Recruiting and Supporting Adoptive, Foster, and Kinship Care Families

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About AdoptUSKids

• AdoptUSKids is a service of the U.S. Children’s Bureau and has been in operation since 2002 by the Adoption Exchange Association

• The mission of AdoptUSKids is two-fold:
  – To raise public awareness about the need for foster and adoptive families for children and youth in the public child welfare system
  – To assist U.S. states, territories, and tribes to recruit, engage, assess, inform, develop and support foster and adoptive families and connect them with children and youth
National adoption recruitment campaign localization status by state
States with media trained spokespersons
Families contacting AdoptUSKids in January 2016 for information about the process of fostering or adopting from foster care

Legend

- 81+
- 61 - 80
- 41 - 60
- 21 - 40
- 1 - 20
- 0
Families who were actively registered on the AdoptUSKids website and waiting to adopt as of January 31, 2016
Children who were actively photolisted on the AdoptUSKids website and waiting for placement in adoptive homes as of January 31, 2016
Goals of the session

- Share a vision for integrated recruitment, development, and support of families for children in foster care
- Get you excited about the idea of an integrated approach for achieving improved outcomes for children and families (and benefits for child welfare systems)
- Provide concrete ideas for ways to recruit and support families
- Share information about how AdoptUSKids can help
A vision for integrated recruitment and support

- What do we mean by “integrated recruitment and support”? 

- Why is this idea needed?
  - Current challenges
  - Gaps in data-driven approaches
A vision for integrated recruitment and support

The current (non-integrated) approach

- Linear
- Planning and implementation happens in silos
- Minimal feedback loops

Adopt US Kids
Together we hold their future
A vision for integrated recruitment and support
Data-informed diligent recruitment

CHILD WELFARE DATA EVOLUTION

Data Collection

Using Data to Assess Outcomes

Using Data to Improve Outcomes

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CHILD WELFARE DATA EVOLUTION

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Using Data to Assess Outcomes

Using Data to Improve Outcomes

RECRUITMENT, DEVELOPMENT, AND SUPPORT OF RESOURCE FAMILIES

AdoptUSKids
Together we hold their future
Data-informed diligent recruitment: Sample Questions to ask your data

Data Elements on Current Families
• Are our current families being fully utilized?

Data Elements on the Licensure/Approval Process
• How is our process working for getting families licensed/approved?

Data Elements on Placement Capacity
• What is our current actual capacity?
• Is it sufficient to meet the need for appropriate placements for children currently in need of a placement and for our anticipated placement needs?
Data-informed diligent recruitment: Sample Questions to ask your data

Data Elements on Placement Capacity

• What is our current actual capacity?
• Is it sufficient to meet the need for appropriate placements for children currently in need of a placement and for our anticipated placement needs?

Data Elements on the Effectiveness of Recruitment, Development, and Support Strategies

• Are our recruitment strategies effective in finding appropriate families for our children and keeping those families engaged both before and after children are placed with them?
Promising recruitment strategies

- Wendy’s Wonderful Kids
- Market segmentation & GIS
- Adoption Advocacy of South Carolina
- Extreme Recruitment
Promising recruitment strategies: Wendy’s Wonderful Kids

- Wendy’s Wonderful Kids recruiters employ aggressive practices and proven tactics focused on finding the best home for a child through the starting points of familiar circles of family, friends and neighbors, and then reaching out to the communities in which they live.
- Research from a five-year evaluation of Wendy’s Wonderful Kids shows that children served by the program are up to three times more likely to get adopted.
Promising recruitment strategies: Market segmentation and GIS

• “Birds of a feather flock together” – similar people go to the same places and do the same things

• Prospective foster and adoptive parents are likely to share values, characteristics, and interests of current foster and adoptive families
Questions market segmentation can answer

- Who are the target audiences?
- What are they like?
- Where are they?
- How can they be reached?
Why use market segmentation to inform recruitment planning?

• **Data driven**
  - Who, where, and how
  - Baseline for outcomes

• **Application**
  - Focuses recruitment activities where you can be most successful

• **Cost effective**
  - Better use of agency and family time
  - More viable families as placement resources
Market segmentation for recruitment planning: steps in the process

- Contract with a national market research company that has classified US households into unique market segments, with households in each segment sharing characteristics.
- Create a data-based definition of “successful families”.
- Create a data-based definition of child/youth origin.
- Extract addresses from jurisdiction’s data system.
- Attach a market segment code to each address.
- Run report to identify high indexing segments.
Arizona AGIS Project

Uses data from the following sources to help recruit additional foster homes:

- Beginning in 2011, incorporates market segmentation data that includes the demographics and style of living of the current foster families.
- Foster parent satisfaction and exit surveys help to better understand parents and their reasons for becoming (and ending) being foster parents.
- Exploring foster parent turnover rates in order to set recruitment goals.
Promising recruitment strategies:
Adoption Advocacy (South Carolina) model

• Primarily rural families; many inner city kids

• Director knows his families personally

• Physically takes family home studies to children’s caseworkers and markets them

• Oversees placement; is source of family support

• Connects families to families for peer support
Promising recruitment strategies: Extreme Recruitment® (Missouri DR grant)

• Extreme Recruitment® is a race to find permanency for youth using 12–20 weeks of intensive recruitment efforts and permanency preparation.

• Extreme Recruitment® works exclusively with the hardest-to-place children: ages 10–18, sibling groups, children of minority status, and youth with emotional, developmental, or behavioral concerns.
Extreme Recruitment’s goal

- Match 85% of youth with a network of safe, appropriate adults
- Match 70% of youth with an adoptive family
Extreme Recruitment®

- Requires weekly, intensive meetings between the child’s professional team members for 12-20 weeks.
- Focuses on preparing the youth for adoption, including their mental health and educational needs.
- Exhausts all forms of adoption recruitment.
Types of support services

- Child or youth assessment
- Information
- Navigation, advocacy, and referral
- Training and other development
- Birth family mediation and adoption search
- Peer support (parents and youth)
- Mentoring (parents and youth)
- Other services for children and youth
- Case management
Types of support services

- Educational support and advocacy
- Respite
- Camps or retreats
- Financial or material supports
- Therapeutic services, including in-home and community-based services and access to residential treatment
- Crisis intervention
Sample support programs

- Midwest Foster and Adoptive Care Coalition
- Alabama Pre-/Post Adoption Connections
- UCLA TIES for Families, California
- Project KEEP
Midwest Foster Care and Adoption Association

- Advocacy and support
- Parent mentoring
- Youth mentoring
- Respite care
- Support groups
- Training
- Behavioral intervention program
- Newsletter and email information
- Support with clothes, toys, school supplies, etc.
- Behavioral intervention model
Alabama Pre/Post Adoption Connections

Services include:

• Information, support, and referral through toll-free help line and website
• Support groups — peer support and support from therapists
• Family adjustment counseling — short-term, ongoing, or crisis
• Adoptive family mentors
• Lending library
• Training for parents, prospective adopters, and professionals
• Special events — family events or respite
• Camp

Also provides pre-adoption education and support
UCLA Ties for Families

Services are available for one year after placement and include:
- Preparation and support of prospective adoptive parents
- Pre-placement assessment of children and consultation with families
- Home visiting
- Support groups
- Counseling
- Mentoring for children and youth
- Mentoring for parents
- Evidence-based therapies
Project KEEP

16-week program includes:

• Weekly group meetings where 7 to 10 caregivers learning about effective behavior management techniques, setting limits, promoting school success, encouraging positive peer relationships, and managing stress
• Caregivers have homework to complete during the week
• Group facilitator checks in with caregivers about child’s behaviors and address issues
• Facilitators can do home visits if caregiver cannot attend group
• Childcare is provided
Benefits of an integrated approach

- More effective and efficient recruitment planning and implementation
- Improved coordination among staff and partners—child-centered approach
- Improved family preparation based on data on what other families need
- Increased placement stability and permanency
- Improved child and family well-being
- Other?
Integrated recruitment and support

- Santa Cruz Diligent Recruitment Grant
- Massachusetts one-worker model
- Placer Kids
Santa Cruz Diligent Recruitment grant

County of Santa Cruz Human Services Department used a liaison who:

- Conducts recruitment events
- Provides information and support to families from inquiry through approval
- Keeps families engaged
- Informs families about the process
- Helps complete paperwork
- Provides emotional support
One-worker model

Provides the same worker to follow the family through:

- Recruitment
- Orientation and training
- Homestudy
- Matching
- Post-placement support
Placer Kids

Collaboration between Placer County Children’s System of Care and Sierra Adoption Services:

• Looks for families for children in care
• Assesses and matches children with potential adoptive families
• Provides training and support through process and after the adoption is final
• Support includes:
  – Individual and family therapy
  – Community resources
  – School consultations
  – Skills training
  – Crisis services
Implementation: How do we make this happen?

Things you can do this month

• Convene staff involved in recruitment, family orientation/training, licensing, placement, and post-placement support
• Begin sharing data across practice areas
• Meet with family support groups to hear about their experiences going through the process
• Review data on why families withdraw from the process or stop fostering
• Identify new data elements needed
• Other ideas from the group?
Implementation: How do we make this happen?

Things you can do in six months

• Develop an integrated recruitment and support planning committee
• Begin collecting new needed data
• Involve experienced foster and adoptive families in recruitment and family orientation/training
• Other ideas from the group?
Implementation: How do we make this happen?

Things you can do in one year

• Take a new, integrated approach to your diligent recruitment plan in your APSR
• Explore options for partnering with adoption exchanges, foster/adoptive parent support groups, and other key groups
• Identify revisions you can make to your data system, including data reports to support integrated approaches
• Review policies and organizational structures
• Other ideas from the group?
Implementation: How do we make this happen?

Key considerations for implementation

• Be data-driven—use both qualitative and quantitative data
• Engage colleagues and stakeholders outside of your usual groups
• Highlight the voices of youth and families
• Identify multiple champions for the work
• Be aware of parallel processes—internal and external integration
• Offer development and coaching to staff
• Acknowledge structural barriers but don’t let them stop you
NRCDR services

The National Resource Center for Diligent Recruitment can provide capacity-building services to states, tribes, and territories

- Consulting, coaching, and other technical assistance
- To learn more about how we can help, contact us:

  www.nrcdr.org
  nrcdr@adoptuskids.org
  (303) 726-0198
Resources

• Diligent Recruitment Navigator [www.nrcdr.org/diligent-recruitment/dr-navigator](http://www.nrcdr.org/diligent-recruitment/dr-navigator)

• Support Matters [www.nrcdr.org/develop-and-support-families/support-matters](http://www.nrcdr.org/develop-and-support-families/support-matters)


Resources

• **Tips on Using Data**  [www.nrcdr.org/diligent-recruitment/using-data/tips-on-using-data](http://www.nrcdr.org/diligent-recruitment/using-data/tips-on-using-data)


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