

Adoption: Disruption or Dissolution

Compiled by Julie Pohlman, July 2014

www.legis.wisconsin.gov/lrb/pubs/tapthepower.htm

In fiscal year 2012 there were over 50,000 U.S. adoptions with public agency involvement. While the federal government does not track domestic adoption disruptions and dissolutions it is generally estimated that they represent 10-25% of total adoptions. Disruption is the term used to describe the process when an adoption is not finalized and the child is returned to their prior situation, usually foster care. Dissolution refers to the legal severing of the relationship between the adoptive parents and child after the adoption has been finalized. In addition to legislation and agency rules, governments at all levels are looking at post-adoption services to contribute to the prevention of adoption disruption and dissolution.

- Adoption and Safe Families Act of 1997.* 42 U.S.C. §Pub. L. No. 105-89, 1305, 111 Stat. 2115 (1997).
- Adoption Assistance and Child Welfare Act of 1980.* 42 U.S.C. §Pub. L. No. 96-272, 94 Stat. 500 (1980).
- Avery, Rosemary J. *Strengthening and Preserving Adoptive Families: A Study of TANF-Funded Post Adoption Services in New York State.* Cornell, NY: Cornell University, 2004. <http://nysccc.org/wp-content/uploads/tanfaverypasrpt.pdf>. Reports on the 2000 project to reduce the number of adoption disruptions and dissolutions in New York State.
- Bala, Nila. "The Children in Families First Act: Overlooking International Law and the Best Interest of the Child." *Stanford Law Review Online* 66 (April 18, 2014). <http://www.stanfordlawreview.org/online/children-families-first-act-overlooking-international-law-and-best-interests-child>.
- Barth, Richard P., Deborah A. Gibbs, and Kristin Siebenaler. "Assessing the Field of Post-Adoption Service: Family Needs, Program Models, and Evaluation Issues." Washington, DC: Department of Health and Human Services, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation, 2001. <http://aspe.hhs.gov/hsp/PASS/lit-rev-01.htm>. Examines post-adoption services and their relation to adoption success and stability. Provides information on different types of services.
- Barth, Richard P., et. al. "Predicting Adoption Disruption." *Social Work* 33, no. 3 (1988): 227-233. Available full text through www.badgerlink.net. Summarizes what has been researched on adoption disruption to this point and the suggested lines of inquiry that are being explored today.
- Child Welfare Information Gateway. *Adoption Disruption and Dissolution.* Washington, DC: Child Welfare Information Gateway, 2012. https://www.childwelfare.gov/pubs/s_disrup.pdf. Introductory guide to the topic.
- Coakley, Jennifer F. "Research Review – In a Rush to Permanency: Preventing Adoption Disruption." *Child & Family Social Work* 13, no. 1 (2008): 101-112. Available full text through www.badgerlink.net.
- Dhami, Mandeep K., David R. Mandel, and Katy Sothmann. "An Evaluation of Post-Adoption Services." *Children and Youth Services Review* 29 (2007): 162-179. Evaluation of post-adoption services shows support from adoptive parents but services success is dependent upon continued development.
- Festinger, Trudy. "After Adoption: Dissolution or Permanence?" *Child Welfare* 81, no. 3 (2002): 515-533. Available full text through www.badgerlink.net. Results of follow-up inquiry of 516 adoptions from New York and identifies service needs of the families.
- High, Anna. *Marquette University Law School Faculty Blog.* "Wisconsin Assembly Responds to 'Child Exchange'." February 16, 2014. <http://law.marquette.edu/facultyblog/2014/02/16/wisconsin-assembly-responds-to-child-exchange/>. Discusses concept of "child exchange," the adoption rules already in place in Wisconsin, and 2013 Assembly Bill 581 which adds more protections against "re-homing."
- Houston, Doris M., and Laurie Kramer. "Meeting the Long-Term Needs of Families Who Adopt Children Out of Foster Care: A Three-Year Follow-Up Study." *Child Welfare* 87, no. 4 (2008): 145-170. Available full text through www.badgerlink.net. Study assessing the support of the Illinois agency overseeing adoptions, post-adoption.
- Proctor, Laura J., et. al. "Factors Associated with Caregiver Stability in Permanent Placements: A Classification Tree Approach." *Child Abuse and Neglect* 35 no. 6: 425-436. <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3740351/>. Examines different placement types for foster children, including adoption, to understand caregiver stability.
- Schwartz, Lita Linzer. *When Adoptions Go Wrong: Psychological and Legal Issues of Adoption Disruption.* Binghamton, NY: Haworth Press, 2006. (347.175/Sch9)
- Snyder, Eileen. "Permanency for Children in Foster Care." *Tap the Power.* Madison, WI: Wisconsin Legislative Reference Bureau, 2012. (LRB/t) <http://legis.wisconsin.gov/lrb/pubs/ttp/ttp-08-2012.pdf>.
- Testa, Mark F. *Fostering Accountability: Using Evidence to Guide and Improve Child Welfare Policy.* New York: Oxford University Press, 2010. (347.17/T28) Essays examine the use of data to establish accountability in child welfare services.

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Continued

- Twohey, Megan. "Americans Use the Internet to Abandon Children Adopted from Overseas." Reuters, September 9, 2013. <http://www.reuters.com/investigates/adoption/#article/part1>.
Five part series that looks at "re-homing," or the dissolution, of international adoptees by United States families, including a Wisconsin case.
- United States Department of Health and Human Services. *The AFCARS Report #20*. Washington, DC: Administration for Children and Families, Administration on Children, Youth, and Families, Children's Bureau, 2013. <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/cb/afcarsreport20.pdf>.
Statistical report on adoption and foster care in the United States.
- Vandivere, Sharon, Karin Malm, and Laura Radel. *Adoption USA: A Chartbook Based on the 2007 National Survey of Adoptive Parents*. Washington, DC: United States Department of Health and Human Services, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation, 2009. <http://aspe.hhs.gov/hsp/09/nsap/chartbook/doc/chartbook.pdf>.
Presents findings of the 2007 study that looked at the characteristics, experiences, and well-being of adopted children. The survey does not provide numbers of dissolutions, however participants were queried as to whether they considered dissolution.
- Wisconsin Legislative Audit Bureau. "Child-placing Agencies: Department of Children and Families." *Report 13-15*. Madison, WI: Wisconsin Legislative Audit Bureau, 2013. (347.176/W7n) <http://legis.wisconsin.gov/lab/reports/13-15full.pdf>.
- Wisconsin Legislative Council. "2013 Assembly Bill 581." *Amendment Memo*. Madison, WI: Wisconsin Legislative Council, 2014. <https://docs.legis.wisconsin.gov/document/lcamendmentmemos/2013/REG/AB581.pdf>.
Related to adoptions and "re-homing" associated issues, it became 2013 Wisconsin Act 314: <https://docs.legis.wisconsin.gov/document/acts/2013/314>.
- Web Sites**
- Adoption & Child Welfare Lawsite. Accessed June 25, 2014. <http://www.adoptionchildwelfarelaw.org/>.
Contains feature to search documents related to adoption by state, including statutes, articles, and case summaries.
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. *State and Local Area Integrated Telephone Survey*. "National Survey of Adoptive Parents." Accessed June 26, 2014. <http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/slait/nsap.htm>.
Site includes full information and results of the survey, including the dataset: ftp://ftp.cdc.gov/pub/Health_Statistics/NCHS/slait/nsap2007/dataset/.
- Children in Families First. Accessed June 25, 2014. <http://childreninfamiliesfirst.org/>.
CHIFF, U.S. Senate Bill 24475 and House Bill 4143, calls for creation of agency, funding, and program rules to ensure and improve child placement. Site includes information on the problem, legislation, and stories related to the legislation.
- Coalition for Children, Youth and Families. Accessed June 26, 2014. <http://www.wiadopt.org/Home.aspx>.
Funded by the Department of Children and Families, it is the umbrella organization for adoption in Wisconsin. Provides resources for social workers, adoptive parents post-adoption, newsletters, links to additional sites and resources.
- National Conference of State Legislatures. "State Legislation to Provide Adoption and Post-Adoption Supports, Subsidies and Tax Credits 2005-2013." Denver, CO: National Conference of State Legislatures, February 5, 2014. <http://www.ncsl.org/research/human-services/ncsl-adoption-support-and-subsidy-legislation-2005-2013.aspx>.
Summary of state legislation.
- United States Department of Health and Human Services. *Child Welfare Information Gateway*.
Resources, links and information on a variety of topics related to adoption including:
- "Coping with Disruption/Dissolution." Accessed June 26, 2014. https://www.childwelfare.gov/adoption/adopt_parenting/disruption.cfm.
Includes a report on numbers and trends.
 - "Achieving & Maintaining Permanency." Accessed June 26, 2014. <https://www.childwelfare.gov/permanency/>.
 - "State Laws Related to Adoption." Accessed June 26, 2014. https://www.childwelfare.gov/adoption/laws/laws_state.cfm.
- Wisconsin Department of Children and Families.
- *Adoption in Wisconsin*. Accessed June 25, 2014. <http://dcf.wisconsin.gov/children/adoption/default.htm>.
 - *Post Adoption Resource Centers*. Accessed June 25, 2014. http://dcf.wisconsin.gov/children/adoption/programs_services/post_adoption/resource_centers.htm.
- Wisconsin Legislative Council. *2014 Legislative Council Study Committee on Adoption Disruption and Dissolution*. Accessed June 26, 2014. <http://docs.legis.wisconsin.gov/misc/lc/study/2014/1189>.

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