Motivation for Foster Care

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Overview

1. Background

– Problem:
  – Foster placements increases
  – Foster Parents (FP) increases not same rate
  – 57% of FP quit within 5 years

– Goal:
  – Information about motivation
  – Careful selection of FP
  – High potential

2. Foster care in Flanders

- Problematic educational situation
- Services Youth welfare agency
  - Foster care first choice
- 17 foster care agencies
  - Soon each province, 1 agency
  - Selection, training, support, monitor
- Criteria: >18 year, health, police clearance certificate
- Competencies:
  - Communicate openly and clearly
  - Collaborate in a team and share parenthood
  - Helping children in changing their behaviors and in developing a positive self-image
  - Aware of the impact on own family

3. Motivation for foster care

- Kinship ≠non-kinship
  - Particular child, kinship network

- Important: decision-making process to start foster
  - Resource theory (Cox, Orme & Rhodes, 2003)
  - Resource: education, income, married, time, parenting experience, social support, helping profession
  - More resources more likely start to foster
  - Barriers! Tyebjee (2003)
    - Lack of resources
    - Life cycle, age, family size, finances, time, space,

3. Motivation for foster care

- Literature
  - 6.6 reasons (Rhodes, et al, 2006)
  - Clustering
    - Intrinsic vs extrinsic
    - Child-centered vs self-oriented
    - Child-centered vs affect individual vs environmental
      » Society-oriented reasons
  - Child-centered: help a child, provide a child with love and a good home, etcetera

- Knowing motivation
  - Predict success,
  - Relate to foster home utilization (# children, # as foster parents)
  - Associate with secure attachment

3. Motivation for foster care

- Intrinsic (loving parent, saving from harm) → continue fostering (Rodger, et al., 2006)
- Child-centered (give love) →placement duration, predicts satisfaction, continue (Kraus, 1971, in Rhodes, et al., 2006; Denby, Rindfleisch & Bean, 1999)
- Self-oriented (inability, own experience) → positive outcome children (Dando & Minty, 1987, in Cole, 2005)

- Increase family size →secure attachment (Cole, 2005)

- Self-oriented (companion, te be loved, needs)→ less placements , more disruption, fewer children (Rhodes, et al, 2006; Miller, 1993, in Cole, 2005; Rhodes, et al., 2006)

Conflicting, scarce, inconclusive
In Flanders: unknown

4. Research

Inconclusive, unknown

Research questions:

- Reasons to become foster parent in Flanders?
- What reasons are associated with retention?
- What family characteristics are associated with motivations?

Research method:

- Foster parents reasons for fostering
  - Dutch, 24 items, 4- pointscale, 3 subscales (child-centered, self-oriented, society-oriented) and 12 1-items scales
- Charateristics
  - Foster parents age, educational level, employment status/available time, marital status, biological children, foster children, total years as foster parents

4. Research

- Research Population
  - Part of larger study
  - Active non-kinship
  - Three month period

  - 200
  - 77.5% foster mothers
  - Mean age: 47.98 years (sd=8.62)
  - 25-69 years

  - 78.5% living together

  - 81.5% at least high school
  - 66.5% of partners at least high school

  - 59.5% part time/not working
  - 52.5 % of partners full time

  - 79.5% at least 1 birth child

- Similar to representative non-kinship foster group

5. Results

- ▪ Family characteristics
  - – 52% at least 1 foster child
  - – Average: 7.5 years experience (sd=6.24)

- ▪ Reasons for fostering
  - – 8.95 reasons for fostering (t=12.933, p<.001)
  - – Main reasons: child-centered
    - • I want to provide a good home for a child: 99%
    - • I want to provide a child with love: 98%
  - – Society-reasons
    - • I want to fulfill my (religious) beliefs by caring for a child: 72.5%
    - • I want to do something for the community 71.5%
  - – Self-oriented
    - • From 6 to 25%
  - – More child-centered (μ= 10.88, sd= 1.22) than self-oriented (μ= 9,66, sd= 2.86) and society-oriented reasons (μ= 5.69, sd=1.54) ($F(2)$=412.73, p<0.005).
  - – Best description: child-centered reasons
    - • " I want to provide a good home for a child"
    - • Never self-oriented reasons

5. Results

- Other items
  - 'I want to provide a home so a child won't have to be put in an institution': 95%
  - ' I know a foster child and want to help': 85.5%
  - ' I know foster parents and I think its suits us too' 73%

- Reasons associated total years
  - Logistic regression
    - lineair regression not possible, residuals were not random, normally distributed KS(166)=0.079, p<0.001
    - Total years dichotomized, cut-off 75%, 10 years
    - Block-wise
    - First block: age, gender, available time, edcuational, biological children
    - Second block: reasons for fostering

- Family characteristics associated foster reasons
  - Spearman correlation
    - Linear regression not possible, residuals were not random, normally distributed, KS (self-oriented)(192)=0.127, $p<0.001$; KS (child-centered)(192)=0.101, $p<0.001$; KS (society-oriented)(192)=0.062, $p<0.05$)

Table : logistic regression analysis for total years as foster parent

	B	S.E.	Exp (B)	Wald	p
Step1[a]					
Age	0.139	0.039	1.149	12.391	<0.001
Gender	0.470	0.518	1.599	0.822	0.365
Children	0.072	0.150	1.075	0.231	0.631
Time	-0.001	0.007	0.999	0.030	0.863
Education	-0.106	0.221	0.970	0.229	0.632
Step2[b]					
Self-oriented reasons	-0.03	0.075	0.997	0.002	0.969
Child-centered reasons	0.098	0.168	1.103	0.340	0.560
Society-oriented reasons	0.021	0.139	1.022	0.024	0.878

[a] Overall model *Chi-square* (df=5)=31.219, *p<0.001, Nagelkerke R^2=0.256*
[b] Overall model *Chi-square* (df=8)=31.708; *p<0.001, Nagelkerke R^2=0.260*

Table: spearman correlation family characteristics and reasons for fostering

	Self oriented		Child centered		Society oriented	
	R	p	R	p	R	p
Age	.030	0.675	-0.017	0.811	0.112	0.117
Children	**-.155**	**0.030**	-0.001	0.989	**0.236**	**0.001**
Time	**.194**	**0.006**	0.073	0.308	0.117	0.104
Education	-.134	0.061	-0.139	0.052	-0.085	0.233

6. Conclusions

- Child-centered reasons
- More average (4-pointscale)
- Retention not explained by reasons, only age
    - Definition of retention
    - Foster care organisation
    - Selection process of foster care agencies
    - Decision process of foster care agencies

    - Further research: considering breakdown, succes, placement movement
- Few family characteristics
    - Resources no indication
    - More children: less self-oriented reasons
        - No children
        - To much children
    - More children: more society reasons
        - Taking care of child already fulfilled
    - More time: more self-oriented
        - Resource theory

6. Conclusions

- 66% to receive love
- 44% want to enlarge family

  - In contrast with screening and selection criteria
  - Incompatible reasons together with compatible

- Knowing a foster family helps recruiting
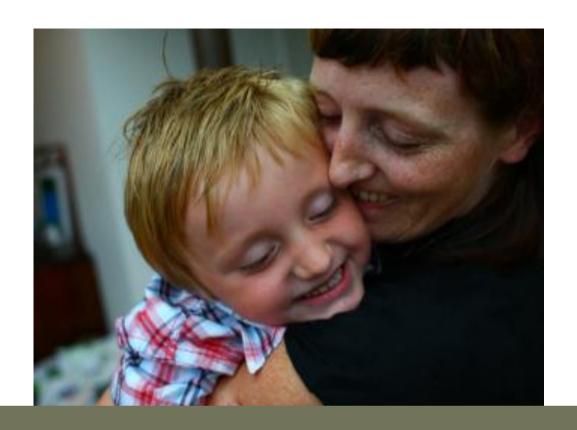
6. Strengths/Limitations

- First Flemish study
- Big participation foster care agencies
- Ordinal scale in measurement

- Lack of information respons/non-respons
- non-active foster parents?
- Foster fathers?
- Follow-up: motivations and succes

- Assessment of motivations is needed:
  - Goals of agencies
  - Predict succes

7. References

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THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION!

QUESTIONS?