

Why Bother? by Jen Braun

November 2007

I arrive at the group home to meet my new client, and tell a worker why I'm there. My goal is to find this teenager an adoptive home.

"He's 17," she says. "Why bother?"

I fume.

Actually, I've been fuming a lot lately. This isn't in my nature. I'm not one of those people who seem constantly irritated by life. Until lately.



Jen Braun is an adoption recruiter for The Homecoming Project. She tries to find families willing to adopt teenagers. *Photo by Stephanie Soucheray*

After four years, hearing this sort of thing gets tiring. I'm an adoption recruiter for teens for the federal demonstration project, The Homecoming Project. We find adoptive families for teenagers in the foster care system.

So I've heard it all. "Teens are too old to be adopted." "Don't get his hopes up." "No family would want to adopt a teen." "Don't disturb her foster home placement." "Let's leave him in the treatment center until he isn't angry anymore."

But how angry will that boy stay if he remains in treatment without a permanent family, without an incentive to leave? Sometimes I want to yell, "You think he's angry? I'm outraged by the unfairness of it all!"

Always in the back of my mind I'm thinking, "What will happen to this kid when she turns 18 if she doesn't have an adoptive family?" Because the truth is, most teens skip around from placement to placement like stones across water. Eventually they turn 18 and age out of the system.

For teens that age out, research tells us that their future is bleak: many become homeless, jobless, addicted, incarcerated, pregnant, pregnant again. Many don't finish high school.

It is wrong that these teens are moved around, ignored, unprepared for adulthood, and then bounced out of the system at an age when most kids are still either living at home or financially supported by their parents.

Lately I take this injustice more personally. Because now, not only is this my livelihood, but it's my life. I find myself, at age 37, the sudden parent to Roger, a 170-pound, high-spirited, good-natured boy who in less than one year will graduate from high school and have voting rights. Sometimes it seems surreal.

Roger is something else. You'd have to meet him. He wakes up every day full of the conviction that life is a solid, fine thing. If you look up "carpe diem" in the dictionary, I'm certain his picture is there. His curiosity about the world came out recently during our San Francisco vacation. As he ran up and down the beach, he found a jellyfish, scooped it up, and came over to show it to me.

"Rog!" I yelled, sounding much too much like a worried mother. "Be careful! You'll get stung!"

"Don't worry. It's dead. I've scooped it from the side without the stingers." He proudly showed me his handful of gelatinous, almost-transparent goo, and reassured me that he was perfectly safe.

He reassures me a lot, actually, and I think one of his biggest gifts is his ability to reassure others that the earth is a mysterious sanctuary to be cherished.

His love of life is infectious. To me this is remarkable considering that the eclipses of his young life were frequent. He spent years in the foster care system after his birth parents' parental rights were terminated.

When Roger was 11, the police came to his home one evening to remove him and his siblings. The reasons for this are not pretty, and as he himself says, "I was taken from their care because they were doing things they shouldn't have been doing."

He was an angry kid, much like these other teens. He moved to different shelters and foster homes, and finally landed at his aunt and uncle's house, where they pledged to adopt Roger and his two younger sisters. His sisters got adopted. He got moved to a group home.

This story makes me ache for my generous, kind-hearted, glass-half-full son. But perhaps the most astonishing part of this story is Roger's total faith in humanity, his inner compass that guides him in his belief that the world is a good, safe place. My partner and



Jen Braun's son, Roger, shows off the jellyfish he found on the beach during a family vacation in California. Photo by Jen Braun

I adopted him the day before his 17th birthday. This was what he wanted his gift to be.

Now I realize: the gift was not his, it was mine. I didn't get into this job thinking that I myself would adopt a teen. In fact, if you had told me three years ago that I would adopt a 17 year-old, I would have laughed at you. But there was Roger, my peace-loving, dog-walking, star-gazing, jigsaw-puzzling poet. And I started to think, "Maybe I could be a parent." The truth is, changing diapers and chasing 5 year-olds never really appealed to me. But give me a fully-formed being, who is asking questions about the world and able to hold a meaningful conversation, and there's the hook for me.

Teens in the foster care system - at the very least - deserve the option to live in abundance. They deserve access to family. I think about Roger's 17th birthday/adoption party.

Picture this: a yard filled with 100 people, friends and family gathered to celebrate this extraordinary young man and the legal beginning of our family. Towards the end of the evening, my parents, my brother and his family, and my sister and her family, all gathered to say goodbye for the evening. As they are departing, one of my nieces yells, "Group hug!!!"

If you were a bird, this is what you would have seen: a kaleidoscope moment. Roger, smooshed in the center of 13 people, all gathered around him. A voice yelling, "Everyone make sure your hand is touching him!" And Roger in the center immobile, being embraced by 13 silent people, our hands all extended and touching his head, his shoulder, his arm. Just as kaleidoscope colors swirl together, so too do we - one to the other - merge, blend, and create new patterns.

This is a pack blessing. This is the concept of 'belonging' at its finest.

Finally, my sister loudly jokes, "Wow, I've never heard us not talk before." And we all laugh, and the moment is broken, but in a good way, in a way that says, "You belong with us. We do not own you, you are your own person, but you are welcome here always." I glance at my son. I hug him. His eyes are full of tears, but he does not cry. He has felt it, too. "I've never been so happy," he whispers to me.

I have two wishes. I wish all kids in the foster care system could have that certainty, could experience that family support. They deserve at least that much. And, after being bounced around the system for so long, my second wish is simple: that they possess the strength to deal with that inclusion.

And so, when I hear this group home worker say to me, "He's 17, why bother?" all of these thoughts rush through my head, like that San Francisco Pacific Ocean roaring inside of me.

I calmly say to her, "Let me ask you something: do you still have family that you talk to, family who are important to you, family

that you visit with or call when you have a problem that you'd like to talk to someone about?"

I see a light bulb go on inside of her. "Well, of course I do," she says softly.

I finish, "You say to me 'He's 17, why bother?' and my answer to you is this: because he's only 17."

Jen Braun works to find permanent families for teenagers through Ampersand Families.

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**Ampersand Families recruits and supports permanent families for older youth,
and champions practices in adoption and permanency that
restore belonging, dignity and hope.**

Ampersand Families opened in October 2008 to provide direct services and national leadership that champions practices in adoption and permanency that restore belonging, dignity and hope. The agency is a resource for youth, families and professionals seeking to promote permanent relationships between teens and significant caring adults. Ampersand Families is Minnesota's only agency exclusively focused on meeting the permanency needs of older youth. Specialized training and support guides parents as they bring into their family an older child who has experienced trauma.

Services provided by Ampersand Families are designed to integrate family and youth participation, community education, child welfare systems change and opportunities to help add to the knowledge base regarding older youth adoption.

Ampersand Families is a Minnesota Department of Human Services licensed Rule 4 child-placing agency. The agency is proud to be a provider of permanency services to youth and families through the Minnesota Department of Human Services Public Private Adoption Initiative (PPAI).

Why are we called Ampersand Families?

The symbol "&" is called an *ampersand*. It's a connector that we're all familiar with and often use to connect important ideas together when we write. It means "and." At Ampersand Families we connect people.

"And" is a really important idea because it means connecting more people, more resources, more ideas and more support to help young people feel hope about their future. We bring people together to help a young person build life-long relationships. That's connecting. That's Ampersand.

Core Values



Anyone working or speaking on behalf of Ampersand Families is expected to uphold the following organizational values.

Hope

Youth, families and professionals must feel hopeful in order to believe that permanency is possible, and necessary, for every young person. Ampersand's priorities and practices build hope.

Integrity

We behave with honesty and professionalism, and hold ourselves accountable for the outcomes of our work. We are committed to the highest ethical and performance standards. We take seriously the public trust conferred upon us as a non-profit organization, and are ethical and transparent in our financial activities.

Dignity

Our practices intentionally demonstrate honor for people's fundamental right to engagement in decisions made regarding their own lives. We believe that it is the birthright of every human being to have authentic relationships with other people. We will challenge systemic barriers that result in young people having to *earn* the right to build or access relationships that add meaning to their lives.

Leadership

We are a learning organization that embraces innovation and freely shares our materials with others.

Permanency Services at Ampersand Families



Pre-Adoption Training, Home Studies and Placement Support

Respect: Your calls will be returned; our staff will be available; your concerns will be addressed.

Honesty: We present an honest picture of the foster care adoption experience and partner with prospective parents to determine what supports and skills they might need in order to commit to adoption (we are not trying to scare you away- we just want to be sure you recognize exactly what you are getting into).

Hope: We believe that older youth are adoptable and that everyone has the right to a permanent family.

Education and Self-Reflection: During pre-adoption training and the many conversations you will have with your home study worker, our aim is to help you reflect on your ability to make an unconditional commitment to an older youth from Minnesota's foster care system.

Partnership: As you move along the adoption process we will work together to determine what type of youth you are best equipped to parent. We are determined to find families for youth, rather than youth for families. Sometimes the process takes awhile, especially since the youth's workers also need time to learn about you and your family's fit with the youth's personality, interests, needs and strengths.

Engagement: Everything we do is geared towards connecting people. We will introduce you to other families who have adopted older youth, and we will provide opportunities for you to learn from and to support other families. Teens working with Ampersand Families are invited to take on leadership roles in educating families and in their own adoption process.

Post-Placement Support From Ampersand Families, you can expect

You will receive a respectful, welcoming and timely response and follow-up from Ampersand Families.

Ampersand Families' staff are knowledgeable regarding the child welfare system, the adoption process, challenges often faced in adoptive families and community resources available.

Ampersand Families' staff will help you find the answers or resources you seek. If we cannot meet your need directly, we will connect you with an agency or professional who can.

When appropriate, Ampersand Families' staff may offer opportunities for you, your child or others in your family to participate in activities or leadership opportunities with other adoptive and waiting families. Often times, the act of sharing your expertise with others can re-energize your passion for parenting and help mitigate some of the challenges faced by your family.

You can expect Ampersand Families to push hard for parents to hang in there even when things are very difficult with their children. We provide help that supports parents' ability to maintain their unconditional commitment to their child. On occasion sustaining the relationship may require temporary placement outside the home, with the parents' continued active involvement and commitment.

The agency does not view disruption or dissolution of the legal or emotional commitment of adoption as a reasonable response to managing difficult child behaviors.

To learn more about Ampersand Families,
contact us at 612.605.1904

Model Permanency Agreement for Jane Doe

1700 Second Street, NE ■ Minneapolis, MN 55413

The indicators below represent the minimum permanency threshold Jane should expect and that ABC County will enforce on her behalf should she be placed into long-term foster care at ABC County's request.

Jane's best interests are served by permanency. Permanency exists not only by legal proclamation, but by the act of an adult claiming a child as her/his own. The best practices in achieving permanency result in indicators that clearly demonstrate an authentic relationship and provide evidence that a child has been fully claimed by an adult/s.

In Jane's case, a **legally binding written agreement** between ABC County and the foster parent is one way to demonstrate that Jane's rights to authentic permanency are protected.

PERMANENCY INDICATORS

- 1) Only the court can remove Jane from the foster home. ABC county and the foster parent will agree that any attempts by the foster parent to have Jane removed from the foster home without a full legal proceeding will result in child protective services investigation of abandonment and/or neglect, a correction order, and an immediate request to the Department of Human Services to suspend the family's foster care license.
- 2) Jane will move with the foster parent should the parent decide to move from her current residence. If, for some reason, it is not in Jane's best interest to move, the foster parent will cease plans to relocate until Jane is living on her own in a community setting as an adult.
- 3) Jane will be offered the opportunity to change her last name to the name of the foster parent. If she desires to do so, all costs associated with the name change will be borne by the foster parent.
- 4) In the event that there is conflict between Jane and any other foster child in the home that requires the removal of a child from the home, Jane will always be the youth who remains in the home. This applies for as long as Jane lives in the home, including beyond the time (i.e. post-18) when she is officially a foster child.
- 5) If it ceases to be in Jane's best interest to live with other foster children, the foster parent will arrange to move the other foster children out (in the most efficient, ethical way possible) and will not accept any other foster child referrals until such time as it is in Jane's best interests.
- 6) Jane's membership in the family will not change should her difficulty of care (DOC) rating decrease, or should there be any changes to the DOC payment structure that result in lowered per diem pay to the foster parent.
- 7) Jane will be immediately added to the foster parent/s' will and other estate planning, and will be granted inheritance as if she were a legal child and legitimate heir of the foster parent.
- 8) In all written and verbal communications, the foster parent will refrain from describing Jane as her 'foster child' and will instead use the term 'my child' or 'my daughter.' The relationship will be described in this way for the remaining years of foster parent's life.

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- 9) The foster parent will plan for physical permanency and continuation of Jane's membership in the family should the foster parent die (i.e. Jane will move in with another family member or pre-appointed guardian who has a close connection to the foster family).
- 10) If this has not already been done, Jane's name will be added to the home phone voice mail, and her photos will be hung in the home according to the family's practice.
- 11) Information about Jane, as a natural and permanent part of the family, will be included in any holiday letters, photos or other information the foster parent sends out for the purpose of updating friends and family during the holidays or other times of the year.
- 12) The foster parent will proactively explore opportunities to create or maintain any relationships Jane has with members of her birth family. The foster parent will be prepared to assist Jane in processing her feelings about those relationships. The foster parent will commit to helping Jane navigate these relationships over the course of her youth and her adult life.
- 13) The foster parent will cover all costs of legal fees resulting from any delinquent behavior Jane might commit before the age of emancipation. The foster parent will take responsibility for assisting Jane in earning money to pay off any fines or restitution she might be assigned by the court or others in the community. The foster parent will bear ultimate responsibility to pay for outstanding fines on behalf of Jane.
- 14) The foster parent will pay all fees or co-pays not covered by Medical Assistance should Jane be placed at a residential treatment center or hospital.
- 15) Should treatment, hospital or juvenile corrections placement become necessary, the foster parent will regularly visit Jane and fully participate in all family programming.
- 16) Jane's bed at the foster home will be reserved for her during any absence for hospital, treatment or juvenile correctional placement, and Jane will return to the foster home immediately upon leaving said placement.
- 17) If applicable, the foster parent will enlist whatever assistance is necessary to help Jane and the foster parent's grandchildren get along. All the children will have equal right to access the home and benefits of full family membership.
- 18) The foster parent will purchase school items, including but not limited to: school photos, yearbooks, dance tickets, prom dresses, graduation announcements, and class ring.
- 19) The foster parent will pay for all activity and field trip fees associated with school or other non-school-related activities or clubs.
- 20) The foster parent will attend Jane's graduation from high school, and hold a party in her honor, in keeping with family tradition and precedent.
- 21) The foster parent will pay for all of Jane's clothing needs. No county clothing vouchers will be issued.
- 22) Consistent with her abilities, Jane will be supported to get a job during her teen years. The foster parent will provide transportation as needed.
- 23) The foster parent will transport Jane to school events, social gatherings, clubs, and groups so that Jane has many opportunities to grow in her ability to appropriately interact with peers.

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- 24) As her capacity allows, Jane will get her driver's license. The foster parent will provide opportunities for Jane to practice behind-the-wheel. Once Jane's license is obtained, the foster parent will cover Jane under her car insurance plan.
- 25) Jane will participate in all family activities. Use of respite will not be permitted at any time that the rest of the family will be gathering, going on vacation, or engaging in any other special event.
- 26) The foster parent will contribute financially and assist with major events in Jane's life consistent with the level that birth children in the family were/are assisted, including but not limited to: post-secondary education, wedding costs, child rearing help, assistance with the purchase of a home, contribution for emergency funds, and any other down payments (e.g. for the purchase of a car).
- 27) Should Jane have the ability and desire to go on for post-secondary education, the foster parent will help Jane fill out the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) and other student loan and higher education applications. Jane will be allowed to live with the foster parent while attending college, regardless of status at ABC county.
- 28) Should Jane have children that she is unable to effectively parent, the foster parent will consider raising the child. At a minimum, the foster parent will agree to fully embrace the role of grandparent for Jane's child/ren, regardless of whether or not Jane is able to parent them.
- 29) The foster parent will be responsible for long-term planning (including paying the family portion of any services) if it becomes necessary for Jane to receive adult services.
- 30) The foster parent will take primary responsibility for assuring that Jane has applied for services or benefits to which she is entitled as an adult.
- 31) The foster parent will assist Jane in completing her annual tax return until the age of 25.
- 32) Once Jane is no longer living with the foster parent, the parent will remain connected enough so that the parent will notice if Jane's physical or mental health deteriorates. The foster parent will accept responsibility to intervene when problems arise and to assure that Jane has access to appropriate services.
- 33) The foster parent will proactively address chemical use issues that might arise for Jane, and assure that she will receive appropriate treatment.
- 34) Once Jane's Medical Assistance coverage ends, the foster parent will move Jane to her health insurance until dependent eligibility ends at age 26.
- 35) If it is in her best interest, Jane will be welcome to remain living in the foster home past the time her case is closed at ABC county. The foster family will provide lifelong family connections and resources, even after she ages out of foster care at age 18.
- 36) At the time when ABC county closes Jane's case, the foster parent will legally adopt Jane as an adult.



Minnesota Department of **Human Services**

Public Private Adoption Initiative: Working together to help families

County and tribal social services agencies and private adoption agencies work together through the Public Private Adoption Initiative to enhance existing adoption resources.

The Public Private Adoption Initiative is a partnership among the Minnesota Department of Human Services, county and tribal social service agencies and licensed, private adoption agencies to place children under state guardianship or under tribal jurisdiction in adoptive homes. To accomplish this, the department contracts with 10 private adoption agencies to work with county and tribal social services agencies to enhance existing adoption resources. These contracts maximize strengths and resources of private adoption agencies and county and tribal social service agencies to ensure that children are placed in adoptive homes, and that they and their adoptive families receive the support they need.

While children under state guardianship are newborns to 18 years old, many are older than age 6, are members of sibling groups and have significant special needs. Of the 355 Minnesota children who need adoptive homes immediately:

- 69 percent are between 6 and 18 years old
- 60 percent are children of color
- 46 percent are siblings who need to be adopted together.

Private adoption agencies provide additional services

Private adoption agencies under contract with the state provide a range of adoption services, such as:

- Recruiting families to explore the possibility of adopting children under state guardianship
- Training and educating prospective adoptive parents about adoption
- Providing intensive child-specific recruitment activities for those children who are difficult to place for adoption
- Completing adoption home studies and updates
- Placing children in adoptive homes, and providing supports and services to both children and families throughout the adoption process.

Initiative works to meet target populations' needs

The greatest need is for families who are committed to opening their homes to help school-aged children and adolescents; children of color, children with significant special needs and sibling groups.

The initiative integrates the strengths and resources of public and private agencies to ensure that children are placed with adoptive families quickly, and receive the support they need.

For more information, contact the Minnesota Department of Human Services at 651-431-4682 or visit the DHS website at: <http://mn.gov/dhs> and click on "People We Serve," then "Children and Families," then "Services" and then "Adoption."

This information is available in alternative formats to individuals by calling 651-431-4671. TTY users can call through Minnesota Relay at 800-627-3529. For the Speech-to-Speech Relay, call 877-627-3848. For additional assistance with legal rights and protections for equal access to human services programs, contact your agency's ADA coordinator.

Ten private agencies provide services

- African American Adoption Agency
217 Mackubin St.
St. Paul, MN 55102
651-659-0460 or toll free 888-840-4084
- Ampersand Families
1700 Second St. N.E.
Minneapolis, MN 55413
612-605-1904
- Bethany Christian Services
3025 Harbor Lane N., #316
Plymouth, MN 55447
763-553-0344
- Children's Home Society and Family Services
1605 Eustis St.
St. Paul, MN 55108-1798
651-646-6393 or toll free 800-952-9302
- Downey Side Inc.
450 North Syndicate, #321
St. Paul, MN 55104
651-603-5927
- Family Focus
2800 University Ave. S.E., #204
Minneapolis, MN 55414
612-331-4429
- HOPE Adoption & Family Services International Inc.
5850 Omaha Ave. N.
Oak Park Heights, MN 55082
651-439-2446
- Kindred Family Services
9766 Fallon Ave. N.E., #104
Monticello, MN 55362
320-529-0862 or 763-271-1670
- Lutheran Social Service of Minnesota
1605 Eustis St., #200
St. Paul, MN 55108-1798
651-646-6393 or toll free 800-952-9302
- North Homes Inc.
1880 River Road
Grand Rapids, MN 55744
218-327-3000 or toll free 800-430-3055



Caseworker Face-to-Face Visits with Children in Foster Care

Every child. Every month.

Frequently Asked Questions

The Department has received a variety of questions from counties regarding meeting the caseworker visit requirements. Following is a list of frequently asked questions and responses.

Types of cases subject to monthly caseworker visit requirements:

- *Which cases are subject to the monthly caseworker visit requirements?* All children in out-of-home placement are entitled to monthly face-to-face visit with their caseworker. The monthly visit requirement applies to all types of cases, including child protection, children's mental health, child welfare, developmental disabilities and, in some situations, delinquency cases.
- *Do the monthly caseworker visit requirements apply to children who are in placement pursuant to a delinquency order?* If the county social services agency has a Title IV-E agreement with their corrections/probation department or if social services and corrections are under the same administrative umbrella, those placements must be entered into SSIS and the monthly caseworker visit requirements apply.

Additionally, if the court transfers care, custody and control of a child to the social services agency for a delinquency placement, even if the social services agency does not have a IV-E agreement with the corrections/ probation department, the agency is responsible for making monthly face-to-face visits with the child.

Visits by a probation officer may be entered in SSIS using the "external placement case manager" role process.

- *What are the expectations/requirements for a placement that is less than 30 days?* Children who are in placement for less than 30 days are not subject to the monthly visit requirements. However, counties should continue all case practice that meets other state/federal requirements; and, most importantly, children should be seen as frequently as necessary based on an assessment of their safety, permanency and well-being needs.

Person(s) responsible for making monthly visits:

- *Whose visits "count" toward meeting the monthly caseworker visit requirements?* Statute requires that the child's caseworker visit the child monthly. "The child's

caseworker” is defined in statute as the person who has responsibility for managing the child’s foster care placement case, as assigned by the responsible social service agency. Assigned caseworker must be able to address issues pertinent to case planning and service delivery to ensure the safety, permanency and well-being of the child.

- ***In my agency, we have one social worker who routinely makes visits with children placed outside of the county. That social worker is the primary caseworker for some of those cases, but not all; however she is familiar with all of the cases. Do that social worker’s visits count toward the monthly visits requirement?*** If the county agency has assigned visit responsibilities to a social worker other than the primary worker, visits made by the assigned worker would meet criteria for a caseworker visit. The social worker assigned visit responsibilities should be listed as a secondary worker in SSIS, and enter all visits in contact/activity.

Counties may have two county agency workers assigned to co-manage a case for various reasons, e.g. a Children’s Mental Health and Child Protection social worker or to have one worker cover for another. If the agency has assigned workers, for whatever reason, those workers could both be visiting with the child for issues pertinent to case planning and service delivery, and each workers’ visits would count toward meeting the monthly visit requirements.

- ***What if the child’s caseworker is on vacation or some other type of leave? How can the agency remain in compliance with worker visit requirements?*** If the child’s caseworker is on an extended leave, the case should be reassigned to a new primary worker. For shorter term leaves, a secondary worker with responsibility for making monthly face-to-face contacts should be assigned to the case.
- ***If a tribe has placed a child in foster care and the county also has a social worker assigned to the case, do both the tribal and county social worker’s visits with the child count toward the monthly caseworker visit requirement?*** Yes. If a case is co-managed with county and tribal workers, both workers have responsibility for the child’s placement, case planning and service delivery, and both worker’s visits would count toward the monthly case worker visit requirements.

Visits by the tribal worker would need to be entered into SSIS to be counted in the federal reporting.

- ***What about children placed in Rule 4 foster homes? Do the Rule 4 agency social worker’s visits count toward the monthly visit requirement?*** No, Rule 4 social worker’s visits with the child do not count toward meeting the monthly face-to-face visit requirements. Rule 4 agencies are service providers, and do not have overall case management responsibilities for children placed in their homes.

- ***If we have a child placed in another county, can we contract with that county to have visits with the child?*** Yes, it is possible to contract with other counties for case management, including conducting face-to-face visits with children. The contract should include provisions for face-to-face visits with children in foster care that meet the statutory requirements, i.e. visits are of “sufficient substance and duration to address issues pertinent to case planning and services delivery to ensure the safety, permanency and well-being of the child”.

Visits by a social worker from another county or state may be entered in SSIS using the “external placement case manager” role process.

- ***Who is responsible for having monthly visits with children placed in another state?*** An assigned caseworker from the supervising agency in the state where the child is placed is responsible for having monthly visits with the child. A standard part of an ICPC agreement is that the supervising agency submit a monthly progress report (100B) to DHS and the county that the child is from. Those progress reports include any face-to-face visits the supervising agency has had.

The sending county should record any contacts made by the supervising agency in SSIS. The “external placement case manager” role is available in SSIS for this purpose.

General questions:

- ***What if the child is placed more than 60 miles outside of the county borders? Is the county still responsible for making monthly caseworker visits?*** Monthly caseworker visits are required with all children in out-of-home placement, regardless of the location of the placement. The 60-mile reference is from the Targeted Case Management billing requirements, which are totally separate from, and do not impact, the monthly caseworker visit requirements.
- ***Do ITV/VPC visits count toward meeting the monthly caseworker visit requirements?*** No. ITV/ VPC contacts are not considered a face-to-face visit, and do not meet the requirement.