Implementing Fostering Connections

The Pennsylvania Approach
PA Child Welfare System

• State Supervised; County Administered
  – 67 Counties deliver services locally
• Approximately 14,000 children in placement on any given day
• Reduce the number of children in placement by approximately 30% in last 5 years
• Over 100,000 children receiving in-home services
• Total child welfare budget nearly $2 Billion
Youth and Young Adults Served

• In general, any youth 16 - 21 who was in agency care after age 16 may receive Independent Living (IL) Services.

• PA provided Aftercare IL Services for youth who exited foster care after age 16 prior to Chafee Act.
Array of Independent Living (IL) Services

- Needs Assessment/Case Planning
- Life Skills Training
- Prevention Services
- Education Services
- Support Services
- Employment Services
- Location of Housing Services
- Chafee Room and Board
- Retreats and Camps
IL Policies and Procedures

- The Youth Independent Living Services Guidelines Bulletin was released July 2011.
- Development was Youth Driven
- FAQ and several useful resources
- Model Policy and Procedures
- Transition Plan Templates
- Stakeholder focused fact and tip sheets
### Comparison of PA Statute and Policy with Federal FCA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Options</th>
<th>Current PA</th>
<th>FCA Options</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>De-Link Income Eligibility for Adoption Subsidy</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extend Adoption Subsidies from 18-21</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>Guardianship Subsidies from 0-17 (relatives/kin)</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>Extend Guardianship Subsidies from 18-21 (relatives/kin)</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>Re-entry into Foster Care from 18-21</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Extend Foster Care 18-21 when:</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Completing High School or GED</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Enrolled in Post-Secondary Education</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Participating in Employment Program</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Employed for at Least 80 Hours a Month</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Have Medical Condition</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
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Fostering Connections Provisions Analyzed

• Extension of Care to 21

• Extension of Adoption Assistance to 21

• Extension of Guardianship Assistance to 21

• Guardianship Assistance for 0 – 17
  – For guardians who are relatives or kin

• De-link of Adoption Assistance from IV-E Income Eligibility
Improved Outcomes warranted for youth 13 and older

• Youth 13 and older often face the greatest challenges finding permanent homes.

• In 2011, nearly half the children in foster care were ages 13 and older.

• Youth who “age out” of foster care experience poor life outcomes.
Impact on Youth in Foster Care

Adoptions by Age
- 0-12: 91%
- 13 and Older: 9%

Legal Guardianships by Age
- 0-12: 61%
- 13 and Older: 39%
PA’s Positive Strides

In 2011, Pennsylvania saw a **DECREASE** in the

- number of all children in foster care
- percent of children placed in congregate care (group homes and institutions)

The state also saw an **INCREASE** in the

- number of children, families helped through in-home services
- percent of youth placed in family settings such as relative foster homes and pre-adoptive homes
Strengths in PA

• Strong, active Youth Advisory Board at the state, regional and local levels.

• Coordination and cooperation with advocacy organizations.

• Consistent and stable network of providers.

• IL staff, in most cases, tend to remain in positions.
Analysis of Fiscal Impact of Fostering Connections in PA

The Finance Project

2010-2011
Process of Analysis

• Pennsylvania Partnerships for Children and Juvenile Law Center provided critical leadership

• Small workgroup meetings

• Use of state and local foster care and payment data

• County survey to inform assumptions
  (Adams, Allegheny, Philadelphia, Venango & York)

• Follow up with counties to validate assumptions and gain feedback on application of the data
Fiscal Analysis

• Extend adoption subsidies to age 21
  – 13 and older
  – 16 and older

• Extend guardianship subsidies to age 21
  – For guardians who are relatives or kin
  – 13 and older
  – 16 and older

• Expand eligibility to extend in foster care to age 21

• Allow re-entry ages 18 to 21
2010 in PA:

• Invested $50.4M in state and county funds on youth 18-21 yielding approximately $1.7M in Title IV-E

If PA maximized FCA by extending permanency subsidies in 2011:

• Invest $35,618 more on adoption subsidies (13+) to age 21
• Invest $56,134 more on guardianship subsidies (13+) to age 21
• Would yield an additional $13M in Title IV-E

  Increased state $92,000 = $13M more in federal
If PA maximized FCA for extension of care in 2011:

• Invest $4.8M more on foster care extension
  – Two additional options
    • Working 80 hours per month
    • Barriers to employment

• Invest $2.9M more on re-entry

• Would yield an additional $3.38M in Title IV-E
  – Additional state and county funding required would be offset by other program cost reductions
Fostering Connections Act (FCA)

- Detailed fiscal analysis completed
- PA uniquely positioned to maximize benefit of federal law
  - New federal revenue and state/local savings
- Corbett Administration priority
- Few states have fully implemented the law
  - Helped position PA for IV-E waiver
External Advocacy Strategies

- Research and Data Analysis
- Communication
- Mobilizing
- Government Relations
Act 80 of 2012

• Permits youth to remain in care until 21 if they are employed 80 hours per month or engaged in a program to eliminate barriers to employment

• Extends adoption subsidies up to age 21 for youth adopted after age 13 (Title IV-E when executed average age 16)
  – Must continue to meet the definition of child (work, school, program to remove barriers or incapacitated)

• Extends subsidies for permanent legal custodianship up to age 21 for youth placed with a PLC after age 13 (Title IV-E when executed average age 16)
  – Must continue to meet the definition of child (work, school, program to remove barriers or incapacitated)

• Generates additional federal revenues and saves state and county funds

• Effective July 1, 2012
Act 91 of 2012

- Permits youth to re-enter foster care up to age 21 when discharged 90 days prior to their 18th birthday or on after their 18th birthday
- Must continue to meet the definition of child (work, school, program to remove barriers or incapacitated)
- Youth must request the court to resume/continue jurisdiction
- Permanency hearings must be held every 6 months at a minimum
  - Court must determine if the youth continues to meet the definition of child
  - Youth must request continued court jurisdiction
  - Court must determine that a transition plan has been presented
- Effective July 5, 2012
### FCA Impact for Youth

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BEFORE</th>
<th>AFTER</th>
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<tr>
<td>• At age 18, youth request court to retain jurisdiction to complete education or treatment program until.</td>
<td>• Expanded to include youth working 80 hours per month and/or engaged in a program to eliminate barriers to employment.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Youth who were previously discharged could only access IL services. No re-entry.</td>
<td>• Youth who discharge 90 days prior or on or after age 18 may request to re-enter when they meet one of the five criteria.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Transition plans and overall services may have included unrealistic goals and objectives.</td>
<td>• Youth and agencies create an opportunity to provide and receive services and supports to promote improved outcomes.</td>
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<td>• IV-E reimbursement ended at age 19 or upon HS Graduation. Higher costs for counties and state.</td>
<td>• IV-E funds expansion will reduce some fiscal burdens and encourage extension and resumption of jurisdiction.</td>
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<td>• Insufficient least restrictive placement settings.</td>
<td>• IV-E allowances and Supervised IL settings can be improved.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Adoption and Guardianship Subsidies ended at 18.</td>
<td>• Adoption and Guardianships extended to 21 when permanency achieved after age 13.</td>
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Independent Living (IL) Services

• Implementation of the Fostering Connections Act (FCA) will not significantly alter IL services availability.
• It is expected that the number of youth accessing services will increase in proportion to the number of youth re-entering agency foster care placement.
• It is also expected that IL services for re-entry youth will be more tailored and focused.
Placement Options
(re-entry and post-18)

• Family Foster Care
• Transitional Living (no more than 4 youth)
• Supervised IL (to be defined broadly) such as:
  – Scattered site apartment
  – Educational institution housing
  – Host homes, other caregivers (not bio parents)
  – With other roommates
• Limited use of Group Home/Congregate Care
Housing Funding Options

• Chafee (Federal) Room and Board:
  – For youth who exit on or after age 18.

• State IL funds:
  – For IL youth discharged before age 18

• Special Grants - Housing Grant:
  – State and local funds to be used when housing is the barrier preventing a youth transition to independence
Permanency Subsidies to 21

• Reduces financial disincentive to permanency

• Provide youth with ongoing relationships and support that have been linked to increased
  - high school graduation rates
  - college enrollment
  - self-esteem
  - physical and mental health
FC to 21 and Allowing Re-Entry

• Improves likelihood for self-sufficiency
  - nearly 50% of former foster youth haven’t found a job four years after leaving the system
  - those with a steady job consistently earn less than their peers and are more likely to live in poverty

• Narrows the gap between foster youth & their peers
  - nearly 40% of all young adults who leave home between 18 and 24 return home due to finances
Re-entry Challenges

• Informing current and former youth.
• No “Wrong Door” – ensuring youth wishing to return are able to access assistance without difficulty.
• Out-of-county – similar to no “wrong door” and additional complicating factors.
• Appropriate placement settings
Next Steps

• OCYF special transmittal and bulletin revisions
  – Clarify court determinations and finding
  – Define Supervised Independent Living Settings
  – Extension of adoption and guardianship subsidies

• Juvenile court rule procedure development

• AOPC Bench Book revision and state roundtable recommendations

• Local Implementation