

5 July 2021

**OzChild's Treatment Foster Care Oregon program set to deliver
better outcomes for vulnerable young people in South Australia.**

Treatment Foster Care Oregon (TFCO), a specialised foster care program has been 'breaking the cycle' for children in Victoria, New South Wales and Queensland who, through no fault of their own, have ended up in residential care.

And now, thanks to a commitment by the South Australian Government, this evidence-based program is set to begin changing the lives of vulnerable teens/young people in South Australia with the program launched today in partnership with the State Government.

"For children or young people in foster care who are displaying complex emotional and behavioural difficulties multiple placement breakdowns are common, often these children and young people are one placement away from entering residential care.

"Wherever possible children and young people should live within families not in staffed residential care facilities, that's why delivering this program is so important to us," says OzChild Chief Executive Officer, Dr Lisa J. Griffiths.

"The South Australian Government's commitment to investing in programs like TFCO, that are backed by research and demonstrate real and measurable outcomes for young people affirms an intention to not only improve outcomes for children but deliver positive returns for the whole community," adds Dr Griffiths.

A first for South Australia, the TFCO program, which aims to reduce the number of children and young people in residential care will be backed by the organisation's success in delivering this specialised foster care model in Victoria, New South Wales, and Queensland.

"With four years' experience, OzChild is the only accredited provider of TFCO in Australia and has established five teams across three states. Entry into South Australia really cements the incredible, life changing outcomes being achieved. We are excited by the opportunity to make a difference in South Australia too," says Estelle Paterson, OzChild's Director Qld and SA.

According to the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare Child Protection data released 18 May 2021, 4,136 children and young people were residing in out-of-home care in South Australia at 30 June 2020, of which 600 were living in residential care.

"TFCO plays a critical part in supporting the child protection system because the aim is to reunify children and young people with their biological family, including kinship carers, or place in lower intensity long-term foster care," explains Dr Griffiths.

TFCO-A is a targeted intervention for children aged 12-17 aimed at improving behaviours in young people who exhibit complex and extreme behaviours that impact on their ability to live in family-based arrangements.

During the program, young people are placed with a specially trained TFCO foster carer for approximately nine months. At the end of the placement, the young person is reunified with their biological family (including kinship carers) or placed in lower intensity long-term foster care, with support provided to maintain stability.

A behaviour modification program based on age-appropriate rewards, TFCO teaches young people interpersonal skills and encourages participation in positive social activities including sports and hobbies. The young person is coached through supported practice in community settings and supported to build a range of coping strategies and problem-solving skills to address areas of difficulty in their lives.

"Benefits for the young people extend further than just preventing residential care placements, they experience improved health and wellbeing, positive inclusion in community activities and enhanced pro-social behaviours, alongside greater attendance, and participation at school or work. These are just a few of the life changing outcomes being achieved," says Ms Paterson.

-ENDS-

- OzChild Chief Executive Officer, Dr Lisa J. Griffiths is available for interview or comment about the need for greater investment in programs targeted at early intervention and prevention within the child welfare sector.
- Estelle Paterson, Director – Qld and SA, is available for interview to discuss the TFCO program and outcomes being achieved in Qld.

For further information please contact:

Rebecca Swinton

Communications Manager, OzChild

03 9695 2230 / 0439 472 281

rswinton@ozchild.org.au

BECOME A TFCO FOSTER CARER

OzChild is currently looking for individuals or couples in all parts of South Australia interested in participating in this internationally proven foster care program. Carers will receive comprehensive training, a generous tax-free reimbursement along with 24/7 on-call support and specially trained staff to support your carer journey.

With a placement duration of 9 to 12 months, you would be required to care for and support a child or young person between the ages of 12-17 years in your home.

Want to know more? Visit ozchild.org.au today

ABOUT OZCHILD

For 170 years OzChild has been committed to delivering quality services which make a real and lasting difference to Australian families to ensure all children and young people are safe, respected and nurtured to reach their full potential.

OzChild is committed to improving the lives of at-risk children, young people and families in our community, through foster and kinship care support and the delivery of evidence-based programs to achieve better outcomes, strengthen and repair relationships to build a brighter future for young Australians.

OzChild is now the largest provider of evidence-based and evidence-informed programs in Australia. Nationally the organisation is delivering multiple evidence-based programs to support children, young people and families, to ensure better outcomes can be achieved.

This includes Treatment Foster Care Oregon, Functional Family Therapy - Child Welfare, Multisystemic Therapy for Child Abuse and Neglect, Functional Family Therapy for at risk youth, SafeCare, Multisystemic Therapy for Youth Justice, and Triple P Positive Parenting Program.

ABOUT TREATMENT FOSTER CARE OREGON

Treatment Foster Care Oregon (TFCO) is a specialised foster care program based on over 30 years of international evidence and research that improves behaviours in children and young people.

Three versions of the TFCO model are available, targeting discrete cohorts of children and young people identified by age. A family-based model of care and therapy, the program supports up to seven (7) placements simultaneously. Delivered in the specialist foster carers home, each placement is for a period of approximately 9-12 months with the objective of returning the graduating child or young person to a stable care environment with family or kin.

The typical cost per placement ranges from \$168,778-\$225,038 which includes all agency costs and carer reimbursement of up to \$65,000 per annum to assist with the expenses associated with supporting a child or young person in the program. There is also a one-off establishment expense of \$354,362 representing model licence fees, clinical training, and site set-up.

This represents a significant cost saving to government when compared to the annual expenses associated with residential care placements being more than \$400,000 per annum in South Australia, in addition to the research proven benefits to children and young people associated with behaviour, health and education and ultimately achieving stable family-based care.