

Northampton County NGA Strategies and Action Steps Document

GOALS

- 1. Increase Safety**
- 2. Reduce Reliance on Out of Home Care**
- 3. Improve Permanency**
- 4. Reduce Re-Entry**

STRATEGIES

- 1. Strategic decision-making**
- 2. Family group decision making (inclusive of concurrent planning)**
- 3. Family finding**
- 4. Service array**
- 5. Partnership with courts**

County PIP Reduction Strategies and Action Steps document

County : Northampton

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Strategy i: Identify youth (12-17) at intake & placement to determine precipitating problems to ensure early use of appropriate services

Goals: 1, 2, 3 and 4

Strategies: 1, 2, 3 and 4

Action Steps and timeline: 2009 & 2010

- **Run quarterly report identifying youth & presenting problems**
- **Review AFCARS data disc**
- **Review data to identify disproportionality trends**
- **Ongoing case in-home service reviews by QA unit to determine if service level/type is appropriate and necessary**
- **Family Group Decision Making routinely used at intake level for families and youth at risk of placement (ages 12-17) and for discharge planning if child is in placement**
- **CYF Supervisors assure that transfer of learning re: concurrent planning occurs throughout agency involvement with family**
- **Refer families whose children have come into placement for the first time to the Time Limited Family Reunification Grant provided through Marvine Family Center (Bethlehem Area School District), 2008-09, 2009-10, 2010-2011**
- **Refer families and children to evidence-based services based upon their needs at assessment and approval at staffing committee**

Strategy ii: Build community capacity to provide preventive services, i.e. FGDM, Family Centers, housing, employment, health care, etc.

Goals: 1 and 2

Strategies: 2 and 4

Action Steps and timeline: 2009

- **Several providers are certified in FGDM; 3 current providers, add 3 new providers in 2009**
- **Identify, train and certify providers through Family Development Credentialing**

2009 (continued)

- **Identify and train providers in FGDM offered through the PA Child Welfare Competency-Based Training Program (Training to be held 4/09)**
- **Continue to use Family to Family Initiative staff for placement prevention/reunification services.**
- **Staff trained in Family Finding through Court Improvement Project (2008-09 training; implementation ongoing)**
- **Enhance services at Family Centers to improve school readiness, parent participation & provide positive parenting skills through United Way funding & CYF participation on Advisory Boards (Family Connections – Easton, Marvine Family Center –Bethlehem).**
- **Caseworkers rely on evidence-based practices, FFT, MST & FGDM; also use Family Focused Solution-Based Services when appropriate.**

2010

- **Identify two additional providers who will be trained and certified in FGDM.**
- **Providers are credentialed in Family Development Credentialing; family engagement practices result in improved service delivery and outcomes for children and families.**

Strategy iii: Agency reliance on evidence-based services, i.e., Functional Family Therapy, Multi-systemic therapy, FGDM, family engagement practices.

Goals: 1, 2 3 and 4

Strategies: 1, 2 3, 4 and 5

Action Steps and timeline: 2009

- **Review providers outcomes reports in conjunction with annual contracting process**
- **Communicate outcomes expectations to providers clearly. Contracts are not renewed with providers who do not demonstrate positive outcomes in relation to CFSR outcomes.**
- **Guide staff towards reliance on evidence-based services in all agency case decision-making (staffing committee, supervision)**
- **Implement contracting recommendations from Advisory Board Project re: in-home service providers outcomes.**
- **Caseworkers rely on and refer to evidence-based practices, FFT, MST and FGDM; also use Family Focused Solution-Based Services when appropriate.**

2010

- **CYF & JPO develop preferred provider network based on outcomes and recommendations from Advisory Board Project.**
- **Expand Advisory Board project to review placement provider outcomes (select providers based on number of children placed, per diem rates, Top Ten).**
- **Implement contracting recommendations per Advisory Board Review.**

Strategy iv: Use of MH respite service (in development) and the services of the Integrated Children's Services Unit.

Goals: 1, 2 and 4

Strategies: 4

Action Steps and timeline: 2009

- **Northampton County has received \$130,000 grant to develop respite care for children and youth through the ICSP. Continue to collaborate through the ICSP Steering Committee to identify providers, develop procedures and criteria for referral (CYF, MH/MR, D&A)**
- **Provider(s) identified; children in MH crisis, volatile parent/child conflict, have ready access to short-term respite care to avoid out-of-home care.**

2010

- **Expand respite network; explore continued funding opportunities.**
- **Continue to develop integrated array of services for multi-system involved children and families.**

Strategy v: Collaboration with school districts on truancy/parent/child conflicts through school-based caseworkers and school based MH and D&A services

Goals: 2 and 4

Strategies: 1, 2 and 4

Action Steps and timeline: 2009

- **Meet with districts to update and develop truancy protocol; CYF caseworkers based in schools in 2008; further refine protocol for working with truants based on mutual needs.**
- **Review "Tool kit on School Attendance and Truancy Reduction" to guide development of protocol**
- **Target Easton Area School District to coordinate on-going initiatives (Caseworkers in Schools, Family Connections) to improve truancy statistics (9.99% are truant per PA Dept. of Education)**

2009 (continued)

- **Gather in-house data re: truant youth; isolate presenting problems at referral, services provided, placement used, age**
- **Encourage and support better communication between CYF and school districts to coordinate compliance with McKinney Vento and Fostering Connections to avoid educational placement delays; identify CYF school liaison to work with districts and assure compliance.**
- **Refer children/families involved in truancy and out-of-home placement to evidence-based services.**

2010

- **Train staff and implement CYF protocol on improving attendance and reducing truancy.**
- **Continue to review in-house data on truancy; implement/change strategies based on data review**
- **Implement initiatives in other districts based upon data review.**

Strategy vi: Improve quality assurance in collaboration with Advisory Board Project to review in-home service provider outcomes.

Goals: 1, 2, 3 & 4

Strategies: 4

Action Steps and timeline: 2009

- **Work group convened in 2008; Advisory Board members trained re: specific programs, to read and interpret provider reports**
- **Work group will develop a tool to determine successful outcomes and measures for that program, i.e., out-of-home care avoided, family engaged in service, housing/employment stability, healthcare/mental health needs met, etc.**
- **Preferred provider network recommendations made by work group**

2010

- **Quality Assurance Program Specialist uses standardized reporting form for all in-home service providers to consistently track outcomes.**
- **Outcomes used by CYF to determine preferred provider network for contractual purposes.**

Strategy vii: Continued involvement in & implementation of the Court Improvement Project (3 mo. Court reviews, Family finding, Family Development Credentialing)

Goals: 2, 3 and 4

Strategies: 2, 3 and 5

Action Steps and timeline: 2009

- **Court personnel and providers participate in Family-Finding Conference in February 2009 (in collaboration with Lehigh County Office of Children & Youth Services)**
- **Implement Family Finding (staff training); participate in use of Accurint search engine trial**
- **Implement Family Development Credentialing; provider assists families to set and reach their own goals.**
- **Court has knowledge & understanding of FGDM; supports the practice by routine inquiry.**
- **3 month court reviews (in the form of status conferences); implement in 3/09**
- **Implement 3-5-7 model**
- **Continue to conduct local Round Table meetings**
- **CYF to survey family post-child welfare involvement for input on overall satisfaction with services, caseworker ability to motivate, engage, focus on strengths, help family reach their goals.**

2010

- **Continued participation in Court Improvement Project**
- **Local Roundtable identifies strategies to improve permanency outcomes in Northampton County**

Strategy viii: Assure concurrent planning efforts at family & system level.

Goals: 1, 2, 3 and 4

Strategies: 1, 2, 3 and 5

Action Steps and timeline: 2009

- **Implement Family Finding practices throughout the agency**
- **Identify staff to train on Accurint Software; develop procedures for staff to request Accurint search**
- **Supervisors prepare caseworkers to meet with family and review full disclosure practice with them**
- **FSP documents concurrent planning with written development of two working plans for child/family**
- **Review concurrent plan during Court status conferences, during supervision and at dependency reviews**

2010

- **Continue 8-month internal reviews for children in placement to review family progress and appropriateness of current goals.**

Strategy ix: Monitor monthly visitation and assure quality, purposeful contacts occur between child & family.

Goals: 1, 3 and 4

Strategies: 1, 2, 3 and 5

Action Steps and timeline: 2009

- **Supervisors reinforce transfer of learning with caseworkers re: family engagement and concurrent planning**
- **Supervisors review permanency plan with caseworker to include discussion of goals and how collaboration with the family will advance the plan in connection with the visit.**
- **Quality Assurance Program Specialist tracks monthly visitation for submission to OCYF.**
- **Caseworker documents visit, content of discussion with child/family/provider and all family members present.**
- **Safety Assessment documents visit, purpose of visit, protective capacities of parents, and safety of the child. Train staff in PA Standardized Safety Assessment model.**

2010

- **Implement last phase of child visitation policy to assure all children in placement, regardless of distance, are seen monthly by a qualified caseworker.**

Strategy x: Promising Practice through Needs-Based Budget

Goals: 2, 3 and 4

Strategies: 2, 3, 4 and 5

Action Steps and timeline: 2009

- **Contract with provider to implement program that works with youth and families while youth are in residential placement.**
- **Reduce length of stay and return 10 youth to home or less restrictive levels of care.**
- **Continue service post-reunification to assure successful reunification**

2010

- **Consider return (step-down) of 10 additional youth**
- **Review program outcomes for quality assurance**

Strategy xi: Use of SWAN services to achieve Permanency for the older adolescent

Goals: 2 and 3

Strategies: 2, 3 and 5

Action Steps and timeline: 2009

- **Improve and encourage use of SWAN services, child readiness, and child specific recruitment**
- **Resource home recruitment and approval of home; assist families with completing all necessary paperwork in a timely manner**
- **Training/reminders at Quarterly General Staff meetings**
- **Improve permanency for IL youth; use of SWAN services**
- **Permanency supervisor monitors submission of CY890 data for accuracy and timely submission**

2010

- **Increase SWAN referrals for adolescents with goal of “another planned permanent living arrangement”; youth have completed child profiles at discharge**
- **Participate in “Older Child Matching Initiative” to improve permanency for older youth**

Strategy xii: Implementation of (YLS)/Case Management Inventory for youth entering delinquency system.

Goals: 2 and 4

Strategies: 1, 2 and 5

Action Steps and timeline: 2009 and 2010

- **New cases use diversionary programming (informal disposition) before Court involvement**
- **Pre-post use of assessment**

Strategy xiii. The JPO Aftercare Initiative to ensure youth receive appropriate services in the community; potential academic, career & technical opportunities through PACT Alliance project.

Goals: 4

Strategies: 1, 2 and 4

Action Steps and timeline: 2009 and 2010

- **Ensure that youth receive appropriate services**
- **Use systematic approach to monitor plan**
- **Use potential academic; career and technical opportunities through PACT Alliance project**