Foster Care in the Netherlands
Policy, Structure and Research

Piet Strijker & Erik J. Knorth
University of Groningen

1

Contents

Part I
- Regulations
- Support for foster parent
- Organisational aspects
- Statistics
- Recruitment, preparation and selection
- Theoretical orientation

Part II
- Research in the Netherlands
- Research University of Groningen
- Some final comments

Regulations

▸ **1989 Youth Care Act**

  ◦ Recognition for *foster care* as a separate, independent form of child care
  ◦ Provisions

▸ **2005 Youth Care Act**

  ◦ Recognition for *foster care providers* ($N=28$)

    • Nationally working providers ($N=3$)
    • Regionally working providers ($N=25$)

MFO's

▸ **Multi-functional organisation (MFO)**

◦ Ambulatory Care

(a.o. family support, home visits, individual therapy, etc.)

◦ Day Care/Treatment

◦ Foster Care

◦ Residential Care

Referral process

Child/family in need of care

Youth Care Bureau (central gate to care)

(MFO)

→ Ambulatory Care
→ Day Care/Treatment
→ **Foster Care**
→ Residential Care

Support for foster parents

- Financially
  - Foster parent treated as volunteer who receives *reimbursement* (nov 2006)
    - 0–10 years: € 440,– a month
    - 11–18 years: € 540,– a month
    - Extra costs: € 90,– a month
- Psychosocially
  - Until 1989 support was arranged and carried out by Youth Care Bureau, i.e. a *guardian*
  - Now the guardian only supports biological parents; a *foster care worker* supports the foster parent
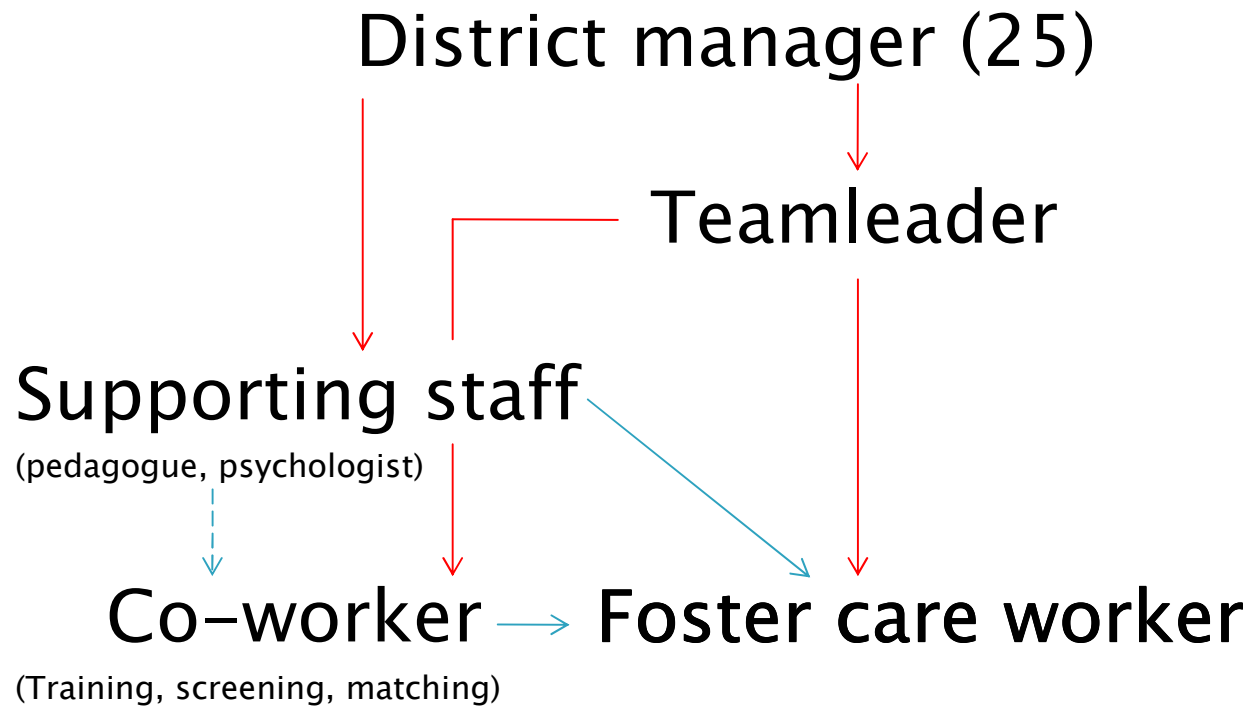
Organisational aspects

▸ Foster care modules:
- Crisis intervention
- Re-unification support
- Holiday foster care
- Weekend foster care
- Day foster care
- Observation (3-6 month)
- Care and upbringing (on average: 2 years)

▸ Adoption: not allowed

Regional foster care provider-hierarchy:

District manager (25)

Teamleader

Supporting staff
(pedagogue, psychologist)

Co-worker → **Foster care worker**
(Training, screening, matching)

Financial means/supply per module

▸ Examples:
- ◦ Long–term foster care   1.28 hours/week per case
- ◦ Crisis–intervention   3.00 hours/week per case
- ◦ Weekend foster care   0.64 hours/week per case
- ◦ Re–unification support   7.00 hours/week per case

Some statistics

- Netherlands
  - ◦ 16.3 million inhabitants
  - ◦ 3.5 million minors (0–18)

- Children <u>making use</u> of out-of-home care <u>during one year</u> (2006)
  - ◦ Foster care: $\pm$ 20.000 (41%)
  - ◦ Residential care: $\pm$ 29.000 (59%)

- January 2006: 12.000 children in foster care

(corresponding with 11.750 foster families)

Some statistics

▸ Extension in 2006: 1.200 places

▸ Children in
  ◦ Long-term foster care: 43%
  ◦ Short-term foster care: 57%

  ◦ Kinship care: 35%
  ◦ Foster care: 65%

▸ Ethnic minority children: 30%

Recruitment & preparation

▶ Recruitment
  ◦ Parent(s) showing interest
  ◦ Parent(s) receive information
  ◦ Invited for special meeting
    • Registration form
    • Declaration of health
    • No objection Child Protection Agency collecting info

▶ Preparation and selection
  ◦ Preparation and selection by *STAP-programme*

Preparation

▸ **STAP-programme** based on MAPP (Model Approach to Partnerships in Parenting)
▸ Issues:
  ◦ Cooperation
  ◦ Loss
  ◦ Binding
  ◦ History
  ◦ Behaviour
  ◦ Perspectives
  ◦ Impact
▸ Goals:
  ◦ Equip candidate foster parent(s) with knowledge and skills
  ◦ Select appropriate foster parent(s)

Recruitment, preparation & selection

▸ **Recruitment**
- Parent(s) showing interest
- Parent(s) receive information
- Invited for special meeting
  - Registration form
  - Declaration of health
  - No objection Child Protection Agency collecting info

▸ **Preparation and selection**
- Preparation and selection by *STAP-programme*
- Home visits
  - Family profile
  - Registration
- Admission

Selection

Criteria:

- Openness and clearness in contacts;
- Co-operation as a team, sharing parenthood;
- Helping child to develop positive view
- Helping child to change behaviour
- Being aware of impact of fostering

Theoretical orientation

- Vision/mission derived from International Treaty of Children's Rights
- Theoretical orientation: eclectic
  - Systems theory
  - Contextual theory
  - Developmental psychology, psychopathology
  - Social learning theory
  - Attachment theory
  - Communication theory
  - Empowerment model
- Empirical results....?

Research

1963 – up to now 290 articles

Subjects of PhD dissertations

- Burden of fostering (Bastiaensen, 2001)
- Assessment in foster care (De Meyer, 2003)
- Legal position foster parent (Punselie, 2006)
- Conflicts with foster parents (Okma, 2006)
- Attachment of foster children (Oosterman, 2007)
- Parent stress & developm of child (Van Oijen, prep)

Mostly statistical empirical research
Pre-experimental designs

Evidence based practice or practice based evidence?

Risk assessment of breakdown

Research in de past

1 Matching

Constructing types of problems
Constructing types of climates
(clusteranalyses)
Searching for succesful combinations

Strijker, J. *et al.* (2005). Typologies and outcomes for foster children. *Child and Youth Care Forum, 34, 43-55.*

2 (Dis)agreement (multiple informant problem)

- YSR and CBCL
- repeated measurement
- + community sample
- compute correlations between the cross-informant items

Strijker, J., & Van Oijen, S. (2006) (Dis)similarities between foster parent and foster child in reporting problem behaviour. *Tijdschrift voor Orthopedagogiek, Kinderpsychiatrie en Klinische Kinderpsychologie, 31*, 69-81 [in Dutch]

	Community (n=87)		Foster care (n=60)	
	T1	T2	T1	T2
Int	.30	.30	.28	.28
Ext	.35	.38	.30	.27
Tot pr	.37	.36	.32	.30

	Current (n=37)	Breakd (n=19)
Int.	.33	.16*
Ext	.28	.26
Tot prob	.29	.31

	FFC ($n=28$)	KFC ($n=50$)
Int.	.24	.29
Ext	.33	.32
Tot prob	.33	.31

3 Predictors of care outcome

450 files

- age

- severity of conduct disorders

- movements through care

Strijker, J., & Knorth, E. J. (2007). Replacement of foster children. *Kind en Adolescent, 28*, 32-45 [in Dutch]

		Actual	
		Breakd	Current
Pred.	Breakd	71%	37%
	Current	29%	63%
		100%	100%

Current studies

1 Assessment of foster parents

CHAP (Casey Home Assessment Protocol)

1a Developing
- profile descriptions
- e-testing

Model:
practice based evidence

1b Local provider of (foster) care CHAP / CBCL/TRF /YSR/ PARI /...

Progress of foster child
Drop out of foster parents
Conditions for development

...

2 Transition:
- position in society of children formely in care
- two wave study?

Knorth, E. J., Knot-Dickscheit, J., & Strijker, J. (2008). Transition to independence for care leavers in the Netherlands, a neglected concern. In M. Stein & E. Munro (Eds.), *Young people's transitions from care to adulthood: International research and practice.* London/Philadelphia: Jessica Kingsley.

Overview:

1 CHAP

    a. developing e-testing and profiles researching predictive validity

    b. cooperation with provider of child care

2 Transition

- Engagement
- History
- Physical / mental health
- Family functioning
- Resources
- Social support
- Cultural competence
- Readiness for foster care

Advantages operational level

- uniformity
- less dependency of the person
- comparison with reference group
- e-testing is efficiently
- more systematic communication

Effectiveness:

- reduction in retention
- reduction in breakdown
- reducing stability problem behaviour

Thank you for your attention!

Piet Strijker
Erik Knorth
University of Groningen
Dept of Special Education and Child Care

J.Strijker@rug.nl
E.J.Knorth@rug.nl

Internet: www.rug.nl