

Keeping Foster and Kin Parents Trained and Supported (KEEP)

Program overview

Keeping Foster and Kin Parents Trained and Supported (KEEP) is a model for providing structured training, supervision, and support for kinship and foster parents caring for children ages 4-12. Developed by the Oregon Social Learning Center (OSLC), KEEP's objective is to give foster and kinship parents effective tools for dealing with a child's behavioral and emotional issues and to support parents as they implement these tools. Training is provided in a group setting once a week for 16 weeks; child care and snacks are provided.

KEEP groups are led by two trained facilitators who are supervised as they implement the program. Foster/kinship parents are taught methods for encouraging child cooperation, using behavioral contingencies and effective limit setting, and balancing encouragement and limits. There are also sessions on dealing with difficult behavioral problems, covert behaviors, promoting school success, encouraging positive peer relationships, and strategies for managing stress brought on by providing foster care. While the facilitators draw from an established protocol manual, they tailor each session to the specific needs, circumstances, and priorities of the participating parents and their children. KEEP groups are interactive and participatory, with the curriculum content integrated into the group discussion.

Facilitators make one 10-minute phone call per week to participating parents to troubleshoot problems parents may be having and to collect data on children's behaviors. If a foster/kinship family misses a group session, the material from the missed session is delivered during a home visit at a time convenient for the parent.

KEEP programs are supporting families in Oregon, Washington, California, Maryland, Great Britain, Sweden, and New York City.

Resources needed for implementation

KEEP offers several implementation options. The basic option costs approximately \$40,000, which includes organizational preparation, a readiness assessment, five days of training for the facilitator and co-facilitator, and weekly consultation throughout implementation. This phase includes a fidelity review/certification of the facilitation team. After they conduct three 16-week groups with intensive support from the KEEP implementation team, facilitators can become KEEP-certified facilitators. Certified facilitators can run KEEP groups with bi-annual fidelity checks conducted by the implementation team.

For More Information

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Evidence base

KEEP has been found to be effective in increasing foster parent retention and preventing placement breakdowns. KEEP is listed in the California Evidence-Based Clearinghouse for Child Welfare (CEBC) because the CEBC has determined that there is promising research evidence that supports a conclusion that KEEP is an effective program.