

County Improvement Plan

County Name: York County

Date of Plan: November 20, 2012

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, Division Manager of Direct Services

Jennifer Moubray, Quality Manager

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

Section II. Background

York County participated in Phase 2 of the Quality Services Review (QSR) in April 2012. Fifteen cases were reviewed and focus groups as well as stakeholder interviews were conducted. The final results of the QSR were received in September 2012. YCCYF's County Improvement Plan (CIP) update was developed primarily by the sponsor team in conjunction with the implementation team.

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York County draws from a number of data sources in the update of this CIP. These data sources include findings from: the 2012 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 2012 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 CIP updates. YCCYF leadership, the University of Pittsburgh's Child Welfare Resource Center, and Pennsylvania DPW OCYF hosted the QSR "Next Steps Meeting" on September 21, 2012 with all Agency staff. This forum provided a comprehensive review of the April 2012 QSR findings, including focus on identified opportunities for improving outcomes for children and families served by YCCYF. Consumers of services were represented in a youth panel and gave input to priorities and strategies for improving outcomes for children and families. The forum fostered a dialogue between youth 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 continue improvement efforts towards the outcomes outlined in the initial CIP and update it to again reflect prioritization of those outcomes based on the key areas that need improvement as well as on those that would have the greatest impact on other indicators and align with the Agency's strategic plan, current initiatives, and shifts in practice.

Section III. Priority Outcomes

Outcome # 1: Improved Engagement of Fathers

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.

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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 1a, 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;
- 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

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- offering transportation and childcare supports, where necessary, to increase family participation in planning and support efforts.

The findings note that 36% of the cases reviewed (6% increase from 2011) were found to be in the acceptable range in regards to the engagement of fathers, however 64% were found to be in the unacceptable range. The results of engagement efforts with mothers mirrored those with fathers and were just as likely to be rated outside the acceptable range. These findings differ drastically from the number of cases that were rated as acceptable for the engagement of the child/youth (85%) and the substitute caregiver (75%).

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 youth 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 knowledge, skills, and cultural awareness to work effectively with the child/youth and family. Members of the team should

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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 the functioning of the team was rated as unacceptable (73%) with only 27% rated as acceptable. For the formation indicator, 73% were also rated as unacceptable. Reviewers felt that teams were not likely to form, but when they did individuals tended to act independently and toward differing permanency goals.

Concerns with the ability to form and function as a team was reiterated by focus groups that noted that agency staff team with one another to discuss case issues, but acknowledged that teaming should branch out beyond the agency staff. 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 to 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.

68% of the cases were rated as acceptable for maintaining family connections with 32% rated as unacceptable. It was noted that the Agency performed better at maintaining connections between children/youth and their and siblings but were significantly worse at maintaining connections with fathers (50% unacceptable) and mothers.

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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 has also been noted and discussed in several Agency initiatives and recent shifts in practice and was addressed by the youth panel forum. Family finding was cited by agency focus groups as improving connections for families. 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 <i>(Also reference YCCYF 2011-2015 Strategic Plan)</i>							
STRATEGIES	ACTION STEPS	INDICATORS/ BENCHMARKS	EVIDENCE OF COMPLETION	PERSON(S) RESPONSIBLE	TIMEFRAME	RESOURCES NEEDED	STATUS
Increase outreach and engagement efforts to fathers.	1) Formation of workgroup to implement outreach and engagement efforts. Work group to implement strategies and action steps to achieve outcome.	1) Cross-section of staff members available to volunteer time, skill, and understanding to improve engagement with fathers.	1) Identification of work group members, outputs, and outcomes.	1) Practice Council & workgroup members	Immediate-Ongoing	YCCYF staff, staff time, technical assistance from CWRC as needed	In progress
	2) Conduct focus groups of fathers to identify barriers to consistent engagement of fathers.	2) Fathers have the opportunity for input into identified barriers and solutions.	2) Report from focus groups.	2) Community Outreach Specialist			
	3) Implement a CYF pamphlet and handbook to give to families as a supplement to engagement.	3) Improved communication regarding process, roles, and responsibilities of agency. Use of handbook to access information.	3) All families will be provided a pamphlet and handbook.	3) Practice Council & workgroup members			
	4) Develop a FSP/FGDM plan form and practice model to increase engagement in decision making through FGDM model.	4) Families will be engaged in the service planning and decision making process.	4) FSP/FGDM plan form and policy will be implemented.	4) Division Manager of Direct Services, Casework Managers, QA staff, FGDM staff			

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<p>Enhancement of staff- hiring, training, coaching, and supervision to be inclusive of father engagement.</p>	<p>1) Tailoring interview process, orientation, trainings, and mentoring / supervision to include focus on father engagement.</p>	<p>1) All staff understands the importance of and utilizes strategies to engage fathers as it pertains to their role.</p>	<p>1) All staff trained per training report. Interviews, training, case record and supervision logs to reflect enhancement.</p>	<p>1) Training, Community Outreach, Family Finding & Engagement Specialists, Supervisors, & Managers</p>	<p>Immediate-Ongoing</p>	<p>YCCYF staff, staff time, CWRC training and coaching supports</p>	<p>In progress</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>	<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>1) All fathers will be identified and included in assessment, identification of strengths and needs, and service planning/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>1-3) All cases will have the father and identifying, contact information listed on the record of family. Accurint 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>1-3) Caseworkers, Casework Supervisors, Casework Managers, Family Finding Unit, FGDM staff, Paralegals</p>	<p>Immediate-Ongoing</p>	<p>YCCYF staff, staff time, Accurint, FGDM provider</p>	<p>In progress</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. Consideration of focus groups.</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>1-2) 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, systems, and protocols that support teaming.	<p>1) Educate 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 staff.</p> <p>3) Increase number of Blended Perspective Meetings to form teams and plan for function. Utilize FGDM at all decision making points.</p> <p>4) Refine protocols to establish roles and responsibilities of team members (identification of workgroup as needed). Include information in parent handbook.</p>	<p>1) Increase in JPT referrals.</p> <p>2) The SCM protocol will be followed.</p> <p>3) Team members will have an understanding of roles and responsibilities. Team members will have a role and voice in Agency involvement.</p> <p>4) All staff, youth, and families will have a better understanding of roles and responsibilities.</p>	<p>1) Tracking and reporting of JPT referrals.</p> <p>2) Documentation adhering to protocol. Training report.</p> <p>3) QA reviews, FF Unit reports, FGDM tracking & reporting.</p> <p>4) Family participation in team, completed protocols / handbook, QA reviews</p>	<p>1&3) Casework Managers, Supervisors, & Caseworkers</p> <p>2) SCM Implementation Team</p> <p>3) Family Finding Unit & FGDM provider</p> <p>4) Practice Council & workgroup members</p>	<p>Immediate-Ongoing</p>	<p>YCCYF staff time, training materials, FGDM provider, curriculum and training materials</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.	1) Increase use of Lafayette house for visitation and decrease use of Agency visiting rooms.	1) Number and frequency of children visiting at Lafayette.	1) Case record documentation of visitation and Lafayette House schedule.	1&2) Caseworkers, Casework Supervisors & Managers,	Immediate-Ongoing	YCCYF staff, FGDM provider, staff time	In Process
	2) Visitation to be considered or addressed as appropriate at all Blended Perspective Meetings, FGDM Conferences, committee and case reviews.	2) Plans and recommendation sheets will include visitation plans. Increase connections demonstrated through connectedness mapping and other family finding steps.	2) Case record documentation, family finding tools, family and Agency plans, and recommendation sheets.	2) Family Finding Unit & FGDM provider			
	3) Implement visitation coaching in York County.	3) RFP and/or Agency restructuring to be proposed and implemented. Identification of families to utilize visitation coaching.	3) Referrals will be made and services will be initiated. Tracking and report of use.	3) Sponsor Team & Contract Manager			
	4) Formation of workgroup to improve family connections for children/youth in placement. Work group to develop strategies and action steps to achieve outcome.	4) Cross-section of staff members available to volunteer time, skill, and understanding to improve family connections.	4) Identification of work group members, outputs, and outcomes.	3&4) Practice Council & workgroup members			

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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 listed, note not all workgroup members are listed)*

Sue Kelly, Intake Caseworker
Shaniekqua Fells, Intake Caseworker
Matt Clause, Intake Caseworker
Kate Bienkowski, Family Support Caseworker
Nicole Fisher, Family Support Caseworker
Lois Kirkpatrick, Permanency Caseworker
Susan Moore, Resource 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