

Bridges

Association of Administrators of the Interstate Compact on Adoption and Medical Assistance

Fall 2006

Planning Ahead for Educational Success: Interjurisdictional Provision of Public Education

by Sharon McCartney, JD, Program Manager, AAICAMA and Liz Oppenheim, JD

Securing necessary supports and services for an interstate placement requires a great deal of preliminary work. Securing educational services is a vital part of these efforts. Education is a critical service for all children—children spend the majority of their day in school and their success in school is one of the single greatest determinants of life success (Judith M. Gerber and Sheryl Dicker, *Children Adrift: Addressing the Educational Needs of New York's Foster Children*, Albany L.R. 1, 1-5, 2006). For children in substitute care, educational well-being is increasingly understood to be a critical aspect of the child's broader well-being (Courtney, Roderick, Smithgall, Gladden & Nagaoka, 2004). Studies have found that children placed in state custody often enter foster care academically behind their peers and have unidentified learning and other disabilities (Ibid.). The effects of abuse and neglect can compound a child's educational disabilities and interfere with the ability to learn. However, a majority of foster children aspire to higher education, and, given the right supports, can achieve their aspirations (Ibid.).

Meeting the educational needs of children in foster care is challenging, and meeting these needs in an interjurisdictional placement is even more so. This article will outline and explain the challenges in the provision of education for children placed across state and county lines and provide guidance that will assist you

in making sure that children receive timely and appropriate educational services, wherever they are placed.

In order to understand the difficulties in securing education for a child placed interjurisdictionally, it is necessary to understand the historical and financial constructs of the American public educational system. Once these constructs are understood, workers can better understand the issues inherent in obtaining educational services for children in interjurisdictional placements and prepare to overcome them.

Public School Administration: Who is responsible for providing public education?

States and counties are almost exclusively responsible for the provision of public education in the United States. Every state's constitution guarantees some level of public

IN THIS ISSUE

<i>One Change at a Time: The Louisiana Foster Parent Bill of Rights</i>	3
<i>Medicaid Update</i>	7
<i>State Information Exchange: Kinship</i>	8
<i>Legislative Update</i>	10
<i>Resource Notes</i>	12
<i>Cases of Interest</i>	14



education and every state has compulsory school attendance laws (*School Finance Overview*, City/State: EdSource, 2005). States and localities fund and administer public education. States also determine eligibility for the receipt of public education and are able, within constitutional limits, to create their own criteria for the receipt of a free public education in the state. States generally restrict this eligibility to children of residents of the state and local school district. The critical eligibility requirement for public education is residency. State definitions of *resident* and *parent* are crucial to understanding this requirement.

In general, in order to receive a free public education in a state, a child must be a resident of the jurisdiction in which they wish to receive the education (*Understanding Public School Residency Requirements: A Guide for Advocates*, City/State: Education Law Center, 2005). Residency is a legal term and does not simply mean, "Where a person is currently living." States vary in their definition of residency, and often define it differently for different purposes, but most definitions of residency for the purposes of education include two elements: (1) physical presence in the state/locality, and (2) a demonstrated intent to stay in the state/locality.

Demonstrations of intent to stay include obtaining a driver's license, registering a motor vehicle, and owning property in the state. Because children are unable to do any of these things, their residency is determined through their *parent*. A parent's residency is based on their physical presence in the state and the intent to stay in the state. When a parent is a biological or adoptive parent, their child can receive education in the jurisdiction in which the parent is a resident. However, state definitions of "parent" vary. Some states do not include foster or preadoptive parents in their definition of parent. Because these individuals are not defined as parents under state law, their foster and preadoptive children are often unable to receive education in their jurisdiction without paying tuition.

In response to the interjurisdictional educational dilemma faced by children in out-of-home care, some states have passed legislation that expands the definition of "parent" or makes special exemptions for children in placement. For example, one state passed a law exempting out-of-state agencies that place children for adoption in their state from having to pay the costs of the education of those children during the period prior to finalization. This law allows children in placements deemed preadoptive to be exempt from tuition. (See, MD. Code Ann., [Educ.], Title 4, Subtitle 1, § 4-122 (e)(2) (1957).) Another state has a law, "Financing

Educational Services for Children in Foster Care," that includes foster care placements in its definition of residency to allow children in foster placements to be considered residents of the district in which the child resides with their licensed foster family. (See, N.D.C.C. § 15.1-29-14.)

Outside individual state efforts to address the issue, the Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children (ICPC) provides a safeguard to ensure that the educational needs of children in interstate cases are met. The ICPC is a contract between states that ensures the protection of and services to children who are placed across state lines for foster care or adoption. All fifty states and the District of Columbia have signed the ICPC, which gives the Compact and its provisions the force of law in every state. The ICPC requires the state with custody of the child to continue to have, "[F]inancial responsibility for support and maintenance of the child during the period of placement." Ultimately, if the new jurisdiction will not cover the child's educational costs, the sending state remains responsible for the care and disposition of the child, to include educational expenses in an interstate case. (See, The Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children, Art. V.)

Receiving educational services can be difficult not only in interstate placements. Residency requirements and the financing structure of public education can make intrastate placements just as difficult. Even when a preadoptive or foster parent resides within the state, local education agencies often require tuition for a child placed outside the county or school district in which the foster or preadoptive parent resides.

The Economics of Education: How is public education funded?

States and local governments provide the majority of funding for public education in the United States, with the federal government providing a very small percentage of the overall expense. Expenditure data for the 2004–2005 school year lists the following approximate contributions: 45.6% from state governments, 37.1% from local governments, and 8.3% from the federal government, with private sources providing 8.9% (*No Child Left Behind: 10 Facts About K-12 Education Funding*, Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Education, 2005). Since a large percentage of education funding comes from local property taxes, states have historically relied on residency definitions to limit the provision of a free public education to residents of the state and locality. Because funding comes largely



from state and local taxes, the rationale is that the beneficiaries of the local school district should be those who pay to support it. This policy effectively prevents nonresidents of a locality from attending a school outside their school district without paying tuition.

The Economics of Special Education: How does it affect children in care?

There is another factor in the complex equation of interjurisdictional education for children in care—cost. A disproportionate number of children in foster care require special educational services (Courtney, Roderick, Smithgall, Gladden & Nagaoka, 2004). Though it must be noted that children in out-of-home care are sometimes misplaced in special education due to the academic delay caused by multiple placements, the reality is that many are in special education and special education is expensive. In a report released in March 2002, the Special Education Expenditure Project (SEEP) determined that in the school year ending in 2000, the per student cost of providing special education in the United States was \$12,474 (*What are we spending on special education services in the United States, 1999–2000? City/State: Special Education Expenditure Project, 2002*). Compare this figure with the per student cost of providing regular education, \$6,556, and you see that special education costs are almost two times the cost of regular education. Because the provision of special education services is mandatory for children found to have educational disabilities and states and localities pay the majority of the expense for public education, the result is that states and localities are largely responsible for the increased expense. (See, Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) at 20 U.S.C. 1400 et seq.)

AAICAMA reminds all party states to use the ICAMA Form 6.03

The ICAMA 6.03 Form must be used to:

-  Notify the adoption assistance state of the opening of Medicaid case in a new state
-  Report changes to the adoption assistance state

This cooperation is not a courtesy between states but a legal obligation under the Compact.

Interstate Education Checklist

Planning ahead for a child's potential educational needs can eliminate unnecessary delays in their receipt of education. Good planning requires a comprehensive consideration of the child's educational needs, available resources, and tuition or residency requirements in the new county or state of residence. The following is a checklist that can assist you in preparing to meet the interjurisdictional educational needs of children in foster care or preadoptive placement.

Step One: Things to Consider Before Placement

A. Regarding placement:

1. In what school jurisdiction does the child's placement resource live?
2. What are the residency requirements for purposes of obtaining a free public education in this jurisdiction?
3. Does the jurisdiction make exceptions for foster care and/or preadoptive placements regarding residency for the purposes of education? If yes, what documentation is required to qualify for the exception?

B. Regarding your agency and the local education agency:

1. Do you know who in your agency is responsible for making binding financial decisions regarding educational costs?
2. What department/agency is responsible for covering the educational costs of children in state care that are placed across state or county lines?
3. If the child's new school requires tuition reimbursement and your agency is responsible for the costs, how will your agency cover this expense? What is your role in the process?

C. Regarding the child:

1. Has the child been tested for special educational needs?
2. If the child has been tested, how recently have they been tested and is a more current testing battery needed?
3. Does the child have an Individualized Education Program (IEP)?
4. How recently has the IEP been updated?

(continued: **Step Two** on page 4)

Step Two: Making the Placement

1. Instruct the caregiver to register the child in the local school district in advance of the school year. Let the caregiver know that the child may not be able to register and to prepare for this possibility by finding education alternatives and requesting the following documents. (See numbers 2 and 3, below.)
2. If the school district denies the placement, request that the district draft a letter on district letterhead explaining the denial. Ask that the letter include a citation to the law that supports the denial and a listing of education options available to the child in the district. Questions to consider: Can the child attend if the caregiver or agency pays tuition? What is the tuition rate and on what is it based?
3. If the child has been denied in the local school district, present alternate options to the caregiver that meet the child's educational needs. Question to consider: Is there a private school that is more convenient for the caregiver or less expensive than paying tuition at the local public school?
4. With the caregiver *and the child* agree upon an appropriate option, considering the child's individual needs that were assessed in Step One.
5. Take this decision to your Supervisor or other staff member in your chain of supervision whom you have determined, in Step One, is responsible for making binding financial decisions for your unit.
6. Following your agency's procedures, draft or have drafted an individual contract for the education of the child with the chosen school in the receiving state and receive approval for the contract from your social services regional administrator or other staff member responsible for approving such contracts.
7. Have a copy of the contract sent to the caregiver, the responsible party of the chosen school in the receiving state, and keep a copy for your files (*Step Two: Making the Placement* created from conversation with Bradley Boucher, January 24, 2006).

References

Courtney, M.E., Roderick, M., Smithgall, C., Gladden, R.M., Nagaoka, J. (2004) *The Educational Status of Foster Children*. Chicago, IL: Chapin Hall Center for Children.

EdSource (2005). *School Finance Overview*. Downloaded from the World Wide Web on November 21, 2005, from the following URL: http://www.edsource.org/edu_fin.cfm

United States Department of Education (2005). *No Child Left Behind: 10 Facts About K-12 Education Funding*. Downloaded from the World Wide Web on November 21, 2005, from the following URL: <http://www.ed.gov/about/overview/fed/10facts/10facts.pdf>

Conversation with Bradley Boucher to create *Step Two: Making the Placement*. Bradley Boucher, Placement Coordinator, Illinois Department of Children and Family Services, Springfield, IL, held on January 24, 2006.

For an electronic copy of this article contact: R. Bockweg at: rbockweg@aphsa.org.



NATIONAL ADOPTION DAY 2006 – NOVEMBER 18

National Adoption Day is a national effort to raise public awareness about the 116,000 children in foster care for who adoptive families are being sought. For the last six years, National Adoption Day has made the dreams of thousands of children in foster care come true by working with courts, judges, attorneys, and advocates to finalize their adoptions in permanent, loving homes.

National Adoption Day is celebrated every year on the Saturday before Thanksgiving. In 2005, judges, attorneys, adoption professionals, child welfare agencies and advocates in 45 states and District of Columbia helped to finalize the adoptions of more than 3,300 children from foster care. That year, 227 events were held throughout the country to finalize adoptions and to celebrate all families who adopt. Visit the National Adoption Day website at <http://www.nationaladoptionday.org/2006/index.asp> for more information, including registering your local National Adoption Day event.

November is National Adoption Month, visit <http://www.childwelfare.gov/adoption/nam/index.cfm> for materials and complete information.

One Change at a Time: The Louisiana Foster Parent Bill of Rights

By: Peggy Kirby, Advocacy Chair, Louisiana Foster and Adoptive Parent Association and Sharon McCartney, JD, Program Manager, AAICAMA

The challenges facing the foster care system are numerous and complex. There are so many children, so many issues, and so much need. Just thinking about it can be overwhelming. Considering all that complexity and all that need, you may ask yourself—what can one person do? The answer is—plenty. One person can make a difference. Several people together can make a *world* of difference. Foster and adoptive parent associations are doing just that—making a world of difference, one small change at a time.

The foster care system is big and its challenges are multidimensional. It would be difficult to tackle even a single issue without feeling daunted. It is important to prioritize. First decide what specific area you wish to address and then decide what exactly you want to see changed. Define your success—what is the situation now, which, after your efforts, will not exist in the same way next year? The Louisiana Foster Adoptive Parent Association (LFAPA) decided to address the role of state foster parents. The Association believed that foster parents had the right to know what to expect for themselves and from the State as caretakers for children in state custody. They determined that the role of State foster parents needed to be defined—that the rights and obligations of foster parents and the State needed to be outlined. In response to this decision, the Association worked in partnership with the Office of Community Services at the Louisiana Department of Social Services (DSS) to establish a Foster Parent Bill of Rights.

The Tennessee Foster Parent Bill of Rights was used as a model and guided the creation of Louisiana's Foster Parent Bill of Rights. The Association introduced a bill draft to the DSS in 2003. Since that time the Association met with DSS leaders, reviewed the bill with the DSS Policy Division to ensure legal compliance, and advocated for the introduction of the bill in the 2006 Louisiana legislative session. The Advocacy Chair for the Louisiana Foster Adoptive Parent Association, Peggy Kirby, sat on a Louisiana House Committee in order to study the state foster care system. In this way, the Association established a working relationship with several elected officials and assisted in the bill's introduction. The bill was unanimously approved by both the Louisiana House and the Senate and signed by the Governor on June 15, 2006. On August 15, 2006, Louisiana House Bill 1370 became Act No. 439. The Foster Parent Bill of Rights was law. By focusing on a single issue—establishing foster parent's rights—and addressing the issue through concentrated advocacy and direct legislative efforts, a foster parent bill of rights was established in the State of Louisiana.

Building on the partnership begun with the DSS, the Association has created an Advisory Council of nine foster and adoptive parents throughout the state to review and comment on proposed DSS policy changes, prior to their implementation, that would affect Louisiana foster care. This activity strengthens parental involvement and continues to build the working relationship with DSS while giving foster and adoptive parents a voice within the system.

No single person or entity can change the entire foster care system. But, together, and focused, we can each take a more proactive position to resolve existing conflicts and prevent future ones. We can make a world of difference, one small change at a time.

Note: The Association created the Louisiana Advocacy Support Team (LAST) to assist foster and adoptive parents to navigate the social service system. A statewide 24-hour toll-free number is available for parents to call when they have a question, or just need support. This team also identifies any areas of training needed within a region and makes a recommendation to the DSS.

Louisiana Foster Parent Bill of Rights

Foster parents are recognized as primary caregivers to abused and neglected children who have been removed from their homes of origin. The State of Louisiana and the Department of Social Services shall implement and promote the support of these rights through the policy and practice of the Department. Foster Parents are entitled to the following rights:

(Louisiana Foster Parents Bill of Rights continued on page 6)

Louisiana Foster Parent Bill of Rights

1. The right to be treated with dignity, respect, trust, and consideration as a primary provider of foster care and a member of the professional team caring for foster children.
2. The right to receive explanation and clarification as to the expectations and roles of all team members; and to receive evaluation and feedback on their role of foster care giver.
3. The right to receive all information on a child, at placement, and on an ongoing basis, that could impact the care provided the child and/or the health and safety of the child and/or foster family members. Information shall include case plan, health/medical, educational, court/legal decisions, and social history as known to the Department, to better meet the needs of children in their care.
4. The right to receive the necessary training and support to enable them to provide quality services in meeting the needs of the children in their care, including reasonable relief and respite, as allowed by agency resources.
5. The right to be informed of available support services, case planning meetings, court hearings and other decision-making meeting in a timely manner in recognition of the importance of their role as foster care givers.
6. The right to actively participate in the development of the child's case plan, educational plan, and in other service planning decision-making processes.
7. The right to access agency staff for assistance in dealing with emergencies on a 24 hour basis; to assistance in dealing with family loss and separation when a child leaves their home; and access to available advocacy services to help support the foster parent in their role as care giver.
8. The right to receive information concerning agency policies and procedures related to their role as a foster parent or to the child in their care, and/or information contained in the foster parents' record, as allowed by law.
9. The right for first consideration as a placement for a child previously placed in their home and/or for a child placed in their home who becomes available for adoption, if relative placement is not available.
10. The right to permit a member of the Louisiana Advocacy Support Team to accompany a foster parent into meetings with departmental staff during investigations or grievance procedures.

In addition to serving as Advocacy Chair for the Louisiana State Foster Parent Association, Peggy Kirby is founder and director of F.A.I.R. Visions, Inc. (Foster, Adoptive Information & Resource) of Monroe, Louisiana, which was one of the first groups to receive support from a mini-grant in *AdoptUsKids*' first year of operation.

To contact LFAPA or Peggy Kirby, write or e-mail to the following: P O Box 332, Baton Rouge LA 70821 or kirp50@juno.com.

To find out about *AdoptUsKids*, phone or e-mail Sylvia R. Franzmeier, Parent Group Manager, for *The Collaboration to AdoptUsKids* at sfranzmeier@adoptuskids.org or 281. 413.7377.



AdoptUsKids has awarded mini-grants of \$4000 to 175 parent groups since its inception in June 2003. These grants provided assistance to adoptive and foster care parent support networks.

MEDICAID UPDATE

The interstate receipt of Medicaid can be challenging. The Interstate Compact on Adoption and Medical Assistance (ICAMA) was created out of a provision in Federal law that ensures the protection of benefits for children receiving adoption assistance interstate. In defining the adoption assistance agreement, the law states that the agreement "shall contain provisions for the protection (under an interstate compact approved by the Secretary or otherwise) of the interests of the child in cases where the adoptive parents and child move to another State while the agreement is effective." ICAMA is that interstate compact designed to assist states in collaborating to ensure the receipt of benefits, particularly Medicaid, across state lines. States can rely on this provision in Federal law and their membership in ICAMA to provide Medicaid in interstate cases to eligible adoption assistance children. The Child Welfare Policy Manual addresses the issue in its Questions and Answers at 8.2A Question 1 below. See:

42 USC 675 (3)(B) online at http://www.law.cornell.edu/uscode/html/uscode42/usc_sec_42_0000675-000-.html.

The Child Welfare Policy Manual

8.2A.1 Title IV-E, Adoption Assistance Program, Agreements, Interstate placements

Question: What happens if a family moves to a different State while the adoption assistance agreement is still in effect?

Answer: Section 475 (3)(B) of the Social Security Act requires that any adoption assistance agreement, effective on or after October 1, 1983, stipulate that the agreement ...shall remain in effect regardless of the State of which the adoptive parents are residents at any given time. The agreement shall contain provisions for the protection (under an interstate compact approved by the Secretary or otherwise) of the interests of the child in cases where the adoptive parents and child move to another State while the agreement is effective.

States which enter into adoption assistance agreements must take measures to assure that the terms of the agreements are met. Either directly, or through agreements with other States, *services and medical care* (children eligible for title IV-E adoption assistance payments are deemed eligible for title XIX (Medicaid) regardless of their residence within the nation) agreed upon between the State and parents must be provided (45 CFR 1356.40(e)).

The responsibility of the State to honor its commitments for title XIX and other services as specified in the adoption agreement is based on the State's agreement to administer title IV-E. The authority for the State to enter into agreements and contracts with other States to honor commitments made in adoption assistance agreements is based on the State's statute or administrative procedures.

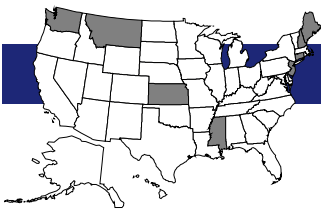
- **Source/Date:** ACYF-CB-PI-83-08 (8/10/83)
- **Legal and Related References:** Social Security Act - section 475(3); 45 CFR 1356.40

Notice! *Child Welfare Policy Manual Update (Updated August 4, 2006)*

Question: Some States are requiring adoptive parents to complete annual renewals of their adoption assistance agreements. Does title IV-E require the State or local agency to perform annual renewals or eligibility determinations for adoption assistance?

Answer: No. There is no Federal statute or provision requiring annual renewals, recertifications or eligibility re-determinations for title IV-E adoption assistance. Parents who receive adoption assistance payments, however, have a responsibility to keep the State or local agency informed of circumstances which would make them ineligible for title IV-E adoption assistance payments, or eligible for assistance payments in a different amount (Section 473 (a)(4)(B) of the Social Security Act). Once a child is determined eligible to receive title IV-E adoption assistance, he or she remains eligible and the subsidy continues until: (1) the age of 18 (or 21 if the State determines that the child has a mental or physical disability which warrants the continuation of assistance); (2) the State determines that the parent is no longer legally responsible for the support of the child, or; (3) the State determines the child is no longer receiving any support from the parents.

- **Source/Date:** ACYF-CB-PIQ-98-02 (9/03/98)
- **Legal and Related References:** Social Security Act - section 473(a)(4)(B)



STATE INFORMATION EXCHANGE

Spotlight on Maine and Washington, DC

Two administrators of the Interstate Compact on Adoption and Medicaid Assistance (ICAMA) are contributors to the current edition of *The Roundtable*. *The Roundtable* is a publication of the National Child Welfare Resource Center for Adoption. The Roundtable is published twice yearly by The National Child Welfare Resource Center for Adoption and is funded through a cooperative agreement with the Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, and the Children's Bureau.

The focus of the latest edition is on kinship care. Sharon Knight, who serves on AAICAMA's Executive Committee, writes about the importance kinship in the District of Columbia. Her article, *Kinship: A Bridge to Permanency*, discusses D.C.'s tradition of valuing extended family members in the adoption process. Virginia Marriner, the ICAMA Compact Administrator in Maine, writes in her article *Kinship Building-Family: A Critical Connection for All*, of Maine's recently renewed commitment to maintaining birth family connections for children involved in the child welfare system through an emphasis on kinship care. See the Maine article below and connect to D.C.'s article at <http://www.nrcadoption.org/resources/roundtable.htm>. If you would like to receive an e-copy of *The Roundtable*, subscribe at: <http://www.nrcadoption.org/subscribe>.



Kinship Building- Family: A Critical Connection for All

by Virginia S. Marriner, LSW Adoptions Program Manager, Maine Department of Health and Family Services

Maine has recently renewed our commitment to birth family connections for children involved in the child welfare system through an emphasis on kinship care. Kinship care in Maine is defined as any relationship that involves full time care of a child by an individual who is related by blood, marriage, adoption or close family relationships acknowledged by birth parents, adoptive parents, tribe or the child. Important steps have been taken to value, reinforce, codify, and institutionalize commitment to preserving ongoing family relationships.

Policy

Revised Policy: Maine's new Relative Placement and Kinship Care policy clarifies the importance of relative placements and emphasizes the preservation of family relationships and familial bonds.

This policy makes clear that our preferred practice is to minimize the impact of separation of family and the familiar environment. This includes community, church, schools, and extended family. When birth parents and/or caretakers are unable to provide for child safety and wellbeing, relative placements can provide children with familiarity, continuity, an understanding of their heritage, and a sense of belonging to their family. A focus of this policy is to familiarize staff on the organizational values regarding the importance of family and to value and recognize the healing capability of family connection and support for children who have experienced trauma.

Statute

Permanency Guardianship: The Maine Permanency Guardianship Program, effective April 2006, was developed over a period of two years through the efforts of a work group of public and private, child welfare, legal, mental health, tribal, and community members. A goal of this program is to honor cultural norms and family values. Permanency guardianship became law under Maine Statute in September 2005, allowing for the District Court, as a dispositional alternative in child protection cases, to appoint a permanency guardian. Permanency guardianship provides an additional permanency option and encourages relative placement. The subsidy available in permanency guardianship is structured the same as adoption assistance subsidy. Post secondary educational benefits are enhanced for this option as well.

Community Connections

Maine has a long tradition of relative caregivers—both those connected with child welfare and those who have stepped in on their own to care for children who are a part of their family system.

Family Connections: This is an organization supported by contract money through Maine's Department of Health and Human Services and other resources. Family Connections provides information and educational materials for families to help the children in their care

feel safer, stable and secure. Programs are available designed especially for relatives who are parenting children affected by substance abuse or HIV among other issues. Support and information groups are available statewide so relatives can share their experiences and solutions to challenging situations. Family Connections in collaboration with their sister agency, Adoptive and Foster Families of Maine, maintains an extensive resource library. Resource staff is available by phone to respond to questions to help relatives navigate complicated systems when they are trying to advocate for and meet the needs of the children they love and care for. The organization also maintains the Caring Relatives listserv and an e-mail discussion list for grandparents, aunts, and uncles who are raising grandchildren, nieces, and nephews.

Specialized Training

Introductory training, Fundamentals of Foster and Adoptive Parenting, is provided to prospective foster

and adoptive parents to prepare them to understand and cope with the experience of receiving an adoptive or foster child into their home. Specialized kinship sessions of this training are available to meet the unique needs of kin caregivers following a very similar format of 24 hours of competency based training delivered at various locations and times across the state.

Maine is also working diligently with relative caregivers to address barriers to meeting the standards for foster, adoptive, or permanency guardianship so they may have their kin children in their homes in safe, legally stable relationships. Funding in some circumstances is made available to help relative families make home repairs to meet necessary standards. While Maine has undertaken significant steps to increase relative connections and adoptive placements with relatives, we continue to assess practice to be assured that children are afforded the fundamental right to family connections.



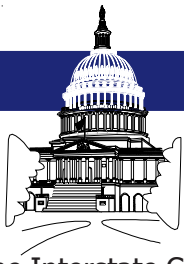
Child Welfare Information Gateway
PROTECTING CHILDREN ■ STRENGTHENING FAMILIES

Child Welfare Information Gateway, a service of the Children's Bureau, debuted in June and is now offering a full spectrum of information services to child welfare and other professionals across the country. Information Gateway represents the consolidation and expansion of two federally mandated clearinghouses—the National Clearinghouse on Child Abuse and Neglect Information and the National Adoption Information Clearinghouse. This consolidation allows for streamlined access to the resources that child welfare professionals need, all in one place. Child Welfare Information Gateway connects professionals to information and resources on family-centered practice, preventing child abuse and neglect, child protection and investigation of abuse and neglect, family preservation and support services, temporary out-of-home care, permanency for children in foster care, different types of adoption, postadoption services and system-wide issues such as workforce training, the Child and Family Services Reviews, and court issues. Information Gateway provides professionals with easy access to statistics on child maltreatment, adoption, and child welfare; research; federal legislation and policies; State laws and statutes; training resources; and improving practices.

Free services include:

- An online library with more than 48,000 documents
- More than 130 Information Gateway publications
- Knowledgeable staff to help customers by email or telephone
- Multiple subscription services

Link: <http://www.childwelfare.gov>



LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

New Interstate Compact for the Placement of Children

The Interstate Compact for the Placement of Children has been written to address many of the barriers that States face when they attempt to place children across State lines. Currently, all States and the District of Columbia are members of the original ICPC, which was written in 1960 and later approved by the individual State legislatures. Despite its unanimous adoption by States, many policymakers, caseworkers, and casework supervisors have noted problems with the current ICPC, especially as it relates to timeliness for adoption.

The new compact attempts to eliminate some of the ambiguities in the original compact, as well as narrow the scope of applicability, provide for enforcement, and comply with Federal regulations for the timely placement of children. A task force of stakeholders, convened by the American Public Human Services Association (APHSA), from State social services, national organizations, the private sector, and the Federal Government worked on the revision for two years.

Among its highlights, this new charter:

- Narrows the applicability of the ICPC, such that it does not apply to intercountry adoptions or to most placements of children made by their parents; the focus of the new ICPC is on children involved with the child welfare system
- Clarifies the authority of the courts and judicial officers in the retention of jurisdiction
- Provides a child-centered definition of the assessment of a prospective placement (home study)
- Specifies the responsibilities of the sending and receiving States
- Creates an Interstate Commission, including rules for its operation, authority, and funding

As with the original ICPC, each State's legislature will need to approve this new compact before it can be applied in that State. The full text of the proposed ICPC and a document that lists highlights are available on the APHSA website: www.aphsa.org/Home/Doc/Interstate-Compact-for-the-Placement-of-Children.pdf and www.aphsa.org/Home/Doc/Highlights-of-New-ICPC.pdf

Bill to Expedite Interstate Placement of Children Becomes Law

(July 3, 2006) The "Safe and Timely Interstate Placement of Foster Children Act of 2006" (P.L. 109-239) was signed into law. The new law is intended to accelerate interjurisdictional placements and improve the protection of pre-adoptive and foster children across state lines. Under the new law, a state receiving a request to place a child for adoption or foster care must complete a home study within 60 days; the state making the request must respond as to its acceptability within 14 days. In addition, the law authorizes funding for an incentive program of \$1,500 for every home study completed within 30 days.

Law link: <http://thomas.loc.gov/cgi-bin/bdquery/z?d109:h.r.05403>

The Adam Walsh Child Protection and Safety Act of 2006

(July 27, 2006) New law requires states to investigate the backgrounds of adoptive and foster parents in national crime and state child abuse registries prior to being approved for child placement. The Act, (P.L. 109-248), is a comprehensive statute intended to protect children from sexual and other violent crimes by expanding the national sex offender registry and establishing a national child abuse and neglect registry, increasing federal penalties for crimes against children, and protecting children from exploitation on the Internet. The new statute includes "Masha's Law" - named for Masha Allen, a Russian adoptee who was sexually abused and exploited by her adoptive father - which dramatically increases civil penalties from \$50,000 to \$150,000 for anyone who downloads child pornography off the Internet.

Law link: <http://thomas.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/z?c109:h4472>

Press release and fact sheet: <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2006/07/20060727-6.html>

National and State Entity Chosen for Hague Accreditation

The U.S. State Department finalized agreements this month with the Council on Accreditation (COA) and the Colorado Department of Human Resources as the two organizations responsible for the accreditation of U.S. service providers involved in international adoptions with Hague Convention nations. The COA will be the national

accrediting body, while Colorado will only accept applications from providers licensed and operated within that state. To date, 69 countries have ratified or acceded to the Hague Convention on intercountry adoption. Link to the memorandums of agreement:

Colorado DHR: <http://www.jcics.org/Colorado%20Accrediting%20Entity%20Agreement.doc>
COA: <http://www.jcics.org/Council%20on%20Accreditation%20Accrediting%20Entity%20Agreement.doc>

Five States Awarded New Child Welfare Waivers

California, Florida, Iowa, Michigan, and Virginia are the latest recipients of child welfare waivers from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The waivers provide States with greater flexibility in their use of Federal title IV-E foster care dollars to develop and evaluate innovative programs to keep children safe from abuse and neglect, support families in addressing problems that place their children at risk, and help children in foster care return safely to their own homes or find other permanency options. The new waiver demonstrations in California, Florida, and Michigan will focus on making greater investments in early intervention services, intensive in-home services, and other supports to families to protect children and prevent them from being removed from home. The projects will help children already in foster care to return home in a safe and timely manner or, when this is not possible, to move more quickly to a new permanent family.

Two other newly approved waiver demonstrations will enable Iowa and Virginia to use Federal foster care funds to pay monthly subsidies to families who assume legal guardianship of children who would otherwise remain in State custody. Families and children participating in these demonstrations will qualify for additional services such as support groups, respite care, and recreational activities. Iowa was also approved for a second waiver demonstration to implement a managed care project focused on providing intensive case planning and services to youth ages 11-16 that are either in or at risk of entering group care. This demonstration seeks to provide services and supports to maintain youth with special service needs in their own homes.

Press release link: http://www.acf.hhs.gov/news/press/2006/five_child_welfare_waivers_April_6.htm
Demonstration waivers link: http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb/programs_fund/index.htm#child

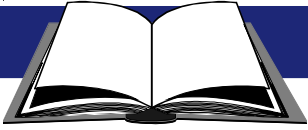
Briefing Held on Subsidized Guardianship

(April 25, 2006) Generations United held a briefing in the U.S. Capitol and released a report, *All Children Deserve a Permanent Home: Subsidized Guardianship as a Common Sense Solution for Children in Long-Term Relative Foster Care*. Sen. Hillary Clinton (D-N.Y.) attended the briefing remarking on the importance of kinship care. She asked for support for the Kinship Caregiver Support Act (S. 985), which she introduced with co-sponsor Sen. Olympia Snowe in May 2005. The panel of presenters consisted of three relative caregivers, a representative of the Pew Commission on Children in Foster Care, and a member of the White House Conference on Aging Policy Committee. Report link: http://ipath.gu.org/documents/A0//All_Children_Deserve_A_Permanent_Home.pdf

Senate Finance Committee Holds Hearing on Child Welfare

(May 10, 2006) Senate Finance Committee held a hearing on "Fostering Permanence: Progress Achieved and Challenges Ahead for America's Child Welfare System." Sens. Charles Grassley (R-Iowa), Max Baucus (D-Mont.), and Gordon Smith (R-Ore.) presided over the hearing. Grassley, who chairs the committee, said the hearing's purpose was for congressional members to hear testimony on child welfare issues generally and on the Promoting Safe and Stable Families Program and the Mentoring of Children of Prisoners programs specifically. He said he also wanted to elaborate on the issues raised during the hearing on the effects of meth on States' child welfare agencies. The authorization for both programs expires in FY 2006. Witnesses included Joan Ohl, Commissioner of the Administration on Children, Youth and Families; Gary Stangler, Executive Director of the Jim Casey Youth Initiative; Arlene Templer, Social Services Manager for the Confederate Salish and Kootenai Tribe; Joe Kroll, Executive Director of the North American Council on Adoptable Children; and Jackie Hammers-Crowell, a former foster youth. Statement and testimony link: <http://finance.senate.gov/sitepages/hearing051006.htm>

The American Public Human Services Association submitted a statement supporting the reauthorization of the current \$505 million in mandatory (not discretionary) funding; encouraging additional mandatory funds to help states expand and continue the array of services and innovation; and discouraging any efforts to designate any additional funds for a specific purpose. Statement link: <http://www.napcwa.org>



Making Education Decisions for Children in Foster Care

Two significant barriers to full educational access for children in foster care are concerns about confidentiality regarding children's records and misunderstanding about who can make educational decisions for these children. These hurdles are addressed in a new publication from the American Bar Association Center on Children and the Law, *Mythbusting: Breaking Down Confidentiality and Decision-Making Barriers to Meet the Education Needs of Children in Foster Care*.

The publication's contents are organized to meet the specific information needs of parents, youth, foster parents, judges, children's attorneys, guardians *ad litem*, and court-appointed special advocates. The four goals of the publication are to:

- Provide context for addressing the education needs of children in foster care
- Debunk the myths about confidentiality and decision-making
- Explain relevant Federal laws
- Suggest strategies to overcome confidentiality and decision-making barriers

A chapter on promising practices from the field offers strategies for encouraging the information sharing and overcoming confidentiality barriers. Examples include the health and education "passports" created for children in foster care in California and Washington that allow records to follow children as they change placements. Other features of the guide include specific information for addressing the needs of children in special education and links between sections and to outside resources. Link: <http://www.abanet.org/child/rclji/education/caseyeducationproject.pdf>

Related Items

Read more about educational advocacy for children in foster care in previous issues of *Children's Bureau Express* (<http://cbexpress.acf.hhs.gov>):

- [Education Advocacy Model for Foster Children](#) (June 2005)
- [Promoting a Positive Educational Experience for Children in Foster Care](#) (October 2004)
- [Overcoming Educational Barriers for Children in Foster Care](#) (May 2004)

Research: Government Costs for Adoption vs. Foster Care

While the social benefits of adoption over long-term foster care for children are widely recognized, a new study shows that adoption also means significant cost savings for governments. The study found that adoption, including the cost of adoption assistance, provides substantial savings in government funding when compared to the cost of maintaining children in long-term foster care.

In *A Comparison of the Governmental Costs of Long-Term Foster Care and Adoption*, the authors compared the costs of similarly situated North Carolina children in long-term foster care (n=691) and adoption (n=1,902). Costs included those covered by Federal, State, and local contributions for adoption subsidies, foster care placements, group home placements, emergency care, home studies, administrative costs, and other child welfare and court costs. The discrepancy was significant:

- Over 7.7 years, the cost for foster care averaged \$86,100 per child, compared to \$65,100 per adopted child.
- Applying that figure to the approximately 50,000 children adopted from foster care in the U.S. each year results in \$1 billion in government savings.
- Projecting these savings through age 18 for these children shows that approximately \$65,422 to \$126,825 is saved for every child who is adopted rather than placed in long-term foster care.

In providing these figures, the authors point out that adoption expenditures tend to be higher toward the beginning of an adoption case and then decrease, whereas the costs of long-term foster care increase as the child gets older. They also cite studies showing that cuts in adoption assistance result in decreases in adoptions. The results suggest a number of implications for funding adoption assistance. While some jurisdictions are considering cutting subsidies due to tight budgets, an increase in adoption assistance amounts actually might generate greater savings over the long run, as more children may move from long-term foster care to adoption. Funding activities such as recruitment of adoptive families and additional supports for families who adopt older children may also increase adoptions.

A Comparison of the Governmental Costs of Long-Term Foster Care and Adoption, by R. P. Barth, C. K. Lee, J. Wildfire, and S. Guo, appeared in the March 2006 issue of the *Social Service Review*. It is available through the journal website.

Link: <http://www.journals.uchicago.edu/SSR/>

Promising Practices: Providing Permanency with Subsidized Guardianship

A significant proportion of children in long-term foster care live with relatives—at least 25 percent—but many are unable to achieve permanency because their kinship caregivers cannot afford to lose the payments that foster care provides. For some of these families, adoption is not an acceptable option because it would alter the family structure by terminating the parents' rights and assigning these rights to a grandparent or other relative. Without an affordable alternative, many of these children remain in long-term foster care.

A recent report from Generations United describes subsidized guardianship, an alternative currently offered by 35 States. Under subsidized guardianship programs, parental rights are not terminated, but permanent legal custody is awarded to a relative. The advantages of guardianship over long-term foster care are significant:

- Children have a permanent home and are no longer subject to removal by the State.
- The caregiver no longer has to get permission from the child welfare agency for the child to spend the night with a friend, receive medical treatment, or go on a school field trip; the caregiver is the legal decision maker.
- The child welfare agency's involvement with the family is generally limited to one annual visit, which reduces administrative costs for the agency.
- Children grow up knowing their siblings, cousins, and other relatives. Often, they live in the same neighborhood and attend the same schools.

As noted in the Generations United report, the drawback of subsidized guardianship involves funding. Federal title IV-E funding can be used for foster care payments or adoption assistance, but not for subsidized guardianship.

Eleven States have received waivers allowing them to use the Federal funds for a specific time period to support subsidized guardianships. Once the waiver ends, States assume all costs of maintaining the guardianships established during the waiver. In these States, and in the States that have been able to find local and State funds to pay for a subsidized guardianship program, the program's success has been significant. For instance, California and Illinois have been able to reduce the number of children in long-term foster care with relatives by subsidizing guardianship. The disadvantage of State financing is that it leaves programs vulnerable to cuts in times of budget shortfalls.

The full report from Generations United, *All Children Deserve a Permanent Home: Subsidized Guardianships as a Common Sense Solution for Children in Long-Term Relative Foster Care*, was funded by the Pew Charitable Trusts. It is available on the Generations United website:

Link: <http://ipath.gu.org/documents/A0/>

All_Children_Deserve_A_Permanent_Home.pdf
(PDF - 1060 KB)

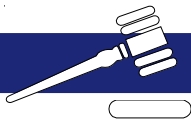
Analysis Shows Adoption Improves Children's Cognitive Development

A meta-analysis of 62 studies comparing the cognitive development and school performance of adopted children and their non-adopted siblings or peers still in institutions indicates that adoption has a positive impact on the children's cognitive development. "Adoption is a Successful Natural Intervention Enhancing Adopted Children's IQ and School Performance," by Marinus van IJzendoorn and Femmie Juffer, was published in the December, 2005 *Current Directions in Psychological Science* (Volume 14, Issue 6). When comparing children adopted from institutions to non-adopted peers still in the institution, adopted children surpass their peers by at least 20 IQ points. When comparing adopted children to non-adopted siblings in their adoptive families, their IQs are similar but the adoptees were found to lag in school performance. They also were approximately twice as likely to be in special education classes.

Link: <http://www.ingentaconnect.com/content/bpl/cdir/2005/00000014/00000006/art00010>

Summaries adapted from:

- ◆ Nat'l Resource Center for Family-Centered Practice and Permanency Planning,
- ◆ Chapin Hall Center for Children
- ◆ Children's Bureau



State Law, Adoption

North Carolina: Marlowe v. Marlowe Cite: No. COA05-1338; 2006 N.C. App. LEXIS 1658 (N.C. App. Ct. Aug. 1, 2006)

The Court of Appeals of North Carolina upheld the trial court's rejection of the biological mother's attempt to intervene in a custody dispute between the adoptive parents. The appellate court ruled that any legal relationship between biological mother and child was terminated when she consented to the adoption. Therefore in the eyes of the law the biological mother is a stranger to the child and has no right to intervene in the custody dispute.

Case link: http://www.aoc.state.nc.us/www/public/coa/opinions/2006/unpub/051338-1.htm

Pennsylvania: In re Adoption of J.E.F. Cite: Nos. 63-03-0552; 2004 PA Super. Lexis 4366 (Pa. Super. Ct. July 18, 2006)

The Superior Court of Pennsylvania reversed the lower court's dismissal of an adoption proceeding based on lack of guardian consent. The Superior Court stated that generally adoption petitions must include consent of the child's guardian, including the child welfare agency if the child is in its custody. The court may override this requirement if the petition for adoption is on behalf of a family member or a party in loco parentis.

Case link: http://www.superior.court.state.pa.us/opin.htm



State Law, Termination of Parental Rights, Due Process

Nebraska: State v. Kelli G. (In re Eden K) Cite: No. A-05-1567, 14 Neb. App. 867; 2006 Neb. App. LEXIS 119 (Neb. App. Ct. July 3, 2006)

The Nebraska Court of Appeals reversed the decision of the juvenile court terminating Appellant's parental rights to her four children. The juvenile court terminated the rights of the mother based on the fact that she was incarcerated; gave birth to a baby addicted to drugs; was involved in domestic violence and drug abuse and had not had custody of her children for the requisite 15 of 22 months. However, the Court of Appeals found that although she was not a good mother, the appellant was making "positive strides" in her life and terminating her rights was not the last possible resort, which is required by Nebraska law.

Case link: http://court.nol.org/opinions/2006/july/jul3/a05-1567.pdf

California Appellate Courts

In re Charlotte D. Cite: No. B183788, 2006 Cal. App. LEXIS 196 (Cal. Ct. App. Feb. 15, 2006)

The Court of Appeal of California, Second Appellate District, reversed and remanded the decision of a trial court declaring a child free from the biological father's custody and control. The court held Calif. Probate Code section 1516.5 to be constitutional on its face, but unconstitutional because it allowed the parental rights of a father, who was an active part of the child's life, to be terminated without first finding the father to be unfit. The court held the statute was constitutional as to fathers who did not actively partake in parental responsibilities as to the child.

Link: http://www.courtinfo.ca.gov/cgi-bin/opinions.cgi (slip opinion)

In re Baby Boy V. (06/26/06 - No. B187823)

Orders denying a putative father's request for a paternity test and terminating his parental rights are reversed pursuant to his claims that: 1) he was entitled to presumed father status and, therefore, to reunification services; and 2) the dependency court was required to order a paternity test to determine whether he was the baby's biological father.

Case link: http://caselaw.lp.findlaw.com/data2/californiastatecases/b187823.pdf



Liability of Agency

U.S. 10th Circuit Court of Appeals

New Mexico: Johnson v. Holmes Cite: No. 04-2286, 2006 U.S. App. LEXIS 18689 (U.S. App. Ct. July 26, 2006)

The United States Court of Appeals for the Tenth Circuit upheld the district court's rulings in favor of the New Mexico Department of Children, Youth, and Family Services ("Department") and several of its employees and reversed and remanded summary judgment favoring one employee, in a case stemming from the abuse and death of a child the Department had placed for adoption. The court found that the "building waiver" exception in the New Mexico Torts Claims Act, which provides sovereign immunity to public agencies, does not apply to adoptive homes since the Department does not have a duty to control the daily operations of the home or provide care for the child. The court ruled that summary judgment favoring one employee was proper since there was no dispute over whether the employee exercised his professional judgment in determining the child was not abused. However, it

reversed and remanded with respect to a social worker stating there was a factual dispute as to whether or not she used her professional judgment when she failed to investigate a change in the child's living situation. Appellant further argued that the "shocks the conscience" standard does not apply where a state actor's liability for the actions of a private citizen (here, the adoptive parent) stems from its special relationship with the injured party. The court ruled that this argument is contrary to established precedent.

Case link: <http://www.kscourts.org/CA10/cases/2006/07/04-2286.htm>

Gomes v. Wood (06/28/06 - No. 04-4197)

Summary judgment for defendants in a 42 U.S.C. section 1983 action arising out of a child protection caseworker's removal of a child from plaintiffs-parents' home is affirmed where a caseworker and other defendants were entitled to qualified immunity because the caseworker did not violate clearly established law of which a reasonable official would have known.

Case link: <http://laws.lp.findlaw.com/10th/044197.html>



Consent Decrees

U.S. 5th Circuit Court of Appeals: Frazar v. Ladd (07/20/06 - No. 05-41798)

In a suit to improve Texas' administration of a Medicaid program to afford health care to a certified class of indigent children, denial of a motion to terminate or modify a consent decree entered in 1996 is affirmed where the district court did not abuse its discretion in holding that defendants failed to show a significant change in factual circumstances to warrant terminating the consent decree entirely or for urban areas only.

Case link: <http://caselaw.lp.findlaw.com/data2/circs/5th/0541798cv0p.pdf>



State Law, Foster Care

Pennsylvania: In the Interest of S.J. *Cite: No. 1593 WDA 2004; 2006 PA Super 195; 2006 Pa. Super. LEXIS 1680 (Pa. Super. Ct. July 28, 2006)*

The Superior Court of Pennsylvania upheld the trial court's order that the Allegheny County Office of Children, Youth and Families (OCYF) pay a stipend to an eighteen-year-old foster child while she attended college. The court held that the trial court had authority under 42 PA.CON.S.TAT.ANN § 6351 and 42

PA.CON.S.TAT.ANN. § 6302 to make such an order. The student had been declared dependent and prior to her eighteenth birthday requested that her case remain open so she could receive aid from OCYF while in college. The appellate court held that under § 6302 a child may remain in the care of OCYF until the age of twenty-one as long as she remains in a "course of instruction," which includes college classes. Furthermore, § 6351 allows the court to issue orders which preserve the mental, physical, and moral wellbeing of the child. The court held that it may therefore require OCYF to pay the student a fourteen-dollar-per-day stipend to assist in everyday living expenses, eighty percent of which will be reimbursed by the commonwealth.

Case link: http://www.courts.state.pa.us/OpPosting/Superior/out/s16029_05.pdf

Washington: State of Washington v. G.A.H. *Cite: No. 57767-1-1, 2006 Wash. App. LEXIS 1282 (Wash. App. Ct. June 19, 2006)* The Court of Appeals of Washington, Division One overturned the juvenile court's order placing a minor criminal offender in foster care. The child pled guilty to charges, including to the assault of his mother. The juvenile court ruled that he should be released to the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) and placed in foster care. The Court of Appeals ruled that the juvenile court could not order the child into foster care because DSHS was not a party to the proceedings and therefore the juvenile court did not have personal jurisdiction over DSHS. Furthermore, the juvenile court was not authorized under RCW 13.40 to make determinations of dependency in juvenile offender proceedings.

Case link: <http://www.courts.wa.gov/opinions/?fa=opinions.opindisp&docid=577671MAJ>

Ohio: In the Matter of A. V. *Cite: No. 05AP-789, 2006 Ohio 3149; 2006 Ohio App. LEXIS 3021 (Oh. App. Ct. June 22, 2006)* The Court of Appeals of Ohio, Tenth Appellate District, Franklin County, affirmed a trial court's decision that awarded legal custody to foster parents rather than a qualified relative. The court held that the trial court did not abuse its discretion by finding that considerations related to stability and continuity of care were overriding factors notwithstanding the fact that both parties seeking legal custody appear to be suitable custodians.

Case link: <http://www.sconet.state.oh.us/rod/newpdf/10/2006/2006-ohio-3149.pdftodians>

Case Summaries adapted from: ♦ FindLaw and ♦ Nat'l Center for Adoption Law and Policy

STAFF

Editor:

Sharon McCartney, J.D.

Contributing Editor:

Ursula Gilmore, M.A.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

S. Pettaway, President

D. Langer, Vice President

W. Lewis, Treasurer

M. DeVault S. Whitlock

S. Ford S. Knight

E. High T. Spartz-Campbell

Secretariat Services provided by:

American Public

Human Services Association

810 First Street, NE, Suite 500

Washington, D.C. 20002

(202) 682-0100

We welcome comments or contributions.

Bridges is published biannually by the Association of Administrators of the Interstate Compact on Adoption and Medical Assistance (AAICAMA). AAICAMA was created to administer and support the Interstate Compact on Adoption and Medical Assistance. States that are members of AAICAMA work together to improve and enhance services to special needs adoptive children and their families. The Association and its activities, including this newsletter, are supported by a federal grant (No. 90-CO-0999) awarded to AAICAMA by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS).

The views that are presented in this newsletter are those of the authors, and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the AAICAMA, APHSA or HHS/ACF/ACYF/Children's Bureau.

We welcome reproduction and/or distribution of the information in ***Bridges***. Please attribute the source as follows: *From **Bridges**, a publication of the Association of Administrators of the Interstate Compact on Adoption and Medical Assistance, c/o APHSA, 810 First Street, NE, Washington, DC 20002.*

November 2006 is National Adoption Month

*You don't have to be perfect
to be a perfect parent.*

*There are thousands of teens in foster care
who would love to put up with you.*

Answering the Call



For materials and complete information go to:

<http://www.childwelfare.gov/adoption/nam/>

810 FIRST STREET, N.E., SUITE 500, WASHINGTON, D.C. 20002-4267

ASSOCIATION OF ADMINISTRATORS OF THE INTERSTATE
COMPACT ON ADOPTION AND MEDICAL ASSISTANCE, INC.

