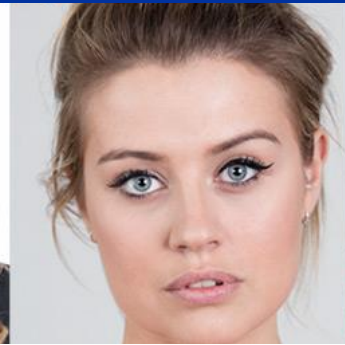
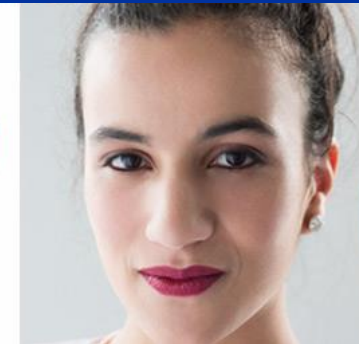


Supporting foster carers in parenting

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SUPPORTING FOSTER CARERS IN PARENTING

CONTENT

Definition and framework

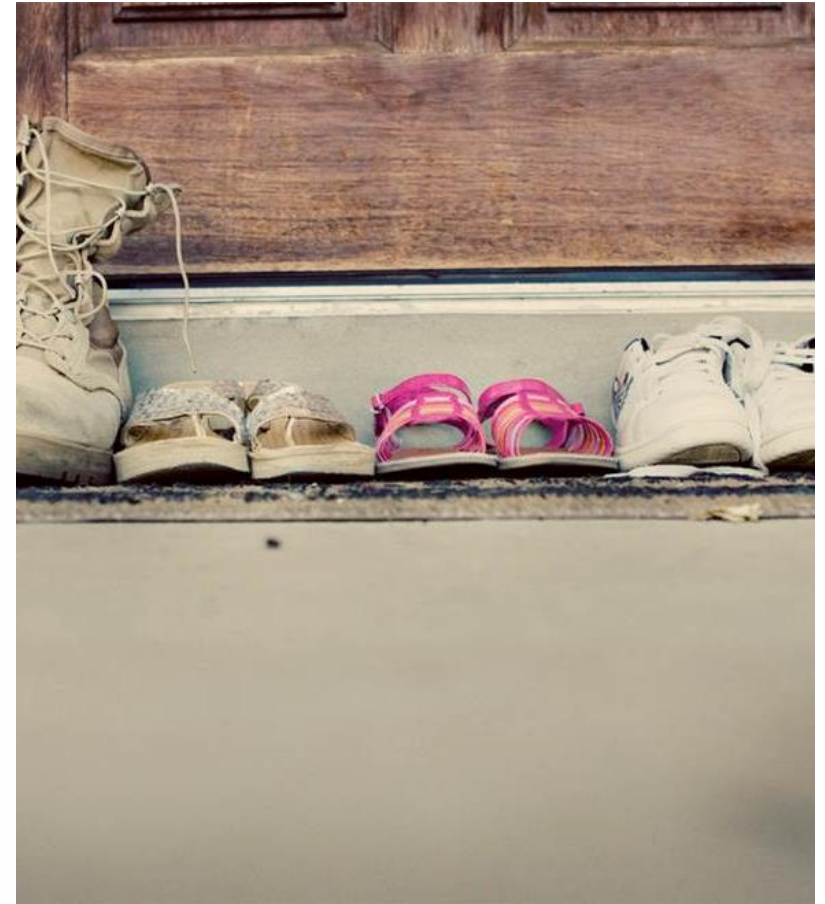
Foster care is valuable

Foster care is vulnerable

Foster care has tendency to frustrate

Preventive and curative actions against frustration and promoting satisfaction

Conclusion



FOSTER CARE

DEFINITION AND FRAMEWORK

"Care from a carer who voluntarily, with the support of a foster care agency and for a reimbursement cares for one or more foster children" (Decreet houdende de organisatie van pleegzorg, 2012, art. 2).

In Flanders (but also in some other European countries) this means:

- ▶ Foster carers are volunteers (no professionals)
- ▶ For a reimbursement (no wage/salary)
 - ▶ Consequently, foster carers are limited in resources to adapt parenting and education to the foster child. Limited adaptations of (normal) family functioning are possible for limited time. This may not lead to (long term) disorganisation of family life
- ▶ With the support of a foster care agency
 - ▶ Parenting is shared not only with the birth parents but also with the foster care agency
 - ▶ Foster care agency offers support and counselling
 - ▶ Foster care agency monitors and controls (intrusive?)

FOSTER CARE IS VALUABLE

BECAUSE OF THE METHODS

- ▶ Offers more continuity in relationships compared to residential care (van IJzendoorn, 2010)
- ▶ Satisfies better basic needs of children, because children in care receive more personal attention and love (Strijker & Zandberg, 2001, van IJzendoorn, 2010)

BECAUSE OF THE RESULTS

- ▶ Better outcomes regarding attachment, social development, behaviour and cognitive development (Brown, 2006, 2008; Perry, 2002)
- ▶ Less problems regarding selective attachment relationships to caregivers (Roy & Rutter, 2006; Roy et al., 2000, 2004)
- ▶ Better academic functioning (less attention, concentration and hyperactivity disorders and better attendance and participation in school) (Barber & Delfabbro, 2003)
- ▶ Better long term outcomes (completion of high school, less crime rates, less alcohol and drug usage, higher satisfaction with life generally, ...) (Barber, Delfabbro, & Cooper, 2001; Brown, 2008)

FOSTER CARE IS VULNERABLE

REGARDING THE FOSTER CARE PROCESS

▶ Vulnerability is associated with

- ▶ No improvement and even tendency of deterioration in adaptive/behavioural functioning of foster children (Goemans et al., 2015; Vanderfaeillie & Van Holen, 2010)
- ▶ The expectation that parenting is shared with the birth parents and the social worker (foster care agency) results in continuously justification, limited power of decision, monitoring and control, ...
- ▶ Limited effectivity of pre-service training (Dorsey et al., 2008) and support (e.g., no relation of frequency with level of behavioural problems of foster children, Vanderfaeillie & Van Holen, 2019)

FOSTER CARE IS VULNERABLE

REGARDING THE FOSTER CARE OUTCOMES

- ▶ Aforementioned problems result in
 - ▶ Breakdowns (estimated internationally 20-50%, 29% in Flanders; Vanderfaeillie et al., 2018)
 - ▶ Contact problems with birth parents, issues around safety of the foster family, disagreement with social worker eventually leading to breakdown (42% because of problems with BP, 3% because of FP not agreeing with decisions of foster care agency or court, ... (Vanderfaeillie et al., 2018)
 - ▶ Parenting stress (Damen & Pijnenburg, 2005) and dissatisfaction with foster care placement by foster carers (Vanderfaeillie & Van Holen, 2019)
 - ▶ Non-effective parenting by foster carers: foster carers try to control and curtail problem behaviour, and are unable to maintain a positive and supportive relationship (Vanderfaeillie, Van Holen, Trogh, & Andries, 2014)

Looking through the lens of the Self-determination Theory (SDT)

FOSTER CARE

PARENTING AND THE SELF-DETERMINATION THEORY

- ▶ People (thus also foster children and foster parents) have 3 basic psychological needs promoting motivation, development, health and psychological growth
 - ▶ Need for competence: need to feel a sense of mastery over the environment, to be able to develop new skills and to search for optimal challenges
 - ▶ Need for autonomy: need to feel psychologically free and to act with a sense of ownership of the own behaviour. It implies the need to act with a sense of choice and volition even when complying the wishes of others
 - ▶ Need for relatedness: need to feel others cared for and loved by others and the need to feel connected to and love others
- ▶ (Foster) parents whose basic psychological needs (in general or in relation to the foster child) are more satisfied, use a parenting style addressing the basic psychological needs of the (foster) child. They parent autonomy-supportive, offer structure and are involved with the (foster) child. Such a parenting style is associated with several positive outcomes (Vansteenkiste & Soenens, 2015)

FOSTER CARE

FOSTER CARE AND THE NEEDS SATISFACTION/FRUSTRATION OF FOSTER PARENTS

- Problems (inherent to) foster care frustrate (systematically) the basic psychological needs of foster parents

	Frustration of		
Problems	Competence	Autonomy	Relatedness
(Increase of) behavioural problems	by FC	by FC	with FC
Contact problems with BP/SW	by BP/SW	by BP/SW	with FC/SW
Non-effective training and counselling	X	X	X

FOSTER CARE

FOSTER CARE AND THE NEEDS SATISFACTION/FRUSTRATION OF FOSTER PARENTS

- ▶ The aforementioned problems can be understood as consequences of the frustration of basic psychological needs

	Frustration of		
Problems	Competence	Autonomy	Relatedness SW, FC & BP
Breakdown	X	X	X
Parenting stress & dissatisfaction with placement	X	X	X
Non-effective parenting	X	X	X

FOSTER CARE

PREVENTIVE ACTIONS PROMOTING NEEDS SATISFACTION OF FOSTER PARENTS

▶ Actions preventing basic psychological needs frustration and enhancing needs satisfaction

	Frustration of		
Preventive actions	Competence	Autonomy	Relatedness
Assessment/selection regarding suitability for Fcare (before placement) of FC and FP	X	X	X
Define an upper limit of bearable problem behaviour in foster care	X		X
Early detection of problem behaviour	X		X
Optimization matching FC – FP	X	X	X
Use of preventive programs	ABC VIPP-FC PIPA	SOP & Role differentiation	ABC VIPP-FC PIPA

FOSTER CARE

CURATIVE ACTIONS PROMOTING NEEDS SATISFACTION OF FOSTER PARENTS

▶ Curative actions promoting needs satisfaction of foster parents during placement

	Frustration of		
Curative actions	Competence	Autonomy	Relatedness
Training programs Dealing with problem behaviour	PVO, PMTO, MTFC(-P) VIPP-FC		PVO, PMTO, (MTFC(-P)) VIPP-FC
Dealing with birth parents/family		SOP Role differentiation	
Relieve foster parents		Crisis placement Time-out	Multiplex placement
Intensify support foster parents	X	X	X
Intensify counselling birth parents	X	X	X

CONCLUSION

- ▶ Foster care is valuable
- ▶ However, foster care is also vulnerable
- ▶ Frustration of basic psychological needs of foster parents (in relation with the FC) often happens in foster care
- ▶ With the framework of the self-determination theory, many problems in foster care can be understood as a consequence of basic psychological needs frustration
- ▶ Strengthening foster care implies supporting foster parents, and this can be done by promoting satisfaction of the basic psychological needs
- ▶ Above we gave some examples. The list is not exhaustive. Other actions are possible
- ▶ The actions are preventive if possible, curative if needed

Questions or comments?



HET DENKEN MAG ZICH
NOOIT ONDERWERPEN.

