

**SACRAMENTO COUNTY PROBATION DEPARTMENT  
EFFECTIVE FAMILY FINDING AND SUPPORT STRATEGIES**



**PRESENTED BY**  
Senior DPO Pamela Lowe  
DPO Danna Buerger



**SACRAMENTO COUNTY  
PROBATION** Supporting Positive Change

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**Senior Deputy Probation Officer Pamela Lowe**  
Senior DPO Pamela Lowe has been with the Sacramento County Probation Department for 19 years. She has worked in Juvenile Hall, as a Juvenile Court writer, and for the last 9 years has been assigned to Placement Services. While in Placement Services she spent the first 5 years working with Extended Foster Care youth, and has spent the last 4 years recruiting and supporting Resource Families.

**Deputy Probation Officer Danna Buerger**  
DPO Buerger joined the Sacramento County Probation Department in 2017. She has worked both in Juvenile Hall and Placement Services and currently supervises a Placement Resource Family Approval (RFA) caseload. Mrs. Buerger has a social work degree and has extensive experience working with at-risk youth, foster care youth and youth on Probation.

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**Audience Poll**

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## Key Terms

- Resource Family Approval (RFA)
- Foster Parent Recruitment, Retention and Support (FRRS)
- Family Finding



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## OBJECTIVES

- Network Building
- Recruiting
- Supporting
- Retaining
- Case Management



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Why the focus on recruiting Resource Families?



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Continuum of Care Reform 2017: Increase the use of home-based family care and the provision of services and supports to home-based family care, reducing the use of congregate care placement settings, and creating faster paths to permanency resulting in shorter durations of involvement in the child welfare and juvenile justice systems.



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This includes Resource Families willing to care for foster youth as an initial placement or as a step down to home base care after completing a Short-Term Residential Therapeutic Program (STRTP), if a youth must live apart from their biological parents.



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
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The Family First Prevention Services Act (FFPSA) Part IV seeks to limit reliance on congregate care for serving children in foster care, consistent with the objectives of California's Continuum of Care Reform that were implemented pursuant to Assembly Bill 403 and subsequent legislation.



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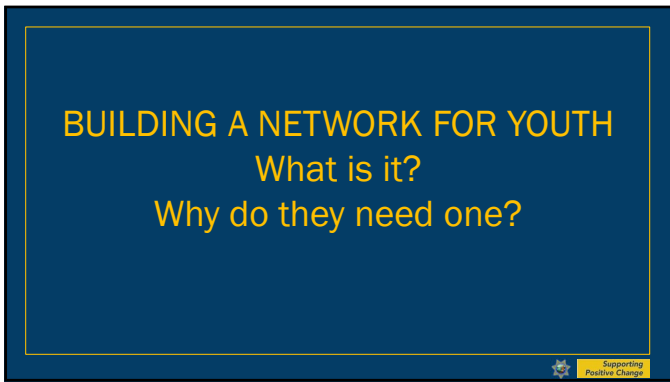
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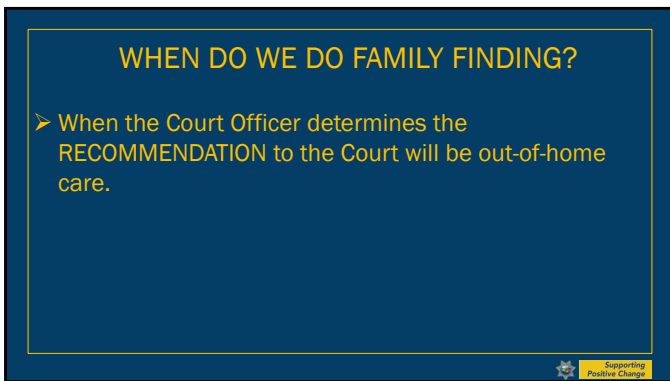
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**WHEN DO WE DO FAMILY FINDING?**

- When the Court Officer determines the **RECOMMENDATION** to the Court will be out-of-home care.
- When the Placement Officer determines the **YOUTH** may not have a parent to reunify with and RFA is the **CONCURRENT** case plan goal.



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**FAMILY FINDING**

- SENECA Family of Agencies contract



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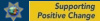
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**FAMILY FINDING**

- SENECA Family of Agencies contract
- EMAIL is submitted with names of birth and/or adoptive parents
  - DOB, Social Security number, last known address



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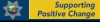
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**FAMILY FINDING**

- SENECA Family of Agencies contract
- EMAIL is submitted with names of birth and/or adoptive parents
  - DOB, Social Security number, last known address
- The INFORMATION provided by SENECA will include names, addresses, phone numbers and emails for 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> degree RELATIVES along with associates



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- We use the information to contact relatives of the youth to see if they are willing to become a RESOURCE FAMILY, PERMANENT CONNECTION or MENTOR for the youth



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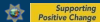
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**INVOLVE THE YOUTH IN FAMILY FINDING**

- Any RELATIVES we have failed to contact
- A FRIEND'S parents
- A COACH or TEACHER
  - Yearbook teacher
- BIOLOGICAL parents of adoptive youth
- PERMANENT CONNECTIONS in youth's life
- Positive influence in YOUTH'S life
- Support the INDIVIDUALS identified through the RFA process



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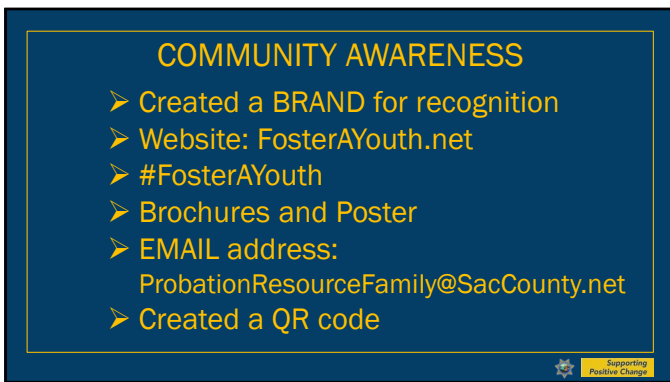
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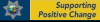
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### BRINGING AWARENESS TO THE COMMUNITY

- Meetings with COMMUNITY based partners
- Speaking with Chaplain VOLUNTEERS at our Youth Detention Facility
- BOYS AND GIRLS Club
- Local Churches
- Elementary, Middle and High SCHOOLS
- STARBUCKS Community Boards
- Restrooms stalls in office building



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### EVENTS

- High School FOOTBALL Games
- GOLF tournaments



FosterYouth.net



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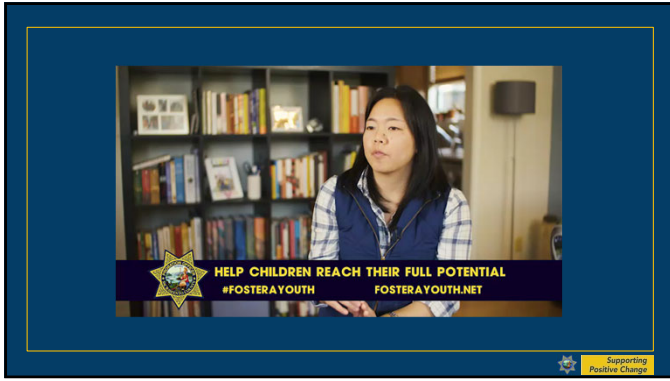
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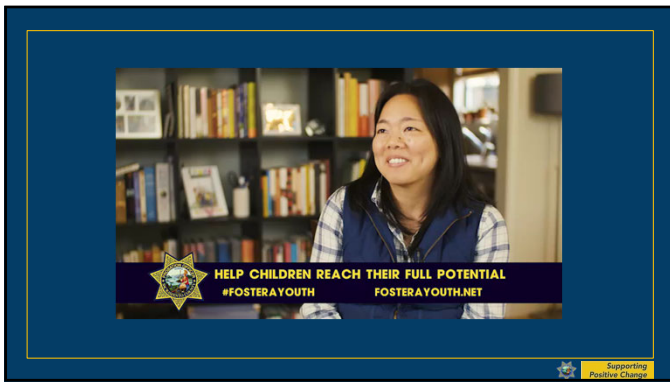
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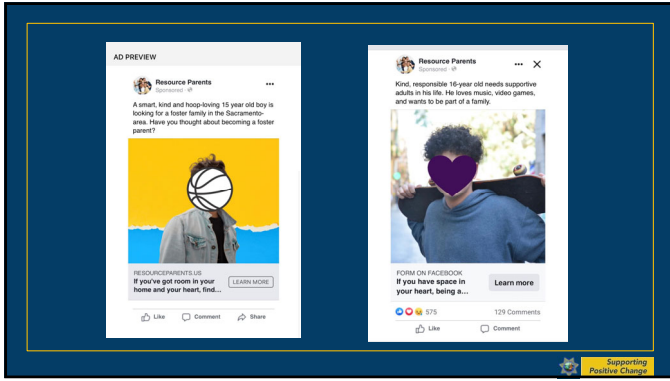
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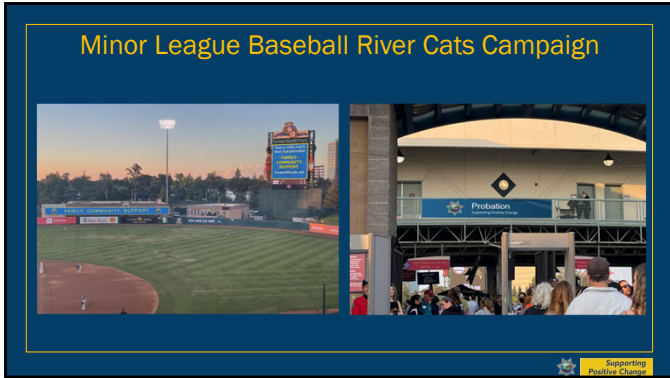
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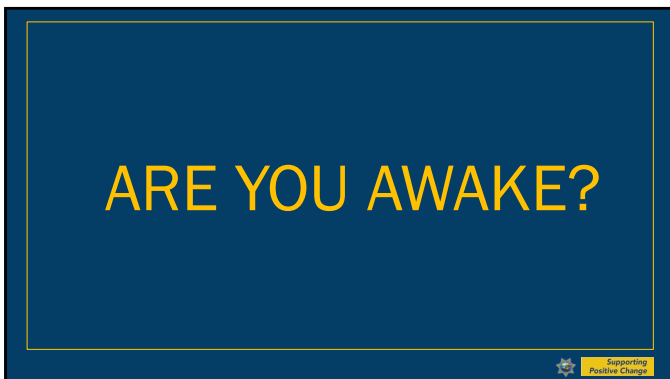
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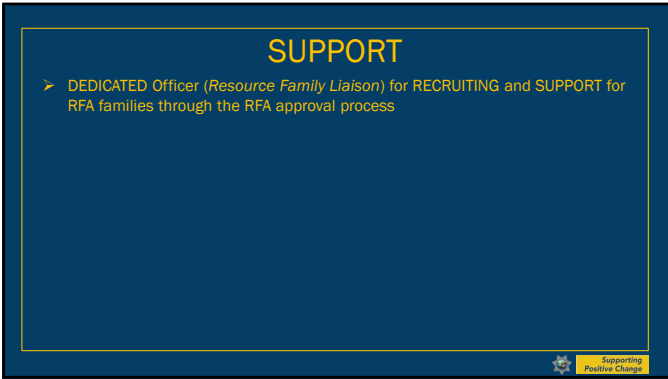
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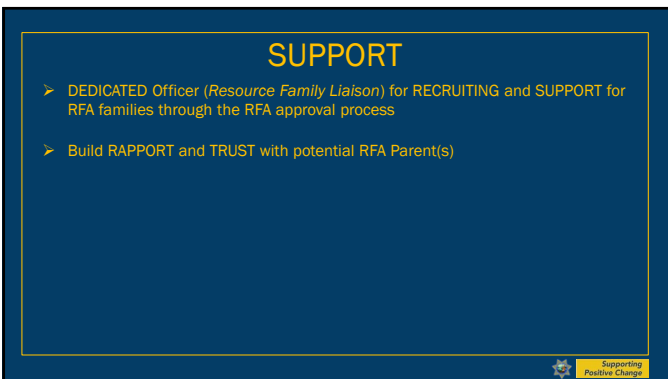
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**SUPPORT**

- DEDICATED Officer (*Resource Family Liaison*) for RECRUITING and SUPPORT for RFA families through the RFA approval process
- Build RAPPOR and TRUST with potential RFA Parent(s)
- Assure families they will be SUPPORTED through the entire process from completing the application, through the approval process and throughout placement of the youth



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- Assure families THEY ARE HEARD; Listening to their "why" and their vision



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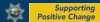
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- Build RAPPOR and TRUST with potential RFA Parent(s)
- Assure families they will be SUPPORTED through the entire process from completing the application, through the approval process and throughout placement of the youth
- Assure families THEY ARE HEARD; Listening to their "why" and their vision
- Educating potential Resource Family Applicants about the responsibilities of foster parenting



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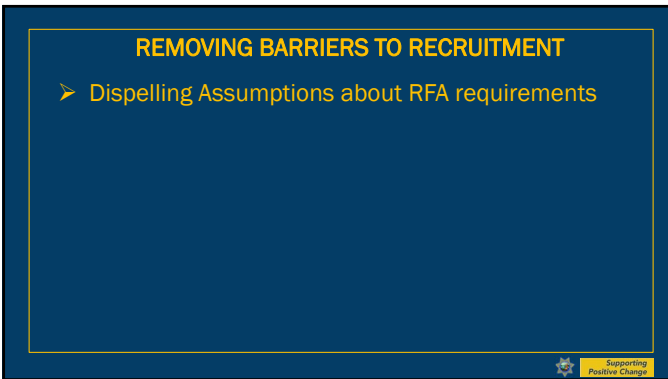
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**REMOVING BARRIERS TO RECRUITMENT**

- Dispelling Assumptions about RFA requirements
  - Diverse Families and Cultures
  - Rent vs. Own
  - Apartment vs. House
  - Young or Older
  - All Socio Economic Backgrounds
  - Criminal or CPS History Conversations

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**REMOVING BARRIERS FOR APPROVAL**

- Basic NEEDS for placement
  - Bedroom Furniture
  - Washer/Dryer
  - Food Pantry
  - Safe for Medications
  - Window Locks
  - Live Scan fees support
- COLLABORATION with Department of Child, Family and Adult Services and Foster Family Agencies as RFA Parent progresses through the approval process

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**REMOVING BARRIERS TO RETENTION**

- RFA placement SUPPORT
  - GROCERIES at initial placement
  - CLOTHING and HYGIENE
  - Personalized room decor, bedding and curtains
  - SCHOOL supplies
  - Education TRAVEL reimbursement
  - Back to school CLOTHES
  - Bike, Helmet, lock for transportation to school/work
  - HOLIDAY Meals/Gift Cards for Gift exchange
  - Grocery gift cards when issues arise during placement
  - Support SELF CARE for RFA parent(s)
    - Personal Story

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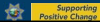
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**BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS**

- Start the RFA Parent and Youth RELATIONSHIP while youth is still in custody or STRTP
  - In custody visits/Letters/Phone calls/ZOOM
  - Home Pass Visits if STRTP
  - WRAP Referral/Team put in place

*SUPPORT and ENCOURAGE a positive relationship between the RFA parent and YOUTH*



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**BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS**

- Building RELATIONSHIPS *WITHIN* the Resource Family by encouraging quarterly family bonding activities
  - A meal and activity for the entire family



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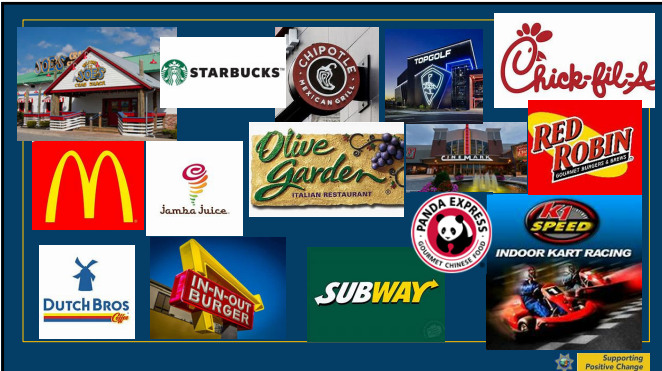
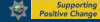
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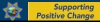
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**BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS**

- Building NATURAL SUPPORTS and RELATIONSHIPS **WITH OTHER** Resource Parents and Families



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**BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS**

- Building NATURAL SUPPORTS and RELATIONSHIPS **WITH OTHER** Resource Parents and Families through RFA events



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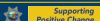
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**LOOKING FORWARD**

- DEDICATED SITE
  - Mobile Live Scan
  - CPR Classes
  - Comfortable sitting area for Resource Family gathering and conversations.
  - Area for Youth and Siblings
  - Computer Access for Application and Foster Parent College
  - WRAP/CFT meetings on-site
  - On-site mentor
  - Food Available



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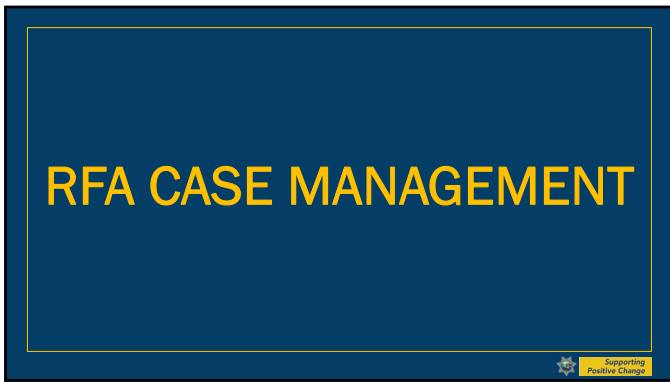
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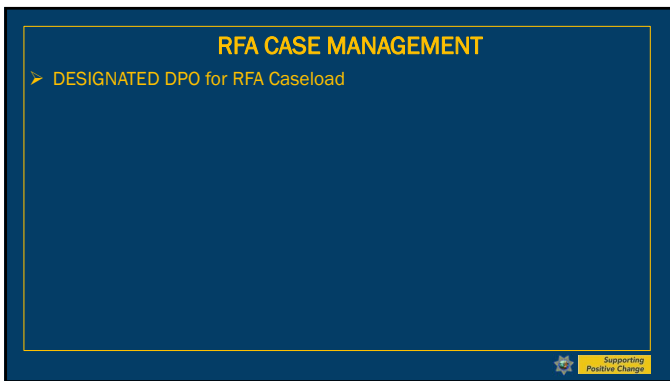
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**RFA CASE MANAGEMENT**

- DESIGNATED DPO for RFA Caseload
- LOW VOLUME caseload-Authentic and intentional INDIVIDUALIZED support for each RFA Family and Youth



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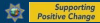
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**RFA CASE MANAGEMENT**

- DESIGNATED DPO for RFA Caseload
- LOW VOLUME caseload-Authentic and intentional INDIVIDUALIZED support for each RFA Family and Youth
  - 5-7 Youth per DPO due to the amount of work



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**RFA CASE MANAGEMENT**

- DESIGNATED DPO for RFA Caseload
- LOW VOLUME caseload-Authentic and intentional INDIVIDUALIZED support for each RFA Family and Youth
  - 5-7 Youth per DPO due to the amount of work
    - Monthly meetings with youth/parents/RFA Parents
    - Support for Court dates and reports
    - School Support
    - ILP Support
    - WRAP Services
    - CFT meetings often occur multiple times per month
    - Crisis Management



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**RFA CASE MANAGEMENT**

- COLLABORATION and CONCURRENT CASE PLANNING with Probation Officers for a smooth transition from STRTP or Youth Detention Facility to RFA home



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**RFA CASE MANAGEMENT**

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- COLLABORATION with Resource Family liaison to support Youth and Families prior to and during RFA Placement



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**RFA CASE MANAGEMENT**

- COLLABORATION and CONCURRENT CASE PLANNING with Probation Officers for a smooth transition from STRTP or Youth Detention Facility to RFA home
- COLLABORATION with Resource Family liaison to support Youth and Families prior to and during RFA Placement
- SOCIAL WORKER and PROBATION OFFICER hats are both worn to help support and retain the RFA placement



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**RFA CASE MANAGEMENT**

- TRANSPARENCY
- FLUIDITY
- RFA SURVEY/FEEDBACK
- IMPLEMENTING CHANGES



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**RFA PLACEMENT SURVEY/FEEDBACK**

1. Was your experience partnering with Sacramento County Probation Department a positive one?
2. What is an example of something our agency did well while supporting the RFA parents during the placement?
3. What is an example of something our agency did well while supporting the youth during the placement?



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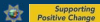
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4. Are there any areas where our agency could improve in support for our RFA families or youth?
5. Would you accept another placement of a youth from the Sacramento County Probation Department?
6. Why or why not?
7. Would you recommend working with Sacramento County Probation Department as an RFA/foster parent to friends and family?



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**THINK OUTSIDE THE BOX TO FIND FAMILIES,  
REMOVE BARRIERS AND RETAIN PLACEMENT**



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**QUESTIONS?**

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**THANK YOU!**

**SENIOR DPO PAMELA LOWE**  
[LOWEP@SACCOUNTY.GOV](mailto:LOWEP@SACCOUNTY.GOV)

**DPO DANNA BUERGER**  
[BUERGERD@SACCOUNTY.GOV](mailto:BUERGERD@SACCOUNTY.GOV)

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