



System (AFCARS) to courts (www.fostercourtimprovement.).

Colorado and Utah are furthest along in the process of implementing comprehensive, two-way, data exchanges —

- Colorado's Family Justice Information System (FAMJIS) is exchanging data used to construct outcome measures of safety, permanency, due process, and timeliness with the Department of Human Services in real time and is one of the most fully developed data exchange systems in the country.
- Utah is another state with a sophisticated data exchange system. The court information system (CARE) has a direct interface with the child welfare data system (SAFE) such that each can view (read only) data from the other system. The web-based juvenile justice system provides access not only to courts and child welfare agencies, but also to schools.

Kentucky and New Jersey exchange data through periodic file transfers. Kentucky shares data on children under the jurisdiction of the Foster Care Review Board with the courts and child welfare agencies through weekly downloads from TWIST, the child welfare data system. New Jersey employs a manual file electronic file exchange. Illinois and New York exchange data by shared access, but only in specific geographic areas of their respective states.

Connecticut, Massachusetts, and Rhode Island are working on shared access systems that are not yet fully implemented. In Connecticut, courts and child welfare agencies have identified the data elements they wish to exchange. Massachusetts is developing an electronic 'bridge' that would allow court data to be exchanged between the Probate and Family Court and the child welfare agency. Rhode Island is seeking to implement the nine key performance measures. Data will be sent electronically every night from the Department of Children, Youth, and Families' "Banner" case management system to the Rhode Island Children's Information System (RICHIST) and vice versa. Data from RICHIST will also be sent to a "dashboard" to inform family court judges about placements and case plans.

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### Virtual Visitation and Child Welfare

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while also addressing on-going concerns of confidentiality and privacy, as well as using these technologies to supplement rather than replace face-to-face worker visits with families and children. Child welfare agencies, particularly those serving remote and rural counties, might greatly enhance their ability to work effectively with families. The field of child welfare seems well positioned to learn from the adoption of virtual visitation in other fields and to advance the necessary policy and practice shifts to incorporate these new strategies in child welfare.

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### Social Networking and Adoption

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It is now widely accepted practice, informed by research, that adopted children need information about their family origins and that they benefit from openness rather than secrecy around their adoption and birth family. And now openness has become more crucial than ever.

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### Building a Secure Federated Government KDD Information System from the Bottom up for Child Welfare Practice, Policy, and Research

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summary statistics that are of general interest. Second, a private login based individual level data should be provided to approved staff for drill down capability. Training and changes in organization culture in CW agencies to use data in their daily jobs will be just as important as making the data available. When data get incorporated into the daily activities of local agencies that generate the data, administrative data will become much more reliable for other purposes. Finally, a secure federated multi-agency data system

with privacy protection should be available for approved use in policy analysis and research.

### Conclusion

Strong partnerships between government agencies and interdisciplinary teams at public universities can lead to successful implementation of comprehensive KDD information systems for child welfare while providing a priceless opportunity for research. Public universities are the natural homes for such systems because (1) they are under the public oversight of state legislatures who are ultimately responsible for policies that govern state agency data, (2) they have access to child welfare experts as well as information system experts required for building and maintaining such a system, (3) they have the flexibility and scale that most non-profit organizations or government agencies do not have, (4) the potential of the data system can be maximized and leveraged by giving researchers in child welfare and information systems full access, and (5) they can leverage the training of the next generation of government information specialists who will be versed in child welfare, technology, and data to build and maintain these systems cost effectively.

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### A Challenge to Child Welfare Professionals: Using New Communication Technologies with Young People and their Families

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are well placed to consider the impact of ICT on communication. Social workers need to cautiously engage with ICT for communication. To fail to do so denies service users important communication possibilities and may further disenfranchise them.

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