

**CHILD ABUSE PREVENTION AND TREATMENT AND  
ADOPTION REFORM ACT OF 1978<sup>1</sup>**

[As Amended Through P.L. 111-320, Enacted December 20, 2010]

AN ACT To promote the healthy development of children who would benefit from adoption by facilitating their placement in adoptive homes, to extend and improve the provisions of the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act, and for other purposes.

*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,* That this Act may be cited as the “Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment and Adoption Reform Act of 1978”.

**TITLE I—AMENDMENTS TO CHILD ABUSE PREVENTION  
AND TREATMENT ACT**

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**TITLE II—ADOPTION OPPORTUNITIES**

**SEC. 201. CONGRESSIONAL FINDINGS AND DECLARATION OF PURPOSE.**

(a) FINDINGS.—Congress finds that—

(1) on the last day of fiscal year 2009, some 424,000 children were living in temporary foster family homes or other foster care settings;

(2) most children in foster care are victims of child abuse or neglect by their biological parents and their entry into foster care brought them the additional trauma of separation from their homes and often their communities;

(3) on average, children entering foster care have more physical and mental health needs than do children in the general population, and some require intensive services because the children entering foster care—

(A) were born to mothers who did not receive prenatal care;

(B) were born with life-threatening conditions or disabilities;

(C) were born addicted to alcohol or other drugs; or

(D) have HIV/AIDS;

(4) each year, thousands of children in foster care, regardless of their age, the size of the sibling group they are a part of, their racial or ethnic status, their medical condition, or any physical, mental or emotional disability they may have, are in need of placement with permanent, loving, adoptive families;

<sup>1</sup> Public Law 95-266.

(5)(A) States have made important strides in increasing the number of children who are placed in permanent homes with adoptive parents and in reducing the length of time children wait for such a placement; and

(B) many thousands of children, however, still remain in institutions or foster homes solely because of legal and other barriers to such a placement;

(6)(A) on the last day of fiscal year 2009, there were 115,000 children waiting for adoption;

(B) children waiting for adoption have had parental rights of all living parents terminated or the children have a permanency goal of adoption;

(C)(i) the average age of children adopted with public child welfare agency involvement during fiscal year 2009 was a little more than 6 years; and

(ii) the average age of children waiting for adoption on the last day of that fiscal year was a little more than 8 years of age and more than 30,000 of those children were 12 years of age or older; and

(D)(i) 25 percent of the children adopted with public child welfare agency involvement during fiscal year 2009 were African-American; and

(ii) 30 percent of the children waiting for adoption on the last day of fiscal year 2009 were African-American;

(7) adoption may be the best alternative for assuring the healthy development of children placed in foster care;

(8) there are qualified persons seeking to adopt such children who are unable to do so because of barriers to their placement and adoption; and

(9) in order both to enhance the stability of and love in the home environments of such children and to avoid wasteful expenditures of public funds, such children—

(A) should not have medically indicated treatment withheld from them; or

(B) be maintained in foster care or institutions when adoption is appropriate and families can be found for such children.

(b) PURPOSE.—It is the purpose of this title to facilitate the elimination of barriers, including geographic barriers, to adoption and to provide permanent and loving home environments for children who would benefit from adoption, particularly older children, minority children, and children with special needs, including disabled infants with life-threatening conditions, by providing a mechanism to—

(1) promote quality standards for adoption services, pre-placement, post-placement, and post-legal adoption counseling, and standards to protect the rights of children in need of adoption;

(2) maintain an Internet-based national adoption information exchange system to—

(A) bring together children who would benefit from adoption and qualified prospective adoptive parents who are seeking such children;

(B) conduct national recruitment efforts in order to reach prospective parents for children awaiting adoption; and

(C) connect placement agencies, prospective adoptive parents, and adoptive parents to resources designed to reduce barriers to adoption, support adoptive families, and ensure permanency; and

(3) demonstrate expeditious ways to free children for adoption for whom it has been determined that adoption is the appropriate plan.

[42 U.S.C. 5111]

**SEC. 203.<sup>1</sup> INFORMATION AND SERVICES.**

(a) **IN GENERAL.**—The Secretary shall establish in the Department of Health and Human Services an appropriate administrative arrangement to provide a centralized focus for planning and coordinating of all departmental activities affecting adoption and foster care and for carrying out the provisions of this title. The Secretary shall make available such consultant services, on-site technical assistance and personnel, together with appropriate administrative expenses, including salaries and travel costs, as are necessary for carrying out such purposes, including services to facilitate the adoption of older children, minority children, and children with special needs, particularly infants and toddlers with disabilities who have life-threatening conditions, and services to families considering adoption of children with special needs.

(b) **REQUIRED ACTIVITIES.**—In connection with carrying out the provisions of this title, the Secretary shall—

(1) conduct (directly or by grant to or contract with public or private agencies or organizations) an education and training program on adoption, and prepare, publish, and disseminate (directly or by grant to or contract with public or private agencies and organizations) to all interested parties, public and private agencies and organizations (including, but not limited to, hospitals, health care and family planning clinics, and social services agencies), and governmental bodies, information and education and training materials regarding adoption, adoption assistance programs, and post-legal adoption services;

(2) conduct, directly or by grant or contract with public or private organizations, ongoing, extensive recruitment efforts on a national level, including efforts to promote the adoption of older children, minority children, and children with special needs, develop national public awareness efforts to unite children in need of adoption with appropriate adoptive parents, and establish a coordinated referral system of recruited families with appropriate State or regional adoption resources to ensure that families are served in a timely fashion;

(3) notwithstanding any other provision of law, provide (directly or by grant to or contract with public or private agencies or organizations) for (A) the operation of a national adoption information exchange system (including only such information as is necessary to facilitate the adoptive placement of children,

<sup>1</sup> Section 202 was repealed by section 402 of Public Law 102–295.

utilizing computers and data processing methods to assist in the location of children who would benefit by adoption and in the placement in adoptive homes of children awaiting adoption); and (B) the coordination of such system with similar State and regional systems;

(4) provide (directly or by grant to or contract with public or private agencies or organizations, including adoptive family groups and minority groups) for the provision of technical assistance in the planning, improving, developing, and carrying out of programs and activities relating to adoption, and to promote professional leadership training of minorities in the adoption field;

(5) encourage involvement of corporations and small businesses in supporting adoption as a positive family-strengthening option, including the establishment of adoption benefit programs for employees who adopt children;

(6) support the placement of children in kinship care arrangements, pre-adoptive, or adoptive homes;

(7) increase the effective use of public or private agencies (including community-based and other organizations) by States, or sectarian institutions, for the recruitment of potential adoptive and foster families and to provide assistance in the placement of children for adoption, including assisting in efforts to work with organizations that promote the placement of older children, minority children, and children with special needs;

(8) consult with other appropriate Federal departments and agencies in order to promote maximum coordination of the services and benefits provided under programs carried out by such departments and agencies with those carried out by the Secretary, and provide for the coordination of such aspects of all programs within the Department of Health and Human Services relating to adoption;

(9) maintain (directly or by grant to or contract with public or private agencies or organizations) a National Resource Center for Special Needs Adoption to—

(A) promote professional leadership development of minorities in the adoption field;

(B) provide training and technical assistance to service providers and State agencies to improve professional competency in the field of adoption and the adoption of children with special needs;

(C) facilitate the development of interdisciplinary approaches to meet the needs of children who are waiting for adoption and the needs of adoptive families; and

(D) identify best practices to reduce adoption disruption and termination;

(10) provide (directly or by grant to or contract with States, local government entities, tribal child welfare agencies, public or private licensed child welfare or adoption agencies or adoptive family groups and community-based organizations with experience in working with minority populations) for the provision of programs aimed at increasing the number of minority children (who are in foster care and have the goal of

adoption) placed in adoptive families, with a special emphasis on recruitment of minority families—

(A) which may include such activities as—

(i) outreach, public education, or media campaigns to inform the public of the needs and numbers of such children;

(ii) recruitment of prospective adoptive families for such children, including developing and using procedures to notify family and relatives when a child enters the child welfare system;

(iii) expediting, where appropriate, the legal availability of such children;

(iv) expediting, where appropriate, the agency assessment of prospective adoptive families identified for such children;

(v) formation of prospective adoptive family support groups;

(vi) training of personnel of—

(I) public agencies;

(II) private child welfare and adoption agencies that are licensed by the State; and

(III) adoptive parents organizations and community-based organizations with experience in working with minority populations;

(vii) education and training of prospective adoptive or adoptive parents;

(viii) use of volunteers and adoptive parent groups; and

(ix) any other activities determined by the Secretary to further the purposes of this Act; and

(B) shall be subject to the condition that such grants or contracts may be renewed if documentation is provided to the Secretary demonstrating that appropriate and sufficient placements of such children have occurred during the previous funding period; and

(11) provide (directly or by grant to or contract with States, local government entities, or public or private licensed child welfare or adoption agencies) for the implementation of programs that are intended to increase the number of older children (who are in foster care and with the goal of adoption) placed in adoptive families, with a special emphasis on child-specific recruitment strategies, including—

(A) outreach, public education, or media campaigns to inform the public of the needs and numbers of older youth available for adoption;

(B) training of personnel in the special needs of older youth and the successful strategies of child-focused, child-specific recruitment efforts; and

(C) recruitment of prospective families for such children.

(c) SERVICES FOR FAMILIES ADOPTING SPECIAL NEEDS CHILDREN.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall provide (directly or by grant to or contract with States, local government entities,

public or private nonprofit licensed child welfare or adoption agencies or adoptive family groups) for the provision of post legal adoption services for families who have adopted special needs children.

(2) SERVICES.—Services provided under grants made under this subsection shall supplement, not supplant, services from any other funds available for the same general purposes, including—

(A) individual counseling;

(B) group counseling;

(C) family counseling;

(D) case management;

(E) training public agency adoption personnel, personnel of private, nonprofit child welfare and adoption agencies licensed by the State to provide adoption services, mental health services professionals, and other support personnel to provide services under this subsection;

(F) assistance to adoptive parent organizations;

(G) assistance to support groups for adoptive parents, adopted children, and siblings of adopted children;

(H) day treatment; and

(I) respite care.

(d) IMPROVING PLACEMENT RATE OF CHILDREN IN FOSTER CARE.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall make grants for improving State efforts to increase the placement of foster care children legally free for adoption, according to a pre-established plan and goals for improvement.

(2) APPLICATIONS; TECHNICAL AND OTHER ASSISTANCE.—

(A) APPLICATIONS.—Each State entering into an agreement under this subsection shall submit an application to the Secretary that describes the manner in which the State will use funds during the 3 fiscal years subsequent to the date of the application to accomplish the purposes of this section. Such application shall be in a form and manner determined to be appropriate by the Secretary, consistent with the purpose of this title. Each application shall contain information that—

(i) describes how the State plans to improve the placement rate of children in permanent homes;

(ii) describes the methods the State, prior to submitting the application, has used to improve the placement of older children, minority children, and children with special needs, who are legally free for adoption;

(iii) describes the evaluation the State plans to conduct, to identify the effectiveness of programs and methods of placement under this subsection, and submit to the Secretary; and

(iv) describes how the State plans to coordinate activities under this subsection with relevant activities under section 473 of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 673).

(B) TECHNICAL AND OTHER ASSISTANCE.—The Secretary shall provide, directly or by grant to or contract with public or private agencies or organizations—

(i) technical assistance and resource and referral information to assist State or local governments with termination of parental rights issues, in recruiting and retaining adoptive families, in the successful placement of older children, minority children, and children with special needs, and in the provision of pre- and post-placement services, including post-legal adoption services; and

(ii) other assistance to help State and local governments replicate successful adoption-related projects from other areas in the United States.

(C) EVALUATION.—The Secretary shall compile the results of evaluations submitted by States (described in subparagraph (A)(iii)) and submit a report containing the compiled results to the appropriate committees of Congress.

(3) PAYMENTS.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—Payments under this subsection shall begin during fiscal year 1989. Payments under this section during any fiscal year shall not exceed \$1,000,000. No payment may be made under this subsection unless an amount in excess of \$5,000,000 is appropriated for such fiscal year under section 205(a).

(B) REVERSION OF UNUSED FUNDS.—Any payment made to a State under this subsection which is not used by such State for the purpose provided in paragraph (1) during the fiscal year payment is made shall revert to the Secretary on October 1st of the next fiscal year and shall be used to carry out the purposes of this Act.

(e) ELIMINATION OF BARRIERS TO ADOPTIONS ACROSS JURISDICTIONAL BOUNDARIES.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall award grants to, or enter into contracts with, States, local government entities, public or private child welfare or adoption agencies, adoption exchanges, or adoption family groups to carry out initiatives to improve efforts to eliminate barriers to placing children for adoption across jurisdictional boundaries.

(2) SERVICES TO SUPPLEMENT NOT SUPPLANT.—Services provided under grants made under this subsection shall supplement, not supplant, services provided using any other funds made available for the same general purposes including—

(A) developing a uniform homestudy standard and protocol for acceptance of homestudies between States and jurisdictions;

(B) developing models of financing cross-jurisdictional placements;

(C) expanding the capacity of all adoption exchanges to serve increasing numbers of children;

(D) developing training materials and training social workers on preparing and moving children across State lines; and

(E) developing and supporting initiative models for networking among agencies, adoption exchanges, and parent support groups across jurisdictional boundaries.

【42 U.S.C. 5113】

#### STUDY OF UNLICENSED ADOPTION PLACEMENTS

SEC. 204. (a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall provide for a study (the results of which shall be reported to the appropriate committees of the Congress not later than eighteen months after the date of enactment of the Keeping Children and Families Safe Act of 2003) designed to determine—

(1)<sup>1</sup> the nature, scope, and effects of the interstate (and, to the extent feasible, intrastate) placement of children in adoptive homes (not including the homes of stepparents or relatives of the child in question) by persons or agencies.

(2) how interstate placements are being financed across State lines;

(3) recommendations on best practice models for both interstate and intrastate adoptions; and

(4) how State policies in defining special needs children differentiate or group similar categories of children.

(b) DYNAMICS OF SUCCESSFUL ADOPTION.—The Secretary shall conduct research (directly or by grant to, or contract with, public or private nonprofit research agencies or organizations) about adoption outcomes and the factors affecting those outcomes. The Secretary shall submit a report containing the results of such research to the appropriate committees of the Congress not later than the date that is 36 months after the date of the enactment of the Keeping Children and Families Safe Act of 2003.

(c) INTERJURISDICTIONAL ADOPTION.—Not later than 1 year after the date of the enactment of the Keeping Children and Families Safe Act of 2003, the Secretary shall submit to the appropriate committees of the Congress a report that contains recommendations for an action plan to facilitate the interjurisdictional adoption of foster children.

【42 U.S.C. 5114】

#### AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS

SEC. 205. (a) There are authorized to be appropriated \$40,000,000 for fiscal year 2010 and such sums as may be necessary for fiscal years 2011 through 2015 to carry out programs and activities authorized under this subtitle.

(b) Not less than 30 percent and not more than 50 percent of the funds appropriated under subsection (a) shall be allocated for activities under subsections (b)(10) and (c) of section 203.

(c) The Secretary shall ensure that funds appropriated pursuant to authorizations in this Act shall remain available until expended for the purposes for which they were appropriated.

【42 U.S.C. 5115】

<sup>1</sup>Margin so in law.