



BETTER FOR OHIO FAMILIES

OHIO'S STATEWIDE SYSTEM
IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM**PURPOSE**

To offer strategies for addressing families appearing in court as a result of child abuse, neglect, or dependency related to substance use.

DESIGN

This bench card provides specific inquiries that may be made at each court appearance, as well as practice tips to make the most effective use of the process.

These inquiries are meant to be layered upon the best practices and legal requirements already in place.

Indicates a practice tip. (NOTE: These are suggestions).

Indicates a question to ask.

ENGAGING PARENTS

- Was a substance use disorder (SUD) screening done of the parent(s)? Did the screening indicate a need for further assessment?
- Was a referral for SUD assessment completed? Has it been scheduled?
- Was a SUD assessment done of the parent(s)? Did the assessment indicate a need for treatment?
- Speak directly to the caseworker. If a screening has not been completed and substance use is indicated in the complaint (or otherwise suspected), consider taking a recess if the parties are present to assure that a screening is completed.**
- What, if any, services have been referred at this time?
- If the parties consent, issue an order directing the respondent(s) to complete a SUD assessment and sign releases authorizing the results and recommendations be sent to the local Children Services Board.**

**WHERE REMOVAL IS REQUESTED,
EFFORTS TO PREVENT REMOVAL**

- Were substance-use-related services offered that would allow the child(ren) to remain at home?
- What services were the parent(s) referred to, but did not participate in or complete?
 - How are those services related to the safety factors that place the child(ren) in immediate danger of serious harm?
- Prior to court involvement or removal, was a safety plan developed addressing the substance-use-related safety threat? Did the safety plan include activities that would allow for the child(ren) to remain in the home?
- If services and/or a safety plan were previously in place, what has occurred since that requires court involvement?
- Consider family dependency treatment court for cases that present as high risk/high need.**

TRAUMA ASSESSMENT

- Has the child(ren) and/or parent(s) received a trauma screen? If a trauma assessment is needed, have the child(ren) and/or parent(s) been referred to receive the assessment?
- Speak directly to the caseworker. If a screening has not been completed and parties consent, consider issuing an order directing the respondent(s) to complete a trauma assessment and sign releases authorizing the results and recommendations be sent to the local Children Services Board.**

