



Maine Department of Health and Human Services



# Supervising for Comprehensive Relative Identification and Exploration

Prepared by the Institute for Public Sector Innovation

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN MAINE  
Muskie School of Public Service

**Supervising for Comprehensive Relative Identification  
And Exploration**

**TRAINER  
CURRICULUM**

**Child Welfare Training Institute  
A Collaborative Agreement Between  
Department of Health and Human Services  
And  
Muskie School of Public Service**

## **Curriculum Introduction**

This curriculum was developed in collaboration with Martha Proulx, Francis Sweeney, the District Operations Managers of the Office of Child and Family Services. The approach to this workshop includes opportunities for participants to give feedback on the development of the draft tool that is presented for future finalization and distribution.

## **An Overview of the Curriculum**

### **Target Audience:**

Child Welfare Supervisors

### **Length of Workshop**

½ Day (3 hours with break)

### **Materials Needed to Present Workshop**

- ◆ Name tags
- ◆ Participant Handouts
- ◆ Blank flip charts
- ◆ Prepared posters
- ◆ Colored markers
- ◆ Power point
- ◆ Masking tape
- ◆ Laptop/LCD and screen
- ◆ Quiz handout

### **Pre-Work for Participants:**

Practice Model, Law, Supervisory Standards, Child and Family Services Review, Policy connections. (to read prior to workshop)

Participants will bring one (1) Relative Resource narrative entry per unit member to the training. This work will not be shared with others.

**Maine Child and Family Services Practice Model Connections:**

<http://www.maine.gov/dhhs/bcfs/practicemodel.htm>

- Section 1, Bullet 3
- Section 2, Bullets 1 & 2
- Section 3, Bullets 3, 4 & 5
- Section 4, Bullets 1, 2 & 4
- Section 5, Bullets 1, 3 & 4

**Supervisory Standards Connections:** <http://www.maine.gov/dhhs/bcfs/policy/policy.htm>

ADMINISTRATIVE SUPERVISION

- Foster ownership of agency mission, vision, goals, values, policies, procedures and the Practice Model
- Encourage maximum performance of individual staff

EDUCATIONAL SUPERVISION

- Foster ownership of agency mission, vision, goals, values, policies, procedures and the Practice Model
- Provide case supervision and consultation
- Provide/assure orientation for new staff

**Office of Child and Family Policy Connections:**

<http://www.maine.gov/dhhs/ocfs/cw/policy/policy.htm>

V. D-7. Relative Placement Kinship Care Including Fictive Kin Policy (includes documentation expectations)

**Title 22 Maine Revised Statutes: Child and Family Services and Child Protection Act**

**Connections:** <http://janus.state.me.us/legis/statutes/22/title22ch1071sec0.html>

4008—3K Confidentially (removed from ‘Optional Disclosure’ added to ‘Mandatory Disclosure of Records’ “K”)

4041 – 1-A A (1) (c) (vi) Reunification and Rehabilitation

4062 – IV Kinship Preference

**Federal Child and Family Services Review Connections:**

[http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb/cwmonitoring/tools\\_guide/onsitefinal.htm](http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb/cwmonitoring/tools_guide/onsitefinal.htm)

- Permanency, Item 15 & Item 14

## **Handouts**

1. Decisive Factors
2. Relative Resource Case Study (4 pages)
3. Self Assessment
4. Beliefs/Values Office Activity Instructions
5. Commitments
6. Quiz

## **Resource Table Handouts:**

Kevin Campbell material HO,  
Rubin article HO  
Step 6 HO  
Relative Exploration and Identification resource HO  
Workshop PowerPoint notes HO

<b>Timed Agenda for the Workshop Day</b>		
<b>Time</b>	<b>Content and Training Methods</b>	<b>Participant Materials</b>
<b>15 min</b> 9:00-9:15 AM or 1:00-1:15 PM	<b>Step 1: Welcome and Purpose</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Introductions</li> <li>➤ Orientation to participant materials</li> <li>➤ Overview of the workshop</li> <li>➤ Learning Objectives</li> </ul>	Folders
<b>15 min</b> 9:15-9:30 AM or 1:15-1:30 PM	<b>Step 2: Creating a Sense of Importance for Relative Identification and Exploration: What it means to the child</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Rationale for this Workshop</li> <li>➤ Making the connections to the Practice Model law, policy, CFSR, Supervisory Standards</li> <li>➤ Presentation of OCFS philosophical base—refer to research—improved outcomes for children</li> <li>➤ Discussion of involvement of relatives in addition to placement</li> </ul>	
<b>5 min</b> 9:30-9:35 AM or 1:30-1:35 PM	<b>Step 3: Introduction to Decisive Factors that indicate high quality identification and exploration: What does the documentation tell us?</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Examination of the essential elements that contribute to quality</li> </ul>	HO
<b>45 min</b> 9:35-10:20 AM or 1:35-2:10 PM	<b>Step 4: Application of the Decisive Factors: Case Study</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Participants review a prepared Relative Resource narrative and assess the quality</li> <li>➤ Participants contribute to the Decisive Factors list</li> </ul>	HO's
<b>15 min</b> 10:20-10:35 AM or 2:20-2:35 PM	<b>Break</b>	Copies of HO for tables
<b>40 min</b> 10:35-11:15 AM or 2:35-3:15 PM	<b>Step 5: Application of the Decisive Factors to Examples from the Field.</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Individuals assess Relative Exploration documentation from their own unit</li> <li>➤ Debrief on findings and learning from activity</li> </ul>	HO

<p><b>10 min</b></p> <p>11:15-11:25 AM or 3:15-3:25 PM</p>	<p><b>Step 6: OCFS Supervisory Practice Expectations--presentation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Presentation of the identification process</li> <li>➤ Presentation of the exploration process</li> </ul>	
<p><b>10 min</b></p> <p>11:25-11:35 AM or 3:25-3:35 PM</p>	<p><b>Step 7: Self-Assessment of Current Supervisory Practice in Meeting Expectations for Comprehensive Identification and Exploration of Relatives:</b> Preparation for Conversation with Program Administrator/Assistant Program Administrator.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Individuals complete an assessment of their own practice and level of skill in bringing their unit into full compliance</li> <li>➤ Introduction to Optional Office Activity—Values Clarification</li> </ul>	HO
<p><b>15 min</b></p> <p>11:35-11:50 AM or 3:35-3:50 PM</p>	<p><b>Step 8: Quiz</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ 10 question multiple choice quiz for measuring knowledge acquisition</li> <li>➤ Explanation of the process of results distribution</li> </ul>	Quiz HO
<p><b>10 min</b></p> <p>11:50 AM–12:00 PM or 3:50-4:00 PM</p>	<p><b>Step 9: Wrap Up and Training Evaluation Information</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ What will participants commit to do right away? Explanation of the new Training Evaluation Process</li> </ul>	HO

## Supervising for Comprehensive Relative Identification And Exploration

### WORKSHOP GOAL AND OBJECTIVES

**Goal:** To increase the overall OCFS practice in identifying and exploring relatives for each and every child involved with child welfare services so that every child has lifetime family connections even in situations where children cannot live with family members.

#### **Learning Objectives:**

1. Participant will articulate the critical importance of the mandate for quality relative identification and exploration contained within relevant statutes, Office of Child and Family Services policy, and the Federal Child and Family Services Review. Participant will connect this mandate with the Maine Child Welfare Practice Model and Supervisory Standards.
2. Participant will gain an increased understanding of the supervisory role and responsibilities to promote compliance with mandates for identification and exploration of relative resources for each child in each case.
3. Participant will assess their own supervisory practices, beliefs, and values that support and/or hinder compliance with mandates for identification and exploration of relative resources. Participant will use this assessment in preparation for a conversation with the PA/APA regarding their plan to meet the mandate.

Step 1:	Welcome and Purpose	🕒 15 Minutes 9:00-9:15
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## Welcome

### PPT#1 Title Slide

### PPT #2 “Kaylie”

#### Step 1.1

### Purpose

*(See Appendix 1 and 2 for full text drafted by Maine Child Welfare District Operations Managers)*

### PPT#3

### Purpose:

Supervisors are the most important link between our policies and practice and improving the lives of the children and families we serve. Management relies on you, the direct line Supervisors, to carry out the mission of the agency where we join with families and the community to promote long-term safety, well-being, and permanent families for children. You are responsible for not only knowing the laws and our policies but also in ensuring that your staff are carrying them out in a way that is consistent with our agency beliefs and Practice Model

Professional development and progress towards the highest level of expertise in current Child Welfare practice has been our charge for a long time. We want to be able to help you and, in turn, help your staff continue to make the changes needed and have positive results for families. It is with the goal and hope of continuing to provide clear expectations and training to you that we are here today.

#### Step 1.2 Introductions

### PPT #4

Thinking back over your past gatherings, holiday or any other special occasion, recall the warmest, happiest time and recall who was there. Recall **how many people came together for that occasion.**

For introductions if you don't know the people to your immediate right and left, take a second to greet each other by saying your:

- Name
- Office
- How many people came together for that occasion?

By a show of hands show us how many have been at a family gathering:

- 1-25
- 26-50
- 51-75
- 76-100
- more than 100?

No matter how many people are at your gathering it may be more important that there were a few you call family, the people with great significance in your life. Think about what this means to you even as an adult. As we go through the workshop today, please keep this in mind.

### **Step 1.3 Orientation to participant materials**

You will see that you have a folder with the handouts for today's training. On the left hand side you will find the Agenda, the Learning Objectives and two other handouts that we will refer you to later in the session. On the right hand side you will find a copy of the PowerPoint presentation and the Participant Handout packet. You will notice that the packet is paginated for easy reference.

### **Step 1.4 Overview of the workshop**

As you can see by the agenda, (in the folder pocket) we have lots to accomplish in these three hours. *Go over the agenda with them.*

Everyone should have brought the Relative Resource narratives from their units. (One narrative per worker, as noted in the Pre-work material received prior to the workshop). If someone doesn't have them, at break, please make sure you print them. We will be working with them immediately following break.

### **Step 1.5 Learning Objectives**

#### **PPT #5**

*Refer the group to their **HO** in their folder pocket on the Learning Objectives*  
*On a PowerPoint **slide #5** display the condensed Learning Objectives and go over them for the group paraphrasing each:*

#### **Workshop Objectives:**

- Connecting relative identification, exploration and utilization to relevant policy, law, practice guidelines
- Understanding supervisory role and responsibilities

- Supervisory performance self assessment and preparation for planning conversation with PA/APA

<b>Step 2:</b>	<b>Creating a Sense of Importance for Relative Identification and Exploration: What it means to the child</b>	<b>🕒 15 min. 9:15-9:30</b>
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**Step 2.1 Introduction of the Antwone Fisher Story**

As part of your pre-work we asked you to view the movie *Antwone Fisher*. It is about a young man who is having some emotional difficulties early on in his career with the Navy. He is sent to the Navy psychiatrist who discovers that Antwone’s distress may connect to his separation from and loss of his family. Antwone grew up in foster care, never knowing his mother, father or any of his extended family. This movie reminds us of what family means to children and we’d like you to keep this in mind as we go through the training today.

With this as the backdrop, talk about OCFS philosophical base and outcomes related to the identification and exploration of relatives.

**Step 2.2 Rationale for the Workshop –**

*(See Appendix 1 and 2 for full text drafted by Maine Child Welfare District Operations Managers)*

- **Connections to Guiding References** (policy, law, CFSR linkages)

**PPT # 6**

I think everyone who works in our agency and in Child Welfare in general, believes that maintaining family connections is best for both children and families. The Child Welfare field has been trying to create success in this area, which is why it is stressed so heavily in the CFSR process, as it is recognized that children with strong family connections have better outcomes as adults. This training is to provide information and expectations as we move forward in fully implementing our beliefs and policy. Policy already states that:

- The Department firmly believes that whenever possible children need to be placed with relatives or with someone with whom they have a significant bond or connection. Determining who constitutes family is a critical component of our work. It is a fluid process. It needs to begin from the moment that we first interact with a family, and then be examined and reexamined throughout the life of the case.
- When we have not made the decision to remove children from the home, we have a responsibility to establish family and community connections. Strong and nurturing relationships can often provide the necessary

supports that enable families to remain together and prevent the need for separation and removal.

According to the July Management Report on relative placements the statewide average was 26.7%. We have been increasing in relative placements for well over the past year. As you are probably aware we are now looking at first placements for new children in care to see how many are placed with relatives and for those that aren't what the barriers are. For a long time it has been the belief that relatives are being actively sought as children enter custody. The first monthly report looking at new placements was compiled for July and showed that 51% of youth entering care were placed with relatives. This means staff are working hard to make sure children are placed with family. It is understood that countless kids are being diverted from coming into custody by working with kin to step up during the Safety Planning process. These numbers are not tracked but if they were, it would be clear that staff are rising to the challenge of finding and utilizing relatives. But like anything else, there is more to be done.

Currently, it is not likely that the **CFSR** review will find that documentation consistently reflects what is needed to meet requirements in this area of practice. Despite the fact that the state is at more than 25% of all children in care are in a relative placement, current documentation does not show the extent of identification and exploration that very well may be happening in the field. It also doesn't always reflect the connections that may have been found.

Both Maine **statute and policy** support and call for increased work with families. Although no one expects you to know these by memory, it is an expectation that you understand the intention of both, know how to access them, utilize both in your practice and expect the same of workers. As supervisors you should be teaching workers about the role of policy and statute in the work, model its use in your decision-making and demonstrate to your workers that you value it. We understand that there are sections of policy that need to be updated and we will do our part to update it. We see all of that as part of the administrative and educational aspects of your supervision. However even given the support of policy and statute making change is difficult for some and we need to recognize that challenge does not mean resistance. Problems will come about and sometimes we are challenged when we make decisions to place with relatives. The important thing is to keep challenging assumptions.

### ➤ **Agency Philosophy Connected to Research**

#### **PPT #7**

There is an article that will be handed out today by **David Rubin about his study**, called "Impact of Kinship Care on Behavioral Well-being for Children in Out-of-Home Care". This study was interesting to read as, although it showed that children in kinship care have better well-being and permanency outcomes, it is also realistic regarding the challenges. It acknowledges that there may be concerns with kin

placements, such as safety issues and economic impacts etc. The picture it paints is not perfect but does demonstrate benefits. This is just one piece of research that supports and provides rationale for our work with kin and that placement with kin is a sound child welfare decision. We should also remember the importance of keeping kids connected to their families or building connections that are not present when we become involved.

His study was intended to estimate the association between placement into kinship care and the likelihood of behavioral problems after 18 and 36 months in out-of-home care. There was a lower expected probability of behavior problems if children had entered early kinship care vs. general foster care with the risk for behavior problems for the group who entered kinship care following foster care somewhere in the middle. The study "...demonstrated a protective effect of kinship care on the early behavioral outcomes of a nationally representative cohort of children entering out of home care. Compared with children entering foster care, children entering kinship care had a lower estimated risk of behavioral problems, even after accounting for their lower baseline risk and increased placement stability. Even children who moved to kinship care after sustained periods of foster care showed some benefit. The magnitude of this association between placement setting and later behavioral problems should reassure a child welfare community that has increasingly moved children toward kinship placements in recent years." The study also talked about the increased family contacts for kids in kin placements which points to the need for Family Team Meetings and determining who the providers of natural family supports are and who else in the family is able to step up and support the family during this placement.

What else provides support for using Kin Care? The **federal government** has directed our focus to preserving connections Permanency Outcome 2 - The continuity of family relationships and connections is preserved.

- Children have permanency and stability in their living situations.
- The continuity of family relationships and connections is preserved for families

This is the CFSR section where our work in keeping kids connected with parents and siblings is reviewed. In our 2003 CFSR the final report said that "case reviewers found that in a majority of cases, the workers did not make concerted efforts to seek and assess relatives as placement resources, although this is required in BCFS policy" As you know statute and policy does not by itself change anything, which is why we said at the beginning you are the key links to change. Your work in reviewing and accepting or challenging the identification and exploration work of you staff is what is creating change. Much of the work that has already been done will be captured in our 2009 CFSR but more importantly we hopefully won't have kids exiting care with no connections and families we are working with will have more natural supports to help when we are no longer involved. This training is to further enhance our system in relation to relative involvement.

Mostly I would like to draw your attention to our **Practice Model** as this had its roots in our reform efforts, was influenced by staff at every level of our agency and by many

others outside our agency. In my mind it represents our best efforts to state how we want and will work with families beginning with the vision of joining "...with families and the community to promote long-term safety, well-being, and permanent families for children". While the entire Practice Model guides our work 3 statements that are especially relevant today are:

- We recognize that family members know the most about their own families. It is our responsibility to understand children and families within the context of their own family rules, traditions, history, and culture.
- When children cannot live safely with their families, the first consideration for placement will be with kinship connections capable of providing a safe and nurturing home.
- Life-long family connections are critical for children. It is our responsibility to promote and preserve kinship, sibling, and community connections for each child. We value past, present, and future relationships that consider the child's hopes and wishes.

➤ **Utilization of Relatives in Addition to Placement**

**PPT's # 8-12** Management Report (*Substitute state specific data into power point presentation.*)

As you can see from these slides from the management reports, good work is being done. We need to now take it the next step from initial identification to exploration and engagement. This will not only increase our placements with relatives but as also and as importantly, it will support or build if necessary kin networks for each child we work with. We need to make sure uncles can be uncles; grandparents can be just grandparents when they cannot or do not want to parent on a day-to-day basis. We need maternal and paternal family members. We also need to demonstrate our efforts, actions and results in our record. I will end on this piece of narration recently seen when looking at some records:

**Show PPT again:** "Kaylie, a young girl in foster care, remarked to a stranger at a spaghetti supper recently that she was no longer a foster kid, because now she lives with her grandparents."

I think from a child's sense of belonging that says it all.

<b>Step 3:</b>	<b>Introduction to Decisive Factors that indicate high quality identification and exploration: What does the documentation tell us?</b>	🕒 <b>5 min</b> <b>9:30-9:35</b>
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### Step 3.1 Introduction to Decisive Factors

To judge the quality of the work through reviewing the Relative Resource Narrative, it helps to have specific factors to be looking for. Recognizing that the content of the identification and exploration process is built over time, if all of the factors are present, the documentation is of the highest quality. If some factors are missing, depending on how important those factors are, quality may be diminished.

OCFS has developed a **draft** list of Decisive Factors for supervisors and others to use when judging quality of relative identification and exploration, case by case. *(States may use this list or develop their own.)*

### Step 3.2 Presentation of the OCFS Decisive Factors

#### **PPT #13** **HO 1**

*Refer participants to HO p. 1.* Explain that we will use this list of Decisive factors and apply it to a case study that we have developed. They will then have an opportunity to help to fine-tune the list of factors and then we will provide some time for participants to determine the quality of some of the Relative Resource narratives from their own units. This list, when finalized is meant to provide you with some guidance for reviewing the documentation.

*Go over the handout briefly, with participants. Mention that once they have worked with them they may have questions about them. Ask that they keep note of questions for discussion later on.*

<b>Step 4:</b>	<b>Application of the Decisive Factors: Case Study</b>	🕒 45 min 9:35-10:20
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#### Step 4.1 Introduce the Activity—Pairs then Small Groups

**HO's 1-5**

**PPT #14**

*Set up for small group work and large group debrief: To determine group size, divide the total number of participants by the number of Decisive Factor cards 's to get enough to have one group per Decisive Factor. While participants are working in pairs, circulate and give each participant a card with the number of their small group. (The card reads: Decide whether the Decisive Factor was Met, Partially Met or Unmet. And If not 'Met', identify what you would need to see in the narrative to rate it as having met this Decisive Factor.)*

*If you have limited space to break into groups, distribute cards in a way that minimizes the need for people to move from there seats. If you have a small number of participants you can double up DF's for one or more groups. Some DF's lend themselves to this if necessary.*

Refer the participants to **HO's pp. 1-5**. Now you will have an opportunity to apply this list of Decisive Factors (DF's) to a Relative Resources narrative that we created based on a narrative from the field. Your job is to simply see how this narrative holds up against the Decisive Factors list. We have purposefully not provided you with a case context, such as naming this as an assessment or custody or adoption case because we'd like you to simply focus on what you see present or absent in this one narrative, rather than apply an additional lens. *Ask participants to stay away from critiquing the DF's at this point. We will provide time for them to give feedback later on.*

We'd like you to spend a few minutes individually reading the case scenario and narrative. You will see that we have provided numbers next to each sentence. This is to help you to track the DF evidence you are finding and help us with our discussion later on. On the DF HO you may want to note the sentence number that demonstrates the DF's as you focus on each one. You will have about 10 minutes to work alone. We will let you know when it is time pair up.

*Give participants about 10 minutes for individual work.*

Now that you have had a chance to read the narrative, please pair up with someone near you to work together using HO pp. 1-5 to determine which decisive factors were met, partially met and not met, and make some notes to support your conclusions. Then determine what you would need to see in the narrative that would go toward meeting any unmet or partially met Decisive Factors. *(10 minutes in pairs)*

While you are working in pairs, we will circulate and give you a card that will assign you to your small group for the second part of this activity. The card will also assign you the DF that your small group will need to be prepared to comment on whether the DF was met, partially met or was unmet. And then you will need to talk about what you need to see in the narrative to meet that DF, if unmet. We will let you know when it is time to get into small groups.

## Step 4.2 Debrief in the Large Group

**Prepared Tally poster** (10 min) Use Trainer Note information in Debrief.

### PPT #15

### PPT's #16-25 All 10 Decisive Factors

Tell group that we have allowed only 1 minute per factor (2 pairs) to report out and we will be critiquing the individual DF's later.

*Ask the group to respond only to the 2 questions on the card for their assigned DF. Call on groups chronologically for the report out their findings on each of the DF's from 1-10. Show the corresponding PPT for each DF as the report-out progresses. Ask each grouping whether their Decisive Factor was met, unmet and why. Using the trainer note below, challenge conclusions that are not specifically supported. Then ask what the pair needed to see in the narrative to meet the DF, if unmet.*

*After the pairs have reported out on 1-10: (Assuming there is enough time)*

**Explain:** You will have an opportunity in a moment to contribute to this draft list of Decisive Factors but before we do that,

**Ask:** Given the experience you've had in applying the draft Decisive Factors so far, how do you see yourselves using this, once refined, with your individual workers, or in groups?

*Trainers will listen for and keep note of any possible DF's that have not previously been identified for use in Step 4.3 if not raised by participants there.*

- Some DF's may be more important to individual supervisors than others? Maybe there are some deal breakers?

## Trainer Note: Step 4.2 – Decisive Factors Analysis

### Deciding the Level of Quality for the Relative Resource Narrative Entry

## CASE STUDY ANALYSIS

Decisive Factor	Line numbers to support decisions
<p>1. Names, addresses, phone numbers, household composition, DOB's</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ DF #1 was heavily represented throughout. All had at least 1 element (name) in each entry.</li> </ul>	<p>3, 19, 26, 32, 37, 46, 50, 61, 66, 67, 68, 76, 83</p> <p>Partially Met- leaning towards Met</p>
<p>2. Evidence that the worker took steps to <b>identify</b> and attempted to personally <b>contact</b> and interview each maternal and paternal family member in a way that <b>invites</b> their potential participation with the child. (And any exception to this is documented.)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ # 2 DF has '<b>identify</b>' hidden in it. This narrative included 14 relatives identified.</li> <li>➤ 4 Family members were actually <b>interviewed</b> (in one instance it was only implied—Jacob, line 79)</li> <li>➤ #2 DF has <b>3 elements</b> within. How does one decide whether the worker engaged the family member in an inviting way? It's easy to decide if the family member has been contacted.</li> </ul>	<p>Identified - 3, 19, 26, 32, 37, 45, 50, 61, 66, 67, 68, 76, 83</p> <p>Contact - 5, 27, 54, 79,</p> <p>Partially Met</p>
<p>3. <b>Relationships with this child</b>—past and present and hopes for the future are explained</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ DF #3 Out of 11 entries, 5 referenced relationship with the child.</li> </ul>	<p>9, 10, 22, 41, 63, 81</p> <p>Partially Met</p>
<p>4. There is evidence that prior <b>Relative Resource entries</b> have been <b>reviewed</b> and have been incorporated into the current relative exploration.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ DF #4 There is no evidence that any prior Rel Resource entry was reviewed.</li> <li>➤ It is not noted that this may have been the first identification/exploration.</li> </ul>	<p>Unmet</p>
<p>5. Indication of what each maternal and paternal family member will <b>offer toward supporting this child</b> (if safe) in addition or instead of placement. (<b>DESIRED INVOLVEMENT</b>)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ DF #5 Between the 3 FM's Lucy, Jacob and Christine Fall, there are 5 instances where there is reference to what the FM could offer to the child.</li> </ul>	<p>9, 10, 29, 79, 80</p> <p>Partially met</p>

Decisive Factor	Line numbers to support decisions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ How does the FM want to be involved in the life of the child?</li> </ul>	
<p>6. Identification of <b>what supports</b> the child; the parents and the maternal and paternal family member will have <b>available to them</b>, should they become very involved with the care of this child.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ DF #6 - There are 4 references. What do we mean by support? Is it what people in their lives are supports in this situation to one another? Is it a service? Is it a strength identification? Are there too many people referenced in #6.</li> </ul>	<p>11, 39, 45, 56,</p> <p>Partially met-unmet</p>
<p>7. Indication of whether each maternal and paternal family member would attend <b>Family Team Meetings</b>, if invited.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ DF #7 - 2 Family Members 's were asked about attending.</li> </ul>	<p>12, 59</p> <p>Partially met – leaning towards - unmet</p>
<p>8. A thorough <b>exploration is done with the child</b>, considering his/her experiences, thoughts and feelings about each maternal and paternal family member that has been identified. Reference to the date of the face-to-face contact with the child is noted.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ DF #8 There is no indication that the worker explored with the child.</li> </ul>	<p>Unmet</p>
<p>9. There is a specific explanation for the <b>reasons why</b> any relative has been <b>excluded</b> from being considered as a resource. Refer to the location of supporting information.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ DF #9 It appears that 3 relatives have been ruled out, or are heading that way. There is scant information about the reasons.</li> <li>➤ Is it clear that the worker made these conclusions? There's no reference to any corroborating evidence contained in the file.</li> </ul>	<p>35, 42, 84</p> <p>Partially Met-leaning towards -Unmet</p>
<p>10. The entry identifies the <b>'Next Steps'</b> for future exploration</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ DF #10 There are no next steps</li> </ul>	<p>Unmet</p>

**Step 4.3 Opportunity for Contributions to the Decisive Factor List (10 min)**

*Have one trainer facilitate and one trainer scribe information on a lap top computer for later use.*

**PPT #26**

***Explain** that shortly we will provide an opportunity for participants to work with their own narratives, but before we do that we'd like their input. Ask the group to comment on their experience using the Decisive Factor list to determine quality of the case study narrative. Ask what they would add or change in this list. Ask Martha/Francis to make notes or record ideas on flip chart. Bring out any possible DF's that were identified in Step 4.2*

***Explain** what OCFS will do with these ideas. Ideas will be collected during the three workshops with the rest of the Supervisors and then we will collate it and provide it to SMT for decision-making.*

**Explain:** If you did not bring Relative Resource narratives from each of your unit members, please use the break to print them. You will be working with them next.

<b>BREAK</b>	Put stacks of copies of Decisive Factors handout on each table for use in next activity	15 minutes
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Step 5	Application of the Decisive Factors to Examples from the Field	🕒 40 min 10:35-11:15
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### Step 5.1 Set up the Activity—Individual Work

**PPT #27**

**PPT #28 Themes—Strengths/Challenges**

**PPT #29 Reflection**

**HO p. 1** and their own relative resource narratives

For this next activity you will need HO p. 1 The Decisive Factors again. (*We will have placed multiple copies of the HO at each table*). We have also posted your ideas for this list where you can see them so that you can keep these in mind as well, although you only need to tend to the list on the HO. You will also need the Relative Resources narratives that you brought with you.

You will be working individually. You will have about 25 minutes to read your narratives and complete a Decisive Factors rating form for each one to assess the quality of the work from your own units. See how many of the narratives you can get through in this time frame. You may find it helpful, as in the previous activity, to note the Decisive Factor number next to the paragraph or line in the narrative where you find it.

We will stop you at 25 minutes. At that time, still working alone, we'd like you to note any themes as noted on the power point that might be emerging related to the quality in your unit. Start by looking for what is already present for your unit. Where is your unit already strong? Staff will already have some things under their belt. Your job may be only to get your unit to do something more often, or consistently. Then identify where things fall short in your unit.

Refer to **PPT #28**.

- ◆ Which decisive factors were met most consistently?
- ◆ What have you already contributed in your role as supervisor to enable your staff to meet these particular decisive factors?
- ◆ What, if any, decisive factors were more often not met?
- ◆ What stands out for you about the challenges you face, as a supervisor to enable your staff to meet the decisive factors that have not been met?

### Step 5.2 Debrief in the Large Group

**PPT #28 (continued)**

**PPT #29**

*Ask participants the following questions:*

- ◆ Which decisive factors were met most consistently?
- ◆ What have you contributed in your role as supervisor to enable your staff to meet these particular decisive factors?
- ◆ What, if any, decisive factors were more often not met?
- ◆ What stands out for you about the challenges you face, as a supervisor to enable your staff to meet the decisive factors that have not been met?
- ◆ Reflection: Think about...how will you use the information you learned with your units or with individual workers to bring them into the process? **PPT #21**

**Trainer Note: Follow up Questions**

- What are you seeing?
- Show of hands for how many narratives reviewed in the time allowed?  
1,2,3, or more  
For those who reviewed 3 or more, lets start with the trends you saw...
- How does your unit results compare with the Case Study results?
- What strengths did you find in your unit?
- What will be some of the easiest things to tackle?
- What will be some things that are more difficult to tackle?
- What's one thing you've learned today that your workers also need to know?
- How will you share what you learned?

*These debrief questions go toward getting ready for discussion with their own supervisor back in the office.*

Step 6	OCFS Supervisory Practice Expectations-- presentation	🕒 10 min 11:15-11:25
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### Step 6.1 Expectations

**HO's Identification and Exploration of Relatives –  
TOOLS and QUESTIONS  
OCFS Tentative Policy Considerations:  
PPT's # 30, 31, 32, 33**

Identification and exploration of relative resources in child welfare is an essential element of the work we do that keeps children and their families connected or in fact builds connections that have been lost or damaged over time. The actual identification and exploration work are caseworker tasks and must be then reviewed, assessed and accepted or not by the supervisor. **PPT #31:** Exploration cannot be done without a complete identification but it is also true that exploration leads to more family being identified. A complete exploration will occur over time and be an ongoing task of the worker. Review of the identification and exploration will also occur over time and is an ongoing task of the supervisor. We have not yet worked out with the PA's how you will demonstrate that you are accomplishing your task of ongoing and meaningful review. We expect to work with the PA's on setting those expectations soon after this training is completed so ideas you have are welcomed and can help shape those soon to be expectations. Other nuts and bolts will be specific identification of time periods or case actions that will require that you as the case owning supervisor or case transferring supervisor have reviewed and approved of the status of the relative identification and exploration. Some of those times are:

- When assessment becomes a case; either a service case or a custody case
- Prior to the first FTM
- Prior to Removal: When anticipating the removal of a child the relative exploration must be fully documented and approved before the family team meeting or team decision-making occurs that is directed at possible removal.
- At change of goal-reunification to TPR
- Any case transfer within the office or between districts:
  - Permanency unit to adoption unit
  - From one permanency unit to another due to:
  - Loss of worker (such as end of employment)
  - Prior to any change of placement:
  - Kin placement to new kin placement
  - Foster care to Kin placement
  - Seeking a residential placement
  - Leaving a residential placement

## Step 6.2 Identification of Relative Resources

**PPT # 32:** Identification of relatives is a proactive responsibility that relies on curiosity, attention to detail, and effective interviewing. In reviewing a relative resources narrative for full identification the supervisor must look for:

- Discussion with the mother of who makes up her family.
  - Maternal family members
  - The mothers parents including current or former step parents or adoptive parents
  - The mothers siblings including half or step siblings
  - The mothers grand parents
    - The maternal family is another source of information about the paternal family
- Discussion with the father (legal / alleged) of who makes up his family
  - Paternal family members
  - The fathers parents including current or former step parents or adoptive parents
  - The fathers siblings including half or step siblings
  - The fathers grand parents
  - The fathers aunts, uncles, and cousins
    - The paternal family is another source of information about the maternal family

Workers will need your assistance in using their motivational interviewing skills to find all the connections that exist in every family. Their job is to take one piece of the family string and begin to roll it up as you might yarn. Your job is to assess whether that ball of family yarn is sufficient given the status of the assessment or case. Besides using their interviewing skills you need to help them be creative in their searches. Some tools you might supply your workers with are: (You will find this as a **handout** on the **Resource Table**.)

- Genograms
- Record searches- often these searches will yield names but also cause questions to be asked. Supervisors must see that workers follow up on information in case records.
- Talking to School personnel. Many school officials have know families for years
- Marriage certificates- make active use of our vital records section
- Letter to relatives that are not local asking for family history
- Has their ever been a family reunion? Who organized it?

Of course, there are other strategies and tools that you have or use with your staff.

## Step 6.3 Exploration of Relative Resources

Exploration is the work of finding how does this family function? Who has what role? Some things you should be looking for in narration are:

- Who is close to the parent (s) and / children.
- Who is estranged and why?
- Who has been involved as the family struggled?
- Who did not know the family was struggling but wants to help?
- Who might be a placement possibility?
- Who cannot or will not be a placement possibility but wants to be involved and help? How do they see themselves as being able to help?
- Who might pose a safety risk to the children? How do we know that?
- Is there a person who is seen as a leader in the larger family?

Again you have other ideas and strategies that you employ now. **PPT #33:** The greatest skill you can teach your staff is to be curious about the families and the best way to teach that is through your own curiosity.

You will find this as a **handout** on the **Resource Table**.

Step 7	<b>Self-Assessment of Current Supervisory Practice in Meeting Expectations for Comprehensive Identification and Exploration of Relatives:</b> Preparation for Conversation with PA/APA.	⌚ 10 min  11:25-11:35
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**Step 7.1 Introduction**

**PPT #34**

*Introduce the Self Assessment by saying that we are providing this activity as a way to help them to prepare for participants' upcoming planning conversations with their PA's and APA's. This assessment is one way for them to gain information about how their supervisory practice is measuring up toward meeting the practice goals and expectations in bringing their unit into full compliance.*

**Step 7.2 Complete the Self Assessment**

*Refer participants to **HO p. 6** Self-Assessment and provide about 10 minutes for them to complete their assessments.*

**Step 7.3 Optional Office Activity**

**PPT #35 Beliefs and Values**

*Refer participants to the **HO on p. 7**. Go over the introduction and questions with them.*  
 This next activity is also intended to help prepare you to hold your conversation with your PA or APA.

**Trainer Note:** *If time permits, provide more in depth information than what is on the HO.*

In the literature (Kinship Practice in Washington State, 2003) we found references to commonly held beliefs and assumptions in the field that need to be challenged. We've all heard, "**The apple doesn't fall far from the tree**". This may make it scary to take a chance in involving relatives.

One worker talked about "**Middle Class Bias**". Having to consider moving a baby from a foster home that looks real good to a home that maybe isn't so sanitary and not even set up for a baby yet...

**Attachment:** The belief that children who have been in a placement 9-12 months can't be moved without irrevocably damaging their primary attachment is very wide spread. Attachment disorder is invoked as a reason not to move children.

**Another attitude might be:** "**Once a abuser, always a abuser**".

**Concerns:** If there was an occasion in the supervisor's/worker's past when they judged a relative as capable and then something went wrong, they may be less willing to take a chance on a relative in the future.

Supervisors or workers may not think it is their role or that they have permission to overturn the decisions made about relatives by another worker or supervisor.

Step 8	Quiz	🕒 15 min 11:35-11:50
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**Step 8.1 Distribute Quiz**

**PPT #36 -**

*Hand out the quiz and explain it is multiple choice and that they have 10 minutes to complete number of questions.*

**Step 8.2 Collect Quiz**

*Collect the quiz from everyone and explain that we will provide their individual results to them and we will keep track of the results in a data-base. They will share their individual results with their supervisors.*

Step 9	Wrap Up and Workshop Evaluation Information	🕒 10 min 11:50-12:00
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**Step 9.1 Taking the learning back to the office.**

**PPT #37**

*Refer to **HO p.8** and ask that participants to write down what they will commit to do in addition to or differently from what they are already doing to meet the goals in this area of practice.*

You may want to share this with your supervisor when you return to your office.

**Step 9.2 Workshop Evaluation**

**PPT #48**

We are doing the workshop evaluation a little differently. Instead of a paper evaluation that you turn into us, to make it more anonymous and encourage honest feedback, we will be doing our evaluations through a website called Survey Monkey. In a few days you will receive email instructions and a request to complete the survey. We hope that you will complete the survey because your input will help us as we go forward and continue to create supervisory training. We want to make it the most useful to you.

**Step 9.3 Final Remarks**

**PPT #39** Kaylie-quote (repeat)

**PPT #40** Thank-you!

# Appendices

## Appendix 1

### Full text of:

### **Francis Sweeney, District Operations Manager, Southern Districts and his contributions to Steps 1, 2 & 6.**

#### **Step 1: Description of Supervisory Practices Program**

We, Senior Management, have said for a long time, that Supervisors are the most important link between public policy or expectations and results for families. Saying it, and believing it, has been true for a long time. Program Administrators trust and rely on each of you to carry out the mission of the agency where we join with families and the community to promote long-term safety, well-being, and permanent families for children. They constantly think of what you need, how much can we ask of you, what can be let go of and what is a core function? Those discussions happen with you and they happen in other forums. There are no easy answers for what is needed because if there were I know you would have already discovered them. We know that we ask a lot of you and hope this training is of value to you from the moment you leave here today.

Over the years we have taken many actions towards providing specific trainings to assist supervisors in reaching professional and outcome goals. Professional development and progress towards the highest level of expertise in current Child Welfare practice has been our charge for a long time. We have provided a variety of trainings, in a range of formats, from graduate classes to topic specific trainings such as performance management. At each step we have had positive results yielding what I think of as the most talented group of professional child welfare supervisors anywhere. It is with the goal and hope of continuing to provide clear expectations and training to you that we are here today. We know that continual work with you is our responsibility and part of our charge is to make trainings timely, relevant and useful to you.

Our partners, for many years and since some of us were workers, has been with CWTI. That partnership has changed and evolved over time but remains as important today as at any time in the past. It is changing due to financial needs and limitations but also has had to evolve as we learn more and more about training for modern child welfare practice. Gone are the days when we say to CWTI here is a topic, please develop training, staff the training and then provide it across the state. We are in a time when we must look more closely at the nature of our partnership and make sure that when we ask for a training we are prepared to help develop it, help staff it, and certainly help deliver it. We have also come to recognize that we (OCFS) must follow up back in the district to make sure that the training that was provided has made its way into practice. Many of us here have attended trainings, received useful materials or ideas and with good intentions headed back to our offices fully intending to implement the trainings only to be so quickly back in the soup of everyday work our good intentions lose out to the speed and complexity of an everyday child welfare office

So going forward with future trainings you should expect that Martha and I along with Gretchen and Lee are charged with seeing that supervisors are provided with relevant and timely training that helps in the attainment of professional goals and specific outcomes for the children and families we serve. That doesn't mean we will develop them in isolation as we expect to reach out to the PA's, the supervisors and even workers who have a lot to say about what skills supervisors have that help them the most. This training today is our first attempt at limiting the time training is in development, speeding up its time to delivery and making sure the connection to practice is followed up after the training. This training will not be perfect and in some ways it will remain incomplete until we have worked with the rest of the supervisor group. Part of what we will be doing today is looking for you to shape the final product, both the training as a product and the expectations from the training as a product. I asked that you think of the next three hours as both training but also a setting of agency expectations for supervisors in the process of Identification and Exploration of relative's resources.

### **Step 2.3 Rationale for the Workshop -**

- **Connections to Guiding References (policy, law, CFSR linkages)**
- **Agency Philosophy Connected to Research**
- **Utilization of Relatives in Addition to Placement**

### **PPT #6 Connections**

I think everyone in Child Welfare agrees that maintaining family connections are best for children and that our whole field is trying to create success in that area. This training is to provide information and expectations for going forward in fully implementing our **beliefs and policy**. Policy that already says

- The Department firmly believes that whenever possible children need to be placed with relatives or with someone with whom they have a significant bond or connection. Determining who constitutes family is a critical component of our work. It is a fluid process. It needs to begin from the moment that we first interact with a family, and then be examined and reexamined throughout the life of the case.
- When we have not made the decision to remove children from the home, we have a responsibility to establish family and community connections. Strong and nurturing relationships can often provide the necessary supports that enable families to remain together and prevent the need for separation and removal.

According to the most recently reported statistics on relative placements the statewide average was more than (June 2008 = 25.9) % which slightly exceeds the target set by Central Office. That statistic has been on the rise for the past year or more. This means that staff are working hard to make sure children are placed with family. It is understood that countless kids are being diverted from coming into custody by working with kin to step up during the Safety Planning process. These numbers are

not tracked but if they were, it would be clear that staff are rising to the challenge of finding and utilizing relatives. But like anything else, there is more to be done.

Knowing that children who are placed with relatives experience better outcomes the purpose of this workshop is to increase the overall OCFS practice in identifying and exploring relatives for each and every child involved with child welfare services so that every child has lifetime family connections even in situations where children cannot live with family members.

Currently, it is not likely that the **CFSR** review will find that documentation consistently reflects what is needed to meet requirements in this area of practice. Although the state is at more than 25% of all children in care are in a relative placement, current documentation does not show the extent of identification and exploration that very well may be happening in the field and doesn't always note the connections that may have been found.

Both Maine **statute and policy** support and call for increased work with families. My expectation about policy is that you know it exists and I expect you to know how to get to it, how to teach workers about the role of policy and statute, model its use in your decision making, demonstrate to your workers that you value it and we will do our part to update the policy and make it as helpful as we can. I see all of that as part of the administrative and educational aspects of your supervision. However even given the support of policy and statute making change it is not a smooth road. Problems will come about and sometimes we are challenged when we make decisions to place with relatives.

## **PPT #7**

There is an article by **David Rubin about his study**, called [“Impact of Kinship Care on Behavioral Well-being for Children in Out-of-Home Care.”](#) The reason I like this study is it is realistic about kin families, safety issues, economic impacts etc. The picture it paints is not all rose colored but does demonstrate benefits. I want you each to be assured or reassured if necessary that evidence is sound in selecting kin for children coming into care. We also must remember and be increasingly successful in keeping kids connected to their families or in fact building connections that are not present when we become involved. This is just one piece of research that supports and provides rationale for our work with kin.

His study was intended to estimate the association between placement into kinship care and the likelihood of behavioral problems after 18 and 36 months in out-of-home care. All said and done there was a lower expected probability of behavior problems if children had entered early kinship care vs. general foster care with the risk for behavior problems for the group who entered kinship care following foster care somewhere in the middle. The study “...demonstrated a protective effect of kinship care on the early behavioral outcomes of a nationally representative cohort of children entering out of homecare. Compared with children entering foster care, children entering kinship care had a lower estimated risk of behavioral problems, even after accounting for their lower baseline risk and increased placement stability. Even children who moved to

kinship care after sustained periods of foster care showed some benefit. The magnitude of this association between placement setting and later behavioral problems should reassure a child welfare community that has increasingly moved children toward kinship placements in recent years. I would encourage you to each read this and other articles that come to your attention.

*Refer to the article on the Resource Table for them to pick up at break..*

What else provides support for using Kin Care?

The **federal government** has directed our focus to preserving connections Permanency Outcome 2 - The continuity of family relationships and connections is preserved.

- Children have permanency and stability in their living situations.
- The continuity of family relationships and connections is preserved for families

This is the section where our work in keeping kids connected with parents and siblings is reviewed. Our policy is strongly worded and references statute and has for quite some time. In our 2003 CFSR the final report said that “case reviewers found that in a majority of cases, the workers did not make concerted efforts to seek and assess relatives as placement resources , although this is required in BCFS policy” Strong statute and policy does not by itself change anything. Your work in reviewing and accepting the identification and exploration work of you staff is what is creating change. Much of the work that has already been done will change the Federal view in 2009 and this training is looking at us being a better system in relation to relatives not that we are now a ‘bad’ system.

Mostly I would like to draw your attention to our **Practice Model** as this had its roots in our reform efforts, was influenced by every level of person in our employment and by many others outside the agency. In my mind it represents our best efforts to state how we want and will work with families beginning with the vision of joining “...with families and the community to promote long-term safety, well-being, and permanent families for children” While the entire Practice Model guides our work 3 that are especially relevant today are:

- We recognize that family members know the most about their own families. It is our responsibility to understand children and families within the context of their own family rules, traditions, history, and culture.
- When children cannot live safely with their families, the first consideration for placement will be with kinship connections capable of providing a safe and nurturing home.
- Life-long family connections are critical for children. It is our responsibility to promote and preserve kinship, sibling, and community connections for each child. We value past, present, and

future relationships that consider the child's hopes and wishes. No one should take any of what I have said to mean that good work has not been happening.

### **PPT's # 8-12 Management Report**

Because it has. Good work is being done and we now need to do more of it, more in depth and increase our placements with relatives but as important and possibly more important we need to support or build if necessary kin networks for each child we work with. We need to make sure uncles can be uncles; grandparents can be just grandparents when they cannot or will not parent on a day to day basis. We need maternal and paternal family members. We also need to demonstrate our efforts, actions and results in our record. I will end on this piece of narration recently seen when Dan was looking at some records.

### **Step 6.1 Expectations**

**HO's (on the trainer table and one on the resource table)  
PPT's # 32, 33, 34, 35**

Identification and exploration of relative resources in child welfare is an essential element of the work we do that keeps children and their families connected or in fact builds connections that have been lost or damaged over time. The actual identification and exploration work are case worker tasks and must be then reviewed, assessed and accepted or not by the supervisor. Exploration cannot be done without a complete identification but it is also true that exploration leads to more family being identified. A complete exploration will occur over time and be an ongoing task of the worker. Review of the identification and exploration will also occur over time and is an ongoing task of the supervisor. We have not yet work out with the PA's how you will demonstrate that you are accomplishing your task of ongoing and meaningful review. We expect to work with the PA's on setting those expectations soon after this training is completed so ideas you have are welcomed and can help shape those soon to be expectations. Other nuts and bolts will be specific identification of time periods or case actions that will require that you as the case owning supervisor or case transferring supervisor have reviewed and approved of the status of the relative identification and exploration. Some of those times are:

- When assessment becomes a case; either a service case or a custody case
- Prior to the first FTM
- Prior to Removal: When anticipating the removal of a child the relative exploration must be fully documented and approved before the family team meeting or team decision-making occurs that is directed at possible removal.
- At change of goal-reunification to TPR

- Any case transfer within the office or between districts:
  - Permanency unit to adoption unit
  - From one permanency unit to another due to:
    - Loss of worker (such as end of employment)
- Prior to any change of placement:
  - Kin placement to new kin placement
  - Foster care to Kin placement
  - Seeking residential through the ITRT process-
  - Leaving residential

## Step 6.2 Identification

Identification of relatives is a proactive responsibility that relies on curiosity, attention to detail, and effective interviewing. In reviewing a relative resources narrative for full identification the supervisor must look for:

- Discussion with the mother of who makes up her family.
  - Maternal family members
  - The mothers parents including current or former step parents or adoptive parents
  - The mothers siblings including half or step siblings
  - The mothers grand parents
    - The maternal family is another source of information about the paternal family
- Discussion with the father (legal / alleged) of who makes up his family
  - Paternal family members
  - The fathers parents including current or former step parents or adoptive parents
  - The fathers siblings including half or step siblings
  - The fathers grand parents
  - The fathers aunts, uncles, and cousins
    - The paternal family is another source of information about the maternal family

Workers will need your assistance in using their motivational interviewing skills to find out all the connections that exist in every family. Their job is to take one piece of family string and begin to roll it up as you might yarn. Your job is to assess whether that ball of family yarn is sufficient given the status of the assessment or case. Besides using their interview skills you need to help them be creative in their searches. Some tools you might supply your workers with are: (You will find this as a **handout** on the **Resource Table**.)

- Genograms

- Record searches- often these searches will yield names but also cause questions to be asked. Supervisors must see that workers follow up on information in case records.
- Talking to School personnel. Many school officials have know families for years
- Marriage certificates- make active use of our vital records section
- Letter to relatives that are not local asking for family history
- Has their ever been a family reunion? Who organized it?

There are of course other strategies and tools that you have or use with your staff. (If there is time to ask for ideas / strategies and capture them here?)

### Step 6.3 Exploration

Exploration is the work of finding how does this family function? Who has what role? Some things you should be looking for in narration are:

- Who is close to the parent (s) and / children.
- Who is estranged and why?
- Who has been involved as the family struggled?
- Who did not know the family was struggling but wants to help?
- Who might be a placement possibility?
- Who cannot or will not be a placement possibility but wants to be involved and help? How do they see themselves as being able to help?
- Who might pose a safety risk to the children? How do we know that?
- Is there a person who is seen as a leader in the larger family?

Again you have other ideas and strategies that you employ now. The greatest skill you can teach your staff is to be curious about the families and the best way to teach that is through your own curiosity.

You will find this as a **handout** on the **Resource Table**.

## Appendix 2

Full text of:

**Martha Proulx, District Operations Manager, Northern Districts and her contributions to Steps 1,2 & 6.**

### **Step 1: Description of Supervisory Practices Program**

Supervisors are the most important link between our policies and practice and improving the lives of the children and families we serve. Senior Management has been saying this and believing it for a long time. You are responsible for not only knowing our policies but also in ensuring that your staff are carrying them out in a way that is consistent with our agency beliefs and Practice Model. Program Administrators trust and rely on each of you to carry out the mission of the agency where we join with families and the community to promote long-term safety, well-being, and permanent families for children. They constantly think of what you need, how much can we ask of you, what can be let go of and what is a core function? They seek your input in these discussions, which happen both with you, and in other forums. There are no easy answers for what is needed because if there were you would have already discovered them. We know that we ask a lot of you and we hope this training is of value to you and is delivered in such a way that it can be applied from the moment you leave here today.

As you know, we have undertaken many different forms of supervisory training throughout the years. These trainings have been to assist supervisors in reaching their professional and outcome goals. Professional development and progress towards the highest level of expertise in current Child Welfare practice has been our charge for a long time. These trainings have included graduate classes, conferences and specific trainings such as performance management. At each step we have had positive results. We have a group of professional child welfare supervisors that are getting results for families. The fact that you are talented leaders is not only recognized internally, but on a state level and national level. The success you have led is the reason other states are now looking at many of our practices and coming to Maine to see how we do things. It has also been publicly recognized by many of our former critics. We want to be able to help you and, in turn, help your staff continue to make the changes needed and have positive results for families. It is with the goal and hope of continuing to provide clear expectations and training to you that we are here today. We know that continual work with you is our responsibility and part of our charge is to make trainings timely, relevant and useful to you.

CWTI has been our partner in training initiatives for many years. That partnership has changed and evolved over time but remains as important today as at any time in the past. Some of these changes have been due to the financial needs and limitations and others have evolved as we learn more about training for emerging child welfare

practice. Gone are the days when we say to CWTI here is a topic, please develop training, staff the training and then provide it across the state. We are now looking more closely at the nature of our partnership and making sure that when we ask for a training we are prepared to help develop it, staff it, and deliver it. We have also come to recognize that we (OCFS) must follow up back in the district to make sure that the training that was provided has made its way into practice. We have all attended trainings, received useful materials or ideas and with our good intentions and renewed energy headed back to our offices fully intending to implement the trainings only to be diverted in the day to day work and the information goes on the shelf with all the other training folders and binders.

So going forward with future trainings you should expect that Francis and I along with Gretchen and Lee are charged with seeing that supervisors are provided with relevant and timely training that helps in the attainment of professional goals and specific outcomes for the children and families we serve. We are not planning to develop them in isolation. We will be reaching out to the PAs, APAs, supervisors and even workers who have a lot to say about what skills supervisors have that help them the most. Today's training is our first attempt at limiting the time training is in development, speeding up its time to delivery and making sure the connection to practice is followed up after the training. This training will not be perfect. Part of what we will be doing today is looking for you to shape the final product, both the training as a product and the expectations from the training as a product. I ask that you think of the next three hours as not only training but also a setting of agency expectations for supervisors in the process of Identification and Exploration of relative resources.

### **Step 2.3 Rationale for the Workshop -**

- **Connections to Guiding References (policy, law, CFSR linkages)**
- **Agency Philosophy Connected to Research**
- **Utilization of Relatives in Addition to Placement**

#### **PPT #6 Connections**

I think everyone who works in our agency and in Child Welfare in general, believes that maintaining family connections is best for both children and families. The Child Welfare field has been trying to create success in this area, which is why it is stressed so heavily in the CFSR process, as it is recognized that children with strong family connections have better outcomes as adults. This training is to provide information and expectations as we move forward in fully implementing our beliefs and policy. Policy already states that:

- The Department firmly believes that whenever possible children need to be placed with relatives or with someone with whom they have a significant bond or connection. Determining who constitutes family is a critical component of our work. It is a fluid

process. It needs to begin from the moment that we first interact with a family, and then be examined and reexamined throughout the life of the case.

- When we have not made the decision to remove children from the home, we have a responsibility to establish family and community connections. Strong and nurturing relationships can often provide the necessary supports that enable families to remain together and prevent the need for separation and removal.

According to the July Management Report on relative placements the statewide average was 26.7%. We have been increasing in relative placements for well over the past year. As you are probably aware we are now looking at first placements for new children in care to see how many are placed with relatives and for those that aren't what the barriers are. For a long time it has been the belief that relatives are being actively sought as children enter custody. The first monthly report looking at new placements was compiled for July and showed that 51% of youth entering care were placed with relatives. This means staff are working hard to make sure children are placed with family. It is understood that countless kids are being diverted from coming into custody by working with kin to step up during the Safety Planning process. These numbers are not tracked but if they were, it would be clear that staff are rising to the challenge of finding and utilizing relatives. But like anything else, there is more to be done.

Currently, it is not likely that the **CFSR** review will find that documentation consistently reflects what is needed to meet requirements in this area of practice. Despite the fact that the state is at more than 25% of all children in care are in a relative placement, current documentation does not show the extent of identification and exploration that very well may be happening in the field. It also doesn't always reflect the connections that may have been found.

Both Maine **statute and policy** support and call for increased work with families. I don't think anyone expects you to know these by memory but it is an expectation that you utilize policy in your practice and teach and expect workers to use it as a frequent guide. Supervisors should be teaching workers about the role of policy and statute, model its use in your decision making, demonstrate to your workers that you value it. We understand that there are sections of policy that need to be updated and may conflict with sections of policy that have not yet been changed. We will do our part to update the policy and make it as helpful as we can. I see all of that as part of the administrative and educational aspects of your supervision. However even given the support of policy and statute making change it is difficult for some and we need to recognize that challenge does not mean resistance. Problems will come about and sometimes we are challenged when we make decisions to place with relatives. The important thing is to keep challenging assumptions.

### **PPT #7**

There is an article that will be handed out today by **David Rubin about his study**, called "Impact of Kinship Care on Behavioral Well-being for Children in Out-of-Home Care. This study was interesting to read as, although it showed that children in

kinship care have better well being and permanency outcomes, it is also realistic regarding the challenges. It acknowledges that there may be concerns with kin placements, such as safety issues and economic impacts etc. The picture it paints is not perfect but does demonstrate benefits. This is just one piece of research that supports and provides rationale for our work with kin and that placement with kin is a sound child welfare decision. We should also remember the importance of keeping kids connected to their families or building connections that are not present when we become involved.

His study was intended to estimate the association between placement into kinship care and the likelihood of behavioral problems after 18 and 36 months in out-of-home care. There was a lower expected probability of behavior problems if children had entered early kinship care vs. general foster care with the risk for behavior problems for the group who entered kinship care following foster care somewhere in the middle. The study "...demonstrated a protective effect of kinship care on the early behavioral outcomes of a nationally representative cohort of children entering out of homecare. Compared with children entering foster care, children entering kinship care had a lower estimated risk of behavioral problems, even after accounting for their lower baseline risk and increased placement stability. Even children who moved to kinship care after sustained periods of foster care showed some benefit. The magnitude of this association between placement setting and later behavioral problems should reassure a child welfare community that has increasingly moved children toward kinship placements in recent years." The study also talked about the increased family contacts for kids in kin placements which points to the need for FTMs and determining who the providers natural family supports are and who else in the family is able to step up and support the family during this placement.

The **federal government** has directed our focus to preserving connections Permanency Outcome 2 - The continuity of family relationships and connections is preserved.

- Children have permanency and stability in their living situations.
- The continuity of family relationships and connections is preserved for families

This is the section where our work in keeping kids connected with parents and siblings is reviewed. In our 2003 CFSR the final report said that "case reviewers found that in a majority of cases, the workers did not make concerted efforts to seek and assess relatives as placement resources, although this is required in BCFS policy" As you know statute and policy alone does not anything, which is why we said at the beginning you are the key links to change. Your work in reviewing and accepting or challenging the identification and exploration work of you staff is what is creating change. Much of the work that has already been done will be captured in our 2009 CFSR but more importantly we hopefully won't have kids exiting care with no connections and families we are working with will have more natural supports to help

when we are no longer involved. This training is to further enhance our system in relation to relative involvement.

Mostly I would like to draw your attention to our **Practice Model** as this had its roots in our reform efforts, was influenced by staff at every level of our agency and by many others outside our agency. In my mind it represents our best efforts to state how we want and will work with families beginning with the vision of joining "...with families and the community to promote long-term safety, well-being, and permanent families for children". While the entire Practice Model guides our work 3 statements that are especially relevant today are:

- We recognize that family members know the most about their own families. It is our responsibility to understand children and families within the context of their own family rules, traditions, history, and culture.
- When children cannot live safely with their families, the first consideration for placement will be with kinship connections capable of providing a safe and nurturing home.
- Life-long family connections are critical for children. It is our responsibility to promote and preserve kinship, sibling, and community connections for each child. We value past, present, and future relationships that consider the child's hopes and wishes.

I know good work is being done and I know it is being recognized, even if at times it does not seem that way. I hear people both at Central Office and in the district offices when I am there talking about relatives and acknowledging our change in involving them at all stages of a case. As I said this is about enhancing practice.

### **PPT's # 8,9,10,11,12 Management Report**

As you can see from these slides from the management reports, good work is being done. We need to now take it the next step from initial identification to exploration and engagement. This will not only increase our placements with relatives but as also and as importantly, it will support or build if necessary kin networks for each child we work with. We need to make sure uncles can be uncles; grandparents can be just grandparents when they cannot or do not want to parent on a day to day basis. We need maternal and paternal family members. We also need to demonstrate our efforts, actions and results in our record. I will end on this piece of narration recently seen when Dan was looking at some records (about the child who said she was no longer a foster child as she was placed with her grandparents). I think from a child's sense of belonging that says it all.

### **Step 6.1 Expectations**

**HO's (on the trainer table and one on the resource table)**

**PPT's # 32, 33, 34, 35**

Identification and exploration of relative resources in child welfare is an essential element of the work we do that keeps children and their families connected or rebuilds connections that have been lost or damaged over time. The actual identification and exploration work are caseworker tasks that are then reviewed, assessed and accepted or not by the supervisor. It is in this step that can guide workers toward the depth of exploration that can provide resources for the family. It is a process that continues through the life of the case as exploration cannot be done without a complete identification but it is also true that exploration leads to more family being identified. A complete exploration will occur over time and be an ongoing task of the worker. Review of the identification and exploration will also occur over time and is an ongoing task of the supervisor. We will be working with the PAs so everyone will know the expectations to ensure this work is being done. If you have ideas on what this could look like we welcome them so you can help shape the expectations. Other nuts and bolts will be specific identification of time periods or case actions that will require that you as the case owning supervisor or case transferring supervisor have reviewed and approved of the status of the relative identification and exploration. Some of those possible times are:

- When assessment becomes a case; either a service case or a custody case
- Prior to the first FTM
- Prior to Removal: When anticipating the removal of a child the relative exploration must be fully documented and approved before the family team meeting or team decision-making occurs that is directed at possible removal.
- At change of goal-reunification to TPR
- Any case transfer within the office or between districts:
  - o Permanency unit to adoption unit
  - o From one permanency unit to another due to:
  - o Loss of worker (such as end of employment)
- Prior to any change of placement:
  - o Kin placement to new kin placement
  - o Foster care to Kin placement
  - o Seeking residential through the ITRT process-
  - o Leaving residential

## **Step 6.2 Identification**

Identification of relatives is a proactive responsibility that relies on curiosity, attention to detail, and effective interviewing. In reviewing a relative resources narrative for full identification the supervisor must look for:

Discussion with the mother of who makes up her family.

- Maternal family members
  - The mothers parents including current or former step parents or adoptive parents
  - The mothers siblings including half or step siblings
  - The mothers grand parents
    - The maternal family is another source of information about the paternal family

Discussion with the father (legal / alleged) of who makes up his family

- Paternal family members
  - The fathers parents including current or former step parents or adoptive parents
  - The fathers siblings including half or step siblings
  - The fathers grand parents
  - The fathers aunts, uncles, and cousins
    - The paternal family is another source of information about the maternal family

Workers will need your assistance in using their motivational interviewing skills to find out all the connections that exist in every family. Their job is to take one piece of family string and begin to roll it up as you might yarn. Your job is to assess whether that ball of family yarn is sufficient given the status of the assessment or case. Besides using their interview skills you need to help them be creative in their searches. Some tools you might supply your workers with are: (You will find this as a **handout** on the **Resource Table**.)

- Genograms
- Record searches- often these searches will yield names but also cause questions to be asked. Supervisors must see that workers follow up on information in case records.
- Talking to School personnel. Many school officials have know families for years
- Marriage certificates- make active use of our vital records section
- Letter to relatives that are not local asking for family history
- Has their ever been a family reunion? Who organized it?

There are of course other strategies and tools that you have or use with your staff. (If time permits *ask for ideas / strategies and capture them here.*)

### Step 6.3 Exploration

Exploration is the work of finding how does this family function? Who has what role? Some things you should be looking for in narration are:

- Who is close to the parent (s) and / children.

- Who is estranged and why?
- Who has been involved as the family struggled?
- Who did not know the family was struggling but wants to help?
- Who might be a placement possibility?
- Who cannot or will not be a placement possibility but wants to be involved and help? How do they see themselves as being able to help?
- Who might pose a safety risk to the children? How do we know that?
- Is there a person who is seen as a leader in the larger family?

Again you have other ideas and strategies that you employ now. The greatest skill you can teach your staff is to be curious about the families and the best way to teach that is through your own curiosity.

You will find this as a **handout** on the **Resource Table**.