

Foster Care and Permanence Task Force

A Report Submitted to:

The Honorable Bill Ritter

Governor, state of Colorado

The Honorable Mary Mullarkey

Chief Justice of Colorado Supreme Court

The Judiciary Committee

The Health and Human Services Committees of the Senate and the
House of Representatives

The Colorado Sixty- Sixth General Assembly

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Executive Summary

PERSPECTIVE

Children served by the foster care system, regardless of their age, are not only coping with the events that lead to their coming into care, but also the personal grief and trauma that accompanies the loss of a family. Without stable relationships and families, too many of these children and young adults may end up facing life's challenges and successes alone.

The Task Force found the complexity of serving children and their families requires coordination at the state level to ensure the best use of resources and to unify the array of services available to promote child well-being. We believe it is essential to increase the human and monetary investment in Colorado's child welfare system in order to appropriately meet the needs of foster children. In addition, whenever possible, communication between biological parents, resource parents and agency workers should be maximized for continuity and mutuality to support children in out-of-home care.

It is our vision that the following recommendations will help children maintain their existing attachments if possible, build meaningful new attachments and promote the safety, well-being and permanence of children in Colorado's foster care system.

CHARGE

The Sixty-Sixth General Assembly established the Foster Care and Permanence Task Force to examine the state of Colorado's system for the care of children who are removed from their biological parents due to concerns for the safety and well-being of the child(ren). The Task Force was created to study the state's foster care (sometimes known as "out-of-home placement") and adoption system to identify problems and concerns and to then identify and recommend solutions to address the concerns identified.

The Task Force was charged to consider the following from statute 26-6-504:

- a. How to ensure that foster children and adoptive children are placed in homes that become permanent and comfortable homes, thereby reducing the number of children who are moved repeatedly into foster homes and adoptive arrangements;
- b. How to evaluate the motivations of foster parent applicants to ensure that the applicants are motivated by reasons that are in the best interest of children;
- c. How to encourage retention of foster parents who practice foster care for reasons that are good for children;

- d. How to provide foster parents or adoptive parents with all available information about a foster child's behavior before the child is placed with the foster or adoptive parents, including contact information for the child's previous foster or adoptive parents;
- e. How to ensure that adoption subsidies remain sufficient to meet the needs of an adoptive child and his or her adoptive parents as the child grows older;
- f. How to improve the rate of permanency among individuals who are at least fourteen years of age but younger than twenty – four years of age who are in the state foster care system or in residential placement; and
- g. Create a process to mediate conflicts between foster or adoptive parents, and child placement agencies, biological parents or county departments.

MEMBERSHIP

The Task Force consists of the following appointed members:

- **Honorable K. Jerry Frangas:** to serve as a member of the general assembly.
- **Honorable Moe Keller:** to serve as a member of the general assembly.
- **Sister Michael Delores Allegri:** to serve as a foster parent who is a member of a statewide foster parent organization.
- **Cyril "Skip" A. Barber, Ph.D.:** to serve as a representative of a non-profit that advocates for child welfare services.
- **Ember E. Beamon:** to serve as a former foster child.
- **Adoree L. Blair:** to serve as an foster parent who is a member of a statewide foster parent association.
- **Sherry A. Caloia:** to serve as a foster parent who is a member of a statewide foster parent organization.
- **Deborah L. Cave:** to serve as an adoptive parent who is a member of a statewide adoptive parent association.
- **Kippi Clausen:** served as the facilitator of the Task Force.
- **Daryle L. Conquering Bear:** to serve as a former foster child.
- **Sheri Danz:** to serve as a representative of the Judicial Branch of Government.
- **Suzanne Dosh:** to serve as a representative for a non-profit or not-for-profit organization that coordinates the efforts of and advocates for, agencies that provide child foster care placement services.

- **Sharen E. Ford, Ph.D.:** to serve as a representative from the state department who has significant knowledge of foster care and adoption issues.
- **David K. Henson:** to serve as a representative of a county department of social services.
- **Carol A. Lawson:** to serve as representative for a non-profit or not-for-profit organization that recruits families for children who have survived abuse and neglect, supports adoptive families throughout the adoption process, and trains child welfare professionals.
- **Andi Leopoldus:** to serve as a representative for a non-profit or not-for-profit organization that coordinates the efforts of and advocates for, agencies that provide child foster care placement services.
- **Paula K. McKey:** to serve as a representative of a county department of social services.
- **M.A. "Bunny" Nicholson:** to serve as a representative of a non-profit or not-for-profit that provides clinical services, training, education and consultation programs to prevent and treat child abuse and neglect.
- **Sarah Padbury:** to serve as an adoptive parent who is not a member of a statewide adoptive parent association.
- **Marlin D. Peterson:** to serve as a foster parent who is not a member of a foster parent association.
- **Shari F. Shink:** to serve as a representative of a non-profit or not for profit that provides legal services for at –risk and maltreated children.
- **Jim Snyder:** to serve in the role of the executive director’s desingee.
- **Jerri J. Spear:** to serve as a representative of a county department of social services.
- **Heather N. Taussig:** to serve as a community child advocate.
- **Ted Trujillo:** to serve in the role of the executive director’s designee.
- **Jessica L. Yost:** to serve as a former foster child.
- **Claudia A. Zundel:** to serve as a representative of the Division of Mental Health in the state department and has significant knowledge of infants’ and young children’s mental health issues.

PROCESS

The Foster Care and Permanency Task Force met from July 2007 through May 2008.

The Task Force was divided into three subcommittees to focus more specifically on the legislatively defined tasks. The duties of the subcommittees and members are as follows.

Systems Subcommittee

- ***Duties:***

- a. 26-6-504 – 3. consult with the department to consider actions the department may take for the purpose of complying with the measures of federal child and family service review pursuant to §42 U.S.C sec 1320a -2a;
- b. 26-6-504 – 4 g. mediate conflicts between foster or adoptive parents and child placement agencies, biological parents or county departments;
- c. Explore best practices and promising approaches, cultural competency, kinship, support systems, accountability and caseworker loads and training.

- ***Members:***

Adoree Blair	Joycee Kennedy
Sheri Danz	Cheryl Miller
John Faught	Bunny Nicholson
Sharen Ford	Shari Shink
Toni Gray	Lindsey Zimmerman
Andi Leopoldus - Chair	

Caregiver Subcommittee

- ***Duties:***

- a. 26-6-504 – 4 a. ensure that foster children and adoptive children are placed in homes that become permanent and comfortable homes, thereby reducing the number of children who are moved repeatedly into foster homes and adoptive arrangement;
- b. 26-6-504 – 4 b. how to evaluate the motivations of foster parent applicants to ensure that the applicants are motivated by reasons that are in the best interest of children;
- c. 26-6-504 – 4 c. how to encourage retention of foster parent who practice foster care for reasons that are good for children;
- d. 26-6-504 – 4 d. how to provide foster or adoptive parents with all the available information about a foster child's behavior before the child is

placed with the foster or adoptive parents, including contact information for the child's previous foster or adoptive parents;

- e. Explore recruitment, retention, training and support services for foster parents, defining kinship care, biological parents and practice standards and subsidy.
- f. Attention should be given to the three types of foster caregivers:
 - Foster families with no intent to adopt
 - Foster families with an intent to adopt
 - Foster families who have adopted

- **Members:**

Sister Michael Delores Allegri	Carol Lawson
Adoree Blair	Paula McKey
Sheri Danz	Sarah Padbury – Chair
Suzanne Dosh	Sue Thibault
Honorable Jerry Frangas	Constance Vigil
Mary Griffin	

Child Well-being and Permanency Subcommittee

- **Duties:**

- a. 26-6-504 – 4 e. how to ensure that adoption subsidies remain sufficient to meet the needs of an adoptive child and his or her adoptive parent as the child grows older;
- b. 26-6-504 – 4 f. how to improve the rate of permanency among individuals who are at least fourteen years of age but younger than twenty-four years of age and who are in the state foster care system or in placement in residential placements;
- c. Explore barriers, support services and adoption.

- **Members:**

Skip Barber	Marlin Peterson
Ember Beamon	Paula Pickle
Deborah Cave - Chair	Peg Rudden
Honorable Moe Keller	Heather Taussig
Cheryl Miller	Constance Vigil
Amy Naes	Rachel Yarbrough

Glossary of Terms

BHO: Behavioral Health Organization

CDHS: Colorado Department of Human Services

CPA: Child Placement Agency

HCPF: Health Care Policy and Financing

Resource parents: foster parents, foster-adopt parents, prospective adoptive parents, and certified kinship parents.

Recommendations

The Foster Care and Permanence Task Force considered the strength of the current system and the quality work currently being done within the state and counties, and identified ways to improve the design, delivery, and outcomes for children in foster care and their families. We make the following recommendations:

RECOMMENDATION 1: Provide mental health screenings, evaluations and services for all children who are the subject of a substantiated case of child abuse and neglect. Offer to and provide mental health services to biological parents, resource parents, caregivers, siblings and other children and youth involved in the child welfare system. Mental health services should be accessible, timely, consistent, culturally appropriate, geographically/ community based, and promote evidence-based practices.

RECOMMENDATION 2: Require public schools to assist in the educational success of foster children.

RECOMMENDATION 3: All pre-foster and pre-adoptive and pre-foster-adopt as well as pre-certified and uncertified kinship families in Colorado should be trained using the PRIDE precertification method of training.

RECOMMENDATION 4: Reduce the time for all revocation of relinquishment of parental rights to 21 days, consistent with the time for appeals of termination of parental rights set by Court of Appeal Rule 3.4 (b).

RECOMMENDATION 5: (a) Support the Colorado Department of Human Services in strengthening its existing enforcement mechanisms for oversight of counties' compliance with the rules promulgated by the State Board of Human Services (Volume 7 and other related rules). (b) Conduct a workload study for county caseworkers and state agencies and recommend workloads that reasonably and realistically support caseworker compliance with CDHS rules and CDHS's ability to enforce rules.

RECOMMENDATION 6: All county departments of human/social services need to create strategies and plans for the provision of foster care homes for children who reside in their counties who are in need of out-of-home placement.

RECOMMENDATION 7: Make resource parents full team members in the planning and implementing of a foster child's permanency plan.

RECOMMENDATION 8: Colorado will increase resource parents' financial reimbursement to the most current Foster Care MARC recommendation and will maintain its foster care reimbursement rates to remain consistent over time with the most current national standard for reimbursement.

RECOMMENDATION 9: (a) The Colorado Department of Human Services, county departments of human/social services and Child Placement Agencies will improve the quality of training and increase the frequency of support available for resource parents. (b) Certified and non-certified kinship parents should be offered the same training and support as all resource parents in addition to specialized training for kin.

RECOMMENDATION 10: Recruit an increased number of resource parents to meet the needs of children in out-of-home placement.

RECOMMENDATION 11: Youth will be adequately prepared for emancipation and appropriately supported during their transition to emancipation.

RECOMMENDATION 12: If a child/youth is adopted from the child welfare system and is challenged by mental illness or emotional issues, and is unsafe to either himself/herself and/or to other family members in the home, and the county takes custody of the child/youth to provide out-of-home placement for the purposes of obtaining special treatment or care solely because the parent or legal guardian is unable to provide the treatment or care, the adoptive family should be informed in a timely manner both verbally and in writing of legal adjudication options prior to any adjudication.

RECOMMENDATION 13: Provide increased support and services to kinship caregivers for children in out-of-home placements.

RECOMMENDATION 14: (a) Strengthen the adoption subsidy regulations that detail the process for both the initial negotiation as well as re-negotiations, to ensure that counties negotiate with pre- and post-adoptive families in good faith, taking into consideration the needs of the child and the circumstances of the family. (b) Conduct an annual adoption subsidy rate review and make public by December 31st of each year in accordance with the Office of the State Auditor's 2002 audit recommendations.

RECOMMENDATION 15: (a) If after a caseworker has completed the Colorado Safety Assessment (described in 12 CCR 2509-3, Volume 7, Section 7.202.53, "Safety Plan Rule"), a viable safety plan cannot be implemented, and the child(ren) is not safe in his/her current environment and must be removed, then it is recommended that the county initiate legal proceedings appropriate to ensure safety issues of the child. (b) The Colorado Department of Human Services should create formal trainings for county workers on how to utilize and implement the Colorado Safety Assessment Instrument.

RECOMMENDATION 16: (a) Create a process to allow caseworkers electronic access to all completed county and CPA foster-adopt and pre-adoptive home studies, regardless of county affiliation, to more quickly facilitate the adoption of Colorado's children. (b) In the preparation of foster-adopt and pre-adoptive parents, CDHS should determine a set reimbursement fee when the home study is transferred between agencies for the purpose of a child being placed for adoption.

OVERVIEW OF RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation	Charge							Legislative - Rule	Cost
	a	b	c	d	e	f	g		
RECOMMENDATION 1: Provide mental health screenings, evaluations and services for all children who are the subject of a substantiated case of child abuse and neglect. Offer to and provide mental health services to biological parents, resource parents, caregivers, siblings and other children and youth involved in the child welfare system. Mental health services should be accessible, timely, consistent, culturally appropriate, geographically/ community based, and promote evidence-based practices.	X		X	X		X		Legislative	\$
RECOMMENDATION 2: Require public schools to assist in the educational success of foster children.						X		Legislative	
RECOMMENDATION 3: . All pre-foster and pre-adoptive and pre-foster-adopt as well as pre-certified and uncertified kinship families in Colorado should be trained using the PRIDE precertification method of training.	X	X	X			X		Legislative	\$
RECOMMENDATION 4: Reduce the time for all revocation of relinquishment of parental rights to 21 days, consistent with the time for appeals of termination of parental rights set by Court of Appeal Rule 3.4 (b).	X					X		Legislative	
RECOMMENDATION 5 (a) Support the Colorado Department of Human Services in strengthening its existing enforcement mechanisms for oversight of counties' compliance with the rules promulgated by the State Board of Human Services (Volume 7 and other related rules). (b) Conduct a workload study for county caseworkers and state agencies and recommend workloads that reasonably and realistically support caseworker compliance with CDHS rules and CDHS's ability to enforce rules.	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	Rule	\$
RECOMMENDATION 6: All county department of human/social services need to create strategies and plans for the provision of foster care homes for children who reside in their counties who are in need of out-of-home placement.	X					X		None	
RECOMMENDATION 7: Make resource parents full team members in the planning and implementing of a foster child's permanency plan.	X	X	X	X		X	X	Rule	\$
RECOMMENDATION 8: Colorado will increase resource parents' financial reimbursement to the most current Foster Care MARC recommendation and will maintain its foster care reimbursement rates to remain consistent over time with the most current national standard for reimbursement.	X		X			X		Legislative and Rule	\$

RECOMMENDATION 9: (a) The Colorado Department of Human Services, county departments of human/social services and Child Placement Agencies will improve the quality of training and increase the frequency of support available for resource parents. (b) Certified and non-certified kinship parents should be offered the same training and support as all resource parents in addition to specialized training for kin.	X	X	X	X		X	X	Rule	\$
RECOMMENDATION 10: Recruit an increased number of resource parents to meet the needs of children in out-of-home placement.	X	X	X			X		None	\$
RECOMMENDATION 11: Youth will be adequately prepared for emancipation and appropriately supported during their transition to emancipation.						X		Legislative and Rule	\$
RECOMMENDATION 12: If a child/youth is adopted from the child welfare system and is challenged by mental illness or emotional issues, and is unsafe to either himself/herself and/or to other family members in the home, and the county takes custody of the child/youth to provide out-of-home placement for the purposes of obtaining special treatment or care solely because the parent or legal guardian is unable to provide the treatment or care, the adoptive family should be informed in a timely manner both verbally and in writing of legal adjudication options <u>prior</u> to any adjudication.	X	X	X		X		X	Rule	\$
RECOMMENDATION 13: Provide increased support and services to kinship caregivers for children in out-of-home placements.	X		X					Legislative	\$
RECOMMENDATION 14: (a) Strengthen the adoption subsidy regulations that detail the process for both the initial negotiation as well as re-negotiations, to ensure that counties negotiate with pre- and post-adoptive families in good faith, taking into consideration the needs of the child and the circumstances of the family. (b) Conduct an annual adoption subsidy rate review and make public by December 31st of each year in accordance with the Office of the State Auditor's 2002 audit recommendations						X	X	Legislative and Rule	\$
RECOMMENDATION 15: (a) If after a caseworker has completed the Colorado Safety Assessment (described in 12 CCR 2509-3, Volume 7, Section 7.202.53, "Safety Plan Rule"), a viable safety plan cannot be implemented, and the child(ren) is not safe in his/her current environment and must be removed, then it is recommended that the county initiate legal proceedings appropriate to ensure safety issues of the child. (b) The Colorado Department of Human Services should create formal trainings for county workers on how to utilize and implement the Colorado Safety Assessment Instrument.						X		Rule	\$
RECOMMENDATION 16: (a) Create a process to allow caseworkers electronic access to all completed county and CPA foster-adopt and pre-adoptive home studies, regardless of county affiliation, to more quickly facilitate the adoption of Colorado's children. (b) In the preparation of foster-adopt and pre-adoptive parents, CDHS should determine a set reimbursement fee when the home study is transferred between agencies for the purpose of a child being placed for adoption.						X		Rule	\$

Recommendations Narrative

RECOMMENDATION 1: Provide mental health screenings, evaluations and services for all children who are the subject of a substantiated case of child abuse and neglect. Offer to and provide mental health services to biological parents, resource parents, caregivers, siblings and other children and youth involved in the child welfare system. Mental health services should be accessible, timely, consistent, culturally appropriate, geographically/ community based, and promote evidence-based practices.

GOAL:

- ✓ Reduce moves and find children permanent homes.
- ✓ Improve permanency for all children, including youth 14-23 years of age, who are in foster homes or in residential placements.
- ✓ Improve family outcomes by providing services to biological parents.
- ✓ Retain more foster parents.

STRATEGIES:

- ✓ Support and fund a pilot program to evaluate effectiveness of enhancing mental health screenings, evaluations and services for abused and neglected children ages 0 to 10 years of age.
- ✓ Develop and evaluate age appropriate screening and evaluation tools.
- ✓ Integrate child welfare and mental health programs for children and parents.
- ✓ Expand training programs and ongoing consultation for screenings, evaluations and mental health services, including evidence-based practices.
- ✓ Review Request for Proposals for Behavioral Health Organizations (BHOs).

RECOMMENDATION 2: Require public schools to assist in the educational success of foster children.

GOAL:

- ✓ Increase graduation rates.
- ✓ Graduation from high school may lead to post secondary education, ensuring sustainable income.
- ✓ Stronger workforce for Colorado.

STRATEGIES:

- ✓ Increase opportunities for children who are in foster care to remain in his/her home school when it is in the best interest of the child and family.
- ✓ Provide transportation for a student who wants to remain in the home school.
- ✓ Strengthen smooth transition for children by having caseworkers follow them when they move to a new school.
- ✓ Accelerate the time it takes for the transfer of and the acceptance of educational credits by the new school.
- ✓ Encourage all professionals involved in the life of a foster child to work towards the goal of graduation.

RECOMMENDATION 3: All pre-foster and pre-adoptive and pre-foster-adopt as well as pre-certified and uncertified kinship families in Colorado should be trained using the PRIDE precertification method of training.

GOAL:

- ✓ Consistent training throughout Colorado.
- ✓ Ensure resource parents have adequate knowledge, resources and tools to meet the needs of children in care before they commit to caring for such children.

STRATEGIES:

- ✓ Develop and implement a pilot to use PRIDE curriculum for training.
- ✓ Survey foster parents who participate in training to evaluate effectiveness of training.
- ✓ Modify CDHS rules to require PRIDE training.

RECOMMENDATION 4: Reduce the time for all revocation of relinquishment of parental rights to 21 days, consistent with the time for appeals of termination of parental rights set by Court of Appeal Rule 3.4 (b).

GOAL:

- ✓ Reduce the time children spend in foster care when parents relinquish parental rights.
- ✓ Reduce the mandatory time between relinquishment and adoption in step-parent and child placement agency adoptions.

STRATEGIES:

- ✓ Recommended statute revision: § 19-5-104 (7)(a), C.R.S., by changing ninety to twenty-one as follows, and adding the language in bold: “A relinquishment may be revoked only if, within **twenty-one** days after the entry of the relinquishment order, the relinquishing **parent files a petition for revocation which includes the parent’s grounds for revocation.** **If a hearing is set, the relinquishing parent shall** establish by “clear and convincing” evidence that such relinquishment was obtained by fraud or duress.

RECOMMENDATION 5: (a) Support the Colorado Department of Human Services in strengthening its existing enforcement mechanisms for oversight of counties’ compliance with the rules promulgated by the State Board of Human Services (Volume 7 and other related rules). (b) Conduct a workload study for county caseworkers and state agencies and recommend workloads that reasonably and realistically support caseworker compliance with CDHS rules and CDHS’s ability to enforce rules.

GOAL:

- ✓ Establish consistency throughout the state in the provision of child welfare services, including foster care.
- ✓ Promote clarity of CDHS expectation of counties among the public and private agencies, individual members of the public and those involved in the child welfare system.

STRATEGIES:

- ✓ Support the Governor’s Executive Order calling for in-depth analysis of county-state relationship and workload study of CDHS, County departments of human services, and caseworkers.
- ✓ Create administrative rules and progressive disciplinary process.
- ✓ Establish/implement accessible and user-friendly procedures for enforcement of existing rules.
- ✓ Create notification procedures of county department’s obligations and available enforcement/review procedures.
- ✓ Recommend that CDHS’s monitoring reports of county departments are available online, as are Certified Placement Agencies (CPAs).

RECOMMENDATION 6: All county departments of human/social services need to create strategies and plans for the provision of foster care homes for children who reside in their counties who are in need of out-of-home placement.

GOAL:

- ✓ Placement of children in the least restrictive, most appropriate placement in close proximity to their family of origin, while recognizing their individualized needs.
- ✓ Reduction of school moves.
- ✓ Higher level of permanence and reduction in moves for children.

STRATEGIES:

- ✓ CDHS should require a county-based, annual foster care program report to include:
 - Number of foster homes recruited and certified.
 - Number of child placements within the county.;
 - Number of children placed outside of the county.
 - Total costs of out-of-home placements.

RECOMMENDATION 7: Make resource parents full team members in the planning and implementing of a foster child's permanency plan.

GOAL:

- ✓ Increase permanency for children.
- ✓ Maximize collaboration and provision of relevant information for the benefit of the child.
- ✓ Validates the unique role, responsibility and knowledge of a resource parent in the process of creating a permanency plan for children.
- ✓ Increases recruitment and retention of resource families.

STRATEGIES:

- ✓ Counties/CPA's should institute regular meetings (minimum of quarterly) with critical and expected attendees (see list in Recommendation 7, Strategy 1.A.) to discuss the child's case progress toward permanency including any transition plans.
- ✓ Provide training for resource parents, caseworkers and supervisors to enhance resource parents' participation in quarterly team meetings.
- ✓ Review caseworker and supervisor training curriculum to determine if there are any gaps in agency worker training that needs to be addressed to enhance teamwork.
- ✓ Provide resource parents with information relevant to the daily care of children in their care and the child's permanency plan.
- ✓ To assure home safety, amend all certifying agencies' resource parent contract/agreements to have a detailed, written advisement of the benefits and risks of releasing such information to the biological family and include a release form.
- ✓ CDHS will survey exiting resource parents (an ongoing project) to determine why resource parents leave. CDHS will produce an annual report of its findings/conclusions.

RECOMMENDATION 8: Colorado will increase resource parents' financial reimbursement to the most current Foster Care MARC recommendation and will maintain its foster care reimbursement rates to remain consistent over time with the most current national standard for reimbursement.

GOAL:

- ✓ Increase Colorado's current base rates to better provide for the needs of children.
- ✓ More successfully recruit and retain high quality families.
- ✓ Fewer moves experienced by children.

STRATEGIES

- ✓ Increase resource family base rate reimbursement to meet the current Foster Care MARC recommendation along with additional reimbursement for travel and childcare expenses not included in the MARC base rate.
- ✓ Certified Kinship foster parents should be offered the same reimbursement as any resource parents regardless of the child's Title IV-E eligibility.
- ✓ Non-certified Kinship parents should be offered the following options:
 - Counties are encouraged to use TANF dollars to support non-certified Kinship parents, as appropriate, in addition to the "child-only" Basic Cash Assistance so that the child can remain placed with kin.
 - All counties need to incorporate into their county plan the Grandparent Guardianship rules outlined in **Staff Manual Section 3.600.19: Grandparent Guardianship [Rev. eff. 1/1/05]**.
- ✓ Efforts to advise and certify kin eligible for certification should be maximized and enforced by CDHS.

RECOMMENDATION 9: (a) The Colorado Department of Human Services, county departments of human/social services and Child Placement Agencies will improve the quality of training and increase the frequency of support available for resource parents. (b) Certified and non-certified kinship parents should be offered the same training and support as all resource parents in addition to specialized training for kin.

GOAL:

- ✓ An increased number of well-trained and well-supported resource families will be retained by the system.
- ✓ Children will be better cared for when caregivers are better trained.

- ✓ Resource families will be able to develop an informal network of resource families for support, information dissemination and mentoring.

STRATEGIES:

- ✓ Increase collaboration in county departments between workers in intake, ongoing and the resource workers value and work toward retention of quality resource families.
- ✓ Make readily available ongoing, relevant, practical training related to the child's special needs that is accessible to resource parents in a timely manner.
- ✓ Child Care should be provided for resource parents when attending any training.
- ✓ Promote and encourage regularly scheduled respite.
- ✓ Encourage development of buddy/mentoring program between new resource parents and experienced ones.
- ✓ CDHS should provide support group models to counties/child placement agencies for resource families to attend for support.

RECOMMENDATION 10: Recruit an increased number of resource parents to meet the needs of children in out-of-home placement.

GOAL:

- ✓ Increase the number and type of resource parents to meet the out-of-home and permanency needs of children by expanding the proven recruitment models.
- ✓ Recruit resource families in the communities of children in need of out-of-home placement.
- ✓ Improved matches of children and resource parents.
- ✓ Decrease the number of legal-free children awaiting permanency.

STRATEGIES:

- ✓ Increase recruitment funding to expand recruitment models to ensure diversity of resource parents.
- ✓ Create regional recruiters to assist counties in recruiting a wide variety of resource families.
- ✓ Develop a statewide media campaign to support recruitment model.
- ✓ Improved oversight of county departments to make sure they are informing all kinship parents that they have the opportunity to pursue certification as resource parents.

RECOMMENDATION 11: Youth will be adequately prepared for emancipation and appropriately supported during their transition to emancipation.

GOAL:

- ✓ Improve permanency among individuals who are at least 14 years of age but younger than the age of 21 who are or have been in state-funded out-of-home care.
- ✓ Improve adult well-being of former foster youth.

STRATEGIES:

- ✓ Increase the age of mandatory emancipation for foster youth to 21 years of age.
- ✓ Provide funding for pre- and post-emancipation services for all eligible foster care youth.
- ✓ Ensure those county departments of human/social service provide emancipation services; educate youth in their care regarding these services; and assist youth in accessing these services. These services should be evaluated for effectiveness and client satisfaction.
- ✓ Continue expanding access for former foster care youth to Medicaid.
- ✓ Make tuition waivers available to foster care youth requiring financial assistance who had been in out-of-home care at age 16 with a case plan for emancipation.
- ✓ Ensure foster care youth have access to copies of their vital records.
- ✓ Provide youth the opportunity to give input regarding their case plans and permanency goals.
- ✓ Increase foster care youth's access to normative, developmentally-appropriate activities.
- ✓ Support the rapid development of rules implementing protecting sibling visitation rights and includes former foster care youth in the rules development process.
- ✓ Identify long-term foster care (OPPLA – Other Planned Permanent Living Arrangement) as a legitimate and viable permanency goal for some youth, on a case-by-case basis and as appropriate.

RECOMMENDATION 12: If a child/youth is adopted from the child welfare system and is challenged by mental illness or emotional issues, and is unsafe to either himself/herself and/or to other family members in the home, and the county takes custody of the child/youth to provide out-of-home placement for the purposes of obtaining special treatment or care solely because the parent or legal guardian is unable to provide the treatment or care, the adoptive family should be informed in a timely manner both verbally and in writing of legal adjudication options prior to any adjudication.

GOAL:

- ✓ Children/youth who have been adopted from the child welfare system should be offered timely and appropriate out-of-home care.
- ✓ Adoptive parents will make more informed decisions regarding out-of-home placement for their children and the legal ramification of such options.
- ✓ Decrease in the number of traumatized adoptive families and dissolved adoptions.

STRATEGIES:

- ✓ Create documents which explain the adjudication options available to adoptive parents needing out-of-home care for their children.
- ✓ Included in the above document information regarding the following sections of the CRS Title 19 Children's Code:
 - 19-3-102(e) – D&N (“...through no fault of such parent...”);
 - 19-3-102(f) – D&N (“...beyond the control of his or her parent...”);
 - 19-1-115(8) – Petition to Review Need of Placement (PRNP).
- ✓ Require Behavioral Health Organizations bids for the July 1, 2009 contracts to HCPF to include a summary of the range of adoption- and trauma-competent mental health services available for children.

RECOMMENDATION 13: Provide increased support and services to kinship caregivers for children in out-of-home placements.

GOAL:

- ✓ Increased access to funding and services for kinship caregivers and children in kinship care placements.
- ✓ Increased stability, safety and well-being of children being cared for by kin.

STRATEGIES:

- ✓ County departments should provide all potential kinship caregivers information on placement options and the associated ramifications prior to their assuming permanent legal obligations for a child.
- ✓ Encourage county departments of human/social services to develop, in their county plan, a provision for kinship caregivers who choose not to become certified kinship care provider's monetary benefits similar to what they would have received in foster care.
- ✓ If reestablished, pursue Federal IV-E demonstration waiver to fund child(ren) in guardianship relationships with kinship caregivers;
- ✓ Ensure kinship caregivers have access to resources including trainings and support groups.
- ✓ Require all kinship providers to have a SAFE home study conducted.

- ✓ Provide a Kinship Care Program Specialist to support county departments.
- ✓ Develop a process to ensure the certification of all orders allocating parental responsibilities entered at the conclusion of a D&N proceeding to the appropriate district court(s).
- ✓ Conduct an inquiry into the use of orders allocating parental responsibility in the child welfare arena.

RECOMMENDATION 14: (a) Strengthen the adoption subsidy regulations that detail the process for both the initial negotiation as well as re-negotiations, to ensure that counties negotiate with pre- and post-adoptive families in good faith, taking into consideration the needs of the child and the circumstances of the family. (b) Conduct an annual adoption subsidy rate review and make public by December 31st of each year in accordance with the Office of the State Auditor's 2002 audit recommendations.

GOAL:

- ✓ Ensure that foster-adopt and pre-adoptive families understand the needs of their child(ren) prior to conducting the subsidy negotiation.
- ✓ Enable the ability of families to request services and financial support post-adoption if the needs of their child(ren) change.
- ✓ Families will not be threatened with removal of their child because they disagree with the proposed adoption subsidy.

STRATEGIES:

- ✓ Amend CDHS Regulation 7.306.42.F.2 to read "The county is responsible for negotiating the subsidy amount that can be provided to a family based upon the needs of the child and the circumstances of the family. The maximum adoption assistance payment cannot exceed the amount the child would receive if s/he were in a family foster home, less the monthly respite care amount."
- ✓ Modify **7.306.54B** (Continuing Subsidies beyond Age Eighteen) to include 'emotional disturbance/mental illness' as a criteria for youth over the age of 18 and less than the age of 21 to continue to be eligible for the adoption assistance program.
- ✓ Continue foster care payments until the adoption is finalized and adoption subsidy agreement begins.
- ✓ The foster care rate for a child will not be decreased when she/he is moved in to a foster-adopt or pre-adoptive placement, *solely* because of the move.
- ✓ An adoption subsidy agreement will not be finalized until a child has been in a foster-adopt or pre-adoptive home for at least 90 days.
- ✓ Change Colorado regulations stating that adoption subsidies cannot be increased post-finalization to include/cover issues that arise after the adoption is finalized.

- ✓ Develop an annual electronic “Subsidized Adoption” form to be utilized by all counties to replace the current monthly process.
- ✓ Counties should not change an adoption subsidy without all parties being in agreement.
- ✓ Provide a dormant subsidy to preserve the ability of families to obtain a subsidy for their child in the future should it become necessary.
- ✓ Inform families prior to finalization of an adoption that after the child(ren) is adopted, the child may be either: a) placed on the family’s insurance as primary coverage, with Medicaid secondary; or b) the child may continue with Medicaid as the primary insurance.
- ✓ A child cannot be removed from a pre-adoptive or foster-adopt home due to potential or current conflict associated with the adoption subsidy negotiation process.

RECOMMENDATION 15: (a) If after a caseworker has completed the Colorado Safety Assessment (described in 12 CCR 2509-3, Volume 7, Section 7.202.53, “Safety Plan Rule”), a viable safety plan cannot be implemented, and the child(ren) is not safe in his/her current environment and must be removed, then it is recommended that the county initiate legal proceedings appropriate to ensure safety issues of the child. (b) The Colorado Department of Human Services should create formal trainings for county workers on how to utilize and implement the Colorado Safety Assessment Instrument.

GOAL:

- ✓ Ensure the safety and well-being of children.
- ✓ Clarify the use and application of the Safety Plan Rule.

STRATEGIES:

- ✓ Review and analyze available data to determine whether or not children remained safe after a case is assessed, a safety plan implemented, and the case closed without a D&N being filed.
- ✓ Creation of formal trainings by CDHS for county workers on how to utilize and implement the Colorado Safety Assessment Instrument.

RECOMMENDATION 16: (a) Create a process to allow caseworkers electronic access to all completed county and CPA foster-adopt and pre-adoptive home studies, regardless of county affiliation, to more quickly facilitate the adoption of Colorado’s children. (b) In the preparation of foster-adopt and pre-adoptive parents, CDHS should determine a set reimbursement fee when the home study is transferred between agencies for the purpose of a child being placed for adoption.

GOAL:

- ✓ To expedite permanency for Colorado's children waiting for a foster-adopt or pre-adoptive placement.
- ✓ To conduct better assessment of available families to meet the individualized needs of the child.

STRATEGIES:

- ✓ Develop a centralized electronic home study sharing process for Colorado counties that is easily available for viewing by all caseworkers and subsequent transfer.
- ✓ Encourage counties to utilize the technical assistance support services of Adopt US Kids to help and support workers and counties through this process.

Appendix A:

Recommendation Mapping Worksheets

1. Mental Health Services
2. Education Success for Foster Children
3. Consistency of Caregiver Training – PRIDE
4. Reduce Relinquishment Revocation Time
5. CDHS Enforcement of Rules
6. All Counties Will Provide Foster Care
7. Make Resource Parents Full Team Members
8. Increase Resource Parent Reimbursement
9. Improve Resource Parent Training and Support
10. Recruit More Quality Resource Parents
11. Youth Emancipation Support
12. Adopted Child Out-of-Home Placement
13. Increase Support and Services for Kinship Caregivers
14. Strengthen Adoption Subsidy Regulations and Practice
15. Safety Assessment/Plan Review and Revision
16. Sharing Home Studies Between Counties

(1) Mental Health Services

<p>RECOMMENDATION</p> <p>(include what duty it relates to from 26-6-504)</p>	<p>Provide mental health screenings, evaluations and services for all children who are the subject of a substantiated case of child abuse and neglect. Offer to and provide mental health services to biological parents, resource parents, caregivers, siblings and other children and youth involved in the child welfare system. Mental health services should be accessible, timely, consistent, culturally appropriate, geographically/ community based, and promote evidence-based practices.</p> <p>Addresses: (a), (c), (d), and (f)</p>
<p>PURPOSE</p>	<p><u>Why is this important?</u></p> <p>Behavior problems are a major reason children move.</p> <p>Address mental health and behavior problems to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Reduce moves and find children permanent homes 2. Improve permanency for all children, including youth 14-23 years in age, who are in foster homes or in residential placements 3. Improve family outcomes by providing services to biological parents 4. Retain more foster parents
<p>THE MEASURABLE RESULTS WE ARE TRYING TO ACHIEVE</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Reduction in moves for children receiving mental health services 2. Improve retention of foster parents <p>Improved outcomes for children: better performance in school and reduction in behavioral issues</p>
<p>EXPECTED OUTCOME</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Reduce moves and improve permanency 2. Improve performance and quality of life for children in need of mental health services 3. Improve family outcomes by providing services to biological parents
<p>INFORMATION USED TO REACH THIS RECOMMENDATION</p>	<p>National Survey of Child and Adolescent Well-Being:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One-half of children who are abused or neglected have mental health problems and need mental health services. • Of the children who had mental health problems, three-fourths (3/4) did not receive any mental health services. • Public testimony to the Task Force from foster children, foster parents, kinship parents, adoptive parents and

	<p>caseworkers as to access competency and maintaining services</p> <p>Kempe Center presentation</p> <p>Public testimony to the Task Force</p>
WHAT INFORMATION DO WE STILL NEED	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Increase in number of children requiring mental health screenings, evaluations and services 2. Number of biological and resource parent requiring mental health screening, evaluations and services 3. Costs and potential cost savings as a result of providing the above. 4. Sources of funding 5. Evaluate EPSDT (Early Periodic Screening, Diagnosis and Treatment) program as a funding source for mental health services 6. Additional information on evidence-based treatments
LEGISLATIVE/RULE	Legislation
COST	\$
OTHER IMPACTS THIS RECOMMENDATION MAY CAUSE	Improve future productivity for children and reduce risk of involvement in other social issues.
CHALLENGE	Resources

(2) Educational Success for Foster Children

<p>RECOMMENDATION (include what duty it relates to from 26-6-504)</p>	<p>Require public schools to assist in the educational success of foster children.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Accepting transfer of credits 2. Allowing foster children to remain in their home schools if it is in the child's best interest. <p>Addresses: (f)</p>
<p>PURPOSE</p>	<p><u>Why is this important?</u> Children and youth in foster care often fall behind in their education due to moves that require a transfer of schools. Schools often do not accept transferring credits, which requires students to take extra courses, creates frustration, and adds to the stress of out-of-home placement. Nationally, approximately 58% of foster youth who age out have a high school diploma at age 19, compared to 87% of non-foster youth.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Children and youth in foster care are entitled to the same educational experiences and opportunities as children who remain in their family homes. 2. Youth who are in foster care and are supported through high school are able to start their independent life on firm footing.
<p>THE MEASURABLE RESULTS WE ARE TRYING TO ACHIEVE</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Every child who is in foster care graduates high school. 2. Every child in placement maintains his academic placement. 3. All school districts accept academic credits from another school.
<p>EXPECTED OUTCOME</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Graduation from high school. 2. Graduation from high school may lead to post secondary education, ensuring sustainable income. 3. Creates a stronger educated workforce for Colorado.
<p>INFORMATION USED TO REACH THIS RECOMMENDATION</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Bridging the Gap focus group ranked this as one of the most important issues to be corrected. 2. Model California legislation. 3. "Kids are Waiting: Fix Foster Care Now," The Pew Charitable Trusts, 2007. 4. A Voice of Their Own – Nov 2007
<p>WHAT INFORMATION DO WE STILL NEED</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Can Colorado access the McKinney Vento Act to define children in foster care in order to access the same requirements as homeless children? 2. Should Colorado's definition of "homeless" included youth in out-of-home placement?

THE STRATEGIES & ACTIVITIES NEEDED	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Legislation to address the issues listed above. 2. All professionals involved in the child's life should encourage and work towards graduation as a goal for the student. 3. Education credits need to be transferred and accepted by new school in a timely manner. 4. Caseworkers follow a child from one school to another to ensure a smooth transition. 5. Transportation is available for a student who wants to remain in the home school. 6. All efforts should be made to keep a child who is in foster care in their home school when it is in the best interest of the child and family. 7. Reduce current time frames for transfer and immediate enrollment with a maximum of 3 days out of school.
LEGISLATIVE/RULE	Legislation
COST	None
OTHER IMPACTS THIS RECOMMENDATION MAY CAUSE	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Requires school districts to accept credits from other schools. 2. Requires cooperation between school districts.
CHALLENGE	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Requesting that school districts work together for the best interest of the student. 2. Reduction of current time frames for transfer and immediate enrollment with a maximum of 3 days out of school.
OTHER IMPORTANT INFORMATION . . .	Congruent education planning is important for all foster youth.

(3) Consistency of Caregiver Training – PRIDE

<p>RECOMMENDATION</p> <p>(include what duty it relates to from 26-6-504)</p>	<p>All pre-foster and pre-adoptive and pre-foster-adopt as well as pre-certified and uncertified kinship families in Colorado should be trained using the PRIDE precertification method of training. (This training is not appropriate for Private Infant Newborn Adoptions or for International Adoptions.)</p> <p>This should begin as a pilot project with four or five of the largest metro counties and be carefully and slowly implemented throughout the state.</p> <p>Addresses: (a), (b), (c) and (f)</p>
<p>PURPOSE</p>	<p>Why is this important?</p> <p>With no standardized training in Colorado, the 64 counties all have differing training capacity and requirement. There are many issues with this situation including inadequately trained resource parents, lack of ability for the state to monitor/regulate training programs, and a high probability of moves for foster children.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To ensure consistency of training in the state. 2. To ensure that resource parent have adequate knowledge, forewarning and tools to meet the needs of children in out-of-home placement before they commit to caring for such children. 3. Less moves for foster and adopted children – less return to the system. (Addresses CFSR concerns about moves of children) 4. Foster parents without adequate personal resources will “opt out” of the foster care process before it is begun.
<p>EXPECTED OUTCOME</p>	<p>With 100% of foster, adoptive and kinship families well trained, there should be less movement between foster homes for children in the system and fewer failed adoptions.</p>
<p>INFORMATION USED TO REACH THIS RECOMMENDATION</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Anecdotal quotes from consumers and teachers of this training (mostly NCAC) in the US and Canada 2. PRIDE Information from Child Welfare League of America 3. Two state employees attended the national PRIDE workshop in Washington, D.C. (Feb. 2008)
<p>WHAT INFORMATION DO WE STILL NEED</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. How can this be funded? 2. Which licensing entities will have “buy in” to the process? (It is reported that two agencies currently use this training in Colorado)
<p>THE STRATEGIES & ACTIVITIES NEEDED</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Standardize training curriculum in all counties and child placement agencies. 2. The training agency should provide childcare for precertification attendees.

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Counties, CPAs and state: Where could funding be found to train incoming resource parent now, with grandfathering in of current resource parents in the future? 4. Develop and implement a pilot project in some of the larger metro counties. 5. Ensure understanding of the training by mandating that the foster parents are tested on what they have learned. 6. Modify Rule in Volume VII to allow for the pilot project.
LEGISLATIVE/RULE	Legislation
COST	\$
OTHER IMPACTS THIS RECOMMENDATION MAY CAUSE	Better retention of better-trained resource parents who opted in to the system despite being aware of the challenging path ahead for them. In other words, more dedicated resource parents.
CHALLENGE	Funding and buy-in from counties, state and CPAs.

(4) Reduce Relinquishment Revocation Time

<p>RECOMMENDATION</p> <p>(include what duty it relates to from 26-6-504)</p>	<p>Reduce the time for all revocation of relinquishment of parental rights to 21 days, consistent with the time for appeals of termination of parental rights set by Court of Appeal Rule 3.4 (b).</p> <p>Addresses: (a) and (f)</p>
<p>PURPOSE</p>	<p>Why is this important?</p> <p>Children whose parents have relinquished parental rights often wait for permanency an additional 69 days compared to children whose parental rights have been terminated.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. This revision may reduce the time nearly all foster children whose parents relinquish parental rights spend in foster care. 2. This revision may reduce the mandatory time between relinquishment and adoption in stepparent and child placement agency adoptions.
<p>THE MEASURABLE RESULTS WE ARE TRYING TO ACHIEVE</p>	<p>This revision would reduce the time foster children whose parents relinquish parental rights spend in foster care by nearly 69 days and shorten the time other relinquished children must spend in legal limbo prior to adoption.</p>
<p>EXPECTED OUTCOME</p>	<p>If there were no action seeking revocation of a relinquishment, foster children might be adopted 69 days earlier than presently, the same as for foster children for whom parental rights are terminated.</p>
<p>INFORMATION USED TO REACH THIS RECOMMENDATION</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. According to State Judicial, 2199 relinquishment cases were filed in fiscal year 2007, 7% of the total cases filed in Colorado courts. 2. In at least one dependency and neglect case in which time was important, a parent could not be offered relinquishment due to the discrepancy in relinquishment revocation and termination of parental rights appeal times. Instead, her parental rights were terminated. 3. § 19-5-103.5, C.R.S., permits relinquishment of children under one year without a hearing upon the affidavit of a parent seeking to relinquish and notice of other possible birth parents. Other possible birth parents have 20 days to answer, appear, and, for an alleged father, claim paternity. Proof of notice to possible parents must be filed before the relinquishment petition can be acted upon by the court. §19-5-103.5(2)(b), C.R.S. Thus this 20 days would always have run prior to the expiration of the recommended 21 day relinquishment revocation period. If all the requirements of

	<p>this section are met, the court may vacate the relinquishment hearing. Several courts will not utilize expedited relinquishments.</p> <p>4. In response to feedback regarding this proposal, it was revised to make seeking revocation a two-step process: In 21 days, a petition for revocation must be filed alleging facts constituting fraud or duress. The court will review the petition to make certain some facts constituting fraud or duress are alleged. If not, the court can dismiss the petition. If so, a hearing will be set at which the relinquishing parent shall prove by clear and convincing evidence that the relinquishment was obtained by fraud or duress. Presently, fraud or duress must be established within 90 days. Thus under this recommendation, in the few cases in which there is an issue regarding a relinquishment, the parent actually is likely to have more than the 90 days currently available to prove his or her case. However, in the vast majority of cases, the child would be legally free for adoption on the 22nd day following a relinquishment.</p>
<p>WHAT INFORMATION DO WE STILL NEED</p>	
<p>THE STRATEGIES & ACTIVITIES NEEDED</p>	<p>See Recommendation.</p>
<p>LEGISLATIVE/RULE</p>	<p>Legislative</p>
<p>COST</p>	<p>None</p>
<p>OTHER IMPACTS THIS RECOMMENDATON MAY CAUSE</p>	
<p>CHALLENGE</p>	<p>Due process may be raised but is not a significant concern since a 15-day appeal period for appealing termination of parental rights was held constitutional in Iowa. <i>In re C.M.</i>, 652 N.W.2d 204 (Iowa 2002); <i>In re C.B.</i>, 611 N.W.2d 489 (Iowa 2000). A 21-day appeal period for termination of parental right was held constitutional in Colorado. <i>People in the Interest of T.D.</i>, 140 P.3d 205 (Colo. App. 2006); <i>People in the Interest of N.A.T.</i>, 134 P.3d 535 (Colo. App. 2006).</p>

(5) CDHS Enforcement of Rules

<p>RECOMMENDATION</p> <p>(include what duty it relates to from 26-6-504)</p>	<p><i>This two-part recommendation serves to promote compliance with existing rules. Parts 1 and 2 of this recommendation are integrally connected, and the Task Force recommends simultaneous pursuit of both parts to serve the purpose of the recommendation and promote the outcomes and results contemplated by this recommendation.</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Support the Colorado Department of Human Services in strengthening its existing enforcement mechanisms for oversight of counties' compliance with the rules promulgated by the State Board of Human Services (Volume 7 and other related rules). b. Recommend workload study for county caseworkers and state agencies and propose workload limits that reasonably and realistically support caseworker compliance with CDHS rules and CDHS ability to enforce rules. <p>Addresses: (a), (b), (c), (d), (e), (f) and (g)</p>
<p>PURPOSE</p>	<p><u>Why is this important?</u></p> <p>CDHS cannot adequately enforce county compliance with rules promulgated by the State Board of Human Services. Thus, there is a lack of consistency throughout the state in regards to county policy and practice of foster care and child welfare. State and county workers also sight an unreasonable workload for lack of compliance with rules.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Establish consistency throughout state in the provision of foster care and child welfare services for children, youth, and families. Promote clarity of department's expectations of counties among all stakeholders in child welfare proceedings. Given the regulatory scheme in Volume 7, many of the statutory goals of the Task Force would be furthered by this recommendation: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Reduce number of moves (a) b. Motivations of foster parents (b) c. Retention of foster parents (c) d. Provision of appropriate information to foster parents (d) e. Adoptive parent subsidy issues (e) f. Rate of permanency for youth ages 14-24 (f) g. Resolution of conflicts between stakeholders in dependency and neglect cases (g) 2. The following concerns that have been identified by members of the Task Force would be addressed in part by this recommendation: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Consistent training of Resource Parents b. Provision of information about available support, services, and options for kinship providers c. Diligent search for kinship providers

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> d. Notification procedures to other counties when a county determines that it is no longer safe to place children in a licensed resource home e. Provision of information to resource parents regarding <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Resource parents' and counties' roles and responsibilities ii. Child's history, general behavior, treatment plans, and placement circumstances iii. How to receive services and reach county or agency personnel on a 24 hours-per-day, 7 days-per-week basis iv. Available permanency options and services for kinship care f. Open and timely communication between agency and resource parent.
<p>THE MEASURABLE RESULTS WE ARE TRYING TO ACHIEVE</p>	<p>Rules established by the State Board of Human Services are followed and enforced consistently on a statewide basis. Possible measures are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Audits of CDHS and counties 2. Child and Family Service Review 3. Child fatality reviews 4. Monitoring reports by departmental level monitoring staff (see strategy of supporting CDHS's efforts to get funding for 7-8 new FTE) 5. Reports on number, subject, and findings of phone calls made to CDHS child welfare consumer advocate
<p>EXPECTED OUTCOME</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Increased safety, permanency, and well-being for children in foster care. 2. Compliance with CDHS rules will be consistent across the state. 3. All caregivers (foster parents, adoptive parents, kinship providers, and biological parents) will receive all of the supportive services set forth by regulation as important to maximize their ability to provide a permanent, safe, and appropriate home for children and youth.
<p>INFORMATION USED TO REACH THIS RECOMMENDATION</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Many times during the Task Force's meetings and subcommittee meetings, an issue or problem has been identified by a Task Force member (e.g. training requirements for resource parents, support for kinship providers) that, upon further research, is addressed in CDHS rules. CDHS reports to the Task Force that the level of oversight and sanction capacity is limited due to the lack of a progressive disciplinary sanction policy 2. Some of the 2007 Performance Review Audit recommendations also appear related to this goal. 3. The presentation by county caseworkers on 2/12 and the January subcommittee meeting highlighted the link between caseload size and inability to comply with all CDHS regulations; caseworkers at the 2/12 presentation recommended a caseload of 10 (recommendations varied from 10 as an average to 10 as a maximum).

	4. Other states' models/mechanisms for enforcement of CDHS rules (e.g. Rule 337 in IL).
WHAT INFORMATION DO WE STILL NEED	.
THE STRATEGIES & ACTIVITIES NEEDED	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Creation of administrative rules, review, and graduated level of sanctions and interventions (including but not limited to programmatic and financial sanctions and interventions), depending on level of willfulness underlying lack of compliance with CDHS rules. 2. Establish/implement accessible and user-friendly procedures for enforcement of existing rules. 3. Notification of procedures to stakeholders (e.g. youth, foster parents, kinship providers, adoptive parents, bio parents) of CDHS obligations and available enforcement/review procedures, including contact information for CDHS's child welfare consumer advocate. 4. Support CDHS's efforts to seek state funding for creation of 7 to 8 FTEs to monitor county activities in foster care and recommend funding additional FTEs to monitor and provide consulting for counties' overall child welfare services. 5. Recommend that CDHS's monitoring reports be made available on line, as are CPAs. 6. Workload study of both state and county caseworkers.
LEGISLATIVE/RULE	Rule
COST	\$
OTHER IMPACTS THIS RECOMMENDATION MAY CAUSE	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Increased clarity of CDHS procedures for all stakeholders 2. Improved consistency throughout the state
CHALLENGE	County/state relationship that currently restricts CDHS's ability to direct counties to improve practices and resolve issues in specific cases and overall concerns in withholding funding for noncompliance, as such withholding of funds may result in counties' decreased ability to serve children and families in their care.

(6) All Counties Will Provide Foster Care

<p>RECOMMENDATION</p> <p>(include what duty it relates to from 26-6-504)</p>	<p>All counties departments of human/social services need to create strategies and plans for the provision of foster care homes for children who reside in their counties who are in need of out-of-home placement.</p> <p>Addresses: (a) and (f)</p>
<p>PURPOSE</p>	<p><u>Why is this important?</u></p> <p>To ensure there are adequate and appropriate foster homes available to meet the individualized needs of the children being placed.</p>
<p>THE MEASURABLE RESULTS WE ARE TRYING TO ACHIEVE</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Adequate and appropriate foster homes available to all counties 2. Increased ability to comply with a child's right to a "goodness of fit" 3. Increased ability for visitation with their family of origin 4. Increased ability to enable a child to return or maintain their connections with their community and culture if appropriate and in the child's best interest 5. Reduction in number of placement moves
<p>EXPECTED OUTCOME</p>	<p>See Measurable Results.</p>
<p>INFORMATION USED TO REACH THIS RECOMMENDATION</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Testimony by the public and discussions with Task Force members describing the absence of foster care homes in some of the counties 2. Testimony describing the absence of "good" homes so a "goodness of fit" placement could be made for each child. 3. Public policy statements regarding children's needs for safety, well-being and permanence.
<p>WHAT INFORMATION DO WE STILL NEED</p>	<p>An assessment of the status of each county's resources.</p>
<p>THE STRATEGIES & ACTIVITIES NEEDED</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The public child welfare system will design services throughout the state to meet the out-of-home placement needs of children. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Each county will design or provide for local foster care services for children in need of safety, well-being and permanence. b. The county will submit to CDHS an annual review of their foster care program. c. The TRAILS data will provide an overview to CDHS to monitor the success of development of local resources and compliance with placement policies regarding close proximity and reduction in number of moves while children are in placement.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> d. County departments can “cluster” their foster care resources and present a joint annual plan for their geographic area of the state. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Rule change required by the Human Services Board for the provisions of a county-based annual foster care program review. 3. Submission by counties of an annual report including the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Children Information <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Number and location of placements by type ii. Age of children who have been placed in the past year iii. Number of child placements within the county iv. Number of children placed outside of the county and what type of facility was used as a resource for those children b. Number of resource families recruited c. Number of resource families certified d. The total costs of out-of-home placements for kinship care placements, foster care homes, CPAs, and resident facilities. e. Other relevant facts and stats as determined by CDHS 4. See Recommendation10 and its strategies
LEGISLATIVE/RULE	None
COST	None
OTHER IMPACTS THIS RECOMMENDATON MAY CAUSE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Increase the focus on community based services 2. Increase collaboration between counties
CHALLENGE	Obtaining county compliance and support.

(7) Make Resource Parents Full Team Members

<p>RECOMMENDATION</p> <p>(include what duty it relates to from 26-6-504)</p>	<p>Make resource parents full team members in the planning and implementing of a foster child’s permanency plan.</p> <p>Resource parents are defined as foster parents, foster-adopt parents, prospective adoptive parents, and certified kinship parents.</p> <p>Addresses: (a), (b), (c), (d), (f), and (g)</p>
<p>PURPOSE</p>	<p><u>Why is this important?</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Validates the unique role, responsibility and knowledge of a resource parent in the process of creating a permanency plan for children. 2. Engages resource parents in the team decisions affecting the permanency of children in their care. 3. Addresses the significant concern of resource parents that their voice is not heard/considered as an important tool in decision making. 4. Increases recruitment of resource families <p><u>Addresses the following stipulations from Section 26-6-504 of SB 07-64:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Reduces number of moves for children (a) 2. Reinforces child-centered motivation for becoming a resource parent (b) 3. Increases retention of resource families (c) 4. Maximize collaboration and provision of relevant information for the benefit of the child (a, b, c, d, and f) 5. Increases permanency for children (f)
<p>THE MEASURABLE RESULTS WE ARE TRYING TO ACHIEVE</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Reduce number of moves for children that are inconsistent with the permanency plan to meet the CFSR national standard. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CFSR Item #6 – <i>Stability of Foster Care Placement: 95% of children will have less than 2 moves in a 12-month period.</i> 2. 80% of QTMs will be attended by critical and expected attendees. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CFSR Item #17 – <i>Needs & Services of child, parents and foster parents: Needs and services of children, parents and/or foster parents are adequately addressed.</i> • CFSR Item #29 – <i>Provides a process for foster parents, pre-adoptive parents, and relative caregivers of children in foster care to be notified of, and have an opportunity to be heard in any review or hearing held with respect to the child.</i> • CFSR Item #35 – <i>The state has in place an array of services that assess the strengths and needs of</i>

	<p><i>children and families and determine other service needs, address the needs of families in addition to individual children in order to create a safe home environment, enable children to remain safely with their parents when reasonable, and help children in foster and adoptive placement achieve permanency.</i></p> <p>3. Permanency plans and key decisions will be developed and monitored at QTMs 95% of the time.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CFSR Item #7: <i>Permanency goal for child: Appropriate permanency goals are established for children in a timely manner.</i> • CFSR Item #17: <i>Needs & Services of child, parents and foster parents: Needs and services of children, parents and/or foster parents are adequately addressed.</i> • CFSR Item #30: <i>The State has developed and implemented standards to ensure that children in foster care are provided quality services that protect the safety and health of the children.</i> <p>4. 90% of new child welfare cases will have the first QTM scheduled within 6 weeks of initial placement.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CFSR Item #7: <i>Permanency goal for child: Appropriate permanency goals are established for children in a timely manner.</i> <p>5. Recruitment and Retention of resource parents will increase</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Legislative Audit Item #2 – <i>Work with county departments of human/social services to evaluate and improve foster parent recruitment and retention.</i>
<p>EXPECTED OUTCOME</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Resource families will feel that their perspectives on the well-being of the child have been heard and considered throughout the process which will encourage retention of resource parents. 2. Resource parents will be better prepared to help the children in their care to achieve safety, permanency and well-being. 3. Retention of resource parents will increase due to satisfaction with their level of involvement in the system. 4. The child's treatment plan will be based on increased relevant information regarding the child's needs. 5. Children will move to permanency more quickly due to increased involvement and information for decision making. 6. With resource parents and biological family "at the table" – this will break down the wall of suspicion between the two parties, thus increasing the potential for (1) positive outcomes for the biological family and (2) the child moving more quickly to health and permanency. 7. Word-of-mouth is important to resource parent recruitment and retention. This recommendation will help the "system" improve in practice, which will assist in improved reputation, thus leading to better recruitment and retention.

<p>INFORMATION USED TO REACH THIS RECOMMENDATION</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. CFSR Onsite Review Instrument 2. "Retaining Foster Parents," Janet Rehnquist, Inspector General, May 2002. Dept. of Health and Human Services. (report purpose: To identify challenges in retaining foster parents) 3. National and Local surveys 4. Presentations to Subcommittee and full Task Force 5. Anecdotal resource parent information
<p>WHAT INFORMATION DO WE STILL NEED?</p>	
<p>THE STRATEGIES & ACTIVITIES NEEDED</p>	<p>A. QUARTERLY TEAM MEETINGS (QTM): Institute regular meetings (minimum of quarterly) to discuss the child's case progress toward permanency including any transition plans. All parties' information about the child's well being, their concerns and recommendations are to be considered in the planning and implementing of the child's permanency plan.</p> <p>Some counties currently employ similar methods often referred to as TDMs or FGDMs (Team Decision Making or Family Group Decision Making, respectively). This recommendation is similar in format, but with the following state-wide standardization goals: requiring all counties to institute QTMs, maximizing participation by resource parents and instituting standardized time frames for such meetings. This would replace or be integrated into counties that already employ QTM-type procedures.</p> <p>Family Services Plan (FSP): QTMs do not replace existing rules regarding the resource parents' responsibility to participate in the development of the FSP specific to the child's needs.</p> <p>We recommend CDHS promulgate rules regarding QTMs, and offer the following guidelines for their consideration:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Critical and expected attendees: child/ youth (as developmentally appropriate); Guardian Ad Litem (GAL); biological parent and counsel; resource parents (and counsel, if represented); relatives; county/CPA caseworker or supervisor; county resource caseworker; county attorneys (if possible and practicable); therapists 2. Additional attendees (strongly encouraged to attend or provide input via a form): educators; family members as appropriate; mentors; other important people in youth's life 3. Notice: Timely and consistent notice provided to all parties including the following: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. First meeting to occur within 6 weeks of initial placement b. The best time to set date/time for first meeting may be at initial court hearing c. All participants should receive timely notice in writing of the when and where first QTM will be

held, no later than 30 calendar days prior to meeting

- d. On the agenda for the QTM should be designating when and where the next one will occur (thus giving participants approx. 90 calendar days notice)
- e. All expected and additional attendees should receive written notice of upcoming QTMs immediately

4. Methods to maximize participation:

- a. Designate one weekday for these meetings so that professionals know to keep their court calendars clear on that day
- b. Developing relevant, easy to use form for interested parties to fill out updated information on a specific child/youth if they cannot attend meeting
- c. Create a report of the meeting that is available to all parties who attended or could not attend
- d. This meeting may be combined with other regularly scheduled meetings such as Team Decision Making (TDM), Administrative Review Division (ARD), Staffings, etc.
- e. Provide childcare for resource family and biological family during QTMs.
- f. Although diligent efforts to notify and accommodate all team members must be made, QTMs should not be cancelled due to one or two attendees not being able to be present. The meeting should continue as planned which will increase the importance of making the QTM's a priority in attendee's schedules.

B. TRAINING – To Enhance Resource Parent Team Participation

1. RESOURCE PARENT: Include in required training for resource parents:

- a. How to support the progress of a case
- b. How to approach biological parents with compassion
- c. How to share relevant information with team members and at court hearings
- d. Provide childcare for resource family children during training

2. AGENCY TRAINING: Review Caseworker and Supervisor Training Curriculum to determine if there are any gaps in agency worker training that need to be addressed to enhance teamwork.

C. INFORMATION: Provide resource parents with information relevant to the daily care of children in their care and the child's permanency plan.

D. RESOURCE FAMILY HOME SAFETY: Consultation with the resource parents regarding the benefits and risks of releasing

their family's surname and/or address to the foster child's biological family. To assure home safety, we recommend *amending all certifying agencies' resource parent contract/agreements to have (1) a detailed, written advisement of the benefits and risks of releasing such information to the biological family and (2) the following statements:*

I have been advised regarding the potential benefits and risks of releasing my family's surname and/or address to a foster child's biological family. Check all boxes that apply:

- I elect to leave the release of my surname and/or address to any foster child's biological family to the discretion of the certifying agency.
 - I request immediate written notification when such information has been released.
 - I do NOT request written notification when such information has been released.

- I elect NOT to release my surname and/or address to any foster child's biological family in my care without acquisition of written permission from me prior to the release of such information.

- I elect to make the decision regarding releasing my surname and/or address to any foster child's biological family in my care on a case-by-case basis in consultation with the child's caseworker.

Signature _____ Date _____

E. **RESOURCE PARENT EXIT INTERVIEW:** CDHS will survey exiting resource parents (an ongoing project) to determine why resource parents leave. CDHS will produce an annual report of its findings/conclusions.

LEGISLATIVE/RULE	Rule
COST	\$
OTHER IMPACTS THIS RECOMMENDATION MAY CAUSE	
CHALLENGES	1. Educating child welfare professionals and resource parents

regarding the role of resources parents in the planning of child permanency.

2. Scheduling and conducting QTMs for *all* of Colorado's children in out-of-home placement might prove to be challenging.
3. Developing realistic expectations for all QTM members regarding voicing their ideas/concerns vs. having the "final say" in a case outcome.
4. Implementing childcare for trainings and QTMs.

(8) Increase Resource Parent Reimbursement

<p>RECOMMENDATION</p> <p>(include what duty it relates to from 26-6-504)</p>	<p>Colorado will increase resource parent s' financial reimbursement to the most current Foster Care MARC recommendation and will maintain its foster care reimbursement rates to remain consistent over time with the most current national standard for reimbursement.</p> <p>Addresses: (a), (c), and (f)</p>																																							
<p>PURPOSE</p>	<p><u>Why is this important?</u> According to the M.A.R.C. Technical Report (Oct 2007), Colorado's current base rates fall short of the actual costs of providing care.</p> <p><u>Addresses the following stipulations from Section 26-6-504 of SB 07-64:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. By properly reimbursing resource parents, the State of Colorado will more successfully recruit and retain high quality families. (a) (c) 2. By retaining high quality resource families for a longer period of time, children will experience fewer moves. (f) 																																							
<p>THE MEASURABLE RESULTS WE ARE TRYING TO ACHIEVE</p>	<p>The chart below details Colorado's base rates compared to the M.A.R.C. Technical Report.</p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse; text-align: center;"> <thead> <tr> <th rowspan="2"></th> <th colspan="3">Age of Child – CO rate</th> <th colspan="3">Age of child – MARC rate</th> <th colspan="3">Rate increase %</th> </tr> <tr> <th>2</th> <th>9</th> <th>16</th> <th>2</th> <th>9</th> <th>16</th> <th>2</th> <th>9</th> <th>16</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>MARC Report 2007</td> <td>\$348</td> <td>\$392</td> <td>\$423</td> <td>\$659</td> <td>\$755</td> <td>\$828</td> <td>89%</td> <td>93%</td> <td>96%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>As of 7/1/07 CDHS budget</td> <td>\$354</td> <td>\$398</td> <td>\$426</td> <td>\$659</td> <td>\$755</td> <td>\$828</td> <td>86%</td> <td>90%</td> <td>94%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Colorado will reach the most current MARC standard by SFY 09/10. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CFSR Item #41 – <i>The state has implemented standards for foster family homes and childcare institutions which are reasonably in accord with recommended national standards.</i> 2. The number of resource families who leave the system due to inadequate reimbursement will decrease. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CFSR Item #17 – <i>The needs and services of children, parents, and/or foster parents are adequately addressed.</i> • Legislative Audit Item #2 – <i>Work with county departments of human/social services to evaluate and improve foster parent recruitment and retention</i> 3. The moves of children that are not a part of the permanency plan will be reduce. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CFSR Item # 6 – <i>95% of children will have less than 2</i> 		Age of Child – CO rate			Age of child – MARC rate			Rate increase %			2	9	16	2	9	16	2	9	16	MARC Report 2007	\$348	\$392	\$423	\$659	\$755	\$828	89%	93%	96%	As of 7/1/07 CDHS budget	\$354	\$398	\$426	\$659	\$755	\$828	86%	90%	94%
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	<p><i>moves in a 12-month period.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CFSR Item #12 – <i>Siblings will be placed together or there is a justifiable reason for separation.</i>
<p>EXPECTED OUTCOME</p>	<p>Resource families will be better able to provide for the children in their care.</p> <p>More resource families will be recruited and retained by the system which will improve stability for children in out-of-home care.</p>
<p>INFORMATION USED TO REACH THIS RECOMMENDATION</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. “Hitting the M.A.R.C. – Establishing Foster Care Minimum Adequate Rates for Children,” Technical Report, National Foster Parent Association, University of Maryland School of Social Work, October 2007. http://www.nfpainc.org/uploads/MARCTechReport.pdf 2. <u>MARC report fact</u>: Colorado is one of nine states that must raise its rates by 76% to 100% to meet the Foster Care MARC base rate. 3. “Foster Care Services Department of Human Services Performance Audit,” May 2007, Report of the State Auditor. 4. The Child and Family Services Review outcome measures were reviewed and incorporated into this Recommendation. 5. Relevant presentations to the Task Force, eg. testimony from resource parents on expenses incurred vs. reimbursement for caring for children. 6. Anecdotal evidence from resource parents and caseworkers.
<p>WHAT INFORMATION DO WE STILL NEED</p>	
<p>THE STRATEGIES & ACTIVITIES NEEDED</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Increase Resource Family base rate reimbursement to meet the Foster Care MARC recommendations. 2. The Foster Care MARC does not include travel and child care expenses. Foster parents should be reimbursed for their actual expenses for these activities, <i>in addition to the Foster Care MARC.</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CDHS to promulgate rules and forms to accomplish this. 3. Agencies should continue to provide reimbursement negotiated above the base anchor rate to provide for children’s individualized special needs that result in higher costs to provide supervision and care in order to support the child’s needs and progress, including transportation for therapeutic appointments. <p>KINSHIP PARENTS:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Certified Kinship foster parents should be offered the same reimbursement as any resource parents regardless of the child’s Title IV-E eligibility.

	<p>2. Non-certified Kinship parents should be offered the following options:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Counties are encouraged to use TANF dollars to support non-certified Kinship parents, as appropriate, in addition to the “child-only” Basic Cash Assistance amount of \$99 per month so that the child can remain placed with kin. b. All counties need to incorporate into their county plan the Grandparent Guardianship rules outlined in Staff Manual Section 3.600.19: Grandparent Guardianship [Rev. eff. 1/1/05] (**see rule below) <p>3. Efforts to advise and certify kin eligible for certification should be maximized and enforced by the State.</p>
LEGISLATIVE/RULE	Legislation/Rule
COST	\$
OTHER IMPACTS THIS RECOMMENDATION MAY CAUSE	Resource parents who have left the system due to inadequate reimbursement may consider becoming licensed again. There will be a potential increase in adoption subsidy rates.
CHALLENGE	State and County budgets will be required to increase significantly. Educating legislators, administrators, caseworkers, as well as the general public regarding adequate reimbursement to resource families.

****3.600.19: Grandparent Guardianship [Rev. eff. 1/1/05]**

Subject to available appropriation, county departments may choose to provide a basic cash assistance grant to a grandchild who was in foster care and who exited foster care into the legal custody or legal guardianship of a grandparent. The county department has the option to determine eligibility for this population based on either of the following and must specify in the county plan if option "B" is used:

- A. The Colorado Works “need standard” at Section 3.614.2; or,
- B. The “need standard” equal to the average foster care home maintenance payment. This need standard shall be established annually by CDHS, based on the prior year’s statewide average foster care home maintenance payment.

(9) Improve Resource Parent Training and Support

<p>RECOMMENDATION</p> <p>(include what duty it relates to from 26-6-504)</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. The Colorado Department of Human Services, county departments of human/social services and Child Placement Agencies will improve the quality of training and increase the frequency of support available for resource parents. b. Certified and non-certified kinship parents should be offered the same training and support as all resource parents in addition to specialized training for kin. <p>Addresses: (a), (b), (c), (d), (f) and (g).</p>
<p>PURPOSE</p>	<p><u>Why is this important?</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Resource parents are often not prepared for the issues foster children bring home. Resource parents are often “on their own” to navigate the systems of care needed to take care of the children in their home. 2. Kinship parents can be especially isolated from supports and training which impedes their ability to care for the children in their home. <p><u>Addresses the following stipulations from Section 26-6-504 of SB 07-64:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Improved training and support will provide resource parents the tools, knowledge and skills needed to provide permanency, safety and well-being to children in out-of-home placement (a), (b), (d), (f) 2. Increase retention of resource parents (c), (g)
<p>THE MEASURABLE RESULTS WE ARE TRYING TO ACHIEVE</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The number of resource families who leave the system will decrease. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Legislative Audit Item #2 – <i>Work with county departments of human/social services to evaluate and improve foster parent recruitment and retention</i> 2. The number of moves of children will be reduced. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CFSR Item #6 – <i>Stability of Foster Care Placement: 95% of children will have less than 2 moves in a 12-month period.</i> • CFSR Item #17 – <i>Needs & Services of child, parents and foster parents: Needs and services of children, parents and/or foster parents are adequately addressed.</i> 3. Improving training and support for resource families will help Colorado meet state and federal goals of safety, permanency and well-being of children as measured below by the CFSR: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CFSR Item #2 – <i>Children who experience abuse in out-of-home care will decrease.</i> • CFSR Item #16 – <i>Efforts to support parent-child relationship of children in foster care.</i> • CFSR Item #17 – <i>The needs and services of children,</i>

	<p>parents, and/or foster parents are adequately addressed.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CFSR Item #22 – Initial health assessments are done in a timely manner and children in foster care will have health needs identified and services provided • CFSR Item #23 – Children with identified mental health needs will have services provided • CFSR Item #29 – Provides a process for foster parents, pre-adoptive parents, and relative caregivers of children in foster care to be notified of, and have an opportunity to be heard in any review or hearing held with respect to the child • CFSR Item #30 – The State has developed and implemented standards to ensure that children in foster care are provided quality services that protect the safety and health of the children. • CFSR Item #34 – The State provides training for current or prospective foster parents, adoptive parents, and staff of State licensed or approved facilities that care for children receiving foster care or adoption assistance under title IV-E that addressed the skills and knowledge base needed to carry out their duties with regard to foster and adopted children. • CFSR Item #35 – The state has in place an array of services that assess the strengths and needs of children and families and determine other service needs, address the needs of families in addition to individual children in order to create a safe home environment, enable children to remain safely with their parents when reasonable, and help children in foster and adoptive placement achieve permanency. • CFSR Item #41 – The state has implemented standards for foster family homes and childcare institutions, which are reasonably in accord with recommended national standards
<p>EXPECTED OUTCOME</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. An increased number of resource families will be retained by the system. 2. Children will be better cared for when caregivers are better trained. 3. Resource Families will be able to develop an informal network of resource families for support, information dissemination and mentoring.
<p>INFORMATION USED TO REACH THIS RECOMMENDATION</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Child and Family Services Review outcome measures were reviewed and incorporated into this Recommendation. 2. Existing training rules, "PRIDE" Curriculum 3. "Foster Care Services Department of Human Services Performance Audit," May 2007, Report of the State Auditor. 4. The Child and Family Services Review outcome measures were reviewed and incorporated into this Recommendation. 5. Relevant presentations to the subcommittee and Task Force, especially those by kinship parents.

	6. Anecdotal evidence from resource parents and caseworkers.
WHAT INFORMATION DO WE STILL NEED	
THE STRATEGIES & ACTIVITIES NEEDED	<p><u>TRAINING:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ongoing relevant, practical training (e.g. strategies and “how to”) related to the child’s special needs should be readily accessible to resource parents. 2. Specialized training for special needs children prior to placement or within 2 weeks of placement if not available prior. 3. Childcare should be provided at all trainings attended by resource parents. <p><u>SUPPORT:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Regularly scheduled respite should be encouraged. 2. Consideration of a buddy/mentoring program between new resource parents and those who have been doing it for over 3 years. 3. CDHS to provide support group models to counties/child placement agencies for resource families to attend for support. The benefits of participating in such a group should be emphasized to resource parents. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Example Support Group Model:</i> T.A.L.K. Group (“Teaching and Loving Kids”) is a model where there are support groups for not only the parents, but the children in the home. This includes specific child support groups for biological children, foster children and adopted children to have a “place” where they can discuss their unique roles and challenges in the family in relation to being a resource family for foster children. 4. County collaboration among workers in the Intake, Ongoing and the Resource so that all staff value and work toward retention of quality resource families
LEGISLATIVE/RULE	Rule
COST	\$
OTHER IMPACTS THIS RECOMMENDATION MAY CAUSE	<p>Children will be better cared for. Resource parents will feel valued, more accurately report their child’s progress, and be willing to continue their commitment.</p> <p>Kinship placements will be better trained/supported and have greater stability for children.</p>
CHALLENGE	<p>State and County budgets will be required to increase significantly. Educating legislators, administrators, directors, supervisors, caseworkers, GALs, the courts, and the general public regarding this issue.</p>

(10) Recruit More Quality Resource Parents

<p>RECOMMENDATION (include what duty it relates to from 26-6-504)</p>	<p>Recruit an increased number of resource parents to meet needs of children in out-of-home placement.</p> <p>Addresses: (a), (b), (c), (f)</p>
<p>PURPOSE</p>	<p><u>Why is this important?</u> Colorado does not have enough resource parents to meet the needs of children needing out-of-home placement.</p> <p><u>Addresses the following stipulations from Section 26-6-504 of SB 07-64:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Colorado needs to recruit a wide range of resource parents to meet the permanency goals of children in its care: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Foster Parents – Those who desire to care for children in out-of-home placement whose current goal is reunification. (a), (b), (c), (f), (g) b. Foster/Adopt Parents – These resource parents are willing to participate in concurrent planning for the child – (1) reuniting the child with his birth parents or (2) adopting the child should parental rights be terminated. (a), (b), (f) c. Prospective Adoptive Parents – Those seeking to adopt children whose parental rights have been terminated/relinquished. (a), (b), (f) d. Kinship Parents – Those identified through diligent, comprehensive and timely search to provide for the needs of specific children. (a), (b), (f) 2. A wide variety and a large number of resource parents are necessary in order to address the following issues: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Ensure timely placements (a), (b) b. Allow for “good matches” between children and resource parents (a), (b), (c), (f) c. Address cultural, religious and educational concerns of children (a), (b), (f) d. Reduce the number of children in each resource home (a), (b), (c)
<p>THE MEASURABLE RESULTS WE ARE TRYING TO ACHIEVE</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Increase the number of resource parents to meet the needs of children needing out-of-home placement. 2. Recruit resource families in the communities of children in need of out-of-home placement. 3. Measure the impact of recruitment models on the quality of resource parents including targeted, child-specific and faith-based models. 4. All legally free children will have an identified adoptive family or other permanency plan at the time of termination or relinquishment.

	<p>The following outcome measures from The Child and Family Services Review (SFSR) are addressed by this Recommendation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CFSR Item #2 – <i>Children who experience abuse in out-of-home care will decrease</i> • CFSR Item #4 – <i>Safety plans will address the issues identified in the safety assessment</i> • CFSR Item #6 – <i>95% of children will have less than 2 moves in a 12-month period</i> • CFSR Item #8 – <i>Children reunited within 12 months of last placement</i> • CFSR Item #9 – <i>Children will experience finalized adoptions within 24 months of TPR</i> • CFSR Item #10 – <i>A limited percentage of cases will have OPPLA as a permanency goal</i> • CFSR Item #11 – <i>Proximity of foster homes to children’s foster placements</i> • CFSR Item #12 – <i>Siblings will be placed together or there is a justifiable reason for separation</i> • CFSR Item #13 – <i>Visitation plans address the permanency goal and are of sufficient frequency with each parent</i> • CFSR Item #14 – <i>Case records address maintaining familial and cultural connections</i> • CFSR Item #15 – <i>Diligent efforts to locate and assess relatives as potential placement resources</i> • CFSR Item #16 – <i>Efforts to support parent-child relationship of children in foster care</i> • CFSR Item #17 – <i>Needs and services of children, parents and/or foster parents are adequately addressed</i> • CFSR Item #44 – <i>The State has in place a process for ensuring the diligent recruitment of potential foster and adoptive families that reflect the ethnic and racial diversity of children in the State for whom foster and adoptive homes are needed.</i>
<p>EXPECTED OUTCOME</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. CDHS, Colorado counties and CPAs be able to more effectively recruit for the needs of children in out-of-home placement. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Legislative Audit Item #2 – <i>Work with county departments of human/social services to evaluate and improve foster parent recruitment and retention.</i> 2. By expanding proven recruitment models Colorado will have a sufficient amount of resource parents to meet the needs of children in out-of-home placement. 3. There will be better matches of children and resource parents. 4. The number of legally free children awaiting permanency will decrease. 5. Identification of retention strategies that are key for long-term foster parents?
<p>INFORMATION USED TO REACH THIS RECOMMENDATION</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Child and Family Services Review outcome measures were reviewed and incorporated into this Recommendation. 2. “KIDS ARE WAITING: Fix Foster Care Now,” The Pew Charitable Trusts, 2007. 3. Subcommittee presentations from CDHS staff and county staff

	<p>regarding the need to increase the number of quality resource families.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Subcommittee presentation by Kempe Center on “motivations” for foster parenting. 5. Subcommittee presentation from Lutheran Family Services regarding “targeted” recruitment. 6. Subcommittee presentation by Project 1.27 regarding “faith-based” recruitment. 7. Caseworker panel presentation to Task Force in Feb, 2008.
<p>WHAT INFORMATION DO WE STILL NEED</p>	
<p>THE STRATEGIES & ACTIVITIES NEEDED</p>	<p>A. INCREASE STATE AND COUNTY RECRUITMENT FUNDING for the following strategies:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. DIVERSITY of RESOURCE PARENTS: CDHS, county departments and CPAs need to develop and fund recruitment plans for the variety of “types” of resource families needed (see above PURPOSE, Items 1.a. – 1.d.) <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. These plans should differentiate between types of resource families so that both agency and resource parents have clear expectations on commitment. b. Annual reviews of resource parents should examine any changes in resource parent motivation, interest and skill level that will impact (1) child placement or (2) necessary recruiting efforts by agency. 2. EXPAND RECRUITMENT MODELS: We recommend that research-based, successful recruitment be given funding and support from CDHS and the Colorado counties including faith-based, child specific and targeted models. 3. REGIONAL RECRUITMENT COORDINATORS: We recommend that CDHS create a team of regional recruiters to assist counties in recruiting the wide variety of resource families required based on local community needs. Annual goals and results should be tracked and reported including, but not limited to, the following: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. recruitment success in the type(s) of resource parents needed based on community needs b. whether recruitment methods are impacting/improving retention rates c. continuing evaluation of types of resource parents needed in the community d. To develop a baseline of the number of resource parent recruited and certified to develop measurable results. 4. STATEWIDE MEDIA CAMPAIGN to recruit foster, foster-adopt and adoptive parents. This should include, but not be limited to the following: radio ads, TV ads (run during prime time) print media, billboard advertising. Ads should also be culturally and geographically competent.

	B. KINSHIP: We recommend that CDHS have better oversight of county departments to make sure they are informing all kinship parents that they have the opportunity to pursue certification as resource parents.
LEGISLATIVE/RULE	None
COST	\$
OTHER IMPACTS THIS RECOMMENDATION MAY CAUSE	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Public awareness of what the child welfare system actually “does” to meet the needs of Colorado’s children needing out-of-home placement. 2. Public awareness of the need for long term foster parents, foster-adopt parents <i>and</i> adoptive parents. 3. Public awareness of all the “waiting children” in Colorado.
CHALLENGE	The state should develop specific recruiting plans for the different “types” of resource parents it needs (see PURPOSE).

(11) Youth Emancipation Support

<p>RECOMMENDATION</p> <p>(include what duty it relates to from 26-6-504)</p>	<p>Youth will be adequately prepared for emancipation and appropriately supported during their transition to emancipation.</p> <p>Addresses: (f)</p>
<p>PURPOSE</p>	<p><u>Why is this important?</u></p> <p>Youth who emancipate are often ill prepared for successful living on their own.</p> <p>Improve permanence among individuals who are at least 14 years of age but younger than the age of 21 who are or have been in state-funded, out-of-home care.</p>
<p>THE MEASURABLE RESULTS WE ARE TRYING TO ACHIEVE</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Eligible youth will receive developmentally-appropriate emancipation services 2. Emancipating youth will be emotionally, physically, educationally, and financially ready to emancipate. 3. Youth will have a voice in decisions affecting their lives. 4. Youth will be satisfied with the emancipation services provided to them. 5. Youth will have documented permanent connections upon emancipation. 6. Youth will have easy access to obtaining their vital records when needed. 7. Emancipation services will be examined for effectiveness.
<p>EXPECTED OUTCOME</p>	<p>Improved adult well-being of former foster care youth.</p>
<p>INFORMATION USED TO REACH THIS RECOMMENDATION</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Midwest Evaluation of the Adult Functioning of Former Foster Youth published by Chapin Hall, Dec. 2007 2. "Kids Are Waiting: Fix Foster Care Now," The Pew Charitable Trusts, 2007. 3. Input from youth 4. Presentation to the SB 64 Task Force 5. Presentation to Subcommittee by CHAFFEE Director 6. Interface with www.colorado.gov
<p>WHAT INFORMATION DO WE STILL NEED?</p>	
<p>THE STRATEGIES & ACTIVITIES NEEDED</p>	<p><u>I. System Changes Needed</u></p> <p>A. Requiring Legislation</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Human Services will increase the age of mandatory emancipation for foster youth to 21 years of age. 2. Human Services will be funded adequately to allow for

the provision of Emancipation Services to all eligible youth even if it means that state general fund dollars must be appropriated.

3. Human Services will keep Emancipation Services and community service referrals open for all former foster care youth who have emancipated from the child welfare system until 21 years of age, even if the case has been closed.

B. Requiring Rule Changes

1. Require counties to develop a written plan identifying emancipation services (Chaffee and other services) and community services (e.g. Colorado Works program) available to pre-emancipated and emancipated youth. A county point-of-contact for emancipation/community services will be identified and accessible to youth age 14 to 21.
2. Every youth from 14 to 21 years of age who was or will emancipate from the system will be informed of and have access to Emancipation or Post-Emancipation Services and referral to community services.
3. Long-term foster care (OPPLA – Other Planned Permanent Living Arrangement) will be acknowledged as a legitimate and viable permanency goal for some youth, on a case-by-case basis and as appropriate.
4. Emancipation Services will be identified as pre- and post-emancipation services; funding for both categories will be tracked separately, each program area will be evaluated for program effectiveness and the client satisfaction of youth served in each service area will be surveyed. The results of these data collection efforts will be made available publicly and on a regular basis (recommend electronic access in collaboration with III.B.1).
5. Support the rapid development of rules protecting sibling visitation rights and recommend that former foster care youth are included in the rule development process.

C. Best Practice Recommendation

1. Youth must be given the chance to provide input regarding their case plans and permanency goal. Youth input must be documented in the development in the FSP (Family Service Plan).

II. Required Emancipation Preparation Services

A. Requiring Rule Changes

1. Support efforts to improve educational outcomes for foster care youth.
2. If the youth returns to his/her previous agency, comes to the attention of authorities, or requests services, then their case must be reopened if they are less than 18 years of age.
3. At a minimum, Emancipation Services should include but not be limited to developmentally-appropriate training for youth prior to emancipation in the following

areas:

- a. Vocational training
 - b. Basic life skills training
 - c. Training in how to access post-emancipation assistance and resources
 - d. Fiscal management
 - e. How to acquire, maintain and protect vital records
 - f. Healthy relationships and permanent connections
 - g. Identity formation
4. Increase foster care youth's access to normative, developmentally-appropriate activities.
- a. Counties and caseworkers will encourage the involvement of foster care youth in school activities and traditional youth activities as long as it is safe (sleepovers, field trips and retreats).
 - b. Develop a means by which foster care youth age 16 and older with a case plan (either primary or concurrent) for emancipation can learn to drive while in the custody of county department of human/social services. All foster care youth will, at a minimum, be given the opportunity to receive driver's education training unless otherwise contraindicated. The State will work with insurance companies and driving schools to provide incentives to develop these programs. (Nothing in this section is to be construed as requiring that a county must allow youth to obtain their drivers licenses while in placement or be granted driving privileges prior to emancipation.)

B. Best Practice Recommendation

1. Empower foster care youth to have an increased say in their case planning and disposition. Foster care youth will have increased access to legal counsel that represents their wishes and desires.

III. Post Emancipation Services

A. Requiring Legislation

1. Further expand the access of former foster care youth to Medicaid. Endorse SB 08-99 – extending benefits to youth in subsidized adoptions and youth emancipated immediately prior to their 18th birthday. If SB 08-99 does not pass, then we recommend that legislation be developed for next session for its reintroduction.
2. Make tuition waivers available at Colorado public colleges, universities, community colleges and vocational training programs to any youth requiring financial assistance that was in out-of-home care at age 16 with a case plan for emancipation.

B. Requiring Rule Changes

1. All foster care youth will have access to copies of their

	<p>vital records (including but not limited to original birth certificates, Colorado IDs, Social Security Numbers, health records/health passports, educational records, etc.).</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Access to obtaining Vital Records will be available on the Colorado State Webpage. This website will include a description of the types of vital records a youth might need and links to agencies that will provide them. This website could include satisfaction surveys for youth and a community information section. In developing this website the following groups should be involved: Colorado.gov staff, youth and all involved agencies. b. Health Passports must be kept electronically and made available to youth after emancipation. It is recommended that the State should examine including family health histories if feasible with HIPPA and confidentiality guidelines. Once developed information on accessing health passports should be on the state website. c. CDHS and county departments of human/social services must have designated personnel responsible for assisting youth in obtaining these records d. CDHS must obtain for every foster care youth 14 years of age and older a Colorado State ID and develop a process for emancipating/emancipated youth to gain access to their ID upon request. <p>C. Best Practice Recommendations</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. We encourage the support of the Vital Documents Workgroup to implement an expedited appeal process to assist former foster care youth in obtaining documents. 2. We encourage the expansion of Bridging the Gap at Mile High United Way statewide.
LEGISLATIVE/RULE	Legislative
COST	\$
OTHER IMPACTS THIS RECOMMENDATION MAY CAUSE	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Reduce societal costs 2. Reduce recidivism 3. Reduce homelessness among former foster care youth 4. Increase economic self-sufficiency of former foster care youth 5. Reduce the number of former foster care youth incarcerated within two years of emancipation 6. Reduce out-of-wedlock births 7. Break the cycle of multi-generational child welfare involvement

CHALLENGE

These recommendations will cost money. However, reducing the negative societal impacts of ill-prepared emancipated youth will save the state much more money in the long run than the initial dollar investment.

(12) Adopted Child Out-of-Home Placement

<p>RECOMMENDATION</p> <p>(include what duty it relates to from 26-6-504)</p>	<p>If a child/youth is adopted from the child welfare system and is challenged by mental illness or emotional issues, and is unsafe to either himself/herself and/or to other family members in the home, and the county takes custody of the child/youth to provide out-of-home placement for the purposes of obtaining special treatment or care solely because the parent or legal guardian is unable to provide the treatment or care, the adoptive family should be informed in a timely manner both verbally and in writing of legal adjudication options <u>prior</u> to any adjudication.</p> <p>The information given to the parents must include explanations of the following sections of the CRS Title 19 Children’s Code:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 19-3-102(e) – D&N (“...through no fault of such parent...”) • 19-3-102(f) – D&N (“...beyond the control of his or her parent...”) • 19-1-115(8) – Petition to Review Need of Placement (PRNP) <p>Addresses: (a), (e), and (f)</p>
<p>PURPOSE</p>	<p><u>Why is this important?</u></p> <p>Different sections of Colorado law acknowledge that the severity of the needs of children in foster care are increasing (e.g. C.R.S. § 19-1-115.5. Placement of children out-of-home - legislative declaration), indicating that the severity of needs of many children adopted from child welfare are also increasing. Many of these children have significant histories of abuse prior to placement in care, and additional moves while in care (exacerbating mental illness and psychological issues), including residential and psychiatric level placements. However, when a child is adopted from child welfare, the adoptive family does not have the same access to level of care that a foster family caring for the same child would, even in cases where the child has a history of needing this level of placement.</p> <p>In many cases, when a family approaches CDHS to request out-of-home placement for a child adopted from child welfare, they are told that this is a mental health issue and that the county department cannot help. If the family persists, some are being informed that they will have a <i>Dependency and Neglect</i> (D&N) action filed against them if their child is removed from the home, but are not offered or informed of the ‘no-fault’ or ‘beyond control of parent’ provisions. Families are also not being informed of the option for <i>voluntary placement</i> of their child/youth outside of the home, or the ‘Petition to Review Need for Placement’ (PRNP) option in those cases where the voluntary placement appears to be necessary for longer than ninety days. Other options available to counties to provide services to families include <i>Continued Adjudications</i>, (C.R.S. §19-3-505(5) (2007)), and <i>Informal Adjustments</i> (§19-3-501(1)(c)(I) and (II), C.R.S. (2007)).</p>

	<p>Counties can and do provide services (e.g. Core and Promoting Safe and Stable Families—PSSF—services) to families whose children are at risk for out-of-home placement, but when this level of intervention is not enough to meet the needs of the child/youth, adoptive families should not be legally penalized solely because they are unable to provide the treatment or care needed by the child/youth.</p>
<p>THE MEASURABLE RESULTS WE ARE TRYING TO ACHIEVE</p>	<p>Children/youth who have been adopted from child welfare and who need out-of-home placements due to mental illness or emotional issues, and other services/interventions have been tried when appropriate (e.g. CORE and PSSF services), will receive this level-of-care through counties in a timely manner.</p>
<p>EXPECTED OUTCOME</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Adopted children/youth will receive this level of care for mental/emotional health issues at the time the need is identified 2. Parents and their adopted child will experience less stress in their personal and family lives because they are told appropriately of the available out-of-home placement options 3. Parents will have the emotional strength necessary to continue to parent their child/youth that has been placed out of the home, decreasing the number of dissolved adoptions or traumatized adoptive families 4. Parents will form an integral part of the treatment team for their child, and view the county as a resource
<p>INFORMATION USED TO REACH THIS RECOMMENDATION</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Public comment that informed the creation of the SB64 Task Force 2. Testimony to the SB64 Task Force from parents and families who have adopted a child/youth from child welfare with severe mental illnesses or emotional disturbances, and who have tried to access out-of-home placements for their child 3. Colorado Post-Adoption Resource Center (COPARC) Adoptive Families Survey (April 2007)
<p>WHAT INFORMATION DO WE STILL NEED</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The number of children/youth in residential care facilities/psychiatric placements who were adopted from child welfare, and whose adoptive families either still maintain parental rights or have dissolved the adoptions. 2. Data on adoption dissolutions (this information was requested and agreed to by CDHS as part of the <i>Subsidized Adoption Program Division of Child Welfare Services, Performance Audit</i>, March 2002, State Auditor's Office, Recommendation 1).

THE STRATEGIES & ACTIVITIES NEEDED	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. See "Recommendation" above. 2. State Department of Health Care Policy and Financing—HCPF—add to the <i>Request for Proposal</i> (RFP) the requirement that agencies bidding on the RFP for the July 1, 2009, contracts document how they will provide a description of the range of adoption- and trauma-competent mental health services for children. The Task Force also requests that all contracts issued as a result of the RFP to the successful bidder(s) include a summary describing the range of adoption- and trauma-competent mental services they will provide for children; if the BHO(s) does not have an adoption-competent therapist, then the contract(s) must include a provision for access to community providers." 3. CDHS will create documents which explain the adjudication options available to adoptive parents needing out-of-home care for their children.
LEGISLATIVE/RULE	Rule
COST	\$
OTHER IMPACTS THIS RECOMMENDATION MAY CAUSE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Healthier and more productive adopted children/youth • Healthier and stronger adoptive families

(13) Increase Support and Services for Kinship Caregivers

<p>RECOMMENDATION</p> <p>(include what duty it relates to from 26-6-504)</p>	<p>Provide increased support and services to kinship caregivers for children in out-of-home placements.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. When children are placed with kinship caregivers under the emergency visitation provisions, county departments must provide all potential kinship caregivers information on placement options for a child(ren), prior to kinship caregivers assuming the legal obligation and duty to care for the child(ren) beyond the emergency visit. 2. Encourage county departments to develop in their county plan, a provision for kinship caregivers who choose not to become certified kinship care providers monetary benefits similar to what they would have received in foster care if they were providing certified kinship care. 3. If reestablished, pursue federal IV-E demonstration waiver to fund child(ren) in guardianship relationships with kinship caregivers. 4. All kinship care providers will have a SAFE home study conducted. 5. Ensure kinship caregivers are invited to all training opportunities. 6. Provide kinship caregiver support groups. 7. Appointment of Kinship Care Program Specialist and Regional Kinship Care Specialists at CDHS to support county departments. 8. Develop a process to ensure the certification of all orders allocating parental responsibilities entered at the conclusion of a D&N proceeding to the appropriate district court(s). 9. CDHS, in collaboration with the Judicial Department should conduct an inquiry into the use of orders allocating parental responsibility in the child welfare arena. <p>Addresses: (a) and (c)</p>
<p>PURPOSE</p>	<p><u>Why is this important?</u></p> <p>Kinship caregivers can provide safe and permanent homes for children, enabling children to remain with their (extended) family and possibly even remain in their communities. However, kinship caregivers need services and support to care for these children. These strategies and activities are intended to provide kinship caregivers with the services and support they need to care for these children successfully.</p>
<p>THE MEASURABLE RESULTS WE ARE TRYING TO ACHIEVE</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Increased safety for children 2. Improved emotional and behavioral well-being of children 3. Reduce number of placements for children 4. Kinship caregivers will be able to adequately provide for the relative child(ren) in their care 5. Kinship caregivers can make informed decisions about caring for relative child(ren)

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 6. Increased access to funding and services for kinship caregivers and children in kinship care placements 7.
EXPECTED OUTCOME	Increased stability and well-being for children being cared for by kin, by keeping children with their (extended) family.
INFORMATION USED TO REACH THIS RECOMMENDATION	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. In Colorado, 510 children per month are placed with relatives in certified kinship care homes; 1,035 children per month are placed with relatives in <u>non-certified</u> kinship care placements. http://www.grandfactsheets.org 2. Presentation by National Conference of State Legislatures at the 11/13/2007 SB 64 Task Force meeting 3. Testimony by grandparents at the 10/9/2007 SB 64 Task Force meeting that they do not receive enough financial support to care for their grandchildren. They receive \$311 (this represents the \$99 a month child-only TANF payment) a month to raise three children and cannot make ends meet. Their only option is to turn over custody of the children to the county. When the county originally contacted them about taking their grandchildren, the only financial option presented to the grandparents was TANF child-only money. They were not informed that they had the option of becoming a licensed foster care home. 4. Interviews by CDHS with kinship caregivers on November 19 and 20, 2007 5. Denver Department of Human Services Third Party Review Report – Kinship Recommendations 6. Presentation by Case Workers at the 2/12/2008 SB 64 Task Force meeting 7. Presentation by grandmothers involved in Catholic Charities kinship support groups at the 3/11/2008 SB 64 Task Force meeting 8. Presentation to Task Force by FamiliesFirst at April 11/08
WHAT INFORMATION DO WE STILL NEED?	
DEFINITIONS	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The term “kinship care” refers to the full time nurturing and protection of children by kin or relative. 2. The term “kinship caregiver” refers to relatives or persons ascribed by the family as having a family-like relationship. These relationships take into account cultural values and continuity of significant relationships. 3. A “relative” includes: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Any blood relative, including those of half-blood, and including first cousins, nephews or nieces, and persons of preceding generations as denoted by prefixes of grand, great, or great-great. b. Stepfather, stepmother, stepbrother, and stepsister. c. Persons who legally adopt a child or his/her parent, as well as the natural and other legally adopted children of such persons, and other relatives of the

	<p>adoptive parents in accordance with state law.</p> <p>d. Spouses of any persons named in the above groups even after the marriage is terminated by death or divorce.</p>
<p>THE STRATEGIES & ACTIVITIES NEEDED</p>	<p>1. When children are placed with kinship caregivers under the emergency visitation provisions of 12 C.C.R. 2509-4, Volume 7, Section 7.304.21 D2e, county departments must provide all potential kinship caregivers information on placement options for a child(ren), prior to kinship caregivers assuming the obligation and duty to care for the child(ren) beyond emergency visitation.</p> <p>Section 1.A. describes strategies and activities for children who are on the cusp of entering or reentering the child welfare system.</p> <p>Section 1.B. describes strategies and activities for children who are in any out-of-home placement and in county custody.</p> <p>A. CHILDREN AT RISK OF OUT-OF-HOME PLACEMENT Strategies for all children who become known to child protective services due to suspected abuse and/or neglect, including, but not limited to, situations arising from court orders, police holds, community referrals, and removal from home via a safety plan.</p> <p>1) KINSHIP PERMANENCY OPTIONS/MATERIALS: County case workers must provide potential kinship caregivers information on all permanency options available, including guardianship, allocation of parental responsibility, and foster care certification, and the financial ramifications associated with each option, as well as information on the range of physical and mental health, financial, housing, counseling, employment, education, and other support services which kinship caregivers and children may receive.</p> <p>a. CDHS –should develop materials that fully and clearly explain the pros and cons (short term and long term) of all permanency options. Particular emphasis should be placed on the financial ramifications and children’s eligibility for services for each option. The materials must be both meaningful and manageable.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Materials will be available in a paper format, an audio/visual format, and electronically on the CDHS website ii. Materials will be available in both English and Spanish. Counties may decide to make these materials available in another language depending on population demographics iii. Materials will be ADA compliant <p>b. In creating these materials, CDHS may want to consult <i>The Colorado Kinship Care Resource Guide</i>, El Paso County Department of Human Service’s <i>The Pink Book</i>, and The American Association of Retired People (AARP) free resource guide in VHS</p>

and DVD format entitled *Lean on Me: A Film About Grandparents and Other Relatives Raising Children*.

- c. The materials developed by CDHS must be available at all state and county departments of human service and at all Colorado district and county courts. Materials may also be made available at public libraries and other government, private, and non-profit agencies involved in the child welfare system.
- d. In addition to supplying kinship caregivers the materials developed by CDHS, the county departments should provide a list of local kinship caregiver support groups and encourage kinship caregivers to attend a group meeting to help them understand the permanency options and make an informed decision.

2) KINSHIP COUNTY/COURT PROCESS: If, at the time of the Temporary Custody Hearing provided for in C.R.S § 19-3-403, a kinship placement is being considered, the judge should inquire whether the county department provided potential kinship caregivers the information on permanency options as developed under section A(1)(a), and if the county has not done so, order the county to do so. In order to provide potential kinship caregiver adequate time to understand the implications of the certification options available to them to care for relative child(ren), such as guardianship, allocation of parental responsibility, and foster care certification,

3) a. while the court should make ongoing inquiries that the family has been advised.

- a. At the next appearance in court, the court will seek verification that kinship care providers have been adequately advised of all kinship placement options
- b. The Kinship family should not be required to decide on certification option earlier than seven days following information provided and no later than 30 days or the next scheduled hearing, whichever comes first.
- c. County departments, in consultation with the judicial system and CDHS, should develop a process that is sensitive to county practice and requirements to preserve federal IV-E funding, for potential kinship caregivers finalize the appropriate permanency option for them care for relative children.
- d. While potential kinship caregivers are learning about and considering permanency options, the county department must:
 - i. Conduct a family assessment using the Structured Analysis Family Evaluation (SAFE), as described in 12 CCR 2509-6, Volume 7, Section 7.500.2 and 12 CCR 2509-8, Volume 7, Section 7.710.33 L), to determine the character and suitability of the family, appropriateness of the home, and child care practices. Kinship caregivers must

participate in the SAFE study to be eligible for services and assistance.

- ii. Refer the child(ren) for a mental health assessment and inform kinship caregivers about the availability and children's eligibility for Medicaid mental health services. In order to serve these children, community mental health providers should have an adequate number of treatment providers who are culturally competent to serve children in the child welfare system
- iii. Counties must assist kinship caregivers in obtaining applicable core services programs.

4) KINSHIP CERTIFICATION PROCESS: If the potential kinship caregiver desires to become a certified foster care home, and the county department and the court believe this to be in the best interest of the relative child(ren), the relative child(ren) can live with the kinship caregiver during the certification process, if the SAFE assessment conducted pursuant to section A(1)(b)(iii) reveals the kinship caregiver's home to be a safe, suitable, and appropriate home.

- a. In order to maintain the child(ren)'s eligibility for federal IV-E foster care payments, the certification process must be completed within 60 days or earlier. (Sixty days to complete the certification process is a very short, tight time frame and will require the cooperation and attentiveness of everyone involved in the process.)
- b. If a kinship caregiver is unable to become a certified foster home because the home does not meet the square footage requirements in 12 CCR 2509-8, Volume 7, Section 7.708.22(B)(1),(3), (8), the county case worker should help the kinship caregiver prepare an appeal to the Child Care Licensing Appeal Panel to request a waiver of the physical space requirements.

B. CHILDREN IN OUT-OF-HOME PLACEMENT

Strategies for when the county department has legal custody of the child(ren) and the child(ren) are in out-of-home placement.

- 1. **KINSHIP PERMANENCY OPTIONS/MATERIALS:** At the time potential kinship caregivers are first contacted by a county department to assume care of relative children then in the custody of the county department, potential kinship caregivers should be informed of all permanency options available, including guardianship, allocation of parental responsibility, and foster care certification, and the financial ramifications associated with each option, as well as information on the range of physical and mental health, financial, housing, counseling, employment, education, and other support services which kinship caregivers and children may receive. The potential kinship caregiver must be

provided the materials developed under section 1(A)(i).

2. COUNTY DEPARTMENT TRAINING: Requirements that potential kinship caregivers be told of their placement options and given services are currently in 12 CCR 2509-4, Volume 7, Section 7.304.21.D. CDHS' core training for child welfare workers should include training about these regulations and how to implement them in daily practice.

3. KINSHIP CERTIFICATION PROCESS: If potential kinship caregiver expresses interest in becoming a certified foster care home, the relative child(ren) can live with kinship caregiver during the certification process, if the SAFE assessment reveals the kinship caregiver's home to be a safe, suitable, and appropriate home.

a. In order to maintain the child(ren)'s eligibility for federal IV-E foster care payments, the certification process must be completed within 60 days or earlier. (Sixty days to complete the certification process is a very short, tight time frame and will require the cooperation and attentiveness of everyone involved in the process.)

b. If a kinship caregiver is unable to become a certified foster home because the home does not meet the square footage requirements in 12 CCR 2509-8, Volume 7, Section 7.708.22(B)(1),(3), (8), the county case worker should help the kinship caregiver prepare an appeal to the Child Care Licensing Appeal Panel to request a waiver of the physical space requirements.

2. County caseworkers must refer kinship caregivers not choosing certification to the Colorado Works Program to obtain a TANF benefit package.

3. County departments should consider modifying their respective TANF/Colorado Works county plans to allow for additional funding to Colorado kinship caregivers.

4. If the federal government reestablishes the Title IV-E waiver Demonstration Program, CDHS will pursue obtaining a Title IV-E wavier Demonstration to use Title IV-E funding to care for children and youth placed in guardianship or allocation of parental responsibility relationships with kinship caregivers.

5. County caseworkers should inform kinship caregivers of training programs offered by CDHS. This training will be available for all kinship caregivers, even if they are not seeking certification.

6. County departments of human/social services should consider developing and offering kinship caregiver support groups.

7. CDHS will appoint a Kinship Care Program Specialist to oversee and implement policies and services. CDHS will also create a network of regional specialists to support counties in providing

	<p>kinship care services.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 8. County departments of human/social services and the judicial system should evaluate the current process for certifying orders allocating parental responsibilities and develop a process that ensures certification of orders allocating parental responsibilities are entered at the conclusion of a D&N proceeding to the appropriate district court(s). 9. The child welfare community finds the use of orders allocating parental responsibility in the child welfare arena problematic. Accordingly, CDHS, in collaboration with the Judicial Department should conduct an inquiry into the use of orders allocating parental responsibility in the child welfare arena and make recommendations for best practices. 10. Training for relevant judicial branch employees about the procedure and importance of certifying orders, particularly order allocating parental responsibilities and/or addressing parenting time and child support, entered in a D&N proceeding
<p>CURRENT PRACTICES</p>	<p>The subcommittee identified three support programs for kinship caregivers that can serve as models for creating additional support programs: <i>Catholic Charities Kinship Program</i>, <i>Family Tree (Adams County Project's TANF Stable Families)</i>, and <i>Families First</i>. Key features of kinship care support programs/support groups:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Educate kinship caregivers/service providers about resources and supports • Network of support among kinship caregivers • Directly refer kinship caregivers to appropriate services • Help establish and maintain relationships between caregivers, and public and private service providers, and formal supports through the County • Help establish a community collaboration focused on kinship services • Advocate for services and resources for kinship caregivers: housing, transportation, medical, child care, family counseling • Provide follow-up with kinship caregivers • Collect necessary data to support evaluation and system improvement
<p>LEGISLATIVE/RULE</p>	<p>Legislative</p>
<p>COST</p>	<p>\$</p>
<p>OTHER IMPACTS THIS RECOMMENDATION MAY CAUSE</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Increased willingness and ability of kinship caregivers to care for relative children. 2. Colorado has the potential to increase its Federal IV-E revenue generation if the pool of eligible children increase. 3. County staff time to perform SAFE assessments on all kinship caregivers homes and facilitate support groups.

CHALLENGE

1. Informing the public about services available for kinship caregivers.
2. Child welfare community understanding the need to better serve and support kinship care families.
3. Ensuring compliance with existing regulations.
4. Funding programs, such as ensuring appropriately low caseworker caseloads, so that compliance with existing regulations is possible.

(14) Strengthen Adoption Subsidy Regulations and Practice

<p>RECOMMENDATION</p> <p>(include what duty it relates to from 26-6-504)</p>	<p>(a) Strengthen the adoption subsidy regulations that detail the process for both the initial negotiation as well as re-negotiations, to ensure that counties negotiate with pre- and post-adoptive families in good faith, taking into consideration the needs of the child and the circumstances of the family.</p> <p>(b) Conduct an annual adoption subsidy rate review and make public by December 31st of each year in accordance with the Office of the State Auditor's 2002 audit recommendations.</p> <p>Addresses: (f) and (g)</p>
<p>PURPOSE</p>	<p><u>Why is this important?</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ensures that foster-adopt and pre-adoptive families understand the needs of their child(ren) prior to conducting the subsidy negotiation. 2. Removes any confusion and/or intimidation from the subsidy negotiation process. 3. Removes artificial subsidy limits or 'caps'— the current limits imposed in some counties are too low in some cases to meet the needs of the child and circumstances of the family, and are therefore inconsistent with the intent of federal law.
<p>THE MEASURABLE RESULTS WE ARE TRYING TO ACHIEVE</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Increase the number of adoptions of children with special needs from child welfare. 2. Adoptive families will have sufficient resources to meet the needs of their children. 3. Families will be willing to adopt from foster care again. 4. 100% of pre-adoptive families will report that the subsidy negotiation appropriately took into consideration their child(ren)'s needs and the family's circumstances, with no coercion or intimidation. 5. Support those counties who are conducting subsidy negotiations that are in the best interest of the child(ren).
<p>EXPECTED OUTCOME</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Decrease in families experiencing inappropriate adoption subsidy negotiations. 2. Pre-adoptive families will be able to negotiate an adoption subsidy based on an understanding of their child(ren)'s needs. 3. Better relations between county departments and adoptive families 4. Ensures the ability of families to request services and financial support post-adoption if the needs of their child(ren) change. 5. Adoptive families will be more willing to adopt again, as well as recruiting other families for adoption. 6. Pre-adoptive and foster-adoptive families will not be worried about their child being removed from the home during the adoption subsidy negotiation

	phase.
INFORMATION USED TO REACH THIS RECOMMENDATION	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Public comment that informed the creation of the SB64 Task Force 2. Public testimony to the SB64 Task Force 3. COCAF Position Paper on Adoption Subsidies 4. Administrative Law Judge Comments in <i>Notice of Initial Decision</i>, Appeal No. SHS 05-0398, 8/9/2005, and Office of Appeals Responses 5. Subsidy Allocation Data Trends All Counties FY 2004-2007 TRAILS data pull provided by the JBC 6. CWLA National Data Analysis System Subsidy Rate by State 04/05/08
WHAT INFORMATION DO WE STILL NEED	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Data on adoption dissolution
THE STRATEGIES & ACTIVITIES NEEDED	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Change CDHS Regulation 7.306.42.F.2 from: “The county should establish a maximum amount that can be provided to a family...” To “The county is responsible for negotiating the subsidy amount that can be provided to a family based upon the needs of the child and the circumstances of the family. The maximum adoption assistance payment cannot exceed the amount the child would receive if s/he were in a family foster home, less the monthly respite care amount.” 2. Modify 7.306.54B (Continuing Subsidies beyond Age Eighteen) to include ‘emotional disturbance/mental illness’ as a criteria for youth over the age of 18 and less than the age of 21 to continue to be eligible for the adoption assistance program. 3. Foster care reimbursement will begin at placement and continue until finalization of the adoption, at which point the foster care reimbursement will end and the adoption subsidy agreement will begin. 4. The foster care rate for a child will not be decreased when s/he is moved to a foster-adopt or pre-adoptive placement, solely because of the move. 5. An adoption subsidy agreement will not be finalized until a child has been in a foster-adopt or pre-adoptive home for at least 90 days. Once the subsidy agreement is signed, the pre-adoptive or foster-adopt family will continue to receive foster care reimbursements for the child until finalization of the adoption. The adoption subsidy agreement will begin at finalization. 6. Only after the best placement for a child has been identified and the child has been placed with the foster-adopt or pre-adoptive family, should adoption assistance be discussed with the family. Accordingly:

- a. A county may not contact a foster-adopt or pre-adoptive family prior to placement of a child to ask the family if they intend to request an adoption subsidy.
 - b. Prior to the adoption subsidy negotiation, a county may not tell a family that adoption subsidies are not available or are not being provided by the county.
7. Remove text in all Colorado regulations stating that adoption subsidies cannot be increased post-legalization to include/cover issues that arise after the adoption is finalized.
8. Families whose children are receiving adoption subsidies will not be required to sign monthly statements verifying that they are receiving monthly subsidy checks. Instead, a short, electronic 'Subsidized Adoption' form will be developed by CDHS to be utilized by all counties. The form, to be distributed to families annually for their signature, will verify that the family is still legally responsible and providing support for their child(ren).
9. It is contingent upon all adoptive families whose children are receiving subsidies to inform the county of any changes to their children's needs or the family's circumstances that could affect the child(ren)'s subsidy rate.
 - a. Federal regulations do not require subsidy reviews or re-determinations, and counties cannot discontinue subsidies if families refuse to provide ongoing documentation for their children. For these reasons, and the fact that federal audit requirements will be met through implementation of an annual 'Subsidized Adoption' form, the counties should not conduct reviews or re-determinations of adoption subsidy agreements.
 - b. The provision to require reviews or re-determinations set forth in Section 7.306.5 should be removed from regulation.
10. If a family is in the process of adopting a child from child welfare, and the child meets Colorado's definition of special needs, then the child must be provided with a dormant subsidy if a financial subsidy is not needed at the time of adoption. By providing a dormant subsidy for the child, it preserves the ability of the family to obtain a subsidy for their child in the future should this become necessary. It also provides the child with Medicaid.
11. Counties must inform families prior to finalization of an adoption that after the child(ren) is adopted, the child may, at the discretion of the parent, be either:
 - a. Placed on the family's insurance as primary coverage, with Medicaid secondary
 - b. Continue with Medicaid as the primary insurance
12. The child cannot be removed from a pre-adoptive or foster-adopt home due to potential or current conflict associated with the adoption subsidy negotiation process.

LEGISLATIVE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • STRATEGIES & ACTIVITIES NEEDED: numbers 1-9 -9-11 can be implemented by rule • STRATEGIES & ACTIVITIES NEEDED: number 8 &12 – requires legislation
COST	\$
OTHER IMPACTS THIS RECOMMENDATION MAY CAUSE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Administrative and monetary savings for counties in not having to mail monthly ‘subsidized adoption’ confirmation letters to all current adoptive families; • Administrative and monetary savings for counties in not having to conduct reviews of all current adoption subsidy agreements every three years.
CHALLENGE	<p>Counties receive annual information from CDHS, and can request technical trainings on ‘successful [adoption subsidy] negotiation techniques’ (e.g. “...negotiating adoption subsidies at the lowest amount needed for the family.” Report of the State Auditor, Subsidized Adoption Program, Division of Child Welfare Services, Performance Audit, March 2002, pg. 61).</p> <p>Pre-adoptive families however, are not trained in negotiating techniques, and are in a very vulnerable position during the subsidy negotiation process. Families network with each other, and word quickly circulates if a county is not treating families appropriately during this process. If families are treated with respect and honesty during the negotiation, the county will save training and recruitment monies by ensuring that families who have adopted remain a resource for future adoptions, as well as recruiters for other adoptive families.</p>
OTHER HELPFUL INFORMATION	<p>Given the disparity between county adoption subsidy agreement policies, and county practices in implementing these policies, would it be more cost and time-effective, as well as more supportive of families, to move the entire subsidy program – negotiations and payments – from the county level to the state level?</p>

(15) Safety Assessment/Plan Review and Revision

<p>RECOMMENDATION</p> <p>(include what duty it relates to from 26-6-504)</p>	<p>a. If after a caseworker has completed the Colorado Safety Assessment (described in 12 CCR 2509-3, Volume 7, Section 7.202.53, "Safety Plan Rule"), a viable safety plan cannot be implemented, and the child(ren) is not safe in his/her current environment and must be removed, then it is recommended that the county initiate legal proceedings appropriate to ensure safety issues of the child.</p> <p>b. The Colorado Department of Human Services should create formal trainings for county workers on how to utilize and implement the Colorado Safety Assessment Instrument.</p> <p>Addresses: (f)</p>
<p>PURPOSE</p>	<p><u>Why is this important?</u></p> <p>This recommendation addresses recent concerns and confusion regarding the Safety Plan Rule. Denver Department of Human Services has publicly acknowledged that its workers are confused about how to use the rule. There is concern that this confusion is jeopardizing the safety of children and that children are being removed from their home environment without court involvement. When children are removed from their home environment via a safety plan and the D&N process is not initiated with the following consequences:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The court does not have the ability to make a determination as to whether reasonable efforts were made to keep the child(ren) in their home and whether the removal is in the best interest of the child(ren) • Children may lose IV-E eligibility for future placements • Birth parents/family may not be provided the services they need to address the issues resulting in the removal
<p>THE MEASURABLE RESULTS WE ARE TRYING TO ACHIEVE</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ensuring the safety and well-being of children 2. Clarifying the use and application of the Safety Plan Rule
<p>EXPECTED OUTCOME</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Increased safety and well-being of children 2. Better understanding by county caseworkers of 12 CCR 2509-3, Volume 7, Section 7.202.53 and the Colorado Safety Assessment Instrument 3. Birth parents/family obtain appropriate services to facilitate reunification
<p>INFORMATION USED TO REACH THIS RECOMENDATION</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Child Maltreatment Fatality Report 2007 2. Concerns of child advocates 3. Testimony from case worker panel

WHAT INFORMATION DO WE STILL NEED	
THE STRATEGIES & ACTIVITIES NEEDED	CDHS will review and analyze available data to determine whether or not children remained safe after a case was assessed, a safety plan implemented, and the case closed without a D&N being filed.
LEGISLATIVE/RULE	Rule
COST	\$
OTHER IMPACTS THIS RECOMMENDATION MAY CAUSE	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Potential increase in legal filings and associated costs; 2. Changes in how county workers use and apply the Colorado Safety Assessment Instrument 3. Changes to the Colorado Safety Assessment Instrument and associated policies
CHALLENGE	

(16) Sharing Home Studies Between Counties

<p>RECOMMENDATION</p> <p>(include what duty it relates to from 26-6-504)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Create a process to allow caseworkers electronic access to all completed county and CPA foster-adopt and pre-adoptive home studies, regardless of county affiliation, to more quickly facilitate the adoption of Colorado’s children. b. In the preparation of foster adopt and pre adoptive parents CDHS should determine a set reimbursement fee when the home study is transferred between agencies for the purpose of the child being placed for adoption. <p>Addresses: (a) and (f)</p>
<p>PURPOSE</p>	<p><u>Why is this important?</u></p> <p>A child should not have to wait for a foster-adopt or pre-adoptive home in their county to become available if there is a foster-adopt or pre-adoptive home in another county who is willing and able to take the child and is an appropriate match/placement for the child.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. This process will expedite permanency for Colorado’s children waiting for a foster-adopt or pre-adoptive placement. 2. If a foster-adopt or pre-adoptive family has a completed home study and is waiting for placement of a child through their county or CPA, and identifies a child(ren) from another county that they wish to be considered for, the family should be able to begin the process with the second county without waiting up to 6 months for transfer of the home study.
<p>THE MEASURABLE RESULTS WE ARE TRYING TO ACHIEVE</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 100% of Colorado foster children needing adoptive families will have an enhanced ability to find permanency at a faster rate. 2. Increases the ability to ‘match’ appropriate families with a waiting child, and vice versa.
<p>EXPECTED OUTCOME</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Decreases the wait, and therefore the potential number of moves, for children in foster care waiting for an adoptive or foster-adopt placement. 2. Facilitates interactions between county departments of human/social services. 3. Increase in repeat adoptions: if parents have a good experience in adopting, they are more likely to adopt a child from foster care in the future. This maximizes the number of adoptive homes, while minimizing certification and training costs. 4. Collaborations between counties will make it more appealing for families to become adoptive families, thereby increasing the resources for children waiting to be adopted.
<p>INFORMATION USED TO REACH THIS RECOMMENDATION</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Public comment that informed the creation of the SB64 Task Force. 2. Because all counties and CPAs now use the SAFE home study form, transferability and acceptance of home studies between

	<p>counties/CPAs is no longer problematic.</p> <p>3. Feedback from parents and families who have gone through the adoption process.</p>
WHAT INFORMATION DO WE STILL NEED	
THE STRATEGIES & ACTIVITIES NEEDED	<p>We recommend CDHS consider the following method in creating a centralized home study sharing process between counties. It will utilize the current state-funded/county-administrated system and enhance county collaboration for the benefit of Colorado's waiting children.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Require that all county and CPA foster-adopt and pre-adoptive SAFE (<i>Structured Analysis Family Evaluation</i>, 12 CCR 2509-6, Volume 7, Section 7.500.2 and 12 CCR 2509-8, Volume 7, Section 7.710.33) home studies be completed and available electronically with written permission of the applicants. 2. Create a centralized home study sharing process for Colorado counties that will make home studies readily and easily available for transfer and viewing by all caseworkers searching for prospective foster-adopt and adoptive parents, regardless of their county affiliation. 3. If foster-adopt or pre-adoptive parents ultimately adopt a child(ren) outside of the county which completed their home study, then the county from which the child(ren) was adopted must reimburse the county or CPA that completed the home study the cost of the SAFE home study and a fixed 'state-averaged' training fee—to be determined on an annual basis by CDHS—to cover pre-adoptive training costs. 4. We recommend that counties utilize the technical assistance and support services of Adopt US Kids (available through The Adoption Exchange) to help and support workers and counties through this process.
LEGISLATIVE/RULE	Rule
COST	\$
OTHER IMPACTS THIS RECOMMENDATION MAY CAUSE	Inter-county cooperation
CHALLENGE	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Creating a culture among county workers and administration that supports inter-county placement of children into pre- and foster-adoptive homes, when this in the best interests of the child 2. Ensuring that families feel comfortable adopting from their 'home' in the future if they have adopted outside of this county

Appendix B: Footnoted Mapping Worksheets

Two additional ideas were forwarded to the Task Force and not approved. Each of these items require futher research for consideration. Mapping Worksheets for each are as follows.

1. Healthy Development
2. Child Line

Healthy Development Mapping Worksheet

Requires Further Investigation

RECOMMENDATION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish a holistic plan addressing the healthy development of children who are served by Colorado Child Protection from the time a child enters the system of care until the child reaches age 21, including children who have their 'cases' closed (or services concluded). • While working on such plan, establish a longitudinal accountability pilot. • Relates to the duty 26-6-504(4)(a), C.R.S.
PURPOSE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For all agencies entrusted to protect and enhance the healthy development of children challenged by protective care issues to succeed. • For the long-term accountability pilot to show the healthy development of children served by Colorado Child Protection.
THE MEASUREABLE RESULTS WE ARE TRYING TO ACHIEVE	<p>By using the Health Passport initiative or other comparable models, achieve:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Child safety – larger scope assessments and monitoring of children and caretakers, ✓ Child medical health, ✓ Child dental health, ✓ Child mental health – larger scope screenings and treatment monitoring homeostasis v. allostasis, ✓ School success – documented by academic achievement, ✓ Relationship success/ moral health – manifested by the ability to develop and sustain friendships, ✓ Opportunity to pursue extracurricular activities while building upon individual strengths: interests may include music, fine arts, religious and/or cultural affiliations, speaking multiple languages and sports.
EXPECTED OUTCOME	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ For every child, as demonstrated by the pilot, to experience safe, healthy development, ✓ For every child to experience safety by having a competent, protective, loving, adult caretaker of trust, ✓ For every child to have regular/timely medical care, ✓ For every child to have regular/timely dental care, ✓ For every child to receive appropriate screening and appropriate mental health care, ✓ For every child to have access to needed resources to succeed in school, ✓ For every child to have the guidance to develop morally and sustain friendships, ✓ For every child to have opportunities to participate in extracurricular activities.
INFORMATION USED TO REACH THIS RECOMMENDATION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information from Task Force/Subcommittee presentations. • Colorado Children's Campaign • Annie E. Casey Foundation • <i>Bridging Worlds</i>, J Kennedy and C.J. McCarthy • <i>Child Protection Report</i>, <i>Harvard Mental Health Letter</i>, National Child Traumatic Stress Network.
WHAT INFORMATION DO WE STILL NEED	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We need refined, widely distributed Multidisciplinary Best Practice Protocols for professionals working with children across the systems of care, including child protection, mental health, juvenile justice, public health, education, that will better protect each child and his or her development.
THE STRATEGIES & ACTIVITIES NEEDED	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A power analysis, completed by a statistician, to determine the number of children in the pilot study. This analysis would provide the needed level of confidence to draw conclusions, • For children open to County Departments of Human Services to have judges

	<p>ask questions monitoring safety and developmental milestones (Casey assessment, Court Improvement Program, J. Osofsky, C. Maze, C. Lederman, M. Grace, and S. Dicker: <i>Questions every judge and lawyer should ask about infants and toddlers in the child welfare system</i> and others to be considered),</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For all professionals and family members to participate in training that addresses healthy development, homeostasis and the capacity for sensory-emotional integration, (Child Welfare League of America: <i>Pride</i> training under consideration), • In the pilot, for incentives to be put in place for professionals and family members to stay in touch with the children at least until age 21, • For incentives to be put in place for each child to document annually (with caretaker assistance when needed) how he or she is doing on each item of measurement. (There are probably valid and reliable scales already in use). Such measurement tools would be kept in an independent State database. Feedback would be given to each county annually. • Regulatory change would be needed for the pilot.
LEGISLATIVE/RULE	Legislation
COST	\$
OTHER IMPACTS THIS RECOMMENDATION MAY CAUSE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child fatalities, high school drop-out rates, child arrests would be mitigated. If not, hopefully those who have experienced a heartfelt commitment to the new Multidisciplinary Best Practice Protocols would be outraged. Children who die from abuse have received unconscionable care.
CHALLENGE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The leaders within some departments in agencies, such as, mental health, child protection, education and juvenile justice do not have a plan to help lessen the inevitable experience of symptoms of secondary trauma. Too often professionals experience feeling overwhelmed and/or numb leading to an inability to respond to the human suffering he or she is charged with preventing or alleviating.
OTHER HELPFUL INFORMATION ...	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do we need to understand more about leadership training of managers and supervisors within agencies? Is there a crisis of leadership of children needing child protection?

Child Line Mapping Worksheet

Requires Further Investigation

RECOMMENDATION	<p>Create “Child Line” a user friendly telephone and web based hotline to receive, process, and respond to reports from people involved with at-risk children or the child welfare system, including, but not limited to, foster parents, biological parents, CASAs, GALs, advocates, child care providers, medical personnel, teachers, and others. “Child Line” will have two focuses: (1) customer service and quality control in individual cases; and (2) system accountability issues.</p> <p>Address § 26-6-504(g)</p>
PURPOSE	<p>Create a safe and secure way for those involved with children and the child welfare system to report concerns, questions, comments, and complaints about the services, actions, and responses of state and county social services departments. Often times those involved with the system feel intimidated or fear retribution for utilizing current reporting mechanisms. By creating a public, transparent, and anonymous reporting system, constituents can obtain redress, counties workers can share concerns without compromising job security, and the system receives the data and feedback it needs to identify patterns and trends, and ensure quality services and continual improvement.</p>
THE MEASURABLE RESULTS WE ARE TRYING TO ACHIEVE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public confidence in child welfare system • Insulate public from pressures of agency bias • Protect reporters from retaliatory action • Improved communication between government agencies serving children • Improve safety for some children currently “falling through the cracks” • Improved customer service and service delivery • Simplify operations
EXPECTED OUTCOME	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved child safety – additional safety net for children • Improved fact and data gathering to identify patterns • Improved constituency satisfaction • Cooperation and communication between government agencies serving children • Performance oriented accountability and transparency
INFORMATION USED TO REACH THIS RECOMMENDATION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recent child fatalities • Media coverage of the gaps in the child welfare system • Testimony by grandmother to Task Force, other testimony about lack of responsiveness and accountability • Presentation to subcommittee by Risk Management Consultants
WHAT INFORMATION DO WE STILL NEED	<p>See “what was not asked but needed”</p>
THE STRATEGIES & ACTIVITIES NEEDED	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish a constituent hotline <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Toll free number and website <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Phone message and website will contain a prominent message informing public that: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (a) this is not a first response system and if this is an emergency they should contact 911 or child abuse hotline (b) the serious nature of the hotline and the importance of making only authentic reports (c) all reports will be handled as soon as possible, with emergency situations being a priority

- Reporters will be guided through a series of detailed, directed questions designed specifically for a child welfare constituency
 - Prompts can be customized for different types of reports (ongoing case, closed case, case not in system, general concern, etc.)
- Reporters can choose to remain anonymous
 - Anonymity does not preclude staff from following up on the report or giving reporter a response
- Reports and responses are stored in a knowledgebase to track data
 - “Child Line” Action Center will use this data to identify hotspots, trends, and systemic issues
- Establish Governance Committee responsible for overseeing “Child Line”
 - Reports to governor
 - 7 members: 2 citizens, member of governor’s staff, county department representative, high-level state department of human services employee, member of legal community, judicial branch representative
 - Meet (at least) once a month to ensure consistency of response, identify hotspots, and determine needed improvement
 - Committee creates governance documents
 - Determine span and depth
 - Protocols and benchmark standards for handling reports of differing levels of severity:
 - Consumer dissatisfaction reports
 - Reports that warrant deeper review
 - Serious/emergency reports
 - Governance committee will work with state and county departments to establish process for reviewing complaints regarding specific cases. The intention is that this review process will complement or replace existing processes for responding to complaints.
 - While there are several complaint/reporting processes currently in place, the processes are under utilized, not effective, and perceived as perfunctory.
 - Establish climate in which county and state departments are responsive to inquires and reports
- “Child Line” Action Center: Sort and analyze reports, collect data, assist with development of response, and communicate with reporter
 - Staff:
 - Chief Coordinator
 - Develop internal policies
 - Direct communication with the chair of the Governance Committee: helps chair prepare for monthly meetings, can easily contact chair in event of a serious/emergency report
 - Analysts
 - Sort and analyze reports: look for hot spots, trends, and systemic issues. By analyzing the reports, the child welfare community will identify areas and services that need improvement, as well as areas of excellence that can be replicated. “Child Line” is an opportunity to learn and improve.
 - Prepare responses for constituents
 - Responses will reflect the level of review

	<p>given to each report and whether the anonymity of the reporter affected the level of review</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare weekly/monthly reports for Governance Committee <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Support staff • Note: “Child Line” differs from an ombudsman office in that it will not have the investigatory powers traditionally granted to an ombudsman, such as access to agency records and subpoena power. “Child Line’s success depends on the good will and collaboration between the state, counties, service providers, and constituents. Only by working together can we improve the system.
LEGISLATIVE/RULE	Legislation
COST	\$
OTHER IMPACTS THIS RECOMMENDATION MAY CAUSE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creates culture of information sharing and inter-agency collaboration • Improve safety for some children currently “falling through the cracks” • Transparency to ensure justice for children • Creates performance-oriented system with accountability
CHALLENGE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaboration between the various government agencies serving children to respond to reports and address systemic issues • Address concerns of perceived services duplication
OTHER HELPFUL INFORMATION ...	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whether sufficient private dollars could be raised to support the executive order and how to structure a private/public partnership • Sufficiently funding to enable state and county staff to participate in the governance committee <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Allocation of FTE at state and county level? • Sufficient staffing levels • Whether governance committee needs to meet more than once month • How to adequately review complaints that are made anonymously • Prevent public from using the hotline for personal grievances or frivolous reports

Appendix C: Materials and Presentations

PRESENTATIONS:

Task Force

- Overview of the Child and Family Service Review - Valerie Jenkins, Child and Family Review Specialist, Child Welfare Services
- Overview of the Office of the Child's Representative - Theresa **Spahn**, Executive Director, Office of the Child's Representative
- Mental Health Issues for Children and Families Involved in Foster Care - Robert Clyman, MD, Executive Director, Kempe Center
- Educational Services in Facilities - Skip Barber, Executive Director, CAFCA
- Subsidies Adoption and Kinship Care – Adoption Exchange, National Conference of State Legislators
- Overview of Medicaid and Behavioral Health Care – Mariel Case, Behavioral Health Contracts Specialist, Health Care and Policy Financing
- Overview of Office of Dispute Resolution – Sharon Daily and Emily Tracy
- Overview of Court Improvement – Colorado State Judicial – Judge Robert Lowenbach, 19th Judicial District Court

Subcommittee

- Motivation's for Foster Parenting by Kempe Foundation
- Targeted Recruitment of Foster Parents – By Lutheran Family Services
- Targeted Faith-based Recruitment of Adoptive Parents – By Project 1:27
- Chafee Overview – By CDHS, CW Staff
- Need to Increase Quality Resource Families – By CDHS, CW Staff and County Department of Human/Social Services Staff
- TANF Reserves and CORE Service

PANEL PRESENTATIONS (in order of presentation):

Task Force

- County Department of Human/Social Service Panel
- Child Place Agencies Panel
- Youth Panel
- Youth Roundtable
- Biological Parents Panel
- County Caseworker Panel

Sub-committee

- Adams County Caseworker Panel

LITERATURE:

1. A Voice of Their Own: Colorado Judicial Institute – November 2007 (<http://www.coloradojudicialinstitute.org>)
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