

# Section 11 – Placement Overview

***“Many of the children are traumatized when they come into the system, and our job is to make them better, not to create additional trauma.”***

***- Max Baer, Chief Justice  
Pennsylvania Supreme Court***

Placing a child in out-of-home care is one of the most challenging decisions a judge must make. The judge must carefully weigh the evidence presented and balance the need for safety with the need to reduce, to the extent possible, trauma. The decision as to whether a child should live outside their own home is only the first of many associated decisions when a child enters placement. Additional decisions include determining the “best” placement setting for a child, the duration of the placement, and the purpose or goal of the placement, to mention a few.

This section provides six primary resources regarding the potential impact of placement. These resources focus on increasing the safe use of kinship care while simultaneously reducing the use of congregate and traditional non-kin foster care as a mechanism to reduce the trauma experienced by children who must be temporarily placed.

- I. A report on institutional care that includes graphs and charts to assist a judge in decision-making regarding placement. (See, *Barth, R.P., 2002*)
- II. The Pennsylvania State Roundtable’s Congregate Care Workgroup provides judges practical resources, including tools, processes, and strategies that minimize the use of congregate care. (See, *Office of Children & Families in the Courts: Congregate Care, n.d.*)
- III. The Pennsylvania State Roundtable’s Kinship Care Task Force, led by Chief Justice Max Baer, is examining Pennsylvania’s use of kinship care. The Task Force has developed Pennsylvania-specific resources and recommendations for judges, legal advocates, and child welfare professionals that maximize the use of safe kinship care. (See, *Office of Children & Families in the Courts: Kinship Care Task Force, n.d.*)
- IV. A resource highlighting five reasons why minimizing placement disruption is vital to reducing pain/trauma, and attachment difficulties for children and youth in out-of-home care. (See, *Pecora, P., Kessler, R., Downs, A. C., English, D., White, J., & Heeringa, S., 2007*)
- V. This resource outlines formal and informal kinship care, policies, and practices specific to Pennsylvania, covering the role of the courts and legal professionals. (See, *Pennsylvania Partnerships for Children, 2021*)

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- VI. What are some of the most common reasons for placement disruption? This final primary resource examines the issue and offers strategies that may minimize placement disruption. (See, *Sigrid, J., 2004*)

