Family Finding and Engagement Coaching

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Who are we and what do we do?

• Casey has 9 field office along the west coast
• Prevention work to keep youth in homes with birth family or fictive kin
• Family finding to search for permanent connections and/or achieve legal permanency
• Work with a sense of urgency
• Priority population are youth who have been in care long term age 11 and older
What is Permanency?

-Safe, stable, legal, permanent living situation for a youth in care, the paramount outcome for the child welfare system along with safety and improving child and family well-being.

-Two types of permanency: legal and relational
Positive Permanency

That all children leaving foster care exit into a permanent setting, which involves a legal relationship to family.

- Reunification with a parent or parents
- Transfer of custody to a relative or extended family member
- Adoption
• What happens when permanency is not achieved?
Comparison of Young Adult Outcomes

A Youth’s Lack of Permanency Has Severe Consequences...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Former Foster Youth</th>
<th>General Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Currently Employed</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median Earnings</td>
<td>$8,000</td>
<td>$18,300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have a Bank Account</td>
<td>&lt; 50%</td>
<td>85%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have Health Insurance</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>78%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Been Pregnant (Female)</td>
<td>&gt; 75%</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Impregnated a Partner (Male)</td>
<td>61%</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High School Diploma or GED</td>
<td>➔</td>
<td>3 X more likely</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have been Homeless or Couch-Surfed</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Delaware Stats- Feb 2017

• About 10% of foster care placements were in kinship homes
• Foster Care- approved relative 5
• Foster Care- Relative non-approved 69 (do not receive payment)
• In DFS Foster Care placement 694
Consider This...

The number of kids in foster care waiting for a family would almost fill 2 Super Bowl Stadiums!
Family Finding and Engagement

WHERE DO WE GO NEXT?
Finding Connections is Critical
Family Finding Tools

- Case Mining
- Genograms
- Eco-Maps
- Circles of Support
- Mobility/Placement Mapping
Case Mining

• Investigation History
• Previous Home Studies (esp. references)
• Family Team Meeting Notes
• Therapy Notes
• Court Reports

• For reentries into care, look at original CPS records
Case Mining

• Create a genogram and eco-map as you case mine.

• Identify youth’s previous neighborhoods, churches, schools and activities for possible outreach.

• Identify caregivers and friends in past placements.
Delaware CPS Database: FACTS

• Computer-generated list of case participants
• Computer-generated summary of case information
• Child Service Plan
• Narratives
Internet Searches

• Search birth records, death records, and property searches.

• Social Media

• Obituaries are a rich source of family information and often detail relationships between family members.

• Document and track your results.
Case Mining/Finding Connections Activity

- Home Study and Investigation Report
- Identify as many people or groups as you can follow-up with to find possible permanent connections.
- Adopt the mindset of a detective.
Genograms – More than a Family Tree!

By using symbols, lines and notations, genograms allow us to quickly understand key elements within families on an intergenerational level.
Genogram Template
Benefits of Genograms

• Expanding networks through identification of family and kin.

• Can be added to over time.

• Visually shows:
  ✓ Support systems
  ✓ Cultural heritage and traditions
  ✓ Patterns that can inspire change in families
Genogram Tools for You

• Genogram Key
• Standard Symbols for Genogram
• GenoPro genealogy software (genopro.com)
Genogram Exercise

• Get into pairs.

• One person interview the other.

• Interviewer create a genogram with the interviewee.

• Identify as many people as possible.

• Include fictive kin.
Eco-Maps

By visually representing the systems in a family’s life and the nature of their relationships with those systems, eco-maps allow us to quickly understand how families interact with their environment.
Eco-Map Template
Benefits of Eco-Maps

• Identify more people to expand networks.
• Can be added to over time.
• Is a visual reminder of supports that families can put on their refrigerators.
• Can help inform the work with families.
Eco-Map Exercise

• Get into your same pairs in your same roles.

• Interviewer create an eco-map with the interviewee.

• Identify as many people as possible.
Case Mining and Genograms and Eco-Maps, Oh My!

Between case mining, genograms, and eco-maps, it’s common to identify at least 40 people per youth.
Mobility and Placement Mapping

An interactive tool to use with youth, mobility and/or placement maps can be used with children of any age to help identify symbolic relatives and other significant connections in their lives.
Mobility Map Template
Mobility Mapping

• What is the first place you remember living?
• Who lived there with you?
• Where did you go to school?
• Who were your neighbors, friends, caregivers?
• Where did you spend holidays?
Circles of Support

As a visual tool to gather information about a family’s network of supports, Circles of Support can help enlarge the network or identify supports who can participate in formal planning activities.

Developed by Susie Essex and Andrew Turnell
Circle of Support Template

- Name/photo/picture of family members
- Who already knows everything that has happened?
- Who knows nothing about what has happened?
- Who knows a little bit about what has happened?
Circles of Support

• Youth/family are in the **yellow** circle.
• People who know everything about what is going on are in the **green** circle.
• People who know a little bit about what is going on are in the **orange** circle.
• People who know nothing about what is going on are in the **blue** circle.
The Inner Circle…More is Better

More people in the inner circle means more:

• Safety
  “Child abuse is a syndrome of secrecy.”

• Permanency

• Well-being

http://crimepsychblog.com?p=1402
Safety Bee
Adapted Circles Template
Family Finding isn’t limited to Family

- Judges
- Attorneys
- CASA
- Community Partners (teachers/school)
- Child Placing Agencies
- Previous Caseworkers
- Foster Parents
- Providers (therapist)
How do we move forward?

MAKING CONTACT
How to Make Contact

• Letters
• Phone calls
• Email
• Social Media
• In-person visits
What to Say

- Introduce yourself and your role.
- Explain looking for connections for child.
- Focus on how they can stay involved.
- Provide your contact information.
Convey a Sense of Urgency

- When contacting potential connections for the youth, convey a sense of urgency.
- Always schedule a follow-up call while you have them on the telephone.
Convey Options for Connections

• Legal Permanency
  – Adoption
  – Permanent Guardianship

• Relational Permanency
  – Permanency Pact

• Use as a resource for information
Engagement Tips

Child Welfare Information Gateway defines the key elements of family engagement as:

- Listen.
- Demonstrate respect and empathy.
- Develop an understanding of the family’s past experiences, current situation, strengths and concerns.

(cont.)
Engagement Tips

- Establish the **purpose of involvement**.
- Be **aware** of own biases and prejudices.
- Validate the **participatory role** of the family.
- Be **consistent**, **reliable**, and **honest**.

www.childwelfare.gov
Balance Strengths…

• Talk about the youth’s strengths, interests, talents or hobbies.

• If there are common interests and strengths, mentioning them can help the relative begin to feel connected to the youth.

(cont.)
...and Needs

- As the conversation progresses, emphasize the youth’s need to know where he comes from and who his “people” are.
- Let them know that the youth has struggled.
- Explain that youth who are lonely for family can struggle to develop a sense of “identity” and often have difficulties with behavior.

Staying In Touch

• Send a thank you note including contact information and an invitation to call back with more information in the future.

• Persist…even when progress is slow or difficult.

• A child who feels alone deserves as many calls as it takes.

Permanency Stories

Emancipated Youth Connections Project
Be Curious.
Until the Last Child