Child Welfare Peer Kinship Network

Webinar: Kinship Treatment Foster Care

May 6, 2015

Jennifer Miller, ChildFocus
Melissa Devlin, FFTA
Brian Lynch, Children’s Community Programs
Sue Miklos, The Bair Foundation
This webinar is sponsored by the Peer Child Welfare Kinship Network and the Foster Family Based Treatment (FFTA)

The Peer Child Welfare Kinship Network is a national network of public agency stakeholders with primary responsibility for kinship policy and practice.

FFTA is a national membership organization of over 400 agencies that provide treatment foster care, designed to meet the specialized social, emotional, behavioral and physical health needs of children in foster care.
Today’s Agenda

- Why Kinship Treatment Foster Care?
- Overview of FFTA’s Kinship Care Initiative
- Kinship TFC in Action
  - Connecticut – Brian Lynch
  - Pennsylvania – Susan Miklos
- Next Steps and Implications for Your Work
- Questions and Comments
Why Kinship TFC?

Jennifer Miller, ChildFocus
Research shows that kinship care has positive benefits for children:

- Improved Placement Stability
- Decreased Behavior Problems
- Higher Levels of Permanency

“Being placed in kinship care has been found to decrease the risk of disruption.”

“Children entering kinship care had a lower estimated risk of behavioral problems.”

“Children initially placed in kinship care as compared to family foster care were more likely to reunify or exit to guardianship.”
Yet youth in kinship care have needs that are almost as high as youth in group care.

**BEHAVIORAL PROBLEMS AMONG YOUTH (11-17) KNOWN TO CHILD WELFARE, BY PLACEMENT SETTING**

![Clinical-Level Behavior Problems on YSR](chart)

* YSR = Youth Self Report

*Source: Bryan Samuels/US Administration for Children, Youth and Families, April 2013*
Despite the need, children in kinship care do not access a range of services

- Chapin Hall (2014): 28.4% of children in kinship care needed mental health services, but only 14.2% actually received those services.

- Literature consistently finds that kin caregivers do not access the benefits to which they are entitled and have less access to training, respite care, and peer support than unrelated foster parents.
FFTA’s Vision of Kinship Treatment Foster Care

All children in out of home care with treatment needs can have those needs met by relatives or those with whom they have a family-like relationship, with access to the full array of training, services, and supports available through treatment foster care to help them stay safe, achieve permanency, and thrive.
Barriers to kinship TFC

- Licensing barriers

- Kinship care seen as a public agency responsibility

- Values and attitudes ("we don’t pay kin to care for kids")

- Failure to adequately assess children with kin

- Widespread lack of support for kin families

- Kin families who desperately want to keep children out of foster care
Which children are appropriate for kinship TFC?

- Children with specialized health and mental health issues
  - First time placements with kin
  - Children at risk of disrupting from kinship care
  - Youth at risk of entering residential treatment, group care or shelters
- Children and youth transitioning for residential treatment, group care or shelters
- Children and youth preparing for permanency with kin
Focus of the FFTA Kinship Treatment Foster Care Initiative

- Identification of barriers to kinship TFC

- Remove barriers to providing TFC in the homes of kinship caregivers (licensing, staff values and attitudes, support to kin, family finding, status of TFC in communities, etc.)

- Support to jurisdictions that are interested in implementing kinship TFC through summits, technical assistance, and peer support

- Dissemination of a toolkit to support public-private partnerships for TFC

- Document lessons learned and successes along the way
Kinship TFC in Action
Kinship TFC in Action: Connecticut

- About Children’s Community Program and the CT Department of Children and Families

- History of kinship TFC in CT - focus on family based placement and reductions in out of state and group care

- What did it take for Children’s Community Program and DCF to focus on kinship care – focus on front line staff, licensing waivers, managing risk, and training

- Continued partnership between Children’s Community Program and DCF regional offices to focus on front end placements
Kinship TFC in Action: Pennsylvania

- About the Bair Foundation and PA, a county-based child welfare system

- History of Bair Foundation’s involvement in kinship TFC – providing TFC for 2 counties with different kinship placement practices

- Bair’s model of TFC – Structured Intervention Treatment Foster Care

- Differences between kinship TFC and traditional TFC – licensing and training issues

- Outcomes for kinship TFC
Implications and Next Steps
Kinship TFC: What Does it Take?

- Recognition that some children in kin families have specialized needs that can be met through kinship TFC
- Willingness to partner with private agencies
- Flexibility so kin families can become licensed to provide TFC services
- A system that values kin and the role they can play to help children achieve safety, stability, permanency and well-being
- Desire to see children thrive in families
Question & Answer Session
If you want to learn more…

Rebecca Robuck
rebecca@childfocuspartners.com

Jennifer Miller
jennifer@childfocuspartners.com

Melissa Devlin
mdevlin@ffta.org

Brian Lynch
BLynch@ccp-ct.org

Susan Miklos
SMiklos@bair.org

Materials from this webinar will be posted at:
www.grandfamilies.org/RESOURCES/
ChildWelfarePeerKinshipNetwork.aspx