RESOURCES FOR WORKING WITHIN THE FOSTER CARE SYSTEM
FRIDAY FORUM
MAY 12, 2023

SARAH KINNEAR - KITSAP PUBLIC HEALTH DISTRICT
MONICA BHAGWAN - LEAH'S PANTRY
Purpose of Friday Forum

- Platform for sharing examples, resources, and opportunities for delivering PSE.
- Facilitate discussion and exploration among SNAP-Ed providers
- Provide an interactive learning experience
Tech Check

Stay
Stay muted when not speaking

Keep
Keep video on when possible

Use
Use Chat box for questions
Tribal Land Acknowledgment

Text your zip code to 1-907-312-5085
Or go to https://land.codeforanchorage.org/
Foster Care System

Resources

Introduction to the Foster Care System & Strategies for SNAP-Ed Work

Sarah Kinnear, BS (She, Her)
Community Liaison
Chronic Disease & Injury Prevention
The Start.

Personal Disclosure & Introduction

- My personal background with the foster care system
- My professional work with SNAP-Ed
Learning Outcomes

“A wise man can learn more from a foolish question than a fool can learn from a wise answer.” – Bruce Lee

By the end of this presentation, you should be able to...

» Define "Foster Care" and "Kinship Care"

» Describe how youth are placed in care, as well as basic statistics about this population

» Explain concepts that could help prepare for working with this population

» Understand the roles of agencies working with this population and where to find local contact information
Definition

“Foster Care”...

“A temporary living situation for kids whose parents cannot take care of them and whose need for care has come to the attention of child welfare agency staff”
Main Types of Foster Care

Foster Care
» Licensed Foster Care
» Licensed Therapeutic Foster Care

Kinship Care
» Licensed Kinship Care
» Unlicensed Kinship Care
Other Types of Foster Placement

Treatment Based
» Treatment Facility
» Crisis Residential Facility

Non-Treatment Based
» Group Home
» Temporary Residential Care
Report made regarding concern for a child's safety

Child Protective Services (CPS) investigates report

CPS files a "dependency petition"

Dependency Review(s)

Placement Decision & Conditions

Shelter care Hearing

Permanency Planning Hearing
Foster Care Statistics: Washington

Child Welfare Services - Monthly Trend


ALL Child Protective Services (CPS) Screened-In Intakes

LEGEND
- Monthly screened-in intakes
- 2019 baseline year (repeats)
- School closure (March 2020)
- Gray bars = summer break

COVID
Child Welfare Overview FY 2022

- Total Requests for Intervention: 121,215
- CPS Reports of Abuse/Neglect: 110,015 (11,200 Non-CPS Requests*)
- CPS Reports Screened-In for Response: 43,828** (66,187 Screened Out)
  - 60,989 Children Required Face-to-Face Response
- CPS-Investigations: 22,204
- CPS-FAR: 19,763
- Open for Services: 22,577***
- Children Placed: 3,702

- 4,591 Exits from Placement:
  - 2,992 Reunifications
  - 903 Adoptions
  - 246 Guardianships
  - 450 Other Exits

* Includes CFW, FRS, licensing rule infractions, and other non-CPS intakes
** Includes 1,861 LD-CPS investigations on providers
*** Service counts indicate services provided in addition to the CPS response

Published: February 2023
Source: FamLink data, children age 0-17
Office of Innovation, Alignment, and Accountability
www.dcyf.wa.gov/practice/oiaa/reports
Foster Care Statistics: Washington

CHILD HEALTH SERVICES - MONTHLY TREND

Injuries Caused by Assault

Abuse-Related Injuries

COVID

Monthly claims
Projection
2019 baseline year (repeats)
School closure (March 2020)
Gray bars = summer break
**Foster Care Statistics**

**Washington State**

Native Americans are...  
3.1X more likely than white youth to be placed in foster care  
Source: *Disproportionality Rates for Children of Color in Foster Care, National Center for Juvenile Justice*

Black Americans are...  
1.5X more likely than white youth to be placed in foster care

Children of color are more likely to be removed from their homes and stay in foster care longer. They are also less likely to return home.

Youth who’ve experienced one placement in a group home or institution while in foster care are 2.5X more likely to face incarceration  
Source: *Children's & Youth Services Review, Juvenile Delinquency in Child Welfare: Investigating Group Home Effects*
## Median Length of Stay by Race

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race</th>
<th>Length of Stay</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>11.5 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>12.7 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two or more races</td>
<td>12.9 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native American</td>
<td>13.1 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic/Latino</td>
<td>13.4 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>14.6 months</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Disproportionality Rates for Children of Color in Foster Care, National Center for Juvenile Justice*
Foster Care Statistics

80% of all children and youth in foster care have a significant mental health diagnosis, compared to 18-22% of the general population.

Children and youth in foster care experience PTSD at 2X the rate of war veterans.

Source: National Conference of State Legislatures, Northwest Foster Care Alumni Study
Foster Care Statistics

In Washington state, 37% of youth who experienced foster care also experienced homelessness before the age of 17.

Nationwide, 17% of youth who experienced foster care also experienced homelessness before the age of 17.
Recommendations
Considerations for working with this population
Go into your interactions with at least a basic understanding of what it means to be trauma-informed, and how ACEs might impact youth’s behaviors.
  - e.g., Impact of food deprivation on relationship with food, food as an emotional coping mechanism

Be sure to promote positive messaging for youth who ask for help / are involved in programming.
  - e.g., “There’s no shame for asking for help” / Asking for help is not “bad”

Support gradual behavior modifications when suggesting healthier alternatives.

Provide informed choices when giving youth directions/instructions, as this can help youth feel more empowered about their decisions.

Engaging youth authentically and “where’re they’re at”, as this may help facilitate increased trust and buy-in for education being provided.
DCYF Caseworkers are not required to receive any training regarding benefits, such as SNAP.

WA DCYF recently created a new position to have a specific designated lead staff for community benefits within each regional office state-wide.

WA DCYF helps provide meal cards to families; understanding that it’s better to keep families united rather than removing a child due to poverty.

Challenges regarding nutrition they commonly face:
- Understanding dietary needs for Type-1 food, or food allergies.
- Youth who “haven’t ever had a real meal”... difficulty with sitting at a dinner table, with food that was prepared from scratch – youth may not even know how to use a fork and knife.

Caseworkers can almost always find common ground with youth, families, and foster parents by talking about food, and know that food holds special importance.

Recommendation for outreach efforts to:
- Foster Care Licensing Agencies
- Safe Babies Court – Which serves mothers and infants.
Take-aways

Concepts that can help in approaching this work...

» Trauma-informed
» Implicit Bias
» Confidentiality
SNAP-Ed Perspective

Where do you see PSE work fitting into these challenges?

» Awareness of SNAP Match Programs
» Nutrition education and cooking skills
» Supporting trauma-informed physical activity
» Elevating needs...
» ???
Outreach Opportunities

» **Foster-Care Specific Programs**
  - **Independent Living (IL) Program**
    - Regional Directory of Program Contacts
  - **Independent Youth Housing Program**
    - Regional Directory of Program Contacts
  - **Extended Foster Care Program**

» **Kinship-Care Specific Programs**
  - **DSHS Kinship Care Resource Page**

» **Other contacts to consider in outreach**
  - School Districts: **Foster Care Liaisons**
  - Juvenile Detention: **Supportive Services; Family Integrated Transitions (FIT)**
  - Family Courts Supportive Services (**Navigator Unit Example from King County**)
  - **Strengthen Families Locally Program**
  - **Treehouse**
  - **Coordinated Care – Apple Core Connections**
Learning Outcomes

You should (hopefully) now be able to…

» Define "Foster Care" and "Kinship Care"

» Describe how youth are placed in care, as well as basic statistics about this population

» Explain concepts that could help prepare for working with this population

» Understand the roles of agencies working with this population and where to find local contact information
Thank You!

Sarah Kinnear
(360) 801-6493
Sarah.Kinnear@kitsappublichealth.org
kitsappublichealth.org
Trainings and Toolkits

Introduction to Trauma & Trauma-Informed Care (Upcoming Webinar – May 16th)
Disproportionality of Native Youth in State Foster Care (Webinar/Video)
Kinship Supports (Webinar/Video)
Peer Support and Trauma Informed Approaches (Webinar/Video)
Strengthening Minds. Uplifting Families. (Information on Foster Care Month)
Outreach Toolkit
Statistics about WA Foster Care

WA Foster Care Facts
WA State Child Maltreatment Statistics
Racial Disparities in Child Welfare
Families Involved in Child Welfare – Financial Hardship, Housing Instability
Kinship Care in WA State
Kinship Care Outcomes
Homelessness Among Youth Exciting Systems of Care in WA State
We envision nourished communities and a healthy, equitable food system.

Our mission is to improve the health, wellness, and resilience of communities through trauma-informed nutrition security.
Build capacity of partner organizations to bring a trauma-informed approach to nutrition and food security programs.

Consult and Collaborate to better integrate a trauma-informed approach into food security, nutrition, and multi-sector systems.

Implement innovative programs that explore our relationship with food, support health, and build resilience.
PRODUCTS AND PROGRAMS

Curricula
- Around the Table
- eatFresh.org MINI COURSE
- food smarts
- food smarts WASTE REDUCTION

Capacity Building
- Building nourishing Pantries
- Nutrition Security with Compassion & Connection
- The Learning Collaborative: a trauma-informed initiative of Leah's Pantry
- Curriculum and Program Consulting

PSEs
- Nutrition Pantry Program
- WiserDining
- Trauma-Informed Care in Garden Education

Web Tools
- eatFresh
Funded by USDA SNAP, an equal opportunity provider and employer
Foster and Kinship Caregiver Education

- Provided by community colleges in California
- 8 hours recertification training
- Typically 2-3 hours live virtual training
- Training provided by qualified professionals (social workers, nurses, doctors), occasionally in conjunction with a peer leader
A trauma-informed nutrition training resource for resource (foster) parents for implementation throughout California by SNAP-Ed educators within the FKCE Programs and other foster parent education settings.
A Responsive Approach to Training Development
- Provide training and tools for resource families to enable them to responsively nourish foster children

- Be able to implement the curriculum within the system and requirements of resource parent training
90% of foster youth have experienced ACES (i.e., parental loss, inadequate caregiving, neglect, food insecurity and poverty). ACEs negatively impacts metabolic health and increases risk of illness and disease. ACEs impacts their ability to have a healthy relationship to food. Caregivers’ ACEs and trauma impacts their parenting style and behaviors. Trauma, food insecurity, and high levels of stress occur throughout the foster care system.
“...the RFA training does not include any food training and we don’t receive any information about what the child has been eating or should be eating at their age. When I adopt animals, I get copious information about their diets and what to feed them, but it’s the complete opposite for foster children.” – Resource Parent

“I would have liked to know tips and tricks for dealing with hoarding behaviors and also an understanding of how to help the child when they struggle with regulating and overeating.” – Resource Parent

“I am a single working foster mom so finding the time to cook is a big challenge.” – Resource Parent
“I learned you’re on your own.”
— Former Foster Youth

“I have always been considered the black sheep of my family, I think it’s due to my certain situation...I ate a lot of times by myself in my room. I didn’t have the communication skills to talk...or interest”
— Former Foster Youth
• Resource caregivers have significant challenges nourishing their children that are insufficiently addressed by their training and support

• Training providers lack information and educational resources to address nutrition for resource families

• Aged-out foster youth lack significant preparation to nourish themselves

• All stakeholders desire a curriculum that supports the growth of the youth in and out of foster care by integrating trauma and nutrition
Opportunity

- Integrate and align the long term health and life success of foster youth with the needs of resource parents
- Link CalFresh Healthy Living to the resource family ecosystem
- Build capacity for the foster care system to integrate nutrition into its training and support system
Training Design and Objectives
Build resource parent literacy, confidence, and resilience so they can support the immediate and long term socio-emotional and nutritional well-being of foster children.
Training Toolkit Structure

- Three, 3-hour single-sessions or full series delivered virtually or in-person (can be split into shorter lessons)
- Digital instructor materials: instructor guide and slide decks
- Printed participant guidebook with home activities and resources
Innovative Topics

- Standardized SNAP-Ed messages for physical and socio-emotional wellbeing
- Contextualized developmentally appropriate child feeding best practices for resource families
- Caregiver model self-care and self-regulation for children
- Caregivers model nutrition and food resource management skills for foster youth
Lesson #1

Objectives: Positive Feeding for Resource Families

- Responsive and developmentally appropriate approaches to feeding foster children with less stress
- How to build a trusting relationship with foster children through food and nourishment
- Identifying tools for regulating caregivers’ and children’s stress response
- How to include high fiber foods, varied protein sources, water, and fruits and vegetables in your diet to help maintain mood and energy levels
- How to create balanced and nutritious snacks using whole foods
Lesson #2

Objectives: Nutrition for the Whole Family

- Incorporating restorative sleep in order to establish good health and be a good caregiver
- How to meet children’s basic nutrition needs at different ages and stages
- How to improve dietary health by eating a rainbow of fruits and vegetables
- How to identify different special feeding needs and how to find support when needed
- How to decrease body weight stigma and support children around their weight and body size
Lesson #3

Objectives: Nourishment, Trauma, and Toxic Stress

- How caregivers can tune into and manage stressful moments and help with trauma and toxic stress
- How to use movement and diet to help support caregiver’s and children’s ability to cope with stress
- Dietary and health habits that are important for good emotional and physical wellbeing
- How trauma and toxic stress drive challenging feeding behaviors
- How to address challenging behaviors, including picky eating
- Identifying different types of eating disorders and how to find help when needed
**Establish** linkages between CFHL and regional FKCE providers (community colleges)

**Train** facilitators from SNAP-Ed and FKCE programs

**Connect** trained SNAP-Ed facilitators to county FKCE programs
Implementer Training

- Training offered by Leah’s Pantry
- Available for nutrition educators and FKCE staff
- Self-paced work + live zoom session(s)
- Late Summer Fall 2023
- $125-200 per person
Interested in hosting a Fostering Nourished Families training or attending a train the trainer? Learn about Leah’s Pantry resources for educators and clients.

Sign up for our Interest List email: monica@leahspantry.org

leahspantry.org | eatfresh.org
Questions?