

PROCEDURE

Series: Operating Procedures **COA:** FKC 15
CFOP: N/A

Procedure Name: Foster Home Recruitment and Retention
Procedure Number: OP-1196
Reviewed Date: 09/12/21
Revision #/Date: 01/09/17, 06/20/17, 02/05/2020
Effective Date: 08/22/16

Applicable to: Brevard Family Partnership (BFP)

PURPOSE: It is the policy of Brevard Family Partnership to recruit and retain quality foster homes in Brevard County.

PROCEDURE:

A. Recruitment:

Section 1.01 Recruitment Plan:

BFP implemented an assertive marketing plan, with assistance from the Public Relations Department, 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 spots, TV ads and social media, as well as direct and targeted media vehicles.

BFP employs the following recruitment strategies ongoing:

- *Develops and implements a schedule of recruitment events for prospective foster and adoptive families;*
- *Develops, coordinates, produces, and prints materials for direct mail, events, and key distribution points;*
- *Collaborates with churches, parents and family focused community organizations and venues;*
- *Distributes print materials to churches and other key partner sites;*
- *Incorporates family home recruitment in existing event schedule;*
- *Implements 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 attends various community partnership meetings to articulate need for quality foster parents and provide an updated press release to all media outlets;*
- *Expands on Foster Care Recruitment Campaign through additional mass market vehicles, radio, TV, and other social media*
- *Space Coast Living articles are featured during Foster Parent Appreciation month highlighting the need for additional foster parents;*
- *BFP Marketing staff has created and deployed a social media campaign focused on the need for quality foster parents for targeted populations such as large sibling groups, teens, and infants in medical foster care in targeted areas of Brevard County;*



- *Identified and secured additional resources including in kind and volunteer services;*
- *Widely disseminates information pertaining to the referral incentive program;*
- *Recruits additional independent sub-contractors for expanded capabilities to conduct PRIDE classes and for new licensing home studies as needed;*
- *Develops a consistent presence at community events including fairs and festivals, seasonal functions, etc.;*
- *Contacts local community groups, such as the Junior League and the Rotary Club, educational organizations including the Florida Institute of Technology and Florida Metropolitan University 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;*
- *Established protocols and procedures and developed forms and tracking systems for identifying, verifying, and processing prospective families through direct contacts and referrals;*
- *Renegotiated agreements with identified networks, Florida Today and Brevard Business Bureau for public service announcements and;*
- *Created and operated 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 informational 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's 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 Parent Recruitment Specialist 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. These trainings consist of Psychotropic Medication, Sudden Infant Death Syndrome and Safe Sleep, Transportation, Water Safety and Scald Prevention. Welle Behavioral Safety Management training is completed after the initial licensing process and updated annually thereafter.

Medical Foster Care:

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. A Medical Foster Parent is any licensed Foster Parent who is willing

to take a Medical Foster Parenting class and able to learn how to care for a child with medical needs. A forty (40) hour Medical Foster Parenting training course is required. BFP works 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.

Basic Eligibility Criteria

- Be 21 years of age or older
- Have successfully completed the CMS MFC training (40 hours);
- Be approved as a MFC parent by the CMS MFC physician;
- Be supervised by a CMS local service area MFC program staff or the MFC contracted agency; and
- Be available to provide MFC services 24 hours per day (this would not preclude the use of other medically necessary services if additional medical needs are present).

Specialized Therapeutic Foster Care (STFC):

Becoming a specialized therapeutic foster care home is an option available through subcontracted providers. BFP assists in recruiting and identifying foster homes for children who needs intensive treatment services. Therapeutic foster care is model of care that combines positive aspects of nurturing and family environment with active and structured therapeutic treatment. Children in therapeutic care are typically 12 years or older, have had multiple placements, and may be from a more restrictive setting such as a group home or residential facility. A Specialized Therapeutic Parent is any licensed Foster Parent who is required to take an additional thirty (30) hour Specialized Therapeutic Parenting training course.

Basic Eligibility Criteria

- Be 21 years of age or older;
- Have successfully completed the Specialized Therapeutic training (30 hours);
- Have a safe, well maintained home environment;
- Have room in your home (no more than 2 to a room);
- Attend monthly STFC team meetings with the primary clinician and other therapeutic foster parents;
- Have a sincere desire to make a difference in a child's life; and
- A specialized therapeutic foster parent must be available 24 hours per day to respond to crises or to provide special therapeutic interventions.

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 (QPI), Trauma Informed Care (TIC) 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 staff members and community partners serve as the lead on the Recruitment Committee which convenes monthly 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.



1. Brevard Family Partnership conducts recruitment activities at sites and events where people who are likely to be successful foster parents congregate. Sites include recreational facilities, schools, hospitals, churches, and civic organizations.
2. Foster parents and representatives from community partners are integrated into recruitment activities. Foster Parent Advisory Committee meets monthly to review data and brainstorm recruitment strategies.
3. All foster parent inquiries are referred to the Foster Parent Recruitment Specialist.
4. All interested individuals are referred to a Foster Parent Informational Session twice a month.
5. Preliminary screenings are conducted on all applicants by the Foster Parent Recruitment Specialist prior to attendance at the foster parent training.
6. If the applicants are cleared through the preliminary screenings, a home consultation is scheduled with the prospective family to determine if they will be invited to attend the foster parent training.
7. The foster parent training is 5 weeks in class and 4 online clusters once a week.

B. Retention:

1. Foster parents are supported and nurtured by Brevard Family Partnership.
2. Educational events and training opportunities are made available to foster parents at the monthly foster care support group meetings by Brevard Family Partnership and online.
3. Foster parents are treated with respect and dignity as members of the BFP team.
4. The Mobile Response Team (MRT) is available to assist the foster parent when a child exhibits challenging behaviors that jeopardizes his/her stability. The MRT therapist provides home visits and phone calls to support and intervene as necessary.
5. The Foster Parent Navigator is available to support all new and existing foster parents. The Foster Parent Navigator provides information, support and mentorship while serving as a liaison between case management and providers. The Foster Parent Navigator visits all licensed foster homes.
6. The Foster Parent Mentoring Initiative is to improve retention of Licensed Foster Homes by providing short term and intensive coaching, training, support, encouragement, and skill reinforcement from experienced foster parents (2 years or more). The Director of Licensing assigns a Mentor to all new licensed foster families. The mentor makes contact with the mentee once a month or as needed to provide support and guidance.

7. Foster parents are encouraged to participate in the local foster parent support group to receive peer to peer support and education.
8. The Licensing Specialist is accessible to support foster parents and intervenes as appropriate.
9. Brevard Family Partnership demonstrates its appreciation of foster parents throughout the year to include an annual training, sponsoring at statewide conference events, public and written recognition awards and supplying helpful materials.

Foster Parent Support Group

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. 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

The Foster Parent Advisory Board meets regularly 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.

Evaluation of Recruitment and Retention Activities:

1. A foster care report is produced monthly at a minimum and describes foster home bed capacity, specialty license (if applicable) and geographical location of the homes.
2. BFP reports annually on the number and types of homes available, the number of homes that closed, highlighting efforts that resulted in the greatest recruitment and retention gains.
3. BFP evaluates the various recruitment and retention strategies conducted by the foster parent recruiter and based on evaluation data, the recruitment and retention plan is modified annually.

BY DIRECTION OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER:



PHILIP J. SCARPELLI
Chief Executive Officer
Brevard Family Partnership / Family of Agencies

APPROVAL DATE: 7/13/21