

County Improvement Plan

County Name: York County

Date of Plan: December 15, 2011

Initial

Update

Section I. Sponsor Team Members

Members of the York County Office of Children, Youth, and Families (YCCYF) leadership team serve as the county improvement sponsor team. These members include:

Deb Chronister, Director

CarrieAnn Frolio, Assistant Director

Hasmukh Amin, Fiscal Officer

Wanda Noll, Director of Social Services

Jennifer Moubray, Quality Manager

**See last page for implementation team members (Practice Council)*

Section II. Background

York County participated in Phase 1 of the Quality Services Review (QSR) in April 2011. Fifteen cases were reviewed and focus groups as well as stakeholder interviews were conducted. The final results of the QSR were received in July 2011. YCCYF's County Improvement Plan (CIP) was developed primarily by the sponsor team.

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York County draws from a number of data sources in the development of this CIP. These data sources include findings from: the 2011 Quality Service Review, inclusive of reviewer scoring and interviews, and summary reports of both focus groups and stakeholder interviews; the Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System (AFCARS); the 2011 Licensing Inspection Summary (LIS); and monthly and annual reports from our internal, local quality assurance reviews. The data gathered from local led reviews was considered in comparison to determine consistencies in both areas of strength and continued improvement as well as prioritization of outcome areas. In addition Agency policies and procedures as well as the results of Agency initiatives and multiple practice improvement efforts over the past years were reviewed.

York County also incorporated the results of two forums to garner additional input for the development of the CIP. YCCYF leadership, the University of Pittsburgh's Child Welfare Training Program, and Pennsylvania DPW OCYF hosted the QSR "Next Steps Meeting" on November 1, 2011 with all Agency staff. This forum provided a comprehensive review of the April 2011 QSR findings, including focus on identified opportunities for improving outcomes for children and families served by YCCYF. Consumers of services were represented in a family panel and gave input to priorities and strategies for improving outcomes for children and families. The forum fostered a dialogue between families willing to share their experience and staff who were able to ask questions regarding both the strengths and concerns across all levels of Agency involvement. Additionally, the YCCYF leadership team in partnership with consulting facilitators engaged staff across all levels in the participation of focus and work groups to develop the 2011-2015 YCCYF Strategic Plan. This plan outlines the Agency mission statement, vision, as well as strategic imperatives, goals, and objectives that were identified as priority areas.

Following a review of all the information received from the data sources and gleaned from the forums the team decided to prioritize the outcomes based on the key areas that need improvement as well as on those that would have the greatest impact on other indicators. The team considered those outcomes that would have the most significant and comprehensive impact on Agency practice as a whole as well as those that align with the Agency's strategic plan and current initiatives and shifts in practice.

Section III. Priority Outcomes

Outcome # 1: Improved Engagement of Fathers

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Engaging fathers at all levels of involvement with YCCYF will result in better outcomes for children and youth by maximizing their natural support systems. Additionally, improvement in this global outcome will directly enhance role and voice, cultural awareness, assessment and understanding, and maintenance of family connections with fathers.

Outcome # 2: Improved Teaming (Formation and Function)

This outcome supports partnering with families, providers, stakeholders, and systems to improve assessment, planning, and service delivery. Teaming encourages families to be active participants in all phases of the case process and supports improved communication and a shared vision between all.

Outcome # 3: Improved Family Connections

Maintaining family connections promotes the preservation of families and the successful reunification of children and youth with their families. Continued quality relationships and emotional support between siblings, parents, extended family members, community supports, and other identified connections contributes to well-being and stability.

Section IV. Findings

Findings related to Outcome # 1: Engaging Fathers

The QSR report identified the need for improved engagement with fathers served by YCCYF. This outcome relates directly to practice performance indicator 1b, engagement efforts, with the focus on engaging fathers. This indicator measures the diligence shown by the team in taking actions to find, engage, and build a rapport with the child/youth, and families and to overcome barriers to families' participation. This indicator assesses the degree to which those working with the children/youth and their families (parents and other caregivers) are:

- finding family members who can provide support and permanency for the child/youth;
- developing and maintaining a culturally competent, mutually beneficial trust-based working relationship with the child/youth and family;
- focusing on the child/youth and family's strengths and needs;

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- being receptive, dynamic and willing to make adjustments in scheduling and meeting locations to accommodate family participation in the service process, including case planning; and
- offering transportation and childcare supports, where necessary, to increase family participation in planning and support efforts.

The findings note that 30% of the cases reviewed were found to be in the acceptable range in regards to the engagement of fathers, however 70% were found to be in the unacceptable range. These findings differ drastically from the number of cases that were rated as acceptable for the engagement of mothers (75%) and the child/youth (89%).

Fathers as a subcategory in other indicators were also rated as unacceptable and reviewers attributed this to an overall lack of engagement with fathers. Reviewers expressed a lack of engagement directly resulted in a lack of role and voice, cultural awareness, assessment and understanding, and maintenance of family connections with fathers. These additional gaps can negatively affect a child's permanency related to reunification, identification of kinship resources and family relationships and connections as well as a child's well-being related to accurate assessment of the father, the father's involvement in case planning, and the father receiving appropriate services to enhance his ability to meet his child(ren)'s needs.

These findings are supported by other sources including the focus groups, stakeholder interviews, and the family panel as well as aligning with the YCCYF strategic plan imperative to be family focused. The ratings coincide with internal quality assurance review results that note deficiencies for fathers in the areas of parental visitation, needs/services provided to parents, family involvement in case planning, and worker visits with parents.

Findings related to Outcome # 2: Teaming (Formation and Function)

The QSR report identified the need for improved formation and functioning of teams. This outcome is directly related to practice performance indicator 2, teaming, both formation and function. This indicator focuses on the formation and functional performance of the family team in conducting ongoing collaborative problem solving, providing effective services, and achieving positive results with the child/youth and family. This indicator assesses the degree to which appropriate team members have been identified and formed into a working team that share a common "big picture" understanding and long-term view of the child/youth and family. Team members should have sufficient professional

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knowledge, skills, and cultural awareness to work effectively with the child/youth and family. Members of the team should demonstrate a pattern of working effectively together to share information, plan, provide, and evaluate services for the child/youth and family.

In the majority of cases teaming was rated as unacceptable (57%) with only 43% rated as acceptable. For the formation indicator, 60% were rated as unacceptable and for the functioning indicator, 53% were rated as unacceptable. Reviewers felt that teams were not likely to form, but when they did form they did not function successfully for the majority of the cases, primarily the out-of-home cases. Additionally, reviewers noted a lack of unified vision and effective problem solving which directly leads to poor team performance. An identified team leader was recommended to clear the communication path and ensure all information is shared between team members.

Concerns with the ability to form and function as a team was reiterated by focus groups who noted time constraints as a factor that impacts teaming as well as difficulties when team members have differing views on Agency directives or initiatives. Concerns regarding teaming have also been noted within quality assurance review results when after interviewing all parties it is evident that the team is either not formed or if formed is not unified and working cohesively towards a positive outcome. Strides towards teaming have also been noted and discussed in several Agency initiative and recent shifts in practice. This prioritized outcome also aligns with the imperatives of our strategic plan including goals and objectives the support family focus, respect for clients and each other, and accountability to all stakeholders.

Findings related to Outcome # 3: Family Connections

The QSR report identified the need for improved maintenance of family connections. This outcome is directly related to practice performance indicator 10, maintaining family connections. This indicator measures the quality of relationships between the child/youth and his/her family members and other important people in the child/youth's life. The quality of these relationships depends on opportunities for positive interactions; emotionally supportive, mutually beneficial connections; and engaging in nurturing exchanges with one another. When this occurs, it promotes the preservation of families in the successful reunification of the child/youth and his/her parents. This indicator assesses the degree to which interventions are building and maintaining positive interactions and providing emotional support between the child/youth and his/her parents, siblings, relatives, and other people in the child/youth's life, when the child/youth and family members are temporarily living away from one another.

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Just over half (52%) of the cases were rated as acceptable for maintaining family connections with 48% rated as unacceptable. It was noted that the Agency performed well at maintaining connections between children/youth and their siblings but were significantly worse at maintaining connections with fathers (75% unacceptable) and mothers (43% unacceptable). Reviewers noted that visits with biological parents were often missed and never rescheduled, barriers such as incarcerations were cited for no visits occurring, and restrictions were placed on extended family members visiting.

Concerns regarding family connections have also been noted within quality assurance review results measuring parental visitation, both mother, father, and contact with extended family. The need for improvement of family connections have also been noted and discussed in several Agency initiative and recent shifts in practice and was addressed by the family panel forum. This prioritized outcome also aligns with the imperatives of our strategic plan including goals and objectives surrounding being family focused.

Section V. Strategies and Action Steps for each Outcome

See attached.

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Section V. Strategies and Action Steps for each Outcome

Outcome # 1: Improved Father Engagement (Also reference YCCYF 2011-2015 Strategic Plan)							
STRATEGIES	ACTION STEPS	INDICATORS/ BENCHMARKS	EVIDENCE OF COMPLETION	PERSON(S) RESPONSIBLE	TIMEFRAME	RESOURCES NEEDED	STATUS
Develop and implement CWEL MSW intern special projects designed to engage and increase outreach efforts to fathers.	<p>1) Description of and infrastructure for special projects will be finalized.</p> <p>2) Engagement and outreach efforts will be implemented. Will include but not be limited to the following: engaging incarcerated and independent living fathers and surveying other county agencies for information on fatherhood engagement practice, policies, and training.</p>	<p>1) Description will be written.</p> <p>2) Cross-section of staff members are available to provide additional engagement and outreach efforts with identified fathers as well as development of skills and understanding to improve father engagement.</p>	<p>1) Description will be made available.</p> <p>2) Identification of staff members. CWEL students will make data and results of special projects available.</p>	Family Finding & Engagement Specialist, CWEL Students	Immediate-May 2012 & Ongoing	CWEL students, YCCYF staff time	In progress
Enhancement of staff training, coaching, and supervision to be inclusive of father engagement.	1) Tailoring of internal orientation, trainings, shadowing, and supervision to include focus on father engagement and strengths based approaches and cultural sensitivity to fathers.	1) Development and implementation of father engagement and male specific trainings and supervision strategies.	1) All applicable staff will be trained and supervised in practice related to father engagement and related strategies.	Training Specialist, Family Finding & Engagement Specialist, Casework Supervisors, Casework Managers	Immediate-Ongoing	YCCYF staff, staff time, CWTP training and coaching supports	In progress

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<p>In progress</p>	<p>YCCYF staff, staff time, Accurt, FGDM provider</p>	<p>Immediate-Ongoing</p>	<p>Caseworkers, Casework Supervisors, Managers, Family Finding Unit, FGDM staff, Paralegals</p>	<p>1-3) All cases will have the father and identifying, contact information listed on the record of family. Accurt searches will be completed and reviewed. Case Record documentation evident of father and paternal family involvement in all levels of service. Documentation throughout the family finding and FGDM process verifying inclusion of father and paternal family members.</p>	<p>1) All fathers will be identified and included in assessment, identification of strengths and needs, and service delivery. 2) Father's will be prepared for and present at Blended Perspective Meetings and FGDM Conferences. 3) Paternal family will be identified and prepared for and participate in Blended Perspective Meetings and FGDM Conferences.</p>	<p>1) Identify all fathers and engage them throughout all levels of service. 2) Fathers will be engaged in the process of family finding and FGDM. 3) Identify and engage paternal family members. Include paternal family in the family finding and FGDM process.</p>	<p>Identify, locate, and engage fathers at all levels of service utilizing the family finding and family group decision making principals and models as best practice.</p>
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Outcome # 2: Improved Teaming (Also reference YCCYF 2011-2015 Strategic Plan)							
STRATEGIES	ACTION STEPS	INDICATORS/ BENCHMARKS	EVIDENCE OF COMPLETION	PERSON(S) RESPONSIBLE	TIMEFRAME	RESOURCES NEEDED	STATUS
Extend outreach and training to providers, community, schools, and stakeholders.	<p>1) Invitation to providers, schools, community, and stakeholders offering Agency outreach and training.</p> <p>2) Provide outreach and training as needed or requested.</p>	<p>1) & 2) Schools, community, providers, and stakeholders will have a better understanding of roles and responsibilities of team members as well as a role and voice in the teaming process.</p>	<p>1) & 2) Tracking and reporting of all outreach efforts and training presentations.</p>	<p>Training Specialist, Community Outreach Specialist</p>	<p>Immediate-Ongoing</p>	<p>YCCYF Staff, staff time, outreach & training materials</p>	<p>In process</p>
Increase utilization of models and systems that support teaming.	<p>1) Educate all staff on Joint Planning Team (JPT) for Youth and Families. Refer JPT as appropriate.</p> <p>2) Provide a Shared Case Management (SCM) refresher training for all staff.</p> <p>3) Increase number of Blended Perspective Meetings to form teams and plan for function. Utilize Family Group Decision Making at all decision making points.</p> <p>4) Refine internal protocols to establish roles and responsibilities of all team members.</p>	<p>1) Increase in JPT referrals.</p> <p>2) The SCM protocol will be followed.</p> <p>3) All team members will have a better understanding of roles and responsibilities. All team members will have role and voice across all levels of Agency involvement.</p> <p>4) All staff will have a better understanding of roles and responsibilities.</p>	<p>1) Tracking and reporting of JPT referrals.</p> <p>2) Documentation adhering to SCM protocol. IT meetings to report on progress.</p> <p>3) QA reviews, FF Unit reports, FGDM tracking and reporting of referrals</p> <p>4) Direct service leadership to report on progress, QA reviews, committee reviews, supervision logs</p>	<p>Casework Managers, Casework Supervisors, Caseworkers, SCM Implementation Team, Family Finding Unit, FGDM provider, YCCYF Staff</p>	<p>Immediate-Ongoing</p>	<p>YCCYF staff, training materials, time, FGDM provider, curriculum and training</p>	<p>In process</p>

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Outcome # 3: Improved Family Connections (Also reference YCCYF 2011-2015 Strategic Plan)

STRATEGIES	ACTION STEPS	INDICATORS/ BENCHMARKS	EVIDENCE OF COMPLETION	PERSON(S) RESPONSIBLE	TIMEFRAME	RESOURCES NEEDED	STATUS
Increase quantity and quality of child/youth visits with mother, father, siblings, extended family, and other identified connections.	<p>1) Increase use of Lafayette house for visitation and decrease use of Agency visiting rooms.</p> <p>2) Visitation to be considered or addressed as appropriate at all Blended Perspective Meetings, FGDM Conferences, committee and case reviews.</p> <p>3) Implement visitation coaching in York County.</p>	<p>1) Number and frequency of children visiting at Lafayette.</p> <p>2) Plans and recommendation sheets will include visitation plans. Increase connections demonstrated through mapping and other family finding steps.</p> <p>3) RFP and/or Agency restructuring to be proposed and implemented. Identification of families to utilize visitation coaching.</p>	<p>1) Case record documentation of visitation and Lafayette House schedule.</p> <p>2) Case record documentation, family finding tools, family and Agency plans, and recommendation sheets.</p> <p>3) Referrals will be made and services will be initiated. Tracking and report of use.</p>	<p>Caseworkers, Supervisors, Managers, Family Finding Unit, FGDM provider, Contract Manager, Assistant Director</p>	Immediate-Ongoing	YCCYF staff, FGDM provider, time,	In Process

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**In addition to the sponsor team and above identified as person(s) responsible, listed below are the additional improvement team members.*

Implementation Team Members (Practice Council Members)

Sue Kelly, Intake Caseworker
Shaniekqua Fells, Intake Caseworker
Matt Clause, Intake Caseworker
Kate Bienkowski, Family Support Caseworker
Nicole Fisher, Family Support Caseworker
Lois Bracken, Permanency Caseworker
Susan Moore, Resource Caseworker
David Riggs, Family Support Caseworker
Tara Deane, Truancy Caseworker
Robyn Folk, Truancy Caseworker
Nicole Lehman, Truancy Caseworker
Amanda Knaub, Independent Living Caseworker
Ellen Carter, TAP Coordinator & Housing Specialist
Danny Moye, Independent Living Caseworker
Heather Buhl, Family Finding Caseworker
Carol Thorton, Clerical Support Staff
Elaine Werner, Clerical Support Staff
Marcia Forbes, Caseaide
Cherie Walters, Quality Assurance Caseworker
Cris Lentz, Family Support Supervisor
Jennah Kosmicki, Family Support Supervisor
Ashley Rohrbaugh, Intake Supervisor
Tahitia Martin, Paralegal
Jennifer Moubray, Quality Manager
CarrieAnn Frolio, Assistant Director
Deb Chronister, Director

