

The Annie E. Casey Foundation

**Immigration Policies Impacting
Children and Families**

**And Justice for All ... Broken
Connections for Immigrant &
Refugee Families in the Valley**

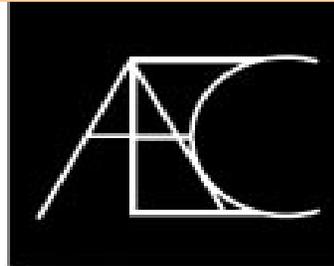
**April 18, 2008
(Fresno, CA)**

Presenters:

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**Statistics on Immigrant
Children and Families**

Immigration in the United States



- The United States has long been considered a land of immigrants.
- The peak of immigration occurred in the 1890s, (15% of the total population, 9.25 million foreign-born in 1890)
- We are now in a second peak (11.5% of total population, 32.5 million foreign born in 2002)

Growth in Foreign-Born Population



Immigrants are:

- 1 in 9 US residents;
- 1 in 7 US workers;
- 1 in 5 low wage workers;
- 1 in 2 new workers.

Source: *“A Quick Look at US Immigrants: Demographics, Workforce and Asset Building”*
by the National Conference of State Legislators (June 2004)

<http://www.ncsl.org/programs/immig/immigstatistics0605.htm>

Growth in Foreign-Born Population



- 21% of children in the US is an immigrant or has an immigrant parent.
- 80% of the children in immigrant families are US citizen.
- 30% of US children without health insurance is in an immigrant family.
- The proportion of students in US schools who are children of immigrants more than tripled from 1970-2000, from 6 to 20% (will be 30% by 2015).

Source:

*"Kids Count Data Snapshot" by
The Annie E. Casey Foundation
(No. 4, March 2007)*

http://www.kidscount.org/sld/snapshot_immigrant.pdf

Immigration Status and Family Structure

- Nearly 1 in 10 U.S. families with children is a mixed immigration status family
- $\frac{3}{4}$ of the children with non-citizen parents are citizens (Fix & Zimmerman, 2001).
- 1 in 12 immigrant children lives apart from their parents.
- Each year approximately 7,000 children arrive in the U.S. without a parent or guardian.
- Growth in migration, economic remittances and transnational families

*Source: National Center for Children in Poverty
Illinois Task Force on Unaccompanied Minors
World Bank*

California & Fresno

▪ **One in four Californians is an immigrant.**

• **California immigrants comprise 27 % compared to other US states average of 12%**

Source: CA Immigrant Policy Center, Fact Sheet April 2007

• **One in five Freshnians is an immigrant**

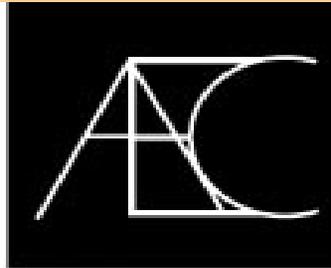
• **U.S. Census 21.5% in Fresno County**

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2006 American Community Survey

Fresno Demographics

- **Fresno County is a melting pot of ethnic heritages and rich in cultural diversity.**
- **The population of Fresno County now exceeds 917,515 and includes Basque, Asian, Indian, Armenian, Hispanic, Hmong, Chinese, Portuguese, and Japanese among its residents.**

Source: Fresno Pacific University



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**Issues Facing for Public Child
Welfare Administrators and
Staff in Working with
Immigrant Families**

Immigration Terms

- Legal Permanent Resident (*i.e. “green card” holders, eligible to apply for citizenship in 5 years*)
- Naturalized Citizen (*same rights as US born citizens*)
- Refugees or asylees (*numbers set each year by the US government*)
- Temporary Legal Residents (*i.e. employment, student, or tourist visa*)
- Undocumented residents (*i.e. “border crossers” or immigrants who overstayed temporary visas*)

Unaccompanied Minors

- Some children came to the U.S. fleeing violence or even murder, others were seeking escape from economic deprivation, and still others were simply abandoned.
- Every unaccompanied child has his or her own story and that the circumstances of each are unique.
- Different immigration relief options are available but it is important to do a thorough assessment and work in partnership with immigrant relief organizations.

Interaction with Recently Revised Immigration and Naturalization Services

Revised Structure

- A) Bureau of Citizenship and Immigration Services
- B) Bureau of Immigration and Customs Enforcement
- C) Bureau of Customs and Border Protection



A troika, a Russian sled drawn by three horses

Toll Free number for US Citizenship and Immigration Services:

1-800-375-5283

www.USCIS.gov

Why Immigrant Children Enter Child Welfare

- Poverty is one of the most important predictors of negative child outcomes. Poverty rates are generally higher among children of immigrants than among children of natives.
- Young children of immigrants are less likely to receive public benefits.
- Children in immigrant families are considerably more likely to be uninsured, to be reported in fair or poor health, and to lack a usual place where they can get preventive health care.
- Immigrant families enter and stay in child welfare for same reasons as natives - domestic violence, substance abuse, health, and mental health – however access to services is limited in most regions of the country.

Source: *“Undercounted, Underserved: Immigrants and Refugee Families in the Child Welfare System”* Annie E Casey Foundation (2006)

<http://www.aecf.org/upload/pdf/files/familytofamily/immigration.pdf>

Policy Recommendations to Child Welfare Agencies

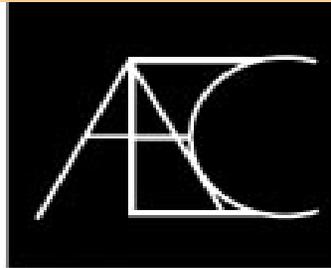
1. Fiscal claiming and considerations
2. Services to new immigrant populations, including policies regarding relevant bilingual and multicultural matters.
3. Family assessment – locally, regionally, and transnationals
4. Information sharing with partner agencies.
5. Placement and licensing guidelines.

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Please fix caps

Sonia Velazquez, 4/15/2007



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**Improved Partnerships with
Community-Based Agencies
Serving Immigrant Families**

Over Arching Issues of the Intersection between Migration and Child Welfare

- Lack of sufficient research / shared knowledge / guiding principles
- Often small number of cases
- Complexity of cases
- Unprepared professionals
- Families caught between systems
- Questions of professionals unanswered
- No funding sources



Undocumented Immigration of Children

- Children may come in through temporary (e.g. visitor) visas and overstay, or come in over the border
- Increasing numbers of children are coming in; previously undocumented immigration was a largely male phenomenon (since men were the people crossing the border to seek work)
- US policy changes and the general border crackdown has made it harder for immigrants to make the return trip to their homes and families - if they have any expectation of going back to the US - so in many cases entire families are crossing over so they can stay together

Source: Illinois Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights

Why are Immigrant Families Vulnerable

- Complex immigration laws and policies, costly services
- Dependence upon others for information
- Language skills
- Overall levels of education
- Discrimination (ethnic, religious, socio-economic, gender)
- Limited work opportunities
- Other factors: living arrangements, cultural practices

Based on: American Bar Association Latin America & Caribbean Law Initiative Council

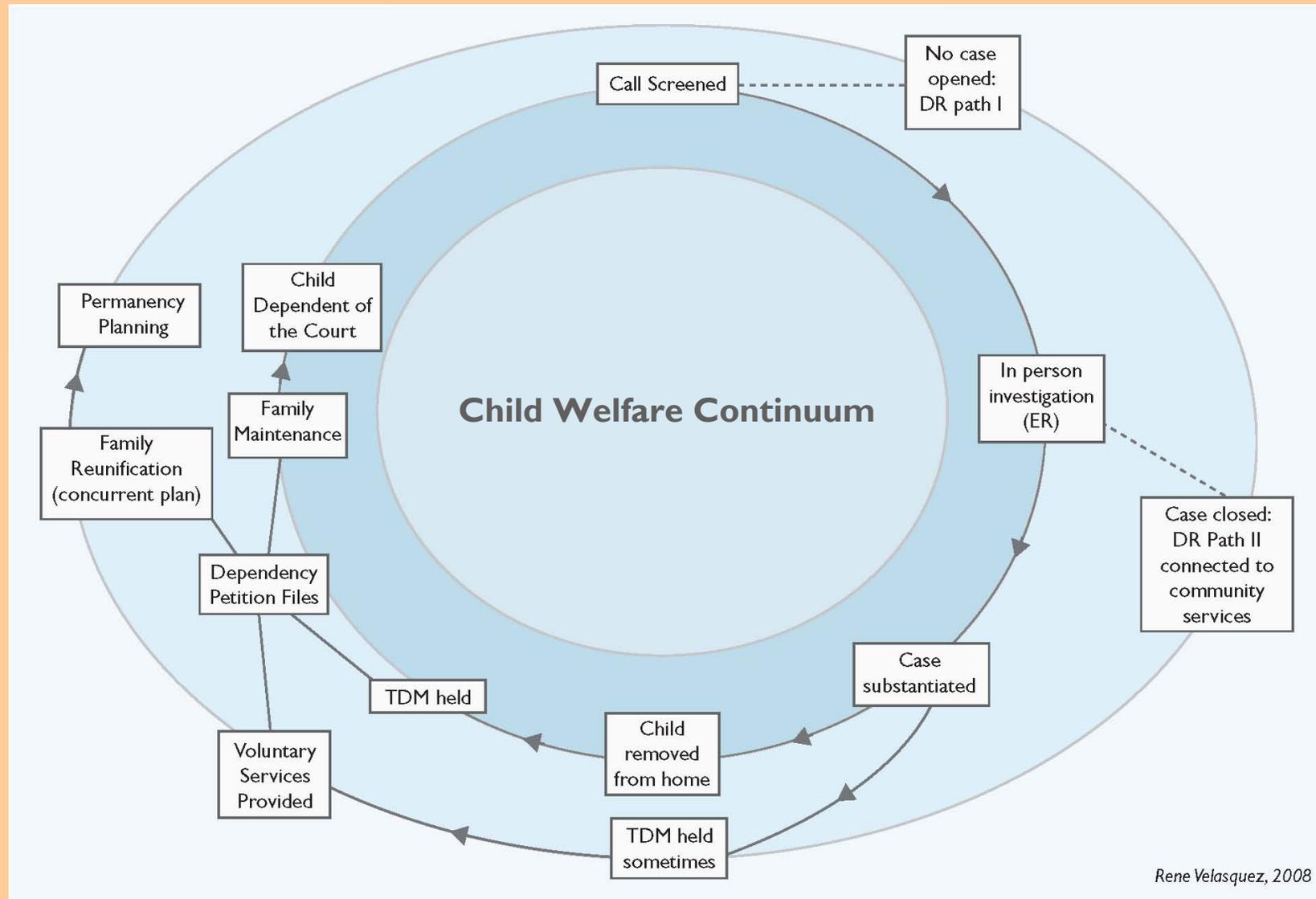
Impact of Migration, Acculturation and Family Status

- Culturally responsive practice with immigrants and refugees requires that child welfare professionals understand the impact of migration and acculturation has on each family and how these experiences have contributed to their child welfare involvement.
- An immigrant family's residency status is a critical aspect of their reception and eligibility for needed services during their period of resettlement.

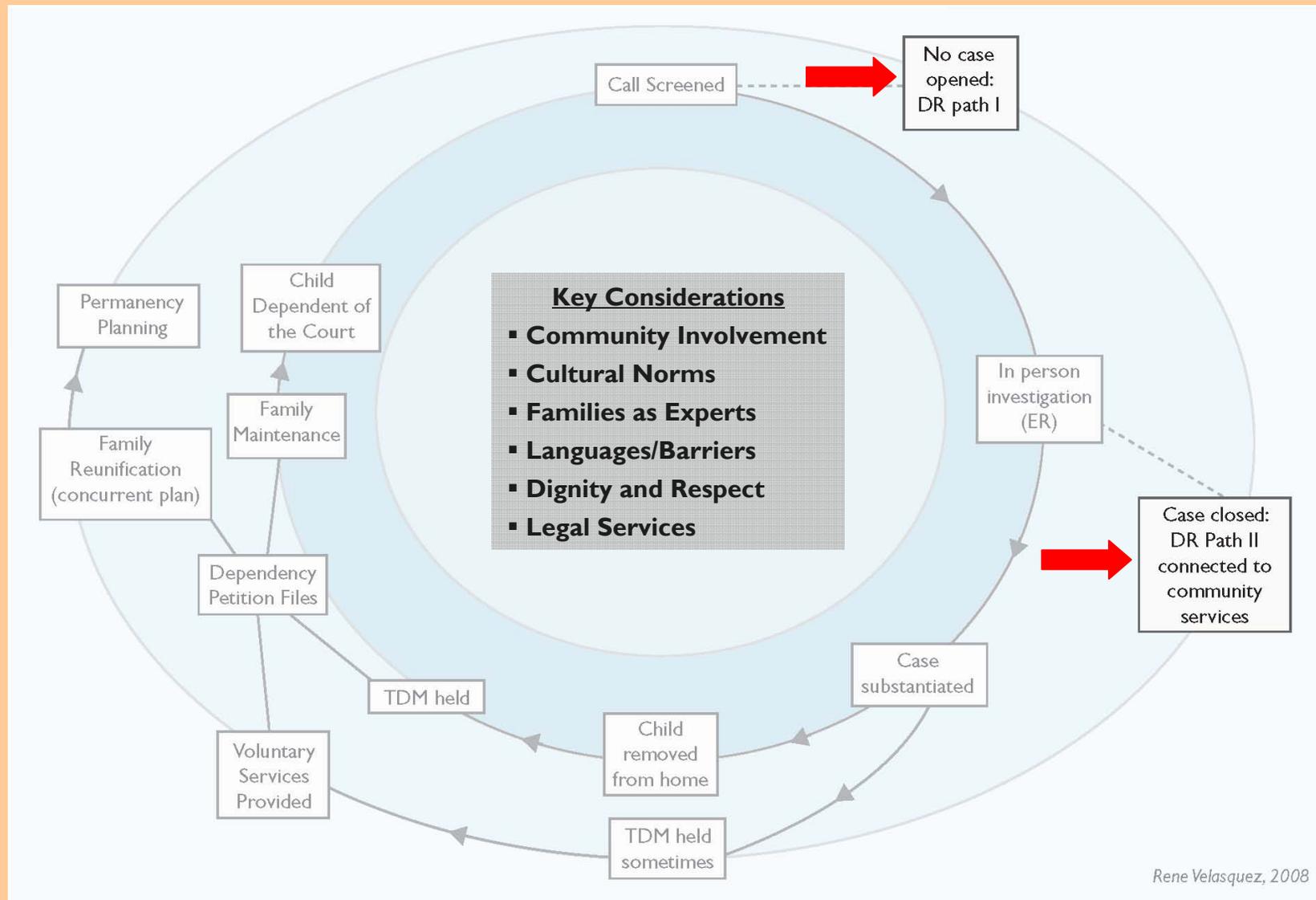
Family To Family Initiative

- A child's safety is paramount
- Every child deserves a family
- Every family needs the support of their community
- Public agencies need community partners to help children and families

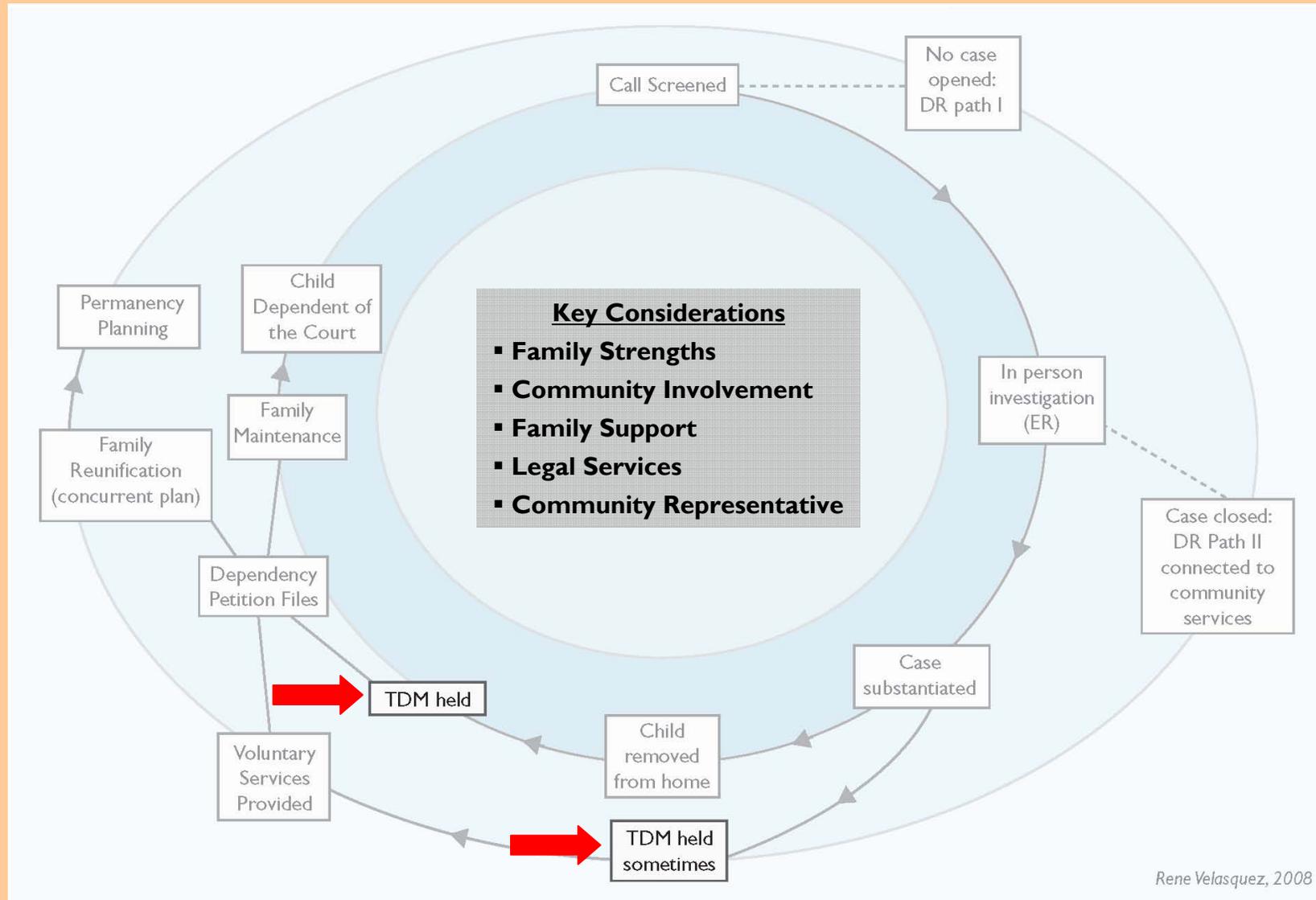
Immigrant Families and Child Welfare



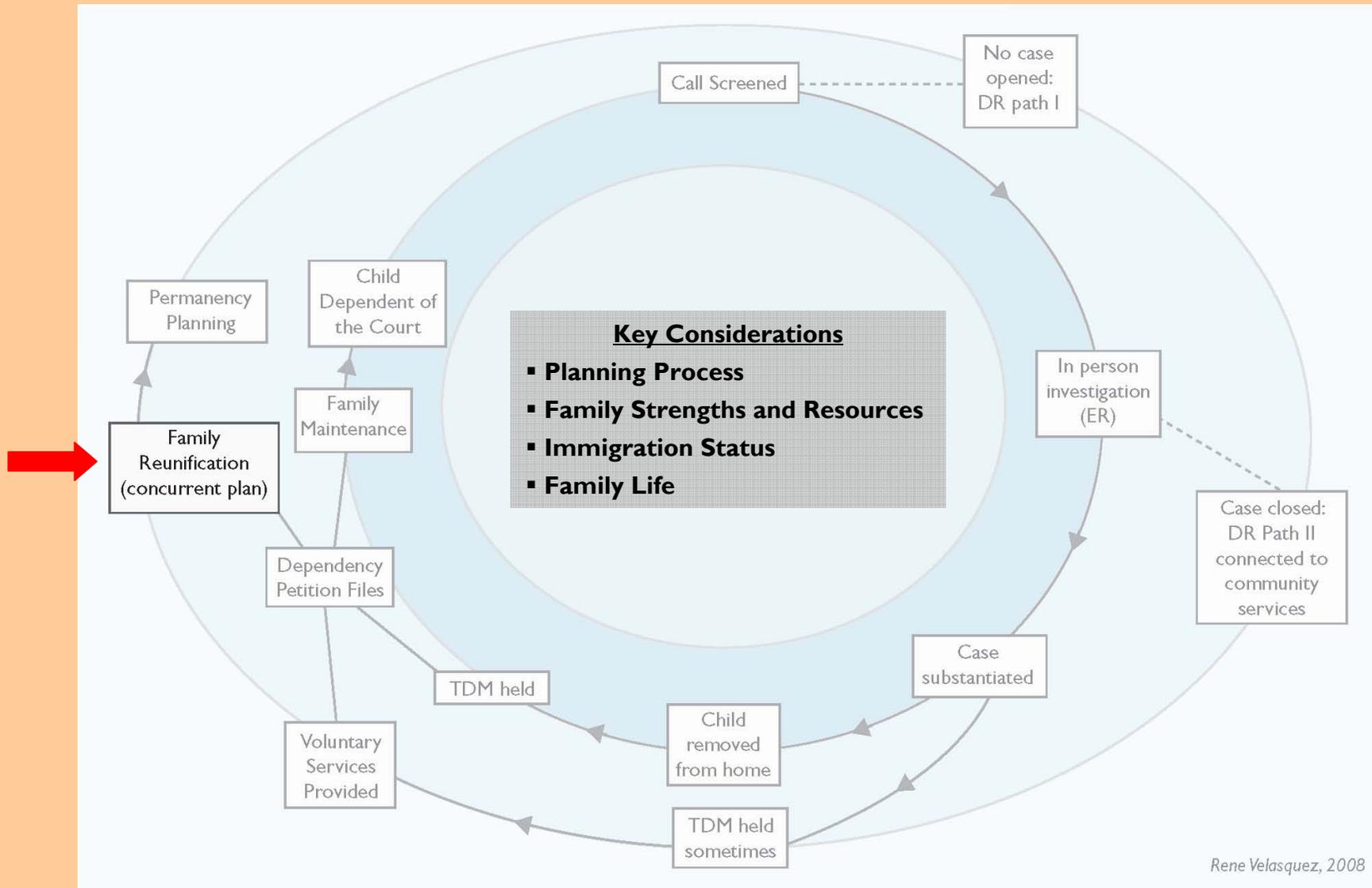
Immigrant Families and Child Welfare



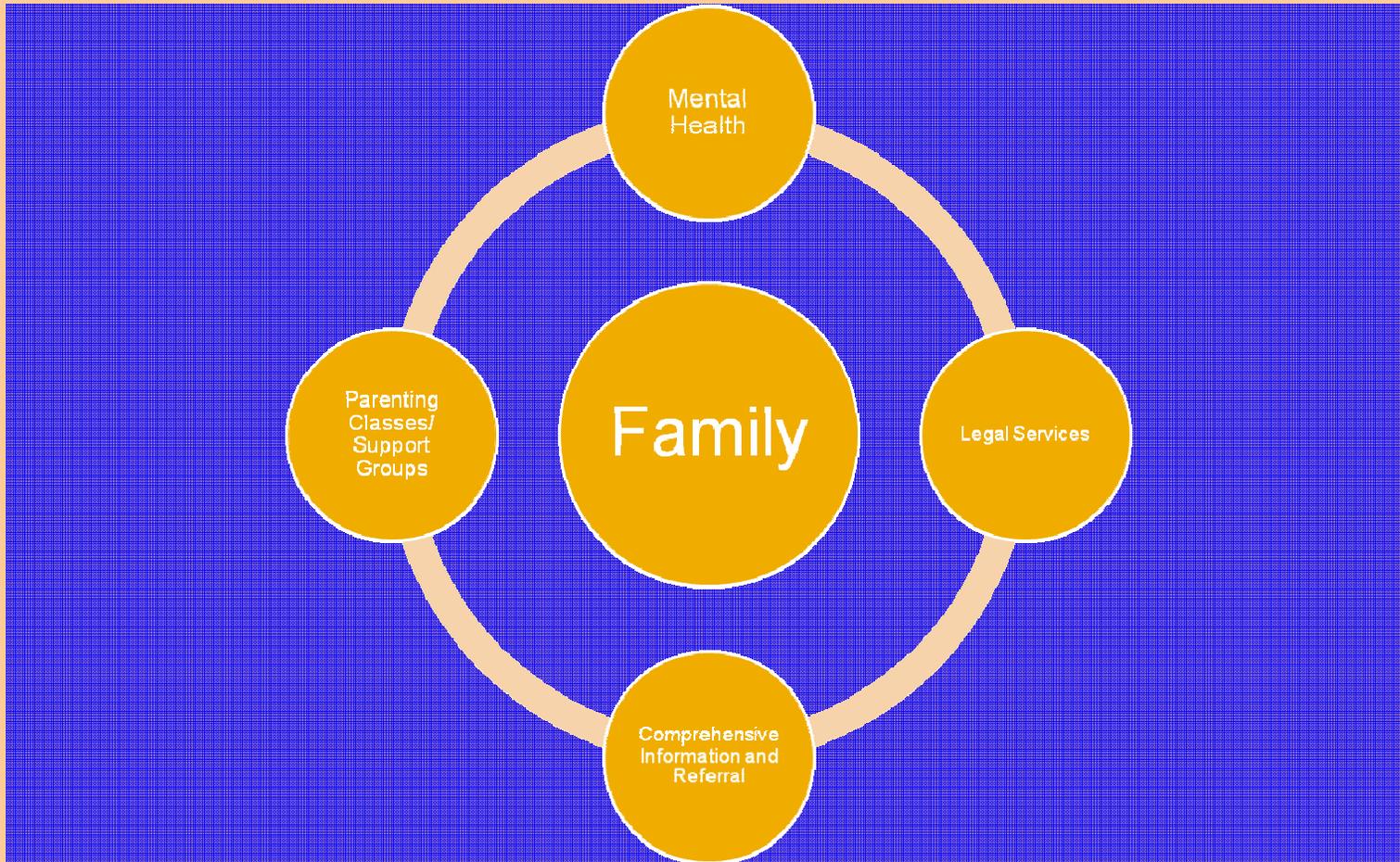
Immigrant Families and Child Welfare



Immigrant Families and Child Welfare



Core Services for Families



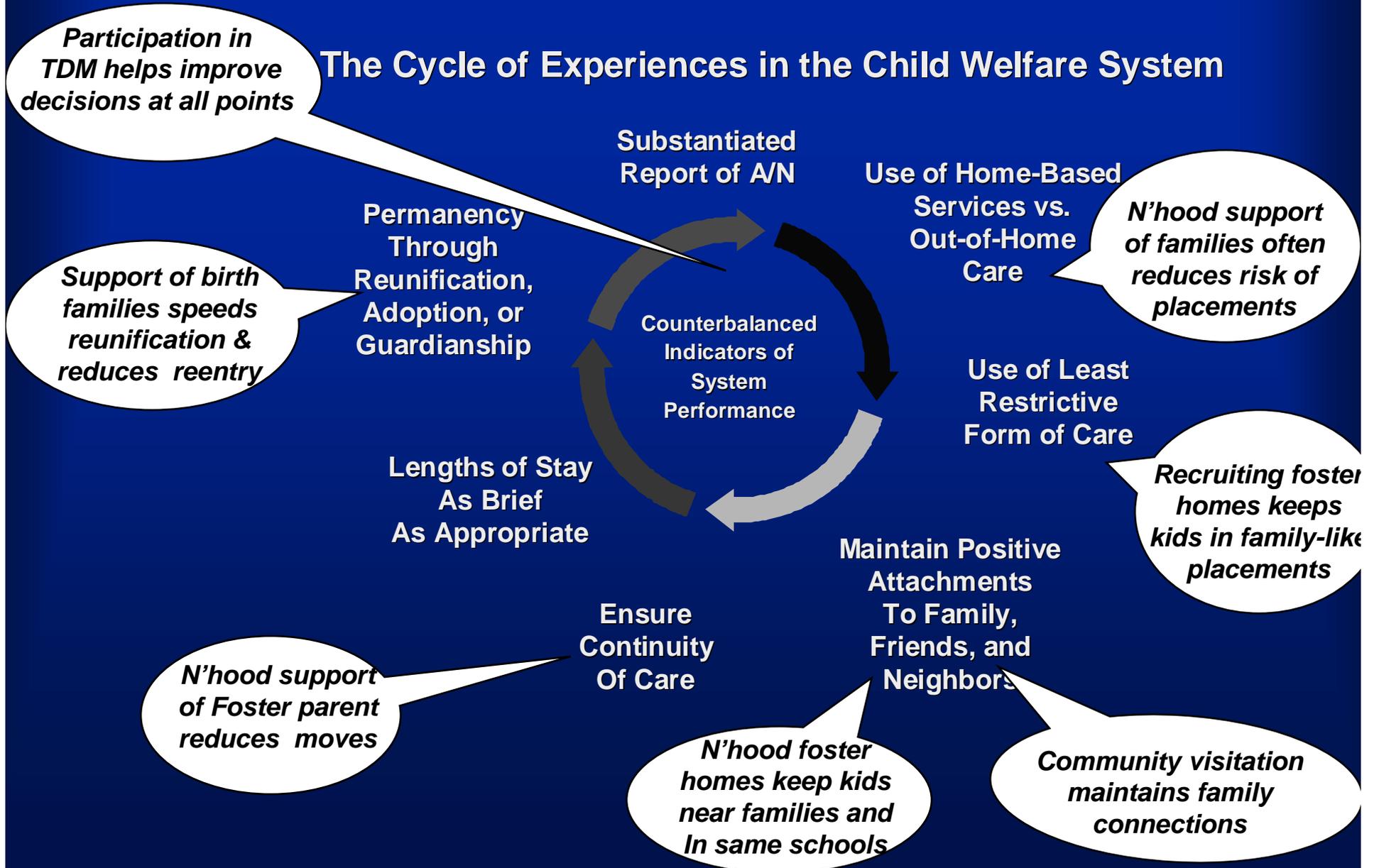
Who are Key Providers in the Immigrant Community?



- Advocacy Organizations
- Immigrant Coalitions
- Faith-based Organizations
- Legal Services Provider
- Community-Based Organizations

Community Partners Help Change Outcomes for Kids

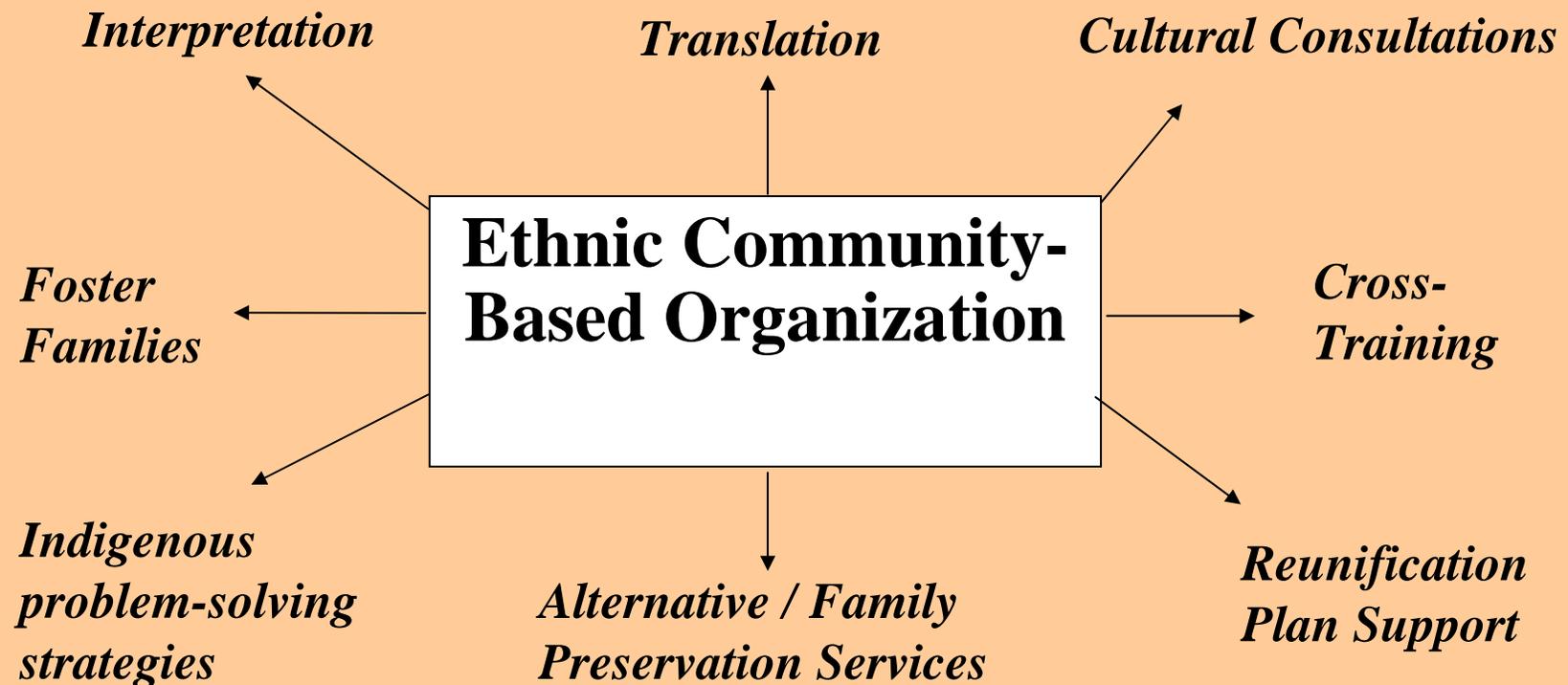
The Cycle of Experiences in the Child Welfare System



Recruitment and Support

- Immigrant Foster Parents not only help children adjust to out-of-home placement but are better able to communicate with birth parents, an important step toward reunifying families.
- There is a population of legal residents within each immigrant community with the potential to become foster parents.
- Recruiting families, through personal connections, is key.

Collaboration with Ethnic Community-Based Organizations



**Kids are waiting
for Us...**