

Dear

Your support is needed to create a statewide post adoption services programs. While most children who joined their family by adoption do not need special post adoption services, some children who were abused, neglected, or exposed to alcohol prenatally prior to their adoption have unique mental health needs which are not being served by programs in the community. A statewide post adoption program can decrease the number of children who were adopted from entering foster care, decrease the use of residential treatment by children who were adopted and help move children from foster care to permanent families. These changes in the use of foster care and residential treatment will in turn **save NYS tens of millions of dollars.**

Post adoption services that families most often need are: respite, support groups for parents and children, counseling, case management, information & referral to community services, and training. Often these services are available to families when a child is in foster care and but these services stop once a family adopts. While most families that adopt will never need post adoption services, the families that do are thrown into crisis when they cannot find or afford these services in their communities. Children often enter foster care or residential treatment centers when their families cannot manage them safely at home. Post adoption services will decrease the amount of time children spend in foster care and residential treatment. With residential treatment costing at least \$70,000/year per child, New York State can save millions of dollars a year if post adoption services enable children to live with their families rather than the far more expensive residential treatment.

Therapists (many of whom are Medicaid providers) are rarely trained on attachment issues, loss of birth family, trauma caused by years of abuse and neglect, and prenatal alcohol and drug exposure. Counseling needs to be provided by trained adoption professionals. Adoptive families whose children have severe emotional and behavioral problems need more than the traditional services found in communities. Respite can mean the difference between family stability and adoption dissolution. Respite is unavailable for most of the adoptive families in need.

The cost of state wide post adoption services would be offset by an increase in adoptions from foster care, a decrease in the number of children who enter foster care and decreased use of residential treatment. Providing these vital services would also decrease the use of juvenile justice system and other social services. Adoptive parents are committed to their children. Families are looking for help to meet their child's unique emotional needs and safely maintain their children in their home. More families will step forward to adopt children in foster care if they know services would be there for support after placement. Please make statewide post adoption services a priority for New York State.

Sincerely,