

Maryland DHS/Social Services & Maryland Resource Parent Association

Survey of Resource Parents: Summary of Findings



BACKGROUND:

The Maryland Resource Parent Association (MRPA) and local county resource parent associations, with the help of the Maryland Department of Social Services (DSS), are intended to provide Foster, Kinship, Adoptive, and Guardianship parents with resources and services to help them in their roles, building authentic relationships between resource parents, DSS workers, and origin families. These organizations collaborated on a survey of resource parents throughout the state of Maryland to find out about their experiences with resource parent associations, and what resources and supports they need and find most helpful.

"We are grandparents of our foster child. Our worker has told us that there are no support groups for people in our situation. I have had to go online to find a group, which is national and not always relevant to our local area."

Authentic Partnerships with Resource Parents Survey

460 Resource Parents from all 24 Jurisdictions Responded

(Baltimore County=12%; Montgomery County=12%; Anne Arundel County=9%; Harford County=8%; Cecil County=7%)

67%

(n=459)

Knew about or were aware of MRPA

34%

(n=245)

Are involved or active member of MRPA

55%

(n=231)

MRPA meets their needs as resource parent

39%

(n=296)

Involved or active member of Local



50%

(n=252)

Local RPA meets their needs as

Top Benefits of Being Involved with MRPA (n=199) or Local RPA (n=226)



"A lot of family bonding between the foster and bio kids from different families."

"MRPA funding to support local resource parent association."

"Local Monthly meetings, support groups and opportunities for CEUs."

"Not sure yet."

Top Challenges to Being Involved with MRPA (n=188) or Local RPA (n=207)

"As a new foster parent, I didn't know certain events and services even existed."

"Only time constraints. We are a two-parent family, we both work full time, and foster children have lots of after school appointments and activities."

"Evening meetings."



What Additional Resources or Supports Do You Need as a Resource Parent that are not already available? (n=175)



"When a school aged child that I am willing to take has hours that conflict with my job, it affects my ability to accept children."

"Ways to connect outside Facebook."

"More flexibility in training times and topics." "It would be nice to have a professional page to receive support."

How Can MRPA Best Support You as a Resource Parent? (n=85)

- ▶ Greater communication frequency; transparency; direct-not through DSS
- ▶ Liaison with DSS
- ▶ Centralized source for finding resources/services (childcare, transportation, trainings, links to products, emergency bags)
- ▶ Mental/behavioral health assistance for children/Trauma support
- ▶ Being a larger presence in general.
- ▶ Educate new foster parents what is available to them.
- ▶ Offer mentoring and training.
- ▶ Offer contact info to other foster parents.
- ▶ Evening trainings.
- ▶ Follow through on good ideas.
- ▶ Advocacy for Foster P to have right to intervene.
- ▶ Advocacy for permanency within statute.
- ▶ Local meetings.
- ▶ Reach out early to Foster Parents
- ▶ Keep Foster Parents updated on legislative, policy or procedural changes.
- ▶ Fun things for family to do at low/no cost.
- ▶ Continue online and virtual trainings for Foster Parents
- ▶ Continue legislative advocacy.
- ▶ Include kinship providers.
- ▶ Keep meeting participants positive and not petty, negative, side talk.
- ▶ More cultural competence in operations
- ▶ Help with how to address the lack of partnership and trust with DSS.