prevented. OCFS' Office of Communications in partnership with New York City ACS and the Safe Babies Campaign launched the Babies Sleep Safest Alone initiative in response to an increase in child fatalities that were linked to unsafe sleeping practices. 200,000 brochures and posters, both Spanish and English were printed for statewide distribution.

This year was once again highlighted by the availability of a series of safety tips entitled Helpful Tips to Keep Your Baby Safe. Materials developed as part of the campaign including a Personalized Safety Tips and Emergency Contact Sheet for Baby Sitters that is also available as a magnetic memo board with safety information for caregivers, and a New York Loves Safe Babies Spanish DVD, companion to the original English version. A new brochure entitled Keeping Sleeping Babies Safer was released in 2008 in both Spanish and English. These materials were made available at a local mall in the capital district in November 2008. Local community-based programs, local health departments, and social service districts participated in the event that offered a variety of resources, arts and crafts, car seat safety, and entertainment. Requests for materials remain robust. Over 200,000 New York Loves Safe Babies publications are disseminated annually statewide. The campaign will go forward with continued efforts to identify and promote child safety issues as resources allow.

The Trust Fund helps lead the NYS Parenting Education Partnership (NYSPEP) initiated through participation at the PREVENT Child Maltreatment Institute in North Carolina in 2006. Partnering with Prevent Child Abuse New York, the Council on Children and Families, the NYS Department of Health and state Education Department, a five-year plan was developed to promote the health and safety of our state's children with a focus on parenting education as a primary prevention method addressing child abuse and neglect. The five-year goal for the initiative is drawn from the New York State Early Childhood Comprehensive Services Plan: To increase the availability and scope of evidence-based parenting education activities, in order to increase opportunities for all families of children from before birth to age five to gain the knowledge, skills, confidence, and social supports needed to nurture the health, safety and positive development of their children. The plan includes a number of objectives, including the formation of a statewide public-private task force on parenting education, the development of a resource book and web-based database of information for parents and professionals, creation a new parent kit, support for professional development, and the development a social marketing plan to promote a culture of positive and effective parenting. Over 100 individuals and organizations are active participants of the statewide

task force that meets twice a year. A Steering Committee and workgroup structure advance the goals of this initiative.

The Trust Fund recognizes the multi-generational nature of family violence and emphasizes primary prevention by supporting domestic violence and elder abuse prevention and intervention programs. Domestic violence prevention programs focus on education of students K-12, trauma counseling and support services for children, and supervised visitation services for families affected by domestic violence. Elder abuse prevention programs focus on educating both seniors and communities regarding the problem/risks of elder abuse, outreach and services to reduce these risks, providing coordination, counseling, and advocacy services to victims of elder abuse, a public awareness campaign, and a prevalence study on elder abuse. Programs initiated in 2008-09 include (1) Cattaraugus Community Action, Salamanca, NY (2) Oswego County Opportunities, Inc, Oswego, NY (3) Putnam Northern Westchester Women's Resource Center, Mahopac, NY (4) The Salvation Army, Jamestown, NY (5) Equinox, Inc., Albany, NY (6) Family Justice Center of Erie County, Buffalo, and (7) Lifespan of Greater Rochester, Rochester, NY.

The federal 2008 Community-Based Child Abuse Prevention funding is in keeping with the mission of the Trust Fund, which administers the federal program to support child abuse and domestic violence services. Trust Fund initiatives also support some of the strategies of the NYS OCFS Child and Family Services Review (CFSR) Program Improvement Plan such as increased efforts to support strength-based and family centered practices that engage parents, evidence-based and evidence-informed programs and practices, and efforts to promote safety, permanency and child well being through enhanced family support services. Current federal and state funded child abuse prevention and family support services include: Statewide Public Education targeting all parents of newborns (1) Kaleida Health/Women Children's Hospital of Buffalo, Buffalo, NY, (2) Children's Hospital Foundation at Westchester Medical Center, Valhalla, NY; Parenting Education and Support services targeting families at risk including young parents and fathers (3) Gateway Longview, Buffalo, NY (4) Women's Prison Association, Brooklyn, NY (5) SCO Family of Services, Bronx, NY (6) Cornell Cooperative Extension of Tompkins County, Ithaca, NY (7) Homes for the Homeless, Bronx, NY; School-based prevention education targeting elementary students and school personnel; (8) Child Abuse Prevention Services, Long Island, NY; Family Resource Centers providing early and comprehensive support to parents and caregivers of young children; (9) North Country Prenatal/Perinatal Council, Watertown, NY, (10) Child Care Coordinating Council of the North Country, Plattsburgh, NY, (11) Child & Family Resources, Penn Yan, NY, (12) Cornell Cooperative Extension of Cortland, Cortland, NY, (13) Catholic Charities of Fulton and Montgomery Counties, Amsterdam, NY, (14) Chinese American Planning Council, New York, NY, (15) Mothers and Babies Perinatal Network of SCNY, Binghamton, NY, (16) ProAction of Steuben and Yates, Bath, NY, (17) Cornell Cooperative Extension of Tioga, Owego, NY, (18) Niagara Falls City School District, Niagara Falls, NY (19) Family Resource Centers of Crestwood Children's Center, Rochester, NY, (20) Phipps Community Development Corporation, Bronx, New York, (21) Association to Benefit Children, East Harlem, NY.

During 2008, state and federally funded programs administered under the Trust Fund served approximately 16,600 children, parents, caregivers and professionals through direct services and training opportunities. OCFS applied for and received federal CBCAP grant funds to complement Trust Fund child abuse and domestic violence prevention efforts in 2008. A grant award of \$1,557,798 allows OCFS to continue existing programs implemented in January 2008 under a 2007 Request for Proposals (RFP), supports an outcome evaluation of family resource centers, and contributes to New York's annual child abuse prevention conference. The 2009 Conference, "Transformations" held this April, once again afforded the Trust Fund the opportunity to showcase best practices and to recognize parent partners who demonstrate their leadership as a result of participation in local programs. Trust Fund-sponsored programs and staff are regular presenters at the conference. Funds also support networking activities, training and technical assistance, parent involvement and leadership training opportunities, and the Program Self-Assessment and Peer Review Process developed in collaboration with the New York State Family Resource Center Network, OCAN, FRIENDS National Resource Center, the National Alliance of Children's Trust and Prevention Funds, and other stakeholders.

The Trust Fund-sponsored Family Resource Center (FRC) Network meets on a quarterly basis for the purpose of receiving technical assistance and training related to program development, service delivery, evaluation, and fund development. Training and networking opportunities this past year focused on launching the new Network brochure and guidelines (brochure can be provided as appendix), developing tools for assessing effectiveness of parenting education programs, promoting volunteerism and parent leadership, exploring the role of FRCs in the current economy, and potential support for the new Family Assessment Response being piloted by OCFS. Many of the Network members also participated in the NYS Parenting Education Partnership (NYSPEP) Professional Development workshops offered this past year. Planning for 2008/09 peer reviews and continued participation in the Network outcome evaluation remained priorities.

Two Self-Assessment and Peer Reviews were held in June and December 2008, at the Waverly Family Resource Center (Tioga County), and Family Fun and Resource Center (Cortland, Cortland County). A consultant continues to assist with Center planning and conducting the self-assessment, in addition to preparing for the peer review site visit. Challenges addressed during the reviews included creation and dissemination of effective outreach materials, integrating diverse groups of families, and increased collaboration with local agencies and groups to enhance services. Feedback from the reviews indicates that the process provides the opportunity for parents to take leadership roles, and to be heard in new ways. The process is also a means to identify gaps in services and address community needs with local partners. Additional work includes continued support of efforts by FRIENDS National Resource Center to develop a peer review self-assessment tool that could be utilized by a broad range of family support programs. The consultant was invited to contribute to this work based on her wealth of experience with NY's peer

review process. Programs conducting reviews in 2009 will pilot the “program activities” domain of the FRIENDS self-assessment tool currently in development. Additionally, programs that are undergoing a second review plan to focus their assessment on outreach using the “How Are We Doing” toolkit developed by Family Support America and the basis for New York’s established review process.

To continue efforts to evaluate family resource centers and their impact on families, work continued this year with CHSR and the Network to conduct an outcome evaluation to examine the effects of programs on developing healthy parenting attitudes, fostering positive parenting behaviors, enhancing social support and other protective factors associated with a reduced risk of child maltreatment. The study was originally launched in January 2008 in six sites: Rochester (2 sites), Owego (2 sites), Tupper Lake and Geneva. Two additional sites were added later in the year, Binghamton (2 sites) and Amsterdam. The evaluation uses the combining portions of standardized instruments: the Parenting Practices Interview, the Adult-Adolescent Parenting Inventory (AAPI), and the Maternal Social Support Index. Currently, 105 program participants have completed the initial assessment, with a response rate of close to 70% for the 6-month follow-up assessment. The goal is to recruit 150 participants.

The Trust Fund continues to work with the Family Resource Information Education Network Development Services (FRIENDS) as part of the CBCAP and PART (OMB Program Assessment Rating Toll) Outcomes Subcommittee on the Efficiency Measures and Evidence-Based Practices. The work focused on developing guidelines for CBCAP lead agencies to support the new federal requirement of documenting local programs use of evidence-based and evidence-informed programs and practices continued. The Trust Fund piloted the Protective Factor Survey developed by the committee with two FRC sites participating. This tool is now being considered as a possible measure for implementation with the FRC Network.

Strengthening families through early care and education continued as a Trust Fund priority this past year through participation in ZERO to THREE Network’s Preventing Child Abuse and Neglect (PCAN): Parent-Provider Partnerships with Child Care initiative. As the state liaison for the project, the Trust Fund partnered with OCFS Division of Child Care, Council on Children and Families, NYC Administration for Children’s Services, New York State Child Care Coordinating Council, New York State Department of Education (Office of EETV and Public Broadcasting), and Prevent Child Abuse New York. The goal of the initiative is to strengthen states’ child abuse and neglect prevention initiatives by a) engaging child care providers in preventing maltreatment, b) strengthening partnerships between ZERO to THREE and state systems that serve young children, and c) building capacity to impact the field.

Forty-two early childhood, child welfare, child abuse prevention, and mental health professionals attended a three-day training in June 2007 in New York City. Trainers’ self-reported knowledge gains at the end of the 3-day training showed an overall increase of 24.1% in the areas of relationship-based training strategies, reflective training strategies, the concept and application of reflection in, on, and for action, and on the

impact of maltreatment on infants and toddlers. The purpose of the one-day follow-up held in February 2008 was to provide trainers with an opportunity to discuss trainings conducted to date, and to explore deeper concepts in the curriculum, and additional concepts such as transformative learning. Thirty-two trainers attended this training. Between August 2007 and October 2008, 56 trainings were conducted reaching over 2499 child care directors, supervisors and teaching staff. The knowledge gain of training participants as evaluated through a pre-post test survey was an average of 17.21%.

Distance learning opportunities were also afforded the trainers corresponding to each of the 10 PCAN units, allowing for further exploration of a particular concept. This activity kept the trainers engaged and active in implementing the PCAN training. Sustaining this work will be afforded through the Early Childhood Comprehensive Services (ECCS) Plan, now endorsed by the Children's Cabinet. The state leadership team is committed to continuing conversations through quarterly conference calls and creating multiple opportunities for sustaining the program at state level conferences. Infusing the PCAN curriculum into training for child care licensers is being explored.

In March 2009, Prevent Child Abuse New York released a 4-page public policy briefing to highlight effective Trust Fund programs that address family well being and prevention of family violence. The publication focused attention on the Healthy Families New York Home Visiting pilot program, Best Beginnings that was started with a Trust Fund seed grant. The briefing was disseminated to government, locally funding programs, and statewide partners to further promote the mission and purpose of the Trust Fund.

#### **Plans for 2010-2014:**

The 2009-10 CAPTA funds will be utilized to support a number of initiatives aimed at improving the child protection system in New York State. The areas that will be targeted include:

- The use of Citizen Review Panels to review policies, procedures and practices of State and local agencies to evaluate the extent to which the agencies are effectively discharging their child protective responsibilities. The contract for Administration was awarded to the Schuyler Center for Advocacy and Analysis (SCAA). SCAA has taken a proactive role in helping the three Panels develop specific workplans.
- Implementing Program Standards for all Child Advocacy Centers and Multidisciplinary Child Abuse Teams in New York State. The Standards were developed through input from New York State Children's Alliance, Multidisciplinary Team/Child Advocacy Center projects, and the Children's Justice Task Force
- Developing and enhancing the capacity of community based programs to integrate shared leadership strategies between parents and professionals to prevent and treat child abuse and neglect at the neighborhood level which is a focus of all of OCFS' program development efforts including the Healthy Families New York Home Visiting Program, the Trust Fund, and the Community

Based child Abuse Prevention Grant Program. These efforts are described below and throughout this plan.

The 2009-2010 CAPTA Basic State Grant funds will continue to support initiatives related to the OCFS Performance Improvement Plan. CAPTA funds will continue to support the Parent Information Resource Center and the statewide Prevention Conference sponsored by Prevent Child Abuse New York. The funds also support the development of materials for the Safe Babies Campaign, an initiative of OCFS in collaboration with the State Health Department and local community based organizations. In addition to these existing initiatives, OCFS may use funds for additional child protective improvements, which have yet to be determined.

The Children's Justice Act funds will support a number of new initiatives including the following:

### **Multidisciplinary Training Program on the New York State Forensic Interviewing Best Practices**

A three-day training program, New York State Children's Justice Task Force Forensic Interviewing Best Practices has presented 21 regional training sessions over the last three years. A one day training course will be developed and introduced to professionals not directly involved with interviewing of child victims, but who should be aware of the components of a sound forensic interview. The training will be targeted to County Attorneys, prosecutors, judges and members of local multidisciplinary teams.

### **Child Abuse and Children with Disabilities: Reporting, Investigation and Intervention**

The success of the CD-ROM *Child Abuse and Children with Disabilities: A New York State Perspective* lead the NYS Children's Justice Task Force to recommend development of a website to provide more information and easier accessibility to professionals involved with reporting, investigating and interventions with disabled children. The New York CJA program will reach out to other States to link with this program and include service providers and experts from their respective States on the website as well. The website will outline basic information which should be known by all members of the various multidisciplinary teams related to characteristics of these children that might impact upon interviewing, data gathering or "reasonable accommodations" that may be needed in investigative and/or support procedures. It will also describe the current policies and federal/state specific guidelines that exist to date which directly affect the appropriate handling of these cases so that these children are not further victimized on any level.

The website will provide sample case studies and a listing of other statewide resources available. This site will also include short interviews with a variety of experts from New York State and its consultants over the years, who share their work and suggestions

related to enhancing the provision of appropriate reporting, investigation and intervention of child abuse involving children with disabilities.

Other initiatives such as Child Abuse Training for Prosecutors and Multidisciplinary Teams, Multidisciplinary Team Management of Children Who Act Out Sexually and The CAC/CASA Partnership Project: Improving Advocacy for Children will also continue to receive support.

### **William B. Hoyt Memorial Children and Family Trust Fund and Community-Based Child Abuse Prevention Grant Program**

Continued support for 28 programs funded under a Request for Proposals (RFP) released in April 2007 to address all forms of family violence including child abuse, domestic violence and elder abuse will remain the priority. Funding in the amount of \$1.68 million to continue fourteen of the new initiatives was allocated in the 2008/09 state budget. The 2009-10 state budget will include a further reduction and support the final year of funding based on the 4-year spend down. Key initiatives worthy of note are the Elder Abuse Prevalence Study being conducted by Lifespan of Greater Rochester in partnership with NYC Department for the Aging and Cornell Institute for Translational Research on Aging (CITRA). It is the first of its kind in the country and will examine prevalence rates among reported and unreported cases, characteristics of victims, types of abuse reported and current referral patterns. The second year of the study beginning in April 2009 should produce some preliminary results and contribute to shaping future policy and funding decisions.

Expansion of the highly successful New York Shaken Baby Prevention program launched in June 2008 will reach all maternity and birthing hospitals in the state. This joint effort reinforces the 2004 State law requiring hospitals to talk to parents about the dangers of shaking a baby and to have a plan for coping with crying. Further tracking of the incidence of SBS will continue in the Western New York, Finger Lakes and Hudson Valley regions, as will our partnership with the state Department of Health to promote child safety through this SBS initiative and the NY Loves Safe Babies collaborative. Partnership with the Child Fatality and Review Teams (CFRT) will also reinforce the importance of prevention and assist that effort in identifying other child safety issues.

The 2009 CBCAP grant will support continuation of 14 programs funded under the 2007 RFP. With limited state dollars to support new initiatives, consideration may be given to using federal funds to release a Request for Proposals to support the existing Family Resource Center Network and to identify new programs in high need communities. Further, the Outcome Evaluation for Family Resource Centers (FRC) will help shape future initiatives to demonstrate the value and impact of FRC services. Designed by the Center for Human Services Research at the University of Albany, the outcome study examines the effects of the programs on developing healthy parenting attitudes, fostering positive parenting behaviors, enhancing social support and other protective factors that are associated with a reduced risk of child maltreatment. These results will be analyzed to

see whether there are changes in variables identified as risk factors in child abuse, and how these changes are related to the number and types of programs attended. Preliminary results from the evaluation will be available next year.

The Trust Fund will continue to promote the use of research-based evaluation to support reliable outcome data, and the use of evidence-based curricula and program models. The Incredible Years (IY) training to be offered this year provides the FRC Network the opportunity to strengthen their services with programming that is proven to produce positive outcomes for families. Efforts to develop common assessments tools with the Network will continue with guidance from OCFS and CHSR research staff.

Supervised visitation services for families affected by domestic violence remains a priority. In partnership with the NYS Coalition Against Domestic Violence and locally funded programs, we will continue our efforts to develop successful strategies and best practice protocols. As a model, supervised visitation centers provide a safe environment for promoting healthy relationships between non-custodial parents and their children, and improve safety for children and custodial parents. Trained staff coach parents during their supervised visits to increase parenting skills and support groups for children and adults increase their resilience and social connections. In January 2009, the Coalition released Supervised Visitation & Domestic Violence – A Protocol for Services that is the direct result of this collaboration.

### **Chafee Foster Care Independence Program**

The major efforts in 2008-2009 were geared to continue the implementation of the Chafee Foster Care Independence Act of 1999 (CFCIP), including the Chafee Education and Training Voucher Program. To continue implementation of the provisions of the CFCIP into the program design, OCFS is developing a practice guidance paper and preparing revisions to program regulations.

OCFS is refining its strength-based Life Skills Training program throughout its direct care system as a key core component of the OCFS residential treatment program. Additional life skills interventions will be identified and prescriptively provided for youth in OCFS direct care programs from the “Counselor’s Toolbox”.

OCFS continued to oversee the remaining period of a federal Department of Labor grant to prepare and support eligible youth with lifelong learning skills to enhance their educational and employment prospects. The PASSport (Preparation, Access, and Support Services) system will link youth with comprehensive services designed to help in the transition to adulthood and self-sufficiency. OCFS received continued funding from Casey Family Programs for the same purpose during 2007-2008, since federal funds no longer will be available.

The following pages provide information about the in-care population in receipt of Independent Living Services. The data is presented for 16-21 year olds and for the

previously State-funded population 14-15 year olds. The data for 14-15 year olds includes only those children who have a goal of APLA. It does not capture information about other children who, because of the service needs identified, are receiving Independent Living Services, even though their primary goal is not Independent Living.

**Children in Foster Care Receiving  
Independent Living Services**

<b>Age</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
<b>14</b>	2143	13.1
<b>15</b>	2893	17.7
<b>16</b>	3396	20.8
<b>17</b>	2955	18.1
<b>18</b>	2095	12.8
<b>19</b>	1146	7
<b>20</b>	1112	6.8
<b>thru 21</b>	600	3.7
<b>Total</b>	16340	100

<b>Sex</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
<b>F</b>	7670	46.9
<b>M</b>	8670	53.1
<b>Total</b>	16340	100

<b>Race/ Ethnicity</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
<b>Native Amer-Alaskan</b>	44	0.3
<b>Asian</b>	94	0.6
<b>African American</b>	7197	44
<b>White</b>	3481	21.3
<b>Unk</b>	2463	15.1
<b>Latino</b>	3061	18.7
<b>Total</b>	16340	100

Current Living Arrangement	Frequency	Percent
ADOPTIVE HOME	10	0.1
RUNAWAY SHELTER	19	0.1
INSTITUTION	4888	29.9
GROUP RESIDENCE	446	2.7
GROUP HOME	1763	10.8
SILP	316	1.9
AOBH	471	2.9
FOSTER HOME	5840	35.7
APPVD REL HOME	2136	13.1
SNF	6	0
RTF	144	0.9
HRF	3	0
NON-SEC DET FAC	46	0.3
SEC DET FAC	1	0
CFR DEV CENTER	8	0
ICF-DD	71	0.4
VOL COMM RES	18	0.1
VOL LIV RES	1	0
PROP RES SCHOOL	33	0.2
VOL RES SCHOOL	5	0
UNION FREE SCHOOL	1	0
PSYCH CENTER	2	0
SUPERVISED LIV	34	0.2
INTENSIVE SUPPOR	5	0
PSYCH HOSP	4	0
OTHER-NONSANC	58	0.4
Total	16329	99.9
System missing	11	0.1
Total	16340	100

Duration of Foster Care	Frequency	Percent
UP TO 6 MOS.	2905	17.8
7-12 MOS.	2468	15.1
13-18 MOS.	1693	10.4
19-24 MOS.	1272	7.8
25-36 MOS.	1698	10.4
37-48 MOS.	1184	7.2
49-60 MOS.	918	5.6
61+ MOS.	4202	25.7
Total	16340	100

OCFS will continue to provide technical assistance and support to independent living program sites serving youth in its custody and on aftercare status. Those youth who are in residential placement in OCFS operated facilities receive independent living skills as part of the Focus Intervention Process. This process is part of the OCFS counseling program, which addresses those risk factors that may lead youth to recidivate. In addition, OCFS will work to enhance Life Skills programming through training, site visits including group observations and the provision of various materials to support this program. (See Goal 4 for additional Chafee information)

### **Education and Training Vouchers**

New York State's Education and Training Voucher program is designed to help youth aging out of foster care to make the transition to self-sufficiency and receive the education, training and services necessary to obtain employment. Under this program, eligible youth may receive up to \$5,000 per year to attend a post-secondary education or vocational training program. The following categories of individuals may be eligible to receive vouchers under the Education and Training Voucher program: (1) youth otherwise eligible for services under the Chafee Foster Care Independence Program; (2) youth adopted from foster care after attaining age 16; and (3) youth participating in the voucher program on their 21<sup>st</sup> birthday, until they turn 23 years old, as long as they are enrolled in a post-secondary education or vocational training program and are making satisfactory progress toward completion of that program.

The Office will continue to contract with the Orphan Foundation of America (OFA) to administer and serve as New York State's fiscal agent for the Education and Training Voucher Program. Local social services continue to be responsible for determining program eligibility. Priority for funding will be given to former foster care youth who are participating in the voucher program on their 21<sup>st</sup> birthday, until they turn 23 years old, as long as they are enrolled in a post-secondary education or vocational training program and are making satisfactory progress toward completion of that program.

New York State's new Permanency legislation, Chapter 3 of the Laws of 2005, brought about many changes to laws that will affect adolescents. The law includes a requirement to provide life skills services to foster care youth beginning at age 14, regardless of permanency goal. Regulations were filed on an emergency basis to implement the new law. With these new regulations, the discharge-planning goal of independent living has been renamed "Discharge to another planned living arrangement with a permanency resource." This permanency planning goal is to assist foster care youth in their transition to self-sufficiency by connecting the youth to an adult permanency resource, equipping the youth with life skills and, upon discharge, connecting the youth with any needed community and/or specialized services. An adult permanency resource is a caring committed adult who has been determined by a social services district to be an appropriate and acceptable resource for a youth and is committed to providing emotional support, advice and guidance to the youth and to assist the youth as the youth makes the transition from foster care to responsible adulthood.

### **Accomplishments**

794 youth received ETV awards during FFY 2007 -2008

471 students were returning students and 323 were new to the ETV program

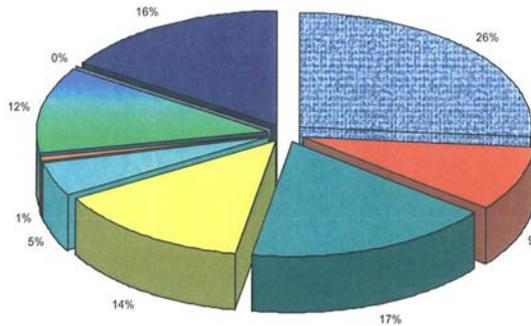
239 of the students were ages 21 and 22

OCFS will continue to build on the education work we began in 2007-2008. OCFS is again planning to hold six regional educational forums around the state during 2009 which will have a career planning focus. Resource materials will also be developed and distributed at the forums.

**FINANCIAL SUMMARY**

NY ETV 2007-2008 Financial Information		
Purpose	Totals	Ratios
Tuition	729,250.21	26.45%
Loans	250,396.87	9.08%
School Supplies	476,763.59	17.30%
Computer	381,738.49	13.85%
Housing	131,927.27	4.79%
Childcare	15,464.00	0.56%
Transportation	330,896.87	12.00%
Healthcare	2,354.40	0.09%
Living Expenses	437,778.30	15.88%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>\$ 2,756,570.00</b>	<b>100.00%</b>

**ETV Distribution Chart**



## **Plans for 2010-2014**

OCFS will continue to contract with the Orphan Foundation of America (OFA) to administer and serve as New York State's fiscal agent for the Education and Training Voucher Program. Local social services districts continue to be responsible for determining program eligibility. Priority for funding will be given to former foster care youth who are participating in the voucher program on their 21<sup>st</sup> birthday, until they turn 23 years old, as long as they are enrolled in a post-secondary education or vocational training program and are making satisfactory progress toward completion of that program.

## **Supporting Information**

### **Juvenile Justice Transfers**

The number of youth transferred to juvenile justice facilities in FFY 07-08 was 210 youth, a decrease from FFY 06-07. This population consists of children that:

- Were in CCRS shown as in LDSS custody as a result of a legal hearing with dispositions of PINS (Person in Need of Supervision), JD (if placed, and placement not exceeding 12 months), JD (initial placement exceeds 12 months), and do not have a disposition of OCFS custody within the same hearing, or
- Have a disposition of Transfer Custody and Guardianship (Surrender or Terminated Parental Rights only) or care and custody to a local social services district, or
- Have a voluntary or emergency removal, and
- Have a subsequent hearing with a disposition of OCFS Custody during FFY 2007 (the two events must occur between the track open date and the first discharge date, if any that lasts more than one day), plus
- Children that were discharged to an OCFS Facility during FFY 2007, and
- Do not have an open admission in the juvenile justice system between the last movement and discharge in CCRS.

### **Inter-Country Adoptions**

On October 6, 2000, the federal Inter-country Adoption Act (ICAA) of 2000 (P.L. 106-279) was signed into law. The ICAA provides for the implementation by the United States of the Hague Convention on Protection of Children and Cooperation in Respect to Inter-country Adoption. At this time, nineteen New York State authorized voluntary agencies have been accredited or temporarily accredited by the Council on Accreditation to provide adoption services for Hague adoption cases. OCFS is in the process of developing an Administrative Directive to provide local departments of social services and voluntary authorized agencies with guidance and information on the provisions of the ICAA.

As residents of New York State, children adopted from other countries have access, if they otherwise satisfy the eligibility standards to mandated preventive services. The State provides TANF funding for Regional Post Adoption Centers where such families, if TANF-eligible, can apply for services. In addition, all New York State authorized agencies providing inter-country adoption programs are regulated and supervised by OCFS. Prospective adoptive parents are evaluated for suitability to adopt through a home study process, which includes a criminal history record review and a check against the Statewide Central Register of Child Abuse and Maltreatment data base.

OCFS directive 04-OCFS-LCM-05 requires social services districts to collect and maintain information on foster placements of children who are adopted from other countries. Efforts to collect this data are continuing and it is anticipated that analysis of this information will be available in future plan submissions. Extensive Legislative information is available at the OCFS internet site. The total number of foster placements of children adopted from other countries during the reporting period July 1, 2007- June 30, 2008, was five (5).

INTER-COUNTRY ADOPTIONS FOR 2007-2008				
Children	Country of Origin	Agency Handling Adoption	Reason for Disruption	Plans for the Child
Child 1	China	Unknown	Adoptive Mother was drunk	Visit w/Adoptive Mom
Child 2	Columbia	Unknown	Anger, Assault, Running Away	Placed as PINS (1yr)
Child 3	Russia	Baker Victory Services	Child's Behavior	Placed in Foster Care
Child 4	Russia	Welcome House	Behavior, Safety Concerns	Placed in Foster Care
Child 5	Guatemala	Unknown	Death of Adoptive Mother	Placed in Foster Care

### **Child Welfare Demonstration Projects**

New York State is not participating in the Child Welfare Demonstration Project

### **Health Care Services Overview**

Health care services: The Federal Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act (P.L. 110-351) amended the section 422(b)(15) of the Act which previously required an update regarding ongoing efforts by the State agency to actively involve and consult physicians or other appropriate medical professionals in assessing the health and well-being of foster children and determining appropriate medical treatment. The law now requires States and Tribes, in coordination with the State title XIX (Medicaid) agency, and in consultation with pediatricians and other experts in health care, and experts in and recipients of child welfare services, to develop a plan for ongoing oversight and coordination of health care services for children in foster care. States are required to submit a copy of the Health Care Services Plan with their CFSP.

New York State has a state-supervised, locally administered system of foster care. As such, provision and oversight of the medical care received by these children is the responsibility of the local departments of social services, who are the legal custodians and case managers, and the authorized foster care agencies with which these departments contract to provide foster care services. Over 80% of NYS children in foster care are cared for by non-public foster care agencies (voluntary authorized agencies) rather than local departments of social services. OCFS routinely conducts site visits and provides technical assistance to departments and agencies to monitor the quality of services provided.

The models of delivery for health care services to children in foster care vary significantly across New York State. Some authorized foster care agencies deliver primary health care directly through on-site clinics. Some agencies have contractual agreements with health care providers; for example, an agency may contract with one psychologist in the community to conduct mental health evaluations on all new admissions. Most agencies have medical staff that provide some tracking and oversight of routine and specialty health services. Children residing in foster homes often use community health providers.

While OCFS does not provide direct clinical services to children in foster care, OCFS promulgated regulations regarding appropriate medical care [18 NYCRR 441.21]. New York State Social Services Law (SSL) provides the statutory authority for OCFS to supervise local departments of social services and promulgate regulations. The regulations require that licensed medical professionals assess the health and well-being of children in foster care and determine appropriate medical treatment. OCFS has also provided practice guidance on necessary and optimal health services for children in foster care with our comprehensive manual, "Working Together: Health Services for Children in Foster Care". This manual was developed in close collaboration with our medical director (a pediatrician), and a representative group of foster care agency and social services staff that included medical professionals.

To support optimal health services for children in foster care, local departments of social services and voluntary authorized agencies use the services of licensed medical practitioners to inform policy and practice. For example, the NYC Administration for Children's Services (ACS) has a Medical Services Office that is led by a physician. This office provides policy guidance and oversees the health services provided to NYC children in foster care. They meet regularly with medical staff from the authorized foster care agencies to discuss new policies and address concerns.

NYC has a local coalition, the Committee of Mental Health and Healthcare Professionals in Child Welfare, which provides a forum for members to consult with each other on common concerns around health services for children in foster care. This group has also advised OCFS on the contents of CONNECTIONS, our SACWIS system. The Health Care Workgroup of the Council of Family and Child Caring Agencies (COFCCA) was instrumental in development of the Foster Care Initiative (FCI). FCI is a project in 2

NYC agencies that demonstrated new approaches for mental health services for children in foster care, including addressing trauma.

In the Albany area, a foster care agency has contracted with Albany School of Pharmacy to advise their medical staff on medication matters. In central New York, several counties have contracted the services of a child psychiatrist, who must approve all prescriptions for psychotropic medications for children in foster care before the prescriptions can be filled. This psychiatrist has also conducted chart reviews of medication usage for children in congregate care settings in Onondaga County and advised the county on the appropriateness of the prescribing practices.

The NYS Coalition for Children's Mental Health Services, headed by foster care agency directors, holds annual Public Policy Forums. These forums attended by community health providers as well as foster care agencies, sponsor speakers and workshops that advance optimal, innovative care. The Office of Mental Health (OMH) is held regional, public forums on their children's mental health plan throughout 2008. This allows our service providers to fully understand and provide input into the state plan.

The Coordinated Children's Services Initiative (CCSI) legislation requires that counties employ a collaborative approach to children with intensive cross-system needs. These collaboratives vary in accordance with local government and community resources, and typically include representatives from social services, mental health, developmental disabilities, substance abuse services, schools, and community providers. The goal is to implement a comprehensive, coordinated, individualized service plan for each child.

At the state level, the OCFS medical director is involved in any regulatory or guidance documents disseminated on health issues. OCFS employs psychologists and a consultant psychiatrist. OCFS routinely engages local and national experts, including psychiatrists, physicians, pharmacists, and psychologists to assist in health-related initiatives. Activities in 2008 included a series of 3 teleconferences on trauma, the development and distribution of a guidance document on the use of psychiatric medication for children in out-of-home care, and an interagency collaboration to address Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders (FASD). OCFS has used an expert consultant to customize the Child and Adolescent Needs and Strengths (CANS) assessment tool for use in our Bridges to Health foster care waiver program.

OCFS implemented a four year pilot of health care coordination for children in foster care in eight agencies across the state. The purpose of this pilot, which was conducted from 2003 - 2007, was to identify models for care coordination in a variety of settings and determine the impact of care coordination on the delivery of optimal health care to children in foster care. In addition to an evaluation component, now posted on our website, a white paper is being written on lessons learned at each site. Project directors and participants at the agencies included pediatricians, psychiatrists, nurses, and physician assistants. By their participation in this pilot, these medical professionals have helped us to define how care coordination can be successfully implemented in a variety of foster care settings. All pilot sites experienced positive outcomes, including the

development of a Medical Passport at a Buffalo agency, and the creation of an on-site clinic for primary health care at a foster care agency in the Bronx. (Additionally, see Bridges to Health (B2H) noted in Goal 2).

These efforts by OCFS with active collaboration and coordination with sister agencies resulted in our development of a health care services plan for coordination and oversight of health care for children in foster care.

See appendices for **OCFS' Health Care Services Plan**

## **Disaster Planning**

### **Emergency Preparedness/ Disaster Plans:**

OCFS continues to refine and test its disaster plan to identify, locate and service children in care in the event of disaster. The approach will include responding to new cases as needed, maintaining communication with essential personnel, and how to maintain records and coordinate services under such circumstances.

OCFS plans address state and local needs as well as federal requirements to:

- identify, locate and continue availability of services for children under State care or supervision who are displaced or adversely affected by a disaster;
- respond to new child welfare cases in areas adversely affected by a disaster, and provide services in those cases;
- remain in communication with caseworkers and other essential child welfare personnel who are displaced because of a disaster; and
- preserve essential program records and coordinate services and share information with other States (Section 422(b) (16) of the SSA).

The following plans are available:

- An updated copy of the OCFS Business Continuity Plan (BCP). This Plan serves as a foundation for all OCFS staff to continue to provide essential services during emergencies.
- An updated copy of the OCFS Business Continuity Plan Light. This Plan is an action document used to reestablish essential services during emergencies. It includes helpful information, such as divisional phone trees and contact information for local departments of social services.
- An updated copy of the OCFS Division of Child Welfare and Community Services (CWCS) Business Continuity Plan. This Division has the primary

responsibility for the oversight of child welfare services delivered by local departments of social services.

- A copy of the template used by OCFS juvenile facilities to develop a “Ready Emergency Data Book”, which details each facility’s plan in the event of an emergency.

The BCPs provide the foundation for OCFS staff to continue to provide essential services during emergencies, and to facilitate an orderly recovery from emergency situations. In support of this, they

- Outline key concepts of business continuity operations;
- Identify roles and responsibilities of key OCFS staff;
- Describe how the agency and its five programs units will function in the event that their essential services are disrupted;
- Outline the mechanics and flows of communication within and outside the agency;
- Identify when and by whom the plan is activated and provides procedures for relocation and for a return to normal operations;
- Outlines agency requirements for BCP awareness training and exercises;
- Establish procedures to update and maintain the BCPs.

In relation to OCFS’ role in oversight, OCFS issued 07-OCFS-ADM-10: “New York State Disaster Plan – Local Department of Social Services Requirements,” on July 30, 2007. This ADM outlines the requirements for local departments of social services pursuant the federal Child and Family Services Improvement Act of 2006, P.L. 109-288. The submitted local plans will be incorporated into state planning.

OCFS conducted an agency wide Exercise of our Business Continuity Plan (BCP) on Wednesday, April 23, 2008, to confirm that the agency is able to respond and continue to provide essential services in the event of an emergency disruption. Emergency planning is not a one-time event but rather a perpetual cycle of training, exercising, and revision. Recommendations from our After-Action Report will be incorporated into our BCP to further enhance our objectives. The BCP Core Team will continue to meet throughout the year to keep the plan updated.

In June 2008, OCFS staff participated in a statewide hurricane preparedness exercise. OCFS carried out several roles during the five day exercise which stimulated a full activation of the Emergency Operations Center (EOC), due to a Category 2 Hurricane hitting the South Shore of Long Island. OCFS participated as a member of the Human Services General Population Temporary Sheltering Group. Upon completion of the exercise, OCFS staff attended the Participant Debriefing and Recovery Planning Discussion to review the collective response and provide feedback.

The week of June 9, 2008, in another preparedness exercise, one SCR hotline unit received hotline calls and processed Intake Reports at the “Cold Site” for their entire shift. This allowed staff to become acclimated with the Cold Site and determine that the site is fully functional. The “Cold Site” is the alternative space fully equipped to handle hotline calls.

In the spring of 2009, several OCFS staff members were sent to a State Emergency Operations Center Course sponsored by the State Emergency Management Office (SEMO). This training insures that in response to and support of disasters or major emergencies personnel from partner agencies are appropriately briefed on their respective responsibilities when assigned to the SEMO.

### **Adoptive Incentive Payments**

New York State did not receive Adoption Incentive funding in 2008-09

### **Timely Home Studies Reporting and Data**

Timely Home Studies Reporting and Data: The Safe and Timely Interstate Placement of Foster Children Act of 2006 amended the Act at 471(a)(26)(B)(2) to encourage timely home studies. (Information Memorandum ACYF-CB-IM-06-03, dated August 11, 2006 provides an overview of the provisions.) A home study is considered timely if “within 60 days after the State receives from another State a request to conduct a study of a home environment for purposes of assessing the safety and suitability of placing a child in the home, the State shall, directly or by contract”:

- conduct and complete the study; and
- return to the other State a report on the results of the study, which shall address the extent to which placement in the home would meet the needs of the child.

New York State was asked to provide with their CFSP submission the following information for FYs 2007 and 2008:

- *the frequency with which the State needed the extended 75-day period for an interstate home study begun on or before September 30, 2008 (Section 471(a)(26)(A)(ii) of the Act):* A total of 458 Safe and Timely requests were received during the time period from 10/1/2007 -9/30/08. Of those 458 requests, 183 of those studies required the 75 day extension.
- *the reasons why the extended compliance period was needed:* The most common reasons cited as extension reasons included: State Central Registry clearances had not been completed, lack of follow up by the resource in completing and submitting medical reports and waiting on responses from references.

- *the extent to which the extended compliance period resulted in the resolution of the circumstances that necessitated the extension:* Of the 183 studies that required an extension, 107 of them were completed within the 75 day time frame.
- *the actions taken by the State and any relevant Federal agency to resolve the need for an extended compliance period:* The NYS ICPC unit continues to follow up and prompt timely submission of home studies via phone calls and emails to the appropriate local department of social services.