

# KINSHIP CARE: MAKING IT HAPPEN AND WHY

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# OVERVIEW OF KINSHIP CARE



# KINSHIP DATA AND OUTCOMES

- **2.5 MILLION CHILDREN** IN THE US ARE RAISED BY RELATIVES OR CLOSE FAMILY FRIENDS WITHOUT A PARENT IN THE HOME
- **30% OF CHILDREN IN FOSTER CARE** (ABOUT 127,00 CHILDREN) LIVE WITH RELATIVES
  - GEORGIA = 17%
- KINSHIP CARE RESULTS IN BETTER OUTCOMES INCLUDING:
  - IMPROVED PLACEMENT STABILITY
  - REDUCED TRAUMA
  - REINFORCED CHILD'S SENSE OF IDENTITY
  - HELP KEEP SIBLINGS TOGETHER
  - EXPANDED PERMANENCY OPTIONS
- SEE *CHILDREN THRIVE IN GRANDFAMILIES* FACT SHEET, AVAILABLE AT [WWW.GRANDFAMILIES.ORG](http://WWW.GRANDFAMILIES.ORG) AND [WWW.GU.ORG](http://WWW.GU.ORG)

# FEDERAL LAWS SUPPORTING KINSHIP CARE

- **FEDERAL PREFERENCE FOR PLACEMENT WITH A RELATIVE: 42 U.S.C.A. 671(A) (19)**
- **FOSTERING CONNECTIONS TO SUCCESS & INCREASING ADOPTIONS ACT**
  - NOTICE TO RELATIVES WITHIN 30 DAYS OF REMOVAL
  - KINSHIP GUARDIANSHIP ASSISTANCE OPTION
  - PLACEMENT OF SIBLINGS TOGETHER
- **PREVENTING SEX TRAFFICKING AND STRENGTHENING FAMILIES ACT**
  - REASONABLE AND PRUDENT PARENT STANDARD
  - GUARDIANSHIP ASSISTANCE FOR SUCCESSOR GUARDIANS
  - NOTIFICATION AND PLACEMENT WITH SIBLINGS
  - INCENTIVIZED GUARDIANSHIP PAYMENTS TO STATES

\* DETAILED LEGAL ANALYSIS OF LAWS AND IMPACT ON KIN CAREGIVERS AT [WWW.GRANDFAMILIES.ORG](http://WWW.GRANDFAMILIES.ORG), INCLUDING JUDICIAL GUIDES AND IMPLEMENTATION TOOLS

# WIKIHOW FOR KINSHIP FOSTER CARE: HOW TO CREATE A KIN-FIRST CULTURE



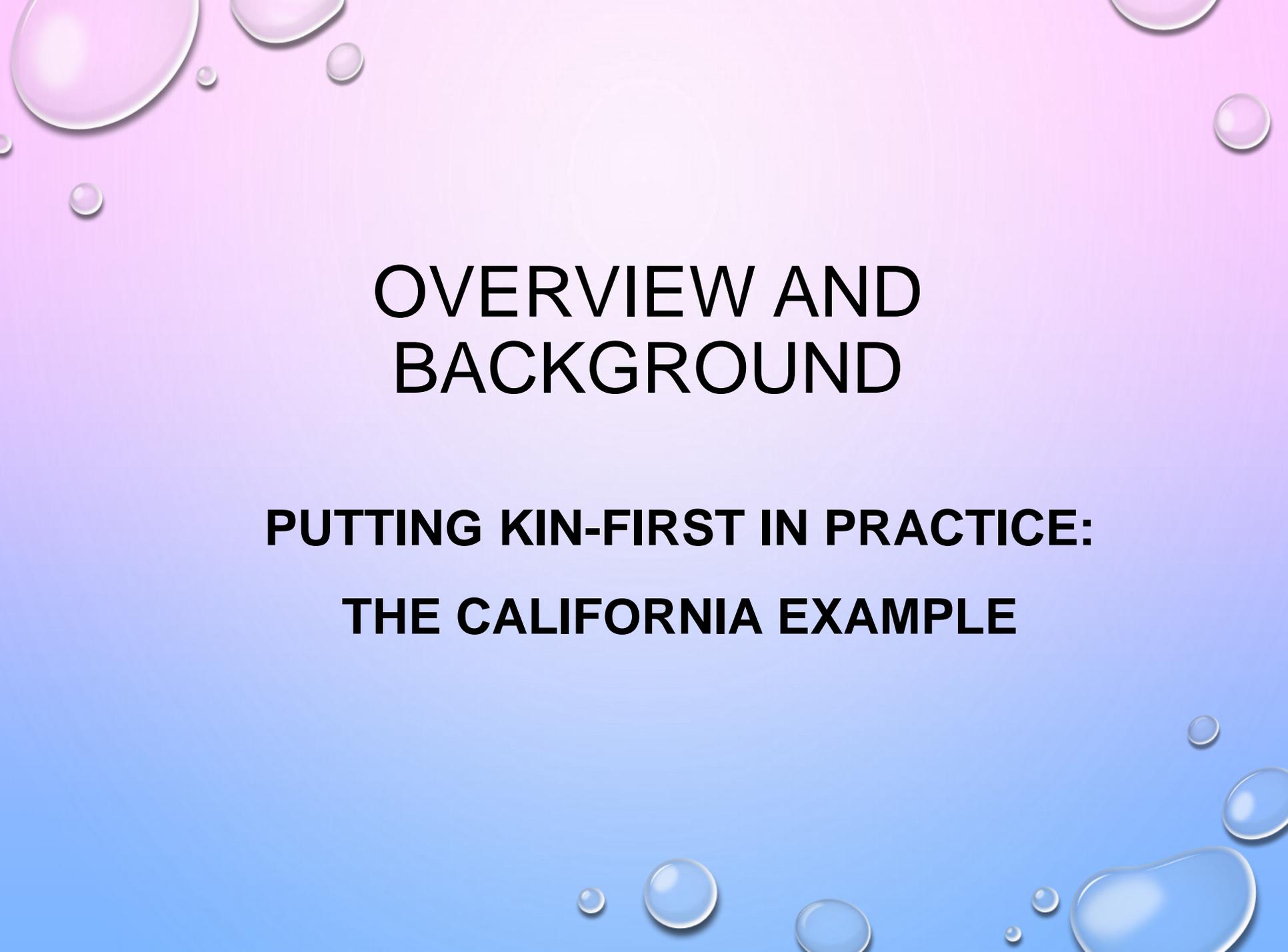
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# WIKIHOW KEY STEPS TO CREATING A KIN-FIRST CULTURE

1. LEAD WITH A KIN FIRST PHILOSOPHY
2. DEVELOP WRITTEN POLICIES AND PROTOCOLS THAT REFLECT EQUITY FOR CHILDREN WITH KIN AND RECOGNIZE THEIR UNIQUE CIRCUMSTANCES
3. IDENTIFY AND ENGAGE KIN FOR CHILDREN AT EVERY STEP
4. CREATE A SENSE OF URGENCY FOR MAKING THE FIRST PLACEMENT A KIN PLACEMENT
5. MAKE LICENSING KIN A PRIORITY
6. SUPPORT PERMANENT FAMILIES FOR CHILDREN
7. CREATE A STRONG COMMUNITY NETWORK TO SUPPORT KIN FAMILIES

# KINSHIP TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

- FULL WIKIHOW WITH STATE EXAMPLES OF EACH STEP AVAILABLE AT:  
[WWW.GRANDFAMILIES.ORG](http://WWW.GRANDFAMILIES.ORG)
  - TRAINING AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE TO IMPLEMENT THE WIKIHOW
- IMPROVING FAMILY CONNECTIONS: A LEGAL FOCUS ON EXTENDED FAMILIES
  - LEGAL KINSHIP CURRICULUM FULL DAY TRAIN THE TRAINERS  
MULTIDISCIPLINARY TRAINING
- CONTACT HEIDI REDLICH EPSTEIN : [HEIDI.EPSTEIN@AMERICANBAR.ORG](mailto:HEIDI.EPSTEIN@AMERICANBAR.ORG)

The background features a vertical gradient from light pink at the top to light blue at the bottom. Scattered throughout are various-sized, realistic-looking water droplets with highlights and shadows, giving a fresh and clean aesthetic.

# **OVERVIEW AND BACKGROUND**

**PUTTING KIN-FIRST IN PRACTICE:  
THE CALIFORNIA EXAMPLE**

# VISION OF CONTINUUM-OF-CARE REFORM

- All children live with a committed, permanent, and nurturing family with strong community connections
- Services and **supports are** individualized and coordinated across systems, and children shouldn't need to change placements to get services
- When needed, congregate care is a short-term, high-quality, intensive intervention that is just one part of a continuum of care available for children, youth, and young adults
- Effective accountability and transparency drives continuous quality improvement for the state, **counties,** and providers

# KEY STRATEGIES

- Child and Family Teams (CFTs) drive case planning, placement decisions, and care coordination
- New licensing requirements for Foster Family Agencies (FFAs) and Short Term Residential Treatment Programs (STRTPs):
  - Limit use of residential care to when an Interagency Placement Committee finds that a child requires short-term intensive services
  - Ensure that STRTPs and FFAs have an identified ability to meet the varied needs of children (i.e., “core services”), including mental health services
  - Ensure that STRTPs and FFAs are nationally accredited and engage [placing agencies in program development](#)
- New approval requirements and restructured rate system for caregivers provide for a single residential rate and a varied “level of care” home-based rate
- Local collaboration between/among child welfare, mental health, probation, and education provides integrated services

# NCJFCJ 68TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE

## JULY 17–20, 2005

### PITTSBURGH, PA

#### RESOLUTION PROMOTING TIMELY RELATIVE PLACEMENTS AND REASONABLY DILIGENT SEARCHES IN FURTHERANCE OF THOSE PLACEMENTS

- **WHEREAS**, RESEARCH-BASED NATIONAL POLICY SUPPORTS (PERHAPS REQUIRES) THE TIMELY PLACEMENT OF CHILDREN WITH RELATIVES WHEN THEY HAVE BEEN REMOVED FROM THEIR HOMES BY STATE ACTION AND SAFE, APPROPRIATE RELATIVES ARE AVAILABLE TO CARE FOR THOSE CHILDREN; AND
- **WHEREAS**, CHILDREN WHO ARE SAFELY AND TIMELY PLACED WITH RELATIVES FOLLOWING REMOVAL FROM THEIR OWN HOMES TEND TO ACHIEVE PERMANENCY MORE TIMELY, EXPERIENCE FEWER PLACEMENTS WHILE IN FOSTER CARE, AND EXPERIENCE A HIGHER DEGREE OF WELL-BEING; AND
- **WHEREAS**, THE FAILURE TO IDENTIFY APPROPRIATE RELATIVE RESOURCES IN A TIMELY MANNER MAY UNNECESSARILY DELAY THE ACHIEVEMENT OF PERMANENT PLACEMENT OF CHILDREN; AND
- **WHEREAS**, THE FAILURE TO PLACE CHILDREN WITH RELATIVES WHERE APPROPRIATE CONTRIBUTES TO THE DISPROPORTIONATE REPRESENTATION OF MANY ETHNIC AND MINORITY POPULATIONS THROUGHOUT THE CHILD WELFARE AND FOSTER CARE SYSTEMS; AND

- **WHEREAS**, beginning the process of systematically identifying relatives at the time of removal and continuing that process throughout the life of the case has been demonstrated to increase the likelihood of placement of children within their families; and
- **WHEREAS**, the failure to recognize changing family dynamics and to remain diligent throughout the life of a case may result in lost opportunities to provide the most appropriate safe, permanent placements for children who cannot return to their birth homes; and
- **WHEREAS**, ensuring that relatives are timely identified and considered for placement is properly within the oversight responsibility of the judges exercising jurisdiction over children in foster care; and
- **WHEREAS**, active judicial oversight has proven to be an essential element in the timely identification of potential relative placements; and
- **WHEREAS**, there is system-wide benefit to establishing some degree of uniformity relative to what constitutes a reasonable diligent search for relatives, both in terms of the scope of the search and the manner in which the search is conducted;

**NOW THEREFORE, BE IT HEREBY RESOLVED**, judges exercising jurisdiction over children in foster care take steps in their jurisdictions to promote the placement of children within their families by setting clear expectations relative to the timely search for relative placements and by actively exercising oversight relative to said search; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, the following represents the minimum steps to be taken by the judge in furtherance of this resolution:

1. Where not otherwise required by state law, requiring the child welfare agency to conduct a reasonably diligent search for relatives of the child who may be considered for placement within thirty (30) days following the date of physical removal of the child from the home.
  
2. Directing the child welfare agency to adopt a systematic process for conducting the search including, but not necessarily limited to, the following: (a) Interviews with the parents from the beginning of the case and continuing during the course of an investigation, while child protective services are provided, and while the child is in care and is supervised by the child welfare agency; (b) Interviews with the child throughout the case; (c) Interviews with relatives throughout the case; (d) As the child welfare agency talks with identified relatives as to their interest in being a resource for the child or parent, inquiring as to the identity, location and interest of other relatives and other persons who have demonstrated an ongoing commitment to the child, thereby allowing the search to expand as additional relatives and other persons are identified; (e) Interviews with collateral sources such as school teachers, counselors, day care providers, preachers, and others who may know of relatives not yet disclosed and of other persons who have demonstrated an ongoing commitment to the child; (f) The use of data bases, including the child welfare agency's own files, the Parent Locator Service and available internet search tools; (g) Any assessments provided by outside service providers; (h) Inquiries of attorney guardians ad litem and CASAs; (i) Appropriate inquiry during the course of all hearings in the case; and (j) Any other reasonable means that are likely to identify relatives or other persons who have demonstrated a significant relationship with the child.

3. Monitoring the progress of the relative search and allocating a sufficient amount of time during all reviews and hearings to address the relative search issue, including asking parents, caretakers and others questions in court in furtherance of the search.
4. Exercising the court's oversight authority to promote timely relative searches and safe, permanent relative placement including, where appropriate, making adverse reasonable efforts findings.
5. Where properly within ethical bounds in the judge's jurisdiction, encouraging state legislators to enact legislation acknowledging the benefit of appropriate family placements, to require the Agency to timely conduct reasonably diligent searches for relatives, to provide adequate resources to conduct those searches, and to provide financial and programmatic support to families serving as placement resources in order to move children out of the foster care system.

Adopted this 20th day of July, 2005  
By the Membership Assembled in Conference  
In Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

# LOS ANGELES UPFRONT FAMILY-FINDING PROTOCOL PILOT

## ELEMENTS OF PILOT PROJECT

- TWO DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES OFFICES (19 TOTAL IN L.A.)
- FRONT-END TRAINING OF CHILDREN'S SOCIAL WORKERS ON THE IMPORTANCE OF AND NECESSITY FOR FINDING/ASSESSING RELATIVES
- CONSISTENT OVERSIGHT
- FRONT-END INCORPORATION OF FAMILY-FINDING EXPERTS AND TECHNOLOGY
- ENGAGEMENT OF NON-PLACEMENT RELATIVES AND NON-RELATIVE EXTENDED FAMILY MEMBERS AS SOON AS POSSIBLE
- AGENCY SUPPORT
- PROJECT EVALUATION BY CHILD TRENDS

## SIX-MONTH+ RESULTS

- RELATIVE PLACEMENT RATE: 81% AND 71% IN THE TWO OFFICES
- EMERGING DATA ON RELATIVE ENGAGEMENT: 20+%

# RESOURCES



# KINSHIP RESOURCES

- GRANDFAMILIES STATE LAW AND POLICY RESOURCE CENTER
  - [WWW.GRANDFAMILIES.ORG](http://WWW.GRANDFAMILIES.ORG)
  - STATE TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE AND TRAINING AVAILABLE FROM STAFF OF GRANDFAMILIES.ORG
- GENERATIONS UNITED [WWW.GU.ORG](http://WWW.GU.ORG)
- CHILDFOCUS [HTTP://CHILDFOCUSPARTNERS.COM/](http://CHILDFOCUSPARTNERS.COM/)
- CHILD TRENDS DATA
  - [WWW.CHILDTRENDS.ORG/DATABANK-INDICATORS/](http://WWW.CHILDTRENDS.ORG/DATABANK-INDICATORS/)

# THANKS TO:

HEIDI REDLICH EPSTEIN  
DIRECTOR OF KINSHIP POLICY  
ABA CENTER ON CHILDREN AND THE LAW

ANGIE SCHWARTZ  
POLICY DIRECTOR  
ALLIANCE FOR CHILDREN'S RIGHTS