Executive Summary

Title: Engaging Families for Permanency

Course Description
This course discusses strategies for engaging known and unknown family members and important adults in the course of finding permanency for children and youth. During the training, participants will learn about the philosophy and values underlying permanency practice, including permanency as a youth-centered process that involves finding family permanency and finding other connections; engaging families in the search for the child/youth's permanency; and working with families to help the youth deal with grief and loss. We will discuss how to hold a youth permanency team meetings with family and professionals and how to set timelines for steps towards permanency. The workshop will use lecture, case studies, small group interaction and participants' cases. Issues regarding race, culture, sexual orientation, gender identity and other areas important to a child or youth are integrated into the training.

Target Audience
This training is appropriate for all social workers and supervisors as they seek to find permanency for children and youth.

Outcome Objectives
1. Identify effective strategies for engaging the family in the search for permanency for a child or youth. Includes effective strategies for engaging and preparing professionals.
2. Identify socioeconomic, cultural and ethnic differences, and sexual orientation and gender identify that may impact engaging the family.
3. Recognize and review how confidentiality impacts work with the family.
4. Identify steps in preparing for a relative's contact with a child/youth and debriefing.
5. Identify steps in working with the family as they join the child/youth's permanency team.
6. Identify ways in which relatives/important persons can help the child/youth with grief and loss.
7. Determine next steps to engage a family member or important person on one case for each participant.
8. Identity members of youth permanency teams on three cases of each participant.

Ways that Supervisors can support the Transfer of Learning from the classroom to the job…
BEFORE the training
1. Supervisors should review with the trainee 2 cases with no viable permanency plan and help trainee think about questions on these cases applicable to the training topic . A viable permanency plan does *not* include emancipation from foster care.
2. Supervisor should review and discuss the definition of permanency and permanent connection with staff person.

AFTER the training
1. Supervisors should follow up with the trainee and review how he/she would begin permanency work in the context of the training.
2. Supervisors should ask the trainee to write 3 measurable, observable next steps that he/she will take regarding engaging the family in one case.
3. Supervisor will help the trainee discuss this information with the youth.
4. Supervisors should offer to help the trainee make an initial phone call to a family member.
5. Supervisors should offer to co-facilitate a youth permanency team meeting.

This workshop will be based on case situations and use material from 6 Steps to Find a Family, Steps 3 and 4.

Definitions:

DEFINITION of PERMANENCE

Permanency is both a process and a result that includes involvement of the youth as a participant or leader in finding a permanent connection with at least one committed adult who provides:

- A safe, stable and secure parenting relationship,
- Love,
- Unconditional commitment, and
- Lifelong support in the context of reunification, a legal adoption, or guardianship, where possible, and in which the youth has the opportunity to maintain contacts with important persons including brothers & sisters.

A broad array of individualized permanency options exist; reunification and adoption are an important two among many that may be appropriate.

DEFINITION OF A PERMANENT FAMILY CONNECTION

An adult who consistently states and demonstrates that s/he has entered an unconditional, lifelong parent-like relationship with the youth. The youth agrees that the adult will play this role in his/her life.