

CHILDREN'S MONITOR

Monday, 17 MAY 2021

May is Mental Health Awareness Month!

This Week:

- ❖ Treasury Releases State and Local Relief Funds
- ❖ Highlights from the Hearing: Making a Difference for Families and Foster Youth
- ❖ What Are the IV-B Programs?
- ❖ Washington Waits on Negotiations
- ❖ NWLC Launches #WeAreTheBackbone: Faces of a Child Care Nation
- ❖ Emergency Broadband Benefits
#GETCONNECTED

ICYMI: [Last Week's Children's Monitor](#)

House Subcommittee Focus on Child Welfare During National Foster Care Month

The Ways and Means Subcommittee on Worker and Family Support held a hearing on "Making a Difference for Families and Foster Youth." The hearing was intended as a review of potential updates and changes to the two Title IV-B programs for reauthorization later this year.

The witnesses included William Bell, President and CEO, Casey Family Programs, Kai Cotton, Lead Youth Navigator, YWCA, Weston Charles-Gallo, Advocate and former foster youth, Kevin Copeland, Program Coordinator, Visits to Mom, Lutheran Social Services, and Sharon Pierce, Immediate Past President, and CEO, The Villages of Indiana.

Chairman Danny Davis (D-IL) opened with remarks describing the hearing as a review of the Title IV-B programs as well as a discussion on families and foster care, the implementation of the Family First Act, potential reforms of the Chafee Independent Living Program, and kinship care. Davis also referred to some of the topics of witness testimony which included addressing racial disparities in child welfare, making improvements to legal representation for all parties in child welfare, peer mentoring, and how to help young people and their incarcerated parents maintain connections.

Ranking member Jackie Walorski (R-IN) spoke of the past year's challenges during the pandemic and the Subcommittee's efforts to help youth in foster care. She also highlighted her joint work with Congressman Davis to address some of those efforts through the COVID-19 relief package. Congresswoman Walorski then launched into an introduction of one of the witnesses, Sharon Pierce, the now-retired past president of the Villages of Indiana.

She described Sharon as a "rock start," a description that CWLA would second.

William Bell offered three recommendations in his spoken testimony: continuing the 100 percent match in federal funds for those states drawing down services through the Family First Act—the temporary increase in the match was passed through a Covid-relief package and goes back down to 50 percent after October 1, 2021. He also recommended changes in IV-B to encourage states to have more engagement with families involved in the child welfare system and urged the Subcommittee to increase the funding from tribal governments. The current set aside for tribes in Title IV-B, part 1 (Child Welfare Services), is reserved by HHS and based on a tribe's share of the state's child population. Under Title IV-B part 2 (Promoting Safe and Stable Families), there is a 3 percent set-aside of mandatory funds and a 3 percent set-aside of appropriated funds.

Kai Cotton, Lead Youth Navigator, talked of how the past year's efforts to prevent youth from aging out of foster care during the pandemic. She urged Congress to require all fifty states to extend foster care to age 21. It is currently an option and, before the pandemic, had been extended by a little more than half of the 50 states. Last year CWLA [began calling for the age to be extended](#) in all fifty states. Cotton discussed the need to have bridges for young people that can help them transform into adulthood. She called for an expansion of Chafee services to age 26, along with extending foster care.

Weston Charles-Gallo talked about his experiences in foster care as a child rejected by an alcoholic father and his mother, who was a victim of abuse. Both rejected him at a young age because he is gay. He now has two fathers adopted by them at the age of 15. He talked about how fortunate he was that they found him, but he also discussed the pain of being rejected not just by his parents but then by various foster parents not prepared to accept him for who he is. He recommended that Congress pass the [John Lewis Every Child Deserves a Family Act](#) that would ban agencies from discriminating against children and potential parents because they identify as LGBTQ. He pointed out that children do not select the agencies handling their placements, so those agencies contracted by the states to provide services should not be allowed to discriminate in their decision-making.

Kevin Copeland, from Lutheran Services of Illinois, discussed his program and efforts to maintain the connection between children in care and their incarcerated parents. The topic is of critical importance to Chairman Davis. Copeland talked about the visits and their impact on children's mental and developmental health who continue to have an attachment to their parents. He talked about the regular comments from guardians who are caring for the children and how important it is for these children to stay connected. Copeland said it is also significant for the parents who are strengthened in their efforts toward successful re-entry once they have been released.

Wrapping up was CWLA member Sharon Pierce. Sharon discussed the significance of partnerships, especially during the pandemic when child welfare, mental health, education, faith-based organizations, and the judiciary worked together to overcome the unprecedented challenges.

In response to a question from Congresswoman Walorski, she described how her agency is able to maintain stable foster care placements with 9 of 10 children staying with one family. Pierce said they made dedicated and ongoing efforts to recruit foster parents so that they are constantly adding to the foster family census and allowing them to have the appropriate placement that fits the child's needs. At one point, she described it as being on a treadmill of recruitment. During the question-and-answer period, she emphasized the need for more flexible funding through IV-B and the need for evidence-based programs and reality-based services since successful strategies and services are dependent on building strong relationships.

Subcommittee members had their specific areas of concern. Congresswoman Judy Chu (D-CA) talked about discrimination toward LGBTQ youth while Congressman Wenstrup discussed the impact that the opioid epidemic has had in Ohio and the importance of other permanency options, especially adoptions. Congresswoman Gwen Moore advocated for extending foster care to 21 and quizzed William Bell on the lack of funding for tribal governments and how to increase those funds. Congressman Dan Kildee (D-MI) discussed strategies to help youth make it through college and talked about his legislation, [H.R. 2028](#) - Fostering Postsecondary Success for Foster and Homeless Youth Act of 2021, which CWLA has endorsed. Congresswoman Carol Miller (R-WV) and Congressman Horsford (D-NV) both discussed the challenges of implementing the Family First Services Act. The Congresswoman said West Virginia had implemented Family First in the fall of 2020, and they were still challenged by the increase in the number of children entering foster care and kinship care due to the opioid epidemic. Congressman Horsford asked Dr. Bell how Nevada could implement the program. Bell indicated that states need to engage each other in the planning process. He also said it would take time to ramp up a new system and approach to child welfare. CWLA is submitting its testimony this week.

What Are the IV-B Programs?

There are two child welfare programs created under Title IV-B of the Social Security Act. Despite the call for flexible funding through child welfare, these two programs have been around for decades and provide very flexible child welfare funding, although neither program has had strong support and, in fact, been continuously cut since 2005.

Title IV-B Part 1, Child Welfare Services (CWS) of the Social Security Act was first established as part of the 1935 Social Security law. It evolved over that time from a small source of federal funding for a range of children's services from the 1930s through the late 1950s.

Until 1958, funds could not be spent in urban areas (it was assumed charities would address those child needs). The 1958 Social Security Act amendments changed that prohibition and, for the first time, required a state match based on a formula not unlike today's FMAP formula. Expansion of Title IV-B Child Welfare Services was also tied to the 1980 creation of Title IV-E foster care and adoption assistance. If states kept their foster care funding under a certain annual individual state target ceiling, the unspent Title IV-E foster care funds could be transferred into

Title IV-B to fund prevention efforts. That provision was dropped more than a decade later as few states used that option.

Today CWS is provided as a 75 percent federal match. Each state share is based on the state's population under age 21 as compared to other states. Although Congress can appropriate up to \$325 million, they never have, and the highest level of funding was reached during the Clinton Administration in 1994 when just under \$295 million was provided. After the last two decades of across-the-board budget cuts and budget caps, it is now down to \$269 million. The question that came up in the House hearing on tribes was generated by the fact that tribes receive a small percentage of IV-B part 1 funds. It is based on an HHS calculation of the Indian child population in each state. Tribes could receive increased funding in one of three ways: create a specific set aside (like IV-B part 2-see below), increase the overall funding or increase both the set-aside and funding.

CWS also includes the Child Welfare Services State Plan that dictates what states must do to get both IV-B and Title IV-E (foster & adoption) funding. It is the most flexible child welfare fund. 2107 information from the Congressional Research Service indicates that 44 percent is spent on protective services and prevention, 12 percent on family preservation services, 10 percent for the (limited number states) for foster care maintenance, 8 percent for family support and other prevention, 10 percent for reunification, and approximately 12 percent for adoption subsidies, adoption support, foster care training, and other staff and partner training.

Title IV-B part 2, Promoting Safe and Stable Families, started in 1993 as part of the August 1993 budget agreement. It began as Family Preservation and Family Support at an initial \$60 million in 1994, growing to \$240 million in 1997. In response to major campaigns, in part led by CWLA in the 1980s, it was to promote family preservation programs that sought to prevent foster care placement through intensive focused and limited efforts to help families at a crisis stage. In the early 1990s, some legislation by Congressman Tom Downey (D-NY) and Senator Lloyd Bentsen (D-TX) promoted upwards of more than \$1 billion for family preservation. The smaller program is what was created in 1993.

The Adoption and Safe Families Act (ASFA) in 1997 revamped the program above its funding of \$240 million to become the Promoting Safe and Stable Families (PSSF) block grant. It added reunification and adoption support as two other services. Eventual regulations required states to allocate at least 20 percent on each of the four service categories. CWLA has continued to advocate for this specificity because while the services for family preservation, support, reunification, and adoption support could be the same, the four types of families served are not. ASFA set funding at \$305 million in mandatory funding (not requiring an annual appropriation like CWS). The George W Bush Administration proposed an authorization of up to \$200 million—requiring an annual appropriation (the new Administration backed away from their original legislation to increase mandatory funding by \$200 million). It has never received more than \$100 million in appropriations, and the services reached their peak in 2004 at \$405 million. It is down to approximately \$360 million today. The tribes receive 3 percent of the mandatory funds and 3 percent of the appropriated funds.

Since 2006 it has included a few added separate funds. \$20 million more for the courts (in addition to the existing set aside of approximately \$10 million), \$20 million to fund competitive substance abuse projects, and \$20 million awarded to states if they prove they are providing monthly visits to children in foster care. The \$60 million for the three programs were added in 2006 after Congress cut title IV-E funding by approximately \$60 million.

As a general rule, states spend at least 20 percent on the four categories, with prevention and family support getting about 26 percent of the state spending. There is a 25 percent non-federal match. The money awarded to Tribes is based on child population and granted only to tribes sufficient to generate at least \$10,000 and submit a five-year Child Welfare Services Plan.

Washington Waits on Negotiations

This past week President Biden met with Republican and Democratic leaders to discuss how to move forward on an infrastructure bill.

The negotiations are vital because, over the remaining weeks of May, such discussions will determine how Congress proceeds this summer on his two major reforms on infrastructure and the American Family Plan. Some observers suggest the possibility that the President could get an agreement with Republicans to address a narrowed-down infrastructure bill that would address some of the more “traditional” infrastructures such as highways, bridges, and maybe a few add ons such as broadband and water and sewer systems. If that were the case, that package could pass with both Democrats and some Republicans. That would also mean the remaining items such as the Child Tax Credit ([CTC](#)), [Child Care](#), and infrastructure around school construction and other parts could be rolled into a reconciliation bill that would take 50 senators plus the Vice President’s vote to pass.

One of the hang-ups on such a traditional infrastructure bill is how to pay for it. Republicans are adamant on not rolling back of any Trump tax cuts, even for very high-income individuals. That leaves few options for transportation since Congress has appeared to turn away from a gas and fuel tax last raised by 4.3 cents in 1993.

By the end of this month, it may be decision time for the President and his Democratic counterparts in Congress. Can they get a partial bipartisan effort or go it alone on everything? May 27, 2021, is now the deadline for the release of the complete Biden 2022 appropriations. This is the detailed line by line budget by the Administration, delayed by the pandemic and the beginning of a new administration. It could provide some insight how the annual appropriations will align with the President’s infrastructure/family plans.

Treasury Releases State and Local Relief Funds

On Monday, May 10, 2021, the U.S. Department of Treasury [released details and funding](#) on the state and local government fiscal relief that was included in the March COVID-19 relief legislation.

The \$350 billion in relief is divided into the following: States & District of Columbia \$195.3 billion; Counties \$65.1 billion; Metropolitan Cites \$45.6 billion; Tribal Governments \$20.0 billion; Territories \$4.5; billion and Non-Entitlement Units of Local Government (smaller cities) \$19.5 billion.

The memo details the five broad ways state and local governments can use the funds. They include: Supporting public health expenditures; Addressing negative economic impacts caused by the public health emergency; Replacing lost public sector revenue; Providing premium pay for essential workers; and Investing in water, sewer, and broadband infrastructure. There is further detail and examples of spending in each of the areas. The memo also reiterates language in the relief package that prohibits the use of funding for either directly or indirectly offsetting a reduction in net tax revenue due to a change in law from March 3, 2021, through the last day of the fiscal year (September 30, 2021) or use of funding to make a deposit to a pension fund.

Andrea Palm Becomes Deputy Health Secretary, CMS Maybe This Week

On Tuesday, May 11, 2021, the full Senate approved Andrea Palm as the Deputy Health Secretary in the Department of Health and Human Services by a vote of 61 to 37. A significant vote considering the number of close votes for some of the President's nominees in the 50 to 50 Senate.

One of her home state senators, Senator Ron Johnson (R-WS), voted against her despite a relatively easy vote of 20 to 8 in the Senate Finance Committee in April. Palm had served in Wisconsin's Health Department, where she had won praise for her handling of the emergency last year.

In her remarks at the swearing-in, she said, "Our country is facing big challenges right now – and it's our responsibility to be tireless stewards of this agency that touches nearly every aspect of American life. My focus will be on improving the lives and livelihoods of the American people: tackling the COVID-19 pandemic, efficiently and equitably distributing vaccines, expanding access to affordable health care, addressing the epidemic of substance use disorders, and improving mental health care. Public service has been my life's calling, and I'm eager to work arm-in-arm with Secretary Becerra and the Biden Administration to build back better than before." Palm had served in the Obama Administration and before that worked in Congress for, Senator Hillary Clinton (D-NY) and Congressman Bob Matsui (D-CA).

At the same time, a vote on Chiquita Brooks-LaSure to lead the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid (CMS) has continued to move forward at a much slower pace. Her nomination required a discharge after the Senate Finance Committee split on approval. Under the 50-50 Senate rules, a tie committee vote can still move with a full Senate discharge. Brooks-LaSure approval has been stalled by Senator John Cornyn (R-TX) because the Administration has pulled back on a Medicaid waiver approved under Donald Trump.

Nonetheless, the Senate did discharge her nomination by a vote of 51 to 48. Senator Susan Collins (R-ME) and Senator Jerry Moran (R-KS) were the only two yes Republican votes, with almost all Democrats voting to release her from the Finance Committee. Senator Martin Heinrich (D-NM) did not vote. It is expected that the vote to confirm her nomination will come this week. Under previous Senate rules changes, nominations are not filibustered.

Let's get more communities and families digitally connected.

Reliable and affordable access to the internet is essential for everything from scheduling health care appointments to ensuring students have the necessary tools for remote learning.

Unfortunately, people in the United States pay some of the highest prices in the world to access the internet.

Lack of internet access, or the digital divide, has long been a problem across the country, and the COVID-19 pandemic has made access to the internet even less affordable. This pandemic continues to prove that having access to the internet at home is an essential resource. Yet, our nation's most marginalized communities are hit hardest by the digital divide.

That's why the civil rights community pushed Congress to implement a new Emergency Broadband Benefit (EBB), to help make sure more people can afford to stay connected to the internet during the pandemic. This program, run through the Federal Communications Commission (FCC), rolled out on **May 12, 2021 — when eligible households can begin to apply for this short-term program, which will provide up to \$50 toward the cost of broadband service.**

As a new, first-of-its-kind program, the EBB provides discounts on eligible households' internet bills. Program participants will receive a discount of up to \$50 per month toward home internet service for eligible households, and up to \$75 per month for households on qualifying tribal lands. Eligible households can also receive a one-time discount of up to \$100 to purchase a laptop, desktop computer, or tablet from participating Internet Service Providers.

As trusted leaders, we need your help to ensure that our communities know about the Emergency Broadband Benefit so that they can take advantage of it. Help us spread the word with this [outreach toolkit](#), including sample social media posts and ready-made graphics!

The Emergency Broadband Benefit provides:

- Up to \$50/month discount for broadband service;
- Up to \$75/month discount for households on qualifying tribal lands; and
- A one-time discount of up to \$100 for a laptop, desktop computer, or tablet purchased through a participating Internet Service Provider if the household contributes more than \$10 but less than \$50 toward the purchase price.

Join us in helping eligible households enroll in the EBB online, by mail, or through a participating broadband provider. Let's #GetConnectedEBB, and encourage households to enroll in this important program!

NWLC Launches #WeAreTheBackbone: Faces of a Child Care Nation

The National Women's Law Center is launching We Are the Backbone: Faces of a Care Nation, a national campaign to center the essential work of child care providers and the value of child care by shifting the narrative around care work from being a personal responsibility to public infrastructure.

Child care workers are the backbone of the economy. They have held us up while we have left offices bare and streets cleared. 92% of these essential workers are women and specifically, Black and brown women. We can't talk about valuing care and opening the economy without prioritizing child care workers.

What can you do?

- **EDUCATE:** Let lawmakers know we need at least [\\$700 billion/10 years](#) in child care funding.
- **THANK** a child care worker and pledge to advocate or child care by using our resources [here](#)
- **SHARE:** your story of a child care provider that has been the backbone of your day-to-day life and include our hashtag #WeAreTheBackbone.

Join ZERO TO THREE for Strolling Thunder: May 17-18th



Join us and ZERO TO THREE on May 17 and 18 as we urge Congress to Think Babies and Act!

Babies from all 50 states and DC will be delivering a message to Congress: Push babies to the top of your priority list! Your voice is needed, too! RSVP to make some noise at the Think Babies rally on Facebook Live May 17 at 2:00 pm ET. There will be cute babies and an opportunity to hear from

parent advocates and baby champions in Congress! And then on May 18, take action and tell your Members of Congress that an investment in babies and their families is an investment in America's future.

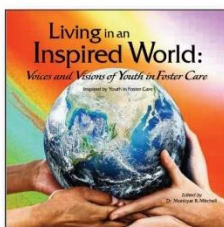
Can we count on you to Be a Big Voice for Little Kids? RSVP and take action at <https://www.thinkbabies.org/strollingthunder/>.

Open Enrollment for ACA Health Care Continues

HHS analysis suggests that purchasers on the marketplaces will see their premiums decrease, on average, by \$50 per person per month and \$85 per policy per month. Current enrollees should review their application, make any changes needed to their current information, submit their application, and select a plan, or reselect their current plan, to receive the increased advance payments of premium tax credits for 2021 Marketplace coverage. Consumers who take action in April and confirm updated savings on the plan of their choice will start receiving the savings and lower costs starting with their May 1 premiums. More than 1 million people have signed up for health insurance during the pandemic enrollment.

The [Special Enrollment Period \(SEP\)](#) for Marketplace Affordable Care Act (ACA) that *continues through August 15, 2021*, can be accessed, and families can submit new applications or update an existing application through www.HealthCare.gov for [step-by-step guidance](#). Additional assistance can be found through www.CuidadoDeSalud.gov, or people can call the Marketplace Call Center at 1-800-318-2596, which provides assistance in over 150 languages. TTY users should call 1-855-889-4325. Consumers can also find a local assister or agent/broker in their area <https://localhelp.healthcare.gov>. Consumers who live in a state that operates its own marketplace platform should visit their state marketplace website or call center for more information about when these additional savings will be available through their state-based marketplace.

— CWLA Press Celebrates — National Foster Care Month



Living in an Inspired World: Voices and Visions of Youth in Foster Care

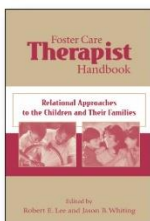
Edited by Dr. Monique Mitchell

This CWLA title consists of 365 days of inspirational messages by youth in foster care for youth throughout the world. This book is an empowering and inspirational resource and the perfect gift for youth who are:

- New to foster care
- In need of peer support and/or encouragement
- Serving as role models for younger children
- Graduating from school, starting a new job, or embarking on a new adventure!



Item #: 7909 • Price: \$14.95



Foster Care Therapist Handbook: Relational Approaches to the Children and Their Families

Edited by Robert E. Lee & Jason B. Whiting

Each section in this comprehensive handbook is written by experts in the field. All facets of a therapist's workload are addressed, from infants needing developmental catch-up, to teenagers benefiting from "hip-hop therapy," to burnt-out therapists requiring care themselves.

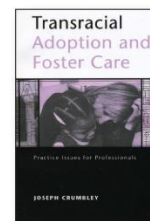
Item #: 0463 • Price: \$26.95

Transracial Adoption and Foster Care: Practice Issues for Professionals

by Joseph Crumbley

Author, Joseph Crumbley, a well-respected authority on transracial adoption and foster care, describes specific ways that practitioners can work with transracial families to ensure that children develop positive racial and cultural identities, as well as how professionals can better serve these families.

Item #: 7176 • Price: \$18.95



My Foster Family



A Story for Children Entering Foster Care

by Jennifer Levine

\$3.95
each

— Featured Publication —

My Foster Family is a special children's coloring book that offers young children entering foster care the opportunity to explore their feelings and adjust to the foster care system. Intended for children ages 5-11 who are being placed in foster care for the first time, it provides a gentle and thoughtful description of both the logistical and emotional changes that a young child is likely to face. Useful at any stage of the foster care placement process, *My Foster Family* employs the familiar coloring book format as a safe and supportive tool to help children share their deepest fears and concerns upon entering foster care.

Coloring Book • Item #5370

Order at 202-688-4171 or www.cwla.org/pubs

UPCOMING CAPITOL HILL BRIEFINGS/EVENTS

- **Monday, May 17, 2021 from 12:30 pm to 2:00 pm (ET).** Bipartisan Congressional Briefing: Technology & Innovation in Child Welfare. [Click Here to Register.](#)
- **Monday, May 17, 2021 at 2:00 pm (ET).** Zero To Three *Think Babies* Virtual Rally. [Click Here to Register.](#)
- **Tuesday, May 18, 2021 at 10:00 AM (ET).** Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee (HELP), "Paid Leave for Working Families: Examining Access, Options, and Impacts." [Click Here to Access the Hearing.](#)
- **Wednesday, May 19, 2021 at 10:15 AM (ET).** House Education and Labor Committee Early Childhood, Elementary and Secondary Education Subcommittee, "Picking up the Pieces: Strengthening Connections with Students Experiencing Homelessness and Children in Foster Care." [Click Here to Access the Hearing.](#)
- **Webinar Series: The Unlearning of Child Welfare: Investing in Families**
 - **Thursday, May 20, 2021 at 3:00 pm (ET).** Bold Actions for Big Change. [Click Here to Register.](#)
- **Thursday, May 20, 2021 from 1:30 pm to 3:00 pm (ET).** Stories from the Field: Practical Strategies for Engaging Young People. [Click Here to Register.](#)