



SUPPORTING
EFFORTS
TO RECRUIT
PERMANENT
FAMILIES
FOR WAITING
CHILDREN

FAMILIES & CHILDREN OF COLOR

MARCH
2002

Recruiting News

970 Raymond Avenue, Suite 106, St. Paul, Minnesota 55114 • 651-644-3036 • fax: 651-644-9848 • info@nacac.org • www.nacac.org

Project Ends but Work Continues

By Diane Riggs, Adoption 2002 Support Project Manager

Last December, the Minnesota legislature's Senate Judiciary Committee heard Samuel Myers testify that Minnesota has the highest disproportion of minorities in child welfare of any state. Myers, a professor at the University of Minnesota's Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs, is studying the over-representation of minorities in states' child welfare systems. The national picture is also disturbing. A comparison of 2000 Census figures and preliminary federal foster care data as of March 31, 2000, shows that the percentage of black children in foster care is three times higher than the percentage of black children in the population at large. On a state-by-state basis, Latino/Hispanic and American Indian children are also over-represented in foster care. Both Myers' findings and the federal data confirm what many of us have known for a long time: agencies must strengthen recruiting efforts directed toward families who reflect the racial composition of children in care.

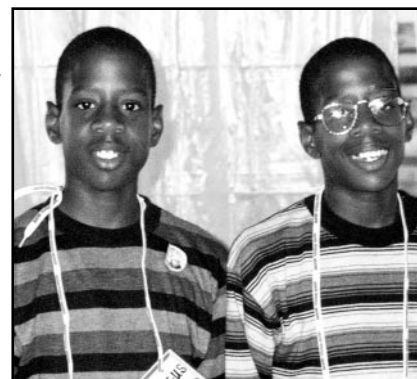
In this final issue of *Recruiting News*, we explore recruiting techniques and other information related to finding homes for African American, Latino, and American Indian children. One unifying theme runs throughout these discussions: recruiters must truly understand their target community before attempting to seek adoptive or foster parents from within its midst. A single strategy will not help agencies to locate and interest the diverse families needed for children in their caseloads.

Fortunately, when Congress extended the Safe and Stable Families Program earlier this year—see news bulletin on page 8—it also appropriated additional funding. The program funds support and preservation work on behalf of birth and adoptive families, and also provides for adoptive family recruitment activities. New funding for 2002 could enable states to enhance recruitment efforts targeted toward families of color.

Unfortunately, the three-year, federally funded Adoption 2002 Support Project that enabled us to conduct a variety of national recruitment and adoption awareness activities (including the production of this newsletter) has ended. But though our national project is over, our work—like yours—is far from finished. We will continue to seek out

Waiting Children

Twins Matthew and Marcus are known for their good tempered approach to life, polite manners, and strong brotherly bond. Sometimes shy and quiet, caretakers note that the twins are charming, funny, and delightful to be around once you get to know them. In social situations, Matthew and Marcus smile easily and show grace when interacting with both adults and children.



Marcus & Matthew
born June 1990

These appreciative, easy-going young men are very much alike. They both love to go for milk shakes at Burger King. They also like to play football and basketball, and take an active role at church. In church, Matthew and Marcus sing in the choir and serve as acolytes during services.

Now in fifth grade, Marcus and Matthew have shown above average abilities in their schoolwork. Marcus attends a resource class to receive extra help with reading, but the boys really enjoy their science class and both made the honor roll last year!

Matthew and Marcus have a lot of love and good times to bring to a family. The family who adopts these twins will need to provide a safe and nurturing environment so they can grow into fine young men and make good use of their talents.

To learn more about Marcus and Matthew, contact Laura Harrell at the South Carolina Department of Social Services: 843-661-2495; e-mail: lharrell@dss.state.sc.us. ✕

model recruiting projects and publicize successful strategies through our quarterly newsletter (*Adoptalk*) and on our web site. We sincerely hope that you, in turn, will keep working to find permanent, nurturing, and culturally sensitive families for the thousands of children who are still waiting for a family to guide them into the future. ✕

Remove Barriers and Latino Families Will Adopt

By Maria L. Quintanilla, LCSW, Executive Director, and Carol Mroz, MSW, Associate Executive Director, Latino Family Institute

The Latino Family Institute (LFI), a federally and state funded adoption and foster care agency in Southern California, understands that certain factors keep Latino families from pursuing formal adoption. Directors Maria Quintanilla and Carol Mroz have identified procedures that neutralize barriers for Latino families, foster trust in agencies, and empower families. Their findings, summarized below, address issues unique to the Latino adoption experience.

Like many other communities of color, Latinos have an established history of informal adoption—children have long been raised by grandparents, aunts and uncles, and godparents. The Latino Family Institute (LFI) was founded to help Latino families navigate the adoption process and help Latino children. Then, before implementing a program to help families, LFI developed a clear understanding of the organizational and cultural barriers that keep Latino families from adopting.

Organizational Barriers

Mistrust of government agencies: For Latinos, experiences both in their countries of origin and in the U.S. keep them from seeking contact with government agencies or organizations they view as government agents. Corruption and political persecution are common in many Latin American countries and inspire fear in both immigrant families and acculturated Latinos. Social service agencies, often perceived as extensions of the government, are automatically mistrusted. In California, recent anti-immigrant initiatives have led to even more government mistrust. Prospective adopters' concerns about their immigration status, as well as that of other family members, may prevent Latinos from submitting to fingerprinting and background checks. Families may also be reluctant to openly talk about themselves during the home study process.

Traditional agencies not viewed as community friendly: Many traditional adoption agencies are located in areas inaccessible to the Latino community. Staff members fail to reflect Latinos' community or speak their language, forms are not available

Subsidy Bookmarks Available

NACAC helps professionals and parents to understand subsidy programs—programs that provide crucial support to parents who adopt children with special needs. To order free copies of subsidy bookmarks that list NACAC's toll-free subsidy number and the services we offer, call 651-644-3036 or write to info@nacac.org.



in Spanish, and agency hours do not accommodate working people. Other discouraging practices include a lack of timely response to initial inquiries; delays in processing; limited agency contact between the time when the home study is completed and a child is placed; and the length and complexity of application forms, financial reports, and legal documents. Few traditional agencies are open to walk-in clients or those who prefer to drop off paperwork, common practices for Latinos and consistent with the cultural custom of *personalismo*—the preference for personal rather than impersonal or institutional contacts.

Lack of culturally and linguistically responsive recruitment strategies: Efforts to approach the Latino community with culturally-appropriate recruitment and retention strategies—available in both English and Spanish—have been limited. Culturally responsive services may be lacking because traditional agencies harbor the institutionalized belief that Latinos, particularly immigrants, do not adopt or will not meet qualifications. The Latino community in general is viewed as system dependent, rather than as a resource for children in the system. Because of these beliefs, traditional adoption recruitment approaches are not well-suited for Latino families.

Cultural Barriers

Lack of knowledge about eligibility requirements: Many Latinos are not aware that they are eligible to adopt, since only the wealthy are able to adopt in their countries of origin. Believing that the income standards must be even higher in the United States, some Latinos are reluctant to pursue the adoption process.

Stigma attached to infertility: The stigma of infertility is painful for any couple and Latinos—raised in a culture that highly values fertility, virility, and children—are especially vulnerable. For many Latinos, giving birth to children may be their life goal and how they define family. Infertility affects the entire family and as the couple deals with their loss, the extended family grieves their lost roles as grandparents, aunts, and uncles. Some infertile couples feel that inquiring about adoption is an admission of their infertility.

Religious beliefs may further intensify the stigma. Some Latinos believe that infertility is a punishment from God. Because they cannot oppose God's will, these couples believe infertility is their cross to bear and they must simply accept childlessness.

High number of male children available for adoption: Approximately 900 (or 15 percent) of the children available for adoption in California are Latino males. Historically, Latino families have been proud of raising sons, yet when it comes to adoption, Latinos prefer daughters. Our experience indicates that when married couples adopt, wives who initiate the adoption process feel more able to relate to girls. As with other ethnic groups, Latino parents believe that females are easier to handle, less aggressive, and more openly affectionate than males.

In addition, cultural beliefs suggest that a girl is more likely to remain close to her family throughout her life, while a boy will be less involved with his family of origin as he gets older. Latino families may also be influenced to adopt a girl because of negative media portrayals of Latino males as criminals and gang members. To respect his wife's wishes, a Latino husband may put his desire to raise a son on hold, and take full responsibility for the couple's infertility. In this way he can compensate for his feelings of helplessness and regain his role as the family provider.

Misconceptions about children with special needs: Latino families may become discouraged about adopting a child who has an alarming diagnosis or label, such as prenatal drug exposure, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, or post-traumatic stress disorder. Since children of color are more likely to be labeled, many Latino children available for adoption will have one or more of these designations.

Medical etiology versus folk etiology: Some Latino families have misconceptions about the cause of their adopted child's behavioral, health, or developmental delays. For example, a family might believe that a child's medical conditions are due to the birth mother's choice of adoption for the child. Depending upon how strongly entrenched they are in these beliefs, parents may be less willing to be matched with children who have special needs and less willing to comply with treatment plans.

Overcoming Barriers

To retain Latino families, agency staff must anticipate prospective parents' needs. Address the topics listed below—in recruitment materials, orientation sessions, pre-service trainings, and throughout the approval process—and your agency can help to address Latino families' concerns, and make the path to adoption welcoming.

- **Reinforce that services are free.** In Latin American countries, only the wealthy can afford to pay the cost of agency adoptions (though informal and kinship adoptions without agency involvement are quite common). Explain early on that the government pays the agency to find families and even provides subsidies to help families raise adopted children. Let the families know that the government wants to help children find permanent homes—because families are good for children and because adoptive parents save the government money.
- **Clarify your agency's relationship with the government.** Latino families—especially immigrant families—are often more willing to work with private nonprofits than public agencies. If your agency is nonprofit, tell families that it is not government run. Whether your agency is public or private, reinforce that information collected about families is confidential. Prospective parents worry (for themselves or for other family members living in their home) that getting involved with adoption agencies may bring scrutiny from immigration bureaus or police. Be upfront about what information will be collected and why, and with whom it will be shared.

- **Establish personal relationships between staff members and prospective families.** Introduce all staff members at orientation. Give families an organizational chart with all of the staff members' names and contact information. Clarify staff members' roles and responsibilities, and emphasize that staff are trained professionals, available as resources to the families. Latino families typically appreciate knowing the title and training that professionals who are serving them have earned.
- **Acknowledge stereotypes and help families examine their own biases.** Latino families frequently express a preference for girls. Ask them about this preference. They will likely say that girls stay closer to the family, cause less trouble with the law, and won't have substance abuse problems. Discuss societal stereotypes about Latino males and help families to see that they too are buying into the belief that Latino boys are criminals and gang members (and help them to recognize that girls get into trouble too). Highlight that without permanent, loving families, children are far more likely to live up to these stereotypes.
- **Address spirituality.** Allow families to talk about spiritual beliefs, especially any related to their infertility. Overcome their initial hesitation to talk by de-personalizing the discussion. Say, "Other families have told us that they believe infertility is a punishment from God or a cross to bear. Have you heard those sorts of ideas?" Always mention that many families see infertility not as punishment from God, but instead as a calling to adopt. Involving other Latino families who have already adopted as speakers can also help.
- **Explain who the children are and where they've come from.** Explain in detail the process by which children become available for adoption, letting prospective parents know that children have not been kidnapped or stolen (as may be a concern in their country of origin). Be honest about abuse and neglect the children may have suffered. Clarify the difference between corporal punishment and abuse—Latino families may fear that the way they were raised or the way they raised other children was abusive and withdraw from the process. Still, tell them that because of the children's histories, spanking is not an acceptable form of discipline. Then share other techniques that are effective. Discuss common treatment plans used to help children with different special needs (medication, physical therapy, counseling, etc.), mentioning that using folk treatments is acceptable but only in conjunction with the traditional interventions.

The Latino Family Institute has worked hard to make adoption a feasible option for Latino families in California. To learn more about ways in which your agency can more effectively reach out to and retain Latino families, contact Maria or Carol at LFI, 1501 West Cameron Avenue, Suite 240, West Covina, California 91790; 800-294-9161 (Español) or 626-472-0123. ✖

Homes for Black Children Recruits through Courtesy and Community Connections

By Marie Zemler

Step into the Homes for Black Children (HBC) office in Detroit, and you won't find the typical maze of desks and cubicles. Instead, a front porch-themed reception area—complete with flowered wallpaper, a picket fence, and patio chairs—welcomes you inside. Then, sofas, dining room tables and chairs, and artwork featuring African American families help you “feel like you're in a home,” says Linda Whitfield, HBC's adoption supervisor.

The homey feeling is just one way HBC makes foster and adoptive parents feel like part of an extended agency family. Whitfield and colleague Anita Hunt, HBC licensing specialist, find that keeping families satisfied with their services *and* connected to the agency family is central to their success in recruiting and retaining African American foster and adoptive parents.

Community Connections

In 1969, community volunteers who were alarmed at the number of African American children languishing in foster care founded HBC to seek adoptive families. Today HBC is a multi-service private agency that is under contract with the Michigan Family Independence Agency to recruit both foster and adoptive homes.

When recruiting, HBC stays true to its community-based roots by, as Hunt says, “being out there where the people are at the time they will be out.” HBC staff attend Detroit's major community celebrations—including the TasteFest, the Black Women's Expo, and the annual car show—as well as smaller festivals and events.

Two groups have proven to be especially valuable community partners. Since connecting with the health care industry, HBC has been busy with requests from hospitals and public health groups that invite them to look for families at community health fairs. As families come in for low-cost vaccinations or free cholesterol screening, they can also learn about adoptive and foster parenting.

Efforts to connect with the faith community—in particular large African American churches (often using women's auxiliary groups to make the initial connection)—have also spawned a host of invitations. HBC staff make displays for parish tea parties, give speeches at missionary society lunches, and serve as resources to family committees whose members are considering adoption.

Staff invest a lot of time in attending events—including time outside normal business hours. As Whitfield says, “it is critical to be seen as part of the community.” She notes that any agency can establish a presence in the community, but cautions that fruitful connections take time. “Only two

or three families may come forward after you attend an event, but we find those families critical—they could be resources for eight children or more.”

HBC's Friends

Whitfield and Hunt both agree that spreading the word about the need for families is too much work to do alone. Fortunately, says Whitfield, “We have a lot of friends.” Friends of Homes for Black Children, a formally organized volunteer group, helps plan special events for foster and adopted children. HBC's Friends also raise funds to sponsor “life enrichment activities” such as zoo and amusement park visits, skating events, dance lessons, and drumming classes.

Enrichment activities benefit HBC in several ways. They provide parents with a welcome respite, enhance children's social skills while boosting their self-confidence, and introduce the Friends to children who are waiting for placement. As the Friends return to their own social circles or go out to do further fundraising, “They've had a hands-on opportunity to meet the children and can speak from real experiences,” Whitfield explains.

Recently the Friends started helping at community recruitment events. Their volunteer hours ease the burden on HBC staff and, since most of the Friends are adoptive or foster parents, their presence at recruitment events communicates that people of all ages and from all walks of life can commit to helping children.

Welcoming Families

The warm, family-like atmosphere of HBC is built from the moment a prospective foster or adoptive parent makes the first inquiry call or initially approaches an HBC staff member at an event. Outreach efforts, says Hunt, are bound to fail if “the receptionist turns away as many families as the recruiter brings in.”

Two principles guide Hunt's initial conversations with families. First, she keeps in mind that HBC is there for everyone. Regardless of the age or seriousness of the person who approaches her, Hunt never thinks time spent discussing foster care or adoption is wasted. She always lets people know that even if they cannot foster or adopt, they can still volunteer to help children find homes. Second, she tries to engage each person in a relaxed, free-flowing conversation. Because adoption and foster care are about family connections, most people have a related story to tell or questions to ask. In the initial conversation, says Hunt, being a listening ear and a helpful resource are more important than discussing licensing requirements or handing out extensive literature packets.

Responsiveness is key, not just with prospective families but in working with community groups as well. HBC often gets calls from churches and civic groups interested in doing service projects with the agency. When they offer an idea for a project, Whitfield never says, “We don't need that,” but instead approaches all offers saying, “That's

wonderful. We can make it fit.” Often HBC finds that these one-time service projects turn into lasting community partnerships that later bring in valuable donations and even foster and adoptive parents.

Trusting solutions offered by community members is especially important when foster and adoptive parents come forward offering to recruit in their own social circles. Whitfield explains, “When families come to us with homemade recruitment posters saying, ‘This is what I want to do,’ we don’t question them with, ‘Who are you to recruit?’ or ‘Do you have the right information?’ Instead we give them a stack of our brochures and let them go. And they do a marvelous job.”

Because the way in which staff members respond to families and community members is the foundation of successful recruiting, Whitfield recommends that all staff take time to complete an honest, thoughtful cultural self-assessment (*see assessments at right*). Only by examining the value systems that have shaped their own lives can staff truly prepare themselves to welcome and accept others—especially those with different backgrounds or cultural practices. Next, she says, the entire agency should assess its skills, interest, willingness, and ability surrounding recruitment efforts—especially in communities of color—before plunging in.

Offering Support

Since 90 percent of HBC’s adoptions are completed by foster parents with whom the children have already been living, adoptive parent recruitment is closely linked to foster parent retention. HBC makes training and support events—including preparation classes, support groups, appreciation days, and life enrichment activities for children—easy to attend by offering them in the evenings and on weekends. This means staff must once again work outside of standard office hours but, Hunt explains, “Since we need families who will go that extra mile, we also need to model that. And it works out great!”

Whenever families come to HBC’s office for an event, they are greeted with food. And not just light fare or deli trays, notes Whitfield, but foods served at a typical family gathering in the African American community. Staff members contribute potluck items—fried chicken, yams, dressing, peach cobbler, etc.—to make families feel at home.

Even when families come for a celebration event or to drop off children, HBC tries to make the trip very worthwhile. Families can always earn training hours toward maintaining their license—even if that means watching an educational video in another room or bringing home a new parenting book to review.

Recruiting and supporting African American families “takes a committed staff who live and breathe the organization” admits Whitfield, but, “we’re an agency that’s willing to do that.” After all, she says, “[families] are doing the work; our job is just to help.” ✦

Cultural Self-Assessment

Before beginning recruitment efforts, staff can use the following questions to examine their backgrounds and determine their comfort level, strengths, and biases in working with different racial and ethnic groups.

- What is your cultural background?
- In what community did you grow up? Describe its demographic composition.
- What values did your family teach you?
- What messages did you receive about relationships with people of different cultures?
- When did you notice that people of different races and cultures are treated differently?
- How do these experiences affect your work?

(Adapted from materials by James Green)

Agency Assessment

Readying your agency to recruit families of color is as important as preparing individual staff members. Honest answers to the questions below—for agency leaders or the entire staff—can help set goals and build the foundation of a successful recruitment and retention program.

Mission: What are your agency and recruitment missions? Indicate the goals and action steps of the program.

History: Review your organization’s history with recruitment efforts. What are your successes? Lessons learned?

Organizational demographics: Examine the racial and ethnic demographics at all levels of the organization: board members, administrators, supervisors, direct service providers, support staff, birth families, foster families, adoptive families, and children.

Image: Indicate and explain any public relations, media, or other administrative issues that affect services.

Community focus: What community is being served? What are that community’s resources? Identify community-based/grassroots organizations, faith-based organizations, and community leaders.

Community collaboration: What collaborative relationships/partnerships are already established? What new relationships/partnerships will be sought?

Policy and budget priorities: Examine current recruitment policies. Are any changes needed? Is there a budget for recruitment? If not, how will the program be sustained?

Strategies/techniques: Which recruitment strategies and techniques will be used in the program?

Current program: Evaluate your present efforts to help identify successful strategies and techniques.

The Indian Child Welfare Act: An Overview

By Kathleen Deserly

Currently the community development specialist for the National Indian Child Welfare Association, Kathleen Deserly has worked in Indian child welfare for 20 years. Below she shares basic information about the Indian Child Welfare Act.

For more than 100 years between the mid-1800s and the second half of the 1900s, thousands of Indian children were taken from their families and placed first into boarding schools and later into non-native foster and adoptive homes. Through boarding schools, the government hoped to assimilate Indians into mainstream America. Misguided efforts to place Indian children into non-native families served much the same goal, and with similarly devastating consequences.

Generations of Indians who grew up in boarding schools and non-native families were stripped of their families, culture, and sense of belonging. Indian families whose children were placed in non-native settings also experienced the profound loss of their children, as well as the loss of being able to pass down traditions and shared history.

By the 1970s, many tribes had launched campaigns to regain control of their children's fate from entities outside the tribe—namely state and private social service agencies, and the Bureau of Indian Affairs. Through tribes' efforts, and efforts of sympathetic Indian organizations and child welfare professionals, the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) became law in 1978.

The Purpose of ICWA

According to the National Indian Child Welfare Association, before ICWA was passed, the out-of-home placement rate for Indian children was 18 times higher than for other children. In addition, 85 percent of Indian children in foster care were placed in non-native homes or institutions. ICWA, supporters hoped, would stem the flow of Indian children away from their families and tribes.

Through ICWA, Indian tribes have authority to make decisions about the welfare, care, custody, and control of their tribes' children. In particular, tribes have sovereign rights and the legal power to say whether or not Indian children should be separated from their families and culture. In turn, public and private child welfare agencies have a different protocol to follow when Indian children come in contact with the child welfare system.

Agencies' Responsibilities

ICWA has two primary provisions. The first concerns what agencies must do prior to a child's entry into care, and when con-

sidering a foster or adoptive placement. Under ICWA, agencies must:

- provide remedial, culturally appropriate services for Indian families *before* a placement occurs;
- notify the child's tribe by registered mail of the child welfare proceeding;
- recognize the tribe's right to intervene in the case or assume jurisdiction over the case;
- use expert witnesses to assess the need for placement; and
- follow stated placement preferences (*see inset below*) when identifying foster and adoptive parents.

ICWA PLACEMENT PREFERENCES	
Foster Care	Adoptive Home
1. Extended family	1. Extended family
2. Tribally licensed, approved, or specified foster home	2. Member of child's tribe
3. Tribally operated or approved institution that can meet the child's needs	3. Member of a different tribe

The second part of ICWA provided for Indian tribes to re-assume jurisdiction over child welfare matters—for instance, develop and implement juvenile codes, set up juvenile courts, and develop tribal-state agreements regarding child welfare services. Many tribes throughout the country provide a range of child welfare services to address their communities' child welfare needs.

To comply with ICWA, workers must identify every Indian child who enters the child welfare system at the earliest stage. When an Indian child is not identified until the termination phase, ICWA must still be followed and permanency planning can be seriously delayed.

The intent of ICWA is to guarantee tribes' right to participate in child welfare decisions affecting their tribal members, a historical right that was returned to tribes only 24 years ago. By following the steps of ICWA, agencies can help to assure that states, tribes, and Indian families achieve the best possible outcomes for Indian children. ✕

Exchanging Ideas

*Tips from the
Adoption Exchange
Association (AEA)*

The Adoption Exchange invites home studied families from across the country to register on Colorado's Adoptive Family Resource Registry (AFRR). The registry asks parents to share demographic information and characteristics of the child or children they are interested in adopting. For \$50 per year (or less, for low-income parents), registered families' information is included in a confidential, password-protected web site. Colorado caseworkers have been trained to use the site and are required to use it to make matches for the children in their custody.

If you or families on your caseload are interested in registering to be matched with a Colorado child or sibling group, or you would like to learn more about AFRR, call Julie Lelek at 303-755-4756 or 800-451-5246, or visit www.afrr.org. ✕

“Ask the Expert”

Ron Woods, the expert for this final issue of *Recruiting News*, is the adoption specialist at California's Indian Child and Family Services. For more than 12 years, he has been working with Indian communities to find homes for Indian children. To learn more, contact Ron at 909-676-8832, ext. 14.

Q What recruitment strategies are most effective when working to find families for Native American children? Would a big media campaign reach the Native community?

A Because every tribe is different, grassroots efforts to identify and connect with members of each tribe work better than large-scale campaigns. Native American foster parents (especially those who are happy with their agency experience), Native American church leaders, and other tribe members are best qualified to spread the word about the need for foster and adoptive families within a tribe. Large-scale campaigns—ones that include radio and television appeals, for example—will simply net a lot non-Indian families who want to help but not the Native American families being sought.

Q Does our agency need to follow Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) guidelines for a child whose birth parents' claims of Native heritage cannot be substantiated?

A In general, if neither the tribe nor a regional Bureau of Indian Affairs office can verify that a child's birth mother or father is eligible for tribal enrollment, ICWA does not apply. That said, agencies must investigate all claims of tribal connections. If ICWA is not followed, and a child's birth parent later turns out to be eligible for tribal enrollment, the tribe can reverse the adoption, even after finalization.

Q Our agency respects the goals of ICWA, but we also want to expedite permanency for children. How can we hasten permanency planning while complying with ICWA?

A The best way to *delay* permanency planning is to ignore ICWA. It takes very little time to verify a birth parent's tribal status, notify the tribe about the child welfare proceeding for an Indian child, and find an expert witness to assess the child's need for placement. Beyond that, ICWA is simply good social work practice. For any child in foster care, workers should seek out relatives and extended family members who may be willing to offer the child a permanent home before looking to other resources. ICWA is not about keeping children from being adopted; it can be more accurately described as a tool for ensuring that children's and tribes' best interests are protected. ✕

The National Indian Child Welfare Association (NICWA) is also a good resource for information about ICWA. NICWA has been working for nearly 20 years to protect Indian children and preserve Indian culture. To learn more about their work and services, call 503-222-4044 or visit www.nicwa.org.



Next Up...

Upcoming Trainings, Conferences, and Events

APRIL 14-17 • DULUTH, MN

The National Indian Child Welfare Association will present its 20th annual conference, "Lessons of a Stolen Generation." Kim Just; 503-222-4044, ext. 113; justkim@nicwa.org.

APRIL 27 • SAN DIEGO, CA

The National Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) Association invites prospective attendees to its 21st annual conference, "Changing One Million Lives, One Life at a Time." National CASA Association; 800-628-3233; www.nationalcasa.org/casa/confer.htm.

APRIL 29-MAY 4 • LAS VEGAS, NV

The National Foster Parent Association, Inc. (NFPA) and the Foster Care Association of Nevada present the 32nd annual education conference, "Bright Lights—Bright Futures." NFPA Education Committee; 800-557-5238; nfpa@donet.com.

MAY 9-11 • ALBANY, NEW YORK

The New York State Citizens' Coalition for Children, Inc. will present its 13th annual adoption training conference, "Adoption 2002: Linking Promises to Possibilities." 607-272-0034; office@nysccc.org; www.nysccc.org.

JUNE 2-5 • PACIFIC GROVE, CA

The American Humane Association (AHA) presents its 2002 Family Group Decision Making (FGDM) Roundtable, "Revolutionizing Practice with Children and Families: Sustaining and Growing the FGDM Movement." Mickey Shumaker; 303-925-9416; mickey@americanhumane.org; www.ahafgdm.org.

Bulletin Board

PROMOTING SAFE AND STABLE FAMILIES PROGRAM ENHANCED

On January 17, 2002, President Bush signed into law the 2001 amendments to the Promoting Safe and Stable Families program. The amendments extend the program for five years, and authorize an annual \$200 million funding increase—\$70 million of which was appropriated for fiscal year (FY) 2002.

The FY 2002 budget appropriates a total of \$375 million for Promoting Safe and Stable Families. Senators DeWine (R-OH) and Rockefeller (D-WV), with Representatives Cardin (D-MD), Herger (R-CA), and Pryce (R-OH), ushered the bill through Congress and pushed hard for the extra FY 2002 appropriation.

The \$70 million increase represents a 22 percent gain in this year's funding for states—funding that can be used through FY 2003. Money is to be used to help prevent child maltreatment, promote family continuity, quickly reunify foster children with birth families when possible, and support adoptive families.

Now is a good time for states to see that a fair share (20 percent, as instructed in the 1998 Health and Human Services' program issuance) of the additional money creates new adoptive families and serves those who have stepped forward to provide permanence for children in foster care. For children who have lived through years of instability and upheaval, a secure and stable family is a crucial component in the struggle to overcome past hurts and traumas. ✕

"Being adopted is better because you've got a family that's yours. In the group home, they did love you, but not in that way. They looked out for you that you didn't get hurt—that kind of love. This love is like love for your life. I feel it."

*—a 14-year-old,
adopted at age 10 after
time in a group home*

Research Examines Children's Service Needs

In *The Needs of Adopted Youth: A Study of Illinois Adoption Assistance Families* (2001) researchers Jeanne Howard and Susan Livingston Smith look at children's well being with an eye toward services families need to facilitate children's adjustment. To learn more, contact Illinois State University's Center for Adoption Studies at 309-438-5841. ✕

Revised Tool Promotes Cultural Competence

Published in 2002, the newly revised *Cultural Competence Self-Assessment Instrument* is designed to help child service agencies identify and enhance cultural competence between staff members and with clients. Through *Cultural Competence*, agencies can determine whether their policies, programs, and practices truly meet clients' needs. To order, call 800-407-6273 or visit www.cwla.org/pubs. ✕

Report Profiles Subsidized Guardianship

The Cornerstone Consulting Group brings together information from interviews with staff of subsidized guardianship programs in several states in its report *Guardianship: Another Place Called Home* (2001). The report offers advice for restructuring or creating new guardianship programs as well as for training and providing post-placement support to families. Contact Luisa Alvim at 713-627-2322 or lalvim@cornerstone.to. ✕

Guide Helps with Sibling Placement Decisions

Together or Apart? Assessing Brothers and Sisters for Permanent Placement (2001) focuses on the needs of siblings—individually and as a group—who need permanent placements. The guide profiles research findings and practice experiences related to assessing and working with sibling groups. Full of case studies and useful checklists, it provides a child-centered framework to aid in planning and decision-making. To order, visit www.baaf.org.uk or e-mail pubs.sales@baaf.org.uk. ✕

Booklet Links Drug Use and Child Welfare

Alcohol, Other Drugs, and Child Welfare (2001) discusses the way in which intergenerational drug and alcohol use is the root cause of much of the abuse and neglect that bring children in contact with child welfare agencies. The booklet outlines challenges created by substance and child abuse, and mentions programs that are working to effectively address these complex problems. To order, call 800-407-6273 or visit www.cwla.org/pubs. ✕

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