

**MEDIA ADVISORY: EMBARGOED FOR PUBLICATION 12:01 A.M. TUESDAY, MAY 27, 2008**

**INSTITUTE REPORT, BACKED BY KEY CHILD WELFARE GROUPS, RECOMMENDS  
MAJOR CHANGES IN U.S. LAWS ON ADOPTION OF BLACK CHILDREN FROM FOSTER CARE**

NEW YORK, May 27, 2008 – The federal law mandating a “color blind” approach to adoption from foster care is preventing adequate preparation for White families who adopt Black children, and its provision for recruiting more African American parents is not being well-implemented or enforced, according to a comprehensive report released today by the Evan B. Donaldson Adoption Institute.

The report, “Finding Families for African American Children: The Role of Race and Law in Adoptions from Foster Care,” calls for major changes to better serve the needs of children of color and to improve their prospects of moving to permanent, loving homes. Among the study’s findings are:

- The Multiethnic Placement Act (MEPA) of 1994 and the Removal of Barriers to Interethnic Adoption Provisions (IEP) of 1996 have not resulted in equity in adoption for African American children.
- The “color blind” interpretations of MEPA-IEP that have served as the basis for its enforcement run counter to widely accepted best practices in adoption.
- MEPA’s call for “diligent recruitment” of prospective parents who represent the racial and ethnic backgrounds of children in foster care has not been well implemented or enforced.

The Institute’s report, researched and written over the last year, is the most thorough examination to date of the often-sensitive, controversial issues relating to transracial adoption. “We tried to assess what was working and what wasn’t, and came to the conclusion that preparing parents who adopt transracially benefits everyone, especially the children,” said Institute Executive Director Adam Pertman. “We hope this knowledge helps to shape more effective policy and practice, so that every child has better prospects of growing up in a family – and of being ready for the world they’ll live in.”

This paper is being endorsed by a broad range of national child-welfare organizations: the North American Council on Adoptable Children (whose executive director, Joe Kroll, is a co-author), the Child Welfare League of America, the Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption, the Adoption Exchange Association, the National Association of Black Social Workers, Voice for Adoption, and the Foster Care Alumni of America. In addition, the National Association of Social Workers – which has no policy for supporting research papers per se – endorses its recommendations, which include:

- Amend IEP to permit race to be considered as one factor (but not the sole factor) in selecting parents for children from foster care, and allow the preparation of parents adopting transracially.
- Enforce MEPA’s requirement to recruit families who represent the racial and ethnic backgrounds of children in foster care, and provide sufficient resources to support such recruitment.

For more information, or to schedule an interview, please contact Adam Pertman at 617-332-8944 or [apertman@adoptioninstitute.org](mailto:apertman@adoptioninstitute.org). The Adoption Institute is an independent, nonpartisan nonprofit that is the pre-eminent research, policy and education organization in its field. To learn more about our work, please visit our award-winning website, [www.adoptioninstitute.org](http://www.adoptioninstitute.org).

