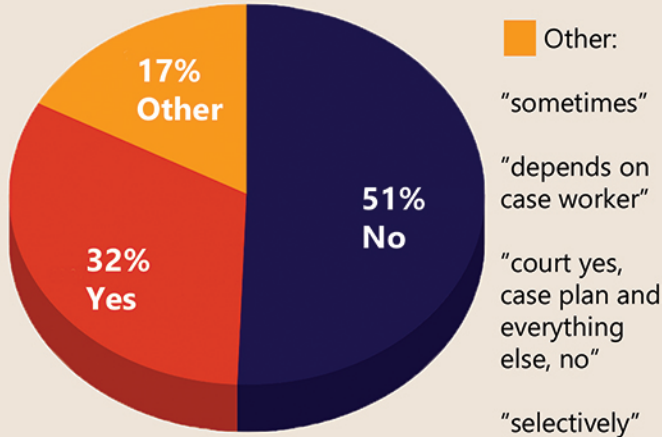


## WHY DO FOSTER PARENTS QUIT?

**70% of foster parents feel they are only sometimes or never a valued member of their foster child's "Team"**

Do you feel that DHS keeps you well informed of the case plan, court dates, upcoming changes, etc.?

164 Responses



Other:

"sometimes"

"depends on case worker"

"court yes, case plan and everything else, no"

"selectively"

"We aren't valued, have few rights, very little support. We are expected to do everything and then some for our kids, but then have no say in what happens to them. Very painful when kids are returned to dysfunctional families or moved to strangers for adoption."

### To increase FP retention we need:

- Communication and support from DHS
- To be made a part of the child's legal and decision-making team
- Financial assistance to cover childcare and respite care; also a swift CANS assessment
- **To see that children really do come first, with healthy timelines for each child's permanency firmly enforced as mandated by federal law**



**Foster Parents want to be a part of the decision-making process for their foster child(ren).**

**"WE are in the trenches with the kids and have a whole view of what is really going on."**

- **Foster parents are highly trained professional volunteer parents who care deeply about the children they support. They attend many hours of classes and advocate for these kids.**
  - **Foster Parents spend significantly more time with the children than any other individual involved in the foster care process.**
  - **Foster parents accompany children to therapy, doctor's visits and more. They make day-to-day and emergency care decisions for the well-being of the child. They administer medication and keep detailed records.**
  - **Foster parents sometimes supervise visits with bio parents and are there to comfort children when they experience complex emotions before and after visitation.**
  - **Foster parents work hard to establish positive relationships with bio parents, case workers, CASA's, and many other team members.**
- "We want the kids to be protected and their needs attended to over parents that have the power to make their own life choices"**

This detailed survey of over 160 foster parents around Oregon aims to pinpoint the strengths and weaknesses of the foster care system from a foster parent's point of view. We hope that sharing this information will aid in the creation of policy and legislation that encourages a positive relationship between DHS and foster families.

Jackson County  
Foster Parent  
Association



Survey prepared by the  
and the Foster Parent Discussion & Support Group

Questions? Contact:  
fosterparentdiscussiongroup@gmail.com

# Foster Parent Survey Oregon 2016

*Our goal is to find positive solutions and continue to work with the Department of Human Services to strengthen our foster care system and provide safe, happy homes for our most vulnerable youth population.*



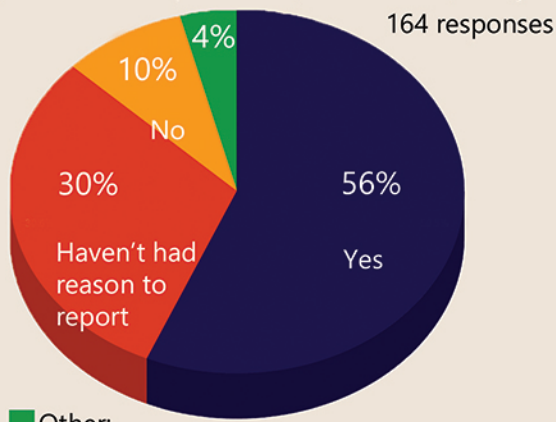
**"Policy and laws should focus on the best interest of the child."**

**Foster parents, case workers, CASA's, supervisors, attorneys, biological parents, relatives, doctors and therapists all must work together to protect those that can't protect themselves.**



## CASE WORKERS

Are you concerned that speaking up against or reporting a case worker would have negative consequences (retribution) for you?



- Other:
- \* "It has happened to me"
  - \* "It always does"
  - \* "I have been told they would take the child away from me if I didn't do what was told"
  - \* "And this is true, based on my personal experiences w/DHS. It has also been the experience of many foster/adoptive parents, whom I have known over the years"
  - \* "ABSOLUTELY!"

## Concerns about case workers

"Not returning phone calls/emails. Not asking what we, as FPs who know the kids well, think would be best or how the kids are doing. Not being informed about changes or given any meaningful/respected opportunity for input."

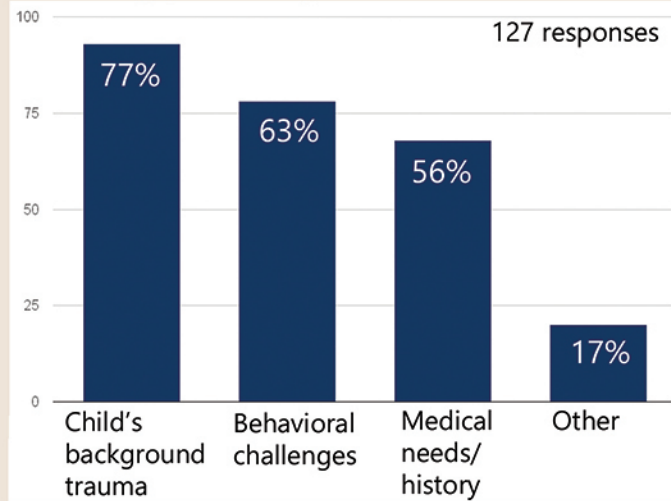
"We are told to go to supervisors if we have problems with case workers. I have. But have never had a satisfactory resolution when going to a supervisor."

**About 60% of foster parents feel that case workers do not spend enough time getting to know the foster child and foster family.**

"Caseworkers that discuss the ideas/needs of the children with me and work with me to make the best plans possible for the kids are the ones that make it rewarding to work with DHS and don't result in trudging through in spite of DHS."

## FOSTER CHILD INITIAL PLACEMENT

Check any category below for which you do NOT receive enough information when a child is initially placed in your care.



"I think a family meeting with all parties, facilitated by a trained, neutral facilitator, would enable the case to start out with all adults working together and keeping the best interests of the CHILDREN as our top priority."

"We need more information on these children. I understand case workers may not have much information but it would be very helpful if we got the info as quickly as possible."

## AT TIME OF PLACEMENT Foster Parents would like:

- As much information about a child as possible
- Placement papers (many report not receiving these)
- Supplies / clothing for two days, & clothing voucher
- Contact info for case worker, supervisor, and alternate
- A clear view of what happens next, any court/visit info

**Do you feel you receive adequate support from DHS in the first week after initial child placement?**



- Other
- "They say they just need a place for a week - that means you will be having them indefinitely"
  - "Some caseworkers yes, but then we have had others drop them off and not see them again until the one month check"

## VISITATION WITH PARENTS/RELATIVES

Do you feel that child visits with biological relatives are well organized, supported and reasonable?



## VISIT CHALLENGES AND SOLUTIONS

- Frequency is hard on foster families, especially those with multiple child placements. Foster family needs should be considered when scheduling visits.
- Transportation for visits needs to be offered by DHS.
- Stricter guidelines for bio parents. They need to be on time or visit is cancelled, have them call in after first no-show, be required to be drug-free/clean at time of visit, and not feed kids junk food.
- More SSA supervision to assure appropriate parent/child conversation and interaction
- SSA needs to communicate more with foster parent about what happens at visits.

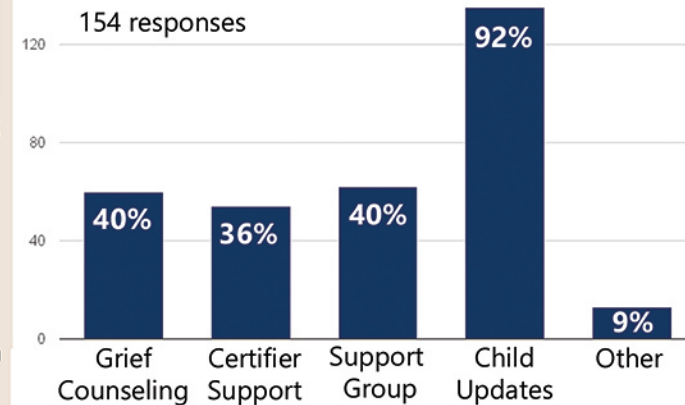
## WHEN A FOSTER CHILD LEAVES

Implement a transition plan with input from the foster family, respecting foster family dynamics and giving all members of the family a chance to say good-bye.

"I have never once been offered any services by DHS after a child has moved. In fact, rarely, if ever, has anyone from DHS asked me how I am doing."

"Residual trauma is not addressed as it should be."

**Approximately 75% of foster parents feel that there are insufficient services/grief counseling/support available after a child moves on from their home.**



**What services would you like to have available to you after a child leaves your foster home?**