Satisfaction issues for Iowa foster families:

Interactions with the foster care system

by

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The Statement of the Problem

By examining foster families' perceptions of their interactions with the Iowa foster care system, this study will examine how foster family satisfaction is affected by parental characteristics, family characteristics, geographic characteristics, and the practice of caseworkers from the Department of Human Services (DHS).

The Sub-problems

The first sub-problem. To examine how foster family satisfaction is affected by parental characteristics.

The second sub-problem. To examine how foster family satisfaction is affected by family characteristics.

The third sub-problem. To examine how foster family satisfaction is affected by geographic characteristics.

The fourth sub-problem. To examine how foster family satisfaction is affected by the practice of DHS caseworkers.

The Hypotheses

The first hypothesis. Parental characteristics significantly affect foster family satisfaction.

a. Foster families with more highly educated mothers are more satisfied with providing foster care than foster families with less educated mothers.

b. Foster families with more highly educated fathers are more satisfied with providing

foster care than foster families with less educated fathers.

c. Foster families with mothers who work in the home are more satisfied with providing foster care than foster families with mothers who work outside the home.

d. Foster families with fathers who work outside the home are more satisfied with providing foster care than foster families with fathers who work in the home.

e. Foster families with mothers who are non-employed or part-time employed are more satisfied with providing foster care than foster families with mothers who are unemployed or full-time employed.

f. Foster families with fathers who are non-employed or part-time employed are more satisfied with providing foster care than foster families with fathers who are unemployed or full-time employed.

The second hypothesis. Family characteristics significantly affect foster family satisfaction.

a. Two-parent foster families are more satisfied with providing foster care than single parent foster families.

b. Foster families with higher incomes are more satisfied with providing foster care than foster families with lower incomes.

c. Foster families with no biological and/or adopted children are more satisfied with providing foster care than foster families with biological and/or adopted children.

d. Foster families who rely on extended family, friends, or neighbors for personal support are more satisfied with providing foster care than foster families who rely on

other foster families, DHS or private agency caseworkers, or have no one to rely on.

e. Foster families who have been licensed for a longer period of time are more satisfied than families who have been licensed for a shorter period of time.

The third hypothesis. Geographic characteristics of the county where foster families live significantly affect foster family satisfaction.

a. Foster families in urban counties are more satisfied with providing foster care than foster families in rural or metropolitan counties.

b. Foster families living in counties with high or low foster care placement rates are less satisfied with providing foster care than foster families with medium foster care placement rates.

The fourth hypothesis. The practice of DHS caseworkers significantly affects foster family satisfaction.

a. Foster families who have more frequent contact initiated by the DHS caseworker are more satisfied with providing foster care than foster families who have less frequent contact initiated by the DHS caseworker.

b. Foster families who have telephone calls returned quickly are more satisfied with providing foster care than foster families who do not have telephone calls returned quickly.

c. Foster families who perceive the DHS agency to be accessible in the event of an emergency are more satisfied with providing foster care than foster families who perceive the DHS agency to be less accessible in the event of an emergency.

d. Foster families who perceive DHS to be very supportive and informative when foster parents are charged with abuse are more satisfied with providing foster care than foster families who do not perceive DHS to be very supportive or informative for foster parents charged with abuse.

The Limitations

The data for this study were limited to the perceptions of licensed Iowa foster families who have been identified by the Iowa Department of Human Services and were gathered in the public domain for purposes of foster care policy development. The data were limited to foster family perceptions of their interactions with the foster care system.

The Definitions of General Terms

Case permanency/reunification plan. A case permanency or reunification plan is a series of goals and specific activities that the foster care agency, the child, the biological parents, and others relevant to the plan must achieve in order for reunification to occur. The purpose of the plan is to create a permanent, stable family for a child who is in foster care. Implicit in the plan is that the "best interest" of the child is to live with the biological family, but, in some cases, the child cannot be reunited with his or her parents. In these instances, the "best interests" of the child are determined. "Best interest" outcomes for the child include long-term foster care and termination of the rights of biological parents to free the child for adoption by another family. The plan is developed by the foster child's DHS caseworker with input from others who work with the biological parents and foster child.

Caseworkers. Caseworkers are public (DHS) or private agency workers, given the title

of "social worker", who work with foster children, biological families, and foster families.

Family foster care. Family foster care is the temporary placement of a child, who is in the state's custody, with an individual or family. In most cases, the goal of foster care is to care for the child in the least restrictive, most family-like environment possible until he or she can be reunited with the biological family.

The foster care system. The foster care system is a subsystem of the child welfare system, and its primary purpose is the care and protection of children who are temporarily unable to live with their biological families. Key components of the Iowa family foster care system include the Department of Human Services, private foster care agencies, the Iowa Foster & Adoptive Parents Association, licensed foster families, guardians ad litem, and the juvenile court system.

Guardian ad litem. A guardian ad litem is a person who is appointed by the juvenile court to represent the best interests of foster children in court hearings relating to the foster care placement.

Iowa Department of Human Services. The Iowa Department of Human Services is an Iowa government agency that is responsible for the protection of children. Child protection includes, but is not limited to, the following activities: placing children into foster care, recruiting and retaining foster families, providing services to biological parents, monitoring foster care placements, developing case permanency/reunification plans, and when necessary, terminating the rights of biological parents.

Licensed foster family. A licensed foster family is an individual or family who has met

the licensing criteria of the state to provide for the daily care of a foster child.

Private foster care agencies. Private foster care agencies operate in the private sector. They usually contract with the state for the provision of services, and are generally involved in the following foster care activities: recruiting and retaining foster families, placing children into foster care, and monitoring foster care placements. Many private agencies belong to the Coalition for Family & Children's Services in Iowa; the Coalition has contracted with the Iowa Foster Family Recruitment & Retention Project to represent the interests of private foster care agencies in statewide collaboration of foster family recruitment and retention.

The Definitions of Variables

Parental characteristics. For this study, the following variables were analyzed separately for mothers and fathers: educational level, employment status, and the site of employment (inside or outside the home). The terms "non-employed" and "unemployed" were used to describe parental employment status. For this study, "non-employed" was used to describe the employment status of parents who were choosing to not be employed; "unemployed" was used to describe the employment status of parents who were not employed at the time of the study, but were looking for employment.

Family characteristics. The family characteristics analyzed in this study were the following: number of parents (single, two-parent), family income, presence or absence of biological and/or adopted children, availability of personal support, and length of time licensed as a foster family.

Geographic characteristics. Geographic characteristics that were considered included

county population and foster care placement rate in the county.

Practice of DHS caseworkers. For this study, the practice of DHS caseworkers included the following: contact initiated by the caseworker, phone calls returned to foster families, availability of help for foster families in emergencies, and the amount of support and/or information available to foster parents charged with abuse to foster children.

Abbreviations

DHS or IDHS are the abbreviations used for the Iowa Department of Human Services.

IFAPA is the abbreviation for the Iowa Foster & Adoptive Parents Association.

Coalition is the abbreviation for the Coalition for Family & Children's Services in Iowa.

Assumptions

The first assumption. The need for foster families in Iowa will continue.

The second assumption. The data were a legitimate representation of Iowa foster family satisfaction.

The third assumption. Foster family satisfaction affects the retention of foster families. Foster families who are satisfied with the foster care system will continue to provide foster care, while those who are not satisfied will discontinue providing care.

The Importance of the Study

In the last few years, the number of children entering foster care has substantially increased both in Iowa and nationally. In 1992, Iowa had 3,626 children in out-of-home placements (Iowa Kids Count, 1993). By December 1994, this number had jumped to 5,074 (Iowa Department of Human Services, 1994b), representing a 29% increase in out-of-home

placements over a two year time span. Of the total population of children in out-of-home placements in Iowa in December 1994, 58% (2,956) were in a family foster care placement, an increase of 27% from December 1993 (IDHS, 1993b). During this same time period, the number of licensed Iowa foster families remained relatively stable, decreasing slightly. In December 1993, the Iowa Department of Human Services reported 1,919 licensed foster families (IDHS, 1993a); in December 1994, this number had dropped to 1,893 (IDHS, 1994a).

Pecora, Whittaker, Maluccio, Barth, and Plotnick (1992) attribute the dramatic increase of children entering out-of-home placements to "cuts in preventive services, dramatic increases in crack/cocaine abuse, reduction in public housing, along with increases in homelessness, and continuing unemployment in many geographical areas and among ethnic-minority groups." Further, the more frequent re-entry of former foster children into the system contributes to the escalating numbers of children in out-of-home care.

State and national governments, as well as child welfare agencies, have responded to the increasing numbers of foster children by focusing policy initiatives and funding into serving children in more family-like settings, namely, family foster care. In 1993, the Iowa General Assembly decreased the capacity of institutional settings to care for children (1993 Code of Iowa, 232.143). This "cap" affected child welfare service delivery by financially mandating less reliance on institutional care for children, increasing the number of children cared for in family foster care. Additionally, the Iowa General Assembly increased the reimbursement for family foster care in an effort to increase foster family retention (Kazmerzak, 1993).

The Iowa Foster Family Recruitment & Retention Project is a legislatively mandated

response to the need for more foster families in Iowa. This project is funded through the Iowa Department of Human Services and facilitates collaboration between DHS, private foster care agencies, and IFAPA. The project operates under the premise that understanding the issues underlying foster family satisfaction is key to retention (Kazmerzak, 1993). Inherent to foster family satisfaction is pinpointing the specific issues and concerns that foster families feel are handled adequately and inadequately by the foster care system.

The purpose of this study was to analyze data regarding foster families' perceptions of the foster care system to differentiate between aspects of the system which positively and negatively impact the satisfaction of foster families. Analysis of the data will suggest areas where modifications to current foster care policies and practices could improve foster family satisfaction. It is anticipated that developing methods to improve the satisfaction of foster families will increase the ability of the foster care system to retain currently licensed foster families.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

The recruitment and retention of foster families has received much attention from policymakers and practitioners in recent years. This section will review the origins of family foster care, current issues affecting foster family satisfaction, and theoretical support for addressing and increasing foster family satisfaction.

Brief History of Family Foster Care

Contemporary family foster care systems have their roots in the work of Rev. Charles Loring Brace and the Placing Out System of the New York Children's Aid Society. In 1854, Brace was concerned that only a small part of the poor population could be housed in institutions, and that a much greater number of children were cared for by no one (Kadushin, 1976). Brace and his associates gathered tens of thousands of children from the streets of eastern cities, and sent them on "orphan trains" to the West and South. These children were placed with farming families where they worked and grew up. Although this was a means to "rescue" many orphan children, many others had parents who were considered "inadequate" and dependent on charity. There was much opposition to the "orphan trains" from child welfare professionals and from the Catholic church, which did not want Catholic children placed in non-Catholic homes. Although this approach to child welfare eventually declined, the practice of placing children in substitute families continued and Children's Aid Societies were established within each state to provide and administer family foster care programs (Pecora et al, 1992).

In 1909, the White House Conference on Children emphasized a societal responsibility to ensure a "secure and loving home" for every child. A complex new child welfare system was

subsequently developed which dramatically changed the focus of service delivery to needy children. Societal attitudes shifted from placing all children of "inadequate" parents permanently with other families, towards preserving the original family unit. Family foster care developed as a means to provide care for children in substitute families until they could be reunited with their biological families or be permanently placed with another family. Also, children were no longer removed from their families of origin solely for reasons of poverty, but rather for the children's physical protection (Garbarino, Abramowitz, Benn, Gaboury, Galambos, Garbarino, Grandjean, Long & Plantz, 1982). By the 1950's, a range of foster care options had emerged which emphasized caring for children in family-like settings. Family foster care became the preferred method of care because it was a less restrictive option than caring for children in institutions (Pecora et al, 1992).

At that time, child welfare policy and philosophy specified that foster care placements should be temporary situations for children. However, this was not inherent in the service provision of most child welfare agencies. This deficit in service delivery, which surfaced significantly in research findings in the 1950's and 1960's, elicited immediate concern. Of most critical concern were the amount of time many children spent in foster care, the number of different placements children in foster care experienced, the number of children being inappropriately removed from their original families, the lack of emphasis on the biological parents' responsibilities, the disproportionate representation of children from minority and poor families, and the increasing evidence that separating children from their biological families negatively influenced the child's development (Pecora et al, 1992). As a result, there was much

pressure in the 1970's to restructure child welfare policies and service delivery.

Data gathered from a project in Oregon during the 1970's initiated the movement toward *permanency planning* for foster children (Horejsi, 1979). The goal of permanency planning is to carefully assess and develop a course of action to reunite children with their biological parents, or to make other permanent plans for a child who could not be reunited with his or her biological family. Ultimately, permanency planning aims to answer the following question: "What will be this child's family when he or she grows up?" (Pecora et al, 1992, p. 320). The permanency planning movement has affected family foster care through its re-emphasis of foster care as a **temporary** situation. It also set the stage for subsequent child welfare legislation at both the national and statewide levels.

Ensuring permanent homes for children was emphasized again in the Adoption Assistance and Child Welfare Act of 1980 (PL 96-272). This law requires states to promote permanency planning for children in order to receive federal funding for child welfare services. Adopted in all 50 states, this piece of legislation has significantly influenced the policies and practices of child welfare agencies; as well as, substantially increasing federal funding for subsidized adoptions, procedural reforms, and preventive and supportive services to families (Pecora et al, 1992). The impact of this legislation on family foster care has been a de-emphasis on out-of-home care. By increasing the services to biological families prior to placement, it is designed to reduce the need for all forms of foster care, including family foster care.

Foster Family Satisfaction

Until the 1980's, there was very little, if any, discussion of foster family satisfaction issues.

One reason for this may be that although the number of children entering foster care was increasing, it was a gradual increase, and the number of foster families was adequate to meet the demand.

Over the last 15 years, societal problems such as drug abuse, cult and gang influences, poverty, homelessness, and employment with inadequate income, have levied too much stress for many families, and the numbers of foster children have increased dramatically (Pecora et al, 1992). Coupled with trends toward the de-institutionalization of foster children during this same time period, there are now more children in the family foster care system than ever before. Further, high social worker caseloads, along with complex family problems precipitating placement, make it difficult for reunification to occur quickly and foster children sometimes spend several years in out-of-home care. Finally, the traditional volunteer pool composed of non-employed mothers is decreasing, as more families require two incomes for financial support (Pasztor & Burgess, 1982).

The need for foster families is readily apparent. This has caused many states to look at new methods of foster family recruitment and to review the policies designed to retain veteran foster families. For this reason, the research on foster care in recent years has brought issues relating to foster family satisfaction and retention to the forefront.

In June 1993, the Iowa Foster Family Recruitment and Retention Project sponsored a series of regional focus group meetings around the state. The purpose of the outreach was to uncover the difficulties foster parents encounter that inhibits their abilities to provide quality foster care. Much concern was expressed about the public image of family foster care, rights of

foster parents, methods for affecting public policy and contacting legislators, and the impact of worker caseloads and caseworker contact with foster families. The predominant theme in each of the meetings was the lack of support available to foster families and how the lack of support affects foster parenting, as well as workers' abilities to recruit and retain good foster parents (Kriener, 1993).

In an effort to understand how aspects of the Iowa foster care system affects foster family retention, the Iowa Foster & Adoptive Parents Association routinely mails a Foster Family Exit Questionnaire to families who have discontinued providing foster care. Forty-nine exit questionnaires were received by the IFAPA between February and September 1994. An analysis (Kriener, 1994) of the responses identified several issues leading up to the ultimate decision to discontinue fostering, including the following: personal reasons (59.2%), frustration with the foster care system (53.1%), inadequate reimbursement (6.1%), and other responses (20.4%). Other category responses include "licensed for a specific child only", "agency would not renew our license", "haven't received training reimbursements", and "our own family doesn't have enough time to spend together".

When asked what, if anything, they would change about the foster care system, families who discontinued providing care reported the following: amount and adequacy of communication with foster families (30.6%), quicker termination of biological parents' rights, hold birth parents more accountable (20.4%), consider the needs of the child more, remove children from biological homes sooner (20.4%), provide foster families with more support and respect (18.4%), problems with reimbursements (14.3%), provide foster families with very specific types

of assistance (12.2%), such as helping with transportation and providing the Title XIX card upon placement, and better matching of foster children with foster families (4.1%). Ten percent of the population did not have suggestions for changing the foster care system, as providing foster care has been a positive experience for them.

The National Survey of Current and Former Foster Parents (James Bell Associates, 1993) found an imbalance between the type and location of foster family homes and the needs of foster care children, with urban areas needing more foster homes and rural areas more likely to have unused foster homes. Although about 1/3 of current foster parents learned of the need for foster parents from other foster parents, agencies don't fully utilize foster parents as a resource in recruitment.

Weyer (1991) identified a predictive relationship between foster parent satisfaction and retention. Issues affecting foster family satisfaction include the following: agency support, caseworkers treating foster parents with respect, timely handling of phone messages, pressures to take more children of a different age than they originally wanted, perception of the agency as controlling, the sharing of responsibility with the caseworker, and the overall way that they felt they were treated by the caseworker.

Barriers to Foster Family Satisfaction

Following are several barriers to foster family satisfaction which have been identified in the foster care literature:

Negative public image of foster care. A negative public image of foster care not only makes it more difficult to recruit foster families, but it is also a barrier to foster family satisfaction

and retention. When the general public does not understand the work of foster families, this is often conveyed through community members that foster parents daily deal with, such as employers, school teachers, medical professionals, and others. Because they do not understand the work of foster parents, these community members are often critical of foster parents' motivations to advocate for and care for foster children (Fein, 1991; Government Accounting Office, 1989; Kasius, 1992).

High worker caseloads. Hess, Folaran, Jefferson, and Kinnear (1989a) discovered that high caseworker and supervisor caseloads and frequent turnover of staff directly contribute to the reentry into placement of abused and neglected children. They claim that caseworker turnover results in frequent case transfers and the assignment of complex and difficult tasks to new, inexperienced, and partially trained caseworkers. They further determined that high caseload size resulted in the following problems: inadequate time for contacts with parents and children, inadequate time to read case records and reports, inadequate time to prepare family members to cope with problems and stresses when the child returned home, inadequate time for supervisors to monitor major case decisions, inadequate time for staffing, and an informal system of staff prioritizing of cases in order to manage the caseload size. In 90% of the cases, reviewers found that the most frequent contributor to placement reentry was that the parents' behaviors/problems that precipitated placement had not been resolved at reunification.

When caseloads are high, caseworkers have less time available for any one client or case. Foster parents who have difficulties contacting caseworkers, or who feel that caseworkers do not spend enough time with the foster child to make appropriate decisions for the child, become less

satisfied with their foster care experience (Eastman, 1978; Government Accounting Report, 1989; Hamilton, date unknown). Additionally, McFadden & Ryan (1991) claim that over half of the foster care caseworkers in state agencies have been trained in social work.

Timeliness and adequacy of foster care reimbursements. Often foster parents must subsidize the monthly foster care reimbursements to provide adequate care for foster children. Over time, it becomes financially impossible for foster parents to continue to provide foster care and still be able to appropriately care for their own children (Douglas, Moore, Lonergan, Wendt, Scoll, Gustavson, & Couture, 1986; Government Accounting Office, 1989; Hamilton, date unknown; Kasius, 1992; Rindfleisch, 1994).

Lack of clear communication. Lack of clear communication and role ambiguity are barriers to foster family satisfaction, because they inhibit foster parents' feelings of adequacy in caring for foster children. Few foster care programs provide clear expectations of the foster parent's role in caring for foster children. Without clear guidelines, foster parents often take the initiative to advocate on behalf of foster children for adequate provision of services. When foster parents are chastised for such action, they become less satisfied with providing foster care (Eastman, 1978; Fein, 1991; Government Accounting Office, 1989; Kasius, 1992; Rindfleisch, 1994).

Foster children are returned to harmful situations after they leave the foster home. Hess, Folaron, Jefferson, & Kinnear (1989b), who have analyzed the affect of foster care policy on foster care reentry, demonstrated how the functioning of foster care agencies translates into poor outcomes for children. They discovered that current state and local agency policy appears

to provide insufficient standards and guidelines defining the minimum requirements of agency staff to accomplish the outcome of reunification. This policy contributes to children returning home without resolution of the family problems that precipitated placement and subsequent foster care reentry. Further, Rindfleisch (1994) has linked this issue with foster family satisfaction.

Inadequate matching of foster children in foster homes. Often, when foster children and foster families are not adequately matched, the foster care placement is unsuccessful, and the child must be moved to another home. A disrupted foster care placement negatively affects both the foster child and the foster family, because it instills a feeling of failure in both, and each feels responsible for the placement disruption. The disruption impedes the child's social and emotional development, including his or her self-esteem. The foster parents interpret the disruption as their failure to provide appropriate care for the child, and they become less satisfied with their foster care experience (Doelling & Johnson, 1990).

Foster parent training. Although foster parents generally spend more time with the foster children than caseworkers, juvenile court representatives, or guardians ad litem, they are the least trained. Studies (Eastman, 1978; Government Accounting Office, 1989; Hamilton, date unknown; Kasius, 1992) have identified that adequate foster parent training increases the chances that foster families will continue to care for foster children. In addition, training foster families to deal with separation and loss issues increases foster family retention because they are better equipped to cope when the foster children leave their homes.

Hunner and Fine (1990) conducted a study of Alaskan foster parents' perceptions of barriers to training. They found that the most important training barrier for women was lack of

child care, while for men it was being able to get the necessary time away from work. Also, rural foster families perceived significantly more barriers to training than urban foster parents. The barrier identified most often by foster parents was that they already knew the training information. Foster parents who are required to attend inadequate training are less satisfied with providing foster care than foster parents who receive training that adequately prepares them to care for foster children.

Lack of information. Foster parents need to receive adequate information about foster children to be prepared to deal with the disruptions that the child will bring to their homes. Many times, caseworkers do not fully disclose the extent of foster children's disruptive behaviors, because they are concerned that the family will not accept the placement. However, many foster parents would rather know "up-front" what behaviors to expect from the foster children, so that they are more prepared when those behaviors do arise (Davis et al, 1986; Hamilton, date unknown; Kasius, 1992).

Foster parent input is not valued. When foster parents feel that their input is not valued or appreciated, they question their ability to be sufficient caregivers of foster children. Additionally, foster parents become dissatisfied with providing foster care when their observations of the child's behavior is not solicited or acknowledged. Because they provide 24 hours per day caring for foster children, foster parents feel that their observations and understanding of the child's behaviors and needs should be considered by caseworkers and others who develop and implement the child's case permanency/reunification plan (Government Accounting Office, 1989; Hamilton, date unknown; James Bell Associates, 1993).

Foster parents do not receive adequate support. This issue highlights the unique role

of foster families as both providers and clients of services in the child welfare system. Few foster

parents have acquired the educational training to work with special needs children that is required

of other participants in the foster care system. For this reason, foster families often need a

resource they can call upon to help them resolve conflicts and deal with the difficult behaviors that

foster children bring into their homes. High worker caseloads are related to this issue because

they reduce the amount of time that caseworkers can devote to assisting foster families (Douglas

et al, 1986; Government Accounting Office, 1989; Hamilton, date unknown; James Bell

Associates, 1993; Kasius, 1992).

Providing foster care creates stress in the foster family. Because foster children

generally exhibit many difficult behaviors, having foster care placements can be very disruptive

to the internal interactions of foster families' original members. Caring for foster children is a

huge time commitment on the part of foster parents, and the time they devote to foster children

is often at the expense of the time they would otherwise have been spent with their own children.

In addition, the issue of foster care reimbursements is relevant here, as many foster families must

supplement the monthly foster care reimbursement in order to provide adequate food, clothing,

shelter, and other supplies for the foster child. Supplementing the foster care reimbursement each

month often causes undue financial stresses to foster families (Douglas et al, 1986; Wilkes, 1974).

Foster children have difficult behaviors. An additional barrier to foster family

satisfaction has been the increasingly difficult and violent behaviors of children entering care. In

many cases these difficult behaviors can be attributed to the biological parents' alcohol or drug

abuse during pregnancy, gang involvement, cult rituals, or the severity of abuse or neglect from the biological parents. Further, the trend toward de-institutionalization has affected family foster care because many children who would otherwise have been cared for in institutions are now cared for in foster families. Difficult and violent behaviors in foster children affects foster parents' satisfaction and retention because these behaviors are disruptive to their own families. Additionally, dealing with these difficult behaviors requires that more of the foster parents' time be spent in training and redirecting the child's difficult and violent behaviors (Douglas et al, 1986; James Bell Associates, 1993; Pecora et al, 1992; Rindfleisch, 1994).

There is too much bureaucracy and "red tape". Foster parents become frustrated when they do not have their concerns responded to quickly. Although bureaucracy helps DHS run more efficiently, it also makes foster parents feel that they "get lost in the paperwork shuffle" (Douglas et al, 1986; Eastman, 1978; James Bell Associates, 1993; Rindfleisch, 1994).

Lack of respect for foster parents. Lack of respect for foster parents by caseworkers and others who develop and implement foster children's case permanency/reunification plans, can cause foster parents to feel inadequate in caring for foster children. Particularly true for foster parents who have had an abundance of sufficient training to help them care for foster children, foster parents who are not treated respectfully quickly become dissatisfied with being a foster family (Douglas et al, 1986; Government Accounting Office, 1989; Kasius, 1992).

Lack of respite care. Because of the difficulties surrounding some foster children's behaviors, along with the time demands of providing foster care, foster parents often need to have a brief respite from providing care. Because the provision of respite care greatly reduces stress

in the foster family, families who are able to place foster children with difficult behaviors into respite care are more satisfied than families who are unable to access this service. Further, because access to respite care reduces stress within the family, incidences of child maltreatment is lower for families who have a brief respite period than families who do not have respite (Government Accounting Office, 1989; Kasius, 1992; Rindfleisch, 1994).

Allegations of child maltreatment. Many foster children were initially placed into foster care because of abuse or neglect from their biological parents. Thus, many of these children have learned that claiming that they have been abused by a foster parent will bring them a lot of attention from agency caseworkers and possibly from their own parents. Because child welfare agencies are appointed to protect children from harm, they must investigate all allegations of abuse. Often when this happens, foster parents receive no support and little information about the abuse investigation. This is a barrier to foster family satisfaction and retention because the family no longer feels respected or trusted (Carbarino, 1992; Carbarino, 1991; Kasius, 1992; McFadden & Ryan, 1989; Rindfleisch, 1994).

Working with biological parents. Occasionally, foster parents are asked to work with the foster child's biological parents in order for reunification between the foster child and the biological parents to occur more quickly. Unfortunately, foster parents receive little adequate training to actually prepare them to successfully work with biological parents. Additionally, few foster parents receive assistance in dealing with their negative feelings towards the biological parents' abusive or neglected care of the child prior to placement (Douglas et al, 1986; McFadden & Ryan, 1991).

Lack of foster parent professionalization. Despite their daily monitoring of foster children, foster parents are often excluded when decisions are made regarding foster children's case permanency plans. Furthermore, ambiguity about the role of foster parents in caring for foster children prevents foster parents from more actively pursuing professional status (Douglas et al, 1986; Government Accounting Office, 1989; James Bell Associates, 1993; McFadden & Ryan, 1991).

Several barriers to foster family satisfaction were listed above. As discussed earlier in a review of Weyer's (1991) study, foster family satisfaction issues have a significant effect on foster family retention. For this reason, it is essential to understand the implications of these issues for the retention of quality foster homes.

Retention of Quality Foster Families

The practices of caseworkers appear to be clearly associated with the success of foster care placement, especially with new foster homes. Aldridge & Cautley (1975), Stone & Stone (1983), and Wulczyn (1991) cite the importance of the frequency of contact between caseworkers and foster parents, thorough preparation of new foster parents to receive placements, and the rapport the caseworker builds with foster families. Each of these factors influences the worker's ability to "match" foster care placements with families, resulting in a greater likelihood of success in the placement.

Foster parents who receive good training, adequate relief or respite time, and responsive supervision feel supported and are more satisfied in their caregiving role (Daly and Dowd 1992). Daniels & Brown (1973), Mietus & Fimmen (1987), and Tinney (1985) demonstrated that when

caseworkers have clear communication with foster parents, the foster parents are better able to understand their role in caring for foster children. Several authors suggested that "professionalizing" foster parents will help them to better clarify their role in the foster care system (Pasztor, 1985; Ryan, 1987; McFadden, 1988; Campbell & Downs, 1987; Hampson & Tavormina, 1980; Reistroffer, 1972). Professionalization includes granting foster parents decision-making authority, professional status, specialized training, utilizing foster parents as team leaders, constructing a career ladder, and providing salaries. Beyond affecting foster home retention, families receiving specialized training feel more equipped to care for difficult placements, as well as multiple placements simultaneously (Titterington, 1990). Further, Chamberlain, Moreland, and Reid (1992) contend that increased training and reimbursements for foster parents result not only in increased foster home retention, but also in significant benefits to the children in their care.

Theoretical Foundation

Following is a theoretical foundation emphasizing foster families' need for support, professionalization, and responsive supervision. This foundation draws from ecological theory, competence and social identity theories, and organizational theory.

Ecological theory. The ecological perspective focuses on the interactions between people and their environments (Pecora et al, 1992). This perspective primarily draws from the works of Kurt Lewin and Urie Bronfenbrenner.

Lewin (1935) proposed that human behavior is not a function of either the person or the environment, but rather a "function of the person and environment in continuous interaction."

Prior to his work, behavior modification techniques were geared solely toward changing individuals' behaviors. His research focused on the concept that changing a person's behaviors must be precipitated by a change in the person's environment.

Bronfenbrenner (1979) further extended Lewin's ideas, by developing an ecological model identifying individuals as members of interacting social systems. He contends that the actions of individuals are shaped not only by environmental settings, but also by the degree to which individuals are interconnected with those settings. For example, a change within an individual's family will affect an individual's behavior differently than a change within the individual's larger social environment.

The primary system influencing the growth and development of individuals is the family unit. Germain (1979) suggests that if practitioners are to effectively help families, they must first understand the variety of influences affecting individuals. By understanding those influences, practitioners will be able to determine whether those influences support or hinder the growth and development of human potential.

Foster families function as members of the larger social environment of the child welfare system, which includes social workers and support groups, as well as the foster children's counselor or therapist, guardian ad litem, teachers, biological family, and others interested in rejoining the foster child with his or her biological family. Foster families are also members of smaller social systems which are not a part of the child welfare system, and could include extended family members, school, employment, church, and the neighborhood.

Competence and social identity theories. Maluccio (1979) defines competence as the

"repertoire of skills, knowledge, and qualities that enables each person to interact effectively with the environment". While ecological theory is concerned with the interaction between a person and the environment, competence theory focuses on a person's **ability** to interact with the surrounding environment. Persons exhibit competence through their abilities to cope and adapt within their environments (Pecora et al, 1992). For example, a foster family displays competence when it integrates a foster child into the family and provides appropriate care, guidance, and nurturing to help the child overcome the past and prepare for a permanent home in the future.

Tajfel & Turner (1979) and Turner (1975) have done considerable research on the relationship between social identity and self-esteem. According to Tajfel, an individual's self-image is composed of a personal identity and many social identities. The number of social identities for one person is contingent upon the number of groups with which an individual identifies. According to this theory, an individual can elevate his or her self-esteem by enhancing either the personal identity or the social identity.

For example, the general public's perceptions of foster families is fairly negative (Fein, 1991; Government Accounting Office, 1989; Kasius, 1992). If individual members of a foster family attribute much of the family's social identity to providing foster care, they are likely to internalize the public's negative perceptions of foster families and lower their own self-images. Members of a foster family who feel that their self-esteem has been lowered by the family's involvement in foster care have three main actions they generally take to remedy this dissonance: 1) exit foster care; 2) raise their image of foster families compared with the larger society (e.g. during a discussion where several people present a conservative stance on an issue, an individual

with liberal convictions may appear to agree with the discussion, but would still prefer the stance of her political party); and 3) feel a sense of injustice and become socially active to change public perceptions of foster families.

Thus, according to social identity theory, the self-esteem of individual member of a foster family will be partially attributed to the family's work in caring for foster children. The self-esteem derived from providing foster care is related to the number of other groups or identities to which the family relates, as well as how the family perceives the larger society to treat foster families. Also, the level of involvement the family has in foster care affects the degree to which its role as a foster family influences its self-esteem. For example, the members of a family who have never had a foster care placement are less likely to attribute self-esteem to providing foster care than a foster family who has had multiple placements. Finally, family members who feel very competent in their ability to care for foster children will likely experience dissonance between their feelings of competence and their social identities, and then take action to dissipate this dissonance.

Organizational theory. The work of Yeheskel Hasenfeld focuses on the impact of organizational functioning on the delivery of services. Hasenfeld (1992) states that although human service organizations are developed with the intention of helping people in need, they often become rigid bureaucracies where services become routinized rather than individualized, in an effort to be more efficient in dealing with large numbers of people. Human service organizations develop routine procedures and practices; however, this "routinization" has unfortunate consequences for individuals accessing services.

Routinization often involves "labeling" an individual or family in order to access funding or services. Unfortunately, labeling individuals negatively influences their self-esteem and social worth, and they feel categorized as a member of that group. According to social identity theory discussed above, individuals associate their personal identities with the social identities of the groups for which they identify.

For example, the Iowa Department of Human Services provides foster families with a reimbursement that is intended to defray the costs of caring for foster children. In order for the families to receive the reimbursement, foster care caseworkers must submit a specific form to DHS for each foster child placed. Unfortunately, caseworkers, who often have many clients, may occasionally omit mailing the required forms to the central office of the Department of Human Services, with the end result being that the foster family would not receive the foster care reimbursement.

Another problem caused by the routinization and bureaucratization of human service organizations is that clients may feel a lack of individuality. Caseworkers with large caseloads often find it is easier and more efficient to channel all clients with a certain situation through the same channels. When caseworkers do not spend time individually assessing the needs of each client, the clients get the impression that the caseworker has very little concern or respect for them.

Hasenfeld's ideas have presented the inadequacies of existing human service organizations. In *Within Our Reach*, Lisbeth Schorr (1988) discusses the properties of successful programs serving children and families. Successful programs have flexible interventions which are

developed according to the needs of the client. The client is viewed in the context of the family and the larger social systems through which he or she interacts. Successful programs have staff who are perceived by their clients as caring, respectful and trustworthy, and provide services that are easy to understand and use. Finally, successful programs are able to reduce the complications clients experience due to "red tape" or procedural barriers.

The National Foster Care Resource Center, in Ypsilanti, Michigan (Ryan, 1993) has developed materials for agencies interested in evaluating their foster family recruitment and retention practices. According to this piece, successful foster care programs have the following characteristics:

- Foster families are adequately prepared for each foster care placement.

- Efforts to match foster families and foster children are in place.

- Agency staff are adequately prepared to nurture and guide new families through frequent contact and support.

- Experienced families are encouraged to provide help and support for new foster families.

- Foster parents are kept informed of what is happening with the child, are included in planning for the child, and have questions answered promptly.

- On-going training addresses the major concerns and needs of foster parents.

- Foster families are encouraged to continually self-assess their needs, abilities, and interests related to foster care.

- Foster families are provided respite care, child care assistance, and vacations.

■ Additional stipends or intensive rates are provided for foster families able and willing to provide additional services for children.

■ Child welfare agencies show recognition for foster families' efforts.

The essence of the theories discussed above aid in the understanding of the relationship between the barriers to foster family satisfaction and foster family retention. Ecological theory guides the understanding that foster families are a part of the larger foster care system. It also demonstrates that the degree to which the environment shapes the behaviors of a foster family depends on the amount of involvement that the family has with that system.

Inherent in social identity and competence theories, is that the degree to which a foster family attributes its social identity to foster care is contingent upon the number of other social identities that the family has internalized. The family's foster care identity is also shaped by other people's perceptions of how adequately they provide care for foster children. When foster families experience dissonance between their feelings of competence and their social identities, it is likely that they will discontinue providing foster care.

Organizational theory further guides understanding about the impact of agency practices and procedures on the feelings of competence and social identity that foster families experience. Because foster families are part of the larger foster care system, their ability to provide foster care is affected by the practices and procedures of child welfare agencies.

METHOD FOR CONDUCTING THE STUDY

Sample

This study was carried out through the Iowa Foster Family Recruitment and Retention Project in cooperation with the Iowa Foster and Adoptive Parents Association. The sample (N=1,922) in this study included the entire population of foster families known to the Iowa Department of Human Services in August 1993. All foster families had current licenses from DHS to provide foster care at the time of the study.

Development of the Instrument

The data collection instrument for this study was the Foster Family Satisfaction Survey, a self-administered survey (see Appendix B). This survey was developed by the author after reviewing the foster care literature, foster family satisfaction surveys conducted by other states, and views of Iowa foster families. In addition, the Executive Committee for the Foster Family Recruitment & Retention Project, composed of Department of Human Services (DHS), Iowa Foster & Adoptive Parents Association (IFAPA) and private agency representatives, participated in the development of the instrument, the design, and execution of the study.

Pilot Study

After development, the survey was piloted with a random sample of 34 foster families, with no follow-up reminders. Completed surveys were returned by 15 of the 34 families (44%). Telephone interviews were conducted with 10 of the families (some who completed surveys and some who did not) one week after the survey return date. The purpose of the telephone calls was to discover foster parent perceptions regarding each of the following: a) length of the instrument;

b) the usefulness of the instrument; c) any questions that were difficult to understand, answer, or inappropriate; d) whether or not the survey instrument and accompanying letter conveyed confidentiality; and e) what issues were not included, but should be added to the final copy of the survey.

At the time the survey was being piloted, it was also reviewed by a number of groups representative of the foster care system: staff of the Iowa Foster Family Recruitment & Retention Project, the Project's Executive Committee and Governance Board, the Iowa Foster Family Advisory Board, Iowa Foster & Adoptive Parents Association (IFAPA), Department of Human Services (DHS), and private foster care agencies. Following input from all of these sources, the instrument was revised.

Final Instrument

The final survey instrument included 189 close-ended response items, and five open-ended response items. The final instrument was divided into six sections. Items using values on a four-point likert scale are included in the description of the instrument below.

The first section, titled "Foster Care System," contains 22 items on seven close-ended questions, regarding the helpfulness of the foster care system and the amount of contact that foster care caseworkers and agencies have with foster families. The variables included in this section are the following: helpfulness of different components of the foster care system (1 = not at all helpful, 4 = very helpful), frequency of contact initiated by DHS and private agency caseworkers, speed at which phone calls are returned to foster families by DHS and private agency caseworkers, availability of help from DHS and private agencies when foster families have

an emergency, and the amount of support and/or information provided by DHS and private agencies when foster parents are charged with abuse.

The second section, titled, "The Foster Care Placement," contains 31 close-ended questions and one open-ended question, regarding the effect that foster care placements have on foster families. The variables included in this section are the following: tracking information regarding the most recent foster care placement no longer in the home, information provided upon placement regarding the foster child, amount of stress and/or conflict the foster family has experienced (1= none), availability of respite care, and difficulties associated with getting information about the foster child (1 = never).

The third section includes seven close-ended questions regarding training. The items in this section include the following: training costs, travel to attend training, convenience of training, and usefulness of training. Six of the seven items are scored on a four point likert scale (1 = strongly disagree).

The fourth section, titled "Foster Parenting," has 65 questions regarding the effect that providing foster care has on the foster family. One open-ended question is also included in this section. Three close-ended questions in this section account for most of the items. Those questions are the following: "How strongly do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements", "How strongly do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements about being a foster family?" (1 = strongly disagree), and "How frustrating are each of the following aspects of being a foster family?" (1 = very frustrating).

Issues included in the fourth section were the following: matching foster children with

foster families, system communication, training, reimbursements, rules and regulations, information provided about foster children, clarity of expectations for foster families, motives to provide foster care, effects of fostering on the foster family, system bureaucracy, allegations of abuse to foster families, and availability of caseworkers. Issues occurred more than once in the instrument in order to strengthen the internal reliability of the instrument.

The fifth section, titled "Iowa Foster & Adoptive Parents Association", included 22 close-ended questions, regarding the helpfulness of the state-level foster parent organization. This section also included one open-ended question. Variables included in this section are the following: length of time as IFAPA member, reasons for non-membership, services IFAPA could provide that would be more helpful, and information families would like to see in the IFAPA newsletter.

The sixth section, titled "Background Information," included 40 close-ended questions. Variables included in this section are the following: length of time licensed, number of children licensed for, type of placements accepted, number of biological and adopted children, number of foster children currently in care, total number of foster children cared for, number of parents, age of parents, parents' employment status and site, parents' occupation, educational level of parents, family income, length of time in current place of residence, family's racial/ethnic background, and source of personal support for parents.

Procedure for Gathering Data

The instrument was mailed to 1,922 foster families in October 1993. The initial mailing included the survey instrument, a cover letter describing the project, and a return envelope. The

cover letter and survey instrument are in Appendices A and B. Each foster family was assigned a five digit code which included a two digit number corresponding to the residential county and a three digit number for tracking purposes. Return envelopes were pre-coded; when the surveys were returned to the office, the codes were transferred from the envelope to the instrument. Respondents who returned instruments in unmarked envelopes remained unknown to the researcher, and a new case number was assigned to each of those instruments. Because those surveys were not returned in pre-coded envelopes, the researcher is unable to make any inferences from this group based on county characteristics.

One week after the surveys were mailed, the foster families received a reminder postcard from the IFAPA. Additionally, the IFAPA, DHS regional foster family recruiters, the Coalition, and private agency foster family recruiters each included reminders in their October 1993 newsletters.

Development of the Foster Family Satisfaction Scales

The first data analysis step was to conduct a factor analysis of all 88 likert-scaled items included in the instrument, to group the items into sub-scales of foster family satisfaction. Statistical Applications Systems (SAS) programming was used to conduct the factor analysis. The purpose of a factor analysis procedure is to measure an abstract psychological concept by condensing several instrument items into a few specific, descriptive, manageable dimensions of the underlying concept to be used in further data analysis (Kim & Mueller, 1978). The factor analysis lends factorial validity to this study, grouping together variables in an "expected" manner through respondents' ratings on survey items. Varimax rotation was used in the factorial analysis

because this method forces clear distinctions between factors to surface. The criteria used to develop the final factorial model included a scree plot, factor loadings, variance, internal reliability, and interpretability.

Scree plot. Initially, 88 items were used in the factor analysis procedure and a scree plot indicated that between eight and twelve factors should be used in further analyses. In the final factorial model, the scree plot began to level off at the tenth eigenvalue, so factor analyses using eight, nine, ten, eleven and twelve factors were conducted. The factor analysis which separated the initial items into twelve factors sorted the items into the most logical, literature-supported groupings, and thus twelve satisfaction sub-scales were constructed.

Factor loadings. The factor analysis procedure produces a factor loading for each item on each of the factors. Each factor loading is a correlation between the item and the factor, identifying the strength of each item's relation to the underlying concept being represented for that factor. Factor loadings of .30, .40 or .50 are generally accepted lower bounds for factor loadings in social science research (Craft, 1990); thus loadings lower than .30 on all of the factors were removed from the factorial model. For those items with more than one loading of .30 or higher, the highest loading was used. Refer to Table 1 for each item's factor loading for each sub-scale.

Variance. Each factor explains part of the variation in the responses. Table 2 displays the percent of variance explained by each of the twelve factors. Added together, this factorial model explains 60% of the variance among response items.

Internal reliability. Cronbach's alpha is a moderately conservative test of internal reliability, and is conducted when only one set of data can be obtained from a population. An

Table 1   Factor Analysis of Foster Family Satisfaction Scales

(Factor Loadings for Rotated Solution)

Sub-scales	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Items Assigned to Factors												
1a. Helpfulness of juvenile court system	.04	.02	.00	.29	.17	.23	**.80**	.09	.10	-.04	.26	-.11
1b. Helpfulness of juvenile probation/juvenile court officers	.04	-.12	.25	.29	.12	.18	**.67**	-.13	.07	.05	.31	-.06
1c. Helpfulness of children's guardian ad litem	.05	-.24	.13	.12	.17	.31	**.49**	.07	.05	.43	.00	.04
1d. Helpfulness of DHS caseworkers	-.10	.02	-.07	**.63**	.11	.16	.25	-.08	.14	-.46	-.00	.24
1e. Helpfulness of private agency caseworkers	-.20	**.70**	.30	-.09	-.09	-.14	-.24	.00	-.16	-.12	-.17	.19
1f. Helpfulness of private agency	-.19	**.73**	.20	-.04	-.13	-.23	-.11	.29	.02	-.02	-.12	.04
1g. Helpfulness of DHS agency	.04	-.12	-.23	**.58**	.22	.08	.55	.14	-.05	-.15	.02	.21
1h. Helpfulness of services provided to foster children	.18	.09	-.20	**.53**	-.01	.14	-.07	.06	-.43	-.04	-.42	-.33
1i. Helpfulness of services provided to foster family	**.44**	.25	.01	.34	-.02	.27	.18	.24	-.14	-.01	-.34	-.07
1j. Helpfulness of foster parent support group	**.58**	.35	-.16	.16	-.21	-.04	.18	-.05	-.14	.07	-.26	-.01
1k. Helpfulness of state foster parent assoc.	.32	-.11	-.05	-.09	-.19	.01	**.65**	-.00	.01	-.03	-.06	-.01
17a. Stress or conflict between spouses	.07	.25	.08	.14	**.77**	-.05	-.02	.00	-.03	-.08	.17	-.18
17c. Stress or conflict with financial expenses	.21	-.05	.28	.19	**.34**	.27	-.18	.07	-.54	-.01	.06	.12
17d. Stress or conflict with extended family	.36	.00	.02	.34	**.37**	-.11	.24	-.05	-.32	-.06	-.39	-.10
17e. Stress or conflict with parents' employment	.05	-.35	-.13	.12	**.64**	-.17	.03	-.11	-.29	-.02	-.05	.21
17f. Stress or conflict with family's social life	-.48	-.30	.24	-.15	**.57**	.03	-.05	.14	-.02	-.15	-.25	.12
17g. Stress or conflict with family's community involvement	-.04	-.41	.22	.01	**.56**	.18	.20	.06	.02	-.14	-.14	-.08

Significant factor loadings are denoted by boldfaced type.

Table 1   Continued

Sub-scales	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Items Assigned to Factors												
23. Ease of receiving information about:												
a. Anticipated length of placement	-.24	.18	.69	.10	.15	-.10	-.04	-.23	-.22	.28	.13	.07
b. Reason for placement	.05	.11	.76	.03	-.00	.22	-.04	.29	-.04	-.01	-.08	.02
c. Case history/child's past behavior	.20	.24	.72	.02	-.08	-.33	-.00	.04	-.14	-.02	.11	.14
d. Case permanency/reunification plan	.10	-.00	.72	-.33	-.03	-.11	.06	.03	.04	.22	-.14	.25
e. Court order reports	.09	.19	.62	-.04	.18	-.01	.14	-.26	.17	-.01	-.19	-.13
f. Biological family background	-.04	.11	.59	.17	.49	-.19	.13	-.19	.23	.05	-.13	.29
g. Medical needs/concerns; Title XIX	-.09	.03	.82	-.03	-.07	.11	-.03	.08	-.05	.03	.11	-.10
28a. Foster parent trainings are affordable	.43	-.19	-.25	-.07	.02	-.01	-.01	-.08	-.01	.24	-.10	.55
28b. Trainings are held within 30 miles of home	.33	-.15	-.21	.43	-.27	.11	-.25	.04	-.01	-.08	-.01	.44
28c. We like the day of the week when trainings are held	.62	-.19	-.08	.43	-.18	-.07	-.15	-.06	-.32	.19	.09	.04
28d. We like the time of day when trainings are held	.71	-.21	-.12	.40	-.06	-.15	-.11	-.16	-.22	.12	.13	-.06
28e. Trainings cover topics that are helpful to fostering	.60	-.06	.21	.02	.06	.22	.06	.37	-.10	-.06	.18	.20
28f. We learn a lot at foster parent trainings	.76	.17	.02	-.08	-.07	.03	.20	.18	.06	.03	.12	.24
29a. The initial licensing process gave us an adequate understanding of our role as a foster family	.24	-.26	.05	-.05	.15	.13	.33	.39	.02	.48	.01	-.11
29b. Our family's privacy was respected during the initial licensing process	.53	.16	.08	.25	.18	.16	.38	.07	-.30	.25	-.15	-.01
29c. Overall, we were very satisfied with the initial licensing process	.53	-.08	-.00	.02	.16	.12	.31	.16	-.38	.31	-.14	-.21

Table 1   Continued

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Sub-sclaes	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Items Assigned to Factors												
29d. Efforts are made to match foster children's needs with our family's abilities and interests	.07	.09	.07	.03	.03	-.16	-.09	.07	-.16	**.83**	.01	.06
29e. When we were first being recruited, foster parenting was expressed as a temporary involvement with the children	-.13	-.07	-.03	.23	-.36	.24	-.02	-.16	**.41**	.40	.13	-.05
29f. Number of contacts the DHS caseworker has with the foster children is adequate	.04	.03	.20	**.86**	.07	-.00	.07	.18	.04	.06	-.01	-.06
29g. Number of contacts the DHS caseworker has with foster parents is adequate	.19	.06	-.09	**.87**	.06	.04	.10	-.08	.13	.16	.01	-.03
29h. Number of contacts private agency caseworker has with foster children is adequate	.01	**.86**	.12	.03	-.12	.07	-.05	.07	-.24	.09	.03	-.01
29i. Number of contacts private agency caseworker has with foster parents is adequate	-.11	**.85**	.12	.02	-.10	-.04	-.00	-.05	.03	.05	-.03	-.12
29j. Foster parents are familiar with DHS rules and regulations regarding expectations of foster families	-.04	.05	-.20	.13	.18	**.67**	.22	-.03	.18	.12	.23	.15
29k. DHS rules and regulations regarding expectations of foster families are clear and easy to understand	-.03	-.13	-.00	.05	-.07	**.77**	.03	.07	.00	.02	.10	.06
29l. Foster parents are familiar with private agency rules and regulations regarding expectations of foster families	.01	.37	.23	.05	-.10	.18	.04	-.15	.36	**.61**	.12	.25
29m. Private agency rules and regulations regarding expectations of foster families are clear and easy to understand	.03	.36	.33	-.00	-.11	.37	-.21	.04	.18	**.63**	.17	.14

Table 1   Continued

Sub-scales	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Items Assigned to Factors												
29n. Foster parents receive adequate information about the foster children in a timely manner	.29	**.42**	.37	.02	.10	.24	.08	.29	.03	.40	.13	.20
29o. Foster care reimbursements are received in a timely manner	.03	.19	.05	.10	-.06	.16	-.04	.01	-.09	.02	-.09	**.81**
29p. Foster care reimbursement rates are adequate	**.36**	-.21	-.05	.08	.26	.32	-.15	.36	-.22	-.13	.01	.06
29q. Ongoing training helps foster parents care for foster children	**.81**	.03	.18	.04	-.11	.02	.26	.24	.02	.01	-.03	.07
29r. Training helps foster parents work with birth parents for children with whom reunification is being planned	.49	-.04	.15	.20	.06	.30	.01	.10	**.59**	.14	-.08	.09
29s. Reasons why the children are in foster care are explained to foster parents at the time of placement	**.39**	.30	.24	-.01	.24	.07	.14	-.16	.07	.22	-.39	.36
29t. Foster parents' views are considered when decisions about the child's treatment plan are being made	.20	**.48**	.05	.33	.21	.05	.12	.08	.01	.02	-.13	.14
29u. Foster parents generally receive adequate notice of foster children's appointments, such as court and family visits	**.43**	.42	.03	.21	.32	.09	-.18	.11	.15	.32	-.17	.14
29v. Foster parents are generally involved in activities designed to prepare for a child's reunification with birth parents	.07	.22	.16	**.54**	.50	.20	-.05	.06	.29	.23	-.33	.10
30a. Foster children need foster parents' help	.12	-.26	-.03	**.36**	-.22	-.14	.13	-.15	-.36	.07	-.53	.28
30b. Foster parents are a help to the parents of foster children	.05	.21	-.15	.23	-.21	-.24	.16	.09	.27	**.45**	-.00	.03

Table 1   Continued

Sub-scales	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Items Assigned to Factors												
30c. Being a foster family has allowed one parent to work in the home rather than outside the home	.02	.08	-.09	.32	.17	.13	-.05	.17	**.55**	-.02	-.14	-.52
30e. Foster parents feel that their work is valued and appreciated	.32	.10	-.12	**.43**	.20	.12	-.03	.09	.11	.40	-.41	.16
30f. Foster families feel satisfaction from helping in the adoption process	-.05	-.14	-.05	.10	-.11	**.57**	-.27	.46	-.03	-.11	.06	.26
30g. Foster families feel satisfaction from helping children reunite with their parents	-.10	-.09	-.10	.05	.05	.03	.06	.01	**.83**	.02	.13	-.11
30h. Fostering is a church/religious responsibility	-.02	.04	-.27	-.01	-.03	.19	.25	.20	-.01	.22	.03	.03
30i. Fostering is a community responsibility	.21	-.22	.08	.02	.04	.30	.20	.03	.09	.02	**.71**	-.10
30j. Monthly foster care stipends provide additional income	-.15	-.04	-.10	-.07	.14	.26	-.39	.12	.33	**.36**	-.25	-.24
30k. Training helps foster parents with their own children	.42	-.14	**.43**	.24	.01	-.04	.21	.38	.35	.05	.04	.04
30l. Foster parents enjoy being part of a professional team	.29	-.26	.18	.17	-.22	-.01	.33	-.23	**.47**	-.03	.34	.03
30m. DHS expresses foster parent's work as valuable and important	.21	-.22	-.35	.41	.16	**.54**	.17	-.06	.07	-.07	.02	-.03
30r. Foster families enjoy meeting and knowing other foster families	**.77**	-.15	-.05	-.09	.19	-.05	.01	-.07	.25	-.13	-.04	-.01
31a. Foster families don't have enough time to spend with the families' original members	-.27	-.01	-.41	.11	**.62**	-.05	.04	.20	.19	.10	.17	.15
31b. Foster families have too many work or school demands on their time	-.17	.09	-.12	.25	.24	-.55	-.11	**.45**	.14	.08	-.13	-.02

Table 1   **Continued**

Sub-scales	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Items Assigned to Factors												
31c. Foster parenting is too stressful	.02	-.06	-.10	.09	**.67**	.35	.12	.23	-.02	.15	-.01	-.16
31d. Payments for foster care do not adequately cover the costs of care	**.34**	-.35	-.46	.02	.33	.14	-.12	.05	.06	.18	.22	.18
31e. Foster parents' children are not accepting of the foster children	-.01	.20	-.04	-.11	-.09	-.04	-.03	**.68**	.08	.12	.14	-.10
31f. There are too many problems with liability expenses	.18	-.00	.11	.22	-.02	.01	.23	**.75**	-.09	-.04	.08	-.00
31g. There it too much "red tape" and paperwork	.18	.27	-.23	-.07	.20	-.01	**.49**	.39	.09	.03	-.10	.21
31h. Dealing with DHS' procedures	.13	.32	-.11	.32	.18	**.51**	.18	.44	.03	-.13	.13	.05
31i. Dealing with the private agency's procedures	.31	**.67**	.05	.11	.05	-.17	.23	.24	.08	.17	.18	.19
31j. Dealing with the court system	-.06	.05	.24	.39	.02	**.48**	.20	.29	.04	.22	.06	-.30
31k. Payments are not received in a timely manner	.35	.38	.20	.09	.11	.06	.08	.13	-.11	.28	.16	**.42**
31l. Allegations of abuse to foster children	.12	-.08	.18	-.05	.19	**.44**	.11	**.51**	-.06	.17	-.21	.43
31m. DHS workers are not available when foster parents need them	-.04	.29	-.12	**.51**	.10	.09	-.53	.03	-.10	.23	.00	.04
31n. Private agency workers are not available when foster parents need them	-.07	**.83**	.00	-.03	.17	-.03	-.27	-.16	.13	.07	-.08	-.10
31o. Foster children's behavioral problems are too great	.11	.06	-.00	.01	.30	.21	-.12	**.75**	.01	.10	-.05	-.06
31p. Discipline options are too restricting	.22	.11	.21	-.13	.28	**.46**	.25	.23	.14	.03	-.20	-.10

Table 2   Percent of Variance Explained by Each of the Factors

Factor	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Variance Explained	7.3%	6.9%	6.0%	5.9%	5.1%	4.9%	4.7%	4.2%	4.2%	4.1%	3.5%	3.5%

alpha score of 1 identifies a perfectly reliable instrument, thus alpha scores of .9, .8, and .7 are considered to indicate good reliability, although items with low alpha scores can still produce highly interpretable scales (Cronbach, 1951). Refer to Table 3 for the internal reliability scores for the twelve sub-scales.

Table 3   Standardized Internal Reliability Scores Using Cronbach's Alpha

Sub-scale	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Cronbach's alpha	.79	.83	.81	.81	.79	.64	.64	.61	.52	.66	.76	.54

Interpretability. Initially, all 88 variables were computed in five factor analyses, using between eight and twelve factors, however, the manner in which the items grouped on the factors did not make logical sense. Several factor analyses were then run, with varying numbers of factors and varying numbers of items until the best factorial model, which is both statistically significant and logically sound, emerged.

The final factorial model included 81 items loading on twelve factors. Seven of the

original items were found not to load highly anywhere and were excluded from final analysis. These items were the following: experiencing conflict or stress between foster parents and their own children, rating self as a "good" foster family, work expressed as valuable or important by the private agency, foster family benefits from interactions with the foster children, usefulness of NOVA training, usefulness of private agency training, and reimbursement of daycare/childcare expenses.

Independent Variables

The independent variables in this study were foster family demographic characteristics and the practices of DHS caseworkers. Parental characteristics, family characteristics, and geographic characteristics were the demographic information compared on each dimension of foster family satisfaction.

Parental characteristics included educational attainment, employment status, and employment site. Educational attainment was divided into the following levels: completed grade school, completed high school, completed college, and completed graduate degree. Employment status was divided into four levels for women (non-employed, full-time employed, part-time employed, and unemployed), and two levels for men (full-time employed, and less than full-time employed). Non-employed was used to describe the employment status of parents who are choosing to not be employed. Unemployed was used to describe the employment status of parents who were looking for employment. Site of employment was divided into two levels: in-home and out-of-home.

Family characteristics included the following: family structure (one-parent or two-parent),

presence or absence of biological and/or adopted children, family income, and types of personal

support available to the foster family. Family income was divided into the following six levels:

less than $20,000, $20,000 -- 29,999, $30,000 -- 39,999, $40,000 -- 49,999, $50,000 -- 59,999,

and over $60,000. The family's social support system was divided into the following four levels:

no one; extended family, friends, and neighbors; other foster parents and support groups; and

DHS and/or private agency caseworkers. A simple linear regression was used to analyze the

effect of length of time licensed as a foster family on foster family satisfaction. Length of time

licensed was determined by foster family responses on the following question: "How many years

have you been/were licensed as a foster family?".

Information from Iowa Kids Count (1993) was used to define the geographic

characteristics, which consisted of the size of the counties' largest population centers (rural,

urban, or metropolitan counties) and foster care placement rate. Counties were designated as

metropolitan, urban, or rural, based on the following criteria: counties with no population center

of 5,000 inhabitants or more were designated as rural counties, counties with the largest

population center being from 5,000 to 49,999 inhabitants were designated as small urban

counties, and counties with the largest population center of 50,000 or more inhabitants were

designated as metropolitan counties. The average rate (ratio of total foster care placements to

total child population) of foster care placement per county in Iowa was 5.0 (range = 0 -12.3).

Inter-quartile ranges were used to delineate between counties with low (0-3), medium (3.1-5.4),

and high (5.5-12.3) rates of placement.

The practices of DHS workers was defined for this study as including the following:

frequency with which DHS caseworkers initiated telephone calls and visits with foster families, frequency with which DHS caseworkers returned telephone calls initiated by foster families, response in the event of emergencies, and amount of support and information provided to foster families accused of abuse. Frequency of visits was categorized as follows: 2-3 times weekly, weekly, 1-2 times monthly, every 2-3 months, every 4-5 months, and other. Frequency of phone calls by caseworkers was categorized as follows: daily, weekly, 1-2 times monthly, every 3-4 months, every 5-6 months, and other. Quickness of having phone calls returned was defined as follows: same day or next day, same week, more than one week, sometimes not at all, and other. Availability in the event of an emergency was defined as follows: the child's caseworker is on-call, available 24 hours a day, we can try to call the caseworker at home when not at the office, when the child's caseworker is not available, there is other agency staff on-call, available 24 hours a day, agency staff is available days, evenings and weekends, but not 24 hours a day, agency staff is available days, evenings and weekends, but not 24 hours a day, agency staff is available week days only, no one from the agency is available when I have an emergency, and other. Agency provision of support and/or information to foster parents charged with abuse were categorized as follows: "a lot, some, little, none, and don't know".

Dependent Variables

Foster family satisfaction was the dependent variable for this study. Twelve foster family satisfaction sub-scales emerged from the factorial model. Each of the factors which emerged from the factor analysis specifically described a dimension of foster family satisfaction. Factor loadings were then used to develop each of the sub-scales, by "weighting" each item based on its

relation to the rest of the items in the sub-scale. Items were "weighted" to reflect their relationship to the underlying dimension of foster family satisfaction.

Foster Family Satisfaction Scales

The twelve foster family satisfaction sub-scales that were developed from the twelve factors are listed below. Appendix C identifies the survey items included in each sub-scale.

Sub-scale 1: Satisfaction with receiving professional training and support.

Sub-scale 2: Satisfaction with private foster care agencies and private agency caseworkers.

Sub-scale 3: Satisfaction with receiving specific types of information about the foster children.

Sub-scale 4: Satisfaction with the practice of DHS caseworkers.

Sub-scale 5: Satisfaction with the effect that fostering has had on the internal family interactions between original family members.

Sub-scale 6: Satisfaction with rules and regulations within the foster care system, particularly concerning DHS.

Sub-scale 7: Satisfaction with dealing with bureaucratic systems, other than DHS, within the foster care system, especially the juvenile court system and the state foster parent association.

Sub-scale 8: Satisfaction with the responsibilities related to having foster children placed in the home.

Sub-scale 9: Satisfaction with professional communication from the foster care system.

Sub-scale 10: Satisfaction with understanding the foster parent role.

Sub-scale 11: Satisfaction with external social rewards for fostering.

Sub-scale 12: Satisfaction with foster care reimbursements.

General Linear Models Procedure

The General Linear Models (GLM) procedure in SAS compared the mean scores of different groups on each of the twelve foster family satisfaction sub-scales to test each of the hypotheses. The GLM procedure tests the impact of each level of the independent variables upon the dependent variables.

Hypotheses

H1: Parental characteristics significantly affect foster family satisfaction.

a. Foster families with more highly educated mothers are more satisfied with providing foster care than foster families with lesser educated mothers.

b. Foster families with more highly educated fathers are more satisfied with providing foster care than foster families with lesser educated fathers.

c. Foster families with mothers who work in the home are more satisfied with providing foster care than foster families with mothers who work outside the home.

d. Foster families with fathers who work outside the home are more satisfied with providing foster care than foster families with fathers who work in the home.

e. Foster families with mothers who are non-employed or part-time employed are more satisfied with providing foster care than foster families with mothers who are unemployed or full-time employed.

f. Foster families with fathers who are non-employed or part-time employed are more satisfied with providing foster care than foster families with fathers who are unemployed

or full-time employed.

H2: Family characteristics significantly affect foster family satisfaction.

    a. Two-parent foster families are more satisfied with providing foster care than single parent foster families.

    b. Foster families with higher incomes are more satisfied with providing foster care than foster families with lower incomes.

    c. Foster families with no biological and/or adopted children are more satisfied with providing foster care than foster families with biological and/or adopted children.

    d. Foster families who rely on extended family, friends, or neighbors for personal support are more satisfied with providing foster care than foster families who rely on other foster families, DHS or private agency caseworkers, or have no one on whom to rely.

    e. Foster families who have been licensed for a longer period of time are more satisfied than foster families licensed for a shorter period of time.

H3: Geographic characteristics of the county where foster families live significantly affect foster family satisfaction.

    a. Foster families in urban counties are more satisfied with providing foster care than foster families in rural or metropolitan counties.

    b. Foster families living in counties with high or low foster care placement rates are less satisfied with providing foster care than foster families with medium foster care placement rates.

H4: The practice of DHS caseworkers significantly affects foster family satisfaction.

a. Foster families who have more frequent contact initiated by the DHS caseworker are more satisfied with providing foster care than foster families who have less frequent contact initiated by the DHS caseworker.

b. Foster families who have telephone calls returned quickly are more satisfied with providing foster care than foster families who do not have telephone calls returned quickly.

c. Foster families who perceive the DHS agency to be accessible in the event of an emergency are more satisfied with providing foster care than foster families who perceive the DHS agency to be less accessible in the event of an emergency.

d. Foster families who perceive DHS to be very supportive and informative when foster parents are charged with abuse are more satisfied with providing foster care than foster families who do not perceive DHS to be very supportive or informative for foster parents charged with abuse.

RESULTS

Demographic Composition of Respondents

Over half (53%) of Iowa foster families participated in the study, resulting in 1,013 usable surveys. Although a random sample was not drawn for this study, survey response rate within each Iowa county was about 50%.

Table 4 displays the family characteristics of survey respondents. The majority of respondents were two-parent families. Eighty-three percent of the families had biological and/or adopted children. The average number of biological children in a family was 2.2 (sd = 1.9; range = 0-12); the average number of adopted children was .5 (sd = 1.0; range = 0-11). The high percent (88.8%) of Caucasian foster families reflected the general population of Iowa. Most of the survey respondents had family incomes less than $50,000 per year, and 40% had incomes less than $30,000 per year. Over half (73.6%) of the foster families lived in their current place of residence for more than seven years.

Table 5 displays the parental characteristics of respondents. The average age for foster mothers was 42.3 (sd = 9.3; range = 22-78) and for foster fathers was 43.9 (sd = 9.5; range = 23-74). Foster mothers and foster fathers are equally educated. Foster fathers are more likely than foster mothers to be employed full-time, and to work outside the home. Non-employed foster parents are those designated as choosing to not work (e.g. retired, student, homemaker or house husband). Unemployed foster parents are those who are looking for employment.

Table 6 provides a picture of the duration of family foster care service of respondents. Overall, 59% of the family foster homes had a foster care placement at the time of the study.

Table 4   Frequency and Percentage Distribution of Family Characteristics of Iowa
               Foster Families [1]

Family Characteristics (N = 1,013)	Frequency	Percentage
Two-parent	847	83.6%
Single-parent	154	15.2%
Single Mothers	131	12.9%
Single Fathers	23	2.3%
Presence of Birth and/or Adopted Children	840	82.9%
Race: Caucasian/White	900	88.8%
Inter-racial	61	6.0%
African American	36	3.6%
Native American	4	0.4%
Hispanic American	3	0.3%
Asian American	1	0.1%
Family Income: Less than $20,000	182	18.0%
$20,000 - 29,999	217	21.4%
$30,000 - 39,999	279	27.5%
$40,000 - 49,999	131	12.9%
$50,000 - 59,999	80	7.9%
Over $60,000	93	9.2%
Length of Time at Current		
Residence: Less than 1 year	69	6.8%
1 - 3 years	198	19.5%
4 - 6 years	222	21.9%
7 - 10 years	138	13.6%
More than 10 years	386	38.1%

[1] *Percentages <100 due to missing data*

Table 5   Frequency and Percentage Distribution of the Parental Characteristics of Iowa Foster Families [1]

Parental Characteristics	Foster Mothers (N = 990)		Foster Fathers (N = 872)	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Highest Level of Education Completed:				
Grade School	15	1.5%	24	2.8%
High School	363	36.7%	330	37.8%
College (Bachelor's degree)	468	47.3%	397	45.5%
Graduate School	144	14.5%	121	13.9%
Employment Status				
Non-employed	362	36.6%	63	7.2%
Full time	376	38.0%	745	85.4%
Part-time	189	19.1%	18	2.1%
Unemployed	14	1.4%	2	0.002%
Place of Employment				
In-home	421	42.5%	78	8.9%
Out-of-home	527	53.2%	762	87.4%
Age	$\bar{x}$ = 42.3	(9.3)	$\bar{x}$ = 43.9	(9.5)

[1] *Percentages <100 due to missing data*

The average length of time the families have been licensed was 6.1 years (sd = 6.2; range = 2 months - 41 years). The average total number of foster children cared for by a foster family during their foster family career was 16.1 (sd = 33.6; range = 0 - 400).

Table 7 shows the distribution of foster families according to characteristics of the counties in which they reside. Most survey respondents lived in counties designated as metropolitan (39.5%) or small urban (40.0%). Half of survey respondents live in counties with

Table 6   Frequency and Percentage Distribution of Family Foster Care Service [1]

Foster Care Service (N = 1,013)	Frequency	Percentage
Number of Homes In Use (October 1993)	602	59.4%
Number of Families Who Have Never Had a Foster Placement	16	1.6%
Type of Placements Families Accept:		
Children birth to 5 years	594	58.6%
Children 6 to 12 years	553	54.6%
Children 12 to 18 years	470	46.4%
Children with disabilities	262	25.9%
Trans-racial placements	353	34.8%
Children with behavioral concerns	463	45.7%
Children with special medical concerns	276	27.2%
Respite care placements	380	37.5%
Other	132	13.0%
Number of years as a Foster Family	$\bar{x} = 6.1$	(6.2)
Number of Foster Children Served	$\bar{x} = 16.1$	(33.6)

[1] *Percentages <100 due to missing data*

medium rates of foster care placement.

Foster Family Satisfaction

As described in the Methods section, a General Linear Model (GLM) was used for most data analysis. Table 8 displays the F-values for each of the Foster Family Satisfaction Sub-scales. For this sample, the independent variables did not significantly affect foster family satisfaction on the following sub-scales: sub-scale 3: receiving information about the foster care placements, sub-scale 6: dealing with the rules and regulations within the foster care system, sub-scale 8, the

Table 7   Frequency and Percentage Distribution of the County Characteristics of
              Survey Respondents [1]

County Characteristics	Frequency	Percent
Population [2]		
Metropolitan	400	39.5%
Small urban	405	40.0%
Rural	178	17.8%
County Rates of Foster Care Placement [3]		
Low	136	13.4%
Medium	506	50.0%
High	343	33.9%

[1] *Percentages <100 due to missing data*

[2] Counties without a population center of 5,000 inhabitants or more were designated as rural counties; counties with the largest population center being from 5,000 to 49,999 inhabitants were designated as small urban counties; and counties with the largest population center of 50,000 or more inhabitants were designated as metropolitan counties.

[3] Rate of foster care placement is the ratio of the county's total foster care placements to the total child population in that county.

Table 8   General Linear Model of the Foster Family Satisfaction Sub-scales

Satisfaction Sub-scales	df	Mean Square	F	Significance Level
1: Training and support	45	.14	2.48	.0001
2: Private agencies and caseworkers	43	.20	1.85	.01
3: Receiving information	45	.20	1.04	.42
4: The practice of DHS caseworkers	45	.31	3.22	.0001
5: Effect of fostering on family's interactions	44	.16	1.59	.02
6: Rules and regulations	44	.12	1.33	.14
7: Dealing with bureaucratic systems	42	.23	1.92	.01
8: Having foster care placements	45	.12	1.27	.14
9: Professional Communication	44	.20	2.32	.0001
10: Understanding foster parent role	44	.14	1.58	.03
11: External social rewards	45	.66	1.68	.01
12: Reimbursements	45	.14	1.19	.21

responsibilities involved with having a foster care placement, and sub-scale 12: understanding

the foster parent role. Other foster family satisfaction variables were affected by the independent

variables, and are further explained under each of the hypotheses.

Parental Characteristics

Table 9 displays the F-values of the Foster Family Satisfaction Sub-scales for parental

characteristics.

Foster mother's education: The research hypothesis tested was that foster families with

more highly educated mothers are more satisfied with providing foster care than foster families

with lesser educated mothers. The null hypothesis, mother's educational level does not affect

foster family satisfaction, was not rejected for sub-scale 1: training and support (F = 2.35; df =

Table 9   **F-values of the Foster Family Satisfaction Sub-scales for Parental Characteristics**

Satisfaction Sub-scales	Foster Mothers			Foster Fathers		
	Educ. Level [1]	Job Site [2]	Job Status [1]	Educ. Level [1]	Job Site [2]	Job Status [2]
1: Training and support	2.35*	1.14	4.67*	.76	8.16**	8.68**
2: Private agencies and caseworkers	2.61*	.40	6.41**	1.97	.15	.00
4: The practice of DHS caseworkers	2.54*	4.57**	2.10*	.86	1.69	.90
5: Effect of fostering on family's interactions	3.60**	.01	.02	.40	.47	3.56*
7: Dealing with bureaucratic systems	1.13	1.78	.65	.63	3.42*	16.08**
9: Professional communication	5.70**	.06	6.67**	3.66**	.50	7.54**
10: Understanding foster parent role	.57	13.28**	2.48*	1.19	.05	3.68*
11: External social rewards	.93	.31	1.36	.58	5.65**	8.30**

**p ≤ .05*
p ≤ .10
[1] df = 3
[2] df = 1

3; p ≤ .08), sub-scale 2: private agencies and caseworkers (F = 2.61; df = 3; p ≤ .06), sub-scale 4: the practice of DHS caseworkers (F = 2.54; df = 3; p .06), sub-scale 7: dealing with bureaucratic systems (F = 1.13; df = 3; p ≤ .35), sub-scale 10: understanding foster parent role (F = .57; df = 3; p ≤ .64), and sub-scale 11: external social rewards (F = .93; df = 3; p ≤ .43). Sub-scales 1, 2, and 4 are significant at the .10 level.

The null hypothesis was rejected at the .05 significance level for sub-scale 5: effect of fostering on family's interactions (F = 3.60; df = 3; p ≤ .01), and sub-scale 9: professional

communication (F = 5.70; df = 3; p ≤ .00). Foster mothers with grade school as the highest degree achieved are more satisfied with the effects that fostering has on the interactions between original family members (T = 2.43; p ≤ .02) and with the professional communication the foster care system has with their families (T = 2.29; p ≤ .02) than more educated foster mothers.

Foster father's education: The research hypothesis tested was that foster families with more highly educated fathers are more satisfied with providing foster care than foster families with lesser educated fathers. The null hypothesis, father's educational level does not affect foster family satisfaction, was not rejected for sub-scale 1: training and support (F = .76; df = 3; p ≤ .52), sub-scale 2: private agencies and caseworkers (F = 1.97; df = 3; p ≤ .12), sub-scale 4: the practice of DHS caseworkers (F = .86; df = 3; p ≤ .46), sub-scale 5: effect of fostering on family's interactions (F = .40; df = 3; p ≤ .76), sub-scale 7: dealing with bureaucratic systems (F = .63; df = 3; p ≤ .60), sub-scale 10: understanding foster parent role (F = 1.19; df = 3; p ≤ .32), and sub-scale 11: external social rewards (F = .58; df = 3; p ≤ .58).

The null hypothesis was rejected at the .05 significance level for sub-scale 9: professional communication (F = 3.66; df = 3; p ≤ .00). Foster fathers with grade school (T = 2.40; p ≤ .02) or high school (T = 2.20; p ≤ .03) as the highest educational level attained are more satisfied with the professional communication that the foster care system has with their families than more educated fathers.

Mother's employment site: The research hypothesis tested was that foster families with mothers who work in the home are more satisfied with providing foster care than foster families with mothers who work outside the home. The null hypothesis, that mother's work does not

affect foster family satisfaction, was not rejected for sub-scale 1: training and support (F = 1.14; df = 1; p ≤ .29), sub-scale 2: private agencies and caseworkers (F = .40; df = 1; p ≤ .53), sub-scale 5: effect of fostering on family's interactions (F = .01; df = 1; p ≤ .92), sub-scale 7: dealing with bureaucratic systems (F = 1.78; df = 1; p ≤ .19), sub-scale 9: professional communication (F = .06; df = 1; p ≤ .80), and sub-scale 11: external social rewards (F = .31; df = 1; p ≤ .58).

The null hypothesis was rejected at the .05 significance level for sub-scale 4: the practice of DHS caseworkers (F = 4.57; df = 1; p ≤ .03), and sub-scale 10: understanding foster parent role (F = 13.28; df = 1; p ≤ .00). Foster mothers who work outside of the home are more satisfied with the practice of their DHS caseworkers (T = -2.21; p ≤ .03) and with their understanding of their role as foster parents (T = -3.19; p ≤.00) than mothers who work in the home.

Father employment site: The research hypothesis tested was that foster families with fathers who work outside the home are more satisfied with providing foster care than foster families with fathers who work in the home. The null hypothesis, that father's work does not affect foster family satisfaction, was not rejected for sub-scale 2: private agencies and caseworkers (F = .15; df = 1; p ≤.70), sub-scale 4: the practice of DHS caseworkers (F = 1.69; df = 1; p ≤ .20), sub-scale 5: effect of fostering on family's interactions (F = .47; df = 1; p ≤ .49), sub-scale 7: Dealing with bureaucratic systems (F = 3.42; df = 1; p ≤ .07), sub-scale 9: professional communication (F = .50; df = 1; p ≤ .48), and sub-scale 10: understanding foster parent role (F = .05; df = 1; p ≤ .82). Sub-scale 7 was significant at the .10 level.

The null hypothesis was rejected at the .05 significance level for sub-scale 1: training and

support $(F = 8.16; df = 1; p \leq .01)$ and sub-scale 11: external social rewards $(F = 5.65; df = 1; p \leq .02)$. Foster fathers who work in the home are more satisfied with the professional training and support they receive $(T = 2.38; p \leq .02)$, and with the external social rewards for fostering $(T = 2.57; p \leq .01)$ than fathers who work outside the home.

Mother's employment status: Foster families with mothers who are non-employed or employed part-time are more satisfied with providing foster care than foster families with mothers who are unemployed or full-time employed. The null hypothesis, mother's job status does not affect foster family satisfaction, was not rejected for sub-scale 4: the practice of DHS caseworkers $(F = 2.10; df = 3; p \leq .10)$, sub-scale 5: effect of fostering on family's interactions $(F = .02; df = 3; p \leq .99)$, sub-scale 7: dealing with bureaucratic systems $(F = .65; df = 3; p \leq .53)$, sub-scale 10: understanding foster parent role $(F = 2.48; df = 3; p \leq .06)$, and sub-scale 11: external social rewards $(F = 1.36; df = 3; p \leq .26)$. Sub-scales 4 and 10 are significant at the .10 level.

The null hypothesis was rejected at the .05 significance level for sub-scale 1: training and support $(F = 4.67; df = 3; p \leq .00)$, sub-scale 2: private agencies and caseworkers $(F = 6.41; df = 3; p \leq .00)$, and sub-scale 9: professional communication $(F = 6.67; df = 3; p .00)$. Non-employed and unemployed mothers are more satisfied with the professional training and support they receive than full-time $(T = 3.59; p \leq .00)$ and part-time $(T = 3.74; p \leq .00)$ employed mothers. Non-employed and part-time employed mothers are more satisfied with the practice of private agencies and caseworkers than unemployed $(T = 1.96; p \leq .05)$ and full-time $(T = 1.87; p \leq .07)$ employed mothers.

Father's employment status: The research hypothesis tested was that foster families with fathers who are non-employed or part-time employed are more satisfied with providing foster care than foster families with fathers who are unemployed or full-time employed. The null hypothesis, father's job status does not affect foster family satisfaction, was not rejected for sub-scale 2: private agencies and caseworkers (F = .00; df = 1; p ≤ .98), sub-scale 4: the practice of DHS caseworkers (F = .90; df = 1; p ≤ .34), sub-scale 5: effect of fostering on family's interactions (F = 3.56; df = 1; p ≤ .06), and sub-scale 10: understanding foster parent role (F = 3.68; df = 1; p ≤ .06). Sub-scales 5 and 10 are significant at the .10 level.

The null hypothesis was rejected at the .05 significance level for sub-scale 1: training and support (F = 8.68; df = 1; p ≤ .00), sub-scale 7: dealing with bureaucratic systems (F = 16.08; df = 1; p ≤ .00), sub-scale 9: professional communication (F = 7.54; df = 1; p ≤ .01), and sub-scale 11: external social rewards (F = 8.30; df = 1; p ≤ .00). Foster fathers who are less than full-time employed are more satisfied with professional training and support received than full-time employed fathers (T=1.91; p ≤ .06).

Family Characteristics

Table 10 displays the F-values of the Foster Family Satisfaction Sub-scales for family characteristics.

Number of parents: The research hypothesis tested was that two-parent foster families are more satisfied with providing foster care than single parent foster families. As described in the previous section, this model did not analyze the affect of single-parent families compared with two-parent families. The other two models which did address single versus two-parent

Table 10   F-values of the Foster Family Satisfaction Sub-scales for Family
              Characteristics

Satisfaction Sub-scales	Family Income [1]	Presence of Children [2]	Personal Support [3]
1: Training and support	2.19*	.25	2.39*
2: Private agencies and caseworkers	.95	6.95**	4.03**
4: The practice of DHS caseworkers	1.69	.01	2.46*
5: Effect of fostering on family's interactions	1.11	1.28	.88
7: Dealing with bureaucratic systems	2.68**	.99	1.82
9: Professional communication	1.71	3.61*	1.66
10: Understanding foster parent role	.52	2.78*	2.90**
11: External social rewards	1.35	.92	3.46**

$**p \leq .05$

$*p \leq .10$

[1] $df = 5$

[2] $df = 1$

[3] $df = 3$

differences did not find significant differences between single and two-parent families for any of

the twelve dependent variables.

Family income: The research hypothesis tested was that foster families with higher

incomes are more satisfied with providing foster care than foster families with lower incomes.

The null hypothesis, family income does not affect foster family satisfaction, was not rejected for

sub-scale 1: training and support (F = 2.19; df = 5; p ≤ .06), sub-scale 2: private agencies and

caseworkers (F = .95; df = 5; p ≤ .45). sub-scale 4: the practice of DHS caseworkers (F = 1.69;

df = 5; p ≤ .14), sub-scale 5: effect of fostering on family's interactions (F = 1.11; df = 5; p ≤

.35), sub-scale 9: professional communication (F = 1.71; df = 5; p ≤ .14), sub-scale 10:

understanding foster parent role (F = .52; df = 5; p ≤ .76), and sub-scale 11: external social

rewards (F = 1.35; df = 5; p ≤ .24). Sub-scale 1 was significant at the .10 level.

The null hypothesis was rejected at the .05 significance level for sub-scale 7: dealing with bureaucratic systems (F = 2.68; df = 5; p ≤ .03). Foster families with incomes between $30,000-40,000 are more satisfied with bureaucracy within the foster care system than those with family incomes between $20,000-30,000 (T = -1.73; p ≤ .09).

Presence of children: The research hypothesis tested was that foster families with no biological and/or adopted children are more satisfied with providing foster care than foster families with biological and/or adopted children. The null hypothesis, the presence of biological and/or adopted children does not affect foster family satisfaction, was not rejected for sub-scale 1: training and support (F = .25; df = 1; p ≤ .62), sub-scale 4: the practice of DHS caseworkers (F = .01; df = 1; p ≤ .94), sub-scale 5: effect of fostering on family's interactions (F = 1.28; df = 1; p ≤ .26), sub-scale 7: dealing with bureaucratic systems (F = .99; df = 1; p ≤ .32), sub-scale 9: professional communication (F = 3.61; df = 1; p ≤ .06), sub-scale 10: understanding foster parent role (F = 2.78; df = 1; p ≤ .10), and sub-scale 11: external social rewards (F = .92; df = 1; p ≤ .34). Sub-scales 9 and 10 are significant at the .10 level.

The null hypothesis was rejected at the .05 significance level for sub-scale 2: private agencies and caseworkers (F = 6.95; df = 1; p ≤ .01). Foster families with biological and/or adopted children are more satisfied with the practice of private agencies and caseworkers than families with no biological and/or adopted children.

Personal support: The research hypothesis tested was that foster families who rely on extended family, friends, or neighbors for personal support are more satisfied with providing

foster care than foster families who rely on other foster families, DHS or private agency caseworkers, or have no one to rely on. The null hypothesis, the source of personal support does not affect foster family satisfaction, was not rejected for sub-scale 1: training and support $(F = 2.39; df = 3; p \leq .07)$, sub-scale 4: the practice of DHS caseworkers $(F = 2.46; df = 3; p \leq .06)$, sub-scale 5: effect of fostering on family's interactions $(F = .88; df = 3; p \leq .45)$, sub-scale 7: dealing with bureaucratic systems $(F = 1.82; df = 3; p \leq .15)$, and sub-scale 9: professional communication $(F = 1.66; df = 3; p \leq .18)$. Sub-scales 1 and 4 are significant at the .10 level.

The null hypothesis was rejected at the .05 significance level for sub-scales 2: private agencies and caseworkers $(F = 4.03; df = 3; p \leq .01)$, sub-scale 10: understanding foster parent role $(F = 2.90; df = 3; p \leq .04)$, and sub-scale 11: external social rewards $(F = 3.46; df = 3; p \leq .02)$. Foster families who rely on their DHS and/or private agency caseworker for personal support are more satisfied with the practice of private agencies and caseworkers than families with no support $(T = -1.70; p \leq .09)$, and than foster families who rely on other foster parents and/or a foster parent support group $(T = -1.80; p \leq .07)$. Foster families who rely on their DHS and/or private agency caseworker for personal support are more satisfied with their understanding of the foster parent role than foster families who rely on other foster parents and/or a foster parent support group $(T = -1.82; p \leq .07)$. Foster families who rely on their DHS and/or private agency caseworker for personal support are more satisfied with external social rewards for fostering than foster families who rely on other foster parents and/or foster parent support groups $(T = -1.81; p \leq .07)$ and foster families who rely on extended family, friends, and neighbors $(T = -2.68; p \leq .01)$.

Period of time as a licensed foster family. The research hypothesis tested was that foster families who are licensed for a longer period of time are more satisfied with providing foster care than foster families who are licensed for a shorter period of time. A linear regression using length of time as a licensed foster family as the independent variable was computed for all twelve foster family satisfaction sub-scales. However, Pearson's r for each of the computations was less than .02. The null hypothesis, length of time as a licensed foster family does not affect foster family satisfaction with providing foster care was not rejected for any of the sub-scales.

Geographic Characteristics

Table 11 displays the F-values for the Foster Family Satisfaction Sub-scales by geographic characteristics.

County population: The research hypothesis tested was that foster families in urban counties are more satisfied than foster families in rural or metropolitan counties. The null hypothesis, county population does not affect foster family satisfaction, was not rejected at the .05 significance level for sub-scale 1: training and support $(F = .01; df = 2; p \leq .99)$, sub-scale 2: private agencies and caseworkers $(F = .87; df = 2; p \leq .42)$, sub-scale 4: the practice of DHS caseworkers $(F = .02; df = 2; p \leq .98)$, sub-scale 5: effect of fostering on family's interactions $(F = 1.36; df = 2; p \leq .26)$, sub-scale 7: dealing with bureaucratic systems $(F = .67; df = 2; p \leq .51)$, sub-scale 9: professional communication $(F = 1.51; df = 2; p \leq .22)$, sub-scale 10: understanding foster parent role $(F = 1.82; df = 2; p \leq .17)$, and sub-scale 11: external social rewards $(F = 1.22; df = 2; p \leq .30)$.

Table 11   F-values of the Foster Family Satisfaction Sub-scales for Geographic
Characteristics

Satisfaction Sub-scales	County Population [1]	Foster Care Placement Rate [1]
1: Training and support	.01	.14
2: Private agencies and caseworkers	.87	.46
4: The practice of DHS caseworkers	.02	2.83*
5: Effect of fostering on family's interactions	1.36	1.50
7: Dealing with bureaucratic systems	.67	1.96
9: Professional communication	1.51	.69
10: Understanding foster parent role	1.82	.13
11: External social rewards	1.22	3.35**

$**p \leq .05$
$*p \leq .10$
[1] $df = 2$

Foster care placement rate: The research hypothesis tested was that foster families living in counties with high or low foster care placement rates are less satisfied with providing foster care than foster families with medium foster care placement rates. The null hypothesis, rate of foster care placement does not affect foster family satisfaction, was not rejected for sub-scale 1: training and support ($F = .14$; $df = 2$; $p \leq .87$), sub-scale 2: private agencies and caseworkers ($F = .46$; $df = 2$; $p \leq .64$), sub-scale 4: the practice of DHS caseworkers ($F = 2.83$; $df = 2$; $p \leq .06$), sub-scale 5: effect of fostering on family's interactions ($F = 1.50$; $df = 2$; $p \leq .22$), sub-scale 7: dealing with bureaucratic systems ($F = 1.96$; $df = 2$; $p \leq .15$), sub-scale 9: professional communication ($F = .69$; $df = 2$; $p \leq .50$), and sub-scale 10: understanding foster parent role ($F = .13$; $df = 2$; $p \leq .88$). Sub-scale 4 was significant at the .10 level.

The null hypothesis was rejected at the .05 level for sub-scale 11: external social rewards

(F = 3.35; df = 2; p ≤ .04). Foster families living in counties with a high rate of foster care placement are more satisfied with external social rewards for fostering than foster families living in counties with a medium rate of placement (T = -1.88; p ≤ .06).

Characteristics of DHS Caseworkers Practice

Table 12 displays the frequency and percentage distribution of respondents to the question, "In general, how often do the foster children's DHS caseworkers visit your home?" Thirty-three percent of the foster families reported that their DHS caseworker visited their home at least bi-monthly. Another 32.9% of the respondents reported being visited by their caseworker every 2-3 months. "Other" category responses included the following: "when placing a child", "haven't seen since child placed", "once a year", and "never".

Table 12   Frequency and Percentage Distribution of Visits by the DHS
             Caseworkers [1]

Visits	Frequency	Percent
2 - 3 times weekly	6	.006%
Weekly	31	3.1%
1 - 2 times monthly	303	29.9%
Every 2 - 3 months	333	32.9%
Every 4 - 5 months	106	10.5%
Other	182	18.0%

[1] *Percentages <100 due to missing data*

Table 13   Frequency and Percentage Distribution of Phone Calls from the DHS
                Caseworkers [1]

	Frequency	Percent
Daily	2	.2%
Weekly	83	8.2%
1 - 2 times monthly	340	33.6%
Every 3 - 4 months	232	22.9%
Every 5 - 6 months	85	8.4%
Other	199	19.6%

[1] *Percentages <100 due to missing data*

Table 13 displays the frequency and percentage distribution of respondents to the question, "In general, how often do you receive phone calls from the DHS caseworkers?" Over 40% of foster families report receiving phone calls from DHS caseworkers at least bi-monthly.

Table 14 displays the frequency and percentage distributions for respondents to the question, "In general, when you call DHS caseworkers, what is the time frame that your phone call is returned?". It appears that DHS caseworkers generally return calls fairly quickly. Almost half of the foster families report having phone calls returned the same day or next day in which they initially called. Another 24% report having their calls returned within a week of the initial call. Almost 14% of the foster families report that sometimes their phone calls are not returned at all. "Other" category responses include the following: "varies greatly from same day to not at all", "depends on who we call", "don't call them", "don't call unless emergency", "same day or

Table 14   Frequency and Percentage Distribution of Returned Phone Calls by DHS
Caseworkers [1]

	Frequency	Percentage
Same day or next day	478	47.2%
Same week	245	24.2%
More than one week	21	2.1%
Sometimes not at all	139	13.7%
Other	64	6.3%

[1] *Percentages <100 due to missing data*

not at all", and "have only had a couple of calls returned in seven years".

Table 15 displays the frequency and percentage distribution of foster family responses to the question "In general, how available is help from the DHS agency when you have an emergency?" Thirty-eight percent of foster families report being able to contact their DHS caseworker in an emergency because the caseworker was either on-call and available 24 hours a day, or foster families may try to call the DHS caseworker at home when he or she was not at the office. Another 21.5% report that they can call an on-call DHS caseworker. Almost 6% report feeling that they do not have anyone at their DHS agency to contact in an emergency. "Other" category responses include the following: "never had emergency", "always go through private agency", "don't know", "I would not know how to get a hold of my DHS worker off hours", "available, but generally takes 4-6 calls to locate if after hours".

Table 16 displays the frequency and percentage distribution for the question "How much

Table 15   Frequency and Percentage Distribution of the Availability of Help from
                DHS in an Emergency [1]

	Frequency	Percent
The child's caseworker is on-call, available 24 hours a day	114	11.3%
We can try to call the DHS caseworker at home when not at the office	268	26.5%
When the child's DHS caseworker is not available, there is other DHS staff on-call, available 24 hours a day	218	21.5%
DHS staff is available days, evenings, and weekends, but not 24 hours a day	30	3.0%
DHS staff is available week days only	96	9.5%
No one from the DHS agency is available when I have an emergency	59	5.8%
Other	147	14.5%

[1] *Percentages <100 due to missing data*

support/information does DHS provide to foster parents accused of abuse?" Many foster families

report not knowing how much support and information DHS provides to families charged with

child abuse. Forty-four percent report knowing how their foster care agency handles the situation

when there are allegations that licensed foster parents have committed abuse. Of those, 19%

report that their DHS agency provides "some" or "a lot" of support and/or information to its

foster families accused of abuse. Twelve percent report that their DHS agency provides "little"

Table 16   How much support/information does DHS provide to foster parents accused of abuse?[1]

	Frequency	Percent
A lot	91	9.0%
Some	98	9.7%
Little	59	5.8%
None	60	5.9%
Don't know	442	43.6%

[1] *Percentages <100 due to missing data*

or "no" support and/or information when foster parents are charged with child abuse.

The Practice of DHS Caseworkers

Table 17 displays the F-values of the Foster Family Satisfaction Sub-scales for the practice of DHS caseworkers.

Visits: The research hypothesis tested was that foster families who have more frequent contact initiated by the DHS caseworker are more satisfied with providing foster care than foster families who have less frequent contact initiated by the DHS caseworker. The null hypothesis, frequency of contact initiated by the DHS worker does not affect foster family satisfaction, was not rejected regarding visits by the DHS worker for sub-scale 1: training and support (F = .50; df = 4; p ≤ .74), sub-scale 2: private agencies and caseworkers (F = .98; df = 3; p ≤ .41), sub-scale 5: effect of fostering on family's interactions (F = 1.54; df = 3; p ≤ .21), sub-scale 7: dealing with bureaucratic systems (F = .96; df = 3; p ≤ .42), sub-scale 9: professional

Table 17   F-values of the Foster Family Satisfaction Sub-scales for the Practice of DHS Caseworkers

Satisfaction Sub-scales	Visits	Phone Calls	Return Calls [2]	Avail. in Emerg. [3]	Abuse [1]
1: Training and support	.50 [1]	1.08 [1]	2.28*	3.24**	5.57**
2: Private agencies and caseworkers	.98 [2]	1.00 [2]	1.31	.75	1.47
4: The practice of DHS caseworkers	7.66**[1]	2.49** [1]	12.13**	2.28**	2.87**
5: Effect of fostering on family's interactions	1.54 [2]	2.02* [1]	.99	3.27**	1.70
7: Dealing with bureaucratic systems	.96 [2]	1.11 [2]	.52	2.49**	1.89
9: Professional communication	1.24 [1]	.75 [2]	.15	.86	3.08**
10: Understanding foster parent role	1.36 [1]	.41 [2]	1.91	.51	1.70
11: External social rewards	.56 [1]	1.89 [1]	.93	1.48	1.38

$**p \le .05$
$*p \le .10$
[1] $df = 4$
[2] $df = 3$
[3] $df = 5$

communication (F = 1.24; df = 4; p ≤ .30), sub-scale 10: understanding foster parent role (F = 1.36; df = 4; p ≤ .25), and sub-scale 11: external social rewards (F = .56; df = 4; p ≤ .69).

The null hypothesis was rejected at the .05 significance level for sub-scale 4: the practice of DHS caseworkers (F = 7.66; df = 4; p ≤ .00). Foster families whose DHS workers visit their homes weekly are more satisfied with the practice of DHS caseworkers than families whose DHS caseworkers visit their homes every 2-3 months (T = 1.80; p ≤ .07) or every 4-5 months (T = 1.81; p ≤ .07); families whose DHS caseworkers visit their homes bi-monthly are more satisfied

with the practice of DHS caseworkers than families whose DHS caseworkers visit their homes very 2-3 months ($T = 1.84$; $p \leq .07$).

Phone calls: The null hypothesis, frequency of contact initiated by the DHS worker does not affect foster family satisfaction, was not rejected regarding frequency of telephone calls from the DHS worker for sub-scale 1: training and support ($F = 1.08$; $df = 4$; $p \leq .37$), sub-scale 2: private agencies and caseworkers ($F = 1.00$; $df = 3$; $p \leq .40$), sub-scale 5: effect of fostering on family's interactions ($F = 2.02$; $df = 4$; $p \leq .09$), sub-scale 7: dealing with bureaucratic systems ($F = 1.11$; $df = 3$; $p \leq .35$), sub-scale 9: professional communication ($F = .75$; $df = 3$; $p \leq .53$), sub-scale 10: understanding foster parent role ($F = .41$; $df = 3$; $p \leq .75$), and sub-scale 11: external social rewards ($F = 1.89$; $df = 4$; $p \leq .11$). Sub-scale 5 was significant at the .10 level.

The null hypothesis was rejected at the .05 significance level for sub-scale 4: the practice of DHS caseworkers ($F = 2.49$; $df = 4$; $p \leq .05$). Foster families who received phone calls from the DHS caseworker weekly are more satisfied with the practice of DHS caseworkers than families who received phone calls from the DHS caseworker daily ($T = -1.77$; $p \leq .08$).

Phone calls returned: The research hypothesis tested was that foster families who have telephone calls returned quickly are more satisfied with providing foster care than foster families who do not have telephone calls quickly. The null hypothesis, length of time DHS caseworkers take to return telephone calls does not affect foster family satisfaction, was not rejected for sub-scale 1: training and support ($F = 2.28$; $df = 3$; $p \leq .08$), sub-scale 2: private agencies and caseworkers ($F = 1.31$; $df = 3$; $p \leq .27$), sub-scale, 5: effect of fostering on family's interactions ($F = .99$; $df = 3$; $p \leq .40$), sub-scale 7: dealing with bureaucratic systems ($F = .52$; $df = 3$; $p \leq$

.67), sub-scale 9: professional communication (F = .15; df = 3; p ≤ .93), sub-scale 10: understanding foster parent role (F = 1.91; df = 3; p ≤ .13), and sub-scale 11: external social rewards (F = .93; df = 3, ≤ .43). Sub-scale 1 was significant at the .10 level.

The null hypothesis was rejected at the .05 significance level for sub-scale 4: the practice of DHS caseworkers (F =1 2.13; df = 3; p ≤ .00). Foster families who have phone calls returned from the DHS worker in the same day are more satisfied with the practice of DHS caseworkers than families who have phone calls returned in the same week (T = 4.08; p ≤ .00) or than families who sometimes do not have their phone calls returned at all (T = 3.41; p ≤ .00).

Availability of help in an emergency: The research hypothesis tested was that foster families who perceive the DHS agency to be accessible in the event of an emergency are more satisfied with providing foster care than foster families who perceive the DHS agency to be less accessible in the event of an emergency. The null hypothesis, accessibility of the DHS agency in the event of an emergency does not affect foster family satisfaction, was not rejected for sub-scale 2: private agencies and caseworkers (F = .75; df = 5; p ≤ .59), sub-scale 9: professional communication (F = .86; df = 5; p ≤ .51), sub-scale 10: understanding foster parent role (F = .51; df = 5; p ≤ .77), and sub-scale 11: external social rewards (F = 1.48; df = 5; p ≤ .20).

The null hypothesis was rejected at the .05 significance level for sub-scale 1: training and support (F = 3.24; df = 5; p ≤ .01), sub-scale 4: the practice of DHS caseworkers (F = 2.28; df = 5; p ≤ .05), sub-scale 5: effect of fostering on family's interactions (F = 3.27; df = 5; p ≤ .01), and sub-scale 7: dealing with bureaucratic systems (F = 2.49; df = 5; p ≤ .04). Foster family satisfaction with the professional training and support they received varied with the

availability of help from the foster care agency when families had an emergency; foster families whose caseworker was on-call, available 24 hours a day (T = 3.05; p ≤ .00), who could contact the caseworker at home when not at the office (T = 3.64; p ≤ .01), who could contact other staff 24 hours a day when they couldn't reach the caseworker, (T = 3.35; p ≤ .00), or who could contact DHS staff on week days only (T = 2.17; p ≤ .03) are more satisfied with professional training and support than families whose caseworker was available days, evenings and weekends, but not 24 hours a day. Foster families whose caseworker was on-call, available 24 hours a day (T = 1.95; p ≤ .05), or who can contact other staff 24 hours a day when they can't reach the caseworker, (T = 2.13; p ≤ .03) are more satisfied with professional training and support than families who feel that no one from the DHS agency was available when they had an emergency.

Foster family satisfaction with the practice of DHS caseworkers varied with the availability of help from the foster care agency when families had an emergency; foster families whose caseworker was on-call, available 24 hours a day are more satisfied with the practice of DHS caseworkers than foster families who must try to call the DHS caseworker at home when not in the office (T = 2.11; p ≤ .04), contact DHS staff on week days only (T = 2.48; p ≤ .01), or not find anyone from the DHS agency available in an emergency (T = 1.88; p ≤ .06).

Foster family satisfaction with the effects of fostering on the internal interactions of the foster family varies with the availability of help from the DHS agency when there was an emergency. Foster families whose caseworker was on-call, available 24 hours a day are more satisfied with the effects of fostering on the interactions between original family members than families who can contact DHS staff on week days only (T = 2.40; p ≤ .02). Families whose

caseworker was on-call, available 24 hours a day (T = 3.15; p ≤ .00), families who can contact the DHS worker at home when not at the office (T = 2.31, .02), families who must contact other staff from the DHS agency, available 24 hours a day, when the DHS worker can not be reached (T = 2.46; p ≤ .02), or families who can contact DHS staff days, evenings, and weekends, but not 24 hours a day (T = 1.96; p ≤ .05) are more satisfied with the effects that fostering has on the interactions between original family members than families who perceive no help to be available from DHS in an emergency.

Foster family satisfaction with bureaucracy in the system varies with the availability of help from the DHS agency when there was an emergency. Foster families who report that DHS staff was available days, evenings, and weekends, but not 24 hours a day are more satisfied with the bureaucracy in the system than families who can try to call the DHS caseworker at home when not at the office (T = -1.83; p ≤ .07), contact other DHS staff, on-call, available 24 hours a day, when the child's DHS caseworker was not available (T = -2.31; p ≤ .02), or contact DHS staff on week days only (T = -2.23; p ≤ .03).

Support/information available to parents charged with abuse: The research hypothesis tested was that foster families who perceive DHS to be very supportive and informative when foster parents are charged with abuse are more satisfied with providing foster care than foster families who perceive DHS to not be very supportive or informative for foster parents charged with abuse. The null hypothesis, foster family perceptions of the amount of support or information that DHS provides to families charged with abuse does not affect foster family satisfaction was not rejected for sub-scale 2: private agencies and caseworkers (F = 1.47; df =

4; p ≤ .22), sub-scale 5: effect of fostering on family's interactions (F = 1.70; df = 4; p ≤ .15), sub-scale 7: dealing with bureaucratic systems (F = 1.89; df = 4; p ≤ .13), sub-scale 10: understanding foster parent role (F = 1.70; df = 4; p ≤ .16), and 11: external social rewards (F = 1.38; df = 4; p ≤ .24).

The null hypothesis was rejected at the .05 significance level for sub-scale 1: training and support (F = 5.57; df = 4; p ≤ .00), sub-scale 4: the practice of DHS caseworkers (F = 2.87; df = 4; p ≤ .02), and sub-scale 9: professional communication (F = 3.08; df = 4; p ≤ .02).

Foster family satisfaction with professional training and support varies with the amount of support and/or information available from the DHS agency to foster parents accused of abuse. Families who perceive DHS as providing "a lot" of information and/or support are more satisfied with professional training and support than those perceiving DHS as providing "some" (T = 2.16; p ≤ .03), "little" (T = 4.14; p ≤ .00), or "no" (T = 3.19; p ≤ .00) support and/or information, or when they don't know how much support and/or information DHS provides (T = 3.70; p ≤ .00). Families who perceive DHS as providing "some" support and/or information are more satisfied with professional training and support than families perceiving DHS as providing "little" (T = 2.21; p ≤ .03) or "no" (T = 1.83; p ≤ .07) support and/or information.

Foster family satisfaction with the practice of DHS caseworkers varies with the amount of support and/or information available from the DHS agency to foster parents accused of abuse. Foster families who perceive DHS as providing "a lot" of information and/or support are more satisfied with the practice of DHS caseworkers than families perceiving DHS as providing "little" (T = 2.83; p ≤ .01), or "no" (T = 2.52; p ≤ .01), support and/or information, or when they don't

know how much support and/or information DHS provides (T = 2.20; p ≤ .03). Foster families who perceive DHS as providing "some" support and/or information are more satisfied with the practice of DHS caseworkers than those perceiving DHS as providing "little" (T = 1.98; p ≤ .05) or "no" (T = 2.52; p ≤ .01) support and/or information.

Foster family satisfaction with professional communication from the foster care system varies with the amount of support and/or information available from the DHS agency to foster parents accused of abuse. Foster families who perceive DHS as providing "a lot" of information and/or support are more satisfied with professional communication with the foster care system than families perceiving DHS as providing "little" (T = 1.92; p ≤ .06), or "no" (T = 3.08; p ≤ .00) support and/or information, or than families who don't know how much support and/or information DHS provides (T = 2.71; p ≤ .01). Foster families who perceive DHS as providing "some" support and/or information are more satisfied with professional communication with the foster care system than families perceiving DHS as providing "no" support and/or information (T = 2.09; p ≤ .04).

DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to examine foster families' perceptions of their interactions with the Iowa foster care system to determine how demographic characteristics and the practice of DHS caseworkers affects foster family satisfaction. From this study, an instrument for measuring foster family satisfaction emerged, and was standardized on the sample of 1,013 foster families. This fills a void in the foster family satisfaction literature, as a standardized measurement was unavailable previously.

The instrument, titled The Foster Family Satisfaction Scales, is self-administered and was developed after conducting a literature search of the issues affecting foster families' satisfaction, reviewing satisfaction and retention surveys developed for other states, soliciting the input of Iowa foster families, and revising the questions after a pilot study. The instrument identified foster family satisfaction as including the following concepts: professional training and support, practice of private foster care agencies and caseworkers, receiving information from the foster care system, the practice of DHS caseworkers, the effects of fostering on the interactions of original family members, rules and regulations within the system, bureaucracy, the responsibility associated with having foster care placements, professional communication with the system, understanding the foster parent role, external social rewards for fostering, and reimbursements. The scales were then used to measure foster family satisfaction for each of the following independent variables: parental characteristics, family characteristics, geographic characteristics, and the practices of DHS caseworkers.

For this study, there were four sub-scales which did not show significant differences for

any of the independent variables. These sub-scales were the following: receiving information about the foster care placements, dealing with rules and regulations within the foster care system, the responsibilities involved with having foster children placed in the home, and foster care reimbursements. Because each of these variables was present in the literature as affecting satisfaction, it is puzzling that they did not emerge as significant in this study. There are two possible reasons for why this did not occur.

The first possibility is that although foster families have very different demographic compositions, they all share the same underlying purpose for providing foster care, such as wanting to make a difference in these children's lives. This underlying reason to provide foster care may also account for the lack of variance in foster family satisfaction.

The second possibility, and probably the more likely, is that an interaction between variables is causing an interaction effect. For example, none of the independent variables alone affected foster family satisfaction on the four sub-scales, but an interactive effect between several variables, such as between county population, rate of foster care placement, and availability of personal support, may identify significant differences among the independent variables.

Parental Characteristics

The results suggest that parental education for both foster mothers and foster fathers affects foster family satisfaction with the professional communication they receive from the foster care system, with lesser educated parents more satisfied than more highly educated parents. It also appears that foster families with lesser educated mothers are more satisfied with the effects that providing foster care has on the internal interactions of family members, than families with

more highly educated foster mothers. Prior to the 1960's, women did not have many career options available outside of the home, other than being involved in volunteer activities. Providing foster care was an opportunity for women to volunteer without leaving their homes. In present day, most women are no longer looking for volunteer opportunities, but rather for compensated employment. A possible reason why more highly educated women are less satisfied with professional communication and with the effects that providing foster care has on the interactions between the family's original members is because they have more career options available to them than lesser educated women. Additionally, more educated women may be less satisfied with professional communication from the foster care system because they are accustomed to being treated with more respect.

Further, both foster mothers and fathers who have spent a fair amount of money to attain a college degree, may feel a greater sense of worth than lesser educated foster parents. Competence theory and social identity theory, which were discussed earlier, strengthen this claim. Foster parents who are more highly educated may feel that they are very competent in caring for foster children, particularly if they have a degree in a human services field. If, however, the foster parents are not positively reinforced for providing foster care, the social identities which they attach to providing foster care come into conflict with their feelings of competence, and they become dissatisfied.

The site where foster parents work has varying effects on foster family satisfaction, depending on whether the mother or father's employment site is considered. Foster families with mothers who work outside the home are more satisfied with the practices of DHS caseworkers

and with understanding the foster parent's role, than families where the mother works in the home.

Foster families with fathers who work in the home are more satisfied with the professional training and support they receive and with the external social rewards for fostering than families with fathers who work outside the home. A possible reason for this is that foster fathers who work outside of the home are unable to attend training when it is held, because it may conflict with work schedules. Also, fathers who work outside of the home are probably less satisfied with support because they have difficulties contacting caseworkers after normal work hours.

The results indicate that the employment status of foster parents affects foster family satisfaction with providing foster care. Families in which the mother is not employed are more satisfied with the professional training and support received and with the professional communication they have with the foster care system than families in which the mother is employed at all. Families with mothers who choose to be employed less than full-time are more satisfied with the practice of private agencies and caseworkers than families in which the mother is employed full-time or looking for work. Mothers who are choosing not to work full-time probably do not have financial or other pressures which require other mothers to work full-time. These women have identified themselves as contributing to the volunteer market, and are satisfied because they have some latitude in choosing their involvement in the work force.

Families in which the father is employed less than full-time or not employed are more satisfied with the professional training and support they receive, and dealing with bureaucracy and professional communication in the foster care system, than families in which the father is

employed full-time. These families do not experience the scheduling conflicts that families with full-time employed fathers experience. Families in which the foster father is employed full-time are more satisfied with external social rewards for fostering than families in which the father works less than full-time, because of societal expectation for men to work full-time to support their families.

Family Characteristics

It is necessary to consider the demographic composition of the population, because different family structures have different needs. Most of the families in this sample have biological and/or adopted children, which is important when considering the demands those children have on the foster parents, as well as the child-rearing experience of the parents.

The high percentage of Caucasian foster families reflects the general population of Iowa. Considering that 18% of children in out-of-home care have a racial background other than Caucasian, and that almost 35% of the foster families responding accept trans-racial placements; there may be a need for more minority foster families to accommodate those children. Although it appears that there are enough Caucasian families to accommodate for the increasing numbers of minority children, current practice trends try to minimize the incidence of trans-racial placements (Pecora et al, 1992).

Additionally, there has been a 22% increase in the number of minority children placed in foster care between December 1993 and December 1994, while the number of Caucasian children has increased 14% during this same time period. This suggests that minority populations may be dealing with more inter-family crises placing children at-risk for out-of-home placement than

Caucasian families, or that family preservation and intervention programs are less effective for minority foster families than for Caucasian families. In either case, interventions to deal with the inter-family crises need to be more effective in targeting and assisting minority families at-risk for out-of-home placements.

Family income, the presence of biological and/or adopted children, and availability of personal support affected foster family satisfaction for this population. Higher income families (over $50,000) are less satisfied in their interactions with bureaucratic systems than lower income families, except for families with incomes between $20,000 and $30,000. Families with incomes between $20,000 and $30,000 and families with incomes over $50,000 are likely to have both parents or the only parent working full-time. These families are less tolerant of dealing with bureaucracy than other families because it is as inconvenient to use their limited available time dealing with bureaucracy.

Families with biological and/or adopted children are more satisfied with the practice of private agencies and caseworkers than families with no children. Foster family satisfaction on the other seven sub-scales does not significantly differ based on the presence or absence of children. This suggests that private agencies are especially conscious of the effect that providing care has on the entire foster family. It is likely that private agency caseworkers provide personal support to foster families, in order to help all family members of the foster family cope with having foster care placements. Finally, this finding implies that recruitment efforts must target the foster family, not only the foster parents.

Families who rely on DHS or private agency caseworkers for personal support are more

satisfied with the practices of private agencies and caseworkers, with understanding the foster parent role, and with external social rewards, than families who have no one to rely on, or rely on extended family, friends, and neighbors or other foster parents and support groups for personal support. Because foster families relying on caseworkers for personal support identify satisfaction with the practice of private agencies and private agency caseworkers, but not with the practice of DHS caseworkers, this finding implies that satisfaction with caseworkers is attributable to the practices of private foster care caseworkers. In conjunction with the finding that families with biological and/or adopted children are more satisfied with the practices of private foster care caseworkers, this provides further evidence that the practices of caseworkers can significantly affect foster family satisfaction. These data additionally indicate that support from caseworkers also affects foster family satisfaction with how well they understand the foster parent role, as well as experiencing external social rewards for fostering.

Geographic Characteristics

Whether foster families live in metropolitan, urban, or rural counties does not appear to influence foster family satisfaction on any of the sub-scales. It is surprising that significant differences did not emerge. It was anticipated that foster families from counties designated as rural and metropolitan would be significantly less satisfied on some of the sub-scales than families living in urban counties. The background literature identified families living in rural areas as being less satisfied with professional training and support. Also, it was anticipated that families living in metropolitan areas would display less satisfaction with the responsibilities involved with being a foster family, and with the effects of being a foster family on the interactions of the original

foster family members. It was anticipated that foster children from metropolitan areas display much more difficult behaviors than children from urban or rural areas. For this sample, the lack of significant geographic differences is actually probably attributed to the homogeneity of Iowa's population.

For this sample, families living in counties with high rates of foster care placement are significantly more satisfied with the external rewards for fostering than families living in counties with medium rates of placement. Foster care is more visible in the counties that have high rates of foster care placement, which explains why foster families living in those counties experience more external social support than families living in counties with lower rates of placement.

The Practice of DHS Caseworkers

The practices of DHS and DHS caseworkers most satisfying to foster families included the following: weekly or bi-monthly visits, weekly phone calls, phone calls returned in the same or following day, caseworkers on-call and available 24 hours a day in the event of an emergency, and DHS providing "some" or "a lot" of support and/or information to foster parents charged with abuse to foster children. Other findings suggest that response from DHS and caseworkers in emergencies and when foster parents are charged with abuse to foster children affects satisfaction with other aspects of being a foster family. Foster families who perceive DHS caseworkers to be readily available when they have an emergency are more satisfied with the professional training and support they receive, the effects that fostering has on their family's internal interactions, and dealing with bureaucratic systems than foster families who do not perceive the caseworker to be readily available. This finding also demonstrates that foster families

would rather receive help in an emergency from their own caseworkers than from another DHS caseworker. Of course, it makes sense that foster families would want to receive help and support from the caseworkers who know the child in placement and his or her case history and past behaviors.

Except for foster families who receive daily phone calls from the DHS caseworker, foster families having more contact with the DHS worker are more satisfied with the practices of the DHS caseworker than families with less contact. Foster families receiving daily phone calls may feel that the frequency of phone calls is a sign that the caseworker questions their ability to provide foster care. Being contacted weekly or bi-monthly by the caseworker lets foster families know that the worker is available to help them in caring for the foster child.

Foster families who perceive DHS as providing "some" or "a lot" of support and/or information to foster parents charged with abuse are more satisfied with the professional training and support they receive, and with the professional communication they have with the system. The results suggest that foster families who perceive DHS to be helpful when they are having difficulties with foster care placements, are also more satisfied with their interactions with DHS and DHS caseworkers in their day-to-day interactions.

Implications for Policy and Practice

Recruitment. The results of this study further helps workers target foster family recruitment efforts. Foster parents who choose not to work, or work part-time, and work in the home rather than outside of the home are more satisfied than foster parents who work full-time outside the home or are unemployed. Being able to more accurately target characteristics of

those families who would be more satisfied as foster families will also increase the ability of an agency to retain those foster families.

Retention. This study has many implications for foster home retention. With modifications in current child welfare policies and practices, the Iowa foster care system will increase foster family satisfaction, as well as increase the capacity of family foster homes to care for needy children. Foster parents who work full-time outside of the home are less satisfied with the professional training and support they receive from the foster care system than parents who work less than full-time outside of the home. The implications of this for training is that foster parent trainers may need to reconsider the time of day and days of the week when training sessions are held. Further, foster care caseworkers and agencies need to reconsider the ways that support is provided to foster families when the parents work full-time outside of the home. Parents specifically need to have a lot of information and support when they have an emergency or when allegations of abuse have been made against them. Training could be a good opportunity to thoroughly inform foster families about how they can expect caseworkers and agencies to respond when they have situations requiring immediate attention concerning allegations of abuse.

Another implication of this study is that foster families are more satisfied with the practices of their DHS caseworker when the caseworker has more contact with them. Standards for the practice of foster care casework must be strictly adhered to, particularly low worker caseloads, as this affects workers' abilities to respond to foster families. Foster parents with college or graduate school degrees are significantly less satisfied than lesser educated foster parents with the professional communications that the foster care system has with them.

Caseworkers, agency staff, guardians ad litem, and other foster care professionals must improve their communication with highly educated foster parents. Unless this communication is significantly improved, highly educated foster parents will not be retained.

Final implications of this study have to do with the public perceptions of foster families. Foster families living in counties with high rates of foster care placement, receiving personal support from DHS and private agency caseworkers, and having parents who work less than full-time outside of the home, are more satisfied with the external rewards for fostering than other families. The implications are that foster families need to feel that their work in caring for foster children is understood and supported by their surrounding community. Communities that have few foster children are less supportive of foster families because they are not as likely to see the need for foster family homes. Employers and foster families' extended family and friends can be more supportive of foster families when they understand the reasons for fostering and the positive outcomes of family foster care.

Implications for Research

Through this study, standardized scales were developed which measure foster family satisfaction on several aspects of the foster care system. Since this did not exist previously, the development of the instrument is a major contribution to child welfare policy and practices. Because it is standardized, this instrument can be used by foster care programs in other states to measure foster family satisfaction. In addition, the literature has linked foster family satisfaction with the intent to continue to provide foster care. By measuring foster family satisfaction, child welfare personnel can target those families who are not currently satisfied, and thus improve

foster home retention.

Additionally, this study defined foster family satisfaction as including the following concepts: professional training and support, practice of private foster care agencies and caseworkers, foster families receiving information from the foster care system, the practice of DHS caseworkers, the effects of fostering on the internal interactions of original family members, dealing with rules and regulations, dealing with bureaucracy, the responsibility associated with having foster care placements, professional communication with the system, understanding the foster parent role, external social rewards for fostering, and reimbursements. This study determined that neither demographic information nor the practice of DHS caseworkers has an affect on foster family satisfaction with information received from the system, rules and regulations, the responsibilities associated with having foster care placements or reimbursements. Since each of these was identified through the literature as being related to foster family satisfaction, further research must be conducted to determine what factors affect each of these concepts. Future research in this area should determine what effect, if any, variables, such as foster home utilization, number of years foster family is licensed, number of foster children the family has cared for, and the ratio of the number of children licensed for with the number of children currently in care, have on foster family satisfaction. Finally, future research objectives should include an analysis of the interactive effects of the independent variables on each of the sub-scales.

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

APPENDIX A

COVER LETTER

Iowa Foster Family Recruitment and Retention Project

Iowa Foster and Adoptive Parents Association • Coalition for Family and Children's Services in Iowa • Iowa Department of Human Services

October 15, 1993

Dear Foster Parents:

The **Iowa Foster Family Recruitment and Retention Project** was created in November 1992, as per legislative mandate. This project, which is managed by the **State Public Policy Group**, joins the **Iowa Foster and Adoptive Parents Association (IFAPA)**, the **Coalition for Family and Children's Services in Iowa**, and the **Department of Human Services** to examine the needs and interests of foster families.

The goal of the Iowa Foster Family Recruitment and Retention Project is to enhance the capacity of Iowa's foster care system to recruit and retain qualified foster families and to provide the support needed to help foster families be effective in their work.

The Foster Family Recruitment and Retention Project and the Iowa Foster and Adoptive Parent Association developed this survey together, in order to understand the views of Iowa foster families. We want to know how the system can be improved to help meet the multi-faceted needs of the children entering care.

Please take the time to complete the enclosed survey, and **return by October 30, 1993** in the enclosed envelope. We estimate that it will take between 30 minutes and one hour to complete the survey. We understand the demands you have on your time, however, **your responses are critical to further developing foster care service delivery in Iowa**, as well as give us direction to better serve you. **It is critical to the success of this project that we hear often from foster families regarding their needs.** If possible, complete this survey as a family, so that different views within the family are expressed.

Only Project staff will read and analyze the surveys. All responses will be kept confidential, please feel free to express your concers. Summaries of the results will be sent to key legislators, IFAPA, DHS, the Coalition for Children and Family Services, private agencies, and concerned others. Any survey identification is for tracking purposes only.

Please help us as we try to implement change that will make fostering easier and more rewarding. Thank you for your participation and for your devotion to the foster care system.

Sincerely,

Deb Kazmerzak
Project Coordinator

Kerry Kriener
Project Assistant

APPENDIX B

SURVEY INSTRUMENT

FOSTER FAMILY
SATISFACTION SURVEY

October, 1993

*Conducted by the Iowa Foster Family Recruitment and Retention Project and developed
in conjunction with the Iowa Foster and Adoptive Parents Association*

Iowa Foster Family Recruitment and Retention Project
100 Court Avenue, Suite 312
Des Moines, Iowa 50309
(515) 243-2000

Through this survey, we want to better understand how foster families in Iowa feel about services provided through the foster care system. This survey is being sent to all Iowa foster families, because we want to know everyone's experiences with the system. All of your responses to the questions will be confidential, so please feel free to express your concerns. Please answer all the questions. If you wish to comment on any questions or qualify your answers, please feel free to use the space in the margins or on the back cover. Your comments will be read and taken into account.

Thank you for your help, and your devotion to Iowa's foster children.

FOSTER FAMILY SATISFACTION SURVEY

A. FOSTER CARE SYSTEM: (Estimated time to complete this section: 7 minutes)

For this section, we would like you to consider your total experience with the foster care system. Your responses will help us understand what parts of the system are meeting your needs, and what parts of the system need to be changed. If you've dealt with more than one person or agency in a category, please tell us generally about your experiences. Circle your responses under each question. If a question does not apply to you, please mark "not applicable".

1. In general, how helpful have each of the following been to you as a foster family?

	not at all helpful	2	3	very helpful	not applicable
a. juvenile court system	1	2	3	4	NA
b. juvenile probation/juvenile court officers	1	2	3	4	NA
c. children's guardian ad litem (attorney)	1	2	3	4	NA
d. children's DHS caseworkers	1	2	3	4	NA
e. children's private agency caseworkers	1	2	3	4	NA
f. private agency supervising foster placement	1	2	3	4	NA
g. DHS agency supervising foster placement	1	2	3	4	NA
h. services provided to foster children	1	2	3	4	NA
i. services provided to our family	1	2	3	4	NA
j. foster parent support group	1	2	3	4	NA
k. state foster parent association	1	2	3	4	NA

2. In general, how often do the foster children's caseworkers visit your home? (circle one response per agency)

	DHS CASEWORKER		PRIVATE AGENCY CASEWORKER
1	2 - 3 times weekly	1	2 - 3 times weekly
2	weekly	2	weekly
3	1 - 2 times monthly (every 35 days)	3	1 - 2 times monthly
4	every 2 - 3 months (every 45 days)	4	every 2 - 3 months
5	every 4 - 5 months	5	every 4 - 5 months
6	OTHER. PLEASE SPECIFY:	6	OTHER. PLEASE SPECIFY:
		7	NOT APPLICABLE

3. In general, how often do you receive phone calls from the caseworkers? (circle one response per agency)

DHS CASEWORKER
1- daily
2 weekly
3 1 - 2 times monthly
4 every 3 - 4 months
5 every 5 - 6 months
6 OTHER, PLEASE SPECIFY: _____

PRIVATE AGENCY CASEWORKER
1 daily
2 weekly
3 1 - 2 times monthly
4 every 3 - 4 months
5 every 5 - 6 months
6 OTHER, PLEASE SPECIFY: _____
7 NOT APPLICABLE

4. In general, when you call caseworkers, is your phone call returned within: (circle one response per agency)

DHS CASEWORKER
1 same day or next day
2 same week
3 more than one week
4 sometimes not at all
5 OTHER, PLEASE SPECIFY: _____

PRIVATE AGENCY CASEWORKER
1 same day or next day
2 same week
3 more than one week
4 sometimes not at all
5 OTHER, PLEASE SPECIFY: _____
6 NOT APPLICABLE

5. In general, how available is help from the foster care agencies when you have an emergency?
(circle one response per agency)

DHS
1 the child's DHS caseworker is on-call, available 24 hours a day
2 we can try to call the DHS caseworker at home when not at the office
3 when the child's DHS caseworker is not available, there is other DHS staff on-call, available 24 hours a day
4 DHS staff is available days, evenings and weekends, but not 24 hours a day
5 DHS staff is available week days only
6 no one from the DHS agency is available when I have an emergency
7 OTHER, PLEASE SPECIFY: _____

PRIVATE AGENCY
1 the private agency caseworker is on-call, available 24 hours a day
2 we can try to call the private agency caseworker at home when not at the office
3 when the private agency caseworker is not available, there is other private agency staff on-call, available 24 hours a day
4 private agency staff is available days, evenings and weekends, but not 24 hours a day
5 private agency staff is available week days only
6 no one from the private agency is available when I have an emergency
7 OTHER, PLEASE SPECIFY: _____
8 NOT APPLICABLE

6. Do you know how your DHS and/or your private agency handles allegations of child abuse by licensed foster parents?
1 YES ————————————>
2 NO

7. How much support/information does your DHS and/or your private agency provide to foster parents accused of abuse? (circle one response per agency)

DHS		PRIVATE	
1	A LOT	1	A LOT
2	SOME	2	SOME
3	LITTLE	3	LITTLE
4	NONE	4	NONE
5	DON'T KNOW	5	DON'T KNOW/NA

B. THE FOSTER CARE PLACEMENT: (Estimated time to complete this section: 8 minutes)

For this next section, we would like you to consider the foster children who have been placed in your care. The first few questions will ask about a specific child. In those cases, please answer for the **most recent child who has left** your foster home. If you have never had a child placed with you, or if all your placements are still foster children in your home, please circle the response "not applicable". **For the last questions** in this section, we want you to **generally** consider **all the foster children** who have been placed in your home. If you have never had a child placed with you, then circle the response "not applicable".

For questions 8 - 16, please consider ONLY the MOST RECENT FOSTER CHILD WHO HAS LEFT FOSTERING IN YOUR HOME.

8. Where did the **most recent foster child** go after leaving your home? (circle on response)

    1   he/she was reunited with birth parents
    2   he/she went to live with relatives of the birth parents
    3   he/she went to another foster home
    4   he/she was adopted by us
    5   he/she was adopted by someone other than us
    6   he/she went into group care
    7   he/she went to juvenile detention or jail
    8   he/she ran away
    9   we don't know what happened to him/her
    10   NOT APPLICABLE (never had a child leave fostering with us)
    11   OTHER; PLEASE SPECIFY:_____

9. Did you agree with where that child went after leaving your home? (circle one response)

    1   YES
    2   NO
    3   NOT APPLICABLE (never had a child leave fostering with us)

10. Who initiated the child leaving your home? (circle one response)

    1   OUR FOSTER FAMILY
    2   THE CHILD
    3   DHS CASEWORKER
    4   PRIVATE AGENCY CASEWORKER
    5   PROBATION OFFICER
    6   THE COURTS

11. How long was that child placed with your foster family? (circle one response)

    1   LESS THAN 1 MONTH
    2   1 - 6 MONTHS
    3   6 MONTHS - 1 YEAR
    4   1 - 2 YEARS
    5   MORE THAN 2 YEARS
    6   NOT APPLICABLE
    7   OTHER; PLEASE SPECIFY:_____

12. For the **most recent foster child who has left your foster home**, what was the initial reason for placement? If you don't know, write "don't know". If you've never had a child leave fostering, write "NA".

_____

13. For the **most recent foster child who has left your foster home**, were you informed about the child's case history and past behavior upon placement? (circle one response)

    1   YES
    2   NO
    3   WE RECEIVED ONLY PARTIAL INFORMATION
    4   NOT APPLICABLE

14. For the **most recent foster child who has left your foster home**, were you informed about the child's biological family background upon placement? (circle one response)

    1   YES

    2   NO

    3   WE RECEIVED ONLY PARTIAL INFORMATION

    4   NOT APPLICABLE

15. For the **most recent foster child who has left your foster home**, were you informed about all medical concerns the child had upon placement? (circle one response)

    1   YES

    2   NO

    3   WE RECEIVED ONLY PARTIAL INFORMATION

    4   NOT APPLICABLE/THE CHILD HAD NO MEDICAL CONCERNS

16. For the **most recent foster child who has left your foster home**, did you have a copy of the child's case permanency plan/ reunification plan upon placement? (circle one response)

    1   YES

    2   NO

    3   NOT APPLICABLE

For the remaining questions in this section, please generally consider all your foster placements within the last five years.

17. Since you have been a foster family, to what degree have you experienced conflict or stress with each of the following?	none	little	some	much	not applicable
a. between spouses	1	2	3	4	NA
b. between parents and own children	1	2	3	4	NA
c. with financial expenses	1	2	3	4	NA
d. with extended family	1	2	3	4	NA
e. with parents' employment	1	2	3	4	NA
f. family's social life	1	2	3	4	NA
g. family's community involvement	1	2	3	4	NA

18. Have you ever wanted to use ——> respite care?

    1   YES

    2   NO

19. Was respite care available when you wanted to use it? ————>

    1   YES

    2   NO

    3   sometimes

    4   haven't wanted to use it

20. When you wanted to use respite care, did a caseworker assist you in finding it?

    1   YES, a DHS caseworker

    2   YES, a private agency caseworker

    3   NO

    4   NA/haven't wanted to use it

21. How often do you receive the foster children's Title XIX cards monthly? (circle one response)

    1   ALWAYS

    2   USUALLY

    3   SOMETIMES

    4   NEVER

22. Generally, what is the practice for your attending court hearings involving foster children? (circle one response)

    1   we are required to attend
    2   we are requested to attend
    3   we are not invited to attend or participate
    4   OTHER; PLEASE SPECIFY:_____

23. Given all the foster children placed in your home within the last five years, what difficulties, if any, have you experienced getting information on each of the following?

	never	sometimes	occasionally	frequently
a. anticipated length of placement	1	2	3	4
b. reason for placement	1	2	3	4
c. comprehensive case history/past behavior of foster children	1	2	3	4
d. case permanency plan/reunification plan	1	2	3	4
e. court order reports	1	2	3	4
f. biological family background	1	2	3	4
g. medical needs/concerns; Title XIX	1	2	3	4
h. other, please specify:	1	2	3	4

24. Are your birth/adoptive children supportive in caring for your foster children?

1   YES   ————————————>
2   NO
3   SOMETIMES
4   NOT APPLICABLE
       (do not have birth/adoptive children)

25. Would your family use family therapy/other assistance to help your own children better understand foster parenting?
1   YES
2   NO
3   NOT APPLICABLE
       (don't have birth/adoptive children)

26. Would your birth/adoptive children be interested in attending foster parent training?

    1   YES
    2   NO
    3   DON'T HAVE BIRTH/ADOPTIVE CHILDREN

C. TRAINING   (Estimated time to complete this section: 1 minute)

27. How many hours of training have you received since being licensed/relicensed this year?

    1   MORE THAN 20 HOURS
    2   15 - 20 HOURS
    3   10 - 15 HOURS
    4   6 - 10 HOURS
    5   LESS THAN 6 HOURS

28. How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statements about ongoing training?

	strongly disagree	2	3	strongly agree
a. Foster parent trainings are affordable	1	2	3	4
b. Trainings are held within 30 miles of our home	1	2	3	4
c. We like the days of the week when trainings are held	1	2	3	4
d. We like the time of day when trainings are held	1	2	3	4
e. Trainings cover topics that are helpful to fostering	1	2	3	4
f. We learn a lot at foster parent trainings	1	2	3	4

D. FOSTER PARENTING   (Estimated time of completion: 12 minutes)

This section will give us an idea of how fostering has affected your family. Your responses in this section will help us to more clearly understand how foster families are currently supported or not supported.

29. How strongly do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements?	strongly disagree	2	3	strongly agree	
a. the initial licensing process gave us an adequate understanding of our role as a foster family	1	2	3	4	
b. our family's privacy was respected during the initial licensing process	1	2	3	4	
c. overall, we were very satisfied with the initial licensing process	1.	2	3	4	
d. efforts are made to match foster children's needs with our family's abilities and interests	1	2	3	4	
e. when we were first being recruited, foster parenting was expressed as a temporary involvement with the children	1	2	3	4	
f. the number of contacts the DHS caseworker has with our foster children is adequate	1	2	3	4	
g. the number of contacts the DHS caseworker has with us (foster parents) is adequate	1	2	3	4	
h. the number of contacts the private agency caseworker has with our foster children is adequate	1	2	3	4	NA
i. the number of contacts the private agency caseworker has with us (foster parents) is adequate	1	2	3	4	NA
j. we are familiar with DHS rules and regulations regarding expectations of foster families	1	2	3	4	
k. DHS rules and regulations regarding expectations of foster families are clear and easy to understand	1	2	3	4	
l. we are familiar with our private agency's rules and regulations regarding expectations of foster families	1	2	3	4	NA
m. our private agency's rules and regulations regarding expectations of foster families are clear and easy to understand	1	2	3	4	NA
n. we receive adequate information about the foster children in our care in a timely manner	1	2	3	4	
o. we receive foster care reimbursements in a timely manner	1	2	3	4	
p. foster care reimbursement rates are adequate	1	2	3	4	
q. foster parent ongoing training helps us care for our foster children	1	2	3	4	
r. foster parent training helps us work with birth parents for children with whom reunification is being planned	1	2	3	4	NA

29. How strongly do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements?

	strongly disagree	2	3	strongly agree	
s. the reasons why the children are in foster care are explained to us at the time of placement	1	2	3	4	
t. our views are considered when decisions about the child's treatment plan are being made	1	2	3	4	
u. we generally receive adequate notice of our foster children's appointments, such as court and family visits	1	2	3	4	
v. we generally are involved in activities designed to prepare for a child's reunification with birth parents	1	2	3	4	NA

30. How strongly do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements about being a foster family?

	strongly disagree	2	3	strongly agree	
a. Foster children need our help		1	2	3	4
b. We are a help to the parents of foster children	1	2	3	4	
c. Being a foster family has allowed one parent to work in the home rather than outside the home	1	2	3	4	NA
d. We are a good foster family	1	2	3	4	
e. We feel that our work as foster parents is valued and appreciated	1	2	3	4	
f. We feel satisfaction from helping in the adoption process	1	2	3	4	NA
g. We feel satisfaction from helping children reunite with their parents	1	2	3	4	NA
h. Fostering is related to our church/religious responsibility	1	2	3	4	NA
i. Fostering is our community responsibility	1	2	3	4	
j. Monthly foster care stipends provide additional income	1	2	3	4	
k. Foster parent training helps us with our own children	1	2	3	4	NA
l. We enjoy being part of a professional team	1	2	3	4	
m. DHS expresses our work as valuable and important	1	2	3	4	
n. The private agency expresses our work as valuable and important	1	2	3	4	NA
o. Our family benefits from interacting with the foster children	1	2	3	4	
p. Foster parent NOVA training is a waste of time	1	2	3	4	
q. Private agency foster parent training is a waste of time	1	2	3	4	NA
r. We enjoy meeting and knowing other foster families	1	2	3	4	
s. Other, please specify:_____	1	2	3	4	

31. How frustrating are each of the following aspects of being a foster family?

	very frustrating	2	3	not very frustrating	
a. Our own family doesn't have enough time to spend together	1	2	3	4	
b. Our own family has too many work or school demands on our time	1	2	3	4	
c. Foster parenting is too stressful	1	2	3	4	
d. Payments for foster care do not adequately cover the costs of care	1	2	3	4	
e. Our children are not accepting of the foster children	1	2	3	4	NA
f. There are too many problems with liability expenses	1	2	3	4	
g. There is too much "red tape" and paperwork	1	2	3	4	
h. Dealing with DHS' procedures	1	2	3	4	
i. Dealing with the private agency's procedures	1	2	3	4	NA
j. Dealing with the court system	1	2	3	4	NA
k. Payments are not received in a timely manner	1	2	3	4	
l. Allegations of abuse to foster children	1	2	3	4	
m. DHS workers are not available when we need them	1	2	3	4	
n. Private agency workers are not available when we need them	1	2	3	4	NA
o. Foster children's behavioral problems are too great	1	2	3	4	
p. Discipline options are too restricting	1	2	3	4	
q. Daycare/child care expenses are not reimbursed	1	2	3	4	NA
r. Other, please specify:_____	1	2	3	4	

32. Based on your experiences, would you recommend being a foster family to others? (circle one response)

    1   YES
    2   NO
    3   MAYBE

33. Do you plan to continue as a foster family after your current placement leaves? (circle one response)

    1   YES
    2   NO
    3   uncertain
    4   current placement is a relative, friend's child, neighbor's child (SPECIAL LICENSE)
    5   current placement is foster/adoption, our home will be closed after adoption

34. Do you feel free to make comments to your caseworker about critical issues about the children in your care? (circle one response)
    1   YES
    2   NO
    3   SOMETIMES

35. In your experience, do birth parents receive an adequate amount of services?

    1   YES
    2   NO
    3   DON'T KNOW

36. Do you think that the amount of time that birth parents spend with foster children is:

    1   TOO MUCH
    2   ABOUT RIGHT
    3   NOT ENOUGH

37. If you could make a specific change to the foster care system to help foster children and foster parents, what would it be? Please describe.

IOWA FOSTER AND ADOPTIVE PARENTS ASSOCIATION (IFAPA)
(Estimated time to complete this section: 3 minutes)

Some foster parents have found participation in the IFAPA to be beneficial, others have not found it to be helpful. Your responses in this section will help the IFAPA to improve the services they provide to foster families.

    38. Are you currently a member of the Iowa Foster and Adoptive Parent Association?

        1   YES
        2   NO

39. If you are a member, how long have you been a member (if not a member, write "0")?_____

40. If you are not a member, what are the reasons why you haven't joined? (circle all that apply)

        1   cost of the membership
        2   don't know how to become a member
        3   don't know what the IFAPA has done
        4   don't have time to be a member
        5   don't know the benefits of being a member
        6   need more information
        7   NOT APPLICABLE, already a member
        8   OTHER, PLEASE SPECIFY:_____

41. Which of the following would you like the IFAPA to provide to help you as a foster family? (circle all that apply)

        1   an ombudsman (someone I can talk with who can represent my concerns
                    within the system)
        2   information about support groups or foster parent meetings
        3   lobbyist, to have legislative voice
        4   training or education, about:_____

42. What information would you most like to see in the Iowa Foster and Adoptive Parent Association newsletter? (circle all that apply)

1   dates and locations of training and conferences
2.   legislative information concerning foster care
3   information about new regulations and rules
4   tips about fostering, such as parent-child activities
5   information on how to start or join foster parent support groups
6   stories about foster families
7   other, please specify:_____

43. Would you recommend membership in the Iowa Foster and Adoptive Parent Association to foster parents or foster care professionals?

1   YES
2   NO

44. Please explain.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION: (Estimated time to complete this section: 5 minutes)

Finally, we would like to ask some questions about your family to help us interpret the results.

45. Are you currently a licensed foster family?

1   YES
2   NO

46. How many years have you been/were licensed as a foster family?_____

47. How many children are you currently licensed for? (if not licensed, write "0")_____

48. On average, how many foster children do you generally have placed in your home at one time? (circle the number of the response)

1   0 - 1
2   2 - 3
3   4 - 5
4   MORE THAN 5

49. What type of placements do you generally accept? (circle all that apply)

1   children birth to 5 years
2   children 6 to 12 years
3   children 12 to 18 years
4   children with disabilities
5   trans-racial placements
6   children with behavioral concerns
7   children with special medical concerns
8   respite placements
9   OTHER; PLEASE SPECIFY: _____

50. How many biological children, if any, do you have? (If none, write "0")_____

51. How many adopted children, if any, do you have? (If none, write "0")_____

52. How many foster children are currently in your care? (If none, write "0")_____

53. How many foster children have you have cared for in your fostering career: (If none, write "0")___

54. In addition to being licensed by DHS, are your placements also supervised by a private agency?

      1   YES
      2   NO

55. Is your home a single or two parent foster home?

      1   SINGLE
      2   TWO-PARENT

56. Age of the foster **mother:**_____   **57.** Age of the foster **father:**_____

58. Please indicate which **best** describes the employment status of the foster parents:
(circle one response per parent)

MOTHER		FATHER	
1	RETIRED	1	RETIRED
2	STUDENT	2	STUDENT
3	FULL-TIME	3	FULL-TIME
4	PART-TIME	4	PART-TIME
5	UNEMPLOYED, looking for work	5	UNEMPLOYED, looking for work
6	HOMEMAKER	6	HOUSE HUSBAND
7	NA/NO MOTHER IN FAMILY	7	NA/NO FATHER IN FAMILY

59. Please indicate which **best** describes the place of the foster parents' employment:
(circle one response per parent)

MOTHER		FATHER	
1	IN-HOME	1	IN-HOME
2	OUT-OF HOME	2	OUT-OF-HOME
3	PART IN, PART OUT-OF HOME	3	PART IN, PART OUT-OF HOME
4	NA/NO MOTHER IN FAMILY	4	NA/NO FATHER IN FAMILY

60. Please describe the occupation of the foster parents:

MOTHER:_____

FATHER:_____

61. Please indicate which best describes the highest level of education completed by the foster parents: (circle one response per parent)

MOTHER		FATHER	
1	NO FORMAL EDUCATION	1	NO FORMAL EDUCATION
2	SOME GRADE SCHOOL	2	SOME GRADE SCHOOL
3	COMPLETED GRADE SCHOOL	3	COMPLETED GRADE SCHOOL
4	SOME HIGH SCHOOL	4	SOME HIGH SCHOOL
5	COMPLETED HIGH SCHOOL	5	COMPLETED HIGH SCHOOL
6	SOME COLLEGE	6	SOME COLLEGE
7	COMPLETED COLLEGE	7	COMPLETED COLLEGE
8	SOME GRADUATE WORK	8	SOME GRADUATE WORK
9	A GRADUATE DEGREE	9	A GRADUATE DEGREE
10	NA/NO MOTHER IN FAMILY	10	NA/NO FATHER IN FAMILY

62. Please indicate which best describes the foster family's total income: (circle one response)

    1   LESS THAN $10,000
    2   10,000 TO 19,999
    3   20,000 TO 29,999
    4   30,000 TO 39,999
    5   40,000 TO 49,999
    6   50,000 TO 59,999
    7   60,000 TO 69,999
    9   OVER $70,000

63. How long have you lived in your current place of residence? (circle one response)

    1   LESS THAN 1 YEAR
    2   1 - 3 YEARS
    3   4 - 6 YEARS
    4   7 - 10 YEARS
    5   MORE THAN 10 YEARS

64. Which of the following identifies your family's racial/ethnic background? (circle one response)

    1   CAUCASIAN/WHITE
    2   AFRICAN AMERICAN/BLACK
    3   NATIVE AMERICAN/AMERICAN INDIAN
    4   HISPANIC AMERICAN
    5   ASIAN AMERICAN
    6   INTER-RACIAL
    7   OTHER: PLEASE SPECIFY:_____

65. Who does your family rely on for personal support? (circle all that apply)

    1   EXTENDED FAMILY
    2   FRIENDS/NEIGHBORS
    3   OTHER FOSTER PARENTS/SUPPORT GROUPS
    4   THE STATE FOSTER PARENT ASSOCIATION (IFAPA)
    5   DHS CASEWORKERS
    6   PRIVATE AGENCY CASEWORKERS
    7   NONE OF THE ABOVE
    8   OTHER:_____

Please write any additional comments you may have about your foster care experience or this survey that you feel are important to share with us.

Thank you for completing this survey.   Confidentiality will be maintained.
Understanding foster parent concerns is critical to understanding what changes
may be needed in Iowa's foster care system.   Analysis of the responses will be
completed by April 1994. Summaries of the results will be sent to key legislators,
DHS, the Coalition for Children and Family Services, private agencies, IFAPA, and
concerned others.   If you would like a summary, please contact the Iowa Foster
Family Recruitment and Retention Project in April 1994.

APPENDIX C

FOSTER FAMILY SATISFACTION SCALES

FOSTER FAMILY SATISFACTION SUB-SCALES

SUB-SCALE 1: SATISFACTION WITH RECEIVING PROFESSIONAL TRAINING AND SUPPORT

1i.	Helpfulness of services provided to foster family
1j.	Helpfulness of foster parent support group
28c.	We like the day of the week when trainings are held
28d.	We like the time of day when training are held
28e.	Training cover topics that are helpful to fostering
28f.	We learn a lot at foster parent training
29b.	Our family's privacy was respected during the initial licensing process
29c.	Overall, we were very satisfied with the initial licensing process
29p.	Foster care reimbursement rates are adequate
29q.	Ongoing training helps foster parents care for foster children
29s.	Reasons why the children are in foster care are explained to foster parents at the time of placement
29u.	Foster parents generally receive adequate notice of foster children's appointments, such as court and family visits
30r.	Foster families enjoy meeting and knowing other foster families
31d.	Payments for foster care do not adequately cover the costs of care

SUB-SCALE 2: SATISFACTION WITH PRIVATE FOSTER CARE AGENCIES AND CASEWORKERS

1e.	Helpfulness of private agency caseworkers
1f.	Helpfulness of private agency
29h.	Number of contacts private agency caseworker has with foster children is adequate
29i.	Number of contacts private agency caseworker has with foster parents is adequate
29n.	Foster parents receive adequate information about the foster children in a timely manner
29t.	Foster parents' views are considered when decisions about the child's treatment plan are being made
31i.	Dealing with the private agency's procedures
31n.	Private agency workers are not available when foster parents need them

SUB-SCALE 3: SATISFACTION WITH RECEIVING SPECIFIC TYPES OF
INFORMATION ABOUT THE FOSTER CHILDREN
23. Ease of receiving information about:
23a.   Anticipated length of placement
23b.   Reason for placement
23c.   Case history/child's past behavior
23d.   Case permanency/reunification plan
23e.   Court order reports
23f.   Biological family background
23g.   Medical needs/concerns; Title XIX
30k.   Training helps foster parents with their own children

SUB-SCALE 4: SATISFACTION WITH THE PRACTICE OF DHS CASEWORKERS
1d.   Helpfulness of DHS caseworkers
1g.   Helpfulness of DHS agency
1h.   Helpfulness of services provided to foster children
29f.   Number of contacts the DHS caseworker has with the foster children is adequate
29g.   Number of contacts the DHS caseworker has with foster parents is adequate
29v.   Foster parents are generally involved in activities designed to prepare for a child's
        reunification with birth parents
30a.   Foster children need foster parents' help
30e.   Foster parents feel that their work is valued and appreciated
31m.   DHS workers are not available when foster parents need them

SUB-SCALE 5: SATISFACTION WITH THE EFFECT THAT FOSTERING HAS ON
THE INTERACTIONS OF ORIGINAL FAMILY MEMBERS
17a.   Stress or conflict between spouses
17c.   Stress or conflict with financial expenses
17d.   Stress or conflict with extended family
17e.   Stress or conflict with parents' employment
17f.   Stress or conflict with family's social life
17g.   Stress or conflict with family's community involvement
31a.   Foster families don't have enough time to spend with the families' original
members
31c.   Foster parenting is too stressful

SUB-SCALE 6: SATISFACTION WITH RULES AND REGULATIONS WITHIN
THE FOSTER CARE SYSTEM

29j.   Foster parents are familiar with DHS rules and regulations regarding expectations of foster families

29k. DHS rules and regulations regarding expectations of foster families are clear and easy to understand

30f.   Foster families feel satisfaction from helping in the adoption process

30m.   DHS expresses foster parent's work as valuable and important

31h.   Dealing with DHS' procedures

31j.   Dealing with the court system

31l.   Allegations of abuse to foster children

31p.   Discipline options are too restricting

SUB-SCALE 7: SATISFACTION WITH DEALING WITH BUREAUCRATIC
SYSTEMS

1a.   Helpfulness of juvenile court system

1b.   Helpfulness of juvenile probation/juvenile court officers

1c.   Helpfulness of children's guardian ad litem

1k.   Helpfulness of state foster parent association

31g.   There it too much "red tape" and paperwork

SUB-SCALE 8: SATISFACTION WITH THE RESPONSIBILITIES RELATED TO
HAVING FOSTER CHILDREN PLACED IN THE HOME

31b.   Foster families have too many work or school demands on their time

31e.   Foster parents' children are not accepting of the foster children

31f.   There are too many problems with liability expenses

31o.   Foster children's behavioral problems are too great

SUB-SCALE 9: SATISFACTION WITH PROFESSIONAL COMMUNICATION
FROM THE FOSTER CARE SYSTEM

29e.   When we were first being recruited, foster parenting was expressed as a temporary involvement with the children

29r.   Training helps foster parents work with birth parents for children with whom reunification is being planned

30c.   Being a foster family has allowed one parent to work in the home rather than outside the home

30g.   Foster families feel satisfaction from helping children reunite with their parents

30l.   Foster parents enjoy being part of a professional team

SUB-SCALE 10: SATISFACTION WITH UNDERSTANDING THE FOSTER PARENT ROLE

29a. The initial licensing process gave us an adequate understanding of our role as a foster family

29d. Efforts are made to match foster children's needs with our family's abilities and interests

29l. Foster parents are familiar with private agency rules and regulations regarding expectations of foster families

29m. Private agency rules and regulations regarding expectations of foster families are clear and easy to understand

30b. Foster parents are a help to the parents of foster children

30j. Monthly foster care stipends provide additional income

SUB-SCALE 11: SATISFACTION WITH THE EXTERNAL REWARDS FOR FOSTERING

30h. Fostering is a church/religious responsibility

30i. Fostering is a community responsibility

SUB-SCALE 12: SATISFACTION WITH FOSTER CARE REIMBURSEMENTS

28a. Foster parent trainings are affordable

28b. Trainings are held within 30 miles of home

29o. Foster care reimbursements are received in a timely manner

31k. Payments are not received in a timely manner