

# New England Convening on Youth Permanence

FROM PLANNING TO ACTION



November 30 and December 1, 2010

Westford Regency Inn and Conference Center  
Westford, Massachusetts

SPONSORED BY THE NEW ENGLAND ASSOCIATION OF CHILD WELFARE COMMISSIONERS AND DIRECTORS,  
THE ANNIE E. CASEY FOUNDATION/CASEY FAMILY SERVICES, AND CASEY FAMILY PROGRAMS

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## DEAR FRIENDS AND COLLEAGUES:

Welcome to the second New England Convening on Youth Permanence.

The Annie E. Casey Foundation/Casey Family Services and Casey Family Programs are pleased to join the New England Association of Child Welfare Commissioners and Directors in hosting this second gathering, the “New England Convening on Youth Permanence: From Planning to Action.” We welcome child welfare leaders from across the region, as well as youth and families, attorneys and judges, mental health practitioners, educators, and policymakers. In the next two days, we will have an extraordinary series of candid discussions, peer learning opportunities, and targeted work sessions.

With the passage of the landmark Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act of 2008 and the momentum created from the National Convenings on Youth Permanence, the permanency movement in child welfare is expanding and deepening. We intend for this event to further the state-level public policies and practice that support every child’s need for, and right to, family.

Over the next two days, we have an opportunity to share ideas and learn from each other. We will hear about emerging data on youth permanence, what is working to create legal permanence for youth in foster care, and what more needs to be done. We also will engage with parents and youth, underscoring our commitment to raising the voices of consumers in finding solutions to the challenges that they face.

This convening is significant, for it brings together state teams, and it is at the state level that the complex work of ensuring permanent families for youth in foster care happens. To a large degree, Fostering Connections is a mandate to states. The decisions to bring children into care, identify relatives and other resource families, and provide services that support permanence are made at the state level with community partners. Therefore, in order to intensify our efforts to ensure permanent families for youth in foster care, we recognize the importance of creating a space for state teams to reflect, recharge, learn, and grow. We hope the next two days will bring all of this to fruition for every state team.

We salute the six state teams that have joined us. Together we make a powerful statement about the relevance of this work to the well-being of older children and youth in care, to families, and to society as a whole. Each of us recognizes that family permanence for all older children and youth in foster care is the ideal, and, on many levels, a legal and moral mandate. Today, we will plan how to put this aspiration into action.



**JULIE SWEENEY-SPRINGWATER**  
*Director*  
New England Association of Child  
Welfare Commissioners and Directors



**RAYMOND L. TORRES**  
*Vice President*  
Annie E. Casey Foundation &  
*Executive Director*  
Casey Family Services



**Zeinab Chahine**  
*Managing Director*  
Casey Family Programs

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## CONVENING PURPOSE, GOALS, AND SUCCESS

### Defining the Purpose

Working in collaboration with the Annie E. Casey Foundation/Casey Family Services and Casey Family Programs, the New England Association of Child Welfare Commissioners and Directors invites you to participate in a regional discussion on improving legal permanency outcomes for youth in foster care throughout New England. This convening will offer participants – up to 10 from each state – an opportunity to reflect on their own state permanency data, policies, and practices in the context of regional and national trends and to facilitate continued state team action planning for youth permanence.

### Meeting the Goals

The convening will provide state teams with the opportunity to:

- hear from other states about initiatives they have employed to achieve better permanency outcomes;
- share successful approaches to increasing youth engagement in their own case planning and opportunities for youth involvement in child welfare planning and policy development;
- use targeted national, regional, and state data trends to inform team discussions;
- identify policy barriers as well as opportunities for strengthening state policies to promote youth permanence; and
- customize state action plans that will achieve and sustain legal permanence for youth exiting foster care.

### Defining Success

The success of this event and resulting action plans will be measured using the following criteria:

- An increase in the numbers of youth (under and over age 18) who exit foster care with legal permanence
- A decrease in the entries of youth in foster care
- A decrease in the numbers of youth who have long-term foster care goals, such as APPLA
- A decrease in the length of stay of youth in foster care
- A decrease in disparities in permanency outcomes for youth of color

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## **AGENDA: TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 30**

*Unless otherwise stated, all events occur in Regency Ballroom 1. Please sit with your state team.*

- 12 p.m.            **Registration and Lunch**
- 12:45 p.m.        **Welcome**  
Julie Sweeney-Springwater, *Director, New England Association of Child Welfare Commissioners and Directors*  
Cindy Walcott, *President, New England Association of Child Welfare Commissioners and Directors, and Deputy Commissioner, Vermont Department for Children and Families*  
Raymond Torres, *Vice President, Annie E. Casey Foundation, and Executive Director, Casey Family Services*
- 1 p.m.             **Starting Our Work Together**  
Susan Getman, *Senior Director, Casey Family Programs*  
An opportunity for participants to get to know each other.
- 1:15 p.m.         **Conversations with Youth and Parents**  
Facilitators: Sarah Greenblatt, *Senior Associate Director, Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative, and Anthony Barrows, Program Manager, New England Association of Child Welfare Commissioners and Directors*  
This opening session features a panel of youth and parents describing what permanence means to them, their experience with the child welfare system in pursuing permanence, and their advice to child welfare professionals.
- 2:15 p.m.         **Review and Reflection on Emerging Data and Implication for Permanence**  
Melissa Correia, *Systems Improvement Advisor, Data Advocacy, Casey Family Programs*  
This presentation will highlight emerging regional and state data trends to illustrate progress in achieving youth permanence, reducing the use of APPLA goals, and decreasing youth entry into foster care.
- 3 p.m.             **Break**

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- 3:15 p.m.      **New England State Sharing: First Session**
- to 4:15 p.m.      Each state will share their strategies and/or initiatives to increase legal permanence for youth.
- Connecticut: Improving Outcomes in Residential Care to Support Permanence**  
                    Third Floor, Westford N1 and N3
- Massachusetts: Improving Youth Participation in Permanency Planning**  
                    Third Floor, Westford N2 and N4
- Rhode Island: Natural Supports, Permanence, and Data**  
                    Third Floor, Westford S1 and S3
- 4:30 p.m.      **New England State Sharing: Second Session**
- Maine: Increasing Permanence through Kinship Care**  
                    Third Floor, Westford N1 and N3
- New Hampshire: A Framework for Collaboration: New Hampshire's Partnership to Improve Permanency Outcomes for Children and Youth in Residential Treatment**  
                    Third Floor, Westford N2 and N4
- Vermont: Strategies for Increasing Youth Permanence through Consideration of the Use of APPLA; Relational and Legal Permanence**  
                    Third Floor, Westford S1 and S3
- 5:30 p.m.      **Adjournment**
- 6 p.m.          **Networking Reception**  
                    Cash bar  
                    Regency Foyer
- 6:30 p.m.      **Dinner and Keynote Address**  
                    Susan Hamilton, *Commissioner, Connecticut Department of Children and Families*
- Keynote: The Honorable Christine Keller, *Chief Administrative Judge for Juvenile Matters, Connecticut Superior Court*  
                    Regency Ballroom 3
- 8 p.m.          **Closing Comments**  
                    Maggie Bishop, *Director, New Hampshire Division for Children, Youth and Families*
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## **AGENDA: WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 1**

*Unless otherwise stated, all events occur in Regency Ballroom 1. Please sit with your state team.*

7:30 a.m. Breakfast

8:30 a.m. Welcome Back/Reflections

*Zeinab Chahine, Managing Director, Strategic Consulting Services, Casey Family Programs*

8:45 a.m. New England State Policy Scan

to 9:15 a.m. *Steve Christian, Child Welfare Policy Advisor, Casey Family Programs*

This presentation will review policies in the New England states and provisions of Fostering Connections to Success that are key to promoting legal permanence for youth. Results of a New England policy scan related to youth permanence will be presented and emerging national policy issues such as reinstatement of parental rights will be highlighted.

9:30 a.m. Policy Roundtables

Policy roundtables will provide an opportunity for discussion of current policy in the New England states related to youth permanence – what is working, what is not working, and how policy can be improved.

### **Another Planned Permanent Living Arrangement (APPLA)**

Facilitator: *Susan Getman, Senior Director, Casey Family Programs*  
Third Floor, Salem

### **Extension of Care beyond Age 18**

Facilitators: *Julie Sweeney-Springwater, Director, New England Association of Child Welfare Commissioners and Directors, and Anthony Barrows, Project Manager, New England Breakthrough Series Collaborative on Safety and Risk*  
First Floor, Whittier

### **Placement with Kin and Notification of Relatives**

Facilitator: *Sania Metzger, Director of State Child Welfare Policy, Annie E. Casey Foundation*  
Third Floor, Westford N1 and N3

### **Reinstatement of Parental Rights**

Facilitator: *Steve Christian, Child Welfare Policy Advisor, Casey Family Programs*  
Third Floor, Westford N2 and N4

10:30 a.m. Break

If you have not done so, please check out of your hotel room. A luggage check is available at the front desk.

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- 10:45 a.m.      **Introduction to State Team Action Planning**  
Julie Sweeney-Springwater, *Director, New England Association of Child Welfare Commissioners and Directors*
- State teams will engage in action planning to advance legal permanence for youth in foster care. Action plans will be captured on flash drives and distributed to each team after the event. Each team is asked to highlight key strategies on flipcharts for presentation.
- 11 a.m.            **State Team Action Planning**  
to 12 p.m.        **Connecticut**  
Third Floor, Westford N1 and N3
- Maine**  
Third Floor, Westford N2 and N4
- Massachusetts**  
First Floor, Emerson
- New Hampshire**  
First Floor, Whittier
- Rhode Island**  
Third Floor, Salem
- Vermont**  
First Floor, Regency Ballroom 1
- 12:15 p.m.      **Action Plan Highlights**
- Each team will present their key strategies for improving legal permanence for youth.
- 12:45 p.m.      **Closing Comments/Next Steps**  
Cindy Walcott, *President, New England Association of Child Welfare Commissioners and Directors, and Deputy Commissioner, Vermont Department for Children and Families*  
Julie Sweeney-Springwater, *Director, New England Association of Child Welfare Commissioners and Directors*
- 1 p.m.            **Adjournment/Lunch**

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## CONVENING ADVISORS

Anthony Barrows, *Program Manager, New England Association of Child Welfare Commissioners and Directors*

Roye Anastasio-Bourke, *Senior Communications Manager, Annie E. Casey Foundation*

Steve Christian, *Child Welfare Policy Advisor, Casey Family Programs*

Melissa Correia, *Systems Improvement Advisor, Data Advocacy, Casey Family Programs*

Diane Dexter, *Adoption Manager, Vermont Family Services Division*

Joy Duva, *Deputy Executive Director of Planning and Program Development, Annie E. Casey Foundation/Casey Family Services*

Mary Gambon, *Assistant Commissioner, Massachusetts Department of Children and Families*

Susan Getman, *Senior Director, Casey Family Programs*

Sarah Greenblatt, *Senior Associate Director, Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative*

Susan Hamilton, *Commissioner, Connecticut Department of Children and Families*

Dulcey LaBerge, *Youth Transition Coordinator, Maine Office of Child and Family Services*

Patricia Lindquist, *Permanency Program Specialist, New Hampshire Division of Children, Youth and Families*

Sania Metzger, *Director of State Child Welfare Policy, Annie E. Casey Foundation*

Lee Mullane, *Interim Director of Communications and Media Relations, Annie E. Casey Foundation*

Kevin Savage, *Administrator for Licensing and Regulation, Rhode Island Department of Children, Youth and Families*

Julie Sweeney-Springwater, *Director, New England Association of Child Welfare Commissioners and Directors*

Susan Weiss, *Director, Child Welfare Policy, Casey Family Programs*

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## SELECTED SPEAKER PROFILES

**Anthony Barrows** is the project manager for the New England Association of Child Welfare Commissioners and Directors. He is a native Bostonian and an alumnus of the Massachusetts foster care system who has worked on behalf of youth for over 15 years, including time as a peer counselor, social worker, supervisor, and trainer. He has also served on numerous boards and committees devoted to the well-being of youth in care. Anthony is a practicing artist and holds a BA in Philosophy and Studio Art from the University of Massachusetts and an MFA in Printmaking from the San Francisco Art Institute.

**Steve Christian** is a child welfare policy advisor for Casey Family Programs, a not-for-profit operating foundation based in Seattle, Washington. Steve's area of expertise within Casey is state child welfare law and policy. He supports Casey's state-based strategic consulting work and also manages the foundation's policy work with several national organizations, including the National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL) and the Grandfamilies State Law and Policy Resource Center. Prior to joining Casey, Steve was program director for child welfare policy at NCSL. In that capacity, he provided policy analysis and technical assistance to state legislators and legislative staff throughout the country. He is the author of numerous publications that can be found on NCSL's website. Steve has a law degree from the University of Virginia and a master's degree in social work from the University of Denver.

**Melissa Correia** is a systems improvement advisor in data advocacy for Casey Family Programs. Prior to this position, she was the administrator of the Bureau of Quality Improvement for the New Hampshire Division for Children, Youth & Families where she oversaw a team responsible for data analysis, program oversight, federal grant management, and the ongoing development of agency policy and rules.

**Sarah Greenblatt** has worked with and on behalf of vulnerable children, families and their communities for over 30 years. She has been a teacher, supervisor, child advocate, policy analyst, and a program and agency manager. In 2010 Sarah joined the Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative assisting public and private organizations to improve outcomes for older youth and young adults leaving the foster care system. In 2001, Sarah was hired to launch the former Casey Center for Effective Child Welfare Practice at Casey Family Services where she coordinated national consultation reflecting Casey's successful permanency teaming and post-adoption practice models. Earlier, Sarah directed the National Resource Center for Foster Care and Permanency Planning at the Hunter College School of Social Work, where she was also an adjunct faculty member. She worked with public, non-profit, and tribal agencies to collaboratively promote quality child welfare services to improve permanency outcomes. She also managed grants related to community organizing and social services to support formerly homeless families.

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Judge Christine E. Keller of Hartford was appointed to the bench in 1993. Prior to her appointment, she had practiced family, personal injury, and real estate law. Judge Keller is an honors graduate of both Smith College and the University of Connecticut School of Law.

Since her appointment as a Connecticut Superior Court Judge, Judge Keller has served as presiding judge in both the Hartford and Plainville juvenile courts, and also has served terms in Waterbury criminal court, New Britain civil and family courts, and Hartford criminal and civil courts. From 1997 to 2002, she served as Chief Administrative Judge for Juvenile Matters, responsible for advising the Chief Court Administrator on matters of policy and procedures affecting the Juvenile Division statewide. In 2005, she was appointed Administrative Judge for the Judicial District of Hartford, a position she held until 2007, when she was reappointed to her former position as Chief Administrative Judge for Juvenile Matters. In 2008, the Connecticut Bar Association awarded Judge Keller the Henry J. Naruk Judiciary Award, presented annually to a Connecticut judge for judicial excellence.

Judge Keller presently serves on a number of task forces and committees affecting juvenile issues, including the Juvenile Justice Advisory Committee, the Child Advocate Advisory Board, the Court Improvement Project Advisory Committee, the Child Poverty and Prevention Council. In the past, she served on the Family with Service Needs Advisory Board, the Governor's Task Force on Justice for Abused Children, and the Governor's Task Force on Judicial Reform.

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## SPONSORS

### The New England Association of Child Welfare Commissioners and Directors

The New England Association of Child Welfare Commissioners and Directors is a consortium of child welfare agency leaders and staff members from Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, and Vermont. Agency leaders created the Association in an effort to develop and implement policies that promote competent child welfare practices. The Association's work is grounded in the position that developing effective services for children and families requires sharing information, discussing mutual issues and concerns, and learning from each other's experience with past and current policy and practice implementation. The Association also published *Common Ground*, a child-welfare-focused newsletter. [www.jbcc.harvard.edu/advocacy/neassoc.htm](http://www.jbcc.harvard.edu/advocacy/neassoc.htm)

### The Annie E. Casey Foundation/Casey Family Services

The Annie E. Casey Foundation fosters public policies, human-service reforms, and community supports that more effectively meet the needs of today's vulnerable children and families. The Foundation makes grants that help states, cities, and neighborhoods fashion more innovative, cost-effective responses to these needs. Casey Family Services, the direct service agency of the Annie E. Casey Foundation, provides a broad range of permanency-focused services to meet the changing needs of vulnerable children and families: foster care, adoption, post-permanency, preservation, and reunification services. [www.aecf.org](http://www.aecf.org) and [www.caseyfamilyservices.org](http://www.caseyfamilyservices.org)

### Casey Family Programs

Casey Family Programs' mission is to provide and improve – and ultimately to prevent the need for – foster care. The organization provides direct services, and promotes advances in child-welfare practice and policy. It collaborates with foster, kinship, and adoptive parents to provide safe, loving homes for youth. Drawing on four decades of front-line work with families and alumni of foster care, Casey Family Programs develops tools, practices, and policies to nurture all youth in case and to help parents strengthen families at risk of needing foster care. [www.casey.org](http://www.casey.org)