



Permanency Enhancement Project Technical Assistance Annual Report Update

Southern Region Mt. Vernon Action Team

This two-part report provides an update of all PEP Action Team and University Partner activities during the 2017 fiscal year (July 1, 2016 – June 30, 2017). Information herein is based off of communication and correspondence with key Action Team members and all other stakeholder group members. These individuals potentially include action team lead contact persons, PEP regional staff, other division employees, area community members, and families involved in the PEP initiative in the related counties.

Action Team Catchment Area

The **Mt. Vernon Action Team** encompasses the following counties listed below:

Jefferson
Marion

University Partner Activity Overview

During fiscal year 2017 the Department of Children and Family Services worked with the University Partner (Southern Illinois University Edwardsville- SIUE) to retain faculty researchers and graduate students (who serve in the role of PEP Action Team Community Liaisons) to explore barriers to permanency, including but not limited to trends in racial disparity and disproportionality as it impacts child outcomes in the Southern Region of Illinois.

In the month of **May** the Department of Children and Family Services Quality Assurance Department provided county level permanency data for **Quarter 4 of fiscal year 2016**. The data provided spans the following months: **March - June FY 2016** to SIUE, so that the University research team could analyze trends in permanencies, by age and race, over the period in question. This data analysis will be provided in a **supplementary report**.

In addition to analyzing permanency data, the PEP Community Liaison (University Graduate Student **Bethany Richards**) contacted representatives who had been identified as leaders of the

Mt. Vernon Action Team and explored PEP goals, accomplishments, barriers and activities. Communication with the following individuals occurred:

Name	Role in DCFS or PEP Action Team
Jay Reeves	Action Team Leader

** To see dates of contact and method of communication please refer to attached contact log document*

Context of Permanency Barriers for Action Team Catchment Area

This section includes a list of the permanency barriers discussed by action team members that are prevalent in the action team catchment area.

- **No current data to assist in updating permanency goals**
- **Maintaining action team membership**
- **Need for community partners to help address current permanency goals**
- **Action team leader is fairly new to position**

This section provides a discussion of the permanency barriers identified above. This discussion is based on information provided by action team members and is supported by the data presented in the supplementary report.

At this time, data has only been recently been supplied to the university partner by the Department of Children and Family Services Quality Assurance Department. However, the action team has been lacking current data for a long period of time and does not yet have access to this data. Such data will influence goals, activities, and encourage action team participation. The action team leader is fairly new to the position, but has remained active while becoming acclimated to the role and responsibilities. In an effort to maintain action team membership, action team members come to goal meetings that are specific to their interest or expertise. In order to address their goals of children in care having access to various resources, there has been a need for community partners. Team has identified several community partners to help children in care in response to this barrier.

Fiscal Year 2017 Action Team Goals

This section includes a current list of goals identified by the action team membership.

- **Assist families in accessing proper hygiene/skin care/hair care for kids**
- **Gain community support for access to dress clothes for teens and parents in need of proper interview attire**
- **DCFS will work toward targeted recruitment for foster parents that would accept older Youth in Care as well as homes that are from minority cultures**

- Attempt to develop a format for writing summaries for youth in care that puts weight on the child’s present and more recent history rather than creating an image of the child from the past that is not accurate to the present.
- Create a digital lifebook for children in care

Action Team Goal Related Activity Overview

Activity	Location	Date & Length of Time	Stakeholders Represented	University Partner Role	Other
Meeting to identify goals	Mt. Vernon	1/31/17		University partner asked for meeting summary	
Meeting to address goal	Mt. Vernon	2/28/17		University partner was in attendance	
Meeting to address goals	Mt. Vernon	3/28/17		University partner asked for update and meeting summary	

Discussion of Action Team Activities to Improve Permanency in the Catchment Area

Team has been meeting regularly to address goals. Team has identified potential community supports for hygiene, hair, and skin care. Team has worked on developing a new format for the summary for youth in care. Team will soon be meeting to address the goal of creating a digital life book.

Action Team Next Steps:

- Sustain action team membership
- Continue to address goals identified above by the action team membership
- Wait to receive current data
- Participate in survey developed by university partners

Include all meeting minutes, contact logs, event flyers, and other relevant materials with the report document.