A Campaign to Ensure Bright Futures for Kids in Foster Care

How to Get Involved
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.
• 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

Foster Care Homes Needed as More Children Affected by Opioid Crisis
Snoqualmie Valley Record, Washington

Initiative Launched to Recruit More Young Foster Parents
KSTP, Minnesota

Iowa’s Children Deserve Better Foster Care
Waterloo-Cedar Falls Courier, Iowa

Foster Care Needs Rising Due to Opioid Addiction
Public News Service (PNS), Iowa

Foster Parents Desperately Needed for Hoosier Children
RTV6, Indiana

Opiepe Epidemic Straining Central Ohio Foster Care Systems
NBC/WCMH-TV Columbus, Ohio

Foster Parents Call for Better Treatment by DCYF
Union Leader, New Hampshire

DCYF Looking to Recruit More Foster Families
Newport Daily News, Rhode Island

Need for Foster Homes Increases as Opioid Epidemic Continues
Spectrum News Buffalo, New York

Finding Foster Families: Officials Struggle to Meet Demand
Daily Intens, Pennsylvania

Foster Children in Dire Need of Foster Homes, SC Faces Shortage
WISTV, South Carolina

Foster Care Shortage Sends Children Anywhere in Ga.; Officials Say Madison Co. Homes Desperately Needed
Madison Journal Today, Georgia

Central Oregon Sees Shortage of Foster Homes
KTVZ, Oregon

Need for Foster Homes Is Critical
Kearney Hub, Nebraska

Oklahoma Has Shortage of Foster Families
Bartlesville Examiner-Enterprise, Oklahoma

Lack of Foster Parents Impacts Teen Homelessness
Fox San Antonio, Texas

Colorado Trying to Address Foster Parent Shortage
KUNC, Colorado

Number of Foster Children Down, Specific Home Needs Still Not Met
KAIT, Arizona

Learn more about CHAMPS policy solutions at www.fosteringchamps.org
or contact us directly at info@fosteringchamps.org
Do We Have a Foster Parent Recruitment or a Retention Problem?

Foster Parent Consideration

36%

Adults ages 18-65 interested in

Have already considered becoming a foster parent 28%

Would consider becoming a foster parent with resources 8%

Foster Parent Retention

56%

Foster parents quit within 1 year

Source: 2017 Harris Poll

Source: US Dept. Health & Human Services
High quality foster parenting

Results in stable placements

Saves money

Improves child outcomes
Stable Placements Improve Child Outcomes

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

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

- 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
**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 help agencies recruit, retain and support stable foster and kin families
Key Components of a State Campaign

- Lead partner
- Coalition of stakeholders
- Strategic Communications
- Outreach & Events to Engage Policymakers
- State campaigns
- Key messengers

State-specific policy priorities
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
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

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

- 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
WHAT CHAMPS POLICIES RESONATE?

HOW MIGHT CHAMPS ALIGN WITH OTHER PRIORITIES IN YOUR STATES?

WHAT CAMPAIGN DESIGN MIGHT BE BEST FIT?
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!

www.fosteringCHAMPS.org

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