



FOSTER CARE

Foster care

In terms of the Child Care and Protection Act, foster care refers to **situations where children are placed by court order with someone unrelated to them.**

People who would like to foster a child apply to a designated social worker to be placed on a list of potential foster parents. The social worker investigates to see if the applicant is suitable, and gives the prospective foster parents appropriate information and training. The Ministry maintains a register of prospective foster parents which social workers draw on as the need arises. Prospective foster parents on the register must renew their application every three years.



Foster parents play a similar function as children's homes, but in a family environment. Children may be placed with foster parents for short temporary periods, or on a longer-term basis – depending on their situation. Placements with foster parents take place *only* by court order.

A foster parent is allowed to care for a maximum of six children, counting both their own children and the foster children placed with them unless the court finds that exceeding this limit is in the best interests of all of the children concerned.

Foster parents are eligible for a foster parent grant to assist with the costs of caring for the children placed with them by the court.

Kinship care

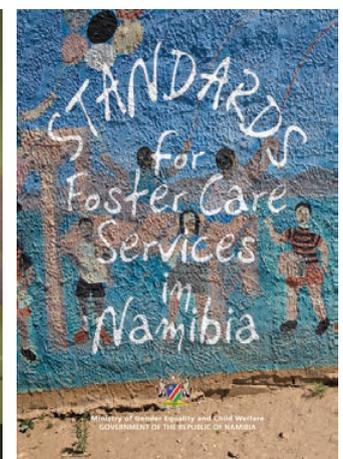
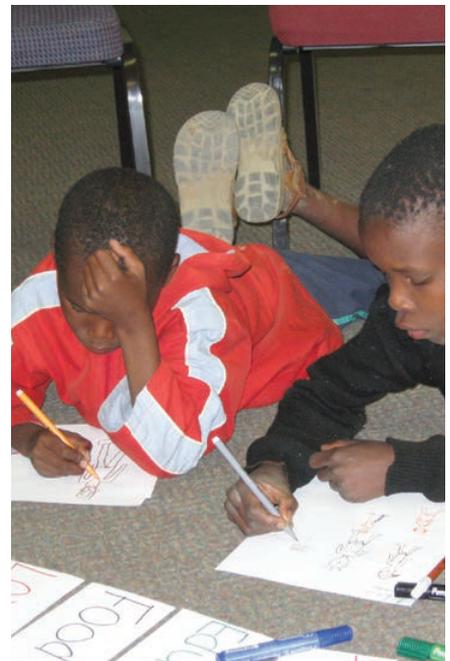
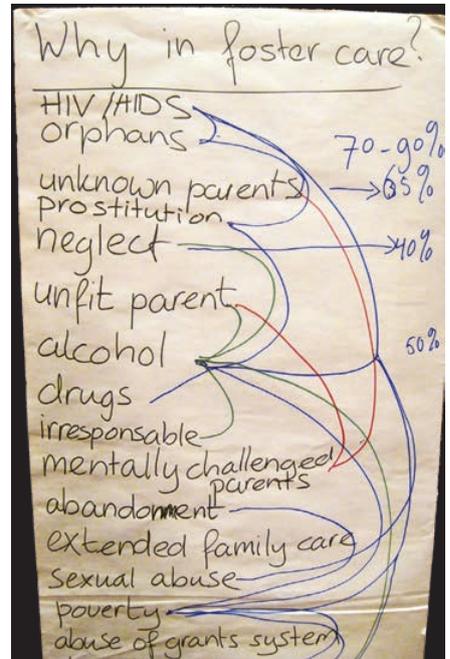
Kinship care is a new concept in Namibia to cover the situation where a care-giver is an extended family member of the child or a close family friend. In terms of the Child Care and Protection Act, such care-givers are no longer part of the category of foster parents. Instead, they are known as kinship care-givers. If a kinship care agreement is registered with the court, a kinship care-giver is eligible to apply for the same type of grant as the child's parent.

Registering a kinship care agreement is a simpler process than obtaining a court order for foster care. The registration process is intended to make sure that a grant paid for a particular child goes to the person who is actually caring for that child.

Kinship care is normally a voluntary arrangement made by a family, although a court can place a child in kinship care if this is the best option for the child.

The new distinction between foster care and kinship care removes an unnecessary burden from courts and social workers. It also recognises approaches to child care which are typical in Africa.

TURN PAGE



Images from the Ministry of Gender Equality and Child Welfare's studies with service providers and children to establish Namibia's standards for foster care services (2011).