



ENDING THE FOSTER CARE LIFE SENTENCE:

The Critical Need for Adoption Subsidies

*A Survey of Adoptive and
Pre-Adoptive Parents*

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Children's Rights
in collaboration with

National Foster Parent Association

North American Council on
Adoptable Children

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The findings from this survey suggest that adoption subsidies are critical to parents' ability to adopt vulnerable children from foster care. Further, other research indicates that children who "age out" of foster care without permanent families experience poor life outcomes which carry great public costs; increases in adoption subsidy payment rates are associated with increased numbers of adoptions; and adoption subsidies achieve substantial governmental savings compared to the costs of foster care. The provision of adequate adoption subsidies to encourage the adoption of children in foster care is sound child welfare policy, from both a human and a financial perspective. The current trend in states to restrict the availability of adoption subsidies should be reversed.

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I. INTRODUCTION AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A number of states are currently taking steps or threatening to reduce financial support for children adopted from the foster care system in order to cut costs. The state of Missouri recently passed a law to restrict access to adoption subsidy by limiting all subsidy agreements to one year (forcing an annual reassessment process with renewal at the state's discretion) and imposing a "means test" on the income of adoptive parents for certain children awaiting adoption. This state law was challenged by Children's Rights in federal court and found to be unconstitutional and a violation of federal law.¹ The North American Council on Adoptable Children (NACAC) reports that other states are tightening their criteria for subsidy and limiting access to special services such as respite and day care.²

This report summarizes the findings of a survey of adoptive and pre-adoptive parents in six states, to assess the impact of adoption subsidies and other factors on their ability to adopt children from the foster care system.

Adoption provides children with stability, continuity, and long-term family connections; assists children in developing a positive self-image; and provides family support and connections upon which children can rely into adulthood.³ Research indicates that children in foster care who do not return home or get adopted and "age out" of the child welfare system without a permanent family have poor life outcomes. They are less likely to obtain a high school diploma or GED and more likely to be unemployed, experience economic hardship, receive government benefits, receive medical care through emergency room visits, develop mental health problems, have children as teenagers and be victims or perpetrators of violent crime.⁴

Currently, there are at least 119,000 children in foster care who are waiting to be adopted.⁵ The children who wait the longest are often older, male, African-American, and have at least one disability.⁶

In 1980, Congress created the federal Adoption Assistance Program (AAP) to encourage the adoption of eligible children in foster care.⁷ The purpose of the AAP is "for a family to be able to adopt a child without having to lower its standard of living; any such possibility is a disincentive to adoption."⁸ Adoption subsidies assist parents with the financial and medical costs of raising children with "special needs." Federal law provides the general characteristics that can warrant eligibility for adoption subsidies, such as "age, membership in a minority or sibling group, or a mental, emotional or physical disability which prevents placement without special assistance."⁹ However, states have the flexibility to define which children qualify as having special needs and the amount of the subsidy.

States that draw upon federal AAP funds must also contribute state dollars to these subsidies. In addition, states also provide subsidies funded with state dollars only for circumstances in which children are not eligible for federal subsidies.

Subsidies are typically monthly maintenance payments to help cover the child's living expenses. Adopted children are also usually eligible for Medicaid. In addition, states can provide a range of services including legal aid, counseling, respite care, referrals, and transportation services. However, each state defines its adoption subsidy program differently, providing coverage for a variety of services.¹⁰ Special service subsidies may also be available for one-time, non-recurring payments to cover a child's emergency or extraordinary need.

While adoptive parents do not adopt children because of the availability of adoption subsidies, subsidies help offset some of the additional costs parents face when adopting children with special needs from foster care.

Eligibility criteria for subsidies, subsidy amounts, and the proportion of children adopted from foster care who receive subsidies are inconsistent across the states. The median subsidy amount ranges from \$171 per month in Indiana to \$856 per month in Iowa.¹¹ Nationally, 88% of children adopted from foster care receive an adoption subsidy; however, for example, only 13% of children adopted in Puerto Rico, 47% in Alabama, 48% in Florida, and 52% in Indiana receive an adoption subsidy. This is in contrast to South Carolina, Maine, Minnesota, Oklahoma, Oregon, Rhode Island, and Wisconsin where at least 99% of children adopted receive an adoption subsidy.¹²

In addition to the significant human costs of failing to provide permanent homes for children, research suggests that state efforts to cut costs by limiting adoption subsidies will fail from a long-term fiscal perspective. A recent study of the economics of adoption of children from foster care found that the subsidy amount was correlated with the rate of adoption; for an average state, a thirty-six dollar increase in adoption subsidies was associated with an increase of ten additional adoptions per year.¹³ Conversely a decrease in adoption subsidies was associated with a decrease in the number of adoptions. Further, a study in North Carolina which compared statistically matched groups of children through longitudinal adoption subsidy and foster care placement data demonstrated that adoption achieves substantial government savings compared to the cost of foster care.¹⁴

Children's Rights, the National Foster Parent Association (NFPA) and NACAC collaborated in 2005 to conduct a survey of adoptive and prospective adoptive parents on their needs and concerns when considering adopting children from the foster care system. The survey involved nearly 250 adoptive and prospective adoptive parents from Illinois, Kentucky, Minnesota, Missouri, Oregon, and Texas, who were identified using convenience and snowball sampling techniques. The survey asked adoptive parents and prospective adoptive parents a series of questions regarding the following:

- the number and ages of children they had adopted or were considering adopting;
- the adoption subsidy and foster care reimbursement rate they receive(d);
- the impact of the subsidy and other factors on their decision to adopt;
- the sufficiency of the subsidy to meet children's needs; and
- the obstacles to adopting children from foster care.

The survey results provide an important indication of the concerns of some adoptive and prospective adoptive parents and the critical need for adoption subsidies. Major findings include the following:

- 81% reported that the availability of adoption subsidies was important to their decision to adopt;
- 58% of respondents said they could not adopt without a subsidy;
- More than half of the respondents said the subsidy amount was not sufficient;
- Almost half (47%) of adoptive parents received an adoption subsidy that was lower than the rate they received as foster parents;
- 88% reported that receipt of Medicaid for the child was critical to their decision to adopt;
- Less than half of the survey participants who had adopted reported receiving post-adoption services; and
- The obstacles to adoption most frequently cited by respondents were the child welfare system bureaucracy and inadequate subsidy amounts.

The findings from this survey suggest that adoption subsidies are critical to parents' ability to adopt vulnerable children from foster care. Further, other research has demonstrated that children who "age out" of foster care experience poor life outcomes (such as unemployment, homelessness and incarceration) which carry great public costs; increases in adoption subsidy payment rates are associated with increased numbers of adoptions; and adoption subsidies achieve substantial governmental savings compared to the costs of foster care. The provision of adequate adoption subsidies to encourage the adoption of children in foster

care is sound child welfare policy, from both a human and a financial perspective. The current trend in states to restrict the availability of adoption subsidies should be reversed.

II. METHODOLOGY AND STUDY LIMITATIONS

Methodology

Children's Rights developed the survey instrument in consultation with NFPA and NACAC.

Children's Rights, NFPA, and NACAC identified six states in which the survey would be conducted: Illinois, Kentucky, Minnesota, Missouri, Oregon and Texas. These states were selected based on the following factors: geographic diversity; a balance between states where adoption subsidy restrictions were being considered and where they were not; the number of parents in the NFPA and NACAC databases by state; and the nature of the relationships between NFPA and NACAC with local stakeholders, i.e., whether relationships existed that would facilitate identifying parents to participate in the survey.

Survey participants were initially identified through a convenience sample drawn from the NFPA and NACAC databases. NFPA maintains a database of all foster parents who are NFPA members. NACAC maintains a database of adoptive parents and prospective adoptive parents who have called its Adoption Subsidy Resource Center help line. The NFPA and NACAC lists contained a total of 752 individuals in the 6 states.¹⁵

In addition to living in one of the six identified states, survey participants had to have adopted a child from foster care within the past five years or been considering adopting a specific child from foster care (at the time of the survey). In order to determine whether the 752 individuals on the NFPA and NACAC lists met these criteria, Children's Rights staff called each individual in the database and verified their eligibility. Additional survey participants were identified by asking individuals on the NFPA and NACAC lists to recommend other potential respondents, a strategy known as "snowball" sampling; survey participants were identified through word of mouth, foster parent newsletters and other informal referrals. The majority of surveys were conducted over the phone by Children's Rights staff; some surveys were completed by parents and mailed or emailed to Children's Rights.

A total of 242 surveys were completed by September 30, 2005. The information from the surveys was entered into SPSS (a statistical analysis computer program) and analyzed by Children's Rights staff.

Study Limitations

One limitation of this survey is that the survey participants were identified using convenience and snowball sampling techniques - and not through random sampling - and therefore, are not statistically representative of all adoptive and pre-adoptive families nationally or within the six states. The participants were identified through databases collected and maintained by NACAC and NFPA of adoptive and prospective adoptive parents who had contacted NACAC with questions (the NACAC database) or were members of the NFPA (the NFPA database). The survey participants who had contacted NACAC's Adoption Subsidy Resource Center are likely to be individuals who have had issues and/or problems with their adoption subsidy or were prospective adoptive parents seeking baseline information. The survey participants from the NFPA list were members of the NFPA and were thus potentially more likely to have an increased awareness of adoption subsidies and subsidy issues than the general foster/adoptive parent population. In addition, participants themselves recruited other adoptive and pre-adoptive parents to participate in this survey; a limitation of snowball sampling is the tendency to identify survey participants who share the same views and opinions.

It could be argued that the survey results may over-represent the importance of subsidies due to the sample selection methodology. However, it is also possible that the survey results under-represent the importance of subsidies, as the sample may not have included parents who are unaware of advocacy assistance provided by associations such as NFPA and NACAC. In addition, the survey did not capture parents who chose not to adopt due to inadequate or absent subsidies, i.e., they dropped out the foster care/adoption process entirely.

III. SURVEY PARTICIPANTS

A total of 242 adoptive and prospective adoptive parents, caring for 670 adoptive and pre-adoptive children, were surveyed in Illinois, Kentucky, Minnesota, Missouri, Oregon, and Texas.

Approximately one-fifth (21%) had adopted a child from foster care and were actively considering adopting another child; about half (53%) had adopted a child previously, but were not considering adopting another child at the time of the survey; and one fourth (26%) were considering adopting, but had not adopted previously (see Table 1).

Table 1: Number of Parents Surveyed

| | Illinois | Kentucky | Minnesota | Missouri | Oregon | Texas | Total |
|---|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-------------------|
| Adopted a Child from Foster Care | 17 | 26 | 18 | 22 | 16 | 29 | 128 (53%) |
| Currently Considering Adopting | 4 | 13 | 12 | 6 | 11 | 18 | 64 (26%) |
| Adopted a Child from Foster Care <u>and</u> Currently Considering Adopting | 9 | 11 | 6 | 13 | 7 | 4 | 50 (21%) |
| TOTAL | 30 | 50 | 36 | 41 | 34 | 51 | 242 (100%) |

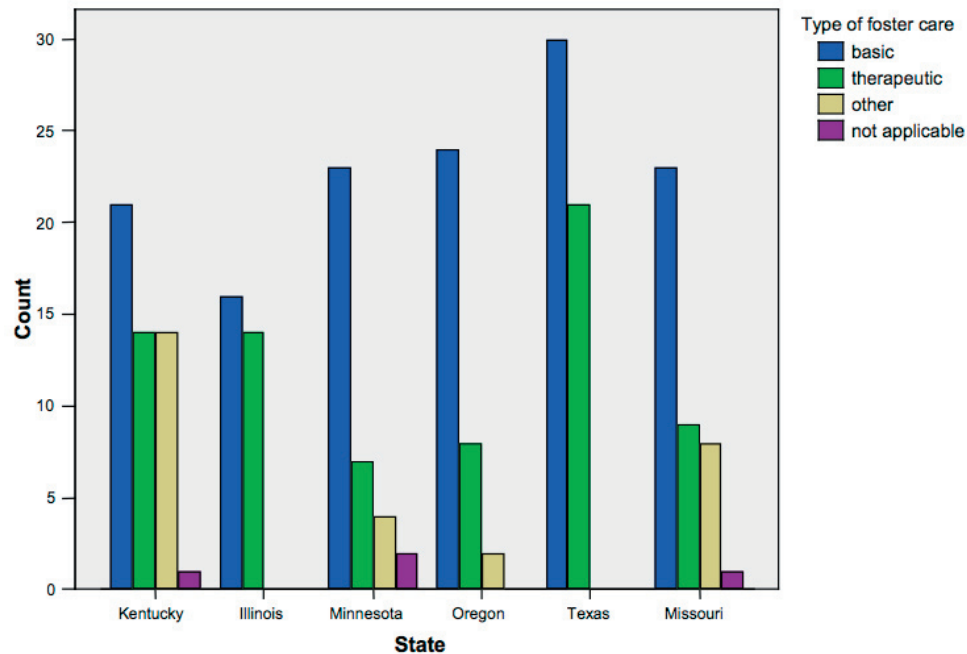
Of the families who had already adopted, 31% of families had adopted one child; 28% had adopted two children; and 41% had adopted three or more children. Of the families who were considering adoption, 54% were considering adopting one child and 45% were considering adopting two or more children.

Previous Foster Parenting Experience

Almost all (98%) of the survey participants had been foster parents prior to adopting or beginning the adoption process. These individuals had been foster parents for an average of 6.7 years.

Approximately 2/3 had provided “basic” foster care and 1/3 had provided “therapeutic” foster care (See Figure 1). Therapeutic foster parents care for children with increased special needs and typically receive a higher foster care reimbursement rate to cover the increased expenses associated with caring for these children.

Figure 1: Type of Foster Care Provided by Parents



IV. SURVEY FINDINGS

A. PAYMENT RATES PRE AND POST ADOPTION

This section provides information on the foster care and adoption subsidy rates received by the parents surveyed. It is notable that 47% of parents reported receiving adoption subsidy rates that were less than the foster care rates provided for the same child.

As shown below in Table 2, the majority of the survey participants had received a foster care reimbursement rate (prior to adoption) that was between \$251 and \$750 per month.¹⁶ Approximately one-fifth (18%) had received a foster care reimbursement rate of more than \$1000 per month and 10% had received a foster care reimbursement rate of \$250 or less.

Table 2: Foster Care Reimbursement Rate Received Prior to Adoption

| Foster Care Reimbursement Rate, Prior to Adoption | State | | | | | | Total |
|---|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|------------------|
| | Illinois | Kentucky | Minnesota | Missouri | Oregon | Texas | |
| None | - | - | - | - | - | 14% | 3% |
| \$100-\$250 | - | - | - | 31% | - | - | 7% |
| \$251-\$500 | 75% | - | 16% | 44% | 50% | 18% | 32% |
| \$501-\$750 | - | 57% | 21% | 19% | 14% | 57% | 30% |
| \$751-\$1000 | 5% | 11% | 26% | 6% | 18% | - | 10% |
| \$1001-\$1250 | 15% | 11% | 21% | - | 9% | 11% | 10% |
| \$1251-\$1500 | - | 14% | 16% | - | 9% | - | 6% |
| \$1501+ | 5% | 7% | - | - | - | - | 2% |
| Total | 100%(20) | 100%(28) | 100%(19) | 100%(32) | 100%(22) | 100%(28) | 100%(149) |

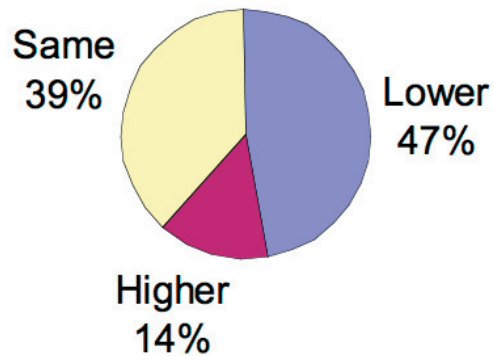
As shown in Table 3 below, the majority of survey participants received an adoption subsidy of between \$251-\$750 per month. Nine percent of adoptive parents received an adoption subsidy of more than \$1000 per month and 20% received an adoption subsidy of \$250 or less per month.¹⁷

Table 3: Adoption Subsidy Rate

| Post-Adoption Subsidy Rate | State | | | | | | Total |
|----------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|------------------|
| | Illinois | Kentucky | Minnesota | Missouri | Oregon | Texas | |
| None | - | 3% | 4% | - | - | 19% | 5% |
| \$100-\$250 | - | 9% | 23% | 35% | 9% | 9% | 15% |
| \$251-\$500 | 58% | 3% | 14% | 35% | 38% | 56% | 34% |
| \$501-\$750 | 8% | 47% | 50% | 29% | 43% | 16% | 31% |
| \$751-\$1000 | 11% | 9% | 9% | - | 5% | - | 5% |
| \$1001-\$1250 | 11% | 18% | - | - | - | - | 5% |
| \$1251-\$1500 | 4% | 6% | - | - | 5% | - | 2% |
| \$1501+ | 8% | 6% | - | - | - | - | 2% |
| Total | 100%(26) | 100%(34) | 100%(22) | 100%(34) | 100%(21) | 100%(32) | 100%(169) |

As shown in Figure 2 below, a total of 47% of the survey respondents received an adoption subsidy that was less than the foster care reimbursement rate they had received for caring for the same child with the same needs. Fourteen percent of survey participants received an adoption subsidy amount that was higher than the foster care reimbursement rate they had received,¹⁸ and 39% received the same amount before and after they adopted.¹⁹

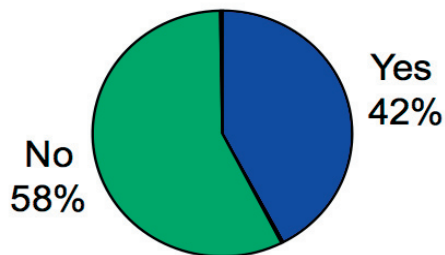
Figure 2: Change in Rate from Foster Care to Adoption



B. IMPACT OF SUBSIDY ON ABILITY TO ADOPT

Survey respondents were asked if they would have been able to adopt without an adoption subsidy.²⁰ As shown in Figure 3, 58% of all survey respondents (both adoptive and prospective adoptive parents) said they would not have been/be able to adopt without a subsidy.

Figure 3: Ability of Parents to Adopt without a Subsidy



Figures 4 and 5 below break out the subsets of parents who had already adopted and parents who were considering adoption. Of parents who had already adopted, 65% said they could not have done so without an adoption subsidy. Forty-five percent of prospective adoptive parents (who had never adopted) said they could not adopt without an adoption subsidy.

Figure 4: Adoptive Parents' Ability to Adopt Without a Subsidy

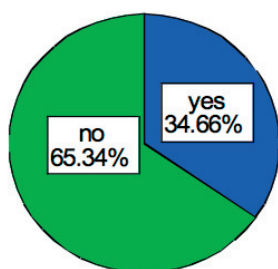
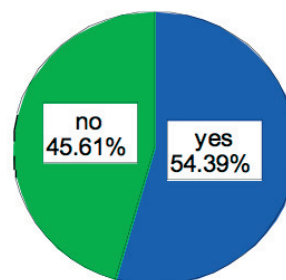


Figure 5: Prospective Adoptive Parents' Ability to Adopt Without a Subsidy



It is interesting to note that the proportion of *adoptive* parents who said they would not be able to adopt without a subsidy is greater than the proportion of *prospective adoptive* parents who said the same. This could be due to adoptive parents having a more realistic view of the expenses associated with raising children with special needs and therefore a greater appreciation of the need for an adoption subsidy. It is also possible that survey participants who are considering adoption do not want to define the decision in monetary terms and are reluctant to admit the importance of the adoption subsidy.

C. ADEQUACY OF SUBSIDY AMOUNT

As shown in Table 4, more than half (57%) of survey respondents who had already adopted said the subsidy amount was not sufficient to meet the child's needs.²¹ Of those survey respondents considering adoption, 59% anticipated that the available subsidy would not be sufficient. Additionally, 7% of adoptive and prospective adoptive parents who responded that the subsidy was sufficient to meet the child's current needs indicated uncertainty that the subsidy would be sufficient to meet the child's needs in the future.

Table 4: Sufficiency Of Subsidy

| State | Parents Who Have Already Adopted Is the Subsidy Sufficient? | | Prospective Adoptive Parents Is the Subsidy Sufficient? | | All Parents Surveyed Is the Subsidy Sufficient? | |
|---------------------|--|-----------------|--|-----------------|--|------------------|
| | Yes | No | Yes | No | Yes | No |
| Illinois | 23% | 77% | 66% | 33% | 37% (14) | 63% (24) |
| Kentucky | 63% | 37% | 61% | 39% | 62% (33) | 38% (20) |
| Minnesota | 42% | 58% | 29% | 71% | 37% (14) | 63% (24) |
| Missouri | 31% | 69% | 0% | 100% | 22% (11) | 78% (39) |
| Oregon | 55% | 45% | 50% | 50% | 53% (20) | 47% (18) |
| Texas | 41% | 59% | 42% | 58% | 41% (17) | 58% (24) |
| All 6 States | 43% (73) | 57% (98) | 41% (36) | 59% (51) | 42% (109) | 58% (149) |

D. RECEIPT OF POST ADOPTION SERVICES

As shown in Table 5, only 49% of survey participants who had adopted a child from foster care within the past 5 years reported receiving post-adoption services.²² Several studies have shown the importance of post-adoption services to adoptive parents and their benefits in preserving adoptive families. These services included parent support groups and training to deal with the behavioral and emotional needs of their children.²³

Table 5: Receipt of Post Adoption Services

| State | Percent of Adoptive Parents Receiving Post-Adoption Services |
|---------------------|---|
| Illinois | 65% |
| Kentucky | 54% |
| Minnesota | 66% |
| Missouri | 80% |
| Oregon | 13% |
| Texas | 21% |
| All 6 States | 49% |

E. FACTORS IN THE DECISION TO ADOPT

As shown in Table 6, survey participants were asked to rank the importance of nine different variables on their decision to adopt. The four most important variables cited by parents were: (1) receipt of medical card or Medicaid, (2) level of services covered through available medical insurance, (3) availability of adoption subsidy and (4) access to information about the child's health and personal family history. Sixty-two percent of the survey participants said that the availability of adoption assistance or subsidy was very important in their decision to adopt or consider adopting. And, half (48%) of survey participants said the level of the subsidy available was very important to their decision to adopt or consider adopting.

Table 6: Nine Variables and Their Level of Importance to Adoptive and Pre-Adoptive Parents

| | Very Important | Important | Somewhat Important | Not Important |
|---|-----------------------|------------------|---------------------------|----------------------|
| Receipt of a medical card or Medicaid | 75% | 13% | 6% | 6% |
| Level of services covered through available medical insurance | 65% | 20% | 8% | 7% |
| Availability of adoption subsidy/assistance | 62% | 19% | 12% | 7% |
| Access to information about the child's health and family history | 60% | 19% | 15% | 5% |
| Availability of education services | 53% | 19% | 14% | 12% |
| Amount of adoption subsidy | 48% | 27% | 16% | 9% |
| Availability of affordable counseling | 44% | 26% | 18% | 12% |
| Availability of appropriately trained respite care | 34% | 17% | 17% | 31% |
| Concrete help, such as medical equipment or home modification | 34% | 15% | 16% | 34% |

F. OBSTACLES TO ADOPTION

As shown in Table 7, half of the survey participants cited the child welfare system bureaucracy as an obstacle to adopting children from foster care. Parents also cited inadequate subsidy amounts and difficulty obtaining post-adoption services as obstacles to adoption.

Table 7: Obstacles Identified by Survey Participants²⁴

| Obstacles | Percent of Parents Citing Obstacles ²⁵ |
|---|---|
| Bureaucracy | 50% |
| Inadequate subsidy amount / Less than foster care rate | 19% |
| Difficulty obtaining post-adoption services | 15% |
| Length of time to determine child's best interest (from when the child enters the system to when they are freed for adoption) | 14% |
| Lack of complete history/information on children to fully understand their needs | 8% |
| Challenge of meeting child's needs (due to child's history of loss/ abuse/ neglect) | 6% |
| Access to medical insurance | 2% |
| Subsidy negotiation process | 2% |
| Lack of information on children available for adoption | 2% |

V. CONCLUSION

The findings from this survey suggest that adoption subsidies are critical to parents' ability to adopt vulnerable children from foster care. Further, other research indicates that children who "age out" of foster care without permanent families experience poor life outcomes which carry great public costs; increases in adoption subsidy payment rates are associated with increased numbers of adoptions; and adoption subsidies achieve substantial governmental savings compared to the costs of foster care. The provision of adequate adoption subsidies to encourage the adoption of children in foster care is sound child welfare policy, from both a human and a financial perspective. The current trend in states to restrict the availability of adoption subsidies should be reversed.

ENDNOTES

1. A lawsuit by Children's Rights challenged Missouri Senate Bill 539, which imposed automatic annual expiration of all subsidy agreements and means testing. The lawsuit claimed that the new law and efforts to implement it violated the rights of the children under the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution; the federal Adoption Assistance and Child Welfare Act (as amended); and the Contracts Clause of the United States Constitution. After a trial, on May 1, 2006, the court ruled in favor of plaintiffs and permanently banned the law from ever taking effect, finding that (1) the automatic annual termination provision of the challenged law violates the federal Adoption Assistance and Child Welfare Act; (2) the means testing provision of the challenged law discriminates against children whose subsidies are solely state-funded (non IV-E eligible children), in violation of the Equal Protection Clause of the 14th Amendment to the United States Constitution; and (3) both the means testing and automatic termination provisions violate the Contracts Clause of the United States Constitution in relation to existing adoption subsidy agreements.
2. A comparison of state adoption subsidy criteria and rates between 2001 and 2006 conducted by NACAC indicates that 26 states reduced their adoption subsidy rates and/or tightened their criteria during that time period (e.g., adding age minimums where none previously existed, eliminating deferred assistance agreements, eliminating the "high risk" criterion as part of the state's definition of special needs, etc.). In addition, in at least 19 states, adoption subsidy payments have not had a cost of living adjustment (COLA) during the past 5 years.
3. Brodzinsky, D. M., Schechter, M. D., & Henig, R. M. (1992). *Being adopted: The lifelong search for self*. New York, NY: Doubleday; Cahn, K & Johnson, P. (1993). Critical issues in permanency planning: An overview. In K. Cahn & Johnson (Eds.), *Children Can't Wait: Reducing Delays in Out-of-Home Care* (pp.1-12). Washington, DC: Child Welfare League of America; The Evan B. Donaldson Adoption Institute. (2004). *What's working for children: A Policy study of adoption stability and termination*. New York, NY: author.
4. Courtney, M., Dworsky, A., Ruth, G., Keller, T., Havlicek, J., & Bost, N. (2005). *Midwest evaluation of the adult functioning of former foster youth: outcomes at age 19*. Chapin Hall Center for Children, University of Chicago.
5. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Administration on Children, Youth, and Families, Children's Bureau. The AFCARS Report #10, (2005) http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb/stats_research/afcars/tar/report10.htm.
6. Avery, R. J. & Butler, J. S. (2001). Timeliness in the adoptive placement of photolisted children: The New York State blue books. *Adoption Quarterly*, 4 (4), 19-46. Avery, R. J. (1999). Identifying obstacles to adoption in New York State's out-of-home care system. *Child Welfare*, 78 (5), 653-671.
7. Public Law 96-272: The Adoption Assistance and Child Welfare Act of 1980.
8. Barth, R. P. (1993). Fiscal issues and stability in special-needs adoptions. *Public Welfare*, 51 (3), 21-29.
9. 42 U.S.C. §673.
10. National Adoption Information Clearinghouse, "Adoption Assistance for Children Adopted From Foster Care: A Factsheet for Families" April 2006. www.naic.cf.hhs.gov/pubs
11. Dalberth, B., Gibbs, D. & Berkman, N. (2005). *Understanding Adoption Subsidies: An Analysis of AFCARS Data*. Research Triangle Park, NC: RTI International.
12. Dalberth, B., Gibbs, D. & Berkman, N. (2005). *Understanding Adoption Subsidies: An Analysis of AFCARS Data*. Research Triangle Park, NC: RTI International.
13. Hansen, M., & Hansen, B. (2005). *The Economics of Adoption of Children from Foster Care*, (forthcoming)
14. Barth, R. P., Lee, C. K., Wildfire, J., & Guo, S. (2006). A comparison of the governmental costs of long-term foster care and adoption. *Social Service Review*, 80 (1), 127-158.
15. 482 in the NACAC database and 270 in the NFPA database.
16. 74% of the survey participants had adopted a child from foster care within the past five years. Of those participants, 84% provided information about the foster care reimbursement rate they received prior to the adoption.
17. 95% of survey participants who had adopted a child from foster care within the past five years provided information about the post-adoption subsidy they received.
18. It should be noted that Title IV-E does not allow adoption subsidies to exceed foster care reimbursement rates. However, it is possible that the children in these cases were re-classified as having special needs at the time of their adoption, making them eligible for an adoption subsidy greater than the foster care rate they had been receiving. It is also possible that items covered through supplemental allocations to the foster care rate (i.e., not in the monthly rate), e.g. special clothing allowance, are included in the adoption subsidy, appearing to result in an increase.
19. 69% of survey respondents (166) provided both their foster care reimbursement rate and their adoption subsidy amount.
20. 176 out of 178 survey participants who had adopted within the past 5 years responded.
21. 171 survey participants out of 178 participants who had adopted provided information about whether they believe the adoption subsidy is sufficient to meet the child's needs.
22. 175 survey participants out of 178 who had adopted a child from foster care within the past 5 years provided information about post-adoption services.
23. Avery, R. J. (2004). *Strengthening and preserving adoptive families: A study of TANF funded post-adoption services in New York state*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University; Christian, S. (2002). *Post-adoption services: Issues for legislators*. NCSL State Legislative Report, 27 (17), 1-23; Festinger, T. (2002). After adoption: Dissolution or permanence. *Child Welfare*, 81 (3), 515-532.
24. 1% of the respondents cited some aspect of interstate adoption and subsidy process as their biggest obstacle.
25. Some survey participants listed several obstacles, therefore the percentages total more than 100%.