



Transforming Children's Care

GLOBAL COLLABORATIVE PLATFORM

Spotlight Series on Foster Care Practice: Webinar 1 - Introduction to Foster Care

7 April 2022



WELCOME

- This webinar is hosted by the Transforming Children's Care Global Collaborative Platform
- The platform establishes more strategic sector-wide collaboration from global to local levels to strengthen children's care and care systems
- Sign up at the link in the chat to join the platform and receive updates about future webinars



LOUISE COX

International Programme Manager
Martin James Foundation



Transforming Children's Care

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**SPOTLIGHT
SERIES ON
FOSTER CARE
PRACTICE**

We will be holding a monthly spotlight webinar that focuses on various aspects of foster care practice

Dates for the webinar series

- 5 May
- 2 June
- 7 July
- 4 August



AGENDA

Welcome

Presentations:

- Existing global guidance/standards in foster care and Foster care and overall care reform
- Types of foster care
- The experience of being a foster carer

Panel Discussion and Q & A

Upcoming opportunities and closing



**BARBRA
ABER**

Regional Family Care
Advisor, Catholic Relief
Services



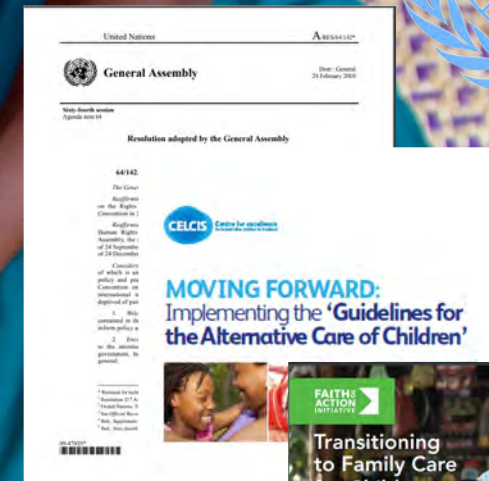


Global Standards and Learning on Foster Care



Global resources

- UN Convention on the Rights of the Child
- 2010 UN *Guidelines for the Alternative Care of Children*
- UNGA Resolution passed in Dec 2019
- Moving Forward: Implementing the ‘Guidelines for the Alternative Care of Children’.
- Interagency Tracking Progress Tool
- Interagency *Getting Care Right for All Children* Massive Open Online Course
- COVID – 19 specific guidance on Alternative Care



What is Foster Care

“Situations whereby children are placed by a competent authority for the purposes of alternative care in the domestic environment of a family other than children’s own family that has been selected, qualified, approved and supervised for providing such care.”

(UN Guidelines for Alternative Care, 2009 – Article 29).

Key findings from global research - Family for Every child 2015

- Definitions of foster care vary greatly - comparisons difficult
- Definitions and perceptions of what is kinship v. foster care also vary.
- It has become the primary form of alternative care in most of Europe, North America, parts of South America.
- In Asia and Africa foster care, it is at earlier stage of development, often as pilots.

Policy and Legislation on Foster Care

Should set out the objectives, priorities and continuum of services in alternative care based on UNCRC and Guidelines for Alternative Care:

- **best interests of the child** paramount in all decisions;
- **child participation** in assessment, decision making and reviewing;
- **the right to an identity, and knowledge of birth origins;**
- **the right to grow up in a family** - the original family wherever possible;
- **seek to assess, plan and decide care plans in partnership with the child's family members**, and strive to enable safe and beneficial contact with birth parents, key relatives and friends;
- **permanency planning**: all children need stable care and relationships and this should be the primary objective for all, as early in the child's life as possible, but this can be achieved in many different ways, depending on the child's unique needs.

Policy and Legislation on Foster care

Moving Forward (Cantwell et al, 2012) highlights essential policy requirements, aligned with Guidelines for Alternative Care (2009):

- **integrated formal & informal** care provision, recognising the strengths & weaknesses of both, deciding which to use in a coordinated & coherent way, but always.....
- **clearly designate the person or entity responsible for the child** at all stages (the parents or principal caregivers unless otherwise legally determined), to prevent conflict and uncertainty;
- **ensure multi-agency cooperation and information-sharing** to guarantee the best protection and most appropriate alternative care for each child
- **develop and implement alternative care policy based on evidence** - ‘sound information and statistical data’;

Policy and Legislation on Foster Care



Foster Care cannot be **implemented in isolation**. It needs to be part of a continuum of **alternative care options**, alongside services for **prevention** and **reintegration**.

This is essential to ensure children are placed in foster care only when it is **necessary** (cannot remain with own family), and **suitable** (meets the child's needs)

Foster Care in the Context of Care Reform

CONTINUUM OF CARE



Foster Care from the System's Perspective



*Effective foster care needs to be part of an overall **national alternative care strategy** with state **coordination** and **oversight**, and **quality standards** for alternative care agreed and enforced by all stakeholders*

Decision making -
necessity &
suitability

Monitoring &
support, based on
4-way partnership

Support for
reintegration and
leaving care

Key Principles of Strong Foster Care Systems

- Child-centred care planning requires FC to be part of a **broader child welfare system**
- Foster care is cost effective (compared to residential care) **but not cheap.**
- Foster carers must always receive **training, support and information**
- Consider different **models of care** – pilot, test & adapt to find the right model(s) that meets children's needs in your context, before scale-up.
- Consider **social, cultural & geographical factors**

Government Capacity to Support the Building Blocks

- **at national level** to set legislation, regulations and standards, and oversee their implementation.
- **at sub-national level** to enable, support & monitor safe and effective FC;
- **Specifically, local authorities and FC agencies must ensure:**

Safe and transparent accreditation / licensing of foster care agencies;

Strong child safeguarding policy – fully implemented and monitored;

Recruit, train, develop and retain a strong, committed and competent workforce;

Ability to run effective and realistic recruitment campaigns for FCs;

Capacity to train foster carers – both initially before approval, and longer term throughout their career as a foster carer.

System for carrying out criminal record checks and obtaining balanced, in-depth references for foster care candidates;

Government Capacity to Support the Building Blocks

- Safe and transparent **system for assessment and approval** of foster carers;
- Checks and balances – a multi-agency and **objective system for decision making** (approval / registration of foster carers, placement of children)
- **Assessments of children's needs**, matching and care planning;
- Support, regular review and **monitoring of placements** (regular visits, seeing and listening to the child);
- System for **working with birth families**, organising and supervising contact;
- System and services to **support transitions** (reintegration to birth family, move from temporary to permanent placement, and leaving care)
- Placement breakdown procedures – for child and for foster carers;
- Complaints procedures for child, foster carers and birth relatives – must be clear and accessible (this is in addition to safeguarding policy).

Financing and Budgeting

- Foster care usually costs much less per child than residential care, but
- safe and high-quality foster care requires considerable initial investment
- Savings from transferring expenditure from residential to foster care are unlikely to be realised in the first 2 or 3 years
- Only once foster care is established at sufficient scale, as part of a continuum of alternative care services, can savings be made by repurposing or closing institutions to enable further investment in FC.
- Need to balance investment in foster care with investment in **prevention**, (i.e. universal basic and targeted family support services, with **kinship care** as a first alternative to parental care), and **family reintegration**, to support safe return of children to their families where possible.



Thank you

 **OCRS** faith.
CATHOLIC RELIEF SERVICES action.
results.

4 Hen


**LOURENZA
FOGHILL**

National Director One Child
One Family Hope and
Homes for Children South
Africa



Care Reform Key Element: Prevention

AFS Khusela:

A Community Based Prevention Model; responsive, effective, timeous, measurable Early Identification, Quick Intervention and Ongoing Support.

Alternative Family-based Care options:

1. Temporary Safety Parents
2. Specialist Foster-care.
3. Long-term Foster-Care (permanency)
4. Domestic Adoption.

Community Based Organization (CBO):

An organization within the community that is aimed at meeting the community needs.



hope and homes
for children

www.hopeandhomes.org





Process of Care Reform and Key Elements for Sustainability

- Political Will, Legislation, Policy and Budgets.
- Capacity-building of social workforce (case management and process flows) and active citizenry of communities.
- **Prevention and Early Intervention Model; efficient, timeous, responsive and measurable. Performs key gatekeeping functions, building of alternative family-based care option banks + post-placement support.**
- Transition of children out of institutions and repurposing of institutions.
- On-going service delivery implementation partnership between government, civil society, communities and corporates.
- Monitoring & Evaluation: Tracking of child-in-family from 1st point of contact with child protection system. Measurement and evaluation of outcomes for child-in-family on well-being and resilience metrics; reduction of risk and increase of protective factors.



AFS-KHUSELA Community Prevention Model; relational and systemic.

Relational – building on strengths of families and communities.

Systemic – Clear role allocation, tools and solid data.

Provides the **FRAMEWORK, TOOLS AND TRAINING** to **COORDINATE, EQUIP AND RESOURCE** networks of key stakeholders in communities; provides **CAPACITY TO MEASURE OUTCOMES AND IMPACT** and **PLACES AGENCY BACK INTO COMMUNITIES.**

The model places prevention functions like **Early Identification, Quick Intervention, Monitoring & Support** back in the heart of communities. It provides opportunity to **support efficient, targeted intervention, alternative family-based care options and case management by communities and statutory professionals.**

AFS-KHUSELA enables under all conditions:

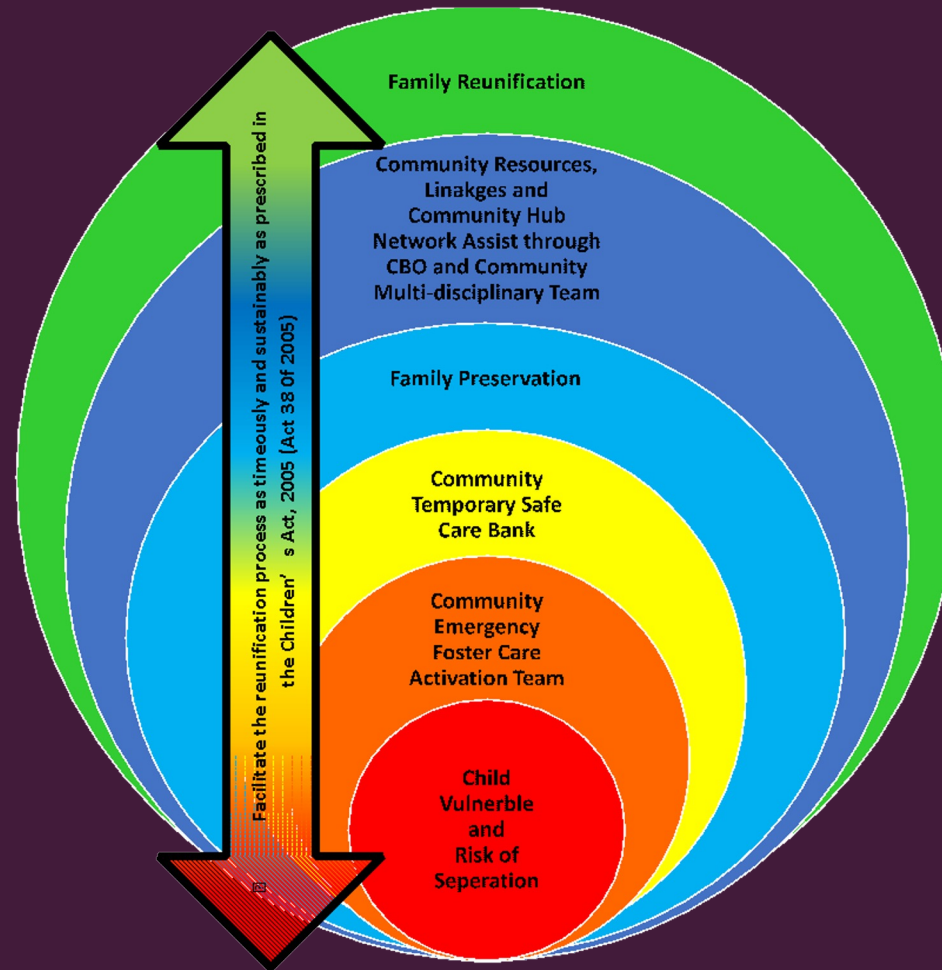
In-depth Assessment across 9 well-being domains of child and family, providing foundation for an efficient, targeted Family Service Plan, measured for outcomes on reassessment which allows for course-correction – optimal outcomes.

Creating Alternative Family-based Care option 'banks' in communities; which include –

- Screened , trained Temporary Safety Parent Families for emergency placement (90 days).
- Specialist foster-care to stabilise children on a treatment programme while resourcing / educating parents to manage conditions.
- Long-term foster-care for permanency.
- Domestic Adoption.

Plays a key role in Safeguarding, enabling early identification and effective intervention, mitigating escalation and harm. The surveillance network created detects early signs of safeguarding risks and appropriate prevention actions can be taken.

KHUSELA – CONTINUUM OF CARE FOR THE CHILD AT RISK





AFS-KHUSELA Role Allocation

- **Government as Whole-of-Government to provide:**

- ☐ Sustainability in redirecting budgets to support Prevention.
- ☐ Provide quality basic service delivery
- ☐ Coordinate and support Specialist service delivery
- ☐ And to track and measure outcomes for children and families.

- **Families:** become more resilient and change-adaptive through being

- ☐ Active Actors in managing own eco-system through access to services, reducing dependency on government for immediate intervention.

- **COMMUNITIES AND NGOs**

- ☐ Give Agency back to communities to promote early identification, quick and appropriate intervention through linkage to services and stabilisation of families.

Key Win: Budget Speech February 2022

Minister of Finance, Enoch Godongwane, announced the implementation of the extended child support grant to allow double orphans to grow up in the care of extended family and not be placed in foster-care!

**TAMMY-JO
MATTHEWS**

Foster Carer,

All-4-One-Child project for
First Community Resource
Centre, in partnership with
Hope and Homes for
Children South Africa



Panel Discussion and Q&A



ROSE AACCA

Senior Probation and
Welfare Officer
Uganda



Opportunity to Join the Task Force on Foster Care

The **Task Force on Foster Care** has been established to provide a platform for sharing and learning on foster care practice experiences from different contexts across the globe.

The group will meet on the Tuesday following each webinar. Learnings from this platform will inform the development of a Thematic Brief on Foster Care.

We encourage and welcome people with lived experience of foster care, foster carers, practitioners, Government actors, and those interested in sharing their experience of the implementation of foster care services to join the Task Force.

If you are interested in joining the Task Force, please sign up to the Transforming Children's Care Global Collaborative Platform and request to join the 'Foster Care Group'.

<https://www.transformcare4children.org/user/register>



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**THANK
YOU FOR
JOINING!**

Please see the chat box for a link to learn more about the [Transforming Children's Care Global Collaborative Platform](#) and find out how to join.

We will be sending you a link to the webinar recording and slides in a follow-up email shortly. If you have questions, comments or recommendations for future webinar topics, please send them to:

contact@transformcare4children.org

En el chat encontrará un enlace para obtener más información sobre la [Plataforma de Colaboración Mundial para la Transformación de la Atención Infantil](#) y saber cómo unirse a ella.

En breve le enviaremos un enlace a la grabación del seminario web y a las diapositivas en un correo electrónico de seguimiento. Si tiene preguntas, comentarios o recomendaciones para los temas de futuros seminarios web, envíelos a:

contact@transformcare4children.org



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