

**SUBSIDIZED CUSTODY  
A PERMANENCY OPTION FOR YOUTH IN Virginia's  
FOSTER CARE SYSTEM**

**DECISION BRIEF**

**In Response to the Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act (H.R. 6893)**

*Prepared for the*

**Virginia Department of Social Services  
Division of Family Services**

*By*

**A Selected Stakeholder Work Group**

**December 1, 2009**

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## **Section 1: Introduction**

### **Purpose**

The purpose of this report is to advise the Virginia Department of Social Services (DSS) and state advocates on the feasibility of kinship guardianship assistance payments (GAP) for children living in foster care pursuant to the Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act (Act) [See Appendix A: Fostering Connections to Success Act, 2008, *excerpt*]. In Virginia, kinship guardianship will be referenced as *Subsidized Custody* to be consistent with child welfare language of the Code of Virginia.

### **Approach/Methodology**

In May 2009, the DSS Division of Family Services (DFS) formed a work group consisting of staff from state office and local departments of social services, private child placing agencies, other state agencies, advocates and care providers. (See Appendix F: Work Group Members) The charge to the work group was to study the feasibility of and provide recommendations regarding instituting Subsidized Custody as a permanency option for children in foster care living with relatives. The Subsidized Custody permanency option (as described in the federal Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act) would allow custody to transfer from the local department of social services to the eligible relative foster parent and the federally funded Title IV-E maintenance payment for the child would follow the child. This option must be included in the State's Title IV-E plan to become effective.

The selected work group members are considered experts in the field of child welfare policies, practices, programs, services and financing. The group reviewed the Act, reviewed literature published on kinship care and child welfare financing (this included studies, reports and data specific to Virginia completed by state agencies and organizations), and analyzed reports from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services on the Title IV-E Demonstration projects that led to the passage of the Act as well as legislation from the state of Texas (Senate Bill 2080 and House Bill 1151) passed into law to enact the purpose of the Act. (See Appendix D: Literature Review and Resources)

The work group met five times between June and November, 2009.

## Section 2: Recommendation

**The work group supports Subsidized Custody as a permanency option for children in foster care who cannot be reunified with the family from which they were removed and when adoption by a relative has been ruled out.** The work group supports this option for all children regardless of their funding source [i.e., federal Title IV-E or Comprehensive Service Act (CSA) state and local funds].

The Subsidized Custody option is consistent with the goals of Virginia’s Children’s Services System Transformation (the Transformation). The goals of the Transformation are:

- increase the number and rate at which youth in foster care move into permanent family arrangements;
- increase the number of at-risk children and youth placed with kin and foster parents; and
- devote more resources to community-based care.

The mission of the Transformation initiative is to strengthen permanent family connections for children and youth by transforming how services are delivered. If implemented, the Subsidized Custody permanency option has the potential to benefit the children and families in Virginia in the following ways:

- Increase permanency, especially for older children, an area in which Virginia falls behind other states. A key reason why Virginia lags in permanency for older children is that the state uses kinship care less than other states.
- Improve the well-being of some of Virginia’s most vulnerable children.
- Make permanent connections for children and youth - an important component of the overall child welfare transformation plan.
- Increase the pool/types of families to target for foster family home recruitment.
- Reduce the escalating foster care spending associated with higher-end placement settings such as congregate care.

In a 2007 report by the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission (JLARC), *Evaluation of Children’s Residential Services Delivered Through the Comprehensive Service Act*, “[the] lack of foster families was identified by local Community Policy and Management Teams (CPMTs) as a critical service gap.” Findings showed that “most local programs (62%) reported having placed a child in an overly intensive or restrictive service. It is more than four times as expensive to serve a child in a residential environment as in the community (average annual cost of \$48,129 per year versus \$11,360 per year in 2005). Consequently, serving even a

seemingly low number of children in a setting that is overly restrictive can quickly escalate program costs. CSA stakeholders interviewed for the report consistently indicated that removing children from their families and communities could negatively affect their well-being and ability to surmount their behavioral and emotional problems.” Research has clearly demonstrated the benefits of Subsidized Custody, especially in terms of increasing permanency and decreasing emancipation from foster care without permanent family connections that serve as a ‘safety-net’ (See Appendix C: Five Title IV-E Demonstration States).

### *Scope of this Report*

The remainder of this report provides information supporting the workgroup’s recommendation. Section 3 explains why Virginia needs a Subsidized Custody option. Section 4 describes how the option would work, including eligibility criteria. Section 5 summarizes the benefits of Subsidized Custody, as shown by research and how Subsidized Custody would help improve outcomes in Virginia. Section 6 estimates the cost of Subsidized Custody. Section 7 describes the steps needed to implement Subsidized Custody in Virginia. Section 8 provides a concluding discussion, and notes potential challenges to implementing the new permanency option.

### **Section 3: The Need for Subsidized Custody as a Permanency Option in Virginia**

- Virginia’s high numbers of youth emancipated with no connection to family or other supports
- Low use of kinship care foster homes as a resource to the need for family-focused, community-based services.

The Subsidized Custody permanency option has the potential to improve these current foster care challenges:

- Virginia’s permanency rate for children who are in care at least 24 months was approximately 15% – nearly half the national standard of 29%; [*Note: a child is considered discharged to a permanent home if the discharge reason is adoption, guardianship, reunification, or live with relative.*]
- The percentage of youth emancipating from foster care (29%) is triple the national percentage of 9%;
- On average, 17 % of children in care have a goal of permanent or long term foster care – almost twice the national average of 9%;

- Children in Virginia are much less likely to be placed with a relative than in other states; on average, only 5% of children entering care are placed with relatives as compared to 26% of children in other states;
- Nearly one quarter (23%) of children entering foster care are initially placed in a non-family (i.e., congregate care) setting while one fifth (20%) of children currently in foster care reside in a congregate care setting; and
- Family foster homes are in short supply leading to placement of children in overly intensive and/or restrictive service settings.

Sources: Child and Family Services Review Data Profile Report (Permanency Composite 3) (VCWOR) (2009); Children’s Services System Transformation Outcomes (Discharges from Foster Care) (VCWOR) (2009); AFCARS FFY2006 Preliminary Data Admission Trend Report (2006-2009) Multi-State Foster Care Data Archive (Chapin Hall); Children’s Services System Transformation Outcomes (First Placement of Children in Family-Based and Congregate Care) (VCWOR) (2009); Children’s Services System Transformation Outcomes (Current Placement of Children in Family-Based and Congregate Care) (VCWOR) (2009); JLARC Report (2007)

A 2002 study conducted by Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU) on behalf of VDSS reviewed kinship care policy in Virginia and other states. The researchers noted that over 138,000 children in Virginia live with relatives, and that child-only and non-parent recipient cases make up 29% of the total TANF caseload. The study also provides a review of recent literature including a study of formal and informal kinship care in Virginia. The 2001 study indicated that formal kinship care providers were more likely to have their financial and service needs met by child welfare agencies than were informal kinship care providers.

<p><b>Section 4: Subsidized Custody Eligibility and Participation</b></p> <p>➤ How the permanency option would work</p>
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**Issue 1. Federal (Title IV-E) Funded and State Funded Foster Children**

The work group supports this permanency option not just for federal (Title IV-E) eligible children, but also for CSA eligible children. The work group does not favor treating children differently due to funding source and creating a dual foster care system. However,

localities could determine that children in the Subsidized Custody option are not a mandated foster care group and funds for maintenance and services will not be available to these families based on an interpretation that they are not mandated.

- Code of Virginia § 2.2-5211, State pool of funds for community policy and management teams (B) (3) and § 2.2-5212 A4, Eligibility for state pool funds (A) (4) both state that a criterion for funding is that “the child has been committed to the agency by a court of competent jurisdiction...”

#### Decision- Use of State Pool Funds for Subsidized Custody

On October 15, 2009, the Assistant Attorney General for CSA responded to a request for a legal opinion about whether funding can be provided through the state pool of funds appropriated under the Comprehensive Services Act for At-Risk Youth and Families to subsidize children in the custody of grandparents or other relatives. The opinion is as follows: *The purpose of the Kinship Guardianship Assistance Agreements is to establish permanent homes for children living with grandparents or other relatives who have cared for them as foster parents and who have committed to care for them on a permanent basis. “Foster care services” is defined in § 63.2-905 as “the provision of a full range of casework, treatment and community services for a planned period of time to a child who is abused or neglected...or in need of services...and his family when the child (i) has been identified as needing services to prevent or eliminate the need for foster care placement.” Children who are eligible for state pool funds under § 2.2-5211(B) (3) are “[c]hildren for whom foster care services, as defined by § 63.2-905, are being provided to prevent foster care placements.” When grandparents or other relatives become the guardians for or take custody of children who have been in foster care and agree to care for them on a permanent basis, subsidized payments made to them meet the definition of “foster care services” in § 63.2-905 because they are designed to prevent the need for foster care and to provide a permanent home for the child. **As long as these children are otherwise eligible for CSA funding, subsidized payments to grandparents or other relatives who obtain custody of the child and agree to care for him or her on a permanent basis may be made from the state pool of funds.***

#### **Issue 2. Relative Definition:**

The Act does not define who is a relative. At this point, this is a state’s option. The guidance document (*New Help for Children Raised by Grandparents and Other Relatives: Questions and Answers About the Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act of 2008*) suggest that a “state may choose to define relative to include only a person related by blood, marriage, or adoption, as some do now in their subsidized guardianship programs, or a state could use a broader definition of relative that includes a godparent, close friend, or someone with a significant existing relationship with the child. A state may find it useful to look at whether and how ‘relative’ is defined in other relevant laws of the state.”

### Discussion and Decision

Relative is not defined in the Code of Virginia. In policy, there is a TANF definition, an Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children (ICPC) definition, and an adoption definition for “close relative.” The work group recommends a broad definition be added to the proposed Permanency Regulation and limited in its application only to Subsidized Custody. It would state: “A *Relative includes anyone related to the child by blood, marriage, adoption or anyone with a significant existing relationship with the child.*” Rationale: A broad definition for relative will allow the state to potentially reduce the number of children in Foster Care with Permanent Foster Care as a goal. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families (ACF) does not recognize “Permanent Foster Care” as an appropriate permanency goal. A number of foster parents who have made a commitment to Permanent Foster Care are not related to the child but might be willing to commit to Subsidized Custody.

### **Issue 3. Key Eligibility Requirements**

The eligibility requirements for the child, caregiver and state are described in the Act. The work group incorporated these requirements into its recommendations. Some items were modified to comply with Code of Virginia and practice. For example, the age required to consult with the child was changed from age 14 to age 12 in accordance with *Code §16.281(C)*

### Discussion and Decisions

#### CHILD CONSIDERATIONS

- Child must be eligible for Title IV-E or CSA Funds for foster care maintenance.
- Child must be in continuous state/local custody at least six (6) months.
- Child’s custodian must be a relative that meets the proposed definition of the work group.
- Child must be with the relative(s) in continuous placement at least six (6) months.
- Child must have a strong attachment to the relative foster parent(s).
- Child must be age 0-18 (screened into Foster Care before age 18); on a case-by-case basis subsidies may continue until the child reaches 19 to facilitate completion of high school or graduate equivalency diploma. Additionally, maintenance payments may be made (on a case-by-case basis) up to age 21 for a child that has a mental or physical disability which warrants the continuation of assistance.

- Child's permanency goals of Return Home and Adoption (by the relative) must be ruled out.
- Child's Subsidized Custody payment will be equal to the monthly foster care maintenance payment including enhanced maintenance payments, if eligible.
- Child's sibling(s) may be placed in the same home and receive financial support even if they do not meet other eligibility requirements, if determined to be in the best interest of the children (in accordance with the Act).

#### RELATIVE CAREGIVER CONSIDERATIONS

- Relative caregiver must obtain legal custody.
- Relative caregiver must make a permanent commitment to the child.
- Relative caregiver must have had the child in his/her continuous foster care placement at least (6) six months.
- Relative caregiver income test will not apply.
- Relative caregiver must be an approved foster parent.

#### STATE CONSIDERATIONS

- Parental (birth parent) consent for custody transfer to a relative is not required; however, under the Family Engagement best practice model, the parent should be part of the process for determining what is best for the child whenever possible.
- Custody transfer to the relative must be in the child's best interest based on a recommendation by the custodial agency and determined by a Juvenile and Domestic Relations Court.
- Must rule out the goal of Return Home and Adoption (by the relative) as permanency options.
- Must consult the child if the child is age 12 or older or obtain input from children of all ages who are capable of communicating their wishes.
- After transfer of custody, the local department of social services should conduct a face-to-face annual review of the child's custody status and placement arrangement.

#### FUNDING

- Subsidized Custody payments will be equal to the foster care maintenance payment (specific to the child's needs) and including enhanced maintenance, if applicable.
- Medical services will be available through Medicaid as a child only eligibility requirement.
- Other services will include pre- and post- permanency supports and services similar to those provided to adoptive families. Education and Training Vouchers and Chafee Foster Care Independence Program (CFCIP) are available to eligible youth.
- The primary funding source will be federal Title IV-E and CSA funds.

## **Section 5: The potential benefits of Subsidized Custody as a component of Virginia's Children's Services Transformation**

### ➤ What the research shows

The Subsidized Custody permanency option helps ensure youth in foster care have permanent family connections. If implemented, the Subsidized Custody option has the potential to achieve the following outcomes statewide:

- Increase the number of children who exit foster care and enter permanent placement arrangements;
- Decrease the number of children who age out of foster care without connections to a permanent family;
- Protect children from subsequent abuse or neglect;
- Reduce rates of re-entry into foster care among children who exit out-of-home placements;
- Redistribute the workload of caseworkers to increase compliance with federal CFSR requirements for monthly caseworker visits for children in foster care; and
- Reduce the number of children in foster care with the goal of Permanent Foster Care in response to federal requirements.

Research on other states' Subsidized Guardianship (Custody) programs shows significant positive outcomes for children who are provided with this permanency option. These outcomes include:

- *Significantly higher net permanency rates* – children with access to Subsidized Guardianship achieved permanency more often than children without access to the option;
- *Substantially less time in placement* - children in Subsidized Guardianship placements spent fewer days in out-of-home care than children in other types of foster care settings;
- *Strong placement stability* – Subsidized Guardianship placements did not disrupt any more than other forms of permanency;
- *Safe placement settings* – guardianship placements do not increase the risk of a substantiated report of abuse or neglect; and
- *Stable or enhanced child well-being* – children in guardianship placements fared as well, if not better, than their peers in other placements in the areas of school performance, physical/mental health, and family functioning.

(Source: Summary of Subsidized Guardianship Waiver Demonstrations (James Bell Associates, July 2009))

Subsidized Custody directly links needed supports to the individuals providing care for this vulnerable population of children as many of these caregivers lack the means to provide for additional family members. National and State studies have shown that relative caregivers face significant challenges:

- About 20% live below the poverty level;
- Some caregivers live on fixed incomes; and
- None anticipated they would be raising another child.

For the child living with relatives, National research identifies numerous benefits including but not limited to:

- Children placed with relatives early in their care have fewer behavior problems after three years than children placed in non-kin foster care;
- Kinship care can support continuity of cultural traditions; and
- Kin providers are more likely to accept sibling groups.

(Source: Center for Law and Social Policy (CLASP))

### **Section 6: The Costs of Subsidized Custody Permanency Option**

*“The children who are eligible for this assistance under the Act are those for whom the state is already paying foster care maintenance payments.”* (New Help for Children Raised by Grandparents and Other Relatives: Questions and Answers)

The Act states that a kinship guardianship assistance payment on behalf of a child shall not exceed the foster care maintenance payment which would have been paid on behalf of the child if the child remained in a foster family home. The Act does not allow for pilot programs/demonstration or targeted programs.

This fiscal analysis attempts to answer the question: What would it cost to operate the proposed Subsidized Custody permanency option in Virginia?

An accurate answer to this question is difficult, because the cost depends on several pieces of information that are uncertain, as discussed below. It is even difficult to determine whether Subsidized Custody would increase or decrease foster care costs, because

one aspect of Subsidized Custody would increase cost, and another would decrease cost, and it is not obvious which of these two factors would be larger. It seems likely, though, that any cost of Subsidized Custody will be small relative to total foster care spending. Further, Subsidized Custody is one component of a larger child welfare transformation in Virginia, and that transformation effort overall is expected to reduce foster care spending.

The relevant cost of Subsidized Custody is the *net* cost, which is the cost of Subsidized Custody minus what would have been spent in the absence of Subsidized Custody. The total net cost is the product of two factors: the net cost of Subsidized Custody *per child*, and the number of children in Subsidized Custody. For example, if we estimate that 40 children would enter Subsidized Custody every year, and Subsidized Custody would cost an additional \$6,000 per child on average, then the total net cost of Subsidized Custody would be \$240,000 per year.

Both the estimated net cost per child and the estimated number of children entering Subsidized Custody rest on several assumptions and are quite uncertain. We discuss each of these elements in turn.

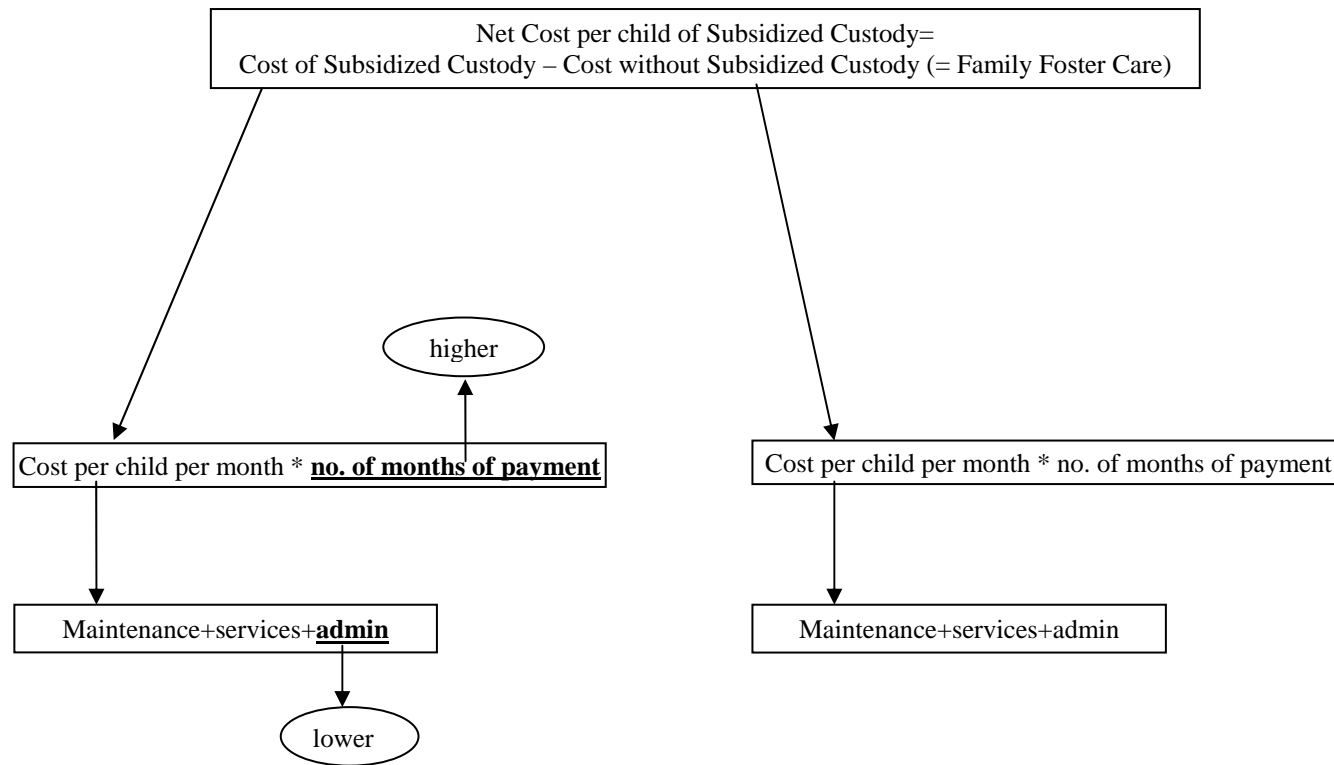
### ***Estimating the Net Cost of Subsidized Custody Per Child***

The net cost of Subsidized Custody per child is the difference in cost for a child in Subsidized Custody compared to the cost for that child if they were not in Subsidized Custody. We assume that the monthly maintenance and services cost would be the same for a child in Subsidized Custody as it is in foster care. What would differ is the number of months those payments would be made. If a child enters subsidized custody, the cost analysis assumes the child will stay in subsidized custody, and monthly payments will be made, until age 18. Without the Subsidized Custody option, the child may have exited foster care before turning 18. So any additional months of payment for Subsidized Custody represent a cost increase for Subsidized Custody.

On the other hand, administrative costs would be lower for children in Subsidized Custody. Social workers are required to make in-person visits every month for a child in foster care, in addition to other casework tasks. For children in Subsidized Custody, social workers will be required to make an *annual* visit with the child. The administrative cost savings would take the form of a reduced workload burden for social workers.

This framework is shown in the diagram that follows. The left branch shows the cost of Subsidized Custody, and the right branch shows the cost in the absence of Subsidized Custody. The net cost of Subsidized Custody is the difference between these two. Whether Subsidized Custody increases or decreases costs depends on whether the additional months of payment under Subsidized Custody are larger than the savings in administrative costs.

## Exhibit 1: Estimating the Net Cost of Subsidized Custody Per Child



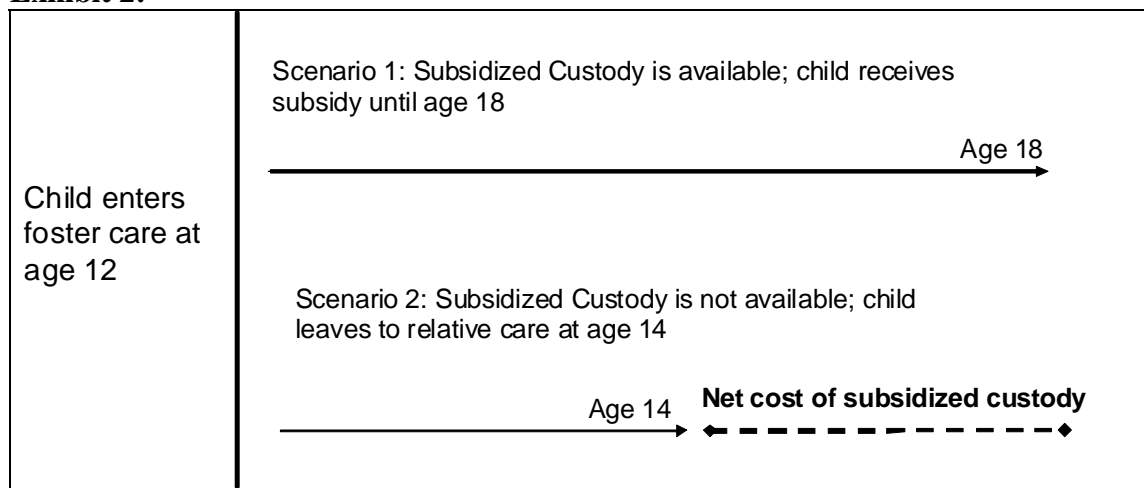
Subsidized Custody would require additional months of maintenance and service payments only when the child would have exited foster care to a relative in the absence of Subsidized Custody. Subsidized Custody is not likely to affect the probability of reunification, because reunification must be ruled out before a child is considered eligible for Subsidized Custody. Subsidized Custody might decrease the likelihood of adoption, to the extent that it is seen by some relatives as preferable to adoption.<sup>1</sup> But even if

<sup>1</sup> Although adoption by the relative must be ruled out before a child is eligible for Subsidized Custody, ruling out adoption involves some judgment on the part of case workers, relative, and older children. Some relatives may prefer Subsidized Custody because they are reluctant to pursue termination of parental rights, and some older children may prefer Subsidized Custody for the same reason. These relatives and children may refuse adoption if Subsidized Custody is an option. Research shows that Subsidized Guardianship has reduced adoption rates in some states.

Subsidized Custody reduces the likelihood of adoption, this will not affect the number of months of payment because children in foster care who are adopted receive adoption subsidy payments at least until they are 18.<sup>2</sup> Similarly, Subsidized Custody would not increase the number of months of payments for children who emancipate from foster care, because in both situations the child receives maintenance and services payments until turning 18. However, if a child in Subsidized Custody would have exited foster care to the custody of a relative before turning 18 in the absence of Subsidized Custody, then Subsidized Custody would lead to additional months of payments for that child.

In other words, children who exit foster care in Virginia to the custody of a relative currently stop receiving payments when they exit foster care, but under Subsidized Custody those children would continue to receive payments until they reach 18. For example, if a child in Subsidized Custody would have exited foster care to a relative at the age of 14 in the absence of Subsidized Custody, then Subsidized Custody would pay maintenance and services for that child for four years more than would have been paid without Subsidized Custody. This is an additional cost due to Subsidized Custody.

**Exhibit 2:**



So Subsidized Custody will increase costs for a child only if the child would have exited foster care to the custody of a relative (if there had been no Subsidized Custody option). For such a child, the critical question for estimating the additional cost is: When would

<sup>2</sup> A reduction in adoptions due to Subsidized Custody could lower administrative costs, if the adoption process is more time consuming or entails more legal costs than Subsidized Custody. For simplicity, however, this cost analysis assumes no impact on adoptions.

that child have exited foster care in the absence of Subsidized Custody? The younger the age at which a child would have exited to a relative, the higher the cost of Subsidized Custody for that child, due to the additional months of payment under Subsidized Custody.

To address this question, we analyzed the exit age for an entry cohort of children who exited foster care to the custody of a relative, using Virginia's data from the Multi-State Foster Care Data Archive (Chapin Hall). Rather than determine an overall age of exit for these children, we determined the exit age for children entering foster care in seven different age categories: under age 1 at entry, 1 to 2 years at entry, 3 to 5 years, 6 to 8, 9 to 11, 12 to 14, and age 15 to 17 at entry. To simplify, we then combined these seven average exit ages into exit ages for three categories (under 5 years, 6 to 11 years, and 12 to 17 years), weighting by the number of children in each of the seven age categories.

As shown in the table that follows, the estimated net cost of Subsidized Custody is much higher for younger children, and is actually *negative* (that is, reduces costs) for the oldest children. For example, children who enter foster care before age 5 and who are likely to be eligible for Subsidized Custody spend an average of 18 months in foster care, in the absence of Subsidized Custody. Under Subsidized Custody payments would be made for an additional 170 months on average, until the child reaches age 18. At an average monthly cost of \$912, this represents \$155,259 in additional maintenance and services payments due to Subsidized Custody. An administrative cost savings of \$12,474 partly offsets the additional maintenance payments, for a net additional cost per child of \$142,785. (This is the total additional cost through age 18.) For children who enter foster care between age 6 and 11, the additional cost of Subsidized Custody is estimated to be \$63,596 per child. And for children who enter foster care at older ages, Subsidized Custody actually reduces costs, because the number of additional months of maintenance payments is small and less than the administrative cost savings.

The estimates of average age at exit do not assume that *every* child entering Subsidized Custody would have exited to a relative. The estimates include children who did not exit foster care during the observation period.

**Table 1: Estimated Net Cost of Subsidized Custody (SC) per Child**

<b>Age Group</b>	<b>Average age at entry into foster care</b>	<b>Average age at exit</b>	<b>Months of payment without SC</b>	<b>Months of payment with SC</b>	<b>Add'l months of payment for SC</b>	<b>Add'l main/svc payments for SC</b>	<b>Admin cost reduction with SC</b>	<b>Net cost per child</b>
Under 5 years	2.3	3.8	18	189	170	\$155,259	\$12,474	\$142,785
6 to 11 years	8.5	10.6	26	114	89	\$80,932	\$17,337	\$63,596
12 to 17 years	14.3	16.7	29	44	16	\$14,373	\$19,270	-\$4,897

**Assumptions**

- Maintenance and service cost per child per month: \$912
- Admin cost per child per month: \$900
- Admin cost reduction due to SC: \$675 (75%)

**Estimating the Number of Children Who Would Enter Subsidized Custody**

The estimated *total* net cost of Subsidized Custody depends not only on the net cost *per child*, discussed above, but also on the number of children assumed to enter Subsidized Custody annually. To estimate the latter, we used the most recent available data from OASIS (via the VCWOR utility) to determine, as a starting point, the number of children in foster care placed with a relative, on the grounds that these are the children most likely to be able to participate in the permanency option. Most of these children, however, would not participate in Subsidized Custody, because reunification could not be ruled out, or for other reasons. Many states that implemented subsidized guardianship waivers had lower than expected rates of participation in Subsidized Guardianship.

Given these factors, for purposes of estimating costs we assume that 40 children will enter Subsidized Custody every year in Virginia. We also assume that the vast majority of children entering Subsidized Custody will be older, in part because it is much more difficult to rule out reunification or adoption for young children.

**The Estimated Total Annual Net Cost of Subsidized Custody**

As shown in the table below, the estimated annual total cost of Subsidized Custody is about \$225,000. This is derived by multiplying the estimated number of children entering Subsidized Custody by the net cost per child.

These estimates are highly speculative, but it is easy to change any of the assumptions to see the effect on the estimated total cost.

**Table 2:  
Estimated Total Annual Net Cost of Subsidized Custody (SC)**

<b>Age Group</b>	<b>Percent of Participants</b>	<b>Number of Children Entering SC Per Year</b>	<b>Net cost per child</b>	<b>Estimated Annual Total Net Cost</b>
Under 5 years	3%	1	\$142,785	\$142,785
6 to 11 years	10%	4	\$63,596	\$254,382
12 to 17 years	88%	35	-\$4,897	-\$171,380
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>40</b>		<b>\$225,788</b>

The total costs are a mix of federal, state, and local funds, with the amount of each depending in part on the proportion of children entering Subsidized Custody who are Title IV-E eligible.

The annual cost is likely to be much lower than \$225,000 in the initial years of Subsidized Custody, because the additional costs begin to accrue only as children exit foster care. Given the age distribution assumed above, the full cost of \$225,000 per year will not be reached for more than ten years after Subsidized Custody begins.

The estimated additional costs of Subsidized Custody are extremely small compared to Virginia’s annual spending on foster care, less than 1/10<sup>th</sup> of 1 percent of annual foster care expenditures. Further, any additional costs will be more than offset by savings from other elements of Virginia’s child welfare transformation, which have resulted in moving children from expensive institutional placements to lower cost settings that are also expected to increase children’s well-being. Taken together, the child welfare transformation has reduced foster care costs, and will continue to do so.

**Section 7. Federal and State Requirements Needed Prior to Subsidized Custody Implementation**

The Children’s Bureau Program Instruction (P.L. 110-351 §601(b); ACYF-CB-PI-08-007 p.7) states that in order to take advantage of the new assistance, a state must submit a revised Title IV-E plan pre-print amendment reflecting the Title IV-E statutory requirements for the Kinship Guardianship Assistance Program and including state policy references and statutory citations for each federal

requirement. States must submit the Title IV-E plan pre-print to the appropriate ACF Regional Program Manager prior to December 30, 2009. However, amendments to the Title IV-E Plan may be made at any time subsequent to that date.

The Act does not require that states pass legislation to take advantage of the Kinship Guardianship Assistance Program, but some states may need to enact new legislation or amend existing laws. Virginia laws have established “placement with relative, with a subsequent transfer of custody” as the second priority goal (foster care policy). Currently, the only financial assistance that may be available to these families is Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) Child-Only grants. Subsidized Custody would be a payment option greater than TANF.

<p><b>Section 8: Summary</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Opportunities, Challenges and Questions</li> <li>➤ Conclusion</li> </ul>
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OPPORTUNITIES	CHALLENGES	QUESTIONS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Technical assistance and resource materials are available from national resource centers, James Bell and Associates (contract managers for the Title IV-E Demonstration Waivers).</li> <li>• Subsidized Custody supports the goals of Virginia’s Children’s Services Transformation.</li> <li>• Addresses the state’s deficiencies in the Child and Family Services Review (CFSR) in the following areas:                      Permanency Outcome 1: Children have permanency in their living situations.                      Permanency Outcome 2: The continuity of family relationships and</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Impact on local departments of social services because of staffing shifts that may be needed to accommodate change.</li> <li>• Locality administrators and governing bodies may interpret any reduction in foster care cases to support a strategy to shift caseworker responsibilities (e.g. from Foster Care to Child Protective Services)</li> <li>• Training for workers, attorneys and courts will be needed.</li> <li>• Review and revise Foster Care Policy and Regulations as applicable.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Will the use of the Subsidized Custody option create a shift in the state’s IV-E penetration rate?</li> <li>• Does the requirement to ‘rule out adoption ’ conflict with the hierarchy of goals in Virginia policy: Return Home, Transfer of Custody of the child to a relative other than his prior family; Finalize an adoption of the child; Place the child in permanent foster care; Transition to independent living; or Place the child in another planned permanent living arrangement (Code of Virginia § 63.2-906 (B))?</li> <li>• Would language in the Code of</li> </ul>

OPPORTUNITIES	CHALLENGES	QUESTIONS
<p>connections is preserved for children.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Subsidized Custody may increase the willingness of families to participate in Family Engagement meetings and decisions to determine the best plan for the child.</li> <li>Placing children with relatives may prevent behaviors from escalating to the degree of higher levels of care such as residential placements; resulting in lower costs for foster care.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop placement protocols for Subsidized Custody.</li> <li>Changes to OASIS will be needed to track payments to families and track outcomes and outputs (i.e. families participating, post placement services and supports, dissolutions and reasons).</li> <li>Develop a communication plan to create an avenue for clearer understanding of the purpose of the Subsidized Custody option.</li> </ul>	<p>Virginia strengthen the DSS efforts to establish Subsidized Custody as a legal part of the Foster Care services and supports for families?</p>

*Conclusion*

This proposal recommending the development of Subsidized Custody as a permanency option for children in foster care placed with a foster parent relative care provider supports several tenets of the Practice Model (developed in concert with the Virginia’s Children’s Services System Transformation):

**We believe that children do best when raised in families**

- Children should be reared by their families whenever possible;
- When children cannot live safely with their families, the first consideration for placement will be with kinship connections capable of providing a safe and nurturing home. We value the resources within extended family networks and are committed to seeking them out; and
- Children’s needs are best served in a family that is committed to the child.

**We believe that all children and youth need and deserve a permanent family**

- Lifelong family connections are crucial for children and adults. It is our responsibility to promote and preserve kinship, sibling, and community connections for each child. We value past, present, and future relationships that consider the child's hopes and wishes;
- Permanency is best achieved through a legal relationship such as parental custody, adoption, kinship care or guardianship. Placement stability is not permanency; and
- Planning for children is focused on the goal of preserving their family, reunifying their family, or achieving permanency with another family.

As with the implementation of any new initiative/approach, Subsidized Custody will require changes in many areas: training, placement protocols, Foster Care policy and regulations, as well as OASIS. Local departments of social services may experience staffing impacts and shifts in caseworker responsibilities. In addition, the state will need to determine how the current hierarchy of permanency goals fits with the option and evaluate the effects on the State's IV-E Penetration Rate.

Notwithstanding these challenges, the implementation of Subsidized Custody is expected to positively impact foster care in Virginia. The most important benefit is realized by the children. A Subsidized Custody Permanency option supports a paradigm shift which focuses on children achieving family permanency and continuity of family connections.

# Appendices

Appendix A: Fostering Connections to Success Act, 2008 (Excerpt)

Appendix B: History of Kinship Care in Virginia

Appendix C: Five Title IV-E Demonstration States

Appendix D: State Data Table

Appendix E: Literature Review and Resources

Appendix F: Subsidized Custody Work Group Members

## **Appendix A: Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act, 2008 (Excerpt)**

The Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act was unanimously passed by both houses of Congress and signed into law by President George W. Bush on October 7, 2008. It amends the Social Security Act (*Titles IV-B, IV-D and IV-E*). The provisions were effective upon enactment, unless stated otherwise. The Act strives to achieve better outcomes for children and youth, who are at risk of entering or who are in foster care, in seven key areas:

- 1) Ensuring permanent placements with relatives;
- 2) Maintaining sibling ties and other family connections;
- 3) Increasing adoptive families for children;
- 4) Improving outcomes for older youth in foster care;
- 5) Increasing training for people working with children in the child welfare system;
- 6) Addressing children's health and education needs; and
- 7) Improving outcomes for American Indian children.

These areas are consistent with the Children's Services System Transformation and Virginia's five year plan submitted to the federal government.

**This report focuses solely on the provision of the Act that address Kinship guardianship assistance for children living in foster care with relatives (*Sec. 101*).** The Act allows states to claim federal funds to provide assistance for children to leave foster care and live permanently with relatives who become their legal guardians. These children are likely to have remained in foster care until they "aged out" of the system. Specifically, the Act creates a new plan option for states to use federal Title IV-E funds for kinship guardianship assistance payments for relatives who take legal guardianship of children in foster care.

- Eligible children must have been eligible for federal Title IV-E foster care maintenance payments while living in the home of the prospective relative guardian for at least six consecutive months. The state must determine that: returning home and adoption are not appropriate for the child; the child has a strong attachment to the prospective relative guardian; and the guardian has a strong commitment to caring permanently for the child. Children 14 years and older must be consulted about the arrangement.
- Siblings of an eligible child may be placed in the same home and receive payments.
- The payment rate must not exceed the foster care maintenance payment that would have been paid had the child remained in a foster family home. Federal financial participation (*FFP*) is available for payments.
- A kinship guardianship assistance agreement must be negotiated and entered into with the relative guardian. It must include specific information (*e.g., agreement remains in effect without regard to residency; Title IV-E agency pays up to \$2,000 of nonrecurring expenses in obtaining legal guardianship of the child*).

**Appendix A: Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act, 2008 (Excerpt)**

- Criminal records checks using fingerprints of relative guardians and Child Abuse and Neglect Registry checks of relative guardians and all adults living in the guardian's home must be processed before a relative guardian receives payments on behalf of a child.
- Eligible children are automatically eligible for Medicaid (*as are children in foster care and children who receive adoption assistance payments*).
- Children who leave foster care after age 16 for kinship guardianship or adoption are eligible for independent living services and education and training vouchers.

## Appendix B: History of Kinship Care in Virginia

In 2003 the Virginia Department of Social Services (DSS) initiated an action plan to enhance support to kinship families as an avenue for improving family continuity for children and reducing reliance on the overburdened child welfare system. Welfare Reform (Personal Responsibility & Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996) and the Child and Family Services Review (CFSR) 2003 were federal mandates which appear to have been the impetus for DSS to initiate an action plan. Under Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF), state's had greater flexibility to set program eligibility and there were some TANF funds under "maintenance of effort" that could be applied to new programs at the state's discretion. The CFSR Permanency Outcome 2 requires states to act to assure "the continuity of family relationships and connections is preserved for children." Since the population of children involved under these federal mandates fell under the Benefits and Foster Care Programs, a DSS Kinship Care Task Force was formed that included among the Task Force leadership, the managers for both the Benefits and Foster Care Programs. DSS wanted to assure an integrated approach to an action plan.

### *Prior Decisions Made on The Issue*

The DSS leadership in 2003 focused on preventing entry to foster care as well as shifting some foster care arrangements to kinship care arrangements. The program concept was simple: create a less obtrusive program for kinship caregivers than existed in the child welfare system. Less obtrusion meant less cost to the system and more family continuity for children.

The design was simple:

- 1) Kinship family homes would be approved, rather than licensed based on a more family-centered set of requirements. Items like square footage, bedroom sharing, and other more institutional-type requirements would be amended to support kinship care rather than discourage kinship care.
- 2) Kinship advocates (case managers) with higher caseload and fewer visit requirements would replace the intense case worker standards in foster care. For example, a kinship family may be required to have a visit from their advocate once or twice a year, but the advocate may be available to them more often upon the family's request. This reduces the administrative cost of case work by changing the cost per child. For example, caseloads of 25 children in foster care costs

approximately \$1400 per child based on an annual case worker salary of \$35,000. A kinship caseload of double that size given fewer visits would cut the administrative cost for caseworkers in half (\$700).

- 3) Approved kinship families would have the authority of birth parents in educational, mental health, and medical services, as would be ordered by the court awarding legal custody.
- 4) Approved kinship families would receive a greater subsidy than informal kinship families receiving TANF only payments, but a slightly lesser amount than foster care.
- 5) Kinship care would be considered a permanency arrangement without the requirement of adoption. A quality of life issue for older children not wanting to sever their birth parent relationship.
- 6) Kinship families would be required to have legal custody of the child in their care. Kinship Advocates would be available to assist in this effort.
- 7) Birth parents would be required to have and maintain a separate legal address from the kinship family with legal custody.

If this program were to come to fruition, the benefit to Virginia was a redesign of the child welfare system that would result in a reduced reliance on the foster care system.

#### *Time Line*

1994 DSS study, **Kinship Care in Virginia, House Document No 71** – This study examined the issue of kinship foster care and ways to provide assistance to kinship caregivers. Six issues were studied: impact of substance abuse on the use of kinship care, safety of children, frequency of parental visits, access to needed services, permanency planning, and standards for approval of relative foster homes. Other states’ kinship care programs listed in this report were: New York, Illinois, California, Maryland, District of Columbia and Pennsylvania. The following were three of the ten recommendations made:

- DSS should study new permanency options for children who cannot return to a parent such as kinship adoption, open adoption, and “standby guardianship” for ill parents and should evaluate other states’ legislation for these areas.
- DSS should evaluate the need for additional funding to support non-relative care by friends and neighbors, in order to provide a safety net to children through kinship care, and prevent foster care.
- DSS should modify the AFDC plan to include an annual school clothing allotment for children in AFDC.

2001 Report of the Virginia Commission on Youth, **Kinship Care, Senate Document No 23** - This report focused on the legal and financial obstacles to kinship care in Virginia. Four issues were studied: the role of kinship care in the child welfare system; Virginia policy and practice; other states’ experience; and constituents’ perceptions. The other states’ kinship programs

reviewed in this report were: Florida, Illinois, Wisconsin, and California. This report recommended that the *Code* of Virginia be amended to include the following definition for kinship care:

- Kinship Care – The full-time care, nurturing, and protection of children by relatives, members of their tribes or clans, godparents, stepparents, or any adult who has a kinship bond with a child.

2003 Virginia Tech, Center for Public Administration and Policy, Institute for Public Policy Research, **Kinship Care Families in Virginia** – This study was part of an evaluation of welfare reform in Virginia. In the early years of welfare reform there was some concern that VIEW might lead to the breakup of families, specifically, that some parents, who lost benefits because they did not comply with VIEW requirements or had reached the time limit, might try to ensure TANF benefits for their children by having the children move in with relatives, who could continue to receive the children’s benefits. The study found no evidence that any aspect of welfare reform had led to the formation of these kinship care cases. The following recommendation was made:

- DSS and other state agencies such as the Virginia Department of Health which administers the WIC program, local social services agencies and other government and community groups further strengthened outreach activities to inform kinship care families, particularly those with low incomes, of the various benefits and services available to them.

2003 Benefits and Family Services Programs crafted a response to a call for increasing support of kinship caregivers.  
Outcome: Established DSS Kinship Care Task Force.

2004 Applied for a Title IV-E Demonstration Waiver for Subsidized Custody  
Outcome: Waiver approved by HHS; Contract signed 05/03/2006, project to begin July 1, 2007.

2004 Establish a definition for kinship care in the *Code* of Virginia

2004 (Ongoing) State office Family Preservation Staff collaborate and cooperate with regional training events targeted for child welfare professionals and kinship care providers.

2006 Waiver implementation placed on hold on or about 12/20/2006, pending review of other options and a look at other states. These three issues were key to the decision to place the waiver on hold:

- Lack of a budget appropriation for \$750,000 (\$150,000 x 5 years) to cover the 50% state share of cost for the evaluation.
- Cost of the waiver relative to the number of children to be impacted over the five-year project was deemed too high.

<b>Projected enrollment for Subsidized Custody Demonstration Project</b>				
<b>Year</b>	<b>Number of New Local Agencies</b>	<b>Cumulative Number of Local Agencies</b>	<b>Number of New Children</b>	<b>Cumulative Number of Children</b>
1	15	15	120	120
2	10	25	140	260
3	5	30	140	400
4	5	35	160	560

- For the first four years of the five-year demonstration DSS anticipated assigning approximately 280 children to the experimental group and 280 children to the control group, for a total sample of approximately 560 children
- Localities may determine that children in the waiver project are not a mandated foster care group and funds and services will not be available to these families.

**Appendix C: Five Title IV- E Demonstration States**

**Waiver Characteristics (ACF Summary of Subsidized Custody Programs)**

<b>State</b>	<b>Children Covered</b>	<b>Kinship Focus</b>	<b>Children Targeted</b>	<b>Sample Size</b>
Illinois (State Administered)	Title IV-E and non-IV-E eligible	Yes, but non-relative homes are eligible for youth 12+	Phase II Enhanced program targets youth 14 and older	7,026 (total as of Mar 2002) 3,079 (total Enhanced as of July 2007)
Maryland (State Supervised, County Administered)	Title IV-E and non-IV-E eligible	Yes, relative and kinship care homes	Only children in Baltimore; plans for expansion were not implemented	1,031 (experimental) 737 (control) (both as of Oct 2003)
Tennessee (State Administered)	Title IV-E and non-IV-E eligible	Yes, but both relative and non-relative adults with significant relationship are eligible	Initially implemented in 16 counties; children with goal of Planned Permanent Living Arrangement (PPLA) (statewide)	305 (experiment) 331 (control) 363 (PPLA) as of Nov 2007
North Carolina (State Supervised, County Administered)	Title IV-E and non-IV-E eligible	No-project focus, varied by county	Each county developed unique set of services to reduce out of home placement costs and improve permanency	2,587 (experimental) as of 2007
Ohio (State Supervised, County Administered)	Title IV-E and non-IV-E eligible	Yes in 6 counties; other strategies also tested: family team meetings; structured visitation; managed care; enhanced MH/SA services	All children age 0 to 17; 6 counties implemented kinship supports; subsidy available statewide	Not available.\

**Permanency Outcomes (ACF Summary of Subsidized Custody Programs)**

<b>Permanency Rate</b>	<b>Overall</b>	<b>Subsidized Custody</b>	<b>Adoption</b>	
Illinois	80.3% (experimental) versus 74.3% (control)	[2003]16.7% (experimental) [not applicable to control]	[2003] 51.8% (experimental) versus 61.6% (control)	
Maryland	42% (experimental) versus 43% (control)	20% (experimental) versus 7.4% (control)	42.5% (experimental) versus 42.6% (control)	
Tennessee	66.4% (experimental) versus 51.3% (control)	Not available	Not available	
North Carolina	Not available	54% (experimental only)	Not available	
Ohio	Not available	Not available	Not available	

**Appendix D: State Data Table - Child Welfare (Five Selected States)  
Center for Law and Social Policy (CLASP), September 2006**

	<b>Illinois</b> (State Administered)	<b>Maryland</b> (State Supervised, County Administered)	<b>Tennessee</b> (State Administered)	<b>North Carolina</b> (State Supervised, County Administered)	<b>Ohio</b> (State Supervised, County Administered)	<b>Virginia</b> (State Supervised, Locally Administered)
Child Population	3,191,624	1,375,057	1,359,672	2,102,050	2,715,439	1,789,782
Child Poverty Rate (Percentage)	16.4%	10.8%	21.4%	21.3%	18.6%	13.3%
Children in Foster Care (rate per 1,000)	6.0	8.0	9.0	Not Available	10.7	3.9
Average Length Stay in Foster Care	50.8 months	46.2 months	27.7 months	26.3 months	24.6 months	33.5 months
# Children Living with Relatives and Neither Parent is Present (not limited to foster care)	119,676	54,323	56,682	80,126	76,794	56,663
	Federal (F); State (S); Local (L)					
Source of Child Welfare Spending, 2004	F= \$680,009,045 S= \$563,202,521 L= \$0	F= \$146,582,795 S= \$277,023,287 L= \$ 15,281,406	F= \$190,166,931 S= \$261,357,379 L= \$0	F= \$193,772,277 S= \$ 69,057,696 L= \$105,315,646	F= \$402,942,509 S= \$121,632,848 L= \$407,322,054	F= \$157,875,462 S= \$ 70,872,117 L= \$ 49,235,475
Percentage of Children in Foster Care Receiving IV- E Funded Payments in 2003	94.81%	39.47%	57.75%	31.72%	28.27%	59.61%

**Note:** The five states that were selected for comparison were selected by the work group based on the following reasons:

- Illinois because it was one of the first waiver states and therefore, has the longest sustaining research in the area of Subsidized Guardianship.
- Maryland and North Carolina, because they are geographic neighbors to Virginia.
- Ohio because currently under the transformation, it is a model state for practice and procedure in child welfare.
- Tennessee was selected because it was approved for a Title IV-E waiver demonstration project the same time as Virginia. Virginia withdrew its interest in the demonstrations shortly after it was approved.

## Appendix E: Literature Review and Resources

*Addressing Kinship Care in Virginia*, Transformation Leadership Team, August 2009

*Composite Summary of State Subsidized Guardianship Programs (Extract)*, <http://www.jbassoc.com/reports/summary.aspx>

*Child Welfare (State Report)*, September 2006; Center for Law and Social Policy

Children's Defense Fund, *States' Subsidized Guardianship Laws At A Glance*, October 2004;

Children's Defense Fund and Center for Law and Social Policy, *New Help for Children Raised by Grandparents and Other Relatives: Questions and Answers About the Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act of 2008*, 2009

Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, *Foster Care Title IV-E, Number 93.658*,

*Evaluation of Children's Residential Services Delivered Through the Comprehensive Services Act*, Report of the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission, House Document No 12, 2007

*Final Exits from Foster Care, by Exit Type and Age at Entry Into Foster Care*, Virginia data from Multi-State Foster Care Data Archive (University of Chicago; Chapin Hall), 2008

Holsworth, Robert D., et al., *TANF II Studies: Kinship Care* (2002). Virginia Commonwealth University. pp. 200-233.

*House Bill 1151*, Texas, 2009

*H.R. 6893, An Act*, 110<sup>th</sup> Congress 2<sup>nd</sup> Session, 2008

James Bell Associates, Inc., *Summary of Subsidized Guardianship Waiver Demonstrations*, July 2009

Murray, Kasia O'Neill, *The Child Welfare Financing Structure* (date unknown)

## Appendix E: Literature Review and Resources

National Association of Public Child Welfare Administrators (NAPCWA), *How States are Implementing the Fostering Connections Act*, 2009

Public Consulting Group, *Supporting Kinship Care: Research and Strategies to Promote and Fund Placement with Relatives*,

*Virginia Department of Social Services Data Report: Kinship Care Numbers*, May 19, 2009

*Virginia Department of Social Services Title IV-E Waiver Application*, 2004

### Emails and Telephone Calls

Elizabeth Black, Executive Director, Office of Child Permanency, Tennessee & Doug Swisher, Finance, Tennessee Department of Children's Services

Mark Testa, Director of the Children and Family Research Center (CFRC) and Professor, School of Social Work, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign <http://www.socialwork.illinois.edu/people/Testa.html>

**Appendix F: Subsidized Custody Work Group Members**

<p><b>Co-Chairs</b>  <b>Shirley Bowie</b>, <i>Supervisor Social Work , Hampton Department of Social Services</i>  <b>Lyndell Lewis</b>, <i>Supervisor Family Preservation, DSS Foster Care</i></p>		
<p><b>DSS Staff</b></p>	<p><b>Local Departments of Social Services</b></p>	<p><b>Private Agencies, Advocates, Care Providers, and Other State Agencies</b></p>
<p><b>Joni Baldwin</b>, <i>Consultant Program Development, Licensing</i>  <b>Erik Beecroft</b>, <i>Office of Research and Planning</i>  <b>Kim Conner</b>, <i>Financial Analyst Senior</i>  <b>Gary Cullen</b>, <i>Policy Coordinator</i>  <b>Denise Dickerson</b>, <i>Manager Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children (ICPC)</i>  <b>Flora Harris</b>, <i>Family Specialist, Eastern Area</i>  <b>Beth Jones</b>, <i>Office of Research and Planning</i>  <b>Deborah Larsen</b>, <i>Budget Analyst</i>  <b>Phyl Parrish</b>, <i>Manager, Policy, Regulation and Legislation</i>  <b>Therese Wolf</b>, <i>Manager Foster Care Program</i>  <b>Betty Jo Zarris</b>, <i>Assistant Director DFS</i></p>	<p><b>Jennifer Albertson</b>, <i>Supervisor, Foster Parent Team Training Unit, Richmond City</i>  <b>Nannette Bowler</b>, <i>Director, Fairfax County</i>  <b>Becky Caputo</b>, <i>Eligibility, Hampton</i>  <b>Jane Crawley</b>, <i>Director, Henrico County and Virginia League of Social Services Executives</i>  <b>Donna Douglas</b>, <i>Director, Hanover County and Virginia League of Social Services Executives</i>  <b>Scott Gilchrist</b>, <i>Supervisor Permanency Services, Chesterfield</i>  <b>Deborah Harvey</b>, <i>Supervisor Social Work, Bristol</i>  <b>Cynthia Kirkland</b>, <i>Assistant Director Lynchburg</i>  <b>Jacquelyn Scott</b>, <i>Chief Social Work Services Division, Portsmouth</i>  <b>Daralene Smith</b>, <i>Supervisor Child Protective Services, Norfolk</i>  <b>Carla Taylor</b>, <i>Director, Winchester</i>  <b>Jason Williams</b>, <i>Adoption Supervisor, Richmond City</i>  <b>Keith Wong</b>, <i>Area Training Center Manager Virginia Institute for Social Services Training Activities (VISSTA) Fairfax</i></p>	<p><b>Reverend Clifford Barnett</b>, <i>Chief Executive Officer, KinCare Connection Hampton Roads</i>  <b>Kathy Dial</b>, <i>Director, Youth and Family Services, Catholic Charities Southeastern VA</i>  <b>Valenia Lamb</b>, <i>Foster Parent &amp; Trainer</i>  <b>Suzette Leathers</b>, <i>Manager KinCare Connection Hampton Roads</i>  <b>Christie Marra</b>, <i>Staff Attorney, Virginia Poverty Law Center</i>  <b>Charlotte McNulty</b>, <i>Executive Director, Office of Comprehensive Services</i>  <b>Cate Newbanks</b>, <i>Executive Director, FACES of Virginia Families</i>  <b>Sara Smalls</b>, <i>Vice-President Kinship Care, FACES of Virginia Families,</i>  <b>Mary Dunne Stewart</b>, <i>Policy Director, Voices for Virginia’s Children</i></p>
<p align="center"><b>Special assistance from the DSS Outcome Based Reporting and Analysis Unit (OBRA)</b></p>		

