



Joint Committee on Child Welfare System Oversight September 11, 2024, 1:45 p.m.: Presentation on Therapeutic Foster Care

Chair Concannon, Vice Chair Gossage, Ranking Minority Member Ousley, and Members of the Committee:

This submission was prepared by Cornerstones of Care Chief Programs and Innovation Officer, Justin Horton. On behalf of our organization, team members, and community of supporters—thank you for the opportunity to present today.

Who We Are

Cornerstones of Care is a behavioral health organization with a 154-year history of providing prevention, treatment and support services to children and their families. The children that we serve have all experienced trauma. Trauma resulting from events, such as abuse or neglect, separation from/loss of a loved one, and witnessing or experiencing violence in their community, as well as trauma stemming from ongoing, cumulative experiences like poverty, addiction, and mental illness.

Cornerstones of Care is a certified trauma-informed organization by The Sanctuary Institute. This model recognizes trauma can be pervasive to the human experience. It acknowledges the vulnerability of clients, organizations, and systems to the adverse effects of trauma and guides the approach that our almost 750 team members across our organization take to recognize, understand and respond to trauma in a manner that mitigates its' negative effects. This model also fosters a restorative organizational culture and framework for creating trauma informed communities, and promotes healthy team member engagement, safety, self-awareness, and self-care.

Cornerstones of Care has been providing services to the children and families of Kansas since 1999. Today, we have more than 250 team members in Kansas within seven offices, supporting citizens in 52 counties.



Therapeutic Family Foster Home Capacity Building March 1, 2024 – June 30, 2025

Specific to Therapeutic Family Foster Home (TFFH) Capacity Building, Cornerstones of Care was awarded \$689,889 to apply a therapeutic foster care model as a prevention tool in 11 counties in Northeast Kansas. The counties are: Brown, Doniphan, Jackson, Jefferson, Marshall, Nemaha, Pottawatomie, Shawnee, and Wabaunsee.

If our model is effective, the work would: 1) reduce the number of children entering foster care, 2) reduce the number of children entering foster care due to reasons not related to abuse or neglect otherwise known as Family In Need of Assessment, 3) increase the capacity of TFFH for youth in foster care as beds are not being occupied by children we have prevented coming into care.

Our model focuses on supports to open Family Preservation cases. When a Family Preservation case is opened, our team works with the family to identify two to three respite/safety plan families. These are safe families, usually relatives or family friends, where children can go stay. The stays are usually short term but are helpful in allowing the biological parents to address what they need to all while knowing their children are in a safe place.

Typically, respite families opening their home to Family Preservation case children would receive no financial support. In an effort to further prevent the need for a child to enter foster care, Cornerstones of Care provides the following additional supports to these respite families identified as part of the TFFH work, in addition to the already assigned Case Manager:

- Access to training in a virtual resource library focused on successful behavioral intervention. More courses are being developed, but currently the library has the following:

Dr. Phalen’s 3 Minute Parent Tips	Ways Trauma Can Change the Brain
Anger- Coach Kids Through It	Boundaries
Procedures and Routines	Life Skills
Grace and Accountability	



- An incentive payment for taking child(ren) into their home
 - One time \$100 payment, per qualifying youth
- A daily reimbursement rate to offset the cost of caring for child(ren) for things like food, gas, additional utility usage, etc.
 - \$50 per night, per qualifying youth
- An incentive payment for the children safely returning to their biological home and a successful case closure
 - One time \$200 payment, per qualifying youth
- Functional Family Therapist Provider Support
 - Cornerstones of Care will provide therapeutic support to the respite home for any clinical support needs that arise.
- An In-Home Support Specialist
 - Sometimes families just need practical day to day support. Therefore, aside from training, financial reimbursement, and therapeutic intervention, families get help with day to day activities and an extra set of eyes and ears between after school and bedtime hours. With these TFFH funds, Cornerstones of Care stood up two In Home Support Specialist positions. The Specialists are working with Family Preservation team members, but alongside the respite caregivers to help navigate the challenges of caring for youth who are a bonus to their home. Supports can be in the home with household support, babysitting, acting as another safe adult in the home, homework assistance, etc. Also, supports can be in the community via daily routine assistance like helping with transportation, helping with shopping, errands, etc. Each family's needs will be uniquely assessed and supported and the In Home Specialist Support work could look different from home to home.



TFFH Data

March to June 2024 was an initial period that allowed Cornerstones of Care to develop the program specifics, hire, and build resources. The program is fully staffed. July 1, 2024, kicked off the implementation. As of August 31, 2024:

<i>Data Element</i>	<i>Data</i>
Respite Families Served	19
Children Served	27
Respite Nights Paid	93
Cases Closed	5 (14 cases still open)
Cases Closed Successfully	4