

## Safe Families for Children



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## What is Safe Families?

- Safe Families for Children (SFFC) is a **movement** that allows people of faith to give meaningful, life changing support to families in crisis.
- A **network** of host families provide parents in need a loving sanctuary where they can safely place their children in times of crises.



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## Three Main Objectives

- **Child Welfare Deflection:** Deflect children from the State child welfare system
  - Safe Families provides a safe alternative to child welfare custody, thus significantly reducing the number of children entering the child welfare system. Families are given time to address risk factors in their lives that, if left unattended, could result in substantiated abuse or neglect of children.
- Out of Home Reunification Rate within 12 months
  - State of Florida: 50%
  - Safe Family: 85 -90%
  - **Length of Stay:** Average length of stay is 45 days with ranges from 2 days to 18 months. There is no limit to the time a child can stay in a Safe Family.

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## Three Main Objectives

- **Child Abuse Prevention:**
  - Providing an overwhelmed and resource limited parent with a safe, temporary place for their child without threat of losing custody can avert potential abuse/neglect episodes.
  - By law and policy most state child welfare agencies are only allowed to rescue children who have suffered blatant abuse or neglect, leaving thousands of children and their families in difficult situations.
    - State child welfare emergency hot lines throughout the nation reportedly receive over **five million calls** each year of suspected child abuse or neglect.
    - Of those calls, about **one million** meet the state's criteria for abuse, thus activating services.
    - What happens to the remaining **four million** families that don't qualify for help?
- **SAFE FAMILIES IS DESIGNED TO STEP INTO THAT GAP!**

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## Three Main Objectives

- **Family Support and Stabilization:**
  - Many parents struggle because of limited informal social supports and unavailable extended family. Many Safe Families become the extended family that a parent never had.



- <http://www.safe-families.org/>
- [http://www.cbanews.com/video/watch/7d4-509387079g\\_upe=search\\_video](http://www.cbanews.com/video/watch/7d4-509387079g_upe=search_video)

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## The Mandate

- Learn to do good.  
Seek justice.  
Help the oppressed.  
Defend the cause of orphans.  
Fight for the rights of widows.

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## Safe Family vs. Foster Care

Similarities	Differences
<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Helping children who are going through crisis and need a family.</li><li>2. Safe Families are patterned after Foster Families in terms of:<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>a. How they are authorized to serve.<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Home study, background checks, references, etc.</li></ul></li><li>b. Supervision of the placement.<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Home visits, client notes</li></ul></li></ol></li></ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Safe Families help families BEFORE their children are legally removed from them.</li><li>2. Safe Families receive no funds.</li><li>3. Safe Families work with bio families.</li><li>4. Bio families voluntarily place their children.</li><li>5. Bio families maintain custody of their children.</li></ol>

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## Are there Safe Families out there?

- Nationwide 2010 : 1,200 families  
1,532 Placements
- Cities with Safe Families
  - Atlanta, Chicago, Colorado Springs, Ft. Lauderdale, Greenville, Indianapolis, Milwaukee, Minneapolis, Nashville, Northwest Indiana, Orlando, Quad Cities, Rockford, St. Louis, Southern California, Tacoma, Whiting and Williamsport

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## Quick Facts

- **Approval Process:** Safe Families are recruited from churches and screened/approved similar to foster care (fingerprinting, home study, etc.). Children are monitored in the host home according to state requirements for monitoring children.
- **Length of Stay:** Average length of stay is 45 days with ranges from 2 days to 18 months. There is no limit to the time a child can stay in a Safe Family.
- **Ages:** New born infants through parenting teens.
- **Discharge:** 85-90% return to parents.
- **Reason for Referral:** Families are referred because of domestic violence, substance abuse, homelessness, parent mental illness, limited financial resources, etc.
- **Referral Sources:** The child welfare system, hospitals, drug treatment and homeless centers, prisons, schools, police stations, adoption agencies, etc.

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Questions

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