

Leading Foster Care Expert Dr. John DeGarmo Addresses 10 Ways to Fix Foster Care

The foster care system continues to struggle in so many ways. Foster care expert Dr. John DeGarmo shared his 10 ways to improve the foster care system in 2025.

ATLANTA, GA, UNITED STATES, January 9, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The foster care system continues to struggle in so many ways. The system is overwhelmed on many levels. [Mental health](#) issues threaten today's children. Agencies are understaffed, and more children are in crisis.

"I often tell legislators, these are children, not good and services," says Foster care expert Dr. John DeGarmo, founder/director of [The Foster Care Institute](#), and a TEDx Talk presenter. "If we want to fix foster care, we need to address the following issues." Dr. DeGarmo suggested the following:



Dr. John DeGarmo, founder/director of The Foster Care Institute and a leading foster care expert.

1. Placement Type

Agencies need to take all necessary steps in order to ensure that the child is placed in a home that provides the needed resources, support services, and care that a child needs, and that it is a good fit for both the child and the foster family.

2. Trauma Assessments

When a child is placed into a foster care home, foster families many times are not completely aware of how trauma has affected the child. In order for foster families to be fully prepared and equipped to help the child, a trauma assessment needs to be made on each child placed within 10 days of being placed into foster care, and the information shared with the foster families.

3. Training and Support

States should better assess the needs of both the training and support services that foster parents are required to have, and make sure that foster parents are equipped to help children



Children are placed into a foster care system where there are not enough homes. Mental health issues are on the rise. Caseworkers are overwhelmed, and the lack of funds are only part of the problem.”

Dr. John DeGarmo

who struggle with mental health issues.

4. Provide relief and support for caseworkers
Agencies must ensure that their caseworkers are safe and not at risk. In addition, caseworkers are overworked, overwhelmed, under resourced, under paid, and understaffed. Today’s caseworkers need to be given more time, more funding, more resources, and more understanding from the public, from the courts, and from foster parents.

5. Family Support

The end goal of foster care is reunification. However, before a child is placed into foster care, agencies and families need to work together in an attempt at keeping the child within the family, if possible. More mental health, substance abuse treatment, support, and services are needed so birthparents can have access to the treatment services they need.

6. Collaboration

When a child in foster care moves from one home to the next, from one agency to the next, and even from one state to the next, many times their information does not follow them. As a result, the child often does not get the services they need. Agencies and foster care programs need to share existing evidence and case studies together in order to better identify and implement approaches that will work best within their area.

7. Time Spent in Care.

The average amount of time a child spends in foster care is 20 months, though that number can be significantly lower or higher, depending upon the child’s situation. The longer a child spends in care, the more [anxiety](#) the child may experience due to separation. Whether it is reunification, adoption, or other options, agencies need to place more emphasis upon permanency of family for a child.

8. Therapy

Mental health issues continue to rise for all children. For children in foster care, issues from anxiety can manifest themselves in a number of ways. Professional therapy and counseling on a continuing basis, both while in foster care, and afterwards is critical for the well-being of the child. In addition, foster parents should also have access to professional therapy and counseling services.

9. Kinship care

Kinship care should be considered when possible. Kinship care allows families to stay together, and studies indicate it helps improve mental health, stability, and behavior. Kinship families need to have the

same sort of benefits that foster parents have, including financial support and a daily per diem to help with the high cost of raising children who suffer from trauma and anxiety.

10. Funding

Child welfare agencies are struggling to recruit and retain foster parents. In addition, caseworkers are overworked, overwhelmed, understaffed, and underpaid. More funding needs to be allocated, in order to better recruit new foster parents, provide much needed training and support services for foster parents, hire more case workers, and better pay for caseworkers and child welfare workers.

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