



# National Association of State Foster Care Managers

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF STATE FOSTER CARE MANAGERS  
AUGUST 3, 2009 ANNUAL MEETING  
MARRIOTT CRYSTAL GATEWAY  
ARLINGTON, VIRGINIA

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*... Networking... Educating... Improving...*

## STATE SHARING SUMMARY

State New Hampshire

( X ) State Administered      ( ) County Administered

Foster Care Manager/Presenter Ann Abram

State Population 1,315,809 State Child Population 299,000

Total Number of Children in Out-of-Home Care as of 3/31/09 895

Congregate 159 Family Foster Care 736 Relative Foster Care 143 unpaid  
(as defined by your state)

Please check:

Does this number represent an:

- ( ) increase
- ( X ) decrease 11%
- ( ) no significant change  
since the last year

Number of Foster Homes that are Licensed/Approved in your State 1037

Please check:

Does this number represent an:

- ( X ) increase
- ( ) decrease
- ( ) no significant change  
since the last year

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Please identify one or two innovative programs in your state. We are interested in initiatives that have proven to be successful or if not, the lessons you have learned. We look forward to hearing your presentation.

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Please bring 40 copies of your typed State Sharing Summary to the NASFCM Annual Meeting.

## **ACCELERATED REUNIFICATION MODEL**

DCYF is committed to achieving permanency for children and their families that enables them to secure natural and community supports that will help parents maintain safety and stability for their children. In the late '90's a program known as Permanency Plus was initiated. This program involved all new children entering care. Although some progress was noted, it was not considered to be significant. However, it was noted that when families are involved early in the processes, the outcomes for children would improve. Therefore, changes were made to the Permanency Plus program and in October 2008 DCYF developed a service model called the Accelerated Reunification Model (ARM) in collaboration with Casey Family Services. The service goal is to conduct a comprehensive assessment with the family that focuses on identifying and strengthening protective factors, and taking concrete action to enable timely and safe reunification. An initial contact is made with the family within 24 hours of the referral for service. A comprehensive and ongoing assessment is provided with permanency team meetings held within the first two weeks of the case opening. Team meetings are scheduled at regular intervals and frequent communication with team members, including the foster/kinship caregiver, parents and service providers, is a key component to success of the program. Frequent in-home and face-to-face contacts are provided to maintain the urgency of creating the changes necessary for children to be reunified and for families to demonstrate the ability to keep their children safe. ARM is currently being used in two district offices. Preliminary findings noted in the Casey Family Services mid-year program review indicate that although initially skeptical of having "another social worker tell me what to do", families have felt supported and included as part of the team in the goal of bringing their children home. When reunification has not occurred, families report a sense of genuine efforts made to reach that goal and that they were included in the planning and decision making. It is anticipated that should the outcomes demonstrate reunification is achieved and sustained through the use of this model, DCYF will expand utility of the model to other offices.

## **DCYF/DJJS/RESIDENTIAL PROVIDER - FRAMEWORK FOR COLLABORATION**

In June 2008, residential providers were invited to join DCYF/DJJS in an initiative aimed at developing and implementing a collaborative system for delivery of services in residential treatment that focused on shorter lengths of stay and achieving permanency for the youth who were placed in their programs. Over the past eight months a core work group of DCYF/DJJS staff and residential providers have been meeting regularly to create a New Hampshire framework to achieve improved permanency outcomes for children and youth placed in residential programs. The framework includes a vision statement, core values, key definitions, guiding principles, outcomes, and standards of practice that emphasize outcomes and positive results. This set of values and commitments provides for more effective collaboration between all stakeholders: child welfare professionals, parents and kin, youth, providers and community alike. The framework will serve as a guide and helps everyone to hold themselves and each other "accountable" to common ways of working together. Policies, both by the child welfare agency and by providers, can be created to "formalize" parts of the framework so that professionals and programs operate in a consistent manner. This framework will serve as the basis for achieving effective, quality service provision at all levels of intervention and support with children/youth and families.

## **Kinship Care**

New Hampshire hired a Relative Care Specialist who has been with us for over a year. During this time policy and practices have been reviewed and are in the process of being revised. A home study format has been developed that takes a clinical approach to addressing the issues that develop with relative caregivers and the family. A standardized format for initially assessing relative care homes has been created. Also in the process of being released is new policy and documents in regards to the Fostering Connections legislation, more specifically the 30-day notification to adult relatives of children who enter placement, as well as, other documents to assist caseworkers and relative caregivers with the placement process. A resource guide for relative caregivers is currently being created for release in the community. NH has collaborated with Vermont this year to host the 2<sup>nd</sup> annual Kinship Conference on October 8th in West Lebanon, NH. Dr. Joseph Crumbley will be the Keynote speaker and attendees from the conference will be coming from both states.