

The Collaboration to AdoptUsKids

Training & Technical Assistance E-Notes

November, 2006

Recruitment Works/Retention Matters

A recent report highlights the importance of adoption subsidy as a factor in the determining the ability of parents to adopt a child from the foster care system. *Ending the Foster Care Life Sentence: The Critical Need for Adoption Subsidies* describes the results of a survey of adoptive parents and prospective adoptive parents conducted by Children's Rights in collaboration with the National Foster Parent Association and the North American Council on Adoptable Children.

Significant findings included:

- 81% reported that the availability of adoption subsidies was important to their decision to adopt.
- 58% of respondents said they could not adopt without a subsidy.
- 47% of adoptive parents who had fostered received an adoption subsidy that was lower than the rate they received as foster parents.
- 88% reported that receipt of Medicaid for the child was critical to their decision to adopt.
- "The obstacles to adoption most frequently cited by respondents were the child welfare system bureaucracy and inadequate subsidy amounts."

The survey was funded by the Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption and published in July, 2006. A copy can be accessed by [clicking here](#).

Inter-jurisdictional Placement Services

The Children's Bureau has released a report on an extensive national survey to identify solutions for barriers encountered in the interjurisdictional placement of children.

Interjurisdictional Placement of Children in the Child Welfare System: Improving the Process details the findings of a survey of child welfare directors in each state, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico. With an emphasis on successful approaches, the report addresses both policy and practice in describing strategies and supports in use by the States. Priorities for action, as recommended by the workgroup which guided the survey, are also detailed.

The report can be accessed at

http://www.adoptex.org/adoptusa/documents/IJReportFINAL_Sept2006.pdf. An introductory letter by Children's Bureau Associate Commissioner Susan Orr can also be obtained at http://www.adoptex.org/adoptusa/documents/DHHSIJReport_OrrLetter.pdf.

Tips and Tools

The Color Purple – In military jargon "purple" refers to an issue or operation that includes all uniformed services – Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine and Coast Guard. Purple is what you get when you mix the greens, blues and khakis of the various uniforms. In today's military climate, the services work jointly in many instances, overcoming unnecessary hurdles en route to their goal. In the same way, adoption professionals and military families can be "purple" as they work towards the common goal of providing great

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Memo from Melody

Warmest National Adoption Month greetings to all of our readers! As we enter into a month full of activities to honor and celebrate adoption and adoptive families, I would like to encourage all of us to double our efforts to secure permanence for one of the populations I consider to be among our most vulnerable – youth in care who are without a permanent family or a lifelong adult connection.

Last week I had the privilege of accompanying four representatives from our Region VIII Youth Permanency Initiative on a trip to Hyannis, MA, to participate in the final Learning Session of the Massachusetts Breakthrough Series Collaborative on Youth Permanence. The meeting began with a youth panel who spoke honestly and courageously about permanence – its meaning to them and their heartfelt desire to achieve it. As I listened, I was encouraged by the fact that there is a renewed, national focus on youth permanency and yet

That is the inviting introduction to ***Wherever My Family Is: That's Home! Adoption Services for Military Families*** authored by McKenzie Consulting, Inc. and Rosemary Jackson. The Children's Bureau is marking National Adoption month with the launch of this latest publication in the AdoptUsKids *Answering the Call* series. While acknowledging the challenges that can exist in military adoptions, the guide highlights the unique strengths which military families may bring to the adoption process: As a group, they bring diversity in race, culture, ethnicity and personality. They have had to be flexible and open to change and are very committed, mission-oriented people. In addition they have access to support from their military community and excellent adoption benefits no matter where in the world they may be stationed.

The Guide is enlivened with vignettes detailing the success strategies of real life families and professionals, and organized into five sections:

- Understanding the issues and setting the stage for effective adoption services for military families.
- Ten steps in the adoption process with promising practices and stories from military families about their experiences with these steps.
- Additional information regarding interjurisdictional placements and collaboration with other organizations.
- Tools and handouts for practitioners to use in working effectively with military families and other agencies.
- References, websites and agencies helpful to providing adoption services to military families.

Wherever My Family Is: That's Home! Adoption Services for Military Families can be accessed in electronic form on the AdoptUsKids website (www.adoptuskids.org/resourcecenter/) after December 1, 2006.

T/TA Highlights

Four teams in Region VIII continue to participate in a year-long Permanency Initiative being sponsored by AdoptUsKids and the National Resource Center for Family-Centered Practice and Permanency Planning (see our August issue for information about the project).

Project Manager, Susan Dougherty, reports that a second meeting of the teams took place in Helena, Montana on September 25-26. Participants focused on promoting youth voice to bring the message of the need for permanent connections for young people to staff, to potential resource families, and to the public. Foster Club All-Star Katie joined the Initiative's Youth Faculty member, La Terra Cole, to provide the perspective of young people and lend support to the youth involved in each team. Three of the teams brought young people as full and active members, and all four teams left with plans to engage youth in diverse efforts, including:

- Increasing participation in youth advisory boards;
- Facilitating youth interviews with potential placement resources in order to give young people a say in selecting their foster parents;
- Having young people and their families attend multi-disciplinary team meetings and

frightened by fact that we have limited time to help these young people achieve it. It is my sincere hope that we can imbue our efforts with the urgency and focus that it deserves.

I want to thank the Massachusetts teams and the Massachusetts leadership for their warm welcome and generous hospitality! This was a wonderful opportunity for us to learn from you and to be buoyed by your collective energies. We left feeling inspired and eager to continue our efforts in Region VIII.

On a different note – I am pleased to announce that the latest publication in our *Answering the Call* series, ***Wherever My Family Is: That's Home! Adoption Services for Military Families***, is set to be released on November 28th at an evening reception that will also honor this year's Adoption in Excellence awardees! The reception will take place from 5:30 – 7:00 PM at the Marriott Crystal Gateway hotel in Arlington, VA. At least two of the families featured in the Guide will be in attendance and we hope those of you planning to be in the area that evening will join us as well! Please see this month's 'Tips and Tools' section for more information about the Guide itself.

As always, we would love to hear from you with your comments and suggestions regarding E-Notes. Please use the links below to contact us and to forward E-Notes to others who might be interested.

Thanks for reading!

Melody Roe

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Vice President, The Adoption Exchange Education Center

court permanency hearings; and

- Exploring ways young people can capture and share their stories using a variety of digital technologies.

To highlight the role of adoption as a permanency option during National Adoption Month, the El Paso County, Colorado team will be holding its third annual Adoption Rally. This is a morning event featuring a speaker and a youth/adoptive family panel. We hope to hear about more ideas being implemented by these teams when they convene again in January!

Recruitment and Retention Network

Summit County Children Services in Akron, Ohio recently held a focus-group session with adolescent foster youth on the subject of adoption recruitment. The meeting was facilitated by a consultant from the *Teens2Homes Project* of Bellefaire/JCB in Cleveland, a multi-county youth permanency effort funded by an Adoption Opportunities grant. The young people viewed child-specific media in use by the county, as well as the State and AdoptUsKids websites. Most of the youth present were themselves featured in some or all of the media discussed. They were open and thoughtful in sharing their ideas about the painful as well as empowering aspects of recruitment. Summit County will utilize the feedback of the young people to guide future recruitment activities and in the development of a youth advisory group. For additional information about the focus group, contact Nikaeda Griffie at ngriffie@summitkids.org. Additional information on the Teens2Homes project may be obtained from Diahanna Roberson at Bellefaire/JCB at RobersoD@bellefairejcb.org.

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

FYI

National Adoption Month 2006 materials and an activity calendar can be found at the Child Welfare Information Gateway: <http://www.childwelfare.gov/adoption/nam/index.cfm>.



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Contact Us

For more information about AdoptUsKids Training and Technical Assistance Services, contact Melody Roe at (303) 755-4756, ext. 241, or email melody@adoptex.org.

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