

# **Challenges Affecting The Care Of Children With High Needs And Intellectual And Developmental Disabilities**

**Presented to:**

**Chair Concannon and Members of the Special Committee on Foster Care Oversight**

**October 21, 2020**



# Keck Family

## Birth, Adoptive and Foster Family

A silhouette of a person running on a rocky cliff edge at sunset. The sky is a mix of orange, yellow, and blue, with the sun low on the horizon. The person is in a dynamic, forward-leaning pose, suggesting movement and challenge.

# **FOSTER CARE CHALLENGES**

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**Workforce**

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**Foster parents**

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**Systems**

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**Policies**

A 3D puzzle background with white, blue, purple, and red pieces. The puzzle pieces are scattered across the frame, with a prominent blue piece in the center-left and a red piece to its right. The background is a light gray surface.

# **WORKFORCE CHALLENGES**

**High turnover rates among workers  
and supervisors**

**Difficulty documenting reasonable  
efforts**

## **WORKFORCE CHALLENGES**

**Workers are naïve to the skills and commitment needed to care for children with complex needs**

**Inadequate specialized training to assist workers understand unique needs of children with special needs**

**Workers untrained in support systems designed for people with IDD**

**Unable to help foster families navigate complex systems to secure and coordinate needed care and services**

# Foster Parent Challenges

**Inadequate/no  
specialized training**

**Rates are not  
commensurate with  
skills needed of foster  
parents and the needs  
of more complex  
children**

**Expectations of Foster  
Families are  
unrealistic, and  
appreciation is lacking**

# **FOSTER PARENT CHALLENGES**

**No options for respite due to very limited number of specialized resource homes**

**Expertise of foster parents with specialized skills is discounted**

**Foster Parents are not given necessary information about children on intake**

**In difficult cases, foster parents may be used as scapegoats or accused of sabotage when desired outcomes are not achieved**

# **SYSTEMS CHALLENGES**

**Services are in silos**

**Very limited mental health services available**

**Lack of care options for children dually diagnosed with  
IDD and Behavioral Health needs**



# **SYSTEMS CHALLENGES**

**Lack of transition options  
and planning for kids with  
IDD, medical, and behavioral  
issues aging out of care**

**Duplicative, thus  
overwhelming oversight**

# **POLICY CHALLENGES**

**The best interest of high risk children with complex medical needs and their potential death must be the first consideration when severing parental rights and documenting reasonable efforts. Currently, the rights of parents supersede the health risks to the medically fragile child.**

# **POLICY CHALLENGES**

**Agency policies and procedures do not allow flexibility in providing continuity of care for children aging out of care**

# **SUGGESTED IMPROVEMENTS**

**Develop specialized teams within each contracted agency to ensure continuity of services and staff with focused training on systems and resources available to children with IDD, complex medical, and behavioral health needs**

**Appoint a highly knowledgeable/trained state staff that works with each of the specialized teams to provide support, guidance, and oversight**

**Develop a cross agency team of decision makers from KDHE, KDADS, DCF and the MCO's to collaborate on high needs cases to ensure children's needs are met through interagency agreements or braided funding options**

# **SUGGESTED IMPROVEMENTS**

**Develop a licensing structure for a medical group homes**

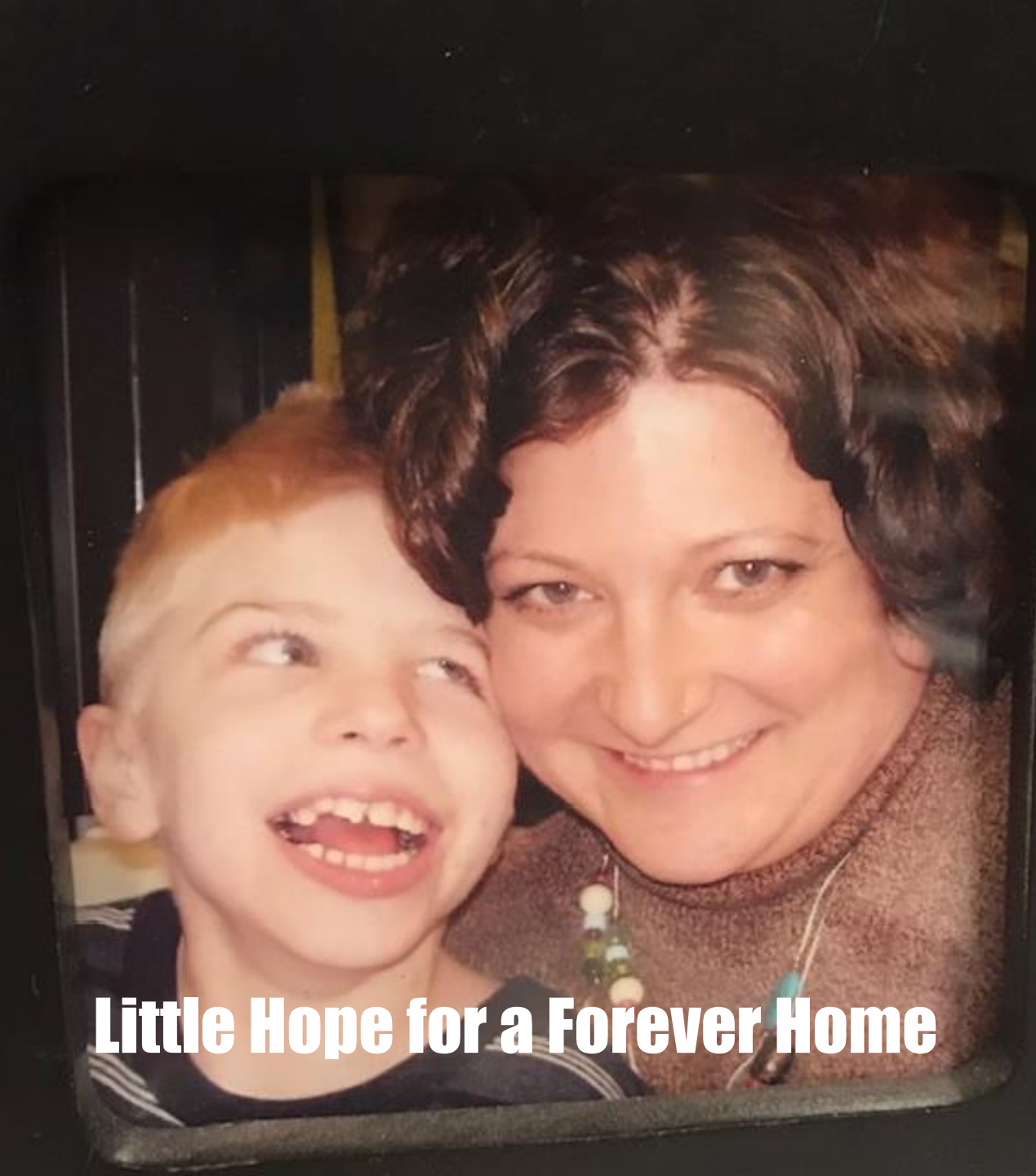
**Reestablish continuum of care options to support children with IDD and Behavioral Health Needs**

**Eliminate the conflict of interest with MCO's and reestablish Community Mental Health Centers as the gatekeepers to perform screenings for PRTF**

## **SUGGESTED IMPROVEMENTS**

**Develop or reestablish professional foster homes for children with IDD/Behavioral Health needs**

**Convene a group of foster families who specialize in high needs children with IDD and complex medical/behavioral needs to review multiple agency policies and make recommendations for areas that could be streamlined and improved to better serve our children and improve foster home retention.**



**Little Hope for a Forever Home**



**Adored Member of a Family**



**Poor Prognosis**



**Defying the Odds**



**THANK YOU FOR  
EXPLORING  
WAYS TO  
IMPROVE  
SYSTEMS THAT  
AFFECT SO  
MANY  
VULNERABLE  
KANSANS!**

