



**PRESS RELEASE**  
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The Department of Human Services  
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**Philadelphia County selected for Statewide Initiative supporting abused and neglected children**

**Philadelphia** — Pennsylvania's Supreme Court recently announced that Philadelphia County has been selected as one of three 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 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.

The selected counties – Dauphin, Northumberland and Philadelphia – join twelve other counties which participated in the initiative throughout the past two years.

"We are excited to include Philadelphia County in the initiative. Its child welfare agency's focus on family inclusion, as well as its history of strong judicial leadership, made it a perfect fit for the initiative," said Pennsylvania Supreme Court Justice Max Baer.

Counties receive specialized resources developed just for them as well as training from international experts to enhance the way they serve abused or neglected children and their families.

"For many children in Philadelphia, extended family and compassionate adults provide the greatest sources of care and support," said the Hon. Margaret T. Murphy, Administrative Judge of Philadelphia Family Court. "We're glad to be a part of this initiative and eager to make a

greater impact in the lives of children who need that care and support the most.”

As part of the competitive statewide selection process, counties were required to submit a letter of interest which included signatures from the lead dependency judge, president judge, county commissioners, child welfare director and mental health director.

Factors considered in the selection process included:

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

“Deepening our engagement with families is critical to ensure children are safe and well cared for. The intentional collaboration created through The Family Engagement Initiative will help us continue to reduce the number of children removed from their homes,” said Cynthia F. Figueroa, Commissioner for the City of Philadelphia Department of Human Services.

Final selections were made by representatives from the Administrative Office of Pennsylvania Courts/Office of Children and Families in the Courts (OCFC), the Pennsylvania Department of Human Services’ Office of Children, Youth and Families and the Pennsylvania Supreme Court.

“Identifying and involving extended family members and close friends in the lives of children is so important and many times requires the support of all local leaders within the selected counties,” said Sandy Moore, director of Administrative Office of Pennsylvania Courts OCFC.

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The **Family Engagement Initiative** was developed by the Pennsylvania State Roundtable and is supported by the Administrative Office of Pennsylvania Courts’ Office of Children and Families in the Courts 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. The Pennsylvania State Roundtable plans to continue expanding the initiative to other counties in the coming years.

### About Us

The Philadelphia Department of Human Services is the county child welfare agency. We lead, support, coordinate and implement services to prevent and address child abuse and neglect; and operate juvenile justice programs for Philadelphia.

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