



Ohio Summit on Children

ACTION UPDATE ■ OCT 2009

WEB SITE UPDATES IMPROVE DATA ANALYSIS

Recent updates to the Ohio Summit on Children Web site have increased the utility of available Children and Family Services Review data, enabling local planning teams to examine the data and its applicability to their local communities in myriad new ways.

The Children and Family Services Review data analysis page now includes links to the following analyses:

- Length-of-Stay
- Children in Custody at Month's End
- Reunification and Re-entry
- Children in Care Longer than One Year
- Using Data to Control Costs
- Point-in-Time Forecasts of Children in Care
- Forecasts on the Number of Children Entering Care Each Month.

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THE SUMMIT PLANNING COMMITTEE

thanks

Casey Family Programs

for its generous
financial & resource
support.



COUNTY PROFILE | Hamilton



A three-year pilot project designed to improve educational outcomes for Hamilton County youth in foster care received an added boost after the Ohio Summit on Children.

Kids in School Rule! (KISR!) involves six

public and private partners, 22 participating Cincinnati public schools and about 100 students at any given time.

To improve academic success, the partners agreed to collaborate to keep KISR! students in school and engaged in learning by making school a place for stability and success that also provides a nurturing framework for students.

According to Carla Guenther, deputy chief magistrate with Hamilton County Juvenile Court, and Elaine Fink, managing attorney for children's advocacy at the Legal Aid Society of Southwest Ohio, the pilot was up and running before the 2008 Summit. After the Summit, however, Hamilton County Job & Family Services (HCJFS) dedicated another full-time staff member to the project and initiated data collection efforts. The decision was made even in the face of severe budget cuts and staffing reductions.

Fink said that prior attempts at collaboration between the two public systems — an urban school district and HCJFS — were compromised in part due to a lack of shared understanding

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Each analysis includes interactive graphs and questions for discussion.

A list of critical questions for team leaders to spur even deeper discussion of challenges and successes also is available.

Roger Ward, data project manager for the Court Improvement Project stated, “The Web site marks a significant milestone to facilitate alliances between and among the state, counties and their strategic partners.”

“If counties use the information on the Web site, the material will help planning teams have the poignant conversations necessary to better serve children.” 

Look for your

representative or senator at the
2009 SUMMIT OPENING RECEPTION

Thursday, November 12

All members
of the General Assembly
are invited to attend

Don't miss your chance
to start ^{or continue} a dialogue.

HAMILTON CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

about priorities, goals, resources and functioning of the respective systems. Further, these two public systems had never before created a formalized structure or approach to facilitate communication and resolve problems.

She said each school now has a designated liaison as the point of contact for immediate access to respond to situations involving a foster child. The dedicated HCJFS staff members meet with each student in the program. Previously, case plan services and parent-child visitations created disruptions during the school day, Fink said. Now those sessions are scheduled during the evenings or weekends.

Historically, school attendance was not a priority when scheduling appointments, and removing youth from their school settings to attend appointments contributed to poor academic performance. Strengthening communication between the schools and HCJFS resulted in increased collaboration and improved coordination of services and educational plans for youth in the pilot project.

Guenther said another positive development of the project has been the increased focus of the juvenile court system on the educational success of foster children. Case workers create a specialized report on each student's educational progress for all review hearings. In addition, magistrates use a judicial checklist to ensure education stability and success for review during hearings. She said it further “supports the collaborative structure of the project and reinforces that education is a priority in our child-protection system.”

The 2008 Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act sets forth federal mandates requiring child welfare agencies to include a plan for educational stability in the case plan for every youth in foster care and requires coordination between local educational agencies and child welfare representatives. Because of KISR!, Hamilton County is ahead of the game in meeting some of the educational requirements of the federal legislation.

The KISR! project will conclude at the end of the 2011-12 school year, which reflects an 18-month extension from the original three-year time frame for the pilot. The project also will include data to measure outcomes that include educational stability and academic progress to assess which strategies and interventions were most effective. 

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—Carla Guenther
Deputy Chief Magistrate
Hamilton County Juvenile Court