



**New York State
Office of
Children & Family
Services**

Report to the Legislature Quality Enhancement Fund

State Fiscal Year 2007-08

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Quality Enhancement Fund
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New York's Child Welfare Financing structure promotes safety, well-being and permanency for children, with the following three components:

1. Chapter 496 of the Laws of 2008 revised reimbursement to 63.7 percent/36.3 percent State/local funding for all child welfare services except foster care services after applying available Federal funds;
2. A Foster Care Block Grant capping State reimbursement to social services districts for foster care services to the annual amounts appropriated; and
3. A Quality Enhancement Fund administered by the Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS) to increase the availability and quality of children and family services programs.

Chapters 53 and 83 of the Laws of 2002, and Section 97-yyy of the State Finance Law require that OCFS submit a report to the Governor and the Legislature annually that describes the disbursements from the Quality Enhancement Fund and the status of the projects financed by the fund.

In State Fiscal Year (SFY) 2007-08, \$3,592,680 in Local Assistance General Funds was available for the Quality Enhancement Fund (QEF). This funding supports services and expenses related to improving the quality of child welfare services that include, but are not limited to: training to mandated reporters regarding the proper identification of and response to signs of child abuse and neglect; public information programs and services that advance a zero tolerance campaign of child abuse and neglect; and demonstration projects to test models for new or targeted expansion of services beyond the level currently funded by local social services districts.

The following initiatives will be supported from the SFY 2007-08 Quality Enhancement Fund:

Permanency Mediation **\$401,375**

The Permanency Mediation program in New York City has to improve the outcomes of children in foster care by reducing the length of stay in care, reunifying families safely and more quickly, or where reunification is not possible, achieving permanency for the child through adoption or guardianship. This project supports strategies to improve permanency outcomes, which is a key component of the Child and Family Services Review (CFSR). The Federal Department of Health and Human Services conducted the on-site CFSR in May 2008.

Permanency Mediation is a process that involves all stakeholders - the family, including the child (as circumstances warrant), caseworkers, service providers, foster parents, law guardians, attorneys for all parties, and a neutral mediator. The mediator's role is to

help identify issues, clarify perceptions and explore alternatives for a mutually acceptable outcome. It can be done at any stage of the child welfare case and often can alleviate the need for protracted litigation in the courts. Because it is non-adversarial, parents are more engaged and empowered in reaching decisions about their families. It is also a mechanism that provides more useful information to the courts and assists with service plan development. Through the cooperation of interested parties, and facilitation by a neutral facilitator, permanency can be achieved through reunification, adoption, guardianship, kinship adoption or other arrangements in the child's best interest.

The Permanency Mediation Program is implemented through a joint project with the Office of Court Administration (OCA) and the Permanent Judicial Commission on Justice for Children.

Parent-to-Parent of New York State – Family Support Model **\$240,000**

Families Together in New York State, Inc. provides supportive services to families entering the child welfare system through child protective services. This model has established a method of supporting families who are in need of services from the child welfare system by connecting them with a Family Support Consultant. There are two counties participating in the Family Support Model - Monroe and Ontario counties. Families Together engage families so they can understand the role of the district, as well as the family, in providing for the safety, permanency and well-being of their children. Engaging families in the decision making process is a method to prevent the need for foster care or to shorten the length of stay in foster care in order to improve outcomes for families and children.

The Family Support Consultant has provided assistance during court proceedings, service plan reviews and family meetings with service providers. Families who have participated received access to program support activities within their community, including support groups that offer a variety of skill building experiences in areas determined by the participants. In addition, families have access to respite services. 009.

Hillside Children's Center – Cross Systems Services **\$90,500**

Hillside Children's Center Cross Systems Services is designed to screen, evaluate and develop a treatment package that will allow a child to remain at home or provide for placement of the child in the least restrictive environment. Hillside Children's Center currently operates a Cross Systems residential program as one of New York State's authorized voluntary agencies serving children with severe disabilities. Youth under the age of 18 and diagnosed as seriously emotionally challenged and at high risk of out-of-home placement are served in this program. There are nine counties (Chemung, Livingston, Ontario, Monroe, Schuyler, Seneca, Steuben, Wayne and Yates) who participate in the Cross Systems Services project.

The second year of funding is supported by five State agencies. They are as follows: State Education Department (SED), Office of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities (OMRDD), Office of Mental Health (OMH), Office of Alcohol and Substance Abuse Services (OASAS) and Department of Health (DOH). Each State agency has committed \$90,500 in funding to support this initiative.

Getting to Outcomes (GTO)

\$657,250

Part H of Chapter 57 of the Laws of 2007 required performance or outcome based provisions beginning January 1, 2008 for preventive services provided in accordance with Social Services Law (SSL) §409-a. The Office of Children and Family Services has been providing guidance and technical assistance to nine counties to assist in the implementation of these requirements. The SFY 2007-08 QEF spending plan has expanded this program by providing training to an additional eight counties to build their capacity to improve the implementation and use performance or outcome based provisions.

Getting to Outcomes (GTO) promotes fiscal and programmatic accountability, program planning, and evaluation to achieve results and improve the quality of programs. The activities include preparation work, initial on-site training/technical assistance, follow-up activities, and ongoing technical assistance between on-site visits. The counties received the following:

- One pre-site visit with key leaders/staff – Contact with key leaders in local districts to determine current practice; review existing procurement (purchase of services) practices; review the county plan; review current services; review current data; learn about individual county needs, issues, and goals; and establish a baseline.
 - One two-day training on-site in Getting to Outcomes – Provide initial training and develop a county work plan to move to the next steps.
 - Three follow-up site visits to the district after the initial training – after the initial on-site training , followed by intensive work with county staff to identify outcomes for contracts and to provide additional training and support for procurement staff and attorneys, if it was required. Initial follow up on-site would be in the first three months after the training. This would be to provide immediate support to county work identified in the two day training. An additional two to three on-site visits would be planned during the next four to nine months. These follow-up on-site visits would enable GTO consultants to review the progress to date, troubleshoot, and provide additional support.
 - Ongoing weekly telephone consultation – Between on-site visits, the GTO consultants will be available for ongoing consultation with participating districts.
 - A one-day meeting midway through training with other participating counties – About six months into the project, there will be a one day Booster Session for all demonstration counties who will meet jointly to share their work and to begin developing a community of practice among the counties.
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Child Welfare Indicator Data and National Data Center

\$243,800

The contract with the University of Chicago's Chapin Hall Center for Children allows OCFS access to their information system and research tools to assist OCFS to improve outcomes for children and families served in the child welfare system. Chapin Hall is a research and development center that provides resources to policymakers and service providers in the area of child safety and permanency. The Center for State Foster Care and Adoption Data, a partnership with the American Public Human Services Association (APHSA) and Chapin Hall, provides child welfare agencies advanced information technology for performance measurement. Chapin Hall provides governmental entities access to these research and data tools.

Under this contractual agreement, OCFS will have access to Chapin Hall's computer programs and Internet based tools to make available child welfare indicator data. This activity includes the production of State and county data profiles based on New York State indicators of child safety and permanency. The contractor works with OCFS to identify different ways of measuring time towards permanency and produce reports that can be transmitted to counties. In addition, the contractor will work with OCFS to transfer this knowledge to continue State-level work on child safety and permanency indicators. OCFS will continue to receive the following technical assistance:

- Access to a sophisticated database to track state child welfare outcomes and agency performance over time.
- Access to multi-state data for benchmarking New York State's progress.
- Provide technical assistance to OCFS on the installation and use of the database and the strategic use of data for program evaluation, policy analysis, and compliance reporting.

Through access and use of the data, OCFS will continue to develop the capacity to:

- Analyze key child welfare outcomes related to time to reunification, time to adoption, placement stability, and re-entry to care.
- Compare outcomes for different entities within New York State and other states.
- Project future service patterns based on state and national historical trends and indicators.

In addition, funding will support and expand OCFS membership of Chapin Hall's Data Center so that voluntary agencies will have access to the data. This will improve the joint effort between OCFS and the Council of Family and Child Caring Agencies (COFCCA) to advance the agencies' access to and effective use of data.

Public Information Campaign – Co-Sleeping

\$295,755

OCFS continues their efforts to educate New Yorkers regarding the dangers of co-sleeping with their babies. The SFY 2006-07 Quality Enhancement Training and Public Campaign funds were used to start the public campaign of educating families about the dangers of sleeping with their children. SFY 2007-08 Quality Enhancement funds continues to support the next steps to continuing the campaign by developing, producing, and marketing, as part of the child abuse prevention campaign, a public education program focusing on infant safe sleeping practices to help address the co-sleeping issue in New York State. In addition, the funds are being used to develop and produce a video, produce radio public service announcements, and develop/produce campaign print materials brochures, fact sheets, posters and other materials.

Mandated Reporter Training

\$250,000

The SFY 2007-08 Quality Enhancement Funds continues to support the State share of a project in the 2008 Training Plan specifically related to training for mandated reporters. This project will improve the ability for mandated reporters to identify and report effectively on suspected instances of child abuse. These funds support continuous updates to the curriculum and allow this training to be accessible on an ongoing basis. In addition, these funds allow the development and delivery of specialized trainings for the Health and Hospitals Corporation and the Greater New York Health Association in NYC as part of the Mayor's Task Force on Child Welfare and Safety: Comprehensive Evaluation and Treatment of Child Abuse and Neglect (CETCAN). The purpose of this course is to advance the safety and the protection of the children of New York City by creating CETCAN facilities.

Sanctuary Model Training

\$775,000

The Office of Children and Family Services has begun a major and complex initiative to change the manner in which young people in residential care are treated by implementing the nationally-recognized and evidenced-based Sanctuary Model of treatment. The Sanctuary Model represents a trauma-informed method of creating or changing an organizational culture in order to more effectively provide a cohesive context within which healing from psychological and social traumatic experience can be addressed. This initiative involves a new environment of treatment and a shift in philosophy designed to reduce the use of physical restraints and injuries sustained by youth and staff. It provides all levels of staff with new techniques and an understanding of the behaviors of the youth in their care.

The Sanctuary Model has been designed to facilitate the development of structures, processes and behaviors for change by staff, children and the community. Rehabilitative programs will be more focused on treatment and individualized approaches, with the special recognition of trauma experienced by residents and its impact on their growth and development. Since most children who enter residential care have been exposed to overwhelming experiences related to some form of trauma and disruption, trauma-informed methods of care integrated into standard treatment practices are important for achieving residential treatment goals. The advancement of

these child and youth development treatment goals is also aimed at preventing a multitude of problems as clients enter adulthood.

Using the Sanctuary Model, and moving towards full implementation of the Sanctuary Model, is a three-year change process that moves OCFS towards a trauma-specific treatment approach. In 2006, five voluntary agencies and two OCFS facilities began this training. Through the approved 2008 Training Plan, an additional five voluntary agencies and three OCFS facilities were added to the Sanctuary Model training.

Child Welfare Organizing Project (CWOP)

\$100,000

The Child Welfare Organizing Project is a parent/professional partnership dedicated to public child welfare reform in New York City through increased, meaningful parent involvement in service and policy planning. Founded in 1994 with a grant from the Child Welfare Fund to the Hunter College School of Social Work, CWOP's early research concluded that clients, particularly biological parents, had practically no voice in the City's public child welfare system. Ten years later, parents who have had direct, personal experience with the system now hold seats on three NYC Administration for Children's Services (ACS) Advisory Groups; guest lecture at virtually every area school of law and social work; develop and implement training curricula for both parents and professionals; publish their own newsletter; advise elected officials on child welfare issues and legislation; and are employed as peer advocates by over 20 foster care, preventive, and legal services agencies.

Funding was used to continue the contract with Child Welfare Organizing Project, Inc. to allow for peer-led, parent driven services and activities intended to increase family preservation and reunification. Funding supported training to parents as advocates who we identified by local social services districts and contract agencies. These parent advocates provided new parents entering the system with relevant information and assistance to supplement what is provided by the caseworker. Their role was to inform parents about their rights and responsibilities and to reach parents in a meaningful way. A trained pool of parents attended family conferences and training. Also, CWOP offer professional leadership training to parent advocates currently employed by the agencies.

Evidenced Based Parenting – Incredible Years

\$70,000

The Incredible Years is a research based course which helps parents increase their parenting skills, learn how to influence their child's behavior, and build positive child-parent relationships. The program also taught parents how to set limits, use praise for good behavior, and to engage children in constructive play. The goals of the Incredible Years program include reducing child abuse and neglect and improving parenting skills. The Incredible Years curriculum was initiated four years ago by the Family Resource Centers of Crestwood Children's Center and five other agencies. Currently, the program is provided in Rochester and surrounding areas.

Evidenced Based Parenting – Powerful Families

\$30,000

Powerful Families, developed by Casey Family Programs, is a strength-based parent empowerment model for promoting family stability and security by providing parents with tools to advocate for their families. Casey staff work with staff from community-based organizations to recruit and enroll parents in a nine-week sessions. Workshop topics are based on parent needs and parent outreach workers conduct weekly follow up calls with parents. This project was piloted and evaluated in five cities with very positive results. Casey staff offer curricula development/research, peer-to-peer networks, technical assistance, training and evaluation.

Ready by 21 Quality Counts Initiative (QCI)

\$200,000

OCFS was selected to participate in the Ready by 21 Quality Counts Initiative sponsored by the Forum for Youth Investment, High Scope Educational Foundation, and the National Training Institute for Community Youth Work. It is funded by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and Atlantic Philanthropies. The award included \$100,000 in funding, as well as training and technical assistance valued at \$150,000 from the three sponsoring organizations over two years. This award granted to OCFS to be an intermediary, in partnership with Cornell University ACT for Youth, to work with four counties (Broome, Onondaga, Orange and Rockland), and to support broader dissemination. In order for OCFS to receive the funds, a \$200,000 match is required. The Quality Enhancement Fund supported the required match for four counties at \$50,000 per year. The counties include Broome, Onondaga, Orange, and Rockland, which are targeted based on their readiness and existing efforts in the area of collaborative planning, program assessment and youth working training. Counties were selected based on regional considerations in close proximity to facilitate technical assistance provided by the national sponsors.

Ready by 21 Quality Counts focused on collaborative planning, program assessment and youth worker training. The selected counties already have important work underway in collaborative planning and youth worker training. This project designed to move existing community work forward rather than initiate new efforts.

The three national partners bring resources to help OCFS and counties move forward on their agenda to improve outcomes for all youth. This included resources from:

- Forum for Youth Investment – Ready by 21 initiative which focused on improving outcomes for all youth (that they are ready for life, work, college). It supported cross systems approach to outcomes, aligning resources, engaging stakeholders and a data driven quality improvement process.
 - High Scope Educational Foundation – This foundation has developed the Youth Program Quality Assessment (YPQA) tool that provides a mechanism for the program monitoring/assessment. This research-based instrument assesses programs particularly on the engagement and relationship between staff and youth. This instrument incorporates the research on effective positive
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developmental settings. Characteristics of effective programs include: Physical and Psychological Safety, Appropriate Structure, Supportive Relationships; Opportunities to Belong; Positive Social Norms; Support for Efficacy and Mattering; Opportunities for Skill Building; and Integration of Family, School, and Community Efforts.

- National Training Institute for Community Youth Work – Supported the Advancing Youth Development training for youth workers.

The anticipated outcomes of this project are to improve county capacity to achieve cross systems outcomes for youth and families by increasing the use of a data driven decision making process (planning); interagency alignment of resources across systems that contribute to long term outcomes such as reduction of child abuse or increase in self-sufficiency; assessment of program quality as it contributes to achievement of outcomes; and assessment of a provider's capacity to deliver quality services.

Service Outcomes Research Project (SOAR)

\$132,000

This project involves a collaborative effort with the University at Albany Hindelang Criminal Justice Research Center, St. Anne Institute, La Salle School, and the Council of Child and Family Child Caring Agencies (COFCCA) to use a developmental research approach to identify evidence-based practice in voluntary agency residential care. It engages staff in participatory research to develop a logic model, identify outcomes, and determine measures. Preliminary results emphasize themes common across the continuum of services and across systems. This work will help identify how OCFS can support this more broadly in voluntary agencies and align it with outcomes work in counties, including outcomes training for voluntary agencies. Finally, this aligns with OCFS' priority of evidence and outcome based services, provides a vehicle to connect voluntary agencies to outcomes discussion and focus, and connects existing training outcomes to voluntary agencies.

Differential Response

\$107,000

In the fall of 2008, six counties are launching New York State's pilot of a differential response model regarding the investigation of certain child protective services reports. The counties participating in the pilot are Erie, Onondaga, Chautauqua, Tompkins, Albany and Westchester. The funding was used for the evaluation component of this program (\$80,000) and wrap around funding to support services to families served on the Family Assessment and Service track (\$27,000).
