

Foster Parent Perspectives of Learning Needs to Support Child Development

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NM LEND Capstone Project
5/6/22



CENTER FOR
DEVELOPMENT
& DISABILITY

LEND Competencies

Person and Family-Centered Care

- Use individual and family input in a meaningful way to design, deliver, and evaluate services and systems of care.

Research, Quality Improvement, and Evidence-Based Practice

- Understand and critically use data to inform continuous quality improvement efforts in clinical and community-based practice.
- Gain experience with framing a problem, researching, developing a product, disseminating to relevant stakeholders, and providing a professional presentation.

Capstone Partners

- Lend Mentor- Heidi Sanders
- Community Partner- NM FIESTA

Thank you!

Capstone Overview

Research Questions

- What are learning needs for foster parents related to development?
- How can occupational therapists better support foster parents through education?

Interest in topic

- CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocate) Volunteer
- Graduate school research in this area
- Hearing the experience of friends who were in foster care and others who are foster parents

Agenda

- Problem Framing
- Research
- Product
- Dissemination
- Reflection

Problem Framing

- 3,489 children in foster care in New Mexico in 2020
 - 632,000 children in foster care nationally in 2020
- (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2017)
- RAFT (Relative, Adoptive, Foster Parent Training) is a training developed by the New Mexico Children, Youth, and Families Department for prospective foster and adoptive parents

(NM Raft, 2022)

Problem Framing

RAFT Training Components:

Lesson 1: Our Parenting Options

Topics include

- History of Child Welfare
- Children in Care
- About Protective Services
- Culture, Appreciation and Bias
- Foster Parent Roles and Responsibilities
- Getting Ready to Welcome a Child
- When a Child Exits the System
- Reasonable and Prudent Parenting
- Confidentiality
- Teamwork

Lesson 2: Our Children and Youth in Care

Topics include

- Adverse Childhood Experiences
- Trauma + Care
- Issues of Attachment
- Grief + Loss
- Child Development, Behaviors, and Skills
- Child Maltreatment: Effects + Caregiver Responses
- Conflict, Communication + Resolution
- Discipline
- Sibling Groups

Lesson 3: Our Older Youth

Topics include

- The Youth's Perspective
- Vital Resources For Youth
- What Foster and Adoptive Parents Can Do
- Youth Services
- Supporting Connections
- Virtual World
- Sexual Exploitation
- Risk + Resiliency
- Life Skills
- The Power of Mentors

Problem Framing

RAFT Training Components:

Lesson 4: Our Foster and Adoptive Families

Topics include

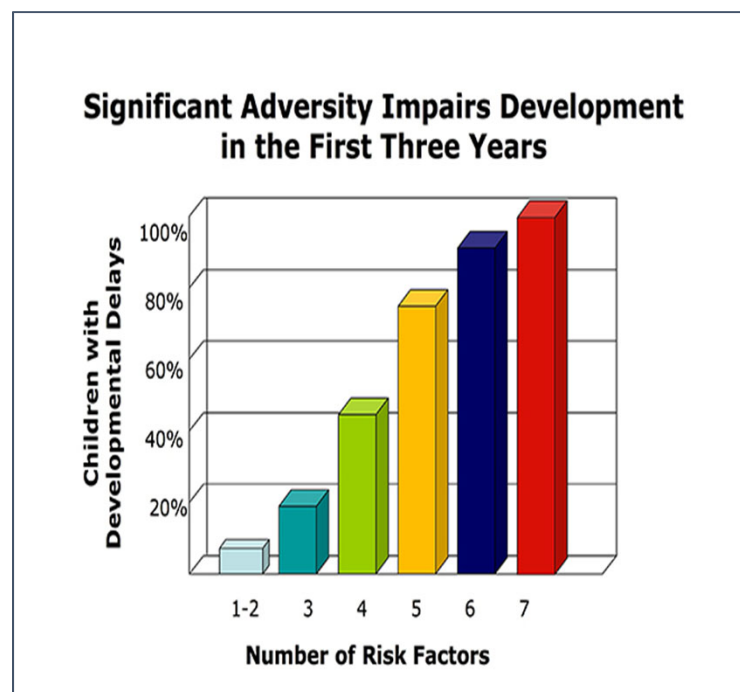
- Our Children's History
- Rights of Biological Family
- Shared Parenting
- Relative Placements
- Adoption
- Foster Care and Stress
- Roles, Paperwork and Protocols
- Licensure
- Financial Issues
- Advocating for Youth

Lesson 5: Safe Sleep for Infants

Topics include

Problem Framing

- Children in foster care services often have trauma exposure
(Oswald, Fegert, & Goldbeck, 2010) (Griffin et al., 2011)
- Risk factors have been shown related to developmental delay
(Barth et. al., 2008)



Problem Framing

- Challenging behaviors may lead to placement instability
(Hebert & Kulkin, 2018)
- Placement instability is associated with reduced life satisfaction for youth
(Bederian-Gardner et al., 2018)
- Studies have shown foster parents wanting more training to help manage challenging behaviors to improve placement stability
(Hebert & Kulkin, 2018) (Price, Chamberlain, Landsverk, & Reid, 2009)

Research and Survey Creation Process

- **Guiding question:** What ongoing knowledge may benefit foster parents to support their children's development?
- Review of developmental impact of foster care
- Research review of trauma and child development
- Pulled common themes from research for potential education topics
- Created a survey of educational topic ideas
- No IRB required

Research: Foster Care and Developmental Impact

- Children in foster care have often experienced multiple adverse childhood experiences. The developmental outcomes of children in foster care are generally worse than the general population
(Goemans, A., et al., 2016)
- The risk for adverse long-term outcomes increases if needs go unaddressed during placement
(Deutsch, S. A., et al., 2015)

Research: Foster Care and Developmental Impact

- According to research done through the Karen Purvis Institute of Child Development, there are 5 aspects of the child that are affected by trauma, referred to as the 5 B's. They are the brain, beliefs, behaviors, body, and biology

(Purvis et al., 2013)

***“When you connect to the heart of a child,
everything is possible.” – Dr. Karyn Purvis***

Research: Brain Development/Cognition

- Brain development is sequential
- Trauma repair and brain rewiring happens best in the order that the brain needs to heal
- One of the first goals in helping children who have experienced trauma is to regulate their lower areas

(Lyons, 2017)

Research: Attachment and Sensory Processing

- Children who have failed to attach to a caregiver in their first two years of life or who have suffered abuse or neglect are at increased risk of developing sensory processing disorders

(Kranowitz, C, 2005).

Research: Behavior and Mental Health

- Children in foster care are more likely to have physical challenges, ADHD, depression, anxiety, and behavioral or conduct problems
(Turney, K. and C. Wildeman, 2016)
- Youth in foster care have been shown to participate in more risky activities than the rest of the population, including alcohol, drugs, and sex which may attribute to poor health outcomes later in life
(Gramkowski, B., et al., 2009)

Research: Themes

| | | | |
|---------------------|---------------------|------------|--------------------|
| General development | Brain and cognition | Attachment | Sensory Processing |
| Behavior | Mental Health | Sleep | Play |

Product: Survey for NM FIESTA Families

Survey Questions: Therapy-Informed Trainings for NM Fiesta

Occupational Therapists support children with developmental skill progression, participation in play, and increasing independence with daily activities. Although not members of New Mexico FIESTA, Occupational Therapists are available to offer educational training to support the learning needs of foster families as they care for children in the home.

Your participation in this survey will help inform what you, as a foster parent and member of New Mexico Fiesta, would be interested in learning about. Your participation is voluntary and confidentiality of all personal data and information will be maintained. If you have any questions regarding the survey, please contact one of the individuals listed below:

Heidi Sanders OTR/L HSanders@salud.unm.edu

Mary Kate Riffle OTR/L mriffle633@gmail.com

Survey Link: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/Z553BGM>

Product: Survey for NM FIESTA Families

- What trainings have been most beneficial for you?
- What topics do you want to learn more about?
- What is your biggest challenge as a foster parent?
- Is your child enrolled in any therapies? Which ones?
- What is your preferred learning style?
 - Visual
 - Auditory
 - Kinesthetic
 - Mixed
- Do you prefer trainings in person, virtual, or no preference?

Which trainings would you be interested in participating in?

Development

- Talk on specific conditions (FAS, RAD, etc.)
- Supporting developmental milestones
- The brain and trauma

Self Help Skills/Daily Routine

- Sleep
- Mealtime tips
- Creating opportunities for independence (dressing, hygiene)

Social Emotional Skills

- Helping children handle their emotions

Sensory Processing

- Sensory integration strategies for overwhelm
- Sensory strategies to encourage sleep

Attachment

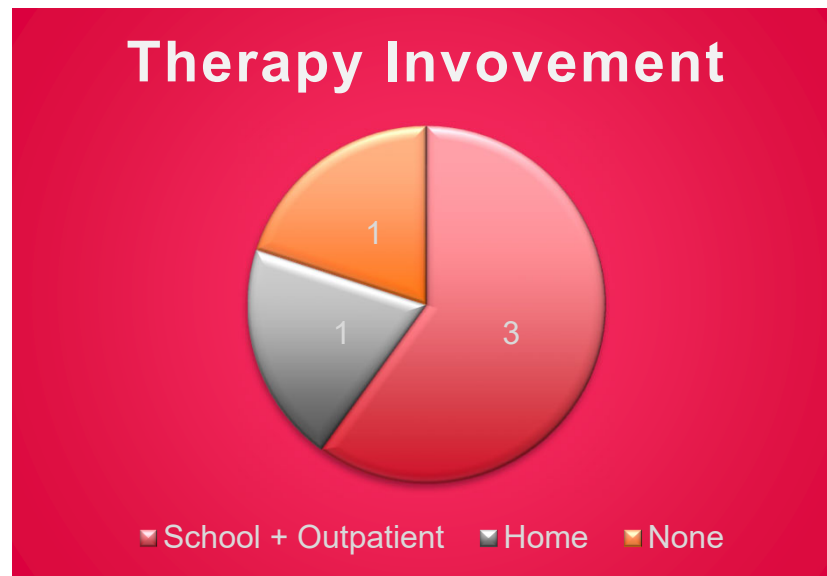
- Infant massage
- Play

Dissemination

- Shared survey with NM FIESTA members via their social media group and email chain
- New Mexico FIESTA Project exists to support, encourage, and equip adoptive and foster parents. FIESTA is an acronym for Family, Activities, Information, Education, Support, and Training
- The results will be given to NM FIESTA

Parent Perspective Survey Results

5 participants:



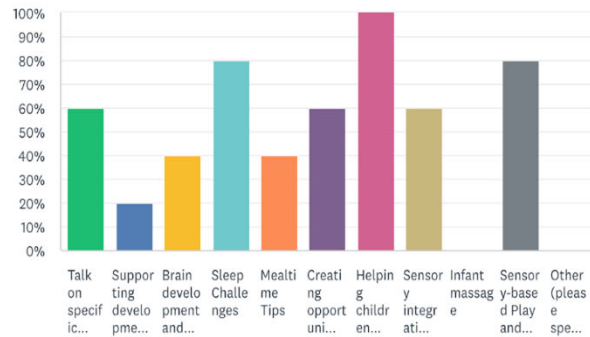
Parent Perspective Survey Results

| What trainings have been most beneficial for you? | What topics do you want to learn more about? | What is the biggest challenge in your daily routines as a foster parent? |
|--|---|---|
| Alert Program (How Does Your Engine Run) Zones of Regulation Make & Take OT activities for home FASD (Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders) Sensory Regulation | DIY for elementary ages FASD (Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders) Sensory and sensory diets Emotional regulation | Juggling responsibilities Handling big emotions Trying to parent differently than when raised Trauma Transitions Having time to recharge |

Parent Perspective Survey Results

Which trainings would you be interested in participating in?

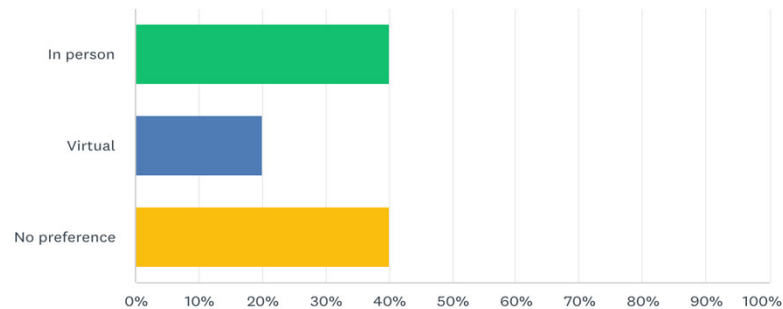
Answered: 5 Skipped: 0



| ANSWER CHOICES | RESPONSES |
|---|-----------|
| ▼ Talk on specific conditions (FAS, RAD, etc.) | 60.00% 3 |
| ▼ Supporting developmental milestones | 20.00% 1 |
| ▼ Brain development and trauma | 40.00% 2 |
| ▼ Sleep Challenges | 80.00% 4 |
| ▼ Mealtime Tips | 40.00% 2 |
| ▼ Creating opportunities for independence (dressing, hygiene) | 60.00% 3 |
| ▼ Helping children handle their emotions through self and co-regulation | 100.00% 5 |
| ▼ Sensory integration strategies for self and co-regulation | 60.00% 3 |
| ▼ Infant massage | 0.00% 0 |
| ▼ Sensory-based Play and Attachment | 80.00% 4 |

Parent Perspective Survey Results

Do you prefer presentations in person, virtual, or no preference?



| ANSWER CHOICES | RESPONSES |
|-----------------|-----------|
| ▼ In person | 40.00% 2 |
| ▼ Virtual | 20.00% 1 |
| ▼ No preference | 40.00% 2 |
| TOTAL | 5 |

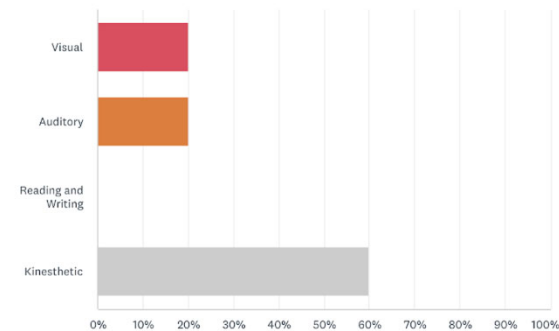
Parent Perspective Survey Results

Learning Styles:

1. Visual Learning: images and graphic elements over words
2. Auditory Learning: speaking, lectures, discussion
3. Read/Write Learning: written words and reading
4. Kinesthetic Learning: tactile processes, concrete experiences, movement

What is your preferred learning style?

Answered: 5 Skipped: 0



| ANSWER CHOICES | RESPONSES |
|-----------------------|-----------|
| ▼ Visual | 20.00% 1 |
| ▼ Auditory | 20.00% 1 |
| ▼ Reading and Writing | 0.00% 0 |
| ▼ Kinesthetic | 60.00% 3 |
| TOTAL | 5 |

| | Handling Big Emotions | Sensory Diet | Make & Take: Sleep | Condition specific topic: FASD |
|----------------------------|--|--|--|---|
| Kinesthetic | Create a “tool box” of calm down strategies & use as a group | Go through an activity for each sensory system | Practice creating a bedtime routine, moving around Velcro pieces on schedule | Hands on stations; ex. showing doll size difference of baby with FASD |
| Visual | Graphic to explain why a child might feel big emotions | Picture of sensory system activities | Write out bedtime routine schedule | Images of those with FASD |
| Auditory | Explain the benefit of regulation strategies | Q & A of which sensory inputs their child might need | Discuss possible routine components | Talk about the signs and symptoms of FASD |
| Reading and Writing | Give handout of other examples for a “big emotions toolbox” | Give note taking packet to participants | Give the class recommendations for a book to read on sleep | Power point slides contain words, not just pictures |

Reflection and Future Directions

- Importance of collaboration with community agency
- Interested in how to make educational topics accessible to the families
- Listening to families and their learning needs
- Expanding on this capstone
 - Is there a network of therapist who are connected with NM FIESTA for educational presentations?
 - Is there an online library of topics and resources?
 - Are families in rural areas aware NM FIESTA exists?
 - Adapt survey for local CASA chapters to support foster care volunteer learning needs

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