



Safe Families for Children

Imagine

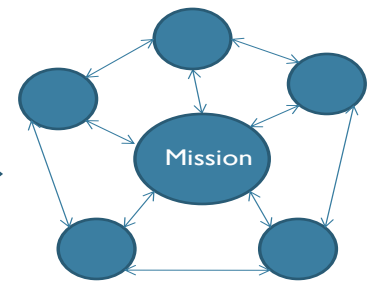
Imagine being in a desperate situation, perhaps a medical emergency, such as learning you have cancer and needing treatment. Imagine facing financial crisis because of extended unemployment or foreclosure and being unable to provide food or shelter for your children. *What would you do?* Who would you call for help while you remedied your situation? Family members, close friends, or someone in your church?

Now imagine you have no one to call. Imagine there is *not* one person in your life who is willing or able to help. It seems impossible, however, there are countless parents, who, if they lost a job or their home, had a medical emergency, needed drug or alcohol treatment, or were experiencing other types of crisis, would have no one to call.

What is Safe Families for Children™?

Safe Families for Children hosts vulnerable children and creates extended family-like supports for desperate families through a community of devoted volunteers motivated by compassion to keep children safe and ultimately together with their families.

The SFFC movement is based on the perspective that the safety and health of our community children are the responsibility of each one of us and that parents are the key to providing long term safe environments for their children.



Network centered around the mission

What Safe Families for Children is NOT:

- Replacement for foster care
- A place to “hide” children from parents *or* authorities
- Not usually for chronic or severe issues (mental health, substance abuse)
- Re-homing

The Goal

- *Child welfare deflection:* Safe Families for Children provide a safe alternative to prevent child welfare custody, thus reducing the number of children entering the child welfare system.
- *Child abuse prevention:* Providing an overwhelmed and resource limited parent with a safe, temporary place for their child without the threat of losing custody can avert potential abuse/neglect episodes.
- *Family support and stabilization:* Many parents struggle because of limited informal social supports and unavailable extended-family. Many host families become the extended-family that a parent never had.

Evidence Informed Practice

The Safe Families for Children model is based on the protective factors of the Strengthening Families Framework. This is an evidenced based best practice framework for preventing child abuse and promoting protective factors in families at elevated risk of child abuse or neglect.

Innovation:

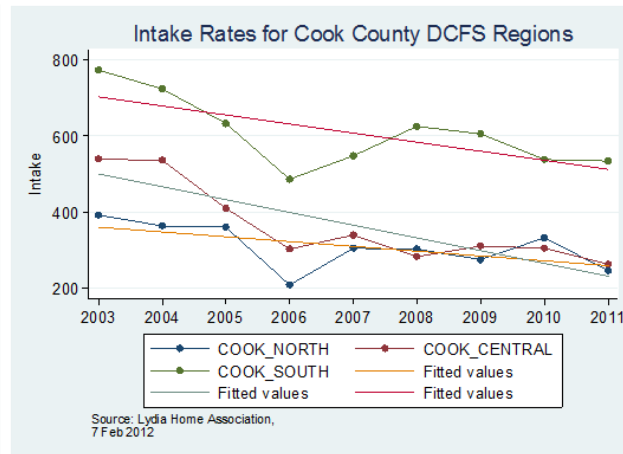
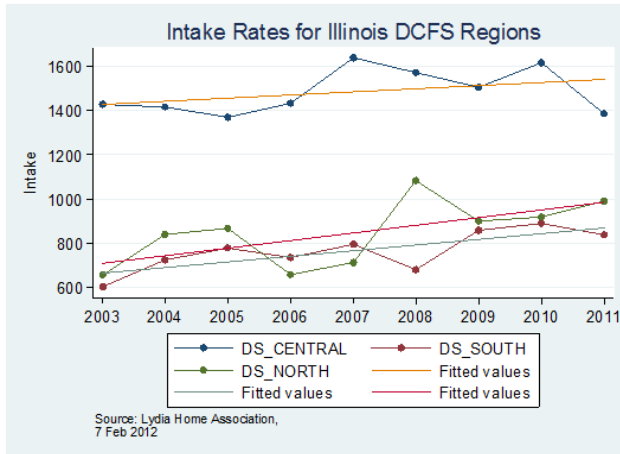
What do you believe is impossible to do in your field, but could fundamentally change the way you do business?



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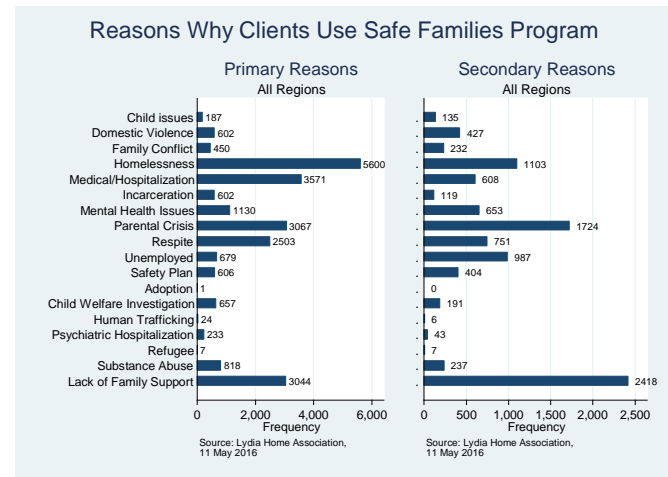
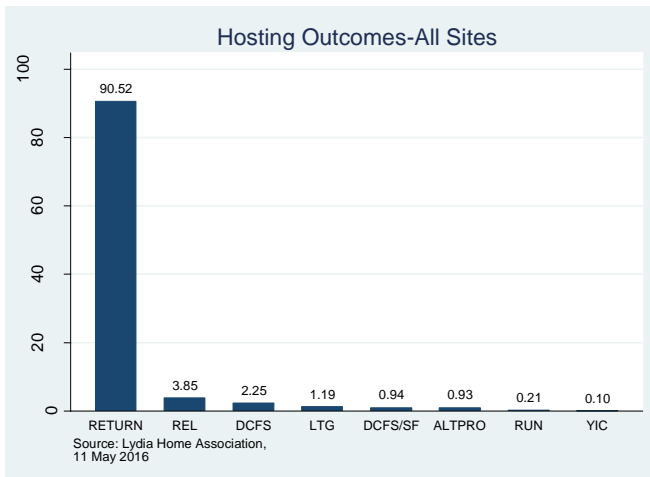
Impact: Case Sample – Illinois

The first graph plots results for the three state regions (where SFCC is not active) and the second graph plots the results of the three Cook County regions (where SFCC is active). Consider the cost benefit analysis of preventing X number of children from entering Foster Care.



Outcomes (Data Extracted on 5 May, 2016)

The impact of preventative services and support to children and families in crisis, versus a reactive approach to addressing a crisis is staggering. Safe Families for Children tracks the reunification rates of children and families following a voluntary and non-coercive intervention through relationship and mentoring.



Ongoing Research & Evaluation

University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill – Double Blind Randomized Control Group. Research ongoing.

Dartington Social Research Unit; United Kingdom – Randomized Control Group. Research ongoing.

Additional Information:

www.safe-families.org



Safe Families *for* Children

Bethany Christian Services is a Christian, nonprofit, licensed social services and child welfare agency that serves children and families around the world.

Bethany's Safe Families for Children™ is provided in partnership with the Safe Families for Children Alliance, www.safe-families.org

a ministry of



www.bethany.org/safefamilies

Serving Children and Families in:

California	Michigan	Rhode Island
Florida	Mississippi	South Dakota
Georgia	Missouri	South Carolina
Illinois	Massachusetts	Tennessee
Iowa	New Hampshire	West Virginia
	Pennsylvania	



Safe Families *for* Children

Families Helping Families in Crisis Situations



Safe Families for Children™ (SFFC) helps parents experiencing a temporary crisis by providing a loving family with whom their children may stay until the crisis has passed.

FAMILIES HELPING FAMILIES

When a crisis strikes, many people rely on relatives or friends for support, but some families have no safety net. Problems such as postpartum depression or unemployment can hit suddenly and be debilitating. Children may then be at risk of neglect or abuse without some kind of support for their family during this crisis.

Now, parents experiencing a temporary crisis can ask Bethany to find a volunteer host family for their children (newborns through age 17) to stay with while parents address the issues that led to their situation. There is no charge for SFFC. Volunteer host families are motivated by compassion and are not financially compensated.

YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE

The SFFC movement is based on the perspective that the safety of children is the responsibility of the entire community. SFFC volunteers can have a powerful, positive impact on the lives of others.



Since SFFC began in 2002, it has helped people in a variety of situations:

- Parents facing eviction and homelessness
- A mother who couldn't find childcare when her sudden illness required surgery
- Children whose mothers were undergoing drug rehabilitation
- A teen being rejected by her parents because of an unplanned pregnancy

HOW DOES SFFC WORK?

Referrals to Bethany come from a variety of sources, including schools, hospitals, state child protection agencies, churches, and social service organizations. Sometimes, parents call us directly for help. Our family coaches work quickly to contact an available host family.

Volunteer host families undergo an extensive screening process, receive training, and agree to host children at their own discretion. The average length of stay is 45 days, but it can be less or more depending on the individual circumstance. Most children who live with host families are 6 years or younger.

SFFC is not adoption or foster care. Parents maintain full custody of their child and are encouraged to participate in decisions regarding their child's care while they address the issues that led to the crisis.

It is important that children and parents maintain their relationship as much as possible. Parents are



encouraged to remain actively involved in their children's lives during their time with a host family and are also encouraged to develop relationships with other families who volunteer to help in various ways through the SFFC ministry. Bethany family coaches and volunteers also maintain contact with the parents to encourage them on their path to stability.

SFFC has a proven record of safely and successfully helping families recover from crisis. Currently, 93% of all families served by SFFC are reunited, often in the most stable environment they have ever known.

TO LEARN MORE...

Single persons, married couples with children of any age, and empty nesters may become host families. If you are interested in learning more about SFFC, please contact us through the information on the back of this brochure.