

## RESUME: MARIS H. BLECHNER, M ED, LCSW

Maris Blechner Consulting LLC, 69-28 266 St., Glen Oaks, NY 11004, 917-941-8640, maris@blechner.net

Maris Blechner is an adoptive and birth parent, a licensed clinical social worker and educator, and an internationally respected trainer, consultant, and speaker who has spent the last thirty-eight years working for the improvement of adoption and the child welfare system. One of the founders of the parent-led multi-service adoption agency that she directed for twenty-six years, Maris relates proudly that she comes from the citizen-activist child-advocacy community and brings that neighborhood and personal family experience to her professional work. As a trainer and motivational speaker, she is known for her humorous and down-to-earth style, and her ability to reach all types of audiences. As a strong administrator with hands-on abilities, she has supervised staff in multiple programs, handled budgets and government reporting, and established and maintained meaningful Board relationships. As a social worker, she developed a sensitive, meaningful birth family counseling program, including appropriate conditional surrenders and the potential for open adoptions.

**Education/Credentials:** Master's Degree in Education, 1973, Queens College, New York City University; Master's Degree in Social Work, 1985, Hunter College School of Social Work, NYC; NYS Certification in Social Work, 1985; NYS Licensed Clinical Social Work Certification, 2008.

**Employment History:** Adjunct Professor, Silberman School of Social Work at Hunter College (2014-2015); Executive Director and founding president (1987-2013), FAMILY FOCUS ADOPTION SERVICES; Adjunct Professor, Sociology Department, City College of New York, 1986; Director, Outreach Adoptions Program, Lutheran Community Services, NYC, 1980-1985

### **Some Recent Major Adoption/Child Welfare Presentations:**

Keynote Speaker and Presenter (2015, 2012) - Nebraska State Adoption Conference

Keynote Speaker and Presenter (2015) - Michigan State Adoption Conference

Keynote Speaker (2014) & presenter - New Jersey "Let's Talk Adoption" Conference at Rutgers University

Keynote Speaker (2014, 2004) & annual presenter - North American Council on Adoptable Children Adoption Conference

Guest Speaker (2014) Hunter College School of Social Work Policy Class

Keynote Speaker (2014, 1994, '90, '86) & annual presenter - NY State Adoptive Parents Committee Conferences

Trainer (2012, 2013) Foster Care/Adoptive Families and Staff, North Carolina DSS; South Carolina DSS

Trainer (2010, 2011, 2012, 2013) NASW/DSS of Louisiana Post-Graduate Course in Adoption Competence

Trainer (2011) Advanced Clinical Permanency Training for Mass. DCF Supervisors

Trainer (2010) Wendy's Wonderful Kids Nat'l Webinar- Successful Transition to Adoption

Trainer (2009) Hillside Children's Center, Rochester, NY, Course in Adoption Competence

Trainer (2008, 2009) Louisiana State U. Post-Graduate Course in Adoption Competence

Trainer (2008) Institute for Advanced Psychotherapy and Education, Baltimore, MD

Trainer (2007, 2008) Hunter College School of Social Work Post-Graduate Course in Adoption Competence

Keynote Speaker and Trainer (2007, 2008) Adoptive Families Assn. of British Columbia

Presenter (2007) first statewide Adoption Conference, Connecticut Department of Children and Families

Keynote Speaker & Presenter (2007) Hawaii Foster Parents Assn; Minnesota Post-Adoption Services Conference

Trainer (2007) Utah Adoption Conference; New Jersey Div. of Youth and Family Services  
Presenter (2007; 2004; 2002) Child Welfare League of America “Excellence in Adoption”  
Conferences

Trainer (2005) Wisconsin, Maine, and Texas Adoption Conferences; Virginia One Church,  
One Child Conference

Keynote Speaker (2004) & annual presenter - NY State Citizens’ Coalition for Children  
Training Conferences.

**Current Member:** NYS Citizens’ Coalition for Children (since 1973); Board of Governors,  
NYS Adoptive Parents Committee (since 1976). **Prior Member:** NYS Adoption Action Network  
(1987-2013); Human Rights Campaign All Children-All Families National Advisory Council; NYS-  
OCFS Adoption Improvement Strategies Workgroup; Board of Directors, North American Council  
on Adoptable Children (2000-2007); NYC Longest Waiting Child Advisory Committee; NYS  
AdoptUSKids Rapid Response Team Advisory Committee; NYC Mayor Dinkins’ Foster Care  
Commission/Chair of Adoption Committee; NYS Adoption Options Task Force; NYC  
Comptroller’s Foster Care Advisory Committee.

**Organizer:** FAMILY FOCUS ADOPTION SERVICES Conference 1998 - “Perspectives and  
Adoption” - in conjunction with the National Resource Center for Permanency Planning at the  
Hunter College School of Social Work.

**Awards:** NACAC Adoption Activist ‘88; Adoptive Parents Comm. Humanitarian Award ‘95  
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Most popular training topics\* (for two hour, three hour, or full day training, or keynotes):

*The Invisible Realities of Successful Adoption*

*Straight Talk for Kids; Tackling the Tough Topics*

*Adoption in the World of Foster Care; Preparing Good Foster Parents to be Good Adoptive  
Parents*

*Ages and Stages; A Look at the Specialized Development of Foster Children* (often given  
for new adoptive parents - but very well received by foster parents as well)

*Dealing with the Issue of Wavering Foster Parents*

*Eliminating Foster Care “Drift” into Adoption*

*The Art and Science of the Successful Birthparent Surrender*

*Consumer Mentality; an Enemy of Adoption*

*Successful Adoption of the Adolescent*

*There is No Such Thing As An Ex-Mother; A Specialized Dynamic of Foster Care & Adoption*

*Managing Stress; Reaching the End of the Day But Not The End of Your Rope* (Also titled:  
*Taking Care of Yourself While You Are Busy Taking Care of Everybody Else!*)

*Always Have A Plan B; Some Day You Are Going to Need It*

*It’s Not Who You Are, But Who They Think You Are; Helping Parents and Parent Group  
Leaders Negotiate Systems and Be Taken More Seriously*

\*Other topics can also be provided, to meet the needs of a specific audience