

## **ProtectOHIO Kinship Strategy Training: Frequently Asked Questions and Responses**

*How does the ProtectOHIO funding streaming work? Is it one lump sum up front or is it a reimbursement for every child served?*

The ProtectOHIO demonstration counties chose to trade guaranteed monetary reimbursements for foster care placement days for a capped and up front Title IV-E allocation that may be spent for a range of child welfare purposes. The core hypothesis is that the flexible use of Title IV-E funds to provide individualized services to children and families will assist in the prevention of placement, increase reunification rates for children in out-of-home care, decrease rates of re-entry into out-of-home care, and reduce length of stay in out-of-home care.

*Is this training only for ProtectOHIO Kinship Coordinators and Workers or can Caseworkers participate too?*

Caseworkers from ProtectOHIO counties are encouraged to participate, as they usually work to some extent alongside ProtectOHIO Kinship Coordinators and Workers to assess and coordinate services for kinship families. Caseworkers who participate in the training will better understand the purpose and processes of the ProtectOHIO Kinship Strategy, making it more likely that caregivers will receive consistent, non-duplicative services to assist them in ensuring the safety and well-being of children in their care. Staff from non-ProtectOHIO counties, however, are not permitted to attend this training.

*Must I complete a Safety and Needs Assessment again if a child is placed within weeks of the first Home Study?*

You can complete another Safety or Needs Assessment if you believe it will make it more likely that a caregiver will be better able to provide a safe and nurturing home environment. As prescribed in the Kinship Strategy Practice Manual, however, you are not required to complete another needs assessment until 90 days have elapsed since the prior assessment.

*When administering the Family Resource Scale prior to a placement with kin, should caregivers complete the scale based on their current situation or what they presume it will be like when the child is actually placed with him or her?*

The caregiver should complete the scale based on their current situation. The Family Resource Scale is proven to be an accurate and consistent measure of the quality of a family's resources, but not when predicting what the quality of their resources may be in the future. However, it may be helpful for you to discuss with caregivers how the quality of the resources might change with the addition of another child or children in the household. And, when they complete it again after the child has been placed and a maximum of 90 days have elapsed since the first administration, you can determine which resources actually declined in quality and address them accordingly.

*When administering the Family Resource Scale, should I change answers that I know to be inaccurate based on the completed Safety and Needs Assessment?*

The intent of the Family Resource Scale is to measure caregiver perception of the quality of their family's resources. While it may be tempting to change responses based on your own assessment of their resources, doing so contradicts this intent and invalidates the measure. Without changing their

responses, however, it is certainly appropriate to note your differences in perception on the Needs Assessment worksheet if doing so will better ensure that kinship families receive effective services.

*Some of the resources at the bottom of the Family Resource Scale are awkward, like asking if they have time to keep in shape or looking the way they want. Why are we asking them about this and the other resources at the bottom of the scale?*

While the resources at the bottom of the scale are less essential for quality of life and you may not actually be able to facilitate their improvement, they are the ones that are most likely to decline in quality with the addition of another child or children in the home. And, these resources may be crucial for certain caregivers and their family's physical and mental health. By making them aware of the potential decline, they will be better prepared to mitigate any negative consequences that may result.

*Is completing a Written Support Plan optional?*

A Written Support Plan is required for every kinship family that you serve. However, there is no specific format for the plan and, according to the Kinship Strategy Practice Manual, "The support plan is developed in accordance with the needs assessment and can be incorporated into the case plan or completed as a separate document according to legal protocol and policy within that jurisdiction." Appendix D of the manual provides a template for a separate Written Support Plan, as well as an example of one that is incorporated into a Case Plan.

*It is very time consuming to enter Case Services into SACWIS for every kinship family I serve. Why is it so important that I enter them?*

Documenting the services in SACWIS that you provide to kinship caregivers and their families is imperative for ensuring that similar services will be available in your county for future kinship families. While we have records in the ProtectOHIO Data System (PODS) of the assessments that you complete, the only record of the services you provide will be gathered from SACWIS. If you do not enter services into SACWIS there will be no record of what you actually provided with the flexible funding received, making it very difficult to demonstrate the impact of those services on child and caregiver outcomes.

*How was the ProtectOHIO Kinship Strategy Practice Manual developed?*

The ProtectOHIO Kinship Strategy Practice Manual is the result of a series of workshops and the coordinated effort of the ProtectOHIO Consortium to consolidate best practices with kinship families. The Consortium members are ProtectOHIO county staff, state child welfare staff, and the external evaluation team.

*Is completing the paper forms for the Safety and Needs Assessment necessary if I am entering the information into PODS anyway?*

While it is not required that you complete the paper forms, most kinship workers find them useful for recalling the information when entering data into PODS.