



NCSL

NATIONAL CONFERENCE of STATE LEGISLATURES

The Forum for America's Ideas

FOSTER CARE INNOVATIONS

KANSAS INTERIM COMMITTEE ON FOSTER CARE ADEQUACY

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Overview

- NCSL Children and Families Program
- Foster Care Overview
- Support for Foster Parents
 - Foster Parents Bill of Rights Legislation and Reasonable and Prudent Parenting Legislation
 - Other Comprehensive Legislation to Support Foster Families
- Foster Care Innovations – What Works, Promising Practices
 - How do we know what works?
 - Innovations in Foster Care

415,129 children in foster care

264,746 entered foster care

238,230 exited foster care

190,454 children in non-relative foster care



Children in Foster Care in U.S.,
9/30/14, AFCARS



Recent Legislative Support for Foster Families

Foster Parent Bill of Rights Legislation

AZ, AR, CA, GA, IL, IA, KY,
LA, MD, MI, MO, OR, PA,
RI, TN, WA

Generally includes the right to:

- Be treated with dignity, respect, trust, value, and consideration
- Receive information concerning the rights enumerated
- A written explanation of their role as foster parents
- Training and support

States may also provide rights to:

- Standardized pre-service training and continuing education
- Respite care
- Fair and equitable payment
- A staff person on call 24 hours, 7 days a week (AL, LA)
- Foster parent hotline (IL)

Foster Child's Bill of Rights Legislation

AZ, AR, CA, CO, CT, DE,
FL, HI, MA, MO, NV, NJ,
NC, OR, PA, RI, SC, TX
and PR

Example: Texas:

- Food, shelter, education
- Participation in extracurricular
- Religious activities
- Siblings
- Copy of credit report

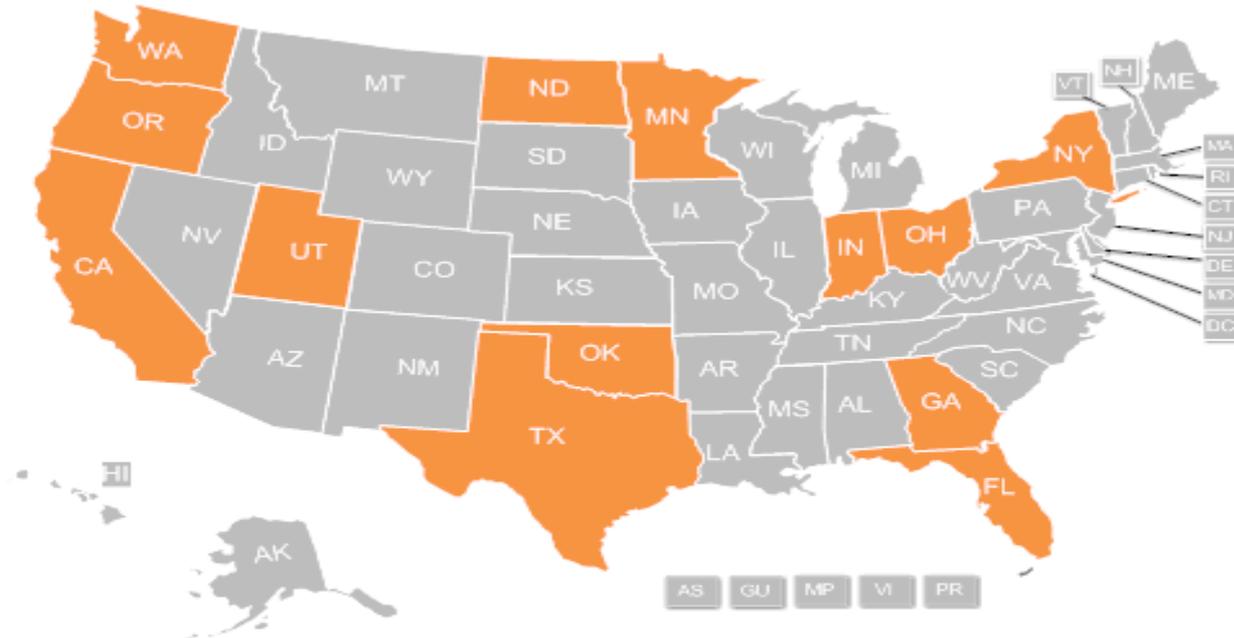
Reasonable and Prudent Parenting Standard Legislation

CA, FL, GA, IN, MN, NY,
ND, OH, OK, OR, TX, UT,
WA

- New federal legislation, [Preventing Sex Trafficking and Strengthening Families Act of 2014 \(H.R. 4980\)](#), now requires state child welfare agencies to:
 - Develop a reasonable and prudent parenting standard for foster parents to make parental decisions re: health and safety, extracurricular, enrichment, cultural and social activities
 - Children 14 or older participate in the development of, or revision to, case plan
 - Provide children aging out with birth certificate, social security card, health insurance information, medical records, driver's license/state I.D.

Preventing Sex Trafficking Act of 2014

States with Reasonable and Prudent Parent Standard in Statute



LEGEND

- States with a reasonable and prudent parent standard in statute
- States without a reasonable and prudent parent standard in statute

Comprehensive State Legislation to Support Foster Parents

- Connecticut
2013 Conn. Acts, SB 972, P.A. 178: Requires the Department of Children and Families to develop a comprehensive implementation plan for meeting the emotional and behavioral health needs of all children in the state. The plan, must: (1) strengthen families through home visitation and parenting education programs; (2) increase mental, emotional, or behavioral health issue awareness within elementary and secondary schools; (3) improve the current system of addressing such issues in youths; and (4) provide public and private reimbursement for some mental, emotional, or behavioral health services.
- West Virginia
2010 W.V. Acts, HB 4164, Chap. 20: Establishes a pilot program (to be known as Jacob's Law) for the placement of children ages 4 to 10 in foster care to provide children in crisis with early intervention, assistance with emotional needs, medical evaluations, independent advocates, and foster family training and education. The law also requires immediate evaluation and testing following removal from a home.
- Wisconsin
2010 Wis. Laws, AB 823, Act 336: Requires that all foster parents complete training regarding the care and support needs of children who are placed in foster care or treatment foster care. The training shall be completed on an ongoing basis and include parenting skills, the teaching and encouragement of independent living skills, and issues that may confront foster parents of children with special needs.

Other Legislation

- **Texas**

2007 Tex. HB 2702, Chap. 267 Sec. 15. Instructs the Department of Family and Protective Services, when making a placement decision for a child younger than age 2, to give priority to a person who will provide care without disruption until the child is returned to his or her parents or adopted. Sec. 30. Establishes a Committee on Licensing Standards to review, analyze and make recommendations for policy and statutory changes related to licensing standards and facility inspections. The committee review shall include analysis of the deaths of children in substitute care, types of licensing violations, administrative reviews and appeals, and the technical assistance received. Sec. 32. Outlines requirements for the unannounced annual inspection of residential child care facilities. Directs the department to investigate any report of a serious incident in an agency foster home or group home involving a child younger than age 6, including an investigation of any alleged violation of a minimum standard. Sec. 36. Requires an agency foster home that is transferring cases to another child-placing agency to notify that agency of any licensing violations.

- **Maryland**

2007 Md. Laws, HB 397 Creates an Eastern Shore Task Force on Foster Care to consider incentives and make recommendations that will enhance foster care recruitment and retention and to consider the hiring of a permanent staff person in each local Department of Social Services to recruit, retain and support foster care parents.



What Works?

Legislatures Address What Works

Washington State Institute for Public Policy (WSIPP)

- ❑ Non-partisan research on child welfare, mental health, juvenile justice and substance abuse
- ❑ Annual inventory of prevention and intervention services
- ❑ Conducts a meta-analysis of all rigorous evaluations of policies
- ❑ Cost-benefit analysis
- ❑ View WSIPP's [child welfare policy reports](#) or <http://www.wsipp.wa.gov/>

New Mexico Results First

- ❑ New Mexico's Legislative Finance Committee (LFC)
- ❑ Issues "report cards" on state programs to assess if they are delivering desired outcomes.
- ❑ Partnership with the Pew-MacArthur "Results First" initiative to support evidence-based policy making and budgeting
- ❑ A [national database](#) on effective programs. States add their own information on programs. The Results First model calculates long-term costs and benefits for each program.
- ❑ See New Mexico's recent [Results First reports](#) or <http://www.nmlegis.gov/lcs/lfc/lfcresultsfirst.aspx>

Evidence-Based Practices to Support Foster Parents

Fostering Healthy Futures	Preventive intervention for 9-11 year old children who have recently been placed in foster care due to maltreatment. This program aims to reduce risk and promote well-being through skills groups and mentoring. Experimental evaluations of this program have found positive impacts on mental health symptoms, trauma symptoms, quality of life, use of therapy, and placement in residential treatment facilities when compared with a treatment-as-usual control group. This program is particularly successful in positive placement and permanency outcomes for children in non-kinship placements.
Foster Parent College	FPC is an online training venue for foster, adoptive, and kinship parents. Interactive multimedia courses offered through the site provide resource parents with in-service training on clinical aspects of and parent interventions for their child's behavior problems. Instructional content is based on social learning theory and attachment theory. Course topics also include safe parenting, positive parenting, resource parents' marriage relationships, working with schools and birth parents, home safety, and kinship care.
Foster Parent Skills Training Program	The 10 program sessions of this program uses demonstrations, role playing and other types of practice as the predominant tools. The program has consistently resulted in increased parental ability to reduce the use of destructive parental/caretaker responses.
Keeping Foster Parents Trained and Supported (KEEP)	KEEP is a less intensive version of the training component of Multidimensional Treatment Foster Care (MTFC), an evidence-based approach to treatment foster care. KEEP offers manualized training, supervision and support for foster parents over a 16- week period. It teaches foster parents about the techniques and benefits of positive reinforcement.
Nurturing Parenting Programs	The Nurturing Programs target all families at risk for abuse and neglect with children birth to 18 years. The programs have been adapted for special populations, including Hmong families, Military families, Hispanic families, African-American families, Teen Parents, Foster and Adoptive Families, Families in Alcohol Treatment and Recovery, Parents with Special Learning Needs, and Families with Children with Health Challenges.



Promising Approaches

Quality Parenting Initiative (QPI) California/Florida

- Improve recruitment of foster parents
- Ensure that only the most qualified individuals care for the children
- Youth and foster parents have a greater voice within the foster care system
- Feedback to guide recruitment, licensing, and placement reform
- Participate in administrative meetings and help lead pre-service training

Florida Quality Parenting Initiative (QPI):

Florida's Just in Time Training

Web based, interactive

Connect fosters parents, kinship or other caregivers with training, peer experts and other resources.

Questions are answered and practical solutions to care for children are discussed.

Quality Parenting Initiative (QPI) California/Florida (cont'd)

Foster Parent Mentor Program

- Support to new and existing foster parents.
- Increase the overall retention rate of foster parents.
- Increase the placement stability of children in foster homes.
- Assist foster parents in successfully navigating through the child welfare system.

Caregiver Mentors will:

- Participate in Caregiver Mentor Program Training minimum 6 months
- Devote a minimum of 8 hours per month to mentoring activities.
- Attend quarterly progress and training meetings
- Complete records to track program effectiveness
- Make contact with protégés within 72 hours of assignment
- <http://www.qpiflorida.org/>
- <http://www.qpicalifornia.org/>

Resource Parenting Curriculum (RPC)

Foster Parent Mentor Program

- Support to new and existing foster parents.
- Increase the overall retention rate of foster parents.
- Increase the placement stability of children in foster homes.
- Assist foster parents in successfully navigating through the child welfare system.

National Child Traumatic Stress Network's "Caring for a Children Who Have Experienced Trauma: A Workshop for Resource Parents"

- 16-hour curricula, often referred
- In-service training for foster parents with a placement.

Safe Families for Children (SFFC)

- ❑ Faith-based
- ❑ Biological Parents maintain full custody
- ❑ Volunteer families are extensively screened and supported
- ❑ Six-week average length of stay (ranging from two days to a year)
- ❑ Average age of child in SFFC care is 4.5
- ❑ Close working relationships between Safe Families, the local church, and the referring organization
- ❑ Commitment to reunite the family as soon as possible
- ❑ 54 sites in 25 states

Goals:

- ❑ **Safe alternative to child welfare custody**, thus significantly reducing the number of children entering the child welfare system.
- ❑ **Child Abuse Prevention:** Safe, temporary place for a child without threat of losing custody. By offering support, the goal is to avert potential abuse/neglect episodes.
- ❑ **Family Support and Stabilization:** Safe Family Volunteers offer social support and act as extended family.
- ❑ <http://www.safe-families.org/>

Mockingbird Society Hub Homes

MFM: A Comprehensive Approach

- Children and Youth ages birth to 21 years
- Birth Families
- Formal and Informal Kinship Caregivers
- Foster Families
- Foster-to-Adopt Families
- Adoptive and Chosen Families

Goals:

- Support network around families with the goal of keeping families together and reducing the number of children entering the foster care system.
- Respite/child care and navigation of social service systems for birth families and kinship caregivers
- Peer mentoring and coaching to stabilize families and prevent crisis situations
- Restructuring Foster Care**
Relationship-based planned and crisis respite care that prevents placement disruptions, provides a safe space for relationship pacing, and reduces caregiver burnout
- Support for children to maintain connections with siblings and birth families
- Early Reunification:** Supporting families so kids can transition back home quickly
- Foster-to-Adopt:** Helping children form relationships with potential adoptive families and supporting the transition process
- Transition to Adulthood:** Preparing foster youth for a successful future and providing support as they transition into adulthood
- <http://www.mockingbirdsociety.org/>

Foster Care Recruitment, Retention

- **Utah Targeted Neighborhood Recruitment** - Targets neighborhoods for two months of recruitment including contact newspapers where press releases and articles are published, and contact foster families who assist in hosting open houses where community members come to learn more about foster parenting and partner with schools. For more information: <http://www.casey.org/Resources/Archive/Publications/RecruitmentRetentionResourceFamilies.htm>
- **One Church One Child** - A national adoption education and recruitment model that originated in Chicago. The original mission of the program, for "each church in the Black community to find at least one family to adopt at least one waiting child or sibling group," has since expanded to other states, denominations and communities. For more information: <http://www.nationalcoc.org/>
- **Fostering Hope** -Fostering Hope is a Colorado based program with the goal of enabling a team of volunteers from a faith community to come together as a "quasi-extended family" to assist and support foster parents in their task of caring for foster children. Over the last 9 years the program has mentored 400 families, with teams of church volunteers who are trained and supervised to be advocates, friends, and resources to the families. For more information: <http://www.fosteringhopeprogram.org/home.html>
- **Rhode Island's Foster Parent Mentor Program** - Mentors are experienced foster parents who work on developing a relationship with newly licensed foster parents during their first year of service. In that time, new foster parents learn much about accessing services and finding resources. They also benefit from having a foster parent mentor with whom to share their fears, frustrations and joys. Similar programs can be found in Oregon, California, Kentucky, Virginia, and New Mexico. For more information: <http://www.rifpa.org/programs/mentor-program.htm>

Resources

NCSL Child Welfare Page:

<http://www.ncsl.org/research/human-services/child-welfare.aspx>

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California Evidence-Based Clearinghouse for Child Welfare

<http://www.cebc4cw.org/>