

The Collaboration to AdoptUsKids

Training & Technical Assistance E-Notes

June, 2008

Recruitment Works/Retention Matters

Securing permanent families for foster youth is the subject of *Six Steps to Find a Family: A Practice Guide to Family Search and Engagement (FSE)*, a recent publication from the National Resource Center for Family-Centered Practice and Permanency Planning. Authored by Mardith J. Louisell, the guide describes six steps to permanency, including Setting the Stage, Discovery, Engagement, Exploration and Planning, Decision Making and Evaluation, and Sustaining the Relationship(s).

The publication is anchored by a set of "Guiding Principles for Finding a Family":

- Finding a family is a youth-driven process.
- Every youth deserves, and can have, a permanent family.
- Youth have the right to know about their family members; family members have the right to know about their youth.
- Youth should have connections with the biological family, regardless of whether they will live with them, unless there is a compelling reason not to.
- With support, most youth can live in a home rather than in foster care or institutions.
- Family and fictive kin help develop, plan and achieve the youth's permanence.
- The goal of Family Search and Engagement (FSE) is permanency, through reunification, guardianship, adoption or another form of permanent commitment - long term placement in foster care is not a permanent plan.

Substantial and detailed practice direction is provided for each of the six steps identified in the permanency process, along with case vignettes and related resources. The publication also contains many practice tools, sample documents and telephone scripts for making contact with potential connections. It can be downloaded at <http://www.hunter.cuny.edu/socwork/nrcfcp/downloads/SixSteps.pdf>.

Interjurisdictional Placement Services

Information on State-Funded Adoption Assistance programs is available from the Association of Administrators of the Interstate Compact on Adoption and Medical Assistance (ICAMA). The *State Law Comparison Chart: State-Funded Adoption Assistance* provides state-by-state information regarding the availability of state funded Adoption Assistance beyond age 18, criteria for extended funding, and the maximum age for Adoption Assistance extensions. Access the document by [clicking here](#).

Tips & Tools

A new website on Youth Permanency has been jointly announced by The National Child Welfare Resource Center for Adoption, The National Resource Center of Family Centered Practice and Permanency Planning and The National Child Welfare Resource Center for Youth Development.

The new site highlights the work in progress of the nine grantees in the Children's Bureau Youth Permanency Grant Cluster. It includes an introduction, background, grantee projects and grantee resources. Tools and materials developed by the projects are

Contents:

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



A Note from Sharri

Hello!

Regular readers may recall our announcement earlier this spring regarding the creation of the AdoptUsKids Interjurisdictional Information Network (IIN). This web-based Network will facilitate the sharing of effective practices and information to improve interjurisdictional placements. This month, I'm pleased to have an update on the progress that has been made in bringing the IIN to reality.

In May, we began the process with a focus group of about twenty participants from across the country, each person having experience and perspective in the area of interjurisdictional services. The group generated quite a few suggestions: De-mystify the interjurisdictional process by providing clear and easily accessible information; make the website user-friendly and provide links to additional information; provide answers to

available for download, including resources for working with birth families, resource families, youth, courts and the legal community, and social workers.

Access the website here:

<http://www.nrcadoption.org/youthpermanencycluster/index.html>.

T/TA Highlights

This month we have an update on the coordinated technical assistance to the State of Florida, involving AdoptUsKids, the National Child Welfare Resource Center for Organizational Improvement and National Resource Center for Family-Centered Practice and Permanency Planning.

Most recently, the State requested assistance in reviewing the progress made by Circuit 1 during the past two years in the areas of recruitment and retention and placement stability outcomes accomplished for children in foster care. We were pleased to see that the Circuit had made significant strides in improving placement stability and increasing the numbers of available resource families.

Coordinated activities of AdoptUsKids and the NRCs earlier this spring included:

- Pre-work to identify issues to be reviewed during the onsite TA, based on 2006 findings
- Development, delivery and summary of a foster and adoptive parent survey instrument plus a staff survey instrument
- Two appreciative inquiry focus group meetings with over 75 attendees
- One-on-one stakeholder interviews with 27 individuals
- Analysis of pertinent data from the State relative to foster children and resource parents
- Case reviews with Florida Circuit 1 staff of over 50 files selected at random
- Presentation of data analysis and findings from the surveys to management and community stakeholders and facilitation of county-based discussions
- Meeting with senior management staff to summarize the week's activities and review preliminary findings and recommendations

Next steps include providing additional feedback on findings and, as requested, working with the State to develop action plans and provide additional TTA to help implement recommendations.

Recruitment and Retention Network

In Louisiana, the Office of Community Services is engaged in a comprehensive initiative to revitalize its Home Development Program and increase support services to resource families. Centered in the philosophy that "Support is Everyone's Business", the effort has several components:

- For every job position within the agency, creation and distribution of a job-specific list of the *Top Ten Ways to Support Resource Families*. (An example from the list for Foster Care Workers: Give them a LIFT: Provide Transportation.)
- Posters in each parish office to remind staff about things which can be done day-to-day to better support foster, adoptive and kinship families.
- Training in every region to underscore everyone's role in providing support. The training includes a panel of resource parents sharing what staff can do to help as well as what is not helpful.
- Increased frequency of home visits by resource family staff including but not limited to times of crisis.

The state has been assisted in the initiative by the Casey Strategic Consulting Group. For more information, contact Karla Venkataraman, Section Administrator of Home

frequently asked questions; promote sharing of tools and best-practices from states; offer ways for peers to help each other; and provide a cutting-edge communication network for information and idea sharing. The next step will be the creation of a core advisory group to take up these recommendations and further define and design the IIN. We will keep you posted as the effort moves forward. Stay tuned to **E-Notes** and this column for additional news on the development of the IIN.

Thanks for reading!

Sharri Black

T/TA Director for AdoptUsKids



Subscribe or Forward

Please help us share E-Notes with others by forwarding this issue, or by visiting the [T/TA website](#) to access our sign-up form.

Contact Us

For more information about AdoptUsKids Training and Technical Assistance Services, contact Sharri Black at (303) 990-3750 or email sharri@adoptex.org.

Print This Issue

For a printer-friendly pdf version of E-Notes, [click here!](#)

For a printer-friendly text version, [click here!](#)

Development Program at (225) 342-5204 or kvenkata@dss.state.la.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

The Children's Bureau has released AFCARS Report #14, containing preliminary estimates for national foster care and adoption data for Fiscal Year 2006. As of September 30, 2006 the total number of children in foster care was reported as 510,000, and the number of children waiting to be adopted was 129,000. The full report can be found at: http://www.acf.dhhs.gov/programs/cb/stats_research/index.htm#afcars.