

## ***Keys to Successful Pennsylvania Family Finding***

### **RESOURCES**

- Ensure that there are staff members with Family Finding activities as their primary responsibility. These may be agency or contracted providers.
- Ensure that resources necessary to support Family Finding are planned for and included in needs-based budgeting.

### **TRAINING**

- Provide initial training and regularly offer updates for Family Finding staff and all staff within the child welfare agency.
- Provide training for all stakeholders – Judges, Hearing Officers, GALs, Parent Attorneys, Solicitors, CASA, Providers, and Foster Parents.

### **TIMING**

- Ensure that Family Finding activities are initiated immediately upon acceptance for service.
- Ensure Family Finding activities are ongoing, not a one-time effort.

### **ENGAGEMENT**

- Ensure that Family Finding efforts include engaging the child, family members and kin.
- Engagement goes beyond sending a letter, or making a phone call.
- Ensure that engagement genuinely includes family/kin in the case planning process and encompasses more options than a placement resource. Consider sending cards/letters, regular visitation or respite as options.

### **ACCOUNTABILITY**

- Agency leadership encourages/requires best practice.
- Prepare to provide Family Finding Information at every court hearing.
- Consider using a standardized form for the report, as aid to courtroom discussion, not as replacement for it.

### **COURT INVOLVEMENT**

- Judicial officer leadership encourages/requires best practice
- Family Finding discussed in courtroom at every hearing.
- Court encourages/requires children, family members and attorneys to participate, ensuring that Family Finding is not solely an agency responsibility.

### **TOOLS-EXAMPLES**

- Genograms, connectograms and calendars completed by skilled interviewers.
- Family interviews, including the child.
- OCFC Bench Card -- "Family Finding - Key Questions".
- Use of FGDM, rapid response/crisis response family meetings, facilitation and Family Team Meetings to include families in service planning
- Diligent Search -- includes Accurant and other search engines, social media.

### **SUSTAINABILITY**

- Gather data and track outcomes.
- Periodically review data and outcomes with all system stakeholders.
- Family Finding is the Law