

# The Collaboration to AdoptUsKids

## Training & Technical Assistance E-Notes

### May, 2007

#### Recruitment Works/Retention Matters

An updated version of *Foster Parent Adoption: A Bulletin for Professionals* is now available from Child Welfare Information Gateway. The publication addresses benefits, costs and practice issues related to foster parent adoption as well as trends, pre- and post-adoption services and questions for further research. References and a resource list are also included. The bulletin was developed by Child Welfare Information Gateway, in partnership with Jeanne Howard, Policy and Research Director of the Evan B. Donaldson Adoption Institute. It can be viewed and downloaded at [http://www.childwelfare.gov/pubs/f\\_fospro/](http://www.childwelfare.gov/pubs/f_fospro/).

#### Inter-jurisdictional Placement Services

Another helpful resource from Child Welfare Information Gateway is the National Adoption Directory. The directory includes contact information for a wide range of organizations and services related to adoption, and can be searched on a State-by-State basis, including U.S. Territories. Information can be viewed in both English and Spanish. Types of information available include:

- State-level phone numbers for information on becoming an adoptive parent or foster parent
- Adoption agencies
- Support groups
- Contact information for State-Level officials involved in adoption or foster care
- Statewide services available for prospective adoptive parents, adopted individuals, and birth parents and relatives

The Internet address for the directory is [www.childwelfare.gov/nad/index.cfm](http://www.childwelfare.gov/nad/index.cfm).

#### Tips and Tools

Too often, older youth who achieve legal permanency via adoption or guardianship lose eligibility for some of the transition supports which would be available if they aged out without a family. This is an often cited barrier to permanency, especially for those youth who need assistance with college expenses. Since 2004, Illinois has been operating a Title IV-E Waiver demonstration which allows for enhanced transition services for youth aged 14 and above who leave the system via adoption or legal guardianship. The latest issue of the *Roundtable* newsletter published by the National Child Welfare Resource Center for Adoption contains an article by June H. Dorn of the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services describing the initiative underway in her state. The "Enhanced Subsidized Guardianship and Adoption Program (ESGAP)" makes possible a range of financial supports and services including monthly stipends and medical cards for qualifying youth who are attending college or working, life skills training, housing cash assistance, and education and training vouchers.

Details on the program can be found in the article, *Illinois Waiver Lets Older Youth Choose Permanency Without Waving Good-bye to Transition Services*, which can be accessed by [clicking here](#).

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#### Memo from Melody

Welcome to Spring and this season of growth and renewal!

By now many of you have probably received your laminated copies of the AdoptUsKids ICPC checklists. If not – watch your mailboxes as they are wending their way through the postal system now! Initial feedback has been very positive and we hope you will find them useful in your organization as well. If you'd like a sneak peek before your copies arrive in the mail, visit [www.adoptuskids.org](http://www.adoptuskids.org) and click on 'free booklets' on the home page.

Also new this month is the completed trainer's guide for our AdoptUsKids' publication, *Finding a Fit to Last a Lifetime: A Guide to Connecting Adoptive Families with Waiting Children*. Complete with a suggested script, exercises to bring the material to life and a companion PowerPoint, it will be available for downloading from the AdoptUsKids website by the end of this month.

And – lastly, but certainly, not

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## T/TA Highlights

AdoptUsKids, in partnership with the NRC for Family Centered Practice and Permanency Planning, has been working with the State of Oklahoma over the past year to help implement significant changes to the state's foster care program. This shift is embodied in the new title for foster care homes in Oklahoma – BRIDGE Homes – and has important implications for the recruitment of new foster and adoptive parents and the retention of current foster parents.

As of July 1, 2007 all foster parents who are certified by the state will be certified as BRIDGE families. A BRIDGE family is committed to maintaining connection to the child--regardless of their permanency plan--and to ensuring that the child maintains connections to his or her kin, culture and community. BRIDGE foster parents work closely with the child's birth parent to support the process of reunification and, if reunification is not possible, either serve as the child's permanent family OR support the child's transition to another permanent family, maintaining contact after the new placement occurs.

A critical component of this work is helping the existing foster families transition to a new way of thinking about their role in the system. To assist in this process, AdoptUsKids conducted facilitated dialogues to ensure that foster and adoptive parents and providers were integrally involved in the practice shifts and to provide an opportunity for enhancing relationships among all parties. The goals of Oklahoma's new approach are to improve reunification outcomes, enhance child permanency outcomes, minimize child loss and enhance a child's educational and placement stability. For more information contact Deborah Goodman at [Deborah.Goodman@okdhs.org](mailto:Deborah.Goodman@okdhs.org)

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## Recruitment and Retention Network

The Massachusetts Department of Social Services recently completed a year-long Breakthrough Series Collaborative (BSC) focused on Adolescent Permanency. This initiative supported 29 teams from across Massachusetts, along with one team each from Rhode Island and Maine. [Click here for a final report](#) describing the initiative. The report concludes that, "The BSC process, combined with a willingness to participate from all levels of DSS, made it possible for trust to be garnered, ideas to be tested, themes to emerge, and promising practices to be identified. Lessons learned address both practice-related themes as well as lessons that speak to the use of a quality improvement methodology to improve case practice." For more information contact Mary Gambon at [Mary.Gambon@state.ma.us](mailto:Mary.Gambon@state.ma.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](mailto:melody@adoptex.org).

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## FYI

*Putting Data to Work to Improve Child Well-Being* is a new report available from Casey Family Programs at [www.casey.org/NR/rdonlyres/453CA51F-620C-4785-8CE9-9CA7BD8BC496/1111/RoundtableR5.pdf](http://www.casey.org/NR/rdonlyres/453CA51F-620C-4785-8CE9-9CA7BD8BC496/1111/RoundtableR5.pdf). The report is a follow up to a 2006 meeting of public child welfare administrators, experts, analysts, and researchers convened by the National Governors Association and Casey Family Programs focusing on how state and county agencies can use their large volumes of mandatory data to produce better outcomes for children and families.

least – watch your inboxes for the date of your state's Regional Roundtable. Our pilot will take place with the Region VI states on June 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> in Dallas, TX and the remaining Roundtables will follow from there. The focus this year will be on the research findings from two studies conducted over the past four years by the University of Texas at Austin's School of Social Work. One study examined barriers to adoption and the other dealt with the factors that lead to successful adoptions. Our primary presenter will be Dr. Ruth McRoy, whom many of you know based on her writings and reputation as a national expert in the field of adoption.

Thanks for reading!

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## Contact Us

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