

The Impact of COVID-19 on Resource Parents

BRIEF REPORT

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Overview

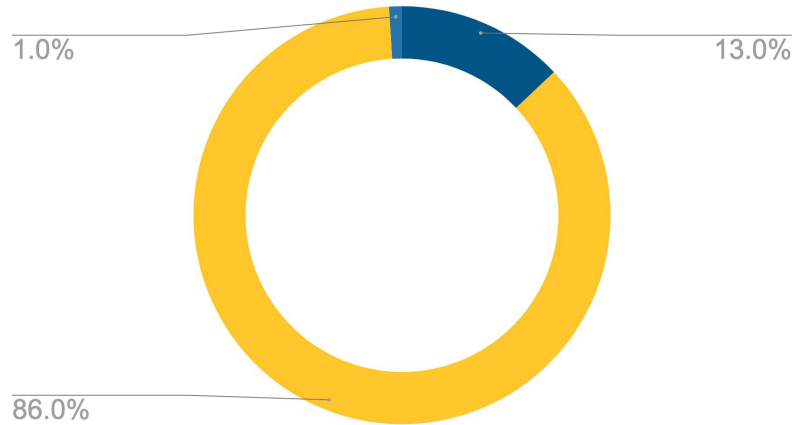
Foster Together Network, a group of public and private partners committed to helping recruit and retain resource families in LA County, collaborated with UCLA TIES for Families and the UCLA Pritzker Center to develop and distribute a survey to their community partners and resource families.

Over 600 resource parents in Los Angeles County were surveyed to understand the impact of COVID-19 on them and the children in their care.

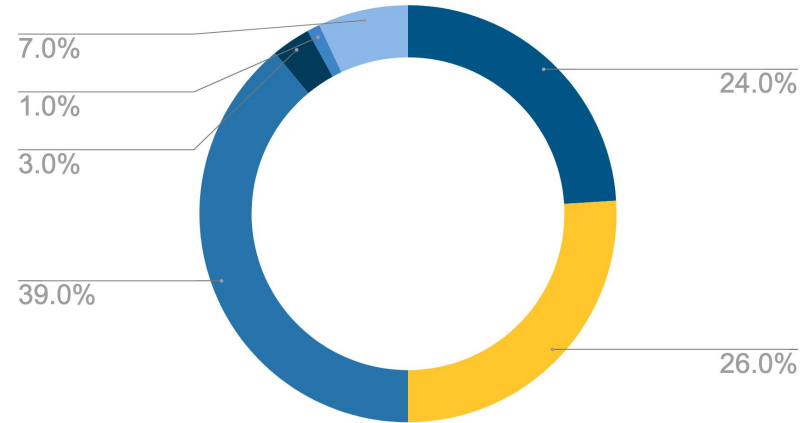


Background and Demographics

A Resource Family is an individual, couple, or family who provides foster care, kinship care, or adoption to a child in the care of the Department of Child and Family Services (DCFS). Commonly referred to as foster parents, resource families include relatives, non-related extended family members, and non-relatives. The Los Angeles County DCFS is the largest child welfare agency in the nation.

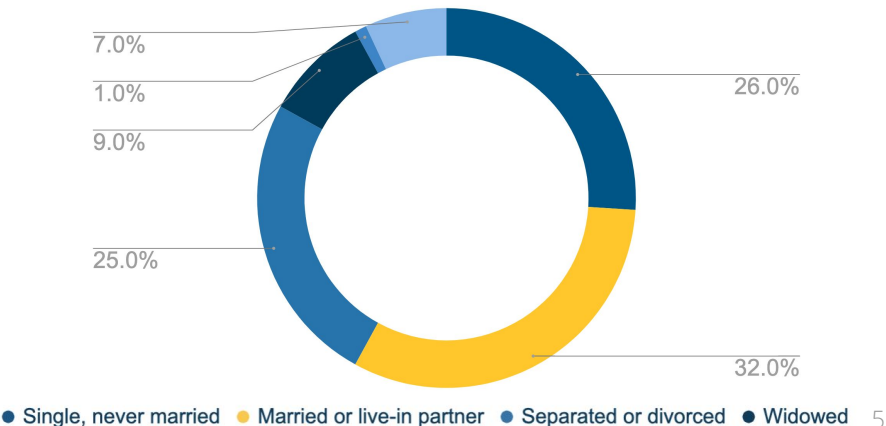
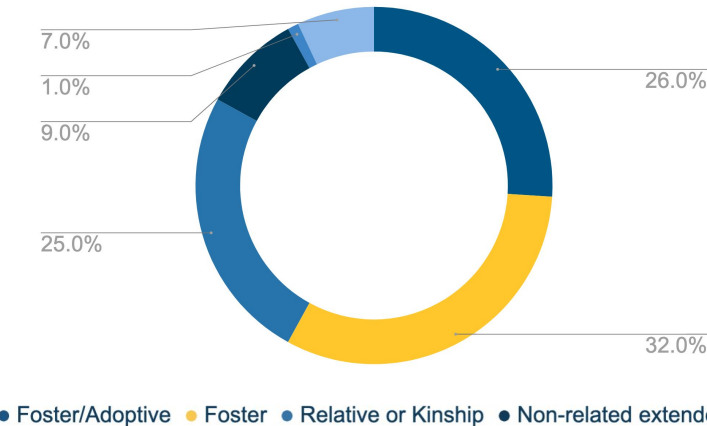
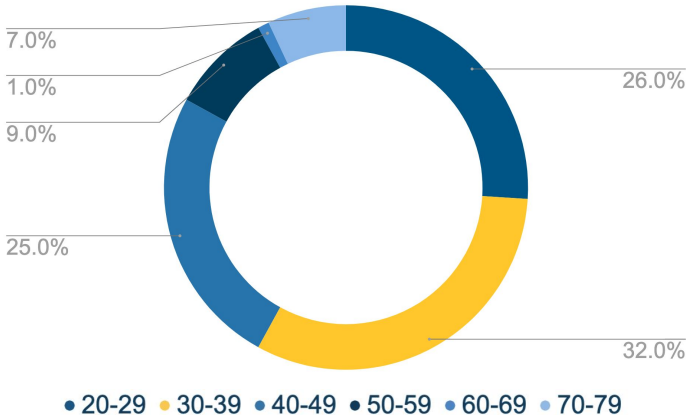
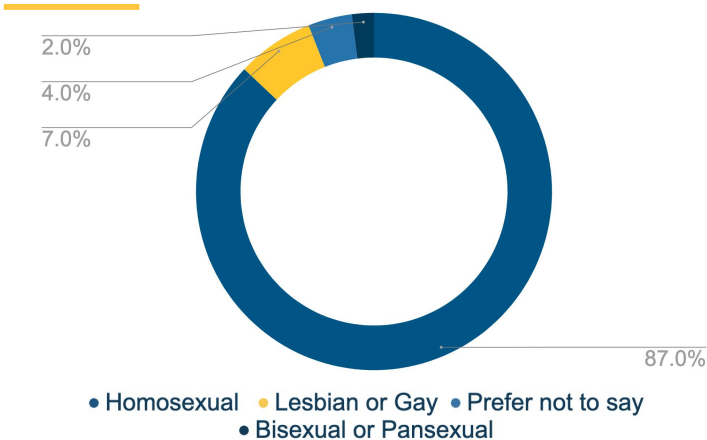


- Male
- Female
- Prefer not to say



- Black or African-American
- White or Caucasian
- Hispanic or Latinx
- Asian or Asian-American
- Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander
- Mixed Ethnicity or race

Background and Demographics



Background and Demographics

COVID-19 will likely have a long-term and significant societal impact. Children in or adopted from foster care are a particularly vulnerable population, having already experienced trauma, lack of control, ambiguity, and loss. Understanding the effect of COVID-19 on these youth and families is of paramount importance.



3 in 10 resource parents reported anxiety related to getting sick or infected



5 in 10 resource parents reported anxiety related to a loved one getting sick or infected



4 in 10 resource parents feel like they have no control over how COVID will impact their life



4 in 10 resource parents reported stress related to uncertainty about the future

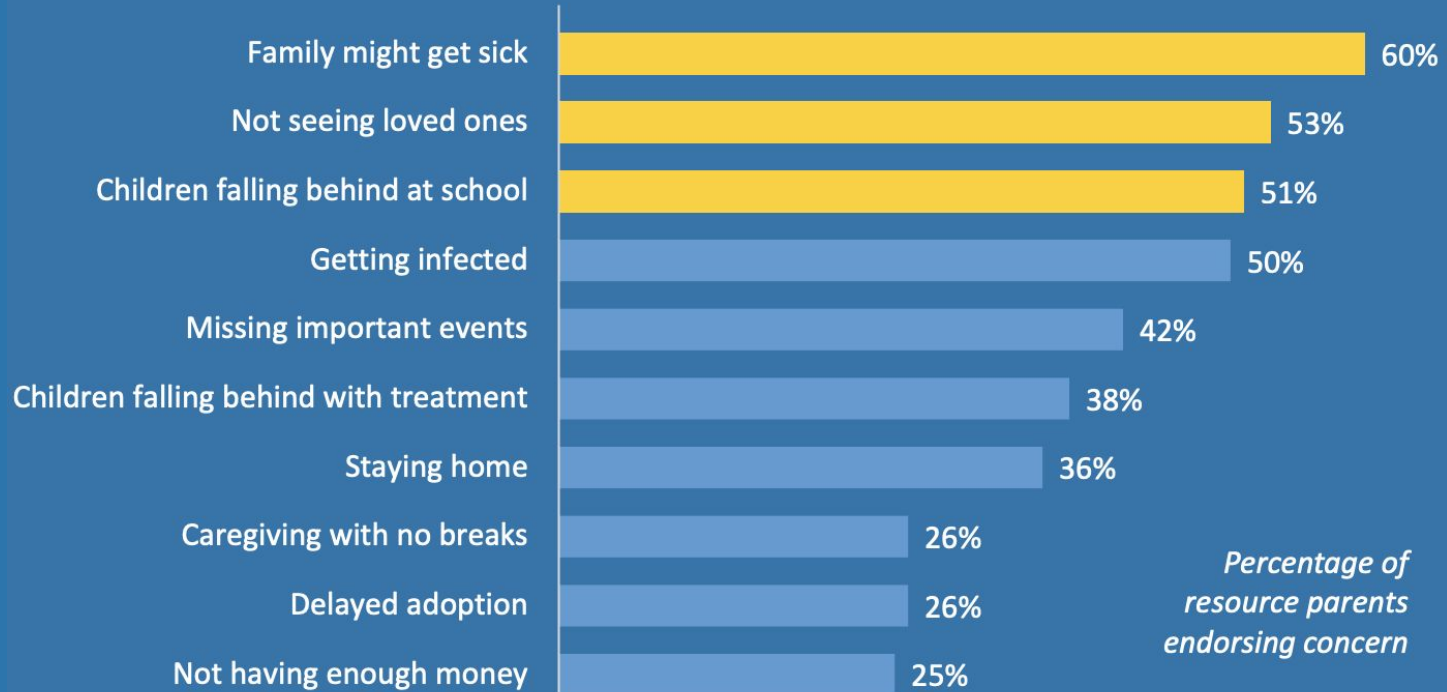


3 in 10 resource parents reported significant impact on their mental and emotional health



Resource parents with children under 5 years old reported more stress related to uncertainty about the future and lack of control

What are resource parents concerned about?



What are resource parents concerned about?

43%

of resource parents reported losing a job and/or experiencing financial hardship

42%

of resource parents reported missed or reduced work hours due to school and child care closures

As the level of financial hardship increased, the reported level of stress increased

"Nobody can give me answers. Nobody returns my calls. I am told "I need to ask my supervisor" and no one gets back to me."

"Let us know what we have to do instead of playing it all by ear."

I need "continued information from LADCFS and/or social worker. I hadn't even heard about any extra resources."

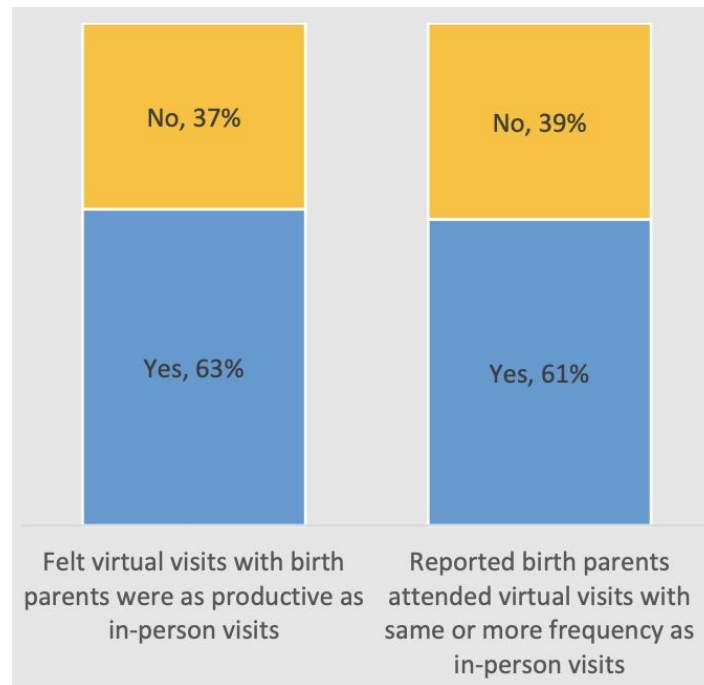
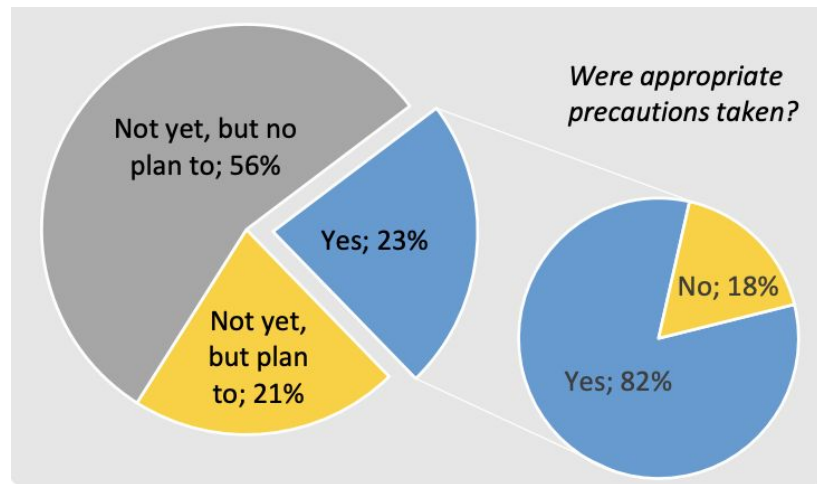


resource parents reported that they were not kept informed of procedural and policy changes during COVID-19, and **COMMUNICATION** was often cited as a significant challenge.

"Mas pronto a responder."
"Respond faster."

What did we learn about birth parent visits?

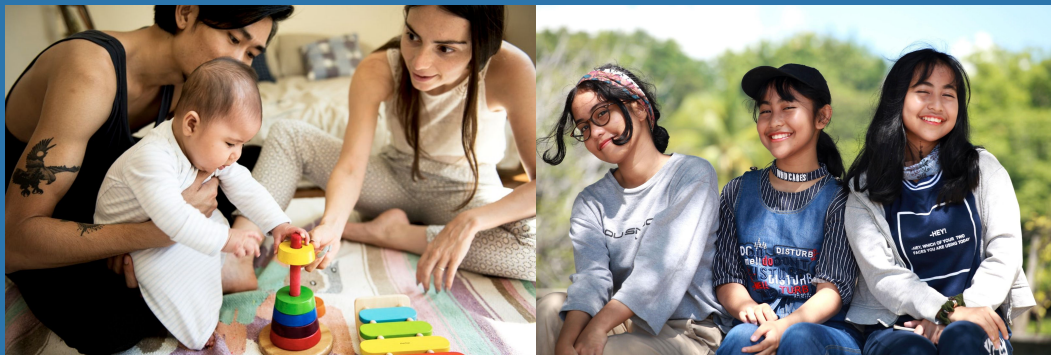
44% of resource parents reported having in-person birth parent visits during Safer-At-Home or plan to



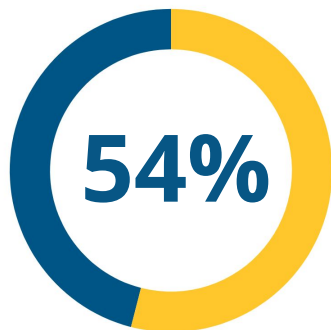
What supports do resource parents need in for in-person visits to happen?

themes from open-ended responses:

- A safe place for visits
- Information related to health status of birth parents (i.e., exposure)
- More testing to ensure no risk of transmission either direction
- Guidance from DCFS
- More support from social workers
- Observation
- Transportation
- Ensuring appropriate use of PPE
- Limiting exchanges of food and gifts during visits
- More testing to ensure no risk of transmission either direction
- A roadmap for adapting to Safer-At-Home



Welcoming a New Child During Safer-at-Home



of resource parents reported being open to welcoming a new child into their home during COVID-19*

**families with no foster children in their homes were more likely to say yes*



What led to resource parents saying yes?

“My household is in a good position to care for another child”

“Las necesidades y demandas de cantidad de niños que necesitaban hogar”

“We were in a good place emotionally and psychologically”

“Everyone needs a safe and loving home”

“A child shouldn’t have to be put on hold due to a pandemic”

“Me gusta ayudar y aparte quisiera que mi Hijo tenga un partner”

Welcoming a New Child During Safer-at-Home



What would have helped resource parents say yes?

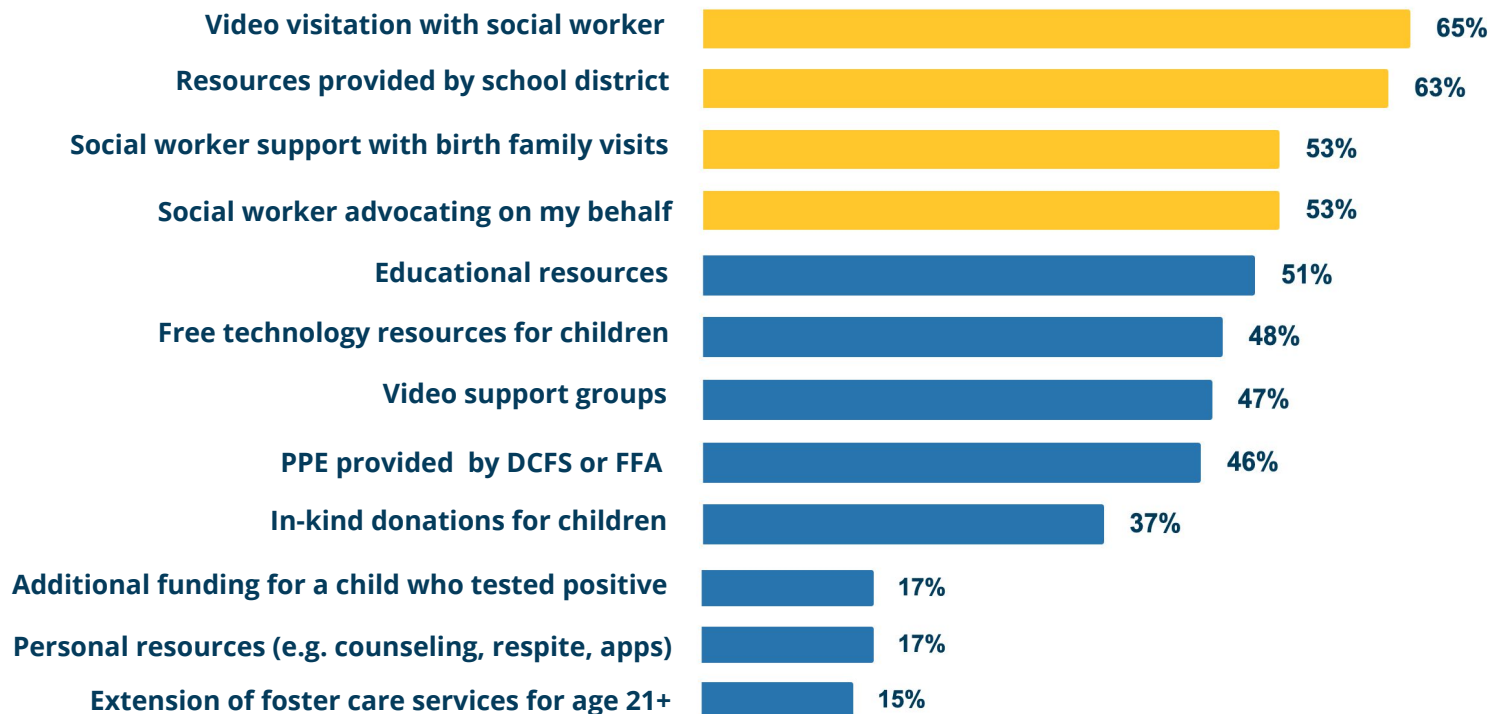
“Knowing there are additional resources to help”

“More clarity/certainty regarding placements during this time”

“Better communication and safety guidance from DCFS”

“Knowing the child has been tested for COVID-19”

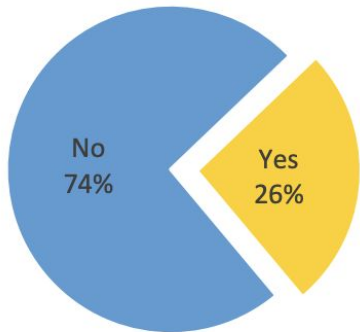
What has been most helpful?



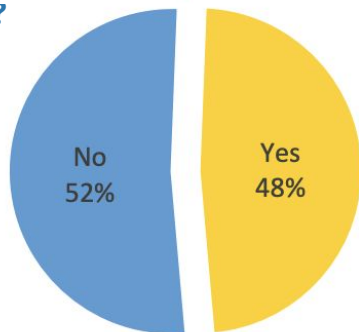
What has been most helpful?

Resource Parent Support Groups

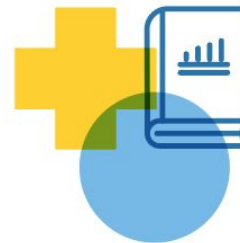
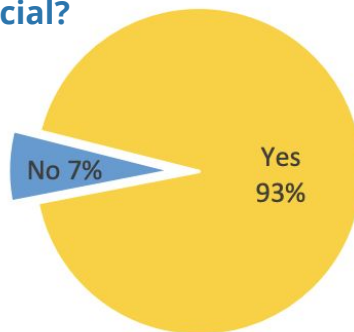
Offered?



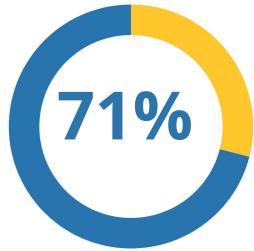
Participated in?



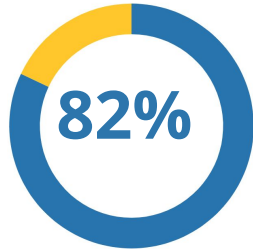
Beneficial?



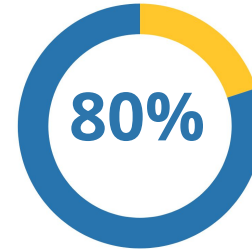
Resource Parent Resiliency



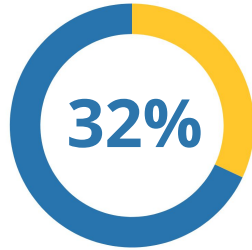
reported that services continued for their children



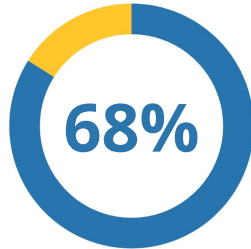
have a greater appreciation for family and friends



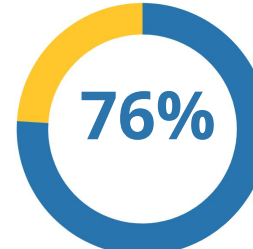
felt they were able to successfully manage and navigate resources



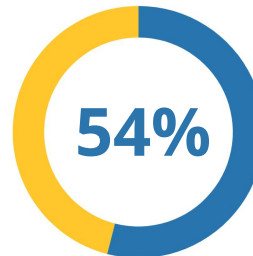
feel more valued as a resource parent during this time



believe shelter in place has helped their family grow closer



have been more accepting of things they cannot change



believe their experiences with uncertainty and loss as a resource parent has helped deal with COVID-19

Summary of Key Findings

Children and youth in foster or relative care, and their caregivers are currently facing unforeseen difficulties and uncertainty during the COVID-19 crisis. Findings from this research have identified opportunities to impact long-term policies and practice. We can utilize the urgency of this event to learn and grow in ways that will enable us to better hold those who are most in need, not only during this crisis, but into the future.

- *The crisis enabled families to grow closer, as well as other positive outcomes*
- *Better communication is needed between the Department of Child and Family Services (DCFS), Foster Family Agencies (FFAs), social workers, and families*
- *When resource parents attend trainings and support groups, they are general beneficial*
- *Increased safety and productivity of birth parent visits needs to be explored*