



CHAMPS New York

What is CHAMPS?

CHAMPS -- which stands for Children Need Amazing Parents -- is a policy campaign focused nationally and in states to ensure bright futures for kids in foster care by promoting the highest quality parenting. CHAMPS aims to spur policy change in 25 states over five years, and enhance the public's understanding about the vital role that foster parents, including kinship caregivers, play in a child's life -- including to provide love and security when birth parents cannot, and to help them achieve permanency through reunification with their birth parents, adoption, or guardianship with relatives.

New York is proud to be a state campaign partner to CHAMPS. The CHAMPS NY campaign is co-led by the Schuyler Center for Analysis and Advocacy and Families Together in New York State (FTNYS).

The **Schuyler Center** is a leading statewide policy analysis and advocacy organization working to shape policies to improve health, welfare, and human services for New Yorkers. The Schuyler Center's work in public policy focuses on strengthening children and families as a long-term investment in the health and well-being of our state. **Families Together in New York State** is a family-run organization that represents thousands of New York State families with children who struggle with social, emotional, and behavioral challenges -- resulting in their interaction with many complex systems, including mental health, substance abuse, juvenile justice, special education, and child welfare.

CHAMPS builds on research that shows that loving, supportive families -- birth, kin, foster or adoptive -- are critical to the healthy development of all children. By bringing together research, policy solutions and key stakeholders, CHAMPS New York seeks to be a valued partner and information source to decision makers across the state who are looking for evidence-based policy approaches on supporting and strengthening families for children and youth in foster care.

Why Focus Policy Efforts on Quality Foster Parenting and Kinship Caregiving?

Children need and do best in families. Foster parents, and kinship caregivers, are key to helping children heal, grow and thrive, when their biological parents are unable to do so.

We know what works to achieve quality caregiving; many approaches are no- or low-cost solutions. By acting now to support foster parents and kinship caregivers, more children will:

- Be safe and healthy,
- Experience greater academic success,
- Stay connected to their siblings,
- Have more stable lives, and
- Leave foster care for a permanent family through safe reunification with birth families, guardianship with relatives, or through adoption.

CHAMPS New York

CHAMPS NY is a statewide group of advocates and providers working to advance state policies and practices that ensure that, in those instances when foster care is necessary, children are placed into family-based settings whenever possible, and that their caregivers are supported so that children experience the best possible permanency and wellbeing outcomes.

*CHAMPS NY is dedicated to advancing policy and practice change that helps to ensure that when children are unable to remain safely with their birth parents, they are placed in the most appropriate setting. To move the State toward achieving that goal **CHAMPS NY seeks to shift by 15% in each New York State county the percentage of children in foster care that reside in family-based care by 2021, with a comparable reduction in children in group homes.***

CHAMPS New York activities include:

- Public events to raise awareness*
- Media outreach to communicate about the vital importance of stable, supportive caregiving to children's health, development, education and permanency*
- Research and policy advocacy to promote data-driven, innovative policy approaches*
- Technical assistance to public and private agencies and legislators seeking solutions*

CHAMPS NY Lead Workgroup Members:

Adoptive and Foster Families Coalition of NYS
Children's Aid Society
Citizens' Committee for Children of New York
Children's Home of Jefferson County
Families Together in New York State
Good Shepherd Services
Graham Windham
HeartShare St. Vincent's Services
LaSalle School

Northern Rivers
New York State Kinship Navigator
Redlich Horwitz Foundation
Schuyler Center for Analysis and Advocacy
The Children's Agenda
The Children's Village
The New York Foundling
You Gotta Believe
YOUTH POWER!

To learn more about CHAMPS New York and how to get involved, please contact Kari Siddiqui at KSiddiqui@scaany.org or Brad Hansen at bhansen@ftnys.org.

To learn about the national CHAMPS campaign, please visit www.fosteringchamps.org:

- Learn about policies that support families. The CHAMPS Policy Playbook offers policy approaches designed to ensure quality foster parents for children in need of foster care. <http://fosteringchamps.org/policy/>
- Pledge your support. Join in taking the CHAMPS pledge to acknowledge foster parents are game-changers in the lives of children and to publicly demonstrate your support for CHAMPS and its goal of promoting quality parenting. Encourage others to sign as well. <http://fosteringchamps.org/the-champs-pledge/>
- Stay informed. Join the CHAMPS listerv and check out our blog for news and commentary about foster parenting issues. <http://fosteringchamps.org/blog/>
- Like CHAMPS on Facebook: www.facebook.com/fosteringCHAMPS
- Spread the word about the importance of foster parents and kinship caregivers. See the "Get Involved" section of the CHAMPS website for easy ways to share information about CHAMPS, <http://fosteringchamps.org/get-involved/spread-the-word/>