New York State’s
Child Abuse Prevention
And
Treatment Act (CAPTA)
Plan

Submitted:
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• Application for funding in accordance with the CAPTA
  Reauthorization Act of 2010, Public Law 111 - 320
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CAPTA PLAN OVERVIEW

The federal Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA) (42 USC 5101, et seq) supports numerous activities designed to develop and strengthen child abuse and neglect prevention programs in New York State. CAPTA funds support the Children's Justice Act programs, management of the Healthy Families New York (HFNY) Program and the William B. Hoyt Memorial Children and Family Trust Fund, domestic violence programs and collaborations that are funded by the Federal Family Violence Prevention and Services Act, and the Community-Based Child Abuse Prevention program. In addition, funds support a statewide Prevention Information Resource Center that operates a 24-hour prevention helpline for parents and distributes printed child abuse and neglect prevention materials.

The New York State Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS) provides the project coordination necessary for the state's utilization of CAPTA funds to be in compliance with federal requirements and guidelines and for CAPTA projects to meet stated objectives. The OCFS CAPTA Coordinator fulfills the role of State Liaison Officer, working with OCFS policy and legal staff to fulfill that responsibility. The CAPTA Coordinator oversees the Community-Based Child Abuse Prevention Grant and the Children and Family Trust Fund, and coordinates activities funded by the Basic State Grant, Children's Justice and Assistance Grant, and the Healthy Families NY Program, as needed. The CAPTA Coordinator also facilitates OCFS collaborations and integration of its activities with those of other child welfare services for children and families, responds to individual requests for information about programs available in New York State, and responds to any complaints from individuals that may be brought to the attention of the Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families (ACF). New York State CAPTA Coordinator:

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PROGRAM AREAS SUPPORTED BY GRANT FUNDS

In accordance with section 106(b)(1)(A) of CAPTA, New York will use its grant funds to target the following program areas described in section 106(a) in order to improve the child protective service system of the State. The nine program areas are shown below:

- the intake, assessment, screening, and investigation of reports of child abuse or neglect;
- creating and improving the use of multidisciplinary teams and interagency, intra-agency, interstate, and intrastate protocols to enhance investigations; and improving legal preparation and representation, including—
procedures for appealing and responding to appeals of substantiated reports of child abuse or neglect; and
provisions for the appointment of an individual appointed to represent a child in judicial proceedings;

- case management, including ongoing case monitoring, and delivery of services and treatment provided to children and their families;
- enhancing the general child protective system by developing, improving, and implementing risk and safety assessment tools and protocols, including the use of differential response
- developing, strengthening, and facilitating training including—
  - training regarding research-based strategies, including the use of differential response, to promote collaboration with the families;
  - training regarding the legal duties of such individuals;
  - personal safety training for case workers; and
  - training in early childhood, child, and adolescent development;
- improving the skills, qualifications, and availability of individuals providing services to children and families, and the supervisors of such individuals, through the child protection system, including improvements in the recruitment and retention of caseworkers;
- developing, facilitating the use of, and implementing research-based strategies and training protocols for individuals mandated to report child abuse and neglect;
- developing and delivering information to improve public education relating to the role and responsibilities of the child protection system and the nature and basis for reporting suspected incidents of child abuse and neglect, including the use of differential response;
- developing and enhancing the capacity of community-based programs to integrate shared leadership strategies between parents and professionals to prevent and treat child abuse and neglect at the neighborhood level;

**PLAN CHANGE HIGHLIGHTS**

In June 2011, New York State enacted Chapter 45 of the Laws of 2011, legislation that makes differential response, first initiated as a pilot program in the state in 2007, a permanent feature of the state’s child protective services. The 2007 legislation that enacted Social Services Law §427-a allowed counties, with the exception of New York City, the option of implementing differential
response. In 2008, six counties initiated a differential response program, called Family Assessment Response (FAR) in New York State. There are currently 23 counties in the State that use differential response and many additional counties have expressed an interest in starting to use it in the coming year. It is anticipated that enactment of the recent legislation, which makes FAR a permanent feature in New York State and allows New York City to implement it, will encourage more counties to implement a system of differential response to reports of child abuse and maltreatment.

There have not been other significant changes in how CAPTA funds are used to support activities described in this State Plan.

There have not been any substantive changes in state law or regulation that could affect eligibility for the CAPTA State grant since the last plan submission.

SERVICE DESCRIPTIONS, COLLABORATION, AND TRAINING

Federal Family Violence

Federal Family Violence funding is available to all OCFS licensed domestic violence residential and approved non-residential programs in NYS. The funds are used to support general operating expenses, health and safety improvements and/or program enhancements. The funds are also used to support child protective/domestic violence collaborations across the state. The purpose of these initiatives is to improve joint case practice, thereby increasing safety and reducing recurrence.

Services and Programs in 2010-2011:

- **Federal Family Violence Prevention and Services Act (FFVPSA) Funds** – In 2010, OCFS received an FFVPSA award of $4,355,055. Five percent of the funds ($217,752) were applied to administrative expenses; $755,157 supported continuation of CPS/DV collaboration projects; and the remaining $3,382,146, in the amount of $35,602 each, was issued to 95 approved residential and/or non-residential domestic violence programs. The grants support program maintenance, health and safety improvements, and/or program enhancements.

- OCFS engages in frequent communication and collaboration with other state agencies, including the Office of the Prevention of Domestic Violence, Office of temporary and Disability Assistance, and the Division of Criminal Justice Services, regarding the collection and sharing of aggregated data regarding domestic violence. OCFS hosts the internet-based Domestic Violence Information System (DVIS), which allows it to identify information that will be useful to programs and communities in identifying trends and gaps to assist in further supporting and enhancing services for victims of domestic violence.
- **CPS/DV initiatives** – During 2010, significant progress was made towards improving safety outcomes for families experiencing both domestic violence and child abuse and maltreatment.

  - Eleven CPS/DV collaboration projects were funded in 2010, in which out stationed domestic violence advocates are placed at local CPS offices. They provide case consultation, participate in home visits and cross training, and work with caseworkers to develop safety plans with DV victims and their children. Each project use data common outcomes, in order to facilitate the reporting of outcomes.
  - OCFS worked on coordinating the implementation of the CPS/DV co-location model and the Child and Family Services Review (CFSR) Program Improvement Plan strategy to improve safety outcomes for families impacted by both domestic violence and child abuse/maltreatment.
  - OCFS, in collaboration with the NYS Office of the Prevention of Domestic Violence (OPDV), provides a mandated two-day domestic violence training for CPS workers at local social services districts. OCFS contracts with OPDV to provide the training. This training is designed to improve CPS capacity to intervene with families experiencing both domestic violence and child abuse and maltreatment.
  - OCFS is currently contracting with OPDV to also provide domestic violence training to CPS supervisors in the social services districts. Curriculum is being developed and a pilot training is scheduled to be provided in 2011.
  - OCFS is an active participant in an inter-agency domestic violence workgroup that shares information, provides training, and collaborates on ways to improve service delivery to victims of domestic violence. The workgroup has been looking at OCFS DV regulations, and is working on developing proposed changes to those regulations.
  - OCFS is an active participant on the Inter-Agency Task Force in Human Trafficking, where OCFS takes the lead on issues related to minors who are victims of human trafficking.

**Plans for 2011-2012:**

- OCFS will continue to support CPS/DV collaborations. These collaborations are designed to improve safety for families experiencing both domestic violence and child abuse/maltreatment. Other anticipated outcomes include preventing reoccurrence of child abuse/maltreatment, and reducing out-of-home placements. Draft guidelines for domestic violence programs to collaborate with child protective services have been developed. These include screening questions to assist in identifying domestic violence and focus on new ways to work with batterers while keeping safety of the victims of paramount concern. OCFS staff will continue to assist in the provision of domestic violence training to child protective workers and other child welfare workers across the state. OCFS will also continue to support the placement of domestic violence advocates in at least several local child protective services offices.

- OCFS will continue to provide a two-day mandated domestic violence training for CPS workers in social services districts. OCFS contracts with OPDV to provide the training.
This training is designed to improve CPS capacity to intervene with families experiencing both domestic violence and child abuse and maltreatment.

- OCFS is working with Office of the Prevention of Domestic Violence (OPDV) to develop a domestic violence training course for CPS supervisors, for the purpose of giving CPS supervisors the tools they need to assist CPS caseworkers when investigating CPS cases that involve domestic violence.

- Non-residential Programming – OCFS will continue to support the network of non-residential domestic violence programs across the state. Staff will also conduct site visits to many of the stand alone non-residential domestic violence programs. In response to site visits and county plan reviews, home and regional office staff, together with local districts, will address regulatory, contractual and best practice issues.

- OCFS will continue to license and approve residential domestic violence programs and distribute Federal Family Violence Prevention and Services Act and TANF funds to support the viability of residential and non-residential programs.

- OCFS staff will continue to use its Domestic Violence Information System (DVIS), a web-based information system used by domestic violence providers throughout the state, to identify information that will be useful to programs and communities in identifying trends and gaps to assist in further supporting and enhancing services for victims of domestic violence. OCFS will collaborate with other state agencies on collecting and reporting information that can support community development. Data collected will be used to provide Domestic Violence Profiles to each social service district to assist them in evaluating the domestic violence services provided by their county. Also, this information will help them recognize any areas which may be lacking and assist them in planning and improving overall services for victims of domestic violence in their particular county.

- OCFS will review and approve county plans as they relate to non-residential domestic violence services and will provide technical assistance to counties and programs as needed to comply with the non-residential program regulations and to provide quality services.

- OCFS will continue to collaborate with other state agencies to help achieve consistency and coordination regarding funding and program quality. OCFS will participate in the OPDV Advisory Council and its data, prevention and funding subcommittees.

**Children’s Justice Act**

**Services and Programs in 2010-11**
The federal Children’s Justice Act (CJA) Program Grant allows OCFS to develop, establish, and operate programs designed to improve: (1) the handling of child abuse and maltreatment cases, particularly those involving child sexual abuse and exploitation, in a manner which limits additional trauma to the child victim; (2) the handling of fatalities cases in which there is suspected child abuse and maltreatment; and (3) the investigation and prosecution of cases of child abuse and maltreatment, particularly child sexual abuse and exploitation.

Children's Justice Act (CJA) program funds are primarily used to promote the start-up and/or improved functioning of programs that provide local community coordination in the investigation, prosecution and treatment of child abuse and neglect cases, including sexual abuse cases and fatality cases. The implementation of local multidisciplinary investigation teams, child advocacy centers and child fatality review teams increases the capacity of child protective services, law enforcement prosecutors, and medical and mental health agencies to coordinate, collaborate and communicate on cases. The goals of all CJA-funded programs are to reduce additional trauma to child victims after their disclosure of abuse, to improve the handling of these cases by all agencies involved, and to improve the skills and knowledge of all professionals involved in cases of traumatic child abuse.

The Children's Justice Act Program has allowed OCFS to expand its efforts to develop and maintain multidisciplinary investigation teams, child advocacy centers and child fatality review teams across the state. OCFS uses these funds to support the NYS Child Advocacy Resource and Consultation Center (CARCC), which provides services including specialized and/or interdisciplinary training, team functioning analysis, coordination of a statewide coalition of child advocacy centers (CACs), and assistance to multidisciplinary investigation teams (MDTs) wishing to develop child advocacy centers. CARCC also assists MDTs throughout the state with access to current information and research on: child sexual abuse; child fatalities; child abuse and neglect data from a multidisciplinary perspective; training resources and opportunities, including a directory of discipline specific consultants, and technical assistance material to assist in team development. CAARC also administers the state’s Children’s Justice Task Force, which reviews policies and procedures used in cases involving abused and exploited children and makes recommendations addressing ways to improve the handling of those cases.

Child Abuse Prevention Evaluation and Treatment: A Toolkit for Medical Providers

A few years ago, CARCC, the Child Abuse Medical Provider Program (CHAMP), and a group of physicians, nurses, nurse practitioners, social workers, and other non-medical professionals in the child abuse field from across New York State worked together with Dr. Ann Botash to develop a Toolkit for primary care, urgent care and emergency providers. The Toolkit addresses issues important in providing care to abused children. This resource continues to provide guidance on prevention methods, recognition, reporting methods, management and referral needs for the abused child. The website www.ChildAbuseMD.com may be accessed for more details.

Child Abuse and Disabilities Training Project

With administrative support from CARCC, the Children’s Justice Task Force supported the development of a CD-Rom, “Child Abuse and Children with Disabilities,” for MDT
investigators interviewing children who are disabled, one of the most vulnerable populations for all forms of abuse. The CD-Rom was released in 2005, and is still in use today. CAARC and the Children’s Justice Task Force continue to focus on developing training and guidelines for interviewing children who are disabled.

Marketing Program
CARCC continues to assist teams and centers with initiatives to support training and awareness events. The project co-sponsors such events by providing financial assistance for promotional materials announcing upcoming events and trainings. Teams and centers are eligible for monetary and in-kind support for promotional and event expenses, including postage and printing.

Mentoring Program
CARCC continues to encourage and support the mutual benefits of mentoring matches between counties. These relationships are vital to the multidisciplinary team process as teams learn from each other and work through practical solutions to problems. To help facilitate this relationship, CARCC matches teams and provides financial support to both the traveling team and the host team by reimbursing for expenses such as travel and lodging.

Toll Free Telephone
CARCC operates a toll free telephone number in order to accommodate those teams that have limited or no long distance access. This has helped facilitate program access to more professionals in the field.

Child Advocacy Center/Multidisciplinary Team Program Standards

The CJA/NYS funds for multidisciplinary investigation teams are currently being used to fund fourteen Tier I and twelve Tier II grants to assist counties in establishing or enhancing child advocacy centers and local multidisciplinary teams for the purpose of investigating reports of suspected child abuse or maltreatment--particularly cases of sexual abuse, physical abuse and family violence--in a manner which limits additional trauma to the child victim(s). Minimally, all teams investigate child sexual abuse cases. These projects have recently been categorized based upon quantifiable and qualifying standards that support New York State expectations and the National Children’ Alliance Standards. All projects must have demonstrated significant progress towards achieving the ten program standards for CACs, which have been listed in earlier admissions of New York State’s APSR.

There are now 24 Tier I CACs approved by OCFS and NCA, and 13 projects that are rated as Tier II projects and working diligently to become Tier I’s. In addition, OCFS has contracts with three programs that are at the Tier III level.
Child Fatality Review Teams

The CJA/NYS funds for start-up or enhancement of child fatality review teams (CFRTs) are currently being used to fund three counties. These multidisciplinary review teams minimally include child protective services, OCFS, county health department (or commissioner of health or designee), county attorney, police, the district attorney, a medical examiner or coroner, EMS and a physician. The CFRTs review fatality cases that were reported to the Statewide Central Register of Child Abuse and Maltreatment, fatality cases in which the child was in the legal custody of an authorized agency at the time of death, and fatality cases in which there was an open CPs or preventive services case involving the child at the time of the child’s death. The primary activities of these teams include: developing a mission statement and goals; developing interagency protocols; implementing a review process; actively conducting reviews; and developing a mechanism for collecting and reporting data. Teams may also review all suspicious, unexplained or unexpected deaths, but grant monies may not be used for this purpose. Such reviews are paid for by CFRT agency members. On August 9, 2010, OCFS released 10-OCFS-LCM-09, Multidisciplinary Teams and Child Abuse Investigations, a Local Commissioners Memorandum to update and remind local departments of social services of the operational standards of multidisciplinary investigative teams.

State Police Training

Children's Justice Act funds are also used to support the annual New York State Police Sex Offense Seminar, which is a five-day comprehensive training program for state and local police officers. CPS workers and other team members who work with police as an investigative team are also invited. The program reaches about 200 professionals a year. Starting in 2006, this seminar was expanded to include child physical abuse training and is presented as a two part “Crimes Against Children Training Seminar”.

OCFS and CARCC have been working with the State Police on preparing curriculum for training to prepare investigators to testify in court.

New York State Children’s Justice Task Force Forensic Interviewing Best Practices

The Children’s Justice Task Force has identified the need to provide additional training to improve forensic interviewing practices, especially when interviewing children with special needs. OCFS and CARCC have been working on developing such training.

Train the Trainer for Forensic Interviewing Best Practices Trainings

The continued success of the Forensic Interviewing Best Practices Trainings relies on the actual teaching of the curriculum. To confirm the integrity and the reliability of the best FIBP trainings, CARCC actively recruits professionals to become FIBP trainers. This relieves some of the training demands and helps to perpetuate the level of skilled trainers as well as interviewers around the state. CARCC has implemented a selection process for all prospective trainers, factoring such requirements as expertise, teaching style and demonstrated commitment to the children of New York State.
Citizen Review Panels

Chapter 136 of the Laws of 1999 addressed New York’s compliance with the federal Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act Amendments of 1996. The Chapter established three citizen review panels. One panel is established in New York City for the purpose of addressing issues particular to the City. The other two panels are located in Buffalo and Albany.

Citizen Review Panel Members:

- Must be volunteers who are broadly representative of the community in which the panel is established, including members who have expertise in the prevention and treatment of child abuse and neglect. No person employed by federal, state, county or municipal agencies that directly deliver child welfare services may be a panel member.

- Cannot disclose any identifying information about any specific child protection case to any person or government official. A member who knowingly violates this duty of confidentiality may be subject to a civil penalty not to exceed one thousand dollars and removal from the panel.

- Must elect a chairperson for each of their respective panels.

- Must meet not less than once every three months.

OCFS provides technical assistance to the Citizen Review Panels. As requested by the panels, each panel maintains regular meetings and examines aspects of New York State’s child welfare system to evaluate the extent to which the state and local child protective service agencies are effectively discharging their child protective responsibilities. It should be pointed out that the members of the New York State Citizen Review Panels have exhibited an enthusiastic willingness to commit themselves to the task for which they have volunteered, and have gone beyond the minimum federal mandate of quarterly meetings. Citizen Review Panels are required to submit an annual report of their activities, findings and recommendations. A copy of the most recent Citizen Review Panel report is provided with this plan submission (Appendix A).

The New York State Citizen Review Panels continued to be supported through the CJA. The Panels continued to comply with all CAPTA requirements and work in collaboration with the Children’s Justice Task Force to avoid duplication of efforts and support initiative(s), when appropriate.

Plans for 2011-2012:

The Children’s Justice Act funds will support a number of new initiatives in 2011-2012, including the following:

1. A Forensic Interview Training Project will build upon the Forensic Interviewing Best Practices (FIBP) guidelines developed through CJA grant funds. This FIBP initiative is already having a tremendous impact on the quality and effectiveness of investigative
interviews. The FIBP is the only comprehensive multidisciplinary interviewing program in the State and the New York State Children’s Justice Task Force (CJTF) will strive to determine its efficacy for investigators. The task force will explore the possibility of expanding the curriculum to offer an advanced FIBP training to address working with children with disabilities. CJA staff will continue to work with OCFS bureau of training to explore the needs of MDT investigators.

2. The CJTF and CJA staff will continue to support the Child Abuse and Children with Disabilities program and explore ways to continue to expand the knowledge base and resources available to better serve children with disabilities.

3. The New York State Police will continue to hold their current comprehensive Crimes Against Children Training Seminars. This two-part initiative includes a four-day seminar on child physical abuse and maltreatment related topics and a five-day sex abuse seminar. The Physical Abuse and Neglect Seminar will be held in November 2011, and the Sex Abuse Seminar was held in May 2011. This training has resulted in numerous law enforcement agencies going back to their respective communities and either initiating development of Multidisciplinary Investigative Teams (MDTs) or participating on a local team. Most attendees participate in this training as a team. The training accommodates about two hundred child abuse investigators. The CJTF has decided to continue funding of this program to support intra-agency collaboration and the enhancement of MDT/CAC’s.

4. CJA staff will continue to monitor and review CFRT Guidelines and Protocols for Child Fatality Review Teams as per Children’s Justice Task Force recommendations. Development and implementation of guidelines and protocols will facilitate standardized practice among CFRTs across New York State. Materials may possibly be used to support new legislation.

5. OCFS and the New York State Department of Health (DOH) will continue to collaborate on how to prevent child deaths. Local review teams will be using a recently standardized child fatality review database and revised fatality report. When data from case reviews produced with these new tools is analyzed over time, significant risk factors or patterns in child injury may be identified. This data may help with local prevention initiatives and provide a basis for state-level prevention initiatives.

6. OCFS will work with DOH toward the development of a state-level child fatality review team to review aggregate or individual findings of local teams. DOH and the State University of New York Research Foundation at Stony Brook will take the lead on this initiative. It is anticipated that a state level team would have the ability to make recommendations for improvements in state policies and practices and/or help to develop best practices and protocols for local CFRTs. Members of the team should include representatives from the following agencies or professions: OCFS, DOH, law enforcement, prosecutors/district attorney’s medical examiners/coroners, pediatricians, and emergency medical services.
7. The New York State Citizen Review Panels will continue to be supported through a CJA allocation. The Panels will continue to comply with all CAPTA requirements and, in response to a Children’s Justice Task Force (CJTF) recommendation, work in collaboration with the CJTF to avoid duplication of efforts and support initiative(s), when appropriate.

8. CJA staff will continue to provide technical assistance, training and, monitoring to all MDT/CAC programs in order to improve the handling of child abuse and neglect cases per the recommendation of the task force and the federal CJA requirement.

9. A three-day training program, “New York State Children’s Justice Task Force Forensic Interviewing Best Practices” has been presented at 21 regional training sessions over the last three years. In the upcoming year, one day training course will be developed and introduced, designed for professionals who are not directly involved in the interviewing of child victims, but who should be aware of the components of a sound forensic interview. The training will be targeted to County Attorneys, prosecutors, judges and members of local multidisciplinary teams.

10. Based on a NYS Children’s Justice Task Force recommendation, OCFS developed a website (Child Abuse and Children with Disabilities: A New York State Perspective, at: http://childabuse.tc.columbia.edu/), to provide easy accessibility of information to professionals involved with reporting, investigating and interventions with disabled children. The website currently contains information provided by 27 states. The New York CJA program plans to reach out to other States to link with this program and include service providers and experts from their respective States on the website as well. The website will outline basic information which should be known by all members of the various multidisciplinary teams related to characteristics of children with disabilities that might impact upon interviewing, data gathering, and “reasonable accommodations” that may be needed in investigative and/or support procedures. The website will also describe current policies and federal/state specific guidelines that directly affect the appropriate handing of these cases so that these children are not further victimized on any level.

In addition, the website will provide sample case studies and a listing of other statewide resources available. This site will also include short interviews with a variety of experts from New York State and consultants it has used over the years, who will share their work and suggestions related to enhancing the provision of appropriate reporting, investigation and intervention of child abuse and maltreatment involving children with disabilities.

Remaining 2010-11 CJA funds will be utilized to support a number of initiatives aimed at improving the child protection system in New York State. The areas that will be targeted include:
The use of Citizen Review Panels to review policies, procedures and practices of State and local agencies to evaluate the extent to which child protective service agencies are effectively discharging their responsibilities. The contract to administer this review was awarded to the Schuyler Center for Advocacy and Analysis (SCAA). SCAA has taken a proactive role in helping the three Panels develop specific work plans.

Implementing program standards for all child advocacy centers and multidisciplinary child abuse teams in New York State. These standards were developed with input from New York State Children’s Alliance, multidisciplinary team/Child Advocacy Center projects, and the Children’s Justice Task Force.

Developing and enhancing the capacity of community based programs to integrate the sharing of leadership strategies through consultation and collaboration between parents and professionals to prevent and treat child abuse and neglect at the neighborhood level, which is a focus of all of OCFS’ program development efforts including the Healthy Families New York Home Visiting Program, the Trust Fund, and the Community Based Child Abuse Prevention Grant Program. These efforts are described below and throughout this plan.

Other initiatives such as Child Abuse Training for Prosecutors and Multidisciplinary Teams, Multidisciplinary Team Management of Children Who Act Out Sexually and The CAC/CASA Partnership Project: Improving Advocacy for Children will also continue to receive support.

CAPTA State Basic Funding and CBCAP

Services and Programs in 2010-11

OCFS continues to implement a variety of strategies and initiatives to prevent and treat child abuse and maltreatment by coordinating the work funded by the William B. Hoyt Memorial Children and Family Trust Fund, CAPTA funding, and the Community-Based Child Abuse Prevention Program.

OCFS supports Prevent Child Abuse New York’s (PCANY), which provides the Prevention Information Resource Center (PIRC) & Parent Helpline, umbrella programs for helping people throughout New York State understand how to prevent child abuse and maltreatment and to support strong, safe, nurturing families. The agency addresses individual, community, and societal responsibility through four inter-related strategies: the Parent Helpline, the NYS Parenting Education Partnership (NYSPEP), prevention education, and an annual professional training conference. PIRC provides direct assistance, in the form of information and referrals, to parents, family members, service providers, and other community members.

The New York State Parent Education Partnership (NYSPEP) is a collaborative of over 800 individuals and is co-convened by PCANY, OCFS (through the Children and Family Trust Fund), the New York State Council on Children and Families, and the New York State Office of Mental Health.
The new NYSPEP website launched this year, www.nyspep.org, provides research information and on-line resource links. Additional funding related to the State Children’s Plan for Social and Emotional Development continues to support the development of a prototype evidenced-based New Parent Kit, to be disseminated to all parents of newborns. Professional development remains a key component to NYSPEP’s work, with work continuing to draft a framework for certifying parent educators. The NYSPEP Steering Committee leads this effort and, through a workgroup process, is focused on its mission of enhancing parenting skills, knowledge and behavior through a strong statewide network that promotes and improves parenting education.

OCFS’ Children and Family Trust Fund priorities continue to emphasize support for research-based home visiting services, such as the Parent Child Home Program, Parents as Teachers, and Parenting Wisely, as well as for training and implementation of evidence-based parenting education curricula, including the Incredible Years and the Preventing Child Abuse and Neglect (PCAN) curriculum developed by Zero to Three. Funds support development of the NYS Family Resource Center Network, services to support young parents and fathers, crisis respite/parenting education and support services, supervised visitation in domestic violence cases, school-based domestic violence and child abuse prevention programs, shaken baby prevention education, an elder abuse prevalence study, and services for the elderly at risk of abuse in New York State.

The Trust Fund (OCFS) helps coordinate the NYS Parenting Education Partnership (NYSPEP), initiated through participation at the PREVENT Child Maltreatment Institute in North Carolina in 2006. The convening agencies—Prevent Child Abuse New York, the Council on Children and Families, OCFS, and the newest partner, the NYS Office of Mental Health—work to advance the Council on Children and Families’ Early Childhood Coordinated Services Plan, which promotes the health and safety of New York’s children, with a focus on parenting education as a primary prevention method addressing child abuse and neglect. The State Education Department (SED), DOH and Families Together also partner with NYSPEP and serve on the Steering Committee. As part of the early childhood priorities established by the former Governor’s Children’s Cabinet, The Children’s Plan focused on social and emotional development and children’s mental health, and is closely aligned with the NYSPEP goals: increasing education and awareness through a social marketing process, promoting the development of a new Parent Kit; increasing the availability and scope of web-based resources for parents and professionals that includes social and emotional development; providing educational opportunities and professional development for early care and education staff including a pilot of a parenting educator certificate; and increasing employment of evidence-based curricula and best practices through training and webinars.

OCFS’ use of federal Community-Based Child Abuse Prevention (CBCAP) funding is in keeping with the mission of the Trust Fund, which administers the federal program to support child abuse prevention and domestic violence services. Trust Fund initiatives...
also support some of the strategies of the OCFS Child and Family Services Review (CFSR) Program Improvement Plan such as increased efforts to support strength-based and family centered practices that engage parents, evidence-based and evidence-informed programs and practices, and efforts to promote safety, permanency and child wellbeing through enhanced family support services. This past year CBCAP funding was also used to support the Family Assessment Response (FAR) Initiative for wraparound services.


- The Trust Fund-sponsored Family Resource Center (FRC) Network meets on a quarterly basis for the purpose of receiving technical assistance and training related to program development, service delivery, evaluation, and data analysis.

- The FRC Network continues to use the Protective Factor Survey (PFS) to assess changes for all new participants. Additionally, technical assistance and consultation for the research-based Incredible Years FRC Network of trainers is provided through quarterly conference calls. This gives trainers the opportunity to address topics such as common protocols for delivering the program, effective facilitation skills, and strategies to engage participants. Many of the Network members participate in the NYS Parenting Education Partnership’s (NYSPEP) "Strong Roots Last a Life Time" professional development workshops and in October 2010, a Train the Trainer session was offered. OCFS has been working with the FRC Network on the development of the Strong Roots curriculum and on creating a parent educator certification. It is anticipated the certification will be piloted in 2012.
OCFS facilitates self-assessments and peer reviews with FRC’s every year. In 2010 two Self-Assessment and Peer Reviews were held at the Parents as Leaders FRC in Binghamton, and the Families First FRC in Essex County. A consultant continues to assist with Center planning and conducting the self-assessment, in addition to preparing for the peer review site visits. Instruments used for the review included the Outreach Booklet from “How Are We Doing?” toolkit and questions from the Program and Activities subscale. Challenges addressed during the reviews included improved outreach efforts, including creating a Facebook page and welcome postcards asking new families for feedback about their first experience at the Center. The assessment and peer review process helped the FRCs to develop ideas about outreach and to develop their Outreach and Retention Plans for the coming year. Feedback from the self-assessment and peer review teams indicates that the process provides the opportunity for stepping away from the day to day work and focusing specifically on programming and areas for improvement. Creative ideas continuously surface during the Peer Reviews, which help each program problem-solve the challenges it is facing. Parent participation also remains a valuable component to this process.

Efforts to strengthen families through early care and education by engaging child care providers in preventing child abuse and maltreatment continue through dialogue with ZERO to THREE (ZTT) and the state leadership team created through the Preventing Child Abuse and Neglect (PCAN) Project. The leadership team is comprised of OCFS, the New York City Administration for Children’s Services (ACS), the Council on Children and Families, Prevent Child Abuse NY, the state Education Department, and the NYS Early Care and Learning Council. This leadership team is committed to continuing conversations through conference calls and also creating opportunities at state level conferences and through funding opportunities for sustaining the ZERO to THREE Parent-Provider Partnerships in Child Care training program.

New York was selected along with South Carolina and Virginia to participate in the Promoting Responsive Relationships Initiative to implement a 3-year grant funded by the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation. Three PCAN trainers from the cadre trained in 2007 were selected to develop an in depth coaching relationship with one child care center and work with them over time. The initiative is designed to develop a model of training and coaching that leads to measurable changes in the capacity of child care programs and their staff to reduce the risk of child maltreatment among families with very young children. There are three New York teams, from Wayland (Steuben County), Queens, and Lower Manhattan. A national evaluation team is following the project and training and technical support for the teams includes monthly team calls and individual calls, and as well as full day training sessions during the year. The overall goals of this effort are to impart skills in addressing the five protective factors, improve practice in early childhood settings, learn new outreach strategies to engage families, and build a stronger partnership between providers and parents.

OCFS issued a Local Commissioners Memorandum (LCM) [10-OCFS-LCS-15] in 2010 to provide guidance to social services district child protective services (CPS) staff
regarding factors to consider and evaluate when investigating a report of death, or serious
injury, of an infant that may have been caused by or related to unsafe sleeping conditions.

Plans for 2011-2012:

- The 2011-2012 CAPTA Basic State Grant funds will continue to support initiatives
  related to the OCFS Performance Improvement Plan, including New York’s Family
  Assessment Response (FAR) Initiative. CAPTA funds will continue to support the
  Parent Information Resource Center and the statewide Prevention Conference sponsored
  by Prevent Child Abuse New York. The funds also support the development of materials
  for the Safe Babies Campaign, an initiative of OCFS in collaboration with DOH and local
  community based organizations. In addition to these existing initiatives, OCFS may use
  funds for additional child protective improvements, which have yet to be determined.

- New York State 2010-11 SFY funding in the amount of $1,243,700 will support existing
  Trust Fund programs, including the Family Resource Center Network. Current programs
  can be continued for a 5th year based on performance achievement. The 2011-12 SFY
  funding in the amount $621,850 will also support continuation of existing programs.

- Promotion of the highly successful New York Shaken Baby Prevention program,
  launched in June 2008, will continue targeting all maternity and birthing hospitals in the
  state. This joint effort reinforces the 2004 State law requiring hospitals to talk to parents
  about the dangers of shaking a baby and to have a plan for coping with infant crying.
  Close to 250,000 parents of newborns (approximately 90% of all live births) are expected
  to be reached each year.

- Further tracking of the incidence of Shaken Baby Syndrome (SBS) will continue in the
  Western New York, Finger Lakes and Hudson Valley regions with the aim of sustaining
  a 50% reduction in the incidence of SBS that has occurred in the Western NY Region.
  The SBS project staff has worked on the production of a new shaken baby prevention
  video, which is slated for release and distribution later this year. It is expected that
  OCFS and DOH will jointly announce release of the new video to all birthing and
  maternity hospitals.

- OCFS will continue its partnership with DOH, other state agencies and local providers to
  assist in our expanded efforts to promote Safe Sleeping Practices for Infants and Young
  Children. OCFS will build on a teleconference held for child welfare staff in 2010 to
  create a shorter training video that can be used as a teaching tool with individual families;
  it is in production and will be released this year. As mentioned above, OCFS issued a
  Local Commissioners Memorandum (LCM) [10-OCFS-LCS-15] in 2010 to provide
  guidance to Child Protective Services (CPS) staff regarding factors to consider and
  evaluate when investigating a report of death or serious injury of an infant that may have
  been caused by or related to unsafe sleeping conditions. OCFS is developing an
  additional Administrative Directive Memorandum (ADM) to support the continuing
  concerns around infant safety, which will be issued in 2011.
• The 2011 CBCAP grant will support high performing programs and social service district priorities for programs that can help to improve outcomes for families most at risk of child abuse and maltreatment in communities where there are not sufficient resources. It will also support evaluation activities, including maintenance of the Family Resource Center Network web-based data system and data analysis, along with a proposed evaluation of the CPS/DV collaborations supported by OCFS. The FRC Network developed action plans for addressing outreach and retention of higher risk families. Data will be collected on these retention efforts and analyzed along with the Protective Factor Survey (PFS) data that measures participant improvements.

• The Trust Fund will continue to promote the use of research-based evaluation to support reliable outcome data and the use of evidence-based curricula and program models. The Incredible Years’ (IY) FRC training staff will continue to network and share experiences to strengthen their facilitating skills and increase participation by families at higher risk for child abuse. Common tools (PFS) are in place to enable the Centers to collect data not only for new families but all those that participate in the program. Bi-monthly conference calls, coaching, a webinar, and consultation with the national trainer to support effective delivery of the curriculum are planned for the coming year.

• The Trust Fund will continue its role as part of the NYSPEP Steering Committee. Through this work, it will contribute to enhancing the NYSPEP website for use by parents and providers to easily access parenting education programs; determine gaps between what parents need in terms of parenting education and what is being offered; and enhance professional development by providing information regarding parenting education components associated with effectiveness, as well as technical assistance and learning opportunities across the state.

• Viewing child abuse through the lens of family violence positions the Trust Fund to be an integral part of coordinated child abuse prevention resources and activities, and provide leadership in supporting the continuum of child abuse prevention efforts to better align with the CFSR PIP and local PIPs. Trust Fund community-based programs located in Family Assessment Response (FAR)* counties are encouraged to link with their social services district to discuss how they can support local needs. Programs in non-FAR counties were also encouraged to strengthen their connection to social services districts to collaborate when appropriate and to lay the groundwork as FAR expands.

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Differential Response

* Family Assessment Response (FAR) is New York State’s program for differential response to child protective reports.
Chapter 452 of the Laws of 2007 enacted Social Services Law §427-a, establishing a pilot differential response program in New York State with an expiration date of June 1, 2011. In June 2011, the NYS Legislature passed legislation removing the expiration date of the 2007 legislation, thereby making Family Assessment Response (FAR), New York’s differential response program, permanent. The recent legislation also permits New York City to implement FAR, which had been prohibited in the original enabling legislation. After the enactment of Social Services Law §427-a, OCFS issued two policies implementing FAR:

- 08-OCFS-LCM-02, Family Assessment Response Application/Plan, which provides an application for counties to submit to OCFS describing how it will implement FAR
- 08-OCFS-INF-13, Family Assessment Response Cases, which provides information about how FAR cases would be displayed and treated in OCFS’s electronic information system.

In the year following the passage of Social Services Law §427-a, six counties implemented differential response programs. That number has since increased to 23 counties. Several additional counties have expressed interest in implementing FAR in the near future and we anticipate that, now that counties have the security of knowing that the program will be permanent, many more will establish differential response in the future. The initial legislation required OCFS to conduct a study of the effectiveness of FAR. The results of that study, issued in January 2011, showed that the program has been highly effective in the pilot counties where it was implemented.

New York State’s FAR legislation allows broad flexibility to counties in developing differential response approaches that best meet their resources, staffing capacity, and needs of their families. The law excludes reports containing allegations of sex abuse, serious physical abuse, severe or repeated abuse, abandonment, and failure to thrive from consideration for FAR. It also requires an assessment of safety and, if the child is deemed unsafe, the report may not be handled through FAR. Local districts are free to impose any additional restrictions that they wish to the use of differential response. The experience in NYS has been that some counties initially implement the program for limited number of categories of reports, but expand the use of FAR as they become more comfortable with its use. The law requires the following to be included in a county’s FAR approach:

- Notice to the family of the intent to use the FAR approach rather than a traditional CPS investigation;
- An examination, with the family, of the family’s strengths, concerns and needs;
- Planning and provision of services, including case management where appropriate, that are responsive to the needs of the family and supportive of family stabilization; and
- A joint evaluation and assessment of the family’s progress including ongoing, periodic assessments of risk to the child.

While the nature and intensity of services offered, staffing and supervisory structure, and collaboration with community partners can vary across participating social services districts, all FAR programs incorporate the same basic principles and key practices. Families are treated as partners in the FAR process and are approached in a non-adversarial way, including calling parents to arrange a time to meet with the family in lieu of making an unannounced home visit or seeing the children at school without parental knowledge. The FAR caseworker aims to gain a
holistic understanding of the family’s functioning through a comprehensive assessment of safety, risk, strengths, and needs. There is no formal determination of whether child maltreatment occurred. Families lead the process of identifying needs and appropriate resources and services, both formal and informal, that they feel will best meet their needs.

Promotion and Enhancement of Collaboration

OCFS recognizes that work to promote the well-being of families and children in this state cannot succeed without inter-agency cooperation and collaboration and thus most of its work involves collaboration with others, including other government agencies, advocacy groups, private non-profits, and families. Many of the collaborations that OCFS and its CAPTA-funded partners engage in are noted in the section describing CAPTA-funded services.

Specific OCFS policies addressing these collaborations include the following:

- **06-OCFS-ADM-08, CPS Investigations with Multi-Disciplinary Teams/Law Enforcement, Chapter 494 of the Laws of 2006.** This policy advises social services districts about changes in State law regarding conducting joint investigations with multi-disciplinary teams.
- **10-OCFS-LCM-09, Multidisciplinary Teams and Child Abuse Investigations.** The purpose of this Local Commissioners Memorandum (LCM) was to update and remind social services districts of the operational standards of multidisciplinary investigative teams, established and operated in accordance with Social Services Law § 423(6). Social Services Law §423(6) was amended by Chapter 574 of the Laws of 2008. The modifications enacted by Chapter 574 took effect on March 24, 2009, and pertain to (1) clarification of the types of cases that should be emphasized by an MDT in determining which cases to investigate, (2) expansion of the possible roles of the MDT, and (3) required membership on such teams. In addition, Executive Law § 642-a, *Fair treatment of child victims as witnesses*, was amended to update statutory references to correspond to the changes made to the SSL by Chapter 574.

Additional collaborations in which OCFS is engaged that are not noted in the section on services descriptions include the following:

**Respite Care Services Workgroup**

In February, 2010, The Council on Children and Families’ Commissioners’ Committee on Cross-Systems Youth asked its Senior Staff and Family & Youth Partners to form a study and work group to identify issues related to families, children and youth with cross-systems needs, accessing needed respite care services, both planned and emergency/crisis in nature, and recommending remedial strategies. Through multiple vehicles and venues, including personally attended regional hearings across the state, the cross-systems Commissioners heard about a series of issues associated with the supply, demand, access to, understanding, availability, accessibility, affordability, and effectiveness of local respite care services.

Group Membership: Representatives of the Following State Agencies and Organizations—

- Council on Children and Families (CCF)
NYS Teaming Model
OCFS began to pilot the Teaming Model in early 2007 in an effort to provide more supports to the child welfare workforce, to counter the forces that contribute to caseworker turnover such as worker stress and isolation, and to support quality decision-making. OCFS and its training partner, the Center for Development of Human Services (CDHS), continue to adapt its Teaming Model Initiative from the casework model developed by the Massachusetts Department of Social Services. Teaming transforms child welfare work from one of individualized casework practice to that of a shared workload and decision making practice.

In-Depth Technical Assistance (IDTA)
In 2006, NYS was awarded an In-Depth Technical Assistance (IDTA) opportunity from the National Center on Substance Abuse and Child Welfare (NCSACW) following a joint application by OCFS, the New York Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Services (OASAS) and the New York State Office of Court Administration (OCA). The purpose of this work is to enhance collaboration to improve outcomes for families with substance abuse issues involved in the family court and child welfare system. The collaboration is called the New York State Partnership for the Family Recovery. *Gearing up to Improve Outcomes for Families NYS Collaborative Practice Guide for Managers and Supervisors in Child Welfare, Chemical Dependency Services and Court Systems* was publicized in 2009. This document provides a framework and guidance for social services districts to increase local collaboration between systems, and the development and identification of cross-systems training opportunities to increase the understanding by workers in each of the systems of each other's work. The Partnership also issued four separate desk guides designed for child welfare workers, substance abuse service providers, judges and judicial officers, and family court practitioners. Late in 2010, the Partnership began working directly with Oneida and Dutchess counties. These counties have begun to build local cross-system collaborations that will aid in improving outcomes for families affected by substance use disorder.

Also:

OASAS is working in collaboration with OCFS to align the delivery of drug and alcohol services for OCFS’ juvenile justice facilities and aftercare services, as well as for local districts that need access to drug and alcohol treatment services to support family functioning, such as a co-location project described elsewhere in the plan.

OCFS, along with the New York State Office for Persons with Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD) and the New York State Office of Mental Health (OMH) are working jointly to reduce the use of physical restraints in child care settings, as well as to improve service delivery to cross-systems children who need support from multiple systems.
DATA ELEMENTS AND WORKFORCE INFORMATION

Information on Child Protective Services Workforce

Education and qualifications
a) Social Services Law §421.4(b) states that child protective services supervisors must have a minimum of a baccalaureate or equivalent college degree and three years of relevant work experience in a human services field.

b) New York State regulation 18 NYCRR 432.2(5)(e)(iii) requires “Each child protective service worker must have a baccalaureate or equivalent college degree and/or must have relevant human services experience.

Training
a) New York State regulation 18 NYCRR 432.2(5)(e)(ii) requires that “Each child protective worker, including supervisors, must satisfactorily complete a basic training program in child protective services within the first three months of his/her employment in the child protective service. Such program must be approved by the department [OCFS] and must focus on the skills, knowledge, and attitudes essential to working in the child protective service. Such training program must include, but need not be limited to: basic training in the principles and techniques of child protective service investigation, including relationships with other investigative bodies; legal issues in child protective service matters, diagnostic assessment of child abuse and maltreatment cases; methods of remediation, treatment and prevention of child abuse and maltreatment; and case management and planning of child protective service cases, including the relationship of the child protective service issues to permanency planning for children who remain at home or who are in out-of-home care.”

b) Social Services Law §421.5(b) requires that all persons employed by a child protective service must complete six hours of annual in service training, beginning in the second year of their employment.

c) Social Services Law §421.5(c) requires that all persons assigned to be a supervisor, within the first three months of employment as a supervisor, must satisfactorily complete a course on the fundamentals of child protection. Such training course shall, among other things, strengthen and expand current training procedures for child protective service supervisors; provide the skills, knowledge and standards to practice effective case planning and case management; provide comprehensive assessment tools needed in critical decision making; require participation in the existing common core training required by child protective service case- workers; strengthen recognition and response to safety and risk indicators; improve skills to promote consistent implementation of training and practice; provide the necessary tools and assistance to build the ability to coach and monitor child protective service caseworkers and model effective investigation practice; increase cultural competency and sensitivity; and establish an annual in service training program specifically focused on child protective service supervisors.
d) New employees of the OCFS New York Statewide Central Register for Child Abuse and Maltreatment (SCR) must complete an intensive five (5) week training program comprised of three (3) weeks of instructor-led classroom and two (2) weeks of on-the-job training. The curriculum includes but is not limited to:

- NYS Social Services Law
- Child abuse and maltreatment allegations and definitions
- Interviewing public and mandated callers
- Decision-making/evaluating information against the law
- Criteria for registering a CPS report
- Decision-making and criteria necessary for taking a law enforcement referral
- Jurisdiction and assigning CPS reports for investigation
- Report narrative construction
- Use of CONNECTIONS for recording report information and searching the database for prior CPS history
- Use of SCR Business Continuity Application (BCA)

Data on the education, qualifications, and training of such personnel
Please see Appendix “C” for specific information regarding training taken in 2010 by child protective services staff who work in social services districts throughout New York State. The data shows that 4855 individual CPS caseworkers attended 13,851 classes in 2010, for a total of 179,656 class hours, or an average of approximately 37 hours of training per worker.

OCFS does not track data on the education or experience of child protective service workers throughout the state. Because child protective services are locally administered, these staff persons are hired by each county and their personnel records are maintained by the counties. Each county may establish its own hiring requirements, subject to the minimum state requirements, which are described above. In 2006, OCFS surveyed all counties regarding their minimum requirements for education and qualifications for CPS Supervisory staff. All responding counties required significantly more than the state minimum requirements. Of 30 counties (out of 58) responding to this question, all but three required at least a bachelor’s degree. Those three required up to seven years experience for those with less formal education. All counties required new supervisors to have experience, with all but three requiring three years or more.

Demographic information
Information on the location of child protective service personnel, i.e. the number of caseworkers in each county of the State, can be found in Appendix “C”. OCFS does not track other demographic information on its child protective services workers. As stated above, each county is responsible for its own hiring of such personnel; OCFS has no role in the hiring or supervision of individual local staff members.
Caseload or workload requirements for child protective service workers
Aside from the requirement in Social Services Law §423(1)(c) that the CPS unit must have sufficient staff of sufficient qualifications. New York State does not have legislated or regulated caseload requirements for child protective service workers. OCFS issued an informational letter in 2008 (06-OCFS-INF-08, New York State Child Welfare Workload Study) in which it presented the results of a workload study it had commissioned. That study recommended that each child protective service set a caseload goal of no more than 12 investigations per month per CPS worker.

Juvenile Justice Transfers

The number of youth transferred to juvenile justice facilities in FFY 09-10 was 200 youth, a decrease from FFY 08-09 which was 212. This population consists of children who:

- Were in CCRS shown as in the custody of a social services district as a result of a judicial dispositions of PINS (Person in Need of Supervision), JD (if placed, and placement not exceeding 12 months), JD (initial placement exceeds 12 months), and do not have a disposition of OCFS custody within the same hearing, or
- Have a judicial disposition of transfer custody and guardianship (Surrender or Terminated Parental Rights only) or care and custody to a social services district, or
- Have a voluntary or emergency removal, and
- Have a subsequent hearing with a disposition of OCFS custody during FFY 2009 (the two events must occur between the track open date and the first discharge date, if any that lasts more than one day), plus
- Children that were discharged to an OCFS Facility during FFY 2009, and
- Do not have an open admission in the juvenile justice system between the last movement and discharge in CCRS.