

# Training **MATTERS**



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- N.C. Division of Social Services
- N.C. Association of County Directors of Social Services
- Appalachian Family Innovations at Appalachian State University
- Independent Living Resources, Inc.
- N.C. State University Department of Social Work
- N.C. A & T State University Social Work Program
- Resources for Change, Inc.
- UNC-Chapel Hill School of Social Work (Jordan Institute for Families)
- UNC-Chapel Hill School of Medicine
- UNC-Greensboro Department of Social Work

#### **We Want To Hear from You!**

If you have questions or would like to comment about something that appears in *Training Matters*, please contact Ruth Harrison, Family Support and Child Welfare Services Staff Development, N.C. Division of Social Services, 2412 Mail Service Center, 325 N. Salisbury Street, Suite 735, Raleigh, NC 27699-2412, State Courier: 56-20-25, E-mail: Ruth.Harrison@ncmail.net, Tel: 919/733-7672.

#### **Visit Our Website**

Go to <[www.trainingmatters-nc.org](http://www.trainingmatters-nc.org)>.

This issue of *Training Matters* was produced by John McMahon of the UNC-Chapel Hill School of Social Work.

## **NC Kids: Good News for Adoption and Foster Care in North Carolina**

Want to hear some good news? Social workers with public and private child-placing agencies in North Carolina have a resource available to them that can make their jobs easier. It's a resource that is accessible, committed, effective—and free.

We're talking about NC Kids Adoption and Foster Care Network, a dynamic organization sponsored by the NC Division of Social Services, in partnership with the University of North Carolina at Greensboro.

Everything NC Kids does focuses on one goal—finding families for children in North Carolina. But NC Kids is not a child-placing agency. It accomplishes its mission by supporting foster care and adoption social workers.

#### **Case in Point**

Sound too good to be true? It's not. Just ask Jon Hunter, who recruits and trains foster and adoptive parents for Rowan County DSS. "The people at NC Kids," he says, "really have compassion for children and families, and they really go the extra mile. They have never failed to meet one of my requests."

To illustrate, he tells about the time a seven-year-old became available for adoption through his agency. Even before this boy was listed, Hunter says, "I knew we would be inundated with calls." His solution was to ask NC Kids to be the initial point of contact for inquiries about the child.

NC Kids was happy to oblige. They answered ques- *continued* →

### **Let NC Kids Help You!**

- **NC Kids is a partner, not a competitor.** It is a state-sponsored organization that recruits foster and adoptive parents and supports child-placing agencies.
- **Encourage prospective adoptive parents to register with NC Kids.** By registering, these families may have a better chance of finding the child they seek.
- **Plan an adoption promotion event.** NC Kids' provides consultation to help you plan and put on a successful adoption promotion event.
- **Use the NC Kids hotlines.** Social workers: call 1-888-NCKIDS-5 to place a child on the adoption registry or 1-888-NCKIDS-7 for technical assistance. Families: call 877-NCKIDS-1 to get information about foster care and adoption.
- **Tell them what you want!** NC Kids strives to provide individualized support to every social worker when it comes to recruitment, matching, and referrals.
- **Reach out to the media.** Do you have a good relationship with a newspaper or TV station in your area? Let NC Kids know and they will contact them to request periodic features on waiting children across the state.

## NC Kids *from page 1*

tions and provided basic information to many callers. They also searched their registry of families who had already completed homestudies. In the end, NC Kids informed Hunter about 60 families that were trained and ready to adopt. Rowan DSS then used this information to match the child with a family, and he was adopted.

### The NC Kids Approach

NC Kids has developed several services designed to create success stories like Hunter's:

#### Registries

NC Kids maintains an adoption exchange comprised of two registries:

##### Registry of waiting children.

NC Kids maintains a database of children across the state waiting for adoption. To make it easy for prospective adoptive parents to find a child, this listing is available at <[www.adoptnckids.org](http://www.adoptnckids.org)>.

##### Registry of potential families.

Families who have completed a pre-adoptive assessment can participate in this registry. Families can contact NC Kids directly and ask to be added to this list, or they can be referred by the assessing agency.

When families register with NC Kids, they may also choose to participate in a photolisting of potential adoptive families, which can be found at <[www.dhhs.state.nc.us/dss/childrenservices/adoptions/docs/listing.pdf](http://www.dhhs.state.nc.us/dss/childrenservices/adoptions/docs/listing.pdf)>.

#### Preliminary Matching

NC Kids uses these registries to conduct preliminary screenings of adoption matches. For example, they might compare a child's characteristics against the traits of registered families and come up with 15 possible matches. They then pass information on these possible matches to the child's social worker and to each family's social worker.

Debbie Gallimore, a trainer and consultant with NC Kids, says that the matching and referrals made possible through their registries have really opened up the boundaries of the counties: "Before, counties often had no way of knowing a family at the other end of the state was a good match for a child. Now they do."

#### Community Outreach

Gallimore also helps agencies promote foster care and adoption in their communities through

one-day events. She is available to speak to foster parent associations and other groups, too.

#### Hotlines for Social Workers

NC Kids operates two hotlines for social workers from 9 A.M. to 5 P.M. Monday through Friday. To have a child placed on the adoption registry, call 1-888-NCKIDS-5. For community outreach or technical assistance—for example, to get help responding to a large volume of calls—call 1-888-NCKIDS-7.

#### Hotline for Families

Last but certainly not least, NC Kids operates a hotline for families (877-NCKIDS-1). From 7 A.M. to 7 P.M. Monday through Saturday, NC Kids staff members speak with callers about foster care and adoption, explain the steps required, and connect callers with child-placing agencies. NC Kids also follows up with each caller to ensure no family is lost while navigating the system.

#### Conclusion

If foster care and adoption workers in North Carolina are not using NC Kids, they should give them a call. NC Kids is an able partner, eager to help you find families for children!



### NC Kids Stats, February 2004

- Approved families registered with NC Kids
  - from North Carolina ..... 250
  - from other States ..... 950
- Children who have either been adopted, placed for adoption, or pending placement due to a referral from NC Kids since 1999 ..... 381
- "Legally free" children for whom NC Kids is currently seeking adoptive families .... 255
- "Legal risk" children for whom NC Kids is currently seeking adoptive families ..... 55

For more information, call the NC Kids Adoption and Foster Care Network toll free at 1-877-NCKIDS-1. Online at <[www.adoptnckids.org](http://www.adoptnckids.org)>