The Family Foster Home Over/Under Capacity Report

February 2003

This report contains data collected from each of the thirteen Districts and the Suncoast Region for August 2002 - January 2003
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I. Introduction

The Family Foster Home Over/Under Capacity Report is produced twice per year in a collaborative effort between the Central Office Licensing Specialist and the Licensing staff of each District and the Suncoast Region to assist in providing a statewide snapshot of licensed foster home capacity, determining the Department's ability to meet capacity needs, monitoring compliance with operating procedures and as a self-assessment tool for improvement. The February 2003 report includes data queried from The Interim Child Welfare Services Information System (ICWSIS) January 2003 as well as information reported by each District and the Suncoast Region regarding licensing trends and recruitment and retention efforts. The next report will be queried in July and published in August 2003.

The homes reported are family foster homes (including emergency shelter family foster homes) which are used for placement of dependent children. This includes homes supervised by the department as well as homes supervised through community-based-care contracts throughout the state. Currently, districts 1 and 12 and the Suncoast Region have community-based-care contracts. District 1 figures include homes from a privatization contract with the lead agency for the district, Families First Network, Lakeview Center, Inc. The district 12 lead agency is Partnership for Community-Based-Care and includes Children’s Home Society, Devereux Inc., Florida United Methodist Children’s Home and Neighbor To Family. Suncoast Region has three lead agencies. These are Family Continuity Program (Pasco and Pinellas), Hillsborough Kids, Inc. (Hillsborough) and YMCA Children, Youth and Family Services, Inc. (Manatee, Sarasota and DeSoto).

Future reports will include additional homes from various community-based-care contracts which are now in the start-up phase throughout the state. Currently, districts 4, 9, 10 and 15 are in the start-up contract phase. All districts will have community-based-care contracts by December 31, 2004.

II. Foster Home Licensed Capacity (Graph #1)

- There were 4820 family foster/shelter homes as of January 2003.
- For Distribution By District, please see Graph #2.
- 9.9% (n=479) of these homes were over licensed capacity.
- 33.5% (n=1614) of these homes were at licensed capacity.
- 56.6% (n=2727) of these homes were under licensed capacity.
• 29.4% (n=1417) of the homes had no foster children placed.

Comparisons to August 2002 report:
• We added 357 family foster homes.
• There was a decrease of 1.7% (n=39) in the number of homes that were over licensed capacity.
• There was a decrease of 2% (n=28) in the number of homes at licensed capacity.
• There was an increase of 3.7% (n=368) in the number of homes under licensed capacity.
• There was an increase of 2.1% (n=200) in the number of homes with no foster children.
• Many of the homes under capacity are reported to be used for respite or are homes limited to specific types of children. Some foster parents specialize in placements of medically or emotionally needy children, which will often result in their homes being under capacity. Other foster parents may be more suited to care for certain groups of children - infants, teens, males, females, etc., which limits the placements made.

III. Distribution of Licensed Capacity (Graphs #3A & B)
• The total licensed bed capacity statewide for this report is 11,792.
• 22.6% (n=1088) of the homes are licensed for 1 child.
• 38.2% (n=1842) of the homes are licensed for 2 children.
• 18.9% (n=913) of the homes are licensed for 3 children.
• 12.9% (n=621) of the homes are licensed for 4 children.
• 7.3% (n=351) of the homes are licensed for 5 children.
• 0.1% (n=5) of the homes are licensed for more than five children.

Comparisons to August 2002 report:
• We had an increase in bed capacity of 826 beds.
• The percentage of homes licensed for more than five children remained at 0.1% and the number of homes licensed for more than five children decreased by 1 home.

IV. Homes with a Total of More than Five Children (Graphs #4A & B)
• 7.3% (n=351) of the foster homes had more than five total children in the home.
• Distribution of the homes with more than five total children is as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Homes</th>
<th>Total Children</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>183</td>
<td>6</td>
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<tr>
<td>83</td>
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<td>31</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>15 or more children</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Comparisons to August 2002 report:

- The number of foster homes with a total of more than five children decreased by 15 homes. There were 365 homes with more than five total children in August 2002 and 350 for this report. The percentage of family foster homes with more than five children total decreased from 8% in the August report to 7.3% for this report.
- In the August 2002 report, there were no homes with 15 or more children total. In this report, there are 4 homes with 15 or more children.

V. Summary of Licensed Capacity Data

Since the August 2002 report, we had an increase of 357 family foster homes and 826 beds. There was a decrease (n=39) in the number of homes over licensed capacity and an increase in the number of homes at capacity (n=28). The total number of homes under licensed capacity was 2722 (56.6% of all homes). It is important to note that having a substantial number of foster homes under capacity allows for various placement options when removing children from their homes or when needing to replace already dependent children, providing better opportunities to find the most suitable, least restrictive placement for special needs children.

There were only five homes licensed for more than five children, which is a decrease of one home since the previous report. The August 2002 report included data on required waivers for homes with more than five children total. This report does not include waiver information.

VI. District/Regional Comments

District One:

- As of 1 January 2003 the contract with Children’s Home Society of Pensacola for family safety foster care beds was discontinued by District One’s Community Based Provider, FamiliesFirst Network, of Lakeview Center Inc.
- Twenty-one family safety homes were not included in the ICWSIS data supplied from Central Office for the February 2003 report because the homes were incorrectly entered as Child Placing Agency Foster homes. Fifteen of these homes remained licensed as of 31 January 2003.
- In August 2002 these homes were mistakenly left out of the report analysis, but were added by Central Office to the statewide totals after a faxed list of the homes were reported by District One. ICWSIS has been corrected to include these homes as licensed family safety foster homes.
- The number of licensed family foster homes has remained fairly constant during the last six months. Total licensed capacity has decreased by eighteen beds, homes over licensed capacity have decreased by sixteen homes and homes under licensed capacity have decreased by thirteen homes. Sixteen more homes are being utilized at licensed capacity than were used in August 2002.
- Currently there are two hundred and twenty licensed family safety foster homes with a total bed capacity of five hundred and thirty-one. This is a decrease of 3.3% in the number of beds since August 2002, when two hundred and thirty-three homes were licensed with a total bed capacity of five hundred and forty-nine.
• The number and percentage of homes over capacity has decreased from 31 homes or 13.3% of the total number of licensed homes in August 2002 to only 15 homes or 6.8% of all licensed homes as of 31 January 2003.
• The number and percentage of homes under capacity has decreased from 129 homes or 55.4% of all licensed homes in August 2002 to 116 homes or 52% of all licensed homes as of 31 January 2003.
• The number and percentage of homes at licensed capacity have increased from 73 or 31.3% of all licensed homes in August 2002 to 89 homes or 40% of all licensed homes as of 31 January 2002.
• District One does not have any homes licensed for more than five children. All homes with more than five children in placement have current waiver request approvals in place.

District Two:
• Since the last reporting period the district has experienced improvement in the number of foster homes by going from a 2% increase to an 8% increase. The last reporting period also showed a 2% decrease compared to a 6.8% increase this period.
• District 2 met their adoption goal of 120 placements, thus offsetting some of the gain realized through recruitment and retention contracts.
• The movement from foster home to medical or therapeutic foster homes created a lesser number of regular foster beds.
• District 2 was approximately half way into the fiscal year when the recruitment and retention contracts were executed. A transition period occurred when the provider had to hire and train MAPP trainers prior to conducting their first class. The transition created a lag during which one of the two providers was unable to meet their goal of developing 20 new homes.
• This fiscal year has seen both recruitment/retention providers exceeding their cumulative goals to date.

District Three:
• The report shows that District 3 has 199 homes under capacity. However, of those homes, 99 do not reflect actual foster care beds. The reasons are as follows: Medical foster homes, IRT foster homes, Agency foster homes that we do not have access to Foster America IRT homes, Foster/Adopt homes awaiting children who meet criteria, Homes licensed only for out of jurisdiction/OTI/ICPC, Inactive homes, Homes that have had a capacity reductions since report, Homes closed since report. Of the remaining 100 homes under capacity, these capacities fluctuate consistently and are realistic given our varying placement needs.
• District 3 continues to strive to meet our goal of increasing the number of licensed homes by 5% for this fiscal year. Last year, District 3 surpassed that goal by increasing the number of homes by 10%. So far this fiscal year, we have licensed a total of 38 homes and 2 facilities. However, given the number of homes we have closed, either by their choice or revocation, at this time we are not on target to achieve our 5% net increase this fiscal year. However, we anticipate this changing due to our recruitment/retention efforts and the extensive training opportunities mentioned above that we are currently offering our foster parents. We have also implemented a stipend for current foster parents if they recruit other foster parents who actually complete MAPP, receive a license and take their first placement. We expect this incentive to serve us in recruitment of new homes as well as retention of existing homes.
• The licensed capacity, at the end of January 2003, of District 3 homes is 770.
The district data provided for this report shows District 3 as having 199 or 67.7% of the homes under licensed capacity. This is not an accurate count, as explained in Section I. Therefore, of the actual 100 or 33.7% of homes under licensed capacity, as of the end of January 2003, there are 12 or 4% of our foster homes currently over licensed capacity. This percentage is stable with the 3.5% reported in July 2002 and 3.2% reported in January 2002. 57.3% of the homes are at capacity compared to 35.2% in July 2002 and 33.9% in January 2002. The number of homes under capacity has decreased to 33.7%.

District 3 has only one home licensed for more than 5 children. This home has a capacity of 6 for one sibling group.

15 homes or 5% have a total of more than 5 children with the largest number of children in one home being 7.

The recruitment and retention efforts mentioned in previous sections (training, media, speaking engagements, foster parent stipend and anticipated implementation of the foster parent mentor program) should begin to produce more prospective foster homes in the very near future. We are already accommodating prospective families by holding continuous MAPP classes. We are currently teaching 5 simultaneous MAPP classes throughout the district, and our largest county just began their second class since January 2003.

Alachua County also continues to conduct and support a work group comprised of both staff and foster parents. This work group meets monthly and addresses issues of concern, develops strategies to deal with the issues and revisits these strategies with surveys to determine results/success. To date, it has been positive, productive and beneficial for all parties.

District Four:
- The total number of foster homes in the District has increased from 551 to 579 since the last report in August 2002. The total licensed capacity has increased from 1404 to 1480 during the same period.
- The number of homes over licensed capacity has decreased significantly from 90 to 59. The homes under capacity have increased, in part due to fewer numbers of children coming into out of home care. The number of homes at capacity has increased slightly. This is due to a reduction in the homes that were over their licensed capacity.

Suncoast Region:
- The number of homes has increased from 1005 to 1299
- The total licensed capacity has increased from 2577 to 3243
- The number of homes overcapacity has increased from 153 to 177 but the percentage of homes overcapacity has decreased from 15.2% to 13.6%
- The number and percentage of homes at capacity has changed from 328/32.6% to 382/29.4%
- The number and percentage of homes under capacity has changed from 524/52.1% to 740/57%
- The number of homes with more than 5 total children has changed from 122/12.1% to 138/10.6%
District Seven:

- The current data shows that District 7 has 322 family foster compared with 327 in August 02. There are no dual licenses and no family group care licenses. The total capacity currently is 716 compared with 729 in August 2002.
- There are nine homes licensed for more than five children. This number has not increased in the past 6 months.
- Currently the total number of homes over capacity is 4.4 percent, 34.2 percent at capacity and 55.6 percent under capacity. The district currently has 132 homes at capacity, 176 homes under and 13 homes over capacity. District 7 has placed one child into a home over-capacity since July 2002. This child was placed, a CBHA completed and a Waiver signed. The numbers of children coming into care has decreased monthly for the past year until December, which showed a slight increase however, this population, has again stabilized. The district’s need for increased beds have leveled off and the loss and gain has been holding at about even. Currently there are 13 homes over-capacity. In early February all of the homes that were over 5 capacity were staffed. All of the children in these homes have been in the home for more than one year and CBHA were requested on all children. For most of the children in these over 5 capped homes have the goal of adoption. When the CBHA are completed on all of these children, the Waivers will be updated to reflect the Assessment completion.
- As written above, the plan for better utilization of the foster homes under utilized will be to involve the families who are identified as foster to adopt and child specific in a process so they understand how they may assist the department.

District Eight:

- We continue to expand our efforts to secure additional foster homes and possible group care facilities in our district. Homes, which are overcapacity (over 5), are visited weekly by a DCF counselor to ensure the placements are safe and stable. A weekly report is provided to the licensing unit. Our district does not have any homes licensed for more than 5.
- Our utilization of available foster homes is very good. Homes who remain inactive or who continue to refuse to accept children are not relicensed. We are also reassessing each foster home to ensure we have them licensed at the proper capacity. This is an ongoing activity.

District Nine:

- The District has maintained its number of foster homes since last reporting period. The numbers fluctuate as new homes are licensed and established homes choose not to renew but we have maintained a steady total.
- The District shows a slight decrease from 151 homes in August 2002 with a licensed capacity of 342 beds to 149 homes with a current licensed capacity of 324 beds for February 2003.
- Our number of overcapacity homes has decreased from 20% in August to 11.4% in February. Under capacity homes have decreased from 88 homes in February to 79 homes currently.
- We have 49 homes that count as having no children in the home. This statistic needs to be explored further, but it is slightly misrepresented as we have children residing in our District that are from out of the District that will not show up in our system.
- We currently do not have any homes licensed for a capacity over 5.
District Ten:
- The total number of Department licensed foster homes continues to decrease. When analyzing the reasons for the decrease, several homes have closed due to finalized adoptions, an effort initiated last year to increase the number of children in the district for which adoption was the primary goal. Homes in the district have been and continue to move to provider agencies, as a result of community-based care being implemented in the district, tentatively scheduled for 4/1/2003.
- There are no longer any homes in District 10, licensed for more than 5 children. Foster/adoptive home recruitment activities by both the department and private agencies has increased the awareness of need for additional homes, and attendance has increased in MAPP, creating the demand for ongoing MAPP classes in the district.

District Eleven:
- Closures occur on an average of 15-20 per month, the difference in total number of homes licensed and total home capacity may have occurred for the following reasons:
- Voluntary Closures- This type of closure occurs regularly due to various reasons, such as adoptions, families requesting a reprieve from fostering, changes in employment and family circumstances that would impact fostering ability, and foster families that are unable to complete required training to maintain status.
- District is developing tracking mechanism with foster parent exit interview to improve our retention efforts. (see section IV for retention efforts)
- District 11 does not license foster homes over 5.
- Although the MAPP Unit faced many external and internal barriers during calendar year 2002 - a plummeting economy offering much uncertainty for the future due to the 9-11 tragedy; the possibility of an upcoming war; ongoing negative media coverage surrounding the Department; elections; extended delays in receiving fingerprint and statewide clearances (since the Screening Unit’s Analyst’s resignation the last week of November) and in obtaining health inspections; one MAPP Counselor not becoming MAPP Certified until October of this year and one going on maternity leave the latter part of the year - we recruited a total of 190 beds for the targeted population versus 129 beds in 2001. We conducted 23 orientations this year versus 21 in 2001. Finally, we conducted 2,005 telephone inquiries in 2002 versus 1,923 in 2001.

District Twelve:
- CBCVF reviewed trends in new shelters from DCF, including race and geographical factors. No significant trends were identified to impact the current recruitment approach. Targeted recruitment efforts have been made in the Flagler County area due to increases in the population of that county.
- More aggressive targeted recruitment activities are being planned with the help of a Recruitment and Retention Task Force that has been established by the Community Alliance.

District Thirteen:
- The total capacity of homes has increased from 829 to 853. This derived from the increase of new homes, increased capacity in some homes and increased retention of existing homes.
- For the most part we are experiencing new homes capabilities from one to five capacities. Some homes continue to go to the private sector or are licensed child specific.
District Fourteen:
- The number of Family Safety and Preservation homes has increased by 13 homes.
- The total licensed capacity has increased by 20.
- The number of homes over their license capacity has decreased by 5% since August 2002.
- The number of homes at their license capacity has increased by 1% since August 2002.
- The number of homes under their license capacity has increased by 2% since August 2002.
- In August there was one home license for more than five children. Currently there is no homes licensed for more than 5 children.
- In August there were 27 homes with more than five total children without an appropriate waiver. We are completing waivers on 100% of foster homes that are over their license capacity.

District Fifteen:
- The District has maintained its number of foster homes since last reporting period.
- The numbers fluctuate as new homes are licensed and established homes choose not to renew but we have maintained a steady total.
- The District shows a slight decrease from 151 homes in August 2002 with a licensed capacity of 342 beds to 149 homes with a current licensed capacity of 324 beds for February 2003.
- Our number of overcapacity homes has decreased from 20% in August to 11.4% in February.
- Under capacity homes have decreased from 88 homes in February to 79 homes currently.
- We have 49 homes that count as having no children in the home. This statistic needs to be explored further, but it is slightly misrepresented as we have children residing in our District that are from out of the District that will not show up in our system.
- We currently do not have any homes licensed for a capacity over 5.
### FEBRUARY 2003
#### Over / At / Under Licensed Capacity By District

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
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<th>12</th>
<th>13</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL # of Homes</td>
<td>220</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>294</td>
<td>579</td>
<td>1299</td>
<td>320</td>
<td>258</td>
<td>156</td>
<td>229</td>
<td>619</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>282</td>
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<tr>
<td># with NO Children</td>
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<td>59</td>
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<td>28.1</td>
<td>25.2</td>
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#### STATEWIDE TOTALS

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<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percent</th>
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<td>Total Number of Foster Homes</td>
<td>4820</td>
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<tr>
<td>Homes OVER Licensed Capacity</td>
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<td>Homes AT Licensed Capacity</td>
<td>1614</td>
<td>33.5%</td>
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<td>Homes UNDER Licensed Capacity</td>
<td>2727</td>
<td>56.6%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Homes with NO Children</td>
<td>1417</td>
<td>29.4%</td>
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*Data indicating NO Children relates ONLY to foster children. Biological and adopted children already in the foster home are not reflected.*
Family Foster Home Licensed Capacity
February 2003

N=4820

- At Licensed Capacity: 34% (n=1614)
- Over Licensed Capacity: 10% (n=479)
- Under Licensed Capacity: 57% (n=2727)
Distribution of Licensed Capacity By District

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL # of Homes</td>
<td>220</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>294</td>
<td>579</td>
<td>1299</td>
<td>3243</td>
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<td>% of Homes Lic. 1</td>
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**STATEWIDE TOTALS**

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Distribution of Licensed Capacity
February 2003

N = 4820

1-2 children
60% (n=2930)

3-4 children
34% (n=1534)

5 children
7% (n=351)

6 + children
<1% (n=5)
Distribution of Licensed Capacity
February 2003

N=4820

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16
Percentage of Foster Homes with More Than Five Children

N=4820

% of Homes With More Than 5 children
7.3%
(n=350)

% of Homes With Less Than or Equal to 5 children
92.7%
(n=4470)
Family Foster Homes with a Total of More Than Five Children
February 2003
N= 350
VII. Summary of Recruitment and Retention Efforts

Retention and Recruitment of foster homes are priority for both Department licensing staff and community based care agencies. In line with strategies to increase the number of foster families, the Department continues to supplement and strengthen district/region foster care retention and recruitment efforts with statewide initiatives to help heighten awareness of the need for additional homes on an on-going basis. Central Office Staff provide technical assistance to districts including monthly statewide conference calls with district retention/recruitment teams (local DCF and CBC staff involved with retention and/or recruitment efforts).

The Multi Ethnic Placement Act (MEPA-IEP) requires states to develop a plan that provides for the diligent recruitment of potential foster and adoptive families that reflect the ethnic and racial diversity of children in the State for whom foster and adoptive homes are needed. The Plan must include a description of the characteristics of waiting children, specific strategies to reach all parts of the community, diverse methods of disseminating both general and child specific information, strategies for assuring that all-prospective parents have timely access to the home study process, including location and hours of services that facilitate access by all members of the community, strategies for training staff to work with diverse cultural, racial, and economic communities, strategies for dealing with linguistic barriers, non-discriminatory fee structures, and procedures for a timely search for prospective parents for a waiting child, including the use of exchanges and other interagency efforts, provided that such procedures must ensure that placement of a child in an appropriate household is not delayed by the search for a same race or ethnic placement.

Listed below are local retention and recruitment initiatives as reported by each district/region:

**District One:**
- Appeared as a guest on 1 television program discussing recruitment of foster parents
- Appeared as a guest on 2 radio shows discussing recruitment of foster and adoptive parents
- Assisted in design of billboard and bus bench shelter and foster parent recruitment brochure
- Obtained donation of billboard space in all four counties. Billboards posted in Escambia and Santa Rosa
- Obtained donation of bus bench space in Escambia and Santa Rosa Counties.
- Recruitment posters and brochures to area businesses and churches.
- Work in progress: Adoptions brochure; Recruitment boards for display at fairs and festivals; Data base
- Presentations: Escambia Foster Parents; FFN staff in Escambia and Santa Rosa Counties; Presentations to new counselor attending PDC training; Guardian Ad Litem presentations; Community Alliance presentation; Presentation to Santa Rosa County School Board members; Presentation to Santa Rosa County Psychologists and Special

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Education Teachers; Monthly Informational meetings held for prospective foster/adoptive parents
- Events: Booth at Fourth of July celebration downtown Pensacola; Baptist Hospital Health Fair; MAPP Class: currently facilitating class; completed one class
- Mailings: Informational packets sent out to each individual who makes an inquiry about fostering or adopting; Invitations sent monthly to all who have inquired; Mailing of class schedules and invitations to attend; Letters sent to over 400 churches with foster/adoptive information with requests to post in bulletins and offers to speak at each church; Letters sent to all Escambia and Santa Rosa schools with information about fostering/adopting and offers to speak at all schools
- Public service announcements sent out monthly to approximately 50 TV, radio and newspapers in all 4 counties.
- Appeared as a guest on 2 television programs discussing recruitment of foster parents.
- Appeared as a guest on 5 radio shows discussing recruitment of foster and adoptive parents.
- Billboards in Okaloosa and Walton Counties.
- Recruitment information posted on 3 bank signs in FWB.
- Recruitment information posted on Shalimar Town sign and Niceville City sign.
- Recruitment posters and brochures to area businesses and churches.
- Presentations for numerous organizations
- Monthly informational meetings (potential foster and adoptive parents)
- Informational packets sent out to each individual who makes an inquiry (foster and adoption)
- Letters sent to over 400 churches (all 4 counties) with info included and offer to speak at each church.
- Letters sent to 64 schools in Okaloosa and Walton Counties, with info included and offer to speak at each school.

Retention efforts include the following:

In District One the Community Based Care Lead Agency developed a District Placement Team (DPT) as a centralized unit through which all placements occur. As the first point of contact, the District Placement Team is equipped to provide accurate tracking and streamline the process for making timely and appropriate placements. The District Placement Team consists of five Placement Specialists and seven Retention Specialists. The job of retention specialist begins at the time a placement is secured and continues throughout the time the children stay in care. Their primary responsibility is to assist the district Placement Team by performing the following functions:
- Providing, arranging, and coordinating supportive services for licensed foster families to reduce placement disruptions, improve quality of care, and retain foster homes.
- Participating in placement staffings with the DPT and relay field information to assist in identifying the most appropriate placement resources for children entering care.
• Visiting the home in which a child is placed within 24 hours or the next working day, to help with placement adjustments and to ensure that the foster parents received all necessary documents relating to the child being placed.
• Providing emergency on-call support and assistance to foster parents by addressing their problems and or referring them to the appropriate resources for specialized services. This may include utilizing basic behavior management interventions to help stabilize the child in the foster home in an effort to maintain the child’s placement.
• Collaborating with network providers to develop additional placement resources and services, such as foster parent support groups.
• Serving as FFN liaison with the local Foster Parent Associations.
• Developing a reminder tickler system to assist foster parents in keeping up to date with their licensing requirements and to help coordinate and facilitate continuing education opportunities for foster parents.
• Identifying and addressing gaps in services to support foster parents care of dependent children.

Addition retention efforts in Okaloosa/Walton, particularly involving the FACES Program, consist of the following:
• 6 foster families (25 children) had respite provided to them through FACES screened sitters.
• 35 free haircuts have been provided to foster children in Okaloosa and Walton Counties
• 2 foster children have received birthday gifts from the “Birthday Angel”
• 1 sitter has been screened through the FACES program to serve as a “community sitter” (Escambia County)
• Approximately 3000 worth of gifts were donated by various community organizations during the holidays for Okaloosa and Walton County foster children/families (this does not include the Angel Tree project, the Eglin Officer's Spouses or various other holiday donations that were received).
• 84 book bags and diaper bags, valued at approximately $25 each, filled with various age appropriate items (diapers, formula, shampoo, toothbrush, stuffed animals, etc.) to give to children coming into care. The bags are being distributed to the 3 service centers in Okaloosa and Walton Counties for staff to give out as needed. This is an ongoing project.

District Two:
• Brochures distributed at various community locations and events to publicize foster care in hopes of getting new recruits.
• Word of mouth from other foster parents is described as the best recruitment tool.
• PowerPoint presentations to community / service groups/ faith based groups / professional organizations to create community awareness and spread the word about foster parenting. Church presentations have been most effective.
• Billboards and television commercials have produced a large number of inquiries and enrollment in MAPP.
• One provider offers a stipend for foster parents who successfully recruit other foster parents.
• The provider makes quarterly (or more often) visits to foster homes to answer questions and help in any way possible. They regularly participate in Foster Parent Meetings. Regular communication prevents future problems.
• Participation in fairs, festivals, expos, etc. to publicize the program, meet people and develop interest within the community.
• Providers participate in various community meetings to network with others to build a base of support and referrals.
• Presentations to churches by provider staff and existing foster parents have been quite successful.

Retention efforts include the following:
• Monthly newsletter and foster parent website geared toward retention by keeping foster parents informed of happenings, new ideas, training opportunities and parenting assistance
• Foster Parent Association meetings, brunches, picnics, etc. are creating networking opportunities for foster parents to assist each other.
• A Fall Fest for foster parents and children was well received. It included food, games and fun.
• Providers assist foster parents in obtaining car seats, strollers, cribs and other items needed for fostering.
• Annual Foster Parent Appreciation Banquets provide formal recognition and honor to foster parents.
• Providers provide resource information and in-service training to assist foster parents to meet training requirements as well as addressing current needs.
• Provider sends Mother’s Day, Father’s Day and birthday cards to foster parents to show appreciation.
• Door prizes are awarded to get foster parents to attend their meetings.
• Mayor’s proclamation of Foster Parent Appreciation month at several city halls throughout the district emphasized the importance of foster parents to communities.
• Participation in the monthly Recruitment / Retention conference call and monthly DCF / provider meetings provide useful knowledge for recruitment and retention.

District Three:
• District 3 uses radio and print media to promote recruitment on an ongoing basis.
• We constantly devise new ways to reach the public through verbal and written advertisements, flyers, posters, brochures and numerous speaking engagements.
• We are working toward recruitment and retention by offering a stipend to foster parents who recruit new families when those families actually complete MAPP, receive a license and take their first placement.
• We also offer extensive training through PDC’s 15-hour positive parenting classes as well as UF’s 30-hour Behavior Analysis program. The positive parenting class focuses on teaching foster families how to deal with difficult behaviors.
• We also pay a stipend as an incentive for attending all of the classes and completing the program.
• The Behavior Analysis program not only works with the foster parents in a classroom setting, it also provides in-home support because they work with the children in the
home as well. This gives our foster families much needed support and a greater willingness to work with our foster children.

Retention efforts include the following:

- This information is detailed above as to licensing staff, but also, a great deal of our retention success lies with foster care staff who work with the foster homes on a daily basis.

District Four:

- We have continued to expand our recruitment efforts. Since the last report we have had kiosks in three area malls.
- We have had billboard advertisement in several locations around the district. We have a city bus that is wrapped with our logo and information about becoming a foster or adoptive parent, as well as phone numbers and website information. In addition, 20 other buses have signage with the same information.
- We have movie theater advertisements in several theaters around the area.
- We have partnered with Child Care Licensure to put our information in 750 childcare centers throughout the district.
- We have a military specific campaign underway and have placed this special poster and rack card in areas surrounding the military bases in Jacksonville.
- The numbers of prospective foster and adoptive parents attending our bi-monthly orientations has increased dramatically in the last few months. This month we had 116 in attendance. In December we had close to 80. We think that our efforts with our recruiting campaign have gained momentum.
- The campaign that was designed by a local advertising agency has been on going since June 2001. We now are seeing the fruit of our efforts.
- The foster and adoptive parents have been a tremendous help to our cause as well. We have consistently given them our recruiting materials and they have been active in our campaign.

Retention efforts include the following:

- We have continued to offer many of the recommended retention ideas put forth through the use of the Foster Parent Support Funds.
- We have a strong class of trained Mentors who assist new foster parents during the first few months.
- We have continued to coordinate the behavioral training offered by the Professional Development Center and the University of Florida Behavioral Analysis Initiative. Many have chosen to take advantage of this valuable training.
- We have been encouraged by the number of foster parents who invite their friends and neighbors to become foster parents, and we have been giving them a recruiting stipend for their efforts.
- We have been very supportive of the foster parent support groups in our district.
- Through the foster parent support funds, we have been able to send parents to state and national foster parent conferences and training which increases the knowledge of our parents and provides excellent opportunities for them to network with other foster parents.
• The retention staff work very closely with our foster parents to help them on a daily basis. We raise funds to help them with events throughout the year. We provide staff to help with their activities and events. We try to meet their needs in every way, or refer them to where they can get the help they need.

**Suncoast Region:**
*Currently in Hillsborough County we track the ethnicity of all children entering care.*
*In order to increase our foster homes we have initiated countywide recruitment efforts.*
*We currently hold monthly recruitment community awareness meetings at various public high schools. Prior to attending the meeting, prospective families are pre-screened. The first initial screening request families to disclose their annual income, demographics, marital status, any prior criminal violations, number of children living in the home, any specifics interest in a particular child and ages of child (ren) they would be interested in fostering. During the meeting we explain the new child welfare system, requirements for becoming a foster families.*
*Our FhAN partners attend community awareness and are available for families who are interested in beginning the process.*

We have not analyzed information related to children requiring out of home placement. Here is a plan to do so.
*Find the database that includes the required information on children in out of home care.*
*Break down the information along these lines: racial/ethnic, age, zip code, level of care (special needs), and current numbers.*
*Try to find trends to predict projected numbers.*
*Analyze findings.*
*Access current foster parent databases.*
*Break down the information along these lines: racial/ethnic, zip code, age of current placements and level of care of children in the home.*
*Analyze findings.*
*Compare child information with current foster home data.*
*Design a targeted recruitment plan based on the information.*

**Family Continuity- Pasco & Pinellas Counties**
*Family Continuity Programs, Inc. utilizes data from our Out of Home data systems to produce demographic information which, when requested will compile placement history that shows ages, race, and address of removal.*
*We also can track special needs and other potential recruitment triggers.*
*At the present time, current orientation attendance has satisfied specific recruitment needs.*
*We are currently projecting future recruitment efforts to include teen homes and homes for independent living and supported living homes.*
*Demographically, our focus is to recruit additional foster homes in the Pasco County area.*
**District Seven:**

- The district’s recruitment efforts have been focused mainly on community events.
- Recruitment efforts in the community include area mall booths, health fairs, seasonal craft and art fairs, presentations in area churches, and area attractions.
- Foster parents have volunteered to sit on committees for the purpose of recruitment. These committees include but are not limited to Public Speaking, telephone, Community Outreach, and Churches. As a partner in this effort the foster parents will utilize their contacts in their communities to broaden our outreach.
- Recent events with Channel 9 Television Studios occurred in the District in the past week. The studio along with DCF staff hosted an Orientation, which was, advertised by Channel 9 and the Orientation meeting was held at the Studio. The focus of this recruitment effort was targeted at sibling groups, children older than 8 and children with special needs. Along with Recruitment staff, the department volunteers coordinator attended to ensure that if persons who attended decided not to consider foster parenting, they could assist in other ways. This was very successful and citizens became aware of the needs of the children in the care/custody of the Department.
- The District One Church One Child Coordinator has been hired and completed training. She is about to complete MAPP. She has been very active in the community and has been to many local churches getting acquainted. The coordinator will be focusing on obtaining foster and adoptive families for sibling groups and other special needs children.
- The Foster Parent Liaison’s have a monthly Foster Parent function, Partnership and Training.
- Speakers, Trainers and other community resources have been utilized to assist foster parents with receiving training.
- The Department arranges Babysitting when their foster parents attend the training meeting.
- Recently when the newly appointed DA, David Dennis came on board in District 7, the foster parent liaisons set up a brunch meeting so foster parents could meet the new DA. It was very successful and many questions were asked and the DA sent written responses at a later date to the foster parents.
- The Foster Parents Support Funds has been used to support a library for foster parents and equipment purchased to take pictures of events etc. to share at meetings that support foster parent functions.
- A foster parent appreciation event is planned for May 2003. This event is an actual dinner with prizes, music and babysitting. Last year’s event was a smashing success and the foster parents really felt special.
- The Mentoring Training is being set up and scheduled through PDC. The applications are being processed and our goal is to have 10 to 12 mentors in the district trained before July 1, 2003.
- Further the foster parents are being rewarded for their recruitment of other foster parents. We are looking at an effective means for getting the word out.
Retention efforts include the following:

- District 7 has utilized the Foster Parents Support Funds to assist foster parents with costs of going to the State and National Foster Parent Conferences.
- Staff are encouraged to attend the Foster Parent Association meetings and many have and the foster parents look very positively on their attendance.
- Additionally when a foster parent needs to have a change in their license for any reason, the foster parent is asked to come in to the office and staff address the issues with them. There has been positive feedback from this practice.
- Also when foster parents leave the agency a letter is sent to them with a personal note about the service they have given the children of our district.
- Further if they left the department in good standing, they are given an award at the Spring Appreciation Dinner/Awards.
- Emphasis is being placed on the value of foster parents and staff is responding. The leadership is supportive of foster parents and there is a huge impact on staff when this occurs.

District Eight:
- Our district recruitment plan for FY 2002-03 was submitted with this last report in August 2002.
- Our district has recently entered into three contracts with private agencies to conduct recruitment activities. Once they get staff hired we intend to get the recruitment activities under way.
- We are also planning on teen recruitment during the month of March and April using the 30-second Teen PSA and purchasing TV time.
- May is Foster Parent Appreciation month and we do an appreciation dinner and will have activities and publicity through the month.
- Once the new contracted providers are up and running, we will be establishing the recruitment team and following the directives of the statewide recruitment plan as well as the activities of our district plan.

Retention efforts include the following:

- New contract with two community providers will include support workers for every foster home in the district.
- Support workers will have regular contact with the foster homes to ensure the foster parents get support and their needs are met in an expedient manner.

District Nine:

- Child and Family Connections has developed extensive, creative plans for recruitment and retention of foster homes. Some efforts include:
- Engage school age children in a “What does Family Mean to Me” poster drawing/story writing contest – age appropriate. Winners will have pictures displayed in CFC offices and receive “bowling/movie/free burger” coupons.
- Initiate sponsorship opportunities for area family focused restaurants, theatres, Zoos, bowling alleys, etc. for free coupons, incentives. These would be donated to foster families.
• Initiate “Foster Family” of the month to be featured in the Palm Beach Post community news papers as well as the community papers, i.e., Boca Raton News, Jupiter Courier, Wellington Times, Jewish Journal, Good News, etc.
• Present churches with “challenge” to produce foster families.
• Prepare sponsorship packet to present to Winn Dixie and Publix – seeking statewide support of Foster Care/Adoption Recruitment.
• Research and identify faith-based organizations, including but not limited to churches and synagogues.
• Research and obtain POC information for community groups – i.e., MOPS, MAD DADS, MADD and other community-based groups and after school programs.
• Coordinate meetings with identified groups and initiate educational forums for their members.
• Research and identify community events for recruitment efforts.

Retention efforts include the following:
• The community currently supports a local Foster Parent Association that provides support to foster parents including telephone support, group meetings, training, a resource library, and a clothing/supply closet.
• In addition, the district has contracted with Child and Family Connections to provide support and retention services. Their system design to retain foster parents includes a Family Support Specialist for every foster home (1:30 caseload average). This Family Support Specialist will be available to the foster parent(s) at all times. The Specialist will advocate for the foster parent’s needs and will assist the foster parent in navigating through the system. Additionally, the specialist will be responsible for monthly home visits, annual relicensing home studies, corrective action plans, training, dissemination of benefits information and other licensing related issues.

District Ten:
• New homes “coming on line” are being tracked more closely to identify ethnicity, medical experience, age and gender preference, as well as their willingness to accept teens, sibling groups and children with medical needs.
• Foster home ethnicity is reflective of the general population in Broward County, and of the children in care, with the exception of the Creole/Haitian populations. We are evaluating the children’s characteristics and will be sharing this information with the proposed ‘Lead Agency” in order to target recruitment efforts.
• Teenagers are historically difficult to place. Discussion with local foster parents/groups about the possibility of opening a group home for teens in the district as met with some limited interest, primarily due to the dollars involved.
• We have implemented an enhanced rate program for foster parents willing to take teen moms and pregnant teen girls, specifically for the purpose of guiding the teens in effective child care methods. Once again, only limited success has been achieved, despite widespread publication of the program, and coordination of several agencies including the school system and Healthy Start.
• Additionally, we have had foster parents of teens speak at the open houses and MAPP Panel night emphasizing the need, and encouraging foster parents for teens. A teen in foster care participates in MAPP panel night as well.
• Children’s Medical Services homes have increased 50% (4 – 8) in the last six months, with two more in the process of converting; clearly a result of targeted recruitment.
• Recruitment activities are increasingly shifting to Community Providers as the district moves to privatize foster care. We are outlining the characteristics of children in need for those agencies, and they are brainstorming marketing techniques and plan to contract based on identified needs to target recruitment efforts.
• In the interim, we are recruiting and licensing specialized programs. For example, the 12 for Children & Families, a new CPA, specializing in the treatment of sexual offenders/multiple abuser teens has begun their recruiting effort in the courthouse, sheriff’s department and schools, while initiating contact with local church’s. Additionally, they are talking with experienced foster and therapeutic foster parents. This effort continues to increase the options for that population.

District Eleven-A:
• Ongoing orientations and presentations in the community focusing on the District’s targeted population;
• Formulation of partnerships with the community to include but not limited to the following: Miami Police Department, radio and television, Department of Corrections, libraries, hospitals, schools, civic organizations, fairs, and local churches;
• Bilingual staff to assist in the recruitment, training and retention of our families;
• Articles in local newspapers regarding children specific available for adoption;
• Monthly participation in the Recruitment and Retention Statewide Conference Call;
• Availability of recruitment materials in English, Spanish and Creole for distribution to the community. These include posters, flyers, brochures, CD’s and recruitment paraphernalia;
• A Recruitment and Retention Task Force that meets monthly to review recruitment and retention strategies in place;
• Partnerships with foster and adoptive families as they are our best recruiters;
• During orientations the benefits of adopting our children are emphasized, to include the new Tax Credit; (10) Partnership with the One Church, One Child Program;
• Statewide recruitment telephone numbers (1-800-96-ADOPT or 1-800-981-KIDS) for families interested in the foster or adoption programs.

Retention efforts include the following:
• In-Service Training Calendar to Foster Parents (topics presented therein are targeted to our children’s characteristics and behaviors and/or required training for foster parents, e.g., Water Safety, HIV/AIDS, Sexual Abuse, etc and are available in English and Spanish);
• Mentoring meetings;
• Quarterly Foster Parent Newsletter: A Foster Parent Connection;
• Development of a 15-hour and 30-hour In-Service Training entitled “Parenting Tools for Positive Behavior Change” to assist foster parents in approaching the challenging behaviors of our children;
• Developed the Fostering the Sexual-Aggressor/Victim – Train-the Trainer In-Service Training for District 11 staff;
• Fingerprinting machine installed in the MAPP Unit so to facilitate/expedite the initial screening process;
• In-house access obtained for viewing/printing Caretaker Screens (abuse and criminal clearances) for our prospective families;
• Creation of a monthly MAPP activities flyer outlining all orientations, pre-service and in-service training to our families;
• Availability of funds for Foster Parent Travel to state conferences;
• Appreciation Events for foster and adoptive parents (some events have been done in partnerships with providers);
• Availability of a Home Finder and Foster Parent Liaison in meeting our foster and adoptive families needs;
• The District is in the process of finalizing a Foster Parent Survey that will be done whenever a foster home is closed voluntarily/involuntarily. The compiled data will assist in identifying the needed services for the retention of our families, which in turn will give us an edge in recruiting foster families;
• Support Group Meetings conducted at provider sites;
• Foster Parent Association Meetings;
• Reimbursement to foster parents satisfactorily completing the 15-hour “Parenting Tools for Positive Behavior Change” In-Service training;
• Creation of a Caregiver Mediation Board; Foster and adoptive parents, Guardian Ad Litem, courts, Foster Parent Liaison, Home Finder, et al are invited to Family Night (last meeting of the MAPP/GPS Pre-Service Training for foster families);
• Promotion of a “Buddy” system among foster families.

District Twelve:
• The District 12 Community Alliance has established a Foster Care Recruitment and Retention Task Force to enhance CBCVF’s existing recruitment efforts. Task Force members currently include foster home providers, church leaders, and foster parents. A foster parent chairs the Task Force.
• In our subcontracts, we provide for incentives for foster parents who recruit new foster homes.
• CBCVF’s Community Resource Manager promotes the need for foster and adoptive homes at speaking engagements throughout the community.

Retention efforts include the following:
• In an effort to help retain our existing foster homes, CBCVF has sub-contracted with provider agencies in the community to provide licensing and retention services. In addition to performing basic licensing tasks, these providers maintain contact with the homes to offer support, guidance and assistance. They also advocate to CBCVF for the foster homes’ needs when they are not being met. This has been particularly important during this first year of transition to a community based lead agency in District 12, as the provider staff helped to support the homes through this transition.
The Foster Care Recruitment and Retention Task Force will be developing community strategies for foster home retention.

- CBCVF is also planning a Foster and Adoptive Parent appreciation luncheon, as well as a letter of thanks from our President/CEO, including pizza and movie passes.

**District Thirteen:**

- DISTRICT 13 Recruitment Plan outlines specific tasks and responsibilities as an ongoing process.
- Identify the number of foster homes in the district
- Review the district’s over-capacity reports
- Conduct an assessment to determine the types of placement needs (including foster parent community input)
- Analyze the needs assessment to target recruitment homes to meet the identified needs of children in substitute care
- Develop a Speaker’s Bureau to educate the community on the need for foster homes
- Conduct recruitment fairs at various community activity days
- Conduct mass mailing to churches and organizations through the district
- Continuous media request for prospective parents
- Implement the mentoring program for the experience foster parent to help the new foster parents
- Implement the grandparent program to help with respite care and life experiences for our children in care
- Works in conjunction with PIO to ensure positive media coverage of successes
- Recruit for and develop a district pool of certified foster parents leaders and co-leaders with a minimum of two trainers in each of the five (5) counties in the district

**Current/Upcoming Recruitment and Retention Efforts:**

- Implemented the Foster Care & Adoption Committee for the District. The committee will plan, organize and execute various events to raise awareness for the need of children in care
- Bank on this! Area banks are investing in the Department of Children & Families by allowing Recruiters to recruit on site
- Schedule and set up a Parent Information Center in area Libraries throughout the county, i. e. flyers, brochure, registration forms for MAPP training
- Conduct recruitment fairs at various community activity days
- Continue with speaking engagements at Community Agencies, Churches, Schools and other Organizations throughout the District
- Continue to have quarterly meetings with the Foster Care and Adoptive Advisory Committee
- Continue the Awareness & Image event that will be used to increase and improve visibility throughout the communities. The Department along with the Leesburg Police Department hosted a softball competition. Hopefully, this will become an annual affair.
- Conduct home visits to newly licensed foster parents within 30-45 days of initial placement in the home
• Conduct an exit interview for foster parents that decide to not relicense
• Quarterly foster parent newsletter to keep foster parents abreast of district activities, polices and procedural changes
• Conduct quarterly meeting with foster parents to discuss recruitment and retention inputs
• Schedule and coordinate Foster Parent Appreciation Events during the month of May
• Identify a Foster Parent of the Year in each County
• Respond to foster parent issues and concerns in a timely manner
• Conduct a minimum of 2 visits per year with foster parents
• Ensure that Certified Behavior Analysts work with foster parents as needed
• Positive Parenting Training available to foster parents through PDC and the Behavior Analysts

**District Fourteen:**
• Current Recruitment and Retention efforts include a Recruitment and Retention Plan that is being updated through the District Recruitment Team.
• A calendar of Recruitment activities has been developed that includes participation of the faith community, foster parents, and neighborhood partnerships
• MAPP classes are being held on weekends in various locations within the District
• Incentive payment authorized for current foster parents who recruit families that become licensed

Retention efforts include the following:
• The foster parent Liaison logs requests for assistance from foster parents and arranges the appropriate response to address the need. The log entries are analyzed to identify trends that might suggest system issues.
• The foster parent liaison also reviews the services identified by both the foster parent and the licensing counselor in the waiver service plans to insure that the needs are being met.
• The licensing supervisor makes visits to newly licensed homes to provide follow-up to and oversight of licensing counselors, and provides personal welcome and delivery of the license.
• Financial assistance is provided to foster parents to attend area and statewide training and conferences.
• Foster Parents are receiving training as MAPP co-trainers.
• The Recruitment and Retention Plan supports Foster Parent Appreciation Activities throughout the year.

**District Fifteen:**
• Educating the public about the need for foster homes through Public Service Announcements on cable television. The airtime and channel is taken into consideration and have recently included family oriented stations such as Lifetime and the cooking channel. The PSA’s are shown year round and the viewing area encompasses the District’s four county area.
Radio Shows – Both pre-taped and live talk radio broadcasts are aired at least 6 times each throughout the District.

Our recruiter has partnered with a community agency that deals specifically with the quality of life in our District and they have agreed to take on the challenge of foster care recruitment. They currently have a contest in progress to see which county representative can get the most recruits within a three-month period (January through March). In April they will conduct a meeting with our recruiters, community members, foster parents, Independent Living Coordinator, and round table members to provide recommendations to our lead agency, United For Families, on ways to improve the foster care system.

The recruiters advertise via donated bumper stickers, magnets and fliers. They send out copies of their MAPP training schedules to churches, schools, etc to include in their bulletins.

They speak to the community through organizations such as the Rotary Club, the YMCA, libraries, local malls, as well as setting up booths at the county fairs.

Retention efforts include the following:

- Returning telephone calls within 24 hours.
- Serving new families by providing them with supplies such as diapers, clothing, toys, furniture, car seats, sheets, towels, etc.
- Placing children in homes that have the ability to meet their needs in an attempt to avoid a disruption in placement.
- Providing new foster families with a mentor when requested.
- Provide foster families with valuable on-going training to increase their parenting skills.