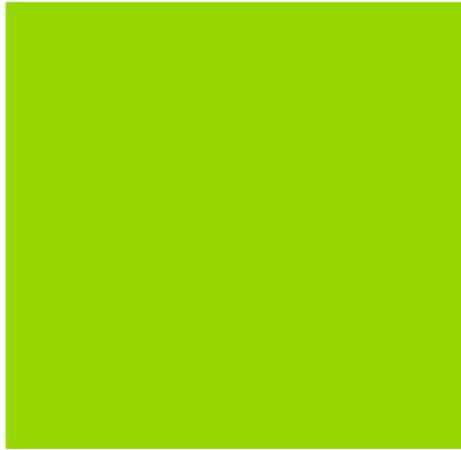




# A Campaign to Ensure Bright Futures for Kids in Foster Care

How to Get Involved





## About CHAMPS

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CHAMPS is a national **policy campaign** to spur policy improvements nationally and in states to ensure children and youth in foster care experience the **highest quality parenting**.

CHAMPS is led by a **coalition of partners** of researchers, advocates, pediatricians, faith-based leaders, foster parents, youth, service providers and other.

CHAMPS offers policy makers a **policy playbook** and related tools to help agencies recruit, retain and support stable foster parents.

All aspects of CHAMPS are **grounded in research** that shows loving, supportive families – whether birth, kin, foster or adoptive – are critical to the healthy development of all children.

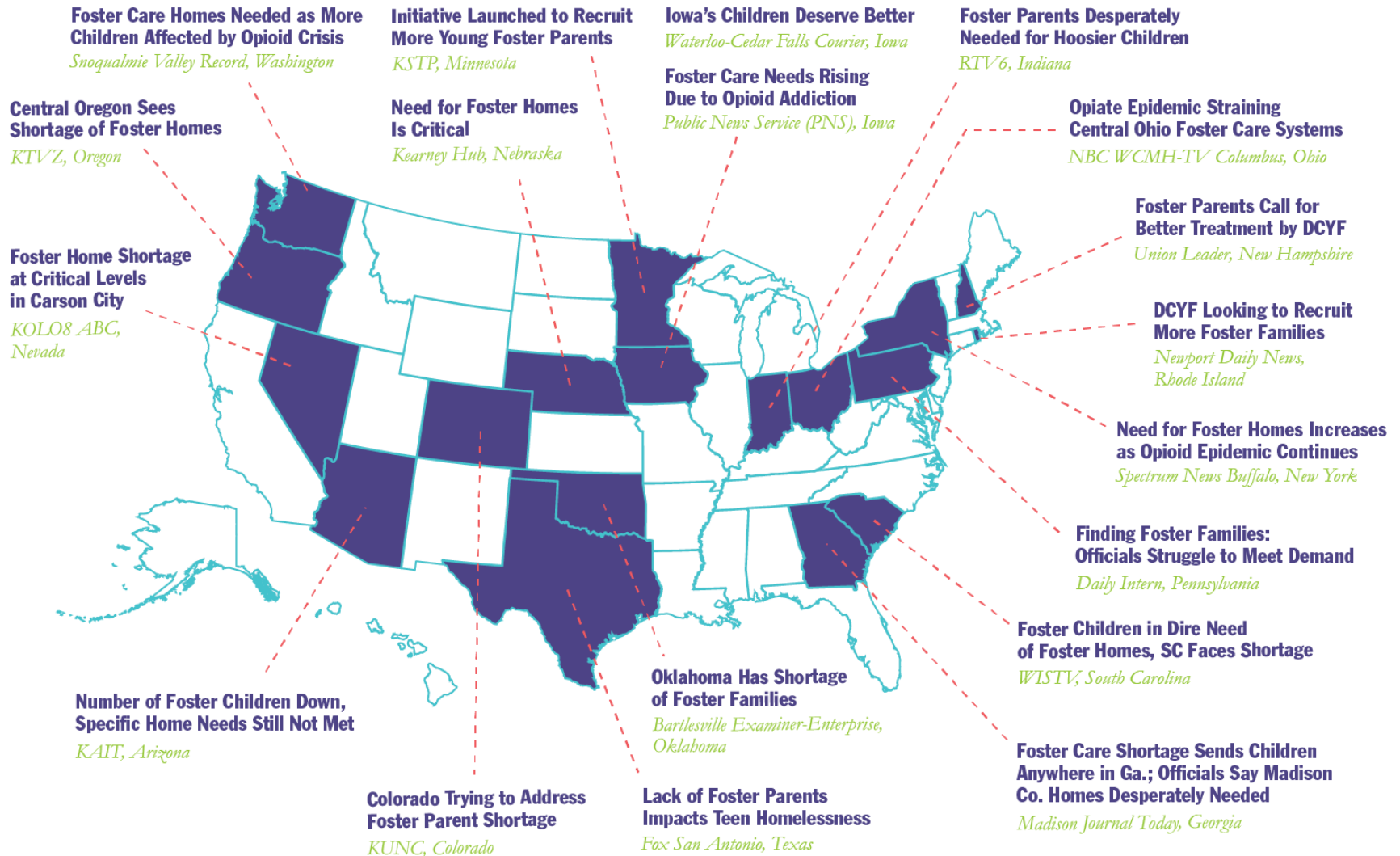
## Underlying Principles of CHAMPS

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- All children need and **do best in families**. When a child needs foster care, quality foster parenting **must be a priority**.
- Foster parents are the **primary intervention** for ensuring the safety and well-being of children in foster care, helping them to heal and thrive.
- Foster parents are **relationship builders**. They provide mentorship to birth parents and help nurture the parent-child bond, and support other family connections. It's vital because more than half of children who enter foster care return home.
- Establishing and prioritizing effective approaches to recruiting, retaining and supporting foster parents yield **better outcomes** and can be **cost-effective**.
- Foster parenting has often been **overlooked** as a solution to achieving better results.

# THE NEED FOR QUALITY FOSTER FAMILIES IS GROWING; CHAMPS OFFERS EFFECTIVE POLICY SOLUTIONS

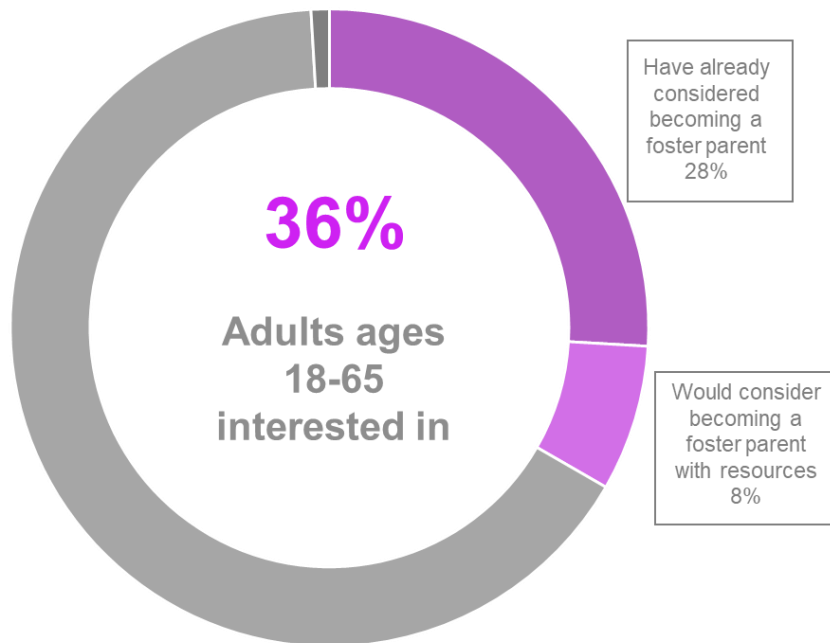
ALL NEWS STORIES FROM 2018



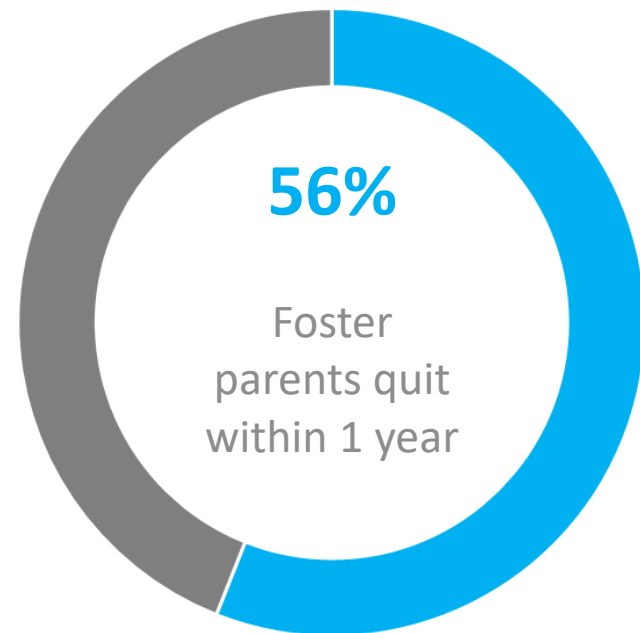
Learn more about CHAMPS policy solutions at [www.fosteringchamps.org](http://www.fosteringchamps.org)  
or contact us directly at [info@fosteringchamps.org](mailto:info@fosteringchamps.org)

## Do We Have a Foster Parent Recruitment or a Retention Problem?

### Foster Parent Consideration



### Foster Parent Retention



Source: 2017 Harris Poll

<https://dciw4f53l7k9i.cloudfront.net/wp-content/uploads/2011/10/2017-US-Foster-Care-Attitudes.pdf>

Source: US Dept. Health & Human Services

<https://aspe.hhs.gov/report/understanding-foster-parenting-using-administrative-data-explore-retention>

## High quality foster parenting

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**Results in stable  
placements**

**Saves  
money**

**Improves child  
outcomes**

## **Stable Placements** **Improve Child Outcomes**

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### **Safety**

- Prevent unsafe parent-child conflicts
- Prevent children from harming themselves

### **Permanency**

- High quality parenting increases stability
- Stable placements associated with greater permanency and more timely permanency

### **Well being**

- Placement instability associated with attachment disorders, increased stress-related responses that alter brain chemistry
- Instability often exacerbates child behavioral problems, increases use of residential care
- Instability associated with poorer school achievement

# The Fiscal Impact of High Quality Foster Parenting

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## **Reducing foster care instability saves money**

- Shorter lengths of stay in care
- Better child outcomes lead to reduced use of mental health services, dependency on public services and increased future tax revenue from high earnings potential
- Less administrative costs associated with finding new placements

## **Retention of foster parents saves money**

- Lower costs for foster parent recruitment and training
- More seasoned foster parents are willing and able to care for children with greater challenges

## **Opportunities to promote foster parent retention are inexpensive**

- Many policy options to better support foster parents have no or low-costs
- Effective foster parent training and support programs have high ROI, especially if targeted to particular foster parents (e.g. parents within their first year of fostering)



## CHAMPS Policy Solutions for Stable, Quality Parenting

### TO ACHIEVE QUALITY, STABLE FOSTER PARENTING

1. Support relationships between birth and foster families
2. Implement data-driven recruitment and retention practices
3. Engage foster parents in decision making
4. Provide timely access to trusted, dedicated staff and peer support for foster parents
5. Prioritize placements with family members
6. Ensure timely access to physical and mental health services

## Policy Solutions: Research-based

**Relationships between birth and foster families**



Lead to fewer externalizing behaviors and less depression in children; and increased positive parenting

**Data-driven recruitment and retention practices**



Data is foundational to assessing needs and identifying families that can provide stable placements.

**Foster parents engaged in decision making**



Improves foster parent satisfaction and intent to continue as licensed home

**Dedicated staff and peer support**



Lowers parenting stress and improves quality co-parenting relationships

**Placements with family members**



Improves child outcomes related to behavior, stability, well-being, and more

**Timely access to physical and mental health services**



Provides critically needed support to children and foster families



## CHAMPS and Family First Prevention Services Act

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- Keep families safely together, whenever appropriate
- Ensure that children who do enter foster care experience the most family-like placement possible
- Opportunity to leverage and build on those reforms by expanding progress to promote family placements

## CHAMPS & FFPSA Strengthening Birth Families

### FFPSA

Aims to strengthen birth families by providing evidence-based prevention services and by expanding reunification services



### IMPACT

Increases the need to support birth and foster family relationships so the parent/ child bond and family support networks are strengthened



### CHAMPS

Real world policy and program examples that promote relationships between birth and foster families

## CHAMPS & FFPSA Support Kin and Foster Families

### FFPSA

Restricts funding  
for placement of  
children and  
youth in  
congregate care  
settings

& reinforces goal  
of family-based  
care



### IMPACT

Increases the need  
for kinship and  
foster families to  
provide stable care  
for children and  
youth



### CHAMPS

Real world policy  
and program  
examples that that  
help agencies  
recruit, retain and  
support stable  
foster and kin  
families

## Key Components of a State Campaign



## STRATEGIES

- Shared parenting
- Icebreaker meetings
- Recruitment of foster parents interested in mentoring and coaching
- Information sharing
- Special training for caseworkers to support kinship / family dynamics

## EXAMPLES

- North Carolina Shared Parenting Policy
- Ventura County Co-Parenting Policy

## Implement data-driven recruitment and retention practices

### STRATEGIES

- **Foster parent census**
- **Market segmentation**
- **Local/regional retention plans**

### EXAMPLES

- North Carolina diligent recruitment and retention plan
- Washington State Foster Care Funding Collaborative



## Engage foster parents in decision-making

### STRATEGIES

- Include foster parents in team meetings
- Notify and follow up regarding hearings
- Foster parent advisory boards
- Training and policy guidance for caseworkers on information-sharing

### EXAMPLES

- Illinois Foster Parent Law and Statewide Foster Care Advisory Council
- Missouri Foster Parents' Professional Status and Foster Care and Adoption Board
- Clark County (NV) Information Sharing Brochure
- Tennessee Child and Family Team Meeting Protocol
- QPI/Florida's Partnership Plan
- Alaska's Resource Parent Advisory Board

## Provide Timely Access to Trusted, Dedicated Staff and Peer Support

### STRATEGIES

- **Dedicated peer support workers**
- **Support groups**
- **Telephone support**
- **Kinship navigator programs**

### EXAMPLES

- Clark County (NV) Foster Parent Champions
- Children's Home and Aid Foster Parent Mentors
- Iowa One Caseworker Model
- Tennessee Advocacy and Mentorship Program
- A Second Chance

## Prioritize Placements with Family Members and Maintain Other Family Connections

### STRATEGIES

- Kinship firewalls
- Provisional licensing protocols
- Removal of licensing barriers
- Family-finding at first contact

### EXAMPLES

- Tennessee Kinship Firewall
- D.C. Expedited Placement Policy
- Nebraska Statute on Removal of Licensing Barriers
- Pennsylvania Statute on Family Finding at First Contact

## Ensure Timely Access to Physical and Mental Health Services

### STRATEGIES

- Authorize foster parents to consent to routine medical care
- Facilitate sharing of health information through electronic information exchange
- Develop federally required Health Oversight and Coordinate Plans
- Establish a mobile crisis response program
- Ensure foster parents are prepared to understand and manage physical and behavioral health needs
- Require child welfare agencies to have medical directors

### EXAMPLES

- California Medical Consent Statute
- Ventura County (CA) Foster Health Link
- Minnesota Statue on Mental Health and FASD Training
- Massachusetts DCF Healthcare Reforms
- New Jersey Mobile Response and Stabilization Services
- Texas 3 in 30



## State Campaign Activity

- Statewide campaigns
- Targeted outreach and events
- Technical assistance to decision makers

## National Support for State-based Campaigns

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### NATIONAL SUPPORT

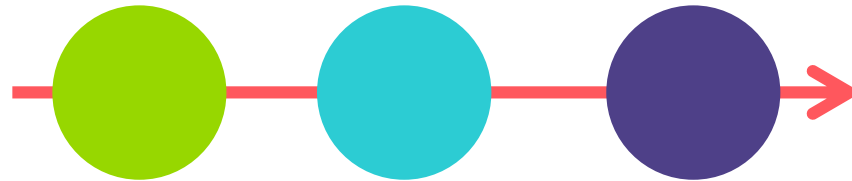
- Partnerships with state and local groups
- Research & evidence
- Communications & messaging
- Stakeholder mobilization
- National and state-based events
- Policy advocacy
- Policy development and technical assistance
- Leadership networks

### NATIONAL PARTNERS

- Brookings Institution
- National Foster Parent Association
- North American Council on Adoptable Children
- FosterClub
- Children's Village
- Youth Law Center
- Christian Alliance for Orphans
- American Academy of Pediatrics
- Children's Defense Fund

## Typical Planning Steps

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- Convene a diverse coalition of interested partners
- Hold series of meetings to determine CHAMPS design and policy priorities
- Ensure CHAMPS builds on existing efforts and is value-add

## Discussion Questions

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WHAT CHAMPS POLICIES RESONATE?

HOW MIGHT CHAMPS ALIGN WITH OTHER PRIORITIES IN YOUR STATES?

WHAT CAMPAIGN DESIGN MIGHT BE BEST FIT?



## THE CHAMPS PLEDGE

Foster parents are  
game-changers for children.

Loving, supportive families – birth, kin,  
foster or adoptive – are critical to the  
healthy development of all children.

Children do best in families, and  
quality foster parenting is key to  
helping children heal, grow and  
flourish.

Quality foster parenting helps children  
thrive and succeed in school,  
relationships and in life.





# Get Involved in CHAMPS!

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