

Weekly Update—April 6, 2007

Voice for Adoption (VFA) is now providing weekly e-mail updates on adoption and child welfare news, resources, and legislation, as well as updates on VFA's activities.

News from Voice for Adoption

- In March, two new organizations were invited to join VFA's board of directors for three-year terms. Kinship Center will be represented on the board by Carol Bishop, and Casey Family Services will be represented by Heather Dunbar. In addition, the Adoption Exchange Association is now represented on the board by their new executive director, Rachel Pratt.
- VFA has signed on as a supporting organization to the Children's Defense Fund's campaign to advocate for health and mental health insurance coverage for all children.
- VFA is beginning to plan for this year's Adoptive Family Portrait Project, to be held in November. Be on the lookout for more information soon about ways that you can be involved with this project with Congressional offices to highlight the experiences of families who have adopted children from foster care. Through this year's project, we will continue our advocacy focus on the importance of post-adoption services.

Policy Update

- The Senate is recessed through April 9, and the House of Representatives is recessed through April 13.
- VFA's April public policy conference call will take place on Monday, April 9 at 3 pm (Eastern). We will discuss the adoption and child welfare bills that have been introduced in Congress so far in 2007.

New Reports

- "Time for Reform: Too Many Birthdays in Foster Care" – On March 28, the Kids Are Waiting campaign held an event on Capitol Hill to release the new report and to highlight all of the children in foster care who have to spend their birthdays without a permanent family. The report can be downloaded at:
kidsarewaiting.org/reports/files/TooManyBirthdays.pdf
- The Children's Bureau at the Department of Health and Human Services has released the "Child Maltreatment 2005" report, which analyzes data from the National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System. The report is online at:
www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb/pubs/cm05/index.htm

- A new report examines putting data to work to improve child well-being. Last October, the National Governors Association and Casey Family Programs convened 90 public child welfare administrators, experts, analysts, and researchers. During a two-day meeting, participants discussed ways to help state and county agencies use their large volumes of mandatory data to produce better outcomes for children and families. The post-convening report can be downloaded at: www.casey.org/NR/rdonlyres/453CA51F-620C-4785-8CE9-9CA7BD8BC496/1111/RoundtableR5.pdf
- “Is Kinship Care Good for Kids?” More than 2.5 million children are being raised by grandparents and other relatives because their parents are unable-for a variety of reasons-to care for them. A number of states have utilized subsidized guardianship programs as a way of supporting these “kinship families.” Some wonder whether kinship care is a good thing – and how we know this. This fact sheet addresses these often unasked but crucial questions. The factsheet can be downloaded at: www.clasp.org/publications/is_kinship_care_good.pdf
- A new report entitled, “Time for Reform: Support Relatives in Providing Foster Care and Permanent Families for Children” finds that children in relative foster care tend to be just as safe, or safer than, children placed with non-relative families. These placements often allow children to remain in their neighborhoods and schools and to live with their siblings. The report can be downloaded at: kidsarewaiting.org/reports/files/timeforreform.pdf
- “Kids’ Share 2007” – This study reports on trends in federal spending on children from 1960 to 2017, looking across over 100 major federal programs, including tax credits and exemptions. Children’s spending increasingly shifted from broad-based programs to programs targeting low-income or special needs children over the 1960 to 2006 period. Over the next ten years, children’s programs are scheduled to decline both as a share of GDP and domestic spending, because they do not compete on a level playing field with these rapidly growing entitlement programs. The report can be downloaded at: www.urban.org/UploadedPDF/411432_Kids_Share_2007.pdf
- The “Deficit Reduction Act of 2005: Implications for Children Receiving Child Welfare Services” report outlines policy leaders’ specific concerns and recommendations for how to respond to and solve DRA challenges that relate directly to children in foster care. The report can be downloaded at: www.casey.org/NR/rdonlyres/0A45850D-3AD3-4DAD-A02F-FA69F0217EF6/1125/CASEY_REPORTDeficitReductionActFINAL.pdf
- “Racial Equity and Subsidized Guardianship: Critical Issues in Child Welfare.” This issue brief provides an overview of the discussion at a December 2005 symposium exploring how subsidized guardianship policies and practices could help to reduce racial/ethnic disproportionality and disparities in the child welfare system while supporting a broader range of permanency options. The issue brief can be downloaded at: www.caseyfamilyservices.org/pdfs/racial_equity_issues.pdf
- “Improving the Well-Being of Our Children: Closing the Gap between Research and Policy” summarizes a symposium convened by Yale University’s Interdisciplinary Center for Bioethics and Casey Family Services. The symposium focused on three

critical areas: early childhood development and education, supporting youth who are transitioning from foster care, and universal health coverage for children. The report can be downloaded at: www.caseyfamilyservices.org/pdfs/casey_yale_report.pdf

Other News and Resources

- The Navajo Nation recently became the first Arizona Tribe to sign a title IV-E intergovernmental agreement with the state that will allow the Tribe to be reimbursed hundreds of thousands of dollars for the foster care of Navajo children. The agreement provides for the training and licensing of relatives of the foster children so the children can continue to live with a family member. The custom of caring for grandchildren or other related children has a long history among Navajos. The Navajo Nation has had a similar agreement with New Mexico since 2002 that has resulted in 99 percent of Tribal foster children being placed with relatives.
- A new blog about reforming the foster care system is available online at: reformfostercare.blogspot.com
- “Knowing Who You Are” is a three-part curriculum for social workers and other adults and professionals in the child welfare system. Created with the direct collaboration of alumni of foster care, youth still in care, birth parents, and resource families, the curriculum helps child welfare professionals explore race and ethnicity, preparing them to support the healthy development of their constituent’s racial and ethnic identity. The materials are available online at: www.casey.org/Resources/Projects/REI/