DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this dissertation is the result of my independent investigation, and that all sources used have been acknowledged by means of complete references.

___________________________   _________________
NOMVULA BEAUTY MLAMLA       DATE
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This dissertation is dedicated to all of you with all my love and appreciation.

BEAUTY
ABSTRACT

South Africa is facing a high rate of children in need of care due to high escalation of the HIV/AIDS related illness. The children are being left without biological parents, and they are eventually placed in the foster care custody of their extended families. Sometimes there are challenges that are experienced by the foster parents and the adolescents’ foster children, as a result the adolescents’ foster children end up leaving school. Foster care learners who stay away from school or who have been entered on the register then absent themselves for substantial parts of the day, are more likely to grow up unhappy and unfulfilled, leaving school much less qualified than they might otherwise be and worst of all sometimes get drawn into a life of crime (Collins, 1998).

The overall aim of this study is to explore the factors that contribute to adolescent foster children not completing their high school education and developing strategies to retain adolescents’ foster children in school. Placing the adolescents’ foster children into institutions like industrial schools and children’s homes hoping that the children’s behavior will change should be considered as the last resort that the professionals should do.

The objectives of the study are:

- To survey literature on foster care education,
- To analyse the scope of the concept “foster care” in terms of current practice,
- To investigate problems that are encountered by the foster parents and how do they deal with the teenagers’ problems,
- To investigate the problems encountered by the teenagers or adolescents foster children, and also identify their unmet needs,
- To investigate the problems encountered by the foster children while still at school,
- To identify challenges of educators towards foster care learners.
Qualitative research methodology was applied with the researcher selecting participatory action research to engage adolescents’ foster children, foster parents and educators in the study. The study was exploratory and qualitative in nature. Focus groups were utilized as the method of information gathering. The focus group was conducted with adolescent foster children, foster parents and educators. The focus group sessions with the children comprised of ten adolescent foster children that did not complete their high school education. The focus group session with the foster parents comprised of ten parents caring for adolescent foster children who left school. The focus group with the educators comprised of six educators who taught foster children, three educators were from each of the two high schools in Naledi, Soweto. The foster children and foster parents were recruited from the researcher’s case load in Soweto.

An interview schedule was used as a framework for facilitating the discussion in the focus groups. The group sessions were recorded with the permission of the members and transcribed. The researcher took notes, and recorded observations during the session. Data analysis was done according to, Marshall and Rossman’s six stages which are organizing the data, generating categories, coding the data, testing the emerging hypothesis, searching for alternative explanations of data, and writing the report.

The findings from the study were as follows:

- Adolescents’ foster children leave school at an early stage because they do not cope with their lessons. Forty percent of the learners are promoted to the next classes without the basic foundation from the primary schools. They experienced learning problems when they were in high school. Foster children who have learning problems in mainstream schools due to inappropriate placement end up not coping and the solution was to leave school. The influence of peer pressure also contributed to the adolescents’ learners to stay away from school and uncontrollable behavior was easily learned.
Lack of parental care was also identified by the respondents in the study as a contributory factor of the school drop-out of the adolescents’ foster children. Foster parents who do not take their responsibilities in raising the foster children with love, support and encouragement lead to high rate of learners school drop-out. The foster children end up playing a role of a parent whereby he or she will take care of the siblings.

There should be opportunities in an environment that support foster children’s education. Government should provide services equally to all learners. Scholarships and bursaries should also benefit the disadvantaged learners.

The study therefore recommended that, the educators should undertake training on screening learners with learning disabilities and place them in remedial schools. Foster care screening sessions should be conducted by the social workers before placing the child irrespective of related foster care or unrelated foster care. The supervision services by the social worker should be conducted every quarter in order the problems in foster care can be identified at an early stage. Motivation and support of foster learners by the foster family, educators and the community was recommended.
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CHAPTER ONE: GENERAL ORIENTATION TO THE STUDY

1.1 INTRODUCTORY BACKGROUND

Foster care has increased and forms a large proportion of Social Workers case loads in South Africa. It can be contributed to the impact of HIV and Aids related illnesses and deaths. According to the statistics of South African Social Service Agency (SASSA), in the Johannesburg region, 34833 foster care applications were approved in the year 2006. The number of foster children that are placed in the foster care increase every year. One of the reasons for the increase of foster care can be attributed to the high rate of HIV infection and death of biological parents. This leaves the burden of child rearing with the relatives, non-relatives and others being placed in the children’s homes. The report of the Department of Health "National HIV and Syphilis Sero-prevalence Survey in South Africa 2006", published in 2007 estimated that, the number of HIV/Aids infections in South Africa had risen to 5.3 million, close to 13% of the population. Based on the sample of 33,033 women attending 1,415 antenatal clinics across all nine provinces, the study conducted by the South African Department of Health Study (2007), estimates that 29, 1% of pregnant women were living with HIV in 2006.

At the 3rd South African Aids Conference that was held in Durban on the 5-8 June 2007, it was stated that Aids has became the third most common cause of death. Most children of HIV infected parents are not infected by the sickness but they are affected by the sickness and death of the parents. Children in foster care can be placed in children’s homes though the government is no longer encouraging children to be placed into a deeper system. Children can be placed with foster parents whom are not related to them, depending on the circumstances of the children. Children can be placed in the foster care custody of their relatives or family members that are known to them, and this placement is known as “kinship foster care.” Kinship foster care is regarded as the best option to keep children with their original families within the community. Kinship foster care is believed to minimize the negative effects of
placement with strangers and has a positive impact by being placed with relatives known to the child (Hegar & Scannapieco 1997, p31).
This intervention strategy promotes consistency for the child and preserves the family system (Berrick, 1997).

Sometimes there are problems that are experienced by the foster children and foster parents that lead the foster placement to discontinue. This occurs mostly during teenage stage of the children. At this stage social workers intervention is highly needed. Kin foster parents are mostly elderly persons who are grandparents of the children from a low socio economic background who enter into a kinship care unexpectedly due to familial responsibility, with the age range of 60 to 75. Teenage problems are stressful physically and emotionally to the kin foster parents (Elly 2003). Foster parents are faced with challenges of raising the children with limited support and service. They are also confronted with the situation of dealing with difficult children who display unacceptable bad behavior problems, as a result that foster parents are not equipped to deal with issues such as disciplines, emotional support, educational and moral development of the children in their care. In this stage, most of the teenagers display behavior problems. In terms of development theory, Zastrow &Kirst-Ashman (1997) quoted in Erickson that, teenagers are considered to be an identity versus confusion stage and characterized by movement from dependency to interdependency. During this stage, teenagers want to know more about their identity, who they are, and this is the period they want to explore life around their surroundings. This developmental stage is challenging for the care giver, the child concerned and it is bound to lead to conflict.

The focus of the study is on foster children who leave school before completing high school education. The study will be broken down into two different parts that will be focused on namely, the contributing factors of foster children who leave school before matriculation as well as the role of the Department of Education and foster parents in keeping the children at school during their teenage stage.
1.2 MOTIVATION FOR THE STUDY
The researcher's experiences as a field worker in the Department of Social Development mainly focusing on foster care observed the social workers case load of foster care that, the number of the foster children who leave school before matriculating in Johannesburg region has increased to 40%. Social Workers at the Department of Social Development have been receiving complains from foster parents about the foster children who stay away from school. They requested that, their foster children should be removed and placed at the Industrial Schools. They believe that placing the children in the institutions will be the solution. Children who are out of school end up associating themselves with criminal activities whereby social workers has to intervene when they are arrested as they are still protected by the Child Care Act 74 of 1983 as amended by the Act 96 of 1996. They become exposed to illegal acts and become involved in using substance abuse. Professionals who work with challenging youth often feel like busy firefighters because, as soon as they put out one fire, two or more start across town (Richardson, 2001). In this era, persons without better education do not make it far in life and they have very slim chances of getting meaningful work. They often end up living in poverty. In order for them to live an acceptable life, they need to have self empowered behavior and focus on their schooling. The researcher’s concern is to develop strategies of retaining foster children in school.

1.3 PROBLEM STATEMENT AND RESEARCH QUESTON
The problem statement stems from the motivation of the study, and can be broken down into certain components drawn from observation in practice as well as literature survey. The following questions will be addressed in this study:

1. What are the attitudes of the foster children towards the family foster care?
2. Do the foster children appear to feel secure at home and at school?
3. Are the foster children provided with a secure base?
4. Are there any wider resources that contribute to foster children attachment network?
5. To what extend do the foster children show interest in school and learning?
Do foster parents facilitate the children’s learning and school attendance?
What opportunities are there in the wider environment to support the foster child education?
Does the school offer life skills programme for the pupil?

1.4 GOALS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY
1.4.1 Aim of the study
Fouche in de Vos (2005) describes this concept in a broader and abstract sense and defines “aim as the end “towards which effort or ambition is directed. The aim of the study is to explore the reasons why foster children not completing their high school education in order to develop strategies that will assist social workers in retaining adolescents’ foster children in school.

1.4.2 The objective of the study
Fouche in de Vos (2005) defines an objective as the more concrete, measurable and speedily attainable conceptions of the end towards which effort or ambition are directed. The objectives of the study are indicated as follows:
1 To survey literature on foster care and education
2 To analyse the scope of the concept “foster care” in terms of current practice.
3 To investigate problems that are encountered by the foster parents and how do they deal with the teenager’s problems.
4 To investigate the problems encountered by the teenagers those are placed in the care and also identify their unmet needs.
5 To investigate the problems encountered by the foster children while still at school.
6 To identify challenges of educators towards foster care learners.
7 To select a sample of respondents from the researchers foster care case load
8 To collect data from focused groups namely foster children, foster parents and educators.
1.5 RESEARCH APPROACH

1.5.1 Approach
A qualitative approach is utilized. The definition of exploratory research by Creswell (2003) is consistent with a qualitative approach. The proposed research seek to gain insight regarding the contributing factors that lead adolescents foster children not completing their high school education.

1.5.2 Type of study
An exploratory study will be undertaken. According to Neumann (2000), exploratory studies are "… concerned with the generation of tentative insight and explanations which can be studied more rigorously at other levels of research".

1.5.3 Research design
Creswell (2003) defines design in the qualitative context as “the entire process of research from conceptualizing a problem, to writing the narrative”. The author further acknowledge that the differences in the use of research design or strategy depends largely on aspects such as the purpose of the study, the nature of the research question, the skills and research available to the researcher.

The study is an exploratory research project, which follows a qualitative approach. The study consists of three focus groups namely: first group 10 foster children, second group 10 foster parents, and third group 6 educators. As indicated Krueger and Casey (2000) focus groups enables a comparison of groups within a particular category and also across different groups. This is referred to as multiple-category-design.

1.5.4 Sampling
A research is aimed at facilitating a multiple category design. Three focus groups of foster children not completed high school education, foster parents of the concern foster children and educators will be conducted in the study. A purposive sample
would be derived from the population of foster care case load in Naledi Soweto. The population consists of 436 foster children in Naledi. From total number of population 26 participants have been selected through purposive sampling. The group has constructed as follows:

Group 1: This group includes 10 adolescents’ foster children
Group 2: This group includes 10 foster parents
Group 3: This group consists of 6 educators, from two high schools in Naledi.

1.5.5 Collection of data
Focus group discussions with each group will be utilized for obtaining the data. Krueger (2000) describe the focus group interview as a “purposive discussion of a specific topic or related topic taking place between eight to ten individuals with a similar background and common interests”.

Since focus groups tend to promote self-disclosure, the selection of manageable groups has been found to be appropriate. These groups will allow the participants to share their experiences or/and perceptions, while allowing the researcher to conduct proper observations and recording of emerging trends and themes. Discussions during the focus groups sessions will be tape recorded with the consent of the participants. Notes on the discussions are to be written down.

1.5.6 Data Analysis
The approach by Marshal and Ross (1999) is used for analyzing the data. Six stages are identified namely, organization of data, generation of categories, coding, testing tentative hypothesis in relation to the data, exploring alternative explanations of data, writing the report. This approach seeks to maintain a balance between efficiency and flexibility.

1.5.7 Ethical Consideration
The informed consent of participants is to be obtained prior to participation in the focus group interviews. Consent for the tape recording of interviews is to be
obtained. The issue of confidentiality is to be discussed with the participants. This includes the role of participants as well as the role of the researcher in maintaining confidentiality. Participants are to be informed about who has access to the material from focus group discussion and the disseminations of the research findings, before consent is obtained, therefore it is appropriate to share the findings with the participants. Confidentiality is addressed by ensuring the anonymity of individual participants.

1.6 DEFINITION OF CONCEPTS

Kinship
Kinship care is the full time nurturing and protection of children who must be separated from their parents by relatives, members of their tribes or clans, godparent’s stepparents or other adults who have a kinship bond with the child (Hegar L. & Scannapieco M. 1999).

Foster Care
Foster care is defined in the Children’s Act No.38 of 2005 amended by Act of July 2007, as “the placement by means of an order of the children’s court, in the custody of a suitable family or individual, willing to act as foster parents of the child. The child is generally maintained by the aid of a foster child grant paid by the State, with a corresponding duty on the part of a parent to contribute towards the child’s maintenance in the form of contribution order. According to Webb (2003), he further defines foster care as a temporary arrangement for a child’s care in a substitute home when parents cannot fulfill their parental responsibility because of some serious situation. A child’s stay in foster care may be as short as overnight or as long as it takes to achieve a permanent plan for the child.

Foster child
Is a child who is in need of care and he or she has been placed in foster care custody of the parent or guardian (Hegar & Scannapieco. 1999, p3).
**Foster Parent**
A foster parent is an individual who has the custody of the child who is in need of care by the order of the court (Hegar & Scannapieco. 1999, p3) According to the researcher; the foster parent can be related or non-related.

**School**
Is an institution or an environment setting that comprised of pupil , teachers and other staff members. The teachers provide formal education to pupil and it is govern by the Department of Education.

**Matriculate**
When a student or pupil has passed grade twelve or finished his or her schooling (Finkelstein, et al, 2002). According to South African Department of Education, a matriculate is known as a person who passed his/her grade 12 or who completed a high school education.

**Teenager**
A teenager is a young person whose age starts from thirteen years to nineteen years old. In terms of developmental theory, the teenage stage is considered to be an identity versus confusion stage and characterized by movement from dependency to independency (Zastrow & Kirst-Ashman 1997, p.73)

**Uncontrollable Behavior**
Vera Institution of Justice (2002) defines uncontrollable behavior as an unacceptable behavior that is displayed by the youngsters in a society. The behavior is mostly consisting of anger, aggression, frustrations, impossible and stubbornness of the child.

**Life Skills**
Richardson (2001) defines life skills as something which the individual needs to sustain and enrich life. Life skills are primary skills necessary for an individual’s
physical and emotional well-being which will help people cope with development tasks.

**Self-empowered Behavior**

Self-empowerment means believing that, and having the abilities to identify the alternatives in any situation, to choose one on the basis of one’s values, priorities and commitments (Richardson, 2001).

Self empowered behavior entails the following:
- An individual observing himself and believing he is able to change and have the skills to change.
- An awareness of desired outcomes and the active process required to achieve them, and the ability to practically implement the action plan.
- The ability to empower other people (for example take charge of their lives).

**Attitude**

It is an enduring system with a cognitive component, an effective component and a behavioral tendency (Freedman, 1999)

**1.7. RESEARCH LIMITATIONS**

The identified topic of research has been identified through work experience, and the main problem that the researcher experienced was, lack of sufficient reference material on the topic. There is a lack of sufficient literature that focuses on children not completing their high school education.

The researcher may be limited by a tendency of resistance among other teen foster children which is likely to affect sharing of information by the participants. Other participants (foster children) are likely not to participate full during the focus group sessions. The dishonest and manipulative of the participants (foster children) with regard to the information they give, might affect the outcome of the study.
There is a challenge posed by the fact that, the languages to used in groups will be African languages (Sotho and Zulu) and thus for academic requirements, the researcher would be expected to translate transcribe to English.

1.8 OVERVIEW CHAPTERS
The report consists of five chapters and a bibliography. A brief outline of what each chapter contains will follow:

**Chapter one:** This will be a general orientation to the study whereby a brief discussion will cover the motivation for the study, goals and objectives of the study and the definition of concepts.

**Chapter two:** Describes the theoretical and conceptual framework of a study that involves a literature review. It raises areas of concern with regard to foster children without basic education.

**Chapter three:** This chapter focuses on research methodology that will briefly illustrate on research design, data collection method, research approaches, sampling and data analysis.

**Chapter four:** This chapter puts forward the findings of the research. It analyzes and evaluates the findings with specific emphasis on the linkages between the findings, the theoretical perspective, research interviews and the experience of the respondents.

**Chapter five:**
This chapter puts forward conclusions, suggestions and recommendations.

1.9 CONCLUSIONS
Based on the information given that the researcher is intending to conduct the study, it is believed that the findings will make a great contribution in assisting the
foster children who leave school at an early stage, and retain them in school so that they can have bright future with education. This problem affects everyone in the society and it creates a platform for criminals. The research study will make the educators aware of the problem and work together with the social workers to address the problem.
CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

In order to conceive the research topic in a way that permits a clear formulation of the problem and the hypothesis, background information of the study is necessary. “This is obtained mainly by reading whatever has been published that appears relevant to the research topic” (Bless & Higson-Smith, 1997, p. 22). The purpose of review is to relate previous research to the problem under investigation (Mc Millan, 2004). The researcher’s main aim is to build a body of knowledge on the topic and also to enable the reader to gain further insight from the purpose and the outcome of the study (Mc Millan and Schumacher 1997, p.112).

The literature review also indicates the results of other studies that are closely related to the study (Creswell, 2003). All the above mentioned quotes illustrates that, a literature review is important in every research. Before one can give a theoretical overview of foster children who do not complete their high school education, it is essential to explore more on foster care and attitudes of adolescent’s foster children towards placement.

2.2 FOSTER CARE

Foster care is defined in the Children’s Act 38 of 2005 as amended by Act of July 2007, as “the placement by means of an order of the children’s court, in the custody of a suitable family or individual, willing to act as foster parents of the child. The child is generally maintained by the aid of a foster child grant paid by the State, with a corresponding duty on the part of a parent to contribute towards the child’s maintenance in the forms of contribution order.

“Foster care refers to the substitute family care for the children who cannot be adequately maintained and cared for at their home of origin and simultaneous welfare services has to provide for these children and their families to help resolve the situation that led to the need for placement” (Crumbley & Little, 1998, p.23).
Foster care is seen by the Child Welfare League Association as “the full time nurturing and protection of children, who are separated from their parents, by relatives, members of their tribe/clan, godparents, stepparents or other adults who have a kinship bond with a child “(http://www.cwla.org/programe). Foster care is believed to be provided by family members.

According to the South African Children’s Act 38 of 2005, the purpose of foster care is that, children who were removed from their natural parents are vulnerable children, and they have special needs such as social, emotional, physical and psychological support so as to prevent secondary statutory services. However it is a reality that has been observed in practice that foster care is on the increase. The increase in foster care can be attributed to the high rate of HIV infection and death of biological parents. This leaves the burden of child rearing with relatives, non-relatives and placing other children in the institutions. (Mason & Liask, 2001) also support this statement in that HIV epidemic is one of the reasons for an increase in foster care.

According to the statistics of South African Social Security (SASSA) in Johannesburg Region, the approved foster care applications were as follows:
Approved foster care application in 2005=16578
Approved foster care application in 2006 =34833
The total number of new applicants that were paid out by Johannesburg region only in the year 2005-2006 is 51411.

Sometimes there are problems that foster children and foster parents experiences, such situation lead foster placement to discontinue. This occurs mostly during the adolescent’s stage of the children. Foster parents are mostly the elder persons whom are grand parents from a low socio economic background who enter into a kinship care unexpectedly due to familial responsibility, with the age range of 60 to 75. Teenage and adolescents problems are stressful physically and emotionally to the foster parents (Elly, 2003). In this stage, most of the teenagers display behavior
problems. In terms of development theory, (Zastrow & Kirst-Ashman 1997 quoted in Erickson), that teenage is considered to be an identity versus confusion stage and characterized by movement from dependency to interdependency. This stage, teenagers are anxious to know more about themselves. They want to know more about their identity, who they are, and this is the period where they want to explore life around their surroundings. The developmental stage is challenging for the care giver, the child concerned and it is bound to lead to conflict.

2.3 CHILD IN NEED OF CARE

Children’s Act No.38 of 2005 also elaborate on a child who is in need of care. A child who is need of care is placed in a substitute care in terms of Section (14)4 of the Child Care Act due to one or more of the following grounds:

(aA) the child has no parent or guardian who cannot be traced

(aB) the child:

(i) has been abandoned or is without visible means of support ;

(ii) displays behavior that cannot be controlled by his/her parents or the person in whose custody he/she is;

(iii) lives in circumstances likely to cause or conduce to his/her seduction, abduction or sexual exploitation

(iv) lives in, or is exposed to, circumstances that may seriously harm the physical, mental or social well-being of the child;

(v) is in a state of physical or mental neglect ;

(vi) has been physically, emotionally or sexually abused or ill-treated by his/her parents or guardian or person in whose custody he/she is;

(vii) is being maintained in contravention of section 10 of the Child Care Act.

A child, as described in the Children’s Act 38 of 2005, as amended by Act of 2007, must be found to be in need of care in terms of the grounds stated above. The removal of a child from parental care should be considered only where there is no alternative and where the well-being of the child is being treated.
2.4 PLACEMENT OPTIONS
A child who is in need of care can be placed with the following:

2.4.1 Institutions:
- Children’s Home or School of Industries
- Places of safety

2.4.2 Children’s Home or School of Industries
Not all children under statutory care are suitable for placement in foster care. Placement of a child in an Institution such as a children’s home or a school of industries might offer a better option to address the child’s developmental needs in accordance with his or her age and maturity.
A children’s home or school of industries may be the option for alternative care in cases where:
- the placement of a child in the custody of the parent or guardian in terms of Section 15(1) (a) of the Act has failed; or
- the placement of the child in foster care in terms of Section 15 (1) (b) of the Act, has failed; or
- the prospective parents are not suitable to foster child; or
- where the age of the child may be prohibitive for a foster care placement.

2.4.3 Place of safety
This is a temporal placement. A child can be placed in a place of safety in the institution or with a suitable parent pending the designation. A child can remain in the place of safety while the social worker investigates the case.

2.4.4 Foster homes
According to the Children’s Act 38 of2005, the choice of foster home is of the utmost importance. It makes no sense to place a child in a foster home that is suitable simply for the sake of accommodation. It often happens that in practice a very young child is placed with a young couple. For fear of losing the child, they either does not encourage access by the parent to the child or intentionally make access impossible
while co-operation with the supervisory social worker is lacking. Consequently the possibility of restoring the child to the custody of the parent or guardian becomes virtually impossible and the best interests of the child are not served by such a placement. Such placements are not in the interest of the parent, guardian or a child and are often responsible for a child having to be transferred from one foster home to another, thereby causing him or her untold damage. There may be grounds to remove a child from such a placement by means of a transfer in terms of Section 34(1) or an urgent removal in terms of Section 36(2)(a) which could be quite traumatic for the child and foster parents. The unselfish rendering of this caring service must be clearly understood by the foster parent as being of a temporary nature, where the child's parents are still an issue. Family-based foster care should be a premium.

In terms of the choice of foster home, authors such as Mokgosi (1997) emphasizes the importance of placing a child in a family environment. As outlined in the (Department of Welfare, 1998) as far as a choice of foster home is concerned, religion and cultural factors of both the child and prospective foster parent must be considered. Van Niekerk (1998) stated that the most important issue in a child's care placement is to determine whether the placement is in the child’s best interests.

Hegar et al.,(1999, p4) support the above authors by stating that the placement decision should consider the developmental level of the child as well as safety, educational and cultural needs. Practitioners should first consider possible relative care givers. They further state the placement with known relatives may cause fewer traumas for the child than in an unfamiliar foster home.

2.4.5 Family Care (kinship foster care)

Families have been caring for children related to them for years. As long as families could afford to care for related children, they appeared to be less intervention by welfare agencies (Ntlailane, 1999). Families felt that it was their responsibility to care for those children as they had no parents.
“In recent years, kinship care has gained increasing notice from practitioners, policy makers and researchers “Berrick et al, (1997, p.12). Many children are being cared for in foster care by kin. Due to a limited number of suitable foster parents, children seem to be cared by the family. In the past, children were cared for by the extended families especially in black communities, and this care is viewed by relatives as an alternative to the welfare system.

According to Mokgosi, (1997) families and next of kin were encouraged to take care of children at no cost to the state”). Families have a duty to take care of one another if members are unable or unavailable to do so. Placement of a child with relatives is considered the best out-of-home placement and wherever possible, factors such as relation to the child, the capacity of parenting, and a willingness to make a commitment to the child’s care are critical issues that need to be considered by practitioners before final placement can be done. Some family members may want to foster the child only for the reason of financial assistance.

It is important that the family is able to support the child so as to prevent situations where children end up in the streets or abandoned .This statement is supported by (Haswinkel, 2001) in that one will often find that an orphan child moves in with a family and later he/she is back on the street because the family simply does not have the means to look after the extra child

2.5 LITERARE REVIEW ON THE ATTITUDE OF ADOLESCENTS’ FOSTER CHILDREN TOWARDS FOSTER PLACEMENT

2.5.1 General attitude of the adolescents

Some of the adolescents experience different problems during this stage. They display negative attitude. Others they stay away from school and others they are acting-out sexually, antisocial behavior, such as delinquency and criminality, becoming immersed in drug cultures and gang behavior (Briggs, 2002).
2.5.2 The adolescent foster child

The behavior of a foster child who is in adolescent stage will be examined within his surroundings. In that, the study will focus on the ecological model and the study emphasis will be on the adolescent child who is in foster care, the interaction between himself and other persons, and social institutions that comprise the individual’s environment.

Oppenheim (2002) defined attitude as a state of readiness, a tendency to respond in a certain manner when confronted with certain stimuli. An individual’s attitude is usually expressed in speech or behavior only when the object of the attitude is perceived. In this sense, foster children who are placed in children’s homes tend to develop negative attitudes towards the institution during the adolescent stage. This occurs as they grow up because they are faced with challenges of the strict rules and regulations of that particular institution or placement. In this stage a structured family environment is needed for them so that they can easily be managed and controlled by the foster parents. Adolescents’ children want to be in control of themselves and they have wrong conception that foster parents will no longer control them. Others they become out of control and display uncontrollable behavior.

Attitudes are reinforced by beliefs and often attract strong feelings that may lead to particular behavioral intents. Attitude may have many attributes. Oppenheimer (2002) is of the opinion that, some attitudes go much deeper than others, and touches upon person’s philosophy of life, while others are relatively superficial. He further states that some attitudes seem to be more embarrassing than others.

Foster parenting adolescents is very difficult for a foster parent. An adolescent foster child will be perceived as consisting negative attitudes towards his or her family, not realizing that he never dealt with the loss his parents. Other children deal with such situation by displaying uncontrollable behavior and show negative attitude towards others. Anderson (1999) emphasizes that,” there is fluctuation between the need to use foster parents as temporary recipients of projections and the ability to contain anxiety and be more independent. The difficulty of parenting lies in the intensity of feelings, which are projected on the parental figures. Sometimes it feels as though
all the unwanted feelings, hopelessness, incompetence and fear on the one hand, and responsibility and worry without the power to go with it on the other, are left with the parents (Anderson, 1999).

2.5.3 Changing families
Sometimes cases of unrelated foster care can make an adolescent foster child to be negative towards foster care. Briggs (2002) emphasizes that, processes of accelerating social change have created new diversities, and among the most significant of these are new range of family structures, models and cultural values. That means a foster child will sometimes differ in that family in language, histories, customs and traditions. (Coleman & Hendry, 1999, p.87) emphasized that, other family structures are headed by a lone parent. With some foster children, there is a huge difference in that family structure, therefore he has to adapt. It is not easy to cope with some children, learn and adapt to these new family structure. They normally display uncontrollable behavior and develop negative attitude towards the placement and the school.

2.6 ENSURING SECURE BASE FOR THE FOSTER CHILDREN
According to the Children’s Act 38 of 2005 as amended by the Act 2007, the foster child should be placed with a suitable custodian who will provide a secure base for the child. (Daniel & Wassel (2004, p.104), explains the concept “secure base” as a building security and predictability for the foster children. They further say that, secure base is when promoting a sense in children that they have relationships with significant people available to them and have a supportive environment.

Building healthier attachment relationship with the foster child may be the most important initiative for the parent. An essential element of a secure base for foster children is predictability of care. Steady routines can have a deeply reassuring affect and the reliable availability of those important to the child provides a sense of belonging. Foster parents who spent time with the children are able to encourage children to initiate and explore the environment safely. Daniel & Wassel, (2002, p.109) further relate that, interest in the child’s activities, encouragement of the child
to take initiative in play and development of the child’s autonomy, will also build self-
esteeem. There should be trust between foster child and the parent. Ensuring secure 
base for the child, healthy and positive communication between care and foster child 
is encouraged. Resources should also be available for the foster care family. It 
should be insured that foster family should be provided with financial and material 
resources that they need to support them in their parenting (Thompson, 1997).

2.7 FOSTER CHILDREN IN SCHOOL AND LEARNING

2.7.1 The Bana Pele Principle

This is the children’s policy that focuses on the needs of the children. It emphasizes 
on the services that should be offered to the children. It says, “Put children first”. In 
all actions related to children, the best interest of the child shall be primary 
consideration. They have amongst other basic rights such as, the right to education, 
recreation, nutrition, proper shelter, peace and good health, the right to protection 
from poverty, suffering, neglect, violence and hatred.

All children have the right to be at school, and no child should be left behind. Bana-
Pele principle is also focusing on every child’s education that, they have the right to 
learn irrespective of his/her status example (adopted child, foster child, and 
biological child), gender and race, poor or rich. It is therefore, the rights of all children 
to be at school and acquire the basic education. Children without basic education do 
not make it far in life, and they have slim chances of getting meaningful work.

Pupils who fail to attend school regularly are blighting their chance of future success, 
may put themselves at risk of abuse and can be drawn into anti-social or criminal 
behavior. Children who stay away from school, or who have been entered on the 
register then absent themselves for substantial parts of the day, are more likely to 
grow up unhappy and unfulfilled, leaving school much less qualified than they might 
otherwise be and worst of all sometimes get drawn into a life of crime (Collins, 1998). On the other side, Cooper at al (2004, p.255) argue that often children who stay away from school reside in high poverty urban communities ,and they attend schools in which children as a group experience high rates of learning
failure. Like any other children, other foster children have tendency of not going to school or not completing their schooling.

2.8 THE BANA PELE PROGRAMME
The Premier in his address at the opening of the Gauteng Legislature on the 7 June 2004 said that, he would introduce a new mechanism to realize the new vision of Gauteng as a province “fit for children”. Vulnerable children, especially orphans, will be able to access a package of services through a “single window, including the child support grant, school fee exemption, free health care, school uniforms, school feeding and psycho social support”. In this statement of the Premier, the researcher is emphasizing to all children especially the foster children that, they should be in school to receive basic information. The Premier also highlighted that; some children should be exempted from school fees.

2.8.1 Exemption from school fees
The Gauteng Department of Education administers the South African Schools Act.1996 No 84 of 1996. The Act has a schedule on Exemption from school fees. The categories of the exemption from school fees are as follows

2.8.2 Categories for purpose of exemption
If annual school fees are determined in terms of section 39 of the Act, the following categories will be applicable for purposes of exemption of a parent from payment of such school fees.

- If the combined annual gross income of the parents is less than ten times the annual school fees per learner, the parent qualifies for full exemption
- If the combined annual gross income of the parents is less than thirty times, but more than ten times, the annual school fees per learner, the parent qualifies for partial exemption.
- If the combined annual gross, income of the parents is more than thirty times the annual school fees per learner, the parent does not qualify for exemption.
2.8.3 A person who has the responsibility of a parent of a learner placed in the foster home, foster care or a place of safety is exempted from payment of any school fees

- As the Act stands the exemption is only for children in foster care or in a place of safety and does not extend to all social grant beneficiaries.
- In terms of the South African School Act (No.84 of 1996) parents who are seeking exemption from the payment of school fees for children must apply to the governing bodies for this. The application form is annexed and the child circumstances and parents or care givers financial circumstances are taken into consideration for exemption from school fees.

2.9 COMPULSORY EDUCATION

Every child has the right to learn, to be educated and to be at school; therefore education is compulsory to all children. Collins (1998) highlighted education policies that were formulated and amended. He stated that, in July 1992 the Government issued the White Paper Choice and diversity, a new framework for schools that include admission and attendance of The Paper proposed legislation which resulted in the Education Act 1993. Hurt (1997) related that, in nineteen century England had a compulsory education, whereby every child should be in school. If children were not at school, they would be offending the law and sent in prison. Following imprisonment, they were sent to reformatory school.

In South Africa, the Minister of Education Naledi Pandor emphasized that every child has the right to be educated, to learn and to be at school. No one should stop the child from learning; therefore education is also important and compulsory for every child.
2.9.1 The legal duty to educate

The Education Act 1996 continues to the present day, the principles laid down in the legislation of 1993, in that, it requires parents to secure education for their children, and makes the parents subject to criminal penalties if they do not (Collins 1998, p.15)

Section 7 of the 1996 Act states:

The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him to receive efficient full time education suitable:

- to his age ability and aptitude
- to any special educational needs he may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

With that information, education is compulsory to every child not schooling.

2.9.2 School Culture:

Every social organization has its unique culture, and schools are no exception (Mc Whirter et al, 2004, p.64). School culture is determined by students’ involvement, teacher’s factors, community support curricular focus, and education leadership. A culture provides its members with two things. First, it establishes a set of rules, expectations, and norms for members.

Second, culture can enhance self-esteem through shared values, beliefs, rituals and ceremonies. Mc Whirter (2004) argues that, student, faculty, and staff who take pride in their school culture are likely to do better than those who do not. School going children should be at school every school day, and on specific time. In a case of adolescents who stay away from school, and not conform to the school culture, his/her performance will be very low.

2.10 ATTITUDE OF FOSTER CHILDREN TOWARDS SCHOOL

School children can be influenced easily by their surroundings. The school appeared to be a more important influence on attitudes than were the student background factors (Rutter 1997). Foster children who dealt with their past experiences (for example) death of the parents, abuse and many more tend to
have enthusiasm for school as well as they participate in activities within the school. They become successful in their studies. Children behavior is also learned in a school setting as children are from different background and interrelate with others. Foster children experience behavior problems if they have negative attitude. They end up staying away from school because they avoid confrontation. Rutter(1997) emphasize that children with negative attitude towards school ,spent less time in school being absent and not achieve anything scholastic attainment. They always have bad school results. Foster children might adopt an attitude of not caring about school. They likely to feel keenly a sense of exclusion from “normal” school activities and progress. Anything positive that the child can be encouraged to identify about the school as a place of education and as a process or teachers as people who can be used as a bridge back into schooling(Daniel &Wassel, 2002 p.116)

**2.11 SPECIFIC NEEDS OF ADOLESCENTS’ FOSTER CHILDREN**

**The need for love**
All the children need to be loved. This need is met by the child experiencing from birth onwards a stable, continuous, dependable and loving relationship with the parent, who themselves enjoy a rewarding relationship with one another. An adolescent need parental love, whereby he/she needs to be valued unconditionally and for his/her own sake, irrespective of his/her sex, appearance, abilities or personality. This love is given without expectation of or demands for gratitude; and that the constraints upon time and upon finance are accepted without resentment or reproach (Pringle, 2002).

**The need for security**
This need is met by giving a child the security of stable family relationships where attitudes and behavior are consistent and dependable, the security of a familiar place and a security of a known routine. All these make continuity and predictability in a world in which the child has to meet and come to terms with so much that is new and changing (Pringle 2002, 37). Schools environment should be a secure base for the adolescents.
For the adolescents in a new school to adjust, he need to be welcomed and accepted by other learners and the educators. This would help decrease the adolescent’s feelings of isolation and alienation in a new setting. This is especially important in view of Bachman at al (2001), finding that in order to” save face” adolescents frequently drop out of high school if they are not accepted by their peers. Adolescents should be also encouraged to become involved in extracurricular activities at school because they can provide support.

**Teacher-Pupil relations needed**

Since the relationships available to the child are of paramount importance, one would expect the teacher to become one of the most influential adults in the learner’s expanding world, thus he stands to be a parent during a large part of the day. A deprived learner will often address a teacher to whom he becomes attached as “mummy”. Healthy relationship between the teacher and the learner is very important in the life of the adolescents. In a good relationship, it is easy for an adolescent to communicate with the teacher in order to receive support, guidance and help the learner with his/her school work. Adolescents’ learners need a good relation with the educators at school.

**The need for praise and recognition**

Adolescent’s learners need to praise when they have done something good or when they have achievements. Recognition and appraisal should begin at home. Teachers play a key role for better or worse in meeting the need for praise and recognition (Pringle 2002).

**2.12 PARENTS AND EDUCATORS IN FOSTER CHILD’S LEARNING**

Every parent and educators should be responsible for the child’s learning in school. This can be done in the following manner:

**2.12.1 Facilitating the foster children’s learning and school attendance**

All parent’s should encourage the child’s interest in learning and school.(Daniel &Wassel,2002, p.118) argue that, sometime foster children find it difficult to understand the point of school and the subjects learned.
It is therefore, the parent’s duty to encourage and assist the child with his studies. This can be done by bringing relevant books for the child, expose him at the library, discussing about interesting subjects and many more. It should not be only the school responsibility, but parents should also assist. The educators are also entitled to make subjects interesting for the learners.

2.12.2 Monitoring learners’ progress
The educators have much school work to do with a high number of pupils to attend to. (Rutter1997) state that; although monitoring by itself, changes little, the majority of the studies found it to be a vital procedure, as a prelude to planning instructional tactics, altering pedagogy, or increasing or decreasing work loads. They also saw it as a key message to students that the teacher was interested in their progress. Whether it is more effective for the monitoring to be carried out formally cannot yet be answered and further work on the way this mechanism operates may be worthwhile. Educators should also monitor the children’s attendance

2.12.3 Student responsibilities and involvement in the life of the school
It is important for a student to adopt an active role in the life of the school. (Rutter 1997) point out that, by seeking to involve students in school orientated activities, or by allocating responsibilities to elicit a positive response from them, teachers have endeavored to provide a sense of ownership in the school and in the student’s own learning.

2.12.4 Parental involvement in the life of the school
It is essential for the foster parent to work in partnership with the school when making any plans for the improvement of the child’s educative experiences.

Parental involvement is possibly one of the most important aspects in school. (Daniel&Wassel, 2002, p118) pointed out ways in which schools involve parents in assessing, monitoring and building the child’s capacities for learning and modeled in every school communication with home. Some parents will need help
in making and sustaining this link and this can be modeled by supportive professionals. Parents can be involved in the school setting in number of ways, for example, as helpers on school trips or at break times. This can be very important in building the key relationships which will sustain the vulnerable child in the school setting. It can also have the secondary benefit of encouraging parent’s confidence in communicating effectively with adults at school and therefore feeling more a part of their child’s education.

2.12.5 Rewards and incentives

Unlike punishment, rewards and incentives appear to act as mechanisms for eliciting positive behavior and in some cases, for changing student’s behavior. Thus, (Purkey & Smith, 1999, p.87) noted that a key cultural characteristic of effective schools is a school-wide recognition of academic success, publicly honoring academic achievement and stressing its importance encourages students to adopt similar norms and values.

Two further points were made by (Levine & Lezotte, 2000, p5.7), first that the use of rewards extends beyond academic outcomes and applies to other aspect of school life. Second that, school-wide recognition of positive performance may be more important in urban schools, and especially those in inner cities. Because of the correlation with disadvantage, there are low achieving students. (Hallinger & Murphy, 2001, p.69) argued that, one of the roles of principals in advantaged schools was, to sustain existing norms, rather than creating new ones.

In disadvantage schools, the principal must ensure that the school overcomes societal and school norms that communicate low expectations to the students. School disciplinary and academic rewards systems need to focus as much on short-term accomplishments, rely heavily on tangible reinforces or develop elaborate linkages between the classroom and the school. (Mortimore and Collegues, 1997, p.39) found that rewards could be given in a variety of ways, if policy of the school was positive. In some schools, the policy was to reward
individuals for good work or behavior, whereas in others, it was to focus on sport and social factors. Schools experienced the problem of trying to create a common system of incentives. This was a particular problem for school’s where the age range was wide; rewards that appealed to younger pupils sometimes lost their enchantment for older students.

To keep adolescents pupils in school, educators should make the environment much interesting so that, pupils become attracted and own the school in a positive way by being part of it.

2.13 FOSTERING EDUCATIONAL POLICY IN THE FAMILY LITERACY

A better understanding of why some parents are actively involved in their children’s lives, whereas others are more aloof is likely to have important policy ramifications. Parents should always be supportive towards their children education. School children should also take responsibility and show interest in school.

(Lapp and Williams, 2004, p. 31) noted that, Start programs, with the focus on family literacy, adult literacy, parent-child interaction, and literacy skill acquisition on the part of young children, could benefit from a better understanding of the risk and protective factors of parent-child interaction.

2.14 CONCLUSION

The framework of the importance of education to all the adolescents who are in foster care has been illustrated in this chapter. The chapter has examined the literature review on foster children who leave school before completing their high school education. Attitudes of foster children towards the foster care placement and school has been discussed. The study also illustrated the importance of the parents and an educator in children’s learning.

For schools to have the base there should be Educational Policy that guide the educators and pupils, therefore, Educational Act was illustrated in this chapter.

In the next chapter, the research methodology to conduct further research will follow.
CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

Mouton (2001) indicated that humans have a natural tendency to gain more knowledge about a specific phenomenon. In order to gain knowledge, research is an essential part of the process. “Everywhere our knowledge is incomplete and problems are waiting to be solved…the role of research is to provide a method for obtaining those answers by inquiringly studying the evidence within the parameters of the scientific methods” (Leedy, 1997).

Unrau, Krysik and Grinnell, (1997), p.256) view the research methodology as the use of qualitative or quantitative approaches to find and answer to specific problems. This chapter is aimed at addressing the research design for the study, whereby the researcher outlined the research process and described the aspects of research strategy, participants, population, sampling plan, data collection and analysis procedures. This study (as discussed in Chapter 1) deals with essential issues of adolescents foster children that never completed high school education.

3.2 RESEARCH APPROACH

Neumann (2000) viewed the research methodology as a use of qualitative or quantitative approaches to find and to answer to specific problems. The author further identified differences between the two approaches. Although these two approaches are different, they simultaneously complement one another.

3.2.1 Quantitative Approach

Quantitative approaches focus on statistical data with emphasis on numerical information and figures. According to Neumann, most quantitative researchers rely on a positivist approach to social science. They apply “reconstructed logic”, and follow a linear research path. Quantitative researchers emphasize precisely measuring variables and testing hypotheses that are linked to general causal...
explanations. Quantitative research addresses the issue of integrity by relying on an objective technology, such as precise statements, standard techniques, numerical measures, statistics, and replication (Neumann, 2006).

3.2.2 Qualitative Approach

Qualitative research is more concerned about issues of richness, texture, and feeling of raw data because the accompanying inductive approach emphasizes developing insights and generalizations out of the data collected. Mouton (2001) indicated that qualitative researchers attempt always to study human action from the insider's perspectives. Qualitative research is an enquiry process of understanding based on distinct methodological traditions of enquiry that explore a social or a human problem (Creswell, 2003).

Qualitative researchers often rely on interpretive or critical social science. They apply “logic in practice” and follow a nonlinear research path (Neumann, 2006). The qualitative research emphasize on describing and understanding rather than explanation and prediction of human behavior.

Creswell, (1994), cited in Reddy-Kandia, (2005), outlined the following about qualitative research:

- The major interest is in meaning, which is how people make sense of their experiences and the structures of the world.
- Qualitative research is also descriptive, in that the researcher is interested in process meaning and understanding gained through words or pictures.
- Qualitative research is an inductive process, as the researcher builds abstractions, concepts, hypotheses and themes from details. It is largely an investigative process where the researcher gradually makes sense of social phenomena by contrasting, comparing, cataloguing and classifying the area of the study.

A qualitative approach was chosen for this study and is directly linked to the purpose of the study which is to explore the reasons why adolescents foster children not completing their high school education, in order to develop strategies
that will assist Social Workers in retaining them in school. According to De Vos (2005) there is no difference between qualitative and quantitative research at the beginning. Both designs start with selecting a research topic, deciding on an approach, the problem formulation and drawing up of a proposal. In the rest of the process, the author distinguished between the two approaches. The following steps are recommended by the author to be followed with regard to qualitative research (De Vos 2005, p.83)

(i). Planning
Selecting a paradigm and consider the place of literature study
Select a research strategy
Select methods of information collection and analysis
Frame and develop a sample

(ii). Implementation
Consider the applicability of elements of a pilot study
Collect materials, record and undertake literature study

(iii). Interpretation and Presentation
Process and analyze data and verify results with literature control
Plan narrative and write report
Qualitative approach was also chosen to be the relevant approach to this study that will study the in-depth nature of a social problem
3.2.2.1 The process of qualitative research

All research follows a general process. Creswell (2003) illustrate this process as follows:

![Figure: 3.1. The process of qualitative research](image)

3.2.3 Research Design

A research design is a plan or blueprint of how the researcher intend conducting the research (Mouton, 2001). The research design serves as guidelines in the study to be conducted with regards to data collection, analysis and interpretation of data (Neumann, 2000). The aim of the research design is to test a hypothesis and prove it true or false.

De Vos (2005) stated that, it is important to have clarity about the focus of the research study, the unit of analysis and the time dimension before deciding on the type of research design to be used. Based on the De Vos point of view, the research design can be explained as the process of and plan according to which the research study will be conducted.

Rubin and Babbie (2001) perceive the term research design that consist of two elements, namely the logical arrangements to be selected, and the act of designing
the study in its broader sense. Creswell (2003) regards a phenomenological study as a study that describes the meaning that experiences of a phenomenon; topic or concept has for various individuals. Phenomenology focus on the understanding the essence of experiences about a phenomenon (Creswell, 2003). The research study intends to explore the reasons why foster children do not complete their high school education; therefore, the researcher will employ phenomenology as a relevant approach. The data will be collected through the facilitation of three focus groups that consist of teen foster children, foster parents and educators.

3.3 POPULATION
The population is an “entire set or universe, of the people, objects or events of concerns to a research study, from which a sample is drawn (Neumann, 2000). The author sometimes calls the population as a “target population”. The target population of this study consists of all adolescents foster children that did not complete their schooling taken from the researcher’s case load of Naledi Soweto. Foster parents of the concerned foster children and the educators from two high schools in Naledi also form part of the study.

Population: Adolescents Foster Children who did not complete schooling

Sample: 10= Adolescents Foster Children not completed High School Education.
10= Foster parents of adolescents foster children not completed school
6= Educators from 2 High Schools

Figure: 3.2 Population
3.4 SAMPLING

3.4.1 Sample

Arkava and Lane (1998) quoted in De Vos (2005) describe a sample as a sub-set of measurement drawn from the population in which the researchers is interested. These authors indicated that, the advantages of sampling enhance feasibility. Involving the entire population in the research project will be more tedious, costly, time consuming and will lack in-depth information. Seaberg (1998) quoted in De Vos (2005), that a sample is a small portion of the total set of objects, events or persons which together comprise the subject of the study.

The type of sampling that has been used is “purposive sampling” which consists of three focus groups namely; adolescents’ foster children not completed school, foster parents of the concerned foster children and the educators from two high schools. A sample is chosen based on the strategy of selecting units that are judged to be typical of the population under investigation (Bless& Higson-Smith, (2000, p.93). Purposes sampling was also appropriate because specific role-players groups were identified. Schrurink, Schurink and Poggenpoel (1998) regarded purposes sampling as being suitable for focus group discussions because the aim was to obtain information from clearly defined group.

Neumann (2000) identifies the following three situations where the use of purposive sampling becomes appropriate.

- To select unique cases that are special informative;
- To select members of a difficult –to reach, specialised population;
- To identify particular types of cases for in depth investigation.

The researcher applied a purposive sampling when selecting the sample from the foster care case load. The criteria applied when selecting purposive sampling is as follows:

-10 Adolescents foster children who did not complete school.
-10 Foster parents of the adolescent’s foster children.
-6 Grade 10 and Grade11 Educators.
3.4.2 Sample Size
Neumann (2000) stated that the larger the population the smaller the percentage of that population the samples needs to be, and vice versa. Bless and Higson-Smith (2000) perceives the size of a sample as a crucial issue in sampling. The authors further indicated that a large sample, while costly is more representative, while on the other hand, a small sample is much less accurate, but more convenient. From the population of the foster care in Naledi, a sample size of three focus group were selected namely, 10 adolescents foster children who did not complete school, 10 foster parents of the concerned foster children and 6 educators, totally 26 participants forming the subjects of the study.

3.5 THE METHOD OF DATA COLLECTION
Data collection method can be seen as a system of gathering information from different sources. In this study, the researcher used the triangulation method for gathering data, for example:

- In-depth interviews,
- Direct observation,
- Tape recording and field notes

3.5.1 Pilot Study/ Testing of Instrument
A pilot study is a pre-test of an instrument of measurement (De Vos, 2005). The relevance or the value of the pilot study in this study was to:

- Assess whether the research is clear, unambiguous and would facilitate the type of the information needed to meet the research purpose
- Detect problems that must be solved before the major study is attempted
- According to De Vos(2005) ,pilot testing focus group questions are too difficult. Although, pilot testing is important, it presents social problems with focus group.
- Check the data collection method and suitability of the sampling frame.

By analyzing the obtained data, a researcher can obtain an indication of problems that would arise during the analysis of data.
For evaluation of the study, in this research one can determine weak and strong points of the investigation.
The involvement of the researcher is also considered, for example, the researcher might realize that, she is either over or under involved in the project.
A pilot study was conducted with few participants (foster children and foster parents) those are included in the study to test the focus group questions.
The purpose or relevance of doing the pilot study in this project, was to test the question before the main study is conducted. The interview was unstructured, so that the researcher gains the perceptions of the particular topic.
During the interview, the researcher was highly aware that open-ended questions allowed richer and fuller information, as the participants were verbally expressive and co-operative.

3.5.2 Instrument
The following methods were used to collect the data:
3.5.2.1 Focus group as a data collection instrument
Focus groups are group interview. They are a means of better understand how people feel or think about an issue, product or service. (De Vos, 2005). Participants are selected because they have certain characteristic in common that relate to the topic of the focus group.

The group interview is a flexible tool for involving a communal population in the diagnosis of problems and encouraging a readiness to change. In a group interview, they interact with each other as well as the interviewer. Typically more information is elicited because as items are discussed, group participants build on each other’s comments.

Krueger (2000) in De Vos (2005), he defined the focus group as a carefully planned discussion designed to obtain perception on define area of interest in a permissive, non threatening environment. Morgan (1997) in De Vos (2005) further describes focus groups as a research technique on a topic determined by the researcher.
The purpose of focus group is:
- To promote self-disclosure among participants, and know what people really think and feel.
- It saves time and it is a quick data collection instrument.
- It collects information from a group of people.

Krueger and Casey (2000) perceive focus group as more useful when multiple viewpoints or responses are needed on a specific topic.

Focus groups are fundamentally a way of listening to people and learning from them, and of creating lines of communication.

Morgan (1997) identified three reasons for using focus group as follows:
- They are used as a self-contained method in studies in which they serve as the participant source of data.
- They are used as a supplementary source of data in studies that rely on some other primary method, such as a survey.
- They are used in multi-method studies that combine two or more means of gathering data in which no one primary method determine the use of the other.

Focus groups create a process of sharing and comparing among the participants.

Krueger and Casey (2000) list the following consideration regarding the use of focus group:
- To be used when looking for a range of ideas or feelings that people have about something.
- To used when trying to understand differences between groups or category of people.
- To uncover factors that influence opinions, behavior or motivation.
- To get ideas to emerge from the group.
- To get pilot ideas, materials, plans or policies.
- To get information to help shed light on quantitative data already collected.
- To conduct research where clients or audience place a high value on capturing comments or language.
3.5.2.2 Size of focus groups
According to De Vos (2005), focus groups usually include six to ten participants so that everyone in a group participates. Morgan and Krueger (1998:Vol.2) mention that, deciding on a right number of participants means striking a balance between having enough people to generate a discussion, but not having so much people that some feel crowded out.

Three focus groups have been selected for this study. The first group consisted of 10 adolescents’ foster children who did not complete their schooling, second group 10 foster parents of the concerned foster children, and the third group 6 educators, that will make a total of 26 participants. From the researcher’s case load, 20 respondents were selected namely (10 foster children and 10 foster parents), and 6 respondents were (educators) responded to an invitation of the researcher. Each focus group was scheduled to have one meeting for two hours.

Figure 3.3 Focus Group:
3.5.3 Research Questions

Krueger and Casey (2000) identified five types of questions that the researcher should apply when interviewing focus groups. These types of questions each of which serves a specific function for the focus group discussion namely:

- Opening Question: This usually takes the form of a robin and elicits brief information about the participants.

- Introductory Question: This is a general to the topic and its purpose is to generate conversation and interaction amongst the participants. It is not crucial to the analysis of data.

- Transition Questions: This serves as a link between the introductory question and the key questions. The discussion around the transition question enables participants to become aware of how others view topic.

- Key Questions: These questions are central to the discussion and the responses to these are the main focus of the data analysis.

- Ending Questions: These questions are use to close the study.

The researcher made use of the following questions as a guide line or frame work for facilitating the discussion in the focus groups.

Focus group questions (guiding questions)
(Foster children)

1. Tell the group about yourselves (introduction)
2. What made you or influenced you to stay away from school?
3. What do you dislike in school? (elaborate)
4. What are the things that you like the most at school?
5. What do you think it should be done to make the school environment interesting?
6. Where do you see yourself in 10 years to come?
7. What do you wish to be when given a chance to complete high school education and why?
8. What do you learn from your friends or company that you are with, when you are not at school?
9. Could you mention some of the things that you do when you are not at school?
10. What do you like the most when you are not at school?
11. How do you feel when you see you peers or age group that has finished school?

Focus group questions
(Foster parents)
1. What challenges are you experiencing with the foster children?
2. How do you deal with those challenges?
3. Since the education is important these days, what contribution do you make to motivate foster children with their education?
4. What role do you make in influencing the foster children learning?
5. What are the attitudes of the foster children towards the family foster care?
6. Do the foster children appear to feel secure at home?
7. Are the foster children provided with secure base?
8. As foster parents, do you facilitate the children’s learning and school attendance? How?

Focus group questions
(Educators)
1. What school programs are offered to school children?
2. Are those school programs exciting the school children?
3. How do they benefit from those programs?
4. Do foster children appear to feel secure at school?
5. To what extent do the foster children show interest in school and learning?
6. What opportunities are there in wider environment to support the foster children education?
7. Do the school offer life skills programmes for pupils?
8. What challenges do you experience from foster children and school children in general?
9. As educators, how can you motivate the foster children to finish their high school education?
10. What strategies can be applied to retain the foster children in school?

3.5.4 Data Preservation
According to De Vos (2005), it is important to preserve data. Different strategies were used to ensure that no data would be lost.

- **Audio-taped data**
  Permission should be obtained from the participants when using audio-tape recordings. Neumann (2000) mentioned that a tape recorder allows much fuller records than notes taken during the group session discussion. It means that the researcher can also concentrate on how the group discussion is proceeding.
  For the purpose of this study, tape recording as a tool of the data collection was beneficial.
  Audio tape was used simultaneously to record the data so as to avoid the loss of data. Audio tape was tested earlier before the commencement of interviews in order to identify technical problems that could lead to the loss of data. The cassettes used are of a high quality.

Audio tape was used for only two focus groups (group 2 and group3) namely, foster parents and educators when collecting data. Participants of focus group number 1, which is foster children, were not comfortable with the use of audio-tape; therefore, audio tape was not used when collecting data in the
first focus group. “Strategies to maintain confidentiality are critical to reduce the risk of harm to embarrassment and legal punishment to those who are being studied” (Bottorff in De Vos 2005). The same author also recommended that “subjects who are being video taped should give consent and also they can stop videotaping if they change their minds”.

§ Field Notes
While supporting the use of tape-recorders, the facilitator also took detailed field notes during the focus group session. Krueger and Casey (2000) described field notes as a written account of the things the researcher hears, sees, experiences and thinks in the course of collecting or reflecting on the data obtained during the study.

The researcher took notes on observation of the groups. The researcher observed the following:
- Seating arrangements
- The order in which people speak
- Non-verbal behavior such as eye contact, posture and gestures between the group members
- Themes that are striking
- Highlighting as much of the conversation as possible

Each participant’s opinion was recorded. The task of taking field notes in this study was the responsibility of the co-facilitator (De Vos 2005). The researcher and the co-facilitator discussed their notes as soon as possible after the focus group session. All the data that was collected is safeguarded and protection of the participants will be taken into account by ensuring that no information will be publicly indulged. These are some principles about safeguarding and handling data, that are especially well suited to qualitative research.

Precautionary measures to safeguard the data including the following:
- All audio tapes are labeled as focus group 2 and 3
- Each group’s audio tapes and field notes are packed separately, and all the data that is collected is placed in a safe place.
The researcher and the co-facilitator are the only people who have access to the information.

3.6 FACILITATION
Facilitators play crucial roles in the groups, therefore, the researcher adopted the role of being a facilitator in this study. Creswell (2003) is of the opinion that the facilitator’s role is quite complex. It includes the following:
- Introducing the topic of discussion to the respondents
- Guiding and managing the interview
- Motivating the respondents
- Clarifying questions and concerns of the respondents
- Remaining objective during the interview.
Apart from the above mentioned facilitator’s roles, the researcher was also responsible for creating a conducive environment which is non-threatening, supportive and respectful of the participants. It is also crucial that, the facilitator should have the interviewing skills and techniques that can be used in a focus group.

Neumann (2000) emphasizes that, the facilitator should be able to re-assure the respondents and motivate them to co-operate. They should be non-judgmental.
The researcher served as a facilitator during the focus group interview (Krueger and Casey 2000, p.11). The facilitator stimulated discussion and kept participants on line with the topic. The researcher also kept in mind that the intent of the focus group is to produce information and not to generalize the reasons of foster children not completing high school education.

3.7 THE SETTING OF FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEW
The setting is the physical location in which data collection takes place (Polite & Hungle, 1999, p.715). It could be an area that is natural to those being studied, for example, at home or at work place. However, Bogdan & Taylor (1975) cited in De Vos (2005) noted that they would “recommend that researchers choose a setting in which the subjects are strangers, and in which they have no particular professional knowledge or expertise”.

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The researcher made an important decision in selecting a field setting. The researcher chose a setting in which the participants are strangers and they have no particular professional knowledge or expertise (Bogdan & Taylor 1975 quoted in De Vos 2005). The place was also free from visual or audible distractions. Permission to use the venue was obtained from the Department of Social Development.

3.8 ANALYSING THE DATA

Neumann (2000) describe data analysis in qualitative research as a search for patterns in data, in other words, recurring behavior, objects, thought pattern etcetera. These patterns are then interpreted in terms of the research question. Krueger (1998) also describes data analysis as examining, categorizing, tabulating or otherwise recombining the evidence, to address the initial proposition of the study. The data analysis in the study is also guided by the fact that the research is qualitative in nature.

The approach by Oka and Shaw (2000), and Marshall and Rossman (1999) is used for analyzing the data. An outline of this approach is presented below. Six stages are included in this approach namely, organizing the data, generating categories, coding the data, testing emergent understanding, searching for alternative explanations and writing the report. Each stage entails data reduction and interpretation.

Organizing the data entails reading through the data several times for familiarizing oneself with it. The information is then organized on note cards. Categories are generated by noting the patterns that emerge. Oka and Shaw (2000) point out that, the researcher does not search for the exhaustive and mutually exclusive categories of the statistician but, instead identifies the salient, grounded categories of meaning held by participants in the setting.

The coding of the data is the formal representation of analytic thinking. Neumann (2000) explains that conceptualization is important when a researcher wants to code data.
The function of conceptualization is that, it indicates the “categories” in which data should be coded. The researcher will apply a coding scheme to categories and marks passages in the data using the codes. During the process of coding, emergent understandings will develop. The patterns and categories will be critically challenged and other plausible explanations of data will be sought. The patterns and explanations that seem most plausible will be used. Once this has been completed, the report is written. The report summarizes and reflects the complexity of the data.

3.9 VERIFICATION

Verification of the results of data analysis is a key issue in ensuring trustworthiness of qualitative research. Verification as the authors maintain, involves “checking for the most common biases that can steal into the process of drawing conclusions” (De Vos 2005).

There are four basic criteria for the evaluation of qualitative research (Bryman and Burgers 1999, p.398). The criterion is developed by Guba in (De Vos 2005) and (Bryman and Burgers, 1998, p.398). According to the authors cited above, the model is conceptually well developed and can be applied with positive results.

Guba’s model is as follows:

3.9.1 Truth Value:

Refers to how one can establish confident in the “truth” of the findings of the research for the respondent with which and the contents in which the research was carried out. The truth-value is ensured by “the strategy of credibility” (Guba in De Vos 2005).

3.9.2 Applicability:

Refers to the degree to which the findings can be applied to other context. It is the ability to generalize from the finding to a larger population.

3.9.3 Consistency:

Refers to whether the findings can be consistent if the enquiry were replicated with
the same subjects, or similar context. De Vos (2005) defined consistency in terms of dependability.

3.9.4 Neutrality:
This refers to the degree to which the findings are a function of the solely of the informants and conditions of the research and not other biases. De Vos cited above, regard conformability as a strategy that can be used to ensure neutrality. The process of triangulation was used to ensure neutrality. The fact that the researcher was not able to form a bond with the respondents also played a role in helping the researcher to remain objective and to only work with the information the respondents gave.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategy</th>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Application</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Truth Value</td>
<td>Prolonged and field of study.</td>
<td>The researcher has been working for the Department of Social Development for eleven years. Group interviews recorded and field notes taken. Different data sources utilized: In depth interview with the Focus group, field notes and tape recording, and direct observation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reflexivity</td>
<td>Triangulation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Applicability</td>
<td>Purposive Sample</td>
<td>Purposive data sources were selected according to specific criteria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consistency</td>
<td>Triangulation</td>
<td>Different data sources utilized: Focus groups, field notes, tape recording</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutrality</td>
<td>Reflexivity</td>
<td>Group interviews, field notes taken, audio recordings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Confirmability</td>
<td>A co-worker who is also a social worker by profession was used.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table: 3.1 Strategies for ensuring trustworthiness.
3.10 RECORDING OF RESULTS
The researcher has to record all the data that she gathered. It is vital to record the results of the study for publication. Creswell (2003) explains that, the results are a well ordered summary of the data. Results also introduce conclusions and recommendation.

3.11 Literature Control
Literature control is done after the data has been collected and analyzed (Oliphant 2003). The purpose of the literature control in this study is to compare the results with existing information. Nel (2004) explains that once a study has been completed, the “new” information can be compared against existing information. This will serve the purpose of confirming and elaborating on existing literature or to prove contradicting facts.

3.12 Conclusions and Recommendation
Bless and Higson-Smith (1997) stated no research project is completed if recommendations have not been made. The authors also suggest that the results be summarized after they have been carefully explained. De Vos (2005) states that the summary also serves the purpose further interpretation of findings. Summary will serve as a base from which recommendation will be made.

3.13 Summary
The research methods used in this study were outlined in this chapter. Details of population, research procedures, sampling methods, data collecting method and analysis of data were presented. The focus group as the main data collection method has been identified. The choice of qualitative approach was pragmatic and was based on the exploratory nature of the study.
CHAPTER FOUR: DATA ANALYSIS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

Analysis starts by going back to the intent of the study (Krueger, 1998). The statement indicates that the key principle in analysis is determined by the purpose of the research study. The researcher has continuously kept in mind the intent of the study when analyzing data, namely to explore strategies of retaining adolescents foster children in school.

Krueger (1998) argue that, the researcher has to weigh options against two factors that are available resources and the value of new information provided by the research study when analyzing data.

4.2 PARTICIPANTS

Focus group discussions were held with three groups with the view of collecting data. A qualitative research has been conducted with the focus groups that consisted of 10 adolescents’ foster children not completed school, 10 foster parents of the adolescents foster children that not completed school and 6 educators that teach grade ten and grade eleven pupils in two different high schools in Naledi. Through consultation with the participants, permission was given to a researcher by two focus groups (foster parents and educators) to utilize a tape recorder when collecting data with the aim of maximizing reliability in saving the collected data. A focus group of adolescents’ foster children felt uncomfortable with the utilization of tape recorder, therefore, a permission to use a tape recorder was not granted. Interview guide consist of relevant questions served as guideline to facilitate the process. Valuable information has been shared among the participants.

The complexity of group interaction is also one of the factors that distinguish the focus groups from other methods of data collection (Morgan and Krueger in Greeff (2002). The statement concludes that, there are aspects that the researcher needs to consider when analyzing data obtained by the focus groups. These include words (both spoken and unspoken), context, specific comments and broad ideas about the group.

According to Bloor at al (2001) the focus group data illustrate the provisional and developmental character of personal opinions, with group members qualifying and extending their views in the course of the discussion, these are aspects of attitudes which cannot be reflected in survey approaches. The interaction between the participants is a key feature of the focus group method, and it is vital to carefully consider the group composition.

Table 4.1 Number of participants in focus group

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Focus Group</th>
<th>Participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Educators</td>
<td>6 Educators from two Secondary Schools in Naledi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adolescents Foster Children</td>
<td>10 Adolescents Foster Children not completed high School Education in Naledi.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foster Parents</td>
<td>10 Foster Parents of the adolescents foster children in Naledi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Number</td>
<td>26 Participants</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.3 DATA ANALYSIS

In this study, after data collection it is analyzed and interpreted, the results are provided in Chapter 5. Qualitative method of analyzing data is used in the study. Marshall and Rossman’s approach is implemented in analyzing the data collected. According to De Vos (2005) qualitative data analysis is done in search of general statements about relationships between categories of data.

4.3.1 Method of Data Analysis

For the purpose of the study, Marshall and Rossman’s approach is adopted in the study (1999). They identify six stages in data analysis which is followed:

**Organising the data**, data is organized through repetitive reading and carefully reading all the transcripts. This enables the researcher to be familiar with the data.

**Generating categories**, themes and patterns, after reading the transcripts, the researcher underlined the important words to identify the major categories. As categories of meaning emerge, the researcher searched for those which are internally consistent but distinct from each other.

**Coding the data** is the formal representation of analytic thinking. The researcher then applied some coding scheme to the categories and themes by thoroughly marking passages in the data using the codes in the form of abbreviations of key
words and underlined passages with orange colored highlighting pen. **Testing the emerging hypotheses against the data**, as categories and patterns emerge in the data, the researcher begins the process of evaluating the explanations for these developing hypotheses, searching for negative instances of the patterns and incorporating these into larger constructs.

**Searching for alternative explanations of the data**, as categories and patterns emerge in the data, the researcher engages in a pattern that seems apparent.

**Writing the report**
Each stage of data analysis involves data reduction as the large volume of data is reduced to manageable parts. It also involves interpretation, as the researcher brings meaning and insight into the words and acts of the respondents in the research (De Vos, 2005).

### 4.4 PRESENTATION OF RESEARCH FINDINGS

The following categories and themes emerged from the data collected were classified as follows.

**TABLE 4.2: CATEGORIES AND THEMES:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Categories</th>
<th>Themes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Category:1 Contributory factors for leaving school | 1. Not coping in class  
2. Inappropriate parental care  
3. Learner playing a parent role  
4. Peer pressure |
| Category:2 The likes and the dislikes in school | 1. Good things about school  
2. Bad things in school  
3. Interesting activities |
| Category:3 Learned behavior | 1. Involving one self in substance abuse  
2. Sexual active  
3. Deviant behavior |
<p>| Category:4 Experiences of a learner out of school | 1. Independent lives |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>1.</th>
<th>2.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>The feelings of school drop-out towards their peers</td>
<td>Regrets and shame</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Learning opportunities and future career</td>
<td>Establishment of own business</td>
<td>Becoming civil servants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Foster parents challenges</td>
<td>Stealing</td>
<td>Irregular school attendance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Uncontrollable behavior</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Foster parent’s ways of dealing with challenges of foster children</td>
<td>Communication</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Contributions of foster parents in motivating the foster children</td>
<td>Influencing roles of foster parents towards foster children’s learning</td>
<td>Facilitating school learning and school attendance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Attitude of foster children towards family foster care</td>
<td>Secure base of foster children</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Responses of the Educators regarding foster children learners</td>
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4.4.1. Response of adolescent’ foster children not completed school

4.4.1.1. Category 1: Contributory Factors/ Reasons for leaving School

Human beings are different from one another; therefore there are different
contributing factors in a life of an adolescent child that make him to leave the school. The group participants provided different reasons as to why they decided to leave school before completing grade 12.

4.4.1.1.1 Theme 1: Not coping in class

The respondents indicated that, they were not coping with their school work. Three of the respondents indicated that, they cannot read and write but they are in grade 9 and 10. They were the eldest and tallest in class and, they became shy to be in class with the young pupil.

The respondents acknowledged that, they have been promoted from primary school to the secondary school when they were supposed to have repeated the grades. They never performed well in the lower grades and they did not get the foundation from the primary school but promoted to the next higher classes.

They indicated that, the promotions to the next classes started when they were in the higher primary schools. They were promoted because of their age. They were the eldest in class; therefore, the educators would not keep them in one class or fail them. They said that, they were “pushed” to the next grades.

The respondents also indicated that, there was a tendency and a say by the school children in the township schools “pass one pass all”. That means, if one pupil is promoted to the next grade, all pupils should be promoted to the next grade irrespective whether they have performed well or not. To be promoted to the next class without the basic knowledge, the respondents perceived that as a contributory factor that made them not to cope in the higher grades.

4.4.1.1.2 Theme 2: Inappropriate parental care

Lack of parental care was identified as a reason for foster children leaving school at an early stage. Participants have put the blame to the foster parents. Two respondents indicated that their foster parents lack parental care and support towards them.

The indication of the respondents was that, their foster parents never played a role in their education. They are forever busy with their own things and never supported them with their schooling. They were not in a position of assisting the foster children with the home work when they were requested. The respondents mentioned that, their foster parents never spent time with them doing school work or showing interest in their schooling and giving support.

Two respondents indicated that, they do not have school uniform and they are not given money to buy lunch at school. They go to school with hungry stomach and only get food after school. They became discouraged and not motivated with the school. Irresponsibility’s of some foster parents were mentioned, in a sense that, foster parents who receive foster care grants and not meeting the children basic
needs such as, school uniform food etcetera can also be a contributory factor that
discourage them to attend school. (Cooper at al 2004:255) argue that, often children
who stay away from school reside in high poverty urban communities.

4.4.1.1.3 Theme 3: Playing a parent’s role

Playing a role of being a young parent to the siblings and cousins by the foster
children was regarded by the participants, as a contributing factor to children leaving
school. Three respondents indicated that, sometimes they became baby sitters for
their siblings and their young cousins during school hours being requested by their
foster parents to do so. Being at home during school hours, they are left behind with
their school work and it is difficult for them to catch-up with the work as they have
been at home for many days.

The respondents also indicated that, they do not have enough time to study as they
have to do first all the house chores. By the time they want to study and attend to
their school work, they are already exhausted. They mentioned that, their school
work was behind and they also loose concentration and feel sleepy in class.
To become a double role player, being a parent and being a school child was
indicated by the respondents as another reason for them to leave the school at an
early stage.

4.4.1.1.4 Theme 4: Peer pressure

The respondents acknowledge the fact that they spent most of their time with
friends, and this was interpreted as having a higher regard of friends and believed in
them as opposed to any significant others.

Seven respondents have been able to indicate the pressure from friends influenced
them to stay away from school. Scholtz (1998) noted that negative peer influence
was more likely to occur in situations where children begin adolescent’s stage. This
started by not attending certain classes and eventually not attending school. They
indicated that, they have been discouraged by their peers that have been long not in
school, to leave the school like them. Peers would say all the negative things about
school, and those discouraged and lead them in leaving school.
Such regard for friendship is also regarded as being dominant over both family
values and personal values. Peer pressure was regarded as the influence on the
adolescents.

4.4.1.2 Category 2: The likes and the dislikes in the school environment

4.4.1.2.1 Theme 1: The good things about school

All the respondents were not in favor of the question that was posed to them. They
indicated that, the good things that they used to like happened in primary schools not
in a secondary school. They had enough time to play with their friends and not lot of
work that they have been getting in high school. They only remember their primary
school friends. Short hours are being spent in primary school as compared to long hours in secondary school.

Three respondents noted that, the good things that they enjoyed in school were a sport day that was on Wednesdays. They liked and enjoyed playing soccer in school. One participant responded by saying that, he miss the school trips that he used to like the most.

4.4.1.2.2 Theme 2: The dislikes and bad things in school

Only five respondents indicated that, corporal punishment and being detained after school was the most horrible experience in school. They mentioned that, other school strict rules were not favorable to the pupil. All the respondents indicated that, there is too much school work that they should do, and they struggle with their school work. They mentioned that, they do not like writing the tests and the exams. They also indicated that, the school is boring and they have a short concentration to listen to their teachers in class as they become tired easily.

This was also noted that, teachers do not make the subjects to be interesting, easy and understandable to the pupil. Teachers are always formal and others are not approachable to pupil.

4.4.1.2.3 Theme 3: Interesting activities in schools

Focus group participants gave their opinion in response to the question “what should be done to make the school environment interesting?” Only three participants put forward that school policies in the township schools should be revisited by the Minister of Education, educators and committees of school children. They should come up with the interesting activities that should be done in schools. School children can be motivated and develop interest in schooling.

Five respondents identified the issue of private schools comparing with the government schools that they should have the same school activities. The participants indicated that, government schools in the townships should learn from private schools the interesting activities such as, school camping. Pupil from government schools should be exposed and be involved in all types of sports such as, swimming, cricket, rugby, hockey and many more. They mentioned that pupils from government schools in the township only participate in sports such as soccer and netball. More sports facilities should be created in the township schools. One respondent mentioned that there should be prizes and merits for the best pupil who achieved or performed well in their schooling. That also will motivate pupils to work hard and become involved in school activities.

The perception of educators becoming friendly and approachable to pupil was identified by the one participant. They encouraged that the educators should be perceived as parents and provide support to pupils.
4.4.1.3 Category 3: Learned behavior out of school premises

Children without parent supervision lack good behavior. They easily influence one another with the wrong doings. The respondents acknowledged the fact that they spent most of the time doing wrongs and learn deviant behavior that is not acceptable by the community when they are not in school. The participant identified the following learned behavior:

4.4.1.3.1 Theme 1: Smoking dagga and consuming alcohol
Adolescents foster children smoke dagga and drink alcohol when they are not at school. They influence one another, and learn from their peers how to use substance abuse.

4.4.1.3.2 Become sexual active
Two respondents indicated that, they usually visit their boyfriends who are not attending school during the day. They spent most of the day having sexual intercourse with their elder boyfriends.

4.4.1.3.3 Theme 3: Deviant behavior
All participants indicated that, they learn deviant and criminal behavior from their peers when they are not at school. They become involved in criminal activities such as, house breakings, hi-jacking cars and stealing in order to survive during the day. The respondents influence one another easily and have a believe that, one should be able to do one or more of this learned behavior as they have enough time during the day.

4.4.1.4 Category 4: The interesting experiences out of school premises

4.4.1.4.1 Theme 1: Independent lives
Eight of the respondents noted that, no one is in control of them when they are not in school. They felt that they are managing their own lives without any adult interference. They do as they like and as they wish with their lives.

4.4.1.4.2 Theme 2: Supervising oneself
The respondents noted that, they own their lives, and they are able to supervise themselves. They enjoy that no one is restricting them from their doings. Two respondents felt that they enjoy the most to spend the day with their boyfriends.

All participants viewed school premises as a stressful place. They become very comfortable away from school and very independent with their lives.
4.4.1.5 Category 5: The feelings of the school drop-outs towards their peers that completed high school education

4.4.1.5 Theme 1: Regrets and shame

Three respondents felt that, they sometimes envy their peers and wish to be like them. They indicated that, they wish that they can reverse the wrong decision of leaving school and be at school. Two respondents indicated that, they have been telling themselves every year that they will be returning to school the following year but postpone the decision.

Three respondents indicated that, they regret to be out of school, and wish that they should have stayed and finished at least grade 12. They felt that it is too late to regret.

Two respondents felt that, people will not be the same, others will succeed in life and others will not. There were indications from the respondents that, children will not all be at school as others were born brilliant by nature and others are struggling with their school work.

4.4.1.6 Category 6: Opportunity to learn and future career of foster children

4.4.1.6.1 Theme 1: Establishing own business

The respondents had different wishes and views regarding the future career if given an opportunity to learn. Five respondents indicated their interest in establishing their own business. They indicated that they will start small by selling vegetables, sweets, cold drinks etcetera, and the business will develop and become bigger. They will then involve themselves in bigger businesses.

Two participants indicated that, they want to have their own hair saloons as they are very good in braiding people’s hair. Three respondents indicated that, they will prefer to attend special schools and further their studies at technical colleges so that they can specialize with trade. They felt that, they are interested in mechanics.

4.4.1.6.2 Theme 2: Becoming civil servants

Two participants preferred to be the government servants. They indicated that they would like to have the positive contribution to their country.

4.4.1.7 Response of foster parents

4.4.1.7.1 Category 7: Challenges of foster parents with foster children

Raising a foster child is a challenge that has been experienced by the respondents. The focus group of foster parents indicated different problems that they are experiencing with the foster children.
4.4.1.7.1.1 Theme 1: Stealing
Nine respondents indicated the “stealing of money” as a common problem that they experience with the foster children. The respondents indicated that, the foster children steal money at home to buy dagga, glue, alcohol and others play games with the stolen money. The feeling of the respondents was that, even these children can be given money to buy lunch and buy anything they like at school, they do not become satisfied. They feel that they have been given too little money and resort in stealing.

4.4.1.7.1.2 Theme 2: Irregular school attendance
Five respondents indicated the fact that, their foster children started the problem of not attending school regular by putting excuses of being sick when they were supposed to go to school. They even lied about the school so that they can stay at home during school hours. One respondent indicated that, her foster child did not write the exams for the past three years, and he ended leaving the school completely. The respondents noted that, the adolescent’s foster children had the tendency of becoming sick on Mondays. They sometimes leave home pretending as they are going to school and never attended school.

4.4.1.7.1.3 Theme 3: Uncontrollable behavior of foster children
Uncontrollable behavior of foster children was also indicated as a challenge that is experienced by all the respondents. The respondents felt that, most of their foster children behave in an uncontrollable manner. The feeling was that, foster children behave in this manner because they miss their deceased parents, therefore they are acting out. Some of them end-up smoking dagga, sniffing glue and others abusing alcohol. Four participants indicated that, their foster children spend week-ends not sleeping at home. They attend the street bash parties, and sometimes come back home on Mondays morning being drunk.

Three respondents indicated that, the foster children are very disrespectful at home. They do not want to be reprimanded by the elders when they have done wrong. They always shout their foster parents when they are reprimanded. Foster children not willing to assist with house chores when requested was also identified by the respondents.

4.4.1.7.1.4 Theme 4: Sexual active of the adolescents
Being sexual active of the adolescent’s foster children was an issue that the respondents have identified. Three respondents felt that their adolescent’s foster children, whom are girls, are always after the boys. They noted that, they sometimes sleep out for days or even the whole week not knowing their whereabouts.

Teenage pregnancy was also identified as a challenge by the respondents. Two respondents mentioned that, their foster children have small babies whom are HIV positive. Both the mothers and the babies were tested and diagnosed to be HIV positive.
All the respondents felt that, they are facing serious problems with the adolescents that are sexual active. It has become difficult to control children these days according to the respondents. The respondents also posed questions among themselves as to “why the foster children cannot learn and understand that Aids kills as most of their biological parents died because of this disease?” These children cannot even see that they are HIV/Aids orphans; instead of behaving well and focus on the right things they are busy doing the wrong things.

4.4.1.8 Category 8: Ways of dealing with the challenges

4.4.1.8.1 Theme 1: Communication

Communication was identified by all the focus group participants as the main important skill that a parent need to acquire. The respondents indicated that, they have sat down with the children, trying to talk sense, guide and support them with no success. Two respondents raised an issue of punishing the child does not help, instead the child become more stubborn.

The respondents also indicated that, they have tried to communicate and share these problems with school teachers, church pastors and social workers trying to get help for the children. The above mentioned people tried to help with no success. It was noted that, if the child does not want to change his/her attitude, he/she will remain stubborn. It was also indicated by the respondents that, the foster children’s behavior was also reported to the police officials to intervene. The feeling was that, all the avenues were tried to get help for the foster children but with no success. They feel that, they are really tired of these children. They now pretend as if these foster children do not exist.

The respondents indicated that, they are now experiencing high blood problems as a result of these foster children behavior. Two respondents believed that, even other extended families and neighbors become jealous when they share a good relationship with their foster children. They influence the foster children with bad things telling them to demand the foster care grant from the respondents.

4.4.1.9 Category 9: Contributions of foster parents in motivating the foster children

30% of the participants visit the school principal or telephone the school once in every quarter, checking the school progress of the foster child. They believe that, school reports does not communicate enough, therefore direct communication with the school is suggested.

20% of the participants always check the school books of the children on daily bases. That motivates the foster children to work hard in school.
50% of the participants assist with the home works every day

4.4.1.9.1 Theme 1: Influencing roles of foster parents in motivating the foster children

The respondents believed that, they have a major role in influencing the foster children learning. They indicated the following:

They attend school meetings and parents meetings. Two respondents even highlighted that, they are members of school governing bodies.
The participants have enough time to spend with the foster children, discussing about school, interesting subjects and other school activities.

The participants make sure that all the school requirements are being met on time. Participants assist foster children with their home work. They even encouraged them to register for the extra classes so that they can excel on the school subjects.

4.4.1.9.2 Theme 2: Facilitating school learning and school attendance of the foster children

The participants indicated that, facilitating the child’s school attendance is very important in a sense that, the child remain motivated and always show interest in his schooling. The following has been indicated by the respondents:
They check the books of the foster children every day
They assist the children with the home work and sign the daily diaries
They phone the school to check the progress of the child.

4.4.20 Category 10: Attitudes of foster children towards family foster care

90% of the respondents indicated that, foster children show a positive attitude towards family foster care because they are part of the family. They are their grand children and they have been raised within the family.

10% of the respondents indicated that, the foster children has recently developed negative attitude towards family foster care. They believe that the reason could be the unrelated foster care. The respondent noted that, the foster child started developing these negative attitudes when he started his secondary schooling. He has been a part of the family for the past eight years. She believed that the community members have the bad influence towards the child to behave in an uncontrollable manner, and sees him as not part of the family.

4.4.20.1 Theme 1: Secure base of foster children

All respondents indicated that, home is a secure place for every family member. They indicated that, food, shelter, clothing, education and security is been provided
for the foster children. They love them and treat them as their own children and sometimes spoil them as they are the grand children. They noted that they are trying to close the gap of a parent to their grand children. They always supportive, protective and guide them.

4.4.21 Category 11: Response of the Educators

An introductory question was raised by the researcher to the respondents of the focus group, as to “why most of the foster children are not completing high school education?” That was a broad question towards the participants.

The respondents had a general feeling of the children’s home environment that is not conducive enough to attend their school work. Foster children having fears to ask their foster children what is requested at school was identified by the respondents. Foster children been treated badly by their foster parents was also identified by the educators as a contributing factor that can have an influence towards the pupils leaving school at an early stage.

4.4.21.1 Theme 1: School programmes offered to pupils

All the respondents acknowledged that, their schools have guidance teachers that provide the learners with life skills. The guidance teachers invite speakers from different organizations and the Departments to address the learners. The organizations and the Departments that always respond positively towards the school invitations to address the learners about their services were identified as Sanca, Nicro, Department of Social Development, SAPS Youth desk and the Department of Health. The respondents believed that the school should involve the stakeholders that are in the community to run the programmes towards the learners.

4.4.21.2 Theme 2: Foster children security at school

A school was identified by all the respondents as a safe environment to all learners. They have acknowledged that, there are security guards at school gates that only allow children to go out of the school premises after school or with a permission slip from the Principal. The school guards does not allow the learners to go in and out from the school gates during the lessons without a permission slip, therefore, there is enough security for all learners at school.

With the foster children, it was noted that, those who experience problems at home easily disclose to their teachers and the guidance teacher. All learners feel secured in school premises.

4.4.21.3 Theme 3: Foster children’s interests in school and learning.

Some of the foster children were identified to have the interest in learning and others were perceived to be influenced by their peer group to stay away from school. The
learners are different and others experience problems at home that make them not to have interest in school, and others are misbehaving and have no reason to be away from school. It differs with the child and the background.

4.4.21.4 Theme 4: Opportunities in an environment supporting foster children’s education

Four respondents believed that, the government does not play a role in supporting all children who are in need. The government provides feeding schemes only to primary schools not focusing to all learners who are in foster care such as those who are in high school. The educators end up sharing their pocket money with the disadvantaged learners to buy food. The feeling was that, it is difficult to teach a hungry child.

It was identified that, only the learners whose parents are rich and have outside contacts such as, scholarship and bursaries benefit from the outer environment. Ward Counselors were also perceived as not playing their role and being supportive towards foster children’s education. They are only serving their interests and their families to benefit. That came to the respondents’ conclusion, that the government and the counselors provide support to the advantaged families instead the disadvantaged children. It was noted that, some of the disadvantage girls’ learners resort in falling in love with the taxi drivers, knowing that they will get support and money in an exchange of sex with them.

4.4.21.5 Theme 5: Challenges experienced by educators towards foster children

There are various challenges that were identified by the participants. These are the following challenges:

- Some of the learners do not study at home. They lack concentration in class, as other learners are child headed family and other are care givers to their parents.
- Parents and foster parents are not supportive towards the learners’ education
- Social problems end up affecting learners, and some become withdrawn in class.
- Teachers become demoralized when learning about the experiences of orphans in school.
- Government policies pose challenges to the educators, example, and a learner cannot fail once or repeat a class or a grade twice. Most learners were pushed from grade one and every grade up to grade ten. The respondents felt that learners cannot even write or read properly. They do not have the basics from the primary school.
- Slow learners were identified to be misplaced in mainstream schools. The respondents have problems in referring those learners to special schools to
learn skills.
- Learners are more interested in the entertainment than their school work
- The rate of pregnant learners is increasing in our school
- Some of the learners are involved in drugs.
- Other learners are not adhering to the school rules. They do not wear school uniform and very arrogant towards the educators

4.4.21.6 Theme 6: Educators’ motivation towards the learners

Learners should be motivated starting when they are in primary school until high school. The respondents felt that, the school district should start judging the results of the learners from grade one to grade seven, before judging the grade twelve results. The statement was supported by the respondents that some educators in primary schools do not attend to their work properly. Instead of teaching the learners according to the syllabus, learners spent most of the time in the garden and girls cleaning classes. The feeling was that, the primary educators teach learners to be domestic workers and gardeners instead of teaching them how to read and write.

Three respondents noted that, the educators motivate the learners with their schooling by sharing with them their background when they were still learners, and their future plans with their studies.

As motivators, the respondents acknowledged that, they even arrange extra classes after school and some Saturdays morning for the learners. Professionals from different organizations are being invited to school to address the learners; motivate them with their schooling and conduct career guidance sessions. They felt that, they are the role models of the learners, by being neat at school and aim very high in achieving their set goals.

4.5 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

This chapter is the cornerstone of the research study as it presented the findings of the research study. The findings were presented by way of narrating participants’ responses and theme analysis. The data presented dealt with the contributory factors of foster children not completing their high school education, challenges experienced by the three participants of focus groups namely, foster children, foster parents and educators as well as the strategies of retaining foster children in school.

A wide range of views were expressed amongst the participants within the groups. Feelings of regrets of leaving the school at an early stage by the foster children were expressed. Other respondents from a focus group of foster children blamed themselves of the wrong decision that they made, and others were sympathetic to see themselves without the education due to the social problems that they experienced. Reasons put forward by the foster children in leaving school before completing the grade twelve included: lack of parental care, peer pressure, children
not coping in class, learned behavior when children are not in school and the teachers who are not approachable to the learners.

The challenges that the foster parents encountered with the foster children included the stealing of money, foster children not attending school regularly, uncontrollable behavior of foster children and adolescents being sexual active. Most of the respondents from the focus group of foster parents showed concerned about their foster children of not having a bright future because they do not have the basic education. Their concerns were based on children end up being unemployable when they are grown up, because they will not be able to produce the required qualifications for certain job positions.

Educators also expressed their challenges that they are experiencing with the foster children. These include poor school attendance by the learners, learners being involved in drugs, uncontrollable behavior of the learners, high rate of pregnant learners, parents not being supportive towards their children’s learning and learners being not able to read and write because of the foundation that not acquired from the primary schools.
CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The first four steps of the research process are completed. The aim of this chapter is to draw conclusions and make recommendations from the available data. Retaining adolescents’ foster children in school, to acquire basic education and understanding their challenges of being in the foster care custody is the central focus of the professionals and organizations working in this field.

The aim of this study was to explore the reasons why adolescents foster children not completing their high school education in order to develop strategies that will assist social work practitioners in retaining them in school.

The objectives underlying this aim are as follows:

- To survey literature on foster care and education.
- To analyse the scope of the concept “foster care” in terms of current practice.
- To investigate the challenges those are encountered by the foster parents and ways of dealing with the adolescents and teenagers problems.
- To investigate the problems encountered by the adolescents’ foster children and also identifying their unmet needs.
- To investigate problems encountered by the foster children while still at school.
- To identify challenges of educators towards foster care learners.

A sample of twenty respondents was selected from a population of the researchers foster care case load and six respondents were grade nine and ten educators from two high schools in Naledi. The group was divided into three focus groups consist of ten adolescents foster children not completed high school education, ten foster parents of the concerned adolescents foster children and six educators.

The conclusions and recommendations are presented in the following discussions.

5.2 CONCLUSIONS

The conclusions have been drawn from the categories and themes that emerged from the discussions and the observations of the respondents as observed by the researcher.

The conclusions are as follows:

5.2.1 Not coping in class

From the focus group of the adolescents foster children conducted, it is apparent that, basic education from the lower primary schools plays an important role and influences the learner’s education at a later stage.

Learners who did not perform well in class and were conditionally promoted to the next high classes due to different reasons experience learning problems when they
are in senior schools. The respondents realised that they were not coping in senior classes as they could not even read and write in class. They were promoted to the next class when they were supposed to have repeated the grade.

Participants from the focus group of educators believed that, the reasons of some learners that are not coping in class, it is because they were incorrectly placed. Learners with learning disabilities are being placed in the mainstream schools instead being placed in special schools. That was identified as a contributory factor that makes a learner to be unable to cope with his lessons in class.

5.2.2 The respondent’s perception of the influence of peer pressure on learners who are in the foster care custody

It is evident from the response of participants that peer pressure can be regarded as one of the reasons of the adolescents’ foster children to discontinue with the schooling at an early stage.

The focus group of adolescents’ foster children indicated that, their peers who left school long ago discouraged them by stating all the negative things about the school. Other participants drew attention to the learning behaviour that they find themselves in when they are not in school such as involving themselves in criminal act, substance abuse and sexual activities. Scholz(1998) pointed out that negative peer influence was more likely in situations where children begin adolescents stage, as well as institutions where families and communities were unable to meet most of the needs of the children.

5.2.3 Lack of parental care

The participants from two focus groups, the adolescents’ foster children and the educators expressed concerns that there are some foster parents who lack the parental responsibilities towards the foster children. They identified those foster parents as not being supportive towards the learners’ education. They are not in a position of monitoring the school progress of the foster children and assist them with their school work. Educators also identified some foster parents that lack educational support towards their foster children, in that, they do not attend parents meetings, and others they even do not know what grades are their foster children doing. Some foster parents have met the class teachers of the learners even they were requested to do so by attending parents meetings.

Irresponsibility of some foster parents were also mentioned, that some foster parents receive foster care grant of the children but they do not meet the basic needs of the children. Other foster children are without school uniform and some are expected to go to school with hungry stomach while the foster care grant is being received and all spent on the foster parent’s personal things.

5.2.4 Uncontrollable behaviour of foster children

Foster parents’ participants anticipated that the loss of the biological parents to some foster children could result in acting out behaviour. Some children who did not grief
or not dealt with the pains and loss of the parents often display uncontrollable behaviour at a later stage. Participants believed that, the uncontrollable behaviour of the foster children also include the stealing of money problem with the aim of buying substance abuse and developing tendencies of not attending school regular.

5.2.5 Lack of opportunities in an environment that support foster children’s education

Participants believed that the government does not reach every disadvantage child. They feel that the government services discriminate other learners. Government services only focus on the learners who are in lower primary school only. Feeding schemes projects provide lunch to only learners that are in primary schools, discriminating foster children and orphans that are attending high school. School uniform is also provided free of charge to learners that are in primary school and the disadvantaged learners that are attending high school do not benefit.

Participants also highlighted that scholarship and bursaries always benefit the learners whose parents are rich and have good contacts from companies that offer bursaries.

5.2.6 Motivating foster child learner

All the respondents agreed that all the learners in school irrespective of being foster children or biological children should be motivated in their leaning. Motivation of learners should begin in the primary schools until the learner is at high school. The school district should monitor the learners’ results starting from the primary school until grade twelve at high school.

Respondents highlighted that, some educators are not approachable when a learner has some difficulties. They tend to label the learners that are not behaving well at school as “uncontrollable children” without finding out the cause and the reasons of not attending school regular. Labelling the learners demoralizes them and others continue with the bad behaviour.

5.2.7 Corporal punishment

The findings suggest that 10% of educators and 40% of foster parents believe that corporal punishment is the solution to discipline learners including foster children who stay away from school. Discipline strategies, which include corrective measures, should be developed at home as well as in schools because according to the researcher, corporal punishment is not a solution to discipline. The researcher has observed the following as disadvantages of corporal punishment in life:

- It is painful;
- Causes school drop-outs;
- Encourage laziness and not motivating the learner with his/her studies;
- Promotes absenteeism;
β Creates dependency and coping other learners work;
β Creates life time hatreds.

5.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

The recommendations for this study are as follows:

β It is without any doubt that the purpose of the research has been achieved, in that the contributory factors of adolescents’ foster children not being able to complete their high school education were thoroughly explored. From the research, respondents tended to focus more on contributory factors and less in developing strategies that will deal with those contributory factors. Opportunities for further research that will focus on the strategies of dealing with the contributory factors that make the adolescents foster children not to complete school are recommended.

β As applicable in exploratory research, there has not been any limitation of the scope of this research. The research therefore, focused on the contributory factors in more general terms. Such research managed to identify opportunities for further research that could investigate the identified factors in more depth.

β Foster care supervision services

It has been concluded from the research that twenty percent of foster parents lack the parental skills, therefore full foster care screening and assessment of proposed foster parents is recommended before the child can be placed in the foster care custody.

Foster care supervision services by the social work practitioners should be conducted on quarterly base so that problems that are being experienced in the foster care can be identified at an early stage.

β Appropriate placement of learners in schools

Remedial schools or Special schools for the learners with learning disabilities are limited; therefore those learners end up being stuck in the mainstreams schools. It is suggested that the government should come with a plan of establishing enough remedial and special schools so that learners with learning disabilities can be correctly placed. Educators in primary schools should be encouraged to upgrade their education and study further to be in line with the present educational policy and be able to screen the learners with learning problems.
Motivating adolescents' foster child learner

Learners should be motivated with their learning starting from the primary school until they attend high school. Parents should show interest in their children’s learning by supporting and encourage them with their studies. They should always avail themselves when learners need them.

There should be rewards and merits for the good performance of learners at school. There should be rewards and merits for the learners with good behaviour at school. There should be merits for the learners who attend school well. School Social Workers in the township schools was seen as a need.

Interesting activities in school

Schools in the township should not focus only to sports such as soccer and netball. Sports such as rugby, tennis, swimming and many more should be encouraged to open avenues for learners that have different talents. Extra mural activities are also encouraged in township schools.

Community involvement

There is also a need for integrated functioning of different role-players in the community to exercise a supportive role and assist the disadvantaged learners who are foster children, linking them with people and companies that can provide with scholarship and bursaries.

Equal distribution of services towards learners

There is a need for the equal distribution of services towards all learners irrespective of the grade that they are doing. The respondents felt very strong that the feeding schemes that provide lunch to primary school learners should also provide the disadvantage high school learners with lunch. There are many disadvantaged children who attend school with hungry stomach in high school.

There is a need that the government should focus on all disadvantaged learners including the foster children and the orphans in all grades when supplying with school uniform. All disadvantaged learners should benefit to all services that are provided in schools. It is recommended that our government should not discriminate the services but distribute them equally to all the disadvantaged and needy learners.

5.4 CONCLUSION

This chapter provided an overview of the research, important findings as well as the recommendations.
The respondents from different groups managed to share common and diverse perceptions on the contributory factors of the adolescents’ foster children not completing their high school education. The emphasis was on motivating the adolescents’ foster children and developing strategies to retain them in school. The identified themes and observations that emerged with the groups and across the different groups assisted in drawing the conclusions and recommendations as presented.
REFERENCE LIST


Department of Health (2007) *South Africa HIV and AIDS Statistics Summary*


Neuman, W. L (2006) *Social research methods: Qualitative and quantitative approaches* Needham Heights: Allyn and Bacon

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APPENDIX: A

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

INTRODUCTION

PERSONAL INTRODUCTION
I am Beauty Mlamla a student from University of Johannesburg

AIM OF STUDY
The aim of the study is to explore the reasons why adolescent foster children unable to complete their high school education. Receiving first hand information from you will be in assistance in developing strategies to retain adolescent foster children in school.

STATEMENT OF CONFIDENTIALITY
You will remain anonymous. The information obtained will not be discussed with anyone; it will be treated with the strict confidentiality.

OBTAIN PERMISSION TO USE DATA PRESERVATION METHODOLOGY
It is important that our discussion be recorded to capture everyone’s comments. I therefore request your permission to record the interview, and take notes.
Taking of notes is permissible by all three focus groups. Audio tape recording is permissible only to two focus groups sessions, namely group of foster parents and the educators.

No audio tape recordings will be made during the focus group of adolescent foster children, as this makes them feel uncomfortable when being recording
APPENDIX: B

Framework for Research Questions

The following is an outline of the questions asked by the researcher in order to obtain information from the respondents.

FOCUS GROUP GUIDING QUESTION
(Adolescents’ Foster children)

1. Tell the group about yourselves

2. What made you or influenced you to stay away from school?

3. What do you dislike in school? (Elaborate)

4. What are the things that you like the most at school?

5. What do you think it should be done to make the school environment interesting?

6. Where do you see yourself in 10 years to come?
7. What do you wish to be when given a chance to complete high school education and why?
_________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________

8. What do you learn from your friends when you are not at school?
_________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________

9. Could you mention some of the things that you do when you are not at school?
_________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________

10. What do you like the most when you are not at school?
_________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________

11. How do you feel when you see your peers or age group that has finished school?
_________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________

FOCUS GROUP GUIDING QUESTIONS
(Foster parents)

1. What challenges are you facing with foster children?
_________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________

2. How do you deal with those challenges?
_________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________

3. Since the education is important these days, what contribution do you make to motivate foster children?
4. What role do you make in influencing the foster children learning?

5. What are the attitudes of the foster children towards the family foster care?

6. Do the foster children appear to feel secure at home?

7. Are the foster children provided with secure base?

8. As foster parents, do you facilitate the children’s learning and school attendance?

FOCUS GROUP GUIDING QUESTIONS
(Educators)

1. What school programmes are offered to school children?

2. Do foster children appear to feel secure at school?

3. To what extent do the foster children show interest in school and learning?
4. What opportunities are there in wider environment to support the foster children education?
________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________

5. Do the school offer life skills programmes for the pupils?
________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________

6. What challenges do you experience from school children?
________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________

7. As educators, how can you motivate the school children to finish their high school education?
________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________

CONCLUSION

Thank you very much for your participation, time and contributions. I really enjoyed the interview. Here is my cell number and the office number that I can be reached at. Please feel free to contact me I am willing to give help wherever I can. I have benefited a lot from you and I think you can benefit from me too. Once more I want to reconfirm that you will remain anonymous. I wish you a safe journey back home

I thank you
APPENDIX: C

Request letter

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

JOHANNESBURG DECENTRALIZED SERVICE OFFICE
PRIVATE BAG X3
JOHANNESBURG
2000

TEL : (011)374-1600/37
FAX (011)833-4014/838-5140

Enquiries: Mrs.N.B.Mlamla
Date: 29 February 2008

Attention: Mrs. Mpumi Ntsamai
Department of Social Development
Head Office
Johannesburg
2000

Dear Madam

Re: REQUEST FOR CONDUCTING A RESEARCH STUDY AT WALTER SISULU PLACE OF SAFETY

I am a Social Work Masters student registered with the University of Johannesburg. My research topic is: Reasons why adolescent’s foster children not completing high school education, so to develop strategies to retain them in school.

I therefore request a permission to use the venue to conduct the research study. Currently I am employed by the Department of Social Development placed at Johannesburg Metro Regional office.

Hoping my request will be considered.

Yours faithfully
N.B. Mlamla
Chief Social Worker
Response to Mlamla NB

Thank you very much for your request dated 29/02/2008. The request is supported by both the director (Mpume Ntsamai) and the Head Institution (Sandra Madella). There is a motivation format, obtainable from the Research Committee will provide the permission ultimately.

Wishing you success with your studies.

Sincerely

Ms. Mpume Ntsamai
Director Institution
Dear foster parents,

You are hereby cordially invited to attend a foster parents meeting concerning the challenges of foster care parenting.

Date: 7TH March 2008

Time: 10h00

Venue: Department of Social Development
Johannesburg Metro Region
Board Room

Theme: Adolescent Foster Children’s Education

Your attendance and participation will be much appreciated
PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH STUDY AT THABO SECONDARY SCHOOL AND NALEDI HIGH SCHOOL IN SOWETO

Head of the school (School Principal)

Following our telephonic discussion with the head of the school and the guidance teachers, I hereby request to conduct a research at your school.

Participants of six educators that teach grade ten and eleven classes from each school are invited to participate in the focus group

The research topic: Strategy of retaining foster children at school

The research will be done using qualitative paradigm and the interview will be conducted to gather reliable data

Your co-operation will be highly appreciated.

Thanking you,

NB Mlamla
Ms H Ellis  
Dept of Social Work  
UJ

Dear Hettie

This is to confirm that I passed Beauty Mamla’s dissertation on to Dr N R Barnes to edit. The student has approved the final edited document.

I turn to Dr Barnes to assist when I am unable, owing to work overload, to undertake editing work myself. He has assisted numerous UJ MA and doctoral students over the years, and has done so particularly for the Dept of Human Resources Management.

Sincerely

Prof. C. MacKenzie  
011-559-2553  
083-969-3029  
craigm@uj.ac.za
TABLE AND FIGURES

Figure 3.1: The Process of Research (Chapter 3)

Figure 3.2: Populations (Chapter 3)

Figure 3.3: Focus Group (Chapter 3)

Figure 3.4: Strategies for Ensuring Trustworthiness (Chapter 3)

Table 4.1: Number of Participants in Focus Group (Chapter 4)

Table 4.2: Categories and Themes (Chapter 4)