

Features of birth families with foster children in Andalusia

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The aim of the presentation is to describe the personal features of biological families whose children are in non-kinship foster care and with whom they have face-to-face contact in Málaga, Granada and Jaén (provinces of Andalusia, Spain). This study was funded by the research project *Application of a psychoeducational intervention program to improve visits between foster children and their biological families* (Reference EDU2016 77094-P). SPSS v.21.0 was used to carry out the descriptive and frequency analysis of socio-demographic information collected by the *Child File Summary Form* designed for this study. The results show the difficulties experienced by birth families to deal with the responsibility of parenthood. There is a high percentage of unemployment (54.5% mothers, 46.4% fathers), and a low level of education (61.7% uneducated mothers, 68.8% uneducated fathers). Furthermore, it is necessary to consider their diverse personal problems which undermine their competences to bring up and educate their children: substance abuse, mental health issues, mental disability and prison. Finally, the lack of relation between Social Services and birth families is highlighted. Knowing the circumstances of families at psychosocial risk permits to develop social policies that match with their specific necessities, by providing them the support and resources required, in line with Recommendation Rec(2006)19 of the Committee of Ministers to member states. Moreover, children and families' rights have to be respected, such as their right to have contact to maintain and strengthen their affective bonds as part of their identity. These findings will contribute to design: (a) family intervention programs which allow parents to acquire the necessary parental skills; (b) support and educational tools for the social workers; and (c) projects to contribute to children's well-being.