

Enhanced Foster Parent Survey Report

May 2016

(Foster Parent Survey conducted March 2016)

Introduction:

As part of ongoing quality improvement at WAYS Mental Health Support, a survey of Enhanced Foster Parents is done on an annual basis. The survey was administered in March 2016. The response rate was 60% (18 responded out of 30 surveys sent).

The target is to achieve 85% or greater agreement on each item (excluding open-ended questions).

Summary of Findings:

Strengths:

On all items, Foster Parents indicated a high level of agreement (85% and over). Specifically, there was high levels of agreement about proactive support provided by WAYS regarding challenges and conflicts associated with placements (100%), Foster Parents indicated they would recommend WAYS Enhanced Foster Program to others (95%), orientation and information received prior to accepting a placement (94%), feeling valued and appreciated (94%), excellent quality of support received (89%), feeling adequately informed about the needs of foster children (89%) and feeling valued in their participation in service planning for foster children (89%).

On open ended questions, Foster Parents indicated seeing children grow and develop new skills (60%), making a difference (20%) and just being with the children and seeing their smiles (17%) as things that brought the most joy and pride with fostering children.

Areas of Improvement:

In an open ended question, several comments were provided relating to training needs and suggestions for training (28%) and some of their frustrations included working with biological families (25%), communications around placement and planning around placements (20%), remuneration and funding (15%), fewer placements (15%) and children leaving and the experience of loss (10%).

It is recognized that some of the frustrations experienced by Foster Parents are more systemic issues that do not have easy fixes or solutions. In some cases awareness, recognition and advocacy on their behalf might be the best we can do at this time.

Quality Improvement Action Plan:

1. Develop a training plan for Foster Parents that reflects current trends in terms of needs of children and foster parents.
 - Meet with Foster Parents and solicit their ideas for training and development opportunities
 - Develop a training plan and schedule that addresses needs, interests and training gaps
 - Determine methods of delivering training that meets Foster Parents schedules and availability

Outcomes: Survey results will show that Foster Parents are 85% satisfied with training programs offered by WAYS for Foster Parents.

2. Develop strategies to assist Foster Parents to be able to work with biological families.

- Utilize the PRIDE (Pre-service Training for Prospective Resource Families) training modules relating to supporting and working with biological families
- At Quarterly Review meetings discuss any concerns and strategies with Foster Parents about their experience with biological families (as relevant to a placement)

Outcomes: Survey results will indicate Foster Parents understand, feel supported and feel they have adequate skills when working with biological families of children placed in their homes.

3. Improve the experience of fostering in regard to planning and communicating around placements.

- Meet with Foster Parents and gain better clarity around their concerns
- Share those concerns with placement agencies where appropriate and develop methods for improvement
- Implement a minimum of at least weekly check ins with Foster Parents to ask about any concerns with the placement and actively problem solve with the placing agency (as applicable) as close to when the concern is acknowledged

Outcomes: Survey results will show that Foster Parents feel satisfied with communications and planning around children placed in their care 85% of the time.