Introducing *A Family’s Guide to the Child Welfare System*

*by* Jan McCarthy, Anita Marshall, Julie Collins, Girlyn Arganza, Kathy Deserly, Juanita Milon

We are pleased to share with you *A Family’s Guide to the Child Welfare System*, a comprehensive resource that answers many of the questions families face when they become involved with the child welfare system. It is written in a simple, question and answer format and grounded in the experiences of families and child welfare professionals from across the country.

**What Families Can Learn from *A Family’s Guide***

- experiences other families have had with the child welfare system
- child welfare laws and policies that influence the actions and decisions of child welfare workers and courts
- people families will meet, the service systems they work in, and their roles with families
- how child welfare works with American Indian families
- ways to advocate for their family’s rights (their own and their children’s)
- responsibilities of parents involved with the child welfare system, and
- practical tips from other parents.

**Using A Family’s Guide**

*A Family’s Guide* can be used by child welfare agencies to build positive relationships with families and increase family participation in service planning, as a tool in family support groups, and to train new workers and foster parents. *A Family’s Guide* provides information that will help other child and family-serving agencies understand how the child welfare system works. It can be a resource for family support organizations such as community centers, faith-based organizations, churches, and family advocacy groups. It also can be used to teach social work students about the child welfare system and family experiences. Readers are encouraged to use *A Family’s Guide* creatively and to adapt it to fit the unique characteristics of their own states, communities, and agencies.

Additional materials to be available soon include:

- audio tapes of the Family Voices in the *Guide*
- a curriculum to use as a “guide to the Guide” which includes training exercises and power point slides.

**A Collaborative Effort**


PDF versions in both English and in Spanish can be downloaded free by visiting the websites of any of the partner organizations:

- http://gucchd.georgetown.edu
- www.tappartnership.org
- www.ffcmh.org
- www.cwla.org
- www.nicwa.org