Family Finding is Only Scratching the Surface. Now the Real Work Begins!

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Casey Family Programs
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Extreme Recruitment video

Family Finding For Children in Foster Care

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OnIPo0B AkT8
Seeing the Gaps Before Families Fall Through Them …..

• Developing Team and Defining Roles
• Preparing the Youth
• Preparing the Family
• Sustaining the Connections
DEVELOPING THE TEAM AND DEFINING ROLES

- Establish initial and ongoing meetings and/or check-ins, communication procedures
- Stress the importance of preparation and follow thru
- Explore other supports to the process
- Obtain commitment of team members
PREPARING THE YOUTH

- Gathering information to locate people
- What is ok to share?
- What are they hoping for?
- Anticipate outcomes
- Define their role
CONNECTION TOOLS

• Genogram/eco-map
• Placement/mobility mapping
• Connectedness chart
• NRCPFC questions
Trauma and our responses to it cannot be understood outside the context of human relationships. Recovery from trauma and neglect is also all about relationships—rebuilding trust, regaining confidence, returning to a sense of security and reconnecting to love. Healing and recovery are impossible without lasting, caring connections to others. All of the children who ultimately thrived did so because of a strong social network that surrounded and supported them.

- Bruce Perry, Ph.D., M.D.
(The Boy Who Was Raised As A Dog. P. 231-232)
How Grief & Loss Work Can Support Family Finding Work

3-5-7 Model by Darla Henry

- Preserves the dignity of the birth family
- Understands fluidity of youth’s feelings towards others
- Decreases loyalty issues
- Stresses the importance of identity formation
- Focuses on assisting youth in developing the ability to cultivate relationships
ENGAGING THE FAMILY - 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.)
ENGAGING THE FAMILY - 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
ENGAGING THE FAMILY – Important Perspectives

• Remember what Uncle Buzz said
• Realize relatives are non-offending and don’t assume pathology
• Focus on engagement as a first priority
• Validate and listen intently to past experiences/family history
• Believe that people can change
ENGAGING THE FAMILY – Initial Contact

• Share information before asking for information
• Explain youth’s situation and why this work is done (outcomes)
• Be open to all the relative can provide
• Ensure privacy and confidentiality
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.

INITIAL CONTACT - phone or letter

Preparing the youth and family members

– Prepare questions/conversation topics
– Avoiding the “heavy” stuff
– Set up supports for youth/family ahead of call
– Anticipating next steps
INITIAL CONTACT – in person

• Items to bring
• Genogram
• Activities
• Permanency Pact
ONGOING CONTACT

• Setting schedule/expectations
• Facilitation of contact
• Psycho-education for the family members
• Discuss types of involvement
• Ongoing supports
ONGOING CONTACT – specialist and family

• 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.

“The greatest disease is to be nobody to anybody.”

-Mother Teresa
RESOURCES (hyperlinks)

- www.childwelfare.gov
- http://darlahenry.org
- http://www.nrcpfc.org/
- https://www.fosterclub.com/_transition/article/permanency-pact
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