

Irish Foster Care Association National Conference 2 – 4 November 2018



Fostering Stability Call for workshop proposals

The Irish Foster Care Association National Conference brings together all those with an interest in foster care, including general and relative foster carers, care leavers, health and social care practitioners, academics, students, teachers, policy makers, and members of the community and voluntary sector to learn together, engage in dialogue, and share their experiences and best practice. This year, the conference will take place from 2 to 4 November at the Radisson Blu Hotel, Limerick.

Conference theme

We are delighted to announce this year's conference theme: **Fostering Stability**. It is well-recognised that a secure and stable environment is key to children's healthy development and well-being. Due to the circumstances which lead to children being received into care and the many changes to their world that may be part of this, it is critical that we do all we can to support the most vulnerable children in our society to feel safety, security and stability.

The conference will offer scope to explore how the system can better support stability for children in foster care and look at many aspects of practice and policy of relevance to this theme. Stability may relate to our everyday foster care practice - how can our practice facilitate healthy child development and well-being? Stability may also relate to the practical and legal arrangements that are in place for a child. For example, how can every element of a child's care-planning and its follow-through contribute to a child's sense of stability and well-being? For the foster family, what are the factors which can contribute to parental autonomy within the foster care parenting role? Closely related to the concept of stability in foster care is that of permanence. The meanings of permanence in terms of stability, emotional security and family membership into adulthood are complex^[1]. One definition of permanence is: 'a set of goal-directed activities designed to help children live in families that offer continuity of relationships with

nurturing parents or caretakers and the opportunity to establish lifetime relationships'^[2]. Another definition is: 'the security and well-being that comes from being accepted as members of 'new' families'^[3]. While some children who come into care return to live with their birth parents, for those who can't, permanence within the foster family can be an alternative. In the Republic of Ireland, a number of different legal options are available or may be proposed within the current review of the Child Care Act 1991, and views vary on which of these options is best able to achieve permanence in both practical and emotional terms. Other areas central to the concept of stability in foster care include: the provision of supports to foster carers; and more broadly, how can the stability of foster care itself be sustained in Ireland? We hope that the conference will stimulate further debate, discussion and learning on these many aspects of fostering stability.

Call for workshop proposals

We are seeking proposals for workshops of relevance to the conference theme. The conference programme will offer daytime workshops all day on Friday and on Saturday afternoon. They will be two hours long. Workshop facilitators view contributing to the conference as an excellent opportunity to showcase their work. IFCA offers facilitators free day-attendance to the conference on the day of their workshop, discounted hotel accommodation and cover of travel expenses within the island of Ireland. We do not offer a fee to facilitators.

Submission instructions

You can submit proposals by using the online form [here](#). If you have any questions, you can contact IFCA Learning and Development, Maeve Healy, at maeve.healy@ifca.ie or Niamh Barrett, at niamh.barrett@ifca.ie on 01 4599474. www.ifca.ie. Unit 23, Village Green, Tallaght, Dublin 24.

Submission deadline

Please submit your proposal by Friday 13 April. You will be notified of the outcome of the selection process by Friday 27 April.

Proposal selection criteria

When reviewing the workshop proposal submissions, we will select based on the following criteria:

- The content offers a significant contribution to the purpose of the conference
- The workshop has a clear purpose and desired learning outcomes
- The workshop format is dynamic and engages those attending through participation and discussion
- The workshop provides participants with concrete ideas / models that can contribute to the development of best practice in fostering.

Irish Foster Care Association

The Irish Foster Care Association (IFCA) is the representative body for foster care in Ireland. Child centred and rights based, IFCA promotes excellence in foster care. We aim to accomplish this by providing information, support and learning opportunities for all those involved in foster care through our direct work in Advocacy, Branch Development, Support, Learning and Development. IFCA seeks to build a culture of learning that values the accumulation of knowledge, skills and experience of all with an involvement in fostering in the development of best practice. The annual conference is one of a range of opportunities in its learning programme which also includes training, seminars, and a journal on developments in foster care practice, policy and research, 'Foster'.



¹ Schofield, G., Beck, M. and Ward, E. (2012) Part of the family: 'Planning for permanence in long-term family foster care in long-term family foster care' *Children and Youth Services Review*, 34(1) January.

² Maluccio and Fein, 1983: 5, cited in Stott and Gustavsson, 2010: 622, cited in Moran, L., McGregor, C. and Devaney, C. (2017) *Outcomes for Permanence and Stability for Children in Long-term Care*. Galway. The UNESCO Child and Family Research Centre, The National University of Ireland, Galway.

³ UK Performance and Innovation Unit (2000) in O'Brien, V. and Palmer, A. (2016) 'Permanence in long-term foster care: what are the options?' *Foster*, Issue 2, pp27-45.