

FOSTER CARE

A SET OF INDICATORS



FOREWORD

An indicator manual is the road map that measures the extent to which a programme has been implemented, whether the planned activities are progressing as per the plan and indicates the need for course correction if any. It provides a platform for assessing the quality and quantity of service delivery. It is an invaluable tool for planners and administrators for monitoring the programme.

Child protection is a concept that commits the State and communities to build a safe world for children. It is important that a verifiable monitoring framework is developed to assess the efforts of the State and civil society groups in ensure that the present schemes and programmes are effective in reaching the envisaged goals. Indicators fundamentally are developed to identify whether:

1. The policy and schemes are relevant to address the challenge to child protection in an effective manner
2. There are gaps or hurdles to the effective implementation and the need for course correction
3. Provides an effective medium to assess the quality of service delivery in an objective manner

As part of our efforts to build a Model project for promoting Foster care, ICCW Tamil Nadu has developed a Monitoring framework and a set of indicators that can be used by the Department of Social Defence to assess their performance. This document presents two sets of indicators. One set of indicators will be useful to assess the State level policies and programmes to promote Alternative Care and to verify the direction of the State.

The second group of indicators are in relation to implementation of the programme at the field level in relation to the stated goals. It can become a part of the MIS used for monitoring field level functionaries. We hope the Govt. finds this useful in their mission of promoting Alternative care programmes for children.

We acknowledge the cooperation of the Dept. of Social Defence and UNICEF and thank them for their guidance.

We wish to place on record our appreciation for the contribution of MS. Neeta Nair, the External Consultant and Dr. Ishwarya Rajan, Integrated Child Protection Scheme -State Consultant UNICEF in developing the indicator matrix. We wish to thank Mr. P.S.Srinivasa Rao for designing this document in an attractive manner

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FOSTER CARE MONITORING INDICATORS

INTRODUCTION

The Convention of the Rights of the Child (CRC) clearly obliges the State Parties and other duty bearers to put into place a mechanism through which the implementation of children's rights can be monitored and evaluated. However, more than one and a half decades have passed since the ratification of the CRC, yet a rights based monitoring and evaluation system has not been made available for programme implementers.

As a dedicated part of civil society groups that work within the Child Protection space, ICCW-TN has been facilitating the process of providing Alternative Care for children in Child Care Institutions, building a replicable model for successful Foster Care placements. The purpose of this report is to list the monitoring indicators pertinent to foster care in order to strengthen monitoring and evaluation which will ultimately help in providing a safe haven for children in need of care and protection. Moreover, it presents step by step strategies with indicators, which can minimise the challenges for effective programme implementation. The overall aim of the document is to ensure that children in need of care and protection are provided an enabling environment like a foster family to thrive and develop in.

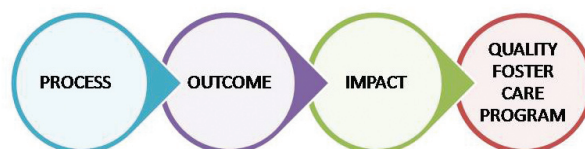
NEED FOR M&E IN FOSTER CARE

In recent years, the need has risen to develop better indicators against which to monitor and measure a child's well-being while raised in a foster family. While some models have been explored, and discussions have taken place across different agencies, to identify indicators that are not only meaningful but based on data that can be collected and analysed with relative ease is important.

M&E PROCESS

Therefore, we have adopted a three-step process to better understand and quantify the overarching aims of the Foster Care program.

1. **Process Evaluation:** A process evaluation describes the Foster Care program's services, activities, policies, and procedures. It provides early feedback as to whether the program is being implemented as intended, what barriers have been encountered, and what changes are needed. Most importantly, it may reveal why outcomes were or were not achieved.
2. **Outcome Evaluation:** An outcome evaluation measures a program's results and determines whether intended outcomes were achieved. It tests hypotheses by comparing conditions before and after participation, by comparing participants with similar individuals who did not participate, or by comparing a combination of both.
3. **Impact evaluation:** Impact evaluation is an assessment of how foster care intervention being evaluated affects outcomes, whether these effects are intended or unintended. The proper analysis of impact requires a counterfactual of what those outcomes would have been in the absence of the intervention.



STRATEGY ADOPTED TO DELIVER QUALITY FOSTER CARE

There are three different kinds of alternative care for children. They are

1. **Adoption:** Adoption is a legal procedure that permits someone to become the parent of a child despite the fact that the parent and the child are not blood relatives. Adoptive parents are the child's biological parents in every sense. The child enjoys all the rights of a biological child.
2. **Sponsorship:** Sponsorship is a financial assistance that is extended to vulnerable families so that the child will be looked after at home by the parents. It will discourage institutionalisation.
3. **Foster Care:** Foster care is an arrangement whereby a child lives, usually on a temporary basis, with unrelated family members. A child shall be preferably placed with child's extended family or with close friends of the family who are known to child and when such options are either not available or not willing to take care of the child, the child may be placed in foster care. While placing a child in foster care, preference shall be given to those families that share similar cultural, tribal and /or community connection.

Foster care provides an opportunity to be raised in a family-type setting for children who can be temporarily cared for when their biological parents are unable to. Yet, sometimes children's development and adaptive functioning does not follow a positive course in foster care. Some foster children are characterized by problematic psychosocial functioning and their problems do not always diminish during their stay in foster care. Furthermore, foster children's problem behaviours, especially externalizing problems, are a major reason for placement breakdown. Foster parents take care of children who are orphans, often have damaged attachment with their parents, initially caused by suboptimal parenting, neglect, or abuse. If the attachment to their parents was healthy, but residing with the parents was no longer possible, the bond with the biological parents may be broken due to placement in a foster family.

BASIC PRINCIPLES OF FOSTER CARE

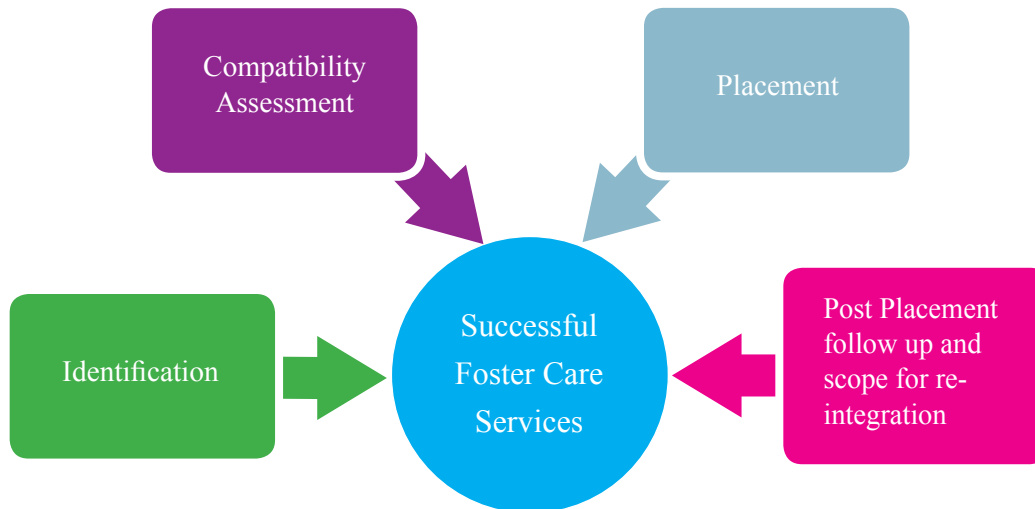
1. All decisions regarding placement of children shall be child-centric and individualized based on the Best Interest Principle.
2. Children have a right to give their opinion regarding Foster care. The right to participation must be respected.
3. Parental assessment is central to the process of Foster care.
4. Safeguards for prevention of abuse and neglect must be embedded in every decision.
5. Failure or returning to the CCI is highly traumatic to the child. Hence utmost care must be taken in all the decisions to protect the child.

PRE- FOSTER CARE (PREVENTION)

The fundamental duty of the State is to create awareness and through that, behaviour change. This is done through a series of awareness workshops and drives. Awareness is an integral component to initiate the overarching foster care theme. Once adequate awareness measures are in place, the formal foster care process can be initiated.

THE ACTUAL FOSTER CARE PROCESS

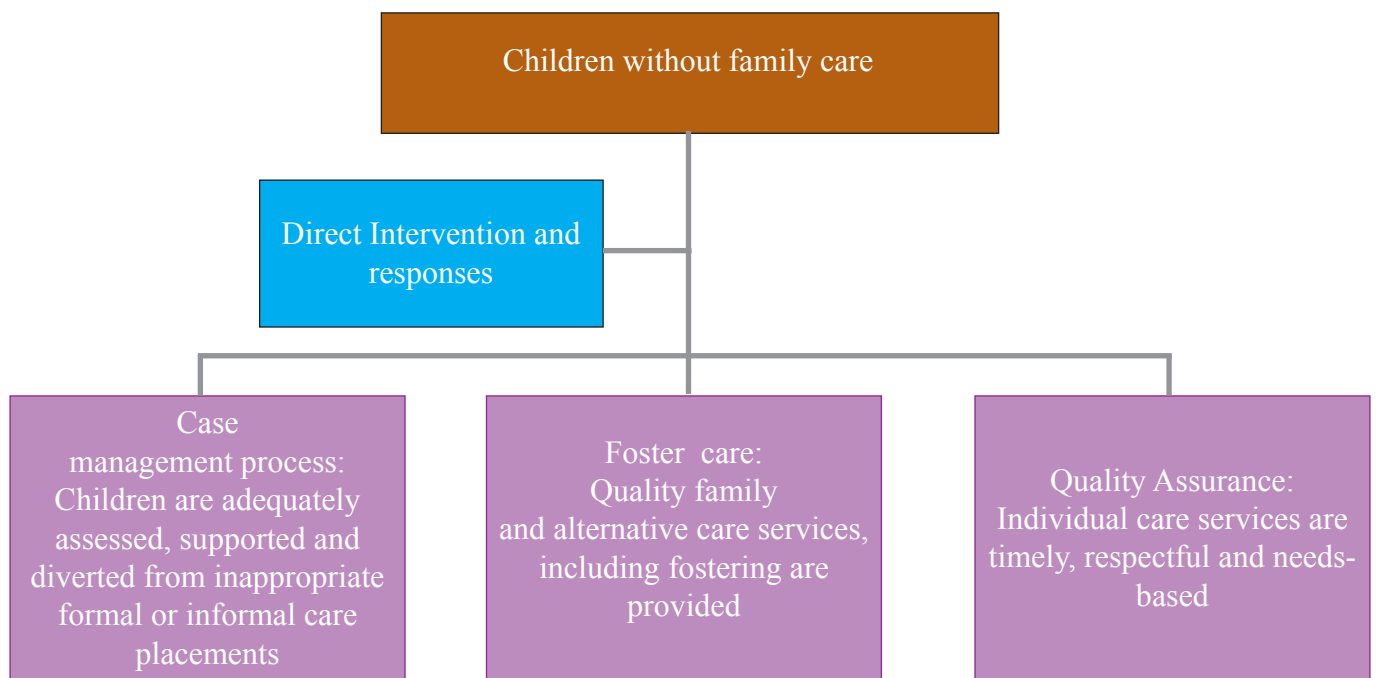
The strategies that are being adopted as part of the foster care process are four pronged, as detailed in the diagram below.



Some of the key factors that need to be looked at during the process are

- Identification of children and foster families via a series of technical assessments.
- Compatibility assessment of children and parents.
- Actual Placement
- Post Placement monitoring and follow-up

THE FOSTER CARE PROCESS - AN OVERVIEW OF THE OBJECTIVES IN MIND



A. STATE LEVEL FOSTER CARE INDICATORS

i. Key Indicators

- Development of a policy for alternative care.
- Development of SOP manual.
- Development of training manual for Child Protection Staff.
- Fund utilisation training manual.
- Fund allotment and utilisation.

ii. Dashboard (MIS Indicators)

- Number and % of foster families willing to foster children.
- Number and % of foster families found to be eligible to foster child(ren).
- Number and % of foster families provided with foster children.
- Number and % of children identified to be eligible for foster care.
- Number and % of identified children willing to be in foster care.
- Number and % of children prepared and placed for trial placements with foster families.
- Number and % of children willing to continue living with foster families after trial placement.
- Number and % of children placed in foster care.
- Number and % of children who returned from foster families.
- Number and % of children who continue to stay in foster families.
- Number and % of children who successfully completed the stay in foster families as per the CWC order and returned to biological parents.

iii. Qualitative Indicators

- % of (reintegrated) children and foster families supported who state satisfaction with the process.
- % of children in foster care who have an individual care plan, which is being used to address their needs and monitor their wellbeing.
- % of identified foster families adequately trained and provided with supervision and support.
- % of staff/caregivers working with children who receive adequate supervision and support on a regular basis.
- # of children who report satisfaction in child care within foster homes.
- % of children who report an increased sense of safety and well-being.
- % of trained staff who demonstrate an increase in appropriate knowledge of foster care concerns.

B. PREVENTION

i. Awareness, Capacity and Behaviour Change

Activity	Sub Activities	Level	Frequency	Output Indicator	Outcome Indicator
Sensitise community on foster care through CPC	Develop community training modules and IEC to be used by CPC for sensitizing the community on foster care	State Level	One-time	No. of modules created on foster care No. of foster care sensitization programmes / meetings conducted through CPC. No. of villages sensitized	
Conduct campaigns and street plays for awareness on foster care		District Level	One-time	No. of street plays conducted No. of campaigns conducted No. of villages covered through campaigns / street plays No of mass media videos created No of mass media audio files created No of radio drives conducted	% Improvement in awareness on Foster care process
Display IEC Materials		State and district Level	Every month	No. of IEC materials developed on foster care No. of IEC materials printed No. of places displayed with Foster care related IEC materials No. of foster care related information shared in social media and print media	% Improvement in awareness on Foster care process % Improvement in awareness on Foster care process %Improvement in awareness on Foster Care amongst foster families, CCIs, parents, children %Improvement in awareness on Foster Care amongst foster families, CCIs, parents, children

Convergence of key stakeholders	Briefings	State Level	One-time	No. of Dept Approached, No. of meetings conducted No. of departments participating in promotion/ support of foster care	% Improvement in awareness on Foster Care program among stakeholders, No of Departments working together
Establishment of District Level Foster Care Committee	Monitoring Sessions	State Level	Monthly	No. of district level committees formed	
	Review Meetings	State Level	Quarterly	No. of review meetings / year	
Maintenance of database	Training of staff on database	District Level	One-time	No. of staff trained in using the data base	% of staff who completed the entries completely in time
	Data entry	District	Monthly	No. of entries made	% of correct entries completed in time
	Review of Data Repository	State Level	Quarterly	No. of Review meetings conducted	% of cases reviewed

C. PROCESS INDICATORS

i. IDENTIFICATION OF CHILDREN/ PARENTS

Activity	Sub Activities	Level	Frequency	Output Indicator	Outcome Indicator
Need assessment on foster care	Training staff on needs assessment tool	District	One-time	No. of staff trained, No. of sessions attended	% of staff acquainted with needs assessment tool, % of staff using needs assessment tool with ease
	Field level data collection	Family Level	One-time	No. of foster families visited, No. of meetings conducted, No of CCIs/ family homes visited	% of families identified for the program
	conducting district wise Need assessment	State Level	One-time	No. of districts which completed the Need assessment reports/ year	
Monthly follow up with key stakeholders	Monitoring meeting with field staff, district authorities	District	Monthly	No. of meetings conducted, No. of stakeholders (type) p who attended the meeting	% of Depts. involved in the program. (direct and indirect)
Check for legal eligibility of parent	Train staff to check the legal eligibility status of parent.	District	One-time	No. of staff trained	% of staff aware of parent's legal status
	Assess for legal eligibility	District	Monthly	No. of parents assessed No. of parents found to be eligible after going through the eligibility check	% of parents whose wards were found to be legally eligible

Maintain a database of CNCP identified as suitable for foster care placement	Home Visit of Foster home	district Level	Monthly	No. of CCIs visited, No. of children identified in the communities	% if children identified for foster care process
	Entry into data base on arrival/ enrolment basis	State Level and district level	One-time	No. of children and families entered in the registry for foster care placement	

ii. COMPATIBILITY ASSESSMENT PROCESS

Activity	Sub Activities	Level	Frequency	Output Indicator	Outcome Indicator
Home study	Interview with child	District Level	One-Time	No. of child study reports , No. of counselling sessions given	% of children expressing interest in being part of the Foster program
	Interview with foster parent	District Level	One-Time	No. of home study report , No. of counselling sessions given	% of foster families expressing interest in taking the child in.
	Counselling of parent	District Level	One-Time	No. of counselling sessions given.	% parents/guardian expressing interest in the child being sent for foster care
	Report Vetting, Final compatible list	District Level	One-Time	No. of reports submitted.	% of children compatible for FC

iii. PLACEMENT PROCESS

Activity	Sub Activities	Level	Frequency	Output Indicator	Outcome Indicator
In dept counselling of child	Training of staff on counselling	District Level	One-Time	No. of staff trained, No. of training sessions attended	% improvement in knowledge of staff on FCG
	Counselling program for children	District Level	One-Time	No. of children counselled,	% of children willing to be placed in Foster Care
	Review with District Authorities	District Level	One-Time	No. of cases reviewed by district authorities	
Request for interim order from CWC for trial placement	Application submission for trial placement in family	District Level	One-Time	No. of applications placed to CWC requesting Interim order	

After the interim order, place child in foster family for 2-3 days (Observation Visit)	Three day observation visit monitoring	Family Level	One-Time	No. of children placed in foster families for trial No. of children found to be compatible with foster families No. of final compatibility reports submitted to CWC after trial placement	% of children who expressed willingness to be part of the foster family
	Report on Compatibility of child with parent	Family Level	One-Time		
Produce reports to CWC for foster care	Review compatibility with District Authorities	District Level	One-Time	No. of foster care placements approved by CWC/ Total no. of final compatibility reports submitted to CWC after trial placement	% of children successfully placed in foster care
Final placement in foster care	Place child in foster care	Family Level	One-Time	No. of children placed, No of families provided with child (children)	

iv. POST- PLACEMENT MONITORING AND FOLLOW UP

Activity	Sub Activities	Level	Frequency	Output Indicator	Outcome Indicator
Maintain individual case file for each child	Provide training on Case file format to field level	District Level	One time	No. of trainings conducted, No. of staff trained	Rate of complete entries (district wise)
	Review of case file entries	State Level	Quarterly	No of districts maintaining the case files	% increase in entries
Post Placement follow ups	Training on follow-up checklist	District Level	One time	No. of trainings conducted, No. of staff trained	Improvement in awareness of counsellors
	Planning the post placement follow up with family	District Level and family level	Quarterly	No. of visits conducted, No. of foster family visited after placement No. of visits made for each child	% of children who seemed to be at ease with a new home
Counselling	Training on counselling module	District level	One time	No. of trainings conducted, No. of staff trained	% of staff who expressed confidence in conducting the counselling session
	Counselling for foster family	District Level	Monthly	No. of counselling sessions conducted, No. of foster families and children counselled	Improvement in confidence, stress, happiness levels of child
	Counselling for child	District Level	Monthly		
	Approval of maintenance grant for foster families	Family Level	One time		
	Receipt of monthly maintenance grant	Family Level	Monthly	No. of foster families who received the grant	Year wise increase in no of foster families from start of the program

	No. of children approved for extension/ termination	State Level	One time	No. of children who were recommended for	% of children who were reintegrated with their families
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CASE SPECIFIC INDICATORS

i. Consent

Consent obtaining	Child Consent	Family Level	One-Time	No. of children consented, No. of Consent forms signed	% children who consented for foster care as a proportion of cases identified
	Foster Family Consent	Family Level	One-Time	No. of foster families consented, No of Consent forms signed	% foster families who consented for foster care as a proportion of cases identified
	Family Consent	Family Level	One-Time	No. of parents/guardians consented, No of Consent forms signed	% parents/guardian who consented for foster care as a proportion of cases identified
Complete ancillary legal processes	Submit application	District Level	One-Time	No. of applications submitted	% of applications vs. identified
	Collect/Prepare all documents	District Level	One-Time	No. of documents completed	% of correct / complete documents

ii. Post Placement Follow Up

Maintain individual case file for each child	Provide training on Case file format to field level	District Level	One time	No. of trainings conducted, No. of staff trained	Rate of complete entries (district wise)
	Review of case file entries	State Level	Quarterly	No. of districts maintaining the case files	% increase in entries
	Individual case file entry	Family Level	Need Basis	No. of trainings conducted, No. of staff trained	Improvement in awareness of counsellors
Post Placement follow ups	Training on follow-up checklist	District Level	One time	No of visits conducted, No. of foster families visited after placement	% of children who seemed to be at ease with a new home
	Planning the post placement follow up with family	District Level and family level	Quarterly	No. of visits made for each child	

iii. Reintegration

Explore options to reintegrate child	Discussion with child on re-integration process	Family Level	Monthly	No. of foster families met, counselling sessions conducted	Year wise increase in no of families willing to be part of the reintegration process
	Review child's case with Department	Family Level	One time		
	Meeting with family	Family Level	Monthly		
	Counselling family	Family Level	Monthly		
	Collate family's requirements	Family Level	One time	No. of families connected to sponsor schemes	% of families who agreed to be part of the reintegration process, % of children who wanted to be reintegrated with their families
	Connect family to State sponsored schemes	Family Level	One time		
	Connect family with livelihood support avenues	Family Level	One time		
	Conduct second level of counselling with family after providing necessary support	Family Level	Monthly		
	Retrieve approval from family for reintegration	Family Level	One time		

CONCLUSION

Child welfare services must have an established reporting and monitoring system where evaluations, placement reviews, house visits, and database checks are undertaken at regular intervals to help the State achieve positive results for children and families.

The State should be required to implement a set of indicators to show if the monitoring standards are being followed. These standards not only ensures the safety, protection and well-being of the child but also can be indicative of the policy level changes and transitions required for the State ensure long-term positive impact in the foster care process.

Conventional Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) systems and mechanisms that are already in use may not be suitable for the Foster care process, which is a relatively new process in India. Therefore, such approaches fail to adequately assess the level of impact programmes and projects have on the lives of children.

For this reason, ICCW-TN has developed as part of the model project on Foster Care, a comprehensive process of revisiting and reconstructing the conventional monitoring and evaluation system particularly for children who will be placed in foster homes.

We hope the Govt. accepts this framework and modify if necessary makes changes to suit their needs. This is a first step towards ensuring effective service delivery.

“Evaluate, because what gets measured gets produced”