

Support Matters! Effective Services for Adoptive Families

Lessons from the Field

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NATIONAL RESOURCE CENTER FOR

DILIGENT RECRUITMENT

at AdoptUSKids

Goals of the Session

- Understand the value of family support
- Know more about how systems are currently supporting adoptive, foster, and kinship care families
- Explain how the National Resource Center for Diligent Recruitment can help States, Territories, and Tribes enhance or implement support services
- Think about what you can do next to enhance family support in your community

Outline

- The Value of Support Services
- Assessing Children's and Families' Needs
- Effective Support Services
- Public/Private Partnerships
- Implementation

The Value of Support Services

Some of the challenges facing children include:

- Effects of trauma
- Increased risk of medical, mental health, and behavioral issues
- Instability in care
- Core issues in adoption
- Difficulty in school

Challenges affect families in many ways

The Value of Support Services

- Helps families understand the needs of children and youth and how they can meet them
- Helps keep families together — prevents disruptions or moves
- Improves parenting skills and family functioning
- Helps children and youth heal and reduces problem behaviors
- Enables parents to remain committed even when their children's issues continue
- Decreases isolation and stress — for parents, youth, and children

The Value of Support Services

- Support services help administrators
 - Ensure safety, permanency, and well-being
 - Recruit families for children in care
 - Prepare families to meet children's needs
 - Retain families
 - Be responsible stewards of government funds

Assessing the Need for Services

- Determining what services are being offered now — both by the child welfare agency and the broader community
- Talking with experts in the field
- Surveying families about their needs
- Conducting focus groups of parents and youth

Types of Survey Questions

- Specific issues or diagnoses the children or youth have
- How the family is functioning; what the stress points are
- What services the families need and are using; if they've helped
- What they've needed but not been able to find
- What they've used that hasn't been helpful

Focus Group Questions for Parents

1. What are the top three challenges facing your adoptive, foster, or kinship family as you attempt to meet your child's needs?
2. What types of support or services have you used in the community?
3. Which support or services have been most helpful to your family? Why?
4. What support or services did you use that were not helpful? Why weren't they of use to your family?
5. What support or services have you needed but not been able to access?
6. What barriers kept you from using those services?

Focus Group Questions for Youth

1. What are the three best things about your adoptive, foster, or kinship family?
2. What are the top three challenges facing you as a foster child, adoptee, or child in kinship placement?
3. What do you think would best help you face those challenges? Why?
4. What do you wish your adoptive, foster, or kinship care parent knew? How would that make a difference for you?
5. Are there programs or services that you think would help you or your whole family?
6. Do you have connections with other children and youth in adoption, foster care, or kinship care?

When to Provide Support

- From the moment a prospective parent makes an inquiry or is identified as a possible relative placement
 - Helping prospective parents understand the needs and strengths of children and youth who may be placed in their care
 - Ensuring parents assess and are aware of their own strengths and capacities and what services they may need
- When parents are considering a particular child, children, or youth
- In preparation for a placement
- During the transition during and after a placement
- As long as children, youth, and families need them

Support Services — Types of Services

Basic Services

- Child or youth assessment
- Information
- Navigation, advocacy, and referral
- Training and other development
- Birth family mediation and adoption search

Support Services — Types of Services

Enhanced Services

- Peer support (parents and youth)
- Mentoring (parents and youth)
- Other services for children and youth
- Case management
- Educational support and advocacy
- Respite
- Camps or retreats
- Financial or material supports

Support Services — Types of Services

More Intensive Services

- Therapeutic services, including in-home and community-based services and access to residential treatment
- Crisis intervention

Support Services — Sample Programs

- UCLA TIES for Adoption, California
- Alabama Pre-/Post Adoption Connections
- Kinship Center Adoption/Guardianship Wraparound
- Seminole Tribe's Family Services Department, Florida
- Illinois Adoption/Guardianship Preservation
- Tennessee Adoption Support and Preservation
- Child Wellbeing Project, North Carolina
- Midwest Foster Care and Adoption Association, Missouri
- Mockingbird Family Model, various locations

UCLA TIES for Adoption

Available one year after child placement

Services include:

- Preparation and support of prospective adoptive parents
- Pre-placement assessment of children and consultation with families
- Home visiting
- Support groups
- Counseling
- Mentoring for children and youth
- Mentoring for parents
- Evidence-based therapies

Alabama Pre/Post Adoption Connection

Services include:

- Information, support, and referral through toll-free help line and website
- Support groups — peer support and support from therapists
- Family adjustment counseling — short-term, ongoing, or crisis
- Adoptive family mentors
- Lending library
- Training for parents, prospective adopters, and professionals
- Special events — family events or respite
- Camp

Also provides pre-adoption education and support

Kinship Center Adoption/Guardianship Wraparound

18 months of services

- Family teams (facilitator, parent partner, family assistant, and sometimes a youth or other community partner) works with the family
- Family outlines goals
- Parent coaches offer assistance
- Assistance from trauma- and permanency-competent mental health providers

Seminole Tribe of Florida

- Assessments through Children's Center for Diagnostics
- Family Services Department teams with Health Department and Education Department to meet children's needs
- Enhanced case management
- Positive Indian Parenting curriculum

Illinois Adoption & Guardianship Preservation Program

State contracts with private agencies who offer services, mostly in the home. Services include:

- Crisis intervention
- Comprehensive assessment
- Clinical services
- Case management and advocacy
- Support groups
- Children's mental health services
- Cash assistance up to \$500

Through other programs, the state also offers respite, training, and search and reunion support.

Tennessee Adoption Support and Preservation

- Pre-adoption training
- In-home therapeutic services
- Crisis intervention
- Helping developing a support network
- Support group
- Advocacy
- Website
- Retreats
- Family camps

Catawba County Child Wellbeing Project

- Services to families whose children and youth leave care (to adoption, guardianship, legal custody, or reunification)
- Success coaches work with the family and child or youth to develop plans and meet service needs
- Additional services may include:
 - Educational advocacy
 - Financial support
 - Parent-Child Interaction Therapy
 - Therapeutic services
 - Adoption therapy groups

Midwest Foster Care and Adoption Association

- Advocacy and support
- Parent mentoring
- Youth mentoring
- Respite care
- Support groups
- Training
- Newsletter and email information
- Support with clothes, toys, school supplies, etc.

Mockingbird Family Model

- Hub home/constellation model in several sites across the country, including Blackfeet Nation in Montana
- Hub home (experienced foster family) provides:
 - Peer mentoring and coaching
 - Planned and crisis respite care
 - Training
 - Helping accessing support services
 - Support groups
 - Social activities

Therapeutic and Skills-Based Programs

3-5-7 Model — Darla Henry

- 3 tasks — understand the past, rebuild relationships, and visualize being in a family
- 5 questions — What happened to me? Who am I? Where am I going? How will I get there? When will I know I belong?
- 7 skills — engaging children, listening, responding, affirming, providing safe environment, recognizing that painful feelings can be express through behaviors, acknowledging the work of healing

Therapeutic and Skills-Based Programs

Attachment, Self-Regulation, and Competency

- Attachment — caregiver affect management, attuning to the children (respond to the why of behaviors), consistent response, routines/rituals can prevent problems
- Regulation — help children understand their emotions and learn to manage them; find way to express their feelings
- Competency — children learn executive functioning, social skills, responsibility

Therapeutic and Skills-Based Programs

Dyadic Development Psychotherapy — Dr. Dan Hughes

- Build attachment between the child or youth and parents
- Help children and youth learn to trust and build relationships
- Reduce the child's or youth's controlling behaviors and stress

Uses PACE — playfulness, acceptance, curiosity, empathy

Therapeutic and Skills-Based Programs

Parent-Child Interaction Therapy

For children ages 2 to 7

- Child-directed interaction — parents learn to follow the child's lead, praise the child, ignore negative behavior
- Parent-directed interaction — parents lead the child's behavior, use specific commands, provide praise

Therapeutic and Skills-Based Programs

Structured Psychotherapy for Adolescents Responding to Chronic Stress

For youth 12 to 21 who have experienced trauma

- Groups of 6 to 10
- Leaders guide teens in discussions on the following topics:
 - Managing emotions
 - Understanding the bodies' reaction to stress
 - Improving communication skills
 - Relationships and getting needed support
 - Creating meaning for the past and purpose for the future

Therapeutic and Skills-Based Programs

Trauma-Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy

- Psycho-education/parenting skills
- Relaxation
- Affective expression and regulation
- Cognitive coping
- Trauma narratives
- In vivo exposure
- Conjoint parent-child sessions
- Enhancing personal safety and growth

Partnering with Community-Based Organizations

- Benefits of partnerships
- Steps to building partnerships, including types of partnerships
- Building the capacity of partners

Considerations in Implementation

- Planning and implementation
 - Creating an implementation team
 - Addressing implementation drivers — competency, organization, and leadership
- Reaching families — assessing readiness to engage families in a variety of areas:
 - Administration and program planning
 - Outreach
 - Service delivery

Considerations in Implementation

- Evaluation
 - Tracking services
 - Evaluating outcomes
 - Assessing program operation and strategy
- Addressing some key barriers
 - Difficulty of change
 - Leadership changes
 - Focus on data
 - Funding

Considerations in Implementation

Funding:

- Federal funds (IV-E, IV-B2, TANF, Medicaid)
- State, country, or tribal county funds (general revenue, targeted child welfare funds, special appropriations)
- Private foundation grants
- University funding
- Donations
- Fee for services

Capacity-Building Services for Public Agencies

- We can provide capacity-building services to states, tribes, and territories
 - Consulting, coaching, and other technical assistance
 - To learn more about how we can help, contact us:

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- *Support Matters* guide

<http://nrcdr.org/develop-and-support-families/support-matters>

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