

The Collaboration to AdoptUsKids

Training & Technical Assistance E-Notes

May, 2008

Recruitment Works/Retention Matters

The challenges and supports experienced by families who have received post-adoption services are detailed in *Strengthening Adoption Practice, Listening to Adoptive Families*, by Anne Atkinson and Patricia Gonet. The article appears in the March/April, 2007 issue of *Child Welfare* and is based on interviews with 500 families conducted during an evaluation of Virginia's Adoptive Family Preservation (AFP) program.

The types of problems or challenges reported by the families in relation to their adopted children included behavior problems (60%), diagnosed mental health conditions (54%), school related issues (47%), adoption issues (38%), attachment issues (27%), and social adjustment problems (8%). The families identified support as the most helpful type of assistance, including support groups, other adoptive families, and staff support. The next most helpful services were adoption-competent counseling and respite, both formal and informal.

The article concludes by identifying implications for the training and technical assistance necessary to establish effective post-adoption practice. Recommendations include development of basic knowledge and skills as well as adoption-specific competencies, and community building to create support for children and families.

Interjurisdictional Placement Services

State-specific information regarding subsidized guardianship programs can be found in the National Data Analysis System at the Child Welfare League of America. States can be searched individually or in groups regarding the availability of monthly subsidies for private guardians. Access the information through the link below:

http://ndas.cwla.org/data_stats/access/predefined/Report.asp?ReportID=510

Tips & Tools

The National Resource Center for Family Centered Practice and Permanency Planning has developed a new Information Packet on Relative Placements. The packet includes a Summary of the Issues, Facts and Statistics, Policies and Legislation, Model Programs and Promising Practices, Website and References. It is available on the NRCFCPP website at [clicking here](#).

T/TA Highlights

This month we have news on two fronts:

First, an update on the targeted recruitment project underway in the State of Washington. AdoptUsKids has been partnering with the State for the last year in an effort to pilot a recruitment project utilizing market segmentation techniques. The State is using profile information regarding its existing foster families to target potential applicants who have similar characteristics. For Washington, this includes people who enjoy outdoor activities, such as gardening, fishing, and camping. A recruitment campaign focused to those

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A Note from Sharri

Hello!

I know that May will be an especially busy time across the country as we take part in *National Foster Care Month* activities. Best wishes to the States and Tribes and to your foster families as we pause to celebrate and acknowledge this important work.

Nominations for the *2008 Adoption Excellence Awards* are now being accepted by the Department of Health and Human Services. Please consider nominating organizations or individuals who have made positive contributions to the field of adoption practice. Links to nominating details can be found in the FYI section of E-Notes.

Thanks to all of you who took the time to complete our recent survey. The AdoptUsKids evaluation team at the University of Texas has provided us with the results and we are grateful for

interest is now being launched. Consultants John and Judy McKenzie are continuing to work together with the state to evaluate the results of the new campaign and plan next steps. We will keep you posted!

Now for news of the new initiative: AdoptUsKids, in collaboration with the National Child Welfare Resource Center for Adoption, is in process of designing a new recruitment engagement strategy for older youth utilizing the AdoptUsKids (AUsK) website, but with a twist. With this strategy, the youth – along with their worker or another member of their permanency team – will use the AUsK website to help identify prospective adoptive families for themselves. Key components of the strategy are preparation, assistance and on-going support for the youth.

The idea came from two states that wanted additional options for older youth and saw using the AUsK website in this way as an option. Plans for the new recruitment strategy will be finalized and piloted in several states over the next few months. Stay tuned for more information.

Recruitment and Retention Network

The New York Council on Adoptable Children (COAC) is using a popular social networking website to give youth waiting for adoption the ability to review information about potential families. Prospective adoptive parents create online *MySpace.com*® pages to introduce their family to youth and adoption workers. With the involvement of agency staff, the youth can view the pages and learn about families without the anxiety or implied commitment of personal contact.

This initiative is a component of COAC's the ROAD (Realizing Open Adoption Dreams) Children Inclusion Project. Project Director, Mark Fairclough reports, "Our prospective families think it's a great idea, because now the children have a choice in the decision making process. The teens fears and anxieties are some what diminished, because some of their question are answered without even being asked."

The families and teens are able to use the privacy features of *MySpace* to protect confidentiality. Youth and their agency workers receive the necessary passwords to view a page once a homestudy has been completed and the family identified as a potential match for the youth. Two adoption matches have already occurred as a result of the project. For additional information, contact Mark Fairclough at (212) 475-0222 ext. 207 or mfairclough@coac.org.

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 Department of Health and Human Services is accepting nominations for 2008 Adoption Excellence Awards. These awards were established in 1997 to recognize individuals, families, States, Tribes, and organizations that share and support HHS's priority for permanency for children in public foster care. The deadline for notifications is July 11, 2008.

Details and nominating instructions can be found at http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb/current_initiatives/aeawards.htm. The 2008 Adoption Excellence Awards flyer can be downloaded at <http://www.adoptea.org/AdoptionExcellenceAward/2008Flyer>.

the generally positive response to our efforts. The narrative feedback which some of you added to your surveys has been especially valuable. We are reviewing all of the responses and will be using your ideas to guide our efforts to make *E-Notes* as valuable as possible for our readers. We will offer the survey again in the future...watch this space for details!

This month we are bringing you the first news on an initiative to give youth a greater role in identifying their prospective adoptive families. Check out the T/TA Highlights section for information on a new youth recruitment strategy we will soon be piloting. Thanks for reading!

Sharri Black
T/TA Director for AdoptUsKids



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Contact Us

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