



ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE of PENNSYLVANIA COURTS

**News for Immediate Release**

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**Six Pennsylvania Counties Selected for Initiative Supporting Abused and Neglected Children**

**HARRISBURG** — Pennsylvania’s Supreme Court today announced the selection of six counties to participate in the Pennsylvania State Roundtable’s **Family Engagement Initiative**. The roundtable is a collaborative effort among state and national court and child welfare leaders.

The selected counties – **Beaver, Butler, Fayette, Snyder, Tioga and Venango** – join seven other counties who received training last year and began applying new techniques to local child dependency systems in January 2018.

“It’s exciting to continue working with some of Pennsylvania’s most progressive counties,” said Pennsylvania Supreme Court Justice Max Baer. “We have exceptional partners throughout Pennsylvania who challenge each other to improve the way we serve families and who volunteer to implement new family engagement strategies that support healthy child development.”

Through this initiative, counties receive specialized resources developed just for them as well as training from international experts to enhance the way they help serve abused or neglected children and their families.

The focus of this initiative is to increase family involvement, reduce trauma to children and reduce the time children are separated from those who love and care about them.

“Identifying and involving extended family members and close friends in the lives of child welfare families is so important and many times requires the support of all local leaders within the selected counties,” said Sandy Moore, director of the Office of Children and Families in the Courts (OCFC).

The selection process was statewide, competitive and rigorous. Counties were required to submit a letter of interest, including signatures from the lead dependency judge, the president judge, the county commissioners and the child welfare director.

Factors considered in the selection process included:

- strong administrative collaboration between the court and children welfare agencies
- current family engagement practices
- data reviews

Final selections were made by OCFC, the Pennsylvania Department of Human Services' Office of Children, Youth and Families and Pennsylvania Supreme Court Justice Baer.

The **Family Engagement Initiative** was developed by the Pennsylvania State Roundtable and is supported by the OCFC and the Federal Court Improvement Program, in partnership with the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania and Department of Human Services' Office of Children, Youth and Families.

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