



THE FAMILY ROOM

The Family Room: Program Fact Sheet

- The Family Room's mission is to provide a homelike visitation setting for families separated in the foster care system. We increase both the quantity and quality of supervised time families spend together with the goal of increasing the likelihood that children can return to their birth parents safely, expediently, and sustainably.
- The Family Room (TFR) is a registered 501(c)(3) non-profit organization (EIN#: 46-0601384).
- Program Highlights:
 - Each TFR location provides up to 9 hours per week of group visitation.
 - Visitation hours include evenings and weekends.
 - Each TFR location has the capacity to serve 15 children and their birth parents.
 - Families can remain visiting at TFR as long as is necessary and helpful; most families visit for 9 months before they're fully ready to transition to the next phase of their case plan.
 - Every TFR visit is overseen by a professional social worker who provides trauma-informed, individualized, hands-on parenting education and coaching to each family.
 - Every TFR visit is designed to simulate daily tasks and situations (i.e. after school homework, meal time, nap time, etc.) that allow for maximum relevancy and accuracy in determining a parent's full parental capacity.
 - Every TFR visit includes a nutritionally balanced meal and healthy snacks.
 - TFR coordinates all transportation of children to and from each visit.
 - TFR's professional staff provides weekly communication with each family's assigned caseworker, attendance at Family Decision Meetings and court hearings, and a thorough, written assessment of each family's parental capacity for every court hearing.
- Since its launch in October 2014, TFR has served 43 families and 71 children.
- In addition to serving children and birth parents involved in the child welfare system, TFR also serves foster families by providing them with up to 9 hours each week of respite care while their foster children are at TFR for their visits. Regular and reliable respite care for foster families directly contributes to the overall health and stability of a placement while also reducing the number of overall placements per child while they are in care.

- TFR partners with faith communities who provide the program with both space and volunteers. This model affords TFR maximum fiscal frugality as well as a normalized, relational environment in which to host families. All volunteers receive a back-ground check and training designed specifically for this client population and this service.
- Reunification of the birth family is always “Plan A” at TFR. Given the many stressors and challenges facing families involved in the child welfare system, reunification is simply not always possible. Even if a “Plan B” scenario is determined to be in the best-interest of a child, TFR remains involved with the family to continue supporting nurturing parent/child interactions through the next phase of case planning.
- Scope and Urgency of the Need:
 - 10,375 children were in foster care in the State of Oregon in 2016 (Annie E. Casey Foundation Kids Count Data Center).
 - 28.4% of Oregon’s foster children originate from Multnomah, Clackamas, and Washington Counties combined with an additional 8.2% originating from Marion County.
 - Research shows that more than any other intervention, it is the quality and quantity of family time that is the best predictor for whether or not a child can safely reunite with his/her birth parents (Simms and Bolden, 1991).
 - Oregon’s child welfare system (DHS) is generally able to provide 1 hour per week of supervised family time.
 - Approximately 56% of DHS involved families ultimately reunite (as compared to 63% of TFR involved families).
 - It costs taxpayers approximately \$2,200/month (conservatively) to keep a child in foster care; even with maximum TANF and food stamp benefits, it costs taxpayers approximately \$800/month to keep them with their birth parents.
 - Long term outcomes for children (education, criminality, morbidity) are better when children can grow up safely within their birth families (Lloyd and Barth, 2011).
 - Males who age out of the foster care system are 4 times as likely as the general male population to be arrested and 6 times as likely to be convicted for a crime. The same ratio is true for females.
 - As a result of the well-known ACE Study (Adverse Childhood Experiences) in the early 1990’s, the CDC concluded that child abuse is, in fact, the “gravest and most costly public health issue in the United States. [Study researchers] calculated that its overall costs exceeded those of cancer or heart disease and that eradicating child abuse in America would reduce the overall rate of depression by more than half, alcoholism by two-thirds, and suicide, IV drug use, and domestic violence by three-quarters. It would also have a dramatic effect on workplace performance and vastly decrease the need for incarceration.” (Van der Kolk, M.D., Bessel The Body Keeps the Score).