



ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE of PENNSYLVANIA COURTS

## News for Immediate Release

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### **Court data confirms: number of dependent Pennsylvania children safely remaining in their homes or with family continues to increase**

*Data from new, improved website dashboards help judges and advocates make more informed decisions*

**HARRISBURG** — Children under the supervision of Pennsylvania’s courts and child welfare system are safely remaining at home or being placed more often with family members, which eliminates time otherwise spent in foster care, saves taxpayer dollars and reduces potential emotional trauma.

“Safely keeping children in their homes or with relatives greatly improves their chances to succeed,” said state Supreme Court Justice Max Baer. “And our data shows we are doing that.”

Justice Baer is a former administrative judge of family court in Allegheny County and guides the Supreme Courts’ Office of Children and Family in the Courts.

While the overall number of abused/neglected children supervised by courts increased 8 percent from 2011 to 2013, the number of children being supervised within their own home or with family during the same time period increased by 38 percent.

This statistic and many others are available thanks to a dependency court data system which has been six years in the making and is the only one of its kind in the country. The system is comprised of three easy to operate and understand “data dashboards,” which are featured on the judiciary’s website.

In early 2013, the AOPC launched the first dependency data dashboards, which featured a comprehensive look at the demographics of the state’s abused and neglected children under court supervision. Now, with several years of court data, those involved in protecting children will be able to see trends and make more data-informed decisions on practices that work and areas needing improvement.

The data is available for anyone to view. The project was undertaken by the Administrative Office of Pennsylvania Courts’ Judicial Automation Department and Office of Children and Families in the Courts in close collaboration with county courts.

“Every day in our local courts judges make critically important decisions impacting the lives of children and families,” Justice Baer said. “The new dashboards are yet another tool for judges as they work tirelessly to ensure safe and loving homes for children in foster care.”

The new dashboards launched today contain more information than earlier versions, are better organized and are easier to use. They allow users to more easily compare categories between years and between counties.

The dashboards can be found at the judicial system website, [www.pacourts.us](http://www.pacourts.us), by clicking on the News and Statistics tab at the top of the page and selecting the research and statistics page. The button for the “Interactive Data Dashboards” is on the right side.

[Link to dashboards](#) – scroll down to third category, Dependency Data.

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