The outstanding leadership and commitment of CHAMPS partners is evident in their collective advocacy on behalf of children and youth while also navigating the daunting challenges facing our country: a national public health emergency, troubling economic conditions, and growing urgency at all levels of government to address systemic racism, including in child welfare.

With this midyear update, we extend our heartfelt thanks to all of our partners and supporters for their ongoing efforts and share these campaign highlights.

**CHAMPS Issues New Policy Report on Diligent Recruitment of Foster Families**

- For this report, "Analysis of State 2020-2024 Foster and Adoptive Parent Diligent Recruitment Plans," CHAMPS reviewed and analyzed 42 state diligent recruitment plans. The report highlights innovative approaches and encourages child welfare agencies to incorporate them as they continue to develop and implement their own state and local strategies. The report also offers recommendations for federal and state policymakers on how to improve the diligent planning process in order to strengthen family-based foster care. In addition to broadly disseminating the report to agencies and interested stakeholders, we are planning a virtual convening for early fall to bring together agency staff for peer to peer conversation about effective strategies. The report can be found here on the CHAMPS website. This blog post provides an overview of the report.

**CHAMPS Campaign Organizes Letter to Congress During COVID-19**

- In May, CHAMPS collaborated with the National Foster Parent Association, North American Council on Adoptable Children and partners in 37 states in sending a letter to Congress highlighting the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on foster families and the children they are caring for. The letter urges Congressional leaders to consider the unique issues facing these families as they deliberate further federal relief measures.

**Campaign Develops New Tools to Help Families and Agencies During the Pandemic**

- CHAMPS issued a new brief to provide agencies and foster families with clear and timely information about the Pandemic Electronic Benefit Transfer (P-EBT) program, which was authorized by Congress in March 2020 as part of the Families First Coronavirus Response Act. The P-EBT aims to provide temporary food resources for families with children who receive free or reduced lunch, including children and youth in foster care who are categorically eligible for free lunches. See here for the new CHAMPS brief on the P-EBT program and how it can help foster families.

- In this new 3-part blog series, Dr. Denise Goodman, a national expert in foster parent recruitment and retention, shares her perspective on how agencies and families can address challenges and ensure children and youth in foster care continue to have stable, quality foster homes during and after the COVID-19 pandemic. See the blog here.
CHAMPS Leverages Federal Policy to Drive State Policy Improvements

- A new CHAMPS brief on the *Family First Transition Act (FFTA)* encourages state child welfare agencies to devote at least 50 percent of their federal allotments from *FFTA* in support of strengthening family-based care, such through 1) collection and analysis of critical information that can help agencies match children with families and improve foster family recruitment and retention; 2) effective recruitment of foster and kinship families, and 3) foster parent supports. For more information about the *Family First Transition Act*, see this [Program Instruction](#) by the Children’s Bureau.

CHAMPS Partners Share Issue Expertise with National Audiences

- CHAMPS West Virginia partner Marissa Sanders presented on foster parenting to the Senate Caucus on Foster Youth at a briefing in May held in recognition of National Foster Care Month.
- Jennifer Rodriguez, of the Youth Law Center’s Quality Parenting Initiative and CHAMPS co-chair, and Marissa Sanders of West Virginia’s Foster, Adoptive and Kinship Network were lead presenters on a webinar hosted by the Chronicle of Social Change on, “Recruiting and Supporting Caregivers: What We Do and Don’t Know.”

CHAMPS Partners Use Media to Deliver Key Messages

- Foster parent leaders affiliated with Denver-based Foster Source shared their vision for policy change in Colorado in a recent op-ed in the *Colorado Sun*, “We have a chance to improve the lives of foster children at their darkest hour.” [See here](#) for the op-ed.
- Iowa foster parent John Smith and Irene Clements of the National Foster Parent Association lifted up the unique challenges facing foster families during the COVID-19 pandemic in an op-ed in the Des Moines Register. See [here](#) for that op-ed.
- The CHAMPS campaign’s state policy director, Lynn Tiede, offered important commentary on recent guidance from the Children’s Bureau in an op-ed published in the Chronicle of Social Change, “Some Welcome Federal Input on Foster Home Recruitment and Family Visitation.” The [Op-ed is here](#). See also a companion CHAMPS blog ([posted here](#)).
- CHAMPS co-chair and President of Children’s Village, Jeremy Kohomban, and Sarah Kroon Chiles, executive director of the Redlich Horwitz Foundation, share the powerful message that “relationships heal, not institutions, in a co-authored op-ed in Youth Today, “New York Residential Facilities Should Only Be Used Like ERs for Children.” See [here](#) for the op-ed.

CHAMPS website

- Coming soon to our website is a new searchable database of state foster parenting policies, including legislation and agency policy.
- Follow us on Facebook [https://www.facebook.com/FosteringCHAMPS/](https://www.facebook.com/FosteringCHAMPS/) and on Twitter @fosteringCHAMPS