

Therapeutic Foster Care Matching Protocols

Definitions

“Therapeutic Foster Care” (TFC) means a family foster care placement where a specially prepared, selected, and trained Resource Parent(s) provides a more intensive level of care for a child with more acute needs than a traditional foster care setting. Children in Therapeutic Foster Care (TFC) receive daily care, guidance, and modeling from specialized, highly trained, and skilled foster parents. TFC families are recruited, connected to training and peer supports from the Contractor. The overarching purpose is reunification of family and stabilizing a child’s mental/behavioral health issues. TFC referrals that are approved by the social work supervisor, have a completed **Pre-Placement Screening for Therapeutic Foster Care form, 470-5764** and approved by the Service Area Manager (SAM) or designee.

“Therapeutic Foster Care Resource Parent(s)” means a resource parent who is required to complete more training and have more experience than other foster parents; there is intentional alignment of services and service planning with Iowa Medicaid and its managed care partners, HHS Mental Health and Disability Services, education, and others; the number of children in the home is lower; the payment rates are higher; and the payment methodologies are different than standard foster care. Placement of children is staggered, meaning a child should be in the home for three months before another child enters.

“Match” means a TFC foster family has confirmed willingness to accept placement and the Social Work Case Manager (SWCM) confirms approval.

Program Eligibility Guidelines

- Meets criteria for co-occurring mental health diagnosis, SED/Behavioral Health, or autism.
- Is not able to be safely maintained in a non-specialized family home.
- Age 7 through 13.
- Adjudicated Child in Need of Assistance (CINA) (In child welfare system).
- Parent or an identified family will participate in the program with the expectation the child will exit therapeutic foster care to permanency in their home.

Referral Process

- HHS Social Work Case Manager (SWCM) staffs a potential TFC case with a Social Work Supervisor (SWS) to ensure the child and family meets Eligibility Requirements.
- If approved, SWCM completes the **Pre-Placement Screening for Therapeutic Care form, 470-5764**.
- SWS forwards the Pre-Placement Screening for Therapeutic Care form to the Service Area Manager (SAM) or designee for review and sign-off.
- SWCM gains verbal consent from the parent or identified family to participate in the TFC program and documents in the case file.

- SWCM completes the **Family Foster Care Referral form** and sends to Recruitment, Retention, Training and Support (RRTS) provider with the **Pre-Placement Screening for Therapeutic Care** form to foster-adopt@fouroaks.org, and cc's Targeted Case Management staff.

Four Oaks RRTS Will:

- Check foster-adopt@fouroaks.org daily for referrals.
- Immediately begin searching for and provide consistent and on-going effort to identify a TFC match for the referred child(ren).
- Check CareMatch to exclude for matching any “on-hold” resource parents or those who have an alert posted.
- Provide the referring SWCM with a list and contact information of all TFC foster family homes who are available and most appropriate for the youth as requested. RRTS will facilitate information sharing between the SWCM and any potential match as needed.
- Document matching efforts, the outcome of each attempt and the reason why specific families were not appropriate for the youth in CareMatch.
- Notify referring SWCM when no home is immediately identified; the child will be placed on the waiting list until the SWCM requests the youth be removed.

HHS Will:

- Use the protocol described in this document for all referrals to TFC.
- Update referrals with current information as new information becomes available.
- Remain accessible and responsive to answer RRTS questions about the referral.
- Accept or decline the recommended match within 24 hours.
- Facilitate an in-person meeting between the youth and the TFC Resource parent.
- Confirm court order is in place or acquire as needed, to authorize placement.
- Notify RRTS at foster-adopt@fouroaks.org within 24 hours once placement has been made.
- Notify RRTS at foster-adop@fouroaks.org to close or cancel referral when a TFC foster care placement is no longer needed.

Waiting List (Maintained by Four Oaks)

- If a home is not immediately available Four Oaks will continue to seek an appropriate home for the youth.
- If no identified home or match is available, the referred youth will be placed on a waiting list and remain on the list until removed at the request of the SWCM.
- RRTS Therapeutic Foster Care Specialist will email the HHS SWCM to provide weekly updates on match efforts.
- RRTS will remove youth from the waiting list at the request of HHS or placement occurs.