

Butler County Children and Youth Services
County Improvement Plan (CIP)

Date of Plan: 03/24/15

Initial

Update

Section I. Team Members

Sponsor Team:

Charles Johns (Administrator)

Karianne Sarnese (Casework Manager)

Brandon Savochka (Casework Manager)

Continuous Improvement Team:

Brandie Birkbichler (Fiscal)

Amanda Feltenberger (Service Integration)

Cathryn Heakins (Program Specialist)

Trish Holfelder (Paralegal)

Alan McGrath (Intake Screener)

Jodi Miller (Casework Supervisor)

Rick Mohr (Casework Supervisor)

Dave Nowakowski (Caseworker)

Bev Porter (Clerk Typist)

Karianne Sarnese (Casework Manager)

Brandon Savochka (Casework Manager)

Aaron Williams (Caseworker)

Section II. Background and Development of the Desired Future State including Priority Outcomes

Butler County has been involved in multiple rounds of the Quality Service Reviews. Past County Improvement Plans have focused on outcomes for cases accepted for services. This year, in addition to the Agency's QSR results (including focus group content), the sponsor team included data from its Needs Based Plan and Budget to identify areas to be addressed in the County Improvement Plan. The Continuous Improvement Team was asked to consider practice at Intake and to develop a plan to improve outcomes pertaining to:

- Engagement
- Safe Case Closure
- Permanency
- Family Finding

A Continuous Improvement Team was formed with representation from all Units in the agency. Additional staff from the Intake Units was included as the focus was on front end practice. The Agency's Practice Improvement Specialist from the Child Welfare Resource Center facilitated this process over a series of four meetings using the DAPIM model.

The team began by developing the following **Define Statements**:

What does successful family engagement and safe case closure look like internally for Intake Units?

Successful family engagement is achieved when Intake staff listens to what families have to say in a non-judgmental manner, understands the issues families face, and meets families where they are.

Safe case closure can happen when Intake staff has positive interactions with families and a trusting relationship with honest communication is established so families understand why they are involved with the agency. When Intake staff complete thorough, accurate assessments, help families build on existing strengths, use service providers to assist families quickly address problems, and involve family and other informal supports early in the case, and families will be more likely to stabilize, keep their children safe, and obtain the resources to solve their own problems in the future.

How can we make good decisions at Intake that support early permanency for children and youth? How do we locate and engage family and kin at Intake to keep children and youth connected to and supported by their families?

By completing comprehensive investigations/assessments, and connecting/reconnecting families with both formal and informal supports (community resources and relatives/kin), we can keep children safely at home.

When children can't remain in the home, we can keep them with kin on a short term safety plan while we use Family Group Decision Making to develop a plan to safely return them home.

The child's first placement can be their last placement if we ask about permanency at the time of placement, if we have a supportive kin network in place to care for the child, if we use Family Group Decision Making to develop a plan, if we have many trained foster families who are committed to concurrent planning and who are prepared to manage the child's potentially challenging behaviors.

Assess:

As the team began to assess their agency's practice in these areas, it became apparent that staff attitudes and values were in line with the above Define statements. However, due to the recent changes to the Child Protective Services Law (CPSL) and the implementation of the Child Welfare Information Systems (CWIS), Intake staff was overwhelmed by the increases in new referrals and the amount of time it was taking them to complete the data entry/data retrieval responsibilities they have under the CAPS and CWIS.

The priority gaps selected by the team once the Assessment phase of the DAPIM model was completed focused on ways they could organize and streamline their work so that more time could be spent doing quality assessments with families. Getting a good idea of what a manageable Intake caseload will be now that CPSL changes and CWIS are a part of the required work is also a priority. Staff were also concerned that due to capacity challenges, there is an increasing reliance on in-home providers. Although the use of providers in their work with families was seen as important, staff wants to ensure they have primary knowledge of the needs and concerns of the families they serve.

Of particular concern to the team was the number of children entering placement placed outside of Butler County due to the lack of resource family homes in Butler County. Overall staff believes they do very good work identifying relatives and kin for children and youth who cannot safely remain in their homes. However, if no relatives or kin are available as a placement resource, few children/youth remain within the county borders once placed in foster care. The county is phasing out its foster care program and now uses provider foster care exclusively.

Plan:

The plan which follows is a direct result of the assessment work done by the team. As the next Butler County QSR is scheduled for 2016, the team was encouraged by the facilitator to select concrete, achievable Action Steps that target the root causes for their priority gaps.

Section III. Plan Strategies and Action Steps to be Implemented and Monitored

Outcome #1: Engagement Efforts, Role and Voice, Teaming

Goal: Increase quality of family engagement at Intake

| | Action Steps | Evidence of Completion | Person(s) Responsible | Status Update |
|---|---|--|-----------------------|---------------|
| a. Develop tools to streamline and organize the work | | | | |
| Sept. 2015 | Develop charts of time frames for required plans and assessments | Charts, checklists, quick reference guides | Work Team | |
| July 2015 | Develop an Intake to Ongoing case transfer policy and process | Policy, written guidelines | Management Team | |
| b. Ensure staff have the capacity to work with each family | | | | |
| March 2016 | Have all new staff complete Charting the Course at the earliest possible date so they can be assigned cases | New Caseworkers are assigned cases, caseloads are balanced | Management Team | |
| Sept. 2015 | Provide refresher sessions to staff on the required safety and risk assessment intervals | Sessions held | CWRC and Work Team | |
| July 2015 | Determine a desired target staff to case ratio for the Intake Units | Target ratio established | Management Team | |
| c. Clarify the role of providers in the work with families | | | | |
| Sept. 2015 | Develop guidelines for staff and service providers that clarifies the responsibilities of CYS staff and providers | Guidelines developed | Work Team | |
| Dec. 2015 | Educate CYS staff and providers about the guidelines | Education sessions conducted | Work Team | |

**Outcome #2: Stability, Living Arrangements, Maintaining Family Relationships,
Permanency, and Cultural Awareness and Responsiveness**

Goal: The number of Butler County children placed in Butler County will be increased

| Action Steps | Evidence of Completion | Person(s) Responsible | Monitoring |
|--|---|-----------------------------------|------------------------------|
| a. Ensure all team members (agency, providers, and families) are working to identify placement resources in Butler County | | | |
| April 2015 | Determine what financial resources are available for recruitment | Communication from Administration | Administration and Work Team |
| June 2015 | Discuss the current concerns with providers regarding lack of resource homes, the message being shared with resource families, and on-call services | Session held | Work Team |
| Sept. 2015 | Contact neighboring counties to discuss their use of provider resource families, explore opportunities for collaboration | Contact made, notes taken | Work Team |
| Sept. 2015 | Compile a list of available resource homes, update it regularly | Resource home list | Providers |
| Sept. 2015 | Increase Caseworkers' participation in meetings with provider resource families | Case Notes | Caseworkers and Supervisors |

The Agency's next state-supported Quality Service Review will be held in: 2016