



Peer Technical Assistance (TA) Summary

Requesting Agency:	South Carolina Department of Social Services
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TA Event:	130
TA Requested:	South Carolina requested TA for help in developing programs and services to effectively and efficiently support relative caretakers in TANF child only cases. They also wanted to address the special needs of children in these cases.
TA Goal:	South Carolina’s goal for the TA was to include partners like the AARP, the Governor’s Office and the faith-based community to develop an action plan for supporting relative caregivers in TANF child only cases.
TA Format:	Roundtable
Sample Evaluations:	<p>Selected highlights from the evaluations include:</p> <p>“This will create momentum that I think will carry us forward.”</p> <p>“It was interesting to learn what other states are doing.”</p> <p>“It was an ‘eye opening’ discussion of information provided on the need for relative caregivers in South Carolina; and I think very helpful for SC to see that other states are impacted as well, yet taking an active role in finding solutions to this growing problem.”</p> <p>“I always learn a lot at these Roundtables- they provoke a lot of thought and re-energizing. This has been one of the hardest working groups I have seen! I think South Carolina is going to start some kind of program this year.”</p>

Analysis:

A child-only TANF case is one in which no adult is included in the cash grant. Child-only cases fall into two categories: parent caregivers and non-parent caregivers. Non-parent caregivers are usually relatives of the children. Federal and state policies specify preference for relative care over other forms of out-of-home care because research shows that children fare better with relatives because these placements are more likely to be stable and long-term. However, relative caregivers often lack resources to respond to children's needs, and because TANF is designed to move families into employment, children in TANF child-only cases with relative caregivers receive few services from TANF, and sometimes become engaged in the child welfare system to access services.

The Welfare Peer TA Network planned, designed, and implemented a Roundtable event that was held on January 26-27, 2006 in Columbia, SC. The Roundtable event was attended by approximately 30 individuals representing a wide variety of Federal, state and local agencies, and community-based organizations. The goal of this TA effort was to assist the South Carolina Department of Social Services to improve the well being of children and families and improve family stability among TANF child only cases.

At the Roundtable, presenters discussed a comprehensive range of issues facing TANF child only relative caregivers and the children; the importance of an integrated approach to the child only caseload; the challenges and successes that local agencies have had in working with this population; and the importance of caregiver and child well-being. The Roundtable was attended by Federal and State agency staff, including representatives from the Division of Planning and Quality Assurance, Child Care, Family Assistance, and Child Protective Services, and community-based organizations including the AARP and the South Carolina Foster Parent Association. Utilizing the knowledge shared by the various faculty, the information provided by peer programs in El Paso County Colorado, and Trenton, New Jersey and the planning tools provided to the participants, the Roundtable served as a central catalyst for the collaboration of Federal, state and local agencies, and non-profit organizations to begin to develop an action plan to provide needed services to the South Carolina child-only TANF relative caseload.

Overall, evaluations submitted by attendees indicated that participants valued the opportunity to network with each other and considered the information provided to be both valuable and motivational.

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