

An Overview of Family to Family



Rebuilding Our Foster Care System in San Luis Obispo County

June 2005

All Children Deserve a Safe and Nurturing Home



Family to Family Is About Principles and Values:

- Children do best with strong families.
- Families can become strong when they have the support of their relatives, neighborhoods & communities.
- We can do our jobs better when we *partner with communities* in support of families.

Family to Family Includes the Best Practices Principles:

- Team-driven
- Family-centered
- Strengths-based
- Needs-driven
- Solution-oriented
- Community-based



Four Key Strategies



- I. **Building Community Partnerships**
- II. **Recruitment, Training, and Retention of Resource/Foster Families**
- III. **Team Decision-making Meetings**
- IV. **Self Evaluation**

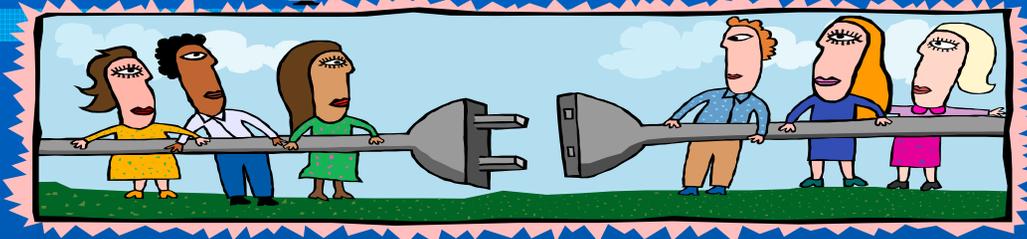
The Family to Family Key Strategies Will Help Us To:

- ***Routinely* place children with relatives or other families in their own neighborhoods.**
- **Better screen and assess the needs of all children being considered for removal from their home, to determine what services might be provided to safely preserve the family.**

The Family to Family Key Strategies Will Help Us To:

- **Become a neighborhood resource for all children/youth & families; and invest in the capacity of communities from where our foster children/youth come.**
- **Involve birth and resource/foster parents as team members in family reunification efforts.**
- **Provide stable and permanent families/homes for children in a timely manner.**

F2F #1: Building Community Partnerships



- Partnerships between government agencies and non-traditional resources offer a diverse set of services and care for children/youth & families.
- Communities, neighborhoods and families participate together in making decisions *with* traditional agency service representatives.

F2F #1: Building Community Partnerships

- **Leadership matters.** The leaders of all parties must continually communicate the “what, why and how” of the partnership.
- **We must work with each other to clearly define and articulate the changes in roles, responsibilities, authority and activities.**
- **We must *all* build and model the process.**

F2F #2: Recruitment, Training, and Retention of Resource/Foster Families

- Recruitment is *re-defined* as support. It starts with meeting the needs of our present resource/foster families.
- Neighborhood-based recruitment and support for out-of-home (foster) care is crucial in order to reduce the trauma of placement.



F2F #2: Recruitment, Training and Retention of Resource/Foster Families

- **A change in the culture of DSS is vital. Our roles are redefined because “recruitment and retention is everyone’s job” from the first contact, and *every* contact.**
- **Resource/Foster families learn to work with and support the birth family towards reunification.**

F2F #3: Team Decision-making Meetings



- The team involves not just resource/foster parents and caseworkers, but birth parents and community members as well.
- Planning and intervention by the team occurs *before* the child is ever placed in foster care or moved to another home.

F2F #3: Team Decision-making Meetings

- The team meets to address the child's safety and permanency issues; to present their opinions; and to identify resources that could be used for *immediate* support of the child/youth and family.
- The team makes the placement decision, and is jointly accountable for the outcome.

F2F #4: Self-Evaluation



- Data is analyzed by a multi-agency team to determine the needs specific to neighborhoods & communities regarding children/youth in foster care.
- This is a collaborative process that brings together individuals & agencies with different kinds of expertise, yet similar needs and/or outcomes.

F2F #4: Self-Evaluation

- We need to think “results focused.” We realize that the decisions we make for families and children influence the outcomes for the agency.
- Self-evaluation includes on-going attention to the implementation progress of the key strategies.

Family to Family: Why?

FEWER KIDS ARE PLACE IN FOSTER CARE

- **More children will be placed in their own neighborhoods and communities**
- **More children will be reunified with their birth families**
- **More brothers and sister will be placed together**

Family to Family: Why?



- Fewer children will be placed in institutional care; resources will shift to resource/foster family care & family-centered services
- Children will have shorter lengths of stay if placed in care
- Fewer children will re-enter placement care

Family to Family: Why?

- Fewer moves once placed in care
- Fewer gaps associated with gender race-ethnicity, or age

Family to Family



- F2F is *not* a pilot, *not* a program, nor the latest new “model” for DSS staff.
- F2F represents a set of value-driven principles that guide a key group of strategies.
- F2F serves as a catalyst for change as we restructure our foster care system.

Family to Family

It's all about building relationships and partnering with communities to improve the support of children/youth, birth and resource/foster families who are involved in our foster care system.

