



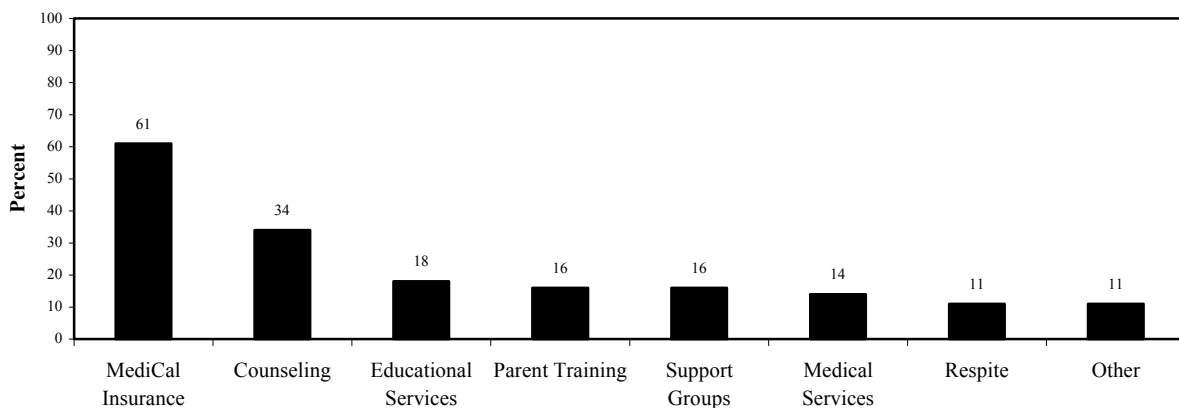
Post-Adoption Needs and Services

This brief series of publications, Post-Adoption Needs and Services, provides a summary of the service-related data collected by researchers through the California Adoption Study. This Study examined the experiences of families who adopted foster children through the California Department of Social Services. The initial mailed survey gathered information from 1,148 families of adopted children ages 19 and under. All families in the study had adopted special-needs foster children who met the criteria for Adoption Assistance funding (AAP). Participants were asked to identify the post-adoptive services that they had received, the services that were most helpful, and any additional services they felt would benefit their families.

What post-adoption services have your family received?

Researchers gathered information regarding use of specific post-adoption services. Seven pre-determined categories were presented to the participating adoptive parents (respite care, MediCal insurance, support groups, educational services, parent training, medical services and child/family counseling). Additionally, respondents had the opportunity to include information about any other services received. The following is a breakdown of service usage among participating families.

Post Adoption Services¹



The most frequently received service is MediCal, which is offered routinely to all families who live in California and adopt special needs foster children (we presume that a large proportion of those not receiving MediCal receive employer-sponsored health insurance). Approximately 61% of participating families received MediCal, while fewer (34%) report receiving the next most frequently identified service of counseling (child, parent or family). Educational services, support groups, parent training and medical services were utilized by 16-18% of respondents. Eleven percent (n=126) of families report receiving respite care. Approximately 22% of respondents (n= 257) reported receiving no post adoption services.

¹ Respondents could identify more than one service.

In addition to the above-reported service categories, 11% of respondents identified other services received, which can be categorized as follows: Support services for the family, support services for the child, and evaluative services.

Support Services for the Family This category includes services such as: adoption agency support and assistance, legal assistance, services provided by regional centers, law enforcement interventions, special activities/events and referral services. In describing adoption agency support and assistance, one parent stated, "Adoption workers are still helpful when we have questions." Another parent commented, "We enlisted our adoption agency on two occasions to mediate between us and the birth mother over visitation requests."

Support Services for the Child This category captures all services designed to address child-related needs. Such services include behavior modification, speech and language training, infant/early childhood programs, and other forms of therapy above and beyond individual or family therapy/counseling. Respondents described various forms of therapy needed by their adoptive children including physical therapy, occupational therapy and speech therapy. In addition to outpatient services, some respondents indicated that they received funding for out-of-home placement services necessary to support their children in facilities such as foster homes, group homes, residential treatment facilities and boarding schools.

Evaluative Services This category describes several different types of child evaluations or assessments. Examples include assessment of the child's developmental, learning, behavioral, psychological, educational, auditory, emotional and medical status.

Implications: Excluding MediCal, a minority of adoptive parents received post adoption services. It is not clear whether limited usage of such services reflects limited needs of adoptive families, or inadequate knowledge of available services. Future research may help determine the answer.

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