

# The Collaboration to AdoptUsKids

## Training & Technical Assistance E-Notes September, 2008

### Recruitment Works/Retention Matters

A recent study compares the permanency, safety, and stability outcomes for children in kinship care with those placed in foster care. As summarized in the article abstract, "after controlling for demographic and placement characteristics, children in kinship care had significantly fewer placements than did children in foster care, and they were less likely to still be in care, have a new allegation of institutional abuse or neglect, be involved with the juvenile justice system, and achieve reunification." However, children in foster home placements were found to be twice as likely to reunify with birth parents than those in kinship care during the time period studied.

*Matched Comparison of Children in Kinship Care and Foster Care on Child Welfare Outcomes* was authored by Marc A. Winokur, Graig A. Crawford, Ralph C. Longobardi, and Deborah P. Valentine and appears in the July-September, 2008 issue of *Families in Society*. A brief registration process will allow online access to the full article at <http://www.familiesinsociety.org/currentissue.asp>.

### Interjurisdictional Placement Services

AdoptUsKids is in the process of establishing the *Interjurisdictional Information Network (IIN)*. As part of this undertaking, AdoptUsKids is currently creating state profile/information sheets for our AdoptUsKids website. Once complete, the information will be accessed through selecting and clicking individual states on the United States map. This resource will gather into a single location the interjurisdictional placement requirements of each State - both as a *receiving state* and as a *sending state*. The subject matter of these state profile sheets will include foster care licensing and adoption approval requirements; background screening requirements; service provisions including Medicaid, special education, medical and mental health services; ICAMA membership status and State child welfare website links. Contact information will be available for State Program Managers including Foster Care, Adoption, ICPC, and ICAMA Managers.

A prototype of the IIN map will be showcased at the upcoming National Association of State Adoption Programs (NASAP) Annual Working Meeting in Washington D.C.

### Tips & Tools

*Training Kin to be Foster Parents: Best Practices from the Field* is a new publication from ChildFocus which addresses the unique training needs of kinship caregivers. Topics include federal licensing requirements; limitations of traditional foster parent training for kinship caregivers; state and county efforts to develop foster parent training programs tailored specifically for kin; common themes related to kin-specific training; and questions that states and localities should consider as they develop kin-specific training.

In addition, ChildFocus describes the approaches of four localities that have developed a specialized curriculum for kin (the States of Hawaii, Louisiana, Idaho, and Allegheny County in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania). The publication also includes "Moving Forward: A Checklist for Making Training Relevant to Kinship Caregivers." The checklist details considerations for developing or adapting educational offerings for kinship parents.

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### A Note from Sharri

Hello!

September is a month that is usually identified with transition and new beginnings (like the beginning of school and the fall season), and thus provides a natural opportunity to look forward to what's ahead.

This month AdoptUsKids T/TA is looking forward to the start of a new initiative on retention and customer service. It appears that our need to recruit more foster and adoptive families will more than likely, always be with us. However, we believe one way to reduce this need is to improve the retention of our existing families, including those prospective families we are trying to reach. In this context, we have defined customer service as *foster and adoptive parents' perceptions of the way they are treated by the agency and its staff and the quality of the services and supports provided.*

[Click here](#) to access the publication.

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## T/TA Highlights

The AdoptUsKids T/TA Team is involved in a project designed to expand our knowledge base on foster and adoptive parent retention and customer service. With the help of the great library team at Child Welfare Information Gateway, we have been compiling existing resources and looking for new ideas by digging into professional literature, government reports and other sources. In addition to “tried and true” retention approaches, we are seeking ways to incorporate customer service concepts to better engage and support resource families.

We also want to enlist your assistance in identifying resources and program examples. Would you be willing to help? If you can direct us to a successful initiative, publication or media resource, or can connect us with someone who has been a leader in your efforts to improve retention and customer service, please let us know. Send your ideas and suggestions to Maureen Heffernan at [msheffernan@earthlink.net](mailto:msheffernan@earthlink.net), or (330) 678-1922.

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## Recruitment and Retention Network

The Iowa Foster and Adoptive Parents Association (IFAPA) has created a guidebook to help resource parents find and engage adults who can offer lifelong, caring relationships for children in their care. *Completing the Circle: Uncovering, Discovering and Creating Connections for Your Foster and Adoptive Children* offers succinct guidance for every step of the family finding process. The booklet begins with a several sections describing the meaning and necessity of permanency, and goes on to give detailed instruction for finding connections, establishing contact, and preparing both youth and adults to meet. It also includes information on additional permanency resources.

[sharri@adoptex.org](mailto:sharri@adoptex.org) IFAPA acknowledges the contributions of several other organizations in creating the guide, including Catholic Community Services of Western Washington, EMQ Children & Family Services, and the Fresno County, California Department of Child and Family Services. The publication is available for download at:  
<http://www.ifapa.org/resources/CompletingtheCircle.pdf>

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

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## FYI

National Adoption Day 2008 information is available now online at <http://www.nationaladoptionday.org/>. The designated date this year is November 15.

You will be hearing much more on this topic in the coming months, beginning with the T/TA Highlights section of this edition. Part of our role in Training and Technical Assistance services is to do some of the search for resources and ideas that you would love to do if you were not so busy in your work with, and on behalf of, the children and families in your state. We are happy to take on this role and look forward to sharing more with you.

Thanks for reading!

**Sharri Black**  
T/TA Director for AdoptUsKids



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## Contact Us

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

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