



Joint Committee on Child Welfare System Oversight

September 11, 2024

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

My name is Angela Hedrick, and I serve as Vice President of Operations of the nonprofit KVC Kansas. In addition to serving as the state's foster care case management provider in two of the eight catchment areas, we are a child placing agency that supports 515 foster families across the state.

Increasing Therapeutic Family Foster Home Capacity through Mockingbird Family Model



With grant funding from the Kansas Department for Children and Families, KVC is making significant progress in implementing the Mockingbird Family Model and attendant care services. This programming aims to increase the capacity of therapeutic family foster homes, general care licensed foster homes, licensed nonrelated kin homes, relatives (regardless of licensure status), and biological parents. Our main goals are to reduce unnecessary foster care placements, facilitate timely legal permanency, prevent the need for residential placements, and promote greater stability within these familial settings.








Our Mockingbird Family implementation team recently spent a week in Seattle with the Mockingbird Family team for an immersion workshop. This experience helped us lay the groundwork for structuring program protocols, developing policies, and selecting Hub and Satellite Families. During the visit, we met with two Hub Home families and attended a Constellation gathering with four additional satellite families to learn about their experiences with the Mockingbird Family Model over the past 10 years.

KVC will use the Mockingbird Family Model to recruit and support foster home constellations, each consisting of up to 11 families. This includes 6-10 foster homes (satellite homes) and 1 Hub Home. Each constellation will be equipped to provide placements for different levels of care. This model empowers caregivers with a strong, natural support network, giving them the confidence and resources to care for youth with higher needs. It also aims to retain current



families caring for high acuity youth and attract new families willing to provide therapeutic-level care.

A Community-Based Solution

-  **Respite Care** readily available - provided by a known caregiver
-  **Relationship Building** between adult care providers and youth
-  **Normalizing** childhood experiences in family settings
-  **Safety and Stability** for youth
-  **Peer Mentoring** and support; shared learning experiences
-  **Relevant and Child-Specific** training for foster families
-  **Connections** to siblings and birth family - supported by Hub Home

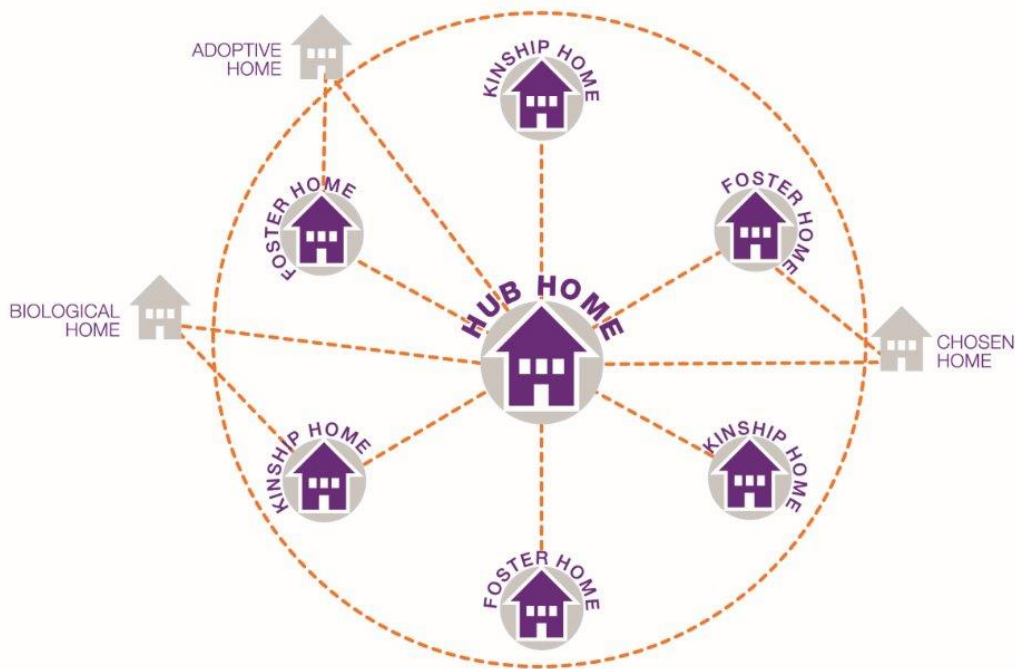
The Hub Home is the heart of each constellation, providing essential support to other homes. It builds community through social events that encourage peer interaction and caregiver support. It also provides regular and emergency mentorship, 24/7/365 respite care, help with navigating systems and community resources, and ensures the safety, permanency and wellbeing of children.

During our meetings with families in Seattle, we confirmed that our infrastructure is well-equipped to support the model's implementation. KVC's robust after-hours protocol, along with our Mockingbird Family implementation team, is ready to provide effective support to families.

With the presence of a compensated Hub Home, families gain access to consistent support, mentorship, and reliable respite care without feeling like they are imposing on someone else or having to ask for a favor. Families we spoke with in Seattle stated specifically that a Hub Home knowing and understanding what their families experience as foster parents and offering support without them having to ask is a crucial benefit of this model. In addition to the Hub Home, families will also receive support from other homes within their constellation and two full-time attendant care workers. These workers will provide up to 20 hours of in-home behavior management support each week.



When families connect with other homes in their constellation, they broaden their support network and build natural relationships. This connection provides access to additional support and experience beyond what is available through the child welfare and mental health workforce. Families can share knowledge about community resources, how to advocate for timely access to services, and offer each other guidance on what to expect. The Mockingbird Family Model enhances existing systems with an innovative approach, providing more structure and easier access to support and expertise beyond traditional professional roles.



KVC aims to launch two constellations in Spring 2025, around April. We are currently finalizing the protocol for selecting Hub Homes and Constellation families and will schedule information sessions for families to learn more within the next 60 days.

Performance Measures

Within the first 16 months of the grant award, additional services available to support TFFH homes measured by staffing attendant care supports and identification of supports provided within constellation will occur. KVC has posted openings for Attendant Care positions and is currently reviewing applications and conducting interviews to fill these roles.



KVC will track the number of moves and placement stability for youth in each constellation, aiming for children to experience 1 or fewer moves within 12 months (of youth served in the constellation).

Within the first 16 months of the grant award, we will identify, select, and implement a training process for the first constellation of homes. KVC started identifying the desired qualities for Hub Homes and Satellite Homes during the immersion workshop. The implementation team is finalizing the job description and application process for Hub Homes. We plan to interview potential Hub Homes and select the best fit, similar to filling a job position. Our goal is to complete Hub Home selection by January 2025 and identify Constellation families by February 2025.

A graphic with a blue background on the left and a yellow background on the right. The blue background contains the text 'MOCKINGBIRD FAMILY™' in white, bold, sans-serif font. The yellow background contains text and a bulleted list. The text reads: 'Building on years of work with government systems and child-placing agencies across Washington State, national partners in California, New York, and Oklahoma, as well as international partners in Australia, Nova Scotia, the Netherlands, Japan, and the United Kingdom, MOCKINGBIRD FAMILY™ is pleased to share the following impact highlights:'. The bulleted list includes: '91% Average foster parent retention in Washington's 11 MOCKINGBIRD FAMILY™ constellations of 91 foster families;', '68 child-placing agencies in 6 countries worldwide are utilizing MOCKINGBIRD FAMILY™; and', and 'MOCKINGBIRD FAMILY™ provided stability and support to an estimated 1,629 families and 2,172 young people in care worldwide through 181 Constellations.'

MOCKINGBIRD FAMILY™

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- 68 child-placing agencies in 6 countries worldwide are utilizing MOCKINGBIRD FAMILY™; and
- MOCKINGBIRD FAMILY™ provided stability and support to an estimated 1,629 families and 2,172 young people in care worldwide through 181 Constellations.

As of September 5th, KVC sponsors 515 placement provider families in Kansas, including seven Therapeutic Foster Homes. Currently, seven youth are placed in KVC's Therapeutic Foster Homes. We will continue to measure increases in the number of Therapeutic Homes throughout the grant period.

Additional Next Steps

In addition to our progress with the Mockingbird Family implementation, KVC recently participated in the Therapeutic Foster Home train-the-trainer program offered by Pressley Ridge. We are currently assessing how to use this training curriculum to support KVC-sponsored families. At a minimum, we plan to offer this curriculum as supplemental training for foster families who have already completed pre-service training, helping them further develop their skills in caring for high-acuity youth.



We recognize the transformative impact of this innovative program and are committed to expanding these services to a broader demographic once we successfully establish initial capacity. Our long-term vision is to extend this vital support to more families in need, enriching and enhancing the lives of many more children and caregivers across the communities we serve.

We wholeheartedly support the Mockingbird Family Model and believe it will positively impact the caregiving culture in Kansas. We also recognize that it is not the end-all, be-all solution for serving high-acuity behavioral health and juvenile justice-involved youth.

Kansas must focus on preventing unnecessary referrals to foster care by improving access to community-based services for biological and adoptive families. These crucial services empower families to safely care for their children at home, rather than through foster care. The state must also continue to increase access to behavioral and mental health treatment, ensuring children and families can access the support they need, when and where they need it. Community-based services and mental health treatment are a vital necessity for all children and caregivers, including biological, foster, adoptive, and relative families.

Thank you for the opportunity to be here today, and I welcome any questions.