

## **Conference Continuation of Day II.**

**Speaker:** Mrs. Anneke Nicolaas & Ms. Nathalie Tromp

**Association:** CFCA Aruba

**Topic:** The status of child protection and foster care in Aruba.

Center for Foster Care established in 2004

### **Functions Center:**

Coordinate foster care

Quality guidance foster care

Quality foster families

Goal: recruit and prepare families for foster care.

### **Task**

Recruitment and selection foster families (ads: newspapers, TV, etc.

Training preparation foster families

Guidance support

### **There are 5 types of foster families:**

Crisis families

Short-term families

Long-term

Weekend

For disabled children

### **Requirements**

21 years and older

Marital status no requirement

No criminal record

Physical and mental commitment

Resident of Aruba

Common sense

Positive attitude

Stable family life

Discipline prone

Good communicative skills

Honesty

**Procedure**

Approach bureau  
 Appointment for interview  
 Court of Guardianship reviews  
 Home visitation  
 Family must attend a course (practical course; visual exercises)  
 Bureau makes selection and introduces child; family; biological parents.  
 Placing and weekly monitoring.

**Fact:**

88 foster families recruited over the past year 5 years.

**2009 plans:**

Celebration 5<sup>th</sup> anniversary  
 Awareness campaign re foster care  
 Awareness week: June 1 – 5  
 Activities already on the way  
 Radio & television commercials are being developed  
 T-shirts with slogans  
 More development of media exposure

**Speaker:** Mrs. Roxanne Palmiste

**Association:** Ministry of Social development Trinidad and Tobago

**Topic:** The status of child protection and foster care in Trinidad & Tobago.

The Ministry's policy is in keeping with precepts laid down by the United Nations General Assembly.

Document covers all aspects: health, education, Welfare, etc

There is legislation in place (7) to uphold these policies.

**Key initiatives:**

Healthy lifestyle  
 Education  
 Combating HIV  
 Family support programs  
 Relevant activities are held in July – August

**Areas**

Health

Social development (books are free at all schools)

Counseling for children (including outsourcing counseling)

Parent counseling and guidance

Publication of booklets related to health and social development

Sports developments

**Foster**

Defends the best interest of children under 18

**Procedure**

Referrals from referral agencies (see chart)

3 foster care officers for entire country

Assessment: reunification or placement

Placement followed by monitoring

Referrals are reviewed by Family Court (private)

Family Court based in Port of Spain

Other district ruled by Magistrate Court

**Types of placements**

Relative placement

Respite (crisis situations)

Traditional foster care

Specialized or therapeutic

Group/ home residential

Adoption

**Process**

Intake (walk-ins)

Medical record

Home session training)

Support and review of foster parents

Currently in care: 259

There is no trouble placing physically/mentally handicapped children: stipend is relatively higher.

Cancellation of an approved foster parent is done in writing.

**Speaker:** Mrs. Victoria Francis-Nathaniel

**Association:** St. Lucia

**Topic:** The status of child protection and foster care in St. Lucia.

Government is responsible for child protection

**Services**

Prevention child abuse

Crisis intervention

Disaster assistance

Senior citizens care

1999: Foster care officially established.

**Constraints**

Many children 18 years and older are still being maintained despite legislation.

Independent living is yet to be developed.

Currently 85 registered foster parents

Majority of placements: females

The main reasons for need foster care: absence of migrant parents.

Recruitment transpires in November: foster care awareness month.

**Process**

At least 25 years of age

Marital status irrelevant

Assessment

Character references

Police report

Home visit

Proof of financial stability

**Challenges**

Inadequate legislation

Financial restrictions

Staff shortages

Inadequate monitoring

**Financial support**

Stipend: \$300 a month

Health card

**Note: There are many positive developments in process.**

**Speaker:** Ms. Ann Green

**Association:** Guyana

**Topic:** The status of child protection and foster care in Guyana.

**Concerns of child protection in Guyana**

Orphans

Vulnerable children

Highest contributor to child vulnerability: loss of a parent (some due to HIV)

**Issues**

Sex abuse

Child exploitation

Legislation is in place: policy was drafted and partnership with assistance of UNICEF.

60 children were in social care without professional intervention.

There are 23 institutions in Guyana (many owned by private religious organizations)

The entire approach violates the child's rights act.

**Functions of Agency**

Provide protection of children

Facilitate placement

Promote unification with biological parents

Monitor to ensure compliance with standards

**Every child placed is placed with an assessment and a care plan.**

**Over 65 children have been returned to their biological parents.**

**Challenges**

Getting resources to get homes up to standard

Promoting the right attitude in staff members

There is a structures foster care program launched by government.

In July the first 40 children will go in permanent foster care.

**Speaker:** Ms. Filomena Marquez

**Association:** **Stichting Maatschappelijke Zorg en Herstel**

**Topic:** The status of child protection and foster care in Curaçao.

Foundation only 1 year in existence

Adolescents (18-24) guidance home

**Concerns**

Victims of human smuggling

Teenage mothers

**Vision**

Timely provided aid

Holistic approach

Involve all stakeholders

Collaboration between all players

Constant evaluation

Efficiency and effectiveness

Individual guidance is central: the child is the central figure

Foster families are properly screened

Foster families undergo training

Establish rights of foster families

Introduce legislation with regard to foster care

Biological families must contribute financially to care costs

All efforts must be done to restore healthy relationship with biological family.

**Speaker:** Ms. Sonia Skellekie

**Association:** Anguilla

**Topic:** The status of child protection and foster care in Anguilla.

### **Under Ministry of Social Development**

Department of Social Development

Education Department

Police Force

Family and Social Services Unit

Governed by: the authority of the Juvenile Act

### **Care and Protection**

Safety and welfare of children are paramount

Reports are investigated

Efforts are made to keep the child within the family unless the child's safety is at risk.

In most cases relatives are approached.

The process is followed in consultation with the parents (In fact the parents are involved from the outset.

Every report of abuse or neglect is reported to the police, this mandated by law.

Teachers who fail to report abnormal practices in this sense are reported and can be prosecuted.

Close links with schools; they help identify the suitability of the placement (monthly reports from schools)

Once a child is placed the care provider is updated on the child's situation: detailed information

### **Placements**

39 placements (*over what period?*)

### **Reasons for placement**

Department places child due to violations (court order)

Father files for custody

### **Support for the victim and family**

Counseling; though counseling services are limited

Stipend: 400 EC\$ monthly

**Challenges**

Difficulty recruiting foster parents for older children

No residential facilities

Inadequate counseling

Resistance from parents

Unification rate is poor

Projection dates for completion plans: 2009 - 2011