Enhancing the Experience of Foster Youth in Transitional Care through Education

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Executive Summary

This capstone project aimed to assist a non-profit organization whose mission is to support foster youth. Foster House (a pseudonym) annually serves thousands of foster youth by providing children with transitional care while they await placement with a foster family. Preliminary conversations with the organization yielded a significant problem of practice; guests at Foster House often experienced extended time (sometimes months) without access to education as they awaited placement. The goal of our capstone was to engage in a quality improvement study designed specifically for Foster House to explore this complex issue and provide solutions to address the educational needs of Foster House guests.

This capstone project utilized document analysis and a structured interview process to capture the data contributing to the problem at Foster House. We designed our capstone project to answer the following:

Q1. How do transitional care facilities ensure foster youth are being educated while they await placement in foster care?

Q2. What support is currently available from local and state agencies to assist in foster youth being able to attend school while they await placement?

Q3. What are the barriers to the continuum of services provided through education for foster youth placed in transitional care?

We triangulated qualitative data collected from structured interviews along with the emergent themes resulting from document analysis. In summary, we found:

1. Manpower limitations of organization staff, as well as the available manpower at the Department of Child Services (DCS), play a significant role in the organization's ability to address the educational needs of foster youth.

2. Accountability structures are lacking or are ineffective between organization staff and DCS, resulting in educational gaps for children, as well as medical hurdles in some instances.

3. Foster House is mission driven. Employees and volunteers share a common language and understanding of organization priorities. Education is a concern (but not a priority) for those serving at Foster House.

In consideration of these findings and the relevant literature, we recommend that Foster House explore educational support through a social/emotion lens, develop a checklist to drive daily planning, and track policy implementation across the organization.

Area of Inquiry

Each day across every community in our country, the Department of Child Services responds to reports of child abuse and neglect. According to the 2020 Child Maltreatment Report, an annual report produced by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, approximately 3,145,000 children received an investigation or alterative response by child protective agencies in the United States in the collecting year of the report. An investigation occurs when information is collected to determine if a child has been maltreated or is vulnerable to maltreatment. It is at this time intervention methods are established if warranted.

One intervention the Department of Child Services may use is removing a child from the home, otherwise known as placing the child in foster care. The federal definition of foster care is 24-hour (or more) substitute care when children are placed away from parents/guardians and for whom the child welfare agency has responsibility (Clemens *et. al.,* 2016). Removal, when warranted, may not occur during ideal times of the day. Removal may be immediate, regardless of external inconveniences such as time of day, weather, or season. When a child is removed, this may require the child(ren) to leave abruptly without any clothing, toys, car seats, or other necessary items. Children may be placed with Department of Child Services (DCS) family case managers or agency personnel while an appropriate determination is made to place the child with next of kin or an available foster family in the county. This process can take hours, if not days, and children are often left to wait (and even sleep) in offices and other business-type settings while adults across multiple agencies work together to determine the appropriate placement given the details of the removal. During this time the child is without their parents and perhaps others with whom they are familiar, waiting to be cared for and loved by families who have risen to the occasion to serve as foster parents in their community. Children are often

without any comforts of toys or familiar items and need to be bathed, fed, and clothed appropriately for the season (Foster House, 2022).

While our study is focused on a non-profit organization within the southeastern region of the United States whose mission is to support children at the onset of the removal process, the issue of placing foster youth is widespread across the United States and beyond. For example, the state of Texas has a documented issue of their inability to place children removed from Child Protective Services in suitable placements until a foster placement is secured. July of 2021 found Texas facing a capacity problem with 416 removed children being housed in unlicensed placements such as motels and CPS offices (Oxner, 2022). While this number decreased through the remainder of 2021, November still found 16% of foster children in unlicensed placements being there a minimum of 36 days (Oxner, 2022).

As noted, the situation above is not unique to any one specific community but is often the experience of children throughout our country as well-meaning professionals work as quickly as possible with limited resources to address many simultaneous needs. The description provided here mirrored the experience of the Smith family when they completed their training to serve as a foster family in 2014. Near the end of the training, they learned that the conference room they were sitting in had served as the bedroom for a young child the evening before. There were needs - immediate needs to love and support children in crisis - and the Smith family wanted to make a difference.

From that experience as first-time foster parents, the Smith family started an organization specifically designed to fill this gap. They founded Foster House (a pseudonym) in 2018, an organization with a goal to provide physical and emotional support in a safe and loving home for children as they awaited foster care placement. Children arrive at Foster House with a DCS case manager and may need a space to decompress after a traumatic experience, have a meal prepared for them, or have their hygiene needs met in a variety of ways. As noted in the 2021 Annual Report, there are seven open

Foster House organization homes and nine home sites under construction. Each home is lavishly

stocked via donations so that children are likely to find food items, toys, and personal care items that

allow for them to select and have some control over their environment. Children will find closets with

new clothing and new shoes from which they can select items during their stay, as well as take with

them once placed with a foster family. School supplies are also available so that children can attend

school the next day amidst the significant changes in their lives.

Figure 1. Sample closets containing new items for children staying at Foster House.

Overall, the Foster House organization works to support foster children, but it also supports

foster families who may unexpectantly receive a child and need help with formula, diapers, and car

seats at a moment's notice. Depending on the home site and nuances of the removal, some children

remain at their current school while cared for in the Foster House while other children are not afforded

that same opportunity.

In 2018, the Smith family opened their flagship home in Alpha County, followed by two

additional home sites in 2019. In 2020, even amidst the global pandemic, Foster House opened a fourth

home in the southeast region and the first site was opened in the Midwest. The organization has fifty

paid staff and countless volunteers to help care for children, maintain the homes, and collect funds and

donations from local communities. According to the 2021 Annual Report, the organization operated on

nearly nine million dollars in revenue made possible by eighty-five hundred donors (Foster House,

2022).   Oversight of the organization is provided by a thirteen-member executive board, with the Smith couple serving in the key leadership roles.

Since March of 2020, Foster House has been approached by individuals in thirty-five states and two other countries expressing a desire to establish a Foster House in their respective communities. At present, there are seven open home sites for foster youth in two states, and another nine home sites are under construction in other areas of the country. Additionally, there are eleven communities raising awareness with the goal of having a home under construction soon. These communities have the potential to propel the organization into other regions of the country.

While the original goal of the organization may have been to serve the children of the southeastern region, the Smiths' ability to successfully replicate these sites in new communities has driven considerable interest in a short amount of time. As the number of foster children seeking placement grows and children are left in their transitional care space for longer periods, the organization is now faced with addressing the educational needs of the children. This leads us to our research questions:

1. How do transitional care facilities ensure foster youth are being educated while they await placement in foster care?

2. What support is currently available from local and state agencies to assist in foster youth being able to attend school while they await placement?

3. What are the barriers to the continuum of services provided through education for foster youth placed in transitional care?

2021 state statistics are still being analyzed, but early indications in some regions demonstrate a reduced number of reports to DCS to investigate claims of child abuse and neglect. With fewer children

regularly in a normal school schedule during the COVID-19 pandemic, many agencies noted seeing a reduced number of reports regarding child welfare and health. While the reporting hotline continued to be operational during the pandemic, there was a reduction of in-person staff and the lack of in-person schooling limited reporting due to school personnel being unable to observe and report suspicions of abuse or neglect. Yet, in 2021, the Foster House served 1354 children in the open home sites across two states alone. With nine additional sites under construction now, one might project nearly 3100 children being served by the end of 2022 when all sites under construction are open.

This problem of ensuring every child in transitional care has access to local education is critical; foster youth are already at an educational disadvantage because there has been a disruption in their school pattern with the removal from their home. Additionally, that removal may result in education-based challenges with school due to the removal's adverse experience. Opening Foster House has been shown to be a successful option for foster children and foster families, but how quickly can the organization adapt to develop a system that prevents foster youth from missing school for a long time? This is the crux of the problem—understanding how to navigate the enrollment process quickly and removing barriers for the transition into a new school setting. To illustrate the problem, consider the 2000 study of foster youth in New York. The study found an alarming 42% of foster youth were unable to begin school immediately upon placement in the foster system, half of the children citing challenges with access to appropriate records and other enrollment paperwork (Pecora, 2012). Similarly, a 2001 study in another region of the United States found that for foster youth, missing information from their prior school experience increased the odds of their enrollment being delayed by 6.5 times (Pecora, 2012).

The purpose of this capstone project is to identify the support available to Foster House in providing educational access to foster youth in transition. Due to the longer periods of time children in transition must wait for foster care placement due to a lack of suitable placements available, meeting

children's educational needs is something the organization is currently not equipped to do, but

organization leaders value education and are seeking guidance on how best to tackle this problem of

practice. Ultimately, children placed in the foster system will benefit from successful educational

support found through the Foster House. This project will help the executive board and staff evaluate

their current processes and identify any applicable action steps for meeting this need.

Research Synthesis

In the United States on any given day, more than 400,000 children are placed out of their homes

with a licensed foster family and/or residential treatment setting with 44% of those children having lived

in more than three settings while another 38% are housed in group homes, shelter care, or institutions

(Pecora, 2012). As practitioners, our focus on this topic was largely driven by a need, as "research on

the education of children and youth in [foster]care is not extensive, and much of the past literature is

focused more on behavioral and emotional problems rather than specifically academic status" (Ferguson

& Wolkow, 2012, p. 1144). Academically, prior studies have found that only 32% of teens in foster care

graduate from public school compared to 59% of their peers (Smithgall *et. al.,* 2004, as cited in Ferguson

& Wolkow, 2012 p. 1144). Foster youth are also nearly six times more likely to earn a GED as opposed

to the traditional high school credential as a GED is the path that is often suggested to youth via trusted

adults who are intervening on their behalf (Clemens *et. al.,* 2017; Pecora, *2012*). The danger with these

numbers is that foster youth who do not complete high school are at a greater risk for requiring public

assistance and often find challenge navigating the demands of independent living, leading to increased

involvement in the criminal just system (Zetlin, *et. al.*, 2004).

Limited educational opportunities heighten risk factors for children already in vulnerable

predicaments (Ferguson & Wolkow, 2012). Students who exit the K-12 system prior to receiving a high

school credential face significant challenges throughout life, often experiencing higher rates of teen

pregnancy and delinquency while simultaneously experiencing more challenges with securing

employment (Clemens, *et. al.,* 2016). Success in school can be a positive counterweight to these

challenges (Pecora, 2012) and because foster children lack stable adults to advocate on their behalf, it is

crucial for agencies and educational organizations to collaborate on safeguards to prevent further

detriment (Zetlin, *et. al*., 2004).

As educators, we as researchers share the focus of Ferguson and Wolkow (2012) on improving

education for foster youth given the significant long-term consequences we see when school failure

leads to unemployment, homelessness, and involvement with social and criminal justice systems. **The**

target of our research is to support the Foster House organization which serves as a transitional care

facility for foster youth and explore the conditions supporting education of the children in their care.

Prior to beginning our research and discovery of this issue for the organization, we turned to the

literature to help frame our understanding and research questions.

Significance of the Problem

Previous studies have shown that when children are placed in foster care, they consistently

perform poorly on all measures of academic performance such as grades, standardized tests in reading

or math, attendance, and graduation. Similarly, other research has demonstrated higher rates of

disciplinary referrals, suspensions and school drop-out rates (Ferguson & Wolkow, 2012). In fact, a

longitudinal study by Fanshel and Shinn (1978) "demonstrates that over 50% of foster children

performed below grade level and one-third were almost two years behind in reading ability. Five years

after entering care, most children showed little school improvement" (Fanshel and Shinn, 1978, as cited

by Ferguson & Wolkow, 2012, p. 1144). Years later, a 2014 study of 465 foster youth in Los Angeles

County, California provided evidence demonstrating a widening gap. The study verified that children in

care "are performing on average between 2.3 and 4.7 years behind their same age peers" (Zinn and

Courtney, 2014, p. 201). Multiple sources note that at both elementary and secondary levels the

children in foster care were twice as likely to repeat a grade when compared to children not in care (Harnett & Bruhn, 2006, as cited in Ferguson & Wolkow, 2012). Other studies noted by this team of researchers highlight as many as 41% of foster youth were retained in school compared to only 9% of children not in care. As the years progress, this gap in achievement widens and has been captured by the Looking After Children (LAC) initiative which has been implemented in fifteen countries. Data from this initiative highlighted "the lag in grade level attainment increased with the age of the child as eight percent of 10-year-olds were behind while 54% of 18-year-olds lagged behind" (Ferguson & Wolkow, 2012, p. 1144).

Contributing to the significance of this problem is the number of times children in foster care must change schools. A 2016 study of foster youth in Colorado found that only 10.4% of children did not change high schools as progressed through their K-12 journey. In fact, this study found that foster youth change public schools an average of 3.46 times during their high school years alone (Clemens, *et. al.,* 2016). Looking beyond the high school years is significant as it provides a better understanding of the overall educational journey children have faced while placed in foster care. "Each move a foster child makes results in a 4-to-6-month loss of academic achievement" (Emerson & Lovitt, 2003; Rios, 2008, as cited by Morton, 2015, p.3).

"Students in foster care drop out at 2.5 to 4 times higher rates than their peers" (Barratt & Berliner, 2013; Colorado Department of Education, 2017; Texas Education Agency, 2013, as cited in Clemens *et. al.,* 2017, p. 66)**.** One study of foster youth in Colorado found that nearly one third of foster youth exited high school without a high school credential (Clemens, *et. al*., 2016). Absenteeism and other factors may contribute to this scenario, as in some cases the rate of absenteeism is twice that of children in the general population (Parrish *et. al.,* 2002 as cited in Ferguson & Wolkow, 2012).

Systemic Barriers

There is no one-size-fits all map that supports every child in their educational journey as they approach various developmental milestones. This complexity is further highlighted for children in foster care. A 2017 systematic review study by O'Higgins, Sebba, and Garner analyzed 39 studies to inform the factors associated with educational outcomes for foster youth (O'Higgins, *et. al.,* 2017).   They found that "children's age, gender, ethnicity, special education needs, emotional and behavioral issues, mental health, executive functioning, cognitive abilities, language, physical health, poverty, type of placement, length of time in care, objectives for placement, and age at entry into care can all impact educational outcomes" (Townsend *et. al.,* 2020, p.1). These circumstances are all important as educators reflect on the materials and approaches to be used with individual students and are at the front of mind in le sson development. In consideration of foster youth, the background on children may not be readily available or known to educators as they map out instructional experiences for students assigned to their classroom.

 Multiple school changes and the disruption of key information following/supporting a child in their experience is a significant barrier to their educational success. Additionally, the literature also points to other significant barriers for children in foster care such as retention or loss of credits due to transfer or attendance concerns, lack of advocacy with homework or other assistance, and delays in enrollment or access of programs (Rutman & Hubberstey, 2018).

Similarly, Zetlin, Weinbert, and Shea, 2006, concluded in a qualitative study that "six main themes were identified including issues of placement instability, poor quality education programs, little accountability or monitoring for school outcomes, confidentiality issues, and poor interagency collaboration" (Ferguson & Wolkow, 2012, p.1146). Related to placement stability and student mobility, "a study of 479 alumni of foster care in Oregon and Washington (the Northwest Alumni Study) found that 65% experienced seven or more school changes from elementary through high school" (Pecora, 2012, p. 1123). Also, "in an ongoing three-state study of youth aging out of care (the Midwest Study) by

Chapin Hill over a third of young adults reported having had five or more school changes" (Pecora, 2012, p.1123).

Other evidence in the literature supports that "school placement instability and poor information management were also identified as key impediments to school progress" (Ferguson & Wolkow, 2012, p.1146). Students frequently have challenge with transfer or credits, and even face difficulty in completing credits resulting in course work that needs repeated to count toward the graduation credential (Morton, 2015; Rutman & Hubberstey, 2018).

Another area that is cited in the literature as a barrier to educating foster youth is the significant number of mental health challenges reported by children and/or those who care for them. "Children in care experienced higher rates of psychopathology than children than children not in care, including PTSD, anxiety disorders, Major Depressive Disorder, Oppositional Defiant Disorder, Conduct Disorder, and Autism Spectrum Disorder" (Goodman, 2007, as cited in Townsend *et. al.,* 2020, p.2). In 2005, a study of 373 seventeen-year-old Missouri foster youth conducted by McMillen found that 37% of these children met the criteria for a psychiatric diagnosis within that same year, while 61% met the criteria for a lifetime disorder such as major depression and others (Pecora, 2012). Pecora's work has also referenced similar studies, such as the one by dosReis *et. al*., in 2001, which concluded that children in care were two times as likely to receive medical assistance for emotional and behavioral support when compared to children who were receiving SSI (social security income). While these numbers are alarming, the information still may not provide adequate context for the general population. However, when you consider the studies that highlight 25% of children in foster care suffering from PTSS, and the fact that this is higher than the percentage of veterans found to suffer from PTSS from the following wars: Vietnam (15%), Afghanistan (6%), and Iraq (12-13%), this point can strike a chord with stakeholders and supporters of children in nearly every community. (Pecora *et. al.,* 2005 as cited in Morton, 2015).

Perhaps one of the most significant barriers for educating foster youth found in the literature is the general failure of various agencies to collaborate and work together to support the educational plan for each foster child. This dangerous "lack of coordination and communication between agencies" includes schools, child welfare, and mental health systems and has been noted as a contributing factor (Weinberg, 1997, as cited in Ferguson & Wolkow, 2012, p.1145). "Advocates suggest that for students in foster care, the trauma and mobility factors are exacerbated by a lack of communication and alignment between the child welfare and educational systems" (Casey, 2014, as cited by Clemens *et. al*., 2017, p.1). The literature also suggests the "obstacle to collaboration is a lack of clear guidelines delineating responsibility for foster children's educational progress" (Ferguson & Wolkow, 2012, p. 1146). These previous findings are imperative to our understanding of the issues raised by our partner organization, and potentially hold an important key to future design and recommendations in our study.

Perspectives of Children

As a vulnerable population, it can be challenging to gather data on this topic from the impacted population, but there is some support in the literature where the opportunity to obtain children's perspective was successful. The focus of our work is to examine the conditions that support foster youth, and thus we are interested to know what children believe about what works for them in their educational journey, as well as what they feel are the barriers. The work of Clemens *et. al*., 2017 as well as Townsend *et. al*., 2020 outline various themes from foster children's account of their experiences in relation to school.

- **Importance of Educational Stability**
    - "Stability is the biggest issue, because that's your main issue in life and that's the biggest thing that you desire. And school is like that most normal it gets for stability. If you

could figure out something that could work, I think that would be like, the biggest

change" (Clemens *et. al.,* 2017, p. 72).

- o "Children currently in care and those formerly in case suggested that a safe and

  predictable school environment offered an alternative to their sometimes chaotic and

  unpredictable lives" (Townsend *et. al*., 2020).

- **Importance of Relationships**

  - o "Participants [Harker 2004 study] repeatedly stated that encouragement and

    acknowledgement of their progress by caregivers, teachers, and social workers were

    responsible for their positive educational experiences" (Ferguson & Wolkow, 2012,

    p.1146).

  - o "Former and current children in care highlighted the importance of positive and

    supportive relationships with teachers and their peers" (Townsend *et. al.,* 2020, p.6).

  - o "A mentor would have helped. Someone who had a similar experience, someone who

    knew what it was like to be in foster care or a group home" (Rutman & Hubberstey,

    2018, p.262).

- **Importance of Promoting Success**

  - o "Throughout the interviews, foster youth conveyed stories about being disempowered,

    marginalized, and silenced. They felt they had no voice or advocate, and that they were

    at the mercy of the system and of their placement" (Morton, 2015, p. 13).

  - o "Children in England report not being aware of their educational rights and options as

    foster youth or opportunities available to them for tuition and other supports" (Harker,

    2003, as cited in Townsend *et. al.,* 2020, p. 7).

After initial consultation with our partner organization, we returned to the literature to uncover

relevant background that would be insightful as we designed a study to examine their problem of

practice. Our search of relevant literature spanned January through March 2022, and utilized the following databases: Elsevier, SAGE Review, Taylor & Francis Online, Google Scholar, and the Vanderbilt (Jean and Alexander Heard) Library.
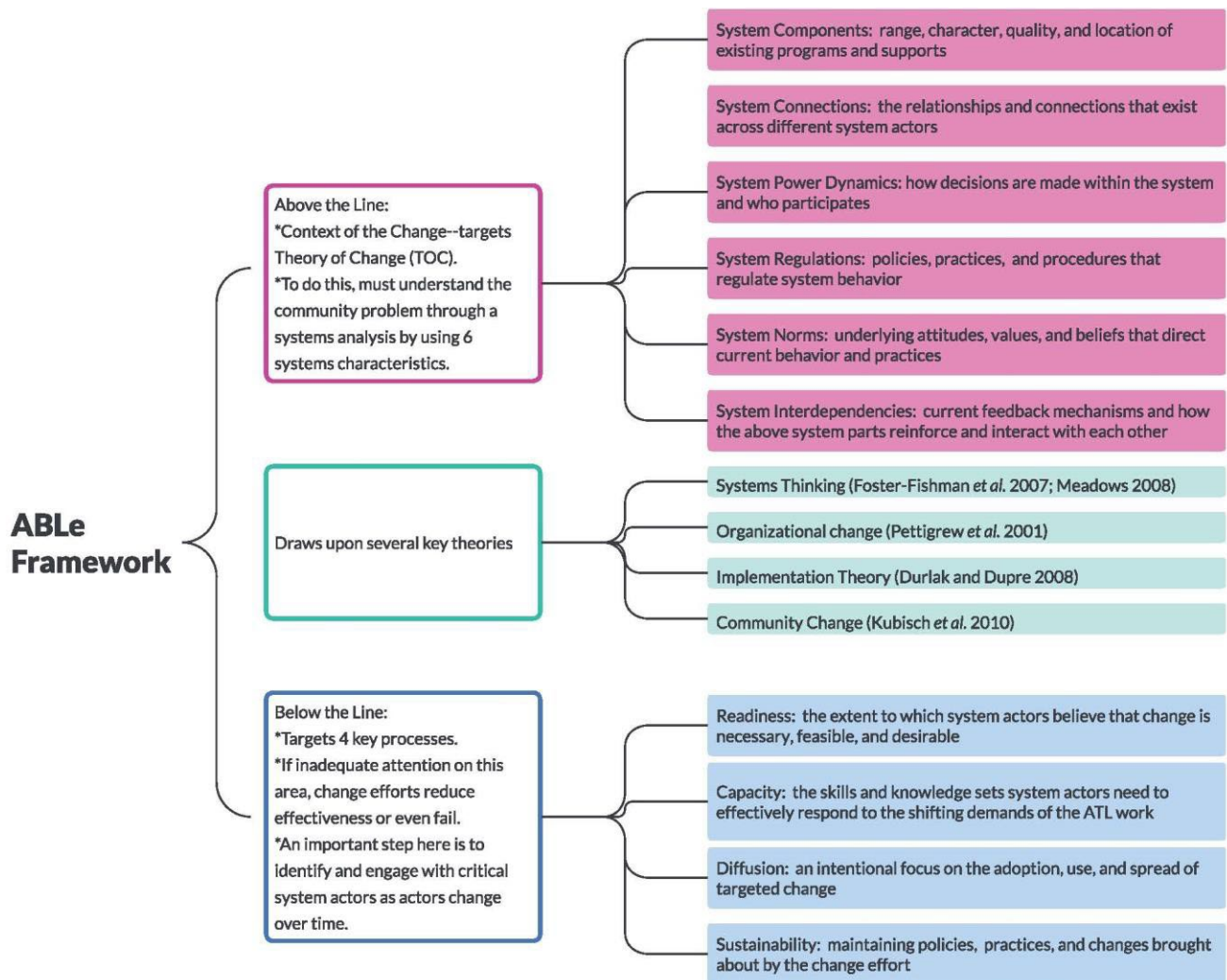
A span of the literature using the combination of search terms and phrases such as "transitional housing", "foster youth", "at-risk learners", "school barriers", "children in care", "placement stability", "youth in care", "school mobility", "school failure", and "foster youth education". To narrow the scope of the search, only peer reviewed articles were included for initial review, and then only those that were written in English and published in the last 20 years. Articles were screened for relevance to the problem of practice in our partner organization. Additionally, references in the articles were screened for other studies to consult and consider for inclusion. Articles were not restricted to studies conducted in the United States. In fact, articles included studies that were done across Canada, Europe, Australia, and throughout the United States.

Conceptual Framework

The framework guiding our design of the Foster House study was published by Foster-Fishman and Watson (2011) and is known as the Above-the-Line, Below-the-Line (ABLe) framework. The ABLe Change Framework calls for simultaneous attention to the content of the work and the processes of the work. This framework was first used in a similar approach to supporting improvement work in a complex system designed to support marginalized populations. Specifically, the ABLe framework was developed during a study of Systems of Care in a Michigan community and allowed for the community to focus on shifting beliefs and roles of individuals, altering the relationship and network between service organizations, creating feedback mechanisms, and expansion of services. As scholar practitioners, we were drawn to the ABLe framework after seeing it referenced in the literature and learning about the

ways in which the use of the framework supported design and implementation of community change efforts for other important social issues.

The ABLe framework draws upon four key theories. One of which, Systems Thinking, had been previously documented by Foster-Fishman (2007) and Meadows (2008). This theory largely drives the Above-the-Line examination of our organization: focusing on the key system characteristics that will guide deep understanding of the organization problem.   These six areas - System Components, System Connections, System Power Dynamics, System Regulations, System Norms, and System Interdependencies - provide the basis for "understanding and identifying the fundamental system parts and interdependencies that can help to explain system functioning and leverage systems change" (Foster-Fishman *et. al.*, 2007, p. 197).

System Components: range, character, quality, and location of existing programs and supports

System Connections: the relationships and connections that exist across different system actors

System Power Dynamics: how decisions are made within the system and who participates

System Regulations: policies, practices, and procedures that regulate system behavior

System Norms: underlying attitudes, values, and beliefs that direct current behavior and practices

System Interdependencies: current feedback mechanisms and how the above system parts reinforce and interact with each other

Above the Line:
*Context of the Change--targets Theory of Change (TOC).
*To do this, must understand the community problem through a systems analysis by using 6 systems characteristics.

ABLe Framework

Draws upon several key theories

Systems Thinking (Foster-Fishman *et al.* 2007; Meadows 2008)

Organizational change (Pettigrew *et al.* 2001)

Implementation Theory (Durlak and Dupre 2008)

Community Change (Kubisch *et al.* 2010)

Below the Line:
*Targets 4 key processes.
*If inadequate attention on this area, change efforts reduce effectiveness or even fail.
*An important step here is to identify and engage with critical system actors as actors change over time.

Readiness: the extent to which system actors believe that change is necessary, feasible, and desirable

Capacity: the skills and knowledge sets system actors need to effectively respond to the shifting demands of the ATL work

Diffusion: an intentional focus on the adoption, use, and spread of targeted change

Sustainability: maintaining policies, practices, and changes brought about by the change effort

Foster-Fishman & Watson, 2011

Figure 2—ABLe Framework adapted to Foster House

In addition to systems thinking, organizational change theory explored by Pettigrew, Woodman, and Cameron (2001) also informed the ABLe framework by proposing the need to pay great attention to six key issues in the change process. These analytical issues included the examination of multiple contexts, consideration of time/history/process/action, performance outcomes, the impact of culture, consideration of episodic versus continuous change, and the partnership between scholars and practitioners in the field (Pettigrew *et. al.,* 2001). Implementation theory (Durlak and Dupre, 2008) also contributed to the ABLe framework by providing insight into the contextual factors that influence program implementation. The spread of Foster House into new communities across the country and the

effective program delivery requires successful implementation. "If many people are to benefit, diffusion must be successful in multiple communities, and at each stage of the process, from dissemination through sustainability" (Durlak & Dupre, 2008, p. 327).

Our goal in utilizing this framework in our research design is to understand these characteristics of the system, especially through the above-the-line lens, to make sound recommendations to generate better outcomes for foster youth served by Foster House. The above-the-line focus will highlight the structures within the organization and the important interactions and dependencies between its areas as we examine the appropriate leverage points for future recommendations. The interview questions we have selected connect distinctly to each of the six system characteristics (System Components, System Connections, System Power Dynamics, System Regulations, System Norms, and System Interdependencies) and will be asked of a variety of stakeholders within the organization. The agreed-upon scope and timeline constraints of our study require the focus of our capstone to remain on the above-the-line aspects of this framework. However, future research may incorporate the below-the-line elements of targeting processes and identifying and engaging with critical system actors as participants may change over time through attrition and turnover in the affiliated institutions (Foster-Fishman *et. al.*, 2007). Our goal is that from this data collection we will generate multiple perspectives and interpretations of the target problem in our organization.

Data Collection

Similar to the Michigan case study utilizing the ABLe Change Framework, we utilized multiple forms of data collection including a review of public data/documents and interviews with key staff and volunteers of our partner organization. In each state where our partner organization exists, the Department of Child Services is divided into several regions. The region of focus requested by the leadership team in our partner organization is the Northeast region of a specific state as it contains all 3

of our counties of interest to our partner organization: Alpha County, Beta County and Charlie County.

The Alpha County House is the flagship facility of Foster House when they first opened their doors to

youth in 2018. At the organization's request, all references to specific people and places, including the

name and location, have been removed to protect the organization's identity. Foster House was

selected as the pseudonym used throughout this paper and in other deliverables for the organization.

Structured interviews were conducted with key staff and volunteers from Foster House after

express permission by organization leadership. 22 interview questions were adapted from the ABLe

framework for embedding systems change into above-the-line work. Questions focused on

components, connections, power and control dynamics, system regulations, values and norms, and

system interdependencies. The full set of questions (including consent) appears in Appendix A.

Interview participants were identified based on role within the organization and vetted for inclusion by

the Executive Director of the organization. Interview participants were acknowledged with a monetary

donation to the organization in their honor. In addition, interview respondents were asked to provide

documents that pertain to their work within the organization for coding relative to the ABLe framework.

Data Collection Methods & Analysis

During July and August 2022, after obtaining approval from the organization founders and

receiving IRB approval on July 13, 2022, interview sessions were offered to key members of the Foster

House core leadership team. While initially intended to be offered in-person, the interviews were

conducted via Zoom to accommodate the 24/7 nature of participant roles and allow for recording and

transcript capability. The virtual platform allowed us as scholar practitioners to be responsive to the

needs of the Foster House staff when removals and placements demanded flexibility, or in some cases

when illness or travel schedules required a quick adjustment in plans. Originally, we intended to include

multiple staff and volunteers in this data collection phase, but the demands placed on these servant

leaders required that we adjust our plans. The organization, while growing, remains small (fewer than

50 employees) in terms of standards observed by the Internal Revenue Service. In total, the founders

identified nine individuals critical to our data collection and we were able to complete the structured

interview process with all nine named persons. Our data set includes interview sessions with the five

members of the core leadership team and four other employees and volunteers who support the sites in

the northeast region of the specified state. Additionally, the organization provided our team with

multiple internal documents for review and analysis as we sought answers to our research questions.

Semi-Structured Interviews

In preparing for our semi-structured interviews, participants were provided a wide range of

times throughout the day to help support the sometimes-sporadic nature of their schedules when

serving youth. Individuals were contacted via email with a link to schedule an interview time via sign-up

genius, a recognizable platform familiar to many organizations. Once scheduled, interview participants

received a follow-up email with specific directions for accessing the interview session via link and/or

telephone, as well as an Outlook calendar invitation which contained the same directions for joining the

interview. Interview sessions began with general introductions and a reminder of our connection to the

organization. Participants were briefed on the anticipated 45–60-minute interview process and

provided information specific to the volunteer nature of their participation. Participants were asked to

provide verbal consent for recording the interview and reminded of their rights to end the interview at

any time or skip any question as they desired.

In total, 22 questions were designed for use in our data collection plan. These questions were

grounded with a primary emphasis on the above-the-line focus of the Above-the-Line, Below-the-Line

(ABLe) Framework (Foster-Fishman & Watson, 2011). This emphasis on the above-the-line components

allowed us to examine the problem through six system characteristics: System Components (five

questions), System Connections (three questions), System Power Dynamics (two questions), System

Regulations (three questions), System Norms (two questions), and System Interdependencies (one question). Of the remaining questions, four were asked to provide background and context of each person's role and familiarity with the organization and two questions were asked to obtain other over-arching concerns or ideas specific to the organization's work. Immediately at the conclusion of each interview, we engaged in a session to memo the overall impressions and key responses offered during the interview sessions. Sample questions connected to the ABLe Framework are noted below, while the complete listing of interview questions (including protocol) can be found in Appendix A.

- Are there barriers you have observed to educating the children who are placed at Foster House? If so, please describe (Components).

- Do children at Foster House get access to the educational programs/services they need? If not, why not (Connections)?

- Do organizations supporting children at Foster House share decision-making power about education plans (Power Dynamics)?

- Do any current organizational policies or procedures get in the way of the overall goals? If so, which ones need to change (Regulations)?

- What attitudes and values held by staff and leaders might get in the way of educating children placed at Foster House (Norms)?

- To what extent and how do the organizations involved interact with each other and provide each other feedback? What gets in the way of these interactions (Interdependencies)?

Document Review

To enhance our qualitative study, we collected documents from the organization to provide contextual and deep understanding of our topic and organization (Bhattacharya, 2017). Initially, we intended to request documents from each interview participant at the end of their interview. However,

after the first interview was conducted with the Director of Operations, we were provided with nearly

three hundred pages of documents specific to the organization. All documents received, with the

exception of the *Employee Handbook* (system regulations) and *Key Principals of Trauma Informed Care*

PowerPoint slides (norms) were reviewed and coded according to the systems characteristics noted in

Table 1. Sample documents connected to the ABLe Framework are noted below, while the full listing of

the 179 documents coded and included in the study is found in Appendix C.

- Organization by Department, Construction Guide, Interior Finishes (System Components)

- Field Office Contacts, Roles of Team Members, Growing Volunteer Teams (System Connections)

- Maintaining Guest Records, Guest Expectations, Training, Tech Platforms (System Regulations)

- Belief Statement, Operating Standards, Story Telling, Branding Guidelines (System Norms)

- Oversight by Location, Creating Advisory Teams (System Power Dynamics)

- Tips from other Coordinators, Advice Sheet before Opening Site (System Interdependencies)

Data Analysis

Upon completing the structured interviews and collecting relevant documents, we coded

interview transcripts and session memos according to the "above-the-line" six system characteristics of

the ABLe framework. Document contents were also coded using the same characteristics below:

System Components "CP"	Range, character, quality, and location of existing programs and supports
System Connections "CN"	The relationships and connections that exist across different system actors
System Power Dynamics "PD"	How decisions are made within the system and who participates
System Regulations "R"	Policies, practices, and procedures that regulate system behavior
System Norms "N"	Underlying attitudes, values, and beliefs that direct current behavior and practices
System Interdependencies "I"	Current feedback mechanisms and how the above system parts reinforce and interact with each other

Table 1. *Qualitative Codes used with Interview Data and Document Review*

While full coding information is available for the reviewed documents in Appendix C, the documents

obtained from the organization were heavily categorized in the space of System Regulations as shown
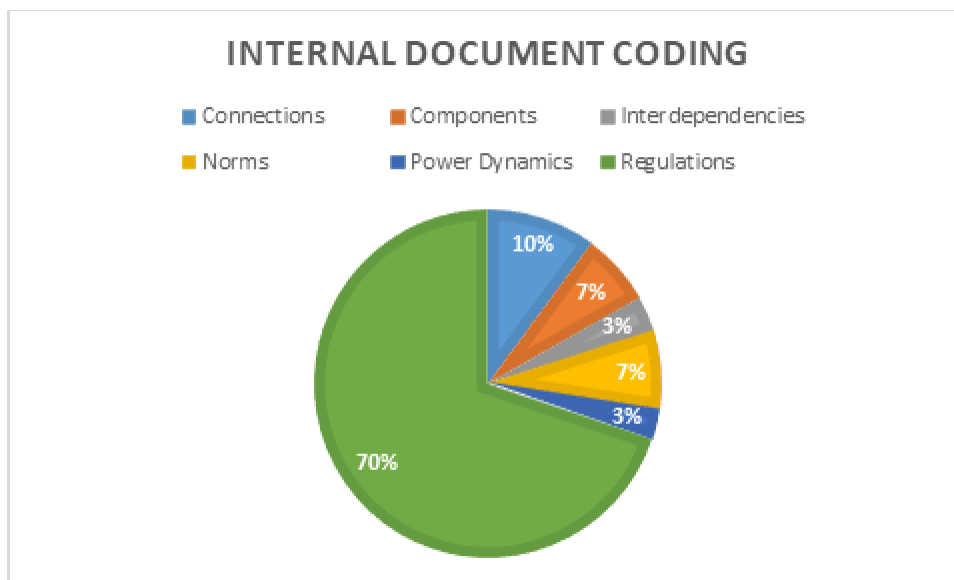
in Figure 3 below.

Figure 3. Qualitative Coding from Document Analysis

Interview transcripts captured the full interview responses, which lasted 45-60 minutes in nearly

every instance. Each transcript, and in addition the complimenting memo, were coded using the same

systems characteristics identified in the ABLe framework. Sample respondent statements coded for

each system characteristic of the ABLe framework are noted below, with additional participant

responses shown in Appendix B.

System Components	• Case managers may not always know where children are enrolled in school. • Some of the Foster House sites have access to apps and even textbooks to support student learning. • The Foster House sites are all drivable, so the location of the homes is not really a barrier to attending school.
System Connections	• Many of the organization volunteers are teachers and administrators, or others who are directly involved in the school system. • There is a good relationship with a lot of faith-based organizations in the community, and a pretty good relationship with the Department of Child Services—there is a lack of DCS workers. • The core leadership team includes individuals who have been close friends for years, or who may be married to one another.
System Power Dynamics	• The case manager decides when children go to school. DCS is also responsible for getting children to school. • Some Foster House staff indicate they cannot make decisions on their own, but it is necessary right now as they are in a period of rapid growth. • People generally get along, but DCS has the final say.
System Regulations	• Since July 2022, Foster House has instituted a strict 72-hour rule regarding the length of time guests may stay in the home. • There is a new regulation for the DCS schedule, workers now must rotate every four hours. • Only the case managers can transport the children.
System Norms	• We want to lavishly love on children on their worst day. • Removal day is the focus. We want to support children on their darkest day, as well as support the DCS workers. • Expansion and raising awareness are also important values.
System Interdependencies	• There are monthly meetings between Foster House staff and DCS. • DCS does not intentionally ask Foster House for feedback. • This is delicate, we don't call the shots, but we do have a voice to ask questions.

Table 2. *Sample interview comments/sentiments coded using the six systems characteristics of the ABLe framework.*

Findings & Recommendations

Through the data collection and analysis process, we answered our quality improvement study

project questions by examining the recurring trends and themes found via the interview process and

document analysis. Our goals of the data collection process were to help our partner organization identify current system attributes that have generated and/or sustained the problem of educating foster youth in their transitional program, as well as identify potential levers for shifting system components that would be supportive of the desired changes.

We offer three key findings as a result of our examination, with the goal that these findings offer clarity to a complex and frustrating concern for our partner organization. These findings are intended to offer deeper understanding of the problem of practice and are not intended to be critical of any role or organization in support of foster youth. As an actionable step, we offer suggested recommendations to address these findings that the organization may wish to entertain as they continue to support thousands of foster children in communities throughout the United States. Recommendations are made in response to current supports available, backed by research, and should be cautiously considered after further review of readiness, capacity, and sustainability in the organization.

Finding 1: Limited capacity of organization staff and volunteers, as well as the available capacity of affiliated agencies such as the Department of Child Services (DCS), play a significant role in the ability of the organization to address educational needs of foster youth.

Organization Staff

Program coordinators at one facility share the responsibility of maintaining a 24/7 on-call phone line in the event DCS contacts them with needs for a removal situation (Program Coordinator #1). At another site, the Program Coordinator expresses that the on-call assignment can be a lot—and "can cause a lot of fatigue with folks, thus impacting their ability to reach goals" (Program Coordinator #3). In response, the Executive Director shares that the organization has already instituted an on-call policy and staff can work no more than two weeks at a time on-call. Program coordinators also oversee the house operations daily which includes coordinating the volunteers, fund raising, attending speaking events,

receiving donations, and working closely with others in partner organizations (Program Coordinator #3).

Organization Volunteers

One location cited 35 individuals on their volunteer roster, but only 20 of those volunteers could jump in to support children at any given moment to assist in a pinch. The organization does have several teachers and educators who are involved as volunteers, but they have limited availability during the school week (Program Coordinator #1). At another site, there are 49 certified volunteers, but roughly only 12 who are described by organization staff as active volunteers (Program Coordinator #2).

Department of Child Services Staff

Aside from the staff challenges noted for the Foster House organization, respondents also cited concern with the closely affiliated DCS teams who are active in those regions. "DCS is understaffed— they can't support getting children to school if they are understaffed" (Program Coordinator #2). The Executive Director also noted, "There is a lack of child welfare staff—and the ones we have are so overworked that it is an issue." One facility operated by the organization has only 30 DCS case workers for three counties, and it is common for all facilities to be completely full each evening (Program Coordinator #1).

Stories of children being seated at kitchen tables working alongside DCS staff completing schoolwork were shared in the interview process. Due to safety and security concerns for the children, the facilities are now device-free zones for children and DCS case workers must sit and have eyes on the child if they are using any form of technology to complete schoolwork while they are guests in the facility (Program Coordinator #1).

The Regional Coordinator reports that counties can vary anywhere from 25 to 125 case workers. The case worker decides what happens in terms of schooling, but "there are not enough case workers." This concern was reinforced by the Executive Director when she shared, "They do not have a lack of

care, but a lack of capacity—they are so overworked. Case workers are stretched thin." Additionally, the Development Director also expressed concern regarding the high turnover that exists within DCS. Because of the shortage of DCS workers, they are regularly shifting and changing. According to Program Coordinator #3, this inconsistency is rough. "The kids have someone new with them every four hours, and the kids can be uncomfortable with this."

The ability for foster children to attend school varies from child to child. DCS will sometimes take foster youth to school, but sometimes they won't. This determination depends on what DCS decides, but most often the children stay at the facility and do not attend school (Program Coordinator #2). Other sites echoed the same experience and shared, "The case manager decides who is attending school" (Program Coordinator #3). According to PC3, younger children are most often taken to school, but teens and young adults do not attend school as the norm. The Executive Director emphasized that sometimes children attend school, but this is not the norm.

Very rarely, if ever, does school bus transportation assist in getting children to/from school in the region studied for our partner organization. Throughout our interviews, this mode of support was only mentioned as an opportunity on one occasion. It is clear to the partner organization staff that only the DCS case managers have the authority to transport children to school. Most of the partner organization facilities are within 45 minutes of the schools where children would be enrolled, and several schools may be within 10-15 minutes depending on where the biological families reside. However, some children do not know where the school is located (Program Coordinator #1), or they have never been enrolled in school (Program Coordinator #2). Often, children are removed from their parents due to educational neglect, so children have gone for extended periods of time without being in school or are not actively enrolled in school. "In one instance, I had a teenager who had not been in school for more than two years" (Program Coordinator #3).

It is not rare that removals occur during the most inopportune times for children such the beginning or ending of a grading cycle and this further complicates issues with transition (Ferguson & Wolkow, 2012). There is no regard for timing of these removals due to the threat of imminent harm or death. Thus, there is a lack of sharing of important educational data that will assist in the educational placement and success of children who have been removed (Ferguson & Wolkow, 2012). Records are often incomplete, which hinders proper placement and adherence to any specified academic plans in place for the child.

Finding 2: Accountability structures are lacking or are ineffective between the organization staff and the affiliated organization (DCS).

This finding mirrors the sentiment expressed in prior studies regarding foster youth and the many barriers that exist in their educational journey. In prior studies, one child stated, "I think that something that's missing in the system is that the foster care system and the education system don't really work in collaboration" (Clemens *et. al*., 2017, p. 74). In the same study, another child's perspective was even more direct when they shared "something that is missing in the system is that the foster care system and the education system do not really work in collaboration ...... They need to do something to keep us in our schools so that we can graduate" (Clemens *et. al.*, 2017, p. 74). In our data collection period with Foster House, similar thoughts were expressed during the structured interview process by members of the Foster House staff. "There is not a planning process happening to educate children, it is up to the case manager" (Regional Coordinator). "Typically, it is the responsibility of the case workers to be certain the educational plan is passed along, and there is an email that is used to communicate between all of these shift changes to share the details specific to the child" (Program Coordinator #1). All planning for the child, including educational planning, is a function solely of the DCS

office. Each case worker is on shift for four to six hours, depending on county protocol, and then a shift

change occurs resulting in foster youth having another person determining next steps (Program

Coordinator #1). "Every four hours children change who they are interacting with in the facility, there is

no time for relationship" (Program Coordinator #3). The shift change results in each new person arriving

on scene to dictate the educational plan for the child at the time they have come on duty. The

Development Director also aligns with this worry as he states, "we see the inconsistency in case

managers as being a piece that impacts education." The Executive Director emphatically echoes,

"Generally, people are not taking charge of education for these children."

Critical logistics are often ignored. According to Program Coordinator #2, this is an area that

needs improvement. She shared, "We had one boy for 48 days, and he missed a cardiology

appointment, and missed his therapy appointments. This is an area where things can fall through the

cracks."   When a shift change happens, those case workers who arrive at the facility do not always

know what the plan is or even where the child is enrolled in school. "Often there are unanswered

questions at 8am when the kids should be at school or leaving such as *'can we transport this child'* or *'is*

there a bus to take them' or *'who will pick up the child after school'.* According to the Foster House State

Director, "Nobody really seems to know the answers to these questions as the case managers focus on

foster placement."

Through document analysis, 70% of the organization documents connected directly with

Regulations. However, these documents were more in line with the physical house itself or tied directly

to employee processes and employee procedures. In total, just seven of 125 documents coded for

Regulations (5.6%) were directly in support of foster youth and outlined the ways in which children

should be served while in at the facility. Interview responses confirmed this low level of accountability

structure as employees shared "We don't like the word rules" (Program Coordinator #1) and "We try not

to policy something as it is really against our mission. We have more policies for our employees and less

to do with children or how to process them when they arrive at the facility. We do not have an in-take

policy" (Director of Operations).

There is a correlation between the unclear accountability structures and the lack of norms that

address communication habits of the organization. Foster-Fishman *et. al.* (2007) defines systems at

their most basic level and outlines the importance of identifying systems with clarity before change is

enacted. The work of Foster-Fishman *et. al.* (2007) focuses on the need for perspective in thinking to

guide the changed behavior. By identifying Foster House's systematic challenges with communication

and thus a conflict with systematic roles, we were positioned to seek recommendations to address this

finding.

Finding 3: The organization is mission driven with a strong sense of purpose in the ministry of serving

children on their worst day.

Employees and volunteers share a common language and understanding of organization

priorities. The priority of the organization is to "focus on our mission—to lavishly love on children—that

is the focus" (Program Coordinator #1). This sentiment was the first priority listed by 56% of the interview

respondents. Not only is this priority quickly identified by the staff and volunteers, but they also speak

with pride and reference their work as a ministry. "The top priority remains to lavishly love on kids. We

are doing a good job as an organization of keeping this front and center" (Program Coordinator #2). 67%

of the interview respondents also discussed the topic of expansion as an organization priority, and others

referenced the priority of supporting people, including DCS case workers.

Education is a concern, but not necessarily a priority for those who are serving in the organization.

In speaking with individuals about the priorities, education was not mentioned once as a priority of the

organization, but certainly was noted as a concern while respondents shared several individual stories of

youth who had not accessed education for weeks and months at a time. When asked about education

and general concerns for youth, respondents sharedthat "The public is thinking about the immediacy and the removal of the child on their worst day, not necessarily thinking about the education of foster youth" (Program Coordinator #3). Additionally, the Director of Operations shared that "school hasn't really been a concern for the case worker, but they like for them [the children] to be at school during the day so they can work on placement." This priority is supported by the literature as the first objective of a child removed from a home and placed in care mandated by the state is their safety (Morton, 2015).

The lack of focus on educational solutions for removed youth and youth in foster care placement is not new. The literature supports the notion that this lack of education focus is more of a systems failure than anything else (Ferguson & Wolkow, 2012). Whether the barriers are lack of cohesion among interrelated agencies, conflicting priorities or a perceived lack of interest among the decision-making adults, the gap in the provision of education is important but not aligned to the central mission of Foster House. If we revisit their mission and original framework for their being, it centers on meeting immediate needs that are associated with the abrupt removal of children from their homes and families (Foster House, 2022).

Additional finding: Decision and Communication Challenges

While not a specific focus of the study design, additional findings regarding internal communications emerged as questions related to System Connections, System Power Dynamics, and System Norms were askedduring the interviews. As the State Director shared, "Communication is always hard. Everyone has a different mode, and we struggle with this a lot as an organization." When asked for specific examples of the struggle, she continued by stating, "We have a home office but now with 35 locations and more than 60 staff, you often hear that folks haven't had time to check messages, to listen to voicemails or they miss meetings when things pop up." Similar communication feedback populated responses in other interviews as well. The Director of Operations shared that the team often discusses

that they are "building the plane as they are flying it" and that he "can't make a decision on his own". This leader continued in his interview to elaborate with "this can be paralyzing for the organization but is truly a necessity right now and we must huddle on big decisions."

The identification of decision and communication challenges does provide an opportunity to explore leader-member exchange theory (Gerstner and Day, 1997). Leader-member exchange theory lends to the belief that the quality of social exchanges between leaders and members impact the outcomes of an organization in its mission (Gerstner and Day, 1997). While the mission of the organization is faith-based and heavy on its relationships between its staff and volunteers (Foster House, 2022), there is a power dynamic revealed through data analysis as it relates to communication and decision-making. The relationship between the leader of a group and the followers has an impact on outcomes of the organization holistically (Gerstner and Day, 1997). Leader-member exchange theory is applicable in this finding because while the social nature of the dynamics between leaders and staff is amiable, there is an undercurrent of tension as it relates to frequent communication and shared decision making.

Recommendation 1—Explore educational support through a social/emotional lens.

When connecting the capacity issue noted in Finding #1 alongside the general educational concerns for foster youth noted in Finding #3, we recommend Foster House explore the opportunity of providing more robust social/emotional support to guests while they are at the house. When respondents were asked during the interviews to describe educational supports, or programs/services that should be considered to address needs, the topic of social-emotional learning was referenced more often than literacy/numeracy instruction. Similarly, when asked about potential needs and improvements in this area, social-emotional learning was highlighted as a worry in how Foster House staff were meeting the needs of children. "We were not reducing trauma so much—and sometimes we have repeat guests in the facility" (Program Coordinator #1). The Director of Operations, overseeing the

operations of all open sites shared similar concern when he stated "Every child has unique trauma and

unique needs, so focusing on education hasn't really been a conversation. If there were to be an

educational plan for children, I'd like to see this as a counseling/reduction plan so children can cope and

process what has happened". The State Director agreed with these sentiments, expressing "There

seems to be an issue with how we can reduce trauma—we train our staff and volunteers on trauma

informed care but also to be the "fun aunt" and "fun aunt" does not stress homework".

This recommendation is supported by the literature as previously presented (Pecora, 2012;

Morton, 2015; Townsend, 2020). In response to our findings supporting prior work, we offer the

suggestion to explore Trauma-Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (TF-CBT) as a program to

incorporate with children while they are guests at the Foster House. While the staff and volunteers

receive training in Trauma-Informed Care, this specific treatment for youth, particularly foster youth, is

well supported by the literature. A five-year study to evaluate the effectiveness of TF-CBT compared to

other treatments found that "youth exposed to domestic violence who received TF-CBT experienced

significantly greater improvement in anxiety and PTSD symptoms and PTSD diagnosis than those who

received child centered therapy" (Cohen, *et. al*., 2011, p. 640). TF-CBT is often provided by therapists

for children who have been victims of child abuse or neglect, or who have experienced traumatic losses.

The goal of this therapy includes skill building for coping with ongoing trauma (Cohen, *et. al*., 2011).

"Over 21 randomized trials have demonstrated support for its efficacy in improving posttraumatic stress

disorder (PTSD) symptoms across a variety of global service settings" (Cohen *et. al*., 2017; de Arellano *et.*

al., 2014 as cited in Orengo-Aguayo *et. al*., 2020, p. 1160).

To provide this type of therapy for foster children associated with the Foster House

organization, the Department of Child Services would need to authorize these services for children.

Service delivery may be provided by local hospital programs or mental health providers with whom DCS

generates an MOU or utilizes for wrap services. These arrangements likely are in place in each county

for cases of CHINS (children in need of services) and could be extended for use within the Foster House facility while children are awaiting placement. In regions where appropriately licensed personnel may be a limiting factor, agencies providing virtual therapy may be a suitable option for the Foster House staff to facilitate with the authorization of DCS. Because the new 72-hour policy is a return to earlier practices of Foster House - they previously had an 8-hour maximum stay of guests – there is no longer a need to focus on minimizing educational gaps within such a short time period, but rather focus on the emotional needs caused by the trauma surrounding the abrupt removal. Additionally, the decreased time guests spend at Foster House does not allow for the logistical navigation that enrolling in a local education agency requires.

Recommendation 2—Develop a checklist to drive daily planning for foster guests.

Researchers of systems change focus on the levers we can pull which in turn bring about the desired changes we seek. "Meadows (1999) proposes that systems change is mostly likely to occur when change is leveraged in a system's norms and/or regulations because these parts exert strong influence on systems behavior" (Meadows, 1999, as cited in Foster-Fishman, *et. al*., 2007, p. 212). Data from this study categorized as System Interdependencies, System Norms, and System Regulations demonstrate a strong likelihood that Foster House can build upon the relationship with DCS to create a protocol (such as a robust checklist) that outlines and facilitates children's educational and other needs. We believe Foster House staff can lean on their strengths of norms and regulations, coupled with strong relationship with affiliated agencies such as DCS, to generate a lever that will have positive impact in ensuring a plan for every child is set when they become guests at Foster House.

This recommendation is supported by prior studies as our literature review highlighted the lack of coordination and communication between agencies as a contributing barrier to educating foster youth (Ferguson & Wolkow, 2012; Clemens *et. al.*, 2017). The Foster House staff should not feel that

this is an error within their organization, but rather a finding that is common among similar studies as evidenced in the literature. However, Foster House can build upon the relationships they have to begin generating a tool that helps capture the needs of each child while they are guests at Foster House.

Program Coordinator #2 stated that her supervisor speaks with DCS routinely and has open dialogue with questions/concerns. This established feedback mechanism can be used as a springboard to develop a tool that enhances communication and reduces educational (or other) barriers for youth. According to Program Coordinator #3, "we have a lot of trust built here—we have a good relationship with the DCS team and strong relationships with other organizations." Program Coordinator #3 feels as though her supervisor, the Regional Coordinator, speaks daily to the liaison at DCS and has routine conversations to share feedback.

As an example, this proposed checklist could be the result of coordination between the State Director and DCS as the State Director often works with various MOUs that are needed between the organization and other groups. The State Director also discussed the opportunity of a checklist and "who is on first" to take children to school, to create a plan and ask questions so everyone has the answers on how to best support the child the next day. The State Director is transitioning to a new role of Director of Culture and Leadership, and this checklist could be an important tool that is developed as a result of transition/succession activities in the coming months. This new role at Foster House has a focus of standardization and common experience/feel at each of the Foster House organization sites, and a checklist provides the opportunity to standardize experiences and operations.

In developing the recommended checklist, it is advisable to revisit Table 1 from Ferguson & Wolkow (2012) for sample strategies. Additionally, it is further recommended that Foster House and DCS leadership incorporate student voice where possible in the development of the checklist. Children have previously alluded to their lack of voice and input being honored in the process. In prior studies,

children have shared the importance of having child welfare, health care, and the schools working together (Rutman & Hubberstey, 2018) and have also expressed desperation and feeling of being unheard (Morton, 2015). "Providing children in care with a voice about their experiences can help build their sense of agency over their educational choices, decisions, and opportunities, which in turn may improve their overall wellbeing and learning" (Townsend *et. al.*, 2020, p. 8).

Recommendation 3—Tracking Policy Implementation

While our project revealed the limited capacity of the partner organization in our first finding, they soon acknowledged their infrastructure limitations. Foster House implemented a new 72-hour policy that resulted in a maximum stay for guests. With the implementation of the 72-hour policy having been instituted just prior to the 2022-2023 school year, we recommend the organization develop a tracking mechanism to help the Foster House leadership team better understand the impact of this policy on foster children accessing education. Interview data suggests prior to the policy shift that some children were out of school for 20, 40, or even 60 days at a time without access to instruction. This new policy to place students within 72 hours is believed to have resolved the issue, according to numerous interview respondents. However, as studies on the use of other interventions have found, "both the school and child welfare systems must be accountable for the child's education. They must operate in collaborative, coordinated ways to confront the educational challenges that impede school achievement for foster children"(Zetlin, *et. al.,* 2006, p. 428). We strongly encourage the organization to utilize tracking software or a similar tool at each site to measure the fidelity of the 72-hour rule for foster placements.

Circling back to implementation theory (Durlak and Dupre, 2008), this new 72-hour policy has only been in practice for 4-5 months. The adoption of a new policy still so very much in its infancy will require monitoring and the development of a checklist will achieve several application pieces of

implementation theory through diffusion. The diffusion of the 72-hour policy will require assessment using both qualitative and quantitative tools and a checklist will further guide the staff as well as build common language and practice.

Limitations

Variability exists in the foster care system at the state and county level. Our partner organization supports facilities in multiple states, but these findings and recommendations noted in this quality improvement project may have limited transferability given the lived experiences and any participant bias that occurs naturally in a system. As such, these recommendations should first be considered in the three sites that were the focus of our review, and if successful, implemented accordingly at other sites identified by the organization where similar challenges persist.

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Appendix A

Consent form and Structured Interview Instrument

Consent:

Welcome to the Foster House research study!

We are interested in understanding how foster children learn within this organization. For this interview, you will be presented with questions relevant to your experience with foster children and the specific experiences you have had with the Foster House within your county.
The interview should take around sixty minutes to complete. As a thank you, we will be donating to FH in your honor for participating with us today. As a reminder, your participation in this research is voluntary, and you have the right to withdraw at any point during the interview.

The Principal Investigators of this study can be contacted at Rebecca.Coffman@Vanderbilt.edu and Katrina.Lemons@Vanderbilt.edu.

Do we have your permission to record the interview today to ensure we capture the full essence of your response?

Questions:

My aim today is to learn more about your work with children in connection with your role at Foster House. Can you describe your position for me and the key responsibilities you hold for the organization (Introduction)?

What would you say are the organization's current priorities (Introduction)?

Please describe the educational plans for school-aged children who are placed at Foster House (Background).

What can you tell me about the planning processes used regarding the education of children who are staying at Foster House (Background)?

What improvements would you like to see when considering the educational plans for youth placed at Foster House (Components)?

Are there barriers you have observed to educating the children who are placed at Foster House? If so, please describe (Components).

What gaps, if any, exist when educating children who are placed at FH? What additional programs/supports are needed (Components)?

Are the current education offerings for children at FH achieving the outcomes needed? If not, why not (Components)?

Does the location of FH affect access to education for children who are placed here (Components)?

Are the educational programs/services coordinated in ways that they need to be? If not, in what ways? If not, why not (Connections)?

Do local organizations trust each other and share information, data, and resources? If not, why not (Connections)?

Do children at FH get access to the educational program/services they need? If not, why not (Connections)?

Do targeted constituents (adults and youth) have real influence over service delivery decisions, processes, plans and options? Does their voice really matter? If not, why not (Power Dynamics)?

Do organizations supporting children at FH share decision-making power about education plans (Power Dynamics)?

Do any current organizational policies or procedures get in the way of the overall goals? If so, which ones need to change (Regulations)?

What new policies and procedures are needed to support educating the children at FH (Regulations)?

Do current organizational policies motivate staff to support proposed changes (Regulations)?
What does the general public think about the issue of educating children placed at FH? To what extent do they care about it? Hold positive or negative stereotypes about the children at FH? Why do these attitudes exist (Norms)?

What attitudes and values held by staff and leaders might get in the way of educating children placed at FH (Norms)?

To what extent and how do the organizations involved interact with each other and provide each other feedback? What gets in the way of these interactions (Interdependencies)?

What concerns you most about the children placed at Foster House on a daily basis (Global)?

Are there any other aspects about your work at Foster House you would like to share (Global)?

Appendix B

Respondent	Statements Aligned to Code "Systems Components" *(range, character, quality, and location of existing programs and supports)*
State Director "SD"	Her new role will allow her to focus on the standardization of the feel of the homes and ensure all staff and volunteers are using the same language. The case managers may not always know where kids are enrolled in school. Volunteers receive training on trauma informed care to help support youth. There is not a strategic plan to where FH is located--they are reactionary to individuals who seek them out and desire to open an FH. "All of our homes have standards." "A lot of guests who walk into our homes are not on grade level".
Director of Operations "DO"	DO shares that most of the time kids go to school, but the teenagers don't attend. They have worked to increase the capacity of their staff and volunteers and work to ensure all volunteers have trauma informed training. Every child has unique needs and unique trauma, so education hasn't been a conversation.
Regional Coordinator "RC"	RC shared that most often children are not enrolled in school and parents report they are home-schooled. Some of the homes have access to apps and even textbooks to support student learning. RC did not feel as though there were enough case workers.
Program Coordinator1 "PC1"	"It's a dismal situation.... they have just hired like twenty-five new people for the region that will be split between all the NE." The PCs did share instances of special circumstances where the school bus would take children to/from school, but that is not the norm. During COVID, the staff didn't feel as though they had the resources needed in the house to accommodate such as an iPad or tablet or anything for them to work on. The PCs shared that the home locations are all drivable, so the location of the homes is not really a barrier to attending school.
Program Coordinator 2 "PC2"	PC2 feels as though usually the school aged children remain at the house, rather than going to school. In Beta County, some kids must drive around 35 minutes to get to school. However, she states "we have several schools that are 15 minutes down the road." PC2 indicates a big issue with kids going to school is that often they are just not enrolled anywhere. DCS is also understaffed according to PC2.
Program Coordinator3 "PC3"	PC3 often sees younger children taken to school, but she sees more teens and young adults not go to school. We can provide the items children need to attend school such as supplies and backpacks. Often the guests at FH have gone a long time without being in school (one case was described as a 2-year hiatus). We have streaming services, YouTube, and volunteers to assist with HW. Sometimes kids don't go to school because they are homeschooled prior to the removal.
Executive Director "ED"	Sometimes guests go to school, but it is not the norm. It is high on the radar for everyone to get them to school. There is a task force from each Dept of Child Services to select the location of each FH.

Respondent	Statements Aligned to Code "Systems Connections" (*the relationships and connections that exist across different system actors*)
State Director "SD"	Executive Director and State Coordinator are best friends. She supports three Regional Coordinators, and they support Program Coordinators. She also generates MOUs between FH and other groups. Questions on connections include "can we transport the child/who will pick up after school?" "It's really remarkable, and honestly surreal the level of trust people have in our organization." We have built trust because we are not the government, and we are a faith-based organization. People have figured out if they are a financial partner or someone who could volunteer.
Director of Operations "DO"	DO states that he can't make decisions on his own, and that this can be paralyzing in an organization, but it is truly necessary right now that they huddle on big decisions. More than once DO referred to the core leadership group of 5 people. DCS and CPS are the main agencies they coordinate with on a regular basis, they are mostly truthful and forthcoming with information but there are challenges there. DO has been with the organization for just about a year, but his wife is the Program Coordinator for an FH in their hometown.
Regional Coordinator "RC"	RC had been in a foster care class with the Executive Director, and her husband was also in college with the Co-Founder. Also, RC shares that they receive limited information from DCS--they sometimes receive more information from case managers, but they don't have any sharing of information with the schools. RC also feels there should be a foster parent support group. "I was a foster parent for 3 years before adoption...and this journey is so hard!"
Program Coordinator 1 "PC1"	PC1a has been with the organization for three years, and PC1b has been with the house for four years. They have a core group of roughly 35 volunteers, and of those roughly 20 are regularly called upon. Many of the volunteers are teachers and administrators, other folks who are directly involved in the school system. The program coordinators also share that "DCS is so understaffed at the moment--they just don't have the manpower to not take these kids to school every day." There are only thirty case workers--but they are usually open with sharing information about the children. DCS knows they can rely on use as we have proven ourselves to be reliable.
Program Coordinator 2 "PC2"	In her role as PC, PC2 supports 49 certified volunteers in Beta County, but only 12 of those folks are active volunteers. PC2 herself was a volunteer before taking a staff role about two months ago. As for other connections, PC2 feels as though DCS is a barrier due to them being "very understaffed right now". She also shares that some case workers will share information easily, but others not as much.
Program Coordinator 3 "PC3"	PC3 has been a PC for ~4 months. She was previously a volunteer. PC3 shard that the priority is to serve the children being removed and serve the case workers. The "sitting schedule" for the case workers means that approximately every 4 hours there is a different adult working with the guests--there is no time for relationship. They have a good relationship with DCS and other organizations--a lot of trust is built here. "The staff higher than me is so supportive." There is limited interaction with foster parents. "We have a good relationship with a lot of faith-based organizations in the community. I feel like we have a pretty good relationship with the department, and

	we try to stay connected in the community, as well as we can, so we do have a lot of strong relationships with other organizations." "We do receive a lot of support from the community."
Executive Director "ED"	ED is first in line to share the story, next in line is her husband, and that isn't always good for their family. There is a lack of child welfare staff, and the ones they have are overworked. DCS guards their information closely, and there are a ton of organizations that do a lot of good...but none of them really know what the other is doing. There are multiple groups involved......DCS is for the foster placements, CPS is for the removal day.

Respondent	Statements Aligned to Code "Systems Power Dynamics" *(how decisions are made within the system and who participates)*
State Director "SD"	"The case workers will get the kids to school when they can. Case manager decides what is happening and what the plan might be." "Nobody seems to know the answers to these questions (getting to school) as the case managers are focused on placement." There are some donors who have expectations. If they can access student records, but they have not been in school for a while, the question becomes do they enroll them based on age-appropriate class or academically appropriate class.
Director of Operations "DO"	DO states that he can't make decisions on his own, and that this can be paralyzing in an organization, but it is truly necessary right now that they huddle on big decisions. "I think we are at the point where it is necessary and it's also helping us all to grow." The case worker is responsible for transporting children to school. Sometimes in the bigger cities it can take longer to get an FH formed and organized---seems to take longer. Stuff gets done faster in the small towns. In terms of schooling, there is a lot of ownership by teenagers. If they don't want to go to school, the case worker really can't make them. Case workers also decide who needs a visit to doctor/dentist/etc.
Regional Coordinator "RC"	There is not a planning process happening to educate children, it is up to the case manager. The case managers decide when the children go to school. Case managers determine what is best for each child.
Program Coordinator1 "PC1"	With the sitting schedule, it's basically the last DCS worker that comes in who decides about transporting the kids to school or not.
Program Coordinator 2 "PC2"	Regarding plans for educating foster youth, PC2 says "it really varies from child to child. Sometimes the DCS workers take them to school and sometimes they do not take them to school. And really DCS at the end of the day, they make all the decisions and have control over that child." DCS makes the decisions regarding the children, and our team is sort of like the fun aunt and uncle.
Program Coordinator 3 "PC3"	People generally get along--ultimately the department has the final say as to who is going to school. "The person who is responsible for getting that child in school is their actual caseworker."

Executive Director "ED"	"Generally, people are not taking charge of education for these children." We have some DCS staff who will say "this is above my paygrade". We see issues where sometimes the DCS team will not wake kids up for school or won't force the issue and that is frustrating. The case manager is the only one who can transport them in a vehicle, but they are often swamped. Sometimes teens show up in shackles, but we can't always be informed of the charges which is concerning when we are placing volunteers with them at the house. When it comes to boots on the ground, nobody is looking at education for our kids.

Respondent	Statements Aligned to Code "Systems Regulations" *(policies, practices, and procedures that regulate system behavior)*
State Director "SD"	The case manager at the FH that day may or may not be the case manager who is working on the placement for the child. Only the case managers can transport the children (they are not placed). As the organization grows, communication is getting more difficult with more than 60 staff. You often hear that folks have not had time to check messages, listen to voicemails, or they may have to miss a meeting when things pop up. People are very focused on the needs of the day; it is difficult to look up and make plans. One of the biggest barriers is simple logistics (case manager sitting schedule). "There is no strategic plan for where we're going.......we react to people who reach out". "It is non-negotiable that volunteers will never be left along with a child". "There is a certain way our physical buildings need to look and feel and that is one of the non-negotiables for the organization."
Director of Operations "DO"	DO shares that they "jokingly say we're building the plane as we fly it" but also "we have gotten back to our roots and decided that we are truly a three-day program". FH is not licensed and is not considered a placement or a group home, the children are always in state custody. There is always a case manager at the home when children are at FH as they are responsible for supervising. It is a practice of FH to have only one case in the house at a time. When it comes to building homes, sometimes permitting and codes are obstacles. The nature of our model doesn't fit into any of the coding or regulations. They don't know whether to put it in residential, or commercial." For FH, they try not to "policy something as it is really against our mission". There is a lot of grey in working with kids. They do have more policies for employees than they do for serving children. "We try so hard not to policy something to the point that it's detrimental to what our mission is."
Regional Coordinator "RC"	RC shared they are not really involved in any education plans for children placed at FH. Since early July, FH instituted a strict 72-hour rule regarding guests at the home. RC shares that the recent change to the 3-day stay has been welcomed in the NE region, as some felt DCS was taking advantage of the situation.
Program Coordinator 1 "PC1"	They discuss using a calendar/program called Logistics to coordinate volunteers. When a removal occurs, there are emails that go out with the sitting schedule of DCS workers, that this is where they usually list all the school information. The staff at the house also work to make sure they have the supplies they need if they do go to school. When a child is using a device at Foster House, a case worker must be seated

	next to them now and have eyes on the device. Children are not allowed to have cell phones anymore due to inappropriate use and some children sharing location--so we had to move toward being a device-free home. There is a new house policy of "eyes on youth at all times" after some incidents where children left when they weren't being closely monitored.
Program Coordinator 2 "PC2"	There is a new regulation in this county regarding the sitting schedule--DCS workers are now rotating roughly every four hours. The organization also made an adjustment to a three-day protocol, citing a young boy who was with them 48 days and missed a cardiology appointment and scheduled therapies twice a week. They base the child's school zone on the bio families' residence.
Program Coordinator 3 "PC3"	The on-call assignment we have can be a lot--this can lead to a lot of fatigue with folks and impact us reaching our goals. The kids having someone new with them every 4 hours is inconsistent. PC3 also spoke to the big gap in the number of actual foster families who can take children---she thinks this is a gap but is not sure.
Executive Director "ED"	There is mileage/overtime/etc. to getting kids to school. Folks can have donation funds be directed to a specific house/county. We have shifted back to housing guests for 72 hours---this is who we were created to be. When we opened, we had a 24/7/365 on-call policy. As we have grown, we have shifted to a stance of staff works no more than 2 weeks at a time on-call. "Children are grey--no child ever fits legislations perfectly--this makes policy hard." FH tries hard to not have a lot of policy--when they do they become like the state.

Respondent	Statements Aligned to Code "Systems Norms" *(underlying attitudes, values, and beliefs that direct current behavior and practices)*
State Director "SD"	Lavishly Love on Children on their worst day. No kids in a cubical or office space. People find it easier to give money, as opposed to time. There are some stereotypes about children and teenagers, and the cycle of poverty here. "Raising awareness is our biggest goal always."
Director of Operations "DO"	DO feels that the first priority is that they run the house well---to be efficient and effective. The second priority is to manage growth. DO also says "There is not a current educational plan for when they come to the FH." We are literally just a place for the caseworkers to bring the child while they are trying to find placement." DO described the organization as a ministry. DO believes there is a lot of red tape with policy, and that will make them less effective. We are trying to reduce trauma for children in the 72 hours after removal. "We want those three days to lavishly love on those children." DO also shares, "I'm completely speaking off the cuff but I don't think school is a major concern. If anything, it's a reprieve for the case worker as they try to find placement while they are at school." DO shares they need to work through the trauma first. "We wanted to be a 501c3 and do everything exactly the same in every house." "The mission is to lavishly love on kids--that's the mission we're supporting children on their darkest days." "We are just trying to do the next right thing."

Regional Coordinator "RC"	Kids in our houses are the priority, as well as the case workers. Third is expansion. The general public doesn't think much about educating foster youth, but the volunteers raise concerns about the children not being in school or their level of readiness. RC shared a story of a 10-year-old child who could not identify letters.
Program Coordinator1 "PC1"	Removal day is our focus. On the day of removal, we are to lavishly love on the children, and we are here to support our DCS workers. It's our responsibility as Program Coordinators that we are here to support the mission and living out the mission the way it was intended. Expansion is also a priority. So, day to day, making sure kids are served, making sure DCS is cared for, and making sure their needs are met. Regarding the issue, the PCs state, "I feel like it's kind of taken care of itself with DCS. With the staff shortage they're making it a priority for these kids to go to school because they just don't have the manpower at the moment, which in turn is good for the children, because we need these kids to have some sort of normalcy, some sort of consistency during the turmoil." For the teenagers, they just have apathy and don't like going to school. School may have been their safe place at one time, but it just isn't anymore, and this is a barrier for kids attending school. These PCs describe the activity as a ministry, sharing that they are a very blessed organization. On mission creep, the PCs stated, "I fully trust our leadership and executive Board to not allow that to happen." We don't like the word rules.
Program Coordinator2 "PC2"	PC2 says, "our top priority is that we lavishly love the kids. That's the main goal of our mission, and I feel like we do a pretty good job of keeping that as our center focus." PC2 also shared that there is a lot of change as the organization is so new, and that they are learning as they go. But, if there is an issue that is brought up to leadership, it is usually taken care of.
Program Coordinator 3 "PC3"	They do have options for us to go to therapy, which they encourage for our personal and professional needs. They will also pay for us to go somewhere else if we want. The public does not think about educating foster youth--they are thinking about removal. "I share the message of the ministry with the community, and I look for opportunities to partner with other organizations and ministries." "We're here to care for children on their worst day."
Executive Director "ED"	The first priority is to lavishly love on children on removal day, second priority is expansion, and third is raising awareness. School needs to be THE safe place. An example of heartbreak is that the child is not first; the child is not first and will sit in a cubicle, not go to school, and there is no regard for what this kid needs. They need clothes, food, love, dignity, and structure. In each county or region, there is a specific time when the sitting schedule changes--nobody is thinking about school. The public is not thinking about education for foster youth.

Respondent	Statements Aligned to Code "System Interdependencies" *(current feedback mechanisms and how the above system parts reinforce and interact with each other)*

State Director "SD"	This is delicate. We don't call the shots, but we do have a voice to ask questions.
Director of Operations "DO"	Our key partnerships are churches and civic organizations, but sometimes it is hard to get in the door with donors. There are regular meetings for connecting and sharing feedback, but it is a slippery slope.
Regional Coordinator "RC"	Case workers--25 at Alpha County House, Beta County has 95, and Charlie County has 125. "We try to encourage them to take kids to school but that does not always happen. We don't really get a say, we do try to encourage that but a lot of times they don't end up taking them." RC notes that the Rotary Club, Lions Club and other civic organizations are very active and involved with the FH locations.
Program Coordinator 1 "PC1"	We would be frustrated, and I would think to myself "Why are these kids not going to school, why aren't you taking them to school". Those are things that we say in our brain, because those are things we cannot say out loud. Those are things we keep to ourselves, or we talk within the confines of an office with the door closed." In terms of relationships and providing feedback, there are monthly meetings between the organization and DCS to express needs and offer feedback. They also provide lunches to DCS staff. We are in constant communication with them.
Program Coordinator 2 "PC2"	In PC2's role there is not much opportunity to provide feedback, but she does feel as though she is able to communicate with her supervisor who can in turn share with DCS.
Program Coordinator 3 "PC3"	I'm the PC and the RC over me listens to a lot about the experiences we are having and speaks daily to the liaison at the dept. of child services. We do question things sometimes, and process scenarios, and then we have routine conversations to share feedback. "I think when we give them feedback it's usually received--it seems to be received pretty well."
Executive Director "ED"	There are zero mechanisms--but oh I should not say zero. There are foster care review boards, but they don't really ask us for feedback. We've had a good relationship with DCS---it isn't that they have a lack of care, but a lack of capacity. They are overworked and stretched thin.

Appendix C

Document Analysis: System Components (CP), System Connections (SC), System Power Dynamics (PD), System Regulations (R), System Norms (N), and System Interdependencies (I)

Document	Code
Organization by Departments	CP
General Information	CP
General Information continued	CP
Regional Admin Contact Information	CN
IN DCS Regional Managers	CN
FL DCS Agencies	CN
VA DCS Regional Office Locations	CN
TX DCS Regional Map	CN
GA Regional Contact List	CN
OH Field Office Contacts	CN
AZ Regional Contacts	CN
Technology Platforms Page	R
Payroll & Accounts Payable Information	R
Password Protections	R
Social Media Details	R
Social Media Exploration of new apps	R
FH We Believe Page	N
Oversight by Location	PD
FH Operating Standards	N
FH Presentation to Public/Structure	R
Employee Care & Counseling Program	N
Red Door Culture-Historical Significance	N
Red Door Culture-Application to FH	N
Story Telling Seminar	N
Story Telling Seminar Cont.	N
"How to" tell the FH Story	R
Team Responsibilities	CN
Gifts/Roles of team members	CN
Mapping your team	CN
Expansion to Program Coordinator-What's next?	PD
Weird House Stuff	R
Tips from other coordinators	I
Tips from other coordinators	I
Tips from other coordinators	I
Program Coordinator (part-time) Job Description	R
Maintaining records of all guests	R
Program Coordinator (full-time) Job Description	R
Gift Card Tracking/Uploading receipts/t-shirts	R
Program Coordinator Advice before opening	I
Program Coordinator Training Supply List	R
The way we treat our guests	R

Tips for Lavishly Loving on guests	R
Stand by You song lyrics	N
Local Advisory Team Guidelines	R
How to Create an Advisory Team	PD
How to Create a Useless Advisory Team	PD
Treasurer Responsibilities-Local Advisory Team	R
Growing and Gathering Volunteer Teams	CN
Minister's Breakfast Purpose/Logistics/Agenda	PD
T-Shirt Committee	R
Lemonade and Hot Chocolate Stands	R
T-Shirt Sales	R
Luncheon Planning Committee	R
Speaking Engagement Committee	CN
Caring for Children Awaiting Foster Placement	R
Speaking Engagement FAQ	R
Registry Wish List (Walmart/Amazon/Target)	R
What's in our Pantry Cabinets	R
Emergency Plan/Caregiver Volunteer Contacts	CN
Volunteer Check-in and Check-out	R
DCS Assessment Questions	R
Guest Check in Form	R
Guest Take Home Bag Checklist	R
Baby Guest Take Home Bag Checklist	R
Packing Large Duffels for Guests	R
End of Month Report Process	I
Construction Guide--Building Lot	CP
Floor Plan Option 1	CP
Floor Plan Option 2	CP
Interior Finishes (Walls/Trim/Doors/Cabinets)	CP
Interior (Ceiling/Flooring/Doorknobs)	CP
Utilities & Security	CP
Storage Area (Attic/Garage/Basement)	CP
Exterior Finishes (Siding/Roofing/Envelope)	CP
Exterior (Lighting/Driveway/Play Area)	CP
Discounts and Tax Exemptions	CN
Sherwin Williams Account Information	CN
Finances: Our Approach	N
Finances: Donors	N
Donation Management	R
Credit Cards	R
Monthly Financial Report Requirements	I
House Financials/Net Income	R
14% Allocation Coverage by area	R
Financial Policies and Procedures	R

Tax Exempt and Accounting Team Contacts	R
Bank Deposit Detail--Donations	R
AmEx Card and SAP	R
SAP Expense Reports	R
Gift Card Management	R
Grants	R
Friendraising Tips	CN
Friendraising Events	CN
Sock Buddy Campaign	R
Fundraiser How-To	R
Yard Set-Up	R
Spread the Love Campaign Set-up	R
Brand Guidelines	N
Logo mark and Identifier/tagline	N
SOP for using identifier or tagline	R
Logo file types/where to use which resolution	R
Dos and Don'ts for Logo	R
Brand Colors	R
Font and Typeface Usage	R
Images and Imagery Sources	R
Social Media Guidelines	R
Managing Social Media Accounts-Tips	R
Video Resources (VIMEO)	N
T-Shirts & Merchandise	R
Kick-off Supplies from Regional Coordinator	R
Kick-off Supplies from Regional Coordinator	R
Kick-off Supplies from Regional Coordinator	R
Kick-off Supplies from Regional Coordinator	R
House Plans & Easel	R
T-shirt Shelf	R
Tabletop Banner	R
Floor Banner	R
Contractors Breakfast	R
Pastors Breakfast	R
Luncheon Table Set up	R
Luncheon Invitations & Table Host Packets	R
How to use Square	R
Newsletters	R
Inputting Customers	R
Processing a sale in square	R
Creating an invoice in Square	R
Checking invoices in Square	R
Comp an item using Square	R
Newsletter and Mailer Annual Guide	R

Newsletter Branding Guide	R
Adding Customers to Newsletter	R
How to Create a Newsletter	R
Welcome to social media	R
Posts and Graphics	R
Instagram	R
How to use Influencers	R
Personal Disclaimer	R
GoTo Connect	R
App Settings	R
Voicemail Greeting	R
Voicemail Greetings Cont.	R
Accessing Files on SharePoint	R
Copy files from SharePoint to OneDrive	R
Share folder or file from OneDrive	R
Adding a signature in Office	R
Adding a signature in Outlook App on Android	R
Change Email Signature in Outlook iOS App	R
Changing Email Signature for Office 365	R
Adding an Event to Outlook Calendar	R
Adding Events on Mobile Outlook app	R
Add FH Org Events to your Outlook account	R
"Out of office" or "vacation" setting	R
Setting an out of office reply on Outlook	R
Creating a group email in Outlook	R
Registering a new employee in ADP	R
ADP cont.	R
ADP cont.	R
Time and Attendance	R
Recording worked time	R
Recording Non-worked time	R
Assigning Departments	R
Adding and Copying Rows	R
Printing your timecard	R
Submitting a time off request in ADP	R
ADP cont.	R
ADP cont.	R
Installing ADP Mobile App	R
ADP System Requirements	R
Logging into ADP Mobile/Enable Fingerprint	R
ADP cont.	R
ADP cont.	R
Managing Time Off Requests	R
ADP cont.	R

Requesting time off	R
ADP Dashboard	R
ADP cont.	R
ADP cont.	R
Enroll in paperless tax statements	R
Meeting sign-in sheet	R

Inputting Customers	R
Processing a sale in square	R
Creating an invoice in Square	R
Checking invoices in Square	R
Comp an item using Square	R
Newsletter and Mailer Annual Guide	R
Newsletter Branding Guide	R
Adding Customers to Newsletter	R
How to Create a Newsletter	R
Welcome to social media	R
Posts and Graphics	R
Instagram	R
How to use Influencers	R
Personal Disclaimer	R
GoTo Connect	R
App Settings	R
Voicemail Greeting	R
Voicemail Greetings Cont.	R
Accessing Files on SharePoint	R
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