

Mockingbird Family™

Mockingbird Family is a groundbreaking, human-centered approach to delivering foster care. With an emphasis on family-based care, the model empowers communities to put children and families at the forefront.

Mockingbird Family was first implemented in 2004, by The Mockingbird Society of Seattle, WA. It establishes a micro-community of six to ten foster and kinship family homes connected to a Hub Home (called a Constellation). The Hub Home is led by an experienced, certified foster care provider. Hub Home parents facilitate a network of support for foster families, providing relevant and child-specific trainings, easily accessed respite care from a known caregiver, and peer supports from a community that knows them. They also provide mentoring and coaching, convene monthly support group meetings, and host social activities to develop community with and among children and caregivers.

Mockingbird Family operates on the philosophy that caregivers deserve the support they need and is designed to provide those supports in a timely manner. Families in Constellations feel less isolated and are more able to provide a stable, loving, and supportive environment for children and youth in their care.

As of 2018, The Mockingbird Society, in partnership with foster care organizations, is operating Constellations in Washington State, New York City, California, the United Kingdom, Canada, and Australia.

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 \$35,000-\$60,000 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 care.

For More Information

The Mockingbird Society

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To replicate *Mockingbird Family*, an agency must be a family support, foster parent licensing, or child placement/adoptive agency. Agencies interested in replicating the model may contact The Mockingbird Society at 206.323.KIDS to learn more about the technical assistance and training process that is required to replicate *Mockingbird Family*.

Evidence base

Mockingbird Family was evaluated in 2017, by the Washington State Institute for Public Policy (WSIPP), evaluating *Mockingbird Family* from 2004 to 2016. WSIPP's evaluation found that children and youth experienced significantly better placement stability than traditional care. And caregiver retention for *Mockingbird Family* was also found to be 92% after two years of fostering (compared with 63% retention in Washington State.)

