

The Circle of Support Model: RELATIONSHIPS MATTER



THE SAFE FAMILIES MOVEMENT is centered around the power of relationships to stabilize and strengthen families facing difficult circumstances. We believe that when parents feel supported and surrounded by family-like relationships, children can better thrive in the home. That's why Safe Families for Children was started! We want to reframe how families are served when facing challenging circumstances by providing a devoted network of relationships based on our core values of radical hospitality, disruptive generosity, and intentional compassion.

Isolation and loneliness have become one of the most significant mental health threats for women 18-37, and this threat is only heightened for single women parenting children. By fostering relationships and leveraging networks through a Circle of Support, parents can benefit from social connectedness and access resources that can significantly aid them in regaining stability. In a recent study by Harvard University, "The share of high SES (socio-economic status) friends among individuals with low SES--which we term economic connectedness--is among the strongest predictors of upward income mobility identified to date. These cross-class friendships had a stronger impact than school quality, family structure, job availability, or a community's racial composition. The people you know, the study suggests, open up opportunities."

WHAT IS A Circle of Support?

THE CIRCLE OF SUPPORT (COS) MODEL is unique to Safe Families for Children. We believe there is a role for everyone and that each role is vital in helping keep children safe and families together. The COS is a group of people working together to support a parent while also keeping volunteers supported as they open up their hearts and homes to host children.



HEAR WHAT PARENTS
ARE SAYING ABOUT



Safe Families
for Children



“The problem with the world is that we draw the circle of our family too small.”
MOTHER TERESA

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WHAT ARE THE GOALS OF THE CIRCLE OF SUPPORT?

PROVIDE SUPPORT TO THE PARENT so they can adequately address the crisis situation that led to the need for Safe Families.

PROVIDE SUPPORT AND RESOURCES TO THE HOST FAMILY so they do not feel isolated and overwhelmed in caring for the child/children in their home.

BUILD RELATIONSHIPS AND CONNECT RESOURCES for a parent to achieve their goals and adequately care for their children.

WHO MAKES UP A CIRCLE OF SUPPORT?

THE MOST EFFECTIVE Circle of Support comprises individuals who serve within the same church body. Ideally, a COS would be created from small groups, Sunday school classes, or specific support groups that enjoy serving together, praying and caring for the needs of their community.



Host Family

A Host Family hosts children in their homes for short, temporary times while a parent gets back on his/her feet. They have a two-fold ministry of caring for children and of offering themselves up to an ongoing relationship with the parent in order to provide family-like support. Hostings average 30-45 days but can be as short as a weekend.

APPROVAL PROCESS: Application, 3 references, background check, 4.5 hours of training, interview and a home study.



Family Friend

Family Friends come alongside parents by providing encouragement, mentoring, access to resources and connections, transportation, babysitting, meals, etc. They may also support a host family in the COS by providing similar resources. The goal is to provide a network of relationships for the parent and help him/her resolve their crisis.

APPROVAL PROCESS: Application, 3 references, background check, 3 hours of training.



Family Coach

Family Coaches walk alongside parents to help them set and achieve goals, encourage them, and direct them toward resources. Family Coaches will also visit the Host Family and hosted children regularly. They will meet monthly with staff and make notes in our online case management system.

APPROVAL PROCESS: Application, 3 references, background check, 6 hours of training, and an interview with the Family Coach Supervisor.



Resource Friends

Resource Friends support Host Families and Family Friends in their church with practical help like providing meals, prayer, and resources (such as cribs, diapers, clothes, and household items, etc.) They can also help with special projects like recruiting, hosting gatherings, and resource drives. Some offer tutoring, language skills, counseling, organization, mechanics, etc.

APPROVAL PROCESS: Application but no training necessary.

Children **SAFE** Families **TOGETHER**