Making Sense of Alphabet Soup

FGDM Statewide Meeting
January 2010
Today’s Agenda

- Introductions
- Purpose
- Child and Family Services Review (CFSR) Findings
- Improving Outcomes
- Program Improvement Plan (PIP)
Purpose

- Recognize how the practices fit together
- Understand that the practices are not different initiatives
- Relate information to your own county experience
What is Child and Family Service Review (CFSR)?

- Federal Review
  - Assesses Service Quality
  - Emphasizes Best Practice
  - Requires Statewide Evaluation and Program Improvement Plan
Safety

- Strengths
  - Timely response to reports of abuse and neglect and timely face-to-face contacts
  - Expedited response for younger children in 2 of the 3 counties reviewed
  - Strong array of services to meet families’ needs and prevent placement and facilitate reunification
  - Risk and safety assessments done regularly
  - Repeat maltreatment
Safety cont.

- Concerns
  - Transition from GPS to CPS
  - Number of out-of-home abuse reports and lack of communication between county and region
  - Risk and safety assessments often focus on presenting problem and not underlying issues, resulting in multiple reports
  - In JJ cases, single focus on the identified youth and not the entire family
CFSR

Permanency

- Strengths
  - Services and casework to reunify children and prevent re-entry
  - Placement stability
  - Permanency goals established timely
  - Siblings placed together or in close proximity
  - Relative placements
  - Independent living
Permanency cont.

- Concerns
  - Permanency is the biggest challenge for PA
  - Lack of engaging non-custodial parents, typically fathers
  - Visitation between siblings positive at first but dropped off or stopped when TPR/adoption pursued
  - Permanence of reunification
  - Lack of timely achievement of adoption (adoption lowest rated item in entire review)
  - Concurrent planning is not occurring
  - Long reunification attempts
  - Various reasons for not filing TPR
Well Being

- Strengths
  - Initial, comprehensive assessments
  - Frequency of worker contacts
  - Education
  - Examples of good work to meet physical and mental health needs of children
CFSR

- Well Being
  - Concerns
    - Family engagement
    - Engaging non-custodial parents
    - Quality of worker contacts
    - Identifying underlying issues
    - Dental Care
Pennsylvania’s Program Improvement Plan

- Improving Outcomes:
  - National Governor’s Association
  - Permanency Practice Initiative
  - Fostering Connections
  - Family Group Decision Making
  - Family Finding
  - Family Development Credentialing
  - 3–5–7 Model (used in Child Preparation Service Unit)
  - Systems of Care
  - High Fidelity Wraparound
  - Strengthening Families

- Just to name a few…
Improving Outcomes

- Engaging Families and Supporting them
- Making Permanent Connections
- Meaningful Interaction
- Strength-based Practice

- So, how do we do that?
National Governor’s Academy (NGA)

- PA is one of six states chosen to participate
- 16 counties in PA participating
- Safely reduce overall placement by 15% by 2010
- Reduce the number of placement settings per child by 10% in 3 years
NGA cont.

- Increase the number of children receiving in-home/community based services by 30%.
- Decrease overall placements by 50% in 3 years.
- Decrease re-entry of 10–17 year olds by 25% in 3 years.
- Decrease adoption disruption by 20% in 3 years.
The PPI assumes close, constructive relationships between the executive and judicial branches of government are critical to child safety, permanence and well-being.

It is a joint venture with the PA Department of Public Welfare – Office of Children, Youth and Families (OCYF) and the PA Supreme Court – Office of Children and Families in the Courts (OCFC)
Hypothesis: Enhanced oversight of the judiciary combined with strength-based, family led practice will ultimately increase the number of children safely maintained in their own homes and expedite safe return home.
Required Services and Practices
- Minimum 3 month court review hearings
- Family search capacity (Accurint)
- Active Local Children’s Roundtable
- Family Group Decision Making
- Family Finding
- 3–5–7 Model
- Family Development Credentialing
Goals:
- Reduce the number of children adjudicated dependent and in court ordered placement
- Reduce the length of time children spend in foster care
- Reduce the number of children who re-enter care
- Reduce the Dependency Court caseload
- Reduce the cost of children in care
- Reduce the level of care
- Increase placement stability
Fostering Connections

Themes:
- Supports sibling connections, kinship care and family connections
- Supports older youth transitions and permanency
- Support improving educational outcomes
Fostering Connections cont.

- Mandatory provisions:
  - Supporting sibling connections
  - Supporting kinship notice
  - Supporting older youth transition plans
  - Improving educational outcomes
    - Stability
    - Attendance
  - Adoption
  - Healthcare oversight and coordination
Family Group Decision Making (FGDM)

- Family Group Decision Making (FGDM) is more a family gathering to which service providers are invited, than an agency meeting to which family members are invited.

- It is a term used to describe a practice, which recognizes the role and the long tradition that families have in the understanding and the care taking of their members.
Family Finding

- Six Step Process—Discovery, Engagement, Planning, Decision Making, Evaluation, Follow up on Supports
- Works in conjunction with FGDM—equips workers with the tools to discover and engage family members/supports to build a Network For Life
- Helps Widen the Circle and offers strategies and methods to engage youth and family
- Teaches worker to explore past, present and future people in the family's life
- Blended Perspective Meeting—Leads to decision making meeting (FGDM)
- Don’t just find the first relative willing to care for a child, find the best
Family Development Credentialing (FDC)

- Interagency strengths-based training and credentialing program:
  - Skills and competencies for frontline family workers
  - Empower families to attain healthy self-reliance and interdependence with communities
Effects of FDC on individuals and families:
- Increased confidence and self-reliance; sense of efficacy
- Learn to set their own goals and make a plan to reach their goals
- Increased ability to advocate for themselves and their families
- Develop sense of interdependence with the community; make contributions
Effects of FDC on personal and professional development of trainees:

- Feel validated and confident
- Self-aware and reflective, personally and professionally
- Communication and relationship skills; setting boundaries
- Positive and empowering
- Cultural competence
Effects on practice:
- Form mutually respectful relationships with families
- Assist people in setting their own goals and making their own plans
- Advocating for families setting their own goals
- Prioritize and use time management
- Supervisors help workers use what they learn
FDC cont.

- Effects on Agencies:
  - Efficiency and effectiveness; fewer crises
  - Higher morale; lower turnover
  - Staff and agencies adopting family development tools
  - Staff teaching other staff

- Effects on Community:
  - Networking and collaboration
  - Local officials support
3–5–7 Model

- Goal: Support readiness for permanency on placement prevention to adoption continuum
- Life books—tool to help children & youth do the work of grieving losses & establishing relationships
- Training/consultation to assist professionals and families
- Connects child/youth to family through Family Finding and FGDM
System of Care (SOC)

- A comprehensive spectrum of mental health and other necessary services which are organized into a coordinated network to meet the multiple and changing needs of children and their families.
Guiding Principles:
- Comprehensive, incorporating a broad array of services and supports,
- Individualized,
- Provided in the least restrictive, appropriate setting,
- Coordinated both at the system and service delivery levels,
- Involve families and youth as full partners, and
- Emphasize early identification and intervention.
SOC cont.

- One family, one plan
- No wrong door
- Service integration to best meet the needs of children, youth and families.
High Fidelity Wraparound (HFW)

- HFW is a process not a service
- Based on:
  - 10 Principles
  - Theory of change
  - 4 Phases
- Four main roles of HFW staff:
  - Coach/Supervisor
  - Facilitator
  - Family support partner
  - Youth support partner
HFW Cont’d

- County Implementers
  - Allegheny
  - Beaver
  - Chester
  - Erie
  - Fayette
  - Lehigh
  - Montgomery
HFW cont’d

- Compare/Contrast with FGDM
  - Similar values and beliefs
  - Supports Family members and youth voices
  - Facilitator Role
  - HFW is generally a longer, more intensive process
  - Roles of Youth and Family Support Partners
  - For Youth 0–21 with a behavioral health diagnosis
Strengthening Families

- Identifies the link between early childhood programs and reducing abuse and neglect was documented. This research was used to create a logic model that described the Strengthening Families approach, centering on the Protective Factors. Over three years, seven states piloted Strengthening Families Through Early Care and Education.

- 36 states have Strengthening Families activities, and numerous states and national organizations are part of the Strengthening Families National Network.
Research indicates that five Protective Factors reduce the incidence of child abuse and neglect:

- Parental resilience
- Social connections
- Knowledge of parenting and child development
- Concrete supports in times of need
- Children's social and emotional competence
Advantages:

- Activities that build the Protective Factors can be built into programs and systems that already exist in every state.
- Strengthening Families has widespread support from social science researchers, state child welfare officials, early childhood practitioners, and policy experts.
- National Association for the Education of Young Children survey shows that 97% want to do more to prevent maltreatment.
Questions?