

FINAL WORDS OF ENCOURAGEMENT

At the Foster Family-Based Treatment Association (FFTA) we are aware that life is a journey that is not always a smooth one. Yet it can be exciting, wonderful, and fun. It all depends on with whom you walk...FFTA is committed to enhancing the lives of children with families through strengthening family-based organizations; therefore, we want to walk with you. Your membership in the FFTA signifies a dedication to excellence in treatment foster care.

We are, and we work as a team. Once you become a member of the FFTA, we walk with you. Traveling alone is something we can not even comprehend. Since it is a family-based association, the FFTA was built upon a belief in the family as the source of stability and security for children and youth.

At times it may get cold and we may have to trudge uphill, but as long as we remain walking together making the quality difference for children, and we remain side by side, even when weariness is all we feel. Doing more for less is the new slogan many child welfare organizations are finding themselves in throughout the United States. As local governments find the need to make fiscal decisions that result in limiting the resources for children in out-of-home care; so too have treatment requirements increased. State and Federal funding of child welfare services are complex to say the least, as the rules for eligibility, allowable uses and shared expenses have created a void in the quality of treatment for children in out-of-home placement.

Treatment Foster Care (TFC) provides a response to those children who do not meet the treatment criteria for regular foster care but do not present with the need for the other extreme in treatment which is residential treatment. Additionally, it is a fiscally sound approach as the cost for providing TFC is lower than residential care, not to mention the additional costs found in regular foster care when children with greater treatment needs are placed in these homes. Children with major mental health problems in out-of-home care continue to grow. This group typically represents those children who will most likely have placement disruption.

TFC serves a difficult and challenging population of youth and the efficacy of TFC is measured by the reduced rate of placement disruption and increased rate of permanency when compared to regular foster care and residential treatment.

Research on TFC provides evidences to the treatment model's soundness in efficacy and economy. It is a fiscally sound treatment decision to choose TFC for this population as it can provide the treatment structure offered by residential care at half the cost. In the continuum of care, TFC fills the gap between regular foster care and residential treatment.

TFC as a model combines both elements of foster family care and residential treatment. It provides the warmth and nurturance synonymous with a foster home and the treatment tolerance and tools offered by residential treatment. It is a strength-based, family-based and community-based treatment model.

We believe in the Power of the Family. The family setting provides a new opportunity to re-experience the family unit as a healthy support system; re-learn to trust; greater effectiveness in meeting the developmental needs; and participate in healthy pro-social activities. Additionally, many times the homes are located in the same community the child was removed from and as a result it allows for greater birth parent involvement and a more normalizing experience while in placement.

Foster parents are members of the Treatment Team, they are integral members of the treatment team. As such they provide more one to one treatment with closer supervision, and more consistency in providing positive, loving discipline, with fewer occurrences of delinquent behavior and behavioral adjustment problems.

Life is a journey. Treatment Foster Care is a road we hope will lead us to help and take children beyond despair. Whatever lies ahead, we can share this walk together. The guarantees in this journey are not many, yet we are certain that if we remain working together, collectively we can help to improve the quality of life for children and youth and help them become positive walkers in the future.