

IN PRACTICE

Maintaining Family Relationships for Children in the Child Welfare System

by Rose Marie Wentz and Kelly Lynn Beck

Everyone needs to be connected to family and others who are important to them. Children¹ who have been removed from their homes and placed in the child welfare system are often cut off from their families or inner support networks. Their family status is

taken from them when they are placed with strangers and they are not always granted contact with close family members. This initial removal can be viewed as the beginning of a series of insecurities, attachment difficulties, and inner isolation for these children.

- How will children who are in care without a permanent family relationship or a sense of permanent belonging ever learn or re-learn to build these relationships in the future?
- How will they begin to trust others when they believe the people whom they have loved or relied upon have left them?
- Will they ever be able to be part of a permanent family again?

Recent federal legislation seeks to maintain children's connections to family members who can serve as permanency resources and supports. The 2008 Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act² (Fostering Connections) requires states to identify, locate, and notify "relatives" when a child is removed or is at risk of removal from the home. Notice must take place within 30 days

of removal. Four years after Fostering Connections was passed, most court systems are not notifying ALL relatives and encouraging them to participate in planning for the youth's future. Family members are often not contacted and told one of their family members has entered the system.

As a child law professional, you likely know of this legislation. However, training and support to meet its mandates may be lacking. Each professional involved in a child welfare case has a responsibility and plays a crucial role in helping the child find permanency. This includes the judicial officer, all attorneys, CASA volunteers, and the social worker charged with locating and notifying all adult family members and engaging them in a meaningful way.³ Everyone involved should work to ensure no stone is unturned and no options are lost. This article:

- offers guidance to help support youth who are removed from their homes and placed in the child welfare system;
- highlights an effective family-finding and engagement model used to maintain a child's natural support

system or build an alternative support network; and

- explains how, even in the face of fiscal, institutional, and personal challenges, meeting Fostering Connections' mandate to find and engage relatives is possible.

Defining Relatives

Fostering Connections does not define "relative." Individual state statutes do. Federal guidance suggests states include relatives up to the third degree, at a minimum. Some states include fifth-degree relationships in their relative definitions.⁴

A Model for Engaging Youth and Family

An effective family-finding model is a child-centered model. It incorporates
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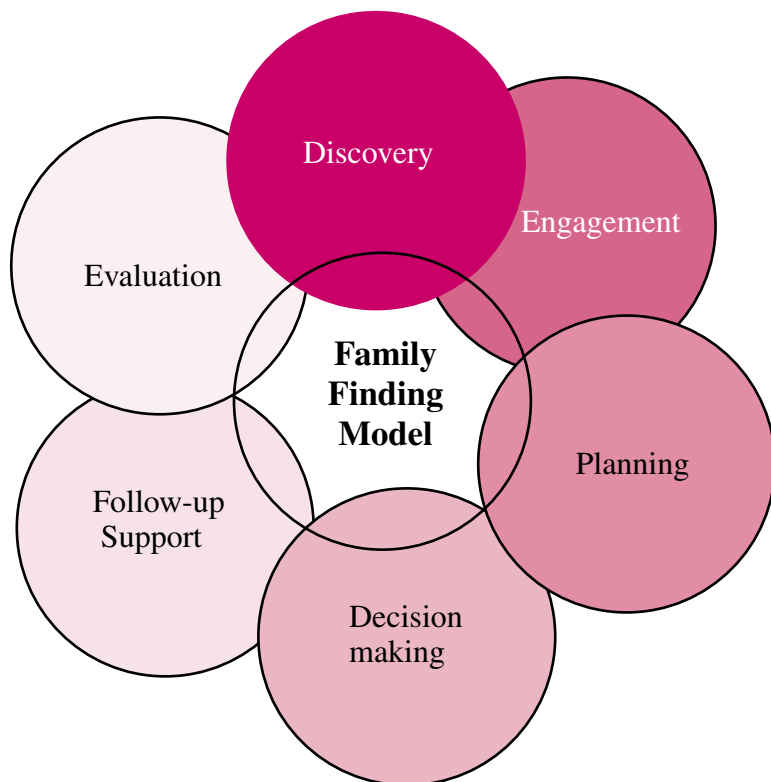
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Family Finding Model

Components do not necessarily occur in order or only once.



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discovery and engagement elements, among other things. It is not just a one-time event. The Family Finding and Engagement Model⁵ (FFE) focuses on organizing a working permanency team when a youth enters care or is removed from the home. This team includes all professionals, identified relatives, caregivers, and the child. They collaborate and organize discovery activities and seek to engage family members and others who share a connection with the child.

Engagement tools are then used to help youth and families identify these additional relatives and connections. The tools are also useful in relationship-building for the child and the professional. With the additional committed family and connections, the team morphs into the child's "Lifetime Family Support Network" and devises several permanency options. It assumes responsibility for raising the child, rather than the system. The professionals eventually

take a back seat and support the family.

In this model, the identified permanency plans have a greater chance of succeeding when the family members agree to support the parents, child, and the child's caregivers. The Lifetime Family Support Network identifies community supports needed to eventually dismiss the case and ensure the child never returns to foster care.

This model allows the family to participate on many levels and with a greater sense of urgency when planning for permanency for children. This process can be used at the front-end of a case, when a child transitions from foster care, and any time in between. The model creates a shared sense of responsibility and accountability among all members, instead of placing the burden on one individual or the child welfare agency.

Overcoming Obstacles

The professionals who support the child and parents often are overburdened by many responsibilities, lack

resources, and face dwindling budgets and loss of staff. Studies and program evaluations show the FFE model works to quickly locate family members, engage family in case planning, and increase the number of children achieving permanency.

Children who remain in the system for long periods require the most resources. Using this model increases the number of children who reach successful permanency and allows resources to be used in other parts of the system. Many professionals focus on the crisis of today versus proactively working on and developing solutions. A permanency team supports proactive, collaborative efforts that help move the responsibility for the child from the professionals to the family.

Using FFE in practice can raise questions and challenges depending on the nature of the case. Many challenges that arise are presented here with solutions drawn from professional experience and from the FFE field training and coaching sessions. A creative can-do approach goes far when working through these issues.

1. Probation or Dually Adjudicated Youth

Question: I am working with a 16-year-old child who will be in custody until she is 18. She has a case plan of independent living. She wants nothing more than to turn 18, get away from the system, and live on her own. Why would I need to locate her family now or work on any other permanent plan for her? She knows what she wants and doesn't want to work with me on this permanency stuff.

Response: All children with an "out-of-home" placement order (even if they also have criminal orders) must have an opportunity to form permanent relationships that support the youth while in detention and upon release.

Children need ongoing support, a connection to family, and a sense of belonging. Many children who have been removed from their

families, whatever the reason, suffer from trauma, loss, and unresolved grief. Often children do not know and are not provided the opportunity to work through their grief. These children build protective shields and layers of unresponsiveness to cope with feelings of fear of rejection and isolation.

Needing family support and a chance to work through grief does not end at age 18. If we wait until a child ages out of the system, we may have lost the only opportunity we have to help meet the child's needs. When you consider the average age young adults leave home for good is about 26 years, how is it we assume foster children will be ready to leave at age 18?⁶

It is more likely the child will return to a "system" through mental health needs, homelessness, joblessness, criminal activity, etc., if we don't continue to address the child's resistance.⁷

"..while independent living programs may offer the skills and knowledge needed for successful emancipation, it is not clear to what extent if any these programs can combat isolation and provide social support."⁸

(See Resources, p. 107, for more ways to help children address these feelings and assist in engagement efforts.)

2. Extending Foster Care Age

Question: Our state has just extended foster care until a youth is 21 years old, provided children meet certain criteria. If we have not located family by the time a child is 18, must we continue permanency planning efforts since reunification, adoption, or guardianship seem unlikely?

Response: Yes. Permanency planning should continue past age 18.⁹ All Title IV-E protections and case review requirements apply to youth over age 18, including:

- periodic reviews;
- permanency hearings and TPR requirements;

- monthly caseworker visits; and
- a judicial determination that the agency made reasonable efforts to finalize a permanency plan every 12 months for youth over age 18 receiving title IV-E foster care who were removed via court order.

However, an agency has flexibility in how to apply these requirements, such as:

- focusing agency and caseworker permanency efforts on the goal of independent living and the child's progress in meeting this goal; and
- conducting hearings/visits and delivering services in an age-appropriate manner.¹⁰

Fostering Connections allows foster care to extend beyond age 18. It requires all children who will be exiting the system to have a "transition plan" developed at least 90 days before exiting care. The development of this plan should be conducted well before the 90-day window, should be personalized at the direction of the child, include specific options for housing, health insurance, education, local opportunities for mentors and continuing support services, workforce supports and employment services, and be as detailed as the child elects.¹¹

3. ICWA—Tribal Involvement

Question: While preparing for the termination of parental rights hearing, we learned the child is Native American. The child has now lived with a nontribal foster family for 12 months. Both parents have consented to the foster parent adopting the child. Do we have to contact the tribe at this late stage?

Response: Yes, you must contact the child's tribe as soon you know the child may be a Native American. The tribe can intervene anytime during the proceeding.¹²

If the tribe intervenes, it may or may not agree with the parents and others about the permanency plan. The Indian Child Welfare Act does support the tribe's right to make permanency

planning decisions that may not be supported by the birth parents. Therefore, the tribe must be contacted even if the parents agree to the adoption. In several cases across the country, the tribe was not notified and permanency orders were overturned.¹³ Asking about Native American ancestry should occur at the first hearing, if not before.

4. Immigration

Question: A child was placed in care after his parents were arrested. The parents are now in the custody of Immigration Services and will likely be sent back to their country of origin. The child is an American citizen and has never lived in his parents' country of origin. Do we have to contact the relatives in that country and, if yes, how should permanency work be addressed?

Response: Yes, relatives within and outside the U.S. must be contacted. There are many possible outcomes for this child:

- return to the parents' care in the country of origin;
- placement with relatives in the U.S. or another country;
- continued placement in a U.S. foster home in the hope that the parents will not be deported; or
- permanent placement with a U.S. family or relatives with continued relationships with all relatives and important connections.

The Immigration Services hearings can take months to years to complete. Communication between child welfare professionals and Immigration Services (IS) can be challenging and increase the difficulties in making informed decisions about the child.

Over 5,100 children are in U.S. foster homes waiting for the IS hearings to take place.¹⁴ Now that this child has been removed from his parent, concurrent planning efforts can begin while seeking return to the parents. Finding relatives in the parent's country of origin could help in

this transition phase and international home studies could be obtained during this time.

5. Family outside the U.S.

Question: This child has relatives in a third world country and their lifestyle differs from how the child lives in the U.S. The child does not want to live in a country he does not know with people he has never met. Am I still required to engage these relatives?

Response: Yes. ALL relatives must be contacted no matter where they live or what their lifestyle. Nothing in federal law limits the search to U.S. residents. In fact, some state statutes require looking outside the U.S. for family.¹⁵ Do not assume all families in that country are too poor to raise a child or use American cultural standards in making decisions about which place would be better for the child. Decisions must be based on the specific needs of the child and that family's ability to care for the child.

Contacting these relatives does not guarantee the child will be placed with them. It may lead to identifying other supports for the child. Having relatives serve as resources can support the child during a difficult time and help him make decisions.

The child is not likely to have the facts or ability to make a decision about living in a country he has never visited or with relatives he has not met. We must ask and listen to the child's request, then allow the family and professionals to make the difficult permanency decisions based on what would benefit the child, including maintaining connections with all family members.

6. Absent Father

Question 1: The child does not want a relationship with his father. The father has not been involved in the child's life. Do we have to locate the father and engage him in this process?

Response: Each parent has the right to have a relationship with their child and the child has the right to have a relationship with his parents. Contact both parents and engage them in this process. How much to involve them in the process will depend on several factors, including whether there is documented proof of domestic violence orders or other evidence that contact is not in the child's best interest. Regardless, absent documented or other evidence of domestic violence the judicial officer must consider and require notice to that parent.

If the child has never had a relationship with his father, seek to offer support to develop that relationship. Sometimes a child is told false stories about why one parent (and family members) is missing. This can influence the child's perception of the incarcerated parent or his family.

Locate the father; if he is interested in developing a relationship, provide supportive visits. Even if he is not interested, gather contact information about his family so they can be notified about the child.

This relationship does not guarantee the parent will be given custody of the child. The professionals must try to find a way for the child to have a relationship with her father and not be placed in loyalty binds by other family members or current caregivers.

Question 2: The child's father is incarcerated and sentenced to 20 years. He has never been involved in raising his child. Do we need to involve him in the child's life?

Response: Incarceration does not change the legal mandate to notify the father. Though it is unlikely the father can ever provide daily care, he may be able to offer other resources to his child. These include access to paternal family members, family history, culture, medical information, and a sense of belonging. The child has the right to decide whether to have a relationship with the father through contact or visits.

7. Disrupted Adoption

Question: The child was adopted as an infant. Now the child is in foster care due to maltreatment by the adoptive parents. The child wants us to find his biological family. Can I help locate his birth family?

Response: If the adoptive parent(s)' rights have not been terminated, typically states do not allow the agency to search for birth parents and their relatives without the adoptive parents' consent. You must obtain the consent of the adoptive parents before looking for the birth family. California allows the agency to contact the birth-family without the consent of the adoptive parents when there is a disrupted adoption.¹⁶

Most preadoption records are sealed, including the original birth certificate.¹⁷ Some states allow adult adoptees to receive a copy of the original birth certificate. These laws only allow adoptees who are now adults (in some states the adult must be over 40 years old before they make this request). Most states require filing a motion to unseal these records. The youth should be offered psychological support regarding the issues related to locating a birth family.

8. Identified Relatives

Question: What if my client identifies family members, I provided those to the child welfare social worker, but he/she does nothing to follow up?

Response: There are several things you can do:

- Have an informal discussion with the social worker and ask why?
- Discuss the matter with the social worker's supervisor and/or county counsel.
- Ask for permission to follow up with those family members or other adults, then do so.
- Raise the issue at monthly stakeholder meetings.
- If no stakeholder meetings are

conducted, arrange one and invite representatives from all involved organizations. Alternatively, set up a brown-bag training session so all are familiar with the goals of family finding, the legal requirements, and roles and responsibilities.

- Request an interim review hearing, or file a motion to set one. Cite Fostering Connections research, recommended best practice, and your attempts to have the social worker follow up.
- Ask your client or parent's counsel to bring the family members or other concerned adults to the next hearing and introduce them to the court.
- Make a record (in court, reports, or pleadings) of the individuals you have located and your attempts to follow up with the social worker.
- For more information on roles and responsibilities of all parties to locate family, see the Resources, p. 107.

9. Judicial Leadership/Buy-In

Question: How do I ensure the judicial officer understands the importance of the family's role in visitation, concurrent planning, sibling contact, and post-adoption contact?

Response: Take these steps:

- Set a stakeholder meeting. Include the judicial officer. Discuss training and funding available through the Fostering Connections grants. Set up a conference call with a Finding Family and Engagement (FFE) training entity.
- Provide research and articles showing poor outcomes for children who are not connected to family and lack a sense of belonging.
- Provide the handout "Judicial Guide to Implementation of Fostering Connections," other leadership resources, and handouts listed in the Resource List to start the conversation.

- Collaborate with child welfare agency staff and discuss permanency outcome data with the judicial officer.

10. Permanency for Every Child

Question: How will I know if we have found permanency for a child?

Response: Start by finding out what permanency means to the child.

- Permanency is not just a legal determination. It is an inherent sense of well-being, connectedness, an unconditional commitment, as well as a sense of belonging.
- Review these questions with the child's Lifetime Family Network:
 - "If this plan fails, will the child remain or return to the foster care system?"
 - "Have we identified and engaged an adequate level of enduring support for the child and the child's caregivers?"
 - "Has the team created a plan that includes family members and other adults willing to offer their support if Plan 'A' is unsuccessful?"
 - "Are there at least three options?"
 - "If challenges arise that threaten the child's safety and stability, will the team reconvene?"
 - "What does the child want and have to say about the options?"
 - Unconditional commitment by safe, healthy, and nurturing adults is available.

11. Resistant Youth

Question: How can I get my teenage clients to open up and discuss permanency, family, and important connections?

Response: Don't give up! If you stop asking about permanency, the teen may feel no one wants him. Don't stop asking because you've asked once.

- Develop a child's connectedness

map. Discuss who is missing from the map. With whom does the child want to reconnect? Ask if they want to find out how big their family really is?

- Perform a Mobility Mapping exercise with the youth.
- Use other "engagement" tools to start or continue the discussion.¹⁸
- Help the child develop a "Life-book."
- Continue the discussion at different times. Sometimes riding in the car or talking on the phone is an opportunity to start or continue the conversation.
- Use "active listening" skills to have a discussion with the child.
- Discuss loyalty issues with the child. Does the child feel that choosing a permanency option like adoption means being disloyal to his birth family? Is he curious whether adoption means changing his name, or if he will ever see his birth family members again if he is adopted?
- Ask opening questions like:
 - "I'm not giving up on finding a forever family for you; can we talk about it more?"
 - "Do you know that adoption doesn't necessarily mean you will never see or have contact with your biological family?"
 - "What is your fear or concern about being adopted?"

12. Retraumatizing Children

Question: I think talking about his family and past will revictimize the child and he should stay with the foster parents who can keep him safe. Why would I want to involve family members who have harmed the child?

Response: Consult and involve the child's therapist or request that the child work with a professional who can help him explore his feelings. Work through these tough issues now while the child is in our care and can

learn about and start to form healthy relationships, not when he ages out and seeks out these relationships on his own. If you wait to work with the child on these issues until he ages out, he truly will not be able to attach to a permanent family.

Children cannot just forget the past. They need to work through their feelings and emotions surrounding grief and loss.

13. Professional is the Constant in the Child's Life

Question: I have been the only constant in the child's life. If he needs one connection, I am here for him. Why pursue family?

Response: Having a professional relationship with you is important but does not replace the child's need for a permanent family. The goal is to have the family raise this child, with the professionals/child welfare system phasing out their roles. Remember, children have a right to know what happened to their families.¹⁹ When they are old enough, most will look for their families, whether you want them to or not. Your responsibility is to help the child make a well-informed decision, not deny the opportunity to make a family connection.

14. Sibling Contact

Question 1: Many children have complex family relationships with siblings with different parents, or siblings with whom they have never lived. Isn't it better to simplify the child's life by limiting the expectation for visits with all siblings?

Response: A child should have a chance to get to know his siblings. Sibling relationships are some of the longest, most important relationships for children. Siblings benefit from these relationships even though they may include fighting, rivalry, and negative emotions. Sibling bonds can help the child address trauma. Fostering Connections requires rea-

sonable efforts to place siblings together or allow them to have visits if placement is not possible.²⁰

Question 2: The child's sibling has many behavioral problems that the birth parents cannot handle. If I insist on placing siblings together it could jeopardize reunification plans. Which is more important: reunification with parents or living with a sibling?

Response: There is no right answer. Either option means the child will lose a critical family relationship. The parents, caregivers, and professionals should work towards a third option that gives the child an ongoing relationship with both parents and the sibling, even if living with all family members is not possible. Building the Lifetime Family Support Network can help maintain these relationships by facilitating visits, respite care, or placement. It also helps model good parenting. The child must never be blamed or made to feel loyalty binds. A caregiver's ability to help the child maintain all relationships would be ideal in determining the best option for the child.

15. Resistant Parent

Question: I represent the mother and she wants to reunify. She doesn't want her child placed with anyone else and just wants to focus on having her child returned to her. It is my ethical duty to argue for what my client wants, why would I do otherwise?

Response: Parent's counsel must be aware of what the client wants. To facilitate reunification with the child, the parent needs a support system. Involving family and reestablishing relationships for the parent improves the chances that the parent will reunify sooner and the child will remain in the parent's care. Discussing this with a parent helps them understand the goal is to help them succeed and to enable the child to stay with the parent with-

out further court or CPS involvement.

16. Domestic or Family Violence

Question: The mother told me the child's father abused her. She has left him and wants to keep her location a secret from him. She is terrified what will happen if he is contacted.

Response: Address the issue with the judicial officer. Fostering Connections provides that no notice is required in family or domestic violence situations. There should be some documented proof of domestic violence or at least a history of such provided under oath by the mother. It is not clear if the court can waive the requirement to locate and notify the other paternal relatives. Without such a court waiver, the agency must exercise due diligence to locate the father and his family. It must ensure the parent who has been victimized is protected. Below are recommendations:

- Follow up to determine the facts of the abuse and intimate partner violence. Assume the parent is a victim of intimate partner violence unless there is clear evidence there was no physical, financial, or emotional violence.
- Ensure all parties know about the intimate partner violence and that everyone seeks to ensure the safety of the parent who has been victimized, including keeping information about that parent confidential.
- Make sure court orders, court reports, and other documents do not contain the location of the parent, children, or children's caregiver.
- Copies of court orders and agency case plans shared with the batterer should not identify when or where visits with the parent victim and the children will occur.
- Court practices in family law-related intimate partner violence cases should be used for any dependency hearings.

Family Engagement Resources

Select resources appear below. Visit the July 2012 issue online to for a complete list.

Family Finding and Engagement Models

- Seneca Center. <www.senecacenter.org/familyconnectedness>
- “Family Finding: Does Implementation Differ When Serving Different Child Welfare Populations?” *Child Trends Research Brief*, October 2011. <www.childtrends.org/Files/Child_Trends-2011_10_17_RB_Family-Finding.pdf>
- Louisell, Mardith J. *Six Steps to Find a Family: A Practice Guide to Family Search and Engagement*. National Resource Center for Family Centered Practice and Permanency Planning & California Permanency for Youth Project. <www.hunter.cuny.edu/socwork/nrcfcpp/downloads/SixSteps.pdf>
- California Permanency for Youth Project (CPYP) Resources. <www.senecacenter.org/perm_resources>
- *Six Steps for Family Finding*, Evaluation step. <www.nrcpfc.org/downloads/SixSteps.pdf>
- National Resource Center for Permanency and Family Connections (NRCPPFC). <www.hunter.cuny.edu/socwork/nrcfcpp/info_services/family-search.html>
- EMQ Families First. <www.emqff.org/>
- “Lighting the Fire of Urgency: Families Lost and Found in America’s Child Welfare System.” *Permanency Planning Today* (Newsletter of the National Resource Center for Foster Care & Permanency Planning at Hunter College of Social Work), Fall 2003. <www.nrcpfc.org/newsletter/ppt-fall-2003.pdf>
- Child Welfare Information Gateway. <www.childwelfare.gov/pubs/f_search.cfm>

Youth/Family Engagement Tools

- “Unpacking the No.” Power Point presentation. <www.nrcpfc.org/webcasts/archives/24/Ohio.unpacking.pdf>
- National Resource Center for Permanency and Family Connections, Youth Permanency Resources. <www.hunter.cuny.edu/socwork/nrcfcpp/info_services/youth-permanency.html>
- Lewis, Bob and Maureen Hefferman. *Families for Teens*, October, 2004. <www.thetoolkit.org/, <www.rglewis.com>
- Lewis, Bob. *Engaging Youth and Those Around Them in the Process of Permanency*. <http://rglewis.com/talking_with_youth.htm>
- Connectedness Map Training-PPT, available at www.senecacenter.org/familyconnectedness. For more information, send an e-mail to: familyfinding@senecacenter.org
- NCJFCJ Webinar Series on Fostering Connections, “Finding Family, Finding Home.” <www.ncjfcj.org/archived-fostering-connection-webinar-series>
- Mobility Mapping— A tool used to gain information from youth that might be missed in a standard one-on-one interview. Drawing stimulates youths’ memories, increasing their recollection of significant relationships, past addresses, nicknames, places visited and favorite memories. See: Bridget DeLay, MSW. *Mobility Mapping and Flow Diagrams: Tools for Tracing and Social Reintegration work with Separated Children*. <www.crin.org/docs/Mobility%20Mapping%20and%20Flow%20Diagrams.pdf>
- Henry, Darla. “The 3-5-7 Model: Preparing Children for Permanency.” *Child and Youth Services*

Review 27, 2005, 197-212.

- <<http://humanservices.ucdavis.edu/academy/pdf/The357model.pdf>>
- Damiano, J., Family Design Resources. <www.familydesign.org/>

Trauma, Loss and Attachment

- Barish, Noah. “Using the Harm of Removal and Placement to Advocate for Parents.” *Juvenile Law Resource Center, Juvenile Rights Project, Issue Brief*; January 7, 2010.
- Fahlberg, Vera I., M.D. *A Child’s Journey through Placement*. Jessica Kingsley Publishers, 2012, 22-23. <www.jkp.com/catalogue/book/9781849058988>
- National Child Traumatic Stress Network. *Child Welfare Trauma Training Toolkit Module 2*, 2008. <www.nctsnet.org/content/child-welfare-trauma-training-toolkit-2008>
- Henry, D. and G. Manning. Integrating Child Welfare and Mental Health Practices: Actualizing Youth Permanency Using the 3-5-7 Model. *In American Humane Association*. “Love and Belonging for a Lifetime.” *Youth Permanency in Child Welfare* 26(1), 2011. <www.americanhumane.org/assets/pdfs/children/protecting-children-journal/pc-26-1.pdf>

Fostering Connections

- ABA Center on Children and the Law et al. *Judicial Guide to Implementing the Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act of 2008*, 2011. <[www.grandfamilies.org/Portals/0/JudicialGuidetoFosteringConnections2011\[1\].pdf](http://www.grandfamilies.org/Portals/0/JudicialGuidetoFosteringConnections2011[1].pdf)>

- The batterer parent should arrive first and leave last. This allows the victimized parent to participate in hearings without being identified or followed after the hearing.
- Prevent the batterer from talking to the parent victim or making threatening comments.
- Consider separate hearings if the above suggestions cannot occur or the parent victim is so threatened by the past behaviors that she or he will not attend court if the batterer attends.
- Consult local domestic violence or intimate partner violence experts on services, supports, and guidelines.

Conclusion

Children have a right to have their biological and emotional relationships maintained and enhanced. These relationships allow a child to develop resiliency and to work through and overcome the trauma they have experienced.²¹ Child welfare and juvenile justice professionals have not always viewed family finding as a tool to prevent removal and seek reunification and other permanency options. We typically focus on “fixing” the abusive custodial parent without involving the noncustodial parent and the extended family system, convinced perhaps that it’s too difficult to locate missing parents or relatives.

New laws and practices clarify that it is our responsibility, as a system, to locate, inform, and engage the child’s family members even if the custodial parent requests that we not locate relatives. These relationships help the child survive maltreatment and develop into a healthy successful adult.

When in doubt about whether to involve family, ask:

- If my child, grandchild, brother, sister, niece, nephew, godchild, etc. were in foster care or in jeopardy of being placed into foster care; would I want to be notified and would I have something I

could offer that child?

- If I was in foster care would I want people to find the healthy members of my immediate and extended family and help me to learn how to have safe relationships with them and others?

Incorporating a family-finding process early can thwart unnecessary losses for children. It also lets children maintain their natural support systems, rather than dismantling them, only to seek rebuilding in the future.²²

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Endnotes

¹ See *Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act of 2008*, P.L. 110-351—definition of child as 18 years old or younger. However, *Fostering Connections* has also included “child” to mean a youth age 18-21, provided they meet certain criteria to remain in foster care, such as being a full-time student, completing secondary education or training per the State’s 1996 title IV-A Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) plan.

² *Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act of 2008*, P.L. 110-351.

³ Beck, Kelly, et al. “Finding Family Connections for Foster Youth.” *ABA Child Law Practice* 27(8), October, 2008.

⁴ ACYP-CB-PI-10-11, Section H.

⁵ Seneca Center FFE Model, first developed by Kevin Campbell and modified into current FFE Model.

⁶ Furstenberg, F. “On a New Schedule: Transitions to Adulthood and Family Change.” *The Future of Children* 20(1), Spring 2010.

⁷ Xiangming Fang et al. “The Economic Burden of Child Maltreatment in the United States and Implications for Prevention.” *Child Abuse & Neglect* 36(2), February 2012, 156-165. <<http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0145213411003140>>

⁸ Avery, Rosemary. “An Examination of Theory and Promising Practice for Achieving Permanency for Teens Before They Age Out of Foster Care.” *Children and Youth Services Review* 32, 2010, 399-408 (citing Iglehart, 1995).

⁹ Children’s Bureau and U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration on Children, Youth and Families, ACYF-CB-PI-10-11; July 9, 2010. <www.hunter.cuny.edu/socwork/nrcfcp/info_services/Fostering_Connections_PI%20for_p2p-Elizabeth_Sharp.pdf> <www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb/laws_policies/policy/pi/2010/pi1011.htm>

¹⁰ PowerPoint on Fostering Connections presented by Elizabeth Sharp, Program Specialist, Policy Division, Children’s Bureau, on October 4, 2010 at the 2010 Policy to Practice Dialogue Conference in Washington, DC. 42 U.S.C. §675(5); 45 C.F.R. §1356.21(b)(2)(i). <http://www.nrcpfc.org/fostering_connections/>

¹¹ Social Security Act, §475(8)(B)(iv)). <www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb/laws_policies/policy/pi/2008/pi0805.htm>

¹² ICWA reference—tribe can intervene at any time, 25 USC §1911(c).

¹³ See, e.g., In re J.R.S., 690 P.2d 10 (Alaska 1984); In re M.E.M., 725 P.2d 212 (Mont. 1986); In re Child of Indian Heritage (Indian Child II), 543 A.2d 925 (N.J. 1988); In re Baby Boy Doe (Baby Boy Doe I), 849 P.2d 925 (Idaho 1993); <<http://narf.org/icwa/faq/voluntary.htm#Q7>>

¹⁴ Wessler, Seth Freed. “Shattered Families: The Perilous Intersection of Immigration Enforcement and Child Welfare System.” *Applied Research Center*, November, 2011.

¹⁵ Colorado, CRS §19-3-403] and Rule 7.304.52

¹⁶ Cal. Welf. & Inst. Code §361.3(f)(1)-(3)

¹⁷ Illinois Adoption Act, 2010. <<http://newillinoisadoptionlaw.com/>>

¹⁸ Beck, K. “Family Finding Connections for Foster Youth.” *ABA Child Law Practice* 27(8), 2008.

¹⁹ See The Geneva Convention of 1947. “The primary need inevitably cited by the families of missing persons is the right to know what happened to their relatives.” *The Missing, The Right to Know*, December 2003, ICRC.

²⁰ <www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb/laws_policies/policy/pi/2010/pi1011.htm#sectg>

²¹ Masten, Ann S., Karin M. Best, and Norman Garmezy. “Resilience and Development: Contributions from the Study of Children Who Overcome Adversity.” *Development and Psychopathology* 2, 1990, 425-444.

²² In re JW, 226 P.3d 873 (Wyo. 2010).