



4301 Connecticut Avenue, NW, Suite 350 ♦ Washington, DC ♦ 20008
Phone 202-572-6000 ♦ Fax 202-362-8420
www.childtrends.org ♦ www.childtrendsdatbank.org

The Child Trends Child Welfare Group

Mission: To improve outcomes for children, youth, and families who may become or already are involved with the child welfare system.

Vision: A child welfare system that promotes positive child development in all of its activities.

Methods: The Child Welfare Group provides research-based information and advice to people who have the capacity to make positive change in child welfare systems. We generate this information through rigorous research, analyzing and synthesizing existing knowledge, and policy analysis. We draw on the broad and deep expertise in child and family issues within Child Trends, as well as our government, foundation, policy, program, and research partners.

Special capacities: The Child Welfare Group has research and direct practice experience in virtually every area in the child welfare field, including maltreatment prevention, child protection, courts, foster care, youth leaving care, staffing and training, permanency, adoption, child well-being, the overlap between child welfare and other government services, the intersection of race and ethnicity with child welfare, and public policy. The group has special capacities in the following areas:

- **Rigorous evaluation:** Rigorous evaluations in the child welfare field are rare. Building on Child Trends' history of high-quality research, the Child Welfare Group has developed the technology, knowledge, and staff to carry out experimental and quasi-experimental evaluations of innovative practices and programs in the child welfare field. For example, our evaluation of Wendy's Wonderful Kids — a child-centered adoption program funded by the Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption — is a random assignment study involving 25 sites across the nation. Similarly, our evaluation of Family Finding, a new intervention that uses advanced search technology and intensive case management to locate kin to build a network of support for children in foster care, also uses a random assignment design at 11 sites coast to coast.
- **Policy reform:** Child Trends uses its rare combination of empirical knowledge, broad network of contacts, and political sensitivity to inform and assess child welfare system reform. For example, Child Trends operates FosteringConnections.org to promote efficient and effective implementation of the 2008 Fostering Connections Act. Working with several foundations, technical assistance providers, professional organizations and service providers, the resource center maintains a central repository of information and facilitates access to expertise to help states and localities carry out the new law. In addition, we operate the [State Child Welfare Policy Database \(www.childwelfarepolicy.org\)](http://StateChildWelfarePolicyDatabase.org), a website that documents state policies on numerous child welfare issues, including child welfare finance, kinship care policies, and policies for older youth in foster care.
- **Indicators:** Child Trends has a national reputation for developing and analyzing indicators of child and family well-being. For example, following the passage of the Adoption and Safe Families Act, Child Trends developed a set of indicators that federal,

The Child Trends Child Welfare Group: Improving Outcomes for Children, Youth and Families

state, and local government could use to monitor child-well being in the child welfare system. Recently, we wrote a paper for the Children's Bureau's Early Childhood QIC recommending indicators for evaluating child maltreatment prevention programs for children ages 0-5 years. We have a vast knowledge of and experience in developing national surveys and compendia of measures, most recently the National Survey of Adoptive Parents, the first nationally representative survey of this group.

Child Welfare Staff

Karin Malm, M.S., Program Area Director. Ms. Malm has over 20 years of experience conducting research and providing technical assistance in the child welfare field, including positions at the Child Welfare League of America and the Urban Institute.

Raquel Ellis, M.S.W and Ph.D., Research Scientist. Dr. Ellis worked as a child welfare caseworker in Los Angeles before obtaining her Ph.D. She directs several implementation studies at Child Trends and has worked on studies of African American and Latino kinship families.

Sharon Vandivere, M.P.P., Research Scientist. Ms. Vandivere has over ten years of experience at Child Trends, where she studies adoption and foster care. Her quantitative experience includes the analysis of numerous experimental, survey, and administrative data sources.

Tiffany Allen, M.S.W., Senior Research Analyst. Ms. Allen, a former child welfare caseworker, specializes in data analysis, database development, and caseworker training.

Kerry DeVooght, M.S.W., Senior Research Analyst. Ms. DeVooght, a former child welfare caseworker, specializes in child welfare policy and project management.

Amy McKlindon, Senior Research Assistant. Ms. McKlindon is a recent graduate of Cornell University.

Eric Williams, Research Assistant. Mr. Williams is a recent graduate of Grambling State University.

Additional Resources

Carol Emig, M.P.P., President. Ms. Emig directed the Pew Commission on Children in Foster Care and held senior positions at the National Commission on Children and the Center for the Study of Social Policy.

Hope Cooper, Vice President for Public Policy. Ms. Cooper held a senior staff position on the Senate Finance Committee and was responsible for legislation and oversight of TANF, Medicaid, and other programs. She was also a senior program officer at the Pew Charitable Trusts, where she directed its foster care initiative.

Rob Geen, M.P.P., Board Member. Mr. Geen is a Senior Fellow at the Annie E. Casey Foundation and a former W.T. Grant Distinguished Fellow. He is the editor of the book, *Kinship Care*.

The Hon. William A. Thorne, J.D., Board Member. Judge Thorne serves on the Utah State Court of Appeals, after decades of experience as a family court judge and a tribal court judge. A nationally recognized leader on children and the courts, he is a member of the board of

The Child Trends Child Welfare Group: Improving Outcomes for Children, Youth, and Families



4301 Connecticut Avenue, NW, Suite 350 ♦ Washington, DC ♦ 20008
Phone 202-572-6000 ♦ Fax 202-362-8420
www.childtrends.org ♦ www.childtrendsdatabank.org

National CASA, NACAC, and the ABA Steering Committee on the Unmet Legal Needs of Children.