

## **Placement Advocacy**

### ***Advocating for the Most Connected Placement: A Guide to Reducing the Use of Group Care***

This Guide is intended to be a practical tool that can be used by attorneys and advocates to ensure that youth are in living settings where they can be connected with family, the community, and a support system. We will refer to this as “the most connected placement.” The tool is divided into fifteen questions and principles to guide your analysis and offer different points of intervention during the course of a case. Each section provides concrete suggestions for actions you can take in and out of court to get your clients in the most connected placements where they can have their needs met and thrive. It also provides the legal and social science authority to support the suggested actions.

Youth Law Center & Juvenile Law Center (2019).

<https://ylc.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/Connected-Placements-Toolkit.pdf>

### ***Achieving Permanency for the Well-being of Children and Youth***

This Information Memorandum concludes that strong family relationships and connections are essential to child and youth well-being, family relationships and connections directly influence children’s and youth’s sense of permanency, and meaningful efforts toward reunification should be an urgent priority. The IM urges child welfare agencies to center their efforts on preserving and bolstering these relationships for all children and youth in foster care to ensure positive permanency outcomes.

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Administration for Children and Families (2021).

<https://www.acf.hhs.gov/cb/policy-guidance/im-21-01>

### ***Child Safety: A Guide for Judges and Attorneys***

This guide addresses the fundamentals of safety assessments and planning, provides clear standards that must be met before children can be safely returned home, and provides checklists to assist stakeholders in making decisions.

American Bar Association (2009).

[http://www.ct.gov/ccpa/lib/ccpa/ABA\\_Child\\_Safety\\_Manual\\_june32009.pdf](http://www.ct.gov/ccpa/lib/ccpa/ABA_Child_Safety_Manual_june32009.pdf)

Hard copies with bench cards available at

<https://www.americanbar.org/products/inv/book/215601/>

### ***The Child Welfare Playbook***

This playbook is a collection of promising practices related to foster parent licensing, background checks, extended foster care, family finding, inquiry management, license renewals, recruitment, retention, and COVID-19.

New America’s Public Interest Technology, Foster America, and Think of Us.

<https://www.childwelfareplaybook.com/about>

### ***Creating a Kin-First Culture***

This article Focuses on steps child welfare organizations and practitioners can take to prioritize kinship placement, help children maintain family connections, and preserve cultural identity all while also supporting kinship caregivers.

American Bar Association Center on Children and the Law (2017).

[https://www.americanbar.org/groups/public\\_interest/child\\_law/resources/child\\_law\\_practiceonline/child\\_law\\_practice/vol-36/july-aug-2017/creating-a-kin-first-culture-/](https://www.americanbar.org/groups/public_interest/child_law/resources/child_law_practiceonline/child_law_practice/vol-36/july-aug-2017/creating-a-kin-first-culture-/)

### ***Families Over Facilities: Ending the Use of Harmful and Unnecessary Institutions and Other Group Facilities in Child Welfare Systems***

This report details the physical, mental and emotional harm done to children in group settings, the significant unnecessary taxpayer costs associated with the practice, and violations of children's civil and human rights. It also contains an adaptable toolkit of practical steps state child welfare agencies, case workers, and service providers can take to end institutionalization, keep families together and children out of foster care, and when that is not possible, dramatically increase the placement of children with other family members.

Children's Rights (2021).

<https://www.childrensrights.org/familiesoverfacilitiesreport/>

### ***Four Steps Judges and Lawyers Can Take to Promote Permanency for Youth in Foster Care***

This bench card outlines the importance of promoting positive attitudes towards permanency, ensuring youth participation in permanency planning, limiting group care and supporting family-based placements, and ensuring quality permanency planning. The card also outlines 13 questions youth wish judges would ask in court.

Voice for Adoption and The Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption.

<https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5f60d64c6268ba0a63ea9283/t/5f84b5db2e860b0a692ae013/1602532828254/Youth-Voices-for-Permanency-v7-Bench-Card.pdf>

### ***Impact of Kinship Care on Permanency Outcomes***

This webpage provides resources addressing practices and programs that promote stability and positive permanency outcomes for children in kinship care.

Child Welfare Information Gateway (2021).

<https://www.childwelfare.gov/topics/permanency/relatives/impact/>

### ***Kinship Care is Better for Children and Families***

The idea of family members assisting and supporting each other is not new. This is a traditional practice in most cultures. The foster care system is starting to incorporate kinship care as a permanency option for children. Efforts are underway to remove barriers to kinship placements, including removing bureaucratic processes and streamlining legal proceedings to allow relatives to safely care for children and maintain important family connections. Efforts are also beginning to examine foster care licensing requirements, supports, and services for kin, and approaches to complex family dynamics that affect kin and their ability to care for children.

American Bar Association (2017).

[https://www.americanbar.org/groups/public\\_interest/child\\_law/resources/child\\_law\\_practiceonline/child\\_law\\_practice/vol-36/july-aug-2017/kinship-care-is-better-for-children-and-families/](https://www.americanbar.org/groups/public_interest/child_law/resources/child_law_practiceonline/child_law_practice/vol-36/july-aug-2017/kinship-care-is-better-for-children-and-families/)

### ***Non-Family Placements: What We Know***

The toolkit includes research on why kids do better in families; bench cards and checklists for judges, attorneys, and advocates; an interactive state-by-state map of data addressing children placed in non-family settings; training tools; and judicial strategies for reform. These resources aim to reduce reliance on non-family placements for children in foster care.

National Center for State Courts.

<http://www.ncsc.org/Microsites/EveryKid/Home.aspx>

### ***Placement of Children with Relatives***

This publication presents an overview of State laws giving priority or preference to relatives when children are in need of out-of-home care. The issues addressed include locating relatives, determining the fitness of a relative to provide care, and requirements for licensure. Requirements for placing siblings together whenever possible and adoption by relatives also are addressed. Summaries of laws for all 50 States are included.

Child Welfare Information Gateway (2018).

<https://www.childwelfare.gov/topics/systemwide/laws-policies/statutes/placement/>

### ***Partnering With Relatives to Promote Reunification***

This factsheet shares stories and advice from caregivers and birth parents who have experienced kinship care on the importance of maintaining boundaries, managing family dynamics, building trust, positive parenting and communication, and securing support.

Child Welfare Information Gateway (2020).

<https://www.childwelfare.gov/pubs/factsheets-families-partner-relatives/>

### ***Practice Points: Five Tips for Advocating for the “Most Connected Placement”: A Few Ways You Can Help Your Child Clients Stay in Contact with the People Who Love Them and Their Own Communities***

This article explains how lawyers can advocate to ensure that their clients are being placed not just in the “least restrictive” setting, but in families where children are the most connected to people who love them and to their own communities.

American Bar Association (2019).

[https://www.americanbar.org/groups/litigation/committees/childrens-rights/practice/2019/five-tips-for-advocating-for-the-most-connected-placement/?utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_source=govdelivery](https://www.americanbar.org/groups/litigation/committees/childrens-rights/practice/2019/five-tips-for-advocating-for-the-most-connected-placement/?utm_medium=email&utm_source=govdelivery)

### ***Promoting Placement Stability***

This publication provides an overview of placement stability issues, practice notes, evidence-based research and programs, and perspectives from various stakeholders.

Center for Advanced Studies in Child Welfare (2010).

[https://www.cascw.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/12/CW360\\_2010.pdf](https://www.cascw.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/12/CW360_2010.pdf)

### ***Pathways to Permanency: Expanding on APPLA Provisions and Youth Engagement to Improve Permanency***

This article provides guidance related to agency and court responsibilities pursuant to the APPLA provisions of the Preventing Sex Trafficking and Strengthening Families Act, information on APPLA’s purpose, and information about and practical tips for engaging youth in permanency planning.

The Capacity Building Center for States and the Capacity Building Center for Courts.

[https://capacity.childwelfare.gov/sites/default/files/media\\_pdf/appla-improve-permanency-cp-00155.pdf](https://capacity.childwelfare.gov/sites/default/files/media_pdf/appla-improve-permanency-cp-00155.pdf)

### ***Reducing Reliance on Non-Family Placements: An Advocacy Guide for Attorneys***

This guide support advocacy efforts to keep children in families and family settings and provides a framework to identify issues for case investigation and legal arguments, as well as supporting resources for presenting these arguments in court. It is based on multi-disciplinary research, as well as other resources and guidelines, and draws on best practices for professionals within the child welfare field.

National Association of Counsel for Children, ABA Center on Children and the Law.

[https://cdn.ymaws.com/www.naccchildlaw.org/resource/resmgr/advocacy\\_guide\\_for\\_attorneys.pdf](https://cdn.ymaws.com/www.naccchildlaw.org/resource/resmgr/advocacy_guide_for_attorneys.pdf)

### ***Relative Placement: The Best Answer for Our Foster Care System***

This article traces the history of placement of children out of their homes because of parental abuse or neglect and demonstrates that the preference for relative placement is a recent occurrence. The article summarizes the advantages and disadvantages of relative. Finally, the article discusses the practices of several jurisdictions with high relative placement rates and urges stakeholders to adopt similar practices.

Juvenile and Family Court Journal (2018).

[https://www.ncsc.org/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0032/18986/relative-placement.pdf](https://www.ncsc.org/_data/assets/pdf_file/0032/18986/relative-placement.pdf)

### ***Timely Permanency or Unnecessary Removal?: Tips for Advocates for Children Who Spend Less than 30 Days in Foster Care***

Each year, tens of thousands of children are removed and placed in foster care for less than 30 days. Most of these children return to the same home from which they were removed. This article discusses the experiences of these children and highlights strategies to promote a healthy child welfare system that removes children from their families only when absolutely necessary.

University of Michigan Law School Scholarship Repository (2017).

<https://repository.law.umich.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=2923&context=articles>

### ***Unadoptable is Unacceptable: Removing Legal Barriers to Permanency for Older Youth: A Guide for Legal Partners in the Child Welfare System***

This guide explores the most common legal challenges when helping children to transition from foster care to adoptive families and offers solutions for how legal partners can help remove the barriers that threaten permanency.

Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption (2019).

<https://www.davethomasfoundation.org/library/unadoptable-is-unacceptable-removing-legal-barriers-to-permanency-for-older-youth/>

### ***Using Family-Finding Models to Achieve Permanency***

This webinar highlights effective approaches for engaging and finding families within the child welfare system. Presenters share key concepts and strategies for conducting meaningful family-finding and engagement efforts to help achieve permanency for children and youth in foster care. They also share findings from the experiences of replicating family-finding models, with an emphasis on providing tips and key considerations for other child welfare systems that are interested in implementing new strategies in their work.

AdoptUSKids (2021).

<https://professionals.adoptuskids.org/using-family-finding-models-to-achieve-permanency/>  
Part 2 at <https://professionals.adoptuskids.org/using-family-finding-models-to-achieve-permanency-part-2/>.

***Youth Engagement Team: Recommendations for Improving Permanency and Well-Being***

Provides recommendations pulled from roundtable discussions about how to support permanency with kin, relational permanency, and older youth adoption.

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Administration for Children and Families.

<https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/documents/cb/Recommendations-Improving-Permanency-Well-Being.pdf>