

## Jeremy Jewel (Psychology)

### **Grant submitted: DHSS – \$213,000 – “Influence of Family Environment in Treatment Foster Care”**

The general purpose of this study is to understand how foster children’s perceptions of their biological families and foster families relate to problematic behaviors exhibited while in treatment. This study will also investigate how various psychological diagnoses in children are related to foster children’s perceptions of their biological family as well as their foster families. The results of this project will guide foster families, and the public and private agencies that work with foster families, in determining the particular family environment that is most likely to increase the therapeutic effectiveness of treatment foster care. The Specific Aims of the study are:

1. To determine the relationship between foster children’s reports of the family environment of their treatment foster families (and biological families) and problematic behaviors exhibited while in such treatment.
2. To understand how current psychological diagnoses of foster children are related to their reports on the family environment of their treatment foster families (and biological families).
3. To understand how foster children’s reports of the family environment of their biological families compare to reports on their treatment foster family.
4. To investigate how foster children’s reports of the family environment of their treatment foster families (as well as their biological families) change while residing in treatment foster care for six months, and whether this change differs by diagnostic category. Participants will consist of approximately 360 youth admitted across a 3 year period to a large treatment foster care facility in the Midwest. Information on the diagnoses of participants will be gathered by the Diagnostic Interview Schedule for Children, 4th Edition. The Self-Report Measure of Family Functioning for Children-Revised will gather information from youth regarding their perceptions of their family of origin as well as their treatment foster family at admission, 3 months after admission, and 6 months after admission. Treatment effectiveness and outcomes will be assessed through a sophisticated database (updated daily) of coded behaviors that youth exhibit while in treatment (Daily Incident Report). It is hoped that the results of this project will illuminate the family relationships, structure, and processes that are related to increased positive behaviors in foster care. Additionally, this study will examine how this relationship between family environment and behaviors in foster care may be effected by the diagnoses of the child.