

ABSTRACT

IDENTIFYING BARRIERS AND CHALLENGES OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA'S FOSTER PARENTS, FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF TULARE COUNTY FOSTER PARENTS

It is estimated that every year in California 83,000 children are placed in out-of-home care. These children are involved with child welfare Services and placed into foster care. Executive Director of CWDA (the Child Welfare Directors Association) Frank Mecca (2007) suggests, "We have a statewide crisis in California. We have too few licensed foster families for the 83,000 children who are in foster care" (p. 1). This mixed-method study examined education, relationships, support, and training with respect to recruitment and retention of foster parents in the child welfare agency in Tulare County.

Data from 7 Tulare County foster parents were categorized into themes for 36 structured questions for interview. This study found that Tulare County foster parent participants felt that the Tulare County HHS was meeting satisfactory expectations with regard to recruitment and retention. Yet, all of the participants felt strongly that the Tulare County HHS could improve in specific areas. This study provided the Tulare County HHS with an awareness to improve and implement policy changes that could benefit engagement between the agency, their social workers, and the county foster parents.

Laura Michelle Knoblock
May 2009