

Children and Youth System of Care State Technical Assistance Team

June 2, 2021

MOU Part 11: Resource Families and Therapeutic Foster Care Services



Agenda

- Updates
- Resource Families (RF)
- Therapeutic Foster Care Services (TFC)
- Local County presentations
 - Santa Clara
 - Monterey
- Q&A

California Department of Social Services Updates

- Updated online System of Care primer and free interactive online training, Building Systems of Care, available from The Institute for Innovation and Implementation: <https://bit.ly/3eYKKA1>
- Trainings and best practices for Mobile Response and Stabilization available from The Institute for Innovation and Implementation: <https://theinstitute.umaryland.edu/>

California Department of Education Update (1)

Academic Seminar: The High School Behavior Education Program, 2nd Edition

This intervention is meant for middle- and high-school-age students with a primary focus on supporting organizational skills. This resource includes a comprehensive manual with lesson plans and reproducible materials that can be accessed at the following web page:

https://assets.website-files.com/5d3725188825e071f1670246/5d72cc107d51710cc9746041_academic_seminar_handbook_second_edition.pdf.

California Department of Education Update (2)

Resilience Education Program (REP)

This package of intervention strategies is intended for students in grades four to eight and is currently under active development and evaluation by a team of researchers at the University of Wisconsin at Madison. The REP also includes explicit cognitive-behavioral instruction and materials for parents and caregivers to support students with internalizing difficulties at home and can be found on the School Mental Health Collaborative REP Home web page at <https://smhcollaborative.org/rep/>.

California Department of Education Update (3)

Early Start Webinar Series

To address the needs of Early Start during the coronavirus pandemic, this Webinar Series offers multiple courses. Registration for these events can be found on the California Early Start website at <https://www.cpeionline.net>. You will first need to login or create an account, enroll in a Webinar Series, and then sign up for individual webinars in these series as they become available. For more information on this webinar series, contact Annie Baccay, Education Programs Consultant, Special Education Division, at ABaccay@cde.ca.gov.

System of Care Updates

- 28 final MOUs have been submitted to the AB 2083 Team.
- On-going technical assistance calls continue to be provided to discuss technical assistance related to draft MOUs and child-specific cases.
- More details are available on our landing page:
<https://humanservices.ucdavis.edu/system-of-care-technical-assistance>

Memorandum of Understanding Part 11: Resource Families and Therapeutic Foster Care Services

Today's Webinar will:

1. Define briefly Resource Family Approval (RFA) and Therapeutic Foster Care (TFC)
2. Review state guidance for Part 11 of the MOU
3. Highlight local effectiveness of RFA and TFC practice in support of foster care outcomes

Family Based Services and Supports

- A full continuum of family-based placement options, where Therapeutic Foster Care (TFC) services can be provided, include Resource Families, Tribally Approved Homes (TAH) and Intensive Services Foster Care (ISFC)
- Other System of Care partner agencies bring necessary resources and services to support this continuum.

Tribally Approved Homes

- A Tribally Approved Home is a home that is licensed or approved by an Indian child's tribe, or a tribe or tribal organization designated by the Indian child's tribe.
- A Tribally Approved Home is **NOT** subject to Resource Family Approval (RFA) requirements.
- A Tribally Specified Home is a designation by the Indian child's Tribe of its preferred placement option for the Indian child. If the Indian child's tribe does not exercise its right to approve this home, then the prospective caregiver will be subject to the RFA requirements.

Resource Families

- Resource Families work with the child's biological family and their natural support, together with child welfare or probation staff and other Children and Youth System of Care partners to successfully return the child to their parents, or when that is not possible, to support the child's transition to permanency.
- The purpose of a Resource Family is to provide a child with a feeling of safety, permanence, and well-being.

What is the Resource Family Approval Program?

- Unified approval standard for those seeking to foster, adopt, and/or provide legal guardianship.
- A comprehensive assessment of the Resource Families and home, which includes interviews and a final Written Report. (*What support do Resource Families have and what do they need?*)
- Prepares and trains Resource Families to better meet the needs of vulnerable children and youth from the beginning of their journey.
- Assess a Resource Family's ability to support a permanency plan for a child, but Resource Families still choose the role they play, temporary or permanent.

What is the Resource Family Approval Process?

- One approval standard
- One application and one background check
- Combined home safety check and family evaluation
- Pre- and post-approval training for all families
- The following Welfare and Institution Code links include procedures for the placement of a child prior to approval as a Resource Family:
 - Emergency Basis ([WIC 309](#), [WIC 361.45](#), [WIC 727.05](#))
 - An ICWA eligible child may be placed on an emergency basis pending Tribal approval of the home
 - Compelling Reason ([WIC 16519.5](#))

Components of Resource Family Approval

RFA Application & Documentation:

1. Home Environment Assessment

- ✓ Background Check
- ✓ Home, Health, & Safety

2. Permanency Assessment

- ✓ Pre-Approval Training
- ✓ Family Evaluation
- ✓ Additional Activities

***Comprehensive
Assessment
&
Written Report***

Emergency Basis

- Must be with relative or non-related extended family member.
- Emergency basis requires assessment found in the following Welfare and Institution codes: [WIC 361.4](#) or [WIC 727.05](#)
 - California Law Enforcement Telecommunications System (CLETS)/Child Abuse Central Index (CACI) and home evaluation.
 - Live Scan within 10 days of CLETS or 5 days of emergency placement.
- Application and home environment assessment must be initiated within 5 business days.
- Comprehensive assessment completed < 90 days absent good cause
- Emergency placement can happen pre or post disposition.

“Compelling Reason”

- Based on unique needs of a child/youth, including maintaining family connections
- After Home Environment Assessment is completed
- Permanency Assessment completed within 90 days, unless documented good cause exists
- Only Resource Family applicants are eligible for compelling reason placements (for more information refer to the following Welfare and Institutions code section, [WIC 16519.5](#))

What is the RFA's role in the System of Care?



Foundational platform for ALL children and youth involved in CWS and Probation systems to heal with a caring family trained to help the child thrive and succeed.

Why Resource Family Approval and Therapeutic Foster Care Services are in the Children and Youth System of Care MOU

- MOU based agreements support capacity building for both family-based foster care and the intensive mental health services needed to maintain youth in community.
- While Child Welfare and Probation agencies have legal obligations to ensure Resource Family capacity, other System of Care partners have responsibility to ensure capacity for and oversight of their system's supports and services.
- Part 11 relates closely to Teaming, Assessment and Coordination of Care (Parts 5, 6 and 7).

Resource Families and Tribally Approved Homes (1)

- Resource Families and TAHs play a critical role in the life of children in out-of-home foster care placements. When out-of-home foster care placement is needed to keep the child safe, Child Welfare Services and Probation Departments make diligent efforts to identify, consider and evaluate relatives, family friends and those closely tied to the family as the primary placement option.
- When the child is or may be ICWA eligible, close communication with the Tribe is important. ICWA Placement Preferences must be utilized in these situations.

Resource Families and Tribally Approved Homes (2)

- When a foster care placement with a closely tied adult is not an option for the child, the placing agency makes efforts to actively recruit and support resource families that are able to keep the child or youth connected to their community and culture.

(Toolkit Pg. 36)

Therapeutic Foster Care

- TFC is one of three specialty mental health services stemming from the Katie A. settlement agreement, now known as the Pathways to Wellbeing. The three services are: Intensive Care Coordination, Intensive Home-Based Services, and TFC services.
- Membership in the Katie A. class or subclass is not a prerequisite to receiving ICC, IHBS or TFC services.

Therapeutic Foster Care

- TFC services are provided under the Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnostic and Treatment benefit and is available to all children and youth who:
 - Are under the age of 21
 - Are eligible for full scope Medi-Cal
 - Meet medical necessity criteria for TFC specialty mental health services

https://www.dhcs.ca.gov/services/MH/Pages/Manuals_And_Guides.aspx

Therapeutic Foster Care

- TFC is a specialty mental health service that is short-term, intensive, highly coordinated, trauma-informed, and individualized intervention.
- TFC is intended for children and youth who require intensive and frequent mental health support in a family environment.
- TFC should not be the only SMHS that a child or youth receives. Children and youth receiving TFC also must receive other medically necessary SMHS, including but not limited to, Intensive Care Coordination (ICC) and other as set forth in the client plan.
- There must be a CFT in place to guide and plan TFC service provision.

Therapeutic Foster Care Parent

- The TFC parent must be at least 21 years old and meet California's Medicaid rehabilitation provider qualifications for "other qualified provider" (i.e., has a high school diploma or equivalent degree).
- Must be approved as a TFC provider, and as a resource parent by the TFC Agency.
- Will provide TFC services under the oversight of a TFC Agency, and under the direction of an LMHP employed by the TFC Agency.
- Meet and comply with all basic foster care or resource parent requirements
- Meet and comply with TFC training requirements (including 40 hours of initial training and 24 hours of ongoing/annual training).

Therapeutic Foster Care

TFC status:

- Number of TFC providers (FFAs): 22*
- Number of counties providing TFC: 12*

**As of March 31, 2021*

Therapeutic Foster Care

Some challenges and feedback shared related to TFC implementation:

- Documentation of interventions and other Medi-Cal documentation requirements.
- FFAs experience challenges with the steep learning curve and process to become a Medi-Cal provider.
- Recruitment of TFC parents.

Therapeutic Foster Care

- TFC services offer an alternative to congregate care placement and are a critical resource in the foster care and behavioral health continuum of care.
- Implementing TFC services requires partnership at the local level, specifically, the placing agency, the MHP and the provider agency to ensure this Medi-Cal Specialty Mental Health Service is available to children and youth as medically necessary.

Resource Family Approval and Therapeutic Foster Care Partnership: *Beyond Child Welfare and Mental Health*

- Foster youth with intellectual and developmental (I/DD) needs often require intensive mental health/TFC, etc.
- While provision of services is critical to the wellbeing of children and youth experiencing behavioral health issues, the relationships and trust they find within a resource family are as important if not more.
- Academic success is enhanced when stable family caregiving and mental health supports are in place.
- School districts can be partners in setting up recruitment drives to generate additional foster families and educate the community about the needs and processes around the resource family approval process.

A Trauma Informed System Involves Intensive Services and Well Supported Caregivers

- Nearly all foster youth have significant trauma related histories*.
- While the healing relationship between caregiver and youth is the foundation of recovery from trauma, timely access to TFC and other Specialty Mental Health Services reduces caregiver distress and allows foster parents to focus on healing, rather than navigating or accessing the system to get the care needed.

*Proposed CalAIM medical necessity eligibility criteria will take into account trauma history.

MOU Framework

MOU should include, at minimum, the following:

- A shared commitment to identifying, recruiting and supporting family-based caregivers and therapeutic care environments to deliver high quality, trauma informed care to children, youth, and their families.
- Identified ways in which partner agencies support Child Welfare, Probation and the Mental Health Authority in resource family recruitment, as well as (ISFC) and TFC implementation.

Guiding Questions (1)

- Is there a shared commitment across agencies to recruit resource families and TFC providers?
- What are barriers to recruitment and retention of resource families and TFC implementation?
- What efforts are taking place to address any capacity issues relating to resource families?

Guiding Questions (2)

- What are known characteristics or qualities of successful recruitment of resource families to care for children and youth with complex needs?
- Are county and local partners (e.g., child welfare, probation, and county mental health plan, tribal partners) collaborating to support recruitment of a continuum of resource families, ISFC, and TFC?
- How do you ensure the delivery of TFC culturally appropriate and responsive?

Guiding Questions (3)

- Is there a shared commitment to recruit homes with contractual agreements with regional centers for children who are developmentally delayed? Is there a shared commitment of placement resources?
- How can LEAs assist in the recruitment of resource families? Are educational services and LEA resources considered when contemplating placement with a TFC parent?
- Are educational services and local district resources considered when contemplating placement with a TFC parent?

Practices for Success

Consider the following partners in recruitment of Resource Families and delivery of ISFC and TFC services:

- County behavioral health agency
- Current Resource Families/Youth/Parents and families
- Tribes
- Department of Rehabilitation Regional Office
- Regional Center(s)
- Early Start program representative
- County Office of Education, Special Education Local Plan Areas, Local Education Agency



Questions and Answers

Resources (1)

- ACIN 05-17
<https://www.cdss.ca.gov/Portals/9/ACIN/2017/I-05-17.pdf?ver=2019-06-13-105626-043>
- ACIN 91-17 and MHSUDS IN NO.17-069
http://www.cdss.ca.gov/Portals/9/ACIN/2017/I-91_17.pdf?ver=2019-06-17-125008-950
- TA Webinars on Continuum of Care Reform
<https://www.cibhs.org/ccr-webinars>

Resources (2)

- TFC Webinar 5/30/2018
<https://www.cibhs.org/post/therapeutic-foster-care-and-intensive-services-foster-care>
- TFC webinar 6/28/2018 & TFC Toolkit
<https://www.cibhs.org/post/therapeutic-foster-care-tfc-training-resources-toolkit>
- TFC webinar, 6/13/20, featuring Santa Clara County
<https://www.cibhs.org/post/implementation-therapeutic-foster-care-county-and-provider-partnerships>

Resources (3)

- TFC webinars, 2/25/20 featuring Kern County and 6/22/2020, featuring Mendocino County
<https://www.cibhs.org/post/implementation-therapeutic-foster-care-county-and-provider-partnerships-1>

State Level Technical Assistance Request Form



<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/ZJNKLKY>

Children and Youth System of Care State Team Email



SystemofCare@DSS.CA.GOV

Children and Youth System of Care Webpage Resources

<https://www.chhs.ca.gov/home/system-of-care/>

<https://humanservices.ucdavis.edu/system-of-care-technical-assistance>

Addendum A

Slide 14 consists of a description of the RFA Application and Documentation process. The left side of the slide includes a list of (1) Home Environment Assessment, including Background Check and Home, Health and Safety and (2) Permanency Assessment, including Pre-Approval Training, Family Evaluation, and Additional Activities. The right side of the slide includes a text box with "Comprehensive Assessment & Written Report." The processes and documents from the left side of the slide result in the Comprehensive Assessment and Written Report.

Addendum B (1)

Slide 17 describes "What is the RFA's role in the System of Care?" The image on the left side of the slide contains 3 rows of 3 boxes. The boxes, in order from left to right, include:

Row 1:

- Blue box with image of a house and labeled, "Short-Term Residential Therapeutic Program"
- Green box with image of a tree and labeled, "Resource Family Approval"
- Bright green box with image of a dollar sign and labeled, "Level of Care and Rates Information"

Addendum B (2)

Row 2:

- Pink box with image of a tree and labeled, "Child and Family Teams/CANS"
- Blue box with image of a magnifying glass viewing an arrow pointing upward and labeled, "Performance and Transparency"
- Pink box with image of a family and labeled, "Foster Family Agency"

Addendum B (3)

Row 3:

- Yellow box with image of the outline of a globe and labeled, "Communications"
- Yellow box with image of a group of people and labeled, "Recruitment, Retention, and Support Resources"
- Grey box with image of a for small houses and labeled, "Temporary Shelter Care Facilities"

The text on the right side of the slide is connected by an arrow pointing to the image of the Resource Approval Process box (row 1, middle box) on the left side of the slide.