FACTORS THAT CONTRIBUTE TO FOSTER PARENT TURNOVER

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FACTORS THAT CONTRIBUTE TO FOSTER PARENT TURNOVER

A Project
Presented to the
Faculty of
California State University,
San Bernardino

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Social Work

by
Cristina Velazquez
Tricia Monique Favela
June 2016
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Approved by:

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ABSTRACT

Foster parents play a key role in providing care to children that have been removed from their families. The purpose of this quantitative study was to identify factors that contribute to foster parent turnover. A self-administered survey included 6 questions in each section of the following sections; interaction with agency staff, communication, and foster parent training. The study's findings indicated that over 36% of the study’s participants reported that they were hesitant to discuss concerns with agency workers, and almost 45% were unsure of or did not believe that their worker was open and honest in providing relevant background information about a child before they were placed in their care. Over 84% of participants reported that training prepared them for children placed in their care, and the vast majority (87%) reported that the foster parent training they received provided them with knowledge and skills that are useful and realistic. Future research is needed to identify factors that lead to foster parent turnover as our results had no variation among the independent and dependent variables. Foster parents who have decided to cease fostering need to be included in future research and policy in order to identify additional factors which impact foster parent turnover.
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DEDICATION

I, Cristina Velazquez, would like to thank my parents, Leticia Velazquez and Nestor Velazquez, for the love that gave me the self-confidence to set my goals as well as the strength to reach them. I would especially like to thank them for the all support that allowed me to take on the challenge of graduate school without worrying who was caring for my son. I would also like to thank my husband, Junior Cuen for the unwavering confidence he had in me when I was in doubt, for his sense of humor when I was feeling overwhelmed, and most importantly for all the times he guided me through the deep-seated guilt only a mother in graduate school can feel. Lastly, I dedicate this thesis to my son, Vincent Velazquez Cuen, my reason for being and my motivation for becoming a better person than I was the day before. Te amo.
To my family and friends,

Thank you for being part of my support team. Thank you for the constant source of support and encouragement you provided me during the challenges of graduate school and life. I would like to give special thanks to my mother Patty Favela for the never ending support, encouragement and motivation throughout my academic endeavors. I give thanks to my better half, Jesse Farias for being there and reminding me that giving up was not an option. My wonderful friend Teresa Ramos, I am grateful for your motivation, empowerment, endless guidance and support during my academic endeavors.

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Tricia Monique Favela
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CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTION

Problem Statement

Foster family homes have emerged as the preferred placement for children within the foster system in order to ease the shock of removal and provide a safe, therapeutic, and family environment to aid in the reunification of families. Unfortunately, despite the increased number of children entering the system, there is a critical shortage of foster homes available. This is due in part to low levels of recruitment, but retention rates continue to be the most impactful issue for child welfare agencies. Attrition of foster homes result in the loss of experienced foster parents, a limited number of homes available for placement and loss of time and expenses spent on training for the agency. Research has found that turnover among foster parents' ranges from 30 to 50% depending on location and the agency (Gibbs & Wildfire, 2006). A majority of foster parents decide to cease providing care within a year of their first placement (Gibbs & Wildfire, 2006). Low levels of retention and decreasing number of foster homes result in increased number of placements for children, which in consequence affects emotional and behavioral issues that can impact long term outcomes in regards to finding permanency. It is essential that we come to understand some of the reasons foster parents choose to stop fostering through studying the areas that directly impact foster parent satisfaction with their role.
Addressing the shortage of foster homes is critical in continuing the philosophical shift in child welfare; that of providing the least restrictive and most family-like home possible for children who are unable to be placed with relatives or kinship foster families (Green, 2003). It is vital that the traumatizing experience of removal and present issues in functioning many children exhibit prior to entry into the foster care system not be further compounded by additional stress during placement. Of the more than 500,000 children currently in out-of-home care in the United States, almost 50% are placed in non-relative foster family homes (Gibbs & Wildfire, 2006). The increasing number of children entering the foster care system has not been paralleled by an increase in the number of non-relative foster homes available (Gibbs, 2007). Research by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services has found that the number of children in the foster system has increased over 10,000 in the last four years (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Children’s Bureau, 2010, 2014). Because of the absence of available foster homes many active foster parents are asked to care for children who exhibit behaviors or have needs beyond their capacity or training, which only serves to overwhelm foster parents who, as a result, are likely to stop providing care. Children are displaced when foster parents decide to cease providing care and are forced to undergo yet another change in placement that might cause additional traumas. Foster parent turnover is a complicated matter that only compounds other issues within the foster care system.
Professionals within the child welfare system agree that placement within a stable and supportive foster family home is ideal for children who cannot remain within their homes or be placed with extended family or relatives. High turnover in foster homes affects the child welfare system on a policy wide, micro, and macro level. Child welfare agencies are unable to comply with the theoretical framework touted as the most conducive to establishing permanency for children because of the limited foster homes available, foster family agencies lose time and money when turnover is high, and children's long term outcomes in term of permanency are impacted.

Purpose of Study

There are some concerns about the increased number of foster parents that decide to cease fostering. In the light of recent research, much of their decision appears to involve a number of factors. The present study seeks to evaluate the factors contributing to foster parent turnover rates. The number of children in out-of-home care is a matter of national and international concern (Octoman & McLean, 2014). In 2014, there were 415,129 children in the foster care system (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Children’s Bureau, 2010, 2014). Over the past few decades, foster parent retention rates have been steadily decreasing. Previous research suggests that retention of foster parents is influenced by a number of factors such as training, supportive relationships, agency service interactions, and involvement in decision-making.
Rather than recruiting more foster parents, it is pertinent for social service agencies to be cognizant about factors contributing to foster parent attrition rates.

After careful consideration, the researchers used a survey design to collect data from participants. More specifically, a survey approach through convenience sampling was used as it enabled researchers to obtain a larger sample size. This approach was selected over the qualitative research approach due to time constraints of the researchers and the large sample size researchers attempted to obtain. A larger sample size was preferred over qualitative methods because previous studies have made the primary factors associated with foster parent turnover clear. Therefore, conducting an exploratory study was deemed unnecessary. The generalizability of a large quantitative study was preferred. A qualitative approach would have been more conducive if researchers were attempting to elicit information pertaining to various views and opinions. In this study, the researchers’ goal was to gain a better understanding of underlying reasons and motivations that contribute to foster parents decision to continue or cease fostering, which is why the quantitative approach was chosen.

Significance for Social Work Practice

Although there are numerous studies on how to recruit greater numbers of foster parents, the key issue is the retention of the foster parents who have already been trained. This is crucial not only to maintain experienced foster
parents who can provide care for more demanding placements, but to stem the crisis of the foster home deficit. Foster families as well as child welfare agencies will benefit from a greater understanding of why foster parents cease fostering children because of the amount of time and resources invested in training foster parents that is only wasted once they exit fostering. It is important to understand this problem further in order for child welfare and foster family agency social workers to gain a better understanding about the needs and perspectives of foster parents and the impact foster parent turnover rates have on children. Because of high turnover rates in foster parents, children experience a high number of foster care placements, which contributes to instability, increased trauma, increased negative behaviors, and poor long-term outcomes, so it is important for social workers to understand the factors that are contributing to these issues in order to improve the safety, permanency, and well-being of children.

Current research pertaining to foster parent retention rates proposes holistic, collaborative, and strengths-based perspective with a focus on permanency. According to the literature, there appears to be a lack of further research regarding foster parent satisfaction levels and the causes of such high levels of attrition. Without further studies, child welfare agencies will be unable to identify causes of high foster parent turnover, which limits the type of out-of-home placements children can be placed in. This in turn leads to children being placed in group homes and other types of congregate care or institutional
settings as the number of foster family homes available continue to decline. When placement options are limited social workers are less able to focus on placements with proximity to supports unique to each child such as family, school, and other community resources (Gibbs & Wildfire, 2006). This study will also be impactful for child welfare agencies as it will allow them to provide more effective services to foster parents and provide children with placements that are conducive to permanency. Foster family agencies will also be able to target specific areas of dissatisfaction such as training, financial support, and relationships with caseworkers resulting in higher rates of retention. Overall, this study aims to aid the multiple agencies which are involved in child welfare services in planning the ways in which they address the issue of foster parent turnover.

This study is relevant to child welfare because it will give child welfare workers insight about factors that are impacting foster parent decisions to continue or cease fostering. Foster parent turnover directly impacts child welfare workers because a limited pool of foster homes restricts the important characteristics they can ask for when searching for placement; characteristics such as location, proximity to biological parents, school continuity, and community. More importantly, this study is impactful because child welfare agencies will be able to identify the factors that may lead to placement disruption early on in a case. If workers are able to identify these factors, it will be less likely that children will re-experience traumatization because of multiple placements.
The study will provide social service agencies with the necessary information to address high attrition rates through a concrete and manageable plan.

In order to better understand how retention rates for foster family homes can be increased we hope to answer the following question: How do factors such as interactions with agency staff, training, and participation in decision making affect foster parents intentions to continue fostering?
CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

The review of the literature pertaining to foster parent turnover summarizes current research in regards to factors that contribute to their satisfactions levels and intent to continue fostering. While there was a great deal of literature available on outcomes and care provided by foster family homes there was a lack of information on their experiences as foster parents. Studies conducted within the United States tend to focus on issues within foster family homes or ways in which foster parents were unable to meet requirements or expectations placed upon them by their agency. There tended to be a focus on performance issues and outcomes as opposed to studies regarding resources and supports foster parents can receive to aid them in what can be the difficult task of parenting children within the foster care system. The literature greatly swayed towards a perspective which disregarded foster parent experiences and needs when studying outcomes. Within the social work field it is believed that all individuals should be approached with a focus on understanding and support, which is why it is important to address the lack of literature which attempts to identify with foster parent experiences as care providers.

While reviewing the literature it was also discovered that a large number of studies conducted on foster family homes were conducted in the 1980’s and
1990’s. The emergence of such an array of studies was due to a serious decline in the availability of foster family homes available for placement. The critical gap appears to have been decreased by a rise in rates of adoption and an increase in the use of kinship placements for children, but a significant disparity continues (Gibbs & Wildfire, 2006). In spite of this issue, there has not been a surge of literature on foster family homes within the United States as previously emerged. A large majority of the literature discovered was both outdated and conducted outside of the United States. This can impact the reliability of the results when being applied to the status of causation of foster parent turnover in the United States. The researchers conducted a search for peer-reviewed publications on foster parent satisfaction and retention rates by utilizing various search engines. After carefully analyzing these studies, the researchers found that there were several apparent factors that contribute to foster parent attrition rates. These factors include, communication and interaction with agency staff, foster parent locus of control, and training inadequacies.

Interaction with Agency Staff

One study examined factors that impact a foster parent's likelihood of continuing fostering (Geiger, Hayes, & Lietz, 2013). Data was collected from 649 foster parents to explore factors that impact this decision. The need for social, emotional, and practical supports was revealed by foster parents. They reported that improved communication, better resources, acknowledgement and respect
from social service agency representatives, courts, attorneys, and state licensing agencies impact their decision to continue or cease fostering. Approximately one-third of surveyed foster parents reported considering discontinuing, which is consistent with previous research, however, provided additional themes that contribute to foster parents decision (Geiger, Hayes, & Lietz, 2013). These results are important in understanding some of the factors that are impacting attrition rates.

Common themes in the research revealed a lack in the quality of the interaction among child welfare social workers and foster parents as well as how it contributes to foster parent satisfaction. This may include things such as unreturned phone calls, ignored emails, or frequent changes in caseworkers handling the case. A qualitative study found that when foster parents reported feeling unsupported it was directly related to the relationship with the worker or the agency. Foster parents who reported a bad relationship with their workers stated issues such as their opinions not being respected, workers failing to return phone call, and overall poor communication (MacGregor, Rodger, Cummings, & Leschied, 2006). In contrast, foster parents who reported feeling supported stated the relationship with their workers was a positive one. These foster parents reported that workers would return their calls promptly, supported their requests or opinions, and used “open, honest communication” (MacGregor et al., 2006). This is in line with other similar qualitative studies which cited “patronizing
professionals”, “dishonesty from worker”, and a lack of respect (Brown & Bednar, 2006).

Changes in caseworkers assigned to foster families was also a barrier to communication and interaction with agency staff. One study revealed that being assigned a new case manager (social worker) was a communication barrier for foster parents (Geiger et al., 2013). Foster parents reported having built a relationship with the previous social worker which allowed for lines of open communication and trust, but it can be damaged or even severed if there is not a proper transition to a new worker. Frequent changes in workers can also make it difficult for foster parents to maintain consistency with the case plan or in parenting strategies as might have been discussed with a previous worker (MacGregor et al., 2006).

Whiting and Huher (2007) conducted a mixed methods study about the interactions that foster parents have with other systems and to gain insight about how foster parents deal with challenges and loss, as well as their motivations, rewards and strengths. Of the 151 foster parents that were surveyed, results revealed that 71.7% of foster parents ceased fostering due to negative experience with agency workers and staff (Whiting & Huher, 2007). Ecological constraints revealed that foster parents had poor communication with the agency. They reported that their workers would not return phone calls and would withhold pertinent information pertaining to the case such as behavioral issues or reason for removal. Some foster parents reported having supportive agency
workers that would return phone calls, provide necessary information, and conduct monthly visits. One of the studies limitations was having a small sample size, however, the information provided is important for social work practice as communication appears to be an ongoing issue in light of recent research.

Another study conducted to examine factors contributing to foster parent satisfaction one year after preservice training revealed that there were a number of factors that emerged pertaining to satisfaction (Fees, Stockdale, Crase, Riggins-Caspers, Yates, Lekies, and Gillis-Arnold, 1998). Several factors emerged from the study pertaining to foster parent satisfaction. Of those factors, social service support satisfaction was one. In fact, strong dissatisfaction in one area, such as a poor relationship with a social worker, can be enough to result in attrition of otherwise happy and qualified parents (Fees, Stockdale, Crase, Riggins-Caspers, Yates, Lekies, and Gillis-Arnold, 1998).

Farmer, Lipscombe, and Moyers (2005) revealed that enhanced support could attenuate the experience of strain such as the regular and reliable availability of the foster child’s social worker. The study sample was drawn from a recent study conducted by the Department of Health that was aimed at foster care for adolescents. As many as 70 percent of the foster parents in the study found it sometimes or always difficult to contact the child’s social worker and the greatest criticism made was that the social worker did not respond to telephone calls and only responded if there was a crisis (Farmer, Lipscombe, & Moyers, 2005). Another interesting finding that was discussed was the strain on the foster
parent during placement was not connected to some of the emotional and behavioral disturbance displayed in the foster children. Although the study was aimed at the foster parent strain and its impact on parenting and placement outcomes for adolescents, the article discussed the importance of social workers understanding what their role was and how it could be frustrating for foster parents when they were ignored. It is pertinent for social workers to stay in contact with foster parents on a regular basis. Improving communication is key due to this being one of many factors contributing to attrition rates. In contrast, those who had regular contact with their social worker reported higher levels of satisfaction.

Decision Making

Eaton and Caltabiano (2009) hypothesized that satisfaction levels of foster parents would be determined by locus of control and social support and the decision to continue or cease fostering would be influenced by satisfaction and commitment to children in their care. The study consisted of 185 voluntary foster carer families, however, after exclusions, data from 154 foster carers were analyzed for this study (Eaton and Caltabiano, 2009). Thirty-one percent of the sample reported that they had felt like giving up fostering ‘often’ or ‘very often. The results of this study revealed that there were four key factors that determined the likelihood of retention: locus of control, support, satisfaction and commitment. Although this study was conducted in Queensland Australia and the sample size
was not representative of the entire foster care population, the results allow researchers to have a better understanding as to what motivates foster parents to continue or cease fostering.

According to Rhodes, Orme, and Buehler (2001), foster parents reported a number of factors that contribute to the decision to discontinue fostering. Some foster parents reported having little or no input in decision-making for foster children. This contributes to the problem of having little control over what happens with the child in the future. Foster parents that perceived having little input into case planning for children and had problems dealing with birth parents over several placements might decide to cease fostering if they do not get the needed support for a particular child (Rhodes, Orme, and Buehler, 2001). This poses a concern for foster parents because they are most familiar with the foster children that are in their care, yet their voices go unheard. Ultimately, this can have an impact on a foster parent’s decision to continue or cease fostering.

Another way that a lack of input in decision making leads to dissatisfaction is the manner in which foster parents are made to feel when they are discounted from providing input to the children’s cases whom they provide so much care for. A study by Wilson, Sinclair, and Gibbs (2000) revealed statements such as “foster carers are second class citizens” and “foster carers are unimportant and their views are ignored” that serve to highlight the manner in which foster parents are relegated to the sidelines when they can provide such valuable input (p. 2030). A quantitative study by Sanchirico, Lau, Jablonka, and Russell (1998)
revealed the very strong correlation between foster parents who are involved in planning and those who are satisfied with foster parenting. The study found that “those who are involved with the planning team are more satisfied than those who are not involved” (p.17) and it held true even after other variables were taken into consideration.

Training

Rhodes, Orme, and Buehler (2001) utilized data from the National Survey of Current and Former Foster Parents that was conducted in 1991 and was based on a nationally selected sample. There was a subsample of 267 current foster families that were divided into foster parents who plan to continue, 193, and foster parents who plan to cease fostering, 59. Findings of the study provided researchers with insight regarding how training is a factor that contributes to foster parent retention. Those who were not successful at fostering made a connection with training inadequacies. Despite issues with foster parent training adequacy, foster parents tend to have better long term outcomes if they receive any type of training regardless of quality. Research by Whenan, Oxlad, and Lushington (2009) found that training was a factor which was significant regardless of other variables. This means that foster parents who completed the initial training had better retention outcomes. Foster parents who participated in further training following the initial training had even greater outcomes in regards to their intention to continue fostering.
Regardless of initial foster parent training leading to better outcomes, the quality of the training should also be evaluated. Past studies revealed that foster parents were not satisfied with the information they were provided with during training and left them feeling unprepared to face some of the challenges foster parents face (Rhodes, Orme, and Buehler, 2001). Multiple studies found that foster parents had great difficulties in addressing some of the behaviors and needs children exhibited in the home. Studies such as those by MacGregor (2006) or Octoman and McLean (2014) went further by obtaining opinions of foster parents on what training was lacking or what type of training they believed would better address the information they lacked. Both studies found that foster parents wanted more “realistic and specialized training that was geared to the specific needs of children” (MacGregor, 2006, p. 11). A majority of foster parents reported that they felt ill equipped to handle the much more severe and complicated behaviors and traumas of the children in their care. Training is crucial in providing foster parents with the necessary tools to tackle the very necessary job of providing care for foster children.

Similarly, Denby, Rindfleshch, and Bean (1999) revealed that a foster parents’ satisfaction and intent to continue fostering consists of training factors as well as motivational factors and self efficacy. Training inadequacies can be reduced through training focused on how to deal with difficult behaviors exhibited in foster children. Lack in competence in working with children who have difficult behaviors leaves foster parents feeling alone and unable to effectively work with
these children. If foster parents have access to a broad support system, they will not feel unsupported. Foster parents need to be empowered and feel appreciated, which can be succeeded through increased formal and informal supports.

One study highlighted foster parents’ perceptions of familial and parental factors that promote or inhibit successful fostering (Buehler, Cox, & Cuddeback, 2003). The study consisted of 22 foster parents who were asked a number of open-ended questions pertaining to rewards, stressors, beliefs and behaviors that make fostering easier or difficult. Results revealed that 31 percent of foster parents who had non-child centered motives, such as supplemental income for fostering inhibited successful fostering, whereas 86 percent reported having a deep concern or love for children as a factor that facilitates successful fostering (Buehler, Cox, & Cuddeback, 2003). Thus, successful fostering begins with pre-service training about topics such as these. One of the studies limitations was that the participants were pulled from one region, so the sample was not representative of the foster parent population.

Theories Guiding Conceptualization

Theoretical frameworks that guided the researchers of this study was ecological systems theory and the cognitive evaluation theory. By utilizing ecological systems theory, researchers were able to focus on individual interactions within the micro, meso, exo, and macro systems and the effects it
has on foster parents’ intentions to continue or cease fostering (Swick & Williams, 2006). Viewing the satisfaction levels of foster parents within the ecological systems theory researchers were able to view them as individuals as well as how they interact with the five separate environmental systems. Because of the ways in which foster family homes interact with the child welfare system it was important for researchers to view foster parents within the context of their community and wider society. The researchers gathered data on foster parents as individuals such as their sex, age, race, and gender. Researchers also gathered data on the foster parents’ microsystems, such as number children in the home, foster children, and spouses. Because of their involvement in the child welfare system their social workers are also considered as part of their microsystem. Being that mesosystems connect two or more systems in an individual’s life, foster parents’ mesosystems can consist of the connection between their foster child and the social workers or between other members of the child’s treatment team. At the exosystem level, researchers delved into the interactions between foster parents and their agency. The macrosystem, which foster parents are very much a part of, is that of the child welfare system. It is this system which can influence how foster parents experience being care providers, how they are viewed, and even how social workers interact with them. Overall, researchers used ecological systems theory to understand how foster parent interaction with their agency social workers and the agency at large impact their
levels of satisfaction with financial support, training, relationships with social
workers, perceived support, and feelings of control in their foster children’s lives.

Cognitive evaluation theory is a framework which has been used in
previous studies on factors that contribute to motivation as well as satisfaction
rates for foster parents (Deci & Ryan 2013). In previous literature it has been
used to analyze motivation factors which might be extrinsic or intrinsic. Cognitive
evaluation theory is one theory among many that make up theories of motivation.
The basic outline of motivation factors in motivation theory is needs, behavior,
and satisfaction. Every individual has certain needs or wants that cause them to
exhibit behaviors or do certain things, which will result in the satisfaction of those
needs. Cognitive evaluation theory takes basic motivation theory a step further
and breaks the motivation system in two; intrinsic and extrinsic motivations which
respond to different kinds of motivators (Deci, & Ryan, 2013). Daniel (2011) used
intrinsic and extrinsic motivators to analyze why foster parents continued
providing care despite barriers and stresses. Intrinsic motivators include things
which include the performance of a task such as achievement, competence, and
come from within an individual. Extrinsic motivators come from an individual’s
environment and are controlled by others such as, pay, feedback, and working
conditions. The researchers also utilized cognitive evaluation theory to analyze
how foster parent satisfaction levels in intrinsic motivators such as perceived
support or feelings of control in foster children’s lives and extrinsic motivators
such as financial support, training, and relationships with social workers impact their intentions to continue fostering.

Summary

Most of the literature reviewed was outdated or conducted in countries outside of the United States, which poses difficulties for social workers’ ability to stay up to date with current research. It was also found that the majority of the research focuses on foster parent’s motivation pertaining to continuing or ceasing foster as opposed to focusing on foster parents satisfaction rates and experiences in regards to fostering. Studies were also contradictory in regards to length of foster parent career length, but this can also be explained by both the fifteen year difference between the data’s collection as well as the ways in which the data was collected. What was gathered from previous studies was a clear indication of the factors which are strongly correlated with foster parent satisfaction and turnover rates. An extensive review of research led to three factors which were found to be impactful to retention rates across a majority of studies, communication and interaction with agency staff, locus of control, and training.
CHAPTER THREE

METHODS

Introduction

This chapter will discuss the specific methods that were employed by researchers to examine factors contributing to foster parent turnover rates. This chapter will provide a brief description of the study design, sampling procedures, including how researchers collected their data, number of participants researchers recruited, and how researchers recruited their participants. Data collection and instruments will also be discussed and details pertaining to procedures that were utilized throughout the study. This chapter will include a brief discussion of protection of human subjects, and conclude with discussing the data analysis.

Study Design

The purpose of this study was to evaluate how factors such as interaction with agency workers, input in decision making, and training contribute to foster parent turnover in San Bernardino County. The study employs a quantitative research design in which a self-administered survey was used. A quantitative research design was used in order to allow the researchers to include a large number of foster parents within the sample. A large sample allowed for more generalizability within San Bernardino County. A quantitative research design is
also more appropriate because of the purpose of the study, which evaluated how factors such as interaction with agency staff, input in decision making, and training contribute to foster parent turnover. A qualitative research design would be more appropriate if the researchers sought to explore or identify what those factors were.

However, one of the limitations of using quantitative research is the inability to explore other possible factors. The researchers were unable to determine whether other additional factors contributed to a foster parent’s decision to cease fostering. Only the factors of interaction with agency staff, input in decision making, and training were studied. Another limitation posed by using a survey design was the inability to explore some of the nuances that emerged in regards to variances between each agency.

Sampling

Researchers initiated communication with San Bernardino County Department of Children and Family Services (SBC DCFS), Knotts Foster Family Agency in San Bernardino, and A New Beginning Foster Family Agency in Hesperia in regards to surveying foster parents within their agency. The researchers disclosed details of the research to the director’s at all three agencies. Convenience sampling was used to survey foster parents in San Bernardino County. The target population for the purpose of this study was current foster parents throughout San Bernardino County. Researchers recruited
a total of 87 participants from the three agencies combined. Researchers only included foster parents in the sampling if they are currently active or certified. Researchers recruited current foster parents in order to examine how communication, decision making, and training impact their decision to continue or cease fostering. Previous or inactive foster parents were not included in the survey because policies and procedures may have changed prior to this study.

Data Collection and Instruments

Data was collected using the Foster Parent Satisfaction Survey (FPSS), a survey that was created in English (Appendix A) and Spanish (Appendix B) by the researchers and is attached in the appendix. The data collected included demographic and background data, foster parent intention to continue fostering, and foster parent satisfaction in regards to each factor. The independent variables is their satisfaction levels with the different factors; interaction with agency staff, decision making, and training. The dependent variable is their intention to continue fostering. The FPSS instrument was created following in-depth literature reviews in regards to the most common factors cited as influential to foster parent turnover of which three were chosen. The FPSS was pretested in order to ensure the survey was clear and reliable.

The survey contained four separate sections, background information, interaction with Children and Family Services (CFS) worker, decision making, and training. Some of the background data collected included gender, ethnicity,
age, marital status, and length of fostering. The level of measurement for all information gathered in the background section is nominal or ordinal. The four separate sections for each chapter will use ordinal levels of measurement through a Likert response scale. Each section lists six statements about that specific factor and asks the foster parents to select their level of agreement. Foster parents are able to choose Strongly Agree (1), Agree (2), Neutral (3), Disagree (4), and Strongly Disagree (5).

Procedures

After receiving approval from the School of Social Work Sub-Committee of the Institutional Review Board of California State University, San Bernardino, the researchers began the initial phase of data collection. Participants were recruited from various three agencies in San Bernardino County between January 2016 and March 2016. San Bernardino County Children and Family Services (Appendix C), Knotts Foster Family Agency (Appendix D) in San Bernardino and A New Beginning Foster Family Agency (Appendix E) provided researchers with letters of support in December 2015 indicating that researchers have permission to survey foster parents. These approval letters were included in the IRB application. The next step in the research process consisted of researchers attending foster parent trainings held by Knotts Foster Family Agency in San Bernardino and A New Beginning Foster Family Agency in Hesperia between January 2016 and February 2016. During this time, researchers administered
surveys to foster parents who were interested in completing a survey at the training. A informed consent form was signed by participants who were interested in participating in the survey. The form advised participants about the following: purpose of the study, description of survey, participation, confidentiality, risks, duration of the survey, benefits, and contact information. In January 2016, researchers mailed out 247 surveys to foster parents who are currently active with CFS. Researchers did not attend a training for this agency because Riverside County foster parents attend these meetings, however, researchers did not include this county in this study. In order for researchers to obtain a representative sample of the foster parent population in San Bernardino County, researchers recruited participants from the above mentioned agencies.

Protection of Human Subjects

Researchers took necessary steps to protect human subjects who participated in the study. It should be noted that researchers did not ask participants any personal identifying information and all participants were identified by number. Researchers of this study developed an informed consent form that meets the requirements of the Institutional Review Board at California State University, San Bernardino. Participants were notified of this approval through the informed consent form. The purpose of the informed consent for this study was to ensure autonomy of study participants although there was no identifying questions asked of the research participants. In addition, the survey
did not pose any risks for research participants. All data collected during this study was stored on secured USB drive and surveys were destroyed once data was entered into the SPSS system.

Data Analysis

Quantitative data for this study was obtained by researchers through use of a survey method design. This explanatory research was analyzed by researchers through data provided on self-administered surveys completed by foster parents. The study used descriptive statistics such as frequency distributions, measures of central tendency, and variations to describe the characteristics of the participants. Data analysis was conducted by utilizing multivariate statistics, analyzing the relationship between the three independent variables and intent to continue fostering. Researchers obtained the mean satisfaction level of each respondent and standard deviation for the three separate sections. We hoped to find a positive correlation between each of the three factors and foster parent intent to continue fostering, meaning that as satisfaction level in communication with agency staff, training, and decision making increases, foster parent intent to continue fostering does as well.

Researchers also used inferential statistics such as chi-square tests, t-tests, and Pearson’s coefficients as needed to assess whether the relationship between variables exists. Researchers examined the relationship between communication with agency staff, training, and decision making and how these
factors impact a foster parent’s decision to continue or cease fostering through use of a survey questionnaire that was constructed by the researchers.

Summary

This chapter covered the research study design, sampling methods, data collection and instruments that were utilized for this study as well as procedures researchers carried out in order to complete the study. This chapter also outlined measures that were taken in order to protect human subjects as well as qualitative procedures that were used in order to answer the research question.
CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS

Introduction

This chapter presents the findings obtained from the data through the use of self-administered questionnaires. The chapter will discuss the relevant descriptive statistics and will present results of the independent samples t-test. The data collection process was designed to explore factors that contribute to foster parent turnover. In order to capture the participant’s perspective, the self-administered questionnaire contained questions regarding interaction, decision making, and communication with agency workers. This chapter will include a brief summary of the findings.

Presentation of the Demographics

The sample consisted of 87 currently active foster parents in San Bernardino County certified or licensed through the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS), Knotts Foster Family Agency, and A New Beginning Foster Family Agency. The great majority of participants were female (91%) while a small minority (9%) were male. The ages of the participants ranged from 25 years to 78 years with an average age of 54 (SD=11.9). Five percent of the population reported that they were between the ages of 25 and 35 years, 20% between the ages of 36-45 years, 31% between the ages of 46-55 years, 25%
between the ages of 56-65 years and 18% were 65 years or older. Over 47% of participants were African American, 30% were Hispanic, 10% were White, 9% were other ethnicities, 1% were Native American and 1% were Asian/Pacific Islander. Over 90% of participants were English speaking and 9% were Spanish speaking. Data regarding the marital status of each participant was also gathered. Over half (56%) of the participants reported that they were married, 17% reported they were widowed, 15% reported they were divorced, 7% reported never being married or they were single, 4% reported they were in a long-term relationship and 1% reported other.

Our survey was administered to foster parents from the three agencies who were either licensed or certified. Over half (55%) of the participants were licensed foster parents with Children and Family Services in San Bernardino County, 29% were certified with A New Beginning Foster Family Agency in Hesperia CA and 16% were certified with Knotts Foster Family Agency in San Bernardino CA. Nearly 22% of participants reported that they have been fostering for 1 year or less, 57% reported fostering 2 to 10 years, 9% reported fostering 11 to 20 years, 5% reported fostering 21 to 30 years and 7% reported fostering 31 years or longer.

The great majority (97%) of the participants reported that they intended to continue fostering whereas the remaining 3% reported they did not intend to continue fostering or they were undecided. Over 41% of the participants reported they intend to continue fostering for 10 years or longer, 23% intend to continue 6-
10 years, 20% intend to continue 4-5 years, 11% intend to continue 2-3 years and nearly 4% were undecided. Table 1 presents the demographic statistics previously discussed.

Table 1. Demographics of Participants

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</table>

Presentation of Data

Participants were asked six questions regarding their interaction with agency workers, the results of which are presented in Table 2 below. Over half (55%) reported they either strongly agreed or agreed they were hesitant to discuss concerns with agency workers, while 36% of participants reported that
they either strongly disagreed or disagreed they were hesitant to discuss concerns with agency workers. Seven participants reported being neutral about this. In regards to receiving support from agency workers, 55 (67%) participants either strongly agreed or agreed they receive support. Nearly 19% reported they strongly disagreed or disagreed they receive support whereas 13% reported being neutral. Nearly 76% of participants reported they strongly agreed or agreed having clear and respectful communication with agency workers, 15% reported they strongly disagreed or disagreed, and the remaining 8% reported being neutral.

When asked about being in agreement with the agency worker about who is responsible for transportation, medical appointments and school events, 70% reported that they either strongly agreed or agreed, 18% reported they strongly disagreed or disagreed and 11% reported being neutral. Nearly three-fourths of the participants (74%) reported they either strongly agreed or agreed that they were able to get in touch with the agency worker when there was an emergency, 18% reported that they strongly disagreed or disagreed, and 6 participants reported being neutral. When asked about agency workers being open and honest about providing relevant background information before a child is placed, over half (56%) of participants reported that they either strongly agreed or agreed, 16% reported that they strongly disagreed or disagreed, and 19% reported being neutral.
Table 2. Participants’ Responses on Interaction Items

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<td>7.3</td>
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<td>Neutral</td>
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<td>8.5</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Strongly Agree</td>
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<td>18.3</td>
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<td>7.3</td>
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<td>13.4</td>
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<td>7.2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
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<td>8.4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
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<td>8.4</td>
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<td>7.5</td>
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<tr>
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<td>21.7%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>33.7%</td>
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</table>

Participants were asked also questions regarding how they viewed their participation in decision making regarding children placed in their care (please see Table 3). Sixty-nine percent of participants either strongly agreed or agreed that knowledge about children in their care is valued by the agency worker, 14% either strongly disagreed or disagreed, and 17% reported being neutral. When participants were asked if they felt they were included in decisions regarding children in their care, more than half (63%) either strongly agreed or agreed, 15% either strongly disagreed or disagreed, and 21% of participants reported being neutral.

Participants were asked if they consider themselves a part of the case planning team for children in their care and 72% of participants reported that they either strongly agreed or agreed, 15% either strongly disagreed or disagreed, and 13% were neutral. When participants were asked about the agency worker informing them about upcoming states such as court appearances and team meetings, 67% indicated they either strongly agreed or agreed, 18% reported that they strongly disagreed or disagreed, and 13 participants indicated they were neutral. In terms of potential changes in placement, visitation, or case
plans, 64% of participants indicated they either strongly agreed or agreed that they were informed, 20% indicated they either strongly disagreed or disagreed, and 17% indicated they were neutral. The results previously discussed are displayed in Table 3 below.

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<td>15.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>23.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>42.9</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Informed of Changes</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>8</td>
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<td>25.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>39.3</td>
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</table>

Participants were asked six questions about their view on foster parent training. Over 84% of participants either strongly agreed or agreed that training prepared them for children placed in their care whereas 10% either strongly disagreed or disagreed, and exactly 6% reported being neutral about this. When asked if foster parent training prepared them for real situations they have faced as a foster parent, 75% reported they either strongly agreed or agreed, 11% either strongly disagreed or disagreed, and 14% were neutral. More than 87% of participants either strongly agreed or agreed that knowledge and skills obtained in foster parent training have been useful in caring for children placed in their care whereas 6% either strongly disagreed or agreed, and 6 participants indicated they were neutral.
Nearly 82% of participants indicated that they either strongly agreed or agreed that foster parent training provided them with a realistic understanding of the issues they would face as a foster parent. On the other hand, 6% either strongly disagreed or disagreed and 12% were neutral. When participants were if information and support from other foster parents would have better prepared them for children placed in their care, 9% either strongly agreed or agreed, 74% either strongly disagreed or disagreed, and 17% reported being neutral. A great majority of participants (78%) indicated that they either strongly agreed or agreed that what they learned in foster parent training was in line with what the agency workers expected of them. Only 14% either strongly disagreed or disagreed and 8% reported being neutral regarding this question. The results previously discussed are displayed in Table 4 below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Prepared for Children</strong></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>3</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6.0</td>
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<tr>
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<td><strong>Prepared for Real Situations</strong></td>
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<td>27.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Gave Realistic Understanding</td>
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<tr>
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<td>2</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
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<td>3.5</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>54.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support from Other Foster Parents</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>42.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<tr>
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<td>In Line with Agency Expectations</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7.1</td>
</tr>
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</table>

Further analysis was conducted on the data gathered in order to assess whether satisfaction levels in the three areas of interaction, decision making, and
training impacted foster parent intention to continue fostering. A number of independent sample t tests were conducted in order to discover whether there was a significant difference between satisfaction levels of foster parents in interactions with agency workers, training, and decision making between the two groups who indicated they did or did not intend to continue. Following a series of t tests it was discovered that there was insufficient variation between the number of foster parents who did and did not intend to continue fostering. Our hypothesis was invalid because the lack of difference did not allow for testing which was generalizable.

Summary

The previous chapter describes the data obtained and analysis conducted by the researchers. The data was gathered in order to explore factors that contribute to foster parent turnover with the areas of interaction, decision making, and communication with agency workers. Data gathered showed that the researcher’s hypothesis was invalid due to a lack of variation in foster parents who did and did not intend to continue fostering.
CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION

Introduction

The following chapter will include a discussion of significant results and key findings of the study. Recommendations for research, policy, and social work practice will be discussed along with the limitations of the present study. The chapter will conclude with a brief discussion about the study.

Discussion

The present study aimed to examine how satisfaction in the areas of interaction with agency workers, input in decision making, and training contributed to foster parent turnover in San Bernardino County. Although the data gathered revealed insufficient variation to allow generalizability, the sample size allowed the researchers to identify numerous key findings which both support and conflict with previous literature. A key finding within the study that supports recent literature is a good percentage of foster parents who are dissatisfied in their interaction with agency workers. Over 36% of foster parents agreed or strongly agreed that they were hesitant to contact their workers to discuss concerns regarding a child in their care. Almost 45% were unsure of or did not believe that their worker was open and honest in providing relevant background information about a child before they were placed in their care. This
is consistent with previous literature which tied poor quality of interaction between child welfare social workers and foster parents to higher rates of dissatisfaction and turnover (Whiting & Huher, 2007). They conducted a mixed methods study of 151 foster parents found that 71.7% of foster parents ceased fostering due to negative experience with agency workers and staff. Foster parents within the Whiting and Huher (2007) study reported issues such as workers withholding pertinent information pertaining to the case such as behavioral issues or reason for removal, which directly parallels the present study’s findings. Despite the rates of dissatisfaction within the area of interaction, over 96% of the foster parents surveyed intended to continue fostering.

Data gathered in the area of training satisfaction revealed a clear deviation from recent literature (Rhodes, Orme, and Buelar, 2001 and Whenan, Oxlad, and Lushington, 2009). A majority of foster parents surveyed for this study appeared to have high levels of satisfaction with their training. Almost 85% of foster parents felt that the training they received prepared them to care for the children in their home. Over 86% of foster parents found the knowledge and skills they gained in training useful in caring for the children in their care. Over 82% of foster parents surveyed also believed that the training they received gave them a realistic understanding of the issues they would face as a foster parent. This is both a clear deviation from recent literature and perhaps explanatory of the decrease in foster home turnover within San Bernardino County Children and Family Services in recent years.
Previous studies have shown that although there is a positive relationship between foster parents’ completion of training and their intention to continue fostering, there are also numerous issues with inadequate training and turnover. Studies have shown that foster parents who felt unsatisfied with the information provided during training often felt unprepared to face some of the challenges of being foster parents such as addressing some of the behaviors and needs children exhibited in the home MacGregor (2006) found that foster parents wanted more “realistic and specialized training that was geared to the specific needs of children” (p. 11). Overall, the literature finds that a majority of foster parents report feeling ill equipped to handle the much more severe and complicated behaviors and traumas of the children in their care. The data gathered in this study directly contrasts with the reported failures of foster parent training.

The data provided by San Bernardino County Children and Family Services (CFS) may partially explain this clear deviation. Data covering 2011 to 2015 shows a decrease in foster family home turnover from 23% in 2011 to only 13% in 2015 (San Bernardino County Children and Family Services [SBC CFS], 2016). The clear decline that occurs over the four years is shown most dramatically between the 24% of foster family homes that closed in 2012 to the 13% of foster family homes that closed in 2013 (SBC CFS, 2016). It can be presumed that a dramatic change in some area of foster parent licensure, training, or support happened to explain the clear decrease in foster family home
closure between 2012 and 2013. Based on the high levels of satisfaction with training in the present study and its direct contrast to recent literature; it can be suggested that a change in CFS foster parent training may have positively impacted the number of foster family homes which continued to be licensed each year.

Limitations

One of the limitations the researchers identified was that of the small sample size of 87 participants in comparison to the approximately 600 foster parents licensed within San Bernardino County in any given year. Other limitations identified included that of the researcher's self selection of agencies, survey methodology, and potentially the researcher's bias. Grinnell and Unrau (2014) identified that a vast majority of studies conducted in the social work profession tend to involve small sample sizes. This limitation is significant as it led to lack of generalizability and lack of variation among the independent and dependent variables. As a result of this limitation, the findings were not meaningful enough to support the researcher's hypothesis. The selection of specific agencies excluded a large number of agencies which might have
provided greater variation. The use of a created survey also created the limitation of unknown reliability or validity.

An additional limitation to this study was the researchers' inability to survey foster parent's that have already ceased fostering. The researcher's encountered a common issue among the three agencies surveyed, specifically a lack of data in regards to foster parents that have ceased fostering. Of the three agencies researchers surveyed, only Children and Family Services (CFS) were able to provide accurate statistics regarding the number of foster homes which were closed in any given year. However, there is no data available from either agency as to why foster parents ceased fostering. Thus, the researchers were limited to surveying current foster parents, which created an unavoidable bias within the sample foster parents in regards to intention to continue providing care.

Further, the experiences of foster parents captured in this study cannot be generalized to the entire foster parent population in the United States. The researchers failed to mail out Spanish language surveys, which impacted the response rate from CFS participants, which were a majority of the respondents. Due to time constraints researchers were only able to focus on foster parents in San Bernardino County, whose demographics varies from that of the larger
United States. The researchers had a 10 week period to collect data, which limited the researcher's ability to survey a representative sample of foster parents.

Recommendation for Social Work Practice, Policy, and Research

A vital recommendation for social work practice is in regards to future research and policy. The researchers recommend that any agencies that provide certification or licensure for foster family homes should administer mandatory surveys to foster parents at the beginning and end of foster parent licensure or certification. This will provide valuable information that could be evaluated by agencies in order to gain insight regarding the perspectives of foster parents who cease fostering. The researchers identified an exit survey currently in use by the state of Georgia, which is required for foster parents who are ending services. Surveys such as the one found can identify motivators behind fostering as well as reasons that led the foster parents to end services. Additional information which could be gathered by the implementation of mandatory entrance and exit surveys would change the face of literature on foster parent turnover. Recent literature often identifies a lack of information from foster parents who have
ceased providing care. Surveys completed when exiting foster parenting would allow researchers to explore the factors already identified as significant as opposed to forming educated guesses on what factors might play a role.

Social workers could advocate for change regarding tracking data on previous foster parents. An assessment tool that is aimed at factors contributing to foster parent turnover could be created and implemented if it is advocated for by social workers as possibly impactful to placement stability. The implementation of an assessment that could be completed both at the beginning and end of services for foster parents could change the way placement stability while in care is addressed. Such policy would be vital to child welfare and foster parent agencies as it relates directly to service, which is a core value for the social work profession.

This study provides an analysis of factors contributing to foster parent turnover. Although the sample was specific to foster parents in San Bernardino County, previous literature suggests similar factors that contribute to foster parent turnover. Research has found that turnover among foster parents ranges from 30 to 50% depending on location and the agency (Gibbs & Wildfire, 2006). A majority of foster parents decide to cease providing care within a year of their first placement (Gibbs & Wildfire, 2006). More research is needed in this area to
determine factors that contribute to foster parents decision to cease fostering. Our findings, that 97% of participants report they are likely to continue fostering are not consistent with previous literature. It is likely that foster parents who plan to cease fostering opted out of this study, so future research should incorporate the voice of previous foster parents. Foster parent agencies can collaborate by creating an exit interview for foster parents that can be implemented across the county or even the state to allow more cohesive data. This will allow the voices of foster parents who have ceased fostering to be heard. Since researchers were unable to obtain such meaningful data through the research process, this is recommended as a tool that can be created and utilized in the future. Information gathered from these surveys can encourage social service agencies to target areas of concern for foster parents and help guide future policies.

Conclusions

The present study investigated foster parent satisfaction in the areas of interaction with agency workers, decision making, and training and how they contributed to foster parent turnover rates. Although the data gathered had insufficient variation to achieve generalizability, the study found that large percentages of foster parents surveyed were dissatisfied with specific areas of their interaction with agency social workers. Foster parents specifically reported
that they were hesitant to contact their agency worker with concerns and did not believe workers were open and honest about pertinent information regarding a child being placed in their home. The study also found that foster parents were overwhelmingly satisfied with their training; finding knowledge and skills learned through the training useful and realistic. This could potentially be related to the decreased rates of turnover for foster family homes licensed through San Bernardino County Children and Family Services. Recommendations for further research such as specifically examining foster parents who have decided to cease fostering would greatly aid in determining specific areas which can be improved to decrease foster parent turnover. The implementation of an assessment tool at the beginning of licensure or certification as well as at the end could benefit both county and foster family agencies in retaining foster family homes. Tracking this data would also provide the agencies with specific target areas new improvements or programs could address.
Survey on Foster Parent Satisfaction

The following survey is designed to learn more about foster parent satisfaction in regards to their interactions with Children and Family Services (CFS). There are no right or wrong answers and all answers will be kept anonymous. The survey can be completed by whichever foster parent can best provide the information needed to complete the questionnaire. After you complete the survey please return it to the researcher.

We would like to begin this questionnaire with a few background questions.

Part I. Background Information

1. What is your gender?
   [ ] Female
   [ ] Male

2. What is your ethnicity?
   [ ] African American
   [ ] Asian/Pacific Islander
   [ ] Hispanic/Latino
   [ ] Native American
   [ ] White
   [ ] Other, please specify __________________

3. What is your age? ______________ year old.

4. What is your present marital status?
   [ ] Never married/Single
   [ ] In a long term relationship
   [ ] Married
   [ ] Divorced
   [ ] Widowed
   [ ] Other, please specify ______________

5. How long have you been a foster parent? ______________ years.

6. Do you plan to continue fostering?
   [ ] Yes  [ ] No
   [ If No, please go to question 1 in Section II ]

7. If Yes, how long do you intend to continue?
Part II. Interaction with CFS Worker

The following section is designed to understand how you see your relationship with CFS workers. There are no right or wrong answers. Please rate your agreement or disagreement with the following statements as accurately as you can.

1 = Strongly Disagree  2 = Disagree  3 = Neutral  4 = Agree  5 = Strongly Agree

1. When I need to talk over concerns about a child in my care, I hesitate to contact their worker.

   Strongly Disagree  1  2  3  4  5  Strongly Agree

2. I feel that I receive support from the agency worker.

   Strongly Disagree  1  2  3  4  5  Strongly Agree

3. I have clear and respectful communication with the agency worker.

   Strongly Disagree  1  2  3  4  5  Strongly Agree

4. I am in agreement with the agency worker in regards to who is responsible for things such as transportation, medical appointment, and school events.

   Strongly Disagree  1  2  3  4  5  Strongly Agree

5. I am able to get in touch with the agency worker in a timely manner when there is an emergency in regards to the children in my care.

   Strongly Disagree  1  2  3  4  5  Strongly Agree

6. The agency worker is open and honest about providing relevant background information before a child is placed in my care.

   Strongly Disagree  1  2  3  4  5  Strongly Agree
Part III. Decision Making

The following statements are designed to understand how you view your participation in decision making in regards to the children in your care. Please rate your agreement or disagreement with the following statements as accurately as you can.

1 = Strongly Disagree  2 = Disagree  3 = Neutral  4 = Agree  5 = Strongly Agree

1. I believe that my knowledge about the children in my home is valued by the agency worker.
   Strongly Disagree  1  2  3  4  5 Strongly Agree

2. I am included in decisions regarding the children in my care.
   Strongly Disagree  1  2  3  4  5 Strongly Agree

3. My opinion in regards to the children in my care is valued and respected.
   Strongly Disagree  1  2  3  4  5 Strongly Agree

4. I consider myself a part of the case planning team for the children in my care.
   Strongly Disagree  1  2  3  4  5 Strongly Agree

5. The agency worker informs me about upcoming dates such as court appearances and team meetings.
   Strongly Disagree  1  2  3  4  5 Strongly Agree

6. I am told about potential changes in placement, visitation, or case plans ahead of time.
   Strongly Disagree  1  2  3  4  5 Strongly Agree
Part IV. Training

The following statements are designed to understand how you view the training you received as a foster parent. Please rate your agreement or disagreement with the following statements as accurately as you can.

1 = Strongly Disagree   2 = Disagree   3 = Neutral   4 = Agree   5 = Strongly Agree

1. The foster parent training I received prepared me to care for the children placed in my home.

   Strongly Disagree   1  2  3  4  5  Strongly Agree

2. The foster parent training I received prepared me for real situations I have faced as a foster parent.

   Strongly Disagree   1  2  3  4  5  Strongly Agree

3. Knowledge and skills I learned in foster parent training have been useful in caring for the children placed in my home.

   Strongly Disagree   1  2  3  4  5  Strongly Agree

4. Information provided during training gave me a realistic understanding of the issues I would face as a foster parent.

   Strongly Disagree   1  2  3  4  5  Strongly Agree

5. I feel that information and support from other foster parents would have better prepared me to care for children placed in my home.

   Strongly Disagree   1  2  3  4  5  Strongly Agree

6. The things I learned in foster parent training were in line with what the agency worker expected of me.

   Strongly Disagree   1  2  3  4  5  Strongly Agree

Developed by Cristina Velazquez and Tricia Monique Favela (2015).
APPENDIX B

SPANISH LANGUAGE FOSTER PARENT SATISFACTION SURVEY
Encuesta sobre Satisfacción de Padres Temporales

La siguiente encuesta está diseñada para obtener más información sobre la satisfacción de padres temporales y sus interacciones con los Servicios para Niños y Familias (CFS). No hay respuestas correctas o incorrectas, y todas las respuestas serán anónimas. La encuesta puede ser completada por el padre que pueda proveer la mejor información necesaria para completar el questionario. Después de completar la encuesta, por favor devuelvalo a la investigadora. Nos gustaría comenzar la encuesta con algunas preguntas de fondo.

Parte I. Información de Fondo

1. ¿Cuál es tu sexo?
   [ ] Femenino
   [ ] Masculino

2. ¿Cuál es su origen étnico?
   [ ] Afroamericano
   [ ] Asiático / Islas del Pacífico
   [ ] Hispano / Latino
   [ ] Americano Nativo
   [ ] Caucásico
   [ ] Otro, favor de especificar __________________

3. ¿Cuántos años tiene? _______________ años.

4. ¿Cuál es su estado civil?
   [ ] Nunca casado/Soltero
   [ ] En una relación a largo plazo
   [ ] Casado
   [ ] Divorciado
   [ ] Viudo
   [ ] Otro, favor de especificar __________________

5. ¿Cuánto tiempo ha sido un padre temporal? ________________ años.

6. ¿Piensa continuar ofreciendo cuidado?
   [ ] Sí    [ ] No
   [ Si no, pase a la pregunta 1 en la Sección II ]

7. En caso afirmativo, ¿cuánto tiempo piensa continuar?
   [ ] 0-1 años
Parte II. Interacción con Trabajador de CFS
La siguiente sección está diseñada para comprender cómo ve su relación con los trabajadores de CFS. No existen respuestas correctas o incorrectas. Califique su acuerdo o desacuerdo con las siguientes declaraciones con la mayor precisión posible.

1 = Muy en desacuerdo  2 = En desacuerdo  3 = Neutral  4 = De acuerdo  5 = Muy de acuerdo

1. Cuando tengo que hablar de preocupaciones acerca de un niño en mi cuidado, yo dudo en ponerme en contacto con su trabajador.

   Muy en desacuerdo 1  2  3  4  5  Muy de acuerdo

2. Siento que recibo el apoyo del trabajador de agencia.

   Muy en desacuerdo 1  2  3  4  5  Muy de acuerdo

3. Tengo comunicación clara y respetuosa con el trabajador de agencia.

   Muy en desacuerdo 1  2  3  4  5  Muy de acuerdo

4. Estoy de acuerdo con el trabajador de la agencia sobre quién es responsable de cosas como el transporte, citas médicas, y eventos escolares.

   Muy en desacuerdo 1  2  3  4  5  Muy de acuerdo

5. Puedo ponerme en contacto con el trabajador de la agencia en el momento oportuno, cuando hay una emergencia referente a los niños bajo mi cuidado.

   Muy en desacuerdo 1  2  3  4  5  Muy de acuerdo

6. El trabajador de la agencia es abierto y honesto sobre la información básica correspondiente antes que un niño sea colocado en mi cuidado.
Parte III. Tomando Decisiones

Las siguientes declaraciones están diseñadas para entender cómo usted ve su participación en la toma de decisiones con respecto a los niños bajo su cuidado. Por favor califique su acuerdo o desacuerdo con las siguientes declaraciones con la mayor precisión posible.

1 = Muy en desacuerdo  2 = En desacuerdo  3 = Neutral  4 = De acuerdo  5 = Muy de acuerdo

1. Creo que el trabajador de agencia valora mi conocimiento sobre los niños en mi cuidado.

Muy en desacuerdo  1  2  3  4  5  Muy de acuerdo

2. Estoy incluido en las decisiones en respecto a los niños bajo mi cuidado.

Muy en desacuerdo  1  2  3  4  5  Muy de acuerdo

3. Mi opinión, en respecto a los niños bajo mi cuidado es valorada y respetada.

Muy en desacuerdo  1  2  3  4  5  Muy de acuerdo

4. Me considero parte del equipo de planificación para los niños en mi cuidado.

Muy en desacuerdo  1  2  3  4  5  Muy de acuerdo

5. El trabajador de la agencia me informa de fechas aproximadas ante el tribunal o reuniones de equipo.

Muy en desacuerdo  1  2  3  4  5  Muy de acuerdo

6. Me informan acerca de cambios posibles de colocación, visitas, o planes del caso con anticipación.

Muy de acuerdo  1  2  3  4  5  Muy en desacuerdo
Parte IV. Entrenamiento

La siguiente sección está diseñada para entender cómo usted ve el entrenamiento que recibió como un padre temporal. Califique su acuerdo o desacuerdo con las siguientes declaraciones con la mayor precisión posible.

1 = Muy en desacuerdo  2 = En desacuerdo  3 = Neutral  4 = De acuerdo  5 = Muy de acuerdo

1. El entrenamiento de padres temporales que recibí me preparó para el cuidado de los niños colocados en mi hogar.

Muy en desacuerdo 1    2    3    4    5    Muy de acuerdo

2. El entrenamiento de padres temporales que recibí me preparó para situaciones reales que he enfrentado como padre temporal.

Muy en desacuerdo 1    2    3    4    5    Muy de acuerdo

3. El conocimiento y las habilidades que aprendí en el entrenamiento de padres temporales han sido útiles para el cuidado de niños colocados en mi hogar.

Muy en desacuerdo 1    2    3    4    5    Muy de acuerdo

4. La información prevista durante el entrenamiento me dió un entendimiento realístico de los problemas que se enfrentarían como padre temporal.

Muy en desacuerdo 1    2    3    4    5    Muy de acuerdo

5. Siento que la información y el apoyo de otros padres temporales me hubiera preparado mejor para los niños colocados en mi hogar.

Muy en desacuerdo 1    2    3    4    5    Muy de acuerdo

6. Las cosas que aprendí en el entrenamiento de padres temporales estaban dentro del margen de lo que el trabajador de la agencia esperaba de mí.

Muy en desacuerdo 1    2    3    4    5    Muy de acuerdo

Developed by Cristina Velazquez and Tricia Monique Favela (2015)
APPENDIX C

CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES APPROVAL LETTER
Date: 11/17/15

Address: 5500 University Parkway
San Bernardino, CA 92407

Dear Dr. Janet Chang,

This letter is to notify California State University San Bernardino, that Cristina Velazquez and Tricia Paveia are authorized to conduct research at San Bernardino County Children and Family Services. The approved title of the research project is Factors Contributing to Foster Parent Turnover.

If I can be of further assistance, please do not hesitate to contact me at (909) 386-1393.

Sincerely,

Laura Lee, Deputy Director
APPENDIX D

KNOTTS FAMILY AGENCY APPROVAL LETTER
November 21, 2015

Dr. L. Smith
Department of Social Work
California State University San Bernardino
5500 University Parkway
San Bernardino, CA 92407-2397

Dear Dr. Smith

This letter serves as notification to the Department of Social Work at California State University, San Bernardino that Tricia Favela and Cristina Velasquez have obtained consent from the Knotts Family Agency to conduct the research project entitled Factors Contributing to Foster Parent Turnover. Final participation in the study is contingent on study receiving IRB approval.

Sincerely,

Edward McField, PhD
Executive Director

Services:
- Foster care and adoption services
- Independent Living Skills Resource Center
- Family and Parenting Institute education
- Individual and family counseling
- Social support groups
- Care coordination
- Care management
- Civic engagement and mobilization
- Financial literacy
- Environmental literacy
- Youth mentoring
- Student tutoring services
- Training and community research
- Program development and evaluation
- Phone bank
APPENDIX E

A NEW BEGINNING APPROVAL LETTER
November 21, 2015

Dr. L. Smith
Department of Social Work
California State University San Bernardino
5500 University Parkway
San Bernardino, CA 92407-2397

Dear Dr. Smith

This letter serves as notification to the Department of Social Work at California State University, San Bernardino that Tricia Favela and Cristina Velasquez have obtained consent from A New Beginning Foster Family Agency to conduct the research project entitled Factors Contributing to Foster Parent Turnover.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Suzette Mohammed, Psy.D.
Administrator/Executive Director
APPENDIX F

CONSENT FORM
INFORMED CONSENT

The study in which you are asked to participate is designed to examine the factors contributing to foster parent attrition rates in San Bernardino County. The study is being conducted by Tricia Favela and Cristina Velazquez, Master of Social Work students, under the supervision of Janet Chang. The study has been approved by the Institutional Review Board Social Work Sub-committee, California State University, San Bernardino.

Purpose:

The purpose of the study is to examine factors contributing to foster parent attrition rates.

Description:

Participants will be asked of a few questions on communication with agency social workers, input in case planning, training and some demographics.

Participation:

Your participation in the study is totally voluntary. You can refuse to participate in the study or discontinue your participation at any time without any consequences.

Confidentiality:

The investigators will take measures to ensure the confidentiality of data. Identifying information will not be asked. Information will be entered in SPSS and subjects will be identified by number. Your responses will remain anonymous and all surveys will be destroyed after the study is complete.

Duration:

It will take 10 to 15 minutes to complete the survey.

Risks:

There are no foreseeable, immediate, or long-term risks to participants who participate in the survey. Although there may be no foreseeable, immediate, or long-term risks noticed by the researchers, participants can feel otherwise. If at any time you feel uncomfortable or uneasy please feel free to stop and exit the survey.
Benefits:

There will not be any direct benefits to the participants. Results could help social services agencies with understanding the factors contributing to foster parent attrition rates.

Contact:

If you have any questions about this study, please feel free to contact Dr. Janet Chang at 909-537-5184.

Results:

Please contact the Pfeiffer Library at California State University, San Bernardino or Dr. Janet Chang (email: jchang@csusb.edu) after December 2016.

This is to certify that I read the above and I am 18 years or older.

Place an X mark here

Date
APPENDIX G

SPANISH LANGUAGE CONSENT FORM
CONSENTIMIENTO INFORMATIVO

El estudio en el que se le pide participar está diseñado para examinar los factores que contribuyen al desgaste de padres temporales en el Condado de San Bernardino. El estudio se está conduciendo por Tricia Favela y Cristina Valdezquez, estudiantes de maestría de trabajo social, bajo la supervisión de Janet Chang. El estudio ha sido aprobado por el Subcomité Institucional de Trabajo Social, California State University, San Bernardino.

Propósito:

El propósito del estudio es examinar los factores que contribuyen al desgaste de padres temporales.

Descripción:

Los participantes se les harán unas preguntas sobre la comunicación con trabajadores sociales, participación en planificación de caso, entrenamiento, y algunos datos demográficos.

Participación:

Su participación en el estudio es totalmente voluntaria. Usted puede parar de participar en el estudio o a descontinuar su participación en cualquier momento sin consecuencias.

Confidencialidad:

Los investigadores adaptarán medidas para garantizar la confidencialidad de los datos. No se pedirá información identificativa. La información se ingresará en SPSS y las personas serán identificadas por un número. Sus respuestas permanecerán anónimas y todas las encuestas se destruirán después de completar el estudio.

Duración:

La encuesta tardará de 10 a 15 minutos para completar.

Riesgos:

No existen riesgos previsibles, inmediatos, o a largo plazo, de los participantes de la encuesta. Aunque no hay riesgos inmediatos, previsibles, o a largo plazo, detectados por los investigadores, los participantes podrían sentir que existen. Si en cualquier momento se siente incómodo o incómoda, por favor pare y no continúe con la encuesta.
Beneficios:

No habrá ningún beneficio directo para los participantes. Los resultados podrían ayudar a agencias de servicios sociales comprender los factores que contribuyen al desgaste padres temporales.

Contacto:

Si usted tiene alguna pregunta sobre este estudio, por favor comunicarse con la Dr. Janet Chang en 909-537-5164.

Resultados:

Favor de comunicarse a la biblioteca de Pfau en California State University, San Bernardino o Dr. Janet Chang (correo electrónico: jchang@csusb.edu) después de Diciembre del 2016.

Esto es para certificar que he leído lo anterior y tengo 18 años o más.

________________________
Escriba una X aquí        Fecha
REFERENCES


The needs of foster parents; A qualitative study of motivation, support, and retention. *Qualitative Social Work, 5* (3), 351-368.


ASSIGNED RESPONSIBILITIES

This was a two person project in which the authors collaborated throughout. Responsibilities were assigned in the manner listed below.

1. Data Collection:
   Team effort by Cristina Velazquez & Tricia Monique Favela

2. Data Entry and Analysis:
   Team effort by Cristina Velazquez & Tricia Monique Favela

3. Writing Report and Presentation of Findings:
   Team effort by Cristina Velazquez & Tricia Monique Favela
   a. Introduction
      Team effort by Cristina Velazquez & Tricia Monique Favela
   b. Literature Review
      Team effort by Cristina Velazquez & Tricia Monique Favela
   c. Methods
      Team effort by Cristina Velazquez & Tricia Monique Favela
   d. Results
      Team effort by Cristina Velazquez & Tricia Monique Favela
   e. Discussion
      Team effort by Cristina Velazquez & Tricia Monique Favela