

Division of Family Services Monthly Update October 2010

Training

The review work on core competencies for child welfare supervisors and managers continued during the month of September. The final draft from the work done by volunteer LDSS child welfare supervisors and managers has been completed and approved for circulation. It will be distributed to a wide group of stakeholders over the next 3 to 4 months. In addition, the first of six modules of pilot core training for child welfare supervisors and managers took place on September 13th and 14th. This curriculum, along with current VISSTA training for child welfare supervisors and the core competencies developed for Virginia, will inform the development of Virginia's core training courses for child welfare supervisors and managers.

Also, the Policy Training Subcommittee has completed work on a survey of Family Services staff as well as made recommendations to the Steering Committee that reflect the findings of that survey. VISSTA will be modifying and improving the way that policy training is delivered to LDSS over the next eighteen months. This information along with the Child Welfare Supervisor/Manager Core Competencies will be posted on the Children's Services System website (www.vafamilyconnections.org) in the near future. In the meantime, if you are interested in reading the most recent draft of Virginia's core competency listing for child welfare supervisors and managers, please contact Vernon.Simmons@dss.virginia.gov.

During the month of October, the pilot core training will continue. In addition, Vernon Simmons, Phyllis Grooms-Gordon, and Cynthia Cole Bauer, all of whom are members of the Virginia Child Welfare Training Program Steering Committee, will be doing a presentation at the Virginia Alliance of Social Work Practitioner Conference in Williamsburg.

Managing by Data

During the month of September, the Outcome Based Reporting and Analysis (OBRA) continued to work closely with select LDSS to continue fostering a culture that promotes the value and practice of "managing by data." Also, OBRA conducted the final Advanced Data Training in the Piedmont region. These trainings reviewed the Critical Outcomes Report, SafeMeasures, the Virginia Child Welfare Outcomes Reports (VCWOR), as well as training in Microsoft Excel. The session was full and participants provided positive feedback. In addition, OBRA provided individualized trainings for the following LDSS: Prince William DSS, Fluvanna DSS and Buckingham DSS. An additional training was also held with Project Life Staff around that National Youth in Transition Database (NYTD).

OASIS (v 3.7) was released on September 24th and included NYTD and CPS change track. LDSS have until October 15, 2010 to install the new version. Work has already started on OASIS (v 3.8) and OASIS (v 3.9) which are scheduled to include custody assistance and SDM respectively. The Managing by Data Workgroup met on September 22nd. Minutes are available on the OBRA web page under the Managing by Data tab (<http://spark.dss.virginia.gov/divisions/dfs/reporting/index.cgi>).

During the month of October OBRA will continue to work with LDSS on an individual basis. Visits are scheduled with Charlotte DSS, Chesapeake DSS and Smyth County DSS. In addition Matt Wade will be holding a session for western agencies on October 22nd. Pam Sheffield will be conducting NYTD OASIS trainings in Albemarle, Chesterfield, Fairfax, Richmond City, Newport News, and the Piedmont region. In

addition she will be conducting resource training in the Central and Piedmont regions. Upcoming analysis on Treatment Foster Care placements and a comparison of agency performance by level size will also be published.

Family Engagement

During the month of September, Tamara Temoney, the Family Engagement Manager, attended family engagement roundtables in the Central and Eastern regions. These meetings provided an opportunity for local departments to share information and ideas about family engagement. Roundtables also took place in the Piedmont and Western region. In addition, each regional expanded team, including the CPS Consultant, Permanency Consultant, Resource Family Consultant, Office of Comprehensive Services (OCS)/Comprehensive Services Act (CSA) Technical Assistant, CRAFFT Coordinator and Project Life Consultant, participated in a meeting with key partners to discuss efforts and strategies needed to sustain family engagement practice for 2011.

The Virginia Department of Social Services Family Strengthening and Fatherhood Initiative held the second annual conference, *Lift off: Gaining Speed and Direction for Virginia's Families*. Tracey Jackson, Family Engagement Specialist, along with the American Academy of Adoption Attorneys Colleen M. Quinn and Stanton Phillips discussed the history of putative father/paternity registries, efforts regarding creating a national registry, and the requirements and policies of the Virginia Putative Father Registry. In addition, the Family Engagement Unit sponsored a training session, *Engaging the Non-Resident Father*, in collaboration with the Division of Community and Volunteer Services and the Division of Child Support Enforcement. The training was facilitated by Ron Clark, consultant and National Director of Community-based and School-based Programming for the National Fatherhood Initiative, and Michelle Howard, from the American Humane Association.

During the month of October, a conference call with local agency directors in Phase 3 localities will take place. Tracey Jackson will facilitate an information session about the Virginia Putative Father Registry during the Virginia Alliance of Social Work Practitioners Conference. In addition, family engagement roundtables will be held in the Central and Northern regions.

Resource Families

During the month of September, the Resource Family Guidance training was held in the Eastern, Central, Western, and Northern regions. There were also introductory sessions about Family Search and Engagement provided to Adoption Contractors and their partner LDSS in the Eastern, Northern, and Western regions.

In addition, the Resource Family Consultants participated in a meeting with relevant partners to discuss sustaining family engagement practice. Lana Mullins and Chasity Fitzpatrick will be working with Lori Ryan from the Annie E. Casey Foundation to facilitate a second round of Family Search and Engagement training in each region in the fall. Also, a survey will be sent to local departments that participated in the Regional Peer Collaborative Process to inquire about changes in resource family development practice.

Community Based Care

OCS staff has been active participants in the family engagement roundtables in the five regions of the state. The relationship between service development and CSA is integral to insuring that family partnership meetings result in the funding for services that the participants developed, so having OCS and local CSA systems participate is important to the success of family engagement processes when meetings are being held for CSA eligible children and youth. SEC policy for the CSA system offers options for integrating Family Assessment and Planning Teams (FAPT) with Family Partnership Meetings for those localities that wish to do so. However, it also encourages the development of policy for those localities that wish to have Family Partnership Meetings separate from FAPT but who need FAPT endorsement for those services. The policy and guidelines adopted by the SEC can be found on the OCS website www.csa.virginia.gov.

Child Protective Services

A part-time CPS staff person was hired in August 2010 to administer all of the Child Advocacy Center (CAC) contracts. This allocation of staff resources will increase technical assistance and support to these programs. The Department is administering \$900,000 in state general funds, through an MOU with the Secretary of Health and Human Resources, to 17 local CAC programs and one sole source contract with CACVA, the state networking organization that provides technical assistance to existing CAC's and supports the development of CAC's in underserved areas of Virginia. All grantees have received 2010 invoice, narrative report and statistical report forms.

During the month of September, CPS and OASIS Unit staff established a committee that met with LDSS representatives on September 13th to begin development of incorporating Structured Decision Making (SDM) into OASIS for the CPS program. The committee made recommendations for improvements to the CPS screens and will reconvene on November 10. In addition, CPS Program staff met with CPS Regional Consultants September 21st to review final draft edits to an SDM training curriculum that highlights intake, safety and risk assessments in CPS. Preliminary planning is underway for statewide training of SDM in late spring 2011.

The CPS Policy Advisory Committee convened on September 15th to review policy issues and propose changes to the guidance manual. The Committee provided input on improving multidisciplinary response to child abuse/neglect for presentation to the Court Appointed Special Advocate/Children's Justice Act Advisory Committee at its strategic planning meeting held on September 30 – October 1, 2010.

Staff completed the Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) Grant Sub-award Report (SAR) for the 40 VOCA sub-grantees which is reported to our federal partners through the Department of Criminal Justice Services (DCJS). This is required annual reporting in October. Staff continued the review of the fiscal year 2010 Final Reports submitted by the 40 VOCA sub-grantees and provided on-going technical assistance to 40 VOCA sub-grantees via telephone and email. Staff attended the VOCA Administrators' meeting at the DCJS on September 22, 2010 which was attended by representatives from both VDSS and DCJS. Topics of discussion included the National VOCA Administrators' Conference held in Dearborn, MI earlier in the month, the Quarterly Recovery Act report which is due the beginning of October, the VOCA Recovery Performance Report which will be due to our federal partners this fall, and the DCJS site visit which will occur at VDSS on November 9, 2010.

The new VDSS Parent Satisfaction Survey, both the English and the Spanish versions, were finalized and will be used by all grantees providing direct service in SFY11. The English version will also be posted online for those grantees who requested it.

During the month of October, CPS staff will meet with IT staff to continue plans for OASIS future updates related to CPS sexual abuse records retention, SDM, and general CPS documentation. In addition, CPS Program staff will provide input with VCU-VISSTA regarding requirements for certification of trainers of policy courses.

Lynne Edwards, Senior Program Consultant, resigned from her position as grant manager for the 27 Prevention Grants. Her last day in this position is October 8, 2011 as she will be taking a different position within the Division's Family Support, Prevention Team. Thank you Lynne for a tremendous contribution to the CPS unit over the years!

Permanency

The Foster Care Guidance Manual was completed, with the Permanency Advisory Committee's and Division leadership's comments incorporated. The manual and transmittal were submitted to the Commissioner's office for review. Seven sections of the manual were significantly reorganized and rewritten. The manual focuses on: engaging children; youth and families as partners; achieving permanency for children and youth in foster care; improving services for older youth to successfully transition to adulthood; and using information to improve effective decision-making, practice and use of resources.

July 2011 is the estimated date for the new Child and Family Services Manual to be posted. The new format of the manual will provide links across program chapters and to external resources, easy navigation across the manual, and a shared "resource" chapter with information that applies to one or more programs and a search function across manual chapters. Linda MacDonald, the technical writer for B2B Solutions, successfully completed an initial "test" format from the Adult Services Manual for application in the new Child and Family Services manual.

Therese Wolf, Permanency Program Manager, requested and received approval from the Managing by Data Workgroup to proceed with developing new assessment and service plan screens in OASIS. New requirements for Transition Plans for older youth leaving foster care along with current steps to identify a comprehensive assessment tool for youth in care and their families makes the need for these changes critical to efficient documentation of case progress. Changes to these screens will occur under the auspices of a workgroup with representatives of Prevention, Child Protection Services, Foster Care and Adoption.

The Fostering Connections to Success (FCS) education workgroup is a collaborative effort composed of persons representing diverse perspectives (DOE, LDSS, VDSS, legal advocates, etc.) who share the common objective of facilitating the best interest of children and assuring Virginia compliance (as related to education needs of youth in foster care or those adopted) with FCS. A communications work stream was organized under this workgroup and met on September 16, 2010. The objective was to develop a plan to facilitate awareness of the Fostering Connections and Increasing Adoptions Act for multiple stakeholders (LEA's, social workers, foster parents, youth, group homes and private providers, GAL's, etc.). An information packet is in the process of being developed. The specifics are outlined below:

- The Fostering Connections to Success Legislation
- The State code and regulations
- Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ's)
- Vignettes (i.e., snapshots of types of scenarios youth experience)
- Guidance Documents

On September 10, a NYTD make-up training was conducted for workers of local departments of social services who were unable to attend any of the five regional trainings offered in August. On September 17, the NYTD work group met to discuss the progress of NYTD implementation. As reported by Dr. Chris Downs from the Downs Consulting Group LLC, Virginia is ahead of many other states with NYTD implementation and is doing a very good job! In addition, on September 30, the Project LIFE director and five regional Independent Living consultants received enhanced NYTD training in order to better support LDSS around the federal requirements.

In addition, the streamlining of adoption processes and procedures has resulted in updates to the data system for managing and tracking completion of requests for adoption disclosures and identification of OASIS changes needed to improve the state office staff's ability to track children moving in AREVA (Adoption Resource Exchange of Virginia).

The Achieving Permanency through Adoptions Initiative began July 1, 2010. Through this initiative the adoption contractors have been given a goal of 300 final placements by June 30, 2011. Seventy-five percent or 225 children will have been in care over 24 months and twenty-five percent or 75 will have been in care less than 24 months. As of August 1, 2010, the adoption contractors were already working with 187 of 300 children or 62% of their goal. As part of this initiative, an agreement was developed for LDSS and adoption contractors to sign; the agreement outlines the roles and responsibilities of each. As of September 31, 2010, fifty-two agreements had been signed. (Forty-four local departments of social services do not have children with the goal of adoption and therefore do not need an agreement.) According to a SafeMeasures report of September 29, 2010, there are 582 children who have termination of parental rights (TPR) and are not in an adoptive placement or permanent living arrangement. *(In the adoption process, there is a minimum of six months with a family before a petition for adoption can be presented to the courts.)* The second meeting of the Achieving Permanency through Adoption Advisory Committee was held on September 29, 2010. The committee has reviewed topics pertaining to program management, reporting, data, training, and the request for proposal process. The committee gave guidance on process for the adoption request for proposal. It was suggested that a focus group be held to clarify the needs of LDSS.

In regards to Adoption Services Contracts, staff is working with the renewal of three contracts. The preservation of adoptive families is of the utmost importance for the stability of families and children. Two of the contracts work with preserving families. The first is UMFS Adoptive Families Preservation contract which provides statewide post finalization services to adoptive families. The second is the Mary D. Ainsworth Child-Parent Attachment Clinic who provides counseling services to Virginia families using a protocol entitled the Circle of Security. The third contract provides pre-adoptive services to children and families and is centered in the New River Valley. Five local departments of social services have an agreement to work together on recruitment and preparation of families as well as the preparation of children.

Prevention

In mid-September, 15 individuals from Virginia (including local and state DSS staff, private providers, and the Court Improvement Director) visited the Allegheny County Department of Social Services and a private provider, A Second Chance, in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. This was sponsored by Child Trends and the Annie E. Casey Foundation. The site visit provided an opportunity to hear about nationally recognized best practices in relation to services to the kinship care triad: child, kin caregiver, and birth parent. The “takeaways” from this trip will inform family engagement and kinship care practices and provides excellent information for benchmarking “best-in-class” programming and potential public/private partnerships in Virginia.

Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children (ICPC) & Interstate Compact on Adoption and Medical Assistance (ICAMA)

The Program Manager continues working with the national workgroup that is revising ICPC Regulations 3 and 7. The workgroup is also developing a glossary of terms and a Preamble to the Regulations. There were 262 new ICPC cases this month for a total of 3,024 cases. Placement statistics for the month of August are listed below:

- Adoption – 51
- Foster Care – 85
- Parental Placements – 40
- Relative Placements –14
- Residential – 72

ICAMA has a total of 2,923 cases – 32 of which are new for the month of September. In addition, the ICAMA Program Consultant continues to assist with the ARRIS development of the computerized ICAMA program. The testing stage continues.

Program Improvement Plan

The Program Improvement Plan (PIP) has been submitted for the final time with the expectation that it will be approved to begin October 1, 2010. The PIP is posted at <http://www.dss.virginia.gov/geninfo/reports/children/cfsr.cgi> along with the state data profile. VDSS will still have to complete a plan for measurement. The PIP measurement period covers the two year PIP implementation period and can include the following non-overlapping year. Staff is working on finalizing the baseline cases. Once the baseline is complete and accepted, a plan for case reviews using the CFSR instrument will be created.

Continuous Quality Improvement

The Continuous Quality Improvement Unit is embarking on a transition to a Quality Service Review (QSR) model for case record review in child welfare cases. The QSR model is nationally recognized as a method to improve the quality of practice rather than the quality of compliance. The QSR review model will help to sustain and support practice reforms and the Virginia Children’s Services Practice Model.

A protocol design meeting was held on September 28th to 30th in Richmond. Twenty four representatives from local departments of social services, stakeholders, service providers, and state staff came together to design an instrument to be used reflecting the Virginia Practice Model. This protocol will be piloted in Chesterfield County in November, revised as necessary and the first Quality Service Review will be in

February 2011. When the protocol is finalized in December, it will be available on the QSR web link on the Children's Services System website (www.vafamilyconnections.com).

Adult Services/Adult Protective Services

Adult Protective Services received 17,140 reports of abuse, neglect and exploitation of vulnerable adults in state Fiscal Year 2010, according to figures compiled for the program's annual report. A total of 8,752, or 59 percent were substantiated. The figures represent a 9.7 percent increase over the previous year and a 27 percent increase over the past four years.

A total of 285 assisted living facilities (ALFs) participating in the Auxiliary Grant (AG) Program submitted annual certification forms for state Fiscal Year 2009, a significant improvement in compliance over the previous year. They reported a total of 13,667 licensed beds with an average of 4,748, or 35 percent, filled by AG recipients. The majority of facilities (144) reported that they do not manage residents' \$81 monthly personal needs allowance (PNA). Most turn over the PNA to the resident. Others are managed by family members or representative payees.

Adult Services notified the Division of Long-term Care at Department of Medical Assistance Services that local Adult Services workers no longer will conduct long-term care assessments for private-pay (non-Medicaid) applicants to the PACE program (Program for All-inclusive Care for the Elderly). Neither federal nor state regulations require local DSS to perform assessments for private-pay placements, and the growth of the PACE program is leading to a significant increase in private-pay participation.

Local Adult Services staff reported increasing issues and concerns with acute care hospitals not meeting their discharge-planning responsibilities. As a result, long-term care (assisted living and nursing facility) placements are being disrupted and LDSS are finding it necessary to perform the additional assessments. Adult Services is putting together an interagency group -- DMAS, Department of Health, Virginia Hospital Association, and local DSS representatives to address the issue.

Program Manager Gail Nardi made a presentation on the Auxiliary Grant (AG) Program to the Community Integration (Olmstead) advisory and implementation boards. She discussed the history, financing and administration of the program and explained the results of the 2008/2009 studies that concluded that "AG Portability" to care settings other than assisted living and adult foster care was infeasible. She noted that while only 20 Virginia localities have authorized adult foster care (AFC), other states use AFC more broadly as a community integration option for elders and individuals who have a disability. Ms. Nardi was asked to provide technical assistance to a board workgroup in exploring options, including AFC.

Ms. Nardi and Central Region Consultant Marjorie Marker led a workshop on annual guardian reports and mandated reporter requirements at the Virginia Public Guardian Program's annual training conference. Local public guardians expressed concerns about significant differences among LDSS in handling annual reports that guardians are required to file on each of their wards. In response, Ms. Marker created a step-by-step chart showing responsibilities and timelines for both guardians and local APS staff that has been distributed to the Public Guardian Program and Adult Services regional consultants. Regional consultants will follow up with refresher training at their quarterly coordinators meetings.

As always, thanks for reading and I hope you find this helpful as we work together to be the best social services agency in the nation!

Kind regards,

Paul