VIRGINIA’S FOSTER CARE SYSTEM: BEDFORD TEAM

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Ongoing/Prevention

BEDFORD COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES
JUNE 22, 2015

A NORMAL TUESDAY
10:00 PM

• Dispatch calls on call worker.

• 13 year old has escaped her home where she has been kept in a closet. Law Enforcement is on scene.
Interviews begin
• On Call Team (CPS, Foster care, Supervisor, Law enforcement) Determines there is only enough evidence to remove the one child.

• 5 children remain in the home.

• All of the children have been adopted by the family from another locality. They were not known to Bedford.
Photographs taken of child at DSS building.
Worker is home to rest for a couple of hours before being back at work.
JUNE 23, 2015

• 8:30 AM  A new work day begins
10:30 AM

• 3 Child Protective Services Staff and Law Enforcement return to the home to conduct further interviews.
11:30 AM

- Emergency Removal Order (ERO) paperwork written, approved, and filed with court by staff in the office.
• Home interviews complete

• Staff return to DSS to schedule interagency staffing
• Child In Need of Services (CHINS) affidavits written, approved, and filed with the court.
4:20 PM

• Interagency meeting with Child Protective Services, Law enforcement, and Commonwealth Attorney.

• Charges determined.

• Plan established to return to the home for further interviews.
6:00 PM

• Jane Doe (Child) seen by Forensic Nurse
Child Protective Services and Law Enforcement meet to return to the home.
7:30 PM

• All children removed from the home.
• Mother, father, and grandmother arrested.
2 HOURS 44 MINUTES

TIME IT TAKES TO GET TO PLACEMENT
JUNE 24, 2015

• Remaining ERO’s filed
• CPS Investigation continues
JULY 2, 2015

• 4 other children have forensic interviews in Roanoke
• Final child has forensic interview in Emporia, Virginia
Final Adult Sentenced and case work is completed.
4

• Number of children from this family still waiting on adoption due to significant trauma.
MEANWHILE:
RESPONSE TIMES

• R1 = 24 hours
• R2 = 48 hours
• R3 = 5 business days
WORKER STRESS

• R1’s prior to July 2017 averaged 4 per month

• R1’s since July 2017 average 18 per month
DRUG EPIDEMIC
JULY 1 2018 TO PRESENT
CPS
ONGOING/PREVENTION
CASE LOADS

- State recommended 12-15 cases per worker (Ongoing)
- Bedford currently has 15-20 per worker
- Average length is 3-6 months
- Bedford currently has multiple cases over 1 year.
CRITERIA

• High/Very High Risk – CPS Investigations/Family Assessments
• Voluntary
• Court Ordered
MANDATES

• Family Partnership Meetings
• Teaming Meetings
• Face to Face Contacts Monthly with each family member
• Family Strengths and Needs Assessment
• Service Plans
• Safety Assessment
• Risk Reassessments (quarterly)
• Service Referrals
ADDITIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES

• Family Assessment and Planning Team (FAPT)
• Child and Adolescent Needs and Strengths (CANS)
• Court
• Visitation
PREVENTION

• Early Prevention
• Low/Moderate Risk from CPS cases with voluntary services
• Court ordered
• Truancy
• Home Studies
• Relief of Custody Petitions
MANDATES

• Face to Face Contact
• Initial Prevention Assessment
• Prevention Comprehensive Assessment
• Service Plan
• Service Referrals
• Reasonable Candidacy
IMPACT ON WORKER

- Current workers caseload (Senior Worker – 16 cases)
- Number of people (64 Face-to-face monthly contacts)
- Communicating with providers (School, Therapist, Psychiatrist, Medical Doctors, In-home workers, CASA, GAL, Attorney, extended family due to safety placement)
- Additional cases assigned throughout the month
- EVERYTHING is documented
- Required Child Welfare trainings
- Worrying that further abuse and neglect will occur while meeting mandates
- Hindered amount of time to engage family and build relationships
- Balancing work mandates and personal family time
- Burnout!
DAY 1 IN CARE

• Place the child on the day of removal

• Obtain: Allergies information
  Medications,
  Medicaid Card,
  Birth Certificate,
  Social Security Card,
  Immunization Report, and
  Clothing

• Send out New Child in care alert to finance and Child’s Services Office (CSA)

• Complete placement agreements
PLACEMENT OPTIONS

• **Maintenance Foster Homes**
  • Placement agreement
  • Code of ethics agreement
  • Financial contract

• **Therapeutic Foster Homes**
  • Application
  • Individual Family Service Plan (IFSP)
  • Child and Adolescent Needs and Strengths (CANS)
  • Family Assessment and Planning Team (FAPT) Assessment
  • Therapeutic Foster Care Confirmation
  • Placement agreement
  • Virginia Enhanced Maintenance Assessment Tool (VEMAT)

• **Group Home/Residential Placement**
  • Application
  • Individual Family Service Plan (IFSP)
  • Child and Adolescent Needs and Strengths (CANS)
  • Initial Plan of Care
  • Certificate of Need
  • Independent Assessment Certification and Coordination Team (IAACT) Process
FIRST 30 DAYS IN CARE

• Best Interest Determination Meeting for School Placement
• Expedited enrollment in school within 72 hours
• Title IV-E/Medicaid Application within 10 days
• Family Assessment and Planning Team (FAPT) within 14 days
• Individual Family Service Plan (IFSP)
• Child and Adolescent Needs and Strengths (CANS)
• Authorization to Exchange Information
• Procedural Safeguards
FIRST 30 DAYS IN CARE

• Home visit with prior custodian
• Pathways to Permanency
• Begin Full Disclosure Affidavit
• Indian Child Welfare Affidavit
• Paternity Affidavit
• Relative Locator and Family Tree
• Clear Search (family locator)
• Relative Letters
• Visits with family
FIRST 30 DAYS IN CARE

• Family Partnership Meeting
• Casey Life Skills Assessment
• Transitional Living Plan
• Fatherhood Registry Search
• 5 day court hearing
• 30 day court hearing
• Service plan to court
• Visit with child in placement
SERVICE PLAN REQUIREMENTS

• Transmittal
• Order/Underlying Petition
• Legal Issues Supplement Order
• Uniform Child Custody Jurisdiction and Enforcement Act Affidavit
• Service Member Civil Relief Act/Default Judgement Affidavit
• Service Plan Part A
• Indian Child Welfare Affidavit
• Paternity Affidavit
• Copy of Pathways to Permanency
• Client Health Report
• Client Education Report
• Copy of Transitional Living Plan (Independent Living Plan for youth 14 and older).
• Immunization Record
FAMILY VISITATION

• Children under 1 year of age - 3 visits per week- supervised initially

• Children 2-17 years of age - 1 visit per week- supervised initially

• Children in residential placements- 1 face to face visit per month
WHERE ARE MY KIDS (CASELOAD)?

• Appomattox
• Bedford (1 in own locality)
• Boones Mill
• Charlottesville
• Chesterfield
• Jarratt (3 children)
• Lynchburg
• Newport News
• Portsmouth
• Richmond (2 children)
• Roanoke
• South Boston
• Waynesboro
Currently, we have 85 children in care ranging from 4 months to 19 years of age.

16 of the 85 children are free for adoption.

Of those free for adoption:

There are at least 5 children free for adoption who are in residential treatment facilities due to a higher level of need. Aside from their case worker and Guardian Ad Litem (GAL), they have no one.
STRUGGLES

• Not enough foster homes
  • Right now when we are able to find an available foster home, it is most often outside of our community, requires a change in school and is too far from their families.

• Not enough adoptive homes

• Foster Care is a complex job with many components.
  • Takes two years to be trained, even longer to become proficient
  • Worker Turnover is high (less than 2 years)
  • Workers who don’t leave are burdened by the additional work created by continuous turnover.
• **Caseloads** – Bedford DSS believes best practice is that each worker should carry no more than 8-10 cases to be effective. This enables the worker to make a relationship with the family and the youth that can promote healthy changes in a family system.

• **Family Engagement** - Families don’t typically ask or want Social Services in their lives. Each worker has to work with the family to establish a relationship and even then the worker may be yelled at, cursed at and/or threatened.

• **Work Load/Schedule** - Foster Care is not a 40 hour a week job. We work early in the morning to late at night due to visits with youth after school or around foster parent work schedules and children’s activities, not to mention distance to each visit.

• **Compensation** – a new worker makes as much as a new employee at Hobby Lobby without having the added stress and student loans that come with a job in Foster Care. Workers are able to earn Comp time for hours worked outside of 40 hours. However, you have to have time to take it. Taking one week off, a worker needs to prepare the week before taking leave to make sure all is covered and then make up again the week they return from vacation. So a worker may work 20 hours over to prepare and be off for 40 hours of vacation.
• Aside from placement needs, we have a need for people to provide support to our young adults.

• We have 10 youth who are living on their own.

• Of those, 5 are living on their own, alone and without family support or contact.

• Other than their case worker, they have no one to call when their car breaks down, they run out of food, or they need advice.