

The Supreme Court of Ohio

MEMORANDUM

TO: Chief Justice Maureen O'Connor

FROM: Judge Matt C. Staley, Allen County Domestic Relations Court
Judge Denise Herman McColley, Henry County Family Court
Co-Chairs of the Advisory Committee on Children and Families

CC: Michael L. Buenger, Administrative Director
Stephanie Hess, Director, Deputy Administrative Director
Stephanie Nelson, Director, Court Services

DATE: January 11, 2017

SUBJECT: 2017 Annual Report on the Advisory Committee on Children and Families

In compliance with the Operating Guidelines for the Advisory Committee on Children and Families, we are pleased to present our annual summary detailing the Committee's activities and accomplishments during 2017.

The Advisory Committee was created in 2002 with the purpose to provide ongoing advice to the Court and its staff regarding the promotion of statewide rules and uniform standards concerning the establishment and operation of programs for children and families in Ohio courts, the development and delivery of services to Ohio courts on matters involving children and families, including training programs for judges and court personnel, and the consideration of any other issues the advisory committee deems necessary to assist the Court and its staff regarding children and families in Ohio courts. The Advisory Committee on Children and Families has continued to be an active body. Detailed below, the activities have continued to address a broad spectrum of issues including child protection, kinship care, adult guardianship, and domestic relations and juvenile rules.

The Subcommittee on Responding to Child Abuse, Neglect, and Dependency (CAND), is chaired by Director Pam Meermans, Clark County Job and Family Services. CAND remains focused on the Children in Need of Protective Services (CHIPS) legislation. Also, CAND identified a continued need for abuse, neglect, and dependency caseflow and Child and Family Services Review multidisciplinary training which was held in September of 2017, particularly with 43 new juvenile judges elected in the past five years. Additionally, the annual regional multidisciplinary juvenile court trainings were held in April and May of 2017, and focused on trauma-informed practices. The juvenile judge led teams focused on identifying trauma, ingredients of trauma-informed systems, and collaborative, best practice strategies. Each team created an action plan on how to address trauma collaboratively in their county. Teams identified such strategies as developing a hand-off protocol to foster parents,

identifying a common trauma screening tool, finding out which providers have trauma-informed care, and training defense counsel on trauma-informed approaches.

Another workgroup, the Judicial Fostering Connections (Bridges) Workgroup, continued to meet to guide the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services and judicial officers on the process of extending Title IV-E benefits to youth ages 18 through 21 who are in the custody of the public children services agency at age 18, passed through House Bill 50. A toolkit was developed, published, and distributed through education at the Winter Conference of the Association of Juvenile Judges and via the Court Café, the Court Improvement Program's webinar series.

Finally, the Juvenile Guardian ad Litem (GAL) workgroup met with the Domestic Relations GAL Workgroup. The revised Sup.R. 48 passed the Commission on the Rules of Superintendence on June 16, and was approved to be published for public comment by the Justices on October 17. The public comment period began on November 6 through December 7, 2017.

The Subcommittee on Family Law Reform Implementation, co-chaired by Chief Magistrate Serpil Ergun, Cuyahoga County Domestic Relations Court, and Judge Matt C. Staley, Allen County Domestic Relations Court, was formed to implement recommendations from the Advisory Committee's 2005 Report and Recommendations on Family Law Reform. The Domestic Relations GAL Workgroup reviewed Sup.R. 48 regarding Guardians ad Litem in domestic relations cases and met with the Juvenile GAL Workgroup as mentioned supra. Also, the Legislative Reform Workgroup met to focus on R.C. 3109.04 language that reflects the continuing roles and responsibilities of both parents when they are not living together and to make Ohio's statutes involving parenting issues more child-centered, now has a final draft. A new workgroup that focuses on developing custody evaluator standards for Ohio is in the same vein as GAL standards function.

The Subcommittee on Adult Guardianship, chaired by Judge Dixilene Park, Stark County Probate Court, was formed to make recommendations for standards of practice, data collection, and monitoring protocols in adult guardianship matters. The Judicial College has educated many guardians regionally across Ohio. Two small workgroups: Development Disabilities Workgroup is planning a toolkit; and the Adult Protective Services (APS) Workgroup is planning both a toolkit and a pre-conference for the summer Association of Probate Judges education to attend with their local teams and to work on plans to enhance local APS collaborative practices. Finally, the Advisory Committee formed a workgroup that focused on expanding and updating the Probate Bench Cards and these are in the process of being adopted.

The Subcommittee on Juvenile Justice was formed in 2015, and is chaired by Judge Beth Gill, Franklin County Juvenile and Domestic Relations Court. Local courts adopted restraint rules pursuant to Sup.R. 5.01 which was adopted and effective on July 1, 2016. Juvenile Justice Bench Cards have been drafted and are in the process of being adopted. In June, we partnered with the Ohio Public Defender and the Ohio Department of Youth Services to offer an introductory training on the Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative (JDAI) in Ohio. The training offered juvenile courts a JDAI 101 introductory session, a panel discussion examining JDAI implementation strategies and local outcomes, and a keynote presentation on reducing racial and ethnic disparities in juvenile justice presented by James Bell, Executive Director of the Hayward Burns Institute. Also in June, we partnered with the Ohio Department of Youth Services to promote and release the newest interface of the Ohio Youth Assessment System (OYAS) to Ohio's juvenile courts. This full-day training event provided judges, court administrators, and court staff with information about the testing and evaluation process of the tools, and its effectiveness as a predictor of risk for youth in the juvenile justice system. The University

of Cincinnati, the creator of the tool, provided a demonstration of the web-based new system, which provides more efficiency for courts.

The Juvenile Justice Subcommittee is focusing on three primary areas: diversion recognition program based on evidence and research which lends itself to a statewide database of programs and resources for local courts; racial and ethnic disparities will be the focus of a joint Department of Youth Services and Supreme Court training for judicial officers and court personnel; and juvenile indigent defense in which surveys are being developed.

Thank you for your support and the continued opportunity to improve the delivery of court services to Ohio's children and families. We welcome your feedback and suggestions on the Advisory Committee's work.