

## Administrative & Overall Program Goals

### Mission and Goals

Kids Crossing is committed to ensuring that children will belong to a safe and appropriate family. In partnership with state, counties and communities, our child placement agency addresses long-term goals to:

- ♦ Protect children, first and foremost, from abuse and neglect.
- ♦ Provide safe, predictable environments for children.
- ♦ Work diligently toward permanency.
- ♦ Provide families with enhanced capacity to protect children and care for their needs.
- ♦ Preserve continuity of family relationships and connections.

Kids Crossing works to assist with the safe reunification of children with their families. When that is not possible, we work to ensure that children are placed in safe, nurturing permanent homes. Children are placed with us through County Departments of Human Services all along the Colorado Front Range.

Kids Crossing was founded by foster parents, for foster parents. Jan and Larry Faubion started the agency in 1992. Since that time, we have grown phenomenally, thanks in part to our outstanding foster parents. We now have offices and foster homes in Colorado Springs, Denver and Pueblo. We attribute our growth to a core of caring, nurturing foster parents and a dedicated professional staff. Kids Crossing serves children from ages 0 to 18 years. In addition to regular foster care, we serve children with medical needs, teenagers, teen moms and their babies, attachment disordered children, and a wide range of other individual needs. Our foster parents have a wide variety of skills and specialties.

Kids Crossing believes that a family setting is the best place for children who have been removed from their homes. Whenever possible, we want children to be able to return to their families or to a special person or family who can give them the "one-on-one" love that we all need. We welcome family involvement with the child for a speedy, safe return home. In the event that a child is not able to return home safely, Kids Crossing is a licensed adoption agency for our foster parents who wish to adopt.

Kids Crossing emphasizes a system-based approach, which utilizes multi-agency coordination and cooperation, and which accesses community resources. By pooling resources, thoughts, ideas and plans, agencies can support the children and families of our communities. The end result is comprehensive services for children and families.

### Wraparound and the Team Approach

The wraparound process is a way to improve the lives of children and families with complex needs. It is not a program or a service. The key components are the family and child team and the wraparound plan.

The Child and Family Team is:

- ♦ Selected by the family and, typically, has no more than half professionals. Team members will include extended family, friends, advocates, teachers, pastors, ministers, etc.
- ♦ The team is committed to persistence in delivery of services and supports. When things do not go well, the child and family are not "kicked out", but, rather, the individualized services and supports are changed.
- ♦ Responsible for answering the question, "What will it take to return the child back to his/her parent(s) and make their lives better?"
- ♦ Responsible for developing, implementing and evaluating the wraparound plan for the child and family.

The Wraparound Plan is:

- ♦ Individualized and based on the unique strengths, values, norms, preferences and culture of the child, family, foster family and community.
- ♦ Needs driven rather than services driven.
- ♦ Developed, implemented and evaluated by the child and family team.
- ♦ Completely consistent with the Family Services Plan now utilized by caseworkers and which are submitted to the Court.

### Why Wraparound?

The El Paso County Reunification Task Force was created in early 2004 to assess the state of our foster care system, especially the number of children who were being reunified with their parents, versus finding permanency through adoption by kin or foster parents. The Task Force issued its final report June 7, 2005. The first three "Recommendations for Future Efforts" were:

#### 1. Self-Sufficiency Needs of Child Welfare Families

"Assessment and response to the self-sufficiency needs of families should be an ongoing process that occurs throughout our involvement with child welfare families."

#### 2. Use of Visitation

"Appropriate visitation is a proven intervention for increasing the likelihood of reunifying families."

#### 3. Engagement with Families

"Strong engagement with parents and families based on a strength-based approach is one of the most significant factors in increasing reunification."

In early 2004, Kids Crossing began exploring different approaches that are out there for working with children and families. Kids Crossing reached the conclusion that there was a better approach than the wraparound process.

In October, of 2004, Kids Crossing began an 18-month consultation with VROON VanDenBerg to make Kids Crossing a "wraparound agency". Effective September 1, 2005, the agency began using wraparound concepts for new placements.

#### Family Engagement:

Engaging the family begins with the first contact and continues throughout our involvement with the child and their family. Family engagement is a philosophy and an approach.

#### Initial Engagement Process:

- ◆ Staff go to the foster home within the first 24 hours of the initial placement. This staff member contacts the parents of the child to let them know their child is safe.
- ◆ Staff attend the initial court hearing in order to meet the parents.
- ◆ Staff facilitate the Ice Breaker meeting between the parents of the children and the foster parents.
- ◆ Foster parents bring the children to Kids Crossing, so children can visit with their parents.

#### First Meeting with Family:

- ◆ Staff begins discussion on strengths, needs culture and vision.
- ◆ Staff will identify and address whether or not basic needs (food, shelter, medicine, etc.) are being met.
- ◆ Staff will explain wraparound and the team process.
- ◆ Staff will have the family identify team members they would like to have participate.
- ◆ Staff will then set a time and place for the first team meeting.

Visitation and Engagement: When parents visit their children, it's such an opportunity for Kids Crossing to engage families.

- ◆ Communicate directly with the children's parents.
- ◆ Encourage and support the visitation process.
- ◆ Children benefit tremendously when they see their parents together and getting along.

Essential Elements of Wraparound:

Wraparound must be based in the community.

Services and supports must be individualized, built on strengths and meet the needs of children and families across life domains to promote success, safety and permanence in home, school and community.

The process must be culturally competent, building on unique values, preferences and strengths of children and families and their communities.

Families must be full and active partners in every level of the wraparound process.

The wraparound approach must be a team-driven process, involving family, child, natural supports, agencies and community services working together to develop, implement and evaluate the individualized service plan.

Wraparound child and family teams must have adequate, flexible approaches and flexible funding.

Wraparound plans must have a balance of formal services and informal community and family resources.

An unconditional commitment to serve children and families is essential.

The plan should be developed and implemented based on an interagency, community-based collaborative process.

Outcomes must be determined and measured for the system, for the program and for the individual child and family.

Foster Parents and Wraparound:

The role of the foster parent is critical when the wraparound process is being used to help children and families. Foster parents are able to engage the parents of the foster children placed in their home in ways that no one else involved can.

The role of the foster parent involves:

- ♦ Participating as a team member on the Child and Family Team.
- ♦ Participating in the Ice Breaker when children are initially placed in the foster home.
- ♦ Encouraging and supporting the visitation process.
- ♦ Working directly with the parents and family of the child placed in their home as prescribed by the wraparound plan.

- ♦ Working closely with the Team Coordinator and Caseworker to ensure that all services and supports are carried out in a quality manner.

The wraparound process is also intended to be helpful and supportive to the foster parents, as well. Part of the process involves focusing on the needs of the children. Foster parents, as members of the Team, have an important say in how the plan for the child is developed and implemented.

Kids Crossing will also utilize the wraparound process to reduce placement moves - especially those relating to the behavior of a foster child.

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1 Hour Credit

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

1. What does "wraparound" mean to you?

2. List five ways in which you would engage a biological parent:

(1) \_\_\_\_\_

(2) \_\_\_\_\_

(3) \_\_\_\_\_

(4) \_\_\_\_\_

(5) \_\_\_\_\_

3. When should an "Ice Breaker" meeting occur?

4. In terms of program goals, list one thing you'd like Kids Crossing to start, continue and stop doing:

Start: \_\_\_\_\_

Continue: \_\_\_\_\_

Stop: \_\_\_\_\_