

Final Report of the Questionnaire Survey - Research on the Strengths and Needs of Foster Families in Czech republic.

In the questionnaire survey was attended by 58 respondents - families and individuals providing foster care. The return of completed questionnaires was 100%. The sample of respondents was made up of foster families with whom the CPP has closed foster care agreements. The results can not be perceived as representative for whole Czech Republic, but for the region which has the most foster families in the Czech Republic. Another fact for the setting of respondents was the fact that we did **not include** in the sample **relative foster** parents because of the current situation in the Czech Republic, where the relative foster parents could not, or could not provide valid information about the process of recruitment, mediation or preparation because they do not pass through the system.

What we found (in the order of each question or range of questions):

General questions about the characteristics of foster families

As mentioned above, the sample of questioned foster families was made up of exclusively non relative foster families providing long-term foster care. The average age is 49 for males and 47 for females. 70% have secondary education and higher education. They are mostly still in full-time employment (60%). In $\frac{3}{4}$ they are married couples, and in one quarter are single living. Foster care is provided over 10 years (38%), 5-10 years (31%) and 3-5 years (27%), therefore they are mostly experienced foster families. For the most part they live in municipalities (52%) or small towns (31%).

The average number of entrusted children in family is 2, with 1 child (40% of families), with 2 children (28%), 3 children has (24%) and 4 and more (8.5%). The average age of the children is 10 years (boys) and 11 years old (girls). The ratio of boys and girls is approximately 40:60. In almost half of the cases they are siblings (45%). Approximately half of families perceive that children have specific needs. Excepting the adopted child / children, lives another biological child in 30% of families. In 62% of families there is no longer any biological child.

From the above characteristics of the group, the majority foster family can be defined followingly: They live in marriage, their age is 49 respectively 47 years, are secondary or university educated, except of foster family caregiving they are still working. They live in a small town or village. They are experienced foster caregivers of two entrusted children when at least one of them has specific needs. They do not have biological children, or their biological children do not live with them, or live outside their home at all.

Research questions

1. Fosterfamilies received information about foster family care (FFC) from specialists (55%), family or friends (25%). Only 17% of respondents had information from the media that can be seen as the lack of media coverage of the FFC.
2. The motivation for FFC is the most effort to help children (50%), but a high percentage (30%) is also the inability to have biological child. It can be concluded that it may be more of an adoptive motivation.

3. In the preparation of children it can be stated that 75% (the calculated percentage) had their own children involved in the preparation, when 25% of the respondents stated that they did not have own a child. Only 15% said that preparing children was not part of training.
4. Processes from the submission of the child's request to his actual entrusting are estimated by in 55% to 1.5 years, (6-18 months 45%) up to 6 months (10%) and 45% over 1.5 years. Such a high percentage may be due to different expectations of the entrusted child and reality.
5. A high percentage of respondents (90%) stated that was sufficiently informed (although in 30% only partly) about the needs of the entrusted children. Only 8% had the information completely insufficient or none.
6. Positive response after the decision to become foster parent (FP) obtained 95% of the respondents who accepted the child. This does not correlate with the further finding that respondents perceive low prestige in everyday life. Only 5% of the FP reported negative reactions.
7. A high percentage (45%) perceives their role as the father / mother of a child. 28% is more perceiving their role as the professional educators of the child and only about 8% perceive their role as helper at returning the child to the biological family and helping this family.
8. The objectives of FFC defines 90% of respondents in relation with the development of the child and fulfilling his needs. For 6% of the FP is the goal own development and less than 1% perceives as the goal the child's return to the biological family.
9. To the new FP respondents mainly recommended to receive information about FFC (95%), only 1.5% from the respondents do not recommended to others become FP.
10. For the increase of the interest of FFC and larger number of respondents, considered FP as important (approximately 30%) informations, greater law competence of the FP, better financial support. 12% mentioned greater professional support and 4% recommended a complete change of the FFC system.
11. For 50% FP is satisfying FFC based on the development of the child, the same (50%) has satisfaction from their own activities - helping children.
12. The whole system of the FFC preparation evaluates FP as rather easy (3.8 out of 10).
13. If there were planned changes in this process, then more than 20% FP recommend more information - more practical elements of preparation - more information about biological families. 10% FP recommended more practical recommendations, shortening the process, more information about children.
14. In 90% respondents decided to become FP thanks to the needs to help children, in 10% played a role financial support for FP.
15. The usefulness of the training, training for the practice after the entrusting of the child, was evaluated by FP on average by number 6.8 out of 10, while 50% rated 8-10.
16. Almost all FP (94%) graduated preparation in CPP, they evaluated very good the specialists and meetings with other FP, they would recommend more practical elements in preparation and more information about biological families.
17. A small percentage (4%) of preparation were in the PRIDE model.

18. The perception of the number of hours according to individual activities in preparation is: 10% - individual work, 25% group work, 17% workshops and 20% lectures, that corresponds to the overall layout activities in training.

19. 2/3 FP no longer has contact after training with other participants.

20. Almost all FP (98%) perceive the monitoring of their activities and the offer of education and further development of their skills.

21. As far as preparation is concerned, 40% FP would no longer change the content of preparation, others would recommend more practical information for care of child with specific needs and more encounters with other FP.

22. A majority of respondents reported perception of their support, especially from family, friends (70%) and professionals (30%), from which it can be seen that the family support is for FP very much important.

23. In response to the requested on expected support respondents reported 15% financial support and children's therapies and 10% therapy for FP - self-service groups and psychological help.

24. (to 27.) The services and cooperation provided by specialists (social workers, psychologists, therapists) were evaluated by FP very well with the requirement for more individual care. Also cooperation with health services and education systems evaluated in 90% positively without necessity meeting other needs.

28. As its strengths defined majority of FP (60%) owns family values and dispositions, professional abilities of about 20% of families and 10% ability to use professionals and teams around.

29. As the greatest difficulties in the practicing of FFC they perceive behavioral statements of the child (20%), low prestige FP (15%), lack of rest (15%), insufficient financial support (10%) and contact with the biological family of the child (8%).

30. In thinking about the potential development of themselves as a foster parent, the dominant majority of FP (85%) talks about their skills, knowledge, abilities related to the child and their care - communication with the child, specific needs of children, positive education, trauma management and only 10% should be improved at work and understanding the biological families.

31. In relation to the biological families of children, 1/3 P understands their importance for the child, at the same time 20% indicate that the child has no contact with the original family and 16% of the FP the biological family rejects (5% radically - "the biological family is pathological, so it does not have to interfere to child development"). Only 2,5% state that the goal of FFC is to return the child to the original family and they want to work together.

32. Contacts with the original family are only in 12% intensive, (i.e. once per month). In 70%, contact is sporadic or almost none (60%).

33. The most common form of contacts (if any) is the weekend spent in the original family, in 15% it is non-personal contacts (mail, photo, Facebook), in 15% contact in the supporting organization and in 8% in house FP.

34. to 35. The importance of biological families and the need to develop FP families was already determined at points 30 and 31.

36. As regards the respect and knowledge of children's rights in the FFC 93% of FP are sure, that children are aware of their rights and can them use, only 7% said that due to the low age of children they did not speak on the rights of the child with them yet.

37. In the future, almost 20% of respondents are considering to finish their FP activity, others see the future as FP or have plan to take another child.