



MONDAY MORNING MEMO

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How Effective Are Family Treatment Drug Courts?

Last year, there were almost 200 family treatment drug courts (FTDCs) operating in 43 States, with many additional programs in development. These courts serve thousands of substance-abusing parents and their children through a team approach that involves collaboration among child welfare, drug treatment, and judicial systems; frequent court hearings; and close monitoring of parents. These courts also send a clear message to parents about the link between successful treatment and the possibility of family reunification.

Despite their proliferation, there has been little empirical research on the effectiveness of the FTDC model. A new study, funded by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, represents one of the first outcome studies of the model. The study compared outcomes for 250 FTDC participants at four sites to outcomes for similar parents who did not receive FTDC services. Results showed that FTDC parents entered substance abuse treatment more quickly, stayed in treatment longer, and completed more treatment episodes. Furthermore, children of FTDC parents entered permanent placements more quickly and were more likely to be reunited with their parents.

The study, “How Effective Are Family Treatment Drug Courts? Outcomes From a Four-Site National Study,” by Beth L. Green, Carrie Furrer, Sonia Worcel, Scott Burrus, and Michael Finigan, was published in the February 2007 issue of *Child Maltreatment*. It is available for purchase on the Sage website:

<http://cmx.sagepub.com/cgi/content/abstract/12/1/43>.

Indian Child Welfare Act and Tribal Collaboration

There are 82,000 New Yorkers who are registered to Native American tribes, and thousands more that have not been formally engaged, according to presenters at the New York Public Welfare Association (NYPWA) conference last week. In a presentation on the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA), this statistic was stressed to highlight the importance of ICWA compliance when working with families in the child welfare system.

Chief Lorraine M. White of the St. Regis Mohawk Tribe said asking about Native American heritage should be “the natural response” in all cases, stressing that heritage is not something that is obvious by sight. Asking these questions allows the appropriate tribe to be involved right from the start, which facilitates permanency according to **Rhonda Mitchell**, ICWA Coordinator for the St. Regis Mohawk Tribe. “Best practice is a lot of communication from and to the tribe in these cases.”

Margaret Burt, counsel to NYPWA, stressed that when a case becomes an ICWA proceeding, higher standards of proof apply. She also said the NYS ICWA Statute has additional provisions and structures from the federal law. If a removal hearing occurs and the child is later determined to be Native American, the hearing must be re-conducted.



The tribe decides whether a child is enrolled or not, and functions as a “third parent” in these cases. The first resource for an ICWA child is the family. But tribes define family differently, some including not just blood relatives but clan members as extended family. Some determine heritage based upon the mother’s lineage, and some based upon the father’s. This makes it even more important to obtain thorough information about fathers in child welfare cases when making an assessment about ICWA status.

ICWA, as a federal and state law, applies to the state courts, and only to tribes if they choose to apply it. There is, Ms. Burt said, some debate and case law as to how the Interstate Compact applies in ICWA cases, but determining native heritage is still the first important step.

Kim Thomas, Native American Affairs Specialist with the NYS Office of Children and Family Services, presented segments of a new DVD produced by NYS OCFS as a teaching tool on ICWA for child welfare case workers. Ms. Thomas will be presenting to CASA directors at the September Program Directors’ Meeting.

For more information, visit the NYS OCFS website at www.ocfs.state.ny.us/main/nas/#icwa. The National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges also has an excellent ICWA resource, which can be found at www.ncjfcj.org/content/blogcategory/361/430/. The National CASA Association Judges’ Page references these resources at www.nationalcasa.org/JudgesPage/Article_ICWAintroduction_03-04.htm. B. J. Jones’ *The Indian Child Welfare Act Handbook: A Legal Guide to the Custody and Adoption of Native American Children* includes helpful information, checklists and forms. The book can be purchased from the American Bar Association www.abanet.org/abastore/index.cfm.

Federal Children’s Bureau Seeking Child Welfare Specialist

The Administration on Children, Youth and Families (ACYF) Children's Bureau within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services is interviewing for the position of Child Welfare Program Specialist. To view the job announcement, go to:

<http://jobsearch.usajobs.opm.gov/getjob.asp?JobID=60200318&AVSDM=2007%2D07%2D18+14%3A33%3A12&Logo=0&q=acf-2007-404&sort=rv&FedEmp=Y&vw=d&brd=3876&ss=0&FedPub=Y>

Bill Limiting Law Guardian Caseloads Passes Legislature

Last week, the NYS State Senate gave final passage by a vote of 59 to 0 to a bill designed to set limits on the number of children law guardians can represent at any one time. The legislation (A6847B/S4025A), requires the NYS Office of Court Administration (OCA) to promulgate regulations for law guardians regarding optimal caseloads.

The bill passed the State Assembly by a 147 to 0 vote on June 21 and has been sent to the Governor for signature. According to the *NY Law Journal*, impetus for the bill came from advocates for law guardians who argued that quality of representation suffers with increased caseloads. Further information on the legislation can be obtained at <http://assembly.state.ny.us/leg/>.



Resources

Free Guide for Preventing Drug Use Available

The National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA), part of the National Institutes of Health in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, is pleased to feature the second edition of *Preventing Drug Use Among Children and Adolescents: A Research-Based Guide for Parents, Educators, and Community Leaders*. This edition, derived from research on effective prevention programs, includes information about key factors that place youth at risk for drug abuse, guidance for planning drug abuse prevention programs in the community, the application of prevention principles to programs, and descriptions of the core elements of effective prevention programs.

This edition is available in four formats that are free of charge: 1) a full-sized complete version, 2) an "In-Brief" pamphlet-sized version, 3) a laminated pocket-sized card that outlines the publication's 16 prevention principles for easy reference, and 4) an abbreviated Spanish-language version.

To order free individual copies, call the National Clearinghouse for Alcohol and Drug Information (NCADI) at (800) 729-6686, (800) 487-4889 (TDD), or (877) 767-8432 (Español) or visit the NIDA Web Site, http://ncadistore.samhsa.gov/catalogNIDA/Pub_Details.aspx?ItemID=16616). If you would like to order this publication in bulk, e-mail nidanews@iqsolutions.com.

CASA of Minnesota has Online Volunteer Exit Survey

Another state is fond of Survey Monkey! Minnesota has an online volunteer exit survey, available at <http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.asp?u=954113468869>

NYS UCS Court Rules and Contract Primer

CASA Programs That Are Required to Have Advisory Boards

§117.2 **Program Requirements** of the Administrative Order of the Chief Administrative Judge of the Courts states that "Each CASA program housed within a multi-program not-for-profit agency shall have an advisory committee with sole responsibility for monitoring such program. A member of the advisory committee shall serve on the not-for-profit agency's board of directors."

Advisory Committee membership should ideally reflect the diversity of the community and children served by the program. Advisory Boards have assumed different roles in various counties, sometimes assisting in resource development, public relations, training, development of publications, and providing input on program management. The liaison to the agency's board helps inform the governing body of the entire agency about the accomplishments and needs of the CASA program, and helps to keep the CASA program within the strategic plan and mission of the host agency.



~~~~~ **The A-Train** ~~~~~

***Fall Program Directors' Meeting September 10-11***

Save the Date for the Fall Program Directors' Meeting, Monday and Tuesday, September 10 - 11, at the Holiday Inn Express Hotel, East Greenbush, New York. Sponsored by CASA: Advocates for Children of NYS and the NYS Unified Court System CASA Assistance Program, the fall meeting is coordinated by CASANYS. CASANYS will be distributing agenda and registration information to directors soon.

***Reminder: Individual Donor Appeals Training Oct. 2-3***

Reminder that the Office of Alternative Dispute Resolution & Court Improvement Programs will sponsor the second in its series of resource development trainings for Community Dispute Resolution Centers, Children's Centers, and CASA Programs this fall Tuesday, October 2<sup>nd</sup> through Wednesday, October 3<sup>rd</sup>. This year's topic will be: Individual Donor Appeals: The Cornerstone of Agency Fundraising. The training will be held at the Holiday Inn in Saratoga Springs, NY.

Registration materials will be distributed to CASA Directors shortly. Featured presenter will be Board Development and Fundraising Consultant **P. Burke Keegan**, author of *Fundraising for Non-Profits: How to Build a Community Partnership*. The training is geared to program staff, board and volunteers.

~~~~~ **Next Issue** ~~~~~

The next issue of the Monday Morning Memo will be published on Monday, August 6. Past issues are available on the CASA Assistance Program Website, www.nycourts.gov/ip/casa/

~~~~~ **Quote of the Week** ~~~~~

"I'm a great believer in luck and I find the harder I work, the more I have of it."

*- Thomas Jefferson*

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