

Data Trends

From: Data Trends
Sent: Monday, August 14, 2000 11:16 AM
To: Data Trends
Subject: Data Trends> News 008

Data Trends are produced by the Research and Training Center for Children's Mental Health, Louis de la Parte Florida Mental Health Institute, University of South Florida, Tampa. Data Trends are funded by the Center for Mental Health Services, SAMHSA, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. There are two Data Trends products: 1) Summaries, which detail recent, published articles on systems of care for children with emotional and behavioral disabilities and their families, and; 2) News briefs, which highlight related items or events of interest to the field.

On Wednesday, August 9, HHS Secretary Donna E. Shalala released the first Child Welfare Outcomes Report. The report compiles state and national data on children who are abused and neglected, in foster care, adopted, or waiting to be adopted. The report was required by the Adoption and Safe Families Act signed into law by President Clinton in 1997, and the data it contains, together with child welfare monitoring reviews, will be used to hold states accountable for services to at-risk children. The report contains data on each state's population, the number of children in poverty, the number of children reported to child protective services, the number of children in foster care, the number of children waiting to be adopted, and the number of children adopted.

The report confirms that incidence of child abuse and neglect has declined in recent years, while the number of adoptions has increased. In 1998, 36,000 children were adopted, a significant increase from 28,000 in 1996. Still, more than 100,000 children remain in foster care waiting for a secure and permanent adoptive home.

Under new regulations issued on January 25, 2000, the state data in this report will be used to improve outcomes for abused and neglected children, children in foster care, and children awaiting adoption. The regulations set up a new federal review process which will measure states for the first time on the quality of services provided to, and outcome results for, at-risk children. States will also be subject to tough new penalties if they fail to protect children adequately as well as being given the opportunity to undertake corrective action plans.

The report includes data on state performance on six of the measures in the new monitoring process. The six measures are: recurrence of child abuse and neglect, incidence of child abuse and neglect in foster care, time to reunification, re-entries into foster care, time in foster care to adoption, and stability of foster care placements.

Later this year, HHS will develop national standards on those six measures to which individual state numbers will be compared, as one part of the review process, to determine how well states are performing. Other review features include an assessment of additional state data and intensive on-site interviews with children, families and stakeholders. HHS undertook an extensive consultation process with states, local agencies, tribes, courts, unions, child advocacy organizations and other interested parties to develop the measures in the report.

The first round of states to be reviewed for the fiscal year 2001, starting this fall, are: Arizona, Arkansas, Delaware, District of Columbia, Florida, Georgia, Indiana, Kansas, Massachusetts, Minnesota, New Mexico, New York,

North Carolina, North Dakota, Oregon, South Dakota and Vermont.

The Adoption and Safe Families Act made the most sweeping changes to the child welfare program in this country in its history. This landmark bipartisan legislation was based in large part on the recommendations of the Clinton Administration's Adoption 2002 report to meet the president's goals of doubling adoptions and permanent placements by the year 2002 and moving children more quickly from foster care to permanent homes. The law made it clear that the safety and well being of children must be the paramount concerns of state child welfare services. The act created bonuses to states for increasing adoptions and tightened time frames for making permanent placement decisions for children. Also, it ensured health insurance coverage for all special needs children in subsidized adoptions, and continued funding for services to keep families together when it is appropriate and safe.

The report is available on the World Wide Web at
<http://www.acf.dhhs.gov/news>

If you missed previous Data Trends publications, visit the main Data Trends page: <http://rtckids.fmhi.usf.edu/rtcpubs/datatrendshp.htm>

For more information about the Data Trends Project or about the Research and Training Center, visit our website at <http://rtckids.fmhi.usf.edu> or contact:

Data Trends
Research and Training Center for Children's Mental Health
Department of Child and Family Studies
Louis de la Parte Florida Mental Health Institute
University of South Florida
Tampa, FL 33613-3807
Ph: (813) 974-8429