



A HOLISTIC FRAMEWORK TO ANALYSE FOSTER-CARE SERVICES IN SOUTH AFRICA

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According to child-care legislation and policies in South Africa, a child should remain in parental and/or extended family care and should maintain connections with family, relatives, tribe, community, culture or tradition. If prevention and early intervening notion measures could not successfully be implemented to keep the child at home, statutory intervention must prove to be in the best interests of the child. On the continuum of alternative care, residential care should be the last resort, and therefore foster care becomes the alternative care most often implemented. It can be applied within the extended family or with other foster parents in the familiar community. Although foster care seems to be the best option on paper, it appears to be that, in the reality of South Africa, the foster-care system is overloaded and fails to deal with the tendency of children being moved from one foster home to the next, resulting in a lack of a consistent home life and an inability to develop lasting attachments. The foster-care system is confronted with traumatised children in physical, material, emotional, sexual, educational and spiritual need; a lack of material and human resources such as foster parents; as well as an excessive turnover of social workers. The purpose of this paper is to present a holistic framework for social workers involved in foster-care services on how to analyse the strengths and obstacles in practice on individual, family, socio-structural and socio-cultural level; as well as create new alternatives to overcome or compensate for all these obstacles, effecting more permanency in the life of the foster child.

