

KINSHIP CENTER'S ADOPTION WRAPAROUND SERVICES

Kinship Center's Wraparound service is California's pilot program of intensive support for families who have adopted children from the foster care system. As a relatively new pilot program, it is presently only available to families who have adopted from the Counties of Santa Clara, Monterey and Orange, and on an individual case basis, as contracted by other counties.

Mission Statement:

We will guide and encourage adoptive families on their unique journeys, in order to further the commitment of their relationships to one another. We will empower families to utilize their strengths and to connect with supportive individuals and resources that will meet their needs.

Families Served:

Adoption Assistance Wraparound is provided to families who receive a subsidy payment through the Adoption Assistance Program (AAP) on behalf of their adopted child who is either:

1. At risk of placement in a high-level group home or institution within the next year, or
2. Presently placed in a group home or institution and is ready to transition home.

The program serves the needs of the entire family, regardless of which child was initially identified.

Program Description:

Adoption Wraparound is strength-based, family-driven, flexible, creative, committed to permanence, and adoption-competent. Goals are developed based on family needs, identified within regular family Team meetings, coordinated by a Wraparound Facilitator. Tasks are assigned by the team, and may include actions to be carried out by family members, community members, assistants hired by the family, hired professionals, and agency staff. Wraparound funds are allocated flexibly and targeted to meet established needs. Funds are managed conservatively to ensure that they will be available in the event of unusual need. If the child eventually needs residential placement then Wraparound pays for that service and continues to work on the goals, with reunification as the desired outcome.

Essential Components:

There is a set of Wraparound Standards established by the State of California that must be in place across the program, and within each individual family team. Primary among these are the reliance on family and individual strengths to effect change, family ownership of both the plan and process, and flexibility in approach. Adoption-competent elements are added to serve this unique population

Funding Source:

Wraparound is funded by AAP dollars that are diverted from each County's budget intended to support residential placement (California is a state that allows funding for residential placement from adoption subsidy). In other words, money that would have been spent on an institution is instead spent on supporting the child within their family and community. The funding



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is limited to a period of eighteen months, but can be re-established should another crisis arise creating a new risk of placement. The funds are flexible and can be pooled, so that high financial need for one family can be met from funds remaining from another family's Wrap. Funds that remain at the end of the eighteen month Wraparound period become available to support new families, or can be allocated to other child welfare services. In the case of our program, the residual funds support general post-adoption service activities in our region.

Setting:

Assistance is provided in any setting chosen by the family, and is usually provided by both professionals and system representatives, and members of the adoptive family's community. Planning and coordination of services occurs in each family's Team, comprised minimally of the parents, a facilitator, and a parent partner. Some teams may be three or four people and others eight or ten. Children are usually team members, depending on age. The goals are set by the Wraparound team, and the entire wraparound process is parent-driven.

Implementation Strategy:

Post-adoption services for challenging children are rare indeed, and those that exist are poorly funded. Given the accelerated pace of adoption for the nation's foster children the need for such services has become obvious. Wraparound will at first glance seem an expensive proposition. It is vital that stakeholders at all levels in the local government systems recognize that Wraparound funds are not new money. They are funds that are already budgeted to be spent on residential placement, often outside the local community and county. Keeping those funds "at home" and available for new child welfare projects, at the same time improving the stability and permanence of adoptive families, has been shown to be a powerful argument supporting implementation.

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For more information about this program, go to www.kinshipcenter.org.