A Campaign to Ensure Bright Futures for Kids in Foster Care

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www.fosteringchamps.org
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.
Underlying Principles of CHAMPS

• 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
Waterloo-Cedar Falls Courier, Iowa

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

Foster Parents Desperately Needed for Hoosier Children
KTVI, Indiana

Opiate 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 Int’l, 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

Colorado Trying to Address Foster Parent Shortage
KUNC, Colorado

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

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
- 28% Have already considered becoming a foster parent
- 8% Would consider becoming a foster parent with resources

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 to Achieve Quality, Stable Foster Parenting

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<th>TO ACHIEVE QUALITY, STABLE FOSTER PARENTING</th>
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<td>1. Support relationships between birth and foster families</td>
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<td>2. Implement data-driven recruitment and retention practices</td>
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<td>3. Engage foster parents in decision making</td>
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The **Quality Parenting Initiative** is a strategy of the **Youth Law Center** to strengthen foster care by refocusing on excellent parenting for all children in the child welfare system.
is an approach, a philosophy and a network of 80 sites in 10 states that share policy, practice and culture change improvements about how to improve parenting as well as recruit and retain excellent families.
Define expectations of resource families and of the system

Articulate expectations to families, staff and stakeholders (Brand)

Align policy and practice with the brand

Improve outcomes for children, youth and families
Key QPI Issues

- Information sharing
- Transitions
- Normalcy/Prudent Parenting
- Increased Involvement in Decision Making
- Recruitment, licensing, retention and support for quality
- High quality, quickly available, individualized training/mentoring
- Birth and Foster Family Partnership
- Placement Processes
- Investigations
- Court
Foster Care Trends and What CHAMPS Can Do to Help
Number of Children in Out of Home Care at End of Fiscal Year in the United States, 2000 to 2016

545,222

445,199

Note: Estimates based on children in foster care as of September 30

Source: AFCARS Data, 2000-2016
Number of Children in Foster Care by Age at End of Fiscal Year in the United States, 2016

Note: Estimates based on children in foster care as of September 30, 2016

Source: AFCARS Data, 2016
What CHAMPS Seeks for Young Children in Foster Care

CHAMPS encourages policy efforts to create a stronger support system for infants, toddlers and families

Infants & toddlers involved in child welfare need access to developmentally appropriate supports that responds to their unique needs and rapid development.

- Early and prolonged exposure to abuse and neglect increases the risk of lifelong physical and mental health problems.
- Maltreated infants and toddlers frequently have developmental delays.
- **Negative foster care experiences**, including lack of ongoing parent-child contact and multiple moves while in care, may compound the impairments in young children’s development.
- The system needs to be prepared to intervene with comprehensive supports for early development through the promotion of stable and caring relationship.
What CHAMPS Seeks for Teenagers in Foster Care

CHAMPS encourages policy efforts to support the healthy development of adolescents and young adults

Adolescents in child welfare need developmentally appropriate supports that respond to their unique needs and rapid development.

• Adolescence is a stage of development that presents unprecedented opportunities for growth, connection, and cultivation of resiliency

• With the right nurturing and experiences, the adolescent brain can be “rewired” to heal from earlier trauma.

• The single most important factor for youth resiliency is whether important adults believe in them, love them unconditionally and hold them to high expectations

• Negative foster care experiences, including lack of ongoing parent-child contact, inappropriate placement and multiple moves while in care, may compound trauma and interfere with healthy development.

• The system needs to be prepared to intervene with comprehensive supports for adolescent development through the promotion of stable and caring relationship.
Prevalence of Parental Alcohol or Other Drug Use as a Contributing Factor for Reason for Removal in the United States, 2000 to 2016

Note: Estimates based on all children in out of home care at some point during Fiscal Year

Source: AFCARS Data, 2000-2016
CHAMPS Encourages Action and Can Assist Policymakers

Resources
- Champs policy playbook
- CHAMPS policy compendium
- Policy workshops
- Policy and research briefs
- Convenings and trainings

Technical Assistance
- Informational sessions
- Research and data
- Policy examples
- Communications
- Stakeholder engagement
- National experts
- Policy toolkits
The CHAMPS Pledge

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.
National Campaign Partners

**Lead Coalition Partners**


**Research Partner**

The Brookings Institution, Center on Children and Families

**Funding Partners**


**State Lead Partners**

Schuyler Center for Analysis and Advocacy (Albany, NY), Families Together in New York State (Albany, NY), Voices for Georgia’s Children (Atlanta), Nebraska (to be announced soon).
Get Involved in CHAMPS!

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