

# Preserving Family Connections



# When to Consider Relative Placement

- Every time a child enters foster care.
- Every time the agency considers moving the child to a different placement location.
- When reunification is no longer a consideration and an alternative permanency plan is developed.
- Every annual permanency hearing for a child ordered into long-term foster care.

# **Agency Responsibilities Relative Search**

- **Conducting relative/kinship searches**
- **Notifying relatives/kin**
- **Documenting agency efforts**
- **Working with tribal social services**
- **Informing the court**

# Relative Search

## General Requirements

- Responsible social services agency must consider placement with a relative ***without delay***
- Responsible social services shall identify relatives and notify them of the need for out-of-home placement – temporary and/or permanent

[Minnesota Statutes, section 260C.212, subdivision 5 (a)]

# Relative Search

## General Requirements (con't)

- Relative search shall be **reasonable** and ***comprehensive*** in scope
- The search may last up to six months or until a fit and willing relative is identified
- ***Relative search shall include both maternal and paternal relatives of the child, if paternity is adjudicated***

[Minnesota Statutes, section 260C.212, subdivision 5 (a)]

# **Benefits of Relative/ Kinship Care**

- **Family Preservation**
- **Family system maintains the role of primary care provider for the child**
- **Reduces the child's loss and trauma**

# **Use of Relative Care AFCARS Data (3 year average)**

- **Minnesota: 17 percent**
- **National: 23 percent**

# **Benefits of Relative Foster Care**

- **What is known from the research?**



# Safety

- **Children in relative foster care tend to be just as safe as, or safer than, children placed with unrelated foster families.**

# Stability

- **Relative foster placements tend to be more stable than placements with unrelated foster families.**

# **Sibling Connections**

- **Children in relative foster care are more likely to maintain sibling connections.**

# **Community Connections**

- **Children in relative foster care are more likely to maintain community connections.**

# Permanence

- **Children placed with relatives are more likely to achieve permanency than if not placed with relatives.**

# Relative Search Best Practice Guide

***DHS has developed a best practice guide to assist counties in complying with the relative search requirements found in Minnesota statutes.***

Available online at:

[www.dhs.state.mn.us/main/groups/publications/documents/pub/dhs\\_id\\_052669.pdf](http://www.dhs.state.mn.us/main/groups/publications/documents/pub/dhs_id_052669.pdf)

# Preserving Family Connections

