



**NATIONAL RESOURCE CENTER
FOR FOSTER CARE
& PERMANENCY PLANNING**

at the Hunter College
School of Social Work

INFORMATION PACKET: *Child, Youth and Family Advocacy*

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INFORMATION PACKET
Child, Youth and Family Advocacy

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INTRODUCTION

The *Code of Ethics* of the National Association of Social Workers identifies advocacy as a “primary mission”, as stated in the preamble that the social worker’s duty is “to enhance human well-being and help meet the basic human needs of all people, with particular attention to the need and empowerment of people who are vulnerable, oppressed, and living in poverty” (Mattaini, 2002, App. A). But, yet, with the current trend of social welfare programs being geared towards “billable hours”, “the one social work strategy that might protect the broader interests of at-risk populations – advocacy- is not among the billable services” (Lens, 2000).

We, as social workers, must maintain and focus on expanding the services available for children, youth and families by standing firm on our ethics and values. Though even progressive graduate social work programs as in Hunter College of Social Work demand students to focus on one particular area of focus, social work practitioners should attempt to incorporate administration, case work, group work and community organizing into their every day practice. Also, within the practice of advocacy, one main area that continues to require much development is in cultural awareness and diversity awareness. The common practice of denying differences and focusing on similarities between groups within society as defined by race, class, gender, religion and sexual orientation, “protects those holding it from awareness of their ignorance of others and the necessity of exerting energy and effort to understand and bridge the differences” (Pinderhughes, 1989). Throughout all of the issues of concern for children, youth and families, we need to build a cultural awareness.

Policy initiatives such as those described later in this packet have been proposed and implemented in attempts to address the needs of children, youth and families. However, more advocacy must be done to make sure that these initiatives are carried forth and continued to be in effect. When discussing out of home arrangements for children and youth, a new perspective on prevention is being addressed and requires further attention. Issues such as poverty, limited health care access, violence and drug abuse, contribute to a child’s being at-risk of being placed into an out-of-home living arrangement.

When introduced to the foster care system, many children are not aware of their rights. They undergo psychological trauma and have to deal with separation from their birth parent and possibly their siblings. Children who enter the foster care and adoption system within the United States develop mental health and overall health problems that require attention by advocates to alleviate. Then, as children age within the foster care system, as youth, they are “let go” of as they “age out” at the age of 18; meaning, they are left with no formal support network. Advocacy groups point out that the youth are not given appropriate transition focused support and thereby a common result for these youth include criminal behavior, substance abuse, homelessness, poverty, mental and physical health problems. There are a few mentoring programs in existence but more needs to be done to provide transition services

and long-term support to these youth who have come out of the out-of-home living arrangement. Other advocacy issues regarding families include recruitment and retention of foster families as well as adoptive families.

It is important for all to be more active as advocates for the needs of children, youth and families not only by understanding the issues at stake but also to join in the struggle for change by actively participating in lobby groups, organizations, and being informed regarding current issues. A few highly recommended advocacy sites include the Child Welfare League of America, National Center for Resources Family Support, and National Foster Care Coalition. These sites provide in-depth explanation of current issues of concern for children, youth and families.

The goal of social work practitioners should be in offering empowerment skills knowledge to the clients and assisting them towards eventually becoming a self-advocate. Meanwhile, with regards to policy building and initiatives as delineated later in this packet, social work practitioners should foster awareness in the community and lobby for change towards expanding the supports needed for children, youth and families at risk. Advocates need to focus on a cause, monitor the environment, plan a goal, build a coalition, direct a message, utilize media and move forward (Lens, 2000). “The process is continuous; policy is re-visited- always be ready” (Lens, 2000)

Contained in this Information Packet on *Children, Youth and Family Advocacy* are:

Fact Sheet
Identification of Best Practices/ Advocacy Tips
Review of Policies and Legislation
References and Suggested Readings
Web Resources

Child, Youth and Family Advocacy
Fact Sheet – Statistics

Child Advocacy Issues

At the end of 1996, approximately 530,912 children lived in out-of-home care, including foster care, kinship care, or residential care. Of these, 140,000 were placed in licensed foster homes (Crosson-Tower, chap. 11).

Infants and children under four years old, particularly those with medical complications and or physical and mental limitations, comprise the fastest-growing group of children in need of care. Physical health problems affect 30 to 40% of children in the child welfare system. These include delayed growth and development, HIV infection, neurological disabilities, malnutrition and asthma. One study revealed that children in out-of-home care check into hospitals more frequently than other low-income children and stay for longer periods of time (<http://www.casey.org/>).

Youth Advocacy Issues

Experts estimate that between 30 and 85 % of youngsters in foster care have significant emotional disturbances. Adolescents living with foster parents or in group homes have about four times the rate of serious psychiatric disorders as those living with their own families. Mental health issues are often not reimbursed through Medicaid coverage provided to children from foster care. Although states now have the option to extend Medicaid coverage to these young people through the Foster Care Independence Act of 1999, they are not mandated to do so (<http://www.casey.org/>).

Each year in America over 20,000 youth reach their 18th birthday and “age out” of foster care”. Too often this means an end to the ongoing support and guidance of caring adults. Many of these young people are not ready to assume all the challenges and responsibilities of adulthood, yet they are expected to do so. Individuals as well as public and private sector organizations must join together to assure educational opportunities, job training, safe and affordable housing, and permanent connections to caring adults for those young people making the difficult transition to adulthood. The end of foster care should never mean the end of a community’s caring for our young people (<http://www.nfcap.org/>).

As these youth age-out, studies show just 50 % will have graduated high school, only 13 % will go on to college or vocational training, 52% will be unemployed, and 25% will be homeless for one or more nights. Without the support of a family, youth who leave foster care are left on their own to obtain further educational and employment preparation, as well as health and mental health care and housing (<http://www.cwla.org/>).

(Taken from Child Welfare League of America, <http://www.cwla.org/>)

National Fact Sheet 2003 : Making Children a National Priority
America’s Children At-a-Glance

	Number of Children*
Children referred for possible child abuse and neglect, 2000	2,796,000
Children substantiated or indicated as abused or neglected, 2000	879,000
Children who died as a result of abuse or neglect, 2000	1,236
Children in foster care on September 30, 2000	547,415
Children waiting to be adopted on September 30, 2000	133,057
Grandparents raising grandchildren, 2000	2,431,349
Children who ran away from a foster care placement, 2000	15,811
Children who ran away from home, 1999	1,682,900
Children lacking medical insurance, 2001	8,500,000
Children younger than 6 below the poverty level, 2000	4,000,000

* Number of children estimated

Children Need Protection and Care

Child Abuse and Neglect

- An estimated 879,000 children were victims of abuse and neglect in 2000; 62.8% of victims suffered neglect, 19.3% were physically abused, 10.1% were sexually abused, and 7.7% were emotionally or psychologically maltreated.
- Children younger than 3 had the highest rate of maltreatment in 2000-15.7 per 1,000 children.
- Studies show that child abuse occurs in 30%-60% of domestic violence cases that involve families with children.

Foster Care and Adoption

- Of the 556,000 children in foster care in 2000, approximately 24% lived with their relatives while in care. Ten percent of the children exiting foster care (26,000) went to live with relatives. Nearly 10,600, or 21%, of adopted children were adopted by relatives.
- An estimated 57% of the children in foster care in 2000 were reunited with their parents or principal caregivers after an average stay in out-of-home care of 22.7 months.
- In 2000, the average age of children in foster care was 10 years. The average length of time in foster care was 33 months.
- Forty percent of the children in foster care are black non-Hispanic, 38% are white non-Hispanic, 15% are Hispanic, and 2% are Native American. More than 40% of the children waiting to be adopted are black non-Hispanic, 34% are white non-Hispanic, 13% are Hispanic, and 2% are Native American.
- Children younger than 6 represent 28% of the children in foster care. Youth age 16 and older make up 18% of children in care.
- Returning home is not an option for approximately 131,000 children in the foster care system who were free for adoption in 2000. Almost 50% of these children are children of color.
- In 2000, 51,000 children were adopted from the public child welfare system, a 10% increase from the 46,000 adopted in 1999.

Domestic Violence

- Between 1.5 million and 3.3 million children witness some form of violence at home each year.
- Children from violent homes exhibit more aggressive and delinquent behavior than do children from nonviolent homes.
- Between 50% and 70% of men who abuse their female partners also abuse their partners' children.

Children Need Strong Families

Child Care and Head Start

In 2001, 68% of single mothers with children younger than 6, and 60% of married mothers with children younger age 6, were in the labor force; 79% of single mothers with children ages 6-17, and 74% of married mothers with children ages 6-17, were in the labor force.

Only 14% of the 15.7 million children eligible for federal child care subsidies in 2000 received care. In 2000, almost 6 million low-income children, whose family's income was below 85% of their state's median income, were ineligible for child care assistance-primarily because of low state income eligibility limits.

Nearly 16 million children younger than 13 living in low-income working families are likely to need child care. But only one in seven children eligible for child care assistance under federal law receives it.

Because the demand for child care is so great, most states do not keep waiting lists of families eligible to receive assistance. Of the 19 states that do, thousands of families have been added to these lists in the last two years. Most state child care programs could not serve all the families who needed help even before the current budget crises.

In 20 states, a family of three earning just \$25,000 a year does not qualify for child care assistance.

Since 1965, Head Start has served more than 18 million children and their families, providing preschool-age children with education, nutritious meals, and access to health, mental health, and social services that support their early development.

Head Start received \$6.5 billion in 2002, a 5% increase from 2001.

Kinship Care

In 1999, 2.3 million children lived in relatives' homes without their parents in what is known as kinship care. Nearly 57% of these children were cared for by grandparents, 22% by an aunt or uncle.

Teenagers represent the largest proportion of children in kinship care (44%). Of children in kinship care, 44% are black non-Hispanic, 38% are white non-Hispanic, 15% are Hispanic, and 3% are of another ethnicity.

Almost two-thirds-64%-of children in kinship care live in families with incomes below 200% of the federal poverty level; nearly one-third, 31%, live in families with incomes below 100% of federal poverty level.

In-Home Services

In 1999, some 550,000 children participated in home visiting programs nationwide. Several studies of a national voluntary home visiting program showed that at least 95% of participants had no reports of child maltreatment 12-18 months after completing the program.

In 2000, family preservation programs served 314,766 children in 27 states and 163,952 families in 29 states, and family support programs served 380,507 children in 22 states and 343,067 families in 27 states.

Families Face Serious Problems

Substance Abuse

- In 1996, approximately 8.3 million children lived with parents who abused alcohol and other drugs.
- In 2000, 19 million children (28.6%) birth to 17 years-approximately one in four-had been exposed to alcoholism, alcohol abuse, or both in their families at some time in their lives.
- Seven out of 10 cases of child abuse and neglect are exacerbated by a parent's abuse of alcohol or other drugs. In most cases, the parent's substance abuse is a longstanding problem of at least five years' duration.
- Approximately 67% of parents with children in the child welfare system require substance abuse treatment, but child welfare agencies are able to provide treatment for only 31%.
- Children whose parents abuse drugs and alcohol are almost three times as likely to be abused and four times likely to be neglected than are children of parents who are not substance abusers.
- Children whose families do not receive appropriate treatment for alcohol and other drug abuse are more likely to end up in foster care, remain in foster care longer, and reenter foster care once they have returned home than are children whose families do receive treatment.
- Women who stayed in comprehensive substance abuse treatment longer than three months were more likely to remain alcohol and drug free than were those who left within the first three months of treatment (68% vs. 48%).
- Of mothers who received comprehensive substance abuse treatment, 75% had physical custody of one or more children six months after discharge from treatment, compared with 54% who had custody of any children shortly before entering treatment.

Health Care

- Of the 40 million people enrolled in Medicaid, more than half are children. One in four children receive Medicaid services.
- Although 20.7 million children received Medicaid coverage in 1998, they accounted for only 14.9% of the program's expenditures.
- The number of children enrolled in the State Children's Health Insurance Program grew from 3.3 million in 2000 to 4.6 million in FY 2001, an increase of 1.3 million or 38%.
- From 1980 to 2000, the U.S. infant mortality rate dropped 46%, from 12.6 to 6.8 per 1,000 live births. Compared with 24 other economically developed nations and the European Union, however, the United States had the second highest infant mortality rate.
- Through December 2001, 9,074 children younger than 13 were reported as having AIDS. Of these children, 5,257 (58%) were reported to have died.

Mental Health

- The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services estimates 75%-80% of children who need mental health services do not receive it.
- More than 80% of children in foster care have developmental, emotional, or behavioral problems. Mental health services are repeatedly identified as their number one health care need.
- Suicide is the third leading cause of death among teens and young adults. In 2000, 3,994 teens and young adults age 15-24 committed suicide-one teen or young adult every 2 hours and 12 minutes.
- Severe mental illness is highly correlated with alcohol and other drug dependence or abuse. Among adults with severe mental illnesses in 2001, 20.3% were dependent on or abused alcohol or other drugs. The rate among adults without severe mental illness was only 6.3%.
- In 1996, nearly 21% of children ages 9-17 had a diagnosable mental or substance abuse disorder associated with at least minimal impairment.
- In 1996, 4 million youth suffered from a major mental illness that resulted in significant impairments at home, at school, and with peers.
- Detained youth are among those with the highest risk for mental illness. A recent federal study of teens in juvenile detention in Cook County (Chicago), Illinois, found that almost 66% of boys and nearly 75% of girls have one or more psychiatric disorders. About half of these youth also abused or were addicted to drugs, and more than 40% had disruptive behavioral disorders.

Teen Pregnancy

Nearly 4 out of 10 young women get pregnant at least once before age 20-1 million girls a year.

The national teen birthrate in 2000 was 48.5 births per 1,000 women ages 15-19, the lowest rate ever recorded in the United States, yet the highest teen birthrate among developed countries.

Parents Who Are Incarcerated

- More than 1 million parents were incarcerated in prisons or local jails in 2000, affecting 2.3 million children.
- From 1991 to 2000, the number of mothers in prison grew by 87%, while the number of incarcerated fathers increased by 61%.
- Most fathers (57%) and mothers (54%) in state prisons say they have never had a visit from their children.

Homelessness and Housing

- In 2002, families with children accounted for 41% of the overall homeless population.
- From 2001 to 2002, requests for emergency shelter by homeless families with children increased 20%.

- An estimated 2.3 million people experience homelessness at some point each year, including nearly 1 million children. Almost three-quarters of the homeless population live in urban areas.
- Of the children with a homeless parent, 53% are male, and 47% are female. More than 60% of these children are 8 years old or younger.
- Approximately 12% of homeless children wind up in the foster care system.

Youth Need Opportunities for Positive Development

Afterschool Supervision and Juvenile Delinquency

Students who spend at least one to four hours a week in extracurricular activities are 60% less likely to drop out of school by 12th grade than are their peers who do not participate in such programs.

Children who attend quality afterschool programs have better grades, peer relations, emotional adjustment, conflict resolution skills, and conduct in school than do their peers who are not in afterschool programs.

Four million children ages 13-14 spend time unsupervised on a regular basis.

Most juvenile violence occurs after school from 3:00 PM to 7:00 PM.

The juvenile murder arrest rate fell 74% from its peak in 1993 to 2000, when it reached its lowest level since at least the 1960s.

Between 1980 and 2000, the arrest rate for all offenses reflected a 35% increase for juvenile females and a decline of 11% for juvenile males.

Homeless and Runaway Youth

The homeless youth population is 300,000 each year.

In 1999, 150,700 youth were arrested for running away from home. Females account for most juvenile arrests for running away (59%).

In 1998, some 75,000 youth were served by programs under the Runaway and Homeless Youth Act, including shelters, transitional living programs, and street outreach.

In 1999, one agency study indicated that 80% of homeless mothers who are minors were unable to find long-term stable living arrangements and could need a Second Chance Home or similar living arrangement.

Child Poverty Remains High

Child Poverty

- In 2001, 16.3% of all children younger than 18 lived in poverty-more than any other age group of Americans.
- In 2001, the child poverty rate for black and Hispanic children younger than 6 was twice that of white children. White children had a rate of 15% in poverty; black children, 35%; and Hispanic children, 29%.
- Of the 11.7 million children living below the poverty level in 2001, 64% were white and 30% were black; 31% were Hispanic, which includes both black and white.
- In 2001, 1.3 million more people were poor than in 2000-32.9 million versus 31.6 million. The number of poor families increased from 6.4 million in 2000 (8.7% of all families) to 6.8 million in 2001 (9.2%).
- In 2000, 7% of America's children lived in extreme poverty, in families with incomes below half the poverty line (\$7,134 for a family of three).
- More than one in four families with young children earn less than \$25,000 a year; a family with both parents working full-time at the minimum wage earns only \$21,400 a year.
- In 1999, 3.8% of children lived in households experiencing food insecurity with moderate or severe hunger, 3.3% experienced food insecurity with moderate hunger, and 0.5% experienced severe hunger.
- From 1999 to 2001, the prevalence of food insecurity rose from 10.1% to 10.7%, and the prevalence of food insecurity with hunger rose from 3.0% to 3.3%.
- In 2001, the National School Lunch Program provided lunches to an average of 27 million children each school day. About 57% of the lunches served were free or at a reduced price.

Temporary Assistance for Needy Families

- In 2002, 2,024,875 families received cash assistance through TANF-including 5,008,034 individual recipients, most of whom were children.
- In 2002, about 5 million individuals and 2 million families received TANF benefits, a decline of 5.1% and 3.6%, respectively, from the previous year.
- Relatives caring for children comprise 9% of the TANF caseload.
- The value of the federal TANF block grant has eroded more than 11% since its creation in 1996 because funding has not been adjusted for inflation.
- Since the welfare reform law was enacted in 1996, the number of individual welfare recipients has declined by 56%; the number of families has decreased by 52%.

For more child welfare statistics, visit the National Data Analysis System at <http://ndas.cwla.org>.

Child, Youth and Family Advocacy
Identification of Best Practices/ Advocacy Tips
Taken From: Child Welfare League of America

The Child Welfare League of America's public policy division works with its member agencies, state and Congressional leaders, and the Administration to monitor public and private sector policies and promote action that will benefit vulnerable children and youths, their families, and their communities.

Consumers, advocates, and legislators must all become informed and take action on pending national and state changes to virtually all public assistance programs for poor children and their families, including income assistance, Medicaid, and housing support.

The following are suggested strategies that you and your organization may want to use on a short- or long-term basis. Choose strategies that you can do and believe will send the most effective message. Most importantly, keep plugging away! *Your voice can make a difference.*

Mobilize State and Community Contacts

1. **Send (mail, fax, & e-mail) an alert** to spread your message far and wide. Urge recipients of the alert to send it to their networks, boards, staff, coalitions, volunteers, and media contacts.

Briefly and clearly state what action you want.
2. **Set up and activate telephone trees** to get the message out.
3. **Get on the agenda** for community group meetings and statewide conferences (neighborhood associations; civic groups -- Kiwanis, Junior Leagues, etc.; professional meetings of social workers, medical and legal professionals).
4. **Work with other interested individuals and organizations** to raise the volume of concern.

Educate Members of Congress and the President

1. **Find out who your members of Congress are.**

Call your community's voter registrar, or Democratic or Republican party headquarters.

Call Capitol Hill Information and just provide your zip code.
 - o Senate operator, 202/224-3121
 - o House operator, 202/225-3121
 - o FYI--The White House switchboard is 202/456-1414; the comment line: 202/456-1111; the fax: 202/456-2461; e-mail address: president@whitehouse.gov
2. **Visit your Representative and Senators** in their district offices.

Call your Representative's and Senators' local offices in your area. Inform the receptionist that you are a constituent and would like to meet to discuss supporting families and protecting abused and neglected children.
3. **When your Members of Congress are in your community, at an event or just back home, introduce yourself and let them know that you are concerned** about protecting children and supporting families.
4. **Write and ask your friends and colleagues to write too.** (You can always write as an individual. If you communicate on behalf of your organization or want to use its stationery, be sure to check on and adhere to its policies.) In your letter, tell your Members of Congress about the needs of vulnerable children and families in your community.

Address letters as follows: The Honorable (insert full name), United States Senate, Washington, DC 20510, or The Honorable (insert full name), U. S. House of Representatives, Washington, DC 20515.

5. **Invite your members of Congress** to visit your organization to speak at meetings about the issues of concern and their positions. Let them see the children and your programs firsthand.
6. **Meet with your state elected officials.** Ask them how your state would fare under proposed changes. Urge them to speak out against harmful proposals.

Work with the Media

1. **Organize press conferences and briefings** on protecting abused and neglected children.
 - Highlight new studies or data documenting how your community would be affected by proposed changes.
 - Showcase positive reforms in your state and community and what might happen to them if proposed policies are enacted.
 2. **Alert the media to events** that would provide good visuals, including meetings with your Representative or Senators. Invite media representatives to your programs.
 3. **Write Op-eds and Letters to the Editor of your local newspaper.** Time your op-eds and letters to correspond with a holiday, a high visibility issue, or an event that highlights child abuse and neglect.
 4. **Meet with the Editorial Board of your local newspaper.** Use this meeting to turn the editors' attention to protecting children.
 5. **Call in to radio talk shows** that are discussing welfare, the Contract with America, block grants or problems facing children and make your case.
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Additional Recommended Resources:

Guide to Special Education Advocacy for Resources Families

(www.casey.org/cnc/support_retention/special_education_advocacy.htm)

Child, Youth and Family Advocacy
Review of Policies and Legislation

(Information drawn from resources offered by Child Welfare League of America, www.cwla.org)

Promoting Safe and Stable Families Amendments

On January 17, 2002, President Bush signed into law the Promoting Safe and Stable Families Amendments of 2001. The new law extends the Promoting Safe and Stable Families (PSSF) program through 2006. The law also creates a new state grant program to provide educational and training vouchers for youth that age out of foster care, as well as a mentoring program for children with incarcerated parents. Promoting Safe and Stable Families Program (PSSF) is one of the very few sources of federal funding that supports prevention services. PSSF helps states fund child welfare prevention services and supports vulnerable families. These funds are used by states to fund four categories of services: adoption support, family preservation, family reunification, and family support services. Currently, federal funding is \$375 million. Both the President and the Senate Appropriations Committee have agreed to increase this to \$505 million in FY 2003. The U.S. House of Representative took no action on appropriations last year. Increasing PSSF funding levels is especially important this year because state budgets are under great stress and many social services are being cut or eliminated.

Currently, there is no federal funding for educational and training vouchers for youth aging out of foster care and youth adopted from foster care at age 16 or older. The President's FY 2003 budget proposed \$60 million for vouchers. Congress has not completed action on the appropriations for federal fiscal year 2003 despite the fact that the fiscal year is over 3 months old. Congress must give final approval to this first time funding before they start to debate funding for fiscal year 2004. If not it may be another year before there is an opportunity to provide this critical resources for older foster and adopted youth to get the training and educational support they need for a successful transition to adulthood.

Act to Leave No Child Behind

The President's FY 2004 budget announces a new legislative proposal to give all states an option to participate in an alternative financing system for child welfare, providing for more flexibility in using their federal child welfare funds. This year, Senator Christopher Dodd (D-CT) and Representative George Miller (D-CA) will reintroduce the Act to Leave No Child Behind, an omnibus bill addressing the unmet health care, educational, housing, income support, child protection, youth development, and other needs of our nation's children. Title VIII of the Act to Leave No Child Behind is a comprehensive proposal to restructure federal financing so states can provide children and families in the child welfare system with the assistance they need. Title VIII provides additional federal funding for preventive, crisis, permanency, and post-permanency services for children and parents or other caregivers when they first come to the attention of the child welfare system, when children enter foster care, and when children leave care to be united with their families, adopted, or placed permanently with grandparents or other relatives. Title VIII would also expand eligibility for foster care, adoption assistance, and other services, as well as add funding for children in kinship guardianship arrangements.

SCHIP, Medicaid and EPSDT

Ensuring the health of children and families involved in child welfare is of paramount importance. Health coverage for all children and their families, through Medicaid, SCHIP, or private insurance, can prevent many children from ever needing the child welfare system. Children in the foster care system, like all children, need well-child care, immunizations, and treatment for acute illnesses. But they also require greater attention due to their high risk for health, mental health, and developmental problems.

Medicaid is a joint federal-state program; each state has extensive flexibility to set its own eligibility standards, benefits packages, payment rates, and program administration, under broad federal guidelines. The result is 56 unique Medicaid programs (one for each state, territory, and the District of Columbia). SCHIP was created in 1997 by Congress to target uninsured children younger than 19 with family incomes below 200% of the poverty level and who are not eligible for Medicaid or covered by private insurance. States can expand coverage to uninsured low-income children through a separate state program, by broadening Medicaid, or both. If states use the Medicaid option, children become entitled to full Medicaid coverage. In implementing SCHIP, 17 states have expanded Medicaid, 16 have created separate state programs, and 18 have combination plans. Effective outreach and streamlining enrollment are key to both Medicaid's and SCHIP's success in improving the coverage of low-income children.

EPSDT entitles children younger than 21 and enrolled in Medicaid to receive comprehensive and preventive health care services. The extent to which children in Medicaid across the country are receiving EPSDT services is not fully known, but the evidence indicates many are not receiving these services.

Child, Youth and Family Advocacy
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Child, Youth and Family Advocacy
Web Resources

Advocacy Institute

<http://www.advocacy.org/definition.htm>

This web site, run by the Advocacy Institute, is a social justice organization. Their web site has great examples of successful advocacy efforts, general information about advocacy, and a great publications section.

Canadian After Foster Care

<http://afterfostercare.tripod.com/>

This site is for people who grew up in the Canadian foster care system. Has lots of information, personal experiences, poetry, etc.

Casey Family Programs

<http://www.casey.org>

This site is for people who are interested in gaining understanding regarding the issues that arise concerning foster care. This is a highly recommended site for people interested in better understanding advocacy issues at stake currently.

Child Advocacy – State Resources

<http://www.childadvocate.net/stateresources.htm>

This site has state specific information about organizations that work on behalf of children.

Children's Defense Fund

<http://www.childrensdefense.org>

The Children's Defense Fund provides a strong, effective voice for all the children of America who cannot vote, lobby, or speak for themselves. CDF began in 1973 and is a private, nonprofit organization supported by foundations, corporation grants and individual donations. Their mission is to Leave No Child Behind® and to ensure every child a Healthy Start, a Head Start, a Fair Start, a Safe Start, and a Moral Start in life and successful passage to adulthood with the help of caring families and communities.

Child Welfare League of America

<http://www.cwla.org>

The Child Welfare League of America (CWLA) is the nation's oldest and largest membership-based child welfare organization. CWLA strives to advance national standards of excellence and sound public policies on behalf of the three million abused, neglected, and vulnerable children served by its 1200 public and nonprofit member agencies. CWLA is also the largest publisher of child welfare materials in North America.

Connect for Kids

<http://www.connectforkids.org>

Funded by the Annie E. Casey Foundation and the David and Lucile Packer Foundation, Connect for Kids helps adults make their communities better places for families and children. The web site offers a place on the Internet for adults-parents, grandparents, educators, policymakers and others-who want to become more active citizens, from volunteering to voting with kids in mind.

Former Foster Kids Place

<http://www.formerfosterkidsplace.org>

This page is for alumni of the foster care system. It has links to personal stories, support groups for alumni, and a link to a discussion group about suggested reforms to foster care.

Formerly Fostered

<http://adoption.about.com/cs/fostadults>

This is the about.com network's listing of foster care alumni sites, including John Dunn's site, this site, Foster Children United, Canadian alumni sites, and more.

Foster Care Youth United

<http://www.youthcomm.org/Publications/FCYU.htm>

Foster Care Youth United is a printed and online publication supported by Youth Communication. It is a teen written magazine about foster care, adoption, living in the system, independent living, etc. There is also a good art section with visual art, poetry, fiction, etc. It's a great resource for people either still in care or people currently transitioning out of foster care.

FosterClub

<http://www.fosterclub.com/grownups/index.html>

This web site is for adults who are advocates of kids currently in care. Advocacy news, resource lists, message board, and foster care statistics are just some of the great things you'll find on this site.

Hakikazi.org

<http://www.hakikazi.org/basics.htm>

This is a Tanzanian web site which explains what advocates do and how they advocate for change. It talks about different kinds of advocacy and ways that you can make a change. This site also has information on planning for change, how to influence policy makers, and how there are many different approaches to advocacy.

In the Best Interest of the Child

<http://www.inthebestinterestofthechild.com>

This site is produced by Quinn Alston, a member of our Curriculum Design Team for Learning Connections and an alumnus of care (see "Better Together": http://fostercarealumni.casey.org/better_together.asp in the Events section for more info). According to the site, "Quinn uses his dynamic speaking ability and years of foster care experiences both as a child that grew up in the foster care system in Washington D.C. and also as an employee of the very system that raised him. Quinn's experiences allow him to deliver a truthful, in-sightful and extremely informative presentation or workshop."

Jim Casey Youth Opportunities

<http://www.jimcaseyouth.org>

The Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative (JCYOI) is a major national effort to help youth in foster care make successful transitions to adulthood. JCYOI brings together the people and resources needed to help youth make the connections they need to education, employment, healthcare, housing, and supportive personal and community relationships.

The Mockingbird Society

<http://www.mockingbirdsociety.org>

Based in Seattle, The Mockingbird Society is an independent, non-profit organization that is dedicated to improving the safety, quality of life and future of the children and adolescents living in the Washington State foster care/group home system. They are committed to saving and improving children's lives by providing resources, leadership and expertise to the Washington State foster care/group home system.

National Clearinghouse on Families and Youth

<http://www.ncfy.com>

On this site you will find information on new youth and family related materials and initiatives.

National Foster Care Coalition

<http://www.nationalfostercare.org>

Sponsored by child welfare organizations nationwide, the National Foster Care Coalition (formerly NFCAP, the National Foster Care Awareness Project) is dedicated to raising public awareness, coordinating advocacy efforts, and building alliances that strengthen foster care and community supports to help children and families.

National Parent Information Network

<http://npin.org>

The network provides access to research-based information about the process of parenting, and about family involvement in education. The Web site has a wide variety of very useful links.

National Resource Center for Youth Services

<http://www.nrcys.ou.edu>

The National Resource Center for Youth Services' mission is to "...enhance the quality of life of our nation's at-risk youth and their families by enhancing the quality of human services." This website is a great place to turn for help with timely information about the child welfare system, training tools, technical assistance, conferences, books, and curricula.

Parents Anonymous

<http://www.parentsanonymous-natl.org>

Parents Anonymous, Inc. was founded in 1970 through the extraordinary efforts of a courageous mother seeking help to create a safe and caring home for her family. Working in partnership with her social worker, they launched a national movement to bring help, support.

Parents Resource Network

<http://www.childrensdefense.org/parentresnet.php>

A network of national Web sites created by the Children's Defense Fund that offer parents information on caring for their own children and on getting involved in group efforts to help children in their communities or states.

Positive Parenting

<http://www.positiveparenting.com>

Developed and maintained by a certified parenting instructor and trainer to share information on positive parenting. Features an online parenting newsletter, an index of professional resources for parents and teachers, online resources for parents, and parenting information in English and Spanish.

State Kid.com

<http://www.statekid.com>

This page is owned by George Pollock, an alumnus of care who has published a fictional story about a "state kid". It's a great story, very inspiring, please have a look at the site.