

# The Collaboration to AdoptUsKids

## Training & Technical Assistance E-Notes

March, 2007

### Recruitment Works/Retention Matters

The portrayal of foster parents in popular media is the focus of a 2005 study by the National Center for Youth Law (NCYL). The findings are described in an article entitled *Foster Parents: Reality v. Perception*, authored by Bill Grimm and Julian Darwall and available by [clicking here](#).

The organization researched images of foster parents in newspapers, novels, movies and television. While many positive representations were found, these were outweighed by those of a negative nature, especially in television and movies. The authors observed, "while the newspaper and magazine category is strongly oriented toward facts, both negative and positive, the other media formats frequently place the telling of a compelling story ahead of the need to convey a realistic picture."

Noting the problematic effect of negative public perceptions on efforts to recruit foster parents, the NCYL encouraged advocates to engage with media representatives to encourage more accurate portrayals. This includes urging the advancement of "more stories about foster children who have grown up to become productive, successful adults not in spite of their foster parents, but because of them."

### Inter-jurisdictional Placement Services

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) has issued a *Report to Congress on Interjurisdictional Adoption of Children in Foster Care*. The report responds to a requirement of the Keeping Children and Families Safe Act (PL 108-36) of 2003 that asked DHHS to describe the nature, scope, and impact of interjurisdictional adoption placement efforts and the strategies that improve outcomes for children in foster care who are placed for adoption in other jurisdictions. It contains findings from the 2005 survey of all States and territories to identify promising practices and possible strategies to overcome barriers to interjurisdictional placements. Other sections of the report provide background information on the practice of interjurisdictional placement, and address federal legislation, interstate compacts, and DHHS strategies to support interjurisdictional adoption. Appendices include a summary of strategies and potential supports identified in the 2005 national survey and findings from the first round of Child and Family Services Reviews.

The report is available for download at [http://www2.acf.dhhs.gov/programs/cb/pubs/ij\\_adopt/ij\\_adopt.pdf](http://www2.acf.dhhs.gov/programs/cb/pubs/ij_adopt/ij_adopt.pdf).

### Tips and Tools

The Casey-CSSP Alliance for Racial Equity has produced *Places to Watch: Promising Practices to Address Racial Disproportionality in Child Welfare Service*. The report describes the efforts of ten jurisdictions to reduce racial disproportionality and disparity in their child welfare services.

Key strategies utilized by the ten locations include:

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### Memo from Melody

This month in E-Notes we are pleased to tell you about two new resources from AdoptUsKids Training and Technical Assistance that we hope you will find useful tools for your daily work.

Being posted this month on the T/TA web pages of [adoptuskids.org](http://adoptuskids.org) will be an interactive, State-specific spreadsheet that lists information pertinent to five key areas of interjurisdictional placements: home study requirements, criminal background checks, purchase of service agencies with active contracts, coverage of medical and educational expenses as a sending and as a receiving State, and standards for post-placement supervision. If your State is not represented in this initial spreadsheet and you would like to be included, send me your information as the document will be updated regularly.

Also – watch your mailboxes for our new ICPC checklist – a two

- ▮ According high priority attention to reducing racial inequities, both within the agency and in the larger community;
- ▮ Using data to understand the problem, to shape solutions, and to track progress;
- ▮ Conducting evaluation to learn from current efforts to assess progress over time;
- ▮ Improving service delivery and expanding scarce service resources and interventions;
- ▮ Partnering with communities in many ways;
- ▮ Redesigning policy interventions.

Working with other systems to promote racial, economic, and social justice was identified as another strategy to be further explored.

The complete report can be downloaded by [clicking here](#).

## T/TA Highlights

***United for Families: The Collaborative Circle for the Well-Being of South Dakota's Native Children*** is composed of members from tribal, state, consumer and provider groups and addresses resource family recruitment and retention as well as other child welfare concerns. The Circle is an outgrowth of a state-tribal foster and adoption work group established in 2002 that was revitalized over the last two years with the support of technical assistance from *AdoptUsKids* and the *National Resource Center for Organizational Improvement*.

The Collaborative Circle focuses its efforts in three broad areas:

- ▮ Setting an agenda for addressing the needs and improving the outcomes of Native children and families in the child and family services system.
- ▮ Developing and advocating for new service strategies to address the needs of Native children and families.
- ▮ Monitoring, supporting, and reassessing these activities and maintaining accountability for ICWA implementation and compliance and for Native child and family outcomes in child protection.

Recently the Collaborative Circle began learning about “reconciliation in Indian child welfare.” Reconciliation is a movement that is gaining interest around the country as a way to improve tribal-state relationships damaged by historical practices of excessive placements of Native children in foster and adoptive placements.

To learn more about the Collaborative Circle, follow the link to an article authored by AdoptUsKids consultant, Kathy Deserly, which can be found at <http://216.38.216.37/adoptusa/diligent.html>.

## Recruitment and Retention Network

The National Indian Child Welfare Association (NICWA) and the Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption have partnered to develop a national clearinghouse for tribal adoption issues. This dedicated adoption web page is intended to help connect tribal communities and non-Indian adoption communities in serving the best interests of Indian children and families involved in adoption. The page can be accessed on the NICWA website at <http://www.nicwa.org/Customaryadoption/index.asp>.

## FYI

The Child Welfare Monitoring page of the ***Children's Bureau*** website contains a comprehensive and updated collection of documents and resources related to the Child and Family Services Review process. Access the page by [clicking here](#).

sided, laminated desk aid that is intended to de-mystify the process for placing children with adoptive families across interjurisdictional boundaries. We are hopeful that this step-by-step guide will broaden the pool of potential placement options for children in foster care.

Thanks for reading!

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## Contact Us

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