



nurture.
inspire.
empower.

Urgent Mental Health Needs

Baltimore's Adoptive, Foster & Kinship Families

C.A.S.E. is a national leader in mental health services for the adoption and foster care community. We have improved the lives of thousands of children who are adopted or in foster care through counseling, lifelong education, and a growing nationwide network of trained professionals. At the forefront of developing and delivering specialized therapy, C.A.S.E. promotes improvements in child welfare and mental health systems through education and training that dramatically increases the healing potential of families nationwide.

Critical Need. The severity of children's mental health symptoms have spiked due to the COVID-19 pandemic, with requests for financial assistance from C.A.S.E. doubling. **Your help is needed now to raise \$650,000 to launch operations in Baltimore City and meet the urgent mental health needs of 100 families.** In honor of our 20th anniversary in 2018, C.A.S.E. launched the \$5 million Growing Together Campaign to increase access to our high-quality services, particularly for vulnerable children in the Baltimore area. We raised \$97,000 to help open a Towson office in October 2018 and co-locate with the Baltimore City Department of Social Services (BCDSS) in 2020, when the coronavirus struck. While we are serving families via telehealth, BCDSS had to put the office plans on hold and now faces budget cuts, while local foundations have focused on other emergency needs.

Unique Challenges of Adoption and Foster Care.

Due to traumatic life experiences and compromised beginnings, many children who are adopted or are in guardianship have higher risks for developmental, health, emotional, behavioral and academic challenges.



Teens who are adopted are **twice** as likely to be diagnosed with a behavioral disorder as non-adopted teens.



The prevalence of **substance abuse** was **43% higher among adoptees** than non-adoptees, according to a 2012 study published in the journal PLOS One.



All children who are adopted are affected by loss and grief as a result of the process.

Why might children who are adopted or in foster care be at higher risk?

-  Poor prenatal care
-  Prenatal exposure to toxic substances
-  Early childhood breaks in attachment
-  Maltreatment and trauma
-  Institutionalization including multiple caregivers
-  Genetic vulnerabilities

Baltimore's Children. As of November 2020, **1,898 children in Baltimore City are in foster care due to neglect maltreatment and abuse.** With schools closed, children are disconnected from peers and support services, while families face greater financial stress and hardship, often putting children at greater risk. While the majority of children in care will return to their birth parents, about 24% (455 children) will need to find new forever families. Sadly, nearly 150 teens age out of foster care in Baltimore City annually without being adopted. They are more likely to drop out of school, experience early parenthood, homelessness and incarceration. These children and teens are particularly vulnerable with "compromised" mental health exacerbated by COVID-19. C.A.S.E. therapists have seen a rise in regressive behaviors and depressive symptoms as social isolation continues, poor hygiene and self-care, self-harming, running away and children with increased suicidal thinking and suicide attempts requiring hospitalization.

Outcomes. C.A.S.E. will help low-income city families overcome these challenges through free specialized individual and family therapy, case management, psychiatric support, education and training. We will be guided by our Baltimore Advisory Committee and work in partnership with BCDSS. By 2022, our two-year program outcomes will include:

- 100 families served by adoption-competent therapists
- 90% of families prevent dissolution of adoption or placement
- 90% report being very satisfied with C.A.S.E. services
- 85% of caregivers report improved child mood and behavior
- 75 BCDSS professionals complete 20-hour C.A.S.E. online training and strengthen ability to meet families' needs
- 600 caregivers and professionals participate in 20 webinars



Why C.A.S.E.? With 6 offices in the Baltimore-Washington metro area, C.A.S.E. has served more than 6,500 counseling clients and their families since 1998. In 2019 we provided therapy to 44 Baltimore County and City residents and their participating family members, reaching 67 in 2020, offering services via telehealth since March. Our therapists apply a family-systems, trauma-informed approach and are uniquely qualified to meet the complex needs of adoptive, foster and kinship families. Our therapists have completed our 72-hour *Training for Adoption Competency* program and are *Certified Telebehavioral Health Practitioners*. Through our national network of partners, C.A.S.E. has trained over 14,000 mental health and child welfare professionals in 22 states, expanded the use of best practices and raised national awareness of adoption and foster care issues.

Funding Opportunity. The \$650,000 raised now will be complemented by \$110,476 from C.A.S.E. grants to support webinars and BCDSS staff training, plus anticipated in-kind rent starting June 2021. Your investment will allow C.A.S.E. to offer free services to the families in greatest need and establish a city presence close to public transportation. It will allow us to reinforce the capacity of BCDSS, build on our partnership with Baltimore City Public Schools and establish the foundation to attract additional funding for Baltimore.

Expenses Covered by Individual Donors	2021	2022	TOTAL
Staff – Includes full-time Program Manager and therapist, plus part-time psychiatrist and case manager to provide integrated care hired by March 2021, plus an additional therapist in 2022	\$228,289	\$342,692	\$570,982
Evaluation – Ensures further development of the field by allowing C.A.S.E. to learn, assess and improve our services and products	\$15,256	\$16,187	\$31,443
Outreach – Increases visibility to help families learn about our services through advertising, events and presentations	\$8,636	\$7,170	\$15,806
Office Expenses – Travel, phone, IT, equipment, furniture	\$17,929	\$13,840	\$31,769
SUBTOTAL	\$270,111	\$379,889	\$650,000
Expenses Covered by C.A.S.E. Grants - Webinars, BCDSS staff training, in-kind rent, financial assistance for 4 families, Wendy's Wonderful Kids Recruiter	\$48,910	\$61,566	\$110,476
TOTAL PROGRAM EXPENSE	\$319,021	\$441,455	\$760,476



For more information visit adoptionsupport.org/growingtogether or contact Tamara Arsenault, Director of Development, arsenault@adoptionsupport.org or (301) 476-8525.