

Ways to Use the *Support Matters* Guide in Your Work

Our publication, [*Support Matters: Lessons from the Field on Services for Adoptive, Foster, and Kinship Care Families**](#), is designed to meet the needs of child welfare administrators and other leaders no matter where they are in the process of exploring how they can or should support adoptive, foster, or kinship care families. The full guide provides comprehensive information about developing, implementing, and sustaining support services, but it can also be used as a reference in connection with other key efforts and activities for child welfare systems. For example, you can find helpful ideas for approaches and services to improve permanency and placement stability outcomes that may be helpful as you develop Child and Family Services Review (CFSR) Program Improvement Plan.

Below we explore how you can use the guide in various ways depending on what your needs and goals are.

| ARE YOU: | THEN WE SUGGEST THAT YOU: |
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| Thinking about whether it's worth creating a support program or trying to convince others that it's worthwhile to invest in support services? | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Read Chapter 1 to learn about research on the value of support services and how they can help administrators, children and youth, and families. Consider how the research findings can help you make the case for support services to key leaders and stakeholders.• Review the evaluation findings in the programs profiled in Chapter 3 and consider the implications of those finding on your efforts to develop or expand more effective support services. How do other programs' outcomes compare to what you're seeing in your jurisdiction? Could support services help improve your results? |
| Working on a federal Program Improvement Plan (PIP), following a Child and Family Services Review (CFSR), to improve placement stability or permanency outcomes? | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review the program profiles in Chapter 3 to see which programs are reporting better outcomes and consider ways you could use or adapt these program approaches to improve outcomes in your system.• Review the information on the value of support in Chapter 1 to help you explore whether research suggests adding support services would help you reach your goals. |

* <http://www.nrcdr.org/develop-and-support-families/support-matters>

| ARE YOU: | THEN WE SUGGEST THAT YOU: |
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| <p>Wondering which services might be needed—whether you’re creating something new or modifying existing services?</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Look through the needs assessment options in Chapter 2 and think about ways that you can develop a deeper understanding of families’ support needs in the communities you serve. • Consider whether a survey or focus group or both might help you shape the direction of your efforts. Explore ways to connect a survey, focus group, or both to existing efforts to gather input from families, to make it easier to collect this important information. |
| <p>Looking for an interesting program that is offering respite care (or youth mentoring or another specific service type)?</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • View the chart on pages 67 to 70—then read the profiles of each program offering the particular service you’re interested in. Are there ways that you can incorporate the service into something you’re already doing? |
| <p>Creating a request for funding proposals (RFP) for nonprofits to offer services to support adoptive, foster, or kinship care families?</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read Chapter 4 and think about how your agency could work with a private partner to ensure the best possible outcomes. Consider the types of partners to include as possible contractors or grantees. • Read program profiles in Chapter 3 to explore types of support services you might include in the RFP. Think about the most important services to your system and whether you might want to make certain services a required part of any proposals. • Use the information in Chapter 3 on budget data and families served to determine how much you might be able to ask your partners to accomplish given your financial resources. Consider how many families you hope to be able to serve and with what depth of services. Does your funding seem reasonable given what other jurisdictions are accomplishing with similar resources? • Read the funding section of the profiles in Chapter 3 and the funding section of Chapter 5 to think about other funding sources to supplement the money you have available. Consider avenues you might explore and talk with leaders of similar programs to see how their funding arrangements work. |
| <p>Wanting to build a stronger evidence base for support services you’re currently offering?</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read the evaluation section of Chapter 5 (starting on page 275), which highlights types of evaluation. Consider whether you want to simply track services or if there are ways to assess outcomes. Are there ways you can incorporate surveys or other tools to better determine if your services are making a difference for children and their families? • Check out the outcomes listed at the end of each program profile in Chapter 3 to see how others are tracking and reporting the difference their services make. Consider if you could incorporate similar evaluation strategies to better assess the return on your investment in support services. |

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| <p>Hoping to add evidence-informed or evidence-based therapeutic services to an existing program?</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review the models for therapeutic services at the end of Chapter 3 (starting on page 206) and think about whether you might be able to make any of the models fit well within your system. Look at the chart on pages 67 to 70 to determine which programs are using therapeutic services, then review those program descriptions for details and components to consider adding to your service array. |
| <p>Offering services but struggling to reach your key audience?</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Set up a team to use the family engagement tool on page 270. After you've done the assessment, brainstorm about areas where you might need to make improvements to your efforts. Read Chapter 4 on partnerships and consider if partnering with nonprofits in your community will help you reach more families. |

Other things you can do with *Support Matters* to help your work

- Share the publication with other decision makers to equip them with more information on the value and effectiveness of support services in improving placement stability and permanency. This can help start a conversation about your own jurisdiction's permanency and placement stability goals and how you might accomplish them.
- Browse through the program models to generate ideas for your own work, such as diverse options for delivering services and creative ways to fund support programs.
- If you're with a public agency, share *Support Matters* with local nonprofits that are currently recruiting, developing, or supporting adoptive, foster, and kinship care families. They can learn from the work of other programs and perhaps build new ideas or strategies into their service array.
- If you're with a private agency, share the guide with your public agency colleagues to help them learn about what other jurisdictions are doing. Perhaps you can set a meeting to talk about whether your community can enhance its supports to families in adoption, foster care, and kinship care.

Contact the [National Resource Center for Diligent Recruitment at AdoptUSKids](#) (NRCDR@adoptuskids.org or 303-755-4756) to find out how we can assist your child welfare system in applying insights from the *Support Matters* publication as part of your recruitment, development, and support of families.



More free resources at:
adoptuskids.org

September 2016

