



ISSUE 39, JUNE 2008



Ebony Orr and Daniel Taylor, OHIO YAB Panel

"It was a privilege listening to the stories of youth."

". . . eye-opening, shocking, sad, and real . . ."

The Overcoming Hurdles in Ohio Youth Advisory Board (Ohio YAB) is a statewide organization of young people, aged 14-23, who have experienced foster care.

Their mission summarized:

- To influence policies and practices affecting youth who have or will experience out-of-home care
- To bring youth together statewide, regardless of race, sex, religion, creed, disability, sexual orientation or national origin
- To work in conjunction with ODJFS, adding our knowledge and experience
- To assist youth in establishing and achieving realistic goals for their future

www.pcsao.org/ohioyouth.htm

Your Connection to Permanency

OCWTP's March 2008 Trainer Event – Kelley Gruber

Recognizing the need for trainers to re-connect with those they ultimately serve, this year's Trainer Event, *Your Connection to Permanency*, provided trainers with an opportunity to hear directly from youth who have experienced foster care.

The keynote address, *The Experts Speak*, set the tone for the rest of the day. Six youth from the Overcoming Hurdles in Ohio Youth Advocacy Board (OHIO YAB) participated in a panel discussion led by Michael Sanders. The youth were well spoken, and were able to recommend needed changes without "bashing" child welfare. They shared their ideas about what foster parents and caregivers need to learn in workshops. Their ideas were grouped into three main areas:

Basic rights:

- Caseworkers and foster parents should think of the youth as their children when making decisions. They are more than a case number or a "placement."
- Remember that youth are going through all kinds of emotions and phases that affect their behavior and feelings. This is normal adolescence.
- More needs to be done to improve the "image" of youth in care.
- Youth should be given more say in who they associate with, the groups they join, the activities they participate in, and how much contact they have with family. This is especially important with siblings.
- Youth need to be better informed on how the system works, what their rights are, and who they can turn to for help.
- Youth in care need better access to funding for higher education.

Involvement:

- Communication between youth, foster caregiver, and caseworker – the trifecta, as one youth called it, is key. The caseworker, foster parent, and youth all need to pull in the same direction.
- There needs to be more focus on teen parenting needs, especial when considering educational goals and independent living.
- Efforts for change should be ongoing – not just one big push and then forgotten. Look for new and better ways to get things done.
- Youth need to speak up and improve their relationship-building skills.
- Youth are capable of expressing themselves and should be involved in decision-making.

Permanency:

- It is a basic right to love a family.
- Permanency is more than just a place; it is stability – mental and emotional stability - and feeling part of a family.

LET'S NOT FORGET YOUTH IN KINSHIP CARE

By Tom Swindel & Sue Schmalzried, Lucas County Children Services

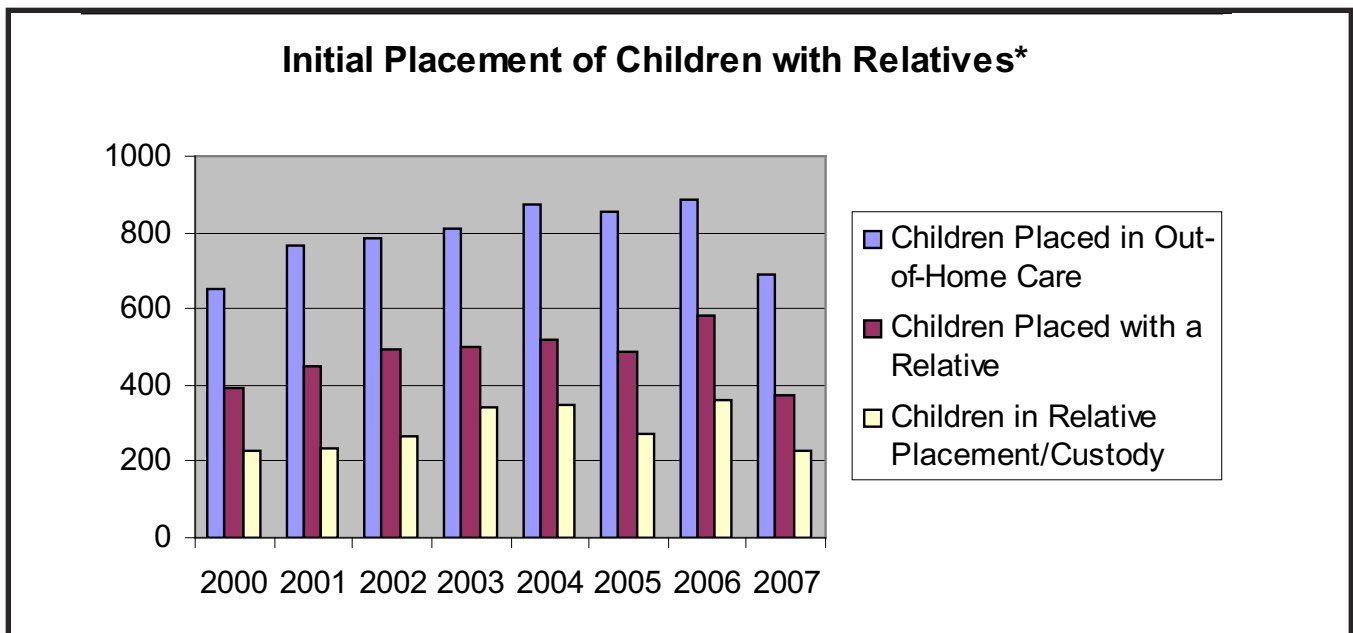
While attending the March 3, 2008, Trainer Event, staff from Lucas County Children Services were impressed by the Ohio Youth Advisory Board's panel presentation on their experiences in out-of-home care. The youths' stories were informative and sensitized the audience to a wide range of foster care issues. Upon reflection, the LCCS staff pondered whether the inclusion of youth placed with relatives or with close family friends might have added another dimension to broaden the knowledge and perspective of those in attendance.

It is the policy of Lucas County Children Services (LCCS) that relatives or kin must be explored as substitute caregivers in instances where children must be removed from their own homes. Further, it is LCCS's recommendation at Shelter Care Hearings, to award Interim Temporary Custody to a relative or kin willing and able to protect, where such placement is: 1) the least-restrictive setting available which meets the child's emotional and physical needs; and 2) likely to enhance the prospects for reunification, when appropriate.

Of the 687 children initially placed in out-of-home care in Lucas County in 2007, 54% (373) were placed with relatives/kin. In tracking LCCS initial placement data for the years 2000 through 2007, more than 50% of children were placed in kinship care each year. We anticipate this trend to continue into the future.

It is best practice to place children with relatives or kin when they cannot safely remain in their own home. This standard is applied on a daily basis at Lucas County Children Services as well as in many other counties throughout Ohio. With the prominence of relative/kin placements in today's child welfare environment, let us remember to consider the issues of children in kinship care when providing training for the development of caseworker skills, knowledge, and application to practice.

***Data from Lucas County Children Services Quality Assurance Department**



Trainer Resources on Permanency & Youth Development

Momentum addressing the specialized needs of youth in foster care is building across the country. Proponents, such as Casey Family Services, the National Resource Center for Family-Centered Practice and Permanency Planning (NRCFCPP), and the California Permanency for Youth Project (CPYP), are among the many groups giving voice and visibility to this effort. Below is an abridged list of trainer resources with links that speak to some of the important issues on permanency and youth development.



Research and Training Center on Family Support and Children's mental health at Portland State University
http://www.rtc.pdx.edu/pgProj_3partnerships.shtml.

New Ways to Work
<http://www.newwaystowork.org/>

Youth Work Central
<http://www.youthworkcentral.org/>
National Youth Development Information Center
<http://www.nydic.org/nydic/index.html>

On Your Way
<http://www.onyourway.org/>

Families for Life – Addressing the Needs of Older Children and Youth in Foster Care
<http://caseyfamilyservices.org/pdfs/webtools.pdf>
Report to Congress on Adoption and Other Permanency Outcomes for Children in Foster Care
http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb/pubs/congress_adopt/references.htm

State Policies to Help Youth Transition Out of Foster Care
<http://www.nga.org/Files/pdf/0701YOUTH.PDF>

Permanency for Adolescents
http://www.nrcys.ou.edu/yd/eupdate/pdfs/yd_update_2004_sum.pdf

Medical Access for Youth Aging Out of Foster Care
<http://www.aphsa.org/Home/Doc/Medicaid-Access-for-Youth-Aging-Out-of-Foster-Care-Rpt.pdf>

Negotiating the Curves Toward Employment: A Guide About Youth Involved in the Foster Care System
http://www.ncwd-youth.info/resources&Publications/foster_care.html

Youth Perspectives on Permanency
<http://www.cpyp.org/Files/YouthPerspectives.pdf>

Foster Club
<http://fosterclub.com>

The Foster Care Alumni of America (FCAA)
<http://www.fostercarealumni.org>

Youth Perspectives
<http://www.childwelfare.gov/outofhome/independent/youth.cfm>

Youth Permanence
http://www.hunter.cuny.edu/socwork/nrcfcpp/info_services/youth-permanency.html



Trainer Question:

A 17-year-old African-American birthmother would like her agency to place her newborn with a stable, loving adoptive family, preferably a couple no older than age 35. By process of elimination during the matching conference, the agency narrows down its family selection to its two strongest prospects: an African-American couple, both in their early 30s with a six-year-old son, and a Caucasian couple in their early 40's with a seven-year-old daughter. Both families have strong extended family support, stable lifestyles, and prior parenting experience. Both moms intend to remain at home with the newborn; both embrace the concept of adoption openness and are willing to maintain on-going contact with the birthmother in the future. Agency staff feels that either family could adequately care for the child despite very minor differences between both families. Would giving consideration to the birthmom's age request of a prospective family (in this instance, the African-American family) create a MEPA violation?

ODJFS Response:

No.

Giving consideration to the birth mom's age request of a prospective family (in this instance, an African American family) is not a MEPA violation. However, granting this request may lead to other violations, such as age discrimination. The Age Discrimination Act of 1975 is a national law that prohibits discrimination on the basis of age in programs or activities receiving Federal financial assistance. The Age Discrimination Act applies to persons of all ages and can be found in 45 CFR Part 91.

Questions about MEPA surface often during training. Would you be ready to give an appropriate response? Common Ground offers another helpful resource to trainers about MEPA issues. Send your inquiries to costerman@ihs-trainet.com.

OCWTP Announcements

E-Track Update

The OCWTP Trainer Development staff are preparing for E-Track, the OCWTP's first online learning management system, by entering information on every trainer, including approved workshops, into the system. Only workshops with approved content outlines on file at IHS are being entered. Trainers are urged to remember that approved content outlines contain competencies, methodologies, learning objectives, along with a content reference list for each workshop. If updated outlines were given to an RTC staff person, trainers need to make sure IHS also receives a copy.

Contracts

The trainer contracts have been updated to clarify ownership of workshop material. The new language, found in section N, reads:

The trainer understands that any payment made to him/her for training curriculum and training materials developed through an OCWTP curriculum development project is considered "work for hire" and is the sole property of the Institute for Human Services on behalf of the Ohio Child Welfare Training Program. (Materials developed for workshops, but not as part of a curriculum development project, are the trainer's property. Training materials include, but are not limited to: texts, monographs, curricula, outlines, handouts, booklets, and computer software.)

New Terminology

You may have noticed that we are no longer using the term "bibliography" and instead are using the term "content reference list" to refer to the list of all materials used to develop a workshop. This term is consistent with the definition of a reference list used in the American Psychological Association's Formatting Guide. You will also begin to see the term "learning activity" rather than "workshops" when we are referencing all the ways learners get information. This term includes on-line training and Learning Labs.

Classroom Performance System (CPS) Resource

The CPS training booklets were revised to be consistent with the upgraded version of the CPS software and are available for download on the OCWTP website www.ocwtp.com (go to *Trainer Resources* and scroll down to CPS resources).



Trainer Bridgeline Series

The OCWTP introduced the Trainer Bridgeline Series in February with its first phone conference for trainers. Although there is a topic for each session, the flexible structure of these calls allows trainers to bring up topics they want addressed. The Bridgeline Series also provides an opportunity for trainers to share successes and stresses, learn from each other, and build relationships. The Bridgeline Series is offered quarterly at two different times to accommodate everyone's schedules.

The next Bridgeline topic is Alternative Response. Starting in July 2008, ten Public Children Services Agencies will begin piloting Alternative Response. Alternative Response is a bifurcated (two-pronged) system which reserves use of formal investigation methods for situations where alleged maltreatment is very serious or referral information suggests children may be at high risk of serious harm. A less intrusive approach is preferable in cases where children are not at high risk of serious harm, they can be protected in their own homes, and involvement of the legal and court systems will not be necessary.

If you'd like to learn more about Alternative Response in Ohio, please read the February issue of Common Ground (www.ocwtp.net/PDFs/CG%200208.pdf), then phone into one of the following Bridgeline calls:

- Tuesday, June 17, 8:00 PM – 8:30 PM
- Thursday, June 19, 12:15 PM – 12:45 PM

Call 1-866-305-2467 and use pass code 148032.

No need to register – just call in!

Applause and Recognition



Ruth McMonagle

University of Pittsburgh Grants Alumni Awards

OCWTP Trainer Sister Madeleine Rybicki and former NEORTC Training Coordinator Dr. Dale Curry, were awarded on April 17 with the 2008 School of Education Departmental Alumni Award from the Department of Psychology in Education, University of Pittsburgh, the Department's highest award.

Jayne Schooler Publishes Again

Congratulations to Jayne Schooler, who's revised and updated *The Whole Life Adoption Book* will soon be in stores. Jayne is the author/co-author of four other adoption-related books.

Ruth McMonagle Receives the OCWTP Linda Pope Award

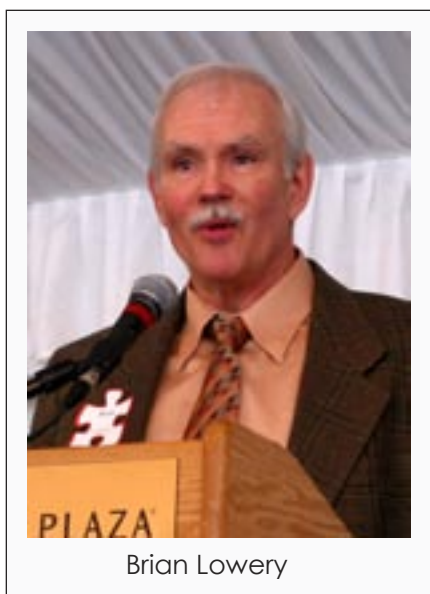
The Linda Pope Award is presented yearly to a trainer who exemplifies expertise, competence, and professionalism in the training environment. Ruth McMonagle received the 2008 Linda Pope Award for her commitment and contributions to the Ohio Child Welfare Training Program.

Ms. McMonagle's 13-year child welfare career began as a caseworker working with unmarried parents. As her career continued, she supervised placement units and an adoption unit. Before leaving child welfare to become an independent trainer and consultant, Ms. McMonagle was the executive director of a child welfare agency.

As a trainer, Ms. McMonagle's workshops focus on time and resource management, stress management, personal effectiveness, and supervisory skills. Through her years in child welfare administration, Ms. McMonagle gained valuable knowledge of supervisory skills and leadership techniques. She has a unique ability to teach participants new skills by connecting concepts taught in her workshops to issues experienced in the field.

OCWTP Rising Star Award Goes To Brian Lowery

The Rising Star Award is given annually to acknowledge a new trainer's hard work and dedication and to recognize his or her promise for the future. The 2008 recipient was Brian Lowery. Brian has a Masters in Public Administration, Licensure in Social Work, and over 25 years of experience as an instructor in the human services field. He is a therapist in private practice and a sought-after consultant and trainer within the field of child welfare throughout the Great Lakes region.



Brian Lowery

Evaluations for the panel were extremely positive. Two trainers described the panel as “eye-opening, shocking, sad and real,” and a “refreshing, meaningful experience.”

At the request of trainers and RTCs, time was allotted after lunch for trainers to network. Trainers were also given the opportunity to network with Regional Training Center staff, and to ask members of the youth panel questions about their experience and the ways trainers can improve the system for youth.

As in years past, we offered a workshop to fulfill the ethics requirement for trainers who are licensed social workers. Dr. Joseph Shannon, last year’s Linda Pope award winner, presented *Avoiding Ethical and Legal Pitfalls with Youth in Care*. Dr. Shannon provided trainers with a better understanding of why youth become “high conflict,” and how trauma impacts behavior. He helped trainers understand the need for boundaries to ensure safety and helped them develop empathy for youth in care.

In the final series of workshops, trainers chose to either attend a workshop geared toward those who train caregivers, a workshop geared towards those who train caseworkers and supervisors, or a workshop presented by foster care alumni.

Michael Sanders presented *Youth Development – From Prevention to Participation: How Trainers Put the Pieces Together for Caseworkers*. Michael explored key elements of youth engagement and gave tips to trainers on how to incorporate youth-development principles into their caseworker presentations. Trainers appreciated the fresh perspective and new ideas.

Jim Still-Pepper presented *Youth Development – From Placement to Permanency: How Trainers Put the Pieces Together for Foster Caregivers*. Jim helped trainers plan ways to teach foster caregivers about youth development principles. Attendees said they received some great training ideas and new ways of engaging foster parents toward permanency.

Lisa Dickson and Amanda Dunlap presented *Emotional Resiliency: Putting the Pieces Together During and After Foster Care*. Lisa and Amanda helped trainers understand the need for youth in care to develop relationship building skills. Trainers enjoyed that the presenters spoke from their hearts. Attendees left recharged and rededicated to serving youth.

To further connect trainers with youth in care, each trainer in attendance was provided with a photo and description of a waiting child. To expose waiting children to a larger audience of both workers and foster/adoptive families, increasing the likelihood of finding a family for him or her, trainers were asked to display the photo at each of the workshops they present in the coming year.

As a result of the Trainer Event, the OCWTP developed an ad hoc committee on engaging youth. This committee will identify ways to incorporate youth at all levels of the training system. For more information, contact Charlotte Osterman, committee chair, at (614) 251-6000 or costerman@ihs-trainet.com.

Field Guide to Child Welfare Now Online!

The Institute for Human Services and the Child Welfare League of America are pleased to announce the release of the searchable Field Guide to Child Welfare, now available online by going to: www.childwelfarefieldguide.com

For more than ten years, the Field Guide to Child Welfare has been an essential practice resource for child welfare staff, caregivers, and university students. Now you can access comprehensive information about the fundamental competencies of child welfare practice online!

Access and search for content and key words from the four-volume resource textbooks online and print topic sections. Primary topics include child welfare values and practice principles, fundamentals of child protection, risk assessment and child safety, the technology of case planning and family-centered casework, interviewing strategies, the impact of maltreatment on child development, separation and child placement, family reunification, foster care and adoption for children with special needs, sexual abuse, cultural competence and services to children with developmental disabilities and their families.

If you would like to try the software please take advantage of our free trial period. If you feel this software would be useful, please contact us for special subscription terms.

For more information, on the Field Guide, please visit: <http://www.narccw.com/CWTraining/fieldguide.htm> or contact Susan Yingling at (614) 251-6000 or syingling@ihs-trainet.com

OCWTP Training of Trainers (TOT) Series

The OCWTP periodically offers the following trainings designed specifically for trainers. If you are interested in attending any of these courses please contact Debra Sparrow at: dsparrow@ihs-trainet.com for dates.

Presentation Skills
Culture and Diversity
Curriculum Development
Transfer of Learning
PowerPoint
Classroom Performance System (CPS)
Skill Building and Transfer of Learning Lab for Trainers

A detailed description of the TOT Series can be found in the *For Trainers* section at: www.ocwtp.com.

REGIONAL NEWS

CORTC welcomes Vicky Rhoads as one of the Foster Parent Education Training Coordinators. Vicky has worked in child welfare for many years as a group home parent, revenue enhancement worker, intake caseworker, intake supervisor, and as a foster/adoption preparation worker. Vicky has hit the ground running and, in addition to working with the Foster Parent program, is actively involved in the Alternative Response initiative as well as OCWTP's Evaluation, Foster Care/Adoption, and Trainer Development Work Teams.

CORTC also welcomes two new support staff members to their team. Kelly King is the new Foster Parent Education and Training secretary. Kelly transferred to this position from a staff position, where she had several years experience. Joshua Smith is the new Staff Training secretary. Joshua worked part-time with the Agency Wish List program prior to joining CORTC.

www.ocwtp.com

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Common Ground is published three times a year. Please send material to syingling@ihs-trainet.com.

The editorial staff reserves the right to condense and edit all materials submitted for publication.



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