



Permanency Goals/Resolutions/Solutions

*A Permanency Planning Report to the
Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors*

Submitted by:
The Relative Caregiver Committee and the
LA County Commission for Children and Families

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Co-chairs

August 2, 2004

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The Charge

Recommendation 6:

Instruct the Director of the Department of Children and Family Services and the Chief Probation Officer to lead a collaborative effort with other key stakeholders to decrease the amount of time for a child to be legally adopted, and increase significantly the percentage of foster youth age 14 and older who leave the system with legal permanence, and also with strong and enduring ties to one or more nurturing adults.

This effort shall be defined in an implementation plan, to be completed in 60 days, with specific goals and performance measures, and should include strategies to improve systems and implement policies to achieve this recommendation.

*Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors
Tuesday, February 3, 2004*

Committee Members

Russ Carr, Harriette F. Williams, Co-chairs

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RELATIVE CARE COMMITTEE PERMANENCY RECOMMENDATIONS

History and Background

On December 23, 1999, the Board of Supervisors requested the Commission for Children and Families to develop a mechanism, together with the Director of the Department of Children and Presiding Judge of the Juvenile Dependency Court, to review the safety and care of foster children currently residing with relative caregivers, and to report back to the Board with their findings and recommendations.

A Relative Caregiver Committee was then established by the Commission, composed of a broad spectrum of individuals from both



the public and private sectors. The group met several times a month in

various locations from March 2000 to July 2000. The Committee gathered information and data from all available resources, including surveys, participatory forums, and interviews with caregivers and youths. After several necessary postponements, the report of the Committee was finalized and submitted to the Board February 13, 2001. By Board motion, the Department and the Dependency Court were ordered to work together to implement the recommendations, and DCFS subsequently

submitted its response indicating actions to be taken.

In order to monitor the progress of implementation, the Relative Caregiver Committee was made a standing committee of the Commission, and has met on a regular basis since that time in an effort to insure the safety and quality of life for children, and the provision of support and assistance to relative caregivers. Accepting the assignment to participate in planning efforts regarding the Permanency initiative was a logical extension of the Committee's on-going activities.

The Process

The Committee met as a whole 15 times to deliberate and develop its recommendations, and further conducted interviews and field visits (the results of which are included as Appendices B-Rites of Passage; C-Relative Care Support Group; D-Kinship Focus Group; E-Relative Caregivers Roundtable. It was recognized that these recommendations should ultimately be integrated into the implementation planning of the Department. In the end, the Committee reaffirmed its position that there are at least two basic elements that make children living with relatives and their caretakers a discrete and unique population that presents particular

challenges and rewards to the system. The two basic elements are:

1. The quality of care of children in relative placement is directly related to the philosophical focus or views that DCFS and other system participants have for care. Until fairly recently in Los Angeles County as well as across the nation, relatives have been accorded little respect for their contribution to the protective system and perilously little recognition for the role they play in conserving family values and cultural and ethnic ties, so critical to a child's well-being.



2. Relatives, the greater number being grandparents, are often resource poor, financially fragile and initially awed by the system They do not come to their caregiver position after careful and deliberate thought. They are confronted, sometimes in the middle of the night, with the option of accepting the child or having that child placed with a stranger in foster care. Accepting the placement is a life altering experience, fraught with complicated family dynamics, for which they must now attempt to find coping mechanisms. They need a thorough orientation and other resource support.

Unless there is full recognition of these factors, all attempts to establish

permanency for children in relative care will surely fail.

The Scope of the Challenge

As of June 2004, of the approximately 8,000 children 14 years and older who are in the system, about 3,000 (DCFS and Probation) are in relative placement. Of this number,

Goal:

To ensure every youth, 14 years or older, living with a relative under the supervision of Los Angeles County (DCFS or Probation Departments) achieves legal permanency through family reunification, adoption, Kin-GAP or guardianship, and having a connection to a caring adult, open to a lifelong commitment to the youth.

1,068 (figure does not include Probation children) have been in the home of a relative for 10 years or more. These figures would seem to indicate that for one reason or another, the relative has not chosen to adopt, accept Kin-GAP or become a legal guardian. Indeed, for many years the mind set both for relatives and within the Department has been that long-term care was a stable and permanent placement. Anecdotal information received conveys the message that relatives are extremely reluctant to enter into any kind of legal permanency.

The Committee initially discussed and hypothesized about the reasons for the rate of non-legal permanency among children placed with relatives. In an effort to verify our thoughts we scheduled several activities as discussed later in this report: Rites of Passage, Appendix B; Relative Care Support Group, Appendix C; Kinship Focus Group; Appendix D; Relative Caregivers Roundtable, Appendix E; and Youth Permanency Summit, Appendix F. Based on input from these respondents, the Committee arrived at the following conclusions:

- Termination of parental rights is disruptive to relationships with the family member (birth parent). Hope remains eternal that the abusing parent will solve his/her drug problem, get out of jail, receive adequate mental health care or counseling, comply with Dependency Court ordered parenting instruction and once again become the custodial parent. The Department's statistics of years in placement would appear to refute this, but it is reality to the caregiver.
- Changes in status from long term care to legal permanency change the dynamics within the family. Where once "Grandma" was the indulgent, bringer of gifts and experiences, she now becomes the disciplinarian. This can create a sense of loss to both the youth and the adult.
- Many youths do not wish to change the equation. They do not want to be

moved from long-term care, or as Willie Brown, then Mayor of San Francisco, said at a Kinship Conference, "they do not care to be 'out-sourced.'"

It is true that with "education" relatives may come to understand the value of legal permanency. However, it can also be anticipated that there will be considerable resistance to changing the status quo. Relatives may see the attempts to force the issue as arbitrary and capricious.

All of the above objections will hinder the ability of the DCFS to further its goal of legal permanency for all children. This goal may be particularly difficult to achieve for the subset of children age 14 and older in relative care, even with the exceptions allowed under the "compelling reasons" document (see Appendix G).

Goals/Solutions/Resolutions

The Committee prioritized the multiple barriers to permanency for this population. In the charts that follow, the concept of barriers is converted to positive actions or goals designed to improve opportunities for permanency for youth in relative foster care. The chart is organized under the headings: **Goals; Description; Solutions/Resolutions; Indicator; Who Will Be Responsible; Time Frame to Implementation, and Outcome.**



Indeed, this interpretation of permanence mirrors the sentiment expressed by the youth and families in the focus groups held by the committee and should be considered when developing a legal permanent plan for our youth and their families.

Permanency Defined

It is clear that the DCFS and Probation places importance on the value of keeping families together. The majority of the children under the supervision of DCFS are placed with relatives. While their goal to achieve legal permanence through family reunification, adoption, Kin-GAP (not available to Probation youth) legal guardianship provides many benefits to both the family and the youth, it is important to note that the idea of permanence is greater than that which can be characterized by a legal relationship.

The California Permanency for Youth Project describes permanency for youth as consisting of:

- At least one adult;
- A safe, stable, secure parenting like relationship;
- Love;
- Unconditional commitment;
- Lifelong support;
- Involvement of youth as a participant or leader in the process;
- A legal connection where possible; and
- Opportunity to make firm connections with important people including siblings.

Goals/Indicators/Outcomes Chart

Goal	Description	Solutions/Resolutions	Indicators	Whose Responsible	Implementation Time Frame	Outcome
1. Change in the Culture	There is a need for a philosophical and cultural change in the County, which values the participation of family, especially <u>relative caregivers</u> , in the placement planning process.	1. Recognize and respect for the relatives who are keeping the family together.	Increase focus groups/meetings that incorporate relative caregivers.	1. DCFS, Probation, SIB, IUC, CPC, the Dependency Court, and other community partners	1. Ongoing	Relatives are empowered to advocate for their families Recognize and respect for relatives
		2. Provide CSW and support staff training to address specific relative and family dynamics.		2. DCFS, Probation, IUC, SCSW, CSW	2. 9-04-10-04	
		3. Initiate countywide awareness campaign re: value of permanence.	Increase number of trainings that address relative and family dynamics.	3. DCFS, Probation, CAO's Public Information Office, CPC's SPA Councils, and community partners	3. Immediate	

Goal	Description	Solutions/Resolutions	Indicators	Whose Responsible	Implementation Time Frame	Outcome
1. Change in the Culture (continued)	There is a need for a philosophical and cultural change in the County, which values the participation of family, especially <u>relative caregivers</u> , in the placement planning process .	4. Assist community partners to form grassroots councils, which could result in a countywide representative body.		4. DCFS, Probation, IUC, RAs, relative caregivers, Interfaith Council members, Roundtable representatives, CPC SPA Councils, Relative Care Committee for Children and Families, and other community partners	4. 9-04 and ongoing	
		5. Empower relatives to advocate for their families.		5. DCFS, Probation, Kinship Resource Center, Interfaith Councils, The Community College Foundation (TCCF), and other community partners	5. Immediate and ongoing	

Goal	Description	Solutions/Resolutions	Indicators	Whose Responsible	Implementation Time Frame	Outcome
2. Increased Levels of Resources and Support	As compared to their counterparts in the foster care community, there is a disparity of available resources and support for this population, which may create a financial hardship and/or disrupt placement.	1. Expand programs designed for youth 14 years and older and develop/implement a system to disseminate this information, e.g., financial and medical benefit, educational benefits, Wraparound, Systems of Care, and job training.	1. Establish a system of Information/ Resources via designated staff, website, newsletter, etc.	1. DCFS, Probation, and other County departments, MH, HS, Community and Senior Services, CBOs, and TCCF	1. 1-05	Increased number of people accessing information, resources, and/or support
		2. Identify/secure community mental health resources for youth that support the concurrent planning and legal permanency options.	2. Develop resource list for children ages 14+.	2. DCFS, Probation, and other County departments, MH, HS, Community and Senior Services, CBOs, TCCF and other community partners	2. Immediate ongoing	

Goal	Description	Solutions/Resolutions	Indicators	Whose Responsible	Implementation Time Frame	Outcome
<p>3. A Workforce Knowledgeable and Committed to the Provision of Kinship Issues</p>	<p>There is a paucity of training for CSWs, administrators, relatives, community-based providers and other potential “partners.” Additionally, because of the high turnover of caseworkers, such training needs to be on going and mandatory.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Improve training specific to relative-care for 14 to 18 year olds resulting in skilled knowledgeable workers and service providers. 2. Enhance training for social workers and support staff specific to relative care assessment and provision of services. Provide accurate and consistent information that includes concurrent planning policy and culturally sensitive, strength-based family practices. 	<p>Evaluate these trainings for effectiveness in transferring specific information.</p> <p>Increase number of trainings that focus on 14+ year olds and specific needs.</p> <p>Increased positive ratings on trainings as assessed by a training evaluation form.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. DCFS Policy and Training Division, IUC, RA, SCSW, and community partners 2. DCFS Policy and Training Department, RA, SCSW, and community partners 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 9-04 2. 9-04 and ongoing 	<p>A more knowledgeable and committed workforce</p>

Goal	Description	Solutions/Resolutions	Indicators	Whose Responsible	Implementation Time Frame	Outcome
4. Inclusion of Youth in Permanency Decisions	The needs, options and wishes of the youth often are not sought nor determined or factored into the permanency decisions.	1. Implement standards of AB 408 by developing protocol to include youth's wishes and identifying a mentor.		1. The Dependency Court, DCFS, CSW, SCSW, ARA, and community partners	1. Immediate	Youth included in permanency planning
		2. State the youth's wishes in the Dependency Court report.	Increase number of youth that include a statement of their wishes in Dependency Court.	2. The Dependency Court, DCFS, CSW, SCSW, ARA	2. Immediate	
		3. Work with the youth to identify a mentor with the youth consistent with implementation of AB 408 and incorporate in TILP plan.	Increase number of youth that have a mentor identified.	3. The Dependency Court, DCFS, CSW, SCSW, ARA	3. Immediate	

Goal	Description	Solutions/Resolutions	Indicators	Whose Responsible	Implementation Time Frame	Outcome
5. Inclusion of Family and Extended Family Members in Permanency Decisions	Family and extended family members often are not active participants in the decision-making process.	1. Require multi-disciplinary team decision-making, case review with family and other significant parties at all critical decision points.	Increase family presence in multi-disciplinary team decision-making process.	1. DCFS, CSW, SCSW, MH, health services, family, extended family members, and other significant parties, e.g., FFAs, mentors, Interfaith Council members, etc.	1. 9-04	Family involved in permanency planning
		2. Advocate for the Dependency Court to recognize relatives as having standing.		2. The Dependency Court, presiding judge, CLC, panel attorneys, County Counsel, CYC, Children's Rights, Public Counsel and other community partners	2. 1-05	

Goal	Description	Solutions/Resolutions	Indicators	Whose Responsible	Implementation Time Frame	Outcome
6. Policy and Practice Address Language, Culture, and Service Needs of a Diverse Population	An increasing population within this target group has culturally specific characteristics, which need to be recognized and addressed. Issues of language, the need for interpreters, issues of citizenship status, and ineligibility of youth for federally funded programs must be studied and resolved.	1. Increase international collaboration and develop bi-lingual services in collaboration with community partners.	Increase resources for undocumented relatives and youth via a published resource list.	1. DCFS, Probation, community stakeholders, Dependency Courts, and lawmakers	1. 1-05	Resources and services meet the needs of this diverse population
	Additionally, undocumented status delays the permanency process.	2a. Identify early (prior to ages 14-18) and initiate a process to obtain legal residency of undocumented children with immigration issues.	Increase # of bilingual service providers in contracted service agencies.	2a. DCFS, Probation, community stakeholders, the Dependency Courts, and lawmakers	2a. 1-05	
		2b. Extend applicable resources to undocumented caregivers, youth, and relatives.		2b. DCFS, Probation, UCU, SIS	2b. 1-05	

Goal	Description	Solutions/Resolutions	Indicators	Whose Responsible	Implementation Time Frame	Outcome
7. Increased and Improved Post Legal Placement Services	Inadequate post legal placement services for relatives create disparities. Additionally, adoptive parents receive limited information regarding post legal placement services.	1a. Fund and provide support services to relative caregiver families to reduce placement disruption rates. Support for families to include a list of resources that include e.g., health/mental health centers, and emancipation services, etc.	Develop resource and information website and quarterly magazine in English and Spanish.	1a. DCFS Budget and Fiscal Services, Post Adoption Services, Kinship Resource Centers, Community-Based Support Division, and community partners	1a. 1-05	Increased awareness of post legal services
		1b. Create a website for post legal placement resources and support.	Increase number of people accessing the website.	1b. DCFS	1b. 3-05	
		1c. Send periodic resource information to Kin-GAP families.	Increase the circulation of the quarterly magazine with published resources.	1c. DCFS, DMH, and other community stakeholders	1c. 3-05	
	Relative caregivers with special needs youth are being pressured to accept Kin-GAP, which is not an option.	2. Ensure mental health and physical assessment results are fully utilized in the development and implementation plan.		2. DCFS (RA, SCSW, CSW, DMH, DHS, the Dependency Court, DPSS, Probation and other community stakeholders	2. Immediate and ongoing	
7b. Initiate a Kin-GAP Option for Probation Youth	Currently relative caregivers for Probation youth are not eligible for Kin-GAP	Explore and identify a method to change the law.		Probation	Ongoing	

Goal	Description	Solutions/Resolutions	Indicators	Whose Responsible	Implementation Time Frame	Outcome
8. Expanded Educational Advocacy	The limited educational advocacy for youth in this age group (and older) places youth at a disadvantage to successful transitions to permanency.	1a Urge relative caregivers and non-related extended family caregivers to attend KEPS, which provides a module that trains for educational advocacy and permanency planning.	Create specific training for education advocacy for youth. Provide education resource packets and invite college representatives and other resources to participate in this training. Publish education resources in the previously mentioned website and dedicate at least one page to education and training resources.	1a. DCFS, CSW, local school districts, DCFS, Probation, Education Coordinating Council and community partners	1a Immediate	Increased educational advocacy
		1b Encourage school districts to minimize “confidentiality” process that prohibit sharing the child/youth’s academic records in order to ensure and provide appropriate educational planning.	Increase the number of families attending this training.	1b. Education Coordinating Council, TCCF, school districts	1b Immediate	

Goal	Description	Solutions/Resolutions	Indicators	Whose Responsible	Implementation Time Frame	Outcome
8. Educational Advocacy (continued)		1c Provide training for all school personnel on DCFS systems to foster understanding of challenges faced by the child/youth and caregivers.		1c. Educational Coordination Council, TCCF, school districts	1c Immediate	
		1d Provide mandatory incentives for attending KEPS classes and for participation in services and other support groups as they go through a permanency planning process.		1d. DCFS, CSWs, TCCF, and community partners	1d 9-04	
	CSWs, caregivers, and youth often lack awareness of educational benefits and job training possibilities that influence permanency decisions	2. Provide to caregivers and youth at the permanency planning meeting resource packets that include academic information related to graduation requirements, tutoring resources, and regional occupation programs.	Increase # of youth making contacts with college, university, job training representatives	2. DCFS, LACOE, and other educational systems	2. Immediate and ongoing	
	Implement the Board of Supervisor's motion addressing the educational rights and needs of the youth.	3. Move forward the Board motion that addresses the educational rights and needs of the youth and implement motion protocols.		3. DCFS, LACOE, and other educational systems	3. 10-04	

Goal	Description	Solutions/Resolutions	Indicators	Whose Responsible	Implementation Time Frame	Outcome
9. Successful Transitions to Permanence	Youth may lack life skills, which may not allow for a successful transition into legal permanency and emancipation.	1. Educate youth on legal permanency options and protocols through a revised ILP curriculum and related services activities.	Create a youth training that focuses on legal permanency options, empower youth on their decision making capacity, provide information on family planning and parenting training, how to search and find stable housing, etc.	1. DCFS, CSW, Emancipation Services, TCCF, Community Seniors Citizens	1. 9-04	Successful transition to permanence
	Transitional/emancipation services need to be intensified to provide understanding of permanency planning.	2. Identify county services training that enable youth to participate in decision-making processes such as family-group decision making and family support practices.	Increase number of youth that attend the training.	2. DCFS, CSW, Emancipation Services, TCCF County and Senior Citizens	2. 9-04	
	Transitional/emancipation services are needed to assist dependent minors on challenges and responsibilities of unplanned early parenting.	3. Incorporate family planning and parenting training for dependent minors and their partners.	Increase number of youth that retain information learned as measured by a training evaluation form.	3. ILP, and community partners	3. 9-05	
	Expectant mothers and new parents recently emancipated from foster care require special supports to provide permanency for their babies.	4. Seek secure housing and stable supports for young families.		4. Alumni Resource Centers, and community partners	4. Immediate and ongoing	

Goal	Description	Solutions/Resolutions	Indicators	Whose Responsible	Implementation Time Frame	Outcome
<p>10. Effective and Streamlined Interstate Compact (ICPC) Processes</p>	<p>The current Interstate Compact laws/protocols often delay and/or prohibit the timely placement of children with relatives that reside out-of-state.</p>	<p>1. Work with representatives from the federal and state level, including: CWDA and the CAAA to streamline the process for obtaining approval for Interstate Compact of the Placement of Children (ICPC).</p>	<p>Create a user's guide on ICPC that includes information on criteria and eligibility for ICPC.</p> <p>Number of ICPC guide distributed to CSW, DPOs, and other staff</p>	<p>1. DCFS Legislative Analysts Section with community partners including the Commission and the BOS.</p>	<p>1. Immediately and on-going</p>	<p>Improved Interstate Compact (ICPC) process</p>
	<p>There is a lack of funding to support further development of ICPC services nationwide</p>	<p>2. Support any pending legislation, including any proposals to increase funding allocations for the advancement of the program.</p>		<p>2. DCFS Legislative Section, CLC</p>	<p>2. Initiate by 7-04, as 8-20-04 is the last date to submit amendment.</p>	
	<p>Once the relative caregiver is approved as a placement option, these relative caregivers may still experience additional delays in the transfer of child pending acquisitions of a foster care license as a condition of ASFA compliance, and/or additional delays in the transfer of foster care payments.</p>	<p>3a. With the same agencies, investigate the possibility of modifying the existing ICPC protocol to facilitate the assessment and development of a transitional plan for current relative caregivers wishing to relocate, including but not limited to: conducting the home assessment and initiating the process to grant a new guardianship in the new state.</p>		<p>3a. DCFS Legislative Section, CLC</p>	<p>3a. Initiate by 1-05 until completed</p>	

Goal	Description	Solutions/Resolutions	Indicators	Whose Responsible	Implementation Time Frame	Outcome
<p>10. Effective and Streamlined Interstate Compact (ICPC) Processes</p>		<p>3b. Urge the federal and state agencies to create a database to identify the status of reciprocity between all states.</p>		<p>3b. DCFS, ITS and ICPC Unit</p>	<p>3b. 4-05</p>	
		<p>3c. Create a user's guide on ICPC, which includes information on the criteria and eligibility for ICPC and instructions on the steps needed to initiate the process in assisting the relative caregiver obtain legal standing in the new state (i.e. grant new guardianship). Train all social workers and support staff on the new protocol.</p>		<p>3c. DCFS ICPC and Training Section</p>	<p>3c. 4-05</p>	

Goal	Description	Solutions/Resolutions	Indicators	Whose Responsible	Implementation Time Frame	Outcome
11.Supportive and Responsive and Consistent ASFA 1997 Approval Process	ASFA 1997 regulations have made the assessment process for relatives a barrier to permanency both for new and continuing placements.	1. Seek grants and community resources when making improvements in homes to comply with ASFA 1997 standards.	Create list of community resources that provide grants or assist caregivers in making necessary improvements that will comply with ASFA standards.	1. DCFS and community partners	1. Immediate and ongoing	A more supportive ASFA 1997 approval process, which increases the number of relative caregivers complying
	All possible efforts must be extended to caregivers to assist them in achieving compliance.	2. Involve relatives in ensuring that timelines and improvements required by corrective actions plans are explained, facilitated and monitored.	Increase number of resources on the list of community resources and increase circulation of resource list.	2. DCFS, relative caregivers, and community partners	2. 7-05	

Goal	Description	Solutions/Resolutions	Indicators	Whose Responsible	Implementation Time Frame	Outcome
12.A Reformed and Responsive CLETS/Live Scan System	State and federal regulations regarding Live Scan/CLETS can prevent and/or disrupt placements with relatives.	1. Work with DOJ to revise current Live Scan forms.	Ensure priority processing for relative placements when a delay will result in placement with a non-relative foster parent	1. DCFS, LA Sheriff's Dept., DOJ	1. Ongoing	A more responsive CLETS Live Scan system
	There is a need for Live Scan processes that can decrease the time for placement .	2. Advocate ensuring priority processing on Live Scan for relative placements when a delay will result in placement with a non-relative foster parent.	Decrease placement disruption due to Live Scan Delay	2. DCFS, DOJ. CDSS	2. Immediate	
	There is a need to understand pending legislation relating to CLETS	3. Support pending legislation relating to CLETS (AB 1913-Cohn and AB 1988-Wolk).	The number of drafted policies tracked that support pending legislation.	3. CWDA, Commission, Board of Supervisors (BOS), DCFS Legislative Analyst Section	3. Immediate	

Appendices List

- Appendix A: Appendices List
- Appendix B: Rites of Passage, 2-27-04
- Appendix C: Relative Care Support Group, 3-18-04
- Appendix D: Kinship Focus Group, 3-26-04
- Appendix E: Relative Caregivers Roundtable, 5-18-04
- Appendix F: Youth Summit on Permanency, 7-08-04
- Appendix G: Alternate Indicator List
- Appendix H: Compelling Reasons Document
- Appendix I: Relative Caregiver Committee Meeting Dates
- Appendix J: Acronym Definitions

**Rites of Passage
Discussion around Permanence
February 27, 2004**

Tammy: 23 years old
Delores: 18 years of age
Kiavia: 16 years old
Frank: 15 years of age
Isaac & Issah (Twins): 14 years old
Ricky: 17 years old

Discussion with Tammy

Tammy says that opportunities for attachments are not encouraged or respected. Tammy has a sister who is seven years younger than she. Her sister is still in the system and has a baby. Tammy was unable to take care of her sister because she does not see herself able to care for herself. Tammy participated in ILP but did not connect with the resources she was told about. The baby lives with her biological father in Atlanta. Tammy and her father are just becoming connected.

Discussion with Delores

Delores feels a connection with a foster mother who moved to Tennessee. Her social worker would not let her move with the foster mother. Dolores still communicates with the foster mother in Tennessee. Dolores is still part of the system, but runs away. She currently lives with Tammy. Dolores sees the system as moving too slowly and believes the system does not allow enough freedom to participate in the life style she would like. Delores and Tammy live downtown.

Discussion with Kiavia

Initially Kiavia was taken with her brother by their material grandmother. They were adopted. The grandmother grew ill so they were sent to Arizona to live with other family members. The relationship did not work. She was then sent back to Los Angeles where she stays in contact with her attorney. Kava lives in a foster home. The attorney was instrumental in getting Kiavia to visit the family in Arizona. Kiavia admits to having a poor attitude but wants to be with her grandmother in Arizona.

Discussion with Frank

Frank has been in placement only two years and has been in three homes. Frank is close to the son of one of these caregivers. He remains in contact with the 27 year old son of the previous placement. Frank sees himself connecting there or with the 27 year old more/rather than with his own biological family member.

Discussion with Isaac and Issah

Isaac and Issah were adopted at age three. They lived in the home of the adoption until the age of 14. They came back into placement because they did not respect their mother (adoptive). They are both wanting to go back to where they were raised. They visit the adopted home every weekend. The social worker and the mother want the boys to come home. The social worker's supervisor wants the young men to have more counseling.

Discussion with Ricky

Ricky was in placement with his brother at the grandmother's home. The grandmother took them in at birth. His grandmother grew ill and could not care for them. Ricky and his brother have had a number of placements. His brother was adopted by one of the foster parents. The foster parent wanted to adopt Ricky but he did not want to live with the rules. Ricky is connected to a 23 year-old biological sister. Ricky and his biological sister are making plans to live together in Louisiana where the sister currently lives. Ricky had just been expelled from continuation school prior to the interview. He admits to having attitude problems and does not want to be confined.

Challenges to Permanence

Youth when questioned openly, do have a significant adult in their lives, however:

1. Is the significant adult wanting or able to take full responsibility (adopt) the youth?
2. Can anyone get the buy-in from the young person that there is something he/she is willing to do to make a change in his/her behaviors to accommodate adoption permanence?
3. What types of services are available for the potential eligible adult? What is the plan for the future? How will this information get communicated when the social worker is no longer available?
4. With the identification of the significant adult what mechanisms are in place in:
 - a. Supporting the relationship (new) of the young person and the adult?
 - b. Continuing to develop resources to support the adults supporting the youth?
 - c. Training and working with the young person to be manageably empowered?

Appendix C

Relative Care Support Group Meeting Report

Relative Care Support Group Meeting Report

Jacqueline Dolan

On March 18, 2004, I attended the Relative Care Support Group meeting held in East Los Angeles. My purpose for going was to identify possible corrections of Kin-GAP policies in Los Angeles County or necessary legislative changes at the state level.

Under the artful and caring direction of Claudia Bustillos-Hess, Social Worker with the Department of Children and Family Services, 16 relative caregivers planned an outing to Knotts Berry Farm. When all the excitement over this day of respite for the caregivers and a fun filled day for the children in their care, the group moved on to their concerns of the daily needs of the children.

It became obvious that those in attendance had children with very special needs. Three of the families had been Kin-GAP'd, but when it became obvious that the children in their care needed services (special ed and mental health services) they filed a 388 and had their cases reopened.

A woman arrived having been released from jail an hour earlier. She had given birth 3 months ago, while in custody. She had given the baby to her cousin to care for and now the cousin would not return the baby. The baby had not been placed by the Dependency Court so there was neither open case nor supervision by DCFS. Claudia strongly advised the mother to get "clean" and stay clean to prove that she was responsible and able to care for her child. She has three other children in foster care. The women in the group gave suggestions to the mother of places where she could get help for her addiction.

The support by the social worker, along with her ability to get these caregivers to support one another is exemplary. It is clear that social workers, who are knowledgeable of the unique ways of working with relatives caring for abused and/or neglected children, ease their task and raise their chances for success for the children in their care.

Appendix D Kinship Focus Group

Kinship Focus

On Friday, March 26, 2004, The Community College Foundation hosted a Kinship Focus Group in Sylmar, California at the request of Dr. Harriette Williams, Commissioner for the Los Angeles County Commission for Children and Families. The Foster and Kinship Care Education Department of Los Angeles Mission College graciously provided a

The Kinship Focus Group Agenda

March 26, 2004

Los Angeles Mission College

1. Welcome and Introductions
2. Group Discussion
 - What are the challenges to adopting your relative?
 - What has been your experience with Kin-GAP, if applicable?
 - Has your DCFS Social Worker encouraged you to adopt the child(ren) in your care?
 - What needs are not being met for you or the child(ren) you are caring for? Who or what do you believe is responsible for this deficiency?
 - What has been useful to you in caring for the child(ren) placed with you?
 - What new services or resources do you need to do a better job of caring for the children?
3. Concluding Remarks

location for the 2-hour meeting, and recruited local relative caregivers from the San Fernando Valley to attend and offer their input. A total of 18 people participated in the Roundtable, 11 of whom were relative caregivers, with the remaining attendees comprised of staff from The Community College Foundation's Kinship Education, Preparation and Support (KEPS) Program, KEPS trainers, representatives from Mission College's Foster and Kinship Care Education Department, and

Madeline Jackson, Program Manager for Kinship Care with the Department of Children and Family Services.

Commissioner Williams opened the Roundtable with an explanation of a motion being set forth by the Board of Supervisors and the Children's Planning Council to examine Permanency, with a particular focus on youth ages 14 –18. She noted that a main point of concern for this age group is that the youth are not adequately prepared to become independent at age 18 when they no longer receive support from caregivers.

Additionally, Dr. Williams explained that, while there has been a lot of emphasis placed on permanency for this age group, there is a concurrent awareness that relatives do not want to adopt because of feeling they are "writing off" their *own* children or other family members. In regard to the topic of Permanence and related issues, 6 questions were posed as follows. The responses are noted after each question:

1. What are the challenges to adopting your relative?

Relative: Fear of losing services and financial resources for special needs.
Problem with not allowing birth parents' names to remain on the birth certificate.
Children don't want their parents as siblings.
Birth parents object to the adoption.
Creates conflict between natural children and relative children.
Unsure of benefits of adoption for the youth, particularly concerning special needs like mental health services.

Dr. Williams: Work with "chain of command" if not getting what's needed.

Relative: Relatives are scared to complain because of conflicts with social workers; fear of "retribution" from social workers (e.g. threats that they will "take away the children").
Need an "advocate" who is not part of DCFS to help in these situations.
Another problem with adoption is fear of future problems; need for ILP to be extended to all youth who have been in "the system," even if adopted.

2. What has been your experience with Kin-GAP, if applicable?

There were no responses to this question as relatives present were not in this system.

3. Has your DCFS Social Worker encouraged you to adopt the child(ren) in your care?

Relative: Social workers "coerce" relatives to adopt, but it seems that legal guardianship with benefits is better for the family.
Social workers seem pressured to "make" relatives adopt, even when the family doesn't feel its best.

Ms. Jackson: Post-adoption services should provide specialized services if need arises after adoption

Relative: There are problems with the Regional Centers.

Dr. Williams: A closer relationship is needed between the Department of Children and Family Services and the Regional Centers.

Relative: The Ombudsmen don't do anything, they just give referrals.
Relatives must be party to the Dependency Court case.

**4. What needs are not being met for you or the child(ren) you are caring for?
Who or what do you believe is responsible for this deficiency?**

Relative: Information about services doesn't filter down to relatives.
Relatives are not party to the Dependency Court case, even though the children are in their care.
Relatives need good local resource lists, connections and advocacy.
Transportation is a problem within "pockets of isolation" where there aren't extensive bus services.
Need better mental health care services.
Kids need special programs like summer camp, music and dance lessons, programs to support special talents. Little is available to support kids who are doing well.
Child care and after-school programs.
Tutoring for youth at all ages (outside of ESTEP program age range).
Respite Care.
Relatives need equality of opportunity to foster parents.

Appendix E
Relative Caregivers Roundtable Agenda

Relative Caregivers Planning Committee and Roundtable Agenda

May 18, 2004

Co-chairs:

**The Commission for Children and Families and
the Department of Children and Family Services**

1. Introductions
2. Presentation of New Kinship Liaisons
3. Relative Care Permanency Committee (update)
4. Relative Care Kin-GAP Committee (update)
5. Relative Care Training (KEPS)
6. Conference Reports
7. Future agenda items
8. Meeting Schedule (2004)
9. Adjournment

Appendix F Youth Summit on Permanency

Youth Summit on Permanency: July 8, 2004

YOUTH SUMMIT FACILITATOR'S AGENDA JULY 8, 2004 8:00 am to 4pm	
8:30—9	Registration & Continental Breakfast
9:10—9:45	Welcome Guidelines & Icebreaker
9:50—9:55	Permanency Defined
10:05—11	Youth's definition of Permanency workshop
11—11:15	Break
11:20—11:30	AB 408 defined
11:30—12:15	Youth's definition of AB 408 workshop
12:15—12:50	Lunch
12:55—1:30	Work on presentations or Adult lead groups
1:35—2:30	Presentation to Distinguished Guests
2:30—3:30	Evaluations and Next Steps
3:30—4:00	Closing/Thank you

Background

The Youth Summit began being conceptualized when administrative staff of The Community College Foundation's (TCCF) Early Start To Emancipation Preparation and the Independent Living Program (coordinated for Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS)) saw that information and understanding of AB 408 and legal permanency was needed. The administrative staff brought together youth in-out-of-home care to seek the youth's thoughts and ideas about permanency. What followed was a decision to hold a Youth Summit on permanency and significant/permanent connections issues. Consistent with the belief that the youth voices and thoughts should be heard, a team of TCCF

staff met with eight youth for several months to facilitate the youth's ability to plan and lead the activities. The Youth Summit Committee activities included designing the Summit, selecting activities, preparing youth leaders/facilitators for the workshops, outreach for the event, planning menus, etc.

On July 8, 2004, the Youth Summit was held. It was a significant opportunity for attendees to define and strategize how permanency for youth will be communicated to the numbers of young people throughout Los Angeles County.

The Summit took place at the Doors of Hope Ministry, 1327 S. Atlantic Boulevard, East Los Angeles, California from 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. Forty plus youth were present. Youth committee members served as leaders/facilitators.

During the morning, youth gathered on their own to discuss permanency and significant adults in their lives. To begin the dialogue youth reviewed the following information to discuss in more detail in breakout small-group sessions:

Definition of Permanency

There is no clear, universal definition of permanency, especially for this age group. Legal permanency is generally meant to include reunification with birth parents, adoption, or legal guardianship by relatives. Some, including DCFS, would include legal guardianship by non-relatives in that category; others vigorously and passionately oppose this inclusion, including some Department staff, arguing that since this type of legal arrangement ends at age 18, it does not constitute “real permanency,” from Dr. Sharon Watson’s report, *A Plan For Increasing Permanency for Los Angeles Foster Youth Ages 14 Years and Older*. March 2004.

Permanency Continuum

Most people agree that reunification is the most desirable form of permanency. The following options are listed in order of preference:

- Family Preservation/Maintenance
- Reunification with birth parents
- Adoption by a relative
- Legal Guardianship with a relative or Kin-Gap
- Legal Guardianship with a non-relative
- Adoption by a non-relative
- Mentor+” or Lifelong Connection
- Positive relationship with unrelated adult
- Mentor

AB 408

AB 408 has two distinct components that impact the child’s psychosocial development and potential for positive outcomes. One is the “**Quality of Life**” piece which calls for a foster youth’s ability to engage in age appropriate social, enrichment, and extracurricular activities without artificial barriers to discourage this involvement. The second portion of AB 408 speaks to the importance of “**Permanence**” and ensuring that no youth leave the foster care system without a lifelong connection to a committed, caring adult.

Intent and goals of AB 408

- Ensure that all children in foster care **retain and or establish relationships** with **important individuals** in their lives;
- Promote permanency and stability by ensuring that no child leave the foster care system without a **lifelong connection to a committed, caring** adult;
- Implement changes to the Welfare & Institutions Code by imposing **new requirements** on the court, social workers, and attorneys to assure permanence and stability for foster youth; and
- Assure that children 10 years of are or older receive notice of and have the **right to attend** their **court proceedings**.

Based upon these definitions and each youth’s perspectives on permanency, youth were given the opportunity to develop their perspectives using the following scenarios called, *The Decision Game* (See *Youth Responses*)

Afternoon Session—Skit, Panel Presentations

In the afternoon, the youth facilitators presented their definitions, suggestions, and questions about permanency to the Distinguished Guest panel. Distinguished Guest Panel were: Angela Carter, Deputy Director, Bureau of Administration, Department of Children and Family Services; Nina Sorkin, Commission, Children and Family; Paul Freedlund, Deputy Director, Services Bureau I, Department of Children and Family Services; Harriette Williams, Commissioner, Children and Families; Armand Montiel, Emancipation Co-chief, Department of Children and Family Services; Berisha Black, Foster Youth Ombudsmen, Los Angeles County.

The youth performed a skit enacting how a youth might select a responsible adult based upon the values and insight to provide meaningful guidance. The youth solicited advice on life situations of five individuals. The role players gave bad and good advice to the youth looking for a mentor.

The outcome of the skit was that the following values were identified as significantly important:

- Respectful to others
- No excuses
- Takes care of business
- Honest and loyal
- Able to relate to youth

After the skit a dialogue between the distinguished guests and facilitators included questions and responses. Both youth and guests gained further clarity that there are many solutions to be identified regarding permanency. The youth were excellent in their ideas they brought from the workshops. The distinguished guests were appreciative of the opportunity to listen and to have dialogue with the youth.

Evaluation Results:

Participants attending the day submitted approximately 50 evaluations. Attendees overwhelmingly responded that the summit was meaningful in learning about AB 408 and Permanency. Youth reported that workshops were helpful. Frequent responses were that the youth learned that they had a voice and learned about their rights. Twenty-one youth attending the Summit were interested in becoming a member of a planning/organizing committee for a future Youth Summit. Suggestions to improving the Summit included: More media coverage, more time with panel, less wasted time, and better air conditioning.

Youth suggestions included:

- Survey/ask youth questions
- Maintain contact with CSW 12-18 months after permanency plan begins for monitoring purposes
- Make permanency optional, not mandatory
- Get MSW candidates that can monitor youth for internship
- Permanency grace period should be implemented (Example: one year)
- Clarify reunification process for youth (all steps and loop holes)
- Provide a way to talk to CSW in private, neutral environment

Youth Responses

AB-408: The Decision Game

1. ***Would you consider a schoolteacher, who has no children of her own, but shows no passion in what she does, as a significant adult?***

Agree: Some people have a job to do; they can still be responsible, yet not passionate. The person could still have influence over you.

Disagree: Need passion for teaching to reach kids and help them.

2. ***Would you consider a man that works on Wall Street, has lots of money, and is willing to take of you financially, but is never at home, as a significant adult?***

Agree: Wall Street person is ambitious and youth could observe his/her ambition (see what to do and not to do).

Disagree: Need someone (parent) to talk to and be a positive role-model. Money does not solve problems. No "life" connection.

3. ***Would you consider a 35 year-old woman that has completed 6 months of rehab (been clean for 6 months) has a place to live and a steady income, as a significant adult?***

Agree: Former addict has life experience and there for you at home. Role model—from mistake to success.
Free from drug addiction (6 months) may show responsibility—a good start—shows effort on a person's part—determination, give the person a chance.

Disagree: Person can help you with similar problems
Recovering addict is more at-risk. Six months is not enough time. Drug addiction is shady, need more time for recovery.

4. ***Would you consider an older brother or sister who has 2 children and a house, as a house, as a significant adult?***

Agree: Because they are family, we would have a house to live in.
Able to help because he is my brother

Disagree: Has too many kids to take on another kid. Need to know income,
Must be responsible, not able to get along.
You can't choose family, but you can choose a mentor.
Older brothers and sisters may be controlling—they have kids, distracting.
Family not understanding

5. ***Would you consider your biological parents(s), as a significant adult?***

Agree: Sober parent has done a lot for them
Parent has been through everything
Yes, strong relation with parent, someone to talk to

Disagree: Never took care of me/different beliefs and not a responsible parent
You can't choose family, but you can choose a mentor
I am her biological child of my biological parent, yet I can't call her a significant adult. Too hard to rebuild relationship

6. *Would you consider a co-worker who can't financially support you but gives you good advice and is there for you emotionally, as a significant adult?*

- Agree: Need support/advice
Disagree: No financial support—if they can't take care of them, how are they going to take care of me?
Don't really know them.
- Agree: Went through similar experiences
Put you on the right track
They want to help and support you
Gives good advice
Their job shows that they are trained to understand the needs of foster youth.
The kind of person, who will point you in the right direction, provides information on how to change "life" pick-up tools and put them to use.
- Disagree: None

7. *Would you consider your boyfriend's/girlfriend's family member as a significant adult?*

- Agree: Know that significant other is getting taken care of, then I will be taken care of.
Get along with the family.
Bringing up their kids right; they can help me.
His/her Mom is a good friend to me.
- Disagree: Not trying to depend on others for my well-being.
Family not understanding

AB 408: Youth Responses to What Youth Want in an Adult/Mentor/Significant Others

- Acceptance
- Always there for you, especially during hard times
- Comfortable-feel love
- Communicative, reliable
- Dependable
- Emotionally supportive/mental
- Good friend
- Good listener, helpful, confidant
- Good role-model, responsible, positive attitude
- Honest, self-supportive
- Kind, caring, etc.
- Kindness, love, support, disciplining
- Knowledgeable on life resources
- Quality Time (Q.T.)
- Respect
- Stable, reliable, trustworthy, selfless
- Support, but also "KIR,"—keeps it real
- Teacher, hard-working
- To live with/caregiver that youth knows and trusts--not an unknown—stable--trusting
- Treat you like they want to be treated
- Treated the same, equal respect
- Trustworthy
- Willing to "meet in the middle"
- Willing to take care of regardless of the money

AB 408: Youth Responses to What Mentors Look for in Mentees

- Be a good student, be helpful in the community
- Caring
- Communicates
- Follows directions/follow-through
- Honest, self-reliant
- Keeps promises
- Kind
- No excuses—admits mistakes
- Obedient
- Open to support
- Respectful
- Responsible, reliable
- Some positive belief in oneself
- Takes advice
- Takes care of business
- Trustworthy
- Youth accepts constructive criticism
- Youth asks for help
- Youth must be motivated
- Youth who networks

Youth Comments on Permanency

- A band aid to a bigger problem
- A band aid to develop a permanent living arrangement without ILP/ESTEP resources
- Bush using extra money saved from permanency on war
- Government ordered-cut backs
- Having an influential person in your life to assist you with all of your needs
- Kids in system getting “screwed over”
- No more money
- Place to live
- Permanency helps foster youth join people just like you with a stable family environment
- Place where you are some where and with someone you don’t know
- Place where you can go change your ways
- Place where you can make positive changes
- Place where you don’t want to be
- Safety blanket
- Stay for the rest of your life

Youth Ideas and Thoughts on Permanency

- All about money
- “Caring” caregivers
- Be placed with someone who is financially stable
- Everyone must agree on welfare of youth—3rd party decision
- Group home accountability
- Housing Assistance
- Leave it up to the youth
- No more group homes
- No more money for caregivers
- Pay the caregivers something
- People placed with below average caregivers
- Permanency should be optional, not mandatory
- Permanency should include a grace period
- Permanency will mean financial cutbacks for caregivers
- Social worker problems/unreliability
- Some take advantage of it
- Stay with someone you know
- Supervise funds for youth
- Transitional Housing continues
- Voluntary foster parents (money should not be an issue or deciding factor)
- Where do younger folks go?
 - Youth learn to self-advocate

Appendix G Alternate Indicators and Outcomes

The list of indicators that follows, prepared by Walter Yi-lung Kiang, Ph.D., MSW, Head of DCFS Contract Management, represents a preliminary attempt to attach specific numbers to the goals proposed by the Relative Care Permanency Committee. We recognized that because of time constraints and representation of significant agencies who would participate in operationalizing the implementation of those recommendations, it would be impossible at this time to put numeric values on these outcomes.

Goals and Indicators		
Goals	Description	Indicator
Change in the Culture	There is a need for a philosophical and cultural change in the County, which values the participation of family, especially <u>relative caregivers</u> , in the placement planning process.	<p>% of relatives who keep the family together</p> <p>% of CSW and support staff receive training to address specific relative and family dynamics</p> <p># of initiating county-wide awareness campaign: re: value of permanency</p> <p># of grassroots councils formed</p> <p>% of relatives empowered to advocate for their families</p>
Increased Levels of Resource and Support	As compared to their counterparts in the foster care community, there is a disparity of available resources and support for this population, which may create a financial hardship and/or disrupt placement.	<p>% of relatives receive the information, e.g., financial and medical benefit, educational benefits, Wraparound, System of Care, and job training.</p> <p>% of youth secure community mental health resources that support the concurrent planning and legal permanency options</p>
3. A Workforce Knowledgeable and Committed to the Provision of Kinship Issues	<p>There is a paucity of training for CSWs, administrators, relatives, community-based providers and other potential “partners.”</p> <p>Because of the high turnover of caseworkers, such training needs to be on going and mandatory.</p>	<p>% of relatives receive training specific to relative-care for 14 to 18 years old resulting in skilled knowledgeable workers and service providers</p> <p>% of social workers and support staff receive relative care assessment and provision of services training</p>

Goals and Indicators		
Goals	Description	Indicator
Inclusion of Youth in Permanency Decisions	The needs, options and wishes of the youth often are not sought nor determined or factored into the permanency decisions.	<p>% of youth meet AB 408 policy and practice</p> <p>% of youth's wished stated in the Dependency Court report</p> <p>% of youth identified with a mentor consistent with implementation of AB 408 and incorporate in TILP plan</p>
Inclusion of Family and Extended Family Members in Permanency Decisions	Family and extended family members often are not active participants in the decision-making process.	<p>% of multi-disciplinary team decision-making used with family and other significant parties at all critical decision points</p> <p>% of relatives recognized as having standing advocated for the Dependency Court</p>
Policy and Practice Address Language, Cultural, and Service Needs of a Diverse Population	<p>An increasing population within this target group has culturally specific characteristics, which need to be recognized and addressed. Issues of language, the need for interpreters, issues of citizenship status, and ineligibility of youth for federally funded programs must be studied and resolved.</p> <p>Undocumented status delays the permanency process.</p>	<p>% of relatives use bi-lingual services who need this service</p> <p>% of undocumented children with immigration issues obtain legal residency</p> <p>% of undocumented caregivers, youth and relatives receive applicable resources</p>
Increased and Improved Post Legal Placement Services	<p>Inadequate post legal placement services for relatives create disparities.</p> <p>Adoptive parents receive limited information regarding post legal placement services.</p> <p>Relative caregivers with special needs youth are being pressured to accept Kin-GAP, which is not an option.</p>	<p>% of kinship families receive a list of resources that include health/mental health centers, and emancipation services, etc. to reduce disruption and placement</p> <p>% of relatives use a website for post legal placement resources and support</p> <p>% of Kin-GAP families receive periodic resource information</p>

Goals and Indicators		
Goals	Description	Indicator
Expanded Educational Advocacy	<p>The limited educational advocacy for youth in this age group (and older) places youth at a disadvantage to successful transitions to permanency.</p> <p>CSWs, caregivers, and youth often lack awareness of educational benefits and job training possibilities that influence permanency decisions</p> <p>Some relatives and non-related extended family members have a limited ability to be linked to resources.</p> <p>Implement the Board of Supervisor's motion addressing the educational rights and needs of the youth.</p>	<p>% of relative caregivers and non-related extended family caregivers attend KEPS</p> <p>% of relatives receive incentives for attending KEPS classes</p> <p>% of caregivers and youth at the permanency planning meeting receive resource packets that include academic information related to graduation requirements, tutoring resources, and regional occupation programs</p> <p>% of the youth whose educational rights and needs of the youth addressed by the Board motion</p>
Successful Transitions to Permanence	<p>Youth may lack life skills, which will permit a successful transition into legal permanency.</p> <p>Transitional/emancipation services need to be intensified to provide understanding of permanency planning.</p> <p>Transitional/emancipation services are needed to assist dependent minors on challenges and responsibilities of unplanned early parenting.</p> <p>Expectant mothers and new parents newly emancipated from foster care require special supports to provide permanency for their babies.</p>	<p>% of youth educated on legal permanency options and protocols through a revised ILP curriculum and related services activities</p> <p>% of youth participate decision-making process training such as family-group decision making and family support practices</p> <p>% of dependent minors and their partners attend parenting training incorporated with family planning</p> <p>% of young families secure housing and stable supports</p>

Goals and Indicators		
Goals	Description	Indicator
Effective and Streamlined Interstate Compact (ICPC)	<p>The current Interstate Compact laws/protocols often delay and/or prohibit the timely placement of children with relatives that reside out-of-state.</p> <p>There is a lack of funding to support further development of ICPC services nationwide.</p> <p>Once the relative caregiver is approved as a placement option, these relative caregivers may still experience additional delays in the transfer of child pending acquisition of a foster care license as a condition of ASFA compliance, and/or additional delays in the transfer of foster care payments.</p>	<p>% of placement of children with relatives that reside out-of-state delayed by the current ICPC</p> <p># of proposals to increase funding to support further development of ICPC services nationwide</p> <p>% of relative caregivers experience delays in the transfer of child pending acquisition of a foster care license as a condition of ASFA compliance</p> <p>% of relatives use database to identify the status of reciprocity between all states</p> <p>% of relatives use a user's guide on ICPS</p>
Supportive and Responsive and Consistent ASFA 1997 Approval Process	<p>ASFA 1997 regulations have made the assessment process for relatives a barrier to permanency both for new and continuing placements.</p> <p>All possible efforts must be extended to caregivers to assist them in achieving compliance.</p>	<p>% of relatives involved in ensuring that timelines and improvements required by corrective actions plans are explained, facilitated and monitored</p>
A Reformed and Responsive CLETS/Live Scan System	<p>State and federal regulations regarding Live Scan/CLETS can prevent and/or disrupt placements with relatives.</p>	<p>% of current Live Scan forms revised</p> <p>% of relatives have disrupt placements due to Live Scan/CLETS</p>

Appendix H Compelling Reasons Document

Compelling Reasons for Determining That Termination of Parental Rights Would Be Detrimental To the Child

[WIC Section 366.26 (c)(1)(A) – (E)]

The following is a list of the ONLY compelling reasons for determining when termination of parental rights would be detrimental to the child. While the law provides for all these reasons, DCFS policy dictates that the most permanent legal plan for the child must be pursued, and that true legal permanency is achieved through **adoption** or legal guardianship with relatives (Kin-GAP). In order to recommend non-TPR, diligent efforts must be made to assess and address those barriers to seeking the most permanent plan, and those efforts must be thoroughly documented in the Concurrent Planning: Permanency Planning/Adoption Assessment, case plan and Dependency Court report.

- ◆ Parents or guardians have maintained regular visitation and contact with the child and the child would benefit from continuing the relationship.
 1. **Assess the quality of the visits and the quality of the child's relationship to the parents or guardians, weighed against the child's need for legal permanence.**
 2. **Explore the options available to search for an adoptive home that will maintain regular visitation with birth family through establishing a postadoption contact agreement.**
 3. **Re-explore the possibility of reunification and/or re-activate the search for relatives (for hearings subsequent to the WIC 366.26)**
 4. **Use permanency-planning mediation.**

- ◆ A child age 12 or older objects to termination of parental rights
 1. **Explore the reason(s) for the child's objection, and clear up any misconceptions. Explore, with the child, options that will meet his or her need to maintain contact with birth family members.**
 2. **Include the need for permanency in the treatment plan if the child is already engaged in therapy. If not, engage the child in therapy to address permanency needs and prepare for adoptive planning.**
 3. **Refer the child to PRU for an Adoption Specialist to work with the child and for matching/recruitment efforts to identify a permanency planning family willing to maintain contact with birth relatives, if applicable.**

- ◆ The child is placed in a residential treatment facility, adoption is unlikely or undesirable, and continuation of parental rights will not prevent finding the child a permanent family placement if the parents cannot resume custody when residential care is no longer needed.

1. Explore the child's treatment needs, and type of placement and support required upon discharge.
 2. Work with the child's service provider, and build permanency into the discharge plan.
 3. Explore services such as wraparound and family preservation that can support child moving to a permanent family.
 4. Document the search for a family who would be able to meet the child's needs, including relatives and families with whom the child has had a previous nurturing relationship.
 5. Activate initiation of the adoption home study when relatives, previous caregivers or non-related extended family members in the child's life want to adopt upon discharge.
 6. If there is no identified permanency caregiver, refer to PRU for an Adoption Specialist to work with the child and for matching/recruitment efforts.
 7. Include active visitation for the identified permanency caregiver in the case plan while the child is in the residential treatment facility.
- ◆ The child is (a) living with a relative, OR (b) living with a non-relative and is over age six or a member of a sibling group which should be placed together where all siblings are over age 6; AND the relative or foster parent is unable or unwilling to adopt the child because of exceptional circumstances, that do not include an unwillingness to accept legal or financial responsibility for the child, but who is willing and capable of providing the child with a stable and permanent environment and the removal of the child from the physical custody of his or her relative or foster parent would be detrimental to the emotional well-being of the child.

Relative Care:

NOTE: A child living with a relative who is determined to be the most appropriate relative caregiver available is an acceptable permanent plan and is an exception to the requirement of filing a petition for termination of parental rights.

1. If the relative is not the best placement or match for the child or cannot care for the child for the long term, explore other relatives/siblings who are willing to provide legal permanence for the child.
2. Use Family Group Decision Making to engage the family in making a determination of the best long term relative caregiver or to identify other possible relative placements.

Non-Relative Care:

3. Assess the caregiver's reasons for not considering adoption. Determine if there are options to address the perceived barriers to adoption. Assess the child's relationship to the non-relative caregiver, weighed against the child's need for legal permanence. Engage the child in discussions for his or her hopes for the future.

NOTE: Meeting the child's need for permanence is DCFS' primary goal. A permanent family can help the child overcome the losses of previous relationships, including a temporary caregiver.

- ◆ There would be substantial interference with a child's sibling relationship, taking into consideration the nature and extent of the relationship, including but not limited to, whether the child was raised with a sibling in the same home, whether the child shared significant common experiences or has existing close and strong bonds with a sibling, and whether ongoing contact is in the child's best interest, including the child's long-term emotional interest as compared to other benefit of legal permanence through adoption.
 1. **Search for an adoptive family willing to accept the sibling group or an adoptive family willing to maintain sibling contact.**
 2. **Explore the possibility of postadoption contact agreement for siblings.**
 3. **Use permanency-planning mediation.**

WIC 281.5

"In accordance with Welfare and Institutions Code Section 281.5, at the time of the removal of a child from the custody of his/her parents, preference shall be given to placement in the home of a relative, if such placement is in the best interest of the child. If there are no appropriate relatives, out-of-home placement shall be in the least restrictive, most family-like setting, which would meet the child's needs.

Assembly Bill (AB) 1695 clarifies California's relative caregiver approval process that employs the same standards used to license foster care homes in accordance with the Federal Adoption and Safe Families Act (ASFA) of 1997 and eliminates the "certification pending licensure" process. This bill also created a new category of prospective caregiver entitled "nonrelative extended family member." A "nonrelative extended family member" is defined as any adult caregiver who has established familial or mentoring relationship with the child. This prior relationship shall be verified by interviews with the parent and child and with one or more third parties.

In compliance with welfare and institutions code 309, 319, 361.3, prior to placing a child in a relative or non-relative extended family member's home, the social worker shall initiate an assessment of suitability of the prospective caregiver, which shall include an in-home site visit to assess the safety of the home and the ability of the prospective caregiver to care for the child on a temporary basis, including consideration of the results of criminal records check and any allegations of prior child abuse or neglect concerning the prospective caregiver and other adults in the home.

It is the policy of the Department of Children and Family Services (Procedural Guide 0100-520.10-Evaluating a Prospective Caregiver) that the efforts to locate relatives and/or nonrelative extended family members as a placement resource is a recurring process which does not cease until a child is returned home, the Dependency Court has approved adoption as the permanent plan, parental rights are terminated, a legal guardian is appointed, or the case is closed.

Appendix I
Relative Caregiver Committee Meeting Dates

Relative Caregiver Committee Meeting Dates

December 16, 2003

January 26, 2004

February 13, 2004

February 27, 2004

March 5, 2004

March 12, 2004

March 22, 2004

March 30, 2004

April 6, 2004

April 19, 2004

April 27, 2004

May 11, 2004

May 18, 2004

June 21, 2004

June 30, 2004

July 27, 2004

Acronyms

ARA	Assistant Regional Administrator
ASFA	Adoption and Safe Families Amendment Act of 1997
BITS	Bureau of Information Technology Services
BOS	Board of Supervisors
CAAA	California Association of Adoption Agencies
CAO	Chief Administrative Office
CASA	Dependency Court Appointed Special Advocate
CBO	Community-based Organization
CCL	Community Care Licensing
CDSS	California Department of Social Services
CLC	Children’s Law Center
CLETS	The California Law Enforcement Telecommunications System
COURT	The Juvenile Dependency Division (for DCFS) or Juvenile Delinquency Division (for Probation) of the Superior Dependency Court of Los Angeles County
CPC	Child Protection Custody
CPS	Child Protective Services
CSW	Children’s Social Worker
CWDA	Child Welfare Directors Association
CYC	California Youth Connection
DCFS	Department of Children and Family Services, Los Angeles County
DHS	Department of Health Services
DMH	Department of Mental Health
DOJ	Department of Justice
DPSS	Department of Public Social Services
DPO	Deputy Probation Officer
FFA	Foster Family Agency
ICPC	Interstate Compact of the Placement of Children
ILP	Independent Living Program
IUC	Inter-university consortium consisting of USC, UCLA, CSULB, and CSULA
KEPS	<i>Kinship Education and Preparation Support</i> curriculum
LACOE	Los Angeles County Office of Education
MH	Mental Health
RA	Regional Administrator
SCSW	Supervising Children’s Social Worker
SDPO	Supervising Deputy Probation Officer
SIB	Service Integration Branch, and CAO
SIS	Special Immigration Status Unit
SPA	Service Planning Area
TCCF	The Community College Foundation