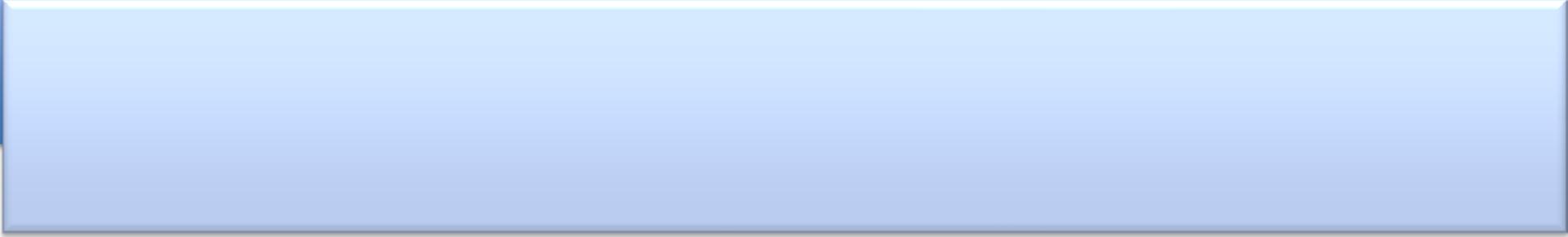


FINDING AND ENGAGING RELATIVES

The Honorable Jim Fun

Washington County Circuit Court



David Pike

Multnomah County DHS Branch Manager

LANE COUNTY

Amanda Monet

DHS Family Finding Coordinator and
Resource Developer

Christy Obie-Barrett

Executive Director

A Family for Every Child



DESCHUTES COUNTY FAMILY FINDING

“Dedicated to assuring that no youth will leave the Oregon Child Welfare system without a permanent lifelong connection to a caring adult”





Deschutes County Family Finding Model

Ali Mostue

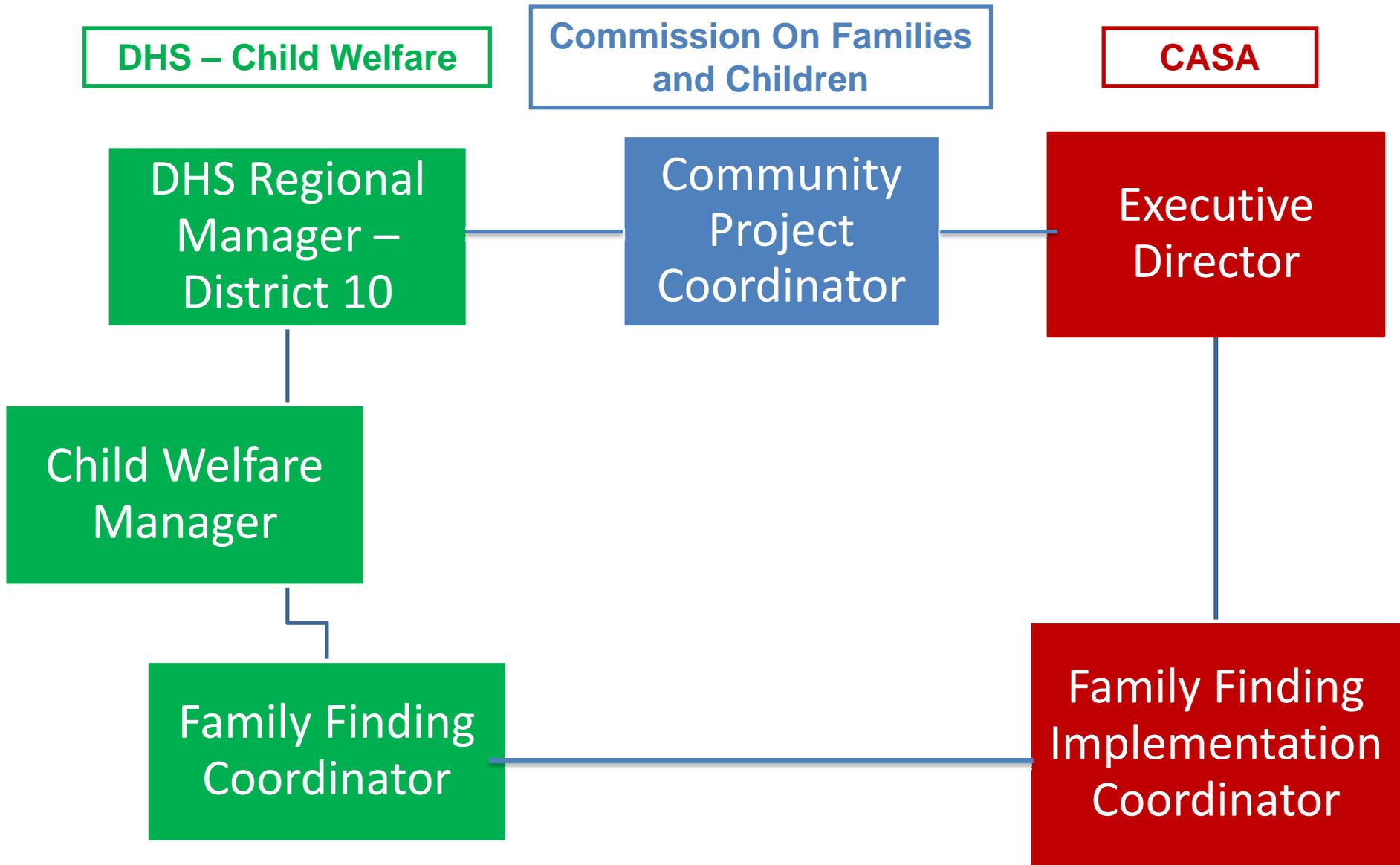
Family Finding Implementation Coordinator

- Casey Family Programs County
- Based on Kevin Campbell's Family Finding model



Deschutes County Family Finding Model

- A collaborative effort between the Department of Human Services (DHS), CASA, the Deschutes Children and Families Commission and the Casey Family Foundation.





Deschutes County Family Finding Model

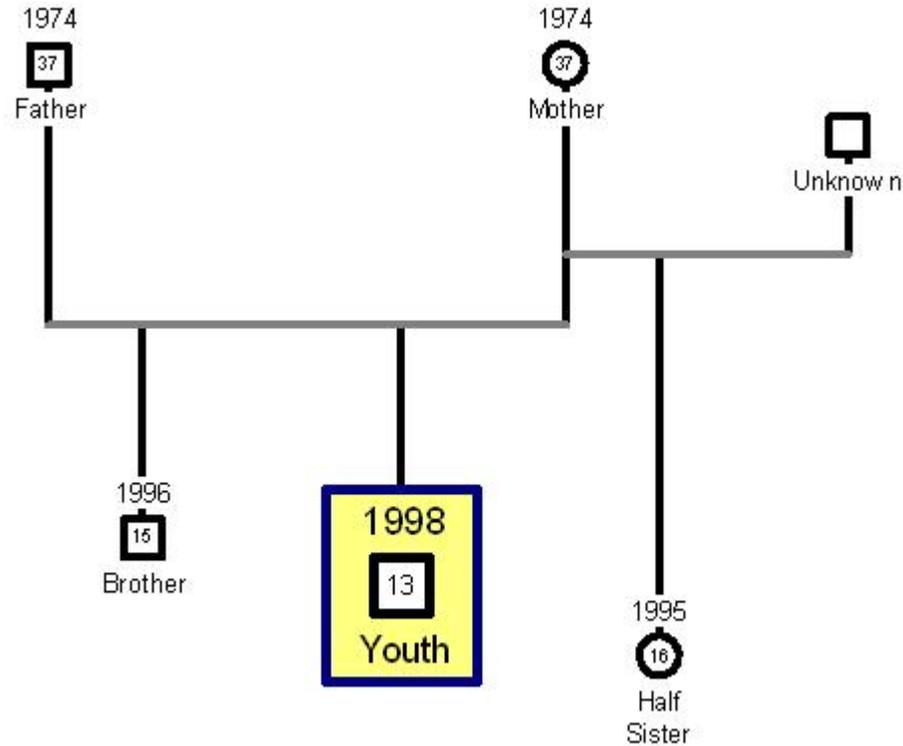
- CASA Family Finding Implementation Coordinator
 - Develop FF program
 - Develop policies, procedures & manual
 - Train DHS position
 - Educate community partners on FF
- DHS Family Finding Coordinator
 - Carry out the FF Model's 6 steps
 - Coordinate with Caseworkers

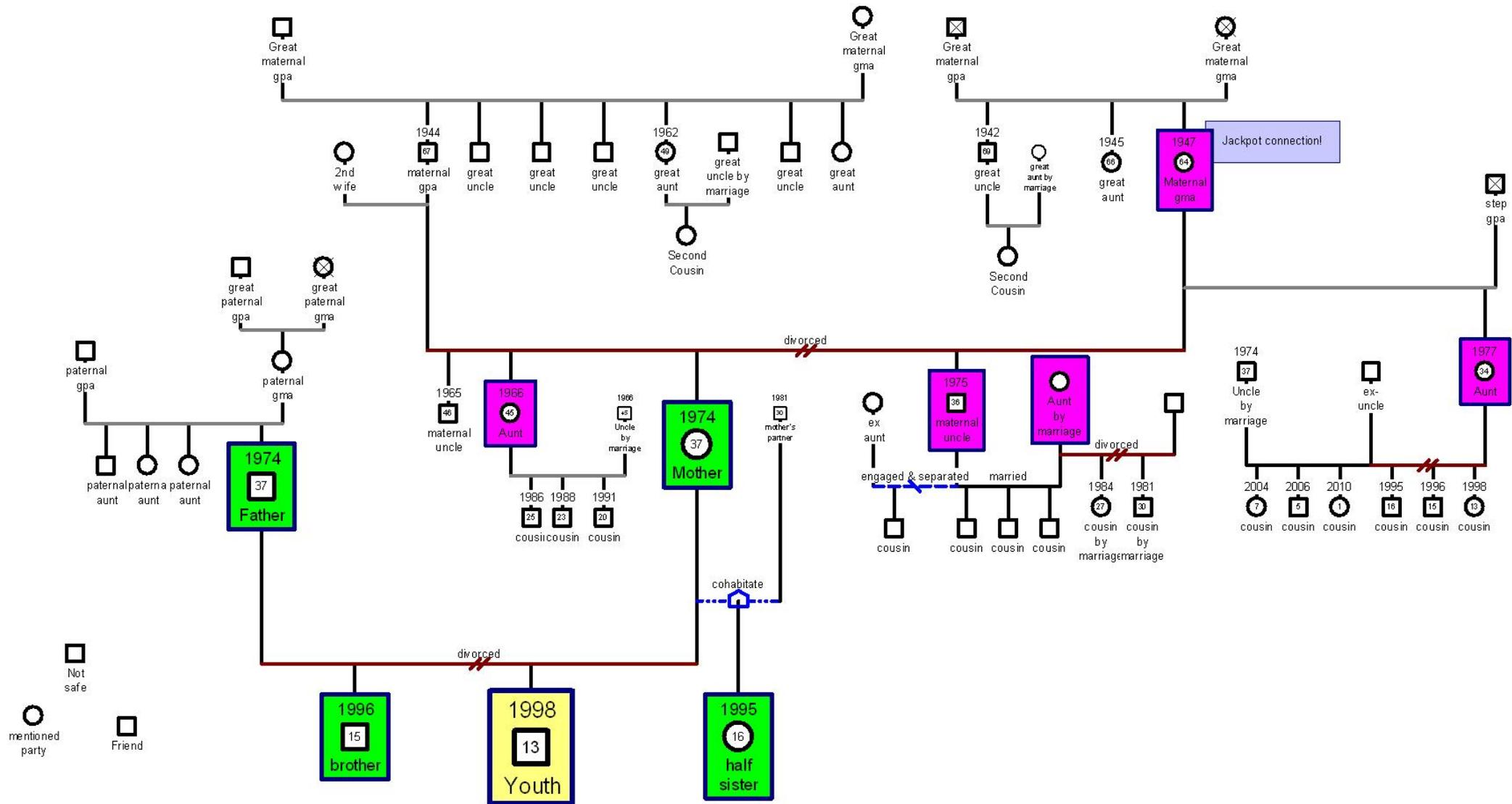


Family Finding Project

- Back end cases
- Currently 8 cases
- 2 successfully closed
- In every case there has been an increase in connections

Known Kin/Kith at Start of Family Find







Catagories of Engagement

- Youth
- Kin/Kith
- Caseworkers, Professionals & Youth Team Members



Engaging Youth

- Engage the youth
 - Process is youth driven
 - Mobility mapping
 - Connect-o-gram
 - Youth at meetings
 - Youth's voice is critically important



Engaging Relatives & Connections

- Identify and locates at least 40 family members
- Call family and connections
- Emphasize it's about connection, not placement



Engagement (cont.)

- 1st call is to build a family tree and gather info on child's history –gauging relative's interest in youth
- 2nd call is invite kin and kith to have contact



Engagement (cont.)

- Facilitate a conversation about importance of family
 - Children do better when they have a sense of belonging
 - Children have a right to know their history
 - Unmet needs - *Appeal to our shared humanity*
 - Love
 - Acceptance
 - A sense of belonging



Engagement (cont.)

- Listen, reflect, empathize
 - Often times there's an element of frustration either with
 - Other family members
 - Agency
 - Acknowledge the past, Focus on the present



Examples of Connections

Forms of support can include any of the following:

- Writing letters
- Having phone contact
- Visits
- Holiday celebrations
- Providing transportation
- Providing family history, photos, etc
- Providing family medical history
- Participating in a family meeting to offer support
- Providing contact info on other family members



Engagement At Family Meetings

- Family Meetings
 - Youth present
 - Connectogram
 - Identify youth's strengths and needs
 - Identify youth's essential, lifelong need for support and affection



Engagement At Family Meetings (cont.)

- Create permanency team
- Permanency Discussion – brainstorm with the family
 - Legal
 - Emotional
 - Relational
- Create Plan Together
- Discuss Contingency Plans



Engaging Caseworkers & Professionals

- Engage Caseworkers, team members and professionals
 - Weekly meetings with DHS supervisor
 - Present at staff and unit meetings
 - Assure we aren't sharing info on youth prematurely
 - Assess and address caseworker fears/concerns
 - Weekly Fun Facts on Family Finding
 - Ongoing Communication



Next Steps...

- Explore use of volunteers
- Explore partnerships (CASA, mental health, CRB, local genealogy group)
- Sustainability



THANK YOU





Finding and Engaging Relatives

Coos County's Story

Frannie McMahan, DHS

The Facts: Percentage of Children Placed With Relatives

- 2008 – 14.3%
- 2009 – 18.4%
- 2010 – 26.0%

NOW
JULY 2011

- 29% in relative care
- Increase of 103% from 2008!

WHAT WE DID

- Provided CPS workers with emergency certification packets
- Produced a “Kith and Kin” DVD featuring relative providers. We provide this DVD to relatives to encourage them to become involved
- Implemented two IVE Waiver Projects
 1. Counseling Service
 2. Relative Contact and Search Agent

MORE OF WHAT WE DID

- Implemented a Family Finders Program
- Worked with Neighbor to Neighbor Mediators to develop an in-home visitation mediation plan between relative care givers and birth parents.
- Piggy backed with Grandparents ROCK Support Group. (Tried not to reinvent the wheel)

FAMILY FINDERS UPDATE

- Program is just beginning
- Currently have two trained volunteers and two trained meeting facilitators
- Goal is to have eight trained volunteers
- Local CASA Program coordinators have been trained and are helping to “mine” files.
- Currently working on two cases
- One case – Four weeks into the case 40 family members have been identified!
- Challenges: “A lot more challenging than I thought.”
 - Have “barked” up the wrong family tree
 - Family members not always trusting the caller

ENGAGING RELATIVES: What We're Learning

- Just about the only people who describe relative care givers as “foster parents” is DHS staff.
- The need to comply with DHS certification guidelines gets lost in the dynamics of relative care.
- Family “ownership” trumps agency custody
- Relatives are not experienced in navigating the judicial and bureaucratic process.

MORE OF WHAT WE'RE LEARNING

- Relatives are not prepared for the culture shock of role transfers i.e. grandma to foster mom.
- Relatives are not prepared for the possible tension within the extended family.

WHAT WE'RE PLANNING

- Monthly Orientation for new relative foster homes
- Mediation between relative foster parents and birth parents

THE PARTNERSHIP

- DHS COOS CHILD WELFARE SERVICES
- CASEY FAMILY SERVICES
- COMMISSION ON CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

Oregon Judicial Guide to Working with Relatives in Juvenile Court

Before a diligent efforts finding is made:

- Are the children placed with family and siblings are placed together?
- Has DHS provided specific information about activities related to searching for relatives that have occurred since the last hearing?
- Is there a network of caring adults who are not paid to care about them surrounds the children you will be discussing?
- Are there relatives or other interested adults in the courtroom? Have they been greeted and their participation in the hearing welcomed?

- Oregon’s policy is to promote the stability and safety of children in foster care and recognizes the importance of children’s relationship with grandparents and other relatives. ORS 419.090(3).
- When children must be removed from their parents’ homes or continued in care, there shall be a preference given to placement with relatives or persons with a caregiver relationship with the child. ORS 419B.192(1)
- DHS shall make diligent efforts to place with a relative and report to the court on those efforts. ORS 419B.192(1)
- If the child has a sibling who also needs placement or continuation in care, DHS shall make diligent efforts to place them together and report to the court on those efforts. ORS 419B.192(2)
- Native American children covered by the Indian Child Welfare Act shall be placed according to the preferences outlined in the act. ORS 419B.192(5)

Relatives can:

- Be a long or short term placement,
- Help keep children safe while at home,
- Develop and maintain family and cultural connections, and
- Provide family and medical history.

OAR 413-070-0060

Blood Relatives: 3 generations of grandparents, aunts, uncles, nieces, nephews and their spouses (grand, great and great great), first cousins and first cousins once removed, siblings and half siblings, any other blood relative who self identifies or the family identifies as important to the child. OAR 413-010-0310

Relatives not related by blood are: legal step parents and step siblings (married to a biological parent), spouses of blood relatives even if the marriage is terminated by death or divorce (if the child has a relationship with the relative), adoptive parents of child’s sibling, relatives of refuge children, a relative defined by tribal custom or law, parents’ registered domestic partners

Other people to consider are:

An individual presented by the child or the child's family, not related by blood, marriage or adoption, as an individual with an emotionally significant relationship with the child or the child's family.

	Has DHS asked the about right people?	Has DHS asked the right questions?	Has asked everyone?
No Relatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has DHS asked about relatives on both the mother’s and father’s sides of the family? • Has DHS asked about other adults the family considers relatives even if they are not related by blood? • Has DHS asked about important adults? • Has DHS fully investigated Native American heritage and tribal connections? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is there a language or cultural barrier? • Are there other strategies for asking about family? • Are the parents fearful or embarassed about involving family? If so, can the court assist by encouraging or ordering the parents to answer questions about family? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has DHS asked the children? Can foster parents or CASAs help the children talk about relatives? • Has DHS asked collateral sources about relatives as they have conducted the investigation? • What other strategies has DHS tried to locate the relatives the parents have identified (internet, other data systems)?

Oregon Judicial Guide to Working with Relatives in Juvenile Court

	Has DHS completed certification?	Has certification been denied?	The relatives cannot be certified under any circumstances.
Relatives are identified but children are not placed with	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has DHS initiated the certification process? • If DHS is waiting on information from relatives, can the caseworker assist the family? • Is DHS waiting for additional information about criminal or child welfare history? • Does the caseworker need to request an exception to certification requirements? • Is the caseworker waiting for a response to a request for an exception? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are there physical limitations that prevent the relative from meeting the child's needs? Can they be overcome? • If the family is unable to support the case plan. Are the family's beliefs understandable in light of their past experience with DHS or the current situation? Is there additional support or discussion that will allow the relatives to participate in caseplanning or in caring for the child? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can the relatives assist with the case plan in other ways? • Can the relative provide information about family history or other family members?
			<p>Are the relatives too far away to provide care?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has DHS developed a strategy to allow the relatives to visit? • Has DHS developed a strategy that allows the relatives to participate in case planning and stay connected with the child?
	Children with APPLA Plans or moving between placements.	When a child is aging out of foster care:	When DHS is recommending a move to relatives:
In the past, there have been no suitable relatives.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the safety reasons that brought this child into care? Should they be re-evaluated? • Has DHS thoroughly reviewed the child's file for relative contacts? • Has DHS re-evaluated relative placement? • Have the relatives been given information about the child and case plan? • Are the relatives visiting or contacting the child? • Has DHS gathered information about family history from relatives? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have relatives been included in the transition planning? • Does the youth know how to contact relatives, including siblings? • Does the youth understand the role interested adults can plan in her life even if she doesn't live with them? • Are there at least 5 people who will wish this youth a happy birthday? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is the current foster home a relative or qualify as a person with a caregiver relationship? • Can the proposed relative caretaker meet the child's safety and well being needs, including their need for educational continuity? • Has DHS provided a compelling argument for why disrupting the existing placement in favor of placement with a relative is in the child's best interests?
Children are placed with relatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is there a back up plan in the event that the current relative caretaker cannot continue to care for the child? • Are other relatives part of the case planning process? • Is the child included in the life of the extended family in a way that will support life long connections? 		

5th Annual Model Court Day

Summit on Abuse and Neglect – August 15, 2011

Jim Fun Washington County Circuit Court Judge

Building a Family....

- A. To return or keep kids safely at home and to develop a durable permanent plan we must involve relatives and family friends
 - a. *Diligent* efforts must be made by DHS to place children with relatives and/or those with a caregiver relationship
 - b. *Diligent* efforts must be made by DHS to place the siblings together
 - c. Relatives need to be a part of every sustainable and healthy placement
 - i. From the child's point of view....
 - 1. Children *understand* visiting aunt and uncle
 - 2. Others *understand* living with aunt and uncle
 - 3. What is the message when we change their school and isolate them from their friends
 - ii. From the family's point of view...
 - 1. Removal of a child from a family serves to further isolate the family and stigmatize them
 - 2. Removes the opportunity for relatives and family friends to exponentially expand a child and family's support network - six degrees of separation
 - a. Teachers, coaches and other school related personnel
 - b. Church and other community members
 - c. Employers
 - d. Relatives/family friend's as visitation supervisors leads to...
 - i. *Safety service providers* which develop into...
 - ii. *Parent mentors/ relative respite providers*...
 - iii. That gives kids *durable connections with positive adults and relatives*

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- B. There are other opportunities for a relative/family friend that do not qualify/or declines to be a placement
 - a. Relative/family friend can assistance to develop and transition into durable plans
 - i. Transportation of parents to counseling, medical visits, school events etc.
 - ii. Non- relative placements encouraged to develop relationships with relatives/family friends toward transition or permanent placement
- C. Ensure early and continuous concurrent planning until adoption - and throughout the case for other plans
 - a. Durable concurrent plans must be dynamic and realistic
 - i. Relative/ family friend engagement requires our promotion and encouragement
 - b. Creative and sophisticated efforts to develop long term relationships and plans for the child
 - i. Ongoing evaluation of Permanent Foster Care/ APPLA to enhance child's success with those plans
 - ii. Consistent examination of more permanent plans
- D. Meaningful integration of relatives requires....
 - a. Transparent court process
 - b. Greater use of Family Decision Meetings
 - c. Community partner engagement, i.e., Casey Family Programs, Mental Health Wrap Around Services
 - d. Our commitment to them....