



2023 BI-ANNUAL REPORT

July—December, 2023

Grant Agreement Number 175676
January 31, 2024

Prepared by
 **the
contingent**

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Background

In 2012, the community in Portland initiated a new posture with Oregon's Department of Human Services (ODHS) by actively caring for children in foster care and those who care for them, including ODHS employees. Under the umbrella of what is now The Contingent, the "Embrace Oregon¹" initiative emerged.

In light of the success of the model, ODHS asked The Contingent to expand its efforts under a new statewide brand: Every Child. With more than 11,000 children spending at least one night in foster care in Oregon in 2015, and less than half of that number of active resource² homes available, it was clear that the crisis shortage of resource homes extended beyond Portland.

The Contingent launched Every Child as a pilot initiative in Lane, Jackson, and Josephine counties in Fall 2015 to serve the needs of children entering foster care across the state, in partnership with ODHS. By 2016, Every Child was growing exponentially and two local non-profit organizations—backbone organizations³—emerged in District 5 and District 8 to lead this effort in the community.

With a record number of resource families stepping forward in the Portland Metro area and quick success in Districts 5 and 8, ODHS awarded Every Child a matching grant to expand to all 36 counties in the state of Oregon.

Developed as a statewide initiative that mobilizes community to uplift children and families impacted by foster care, Every Child strives to increase the recruitment and retention of families who are willing to open their home to children in crisis. The strategy invites Oregonians to contribute to the needs in their community by supplying tangible goods or services, volunteering, or caring for a child, providing simple ways to engage community members who likely never would have become resource parents and are now interacting with child welfare in meaningful ways. Many eventually step into resource parenting because of their experiences.

In 2019, Every Child Oregon was asked to take on the 1-800 number and built a community experience team to respond to inquiries, educate the community and answer questions, and help community members take next steps by either warmly connecting them to their local certifier or Every Child affiliate to begin volunteering. Every Child has continued to learn and evolve by creating a robust digital marketing and recruitment strategy, drip marketing campaigns, and launched new efforts aimed at supporting and retaining resource families (i.e. My Neighbor and Peer Mentorship). As we listen and learn from the community and our affiliates, we are re-calibrating our efforts, and are excited to utilize data to inform our work in more strategic ways that create impact for children and families.

The following is a detailed report of Every Child's resource parent recruitment and support efforts from July –December 2023.

1 Embrace Oregon is now known as "Every Child PDX" to mitigate branding confusion.

2 ODHS has transitioned to "resource parent" and "resource home" in lieu of "foster parent" or "foster home" in alignment with national shift from the Children's Bureau.

3 https://ssir.org/articles/entry/collective_impact

Executive Summary



Executive Summary

Every Child Oregon and its affiliates have mobilized thousands of Oregonians to step forward to support the local child welfare system, or to inquire about becoming resource parents – with increasing numbers of individuals who self-identify as part of the BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Color) community. Every Child is engaging the community to care for children and families impacted by the child welfare system through donating their time, resources, and services. We have also continued to scale creative initiatives to support resource families' retention through expansion of the resource parent Peer Mentorship program and Foster Parents' Night Out (FPNO). Below are highlights of Every Child's results from July – December 2023.

Resource Family & Adoption Inquiries: Every Child received new interest in **resource parenting and/or adoption from 640 individuals, with 547 of those inquiries expressing interest in learning more about becoming a resource parent**, a 30% decrease from the 1,020 individuals who inquired about fostering or adopting during the same 6-month period in 2022. **However, Every Child earned foster or adoption inquiries went from 71% in July – December 2022 to 82% in the current reporting period, an 11% increase.**

Every Child has demonstrated a **2% increase in individuals who self-identified as people of color or multiracial when compared to the same reporting period as the previous year.** Through partnership with ODHS and utilizing needs assessment data, we are excited to further adapt our strategies with a goal of not simply recruiting more homes, but more ideal placements for children in foster care.

My NeighbOR: Since July of 2023, Oregonians have met **1,420 tangible needs of their fellow neighbors, fulfilling pressing and tangible needs for at least 575 Oregon families and youth** impacted by foster and kinship care. While the fulfillment rate is just 73%, there is a 47% increase in the number of needs met (increasing from 966 needs met from January- June of 2023) and a 35% increase in the number of families served compared to the 427 families served in the previous reporting period.

Over the course of 2023, the community has met 2,439 needs, 95% of the qualified needs submitted. Over \$140,000 has been gifted to benefit close to 1,000 families in the form of in-kind donations.

Resource Parent Peer Mentorship: The Spring 2023 Resource Parent Peer Mentorship Cohort included **30 mentor-mentee pairs spanning 18 counties.** This program has demonstrated consistently positive outcomes with 100% of participants sharing they would highly recommend this program to support newly certified resource families. Participants also showed significant gains in their understanding and capacity. Mentees self-reported feeling more confident and equipped to foster after participating in the Peer Mentorship Program, almost doubling their rating from pre and post survey results (from a rating of 3.6 in the pre-survey, to 6 in the post survey).

County Expansion: Every Child is **serving all 36 Oregon counties** through its My NeighbOR services and resource family recruitment efforts. Every Child also has local affiliates leadership established in 24 of Oregon's 36 counties. Additionally, we are exploring new partnerships with existing non-profits in non-affiliate counties and fostering collaboration around shared goals that support the recruitment and retention of local resource families. In Umatilla County, Every Child and Hands and Feet Inc., a local nonprofit, are co-hosting a TBRI Training in February and providing childcare and meals to local resource families.

Foster Parents' Night Out (FPNO): Every Child and its affiliates **launched 2 new FPNO sites in this last FPNO season (September– December 2023) in Jackson and Deschutes Counties.** Oregon volunteers operated 17 FPNO sites from September – December 2023, serving an average of 256 children and providing roughly 5,109 hours of respite per month to 107 Oregon resource families.

Community Engagement: Over the last 6 months, Every Child **affiliates mobilized 1,942 community members** to engage with their local child welfare system, either by volunteering their time or meeting a tangible need for families impacted by foster care.

In-Kind Support to ODHS: Through collaborative efforts with local businesses and community members, Every Child initiatives resulted in over **\$101,401 of in-kind support** to local ODHS branches across Oregon in the past 6 months, including makeovers of **15 ODHS visitation rooms, lobbies, and staff wellness rooms and 49 instances of hospitality to ODHS staff.**

Recruitment



Recruitment

Resource Parent (Foster or Adoption) Inquiries

In the second half of 2023, Every Child received 640 fostering and/or adoption inquiries, with 547 of those inquiries expressing interest in learning more about becoming a resource parent. These totals represent a decrease of over 30% when compared to the same period in 2022. However, there was a 5% increase in foster inquiries over total inquiries, going from 80.5% in Jul-Dec 2022 to 85.5% in Jul-Dec 2023. Every Child has employed a number of tools to try and identify where there may be barriers preventing individuals from inquiring. Early this year, we began utilizing “Hot Jar”, an analysis tool that has helped us visualize where inquiries may be getting stuck or dropping off from completing the inquiry form. As a result, we are running A/B testing with a much shorter form and seeing positive results. Additionally, Every Child made significant investments in storytelling and launched our “Love, Every Child Campaign” that resulted in 341 foster and adoption inquiries.

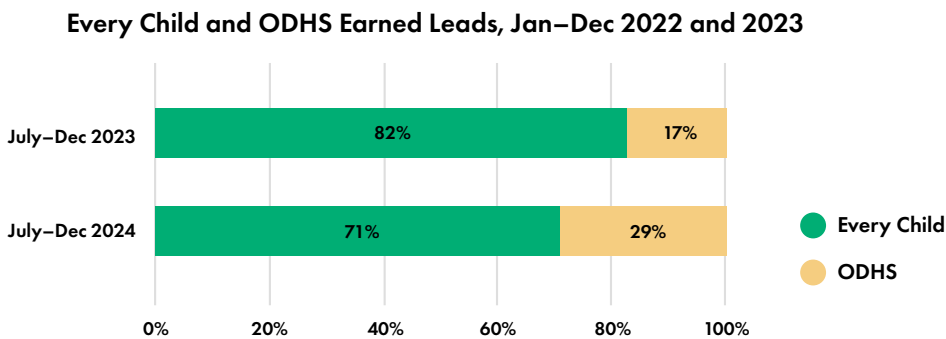
Through our marketing and grass-roots community efforts, Every Child earned foster or adoption inquiries went from 71% in July – December 2022 to 82% in the current reporting period, a 11% increase (Figure 1).

Table 1. Breakdown of Resource Parent and Adoption Inquiries Received in July – December 2022 and 2023

Type of inquiry	July–Dec 2022	July–Dec 2023
Foster inquiries	821	547
All resource (foster/adoption) inquiries	1020	640
Foster/adoption “Ready Now” handoffs to ODHS	468	217

Source: Every Child Customer Relationship Management (CRM) Database, January 2024.

Table 1. Breakdown of Resource Parent and Adoption Inquiries Received in July – December 2022 and 2023



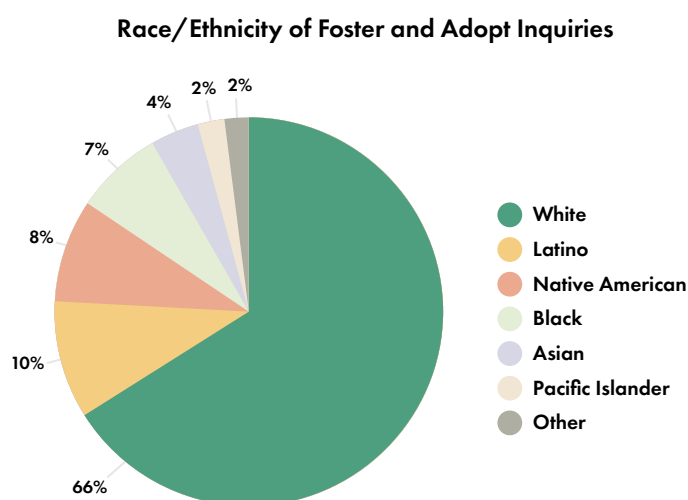
Source: Every Child Customer Relationship Management (CRM) Database, January 2024.

Resource Parent and Adoption Inquiry Demographics

One of Every Child's desired outcomes is to provide children of diverse backgrounds access to culturally responsive homes. Every Child Oregon continues to engage in intentional marketing and outreach efforts, by increasing representation in images and video content, and by utilizing targeted ads to invite more Oregonians who can support the needs of children disproportionately represented in the foster care system.

One of the key indicators to measure our targeted reach is resource inquiries by race/ethnicity, as we can see in Figure 2. **Compared with the overall demographics of Oregon¹, where 28% of the population are people of color or identify as having more than one race, 34% of Every Child foster and adoption inquiries from July – December 2023 were made by individuals who self-identified as people of color or multiracial.**

**Figure 2. Foster/Adopt Inquiries Disaggregated by Race and Ethnicity
July – December 2023**



Source: Every Child Customer Relationship Management (CRM) Database, January 2024.

When focusing on individuals who self-identified as people of color or multiracial, there was an increase from 32% in 2022 to 34% in 2023.

Table 2. Percentage of Foster/Adopt Inquiries Disaggregated by Race/Ethnicity, July – December 2023

Race/Ethnicity	July–Dec 2022	July–Dec 2023
African American/Black	7%	7%
Asian American	3%	4%
Latino/Hispanic	12%	10%
Native American/American Indian	5%	8%
Pacific Islander	1%	2%
Other	4%	2%
White/Caucasian	68%	66%

¹ Oregon's census data from 2022 reveals that 85.9% of Oregonians identify as White, 14.4% as Latino, 4.3% Multiracial, 5.1% Asian, 1.9% American Indian, and 2.3% Black, <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/OR>

A More Strategic Recruitment Effort

Over the last few years, we have continued to gather data points and learnings that are helping us to further refine our recruitment strategy. In an effort to create greater placement stability for kids, we see a need to shift from simply recruiting more homes, to recruiting homes that can more appropriately care for the needs of children and youth experiencing foster care in Oregon.

With greater access to data than ever before, we can leverage tools like the Gap Analysis, or Needs Assessment data, to identify where and how targeted recruitment efforts can help to meet the current and future placement needs of children in foster care. By using data describing the characteristics of children in care, such as the location from which they were removed, connection to siblings, their racial and/or cultural background, and therapeutic needs, compared to the characteristics of their placement and whether those needs are being met, we can identify strategic gaps in placement resources.



As we have been recruiting and engaging families across Oregon and in dialogue with ODHS, it has become increasingly clear that having the right strategic family at the right time and place helps to meet children's needs with more impact than just recruiting a certain number of families. It is our hope and intention that our recruitment work can support more ideal placements for kids in care.

In Q4 of 2023, we used an initial publicly available data set in order to identify a set of particular needs in Oregon that we could tailor our recruitment efforts toward, in addition to ongoing statewide recruitment. These included black families that can take teens and sibling groups in Multnomah County, Native American families in Lane County, and families that can take sibling groups in Marion County. We then are tracking our inquiry results against those identified gaps or needs.

After a year of significant planning and partnership with ODHS leaders and ORRAI, we have received access to a data set that will help us create an even more fine-tuned analysis of the needs across Oregon and then plan our recruitment efforts accordingly. We look forward to making this data available to affiliates and ODHS staff quarterly in order to bring more synergy to our shared work.

Digital Marketing & Recruitment Activity Updates

In the first half of 2023, Every Child Oregon introduced new innovations within our digital marketing recruitment efforts, including: increased focus on video content, launching YouTube shorts, and a lead generation campaign that started in April.

We have seen exceptionally high levels of engagement with our video content. Earlier this year, we started publishing YouTube shorts, videos which are sixty seconds or less and are algorithmically favored by Google/YouTube. Our best-performing YouTube short now has 444,000 views. Every Child Oregon Shorts can be viewed on this link: [Every Child Oregon - YouTube](#).

Lead Generators

Our lead generators launched in April and May of 2023, and have performed well, with high levels of engagement. We had two primary lead generators in the market: one was a short pdf “Five Things You Need to Know About Foster Care” and the other was a video series featuring Jillana Goble, in which she shares her insights as a resource parent, resource parent advocate and author. At the end of 2023, over 550 people had responded to the lead generators and are included in a multi-month email cultivation campaign as we encourage folks to consider taking next steps to become a resource parent.

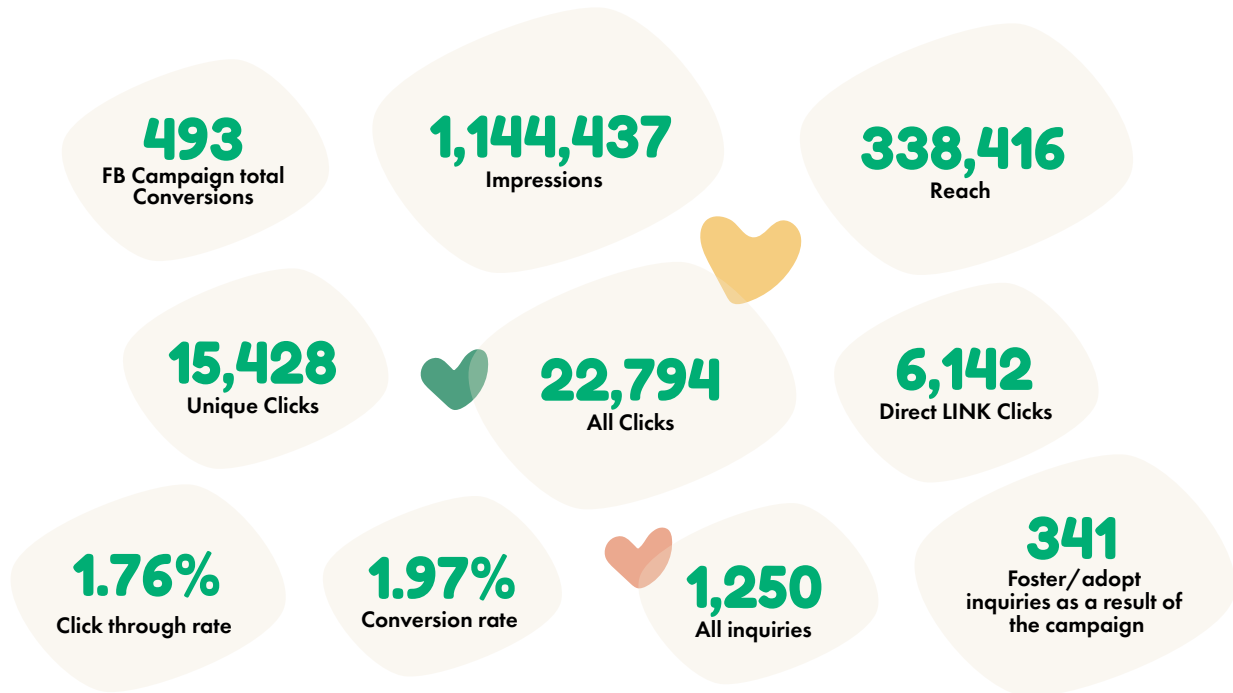
“Love, Every Child” Fall Campaign

Starting at the end of September, the “Love, Every Child” campaign was launched to focus on and amplify the voices of people impacted by foster care. Stories from different aspects of the foster care experience were highlighted and video stories performed very well. From the resource parent perspective, “[Kelly’s story](#)” received a high level of engagement.

The most engaging video from the campaign, both organically and through paid media, was “Michael’s Story” about a teen in the Portland area who had experienced foster care. Michael’s video can be viewed here:



The "Love, Every Child" Fall Campaign yielded the following results
from October 1 – December 31:



Our click through rate saw an increase from 1.6% in the first half of the year and almost double the industry standard of .9%.

The "Love, Every Child" Fall Campaign yielded the following results
from October 1 – December 31:



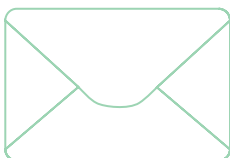
463

New Instagram followers



976

New Facebook followers



33%

Open rate for newsletters and email updates

(This is performing well above industry standards which are around 21% across all industries.)

New “Short Form”

In reviewing some of the barriers to inquiry completion, we discovered that the main inquiry form had about a 25% conversion rate. To see if the length was a barrier, we devised a shorter inquiry form and launched it in mid-December as a test. The “short form” test will continue through the end of January, at which time we will evaluate the effectiveness of the form and how we might use it moving forward.

Community Experience

The Community Experience (CX) team is currently fully staffed and equipped to support both English and Spanish inquiries submitted by community members looking for ways to volunteer, and/or who are ready to begin the foster or adoption certification process. In the last 6 months, the CX team focused on ways to improve our processes with an overall goal to increase engagement, specifically inquirers interested in becoming resource parents or respite providers. Below are a few innovative strategies they have begun to implement:

- We are conducting Respite and Foster Ready Now surveys over the phone.
- Incorporating additional touchpoints, both before we pass off the inquirer to ODHS as well as post-handoff, to ensure a smoother handoff experience.
- Improving fulfillment of submitted My NeighbOR requests by increasing frequency of auditing the portal for outstanding requests.

Mobilizing Volunteers

Recognizing that not every individual is in a place to become a resource parent, Every Child has created a wide array of volunteer opportunities as part of our recruitment strategy. By offering low barrier opportunities for individuals to engage in the child welfare system and create greater proximity to those impacted by foster care, community members are more willing to consider fostering than they might otherwise have, had they not had a way to “dip their toes in the water.” Through the tireless efforts of the Every Child affiliate staff building relationships and rallying their local communities, **1,195 community members have volunteered** to support children in foster care, resource families and ODHS staff since July 2023.

**Table 4. Total Number of Volunteers Engaged
from July — December 2023, by Local Every Child Effort**

Local Every Child Effort	Volunteers
Central Oregon (Crook/Desch./Jeff.)	78
Coos	15
Curry	51
Jackson	23
Josephine	28
Lane	259
Lincoln/Linn/Benton	124
Marion	10
Northwest Oregon (Clat./Colum./Till.)	46
PDX (Clack./Mult./Wash.)	427
Polk/Yamhill	145
TOTAL	1,206

Source: Every Child Affiliate quarterly reports, January 2024

Local ODHS Branch Hospitality and Community Support

Every Child affiliates have also mobilized Oregonians to offer support to wrap around their local child welfare offices this year. ODHS staff and caseworkers who carry overwhelming caseloads and care for families in crisis were encouraged by the show of support.

Through Every Child affiliates, volunteers and teams from the community provided ODHS local workers with **49 separate occurrences of staff appreciation and hospitality** in the second half of the year.

Every Child volunteer teams also renovated **15 ODHS office spaces** from July through December 2023 in collaboration with local businesses and community members stepping forward to donate resources and volunteer their time.

A local Architecture firm in Portland made over visitation spaces at a local ODHS office. They turned this space into a haven of connection and dignity, thanks to their vision and commitment to uplifting communities through thoughtful design.

~ Every Child PDX



Community volunteers after completed makeover at ODHS in Portland

Every Child affiliates also rallied the community to offer meaningful support through the holiday season, through toy and gift card drives, as well as meeting other tangible needs. EC Polk and Yamhill did a drive resulting in over 240 winter coats and hoodies, and 200 pairs of brand new, name brand shoes donated for kids in foster care.

Every Child Lane mobilized their community to donate 225 Christmas presents for youth in foster care, allowing parents to give their children in foster care something special during their supervised family time in December. Every Child Curry and community partners served 65 children (Bio, Foster, Bio Siblings, and RP bio children) with gifts at Christmas.



Delivering donated shoes to ODHS in Yamhill County



"Through feedback loops provided by our local ODHS Champion, we learned that one of the challenges for resource parents at the Annual Christmas Party is that their bio children do not get recognized. This year, we asked our certifiers to gather gift information for the legal children in the household so that all children would receive a gift at the holiday party."

~ Every Child Curry

Every Child affiliates found creative ways to support ODHS as they put together holiday events for children and their bio families and resource families. They had food or cookies for decorating, donated gift cards, toys, and rallied community volunteers to lend a hand. In Josephine County they hosted a holiday movie night.

"At our annual Christmas movie night for resource families and all the kids in home, I had a really amazing conversation with a resource mom. She has two kids of her own, adopted three and is currently fostering two. She was telling me how much these events mean to her and her family. A lot of her kids have behavioral issues that often accompany kids in care.

When she goes out with seven kids and they start acting up, she gets looks and feels judgement on how they are acting without other people knowing the background of the children. When, in reality, this is them on a good day.

She told me that when she comes to the events Every Child puts on, she does not feel judged. Her kids feel loved on and understood."

~ Every Child Josephine

In-Kind Donations

In addition to volunteer opportunities, Every Child invites community members to donate in-kind support in the form of meeting tangible needs, making Welcome Boxes or Launch Boxes for children and youth in care, as well as items donated towards ODHS office makeovers and hospitality. In-kind donations from the community totaled at least \$101,401 from July – December 2023.

Resource Family Support & Retention



My NeighbOR

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, Every Child launched a statewide emergency response effort called “My NeighbOR” in March of 2020. My NeighbOR (myneighbor.org) mobilizes the community to meet the urgent and essential needs of resource families, youth in foster care, kinship families, and families of origin who have an open Child Welfare case.

As a result of relationships with faith communities and other community partners, Every Child established anchor sites at locations across Oregon to serve as neutral drop-off and pick-up sites for donated items. Timely and tangible needs are shared via an online form (everychildoregon.org/need) by ODHS employees, resource families, kinship providers, youth in foster care (including those in the Independent Living Program), or families of origin.

While the fulfillment rate is only 73%, there was a 47% increase in the number of needs met (increasing from 966 needs met from January- June of 2023). This significant increase in the level of needs being submitted is a strong indicator of the value this program provides. We are grateful for our partnerships with our affiliates across the state that have stepped up to meet 1.5 times the level of needs and serve 35% more families this past six months, compared to the 427 families served in the previous reporting period. Additionally, Every Child received in-kind donations from the community for youth and families that surpassed \$87,000.

Over the course of 2023, the community has met 2,439 needs, 95% of the qualified needs submitted. Over \$140,000 has been gifted to benefit close to 1,000 families in the form of in-kind donations.

Also, hearing quotes and stories of these needs met continues to demonstrate the value of My NeighbOR as an opportunity to invite the community to care for their fellow neighbors.

“A local relative provider reached out to her certifier that her washing machine had broken. We put out an ask to the community on Facebook and the city manager shared that she had a matching set she’d love to donate. They even delivered them! ”

~ Every Child Coos



Community volunteer delivering donated washer and dryer to a local resource parent in Coos County

"A grandmother raising her 5 grandchildren needed help with clothes, shoes and furniture. Through community donations, we were able to meet her need with an Amazon gift card. She reached out to share, "Thank you for the Amazon.com gift card! My family is forever grateful to everyone, blessings to you all ❤️ "

~ Every Child PDX

"When our tangible needs coordinator and a volunteer went to drop off two twin beds, the door opened to a mom with a newborn in her arms and young boys running to see who was there. The boys were so excited for their new beds!

They did their best and grabbed a corner to help our coordinator and volunteer carry the new beds to their room. The way these young boys helped us and their mom was just so sweet."

~ Every Child Josephine

"Some time ago, we posted about a kiddo in care needing a bike to get around. A compassionate community member, who happened to be a former foster youth, went out and bought this kid a brand new one!"

~ Every Child Coos

Improving My NeighbOR

Over the last year, the Every Child team has intentionally set aside time to listen to the affiliates running My NeighbOR across the state to learn how we can grow and improve. This has resulted in forming a Task Force to evaluate the program and its operations at the county and statewide level. The Task Force has identified a need for creating additional materials to inform program operations and understanding, software updates, and website narrative changes.

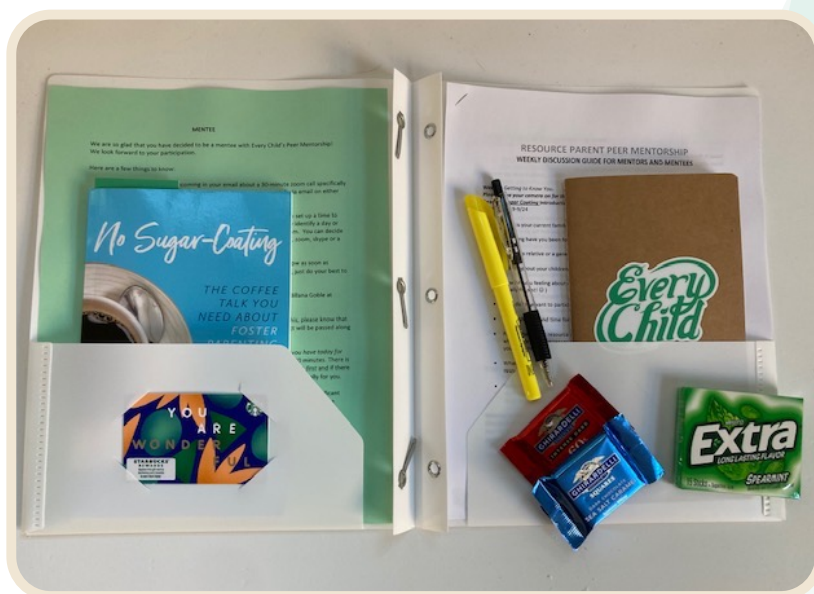
Additionally, the Every Child Oregon team has taken steps to better serve resource families and youth with tangible needs by partnering with other organizations to share resources across the state. At the end of 2023, Every Child established a partnership with Goodwill Industries of Columbia and Willamette to distribute up to \$45,000 in gift cards through My Neighbor in 2024 to serve children and families. We also launched a new partnership with Hope to Dream, providing brand new twin bed frames, mattresses, and bedding to children and youth in foster care. We are excited to see how this new partnership can serve resource families in Oregon and how we could potentially collaborate with other organizations as well.

Peer Mentorship for New Resource Families

Every Child's Resource Parent Peer Mentorship initiative strategically and intentionally pairs experienced resource parents with new resource parents for the first critical months of their fostering journey. The initiative provides an organized curriculum that offers a structure for the mentor-mentee pairs to connect for regular discussions focused on critical topics that can be overwhelming for newer resource parents, including, but not limited to: cultivating relationship with the child's family of origin, what resources exist and how to access them, and how to have a strong partnership with the agency.

peer 
mentorship

Background: In 2019, Every Child conducted a focus group discussion with general and relative providers to better understand resource parents' experience and ways the community could provide meaningful support. Their feedback led Every Child to develop a resource parent mentorship pilot program aimed at increasing retention and general satisfaction of foster care givers and stabilizing placements by providing a foundation of education and encouragement through one-on-one guided mentorship.



Resource parent mentee packets of materials including coffee gift card, copy of “No Sugar Coating,” and journal.

In the Fall of 2020, Every Child launched a six-month pilot virtually and included mentor-mentee pairs primarily from the Portland Metro area (Districts 2, 15, and 16), and a pair from Central Oregon (District 10). Local ODHS personnel assisted Every Child in identifying **11 new resource families** from these regions who expressed interest in receiving mentorship. Upon conclusion, feedback from participants in the initial pilot was overwhelmingly positive and as a result, Every Child Oregon began preparing to scale the initiative model and curriculum to other Oregon counties. Early in 2022, a new Spring Peer Mentorship cohort was launched to serve **19 new resource parent mentees** and expanded to include participation from **9 Oregon counties**. Based on the encouraging survey data from participants, the model was further refined and prepared to scale to more than double the participants in the Fall 2022 cohort.

Peer Mentorship Initiative Results – Fall 2023 Cohort

The Fall Resource Parent Peer Mentorship Cohort **included a total of 30 mentor-mentee pairs who completed the cohort**, bringing the total of relationally mentored and supported new resource parents via Every Child’s one-on-one mentoring initiative to 133 over the course of the last 2 years.

Table 5: Growth in Every Child’s Resource Parent Peer Mentorship Initiative

Cohort	Mentor/Mentee Matches
Spring 2022	19
Fall 2022	40
Total for 2022	59
Spring 2023	44
Fall 2023	30
Total	133

The Fall cohort of Peer Mentorship included mentors and mentees participating from the following 18 counties: Linn, Benton, Columbia, Coos, Lane, Josephine, Polk, Yamhill, Marion, Klamath, Baker, Deschutes, Tillamook, Umatilla, Curry, Multnomah, Clackamas, and Washington.

Of the 30 participating mentees:

21

had been
fostering six
months or less

15

were single
parents

9

of the mentee
participants had no
previous parenting
experience

4

welcomed
a new child while
participating in
Peer Mentorship

2

said good-bye
to a child in care
while participating
in Peer Mentorship

In answering the survey question “Is this relationally-based Peer Mentorship something you found worthy of your valuable time and would recommend to a new resource parent as worthwhile?”

100% said yes

In answering the question: **“What I appreciated the most about being part of Every Child’s Peer Mentorship program”**

70% of participants shared receiving support and encouragement from someone who has relatability to what they are experiencing is what they appreciated most!

These are specific quotes from mentees about what they appreciated most:

“Having someone to talk through thoughts and scenarios.”

“I didn’t feel alone.”

“Talking with someone who understands the special stresses of being a relative resource parent.”

“I appreciated my mentor, Kelly. She was there for me when I needed advice or just to vent. She was quick to respond to me. We have become friends because of your mentorship program, and I am so thankful for her!”

In answering the question: **“How did participating in Every Child’s Peer Mentorship Program differ from RAFT (Resource & Adoptive Family Training) training?”**

68% noted the flexibility in schedule, the ability to get more involved in topics of interest and the ability to ask specific questions.

These are specific quotes from mentees:

“More in depth and personable.”

“It gave me a sense of comfort as I learned more about the system.”

“This was informal training, tailored to my needs. Taking this after RAFT was so great!”

“It felt more personalized, and I felt heard and seen.”



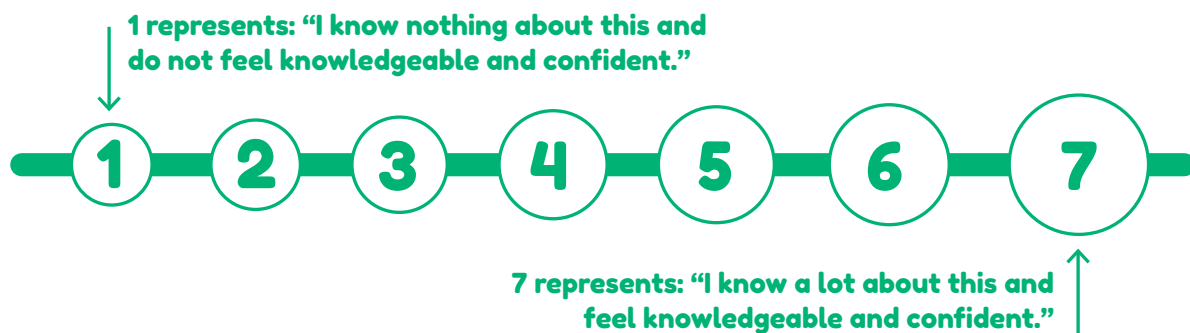
Hear first hand from Kelly, as she shares her experience with Peer Mentorship

Watch Video

Below are the 11 topics in which mentees self-rated their knowledge before and after their 11 conversations with their peer mentor:

- Attending and speaking up in court
- Engaging ODHS staff collaboratively
- Addressing the behaviors of children in my care
- Navigating the agency to receive a response to my question and/or delicate situation
- Working with a child whose racial, cultural, or religious background is different from my own
- How to engage Out of Home Cares Assessment
- Transitioning a child to their family of origin or adoptive placement
- Seeking services for the children in my care
- Empathy when speaking about/engaging a child's biological family
- Understanding the structure of ODHS CW & staff roles
- Working with a child whose background is different from your own

On the graphs on the following page:



Mentees self-rated themselves before and after the program.

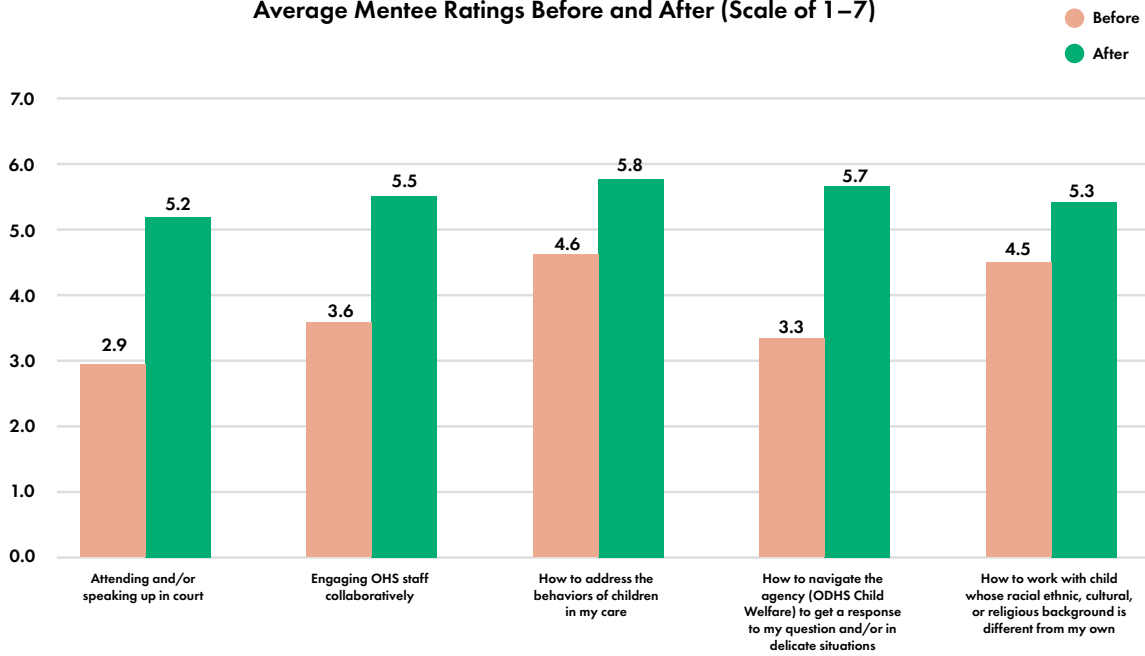
The **Pre-Peer Mentorship** knowledge and confidence average is

3.6

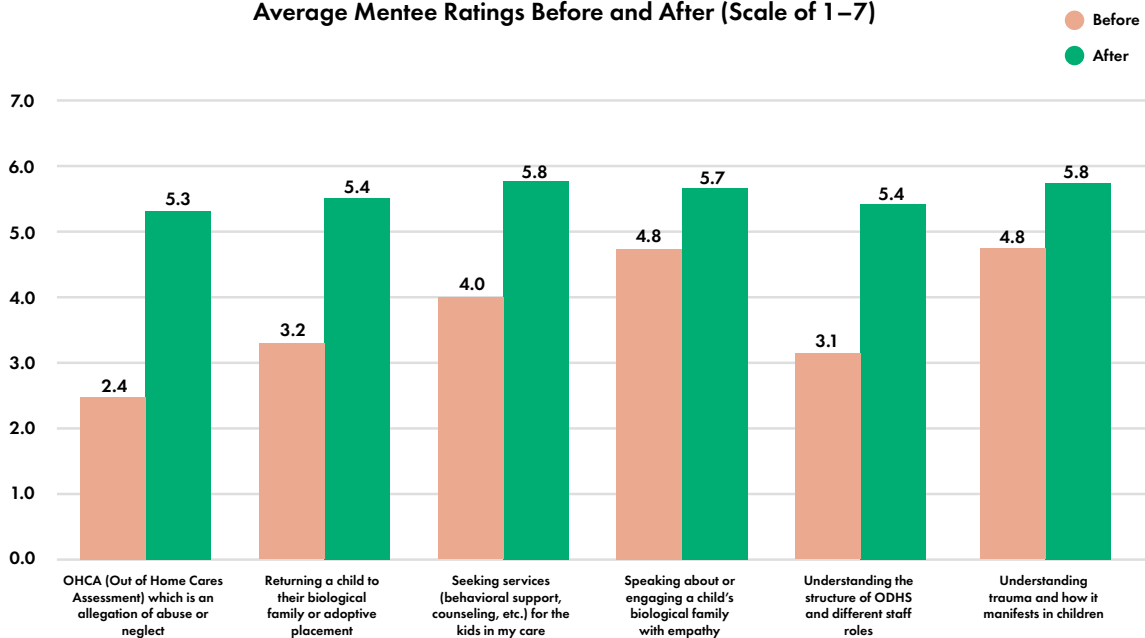
The **Post-Peer Mentorship** knowledge and confidence average is

6.0

Average Mentee Ratings Before and After (Scale of 1–7)



Average Mentee Ratings Before and After (Scale of 1–7)



While every single informational topic showed gains due to engagement with Peer Mentorship, the following 5 categories showed the most gains during Every Child's Peer Mentorship program:

How to engage Out of Home Cares Assessment



3.44
point increase

Attending and speaking up in court



3.29
point increase

Navigating the agency to receive a response to my question and/or delicate situation



3.07
point increase

Understanding the structure of ODHS CW & staff roles



3.02
point increase

Transitioning a child out of your home



2.65
point increase

For our cohort of mentors, 100% of mentors said yes to this statement: **"In terms of a relationally-based one-on-one peer mentoring program, I would recommend this as worthwhile to another experienced foster parent to participate in as a mentor."**

100% of mentors said yes

We look forward to continuing to bring Peer Mentorship to newer resource families across the state in our upcoming Spring 2024 cohort! For our Spring Cohort, we are dedicated to continuing to serve new resource parents (general applicant and relative) who have completed RAFT training and have (or have had) their first placement.



Foster Parents' Night Out (FPNO)

Foster Parents' Night Out (FPNO) provides consistent monthly respite to ODHS resource parents during the school year through scheduled three to four-hour events. Local organizations throughout Oregon host FPNO, which gives resource parents time off while trained volunteers care for their foster, adopted and biological children in a fun and safe environment. By providing quality respite care, FPNO strives to increase the retention rate of resource parents in the community.

The partnership between ODHS and Every Child Oregon has resulted in notable progress in launching and sustaining Foster Parents' Night Out sites across Oregon. The investment and collaboration led to maintaining 14 sites, launching 2 new sites, 1 site relocation, and 1 on pause this Fall. FPNO volunteers provided 174 hours serving 418 families for 72,732 hours of respite from September to December 2023.

However, some of the challenges faced included:

FPNO Volunteers:

For the September to December 2023 season, FPNO served an average of 256 children from 107 resource families a month, providing 5,109.25 hours of respite per month across Oregon.

Participating resource families in Oregon received a total of 81,366 hours of respite from September to December 2023. **Seventeen different FPNO sites mobilized an average of 269 volunteers every month to serve children and families impacted by foster care.**

Every FPNO season, and every month, there are a multitude of positive outcomes, stories, and testimonials that we get the privilege to bear witness to or hear an account of. Below are a few quotes and stories that struck us this season and remind us of the value these FPNO sites, FPNO Site Coordinators, and volunteers provide.



FPNO Site Coordinators on Superhero Night



"We have a new teenage volunteer who brings the best energy! This month, he brought his bucket drum set, played for the kids who all danced around, then taught them how to play themselves. It was a huge hit for everyone."

~ FPNO Site Coordinator

"One of our families recently took in a preemie baby. When the doors opened for FPNO they rushed in and the mom said, 'We have a house full of kids and we just took in a new baby. We are desperate to drop them off, we need this!' When she came back to pick up the kids, she was calm and so grateful."

~ FPNO Site Coordinator

"One mom told us that as soon as she mentioned FPNO in early September that her kids asked how many more days, every day for 2 weeks. They could not wait to come!"

~ FPNO Site Coordinator



The Neighborhood

Being a resource parent can be extremely isolating. The Every Child movement has embodied and held closely to a core value of radical hospitality, and it is our goal to support newly certified homes or resource families who are working hard each day to care for children who have experienced varying degrees of trauma and are in great need of community.

Over the past eighteen months, Every Child local efforts began to launch and refine **The Neighborhood**, an initiative that wraps around resource families with a team of volunteers committed to providing relational & tangible support in 6-month increments. Neighborhood teams provide regular meals, encouragement, and tangible acts of kindness, such as laundry or yard work based on real needs the family expresses. The Neighborhood works to build relational support for the entire family to contribute to the retention of resource homes and the stabilization of children experiencing foster care.

This past Fall Every Child PDX mobilized 60 volunteers to launch an additional 7 Neighborhood groups, ranging in size from 4 to 12 volunteers, who have provided meaningful support, contributing to the retention of resource families from Washington, Multnomah, Clackamas, Jefferson, Crook, and Deschutes counties.

One Every Child PDX volunteer is seeing creative opportunities to go beyond meals and meet families where they are to provide as much support as possible.

"The family we support shared they are struggling to be able to be fully present in their foster child's weekly doctor's appointments because they have the remaining children in the home that the foster mom is having to bring and supervise at the same time. We would like to go through the requirements to become respite certified and provide babysitting for the children who are not attending the medical appointments."

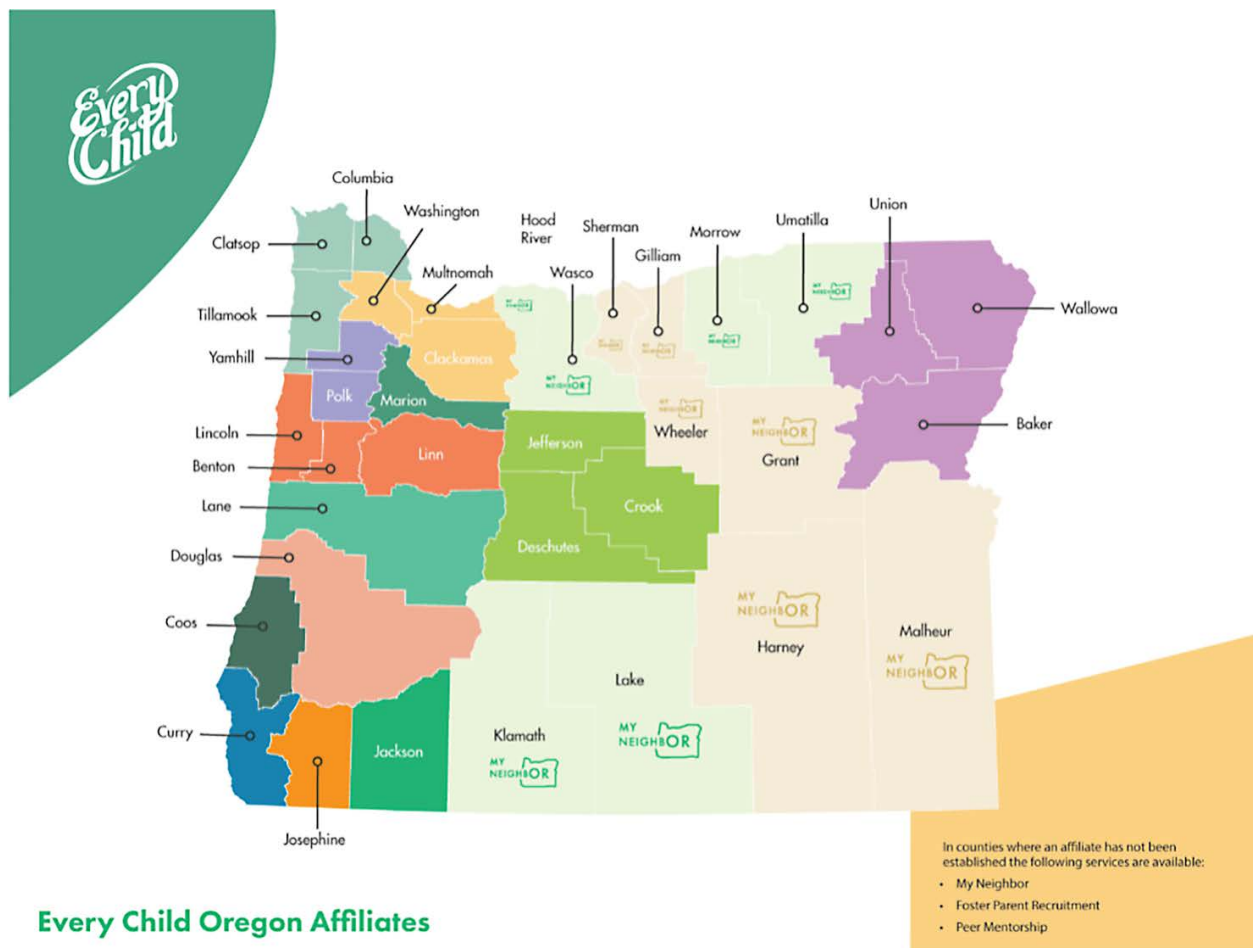
~ Neighborhood volunteer, PDX

We see the potential for greater impact with The Neighborhood initiative and are excited to build out additional resources and supports so more affiliates can launch this effort in their communities.

Every Child Progress Across Oregon

From July – December of 2023 Every Child has an established affiliate in 24 counties where there is a collaborative partnership between ODHS and the community. **From July- Dec 2023, there were 24 counties that are supported by backbone organizations:**

- Baker
- Benton
- Clackamas
- Clatsop
- Columbia
- Coos
- Crook
- Curry
- Deschutes
- Douglas
- Jackson
- Jefferson
- Josephine
- Lane
- Linn
- Lincoln
- Marion
- Multnomah
- Polk
- Tillamook
- Union
- Wallowa
- Washington
- Yamhill



These local Every Child affiliates completed makeovers of 15 different spaces at ODHS offices in the later half of 2023, mobilized more than 1,200 volunteers, provided 49 different instances of hospitality for ODHS staff, and rallied their community to meet 1,400 tangible and emergency needs of resource families and families of origin impacted by foster care. Every Child affiliates also held monthly virtual and in-person resource parent and volunteer recruitment events and raised over \$104,000 in in-kind donations for ODHS makeovers, office support, or supporters directly fulfilling needs of their neighbors impacted by foster care.

In receiving requests and meeting needs through My NeighbOR, and serving newly certified resource parents through Peer Mentorship, Every Child also has a presence in the more remote counties of Oregon.

As we continue to listen to our affiliates and are seeing a growing number of backbone organizations struggle to maintain and operate Every Child in their community with limited community resource and over-extended human resources, we are re-calibrating our model to ensure greater sustainability for the long haul. Through collaboration with ODHS and access to provider reports, our goal is to more effectively evaluate the impact of our local efforts on retention of resource families. By taking a more data informed approach, we will be able to streamline our efforts to expend limited time and resources on the aspects of the work that generate the greatest impact for kids and families.

Every Child Oregon is also seeking to invest in affiliates and remove infrastructural barriers by providing a new volunteer management platform and software that will empower and streamline their efforts to mobilize and on-board community volunteers, saving them precious time and money. We have also invested in a donor prospecting tool to provide affiliates with tools to cultivate a local donor base and more diversified funding streams.

In Eastern Oregon, Every Child is exploring new partnerships with existing organizations that have a shared vision to support children and families impacted by foster care. Rather than duplicating efforts or competing for resources, Every Child is seeking to foster collaboration and uplift and empower local efforts that align with shared goals. In Umatilla County, Every Child Oregon is helping to fund, market, train and equip volunteers, and co-host a Trust Based Relational Intervention training to support the equipping and retention of resource families in Pendleton and Hermiston through collaboration with Hands and Feet, Inc. We are excited to explore other partnerships in rural communities in Eastern and Southern Oregon where we can nurture collaboration that ultimately supports the recruitment and retention of families in meaningful ways.

Recommendations



Recommendations

Since Every Child's inception, ODHS has practiced collaboration, removed barriers, embraced innovation, and responded to Every Child's recommendation across Oregon. This collaborative approach has directly impacted the effectiveness of mobilizing community, recruitment of resource families, and engagement of volunteers across the state. Since the last report, ODHS has collaborated with Every Child and responded to recommendations in the following ways:

- ODHS is sharing Monthly Home Provider Data that is providing the Every Child Oregon team the ability to communicate opportunities to participate in the Peer Mentorship program as we seek to support the retention of families across the state.
- ODHS has also provided the Needs Assessment (Gap Analysis) data to Every Child which enables us to better understand the placement needs for children experiencing foster care and will help inform a more targeted and strategic recruitment effort.

We express our deep gratitude for ODHS's partnership and their willingness to share data that holds the potential to significantly enhance the effectiveness of our retention and recruitment efforts. We are working to create dashboards that highlight key insights, identifying areas of greatest need. These dashboards will be shared with ODHS and Every Child affiliate, transforming how we engage and mobilize communities to better address the unique needs of children experiencing foster care in Oregon.

As Every Child operates across Oregon, the following new recommendations would assist with serving the needs of families and children impacted by child welfare, community mobilizing, building capacity for Every Child affiliate organizations, targeted recruitment, and the support of resource families:

1

Support Gathering Compelling Stories that Increase Community Engagement:

Audiences respond well to real stories about children and families impacted by foster care. Our goal is to create a greater sense of proximity and connection by highlighting stories of real children and families on social media, while still protecting their privacy. Relatable details about the kids and families help community members see these kids and families in a new light.

RECOMMENDATION: Every Child recommends collaborating with ODHS to gather stories from case workers about the needs and what they see in the personalities and in the resilience of the children and families they serve.

2

Building Relationships with District Managers (DMs) and Program Managers (PMs):

With turnover of ODHS district level leadership, there can sometimes be a disconnect with how Every Child is structured, the inquiry process led by Every Child Oregon, and how Every Child affiliates operate at the local level.

RECOMMENDATION: Every Child recommends creating opportunities to meet and foster strong relationships with DMs and PMs within ODHS' regular meeting structures to share critical updates, build understanding, and share the CX (customer experience) process. This will foster greater understanding and alignment between Every Child and ODHS, leading to more effective community mobilization efforts.

3

Establish a Reverse API Connection:

Every Child requires access to data directly input into our CRM system that would allow us to track and design recruitment strategies.

Every Child recommends establishing a reverse API connection that provides our team insights into the real time number of children and youth in foster care within each district, as well as the availability of certified homes within those districts. By integrating this data into Every Child's CRM system, the organization can create interactive dashboards that allow for detailed data analysis and a more targeted and specific approach to recruitment efforts. This will enable Every Child to respond promptly to changing trends and make data-driven decisions, leading to more successful outcomes for children and families involved in the child welfare system.

4

Create a Developmental Approach to Recruiting Parents:

Based on valuable insights gained from recent surveys conducted with individuals who have inquired through Every Child, it is evident that certification can be a lengthy and complex process. To improve the certification rates for those starting their journey to become certified resource parents, more support is needed.

RECOMMENDATION: Every Child recommends a strategic investment in a relational and developmental approach to supporting prospective resource families at key stages, including: inquiry, certification, waiting, and their first placement. In this proposed model, each prospective resource parent would be paired with a guide. These guides, selected based on shared language, culture, and lived experience as resource parents, would assist in navigating the certification process, addressing questions, and facilitating connections with relevant resources. By providing personalized support, fostering relational connections, and enhancing the overall experience, this approach aims to boost engagement and increase the likelihood of prospective resource parents successfully completing the certification process.

5

Create a Process for Reconciling Data Passed from Every Child to ODHS

Since May 2023, Every Child has expanded its scope of operations by taking on the management of certified respite inquiries and implementing an automated data exchange process. The accuracy of data receipt is not always assured, and feedback surveys indicate that numerous community members do not receive communication in an accessible format.

RECOMMENDATION: Every Child recommends ODHS and Every Child's data and CX teams collaborate to set up a simple, smooth, regular data reconciliation process to ensure community members are honored.

6

Collaboration with ODHS Champions

Champions have proven to be invaluable partners in supporting the recruitment and retention of resource families. With increased access to data through the Gap Analysis and Home Provider reports, Every Child aims to strengthen its collaboration further, not only in recruiting families, but also in providing ongoing support throughout their certification and fostering journey.

RECOMMENDATION: Every Child proposes organizing opportunities to continue to strengthen the intentional partnership between Every Child and Champions, focusing on better support for families throughout their certification and fostering experience.