

## Ep. 1 How to Reunite Families: An Introduction

### Frequently Asked Questions

**What elements are required for a successful transition process from Child Care Institutions to Family Based Care in any country/state/region ?**

Successful transition requires four key elements, each of which includes work at multiple levels, from political leaders and policy makers, to funders, to the professionals working on the ground.

The goal is to ensure that the best interests of the children are always top priority.

#### Key Elements\*:

- Political Will – work with political leaders, government representatives, policy makers to create the child protection ecosystem for comprehensive and sustainable reform
- Know How - To achieve meaningful change, each region needs to understand that it is possible to move from a system that relies on Child Care Institutions to one that focuses on community and family based solutions. By developing community based support systems, governments can tackle the root cause of family separation.
- Capacity on the Ground - Build a strong, local, social service workforce of both professionals and community volunteers to support the children and families
- Funding – Seek investment in family based care systems

\*Reference: Hope & Homes for Children ([hopeandhomes.org](http://hopeandhomes.org))

#### For more information:

- [Strategic Review Intro](#)
- [Strategic Review part 1](#), [part 2](#), [part 3](#)
- [Strategic Review Template](#)

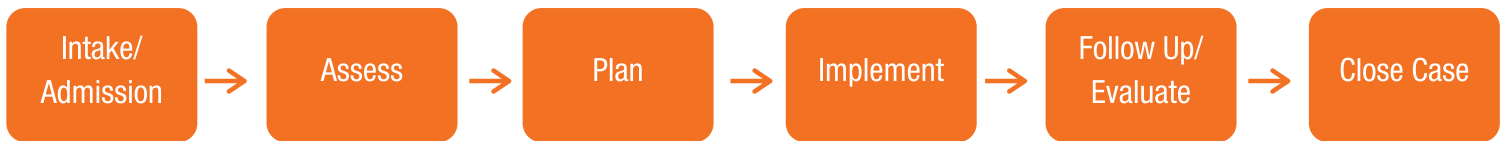
#### **What are the common reasons for family separation?**

Poverty is often cited as the cause of family breakdown, but there are many families that remain together even when they are lacking basic necessities.

The reasons for family separation are complex and unique to each individual family. Often, parents believe that a CCI can provide more opportunities in the way of education and vocational options than they could in their communities. In some cases the families have no resources for child care while they work, others they fear for the safety of their children because of substance abuse in the family or dangerous neighborhood activities. It is critical that you understand the unique set of circumstances and the true underlying cause of every individual family's breakdown.

## What is Miracle Foundation's methodical approach to reintegrating families?

Miracle Foundation follows a comprehensive and holistic Case Management process for every child and family. This process consists of six steps, though while the process is presented as steps, it is often non-linear and can involve several steps happening simultaneously or circling back in the process.



- Intake/Admission
  - Look for concerns that need to be addressed immediately
  - Collect required documents (India: JJA Form 17) and present to the appropriate authorities
- Assessment
  - Identify child's strengths, interests, concerns, needs, and support system using Child Case History (India: JJA Form 43) and create a Child Care Plan (India: JJA Form 7 Individual Care Plan)
  - Collaborate with child's family and professionals in the child's life including health, education, mental health, etc (India: JJA Form 22 Social Investigation Report)
  - Assess safety of family environment and determine if reintegration is possible - utilizing Miracle Foundation's Home Thrive Scale™
- Planning
  - Begin child-focused decision making process and planning of support services - refer to the child/family's Home Thrive Scale™
- Implementation
  - Coordinate the implementation of support services as outlined in the Home Thrive Scale™
  - Prepare the child and family for reintegration
  - Link them to their support network and community services
- Follow Up/Evaluation
  - Connect with the child and family frequently to ensure they are finding the support helpful, to understand issues/concerns, and to revise the care plan as needed. Refer to the child/family's Home Thrive Scale™ and document progress.
- Close Case
  - Cases are typically closed when the goals of the plan have been met
  - After closure, the child and family should always know who to reach out to for assistance in the future

For more information and to access the tools, refer to the remaining videos for more details on the process as well as the Case Management resources on [Miracle Foundation's website](#).

I run an institution and I believe that many of my children are better off with me than with their families. Why should I work so hard to get these children back to their families when the families can't take care of them?

We understand what you're saying and you've done a great job taking care of these children.

We always try to look at a challenging situation from different perspectives:

- Have you talked to the families of the children and asked them why they placed the child in the institution?
- Did they consider other options prior to bringing them to the institution?
- If they could have had the support they needed at the time they placed the child in the institution, would they have changed their mind?

It's important to understand the root cause and prioritize addressing those issues. Utilizing a case management process such as Miracle's does result in successful, permanent reintegration.

Keep in mind, you can continue to support the children and families through family strengthening efforts, even if the children aren't living in your institution any longer.

Who are the members of the global child care and protection community, and how can governments, NGOs, and communities collaborate toward this effort?

First, it is important to define child care and protection as creating a safe and positive environment for children, promoting their well-being, and doing no harm to them.

The goal of this collaboration of the child care and protection community is to prevent the children from coming into the child protection system and ensure every child thrives, whether in CCIs or families. The strategy should focus on strengthening the child protection system toward systemic change instead of creating a parallel system.

The members of this community include UNICEF, State Governments, Civil Societies, CCIs, children & young adults, families, child protection committees at village/ward block level, community District Child Protection Unit, and Child Welfare Committee (CWC). In India, the Juvenile Justice Board (JJB) are also members of the global child care & protection community.

The transformation of CCIs to family based care is accomplished through 5 steps\* :

- Engagement with the child care and protection community
- Assessment of children, families and community resources
- Design and deliver service as per individualized needs
- Transition of children from CCIs to family
- Regular follow up and monitoring

\*Reference: Hope & Homes for Children ([hopeandhomes.org](http://hopeandhomes.org))

## My team, donors and board are hesitant to reintegrate children. What do I do?

While this can be a challenging position to find yourself in, the first step is to help your team, donors, and board to understand the importance of family for every child.

- Enlighten them on the impact that living apart from family has on the child.
- Educate them on the negative impact institutional living has on the child, even in the best run CCIs.
- Inform them of the incredible success of family reintegrations around the world.

You may want to consider providing a learning exchange in which those who have achieved success in reintegration work share their experiences with your team, donors and board members.

Then, consider starting small and building success stories that you can share with those who are hesitant. This process takes time -- it is not a one-time event.