

# An Overlooked Aspect of Improving Child Welfare Outcomes:

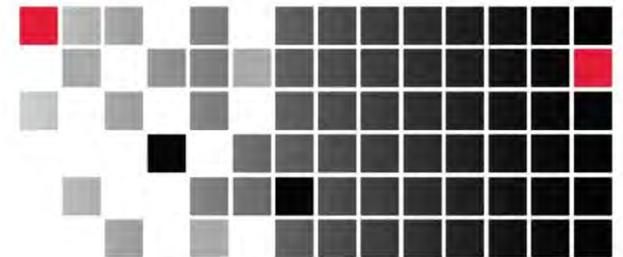
**PAYING MORE ATTENTION TO  
EVALUATING AND LEARNING ABOUT  
FOSTER PARENTS**

2011 National Child Welfare Evaluation Summit  
Washington, DC

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# Roundtable Presenter Affiliations



College of Social Work  
Training Resource Center



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'making a difference in our part of the world'

# Roundtable Presenters

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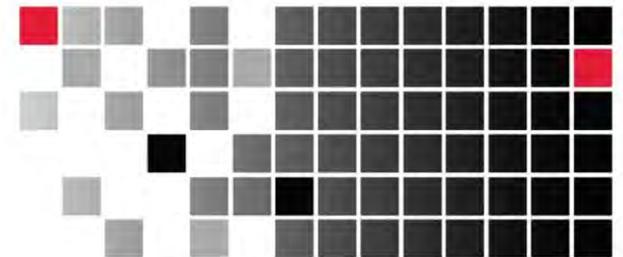
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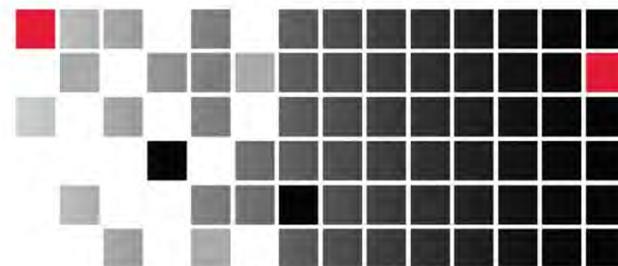


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**WHAT THE DATA ON FOSTER  
CHILDREN AND YOUTH TELLS US**

**1 in 4 youth in foster care  
will be in jail within 2 years  
of leaving care**





Over half the youth leaving care  
will experience homelessness

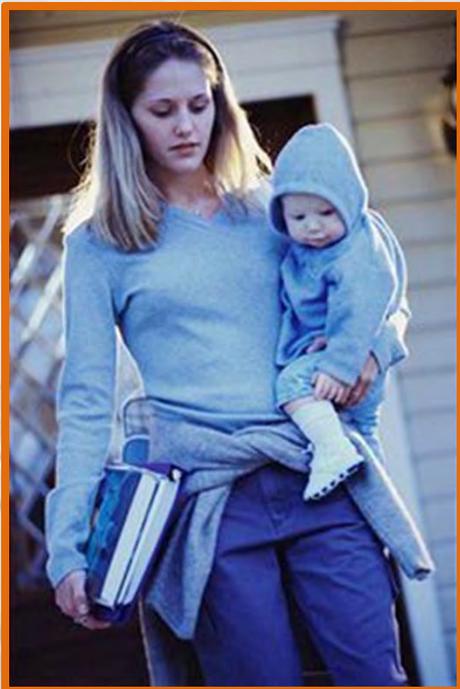
# SCHOOL DEGREES OR A G.E.D.

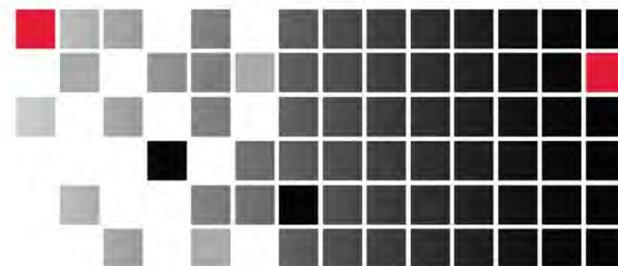


Fewer than 2% will earn a college degree compared with 33% of their non-looked after peers.



Girls in foster care are 6 times more likely to give birth before the age of 21 than the general population





**WHAT THE RESEARCH ON  
FOSTER CARERS TELLS US**

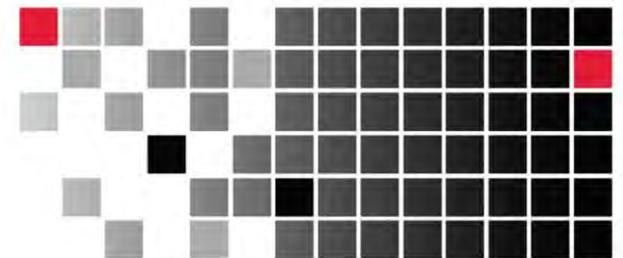
# Study of Foster Carers & Foster Homes in New Mexico, Oklahoma and Oregon: (RTI, 2005)

- Licensing data showed consistently high rates of foster carer turnover with at least one in five foster homes exiting each year.
- Regardless of their characteristics, foster homes had, on average, between one and two children in the home at a time.
- Across the three states, one-fifth of the foster carer population provided between 60 and 72 percent of all days of foster care.
- Median length of service in foster caring ranged from 8 to 14 months across the states - suggesting many children's placements in foster care are longer than the typical foster parent career.
- Few homes resumed foster caring after a break in child placements of at least 90 days.



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# Foster Care Effectiveness Factors:

## **Sinclair, 2010**

- The carer rendering child-oriented authoritative parenting
- There is a good fit and/or chemistry between the child and the foster home

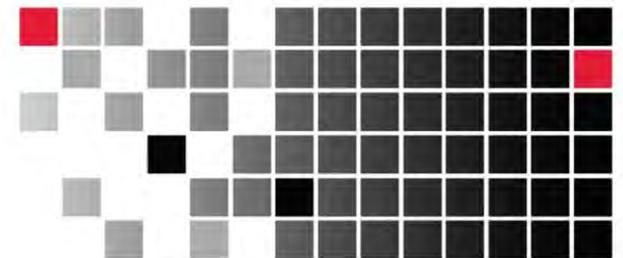
## **Morgan & Baron, 2011**

- Self-efficacy was found to partially mediate the relationship between challenging behavior and carer stress, anxiety and depression.



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# The greater the degree of “cohesion” between carer and young person in care: (Fernandez, 2010)

- A stronger repertoire of pro-social behaviors
- Better self-esteem
- Improved emotional and behavioral developmental outcomes

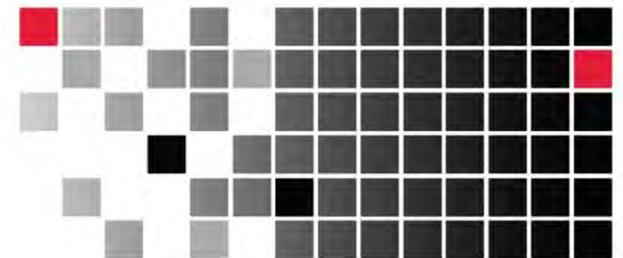
# And the higher the degree of “cohesion” with the foster dad:

- Fewer conduct problems
- A lower CBCL externalized problem score
- Better peer relationship outcomes
- Increased relationship building skills

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# The Keeping Foster and Kin Parents Supported & Trained (KEEP) Program

**KEEP has been rated by the California Evidence Based Clearinghouse in the areas of:**

- Placement Stabilization
- Resource Parent Recruitment and Training

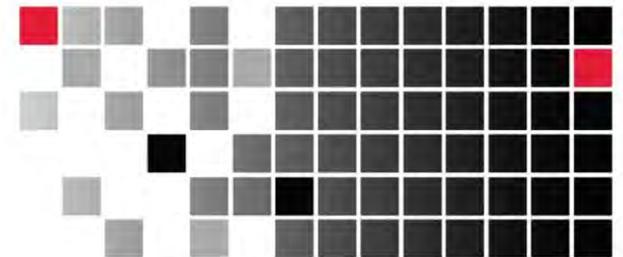
## **The KEEP Program:**

- Holds a scientific rating of 3 indicating “Promising Research Evidence”
- Was designed to provide effective tools for dealing with their child's externalizing and other behavioral and emotional problems and to support them in the implementation of those tools



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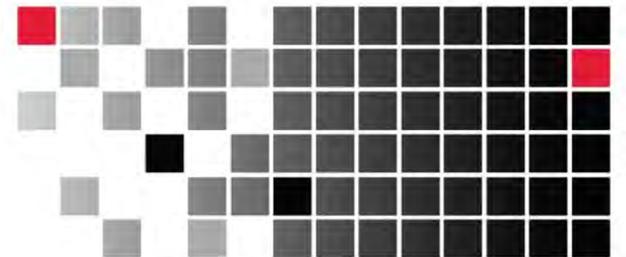
HOW DO WE DEVELOP AN INNOVATIVE  
APPROACH IN RESPONSE ?

ROUNDTABLE QUESTIONS

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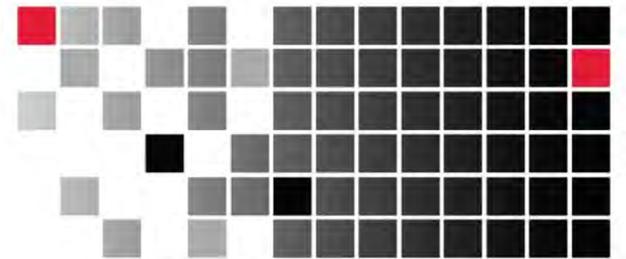
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# HOW DO WE RECRUIT AND MATCH FOSTER CARERS AND YOUNG PEOPLE EFFECTIVELY?

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# Recruiting and Matching

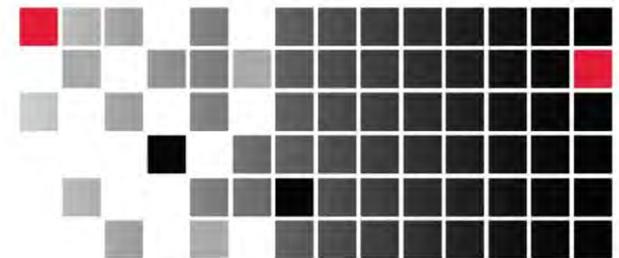
With the increasing complexity of children/youth coming into care, are there characteristics of the young people which therapeutic foster care agencies must take into consideration when recruiting foster carers that will provide homes and support for these kids?



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# Recruiting and Matching

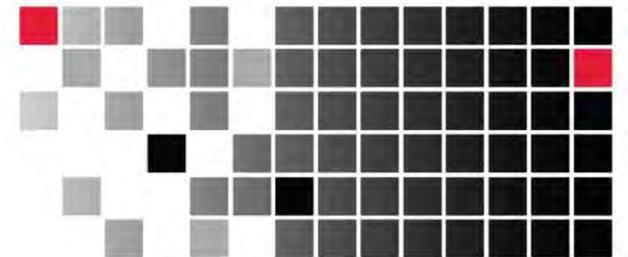
How do we identify those characteristics and then go about measuring them?



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# Recruiting and Matching

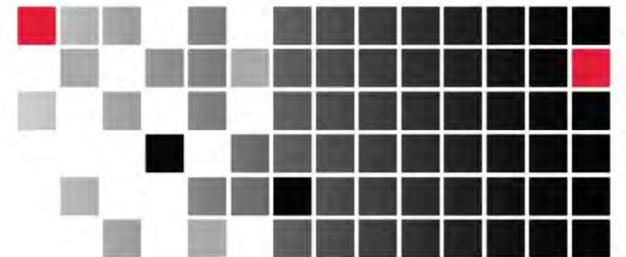
What recruiting approaches would be best utilized when attempting to engage foster families to provide homes and interventions for these complex kids?



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# Recruiting and Matching

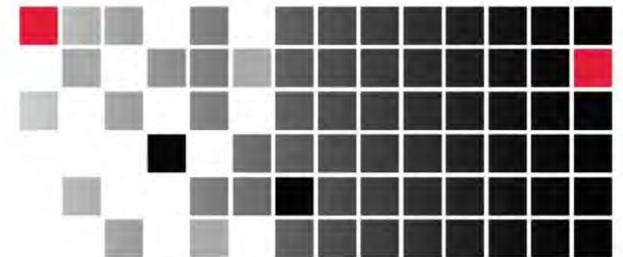
What is the inter-relatedness between honest marketing to carers and effective matching of children?

Are there questions we need to be asking in the carer recruitment and assessment phase which will advance appropriate matching when children are placed in their home?

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# Recruiting and Matching

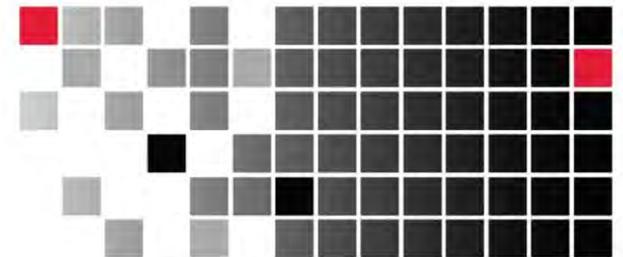
What are the most pertinent assessment questions and data we need to obtain to ensure matching is as good as it can be before placement occurs?

- Is “placement stability” the best/only outcome?
- What other types of information should public agencies be asking of placing agencies?
- Do placing agencies need to look differently at their own pre-placement needs before they match children with these new kinds of carers?

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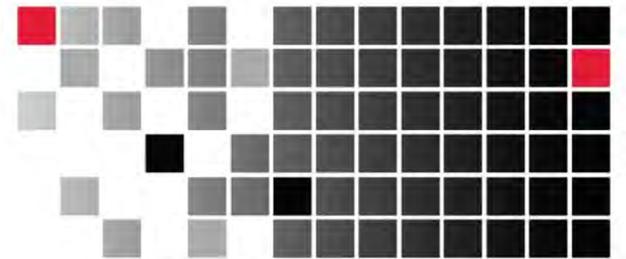


# HOW DO WE SUPPORT AND TRAIN FOSTER CARERS EFFECTIVELY?

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# Supporting and Training

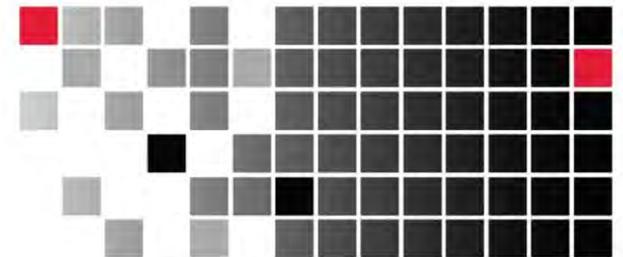
Can and how might connectedness and attachment be taught to carers?



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# Supporting and Training

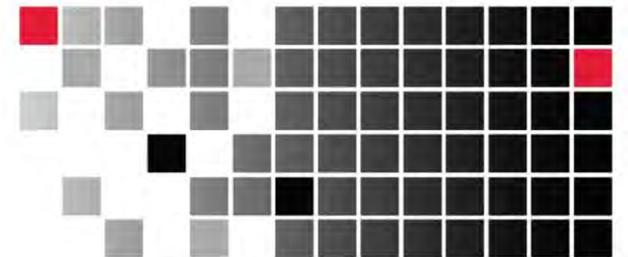
How can the negative aspects of professionalization of foster carers be addressed through training?



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# Supporting and Training

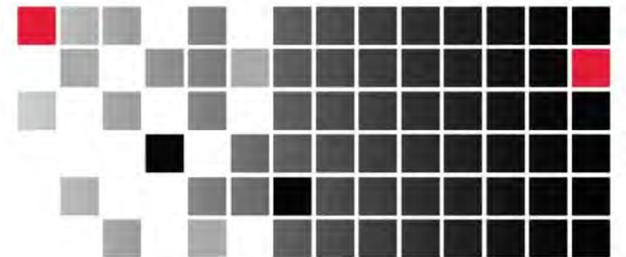


Across time do carer's go through different stages, and if so, are there unique needs based upon where they are in the life cycle of fostering?

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# Supporting and Training

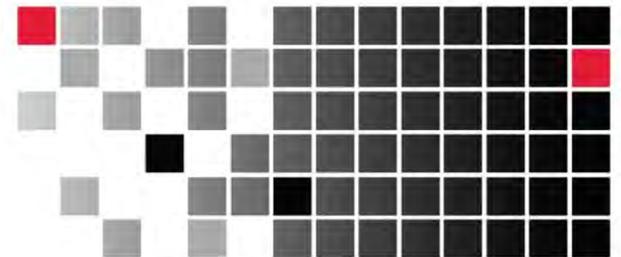
Does the chronological age and years of service of the carer affect what they need to know and do?

How can training and support be geared to age/length of time as carer, etc.?

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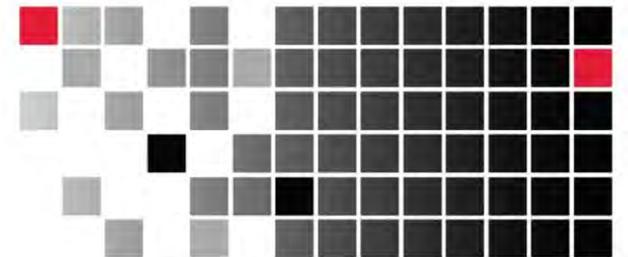
What are effective approaches to more fully engaging carers in the life of the community, thereby encouraging the greater use of community resources more readily?



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# Supporting and Training

What kind of support groups and how much support do carers need?

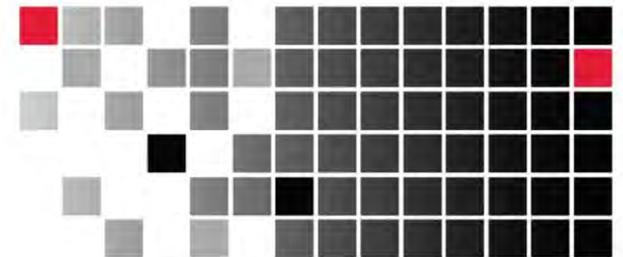
Peer support?

Professional led support?

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# Supporting and Training

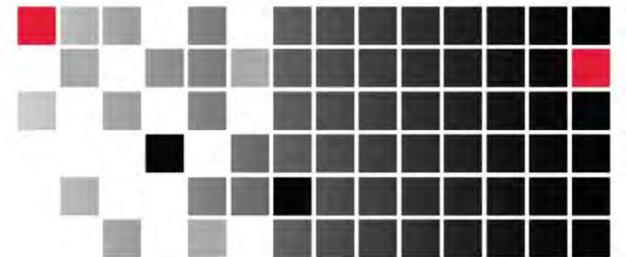
What do foster carers need to be equipped with to promote the developmental well-being of kids in their care?



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# Supporting and Training

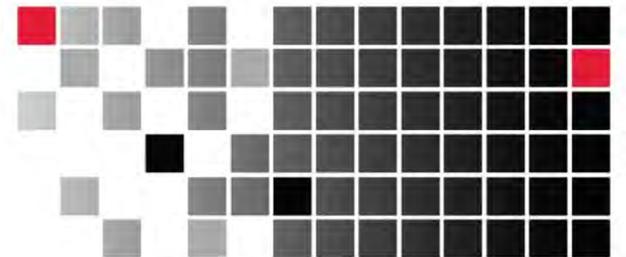
What other types of information should public agencies be asking of placing agencies which will increase not only stability but also the developmental success of children and youth in care?



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# Roundtable Engagement

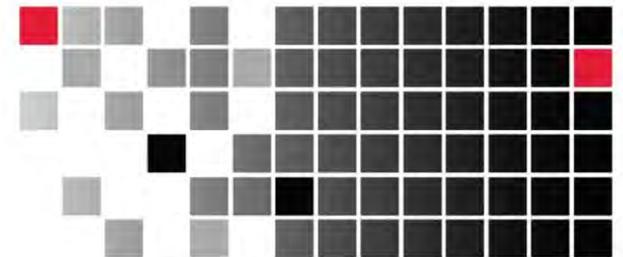
Are there other  
research questions  
that need to be asked?



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# Roundtable Presenters

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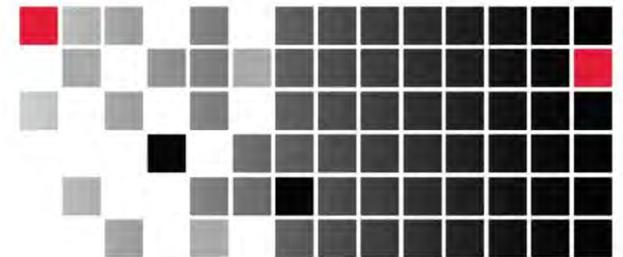


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**An Overlooked Aspect of Improving Child Welfare Outcomes:  
Paying More Attention to Evaluating and Learning About Foster Parents**

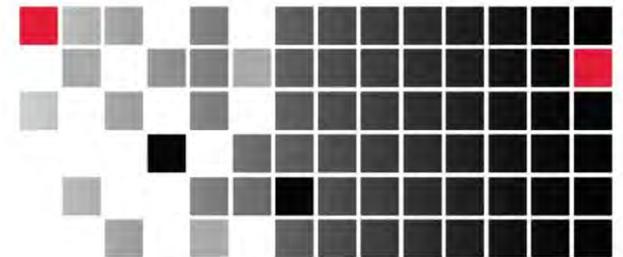
**PERHAPS A  
NEW BEGINNING...**

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