

clark county department of
family services



Family Involvement: Supporting Kin Caregivers

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Moderated by: Millicent Williams

Sponsored by the National Technical Assistance and Evaluation Center for Systems
of Care with financial support from the federal Children's Bureau

Learning Objectives

- Gain a better understanding of the Kinship Liaison Program in Clark County
- Get a better understanding of what former and current caregivers can bring to a kinship liaison role
- Gain a better understanding of how a peer-to-peer support program can impact permanency for children in the Child Welfare System

System of Care Infrastructure Components

- Planning
- Governance
- System Management
- Coordination of Services and Service Array
- Communication
- Policy
- Finance
- Continuous Quality Improvement
- Training, Development and Human Resources

System of Care Principles

- **Community-based:** Children thrive in the context of their homes, communities and schools. Systems of Care ensure a wide range of home-and community-based services and support to promote the safety, permanency, and well being of children, families, and the community. Decision-making responsibility rests at the local level, with key links to the county and/or State government.
- **Child and Family Involvement:** In Systems of Care full family participation requires mutual respect and meaningful partnership between families and professionals in the planning, implementation, and ongoing operation of the System of Care. Families are involved and their voice is valued in all levels of the Systems of Care.
- **Interagency collaboration:** Interagency collaboration within Systems of Care engages all child and family serving agencies at all levels of the public, private, and faith based sectors, including child welfare, juvenile justice, mental health, education, substance abuse, health, and agencies responsible for serving Native American families.
- **Cultural Competence:** Systems of Care tailor services (location and types) and programs by considering the cultural, ethnic, and racial makeup of the community. Agency policies, training and family engagement are critical to ensure cultural competence.
- **Individualized and Strength-based:** Every child enrolled in the Systems of Care participates in an individualized plan of care that focuses on the needs, strengths, and challenges of the child and family.
- **Accountability:** Systems of Care ensure outcome data is collected, analyzed, and reported on the individual child and family services system, performance, and financial efficiencies. The information is used to inform all stakeholders and serves as a quality assurance process.

Project Development

- In October 2003, an *Improving Child Welfare Outcomes Through Systems of Care* grant through Children's Bureau was awarded to Clark County, Nevada as a five-year project.
- Clark County Department of Family Services had the goal of using a community-based Systems of Care (SOC) approach to improve the safety, permanency and well-being of children living with kin caregivers.

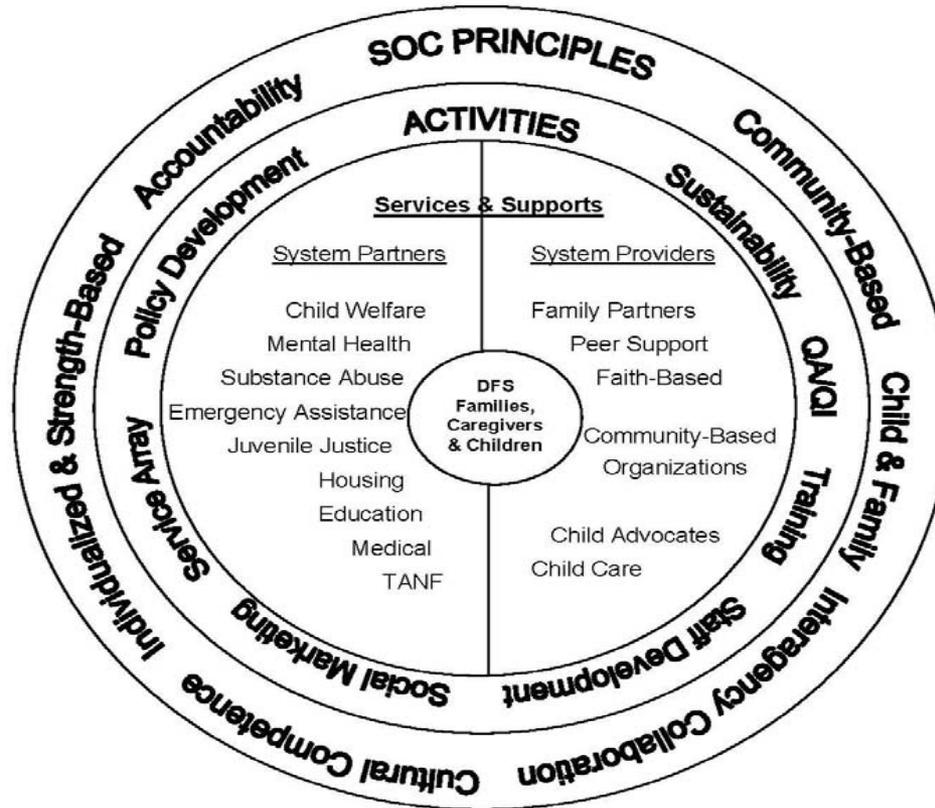
Caring Communities Project

- Goal
 - Use System of Care approach to improve safety, permanency and well-being of children living with kin.
- Objectives
 - Increase placements of children with kin
 - Increase safety of children living with kin
 - Improve physical/mental health of children living with kin
 - Increase stability of placements with kin
 - Increase timely permanency for children living with kin
 - Increase capacity of kin to care for the children living with them
 - Align infrastructure with System of Care principles

Kin Caregivers reported their greatest needs as:

- Desire to network with other caregivers
- Family advocate or mentor
- Training on legal issues relating to permanency
- Classes about dealing with the children's behavior
- Classes about dealing with loss and grief
- Monthly subsidy
- Medical insurance
- Assistance facilitating visits between the children and their parents
- Help locating educational services and getting school supplies
- Assistance accessing health care, mental health care and dental care
- Recreational opportunities for the children
- Assistance securing emergency funds
- Informational and referral services

Clark County Systems of Care



Kinship Liaison Program



(left-right: Tammie Blackwell, Brandy Manuel, Tiffany Hesser, Vanessa Lindsey and Latesha Greer)

On May 21, 2007, four Kinship Liaisons began full-time employment with Clark County Department of Family Services

Kinship Liaison Role

- Kinship Liaisons are current or former relative caregivers for children in Department of Family Services custody
- Initially hired under the Caring Communities System of Care grant, three positions have been sustained
- These are full-time positions including all benefits through the County

Contact With Families

- Kinship Liaisons are linked with all caregivers upon placement of a relative child.
 - Introductory letters are sent
 - Caregiving guides and resource guides are provided
 - Phone contact is made
 - Face-to-face & home visits are made
 - Ongoing support is provided as needed

Supportive Services

- Kinship Liaisons engage in a variety of supportive services for kin caregivers including:
 - Information and referral
 - Foster care licensing assistance
 - Resource attainment
 - Application assistance
 - Caregiver, staff and community trainings
 - Networking opportunities
 - Advocacy
 - Emotional support
 - Child and Family Team participation
 - Representation of kin "voice" in meetings

Advantage of a Peer Perspective

- All of this is provided from the “been there, done that” perspective of current and/or previous kin caregivers who were hired because of their real life experience.
 - New kin caregivers know someone understands & relates to their situation
 - Kin caregivers know their role is valued within the child welfare system

Peer-to-Peer Support

Providing emotional support

Encouraging families with our personal experiences

Empowering families by education on permanency

Helping caregivers make informed decisions for their family

Participating in Child and Family Teams

My Kinship Liaison has been there to talk to and has given me her shoulder to lean on and let me know I am not alone. – Denise, Kin Caregiver

Footprints in the Sand

Caregiver Quotes

The Kinship Liaison Program has been food for my soul to know that I have someone with similar experiences as myself looking out for me. - Dawchica, Kin Caregiver

For all of the nightmares that people talk about with the "System", we fortunately can't say that we agree. - Bob & Shannon, Kin Caregivers

I can honestly say my Kinship Liaison is heaven-sent - Denise, Kin Caregiver

Caseworker Quotes

This program has been such an asset to the Department of Family Services. We need this wonderful program to be permanent at The Department of Family Services. - Janie Ostlund, MSW, LSW

*Compliment about your Kinship Liaison. She is doing an awesome job with our relatives on our case. The caseworker is very pleased. Additionally, we have another relative family that is working on getting licensed. Is it possible to have this one also assigned to a Kinship Liaison?
- Patti Meyers, Department of Family Services Supervisor*

Questions

Collaborative Efforts

- Kinship Liaisons focus on
 - Mentoring and informing kin caregivers
 - Educating staff and stakeholders on kinship issues
 - Advocating for kinship needs
 - Networking and collaborating with various community providers and stakeholders for improved services and supports for kin caregivers
- They have partnered well with agency staff
- They have become well-known and well-respected amongst other community agencies

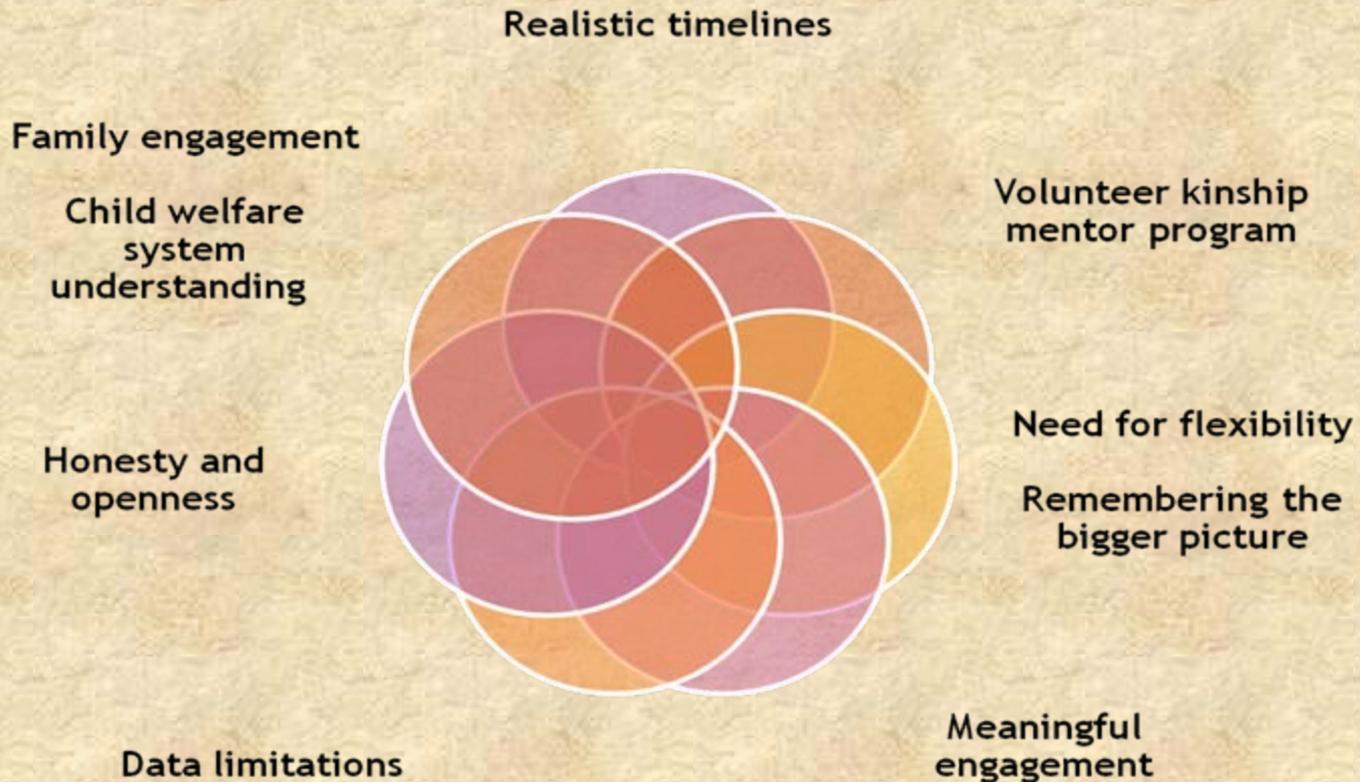
Agency Impact

- These efforts have all been closely linked with other agency initiatives and programs including: foster parent licensing training; specialized licensing unit for relative placements; foster care retention/support unit staffed by Foster Parent Liaisons; caregiver support initiatives; the foster parent association; Department of Family Services Placement Team; and caregiver events and activities.

Sustainability

- A significant cultural shift transpired at DFS for staff to embrace the contributions of "paraprofessional" kinship liaisons who were peers to families receiving services
- Sustainability was achieved by having the needed services integrated as a permanent part of agency resources
- County funding now supports these positions

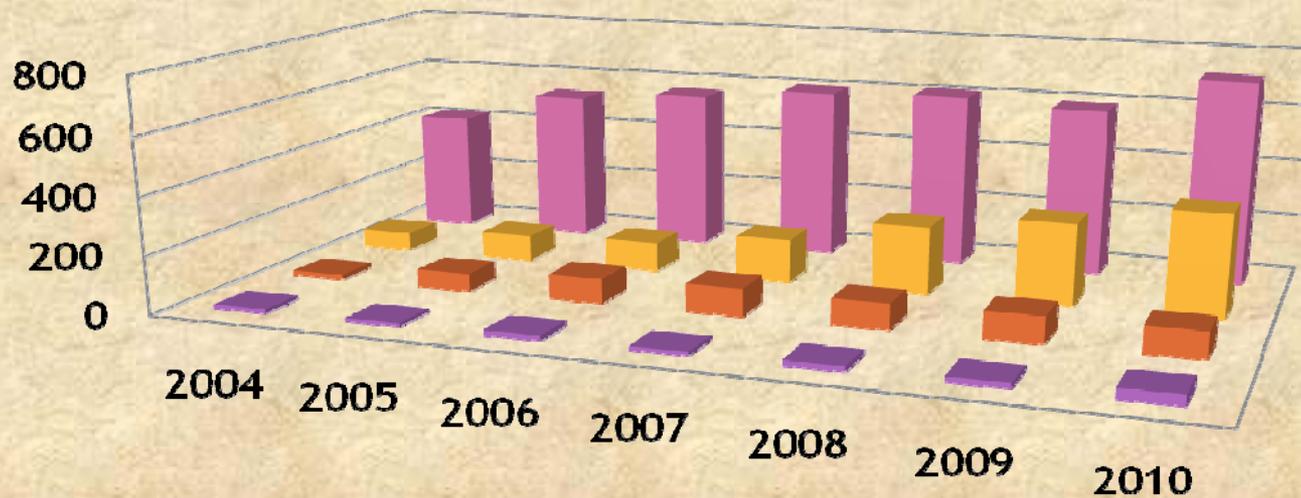
Lessons Learned



Child and Family Statistics

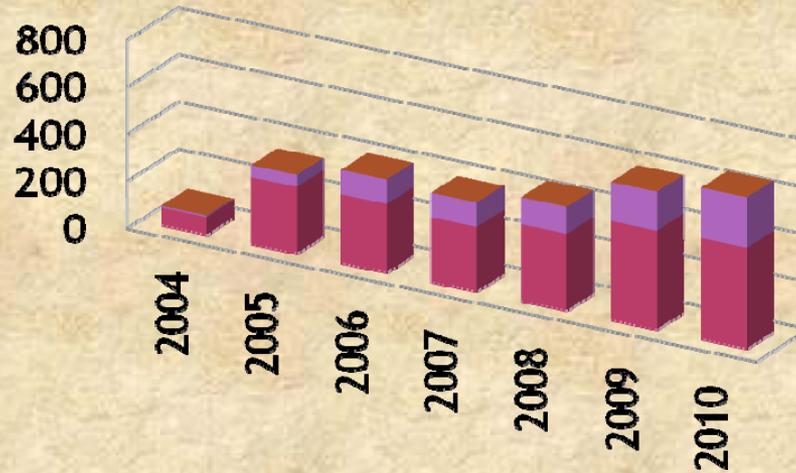
Impacts for Children in Relative Care

Licensed Relative Foster Homes



	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
ICPC Incoming	13	12	18	13	18	18	36
ICPC Outgoing	16	62	86	96	90	94	92
Relative Foster	63	91	104	153	237	286	358
Regular Foster	421	530	561	599	611	589	715

Adoptions by Relatives per Year



	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
■ Percentage adopted by relatives	10%	18%	36%	38%	35%	39%	50%
■ Relative adoptions per year	7	51	104	104	114	165	214
■ Total adoptions per year	73	282	290	273	325	419	427

Questions

For More Information

Systems of Care Information

Information Gateway

<http://www.childwelfare.gov/management/reform/soc/>

National Resource Center for Permanency and Family Connections

<http://www.nrcpfc.org>

System of Care Toolkits

<http://www.childwelfare.gov/management/reform/soc/communicate/initiative/soctoolkits/index.cfm>

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Kinship Liaison Information

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Key Knowledge Development Products

- **Systems of Care: A Guide for Strategic Planning**
- **Building the Infrastructure: A Guide for Communities**
- **A Closer Look Series**
 - Overview of Systems of Care
 - Interagency Collaboration
 - Youth & Family Involvement
 - Individualized Strength-based Care
 - Cultural & Linguistic Competence
 - Community-based
 - Accountability
- **9 System of Care Infrastructure Toolkits**

For more information visit:

<http://www.childwelfare.gov/management/reform/soc/communicate/initiative>

Key Knowledge Development Products

- **Evaluation Reports from the Grant Program**
 - Overview of the National Cross-Site Evaluation
 - Systems and Organizational Change Resulting from the Implementation of Systems of Care
 - Systems of Care Implementation Case Studies (Contra Costa County, CA and North Carolina State grantees)
 - ***Family Involvement in the Improving Child Welfare Outcomes Through Systems of Care Initiative***
 - Leadership in the Improving Child Welfare Outcomes Through Systems of Care Initiative

For more information visit:

<http://www.childwelfare.gov/management/reform/soc/communicate/initiative>

Key Knowledge Development Products

Coming Soon!!!

- **Action Brief Series**
 - Creating and Communicating a Shared Vision – now available in print
 - Building Agency Capacity for Family Involvement – now available in print
 - Building Family Capacity for Family Involvement
 - Forging Partnerships
 - Obtaining Buy-in for Change from the Frontline
- **Webinar Series**
 - Strategic Planning: Setting the State for Change (transcript, powerpoint, & audio forthcoming)
 - Family Involvement: Supporting Kin Caregivers
 - Community Involvement to Improve Child and Family Outcomes
 - Generating Buy-in for Change
 - Policy Assessment to Support and Sustain Effective Practice

For more information visit:

<http://www.childwelfare.gov/management/reform/soc/communicate/initiative/>