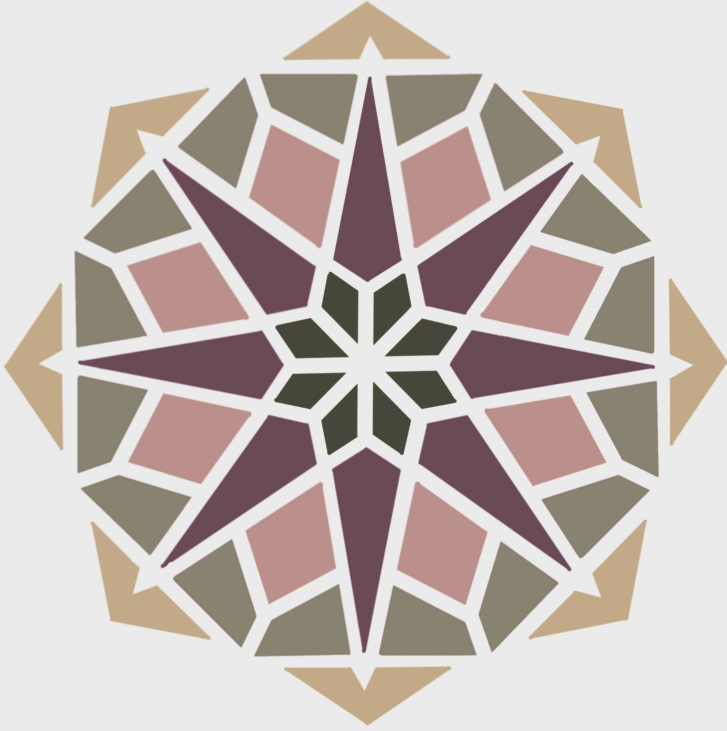


FOSTER CARE

MENTAL HEALTH



BOOKLET 6

كَلَّا بَلَّغْنَاكَ الْاٰلَاٰمَۃَ الْاَوَّلٰى
وَلَا نَرٰكَ مِنَ الْاَوَّلِيْنَ

BUT NO; YOU DO NOT TREAT THE ORPHANS HONORABLY.

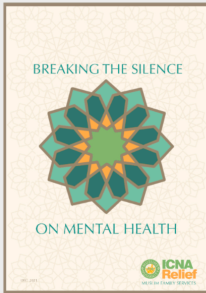
QUR'AN 89:17

MAY 2023

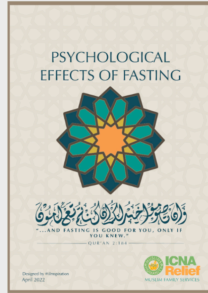
The author of this booklet, Dr. Amber Haque, is the Program Director of Muslim Family Services, ICNA Relief USA. He was previously a psychologist in Michigan and a professor of clinical psychology in Qatar, UAE and Malaysia. Dr. Haque is also a researcher for the Muslim Mental Health Consortium, Department of Psychiatry, Michigan State University and affiliated with Cambridge Muslim College, UK.

<https://cambridgemuslimcollege.academia.edu/AmberHaque>

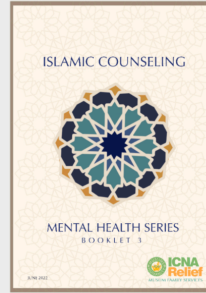
MENTAL HEALTH SERIES



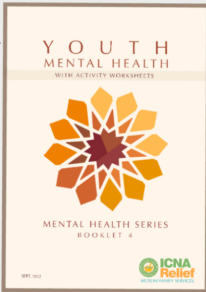
Booklet 1



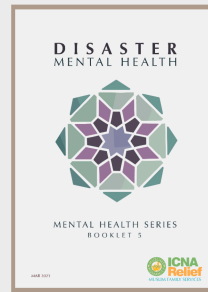
Booklet 2



Booklet 3



Booklet 4



Booklet 5



Booklet 6

Why this booklet?

The virtues of foster care are emphasized in the Quran and by our beloved Prophet (PBUH). Yet many Muslims are unaware of this act of piety and collective responsibility (Fard Kifaya). This booklet introduces foster care and the mental health needs of children living in foster care. Society needs licensed Muslim families and homes, as many Muslim children are placed in non-Muslim homes, compromising faith and values.

Disclaimer

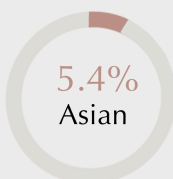
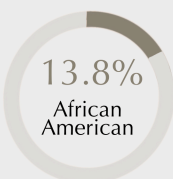
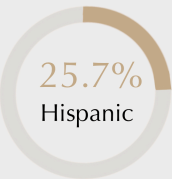
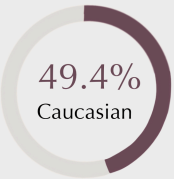
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FACTS AND FIGURES



73.6 MILLION CHILDREN LIVE IN THE USA



<https://www.childstats.gov/americaschildren/glance.asp>

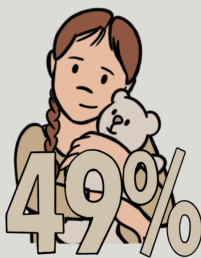
THE TOTAL NUMBER OF CHILDREN IN FOSTER CARE IS

391,098



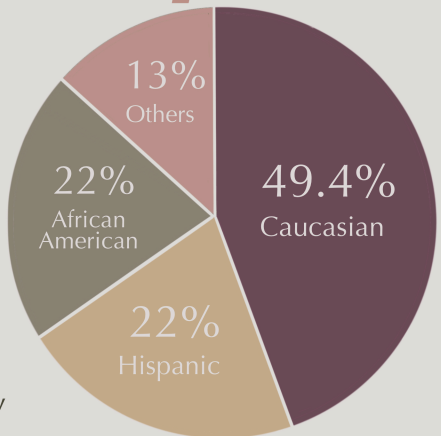
M A L E

MEAN AGE AT ENTRY: 8 y



F E M A L E

MEDIAN AGE AT ENTRY: 7 y



<https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/documents/cb/afcars-report-29.pdf>



MUSLIM CHILDREN IN FOSTER CARE

Data on Muslim children in foster care is scarce except from Michigan where there are 100-150 children at any given time; ten licensed Muslim families and one family licensed to take unaccompanied refugee minors.

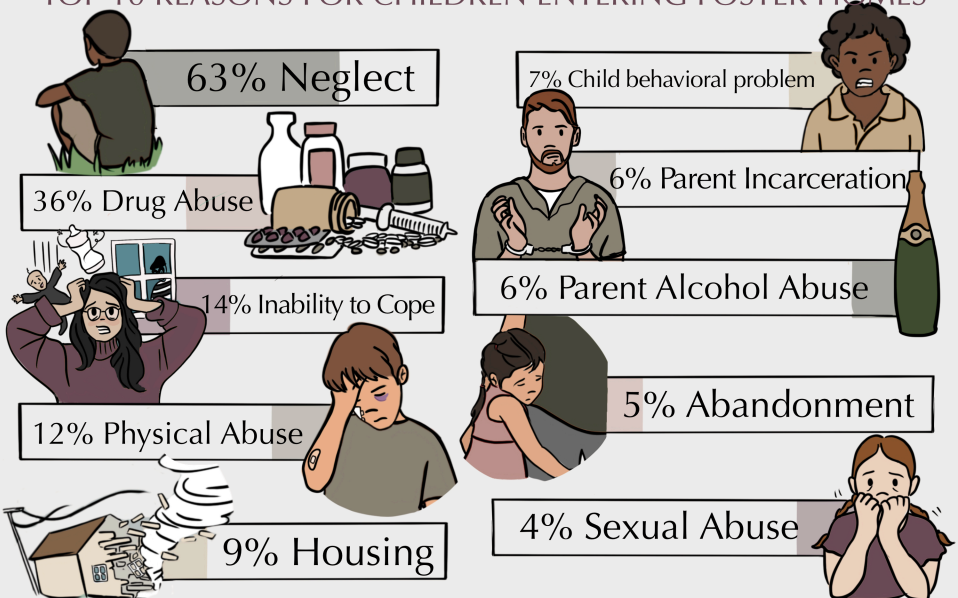
Data from Britain suggests there are 3,000 Muslim children in foster care each year out of 50,000 children total.

What is Foster Care?

Foster care is a temporary living arrangement for children whose parents cannot care for them. This is because of a lack of safety, inadequate care, or maltreatment. The State intervenes through Child Protective Services (CPS). It takes over the legal and physical custody of the child and temporarily places them in the possession of a licensed foster parent or a relative approved by the State. At the same time, the court investigates the abuse and negligence charges/allegations against the parents.

Children in foster care may live in kinship care with foster families or residential facilities.

TOP 10 REASONS FOR CHILDREN ENTERING FOSTER HOMES



Foster Care

MENTAL HEALTH



UP TO **80%** OF FOSTER YOUTH TO SUFFER FROM MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES COMPARED TO 18%-22% OF THE GENERAL POPULATION.

FOSTER CHILDREN ARE 5X MORE LIKELY TO HAVE ANXIETY AND 7X MORE LIKELY TO HAVE DEPRESSION THAN OTHER CHILDREN.

THE SUICIDE RATE IN FOSTER CARE YOUTH IS AMONG THE HIGHEST IN THE US.



POOR EDUCATIONAL outcomes and WORK records



MENTAL AND BEHAVIORAL HEALTH IS THE GREATEST UNMET NEED FOR CHILDREN IN FOSTER CARE.

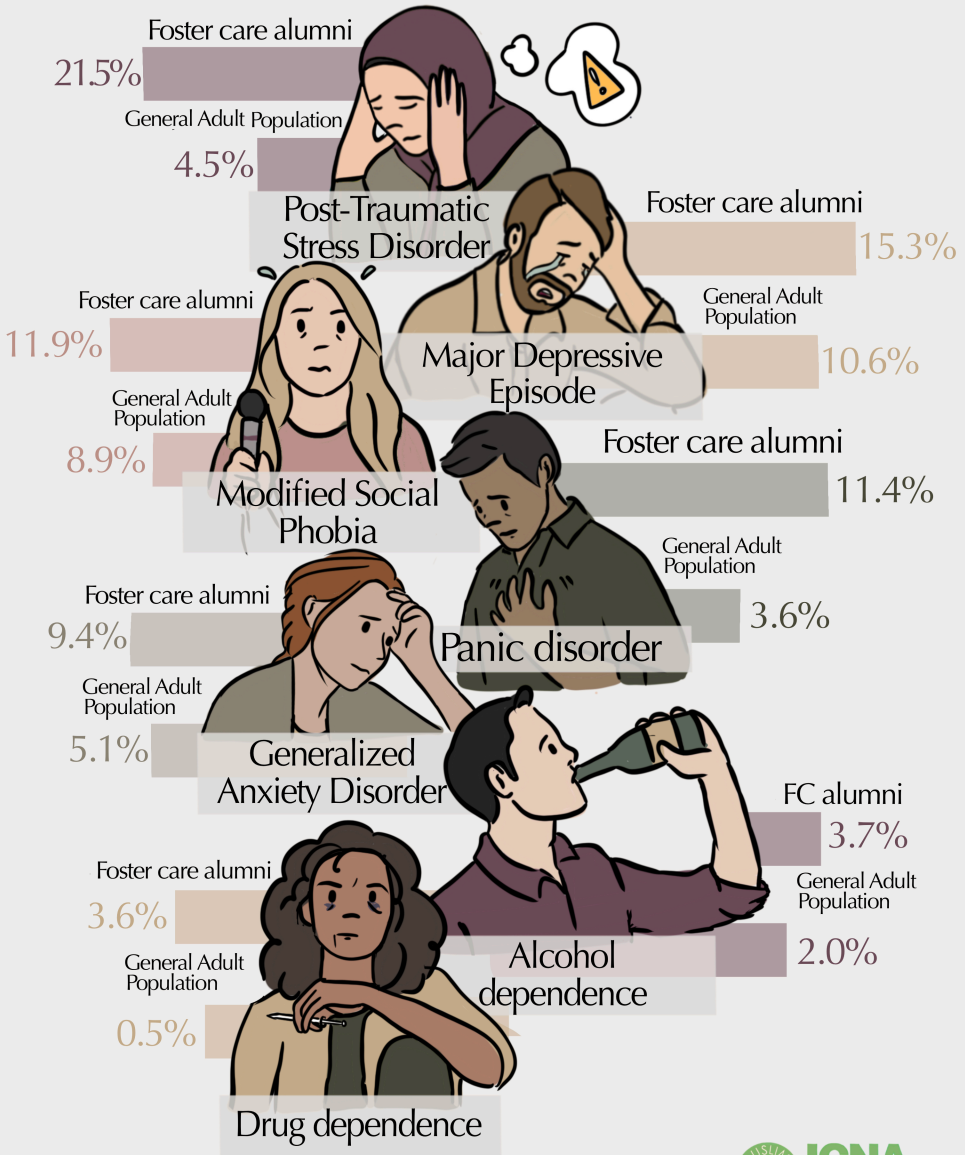


EXPERIENCE PTSD **2X** THE RATE OF WAR VETERANS

PSYCHOTROPIC MEDICATION IS PRESCRIBED AT A MUCH HIGHER RATE THAN TO THE GENERAL PUBLIC

In a study of adolescents' mental health in foster care, the following diagnosis was most common: ADHD, conduct disorder, major depression, oppositional defiant behavior, panic attack, and social phobia.

While in foster care, many children may still experience homelessness, food issues, financial issues, maltreatment, bullying or abuse by other children, etc. Studies show that those who grow up neglected have adverse effects in adulthood.



EACH YEAR
20k
 YOUNG ADULTS
 AGE OUT OF
 FOSTER CARE



TOO MANY
 foster youth begin
 their adult lives
WITHOUT
 RESOURCES,
 PREPARATION,
 OR GUIDANCE.
<https://nfyi.org/issues/health/>

The purpose of foster care is to keep children safe. For children to flourish, they must be safe mentally and physically and feel secure in a nurturing family and community.

CHILDRENS' FEELINGS IN FOSTER CARE

Children in foster care may experience things differently. The following is adapted from a booklet, *Maybe Days: A Book for Children in Foster Care* by Wilgocki & Wright (2002), Magination Press.



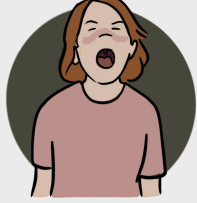
Relief and safety from actual danger, worry, or other stresses.



Happiness to develop into their best selves and enjoy being children.



Sadness about not living with parents



Anger at surrounding adults for putting them in a foster home.



Fear/worry about separation from family members



Self-blame even when they understand the reasons for the placement.



Shame that they are separated from their parents.



Loneliness from being away from home & relatives.

A conversation with the child about such feelings and how to resolve issues can help, maybe even using pictures rather than words for self-expression. Drawing something they miss, for example, can start a meaningful discussion. Listening is more important than telling the child what to do.



Genograms and family timelines are two techniques that can be used to know more about the child and their family circumstances. Genograms are family tree diagrams used by family therapists to gather information across three generations, and illuminate patterns, including alliances and conflicts. A family timeline is an assessment for children as their lives began in other families.

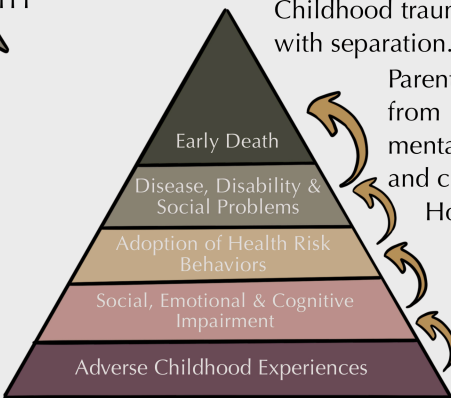
Besides ongoing support from foster families, the children in foster care also need structure, boundaries, consistency, and affection to provide them the direction and growth in their new family environment.



ICNA Relief Mental Health Series Booklet 4 on Youth Mental Health addresses many topics, including psychological wellness screening and counseling, diagnostic criteria for common mental illnesses, factors that influence youth mental health, when to see a professional, mental health first aid, tips on improving mental wellness, and our responsibilities as a community: https://www.academia.edu/87585546/Youth_Mental_Health_Booklet

Effects of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) on a child

DEATH



Childhood trauma from abuse at home followed with separation.

Parents are in prison, died, or suffer from substance abuse, which has mental health implications for parents and children.

Homelessness of parents.

In foster care, meeting with many new faces daily and fear the unexpected.

Lack of attachment to parents results in detachment, following with mental hardships.

BIRTH

<https://www.childwelfare.gov/fostercaremonth/awareness/facts/>
<https://www.safy.org/mental-health-among-children-in-foster-care/>
<https://www.ncsl.org/human-services/mental-health-and-foster-care>

Mental Health Booklet 6; MAY 2023

PSYCHOTROPIC MEDICATION

Studies estimate that youth in foster care use psychotropic medications at a much higher rate (ranging from 13-52 percent) than youth in the general population (4 percent). Additionally, there is significant variation in rates of medication in different geographic communities. Children in foster care also sometimes accumulate mental health diagnoses over time — and may not even be accurate.

Psychotropic medication used with children in foster care includes mood stabilizers, antipsychotics, anti-anxiety drugs, and stimulants.

Over the past decade, psychotropic medication use in children and youth in foster care has increased dramatically.

The Government Accountability Office (GAO) reports concomitant use of five or more psychotropic drugs in foster and non-foster children that fall short of the best principles guidelines published by the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry (AACAP). The American Association of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry recommends guidelines for psychotropic meds:

<https://www.gao.gov/products/gao-12-201>

https://www.aacap.org/AACAP/Policy_Statements/2018/Appropriate_Use_of_Psychiatric_Medication_for_Youth_in_Foster_Care.aspx

FOSTER PARENT REQUIREMENTS



21+ years old



Financially stable



Own/rent residence



Have separate living space for youth



Be above the poverty level

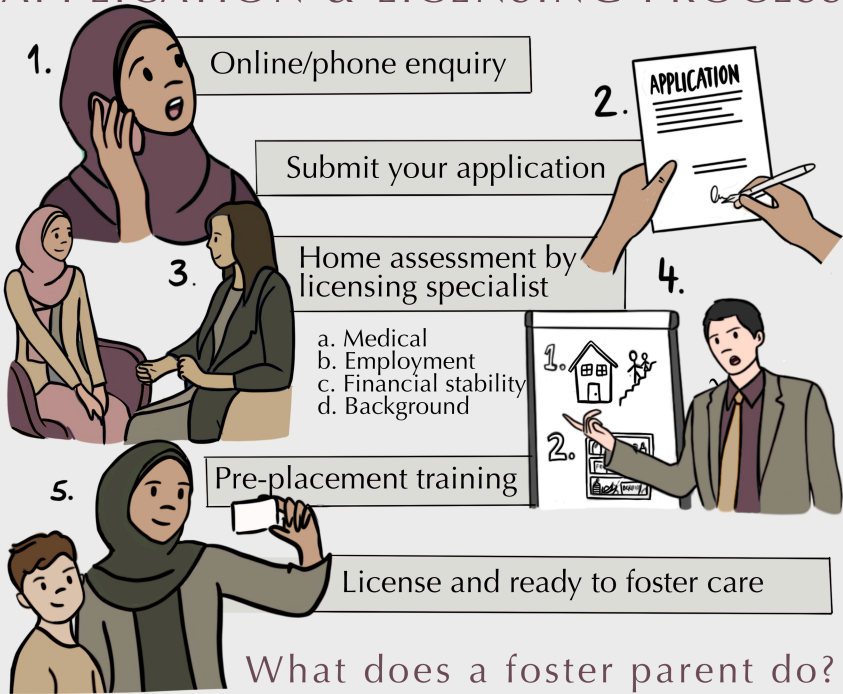


Pass background check

<https://www.childwelfare.gov/state-resources/>

<https://www.childwelfare.gov/nfcad/>

APPLICATION & LICENSING PROCESS



- Receive training on available program services and stay current on related health topics
- Coordinate and attend all health care appointments to meet the needs of the child in their care
- Collaborate with the parent and Child Protective Services (CPS) team to ensure healthcare needs are identified and addressed
- Provide updates on medical visits and immunizations to the Foster Care Health Nurse Consultant (FCHNC) and the Child Protection Service Worker (CPSW)



Why do we need Muslim foster parents?



Muslim children entering the Foster Care System find themselves abandoned by the community, and we must provide a Muslim environment for those children's identity, beliefs, and cultural preservation. FATE encourages all Muslims to follow in Prophet Muhammad's (PBUH) 's footsteps by opening their hearts and fulfilling the beautiful Sunnah of Kafala.

ICNA RELIEF FOSTER ADVOCACY PROGRAM

The ICNA Relief Foster Advocacy Training and Education (FATE) Program was founded in 2017 in Dallas, TX, and has grown into other states with nine liaisons serving different regions. This program aims to provide a safe home for every Muslim child in foster care.

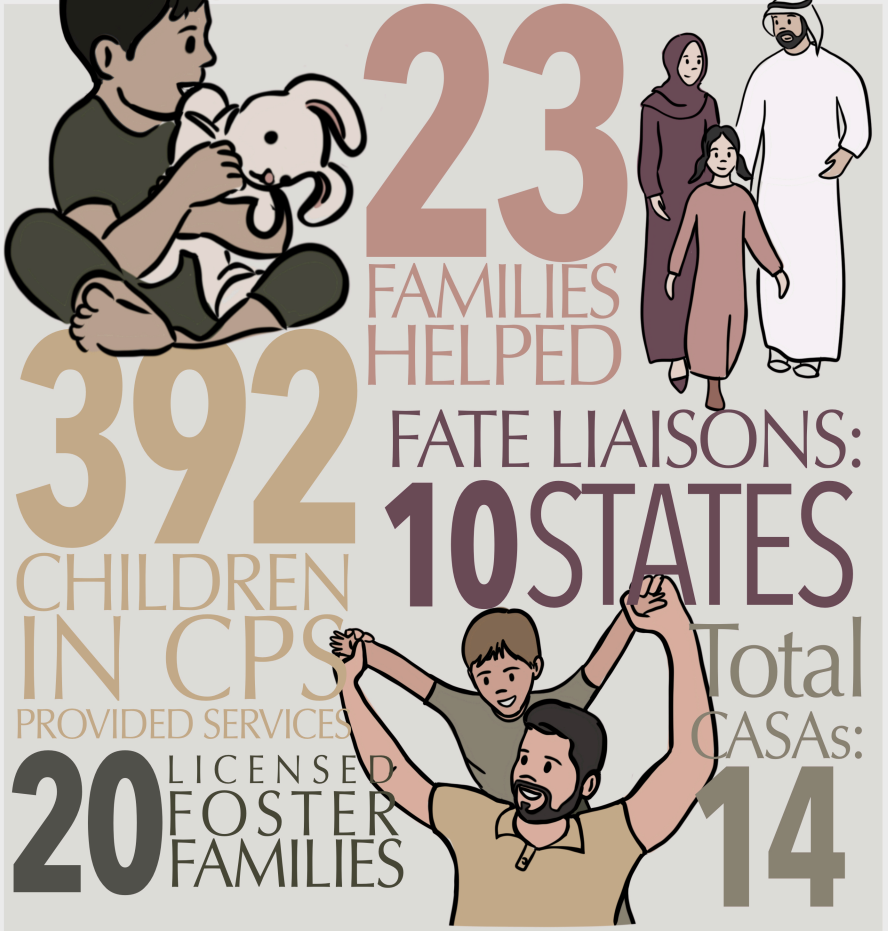


We connect children in foster care to Muslim foster homes and with mentors in our communities. The program also guides and supports foster families by connecting them to proper resources and assisting them on their journey to help the children in need. In partnership

with child welfare agencies, we assist unaccompanied minors who arrived from Afghanistan and extend service providers with religious and cultural competency training.

<https://www.icnarelief.org/fate>

FATE Program (2022)



Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA)



For persons willing to help but not ready to become foster parents, becoming a CASA is an option. CASAs must observe and engage the foster child in the new environment and report findings to the judge. In this way, a well-informed and unbiased decision is made in the child's best interest.

MY INSPIRATION

The author of this booklet fortunately became the first Muslim CASA in the State of Washington recently. The stories of unaccompanied refugee minors arriving in the US from Afghanistan and staying in government shelters long before moving into a foster home inspired me to become their voice in the court. Also, during my training as CASA, almost everyone asked about my source of inspiration. I told them that my grandfather, who ran an orphanage in India, inspired me as a child. I could not forget his care for abandoned children, which eventually led me to become the voice of children experiencing foster care in America.



FOSTER CARE IN ISLAM

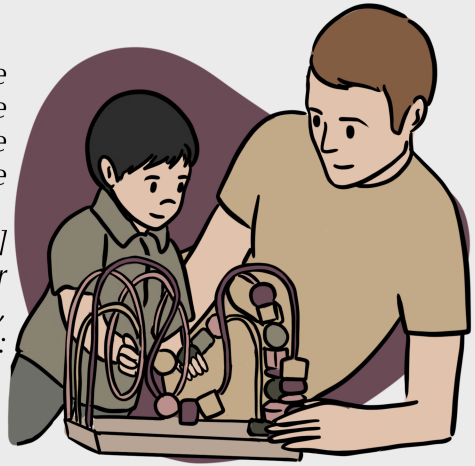
The Quran made caring for orphans a compulsory part of religion. The topic of orphans and abandoned children is mentioned more than 23 times in 22 verses in the Quran and in the prophet's sayings (PBUH).



- ‘They ask you, [O Muhammad], what they should spend [in charity]. Say, “Whatever you spend of good is [to be] for parents and relatives, orphans, the needy, and the traveler. And whatever you do of good - indeed, Allah knows of it.”’ Al Baqarah: 215
- ‘Righteousness is not that you turn your faces toward the east or west, but (true) righteousness in one who believes in Allah, the Last Day, the angels, the Book, and the prophets, and gives wealth, despite the love for it, to relatives, orphans, the needy...’ Baqarah: 177

- *Have you seen the one who denies the Recompense [the religion]? For that is the one who drives away the orphan'. Al-Ma'un: 1-2*

- *"And they [the righteous] give food despite the love for it to the needy, the orphan, and the captive....' Al-Insan: 8*



PROPHETIC SAYINGS

- *"I and the caretaker of the orphan will be in Paradise together like this, raising his forefinger and middle finger jointly." -- Sahih Bukhari.*

- *"Bring the orphan close to you, pat them on their head, and feed them the same food you eat. It will soften your heart and fulfill your need." – Makarim al-Akhlaq lil Kharaiti 661.*



In Arabic, the term Kafalah is used for guardianship of a child who is deprived of the family environment and is highly encouraged.

There are specific rulings on kafala that are available here:

<https://fiqh-council.org/the-islamic-position-regarding-the-care-of-orphans-and-abandoned-children/>
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u0BidbbUScc>
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v3JoPqmQPfO>
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_SE2UBXrjTY
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p00R3W-Bjo8>
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yD6ozNtYfgI>

Muslim Foster Care Programs in the US

<https://icnarelief.org/muslim-family-services/>

<https://muslimfostercare.org/>

<https://www.muslimadoptionnetwork.org/about/>

MENTAL HEALTH OF FOSTER PARENTS

The experience of fostering children can be stressful for some people. The two most common challenges are the child's problematic behavior and the foster parent's lack of confidence to manage a child.

The behaviors of children with a history of abuse and neglect can be confusing. They can be misinterpreted as a sign of rejection rather than an understanding that it can be due to communication issues with the child going through anxieties and fears.

Improving the skills and confidence of foster parents to manage the complex difficulties of children in their care is fundamental to placement stability and positive outcomes. Training for foster parents is seen as an essential part of preparing and supporting them with the task of fostering.



A CASE DEPICTING THE NEED FOR MUSLIM FOSTER CARE PARENT

As this booklet was being finalized, ICNA Relief Muslim Family Services received this request from a social worker in New Jersey: "Two Autistic children around 10 and 11 years old lost their mom to brain cancer. They have no family here in America. We are looking for a Muslim family to foster/adopt them. The kids are under the supervision of Child Protective Services, so there will be state assistance financially and help in caring for them. If anyone knows of a middle-aged woman/couple, who could take on the responsibilities...."

Our FATE services immediately had the children placed with their relatives and were provided with the needed assistance. The mental health of these children is dangerously affected by the passing of their mother, and the Muslim community has an opportunity to meet its religious obligations by helping such children.

For more information on ICNA Relief FATE see <https://icnarelief.org/fate/>

