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Webinar Series, Part 2:

Recruiting, retaining and supporting kinship caregivers: Identifying the needs and current opportunities to expand recruitment, retention and support to kin



How to Join the Webinar

1. Click the link to join the webinar at the specified time and date:

<https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/1078990711223114242>

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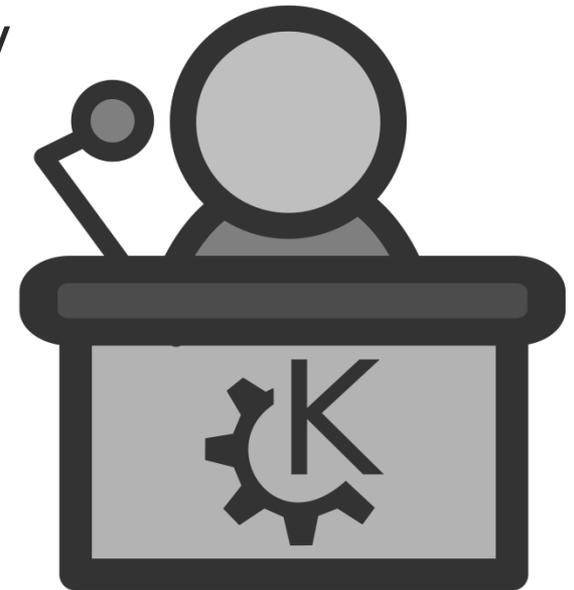


Logistics

- Webinar will be recorded and archived at www.stepupforkin.org/trainings
- All attendees will be on mute – type any questions you have into the chat box or if you experience technical difficulties email Molly Dunn at m.dunn@kids-alliance.org
- A certificate of participation will be posted online after the webinar at www.stepupforkin.org/trainings
- We will be pausing for questions at 3 different intervals

Today's Presenters

- Molly Dunn, Alliance for Children's Rights
- Christina Riehl, Children's Advocacy Institute
- Tim Morrison, Children Now
- Martha Matthews, Public Counsel
- Beverly Johnson, Lilliput Children's Services
- Gail Johnson Vaughan, Families NOW



What We Will Cover Today



- Building on our last webinar – which focused on the plight of our kinship families and why our policies need to be attentive to their needs
- Legal Framework: Overview of the laws related to relative preference and family finding
- Discussion of unmet service and support needs of kinship families
- CURRENT opportunities to shift practice
- Program Examples – Current Best Practices in family finding, kinship support, and child-centered permanency

RECRUITMENT: LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR FAMILY FINDING

Christina Riehl

Recruitment
Notice



Legal Framework: **Who is a Relative?**

- Relative is a very broad term (WIC §§ 319(f)(2) & 361.3(c)(2))
 - Anyone who is within the 5th degree of kinship by blood, adoption or affinity
 - Includes step-parents and step-siblings
 - Relatives whose status preceded by “great”, “great-great”, or “grand”
 - Spouse of any of these persons, even if marriage terminated
- **Preferential treatment** for placement only applies to adult Grandparent, Aunt, Uncle or Sibling of the Child

Legal Framework: Finding Relatives

- Responsibility for identifying relatives is shared by **ALL THROUGHOUT THE PROCEEDINGS.**
- Social Worker Responsibilities
 - Use due diligence in investigating identity & location of relatives (WIC § 309(e)(3))
 - **30 days** to ID/locate & notice relatives (WIC § 309 (e))
 - ✓ Probation Officers Too (WIC § 628(d))
 - ✓ Notice must include info that child has been removed, explanation of options for providing care & visiting child & info about financial assistance for caretakers. (WIC § 309 (e))

Legal Framework: Relative Preference

- “Placement with a suitable relative is presumptively in the child’s best interest.” (*In re Esperanza C.*)
 - Preference ≠ Automatic Placement
- Preference applies whenever new placement must be made.
 - During reunification period, preference still applies (*In re Joseph T.*)
 - If request for placement made after disposition but before change in placement would harm the child, assessment should be ordered (*In re Jessica Z.*)
- Preferential consideration (for LG/adoption) of ongoing caretakers if reunification fails. (WIC § 366.26(c)(4) & (k))

Legal Framework: SB 794 (2015)



- Custodial Parents of siblings are relatives who must be id'd/located and noticed for purposes of placing a child (WIC § 309 (e)(1))
- At hearing to terminate services & post permanency hearing (if child not placed for adoption) court **must find diligent efforts were made** to locate and evaluate a relative whose name was submitted as a possible caretaker. (FC § 7950)
- Placement with a **Fit and Willing Relative**
 - Potential permanent placement (WIC § § 366.3 (e)(8), (h)(1), & 706.6 (m)(2), (n)(2))
 - At the Termination of Parental Rights hearing, if the child is living with an approved relative or and the court finds removal would be seriously detrimental to the child's emotional well-being, the child shall not be removed from the home. (WIC § 366.26 (c)(4)(B))

Legal Framework: Placement Requirements

Initial Assessment

WIC § 309 (d)

- In-home inspection re safety & ability to care for needs
- Crim records check
- Check CAN Allegations

Court Placement

WIC 319 (f)(1)

- Relative/NREFM
- Consider CWS's rec based on crim records check & child abuse allegations

Placement Assessment

WIC § 361.3

- Stability/ability to protect, facilitate visitation & provide permanence
- Crim records check of all in home or with sig. contact
- Immigration Status irrelevant

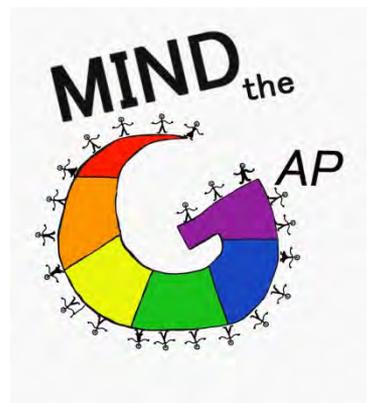
Evaluation for AFDC-FC Eligibility (WIC 11402)

Legal Framework: Requirements if Placement with Relatives Not Made

- If the Court does not place with a relative who has been considered for placement, reasons for denial must be stated for the record. (WIC § 361.1 (e))
- Criminal Records Exemption
 - Court Review Possible ONLY IF:
 - ✓ Agency's failure to seek exemption
 - ✓ Whether Agency used appropriate legal standard.



Gaps in the System



- Dispositional Hearing – if due diligence in finding/investigating relatives not exercised, **no specific remedy or prohibition** against proceeding with placement order. (CRC 5.695(f) & WIC § 361.3(a)(3))
- *Joseph T.* case not universally followed.
 - Some jurisdictions require “**need for removal**” before assessment conducted.
- Resource Family Approval Process

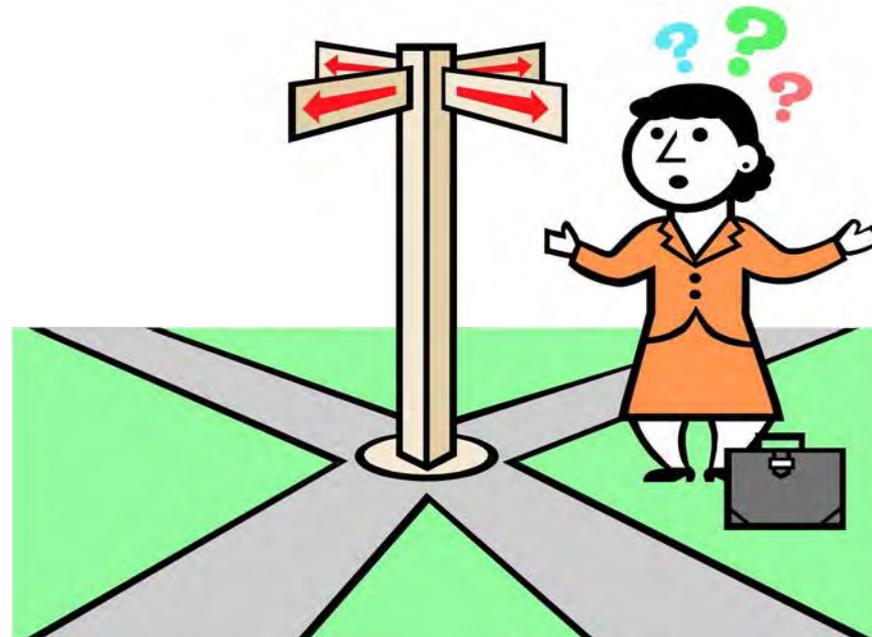
QUESTIONS?



UNMET SERVICE AND SUPPORT NEEDS OF KINSHIP CAREGIVERS

Molly Dunn

Tim Morrison



Kin Have Different Needs

- **Different Needs**
 - Kin, generally, have **fewer** financial resources
 - Kin are **recruited in a crisis situation**, after the child has been removed, and are not given a chance **to prepare financially, emotionally or logistically**
 - Kin are more likely to need child care
 - Kin often need counseling to help them deal with birth parents, feelings about parenting again, and their new relationships with their related children
 - **Older caregivers**, many of whom are kin, are more likely to need help meeting children's educational needs and providing recreational services



CA Law: Same Services Available to All Foster Families

Child welfare services may include, but are not limited to, a range of **service-funded activities**, including:

- case management,
- counseling,
- emergency shelter care,
- emergency in-home caretakers,
- temporary in-home caretakers,
- respite care,
- therapeutic day services,
- teaching and demonstrating homemakers,
- parenting training,
- substance abuse testing,
- and transportation.

These service-funded activities shall be available to children and their families in **all phases of the child welfare program** in accordance with the child's case plan and departmental regulations. WIC 16501.

In Practice, Kin Receive Fewer Services

“State policies indicate that kin are generally eligible to receive the same services as non-kin foster parents. However, past research has clearly shown that in practice, kin foster parents and the children in their care receive fewer services. Kin are offered fewer services, request fewer services, and receive fewer services.”

Service	Non-Kin	Kin
Respite Care	23%	16%
Support Group	40%	9%
Training	76%	13%
Specialized Training	71%	17%
Child Care	Less than 10%	Less than 10%
Mental Health Services	48%	28%
SW Contact within last month	81%	73%
<i>Average # of Services on 0 to 6 Scale</i>	2.3	0.53

Why do Kin Receive Fewer Services?

- **Legal Barriers:** Some services are simply denied to kin families
 - Foster youth services
 - Specialized care increments
- **Cultural Barriers:** Misperceptions and mistrust between child welfare and kin
 - Respite care
 - Mental Health Services
- **Design Barriers:** Services/service delivery not tailored to the needs of kin
 - Training
 - Child care
- **Implementation Barriers:** Misinterpretation of law or failure to communicate about what the law requires
 - Reimbursement for Transportation to School of Origin
 - Child Care

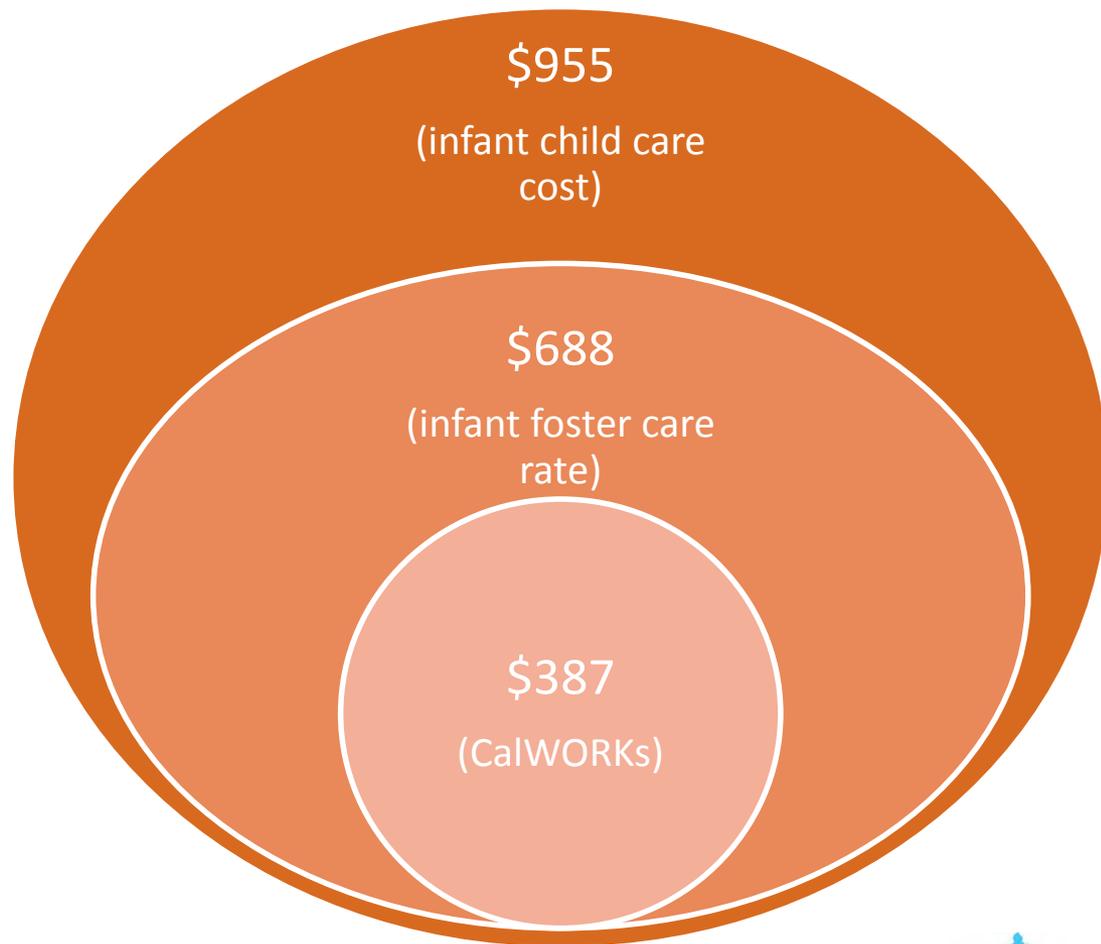
Respite Care

- Respite care is especially important for caregivers who (as is typically the case for relatives) were **unable to plan** ahead for new responsibilities.
- In a national survey (NSCAW II), 23% of nonrelative foster parents found to receive respite services, compared with **16% of kinship caregivers**.



Child Care: Cost

- Caregivers (especially relatives) work full-time.
- Market-rate cost is prohibitive.



Child Care: Accessing Subsidies

Barriers

- **Complex system** – need referral support
 - Lack of “**emergency**” child care options
 - Misguided interpretations &/or fewer accommodations for children placed with relatives and other foster parents
- *In LA County, only **one in eight foster children** (0-5) attend a public early care & education program.*

Policy strategies in California

- Categorical eligibility...✓
- Prioritized enrollment...✓
- Family fee exemptions...✓
- Supplemental foster care funding...✗



overcoming barriers

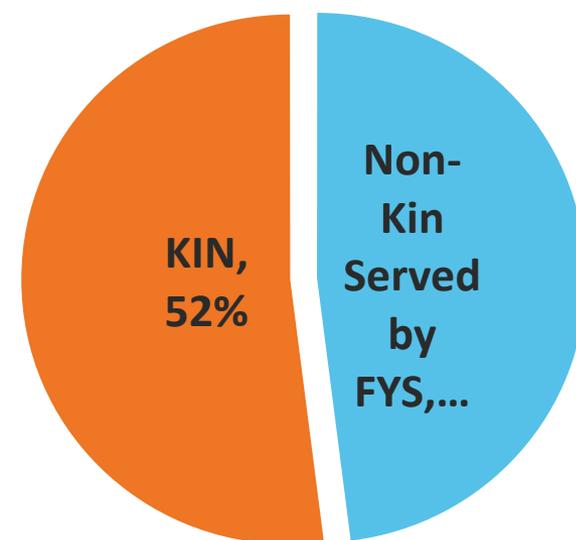
Child Care: **Quality**

- The most vulnerable children are least likely to access high-quality care



Educational Supports

- **Poor Educational Outcomes**
 - Highest drop out rate
 - Lowest graduation rate
 - Significantly more likely to change schools
 - Significantly more likely to be enrolled in lowest-performing schools.
- **Kin Tend to Need More Support in Meeting Educational Needs:** Studies note that older caregivers, many of whom are kin, tend to need more support in meeting children's educational needs.
- Until very recently, children placed with kin were **legally** excluded from receiving educational supports from California's Foster Youth Services Program.



Transportation Stipend to Keep Child in School of Origin

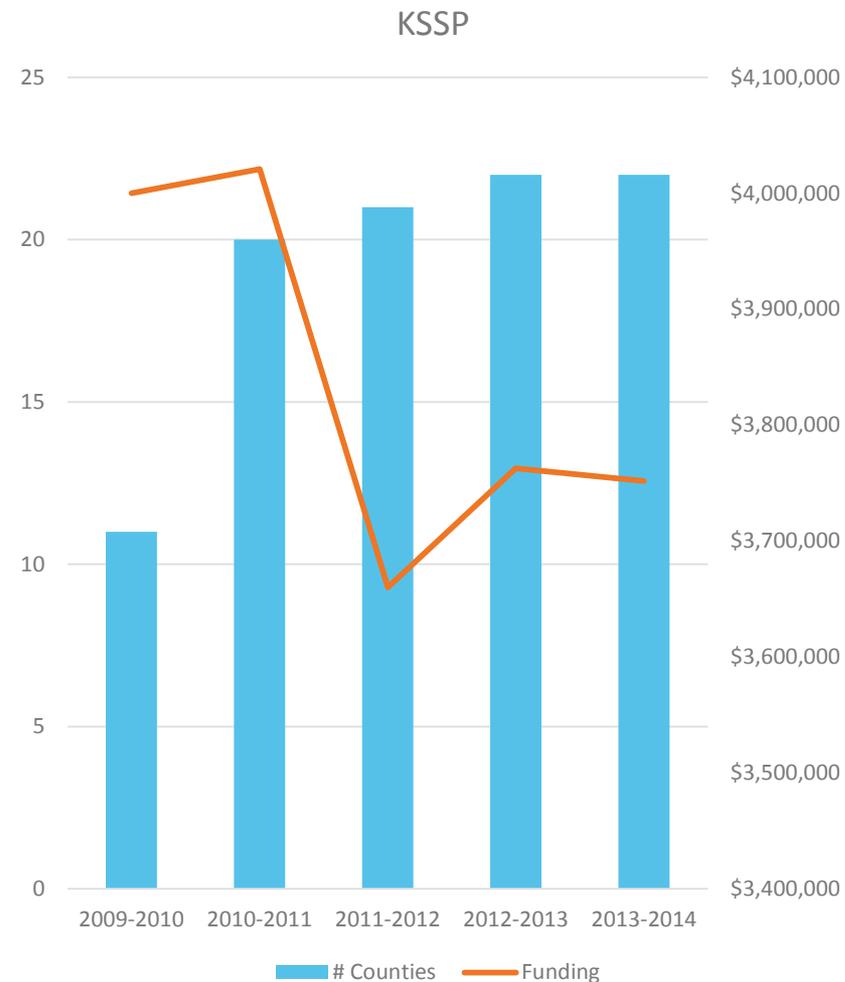
- One of the largest barriers to school stability is the **inability of caregivers** to cover the costs of transporting foster youth to their school of origin.
- Non-relative foster parents receive up to \$423 a month in additional foster care funding if they transport foster youth to their school of origin.
- Relative foster parents who are caring for children who are not federally eligible are:
 - **NOT** eligible for any transportation funding if they are in a county that is not participating in ARC.
 - **SHOULD BE** eligible for up to \$423 a month in funding if they transport foster youth to their school of origin.

Kinship Support Services Programs

“One of the main barriers to kin accessing services is knowledge; because most kin lack experience with the child welfare system, they do not know where to look for or how to access community resources.”

KSSPs & Realignment

- The number of counties providing KSSPs has remained steady at **22**.
- Overall funding has **decreased** from \$4M pre-realignment to \$3.75 million in 2013-2014.
- Nearly 1/3 of counties with KSSPs have cut funding by 15% or more (including 3 counties that have cut funding by more than 30%).



CURRENT OPPORTUNITIES TO INCREASE SUPPORTS AND SERVICES TO KIN

Martha Matthews



Question: If relatives are the most-favored placement for foster children, why do they get lower monthly benefits and fewer services and supports?

Hint: The correct answer is NOT federal or state funding restrictions.

Unequal Treatment of Relative vs. Non-relative Foster Parents

- Relatives caring for non-federally-eligible foster children only got CalWORKs until 2014; now can get **ARC** if the **county opted in**, BUT still no specialized rates or supplements.
- Relatives **do not** get FFA rates and support.
 - Many relatives will accept children regardless of funding/support. Counties save money on relative placements ... but at what long-term cost?



Does It Have To Be This Way? **Funding** **Myths And Facts**

TRUE: Title IV-E funding is restricted to out-of-home care costs for federally eligible children

... **but not in waiver counties!**



TRUE: State child welfare funding was categorical, with limited amounts earmarked for kinship support services

... **but not after 2013 realignment!**

Realignment

- **Realignment** localized state funding for county foster care and child welfare systems.
- Key decisions about child welfare system funding priorities are now made at the county level instead of by the state legislature.
- In waiver counties, the impact of realignment is amplified by **parallel flexibility** in the use of federal funds.



Funding under Realignment & Title IV-E Waiver

Realignment

Pre-Realignment: Foster care and child welfare services were budgeted at state level by line item.

Now: State deposits a portion of state sales tax and VLF revenues into Local Revenue Fund, which is allocated to counties based on prior years' expenditures.

Title IV-E Waiver

Pre-Waiver: County received Title IV-E reimbursement for eligible out-of-home care costs based on actual expenditures.

Now: Waiver counties receive a fixed yearly amount based on prior years' level of federal foster care funding.



Decision-making under Realignment & Title IV-E Waiver

Realignment

Pre-Realignment: County received specific funding allocations for specific programs.

Now: County has discretion to shift funds within foster care and child welfare services so long as children receive benefits and services required by federal and state law.

Title IV-E Waiver

Pre-Waiver: County could only spend Title IV-E funds on eligible children in out-of-home care.

Now: County can allocate federal funds across foster care, child welfare services, adoption and prevention programs. County can use funds for children regardless of federal eligibility.

It's up to the counties!



- Counties already have fiscal flexibility to better support relative placements – no special funding stream or change in law is needed.
- So far, fiscal flexibility has not benefited relative caregivers: counties' Kinship Support Services Program expenditures decreased about 6% between 2011 and 2014. (CDSS Realignment Expenditures Summary 2015).

Examples of How Counties Could Use Fiscal Flexibility ...

- Fund **all relative placements** equally (supplement ARC with specialized care rates, clothing allowance, infant supplement, etc.) -- WIC § 11460(e) explicitly gives counties this option.
- Create/expand kinship support centers
- Contract with FFAs to **support relative caregivers.**
- Provide **'start-up'** funds for initial placement costs (home modifications, beds, cribs, infant supplies, clothing, school supplies, etc.).



QUESTIONS?



LILLIPUT



Recruitment of Relatives & Necessary Supports

Karen Alvord, CEO, 916.835.0240

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Beverly Johnson, CPO, 916.803.6247

bjohnson@Lilliput.org

“I don’t know what would have happened to my grandchild had it not been for Kinnections.”



-Grandparent

Guiding Principles

- Prevention and early intervention
- Relatives considered *first*
- **Strength-based** with a **strong value** to keep children safely in their families of origin
- Shared decision-making



Strategies

- Family Finding & Engagement at Front-End
 - Informal Family Team Meetings
- Kinship Supports *Before* Child is Placed
- Information & Resource Linkages in Family's Community
- Kinship-Specific Training & Support
- In-Home Case Management
- Foster Certification of *Relatives* for Additional Support
- Trauma Informed
- Protective Factors Framework



Our Journey into Kinship Care

- History of partnership
 - 1990's Foster Homes to Permanency
 - 2007 Kinship Support Services Programs
 - 2009-2012 **Kinnections** Initiative
 - 2013 Family Finding & Foster Certification of Relatives



Federal Connections Grant: A Public/Private Partnership

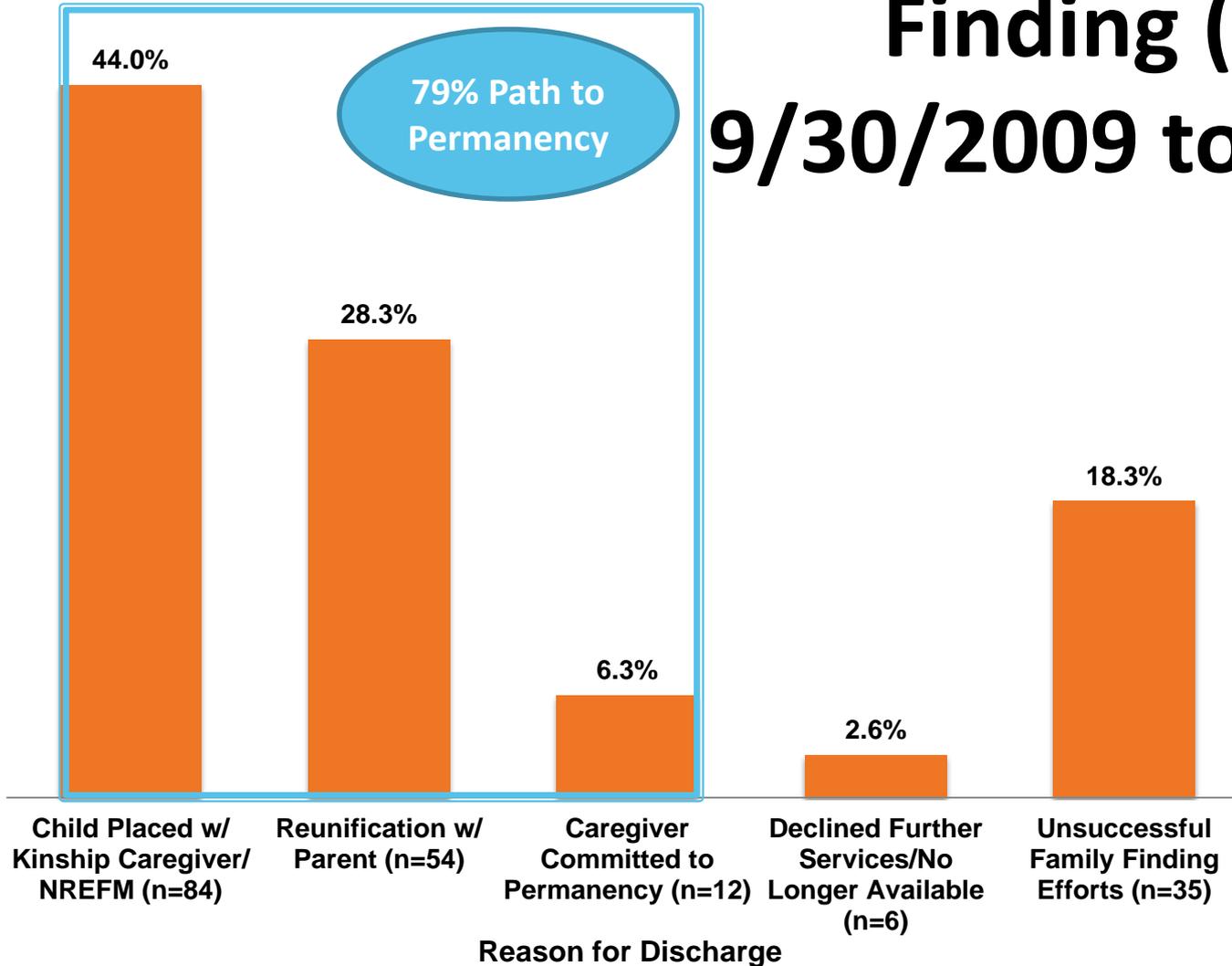
- **Sacramento County (2008)**
 - 4,000 Children In Foster Care
 - 24% Formal Kinship Placement Rate
 - Disproportionality
- **Major Goals**
 - **Increase** Kinship Placements & Connections
 - **Support** Kinship Placements
 - **Establish** Permanency



Kinnections Initiative

- Major Components
 - Intensive Family-Finding
 - Kinship Navigation & Support
- Target Population
 - AA Youth 0-17 years, 1st time entries
 - Sacramento County

Discharge from Family Finding (N=191) 9/30/2009 to 6/30/2012



Foster Certification of Relatives

- Sacramento County 18-month Pilot (2013)
- Foster Certifying Kinship Families
 - 50 Children/Youth Initial Entry Into Care
 - Time-limited



Foster Certification of Relatives

- Intensive Family Finding
- Kinship Assessment & Supports
 - **SAFE: S**tructured **A**nalysis **F**amily **E**valuation
 - Kinship-specific Training
 - Protective Factors Framework
 - All Licensing Requirements Are Met
 - **CANS: C**hild & **A**dolescent **N**eeds & **S**trengths Tool

Challenges

- Relative Motivation
- Certification Requirements
- Payment Inequity- Federal Eligibility



Successes

- Relatives accept support & training
- Families receive emotional support and mental health needs are addressed
- Understand how to access the resources the family needs to participate in child's tx
- Connection to other kin caregivers
- Healthier relationships with extended family
- Understanding of permanency options



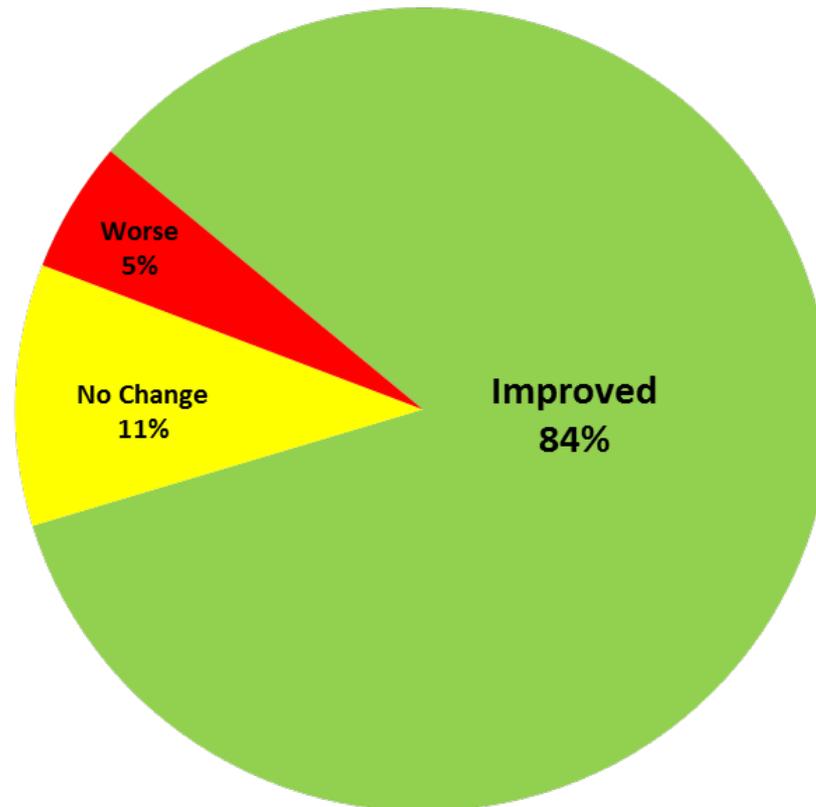
Promising Outcomes

- Timeliness to permanency
 - 27 kids discharged
 - 85% permanency
 - 52% adopted or guardianship
 - ✓ Avg. Length of Time: 12 months
 - 48% reunified with birth parent
 - ✓ Avg. Length of Time: 6 months



Promising Outcomes

Total CANS Score Outcomes For KEEP Children
Served Through July, 2015 (N=19)



CHILD CENTERED PERMANENCY SERVICES: THINKING ABOUT RELATIVES

Gail Johnson Vaughan



Child-Centered Specialized Permanency Services

- Focuses on the child's feelings that might make them worried about being part of a permanent family.
- Designed to address child's history of trauma, separation and loss, and/or the child's need for mental health services to ameliorate impairments in significant areas of life functioning that can **reduce the child's ability to achieve a permanent family.**

Child-Centered Specialized Permanency Services con't

- Defines permanency to include reunification, adoption, legal guardianship or other lifelong connections to caring adults, including at least one adult who will provide a permanent, parent-like relationship for that child.
- Also utilizes family finding and engagement, & child-specific recruitment as needed.

Key Service Components

- Puts the child/youth in the center the process
- Building a trusting relationship with the youth
- In-depth review of case file
- Assessment of youth's strengths, challenges, readiness for adoption or other forms of permanence, etc.
- **Family-finding** -identifying and/or rekindling potential connections, relationship building and mending



Key Service Components con't

- **Addresses and integrates** the child's history of trauma, separation and loss
- Network building and engaging caring adults in planning with the teen — both professional and social supports
- Individualized recruitment plan
- Preparation of permanent family to assure they are adequately prepared to meet the needs of the youth
- Post-placement support

Adding Trauma-Focused Clinical Components Improves Outcomes

These components include:

- Working with youth to create safety, self-regulation and self-reflection
- Building a **sense of empowerment / mastery over his or her situation and life** by nurturing the youth's participation and decision making about their case plan and work
- Relational engagement and positive affect enhancement using a **family-centered model**

Trauma-focused Clinical Components con't

- Understanding the **youth's past**, realizing his or her **present situation** and developing **plans for the future**
- Providing individual, family, collateral and group therapy
- Case management and rehabilitation services
- **Educating and supporting** the youth and the families they live with **on the issues of complex trauma and core permanency issues**

How This Affects Kin Caregivers

- Child's extended family is **central to the permanency process**
- Re-kindling relationships **deepen bonds** between kin and youth
- These services address the unresolved trauma and loss can lead to behaviors that can create parenting challenges.



How This Affects Kin Caregivers con't

- Increases likelihood kin will be contacted about the youth's need for a permanent family
- Allows kin to choose guardianship or adoption as the vehicle for their permanency
- Provides **preparation and support** to the permanent family

Funding Specialized Permanency Services

- Keeping youth in foster care creates an **unnecessary financial burden for counties**
- The cost of providing lifelong families low in comparison to foster care
- Intensive child-centered specialized permanency services **more than pay for themselves.**
- Reinvesting the savings allows counties to sustain and expand the services to improve their permanency outcomes.



County Guide to Funding Youth Permanency



Funding Youth Permanency

A County Guide to Funding Child-Centered Specialized Permanency Services for Youth in Foster Care

Prepared by Families Now
(Formerly Mission Focused Solutions)
through a grant from Sierra Health Foundation

June 2015



<http://familiesnow.org/media/publications/>

AB 519

- Defines **Child-Centered Specialized Permanency Services** in statute
- Requires these services prior to deeming a child **“unadoptable”**
- Requires the services before a youth age 16 or above is given a plan of APPLA



AB 519 con't

- Includes Child-Centered Specialized Permanency Services as part of the ongoing and intensive efforts to place the youth in a permanent family **now required by federal law**
- Requires that adoptive parents and guardians be given written info about **importance of working with mental health professionals** with specialized training in adoption/clinical issues, should the need arise

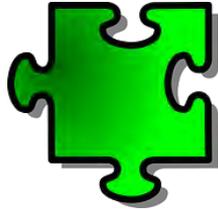
FAQs

- What if the youth doesn't want to be adopted?
 - Specialized permanency services are about **removing the barriers that makes a child want to leave care alone**. The youth is not pushed into a permanent family.
- Is this an unfunded mandate?
 - No, **Counties have the choice not to deem** children “unadoptable” and to give them plans other than APPLA
- Are any Counties providing these services?
 - Yes, several. Sacramento’s Destination Family program has been in place since 2003 funded primarily by recycling the savings achieved. There are more examples

QUESTIONS?



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WHEN: **NOVEMBER 18th from 10 AM – Noon**

WHAT: *Continuum of Care Reform and
What It Means for Kinship Families*



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