

Strong States, Strong Nation



Child Welfare Reform:
Supporting Foster Parents and
Caseworkers

 NATIONAL CONFERENCE *of* STATE LEGISLATURES

NCSL Human Services Chairs Meeting
Monday, October 2, 2017 Nashville, TN

Child Welfare Reform:

Supporting Foster Parents and Caseworkers



Part 1: Supporting Foster Parents

□ Presenters:

- Senator A.J. Griffin, Oklahoma
- Dr. Linda Davidson Sagor, MD, MPH, University of Massachusetts Medical School, American Academy of Pediatrics Council on Foster Care, Adoption, and Kinship Care Executive Committee Member

- **Moderator:**
 - Rob Geen, Director Policy Reform and Advocacy, Annie E. Casey Foundation

Part 2: Supporting Caseworkers: Efforts in Colorado and Tennessee

□ Presenters:

- Dr. Dawn Matera Bassett, MSW, LCSW, PhD Associate Professor, College of Professional Studies, Chair Colorado Child Welfare Caseworker Resiliency Task Force, Colorado
- Dr. Michael Cull, Ph.D., Deputy Commissioner, Child Health, Tennessee Department of Children and Families

Child Welfare Reform: Supporting Foster Parents and Caseworkers



- 427,000 children and youth in foster care in U.S.
 - 269,509 entered foster care
 - 243,060 exited foster care
 - 191,842 children in non-relative foster care (45%) (AFCARS, June 2016, [Report #23](#))
 - Dramatic decline in foster care caseloads until 2012
 - Increase in foster care
 - Increase in child maltreatment reporting rates

Child Welfare Reform:

Supporting Foster Parents and Caseworkers



TRAUMA, HEALTH, AND RELATIONSHIPS

- ❑ Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) like abuse and neglect can contribute to lifelong negative health.
- ❑ Safe, stable, nurturing relationships promote resilience and can help mitigate the effects of ACEs.
- ❑ Foster parents and caseworkers can both provide that support and help children heal.





Table Talk

- Do you have enough foster parents to place all children for whom a family placement is appropriate?
- Is it getting harder, easier, or about the same to recruit foster parents?
- Do you feel like you have accurate and accessible data on your foster parents?
- Are you concerned about the quality of the foster parents you have and the ability to care for the children needing homes?
- If you had more high quality foster parents, could you safely reduce your use of shelters or group homes?
- What are the issues facing caseworkers in your states? What solutions have you considered?

Supporting Foster Parents



Senator A.J. Griffin, sponsor, Oklahoma 2017 SB 727

- ❑ Collaborative process between parents and DHS - actively engage parents around child placement decisions
- ❑ Strengthen long-term accountability at DHS – yearly reports on #s of available foster homes, child welfare staff workloads and other key metrics
- ❑ Increase support and resources for foster parents; strengthen the Foster Parents Bill of Rights
- ❑ Reduce liability for foster parents



Supporting Foster Parents

MA EXAMPLE- MEDICAL SOCIAL WORKERS

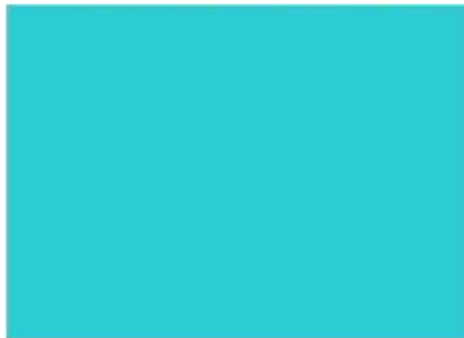
- Dr. Sagor joined MA DCF in 2016 as Medical Director.
- Established program placing medical social workers in each of the 29 state area offices.
- They work with caseworkers and foster parents to ensure children access needed medical, dental, and behavioral health care.
- Rate of recommended medical visits statewide has increased 383%.





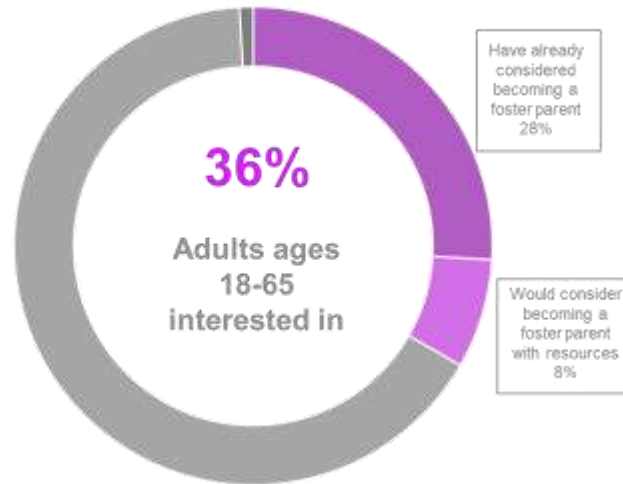
A Campaign to Ensure Bright Futures for Kids in Foster Care

www.fosteringchamps.org



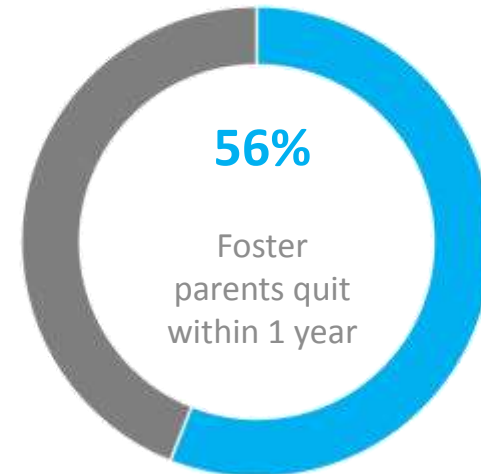
Do We Have a Foster Parent Recruitment or a Retention Problem?

Foster Parent Consideration



Source: 2017 Harris Poll
<https://dciw4f53l7k9i.cloudfront.net/wp-content/uploads/2011/10/2017-US-Foster-Care-Attitudes.pdf>

Foster Parent Retention



Source: US Dept. Health & Human Services
<https://aspe.hhs.gov/report/understanding-foster-parenting-using-administrative-data-explore-retention>

Supporting Caseworkers



2017 Colorado HB17 -1283

- The bill creates a task force to organize county-level versions of and guidelines for child welfare caseworker resiliency programs (task force) modeled on national resiliency programs. The membership of the task force is outlined; written findings and recommendations must be submitted to the Joint Budget Committee and the Joint Health and Human Services Committee by December 31, 2017.



Supporting Caseworkers

Evidence-based Strategies to Advance a Safety Culture in Child Welfare

Michael Cull, PhD



Supporting Caseworkers



Safety Science

- Interdisciplinary science that draws on psychology, engineering, medicine, architecture/design and may other related fields.
- Concerns itself with understanding how humans interact with and within complex system so those systems can be made more safe and reliable.

Safety Culture

- A one in which organizational values, attitudes, and behaviors support an engaged workforce and reliable care delivery.



Supporting Caseworkers

Leaders in a safety culture:

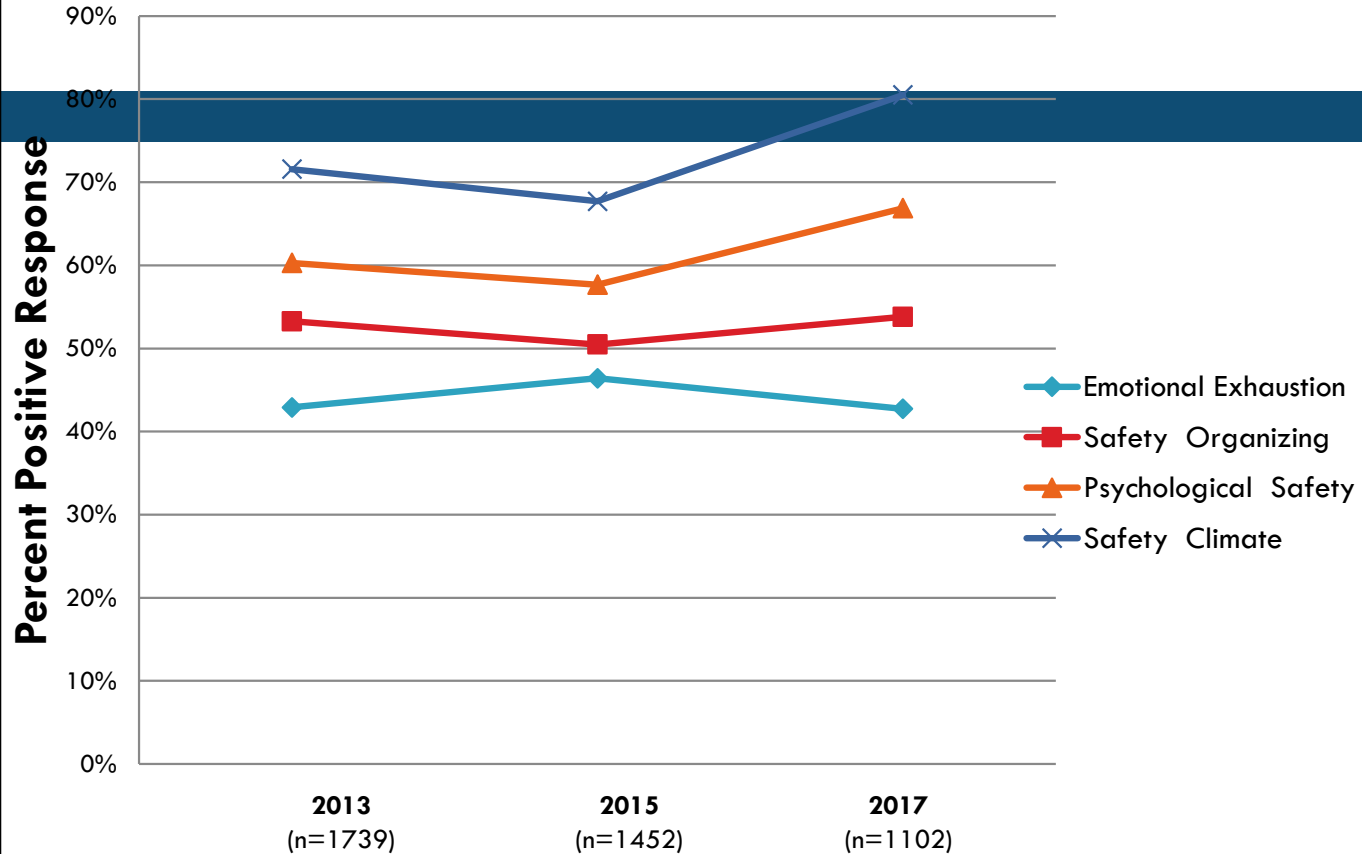
- ▣ Strive to balance systems and individual accountability; and
- ▣ Value open communication, transparency, and continuous learning and improvement.

Teams in a safety culture

- ▣ Monitor themselves, their colleagues, and their system for stress
- ▣ Anticipate and respond to unexpected events

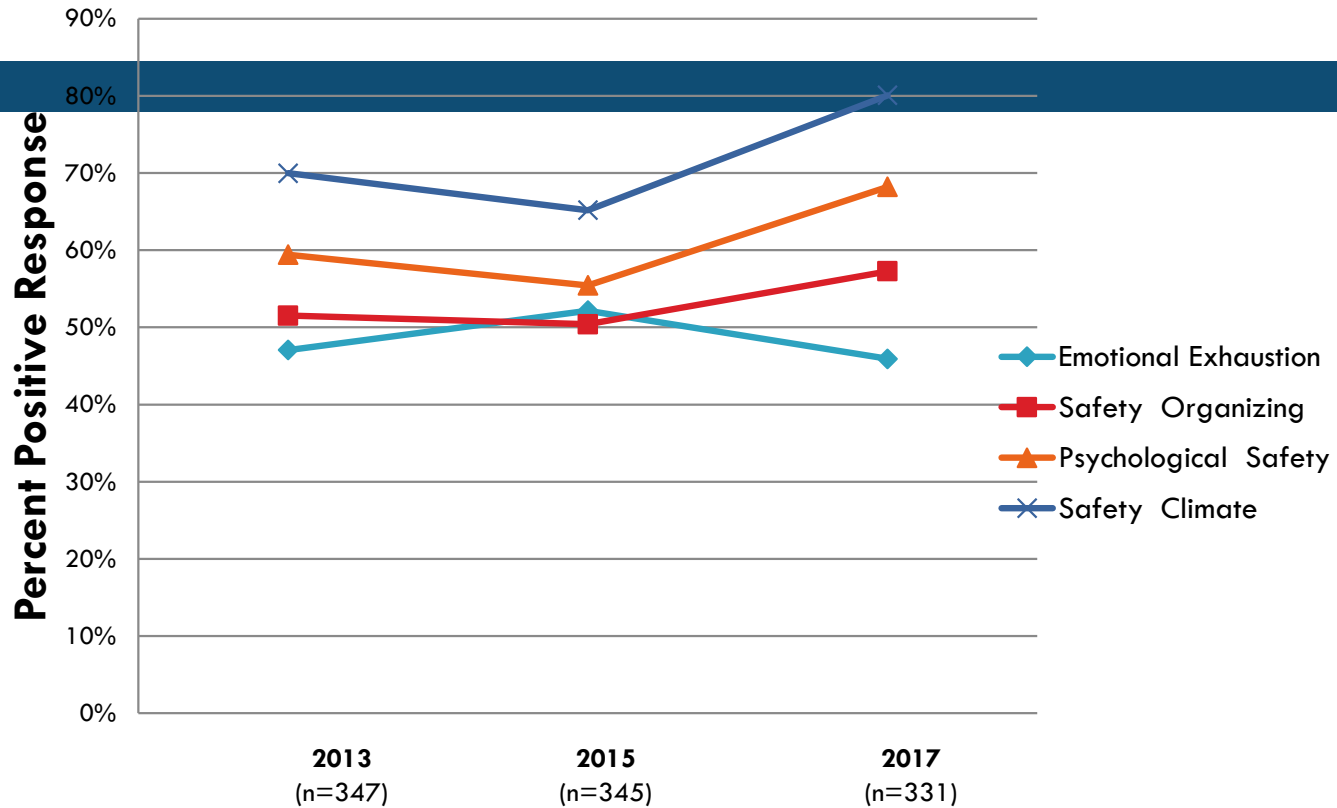


All Staff - All Regions



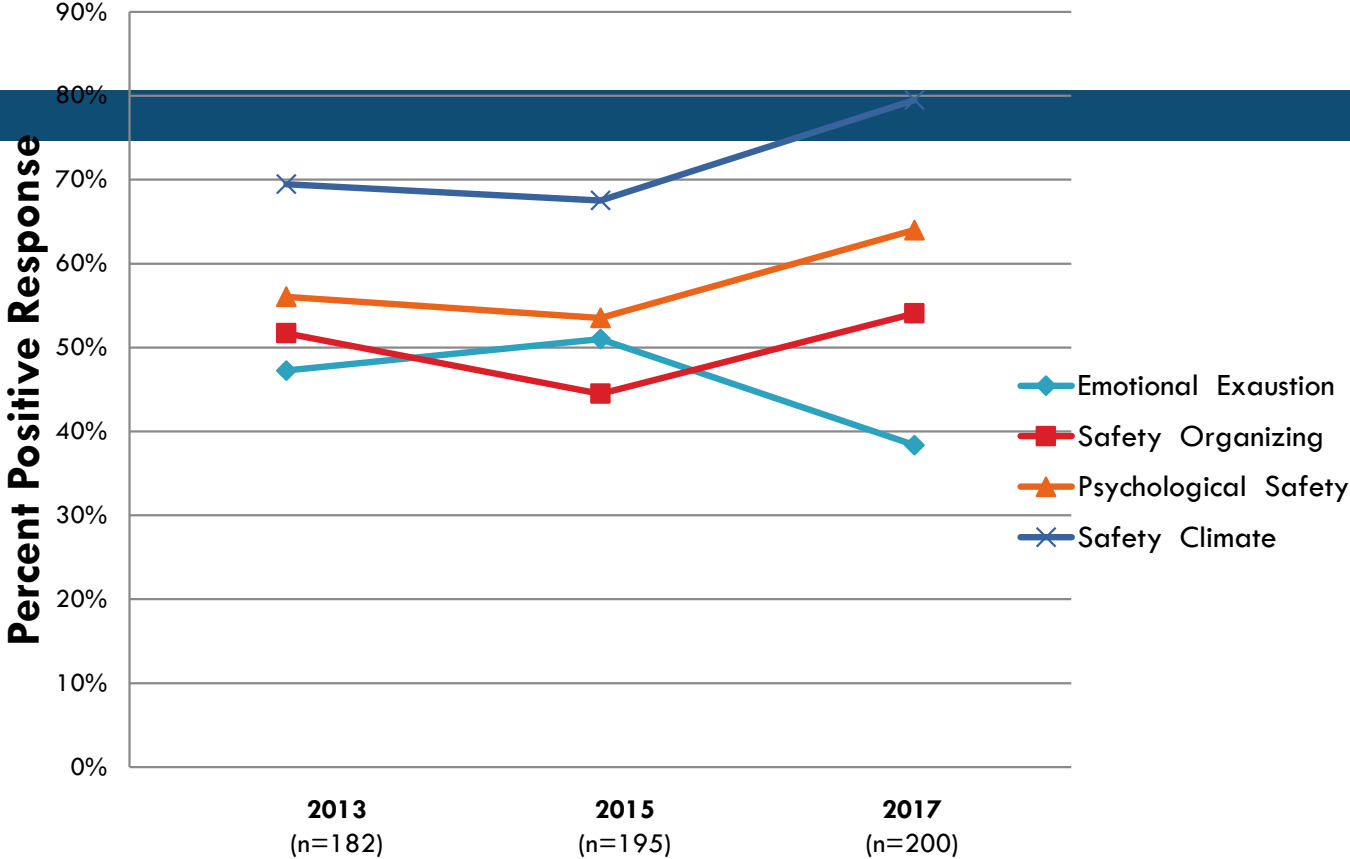


Child Programs – All Regions

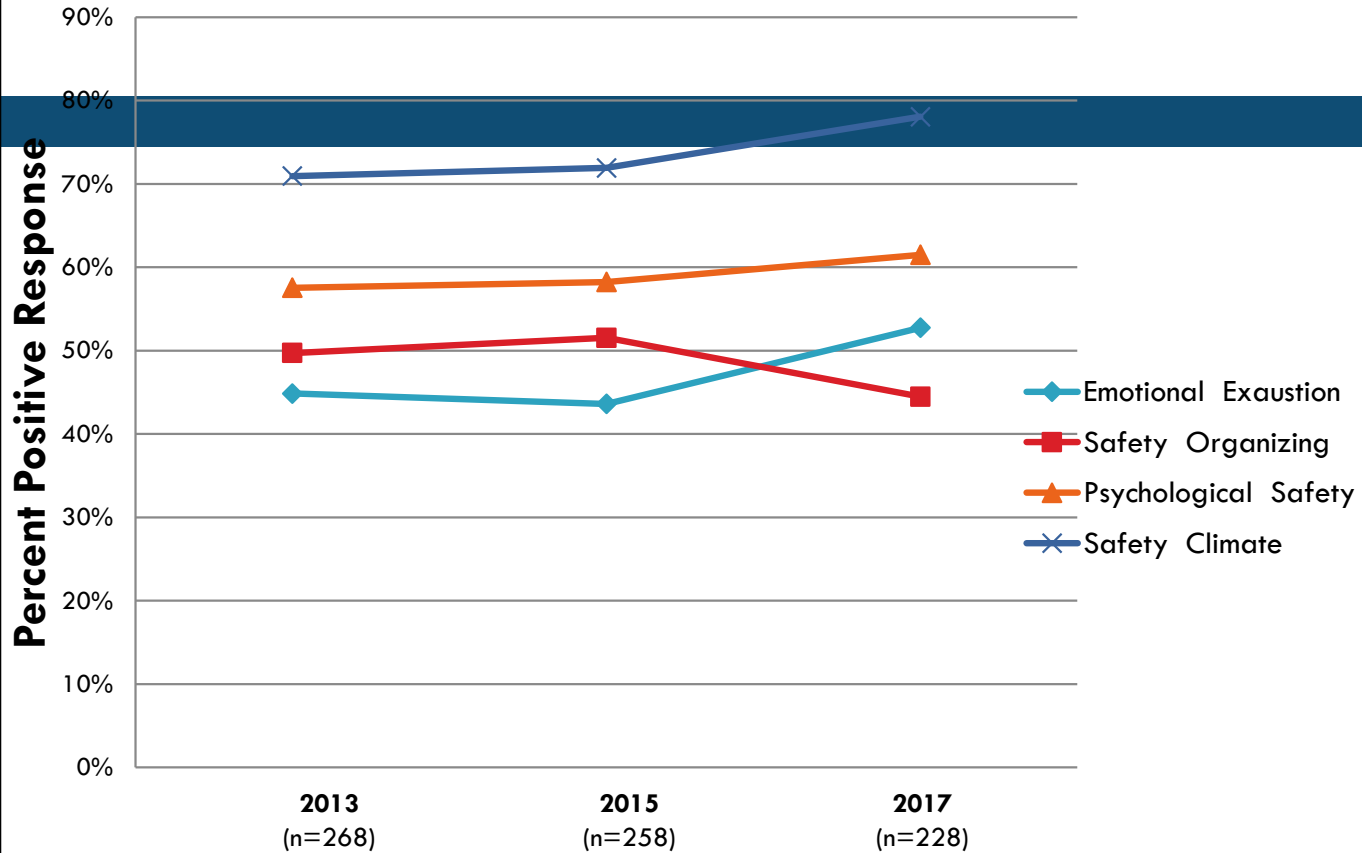




CPS Investigations – All Regions

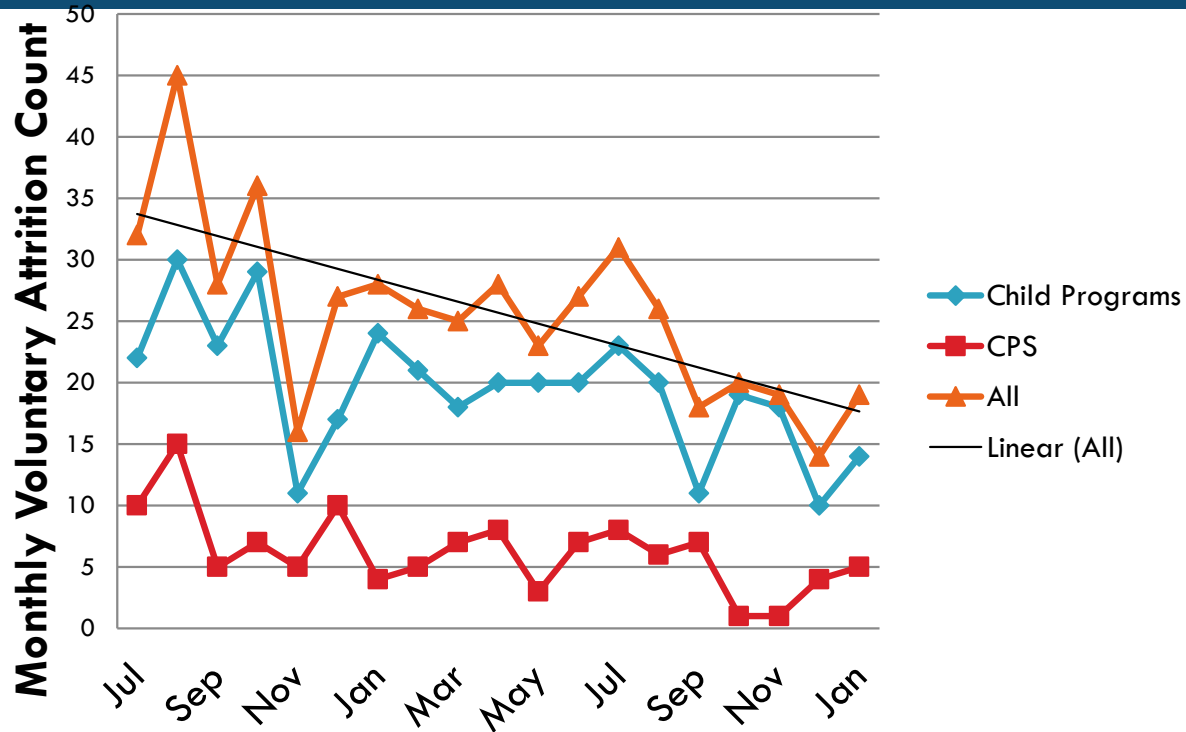


CPS Assessment





Staff Turnover - FY16 and FY17 (to survey period)



Child Welfare Reform: Supporting Foster Parents and Caseworkers



NCSL Tracks:

- ❑ Foster Care Bill of Rights
- ❑ Access to Liability Insurance
- ❑ Educational and Medical Consent Laws
- ❑ Foster Parent Voice in Court
- ❑ Caseworker Dedicated to Foster Parents
- ❑ Reasonable and Prudent Parenting Standard
- ❑ Child Welfare Workforce
- ❑ Child Welfare Enactments – maltreatment, foster care, adoption, kinship care

(Site: <http://www.ncsl.org/research/human-services/child-welfare.aspx>)