

Treatment Family Foster Care (TFFC) Webcast Q & A

Q: What does "TFFC" stand for?

A: Treatment Family Foster Care.

Q: What would be examples of after care?

A: Regular contact, at least monthly, with the new caregiver to get an update on the transition to the new placement. If there is a need or concern, helping the new caregiver assess services. It can also mean the current TFFC therapist will still work with child until a new therapist is engaged.

Q: How many TFFC homes are there in the state?

A: As of May 17, 2023, there are 173 total. 116 homes in Legacy regions, and 57 in Community-Based Care (CBC) regions.

Q: Is placement out of region an option if a TFFC home is available? We have run into placement challenges due to a region being a Community-Based Care region being unwilling to consider an out-of-region placement.

A: For CBC, it is different since those children are supposed to remain in their catchment area. However, placement out of region is always an option if the field team is ok with moving the child out of their home region. If there are visitation concerns, the Child Placing Agency (CPA) & foster family can assist.

Q: How many TFFC homes have served as placements so far and is data maintained regarding these placements such as how many of these placements have completed the 9-12 months placement? So many of the youth change placements because foster homes put in discharge notices, sometimes only giving us a week to find a new placement.

A: Data are maintained regarding TFFC homes serving as placements. For children in Legacy regions, for example, 559 unique children have been served in the program since 2018 (as of May 17, 2023). DFPS tracks every placement and how long the child was in the placement before discharging. TFFC foster homes can submit a discharge notice at any time just like a traditional placement so long as the discharge reason meets criteria (24-hour notice only for psychiatric hospitalization for example).

Q: Is Treatment Family Foster Care sometimes also called a therapeutic foster home or is a therapeutic foster home something different? If so, what is the difference?

A: Yes, but they are not the same. A Therapeutic Foster Home is just traditional foster care which serves children with therapeutic needs. TFFC homes must meet additional training and home criteria. Children in TFFC placements have a higher level of need than can be met in a therapeutic home.

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Q: Can we get the DFPS mailbox address where we can send questions?

A: The address is dfpstreatmentfostercare@dfps.texas.gov.

Q: How does a family become a TFFC?

A: They need to be licensed by one of our 6 TFFC contracted agencies: Arrow, Bair, CK, EmberHope, Monarch, or Texas Baptist (current agencies as of May 17, 2023).

Q: Who or what is CK?

A: CK or Covenant Kids is a CPA which provides TFFC services.

Q: Is there a waiting list for these homes, especially as to older teens? If so, are there plans to increase the number of TFFC beds and when?

A: The CPAs providing these services are always recruiting more families who are willing to work with our high-risk teens. It's definitely a need. All the contracted providers are working to increase their numbers of TFFC beds and DFPS expects an increase in available beds in the next 2 fiscal years (through Fiscal Year 2025). These beds are in great demand, and it is a very careful matching process placing children in a home that can best meet their needs. DFPS does not create waitlists for the homes. Each child is assessed as the need for placement arises.

Q: On a previous case with a 12-year-old girl, I requested a TFFC, but CPS said that she would be too old and TFFC homes do not take that age. According to these pie graphs, 12+ are indeed eligible? Is that correct?

A: When DFPS began the TFFC program, the criteria for acceptance was for children aged 10 years and younger. After recognizing the success of the program, DFPS expanded the age to 17 or younger in February 2021 to open the program up for more youth to be served.

Q: Does a teen have to agree to TFFC placement?

A: It is DFPS policy to present children with placement options prior to placement and to allow for pre-placement visits. Teens can advocate for or against a placement and treatment. Since the beginning of this program, no teen has declined a TFFC home.

Q: How many kids are in TFFCs?

A: As of May 17, 2023, 116 children in Legacy regions are in the program and 65 children in CBC regions are in the program.

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Q: It's surprising to learn that African American children are 3rd on the list of children placed in these TFFC homes given the history of their disproportionality in the child welfare system. How can this be?

A: That's an interesting question. DFPS has seen disproportionality for African American children in other areas of the child welfare system when this analysis was done on the subject. Unfortunately, DFPS does not have an answer as to why they would be 3rd on the list proportionally for TFFC. It would be interesting to investigate why this might be the case with another analysis.

Q: What is the rate of pay for the foster parents? Are they paid more than foster parents doing traditional fostering?

A: As of May 17, 2023, the current daily rate is \$277.37; however, there is a current supplemental rate of \$309.27. You may access the rate at the following link: https://www.dfps.texas.gov/Doing_Business/Purchased_Client_Services/Residential_Child_Care_Contracts/Rates/supplemental_payments.asp

Q: Is TFFC available in all counties?

A: Unfortunately, no. The current CPAs are contracted in all regions except 10. For example, Arrow serves TFFC in Regions 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, & 11 while CK only serves Regions 3 & 7. Even though a region may have a TFFC provider serving that region, there may not be an approved TFFC home in each county. DFPS and TFFC providers are committed to expanding this program throughout the state and welcome new TFFC providers and new foster homes.

Q: Up and down on exit TFC, gradual on Residential Treatment Centers?

A: It is assumed that this question is about the histogram charts showing how many children exited placement after a certain number of days (ranges). To clarify, the gradual decline for RTC relates to a gradual decrease in the number of kids within the cohort who discharge after a longer length of days (going by groupings). Hopefully, this answers the question.

Q: Is there a waiting list to get into TFFC? How is it determined whether a child goes to TFFC or RTC?

A: To get into the program, the caseworker submits a referral to the regional Centralized Placement Unit (CPU), just like a regular CPU referral. CPU makes sure the child qualifies then sends their info to all the TFFC providers. If the provider feels they have a match, then a visit or call is set up. These beds are in great demand, and it is a very careful matching process placing children in a home that can best meet their needs. DFPS does not create waitlists for the homes. Each child is assessed as the need for placement arises.

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Q: Do you have the data on specifics for negative discharge reasons, i.e., the percentage of negative discharge due to runaway compared to the percentage of negative discharge due to "child behaviors?"

A: Yes, "child behaviors" is the largest category, but negative discharges were not broken down further for this analysis. This might be something DFPS could add to future analysis of TFFC program success.

Q: If we have a child that would benefit from one of these homes, how do we get them placed into one in a CBC region?

A: Referrals are made through the CBC placement team for placement into a TFFC home. Each Single Source Continuum Contractor has TFFC contracted providers.

Q: What is the process required for me to request a placement change into a TFFC home?

A: Please talk to the caseworker/supervisor. A referral to the Child Placement Unit (CPU) needs to be submitted.

Q: How do we identify TFFC homes in our area?

A: You may email this inquiry to the DFPS TFFC mailbox, and you will be provided with a list of providers who are contracted to provide TFFC services in your area. The address to the mailbox is dfpstreatmentfostercare@dfps.texas.gov.

Q: Is K-TFFC available in all regions?

A: Monarch is only providing Kinship TFFC in Region 6. However, if there is child in a kinship placement that would benefit from the supports of TFFC or if a child that is in a placement that is beginning to break down, DFPS can always get that placement connected with a kinship TFFC provider in their area. It is highly encouraged for families to become licensed foster homes to take advantage of services and payments for their care of kin. Only the agencies contracted for TFFC services would be able to provide Kinship TFFC services.

Q: How do "child behaviors" negative discharge outcomes for TFFC homes compare to RTCs negative discharge outcomes in the same category?

A: DFPS does not have a specific percentage on hand, but negative discharges due to child behaviors is typically the largest category reported, regardless of facility type, statewide. This category captures a wide net of reasons.

Here are the 2022 data:

- TFFC: 67% of all negative discharges and 19% of all discharges (includes pos/neg/neutral) had child's behavior reported as the discharge reason.

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- RTC: 64% of all negative discharges and 28% of all discharges (includes pos/neg/neutral) had child's behavior reported as the discharge reason.

Q: Families get together quarterly-where? From all over state or what region?

A: For example, on June 28, 2023 (Quarter 2), Monarch Family Services (MFS) is hosting an event entitled Revitalize & Thrive: A Self-Care Journey at the office for all caregivers. The philosophy on self-care is that kin caregivers must make taking care of themselves a priority so that they are healthy and present to heal the child(ren) in their care. DFPS hosts these sessions every quarter.

Q: What if there isn't a permanent family option within 30 days of placement?

A: That is a common factor when the child comes into TFFC, and the permanency plan can evolve through the time in the foster home. The best outcomes are achieved when the child and placement have a clear goal and plan at the start of placement. Although identification of next placement early is the goal, the child should be stepped down to at least a traditional foster home placement when they finish their treatment.

Q: Do you know how many open beds you have in TFFCs now? Given that kids stay longer in TFFCs, how often does a bed come open? Is there a waitlist and does the next in line get the next bed or is it just the luck of the draw?

A: TFFC homes have the capacity for 2 TFFC beds. However, a lot of foster parents in TFFC homes only feel comfortable with 1 child (due to their high needs/behaviors). So, while it may appear like there may be 50 TFFC beds available, some of those 25 homes housing the beds may already have 1 child placed and may not want to use their second bed. As of May 17, 2023, there were only 11 TFFC homes in the state that did not currently have a child (either TFFC or traditional foster care) placed in the home.

Q: My region is now under Belong (Community-Based Care); are these children still eligible for TFFC?

A: Yes. Belong contracts with TFFC providers in their catchment area.

Q: Will the Dept/SSCCs place CBC kids in the Legacy TFFC beds and vice versa?

A: Yes. For a child in a Legacy region to be placed in a CBC region, leadership approval is needed. For a child in a CBC region to be placed out of their catchment area, there must be a contract with the provider.

Q: How many of the 173 TFFC homes are kinship homes?

A: Monarch has 1 currently. Region 6 is slowly catching on the K-TFFC. For the next two Fiscal Years, Monarch has the capacity to serve 20-30 kids in their TFFC program.

All responses based on information available as of May 17, 2023.