In this issue of Permanency Planning Today – our semi-annual newsletter – we tackle the critical challenge of finding, preparing and supporting foster and adoptive family resources for children and youth in need of out-of-home care, protection and permanency. The current foster care population of over 540,000 children is in many ways paradoxical. While children are entering at younger ages (with children under 5 the fastest growing segment of the foster care population), simultaneously the numbers of older children in care are increasing, as children are staying longer and leaving care at older ages (Tartara, T. 1998. VICS Research Notes, No. 14: Child Substitute Care Flow Data for FY 96, US Child Substitute Care Population Trends. Washington, DC: American Public Welfare Association – now American Public Human Services Association). Additionally, many of the children in placement present serious emotional needs, and come from families experiencing persistent poverty, racism, homelessness, unemployment, substance abuse, domestic and community violence, neglect and chronic mental illness. Too often, even before children enter out-of-home care, they have experienced the traumatic effects of relationship disruptions and violence, and struggled with medical and behavioral difficulties. When placement is necessary, they require specialized care and support from a mix of capable foster families as well as community health, mental health and education programs. In special circumstances, they may also need temporary group and residential programs to meet their treatment needs while maintaining connections to birth, foster or adoptive families as well.
While the foster care population continues to grow and become more complex, the foster parent population has shrunk – from 147,000 foster homes for 276,000 children in care in 1984 to 125,000 foster homes for just under 450,000 children in care in 1994, in part due to demographic and economic/labor force changes. (Barbell, K. 1996. The Impact of Financial Compensation, Benefits and Supports on Foster Parent Retention and Recruitment. CWLA). The reality of recruitment and retention of foster parents today demonstrates that many families are using all of their resources to manage their own emotional and economic challenges, leaving little time left over for parenting ‘other people’s children’ – particularly those with special needs.

Yet, with 75% of the children in foster care living in community-based family foster homes, and relatives caring for 25% of all foster children (CWLA, 1998. Family Foster Care Fact Sheet; U.S. General Accounting Office. May, 1999. Foster Care: Kinship Care Quality and Permanency Issues), there is a greater need to find and support a pool of diverse foster families able to meet the changing needs of children in care – families who can also work as a part of the "team" to support reunification, and plan as well for alternative permanency options should that be necessary. This is particularly true for the over-represented populations of children of color (some 65% of the children in care today), large sibling groups, infants with pre-natal drug exposure, and those younger and older children and youth with emotional/behavioral difficulties.

Experience has shown that relatives and non-relatives do continue to offer themselves as foster parents, but they need increased supports and training from the child welfare system to help them stay involved in providing care (Pasztor, E & Wynne, S. 1995. Foster Parent Retention and Recruitment – the State of the Art in Practice and Policy. CWLA). The challenge is complicated by the reality that approximately 40% of foster families leave the system within one year of being licensed. There may be several possible reasons, including: families who have adopted their foster children and have no additional space; societal and demographic changes related to higher divorce rates, two-breadwinner families struggling to make ends meet, and the high cost of housing; media portrayal of the foster care system as usually negative; role confusion, lack of agency support, lack of respite care; negative interaction with birth families; adversarial worker-foster-birth family relationships; and in some cases, low payment issues for caregivers. (CWLA, 1998. Family Foster Care Fact Sheet).

Thus, both public and private child welfare agencies are deeply troubled by the fact that there is a growing shortage of foster parents and are looking for new and tried strategies that can be adapted to their unique communities to increase the satisfaction and participation of foster families while expanding the pool of the types of families (relatives and non-relatives) available to meet the complex needs of children and families. With ASFA’s shortened timeframes for planning and decision-making about where children will grow up, a capable and diverse pool of foster families is a critical need if we are to use family foster care as a vehicle for successful permanency planning.

In this issue we have included a mix of articles related to retention and recruitment of foster and adoptive resource families that together share a consistent message about inclusion, respect, teaming, education and support. These strategies apply to non-relatives or relatives who serve as foster or adoptive parents for children in out-of-home care.
Whether recruiting and supporting non-relative or relative resource families, we encourage States, Tribes and localities to "think out of the box" about understanding the complex needs of children and families, the types of foster and adoptive families we need to find, the way we work with communities and families to invite them to help us care and plan for children's safety, permanency and developmental well-being, and the policies and program designs that will best support good social work practices. Our writers in this newsletter will teach and guide you by sharing the lessons they learned through working with foster and adoptive families, and through their own personal experiences. We hear from practitioners (Susan Davis, Every Child, Inc. in Pittsburgh and Diane DeLeonardo, an adoption family recruiter with The Illinois Department of Children and Family Services); from a child welfare expert and veteran (Jake Terpstra, mentor to all); from foster and adoptive parents through research done by the National Foster Parent Association (Karen Jorgensen and Jayne Schooler); from a permanency planning resource parent (Gwendolyn Lawson Townsend in an interview by Linda Katz) and a former foster care youth (our own newsletter editor Sharon Karow).

With our second cooperative agreement from the Children's Bureau we are using our newsletters as vehicles to address emerging and hot topics in the field, allowing us to gain more expertise and develop more resources on issues that state, tribal and local child welfare agencies can use in their daily work. Our interest in retention and recruitment has lead us to pursue a focus on foster and adoptive home licensing approval as a link to quality assurance and expediting permanency for children. We have recently received a contract from Casey Family Programs to explore and report on current best practices in the States regarding Dual Licensing, and will be working over the next year with the National Resource Center for Organizational Improvement to expand our efforts with States and Tribes on licensing of foster and adoptive family resources. Thus, even after this newsletter you should be hearing from us on these important issues. We hope that you, our readers, will let us know what you think of this Retention and Recruitment issue – but more importantly, we continue to seek the ideas you have that might be further studied or shared with your colleagues!

Sarah B. Greenblatt

WHAT MAKES FOSTER PARENTS COME AND STAY: UNDERSTANDING THE KEYS TO SUCCESSFUL RETENTION

by Karen Jorgenson and Jayne Schooler

National Foster Parent Association

Director's Note: The following statements from foster parents and information on the experiences of foster parents were gleaned from a survey of foster parents and from the National Foster Parent Association's years of advocating, training and working with foster parents across the country.


Foster parents leave agency programs for a number of what can be called "soft issues." These include the normal attrition reasons such as: foster parents “age” out of the program, life changes/moves, health problems, financial problems, or adoption of their foster children. However, these reasons are not those cited in the research literature as the reasons foster parents leave. Why do foster parents really give up?

WHAT MAKES FOSTER PARENTS GIVE UP: THREE CRUCIAL ISSUES

Who Are We to You?
Foster Parent Role Ambiguity

A primary reason that foster parents cite as the grounds for leaving the program is confusion about who they really are in relationship to the
agency. Much of that confusion revolves around the lack of clarity about their roles and responsibilities and lack of respect and positive regard (Denby). In exit surveys, as well as research into the issue of role ambiguity, foster parents cited such statements as (Denby):

- We were unclear about what agency social workers expected of us.
- We were never “really” included in case planning.
- Complete information was kept from us.
- Our input was treated as trivial or minimized.

Can You Teach Us To Do The Job?

Lack of Relevant Pre/Post Placement Training

In both exit surveys and in research foster parents cite additional reasons for leaving the program. Those reasons included: being inadequately prepared in the pre-service orientation to the job of fostering and not having relevant ongoing training. Foster parents related such concerns as (Denby):

- The training I received in pre-service did not prepare me for the realities of being a foster parent.
- The children I have in my home have such challenging behavior problems, but the agency does not have any training or resources to help me.
- There was never a system in place to identify my training needs as a foster parent.

Will You Be There for Us?

Lack of Avenues of Support and Connections

Respondents in a survey on foster parent satisfaction indicated “that in order to deal with children who have behavioral problems and other day-to-day fostering duties, parents need a high level of support,” (Denby) and that support needs to come from a variety of sources. Parents voiced concern about the lack of support by commenting (Denby):

- I am afraid to ask my case manager for a respite break. Last time I did, I got the feeling that “I must not be handling the job correctly.”
- When I called my worker to schedule respite, she told me firmly that was something she didn’t do, I would have to arrange my own. I don’t know any other foster parents.
- We never see my child’s worker. An aide always comes to pick the child up for visits. The aide never can answer any of my questions.
- Our agency does not encourage our foster parents to exchange phone numbers. If I had someone to call for help, I wouldn’t always have to rely on my worker.

WHAT MAKES FOSTER PARENTS COME AND STAY:

KEY PRINCIPLES OF SUCCESS

Coming In:

A Positive Experience

- Recruitment Response: Agencies respond to foster parent inquiries in a timely manner, providing information that fully explains the application process, training process, and other expectations.
- Family Assessment Process: Foster parents participate in a mutual family assessment process which encourages them to look at their own abilities, motivations and qualifications in light of the children they hope to foster (and maybe adopt). Foster parents do not feel that they need to guard their communication in fear of never being able to become a foster parent.
- Relevant Pre-Service Training that Links Content to Life Experience: Foster parents receive competency based pre-service training that clearly defines the challenges of foster care. It allows them to use the group process and life experiences in assessment of their own qualifications to become a foster parent.

Staying On:

A Positive Experience

- Communication: Foster parents experience a relationship with the agency that is exemplified by mutual sharing of information and ready access to worker support, within the framework of respect and positive regard.
- Clear Role Definition: Foster parents have a clear understanding of their role as a team member. They are informed of all meetings regarding the child’s case, meet the birth parents within a short period of time after placement and understand their input is valued and needed.
- On-going Training: Foster parents have access to training opportuni-
ties that are relevant to the requirements of specialized parenting. Foster parent’s training needs are assessed on a yearly basis and the agency’s training program provides those opportunities or recommends outside resources to meet the training need.

- Ongoing Support: Foster parents have access to a support network of experienced foster/adoptive parents, caseworkers, and professionals when challenges and crises occur. Agencies also provide regular planned respite opportunities and connections through mentoring.

Foster care in this country is in the midst of transition. The strains upon the system will continue to become greater. In order to assure quality, consistent care for our children and to ensure fewer moves for our children, we must retain experienced foster parents who understand the times and know what to do.


**Recruitment: A “Tool” For Permanency**

by Susan I. Davis,
Executive Director, Every Child, Inc.,
Pittsburgh, PA

I entered the field of adoption in 1985 after 15 years as a special education teacher. I knew nothing about child welfare – including adoption – when I applied for a new position to head up an adoption program for children with developmental disabilities in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. At my job interview, I acutely remember leafing through page after page of an oversize book that contained pictures and descriptions of ‘waiting children’ from across the state. I was amazed and appalled that all of the children, many described by a long list of ‘problems’, were currently without a consistent, loving family. Especially noted the children with disabilities, since my role would be to develop adoption services for this group. Fortunately, my interviewers took a chance and hired me – and for the past 16 years, with the help of dedicated staff, we have placed nearly 400 children with special needs with loving families.

There was so much to learn, but I was driven by my passionate belief that every one of the children deserved an opportunity to grow up with a family in a community. Who were my teachers? First and foremost, multiple interviews with adoptive families provided invaluable insights into the motivations, rewards and great challenges related to adopting a child with multiple special needs. Next, it was my great fortune to participate in an intensive week of training with the ‘the mothers’ of special needs adoption – Kay Donley Zeigler (former Director of Spaulding for Children, currently retired and working as an independent consultant) and Betsy Cole (previously at the Child Welfare League of America, currently retired). My training continued through ongoing consultation with Kay and Betsy, Judy McKenzie (former President and CEO of Spaulding for Children, currently retired), Sara Brown (previously at Spaulding for Children, currently a consultant on fetal alcohol syndrome and other developmental disabilities), and Drenda Lakin (Director of the National Resource Center for Special Needs Adoption, Spaulding for Children) and through my membership in the Family Builders Network. I mention these leaders because their teachings remain valid in my experience and reliable in my practice to this day.

My entry into foster care was quite different. For years I vowed that our agency would not provide foster family care; we had worked with far too many children who had languished in it. Our agency only utilized foster care as a way to financially support adoptive placements in legal risk situations, until the adoption could be finalized. Just a few years ago, I began to understand that by keeping permanency foremost, our agency could have some control over the length of time a child remained in foster care. Then we developed a small pool of foster families who could play the very important role of a temporary resource for children who were able to return home or who needed to be adopted in the event that reunification was determined not possible. Still, we have not created a foster family care ‘program’ and have remained zealous in assuring timely permanency through adoption for these children in transition if they are unable to return to their biological parents.
The following are observations and suggestions I've learned over the past 15 years and that I believe may help guide and support adoption and foster care staff in placing children with special needs:

LESSONS LEARNED THROUGH EARLY EXPERIENCES IN ADOPTION

1. Special Needs Adoption is a service for waiting children first, then for waiting families.

2. Special Needs Adoption is still a relatively new concept.

3. Families are the greatest resource to a child waiting for a permanent placement and should not be charged for adoption services.

4. It's important to understand, respect and be responsive to the culture, race and other variables that make each child and prospective adoptive family unique.

5. Foster family resources can be one of the greatest potential adoptive families.

6. A large pool of families waiting for adoptive placements may indicate that your agency is recruiting families who do not truly want to be or are not appropriate for the type of children who are waiting.

7. Comprehensive and accurate information about the waiting child is critical to successful recruitment and preparation of appropriate potential foster and adoptive families.

8. Knowing the child and having the opportunity to prepare the child for adoption will make a positive difference in the success of the placement. Getting to know a child and his or her history can help in identifying a potentially beneficial new or past family resource.

9. ‘Child specific’ recruitment is a highly successful strategy for recruitment of families for children with multiple special needs.

10. Full disclosure of information about the children can not only help families make informed decisions about adoption, but also can protect an agency from future litigation.

LESSONS LEARNED THROUGH LATER EXPERIENCES IN FOSTER CARE AND ADOPTION

11. Families must have the opportunity to learn about the children waiting for adoption and the adoption process in order to make informed decisions. This can be accomplished best, initially, through a group training process.

12. Because Special Needs Adoption is a lifelong process and commitment, assistance, identification of resources, and other ongoing support is vital to the stability of the adoption before and after legalization.

13. Foster care is a valuable transition resource, as long as it quickly leads to a permanent family solution, whatever the outcome. Too often, more supports and resources are provided to maintain the foster family setting, than to achieve a permanency solution for the child. And many foster parents are not asked or encouraged to be an adoptive resource for the child if reunification is determined impossible.

14. Identifying children for whom reunification is not possible and therefore need to be adopted should be a primary task in the permanency planning process. Children may be labeled and unfairly hidden in one of many systems, i.e., children with serious disabilities may have been placed into the Mental Retardation/Developmental Disabilities system. Even with termination of parental rights, these children may remain ‘hidden’ and unavailable to families who might have an interest in adopting them.
Similarly, children, as young as thirteen may be considered ‘unadoptable’ because of their age and assigned to long-term foster care or to an independent living track. These children deserve the opportunity be identified, considered and prepared for adoption services — not to mention given the choice.

Services to ensure that a child has a consistent, safe and healthy, as well as loving family are paramount and should be initiated as soon as risk factors related to the child are evident. Therefore, staff providing family preservation or reunification services should be involved in the permanency planning process from the outset as well.

While the ‘art of recruitment’ has evolved, there remain a set of core recruitment activities that can be utilized across all ‘specialty’ areas (e.g. children with disabilities, sibling groups, teenagers, Latino and African-American children):

- It is vitally important to ‘know’ the children in foster care who are available for adoption. In both foster care and adoption cases, caseworkers must take time to meet and get to know waiting children in person.
- Read every piece of past and current information you can gather about the child and interview all past and present caretakers. Thus, you will be able to describe the strengths, interests, personality and challenges of that special child to prospective families in a personal, first-hand way.
- Avoid labels or “Words That Hurt” (a slogan of National United Cerebral Palsy) and unnecessary verbiage that limit the child’s potential.
- Have many attractive pictures and a video to introduce the child to prospective families.
- Make sure that prospective fost/adopt families, whenever possible, receive equal access to information about the children who may enter their lives. But remember, always be honest and open with prospective foster and adoptive families resources about a child’s current and past situation.
- For adoption recruitment, fully research the child’s life. Is or was there a relative, caretaker (foster family, residential or institutional staff or volunteer), teacher, or friend of the family who may not be aware of this child situation and may be available as a foster or adoptive resource. Be sure to ask the child about meaningful relationships — past and present — in her/his life. A non-familial relationship in the child’s life has more than once lead to an adoptive placement as the following situations will attest:

  Louise, a 12-year-old with mental retardation, urged a schoolmate to ask his parents to adopt her — and they did! ...
  Carole was Deaidra’s special education teacher. She called our agency to see how she could help increase Deaidra’s signing skills. Within a year she became the nine year old’s foster, then adoptive mother ...

  Nancy, a 13-year-old, had just disrupted during pre-placement visits. Gearing up for renewed efforts to find Nancy a family, her agency caseworker was photocopying a photo of Nancy when the office secretary took notice of Nancy.

  She recognized Nancy as a youngster whom she had met and become fond of while working for a group home where Nancy once lived. Shortly after, the secretary and her family began visits with the teen, and Nancy, now 16, is happily adopted ...

  Assess the characteristics of past successful adopters or foster families, and target recruitment efforts in the communities in which similar families live, work and play. For children with disabilities, consider the families and employees at schools with special education programs, health care facilities of every kind, recreational programs designed for people with and without special needs, residential and religious settings, institutions and group homes. Go into the community and develop relationships! Become knowledgeable, comfortable, and recognizable in culturally-diverse communities. Work as a team with citizens of the community, helping them understand the formal process for
foster care and adoption and why it must be maintained. Keep track of which recruitment efforts make good use of your time, effort, and resources. Paying staff to recruit at a fair all day is a costly venture; perhaps foster or adoptive families can volunteer or be compensated in alternative ways.

- Don’t be afraid to use some of the new technology – video conferencing, the Internet, a Web site.

- “You Gotta Believe!” (an agency in New York City operated by Pat O’Brien). If you believe a child you serve is adoptable, other workers and families may be more likely to also believe in the possibilities. Self-assessment is critical in this business. Do you feel pity or discomfort with children who have disabilities? Be sure your recruiter sees and promotes the gifts of these children.

Preparation of waiting children still occurs too infrequently. Children of all intellectual abilities benefit from audio, videotapes, and picture albums from their matched family. Having children prepare life books is a valuable therapeutic tool for them, as well as an emotionally healthy way to prepare children for their next move – while better understanding where they’ve come from.

Keep the children at the center of parent preparation or training. Prospective families need the opportunity to understand who these children are, their lives, their losses, and their resilience. They need time to evaluate and understand the personal and external resources which will be necessary to parent a child with multiple special needs. And staff need to understand that learning for families is an ongoing process and that training sessions should be made available before, during and after placement – and provided through an array of experiential, creative, and active venues.

Do not assume that you know what the foster or adoptive family needs. Support to families should be provided on an individualized basis. Families who foster or adopt children with disabilities most often request information and support on special education issues. Mental health therapy and respite are not always the family’s greatest needs. Creative avenues are available to access ongoing support for families. That’s why it is so important to develop relationships with specialized agencies, like United Cerebral Palsy (UCP), Association for Retarded Citizens (ARC), and Education Law Centers.

An array of articles and program resources are available today to help you with recruitment of both adoptive and foster resource families (Adoption Clearinghouse, National Resource Center on Special Needs Adoption, National Resource Center for Foster Care and Permanency Planning, National Adoption Center, National American Council on Adoptable Children, Children Awaiting Parents, National Foster Parent Association, National Center for Permanency for African American Children). But, please remember that recruitment of families, from their first call, is only the first, tiny step towards quality foster care or adoption of a child with special needs. Resource families require a great deal of ongoing support, time, patience, respect, and enthusiasm from their workers!!

At a recent presentation I made in Massachusetts, I showed the audience a clip of the Indiana Jones film, “The Last Crusade” – when he was about to take a “leap of faith” because it was the only way to save his Father. I truly believe that all of us involved in finding and supporting families must be willing to take a “leap of faith” and believe that we are doing the right thing, and that a nurturing, safe and healthy family for the children we serve is by far the most valuable resource available to them. And we must understand and accept that the process demands our time, energy, and commitment if it is to have a successful outcome.
**Retention and Recruitment of Foster Care Resource Families: Reflections from a Veteran**

by Jake Terpstra
Child Welfare Specialist

Director's Note: Jake Terpstra is a veteran social worker in the child welfare field, one who has been a mentor to many. In his 40+ years of experience, he has worked as a caseworker, consultant to children's agencies, Director of Child Welfare Licensing for the Michigan Dept. of Social Services and a Specialist in Licensing and Foster Care for the Children's Bureau. In a recent conversation I had with Jake about the need to recruit and retain qualified foster parents as permanency planning resource families for our children in need of out-of-home care, Jake mused about the issues and concerns facing child placing agencies across the country as they strive to improve their retention and recruitment strategies. Knowing that our next issue of Permanency Planning Today would be devoted to this subject, Jake thought that a collection of “tips” and activities about supporting current and finding new foster families would be of help to the field. Below is a brief account of Jake's message to child welfare agencies and the “tips” this special veteran offers to those working in the field today tips that are likely to increase options for children to find life long family connections.

Pressures on child placing agencies continue to be extremely high, with a shortage of foster homes being a major concern. In 1999, the number of children in foster care (including residential and group foster care) was close to 550,000 (Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System, Children's Bureau, March 1999), and for the past decade has been increasing significantly. At the same time the number of family foster homes is reported to have decreased. This dilemma is further compounded by the high turnover of foster families. High turnover of caseworkers complicates the picture even further, with reports of an average tenure of only eight months in some locations.

Creative retention strategies need to be viewed by agencies and child welfare experts as being the most basic foundation to increasing both the supply and the quality of foster family resources. Foster parents who have fostered for an extended period of time generally become more capable and reliable the longer they serve as foster parents. Such foster families can be major public relations representatives for agencies and powerful recruiters for referring potential foster families, since some of the most effective recruitment is done by word of mouth especially by foster families who feel positive about the agency and the experiences they have had! It is clear therefore that agency support and recognition of foster families is critical not only to the retention of quality foster homes, but to the recruitment of additional resource families. And, in addition to agency representatives and recruiters, foster parents can serve as powerful mentors to new foster parents, especially in helping them through difficult periods of children's initial adjustments and emotional and behavioral problems that may arise. Increasingly, foster parents are also serving as mentors to birth families.

Many states are making strenuous efforts to increase the supply of foster homes. The following list of best practice “tips” include support and retention, recruitment, preparation, and staff training and agency evaluation activities that have been successfully utilized by public and private child placing agencies. These tips serve as a guide to all agencies in their retention and recruitment efforts. Retention and support activity “tips” are deliberately listed first as a recommendation that greater effort be made there. Successful agency retention and recruitment efforts have shown that, when retention is high and foster families feel supported and respected, recruitment needs little additional effort and tends to be much easier.

In conclusion, this list of activities deals with the “how” – how to support and recruit resource families – and the “what” – what agencies need to do to retain and support resource families but scarcely touches the “why” – why individuals choose to foster children. Answers to that question are more complex and vary with each child and resource family. But the complexities of family foster care should never overshadow the “heart” of child welfare services – the children – and the “goal” of child welfare workers and advocates to provide children and youth with safe, stable, permanent families in which to grow and live. What continues to be the need is to find, prepare and support foster families who can nurture children and support the reunification process, families who can serve as permanency resources if needed or help a child move on securely to another permanent family. We believe the “Tips” that follow will support best practices in Retention & Recruitment at the agency and community level.
JAKETERPSTRA’S BEST PRACTICE “TIPS” FOR SUPPORTING AND RETAINING RESOURCE FAMILIES

- Assess the child and family, and provide full disclosure to foster parents about children’s development prior to and during placement.
- Avoid coercing foster parents to accept children they do not want or for whom they feel they cannot provide a home.
- Strive to find resource families for children with complex needs and do not use family foster care only because it is “least restrictive.”
- Develop at least three clear categories of family foster care – regular, emergency shelter, and specialized – to make placements selectively and to make it possible for foster parents to change from one category to another.
- Provide recognition dinners and other events honoring foster parents.
- Give public recognition to successful foster parents. Recognize them on special occasions such as Mother’s Day and Father’s Day.
- Share the case plan with foster parents, and use them as part of the team when reviewing and revising the plan.
- Make “teamwork” meaningful and treat foster parents with RESPECT.
- Be sensitive to foster parent’s grief when children leave, and make grief counseling services available.
- Help prepare children and foster parents for moves.
- Provide 24 hour hotline access for foster parents. Give worker’s phone number to foster parents.
- Maintain frequent social worker and foster parent contact (from weekly to monthly, as needed) supplemented with telephone calls.
- Use professionally trained social work staff, with reasonable caseloads, and make strong efforts to avoid unexplained changes of social workers (minimize turn-over impact).
- Find and inform foster parents of community services available to them, including specialized counseling for special needs, e.g. sexual abuse or drug use.
- Make liability insurance available to foster parents.
- Advocate for foster parents to utilize adequate Medicaid services for their children.
- Notify foster parents of all hearings regarding children in their care, and encourage their attendance.
- Provide day care and respite care when needed.
- Provide transportation when needed.
- Provide flexible funding for items not included in the foster care board payment.
- Help foster parents, at the outset, when there are abuse allegations (provide information, support, action steps).
- Establish support groups of foster parents to support (but not take sides) when foster parents are accused of abusing a child.
- Conduct exit interviews with foster parents who leave - regarding the reasons - and how the experience could have been improved.
JAKE TERPSTRA’S BEST PRACTICE “TIPS” FOR RECRUITING RESOURCE FAMILIES

✓ Develop a plan based on demographics of children in care and their communities.
✓ Target recruitment to the population of children most needing care, be clear about children’s needs.
✓ Schedule a meeting with the managing editor of the local newspaper and the person in charge of foster care, to orient the editor about your program and needs of children.
✓ Media: Utilize newspapers: feature articles in major papers and small, specialized papers, including those for diverse community groups, classified ads. Appear on TV wherever possible – utilize public service announcements.
✓ Assign specific staff to recruit foster homes and make their title not only reflective of their role as a recruiter, but as a public relations representative of the agency, for example, “Recruitment and Public Relations Specialist.”
✓ Provide an orientation with a positive, receptive atmosphere as soon as possible after the first inquiry by a prospective resource family. Inform prospects of licensing requirements early, so they do not come as a surprise late in the process.
✓ Do not go through the licensing and training process if it is clear that children will not be placed in the home.
✓ Establish a “finder’s fee” for foster parents who refer others who actually become foster parents.
✓ Have foster care staff respond to speaking requests and seek speaking opportunities to stimulate interest in foster parenting, wherever appropriate – on job time. Be creative, e.g. booths at fairs, PTA meetings, community/church meetings.
✓ Publicize recognition dinners and other events honoring foster parents.
✓ Involve foster parents directly in recruitment activities, and orientation meetings.
✓ Coordinate foster care and adoption recruitment efforts.
✓ Be clear about the range of foster parent resources children need, and the roles and responsibilities of nurturing children, working towards reunification, and planning for alternative permanency options.
✓ Be sure that all staff are clear on the fact that recruitment efforts must be based on retention abilities.
✓ Convey a clear message that all staff are recruiters. This begins with telephone and office receptionists.
✓ Make certain staff understand that that satisfied foster parents are the best recruiters through word of mouth. The way they are treated is most likely to determine their influence on prospective foster parents.

JAKE TERPSTRA’S BEST PRACTICE “TIPS” FOR PREPARING RESOURCE FAMILIES

✓ Provide general pre-service training, plus special training regarding caring for children who have special needs.
✓ Include agency staff and foster parents in foster parent and agency staff training.
✓ Develop a foster parent handbook, giving information about the role, what is expected of them and what they can expect from the agency.
✓ Explore the foster parent’s motives to foster children, prior to placing children, to determine whether foster care is likely to satisfy their motives.
✓ If there are birth children in the home, explore their feelings about having foster children in their home.
✓ Help foster parents to see their role as a family support service primarily, with reunification as the first goal.

JAKE TERPSTRA’S BEST PRACTICE “TIPS” FOR SUPPORTING FOSTER CHILDREN AND BIRTH PARENTS

✓ Encourage foster parents and agency staff to help children who have been removed from their birth families to maintain contact with persons with whom they had a relationship in the past, including foster parents (when safe and appropriate).
✓ Include foster parents as part of the team to support birth parents, where feasible.
✓ Encourage visits in the foster parent home or other community sites, but take responsibility for controlling visitation when necessary.
✓ Be sensitive to a foster child’s grief when removed from a foster home and make grief counseling services available.
✓ Help prepare children and foster parents for moves.
✓ Collaborate with other services that affect foster care, such as healthy start, protective services, prevention, day treatment, reunification, aftercare, adoption, and post adoptive services.
The role of “partnership” as a means of addressing a wide range of social and community issues has been evolving for the past decade. Of course, the concept of forging alliances isn’t new, but what is new, is the courting of Corporate America’s involvement beyond the check-writing predisposition of the CEO into a new realm of volunteerism and support. In 1998 the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (IDCFS) began to address the challenge of finding permanent homes for children who were being freed for adoption at a faster pace than ever before in its history. Anticipating more than two thousand children would need adoptive placements within the year, the Department examined new ways to recruit, train, and match adoptive families. The following crucial factors shaped the new program design:

- Over 90% of the Department’s children were adopted by their foster parents;
- The children waiting the longest for adoptive placements were not adopted by their foster families;
- The Department did not have in place a method for specifically targeting, recruiting, training, and matching families who were only interested in adoption; and
- A history of poor customer service directed toward families seeking to adopt children rather than foster, in the child welfare system.

The idea of using public/private partnerships to strengthen services within the child welfare system was first tried by the Department in the late-1990s. In a bold new initiative, IDCFS combined its partnering philosophy with an appeal to Corporate America to become involved in a program of workplace recruitment of families specifically interested in adoption only. The Governor’s Office initiated the Corporate Partnership for Recruitment of Adoptive Families. They invited the Illinois Hospital and Health Systems Association (IHHA) to become the Department’s first corporate partner for workplace recruitment. On the child welfare agency side of the partnership, the Child Care Association, made up of private child welfare agencies, was asked to come on board to provide guidance in the selection of private agencies to partner with IHHA members hospitals. (In some cases, the Department provided licensing and training directly to recruited families.) This recruitment effort would showcase the Department’s newly developed Adopt-Only Training, as well as integrate customer friendly techniques and methods. In its partnership role, the Department would provide program leadership, training, financial incentives for the private agencies, and the services of the Adoption Information Center of Illinois, the statewide database of children waiting for adoption.

**THE PROGRAM PILOT**

Ten hospitals and eight private agencies in Chicago and Peoria were chosen as test sites for the model. IHHA partners that signed on for the project agreed to participate in very specific ways:

- To assign a hospital employee to work on the project who expressed an enthusiastic belief in and support of recruiting adoptive families;
- Provide assistance with the development of appropriate marketing tools and strategy;
- Arrange access to space within the hospital for orientation, training sessions, finger printing, etc.; and
- Review the benefit package for employees choosing to adopt (i.e., family leave when the child comes home, work time off to attend training and orientation).
The Child Care Association chose its private agency partners based on past performance records in adoptions, and when possible, an existing affiliation with a partnering hospital. In order for a private agency to become a partner, it had to enter into a specially written contract for the pilot. The contract stipulated that the Department pay the agency a financial incentive for each of three steps in the adoption process:

1. submitting a completed application to the Department;
2. issuing a license within 75 days of the application submission;
3. placement of a child in an adoptive home for 30 days.

(Since the pilot was tested, the Department has added a $1,000 incentive for agencies making matches within 90 days of a family being licensed.)

Equally important, the contract required the private agency to utilize a customer-friendly, efficient approach. All recruitment, training, licensing, and matching procedures were predicated on a customer-friendly model designed to appeal to everyone in the hospital-from the corporate office to the laundry room.

This approach included:

- Twenty-four hour turnaround response to all inquiries.
- Using recruitment materials tailored to each partner agency that included the name and phone number of identified staff to call for more information.
- Expedited processing of applications – 75 days.
- Specific training for those who wanted to adopt.
- On-site information sessions, orientation, training, and fingerprinting.
- Flexible work hours at the partner agency so that families could schedule meetings at their convenience.
- Follow-up and tracking of all families interested in adoption.
- A project coordinator who would respond to family or agency problems the same day and help to solve them.

In another example of partnership, to develop recruitment materials, the Department teamed with the marketing staff from the fast food giant, Wendy’s via the Dave Thomas Foundation whose mission is to promote adoption. These recruitment materials included: adoption information brochures, “Adopt” magnets, various-sized posters, banners, table tents, and employee paycheck inserts.

**SUMMARY**

The pilot currently has eight adoptions finalized and five more to be finalized in the Fall of 2000. There were other, unanticipated benefits to the recruitment program. It appears that the recruitment information reaches a secondary audience of individuals not interested in becoming adoptive parents but who indicated high levels of interest in other areas such as foster parenting, mentoring and other forms of volunteering.

Data and budget analysis suggest that the program has been cost efficient, compared with limited data available from other recruitment initiatives. For just under $15,000 each, the Corporate Partnership has licensed 39 families.

The Illinois Department of Children and Family Services has moved beyond the piloting stage and is currently recruiting new corporate partners to help find permanent homes for children waiting for adoption. To date 34 hospitals have hosted workplace adoption recruitment and new hospitals continue to sign-on to the project. In learning from the experience of the pilot, new corporate and private agency partners will be chosen based on their enthusiasm for the program and interest in workplace adoption recruitment activities. Partnerships, where either the hospital or private agency partner were
hesitant to commit the resources, did not have positive results. Also, a financial incentive has been added to the contract which rewards agencies for thinking ahead about possible matches for adoptive families and which can make those matches within 90 days of a family being licensed.

The Corporate Partnership for Recruitment of Adoptive Families is a highly replicable program. For information on the specifics of the Adopt-Only Work Place Recruitment Model, contact Diane DeLeonardo, Statewide Project Coordinator of the Corporate Partnership for the Recruitment of Adoptive Families, (217) 544-0254 or e-mail leonardo@fgi.net

NEW ROLES FOR FOSTER PARENTS - KEEPING THE DOORS OPEN: AN INTERVIEW WITH GWENDOLYN LAWSON TOWNSEND

by Linda Katz, MSW
Program Manager,
Dependency CASA Program,
King County Juvenile Court,
Seattle, WA


Gwendolyn Lawson Townsend, Executive Director of One Church, One Child of Washington State/UJIMA, volunteer Guardian ad Litem (GAL), consultant for the NRCFCPP and parent of 14 children by birth, adoption, guardianship and permanency planning foster care, believes deeply in concurrent planning and in open relationships between the adults in a child’s life. In our interview at her office in Renton, with four year old LaKenya playing at our feet, Gwendolyn related the story of her daughter, Mary, (not her real name) and Mary’s evolving family ties over 11 years as part of the Townsend family.

Placed with the Townsends at age two, at her mother’s request when facing overwhelming personal circumstances, Mary’s status was that of a dependent child in foster care. Although the mother herself had chosen them, her grief over separation from her child made her hostile and suspicious of the Townsends. Regular visits were carried out by the social worker, GAL and by Gwendolyn, who made an extra effort to win the young woman’s trust. Telephone calls between Mary and her mother were arranged. Gwendolyn sent frequent photos and mementos, more than the agency was accustomed to in general. Gwendolyn says that her observations of the warm and close relationship between Mary and her birth mother affected her deeply and led her to go to great lengths to keep the mother involved. She knew that placed children need contact, information, and inclusion if they are to retain their family ties.

As Mary’s birth mother developed a relationship with Gwendolyn, she asked if Mary could call Gwendolyn “Mommy” like the other children in the Townsend family, and gradually the tension between the two mothers disappeared. Gwendolyn continued Mary’s visits and kept the agency fully informed, as the worker had expressed concerns about the high level of contact between the two women. Gwendolyn feels that she saw something positive in this mother that perhaps the worker could not see because of her more official position. She points out that the agency must trust foster parents as full team members because “case managers manage the case, but foster families live it.”

With the Townsends’ support and encouragement, the birth mother located Mary’s absent birth father. He began visiting his daughter, and at a team staffing he was urged to take over Mary’s care. (Gwendolyn now regrets supporting this hasty plan, as it overlooked the father’s initial reluctance). At age six, Mary went to live with her father briefly. When CPS returned her to the Townsends, the father felt animosity toward them, but their friendship with Mary’s mother flourished and became even closer.
When Mary was seven, Division of Children and Family Services decided on termination of parental rights and foster parent adoption as the permanent plan, following agency policy to move cases on to the highest level of permanency possible. The Townsends opposed this plan. To them it seemed punitive to deprive Mary of legal ties to her parents when a legal guardianship would suffice. They felt a duty to support Mary’s right to her birth family. Feelings were strong on all sides and, unfortunately for everyone, teamwork between the parties deteriorated. Meanwhile, bonding between the two families continued to grow. By this time, Mary had been with the Townsends for five years.

During this difficult time, Mary’s birth mother and father married, and their differing views of the Townsend family caused a rift, resulting in a contested guardianship trial. Mary’s father now wanted custody of Mary. Gwendolyn speculates that Mary’s mother was embarrassed to let her know this, and may have been urged by others to keep it secret. The agency also did not reveal to them that the parents were opposing the guardianship, perhaps because of their recent dissension over the adoption staffing. Without trust and openness between agency and foster parents, the Townsends were unprepared for bitter hostilities with the parents when the guardianship was granted. Gwendolyn believes this tumult could have been avoided by better teamwork efforts on all sides.

In the following years, they repaired their relationship with Mary’s mother. She relocated for six months to Spokane and Gwendolyn continued providing her visits with Mary. The mother-daughter bond was healthy and strong; the parenting skills she observed were excellent. When Mary’s mother moved to Seattle, she came to Bible study at the Townsends’ church. Later, when she and Mary’s father settled in Tacoma, the Townsends worked steadily to build a relationship with him again, for Mary’s sake, although it was difficult. The couple now have two more children and Mary has spent the night with them, but still isn’t entirely comfortable with longer visits. At the time she wanted her mother to move into the Townsend home. It has become clear that Mary regards both families as her family but is definite that she does not want to leave the Townsends. Her birth family agrees, because of their relationship with the Townsends.

Recent events have continued the roller coaster pattern of Mary’s story. Her birth father has asked the Townsends to adopt Mary, and now both parents have relinquished her so Mary can become the Townsends’ adopted daughter at age 13. Because of her friendship with Mary’s mother, and her respect for the tie that binds Mary to her birth parents, Gwendolyn has mixed feelings. Of course they will adopt, but Gwendolyn still feels regret over what she sees as her “failure” to reunite Mary with her family. Mary’s birth mother has no such doubts, telling Gwendolyn to “give yourself credit.” “Where would we be without you? My daughter wouldn’t even know me. You are my sister, I love you.”

From Gwendolyn’s perspective, Mary’s story validates the importance of keeping all the doors open with the birth family, building bridges to them and letting the outcome evolve. She believes this can best happen when foster parents are given a greater role with the birth family, are made full partners in the case planning team, given complete information, and a voice in the process every step of the way. While it may seem ironic that the adoption plan first proposed by the agency six years ago, and opposed by birth and foster family, is now agreed to by all, Gwendolyn
sees it differently. She believes that adoption would not have worked out well back then, in an adversarial atmosphere. It would not have been truly in Mary’s best interest, as it is today.

Although raising children with this level of openness is complicated, Gwendolyn believes it has benefits for the child and for both families, all of whom gain so much. She says, “Mary’s life didn’t begin with me. I wish you could see Mary with her birth mother – she is a great mother. I learn a lot from her. And Mary knows she has two families who love her.” She cautions, though, that “not everyone can carry out this unique parenting role, and those who are doing so need extra training and support as they travel down two tracks at the same time.”

**LEARNING THROUGH THE EXPERIENCES OF A FORMER FOSTER YOUTH: HOW FAMILY FOSTER CARE AFFECTS FOSTER CHILDREN**

by Sharon Karow, Newsletter Editor
National Resource Center for Foster Care and Permanency Planning

Caring foster parents can be a godsend to children in need of out-of-home care and protection. Yet, foster parents and foster homes come in a variety of emotional, cognitive and cultural packages – just as biological parents and families do – making the reasons for and ways of parenting foster children of critical importance to the overall experiences and well-being of foster children.

In 1967, my eight brothers and sisters – ranging in ages from one year to 16 years – and I were removed from our home and placed in nine separate foster homes in two different towns. Over the following four years, we came together to renew our bond with one another only twice and never with our mother. In all, my siblings and I experienced 16 different foster homes; four of my youngest siblings were later adopted by their foster parents – one brother, age two at the time, has never been seen or heard from again.

The relationships that my siblings and I had with our foster families varied greatly in affection, care and long-term association. Most of us felt very distant and removed from the foster families with whom we were living, but several of my siblings became and remain very close to the families who cared for them. The reasons vary just as the experiences and are very telling. My foster parents – although responsible and attentive to my needs – failed to understand how hurt I felt when they required me to call them Mr. & Mrs. ……, nor did they understand how painful their teasing of me affected my fragile adolescent personality and heart. At the other end of the spectrum of experiences was the relationship that one of my sisters had with her fifth and final foster family. Her foster parents opened their arms wide and wanted my sister to feel that they were her “Mom” and “Dad” and that she was completely at home. They were very concerned about her wounded spirit and feelings of great insecurity. After only a short time in their home, my
sister began to thrive and her anger and hurt began to quickly vanish. The crowning gift these foster parents gave to my sister was their wish to adopt her and, although she decided against it, they continued to treat her as their “daughter” and even informed her that she was in their will. My sister began to heal for the first time in the six years she had been in foster care. My relationship with my foster family ended when I turned 18, but my sister’s relationship with her foster family remains very strong and loving – a true commitment of love, family and permanency in relationships.

It is not that foster parents should be expected to be financially responsible for a foster child forever, but how foster parents open up their hearts and their homes to care for a child or youth is critical to the adjustment and well-being of the child and the fostering experience. Today if we randomly polled children and young adults living in or having lived in family foster care, the stories of their relationships with their foster families would reveal a wide continuum of very positive and very negative experiences. Whether or not each remain close to his or her foster family would have a direct correlation to his or her story and its place along the continuum. Having reflected on my own experiences and having listened to the stories of my siblings and those of other children who lived in family foster care, I have compiled a list of recommendations to foster parents that can help to make a foster child feel more accepted and cared about, thereby increasing the likelihood that the fostering experience is far more fulfilling, positive and an opportunity for growth:

- Do all you can to bring about visitations with siblings and with biological parents; if safety is not a concern – the more a child feels connected to his or her siblings and parents, the less he or she will strike out against the world.

- Talk to and listen to your foster child. Try to help him or her talk about the pain of being separated from his or her family. Help the child feel that it is okay and good to talk about his or her family and it’s okay to miss parents and siblings—no matter how troubled his or her home life was. Take time to hear your foster child’s story—it shows you care.

- Be aware of any prejudices you might have about children who need foster care and their parents especially if you feel that they must have something wrong with them or be in some way disturbed or even “bad” because of the situation and family they come from. Be honest with yourself about what you think of a foster child’s parents – bad, good, unfit, in need of help, a problem to the community – because how you see the parents may impact how you see and treat the child. Recognize, too, that negative feelings can change if acknowledged and challenged.

- Be attentive to and watch carefully for signs that biological children are jealous of or unhappy about a foster child receiving attention from a parent and find ways to remedy those feelings. Signs like painful teasing of or constant confrontation with a foster child by a biological child can signal anger on the part of the biological child.

- Reserve the term “foster child” for legal purposes and do not use it to introduce that child to someone outside the home – a friend, neighbor, relative.
Introducing a child by his or her name and simply stating that he or she has come to live with you for awhile is much more comfortable to a child or youth who feels the term “foster child” to be a shameful and socially negative tag.

Don’t take it personally if a foster child cries to go home and doesn’t seem appreciative of your help and concern. It is an incredibly painful time for a foster child who is experiencing a deep loss no matter how disturbed his or her life was before. In time, once a foster child begins to feel cared about and secure, he or she will begin to respond in positive ways.

If financially possible, use part – even a very small part – of the foster care payment to open up a savings account for your foster child. This will help the foster child feel that you are caring for him or her more out of concern than for monetary reasons - foster children hear the negative impressions about foster parent’s reasons for fostering just as clearly as anyone else. This can also be a positive way to teach future planning skills.

The debate continues as to why people become foster parents. Some believe that people do it out of love and concern for children and others feel that people “do it for the money.” However many, like myself, recognize that most foster parents cannot foster – no matter how much love and concern they have in their hearts for children without monetary benefits and agency support services. Alternatively, no amount of monetary benefits and support services can make someone love and care for someone else’s child if it isn’t in his or her heart to do so. It is therefore clear that agency care and support of foster parents is as critical to the quality of care afforded foster children, as the assessment of foster parents’ capacity to meet a child’s overall needs for safety, permanency and developmental well-being.

Foster care saved my siblings and me from a life of terror at the hands of a violently abusive father, but family foster care could have been so much more than a safety net for most of us. Little effort was given by our caseworker or our foster parents in helping us maintain contact with one another and with our mother – contact that would have been a great source of comfort and emotional support for each of us. And no help was given us in coping with the numbing loss of our family, with our constant worrying about each other, and our mother, and with our fears and concerns for our future. Some of my siblings grew up to have serious problems with drugs and alcohol and to have great difficulty in personal relationships problems I feel may have never developed or may have been challenged early on if they had received the open and honest care and therapeutic support they needed. In sum, foster children need so much more than room and board and until greater attention is given to the quality of foster care and to the services, and supports given to foster parents and foster children, the benefits and rewards of family foster care will continue to be debatable.

---

In The Wings

Staff at the NRCFCPP are developing Information Packets on issues related to foster care and permanency planning to assist child welfare agencies in their permanency planning efforts. Currently we are completing the following information packets that will be available by January 1st free of charge from the NRCFCPP: Foster Parent Recruitment and Retention; The John H. Chafee Foster Care Independence Act of 1999; and Permanency Planning with Drug Affected Families. In the future, we will be developing additional information packets on emerging issues and concerns in the child welfare field and will keep you informed of new packets in upcoming newsletters.

For a copy of any of these information packets, contact Myrna Lumbsden, NRCFCPP Information Specialist, by phone at (212) 452-7431 or e-mail: mlumbsde@shiva.hunter.cuny.edu.
Enhancing Critical Thinking Skills Through Journal Writing

This article explores the benefits of journal writing for enhancing critical thinking skills. It discusses the role of writing assignments in the classroom and how they can facilitate deeper understanding and self-reflection. The author provides strategies for integrating journal writing into various subjects and grade levels, emphasizing its potential to improve students' analytical and writing abilities. The article concludes with suggestions for teachers on how to effectively assess and utilize journal writing in their teaching practices.

WHERE CAN I FIND MORE INFORMATION?

The following is a listing of reports, summaries and materials available through the NRCFCPP, unless otherwise noted. Copies can be obtained by contacting Myrna Lumbsden, Information Specialist:

phone: (212) 452-7431
email: mlumbsde@shiva.hunter.cuny.edu

Bridging the Gap
Workday Proceedings:
Permanency Planning
with Drug Affected Families

This report was prepared by our Special Projects Coordinator, Judy Blunt. It summarizes the proceedings, recommendations and supporting research from a workday held at the Center to address collaboration opportunities between child welfare and substance abuse treatment service systems. The report is available from the NRCFCPP for $8.00.

Listening to Youth Report

The Listening to Youth Report captures the experiences of youth formerly in foster care and their recommendations about how to improve the system and strengthen services. This report describes the projects’ goals and methodology, lists the interview questions and the moving, thought-provoking youth responses, and provides recommendations for change offered by the former youth in care. A copy of the report can be purchased from NRCFCPP for $5.00.

“Tools” for Permanency

NRCFCPP “Tools” for Permanency practice and information sheets are available on Concurrent Permanency Planning, Family Group Decision Making and Child Welfare Mediation. A copy of each “Tool” can be purchased from NRCFCPP for $3.00 each. We will have a Relative Care “Tool” for Permanency available February 1, 2001.

The Implementation
of Managed Care
in Child Welfare:
The Legal Perspective

The purpose of this overview of the legal issues raised by the implementation of managed care principles in child welfare during the early and mid-1990’s by Denise Winterberger McHugh, an attorney and NRCFCPP consultant, is to provide a basic understanding of the legal aspect of managed care and a review of its challenges and potential opportunities for child welfare leaders. The report can be purchased from NRCFCPP for $8.00.

Permanency Planning
and ASFA Handbook

Michael A. Neff, an attorney practicing in New York City and NRCFCPP advisor, developed a handbook for child welfare specialists that can be used as a training tool in workshops on permanency planning and ASFA. The handbook incorporates legislative and judicial developments and strategies for good social work practice, as well as caseworker-attorney partnerships. A copy of the handbook can be obtained from the NRCFCPP for a shipping and handling charge of $3.00 or from Michael Neff:

phone: (212) 575-1365
e-mail: maneffpc@aol.com

Legislative Summary

A legislation summary on The Adoption and Safe Families Act of 1997, prepared by Diane Dodson, J.D., a consultant for the NRCFCPP, is available and can be purchased from NRCFCPP for $5.00.
Bibliographies
The following bibliographies can be obtained from NRCFCPP free of charge:
- Permanency Planning
- Concurrent Permanency Planning
- Child Welfare Mediation
- Family Group Decision Making
- Kinship Care

NRCFCPP Dual Licensure Survey
The NRCFCPP in collaboration with the Casey National Center for Resource Family Support is looking at the practice of dual licensure for foster and adoptive parents. We would like to hear from your state or child welfare agency if you are using or planning to use dual licensing or approval policies/practices to expedite permanency planning for some children. Please contact Sarah Greenblatt:
phone: (212) 452-7049
e-mail: sgreenbl@shiva.hunter.cuny.edu

Determining Adult Relatives as Preferred Caretakers in Permanency Planning: A Competency-Based Curriculum
This curriculum includes important clinical issues to consider and the questions that must be asked when identifying relatives to be considered as first placement resources for children in need of out-of-home care, protection and permanency. This curriculum will be available late Winter 2001. For more information, please contact Judy Blunt, NRCFCPP Special Projects Program Coordinator:
phone: (212) 452-7436
e-mail: jblunt@shiva.hunter.cuny.edu

A Call For Papers
For a special issue of the Peer Reviewed Journal:
Child Welfare
Topic:
Contemporary Issues in Permanency Planning
Practitioners, Policy-Makers, Clients affected by permanency issues and researchers are all encouraged to submit papers. Abstracts are due February 1, 2001.

For Information Contact
Gerald P. Mallon, DSW
The National Resource Center for Foster Care and Permanency Planning
Hunter College School of Social Work
129 East 79th Street, New York, NY 10021
telephone: (212) 452-7043, e-mail: MrenGmal@aol.com

NRCFCPP WEBSITE
Phase I of our new and improved web site is underway, and will be completed by the end of January 2001.
In this phase and in future web site updates, we will strive to provide you with the most current information on the NRCFCPP and information on current topics of concern in the child welfare field.

Web Address
www.hunter.cuny.edu/socwork/nrcfcpp