



# Fostering Sustainable Connections

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## Introductions



The Story of Your Name

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## Title IV-E Overview

**What is it?**

- \* Title IV-E : federal funding for eligible children in out of home care; it is also used for educating and training child welfare staff.
- \* IV-E Waiver: A tool that allows states and jurisdictions to use IV-E funding flexibly to provide targeted and focused services to achieve improved child welfare outcomes.

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## Arizona's Title IV-E Waiver

- ❖ Is a demonstration project that seeks to reduce children's length of stay in congregate care settings
- ❖ Children who are placed in congregate care settings at the start of the demonstration; or
- ❖ Who enter congregate care during the demonstration.

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## Theory

Improve engagement with children in the congregate care setting and their families through:

- ❖ Family/fictive kin search and engagement activities;
- ❖ Expanding the Team Decision Making (TDM) process to support the action plans created in partnership with the family/fictive kin; and
- ❖ Enhancing the availability of in-home reunification, placement stabilization or other needed services

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## Definitions

- ❖ Congregate Care: a group home or shelter care setting.
- ❖ Fictive Kin: people who are regarded as being part of the family, even though they are not related by blood or marriage.
- ❖ Family: a group of people who are related to each other

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## Characteristics of Congregate Care



Maricopa, Pima and Pinal Counties have 95% of the children in congregate care with the remaining 5% spread across the rest of the state.

Youth between the ages of 13-17 make up 61% of the congregate care population.

- as of July 1, 2015

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## Characteristics of Congregate Care

- ❖ Children in congregate care are more likely male than female.
- ❖ Upon removal children are more likely to be placed in a congregate care setting
- ❖ Average length of stay in the first out-of-home placement is shorter for children who are placed in congregate care vs those placed with family or foster home.
- ❖ The cost of group placement is roughly seven to ten times the cost of placing a child in a family-type setting

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## Characteristics of Congregate Care

Children placed in congregate care type placements:

- ❖ Report the lowest rate of positive experiences
- ❖ Are more likely to have lower test scores,
- ❖ To drop out of high school, and
- ❖ Less likely to graduate from high school

Than children placed in a family-like placement setting

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## Outcomes

The following are desired outcomes to achieve:

Short Term	Long Term
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increased number of family/fictive kin available</li> <li>Improved engagement and connections fostered to support the children</li> <li>Enhanced involvement of family/fictive kin in decision making</li> <li>Expedited identification of needs and strengths for children/family</li> <li>Increased children and family/fictive kin supports through natural and in-home services</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increased percentage of children in congregate care settings who are placed in family settings</li> <li>Decreased length of stay in congregate care</li> <li>Decreased length of stay in out-of-home care</li> <li>Increased reunification and legal permanency</li> <li>Improved stability with life-long supports and connections</li> </ul>

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## Unwanted

[https://youtu.be/Msq\\_hmrcfsQ](https://youtu.be/Msq_hmrcfsQ)

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## Fostering Sustainable Connections

### Four Stages:

- ❖ Discovery and Engagement
- ❖ Planning
- ❖ Decision Making/Action plan
- ❖ Follow up

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## Discovery and Engagement

### Family/Fictive Kin Search and Engagement

Conducted by the Family Engagement Specialist

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## Discovery

Family Finding Model offers methods and strategies to locate and engage relatives of children currently living in out-of-home care.

- ❖ Every child has a family and they can be found;
- ❖ Loneliness can be devastating; and
- ❖ A meaningful connection develops a sense of belonging in children.

Youth will have a range of commitments from adults that will be sustainable in the transition to adulthood and beyond.

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## Engagement (Outside the Box)

### Who is the child connected to?

Mother, Father, Siblings, Grandparents, Aunts, Uncles, etc...

### What about?

Teachers, Principal, Crossing Guard, Cafeteria Personnel, School Nurse, Janitor, Guidance Counselor, etc.

*Children have more connections than biological.*

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## Planning

### Discussions with family/fictive kin:

- ❖ About the child;
- ❖ The needs of the child; and
- ❖ How to support the child

### Blended Perspectives Meeting

Conducted by the Family Engagement Specialist

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## Blended Perspectives Meeting

### What is it?

Brings together those who are connected to the child or those who have lost contact with the child to explore how to best support the child and family.

The child's strengths and needs are identified in order to lay the foundation for permanency planning.

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## Decision Making/Action Plan

- ❖ Determine what services the family will need.  
In-home services, community services, and behavioral health services.
- ❖ Determine what supports the family may need.  
Community based and natural supports

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## Decision Making/Action Plan

### Life Long Connections (TDM expansion)

Criteria:

- ❖ Kinship placement, services, and supports for the child and family need to be identified

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## Life Long Connections

What is it?

- ❖ A new TDM type that brings together family/fictive kin to develop a plan to transition the child into a family-like placement;
- ❖ Identify services and supports for the child and family; and
- ❖ Establish life-long, sustainable connections for the child.

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## Service Array

- ❖ Family Reunification & Placement Stabilization
  - ❖ Assists to safely expedite and aide in the return or transition of children who are in out-of-home placement back to their family.
  - ❖ Safe maintenance of a child in their home.
  - ❖ Following services are available for the family (but not limited too):
    - ❖ Parenting education
    - ❖ Crisis Intervention
    - ❖ Counseling
    - ❖ Problem Solving Skills
    - ❖ Behavioral management/modification

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## Follow Up

### The Family Engagement Specialist and Child Safety Specialist:

- ❖ Will work together to make sure the service referrals are submitted;
- ❖ Ensure services are implemented
- ❖ Will work with the child's team to determine if the adults caring for the child have adequate supports.

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## Does it Work?

### Evaluation Component of the Waiver

- ❖ Research Questions
  - ❖ Was Fostering Sustainable Connections implemented as designed?
  - ❖ Were the short and long term goals met?
- ❖ Sample
- ❖ Method

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## Family Finding

[https://youtu.be/Msq\\_hmrcfsQ](https://youtu.be/Msq_hmrcfsQ)

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# Questions and Answers

Thank you 😊

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## References

- Seneca Family of Agencies. (2014, October 10). FamilyFinding [Video file]. Retrieved from [https://youtu.be/Msq\\_hmrcfsQ](https://youtu.be/Msq_hmrcfsQ)
- Seneca Family of Agencies. (2012, November 8). Family Finding Video [Video file]. Retrieved from <https://youtu.be/gOygXVEjUhl>

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