

FOSTERING SUCCESS FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH IN FOSTER CARE

ACTION STEPS

- **Promote stability for children** by reducing the number of moves and family placements through better screening, expanded recruitment and more comprehensive training, preparation and support for children and families, including kinship homes;
- **Expand foster care parent recruitment** in order to find additional caring and supportive families for children entering care and to avoid the need of placing non-kinship children from different homes and traumas into one home where they too often act out their own trauma experience on others in the home;
- **Support foster, kinship, adoptive and guardian families** with groups, counseling, educational opportunities and other services to enable them to adequately meet the needs of children in care;
- **Offer therapeutic support groups** to children in foster care to foster a sense of community and combat the feelings of isolation and abandonment common to children in care;
- **Identify children's specific needs earlier** by evaluating children for trauma/psychological issues and/or educational/developmental delays when they first enter care in order that all necessary services and supports can be implemented as soon as possible;
- **Provide holistic, comprehensive and integrated mental health and medical services** (including evaluations, trauma-informed therapy, and psychiatric care) to children from the beginning of care through permanence by reunification, adoption or legal guardianship;
- **Promote educational stability** by ensuring that children stay in the same school regardless of placement changes, and work with schools to provide transportation and other academically necessary resources;
- **Support academic success** through educational stability; keeping staff and teachers informed of circumstances which impact a child's performance in or absence from school; engaging schools in best supporting the child during changes in his or her family setting; and providing children with an IEP with an advocate who ensures he or she gets the classes and support promised;
- **Improve services for birth families** when children return home to assure a seamless and successful discharge from foster care;
- **Give youth an active role** in team planning and decision making about their futures;
- **Provide a voice** to children and youth through creative outlets – such as writing, music, theater, and art;
- **Equip youth in foster care and their families with financial literacy skills** through education and incentive programs to best provide for long-term success and stability as adults; and
- **Ensure that children and youth exit foster care to a family** rather than “aging out” by identifying and supporting a permanent legal parent for every child and youth in foster care.