

Intensive Foster Care (IFC) Program Philosophy and Purpose

Intensive Foster Care (IFC) is designed to offer a more normalized living environment and alternative to group home placements for children and youth with high emotional and behavioral needs, complex traumas, history of psychiatric hospitalizations and failed placements in the foster care system.

The purpose of the program is to place children and youth in specialized foster homes to receive intensive therapeutic and behavior-management services with the goal of obtaining better permanency outcomes for these children and youth.

IFC Parents are licensed by county or private agencies within their home based setting. They receive compensation by the child placing agencies in addition to the maintenance uniform foster care rate that is set for each individual child in care. The additional compensation for an IFC Home is equivalent to what they would earn if employed in a full-time professional position outside of the home.

Foster parents licensed for IFC care for a small number of children at a time in order to provide intensive one-on-one care and support. IFC Parents are trained professionals and are an integral member of the child's treatment team. Their work includes regular contact with the child's parent/legal guardian, relatives, school, case managers, court system, therapist and other service providers/members of the child's treatment team.

In addition to the basic childcare responsibilities of food, shelter, clothing, etc., IFC Parents:

- Provide 24/7 care and on call for accepting placements when there is an opening in their home
- Participate in regular treatment team meetings
- Provide transportation for visits, appointments, court hearing, etc.
- Work closely with social workers, therapists, parents/guardians, schools and attorneys
- Dispense medications
- Manage behaviors and de-escalating emotional situations
- Assist parents/guardians in understanding the child/youth's triggers and how to manage behavior
- Provide Trauma-Informed Care and nurturance to children/youth and parents/guardians
- Follow all rules and regulations to ensure compliance with licensing rules while adhering to a wraparound philosophy
- Attend ongoing training in trauma informed care, mental and behavioral health and utilize therapeutic techniques
- Advocate and ensure that the needs of the child/youth and his/her parents/guardians are being addressed
- Partner with schools to ensure educational stability.

The child characteristics of a child/youth placed in an IFC Home include:

- Removal from parental home
- Physical and sexual abuse and/or neglect
- Numerous placements in relative homes, foster homes, group homes, residential treatment centers, inpatient hospitalizations, and disrupted adoptions
- Inconsistent educational and poor academic functioning
- Aggressive behavior and homicidal or suicidal risks
- On a number of prescribed medications with some chemically restrained
- Runaway behavior
- Prostitution and trafficking victimization
- Emotional and behavior diagnoses
- Developmental delays and low cognitive functioning

The parent and family characteristics include:

- Significant AODA and mental health diagnoses
- Incarceration and criminal histories
- Partner violence and abuse to children
- Educational and employment deficiencies
- Poor health
- Developmental limitations
- Lack of resources and supports
- Trauma histories as a child and continue in adulthood.