

FAMILY FINDING AND ENGAGEMENT

TOOLKIT FOR PROBATION OFFICERS/SUPERVISORS



Chief Probation Officers of California Foundation (CPOCF)

National Institute for Permanent Family Connectedness (NIPFC)

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Family Finding and Engagement Toolkit for
Probation Officers/Supervisors

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INTRODUCTION

Youth who come to the attention of the Juvenile Justice system and who are then placed into foster care are typically placed either in a STRTP, licensed foster home or resource family home.¹ The foster care placement process is changing drastically. Family Finding and Engagement (FFE) used within a Kin-First approach to placement is a result of a multitude of research outlining that youth, however they come into the foster care system, are better off living with kin and need to be connected to healthy, safe, and loving adults who will be there for the youth no matter what.

This area of the law can be challenging. Probation agencies are required to balance community safety and an appropriate placement for youth. Placement with family is statutorily preferred however, if it is contrary to the youth's welfare to remain at home, a "family-like" setting is the



next best option for him/her. At this same time, probation is also charged with helping the youth maintain or build a network of caring adults who will help to plan for their future and who will remain supportive and connected to the youth throughout their adulthood. This requires a proactive approach on behalf of probation to seek out those healthy, safe, and committed adult connections who will be there for the youth for the foreseeable future.

Written policy and practice implementation of this work is required. The California State Department of Social Services (CDSS) has mandated that all probation agencies provide a copy of their written FFE policy and implementation processes on or before January 1, 2024².

This toolkit provides legal information, policy supports, recommendations and strategies for probation officers to use in their quest to ensure that a "Kin-First³" approach (which includes Family Finding and Relative Preference) is used when working with youth who are either already in the foster care system or at risk of being placed in a foster care setting. It also provides a roadmap for supervisors who are supporting probation officers (PO) doing this work as well as examples, templates and samples of documents used to implement kin-first at every opportunity and to build a network of supportive and caring adults.

Those who practice and participate within the Juvenile Justice Court system have a critical role in helping young people stay connected to those who are important to them and who can help to provide permanency, safety, and well-being. This section provides information about the applicability of research, initiatives, values, and principles that shape and guide the work of Family Finding and Engagement.

Although most youth who come to the attention of Juvenile Justice Court system return home, many remain at risk of an out of home placement, have already been removed or who are leaving a formalized, institutionalized situation, without a recommendation for kin placement and/or permanency. It is statutorily required for Probation officers to seek the most “family-like” setting for those youth who cannot return to their family of origin, so they have the same opportunities to transition to successful adulthood.⁴

Starting with a “Kin-First” approach and attitude when working with youth and their families allows the PO to create more stable options and opportunities for youth. It is also in alignment with the Federal and State focus to incorporate the youth and families’ voice when facilitating options for placement and case planning.

Family Finding and Engagement (FFE) is a component of the “Kin-First” philosophy and practice. FFE is the process by which known relatives and connections can continue to participate in planning for the youth’s future and provides an avenue to uncover or reconnect with those relatives/important people who may provide a placement option and/or become part of the supportive network for youth. It is one of the first steps in creating and building a life-long family support network for youth.



DEFINITIONS

For the purposes of this Toolkit, the following definitions are used and derived from the California Welfare and Institutions Code Sections, All County Letters/Notices, Published Policy (where indicated) and Best Practice.

- **ACL/ACIN** – Refers to All County Letters or All County Information Notices distributed by CDSS and are applicable to Probation.
- **Kin** – Includes: An adult relative who is related to the youth up to the fifth degree of kinship¹ A nonrelative extended family member¹; and extended family member of an Indian Child. Kin also includes those individuals who are important to the young person and who he/she has or had a healthy and safe relationship with.¹
- **FFE – Family Finding and Engagement:** Is a broad concept which encompasses not only the statutory requirements pertaining to identifying, locating, and notifying the relatives of a child in foster care or at risk of entry into a foster care, but also related efforts to foster life-long familial connections for children and youth in care. These efforts are meant to enhance the long-term well-being of children and youth in care. Beyond the notification and placement requirements and opportunities, is the goal of seeking to build a network of permanent connections which can support the youth throughout his or her life.¹
 - Family Finding & Engagement is an intervention designed to ensure that those relatives and important connections are maintained for a youth in foster care or at risk of entry into foster care. It is then enhanced and continued throughout the youth's stay in foster care to build a network of adults who will support the youth throughout his/her life and provide a safe environment for the youth.
- **CFT – Child and Family Team** is a group of individuals that includes the youth, family members, the caregiver, tribal representative, professionals, natural community supports, placing agency caseworker, probation officers and other individuals identified by the family who are invested in the youth and the family's success.¹
- **CFT Meeting** – These meetings are primary engagement processes to enable a collaborative discussion of the strengths and needs of the youth and family by using an effective teaming process. CFTs help the family by respecting that the youth and family know themselves best, that the youth and family deserve to be treated with dignity and respect while respecting the family's culture.¹
- **Relatives** – Means an adult who is related to the child by blood, adoption, or affinity within the fifth degree of kinship, including stepparents, stepsiblings, and all relatives whose status is preceded by the words “great,” “great-great,” or “grand,” or the spouse of any of these persons, even if the marriage was terminated by death or dissolution.¹
- **PO** – Probation Officer or Probation Department
- **WIC** – Refers to the California Welfare and Institutions Code.

WHY FAMILY FINDING AND ENGAGEMENT?

Kinship care for children and youth who are removed from their family of origin often leads to better outcomes than when they are placed in non-kinship care. Kinship care can lead to fewer placements, greater stability, and more contact with parents, siblings, and other kin.

Additionally, youth placed in kinship care generally have better mental and physical health, fewer behavior problems, higher levels of competence and better outcomes as adults.⁵ Kin placements can also preserve cultural identities and minimize further trauma youth may



experience.⁶

The purpose of undertaking Family Finding and Engagement activities is to ensure that children and youth in care can maintain and develop permanent connections with relatives and other important individuals in their lives, as well as reduce the length of time children are in foster care.⁷

LIFE-LONG “FAMILY” SUPPORT NETWORK

The central purpose of all “Family Finding” interventions is to establish an enduring network of support for the young person and family that will continue to operate post system oversight/intervention. The network is more than a set of connections; it is a group that is committed to support the youth and family and actively participates in all planning and decision-making activities that occur within the system. The research is clear that collaborative practice, achieved when including the support network in planning and decision-making (in CFTMs and other decision spaces) is more effective than agency-centered practices (including multi-disciplinary teams that omit family presence).

The research continues to show that all people who feel they belong to networks of support fare better on almost every scale of wellness, including living longer and happier lives. The “test” for probation agencies when determining whether effective “Family Finding” is performed is whether every youth and family has a network of support who is participating in planning and decision making. To achieve this, both adaptive and technical leadership activities are needed to create the system change necessary for this practice to develop, thrive, and sustain.

KEY VALUES AND PRINCIPLES FOR FAMILY FINDING AND ENGAGEMENT

- FFE laws and policies underscore the importance of relative participation and support in all aspects of the child's life.⁸
- Relatives can foster life-long familial connections for children and youth.
- Youth have inherent attachments and connection with their families of origin that should be protected and preserved whenever safely possible.⁹
- Relatives shall be given placement priority.
- FFE improves processes for youth to live with or stay connected to their extended families.¹⁰
- Positive father involvement is associated with children's well-being and lower levels of behavioral problems.¹¹



CONTINUUM OF CARE REFORM/INTEGRATED CORE PRACTICE MODEL

TEN GUIDING PRACTICE PRINCIPLES:

1. **VOICE AND CHOICE:** Each family member's perspective is intentionally elicited and prioritized during all phases of the teaming and service process. The team strives to find options and choices for the plan that authentically reflect the family members' perspectives and preferences.
2. **TEAM-BASED:** The team consists of individuals agreed upon by the family members and committed to the family through informal, formal, and community support, and service relationships. At times, family members' choices about team membership may be shaped or limited by practical or legal considerations, however, the family should be supported to make informed decisions about who should be part of the team. Ultimately, family members may choose not to participate in the process if they are unwilling to accept certain members.
3. **NATURAL SUPPORTS:** The team actively seeks and encourages full participation of members drawn from the family members' networks of interpersonal and community relationships. The plan reflects activities and interventions drawn on sources of natural

support. These networks include friends, extended family, neighbors, coworkers, church members, and so on.

4. **COLLABORATION AND INTEGRATION:** Team members work cooperatively and share responsibility to jointly develop, implement, monitor, and evaluate an integrated, collaborative plan. This principle recognizes that the team is more likely to be successful to accomplish its work when team members approach decisions in an open-minded manner, prepared to listen to, and be influenced by, other team members. Members must be willing to provide their own perspectives with a commitment to focus on strengths and opportunities in addressing needs, and work to ensure that others have the opportunity to provide input and feel safe doing so. Each team member must be committed to the team goals and the integrated team plan. For professional team members, interactions are governed by the goals in the plan and the decisions made by the 12 team. This includes the use of resources controlled by individual members of the team. When legal mandates or other requirements constrain decisions, team members must be willing to work creatively and flexibly to find ways to satisfy mandates while also working toward team goals.
5. **COMMUNITY-BASED:** The team will strive to implement service and support strategies that are accessible and available within the community where the family lives. Children, youth, and family members will receive support so that they can access the same range of activities and environments as other families, children, and youth within their community that support their positive functioning and development.
6. **CULTURALLY RESPECTFUL:** The planning and service process demonstrates respect for, and builds on the values, preferences - including language preferences, beliefs, culture- and identity of the family members, and their community or tribe. Culture is recognized as the wisdom, healing traditions, and transmitted values that bind people from one generation to another. Cultural humility requires acknowledgement that professional staff most often cannot meet all elements of cultural competence for all people served. Professionals must ensure that the service plan supports the achievement of goals for change and is integrated into the youth's and family's cultures. Cultural humility and openness to learning, foster successful empowerment and improved outcomes.
7. **INDIVIDUALIZED:** The principle of family voice and choice lays the foundation for individualization and flexibility in building the plan. While formal services may provide a portion of the help and support that a family needs, plans and resources must be customized to the specific needs of the individual child, youth, and family members. Each element of the family's service plan must be built on the unique and specific strengths, needs, and interests of family members, including the assets and resources of their community and culture.

8. **STRENGTHS-BASED:** The service process and plan identify, build on, and enhance the capabilities, knowledge, skills, and assets of the child, youth, and family members, their tribe and community, and other team members. The team takes time to recognize and validate the skills, knowledge, insight, and strategies that the family and their team members have used to meet the challenges they have encountered in their lives - even though sometimes these strengths have been inadequate in the past. This commitment to a strengths-based orientation intends to highlight and support the achievement of outcomes not through a focus on eliminating family member's deficits, but rather through an effort to utilize and increase their assets. This begins with a uniform and singular use of the Child and Adolescent Needs and Strengths (CANS) assessment tool. Doing so validates, builds on, and expands each family members' perspective (e.g., positive self-regard, self-efficacy, hope, optimism, and clarity of values, purpose, and identity), their interpersonal assets (e.g., social competence and social connectedness), and their expertise, skill, and knowledge.
9. **PERSISTENCE:** The team does not give up on, blame or reject children, youth, or their families. When faced with challenges or setbacks, the team continues working towards meeting the needs of the youth and family and towards achieving the team's goals. Undesired behavior, events, or outcomes are not seen as evidence of youth or family "failure" but, rather, are interpreted as an indication that the plan should be revised to be more successful in achieving the positive outcomes associated with the goals. At times, this requires team commitment to revise and implement a different plan, even in the face of limited system capacity or resources.
10. **OUTCOMES-BASED:** The team ties the goals and strategies of the plan to observable or measurable indicators of success, monitors progress consistent with those indicators, and revises the CANS assessment and service plan accordingly. This principle emphasizes that the team is accountable – to the family and all the team members, to the systems of care which serve the children, youth, and families, and to the community. Tracking progress toward outcomes and goals keeps the plan on track and indicates the need for revision of strategies and interventions as necessary. It also helps the team maintain hope, cohesion, and effectiveness and allows the family to recognize that things are, indeed, changing and progress is being made.

Historically, the ability to retain children, youth, and family members in treatment services to completion has been a problem. Particularly, children, youth, and families from vulnerable populations (e.g., children of single parents, children living in poverty, youth and families of color) are least likely to stay in treatment. When asked about reasons for dropping out, parents often identify stressors associated with getting to appointments, a sense that the treatment or service offered is irrelevant to their needs, and a perceived lack of connection with the service provider.

While a provider may have little control over a child and family's daily life stressors or difficulties in accessing care, they clearly have control over the relevance and opportunity to avoid redundancy of services offered to families (supporting the principles of voice and choice and individualized), as well as their efforts in relationship building (also known as engagement). Within the CFT process, a focus on the needs identified as highest priority by the child, youth, and family members themselves is a critical component of initial and sustained engagement during the service delivery process.

An additional practical construct to this approach is the reality that families with complex needs often receive services directed by multiple and competing service plans. Bringing service plan expectations and resources together, as well as following a shared CANS assessment, single and functional structured assessment process, will result in a simplified, coordinated plan that will greatly improve the prognosis of success and dramatically lower the stress on family members.



FEDERAL AND STATE REQUIREMENTS

RELATIVE PLACEMENT PREFERENCE

- **FEDERAL** – In order for states to receive federal payment for foster care and adoption assistance, federal law under title IV-E of the Social Security Act requires that they “consider giving preference to an adult relative over a nonrelated caregiver when determining a placement for a child, provided that the relative caregiver meets all relevant state child protection standards.”¹²
- **STATE** - If a PO makes a recommendation to the court when a youth allegedly comes within section 602 of Welfare and Institutions Code, that they should be removed from the physical custody of their parents or guardian, a PO shall give primary consideration of a recommendation to the court that the youth be placed with a relative, if such placement is in the best interest of the youth and will be conducive to reunification of the family.¹³
 - ❖ Upon delivery to the PO of a youth who has been taken into temporary custody, the PO shall investigate and shall immediately release the minor to the custody of their parent, legal guardian or responsible relative, unless certain conditions exist.¹⁴
- If at any stage in a proceeding the PO makes a recommendation to remove a youth from his/her parents or guardian’s custody, PO must give preference to a relative if, such placement is in the youth’s best interest and the placement will be conducive to reunification of the family.¹⁵



NOTICE TO RELATIVES [FOSTERING CONNECTIONS]

- **FEDERAL** – “...provides that, within 30 days after the removal of a child from the custody of the parent or parents of the child, the State shall exercise due diligence to identify and provide notice to all adult grandparents and other adult relatives of the child (including any other adult relatives suggested by the parents), subject to exceptions due to family or domestic violence...”¹⁶

- ❖ Notice contents shall include:
 - “(A) specifies that the child has been or is being removed from the custody of the parent or parents of the child;
 - (B) explains the options the relative has under Federal, State, and local law to participate in the care and placement of the child, including any options that may be lost by failing to respond to the notice;
 - (C) describes the requirements under paragraph (10) of this subsection to become a foster family home and the additional services and supports that are available for children placed in such a home; and
 - (D) if the State has elected the option to make kinship guardianship assistance payments under paragraph (28) of this subsection, describes how the relative guardian of the child may subsequently enter into an agreement with the State under section 473(d) to receive the payments.”
- **STATE** – If a youth is detained and the PO has reason to believe that the youth is at risk of entering foster care placement, PO shall conduct within 30 days, an investigation to identify and locate all grandparents, adult siblings and other relatives as noted above, including any other adult relatives suggested by the parents.¹⁷

EMERGENCY PLACEMENTS

State: The Probation Department may make an emergency placement of a youth ordered into its care, custody, and control with a relative or nonrelative extended family member.¹⁸

Prior to the Emergency Placement, probation agency shall do all the following:

- In-home inspection
- CLETS (criminal records check)
- Prior child welfare history check



If the CLETS indicates that a person has no criminal record, probation department may place the youth in that home on an emergency basis.

If CLETS indicates that a person has committed a criminal offense that requires a criminal records exemption, the youth shall not be placed in the home unless the exemption has been granted.

- Pending exemption - placement may be made pending exemption if:
 - ❖ The conviction is not an offense against a child.
 - ❖ Chief PO (designee) determines placement is in best interest of youth and
 - ❖ No party objects to this placement
- Notwithstanding placement recommendation of county probation department, the court may authorize the placement of a child on an emergency basis in the home of a relative, regardless of the status of a criminal record exemption or RFA approval, if court finds that placement does not pose a risk to the health and safety of the child.¹⁹ [See JCC Detention Hearing Bench card, Attachment A]

CA CONTINUUM OF CARE REFORM (CCR)

- Building the Child and Family Team (CFT)
 - ❖ The CFT (as defined above) are those individuals willing to help plan for the youth's future. The composition of the team is driven by the youth and family members' preferences.
 - ❖ Consistent with California's adoption of the Integrated Core Practice Model (ICPM) and CFT process, the CFT meetings are the primary engagement process to enable a collaborative discussion of the strengths and needs of the youth and family by using an effective teaming process.²⁰
- FFE uncovers more support and connections – The statutory requirement of exercising “Due Diligence” shall include family finding. Family Finding as defined here means conducting an investigation, including, but not limited to, through a computer-based search engine, to identify relatives and kin and to connect a child or youth, who may be disconnected from their parents, with those relatives and kin in an effort to provide family support and possible placement.²¹ This process shall be done at the earliest possible opportunity and thereafter as the CFT is built and meets. Ask who is missing? Who should be here, but isn't?



ADDITIONAL FEDERAL AND STATE GUIDANCE

EXECUTIVE ORDER – SEC. 5. IMPROVING PROCESSES TO PREVENT UNNECESSARY REMOVAL AND SECURE PERMANENCY FOR CHILDREN. (A) FEDERAL REVIEW OF REASONABLE EFFORT DETERMINATIONS AND TIMELINESS REQUIREMENTS.

(i) ...”the Secretary shall require that both the Title IV-E reviews conducted pursuant to 45 CFR 1356.71 and the Child and Family Services Reviews conducted pursuant to 45 CFR 1355.31–1355.36 specifically and adequately assess the following requirements:

- (A) reasonable efforts to prevent removal;
- (B) filing a petition for Termination of Parental Rights within established statutory timelines and court processing of such petition, unless statutory exemptions apply;
- (C) reasonable efforts to finalize permanency plans; and
- (D) completion of relevant required family search and notifications and how such efforts are reviewed by courts.** [Emphasis added]

(ii) In cases in which it is determined that statutorily required timelines and efforts have not been satisfied, the Secretary shall make use of existing authority in making eligibility *ACYF-CB-IM-18-05* determinations and disallowances consistent with section 1123A(b)(3)(4) of the Act (42 U.S.C. 1320a- 2a(b)(3)(4))”.²²

INFORMATIONAL MEMORANDA FROM THE CHILDREN’S BUREAU

- **ACYF-CB-IM-18-05** - <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/cb/policy-guidance/im-18-05>
Reshaping child welfare in the US to focus on strengthening families through primary prevention of child maltreatment and unnecessary parent-child separation.
 - ❖ *This ACF strongly encourages all agencies to work together with the courts and other appropriate agencies to plan, implement and maintain integrated primary prevention networks and approaches to strengthen families and prevent the unnecessary removal of children from their families.*
- **ACYF-CB-IM-21-01** - <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/cb/policy-guidance/im-21-01>
Achieving Permanency for the Well-being of Children and Youth.
 - ❖ Emphasizes the importance of all agencies and courts to focus on each child’s unique needs, attachments, and connections when making permanency decisions and the importance of preserving family connections for children as a fundamental practice.
 - ❖ Efforts must include safe and deliberate preservation of familial connections to ensure positive child well-being outcomes. Children have inherent

attachments and connections with their families of origin that should be protected and preserved whenever safely possible.

FAMILY FIRST PREVENTION SERVICES ACT (FFPSA)

Enacted under Federal law this legislation allows states who opt into an ability to claim federal Title IV-E funds for eligible, evidence-based mental health and substance use prevention and treatment services and in-home parent education skill-based programs. Eligible individuals include children at imminent risk of entry into foster care (“candidates’ for foster care), their parents or kin caregivers, and pregnant or parenting youth in foster care.²³

- Allows youth and kin caregivers to obtain preventative services for up to 12 months. These services can be extended another 12 months.



INITIAL/TEMPORARY REMOVAL

▪ WHO

- ❖ PO shall provide “Notice” to **all adult relatives** (see definition of Relative above) who are located, that the youth is in a foster care placement or at risk of entry into a foster care placement. The only exception to this notice requirement is when the PO has information/evidence of a particular relative’s history of family or domestic violence that makes notification inappropriate.²⁴

▪ WHAT

- ❖ PO shall provide written notification and shall also, whenever appropriate, provide oral notification, in person or by telephone, of all the following information:
 - That the child has been removed from the custody of their parent(s) or guardian.
 - Explanation of the various options to participate in care and placement of the child and support the child’s family, including any options that may be lost by failing to respond.
 - How to become a resource family and what services and supports are available.
 - Information about Kin-GAP, other programs for financial assistance for the care of the child
 - Include a relative information form – JV285 (<https://www.courts.ca.gov/documents/jv285.pdf>)
 - [See Sample Notice Letter from Probation, Attachment B]

▪ HOW

❖ **Due Diligence (DD) Requirements**

- PO shall use due diligence in conducting an investigation to identify, locate, and notify all the child's adult relatives (See definition of relative above). The PO is not required to notify a relative whose personal history of family or domestic violence would make notification inappropriate.²⁵
- DD includes, but not limited to:
 - Asking the youth in an age-appropriate manner about any parent, alleged parent, and relatives important to the child
 - Obtain information regarding the location of the child's parents, alleged parents, and adult relatives.²⁶
- DD **shall** also include family finding.
 - FFE means conducting an investigation, including, but not limited to, through a computer-based search engine to identify relatives and kin and to connect the child or youth, who may be disconnected from their parents, with those relatives and kin in an effort to provide family support and possible placement. If known or reason to know child is an Indian child, FF also includes contacting Indian child's tribe to identify relatives and kin.²⁷
 - [See JCC Info Sheet #24, Attachment C]
- Case Law Guidance: Youth was placed in STRTP without conducting Family Finding or a CFT Meeting. "The probation department is duty-bound to follow the directives of the Legislature, and here the record shows that despite the court's statement" at the disposition hearing ordering probation to start the CFT process, which includes Family Finding, no CFT was convened. The Juvenile court erred in placing a youth in a STRTP based upon the probation department's recommendation – that failed to consider the input of the CFT, which was never convened.²⁸

- ENGAGEMENT OPPORTUNITIES AND TOOLS

- ❖ Conversation Starter/Strengths [Attachment D]
- ❖ Use of interactive tools to engage youth
 - Remembered People Chart [Attachment E]
 - Family and Eco Map samples:
 - <https://www.appa-net.org/eweb/docs/appa/pubs/UFMTEOTMUCS.pdf>
 - <https://www.appa-net.org/eweb/docs/appa/pubs/ifsacs.pdf>
 - <https://www.familiesoutside.org.uk/content/uploads/2011/02/family-justice-clinical-guide.pdf>
 - Three Houses [Attachment F]
 - http://www.partneringforsafety.com/uploads/2/2/3/9/22399958/three_houses_booklet_updated.pdf
 - Mobility Mapping - Videos:
 - <https://vimeo.com/35207975>
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Rbb5SD5hQyA&t=255s>



ON-GOING FAMILY FINDING & ENGAGEMENT

- CHILD AND FAMILY TEAM DEVELOPMENT AND MEETINGS

- ❖ Continue to develop and allow those already identified to provide additional names of relatives or important connects
- ❖ Ask who is missing from this meeting that should be here?
- ❖ Determine who the youth misses or who might be missing them

➤ Refer to Permanency Bench card Appendix #5 [Attachment G]

▪ IF YOUTH'S PERMANENT PLAN IS ANOTHER PLANNED PERMANENT LIVING ARRANGEMENT (APPLA) AND NON-MINOR DEPENDENT

❖ On-going and intensive efforts required. These include safely returning the youth to their home or to complete whatever steps necessary to finalize the permanent plan. Permanent plans include, return home, adoption, legal guardianship, permanently placed with fit and will relative or APPLA.

➤ Refer to Permanency Bench card Appendix #10A, [Attachment H]

▪ DISRUPTED OR DISSOLVED ADOPTIONS

❖ Effective January 1, 2008, AB 714 amended W&IC Section 361.3. This statute permits a child welfare agency and any licensed adoption agency to search for a “relative” of a previously adopted child and provide that relative with identifying information relating to the child, if it is believed that the child’s welfare would be promoted by the furnishing of this information. Applicable to Probation.²⁹



FAMILY FINDING & ENGAGEMENT IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

ON-GOING FAMILY FINDING & ENGAGEMENT

There are many reasons why a youth might be skeptical about the idea of building a network and this hesitancy is always particular to that youth even if the words that they share are familiar. Although there is no script to follow if a youth is skeptical, it is often helpful to stay connected to certain principles when given this situation. First of all, avoid trying to convince the youth that they should include others or to challenge their idea/position. Instead, get curious about the position they are taking or the ideas that they are sharing. For most of these youth they feel a sense of helplessness as they have not been consulted about many of the decisions that are being made regarding their life. It is helpful to try and listen for what is important to them without immediately offering a counter-position which might invite them to stand more firmly in their position. Inquiring about their worries or concerns related to the idea and validating these fears will situate you as someone who is willing to hear their perspective.

Following are some sample questions that might be useful for some of the statements that express a sense of hesitancy. It must be noted that these questions are not designed to be asked in a linear fashion, whatever we might inquire about is always impacted by the specific responses of the youth.



Barrier – “I don’t need anyone”:

- What do you know about yourself, that others might not, that lets you know that you don’t need anyone?
- What skills and knowledge do you hold that can help you get through these times and get to where you want to be?
- How or from whom did you learn these things from?
- Who in your life might also know that you have these skills and knowledge?
- How do they know this, what have they seen that leads them to know you in these ways?
- Is it a good thing that you have some people in your life who know that you have these skills and knowledge? Why is that a good thing?
- Are you still connected to any of these people? How have you stayed connected? What about these connections is important to you?

- Have you lost connection with some people who you felt saw the best of you? Is that ok?
- If it were possible to re-connect with them would you be interested?
- Are there other people in your life now or previously who you wish knew these things about you? Why do you wish that?
- What difference might it make for you if they knew these things?

“Why can’t I just go home?”

If a youth is making a statement or asking a question related to a specific ‘placement’ option (“why can’t I just go home?” or “I want to go live with my friend”) it is important to let them know that this decision cannot be made right now but then to get curious about their idea. It is not very helpful to disregard these ideas at this time even if they are unlikely. Telling them that we are very interested in working with them to find a group of people who can help make those decisions can be a useful response. Then you can ask permission to ask them some questions about the placements they have suggested.

- What is it about being at home/with your friend that is important to you?
- How would being there be helpful for you?
- Who is there that you would look forward to being with?
- Who is there who you feel really has your back? How do you know this, what have you experienced from them that tells you this?
- Are there other people who know how important these people are to you?

“My gang is my family”

- Important to get curious about how their gang serves as family. This curiosity does not denote agreement with the position just a willingness to hear what the youth holds as important in their life.
- “They keep me safe” is an indication that safety is important to them and you could ask more about safety.
- “They take care of me” invites a conversation about being cared for or cared about which could lead to questions about times in their lives before the gang that they felt cared for or cared about and the people who provided this.

“I don’t trust anyone, especially not you”

- This is an opportunity to inquire about trust and why this is important (again, it is important to ask the youth permission to ask more questions about this and to respect their response).
- Is trust important to you? How do you know this, have there been times when you had trust in other people?
- What are some of the things you are looking for that tells you someone is worthy of your trust?

- Is there anyone in your life now or in the past who might meet these requirements?

“Nobody wants me”

- As stated before, it is not very helpful to directly challenge this conclusion right off the bat, while also not colluding with the idea.
- “Is this ok with you that you believe nobody wants you or would you rather have some people who want you?” If they state that this is ok, I would want to know what about that is ok with them and have an opportunity to engage around some of the fears/worries/concerns that emerge.
- If the youth says that this position is not ok with them, I would again want to know why it isn’t ok and what about being wanted is important to them (“I like being in a family”, “I like people being around”, “it’s nice to have someone who cares about me”)
- “How do you know these things? Have you had them before? From whom?”

For almost all youth who are expressing some hesitancy related to network building it could be valuable to very clearly share the truth about how these decisions are going to be made. For example:

“It looks like a group of people are going to make some decisions about your life. As it stands right now, that group will be made up of professionals, some who might know a bit about you and some who don’t really know you at all. We would be very interested in making sure this team includes people who you think know you well and/or care about you. If you were creating a team of 5 people who had some say about your future, who would you put on that team? If you had to include at least 2 people who weren’t paid to be in your life, and are over 18, who would you include?”

What is it about these people that would have you putting them on your team? What are some of the qualities of a team member that would be important for you?”

¹<https://ccwip.berkeley.edu/childwelfare/reports/Entries/MTSG/r/ab636/s>

² ACL 09-86; WIC Section 628(d)(3)(ii)

³ Miller, J., Creating Kin-First Culture, July 2017, ABA

⁴ WIC 706.6(c)(2)(B) & (d)(2); Information Bulletin, CA Dept of Justice, DLE-2016-04; Dec 9, 2016

⁵ Benefits of Kinship Placement, January 2022 American Bar Association

⁶ Child Welfare Information Gateway. (2022). Kinship care and the child welfare system. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Children’s Bureau.

<https://www.childwelfare.gov/pubs/f-kinshi/>

⁷ ACIN I-35-11

⁸ ACL 09-86; para 2

⁹ ACYF-CB-IM-21-01

¹⁰ ACIN 1-35-22

¹¹ ACIN 1-05-11; ACYF-ACF-IM-18-01; October 2018; <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/occ/policy-guidance/integrating-approaches-prioritize-and-enhance-father-engagement>

¹² 42 U.S.C. Section 671(a)(19)

¹³ WIC 281.5

¹⁴ WIC 628(a)(1)(A-C)

¹⁵ WIC 281.5; 16000(a); FC 7950, Information Bulletin DLE-2016-04; 12/9/2016, CA Dept of Justice

¹⁶ Stephanie Tubbs Jones Child Welfare Services Program. SEC.103. NOTIFICATION OF RELATIVES. Section 472(a) of the Social Security Act (41 U.S.C. 671(a), as amended by section 101(a) of this Act.

¹⁷ WIC 628(d)(2)

¹⁸ WIC 727.05(a)

¹⁹ WIC 727.05(b)(c); See also: JCC Information Sheet #24 and JCC Kin-First Detention Bench card

²⁰ ACL 22-73

²¹ WIC 628(d)(2)

²² Executive Order on Strengthening the Child Welfare System for America’s Children, Law & Justice, Issued on June 24, 2020

²³ ACL 23-23

²⁴ WIC 628(d)(2)

²⁵ CRC 5.637

²⁶ WIC 628(d)(2)

²⁷ WIC 628(d)(3)(B)

²⁸ In Re: A.M., 2020, A156432

²⁹ ACL 08-43

Juvenile Probation/Foster Care

1. Are there sample letters that can be sent to the family of a youth who is at risk of removal?

- a. Attached are two samples used by Humboldt County.

2. What does the conversation look like with the parent of an at-risk youth who might not be open to discussing their situation with family members?

- a. The purpose/goal of reaching out to family and those who are important connections is to build a network of support – not only for the youth but for you as well. If the youth is coming/staying at home, you will need support.
- b. The purpose of reaching out to those who can support you and the youth is so that they can help plan for the youth's future. Discuss goals/plans and how those relatives or connections can help the youth meet those goals.
- c. You are the role model for your daughter/son and modeling how to create and maintain safe and healthy relationships will be extremely beneficial for the youth as he/she grows into adulthood.
- d. It sounds like you're being careful sharing information about those who are or can support you. Who amongst your group would you feel most hopeful that they could provide non-judgmental support to you and your family?
- e. If you think about a set of concentric circles, with the one in the center being for the people who know you best and you trust the most, who would be in the inner circle, the middle circle, and the outer circle?

3. What if a relative expresses a desire to be a support but the youth and/or parent/legal guardian is against that person's involvement?

- a. It is important to remember that preparation of each family member is imperative before bringing them into a Child and Family Team Meeting.

It may take a bit more time to listen to each family member's concerns about why they do not want to involve that relative. Talk to the relative too. Ask probing/open ended questions such as:

- i. How are you related?
- ii. Did you grow up together?

- iii. How often do you see each other?
 - iv. Are you close?
 - v. What is your relationship like today?
- b. Getting to know the reasons the youth doesn't want that relative involved is important. If it's not a safety risk, you can suggest that they participate via Zoom or phone instead of in person. If the youth doesn't want them to participate, listen to their concerns and provide "what ifs."
- i. What if we set ground rules at the beginning of the meeting?
 - ii. What if you were able to tell them how you feel – in a safe environment?
 - iii. What if we involve them later when you feel more comfortable?
 - iv. What if we let them know you are not ready to talk with them yet?
 - v. If the youth isn't comfortable with any relatives, you certainly want to unpack their discomfort. You could help them consider other possibilities, ask if there is one relative who could contribute to the team, who really cares about the youth.
- c. The youth's concerns and requests about a relative's involvement should be honored and may change in the future – ask again later.

4. If a youth is placed with a relative with RFA funding, what happens when the probation term is completed and terminated?

- a. Funding: When jurisdiction terminates, the funding will also generally terminate. However, there is an alternative if the relative seeks to become a legal guardian before termination. In that instance the relative may seek continued funding through the Kin-GAP program. Additional information regarding the steps that must be taken are available at:
<https://www.cdss.ca.gov/inforesources/foster-care/kinship-guardianship-assistance>
- b. If the youth completes the term of probation and is not a dependent of the court, then the Child and Family Team should have developed a plan for their continued living situation along with at least one backup plan. (concurrent planning)

5. Which site was that sample summary report from?

That was a sample search result that Clif Venable, from Seneca Search Services provided. He changed the names and wanted to provide a sample of what

information you can obtain when you run a Seneca Search. It includes names, addresses for the last 10 years, ages, published phone numbers, etc.

A copy of that sample search can be made available upon request.

6. To clarify, counties can contract with Seneca to conduct the searches.

Yes. Some counties contract for many searches per year; some counties contract to do 20 or 50 searches.

7. For youth who reach the age of 18 while in placement and therefore eligible for Extended Foster Care (EFC) but otherwise could reunify, do these efforts switch to lifelong connections?

Ultimately, we are trying to build networks whether they are 17, 18 or older. Those networks may support, with the young person's approval, opportunities for legally permanent options including reunification, or adult adoption. But the focus remains on building a network for free and forever no matter what age.

8. Who reviews and provides an exemption?

- a. Emergency Placement and RFA exemptions are usually handled through the Division Director who can either temporarily approve an emergency placement pending RFA process and will also make the final decision on the exemption. Note that prior to placing a youth in the home of a prospective caregiver, the exemption process will apply to that caregiver and every person in the home convicted of a crime. The Director may ask for a written statement for any adult in the home who has been convicted of a crime, which includes the circumstances of the offense and what steps have been taken by that individual to resolve those charges.
- b. Some crimes such as abuse or neglect of a child, as well as others, may not be exemptible and may render that home ineligible for placement. The following link provides additional guidance on policy and procedure for emergency exemptions:

https://m.policy.dcfslacounty.gov/Content/Exemptions_for_Relatives.htm

PLACEMENT PRIORITIES - KIN-FIRST¹ APPROACH

SOCIAL WORKER (SW) SHALL IMMEDIATELY INVESTIGATE CIRCUMSTANCES AND ATTEMPT TO MAINTAIN THE CHILD WITH THE CHILD’S FAMILY THROUGH THE PROVISION OF SERVICES.² EMERGENCY PLACEMENT AVAILABLE.

IF PROBATION OFFICER (PO) RECOMMENDS REMOVAL FROM PHYSICAL CUSTODY, RELATIVES SHALL BE GIVEN PRIORITY FOR PLACEMENT³

RELEASE FROM TEMPORARY CUSTODY

Social Worker shall immediately investigate & release child to:

- *parent [non-custodial parent] or*
- *legal Guardian or*
- *Indian custodian or*
- *relative*

Unless:

- None of the above are willing to provide care for the child OR
- Continued detention – immediate & urgent necessity for protection AND There are no reasonable means to protect child in home or with relative OR
- See Welf. & Inst. Code, §309(a)(2-6); §319(b).

Probation Officer shall immediately release minor to:

- *parent or*
- *legal guardian or*
- *responsible relative*

Unless evidence shows continuance in home is contrary to the minor’s welfare AND one or more of the following conditions exist:

- Continued detention of minor is of immediate & urgent necessity to protect minor or reasonable protection of persons/property of another.
- Minor is likely to flee the jurisdiction of the court.
- Minor has violated an order of the juvenile court.⁴

EMERGENCY PLACEMENT(EP)

County welfare department (CWD) **shall** initiate assessment for any relative or NREFM who requests EP pending or after Detention hearing and pending disposition.⁵

Probation Agency (PA) may make an emergency placement of minor with relative or NREFM.⁶ PA shall conduct an assessment prior to Emergency placement.

- Assessment includes⁷
 - In-home inspection
 - CLETS (criminal records check)
 - Prior child welfare history check
- Upon completion of assessment, child may be placed in that home on an emergency basis.
- The CWD and PA shall require that relative or NREFM to submit an RFA application within 5 business days thereafter.⁸

- Assessment obstacles⁹
 - **Resources:** if sole issue preventing placement is lack of items such as cribs/car seats, agency shall use reasonable efforts to assist the relative or NREFM in obtaining those items.
 - **Criminal conviction** – pending exemption¹⁰ - Placement may be made pending exemption if:
 - Conviction not offense against a child,
 - CWA Director/County PA determines best interest for this placement AND
 - No party objects.

COURT CAN OVERRIDE A RECOMMENDATION NOT TO PLACE CHILD/MINOR ON EMERGENCY BASIS.

Notwithstanding placement recommendation of County PA or CWA, the court may authorize the placement of a child on an emergency basis in the home of a relative, regardless of the status of a criminal record exemption or RFA approval, if court finds that placement does not pose a risk to the health and safety of the child.¹¹

PREPARING FOR DISPOSITION: Within 30 days of removal/risk of removal – SW or PO shall identify, locate, and provide notice to relatives.¹² This includes an investigation¹³ to identify and locate all grandparents, parents of a sibling of the child if the parent has legal custody of the sibling, adult siblings, other adult relatives as defined¹⁴ including any other adult relatives suggested by the parents and if it is known or there is reason to know the child is an Indian child, any extended family members as defined¹⁵. Notice shall be provided to those whose identity and whereabouts are located.¹⁶

Questions to ask about Kin

- | | |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ If the father is not present or identified:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Where is he?○ What do we know about him?○ Is there anyone in Court today that has information?○ Can court determine paternity today through testimony?○ What are the next steps for the SW/PO to locate father?○ Do we know any of his relatives or friends?○ Should the Court continue this hearing for one day to properly notice the father?▪ If the child/minor is not placed with a relative:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Why not? What are the barriers?○ What due diligence has the agency done so far?○ Are the relatives in the courtroom or in hallway?○ Court can inquire of those relatives about support/placement.▪ If the child/minor is with a relative:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ What is the plan for that relative?○ Are there other family members available who are safe to provide respite or who can accept placement if current relative unable?○ Did agency ask kin who else in the family/network we should reach out to? Who are we missing?○ Did agency ask kin if they would like to attend a meeting to help the child and family plan for the child/minor's future? | <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Who was present at the time of removal?<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ What efforts were made to ask about or search for kin?○ Who was identified and where are they today?▪ Did the SW/PO begin their required due diligence?<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Has a computer-based search been done? By whom?○ Where are the results of that search?▪ What other diligent efforts have been employed prior to and including today?▪ Did the SW/PO call any identified kin?▪ If yes, what was the outcome?▪ What is the plan to follow up?▪ Did the SW/PO ask the child/minor about kin?<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ If yes, what was their response?○ If not, why not?○ What is preventing you from asking?▪ Who can take physical custody of child today?▪ Who has asked for placement?<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Has Assessment been conducted?<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ What is the outcome of assessment?▪ If no assessment has occurred, what is the reason?○ If more than one relative is requesting placement, all relatives should be assessed. Has this occurred? |
|---|--|

¹ All statutory references are to the Welfare and Institutions Code, unless otherwise specified. Kin includes: 1. Relative who is related to child to the 5th degree of kinship (§361.3(c)(2); §319(h)(2); §628(d)(2); CRC 5.502(34); 2. Nonrelative extended family member (NREFM): An adult caregiver who has an established familial relationship with a relative of the child or a familial or mentoring relationship with the child. (§362.7) and 3. Extended family member of an Indian child §362.7; 25 U.S.C. Sec. 1903(2)).

² Welf. & Inst. Code, §309(a).

³ Welf. & Inst. Code, §281.5.

⁴ Welf. & Inst. Code, §628 (a)(1)(A)-(C).

⁵ Welf. & Inst. Code, §309(d)(1)

⁶ Welf. & Inst. Code, §727.05(a).

⁷ Welf. & Inst. Code, §361.4(a)(1-3); §727.05(b)(1-3)

⁸ Welf. & Inst. Code, §309(d)(2), §727.05(d).

⁹ Welf. & Inst. Code, §309(d)(3).

¹⁰ Welf. & Inst. Code, §361.4(b)(3)(A-C); §727.05(c)(3)(A-C).

¹¹ Welf. & Inst. Code, §361.4(b)(6); §727.05(c)(6)

¹² Welf. & Inst. Code, §309(e)(3); §628(d)(2)

¹³ Welf. & Inst. Code, §309(e)(1); §628 (d)(2);

¹⁴ Welf. & Inst. Code, §319(h)(2); §628(d)(2)

¹⁵ Sec. 1903 of Federal Indian Child Welfare Act of 1987 (25 U.S.. 1901 et seq.), Welf. & Inst. Code, §224.1.

¹⁶ California Rule of Court, rules 5.637, 5.695.



**PROBATION DEPARTMENT
COUNTY OF HUMBOLDT**

2002 Harrison Avenue, Eureka, CA 95501
Telephone (707) 445-7401 Fax (707) 443-7139

|CurrentDate|

|RelationFirstName| |RelationLastName|
|RelationMailingAddress|
|RelationCity|, |RelationState| |RelationZipCode|

Dear |RelationFirstName| |RelationLastName|:

I am working with a family who have been identified as related to you. The youth who has come to our attention is |ClientName| and we have information that you may be a relative of |ClientFirstName|. We are contacting you because we view family members as an important and vital part of providing services to help families.

I am sending you this letter to let you know that Court proceedings have been started that may result in |ClientFirstName| being removed from their parent/guardian. |ClientFirstName| may be or has been temporarily placed in foster care or a juvenile detention facility. When a youth is removed from their home, relatives must be identified, located, contacted, and informed about the youth's removal and how the relative can choose to help the youth during this most difficult time. Because you are possibly related to |ClientFirstName|, I am sending you information about ways you can help, if you choose to, and how you can contact me. I truly hope that you will contact me as soon as you can.

A few of the ways you can help include being involved with helping |ClientFirstName| get back together with their parent, becoming or continuing to be a support for the youth, letting me know about other relatives who may want to help, visiting at juvenile hall or their foster care home, staying in touch with |ClientFirstName| by phone, letter, or email, or having them live with you. You may also provide information to the juvenile court verbally or in writing. You may have other ideas about how you can help that we can discuss. I've enclosed some additional information about this situation and foster care. I would be very pleased to speak with you and answer any questions you have as the law allows. Due to confidentiality laws, there may be some things I cannot tell you at this time.

Your reply to this letter does not obligate you in any way, but please know that this may be the only notification you receive. I hope that you will contact me; however, if you don't respond, we may need to proceed in decisions without your input. Please contact me at the numbers listed below as soon as you can. If you are calling long distance, you may make the call a "collect call." If you are not related to |ClientFirstName|, I apologize for sending this letter to you but please contact me regardless to let me know that you are not a relative.

Thank you very much for your time and I look forward to talking with you.

Sincerely,

|AssignedOfficer|

Deputy Probation Officer

(707)268-|PromptForPhoneExt|

E-Mail Address: |PromptForEmailName|@co.humboldt.ca.us

Information Sheet

Relative Placement Preference, Family Finding, and Diligent Search Requirements

State and federal laws on relative placement preference are intended to ensure that children and youth maintain safe and healthy connections to relatives and non-relative extended family members (NREFM), and to optimize placement opportunities.¹ These healthy and safe connections provide a sense of belonging and help children and youth develop a lifetime family support network that may not only prevent entry into foster care but may safely decrease time spent in care.²

This information sheet consolidates the legal requirements for relative placement preference including: identifying, locating, noticing, and engaging relatives, and maintaining important connections for children and youth, including siblings.

Pre-Detention

When a child is taken into temporary custody, the social worker or probation officer must immediately release the child to the custody of a parent, guardian, or relative unless one of the circumstances under sections 309(a) or 628(a) apply.³

The social worker or probation officer must initiate an assessment for emergency placement *for any and every relative* who requests placement.⁴ Adult relatives include adults related to the child by blood, adoption, or affinity within the fifth degree of kinship.⁵

The Court shall consider the results of the assessment including results of a criminal records check and prior child abuse allegations if any. Effective January 1, 2022, Senate Bill 354 expanded the eligibility for the simplified criminal exemption process and explicitly excludes all infractions from criminal exemption requirements. As a result, the court may authorize the placement of a child on a temporary basis in the home of a relative, *regardless of the status of any criminal record exemption or RFA approval, if the court finds that placement does not pose a risk to the health and safety of the child.*⁶

It is important that the agency and probation begin efforts to identify and locate family prior to physical removal, during temporary removal and up to 30 days of the removal.⁷

Detention

Within 30 days of the child being taken into temporary custody, the social worker or probation officer must use due diligence to identify and locate relatives and must provide all adult relatives notice that the child has been removed from parents and options to participate in the child's care and placement. The

¹All further statutory references are to the Welfare and Institutions Code, unless otherwise specified. All further rule references are to the California Rules of Court, unless otherwise specified.

² October 2008 Pub. L. No.110-351

³ See also §308

⁴ This includes extended family member (ICWA) and nonrelative family members (NRFM).

⁵ §319

⁶ §319(h)(3); §361.2(e)11; §361.4(b)(6); §727.05(c)(6); All County Letter 22-23.

⁷ All County Letter No. 22-23

social worker or probation officer is not required to notify a relative whose personal history of family or domestic violence would make notification inappropriate.⁸

Dispositional Hearing

From detention to disposition, the social services agency and probation department must continue to exercise due diligence in an effort to find relatives by utilizing several search techniques--including internet searches and asking the child about relatives in an developmentally appropriate manner--to identify, locate, and notice relatives and continue the preferential consideration for placement with relatives.⁹ The notified relatives must be provided with the Judicial Council form *Relative Information* (form JV-285).

The Court may consider those efforts outlined in rules 5.695(g) and 5.790(f) to determine if the agency has exercised due diligence [See Section C of attachment] to identify, locate, and notify all relatives.¹⁰ The court must document its determination by making a finding on the record.¹¹

When a placement in foster care is being made, the proximity of the natural parents for visitation and reunification purposes must be given full consideration and placement must, if possible, be made in the home of a relative, unless the placement would not be in the best interest of the child.¹² Diligent efforts shall be made by an agency to locate an appropriate relative.

If the Court finds that the social services agency or probation department has not exercised due diligence, the court may order the agency or probation department to conduct an investigation to identify, locate, and notify the child's relatives and set a review hearing thereafter to report the outcome.¹³

If the dispositional hearing is continued, the court may set a hearing to be held within 30 days from the date of removal or as soon as possible thereafter to consider and determine whether the agency exercised due diligence to identify, locate, and notify the child's relatives.¹⁴

The social worker/probation officer has a continued obligation to assess a relative or NREFM's suitability for emergency placement. The agency must also initiate an assessment under section 361.3 of any relative to be considered for continuing placement.¹⁵

The dispositional hearing report should summarize the efforts utilized by the agency/probation to identify, locate, and involve the family and also address the appropriateness of any relative placement.¹⁶

⁸ §309(d);§361.3; §628(e); Rule 5.637.

⁹ §309, §361.4, §628; §281.5.

¹⁰ Rule 5.637, 5.695(f); All County Letter No. 09-86 Notification of Relatives

¹¹Rule 5.695(e)

¹²Family Code Section 7950(a)(1)

¹³Rule 5.695

¹⁴Rule 5.695(e)(f)

¹⁵§706

¹⁶§358.1, §361.3, §727.

If the court does not place the child with a relative who has been considered for placement pursuant to section 361.3, the court shall state for the record the reasons placement with that relative was denied.

Placement Changes

After the dispositional hearing, whenever a new placement of the child must be made, consideration for placement shall again be given to relatives who have not been found to be unsuitable and who will fulfill the child's reunification or permanent plan requirements.¹⁷

Reunification Hearings

Case law in dependency proceedings and state policy through All County Letters indicate that the relative placement preference and duty to assess relatives is required by the agency.¹⁸ During the reunification period, placement with a relative or NREFM can be made as an emergency placement or based on a compelling reason.¹⁹

Permanency and Post Permanency Hearings

Under Family Code section 7950 and rule 5.740(b), at any permanency hearing in which the court terminates reunification services, or at any post-permanency hearing for a child not placed for adoption, the court must find that the social worker or probation officer has made diligent efforts to locate an appropriate relative and that each relative whose name has been submitted to the agency has been evaluated.

California implemented the Preventing Sex Trafficking and Strengthening Families Act with SB 794 and among other provisions, SB 794 requires child welfare agencies to document, at each permanency hearing, the efforts to place a child permanently with a parent, relative, or in a guardianship or adoptive home.²⁰ When the child is under 16 years of age and is in foster care, the court must consider all permanency planning options for the child including whether the child should be returned to the home of the parent, placed for adoption, or, for an Indian child, in consultation with the child's tribe, placed for tribal customary adoption, or appointed a legal guardian, or placed with a fit and willing relative; the social study must include a description of any barriers to achieving the permanent plan and the efforts made by the agency to address those barriers.²¹ These provisions also apply to nonminor dependents in extended foster care as well.²²

When a youth is in another planned permanent living arrangement (APPLA), the placing agency must document in the case plan the ongoing and intensive efforts to return home, adoption, tribal customary adoption, legal guardianship or placement with a fit and willing relative, as appropriate. During each permanency hearing for a youth whose permanent plan is APPLA, the court is required to ask the youth about his or her desired permanency outcome, make a judicial determination that APPLA is the best

¹⁷ §361.3(d)

¹⁸ In re Isabelle G. 2016 246 Cal. App. 4th 708; All County Letter No. 17-65.

¹⁹ §361.3, 261.45, 6516.5; DCFS Policy (FY1 17-03.)

²⁰ §366(a)(1)(B), §366.3(h)(3).

²¹ §366.26(d), (h)(1), (h)(4).

²² 366.31(e)

permanency plan for the youth and identify the compelling reasons why it is not in the best interest of the child to return home, be placed for adoption or tribal customary adoption, be placed with a legal guardian or with a fit and willing relative.²³

Disrupted or Dissolved Adoptions-Search for Biological Relatives

Whenever a child is returned to the foster care system due to an adoption disruption or set aside, the child welfare agency and any licensed adoption agency may search for a “relative” of a previously adopted child and provide that relative with identifying information about the child, if it is believed that the child’s welfare would be promoted by furnishing this information.²⁴ "Relative" includes a member of the child's birth family and NREFMs, regardless of whether the parental rights were terminated, provided that both of the following are true:

- No appropriate potential caregiver is known to exist from the child's adoptive family, including NREFMs of the adoptive family, AND
- The child was not the subject of a voluntary relinquishment by the birth parents pursuant to Family Code section 8700 and Health and Safety Code section 1255.7.

Nonminor Dependents

For nonminor dependents no longer receiving court-ordered reunification services and is in a permanent plan of another permanent planned living arrangement, “the reviewing body shall inquire about the progress being made to provide permanent connections with caring, committed adults for the nonminor dependent.” The review hearing should also address whether reasonable efforts have been made to establish or maintain the nonminor dependent’s relationship with their siblings who are under the juvenile court’s jurisdiction.²⁵

Resources:

Please see the accompanying charts:

- A. Identification and Notification of Adult Relatives
- B. Nonrelated, Extended Family and Important Connections
- C. Due Diligent Investigation by Social Worker/Probation Officer

Recent Case Law Related to Family Finding/Due Diligence

- *In re Mia M.* (2022) 75 Cal.App.5th 792 (The evidence before the juvenile court in this case was woefully inadequate to support a finding that the Department exercised reasonable diligence trying to find father).
- *In re A.H.* (2022) 84 Cal.App.5th 340 (Due process was violated when the juvenile court and the child welfare department failed to inquire about the identity and contact information of any alleged fathers, and failed to notify an alleged parent about the dependency proceedings)
- *In re C.P.* (2002) 47 Cal. App. 5th 17 (An absolute statutory bar to placement approval because of a criminal conviction can be unconstitutional if the individual has a parental relationship with the child.)

²³ 42 USCS 675a; §366.3 (h)(3),§727.3, All County Letter No.16-28

²⁴§361.3(f); All County Letter No. 08-43.

²⁵ 366.31(e)

SECTION A – INVESTIGATION, IDENTIFICATION AND NOTIFICATION REQUIRED FOR ALL OF THE FOLLOWING

PATERNAL (Father incl: Alleged) _____

MATERNAL (Mother) _____

NAME	NOTICED	NEXT STEPS		NAME	NOTICED	NEXT STEPS
			Grandparent			
			Grandparent			
			Adult Siblings Adult Stepsiblings			
			Parent of Sibling (Custody of sibling)			
			Stepmother Stepfather			
			Aunt			
			Uncle			
			Great-Aunt			
			Great-Uncle			
			Great-great- Grandparent			
			Great-great-Aunt			
			Great-great Uncle			
			Spouse or domestic partner of any of the above			
			Extended tribal Family member			

SECTION B – NON-RELATED, EXTENDED FAMILY (NREFM)¹ AND IMPORTANT CONNECTIONS [Placement and Support Considerations]

RELATIONSHIP	NAME	LOCATED	NEXT STEPS	INVITED TO CFT MTG
NREFM				
NREFM				
Godparent				
Neighbor				
Neighbor				
Prior Foster Parent				
Group Home Staff Member				
Teacher				
Teacher				
Coach				
Friend's Parents				
Childhood Friends				
Who does child or youth miss?				

¹ NREFM is an adult caregiver who has an established familial relationship with a relative of the child or familial or mentoring relationship with the child [WIC362.7]

SECTION C – DUE DILIGENT INVESTIGATION REQUIRED BY AGENCY AND PROBATION

Both shall use “due diligence” in investigating the names and locations of the relatives, including any parent and alleged parent (WIC 309(3)(A); 628(d)(3)(A))

Due Diligence shall include:

1. Family Finding (309(e)(3)(b) (WIC 628(d)(3)(B))
 - Family Finding means conducting an investigation to identify relatives and kin and to connect a child or youth, who may be disconnected from their parents, with those relatives and kin in an effort to provide family support and possible placement. Including, but not limited to, through a computer-based search engine.
 - If it is known or there is reason to know that the child is an Indian child, (224.1) family finding also includes contacting the child’s tribe to identify relatives and kin.
2. Asking the child, in an age-appropriate manner about any parent, alleged parent, and relatives important to the child, consistent with the child’s best interests
3. Obtaining information regarding the location of the child’s parents, alleged parents and adult relatives.
4. Court may also consider, among other examples of due diligence: (Rule 5.695 (e)(f)).
 - Reviewed the child’s case file for any information regarding relatives.
 - Telephoned, e-mailed, or visited all identified relatives.
 - Asked located relatives for the names and locations of other relatives.
 - Used Internet search tools to locate relatives identified as supports; or
 - Developed tools to help the child or parents to identify relatives, including:
 - Genogram – Date Completed: _____
 - Family tree – Date Completed: _____
 - Family map –Date Completed: _____
 - Other diagram of family relationships
 - _____
 - _____
 - Other Efforts
 - _____
 - _____
 - _____

ENGAGING IN CONVERSATIONS

GROUNDING IN THE SPIRIT OF RESPECT, CONNECTION, CURIOSITY AND HOPE

Key Shifts:

- Follow a framework (map) for constructive conversations about challenging issues
- Ensure all feel that they “matter.” Be inclusive. Support their valued voice
- Move away from a single story – What someone did wrong; what led to where they are today
- Be open to possibilities to use identified strengths to build the lives preferred
- Move from just listening to listening justly

- I. **Mattering**ⁱ We all want to feel like we are being heard and that we matter. If we feel like we matter, we will be more involved. If we are involved, we will feel as though we matter.
 - a. Mattering is a motivator. It is the feeling that others are interested in us, depend on us, or are concerned for our fate.
 - b. Mattering brings us to “I am important.” “What I say and do makes a difference.” “I am listened to and I have influence.”
 - c. Mattering brings involvement – The more involved, the more invested we are in the outcomes
 - d. Being involved and invested builds collaboration and community and leads to positive, more lasting change.

- II. **Intentional Strengths**ⁱⁱ - Strengths as practices (e.g., things people do in their lives)
 - a. Move from “What” are you doing to exploring intentions – “Why” are you doing that? What are your intentions in doing that? What are you hoping to accomplish in doing that?
 - b. Elicit possible intentions, values, and beliefs, hopes, dreams and commitments in life that might inspire those practices

CONVERSATION STARTER

Note: These are principles to guide a conversation, not to be simply followed. Listen to responses. Follow up with disciplined improvisation – accommodate unexpected responses

Identify a strength: _____ [turn adjective “I’m determined” to noun “Determination.”]

- Can you tell me more about _____? (Would it be okay if I asked you more about _____)
- If _____ is not a quality that you have, but something you do, how do you do that?
- For you, how to you practice this (strength)?
- How did you develop those practices?
- Did you learn this practice from someone in your life? (Who?)
- Can you tell me a story about the first time you saw someone practicing this?
- Why is this (strength or practice) important to you?
- If I saw you practicing _____, what might I see you doing?
- When you are doing this _____, what were you hoping to accomplish?
- As you think about those intentions, what values and beliefs might sit behind them?
- When you think of those values, what hopes, or dreams might they reflect?
- What might those hopes and dreams say about what you stand for in your life?
- As you think back across your life, who do you think might particularly appreciate your pursuit of _____?
- What do you think _____ might say if they knew you did this _____ in the face of [include any challenges or obstacles that were uncovered during *this* conversation]?
- If they could see you putting _____ into practice, what do you think it would tell them about you?
- What is it like for you to be thinking and talking about them (him/her) right now?
- Would you like them to be more present in your life today?
- Is this (strength/practice) something that you hope to pass along to your child(ren)?
- How can you see this (strength/practice) being passed onto to your child(ren)?

Note: (Move to forward thinking – how would you like your life to be in the future? With you child(ren)? How can we get there?)

ⁱ Mattering: Beth Root, MA

ⁱⁱ Intentional Strengths; Madsen, W. & Gillespie, K. (2014). *Collaborative Helping: A Strengths Framework for Home-Based Services*. Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.; Vygotsky, L. (1986). *Thought and Language*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press; White, M. (2007). *Maps of Narrative Practice*. New York, NY/London, England: W.W. Norton & Company. See: Intentional Strengths, Mertz, Mike, MS, NIPFC, Seneca Family of Agencies, Oakland, CA

Families for Teens

Looking for Connections with Teens

For any resource, as much of the following information as possible would be helpful: name, home phone number, work phone number, cell phone number, address. A date of birth or social security number might also be useful in certain situations if other identifying information is missing.



Ask Teens

1. Can you tell me how we can reach:
 - a. Your mother
 - b. Your father
 - c. Aunts and uncles on your mother's side of the family
 - d. Aunts and uncles on your father's side of the family
 - e. Cousins on your mother's side of the family
 - f. Cousins on your father's side of the family
 - g. Your grandparents
 - h. Your godparents

2. Do you have older brothers or sisters? Can you tell me how we can reach them? Are any of them in foster care? Have any of them been adopted? Do you know how to reach their foster or adoptive parents?

3. Do you have younger brothers or sisters? Can you tell me how we can reach them? Are any of them in foster care? Have any of them been adopted? Do you know how to reach their foster or adoptive parents?

4. Were you ever in foster care before? Who were your foster parents? Would you like to see them again? Were you ever in a group home or residential setting before? Were there any staff members you felt close to or trusted? Do you know how to reach them?

5. Are there friends from school you are close to? Where can we reach them? Are you close to their parents? Where can we reach them?

6. Is there anyone else from school you feel close to, look up to, admire or respect: a teacher, a coach, a mentor, a guidance counselor, a staff member?

7. Are there any adults from your place of worship, your neighborhood, your job, your after-school activities you are close to or feel comfortable spending time with? Any family friends? Friends' parents? Boyfriend or girlfriend's parents?

8. Are there any other adults you close to or feel comfortable spending time with? Any adults whom you admire? Any adults whom you would turn to for advice? Any adults who compliment or praise you? Any adults who took care of you when your parents couldn't? Any adult who listens to you?

Remembered People Chart

Exercise: Making a Chart

Provide your group members with a piece of graph paper and ask them to construct a chart for a child they know well. A empty chart is shown below. For purposes of this activity, the charts do not need to be completely accurate. The point of the activity is simply to practice making a chart to gain comfort in using the tool with teens. Work through any comments, questions, and reactions while participants complete their work.

Sample Remembered People Chart

<i>Age</i>						
<i>Where I lived</i>						
<i>Who I remember</i>						
<i>What I'd like to do</i>						

Melvin

Melvin was born to a single mom who made an adoption plan for him at birth. However, he spent his first two years in a foster home until the county could place him for adoption. He stayed with his adoptive parents until he was seven years old. At that time they brought him back to the county because they said he was unmanageable. The county took a surrender and placed Melvin in a children's home where he lived for the next five years. At age 12 he was placed with a foster family where he lived for two years while his adoption worker looked for a family for him. At 14 he moved into a group home when his 73-year-old foster mother died. Although his adoption worker continued recruitment activities through the media, no family was developed. At age 15 Melvin told his worker he didn't want to be adopted. At 17, still in the group home, Melvin visits with a single man, Joe, who was a childcare worker in the first children's home. Much to the surprise of all involved, Melvin told his house staff that he still wanted to be adopted.

Remembered People Chart for Melvin

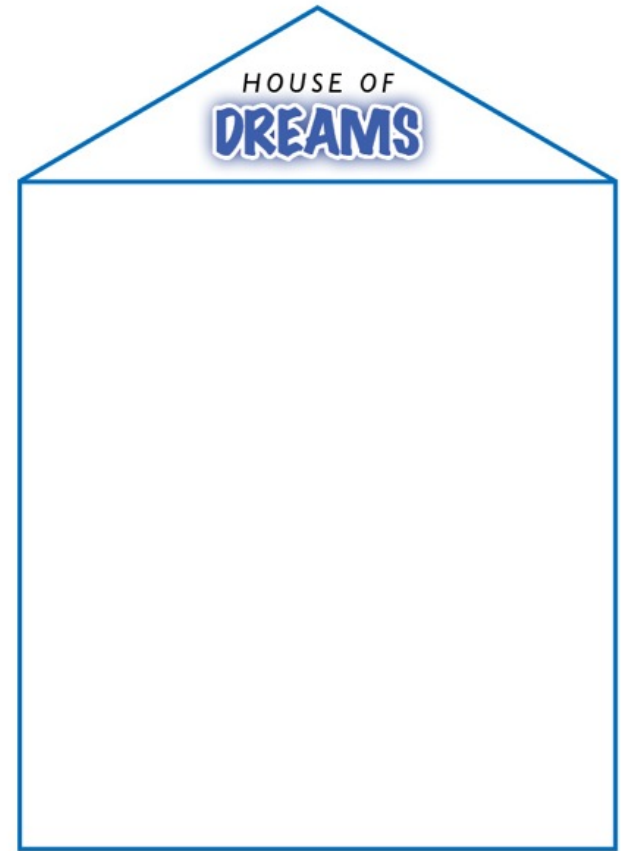
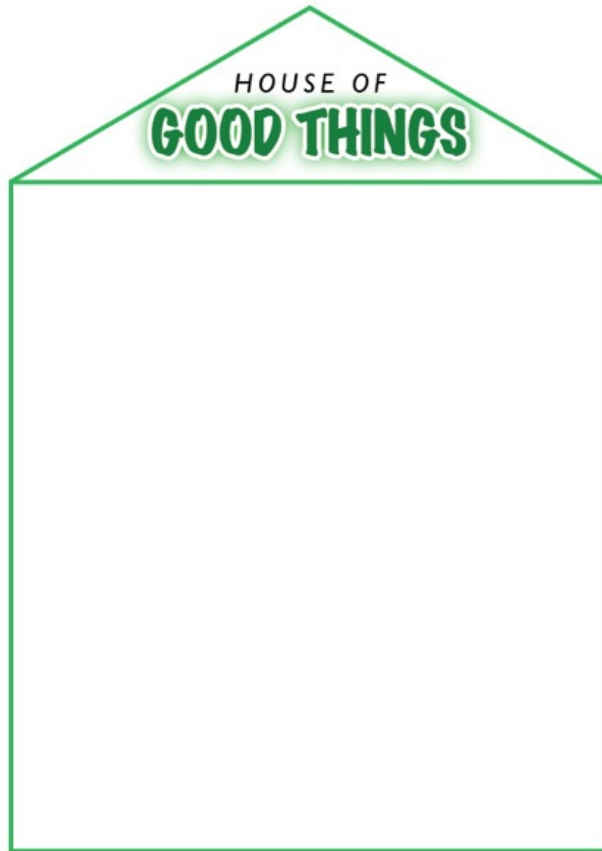
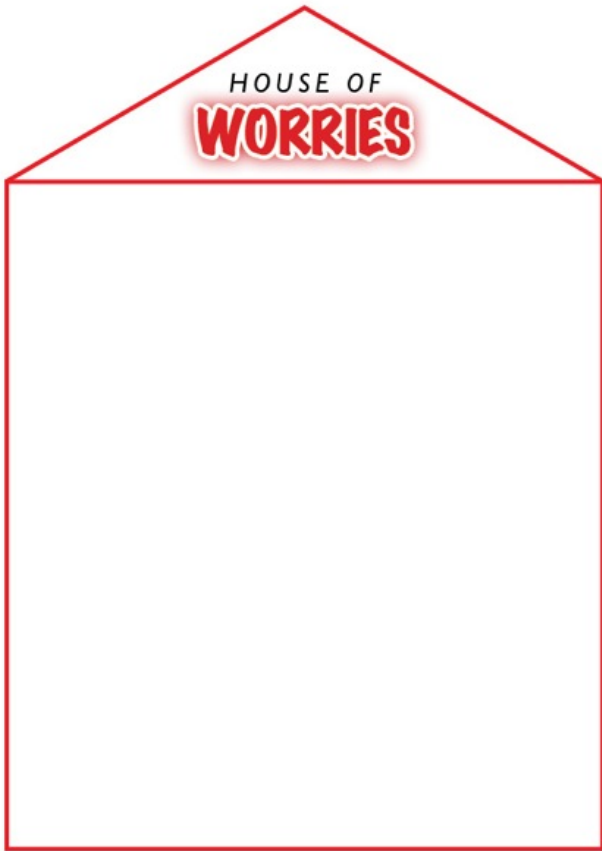
<i>Ages</i>	<i>1 mo.</i>	<i>To age 2</i>	<i>To age 7</i>	<i>To age 12</i>	<i>To age 14</i>	<i>To today</i>
<i>Where I lived</i>	Mom	Smiths	Jessups, adoptive family	Children's Home	Johnsons	Group Home
<i>Who I remember especially well</i>			Preschool teacher	Joe, staff, Dale, kid, Mrs. Green, cook, Mr. McKenzie, staff	Mr. and Mrs. Johnson	Mr. Hanson, staff, Mrs. Barnes, social worker, Ms. Bidwell, teacher
<i>What I'd like to do about them</i>	Nothing	Nothing	Ask them why. Tell them off	Keep visiting Joe. Find Dale Go back and see Mr. McKenzie	Nothing	I don't know

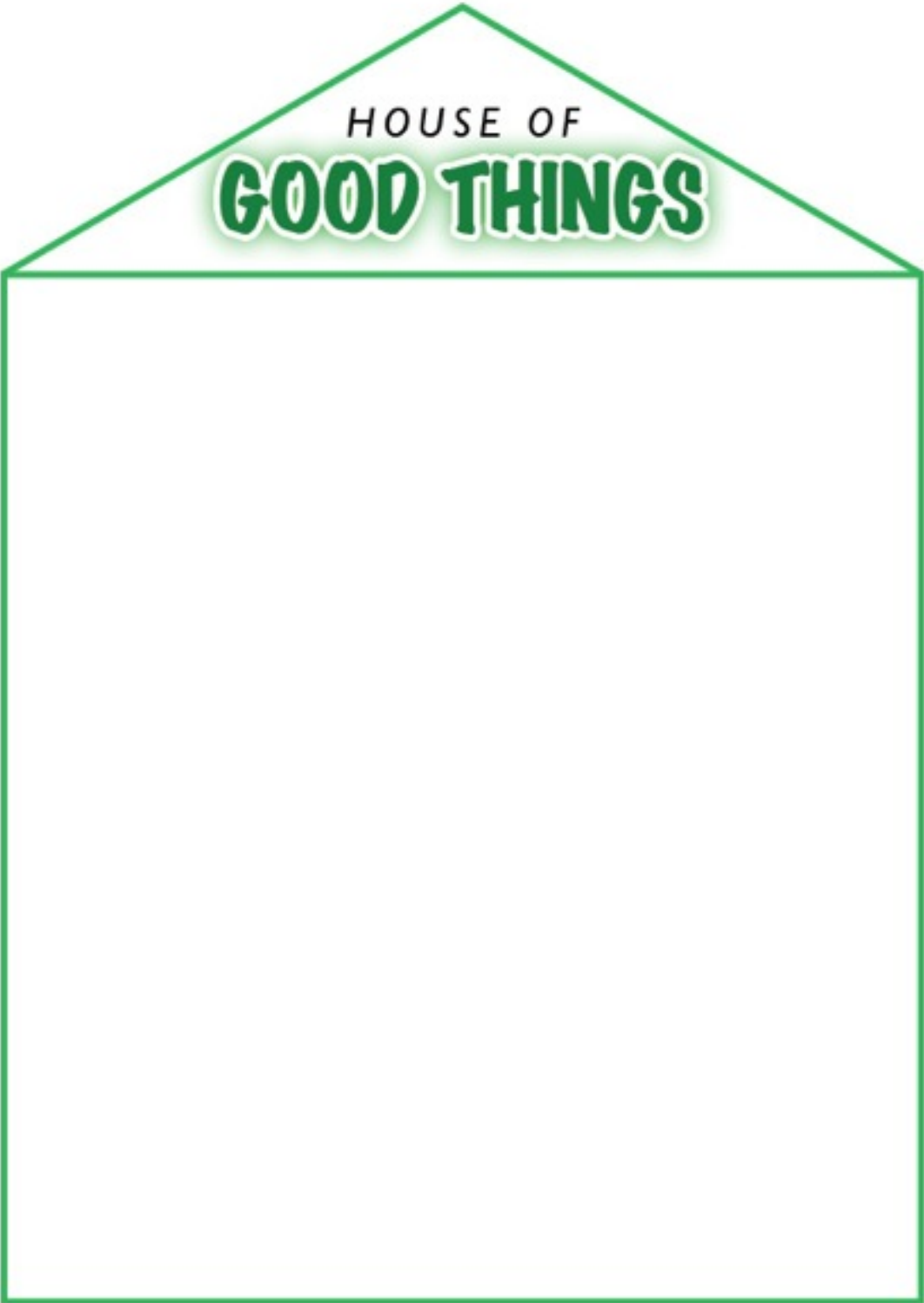
Remembered People Chart

Sample Remembered People Chart¹

<i>Age</i>						
<i>Where I lived</i>						
<i>Who I remember</i>						
<i>What I'd like to do</i>						
<i>Anything else</i>						

¹ Adolescents & Families For Life, R.G.Lewis & M.S.Heffernan

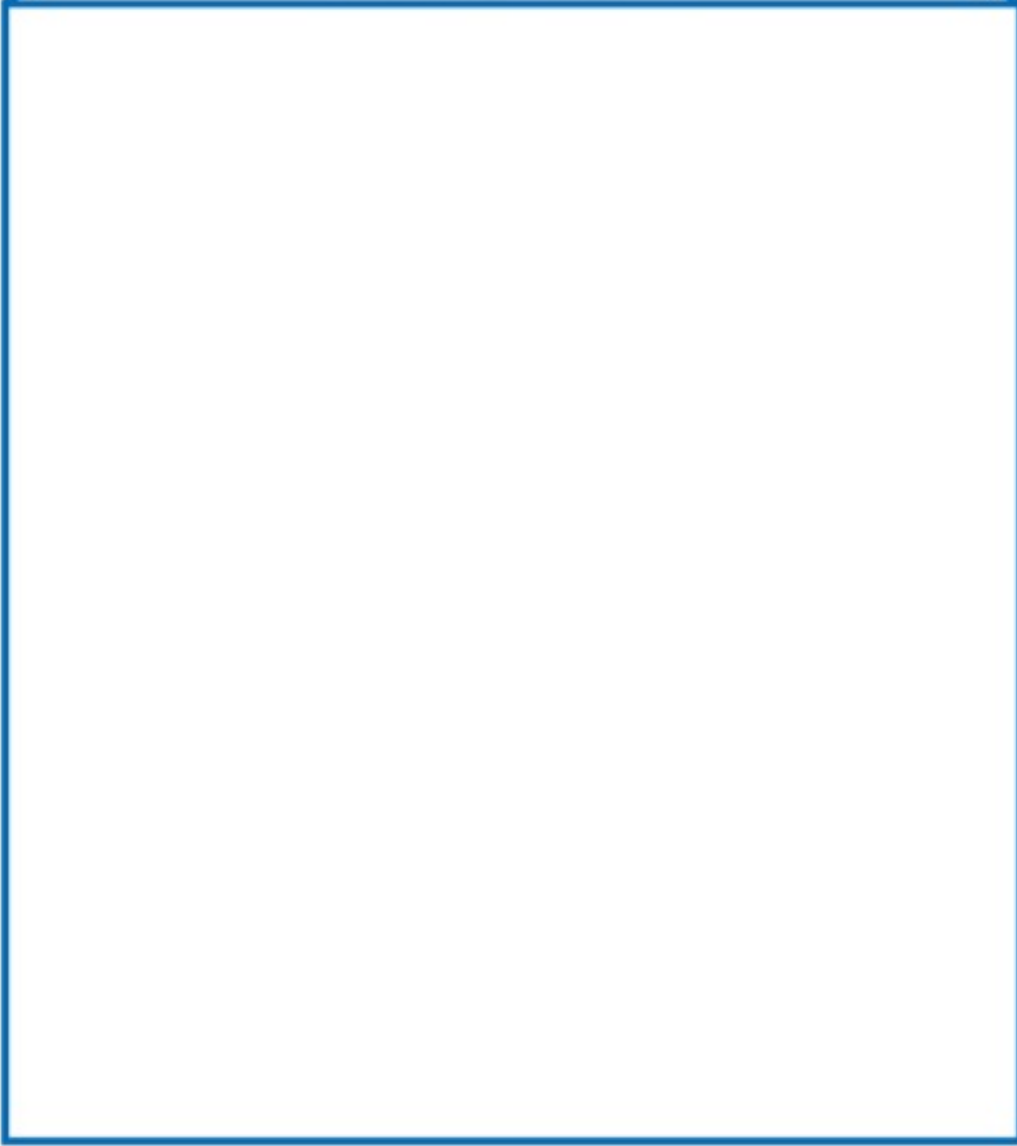




HOUSE OF
WORRIES

A large, empty rectangular box with a red border, occupying the majority of the page below the title. It is intended for the user to write down their worries.

HOUSE OF
DREAMS



APPENDIX 5: ONGOING REQUIREMENTS TO CONTINUE EFFORTS TO LOCATE AND ENGAGE RELATIVES³

Disposition, Status Reviews, Permanency, Post-Permanency & Disrupted Adoption Hearings



California and federal law support maintaining the safety, well-being, and healthy development of children/youth, and faster paths to permanency when they are removed from their parents or legal guardian, by placing them, whenever possible and appropriate, with relatives or someone familiar at the time of the initial placement or immediately thereafter. Consideration of placement with relatives does not end at disposition, rather it continues throughout the case, including diligent efforts to locate an appropriate relative at any permanency hearing at which the court terminates reunification services or at any post-permanency hearing if the child/youth is not placed for adoption. FAM § 7950(a)(1), & WIC § 361.3(d)

Permanency Findings Required:

- The agency has made diligent efforts to locate an appropriate relative³. (FAM § 7950(a)(1), WIC §§ 319(h)(2), 361.3(d), Rule 5.740(a)(6) & (b)(3)(A), ACL 17-35)
- Each relative whose name has been submitted to the agency has been evaluated as an appropriate placement resource. (FAM § 7950(a)(1), WIC §§ 319(h) 361.3(d), *In re Isabelle G* (2016) 246 Cal.App.4th 708, Rule 5.740 (b)(3)(B), 5.695(f), ACL 17-65)
- Whenever a new placement of the child/youth needed to be made, consideration for placement was again given to relatives who have not been found to be unsuitable and who will fulfill the child/youth's reunification or permanent plan requirements. (WIC § 361.3(d))

Questions Part I: Questions Children/Youth Want Judges to Ask (See Appendix 1, page 1)

Questions Part II: Ask to Determine if Continued Efforts to Locate and Engage Relatives Have Been Made

- Did the agency's "family finding" efforts demonstrate due diligence to identify, locate and notice relatives up to the 5th degree?⁴ If yes, when was search and notice completed and what were the results? (Note: the reports should contain evidence demonstrating what was done to search and locate relatives to satisfy the finding of due diligence.)
- How many relatives/NREFMs⁵/important connections have been identified, what is their relationship to the child/youth?
- How many of those relatives have been located and notified of options to participate in care and placement of the child/youth?
- How were the relatives notified? What was the follow-up process for those relatives who did not respond to the initial notice?
- How many relatives/NREFMs/important connections are interested in ongoing contact with the child/youth?

³ As used in WIC § 319(h)(2) & WIC § 361.3(c)(2), "relative" means an adult who is related to the child by blood, adoption, or affinity within the fifth degree of kinship, including stepparents, stepsiblings, parents of a sibling of the child, if that parent has legal custody of the sibling, adult siblings, and all relatives whose status is preceded by the words "great," "great-great," or "grand," or the spouse of any of these persons, even if the marriage was terminated by death or dissolution. WIC § 361.3(c)(2), 309(e)(1), 362.1(c), 16002(g)

⁴ The Court is required to make a finding at the dispositional hearing as to whether or not the agency utilized due diligence to identify, locate and notice relatives up to the 5th degree in order to involve relatives and NREFMs in the CFT and subsequent CFT meetings and as possible emergency and ongoing placement options. (CA Rule 5.695, 5.790)

⁵ NREFM (Nonrelative extended family member) is defined as an adult caregiver who has an established familial relationship with a relative of the child, or a familial or mentoring relationship with the child. (WIC § 362.7)

APPENDIX 5: ONGOING REQUIREMENTS TO CONTINUE EFFORTS TO LOCATE AND ENGAGE RELATIVES

Disposition, Status Reviews, Permanency, Post-Permanency & Disrupted Adoption Hearings

- How many of those relatives/NREFMs/important connections are interested in providing placement for the child/youth?
- Have those relatives, NREFMs and/or important connections been assessed, as potential placement resources? What was the outcome of the assessments?

NOTE: If all of the above are not contained in the case plan or court report, consider setting interim review hearing to receive all information and evidence requested above.

Questions Part III: Additional Questions That May be Useful:

- Has the agency considered relatives or NREFMs who had been ruled out previously? Have their circumstances changed?
- Has the agency asked the child/youth, in an age-appropriate manner, and consistent with the his/her best interest, about his or her relatives, former foster parents, important connections and people whom they miss and with whom they would like to reconnect?
- Has the agency obtained information regarding the location of the child's relatives; where is that information?
- Did the agency review the child's case file for any information about relatives or NREFMs who asked about the child/youth, visited the child/youth in the past, or contacted the child/youth?
- Did the child/youth identify former foster parents and parents of close friends?
- Did the agency contact all identified relatives by telephone, e-mail, or in person?
- Did the agency ask those relatives for the names and locations of other relatives?
- Did the agency use internet search tools and social media to locate relatives?
- Did the agency use any other tools designed to uncover relatives and important connections including a genogram, family tree, family map, or other diagrams of family relationships? Which tools and where are the results?
- Were identified relatives invited to participate in the CFT?
- Were relatives given opportunities to participate in the child's life other than being asked to take placement? What opportunities are relatives being given to engage in the minor's life?
- How are the relationships with relatives being facilitated to promote a lifelong connection to the child?

APPENDIX 10A: INTENSIVE AND ONGOING EFFORTS – POST-PERMANENCY HEARINGS FOR YOUTH LIVING IN ANOTHER PERMANENT LIVING ARRANGEMENT (APPLA)

Post-Permanency Hearings & Reviews



California and federal law specifically require a higher standard of effort to achieve a permanent family for youth age 16 and above, and nonminor dependents living in another planned permanent living arrangement (APPLA). Intensive and ongoing efforts are required and it would be expected that the agency has tried all possible efforts to achieve a permanent family, and tried them repeatedly.

APPLA will rarely be the best plan, and when used, the expectation is that the youth will stay in that family at least until they leave foster care. (See Appendix 9F, pg 39 – APPLA for more information)

Permanency Findings Required:

- Compelling reason(s) why it continues NOT to be in the best interest of the child to return home, be placed for adoption, be placed for tribal customary adoption in the case of an Indian child, be placed with a legal guardian, or be placed with a fit and willing relative. (WIC § 366.3(h)(2)(C), 42 U.S.C. 675(2)(B))
- The agency has complied with the case plan in making intensive and ongoing efforts for a youth 16 years of age or older in another planned permanent living arrangement (APPLA) to return the youth to a safe home and to complete any steps necessary to finalize the permanent placement of the youth. (WIC § 366(a)(1)(B)), (42 U.S.C. §§ 675(1). List of specific ongoing and intensive efforts made. (JV form 466(19))
- Agency has documented the intensive, ongoing, and, as of the date of the hearing, unsuccessful efforts made by the agency to return the youth home or secure a placement for the child with a fit and willing relative (including adult siblings), a legal guardian, or an adoptive parent, including through efforts that utilize search technology (including social media) to find biological family members for the children, and to complete any steps necessary to finalize the permanent placement of the child? (WIC §§ 366(a)(1)(B), 706.5, 16501.1(g)(15)(C), 42 U.S.C. § 675)
- Another planned permanent living arrangement is in the best interest of the youth as of the hearing date. (WIC § 366.3(h)(2)(B), 42 U.S.C. 675(2)(B))

Questions Part I: Questions Children/Youth Want Judges to Ask (See Appendix 1, page 1)

Questions Part II: Ask to Determine if APPLA is the Best Permanent Plan for the Youth: (See Appendix 9F, pg 39)

Questions Part III: Ask to Determine if Intensive and Ongoing Efforts Have Been Provided and Documented:

- How has the agency ensured that the youth understands his or her permanency options? If the youth or the youth's counsel or CASA, is present, ask them as well?
- Some youth may say they don't want to be adopted for reasons underneath the surface – concerns, doubts, fears about what adoption means. Has this youth told the agency they do not want to have a family that belongs to them? If so what is the agency doing to unpack the “no”?; (See Appendix 1, pg 2)
- Has the agency talked to the youth to make sure the youth understands the available options?
- Is the youth aware that adoption and guardianship can include ongoing relationships with parents & siblings?

APPENDIX 10A: INTENSIVE AND ONGOING EFFORTS – POST-PERMANENCY HEARINGS FOR YOUTH LIVING IN ANOTHER PERMANENT LIVING ARRANGEMENT (APPLA)

Post-Permanency Hearings & Reviews

- How has the agency involved the youth in the design and implementation of intensive and ongoing permanency efforts on their behalf? If the youth is present, ask him/her as well.
- How does the agency's staff continue to engage youth in identification and development of a forever family?
- Ask the youth about his or her desired permanency outcome.
- Ask for copies of the written and/or electronic information provided to members of the youth's CFT describing services and activities, including specialized permanency services, shown to be effective in achieving and sustaining permanency for all children, youth, and nonminor dependents. (Note: Required for CFTs of children/youth placed in an STRTP, recommended for CFTs for all children/youth.)
- What efforts has the agency made to assure that the CFT members understand the promise specialized permanency services offer?
- Describe the agency's full array of intensive and ongoing permanency services, including, but not limited to, specialized permanency services as defined in WIC § 16501(a)(9) and the use of technology, including social media, to find biological family members of the child/youth.
 - » Have they all been provided to this youth? If not, why not? Have they been provided several times? How many times has the agency used these services? Are all of these documented in case plan?
- How does the agency stay informed about the cutting edge of effective permanency services for this population?
- How has the agency engaged the youth's counsel or CASA?
- If specialized permanency services, as defined in WIC § 16501(a)(9), were not used, ask the agency to provide the case plan documentation of why not.
- How does the agency train and evaluate staff or partner agencies' use of intensive and ongoing efforts, including specialized permanency services?
- What barriers does the agency have to successfully utilize proven effective services to achieve permanent placement for the youth?
- If fiscal constraints are considered a barrier to utilizing proven effective intensive services, including specialized permanency services, has the agency compared the cost of the services to the cost of keeping the youth in care?,

Are you now able to make these findings?

- There is a compelling reason or reasons why it continues not to be in the best interest of the child to return home, be placed for adoption, be placed for tribal customary adoption in the case of an Indian child, be placed with a legal guardian, or be placed with a fit and willing relative.
 - Yes (if yes, state the compelling reasons for the record and make a judicial determination explaining why no other permanent plan is appropriate)
 - No (if no, select and order a more appropriate plan and set interim review hearing to address)
- Agency has complied with the case plan in making intensive and ongoing efforts to return the child to a safe home and to complete any steps necessary to finalize a permanent family for the youth.
 - Yes
 - No (if no, order the agency to make intensive and ongoing efforts and set interim review hearing to receive information)

APPENDIX 10A: INTENSIVE AND ONGOING EFFORTS – POST-PERMANENCY HEARINGS FOR YOUTH LIVING IN ANOTHER PERMANENT LIVING ARRANGEMENT (APPLA)

Post-Permanency Hearings & Reviews

Are you now able to make these findings?- continued

- Agency has documented the intensive, ongoing, and, as of the date of the hearing, unsuccessful efforts made by the agency to return the youth home or secure a placement for the child with a fit and willing relative (including adult siblings), a legal guardian, or an adoptive parent, including through efforts that utilize search technology (including social media) to find biological family members for the children, and to complete any steps necessary to finalize the permanent placement of the child.
 Yes No (if no, order the agency to complete the required documentation and set interim review hearing to receive information)
- Another planned permanent living arrangement is in the best interest of the youth as of the hearing date.
 Yes No (if no, select and order a different permanent plan for the youth and set interim review hearing to address)

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

1. How Do Social Workers Really Do Eco Mapping In Social Work? (Social Work Portal): <https://www.socialworkportal.com/eco-map-social-work/>
2. The Family Ecomap Explained (Love to Know): <https://www.lovetoknow.com/parenting/parenthood/family-ecomap-explained-examples-template>
3. What is an Ecomap? (Wondershare EdrawMax): <https://www.edrawmax.com/article/what-is-ecomap.html>
4. Judges' Roles in Promoting Youth-Centered Legal Permanency (ABA Center on Children and the Law & National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges): <https://www.ncjfcj.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/youth-centered-permanency-1.pdf>
5. Recommendations for Improving Permanency and Well-Being (Administration for Children and Families: Youth Engagement Team): <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/documents/cb/Recommendations-Improving-Permanency-Well-Being.pdf>
6. Four Ways That Courts Can Actively Engage Children and Youth Involved in Child Welfare Proceedings (Quality Improvement Center on Engaging Youth in Finding Permanency & National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges): <https://www.ncjfcj.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/QIC-EY-NCJFCJ-Court-Paper.pdf>
7. Center for Excellence in Family Finding, Engagement and Support: <https://humanservices.ucdavis.edu/center-for-excellence-family-finding>