University of Pittsburgh: School of Social Work

Pennsylvania Child Welfare Resource Center

Annual Report 2014/2015

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Director's Report Fiscal Year 2014/2015 Highlights

Pennsylvania's child welfare system was faced with unprecedented change in 2014/2015. The passage and initial implementation of more than 20 significant child welfare laws, implementation of the Child Welfare Information Solution (CWIS), and substantial increases in the number of referrals all created considerable strain on the system. As a Resource Center, we strived to support these system changes through implementation support, training, transfer of learning, technical assistance, evaluation, and project management.

There has been a massive influx of new caseworkers across the Commonwealth. Between January and June of 2015, we delivered 31 rounds of *Charting the Course*, which is well above average. To support implementation of the new Child Protective Service Law, we developed 9 online modules and 5 transfer of learning options. To date, almost 4,000 child welfare professionals have taken one or more of the online modules and a significant number of in-person transfer of learning sessions were delivered.

In July of 2014, we were asked to develop an online training option for mandated and permissive reporters that would be free to participants. In November of 2014, we launched the 3 hour Recognizing and Reporting Child Abuse: Mandated and Permissive Reporting in Pennsylvania. By June of 2015, over 300,000 Pennsylvanians had completed the course, which meets the training requirements of Act 31 of 2014. The feedback from participants has been overwhelmingly positive, with over 90% reporting they feel more confident in their skills and that they will be able to use what they learned in the course of their work.

During this reporting year, we collaborated with the county administrators and their staff to improve efficient utilization of the training rooms. We are still in the process of securing some of the intended sites but we are confident the outcome will be an improvement. In addition we engaged county staff and other stakeholders to inform development of *Charting the Course* into a hybrid model which will be a combination of on-line learning as well as classroom learning, including simulations. This is truly an exciting endeavor to the continuous quality improvement of the critical certification process.

Our youth and family engagement efforts continued with employment of Youth Quality Improvement Specialists as well as the Parent Ambassador and the Youth Ambassadors. Some of the highlights of their work include support of the YAB (Youth Advisory Board), with over 300 youth participating in statewide and regional meetings advocating for improved practices and better informed youth through the Know Your Rights trainings. We held the Older Youth Retreat at Pitt- Johnstown in August of 2014. It was another successful year with over 89 youth participating. Again, I would like to encourage you to participate in the Youth Retreat for the week, a day or even by attending the banquet. It is truly an opportunity to be refreshed on the utmost importance of child welfare work and your meaningful contribution to the success of the system in Pennsylvania.

Maryrose McCarthy

RESOURCE CENTER OVERVIEW

The Pennsylvania Child Welfare Resource Center (Resource Center) is a collaborative effort of the University of Pittsburgh, School of Social Work, the Pennsylvania Department of Human Services, and the Pennsylvania Children and Youth Administrators. The Resource Center is centrally managed and regionally administered by the University of Pittsburgh, School of Social Work.

VISION

Every child, youth, and family experiences a life rich with positive opportunities, nurturing relationships, and supportive communities.
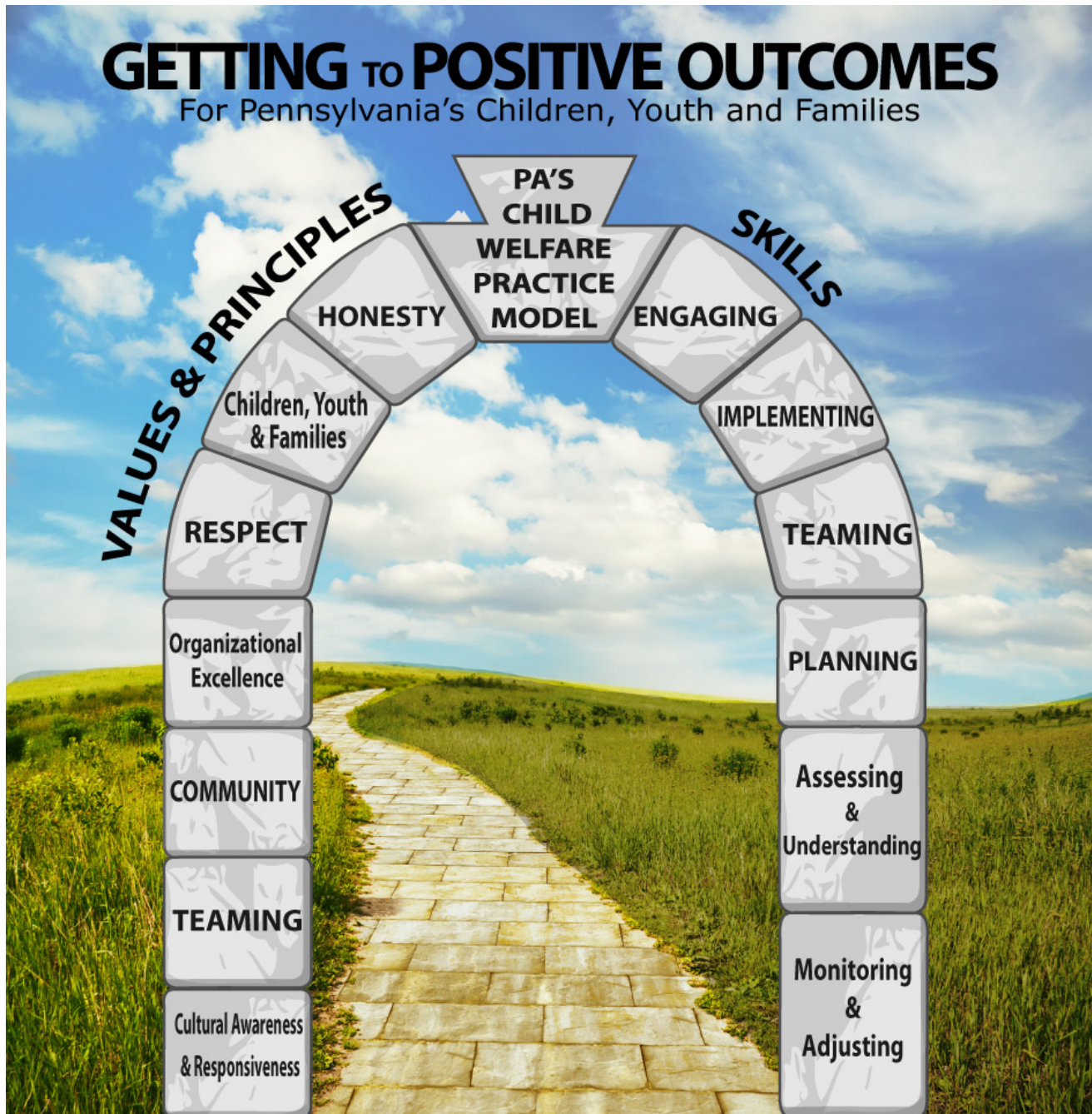
MISSION

The Pennsylvania Child Welfare Resource Center is a national leader in advocating for an enhanced quality of life for Pennsylvania's children, youth, and families. In partnership with families, communities, and public and private agencies, we prepare and support exceptional child welfare professionals and systems through education, research, and a commitment to best practice.

Pennsylvania's Practice Model

GETTING TO POSITIVE OUTCOMES
For Pennsylvania's Children, Youth and Families

VALUES & PRINCIPLES

SKILLS

PA'S CHILD WELFARE PRACTICE MODEL

HONESTY

ENGAGING

Children, Youth & Families

IMPLEMENTING

RESPECT

TEAMING

Organizational Excellence

PLANNING

COMMUNITY

Assessing & Understanding

TEAMING

Monitoring & Adjusting

Cultural Awareness & Responsiveness

This practice model reflects the values, principles, and skills that Pennsylvania's child welfare system holds as critical to achieving positive outcomes for children, youth, and families. The Resource Center works to ensure all products and services are grounded in the practice model. For more information on Pennsylvania's Child Welfare Practice Model, go to the Resource Center's Practice Model webpage.

Our Approach and Focus

The Resource Center provides a continuum of services designed to facilitate and sustain positive change in the child welfare system. Our services include: training, transfer of learning, technical assistance, research and evaluation, project management, and organizational development.

Our primary strategies include:

- Conducting research and evaluation;
- Providing consultation and support;
- Developing and revising tools, materials, and curricula;
- Training child welfare professionals;
- Integrating youth and family engagement;
- Advocating for policy and practice improvements;
- Developing and implementing a quality improvement process;
- Organizing and sponsoring events; and
- Providing resource coordination.

The Resource Center is comprised of the following departments:

- Administrative
- Curriculum and Trainer Development
- Fiscal and Human Resources
- Organizational Effectiveness/Regional Teams
- Statewide Quality Improvement
- Technology Development

Following is a summary of work completed within each key strategy.
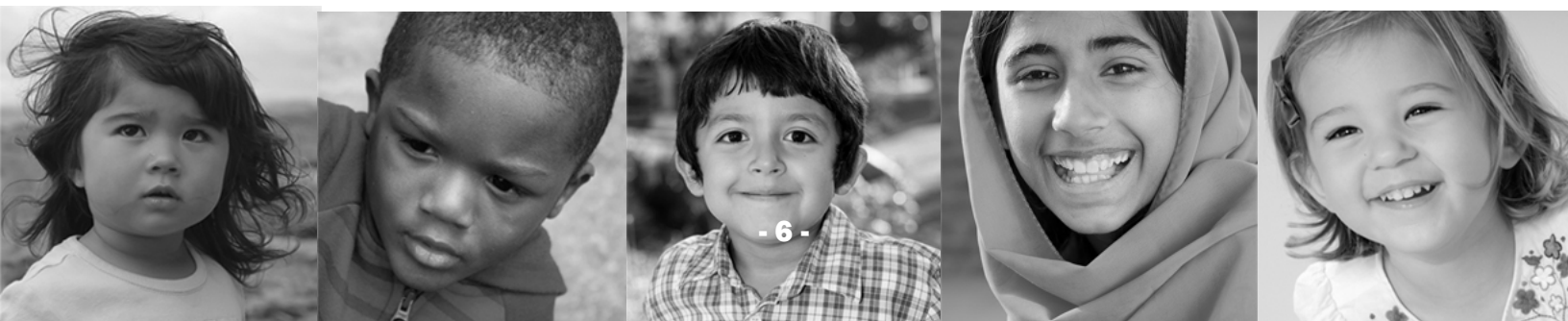
Conduct Research and Evaluation

The Resource Center has undertaken the strategy of conducting research and evaluation to promote national leadership in child welfare research and implementation to practice. The Resource Center intends that research and evaluation efforts will improve the quality of practice and system functioning in the Commonwealth. During this fiscal year, the Resource Center advanced several major research and evaluation efforts described below.

Evaluation of Pennsylvania's Child Welfare Demonstration Project

The Resource Center is the independent evaluator for Pennsylvania's Title IV-E Waiver Child Welfare Demonstration Project. The Child Welfare Demonstration Project is testing the flexible use of Title IV-E funds to develop a new case practice model focused on family engagement, assessment, and the expanded use of evidence-based programs/practices driven by local needs. It is the intent that these activities will lead to improved placement decisions and child and family functioning, and will ultimately result in improved safety, permanency, and well-being outcomes for children and families involved in the State's child welfare system. Beginning July 2013 through June 2018, the Child Welfare Demonstration Project Evaluation Team is implementing an evaluation to investigate the processes, outcomes, and costs associated with the project. During 2014/2015, the evaluation has continued to focus on the process and outcome evaluations of assessment and family engagement and on collecting and synthesizing baseline fiscal and outcome data but has also broadened to include the evaluation of evidence-based practices. The Evaluation Team has assessed caseworker attitudes and behaviors relative to evidence-based practices and referrals to them and has also begun collecting referral and dosage information for evidence-based practices in general as well as outcome data related to two specific evidence-based programs. Information about the Demonstration Project and the evaluation can be found at the Demonstration Project's webpage.

Family Group Decision Making (FGDM) Evaluation

The Resource Center received surveys from over 1,500 Family Group Decision Making (FGDM) conferences that were held across the state. Some counties and providers do not participate in the Resource Center's evaluation and other counties who had participated in this evaluation are now participating in the Demonstration Project; therefore, it is likely that the number of conferences held across the state is higher. The FGDM Evaluation measures fidelity to the Family Group Decision Making model by asking each conference participant to complete a survey that contains various questions measuring cultural safety, community partnerships, and family involvement. Results from the conference surveys continue to show that families and professionals alike view the conferences positively and find them to be beneficial. The number of family members and friends participating in conferences continues to grow as does the number of counties participating in the evaluation. The 2014/2015 Survey results and other reports can be found at the FGDM webpage.

Evaluation of Training

The Resource Center continues efforts to evaluate the effectiveness of their training. During 2014/2015, the Resource Center developed a pre/post multiple-choice test to assess participants' knowledge of key topics associated with Out-of-Home Placement and Permanency Planning (Charting the Course, Module 9). In addition, the Resource Center developed an embedded evaluation activity in Charting the Course, Module 2. This activity allows participants to apply their newly acquired knowledge of the definitions of child abuse and perpetrator to a series of scenarios to identify whether abuse may have occurred and who may be the perpetrator. Pilot testing of both evaluation activities will begin in FY 2015/2016.

Organizational Effectiveness (OE)

In 2012, the University of Pittsburgh, School of Social Work, Child Welfare Resource Center and the American Public Human Services Association (APHSA) jointly sponsored an evaluation of Organizational Effectiveness practice to gather feedback for continuous improvement efforts and to begin to define the fundamental components necessary to implement the model with fidelity.

The following are a few highlights of the evaluation.

Satisfaction
The report indicates that over 75% of respondents were very satisfied or satisfied with the OE experience and that the process helped to achieve quick wins, mid to long range goals, and to sustain their organizational improvements.

Sustainability
Over 90% of respondents indicated that their organizations had maintained the specific improvements resulting from the OE work. In addition 25 of 27 interview participants indicated that changes that were the initial focus of the work had been sustained.

Client Impacts
Almost 60% of respondents also indicate that their OE work positively impacted client outcomes such as reductions in placements, reductions in truancy, more timely permanence, and more timely response to referrals. Respondents reported service enhancements including implementing a practice model, implementing a program improvement plan, better family engagement, increased teaming with families and community partners, additional resource development, meeting visitation requirements, and making it easier for families to access agency services.

This is positive news regarding Organizational Effectiveness in Pennsylvania and across the nation. Please contact the Resource Center for more information using the following link to the webpage (OE contacts).
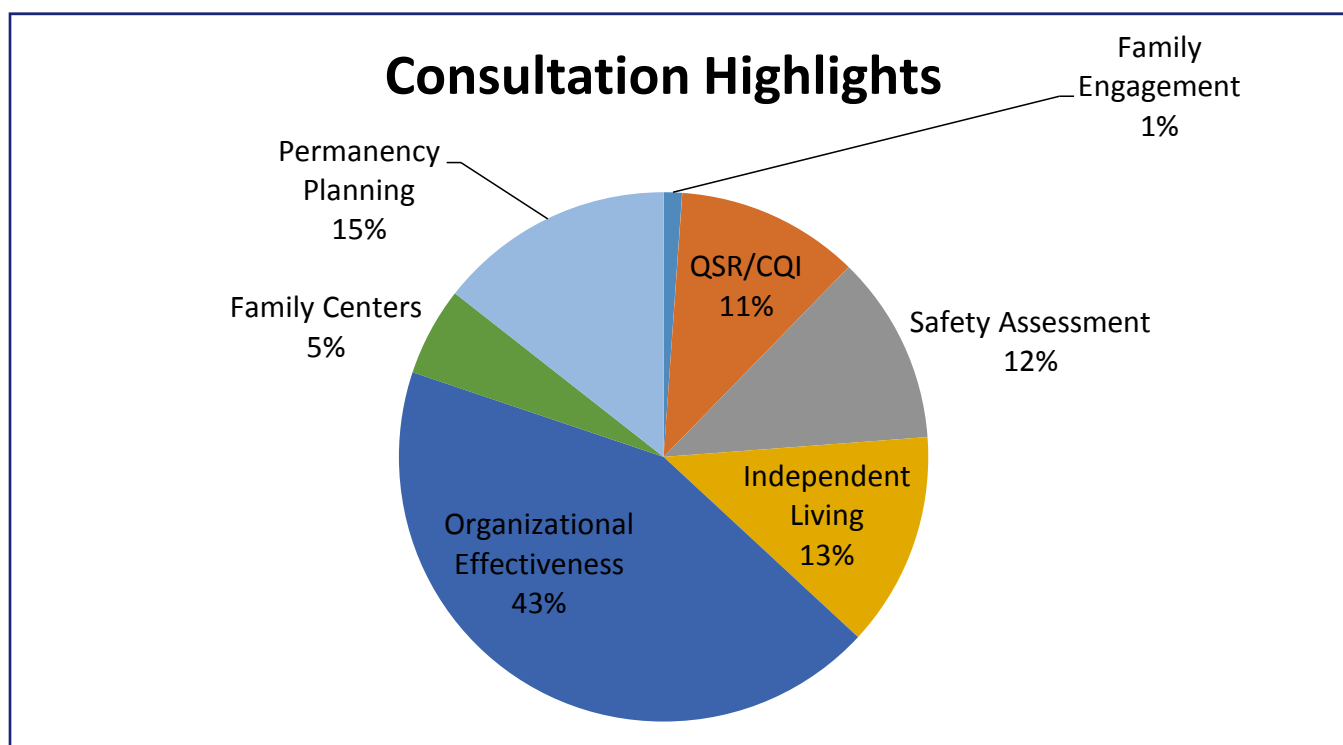
Provide Consultation and Support

The Resource Center provides consultation and support services across Pennsylvania with the goal of facilitating positive, strategic, organizational change, and the implementation of best practice to improve family serving systems. The American Public Human Services Association's (APHSA) enhanced Organizational Effectiveness (OE) Framework DAPIM™ model is the primary vehicle to effect continuous quality improvement at the local and state level. Click to visit APHSA's website.

Consultation (also known as technical assistance) is provided through facilitating work sessions, cultivating organizational leadership, encouraging meaningful staff and consumer involvement, identifying root cause needs, embedding application of new knowledge and skills through transfer of learning, and supporting the monitoring and resourcing of continuous improvement efforts.

Successful implementation of change requires the active support of key internal and external stakeholders and the coordinated efforts of all external entities providing technical assistance. In all we do, much like children and youth agencies serve families individually, we meet our customers where they are and use our models, tools, and skills to help move forward together for positive outcomes for children, youth, families, and the child welfare system.

The chart below shows the percentage of time spent in some of the core practice areas provided by Organizational Effectiveness staff.

2014-2015 Technical Assistance

Consultation Highlights

- Family Engagement 1%
- QSR/CQI 11%
- Safety Assessment 12%
- Independent Living 13%
- Organizational Effectiveness 43%
- Family Centers 5%
- Permanency Planning 15%

The Resource Center continued to see an increase in OE technical assistance requests in 2014-2015 (from 23% in 2009 to 43% this year). Some of the specific OE work included organizational assessments, continuous improvement team building, staff morale, succession planning, organizational restructuring, leadership development, and supporting best practice. Safety assessment was the other technical assistance area that saw an increase from previous years (up from 2% in 2013/14) primarily due to increased requests for safety support sessions and CPSL implementation efforts.

The QSR had a decrease (down from 32% in 2013/14 to 11% in 2014/15). This aligns with having supporting eleven counties in 2013/14 to only supporting seven in 2014/15. The percentage of effort for the other technical assistance areas remained consistent with previous years.

Below are some specific examples of technical assistance services provided by the Organization Effectiveness/Regional Teams Department during the past year in the core areas illustrated above:

- **Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI)/Quality Service Reviews**
  - Providing site lead support before, during, and after the Quality Service Review (QSR) portion of CQI including: Conducting county staff training or technical assistance sessions to understand the QSR process.
  - Training for reviewers.
  - Participation as QSR reviewers.
  - Second layer quality reviews.
  - Presenting QSR data to county staff and stakeholders.
  - Facilitation of Continuous Improvement Plan development.

- **Organizational Effectiveness**
  - Supporting the formation of sponsor teams and continuous improvement teams.
  - Conducting Organizational Readiness for Change (ORC) assessments and providing analysis of data gathered.
  - Facilitating focus groups and providing summary of findings.
  - Supporting teaming and competency development with leaders, management teams, and supervisors.
  - Assisting with the understanding and implementation of organizational structures.
  - Modeling youth and family engagement through consumer participation in technical assistance services.
  - Supporting communication plan development, implementation, and monitoring.

- **Safety Assessment**
  - Co-facilitating with Office of Children, Youth, and Families (OCYF) safety support sessions to review use of the safety assessment process with supervisors and caseworkers.
  - Supporting the statewide safety assessment efforts and implementation.

- **Permanency Planning**
  - Co-facilitating (with OCYF) critical case reviews (also called NGA meetings in some counties).
  - Facilitating county assessments and plans related to the number of children in placement, prevention services, and placement decision criteria.
  - Facilitating technical assistance efforts around concurrent planning understanding, plan development, and implementation of expanded practice.
  - Assisting with resource parent handbook development and procedures to strengthen birth family and resource parent relationships.

- **Independent Living (IL) (services to support older youth)**
  - Conducting site visits in counties to support IL services.
  - Communicating information to support statewide changes.
  - Supporting new IL coordinators and providing networking opportunities.

- **Family Engagement**
  - Support County Agencies in their work providing Family Finding efforts.
  - Assisting County Agencies with furthering father engagement efforts.

- **Family Centers**
  - Conducting Family Center, Time-Limited Family Reunification, and Promoting Responsible Father site visits.
  - Supporting community meetings and collaboration.
  - Assisting with the Peer Review process between centers.
  - Supporting collaboration between Family Centers and Children Youth Services (CYS) agencies.

Here is what some of our customers had to say about our services:

"After years of experience as a caseworker, this experience gave me a new perspective of what casework is and (how) I can influence other caseworkers in the process. I feel that the caseworkers can use this experience to help engage families, which will lead to cases being closed sooner and quicker reunification."

"We all had a say in the process. The participants need to feel it is their recommendations and their solutions to make the necessary changes. Now our staff is bought in to the process. They have volunteered for the next phase of the OE process, and continue to be a part of the CI (Continuous Improvement) team. I think our momentum is maintained by the staff being a part of it, and not so much management saying this is going to be how this is going to be."

"I think the biggest advantage to having the CWRC facilitate the organizational effectiveness work is their multi-agency knowledge."

"CWRC has a lot of resources at their disposal: surveys, worksheets, exercises, they have a lot of knowledge. It really expands your world and the resources available."

Develop and Revise Tools, Materials, and Curricula

Primary Purpose: Elevate Child Welfare Practice in Pennsylvania

The primary purpose of developing and revising tools, materials, and curricula is to support the elevation of child welfare practice by promoting the long-term career development of public child welfare professionals.

This purpose is accomplished through the development and delivery of tools, materials, and curricula that is aligned with and supports the Pennsylvania's Child Welfare Practice Model and improvement initiatives such as the Child Family Service Review, the Continuous Quality Improvement project, and established empirically-based best practices.

Tools, materials, and curricula are developed for specific classifications of child welfare professionals including direct service workers, supervisors, and administrators.

Tools, materials, and curricula are competency-based with an emphasis on the knowledge (information), skills (observable competence), and ability (observable behavior) necessary for child welfare professionals to competently perform job tasks to ensure the safety, well-being, and permanency of Pennsylvania's children and youth. Competencies are currently under revision to ensure that they are aligned with Pennsylvania's recently updated Child Welfare Practice Model.

In FY 2014/2015, the Resource Center completed the development of thirty-two new curricula and revisions to fourteen existing curricula.

> **32 new curricula developed**
> **14 curricula revised**

In 2014 the Resource Center created *Child Protective Services Law: An Update for Child Welfare Professionals*, which is a 9-module, online course for child welfare professionals regarding the changes made to the CPSL.

Child Protective Services Law: An Update for Child Welfare Professionals:

CPSL Module 1: Introduction
CPSL Module 2: Overview of Amendments
CPSL Module 3: The Link to Best Practice
CPSL Module 4: Reporting and the Role of the Child Welfare Professional
CPSL Module 5: Assessment and Investigation
CPSL Module 6: Disposition of Cases
CPSL Module 7: Appeals and Expunctions
CPSL Module 8: Child Custody
CPSL Module 9: Resources and Review

In addition, Recognizing and Reporting Child Abuse: Mandated and Permissive Reporting in Pennsylvania (www.reportabusepa.pitt.edu) was created to reflect the changes made in the CPSL to

reporting procedures. This course is free to the public and meets the requirements set forth in Act 31 of 2014.

With a few exceptions, due to copyright restrictions, all Resource Center curricula are located at the Resource Center's Curriculum Page.

In the development and revision of tools, materials, and curricula that will achieve the professional development needs of the child welfare professionals, assigned curriculum and instructional development specialists engage in multiple activities and strategies including but not limited to:

- Partnering with Resource Center's key stakeholders, the Department of Human Services, and the Pennsylvania Children and Youth Administrators in the identification of tools, materials, and curricula to be developed or revised.
- Collaborating with the Administrative Office of Pennsylvania's Court to support both the improved functioning of the child welfare system and dependency courts.
- Convening and conducting quality assurance committees consisting of multidisciplinary professionals who have expertise in topics related to the development of the tools, materials, and curricula.
- Consulting with content experts and established advisory committees such as the Diversity Task Force and Supervisor Advisory Workgroup.
- Incorporating empirically-based literature and best practices.
- Incorporating the role and voice of youth and parent consumers.
- Analyzing Child and Family Service Review and Quality Service Review data to identify knowledge and skill gaps and strengthening those concepts in the development of tools, materials, and curricula.
- Participating in Quality Service Reviews to facilitate understanding of practice improvement initiatives and the front-line experience.
- Intentionally incorporating and reinforcing values and themes from the practice model in the curricula.
- Developing transfer of learning components and activities to support the curricula.
- Using the Analysis-Design-Development-Implementation-Evaluation (ADDIE) Model to clearly determine the learning objectives, the audience, and the scope of the tools, materials, and curricula to be developed.
- Employing decision guides to support the determination of the format of the tools, materials and curricula to be developed, such as in-classroom, online, or blended.

The selection of tools, materials, and curricula to be developed or revised is based upon an established criteria which prioritizes statutory enactments and amendments, the availability of existing resources that will meet identified professional development needs, how extensive or widespread the professional development need, and the time frame in which the professional development need must be met.

The Resource Center offers both foundational and specialized related curricula in the classroom, online, and in blended formats. Charting the Course, the foundational curriculum leading to Direct Service Worker certification, consists of 120 hours of in-classroom instruction and 6 hours of pre and post online transfer of learning activities and instruction. Supervisor Training Series is a 60 hour certification series delivered to newly assigned supervisors. The Leadership Academy includes the Foundation of Leadership series which provides certification for administrators.

Train Child Welfare Professionals

Child welfare professionals from 370 agencies across Pennsylvania attended over 1,200 workshops delivered by the Resource Center in FY 2014/2015.
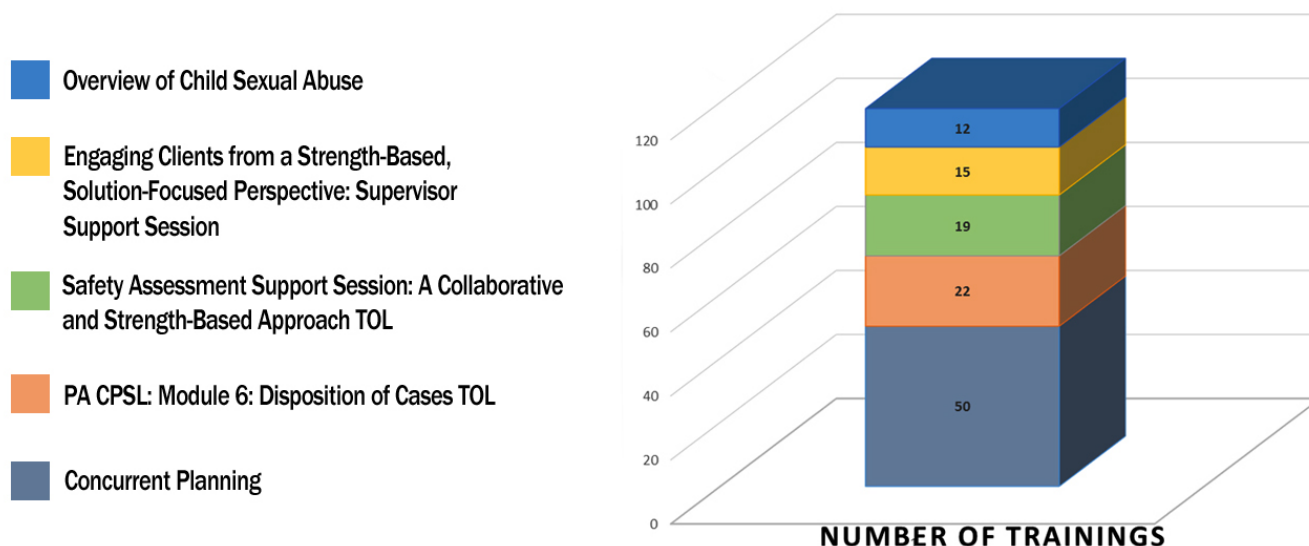
1,212 Workshops delivered!

The following chart identifies the percentage of training sessions by workshop type. Fifty-seven per-cent of all offerings represent one of the certification series for caseworkers and supervisors. Three hundred and forty (340) caseworkers and 52 supervisors were certified this fiscal year.

Workshop Types

CTC 53%
STS 4%
Other 43%
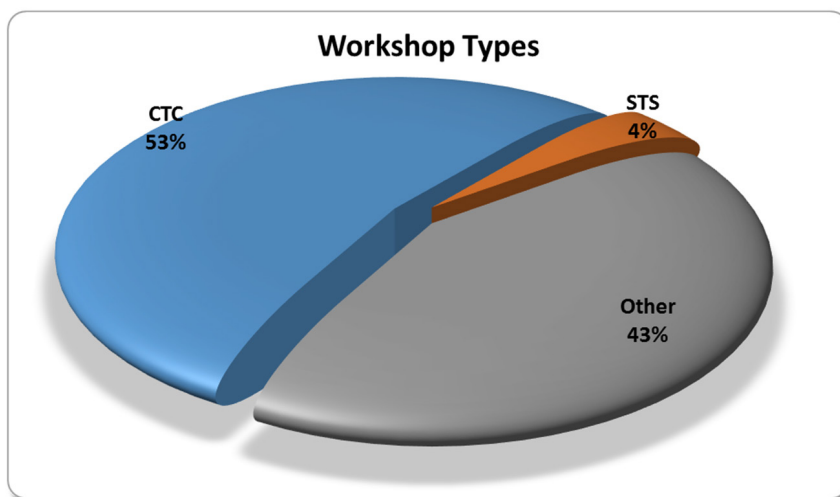
To breakdown the "other" category in more detail, the following chart identifies the top five training/transfer of learning sessions delivered outside of the certification areas.

- Overview of Child Sexual Abuse
- Engaging Clients from a Strength-Based, Solution-Focused Perspective: Supervisor Support Session
- Safety Assessment Support Session: A Collaborative and Strength-Based Approach TOL
- PA CPSL: Module 6: Disposition of Cases TOL
- Concurrent Planning

12
15
19
22
50

NUMBER OF TRAININGS

In addition, the Resource Center has continued to expand the number of online training options available to Pennsylvania's child welfare professionals. There are now 36 online courses available. During this fiscal year, 4,719 participants completed 29,971 online courses. The majority of these participants completed one or more of the nine CPSL modules. Over 3,800 participants completed at least one of these modules.

> **36 Online course options 4,719 participants completed 29,971 courses**
> **(An average of over 6 courses per participant!)**

Finally, The Resource Center launched a 3 hour free online course for mandated and permissive reporters across the Commonwealth. There has been an overwhelming response to this training.

Between November 14, 2014 and June 30, 2015, **over 300,000** Pennsylvania residents completed the training; this represents **almost 3%** of PA residents 18 years old and older.

PA Population 18 years and over (2010 Census)   9,910,224
PA residents completed online training   307,749
Out of state residents completed online training   17,846

92% of participants, identified themselves as Mandated Reporters.
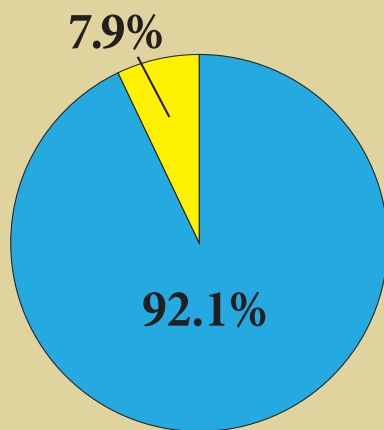
15% of the participants indicated that they had previously made a report of child abuse.

7.9%
92.1%
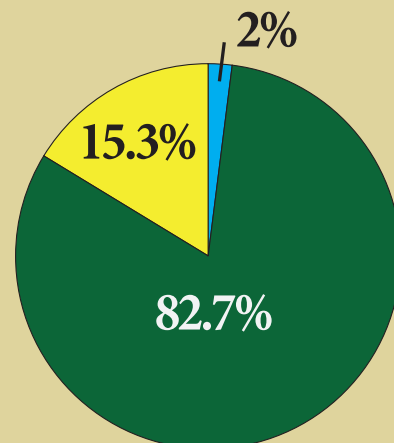
Mandated Reporters   **Permissive Reporters**

2%
15.3%
82.7%

Yes   **No**   **Decline to Answer**

After completing the training, over 90% of the participants reported that they feel more confident in their skills and that they will be able to use what they learned in the course in their work.

Over 90%

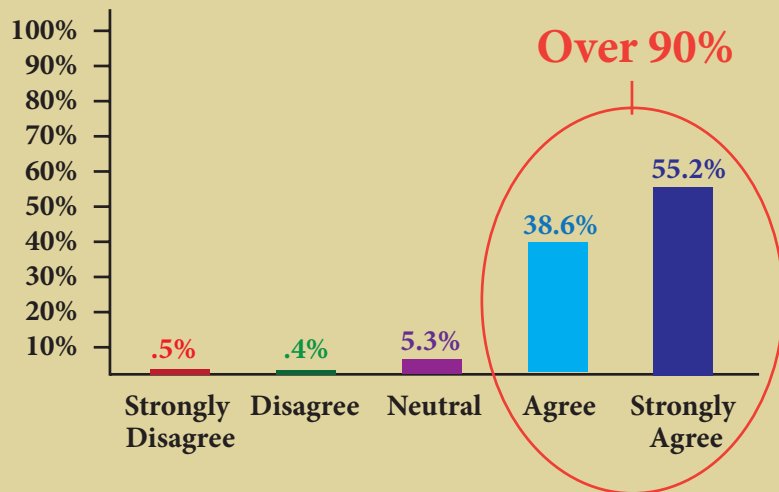|	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
	.5%	.4%	5.3%	38.6%	55.2%

To support continuous quality improvement and the consistent and competent delivery of training sessions and workshops, the Resource Center engages in multiple activities and strategies in its recruitment, selection, and development of its trainers including but not limited to:

• Conducting an extensive trainer/consultant selection process consisting of an application, reference check, and panel interview.
• Prioritizing the selection of experienced child welfare professionals who have worked in Pennsylvania's child welfare system and with training experience.
• Recruiting youth and parent consumers as co-trainers.
• Providing selected trainers/consultants with a foundational course on training, platform, and facilitation skills.
• Requiring trainer/consultants to deliver a practice training session which includes critical feedback from peers and Resource Center staff.
• Supporting trainer/consultant participation in quality service reviews.
• Training or mentoring trainers/consultants on curriculum content prior to approving them to train the curriculum.
• Observing trainers/consultants the first time they deliver a curriculum and on a periodic basis and providing them critical feedback on their training, platform, and facilitation skills.
• Providing trainers/consultants technical assistance.
• Requiring trainers/consultants to obtain a minimum of six professional development hours annually.
• Providing professional development opportunities for trainers/consultants through training sessions, a quarterly newsletter, and a trainer/consultant handbook.
• Convening monthly consultant/trainer advisory group conference call meetings.
• Conducting level one evaluations of all training sessions.
• Requesting trainers/consultants to provide feedback after every time they train a curriculum.
• Developing a trainer utilization process to ensure the equitable assignment of trainers to deliver curriculum.

Youth and Family Engagement and Integration

The Resource Center has undertaken the key strategy of Youth and Family Engagement and Integration to support the increased engagement of consumers at the individual, community, and systems level toward improved service and outcomes. There are a variety of means by which the Resource Center supports family engagement including training and technical assistance. The following sections will highlight significant youth and family engagement work by the Resource Center.

Family Engagement

The Resource Center remains committed to leading efforts across the Commonwealth to help counties engage family members in their planning and service delivery. Supported family engagement practices include:

- Family Group Decision Meeting (FGDM)
- Family Finding
- Father Engagement
- Engagement of Incarcerated Parents

The Resource Center employs a Family Engagement Project Manager who supports family engagement practice at the county, regional and statewide levels. Ongoing support is provided to Regional Family Engagement Network Meetings and FGDM Leadership Team and Statewide Meetings.

Parent Engagement

The Resource Center employs a Parent Ambassador who supports family engagement efforts and brings the family perspective to the development of curriculum, policies and initiatives. Some roles of the Parent Ambassador include:

- Participation in Quality Service Reviews (QSRs) and panel presentations to uphold the efforts of Continuous Quality Improvement in Pennsylvania.
- Provides technical assistance to counties, private providers, and collaborates with stakeholders such as Family Centers, Statewide Adoption Network, Administrative Office of PA Courts, and the Office of Children, Youth, and Families.
- Co-Chairs the Families and Communities United workgroup.

Families and Communities United (FCU)

Families and Communities United (FCU) is an advisory board comprised of a passionate group of family members, community members, and professionals working together to improve the lives of children, youth and families involved in the child welfare system and to impact positive change. FCU advocates, educates, supports, and empowers individuals involved with family service systems to be resources for themselves and their communities. Communities have the tools and support needed to assist individuals involved with family serving systems to build permanent relationships in their community and to nurture a healthy quality of life for families in Pennsylvania.

The Pennsylvania Child Welfare Practice Model continues to guide the development of FCU's strategic plan.

Families and Communities United (FCU) 2014/2015 highlights include:

- The FCU has maintained a membership of diverse representation including family members, community partners and cross system professionals for over five years.
- The FCU provides family engagement resources via the FCU website and quarterly newsletter.
- The FCU members are in the process of creating a Frequently Asked Questions Booklet for Birth Parents involved in the child welfare system.

Youth Engagement

In 2014/2015, the Resource Center continued to employ two Youth Quality Improvement Specialists to assist in the delivery of trainings and technical assistance, as well as to provide oversight to the Older Youth Retreat and Youth Advisory Board (YAB). These paid professional positions represent the highest level of youth engagement in our continuum of employment opportunities at the Resource Center.

The Resource Center's second level of opportunity is a paid internship. These positions are titled Youth Ambassadors and during this fiscal year we employed two. Youth Ambassadors continue to lead youth engagement training and technical assistance efforts across Pennsylvania. Youth continue to support the Youth Advisory Board, Older Youth Retreat, Know Your Rights trainings, as well as providing keynote presentations at multiple conferences and events. Additionally, Youth Ambassadors and the Youth Quality Improvement Specialist continue to support internal Resource Center operations including reviewing curriculum, participating on workgroups, and the interviewing and selection of new staff.

Fiscal Year 2014-2015 was a big year for Pennsylvania's Youth Advisory Board. Youth Advisory Board members focused on a project aimed at bringing attention to the inconsistency of rules and policies regarding developmentally appropriate freedoms and normalcy for youth in care. The outcome of the project resulted in a Developmentally Appropriate Freedoms and Normalcy Recommendation Guide (DAF) and Advocacy Toolkit that supports practice efforts to help youth in care have more opportunities to feel normal and stable. The recommendations were a timely resource to H.R. 4980 "Preventing Sex Trafficking and Strengthening Families Act." implementation in Pennsylvania. As Pennsylvania moves forward with implementing H.R. 4980, YAB members have been at the table providing feedback and recommendations on policies and practice. The YAB members have also participated in focus groups sharing their stories and providing feedback around the topic of permanency planning and APPLA.

The YAB continued to strengthen its efforts with advocating, educating, and forming partnerships to create positive changes in child welfare. There has been a bigger push for leadership within the regional structure of the YAB. The YAB has over 300 youth members participating in statewide and regional meetings, speaking engagements, community service projects, Know Your Rights trainings, Strategic Sharing workshops, peer mentoring, and consultation with child welfare professionals.

Over 300 youth actively participate on the YABs

The YAB Leadership Summit held at the Resource Center in June 2015 hosted over 36 youth leaders and 18 staff supporters from across the state. "Strategic Sharing" training was provided to youth leaders in an effort to prepare them to share their stories effectively and safely. Youth also heard from a motivational speaker who helped them focus on their strengths, and worked with them on a sacred circle. Youth were empowered to share their stories in a safe way and walked out feeling supported and closer to other youth across the state.

The Resource Center continued its support of increasing youth engagement with the National Youth in Transition Database (NYTD) by purchasing items with the youth-developed NYTD logo on them to be passed out at YAB and Older Youth Retreat events. This is an ongoing effort to help youth recognize the importance of their participation in the survey.

The Resource Center continues to provide SAT Waivers to youth across the Commonwealth. The Resource Center also continues to update the YAB Financial Aid Guide, which is used across the state to assist older youth in care in finding ways to finance post-secondary education.

In addition to supporting the Pennsylvania Youth Advisory Board, the Resource Center continues its partnership with current and former foster care youth and Independent Living Professionals in planning and facilitating the annual Older Youth Retreat. The retreat is co-sponsored by the Office of Children, Youth and Families at the Department of Human Services and the University of Pittsburgh's School of Social Work – Pennsylvania Child Welfare Resource Center. A committee comprised of youth, county and provider staff, Resource Center staff and other statewide partners plan and implement the week's activities which include youth led peer group sessions, activity sessions, and other special events. Youth retreat participants from across the state also participated in focus groups on normalcy planning for older youth to support implementation of H.R. 4980 "Preventing Sex Trafficking and Strengthening Families Act".

The purpose of the retreat is to afford current and former foster care youth educational, practical and social experiences for a week while living on a college campus. This year, the retreat was held the week of August 10-14 2015, on the University of Pittsburgh's Johnstown campus. Participants included 89 youth, ranging in age from 16-21 years of age, and 46 staff representing 32 counties across the state. For more detailed information regarding the 2015 Older Youth Retreat, please visit the Youth Advisory Board website http://www.independentlivingpa.org/ILRetreat.htm.

89 Youth from 32 counties attended the Older Youth Retreat

The Resource Center remains committed to lead efforts across the Commonwealth to help counties engage youth and family members in their planning, service delivery, management, and evaluation processes. For more information, please visit the Older Youth website. Success will be achieved when youth, alumni, and family voices are not only heard, but when their voices are the ones leading the process.

Advocate for Policy and Practice Improvements

The Resource Center has undertaken the strategy of advocating for policy and practice improvements in order to influence public policy decisions related to children, youth, and families. Our intent is to help customers and partners enhance collaboration with their partners and increase engagement of youth and families in their practice and policy decisions. Strategies in this area include support of Pennsylvania's Continuous Quality Improvement Efforts and supporting activities related to the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act.

Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA)

In 2010, Pennsylvania became CAPTA compliant when three Citizen Review Panel's (CRP) were established. The CRPs are located regionally and cover 36 of Pennsylvania's 67 counties. Members serving on the panels are volunteers and are charged with developing an annual report to the Department of Human Services. Contained in the report are recommendations aimed at improving Pennsylvania's child protective services policies, procedures, and practices. These reports cover the calendar year but are published, along with the State's responses, within Pennsylvania's Annual Child Abuse Report. These reports are typically published every April and also include a list of the activities completed by the panel members each year. The complete report can be viewed on line by clicking on the following link: Pennsylvania Department of Human Services 2014 Annual Child Abuse Report. While these panels are independent entities, the Resource Center provides support for their work in a variety of ways, including but not limited to, supporting their bi-monthly regional and bi-annual state meetings, data collection, and communication to key stakeholders. For more information on Resource Center's work related to the CRPs go to the Resource Center's CAPTA webpage.

Children's Justice Act (CJA)

The Resource Center supports the Pennsylvania Department of Human Services (DHS) in the compliant and effective use of Pennsylvania's Children's Justice Act grant funds. The Resource Center engages in activities designed to promote collaboration and communication in the use of CJA funds, increase knowledge and resources gained through the Annual CJA Grantee Meeting and support OCYF in identifying opportunities regarding the use of CJA funds to address goals areas in the Annual Progress and Service Report.
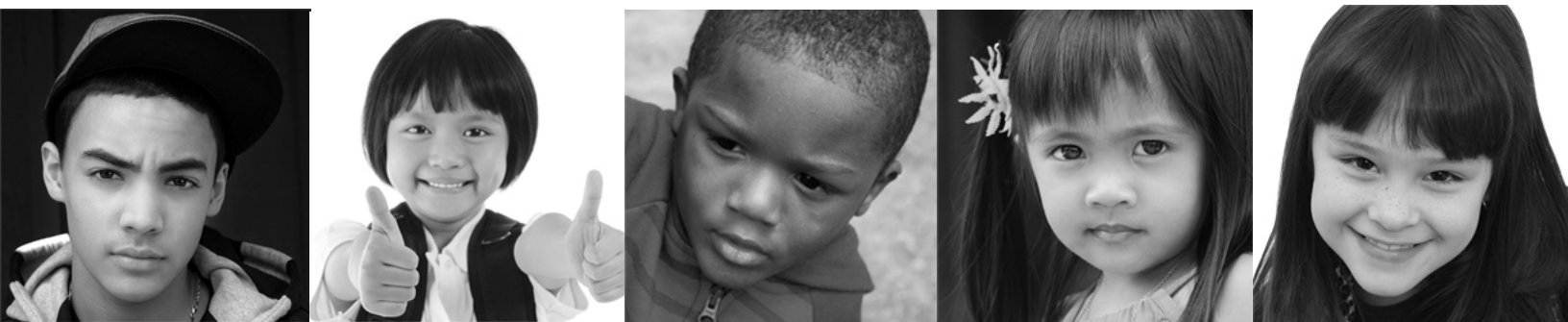
Develop and Implement a Quality Improvement Process

Implementing change at the local level is critical to the achievement of positive child, youth and family outcomes, particularly in a state-supervised and county-administered state. Pennsylvania's Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) approach continues to be an effort focused on reshaping the system at the local and state level to support the achievement of positive outcomes for our children, youth, and families. The Resource Center has remained a key stakeholder and partner in the strategies of implementing and monitoring Pennsylvania's Continuous Quality Improvement effort.
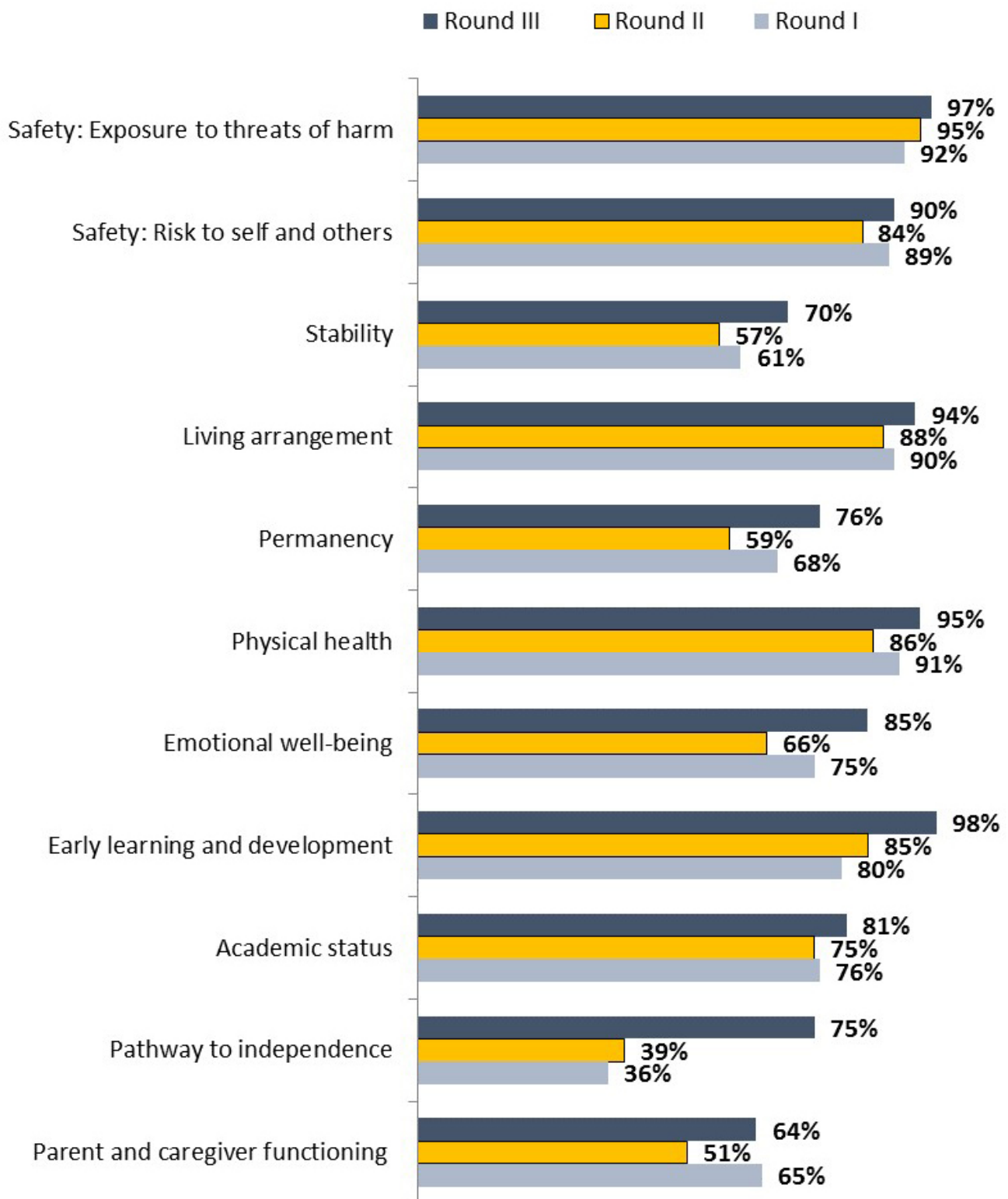
The Quality Services Review (QSR) process is one critical component of the CQI effort, which is used to evaluate safety, permanency and well-being outcomes as well as practice performance. The QSR uses a combination of record reviews, interviews, observations, and deductions made from fact patterns gathered and interpreted by trained cross-systems reviewers regarding children, youth and families receiving services. Pennsylvania's QSR Protocol, developed in collaboration with Human Systems and Outcomes (HSO), outlines a specific set of 23 indicators that are then used to examine the status of the child/youth and parent/caregiver and analyzing the responsiveness and effectiveness of core practice functions. Indicators are divided into two distinct domains: Child, Youth and Family Status and Practice Performance.

During the fourth round state-supported Quality Service Reviews (QSR) which were conducted between December 2013 and November 2014, QSRs were held in 14 counties and 181 cases were in the sample with 74 out-of-home cases and 107 in-home cases. The data from Round 4 is still being finalized, but the statewide report from Round 4 will be able to be accessed at: http://www.pacwrc.pitt.edu/CQI.htm.

The following figures provide an overview of the percent of cases rated acceptable for the "Child/Youth & Family Domain" and the "Practice Performance Domain" during the third round of state-supported QSRs which are compared to those cases rated acceptable during the first and second rounds. It should be noted that there has been a general trend and increase in the percent of acceptable cases over time.

"Child/Youth & Family Domain" Acceptable Ratings by Round

Legend: ■ Round III ■ Round II ■ Round I

Category	Round III	Round II	Round I
Safety: Exposure to threats of harm	97%	95%	92%
Safety: Risk to self and others	90%	84%	89%
Stability	70%	57%	61%
Living arrangement	94%	88%	90%
Permanency	76%	59%	68%
Physical health	95%	86%	91%
Emotional well-being	85%	66%	75%
Early learning and development	98%	85%	80%
Academic status	81%	75%	76%
Pathway to independence	75%	39%	36%
Parent and caregiver functioning	64%	51%	65%

"Practice Performance Domain" Acceptable Ratings by Round

Legend: ■ Round III ☐ Round II ■ Round I

Engagement efforts
- Round III: 69%
- Round II: 66%
- Round I: 70%

Role and voice
- Round III: 63%
- Round II: 59%
- Round I: 61%

Teaming
- Round III: 58%
- Round II: 59%
- Round I: 53%

Cultural awareness and responsiveness
- Round III: 83%
- Round II: 75%
- Round I: 77%

Assessment and understanding
- Round III: 67%
- Round II: 63%
- Round I: 65%

Long-term view
- Round III: 71%
- Round II: 60%
- Round I: 64%

Child/youth and family planning process
- Round III: 64%
- Round II: 56%
- Round I: 65%

Planning for transitions and life adjustments
- Round III: 63%
- Round II: 57%
- Round I: 59%

Efforts to timely permanence
- Round III: 70%
- Round II: 60%
- Round I: 64%

Intervention adequacy and resource availability
- Round III: 88%
- Round II: 84%
- Round I: 81%

Maintaining family relationships
- Round III: 68%
- Round II: 57%
- Round I: 67%

Tracking and adjustment
- Round III: 73%
- Round II: 72%
- Round I: 66%

Gathering data is only one step in the CQI process. In addition to supporting the Quality Service Reviews conducted in the counties, Resource Center staff and other technical assistance providers also work diligently to support the individualized county specific improvement efforts. Much of the focus of these improvement efforts have centered around enhancements to practice efforts focused on engagement (particularly with fathers), teaming within the public child welfare organization and with community partners, assessment of child/youth and family service needs (particularly for older youth), as well as a focus on a greater understanding of overarching child welfare laws and regulations, internal communication amongst staff and targeted efforts to improve stability in living situations and efforts to achieve timely permanence.

Resource Center staff members and key stakeholders will continue to support the improvement efforts by facilitating local and statewide analysis of the data collected from QSRs and other data sources to inform strategic decision making, promote Pennsylvania's Child Welfare Practice Model, and support continuous improvement planning, implementation, and monitoring.

Throughout the last year, there have also been targeted efforts to explore how Pennsylvania can better integrate the Federal Child and Family Services Review process into our existing statewide continuous quality improvement efforts, as Pennsylvania is scheduled to participate in the CFSR process in the year 2017.

Organize and Sponsor Events

The Resource Center organizes and sponsors many events each year with the intention of enhancing child welfare practice and integrating our key stakeholders, consumers, families and youth into our work. The events help to enhance collaboration and increase engagement with the hopes that strengthening these areas will lead to an improved quality of practice.

Continuing Education Credits

The Resource Center continued to offer continuing education credit hours in partnership with the University of Pittsburgh, School of Social Work Continuing Education Department.
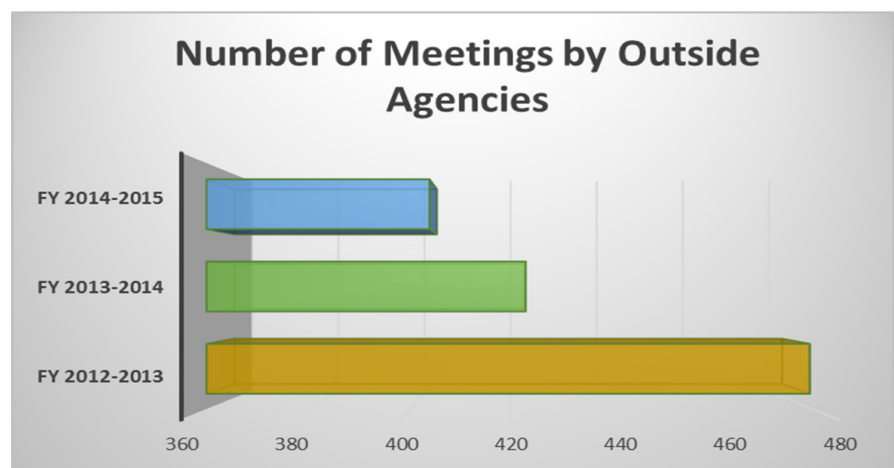
Training Partnerships

The Resource Center provided leadership within identified task areas for partner committees and provided support with identifying training and curriculum needs. The Resource Center also collaborated with the below partners to support events and meetings. These partners included:

- Pennsylvania Children and Youth Administrators and the Leadership Academy Workgroup
- Office of Children, Youth and Families (OCYF)
- Pennsylvania State Resource Family Association (PSRFA)
- Family Group Decision Making Statewide and Leadership Teams
- Fiscal Quality Assurance Committee (QUAC)
- Statewide Adoption and Permanency Network (SWAN)
- Administrative Office of Pennsylvania Courts (AOPC)
- American Bar Association (ABA)
- National Staff Development and Training Association (NSDTA)

The Resource Center utilizes leased training rooms both in our home office building in Mechanicsburg, as well as in locations across the state for trainings, meetings and various events. The chart below shows the training room usage by external agencies in the Mechanicsburg office.

There are currently 182 agencies on the approved list. Of those, 68 agencies currently schedule meetings/trainings on a regular basis.

Finally, the department produced and distributed the monthly newsletter, County Connection, to county children and youth agency training liaisons and administrators. Please click here to access these newsletters.

Number of Meetings by Outside Agencies

FY 2014-2015	
FY 2013-2014	
FY 2012-2013	

360 380 400 420 440 460 480

Resource Coordination

The Resource Center continued to expand and refine efforts in the delivery of products and services using a variety of methods to meet the needs of our consumers and stakeholders. During FY 2014/2015, the Resource Center undertook several resource coordination efforts, including those listed below.

Identify County Specific and Statewide Consultation and Training Needs

One of the ways the Resource Center coordinates and prioritizes work is through the assessment of training needs. In FY 2014/2015, Individual Training Needs Assessments (ITNAs) were distributed to 24 counties in January 2015. By August 2015, the Resource Center had received completed ITNAs from 16 counties. The following is list of the five content areas most frequently identified as a high need:

<u>**High Need Areas**</u>
Sexual Abuse
Ethics
Hostile Clients
Alcohol Abuse
Family Violence

Child Welfare Education for Baccalaureates (CWEB)

Designed to recruit and prepare students for a career in the public child welfare field, the Child Welfare Education for Baccalaureates (CWEB) Program is offered at 14 schools of social work throughout Pennsylvania. Undergraduate students who are official Social Work majors in any of the fourteen approved, participating undergraduate schools are eligible to apply for the CWEB program. Qualified students receive substantial financial support during their senior year in return for a legal commitment to work in one of Pennsylvania's county public child welfare agencies following graduation. Students must satisfactorily complete child welfare course work and an internship at a public child welfare agency. During the course of the internship, most students are able to complete some or the entire competency based training required for public child welfare caseworkers. Upon graduation, students also receive assistance with their employment search.

Requirements as a student:
- Complete child welfare course work
- Enroll in Charting the Course; and
- Complete an internship at a public child welfare agency

Requirements as a graduate:
- Gain and maintain, for one year, employment at a public child welfare agency

Child Welfare Education for Leadership Program (CWEL)

The Child Welfare Education for Leadership (CWEL) Program provides substantial financial support for graduate-level social work education for current employees of public child welfare agencies. Caseworkers, supervisors, managers, and administrators of any Pennsylvania county children and youth agency are eligible to apply to participate in the CWEL program. All persons enrolled meet participation criteria as determined by their CWEL applications, résumés, personal statements, agency approvals, notifications of admission from one of the approved schools, and signed agreements. The CWEL program has funded students from 66 counties and 12 Pennsylvania Schools of Social Work on both a full- and part-time basis. The CWEL program reimburses salary and benefits for full-time CWEL students and covers tuition, fees, and other expenses for both full- and part-time students in return for a legal work commitment to the employing county child welfare agency upon graduation.

Requirements:

- Complete child welfare course work
- Complete an internship at a public or private child and family agency serving IV-E eligible clientele
- Maintain, for two years, employment at a Pennsylvania public child welfare agency

For more information concerning the CWEL/CWEB programs (Click Here)

Develop, Support and Maintain Websites and Databases

The Resource Center hosts a variety of websites and software applications designed to provide the most up-to-date information and resources on all Resource Center activities, as well as, resources for Independent Living youth and all child welfare professionals and their affiliates. In collaboration with our internal and external systems, comprehensive evaluation strategies are developed and supported to increase accountability and provide evidence of the effectiveness of specific approaches. The design and content for each website and application is informed by the respective advisory boards and committees assigned to the sites, as well as by input from other avenues. During FY 2014/2015, the Resource Center either deployed, maintained or made major enhancements to the following websites and applications.

Demonstration Project
- Maintained a ShareFile site for Demonstration Project counties to upload their monthly data submissions.
- Developed and administered multiple databases to import and house the county data submissions.
- Developed, and maintained Teleforms and SQL tables to capture Family Group Decision Making data as it related to the Demonstration Project.

Resource Center Website
- Implemented a stretch attribute to the website for compatibility across device platforms ensuring information is easily accessible from mobile devices to desktops.
- Restructured the nested menu and site contents for a more user friendly, intuitive browsing experience.

Meeting Planner
- Provided development and maintenance to the Meeting Planner software which now allows users to request and reserve rooms, equipment, and function arrangements over the web.

The Resource Center HUB (SharePoint site)
- Rebuilt site with connection to dual-node SQL cluster for failover capability and backup redundancy.
- SQL Server Integration Services installed and configured for enterprise level data reporting.

Encompass
- Developed new menu, login and landing pages.
- Provided data maintenance, additional programming, fixes, and ad hoc reporting.

E-Learn
- Upgraded the LMS to the latest software version.
- Provided data maintenance and ad hoc reporting.

Screening Database (Ages and Stages)
- Provided Data maintenance and ad hoc reporting.
- Provided training to multiple counties.

Information Technology Support

During FY 2014/2015, the Technology Development Department continued its efforts to offer technology support to Resource Center staff, University of Pittsburgh, School of Social Work staff/faculty as well as external state and county stakeholders by:

- Maintaining computer applications used to support the initiatives of the Resource Center and its affiliates.
- Developing and maintaining reports from multiple applications and databases for the Resource Center, county children and youth agencies, DHS-OCYF, and private providers.
- Providing technical assistance and support to the Resource Center and affiliates through the operation of multiple help desks, including the Recognizing and Reporting Child Abuse: Mandated and Permissive Reporting in Pennsylvania Online Training, which provided support and TA to over 400,000 users who completed the course in FY 2014/2015.
- Development and maintenance of technology training resources, media development and duplication, function arrangements, network support, and hardware/software installation and maintenance.
- Producing videos and technology-based tools used to enhance the delivery of curriculum, transfer of learning, and other initiatives.
- Developing and maintaining multiple websites, updated regularly to ensure accuracy and;
- Developing and maintaining web-based courses and workshops.
- Providing daily Recognizing and Reporting Child Abuse: Mandated and Permissive Reporting in Pennsylvania Online Training data uploads to the PA Department of State for Act 31 Licensure and license renewal processing.
- Collaborating with the Curriculum/Trainer Development Department in the creation and

deployment of online courses, as well as, developing videos to pair with existing classroom curriculum and events;

- Collaborating with the Organizational Effectiveness, Statewide Quality Improvement, Administrative and Fiscal and Human Resources Departments to ensure connectivity to business-critical databases (for example SharePoint, SQL, Encompass and Meeting Planner);
- Providing computers and related hardware peripherals/remote meeting setup and audio/visual support
- Working with the University of Pittsburgh Computing Services and Systems Development staff to ensure staff and faculty connectivity to network resources whether onsite or offsite
- Creating new applications and enhancing existing software and applications to meet the needs of the Resource Center and affiliates
- Developing brochures and media for publications and events
- Deploying new hardware and software for staff
- Maintaining inventory and tracking of all computer related equipment

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DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

PCYA
Pennsylvania Children & Youth Administrators
www.pcya.org

"*There can be no keener revelation of a society's soul than the way in which it treats its children.*"
— **Nelson Mandela**