

## COFCCA SPOTLIGHT ON...



### Data on Finalized Adoptions Available!

**The first nationally representative survey of adoptive families has been completed. Information that was previously unavailable about the characteristics, adoption experiences, and well being of adopted children and their families in the United States is now within reach.**

The National Survey of Adoptive Parents (NSAP) is the first large, nationally representative survey of adoptive families across adoption types. The survey was funded by the Children's Bureau and conducted in collaboration with the National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS). Data collection was conducted as a telephone survey during 2007-2008 and the findings recently released.

“The findings indicate a largely positive experience, with the majority of adopted children faring well on measures of physical health, social and emotional well being, cognitive development, and educational achievement.”<sup>i</sup> Differences do emerge when comparing adopted children with children in the general U.S. population. “While adopted children do not fare as well on certain measures of well being (e.g., special health care needs, diagnoses of psychological disorders, and school engagement), they fare better than the general population of

children on other measures (e.g. consistency and adequacy of health insurance, being told stories or sung to daily as young children, and participating in family and community activities).”<sup>ii</sup>

The NSAP is unique when compared to previous efforts to collect information on finalized adoptions in three specific ways. First, the NSAP was completed as a component of the National Survey of Children's Health (NSCH). The NSCH is a well established survey that has generated a good participant response and a highly useable sample. It includes data on numerous domains of both a child's and a family's life, including information on the health and mental health of children. There is also a subsample that focuses solely on special needs. Second, the survey was able to access information after adoptions were finalized so the data provides insights into the long term status of adopted children. Third, the data differentiates by type of adoption. Differences between children who were adopted through foster care, private domestic adoption, and international adoption can be studied and compared to each other and to the general population of children.

The results of the survey significantly enhance knowledge in the field and “will be used to help recruit adoptive parents for children in the U.S. foster care system by describing the reasons why families adopt, as well as the characteristics of

adoptive families and the children they adopt. The information will also improve our understanding of the kinds of support adoptive families find most helpful. In addition, the NSAP provides data on openness in adoptions, transracial and transcultural aspects of adoption, and adoption satisfaction across

adoption types.”<sup>iii</sup> Individuals involved with adoption in the United States are likely to want more information on the topic. The following are recommended resources:

- The National Survey of Adoptive Parents’ (NSAP) project page: <http://aspe.hhs.gov/hsp/09/NSAP/index.shtml>
- ADOPTION USA: SUMMARY AND HIGHLIGHTS OF A CHARTBOOK ON THE NATIONAL SURVEY OF ADOPTIVE PARENTS, Sharon Vandivere, Karin Malm, and Amy McKlindon, Adoption Advocate, NO. 22, March 2010. Also available online: <https://www.adoptioncouncil.org/publications/adoption-advocate-no22.html>.
- Adoption Quarterly, Volume 13, Issues 3 & 4 2010 The National Survey of Adoptive Parents: A New Data Resource ISSN: 1544-452X (electronic), 1092-6755 (paper). This is a special edition of Adoption Quarterly, devoted entirely to articles that explore different topics that use the data collected in the survey.
- Adoption USA: A Chartbook Based on the 2007 National Survey of Adoptive Parents, Vandivere, S., Malm, K., & Radel, L., Washington D.C.: The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation, 2009. This is a detailed analysis of the findings.
- For technical information related to the survey methodology, the survey’s data dictionary, etc., can be found at: <http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/slait/nsap.htm>. For the special needs survey: <http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/slait/nsapsn.htm>.

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<sup>i</sup> Project Page of the National Survey of Adoptive Parents (NSAP)

<sup>ii</sup> ADOPTION USA: SUMMARY AND HIGHLIGHTS OF A CHARTBOOK ON THE NATIONAL SURVEY OF ADOPTIVE PARENTS

<sup>iii</sup> Project Page of The National Survey of Adoptive Parents (NSAP) <http://aspe.hhs.gov/hsp/09/NSAP/index.shtml>