An estimated 40% to 60% of children in foster care have clinically significant emotional or behavioral problems. Children in foster care experience a range of complex psychosocial issues due to a loss of stability in a foundational biological family unit. Research shows that placement type may have an impact on a child’s socioemotional resiliency and level of access to needed mental health services. In order to provide quality care to foster children in the healthcare setting, it is important to know the effect that placement type has on a child’s individual needs. The purpose of this literature review was to evaluate the effect of foster home placement type, specifically kinship foster care compared to non-kinship foster care, on foster child resilience. Methods included evaluation of systematic reviews, descriptive research, and cohort studies. This review synthesizes results from 11 articles comparing beneficial and negative effects of both kinship and non-kinship foster care on various indicators of child well-being including behavior, mental health, financial resources, and placement stability. A recent interview with a current registered nurse is included to support the clinical significance of this review as it evaluates the effect of placement type on a foster child's access to necessary healthcare and socioemotional ability to develop trusting relationships with healthcare providers. Ultimately, there was no evidence to prove that either kinship or non-kinship foster care had an overall more desirable effect than the other on resilience. Rather, research suggests that each may offer solutions to specific needs - kinship care providing more beneficial psychosocial effects through maintenance of biological attachment and non-kinship care providing more beneficial economic effects by offering properly trained caregivers and historically increased resources. While further research is needed due to an insufficient evidence base, the existing research seems to suggest that the most effective placement type for a child needs to be determined based on his individual set of needs. Increasing support for kinship families may bridge the gap of benefits in foster care placement type by integrating biological ties and adequate resources into one effective form of foster care.


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Abstract Summary:
This literature review evaluated the effect of foster home placement type on foster child resilience. Existing literature was evaluated and synthesized to compare the negative and positive effects of both kinship and non-kinship foster care on various indicators of child resilience including behavior, mental health, financial resources, and placement stability.

Content Outline:
1. Introduction
   a. This literature review seeks to answer the following question: In foster children who have been removed from their biological families, what is the effect of kinship foster care compared to non-kinship foster care on resiliency?
   b. Definition of terms:
      - *Kinship foster care* is defined as “the formal placement of children removed from their familial homes with persons related to the child through blood, marriage, or adoption”
      - *Non-kinship foster care* is defined as “the formal placement of children with adults who are licensed by the local child welfare authority to provide care for wards of state”
      - *Resiliency* can be described as “the capacity of a child to recover from disruptive and potentially traumatic experiences by means of psychosocial supports and adequate economic resources.”

2. RN Interview
   a. Clinical significance of placement type as it relates to foster child's ability to trust healthcare providers and receive appropriate care

3. Methods

4. Results
   a. Assessment tools
      - Child Behavior Checklist (CBCL)
      - National Survey of Child and Adolescent Well-Being (NSCAW)
   b. Outcomes
      - Within Kinship Foster Care
-- Studies suggest there are beneficial effects on resilience for children in kinship foster care evidenced by decreased behavioral problems, decreased mental health problems, increased placement stability, and maintenance of biological ties.

-- Studies suggest there are negative effects on resilience for children in kinship foster care evidenced by decreased financial resources and a need for increased support for kinship families. Kinship families would clearly benefit from increased government funding and compensation, but also from non-monetary supports including group services and fewer caseworker visits.

- Within Non-Kinship Foster Care

-- Studies suggest there are beneficial effects on resilience for children in non-kinship foster care evidenced by increased financial resources.

-- Studies suggest there are negative effects on resilience for children in non-kinship foster care evidenced by increased behavioral problems.

- Mixed Outcomes

-- 25% of our articles reported no significant difference in behavioral or mental health problems among children between the two types of foster care. This data goes against much prior research, which seems to suggest an overall positive effect of kinship foster care on behavioral and mental health.

5. Critical Appraisal

6. Discussion & Recommendation

a. More research is needed because of an insufficient evidence base. Kinship foster care may be able to promote the socioemotional resilience of a child by maintaining biological attachment and stability. Non-kinship foster care may be able to promote economic resilience of a child by offering properly trained caregivers and historically increased resources. The most effective placement type for a child needs to be determined based on his individual set of needs.

7. Limitations

a. The strength of this recommendation must be assigned Grade B, according to the Joanna Briggs Institute Recommendation Grading Scale, because there is no clear evidence that the desirable effects of one form of foster care outweigh the other.

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**Author Summary:** Alyssa Bergthold and Heidi Vizino are current senior nursing students at Cedarville University and performed this literature review in an evidence based practice course. Though "foster care" does not seem a topic specific to nursing, they chose it to advocate for interdisciplinary collaboration within the healthcare setting to promote holistic care and are passionate about healthy pediatric psychosocial development within the foster care system.

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**Author Summary:** Alyssa Bergthold and Heidi Vizino are current senior nursing students at Cedarville University and performed this literature review in an evidence based practice course. Though "foster care" does not seem a topic specific to nursing, they chose it to advocate for interdisciplinary collaboration within the healthcare setting to promote holistic care and are passionate about healthy pediatric psychosocial development within the foster care system.