

FFTA



## ***Benchmark TFC! Project***

### **Overarching Goal:**

To create empirically-based benchmarks for measuring performance and effectiveness in the field of treatment foster care by collecting information on a common set of outcomes and gathering sufficient data from FFTA members around the country.

### **Background:**

Over the past 20 years, there have been some, but not many, evaluations of treatment foster care most of which focused on clinical outcomes, cost, comparisons with other services (e.g. group homes), risk factors, and reunification. Although these studies, as well as numerous anecdotal indicators, generally report on the clinical, social, and financial efficacy and efficiency of treatment foster care, they have been limited in scope. Most are quite small, reviewing only a single agency or group of children, while utilizing a set of data elements unique to the situation or organization. However, it is precisely the lack of uniform data sets that prevents accurate comparisons between agencies, service models, and forms of treatment. As a result, collective stakeholders do not have an accurate assessment of the effectiveness or efficiency of TFC programs.

### **Our Vision for the Future:**

The *Benchmark TFC!* Project will have national implications, including:

- Facilitating the acceptance and utilization of a uniform data set, with agreed upon outcomes;
- Establishment of stronger national standards and performance benchmarks;
- Opportunities for funding agencies to develop and use reliable methods of comparison, looking at both cost and outcomes;
- Ability for agencies to determine how their performance compares to peer agencies;
- Results that can be fed back into agencies' performance improvement processes;
- Accurate, uniform, and comprehensive data will inform and guide policy development, evaluation and decision making;
- Funders, policy makers, families, administrators, and clinicians will be able to ascertain the effectiveness of specific interventions and design programs accordingly.
- Ability to illustrate the efficacy of utilizing similar data sets and data collection processes across a wide range of children's services.

In the end, children and families will be better served through well crafted, evidence-based, research-supported programs.

## **Critical elements are in-place for implementation:**

- Funding from the Annie E. Casey Foundation for Phase I of the project;
- A large pool of Treatment Foster Care agencies, drawn from FFTA's membership, representing all parts of the U.S.;
- An experienced data collection organization (KaleidaCare Solutions);
- A data collection tool for TFC agencies that are not KaleidaCare subscribers;
- A set of key data elements designed and tested by a national panel of child welfare researchers;
- Experience based upon a smaller study conducted in 2002.

## **Phases of the Project**

FFTA is committed to pursuing additional funding opportunities to extend the project past Phase 1. Towards that end, FFTA has contracted with a fund development consultant to pursue other funding opportunities to expand the project. Below is a guide to future phases of the project if funding is secured.

### Phase 1

The funding we have received allows us collect, analyze, and disseminate admission and discharge data to FFTA member agencies participating in the project.

### Phase 2

Continuation of Phase 1 and add a one-year follow-up survey. The costs involved would include contracting with a third party (already identified) to conduct follow-up surveys on a sample of all discharges from each participating agency.

### Phase 3

Continuation of Phases 1 & 2 and adding in additional survey elements that will help in determining cost of services.

Questions about the Project should be directed to:

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