

WHAT'S NEW WITH KIDS?

March 2008

Site of the Month

Foster Care Reform

The Pew Charitable Trusts (Pew) in their 2008 report, *Time for Reform: Investing in Prevention: Keeping Children Safe at Home*, recommends that the federal government allow states more flexibility in using federal child welfare funds for prevention services that may help: (1) prevent child abuse and neglect, (2) children safely reunite with their families after exiting foster care, and (3) lessen reliance on the foster care system. Currently, most of the federal funds for child welfare are dedicated to pay for foster care placement and related services.

Offering support to families when it is needed may prevent a family crisis. The Pew recommends a range of services throughout different points in families' lives from offering support when needed to support when children leave foster care. For example, the report shows that nationally, 53 percent of children in 2005 were removed from their homes based on neglect/families' housing problems, the number one reason for removal. Providing housing support when needed may have helped keep some of these children with their families.

The report also covers: (1) policies for federal child welfare financing for foster care, (2) parents' opinions on what prevention and reunification services are needed, (3) programs that strengthen and stabilize families, (4) stories of children who had been placed in foster care, (5) history of foster care in the U.S., and (6) state data regarding foster care and child welfare federal funding for the states.

The 2005 Nevada information in the Pew report includes:

- ◆ 70.8 percent of children entered foster care due to neglect/families' problems with housing
- ◆ 3,796 children entered foster care
- ◆ 63 percent of the children exited foster care to family reunification
- ◆ Nevada had an inflexible to flexible federal dollar child welfare ratio of \$6:\$1 (FY 2006 in millions)
- ◆ Nevada received \$2,047,764 in Promoting Safe and Stable Families allocations (FY 2006)

To access the report go to: http://www.pewtrusts.org/uploadedFiles/wwwpewtrustsorg/Reports/foster_care_reform/time_for_reform.pdf.