

Post-Adoption and Post-Guardianship Support: and the Transition of the Family's Identity

Prepared for the Annual NYS Foster Care and Adoption Conference
May 12, 2017

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Tomasine Oliphant, AGAPE Hudson Valley Director



First, about the Coalition:

- Founded in the 1960s. Incorporated in 1975.
- Founded by adoptive parents to support one another and advocate on behalf of children and families. Foster parents became part of “the family” soon thereafter.

More about the Coalition:

- Originally the New York State Citizens Coalition for Children
- Legally changed name in April 2016
- Why? ... You!

Our Goal:

Support, information and
advocacy for foster, adoptive
and kinship families.

Our Vision:

- No foster, adoptive or kinship care family in New York State will feel alone or unsupported and that all such families will have the tools, support and community they need to nurture their children and be role models for others.

What We Do: Seven Areas of Service

- **24/7 HelpLine**
- **Foster and Kinship Care Support**
Assistance with understanding family court, dealing with allegations, where to start, etc.
- **Parent Support Groups**
- **Adoption and Guardianship Assistance Program for Everyone (AGAPE)**
- **ETA: Education and Training Academy**
Annual Foster Care and Adoption Conference, Education Support Series
- **Advocacy and Outreach**
- **Online Service Directory and Website**

More about Post Adoption and Post Guardianship Support:

- State initiative: Create 13 Regional Permanency Resource Centers to serve post adoption and post guardianship families. Launched in late 2016.
- The Coalition has three regional centers serving 15 counties
- Basic premise: Support for families when they need it – no matter what, no matter when.
- Blend of brief counseling, case management, parent training, support groups and referral to services.
- Services include HelpLine.

Some of the Faces of the Coalition:



Richard Heyl de Ortiz
Executive Director

Claudia D'Arcy
Outreach and Advocacy Coordinator



Amy Drayer
Foster and Kinship Care Specialist

Some of the Faces of the Coalition:



Renee Hettich

AGAPE Southern-Tier Finger Lakes Director



Tomasine Oliphant

AGAPE Hudson Valley Director



Pat O'Brien

AGAPE Long Island-Rockland Director

And now . . .
On to AGAPE

Adoption and Guardianship

AGAPE

Assistance Program for Everyone

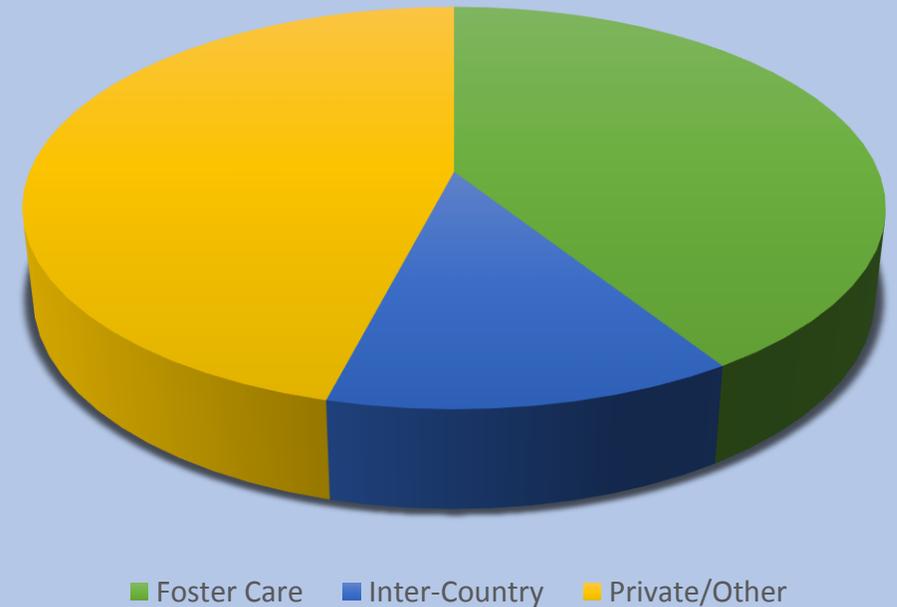
AFFCNY

**Model of Post-Adoption
Service Delivery**

UNITED STATES ADOPTIONS

- 2008* there were 135,813
- 55,303 – Foster Care/Public
- 17,416 – Intercountry
- 63,094 – Other

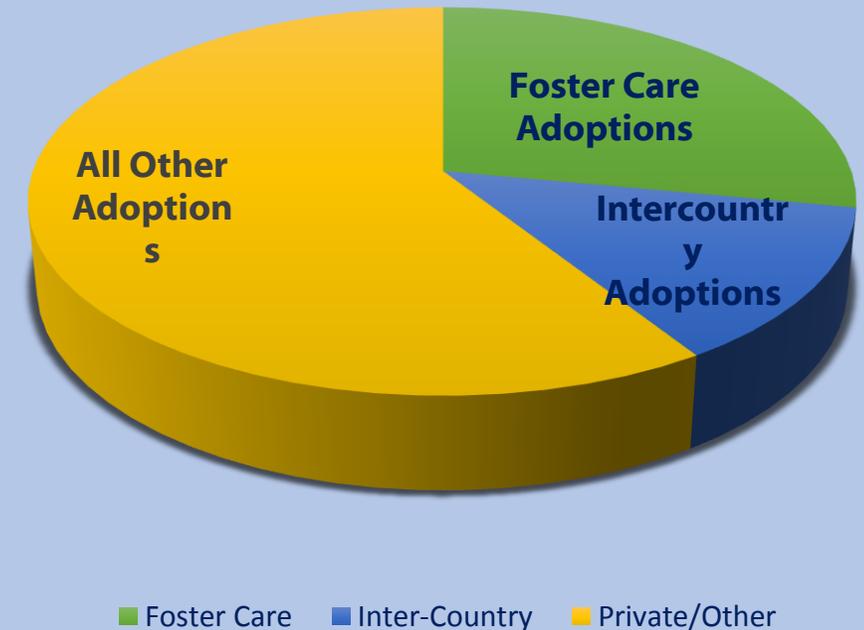
US ADOPTIONS



NEW YORK ADOPTIONS

- 2008* there were 8524 Adoptions.
- 2395 – Foster Care – 28% (2015 1981)
- 1118 – Intercountry – 13.1% (2015 269)
- 5012 – Other – 58.7%

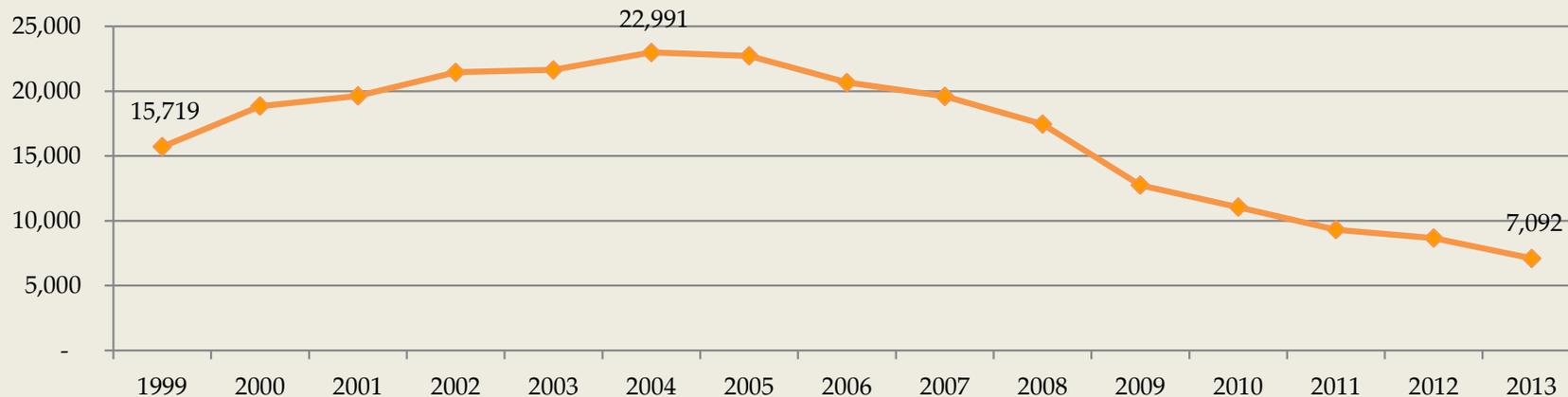
NYS Adoptions



INTERNATIONAL ADOPTIONS

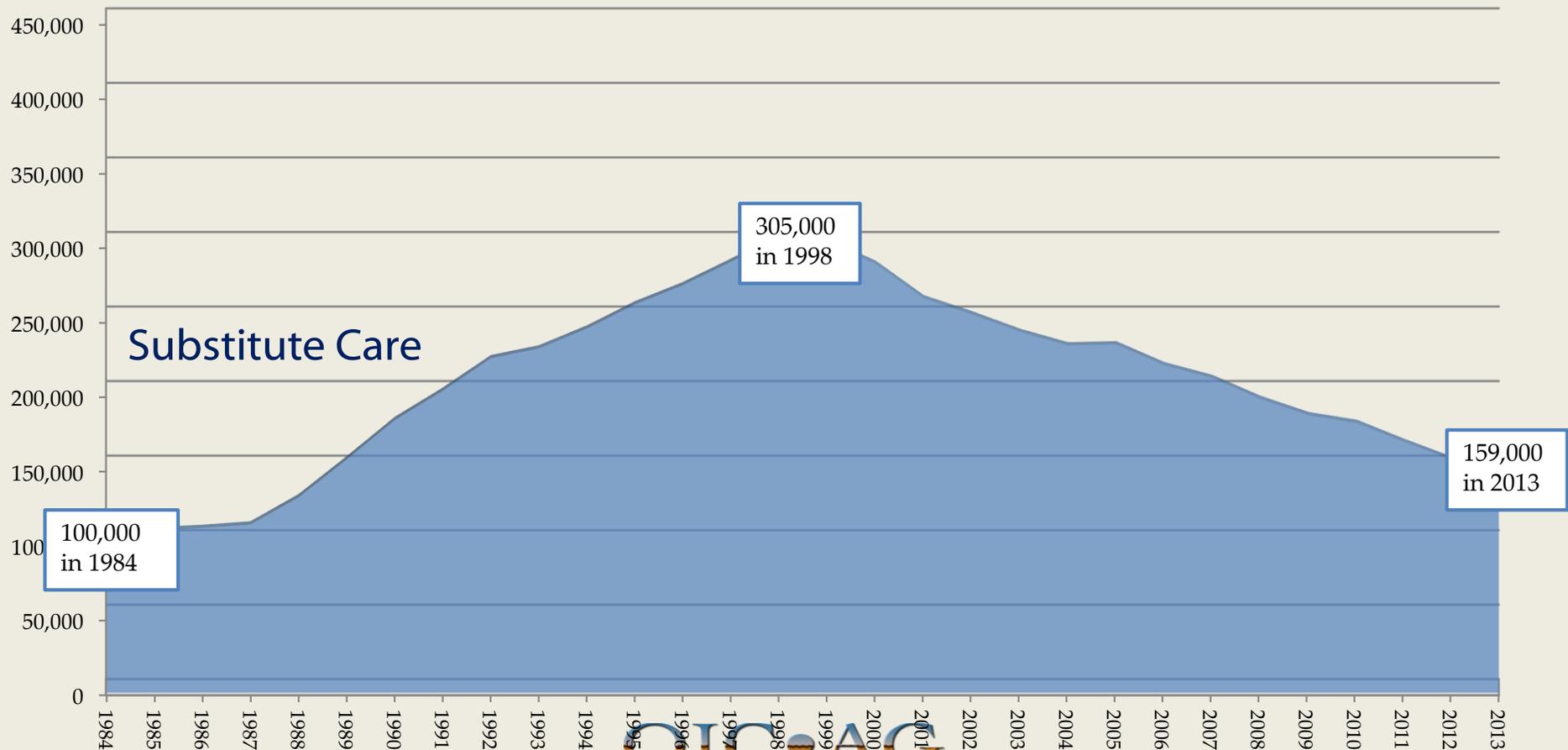
Nationally

- Between 1999-2015 there were 261,779 international adoptions. Majority of these adoptions were with children two or younger. Primary places for adoption were China and Russia.
- In 2015, the number dropped to 5,647 international adoptions.



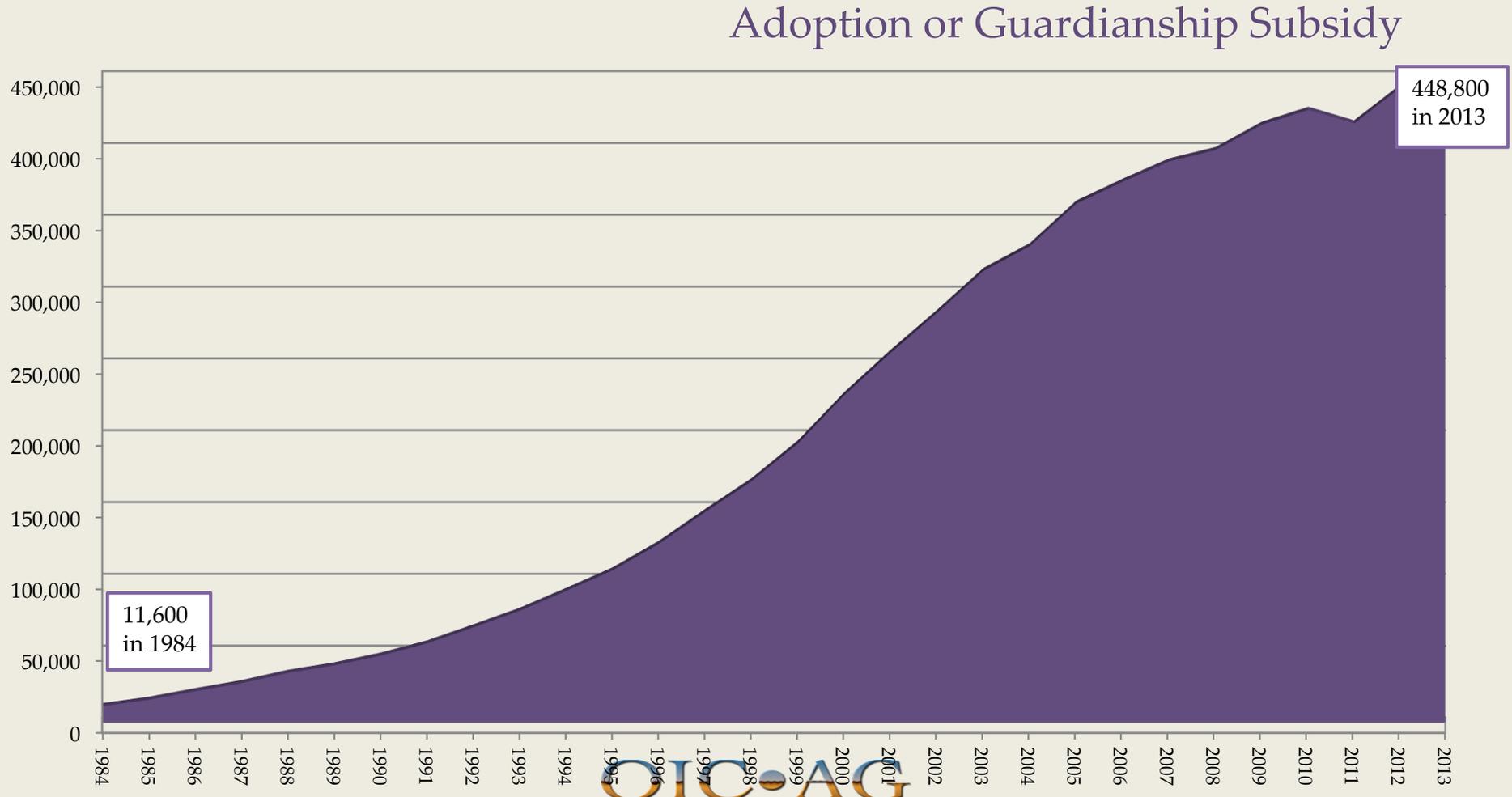
Source: <http://travel.state.gov/content/adoptionsabroad/en/about-us/statistics.html>

NATIONAL AVERAGE MONTHLY IV-E FUNDED CASELOADS



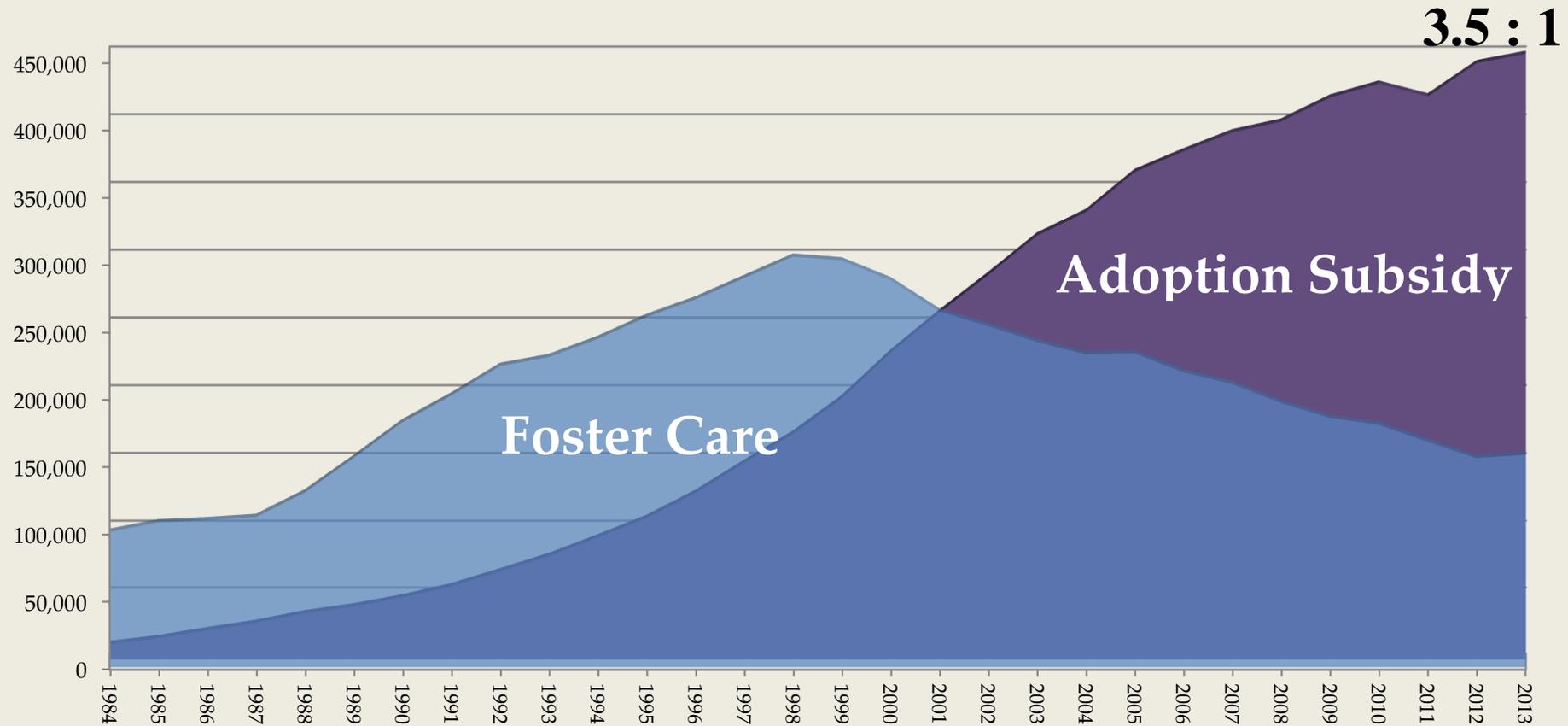
Source: Committee on Ways and Means of the U.S. House of Representatives, 2014

NATIONAL AVERAGE MONTHLY IV-E FUNDED CASELOADS



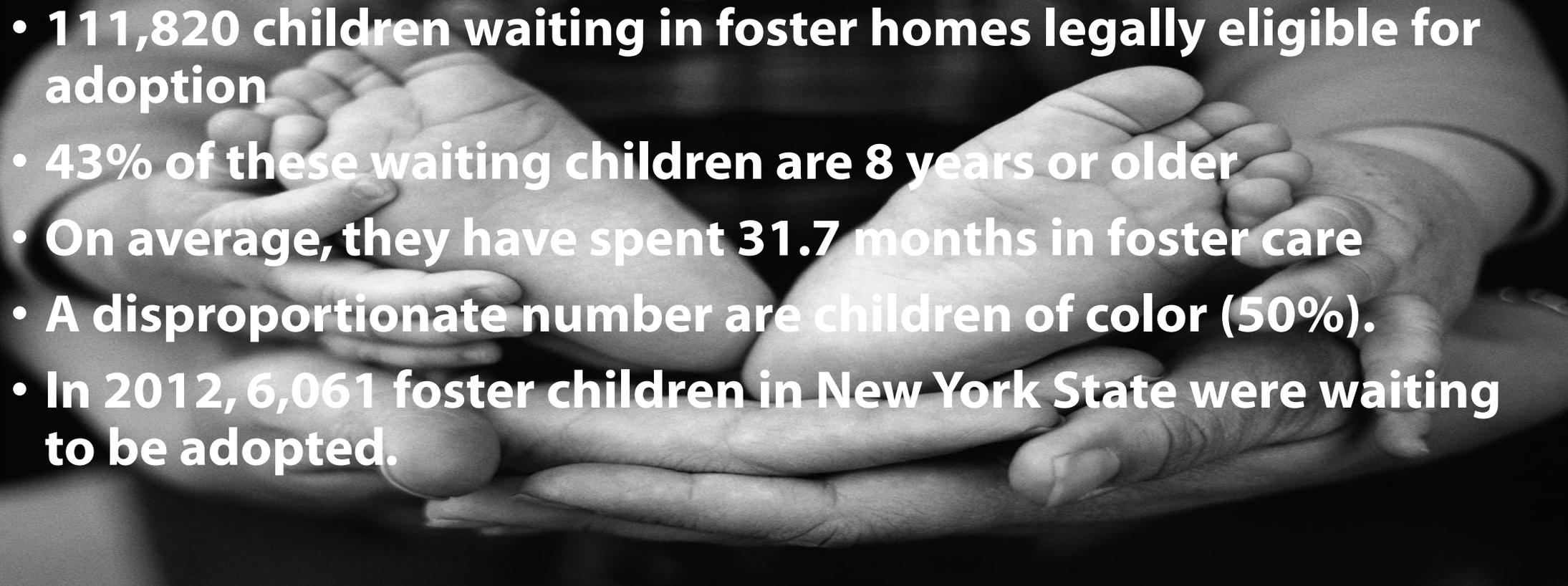
Source: Committee on Ways and Means of the U.S. House of Representatives, 2014

NATIONAL AVERAGE MONTHLY IV-E FUNDED CASELOADS



Source: Committee on Ways and Means of the U.S. House of Representatives, 2014

Current picture of children in foster care waiting to be adopted

- 
- 111,820 children waiting in foster homes legally eligible for adoption
 - 43% of these waiting children are 8 years or older
 - On average, they have spent 31.7 months in foster care
 - A disproportionate number are children of color (50%).
 - In 2012, 6,061 foster children in New York State were waiting to be adopted.

The Adoptive and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System (AFCARS) Report, No.23, FY 2015 data.

Where do children go after they leave NYS Foster Care?

- In **2012**, most New York children left foster care to **return home (52%)** or live with relatives in **guardianship arrangements (11%)**.
- **20%** of children in foster care exited through **adoption**.

AFCASource: Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System (AFCARS), 2012 data made available by the National Data Archive on Child Abuse and Neglect, Cornell University Data on child population from Children's Bureau Child Welfare Outcomes Report (<http://cwoutcomes.acf.hhs.gov/data>).

Children Exit Foster Care in New York State with OCFS Involvement

• Adoptions finalized

2015: 1981

2014: 2001

2012: 2232

KinGAP

2015: 351

2014: 331

2012: 74

Relative

2015: 1250

2014: 1264

2012: 1100



SPECIAL NEEDS

A large percentage of the children adopted from foster care and inter-country were classified as having special needs-many with complicated traumatic histories exacerbated by separation from birth family, multiple moves , unresolved grief and institutionalization.

Voice for Adoption, July 2009

Congress Acknowledges the Need

“The rapid increases in the annual number of adoptions since the enactment of the Adoption and Safe Families Act of 1997 have created a growing need for post-adoption services and for service providers with the particular knowledge and skills required to address the unique issues adoptive families and children may face.”

Congressional Findings and Purpose,
Promoting Safe and Stable Families Amendments of 2001

The need for post-adoption service: What families report to us.

It would be very useful to have easy access to a list of services and providers dealing with adoption (perhaps at the court procedure when adoption is finalized and at family services and at the public schools.) It was very hard to find a mental health provider to help us with the unique challenges of dealing with an international adoption.

Adoptive & Foster Family Coalition of New York Survey
conducted in February 2010

What families report to us cont.

There is just no “one place” to look for adoption help I've tried to find therapists who specialize in adoption issues. They do not exist in the public sector and most of the private ones don't accept any insurance. There is no one to call for respite or crisis help near where I live that I know of.

Adoptive & Foster Family Coalition of New York Survey
conducted in February 2010

What families report to us cont.

- Childcare for kids with reactive attachment disorder is needed very much. My husband and I are desperate for some respite/time for us as well as ability to have someone who knows how to manage a RAD child so that we can go for support groups, etc.

Adoptive & Foster Family Coalition of New York Survey
conducted in February 2010

Post Adopt Lacks Evidence Base

- Despite the appearance that many programs support post-adoption service, there is no federal mandate or funding directed specific to this cause.
- Due to limited funding, little emphasis has been placed on research and evaluation resulting in a lack of an evidence base for service development.

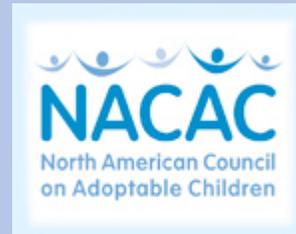
Voice for Adoption, July 2009

Keeping the Promise Joint Policy Recommendations

EVAN B. DONALDSON
adoptioninstitute



Voice for Adoption
SPEAKING OUT FOR OUR NATION'S WAITING CHILDREN



Keeping the Promise

- Create a national task force to provide strategic planning and legislative leadership for the development of post-adoption services.
- Develop and support research in and evaluation of post-adoption services.
- Establish government and private partnerships that will make services available and easily accessible to families and highlight communities of faith as a source for identifying and growing local hubs of post-adoption support.

Keeping the Promise cont.

- Eliminate all state policies that force parents to give up custody in order to receive services.
- Provide access to post-adoption services regardless of the type of adoptive family.
- Ensure that services offered to adoptive families embrace best practice and are provided by adoption-competent professionals.

Keeping the Promise cont.

- Minimize the damage to children in the child welfare system and elsewhere.
- Make pre-adoption training an integral part of the adoption process.
- Performance and outcome measures for child and states must be amended to include measures of post adoption placement and stability.
- Federal funding for post-adoption services should be enhanced and improved.

New York State's Response to Need

Targeted Regional Permanency Resource Centers 2016-17

AGAPE & Abbott House – Hudson Valley

AGAPE - South Tier/FingerLakes

Hillside – Western Southern Tier & Rochester Regions

Catholic Charities Diocese of Rochester – Rochester Region

AGAPE – Long Island, Rockland, Putnam

Family Centers, NYCOAC, New Alternatives for Children – New York City

Parsons – Capital District

Child Care Coordinating Council of North Country – Albany/Syracuse Region

Gustavus Adolphus Child & Family Center – Buffalo Region

The Neighborhood Center, Inc – Syracuse/Albany Region

Children's Home of Jefferson County – Syracuse/Albany Region

TARGET POPULATION

- We take the “E” or “Everyone” in AGAPE Seriously
- All Finalized Adoptive Families: From Foster care, Inter-country, and privately over the course of the lifetime of your adopted child and through the launching of your child into adulthood.
- All families with Legal Guardianship (Relatives, and KinGAP)
- All Step Parent Adoptions

Criteria for Referral – Just 2

- 1) Proof of Legal finalization of adoption or guardianship.
- 2) Family living in one of the 15 counties that AGAPE serves.*

* AFFCNY and AGAPE staff will refer to organization if family does not live in one of the 15 counties AGAPE services.

PROJECT OUTCOMES

- Children will be safely maintained in their adoptive, kinship, and guardian homes.
- Adoptive, Kinship and Guardian families will have identified at least two connections to community resources and be able to connect to these supports when need.
- By participating in offered parent training and informational sessions, parents will demonstrate effective parenting strategies/techniques that address the children's social, emotional, behavioral, and developmental needs.
- Reduction in the impact of trauma on children and families.
- Families are stronger and more empowered to meet the challenge of raising their child and supporting balance in their family as a result of engagement in the program.

Adoptive & Foster Family Coalition of New York Adoption & Guardianship Assistance Program 4 Everyone (AGAPE)

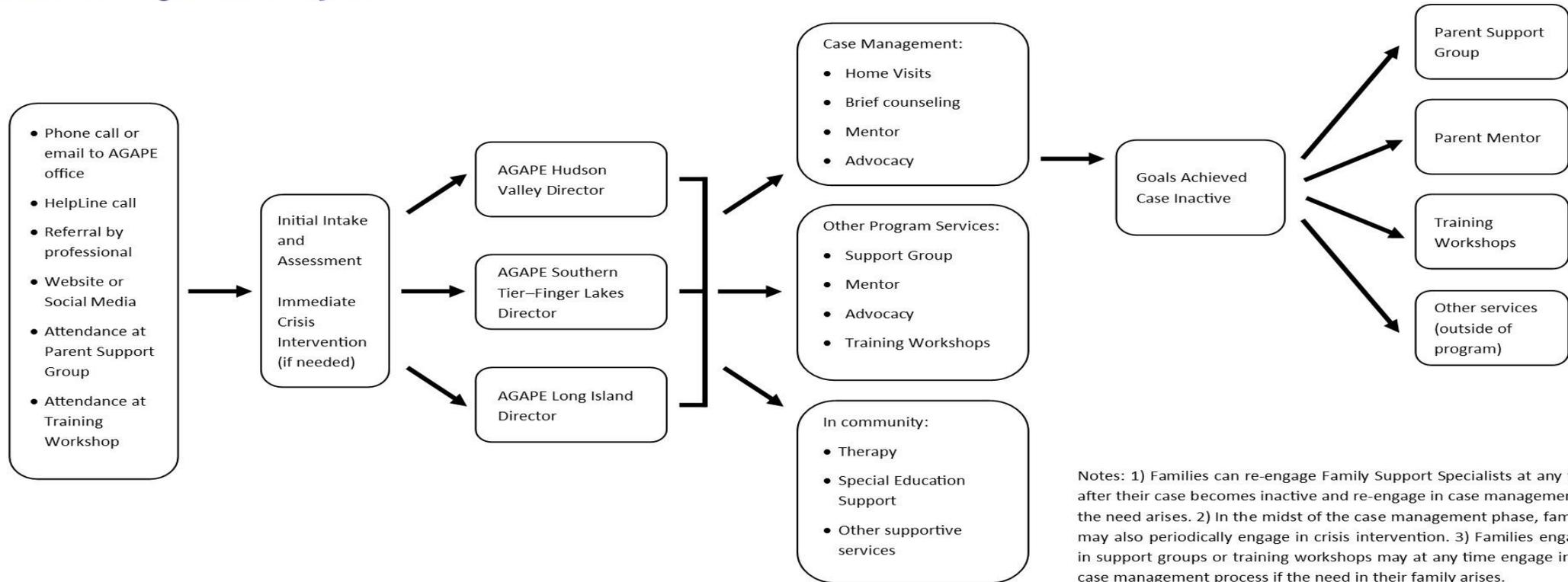
- Funding through a contract with New York State Office of Children & Family Services
- Utilizes adoption competent staff, many who are adoptive parents, to provide a model of support, assessment, brief counseling/case management, and referral
- Provided funding for 5 years with an OCFS option to renew after every year.

A Family-friendly, Family-focused Model...

- Regional Point of Entry with option of being referred by AFFCNY's Statewide Helpline.
- 24 hour call back
- All AGAPE staff have background and training in the area of adoption
- Family systems approach
- In-home support or office appointments
- No wait list
- Operates independently of OCFS

AGIAPE Program Components

- Tailored Assessment
- Brief counseling
- Parent education & Annual Conference
- Referral & Information
- Community Case Management – In home or office.
- Educational advocacy
- Other forms of advocacy including mental health systems to help secure services.
- Parent Support Groups and Parent Mentors
- Helping provide natural respite resources
- Training in Adoption Competency to Therapists
- 24 hour helpline



Notes: 1) Families can re-engage Family Support Specialists at any time after their case becomes inactive and re-engage in case management as the need arises. 2) In the midst of the case management phase, families may also periodically engage in crisis intervention. 3) Families engaged in support groups or training workshops may at any time engage in the case management process if the need in their family arises.

Three Program Component
Educating Therapist and
Families on a Broader
New York State Scale...

#1 AFFCNY Annual Foster Care and Adoption Conference on Mother's Day Weekend

WHO DO YOU THINK YOU ARE?

Connecting adoptive families, adoption professionals, and all those interested in adoption to form a strong, supportive and resourceful adoption community.

#2 Support of Regional Development of Adoption Competency to Therapist



#3 Re-Framing Parenting Series



EVALUATION

We Plan to Evaluate Our Program's Families

- Demographics
- Promise of prompt contact with AGAPE be achieved
- Results of well being survey categories.
- Satisfaction with program

Top reasons for contacting a neighboring State's Post Adoption Assistance Program – Connecticut

- Child's behavioral and/or emotional problems
- Need in finding assistance or information
- The health of their adopted child
- Special learning needs
- Child's school difficulties
- Parent's relationship with their child

Our Anticipated Outcomes are ...

- Parents feel welcomed, valued, respected, and supported in their interaction with AGAPE.
- Parents develop realistic expectations of their child(ren) in context of history.
- Parents feel they've strengthened their parenting abilities.
- The family climate improves.

Bibliography

Adoptive & Foster Family Coalition of New York, Parents and Professionals Identify Post Adoption Service Needs in New York State, February 2010.

** Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System (AFCARS), 2012 data made available by the National Data Archive on Child Abuse and Neglect, Cornell University Data on child population from Children's Bureau Child Welfare Outcomes Report (<http://cwoutcomes.acf.hhs.gov/dat>)*

Questions?

Adoption and Guardianship

AGAPE

Assistance Program for Everyone

Hudson Valley
STFL
Long Island

Thank you!

We're always here to help:

HelpLine: (888) 354-1342

Statewide. Free. 24/7.

Main Office: (646) 688-4321

Website: www.affcny.org