

## **FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONS and RESPONSES – RESEARCH ONLY**

After each response we note the source of the response (**B**-Biological parents, **Y**-Youth, **F**-Foster Parents, **S**-Staff from the Agency)

### **SAFETY**

#### **Questions:**

What questions do you have about how the child welfare works to keep children from being abused and neglected?

What questions do you have about how the child welfare system works when they find out a child has been abused or neglected?

#### **Research Responses:**

#### **Themes:**

##### **1. Regarding Reports of Child Abuse and Neglect**

- How do hospitals and other professionals decide to report? What types of socio-economic factors are at play?—**S**
- Is emotional abuse more traumatic than sexual abuse?--**S**
- Why are there more referrals etc. March/ May/ Oct?—**S**
- What is the proof that a child is being neglected?—**Y**
- How do you approach young kids on the subject of abuse? (put wire taps on kids- listen for sounds of abuse)--**Y**

##### **2. Traumatic Effects of Foster Care Removal and Placement**

- How can I tell if the trauma of removing a child is better/worse than leaving the child at home (balancing effect of trauma).--**S**
- Are there behavioral indicators re-trauma--**S**
- What should a SW do with a traumatic child-They bond to us so quickly, what should we do?—**S**
- How honest should the SW be with a child about where they are going?—**S**
- What kind of emotional abuse are we causing the children by removing them?—**S**
- How to assess risk to siblings?—**S**
- What is going on with passive/ willing children when they willingly go with Social Workers?--**S**

##### **3. Effectiveness of Direct Services**

- Does anybody know whether parenting classes work?--**B**
- Why don't they have age appropriate parenting classes?—**B**
- Are there parenting classes to help parents deal with the trauma of coming from foster care?—**B**
- Do peer to peer kids group work and do people use it?—**B**
- Does welcome home baby take parenting to next level? Eg. What to do with toddlers.—**B**
- How do parents know how to get it right? –**B**
- How can you make mandatory therapy work for core issues?(trust issue)--**B**
- Does Parent mentoring work? (Shared Family Care)—**F**
- Are there tools to help you deal with traumatized children returning from foster care?–**B**

#### **4. Effectiveness of Agency Services**

- How many kids that are returned via Family Maintenance come back into care? How many times do the worker's visit after child is returned home--**F**
- What happens to the long-term well-being of children returned home— what do we know about them 5 years after the system has gone?--**F**
- What are ethnically appropriate placements? How is that decision made?--**S**
- Research about: assessment tools. If we had better outcomes than-- SDM vs. CAT tool. --**S**

#### **5. Effectiveness of Foster Care Services**

- How does the system know a kid is safe in foster care? (Social worker only comes to visit once a month).--**Y**
- How can foster parents deal with children with different values? Eg. Doing chores etc?--**B**
- What is the best way to handle children that have different rules in different homes? Eg. Foster care, custody--**B**
- How to handle the effect on children and parents when children are in wealthy foster homes and come home without the pool, dog, etc?--**B**
- Look at different foster parent training curricula to see if it affects outcomes.--**F**
- Why is there a shortage of Foster Parents--**F**
- How to promote training without food and prizes?--**F**
- **F**
- Perception of foster homes is bad- Why is that the case and what can be done about it?—**F**
- It costs FP to foster children; What does it cost to care for a foster child?--**F**

## **WELL-BEING**

### **Questions:**

What questions do you have about the child welfare system takes care of children involved in it?

How about services? What questions do you have about the services that are offered to children in the child welfare system?

### **Research Responses:**

#### **1. Effectiveness of Parental Involvement**

- Once a child leaves foster care, what happens? What services do they need?--**F**
- How can parents be there emotionally for their child in foster care?--**B**
- Is there a difference in outcomes if the parents are involved in school, medical, appt sect?--**B**

#### **2. Effectiveness of Direct Services**

- Are the services provided by interns for therapy less effective than licensed therapist?--**S**
- Timing around placing kids in AOD treatment- What are the key factors we should assess.—**S**
- How do we know the services are effective in reducing child abuse and neglect? --**S**
- What about the effectiveness of services they get on their own that aren't part of the case plans? EG. Church—**S**
- Why aren't classes that bio parents take effective?--**Y**
- Why aren't bio parents services more structured?--**Y**

#### **3. Effectiveness of Agency Services**

- What is the impact of TDMs?--**B**
- Why does it differ so much from SW to SW? Effects outcomes: inconsistent decisions between social workers.--**B**
- Should SW's specialize with different age groups?--**B**
- Why cant families have one SW instead of several? After ER- should stick with the next one, lack of consistency.—**B**
- Why do FP's have to be so proactive to get services?--**F**
- Do they need more SW's?--**F**
- What is the role of FP's in training SW's?—**F**

- Why aren't they taking success stories and replicating them? --**F**
- What is the relationship between meeting all the case plan objectives and what happens to the child. How do we know if they(the parents) got it?--**S**
- Can a SW do their job alone? Would a team approach make a better assessment?--**S**
- If a family can keep a child at home safely do they have a better outcome if they have a Voluntary Family Maintenance or court supervised Family Maintenance?--**S**
- SW accessibility to research: What does it mean to bridge research and practice? How do you have time? What is the most effective way to get research to SW.?---**S**
- Are our decisions driven by case load size? Is this fair?--**S**
- What does it take to get SW's to participate in making changes to the system?--**S**
- The role of the supervisor and manager: what is it? What should it be?—**S**
- Is a case review meeting with supervisors and managers effective in making decisions?—**S**
- Impact of recruitment campaigns for foster parents like on the side of buses, inside the bus, light-rails, light-rail stations, and penny saver.--**Y**

#### **4. Effectiveness of Role of Foster Parent**

- What can't FP establish their own boundaries with parents? Not up to the individual SW changes to the rules with each worker—**F**
- What is the impact of FP working with bio parents? What is the right time?--**F**

## **PERMANENCE**

### **Questions:**

What questions do you have about how the child welfare system provides for a stable home for children in foster care?

What questions do you have about how the child welfare system gives kids a permanent living situation?

### **Research Responses:**

#### **Themes**

##### **1. Effectiveness of Direct Services**

- Relationships between recovery and reunification.--**B**
- Roles of programs that allow for reunification and recovery. Is substance abuse different than DV or other issues?--**B**
- Should Substance Abuse programs be longer?--**B**
- How can programs decide whom to work with?--**B**
- Some programs make reunifications work.--**B**
- What is the effect of screening and referral process for AOD. Centralized access program.--**B**

##### **2. Effectiveness of Agency Services**

- Coordination with regional center?--**F**
- Why don't we have more kids with family?—**S**
- By being a legalistic system does this do more harm for children and families?--**S**
- Why do relatives have to go thru formal CPS system to get help? Have to say "I can't take care of child?" How many relatives have to give up kids to get help?—**F**
- Are we sure that is really bad for kids to stay in Long Term Foster Care?--**S**
- Why do we place teenagers in group homes based on age?—**S**
- Do concurrent (planning) homes work, is it misleading?—**F**
- What is better for teens? Adoption? Permanent placement? We don't know so what is best for us.--**Y**

##### **3. Effectiveness of Foster Care Services**

- Emergency Shelter Care homes that are asked to adopt children? Why is "back-dooring" a bad thing?--**F**

- Why are there age restrictions for Adopt/Concurrent FP's yet Emergency Shelter Care homes adopt at the same age.—**F**
- Difference between FFAs Foster Parents and County Licenses Foster Parents?--**F**
- Impact of direct communication from court to child-- FP should be aware so they can help nurture and guide child.--**F**
- What are the resources that are necessary for FP to take more teens?—**S**
- Why do you get kicked out every time you do something wrong, even if you broke a rule you didn't know about?--**Y**
- What about the impact it (out of county placement) has on us, the youth?—**Y**
- Who is checking to see if it is affecting us when we move from our home county? (I.e. feeling alone).—**Y**
- What is the impact of putting a "city kid" in the country?--**Y**

#### **4. Impact of Socio-Economic Factors**

- What are the relationships between socio-economics factors, culture and ethnicity, factors and outcomes? Why?--**S**
- Is the pattern of disproportionality based on SW bias or cultural norms? Is it something we do, the family does or society?--**S**
- What is the community? Who is it? Does it exist?—**S**
- Why don't SW's trust the system they work in? EG a referral on their own family.--**S**

#### **5. Youth Perspectives**

- What is the child/youths perspective of being in different parts of our system (ER, FM, FR, PP)?--**S**
- What is the child/youth's perspective with the maze of legal definitions.—**S**
- Why don't they ask youth if your social worker is doing a good job? (I.e. evaluation form)!!!!—**Y**
- Why don't youth want to get involved with ILP?--**Y**