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**Do San Bernardino County, Department of Children's Services,  
licensed foster parents receive adequate trainings and services to  
care for foster children?**

Ryan DeRay Berryman

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DO SAN BERNARDINO COUNTY, DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN'S  
SERVICES, LICENSED FOSTER PARENTS RECEIVE  
ADEQUATE TRAININGS AND SERVICES TO  
CARE FOR FOSTER CHILDREN?

---

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  
Ryan DeRay Berryman  
September 2008

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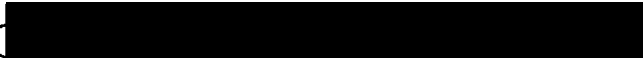
A Project  
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by  
Ryan DeRay Berryman


September 2008

Approved by:

  
Dr. Rosemary McCaslin, Faculty Supervisor  
Social Work

8-20-08  
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Dr. Janet C. Chang,  
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## ABSTRACT

This purpose of the study was to examine the services and trainings received by San Bernardino County licensed foster parents and their level of satisfaction. This information can be useful to the Department of Children's Services in the process of recruiting, training, and retaining County licensed foster parents in caring for foster children. The findings from this study can offer important provisions when assessing prospective foster parents, developing and incorporating policies that are beneficial to retaining foster parents, and other provisions to ensure the safety, permanency, and welling being of foster children.

The data revealed from this study indicated that San Bernardino County licensed foster parents have expectations about fostering that are often based on their personal desires, background, education, ethnicity, household composition, and other factors. The study also found that County licensed foster parents desire to have more trainings and they perceive respite care and counseling to be important elements in caring for foster children.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to acknowledge:

Dr. Rosemary McCaslin, Ph.D., Professor of Social Work. I thank you Dr. McCaslin from the bottom of my heart. Your willingness to lead and guide me in this research study is greatly appreciated and admired. I shall forever be grateful for your assistance in this journey, but most importantly your emotional sensitivity.

San Bernardino County, Department of Children's Services. I thank all the wonderful individuals, employed with the Department of Children's Services, who allowed me to conduct this research study. It is my hope that as a result of this study, children in child welfare will be better served.

San Bernardino County, Licensed Foster Parents.

I would like to thank all the foster parents who participated in this study. I am truly grateful for your time, your input, and your personal words of encouragement. You are, without a doubt, an important element to improving the lives of foster children.

## DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this project to my wonderful wife, Maria. The fact that you graciously allowed me to be "stuck in my little hole" reading, studying, typing, and doing whatever else needed for me to complete this three year journey, is exemplary of your support, kindness, and love. Yo tengo amor usted.

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## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

#### Problem Statement

In 1998, the number of children residing in foster care placement was approximately 495,000. In 2003, those numbers increased to over 515,000 children living in out-of-home placement. As the population of children entering the foster care system has increased, the number of licensed, certified or approved homes and facilities has decreased from an total of 214,000 in 2001 to 180,000 in 2004 (National Data Analysis System, 2006).

In the early years of foster care, out-of-home placement of children was more commonly due to parental illness, poverty, or family death. During that time, foster care was seen as a means of providing assistance to families experiencing financial hardship. However, today the majority of children enter the foster care system as a result of parental abuse or neglects (Dore & Kerker, 2006). When custody is removed from a parent or legal guardian, federal law mandates that the child be placed in a State licensed foster home or facility, until the child can be safely reunified with the parent or

legal guardian. During the reunification process, the child welfare social worker supervises the overall mental, emotional and physical status of the child, while simultaneously assisting the parent or legal guardian in receiving services to address problems that resulted in the child's removal.

The removal or separation of a child from their parental home can cause trauma, which can be damaging to a child's emotional well-being and mental status. Children, who remain in the foster care system, particularly are more vulnerable to mental health problems, such as post-traumatic stress disorder. These children often demonstrate many mental disorders, behavioral problems, learning disabilities and/or developmental deficits. Children in foster care demonstrate emotional, behavioral, and developmental disorders almost three times higher than the general population (Craven & Lee, 2006). Children with severe emotional and behavioral problems in foster care suffer from placement instability and face greater challenges in returning to the parental or custodial home. Children in foster care with less challenging emotional and behavior difficulties are either reunified with their

parents/legal guardians, and relatives, or adopted by non-relative caretakers. Therefore, the number of children in foster care with severe emotional and behavioral problems continues to increase, resulting in the care and parenting of these children being an even greater challenge for foster parents.

When foster parents are improperly trained, lack adequate resources and services, or are no longer interested in caring for these children, foster children are often relocated to other foster homes or placed in a higher level of care facility. With each move, foster children often experience more rejection and develop more defensive ways in managing the world around them, which they began to perceive as being unpredictable. As a result, these children are less likely to establish intimate relationships with subsequent caretakers and often exhibit behaviors that keep caretakers from wanting to connect with them (Macdonald & Turner, 2005).

Children with unmet emotional and behavioral problems often "burn-out" foster parents, resulting in the need to replace foster parents and requiring the child to be moved again. Furthermore, after repeated moves, the caretakers' lack of commitment, and their

inability to navigate the mental health system, foster children often become more vulnerable in not receiving mental health services. As a result, children in foster care may grow up to become young adults with untreated mental health disorders, and finding themselves homeless, or in prison, jails, institutions, or mental hospitals (Dore & Kerker, 2006). Therefore, in order to provide foster children with the emotional support and therapeutic services, foster parents must be familiar with this population, possess effective parenting skills, and receive adequate support services to meet the needs of these children. It is extremely beneficial to foster children that foster parents have these attributes at the time of the child's initial entry into their foster home.

#### Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to examine the training and support services that were available to foster parents licensed with San Bernardino County, Department of Children's Services. San Bernardino County is responsible for approximately 510 licensed foster homes. Unsurprisingly, the number of foster homes in San Bernardino County has gradually decreased, along with the

general foster home population in the United States. However, the number of children entering the foster care system in San Bernardino County has continued to increase.

Approximately every three months, San Bernardino County, Department of Children's Services organizes and holds a recruitment meeting for prospective foster parents. During these meetings, information is provided to these prospective foster parents to inform them of the licensing process and the expectations of becoming a foster parent. Once the foster parent has completed the paper work process, an approved home evaluation, and a criminal background investigation, the foster parent is required to participate in a foster parent-training program offered by the Department staff. After the completion of the foster parent-training program, the foster parents' names are placed on the County's vacancy list. At this point, children may be placed in these foster homes by social workers employed by San Bernardino County, Department of Children's Services.

It was the intent of this study to examine the training and support services that were available to foster parents licensed by San Bernardino County,

Department of Children's Services. It was hoped that, through this study, policies and procedures would be established to provide foster parents with effective training and support services, directed toward meeting the needs of foster children. The research question was if more efficient practices, trainings, and support services could be made available to foster parents licensed through San Bernardino County, Department of Children's Services.

This study employed a cross-sectional survey designed to assess trainings and support services of foster parents licensed with San Bernardino County. This was a quantitative study used to gather information from the foster parents. The sample group consisted of 54 foster parents, licensed by San Bernardino County, Department of Children's Services. The independent variable was the training and support services provided by San Bernardino County and the dependent variable was the foster parents' satisfaction with these trainings and services toward assisting them in caring for foster children.

## Significance of the Project for Social Work

San Bernardino County, Department of Children's Services will be able to utilize findings from this study for recruitment, training, and the retention of foster parents, simultaneously addressing the multiple needs of children in the foster care system. Through these findings, new policies for recruitment, monitoring, servicing, training, and the retention of foster parents may be formulated and administered by San Bernardino County. San Bernardino County, Department of Children's Services must seek to administer trainings and services to foster parents, which focuses on the needs of foster children, by addressing three important areas. These areas would be the recruitment, the training and the retention of foster parents, licensed through San Bernardino County, Department of Children's Services.

The recruitment would consist of the foster parents, as well as their immediate family members, being properly assessed for their ability and commitment in caring for foster children. The characteristics of the foster family must be properly assessed and appropriately matched with each specific foster child, whenever possible. Trainings that are offered to foster parents should be specific to



the child's demographics (e.g., age, developmental stage, ethnicity, culture, health issues), emotional, behavioral and medical needs. The retention of foster parents in caring for foster children could potentially be improved by San Bernardino County, through the implementation of affective trainings, assessments, and support services, directed toward the foster family maintaining appropriate and functional homeostasis within the family environment.

Therefore, the research question for this study would be, "Do San Bernardino County, Department of Children's Services, licensed foster parents receive adequate trainings and services to care for foster children?"

## CHAPTER TWO

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### Introduction

Chapter Two consists of a discussion of the literature relevant to this study. This chapter is divided into sections on studies addressing recruitment, training and the retention of foster parents through support service.

#### Recruitment of Foster Parents

In order for San Bernardino County licensed foster parents to be able to meet the needs of children in foster care, San Bernardino County, Department of Children's Services must have some cognizance of the strengths and limitations of their foster parents. For example, foster family applicants may have limitations in psychosocial functioning or certain background characteristics that demonstrate a need for special attention during the assessment process or require special training, prior to approval. Inadequate recruitment, insufficient training, and a lack of support services, may have negative consequences for foster families and the children in their care. These

inadequacies may hamper the capacity of approved families to provide a safe haven, where the emotional well-being of foster children can be promoted without disrupting their placement (Buehler, Cox, McSurdy, Orme, Patterson, & Rhodes, 2004).

Buehler et al. (2004) examined three selected key characteristics of 161 foster family applicants. The characteristic that were assessed for recruitment of the foster family applicants were desirable parental and familial characteristics, parental and familial psychosocial functioning, and parent education and family income. For each of these characteristics, foster family information was acquired with the use of quantitative data collection and psychosocial measuring tools (Buehler et al., 2004).

Foster parents who had low scores in psychosocial areas such as developmental expectations, adequate empathy with children, or parent-child role clarity, may require a skilled family foster care worker who knows how to better assess and monitor such applicants. Foster parent applicants showing limitations in these areas may also require pre-service training prior to approval, closer monitoring, additional training and perhaps even

peer mentoring. Therefore, such limitations by the foster family applicant should be identified and addressed because of the importance of effectively parenting foster children (Buehler et al., 2004).

Foster parents' personal issues also may affect the mental health care of a child in their home. For example, African American adults generally use mental health services less often than their white peers. Therefore, foster families who are African American may access mental health services for African American children placed in their home less often than white foster children (Dore & Kerker, 2006).

Another important category to consider in recruiting foster families is that assessing their educational information may be important to show the caretaker's ability to gather and understand information in training, to navigate a complicated social service system, and to advocate for services for foster children. Preliminary data from a federally sponsored national study of foster children reveal that 50% of foster parents had a high school diploma or less. Foster parents with higher education levels have been found to be more likely to actively access mental health services for children in

their care (Dore & Kerker, 2006). This information is imperative since foster children often require mental health services. It is important that foster parents are recruited possessing the intellectual capacity to serve as an advocate for foster children, rather than simply as a surrogate caregiver.

### Training of Foster Parents

The training of foster parents is another important element in meeting the complicated emotional needs of children in the foster care system. Well trained foster parents are associated with the stability of placements, improved parenting attitudes and skills, the reduction of behavioral problems in foster children, better relationships between foster parents and child welfare agencies, and decreased attrition among foster parents (Jackson & Puddy, 2003). In practical terms, the ultimate goal of parent training is to teach foster parents effective techniques or practices to manage undesirable behaviors displayed by foster children. However, not all research demonstrates this to be the case.

In one study, Jackson and Puddy (2003) conducted a parent training program, which was administered to 62

foster and adoptive families. The purpose of this study was to examine the effectiveness of the Model Approach to Partnership in Parenting/Group Preparation and Selection of Foster and/or Adoptive Families (MAPP/GPS) program. The MAPP/GPS program is considered to be one of the most widespread and accepted programs for foster parent training. "The overall goal of the MAPP/GPS is for potential foster parents to develop the knowledge, attitudes, and skills necessary to be effective and satisfied foster parents" (Jackson & Puddy, 2003, p. 990). Unfortunately, the MAPP/GPS training program offered less than adequate foster parent training to effectively deal with the challenging behaviors of foster children.

As poorly trained foster parents attempt to meet the complex and challenging behaviors of foster children, new foster parents and foster children continue to enter an already taxed foster care system. The results could be disastrous as foster children experience placement failures due to poor foster parent training. Furthermore, this would most likely result in foster parents dropping out and the cost of training new foster parents being

incurred by a financially restricted foster care system (Jackson & Puddy, 2003).

In another study where foster parents were trained in techniques to manage challenging behaviors, the results revealed the training design to have limited impact on children's conduct (Lowe, Pithouse, & Tout, 2002). In this particular study, the training intervention group received a cognitive-therapeutic approach toward managing the behaviors of children in foster care. The training methods presented to the foster parents educed a constructive rather than a psychological approach and stressed a focus on how a child might behave more appropriately in the future, rather than simply seeking to extinguish the behavior. Foster parents were also trained in utilizing coping skills, rather than attempting to extinguish the chronic nature of the child's disruptive behaviors. Therefore, problem solving techniques and a focus on positive rather than punishment-oriented techniques were featured in this parent training (Lowe, Pithouse & Tout, 2002). An important issue that was recognized in this study was that methods for meeting the challenging behaviors of foster children is not a single entity and that specific

training in the field cannot be made to fit the needs of all children (Lowe, Pithouse, & Tout, 2002).

In a similar study, foster parents received behavioral management training to test the effectiveness of cognitive-behavioral methods in the management of difficult behaviors displayed by foster children. There were no statistically significant differences found between the experimental and the control group in his study with respect to behavioral management skills, the frequency and/or severity of behavioral problems, and placement stability (Macdonald & Turner, 2005). In this study, the foster parents received training to assist them in understanding the factors contributing to the development and maintenance of behavior problems and enable foster parents to identify and effectively utilize appropriate techniques (Macdonald & Turner, 2005, page 1268). As with the previous study, the foster parents in this study expressed satisfaction with the overall training and their increase confidence in dealing with difficult behaviors of foster children.

This particular study also revealed some important recommendations for future training. These were:

- 1) foster parent should receive training programs which



are sufficiently long to ensure that foster parents have the opportunity to practice intervention skills learned, 2) foster parents' training groups should be small with a maximum of eight participants, 3) foster parents should be contracted to attend these training groups with a monetary incentive, and 4) social worker who are involved with the children and the foster parents should participate in the training to facilitate a future point of contact or support mode for the foster parents (Macdonald & Turner, 2005, p. 1279).

In this research article, there was no information addressing the age of the children in the study. It would be interesting to know if the age of the children and the behavioral method used in the study was significant enough to alter the outcome.

#### Retention of Foster Parents through Support Services

Taking into consideration the enormous challenges facing foster parents in meeting the emotional and behavioral needs of foster children, foster parents are in dire need of support services from a number of entities. These support services would be beneficial coming from social workers, mental health workers,

teachers, policy makers, and various other organizations and agencies that are connected with foster children and foster families.

Throughout a number of the research studies addressing foster children and foster parents, there was a constant reference to the need to provide foster parent with support services. Macdonald and Turner (2005) indicate that the foster families' difficulties were intensified by the lack of support the family felt they received from the child's social worker. Foster parents often complained about how difficult it is to contact their social worker and perceived some social workers as adopting an adversarial approach, being more interested in the parents' rights than the child's welfare. The authors further state that these problems are not new, but it was clear that social workers varied in the ways they were perceived by individual foster parents, from very supportive to not supportive at all (Macdonald & Turner, 2005).

Lowe, Pithouse, and Tout (2002) acknowledged the importance of equipping foster parents to parent and care for children whose challenges are complex. They suggest that research is needed to determine the support needs of

foster parents who look after children exhibiting challenging behaviors and the support needs of children themselves. Then a comprehensive package of support services will need to be developed and evaluated fully. The researchers suggested that these support services should include parent training and support as a central element, which also encompasses wider support networks and structures for foster families and children (Lowe, Pithouse, & Tout, 2002).

Gorey and Holland (2004) state that policy trends have generally acted to provide less, rather than more support services to foster children and foster families. Recent legislature in both Canada and United States has tended to emphasize risk assessment and child protection. As a result, these temporal trends have significantly increased the number of children in the foster care system. Furthermore, funding for prevention and therapeutic intervention services has not risen with increasing need, but has actually shrunk (Gorey & Holland, 2004)

Klee, Kronstadt, and Zlotnick (1999) sought to identify the services needed by foster families and to determine which services required the most case

management effort. They found that services aimed at foster parents, rather than foster children, required the most labor-intensive case management services. In this study, a random sample of 130 children, under the age four, had been recently placed into foster care with randomly selected foster families. Essentially no information was provided on the foster family in this research study. The results of this study revealed that foster families who receive the highest intensity level case management services, were those families who need counseling and education. Families who received a moderate intensity level case management services, were those who needed foster parent support services (Klee, Kronstadt, & Zlotnick, 1999). Although this writer perceived this study to be relatively weak in the information presented, it did reveal that when case managers recommended these groups to foster families, the foster families attended the meetings and enjoyed participating. However, it would be interesting to know what information is provided during these support groups and if the groups are monitored by a professional to ensure the quality of information is therapeutically

beneficial to the foster families in caring for foster children.

#### Theories Guiding Conceptualization

Some of the theories guiding conceptualization of this research study were the systems theory, cognitive theory, role theory.

In reference to systems theory, a foster child entering the home of a foster family would result in the child, as well as the foster family, adapting and often developing coping mechanisms that would seek to attain homeostasis in the family system. Buehler et al. (2004) sought to study the characteristics of foster families that were thought to influence the behavioral and emotional adjustment of foster children. Their research suggests that foster families should possess social, personal and relational characteristics that are likely to promote the behavioral and emotional adjustment of foster children. Furthermore, in operationalizing a systems theory model, foster parents must be trained, made aware of, and encouraged to seek out community support systems that are associated with the characteristics of the foster child and beneficial to the

foster family. These support systems are family supports (e.g., immediate family members), natural supports (e.g., extended family members, neighbors, and friends), informal supports (e.g., support groups, therapists, teachers, specialty clinics), and formal supports (e.g., financial, legal, health insurance benefits, respite vouchers, and early intervention and special education programs) of the foster family (Johnson & Kastner, 2005).

In conceptualizing the study using role theory, foster children and foster families have particular expectations or a position they are expected to play out in their living environment or ecosystem. This role expectation is also inclusive of other support systems, involving foster parents and foster children, and pertinent to the success of service outcomes. These systems may include participants such as, child welfare social workers, therapists, teachers, biological parents, nurses, physicians, medical specialists, and professionals and non-professionals. The expectations of these participants would include both rights and obligations that each particular person may have in their role expectation (Turner, 1996). Whether foster parents should be viewed as professional colleagues, clients, or

something in between has been the subject of debate for at least 60 years. As a result, foster parents' challenges in meeting the needs of foster children are hindered due to their lack of role clarity and limited skills (Halfon, Hollinger, Inkelas, & Pasztor, 2006).

In the conceptualization of the study through cognitive theory, foster parents may at times feel incompetent in caring for foster children or navigating systems, such as mental health, that are necessary in initiating services to foster children. Through the cognitive theory approach, trainings and other services could be made available in the form of educating, supporting and empowering foster parents to be effective caregivers and advocates for foster children. Cuddeback, et al. (2002) stated that lack of adequate training for foster parents is associated with disruption of placements, poor parenting, and the inability to retain foster families. As a solution, the researchers suggested that greater attention should be given to providing foster families with adequate training and services, particularly those relevant to the profiles of the children entering their homes.

## Summary

It is important to properly assess the needs of the foster child in the context of their new living environment in the foster care system. This should also include the characteristics of the foster family and their ability to meet the needs of the child. The roles of the participants involved in the life of the child must be clearly defined and with appropriate expectations. Foster families should be encouraged to seek out appropriate trainings and services that would be conducive to maintaining a homeostatic living environment and meeting the needs of the foster child.



## CHAPTER THREE

### METHODS

#### Introduction

This section contains an overview of the research methods that were applied in this study. The study design, sampling methods, the data collection and instruments, the procedures, the efforts taken to protect human subjects, and analysis of the data have been outlined in this section in detail.

#### Study Design

The purpose of this study is to examine the training and support services provided to foster parents who are licensed by San Bernardino County, Department of Children's Services. In this exploratory research study, a quantitative design was utilized to assess the adequacy of trainings and support services that are available to foster parents licensed by San Bernardino County, Department of Children's Services. This study examines the trainings and services offer to foster parents that are necessary in parenting foster children. This study also explores relevant implications in the recruitment, training and the retention of foster parents.

This study employs a cross-sectional survey design, utilizing a random sample of foster parents licensed by San Bernardino County, Department of Children's Services. A quantitative design was used with a self-administered questionnaire. The limitations of this survey were the time restraints in completing the study, the limited amount of information obtained, and the inability to obtain a larger sample group.

The research question for this study will be, "Do San Bernardino County, Department of Children's Services, licensed foster parents receive adequate trainings and services to care for foster children?"

#### Sampling

Licensed foster parents were randomly selected from the foster care, computer system at San Bernardino County, Department of Children's Services. Systematic random sampling was used in the selection process. Currently, there are approximately 510 foster homes licensed by this Department.

As a licensing prerequisite, all adults residing in a prospective foster home must complete a criminal background investigation. At least one adult in the

prospective foster home must participate in several days of training provided by San Bernardino County, Department of Children's Services. After the successful completion of the criminal investigation and mandatory participation in the foster parent training classes, the adult(s) is designated as the licensee and their name(s) is inputted in the Department's foster care computer system.

The sample was obtained by randomly selecting the first case and then every other licensed foster parent from the San Bernardino County alphabetical computerized foster care list. As the desired sample size of licensed foster parents in this study was 75, a research sample of 250 licensed foster parents was selected from the computerized list of 510 licensed foster homes. A survey was mailed to the 250 licensed foster parents.

#### Data and Collection and Instruments

The data that were collected for this study were obtained from a self-administered questionnaire from the National Survey of Current and Former Foster Parents (NSCFFP). The NSCFFP was conducted in 1991 and is the only study of current and former foster families based on a nationally representative sample (Cuddeback & Orme,

2002). Three specific areas of the NSCFFP questionnaire were selected and mailed to the 250 licensed foster parents as a single survey. The specific information collected from this questionnaire used items from three categories: (1) "Being a Foster Parent," (2) "Licensing, Training, and Foster Parent Services," and (3) "Description of Foster Parents" (See Appendix A).

In the category, "Being a Foster Parent," there were 26 questions. The respondents were asked questions such as, the year they were first approved, licensed or certified as a foster parent, number of children fostered, and if the children they foster were:

- Developmentally disabled/mentally retarded,
- Physically handicapped or seriously ill,
- Drug-exposed infants or newborns,
- Born with fetal alcohol syndrome or other alcohol- related disorder,
- Born with the AIDS virus,
- Mentally ill or emotionally or behaviorally disturbed, or
- Sexually abused before entering the foster home.

The study also questioned the respondents on whether or not they would be willing to accept a foster child with certain problems into their home.

In the category "Licensing, Training, and Foster Parent Services," there were 16 questions. In this category, the respondents were asked questions to determine the level of training they had received before and after becoming a licensed foster parent. In one question with a number of topic areas, the respondent were asked whether they received "No information," "Some, but not enough information," or "enough information" before becoming a foster parent. After becoming a licensed foster parent, the respondents were asked if they received "more training on any of the following" areas:

- Fostering a teenager,
- Fostering a handicapped child,
- Fostering a child of a different race or culture,
- Disciplining a foster child,
- Supervising a foster child,
- Fostering a sexually abused child,

- Teaching a child skills for growing up and living on his or her own,
- Children's feeling about their own parents, and
- Working with the child's own parents.

In the category "Description of Foster Parents," there were 22 questions. Some of the questions had multiple items requiring a response from the foster parents in the areas of marital status, age, race, employment status, and education.

Majority of the items in the study required a nominal response of "yes", "no", or a numerical number. There were some items in survey requiring a likert response, such as "Very well prepared," "Somewhat prepared," "Somewhat unprepared," and "Very unprepared." This instrument also included some items with open-ended questions, which allowed foster parents the opportunity to provide a descriptive input in their responses.

The independent variables in this study were the trainings and services provided to foster parents and the dependent variable were the foster parents' perceived level of satisfaction.

## Procedures

A letter was submitted to San Bernardino County, Department of Children's Services requesting permission and cooperation in undertaking this research study (See Appendix B). Once approval was granted by San Bernardino County, Department of Children's Services, and the Institutional Review Board's, Department of Social Work Sub-Committee of California State University, San Bernardino, a survey questionnaire was mailed to the randomly selected 250 licensed foster parents. The survey consisted of approximately 64 items and took no longer than 30 to 45 minutes to complete. After the completion of the questionnaire, foster parents were mailed a debriefing statement informing them of the study and thanking them for their participation (See Appendix C). The data collection for this research begun on July 15, 2007 and was concluded on September 15, 2008.

## Protection of Human Subjects

The self-administered survey was individually coded with an identification number, coinciding with each foster parent in order to maintain their anonymity and confidentiality. All confidential and identifying

information was kept in a locked file cabinet at the residential home of this researcher. This information was only accessible to this researcher and his advisor. An introductory letter was included with the consent form and the survey (See Appendix D and E).

The introductory letter (Appendix D), informed consent and questionnaire were included in the survey packet and mailed to the selected licensed foster parents. The foster parents were mailed a brief explanation of the study and asked to participate. The foster parents were informed that they may refuse to participate or refuse to answer any questions and may withdraw from the study at any time. They were also informed that their answers would be kept confidential.

If in agreement with the terms of the consent form, they were asked to place an 'X' in the box on the form, indicating their consent to participate (See Appendix E). The consent form was returned, along with the completed survey questionnaire. Once the survey questionnaire is received and the data inputted into the computer, all questionnaires and identifying information will be destroyed.



A debriefing statement was provided to the foster parents that included the name and telephone number of the researcher advisor, if they had any questions or concerns as a result of participating in this study.

### Data Analysis

The data were to be analyzed utilizing quantitative methods. The research findings address the level of satisfaction using descriptive statistics, including frequency distributions and measurements of central tendency to summarize the characteristics of the data set. The levels of measurement in this study were ordinal and interval, utilizing a univariate measure of median or mean score.

The independent variable that measured was trainings and services licensed foster parents received through San Bernardino County, Department of Children's Services. The dependent variable was the level of satisfaction received by the licensed foster parents.

### Summary

This study used an exploratory and quantitative design to examine the training and support services provided to the foster parents licensed by San Bernardino

County, Department of Children's Services. A random sample of foster parents was selected and surveyed for this study. Preventative measures were taken to ensure the anonymity and confidentiality of the foster parents. The data were collected and analyzed to show the associations between the independent variable and the dependent variable, as it relates to parenting children in the foster care system.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### RESULTS

#### Introduction

This study was designed as an exploratory study to examine the services and trainings that are provided to foster parents, licensed by San Bernardino County, Department of Children's Services. Chapter Four begins with a presentation of the demographic information on the respondents. It also presents information from the respondents on what type of children they were willing to foster, trainings offered by the agency, and the respondents' level of satisfaction with the trainings provided by the Department of Children's Services.

#### Presentation of the Findings

Table 1 shows descriptive statistics for marital status, ethnicity, and gender of the respondents. This study sample is comprised of fifty-four San Bernardino County licensed foster parents. Of this sample, 85.2% were married or living as married and 14.8% were either divorced, separated, widowed, or never married. All fifty-four of the respondents were females, with a data

also provided on forty-four males on questions addressing foster mothers and foster fathers.

Table 1. Respondent Marital Status, Gender, and Ethnicity

Variables	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Marital Status (n = 54)		
Married	46	85.2
Not married	8	14.8
Foster Mother's ethnicity (n = 54)		
White/Caucasian	32	59.3
African American	7	13.0
Other	15	27.7
Foster Father's ethnicity (n = 43)		
White/Caucasian	27	62.8
African American	6	14
Other	10	23.2

Approximately 59% of the foster mothers were White/Caucasian, 13% were African American, and 17% were of a different ethnicity. The majority (62%) of the foster fathers were also White/Caucasian, with 14% being African American, and 23% being of a different ethnicity.

The age of the respondents ranged from (one female) thirty years to (one male) seventy-six years. Table 2 shows that the majority of the females were under the age

of fifty, with 30.9% of the females falling between the age of thirty and thirty-nine and 31.8% between the age of forty to forty-nine. Most male respondents were also under the age of fifty, with 30.9% between the age of thirty and thirty-nine and 31.8% falling between the ages of forty and forty-nine. The female respondents had a mean age of 47.2, and male respondents had a mean age of 40.4 years.

Table 2. Respondent Age

Variable	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Foster Mother's Age (n = 53) Mean = 47.24		
30 - 39	16	30.9
40 - 49	17	31.8
50 - 59	10	18.6
60 - 69	9	16.8
70 - 79	1	1.9
Foster Father's Age (n = 43) Mean = 40.43		
30 - 40	13	30.2
41 - 50	15	34.8
51 - 60	6	14
61 - 70	6	14
71 - 80	3	7

The educational information found in Table 3, shows some similarity between the foster mothers and foster fathers. Approximately a third of the female (31.8%) and male (35.2%) respondents reported having received some training or some college classes after high school graduation. The percentage of foster mothers who reported continuance of their education through graduation from a two-year college was 18.5%, 9.3% graduated from a four-year college, 5.6% did graduate work, and 13% had a graduate degree. The percentage of foster fathers who reportedly graduated from a two-year college was 13.6, 20.5% from a four-year college, and 13.6% with a graduate degree.

Table 3. Respondent Education

Variable	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Foster Mother's Education (n = 54)		
Eighth grade or less	2	3.7
More than 8 <sup>th</sup> grade, but less than high school completion	2	3.7
High school graduate (or GED)	6	11.0
Some training or some college classes after high school	19	35.2
Graduate of a 2-year college	10	18.5
Graduate of a 4-year college	5	9.3
Graduate work after college graduation	3	5.6
Graduate degree	7	13.0
Foster Father's Education (n = 44)		
More than 8 <sup>th</sup> grade, but less than high school completion	1	2.3
High school graduate (or GED)	8	18.2
Some training or college classes after high school	14	31.8
Graduate of a 2-year college	6	13.6
Graduate of a 4-year college	9	20.5
Graduate degree	6	13.6

When asked about their "current employment status," Table 4 shows that less than half (44%) of the foster mothers reported being employed while over half (61%) of the foster fathers reported employment. In another question, when asked about their "primary source" of

household income, the majority (81.5%) of the fifty-four respondents reported employment.

Table 4. Employment Status and Primary Household Income

Variable	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Foster Mother's Employment Status (n = 54)		
Employed	24	44.4
Unemployed	30	55.6
Foster Father's Employment Status (n = 41)		
Employed	33	61.1
Unemployed	8	14.8
Primary Household Income Respondents (n = 54)		
Employment	44	81.5
Public assistance or other	10	18.5

The respondents were asked for the year they were first approved, certified or licensed as foster parents. One respondent reported 1970 and three other respondents reported to have been approved, certified, or licensed as foster parents in the year 2007. Table 5 shows that the date of becoming foster parents ranged from 1970 to 2007. The mean year was from 1999 with a standard deviation of nine years. Thus, two-thirds of the respondents began fostering in the years from 1999 to 2007. The average



years respondents reported having been foster parents was 7.87.

Table 5. Year Approve, Certified, or Licensed

Variable		Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Year approved, certified, licensed	(n = 54)	1997	2007	1999	9
Years foster parent	(n = 54)	0	37	7.87	8.554

The respondents were asked, "Below are a number of topics on which agencies may provide information to people who want to become foster parents. For each topic, please check the box appropriate for whether you received no information, some information, but not enough, or enough information before you became licensed as a foster parent." Some of the twenty-one topics were: role of the foster parent; kinds of children needing foster care; working with a child who is racially or culturally different from you; working with a sexually abused child; fostering a teenager; and helping a child develop skills for growing up and living on his or her own. The responses "no information" and "some, but not enough

information" were combined and categorized as "not enough information."

As shown in Table 6, the majority (83%) of the respondents received "enough information" on the role of a foster parent, on the kind of children needing foster care (73.6%), and on working with a child who is racially or culturally different from you (56.6%). Less than half of the respondents received enough information on working with a sexually abused child (44.1%), fostering a teenager (40.4%), and helping a child to develop skills for growing up and living on his or her own (39.6%).

Table 6. Respondents Receiving Enough Information on Pre-licensed Training Topics

Variable	Frequency	Percentage % Receiving Enough Information
Role of the foster parent (n = 53)		
Enough Information	44	83
Kinds of children needing foster care (n = 53)		
Enough Information	39	73.6
Working with a child who is racially and culturally different from you (n = 53)		
Enough information	30	56.6
Working with a sexually abused child (n = 53)		
Enough information	22	41.5
Foster a teenager (n = 52)		
Enough information	21	40.4
Helping a child develop skills for growing up and living on his or her own (n = 53)		
Enough Information	21	39.6

In another question, the respondents were asked, "Overall, how well did the information you receive prepare you for becoming a foster parent?" The respondents' response choices included "very well

prepared", "somewhat prepared", "somewhat unprepared" and "very unprepared". The responses "somewhat prepared", "somewhat unprepared", and "very unprepared" were combined and categorized as "somewhat prepared, or less". Table 7 shows that less than half (42.6%) of the respondents reported the information they received resulted in them being "very well prepared" for becoming a foster parent. The majority (57.4%) of the respondents reported that the information they received resulted in them being "somewhat prepared, or less" for becoming a foster parent.

Table 7. Satisfaction Survey

Variable	Frequency	Valid percentage %
Overall, how well did the information you receive prepare you for becoming a foster parent? (n = 54)		
Very well prepared	23	42.6
Somewhat prepared, or less	31	57.4

Respondents were asked separate questions about their willingness to care for "a child born with the AIDS virus", "a teenage foster child", "a child who had been sexually abused", "a child whose race is different from

you", and "a drug-exposed infant." The response categories for four of the five items were "probably accept the child" or "probably not accept the child". The response categories for the respondents' willingness to accept a teenage foster child were "probably accept the child", "possibly accept the child depending on the age" and "probably not accept the child." The responses "probably accept the child" and "possibly accept the child depending on the age" were combined and categorized as "probably accept the child."

Table 8 shows that 26.9% of the respondents were willing to accept a child born with the AIDS virus, less than half (46.3%) were willing to accept a teenage foster child, 68.5% were willing to accept a child who had been sexually abused, 90.6% were willing to accept a child whose race was different, and 94.3% were willing to accept a drug-exposed infant.

Table 8. Respondents Acceptance of Children

Variable	Frequency	Valid Percentage %
A child born with AIDS virus (n = 52)		
Probably accept the child	14	26.9
Probably not accept the child	38	73.1
A teenager foster child (n = 54)		
Probably accept the child	25	46.3
Probably not accept the child	29	53.7
A child who had been sexually abused (n = 54)		
Probably accept the child	37	68.5
Probably not accept the child	17	31.5
A child whose race was different (n = 53)		
Probably accept the child	48	90.6
Probably not accept the child	5	9.4
A drug exposed infant (n = 53)		
Probably accept the child	50	94.3
Probably not accept the child	3	5.7

In another question, respondents were asked if they belong to a "local foster parent organization", "State foster parent organization," or "National Foster Parent Association." Table 9 shows that less than half (45.1%) belong to the local foster parent organization, 21.3% belong to the State foster parent organization, and 11.1% belongs to the National Foster Parent Association.

Table 9. Respondents Belonging to a Support Organization

Variable	Frequency	Valid Percentage %
Do you belong to any of the following?		
Local foster parent organization (n = 51)		
Yes	23	45.1
No	28	54.9
State foster parents organization (n = 47)		
Yes	10	21.3
No	37	78.7
National Foster Parents Association (n = 45)		
Yes	5	11.1
No	40	88.9

The respondents were asked, "Thinking ahead, over the next three years, do you intend to continue as a foster parent?" Table 10 shows that 26.9% of the respondents surveyed indicated they would not continue as foster parents.

Table 10. Respondents Continuing as Foster Parents

Variable	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Over the next three years, do you intend to continue to as a foster parent? (n = 52)		
Yes	38	73.1
No	14	26.9

#### Summary

This study was designed as an exploratory study to examine the trainings that are provided to foster parents, licensed by San Bernardino County, Department of Children's Services, which are necessary in caring for foster children. Chapter Four included a presentation of demographic information about the foster parents, pre-licensed trainings topics provided by the agency, the problems and type of children foster parents were willing to accept, and concluded with the foster parents' willingness to continue as a foster parent.



## CHAPTER FIVE

### DISCUSSION

#### Introduction

The information used in this study is useful in providing San Bernardino County, Department of Children's Services, with information related to their licensed foster parents and the needs of children in child welfare. Chapter Five includes a presentation of the limitations of this study and then a discussion of the implications of this study for agency policy, practice, and future research. This chapter ends with a section on the conclusions of the study.

#### Discussion

The sample group was comprised of fifty-four foster parents licensed through San Bernardino County, Department of Children's Services, to care for foster children. The majority (85.2%) of the respondents was married or living as married. The average age of the respondents was 47 years old, with ages ranging from 30 to 76 years old. The majority (59%) of the respondents were White/Caucasian, 14% were African American, and 23% were Hispanic, Native American, Asian, or another

ethnicity. The educational level for the respondents was relatively high. The majority (86%) of the foster mothers possessed at least a high school diploma (or equivalent) and many had further training or education. The majority (79.5%) of the foster fathers had at least a high school diploma (or equivalent) and many had further training or education. The primary source of household income for majority (81.5%) of the respondents was through employment. The average years the respondents reported as foster parents was slightly under eight (7.87) years.

Some significant findings that came from this study were the results from the level of information respondents received from the agency on various topics, prior to becoming licensed foster parents.

The topics where the majority of the respondents indicated they had received "enough information" were in the "role of a foster parent" (83%) and "kinds of children needing foster care" (73.6%). However, topic areas taken from the survey where respondents showed a need for more training were in "working with a child who is racially and culturally different from you", "working with a sexually abused child" and "helping a child

develop skills for growing up and living on his or her own."

Approximately 56% of the respondent indicated that they received enough information from the agency in working with a child who is racially and culturally different. This is of concern considering that the majority (approximately 60%) of the respondents in this study are White/Caucasian, although children of color make up over 65% of foster children in San Bernardino County ([http://hss.co.san\\_bernardino.ca.us/DCS/departmentinfo/Statistics/default.htm](http://hss.co.san_bernardino.ca.us/DCS/departmentinfo/Statistics/default.htm)).

In working with a sexually abused child, 41.5% of the respondents indicated that enough information was received on this topic from the agency. Children often enter foster care with caregivers having limited information and being untrained in addressing their emotional and behavioral problems. This is especially true of working with children who have been sexually abused. Foster parent must receive adequate information in the form of training in order to recognized signs of sexual abuse in children, obtain therapeutic services, and to ensure a safe and emotionally healthy home

environment for the child, as well as other members of the household.

Less than half of the respondents reported having received enough information from the agency in the area of fostering a teenager (40.4%) and helping a child develop skills for growing up and living on his or her own (39.6%). With the increase of foster youth aging out of the foster care system with inadequate resources and skills to live independently, caregivers must be adequately trained to work with foster youth and possess the knowledge to assist children in developing skills toward independence.

After addressing the pre-licensed topic areas, the respondents were then asked, "Overall, how well did the information you receive prepare you for becoming a foster parent?" Again, less than half (42.5%) of the respondents indicated that the information they received from the agency, resulted in them being "very well prepared" for becoming a foster parent. However, Table 11 shows that 48% of the foster parents licensed between the year of 2003 to 2007 and 50% of the foster parents licensed between the years 1997 to 2002 reported being "very well

prepared" in becoming a foster parent from the information and training they received.

Table 11. Foster Parents Satisfaction and Years Licensed

Variable		
Overall, how well did the information you receive prepare you for becoming a foster parent? (n = 23)		
Very Well Prepared		
Years Licensed	Frequency	Valid Percentage %
2003 - 2007	14	48.3
1997 - 2002	6	50.0
1990 - 1996	1	20.0
1970 - 1989	2	25.0

Jackson and Puddy (2003) found that well trained foster parents are associated with the reduction of behavioral problems in foster children, improved parenting attitudes and skills, and better relationships between foster parents and child welfare agencies.

Another important set of findings assessed the type of children foster parents were willing to accept. The majority of respondents reported probable acceptance of a child who had been sexually abused (68.5%), a child whose

race was different (90.6%), and a drug-exposed child (94.3%).

The respondents indicated that a child born with the AIDS virus was least likely (26.3) to be accepted. However, this probability of acceptance may not be a problem, based on the needs of this population in San Bernardino County. This could also be true of teenage foster children, where only 46% of the respondents indicated that they probably accept a teenage foster child. In San Bernardino County, children between the ages of 13 and 18 years old make up 35% of the children in foster care placement ([http://hss.co.san\\_Bernardino.ca.us/DCS/departmentinfo/Statistics/default.htm](http://hss.co.san_Bernardino.ca.us/DCS/departmentinfo/Statistics/default.htm)).

San Bernardino County licensed foster parent often have limited support services to obtain information necessary in caring for foster children. Previous studies have revealed that foster parents perceived social workers as being unavailable or too busy to provide them with adequate support (Macdonald & Turner, 2005). As a result, it is important that foster parents seek to develop and utilize a support network, which includes caregivers aligning themselves with organizations that provide information, resources, trainings, and other

support services. In this study, when respondents were asked if they belonged to a foster parent association or organization, less than half (45%) reported to belong to the "local Foster Parents Association," 21% to the "State Foster Parents Organization," and only 11% belonged to the "National Foster Parents Association."

In another finding, respondents were asked if they intend to continue as foster parents over the next three years. The majority (73%) of the respondents indicated "yes," while over a fourth (26.9%) of the respondents indicated that they did not intend to continue as foster parents. It is unknown what percentage of the respondents who did not intend to continue as foster parents were foster-adoptive parents. Very often foster-adoptive parents become licensed through the County with the primary focus of adopting a child. In many of these cases, once an appropriate child is placed with the foster-adoptive family and the adoption is finalized by the Court, the foster parents may no longer be interested in continuing as foster parents.

## Limitations

Limitation of this study begins with the most obvious factor, a small, non-probability sample that was not necessarily representative of all the foster parents licensed through San Bernardino County, Department of Children's Services. Therefore, caution must be taken when generalizing the results to the larger population.

Another limitation is the reliance on retrospective self-reports by the respondents. Many of the respondents who had received pre-license trainings many years ago, may be required to rely on memory to respond to such questions. As a result, they may provide responses that are unreliable or have other biases.

A final limitation was that survey was too broad (possessing too many unrelated questions) for this study. The survey might have been better received by the respondents, if there were fewer questions and the questions were better tailored to this specific population and agency.

## Recommendations for Social Work Practice, Policy and Research

Several recommendations for social work practice and policy can be made based on the outcomes of this study.



In regards to social work practice, social workers and child welfare agency staff must be aware of the importance of foster parents receiving on-going and proper trainings that are necessary in meeting the needs of foster children. These trainings must be presented in a manner such that foster parents have a thorough understanding of the subject and that trainings are applicable to the children they foster. Post-tests given to foster parents after pre-license trainings may be helpful in obtaining this information. Foster parents who have difficulty in absorbing information in trainings should be provided with special attention, in the form of closer monitoring, further trainings, and/or mentoring. Child welfare agency staff should seek to match foster children with foster parents, which takes into consideration not only ethnicity, but the composition and characteristics of the foster family, and the knowledge and expertise of the foster parents. This could be accomplished by child welfare agency staff assessing foster parents to determine the type of child that would be an appropriate match for each particular licensed foster parent. Procedures should also be in place to ensure clear and open communication between social

workers, licensing workers, placement workers, and foster parents.

In the policy arena, foster parents should no longer be placed in a box and perceived by authorities in the child welfare system and lawmakers as simply kind individuals willing to help foster children. The emotional, physical, and medical needs of children entering foster care are continually becoming more demanding and complex. Therefore, it is imperative that authorities in child welfare and policymakers began to re-envision the fostering of children as a profession. This would require that foster parents provide specific services based on the emotional, behavioral, and medical needs of the child and then receive adequate compensation for those services. This could be accomplished by foster parents having a specialization with particular children, based on a needs assessment conducted by the local child welfare agency. Foster parents would then be mandated to receive regular on-going trainings, as well as trainings based on their specialization. The trainings and services offered to foster parents could be provided by developing a collaboration of resources from the community, which would include the involvement of colleges, the local

foster parent association, mental health systems, hospitals, schools, and other agencies.

Future research should examine the influences of trainings and services offered to foster parents by San Bernardino County, Department of Children's Services. It would be beneficial to assess which services are perceived as being beneficial to foster parents and which ones are not. It would also be beneficial to assess the outcomes of these trainings provided to foster parents and their influences on foster children.

#### Conclusion

The children entering the foster care system continue to increase as the number of foster families willing to care for children decreases. San Bernardino County, Department of Children's Services has approximately 510 licensed foster homes in order to care for this vulnerable population. The quality of trainings and support services provided to foster parents is associated with placement stability and the emotional growth of foster children in their care.

This study shows indications that foster parents receive inadequate training and preparation before

licensure in some areas that are important to properly meet the needs of foster children. As a result, this could ultimately jeopardize the emotional well-being and safety of foster children in the child welfare system. In order to rectify this problem, the licensing agency must ensure adequate training to foster parents relevant to the profiles of children entering their home and the foster care system. This may result in foster parents no longer being viewed as simply caring individuals, but more as caring professionals. This may result in changes in agency policy, increase communication among foster parents, social workers, and child welfare staff, and collaboration with other agencies, departments, and members of the community.

In essence, fostering children is everyone's responsibility. Therefore, everyone must be involved to ensure the safety, permanency, and well-being of foster children.

APPENDIX A  
QUESTIONNAIRE

SURVEY OF CURRENT FOSTER PARENTS

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Part A  
Being a Foster Parent

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A1. In what year were you first approved, certified, or licensed as a foster parent?

            
YEAR

A2. Are you approved, licensed or certified as a: (CHECK BOX FOR YES OR NO FOR EACH ITEM.)

	YES	NO
Foster family home .....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Emergency care .....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Specialized foster family home .....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Relative foster home .....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Group home .....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (specify) _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

A3. How many children is your home approved, certified or licensed to accept at one time?

            
# OF CHILDREN

A4. How many foster children are currently in your home?

            
# OF CHILDREN

A5. Since you first became a foster parent, how many foster care children have you had who were:

Number of children

Related to you by birth or marriage .....

Were known to you before placement but not related .....

Were neither related nor known to you before placement .....

TOTAL \_\_\_\_\_

A6. To the best of your knowledge, were any of the children you have fostered: (CHECK BOX FOR YES OR NO FOR EACH ITEM.)

	<u>YES</u>	<u>NO</u>
Developmentally disabled/mentally retarded .....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Physically handicapped or seriously ill .....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Drug-exposed infant or newborn .....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Born with Fetal Alcohol Syndrome or other alcohol-related disorders .....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Born with the AIDS virus .....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Mentally ill or emotionally or behaviorally disturbed .....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

A7. To the best of your knowledge, were any of the children you have fostered sexually abused before they came to you?

Yes .....	1
No .....	2
Don't know .....	3

A8. Were any of the children you have fostered: (CHECK BOX FOR YES OR NO FOR EACH ITEM.)

	<u>YES</u>	<u>NO</u>
American Indian or Alaskan Native .....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Asian or Pacific Islander .....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Black, not of Hispanic origin .....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Hispanic (including Mexican American) .....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
White, not of Hispanic origin .....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (specify) _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

A11. If you were asked to care for a foster child who is physically handicapped or seriously ill, would you: (CIRCLE ONE.)

Probably accept the child .....	1
Possibly accept the child depending on the extent of the problem .....	2
Probably not accept the child .....	3

A12. What would be your major concerns in caring for a physically handicapped or seriously ill child? (IF YOU HAVE NO CONCERNS, WRITE IN "NONE".)

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A13. If you were asked to care for a foster child who had serious behavioral or emotional problems, would you: (CIRCLE ONE.)

- Probably accept the child ..... 1
- Possibly accept the child depending on the extent of the problem ..... 2
- Probably not accept the child ..... 3

A14. What would be your major concerns in caring for a child who had serious behavioral or emotional problems? (IF YOU HAVE NO CONCERNS, WRITE IN "NONE".)

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A15. If you were asked to care for a teenage foster child, would you: (CIRCLE ONE.)

- Probably accept the child ..... 1
- Possibly accept the child depending on the age ..... 2
- Probably not accept the child ..... 3

A16. What would be your major concerns in caring for a teenage foster child? (IF YOU HAVE NO CONCERNS, WRITE IN "NONE".)

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A17. If you were asked to care for a child whose race is different from yours, would you: (CIRCLE ONE.)

- Probably accept the child ..... 1
- Probably not accept the child ..... 2

A18. What would be your major concerns in caring for a child whose race is different from yours? (IF YOU HAVE NO CONCERNS, WRITE IN "NONE".)

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A19. If you were asked to care for a child who was born with the AIDS virus, would you: (CIRCLE ONE.)

Probably accept the child ..... 1  
Probably not accept the child ..... 2

A20. What would be your major concerns in caring for a child with the AIDS virus? (IF YOU HAVE NO CONCERNS, WRITE IN "NONE".)

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A21. If you were asked to care for a drug-exposed infant, would you: (CIRCLE ONE.)

Probably accept the infant ..... 1  
Probably not accept the infant ..... 2

A22. What would be your major concerns in caring for a drug-exposed infant? (IF YOU HAVE NO CONCERNS, WRITE IN "NONE".)

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A23. If you were asked to care for an infant who was born with Fetal Alcohol Syndrome or other alcohol related disorders, would you: (CIRCLE ONE.)

- Probably accept the infant ..... 1
- Probably not accept the infant ..... 2

A24. What would be your major concerns in caring for an infant who was born with Fetal Alcohol Syndrome or other alcohol-related disorders? (IF YOU HAVE NO CONCERNS, WRITE IN "NONE".)

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A25. If you were asked to care for a child who had been sexually abused, would you: (CIRCLE ONE.)

- Probably accept the child ..... 1
- Probably not accept the child ..... 2

A26. What would be your major concerns in caring for a child who had been sexually abused? (IF YOU HAVE NO CONCERNS, WRITE IN "NONE".)

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**Part C**  
**Licensing, Training, and Foster Parent Services**

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C1. Please think back to the time when you first looked into becoming a foster parent. When did you first inquire about becoming a foster parent? (IF YOU CAN'T REMEMBER EXACTLY, PLEASE ESTIMATE.)

|\_| |\_| |\_| |\_|  
Month                  Year

C2. About how many months after you first inquired did you become certified, licensed or approved as a foster parent?

\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_  
Months                  Years

C3. About how many months after you were certified, licensed, or approved was a foster child placed in your home?

\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_  
Months                  Years

C4. Below are a number of topics on which agencies may provide information to people who want to become foster parents. For each topic, please check the box appropriate for whether you received: no information; some information, but not enough; or enough information before you became licensed as a foster parent. (CHECK ONE BOX FOR EACH TOPIC.)

Topic	No information	Some, but not enough information	Enough information
a. Role of the foster parent .....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Temporary nature of foster care .....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. Working with the child's parents .....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. Kinds of children needing foster care .....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e. Role of the foster care worker .....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f. Payments to foster parents - for what expenses and how they get paid .....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
g. Ways to contact the agency after working hours or on weekends .....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
h. What must be reported to the agency .....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
i. Services given by the agency .....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
j. Services given by the foster parent association .....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
k. What the agency does when foster parents are accused of abuse or neglect .....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
l. Possibilities of abuse or neglect charges .....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
m. Legal aspects of foster care .....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
n. Discipline of children .....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
o. Children's feelings about their own parents .....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
p. Effects of foster parenting on your family .....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
q. Fostering a teenager .....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
r. Helping a child develop skills for growing up and living on his or her own .....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
s. Working with a handicapped child .....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
t. Working with a child who is racially or culturally different from you .....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
u. Availability of more foster parent training .....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
v. Working with a sexually abused child .....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
w. Other topics (specify) _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
_____			
_____			

C5. How or where did you receive information? (CHECK THE BOX FOR YES OR NO FOR EACH ITEM.)

	<u>YES</u>	<u>NO</u>
Orientation or training session provided by the agency before being approved .....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
By talking with agency staff .....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
By talking with other foster parents .....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
From a foster parent "buddy" assigned by the agency .....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Books, pamphlets, foster parent handbook, or other written material provided by the agency .....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Books, pamphlets, or other written materials provided by foster parent association .....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other source (specify) _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

C6. Overall, how well did the information you received prepare you for becoming a foster parent? (CIRCLE ONE.)

Very well prepared .....	1
Somewhat prepared .....	2
Somewhat unprepared .....	3
Very unprepared .....	4

C7. After you became a foster parent, did you receive any more training?

Yes .....	1
No .....	2 (SKIP TO C9)

C8. Did you receive more training on any of the following: (CHECK BOX FOR YES OR NO FOR EACH ITEM.)

	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>
Fostering a teenager .....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fostering a handicapped child .....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fostering a child of a different race or culture .....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Disciplining a foster child .....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Supervising a foster child .....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fostering a sexually abused child .....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Teaching a child skills for growing up and living on his or her own .....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Children's feelings about their own parents .....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Working with the child's own parents .....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other training (specify) _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

C9. Has the child welfare agency designated a caseworker or someone else who can answer any questions you have or help if you have problems? (NOTE: DO NOT COUNT CASEWORKERS ASSIGNED TO A FOSTER CHILD - ONLY A WORKER ASSIGNED TO YOU AS A FOSTER PARENT.)

Yes ..... 1  
No ..... 2 (SKIP TO C13)

C10. Does this worker contact you regularly?

Yes ..... 1  
No ..... 2

C11. Have you ever contacted this worker?

Yes ..... 1  
No ..... 2

C12. Why did you contact the worker?

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C13. Do you have a foster parent "buddy" (i.e., another foster parent whom you can call for advice or support)?

Yes ..... 1  
No ..... 2 (SKIP TO C15)

C14. Was the foster parent "buddy" assigned to you by the: (CIRCLE ONE.)

Public child welfare agency ..... 1  
Private children's agency ..... 2  
Foster parent association ..... 3  
Other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_ 4

C15. Foster parents often need help from the agency in order to care for a foster child. Please check the boxes below to indicate: (1) whether or not you need each type of service listed, and (2) check whether or not the agency has provided each type of services. (CHECK YES OR NO FOR EACH ITEM IN COLUMN 1 AND COLUMN 2.)

	Column 1 Service needed		Column 2 Service provided	
	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>
a. Day Care .....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Respite Care .....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. Liability Insurance .....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. Health care costs not covered by Medicaid .....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e. Transportation for medical appointments or other services needed by the child .....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f. Changes to your home necessary to accommodate a disabled child .....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
g. Child or family counseling .....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
h. Recreational activities for the child .....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
i. Other services (specify) .....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
_____				
_____				
_____				

C15. Write the letter of the service listed above which you consider to be most important:

          
LETTER

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**Part F**  
**Description of Foster Parents**

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The next group of questions asks for some general information about you and your household. Remember that your responses are confidential.

F1. What is your current marital status? (CIRCLE ONE.)

- Married or living as married ..... 1
- Divorced ..... 2
- Separated ..... 3
- Widow/Widower ..... 4
- Never married ..... 5

F2. Have you given birth to any children?

- Yes ..... 1
- No ..... 2 (SKIP TO F4)

F3. How many?

            
# OF CHILDREN

F4. Do you have any adopted children?

- Yes ..... 1
- No ..... 2 (SKIP TO F7)

F5. How many?

            
# OF CHILDREN

F6. Had any of your adopted children previously been placed with you as foster children?

- Yes ..... 1
- No ..... 2

F7. Had you been interested in adopting any of your foster care children, but were not able to do so?

- Yes ..... 1
- No ..... 2 (SKIP TO F9)



FB. Why were you unable to adopt your foster children?

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F9. Excluding foster care payments, what was the total combined annual income of all members of your family in 1990? Count income of family members age 14 and older. (CIRCLE ONE.)

- Less than \$15,000 ..... 01
- \$15,000-\$19,999 ..... 02
- \$20,000-\$24,999 ..... 03
- \$25,000-\$29,999 ..... 04
- \$30,000-\$34,999 ..... 05
- \$35,000-\$39,999 ..... 06
- \$40,000-\$49,999 ..... 07
- \$50,000 or more ..... 08

F10. What is the primary source of income for your household? (CIRCLE ONE.)

- Employment ..... 01
- Public assistance (AFDC or SSI) ..... 02
- Social security or other retirement income ..... 03
- Child support/alimony ..... 04
- Other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_ 05

IF THERE ARE TWO FOSTER PARENTS, PLEASE ANSWER QUESTIONS F11 TO F16 SEPARATELY FOR EACH ONE. OTHERWISE, ANSWER FOR YOURSELF ONLY.

F11. What is your current employment status? (CIRCLE ONE NUMBER IN EACH COLUMN.)

	<u>Foster mother</u>	<u>Foster father</u>
a. Employed full-time (30 hours or more per week) .....	01	01
b. Employed part-time (less than 30 hours per week) .....	02	02
c. Unemployed and looking for work .....	03	03
d. Homemaker, not employed outside the home .....	04	04
e. Disabled or retired, not employed outside the home .....	05	05
f. Other (specify) _____	06	06
g. Not applicable .....	88	88

F12. What is your occupation, or, if not currently employed, your most recent occupation? (For example, secretary, typist, stock clerk, grocery store manager, etc.)

Foster mother: \_\_\_\_\_

Foster father: \_\_\_\_\_

F13. What was the highest grade or level of schooling that you completed? (CIRCLE ONLY ONE FOR EACH COLUMN.)

	<u>Foster mother</u>	<u>Foster father</u>
Eighth grade or less .....	01	01
More than 8th grade but less than high school completion (or GED) .....	02	02
High school graduate (or GED) .....	03	03
Some training or some college classes after high school graduation .....	04	04
Graduate of a 2-year college .....	05	05
Graduate of a 4-year college .....	06	06
Graduate work after college graduation .....	07	07
Graduate degree .....	08	08
Not applicable .....	88	88

F14. What is your race or ethnic group? (CIRCLE ONLY ONE FOR EACH COLUMN.)

	<u>Foster mother</u>	<u>Foster father</u>
American Indian or Alaskan Native .....	01	01
Asian or Pacific Islander .....	02	02
Black, not of Hispanic origin .....	03	03
Hispanic (including Mexican American) .....	04	04
White, not of Hispanic origin .....	05	05
Other (specify) _____	06	06
_____		
Not applicable .....	88	88

F15. What is your age?

<u>Foster mother</u>	<u>Foster father</u>
_____	_____
AGE	AGE

F16. Please check Yes or No for the following statements which apply to you. (CHECK ONE BOX FOR EACH ITEM FOR EACH FOSTER PARENT, AS APPLICABLE.)

	<u>Foster mother</u>		<u>Foster father</u>	
	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>
a. Was a foster child .....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Was an adopted child .....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. Was raised by relatives .....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. Lived most of childhood in an institution .....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e. Lived in foster homes or relatives' homes .....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f. Was abused (sexually or physically) as a child .....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
g. Was seriously neglected as a child .....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
h. Was abandoned by parents .....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
i. Had a parent die during childhood .....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
j. Had foster or adopted brother(s) and/or sister(s) .....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
k. Had close friend or relative who was in foster care .....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
l. Have/had a relative or close friend who is/was a foster parent .....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
m. Had family member who was retarded, handicapped, or emotionally disturbed .....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
n. Worked or volunteered with handicapped, retarded, or disturbed children .....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
o. Have/had a large number of brothers and/or sisters .....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

F17. Do you belong to any of the following? (CHECK BOX FOR YES OR NO ON EACH LINE.)

	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>
Local foster parent organization .....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
State foster parent organization .....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
National Foster Parent Association .....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

F18. Thinking ahead, over the next three years, do you intend to continue as a foster parent?

Yes ..... 1 (SKIP TO F21)  
 No ..... 2

F19. Why do you intend to stop being a foster parent? (CHECK BOX FOR YES OR NO FOR EACH ITEM.)

	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>
a. Age - will be too old to care for children .....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Divorce, marital problems .....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. Health problems .....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. Moved/relocated .....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e. Conflict between foster child and my own or adopted child .....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f. Expect to have my own child or more of my own children .....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
g. Expect to adopt a child .....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
h. May need to return to work or to work full-time .....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
i. Inadequate reimbursements .....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
j. Cannot get type of child requested .....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
k. Poor communications with foster care worker .....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
l. Agency insensitive to my needs/lack of support from the agency .....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
m. Do not have any say in child's future .....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
n. Lack of respite services .....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
o. Lack of day care .....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
p. Lack of other services (specify) .....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<hr/>		
q. Problems with children parent(s) .....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
r. Child's behavior/discipline problems .....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
s. Health or personal care needs of child will become too difficult to manage .....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
t. Have difficulty seeing child leave .....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
u. Other reason for not continuing to be a foster parent (specify) _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<hr/>		
<hr/>		

F20. What one thing would be most important in keeping you from terminating as a foster parent?

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F21. What other kinds of improvements in agency support or services to foster parents do you feel are needed?

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F22. Who completed this questionnaire? (CIRCLE ONE.)

- Both foster mother and foster father ..... 1
- Foster mother ..... 2
- Foster father ..... 3

**THANK YOU FOR COMPLETING THE QUESTIONNAIRE. PLEASE USE  
THE ENCLOSED ENVELOPE TO MAIL THE QUESTIONNAIRE BACK.**

APPENDIX B  
LETTER, TO THE DEPARTMENT OF  
CHILDREN'S SERVICES

April 25, 2007

Department of Children's Services  
County of San Bernardino  
412 West Hospitality Lane, Second Floor  
San Bernardino, CA 92315

TO THE DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES:

My name is Ryan Berryman. I am a part-time, Title IV-E student, enrolled in the Master's of Social Work program at California State University, San Bernardino. I am also employed with San Bernardino County, Department of Children's Services in the Special Health Care unit.

As a second year student, I have begun my research thesis in the area of child welfare. My research question is "Does San Bernardino County licensed foster parents receive adequate training and services necessary in caring for foster children?" The purpose of this study is to examine the training and services available to foster parents licensed with San Bernardino County, Department of Children's Services.

In order to conduct this research, survey questionnaires will be mailed to approximately 250 foster parents licensed by San Bernardino County, Department of Children's Services. Participants will be randomly selected from the Department's foster care computerized system. The participants will be mailed a self-administered, quantitative survey to complete and then return in a self-addressed envelope. I have chosen to use sections of the Current Foster Parent Survey taken from the National Data Archive on Child Abuse and Neglect. This survey was originally administered in the National Survey of Current and Former Foster Parents in 1993. I have attached a copy of the survey (Part 'A', Part 'C' and Part 'F', consisting of 16 pages) that I will be using in my research study.

The amount of time required to complete this questionnaire should take no longer than 30 to 45 minutes. The data collection for this research will begin around May 15, 2007 and will conclude on or about December 15, 2007. The results of this study will be available after September 30, 2008.

The personal rights and welfare of all participants will be protected in this study. Informed consent by the Department and each participant will be received prior to participants taking part in this study. There will be no risks associated with the participants in this study. However, participants will be requested to take their time in carefully answering each question and to return the survey once they have completed it. The results of this study will be submitted to the Department of Children's Services following completion of this research study. However, all information about the participants will remain anonymous and confidential to ensure their protection. Any information that would link data with the participant's identity will be safely secured and destroyed at the designated time allowed.

It is my hope that this research study will provide implications for improving best practice in the areas of training, recruiting and providing support services to foster parents licensed by San Bernardino County, Department of Children's Services.

If the Department has any questions or concerns, please contact me at work; telephone number is (909) 891-3367. The Department may also contact my research advisor, Dr. Martha Bragin, at California State University, San Bernardino at (909) 537-3775. Thank You.

Respectfully,

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Ryan Berryman, MSW Intern

APPENDIX C  
DEBRIEFING STATEMENT



## Debriefing Statement

“A Study on Training and Services Received  
By San Bernardino County Licensed Foster Parents”

Investigator: Ryan Berryman, Graduate Student

Thank you for participating in this study. The purpose of this study was to examine the training and services available to licensed foster parents with San Bernardino County, Department of Children’s Services. The hypothesis of this study is “Does San Bernardino County licensed foster parents receive adequate training and services necessary in caring for foster children?” I am examining whether or not the level of training and services made available to foster parents are adequate to help you to meet the needs of foster children.

This study is intended to be clear and concise. If you want to discuss this study further, or have any questions concerning or following your participation, please contact me or my research advisor, Dr. Martha Bragin at (909) 537-3775.

As a foster parents licensed with San Bernardino County, Department of Children’s Services, your input is greatly appreciated and valued in seeking to improve the lives of foster children. A report of this research study should be available at the Pfau Library at California State University, San Bernardino by the end of September 2008. Thank you again for your participation.

APPENDIX D  
INTRODUCTORY LETTER TO FOSTER PARENT

**Ryan Berryman, MSW Student  
California State University, San Bernardino  
P.O. Box 995  
Highland, CA 92346**

June 21, 2007

To: San Bernardino County, Licensed Foster Parent

Dear Licensed Foster Parent,

Hello! My name is Ryan Berryman and I am a graduate student at California State University, San Bernardino. Along with being a student, I am also currently employed with San Bernardino County, Department of Children's Services as a Social Services Practitioner. I have been employed in this position as a "line social worker" for the past twelve years.

I would like to request your assistance in my research thesis addressing the training and support services offered to foster parents by San Bernardino County, Department of Children's Services. As a foster parent, I understand that your time is valuable in caring for foster children, your personal life, as well as meeting the needs of your family members. However, I believe that your time and effort in participating in this survey will provide valuable information toward equipping foster parents in caring for neglected and abused foster children. I desperately need your input by completing the enclosed survey and returning to me in the self-addressed stamped envelope.

Please read carefully the informed consent letter which explains the project to you in detail!

I gratefully thank you for your time and consideration. Whether or not you choose to participate in this survey, I personally applaud the fact that you have chosen to be a licensed foster parent.

Thank You!

Sincerely Appreciative,

Ryan Berryman,  
MSW Student

APPENDIX E  
INFORMED CONSENT

## Informed Consent

“A Study on Training and Services Received  
By San Bernardino County Licensed Foster Parents”

The purpose of this study is to examine the level of training and services offered to foster parents licensed by San Bernardino County, Department of Children’s Services. You are invited to participate in this study conducted by graduate student, Ryan Berryman, under the supervision of Dr. Martha Bragin, Assistant Professor at California State University, San Bernardino. This study has been approved by the Department of Social Work, Sub-Committee of the Institutional Review Board, California State University, San Bernardino.

Your participation involves completing a written questionnaire survey about the training and services you receive. The amount of time required to complete this survey should take no more than 30 to 45 minutes. The data gathered from this survey will be used to assess the needs of foster parents. It will help make a case for providing the resources and training that is necessary in caring for and parenting foster children.

Your replies are confidential and your name will not be recorded. Your survey will be recorded in numerical form. All confidential and identifying information will only be accessible to this researcher and this researcher’s advisor.

Your participation in this study is totally voluntary. You may choose not to participate and you may withdraw your consent to participate at any time. The agency will not know whether or not you participated. The services that you receive will not be affected.

If you should have any questions or concerns about this study, please contact Dr. Martha Bragin at California State University, San Bernardino at (909) 537-3775.

When you have completed the questionnaire, you will receive a debriefing statement describing the study in more detail.

By placing a check mark in the box below, I acknowledge that I have been fully informed and understand the nature and purpose of this study. Therefore, I freely consent to participate and acknowledge that I am at least 18 years of age.

**Place a check mark here:**

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