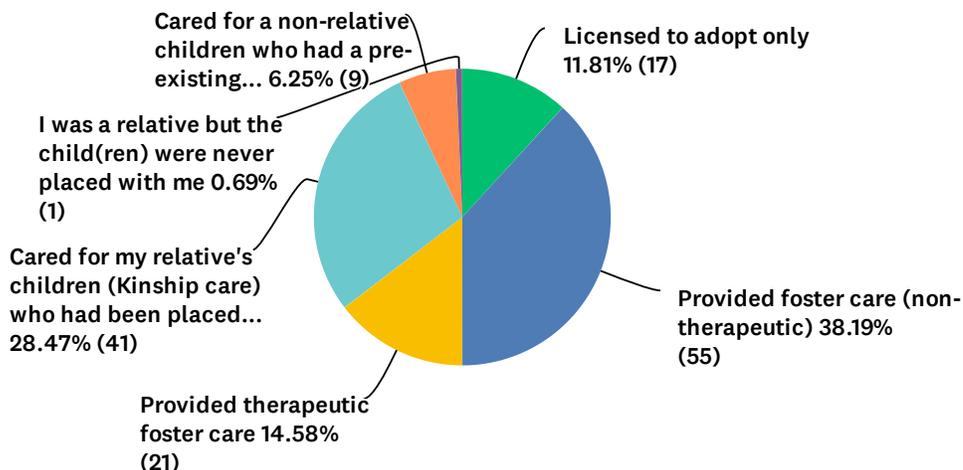


Q1 What was your alternative caregiver role?

Answered: 144 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Licensed to adopt only	11.81%	17
Provided foster care (non-therapeutic)	38.19%	55
Provided therapeutic foster care	14.58%	21
Cared for my relative's children (Kinship care) who had been placed with me by DHHS	28.47%	41
Cared for a non-relative children who had a pre-existing relationship with me (Fictive Kin)	6.25%	9
I was a relative but the child(ren) were never placed with me	0.69%	1
TOTAL		144

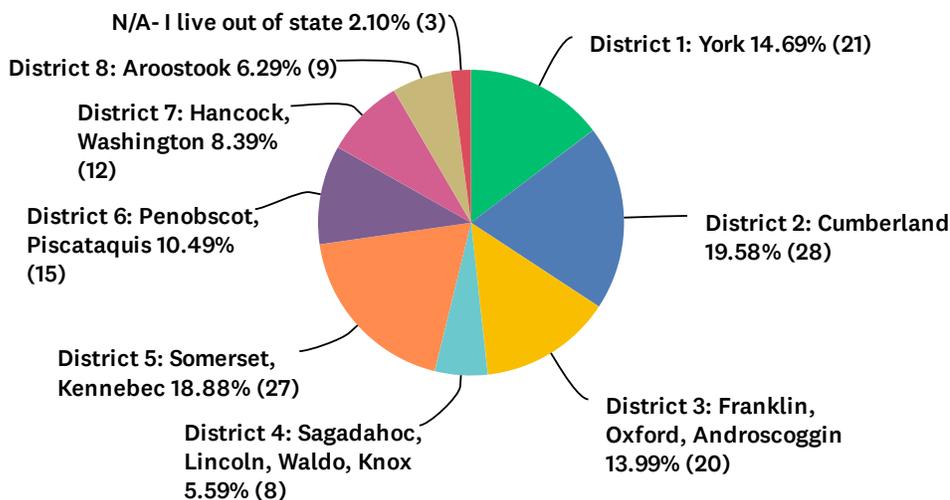
#	OTHER (PLEASE SPECIFY)	DATE
1	I did kinship then became foster parent	3/29/2022 5:37 PM
2	I also provided therapeutic care	3/29/2022 4:11 PM
3	cared for my grandson who needed to be placed somewhere other than home	1/17/2022 10:31 PM
4	Also fostered & adopted a child that wasn't fictive kin	9/30/2021 6:41 PM
5	We mostly wanted to help provide respite care	9/30/2021 2:30 PM
6	Adopted 2 grandchildren	9/30/2021 6:03 AM
7	And we did therapeutic for a short time as well.	9/30/2021 2:27 AM
8	The children are my boyfriend grandchildren..	8/18/2021 1:39 PM
9	Also did respite	7/9/2021 5:30 PM
10	We have also been licensed to provide therapeutic foster care during our time as foster parents	7/6/2021 11:55 AM
11	Kinship to adoption	7/3/2021 8:59 AM
12	Reg foster care, kinship, respite as well.	12/2/2020 8:34 PM

Resource Family Exit Survey

13	Then adopted	10/7/2020 7:57 PM
14	Fostered then adopted him	8/27/2020 4:58 PM
15	We also found out one of our girls was a close realative. DHHS moved her anyway. And did not allow any contact moving forward.	8/17/2020 4:58 PM
16	Also adopted our three placements	6/8/2020 7:15 AM
17	We are still doing foster care I believe.	6/8/2020 6:54 AM
18	I have permanent custody of grandchild.	4/20/2020 7:46 PM
19	We provided non-therapeutic care to foster children, but children who needed therapeutic care were placed in our home. We also were fostering to adopt, if appropriate. During our time, we adopted 2 of our 4 foster children.	4/15/2020 3:09 PM
20	Adoption home too	1/16/2020 8:48 AM
21	Followed by adoption	1/15/2020 9:10 AM
22	Foster to adopt	1/7/2020 4:44 PM
23	I was a therapeutic foster care provider for my two grandsons whom I've adopted.	1/6/2020 7:38 AM

Q2 What County do you live in?

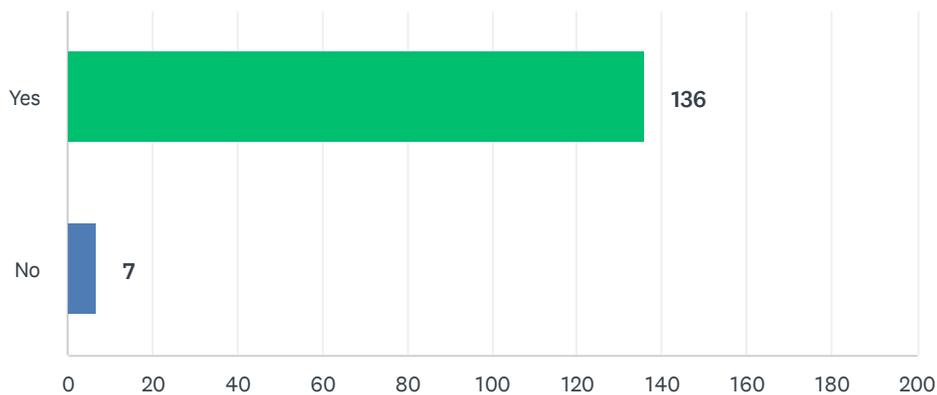
Answered: 143 Skipped: 1



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
District 1: York	14.69%	21
District 2: Cumberland	19.58%	28
District 3: Franklin, Oxford, Androscoggin	13.99%	20
District 4: Sagadahoc, Lincoln, Waldo, Knox	5.59%	8
District 5: Somerset, Kennebec	18.88%	27
District 6: Penobscot, Piscataquis	10.49%	15
District 7: Hancock, Washington	8.39%	12
District 8: Aroostook	6.29%	9
N/A- I live out of state	2.10%	3
TOTAL		143

**Q3 While you were licensed-did you care for children in DHHS custody?
(We ask this because sometimes people get licensed but don't end up of
caring for a child in DHHS custody.)**

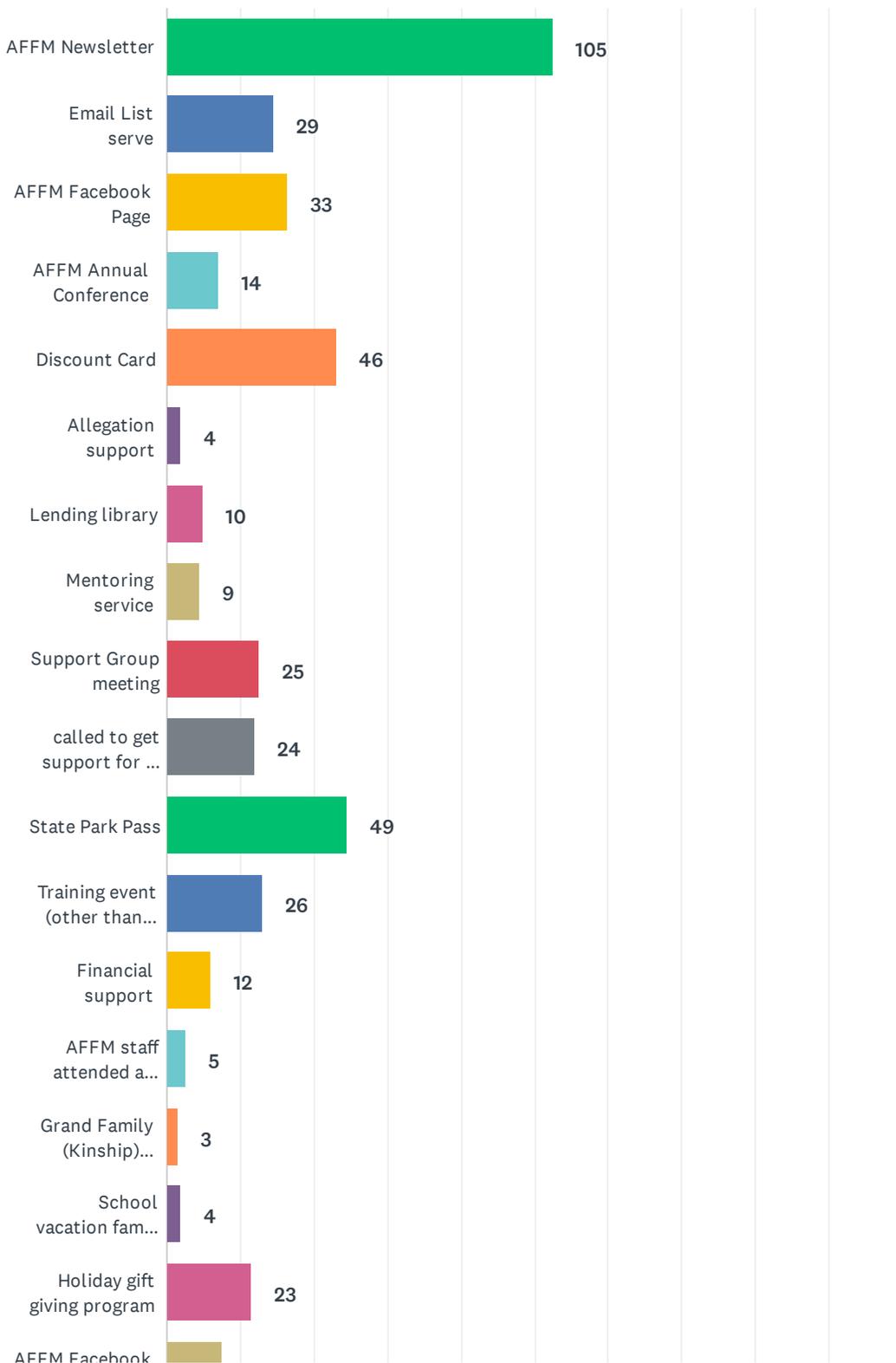
Answered: 143 Skipped: 1



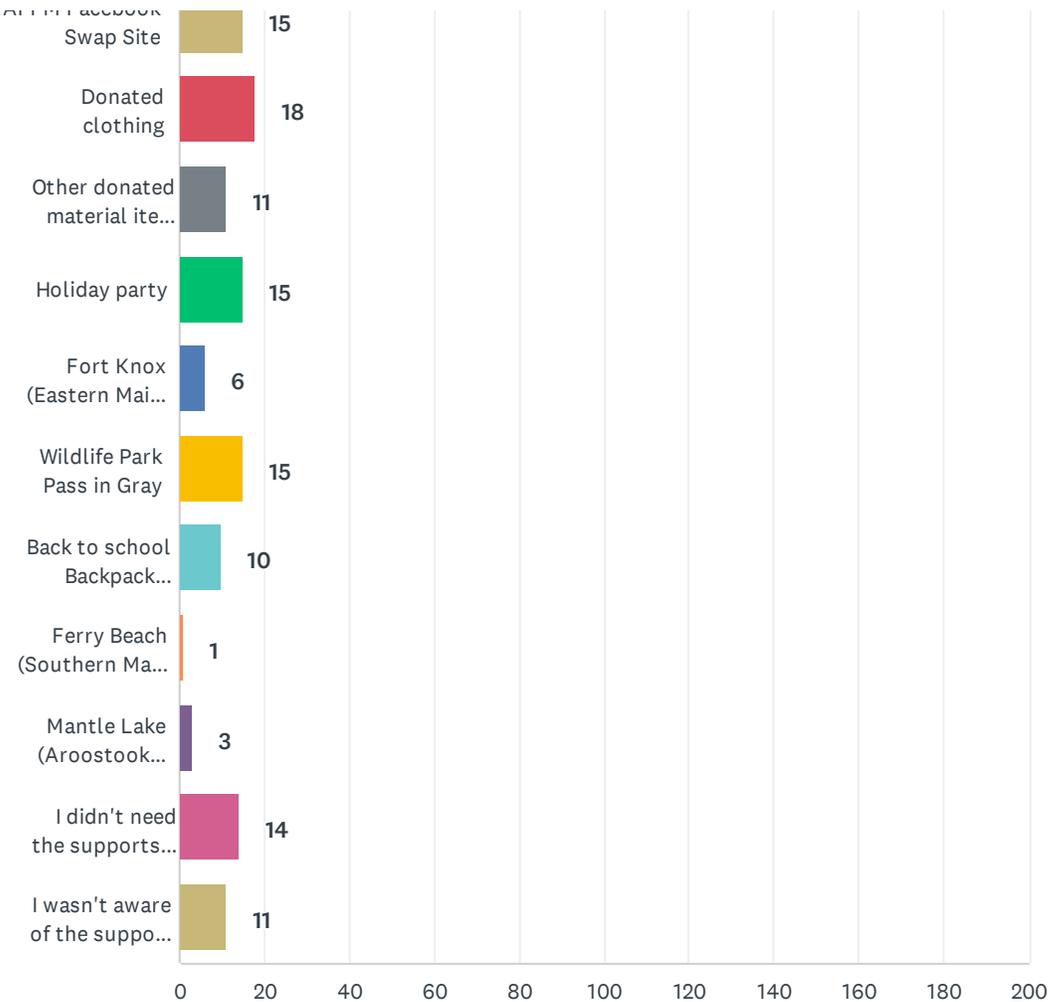
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Yes	95.10% 136
No	4.90% 7
TOTAL	143

Q4 Adoptive and Foster Families of Maine and the Kinship Program (AFFM) offers a network of supports. Please check all the supports you have used or took part in at least once in the past year.

Answered: 130 Skipped: 14



Resource Family Exit Survey



Resource Family Exit Survey

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
AFFM Newsletter	80.77%	105
Email List serve	22.31%	29
AFFM Facebook Page	25.38%	33
AFFM Annual Conference	10.77%	14
Discount Card	35.38%	46
Allegation support	3.08%	4
Lending library	7.69%	10
Mentoring service	6.92%	9
Support Group meeting	19.23%	25
called to get support for a specific situation	18.46%	24
State Park Pass	37.69%	49
Training event (other than annual conference)	20.00%	26
Financial support	9.23%	12
AFFM staff attended a meeting with you	3.85%	5
Grand Family (Kinship) family event	2.31%	3
School vacation family activity	3.08%	4
Holiday gift giving program	17.69%	23
AFFM Facebook Swap Site	11.54%	15
Donated clothing	13.85%	18
Other donated material items (household goods, etc.)	8.46%	11
Holiday party	11.54%	15
Fort Knox (Eastern Maine resource family appreciation event)	4.62%	6
Wildlife Park Pass in Gray	11.54%	15
Back to school Backpack Program	7.69%	10
Ferry Beach (Southern Maine Resource Family Appreciation event)	0.77%	1
Mantle Lake (Aroostook County Resource Family Appreciation event)	2.31%	3
I didn't need the supports of Adoptive and Foster Families of Maine	10.77%	14
I wasn't aware of the supports that AFFM provided	8.46%	11
Total Respondents: 130		

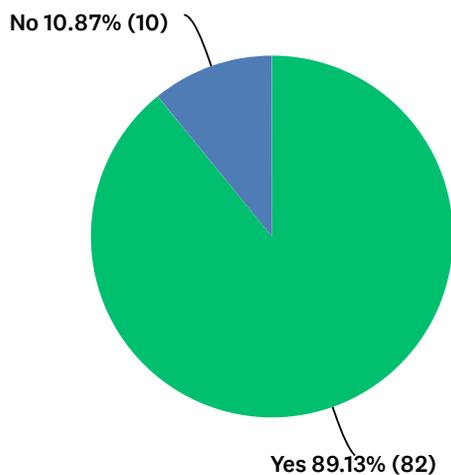
#	OTHER (PLEASE SPECIFY)	DATE
1	I haven't been a foster parent for a few years now, answers are marked for when I was a foster parent	3/29/2022 4:13 PM
2	I wasn't aware of all of the support.. or forgot of all they can do.	8/18/2021 1:41 PM

Resource Family Exit Survey

3	None in the past year. Didn't renew my license when it expired in 2017.	7/22/2021 5:14 PM
4	bowling	12/9/2020 9:43 PM
5	None	12/2/2020 8:36 PM
6	We used many other AFFM supports when we were licensed.	8/17/2020 5:01 PM
7	wasn't a foster care giver in the last year	4/16/2020 12:16 PM

Q5 Overall, do you feel Adoptive and Foster Families of Maine & the Kinship Program's (AFFM) services supported your foster care experience?

Answered: 130 Skipped: 14

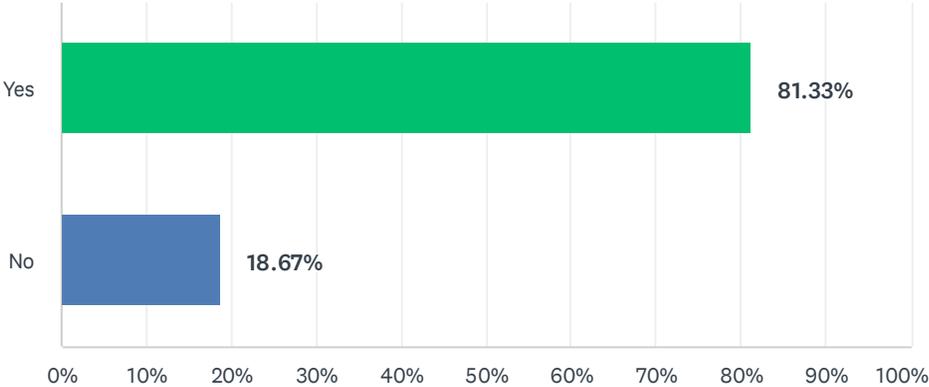


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	89.13%	82
No	10.87%	10
TOTAL		92

#	BRIEFLY TELL US WHY YOU FEEL THIS WAY. (OPTIONAL)	DATE
1	I feel the AFFM could do a lot more around advocating for system changes and for more kind treatment of foster families.	6/8/2020 7:16 AM
2	Everybody in the Orono office were amazing, especially [REDACTED] (my mentor) and [REDACTED]. My calls and concerns were always taken seriously. One time [REDACTED] even left to watch some of my kiddos while I went to the hospital with another for a crisis matter.	5/6/2020 11:32 AM
3	The available services seemed fine, but haven't foster since 2017	4/16/2020 12:16 PM
4	Did not really access when children were younger. The park pass, however, was invaluable. It made getting out to beautiful places possible. Thank you.	4/15/2020 8:09 AM
5	[REDACTED] feel AFFM is a great support, we just didn't happen to have need of services during the short time the child was with us.	1/15/2020 9:14 AM
6	AFFM is a great resource for lots of reasons, but I didn't really feel connected (the newsletter was great but more of a detached experience).	1/6/2020 1:47 PM
7	Very helpful	1/6/2020 7:39 AM

Q6 Do you feel that the services provided by AFFM enhanced your ability to care for the youth in your home?

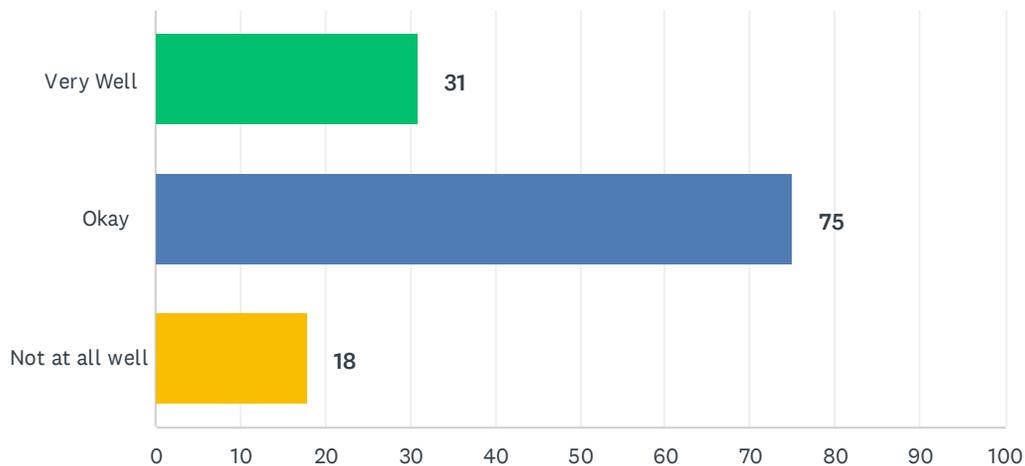
Answered: 106 Skipped: 38



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	81.33%	61
No	18.67%	14
TOTAL		75

Q7 How well did the pre-licensing training prepare you for your role as a foster parent or kinship provider?

Answered: 124 Skipped: 20



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Very Well	25.00%	31
Okay	60.48%	75
Not at all well	14.52%	18
TOTAL		124

Q8 What did you like most about the pre service training? (Optional)

Answered: 43 Skipped: 101

#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	I liked the framings . I always enjoyed meet other foster parents and earning things	3/29/2022 5:52 PM
2	Hearing from the kids who aged out of the system	3/29/2022 4:06 PM
3	It was very informative and I felt that biological parents should get same training before they get their kids back.	2/24/2022 10:49 PM
4	did not participate because he was already in our care	1/17/2022 10:36 PM
5	They answered any questions I had	1/17/2022 10:55 AM
6	Did not receive training prior to placement	1/17/2022 7:05 AM
7	Well, that was a very long time ago but it prepared me for all the things that happened over the years.	9/30/2021 2:29 AM
8	Hearing from past foster parents and their kids.	9/29/2021 9:15 PM
9	Learning that there are resources out to help people	8/23/2021 8:32 PM
10	All the paperwork in one place	8/19/2021 12:22 PM
11	Did not have	8/18/2021 3:57 PM
12	I don't quite remember the training.	8/18/2021 1:43 PM
13	Meeting foster parents and foster youth	8/17/2021 4:43 PM
14	Meeting with other families.	8/15/2021 11:04 AM
15	Enjoyed hearing from former foster kids and former foster parents on their experiences.	8/15/2021 9:09 AM
16	It was eye-opening at to the potential situations we would be dealing with and recommendations as to how to handle them.	8/15/2021 8:15 AM
17	the teachers	7/14/2021 3:08 PM
18	Meeting other foster parents	7/9/2021 5:34 PM
19	It was personal and interactive as opposed to a lecture	7/3/2021 2:49 PM
20	Meeting other kin family going through the same process. Hearing their stories.	6/14/2021 8:39 AM
21	The foster kid panel and foster parent panel.	1/11/2021 5:28 PM
22	Very Educational	1/9/2021 5:54 PM
23	Hearing from kids who grew up in foster care and Fostercare parents. Meeting other Fostercare parents	1/9/2021 7:47 AM
24	I like the speaker panels	1/8/2021 5:31 PM
25	real life experiences & telling us that even though it looks bad it has to meet a certain level legally for dhhs to act	12/9/2020 9:48 PM
26	My training was done in the state of Georgia. I liked the ability to train on weekends.	12/3/2020 8:26 AM
27	Hearing stories from other people made us realize that we were not the only ones in this situation	12/2/2020 5:19 PM
28		10/11/2020 3:37 PM

Resource Family Exit Survey

29	The best part for me was meeting with youth in foster care who participated in a panel discussion at the end of the training.	9/22/2020 11:47 AM
30	It was short	8/24/2020 1:40 PM
31	Chance to interact with other families	6/8/2020 7:17 AM
32	it put me in touch with other kinship/foster families in my area	6/5/2020 6:44 AM
33	I liked having a reference book to look back over, and to make connections with other foster families. Lastly the Foster Parent panel was very helpful.	5/6/2020 11:52 AM
34	Very comfortable but mostly the other families were in the same situation so the support was positive	4/22/2020 12:14 PM
35	knowing there was a network of support	4/16/2020 12:17 PM
36	Group activities to educate on certain scenarios.	4/15/2020 10:15 AM
37	I did not have or remember preservice training.	4/15/2020 9:11 AM
38	Eye opening. I felt fearful for the children that would be placed with some of the parents in my group. They really did not seem to understand what their motivation was and worried for the children. To me, attachment issues and the impact of trauma on brain development was not covered at all or superficially and was the biggest struggle the children had. Attachment and brain development needs to be brought into training of families and staff. No one seemed to have a clue about this area and early intervention is so important.	4/15/2020 8:17 AM
39	See other foster families and hear their stories	1/16/2020 8:51 AM
40	We didn't have pre service training. Child was placed with us on emergency approval before we did the training and became licensed.	1/15/2020 9:15 AM
41	Input and questions from other potential foster families, resource pages for my area	1/6/2020 1:49 PM
42	Panels	1/6/2020 11:09 AM
43	Though we didnt understand everything during training it proved useful as we had several children in our care- behavioral issues were consistent with training and we were able to see things I dont think we would have without it.	1/6/2020 9:16 AM

Q9 If you could make a change to the pre service training, what would you change? (Optional)

Answered: 45 Skipped: 99

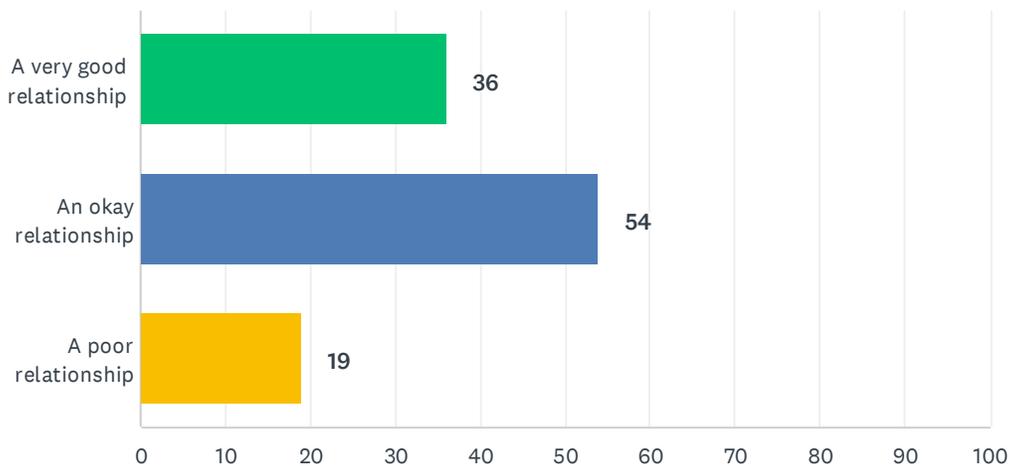
#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	Be more real, about the roller coaster that we are about to experience	3/29/2022 7:01 PM
2	more focus on trauma and TBRI	3/29/2022 5:19 PM
3	Make similar training available for bio parents or whomever will be adopting or legal guardian	2/24/2022 10:49 PM
4	How to deal with the child's parents	1/17/2022 10:55 AM
5	Na	1/17/2022 7:05 AM
6	Preparing us for the fact that DHHS treated us like daycare providers. Our opinions and information were often ignored as the focus was helping the bio parents reunify even though everyone said "they won't get this child back".	9/30/2021 6:44 PM
7	Follow up after training	9/30/2021 2:33 PM
8	I'm not even sure I know what the new training looks like. I first got licensed 8 years ago.	9/30/2021 2:29 AM
9	More real, the trauma and time. The reasons for behavior chart and how parents can choose different responses to get better results. I got it from a counselor a year into the process. Would have been great to have earlier.	9/29/2021 9:15 PM
10	More time spent on connecting discipline.	8/19/2021 12:22 PM
11	Not sure	8/18/2021 1:43 PM
12	info/discussion on understanding of the limits of the system, and creation of a positive culture of resource parents (instead of us vs. them).	8/17/2021 4:43 PM
13	Should inform people that visitation is way harder on the kids than you think it would be. Also, dhhs does not handle paperwork in a timely fasion and young children can often not have shots or see a provider for months due to the lack of sign-off. More hands on knowledge of how DHHS works with placements (like say it is a placement for one month but then the child stays for over half a hear while seperated from their siblings)	8/16/2021 9:57 AM
14	They need to be more real about what actually happens.	8/15/2021 9:33 AM
15	Much of the training was drawn out...could have been shortened by a couple of days if everything were more focused and streamlined. Would have liked to learn more from the former foster kids and parents. Didn't provide the knowledge of how the foster care system really works.	8/15/2021 9:09 AM
16	Longer training that extended during placement	8/15/2021 8:05 AM
17	The pre service training is not at all an accurate depiction of what ACTUALLY happens as a resource parent. It needs to be more honest and real.	8/15/2021 7:32 AM
18	It was so long ago, I can't really recall any training other than by dhhs.	7/22/2021 5:15 PM
19	nothing love it	7/14/2021 3:08 PM
20	Some kind of prep for the fact that no one is on the same page,: about what I needed to do about what we couldn't do about what our house could be like or couldn't be like.	7/9/2021 5:34 PM
21	None	7/3/2021 2:49 PM
22	Learning about more supports available for behavioral issues that may arise with children. I learned briefly about them during training, but felt they could be more thorough.	7/3/2021 10:24 AM
23	I did the in class and zoom and both were great. No changes.	6/14/2021 8:39 AM

Resource Family Exit Survey

24	Online training	1/9/2021 7:47 AM
25	more about services avail: meetings,support,mileage,WIC,finan if needed,website for clothing & furn,who to cont for what,what we need to do ie meet w/case worker monthly,child visits,etc.....	12/9/2020 9:48 PM
26	Don't push the idea that "all these kids need is love and a stable home." More often they need so much more than that, sometimes they never heal. When the idea is pushed that all these kids need is love, but then they still don't heal/succeed, we end up blaming ourselves because maybe we didn't love enough or try hard enough.	12/3/2020 9:28 AM
27	I would have more foster parents speak at the training meetings.	12/3/2020 8:26 AM
28	It seemed like a lot of information was given to us all at once. A follow up from one person over a few months would have been helpful	12/2/2020 5:19 PM
29	I know it's gotten shorter over the years - it really is important that folks know what they're signing up for.	10/11/2020 3:37 PM
30	Had to travel a long way to attend should have more locations available	10/8/2020 12:10 AM
31	More availability different hours or weekend hours. More options in York County	10/7/2020 7:59 PM
32	The panel discussion with foster parents. The session I attended quickly turned into hearing horror stories rather than an opportunity to ask questions. The trainers should have better control over the direction of the panel discussions.	9/22/2020 11:47 AM
33	They need to be more educated on process differences with tribal children	8/24/2020 1:40 PM
34	The trenches. How to navigate dealing with the state and hostile birth parents.	8/17/2020 5:02 PM
35	Be more real. The system isn't kind to anyone involved, esp. to the foster families.	6/8/2020 7:17 AM
36	We think there needs to be more training on transracial placements/adoptions.	6/7/2020 4:37 PM
37	more information on kinship/guardianship rules, regulations, responsibilities	6/5/2020 6:44 AM
38	I think it needs change, but I am unsure of suggestions for how to.	5/6/2020 11:52 AM
39	Not being trained that birth parents want to work with you. Our experience they did not want to work with us. The training videos were rose colored glasses.	4/15/2020 9:21 AM
40	Nancy Thomas in Colorado has excellent teaching tools for parenting children with early trauma and attachment issues. I would make her resources available to families and use her models for training staff. We found her ourselves and much later. Would have been great to have had her strategies in place from beginning. My children, all children would benefit.	4/15/2020 8:17 AM
41	Be more honest about what our rights are with parents! Some parents are bullies and DHHS is not always supportive or forthcoming about what our rights are	1/16/2020 8:51 AM
42	People (participants and trainers) would show up on time and more professional.	1/15/2020 8:17 AM
43	Train everyone therapeutically	1/13/2020 9:24 AM
44	Dedicate a portion of the teaching to the day to day tasks as a foster parent;required administrative appointment scheduling responsibilities; the variety of bio family reactions to you as a foster parent and DHHS role in mediating family face to face meetings with bio family; emotional stages of attachment and loss not only from the foster child's perspective but the foster family's bonding/loss process that comes with each placement.	1/7/2020 4:59 PM
45	That foster parents should be more equipped for the fight that many birth families give. The up and down week to week challenges during reunification and the honest length of time DHHS gives to birth parents. It becomes very confusing and unnecessarily emotional when you're caring for a child and you don't understand the process or reasons.	1/6/2020 9:16 AM

Q10 Within the last year, how would you rate your relationship with your licensing worker?

Answered: 109 Skipped: 35



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
A very good relationship	33.03%	36
An okay relationship	49.54%	54
A poor relationship	17.43%	19
TOTAL		109

Q11 What did you like most about your relationship with the DHHS licensing worker? (Optional)

Answered: 43 Skipped: 101

#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	I haven't been a foster parent in like 4/5 years. I really wish I could get it back. I miss it	3/29/2022 6:01 PM
2	They were very helpful	3/29/2022 4:17 PM
3	In the past year I only had one encounter with my licensing worker with a question; she answered and I felt I would miss her. I enjoyed our talks. She was always so helpful. Making the process doable for me. I'm not good with lots of questions and paperwork but with her help I found I could do it without a problem.	2/24/2022 10:55 PM
4	Kind and compassionate	1/17/2022 7:10 AM
5	I only had minimal contact with the worker she inspected my home and did the paperwork in a timely manor. I had an allegation of a licensing violation which I did an interview with her supervisor and was totally cleared of. The licensing worker gave me an ultimatum of either go through the investigation or hand in my license. I told her I was done and would turn in my license. I then called the supervisor and did the interview of which I was cleared and asked to just take a break and not hand in my license.	10/12/2021 4:58 PM
6	We have not had a case worker in years. We are post adoptive former foster parent s	9/30/2021 6:50 PM
7	Helped to make sure we were able to help kids that we were qualified to help. We were asked a few times help with kids that really needed therapeutic care.	9/30/2021 2:44 PM
8	She cared	9/30/2021 9:58 AM
9	Well I mostly have known her as a friend. I still work with her in other roles in the community. We stopped taking placements after our daughter was adopted 2 years ago.	9/30/2021 2:32 AM
10	She didn't think it was possible to license me quickly. We both worked to get it DONE!	9/29/2021 9:32 PM
11	She was understanding, able to answer questions, and had been a social worker previously so able to answer questions when social worker wasn't available.	8/23/2021 8:35 PM
12	Only meet a few times so wasn't aware that we should have a relationship	8/18/2021 1:57 PM
13	She was easier to get a hold of another workers. Should reply back to me when I couldn't get a hold of anyone else.	8/18/2021 9:14 AM
14	kind, friendly	8/17/2021 4:45 PM
15	She was the only foster care/adoptive worker that was supportive and helpful when I had questions.	8/15/2021 9:46 AM
16	██████ had always been incredible. Always follows through and always is willing to listen and find a solution.	8/15/2021 9:35 AM
17	He was nice	8/15/2021 8:07 AM
18	She was prompt in getting back to me when I had questions.	8/15/2021 7:36 AM
19	I stopped working as a foster parent due to poor case workers, that when reported for neglect of duty, lied and tried to make me look bad. Awful experiences.	7/22/2021 5:24 PM
20	loved most of them that toke the time to explain the situation. But since covid we have not had any children	7/14/2021 3:14 PM
21	They were civil	7/9/2021 5:47 PM
22	Our licensing worker was not very involved with our family. She did not reach out and this last	7/6/2021 12:03 PM

Resource Family Exit Survey

	time our license was months overdue.	
23	I don't know who my licensing worker was	7/3/2021 3:47 PM
24	Our workers we understanding, caring, professional and everything we needed during a difficult time.	7/3/2021 9:03 AM
25	Very friendly and supportive to my needs and questions.	6/14/2021 8:41 AM
26	We only did it for 2 years so don't have a relationship now. I don't remember who was who and different roles. It's quite confusing.	1/9/2021 8:12 AM
27	Kind, efficient, respectful, professional	1/9/2021 7:59 AM
28	No contact x 4 years	1/9/2021 7:31 AM
29	All the ladies i met were very nice.	1/8/2021 5:41 PM
30	very good listener,understanding,you don't feel she will lie,she understands what your saying when explaining life experiences	12/9/2020 9:57 PM
31	All the Maine dhhs workers were wonderful, caring, and easy to work with.	12/3/2020 8:31 AM
32	Everything was done fairly quickly because I had been licensed previously.	10/11/2020 3:43 PM
33	She was communicative by phone.	9/22/2020 11:55 AM
34	Had no contact	8/24/2020 1:46 PM
35	I say poor because we really heard nothing from the liceneisng worker until jsut before our licensen was due for renewal. They should be doing active outreach to families who are making this decision early and often.	6/8/2020 7:21 AM
36	She was very informative always accessible Returned calls within a few days very professional while being friendly too	4/22/2020 12:24 PM
37	She was always in contact and was professional. She cared about the children	4/15/2020 9:29 AM
38	I misunderstood their role. I thought they would be supporting me/children emotionally through process. They served as an advocate more than, say, social worker. They were great walking us through legal process but did not have much to offer by way of support emotionally. We had a lot to do on our own while we were parenting the children.	4/15/2020 8:22 AM
39	Helpful to get licensed! Friendly	1/16/2020 8:53 AM
40	We only met/spoke to he once for the home inspection/interview. As it was an emerged placement everything was rushed. Almost immediately after our full license came through was when DHHS restructured and we were assigned a different licensing worker who we never actually had any direct communication with.	1/15/2020 9:28 AM
41	We enjoyed when [REDACTED] was the licensing worker as she was very down to earth and reasonable. I have not had children in my care for the last year even though my license was active so I haven't had any contact with the current licensing worker.	1/15/2020 8:20 AM
42	helpful communication	1/6/2020 1:58 PM
43	They typically speak encouragingly good attitude and I believe they mean to try to do the things they say they will.	1/6/2020 9:27 AM

Q12 What if anything could have helped improve your relationship with the DHHS licensing worker? (Optional)

Answered: 29 Skipped: 115

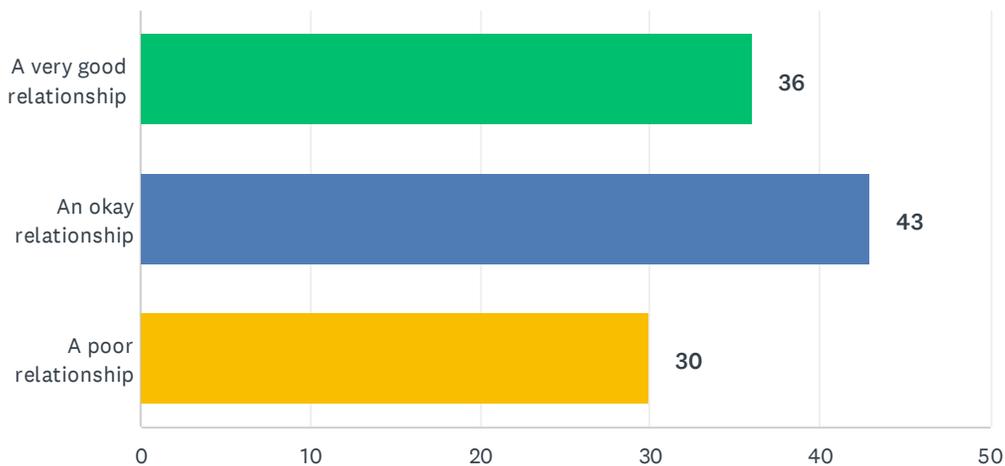
#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	I didn't feel calls or correspondence were returned in a timely manner.	3/29/2022 4:12 PM
2	1. more truthful answers 2. any answers. She always had to check with her supervisor and then was still not satisfied with their answer	1/17/2022 10:48 PM
3	When false allegations were made they didn't investigate, just assumed allegations were true. Threatened me, several times over these allegations.	10/17/2021 8:49 PM
4	There should be more support for foster parents spend 24/7 with these kids while trying to balance their own families, foster children and bio families. There should be some kind of middle ground with spite allegations and not an ultimatum of either go through the investigation or hand in your license. The license worker was very professional and was only doing her job. The supervisor told me they are prepared to start staying with children in hotels because so many foster parents are turning in their license's for many reasons.	10/12/2021 4:58 PM
5	We were licensed after fictive kin placement	9/30/2021 6:50 PM
6	Follow up...however we understand they are way overworked and really don't have the time for relationship building for folks without kids.	9/30/2021 2:44 PM
7	Due to Covid it was hard to connect and schedule needed meetings	9/30/2021 8:14 AM
8	Faith that we could do it from the beginning. It was a little discouraging to tell me 4 times it wasn't going to happen.	9/29/2021 9:32 PM
9	A case worker who visited the child like she was supposed to, one that cared when a guardian ad litem never saw the child in months nor replied to any messages, and one who didn't create false reports.	7/22/2021 5:24 PM
10	if they gave more phone # so that someone could asker ? when needed	7/14/2021 3:14 PM
11	Some clear answers, I know they ant help though because the entire system is messed up.	7/9/2021 5:47 PM
12	Communication. We feel that licensing workers should check in with families at least once a year.	7/6/2021 12:03 PM
13	He/she could have contacted me to introduce themselves.	7/3/2021 3:47 PM
14	Nothing. She is wonderful.	6/14/2021 8:41 AM
15	- Consistency. We had different caseworks throughout the experience.	1/10/2021 12:32 PM
16	If She was An Honest Worker. She was telling the girls totally different to what she was telling us. It was hard enough without [REDACTED] doing this. There was enough trauma without the extra lies.	1/9/2021 6:02 PM
17	We. Had three different workers over a period of 4 years. The first left on maternity and did not return. The second [REDACTED] was less than helpful. The third [REDACTED] was amazing. Transitioning from one to another was difficult but the end result was good.	1/9/2021 7:59 AM
18	nothing	12/3/2020 8:31 AM
19	Went through 3 workers. Finally the last one was awesome!	10/7/2020 8:01 PM
20	Lateness was very problematic for us. It would be helpful if workers were prompt and stuck to their schedules for visiting homes. I was often left waiting 45 minutes or more for the worker to arrive.	9/22/2020 11:55 AM
21	More communication at other times than just during the licensing process	8/20/2020 10:25 PM

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22	Do not understand why we got so few calls.	8/17/2020 6:11 PM
23	See above.	6/8/2020 7:21 AM
24	i have had no contact with DHHS since being made a guardian	6/5/2020 6:45 AM
25	Being allowed to openly discuss issues indirectly affecting the children.	4/15/2020 9:29 AM
26	See other comments.	4/15/2020 8:22 AM
27	Sometimes was hard to get ahold of - but not really anything	1/16/2020 8:53 AM
28	If they had children of their own or were therapeutically trained.	1/13/2020 9:27 AM
29	Can't think of anything	1/6/2020 1:58 PM

Q13 Within the past year, how would you rate your relationship with the child(ren)'s DHHS caseworker?

Answered: 109 Skipped: 35



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
A very good relationship	33.03%	36
An okay relationship	39.45%	43
A poor relationship	27.52%	30
TOTAL		109

Q14 What did you like most about your relationship with the child(ren)'s case worker? (Optional)

Answered: 52 Skipped: 92

#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	When I was a foster parent I had awesome relationship with my worker's I told them everything I didn't keep anything from them	3/29/2022 6:01 PM
2	We have been out of fostering for a few years but the children's case worker we had with the last placement was not helpful, hard to get ahold of, was not caring or understanding. It made for bad communication between everyone.	3/29/2022 4:17 PM
3	We worked with the port and office and they always answered calls or emails right away.	3/29/2022 4:12 PM
4	Again no case worker past year. Last year we had one. She was very respectful and helpful	2/24/2022 10:55 PM
5	child's case worker was the same as the licensing worker.	1/17/2022 10:48 PM
6	She was kind	1/17/2022 7:10 AM
7	We had 3 caseworkers. Seems that as soon as a caseworker was familiar with the case there would be a new one and we would have to start all over.	10/12/2021 4:58 PM
8	nothing they change too often	10/6/2021 3:47 PM
9	We had one good case worker	9/30/2021 6:50 PM
10	No relationship	9/30/2021 2:44 PM
11	We don't have a caseworker. So my only option was to select okay.	9/30/2021 2:32 AM
12	She was easy once she knew our child was in good care.	9/29/2021 9:32 PM
13	Understanding that we worked full time and weren't available at the drop of a hat.	8/23/2021 8:35 PM
14	He trusted us and was very positive and affirming.	8/19/2021 12:23 PM
15	We had a adoption worker this past year and the three we had were so much better then the other caseworker..	8/18/2021 1:57 PM
16	They are genuine in their care for kids. You're doing their best an impossible situation.	8/18/2021 9:14 AM
17	honest, realistic, ability to listen/hear our concerns	8/17/2021 4:45 PM
18	I worked with several foster or adoptive case workers over the years. Each time, I felt their focus was on what was easiest for them. They weren't interested in supporting you once a child was in your home. If it was a potential adoptive placement, then you weren't given the full story of the child's needs. Here's how their focus priority should have been: 1. foster/adoptive child 2. foster/adoptive parents 3. child's bio family (if applicable) 4. case workers Here's how their focus priority actually was: 1. case workers I've heard case workers say how they care about the kids in their care and the foster families but their actions never backed up what they would say. I witnessed many times examples of how they don't care about the kids in their care. They're just numbers to them that they're trying to dump off as quickly as possible to anyone who will take them. It's no wonder why Maine is the 3rd worst state in the US on length of time kids are in foster care. If case workers focused on correct placements instead of any placement and if they focused on full disclosure to the potential adoptive families, kids that are free to be adopted would have a much higher chance of being adopted. It's no wonder the number of foster families continues to decline in Maine year after year. It's incredibly frustrating to go through the same experience over and over again....whether you're fostering or trying to adopt. The culture has to change.	8/15/2021 9:46 AM
19	This is the first case where for most of the time (except for when a supervisor took over case for short period of time) with our consistent worker I felt supported and that they cared about	8/15/2021 9:35 AM

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	my kiddo. We had an incredible foster worker and an even better adoption case worker.	
20	Clearly had the child's welfare paramount.	8/15/2021 8:16 AM
21	Absolutely nothing.	8/15/2021 7:36 AM
22	I've had no relationship with dhhs since I ended my license. More than a decade with them, where they begged me to take more kids beyond what my license was for, and then treated like a criminal because of case worker misreporting. Child, bio parents, case workers all have lawyers paid for by the state. But foster parents need to pay out of pocket to hire a lawyer and deal with the dhhs shortcomings. Never again.	7/22/2021 5:24 PM
23	Have not foster in the past year	7/14/2021 3:14 PM
24	The case workers I worked, in 2015 and 2016 with were overwhelmed and way too busy to provide timely answers or support for many of my questions or needs. I was expected to act as their legal gaurdian but told I was not and could not sign anything but then told to sign things like for school. Nothing was clear. I was always confused and always worried I was going to get in trouble for doing or not doing something.	7/9/2021 5:47 PM
25	She kept us connected to our granddaughters, instead of outside placement	7/8/2021 11:18 AM
26	The case worker that we had prior to moving to the adoption unit was wonderful. When we changed to an adoption case worker communication was poor, and we felt like she didn't have time for our family.	7/6/2021 12:03 PM
27	She was very responsive	7/3/2021 3:47 PM
28	Very friendly and supportive of mine and my granddaughters needs.	6/14/2021 8:41 AM
29	she was laid back, really cared about the child's well being, cared about how we were doing and always asking if we needed anything	5/16/2021 9:03 PM
30	Nothing she worked against Us!	1/9/2021 6:02 PM
31	I like her but n/a due to this having been 7 years ago	1/9/2021 8:12 AM
32	██████ responsiveness	1/9/2021 7:59 AM
33	Provided assistance when needed. Very personable	1/8/2021 5:41 PM
34	all of the case workers were very very good & great with children	12/9/2020 9:57 PM
35	They were all professional and caring and dedicated.	12/3/2020 8:31 AM
36	Not much. She came onetime got an extended visit then it was hard to communicate, then the case worker changed during Covid, then we had no contact with anyone.	12/2/2020 5:35 PM
37	This was my last case worker (who changed 3 times in the year and 3 months I had my foster daughter) - didn't really get to know them well.	10/11/2020 3:43 PM
38	Very knowledgeable very nice got things moving, kept in touch	10/7/2020 8:01 PM
39	The caseworker changed midway through. The first one was excellent. She was prompt, communicated clearly about what was happening, and made time to see our now son. She was a veteran in the field, which is rare to find.	9/22/2020 11:55 AM
40	Return calls, communication, be more informed, information not given to us due to their opinion of need to know etc	8/27/2020 3:44 PM
41	The guardianship worker was fine but the case worker was not	8/24/2020 1:46 PM
42	We haven't had any kids in the last year dir to well/water problems.	6/8/2020 6:57 AM
43	i have had no contact	6/5/2020 6:45 AM
44	She was well experienced.	6/4/2020 6:32 PM
45	██████ always got back to me. Our boy spent some time in the hospital she made sure all the paperwork was done in a timely manner. She seemed to understand that we were investing our life into these kiddos and she valued that.	5/6/2020 11:59 AM
46	Amazingly professional while relating to me in a positive way	4/22/2020 12:24 PM

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47	She was friendly and kind.	4/15/2020 9:29 AM
48	I could call anytime	1/16/2020 8:53 AM
49	She was very accessible and always responded quickly to messages. She was very supportive through the adoption process.	1/15/2020 9:28 AM
50	Willingness to follow up	1/7/2020 4:59 PM
51	[REDACTED] were very supportive of our foster child and of our family. They kept us updated about process, answered many questions, were very pleasant and helpful during visits to our home.	1/6/2020 1:58 PM
52	Very positive	1/6/2020 9:27 AM

Q15 If anything, what could have been done to help improve your relationship with the DHHS case worker? (Optional)

Answered: 47 Skipped: 97

#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	Unfortunately the last caseworker we worked with was visibly overwhelmed by the children's case and her overall caseload. It was difficult times to get a hold of her and also difficult to have things follow through with but when I did have contact with her she was always kind and professional. Unfortunately just overworked and burnt out.	3/29/2022 8:19 PM
2	Our contact with the Portland DHHS office was Much better (more professional, returned calls etc.) than our experience with the Biddeford office. I know Biddeford works inside Portland office, however very different experiences.	3/29/2022 4:12 PM
3	She acted as if she knew everything and I knew nothing. There was no give on her side. Everything was exactly by the book.	1/17/2022 10:48 PM
4	She didn't handle the placement very well. She allowed the children to have unlimited contact with their mom and that caused issues with my daughter and teenage grandchildren that were placed with me.	1/17/2022 7:10 AM
5	They should stop judging people by the money they have, or don't have. Threatening foster parents is disgusting. Affm was incredible and very supportive. That's where I got my support, not dhhs.	10/17/2021 8:49 PM
6	More communication and foster parents being included in the team. I felt like me as a foster parent my opinion did not matter. The foster parents know these kids better than any of the team but we as foster parents are not treated as we are even a part of the plan. We are told just what we have to do get these kids to visits, Dr. Appts, Counseling etc... Without any consideration of what the foster parent has going on with work or their own family you as a foster parent better be prepared to put your life and family on hold.	10/12/2021 4:58 PM
7	Our sons caseworker missed numerous deadlines, like filling for emergency removal, he did that 8 months after our son was emergency removed when DHHS called by police.	9/30/2021 6:50 PM
8	If she had actually ever been a parent. Everyone knows everything until they become a parent. I know how underpaid and over worked they are. They need more time to do their job well. She had to advocate for the messed up parent that was hard, we should have an advocate for us and a separate one for the parent.	9/29/2021 9:32 PM
9	That the same information we received was also given to biological parents.	8/23/2021 8:35 PM
10	To get in touch with me quicker then what was being done	8/18/2021 1:57 PM
11	Her be able to return phone calls quicker.	8/18/2021 9:14 AM
12	smaller caseload so she had more time for us!	8/17/2021 4:45 PM
13	Change the culture from the top down. Focus on kids first, then foster/adoptive families...then a distant third, the case workers. Find the right placements for the kids...support the foster/adoptive families. The statistics are showing that Maine is doing a very poor job so make some changes instead of doing the same thing.	8/15/2021 9:46 AM
14	Help to educate us and prepare us for the role we were stepping into	8/15/2021 8:07 AM
15	COMMUNICATION, HONESTY, Following through, accountability	8/15/2021 7:36 AM
16	Spoke up for me and helped guide me in the right direction so I wasnt bulldozed and my reputation ruined over false accusations.	7/22/2021 5:24 PM
17	Have not foster in the past year	7/14/2021 3:14 PM
18	A caseworker would need to have like only 5 cases at a time to even possibly do what is	7/9/2021 5:47 PM

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	actually their responsibility for their charges since the case worker was/is their legal gaurdian.	
19	I feel she was mis informed on mom and had her mind made up before knowing mom. I feel she could have been more open minded and found facts.	7/8/2021 11:18 AM
20	More communication, sincere check in's, sincere conversations. Just working to make families feel like what they are doing matters.	7/6/2021 12:03 PM
21	It was difficult having 3 different caseworkers in 8 months on my last child. Less turnover in Ellsworth DHHS is needed!	7/4/2021 3:21 PM
22	Nothing.	6/14/2021 8:41 AM
23	better communication. It was frustrating almost always being last to know about a FTM, or court date, or anything important. We have other children and always had to coordinate child care so we could attend these important meetings and we often would have very little notice.	5/16/2021 9:03 PM
24	Changed Workers totally.	1/9/2021 6:02 PM
25	If we had started with Nancy and stayed with her we would have gotten through the adoption process quicker.	1/9/2021 7:59 AM
26	Nothing	1/8/2021 5:41 PM
27	██████████(?) not sure of spelling & no longer w/dhhs was convinced she had the perfect family for my niece and because of something small in my boyfriends background that nobody else had a problem with, she didnt want my niece with us & did her best to keep her from us & we had to go to the umbudsman..this resulted in 5mos my niece being w/strangers & caused her undue stress	12/9/2020 9:57 PM
28	Some case workers were very young and just needed a little more life experience. They were all very good though.	12/3/2020 8:31 AM
29	Monthly calls, not emails. Monthly contact right up until the end. This last time we never even knew the ended until a month later when the mother told us.	12/2/2020 5:35 PM
30	They could have lied less. Provided any information that wasn't the opposite of the truth about my child.	10/14/2020 7:55 AM
31	Some consistency	10/11/2020 3:43 PM
32	We had several case workers during the reunification plan which did not provide for consistency. Furthermore it felt like the case workers (and their supervisors) had the birth parents interests more in mind than they did the children(s) best interests. It was not an experience that I would wish on an enemy - which I why I do not have many positive things to say about DHHS.	10/7/2020 8:03 PM
33	More training and better compensation for case workers would be helpful. Our second caseworker was unprofessional and had inaccurate information about our son's case. She also left her position within a month.	9/22/2020 11:55 AM
34	In the many years we provided foster care we have had very excellent caseworkers. It's just the last one we had worked with for a couple years did not meet the standards of care. She was very overstretched in her caseload.	8/27/2020 3:44 PM
35	She had no regard for my schedule. I'm a single dad and can not work around her schedule at the drop of a hat. The the temporary replacement with the parent was handled half-assed with no regard for me or the child.	8/24/2020 1:46 PM
36	Honesty. They need to be upfront with imformation	8/20/2020 10:25 PM
37	Caseworkers need to listen to foster parents.	8/17/2020 5:03 PM
38	In all cases we had the same caseworkers. We felt very frustrated that info was withheld, and that deals were going on behind the scenes without much - if any - input from us as the foster family.	6/8/2020 7:21 AM
39	i have had no contact	6/5/2020 6:45 AM
40	██████████ literally told me to stop calling her. She would take days at time more then a week to respond to my calls. We had some major crisis come up. I learned after that to screen	5/6/2020 11:59 AM

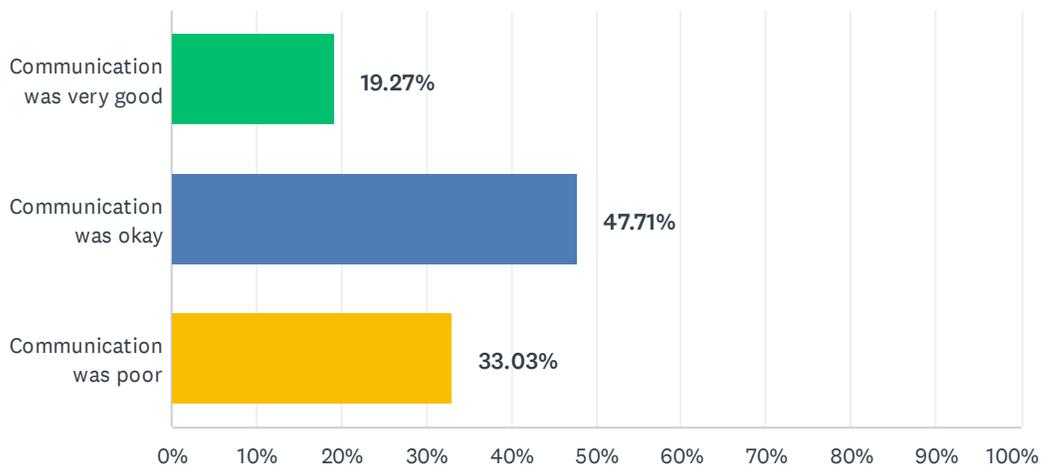
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which cw would be on the cases and at times I decided if I would take a child based on the cw overseeing the case.

41	Better communication, knowing when case worker is going on vacation/long weekend, better understanding of the foster parents' perspective and compassion regarding the foster parents feelings	4/15/2020 10:29 AM
42	She did not value my time or efforts.	4/15/2020 9:13 AM
43	Caseworkers need to be trauma trained	1/13/2020 9:27 AM
44	More open and honest communication	1/13/2020 6:39 AM
45	More transparency, follow through. Knowledge of our kiddos specific case.	1/6/2020 11:10 AM
46	I think these kids have so many people influencing them and it can become unproductive. I was upset to have a case worker offer a teen safe sex material when his issues were sexual assault on a younger sibling	1/6/2020 9:27 AM
47	Kinship is a very difficult situation .	1/6/2020 7:41 AM

Q16 Within the past year, how well did members of the child(ren)'s team communicate with each other?

Answered: 109 Skipped: 35



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Communication was very good	19.27%	21
Communication was okay	47.71%	52
Communication was poor	33.03%	36
TOTAL		109

Q17 What was most rewarding part of being on the child's team? (optional)

Answered: 47 Skipped: 97

#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	I love children and want the best for them all. I feel for the children that live a awful life	3/29/2022 6:01 PM
2	Knowing I was supporting the children everyday through their worst days.	3/29/2022 4:17 PM
3	Having the children and making a difference in their lives.	3/29/2022 4:12 PM
4	We had a great support team. Everyone worked together for the children	2/24/2022 10:55 PM
5	To have our wants and needs voiced.	1/17/2022 10:48 PM
6	Making sure he was safe	1/17/2022 10:58 AM
7	Being there for the children.	10/17/2021 8:49 PM
8	My last case was supposed to be a 2 week case which ended up being 19 months of me fighting for this bio Mom for reunification. No one would listen to me and I was the only one that saw her with her son almost on a daily basis. I thought we had a really good relationship with and I allowed this Mom to do her visits in my home for month's 5 to 6 nights a week. We thought we would be in this little guys life forever but 2 month after he was home Mom put in a false allegation in which I was cleared.	10/12/2021 4:58 PM
9	To care for our Grandchildren was a very rewarding experience. We watched them grow and they loved going to daycare- and of course the hugs and smiles.	10/1/2021 2:45 PM
10	We have not been licensed for 5 years. We survived the horrible [REDACTED] years	9/30/2021 6:50 PM
11	Really don't know	9/30/2021 2:44 PM
12	No kids...	9/30/2021 2:32 AM
13	That I had communication skills to facilitate a smooth process and remained calm, even when it was tough.	9/29/2021 9:32 PM
14	To be his advocate and to ensure he received the services that he needed.	8/23/2021 8:35 PM
15	Adopting her.	8/19/2021 12:23 PM
16	Being their voice... cause the children didn't have a choice	8/18/2021 1:57 PM
17	ensuring our children were cared for and had their best interests in mind	8/17/2021 4:45 PM
18	Trying to help the child in care.	8/15/2021 9:46 AM
19	Getting to give my daughter the life she has deserved the whole 5 years in foster care.	8/15/2021 9:35 AM
20	What team? No one worked together as a team. It was a very every man for himself "team"	8/15/2021 7:36 AM
21	As far as prior answer, there was no communication in the past year. Most rewarding part was being part of a child's life and trying to show them the kind of life they could have with the right love, support and choices.	7/22/2021 5:24 PM
22	seeing the child grow into a strong self confidence person	7/14/2021 3:14 PM
23	Trying to be there for a kid that was floating through an overcrowded and backlogged system.	7/9/2021 5:47 PM
24	Guardian at litum was awesome and supportive.	7/8/2021 11:18 AM
25	Working with our GAL. He was wonderful, and often times we would find out what we needed to know in regard to the child's case from him.	7/6/2021 12:03 PM
26	Seeing the care and support they wanted for [REDACTED]	6/14/2021 8:41 AM
27	Being able to love, care for, and welcome a precious child into our home and hearts.	5/16/2021 9:03 PM

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28	Knowing my nieces were finally safe. Also knowing we were able to show them Love and Stability. Some I promised my Sister on her Death Bed!	1/9/2021 6:02 PM
29	?	1/9/2021 7:59 AM
30	Watching her graduate	1/9/2021 7:31 AM
31	Watching them grow/adjust to the situation.	1/8/2021 5:41 PM
32	being able to tell dhhs what was going on to protect my niece	12/9/2020 9:57 PM
33	The final adoption was the most rewarding.	12/3/2020 8:31 AM
34	We were the grandparents so we had a different perspective on things.	12/2/2020 5:35 PM
35	I really didn't have a team.	10/11/2020 3:43 PM
36	Being there for our niece and nephew (now our daughter and son) was the most rewarding part.	10/7/2020 8:03 PM
37	Caring for our (now) son and supporting his development during a traumatic time in his young life.	9/22/2020 11:55 AM
38	Raising a child	8/24/2020 1:46 PM
39	Working with Community Health Counseling Services	8/20/2020 10:25 PM
40	Getting to the end of a ten year back and forth with trial placements, and finally adopting the children.	6/4/2020 6:32 PM
41	That I knew I had a voice when it came to his care From school to his health and emotional stability	4/22/2020 12:24 PM
42	Developing a relationship with the child, watching them reach milestones, seeing them smile/laugh/play	4/15/2020 10:29 AM
43	Seeing kids get help	4/15/2020 9:29 AM
44	Knowing that my child's welfare was foremost on everyone's list of priorities.	4/15/2020 8:22 AM
45	The child	1/16/2020 8:53 AM
46	Adopting her.	1/15/2020 8:20 AM
47	It was obvious that all involved wanted him to have a safe and supportive family	1/6/2020 9:27 AM

Q18 What was the most challenging part of being on the child's team? (Optional)

Answered: 55 Skipped: 89

#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	Watching the department take so long to take action against their other foster home where our placement was originally with who were physically and emotionally abusing them. It took myself and my husband calling the hotline, speaking to individuals in Augusta, and sending too many emails to get the matter taken care of.	3/29/2022 8:19 PM
2	lack of support, little information available before placement	3/29/2022 5:20 PM
3	Birth parents not doing what they needed to do; what was being asked of them. It was frustrating at times.	3/29/2022 4:12 PM
4	Getting our wants and needs met. We were promised respite over the summer, but did not take place until the weekend before school started, when I asked for him to be removed from our home. Had we gotten respite, we wouldn't have needed an alternate placement.	1/17/2022 10:48 PM
5	Having the parents understand that my main concern was a child	1/17/2022 10:58 AM
6	Didn't receive the support needed from dhhs social worker.	1/17/2022 7:10 AM
7	Dealing with unprofessional dhhs workers.	10/17/2021 8:49 PM
8	NO ONE giving a foster parent any support. Foster parents always having to defend allegations. Foster parents are expected to take care of these kids which is our job but are not included in any of the decision making and are never considered when changes are made to schedules they are told you must do this or that and are never asked for any input as to whether it works for their schedule or not. Bio parents need to be held more accountable for missed appts. etc just as a foster parent is.	10/12/2021 4:58 PM
9	Getting truthful answers and being kept informed about meetings and such. In three years my son and the children's mother never progressed from the unsafe environment they came from.	10/1/2021 2:45 PM
10	The caseworkers being unable to do their jobs.	9/30/2021 6:50 PM
11	Because we were respite care we had very little to do with the team	9/30/2021 2:44 PM
12	No kids...	9/30/2021 2:32 AM
13	Picking up the pieces after parental visits. Witnessing the damage, and the parental lies and the child's hopes and all the pain. Also, being told by staff that I was the problem at drop off, because she didn't want me to leave!!!! Again could have used my own advocate.	9/29/2021 9:32 PM
14	Everything I that I was concern about. it was never addressed. Or took it seriously. In the beginning it was all about the kids but after 4-6 months the departments team seem more push for parent with an unlimited amount of chances.. that the kids wellbeing didn't matter anymore as long as the kids were safe. So physically they were but mentally they were not..	8/18/2021 1:57 PM
15	mis-communication, lack of communication, difficult contact with bio parents, feeling like we are "just a number" (overburdened system)	8/17/2021 4:45 PM
16	Being withheld of all of the child's needs and past trauma, lack of ongoing communication from the case workers, difficulty in reaching them or having them call you back. Lack of effort to assist or support you when needed. Overall apathy. I had the continued sense that I'm on my own.	8/15/2021 9:46 AM
17	Dealing with Dhhs, inconsistency and bad supervisors	8/15/2021 9:35 AM
18	No one was ever on the same page. Very poor communication, no follow through. I could go on forever	8/15/2021 7:36 AM

Resource Family Exit Survey

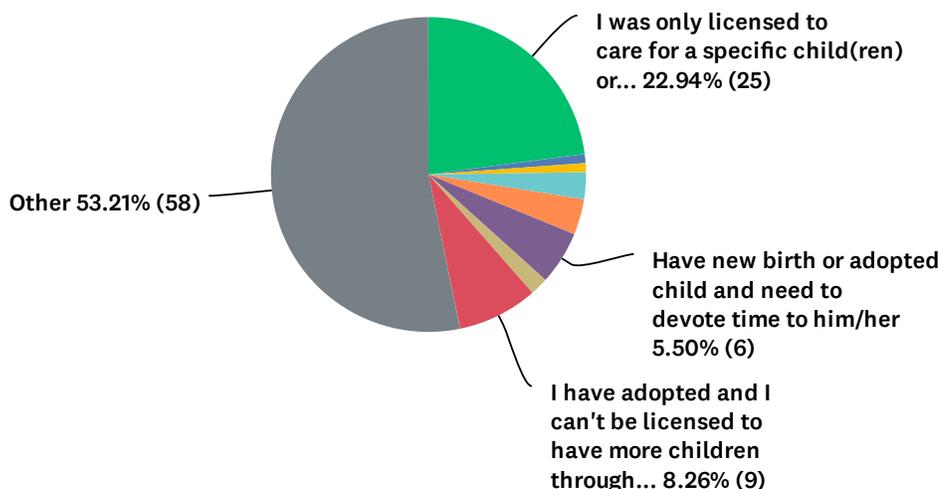
19	Refer to all of my other answers about dhhs.	7/22/2021 5:24 PM
20	not knowing all the background	7/14/2021 3:14 PM
21	Everyone was just guessing and filling in the blanks on their own for the well being of each child. Nobody knew the whole story or had the whole ability to do what was best for the kids	7/9/2021 5:47 PM
22	These were my granddaughters and the mom is my step daughter. I feel I knew more about the issues then was brought to light.	7/8/2021 11:18 AM
23	Not being heard when you're trying to look out for the child's best interest/advocate for child . It didn't matter.	7/4/2021 3:21 PM
24	Nothing	6/14/2021 8:41 AM
25	interactions with the Bio parents. Frustrations with poor communication	5/16/2021 9:03 PM
26	DIFFERENCE between the worker telling the girls one thing and than Us something different	1/9/2021 6:02 PM
27	Having people (DHHS, GAL, BHP, LCSW) come in an out of our house and coordinating parent visits and external supports (like therapeutic riding, speech therapy, psycho therapy...) was a juggling act.	1/9/2021 7:59 AM
28	Finding creative ways to modify behaviors	1/8/2021 5:41 PM
29	dhhs would reveal their source when at times they didnt need to offer it,i understand the need to document & reveal at times but to come out & say when not needed it makes others not want to come forward,dhhs having to let parents have certain rights when its the law when its not safe	12/9/2020 9:57 PM
30	As a foster parent we felt as though we had all of the responsibilities of raising and healing the child with very little input into the process and not being privy to much of the information that could have helped. We understand the need for privacy for the biological parents, but we are supposed to be a part of the child's team - we are a huge part of the child's team - but were not treated as equal members in the team.	12/3/2020 9:34 AM
31	It's always a challenge to work with transportation for visits. Not anyone's fault. The birth parents, case workers, transportation company, and foster parents have a hard time getting in touch with each other if plans change.	12/3/2020 8:31 AM
32	Being personally involved caused problems because we had questions that we could not have answers for.	12/2/2020 5:35 PM
33	Being left with an adoptive child with much higher needs than we were informed about with no services to help us, worried to the point that it effects our help with literally NO ONE helping us.	10/14/2020 7:55 AM
34	Not feeling listened to by DHHS. I had asked for assistance with summer programming for a teen who still needed a significant amount of supervision. I was a single parent working full-time. I began discussing this at the beginning of the school year and my foster daughter ended up having to move out of my home at the end of the school year because there no summer programming was found for her.	10/11/2020 3:43 PM
35	A tie between constant turnover and misalignment of priorities (birth parents vice children)	10/7/2020 8:03 PM
36	Communication with DHHS and the lack of adherence to a unified process.	9/22/2020 11:55 AM
37	Balancing act with providing information for TPR proceedings and maintaining somewhat friendly relationship with biological family	8/27/2020 3:44 PM
38	Dealing with the state and tribe that were not in sync	8/24/2020 1:46 PM
39	Not being heard. My own family coming last.	8/17/2020 5:03 PM
40	Lack of communication and lack of agency. Nobody seems to get how much foster families give up in order to do the things they do to support children. Without agency is it impossible to engage and to feel like you are part of a team. Even the term "resource family" reflects that - we are FAR more than a resource. We are a lifeline. We open our hearts to children and their families sometimes at great pain and risk to the intactness of our bio family.	6/8/2020 7:21 AM
41	having no information about what guardianship consists of, and having ZERO support from	6/5/2020 6:45 AM

Resource Family Exit Survey

	DHHS	
42	Frustration with the slow process and endless meetings.	6/4/2020 6:32 PM
43	Realizing that while I spent day and night with the kiddo, I really had no say in what happened with them.	5/6/2020 11:59 AM
44	Trying to be a positive influence while still balancing the new situation I was in Glad I did what I felt was in my heart Would do it again if I had to	4/22/2020 12:24 PM
45	ADHD	4/20/2020 7:49 PM
46	Honestly—dealing with DHHS. Communication issues, being expected to drop everything with one phone call (with no notice), conflicts and not feeling as though the department was understanding or considerate of ours feelings or concerns all the time	4/15/2020 10:29 AM
47	Seeing birth parents not show up or show up intoxicated, under influence, or fall asleep.	4/15/2020 9:29 AM
48	Lack of knowledge about trauma/attachment.	4/15/2020 8:22 AM
49	Parents bullying us and threatening our family - not a good last experience	1/16/2020 8:53 AM
50	I believe her time in the system before the final placement with us exacerbated her problems forming attachments and trusting people. She was 16 at the time of adoption and was able to convince her workers, GAL, and the judge she wanted and was ready to be adopted. They even fast tracked it so we didn't have to wait the minimum 6 months since she was biologically related to us. She ran away almost immediately upon the adoption finalization and told several people it had been planned all along. I feel that waiving the 6 month minimum placement before beginning the adoption process was a mistake.	1/15/2020 9:28 AM
51	I feel as though foster parents are not listened to. We are often treated like whatever we say isn't valid because "just want to be able to adopt the child".	1/15/2020 8:20 AM
52	Inconsistent communication	1/13/2020 6:39 AM
53	Having the birth mothers lawyer ignore safety concerns raised.	1/6/2020 1:58 PM
54	So many people making decisions and the affect on how our home was run	1/6/2020 9:27 AM
55	Kinship	1/6/2020 7:41 AM

Q19 I am no longer licensed through DHHS for the following reason: (Please check the reason that most applies)

Answered: 109 Skipped: 35



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
I was only licensed to care for a specific child(ren) or kinship placement	22.94%	25
Reimbursement was not adequate enough	0.92%	1
Childcare issues	0.92%	1
Separating from the child was too difficult for our family	2.75%	3
Changes in job, health, moving, advancing age	3.67%	4
Have new birth or adopted child and need to devote time to him/her	5.50%	6
Family crisis	0.00%	0
Lack of placements	1.83%	2
I have adopted and I can't be licensed to have more children through DHHS	8.26%	9
Other	53.21%	58
TOTAL		109

#	OTHER	DATE
1	We still have our license we just are not taking in placements at this time due to our sons medical challenges	3/29/2022 8:20 PM
2	It's something that needs to be talked with someone.	3/29/2022 6:03 PM
3	too little information available prior to placement; DHHS not honest about childrens' needs	3/29/2022 5:21 PM
4	The last placement was very stressful on my household and the communication from the caseworker was horrible which made us not want to work with dhhs anymore.	3/29/2022 4:19 PM
5	I was threatened by my daughter and grandchildren while they were in my care.	1/17/2022 7:12 AM

Resource Family Exit Survey

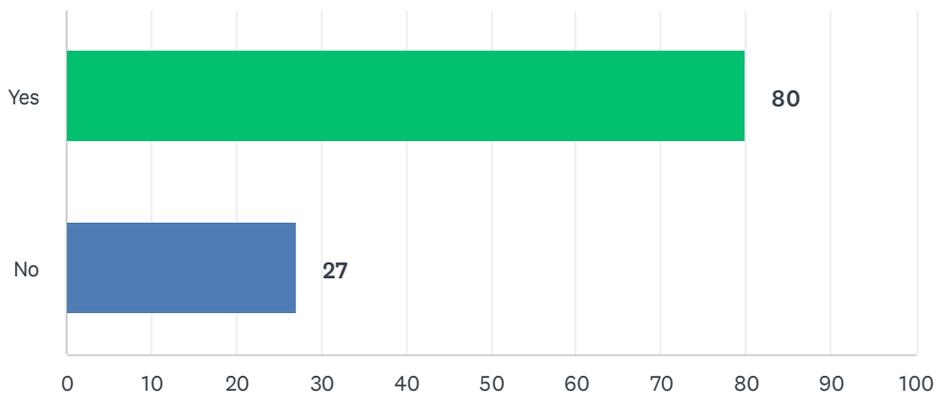
6	False allegations that I was cleared of that was put in 2 months after the child was home. This parent was in my home for basically 5 to 6 nights a week most nights until 8:00 or 9:00 and never put in an allegation. Then 2 months later she decides to put one in on a ridiculous out right lie. I put everything I had into reunification as she was a good Mom and did the work to make it safe for him to go home. I was asked to just take a break but at this point I cannot put myself and my family out there to save someone else's. As sad as that is to say because being a foster parent is definitely a thankless job. I purchased a bigger house and had all plans to continue to foster but with the lack of support for foster parents I felt it was time to be done.	10/12/2021 4:58 PM
7	We adored 1 fictive kin and 1 foster child. Our family felt complete.	9/30/2021 6:51 PM
8	We moved to North Carolina	9/30/2021 2:45 PM
9	Adopted my child and that is all we as a family committed to.	9/29/2021 9:35 PM
10	Family issues and the depleting reputation of the department	9/29/2021 9:00 PM
11	Adopted and have no more space	8/19/2021 12:24 PM
12	Waiting 9 months because, I am guardian of previous foster/fictive kin child	8/18/2021 3:58 PM
13	Having foster placement was too hard on my other children, biological and adopted.	8/18/2021 9:14 AM
14	Too much going on right now, possibly again in the future	8/17/2021 4:46 PM
15	Complete frustration with the DHHS.	8/15/2021 9:48 AM
16	Working with dhhs has been the worst.	8/15/2021 9:35 AM
17	Working with district 7 is impossible.	8/15/2021 7:37 AM
18	Complete lack of documentation and any resemblance of organization	8/15/2021 7:31 AM
19	Refer to my prior answers. Dhhs is quick to blame foster parents for any issues to deflect blame from themselves and their errors and shortcomings. Dhhs poor choices negatively affected childs' lives as well as foster parents' lives.	7/22/2021 5:25 PM
20	covid happened	7/14/2021 3:14 PM
21	Mostly it was the lack of support and the last straw was them telling me I needed to spend thousands of dollars to change my windows because they were off the standards by one inch, or else I couldn't get re licenced. So I let my licence drop.	7/9/2021 5:51 PM
22	We felt that it was time to focus on our children. We were foster parents for years, and navigating the system and fighting for what's best for children can be exhausting.	7/6/2021 12:05 PM
23	The system is just so broken. All the requirements of foster parents truly takes over your life and puts your own family on the back burner. Ellsworth DHHS turnover rate made cases even more difficult.	7/4/2021 3:23 PM
24	DHHS	7/3/2021 8:32 AM
25	My parents moved in temporary. Once they move out I will renew my license.	6/14/2021 8:42 AM
26	false allegation was made and we got dragged through the mud. Was proven innocent, but totally turned us away	1/9/2021 6:04 PM
27	The child threatened to kill me and my unborn child	1/9/2021 8:12 AM
28	The program wasn't well run.	1/9/2021 8:01 AM
29	I've adopted and my son (particularly during the pandemic) requires all of my "free" time.	1/9/2021 8:01 AM
30	O Maine children met my criteria and adoption agents were not helpful when I inquired out of state placement stating "we don't work for you."	1/8/2021 5:44 PM
31	dhhs was not supported	1/8/2021 10:37 AM
32	adoption of my niece and enough for now	12/9/2020 9:58 PM
33	We feel are family is complets with the 4 we have adopted!!	12/5/2020 6:33 PM
34	We have adopted all of our foster children and no longer have any open beds	12/3/2020 9:35 AM

Resource Family Exit Survey

35	we have adopted 4 children through dhhs. Our home is not large enough to take more children and we would need funds for summer camps.	12/3/2020 8:32 AM
36	Lack of support	12/2/2020 8:38 PM
37	We adopted and it turns out they lied about almost everything to do with our child.	10/14/2020 7:55 AM
38	I didnt know it expired. Was not contacted. Bit we had such a difficult time with the state and the whole foster/adoption process that I'm not sure we would go through it again. Very difficult long process, little communication and lots of errors in all departments. Other states are so much easier and more organized.	10/7/2020 8:03 PM
39	Our family found DHHS too difficult to work with any longer.	9/22/2020 11:56 AM
40	After fostering to adopt, we wanted to adopt again but couldn't go through the process of fostering again	8/27/2020 5:02 PM
41	We are older now	8/27/2020 4:23 PM
42	BURN OUT	8/27/2020 3:45 PM
43	I adopted my child n wanted take break before doing it again. Trying do home renovations n move on in life	8/27/2020 3:11 PM
44	I am the legal guardian of the child in my custody	8/24/2020 1:47 PM
45	did not get calls for foster to adopt children	8/17/2020 6:14 PM
46	Lack of placements and being treated poorly by DHHS	8/17/2020 5:04 PM
47	While we have adopted three kids and added to our 2 bio kids for a lg family, we wiuld ahve considered doing more if we felt we had any agency in this process. We were approached to take bio sibs of our adopted kids and thought about it, but without add'l support from DHHS we just couldn't see making it work.	6/8/2020 7:23 AM
48	We are still licensed I think but we are working on the water issues.	6/8/2020 6:57 AM
49	We have had 4 placements and 2 9f those should've been therapeutic and were not. Getting proper services for these kids is so hard and we just didn't feel supported/respected in that area.	6/7/2020 4:39 PM
50	Honestly I don't want to work with the department, too many times I would be told one thing to have it completely changed. For example one placement we were told was going straight to adoption, a supervisor even called to make sure we were willing to commit to adoption, only to find out a few days after we accepted but made very clear we couldn't take children with visits did we find out that the placement would have 3-5 visits a week. We had to disrupt.	5/6/2020 12:03 PM
51	We moved out of the area.	4/15/2020 9:14 AM
52	We have adopted and he children we have have needs that have us fully engaged. Would not be responsible to add more now.	4/15/2020 8:24 AM
53	I started a daycare! Honestly lack of support in dealing with parents with significant mental health issues was a key factor too	1/16/2020 8:54 AM
54	Our situation is not typical so I don't feel the form answers fit. Having the child run away within a few weeks of the adoption was extremely painful and traumatic for our family. All separations are difficult but this was not a typical DHHS led/ordered separation so I don't fel it would be accurate to check that box.	1/15/2020 9:33 AM
55	My experience and the way I was often treated by DHHS as a foster parent was so poor that it discouraged me from fostering any more children.	1/15/2020 8:21 AM
56	Just need a break due to the level of care the young people we served required	1/15/2020 7:49 AM
57	Personal	1/13/2020 6:40 AM
58	Became permanent guardian and cannot care for addition kiddos	1/6/2020 11:11 AM

Q20 Is there anything else you wish could be changed in Maine's foster care system?

Answered: 107 Skipped: 37



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Yes	74.77% 80
No	25.23% 27
TOTAL	107

#	IF YOU CHOSE YES, WHAT CHANGES/IMPROVEMENTS WOULD YOU SUGGEST?	DATE
1	There needs to be more accountability on the parents, and DHHS as a whole. Long-term goals for the children who are in states custody should be in THEIR Best interest, not that of their parents or the states wallet. These children need to be provided with more robust services upon entering the system, it shouldn't be something that foster parents need to wrestle the system to get. When it is there the quality is not up to par for these non-consenting little humans that didn't ask to be brought into this tumultuous world.	3/29/2022 8:27 PM
2	Higher pay and workers that would take children to their appointments so the foster parent don't have to miss work	3/29/2022 6:08 PM
3	cases shouldn't go on years and years; foster parents should be treated as valuable members of the team; DHHS should be honest and forthcoming about the needs of children prior to placement	3/29/2022 5:23 PM
4	I know it's hard right now but smaller caseloads for the caseworker so they can spend adequate time working with the families. I feel a better screening for caseworker. They need to be friendly and knowledgeable, also a good listener and willing to offer advice.	3/29/2022 4:21 PM
5	Caseworkers and licensing workers from the Biddeford DHHS office, could have more help so they could be more attentive to foster parents/Children's needs.	3/29/2022 4:16 PM
6	1. When an alternate case worker is requested, it should be granted. 2. When caseworker is asked questions, they should answer to the best of their ability. 3. When respite is requested, grant it. A respite family was available but was not set up in a timely manner (all summer!). 4. The dept should allow caseworkers to use common sense rather than going by the book when the book doesn't make sense	1/17/2022 11:12 PM
7	When a kinship placement is done. Limit contact with the parent to allow the children to get acclimated to there new living situation. In my situation, my daughter was constantly on the phone with the kids, and interfering with boundaries I was trying to set for the kids. This	1/17/2022 7:23 AM

Resource Family Exit Survey

caused the kids to become angry and to threaten us over what their mom was saying. It was very frustrating and overwhelming and caused us to terminate the foster care in only one week. I think things could have been so different if we had time to get the kids into a routine without constant interference from their mom.

8	I am not sure how the foster care system could be changed but every meeting that we went to that foster parents brought up their concerns it was always we hear you and we are working on that but nothing ever changes. I feel bad for these kids that will end up in hotels without families and what will happen when there is a false bioparent allegation to whoever is in a hotel with these children will that employee have to always be defending themselves as a foster parent does? There needs to be a total overhaul of how a foster parent fits into the case as they are basically just the foster parent. One caseworker told me we don't listen to foster parents you guys are all biased. Reunification was always my goal with all of the kids when they entered into my home and I put everything I had into that . In the end we were just the baby sitter in most cases. A foster parent needs to be just as important as the other team members as they are the ones that know these kids the best.	10/12/2021 4:58 PM
9	There is always room for improvements in any agency. I would like to see more in home, unannounced visits. Make sure there is heat when it gets cold and proper sleeping areas.	10/1/2021 2:49 PM
10	I wish for consistency. Our son was placed with us 10 years ago as fictive kin on a safety plan. We made the arrangements through an email. Our son lives with us for 8 months prior to a DHHS visit. We knew and expected a monthly visit. When our daughter came, more than 2 years later, our son was still not adopted & we ended up getting 2 visits a month - 1 for each case manager. What a misuse of resources.	9/30/2021 7:03 PM
11	More funding, unfortunately what you do is needed and you should be better paid and appreciated	9/30/2021 2:49 PM
12	More people to take care of these poor children	9/30/2021 9:59 AM
13	The number of "chances" and the amount of time biological families get to have their children back. Some children linger in the system too long. Other biological families are given months and months to get their act together, but don't follow through with the plan.	9/30/2021 8:35 AM
14	Better training for DHHS staff. It was improving then Covid hit and staff left. It became worse than it's been before. I hear so many complaints from current families and I just try to support them as much as I can. Resource families and the children deserve so much more than they are currently getting.	9/30/2021 2:39 AM
15	First several questions on the survey have to be answered but these don't apply as I haven't had any contact in the last year so your results will not be accurate and biased: Every question that says in the last year.... this is disturbing as it applies to case worker and licensing communication etc. Next changes to Foster system, Resource Parent is a horrible name for the people who open their hearts and homes. I think the solution should be to call them Foster Aunt and Uncle. This gives a family feel without stepping on the mom and dads feelings. Also leaves an opening to stay connected if reunification occurs.	9/29/2021 9:46 PM
16	Foster parents are treated with very little respect. We are expected to drop things on a dime, change our plans and no resources for respite or mental health services provided to us due to the trauma we endure taking care of these kiddos. What's expected of us is 100 % more than what is expected of the bios and burn out happens quick	9/29/2021 9:04 PM
17	Not to give biological parents so much time to fight for reunification. We were over 4 years before we were able to adopt, and that was 2/3 of his life at that point. Set benchmarks that they have to meet and if they fail to meet them don't give them second, third, or even fourth chances to meet them. And that the same information we receive is also given to the biological parents. Also, that kinship families may work full time and not to set up appointments in the middle of workdays that are several hours away.	8/23/2021 8:42 PM
18	The ability to verify information- for example, we were told that our placement had no issues with animals, but actually had documented history of hurting animals. We were not prepared for that and our dog was hurt badly.	8/19/2021 12:31 PM
19	What's safe/best for CHILD, not the mindset of reunification at any cost.	8/18/2021 3:59 PM
20	Alot starting with visits.. visits are a joke and do more harm to a child. Especially when parents are supervise by HCI.. yes it's not a parenting class but there should be more	8/18/2021 2:16 PM

Resource Family Exit Survey

communication, more listening to the children, and if parents miss more than 3 visits in 3 2 months time should be taken seriously.. if the foster parents as any concerns it should be a Immediately looked into.. for an example if the Foster parent parents says the parents looked like they were on drugs at a visit but the supervisor did not It should still be looked into.

21	I would like to see kids that are reunified with their parents be followed for longer than three months. I've had several long-term placement that were reunified. A couple years down the road, all of them are not doing well, either needing to come back into care or the parent they were reunified to giving the child to the parent they were not reunified to. A case should be followed at least three years after reunification.	8/18/2021 9:17 AM
22	Give children (over 2+) a voice in court. Give more supports to bio parents BEFORE separating children. Provide more anti-racist training to resource parents. Reduce caseload size for caseworkers.	8/17/2021 4:49 PM
23	- Hire more case workers. They're clearly burnt out, over worked or are so numb to the system that they've mentally checked out. - Train case workers to better support the kids in their care and the families that are fostering/potentially adopting their kids. - Train case workers on how to vastly improve their placement decisions. - Train case workers to fully disclose all of the good and bad about a potential placement child. It does no one any good if they withhold vital information on a child's needs just so they can convince a foster family that the child will be a great fit in their home. Tell them all of their needs and their past trauma so the potential placement family can determine whether that child will work in their family dynamics. I'm sure that's one of the reasons why Maine foster kids stay in the system 7 months longer than the US average. - Encourage counties to search for potential adoptive homes in all counties across the state...not just in their county.	8/15/2021 9:59 AM
24	The whole system needs a change, a revamp and a new look at what's important. Which is always. The kiddo.	8/15/2021 9:36 AM
25	Better incentive for workers to apply and become involved in the system. The work load appears to be overwhelming for those in the system which strains employees and does a dis-service to those children that need them for protection and advocacy.	8/15/2021 8:20 AM
26	Timelines need to be followed. Kids are staying in care for far too long. Caseworkers need to respect resource parents.	8/15/2021 7:38 AM
27	Document events and conversations.	8/15/2021 7:35 AM
28	More protections for foster parents. In the past 5 years, dhhs seemed to take a turn for the worse assuming foster parents were awful and needed to prove otherwise rather than how it used to be, when foster parents were treated as good people until proven otherwise. It felt awful having a judgmental worker going through my home every visit and just looking for something wrong. It never used to be that way. I provided a clean, safe, fun home for my kiddos. And to have my home scoured regularly from a caseworker who wasn't even doing her job, was awful. Stop changing case workers multiple times a year. If a child forms a bond with a worker, it is just one more loss for that child. Ex: child has case worker. Is determined to be therapeutic. Gets new case worker. Case worker get promoted. Gets new case worker. Becomes eligible for adoption. Gets new case worker.	7/22/2021 5:37 PM
29	not to force vaccinations onto the children. seek alternative medications with fewer side affects.	7/14/2021 3:19 PM
30	So many things. I understand that no system is perfect but this system is chaos. I felt that I was warned strongly about what rights and responsibilities I had and didn't have with the kids in our care and then it was all thrown out the window and I was expected to twist every requirement differently with each case worker.	7/9/2021 6:02 PM
31	There are always more sides to a story, of course the children's safety should be first always - but different perspectives and sides should be more widely considered. Anger management is not a full reason for removing children from a home - the children were never harmed or had injuries to lead to removal.	7/8/2021 11:22 AM
32	More focus on the safety and well being of the child. More focus on how trauma impacts children. Better training for Licensing staff- their focus should be to know their resource families. If you had someone who put a little effort into knowing the resource families and had a rapport with them it would be an extra level of support.	7/6/2021 12:44 PM

Resource Family Exit Survey

33	I feel cases drag on way longer than they should! While I support reunification and want to see families restored, the child needs to come first. Dragging cases/TPR out is not in the best interest of the child. The court system needs to be able to accommodate kids in care more efficiently! There needs to be more support for foster parents.	7/4/2021 3:31 PM
34	Law needs to be changed to give more weight to best interest of the child rather than current law that favors the parent.	7/3/2021 3:49 PM
35	I enjoyed the State Park pass with my child and when I had paid for him to be in a summer camp it would have been nice to have a break by myself at the State Park...	7/3/2021 9:05 AM
36	- The system needs to be consistent with case workers and the expectations of the state. We had a lot of different expectations and recommendations from each caseworker. It was like we were changing directions multiple times.	1/10/2021 12:40 PM
37	Children taken before they endure so much trauma	1/9/2021 8:13 AM
38	Mainstream it. When my son's biological mom learned she was going to lose all of her TANIF benefits she started obstructing the process though she did not want him back. A protracted process is difficult on everyone.	1/9/2021 8:05 AM
39	I was licensed and only placed once in a year. While I had a kid for 2 weeks while his family was on vacation I got three other calls to take other children. Didn't get called before or after. Took three months to get paid. Very poorly run!!!	1/9/2021 8:03 AM
40	Quicker placement of abused child outside of the abused home Better appreciation for grand parent capabilities	1/9/2021 7:34 AM
41	It should not be so difficult to communicate between agencies.	1/8/2021 5:51 PM
42	if disagreement between caseworker & family trying to get child, wish supv would listen to family unbiased of caseworker in our case caseworker was biased for another family that she wanted to have my niece..at times you can't speak to a supervisor at dhhs..	12/9/2020 10:27 PM
43	Making the foster parents an equal member of the child's team in regards to the sharing of information and ideas about the case. Encourage caseworkers to believe the foster parents when we bring up a concern rather than brush it aside or try to explain it away. HEAR us, LISTEN to us. We spend the most time with the child during this process - respect us.	12/3/2020 9:42 AM
44	I wish that DHHS was provided more funds for their staff and programs to do their jobs. As the number of children going into and needing care rises, the financial help to workers and caregivers is increased. As foster parents, we changed our lives to do this. We took pay cuts and job changes to make this work. It was our choice, but the decision making process to get great foster parents to take on this challenge might be enhanced with funds towards tutoring, camps, child care, extra curricular activities, and services that will help the children thrive within their placements.	12/3/2020 8:41 AM
45	So numerous and brings up terrible memories that I don't want to begin a list	12/2/2020 8:42 PM
46	How would a foster parent make a complaint about the Guardian Ad Litem. We had the same one two different times and during the court hearing she made a personal judgement to the judge at the final court hearing, giving a personal opinion which was unethical. We had the same Guardian Ad Litem the second time around, and during our meet and greet I alluded to the final court case. A lawyer friend told me I should have brought charges against her. She was arrogant and not very pleasant to us. [REDACTED]	12/2/2020 5:50 PM
47	Yes - less lies and misinformation about children. We were told multiple things that were untrue, including that our child was born drug affected when they told us she was not. Also there are no supports to help us. We almost live in the crisis unit at the ER and no one will help us.	10/14/2020 7:57 AM
48	I wish there was more assistance for foster parents working with teens in their transition to adulthood.	10/11/2020 3:46 PM
49	It needs to be reassessed. Educate the people involved, give them the tools they need to help the families and kids. It's too bad the government doesn't see how much the system is behind other states.	10/7/2020 8:06 PM
50	Just re-enforcing that it should ALWAYS be about the children - not the birth parents. We all hope the birth parents get their lives in order but not at the expense of developing future adults	10/7/2020 8:04 PM

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who can be productive members of society.

51	Be honest with foster families about the children you are placing. We began to feel as though DHHS was withholding information in order for us to take a child off their hands. On two occasions, the children we cared for had needs that were far greater than we could manage and would have been better suited for a therapeutic placement. We also had placement coordinators attempting to place multiple children in our home when we were only licensed for one.	9/22/2020 12:07 PM
52	More information given to families looking to adopt. You hear about and see children on the adoptuskids site but yet when you are actually wanting to adopt you neve get calls about these children. We only ever got calls about emergency fostering. We realize DHHS isnt an adoption agency, but if there are children that have already been TPR'd there should be more of a push to find these children forever homes.	8/27/2020 5:06 PM
53	Yes. The list is too long. Some: Most change needed..... court dates dragged out way too long. I had many cases that could've been resolved much sooner but waited months even years for court dates. Please Consider giving more resources, finances, helps to bio family before removing children. Need more respite providers. Why does foster care have such a bad reputation? More public announcements/advertising of positive foster car families.	8/27/2020 3:52 PM
54	More support more help money wise n program wise	8/27/2020 3:11 PM
55	Better reimbursement. You pay more for 40 hours of daycare than you do for 24/7 foster care	8/24/2020 1:52 PM
56	Improvement in communication between DHHS and Foster parents	8/20/2020 10:28 PM
57	Sooner permanent, foster parents having a voice, prioritizing kids over birth parents, transparency with foster parents, the foster family mattering.	8/17/2020 5:05 PM
58	The system needs to undergo an evaluation that is meaningful and that seeks to understand the impact of fostering on the families it is trying to maintain as sources of comfort and strength for kids. The drawn out nature of reunification was outrageous. Bio mom (for 2 of our 3 adopted kids) was given chance after chance even when it was obscenely clear she had no ability to safely care for kids. If the Dept has set timelines, they should follow them. Consistency is a form of kindness and we found it cruel that the Dept changed its mind so much in the disposition of the case (for our 2 youngest).	6/8/2020 7:37 AM
59	Make it a little easier for relatives to adopt!	6/8/2020 7:09 AM
60	There should be more training before placements, transracial placements shouldn't happen unless the family has a lot of knowledge in that area, and support for the foster families/children needs to be easier to obtain.	6/7/2020 4:40 PM
61	support and information on differences between kinship and guardianship. Support for guardianship	6/5/2020 6:47 AM
62	Too many chances given with parents cause anxiety with the children. The time before now when they were in my care DHHS told them they will stay with me, only to give the father trial placement another time.	6/4/2020 6:34 PM
63	I think a foster parents bill of rights needs to come to Maine. Foster Families bring these broken, beautiful children into our homes and then get completely ignored. I got into this to help children. Reunification was the goal for us, but if it couldn't happen then adoption. I truly wanted to help broken families heal. We said if we adopted one kiddo we would continue to foster until another kiddos was free for adoption so that they could have siblings close in age. By the time we adopted our boy, we were so burnt out and exhausted from being pulled around by the CW. I understand it's a very fluid situation, but as foster families we should know the medical history before we bring kiddos into our homes, we should get to be considered kinship at some point allowing us a little more say in their lives.	5/6/2020 12:12 PM
64	I was working with Mass and Maine DHHS systems I wish we could implement quicker info when it comes to transfer from one state to another Having computer access coast to coast for families whom are in situations were caring for a grandchild or niece nephew can be done within a month or two not a year which was my case!! I was fortunate to have my grandson live with me for a year I enjoyed everyday with him!	4/22/2020 12:32 PM
65	Reimbursement is inadequate as I treat the children the same as ours. They are involved in sports, lessons, and whatever we do. Eating out at least once a week and being in the	4/15/2020 9:38 AM

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community or going on vacation. I never used respite because I didn't think it fair to the child to be left behind. Also, childcare or babysitting funds for parents to just get out for an evening would be a big perk.

66	The focus should be on what's best for the child. The parents are getting too many chances and they play the system. The children are the ones that become irreparably damaged. It's a generational cycle. Stop the cycle by focusing on what the child needs.	4/15/2020 9:16 AM
67	I know parental rights are sacrosanct but I sometimes feel that parents who have neglected or abused children are given too many chances and those chances are paid for by the children. I believe that parents cause a lot more harm than anyone wants to acknowledge and children who are harmed need loving, thoughtful families to provide stable, dependable supports for these children to give them an opportunity to live productive and happy lives. Returning children over and over to parents who are unable to care for them reduces the child's healthy development and removes the possibility that they will escape the cycle of neglect/abuse that has ensnared their parents. I believe we should have a much higher threshold, especially for preschool-aged children, to be exposed to potentially dangerous home situations or neglect. I feel bad for the parents, have compassion for them, but have seen the degree to which the damage of a only few months of neglect/abuse has on a child even many years out. These children's future is more important than the trial/error approach where parents in rehab or parenting classes are deemed suitable. Parental rights seem to trump the social/emotional/intellectual well being of the child.	4/15/2020 8:36 AM
68	Our system needs to look more at the child and less on the parents! I fully believe that parents who are actively abusing alcohol or drugs should not have contact with their children until they can be safe	1/16/2020 8:56 AM
69	Counseling should be mandatory for the children in care, including children who may not have any psychiatric diagnoses. Children and teens should not be allowed to forego counseling. I believe our child's anxiety, attachment and trust issues could have been helped if she had not been allowed to stop attending counseling early on. As well as misconduct by her previous foster parents may have be detected earlier.	1/15/2020 9:40 AM
70	Foster parents would be heard, when they observe disturbing things happening at visits and report it, it would be considered as a valid observation. Visit supervisors should be more qualified and trustworthy.	1/15/2020 8:27 AM
71	The U.S. needs to pass a law where children with severe abuse (sexual or physical) do not have supervised visits or work towards reunification. The u.k. just passed that law last year, so there is hope! It is ruining our kids and we don't put adults through that. If a person is raped we don't require them to sit in a room with there abuser, so why do we allow children to go through this?	1/13/2020 9:30 AM
72	Truthful information, better communication, more respect of foster family,	1/13/2020 6:41 AM
73	See pre-licensing education comments and below.	1/7/2020 5:09 PM
74	More home visits with at-risk families and children in the foster care system. Easier method of changing child's original Social Security number after adoption (I got stonewalling from SSA office despite having law printed out).	1/6/2020 2:07 PM
75	Summer camp scholarships, school vacation camp scholarships, etc. Fun/supportive group programs for children together	1/6/2020 11:12 AM
76	I think they are way too quick to "add services" to the kids, including medications just to keep their behaviors down- we know why they have behaviors, why are we not allowing time for transitioning instead of jumping right back into school, therapy ...all these new faces must be so overwhelming for them. There are so many voices speaking into their lives and often givea mixed messages so they have way too many options and feel/act entitled. A foster home shouldn't just be a dumping ground but a place of rest for these kids, a place to help them through this difficult time and with all the added appointments it becomes kinda clonical feeling rather than supportive.	1/6/2020 9:41 AM
77	Many things....	1/6/2020 7:42 AM

Q21 Is there anything else you would like to say about your experience? (Optional)

Answered: 50 Skipped: 94

#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	We loved working with the Portland DHHS office works. We love our children and are very happy with our experience; we tell everyone we can about how great foster care is.	3/29/2022 4:16 PM
2	The case worker in question was vindictive. I refused to do something that she wanted. Shortly after, she commenced to investigate us for abuse when the child had bruises on his legs from dare devil bike riding. I will never provide DHHS care again. We had worked with the dept when we adopted our 2 children and again to adopt our granddaughter. Those experiences were so much better than this time. The caseworkers make all the difference in the world.	1/17/2022 11:12 PM
3	I had been estranged from my daughter and grandchildren. The DHHS social worker had me come to the house to get the kids, it was an awful experience for us all. I think she should have removed them from the home.	1/17/2022 7:23 AM
4	I would like to thank affm for all the support , I received from them. The classes were very helpful and the support was greatly appreciated.	10/17/2021 8:51 PM
5	I wish I could have continued to foster children but with the broken system it is just not an option for me and many others at this point. I feel that the bio parents are given chance after chance and some cases go on for 4 to 5 years and these kids are still in limbo. There needs to be a time limit for the bioparents to step up to do what needs to be done and not just before court to buy them more time. A more definite time frame laid out at the beginning of a case and held to that time frame. These kids deserve to have permeance and to move on with their lives. There is more rights for the bioparents and it is supposed to be what is in the best interest of the child. The child really one of the last ones to be considered next to the foster parents.	10/12/2021 4:58 PM
6	I would not change taking care of our Grandchildren.	10/1/2021 2:49 PM
7	DHHS - may try to keep kids safe - but we saw so many procedural errors as well as mistakes that showed just a general lack of solid judgment. One case worker, advocated our infant be allowed to have supervised visits with the bio father while he was in jail for a violation of his terms of release as a sex offender (against a child). Also the lack of medical information from the bio families could have been avoided if the case worker would have sat down with the bio parents to help them fill it out.	9/30/2021 7:03 PM
8	It was a pleasure to help the 2 kids we did. We would have liked to help more kids, I'm just not sure if we were needed more or not.	9/30/2021 2:49 PM
9	Overall, it was good. We worked with some great caseworkers and some not so great caseworkers. AFFM supported our family in many ways over the years and we are very thankful. I'm still here as support though and I don't think I will ever really be done working with foster families or children. We are very lucky to have our children and I know that we changed some lives. I still talk to my previous foster daughters and I'm able to support them as a friend now. They know they have someone on their side.	9/30/2021 2:39 AM
10	We enjoyed working with our case workers and licensing worker. The most frustrating thing (besides foot dragging on parental termination) was when appointments were made without our knowledge and then people getting upset that we had to reschedule. We both worked full time and appointments would be made for the middle of our shifts that required a one hour commute one way for the appointment.	8/23/2021 8:42 PM
11	Because of our experience with not being told the truth- and now that we have a child in the home as well as animals- it is a big question to us whether or not we will feel able to take another placement, though we want to when we have more space. We could have kept our animals safe and taken the placement but they were hurt because we were not prepared.	8/19/2021 12:31 PM

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12	My experience was absolutely a blessing but at the same time it was heartbreaking it was frustrating very disappointing on the lack of communication i felt like it was false info at the beginning.. foster parents did not have a say and a lot of things. Was told in the beginning that visits would be around my schedule that was absolutely false that was absolutely false they got a thousands of chances and just enabled the behavior.	8/18/2021 2:16 PM
13	Although foster parents are important, and necessary to the system as is, I feel there are too many times that we are flattered with words - when really the system needs to change to be better for all involved (kids mostly, but also bio & resource parents).	8/17/2021 4:49 PM
14	I came into the foster to adopt experience in Maine with an open heart to adopt a child in need. Several years later, after experiencing how poorly Maine is handling the foster care system, I'm leaving frustrated, disappointed and sad. I have a wonderful home and life and wanted to share that with a child in need. Instead, with how broken and apathetic the Maine system is, there's now one less child who will be adopted into a loving home.	8/15/2021 9:59 AM
15	Thank you so much to AFFM for always providing answers, support and all the stuff they provide.	8/15/2021 9:36 AM
16	We appreciate the opportunity to be involved in fostering and eventually adopting our handsome, smart son. We are grateful to be able to help one child, but regret not being able to help them all. They did not ask to be born.	8/15/2021 8:20 AM
17	The child's mother wanted the case to be closed so we were forced to become legal guardians. With no previous parenting experience and a 15 year old child with extensive baggage and trauma, it is an understatement to say we did not know what we were getting ourselves into. We were provided no counsel, no support and the entire experience ended up blowing up in our faces. The cold is now back with her biological mother. My husband and I have both gone to months of therapy to try and work through the trauma of what happened. I am so angry that nobody thought to step in and try and help us out prepare us for what we were undertaking. My therapist keeps telling me that we were at up for failure because we were in no way prepared to be responsible for this child. I understand that with the child leaving state custody that DHHS would no longer be involved but it felt like we were viewed as an easy case to close and forget about.	8/15/2021 8:16 AM
18	At this point, what is done is done. I could talk for days about this.	8/15/2021 7:38 AM
19	We are no longer fostering because of disorganization and complete lack of documentation. State took our foster out the most caring loving home and gave him to his family members who never wanted him in the first place. The state discriminated against me because I am in substance abuse recovery that they had known About for 7 years yet now all of a sudden know nothing about and have no documentation of.	8/15/2021 7:35 AM
20	I used to recommend to anyone interested in helping children or considering fostering to definitely do it. I had fantastic experiences for years, prior to me not renewing my license. But now when I hear people considering it, I advise them to think twice-- especially if they already have bio kids. Because dhhs could try and take those kids out of their home based on false reports. That their lives will be under a microscope, no matter how wonderful they are...that dhhs will try to find fault if it means covering up their own mistakes.	7/22/2021 5:37 PM
21	it was very eye opening and very sad to see this kiddo go though what they have been though. Had to take breaks after kiddo left to regroup. But would not change what we did.	7/14/2021 3:19 PM
22	Make procedures and expectations and resources clear across the board and help your foster parents qualify to stay foster parents. The "all or nothing" requirements of changing out our windows on our own dime to qualify to help children in the system was something we literally couldn't afford and there was no help offered to find a way to work together.	7/9/2021 6:02 PM
23	I will always be available to step in for family needs when needed.	7/8/2021 11:22 AM
24	After years of being licensed foster parents we thought it would be best to call our licensing worker to let her know that we were letting our license go. Our licensing working simply responded "ok." That was the end of the conversation. She didn't ask us why we no longer wanted to be licensed, she didn't say thank you, or it was nice working with you. It's not that our family needed to be praised for being foster parents, but it comes down to developing relationships, and just being kind. It's been in our experience that the department does not value relationships with foster parents, and it takes a lot for them to value the opinions of foster parents. Foster parents should be treated with dignity and respect, just as other	7/6/2021 12:44 PM

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members of the team. Take the time to respond to the concerns of foster parents with sincerity and respect, tell them that they are doing a great job, remind them that what they are doing is valuable. Validate their feelings. The needs of the Dept. for Foster Parents will only continue to rise. However the concern is with the current direction the Dept. will not be able to meet that growing need under its current practices of Resource parent management. Our family has served the Dept. as a resource family for many years and in that time we have worked with many different case workers, supervisors and Administrators. We made it our mission to develop relationships with those we worked with. Unfortunately there is not enough effort being placed upon maintaining foster homes. I can honestly say our licensing worker was the person we communicated the least with during our last 2 renewal cycles. In order for the Dept. to have the ability to meet the growing need for foster homes, it must first find the foster homes, but most vitally the Dept. needs to work a lot harder in maintaining its foster homes. Resource families sacrifice a lot to support the children that come into care and it takes a tremendous toll on them. Knowing you have a support system in place at the Dept. would help take some of the stress off of the families. Often times unless you have really good case worker who communicates frequently with you, as a resource parent you often times feel alone in your case bearing the brunt of the case. The child should be the focus of the case and those caring for that child or children is a vital role that should be treated with respect. Too often if a foster parent who may not be strong enough to advocate for themselves, they are simply treated as a wet nurse. Some who provides care but no one wants to bother with for their perspective or how they are doing in the day to day of care they provide. In our experiences have been lucky to have a few good case workers and it made a big difference, had it not been for that we would not have had any support. There is a big void in Licensing. When we were providing Tx Level care the agency we worked with did an excellent job communication and maintain a good rapport.

25	Sadly, we decided not to renew our license after our first 2 years because of the stress that comes with being involved with the system and Ellsworth DHHS. The visit schedule required of me was just too much on me and the child in my care. I felt My own family was being neglected because of all that comes with fostering. I loved the children, but couldn't deal with the system anymore.	7/4/2021 3:31 PM
26	Through all this I had a very good experience, with all who was involved with [REDACTED] From the day she was place in my care till the adoption I have had wonderful people who have supported [REDACTED] and I. Always answering any questions or asking me if I needed anything from them. I never felt alone in this process and I knew I only had to pick up a phone and someone would help me. The experience was so wonderful I plan on being a foster mom once my parents move back home. Thank you. [REDACTED]	6/14/2021 8:50 AM
27	- This was my second time caring for a relative child with about 4 years difference and the PROCESS that is used within DHS seemed to have gotten worse. My largest complain is the flow of information. The childs records and team members would not get answers when changes ocurred. In the age of email, text and web meetings it was crazy to think that no one was informed of meeting changes etc.	1/10/2021 12:40 PM
28	Im glad i tried it but i reslly don't understand why it is easier to get a child from out of the country than it is to get one from the state next door.	1/8/2021 5:51 PM
29	Great great DHHS employees that should be commended in no specific order: [REDACTED] [REDACTED] Great great AFFM employees [REDACTED] sorry I don't know their last names but they have worked there since probably 2018 as we came to know them in June [REDACTED] they are inspirational, caring and compassionate and hard working and have the traits that are needed for the outstanding job they do! They all put in alot of endless hours to plan functions & events for kiddos and their families to enjoy and don't always get recognized for all the work they do. They listen to our problems, stories, and try to get families baby furniture, clothes, toys or needed resources along with planning events, coordinating discount cards, park passes, other passes with discounts, adoption backpacks, monthly newsletters, welcome backpacks and the Holiday presents at Christmas amongst many other things. I think all of the staff above BOTH DHHS and AFFM should get an honorable mention for the work that they do!!! Please thank them.. Thank you!!! [REDACTED]	12/9/2020 10:27 PM
30	This process was excruciatingly difficult, but our family grew by three because of it. Every day is a struggle to work through trauma and teach the kids things that they missed out on early in their lives. We appreciate having these kids in our life, and can not diminish the hurt and pain	12/3/2020 9:42 AM

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that everyone in the process had to experience in order for our kids to have found their way into our home, but we are forever grateful for this experience.

31	We may do this again when our children grow older and move out of the house. Right now we are limited by space and know that a certain amount of "just us" family time is needed for the children we have adopted. Our concerns for our children is that they will be able to live and thrive on their own after their financial support stops.	12/3/2020 8:41 AM
32	After 39 years of being a foster parent I found that the lies and outright deceptive words of the agency were so horrendous it was unbelievable.	12/2/2020 8:42 PM
33	The first case, DHHS did not take our concerns seriously, bring the parents and grandparents of the family. That was a bad year and nobody listened to our concerns. So of course, we ended up with our granddaughter a second time. 2 years with a 7/8 year old but we would not have had it any way. Anything to protect her. The second time , DHHS finally took a different approach (we , my husband and I) were not privy to any particulars, but something finally clicked and our daughter seemed to get the help she needed.	12/2/2020 5:50 PM
34	Yes - you ruined our lives.	10/14/2020 7:57 AM
35	I had some great experiences with the children in my care, but the support was not there to be able to continue to do foster care. It's extremely difficult to be a working single parent and care for a child who has significant supervision needs - especially if that child is a teenager.	10/11/2020 3:46 PM
36	It took me to have been diagnosed with breast cancer to move up the adoption date. That way it could be done before my treatments started. Thats sad, it could have been done without that. Just one of the discouraging situations we ran into.	10/7/2020 8:06 PM
37	Consistency, communication, and professionalism of DHHS staff and partners needs improvement. We found that our children's cases were handled very differently depending on the caseworker. For example, one would continue to pursue reunification upwards of a year after failed attempts, while another would give the plan three months before moving on to other alternatives. There seemed to be no clear guidelines. Often, we would rearrange our schedules so we could be at home for a home visit, only to find out the caseworker or guardian ad litem was very late or had forgotten the meeting completely. Finally, we found that DHHS staff were sometimes overly familiar with us and/or a child's parents. This made it difficult to trust that boundaries were being maintained.	9/22/2020 12:07 PM
38	Thank you for your help	8/27/2020 4:23 PM
39	We were licensed for over 20 years for therapeutic foster care.	8/27/2020 3:52 PM
40	We sometimes felt demonized for advocating strongly for clarity and consistency--and definitely when advocating that the Dept move more quickly to create permanency for kids. Maine seems to err on the side of reunification as opposed to permanency. We learned through this process that we fundamentally disagree with a skew toward reunification when in our cases at least everyone was clear and in agreement three months in that bio parents could not care for the kids. Still it was over 2 yrs until TPR and another many months until adoption. It's hard to know how to change a system that is so fraught with the drama and pain that foster care is. All parties end up feeling victimized and traumatized and so many people I know have decided to buffer themselves from that pain as much as they'd like to continue to serve and support.	6/8/2020 7:37 AM
41	I think AFFM is an amazing organization. I enjoyed working with them! I think these kiddos are worth all of it. I think that if the department was a little more respectful towards their foster families then maybe the average family would hang around longer, and not be burnt out so quickly. As in our case it was never our plan to be done after just two years.	5/6/2020 12:12 PM
42	I would do it all over again without a question!! Glad I was their in my grandchildren's life when they needed me!	4/22/2020 12:32 PM
43	Overall, I am glad that we were able to provide a safe space for children in need. If our situation changes someday, we may one day be able to foster again, despite the challenges I mentioned with the department (although I would hope that improvements have been made—especially in regards to communication and expectations as not all foster parents stay-at-home)	4/15/2020 10:34 AM
44	I found the pre training showed video of irth parents wanting kids back and working wth foster care. I only found this to be true twice. Most hardly showed up and were very impaired. Drug	4/15/2020 9:38 AM

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use seems to be a trend now. The children suffer, the foster parents burn out due to behavior of bios and traumatized children in their home. The reimbursement doesn't cover food let alone the damage to your home.

45	Thank you. We have two wonderful children thanks to you and your team. We are grateful and count them as blessings. You have a hard role to play but an important one.	4/15/2020 8:36 AM
46	Our last experience was awful and really made me not want to do foster care for awhile! We dealt with some manipulative parents and their rights were favored over the well being of the child!	1/16/2020 8:56 AM
47	My overall experience fostering through the Ellsworth DHHS was absolutely terrible. I cannot stress this enough. This was from 2014-2106. My caseworker never returned my calls, and never listened to my (very valid) concerns about inappropriate things they were happening to my foster child at her visits. The visit supervisors change many multiple times throughout the case. I never felt comfortable leaving the child with these people in charge as they were not appropriate. One of the visit supervisors has a grandson that was taken from her daughter by DHHS. She was very vocal about being against DHHS and lied for the biological parents many times about fights and inappropriate things that happened at visits. I repeatedly voiced this concern and other concerns relating to drug use to my worker and they were ignored. My most recent experience fostering through Machias 2017 & 2018 was much improved from my experience with Ellsworth. However, the overall experience in the past 6 years has not been positive and deters me from fostering again.	1/15/2020 8:27 AM
48	We worked closely with Spurwink with their resource family advocacy and were able to benefit from ongoing counseling pre-placement, during placement and post placement leading into the adoption process. This service was invaluable to our family navigating the DHHS/Office of child/family services. They were our family's advocate and a welcomed constant in an ever-changing system. Also, A Family for ME is a solid resource for the pre-adoptive family, gifted with a talented and dedicated staff.	1/7/2020 5:09 PM
49	We are grateful to everyone who supported us and our now-son through this difficult process. It seems to me that the time given birth parents to succeed or fail is too long given the impact adverse childhood events have throughout the lifespan. Prioritization of the child's safety over reunification of the family would reduce trauma for many children in the system.	1/6/2020 2:07 PM
50	We are grateful for the opportunity to have been a placement home for 4 different boys, 3 of whom have become our sons. We realize there are difficult situations and that unexpected things happen. Overall the difficulties were worth the end results.	1/6/2020 9:41 AM