



Myers JDC
Brookdale

Parent and Child Foster Care: Literature Review

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Abstract

Background

Different countries provide various types of foster care developed to suit the needs of children who lack adequate parental care. In Israel, there are four types of foster care: traditional, therapeutic, emergency, and kinship foster care. Parent and child foster care is formally not practiced in Israel, nor is it mentioned in the Law on Foster Care. The Public Forum – Youth Villages, Social Service Boarding Schools, and Foster Care in Israel is a philanthropic and professional partnership designed to promote residential care settings and foster care services on a national level. In October 2022, the Public Forum contacted the Children, Youth and Young Adults team at the Myers-JDC-Brookdale Institute and commissioned a review of parent and child foster care models and best practices.

Objective

To learn about the scope of parent and child foster care worldwide and examine best practices.

Method

The review was based on a variety of information sources, including scholarly articles published in the global professional literature and websites of organizations devoted to providing foster care services or to the study of childhood. Publications on parent and child foster care were found in the UK and the US.

Main Findings and Conclusions

Parent and child foster care is a unique type of foster care where both parent and child are temporarily placed with a family trained to mentor and support parents. In this type of foster care, the parents develop their parenting skills and the support system they require to care for their children and live independently. Such foster care is designed to support parents whose child custody rights are at risk or whose ability to function as parents is in doubt.

In many foster care agencies, parent and child foster care is intended for minor parents who have given birth while in foster care and is designed to provide them with the support they are unable to obtain from their family. The uniqueness of this type of foster care lies in the ability to work on parenting and household management skills, a kind of support that is almost never available in other out-of-home care settings and which can increase

the likelihood of the child returning to live with their birth parents. For parent and child foster care to succeed, the foster care services should adopt the following best practices:

- Carefully select and train foster parents suitable for this type of care
- Assess the motivation and commitment of candidates for parent and child foster placement during the evaluation and selection process
- Make sure all parties involved are aware of their rights and duties and the basic rules for shared living
- Create a comprehensive plan with clearly defined roles and responsibilities for each party, as well as predetermined stages that enable regular and frequent evaluations
- Appoint a dedicated social worker for each placement, preferably on a permanent basis
- Hold pre-placement acquaintance meetings of the foster parents and the parents who are placed in foster care
- Ensure that the parents of the child have opportunities for further education
- Create a post-placement support program, particularly regarding housing

In the current review, we do not assess the situation in Israel regarding parent and child foster care or the feasibility of its implementation. Today, the possibility of initiating parent and child foster care in Israel is not included in the Law on Foster Care. We recommend undertaking a study to examine the possibility of practicing this type of foster care in Israel and, in accordance with the findings, to promote legislative changes and the development of expertise in this type of foster care.