WHAT MAKES FOSTER PARENTS COME AND STAY

Coming In: A Positive Experience

• Recruitment response: Agencies respond to foster parent inquiries in a timely manner, providing information that fully explains the initial application and training process.

• Family assessment process: Foster parents participate in a mutual family assessment process that allows them to examine their own competencies, abilities, and qualifications in light of the type of children they hope to foster.

• Relevant basic training: Foster parents receive competency-based pre-service training that clearly defines the requirements and challenges of foster care.

• Awareness: Agencies convey a message of the impact foster parents can have on the children and their families (exercising caution with “rescuing” messages).

Staying on: A Satisfying Experience

• Communication: Foster parents experience a relationship with the agency that is typified by sharing of information, ready access to worker support, within the framework of respect, and positive regard.

• Clear role definition: Foster parents are clear and confident about their rights and responsibilities and agency expectations.

• Ongoing training: Foster parents have access to training opportunities that prepare them to deal with more difficult behaviors exhibited by foster children.

• Ongoing support: Foster parents have access to a supportive network of caseworkers and other more experienced foster parents when challenges and crises occur. They also have the opportunity to participate in social events with other foster parents such as picnics, holiday parties and award banquets. Other supportive services include liability insurance, planned respite care and quality training events.

• Inclusion: Foster parents are regarded as part of the team that is responsible for making decisions about the child and the family.