Fall 2024

OFFICE OF
CHILDREN'S SERVICES

CSA TODAY

A NEWSLETTER OF THE OFFICE OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES

Office of Children's Services

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Director's Blog

Scott Reiner, Executive Director

The leaves have fallen from the trees, and I think I even spotted a few snow flurries last week.

Elsewhere in this Newsletter, you will hear about our recently concluded annual CSA conference. It is always one of the highlights of our year at OCS, and I hope you feel similarly. Thanks to all who attended, offered presentations, or shared information on your services in the exhibit space. We couldn't (and wouldn't) do this each year without you and, of course, with the efforts of the OCS team, expertly led by Mary Bell.

In conjunction with the Virginia Commission on Youth (VCOY), OCS will be bringing forward legislation in the 2025 session of the General Assembly to codify the eligibility of Children in Need of Services (CHINS) as eligible for sum-sufficient funding under the CSA for both congregate care placements through a Parental Agreement and community-based behavioral health services. Since 2007, this eligibility has been based on an opinion of the Attorney General and policy of the State Executive Council, but not formally in the Code of Virginia. Several developments over the past years have made this a necessary step. The VCOY recommended this as one recommendation from its study on relinquishing a child's custody to a local department of social services. OCS looks forward to your support in this important legislation.

At the State Executive Council for Children's Services (SEC), both private provider representatives, Ron Spears from Elk Hill and Natalie Elliott Handy from Health Connect America, were reappointed for their second three-year terms. All five local government representatives will be new. They include John Budesky, County Administrator of Hanover County; Jake Holmes, the Vice-Mayor of the City of Bristol; and Kevin Carroll, a Chesterfield County Board of Supervisors member. Two more local representatives are still to be appointed. We look forward to working with these new and returning members and all the members of the SEC.

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Director's Blog (cont'd.)

As the year draws to a close, the Office of Children's Services has much to be thankful for. On a personal note, I have been blessed this past year with the gift of my first two grandchildren, Molly and Jack. They remind me daily of the joy of family and our work's critical role in assisting those we serve, addressing needs, and building communities. When our work seems to be most challenging or discouraging, please ground yourself in the value and values of the CSA mission in building a robust and responsive system of care. On behalf of the OCS team, I wish you a peaceful and joyful holiday season.

Scott

We celebrate the lasting connections formed through adoption and raise awareness about the need for adoptive families. This month began as "Adoption Week" in 1976, and was later expanded to a month in 1995, proclaiming November as *National Adoption Month*.

This year's theme, "Honoring Youth: Strengthening Pathways for Lasting Bonds," highlights the importance of building lifelong support systems for youth in foster care.

Click here to learn more about the Children's Bureau's campaign on highlighting the lifelong connections brought through adoption.

13TH ANNUAL COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA CSA CONFERENCE

The 13th Annual Commonwealth of Virginia CSA Conference was held this year at the beautiful Hotel Roanoke & Conference Center in Roanoke, Virginia. This year's theme, "***Unlocking Our Potential***," inspired participants to build strong and trusting relationships, tap into new and existing tools integral to organizational change, and embrace the new challenges they may face in their important work with and for families. Over 500 participants attended over 40 breakout sessions delivered by community partners, public agencies, and OCS staff during the event. Session presentations are accessible here on the CSA website. We were excited to host over 50 sponsors and service providers eager to engage with and share their resources with members of the local CSA communities.

The first-ever joint pre-conference session kicked off this event. CSA Coordinators, CPMT, and FAPT members gathered to listen and learn about cultivating trust and balancing power. Led by Dr. Sobia Khan of the Center for Implementation, over 165 participants engaged in discussions focused on building trust and addressing the power dynamics between professionals, stakeholders, and families.

This unique pre-conference session was followed by an enriching keynote address by renowned author and advocate Beth Macy. She shared how her tireless efforts and in-depth research exposed the devastation of the opioid epidemic in American society. Through her work, she highlighted the resilience of individuals who fight daily for sobriety, paying forward the lessons learned from their lived experiences and giving light to the unsung heroes who continue this fight.

Ms. Macy shared tips on providing urgent care for individuals struggling with addiction, showing kindness, and not underestimating the "Power of One." Be on the lookout for her next book, Paper Girl, a combination memoir and reported examination of the rural-urban divide told through the lenses of declining upward mobility, political polarization, and the decimation of local and regional news.

The Office of Children's Services accepted nominations for the *Paul Baldwin Outstanding Coordinator Award* and its newest award, *Rookie of the Year*.

The Outstanding Coordinator Award celebrates CSA Coordinators for their countless efforts and commitment to serving youth and families throughout the Commonwealth.

The Rookie of the Year award recognizes a CSA Coordinator who has performed exceptionally well and has been in their role for less than two years.

Congratulations to the Outstanding CSA Coordinator and the
Rookie of the Year awardees!

**Outstanding
CSA Coordinator**

**Rookie of the
Year**

Joni Tables
Amherst County CSA

Meaghan Turner
Manassas City CSA

Special thanks to everyone that had a part in the success of the conference. We look forward to seeing everyone in 2025!

CANS Detail Reports

The following CANS Detail Reports are now available on the *CSA Data and Outcomes Dashboard* to provide users with **program-level** assessment summaries and trends and an improved capability to answer the question, "Is anyone getting better?" These reports are adopted from the current Longevity Reports in CANVaS but are not exact replicas.

Who is included?

Children and youth, ages 5 to 21, served by CSA with at least one Reassessment following an Initial CANS, excluding those identified as "In-Home Only" served by local social services departments (LDSS).

What is included?

Key Intervention Needs by **Locality**: identifies top actionable items (score of "2" or "3") at the time of the Initial assessment (within the Life Functioning, Behavioral/Emotional, and Child Risk Domains) and provides the percentage of youth for whom the item continues to be actionable at Reassessment.

Key Intervention Needs by **Domain**: identifies top actionable items (score of "2" or "3") at the time of the Initial assessment for the selected Domain and provides the percentage of youth for whom the item continues to be actionable at Reassessment.

Average Impact: sums the average number of actionable items in Life Functioning, Behavioral/Emotional Needs, and Child Risk Domains at the Initial assessment and at Reassessment.

Impact by Item: compares Initial assessment results for a single CANS item to Reassessment results (percentage of youth for whom the item is actionable, improvement/decline occurred, or the item was newly identified).

Strengths Development: compares centerpiece strengths at the Initial assessment to strengths at the Reassessment.

How often are these reports updated?

Reports are refreshed quarterly to include newly completed assessments for each cohort.

How do I find these reports?

From the dashboard home page, navigate to the Outcomes section and then to the CANS section.
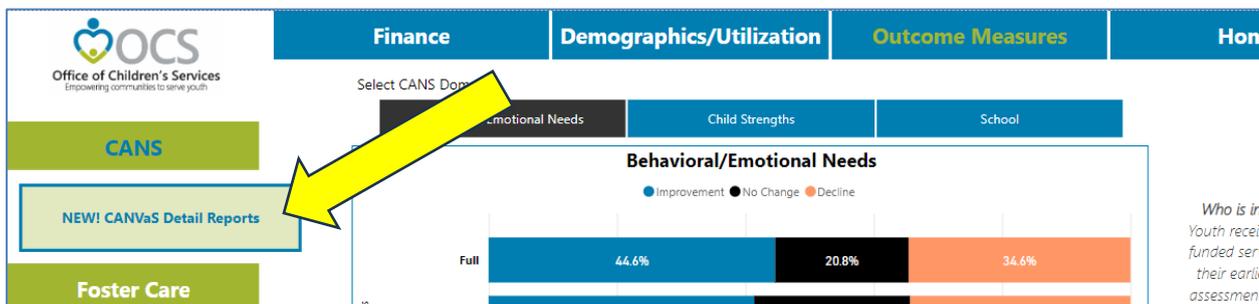
Send your questions to carrie.thompson@csa.virginia.gov or carol.wilson@csa.virginia.gov.

Did you know that the reporting provided by the Office of Children's Services (OCS) on the CSA website is directly influenced by the quality of data submitted in local program LEDRS files?

Data quality is essential to CSA programs at the state and local levels. To support local CSA programs with the task of coding LEDRS data, OCS has developed several resources that can be used to support accurate LEDRS file uploads. These resources can be accessed on the OCS website (https://www.csa.virginia.gov/) under the "Funding and Financial Reporting" section of the guidance section of the resources tab (https://www.csa.virginia.gov/Resources/Guidance). We hope you find the following documents valuable resources to support your CSA team.

- CSA Services Names (https://www.csa.virginia.gov/content/doc/CSA_Service_Names.pdf)

- CSA Service Placement Types and Definitions
  (https://www.csa.virginia.gov/content/doc/CSA_Service_Placement_Types.pdf)

- LEDRS File Layout Details and Crosswalks (https://www.csa.virginia.gov/Resources/Guidance)

- Mandate Type Definitions
  (https://www.csa.virginia.gov/content/doc/Mandate_Type_Definitions.pdf)

- Pool Fund Expenditure Categories and Definitions
  (https://www.csa.virginia.gov/content/doc/Pool_Fund_Expenditure_Categories_and_Definitions.pdf

- Pool Fund Expenditure Categories mapping with the Thomas Brothers System
  (https://www.csa.virginia.gov/content/doc/Pool_Fund_Expenditure_Categories_mapping_with_Thomas_Brothers_System.pdf)

- CSA Coding Cheat Sheet (https://www.csa.virginia.gov/content/doc/LEDRS_Coding_Cheat_Sheet.pdf)

Please feel free to share these resources with anyone within your program that you believe will benefit from the information.

If you should have any questions regarding the coding of LEDRS data, please get in touch with OCS using the "OCS Help Desk" feature, which is available under the Technical Assistance section under the "Contact" tab (https://www.csa.virginia.gov/Contact/TechnicalAssistance/0).

Auditor's Corner

INTERNAL CONTROL MANAGEMENT: MOVING FROM ADOLESCENCE TO MATURITY

Submitted By: Rendell Briggs, Program Auditor

The Institute of Internal Auditors defines control environment as "*the attitude and actions of the board and management regarding the importance of controls within the organization. The control environment provides the discipline and structure for the achievement of the primary objectives of the system of internal controls.*"[1] Increasing business complexity and compliance requirements drive continual change in the internal control environment. Immature, siloed, and manual approaches compound the problem.

A mature control environment is the foundation on which an effective system of internal controls is built and operated in an entity that strives to (1) achieve its strategic objectives, (2) provide reliable financial reporting to internal and external stakeholders, (3) operate its business efficiently and effectively, (4) comply with all applicable laws and regulations, and (5) safeguard its assets. The goal is to create an internal control management program that is effective, efficient, and agile, where management can continuously assess controls and their impact on objectives, uncertainty/risk, and the integrity of the CSA Program. Too often, internal control management is an occasional exercise.

How does one move from an adolescent (occasional) control environment to maturity (continuous)? Local CSA Programs should seek to modernize and mature internal control management to address the vast web of risks and compliance requirements, ensuring partnering agencies remain agile and resilient as they strive to achieve objectives. Mature internal control management is a seamless part of governance and operations. It is not only about meeting regulatory requirements. It requires a top-down view of objectives and risks and becomes a part of the operational fabric of local CSA Programs. It also means bottom-up participation, where business functions identify, monitor, and evaluate the effectiveness of established internal controls. Internal control management must be integrated into the culture of the CSA Program, and this requires both an effort from the top and bottom of locally administered teams to adequately define and guide this culture and participate within it, meaning business functions and agency partners need to effectively and efficiently monitor internal controls. Continuous monitoring incorporating technology and automation enables localities to gain a real-time, integrated view of and controls across business systems, applications, processes, and the role of agency partners.

"Steve takes evidence gathering very seriously."

In a dynamic business environment where emerging risks lurk around every corner, a mature internal control management program is the bedrock for reliably achieving objectives, addressing uncertainty, and acting with integrity. This framework ensures that everyone in the CSA Program understands their roles, responsibilities, and accountabilities. It minimizes the potential consequences of a control failure, risk exposure, or non-compliance.

If you found this article helpful and would like to learn more about other internal controls, please contact any of our program audit staff. Contact information is available on the CSA website (https://www.csa.virginia.gov/). Also, check the OCS newsletter, *CSA Today*, for future articles.

References:
https://www.sai360.com/resources/grc/an-enterprise-perspective-on-internal-controls
https://deloitte.wsj.com/riskandcompliance/a-5-step-guide-to-stronger-internal-controls-01656009217

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[1] The Institute of Internal Auditors, https://www.theiia.org/en/standards/what-are-the-standards/mandatory-guidance/standards/standards-glossary/

Model UR Form – A Template for Local CSA Programs

By: Anna Antell, Lead Program Consultant

In the Spring 2024 edition of the CSA Newsletter, we reminded you of the Utilization Review (UR) Guidelines (found here: UR Guidelines). The UR Guidelines define Utilization Review and its requirements for local CSA programs, as well as an overview of best practices of UR. Embedded in the Guidelines are several tools such as a sample *Family Satisfaction Survey* and a *UR Self-Assessment* that localities can utilize as they develop and revisit their UR process.

As a companion to the UR Guidelines, this Fall, we updated the **Model UR Form**. This one-page document can be found on the OCS website (under *Resources → Guidance → Utilization Review*). The form is straight forward, allowing for easy adaption at the local level. For reference, a sample completed form can be found in the UR Guidelines.

The Model UR form answers the fundamental questions of UR:
- Are we getting what we paid for?
- Are things getting better?
- How do we know?
- And now what will we do?

The form can be filled out as part of the local UR process, and content should inform the service planning process that occurs within the FAPT process. As a reminder, Utilization Review is an ongoing process, and when done well, UR strengthens the service planning process by deepening family and youth engagement, local partnerships, and producing positive outcomes.

We invite you to utilize the Model UR Form and consider opportunities to strengthen your local UR process. Please reach out to Anna Antell (anna.antell@csa.virginia.gov) with questions or UR needs.

The Office of Children's Services (OCS) strives to provide valuable resources to stakeholders through the OCS resource library and the Virginia Learning Center. The OCS is pleased to announce the newly updated ***Policy Manual for the Children's Services Act (CSA),*** the ***User Guide for the CSA***, ***Special Education and the Children's Services Act***, and the newly developed ***Model CSA Intake Form***. We are confident that you will find these documents to be vital resources in implementing local CSA programs. Below is a brief description of each document and its location on the CSA website.

Policy Manual for the Children's Services Act

The *Policy Manual for the Children's Services Act (CSA)* provides a single reference to the policies adopted by the State Executive Council for Children's Services in accordance with its statutory responsibility to establish interagency programmatic and fiscal policies that support the Act's purposes. The Policy Manual can be found under the ***Resources*** tab on the CSA website.

User Guide for the Children's Services Act

The *User Guide for the Children's Services Act (CSA)* provides guidance on the significant areas of CSA implementation and administration at the local level. While not intended to answer all possible questions regarding CSA operations, this document does provide a broad overview, which, when utilized with its companion document, the *Policy Manual for the Children's Services Act*, and the Code of Virginia, assists communities in the local implementation of their CSA programs. The CSA User Guide can be found under the ***Resources*** tab on the ***CSA website***.

Special Education and the Children's Services Act

Special Education and the Children's Services Act (CSA) provides guidance related to the interface of special education services and the Children's Services Act. While the document addresses many circumstances, it does not address every situation encountered when navigating the CSA and special education processes. Readers are encouraged to contact the Office of Children's Services and/or the Virginia Department of Education concerning specific situations not covered in this document. The Special Education guidance document can be found on the CSA website: Click on *Resources* → *Guidance* → ***Special Education***.

Model CSA Intake Form

Although no template is required for a CSA intake form, this document is a model for local CPMTs to use with new referrals to their CSA program. The form was developed by a workgroup of the State and Local Advisory Team (SLAT) as part of the State Executive Council's strategic plan.

This document was created as a Microsoft Word form template, allowing specific field settings. Although editing parameters exist, fields that appear in parentheses can be edited to include child-specific information. Additionally, the table layout of the form is unrestricted, allowing for the inclusion of unlimited data. Because of editing parameters, modifying the form's content and/or layout will require the password "CSA" (no quotes) to be entered while in design mode, which can be accessed from the Developer tab. The model CSA Intake Form can be found following this path on the CSA website: Click on *Resources* → ***Forms***.

If you have questions or would like additional information, please get in touch with Kristi Schabo at kristi.schabo@csa.virginia.gov.

Childcare Provider Provisional License

Every month, the Division of Family Services releases an updated childcare provider listing on the Fusion page identifying providers with a provisional license. The monthly report can be found here.

To find childcare providers and their licensure status, click this link to access Finding Child Care Virginia. The CSA User Guide (Section 10.5) provides information about CSA funding implications for childcare providers.

Drive to Thrive

Local DSSs can now access this newly developed program to assist youth in foster care in obtaining a driver's license and accessing car insurance. These funds can be used to enroll in driving school, get vehicle insurance, and cover DMV fees. Funding cannot be used for vehicle repairs or the purchase of a vehicle.

To access these funds, the LDSS must complete a request form located on FUSION. For more information, contact Avis Thomas (avis.thomas@dss.virginia.gov) or Letha Moore-Jones (letha.moore-jones@dss.virginia.gov).

Substance Screening – A New Resource

The Virginia Department of Social Services (VDSS) has newly developed guidelines and recommendations for substance use screening. Through local and state partnerships, this resource is designed to assist child welfare professionals, court officials, and substance use treatment entities in improving the safety, permanency, well-being, and recovery outcomes for children, parents, and families.

A webinar to review this new resource was held on Wednesday, December 4, 2024, at 10 a.m. The webinar will be recorded and posted on FUSION. Questions regarding this resource should be directed to your Regional Practice Consultant.

LOCAL PROGRAM SPOTLIGHT

LUNENBURG COUNTY REGIONAL TRAINING

Submitted by: Anna Antell, Lead Program Consultant

On November 19, 2024, Lunenburg County hosted a regional in-person *CANS and Service Planning* training. Lunenburg County CSA Coordinator Brande Crutchfield organized all event details, including inviting regional partners, securing a training site, and communicating with OCS staff. Anna Antell and Carol Wilson delivered the three-hour training. Ten localities attended (Amelia, Buckingham, Charlotte, Cumberland, Halifax, Lunenburg, Mecklenburg, Nottoway, and Prince Edward), with representation from all local child-serving agencies. Local CSA Coordinators, Case Managers, and FAPT members were in attendance, totaling 43 participants. The group was engaged with excellent questions and energy. Brande went above and beyond to create a welcoming environment for all attendees, including festive décor, breakfast goodies, and chocolates on the table.

Thank you, Brande, for all of your efforts, and thanks to all who attended the training.

If your locality is interested in CANS and Service Planning, please get in touch with Anna Antell (anna.antell@csa.virginia.gov) or Carol Wilson (carol.wilson@csa.virginia.gov).

In August 2024, Rachel Friedman joined the Office of Children's Services (OCS) as a Program Auditor. Rachel comes to OCS with a wealth of knowledge and experience in the audit process, and she brings her own brand of insight and energy to the work she performs. Here's more about Rachel:

In 2013, Rachel served as a Litigation Paralegal (later promoted to Senior Paralegal) with CarMax, where she managed special projects and resolved various pre-litigation and litigation customer and store issues across multiple states. She also managed the COVID response during her tenure with CarMax. Rachel's outstanding performance and contributions in her various roles resulted in her being awarded the inaugural *Legal Champion Award* (2019) for her enthusiastic teamwork and for going above and beyond.

Before joining CarMax, Rachel worked as a Legal Secretary and Paralegal for various law firms in Hampton Roads and Northern Virginia.

In February 2021, Rachel accepted the role of Senior Consultant in the newly formed Human Resources (HR) Central Investigations team at CarMax. There, she worked on over 200 routine HR investigations and conducted over 460 interviews with involved parties. She is well-versed in performing investigative research activities and analysis and recommending appropriate resolutions.

Rachel transitioned to the Auto Finance side of the business in 2022 to serve as an Auditor on the Compliance Service Team. There, she performed various audit tests to assess operational compliance with applicable state and federal laws, regulations, frameworks, or other guidelines.

In her academic pursuits, Rachel attended Old Dominion University in Norfolk, Virginia, earning a Bachelor of Science in Political Science with a minor in Criminal Justice. In her free time, she plays 8-ball weekly in a billiards league on a team of eight, and she loves going to shows and hearing live music. Rachel loves spaghetti, animals, anything Steve Harvey-related, the NASA channel, soap operas, Bravo, true crime, and history and nature documentaries.

Let's give a warm welcome to Rachel! We are happy to have her as part of the OCS team 😊

Resource Round-Up

Guidance for Students in Foster Care

The U.S. Departments of Education and Health and Human Services have released joint discretionary guidance to support state and local educational systems and child welfare agencies working with students in foster care. This updated guidance can be found here.

VQB5 VIRGINIA QUALITY BIRTH TO FIVE
VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

VDOE has launched the *VQB5 Portal* to aid families in finding early childhood programs around the Commonwealth. Families can explore the quality, curriculum, and safety of programs for children from birth to age 5. The portal is designed to assist families in making the best decisions about these programs for their children.

Click the logo to access the portal.

35th ANNUAL NATIONAL LEADERSHIP FORUM
SAMHSA's 21st Annual Prevention Day
February 3-6, 2025 Gaylord National | National Harbor, MD
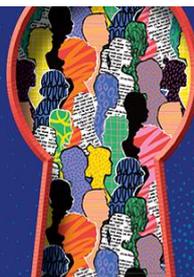
UNLOCK THE POWER OF COALITIONS
CADCA

ANNUAL CHILD ABUSE & NEGLECT PREVENTION CONFERENCE

Families Forward VA and VDSS will host the annual conference on April 28-29, 2025 in Williamsburg, Virginia.

Workshops include topics relevant to professionals who support or provide direct services to children and families.

Click here for more info!

Families Forward
Stronger Virginia Families
Two Generations at a Time

2025 TRAINING INSTITUTES

The University of Connecticut is hosting a national gathering of experts and leaders working at the federal, state, and local levels to transform public systems, programs, and services for children, youth, young adults, and their families. Click this **link** to learn more information and to register.

TA Questions of the Quarter

A Parent Representative serving on a CSA team is uncomfortable with completing the financial disclosure on the Statement of Economic Interest form because the information can be made public. Is this a state or local requirement?

The requirement for Parent and Private Provider representatives serving on a CSA team to complete this form is in state law COV § 2.2-5207: "Any person serving on such team who does not represent a public agency shall file a statement of economic interests as set out in § 2.2-3117 of the State and Local Government Conflict of Interests Act (§ 2.2-3100 et seq.). Persons representing public agencies shall file such statements if required to do so pursuant to the State and Local Government Conflict of Interests Act. Persons serving on the team who are parent representatives or who represent private organizations or associations of providers for children's or family services shall abstain from decision-making involving individual cases or agencies in which they have either a personal interest, as defined in § 2.2-3101 of the State and Local Government Conflict of Interests Act, or a fiduciary interest.

This requirement ensures transparency in government when managing taxpayer funds and avoids conflicts of interest which could intentionally or unintentionally create situations where individuals are personally financially benefitting from their participation in CPMT or FAPT.

Can the clothing allowance supplement be used to pay for non-clothing items, such as haircuts/hair styling?

No, the clothing allowance may not be used for haircuts or hair styling. The basic maintenance payment made on behalf of a child in foster care can be used to cover a child's personal incidentals, which can include personal hygiene (i.e., haircuts/hair styling). See Foster Care guidance (Section 18.1.4) for more details.

It has been confirmed that CSA can pay for Kinship maintenance for a IV-E child while a COA (Certificate of Approval) is being issued as long as all required soft safety checks are completed. Is there a time limit as to how long CSA can be used while awaiting the CSA and the kinship home to be certified?

Yes, the home must be fully approved (all requirements met, including the COA) within six months of placement. If not fully approved, neither CSA nor IV-E can pay.

Got Questions?

Get answers by using the OCS Technical Assistance Help Desk. OCS staff will receive and respond to your questions, with the goal of same-day responses.

The OCS Technical Assistance Help Desk is found on the CSA website under *Contacts --> Technical Assistance* or by clicking here.

Would you like to be contributor to CSA Today?
If you have information you would like to share with CSA colleagues around the state, please follow the guidelines for submission located **HERE**…

HAPPY
Holidays
FROM THE OCS TEAM!