EFFECTIVE PRACTICES IN FOSTER PARENT RECRUITMENT, INFRASTRUCTURE, AND RETENTION

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INTRODUCTION

This report was prepared in response to a request from Melissa Baker, Casey Family Programs Strategic Consultant, and New York City's Administration for Children's Services (ACS) for information on jurisdictions that have developed effective practices for the recruitment and retention of foster parents. In particular, ACS requested information on strategies that targeted recruitment of professionals (e.g., nurses, teachers) as foster parents, and programs and interventions with a focus on permanency and well-being outcomes for children in foster care. Currently, ACS contracts out all of their foster parent functions to private agencies across the city, and they are interested in learning how they and their private agency partners can improve their foster parent program across the continuum.

A review of the literature, conversations with foster parent experts, and inquiry to Casey Family Programs Strategic Consultants led to the identification of six public and private agency programs that have demonstrated effective strategies in their recruitment, retention, and/or foster parent development efforts. This report does not reflect a comprehensive national scan but, rather, highlights a handful of programs that have been successful in improving an aspect of their foster parent program. Florida appears to have the only large-scale, child welfare system-wide recruitment and retention initiative. Half of these six programs have been rigorously evaluated and shown positive outcomes while the other three were chosen based on the recommendations of experts and the literature and have demonstrated improvements measured by the agency's internal tracking of outcomes. Once programs were identified, phone conversations were conducted with managers and staff.

The following programs are highlighted in the report:

- **Florida's Foster Family Initiative**, which was chosen for their state-wide initiative designed to recruit and support quality foster parents and promote success of children in care.
- **Quality Parenting Initiative (QPI),** which was chosen for its national focus on agency-wide efforts to rebrand foster care and strengthen foster parenting.
- **Keeping Foster and Kin Parents Supported and Trained (KEEP)**, which was chosen for their evidence-informed foster parent training curriculum and intervention. The KEEP intervention has led to reduced foster child behavior problems and reduced caregiver stress.
- **Extreme Recruitment,** which was chosen for its child-specific recruitment program model. This model has demonstrated increases in permanency for the hardest-to-place children in care.
- **Mockingbird Family Model (MFM),** which was chosen for its retention of foster parents through its unique Hub Home model, with a built-in foster parent peer support network and respite.
- **Anu Family Services,** which was chosen for its targeted recruitment of Healing Parents, retention and placement stability rates, and focus on well-being outcomes.
- **Iowa's Performance-Based Contracting** model, which was chosen for its identification and implementation of performance measures into the private agency contract, based on desired well-being and permanency outcomes.
- Casey staff spoke with **Denise Goodman**, Ph.D., foster parent consultant and trainer who works with agencies nationwide in recruitment, training, preparation, support, and retention of caregivers.
- Casey staff also spoke with **Carole Shauffer**, J.D., Senior Director of Strategic Initiatives at the Youth Law Center and co-creator of the Quality Parenting Initiative (QPI).

The report is divided into three main sections: **Recruitment; Infrastructure; and Retention**. Each includes key themes and critical strategies for developing a robust foster parent program, as informed by participants as well as the literature review. These themes and strategies reflect the continuous learning process that participants experienced while building their programs. Concrete examples are cited throughout the report to exemplify effective practices for NYC's Administration for Children's Services to consider as they move forward with their transformation efforts.

The six summaries of the individual programs as well as an annotated bibliography from the literature review are included as appendices at the end of the report. Where available, program evaluation data is included with the summaries.

KEY FINDINGS

A review of the literature, conversations with foster parent experts, and interviews with managers from public and private agency programs revealed several common practice components that should be considered when building an effective system for recruiting and retaining foster parents. Themes that were highlighted for the recruitment process include:

- Messaging and Branding;
- Targeted vs. General Recruitment;
- Child-specific Recruitment; and
- Foster Parents as Recruiters.

When addressing the question of improving infrastructure, the following key elements emerged:

- Encouraging and Welcoming Prospective Parents;
- Decreasing Response Time;
- Addressing Barriers to Facilitate Licensing and Other Requirements;
- Streamline Process and Reduce Paperwork; and
- Develop Performance Indicators to Measure Success.

To successfully retain foster parents, interviewees emphasized the following:

- Being Available and Responsive;
- Organized Peer Support;
- Respite Care;
- Training; and
- Tokens of Appreciation.

Most importantly, through every stage in the process, it is imperative that foster parents are **engaged, developed, and supported** by the child welfare agency. The path to an effective foster parent program is not linear but, rather, operates in a cyclical fashion as each stage in the process positively or negatively influences the other stages.

EFFECTIVE PRACTICES FOR ENGAGING, DEVELOPING, AND SUPPORTING FOSTER PARENTS

RECRUITMENT

Expectations for foster parents are high – they are responsible for nurturing the well-being of the children in their care, and ideally they also support the agency's efforts to help those children achieve permanency. Building a pool of high-quality foster parents that is prepared to meet all of these expectations is no easy task.

Recruitment is an ongoing undertaking, as there are rarely "enough" foster homes. Even if an agency has a licensed home for each child in need of foster care, practice wisdom dictates that more foster homes should be available so that agencies can look for best fit between a child and a home that can best meet that child's needs. Further, additional foster homes should be available to provide support such as respite, which can be critical to retaining foster parents.

Recruitment of foster parents is widely acknowledged to be challenging, and few agencies feel that they are as successful as they would like to be in this area. Nonetheless, some are making progress; for example, Florida set a goal of recruiting 1,200 new foster parents and successfully met that goal. The most significant themes regarding effective recruitment strategies, shared by Florida as well as other programs, are discussed below.

Messaging and Branding

Messaging to potential foster parents is the first step to recruitment, and it is crucial that the message is a positive one. The general public often has a negative perception of foster parenting, which is a significant barrier to recruiting foster parents.[1] Overcoming any preconceived notions that might be held about foster parenting is necessary in order for individuals to take the first step towards licensure.

In addition, it is important that the message clearly communicates the agency's expectation of its foster parents. If an agency expects foster parents to serve as permanency partners, then from the outset, the message should be that every child has a family and that the foster parent's role is to serve as a bridge to permanency, including working in partnership with birth families towards reunification. This will allow a natural screening out of prospective foster parents whose values are not aligned with those of the agency.

- For example, one **Florida Community Based Center (CBC)** calls foster parents "partner families" so that, from the beginning, the message to foster parents is one of permanency, whether through adoption, guardianship, or reunification. Partner families are expected to work with birth families to co-parent (i.e., share information regarding the child, help to facilitate a transition back to the home, etc.)

[1] Marcenko, M., Brennan, K., & Lyons, S. (2009). *Foster parent recruitment and retention: Developing resource families for Washington State's children in care*. Retrieved December 18, 2014, from Partners for Our Children Web Site: http://partnersforourchildren.org/sites/default/files/publications/2009._foster_parent_recruitment_and_retention.pdf

- At **Anu Family Services**, foster parents are called "healing parents," as they have found that a healing mindset supports their Model of Wellbeing. A healing approach is found throughout Anu's foster parent framework, from recruitment to training.
- Similarly, if an agency's goal is that foster parents will support efforts to achieve permanency for the children in their care, including reunification, foster parent expert **Denise Goodman** recommends that an agency should avoid messages such as "give a child the gift of family." This type of message implies that children in foster care do not have their own families, and therefore is likely to be more powerful with families that want to adopt, but not as effective at recruiting foster families that share the agency's goals of reunification.

Ongoing communication of the foster parent "brand" is key to maintaining their engagement in the licensing process. Participants consistently shared that it is important to reframe the foster parent brand so that they are seen as professionals, working together in partnership with the other members on the team, such as the child's social worker, therapist, etc. Above all, foster parents should not be perceived as working in isolation, but rather, they should be seen as equal partners in a team which is available to support them. It can also be helpful to engage the media in the branding process, in order to shift the public perception of foster parenting so that it is more positive.

- Even though the media typically highlights tragedies and other negative stories about the child welfare system, **Denise Goodman** suggests that it can be helpful to engage the media by sharing some of the child welfare system's success stories. These types of stories can have a significant impact on shifting the public perception of the child welfare system in general, and foster parenting specifically.
- As part of **Florida**'s "A Family For Every Child" initiative, the Secretary of DCF at the time, together with his wife, traveled throughout the state sharing their personal experiences as foster parents and discussing the changes they had implemented at the Department of Children and Families.
- The **Quality Parenting Initiative (QPI)** seeks to "rebrand" foster care by changing the core elements and values underlying the brand, but there is no prescriptive, "one size fits all" approach to doing so; QPI believes that each community is unique and must tailor its recruitment strategies to the needs of that particular community. However, QPI does provide a process for jurisdictions to define the expectations of caregivers, provide caregivers with sufficient training and support, and include caregivers as an equal member of the child's team.

Targeted Recruitment

While many child welfare agencies utilize large scale media campaigns to recruit foster parents, targeted recruitment has also gained momentum as a more effective strategy for recruiting the "right" foster parents, based on the agency's needs. In particular, many interviewees highlighted faith-based institutions as an ideal place to recruit foster families, since faith communities often emphasize helping others as part of their ministry. This leads to a "natural fit" between their desire to serve and the needs of the child welfare agency. In fact, one national survey found that "foster parents who first heard about fostering through mass media provided fewer years of service than those who had learned about fostering through a religious organization" (p. 3).[2]

[2] Marcenko, M., Brennan, K., & Lyons, S. (2009). Foster parent recruitment and retention: Developing

Recruitment can also be targeted towards specific professions, ethnic groups, or geographic areas; for example:

- **Anu Family Services** targets recruitment of "healers," which they define as individuals who have a healing or well-being mindset. They seek out such individuals by targeting recruitment at yoga studios, massage therapy centers, and other centers of integrated healing, and through their Healing Partners, such as the University of Minnesota's Center for Spirituality and Healing.
- Using performance-based contracting, **Iowa** is motivating their private agencies to place children within 20 miles of their home. Therefore, agencies have had to gain a better understanding of where children are coming from and target their recruitment in those geographic areas.
- In targeting recruitment to certain professions, such as medical professionals, **Denise Goodman** recommends developing a focused and continuous recruitment plan rather than a one-time recruitment event. For example, the agency could build an ongoing presence at the local hospital through strategies such as providing materials in the break room, asking a foster parent who is also a medical professional to speak at an outreach event at the hospital, reaching out to the nurses' union, or including a human interest story about a foster child in the hospital's employee newsletter.

Child-Specific Recruitment

In addition to targeted recruitment, child-specific recruitment has also demonstrated outcomes as being an effective strategy for finding permanent families for children in care. While this method can be somewhat labor intensive, it is one way of engaging children in their own permanency planning and building permanent connections for children that go beyond just placement.

- Using the "nothing about you, without you" approach, **Extreme Recruitment's** mission is to involve youth in their own permanency planning. Together with the youth's therapist, the Extreme Recruiter works with the youth to explore his/her understanding of permanency, as well as past and current connections through a family tree, eco-map, drawings, etc. The Extreme Recruiter also facilitates a process of identifying and locating at least 40 relatives for each youth served by the program. An evaluation found that youth served by Extreme Recruitment had a number of positive outcomes, including higher rates of permanency and pre-permanency, improvement in well-being as indicated by CAFAS scores, and an increase in the number of biological persons identified by the youth as who is most supportive of him/her (as opposed to paid persons), as compared to the control group.

Foster Parents as Recruiters

While most child welfare agencies rely on licensing staff to carry out recruitment activities, research shows that current foster parents are actually believed to be the most effective

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resource families for Washington State's children in care. Retrieved December 18, 2014, from Partners for Our Children Web Site: http://partnersforourchildren.org/sites/default/files/publications/2009._foster_parent_recruitment_and_retention.pdf

recruiters.[3] Current foster parents have more credibility with potential foster parents because they are able to address their concerns and speak about their own experience, so they are perceived as more likely to be transparent about the realities of foster parenting. Child welfare agencies can involve their current foster parents in the recruitment process in a variety of ways, ranging from informal roles to paid positions.

- While the **Mockingbird Society** does not formally use foster parents as recruiters, Degale Cooper, Director of Family Programs, emphasizes that the Hub Home provider can play a key role in recruiting foster families, both as an experienced foster parent and in the support that they provide to the other foster homes in the Mockingbird Family Model (MFM). The MFM can be used as both a recruitment strategy and a retention strategy, as many new foster parents are drawn to its supportive structure and then stay because they receive the support that they need.
- At **Anu Family Services**, seasoned foster parents serve as Ambassadors to recruit new foster parents. Anu does not pay its Ambassadors, but instead solicits their participation in the recruitment process by educating them about the unmet needs of children in care who cannot be served by Anu due to a lack of Healing Homes. Their belief in Anu's mission and model motivates them to recruit additional Healing Parents.
- As part of **Florida's** "A Family for Every Child" campaign, some CBCs created paid positions for foster parents to help with recruitment and retention. Florida's state agency also created a user friendly website that highlights success stories, and includes a video page which shows current foster parents sharing in their own words about what it means to them to be a foster parent.
- Similarly, some **QPI** sites involve youth in their foster parent recruitment and training process, including matching youth with prospective foster parents during the training process so that they can get hands-on experience working with youth.

BUILDING THE INFRASTRUCTURE/IMPROVING PROCESSES

From the first point of contact with the child welfare system to the moment a child is placed in their care, there are multiple steps prospective parents must go through to become licensed foster parents. While participants shared that it is critical that agencies recruit foster parents who are committed to the agency's mission, and then provide them with the on-going supports needed to be successful, it is just as important that the internal processes and infrastructure are in place to engage, develop, and support foster parents. As one child welfare administrator commented, "Recruitment is only as good as your response system."[4]

The ways in which prospective foster parents are engaged during the recruitment process has a strong impact on whether or not they decide to continue. Without careful attention to the process of receiving and developing interested foster parents, it is futile to spend the time and resources necessary to recruit them. Many agencies invest in costly, large-scale foster parent recruitment campaigns but do not have the infrastructure to follow up once people express interest. Studies

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[3] Marcenko, M., Brennan, K., & Lyons, S. (2009). Foster parent recruitment and retention: Developing resource families for Washington State's children in care. Retrieved December 18, 2014, from Partners for Our Children Web Site: http://partnersforourchildren.org/sites/default/files/publications/2009._foster_parent_recruitment_and_retention.pdf

[4] Office of Inspector General. (2002). Recruiting Foster Parents. Department of Human and Health Services. Page 10.

have found that 50 percent of interested parties drop out of the process before a child is even placed in their homes.[5] This is often a result of bottlenecks that slow down the process or logistical challenges that become insurmountable obstacles. Building the recruitment and retention infrastructure and streamlining internal processes are often technical changes that can be relatively easy and inexpensive fixes, but which may reap huge benefits and immediate results.

One major theme highlighted in conversations with public and private agency staff was that the first step in improving their recruitment and retention approach was a comprehensive examination of their intake to licensing pipeline. This assessment helped them to understand current processes, identify bottlenecks in the system and cumbersome requirements, pinpoint where prospective foster parents are dropping out, and ultimately adopt structural and operational changes. The following section captures the relevant themes that emerged and provides concrete examples of effective strategies to streamline the internal processes necessary to successfully recruit and retain foster parents.

Encourage and Welcome Prospective Parents

Anu Family Services held focus groups with potential foster parents and learned that most individuals interesting in fostering were being held back by fear, and that potential foster parents needed to be assured that they would not face challenges alone but would be supported throughout the process. A study found that it takes many prospective foster parents as long as one year to make initial contact with the agency.[6] Becoming a first time foster parent can be daunting, no matter how committed a person is to opening up their home to a foster child. Accordingly, participants shared that prospective foster parents need to feel supported from their first point of contact with the system. The intake phone call should be viewed as an opportunity to welcome and encourage those interested in fostering without feeling too pressured to immediately commit or too overwhelmed by what the process will require of them. Put simply, they need assurance that they will have on-going support from the agency before they have the confidence to take on the difficult task of fostering a child.

- In **Florida**, some CBCs have the same staff person that answers the initial intake call continue to work with the prospective foster parent throughout the process. This level of consistency nurtures relationships and builds trust and confidence in the agency by the foster parent. At least one CBC immediately follows up the initial intake call with a home visit, to answer any questions and determine whether the structure of the home will need any modifications. This also allows for relationship-building to begin immediately.
- The **Annie E. Casey Foundation**[7] recommends that all initial inquiries should be answered by a live person, even after-hours if possible, rather than a recorded message. The goal of the initial conversation should be to provide the potential foster parent with information, rather than gathering information about them in order to screen them “in or out.” That staff person should then follow up the conversation with a thank-you note and information regarding the foster parent orientation, and should continue to follow up with

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[5] Rhodes, K., Orme, J., Cox.,M., and Beuhler, C. (2003). Foster Family Resources, Psychosocial Functioning, and Retention. *Social Work Research, 27 (3)*, 135- 147.

[6] Office of Inspector General. (2002). Recruiting Foster Parents. Department of Human and Health Services.

[7] The Annie E. Casey Foundation. (2012*). Building successful resource families: A guide for public agencies*. Retrieved December 18, 2014, from http://www.aecf.org/m/resourcedoc/aecf-BuildingSuccessfulResourceFamilies-2008.pdf

the prospective foster parent throughout the licensing process. It is also important to think about how an agency will accommodate calls from non-English speakers and provide them with the same welcoming support

Timely Response

According to a national survey, one of the primary reasons reported for dropping out of the foster parent pool while becoming licensed is a lack of timely response from caseworkers. Participants expressed concern with the number of prospective foster parents that are lost as the result of delayed responses (or no response at all) to initial inquiries.

Responsiveness is also important to retention, as foster parents often express frustration about the lack of response from caseworkers. Many child welfare agency staff are managing competing priorities, and non-emergency tasks such as responding to foster parent questions are often deferred. However, it is important that agencies prioritize foster parents from the outset, developing trusting relationships with them and demonstrating respect for their time, throughout the licensing and foster parenting process.

- According to **Denise Goodman**, "no interested caller should have to wait more than two weeks for orientation because a long delay will reduce the likelihood of attendance." Similarly, following orientation, "prospective parents should not have to wait more than a month to begin pre-service training and should receive a reminder phone call or postcard beforehand."
- As part of the **QPI** Partnership Plan that caseworkers and foster parents develop together, **Florida** and **San Diego** caseworkers commit to promptly calling foster parents back within a certain amount of time, such as 24 hours, and to making monthly visits. In Florida, foster parents and caseworkers regularly submit feedback to each other about how well they are fulfilling the partnership plan.
  For an example of Florida's Partnership Plan, please visit:
  http://www.qpiflorida.org/pages/PartnershipPlan/PartnershipPlan.html

Remove Barriers

Becoming a licensed foster parent is often a lengthy process, with many requirements to be met along the way. It can be useful to stop and take a look at the licensing pipeline, to ensure that all of the requirements truly are necessary to ensuring the safety and well-being of children in foster care. Those that are not should be eliminated, as they may deter or even prohibit some potential foster parents from completing the licensing process.

- According to **Denise Goodman**, the city of Philadelphia recently re-examined their foster parent licensing requirements and found that they were able to make their requirements more inclusive, for example, by eliminating non-safety rules such as age and education requirements of foster parents. Further, they also found that some workers were operating under misconceptions and applying rules that were not actually found in policy. One such example was requiring foster parents to have a landline, when a cell phone line would have been acceptable.

The majority of foster parents lead busy lives, often balancing work responsibilities with caring for their families. Many must take time off work and find child care in order to attend all the mandated foster parent trainings. In addition, navigating a complex and bureaucratic system such as child welfare can be overwhelming to even the savviest foster parent. A common theme

throughout the interviews was that it is the responsibility of the child welfare system to ensure that any requirements of foster parents are structured in a way that is accessible and convenient to them, rather than the agency.

- **San Diego County** reduces potential roadblocks to participation in their evidence-based kin and foster parent training intervention, **KEEP**, by scheduling group sessions at times and locations that are convenient for caregivers. Before the training even begins, the facilitator visits the home of each caregiver to build rapport and fill out paperwork with them. In addition, KEEP provides a $15 transportation stipend for each session, and provides refreshments and child care as well. If a caregiver is unable to attend one of the sessions, then the facilitator or co-facilitator will go to their home to provide a make-up session.
- **Anu Family Services** schedules their trainings at times that are convenient for their foster parents, even if that is later in the evening or on a weekend. They also make their trainings available online, via webinar or video, or even individually in a Healing Parent's home to reduce barriers for families.

Many child welfare agencies have stringent rules and regulations that restrict foster parents in their ability to make parenting decisions for the children in their care. For example, in many states foster parents are not allowed to take their foster child out of state on vacation with them, sign them up for a sporting team, or permit them to attend school trips, without going through a cumbersome process of getting permission from the child welfare agency. This undermines their role as a parent and hinders a child's ability to experience the same "normal" childhood activities as their peers. However, some child welfare agencies are beginning to recognize the importance of giving foster parents the autonomy and discretion to parent in the way that they see fit and that is in in the best interest of the child.

- **Florida's** Legislature recently passed the "Let Kids Be Kids" Bill, which "normalizes" foster care by easing the rules and regulations for foster parents that currently limit the activities of children in foster care. The "Reasonable and Prudent Parent" standard incorporated in the bill allows foster parents to give foster children permission to do daily, age appropriate activities such as joining a school athletic team or going to the beach with friends, while holding them responsible to a standard of care characterized by careful and thoughtful parental decision-making.

Streamline Process and Reduce Paperwork

Another consistent theme that emerged was the need to streamline the application and licensing process with the goal of making it easier on the applicant, rather than convenient for agency staff. Application forms are often lengthy, and completing the application as well as the other required paperwork contributes significantly to the delay between application and becoming licensed. The literature review revealed that it is during this phase that many applicants become so discouraged that they decide not to foster. Some agencies have started to mitigate this problem by examining the entire paperwork process, from intake to certification, and identifying where there were duplications in the process. For example, foster parents are often asked the same question multiple times in the different forms that they must fill out. A simple modification to the paperwork so that they are only asked a question once can reduce the burden to foster parents and prevent unnecessary frustration on their end.

- In an effort to streamline licensing processes, **Florida's DCF** redesigned the Home Study form for prospective foster families. The new Unified Home Study is more focused on the "job" of fostering, and less intrusive and more family-friendly. The Unified Home Study is also 25 pages shorter and applies to all types of placement, whether an emergency shelter, a licensed foster home, or an adoptive home.
- **Anu Family Services'** strategies for streamlining their licensing process included eliminating bottlenecks, such as paperwork duplication. Establishing a goal for the licensing timeline, along with a scoreboard to monitor progress towards the goal, were also key parts of this process. The scoreboard is shared across the agency every two weeks, in order to maintain accountability. Anu's average time to licensing is now approximately 100 days.
- In **Florida**, family foster homes in good standing may now be eligible for a license valid for up to three years, instead of one year. To be considered for the extended license, a family that has been fostering for three years or longer must meet specific criteria, including a recommendation by the assigned Child Placing Agency and the lead agency, clear background checks, have no performance improvement or corrective action plan, and no findings of maltreatment.

Develop Performance Indicators to Measure Success

Many states are unable to measure the effectiveness of their recruitment and retention strategies because they have not developed benchmarks or performance indicators, and have not tracked data to establish a baseline. In fact, a national survey of recruitment and retention programs discovered that less than half of states have developed goals for recruitment and only 13 of those 21 had established performance indicators to measure the success of recruitment efforts. Denise Goodman emphasized that data collection can be a helpful tool in "identifying where to begin the reform efforts and then track for progress."

- **Iowa's Department of Human Services** implemented performance-based contracting with their recruitment and retention contracts in 2007. According to participants, developing the measures helped them identify a baseline from which to track progress. In addition, the measures evolved over time from process measures (number of licensed homes) to outcome measures (placement stability and safety); these new performance goals are a reflection of the types of positive outcomes that the agency wanted for the children in their care.

RETENTION

Recruitment and retention are often seen as two distinct goals of child welfare agencies, and therefore as separate work efforts. However, a theme that echoed throughout the interviews and the research literature was that "retention *is* recruitment" (p. 4);[8] or, as Amelia Franck Meyer and Crystal Hanson of Anu Family Services stated, "it is hard to recruit foster parents in the absence of foster parents."

[8] Marcenko, M., Brennan, K., & Lyons, S. (2009). Foster parent recruitment and retention: Developing resource families for Washington State's children in care. Retrieved December 18, 2014, from Partners for Our Children Web Site: http://partnersforourchildren.org/sites/default/files/publications/2009._foster_parent_recruitment_and_retention.pdf

As stated earlier, foster parents are effective recruiters, possibly even more effective than agency staff who are tasked with recruitment. Foster parents who feel supported by their agency and who are happy and satisfied with their role as foster parents are more likely to speak to others about their experience, whether formally or informally. By the same token, foster parents who are unhappy, or those who have left their agency due to negative experiences, are also likely to share their stories with others. Therefore, participants shared that it is crucial to ensure that current foster parents feel supported and appreciated. If they do, they are more likely to play a positive role in the recruitment process rather than deterring others from foster parenting.

Strategies for supporting foster parents – and therefore retaining them – range from basic best practices such as returning phone calls, to specific expressions of appreciation for a job well done. Examples of such strategies are provided below.

Being Available and Responsive

Oftentimes, foster parents only hear from workers when there is a specific question or need, and conversely, workers only hear from foster parents when there is a crisis. By checking in more regularly with foster parents, participants stated that foster parents generally feel more supported and appreciated, and workers are also more aware of the child's situation and can provide needed resources before a crisis erupts.

- At **Anu Family Services**, caseloads are 11 children per social worker, so that workers have time to check in with each Healing Parent weekly, in addition to biweekly home visits. When a crisis arises, Anu employs a team approach to crisis intervention, working together to prevent a placement disruption. Strategies may include more frequent check-ins, parent coaching, and additional respite for the Healing Parent.
- Also described above, both **San Diego** and **Florida** utilize a Partnership Plan as part of their **QPI** process. The Partnership Plan is developed together by the child's caseworker and foster parent, and typically includes a commitment from workers that they will respond to foster parents in a timely manner.
- Another approach, recommended by the **Annie E. Casey Foundation**,[9] is to utilize dedicated resource parent workers to provide support to foster parents. This could take the form of regular check-ins via support visits and/or phone calls, and would be outside of their recertification visits and home safety checks.

Organized Peer Support

In addition to support from the agency worker, it is also important that foster parents are supported by each other, so that they do not feel isolated in their experience of foster parenting. Many states have foster parent associations that organize support groups, but these are often independent of the child welfare agency. It can be helpful for the agency, whether public or private, to provide opportunities for their foster parents to both learn from each other and support each other.

[9] The Annie E. Casey Foundation. (2012*). Building successful resource families: A guide for public agencies*. Retrieved December 18, 2014, from http://www.aecf.org/m/resourcedoc/aecf-BuildingSuccessfulResourceFamilies-2008.pdf

- The **Mockingbird Family Model (MFM)** is designed to inherently provide peer support; the MFM is built around an experienced foster parent, known as the Hub Home provider, who is available to support 6-10 other foster families with everything from navigating systems to monthly social gatherings to transporting children for appointments. Together, these families are known as a Constellation. Families within the Constellation receive peer support from the Hub Home provider as well as from the other Constellation families.
- **Anu Family Services** holds monthly Education and Support meetings that provide Healing Parents with opportunities for peer support as well as training hours.
- Many of the **Florida QPI** sites have foster parent peer mentors available to support new foster families as well as foster families that need additional support.

Respite Care

Respite care is widely known to be crucial for avoiding foster parent burn-out, but too often the responsibility for finding respite care is on the foster parent. This process makes respite care inaccessible, particularly in the absence of strong foster parent support networks. By building respite care into the standard practice of foster parenting support, foster parents are less likely to reach the point of burn-out. Respite care can also contribute to placement stability, as foster parents that are less stressed are less likely to request that children be removed from their care. Policies that allow foster parents to use their natural supports, such as neighbors, family members, and family friends, as baby-sitters and respite providers can be particularly helpful.

- Again, the goal of the **Mockingbird Family Model** (MFM) is to provide foster parents with a built-in system of respite support; the Hub Home provider is expected to maintain two open beds 365 days a year so that they can take a child from any of the other foster homes in the Constellation, whether as planned respite or at a moment's notice. This model also supports a more positive respite experience for the child, as the Hub Home provider is familiar to the child. A 2009 evaluation of the MFM found that the MFM caregiver loss rate was 12% (a retention rate of 88%), as compared to the Washington State average loss rate of 31%. In addition, the rate of placement changes for MFM children was generally positive.
- One of the strategies that **Anu Family Services** employs to support its Healing Parents is to provide opportunities for regular respite care, as well as additional respite care when needed. They have found that this strategy can be helpful in maintaining placements, particularly when there is a crisis. As a result, Anu's placement stability rate is 97% and their retention rate is consistently high.

Training

Providing foster parents with training is a basic part of the foster parent licensing process; however, ensuring that foster parents feel equipped to manage the behaviors of the children in their care can also play an important role in retention. Foster parents who feel overwhelmed or who feel that their parenting is ineffective are more likely to burn out, and will be less motivated to continue foster parenting. While all foster parents are required to complete a certain number of training hours each year in order to maintain their license, not all trainings are equally useful. Some participants shared that learning parenting strategies specific to the behavioral needs of the children in their care seems to be particularly helpful to many foster parents.

- The **Keeping Foster and Kin Parents Supported and Trained (KEEP)** evidence-informed parenting intervention is one that has been found to be effective in reducing caregiver stress, as well as reducing child behavioral challenges. Using a group format, the KEEP training provides caregivers with effective tools and strategies for managing children's (ages 4-12) behavior. Participants in KEEP expressed that it was "highly useful for addressing parenting challenges…and conducive to developing positive and supportive relationships" (p. 5).[10]
- In addition to the training required by the state, **Anu Family Services** also trains all of their Healing Parents on topics that support their Model of Well-Being, including trauma, grief, loss, and permanency. Parent coaching is also available to provide hands-on, in-the-moment support to foster parents. Coaches work with foster parents individually, without the child present, to help them develop parenting tools that will promote positive behaviors.
- **QPI** provides online trainings, webinars on demand, and a video library through three of their state sites (Florida, Nevada, and California) to foster parents in those states. These include trainings on topics requested by foster parents as well as explanations of policy changes, so that foster parents are included in the conversation regarding policies and how they are affected by them.

Tokens of Appreciation

While most child welfare agencies generally do not have the funds to provide their foster parents with gifts, just acknowledging the work that foster parents do can often be a very meaningful gesture. When possible, small tokens of appreciation such as gift cards can have a significant impact; soliciting such tokens from community businesses can be one way of building community relationships as well as local support for foster parents.

- Showing appreciation is another retention strategy regularly employed by **Anu Family Services**, and includes handwritten notes, calls from leadership (especially after particularly difficult situations), and small presents such as coupons or gift cards which are donated by local businesses. Anu also recently held an Appreciation and Recruitment event that provided Healing Parents with a free dinner and overnight stay at a hotel.
- The **Mockingbird Society** also encourages agencies that utilize the MFM to develop partnerships with local businesses as a way of garnering support and showing appreciation for its foster families, for example, asking a business to "adopt" a Constellation at the holidays.

CONCLUSION

Foster parents play an important role in the child welfare system and should be treated as critical partners of the agency. A key finding from this report is the cyclical nature of a foster parent program – rather than looking at recruitment and retention functions as isolated tasks, it is best for child welfare agencies to view the process as a continuum, realize that each stage in the process impacts and influences the other stages, and thoughtfully examine the intake to

[10] Price, J.M. (2008). *Progress report on the KEEP SAY Foster Parent Training Project*. Child and Adolescent Services Research Center (Internal document).

placement continuum of services. Most importantly, through every stage in the cycle, it is imperative that foster parents are engaged, developed, and supported by the child welfare agency. This will create an environment that attracts quality foster parents who feel supported and adequately prepared to care for the vulnerable children placed in their homes.

APPENDIX A
Quality Parenting Initiative (QPI)[11]

OVERVIEW

The Quality Parenting Initiative (QPI) was developed by the Youth Law Center, and is an approach to strengthening foster care, including kinship care, by improving the branding and marketing used for recruiting foster parents. The core principle of QPI is a strong partnership between the child welfare agency and the caregiver that supports the child being reunited with their birth parents. QPI recognizes that the traditional foster care "brand" historically has negative connotations and this deters people from participating. QPI is an effort to rebrand foster care, not simply by changing a logo or an advertisement, but by changing the core elements and values underlying the brand. Once these changes are enacted, QPI sites are better able to develop communication materials and to design recruitment, training, and retention systems for foster parents.

In addition to rebranding foster parents, QPI is a model to accomplish systems change and reorientation of the foster parent recruitment and retention process by ensuring that each child has excellent parenting as the primary goal. Policies and practices must be assessed for consistency with that goal. In this way, achieving the goal requires assessment and involvement of every aspect of the system.

QPI also works to “professionalize” foster parenting to ensure they have the best quality foster homes for children. The key elements of the QPI process are to:

- Define the expectations of caregivers;
- Clearly articulate these expectations; and then
- Align the system so that those goals can become a reality.

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[11] Quality Parenting Initiative. (2012). Retrieved January 5, 2015, from http://www.ylc.org/our-work/action-litigation/quality-foster-care/quality-parenting-initiative/

Another core tenet of QPI is that there is not a prescriptive, "one size fits all" approach to rebranding foster care; it acknowledges that each community is unique and must tailor its recruitment strategies to their particular needs.

Most importantly is to treat caregivers as full partners in decision making, not just in individual child cases, but also in policy and practice improvements at the systems level.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

San Diego County's Quality Parenting Initiative[12]

In San Diego County, Child Welfare Services (CWS) implemented QPI approximately 1.5-2 years ago with the goal of supporting and retaining high quality foster parents, as well as decreasing the number of times a child changes placement. As part of the QPI process, CWS established a steering committee that includes social workers, foster parents, public health officials, and university partners. The steering committee is working on building QPI into practice in a number of different ways, such as implementing a quarterly QPI staffing at each office, and joint trainings for foster parents and staff so that they develop shared learning as well as teamwork. In addition, the steering committee is developing QPI Ambassadors at each office, who can help to ensure that placement issues are addressed through a QPI lens.

Florida's Quality Parenting Initiative[13]

In Florida, each of the 22 CBCs has their own QPI effort in their region and they work with a consultant in their rebranding efforts. Each CBC is inclusive of foster parents when making policy and practice decisions, and solicits their recommendations and suggestions around how to improve the foster parent experience. Once a month, all the CBC leads come together by phone to share effective strategies with each other and work collectively through challenges. The QPI lead consultant provides a variety of "hot topics" for discussion and the CBCs share the input from their foster parent partners. Although the CBCs come up with their own community and agency specific plan, the state agency participates in these calls to determine how they can support the CBCs at the state level, for example through changes to agency policy or processes, or clarification to the administrative code.

The QPI Initiative has resulted in Florida DCF policy changes that make the foster parent recruitment process more efficient, such as:

- **Simplified Licensing**: Family foster homes in good standing may now be eligible for a license valid for up to three years, instead of one year. To be considered for the extended license, a family that has been fostering for three years or longer must meet specific criteria, including a recommendation by the assigned Child Placing Agency and the lead agency, clear background checks, no performance improvement or corrective action plan, and no findings of maltreatment.

[12] Personal communication, Margo Fudge, San Diego County Protective Services Program Manager, on November 18, 2014.

[13] Personal communication, Carrie Toy, DCF Out-of-Home Care Specialist, on November 17, 2014.

- **Improved Home Study**: In an effort to streamline licensing processes, DCF redesigned the Home Study form for prospective foster families. The new, Unified Home Study is more focused on the "job" of fostering, and is less intrusive and more family-friendly. The Unified Home Study is also 25 pages shorter and applies to all types of placement, whether an emergency shelter, a licensed foster home, or an adoptive home.

Challenges: Some challenges to implementing QPI in Florida, according to informants, include:

- Changing society's perception of foster care and foster parents;
- High staff/caseworker turnover rates which requires educating new staff about QPI;
- Getting everyone on same page about permanency goals (DCF investigators, CBC caseworkers, foster parents, etc.).

***Outcomes*:** The major successes of QPI in Florida have been in systems change and improved relationships with foster parents. According to participants, CBC sites have reported measurable improvements in outcomes such as:

- Placement stability;
- Reduced use of congregate care;
- Reduced numbers of sibling separations;
- Improvements in reunification.

APPENDIX B
Fostering Florida's Future Initiative[14]

OVERVIEW

In 2012, Florida's Department of Children and Families (DCF) launched The Fostering Florida's Future Initiative, which is designed to recruit and support quality foster parents and promote the success of children in foster care. This state wide foster parent initiative builds upon the work efforts accomplished through the Quality Parenting Initiative (QPI) and encourages the partnership between foster parents and the child welfare team of the child in their care. In addition, The Florida Legislature passed a bill that reduces the rules and regulations for foster parents and allows them more autonomy in their parental decision making.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The Focusing Florida's Future Initiative has implemented the following strategies:

- **Awareness Campaign** - An extension of the QPI foster parent rebranding efforts, DCF launched an awareness campaign that includes foster parents spreading the word and informing people about the importance of being a foster parent. They have created a user-friendly website that highlights the stories of successful foster parents, children in foster care, and young adults who have aged out of foster care. This website gives information to anyone in Florida who is interested in fostering a child. A video page shows foster parents talking in their own words about how meaningful being a foster parent is to them.

- **A Family for Every Child** - The Department's CBC agencies and the statewide and local Foster and Adoptive Parent Associations teamed together to recruit 1,200 new foster families during 2012-13. The Secretary of DCF at the time and his wife, Mrs. Wilkins, spurred recruitment during visits to various cities and towns, sharing their personal experiences as sponsor parents and discussing the changes they have led at the Department of Children and Families. Since foster parents make the best recruiters, some CBCs created paid positions for foster parents to help with recruitment and retention. Other CBCs focused on engaging faith-based institutions as a recruitment strategy. According to reports, DCF reached the 1,200 recruitment goal.

- **Quality Parenting Initiative (QPI)** - QPI was expanded in 2012 to support the goals of the Foster Florida's Future Initiative. Mrs. Wilkins initially served as chairperson of a statewide workgroup of foster parents, DCF, and CBC staff to address recruitment and retention concerns. The accomplishments of the QPI are described in Appendix B of this report.

- **Letting Kids in Foster Care be Kids** - In support of the "Let Kids Be Kids" legislative bill described below, DCF developed a Bill of Rights for foster children in line with the values that foster children deserve to experience a "normal" childhood and that foster parents should have the autonomy to support that experience. This legislation was passed after a policy change was encoded in statute within DCF. DCF is currently working on

[14] Personal communication with Carrie Toy, Out of Home Care Specialist, DCF, on November 17, 2014.

modifying current policies and protocols to ease restrictions on foster parents and encourage participation in everyday childhood activities.

- **Promising Futures** - To ensure that foster children are receiving the same academic expectations as other children, DCF began tracking the school attendance and graduation rates of these children on a monthly basis. The goal is to identify ways to increase school participation and ensure that children in foster care have the opportunity to graduate high school and move on to future studies. A report card looks at an array of measures for each child so that foster parents and their CBC partners can work with them on an individual basis and provide the tools that are needed to help them succeed.

Legislative Policy - "Let Kids be Kids" Bill

In 2012, House Bill 215, also known as "Let Kids be Kids," was signed into law by Governor Scott with support from the Florida Legislature, DCF, and foster parent advocates. This "Normalcy Bill," as it is known, recognizes the importance of allowing children in foster care to take part in everyday activities, without the involvement of case managers, provider agencies, or the court system. It accomplishes this by reducing the rules and regulations that currently limit the activity of children in foster care. The "Reasonable and Prudent Parent" standard incorporated in the bill allows foster parents to give foster children permission to do age appropriate activities such as joining a school athletic team or going to the beach with friends, while holding them responsible to a standard of care characterized by careful and thoughtful parental decision-making.

Partnership Plan

Another result from the "Let Kids be Kids" bill is a policy that requires foster parents to develop a partnership plan for each child in out-of-home care. This new policy is now embedded in the administrative code. The purpose of this partnership plan is to articulate a common understanding that "children deserve normal childhoods as well as loving and skillful parenting which honors their loyalty to their biological family." One CBC calls foster parents "partner families" so that the message to foster parents, from the beginning, is one of permanency through adoption or reunification. Caregivers, the family, DCF, the CBC, and agency staff all participate in developing the plan for the child and family, and all members of the team work together to implement this plan. This includes caregiver participation in all team meetings or court hearings related to the child's care and future plans. In return, DCF, the CBC, and agency staff commit to supporting and facilitating caregiver participation through timely notification, an inclusive process, and providing alternative methods for participation for caregivers who cannot be physically present at meetings or hearings. Both foster parents and DCF and CBC staff have set up a QPI process with regularly scheduled follow-ups where they rate how well each person is adhering to the partnership plan.

CHALLENGES

Some of the challenges highlighted during the interview include:

- Getting everyone on the same page (i.e. DCF investigators, CBC case managers) to support the permanency plan
- Changing the mentality towards foster parents by DCF staff
- Child-specific information sharing
- Support and involvement of local leadership

OUTCOMES

Participants reported that the CBCs are not currently evaluating their Quality Parenting Initiative or Fostering Florida's Future Initiative. However, DCF did meet their goal of increasing the number of available foster parents by 1,200. Managers also stated that there was anecdotal evidence from the CBC staff that they quality of foster parents that that they had recruited had improved because of QPI.

APPENDIX C
Keeping Foster and Kin Parents Supported and Trained (KEEP)[15]

OVERVIEW

Keeping Foster and Kin Parents Supported and Trained (KEEP) is an intervention designed to provide caregivers with effective tools and strategies for managing children's behavior. KEEP is targeted towards caregivers of children 4-12 years old, particularly those that display externalizing behaviors, and is delivered in a group format. The curriculum frames the caregiver's role as being a key agent of change with opportunities to alter the life course trajectories of the children placed with them.

In San Diego County, Child Welfare Services (CWS) contracts with a local service provider, Social Advocates for Youth (SAY) to provide the KEEP training. SAY provides KEEP trainings county-wide in both English and Spanish, with the goal of making training times and locations accessible and convenient for caregivers. Foster and relative caregivers are combined into the same KEEP cohort. Caregivers for KEEP are recruited from a variety of sources, including programs and events specific to foster parents and relative caregivers. CWS also provides SAY with a list of foster parents and relative caregivers in the area where a KEEP group is being formed, so that SAY can reach out to those caregivers directly.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

Groups are held for 90 minutes over 16 weeks, and each group is limited to 6-10 caregivers. The curriculum includes topics such as managing difficult behaviors, promoting school success, and encouraging positive peer relationships. The curriculum emphasizes active learning and includes homework assignments so that caregivers can apply and practice the skills learned in the group setting.

KEY COMPONENTS

Caregiver skill development

KEEP emphasizes active learning methods, such as role playing, and teaches skills such as balancing encouragement with limits, and encouraging child cooperation through behavioral contingencies and effective limit setting. The curriculum also includes sessions on managing difficult behaviors, promoting school success, encouraging positive peer relationships, and strategies for managing stress brought on by providing foster care.

Supporting caregivers

Once a caregiver agrees to participate in a KEEP group, the facilitator (and/or co-facilitator) meets with the caregiver in their home to complete paperwork and to begin building rapport. The facilitator or co-facilitator also calls each of the caregivers every week to provide further support in applying the new skills, and to assess the child's behavior using the Parent Daily Report (PDR) checklist. If a caregiver misses a group session, the facilitator or co-facilitator will provide a make-up session in the caregiver's home.

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[15] Personal communication, Patty Hoyt, San Diego County Contract Unit Supervisor, and Tracy Bell, San Diego County Policy and Program Support, on November 25, 2014.

Concrete support

Caregivers receive a $15 transportation stipend for each group they attend, as well as free child care and refreshments during each group session. Additionally, a $15 gift card is raffled off at each session for those caregivers that completed the weekly phone check-in.

OUTCOMES

KEEP has been evaluated through at least two randomized controlled trials and is rated as a "3 - Promising Research Evidence" on the California Evidence-Base Clearinghouse's Scientific Rating Scale. Evaluations of San Diego County's KEEP intervention in 2008 and 2013 both found that "the KEEP intervention can be viewed as being effective in reducing child behavior problems and in reducing the parental stress associated with addressing child behavior problems" (p. 3).[16] The 2008 evaluation specifically looked at caregiver satisfaction with the intervention and found that participants thought the training was "highly useful for addressing parenting challenges…and conducive to developing positive and supportive relationships" (p. 5).[17] Given these findings, the evaluators believe that "the KEEP foster parent intervention has the potential for attenuating placement disruptions associated with child behavior problems and parental stress and for contributing to foster parent retention rates" (p. 3).[18]

[16] Price, J.M. & Berry, K. (2013). *Technical report for Social Advocates for Youth, San Diego: Outcomes of the KEEP Foster Parent Intervention*. Child and Adolescent Services Research Center (Internal document).

[17] Price, J.M. (2008). *Progress report on the KEEP SAY Foster Parent Training Project*. Child and Adolescent Services Research Center (Internal document).

[18] Price, J.M. & Berry, K. (2013). *Technical report for Social Advocates for Youth, San Diego: Outcomes of the KEEP Foster Parent Intervention*. Child and Adolescent Services Research Center (Internal document).

APPENDIX D
Extreme Recruitment Program[19]

OVERVIEW

The Extreme Recruitment (ER) model was developed for the Missouri Children's Division (CD) by a coalition of providers to create urgency around finding foster children a safe and permanent home as quickly as possible. The Children's Bureau awarded a grant to the Foster and Adoptive Care Coalition (FACC), Children's Home Services, and the Adoption Exchange, to deliver direct service through the Extreme Recruitment grant with the assistance of several other partnering organizations. Extreme Recruitment works exclusively with the hardest-to-place children: ages 10-18, sibling groups, children of color, and youth with emotional, developmental, or behavioral concerns. The program uses child specific recruitment strategies supplemented by case file mining to research and locate all known and unknown relatives, making personal contact with all appropriate family members. This multi-faceted approach significantly increases the options available for a child's permanent placement, especially for those children considered hard to place or "unadoptable."

Missouri created a Governor's Task Force on the Recruitment and Retention of Foster Homes in 2012 and the state-wide expansion of Extreme Recruitment is a key initiative in this effort.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

Any person associated with the child's case may make a referral to the Extreme Recruitment program. A team is formed, made up of case workers, adoption workers, CASA, etc., and they meet initially for 90 minutes to review the child's situation and determine whether or not it is in the child's best interest to opt into the program. Once a child is approved, an initial staffing is held, in which a sense of urgency is created, the child's potential resource families are identified, and the child's strengths and weaknesses are discussed. Action items are assigned to each team member and from that point, 30 minute weekly meetings are held for the next 12-20 weeks. At each meeting, the Weekly Action Plan is reviewed for progress.

One of the most important tasks for the first week is to have the Extreme Recruiter review the youth's case file to find names of relatives/kin and to make copies of documents needed to achieve permanency. Although the team may only discover a few relatives in the first weeks, the diligent search for relatives does not stop until at least 40 relatives are identified by the Private Investigator and the family tree includes both maternal and paternal relatives Once relatives are identified, the team "nominates" the most appropriate potential caregiver and the Extreme Recruiter pursues different permanency options with that individual. In addition, the other relatives that may not be able to provide a permanent home for the child are still engaged about staying connected to the youth in whatever capacity works best for them.

Active Extreme Recruitment cases end after 12-20 weeks, when the youth has been connected with a relative/kin, and/or a permanency plan has been approved by the team. If, at the end of 20 weeks, the team does not achieve a permanency plan, the team may close the case, extend the case, or place the case on hold. For cases closing with an identified permanent resource, the team continues to meet monthly until permanency is achieved.

[19] Personal communication with Amy Martin, CD's Permanency Program Manager, on December 1, 2014.

KEY COMPONENTS

Staffing

Extreme Recruitment employs two staff members that are unique to their program model. They hire retired law enforcement officers to utilize their detective skills in the role of Private Investigator. The Private Investigator acts as a support to the program by conducting diligent searches for at least 40 family members of children in foster care. The Private Investigator works in conjunction with the Extreme Recruiter and the youth's team to identify and gather information from extended family/kin in an effort to establish permanent relationships. Family finding is not exclusively done from behind a desk. Recruiters and investigators follow leads by knocking on doors and traveling to the information sources.

The Extreme Recruiter is responsible for managing all aspects of the child-specific adoption recruitment. Since the work is very time-intensive, they have smaller caseloads of 4-8 youth. The Extreme Recruiter facilitates the weekly team meetings and assigns tasks, works with the Private Investigator to conduct diligent searches, engages with the identified relatives as potential permanent caregivers for the child, and prepares the youth for permanency.

Involving Youth in Process

One critical element in the Extreme Recruitment model is involving the youth in the process. While the program model advocates the "Nothing about you, without you" approach, youth do not attend the weekly team meetings since potential caregivers do not always work out as a permanent placement and caseworkers do not want to give the child false hope. Instead, the Extreme Recruiter recognizes that each case is to be managed differently based on the youth's developmental level. The Extreme Recruiter works with the youth, in combination with their therapist, to explore their understanding and perception of permanency. They also engage the youth about past and current connections through a family tree, eco-map, drawings, etc.

Concurrent Recruitment Efforts

While the main focus is on finding relatives to provide a permanent home for the child, other forms of recruitment are explored simultaneously. Extreme Recruiters utilize both general and targeted recruitment strategies at the same time as they search for relatives.

Focus on Front End

Extreme Recruitment initially focused on the hardest to serve children that were languishing in foster care. One of the main findings from their first grant cycles was that they needed to utilize a "two-pronged" approach to permanency. ER developers believed that the same premise that was applied to the "long stayers" could effectively be applied to children when they entered the foster care system. As a result, the **"30 Days to Family"** program was launched in March 2011. The principle of 30 Days to Family is to assist in the search and engagement of a child's relatives and kin within 30 days of the child entering the foster care system. Because placements can be fragile, the goal is to identify one primary placement provider and one to two other relatives or kin as potential back-up placement providers. The first year of the program

demonstrated great promise, with 71.4% of the children placed with relatives/kin by case closure.

Agency Shift in Values

Extreme Recruitment requires a shift in thinking around traditional foster care placement. Part of the Extreme Recruitment model establishes and maintains a sense of urgency throughout the agency and at all levels of staff around permanency and a belief that all children are adoptable. The agency brought the national permanency consultant, Kevin Campbell, to the agency to present and train staff in his Family Finding model. In order to "operationalize and institutionalize" permanency values throughout the agency, Extreme Recruitment emphasizes and promotes the following core beliefs:

- Foster care is intended to be a temporary living arrangement.
- Every child is adoptable and deserves a permanent, loving home.
- Relative/kinship placements are generally preferred, however non-relative placements are also explored.
- Having multiple options for permanency is not a problem.
- Every person in a child's life can offer assistance, especially by providing information.
- Youth do not need to be "stable" to be worthy of a permanent home. Many youth need permanency before their behaviors will truly stabilize.

OUTCOMES

The evaluation[20] employed an experimental, repeated measures design to determine if the intervention increased permanency, social support, and child well-being. However, a quasi-experimental design was carried out because the randomization of youth into treatment and control groups was problematic and did not result in the creation of two equivalent groups. In summary, the Intervention group realized numerous positive outcomes, including higher rates of permanency and pre-permanency, improvement in well-being as indicated by CAFAS scores, and an increase in the number of biological persons identified by the youth as who is most supportive of him/her (as opposed to paid persons), as compared to the control group.

[20] Retrieved December 14, 2014 from: http://www.nrcdr.org/_assets/files/DR-Grantees/year-one-reports/MO_SLU-Evaluation-Report-FINAL-for-appendix.pdf

APPENDIX E
Mockingbird Family Model[21]

OVERVIEW

The Mockingbird Family Model (MFM) was developed by the Mockingbird Society in Seattle, WA, and was first established in 2004 as a proof of concept pilot. At its core, the MFM consists of a Hub Home and six to ten foster/kinship families that live within a geographic radius of the Hub Home; together, these homes make up a Constellation. The Hub Home is a licensed foster home that must be able to maintain two open beds 365 days a year and be available to provide support 24/7 to the other families in the Constellation.

Since 2004, the MFM has grown to eight Constellations in Washington State, serving 55 foster families and 113 children. The MFM has also been replicated by a private agency in Kentucky, which has two Constellations, and the District of Columbia, which has set the goal of having every child in their system placed within a Constellation.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The MFM provides an alternative to traditional foster care and is "grounded in the assumption that families with ready access to resources and support are best equipped to provide a stable, loving and culturally supportive environment for children and adolescents in their care."[22] Some of the goals of the MFM are to promote placement stability, prioritize sibling connections, increase permanency, and improve foster parent retention.

MFM Constellations often include new foster parents, and even kin or birth parents, if a child's permanent placement is with a relative or if a child is reunified with their parents. When a child is moved from the Constellation to their permanent caregiver, the new home has the option of receiving MFM services from the Constellation as part of a transition plan. After six months, the family or the youth can decide whether or not they want to continue as a part of the Constellation's "outer circle." The hope is that the MFM helps create extended family for children and youth in care; anecdotally, this has been the case for at least some children served by a Constellation.

KEY COMPONENTS

Hub Home Provider

Given the skill set needed to be a successful Hub Home provider, the Mockingbird Society recommends that this home should be very experienced in working with children 0-18 years old, with a range of strengths and needs. Support offered by Hub Home providers include:[23]

- Planned and emergency respite care 24/7;
- Monthly social events for families including peer interaction and support for caregivers;
- Unlimited access to peer support and mentoring for caregivers;

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[21] Personal communication, Degale Cooper, The Mockingbird Society Director of Family Programs, November 14, 2014.
[22] *Mockingbird Family Model (Overview)*. (n.d.). The Mockingbird Society. (Internal document)
[23] *Mockingbird Family Model (Overview)*. (n.d.). The Mockingbird Society. (Internal document)

- System navigation and access to community resources;
- Neutral environment for shared decision-making meetings & social worker visits; and
- Critical support to state case workers, increasing safety, well-being, and permanency.

Host Agency

The licensing agency, known in the MFM as the Host Agency, is responsible for identifying the Hub Home provider as well as the other foster homes that make up the Constellation. The Mockingbird Society provides technical support to help the Host Agency manage the Constellation to fidelity, as well as training to ensure that everyone understands their roles and responsibilities. The Mockingbird Society is also available to provide ongoing training specific to the needs of each Constellation, at the request of the Host Agency and Hub Home provider.

Cost

For jurisdictions that are considering adopting the MFM, the primary cost associated with this model is the fee for the Hub Home provider. Typically Hub Homes are paid by the Host Agency as a self-employed contractor. In Washington State, Hub Home providers are paid between $30,000-$50,000 per year, depending on the level of care they provide (i.e., traditional versus treatment foster care). This fee covers the retainer for maintaining two open beds in the home and providing support services to the Constellation families. It also includes concrete resources such as food and activities related to the Constellation, and additional liability insurance (if not covered by the Host Agency's insurance). While some agencies may believe that it is not feasible to find additional funding in order to pay the Hub Home provider, the Mockingbird Society believes these funds can be generated by cost savings from other areas, such as transporting youth, supervising sibling visits, and respite.

LESSONS LEARNED

- The Hub Home provider can play a key role in recruiting foster families, either to their own Constellation or to the agency so that they can be part of another MFM. The MFM can be used as both a recruitment strategy and a retention strategy, as many new foster parents are drawn to its supportive structure and then stay because they receive the support that they need.
- The Hub Home provider is key to the success of the MFM, so it is important to identify individuals who have a breadth of experience, as well as enough flexibility in their daily lives to address the needs of the youth and families in the Constellation.
- In jurisdictions where the public agency is asking private agencies to adopt the MFM, there needs to be clarity regarding who will be paying the fee for the Hub Home provider.
- Developing partnerships with local human service organizations can help ensure service provision for all the children within a Constellation, for example, if a mental health agency can "assign" an in-home therapist to a specific Constellation. Similarly, partnerships with local businesses can be helpful in garnering additional support, for example, if a business is willing to "adopt" a Constellation at the holidays, etc.

OUTCOMES

The MFM was evaluated by the University of Washington School of Social Work's Northwest Institute for Children and Families for program years 2004, 2005, and 2006, as well as January-June 2007; these evaluations indicated that outcomes were generally positive. A 2009

Management Report on Program Outcomes, which provides the most recent published outcome data available, states that in calendar year 2009:[24]

- Of the MFM youth that exited foster care, 90% were discharged to a permanent home
- Only two MFM youth (1%) ran away from placement, and 83% of MFM children experienced zero placement changes unrelated to their permanency goals
- There were zero founded CPS referrals for caregivers in MFM constellations
- The MFM caregiver loss rate was 12% (a retention rate of 88%), as compared to the Washington State average loss rate of 31%

[24] *Mockingbird Family Model: 2009 Management report on program outcomes*. Retrieved December 18, 2014, from http://www.mockingbirdsociety.org/images/stories/docs/MFM/2009_mgmt_report_final_fullreport.pdf

APPENDIX F
Anu Family Services[25]

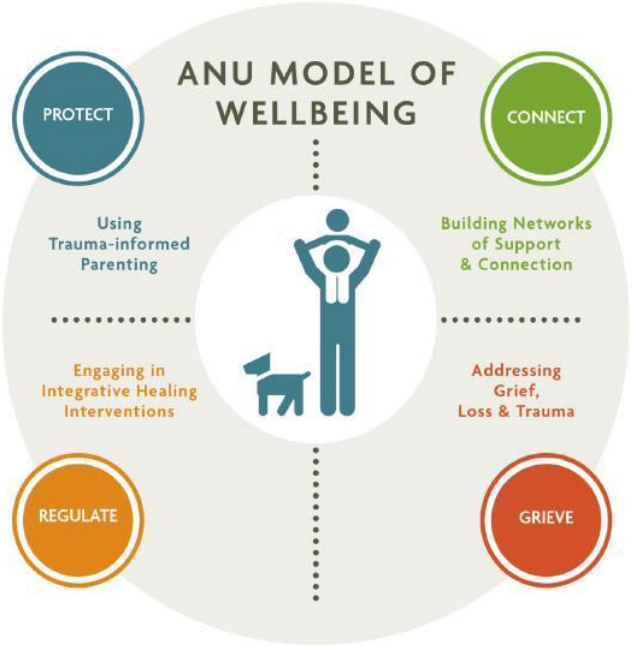
OVERVIEW

Anu Family Services is a private agency in Wisconsin and Minnesota that provides treatment foster care services to children and young adults, from 0-21 years old, with a focus on Trauma-Informed Parenting principles.

In addition to treatment foster care, Anu has expanded its service offerings to include medically fragile foster care, respite foster care, family search and engagement, parent coaching and parent support services, Parent Coaching Certification, training, and consultation. Their mission is to "create permanent connections to loving and stable families."

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

In response to changes in the public child welfare system in 2009, Anu shifted their definition of foster parents to one of Healing Parents; this new focus, together with their Model of Wellbeing, has provided the framework for Anu's recruitment, development, and support of Healing Parents. Anu's Model of Wellbeing is provided below:



Anu also believes that excellence in treatment can be accomplished through:

- Low caseloads
- Treatment family involvement
- Extraordinary foster parents

[25] Personal communication, Amelia Franck Meyer, Anu CEO, and Crystal Hanson, Director of Partnerships for Well-Being, on November 25, 2014.

- Staff education
- Frequent contacts with each child treatment home

KEY COMPONENTS

Recruitment

Once Anu decided that they wanted to focus on recruiting individuals who have a healing/wellbeing mindset, Anu held focus groups with people who fit this description. The goal was to learn more about what was preventing them from foster parenting, and what might motivate them to become foster parents. What they found was that most individuals were being held back by fear, and that potential foster parents needed to be assured that they would be supported throughout the process.

Out of this experience, Anu now involves Healing Parents in all recruitment events and activities, so that potential foster parents can immediately hear from current Healing Parents about their actual experiences. Anu's philosophy is that their Healing Parents are the experts, and can reassure potential foster parents that they will indeed be supported by Anu. According to Amelia Franck Meyer and Crystal Hanson of Anu, "it is hard to recruit foster parents in the absence of foster parents…when we have happy, supported foster parents, they talk to others about the work we do." Anu sees their Healing Parents as Ambassadors who must feel supported in order for recruitment to be effective. Anu does not pay its Ambassadors, but instead solicits their participation in the recruitment process by educating them about the unmet needs of children in care who cannot be served by Anu due to a lack of Healing Homes.

In addition to changing who is involved in the recruitment process, Anu has also shifted where recruitment takes place. In line with their goal of foster parenting as healing parenting, Anu targets recruitment to places where people seek to improve their own well-being, such as yoga studios and massage therapy centers. Anu has also developed Healing Partnerships, for example, with the University of Minnesota's Center for Spirituality and Healing, and with practitioners of integrated healing services, to expand their access to individuals who share Anu's philosophy of healing and well-being. These Healing Partners are also invited to participate in Anu's monthly conference call to learn more about topics such as Trauma's Impact on Child Development, thereby growing a community of like-minded practitioners.

Foster Parent Development and Training

From the initial point of inquiry, Anu is clear about their philosophy and the agency's focus on permanency and well-being, in order to gauge if a potential Healing Parent shares their philosophy. This continues into the training process, which goes beyond the state's required training to include training on topics that are integral to their Model of Wellbeing such as grief, loss, and trauma, as well as family search and engagement.

Anu requires 40 hours of training for participants to become licensed, followed by 30 hours of training annually in order to maintain a Healing Parent license. However, Anu maintains its commitment to supporting Healing Parents by making every effort to ensure that trainings are both relevant and accessible; for example, trainings are scheduled according to the availability of Healing Parents, and staff then arrange their schedules accordingly. Trainings are also available online, via webinar or video, or even individually in a Healing Parent's home.

Making the trainings accessible has had the additional benefit of reducing the time from point of inquiry to licensure; other strategies for streamlining the process included eliminating paperwork duplication, as well as any other bottlenecks. Establishing a goal for the licensing timeline, along with a scoreboard to monitor progress towards the goal, were also key parts of this process. The scoreboard is shared across the agency every two weeks, in order to maintain accountability.

Support

Anu views recruitment and retention as reciprocal processes, since effective recruitment cannot happen in the absence of Healing Parents who feel supported and stay with the agency. Support takes many forms, but at a minimum, includes weekly contact with a social worker as well as biweekly in-home visits. Workers maintain a caseload of 11 children in order to ensure their ability to be responsive to the needs of children and Healing Parents. Anu also holds monthly Education and Support meetings, providing Healing Parents with opportunities for peer support as well as training hours. In addition, parent coaching is available to provide Healing Parents with hands-on, individualized parenting strategies and tools.

If a crisis arises, Anu employs a team approach to crisis intervention, working together to prevent a placement disruption. Strategies may include more frequent check-ins, parent coaching, and additional respite for the Healing Parent.

Anu also believes in demonstrating their appreciation for Healing Parents in concrete ways; for example, they often send individualized handwritten notes of appreciation, or a member of Anu's leadership team may follow up with a Healing Parent after a crisis. Anu also solicits community donations such as gift cards or coupons for Healing Parents, and they recently held an Appreciation and Recruitment event that provided Healing Parents with a free dinner and overnight stay at a hotel.

OUTCOMES

Anu has a robust QIC process and is in the process of developing an instrument with the Center for Advanced Studies in Child Welfare to measure youth well-being. Some data points currently available include:

- Anu's average time to licensing is approximately 100 days.
- Anu's placement stability rate is 97%.

APPENDIX G
Iowa's Performance Based Contracting (PBC) for Recruitment and Retention of Foster Parents[26]

OVERVIEW

In July 2007, Iowa's Department of Human Services (DHS) implemented new Resource Family Recruitment contracts that contained both performance standards and incentive payments. Prior to the development of the recruitment PBC contract in Iowa, state agency workers conducted all recruitment and licensing activities. The agency leaders found that some foster families were not being utilized in a consistent manner and policies were not applied equally across the state. In response, they decided to contract out all recruitment and retention functions. This contract was Iowa's first attempt at PBC.

In the current structure, a lead-agency sub-contracts with five other agencies across the state. These agencies perform all recruitment and retention activities locally, but the lead agency manages staff employment of all the sub-contracted agencies across the state. Iowa has five service areas within the Department and the Iowa Kids Net (the consortium) has structured their staff to follow the same structure as the state agency.

Private providers awarded the recruitment and retention contracts are expected to:

- Develop and implement service area specific plans for the recruitment and retention of resource families (e.g., foster care and/or adoptive families). Each plan will include specific goals for recruiting both general and target (or hard to recruit) populations;
- Orientation for potential foster families;
- License and train families;
- Provide foster care matching service;
- Conduct annual renewal processes for resource families;
- Conduct unlicensed relative home studies;
- Provide ongoing foster care and pre-adoptive support and post-adoption support services.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

Providers are paid a base contract amount and, on top of this, are eligible for incentive payments up to 10% of the contract amount for strong performance. There are no penalties in place for not meeting a measure. All of the incentives are paid by quarters except for the "number of foster parents and non-white foster parents recruited" measure, which are paid out once a year. The measures are developed from a baseline that was established the first year of the contract; there are expectations of annual improvements of a certain percentage for each measure. This was put in place so that agencies are held responsible for improvements based on their own past performance, rather than a statewide measure. The measures chosen for the contract are a combination of outcome measures, such as safety and placement stability, and process measures, such as timely mailing of packets.

[26] Personal communication with Tracey Parker, DHS Recruitment and Retention Program Manager, and Julie Allison, Bureau Chief, on December 3rd, 2014.

Performance Measures - The following performance measures are included in Iowa's most recent contract:

Performance Measure	Measure Description	Incentive Payment
Performance Measure #1: Race and Ethnicity	The contractor will increase the number of foster families to reflect the racial and ethnic diversity of the children in care. This allows children to maintain and strengthen cultural connections.	Contractor will receive a one-time payment of $76,450 for achieving a 5% narrowing of the gap between the cumulative number of minority children placed in family foster care and the cumulative number of minority licensed foster families during each contract year. Achievement will be determined at the end of the contract year based on that year's performance.
Performance Measure #2: Placement Stability	Children placed in licensed foster homes will experience placement stability. A child's first placement should be the child's only placement. Children will either be in the same licensed foster home four months after placement or: •Will have exited that home to a trial home visit working towards reunification; or •Will have exited to a pre-adoptive placement working toward permanency; or •Will have attained permanency through adoption or guardianship.	Contractor will receive a quarterly payment of $19,100 for each quarter of the contract year if the Contractor achieves a 5% improvement over the baseline. The baseline for the measure will be established in the first quarter of the first contract year. The baseline for subsequent contract years will be based on the highest quarter of the previous contract year. Incentives will be paid for a 5% improvement over the baseline for that contract year.
Performance Measure #3: Proximity to Home of Removal	Resource families need to be located in the communities from which the children are removed. The Contractor will provide the road miles between children's removal home and the resource home where they are placed.	Contractor will receive a quarterly payment of $19,100 for each quarter of the contract year if the Contractor achieves a 5% improvement between the number of children who are placed within twenty miles of their removal home and those who are placed more than twenty miles from their removal home, and maintains that improvement each subsequent quarter for the contract year. The baseline for the measure will be established in the first quarter of the first contract year. The baseline for subsequent contract years will be based on the highest quarter of the previous contract year. Incentives will be paid for a 5% improvement over the baseline for that contract year.
Performance Measure #4: Safety is maintained for	Safety is maintained for children in foster and adoptive care. 99% of children in licensed foster family or pre-adoptive care will be safe from abuse by their foster or	Payment for achieving this measure is $8,200 per quarter for each contract year if the Contractor achieves this measure based on statewide data.

children in foster and adoptive care	pre-adoptive parents.	
Performance Measure 5A: Initial Packets	**Complete initial packets will be received by the agency no later than 110 days from the first date of PS-MAPP attendance for newly licensed home/approved adoptive homes 93% of the time.**	**Payment for achieving this measure is $9,575 per quarter for each contract year.**
Performance Measure 5B: Renewal Packets	Complete renewal packets will be received by the agency at least 45 days prior to foster home licensure expiration or adoption approval expiration 93% of the time.	Payment for achieving this measure is $9,575 per quarter for each contract year
Performance Measure 6: Matching- Urgent Placement	When a Placement referral is received from the Agency or Juvenile Court Services for an urgent placement referral, the Contractor will provide the agency with the name of one or more families that will result in an accepted placement match for the child within two hours of referral 90% of the time.	Payment for achieving this measure is $10,925 per quarter for the contract year.

CHALLENGES

- **Involve stakeholders** - Participants shared that in order to be successful, it is critical that child welfare agencies bring providers to the table and ensure their buy-in on the performance based model. It is also important to clarify and differentiate the roles and responsibilities between state agency staff and private agency staff.

- **Measures evolve over time** - The informants also commented on the evolution of performance measures over the years. Initially the measures were more process oriented, for example, percentage of home studies or match referrals that had to be completed in a specific time frame. Now the agency has added measures that reflect the outcomes that the agency wants to achieve and that are tied to safety, permanency, and well-being, such as placement stability.

- **Data informed agency** - By having established performance measures, the agency is now looking at the data behind those measures and having better conversations about how to “move the needle” forward. They commented that they were surprised to find that the data does not always align with what they expected was happening in the system. For example, there was an assumption that placement disruption was most common with older youth but, upon further analysis, discovered it was actually their youth in care under age 5 that were disrupting the most. This helped them guide appropriate policy and practices changes in their work.

- **Develop appropriate measures** - It is a challenge to come up with measures that hold agencies accountable but do not hold them responsible for outcomes that are not within their control. Informants stated that the state agency needs to be cognizant of what is within the private agencies’ ability to influence and develop measures accordingly.

- **Balance between timeliness and quality** - Participants noted that another challenge when developing performance measures was finding a balance between the timeliness of outcomes and a commitment to quality of work. In the beginning of the PBC, the incentives had unintended consequences, as there was some sacrifice of quality to ensure that the measure was met in time. This underscores the need to revisit measures each year to make sure that they are feasible and appropriate.

OUTCOMES

Since the agencies were not tracking the measures prior to the contract, participants commented that it is hard to know the impact that the PBC has had on outcomes. However, they reported some improvement in measures across private agencies, such as safety. Anecdotally, participants states that adoptive parents have reported feeling much more supported with the post-adoptive support services than parents have expressed in the past.

APPENDIX H
Literature Review and Annotated Bibliography of Research Literature

Currently, there is little rigorous evaluation research related to foster parent recruitment and retention. Most of the research findings are drawn from satisfaction surveys or exit surveys of foster parents, kinship caregivers, and child welfare staff. However, there are a few studies that have used experimental or quasi-experimental research design models. Several studies from both rigorous evaluation studies and qualitative studies were reviewed for this report; however, this is not an exhaustive review of the literature but rather a review of a sampling of studies. Please see Appendix G for an annotated bibliography of the studies. The key findings from the literature review are as follows:

- "Word of mouth" from satisfied foster parents is the most effective strategy in recruiting potential foster parents.[27]
- Mass media campaigns are not as effective in recruiting foster parents as targeted and child-specific recruitment. One study found that foster parents who heard about foster parenting through mass media provided fewer years of services than those who learned about foster parenting through a religious institution.[28]
- Many potential foster parents do not complete the application or licensure process.[29] One study found that 50% of families did not complete foster parent training. Families with more resources, especially income, were more likely to complete the process while African American and single parent households were more likely to drop out.[30]
- According to one study, factors influencing the decision to become foster parents include: personal motivations, such as religion/moral duty (14%); expansion of family (30%); convinced by family members and friends (20%); and 30% reported that a response to the need for foster parents was their main driver to becoming a foster parent.[31]
- Parenting characteristics that led to increased placement stability include: parenting support (having a support network) and use of limit setting (although not too authoritative).[32]

There are a few foster parent trainings that are evidence-based or promising programs, as rated by the California Evidence-Based Clearinghouse for Child Welfare (CEBC). ***Together Facing the Challenge*** is an evidence-based training/consultation approach to improving practice in treatment foster care (TFC). The enhanced foster care training offers more support by supervisors and also proactive teaching oriented approaches to problem behaviors. In the treatment group, youths showed improvement in symptoms, behaviors and strengths after 6

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[27] Office of Inspector General. (2002). Recruiting Foster Parents. Department of Human and Health Services

[28] Cox., M. (2002). Recruitment and foster family service. *Journal of sociology and Social Welfare, 29 (3),* 151-177.

[29] Rodger, S., Cummings, A., Leschied, A. (2006). Who is caring for our most vulnerable children? The motivation to foster in child welfare. *Child Abuse and Neglect, 30,* 1129-1142.

[30] Rhodes, K., Orme, J., Cox.,M., and Beuhler, C. (2003). Foster Family Resources, Psychosocial Functioning, and Retention. *Social Work Research, 27 (3)*, 135- 147.

[31] Baum, A., Crase, S., Crase, K. (2001). Influences on the Decision Not to Become a Foster Parent. *Families in Society: The Journal of Contemporary Human Services. 82(2)*, 202- 213

[32] Crum, Wes. (2010). Foster care parenting characteristics that lead to increased placement stability or disruption. *Children and Youth Services Review, 32*, 185-190

months and 12 months. **Keeping Foster and Kin Parents Supported and Trained (KEEP)** is an evidence-informed foster and birth parent training that has shown a decrease in behavior problems, an increase in positive reinforcement, and an increase in reunification and fewer placement disruptions, as compared to control

Annotated Bibliography

Enhancing Usual Practice Treatment Care: Findings from a Randomized Trial on Improving Youths' Outcomes[33]
This study compared enhanced foster care training, known as *Together Facing the Challenge*, to the "business as usual" treatment foster care training. The enhanced foster care training offered more support by supervisors and also proactive teaching oriented approaches to problem behaviors. In the treatment group, youth showed improvement in symptoms, behaviors, and strengths after 6 months and 12 months. Measures were the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire and the Parent Daily Report and Behavioral and Emotional Rating Scale.
Sample Size: 242 Youth from 14 treatment foster care agencies

Cascading Implementation of a Foster and Kinship Parent Intervention: Project KEEP[34]
Children placed with foster parents trained in Project KEEP had a decrease in behavior problems, an increase in positive reinforcement, an increase in reunification, and fewer placement disruptions, as compared to the control group. Participants were randomly assigned to the intervention groups or training "as usual." Parents were trained 1½ hours per week for 4 months. If they missed a session, a make-up session would be provided in their home.
Sample Size: 700 for both groups

Foster Care Parenting Characteristics That Lead to Increased Placement Stability or Disruption[35]
The purpose of this study was to identify the parenting characteristics that are likely to increase placement stability or disruption. Results of the study showed a significant relationship between parenting support (having a support network) and limit setting (although not too authoritarian) on placement stability.
Sample Size: 151 foster parents

A 2002 US DHHS Survey[36] of foster parents and child welfare agency staff found that "word of mouth" was most effective in recruiting foster parents and that states were underutilizing foster parents as recruiters. Findings include that foster parents receive limited caseworker support and they need help obtaining services for themselves and their foster children.

Foster Family Resources, Psychosocial Functioning, and Retention[37]

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[33] Farmer, E., Burns, B., Wagner, H., Murray, M., Southerland, D. (2010). Enhancing Usual Practice Treatment Care: Findings from A Randomized Trial on Improving Youths' Outcomes. *Psychiatric Services, 61 (6),* 555-561.
[34] Chamberlain, P., Price, J., Reid, J., and Landsverk, J. (2008). Cascading Implementation of a Foster and Kinship parent Intervention. *Child Welfare, 87* (5) 28-47.
[35] Crum, Wes. (2010). Foster care parenting characteristics that lead to increased placement stability or disruption. *Children and Youth Services Review, 32*, 185-190.
[36] Office of Inspector General. (2002). Recruiting Foster Parents. Department of Human and Health Services.
[37] Rhodes, K., Orme, J., Cox.,M., and Beuhler, C. (2003). Foster Family Resources, Psychosocial Functioning, and Retention. *Social Work Research, 27 (3)*, 135- 147.

This study found that 50% of families did not complete foster parent training. Families with more resources, especially income, were more likely to complete the training, while African American and single parent households were more likely to drop out. Families with psychological problems were more likely to express uncertainty in completing the training.

Influences on the Decision Not to Become a Foster Parent[38]

Foster parents that participated in a foster parent training were interviewed one year later to find out what part of the training influenced their decision whether or not to become a foster parent. The findings of those interviews revealed that: 10% responded that the trainings were influential in their decision; 14% listed personal motivations, such as religion, as influences on their decision; 30% listed expansion of family as the main reason behind deciding to become a foster parent; 20% were convinced by family members and friends to become a foster parent; and 30% reported that a response to the need for foster parents was the driver behind their decision to become a foster parent.

[38] Baum, A., Crase, S., Crase, K. (2001). Influences on the Decision Not to Become a Foster Parent. *Families in Society: The Journal of Contemporary Human Services. 82(2)*, 202- 213.