



**Brevard Family Partnership**

**Foster Parent Recruitment Plan**

**July 1, 2017- June 30, 2018**

## **Introduction**

Brevard Family Partnership (BFP) has implemented this plan in order to achieve the goal of recruiting and retaining ample, qualified foster homes for every child in the BFP system of care. Using the Child and Adolescent Functional Assessment Scale (CAFAS) upon entry into the System of Care, BFP matches each child with a home that best suits the child's needs, considering all of the domains that impact a child's quality of life, including family bonds, sibling bonds, education, friends, cultural, ethnic, and religious values and practices, physical, medical, nutritional, and developmental needs, emotional well-being, mental health, personal growth and development.

Through the Brevard Youth Thrive (BYT) Initiative we recognize that minimization of trauma associated with a removal is essential. To that end it is our goal to operate a trauma informed system of care that fosters healthy developmental functioning of children placed in foster care with focus on the promotive factors that foster the healthy development of children and youth. We recognize that children who experience multiple placements while in licensed care are vulnerable to developing an attachment disorder; and sudden separation from a primary caretaker, confounded with these variables, may contribute to the child perceiving that the world is unsafe. The BFP placement philosophy is based on a number of key governing principles:

1. Substitute care homes must consist of high quality, safe, stable environments that do not have early identifiable issues indicative of placement disruption.
2. Each family foster home must meet the child's specific needs and ensure the child's safety and well-being.
3. Using a continuum of care model that prescribes the training, services, skills and competencies required of foster parents serving in each level, the foster family assumes the responsibility of a surrogate parent, ensuring the child's educational, medical, social, recreational, spiritual, and emotional health needs are met.
4. Each home should be consistent with the child's best interest, special needs and cultural characteristics, and sensitivity to the cultural preferences of the child.
5. Children should be placed within their home community and same school zone to preserve the child's connections and close proximity to biological families.
6. Whenever possible, children are placed with their siblings. Any sibling group that is separated will be staffed on a monthly basis to expedite the facilitation of a placement together.

BFP embraces a strength based philosophy and approach to care that focuses on the strengths rather than deficits of the family ensuring that the safety, well-being and permanency of the child's living arrangement and the continuity of relationships of the child are the primary goals of the service delivery system (F.S. Chapter 39).

### **Recruitment Plan:**

BFP has implemented an assertive marketing plan, under the direction of the Senior Executive of Administration, utilizing various social media platforms to recruit foster homes. The BFP marketing team has developed a recruitment strategy that delivers consistent images and messages designed to complement the advertising plans already in place by providing additional exposure and awareness through radio, , as well as direct and targeted media vehicles.

BFP employs the following recruitment strategies ongoing:

- *Develop and implement a schedule of recruitment events for prospective foster and adoptive families;*

- *Develop, coordinate, produce and print materials for direct mail, events and key distribution points;*
- *Direct mail to child care providers, churches, parents and family focused community organizations and venues;*
- *Distribute print materials to child care provider locations and other key partner sites;*
- *Incorporate family home recruitment in existing event schedule;*
- *Implement targeted print and web based advertising utilizing family focused advertising vehicles such as April Child Abuse Prevention Month and May Foster Parent Appreciation Month;*
- *BFP Marketing staff will attend various community partnership meetings to articulate need for quality foster parents and provide an updated press release to all media outlets;*
- *Expand on Foster Care Recruitment Campaign through additional mass market vehicles, radio, and other social media;*
- *BFP Marketing staff will create and deploy a social media campaign focused on the need for quality foster parents for targeted populations such as teens and sibling groups in targeted areas of the County;*
- *Identify and secure additional resources including in kind and volunteer services;*
- *More widely disseminate information pertaining to the referral incentive program;*
- *Develop a consistent presence at community events including fairs and festivals, seasonal functions, etc.;*
- *Contact local community groups, such as the Kiwanis and the Rotary Club, educational organizations including the Brevard County School Board and governmental groups, such as the Brevard County Board of Commissioners, for their support and recognition of our effort to recruit and support quality foster homes;*
- *Establish a Speakers Bureau including at least one representative from a partner agency and one from BFP, along with a licensed foster parent. The group will attend community events and other recruitment activities to present different perspectives and information about fostering;*
- *Established protocols and procedures and developed forms and tracking systems for identifying, verifying and processing prospective families through direct contacts and referrals;*
- *Operate a Foster Care Recruitment Subcommittee for targeted recruitment efforts that target specific audiences including medical professional, school and day care personnel, parent/teacher associations, faith organizations/faith community, minority social organizations, civic groups, government agency and provider organization staff, foster parent associations.*

These recruitment efforts are conducted by BFP; and identified families are then referred to BFP's bi-weekly orientation sessions designed for all families who may be interested in learning more about fostering and how to become a licensed foster parent in Brevard County. Brevard Family Partnership Foster Parent Recruitment Specialist receives information on prospective foster parents, aggregates the information and monitors and tracks progress and timelines for engagement. The Foster Parent Recruitment Specialist schedules the prospective family for the next available upcoming PRIDE class that is conducive to the family's scheduling needs. The Foster Care Recruiter engages in a prescreening process and completes the Screening Questionnaire form for each family as well as a preliminary background screening. The families are then reviewed with the Director of Licensing and Licensing Supervisor. The Foster Parent Recruitment Specialist confirms that family's attendance of PRIDE 72 hours in advance of training.

BFP provides PRIDE Pre-Service Training Classes annually to all prospective families interested in fostering. Classes are added to training schedule as needed to expedite foster parent training and to better accommodate prospective foster parent needs.

BFP requires participation and attendance at four (4) additional training classes at the end of each PRIDE Pre-Service Training cycle. Becoming a trained medical foster home is an option available through Children's Medical Services (CMS). BFP works in partnership with CMS to recruit and identify foster homes for medically complex children. We also work in collaboration with CMS to monitor, support and provide services as needed (from both on a licensing and clinical standpoint) to assist in maintaining medically complex children in the least restrictive and most nurturing environment available. Foster parents also have the option of becoming a Specialized

Therapeutic Foster Home and can receive the appropriate training and credentialing through Family Counseling Center.

### **Recruitment:**

Recruitment of quality foster families is a chief priority of BFP. Recruitment efforts focus on recruiting, training, supporting and advocating for foster families to promote and adhere to the principles of the Quality Parenting Initiative, Trauma Informed Care through the Brevard Youth Thrive Initiative.

BFP hosts information on the websites outlining how to become a foster parent. This is intended to provide ease of access to information to assist families who are interested in fostering better understand the process.

BFP created a Recruitment and Retention Roundtable which reconvened monthly beginning on July 1, 2016, to enhance recruitment strategies and marketing ideas for Brevard County.

BFP regularly hosts information tables at various community events and provides presentations and brochures to assist people in learning more about how prospective foster families can support the children in foster care in Brevard County.

### **Fiscal Year 2016- 17 Recruitment Meetings, Events and Activities:**

- Donations for foster parents used for both retention and recruitment and bi weekly Foster Parent Orientations per month
- First Baptist Church of Melbourne Foster Care Presentation
- North Brevard United Methodist Pastor's Presentation
- All-Pro Dad Kids Experience
- The House Church Family Christmas Xtravaganza
- Foster Parent Info Session Titusville Library
- Brevard Public School- Parenting in Today's World
- Ascension Catholic Foster Parent Informational Session
- Mix and Mingle Foster Parent Recruitment
- Phi-Beta Sigma Fraternity Mother's Day Salute
- Kid A Palooza
- Downtown Friday Night Live
- Kiwanis Cocoa Beach
- Kiwanis Merritt Island
- Big Brother/Big Sister
- Centerpointe Church Back 2 School Backpack Community Event
- Foster Parent Recruitment radio spots running (.30, .15, and .5) 91.5 (WMIE) and 920 AM (WDMC)
- Social Media outreach – Facebook, Twitter, etc.
- Monthly E newsletter
- Website content updated
- North Brevard Coalition of Human Services
- Foster Parent Task Force
- Space Coast Pride Fest – Community Event
- Boo at the Zoo Community Even
- Foster Parent / Children Breakfast with Santa – First Baptist Church of Melbourne
- Foster Parent Thanksgiving Luncheon – Ascension Catholic Church

## **Recruitment Goals through June 30, 2018**

- Increase recruitment opportunities among the faith-based organizations within Brevard County by securing commitments from churches throughout Brevard County who have requested brochures and/or speaking engagements about fostering.
- 65 New Homes through June 30, 2018.
- Licensed an additional 20 Teen Homes.
- Licensed an additional 20 Homes for children 0-10.
- Licensed an additional 10 Homes for Siblings Groups
- Licensed an additional 10 Therapeutic Homes.
- Licensed an additional 5 Medical Foster Homes

## **Specific Timeframes Associated with Recruitment and Home study:**

- Inquiry received and documented;
- Call returned; information given about upcoming foster parent informational session by BFP Foster Parent Recruitment Specialist, an individual staff member will meet with those interested who are unable to attend the foster parent informational session to provide it one to one;
- Foster Care Information Sessions held twice a month;
- Foster Care Recruitment Specialist completes preliminary backgrounds check on prospective foster family and reviews orientation screening questionnaire with Director of Licensing and Licensing Supervisor;
- Foster Parent Recruitment Specialist schedules home consultation;
- Foster Parent Recruitment Specialist invites family to PRIDE class ;
- PRIDE class begins in caller's area; caller attends the New Generation PRIDE class which is a hybrid model; 5 in person classes and 4 online classes;
- Family attends PRIDE, learns about process, fostering, etc.; family completes background screening paperwork by week 2;
- Family complete background screenings by week 3;
- Licensing Specialist is assigned and schedule initial home visit, begins gathering information for home assessment by week 23;
- Family continues to attend PRIDE; Licensing Specialist begins getting results of background screens, discusses any concerns with family and supervisor; if no concerns or all concerns addressed, licensing counselor proceeds with home assessment of family
- Licensing Specialist completes home assessment, submits to supervisor for review and comment/revision
- Licensing Specialist completes any revisions, finishes home assessment; submits licensing file to supervisor then to Director of Licensing for review and approval
- Supervisor completes attestation and forward to DCF for approval and issuance of license.

### Foster Parent Support Group Meetings

BFP has representation at the Foster Parent Support Group monthly meetings. BFP and members of the Foster Parent Support Group establish contact and communication on an ongoing basis and foster parents are key partners in all major initiatives at BFP. A North County Foster Parent Support Group was established in FY 2016-2017. BFP works with the Foster Parent Support Group leaders to plan activities appropriate to recruit, support, and recognize foster parents. Activities include recruitment/appreciation picnics, book clubs, clothing closets, foster child welcome kits, foster parent mentoring programs, etc.

### Foster Parent Advisory Board

BFP has added a Foster Parent Advisory Board that meets monthly to discuss such initiatives as the Quality Parent Initiative and mentoring program. The Foster Parent Advisory Board may identify other areas of needed support or improvement. This initiative was added in August 2015.

### Foster Parent Mentoring Initiative

**This initiative was added in August 2015.** As a result of the Foster Parent Mentoring Initiative, the following outcomes are anticipated:

- Improved retention of Licensed Foster Homes by providing short term and intensive coaching, training, support, encouragement and skill reinforcement.
- Increased placement stability for children and the prevention, whenever possible, of any unnecessary disruptions and transitions due to stress and discouragement.
- Increased foster parent recruitment activities.
- Improved satisfaction with BFP and provider agencies across the System of Care.
- Newly learned strategies to equip newly approved foster parents with a wide variety of parenting strategies unique to providing out-of-home care.
- Assist newly approved foster parents in applying skills that make their experience both satisfying and successful.
- Increased demonstration of the understanding of the value of the Quality Parenting Initiative with an emphasis on the importance of working with biological families to meet the best interest of children in care.
- Increased understanding of the roles of child welfare professionals and enhanced opportunities to build effective partnerships with team members and key stakeholders.

### Current Analysis of Projected Recruitment Goals through June 30, 2018:

It is anticipated that by June 30, 2018 an additional 110 family foster home beds or 65 homes will be needed June 30, 2018 which reflects a 50% increase.

Family Foster homes that can accommodate teenagers and sibling groups and homes in the North part of Brevard County, are the first priority for recruitment. Recruitment of therapeutic foster homes is also a priority.

Currently, Brevard County has 135 family foster homes.

Number of Homes	Number of Beds Available	Current Census in Level
Traditional: 114	217	182
Medical: 19	50	38
Therapeutic: 2	4	2
Group Care		

Based on a review of the current capacity, the types of placements an initial estimate of additional home-based placement options required to meet Brevard's System of Care needs includes:

HOMES	TYPES OF HOMES
65	A 50% increase in family foster care <i>beds</i> for Brevard children per quarter prior to the end of the fiscal year
20	Add 20 homes that will accept children aged 0-10
20	Add 20homes will accept teenagers
10	Add 10 new homes that will accept sibling groups new placements
10	Add 10 new therapeutic Homes
5	Add 5 new medical Homes

Hotline homes will be on call on a rotation basis to receive emergency placements coming from child protective investigations and for temporary respite care. Ideally, there would be two homes on call nightly – one each in the north and south parts of the county – to accept children as needed. With an average of children coming into licensed care each month since July 1, 2016, this would be more than sufficient capacity and not every home would be called on during their on call shift. There may be homes that serve exclusively as hotline homes and there may be traditional family foster homes that wish to participate in the hotline home rotation. All hotline homes will receive specialized training in order to meet the specific needs of the children just entering the system and those requiring emergency respite due to an immediate crisis.

In addition, BFP continues to build positive relationships and support the current homes that are licensed by providing excellence in customer service:

- “24-hour Contact after Initial Placement” - when a child is placed in a foster home, the Licensing Specialist assigned to that foster home contacts (typically by telephone) that foster parent to review the information, provide reminders of medical and dental appointments needed; and, provide support and services that may be identified from removal and placement.
- Single Point of Contact for Placements, Movement and Respite – established that all daytime placements, movement and respite are made through one single point of contact (Licensing Specialist) to provide the foster parents with a direct line regarding placement needs, issues and to establish better relationships between BFP and the foster parents.
- Monthly Foster Parent Trainings at the Brevard Foster Parent Support Group Meetings provides BFP the ability to provide the required trainings; and, build relationships through monthly contact with communication and collaboration for improvement.

Recruitment efforts continue ongoing by establishing relationships with our faith-based community and other civic groups, engagement with Brevard County School Board and continued presentations in the community. BFP provides leadership of the Trauma Informed Care/Positive Youth Initiative and the Quality Parenting Initiative. These philosophies, qualities and expectations are trained throughout Pre-Service and In-Service trainings with foster parents.

BY DIRECTION OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER:



DR. PATRICIA NELLIUS  
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