Fostering Readiness & Permanency Project
The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Children’s Bureau awarded six sites across the nation a five-year Permanency Innovations Initiative (PII) grant.
Background

- Arizona was chosen as one of these sites through a competitive grant application process.
- Over the five-year grant term, which began in September 2010, our state has the potential to be awarded $11.5 million to support the grant’s proposed permanency initiative.
PII Goals

• Improve permanency outcomes for children with the most serious barriers to permanency.
• Advance evidence-based programs and practices to eliminate the barriers to permanency and to increase the number of children/youth who achieve permanence.
• Disseminate findings from the six sites’ to improve knowledge in the child welfare field.
Arizona’s Initiative

• Arizona’s initiative is called the Fostering Readiness and Permanency (FRP) Project.
• It is a three-pronged approach to increase permanence
  — Improve young people’s readiness for permanence.
  — Increase the recruitment and preparedness of potential permanent placements.
  — Bolster the coordination of activities and services aimed at permanence.
Arizona’s Initiative

• The FRP Project aims to:
  – Increase the number of exits to permanent homes of young people who have been in care for one year or more.
  – Decrease the number of disruptions of proposed permanent homes (prior to finalization of adoption or guardianship).
  – Increase placement stability.
  – Increase the number of permanent connections for those young people who remain in care long-term.
Target Population

• FRP will focus on two target populations from the Central Region:
  – Legacy population
  – Prevention population
Legacy Population

Youth between the ages of 13 and 17.5 years who have been in out-of-home care for two years or more.
Prevention Population

- Children and youth between the ages of 5 and 17.5 years,
- Who have been in out-of-home care for one year,
- Are not likely to be reunified within the next three months,
- Are not in one of the exclusion categories,
- AND…
Prevention Population

...have at least one of the following predictors:

– The parent is unable/unwilling due to abandonment, relinquishment, or incarceration.
– The young person had three or more placements in the first 100 days of placements.
– The mother refused either mental health or substance abuse services.
– Either the young person or a parent has a substance abuse problem.
– The young person is a chronic runaway.
There will be three primary interventions involved in the Fostering Readiness and Permanency Project:

- Family Finding
- 3-5-7 Model
- CARE (Child Advocate and Recruitment Experts) Team
Family Finding Model

- Discovery
- Engagement
- Preparation and Planning
- Decision-Making
- Evaluation
- Follow-up Supports
3-5-7 Model

• Three Tasks
• Five Conceptual Questions
• Seven Critical Skill Elements
CARE Team

• Will coordinate the process so that both the potential permanent people and the youth are “ready” to engage in a relationship.

• Will coordinate the normal system activities with the activities of the interventions to ensure that they are aligned.
Intervention Practitioners

• CARE Team
  – Care Coordinator (contracted provider)
  – Youth Advocate (contracted provider)
  – CPS Specialist
Care Coordinator

- Mines the case files.
- Coordinates the CARE Team meetings.
- Searches for potential permanent placements/connections on-line and utilizes other services (Parent Locator).
- Makes referrals to the Family Finding service.
- Engages potential permanent people.
- Prepares potential permanent people.
- Facilitates the CARE Team following the six steps in the Family Finding Model.
- Supervises the Youth Advocate.
- Is a member of the CARE Team.
Youth Advocate

- Regularly meets with the young person.
- Engages the young person and builds rapport.
- Follows the 3-5-7 Model.
- Assists the young person in reconciling past experiences of loss and/or separation.
- Assesses the young person’s readiness for permanence.
- Advocates for the maintenance of healthy relationships and activities in the young person’s life.
- Is a member of the CARE Team.
CPS Specialist

- Coordinates the intervention services with other services.
- Keeps the team informed as to the youth’s well-being and placement.
- Communicates the processes and plans of the team to other providers and systems.
- Communicates plans of other systems and providers to the team.
- Completes system tasks necessary to pursue relationships and permanence.
- Is a member of the CARE Team.
CARE Team

- Prioritizes efforts toward locating and engaging potential permanent people.
- Assesses the readiness of the youth in conjunction with the readiness of the potential permanent people.
- Plans for relationship building and maintenance and for permanency options.
- Evaluates the well-being of the youth and healthiness of the relationships being forged.
- Decides on action plans related to permanent connections and permanent homes.
Intervention Overview

• The Care Coordinator will continuously search for and engage relatives and important others.

• The Youth Advocate will meet with the young person, working with him/her to be ready to engage in permanent relationships.

• The CARE Teams will focus on moving the young person toward permanence.
Intervention Overview

• One episode of the intervention will last six months.
• Aftercare, in the form of continued services from the Care Coordinator and Youth Advocate, will be provided for two to three months.
Implementing the Intervention

• The intervention is being implemented in the Central Region.
Implementing the Intervention

• All the grantee sites are being trained in and asked to adhere to implementation science. This is a scientific approach to implementing interventions that involves careful planning and evaluation.
Random Assignment

• The grant requires the use of a rigorous evaluation design.
• Rigorous evaluation design is accomplished in the FRP Project through random assignment.
Random Assignment

• Using random assignment with treatment and control groups allows the evaluation findings to:
  • Causally link the intervention to the outcomes
  • Report evidence-based practice
  • Share and inform other jurisdictions about the intervention
Random Assignment

- Ongoing CPS Specialists in the Central Region and Adoption CPS Specialists from the SW Region, will be randomly assigned to treatment (60%) or control (40%) groups.
- The young people on their caseloads who fit the eligibility requirements of one of the two target populations will be assigned to treatment and control groups based on the status of their CPS Specialist.
Caseloads and Treatment

CPS Specialists

• Treatment CPS Specialists will have a small percentage of children/youth in the treatment group on their caseloads.
Evaluating the Intervention

• Evaluation will be ongoing and take many forms.
  – Fidelity measures
  – Outcome measures
Evaluating the Intervention

All the young people who are enrolled in the study, either the treatment or control group, will participate in the evaluation.
Evaluating the Intervention

• Some systemic outcomes we have proposed to be measured include:
  – CPS Specialist satisfaction
  – Caseload sizes
  – CPS Specialist retention
FRP Project Timeline

• Usability testing (pilot tests) will begin in August of this year.
• Full-scale Implementation will begin in May/June 2013.
• The project will conclude in September 2015.
How the Project will Impact CPS Specialist’s Workload

The treatment CPS Specialists will have some additional workload requirements relating to the children/youth on their caseload who are in the study (remember this will only be a few).
How the Project will Impact CPS Specialist’s Workload

The treatment CPS Specialist’s will also have additional access to services and supports.
How the Project will Impact CPS Specialist’s Workload

• All CPS Specialists, both treatment and control, in the Central Region, YAP and Adoptions:
  - Will need to assist the evaluation interviewer in scheduling the pre- and post-interviews with the young people.
  - Will be asked to be a research participant (answering questions in an interview or completing a questionnaire) in the evaluations.
How the Project will Impact Supervisors and APMs

- All Supervisors in the Central Region, YAP, and Adoptions will participate in extensive training on Family Finding, the 3-5-7 Model, and the CARE Team approach.

- When re-assigning cases, additional efforts will be necessary to ensure that treatment cases go to treatment CPS Specialists and control cases go to control CPS Specialists.
How You Can Help

- Help us identify systemic barriers so that we can plan for them.
- Dispel rumors and myths about the project with information and facts.
- Maintain the rigor of the evaluation through adherence to the random assignment plan, the intervention plan, and the evaluation plan.
How You Can Help

• Spread the word about the good news of the project:
  – We were chosen to participate in a multi-million dollar federal initiative.
  – We have the opportunity to build an evidence-based practice.
  – We will have increased funding for some of our hardest to serve children/youth.
Thank You!

The Fostering Readiness & Permanency Project, operated by the Arizona Department of Economic Security is funded by the Children's Bureau, Administration on Children, Youth and Families, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, under grant number 90-CT-0155.
The Fostering Readiness & Permanency Project is operated by the Arizona Department of Economic Security and is made possible by grant number 90-CT-0155 from the Children’s Bureau. The contents of this presentation are solely the responsibility of the Arizona Department of Economic Security and do not necessarily represent the official views of the Children’s Bureau, ACYF, ACF, or HHS. The GRANTEE PROJECT/PROGRAM is funded by the Children's Bureau, Administration on Children, Youth and Families, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.