



**NATIONAL RESOURCE CENTER  
FOR FAMILY-CENTERED PRACTICE  
AND PERMANENCY PLANNING**  
at the Hunter College  
School of Social Work



A service of the  
Children's Bureau/ACF/DHHS

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# Permanency Planning Today

From the Desk of

## THE DIRECTOR Gerald P. Mallon, DSW

One of the most striking findings from the first round of Child and Family Service Reviews was the strong positive relationship that was found between caseworker-child visiting and a number of indicators for all three child welfare outcomes in safety, permanency, and well-being.

The importance of caseworker-child visits, and in particular the quality, or content, of visits, has been explored by not just the Children's Bureau and state, local, and tribal child welfare agencies, but also by the National Conference of State Legislatures and the Department of Health and Human Services Office of Inspector General. We at the National Resource Center for Family-Centered Practice and Permanency Planning have been doing our part as well, by developing curricula, hosting a teleconference and maintaining a web page of resources specifically devoted to this important topic.

Congress, too, has recognized the need to promote and support good practice in the area of caseworker visits with children in out-of-home care, providing funding over a five-year period to increase the percent of children receiving regular visits through the Child and Family Services Improvement Act of 2006 (CFSIA).

In my conversations with child welfare administrators, supervisors, and frontline caseworkers around the country, I hear the same question from all of them: How do we improve our practice to ensure that children and youth are visited not just frequently, but by caseworkers who are well-prepared to assess the strengths and needs of children in care, their families, and their caregivers? We have devoted this issue of Permanency Planning Today primarily to this subject, believing



that this is an essential element of casework practice with children in out-of-home care. We have done our best to focus on practical tips for making visits child-friendly and useful in the kind of continuous assessment process needed to ensure both effective temporary care and services and ultimately good outcomes:

- **Dr. Terry Carrilio**, author of a new book, "Home Visiting Strategies," gives recommendations for administrators on planning visiting programs, for supervisors in supporting caseworkers, and workers seeking to improve their approach to case management and visiting.

- NRCFCPPP consultant **Rose Wentz** provides developmentally-appropriate approaches to talking with children who ask difficult questions.

- We have included a Children's Bureau summary of the CFSR findings on worker visiting with parents and children.

The priorities and planning processes for visits between children and caseworkers differ from those for visits between children and their families; however, just as visits between children and caseworkers are essential to well-being and permanency outcomes, it is critical to children's well-being and development that they have the opportunity to maintain relationships with family members and other significant people in their lives through visits. Therefore, we have also included an

# From the Desk of **THE DIRECTOR**

(continued)

excerpt from our webcast in which **Dr. Peg Hess** talks about her extensive research and experience related to visits between children and their families, and the importance of practices such as planning visits and coaching parents as essential to assisting in the achievement of reunification.

Finally, NRCFCPPP consultant **Lucy Salcido Carter**, along with **Cassandra Porter** and **Julia Deckard** from the Indiana Department of Child Services, describe Indiana's Youth Connections Program, which is designed to improve long-term outcomes for older youth by helping them build relationships with caring adults who can support them as they transition out of foster care. While this last article is not specifically about visiting, I challenge us all to think about how regular, quality visits from the beginning of any child's time in out-of-home care could result in a more consistent focus on permanency and well-being, leading to the possibility that this type of effort to connect and prepare older teens may become a thing of the past by building it into our on-going work with all children. I invite you to read this issue, explore the additional resources on our website and, as always, consider the possibilities for training and technical assistance that are available to public and tribal child welfare agencies through the Children's Bureau Training and Technical Assistance Network.

Regards,

Gary  
Permanency Planning Today: Summer 2008

*Gerald P. Mallon, DSW*

## **Promoting Placement Stability and Permanency Through Caseworker/Child Visits**

This curriculum was developed by the National Resource Center for Family-Centered Practice and Permanency Planning in response to the clear indication that the importance of caseworker visits to children in foster care is positively correlated to outcomes for children and families. This one day curriculum is intended to be part of either pre-service or ongoing training within a child welfare organization. It builds on the concepts of attachment, strengths-based assessment and planning, child and youth development, effective interviewing, and organizing contacts. It allows caseworkers to practice some of the skills through role plays and preparatory activities. The seven developmental checklists are tools for caseworkers to use as they begin to more intentionally structure their visits to focus on safety, permanence, and well-being.

[http://www.hunter.cuny.edu/socwork/nrcfcpp/info\\_services/caseworker-visiting.html](http://www.hunter.cuny.edu/socwork/nrcfcpp/info_services/caseworker-visiting.html)



## *Save The Date*

**17<sup>th</sup> National Conference  
on Child Abuse and Neglect**

**March 30 - April 4, 2009  
in Atlanta, GA**

*Focusing on the Future: Strengthening Families and Communities*  
ALL ABSTRACTS MUST BE SUBMITTED ELECTRONICALLY AT  
[WWW.PAL-TECH.COM/WEB.CALLFORPAPERS/](http://WWW.PAL-TECH.COM/WEB.CALLFORPAPERS/)

**THE CHILDREN'S BUREAU'S OFFICE ON CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT (OCAN) OF THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES, ADMINISTRATION ON CHILDREN, YOUTH AND FAMILIES IS PLEASED TO ANNOUNCE**

## **THE 17th NATIONAL CONFERENCE ON CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT**

**March 30 - April 4, 2009  
Atlanta, Georgia**

The Conference theme, "Focusing on the Future: Strengthening Families and Communities," reflects our resolve to ensure that every child enjoys a healthy family life in a nurturing community. It emphasizes the need for prevention and comprehensive services to address co-occurring disorders and highlights evidence-based approaches to improving practice and systems.

### **Goals of the Conference:**

The goals of the 17th National Conference include:

- ▶ Disseminating state-of-the-art information on research, practice, policy, and system reform
- ▶ Facilitating the exchange of information across disciplines and among individuals, groups, and institutions
- ▶ Reaching out to strengthen and sustain collaboration
- ▶ Highlighting the positive contribution of research to practice

### **Who Should Attend:**

The 17th National Conference is designed for child protection workers and administrators, social workers, educators, law enforcement and court professionals, health care practitioners, researchers, child advocates, parents, volunteers, and others committed to ensuring the protection of children.

# VISITING STRATEGIES

## Program Considerations & Practice Recommendations

This article, based on an interview with Dr. Terry Carrilio, provides an overview of some of the recommendations from her book "Home Visiting Strategies" that are applicable to planning programs, supervising workers, utilizing a team approach, and framing and approaching case management and home visits in child welfare.



### Based on an Interview with Dr. Terry Carrilio:

#### What do you recommend administrators consider in planning new programs?

Most program problems are rooted in issues regarding resources – a quality program cannot run on 80% of the funding needed to accomplish its goals. Logistics need to be thought through and advance planning needs to occur in order to

develop a program concept and plan, including an understanding of what the program is about, what it is going to do, and what it will take to do it. It is critical to determine whether the necessary resources, including staff, facilities, and resources for clients, are available to carry out the program effectively; the program should only move forward if it is adequately funded and resourced. Service providers and administrators have a mutual responsibility to one another – the job of the administrators is to provide the resources that service providers need to do the work they are expected to do.

#### Strategies and considerations for planning new programs:

- ... If the agency does not have the resources necessary to operate the program, it should focus first on fundraising.
- ... Program policies that reflect the philosophy and goals of the program and develop and support continuity need to be established.
- ... It is critical that staff members are paid well, receive decent benefits, and have opportunities for professional development and access to a career ladder. By treating staff with respect and managing the program according to its philosophies and values, the agency can support staff in working respectfully and effectively with clients.
- ... The issue of overwhelming caseload size is an administrative problem. Service providers cannot be expected to do a decent job without adequate resources or with an unmanageable caseload. The program needs to hire more staff, or, in the short-term, serve fewer people.
- ... Money is available, but it is not going to our programs. Administrators need to challenge and expose our country's spending patterns and collectively advocate for a shift in priorities regarding where our country's money is going. This involves making a personal decision to take risks in order to really engage the problems that child welfare faces, committing to a vision, and avoiding passive compliance on all levels of program administration and service provision.

**What do you recommend supervisors consider in order to be effective in their roles?** Supervision should reflect the philosophy of the program, encourage autonomy, and provide support and continuity. The supervisor's role with the worker will likely mirror and model the worker's role with the client. The supervisor recognizes the worker's strengths and challenges and helps with the challenges (without criticizing or doing the work for the staff member).

#### Strategies and considerations for effective supervision:

- ... Supervision can be viewed as an investment in workers to help them realize their potential through teaching and mentoring.
- ... Effective supervision takes energy every day. The supervisor cannot be too busy to spend time with the worker and team. It is helpful to have a regularly scheduled supervision meeting time and an open door for emergency and urgent needs.
- ... Supervision is not a therapeutic relationship – it involves working with the person in his or her role.

#### How does using a team approach improve program services?

Programs can improve the quality of their services to clients by utilizing a team approach; a team approach can help keep the focus of work on the process and provide a structure in which staff can support one another.

#### Strategies and considerations for utilizing a team approach:

- ... A team approach can be helpful in mitigating the impact of high worker turnover. For instance, when using a team approach, if the original home visitor is no longer working for the agency, the client has relationships with other people at the agency who can help to maintain continuity in the work they were doing together. The team approach can help to ensure that the focus of the work is on the process and not the person (worker).
- ... In supervising team meetings, the supervisor must be conscious of relationships and dynamics between team members.
- ... If paraprofessionals are utilized by the program, they can be most effective as part of a team or working in pairs for initial engagement. Paraprofessionals continue to play an important role in keeping clients engaged throughout the service relationship, but should not be given sole case management responsibility; it is suggested that paraprofessionals work under close supervision, with a more experienced provider or the team taking responsibility for the case.

#### What strategies can assist workers in their approach to case management and home visiting?

The stages of case management – engagement, assessment, planning, plan implementation, and termination – flow into one another; each step continues to include all of the preceding stages. Engagement, the first step in case management, is central in all of the following steps ...

**Engagement** involves a focus on self-determination and on establishing stability and trust. In order to support the client's autonomy and strengths, the worker needs to listen to what the client has to say (rather than forging ahead with a prescribed plan determined by someone other than the client) and put forward options as to what the worker and client each can do, as well as the likely outcomes of these various paths. In worker-parent home visiting, the main activity is engagement. Engagement is similarly central to worker-child visiting and involves understanding what a child of a particular age wants and needs. Clients will commit more fully to the

# VISITING STRATEGIES

## Interview with Dr. Terry Carrilio (cont'd)

process if they are given the opportunity to “hire” the worker. This means that the worker and client have sorted out what the client really wants to do and have gone through the process of building a plan around what they want to accomplish together.

**Assessment** should involve engaging the client and looking at all dimensions in context, taking into account clients’ ways of thinking about their situations. The worker and client can co-create a picture of the situation and what can happen next, which leads them to setting goals.

**Planning** is a process, which includes engagement and assessment, and can serve as a feedback mechanism, as it involves constant re-assessment, shifting, elaborating, responding to changes, and checking in to be sure that the plan is still what the client wants.

**Plan Implementation** includes steps 1-2-3. Because changes can take place over time and in a client’s life, every time a worker sees a client, (s)he has to re-engage, re-assess, and re-connect in order to find out if there has been any change in where the client is and whether what the worker thought (s)he was going to do is what the client is still prepared to do. Follow through on established plans is very important; if there is a crisis, in order to maintain continuity and when appropriate, it can be helpful to determine whether an action or plan needs to be postponed or altered and explicitly acknowledge the change in plans.

**Termination** At the point in which the worker and client have done what they determined they would do, it is time to prepare for termination. This preparation must be a process. In child welfare, as in other fields, clients may have experienced abandonment or discontinuities. For this reason, it is important to recognize what has been accomplished and to leave the door open for some sort of ongoing relationship, even if it is less consistent, which helps to ease the process of termination. For instance, perhaps the client can call, stop in, or write. It is helpful to let the client know that the staff member will continue to be available to periodically touch base and that they will be able to maintain a connection over time. Clients may need services on and off over time, and these services should be made available. In planning the program, consideration needs to be given to resources that can be made available in this regard.

In “Home Visiting Strategies,” Dr. Terry Carrilio provides recommendations and strategies, such as those discussed in this interview, which can assist service providers, supervisors, and administrators in the field of child welfare in framing and approaching their work most effectively. Programs that are adequately funded and create and foster supportive, respectful environments, including paying workers well, creating time for supervision, providing team support, and encouraging worker-client partnership in case management and planning, will be most effective in meeting clients’ needs and creating positive and collaborative working environments.

## INFORMATION SERVICES FROM THE NRCFCPPP



Beyond the formal training and technical assistance we offer, we are also pleased to be able to offer a number of less formal ways to connect you with the information you need. We invite you to take advantage of some or all of our informational offerings:

### OUR WEBSITE

We offer our own resources as well as links to important resources from other sites on nearly 60 individual topics from A (adoption) to Y (youth voice).

### NRCFCPPP Weekly Update

An electronic weekly newsletter provided at no charge to subscribers. Sign up on our home page at [www.nrcfcppp.org](http://www.nrcfcppp.org).

### TRAINING CURRICULA in English/Spanish

Training materials on a variety of topics, all downloadable for free.

### QUARTERLY WEBCASTS

Focusing on a wide range of family-centered practice and permanency planning related issues, these are broadcast live and then archived on our website.

### PERMANENCY PLANNING TODAY

This publication, our semi-annual newsletter, shines the spotlight on national promising and best practices in the field. It is a web-based publication archived on our website.

### TELECONFERENCE SERIES

Teleconferences for State foster care and adoption managers: focusing on a wide range of family-centered practice and permanency planning related issues.

# Worker Visiting with Parents and with Children: Findings from the Child and Family Services Reviews

Significant analysis of the findings of the first round of the Child and Family Services Reviews (CFSR) can be found on the Children's Bureau website at <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb/cwmonitoring/results/index.htm>  
To highlight the importance of worker-parent and worker-child visits, information has been culled from several previously compiled reports and summarized below.

During the CFSR 52 reviews from 2001 to 2004, there were 2,569 cases reviewed. Changes were made in the case review instrument after the FY 2001 reviews, which resulted in the decision to exclude cases reviewed during the FY 2001 CFSR from many of the analyses in reports developed about the first round. CFSR cases included 1,477 cases in which children were in foster care at some time during the CFSR period under review. There also were 1,092 "in-home" cases. In-home cases are cases that were open child welfare cases at some time during the CFSR period under review, the child remained in the home, and no children in the family were in foster care during the period under review.

## Well-Being Outcome 1

**Families have enhanced capacity to provide for children's needs. Measured by 4 items:**

ITEM 17

Needs/services of child, parents, & foster parents

ITEM 18

Child/family involvement in case planning

ITEM 19

Worker visits with child

ITEM 20

Worker visits with parents

Analysis of the cases reviewed in the 35 States with CFSRs from 2002 through 2004 found statistically significant associations between "strength" ratings on each of the 4 performance indicators used to evaluate Well Being Outcome 1 and "substantially achieving" both of the permanency outcomes. The timely achievement of permanency and preservation of children's connections while in foster care were supported by positive case ratings on:

- ♦ **Services to children, parents, and foster parents**
- ♦ **Case involvement of parents in case planning**
- ♦ **Caseworker visits with children**
- ♦ **Caseworker visits with parents**

## Permanency Outcome 1

**Children have permanency and stability in their living situations. Measured by 6 items:**

ITEM 5

Foster care re-entry

ITEM 6

Stability of foster care placements

ITEM 7

Permanency goal for child

ITEM 8

Reunification, guardianship, & placement with relatives

ITEM 9

Adoption

ITEM 10

Other planned living arrangement

Of the cases reviewed from 2002 to 2004, statistically significant associations were found between "strength" ratings on Item 8 (Length of time to achieve reunification, guardianship, and permanent relative placement) in Permanency Outcome 1 with other performance indicators used to evaluate the outcomes and systemic factors in the CFSR. The strongest associations with timely reunification, guardianship, and permanent relative placement include:

- ♦ **Caseworker visits with parents**
- ♦ **Child's visits with parents & siblings in foster care**
- ♦ **Services to children, parents, & foster parents**
- ♦ **Family/child involvement in case planning**
- ♦ **ASFA requirements regarding termination of parental rights**
- ♦ **Placement stability**

## Permanency Outcome 2

**The continuity of family relationships and connections is preserved. Measured by 6 items:**

ITEM 11

Proximity of placement

ITEM 12

Placement with siblings

ITEM 13

Visiting with parents & siblings in foster care

ITEM 14

Preserving connections

ITEM 15

Relative placement

ITEM 16

Relationship of child in care with parents

Statistically significant associations were found in the cases reviewed during the 2002-2004 CFSRs between "strength" ratings on Item 6 (Stability of foster care placements) in Permanency Outcome 1 with other performance indicators used to evaluate the outcomes in the CFSR, and the age of the child in foster care. The strongest associations with placement stability include:

- ♦ **Placement with relatives**
- ♦ **Services to children, parents, & foster parents**
- ♦ **Caseworker contacts with parents (not children)**
- ♦ **Age of child:** Most stable are ages 0-6 & 16-18; least stable are ages 13-15)

**"Summary of the Results of the 2001 - 2004 Child & Family Services Reviews"** presents key findings from the analyses of information pertaining to the specific cases reviewed during the onsite CFSR. Many states during the first round encountered challenges in their efforts to provide services that are sufficient to meet

the identified needs of children and their parents, involve parents and children in the case planning process, and establish sufficient face-to-face contact between agency caseworkers and the children and parents in their caseloads. In 77% of states reviewed from 2002 to 2004, the frequency of face-to-face contacts between workers and children was not consistently sufficient to ensure children's safety and well-being. In 40% of the states reviewed from 2002 to 2004, findings indicate that when establishing face-to-face contact with children, workers are not consistently focusing on issues pertinent to case planning and achieving goals.

## Item Ratings Associated with Caseworker Visits with Children & Parents

Ratings for item 19 (Worker visits with children) were found to be significantly associated with ratings for many of the other items. The strongest association was between ratings for item 19 and ratings for item 20 (Worker visits with parents). For this association, 91% of the cases rated as a Strength for item 20 also were rated as a Strength for item 19. The size of this association suggests that when workers make concerted efforts to establish frequent contact with the children in their caseloads, they often make the same effort to establish frequent contact with the parents.

Very strong associations also were found between ratings for item 19 and ratings for item 4 (Risk of harm), item 17 (Needs/services of child, parents, and foster parents), and item 18 (Child/family involvement in case planning). Highly significant relationships, although not as strong, also were found between ratings for item 19 and ratings for the following items:

### ITEM 3

**Providing services to prevent removal**

### ITEM 7

**Establishing an appropriate permanency goal for the child in a timely manner**

### ITEM 8

**Achieving permanency goals of reunification, guardianship, and permanent placement with relatives in timely manner**

### ITEM 13

**Visits with parents and siblings in foster care**

### ITEM 15

**Seeking relatives as potential placement options**

### ITEM 21

**Meeting children's educational needs**

### ITEM 22

**Meeting children's physical needs**

### ITEM 23

**Meeting children's mental needs**

As would be expected based on the relationship between ratings for item 19 and 20, ratings for item 20 (Worker visits with parents) were found to be significantly associated with ratings for all of the items associated with item 19. However, ratings for item 20 also were associated with ratings for item 6 (Placement stability). As with item 19, ratings for item 20 were not associated with either item 9 (Adoption) or item 11 (Proximity of placement).

## Youth Speak Up in the Second Round

While we are early into the second round of CFSRs some analysis has been done of the interviews of youth-level stakeholder groups. Among other findings, youth voiced preferences about caseworker behaviors.

### They Don't Like it When...

- Caseworkers don't visit them and don't return their calls.
- They are always getting new caseworkers, but no one tells them or helps them transition.
- Caseworkers visit for just a few minutes.
- Caseworkers are "too busy" so important case matters do not get done.
- Caseworkers don't know about services available for youth or don't help youth access services.

### They Like it When...

- Caseworkers make them feel that they care about them.
- They have the same caseworker since they entered foster care.
- Caseworkers ask for input from the youth and value their opinions.
- Caseworkers are well-informed about the services available for youth.

### References:

Children's Bureau. Findings from the Initial Child and Family Service Reviews 2001-2004

<http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb/cwmonitoring/results/sld001.htm>

Children's Bureau. Summary of the Results of the 2001 - 2004 Child and Family Services Reviews

<http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb/cwmonitoring/results/genfindings04/index.htm>

Children's Bureau. Agency, Court, and Youth Collaboration during the Second Round of the CFSRs

<http://www.agenciesandcourts.com/handouts.html>

# VISITS WITH FAMILY:

Critical to the Well-Being and Permanency of Children and Youth in Care

Frequent visiting between children and youth in care and their parents has been consistently associated with children's enhanced well-being, decreased length of stay in care, and family reunification, and is important to promote connections; yet, frequent visits often are not provided. This interview about visiting between children and families is adapted from a webcast conversation between Dr. Peg Hess, the leading expert in family visiting and NRCFCPPP Senior Consultant, and Dr. Gary Mallon, the Executive Director of the NRCFCPPP.

View the full interview at: <http://www.hunter.cuny.edu/socwork/nrcfcpp/webcasts/index.html>



**Gary:** How did you become interested and involved in visiting in the first place?

**Peg:** In the late 70s, I was employed by the University of Tennessee School of Social Work and had the opportunity to develop a curriculum on visiting for foster parents and caseworkers. What had prompted that request was that the State of Tennessee had been sued by parents with a child in foster care for alienation of affection, because there had been so little contact. Part of the State's response was to look at their policies and to develop this training curriculum. When I went to the library to work on the curriculum, I was stunned to find that there was very little written about parent-child visiting. I took trips to a number of counties in Tennessee to try to understand why at that time there was so little visiting. What I learned was that in almost every county, there had been some horrific experience, such as a parent taking a child from a visit, which led to very restrictive visiting policy and practice. Most of the ideas that we've developed about visiting and its importance were not part of the thinking of the majority of the people at that time. There are two things that were available at that point in time that we still use. One is the theoretical work by John Bowlby about parent-child attachment and the importance of contact and interaction for the relationship to be maintained. The other is child development, because visits vary for children and youth of different ages in terms of activities, locations, etc. The next big step was when I worked on my PhD in Social Work at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. For my dissertation, I interviewed 15 caseworkers in two different states - one that had a policy about visiting and one that had no policy about visiting.

**Gary:** Were there major differences between the state where there was a policy about visiting and the state where there was no policy in terms of how visiting was carried out?

**Peg:** Yes. In the state where there was a policy that required frequent visits between children and families, workers were aware of the policy and really worked to adhere to it. In the state where there was no policy, caseworkers used their own discretion in planning visit frequency, and there was a great deal more variation in the visiting plans they developed. The workers did not plan for children to visit with their families as often as did the workers in the state where there was a policy.

**Gary:** Once someone focuses time and has done research on a specific area, they start getting invitations to go different places to speak. How did that process emerge for you?

**Peg:** For me, invitations to do trainings or meet with policymakers have been not only an opportunity to shape practice in a particular place, but have also helped me to stay grounded in the reality of this very difficult and resource-demanding part of practice. It takes a lot of time to plan visits; prepare children, parents, and caregivers for visits; coordinate transportation; and process visits afterwards. For that reason, while I've seen clear changes over the past thirty-five years, unfortunately, there are still jurisdictions where visits are in the agency office, closely supervised, and never change prior to the child's return home. To move a child and family toward reunification safely, visits need to go from supervised to unsupervised, to in the child's home during the day, to in the child's home overnight. Family time, or visiting, needs to become a larger proportion of the time children and families spend together, so that there can be a transition. Otherwise, children can be sent home, and then very quickly there is an incident that returns them to care. I think one of the challenges is that the transition can frighten us because we can't predict human behavior. We can do our best to assess the risks and to protect, but we can't predict, so making these changes in visiting is often unnerving. We have to be very thoughtful about the decisions we make, and again, that takes time and often means consulting with others.

**Gary:** Reunification is the goal for most children in foster care. If children don't frequently visit parents, it is difficult to move toward reunification; yet, sometimes it is very challenging to do it the right way. What would you suggest works well or would be ideal in planning visits?

**Peg:** Ideally, an agency would work very hard to involve parents, and children who are old enough, in decision-making. Supervision of visits needs to be justified - not all visits need to be supervised initially. There are situations, particularly in neglect situations, where the child is not at risk in a visit, and visits could safely begin in the foster home, with the foster parent around, but not there every minute. The foster home can be a good location for visits because it is familiar to the child. The location is important. An agency room is quite restrictive, as is any room that is not part of the child's life. The parent's home is where you're working toward; even if you don't start the visits there, you want to have visits there eventually because it is the most natural in terms of understanding how it's going to work for this parent and child together. From the child's point of view, usually, to visit with

## Interview with Dr. Peg Hess (cont'd)

parents at home, in their own neighborhood, is more natural and comfortable. There are a range of other places in between, such as a lot of public places – parks, children’s museums. Children’s ages come into play, as well. For very young children – infants and toddlers – frequency of contact is more important than length of visits. For an adolescent, less frequent visits where more time is spent together are sufficient. Another thing to think about is the parent’s commitments to work or job training. We do not want visits to undermine other areas in which parents are working to progress. That is part of why it is helpful to have the parent involved in planning. The core of it is that, at its best, planning visits is collaborative, and takes into account the needs of all those involved.

**Gary:** I know it’s not an easy question to answer, but how does one determine the frequency of visits between children and their parents?

**Peg:** The primary thing to think about first is the child’s age. What we’re dealing with is cognitive – the mind has to develop to be able to recognize someone and conceptualize that person leaving and coming back. For an infant or an 18-24 month-old child, we need to think about how long they can remember that person coming and going. Less than once a week is unacceptable. When I did the survey of state’s policies for NRCFCPPP, I was struck that Alabama required daily visiting for very young children when it is possible. Certainly, that would be ideal. As you move up into adolescence, it is less of an issue of maintaining the relationship. Visits could be every couple of weeks, or even once a month, but visits then need to be for longer periods of time so there is an opportunity for a real experience during that visit. It is also important to have the first visit as soon as possible after placement – the recommendation is within 48 hours.

**Gary:** That’s why things like proximity of placement are so important to promote access for birth parents to children in placement. Those concepts are fairly new to the field in the sense of understanding that this will promote connections between parents and children. Coaching is another new concept in relation to visiting.

**Peg:** I like the concept of coaching. People understand that a “coach” is there to keep things going in the right direction, to correct when needed, to encourage and be helpful. The concept is the same for visits. The coach is there to encourage the parents, give them information, and sometimes correct and teach. If a child is in placement because something needs to change, then somebody should help the parent make that change. Sometimes the change that needs to be made doesn’t have a lot to do with the child – it involves housing, for instance. But if the issue involves a parent’s interaction with her or his children, it is important to have a coach present in the visit to support the parent and learn whether with help, the parent can make the change. It is not really fair of us to have the child in placement without addressing that issue, whatever it is. I’d also like to mention the concept of ambivalence. I worked on several lawsuits where if there had been someone who had had a relationship with the parent over time who could have helped the parent process his or her feelings, the parent might have relinquished the child for adoption. We don’t think about that (relinquishment) often. If the data suggest that the child is not going to be able to go home, we focus on gathering information (to terminate parental rights). Often in the child welfare system, no one has a relationship with the parent

that can help the parent really look at the relationship with the child and struggle with ambivalence about that relationship, if that is how they feel. Not many parents, but some, are capable, when there is such a helping relationship, to say, “I don’t think I can do this, and in truth, I don’t want to do this.” We can help them struggle with that, (not just facilitate that if they say it once, of course), but if that is really where they are. That is less painful than moving toward termination, going to court, and having the relationship between the parent and the agency become adversarial. Sometimes we forget how important it is for parents to have a helping relationship with someone like that – often, a visit coach can be that person.

**Gary:** I think it is probably a bias on a lot of our parts assuming the parent wants to work toward reunification. Therefore, the ambivalence may even be from us.

**Peg:** Yes, I agree. There is one last thing I want to mention. In many ways, I started out learning about the importance of visiting policy. I was able to do a survey of the states’ visiting policies (Visiting Between Children in Care and Their Families: A Look at Current Policy, October 2003) with NRCFCPPP’s sponsorship, and the findings are on the website. The findings suggest to me the importance of states, counties, and regions continuing to look at their visit policies to see whether they specifically cover important content areas. For example, while many states have a policy about visit frequency, 30% of states that responded to the survey on visit policy did not. Within those states with policy, where there was specification, some required visits once a week, while others required visits once a month. When you think about the consequences of these policies for children, it is a very critical area for states and other jurisdictions to take a look at. Hopefully, the checklist that is at the end of the publication can help with the process of policy review.

Dr. Peg Hess has worked as Associate Dean at Columbia University School of Social Work and as Professor at University of South Carolina College of Social Work and has provided expert consultation in court cases in Georgia, Mississippi, and Alaska.

She serves as Senior Consultant to NRCFCPPP. She is author or editor of eight books, including “Family Visiting for Children in Out of Home Care: A Practical Guide” and “Child Welfare for the 21st Century.”

Resources pertaining to child/family visiting are available on the NRCFCPPP website at:  
[http://www.hunter.cuny.edu/socwork/nrcfcpp/info\\_services/family-child-visiting.html](http://www.hunter.cuny.edu/socwork/nrcfcpp/info_services/family-child-visiting.html)

# WHAT TO DO AND SAY

## When a Child Asks an Unanswerable Question

By Rose Marie Wentz, MPA NRCFCPPP Consultant

A 7 year old child just placed in care asks, *"When do I get to go home?"*

A caseworker is talking to a 15 year old about permanency and asks the young man if he wants to be adopted. He quickly says, *"NO"* and walks out of the room.

It is not always easy to talk with a child who is in care, especially when (s)he asks questions that cannot be easily answered or resists talking to the worker. We know that having high quality worker/child contact will help a child be safe and reach timely permanency and will provide the worker with an opportunity to assess the child's well-being. Here are some suggestions on how to address tough questions.

***WHEN CAN I GO HOME?*** (Assure the child that the adults are working to make that decision and the child does not have to be responsible. Young children often believe their actions control adults and thereby need to be reassured on this point.) Think about the connection issues that home represents and ask the child questions about those connections on visits. *Who would you like to see? Who do you miss? Can you draw me a picture of your house? What makes it a safe, fun, or happy place? What would make where you live right now feel more like a home to you?* Avoid giving the child a long description about the legal timelines or failing to answer the child because you cannot provide a specific date. By exploring the child's view of home, time, and what the child wants, it is likely the worker can answer those questions and meet the child's need to maintain connections while in care.



***I DON'T WANT TO BE ADOPTED.*** Youth often feel that agreeing to adoption is being disloyal to their parents, or they are afraid to admit they want to be adopted for fear of being rejected. Ask questions such as: *Can you describe an ideal family that would support you having contact with everyone you love? What does "being adopted" mean to you? Is there anything you are afraid will happen if you are adopted?*

For additional resources and other ideas on how to talk to teens about families and permanency, visit:

<http://www.rglewis.com/families%20for%20teens%20key%20questions%20sept03.htm>



***WHAT GRADE ARE YOU IN?*** *What is your favorite subject?* School age children think adults are kind of silly for asking these same questions over and over. It can also seem disrespectful to the child that you did not take the time to read or remember facts about the child. If the case is new to you, be sure to learn the basic information about the child before the contact. To learn about how the child is doing at school you may want to ask: *What would be the best/worst thing that could happen at your school? On a scale of 1 to 10, where 10 is the best day ever at school and 1 is the worst, what number describes the type of day you had? Why was it number X? What could happen that would make it one number better?*

***IF I AM REALLY GOOD CAN I GO HOME?*** This may be the child's way of bargaining, a stage of grief and loss. Children often have perceptions that what they did caused them to be placed in foster care. A worker may be tempted to answer, *"What you do does not make a difference as to when you go home."* Instead use this as an opportunity to talk about the child's perceptions of foster care, whether the child feels responsible for what occurred or if the child needs help handling grief and loss. *If you go home what would that be like? What would be the best thing? What might not be so good? It sounds like you are really missing your home. Tell me what you miss the most? What would you do on your first day back at home? What would you do differently when you are back at your home that would make things better? What would your parent do?*

# When a Child Asks an Unanswerable Question

Assessing non-verbal children can be even more difficult. The NRCFCPPP checklist of questions provides suggested questions for the caseworker to use with the foster parents or relative caregivers. These questions include:

- What is it like for you to care for this child?*
- What has been the effect on your family of having this child placed here?*
- What did you expect it to be like?*
- Describe who this child is.*
- What about the child is easiest and most pleasurable?*
- How has the child changed since coming to live here?*
- How has the child adjusted to this placement?*

These suggestions and many more for how to ask children, youth, and caregivers questions based on the developmental age of the child can be found at: <http://www.hunter.cuny.edu/socwork/nrcfcpp/downloads/visitingModule3.pdf>

## SUGGESTIONS ON HOW TO CONDUCT AN INTERVIEW

- The worker should observe interactions between the foster parent and child (for children/youth of all ages.) Ask the child and caregiver for some time to just observe rather than using the entire time for a formal interview.
- Workers should conduct some of their visit with the child out of sight and sound distance of others. This will allow for the child to share more openly.
- Visits should be conducted by a consistent worker, preferably the worker responsible for case planning and case decisions, to encourage the child to know and trust the worker.
- Understanding children's developmental ages, how children handle grief, loss, and separation, the special needs of abused and neglected children (such as parentified children), and the child's sense of time will help workers be more effective. To achieve the outcomes of safety, permanency, and well-being, we must develop a relationship with the child, which requires time and the skill to engage the child in a conversation at his or her developmental level. As one state manager said, the goal is that there be NO "drive by visits." It is not enough to meet the quantity measurement of one contact a month – it is critical to have quality interactions with the child.

## OTHER RESOURCES FOR HOW TO HAVE QUALITY CONTACTS WITH CHILDREN INCLUDE:

Interviewing Children. Rosemary Vasquez, L.C.S.W. CASAnet Resources.  
<http://www.casenet.org/library/advocacy/interviewing.htm>

Interviewing Children with Disabilities. Northern California Training Academy, University of California, Davis.  
[http://humanservices.ucdavis.edu/academy/pdf/interview\\_children\\_disabilities.pdf](http://humanservices.ucdavis.edu/academy/pdf/interview_children_disabilities.pdf)

Talking to Teens in the Justice System: Strategies for Interviewing Adolescent Defendants, Witnesses, and Victims. American Bar Association Juvenile Justice Center Juvenile Law Center, Youth Law Center. Lourdes M. Rosado, Editor.  
<http://www.njdc.info/pdf/maca2.pdf>

Worker's Role: Visits with Children. Children and Family Services Division, Iowa Department of Human Services.  
[http://www.dhs.state.ia.us/docs/02.08-Worker\\_Role\\_in\\_Visitation.pdf](http://www.dhs.state.ia.us/docs/02.08-Worker_Role_in_Visitation.pdf)



# INDIANA'S YOUTH CONNECTIONS PROGRAM

## *Providing Permanent Connections For Youth Transitioning From Foster Care*

By Lucy Salcido Carter, Cassandra A. Porter, and Julia Deckard

In October of 2006, Indiana's Department of Child Services (DCS) began developing the Youth Connections Program (YCP) to improve long-term outcomes for older foster youth by helping them build relationships with caring adults who would support them as they transitioned out of foster care. Data from the first year of the program show consistent success in using family finding approaches to establish permanent connections for these youth. These successes have resulted in management directives to expand family finding strategies to all aspects of child welfare work and to widen the availability of the YCP by offering contracts to private agencies throughout the state to provide similar services.

### YCP Basics

The goal of the YCP is to ensure that all youth aging out of foster care have a permanent family, or a permanent connection with at least one committed, caring adult who provides guidance and support to the youth as they make their way into adulthood. The program serves foster youth:

*Ages 14 to 18 years old whose parents' rights have been terminated and who express that they no longer desire to be adopted.*

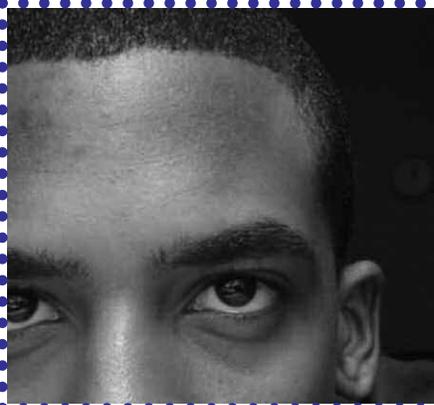
Because the YCP is part of Indiana's permanency unit—which includes the special needs adoption program (SNAP), post-permanency services, Independent Living (IL), and legal guardianship—it was developed to complement these other programs' goals. For example, youth wanting to be adopted are already served by the SNAP, so fall outside YCP parameters.

The YCP has a broad vision for how permanent connections can support youth as they transition from foster care, including but not limited to:

- A home for the holidays.
- Someone to talk to about their problems.
- Help finding housing, educational opportunities, and/or a job.
- Assistance with household and money management.
- Assistance with health issues, relationship counseling, and/or babysitting if youth is a parent.
- Advocacy, motivation, mentoring.
- Emergency cash.
- A place to do laundry, use a computer or phone.
- A link to community resources and social activities.
- Transportation, clothing, occasional meals.

A YCP Certificate of Connections lists each of these possible ways in which the caring adult can support the youth. Once the youth and adult are ready to commit to a permanent connection, they can sign the certificate.

Two specialists staff the YCP, one accepting referrals from counties in



Northern Indiana and the other in Southern Indiana. The specialists currently carry a caseload of nine and conduct trainings on the YCP and family finding strategies.

### The following principles guide the YCP work:

- The youth must take the lead in identifying whom they want as permanent connections.
- When safe to do so, YCP specialists will reach out to both the maternal and paternal sides of the youth's family.
- The YCP is not limited to searching for blood relatives, but instead uses a broad definition of family that includes "fictive kin"—individuals who have an emotionally significant connection to the youth but are not legal relatives.
- The YCP specialist supports the work of the case-carrying social worker (called family case managers in Indiana) to reach permanency goals for the youth.
- Agency partners—including group home staff, foster parents, IL workers and others—are a critical part of the work.

### YCP Procedures

Once a youth is referred to the YCP, the specialist reviews the youth's case file to better understand the history of the case and to look for relatives' names and contact information. They share their findings with the family case manager and agree on next steps in the case. Typically, the specialist will then meet with the youth, explaining the program and asking if they would like to participate. If so, they then ask the youth who has been important to them in the past and with whom they would like a permanent connection.



# INDIANA'S YCP: PROVIDING PERMANENT CONNECTIONS FOR YOUTH (cont'd)

With family case manager approval, the specialist begins looking for these individuals as well as other possible permanent connections for the youth, contacting relatives to learn more about the family, and using search tools to get missing contact information and discover additional kin. When specialists first contact relatives, they loosely follow a written script they created for this purpose. Because of confidentiality needs, there is little that they can tell the relatives about the youths in the first call. The specialists do, however, communicate their concern for the long-term well being of the youths and stress the urgency of finding supports for them. Follow-up with the relatives interested in having future contact with a youth includes having them complete a confidentiality agreement form and a questionnaire about their prior history with the youth. The specialist encourages the relatives who do not want further contact with the YCP to provide as much information about the family as they can.

Once the specialist finds relatives who are interested in being connections for the youth, she begins a series of meetings with the relatives and the youth, separately and then together, to help them build a strong relationship. The family case manager and any other professionals involved in the case are kept informed about progress and brought into the process as needed. The specialist uses the Certificate of Connection to help the youth and relative identify the ways in which the adult can support the youth through their

permanent connection. When they are ready to commit, they both sign the certificate.

## Year One Results

There were 57 referrals made to the YCP in Year One, and 25 youth participated in the program. Permanent connections were found for 19 youth, and one of those resulted in a formal placement with kin. One youth was able, upon emancipation, to go live with a relative found by the YCP specialist, instead of ending up in a homeless shelter. Of the remaining 6 cases, 2 youth were moved to the adoption program, 2 youth were emancipated before the YCP could find connections for them, and 2 siblings decided in the middle of the process that they did not, at that time, want further contact with their birth family.

### The success of the YCP is attributable to a number of factors including:

- Highly skilled and committed staff hired as specialists.
  - Early buy-in from pilot counties whose staff were part of program planning.
  - Access to current information about best practices nationwide.
  - Consultant support for planning, documentation, and evaluation of the program.
  - Consistent, ongoing support from the permanency manager
- and**
- Strong partnering with family case managers and other professionals.

Cassandra Porter, IN DCS Permanency Manager, points out that for effective program management, "It is imperative to realize that in the early stages of development, you need to support the staff by allowing flexibility, yet be mindful of maintaining program integrity. Establishing a strong foundation is essential to successful program outcomes."

Because of the recognized success of the YCP and the commitment to keep the staff numbers small, other strategies for providing similar services are being explored. Service standards were created so that private agencies can bid to get a state contract to provide YCP-like services in 2009. The standards include, as part of the mentoring component of IL services, what is being called "lifelong connections" instead of "youth connections" but is essentially the same program.

Other permanency unit programs (SNAP and IL) are using family finding approaches for a small number of their cases. In addition, there is growing interest on the part of county directors in having their family case managers learn family finding techniques and use them to accomplish a range of case goals. YCP specialists have begun providing training and consultation to permanency staff and others as they start to use family finding techniques. Efforts are underway to update policies in the DCS staff manual so that they reflect the YCP and the growing interest in using family finding approaches in other areas of child welfare practice.

For more information about Indiana's Youth Connections Program, see training materials and a program history posted on the NRCFCPPP website at [http://www.hunter.cuny.edu/socwork/nrcfcpp/info\\_services/family-search.html](http://www.hunter.cuny.edu/socwork/nrcfcpp/info_services/family-search.html)

Or contact IN DCS Permanency Manager Cassandra A. Porter, JD, at:  
Indiana Department of Child Services

302 W. Washington • Room E306 MS47 • Indianapolis, IN 46204-2739

317-234-4211 (W) • 317-232-4436 (F) • 317-650-6626 (C) • [Cassandra.Porter@dcs.in.gov](mailto:Cassandra.Porter@dcs.in.gov)

Nationally, foster care programs are working to develop strategies to better support effective permanency plans for youth. The Children's Bureau, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services awarded nine grants in October of 2005 to explore innovative programs to achieve youth permanency. This web page offers the field of child welfare information on the accomplishments of the nine grants as they progress, and highlights some of the products they have developed:  
<http://www.nrcadoption.org/youthpermanencycluster/index.html>

# TIDBITS FROM THE STATES



**LOOKING FOR A NEW IDEA OR A FRESH APPROACH TO A PROBLEM?  
CHECK OUT THESE IDEAS FROM AROUND THE COUNTRY**

## **IOWA: BEST PRACTICE BULLETINS**

The Iowa Department of Human Services is publishing a series of Best Practice Bulletins with tips for caseworkers. Bulletins posted to date include: Involving Fathers; Close to Home; Relative Search & Placements; Worker's Role - Visits with Children; Safety and Risk of Harm; Repeat Maltreatment; Mental and Behavioral Health; Improving Health Care for Children in Foster Care; Education Success for Children in Child Welfare; Social Worker Training; Father Engagement; Early Access; Comprehensive Family Functional Assessment; and Case Planning in Child Welfare. [http://www.dhs.state.ia.us/Consumers/Child\\_Welfare/BR4K/Practice\\_Bulletins/Practice%20Bulletins.html](http://www.dhs.state.ia.us/Consumers/Child_Welfare/BR4K/Practice_Bulletins/Practice%20Bulletins.html)

## **KENTUCKY: COURT IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM**

As part of the Court Improvement Program (CIP) in Kentucky, the child welfare and juvenile justice systems are collaborating to identify systems changes and innovations in court procedures, legislation, and services that will lead to better outcomes for children and families. A statewide summit, "Courts and Community: Improving Systems for Our Children," was held in August 2007, attracting approximately 600 participants, including judges, attorneys, legislators, child welfare workers, foster parents, and children. Later in the year, nine regional summits hosted another 1,300 attendees. In each case, participants attended workgroups designed to examine the court and child welfare systems experienced by children and to recommend changes. Participants also completed surveys designed to gather individual input. <http://courts.ky.gov/aoc/juvenile/summit.html>

## **MICHIGAN: FOSTER YOUTH IN TRANSITION WEBSITE**

This Website was the result of a recommendation made by the Statewide Task Force on Youth Transitioning from Foster Care in 2006. Over 100 members from public and private organizations that care about improving services to foster youth participated. Youth representatives were part of the Task Force and acted as a lead for each of six subcommittees. The Website will be updated by members of Michigan's Youth Boards from locations across the state. <http://www.michigan.gov/fyit/0,1607,7-240--159060--00.html>

## **NEW HAMPSHIRE: UNPLANNED TRANSFER CONFERENCE POLICY**

In an effort to facilitate open discussion with foster parents, New Hampshire DCYF has a policy on the books for holding "unplanned transfer" conferences. These conferences are called when a placement disruption has occurred in a foster home. They include not only the foster parents, but DCYF staff and team members, to talk about what happened in that situation, what the reasons were behind the move, and what could have been done better.

Says Gail DeGoosh, New Hampshire's Foster Care Program Manager, of the policy, "Just having the policy has given some peace of mind to foster parents who know they have recourse... When a placement changes, planned or not, sometimes foster parents see it as something they did wrong." These conferences are often a means of retaining foster parents as they feel their voices are heard and they decrease any miscommunication between workers and parents. Contact: Gail DeGoosh, 603-271-4711, [gdegoosh@dhhs.state.nh.us](mailto:gdegoosh@dhhs.state.nh.us)

## **NEW YORK CITY: BEST PRACTICE GUIDELINES FOR FOSTER CARE YOUTH MENTORING**

This guide from New York City Children's Services includes guidelines for building organizational capacity, working with mentors and mentees, and working with caseworkers. [http://www.nyc.gov/html/acs/html/become\\_mentor/best\\_practices\\_addition.shtml](http://www.nyc.gov/html/acs/html/become_mentor/best_practices_addition.shtml)

## **NORTH CAROLINA: THE COLLABORATIVE**

For the last seven years, the North Carolina State Collaborative for Children, Youth and Families (the Collaborative) has provided: a neutral venue for public and private child and family serving agencies, families, and community partners to meet, satisfy mandates to collaborate, coordinate initiatives, and help members become better informed about the needs of other agencies, families, and a variety of community partners. The Collaborative is not part of any agency, has no budget, and has no formal legal status. The number of agencies that voluntarily attend the collaborative continues to grow because it has been able to help agencies produce products that they could not have produced by themselves, including a common training curriculum used by different agencies and groups serving children; a list of the tools used by different agencies to screen and assess children and families; and matrixes showing funding sources and data sources used by different agencies. <http://www.nccollaborative.org/management/1/Home/>

## **OREGON AND ALASKA: TRAINING FOR EXCELLENCE IN CHILD WELFARE**

Focusing on the unique opportunities presented by rural child welfare, partners from the University of Alaska and Portland State University in Oregon teamed with Oregon's Department of Human Services and the Child Welfare Region centered in Bethel, Alaska, to develop training for State and Tribal child welfare workers, foster parents, and community partners. The resulting training project, "Training for Excellence in Child Welfare in Rural Oregon and Alaska," serves as an affirmation and celebration of rural child welfare practice, boosting the recognition and importance of rural and Tribal child welfare staff and their work. [www.rtg.pdx.edu/](http://www.rtg.pdx.edu/)

# Resources for Permanency Planning Today

## Books

### **Child Protection: Using Research to Improve Policy and Practice**

The Brookings Institution has published this book by Ron Haskins, Fred Wulczyn, and Mary Bruce Webb, based on the National Survey of Child and Adolescent Well-Being (NSCAW). NSCAW is the first nationally representative study of children who have been reported to authorities as suspected victims of abuse or neglect and the public programs that aim to protect them. This is the first book to report the results, interpret the findings, and place those findings in a broader policy context. <http://www.brookings.edu/press/Books/2007/childprotection.aspx>

### **Transition Tools from the Child Trauma Academy**

Photo albums titled "My New School," "My New Home," and "My Trip" give children an opportunity to become familiar with new people, places, and situations. Each photo book is an album for caregivers and children to assemble together, and includes specific questions for caregivers to encourage discussion and help ease the child's transition.

<http://www.childtrauma.org/ctamaterials/default.asp>

### **Home-Visiting Strategies**

This book by Terry Eisenberg Carrilio is a step-by-step guide for in-home case management of vulnerable populations that without direct visits might not receive needed interventions. Drawing on her decades of experience in direct caregiving and classroom instruction of social workers, Terry Eisenberg Carrilio offers a useful primer for students and practitioners in establishing and maintaining the type of intervention program that has proved especially effective in preventing abuse and providing support to overburdened families. This sourcebook covers the range of cases—involving child welfare, mental health, substance abuse, aging, domestic violence, family support, poverty reduction, and school readiness—encountered as part of home-visiting programs. Order online from the University of South Carolina Press at:

<http://www.sc.edu/uscpres/>

## Books

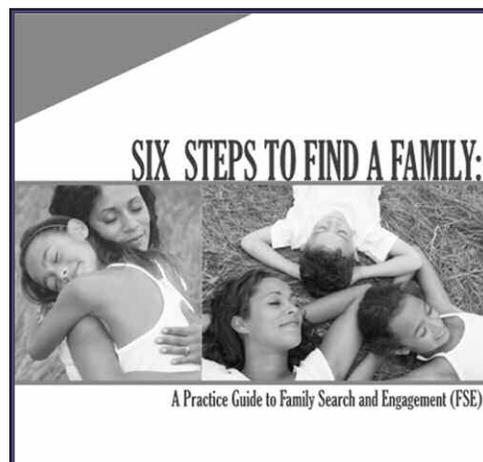
### **NYSPCC Professionals' Handbook: Supervised Visitation Services for High-Risk Families**

This handbook, edited by Mary L. Publido, Ph.D., was written so that providers of service, judges, referees, and other professionals interested in supervised visitation, would gain insight and understanding of The NYSPCC's therapeutic supervised visitation model, Positive Parenting Plus (PP+). The authors of this handbook are experts in the provision of supervised visitation services, legal services, and trauma recovery services. This handbook will help meet the need for detailed information about programming, protocols, safety considerations, and legal issues impacting supervised visitation programs that deal with high-risk families. [http://www.nyspcc.org/publications/index\\_publications.htm](http://www.nyspcc.org/publications/index_publications.htm)

## Guides

### **Six Steps to Finding a Family: A Practice Guide to Family Search and Engagement**

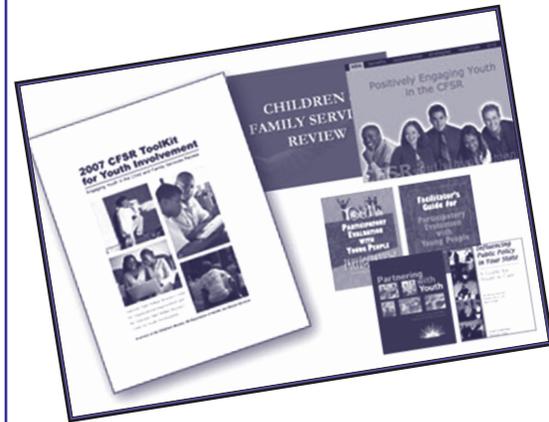
This guide from the NRCFCPPP and the California Permanency for Youth Project provides detailed guidance on casework practice that supports family search and engagement in the quest to provide permanency for youth. It also headlines our web page on Family Search and Engagement. [http://www.hunter.cuny.edu/socwork/nrcfcpp/info\\_services/family-search.html](http://www.hunter.cuny.edu/socwork/nrcfcpp/info_services/family-search.html)



## Guides

### **Child and Family Service Review (CFSR) Toolkit for Youth Involvement**

This toolkit from the National Resource Center for Youth Development is a multimedia product that will expand over time as new materials are developed and shared nationwide. The CFSR Toolkit document provides important information on how to prepare youth and adults to work in partnership to improve the nation's child welfare system. <http://www.nrcys.ou.edu/cfsrtoolkit/default.html>



### **Gearing Up to Improve Outcomes for Families: A Collaborative Practice Guide for Managers and Supervisors in Child Welfare, Chemical Dependency Services, and Court Systems**

This guidebook, developed for the New York State Office of Children & Family Services with technical assistance provided by the National Center on Substance Abuse and Child Welfare (NCSACW), is based on the premise that when substance use disorders affect children and families, children can suffer from abuse and/or neglect. When this occurs, it is essential that the Chemical Dependency, Child Welfare, and Family Court systems work together with families to achieve child safety, sustained parental recovery, and family well-being. This tool was created to serve as a desk reference for staff to assist in maximizing their effectiveness in working with families, and each other.

<http://www.ocfs.state.ny.us/main/publications/Pub5073.pdf>

# Resources for Permanency Planning Today

## Guides

### Tool to Enhance Monthly Agency Visits

North Carolina's Fostering Perspectives introduces this 4-page, 7-item tool designed to be a guide for monthly visits. It is intended to be used as a guide for conversation, not a checklist of items to read off every month. Workers are advised to continue to have their typical, open-ended conversations with foster parents and children in care, and then to simply use the tool at the end of the visit to summarize, ensure that important topics are not overlooked, and plan follow-up. <http://www.fosteringperspectives.org/ContactRecord.pdf>

## Curricula

### Child Welfare Trauma Training Toolkit

This resource from the National Child Traumatic Stress Network is designed to teach basic knowledge, skills, and values about working with children who are in the child welfare system and who have experienced traumatic stress. It also teaches how to use this knowledge to support children's safety, permanency, and well-being through case analysis and corresponding interventions tailored for them and their biological and resource families. [http://www.ncstnet.org/nccts/nav.do?pid=ctr\\_cwtool](http://www.ncstnet.org/nccts/nav.do?pid=ctr_cwtool)

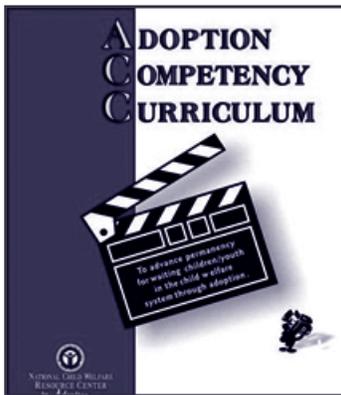
### Primer Hands On-Child Welfare

This comprehensive curriculum on system of care casework practice is the result of a collaboration between the Children's Bureau, the National Resource Center for Organizational Improvement and the other National Resource Centers in the Bureau's Training and Technical Assistance Network, the National Technical Assistance Center for Children's Mental Health at Georgetown University, and the Human Service Collaborative. It includes 10 modules, each with PowerPoint slides, handouts, exercises, and case scenarios, as well as additional related materials. <http://muskie.usm.maine.edu/helpkids/systemofcare.htm>

## Curricula

### Adoption Competency Curriculum

Developed by the National Child Welfare Resource Center for Adoption, this curriculum updates the popular Special Needs Adoption Curriculum developed in 1990. It includes the latest research on adoption practice. It is designed to be a comprehensive curriculum that speaks to all the issues in the adoption of children/youth from the child welfare system. It is appropriate for training practitioners new to adoption as well as those who have experience in this area. <http://www.nrcadoption.org/acc/index.html>



## Video

### Understanding Traumatized and Maltreated Children: The Core Concepts

This seven-part series features Bruce D. Perry, M.D., Ph.D. and is hosted by Art Linkletter. Comprehensive information is presented by Dr. Perry on the primary problems facing maltreated children and dynamic approaches for effective caregiving for professionals and lay people alike. <http://store.ctaproducts.org/untrandmachc.html>

## Video

### Digital Stories

Digital storytelling uses the available tools of the computer and Internet, and morphs it with words and narration, with the final outcome being an interesting multi-media mix of images and voice. The Preparation for Adulthood/Supervising for Success program used digital stories to enhance the quality of supervisory learning circles by incorporating the voices of young people and child welfare workers and supervisors to highlight critical practice issues. The stories are told from personal points of view and reflect issues of permanency and preparation for adulthood services, supports, and opportunities. View the videos online or inquire about ordering at:

<http://www.hunter.cuny.edu/socwork/nrcfcpp/pass/digital-stories/index.htm>

### MP3 Downloads from the National Resource Centers

### Podcasts of Teleconferences and Webcasts

The NRCFCPPP is proud that all of our teleconferences, as well as webcasts beginning with June 5, 2007 are now available as podcasts. Subscribe via RSS feed or directly to iTunes, or continue to listen on the web to our .wma format files. You can listen in your car, at the gym, or any time! A great way to keep up with this information when you can't listen at your computer. Bring our experts from around the country with you on your MP3 player!

[www.nrcfcppp.org](http://www.nrcfcppp.org)  
Teleconferences from the National Child Welfare Resource Center for Organizational Improvement. <http://muskie.usm.maine.edu/helpkids/tele.htm>

Download handouts and MP3 audio of all the NRC-OI teleconference series. Play the audio on your computer or download and save in iTunes.

The NRCFCPP publishes an electronic newsletter each week that keeps subscribers informed about new Internet-based publications, conferences, and other events of interest to child welfare professionals. This section lists some of the valuable resources we have highlighted over the past few months.

### PREPARATION FOR ADULTHOOD - SUPERVISING FOR SUCCESS

<http://www.hunter.cuny.edu/socwork/nrcfcpp/pass/>

This NRCFCPP three year curriculum development and training project is funded by the Children's Bureau Discretionary Grants Program - ACF/DHHS. The goal of the project is to develop, implement, evaluate, and disseminate a training curriculum for public child welfare supervisors. This curriculum will strengthen supervision of staff's interventions with older youth who are in foster care. Our state and city partners in this project are Oregon Department of Human Services, State Office for Services to Children and Families, the New York City Administration for Children's Services, and the Mississippi Department of Human Services. Please explore this site, including the Digital Stories that bring the voices of young people, workers, and supervisors into the curriculum, and the Learning Circles that are designed to build cohesive learning communities and provide structure for high quality peer learning.

### MAJOR LEGISLATION CONCERNED WITH CHILD PROTECTION, CHILD WELFARE, AND ADOPTION

<http://www.childwelfare.gov/pubs/otherpubs/majorfedlegis.cfm>

This publication from the Child Welfare Information Gateway summarizes the major provisions of key Federal laws regarding child protection, child welfare, and adoption and includes a timeline of Federal child welfare legislation. New features this year include links to the full-text of each act and the Major Federal Legislation Index and Search, which allows users to browse or search the acts included in this publication.

### STATE CHILD WELFARE LEGISLATION 2006

<http://www.ncsl.org/programs/CYF/childwelfarelaws06.htm>

This report from the National Conference of State Legislatures documents significant state legislation enacted during the 2006 calendar year. In 2006, states continued to legislate heavily in the areas of adoption, courts, education of children in the child welfare system, foster care, kinship care, and transition from foster care. A few state legislatures ventured into the areas of immigration and children of incarcerated parents, which may signal emerging trends. In addition, both prevention and oversight were dominant themes in 2006.

### EDUCATING CHILDREN IN FOSTER CARE: STATE LEGISLATION 2004-2005

[http://www.ncsl.org/print/cyf/foster\\_care\\_education.pdf](http://www.ncsl.org/print/cyf/foster_care_education.pdf)

This report from the National Conference of State Legislatures reviews state legislation enacted between 2004 and 2007 to improve the educational experiences and opportunities of children and youth in foster care. It also provides information on laws and policies regarding early learning and foster care.

### SYNTHESES OF CHILDREN'S BUREAU RESEARCH AND DEMONSTRATION PROJECTS

<http://www.childwelfare.gov/catalog/index.cfm?event=catalog.viewSeriesDetail&series=5>

This series of publications on the Child Welfare Information Gateway shares the knowledge gained by Children's Bureau grantees who have completed research and demonstration projects in the areas of adoption, foster care, and child maltreatment. Publications in the series discuss grantee challenges, strategies, findings, and lessons learned, providing valuable information that can guide future programs.

### CHILD MALTREATMENT 2006

[www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb/pubs/cm06/index.htm](http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb/pubs/cm06/index.htm)

This 17th annual publication provides national and State findings on referrals for child maltreatment, substantiated cases, and types of abuse and neglect. Information on perpetrators of maltreatment, child protective services (CPS) workload, and preventive and post-investigation services is also included.

### STATE-SPECIFIC FOSTER CARE AND ADOPTION INFORMATION

<http://www.adoptuskids.org/resourceCenter/rrtPackets/chooseState.aspx>

AdoptUsKids' network of Recruitment Response Teams (RRTs) works exclusively for families. Each state, District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico has its own RRT staffed with experienced professionals in foster care and adoption. AdoptUsKids now offers an interactive map that provides access to state-specific information on foster care and adoption.

### FAMILY FRIENDLY CHECKLISTS

<http://olrs.ohio.gov/asp/SiteMapAndLinks.asp#OLRS%20Publications>

The Family Support Council of Ohio has produced these checklists to help families and agencies assess whether agency practices are family friendly. Together, families and agencies can use these checklists to help make an agency family friendly.

### COMING OF AGE: EMPLOYMENT OUTCOMES FOR YOUTH WHO AGE OUT OF FOSTER CARE

<http://aspe.hhs.gov/hsp/08/fosteremp/>

The Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation (ASPE) requested this study to examine employment and earnings outcomes for youth, through their mid-twenties, who age out of foster care. The key question and focus of the study is whether foster youth catch up or continue to experience lower rates of employment and significantly lower earnings than their peers even into their mid-twenties.