

## Mockingbird Family Model

The *Mockingbird Family Model* (MFM) was first implemented in 2004 by the Mockingbird Society of Seattle, WA. It establishes constellations of six to ten foster and kinship family homes in close proximity to a Hub Home. The Hub Home is led by an experienced, certified foster care provider. The Hub Home provides 24/7 support, as well as planned and emergency respite to the families within its constellation. The Hub Home also provides peer mentoring and coaching, convenes monthly support group meetings, and hosts social activities to facilitate the development of a sense of community among children and caregivers. The constellation is designed to function as an extended family (see diagram on following page).

MFM operates on the philosophy that caregivers deserve the support they need and its model is designed to provide those supports in a timely manner. Families that receive these resources and supports tend to feel less isolated and are more able to provide a stable, loving, and supportive environment for children and youth in their care.

At one point, MFM constellations were operating in Washington State, Washington, D.C., and Kentucky.

### ***Resources needed for implementation***

The primary cost of this model is support for the Hub Home provider. For example, in Washington State, Hub Home providers are paid by the host agency as a self-employed contractor, typically between \$30,000-\$50,000 per year, depending on the level of care they provide (e.g., regular vs. therapeutic foster care). This fee covers the retainer for maintaining two open beds in the home for respite care, providing support services to families, and concrete resources such as food and activities related to the constellation. The Mockingbird Society operates on the principle that the funds for Hub Homes can be generated by cost savings in other areas, such as transporting youth, supervising sibling visits and respite.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Casey Family Programs (2014). *Effective Practices in Foster Parent Recruitment, Infrastructure and Retention*.

### **For More Information**

The Mockingbird Society

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## Evidence base

MFM was evaluated annually between 2004 and 2009 by the University of Washington's Northwest Institute for Children and Families. The most recent evaluation stated that of the MFM youth that exited foster care, 90% were discharged to permanent homes. Caregiver retention rate was 88% (compared to Washington's state average of 69%), and there were no founded CPS reports for caregivers in MFM constellations.

The *Mockingbird Family Model* has been reviewed by the California Evidence-Based Clearinghouse for Child Welfare (CEBC) and is listed in the CEBC registry.

