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Press Releases

New Court Office Aims to Aid State's Dependent Children

HARRISBURG — On any given day in Pennsylvania, there are some 20,000 dependent children — abused and neglected they have been placed in foster homes or temporary residential settings where they can wait, in some cases, for years before being placed in a permanent home.

"That's too many dependent children in the system," says Chief Justice of Pennsylvania Ralph J. Cappy, "and it's far too long for a child to wait to be placed in a permanent home where hopefully they will find stability and normalcy in their life."

On Tuesday, June 26 at the Hershey Motor Lodge in Hershey, PA, beginning at 9:30 a.m., the state Supreme Court will hold the first-ever State Roundtable to improve the plight of dependent children.

The State Roundtable culminates over a year of planning by the Court and the Office of Children and Families in the Courts (OCFC) to establish 60 local Children Roundtables (one in each of Pennsylvania's Judicial Districts) and ten Leadership Roundtables throughout the state.

OCFC was created in Oct 2006 with the broad goal to make family courts more responsive to the needs of children and families. The roundtables were created to establish a statewide infrastructure that allows for effective administration and communication among Pennsylvania's judicial districts and child welfare services.

"We believe the State Roundtable will have a profound effect on how abused and neglected children fare in the Pennsylvania judicial system," said Justice Max Baer, a former administrative judge of family court in Allegheny County. Justice Baer is acting on behalf of the Supreme Court to guide OCFC within the Administrative Office of Pennsylvania Courts.

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