Best Practice 101: Photolisting & Inquiry Response Systems

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Adopt US Kids

Together we hold their future

Getting started

This webinar will be recorded and shared on AdoptUSKids.

Submit your questions via chat.

Please complete our survey at the end of the webinar.

Our mission

Raise public awareness about the need for foster and adoptive families for children in the public child welfare system

Assist US states, territories, and tribes to recruit, engage, develop and support foster and adoptive families

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Welcome

- Introductions

- Who is in the room?

- Polling question

Agenda

1   Strengths-based narratives

2   Strategies to effectively manage child-specific inquiries

3   Connection between effective response systems and photolisting

4   Peer sharing from South Carolina and Michigan

5   Questions and answers

Strengths-based narratives

Strengths-based narratives tips

Public vs. private-dos and don'ts

Continuum of disclosure

Strengths-based narrative and how it connects to response systems

Continuum of disclosure

- **Public:** People generally interested in adoption

- **Private:** Prospective adopters, been through training, have approved home study

- **Confidentiality:** Prospective adopters, matched and moving toward placement with specific child

What to include in public profile

- Preferred first name
- Recent photo
- Positive personality traits
- Strengths
- Hobbies, interests, and pastimes
- What they like about school
- What makes them laugh
- Things that are important to them

What NOT to include in a public profile

- Identifying information
- Information about abuse, neglect, maltreatment
- Placement information
- Medical information
- Behavioral challenges
- Potentially painful or embarrassing information
- Fears or anxieties
- Things that limit potential families
- Intellectual ability or education challenges
- Sexual orientation or gender identity

Child-specific inquiries

Tips for responding to child-specific inquiries

- Feedback loops

- Start building the relationship

- Offer clear next steps

- Be proactive

Effective response systems

What is a response system for photolisting?

It's your processes, messages, and approaches for responding to inquiries from prospective parents about specific children or youth who are photolisted.

Value of an effective response system

- Supports your effort to keep inquiring families engaged and feeling valued

- Helps families learn more about children who may be a good match and what is needed to meet children's needs

- Moves forward in the continuum of disclosure of information to help ensure that children's needs are met

What does an effective response system look like?

Effective photolisting response systems

- Responsive and timely

- Accessible and engaging

- Supportive

- Data-driven

- Consistent in their messaging

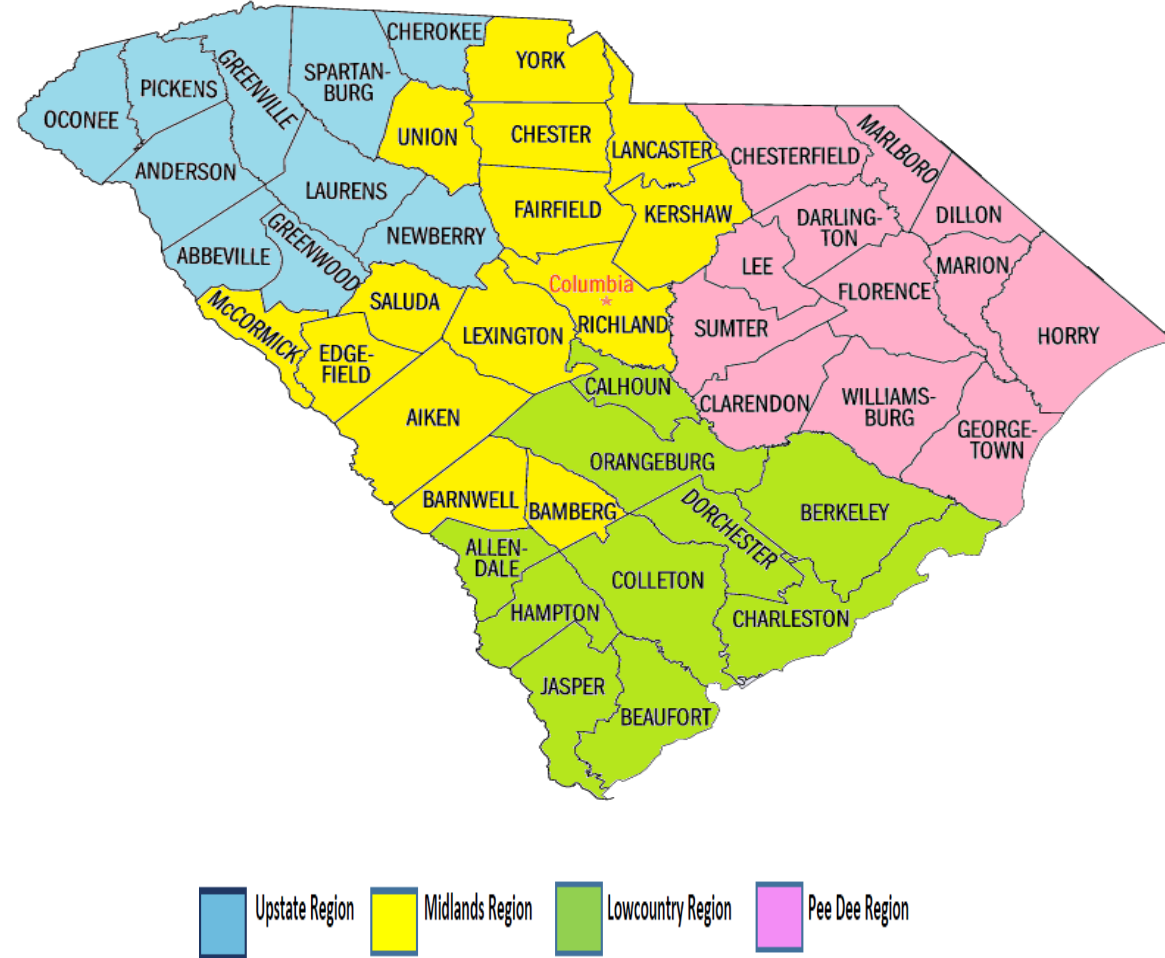- Aligned with the goals of a continuum of disclosure

South Carolina Department of Social Services Centralized Recruitment Program

Presented by:

Brittany Brewer, MSW

South Carolina Department of Social Services

South Carolina Department of Social Services

Legend: Upstate Region | Midlands Region | Lowcountry Region | Pee Dee Region

Centralized Recruitment Program

Problem: Breakdown in communication between inquiring families and children's caseworkers

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Program launch: November 2019

- Over 3,000 inquires since launch:
  - o Of the **3,000** inquiries we reviewed, we were able to identify **274** potential matches for the worker to consider.
  - o SCDSS Centralized Recruitment Office receives inquiries for available children via three sources:
    - SCDSS-maintained website
    - AdoptUSKids
    - South Carolina Heart Gallery

How does it work?

- The Centralized Recruitment Office is a program of two staff.

- All inquiries from these three sources are directed to one program coordinator in State Office Adoptions.

- Each inquiry is responded to, acknowledging the receipt of inquiry, within three business days.

- Out-of-state families are reviewed, handled, and responded to the same as in-state families.

Internal database

- We have set up an internal database on SharePoint where all families have an electronic file.

- All of their documents are stored in this system.

Responding to families and requesting documents

- Master document with email draft responses.

- State Office Adoptions requests the home study of the adoptive family, if it has not already been sent.

SCDSS Child Factors Checklist

We have created a (fillable) Child Factors Checklist (CFC) that we request all inquiring families to complete and SCDSS caseworkers to fill out for children on active recruitment.

What is the Child Factors Checklist (CFC)?

- 11-page document
- Completed by the prospective adoptive
family and caseworkers
- Disabilities captured in the CFC include:
  - Developmental
  - Physical
  - Mental/Emotional Health
  - Learning
  - Behavioral, including sexual
  - Substance use
  - Juvenile court history
  - Family history

What is the Child Factors Checklist (CFC)?

DSS SOUTH CAROLINA
DEPARTMENT of SOCIAL SERVICES

South Carolina Department of Social Services
CHILD FACTORS CHECKLIST FOR ADOPTION

Note: SCDSS cannot and will not deny prospective foster/adoptive parents the opportunity to foster/adopt on the basis of race, color or national origin; nor delay or deny the placement of children on the basis of race, color or national origin.

Instructions: Please print. Use the list below to let us know the type of child(ren) you would like to adopt. Please review "*level of disability*" guidelines on the following pages before completing the document. Place an "X" in the appropriate boxes; selecting if you "will accept" while also specifying "mild, moderate, or severe" (when applicable) or "current or past charges" (when referring to juvenile court involvement) or if you "will not accept" a factor of a child.

Name of Applicant 1: _____ Applicant 1's phone: _____

Email Address of Applicant 1: _____

Name of Applicant 2: _____ Applicant 2's phone: _____

Email Address of Applicant 2: _____

Address of Applicant(s): _____

_____

Family Caseworker's name: _____ Family Caseworker's phone: _____

Family Caseworker's email address: _____

Instructions: Type "X" in each box that applies

What is the Child Factors Checklist (CFC)?

	Will consider	Will not consider
Gender/Sex of child		
Female	☐	☐
Male	☐	☐
Non-binary/Transgender	☐	☐
Orientation		
Identifies as LGBTQ+	☐	☐
Age of child		
Newborn/under 1	☐	☐
1	☐	☐
2	☐	☐
3	☐	☐
4	☐	☐
5	☐	☐
6	☐	☐
7	☐	☐
8	☐	☐
9	☐	☐
10	☐	☐
11	☐	☐
12	☐	☐

What comes next?

- Reviewing inquiries

- Placement Committee

Reviewing inquiries

Centralized Recruitment Office has two weeks to review all documents for a potential match.

Placement Committee

- When a family is identified as a potential match by our office, they are sent to the Placement Committee.

- The region has 30 calendar days to hold a Placement Committee meeting and inform State Office Adoptions of the outcome.

Lessons learned

- Have an internal database before launch.
- Hire multiple staff at one time to prepare for launch.
- In order to grow this program and better serve our families and children, we hope to:
    - Implement an internal matching database
    - Hire additional staff

Successes

Support for caseworkers and families

Staff now have more time to focus on their youth

Families are far less frustrated

Michigan's Photolisting and Response System

Presented by:
Michelle Parra, LMSW
Program Manager
Michigan Adoption Resource Exchange

Michigan's review process

Who is involved and what are their roles?

- Adoption worker and youth: gathering information

- MARE communication specialist: writing narrative

- MARE supervisor: reviewing narrative before posting

Responding to inquiries

- Both studied and unstudied families are listed, but the child's worker is only required to contact family workers.

- Utilize the stages of photolisting registration statuses (reviewing matches and placement pending).

- Complete inquiry follow-up reports for all studied/ approved families (barriers and focus group to make improvements).

Stages of photolisting

Open:
My worker is ready to hear about your family to see if we are a good match. Please inquire today!

Reviewing home studies:
My worker is busy reading and reviewing all of the home studies sent recently. If my forever family isn't within these, my worker will let you know by changing my status back to "open."

Placement pending:
I am almost matched with my forever family! We are having meetings and visits, but if this doesn't work out, my worker will change my status back to "open."

Questions and answers

Resources

- Article: [“Engaging Youth Is Not Just the Right Thing to Do, It's a Path to Permanency”](#)

- Article: [“10 Tips for Helping Teens Explore Adoption”](#)

- Article: [“Engaging Youth in Writing Their Narratives”](#)

- Article: [“Working with Children and Caregivers to Create Strengths-Based Profiles”](#)

Resources

- Webinar: [National Adoption Month: Engage Youth, Listen and Learn](#)

- Tool: *[Quick Reference Photolisting Guide](#)*

- Tool: *[Checklist for Reviewing Children's Photolisting Narratives](#)*

Contact information

Capacity Building and Engagement team at AdoptUSKids: Consultation@adoptuskids.org

Stay informed about upcoming events and publications: adoptuskids.org/newsletter-sign-up

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Children's Bureau