



All in the Family: Recruiting, Engaging, and Supporting Kin

Logistics

- Webinars will be recorded and archived at <http://kids-alliance.org/webinars/>
- All attendees will be on mute – type any questions you have into the chat box or if you experience technical difficulties email Shanti Ezrine at s.ezrine@kids-alliance.org
- A certificate of participation will be posted online after the webinar at <http://kids-alliance.org/webinars/>
- We will be answering your questions – please submit questions using the “chat” function on your GotoWebinar dashboard

Today's Speakers

- Judge Michael Nash, Los Angeles County Office of Child Protection
- Tiffany Collins, Los Angeles County Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS)
- Jennifer Lopez, Los Angeles County Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS)
- Jay Kadash, A Second Chance, Inc.
- Yakiciwey Mitchell, A Second Chance, Inc.
- Stacy Johnson, A Second Chance, Inc.

WHY ARE WE FOCUSED ON KIN?

Kinship families are the backbone of our child welfare system

- Hidden in plain sight - kinship families are the largest child welfare system in America
 - Extended family members and close family friends care for more than **2.7 million** children in this country
 - Over the past decade **the number of children in kinship care grew six times faster** than the number of children in the general population
 - **287,996** children in California live in homes with grandparent householders where grandparents are responsible for them - of these children, **80,248** have no parents present in the home.
 - **In California, 19,635** of our state's 63,000 foster children are in kinship placements

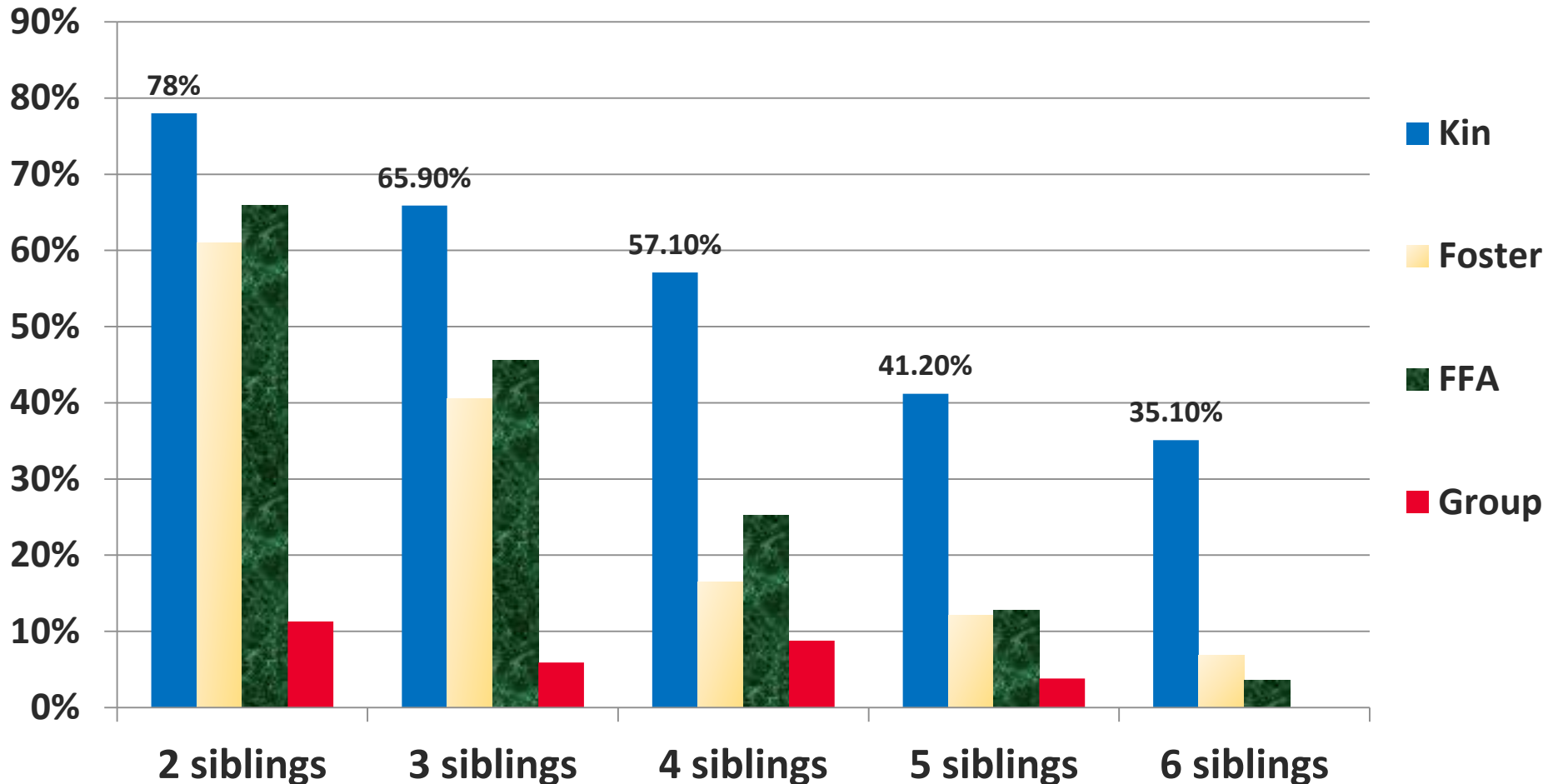
Children Thrive in Grandfamilies



* See Children Thrive in Grandfamilies fact sheet, available at www.grandfamilies.org and www.gu.org

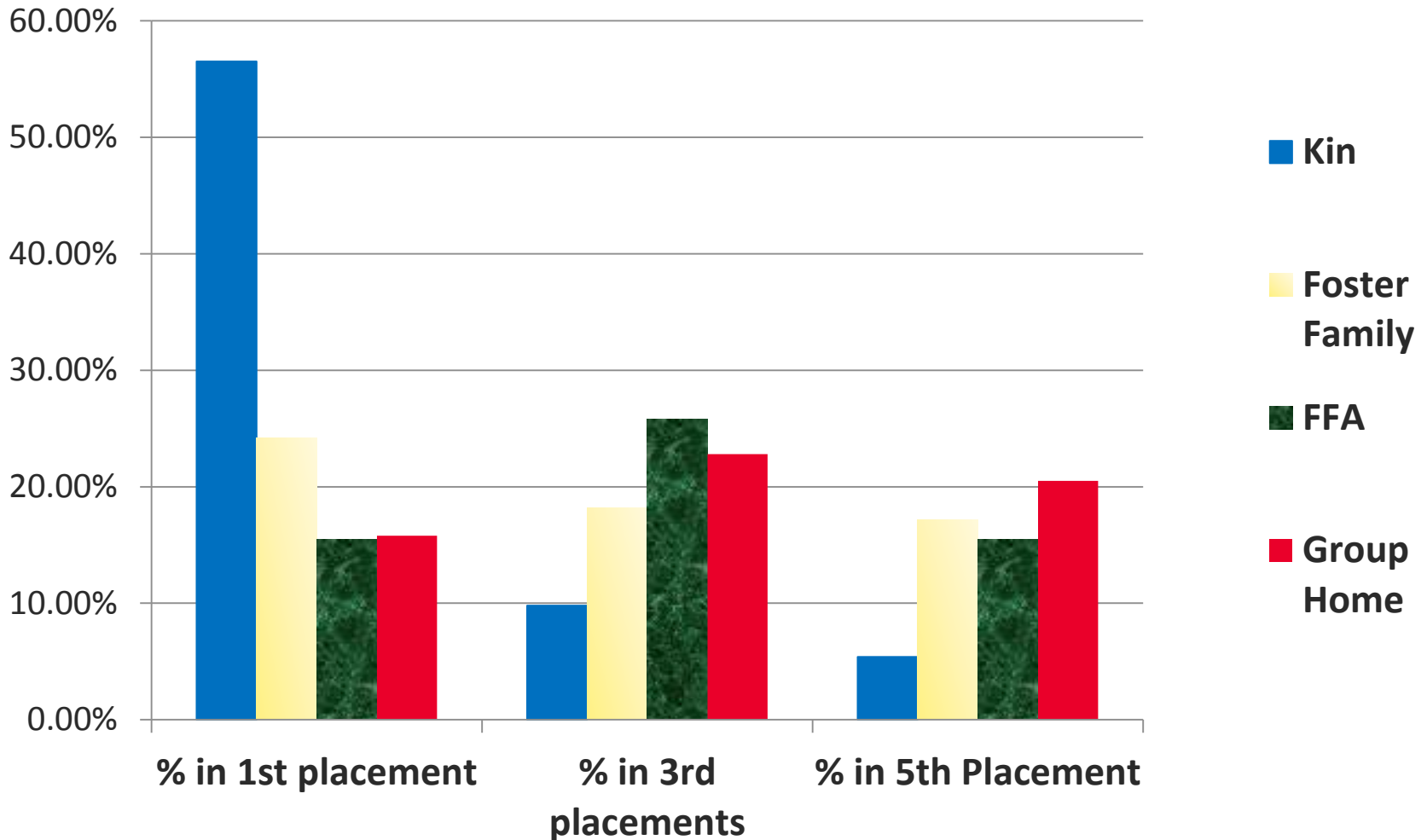
Kin Most Likely to Support ALL Siblings

% of Siblings ALL Placed Together



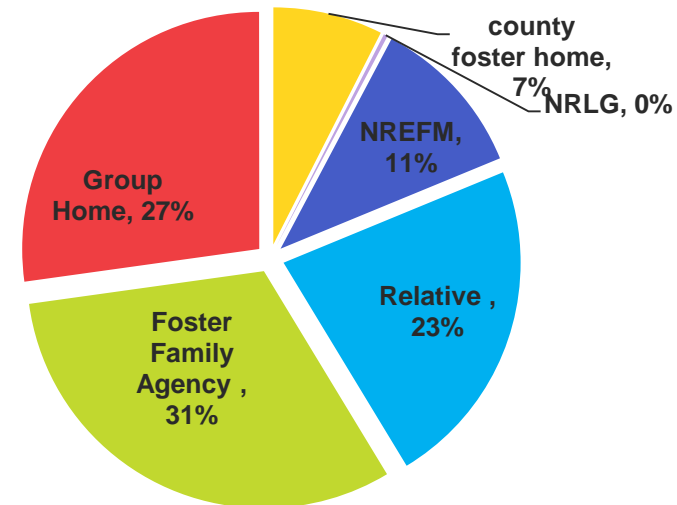
Kin Provide Greater Stability – Even with Older Foster Youth

Youth Ages 14 - 17 Still in Care at 12 Months



Relatives are key to reducing reliance on congregate care

- Recent studies underscore that relatives are key to reducing reliance on congregate care
 - Children's Bureau, *A National Look at the Use of Congregate Care in Child Welfare* (2015)
 - GAO, *HHS Could Do More to Support States' Efforts to Keep Children in Family-Based Settings* (2015)



LOS ANGELES COUNTY UPFRONT FAMILY FINDING PROTOCOL

Early Work Surrounding Relative Placements

- Limited, focused work to increase relative placements
- Promising results from pilot, but it was never fully expanded
- Recognized need for a more comprehensive effort that focused on the front-end



Los Angeles County Landscape Today

- 40-50% of children in out-of-home care are placed with relatives in Los Angeles County, which is above average
- Above average relative placement is coupled with reality that there is a shortage of foster homes
- Resource Family Approval (RFA), new statewide approval process, makes it more difficult to recruit and retain caregivers

Los Angeles Board of Supervisors' Motion

In May 2016, the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors directed the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) and the Probation Department to establish:

- A plan to increase relative placements and the role of kin in the lives of children in foster care
- A program based on current law and review models and best practices in various jurisdictions
- A single countywide protocol and a timeline for implementation

Collaboration

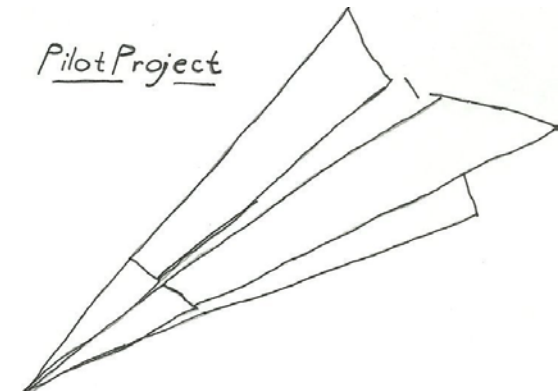
- **The motion requires collaboration across many departments, including:**
 - Department of Children and Family Services
 - Probation Department
 - Office of Child Protection
 - The Courts



Pilot Program

- DCFS developed a pilot program to address the Board of Supervisors' motion
- Two DCFS offices (Glendora office & Santa Fe Springs office) selected to participate
- The Departments laid groundwork prior to implementation of the pilot in October 2016
 - Specialized training to emphasize importance of family finding work
 - Specialized training to clarify roles and responsibilities
 - Monthly meetings to identify and refine pilot elements needing improvement

Pilot Project



Staff Buy-in Critical to Pilot Success

- All levels of staff required education about importance of identifying and engaging family members
- More family members were found when staff understood the family finding process and was excited about engaging family members

Family Finding & Family Engagement

- Initially, pilot focused on how to increase placement rates
- Focus expanded to include how to engage and plan with relatives other than through placement
 - During detention *and* placement processes

Identifying Family Members as Potential Placements

- Educate relatives who are potential placement options
- Explain how to navigate approval process
- Provide immediate support and education through partnership with community based organizations (CBOs) located in the relative's community

Results to Date

- **Santa Fe Springs Office:**

- % Placed with Relatives Prior to Implementation*: 59%
- % Placed with Relatives after 9 months of pilot: <80%

- **Glendora Office:**

- % Placed with Relatives Prior to Implementation*: 53%
- % Placed with Relatives after 9 months of pilot: 80%
- the Glendora Office had a **100% relative placement rate** for children entering the system in a recent month

Santa Fe Springs Office Detentions by Month

Number of Children	Oct '16		Nov '16		Dec '16		Jan '17		Feb '17		Mar '17	
Referrals	828		741		599		630		715		904	
Detentions	58	7%	39	5%	53	9%	27	4%	36	5%	49	5%
Placement with Relative/NREFM	48	83%	33	85%	41	77%	18	67%	30	83%	45	92%
Not placed with Relative/NREFM	10	17%	6	15%	12	23%	9	33%	6	17%	4	8%

Glendora Office Detentions by Month

Number of Children	Oct '16		Nov '16		Dec '16		Jan '17		Feb '17		Mar '17	
Referrals	660		609		503		457		483		559	
Detentions	36	6%	28	5%	24	5%	27	6%	22	5%	20	4%
Placement with Relative/NREFM	28	78%	16	57%	14	58%	22	81%	14	64%	18	90%
Not placed with Relative/NREFM	8	22%	12	43%	10	42%	5	19%	8	36%	2	10%

Family plays supportive roles

- In the Glendora office, an average of 16 relatives/non-related extended family members per child served
- In the Santa Fe Springs office, an average of 12 relatives/non-related extended family members per child served
- In both offices, majority of relatives interested in visits or phone calls

NREFMs: Potential Untapped Source

- NREFMs (or family friends) were often interested in participating in significant contact activities
- NREFMs also provide support for the family



Pilot Challenges

- **Agency barriers**

- Reassignment of staff
- Newly implemented approval process called Resource Family Approval (or RFA)
- Learning curve for staff unfamiliar with family finding pilot and purpose
- Cultural considerations, particularly undocumented status of some relatives

- **Case barriers**

- Debrief each case to see what prevented a relative placement

Next Steps

- Pilot expanded to two additional DCFS offices
 - These two offices likely to be more challenging
- Utilizing lessons learned from the initial pilot to modify implementation and maximize impact.



Putting it All Together: How to Achieve Successful Kinship Placements

- **Place more children with relatives**
 - Individual social worker should help relatives make informed decisions
 - Relatives need support throughout process – not just at time of approval
- **Engage family members**
 - Notice to family members
 - Involvement in Team Decision Making (Family Group Decision Making)
- **Ensure families access support they need**
 - *Everyone involved in the case:* ask what can I do to support the family?
 - *Community Based Organizations (CBOs):* LA County contracted with CBOs to provide relatives support and services
 - *Caregiver Support and Maintenance Worker:* caregivers now have a worker assigned to them in LA County

It's really a matter of truly making this a priority. There's nothing about this that every agency in the country couldn't do.

— Judge Michael Nash















Additional Resources

- Upcoming Webinars
 - November 15 at 10-12 PM: All in the Family, How to Recruit, Support, and Engage Kin, <https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/2426261908629734913>
- Resource Family Approval Guide Version 2 Coming Soon
 - Spanish version coming soon after

Resource Family Approval Guide



A project of The Step Up Coalition
stepupforkin.org



Questions?

- The PowerPoint slides, webinar recording, and a certification of participation will be posted at www.kids-alliance.org/webinars

