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*US-Russia Social
Expertise Exchange*



PROMOTING CONNECTIONS FOR SUCCESS

**Building Understanding:
An Overview of Child Welfare Systems
in the United States and Russia**

Eurasia Foundation
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Promoting Connections for Success

**Building Understanding: An Overview of Child Welfare
Systems in the United States and Russia**

**Child Protection Working Group
US-Russia Social Expertise Exchange (SEE)
Eurasia Foundation**

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About US-Russia Social Expertise Exchange

The US-Russia Social Expertise Exchange (SEE) (<http://www.usrussiasocialexpertise.org>) is a diverse network of Russian and US experts and socially involved individuals engaged in a meaningful exchange of ideas and best practices to produce positive change in the lives of citizens in both countries. SEE is implemented by Eurasia Foundation.

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Section I.

Preface



A. Context

In 2012, a small group of child welfare specialists from Russia and the United States met as part of the Child Protection Working Group of the US-Russia Social Expertise Exchange sponsored by Eurasia Foundation. When this group first met, critical challenges that each country was facing were shared and there was universal agreement of the need to promote and sustain permanent connections with caring adults for older youth leaving the foster care system in the United States and older youth who are expected to be leaving residential institutions in Russia. The working group identified common research that unequivocally indicated that youth without permanent adult connections are more likely to experience poorer outcomes than those who have a permanent caring adult to support them as they enter into adulthood.

Despite enormous cultural and language differences, the group worked together to identify common philosophical principles or core values that guide practices for achieving permanent connections for youth within the very different child welfare systems of the US and Russia. These included the following:

- ▶ Parents, biological family, and relatives are important to youth and whenever possible, retaining these connections will be essential for youth to understand their personal and cultural identity.
- ▶ When youth need to be placed away from their biological families for whatever reason, planning for options to achieve permanent connections with trusted/caring adults must be pursued simultaneously with exploring opportunities for reunification with families.
- ▶ One must never give up hope in finding permanent adult connections or an adoptive family for youth.
- ▶ Recruiting adult mentors, adoptive families, and other types of supports should always be child-focused, considering the youth's specific needs and interests.
- ▶ Youth must be involved and empowered in decision making for recruiting an adoptive family or mentor, and informed of all search efforts. Youth should be engaged in the whole process of their care and protection, including decisions to maintain contact with their birth family or to be involved in various support services.
- ▶ Partnering with all types of community based and faith-based organizations can be beneficial in identifying an adoptive family and/or adult connection.
- ▶ It is important to support youth in preparing for independent life and prepare adoptive families and/or adult mentors for what to expect and how to ensure connections are successful and can be sustained long term.

The exchange between US and Russia child welfare specialists provided an opportunity to share practices, policies and the role of government and non-governmental entities in promoting positive outcomes for youth who are removed from their families. A US and Russian team of advanced and emerging practitioners were identified and toured several cities in the US and in Russia to learn about the child protection systems, services, practices, and the organizations and professionals that deliver these services. While they shared values and vision for older youth who are transitioning to adulthood, the working group also learned about the fundamental differences in how child welfare systems operate and the federal, state, and regional policies and laws that guide service delivery.



B. Purpose of This Document

To understand the circumstances and characteristics of young people who are in foster care or residential institutions, it was necessary to understand the context of the child welfare system in each country.¹ The working group decided to create this cross cultural/cross system analysis to describe the US and Russian child welfare systems. This document is intended to create a better understanding of how and when services are delivered, the young people who are being served, and the national policies, practices, and organizations intended to support them. This document provides a brief overview of each country's evolution of child welfare policies, incremental progress toward more effective practices, and current efforts to promote better outcomes, particularly for older youth who exit placement from out-of-home or residential institutions, and efforts to promote their long-term success in independent life. Current national data is provided when available from national sources.

This document provides an overview of the goals, laws, and processes of the US child welfare system. Current national data is provided when available from US federal sources. Because the US and Russia track children and youth in the child welfare system differently, it is not possible to provide accurate comparisons. For example, as soon as children and youth in the US are identified by the child welfare system, they are tracked in state and federal data regardless if they are receiving services in their own home or are temporarily separated from their families, whereas in Russia, data on youth are kept only after the youth are placed in institutions.

Appendices found the end of this document provide more details on US federal definitions of child maltreatment, those who are required to report child maltreatment in the US, federal legislation related to child welfare systems, best practices for supporting older youth who transition from foster care in the US, organizations that provide resources and support for practitioners working with older youth, and a glossary of terms frequently used in the US child welfare system.

¹ "Child protection" in the US refers to services that focus primarily on child safety from maltreatment, while the "child welfare system" includes a comprehensive range of services and supports (including child protection) provided for identified children, youth, and their families to prevent maltreatment, reunify families when possible, and connect children and youth with other caregivers if necessary.



Section II.

Overview of the United States Child Welfare System



A. Goals of the Child Welfare System in the United States

All children and youth need a stable, nurturing, and enduring relationship with at least one adult who assures that their physical, emotional, educational, and social needs are met and who protects them from harm.² The US child welfare system is designed to promote the well-being of children by ensuring safety and enabling families to successfully care for their children. When that is not possible, the child welfare system helps children find permanent connections with relatives or adoptive families. The overarching premise is that all children have the right to a safe, permanent, and stable home, which provides basic levels of nurturance and care while remaining free from abuse, neglect, and exploitation. The US system is designed to ensure children and youth can safely remain in a family environment and placement in a residential institution is rarely the preferred placement of choice.

US federal legislation³ promotes three national goals to ensure child protection and child welfare:

- ▶ **Promote Safety:** All children have the right to live in an environment free from abuse and neglect. The safety of children is the paramount concern that must guide child protection efforts. When parents or caregivers are unable or unwilling to provide adequate care and to keep children safe, state, county, or city governments has a mandate to intervene. Referral to the court system and the removal of children from their families is only done when it is determined that children cannot be kept safely in their own homes.
- ▶ **Promote Permanency:** Children need a family and permanent place to call home. A sense of continuity and connection are central to a child's healthy development. A safe and permanent home is the best place for a child to grow up and most children are best cared for in their own families. State or local (county or city) child welfare agencies must assure that children move to a permanent family as quickly as possible. For children who cannot be safely reunified with their families, timely efforts must be made to ensure the children are provided with a stable, secure, and permanent home through adoption or other permanent living arrangement.

² Mallon, G and Hess, P. (2014) *An Overview of Children, Youth, and Family Services, Policies, and Programs in the United States*. Child Welfare for the 21st Century. NY: Columbia University Press.

³ In response to rising numbers of children in foster care and concerns about the safety of children that remain with or return to their families after placement in foster care, the US Congress enacted the Adoption and Safe Families Act of 1997 (ASFA, P.L. 105-89).



- ▶ **Promote Child and Family Well-being:** Children deserve nurturing environments in which their unique physical, emotional, and social needs are met and healthy development is promoted.

States are eligible to receive federal funding for child welfare services. In order to receive these funds, they must meet certain requirements that promote the safety and well-being of identified children and youth.



B. US Federal and State Government Role in Child Welfare

Child welfare is defined by federal law and overseen by the Children's Bureau, within the Administration for Children and Families of the US Department of Health and Human Services. The Children's Bureau provides guidance, disperses funds, monitors state services, and reports on state performance to Congress. US states, tribes, territories, and/or county or city governments enact statutes and develop child welfare programs and policies in accordance with federal legislative mandates, policies, and funding requirements.

The Children's Bureau was established in 1912 and is the oldest federal agency responsible for regulating, guiding, overseeing, and monitoring child welfare services to children and families. In 2014, the Children's Bureau managed over \$25 billion in funding for a full range of services through grant programs and initiatives to states and local communities, as well as training and technical assistance for child welfare systems, organizations, and practitioners. The Bureau's programs focus on preventing the abuse and neglect of children, protecting children from abuse, finding temporary foster or kinship families until children can safely return home, and finding permanent adoptive families for those who cannot safely stay with or return to their parents.

1. Federal Monitoring

The Children's Bureau monitors child welfare programs in all 50 states, federally recognized tribes, and US territories. One monitoring approach is through the Child and Family Service Reviews (CFSRs). The CFSRs were initiated in 2001 to determine what is actually happening to children and families as they work with child welfare services, assess states' capacity to create positive outcomes for children and families, and the provision of appropriate services including child protection, foster care, adoption, family preservation and family support, and independent living services. These reviews are conducted in partnership with child welfare agency staff and help to identify strengths, areas needing improvement, and approaches for enhancing systems and services.

The CFSR is a two-stage process consisting of 1) a statewide assessment and 2) an onsite review of child and family service outcomes and program systems. For the statewide assessment, the Children's Bureau prepares and shares data on the foster care and in-home service populations within the state. The onsite review of the state child welfare program includes: a review of case records; interviews with children and families engaged in services; and interviews with community stakeholders, such as the courts and community agencies, foster families, and caseworkers and service providers.

At the end of the onsite review, states determined not to have achieved certain goals are required to develop and implement Program Improvement Plans (PIPs). The Children's Bureau supports those states with technical assistance and monitors implementation of their plans. States that do not make necessary improvements may sustain penalties as described in federal regulations.

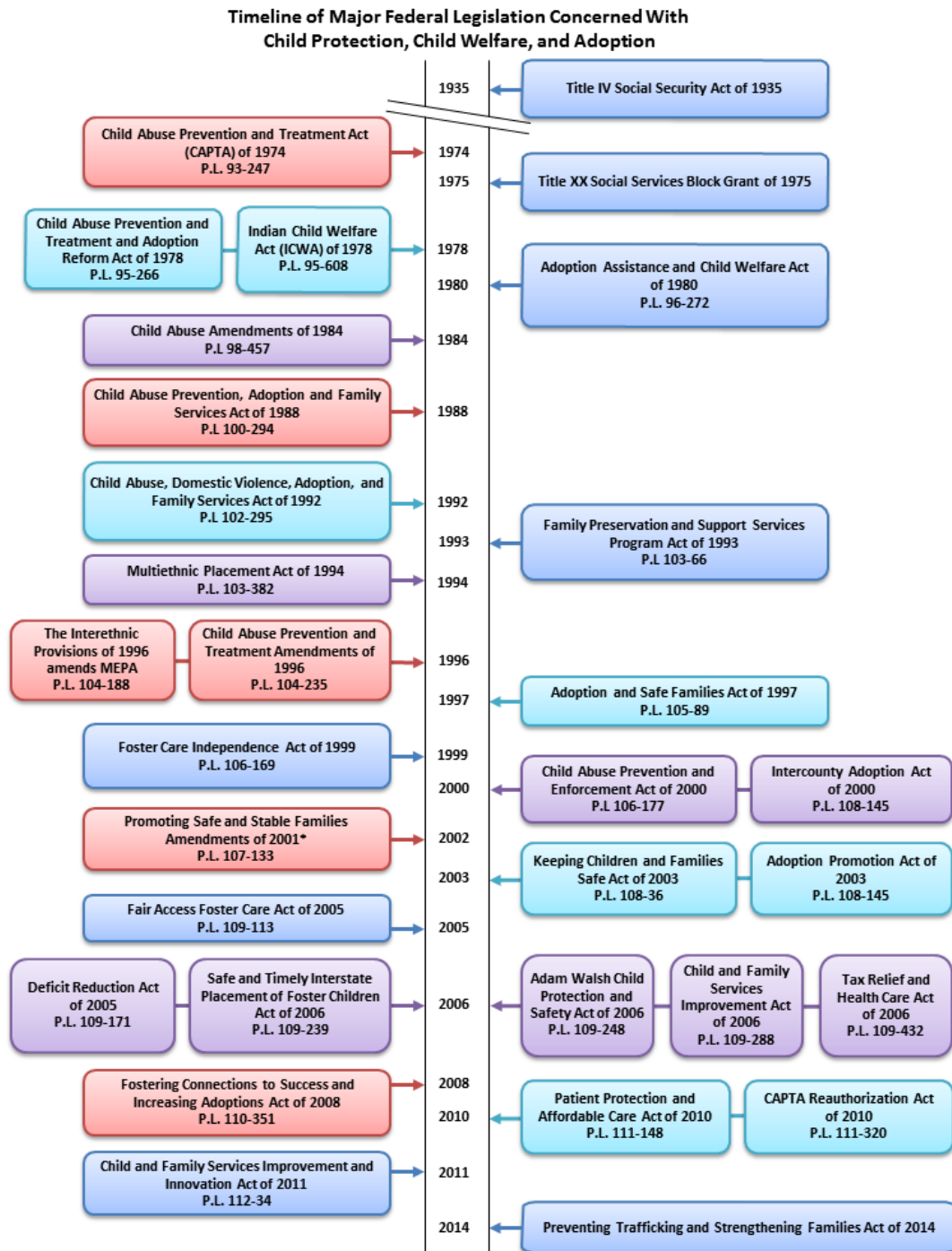
In addition to monitoring by the federal government, child welfare agencies are usually subject to oversight from a variety of state and local bodies, including the courts, foster care review boards, citizen review panels, legislative committees, advocacy groups, and ombudsmen.

2. Key Legislation Guiding Child Protection and Child Welfare in the United States

The US Congress has enacted a number of laws that have had a significant impact on state child protection and child welfare services. (See Appendix A for a list of selected US federal legislation related to child welfare.) Such legislation often requires federal departments and agencies such as the Children's Bureau to issue or amend federal policies and regulations. Figure 1 shows a timeline of the enactment of key laws and demonstrates the evolution of laws in response to identified gaps and needs in the US child welfare system.



Figure 1. Timeline of major US legislation concerned with child protection, child welfare, and adoption



Source: Major Federal Legislation Concerned With Child Protection, Child Welfare, and Adoption (2011). Retrieved from the World Wide Web on August 16, 2011 @ <http://childwelfare.gov/pubs/otherpubs/majorfedlegis.cfm>.
The Pennsylvania Child Welfare Resource Center

Module 1: Introduction to Pennsylvania's Child Welfare System
Handout #7, Page 1 of 1

*Some acts were enacted the year following their introduction in Congress.



3. Federal Funding for Child Protection and Child Welfare

State child welfare programs are funded primarily through federal mandatory formula grants that link to child welfare legislation. A combination of federal and state sources fund child welfare services and many states require county or local contributions or “matches”.

Child abuse prevention funds are awarded through the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA). Title IV-B (Child and Family Services) of the Social Security Act provides allotments to states for child welfare services and to promote safe and stable families. Title IV-E (Foster Care Maintenance, Adoption Assistance and Guardianship Assistance) provides federal payments for foster care and adoption assistance. Included under IV-E is the John H. Chafee Foster Care and Independence Program. Title XX specifies that block grants to social services are to be used in part for preventing or remedying child abuse and neglect, and also for preventing or reducing inappropriate institutional care through the provision of community-based care or home-based care. The Children’s Bureau closely monitors the disbursement of funds and conducts compliance reviews to ensure that a state is correctly determining the eligibility of foster and adoptive children for whom IV-E funds are received. An error rate exceeding 5% results in financial penalties. The US Office of Inspector General (OIG) also periodically audits states for IV-E compliance with respect to use of IV-E funds.

4. Role of State and County/City Governments in Implementing Federal Laws

Federal legislation often results in the enactment of new legislation in a state, tribe, territory and/or county or city, the development or revision of new policies and regulations, and the implementation of new programs. While states, tribes, and territories must comply with specific federal requirements and guidelines in order to be eligible for federal funding under certain programs, the primary responsibility for implementing child welfare services rests with the state, tribe, or territory. Each state, tribe, and territory has its own legal and administrative structures and programs that address the needs of children and families. States, tribes, and territories establish their own policies and procedures to implement federal child welfare programs and regulations.

Consequently, the practices in child welfare agencies may vary. No two state or local child welfare systems are exactly alike in how they are structured or in how they manage and monitor their service delivery system. The following section offers an overview of the services provided by child welfare systems in the US.



C. Description of the US Child Welfare System

1. Services Provided by the Child Welfare System

Child welfare programs provide a continuum of services and supports, including but not only child protective services, depending on the immediacy of the family's challenges and the extent to which the child is determined to be unprotected and unsafe. The child welfare system is not a single entity. Many organizations in each community work together to strengthen families and keep children safe. Public or governmental agencies, such as departments of social services or child and family services, often collaborate with other government agencies and the courts and law enforcement, and contract with private, nonprofit, nongovernmental organizations or agencies to provide services to families, such as in-home family preservation services, foster care, residential treatment, mental health care, substance abuse treatment, parenting skills classes, employment assistance, and financial or housing assistance.

While specific procedures vary widely by state, child welfare systems typically:

- ▶ Create statewide processes for receiving and responding to reports of suspected abuse or neglect;
- ▶ Investigate reports of possible child abuse and neglect to determine the immediacy of the response required;
- ▶ Provide resources for community-based child abuse prevention efforts;
- ▶ Provide services to families while children remain in their home to stabilize families and prevent child removals from parents or caretakers;
- ▶ Provide emergency shelter and arrange longer term protective custody placement for children often with relative or foster families when they are not safe at home;
- ▶ Provide services to reunify children with parents, including court oversight for children in protective custody; and
- ▶ Arrange for adoption or other permanent family connections for children who cannot return to their parents.

2. Population Served by Child Welfare System

Some families who are identified at risk due to domestic violence, substance abuse, mental health issues, and/or teen parenting may be offered voluntary child abuse prevention supports such as home visitation and parent training. Other families may become involved with their local child welfare system due to a report of suspected child abuse or neglect (sometimes called "child maltreatment"). As defined by US federal law, child maltreatment is any recent act or failure to act on the part of the parent or caretaker (such as extended family members or babysitters) that results in death, serious physical or emotional harm, sexual abuse, or



exploitation; or an act or failure to act that presents an imminent risk of serious harm. Child maltreatment also can include harm that a caregiver allows to happen or does not prevent from happening to a child. (See Appendix B for the full definition of child maltreatment.) In general, child welfare agencies do not intervene in cases of harm to children caused by acquaintances or strangers, as these cases are the responsibility of law enforcement.

Child welfare services are provided to individuals ranging in age from newborns to young adults. The reasons why children receive child welfare services vary and can include:

- ▶ Children and youth are at risk of child maltreatment;
- ▶ The child welfare system has confirmed child maltreatment allegations and the children remain in their home;
- ▶ The child welfare system has confirmed child maltreatment allegations and the child is placed in out of home care;
- ▶ The youth is transitioning from child welfare dependency to independent living;
- ▶ In some jurisdictions, child welfare agencies may also serve other populations, such as families experiencing parent-child conflict, children and youth with severe behavioral problems, and youth reported for truancy.

3. The Process of the Child Welfare System

a. When Possible Abuse or Neglect is Reported

Any concerned person can report suspicions of child abuse or neglect. Most reports are made by people who are required by state law to report suspicions of child abuse and neglect, called “mandatory reporters” which are further described in Appendix C. Reports or allegations of possible child abuse and neglect are generally received as a referral by child protective services workers (whose focus is on child safety). A report is “screened-in” if there is sufficient information to suggest an investigation is warranted. A report may be “screened-out” if there is not enough information on which to follow up or if the situation reported does not meet the state’s legal definition of abuse or neglect. If a report is screened out, the worker may refer the person reporting the incident to other community services or law enforcement for additional help. In most states, the majority of screened-in reports receive investigations, which determines if a child was maltreated or is at-risk of maltreatment and establishes whether an intervention is needed.

In 2012, an estimated total of 3.4 million referrals involving 6.3 million children were made to child protective services. Approximately 62% were screened in for an investigation or assessment by child protective services, and 38% were screened out. Of those screened in, approximately 20% of investigations or 686,000 found a child to be a victim of abuse.⁴

⁴ The statistics are compiled in an annual report published by the Children's Bureau based on data collected on maltreated children known to the state child protective system from states to the National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System (NCANDS). The annual NCANDS report presents national and state level findings on the number and sources of child abuse and neglect reports, investigation dispositions, types of maltreatment,



b. When a Child Abuse Report is Confirmed

Child protective services (CPS) workers, often called investigators, respond within a particular time period, which may be anywhere from a few hours to a few days, depending on the type of maltreatment alleged, the potential severity of the situation, and requirements under state law. As part of an initial assessment or investigation, they may speak with the parents and other people in contact with the child, such as doctors, teachers, or childcare providers. They also may speak with the child, alone or in the presence of caregivers, depending on the child's age and level of risk. Children who are believed to be in immediate danger may be moved to a shelter, temporary foster care placement, or a relative's home during the investigation and while court proceedings are pending. An investigator's primary purpose is to determine if the child is safe, if abuse or neglect has occurred, and if there is a risk of it occurring again, which represents one aspect of services provided by the child welfare system.

Some jurisdictions employ an alternative response or differential response system in which different options are considered depending on the level of risk. The following general options are available:

- ▶ No or low risk—The family's case may be closed with no services if the maltreatment was a one-time incident, the child is considered to be safe, there is no or low risk of future incidents, and any services the family needs will not be provided through the child welfare agency but through other community-based resources or service systems. In these low-risk cases, children may remain in their own homes with the families and then families may receive in-home services and supports, such as parent education, safety planning, counseling and more. Families may be connected with community services that provide help with housing and food.
- ▶ Low to moderate risk—Referrals may be made to community-based or voluntary in-home CPS services if the CPS worker believes the family would benefit from these services and the child's present and future safety would be enhanced. This may happen even when no abuse or neglect is found, if the family needs and is willing to participate in services.
- ▶ Moderate to high risk—The family may be offered voluntary in-home CPS services to address safety concerns and help ameliorate the risks. If these are refused, the agency may seek intervention by a juvenile dependency court and the child may become "dependent" on the court for safeguarding. Based on information provided to the judge of the court, the judge makes the final decision about what happens in a case. Sometimes the judge will assign a Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA). There are over 950 community-based programs that recruit, train, and support CASAs who are citizen-volunteers to advocate for the best interests of abused and neglected children in courtrooms and communities. Volunteer advocates—empowered directly by the courts—offer judges the critical information they need to ensure that each child's rights and needs are being attended to while in foster care. These CASA volunteers stay with

characteristics of children victimized, relationship of perpetrators to victims, and services provided for child maltreatment victims.



children until they are placed in loving permanent homes. For many abused children, a CASA volunteer is the only constant adult presence in their lives.

At the end of an investigation, child protective services workers typically make one of two findings— 1) “unsubstantiated” or “unfounded” or 2) “substantiated” or “founded”. These terms vary in different states. Typically, a finding of “unsubstantiated” means there is insufficient evidence for the worker to conclude that a child was abused or neglected, or what happened does not meet the legal definition of child abuse or neglect. A finding of “substantiated” typically means an incident of child abuse or neglect, as defined by state law, is believed to have occurred. Some states have additional categories, such as “unable to determine,” that suggest there was not enough evidence to confirm that abuse or neglect occurred.

The agency will initiate a court action if it determines that the authority of the juvenile dependency court is necessary to keep the child safe. To protect the child, the court can issue temporary orders placing the child in shelter care during the investigation, ordering services, or ordering certain individuals to have no contact with the child. At an adjudicatory hearing, the court hears evidence and decides whether maltreatment occurred and whether the child should be under the continuing jurisdiction of the court. The court then enters a disposition, either at that hearing or at a separate hearing, which may result in the court ordering a parent to comply with services necessary to ameliorate the abuse or neglect. Orders can also contain provisions regarding visitation between the parent and the child, agency obligations to provide the parent with services, and services needed by the child.

Data: In 2012, approximately 686,000 children were found to be victims of child abuse or neglect. Nationally, four-fifths (78%) of victims were neglected, 18% were physically abused, 9% were sexually abused, and 8% were psychologically maltreated.

c. Course of Action for Confirmed Cases of Abuse or Neglect

If a child has been abused or neglected, the course of action depends on state policy, the severity of the maltreatment, an assessment of the child’s immediate safety, the risk of continued or future maltreatment, and the services available in the community to address the family’s needs. After a judge determines that ongoing services are needed, a comprehensive family assessment is conducted. The assessment is intended to gain a greater understanding about the strengths, needs, and resources of the family so that children can be safe and the risk of maltreatment can be reduced. The assessment inform key decisions that will be part of a case plan, determine where the child will be placed; the services needed by the child, parents, caregivers, and/or foster parents; and other services needed to achieve desired outcomes for the child and family. These are documented in a case plan that must be reviewed at least once every six months by a judge.

Once there is a judicial determination that abuse or neglect occurred, juvenile dependency court may require the family to cooperate with in-home services if it is believed that the child can remain safely at home while the family addresses the issues contributing to the risk of



future maltreatment. If after the initial assessment it is determined that the child can safely remain in their own home, the child welfare system develops a plan for the delivery of “in-home services” to assist families, help children and youth, and preserve families to prevent separation.

If the child has been seriously harmed, is considered to be at high risk of serious harm, or the child’s safety is threatened, the court may order the child’s removal from the home or affirm the agency’s prior removal of the child. The child may be placed with a relative or in foster care.

Data: In 2013, 641,000 were served in the child welfare system. In 2012, 61% received services in their own homes with their families and 38% were temporarily removed from their homes.⁵ In 2013, an estimated 255,000 children were removed from their parents as a result of a child abuse investigation and assessment and entered out of home care.

d. When a Child is Placed in Out-of-Home

When child welfare staff and/or a judge determine that the young person cannot safely remain in their own home, the agency is required to provide for the child’s welfare and protection by taking legal and physical custody of the child and placing the child in out of home care. The child welfare agency must be prepared to immediately provide the child a safe, nurturing placement. While a child is in out-of-home care, he or she attends school and should receive medical care and other services that are needed. The child’s family also receives services to support their efforts to reduce the risk of future maltreatment and to help them, in most cases, be reunited with their child. Parents may visit their children on a predetermined basis and are often supervised by designated employees of the child welfare system. Visits also are arranged between siblings, if they cannot be placed together.

Out-of-home care is provided for children and youth who need to be temporarily separated from their families. The child welfare system is required to place the child in the least restrictive setting that closely approximate a child’s family setting. Out of home placements are expected to provide 24-hour care to meet the day-to-day needs of children; respond to their emotional and behavioral needs; arrange and transport children to medical appointments, mental health counseling sessions, and court hearings; and arrange visits with birth parents and caseworkers. Out-of-home care options may include the following:

- ▶ Kinship care or placement with a relative;
- ▶ Family foster homes (with a licensed foster family not related to the child);

⁵ Adoption, Foster Care Accounting and Reporting System (AFCARS) is a child welfare federal reporting system that collects case level information on all children in foster care for whom State agencies are responsible for placement, care or supervision. Some of the information reported in AFCARS includes demographic information on the child, the number of removals from a placement a child has experienced, the number of placements in the current removal episode, as well as the current type of placement such as foster family or adoptive placement. AFCARS captures information about children and youth exiting foster care such as their age, race, length of time in care, and reason for their discharge.



- ▶ Therapeutic or medical foster home (with a licensed foster parents who have additional training to meet the special needs of the child);
- ▶ Emergency shelters (short term temporary housing for children and youth awaiting a more appropriate setting);
- ▶ Group homes (state-licensed, community based facilities with twenty-four hour staff which normally hold eight to twelve children, usually around the same age);
- ▶ Supervised independent living settings (state-licensed, community based settings for older adolescents preparing for transition to adulthood); or
- ▶ Residential treatment centers (state-licensed, congregate care settings with an on-site educational facility and intensive health, mental health, and social services).

Data: Of all those served in 2013, 402,000 were in out of home care for a portion of the year. In 2012, more than a quarter of youth placed in out-of-home care were living with relatives in kinship care (28%), nearly half (47%) were in temporary foster family homes, a small portion were living in small group homes (9%) or placed in residential treatment centers or institutions for intensive therapeutic support (8%). Young people constitute a major segment of the foster care population. In 2013, 28% of children in foster care were 14 years of age or older.

e. When a Child Leaves Out-of-Home Care

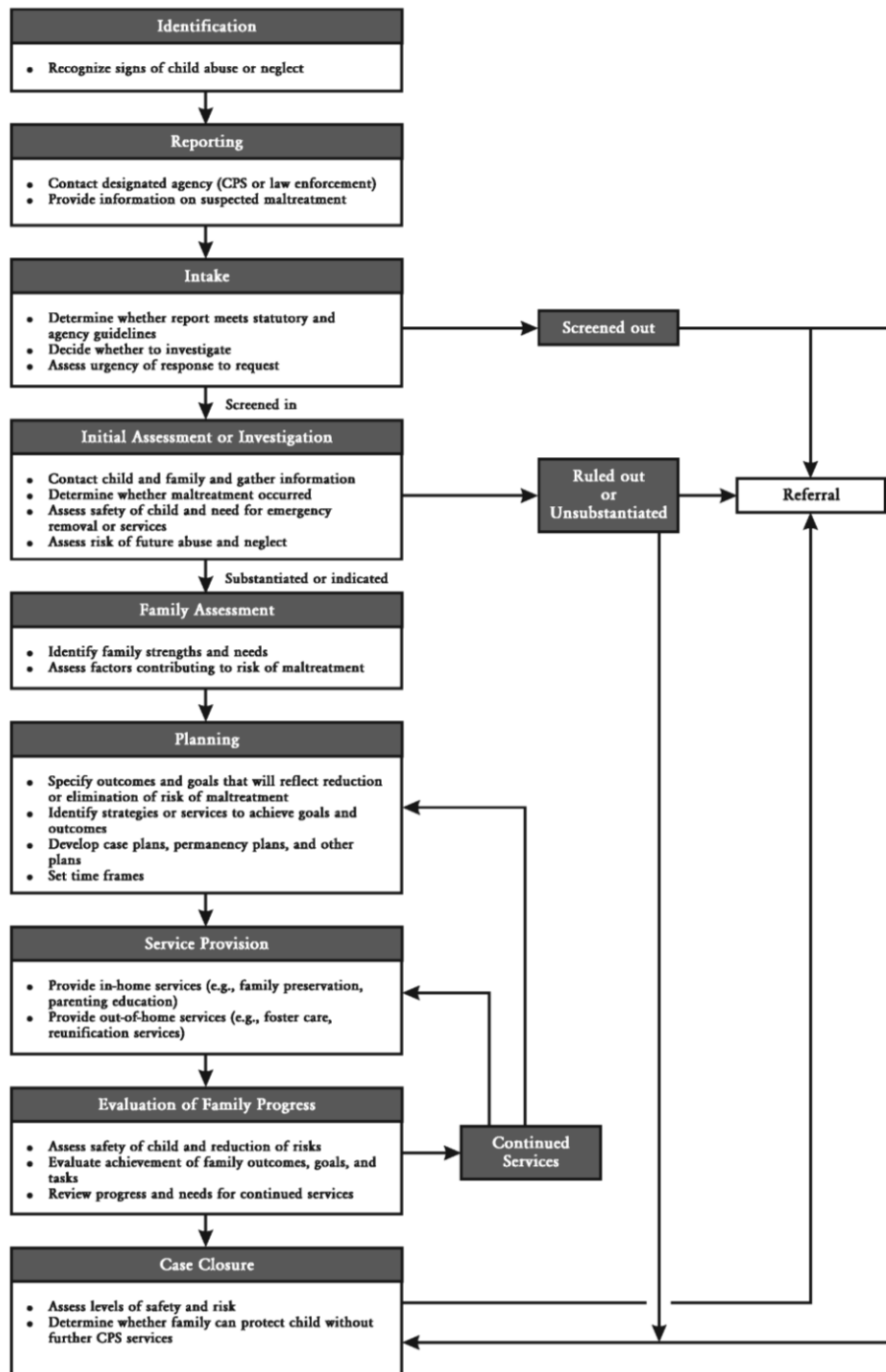
Every child in foster care must have a permanency plan that describes where the child will live after he or she leaves out-of-home care. The child welfare agency is required to make reasonable effort to provide services that enhance family's capacities and facilitate the child's or adolescents safe return home, referred to as reunification. Families typically participate in developing a permanency plan for the child and a service plan for the family to guide the agency's work. Except in unusual and extreme circumstances, every child's plan is first focused on reunification with parents.

If the efforts toward reunification cannot safely be achieved due to the severity of the neglect or abuse or a parent's condition or family history, the child welfare agency is responsible for identifying another plan that provides the child with a stable placement such as adoption or transfer of custody to a relative, who provides legal guardianship. Federal law requires the court to hold a permanency hearing, which determines the permanent plan or goal for the child, within 12 months after the child enters foster care and every 12 months thereafter. The plan may include returning home; termination of parental rights (referred to as TPR); referral for adoption, guardianship or placement with a fit and willing relative; or another planned permanent living arrangement (referred to as APPLA). Many courts review each case more frequently to ensure that the agency is actively pursuing permanency goals for the child.

Data: In 2013, 238,000 exited the foster care system. More than half (51%) of children leaving foster care were returned and were reunified with their parents. Nearly half of these children (46%) were in foster care for less than 1 year and 17% had been in care for more than three years. In 2013, 102,000 children and youth were waiting for adoption placement, 59,000 had parental rights terminated, and 51,000 were adopted.



Figure 2. Diagram of the Child Protection Process



Source: A Coordinated Response to Child Abuse and Neglect: The Foundation for Practice (2003) US Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Child Abuse and Neglect, p. 60



D. Preparing Youth for Transition to Adulthood in the US

1. Challenges Facing Older Youth Who Transition From Out of Home Placement

Youth in out-of-home care face many challenges in their struggle to achieve self-sufficiency, develop independent living skills, and build supports that ease the transition to adulthood. The transition to adulthood is especially challenging for youth in foster care as they have a history of instability as a result of many disruptions such as multiple placements, school changes, and placements in institutional settings. As a result they are often disconnected from family and social networks and lack the support that can help them overcome hardships as they transition to adulthood.

The number of youth who “age out” of foster care and are no longer eligible to receive services and supports from the child welfare system has increased every year since 2001. In the years between 2005 and 2010, more than 100,000 youth left the foster care system as they had exceeded the age limits of the child welfare system. Older youth in care and those who “age out” of foster care often face obstacles in achieving independent life. Studies have shown that emancipated foster youth fare poorly relative to youth in the general population in the following ways:⁶

- ▶ Are more likely to be involved in the criminal justice system;
- ▶ Are at higher risk of teen pregnancy and parenting;
- ▶ Have lower reading and math skills and high school graduation rates;
- ▶ Have high rates of physical, developmental, and mental health problems;
- ▶ Are more likely to experience homelessness;
- ▶ Have higher rates of alcohol and other drug abuse;
- ▶ Have higher rates of unemployment and likelihood of dependence on public assistance;
- ▶ Are likely to be living with parents or other relatives within one year of leaving placement.

2. Federal Role in Facilitating Transition Planning

Recognizing the difficulties faced by older youth in care and youth emancipating from foster care, Congress created the Independent Living Initiative in 1986 to assist certain older foster youth as they entered adulthood. The Foster Care Independence Act created the John H Chafee

⁶ Courtney, M. E., & Dworsky, A. (2005). *Midwest evaluation of the adult functioning of former foster youth: Outcomes at age 19*. Chicago, IL: Chapin Hall Center for Children at the University of Chicago.



Foster Care Independence Program of 1999 expanded services to current and former foster youth to help them achieve self-sufficiency. These federal initiatives enable states to offer help with education, employment, financial management, housing, and promote connections to caring adults for older youth in foster care. The program is intended to serve youth who are likely to remain in foster care until age 18, those who, upon reaching age 16, have left foster care for kinship guardianship or adoption, and young adults ages 18 to 21 who have “aged out” of the foster care system. Federal law also authorizes funding for states to provide workforce assistance and housing to older foster youth. In 2001, the Chafee Foster Care Independence programs was amended to include the Education and Training Voucher program to ensure state had access to dedicated funds to assist young adults currently or formerly in foster care, or those adopted after age 16, to pursue post-secondary education and vocational training.

The Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoption Act of 2008 required states to develop transition plans with young people at least 90 days prior to their emancipation from the child welfare system. This act also requires that transition and permanency planning must now be integrated toward supporting youth in making new connections, strengthening existing relationships, and assisting youth in reconnecting with their families of origin before they leave foster care. In achieving permanency outcomes, the objective is to foster permanency on many levels, including a safe and stable living environment, relationships with significant others, secure legal and social status, and connections to family, tradition, race, ethnicity, culture, language, and religion.

3. Approaches to Developing Transition Plans for Independent Living and Promoting Permanent Adult Connections

Child welfare staff, community members, and other youth serving systems support youth in the following ways:

- a. Developing an independent living plan that may include, but not be limited to, the following objectives:
 - ▶ Promote education attainment, minimize disruptions in education and inform youth about educational opportunities;
 - ▶ Educate youth about job training options by providing vocational, career training, and employment planning through partnerships with employers;
 - ▶ Help youth access and manage health care;
 - ▶ Facilitate transportation, including, where appropriate, assisting the child in obtaining a driver’s license;
 - ▶ Develop skills in money management;
 - ▶ Plan for housing and enhance access to safe and stable housing;
 - ▶ Identify opportunities for social and recreational activities.



b. Promoting permanent connections to caring adults by:

- ▶ Connecting youth to family members such as grandparents, aunts, and uncles;
- ▶ Establishing legal guardianships;
- ▶ Helping youth develop connections to at least one caring adult, including exploring opportunities for adoption;
- ▶ Connecting youth with opportunities to select well-screened mentors who can act as role models and teach youth specific skills;
- ▶ Making sure youth know why they are in placement;
- ▶ Helping youth get the information they need to create their own personal history;
- ▶ Helping youth identify and connect with birth family members with whom they can maintain a safe and appropriate relationship;
- ▶ Making sure someone is teaching youth how to find the community resources they will need when they age out of care;
- ▶ Helping youth explore reasons and concerns when they state they do not want permanent legal connection;
- ▶ Using Family Group Decision Making process to help key people in the youth's life to identify and establish permanent connections.

Data: Between 97,000 to 120,000 youth received independent living services between 2011-2013. The median age was 18. Of the 104,000 in foster care who are available for adoption, 18,000 were children ages 14 through 17. In 2012, 23,000 young people left foster care through “emancipation” or “aged out” of foster care (at the age of 18 to 21 depending on state law).

“Without positive relationships, you lack the support and energy you need on your journey to realizing your full potential.” —Beamer, Young Person



Section III.

Overview of the Russian Child Welfare and Protection System



A. Goals and Objectives of National Policy Concerning Protection of Children's Rights

National policy concerning protection of children's rights strives to:

- ▶ Enforce the rights guaranteed to children by the Constitution of the Russian Federation, prevent discrimination against children, and strengthen important safeguards of children's rights and legal interests, as well as restore these rights when they are violated;
- ▶ Establish a legal basis for protecting the rights of children;
- ▶ Promote the physical, intellectual, mental, spiritual, and moral development of children, instill in them a sense of patriotism and civic duty, and help each child come into his or her own as a contributing member of society and law-abiding citizen of the Russian Federation;
- ▶ Protect children from influences that adversely impact their physical, intellectual, mental, spiritual, and moral development.⁷

At this stage in its development, Russian social policy views protection of the family, motherhood, and childhood as one of its main goals. Article 38 of the Constitution of the Russian Federation declares that motherhood, childhood, and the family fall under state protection, and that taking care of one's children is the right and responsibility of all parents.

The Russian Federation is a member of the United Nations and the Council of Europe, which means that all legislation adopted by the Russian Federation must comply with international law in the area of children's rights.

Russia became party to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1990 and ratified it in 2013. In accordance with the Convention, the quality of the family environment and of the child's upbringing is a decisive factor in determining the child's fate.

As a party to the Convention, Russia must:

- ▶ Respect the child's right to preservation of identity, including nationality, name, and family ties recognized by law, without unlawful interference (Article 8);
- ▶ Ensure that no child be separated from his parents against his will, except where competent authorities determine, with judicial backing and in accordance with

⁷ Federal Law of July 24, 1998 No. 124-FZ Concerning Fundamental Guarantees of the Rights of the Child in the Russian Federation



applicable law and procedures, that such separation is necessary and in the best interests of the child. Such a determination may be unavoidable in certain cases, such as when parents abuse or neglect their children (Article 9);

- ▶ Respect the right of a child who is separated from one or both parents to stay in close and regular contact with both parents, unless doing so is not in the child's best interest (Article 9).

1. Authority and powers of Russian Federation administrative subjects

Russia today is made up of 85 administrative subjects (republics, territories, and regions, as well as three cities with federal status, one autonomous oblast, and several autonomous districts) joined into nine federal districts.

According to data gathered by the Federal State Statistics Service, the total population of the Russian Federation in 2013 was 142 million and the total number of children was 26.5 million.

Governmental agencies at the federal level in the Russian Federation have the authority to dictate principles of national policy concerning child welfare; to prioritize actions that promote the rights and legal interests of children; to devise and implement federal initiatives that protect and support children, as well as determine which agencies, institutions, and organizations shall be responsible for executing these programs; to establish judicial procedures for protecting the rights and legal interests of children; to fulfill the Russian Federation's obligations to the international community and to represent Russia's interests when working with international organizations in address issues of child protection and children's rights.

Governmental agencies of Russian Federation subjects are empowered to implement child welfare policy at the regional level; to decide questions of social support and social services for orphans and children without parental care, homeless children, and disabled children; and to administer rest and recreation programs for these children, while they are in school. Regions have the authority to institute local laws that expand the rights and benefits accorded to children.

2. Data collection

Every subject of the Russian Federation regularly provides information and statistics to the Federal State Statistics Service using prescribed document forms. As pertains to children without parental care, the important forms are:

No. 103-RIC – Information on the identification and placement of orphans and children without parental care: the number of children identified during a reporting period as lacking parental care, along with information about their placement in family-based or institutional care; the number of children in the regional database of children without parental care; the number of children adopted or placed with custodians or guardians during the period in question; the movement of children who were adopted or placed with families; the number of adoptions and custodial arrangements that were cancelled; the



number of prospective parents interested in providing family-based care to an orphan; the number of biological parents who have been partly or entirely deprived of their parental rights, and the number who have recovered them; the number of appeals for child protection; the number of alumni of the child welfare system who have secured or are awaiting housing; the number of specialists employed by the custody and guardianship authorities, etc.

No. D-13 – Information on institutions for orphans and children without parental care: the number of orphanages and the number of children housed in them, by age; the number of children still in need of placement; the progress of children who have left the institution (educational pursuits, job placement, reunification with family, transfer to a different organization); personnel working in institutions and their level of education; the material resources and financing of organizations.

3. Development of State Policy of the Russian Federation in the Area of Rights and Protection for Children Without Parental Care

The National Child Welfare Action Plan for 2012-2017⁸ defines the main objectives of state policy concerning orphans and children without parental care, one being the de-institutionalization of these children, which involves reducing the number of orphans raised in institutions by transitioning them to family-based care (the term “deinstitutionalization” was first used in this sense by UNICEF in the early 1990s).

Deinstitutionalization does not refer simply to the transfer of children from institutions to families. Rather, it describes a complete transformation in the child welfare system, a reduction in the number of orphanages, and provision of a variety of child care services, in accordance with legislation and established standards.

A broad interpretation of the term deinstitutionalization was offered by G.V. Semya (2000). The process of deinstitutionalization as a basis for state policy in the area of child abandonment entails the following essential directions of work:

- a. Keeping children from being placed into a state institution as a result of preventing child abandonment aimed at preserving biological families

This approach provides for early identification of children and families in distress, assessment of the risk of leaving a child in the family's care, and development of a plan for child protection and family support services. At the present moment, there are a variety of regional help centers in operation that provide a range of services to families with children: crisis centers for women with children, centers for battered women, mobile teams of specialists that travel to families' homes, 24-hour hotlines, as well as branches of the Malenkaya Mama (teen mothers) program in Moscow and St. Petersburg for pregnant minors and young mothers, which works with new mothers in cases of potential child abandonment.

⁸ Executive Order of the President of the Russian Federation of June 1, 2012 No. 761



Only after all avenues of family assistance have been exhausted does the child become a ward of the state. The state attempts to place the child, first with extended family members, and then with unrelated members of the general public. If no such placement can be found, the child is transferred to an orphanage temporarily and the search for alternative family-based care continues.

b. Increasing family-based care for orphans and preventing “returns” of placed children (secondary abandonment). This objective involves action both on the federal level and among regional administrations

- ▶ Educating the public about the issue of child abandonment; creating positive attitudes toward orphans and eliminating negative stereotypes about them; using media and the Internet to inform the public of children available for adoption or custody;
- ▶ Expanding the system of incentives (benefits and direct payments) offered to prospective adoptive and surrogate parents (custodians, guardians) and the system of material and logistical support for adoptive families, custodians, and guardians;
- ▶ Developing a system to prepare prospective adoptive and surrogate parents for their undertaking, offering them a voluntary mental health examination;
- ▶ Expanding support services for family placement specialists (psychologists, social educators, lawyers, etc.);
- ▶ Additional legislative reform.

Orphanages also endeavor to find family placements for their wards. Specialists work with biological parents to reunify them with their children, in addition to working with prospective adoptive parents. The organizations also sponsor various thematic events: Stork Day, Open Door Day, Adoption Day, creative competitions for wards of the organization, etc.

Such events facilitate introduction between prospective parents and children, encouraging would-be parents to bring an institutionalized orphan into their family by allowing them to get to know the child beforehand.

c. Reforming the network of orphanages

Increasing family placements for orphans helps reduce the number of children living in institutions and in so doing changes the demographics of this population (adolescents, disabled children, and siblings become the predominant groups remaining). Each region has adopted a program to reorganize, convert, or close existing orphanages, providing a foundation on which to establish various support services for families, surrogate parents, and alumni of the system. Unused buildings have the potential to be converted to kindergartens or institutes for continuing education.



- d. Improving the quality of living conditions, child care, and education provided to children who, for various reasons, cannot be placed with families and so continue to be brought up in an orphanage

Within the institutional setting, children are assigned to small groups resembling families (children of different ages, organized according to family principles: a biological or social family unit that takes into account the individual needs of the children who are its members). Children remaining in institutions receive advanced and high quality medical care. Orphanages are not isolated and residents are educated in the same municipal pre-schools and schools as the general population. In the past, institutional boarding schools where orphans both lived and studied were common throughout Russia. Today, boarding schools are reserved for disabled children who have no way of receiving special education outside of the institution, and for children in regions so remote that education in a municipal school is not feasible.

- e. Ongoing support for alumni in order to prevent secondary abandonment

To accomplish this, regional support services and mentoring programs are made available to alumni. Orphanages are required to prepare alumni for independence and help them adapt to post-institutional life. All alumni who do not have permanent housing (for example, do not have the opportunity to return to live with their families) receive it free of charge.

Deinstitutionalization thus amounts, in its most basic principles, to a replacement of old institutions with a range of new services. Some of these services are designed to accommodate children with special needs, or those who require temporary extra-familial care during a difficult period. Other services are designed to assist families, whether to avoid the breaking up of biological families, or to support surrogate families in caring for their charges.

B. History of Child Protection Policy in Russia

Here follows a brief historical background on the development of child protection policy in contemporary Russia.

Since 1995, state policy concerning the prevention of child abandonment has been guided by federal programs (and later subprograms) of the Orphans Initiative. These have solved the issue of mass institutionalization in stages by introducing psychological services, preparing and equipping alumni with initial means for independent living, and promoting family-based care.

A completely new and progressive stage in the development of state policy began in 2006 and can be divided into two main periods: the first starting in 2006, and the second in 2013. These stages were characterized by significant changes in the Russian Federation's legislation concerning the prevention of child abandonment, by a strengthening of federal laws through innovative reforms, and by the provision to Russian Federation subjects of targeted federal grants and subsidies supporting family-based care for orphans and funding housing for alumni of the system.

1. First stage of policy reform in the deinstitutionalization of orphans

In his 2006 Presidential Address to the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation, Vladimir Putin articulated the challenge of effective demographic policy, prompting the passage of a series of measures supporting family care, including measures to incentivize the provision of family care for orphans. The President charged the federal government with working “together with regional governments to create a system for reducing the number of institutionalized children.” This meant bringing about a major change in policy concerning child abandonment: attention shifted to those orphans whose right to grow up in a family had been disrupted by the conditions of institutionalization, as well as children living in dysfunctional families. In this moment, the main measure of success became a reduction in the number of institutionalized children.

2007 saw the approval of Children of Russia 2007-2010, a targeted federal program which funded projects to expand family-based care, improve children's homes and orphanage-boarding schools, train specialists (psychologists, social workers, etc.), carry out a Russia-wide action plan of integrating wards of the state into the cultural and recreational activities of broader society (artistic competitions, sporting events, etc.), and prepare and support alumni of the system in their transition to independent life.

From 2007 to 2010, the federal government allotted a portion of its budget to grants and subsidies for regional expansion of family-based care for orphans. The federal government took the responsibility upon itself to cover the cost of a one-time payment to the surrogate family



upon initial placement of a child, as well as a portion of the monthly remuneration of the family's expenses in caring for a child and ongoing compensation of the parents.

In 2008, the government instituted its Federal Law Concerning Custody and Guardianship, which re-evaluated family-based care as the preferred placement option for orphans and expanded the responsibilities of the custody and guardianship authorities to include the prevention of child abandonment.

In 2009, the Foundation for Support of Children in Difficult Life Situations was established by executive order and began its work of funding regional projects and programs aimed at changing the child welfare system with respect to such issues as:

- ▶ Preventing family dysfunction and child abandonment;
- ▶ Restoring children to a healthy and nurturing family environment, and finding family placements for orphans and children without parental care.⁹

During the same year, the federal government began allotting a portion of its budget to subsidies for orphans' housing which was paid out to regional governments.

In 2009, the President Dmitry Medvedev created the post of Commissioner of Children's Rights, and to date regional commissioners of children's rights have been appointed in all subjects of the Russian Federation.

In his 2010 Presidential Address to the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation, President Medvedev tasked the government with creating an effective state policy on childhood, including the design and implementation of programs to prepare institutionalized children for independent living and support alumni of children's homes in their adaptation to broader society, as well as to reinforce the custody and guardianship authorities' commitment to finding family placements for children and supporting host families post-placement.

In his 2011 Presidential Address to the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation, Vladimir Putin made the following pronouncement: "The government shall take additional measures to increase the expansion of family-based care for orphans. I will soon give such an order, and think that regional leaders should also spearhead programs that provide medical, psychological, and pedagogical support to families bringing up orphans. They need help, and it has to be practical. Additionally, all regions must finish developing programs of social adaptation for alumni of children's homes."

In 2012, the President issued Executive Order No. 761 "Concerning a National Action Plan in the Interests of Children for 2012-2017" and the government approved an interim plan of priority measures for implementing key provisions of the Action Plan through 2014, with expansion of family-based care for orphans and reform of the network of orphanages being declared two

⁹ Five programs fall under the auspices of this objective: "The Child's Right to a Family," "We Return No One," "New Family," "Assistance League," and "Protect Children from Abuse!"



such priorities. In 2015, the government approved a second interim plan covering implementation of the Action Plan through 2017.

2. Second stage of policy reform in the deinstitutionalization of orphans

The second stage of policy reform began in 2013, in the wake of Executive Order. 1688 “Concerning Certain Measures for the Implementation of State Policy in the Area of Protection for Orphans and Children without Parental Care”, issued for the purpose of safeguarding the right of every child to grow up in a family, expanding and supporting various forms of family-based care for orphans, and reducing the number of children residing in institutions. In working towards a realization of these objectives, the legislature passed a series of measures that greatly simplified procedures and reduced the wait time for family placement of orphans.

Reforms in the network of orphanages significantly expanded their functions across the board, from participation in efforts to prevent child abandonment, to preparation and support of surrogate parents caring for formerly institutionalized youth. The reforms instituted, for the first time, a limit on the duration of a child's stay in an orphanage, as well as new requirements for keeping children close to their families. New types of orphanages were created.

The reforms increased federal benefits and pensions for disabled children and their caretakers. Starting from January 1, 2013, the one-time award for adoption of a disabled child, a child older than seven, or a sibling group was raised to 100,000 rubles. Many subjects followed suit by passing regional laws to further increase the size of payments out of their own budgets. The Kaliningrad region, for example, increased payments to 640,000 rubles, and the Sakhalin region to one million rubles.

A law passed in 2013 strengthened the right of biological and surrogate parents to access medical, psychological, pedagogical, legal, and social services in their exercise of parental rights.

As of January 1, 2015, the state database of children without parental care is required to include information about persons interested in becoming surrogate parents, access to which shall be provided to all custody and guardianship authorities for the purpose of efficiently screening candidates for child placement.

The significant workload currently involved in protecting the rights and legal interests of minors warrants commensurate staffing changes for custody and guardianship authorities. The number of specialists working in this area has thus been growing, from 5,907 child protection specialists in 2006 to 10,687 in 2013. New professional standards for these specialists were approved in 2013, and a continuing education program to help specialists meet these qualifications debuted in 2015.

In 2013, per the federal government's mandate, each Russian Federation subject devised a plan of action to expand programs providing family-based care to orphans and children without parental care.



Legislative reform is, at present, ongoing. The concept of a governmental family policy continues to take root, and in this process amendments to the Family Code are instituted, the rights and duties of parents reinforced, the child's right to a family preserved, and justifications for termination of parental rights reviewed. Introduction of a new form of reimbursable custody — professionally contracted family-based care (social education) — is under active discussion. If this is implemented, a new profession — that of the social educator — will be created, which will facilitate family-based care for disabled children, teenagers, and sibling groups, as well as accommodate children who are temporarily separated from their parents.



C. Key Child Protection Laws in Russia

Russia's key child protection laws include:

1. Family Code of the Russian Federation (1995)
2. Federal Law of December 21, 1996 No. 159-FZ Concerning Additional Guarantees of Social Protection for Orphans and Children without Parental Care
3. Federal Law of July 24, 1998 No. 124-FZ Concerning Fundamental Guarantees of the Rights of the Child in the Russian Federation
4. Federal Law of June 24, 1999 No. 120-FZ Concerning Principles for Preventing Abuse and Violations of the Rights of Minors
5. Federal Law of April 16, 2001 No. 44-FZ Concerning the State Database of Children without Parental Care
6. Federal Law of April 24, 2008 No. 48-FZ Concerning Guardianship and Custody
7. National Action Plan in the Interests of Children for 2012-2017 (Executive Order of the President of the Russian Federation of June 1, 2012 No. 761)
8. Related bylaws (executive orders of the Russian Federation). Amendments and new articles are constantly being added to existing laws.

1. Family Code of the Russian Federation (1995)

Russian Federation Family Code (FCRF) guarantees the right of every child to live and grow up in a family, and, whenever possible and in the child's best interests, to know, reside with, and be cared for by his or her own parents.

FCRF defines the rights and responsibilities of children and their parents, the grounds and procedure for separating a child from his or her family, the basis for restricting or terminating parental rights, and the process for restoring them.

When a child is removed from his or her family, he or she is designated a child without parental care. "Children without parental care may be given up for another family to raise (adopted), placed under custody or guardianship, housed with a host family or, where provided for by the laws of a Russian Federation subject, with a patron family, or, failing these options, transferred temporarily to an organization for orphans and all types of children without parental care."



2. Federal Law of December 21, 1996 No. 159-FZ Concerning Additional Guarantees of Social Protection for Orphans and Children without Parental Care

This law sets forth the general principles, substance, and measures of state support for orphans and children without parental care, as well as persons counted as orphans and children without parental care.

The law likewise defines the category of children and children without parental care. These are persons under 18 years of age who are without parental care due to the fact that their parent(s) have lost their parental rights or had these rights restricted, have been declared missing, incompetent, or dead, have relinquished custody to the court, have been detained or imprisoned after being suspected, accused, or found guilty of a crime, have refused to care for or to protect the rights and interests of the child, have refused to take the child back from institutions providing educational, medical, or social services, are unknown, or meet any other legal criteria under which the child may be assigned to this category.

An individual with the status of orphan or child without parental care receives full state support. Full state support provides for the child's stay in an orphanage, custodial arrangement, or guardianship, including free or reimbursed room and board, clothing and shoes, medical care, and secondary or higher education. Youth between the ages of 18 and 23 have the right to full state support and additional guarantees of social support, including free dormitory accommodation through the conclusion of their professional education.

3. Federal Law of July 24, 1998 No. 124-FZ Concerning Fundamental Guarantees of the Rights of the Child in the Russian Federation

The law defines the goals (see above) and principles of state policy in the interests of children, including:

- ▶ Legal protection for the rights of children;
- ▶ Support of families with respect to the education, upbringing, recreation, and health of children, protection of children's rights, and preparation of children for a meaningful future role in society;
- ▶ Accountability of legal parties, responsible persons, and other individuals for violation of the rights and legal interests of a child, or for causing him or her harm;
- ▶ Support for NGOs and other organizations working to protect the rights and legal interests of children.

This law first introduced the concept of children in difficult life situations and identified measures and obligations for protecting the rights of these children.

This law also included a requirement for the development, dissemination, and publication of a State Report on the Situation of Children in the Russian Federation by the government.



4. Federal Law of June 24, 1999 No. 120-FZ Concerning Principles for Preventing Abuse and Violations of the Rights of Minors

This law identifies all state and municipal agencies responsible for the welfare of children and provides guidelines for interagency cooperation in the protection of children's rights. It coordinates all activities of the Commission for the Protection of Minors. A regional commission generally is led by the region's deputy director for community affairs.

The law defines a *difficult life situation* as any factor or condition that objectively disturbs normal daily life and cannot be overcome independently by individuals or families. It introduces two categories of children in need of state protection:

- a. **Children in difficult life situations** – children deprived of parental care; children who are disabled, developmentally delayed, or physically handicapped; child victims of war, ethnic conflict, and natural or human-instigated disasters; children from families of refugees and internally displaced persons; children in other kinds of exigent circumstances; child victims of violence; children serving sentences in the juvenile justice system or confined to special educational institutions for troubled youth; children living in poverty; children with behavioral problems; children whose lives have been disrupted through circumstances that they cannot overcome on their own or with the help of family.
- b. **Children in socially dangerous situations** – persons who, as a result of neglect or abandonment, find themselves in circumstances that endanger their life or health, that fail to suffice for their care or support, or that facilitate their involvement in illegal or antisocial activities (for adolescents, antisocial conduct manifests itself in systematic use of drugs, stimulant and/or depressant substances, alcohol; involvement in prostitution, vagrancy, and begging; and any other activities that violate the rights and legally-protected interests of other people).

Families with children in socially dangerous situations, along with families in which parents or other legal guardians do not fulfill their obligation to provide for the education, upbringing, and/or material support of a child, and/or negatively influence or abuse that child, belong to the category of families in socially dangerous situations.

In 2013, out of the total population of persons under 18 years of age, the number of children in difficult life situations, in the most basic sense of the term, was about 2,318,000, including 5,700 newborns abandoned by their mothers and 1,142,200 children living in low-income families.

5. Federal Law of April 16, 2001 No. 44-FZ Concerning the State Database of Children without Parental Care

The state (federal) database is an aggregate of regional databases of information about orphans and children without parental care. It contains all the information and photographs that are collected when the status of orphan or child without parental is assigned. This information is provided by the custody and guardianship authorities.

The state database of children:



- ▶ Contains records of children without parental care;
- ▶ Assists in placing children without parental care in the families of Russian Federation citizens by providing information about children to persons willing to provide family-based care and provides directions for visiting these children in the orphanages where they are housed.

The photographs and description of each child are updated periodically.

After a child has been placed with a family, information about that child is removed from the database.

6. Federal Law of April 24, 2008 No. 48-FZ Concerning Guardianship and Custody

This law governs the custody and guardianship authorities and regulates activities engendering the initiation, implementation, and termination of custody and guardianship of minors.

Custody and guardianship authorities are executive agencies of Russian Federation subjects. Their powers can be delegated to local (municipal) administrations.

Specialists employed by the custody and guardianship authorities:

- ▶ Secure and protect the rights and legal interests of minors, including the child's right to live and grow up in a family, the right to communicate with parents and other relatives, and other personal and property rights accorded to minors;
- ▶ Identify children in need of government assistance and protect their rights and interests; keep track of children identified as needing government assistance; determine the best method for protecting the rights of a child in need of government assistance; provide help to families with children in difficult life situations;
- ▶ Protect orphans and children without parental care, and their rights and legal interests: maintain records of orphans and children without parental care; organize and manage work with candidate adoptive parents, custodians, and guardians; arrange institutional and family-based care for orphans and children without parental care; monitor compliance with the rights and legal interests of institutionalized children; help protect the rights of persons counted as orphans (alumni) during the post-institutional period;
- ▶ Protect the rights and legal interests of orphans and children without parental care who are being brought up in the family-based care of Russian Federation citizens, and assist the families that have taken in these children: protect the personal and property rights of orphans in surrogate families; monitor observance of the rights and legal interests of children in these families; provide support to families bringing up orphans and parentless children.

Thus, the laws of the Russian Federation, in accordance with international standards, establish family-based care, biological and surrogate, as the unequivocal priority of its policy regarding orphans and children without parental care.



7. National Action Plan in the Interests of Children for 2012-2017

This law, passed by Executive Order of the President of the Russian Federation of June 1, 2012 No. 761, has as its key objectives:

- ▶ Preserving the child's biological family;
- ▶ Assuring the priority given to family-based care for orphans;
- ▶ Managing the rehabilitation and restoration of parental rights to parents of institutionalized children, as well as the search for relatives and establishing of social relations for returning children to their biological families;
- ▶ Reforming the network and operations of orphanages, including institutions for sick and disabled children;
- ▶ Converting boarding schools into services centers for families and children in difficult life situations, rehabilitation centers, and other resource centers, depending on the region's needs;
- ▶ Creating a system of post-institutional support and socialization for alumni of orphanages and persons counted as orphans;
- ▶ Actively engaging non-profit organizations and volunteers in solving problems related to protection of children's rights.



D. Children in Need of State Protection in Russia

After being alerted to an endangered or abused child, the custody and guardianship authorities make a joint visit to the family and carry out an inspection of the conditions under which the minor is living and being brought up. The inspection must be conducted within three days of receipt by the authorities (or organization) of verbal or written reports by legal entities or individuals containing information about children deprived of parental care.

An alert about a possible case of child neglect or abuse may come from employees of educational, medical, social services or other organizations, relatives, neighbors, or other individuals. Children can also ask for help themselves. In 2013, 143,383 notifications were received, 969 of them from children.

When performing an investigation, employees of the custody and guardianship authorities (the organization) should determine to what degree the child's basic needs are being met, including:

- ▶ The child's state of health: a general visual assessment of the child's physical development relative to age, symptoms of disease or special health needs, pharmaceutical prescriptions, signs of physical and/or psychological abuse;
- ▶ Outward appearance: the child's personal hygiene relative to accepted norms, availability, quality, condition, and seasonal appropriateness of clothing and shoes, the child's age and gender, etc.;
- ▶ Social adjustment: interpersonal skills, independent skill sets relative to the child's age and unique developmental traits, appropriateness of the child's behavior in various settings, etc.;
- ▶ Personal and intellectual development;
- ▶ Supervision and safety within the home;
- ▶ Satisfaction of the child's emotional needs;
- ▶ The child's family environment, including family structure and relations between family members, the child's social bonds with family, neighbors, and friends, and the child's contact with peers, teachers, and caregivers;
- ▶ Day-to-day living conditions and financial concerns;
- ▶ The existence of conditions that pose a threat to the child's life, health, and physical or emotional development, or that violate the child's rights and legally protected interests; evidence of treatment that is neglectful, cruel, coarse, degrading, exploitative, or verbally, physically, emotionally, or sexually abusive towards the child.

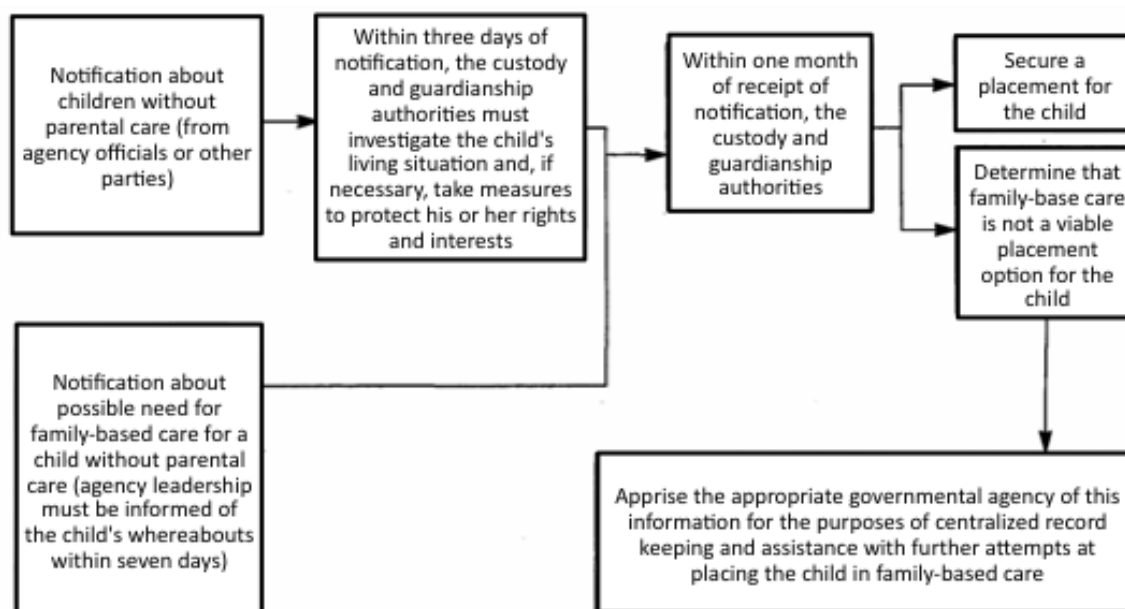


Social services agencies, in cooperation with custody and guardianship authorities, are duty-bound to work with such families in order to keep the child at home. That said, a child may be temporarily moved to a social rehabilitation center (i.e., a shelter) for the duration of this work.

66,770 children without parental care were identified in 2013. This number represented a decrease of 8% from 2012 and 16% from 2011.

Figure 3 illustrates the procedure for identification and registration of children without parental care:

Figure 3. Child registration procedure without parental care



Russian Federation family law makes removal of a child from his or her parents possible in the following cases:

1. Termination of parental rights

Termination of parental rights is an extreme sanction of parental responsibility used in family law. A parent may be deprived of parental rights by the court on grounds provided for in Article 69 of the Family Code of the Russian Federation, if, and only if, they have been found guilty of prohibited conduct.

One or both parents may be deprived of their rights if they:

- ▶ Shirk their parental duties, including willful evasion of alimony payments;
- ▶ Refuse without legitimate reason to take their child home from a hospital, school, social services institution, or other similar organization;
- ▶ Abuse their parental rights;



- ▶ Behave towards their children in any manner that is considered abusive, be it physical, emotional, or sexual abuse;
- ▶ Are suffering from chronic alcoholism or drug addiction;
- ▶ Commit an intentional crime against the life or health of their children or spouse.

Termination of parental rights takes place in court. The court takes into account the wishes of children 10 years of age and older. Parents deprived of parental rights lose all rights based on kinship with the child in relation to whom their parental rights have been terminated, including the right to receive financial support on the child's behalf, as well as the right to benefits and state assistance for families with children. Termination of parental rights does not release parents from their obligation to financially support their own children. If it is not possible to transfer the child to the care of his or her other parent, or if both parents have been deprived of their rights, the child is transferred to the care of custody and guardianship authorities. If the court decides to terminate the parental rights of one or both parents, then adoption of the child may occur no sooner than six months from the date of the court's decision.

In exceptional cases where a parent has been proven guilty of objectionable behavior, the court, taking into account the parent's behavior, personality, and particular circumstances, may nevertheless decline to terminate parental rights outright, and instead order the defendant to correct his or her behavior under the supervision of custody and guardianship authorities. In such cases, the law allows parents to recover their rights once they have changed their conduct, lifestyle, and/or approach to caring for their child.

Restoration of parental rights takes place in court at the request of a parent whose rights have been terminated. A case for restoring parental rights is decided in consultation with the custody and guardianship authorities and public prosecutor. A statement by the parent(s) regarding restoration of parental rights may also be considered a requirement for the child to be returned home. The court may take into account the child's own views and dismiss a claim for restoration of parental rights by his or her parent(s), if such restoration would be contrary to the child's interests. Restoration of parental rights to a child aged 10 or older is possible only with that child's consent.

2. Restriction of parental rights

The court may, in the interests of the child, decide to take him or her away from one or both of the parents, without terminating parental rights, by restricting these rights for a period of six months.

Restriction of parental rights is warranted when leaving the child with one or both of the parents poses a danger to the child as a result of circumstances that are beyond the parents' control (mental illness, other chronic health issues, a combination of misfortunes, etc.).

Restriction of parental rights is also warranted when leaving the child with one or both of the parents is deemed, in light of their behavior, dangerous for the child, though not sufficiently so to justify outright termination of parental rights. If the parent or parents fail to change their

behavior within six months of the court's decision to restrict their parental rights, the custody and guardianship authorities must file a claim for termination of parental rights. If doing so is in the child's best interests, then the custody and guardianship authorities are entitled to file the claim before the six month period has elapsed.

Parents whose rights have been restricted by the court lose their right to raise the child in question, as well as any right to benefits and state assistance for families with children. In cases where the rights of both parents have been restricted, the children in question are transferred to the care of custody and guardianship authorities.

Parents whose parental rights have been restricted by the court may be permitted to remain in contact with their child, if this allowance does not have a harmful effect on the child. Contact between parent and child requires consent of the custody and guardianship authorities, the child's custodian, guardian, surrogate parent, or the organization where the child is being sheltered.

If the basis for restriction of parental rights has lapsed, the court may, at the parents' request, decide to return the child to the parent(s) and annul the restrictions. The court, taking into consideration the child's wishes, may choose to reject the request, if returning the child to his or her parent(s) is not in the child's best interest.

3. Removing a child from parental custody in response to a direct threat to the child's life or health

When a child's life or health is being directly threatened by conditions at home, the custody and guardianship authorities have the right to immediately separate the child from his or her parent(s) or other guardians.

Custody and guardianship authorities are empowered to act in their immediate removal of a child based on relevant legislation by a Russian Federation subject or by a municipality, if a local mandate over custody and guardianship has been granted by the subject.

Upon removing a child from his or her home, the custody and guardianship authorities must immediately notify the public prosecutor, secure a temporary placement for the child, and within seven days file suit to terminate or restrict the parental rights of the parents of the child in question.

Separation of child and parent and an application for the limitation or termination of parental rights is a rare measure used only when remaining with his or her parents constitutes an immediate threat to the life, health, and legally protected interests of a child.

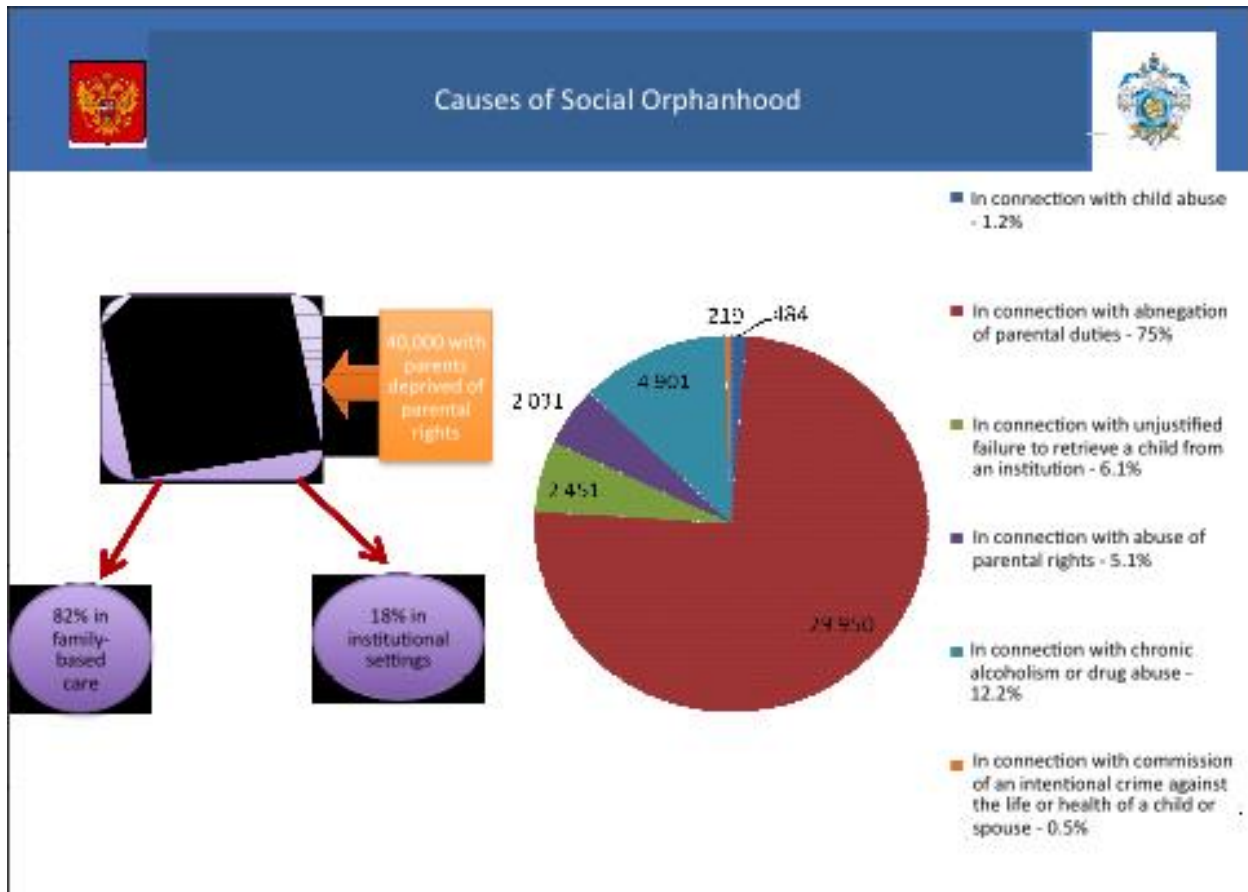
Thanks to preventative measures, the number of children whose parents were deprived of their parental rights decreased by 28% between 2010 and 2013 (the 2013 count was 46,753 people).

Custody and guardianship authorities must arrange for correctional rehabilitative work with parents who have lost custody of their children through termination or limitation of parental



rights, so as to help form or rebuild a positive relationship between parents and children, restore parental rights, and return children to their parents.

Once they have exhausted all possible means of keeping a child's biological family intact, the custody and guardianship authorities have no choice but to file suit for termination or restriction of parental rights.

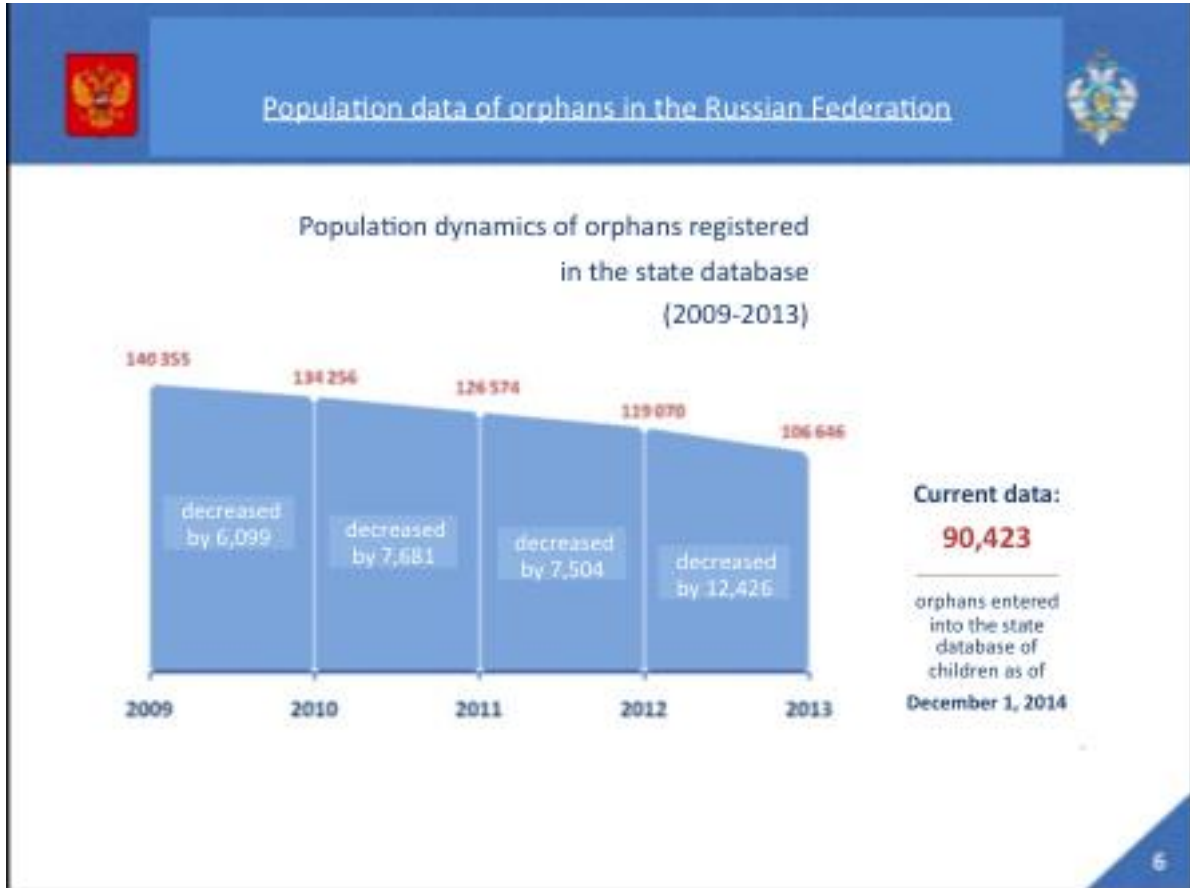


Once the court decides to assign a child the status of being without parental care, the child's information is added to the regional database of children without parental care. If the child is not placed in local family-based care within one month of entry into the regional database, his or her information is forwarded to the federal database.

A candidate for surrogate or adoptive parenthood may request information about children in any database, regional or federal. In addition to information in the database, custody and guardianship authorities may possess additional records and documentation of children that can be provided to candidates. The main condition of providing such information is confidentiality: redaction of details that could reveal the child's physical location.

As of late 2014, approximately 91,000 children were registered in the federal database. More than 20% of these entries were children with disabilities, 70% were adolescents, and 15% were members of sibling groups.

The number of orphans registered in regional databases decreased by 11% in 2013, and, in some regions, by 30% in 2014.



E. Family-Based Care for Orphans in Russia

Immediately after establishing the status of a child without parental care, the custody and guardianship authorities set to work finding a family placement for the child. If a family cannot be found right away, the child is sent to an organization for orphans and children without parental care.

In Russian, the following forms of permanent family-based care exist: adoption and custody/guardianship. In selecting a family placement for a child, preference is given to relative caregivers.

62,973 children were placed in family-based care during 2013, an increase of 1,545 children from 2012.

Adoption. Under Russian Federation Family Code, adoption is the preferred form of family-based care for orphans and children without parental care (if they can't be reunified with the birth family). Adoption involves a family's taking in a child and extending to that child the rights of kinship, while taking on all the attendant rights and responsibilities of parenthood. Adoption is carried out in a court of law, and the procedure is free of charge. There are no adoption agencies in Russia, as brokering (commercialization) of children is prohibited.

In the course of an adoption, prospective parents have the right to ascertain the child's health status independently, through medical examination in a hospital or clinic.

An adopted child is no different than a biological child in terms of rights within the family, a fact which helps adopted children feel like full-fledged family members and provides a sense of safety, stability, and emotional security. Adoptive parents may give their own surname to the child, and may change the child's first name, place of birth, and date of birth within three months.

The confidentiality of adoptions is protected by Russian law, with administrative and criminal penalties for violations by third parties. Parents themselves can decide whether or not to maintain the confidentiality of an adoption. The question of open adoption is being actively discussed in Russia. Moreover, in a number of regions adoptive parents receive financial support from local authorities.

Custody and Guardianship. Custody is established over children less than 14 years of age, and guardianship over youth between the ages of 14 and 18.

There are different forms and types of custody and guardianship:



1. Uncompensated custody or guardianship: a custodian or guardian acts as the ward's legal representative, fulfilling all responsibilities of the role without compensation. More often than not, uncompensated custodians/guardians are related to their wards.
2. Compensated custody or guardianship may be contracted in two ways:
 - ▶ by agreement with a host family;
 - ▶ by agreement with a patron family on the basis of regional law (laws regarding patron families presently exist in 23 regions).

Remuneration for the custodian or guardian may come from the budget of a Russian Federation subject or be paid out of revenue from the ward's own estate. Host parents and patrons are compensated for the child care they provide and given allowances for costs incurred in providing for the child. The amount of an allowance depends on the number of children placed with a family, the age of each child, whether or not a child is disabled, etc. Additionally, all persons who provide family-based care to a parentless child receive a one-time payment from the federal budget, which may be supplemented with funds from regional budgets.

The award for adoption of a disabled child, a child over seven years old, or a member of a sibling group was 105,000 rubles per child in 2014.

Starting from September 1, 2012, persons wishing to raise, adopt, take custody or guardianship of, or provide a host family to a child without parental care must undergo psychological-pedagogical, and legal training. Such training is not required of a child's close relatives, nor of persons who already are or have been adoptive parents.

The goals of training for prospective adoptive and host parents include:

- ▶ Preparing individuals to provide family upbringing to orphans and children without parental care, uncovering and developing the individual's ability to nurture a child, and teaching parenting skills that include how to protect the rights and health of a child, how to create a safe environment, and how to provide for the child's successful socialization, education, and development;
- ▶ Helping candidates ascertain their own readiness to take care of a parentless child, decide which form of family-based care they are willing to provide, and recognize the real challenges and difficulties they may face in bringing up such a child;
- ▶ Familiarizing candidates with basic legislation in the area of children's rights and family protection for children without parental, the rights and responsibilities of surrogate parents, and existing forms of professional help, support, and assistance for surrogate families.

The duration of this training ranges from 40 to 80 hours depending on how a region has decided to structure it. Regions choose the content of their own training programs, using as a guideline a sample program developed by the Ministry of Education and Science of the Russian Federation. The custody and guardianship authorities must also conduct voluntary



psychological examinations of prospective parents, in order to assess their emotional readiness for bringing a child into their family.

Such training is typically conducted by educational, medical, and social services organizations, or organizations for orphans and parentless children, all of which are considered authorized providers.

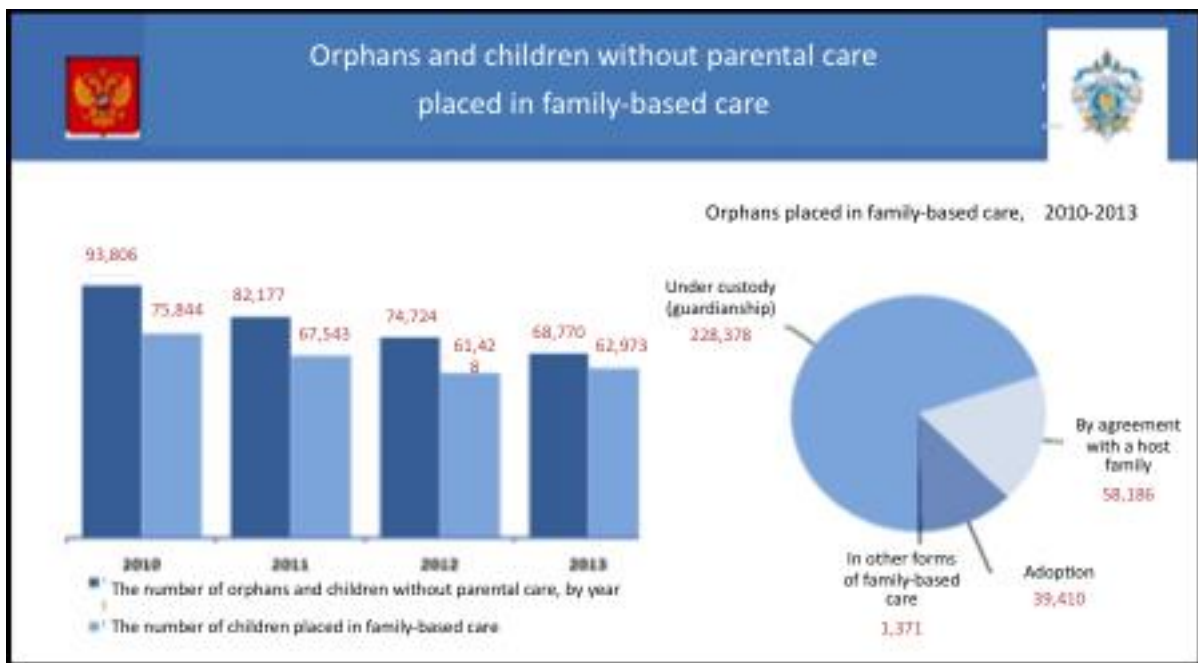
Families that have taken in a child can turn to support services for surrogate families for professional consultation and legal, psychological, medical, or social assistance. These support services are free of charge.

In 2013, 871 organizations provided training to candidate parents, and 1,348 organizations provided support services to surrogate families.

Custody and guardianship authorities oversee the progress of children and the protection of their rights within the family.

In 2014, there were a total of 420,000 replacement families providing homes to 514,000 children without parental care.

Every year, more than 82% of orphans identified in the course of that year are placed in the care of families.



If it is discovered that a child's rights have been violated or that the child has been abused within a new family, then the child is removed from that family and either transferred to another family or returned to an orphanage.

6,144 children were brought back from replacement families in 2012, and 5,746 (6.5% fewer) in 2013.

The proportion of children brought back from a family compared to the total number of children placed in a family in the space of one year is 9%. This is a conditional indicator, since returning children include those placed with families not just in the current year, but also in previous years. The proportion of returning children relative to the total number of orphans living in families is 1.2%.



F. Description of Organizations for Orphans and Children Without Parental Care in Russia

As of January 1, 2014, there were 1,526 organizations for orphans and children without parental care operating in the territory of the Russian Federation, including:

- ▶ 1,197 educational institutions for orphans between the ages of four and eighteen years (population 65,400);
- ▶ 200 children's homes for children from birth through age four (population 11,000);
- ▶ 129 stationary social service institutions for developmentally delayed and disabled children (population 13,500).

Organizations for orphans can be rehabilitative — for the education and training of children with disabilities (complete or partial deafness, blindness or visual impairment, severe speech impediments, musculoskeletal diseases, developmental delays, etc.).

There are special institutions focused on music, sports, etc. for gifted and talented orphans. In Moscow, for example, there is a boarding school for orphans with a background in circus performance. In addition, young people can reside at military academies: Suvorov and Nakhimov Schools, cadet corps (cadet schools or cadet boarding schools for children seven years and older), and military training units (for pupils fourteen and older). There are also nongovernmental children's institutions for orphans, most of which have been established by the Russian Orthodox Church.

Russian Federation subjects use funds from regional budgets to finance the maintenance costs of institutions for orphans, along with the cost of additional benefits for pupils.

According to the 2013 Amendments to Russian Federation Family Code, children without parental care for whom an interim family placement (during the search for a permanent placement) cannot be found may be transferred to orphanages. The law thus affirms the principle of limiting the duration of a child's stay in an orphanage.

Decree No. 481 of the Government of the Russian Federation Concerning Orphanage Activities and Institutional Placement of Children, passed on March 24, 2014, provides for the establishment at orphanages of conditions conducive to safe occupancy, maintenance of family ties, and intellectual, emotional, spiritual, and moral development of children. It stipulates that care groups for children under four years of age should contain no more than six people each,



and that groups for children over four years should contain no more than eight. Care groups must have a limited number of permanent teachers who are present at all times and serve, among other functions, as personal mentors to the children.

Orphanages carry out the following kinds of activities:

- ▶ Round-the-clock reception and care, in an environment conducive to safe occupancy and maintenance of family ties, for orphans and children placed in the orphanage temporarily by a legal representative;
- ▶ Childcare, physical education, academic education, and moral education appropriate to age and developmental stage;
- ▶ Counseling, psychological, educational, legal, and social services, and other forms of assistance for parents at risk of abandoning their obligations to their children, being deprived of or restricted in their parental rights, or failing to recover those rights if they have already been lost;
- ▶ Activities to promote and facilitate placement of children in family-based care, and consultations with prospective adoptive and surrogate parents;
- ▶ Information campaigns to increase the number of potential adoptive parents, guardians, and custodians, as well as cultural events held jointly with such persons, charities, volunteers, and others;
- ▶ Preparation of children for adoption and transfer to custody or guardianship;
- ▶ Selection and training of persons who have expressed a wish to become custodians or guardians;
- ▶ Psychological, medical, and pedagogical rehabilitation of children, including implementation of measures to provide psychological assistance, preventative as well as corrective, to residents of orphanages and children who have returned to an orphanage after spending time in family-based care;
- ▶ Making orphanage services more accessible to ill and disabled children;
- ▶ Implementing measures to ensure optimal physical and neuropsychological development of children;
- ▶ Medical care for children, including preventative, diagnostic, and other types of exams and procedures;
- ▶ Expert assistance for children with learning disabilities and developmental delays;
- ▶ Development, maintenance, and optimization of sanitary-hygienic and anti-epidemic measures, and of nutrition and exercise programs for children;
- ▶ Implementation of individual rehabilitation programs for disabled children;
- ▶ Arranging rest and relaxation for children;
- ▶ Identifying minors who need to be placed under custody or guardianship, including investigating the living conditions of those minors and their families;
- ▶ Advising and providing psychological, educational, legal, social, and other services to persons who have adopted or taken custody (or guardianship) of a child;

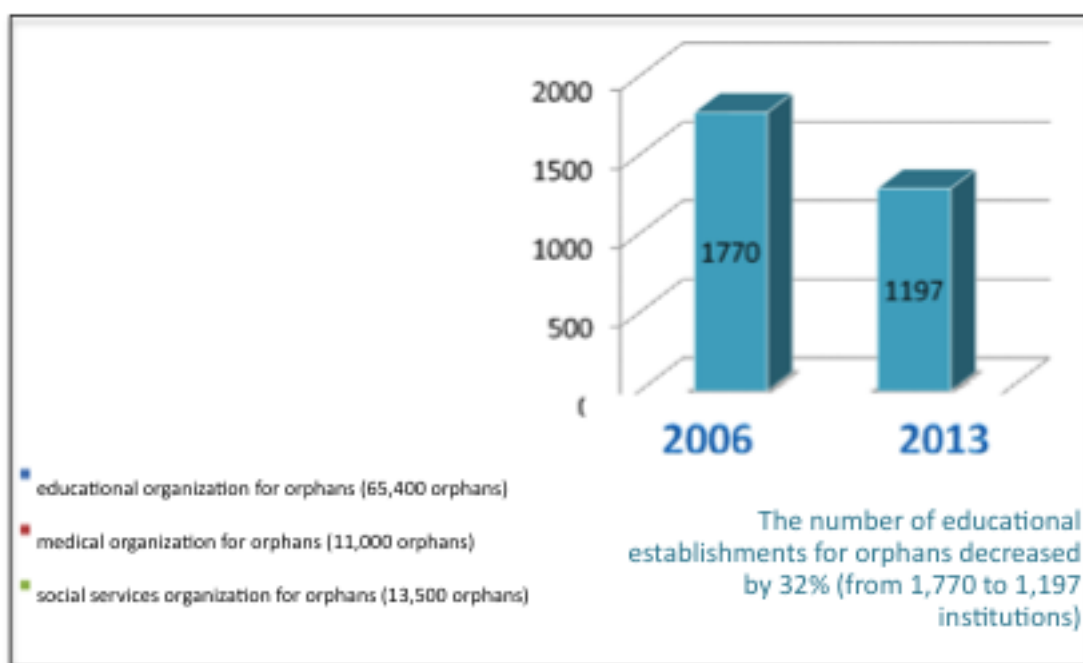


- ▶ Advising and providing psychological, educational, legal, social, and other services to orphanage alumni;
- ▶ Other kinds of activities aimed at protecting the rights of children.

Early 2013 reforms to the network and activities of organizations for orphans and children without parental care represented a fundamentally new direction in state policy regarding social orphanhood.

Every year the number of active orphanages decreases by 60-70 units due to family placements. In this process, dilapidated former children's homes are turned into centers for families and children, centers for surrogate families and orphanage alumni, and kindergartens (the annually increasing birth rate in Russia has led to a shortage of kindergartens for children aged two to six).

2012 Amendments to the Federal Law Concerning Education in the Russian Federation excluded children's homes and other non-pedagogical organizations for orphans from the category of educational institutions. Because of this, Russian Federation subjects must designate by January 1, 2016, the main kinds of activities to be carried out by orphanages currently considered educational institutions. Such decisions must be made for each organization individually, taking into account the particular features of the region, including the possibility of arranging for residents of an orphanage to study at neighboring educational institutions. Regions have begun large scale preparations for transferring organizations from the educational system to the system of social protection. For these purposes, regions have begun to introduce new kinds of organizations for orphans: e.g. the Center for Family-based Care (Moscow, Astrakhan Oblast), the Interagency Center for Orphan Assistance (Perm Territory), etc.



G. Description and Data on Alumni in Russia

In Russia there are several categories of youth who can be classified as alumni. As defined by law, alumni are individuals who have graduated from organizations for orphans and children without parental care — persons placed on full state welfare under the supervision of such an organization who are no longer being brought up by that organization. They may have left the organization at as early an age as 14 to 16 in order to enroll in college. Youth over age 18 who have graduated from organizations for orphans or aged out of family-based care (custody or guardianship) are by definition still counted as orphans and children without parental care.

In 2013, more than 22,000 alumni of organizations for orphans were counted, of whom there were:

- ▶ *approximately 9,000 alumni (41% of the total) under 18 years of age;*
- ▶ *13,500 alumni (59% of the total) between the ages of 18 and 23 years;*
- ▶ *approximately 20,000 alumni (91% of the total) enrolled in educational programs;*
- ▶ *approximately 3,000 alumni (7.8% of the total) registered with employment agencies.*

At-risk groups included:

- ▶ *9,900 alumni (45% of the total) in correctional facilities;*
- ▶ *482 alumni (2.2% of the total) who had born children or were pregnant;*
- ▶ *38 alumni (0.2% of the total) who had given birth and given up their children;*
- ▶ *730 alumni (3.3% of the total) serving sentences in the criminal justice system.*

Preparing alumni for independent living. In order to prepare alumni for independent living, specialists have implemented socialization programs (related to work and family life) at orphanages. To this end, young people are offered apartments for adaptive social experience, life skills classes (in areas such as self-care, health, leisure, etc.), vocational classes (basic design, computers, driving, and others), workshops (sewing, pottery, carpentry), and communication training to expand their options for further education, employment, etc. Almost all orphanage alumni pursue a college or university education. Federal Law No. 273-FZ Concerning Education in the Russian Federation makes general education through the ninth grade mandatory.

Prior to a youth's graduation from supervised care, an orphanage director or surrogate parent sends all the youth's information to the custody and guardianship authorities in the region where the youth will be studying, so that together they can develop an individualized program of post-institutional support that will take the youth's preferences into account.



NGOs and volunteers play a significant role in supporting alumni's social adaptation and preparation for independent living by offering long-term mentoring, tutoring, drama classes, camps during vacations, various kinds of excursions, sporting events, life skills modules, and additional training in music, dance, arts and crafts, etc. Industrial and business groups establish foundations that orphanage boards of trustees can draw on to finance these activities.

Support for alumni. To support alumni during the post-institutional period, social services centers and their specialists implement regional support programs and establish special post-institutional support centers and services, including some based at orphanages. Specialists provide advisory, legal, psychological, social, pedagogical, and other assistance, help with educational and professional pursuits, and protect the rights and legal interests of alumni. These centers may also have 24-hour shelters for youth in crisis.

A number of Russian Federation subjects have passed regional laws creating systems of post-institutional patronage. A citizen agrees by contract to act as a youth's post-institutional counselor, a responsibility that involves providing the youth with support and in-home visits (this can be regarded as a kind of formal mentoring). In the Moscow region, for example, all alumni (there are approximately 2,000 in total) have a post-institutional counselor.

Russian Federation subjects have instituted a variety of measures to facilitate the employment of alumni, including professional development programs, career diagnostics that take into account an individual's health and ability, and avenues for both permanent and temporary work involving active use of job center and youth employment agency resources. An important priority of these efforts is providing orphans with skills that will enable them to compete in the regional job market and transition to careers with prospects for future professional growth. A number of Russian Federation subjects have legislated employment quotas for persons in this category.

In Russia, NGOs and socially responsible businesses take an active role in the mentorship of alumni. A number of organizations have implemented mentoring programs wherein specially trained adult volunteers meet regularly with youth, engage with them, and help them solve simple life problems. Others provide services such as tutoring and educational programs, or fund stipends. Some large businesses fund competitive institutional grants to support and assist alumni.

Industrial enterprises also involve themselves in the issue of social adaptation of alumni. In the Belgorod region, for example, they help youth develop technical specialties and, down the road, provide them with job opportunities and housing.

In many regions, sites funded by NGOs, among others, provide alumni with useful information, such as how to handle various life situations, and where to find a job. Most regions have a database with entries for all of their alumni, thus keeping track of their path in life until they turn 23.



Legally guaranteed additional rights. Legislation guarantees alumni of organizations for orphans and children without parental care financial support, the right to housing, noncompetitive matriculation at higher educational institutions, employment assistance, and free medical care.

These guarantees apply to all former wards of the state between the ages of 18 and 23. After age 23, alumni retain only the right to housing, which is theirs in perpetuity.

The right to housing. By law, upon reaching age 18, all youth must be provided with housing, although they may receive it later if they are serving in the military, studying and living in another city, etc.

There are two forms of housing. If a child had housing before being identified as orphaned or without parental care, that housing is kept for his or her later use. State agencies of Russian Federation subjects are responsible for the safekeeping and use of such property. In a practice common in a number of regions at present, local authorities help alumni make repairs, buy furniture and appliances, and pay utility bills. However, there are numerous problems associated with the return of alumni to such housing, particularly in cases where children must live with parents whose parental rights have been terminated or who suffer from severe chronic disease, alcoholism, or drug addiction, or in cases where housing has been abandoned or destroyed and is uninhabitable or not up to code. In such situations, youth receive an apartment from the government.

If a child did not have housing before being identified as orphaned or without parental care, he or she is registered for an apartment at the state's expense. State agencies of Russian Federation subjects compile their own lists of orphans and children without parental care, and persons counted as such who are entitled to housing. The list includes all such persons over the age of 14 years, and an individual can only be removed from the list once he or she has received housing. Persons counted as orphans and children without parental care currently receive comfortable, private apartments.

In this case, alumni do not have the right to dispose freely of the property for at least five years (it belongs to a specialized housing fund). After five years of independent living, a special commission reviews the question of transferring property ownership, though they may delay doing so for another five years if immediate transfer is deemed risky.

Over the past five years, 83,597 orphans and persons counted as orphans have received housing (24,795 in 2011, 22,573 in 2011, 13,905 in 2010, 12,522 in 2009, and 9,802 in 2008).

The right to education. Alumni receive a number of educational benefits. Until 23 years of age, they are entitled to free secondary education or vocational training, as well as to free preparatory courses for admission to higher educational institutions, where they can also matriculate, by request, on a noncompetitive basis. Alumni that pursue higher education receive dormitory housing for the duration of their studies, along with a stipend for clothing, books, and supplies that is 50% higher than the stipend received by other students. Upon



completion of their studies, alumni receive a one-time allowance for the purchase of furniture, appliances, clothing, and shoes.

Alumni of organizations who return home to these organizations on vacations, weekends, and public holidays may receive free room and board for the duration of their stay. While studying they are able to use public transportation for free, and are entitled to a free trip home once a year.

According to government statistical reporting, approximately 84% of alumni pursue secondary vocational education, and 5% pursue higher education after leaving their orphanage.

The right to work. Alumni who are first-time job seekers and registered as unemployed with the state employment offices receive six months of unemployment benefits at a rate equivalent to the region's average salary. In many regions this is a fairly large sum, often significantly greater than the individual could earn by working. For a specified period of time, employment agencies provide alumni with career guidance, direct them to vocational training or additional professional education, and find job placements for them.

When alumni lose their jobs due to business closure or layoffs, the employer or its successor must, at its own expense, fund all training necessary for subsequent employment in the same workplace or some other.

Right to healthcare. Alumni are entitled to free medical care, including diagnostic procedures, rehabilitation, routine examinations, and surgeries at any state or municipal hospital or clinic. They are also given access to student health and fitness camps and medical sanitariums, with free transportation, accommodation, and treatment during their stay. Local laws dictate the extent of such aid.

Protection of rights. In order to protect their own rights, orphans and children without parental care, and likewise their legal representatives, custodians, guardians, custody and guardianship authorities, and public prosecutors have the right to appeal, in accordance with established procedure, to a relevant Russian Federation court.

Orphans and children without parental care have the right to free legal aid.



Section IV.

Appendices



Appendix A.

Summary of Key US Federal Legislation Guiding Child Welfare Practice and Policy

Below is a summary of more recent, major Federal laws addressing child welfare, illustrating the evolution of laws and practices in response to identified gaps and needs in the child welfare system.¹⁰

Title IV of the Social Security Act (1935) Provides grants to states for aid and services to needy families with children and child welfare services. Title IV B, subpart 1 of the Social Security Act grants to states and tribes for programs directed toward the goal of keeping families together. They include preventive intervention so that, if possible, children will not have to be removed from their homes. If this is not possible, children are placed in foster care and reunification services are available to encourage the return of children who have been removed from their families. Services are available to children and their families without regard to income. Title IV E is the legislation for the Federal Foster Care Program which helps to provide safe and stable out-of-home care for children until the children are safely returned home, placed permanently with adoptive families or placed in other planned arrangements for permanency. Funding for this program is annually appropriated with specific eligibility requirements and fixed allowable uses of funds.

Title XX of the Social Services Block Grant (1975) Title XX of the Social Security Act provides for funding for social services through the Social Services Block Grant (SSBG). The national goals for the SSBG were developed toward providing economic self support, self-sufficiency, prevention of abuse and neglect of vulnerable populations and preventing or reducing institutional care.

States have substantial discretion in the use of SSBG funds. Each state determines what services are provided, who is eligible to receive them, and how funds are used.

Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act or CAPTA (1974, 1978, 1986) The establishment of and subsequent revisions of CAPTA played a significant role in shaping the federal role in child protective services. The initial legislation brought national attention to address child abuse and neglect, sexual abuse, and treatment. The law authorized federal funding to states to help improve responses to abuse and neglect. In exchange, states were required to have a system for receiving, responding to, investigating, and prosecuting allegations of child abuse or neglect;

¹⁰ The primary sources for this information are the Committee on Ways & Means, US House of Representatives, Green Book 2012 and 2014, and the US Department of Health and Human Services' [Child Welfare Information Gateway](http://www.childwelfare.gov) (www.childwelfare.gov).



protect confidentiality of records; pass certain laws, including child abuse reporting procedures to ensure victimized children are identified and reported to appropriate authorities; and offer treatment activities. CAPTA established a federal role in supporting research, evaluation, technical assistance, and data collection activities. It also established the National Center on Child Abuse and Neglect. CAPTA's Adoption Opportunities program seeks to promote adoption of children in foster care with special needs; authorizes funds to remove barriers to adoption of children with special needs; and establish a national adoption and foster care data gathering and analysis system.

Indian Child Welfare Act (1978) Congress sought to reduce the high number of, and high removal rate at which, Native American (Indian) children were removed by federal and non-tribal agencies from their families and placed outside of Native American communities because of allegations of abuse and neglect. Among many things, the law set minimum federal standards for the removal of Indian children from their families and placement of children in foster or adoptive homes; authorized some assistance to Indian tribes to operate child and family services programs; and required all child welfare court proceedings involving Native American children be heard by tribal courts. For Native American children not living on a reservation, state juvenile courts could make decisions about removal, but the child's tribe must be notified and given the right to intervene in the case.¹¹

Adoption Assistance and Child Welfare Act or AACWA (1980) Along with the expansion of the foster care program, states' implementation of mandatory reporting laws in response to CAPTA resulted in rapid growth in the number of children removed from their homes and placed in foster care.¹² By the late 1970s, the number of children entering foster care was rising significantly, as did their lengths of stay. Lawmakers became increasingly concerned that many children were being removed from their homes unnecessarily, and once they entered foster care, inadequate efforts were made to either reunify them with their families or place them with adoptive families. Concerns were raised about the lack of oversight within the foster care system. In response, Congress enacted landmark legislation, which for the first time established a major federal role in the administration and oversight of child welfare services.¹³ Specifically, it created permanent entitlement funding (Title IV-E) for foster care and adoption assistance; established a major Federal role in the administration and oversight of child welfare; and a significant role for the family court system. To reduce foster care placements and support reunification of children with their families, it required states to establish programs and implement procedures for conducting "reasonable efforts" to keep families together, by providing both prevention and family reunification services after a child was removed. To promote adoption of children from foster care, it created a new Adoption Assistance program to provide financial support for adoption of children with special needs, and who could not or should not return to their parents home, and who would not be adopted without financial

¹¹ Myers, J. *A Short History of Child Protection in America* (2008-2009), Family Law Quarterly, Volume 42, Number 3.

¹² O'Neill Murray, K. and Sarah Gesiriech, *A Brief Legislative History of the Child Welfare System* (2003), Pew Commission on Children in Foster Care.

¹³ Ibid.



assistance for reasons such as age, race, disabilities, or being part of a sibling group. Although it permitted eligibility for children placed in public childcare institutions, it limited it to a facility with no more than 25 children, and restricted federal reimbursement for costs for detention or related childcare institutions. As a result of this legislation, both the number of children in foster care and their average length of stay decreased for a brief period in the early 1980s.

Independent Living Program (1986, 1988, 1990, 1999, 2001) Out of concern that adolescents who aged-out of foster care were not equipped to live on their own, Congress created the Independent Living Program to provide funding for States to help older foster youth (age 16 and older) successfully transition from foster care to independence.¹⁴ In 1988, Congress extended services up to 6 months after youth left care. In 1990, Congress gave States the option of providing these services to youth who aged out up to age 21. In 1999, Congress renamed the program the John H. Chafee Foster Care Independence Program, expanded funding and provided greater flexibility for States to develop and promote programs for youth in foster care up to age 21 to make more successful transitions to adulthood. The program was specifically designed as a service option for states, rather than a permanency option for foster youth.¹⁵ Services included: financial and housing assistance, counseling and support services, and education, training, vocational, and practical skills. It also expanded access to medical care for youth ages 18-20 who were in foster care; and required HHS to establish the National Youth in Transition Database to quantify services provided and measure outcomes. In 2001, Congress created a new state grant program to provide post-secondary education and vocational training vouchers to youth leaving foster care or who had been adopted after age 16.

Abandoned Infants Assistance Act (1988) Congress found that the number of infants and young children exposed to drugs taken by their mothers during pregnancy was increasing dramatically. In response, they authorized funding for projects to prevent the abandonment of infants and young children and address their needs; assist such children to reside with their families or in foster care; to recruit, train, and retain foster families for them; carry out respite care for families of children with AIDS; and recruit and train health and social services personnel to work with such families and residential programs.

Family Preservation and Support Services Program (1993) Despite some improvements in foster care trends, by the mid-1980s the number of children in foster care began to rise dramatically. Researchers pointed to the multiple effects of the economic slowdown, the crack cocaine epidemic, AIDS, and higher incarceration rates among women offenders.¹⁶ Out of concern that states were focusing too little attention on efforts to prevent foster care placement and reunify children with their families, Congress established the Family Preservation and Family Support Services Program.¹⁷ This Act provided flexible funding for community-based services to prevent child abuse and neglect; support services for families at risk of maltreatment; and family preservation services for families experiencing a crisis that

¹⁴ *ibid.*

¹⁵ *ibid.*

¹⁶ *ibid.*

¹⁷ *ibid.*



could lead to out of home placement. It authorized the first significant source of Federal funding for a new Court Improvement Program to test innovative approaches to improving juvenile and family court performance. It authorized a capped entitlement for States to provide family support and family preservation services to families (foster, adoptive, and extended).

The Multiethnic Placement Act or MEPA (1994, 1996) Prior to the 1960s, interracial adoption was uncommon, several states had bans on interracial adoption, and social workers generally believed children should be placed with foster or adoptive parents of the same ethnic background. During the 1960s, courts struck down laws against interracial adoption, but critics mounted opposition to the practice, causing the number of transracial adoptions to drop. African-American children were overrepresented in foster care and waited longer for adoption than white children, and pressure mounted to lower racial barriers to adoption.¹⁸ In 1994, Congress passed MEPA to promote adoption and permit agencies to consider the child's cultural, ethnic, or racial background, and the capacity of the prospective parents to meet the child's needs when determining placement, but prohibited states from delaying, denying, or discriminating when making these placements on the basis of race, color, or national origin. In 1996, Congress repealed the provision that permitted consideration of race, culture, and ethnicity in placement decisions. MEPA required states to recruit adoptive and foster families that reflect the ethnic or racial diversity of children in need of placement. In 1996, Congress required states to give preference to relatives in determining a foster or adoptive placement.

Adoption and Safe Families Act or ASFA (1997) In response to concerns that the number of children in foster was increasing, the child welfare system was biased toward family preservation and reunification at the expense of safety and well-being, children remained in foster care too long, and inadequate resources were dedicated to adoption as a placement option, Congress enacted significant reforms which built on earlier laws to: ensure that child safety, permanency, and well-being were paramount in all child welfare decisions; promote more timely permanent placements for children in foster care; increase the number of adoptions of children from foster care; establish performance standards; and increase accountability of the child welfare system, including fiscal penalties. Specifically, the reforms:

- ▶ Required states to conduct criminal background checks for prospective foster and adoptive parents.
- ▶ Required states to not only prevent a child's removal from home, and make reasonable efforts to return the child to his home when safe, but also make reasonable efforts to find the child another permanent home if reunification was not possible. It established shorter timeframes for termination of parental rights, and in cases of sexual abuse and chronic physical abuse, authorized states to forgo reunification efforts; and required foster and pre-adoptive parents, and relative caregivers receive notice of, and an opportunity to be heard at reviews and hearings.
- ▶ Revised and renamed the Family Preservation and Support Services Program to the Promoting Safe and Stable Families program, and included two additional categories,

¹⁸ John E.B. Myers, *A Short History of Child Protection in America* (2008-2009), *Family Law Quarterly*, Volume 42, Number 3



time-limited family reunification services and adoption promotion and support activities. The definition of “family support services” was later modified to include strengthening parental relationships, promoting healthy marriages, and mentoring as a means to enhancing child development. In 2011, the definition of “time-limited family reunification services” was modified to include peer-to-peer mentoring and support groups for parents and primary caregivers, and activities to aid parents and sibling visits with children in foster care.

- ▶ Authorized incentives for states to increase the number of adoptions from foster care. In 2003, provided additional incentives for adoption of older children (age 9 and older).
- ▶ It replaced the permanency goal of “long-term foster care”, with “another planned permanent living arrangement” for youth if a compelling reason existed that other permanency goals would not be in the child’s best interest. In 2014, this option was eliminated for children under age 16.

Strengthening Abuse and Neglect Courts Act (2000) Allowed state family courts to apply for federal grants to reduced the backlog of abuse and neglect cases, and expedite the flow of cases through automated case-tracking and data-collection systems.

Children's Health Act (2000) Authorized funding for adoption awareness activities and public awareness campaigns for adoption of children with special needs.

Child and Family Services Improvement Act (2006) Concerns grew from reports that revealed states needed to improve prevention of repeat abuse and neglect of children, improve services provided to families to reduce the risk of future harm, strengthen upfront services provided to families to prevent unnecessary family break-ups, and protect children who remain at home. Reports also demonstrated child welfare caseworkers were not visiting children in foster care on a monthly basis according to best practice, and the average tenure for a caseworker was less than 2 years – both negatively affected safety and permanency for children and delaying permanency.¹⁹ In an attempt to address these concerns, and ensure States were appropriately targeting federal funds and investing in services that promoted and protected the welfare of children, support strong and healthy families, and reduce the reliance on foster care, Congress:

- ▶ Reserved funds for states to improve caseworker retention, recruitment, training, and support monthly caseworker visits to children in foster care;
- ▶ Increased set-asides for Indian tribes for Promoting Safe and Stable Families programs;
- ▶ Funded competitive grants to improve outcomes for children affected by their parent’s methamphetamine or other substance abuse;
- ▶ Amended case review procedures to require courts conducting permanency hearings for a child in foster care consult with the child in an “age-appropriate manner” regarding plan.

¹⁹ *House Report 109-555 – Child and Family Services Improvement Act of 2006.*



Safe and Timely Interstate Placement of Foster Children Act (2006) Congress provided funding for Courts through the Court Improvement Program, in exchange for their agreement to notify any foster parent, pre-adoptive parent, or relative caregiver of proceedings to be held regarding the child. The Act strengthened language requiring states to maintain and update a complete health and education record for each child in foster care and provide to youth who age out of foster.

Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoption Act (2008) Congress enacted this law with the goal of connecting and supporting relative caregivers, maintaining sibling connections in placements, ensuring educational stability of children in foster care, and improving outcomes for children in foster care. Specifically, the Act: required States to locate and provide notification to relatives when a child enters, or is about to enter, foster care; authorized Family Connection Grants for support of kinship navigator programs to help children in, or at risk of entering foster care to reconnect with relatives; provided adoption incentives for older youth, and provided kinship guardianship assistance payments for relatives who have assumed legal guardianship of children who had been in foster care up to age 21 under certain circumstances; required states to ensure education stability for children in foster care, and to create a plan to ensure health and mental health care for children in foster care; and required siblings be placed together unless it was not in the best interest of one of the siblings.

Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (2010) Congress amended Medicaid to provide eligibility up to age 26 for youth who aged out of foster care; and established the Maternal Infant and Early Childhood Home Visiting program to, among many things, prevent child abuse or neglect and injuries.

Child and Family Services Improvement and Innovation Act (2011) Congress wanted to improve state accountability for positive outcomes for children in foster care by including several provisions dealing with the improper use of psychotropic drugs, lack of educational stability of children in foster care, and need to support families struggling with substance abuse. Specifically, the Act required states to:

- ▶ Include protocols for appropriate use and monitoring of psychotropic medication, and how they plan to monitor and respond to emotional trauma of children, either because of abuse or neglect, or because of removal from their homes;
- ▶ Complete at least 90% of required monthly caseworker visits;
- ▶ Describe their activities to reduce the amount of time children under age 5 are without a permanent family.

Preventing Trafficking and Strengthening Families Act (2014) Because of growing concern over reports estimating thousands of children were at risk for domestic sex trafficking, and youth emancipating from foster care were at greater risk; frustration that children in foster care were too often denied the opportunity to participate in normal, age or developmentally-appropriate activities (clubs, arts, sports); and because of a continued commitment to reducing the number of children in long term foster care, Congress passed an Act that:



- ▶ Required states to develop procedures for identifying, documenting, and determining appropriate services for children who are victims of sex trafficking or at risk of victimization; and required HHS establish a national advisory committee on child sex trafficking for the purpose of developing policies to improve responses to sex trafficking;
- ▶ Included numerous requirements regarding youth in foster care, including: consulting with youth age 14 and older in the development or revision of their case or permanency plan; and providing foster youth aging out of care with a birth certificate, health insurance information, medical records, and a driver’s license or a state identification card;
- ▶ Emphasized the importance of family strengthening services, including post-adoption services, and strengthening children’s connections to their parents and other relatives;
- ▶ Provided incentives to increase adoptions and legal guardianships, and required States to collect data on adoption disruption or dissolution;
- ▶ For older youth in care, it eliminated “another permanent planned living arrangement” as a permanency goal for children under age 16; required states to take steps to support permanency for children age 16 or older who are assigned that plan; added measures to ensure children in foster care have the opportunity to participate in activities appropriate to their age and stage of development; and included provisions to ensure permanent adult connections for older youth to aid their transition to successful adulthood.²⁰

²⁰ Committee on Ways & Means, US House of Representatives, *Green Book* (2014)



Appendix B.

US Definition of Child Maltreatment

US federal law defines maltreatment as “Any recent act or failure to act on the part of a parent or caretaker which results in death, serious physical or emotional harm, sexual abuse or exploitation; or an act or failure to act which presents an imminent risk of serious harm.”²¹ Most states recognize the four major types of maltreatment: physical abuse, neglect, sexual abuse, and emotional abuse as described below:²²

- ▶ Physical abuse is nonaccidental physical injury (ranging from minor bruises to severe fractures or death) as a result of punching, beating, kicking, biting, shaking, throwing, stabbing, choking, hitting (with a hand, stick, strap, or other object), burning, or otherwise harming a child, that is inflicted by a parent or caregiver.
- ▶ Neglect is the failure of a parent, guardian, or other caregiver to provide for a child’s basic needs including physical neglect (e.g., failure to provide necessary food or shelter, or lack of appropriate supervision), medical neglect (e.g., failure to provide necessary medical or mental health treatment), educational neglect (e.g., failure to educate a child or attend to special education needs), or emotional neglect (e.g., inattention to a child’s emotional needs, failure to provide psychological care, or permitting the child to use alcohol or other drugs).
- ▶ Sexual abuse includes activities by a parent or caregiver such as fondling a child’s genitals, penetration, incest, rape, sodomy, indecent exposure, and exploitation through prostitution or the production of pornographic materials.
- ▶ Abandonment is now defined in many states as a form of neglect. In general, a child is considered to be abandoned when the parent’s identity or whereabouts are unknown, the child has been left alone in circumstances where the child suffers serious harm, or the parent has failed to maintain contact with the child or provide reasonable support for a specified period of time

²¹ The Federal Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA) (42 USC.A. § 5106g), as amended by the CAPTA Reauthorization Act of 2010.

²² Child Welfare Information Gateway. (2013). *What is child abuse and neglect? Recognizing the signs and symptoms*. Washington, DC: US Department of Health and Human Services, Children’s Bureau.



Appendix C.

Mandatory Reporters in the US

Many states and territories in the US designate professionals who are mandated by law to report child maltreatment.¹ Individuals designated as mandatory reporters typically have frequent contact with children. Such individuals may include:

- ▶ Social workers;
- ▶ Teachers, principals, and other school personnel;
- ▶ Physicians, nurses, and other health-care workers;
- ▶ Counselors, therapists, and other mental health professionals;
- ▶ Child care providers;
- ▶ Medical examiners or coroners;
- ▶ Law enforcement officers.

Some other professions that may be mandated to report include commercial film or photograph processors and computer technicians, substance abuse counselors, domestic violence workers and probation or parole officers, court appointed special advocates and members of the clergy. Directors, employees, and volunteers at entities that provide organized activities for children, such as camps, day camps, youth centers, and recreation centers are required to report in some states.

The term “institutional reporting” refers to those situations in which the mandated reporter is working (or volunteering) as a staff member of an institution, such as a school or hospital, at the time he or she gains the knowledge that leads him or her to suspect that abuse or neglect has occurred. Many institutions have internal policies and procedures for handling reports of abuse, and these usually require the person who suspects abuse to notify the head of the institution that abuse has been discovered or is suspected and needs to be reported to child protective services or other appropriate authorities.

The circumstances under which a mandatory reporter must make a report vary from state to state. Typically, a report must be made when the reporter, in his or her official capacity, *suspects or has reason to believe* that a child has been abused or neglected. Another standard frequently used is in situations in which the reporter has knowledge of, or observes a child being subjected to, conditions that would reasonably result in harm to the child. Most states maintain toll-free telephone numbers for receiving reports of abuse or neglect. Reports may be made anonymously to most of these reporting numbers, but States find it helpful to their investigations to know the identity of reporters.



Source: Child Welfare Information Gateway. (2014). *Mandatory reporters of child abuse and neglect*. Washington, DC: US Department of Health and Human Services, Children's Bureau. (excerpts were downloaded January 8, 2015 from <https://www.childwelfare.gov/pubPDFs/manda.pdf>)



Appendix D.

Selected Best Practices in Achieving Permanent Connections in the US

Family Finding

Family Finding is a national program that locates relatives of children in foster care and encourages them to provide emotional support or even a permanent home for these children. The purpose of the family finding model is to provide child welfare practitioners with intensive relative search and engagement techniques to identify family and other close adults for children in foster care, and to involve them in developing and carrying out a plan for the emotional and legal permanency of a child. Family finding workers attempt to identify at least 40 family members for the child and other potential adult connections as possible to provide support for the foster child.

Permanency Roundtables

Permanency Roundtables were developed to increase legal permanency rates for older youth in foster care including reunification, adoption, or guardianship. A permanency roundtable is a structured meeting intended to establish legal permanency for youth by involving internal and external experts and brainstorming about current barriers to permanency and development of a specific action plan and identifying incremental steps for addressing barriers to permanency one youth at a time.

Wendy's Wonderful Kids

The Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption awards grants to public and private adoption agencies to hire adoption professionals who implement an intensive, child-focused recruitment model that requires a thorough review of the case field, a face-to-face relationship with the child, collaboration with all adults in the child's network, assurance of adoption preparation, an aggressive recruitment plan, and diligent search for all potential adoptive parents.

Wednesday's Child

Every week, Wednesday's Child features local children who are waiting in foster care to be adopted and shares success stories of families who have adopted from foster care. Hosted by local news anchors, the television segments highlight each child's special personal and interests.

Wrap Around programs

Wraparound is an intensive, holistic method of engaging children, youth and their families in an intensive, individualized care planning process. The team planning process is designed to meet the identified needs of caregivers and siblings and is driven by the perspectives of the family and the child or youth.



Appendix E.

Organizations and Resources on Promoting Permanent Connections for Older Youth and Preparing Youth for Adulthood in the US

AdoptUsKids – A federal resource designed and operated to find and support foster and adoptive families for waiting youth and developed a special recruitment campaign for older youth and photo listing. (<http://www.adoptuskids.org>)

Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA). There are over 950 community-based programs in the US that recruit, train and support CASAs who are citizen-volunteers to advocate for the best interests of abused and neglected children in courtrooms and communities. Volunteer advocates—empowered directly by the courts—offer judges the critical information they need to ensure that each child’s rights and needs are being attended to while in foster care. These CASA volunteers stay with children until they are placed in loving permanent homes. For many abused children, a CASA volunteer is the only constant adult presence in their lives. (<http://www.casaforchildren.org/site/c.mtJSJ7MPlsE/b.5301295/k.BE9A/Home.htm>)

Casey Family Programs – Partners with child welfare systems across America to safely reduce the need for foster care. (www.casey.org)

- ▶ A Call to Action: An Integrated Approach to Youth Permanency and Preparation for Adulthood (<http://www.aecf.org/m/resourcedoc/AECF-AnIntegratedApproachtoYouthPermanency-2005.pdf>)
- ▶ Older Youth Learning Collaborative: <http://www.casey.org/older-youth-learning-collaborative/>

Child Welfare Information Gateway – HHS’ online resource to connect child welfare and related professionals to resources to protect children and strengthen families. (www.childwelfare.gov)

- ▶ Enhancing Permanency for Youth in Out of Home Care: Bulletin for Professionals (2013)
- ▶ Transition to Adulthood and Independent Living - child Welfare Information Gateway (www.childwelfare.gov/outofhome/independent)
- ▶ Working with Youth to Develop a Transition Plan: Bulletin for Professionals (2013)



Foster Club – Promotes networking among youth in foster care. (www.fosterclub.com)

- ▶ Transition Toolkit provides a step by step process for thinking about leaving care and provides transition plan templates (www.fosterclub.com/files/transition_toolkit_v3.pdf)
- ▶ Transition Toolkit Companion Tools for professionals working with transitioning youth including guidance on asset mapping, assessment tool to evaluate needed services and worksheets for youth (www.fosterclub.com/transition/article/transition-toolkit-companion-tools)
- ▶ Frequently Asked Questions for Transitioning Youth (www.fosterclub.com/questionsanswers/leaving-foster-care)

FedCap’s Washingtonians for Success – This program began in Washington, DC, but has been expanded to cities throughout the US with the intent to ensure foster youth complete high school and pave the pathway to college for foster youth. The program helps youth get accepted into college including opening doors for opportunities to participate in community service, developing public speaking and writing skills, building networking strategies and accessing financial aid through the support of Life Coaches. These coaches also help youth find internships and meaningful employment experiences through our extensive network of youth-friendly business partners. (<http://www.fedcap.org/programs--services/programs--services-for-youth-and-young-adults/washingtonians-for-children>)

Foster Care to Success - Foster Care to Success has helped over 50,000 young adults from foster care achieve success through education. Annually, approximately 5,000 turn to Foster Care to Success (FC2S) for the support they cannot get from a parent or guardian – like financial backing for college in the form of scholarships and grants, care packages and family-like encouragement, academic and personal mentoring, and help with internships and employment readiness skills. (<http://www.fc2success.org/our-programs>)

Great Expectations – Virginia Community Colleges received a grant to help Virginia’s foster youth complete high school, gain access to a community college education and transition successfully from the foster care system to living independently. Key components include Individualized tutoring, help applying for college admission and financial aid, career exploration and coaching, help applying for and keeping a job, life skills training, including managing finances, personalized counseling and student mentors. (<http://greatexpectations.vccs.edu>)

Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative – Ensures that young people—primarily those between ages 14 and 25—make successful transitions from foster care to adulthood. (www.jimcaseyyouth.org)

- ▶ Transition Planning With Adolescents: A Review of Principles and Practices Across Systems (<http://www.jimcaseyyouth.org/sites/default/files/documents/transition-planning-with-adolescents.pdf>)



The National Mentoring Partnership – Advocates for the expansion of mentoring and a resource for mentors and quality mentoring initiatives nationwide.

(<http://www.mentoring.org/>)

- ▶ *Elements of Effective Practice for Mentoring™, Third Edition* reflects the latest in quality mentoring research, policies and practices and serve as the gold standard for operating effective mentoring programs including mentor and mentee recruitment; screening; training; matching; monitoring and support; and closure.
(http://www.mentoring.org/downloads/mentoring_1222.pdf)
- ▶ *Elements of Effective Practice Toolkit: How to Build a Successful Mentoring Program Using the Elements of Effective Practice™*, includes more than 160 tools, templates and advice for implementing and adhering to the second edition of the Elements.
(http://www.mentoring.org/downloads/mentoring_413.pdf)

Kidsave International - Conducts monthly weekend advocacy events, “Weekend Miracles” so that older foster youth can meet and get to know potential host and adoptive families.

Volunteer hosts commit to spending at least two days a month with a youth for at least a year and introducing them to friends, family and associates. Based on Kidsave’s family visit model, the goal of Weekend Miracles is to connect children in foster care with caring adults who may become adoptive parents or long term mentors. (<http://www.kidsave.org>)

North American Council on Adoptable Children – Promotes and supports permanent families for children and youth in the US and Canada—especially those who are or have been in foster care and have special needs. (www.nacac.org)

- ▶ *A Family for Every Child: Strategies to Achieve Permanence for Older Foster Children and Youth* (2005) (www.aecf.org/m/resourcedoc/AECF-AFamilyForEveryChild-2005.pdf)



Appendix F.

Glossary (Specific Terms Used in the US)

Adoption: The legal transfer of parental rights and legal responsibilities for a minor child or person at any age which results in a permanent family.

Adoption subsidy: Federal financial assistance to adoptive parents created under the Adoption Assistance and Child Welfare Act of 1980 to encourage the adoption of children with special needs within the United States. Each state sets guidelines for determining the criteria and amount of financial assistance.

Best interest: In the context of child welfare this means that all decisions about a child are made with the ultimate goal of fostering and encouraging the child's happiness, safety, security, mental health, and emotional development into young adulthood.

Child-centered (or focused): A child welfare practice approach that places the safety, permanency, and well-being of the child as paramount in any decision or action concerning the child.

Child protection system: A comprehensive system of laws, policies, procedures, and practices designed to ensure the protection of children and to facilitate an effective response to allegations of child abuse, neglect, exploitation, and violence.

Child protective service workers: Caseworkers who investigate and assess allegations of child abuse and neglect.

Child welfare system: The child welfare system is a group of public and private services designed to promote the well-being of children by ensuring safety, achieving permanency, and strengthening families to successfully care for their children.

Community-based: Care that is as close as possible to family based care and where the community is involved in the process of a child's recovery. Foster and extended families are examples of community-based care.

Concurrent planning: Concurrent planning is the process by which child welfare caseworkers plan with children, youth, and families to reunite while simultaneously considering and preparing to implement one of the other permanency plans as enumerated in current federal legislation, such as adoption, placement with a legal guardian or emancipation.



Family group decision-making: A way of fully involving a family in the planning, decision making and arrangements for the care, protection and supervision of the child, young person or vulnerable adult. The family is invited to meet as a group to discuss issues relating to the child and is encouraged by a facilitator to come up with their own solutions.

Family-centered: Child welfare services provided to families that emphasize responding to family needs and strengths. These include family preservation to keep families together, preventive services to address potential risks for child abuse and neglect and reunification services to reunify parents with children in out of home care.

Family preservation: An integrated, comprehensive approach to strengthening and preserving families who are at risk of or already experiencing problems in family functioning, with the goal of assuring the emotional, social, educational, and spiritual development of children in a safe and nurturing environment.

Foster care: The full-time care of a child or adolescent within a non-related family who agrees to meet the developmental, psychosocial, medical, educational, and spiritual needs of a child who is not able to live with his/her own parents or extended family.

Independent living: The transitional necessary services, supports and opportunities provided to assist youth in transition when leaving out-of-home care to independent living in order to maximize their ability to become self-sufficient, productive, and healthy adults.

Juvenile dependency court: A court that hears cases about child abuse and neglect; issues orders placing children into protective custody, mandates services to families and issues termination of parental rights orders.

Kinship care: A program designed to support a child financially who resides out of his or her home either temporarily or long term with a relative. Placement of the child may be voluntary or by court-order.

Legal Guardianship: A judicially created relationship between child and caretaker, which is intended to be permanent and self-sustaining as evidenced by the transfer to the caretaker of the parental rights with respect to the child: protection, education, care, and control of the person, custody of the person, and decision-making. The term legal guardian means the caretaker in such a relationship.

Life skills: Various skills children and young people can learn regarding social development and living and coping independently. This includes self-awareness, problem solving, learning to negotiate, decision-making, creative thinking, critical thinking, effective communication, interpersonal relationship skills, conflict resolution, empathy, coping with emotions and stress management as well as money management, raising a family and running a home.

Mentor: A person or friend who guides a less experienced person by building trust and modeling positive behaviors. Mentoring relationships are sustained over a prolonged period of



time between two or more people where an older, caring, more experienced individual provides help to the younger person as he/she goes through life. An effective mentor understands that his or her role is to be dependable, engaged, authentic, and tuned into the needs of the mentee. Mentoring programs in child welfare can be targeted for youth, parents, foster parents, adoptive parents and caseworkers.

Orphan: A minor child whose parents are no longer living or whose parents have abandoned and/or neglected the child and their parental rights have been legally terminated.

Orphanage: A residential institution for minor children whose parents are deceased or unable or unwilling to provide care for them; other residential institutions for minor children are called group homes, children's homes, refuges, rehabilitation centers, night shelters or youth treatment centers.

Out-of-home placement: Out-of-home placement refers to any arrangement made by the state for a child to live apart from his/her parent or legal guardian in an approved relative or non-related extended family member's home, in a licensed or certified home, or in a licensed residential facility on a 24-hour basis.

Permanency: Establishing family connections and placement options for a child in order to provide a lifetime of commitment, continuity of care, a sense of belonging and a legal and social status that goes beyond the child's temporary foster care placement.

Prevention: A variety of approaches that support family life and help to diminish the need for a child to be separated from her/his immediate or extended family or other caregiver and be placed in alternative care.

Protective custody placement: When a determination is made by either a social worker or a police officer that a child cannot remain safely at home the courts will issue an order placing that child into protective custody either in a facility, a foster family or another arrangement.

Reintegration: Child-centered reintegration is multi-layered and focuses on family reunification; mobilizing and enabling care systems in the community; medical screening and health care, including reproductive health services; schooling and/or vocational training; psychosocial support; and social, cultural, and economic support.

Relative care: Children who come to live with their grandparents or other relatives in a number of ways; sometimes through involvement with the child welfare system (see kinship care).

Residential care: When children are unable to live at home, residential care programs provide a safe and therapeutic environment while families and staff members seek to create plans for restoration of family life. Services are provided through an interdisciplinary team of psychologists, psychiatrists, nurses, social workers, child care staff, and educators to assist children in residence who may have emotional, behavioral, and mental health disorders. Family



participation is considered essential. Youth who cannot return to their families are prepared to live in foster homes or to live independently in the community.

Reunification: The process of bringing together the child and family or previous care-provider for the purpose of establishing or re-establishing permanent care.

Safety: Means the absence of present or impending danger to a child or routinely demonstrated behavior by a parent or caregiver of protective capacities to assure that a child is protected from danger.

Voluntary in-home services: Social services provided to families on a voluntary basis to prevent abuse or neglect and improve family functioning. (see Family preservation)

Well-being: Identified as optimal functioning across four domains: cognitive functioning, physical health and development, behavioral/emotional functioning, and social functioning.

For additional definitions please see the following resources:

Definition of Terms in Child Welfare Policy:

<http://www.childwelfarepolicy.org/resources?id=0006>

Definition of General Terms in the Child Welfare System:

<http://www.bettercarenetwork.org/BCN/Toolkit/Glossary/index.asp>



Appendix G.

Examples of Russian Methodological Best Practices for Family-Based Care and Support of Children

Forum of adoptive parents – An annual event convened nationally and regionally in the Russian Federation for the purpose of studying advancements, challenges, and obstacles in the area of family placements for orphans and children without parental care. The national forum is attended by approximately 1,000 custodial, host, replacement, and adoptive parents from all regions of Russia. Members of the Federation Council, State Duma, and executive branch also take part in the forum, reporting on new laws, projects, and measures taken to support these families, as well as engaging with participants through an open microphone question and answer session. <http://www.centrrsp.ru>

Conference of directors of organizations for orphans and children without parental care – An annual, national convention attended by 500 to 1,000 directors of children's homes, boarding schools, homes for infants, orphanage boarding schools, and other institutional settings for children without parental care. Conference attendees discuss reforms in the network of organizations for orphans and children without parental care, present best practices and innovative case studies, and identify emerging problems.

Association of adoptive (replacement) parents – A voluntary association of adoptive (replacement) parents with regional and municipal chapters. The purpose of the association is to facilitate mutual assistance and support between host families, and to increase support for adoptive (replacement) families by establishing relationships with local authorities and organizing regional legislative campaigns.

Network of organizations for orphans and children without parental care – A method of pooling resources from multiple organizations within a Russian Federation subject, so as to more effectively expand family-based care for orphans and, first and foremost, children being brought up in institutions. A resource center instituted at one organization compiles successful case studies, develops new methodologies and training programs, and monitors and analyzes the results. Organizations in the network receive professional development services for their staff, are kept up to date about changes in regional and federal law, new services, and prospective surrogate parents, and benefit from other collaborative activities (see, for example, the website of Vologda Children's Home No. 2, <http://www.domdeti2.edu35.ru>).



Military academy for orphans and children without parental care – A program of military and patriotic education that trains participants for national service in military and civilian fields. Cadets receive professional guidance intended to help them to choose a career and prepare for vocational training, in a military or civilian field, at secondary and higher educational institutions. Cadets are also taught cultural skills including etiquette and ballroom dancing. Children's Home No. 3 in Perm is representative of the military academy model (more information at ddom3-perm.ru).

Mobile social services providing emergency assistance to children and families in difficult life situations – A program designed to provide targeted emergency assistance to members of the population who are in difficult life situations and have urgent need for social support (more information can be found on the website of the Foundation for the Support of Children in Difficult Life Situations: <http://www.fond-detyam.ru>).

Center for post-institutional adjustment for alumni of organizations for orphans and children without parental care – A specialized organization that provides assistance and support for young people up to 23 years of age. Centers may have in-patient units with temporary accommodations for alumni. Staff at the center serve as advisors, help gather necessary documents, and assist youth with the transition to independent living and initial job placement. Each alumnus is assigned a trustee or mentor who is available by telephone at any time. See, for example, career guidance and social support for alumni of Crossroads Children's Home No. 2 in Vologda Oblast (more information at <http://detdom1-35.ru/>)

The Little Malenkaya Mama (Teen Mothers) Program – A program aimed at preventing child abandonment and fostering social and emotional conditions in which orphans who have or are expecting children can gain a positive experience of motherhood and all the tools necessary to keep their family intact. The program ensures that orphans with children have propitious social experiences during pregnancy and early motherhood, receive timely and effective psychological and social services, and have access to social support, career counseling, and job placement services, as well as assistance in finding a dependable and caring adult mentor. Through these measures, the program aims to preserve the nation's health and vitality by ending the vicious cycle of child abandonment. This program was developed in collaboration with Kidsave and is based on the Little Mama Crisis Center in Moscow (more information available on the web at <http://kidsaverussia.org/>).

Mentoring programs – These programs provide assistance to children who have grown up in institutional settings and are in the process of transitioning to society. They help these children realize their individual potential through professionally facilitated interactions with an adult mentor. These programs are generally implemented by nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) in cooperation with organizations for orphans and parentless children.

The Big Brothers Big Sisters community organization for youth – This mentoring model involves direct interaction between volunteer (mentor) and child: young people receive skills training via practical activities with a mentor, expand their network of support through the pairing, find avenues for preserving their resources and options in life, and acquire knowledge



and abilities that will enable them to live independently, care for their own health and well-being, and plan for the future. Children participating in the program are, on average, 12 to 15 years old. The average volunteer is 24 to 28 years old and employed by a large company (<http://www.nastavniki.org/>).

Kidsave: Strong Shoulders and corporate mentoring – A program for young adults, ages 16 to 23. Active participation of business and community leaders gives teenagers and alumni of orphanages the opportunity to prepare for a healthy, productive, and successful life. The program covers basic legal and financial literacy, independence, and competence in the labor market. (<http://kidsaverussia.org/>)

Volunteers Assisting Orphans Charitable Foundation – An alliance of volunteers assisting institutionalized orphans in Russia. Foundation volunteers care, tutor, and organize activities for abandoned children living in institutions, participate in efforts to prevent child abandonment, raise money to pay for nannies and children's supplies, and implement programs to support host families and family-based care for parentless children. (www.otkazniki.ru)

Change One Life: a charitable foundation promoting family-based care for orphans – The foundation pursues its mission in large part by disseminating videos and photographs of children awaiting family placements, per official agreements with relevant ministries. The foundation offers three main services to current and prospective surrogate parents: it hosts a video database of orphans, provides consultations to surrogate parents, and administers a specialized information portal (<http://changeonelifelife.ru/>) devoted to finding family placements for children without parental care.

Up, a center of equal opportunity for orphans – The center works with wards and alumni of correctional children's homes and therapeutic residential facilities. Young people receive support in the following areas:

- ▶ Primary education for wards of therapeutic residences;
- ▶ Exam preparation for alumni of correctional institutions;
- ▶ Distance learning for residents of regional children's homes;
- ▶ Assistance with secondary education.

(Information at <http://vverh.su/>)

A Hand in Fate Charity Center: a regional community organization – The center promotes adjustment to independent living for orphans, children without parental care, and persons brought up in surrogate families. It provides orphans with social sponsorship, legal aid, and protection, and alumni of the system with career guidance, job placement, and assistance in choosing courses of study at institutes of vocational, higher, and continuing education. (<http://souchastye.ru/>)

Successful Orphan.ru: A social network for alumni of children's homes and their support specialists – This site was created by A. Gezalovym, a children's home alumnus, writer, and



public figure. It is an Internet resource for communication among alumni of children's homes and specialists in the field, and receives an average of 200 visits per day. (www.uspeshnye-siroty.ru).



Appendix H.

Glossary (Specific Terms Used in Russia)

Adoption – The act of a family's accepting, with all the rights of consanguinity, a child who is otherwise without parental care. Adoption affords a child all rights of birth, including the right of inheritance, and renders all attendant responsibilities to his or her parents. It also strips the child of all the benefits he or she received as an orphan.

Alumni of organizations for orphans and children without parental care – Persons who were placed, with full state support, in the custody of an organization for orphans and children without parental care, and who have completed their stay in that organization. Individuals 18 years and older who have aged out of family-based care are also referred to as alumni.

Child abandonment – A societal phenomenon in which minors without parental care, or without parents, appear in the community.

Child orphans – Persons under 18 years of age whose parent(s) are deceased.

Child protection – A system of measures that safeguards the rights and interests of children based on legal standards and the documented status of minors; advances the system of guardianship, trusteeship, and adoption of children without parental care; and implements a network of specialized social service agencies and agencies providing correctional and rehabilitative services to children in need of such support.

Children in difficult life situations – Children who are deprived of parental care, disabled, developmentally delayed or physically handicapped, victims of war, ethnic conflict, and natural or human-instigated disasters, refugees or internally displaced persons, living in extreme conditions, victims of violence, serving sentences in the juvenile justice system or confined to special educational institutions for troubled youth, living in poverty, or struggling with behavioral problems, and children whose lives have been disrupted through any other circumstances that they cannot overcome on their own or with the help of family.

Children in need of state protection – Children whose parents are unknown, deceased, or absent from the family; children whose parents have lost some or all of their parental rights; children who are victims of neglect, as well as children of chronically ill parents who are unable to provide sufficient care or support; children whose parents have been declared legally incapacitated (or partially incapacitated) or missing (presumed dead); children whose parents are detained or incarcerated; children suspected or accused of a crime; children who otherwise meet the legal definition of needing state protection.



Children in socially dangerous situations – Individuals who, as a result of neglect or abandonment, find themselves in circumstances that endanger their life or health, that are insufficient for their care or support, or that facilitate their involvement in illegal or antisocial activities (for adolescents, antisocial conduct manifests itself in systematic use of drugs, stimulant and/or depressant substances, alcohol and alcohol-containing products; involvement in prostitution, vagrancy, and begging; and any other activities that violate the rights and legally-protected interests of other people).

Children without parental care – Persons under 18 years of age who have been deprived of parental care as a result of their parent(s) being absent, declared dead, stripped of some or all parental rights, declared missing or incompetent, hospitalized, detained or imprisoned, remiss in caring for said persons or in protecting their rights and interests, or unwilling to take back said persons from residential, medical, or other facilities.

Custody of minors – A form of placement for young citizens (minors up to 14 years of age) wherein an adult appointed as custodian by the custody and guardianship authorities serves as the citizen's legal representative, acting in his or her name and on his or her behalf in all legal affairs.

Custody and guardianship authorities – Agencies of Russian Federation subjects or municipalities, whose central duties with respect to minors are:

- ▶ defending the rights and legal interests of children in need of custodial protection;
- ▶ overseeing the activity of guardians, custodians, and organizations for orphans and children without parental care;
- ▶ protecting and managing the assets of minors being cared for under guardianship, custodial arrangement, or the supervision of educational institutions, medical facilities, social services providers, or other organizations, including organizations for orphans and children without parental care.

Deprivation (Lat. *deprivatio* – loss, denial) – A psychological condition caused by denial of life's essential needs (such as sleep, food, housing, or, in the case of children, maternal interaction) or benefits to which a person has grown accustomed over a long period of time. Maternal deprivation occurs when a mother's care is withheld.

Full state support for orphans and children without parental care – Provision, during a child's stay in a state or municipal institution, or in the family of a custodian, guardian, or host parent, of free room, board, medicine, and clothing, or compensation for the total value thereof. Those of them who attend secondary, vocational, or higher educational institutions are entitled to full governmental support and additional guaranteed services until they reach 23 years of age or complete their full-time studies.

Further guarantees of social support – Additional legally guaranteed measures of social protection for orphans and children without parental care, as well as for persons up to 23 years of age who are counted as orphans and children without parental care.



Guardianship of minors – A form of placement for citizens aged 14 to 18 years in which an adult appointed as guardian by the custody and guardianship authorities is engaged to assist the designated individual in realizing their rights and obligations, as well as protect the minor from abuse by a third party.

Host family – A form of compensated custody for orphans and children without parental care, in which transfer of child custody is formalized by agreement between the host parents and the custody and guardianship authorities. Host parents receive compensation and benefits for fulfilling their duty of care to a child.

Persons counted as orphans and children without parental care – Persons age 18 to 23, whose parent(s) died or were deprived of their parental rights before these persons reached maturity, and who are entitled to additional guarantees of social support.

Post-institutional support for alumni of the child welfare system – A form of assistance, provided to alumni of the system and persons counted as orphans, which includes adult mentorship for every young person. This support is typically provided by organizations for orphans, social services centers, and NGOs.

Private partners of the custody and guardianship authorities – Organizations that have been given a mandate to fulfill some of the responsibilities of the custody and guardianship authorities, namely:

- ▶ identification of minors needing custody or guardianship, including assessment of living conditions for these minors and their families;
- ▶ selection and education of persons who have expressed a wish to become custodians, guardians, or host parents to minors without parental care ;
- ▶ Private partners may be educational, health care, and social services providers, as well as organizations for orphans and other NGOs.

Replacement family – The concept, not enshrined by law, of a given family having been entrusted with the upbringing of an orphan or a child without parental care (except for adoption).

State database of children without parental care – A corpus of informational resources generated at the level of Russian Federation subjects (regional databases of children) and at the federal level (federal database of children), as well as information technology for collecting, processing, assembling, storing, searching, and providing to potential host families the records of children without parental care who meet the Russian Federation's criteria for placement in family-based care.





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