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# Foster care for children with special needs on the cards

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*Delhi had formed the foster care rule in 2009 but there has been no progress since then. Government should not delay the pilot project since the pilot could be started with 50 children. YOGESH KUMAR, NGO, Association for Development*

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NEW DELHI: The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) government may soon allow foster care for children who are in need of special supervision and protection.

A Delhi government official said that the project was under consideration and a decision that was in the interest of the children would be taken.

Groups working for child rights have been pitching for implementing foster care, which is part of Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2000, Section 42.

NGOs are hoping that Arvind Kejriwal's government will act positively in the matter as foster care is a non-institutional family care programme where a child lives on a temporary basis with the foster parents, which can be for short term or long term. They say it is one of the most effective mechanisms for the rehabilitation of children.

"We took up the matter with the Delhi government through a letter to the chief minister in which we requested him to implement the programme at least on pilot basis. But the department of women and child development gave the excuse that as the final notified guidelines on foster care had not been published by the Union ministry of women and child development, they will not be able to move ahead in the matter. Recently the Union ministry had issued the model guidelines so we will take up the matter again with the Delhi government to implement the programme," said Yogesh Kumar of Association for Development (AFD), an NGO.

According to the guidelines issued by the Union ministry, children in the age group of 0-6 years shall not ordinarily be considered for placement in long term foster care as such small children should be preferably provided a permanent family through adoption.

While children in the age group of 6-18 years, who have been staying in child care institutions, shall be placed in foster care based on their individual care plan developed in the institution.

Children whose parents are terminally ill and have submitted a request to the committee or the District Child Protection Unit for taking care of their child as they are unable to take care of their child should also be considered for foster care.

"Delhi had formed the foster care rule in 2009 but there has been no progress since then. Government should not delay the pilot project since the pilot could be started with 50 children. The implementation of the scheme on pilot basis would enable the government to frame necessary protocols, monetary mechanism and implementation strategies," Yogesh added.

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