Why it works:

- **Relationships** Foster parents are able to form non-threatening relationships with parents.

- **Foster parents care** They understand the needs of the children in foster care and they embrace the philosophy that kids belong with their parents.

- **Mentors are exceptional** foster parents and are committed to children and families. They value the relationships they have with the parents and families they work with.

- **Objectives identified** by the Action Plan are targeted towards specific barriers the family faces.

- **An under utilized resource**, the skills of foster parents are harnessed to fill gaps in the services offered to families.

- **Dwindling resources** in a climate of increased need for services, DCFS has tapped an experienced and available resource to assist families.

Program goals:

- **Enhance** child safety.

- **Increase** rates of reunification among families in Child Welfare.

- **Shorten** a child’s length of stay in foster care.

- **Reduce** rates of re-entry into care.

Program Coordinators

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Mentors work one on one with families and effectively establish non-adversarial relationships that often outlast the time period of the formal intervention.

Mentors assist families often isolated by substance abuse in establishing healthy forms of social support and assist them in repairing fractured family relationships.

Mentors teach families to advocate for themselves.

Mentors are role models.

How it works

A family’s participation in the program is strictly voluntary. The service is not court ordered.

Mentors are referred by the assigned social worker who has discussed the benefits of the program with their client.

The family, social worker and mentor work together to establish an Action Plan outlining the goals of the intervention.

Mentors are engaged with their assigned families for five hours each week to address the needs identified in the Action Plan.

The formal intervention period lasts for a period of four to six months.

Mentors are supervised and supported by Program Coordinators.

Mentors receive ongoing training.