

Child Welfare: Post Adoption Support Services Funding

Position Statement approved by One Voice: November 14, 2008

Issue/Concern: Adequate funding for post-adoption support services for children who have been adopted through Children's Protective Services (CPS) and their adoptive families.

Specific Policy Recommendation(s): Restore per capita funding for post-adoption support services to 2003 levels (in constant, not inflated, dollars), to meet the needs of the increased numbers of children moving from the foster care system to adoptive families. Annual cost, \$1,005,343 general revenue, \$4,021,372 all funds (75% federal match) above DFPS budget request.

How does this issue/recommendation relate to prevention and early intervention or maximizing federal funds for health and human services? Post-adoption support services are critical to the stabilization of placements for families who adopt children from CPS. They are intended to prevent relinquishment of adopted former CPS children by covering the treatment these traumatized children require, including outpatient counseling, residential therapeutic care, support groups, respite care, and parent training. The program runs efficiently and is a critical component of successful adoption placements. Service providers are community and faith based charities that contract with the State.

Supporting Facts/Research/Resources:

Children adopted from the CPS system and their adoptive families need the following services (see Post-Adoption Services: Meeting the Mental Health Needs of Children Adopted from Foster Care, North American Council on Adoptable Children, July, 2007, www.naccac.org, and citations therein)

- Counseling for the family, including assistance with the child's attachment issues, and counseling for the children, including groups for the older children;
- Guidance in responding to the adopted child's emotional, behavioral, and developmental issues;
- Crisis intervention services;
- Specialized child treatment services, including psychiatric care, residential treatment, & drug & alcohol treatment.

From 2003 to 2007, annual adoptions of CPS children increased 65% (from 2331 to 4023). The projected growth in the number of children needing post-adoption support services is between 48%, as stated in the DFPS LAR to 116%, based upon the growth in the special needs children being adopted and receiving adoption subsidies. (Sources: DFPS Data Books and DFPS 2010-2011 LAR)

In its Legislative Authorization Request (LAR) for upcoming FYs 2010 & 2011, the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services requests funding to cover caseload growth and inflation in foster care and adoption subsidies during the upcoming biennium, but proposes to CUT post-adoption support services' by \$19,000 per year from FY 2009, from \$3.65 million to \$3.63 million, despite inflation and caseload growth. It would CUT per capita funding at least 32% from 2003 (in constant, not inflated, dollars). The federal Adoption and Safe Families Act requires states to increase the numbers of adoptions of children in CPS care whose parental rights are terminated. **Funding must reflect this growth in service needs. Funding is 25% state, 75% federal.**

As increased numbers of older children are adopted, the need for these services will further increase. Additionally, **the financial and service-demand impacts are cumulative, since more children are added each year than reach adulthood.** Adequately funding these support services is a very minor cost to the State compared to the cost of long term foster care resulting from a family relinquishing an adopted child to the foster care system.

Contact: Conni Barker at 713.802.7706 or cbarker@depelchin.org