



In 2007, the Oklahoma Department of Human Services and the University of Oklahoma's Center for Public Management partnered to create the Foster Care and Adoption Support Center with the primary goal of recruitment and retention of Oklahoma's foster and adoptive families through outstanding customer support.

## BENEFIT CARD PROGRAM

The *Foster Parent Exclusive Benefits Program* allows business partners to offer services, discounts, and other benefits to Oklahoma's foster families.

It also makes it easier for foster families to provide food, fun, and educational activities for the kids in their care.

We have a variety of benefits and discounts to help foster families. These benefits include:

- Discounted tickets to certain theme parks
- Percentage off clothing and accessories
- Discounted membership fees
- Photography
- Construction
- And more!



Exclusive

Community

Partnerships

Supports

Check out more partners on [okfosters.org/benefits](http://okfosters.org/benefits).

If you're interested in becoming a Foster Parent Exclusive Benefits Partner, Visit us at [www.okfosters.org/benefits](http://www.okfosters.org/benefits) and click **Partner Now**.



## ABOUT CHILD'S PASSPORT

We are very excited to provide you with a revamped Child's Passport. You will be able to access important information about the child in your care by using [okbenefits.org](http://okbenefits.org)



OKBENEFITS.ORG

# CHILD'S PASSPORT

**VISIT  
OKBENEFITS.ORG**

Need help setting up your  
OK Benefits account?  
Call (405) 522-5050



**OKLAHOMA**  
Human Services

**MOBILE FRIENDLY**  
**INTUITIVE DESIGN**  
**ANY TIME OF DAY**  
**CONFIDENTIAL**



# WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

Foster families now have the ability to access this information from our intuitive website and mobile-friendly format in the event that you need to enroll a child in school or fill out necessary paperwork at a doctor's office. It can even be used to provide service providers to meet the behavioral health needs of the child.



## GET STARTED

Visit [okbenefits.org](http://okbenefits.org) and easily create an account, login, and go to View My Services.

## WHO HAS ACCESS?

Only you, the resource parent, has access to the Child's Passport. It is determined by account creation in the OK Benefits portal and the link with our child welfare reporting system.

## WHAT INFO IS PROVIDED?

Current foster families will be able to access demographic, educational, medical, and childcare information in regard to the child placed in their home. The information is provided as a collaborative effort on part of several state agencies that include Oklahoma Health Care Authority, Department of Education, and Department of Human Services.

## Youth Crisis Mobile Response

### What is Youth Crisis Mobile Response?

Youth Crisis Mobile Response is a free, statewide mobile response program that connects children and families to supports in time of crisis. When a child displays a behavioral or mental health episode within the home, community, or school, a call to the Youth Crisis Mobile Response line by the child's parent or caregiver can initiate needed services for the child's immediate needs. As a resource parent, it is important for you to understand that you do not have to navigate these situations alone.

By calling **1-833-885-CARE (2273)**, a parent or caregiver is connected to a trained call specialist who will listen to determine immediate needs, assist to calm the situation, and assess the next steps. If your family or child needs more help, the call specialist will connect you to a mental health professional in the county where the child resides, who will respond within one to 24 hours. If a mental health professional is not available in the county where the child resides, the call specialist may contact law enforcement to assist or refer you to the closest emergency room.

After the crisis is de-escalated, the child can be linked to Wraparound services if they are not already receiving supportive mental health services from another agency. Wraparound services are provided through Systems of Care (SOC) and utilize a family-centered team to help you develop a plan on how best to understand the child's needs and strengths to problem-solve as a family and community. These services and supports can help stabilize the child and maintain the child's placement in your home.

### Is Youth Crisis Mobile Response only for children in foster care?

No, this service is available to **any** child or youth in crisis who is 24 years of age and younger. This includes foster, adopted, or biological children, in addition to any child you are trying to support through a crisis. As a resource family, Child Welfare values the health and well-being of all members of your family.

### How do I determine if a situation would benefit from contacting the Youth Crisis Mobile Response line?

If the child has an immediate behavioral or mental health need such as risk of harm to self or others, this is a situation you might address by contacting the Youth Mobile Crisis Response line. Examples include, but are not limited to:

- Becoming more violent towards others
- Starting fires, destroying property, or harming animals
- Threatening a person with a weapon
- Cutting or hurting themselves
- Expressing a desire to kill a person or group of people
- Planning or taking action to kill themselves

If the child has a non-immediate behavioral or mental health need, it should be addressed with the child’s mental health provider if the child currently receives these services. If the child does not have an established mental health provider, contact the child’s worker or the child’s primary care provider for a referral to mental health services. Behaviors or needs that are typically non-immediate include, but are not limited to:

Younger Children	Older Youth
Frequent tantrums or are intensely irritable much of the time	Smoke, drink, use drugs, or engage in risky or destructive behavior alone or with friends
Complain about frequent stomachaches or headaches with no known medical cause	Periods of highly elevated energy and activity, and require much less sleep than usual
In constant motion and cannot sit quietly	Fear gaining weight, or diet or exercise excessively
Not interested in playing with other children or have difficulty making friends	Lost interest in things they used to enjoy
Sleep too much or too little, have frequent nightmares, or seem sleepy during the day	Spending more and more time alone, and avoid social activities with friends and family
Struggle academically or have experienced a recent decline in grades	Sleep too much or too little, or seem sleepy throughout the day

Please make contact with the child’s worker and/or supervisor if the Youth Crisis Mobile Response is contacted for a child in OKDHS custody. In the event the situation **continues to escalate, call 911 or go to your local emergency room.**

*As a valued Oklahoma resource parent, you care for children who have experienced varying degrees of trauma. There is a team of Child Welfare and mental health professionals in your corner to help you navigate this journey. Help during a crisis is just a phone call away.*

**Youth Crisis  
Mobile Response**



# Enhanced Foster Care (EFC)

OKLAHOMA Human Services

Oklahoma Human Services (OKDHS) strives to provide children with opportunities to gain HOPE and healing.

At no fault of their own, some children develop complex behavioral, medical, developmental and mental health needs that lessen their likelihood for success in traditional foster care. In these cases, Enhanced Foster Care (EFC) can provide children in OKDHS or tribal custody with an elevated level of care that identifies their individual needs and uses a trauma informed approach to facilitate their healing.

EFC services are delivered in the context of two family-based care settings:

- **Enhanced Foster Care Services:** These refer to child-specific services provided to kinship or traditional homes for children already placed in those settings, or about to be placed in one of these identified settings, including as a first placement.
- **Enhanced Foster Care Homes:** These refer to pre-selected traditional foster homes, in which additional training is provided to the family to support the placement of children with no identified family-based placement transitioning from congregate care, acute or residential

True North goals are a set of priorities developed by OKDHS to guide the work of the agency in order to focus resources and improve collaboration and communication with stakeholders. Each of OKDHS's divisions has approximately three to five focused True North goals in addition to eight agency-wide True North goals.

**True North Child Welfare Services Goal 2:** If children enter foster care, understand and meet their specific needs. This includes their need for safety, connections with family, community and culture, and addressing health, behavioral health, developmental, and educational needs.



treatment. Additionally, children who meet the EFC service criteria and who are placed in shelter care<sup>1</sup> or at risk of placement in shelter care can be placed in an EFC home.

## EFC Service Elements

Enhanced Foster Care is individualized to the strengths and needs of the child and resource family. The standard services and supports listed below are provided to all children (and their families) receiving EFC.

- Individualized Treatment Plan
- Regular Team Meetings about Treatment
- Monthly In-Home Quality Worker Visits
- Weekly Individual Therapy for the child
- Family Therapy
- 24-Hour Crisis Intervention, including a Crisis Plan
- Supplemental Foster Care Rate (Level 5 DOC)
- Child and Adolescent Needs and Strengths Assessment (CANS)
- Evidence-Based Treatment Models, when appropriate
- EFC Service and Support Plan
- Additional Training for Families Caring for Children with Complex Needs<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> As evidenced by youth experiencing placement instability without an identified placement.

<sup>2</sup> These families will receive specific modules from Pressley Ridge, an evidence-based curriculum for foster parents.

Additional services and supports, listed below, are also available as needed.

- Systems of Care - Service Coordination and Wraparound Treatment
- Specialized Services (Developmental Disabilities Services, Medical, Occupational, etc.)
- EFC Resource Parent Support Group

### Child Eligibility Criteria

A child must meet at least one of the eligibility criteria below to receive EFC services; the resource parent(s) caring for the child must also agree to actively participate in the child's treatment needs and planning. These criteria are more inclusive but informed by the programmatic criteria commonly used to determine eligibility for Therapeutic Foster Care.

- The Child and Adolescent Needs and Strengths (CANS) assessment indicates the child would benefit from the EFC level of care.
- The child experiences the onset of frequent placement moves from family-based settings due to the provider requesting change of placement or that the provider cannot meet the child's behavioral health needs.
- The child has a minimum of two elevated Child Behavioral Health Screeners (CBHS).
- The child has a provisional or primary diagnosis from the most recent edition of "The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders" with a detailed description of the symptoms supporting the diagnosis.

The Co-Neutrals' initial round of EFC case reviews showed foster parents reporting that their treatment plans and wrap-around services provided them with coping skills and therapeutic responses to help the children in their care work through heightened moments of emotional and mental stress and behavioral agitation.

*(From the latest Pinnacle Plan<sup>1</sup> commentary)*

- The child's conditions are directly attributed to a primary medical diagnosis of a severe behavioral and emotional health need and may also be attributed to a secondary medical diagnosis of a physical, developmental, intellectual, or social disorder that is supported alongside the mental health needs.
- The child's conditions are directly attributed to a mental illness or serious emotional disturbance, a medical issue, or a developmental or intellectual delay.
- There is evidence that the child's presenting problems require full integration of 24-hour crisis response, behavior management or intensive clinical interventions from professional staff to prevent the child from having to move from a family-based placement or to transition to a family-based setting from a higher level of care.
- The child has other specific needs or factors that pertain to the child's permanency, safety, and well-being, as approved by the Enhanced Foster Care Program Administrator.

### EFC Referral Process

Enhanced Foster Care is available to any child in custody meeting criteria, including children entering custody in their first placement. Information obtained during the referral process is used to determine eligibility and to support individualized service planning for the child. There are two referral pathways for children to be considered for EFC:

- An Enhanced Foster Care Referral (Form 04EF003E) is completed for children currently or to be placed in an identified traditional or kinship home, and who are identified for EFC services and supports only; or
- The Child Placement Interview is completed for children in need of an identified traditional home placement and meet the criteria for EFC services and support.

**Learn more at [OKFosters.org](http://OKFosters.org)  
and [OKDHS.org](http://OKDHS.org)**

<sup>1</sup> The Oklahoma Department of Human Services (OKDHS) settled a class action, civil rights lawsuit against its foster care system. As part of this settlement OKDHS developed a plan, called the Oklahoma Pinnacle Plan, which guides the agency as it works to improve the way it cares for children in foster care. "Co-Neutrals" refers to an independent panel of experts that provide commentary and assessment on OKDHS' continuing efforts on a semiannual basis.



# SUPPORTING NATIVE YOUTH INTO ADULTHOOD



These resources can help child welfare professionals support the health, well-being, and cultural connectivity of native youth while they journey into adulthood.

## Tribal Leadership Series: Youth Engagement

(National Indian Child Welfare Association)  
Highlighting the importance of youth engagement, this guide offers tips and tools specifically geared toward tribal leaders.

## Native American Youth in Transition: The Path from Adolescence to Adulthood in Two Native American Communities

(National Indian Child Welfare Association)

Though conducted over 15 years ago, the community-based recommendations in this research report offer relevant insight.

## Native Youth Today! Bridging the Gap

(Prevention & Recovery)

This edition of the Prevention & Recovery quarterly newsletter focuses on the native youth perspective and offers examples of programs that focus on prevention and promote well-being.

## Center for Native American Youth

(Aspen Institute)

The CNAY works alongside native youth to help improve their health, safety, and well-being. In various places throughout their site voices of youth are featured as they describe their foster care experience and importance of maintaining cultural connections. See also their report, Drawing Strength from Our Cultures: State of Native Youth 2016.

## YOUTH ROUNDTABLES

In 2020, the Children’s Bureau held 12 roundtable discussions with youth from across the country who are, or were previously, in foster care. Common themes that arose during these discussions focused on mental health, overall well-being, and social isolation brought on by the current health crisis. Youth are experiencing increased feelings of loneliness, disconnection, and suicidal ideation. This was expressed more during the roundtable with tribal youth.

Additional challenges youth shared during the roundtables:

- Concerns about aging out of foster care during the pandemic without a place to go or a means to support themselves
- Job loss and/or difficulty finding meaningful employment
- Safe and secure housing
- Worries about schools and universities shifting into a virtual learning environment
- Access to healthcare
- Reduced access to reliable transportation
- Reunification and adoption finalization concerns

State child welfare leaders are encouraged to reach out to the local tribes and tribal consortia to better support the well-being of tribal youth.

[Learn about Building an Effective Tribal-State Child Welfare Partnership.](#)





**Youth Engagement Team: Recommendations for Improving Permanency and Well-Being**

(Administration for Children and Families)

Developed in 2020, the ACF Youth Engagement Team held three roundtable discussions focused on supporting: permanency with kin, relational permanency, and successful older youth adoption and compiled a summary of their recommendations.

**Youth Transitioning from Foster Care: Background and Federal Programs**

(Congressional Research Service)

Prepared for members and Committees of Congress, this report provides background information on older youth in foster care and details two federal programs under Title IV-E: the John H. Chafee Foster Care Program for Successful Transition to Adulthood (Chafee program) and the Foster Care Maintenance Payments Program.

[Learn more about the Chafee program.](#)

**Listen Up! Youth Listening Session Toolkit** (Office of Population Affairs)

Interested in conducting a youth listening session within your community? From goal setting and coordination to taking action, this toolkit offers tested strategies and tips on how to engage youth in meaningful ways.

**Support for Youth Aging Out of Care** (North American Council on Adoptable Children)

(North American Council on Adoptable Children)

Position statements and policy recommendations for adoption related child welfare issues.

**Youth Engagement Blueprint Series** (Center for States)

A six-part series encouraging child welfare agencies to build capacity and better engage current and former foster youth and integrate their voices at all organizational levels.

**Support Services for Youth in Transition** (Child Welfare Information Gateway)

A list of resources for supporting youth as they transition to adulthood.

**Engaging and Involving Youth** (Child Welfare Information Gateway)

A list of resources for child welfare professionals to learn about engaging youth in authentic and effective ways.

**Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) Tribal Youth Resource Center**

has developed culturally specific training and technical assistance for tribes seeking to build capacity to develop, expand, improve, and maintain their juvenile justice systems.

**Indian Health Service**, the Federal Health Program for American Indians and Alaska Natives, has created a list of Youth Best Practices.

## **TRIBAL RESOURCES AND YOUTH COUNCILS TO EMPOWER YOUTH AND KEEP THEM CONNECTED TO THEIR COMMUNITIES AND CULTURE**

**Mvskoke Nation Youth Services Program** at the Muscogee (Creek) Nation has a strategic plan and an active Youth Council to engage and empower Mvskoke youth by connecting them to culture, community, and resources.

**Three Precious Miracles** was founded to support Native American children by providing basic resources, streamlining systems, providing cultural and natural linkages to licensing agencies, and supporting foster and kinship families through systems navigation and involvement.



The Children's Bureau within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services funds the Child Welfare Capacity Building Center for Tribes. The content of this document does not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the funder.

# Working with Two-Spirit and Native LGBTQ Youth

Resources for Tribal Child Welfare, April 2020

Two-Spirit is a modern overarching term intended to convey a broad array of indigenous gender diverse traditions. Expressions of Two-Spirit identities vary tremendously from Tribe to Tribe and within each Two-Spirit person. While the gender presentation, sexuality, social and ceremonial roles are diverse across Indian Country, a shared understanding of Two-Spirits is that it is a socially embedded, spiritually grounded identity; there are duties and responsibilities to community that accompany being a Two-Spirit person.

## Native LGBTQ and Two-Spirit Webinar Series

This two-part webinar series discusses the historical roles and identities of Two-Spirit & Native LGBTQ people, how historical and intergenerational trauma has impacted this community, and the efforts to bring back balance, beauty, and acceptance.

- [Walking in Two Worlds: Understanding the Two-Spirit Native LGBTQ Community](#)
- [Supporting Two-Spirit/Native LGBTQ+ Youth](#)
- [Creating Safe & Welcoming Spaces for Two-Spirit/Native LGBTQ+ Youth \(Webinar Handout\)](#)

## Two-Spirit Societies

A list of Two-Spirit societies in the US and Canada. These local and virtual communities offer support and can connect TSLGBTQ+ youth with local services and spiritual leaders that are inclusive.

## Sharing Our Lived Experiences

These tip sheets are dedicated to Two-Spirit and American Indian/Alaska Native LGBTQ children and youth whose lives are impacted by the child welfare system.

- [8 Tips for Understanding Two-Spirit/LGBTQ Journey for Native Youth in the Child Welfare System](#)
- [22 Tips for Caring for Two-Spirit and Native LGBTQ Youth](#)

## Walking in Two Worlds: Supporting the Two-Spirit and Native LGBTQ Community

What it means to be Two-Spirit, various definitions, tips on how to be a good ally, and potential challenges and barriers that may be experienced by those who identify as Two-Spirit or Native LGBTQ are included within this educational guide.

(Please seek printing permission from *The Minnesota Indian Women's Sexual Assault Coalition*.)

## Native Youth Sexual Health Network

An organization by and for Indigenous youth that works across issues of sexual and reproductive health, rights and justice throughout the United States and Canada. Offers a Two-Spirit Mentor Support Circle.

## Standards of Care for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Questioning, Intersex, and Two-Spirit American Indian/Alaska Native Youth

NICWA developed this 2013 newsletter as part of their *Honoring Innovations Report* series designed to offer best practice ideas for system of care communities.

## A Place in the Middle

Hawaiian children and their teacher tell a powerful story of ancient traditions that they're keeping alive and the valued place for those that embrace their masculine and feminine traits. Free film and downloadable discussion guide.

## Celebrating Our Magic: Resources for American Indian/Alaska Native transgender and Two-Spirit youth, their relatives and families, and their healthcare providers

A comprehensive toolkit created by Northwest Portland Area Indian Health Board.



Capacity Building  
CENTER FOR TRIBES