

Supportive Housing Keeping Families Together



Supportive housing provides a safe and affordable home for families when they don't have one. The services in supportive housing help parents struggling with overwhelming poverty and complex health issues build their capacity to parent again so that their children get the support and stability they require and deserve. Several local and national initiatives, including the CSH Keeping Families Together effort, are giving us hope that supportive housing achieves better results for families who would otherwise be separated.

Foster care placement is the last thing anyone wants, especially when it's the result of a family not having a home. It is one of the most traumatic events a child can go through. This trauma has lasting, often negative consequences on children as they grow into adults. Children in foster care often do not graduate from high school; have greater rates of adolescent pregnancy and homelessness, and frequently suffer from the same substance abuse and mental health issues their parents did.

Children deserve to live safe, stable lives under one roof with their own healthy parents.

Supportive housing not only increases families' housing stability, but in focused studies is shown to improve outcomes across multiple domains such as education, employment and health care access. To further test the Keeping Families Together model, a rigorous national evaluation is being conducted in five sites.



The US Department of Health and Human Services Administration for Children Youth and Families (ACYF), bolstered by the promising results from the CSH Keeping Families Together pilot and other initiatives, assembled the \$35 million five-year public-private "Partnerships to Demonstrate the Effectiveness of Supportive Housing for Families in the Child Welfare System." The goal of the demonstration is to determine if supportive housing can preserve and strengthen vulnerable families, improve child well-being, and prevent foster care placements among the child welfare systems' highest-need families. This demonstration represents the first federal investment specifically focused on creating supportive housing to reduce child welfare system involvement. Findings are expected in 2017.

CSH's Child Welfare and Supportive Housing Resource Center plays a neutral convening role, linking the five demonstration sites with one another as well as other "early adopter" Keeping Families Together efforts, to generate solutions for program, policy and implementation challenges. The Resource Center's work emphasizes bringing partners together and building capacity to deliver the highest quality supportive housing as cost effectively as possible. Resource Center activities fall under the following broad buckets:

- **Collaborative Learning and Technical Assistance** - We deploy a variety of collaborative learning techniques to facilitate peer-to-peer exchange and promote emerging best practices. Our technical assistance activities range from virtual learning networks to targeted in-depth assistance.
- **Site Technical Assistance** - We work directly with sites to familiarize them with the core components of supportive housing, strategize, and provide practical technical assistance and expertise around best practices.
- **Best Practice Synthesis/Dissemination** - Underlying all of our work is the goal of identifying, developing, and spreading best practices to a broad national audience. We develop tools to help advance supportive housing as an intervention for the most vulnerable families, improving care and also systems coordination.



The Child Welfare and Supportive Housing Resource Center is an innovative partnership that includes CSH, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services ACYF and four private foundations: the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, the Annie E. Casey Foundation, Casey Family Programs and the Edna McConnell Clark Foundation. The five local demonstration sites currently supported by the Resource Center are:

- **HEART (Housing, Empowerment, Achievement, Recovery, Triumph) - Broward County, FL**
- **Partners United for Supportive Housing in Cedar Rapids - Cedar Rapids, IA**
- **Memphis Strong Families - Memphis, TN**
- **Families Moving Forward - San Francisco, CA**
- **Intensive Supportive Housing for Families - CT**

CSH is deeply indebted to the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation for its initial investment in Keeping Families Together as well as its continued support for the Resource Center. They are joined by impressive philanthropists - the Annie E. Casey Foundation, Casey Family Programs, and Edna McConnell Clark Foundation - in supporting the Resource Center.

For more information on the Resource Center, the Keeping Families Together supportive housing model and the national Partnerships to Demonstrate the Effectiveness of Supportive Housing for Families in the Child Welfare System, please contact Alison Harte at alison.harte@csb.org or visit <http://www.csb.org/KeepingFamiliesTogether>

KEEPING FAMILIES TOGETHER SUPPORTIVE HOUSING MODEL

Keeping Families Together was initially a pilot project designed and implemented by CSH and funded by Robert Wood Johnson Foundation that sought to answer the question: *Could supportive housing permanently end homelessness, child neglect and maltreatment and foster care placement among families with chronic and high levels of child welfare system involvement?* To implement the pilot, CSH partnered with local government agencies and several nonprofit supportive housing providers to identify, house and provide wrap-around supportive services to 29 homeless families involved in the child welfare system. Families receiving supportive housing through Keeping Families Together had long histories of contacts with the child welfare system, including multiple investigations, incidences of maltreatment and child removals. The 105 children of these 29 families had consumed more than 3,000 foster care days prior to supportive housing. Two years after families moved into supportive housing, 92% of the families remained housed, open child welfare cases decreased by 61%, and 100% of children placed in foster care were reunited with their families. The children's school attendance rates skyrocketed from 60% to 80%.



Today Felicia is a thriving young woman preparing for college. Despite his own challenges, her dad Ronald has been unwavering in his efforts to ensure Felicia gets an education and has a better life than he did. Unlike many children who spend time in foster care, not once but twice, and also in the homeless system, Felicia ultimately returned to her dad in supportive housing through the CSH Keeping Families Together pilot. Under one roof, Felicia and Ronald strengthened their family and re-built their lives.

CSH is proud of our role in developing the Keeping Families Together, and our public education and engagement around the need for federal and philanthropic leadership to address the needs of families experiencing homelessness and recurring child welfare system involvement.