

# ACF

Administration  
for Children  
and Families

**U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES  
Administration for Children, Youth and Families**

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## INFORMATION MEMORANDUM

**TO:** ADMINISTRATORS OF STATE PUBLIC WELFARE AGENCIES, INDIAN TRIBAL ORGANIZATIONS, AND CHILD WELFARE SERVICE PROGRAMS

**SUBJECT:** TITLE IV-B JOINT PLANNING AND ADOPTION

**INFORMATION:** There are approximately 33,000 special needs children in foster care who are legally free and waiting for adoption. For the past two years; the Department of health and Human Services has led a national adoption initiative for special needs children with considerable success, thanks to child welfare agencies in the States which have made significant efforts to find permanency for these children through adoption. In addition to adoption programs for special needs children, States also have opportunities to encourage the adoption of infants. Often, pregnant women, including young teenagers, who come to the attention of public agencies believe that there are only two choices for them:

1. to have an abortion or
2. to keep the child.

While State agencies may offer excellent programs in parenting skills and referral services, it is important that the third option of adoption be offered through counseling and guidance from the agency social worker. Some States are operating effective programs in the adoption of infants; however, there are many others who, in the past few years, have eliminated such adoption services to their clientele.

As an adoptive child myself and the mother of two adopted sons, I have a particular appreciation for the "adoption option." The purpose of this memorandum is to encourage and support the development of infant adoption programs, including outreach programs, through joint Federal-State child welfare service planning. The provision of counselling services and adoption services

is an appropriate goal for purposes of title IV-B planning and cost allocation. In addition, the lives of many children and adults can be enriched through such programs--a high priority goal for all child welfare services.

**INQUIRIES TO:** Regional Program Director for Children, Youth and Families and Regional Children's Bureau Supervisors who are engaged in joint planning in the development of State and Tribal child welfare services plans.

/s/

Dodie Livingston  
Commissioner