

The Collaboration to AdoptUsKids

Training & Technical Assistance E-Notes

April, 2007

Recruitment Works/Retention Matters

The Illinois Foster Caregivers' Study (2005) surveyed 204 caregivers and found that they generally reported good physical and mental health and much satisfaction with their role as foster parents.

Significant findings of the study include:

- Most foster caregivers are healthy and few report significant numbers of depressive symptoms or childhood trauma
- Most expressed positive feelings about fostering the children in their care and in their interactions with their primary child welfare agency contacts
- Areas of concern reported by the foster caregivers were lack of access to dental and behavioral health services for children in their care, difficulty obtaining training, communication with caseworkers, lack of respite support, birth family visitation difficulties, insufficient background information at placement, and insufficient reimbursement

Foster parents identified the following areas in which agency support could be improved:

- Improving caseworker training and support (36%)
- Increased training, support groups and liability insurance for foster caregivers (30%)
- Additional dental and behavioral health services for children (20%)
- Higher reimbursement rates (16%)
- Increased background information that is accurate (11%)
- More consistent family visitations (6%)
- Better respite services (6%)

The study was completed by the Children and Family Research Center of the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign and is available for download at <http://cfrcwww.social.uiuc.edu/pubs/Pdf.files/Illinoisfostercaregivers%20.pdf>.

Inter-jurisdictional Placement Services

State by State Resources to Facilitate the Interjurisdictional Placement Process

A chart detailing State-specific resources and requirements related to interjurisdictional placements can be found on the AdoptUsKids T/TA website at http://216.38.216.37/adoptusa/documents/IJ_resources/IJ_resources.pdf. The web page was developed in response to a recommendation of the 2006 Children's Bureau report titled, *Interjurisdictional Placement of Children in the Child Welfare System: Improving the Process*. The report called for the development of a national website containing information on the following State requirements: criminal background checks, coverage of medical and educational expenses as a sending and as a receiving State, a list of Purchase of Service (POS) agencies with active contracts and POS requirements within the State, home study requirements, and post-placement standards for supervision. This information is now posted for many States. To add information for your State, contact Melody Roe at AdoptUsKids.

Contents:

- [Recruitment Works/Retention Matters](#)
- [Inter-jurisdictional Services](#)
- [Tips and Tools](#)
- [T/TA Highlights](#)
- [R&R Network](#)
- [FYI](#)
- [Subscribe or Forward](#)
- [Contact Us](#)
- [Print This Issue](#)



Memo from Melody

Welcome to Spring! I have a few pieces of information I've been looking forward to sharing with you this month.

I recently participated in the 2007 Children's Bureau Joint Grantee Meeting. This was a wonderful venue for several members of the Children's Bureau Training and Technical Assistance (TTA) Network, including AdoptUsKids, to connect with federal grantees from across the country. We had opportunities to share the work we are doing and to hear about the efforts of Adoption Opportunities grantees working in a variety of program areas.

Additionally, in June, the TTA Network and AdoptUsKids will have the opportunity to share with and learn from members of the various Quality Improvement Centers (QICs) by participating in their two-day Symposium.

The next series of Regional Roundtables will begin in June, and will highlight the research component of AdoptUsKids, led

Tips and Tools

A new fact sheet from the Center for Law and Social Policy reviews research evidence that supports kinship care as a valuable resource for children. Highlights of the report include:

- Children in kinship care experience greater stability than those in other types of out-of-home care
- Children in kinship care report more positive perceptions of their placements and have fewer behavioral problems
- Kinship care respects cultural traditions and may reduce racial disparities in a variety of outcomes
- Kinship caregivers provide stability to children and youth with incarcerated parents

Is Kinship Care Good for Kids? can be obtained at http://www.clasp.org/publications/is_kinship_care_good.pdf.

T/TA Highlights

Along with other members of the Children's Bureau Training and Technical Assistance Network, AdoptUsKids has provided services to States impacted by the devastation of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. One State requesting service following the onslaught of the storms in 2005 was Louisiana. Prior to submitting their request, child welfare staff in Louisiana had worked to locate their foster children and foster families to ensure their safety. As initial safety concerns were addressed, other issues began to surface. For example, many children in care were displaced to a number of States creating inter-jurisdictional issues related to permanency. It was this issue which brought AdoptUsKids' consultants Sarah Webster and Melody Roe to the State to assist in organizing and prioritizing the permanency needs.

The first step in our work was setting up a spreadsheet with each child's location and permanency plan goal and the status of any arrangements the foster family had made to return to Louisiana. This helped the State to develop service priorities. It was found that many children could achieve permanency if home studies could be secured in their new locations. AdoptUsKids was able to develop lists of agencies in identified States and questions for Louisiana staff to consider when determining which agency to pursue for home study needs.

In addition, Louisiana staff determined a need for a 'guide' to assist front line staff when making permanency decisions during an emergency and to inform the court of these decisions in a planned way. With input from the **National Child Welfare Resource Center on Legal and Judicial Issues** and from Louisiana program managers, AdoptUsKids developed a *Case Planning Desk Reference* that identifies specific questions that should be answered to guide decision-making. The information gathered was not new to staff but the guide created a single reference site. Organized by permanency goal, the Desk Reference is formatted as a set of check lists to facilitate ease of use. It has now been printed and provided to the State to distribute to field staff. While this tool was designed specifically for use in the aftermath of the hurricanes, it can be used by any worker seeking guidance in permanency decision-making regardless if the plan is reunification, adoption or anything in between.

[Click here](#) to access the Case Planning Desk Reference.

Recruitment and Retention Network

Looking for new ways to excite child welfare staff about resource parent recruitment? Try harnessing the power of email to communicate with tens or even hundreds of staff

by Dr. Ruth McRoy and her colleagues at the University of Texas at Austin. You can expect to receive details on the Roundtables in the near future.

Finally, I'm happy to announce the completion of a set of very concrete tools to assist with the ICPC placement process. Two ICPC checklists – one each for Receiving and Sending States – are hot off the presses and will soon be in the mail to State Foster Care and Adoption Managers, ICPC offices, Regional Federal offices and other stakeholders as well as available for download from the AdoptUsKids website. The laminated checklists offer a quick guide to the steps needed to complete the ICPC requirements for interstate placement. We hope you find them helpful!

Thanks for reading!

Melody Roe

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Contact Us

For more information about AdoptUsKids Training and Technical Assistance Services, contact Melody Roe at (303) 755-4756, ext. 241, or email melody@adoptex.org.

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members about your agency's recruitment needs.

In New York City, the Administration for Children's Services launched an electronic "Recruitment is Everyone's Business Campaign." The Commissioner sent an e-blast to all staff members inviting them to "Win Lunch with the Commissioner" by submitting their ideas for a recruitment tagline contest. The Graphics department created an e-mailable recruitment poster which was then circulated by e-mail to all staff, who were encouraged to forward it widely to friends, family members and neighbors, and to print out copies to put up in their apartment lobby, their supermarket and their local library.

Over 250 employees from all divisions of the agency entered the recruitment tagline contest. At the same time, several immediately got to work using their personal contacts to "spread the word." One child protective staff member made copies of the poster to take with her to a church retreat. A manager took the poster to local Black History Month events. Another staff member left copies of the poster with street vendors in her neighborhood. Four contest winners have been scheduled for lunch with the Commissioners and ideas for additional recruitment leads have poured in from all agency departments. To learn more about New York City's effort, contact Alexandra D. Lowe at alexandra.lowe@dfa.State.ny.us.

Please send us your stories and ideas that have shown results in recruitment, retention and interjurisdictional placements. Email your offerings to melody@adoptex.org.

FYI

The current issue of the *Child Welfare Matters* newsletter of the National Child Welfare Resource Center for Organizational Improvement focuses on the second round of Child and Family Services reviews. Included is a discussion of the CFSR process, suggestions for preparation and links to helpful resources. Click [here](#) <http://muskie.usm.maine.edu/helpkids/rcpdfs/cwmatters5.pdf> to access it.