



TRAINING AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE E-NOTES JULY, 2009

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A NOTE FROM SHARRI

Dear Readers,

I hope this issue of E-Notes finds you refreshed after an enjoyable Fourth of July holiday!

This month, I'd like to tell you about our NRC's Consultants

RECRUITMENT WORKS/RETENTION MATTERS

[The Ongoing Connections: Parenting Curriculum Trainer's Guide](#) describes a curriculum to prepare prospective adoptive parents and other permanency families for older youth. It was authored by Virginia Sturgeon and developed by the Family Connections Project, a partnership of the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services and two private agencies, Lutheran Social Services of Illinois and Hull House. The training is designed to assist the participants "in exploring the importance of permanence for the youth as well as the benefits gained when the youth maintain connections with significant people from their past after they join a family."

The trainer's guide includes detailed instructions and resources to prepare and deliver six training sessions. Modules include: Introduction and Purpose; Exploring My Connections; Identity, Self-Concept and a Youth's Connections; The Adoptive/Permanency Family – What About Us; and Where Do We Go from Here? An Appendix contains participant handouts including a sample "Ongoing Connections Agreement."

To learn more about the projects being implemented by the Family Connections Project and other Children's Bureau Youth Permanency grantees, [visit this page](#) on the website of the National Child Welfare Resource Center for Adoption.

INTERJURISDICTIONAL PLACEMENT SERVICES

The website of the Association of Administrators of the Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children (AAICPC) is a storehouse of valuable resources on the ICPC process. By clicking through the site, one can find printable copies of the ICPC forms, the regulations governing the compact, State-specific contact information and many other publications and information resources. [Click here](#) to visit the AAICPC site.

Seminar. Two weeks ago, Tamika and I brought our team of consultants together with our AdoptUsKids and Children's Bureau partners in Alexandria, VA. It was a great day two days, and gave us opportunity to orient new consultants, update ourselves on trends and resources, build skills and strengthen our capacity to better assist States, Tribes and Territories with their recruitment and retention planning. Twenty of our consultants were able to attend, and it was a great time of learning and sharing. We all left with renewed energy and excitement about our work with you.

If you would like to know more about our consultants, please visit our [NRCRRFAP Consultant Directory](#).

To inquire about technical assistance, please contact Tamika Williams, using the information listed below.

Until next month,

Sharri Black

Sharri Black, Director

NRC for Recruitment and Retention of Foster and Adoptive Parents at AdoptUsKids



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TIPS AND TOOLS

Evidence-Based Practice in Foster Parent Training and Support: Implications for Treatment Foster Care Providers is a recent publication of the Center for Advanced Studies in Child Welfare (CASCW) at the University of Minnesota School of Social Work. The report is authored by Kristine Piescher, Katy Armendariz, and Traci LaLiberte, and based on a comprehensive review of literature related to models for foster parent training and support.

The report describes the evidence available to support various approaches to foster parent training. The authors relate that the literature review suggests "training programs are most able to create positive changes in parenting knowledge, attitudes, self-efficacy, behaviors, skills, and to a lesser extent, child behaviors."

Training of foster parents was also found to be "linked to foster parent satisfaction, increased licensing rates, foster parent retention, placement stability, and permanency." In relation to foster parent support, several different types of support were considered, including benefits, involvement in service planning (collaboration), respite care and social support. The report cites research to indicate that "support provided by agencies and caseworkers is linked to greater foster parent satisfaction and retention." Recommendations for practice and further research are also outlined.

Follow [this link](#) to access the report, an executive summary and a quick reference guide containing key findings and outlining empirically-based relationships between specific practices and key child welfare outcomes.

T/TA HIGHLIGHTS

Several months ago, the NRCRRFAP at AdoptUsKids received a request to assist the State of Idaho in its development of a statewide foster and adoptive parent recruitment plan. The request included provision of assistance in completing regional assessments to determine Idaho's statewide critical needs, goals, objectives and strategies.

Consultants John and Judy McKenzie and Beth Brindo went to Boise, Idaho to provide the technical assistance requested, following several months of planning with the State. The three day on-site TA began with a meeting with the leadership team to clarify objectives. The following two days of TA were attended by the State Foster and Adoption Program Specialists, the State's data

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CONTACT US

For more information about AdoptUsKids Training and Technical Assistance Services, contact Tamika Williams at (303) 726-0198 or email Tamika@adoptex.org.

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person, regional leaders, university representatives, representatives of the Latino and Native American communities, and others.

The NRCRRFAP consultants facilitated the strategic planning process using a combination of presentation and activities to assist the group in clarifying and stating their vision, critical issues, goals and strategies. The participants prioritized their plan into three critical issues which were addressed by three goal statements with supporting strategies and detailed action plans. There was particular emphasis on dovetailing the recruitment and retention plan into the work that is already going on in State's Program Improvement Plan (PIP).

RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION NETWORK

The New Jersey Department of Children and Families is experiencing real success in its efforts to recruit and retain resource families. Over the last two calendar years, the State achieved a net increase of more than 1,600 licensed families, or about 800 each year.

Three key staff from the Office Resource Families agreed to share with E-Notes readers some of the strategies which have contributed to these results. Colette Tobias, Administrator; Denise Smith, Supervisor of Recruitment and Field Support; and Gilbert Soto, Statewide Recruitment Coordinator, all agree that a combination of factors has led to improved outcomes. In the last several years the State has implemented a comprehensive reform effort, and resource family services have benefited from greater attention, focus and training. Increased staffing levels and many efforts large and small have each played a role. Key elements of the new approach include:

- **Impact Teams** – Central Office Resource Family Support Staff are deployed to offices requiring assistance to provide intense conferencing, tracking and mentoring with local office staff involved with recruiting, licensing, training, and supporting resource families. For example, Impact Teams identify cases which are not moving quickly through the licensing process, identify barriers, and plan, then monitor solutions. The Teams are helping the State to move closer to its goal of a 150 day licensing target.
- **Geographic Resource Family Teams** – In each county another team approach brings together the resource family and licensing staff who in the past were not under the same umbrella. The resulting collaboration helps to address any disconnect which may arise between recruitment staff, eager to bring in families, and the licensing staff, who carry

responsibility for ensuring regulatory compliance.

- **Training** – Joint training for resource family and licensing staff has promoted team building and a better understanding of the interdependent roles staff play in the timely processing of completing home studies and licensing families. Other specialized trainings have been developed to build knowledge and skill for staff in all resource family job functions.

The resulting increase in the number of licensed homes has yielded increased placement options and has allowed the state to target the development of homes for sibling groups and children with other specialized needs. For more information, contact Colette Tobias at Colette.Tobias@dcf.state.nj.us.

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

FYI

How Federal Legislation Impacts Child Welfare Service Delivery, is a new resource available at Child Welfare Information Gateway. This interactive webpage provides brief explanations of each step of the process, as well as links to resources for additional information. [Click here](#) for access.