Georgia Division of Family and Children Services

Georgia CASA Conference

DATE: April 22, 2017

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State Permanency Director
Permanency At The Front Door

- Discussion regarding where permanency begins
- What permanency should look like
PERMANENCY AT THE FRONT DOOR

- Sibling Placement
- Diligent Search
- Placement Type
- Permanency Plan
VALUES

• WHY SHOULD SIBLINGS BE PLACED TOGETHER?
Siblings – Former Foster Youth Says

“an extra punishment, a separate loss and another pain that is not needed”
Sibling – Definition

• Full or half-siblings (including children relinquished or removed at birth)

• Step-siblings

• Adopted children in the same household, not biologically related

• Children born into the family and their foster/adopted siblings
Sibling – Definition con’t

• Other close relatives or nonrelatives living in the same kinship home
• Foster children in the same family
• Group-home mates with close enduring relationships
• Individuals conceived from the same sperm or egg donor
• Children of the partner or former partner of the child’s parent.
Fostering Connections Act of 2008 requires:
A) to place siblings removed from their home in the same foster care, kinship or adoptive placement, unless the State documents that such placement would be contrary to the safety or well-being of any of the siblings; and
A critical part of the work we **must do** involves searching for relatives.
Child Welfare Agencies must provide notice to relatives within 30 days of removing a child from his or her home.
Fathers are an important part of the family dynamics.
Diligent Search for Relatives

- Engage mothers in identifying relatives.
- Engage fathers in identifying relatives.
ASK THE CHILD

ASK ME, I KNOW MY RELATIVES!
TOOLS AND TECHNIQUES

• Review CPS Investigation
• Review CCFA
• Have family complete a genogram
• Ask relatives about other relatives
• Check school records for emergency contacts
• Use social media and search sites
• Accurint
APPROPRIATE PLACEMENT

• Parental Capacity
• Child Vulnerability
KNOW THE CHILD

• Age of child
• Child vulnerabilities (needs)
• Siblings
• Relatives
• History
KNOW THE FAMILY

- Read the Family Assessment
- Know the family’s strengths
- Know the family’s weaknesses
- Know their protective capacity
- Stay abreast of changes
• Assess the child
• Assume that the first placement is the last placement
CASE PLAN TYPES

Reunification Case Plan - law requires reasonable efforts to reunify and reunification services unless grounds exist for a non-reunification case plan.

Non-Reunification Case Plan – No reunification services required; can be granted if, murder of a child, previous TPRs exist, third entry in care or an egregious act occurred.

Concurrent Case Plan - Should be used when a family has significant history in CPS with the agency and when the prognosis tool indicates a concurrent plan is appropriate.
Permanency Plans

• Reunification
• Adoption
• Guardianship
• APPLA
**SFY17 (ytd) Finalizations by Region**

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*Goal: To Increase the Percentage of Children in Foster Care with Adoption that Finalize (within 24 months of entering care) from 28% to 52% by July 2018*
Law requires that adoption be ruled out as the better plan before the selection of guardianship.

- Children under age 14
- All children that the agency has achieved TPR
- Youth who have expressed the desire
REQUIREMENTS FOR GUARDIANSHIP

• Relative or Non-Relative

• Child is unlikely to return home

• TPR is not in the child’s best interest and Adoption is impractical or inappropriate

• Placement is stable and in the best interest of the child.
Requirements for Guardianship (con’t)

• Family Team Meeting
• All the key players
• Discussion of goal
• Discussion of supports
Permanency Options

Adoption vs. Guardianship