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Children and Youth Services Review

Volume 29, Issue 1, January 2007, Pages 92-109

Kinship foster parents' perceptions of factors that promote or inhibit successful fostering

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<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chilyouth.2006.06.001>

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Abstract

A better understanding of kinship foster families' perceptions of the familial factors and parenting beliefs that promote or inhibit successful fostering can inform child welfare practice and policy. To this end, and to extend previous research [Buehler, C., Cox, M. E., and Cuddeback, G. (2003). Foster parents' perceptions of factors that promote or inhibit successful fostering. *Qualitative Social Work: Research and Practice*, 2(1), 61-84.], semi-structured interviews were conducted with kinship foster parents to explore their perceptions with regard to the familial factors and parenting beliefs that promote or inhibit successful fostering. Nine kinship foster parents from 8 families were interviewed. The results of this study were compared to the results of the Buehler et al. [Buehler, C., Cox, M. E., and Cuddeback, G. (2003). Foster parents' perceptions of factors that promote or inhibit successful fostering. *Qualitative Social Work: Research and Practice*, 2(1), 61-84.] study on nonkinship foster parents.

Similar themes emerged from both groups, but kinship foster parents described more complex issues with their families- of-origin. Characteristics that promote successful fostering of kin include support of family, commitment to children, faith, good parenting abilities, church involvement, flexibility, and adequate resources. Characteristics that inhibit successful fostering of kin include strained relations with birth family, poor discipline strategies, inability to deal with "the system," lack of resources, and inability to deal with children's emotional, behavioral, physical problems. The findings suggest a need to focus on special training and support services for kinship foster parents, as well as assessments specific to kinship fostering.



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Keywords

Kinship; Foster care; Perceptions; Successful fostering

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Casey family programs funded this study.

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