Supporting Timely and Successful Reunifications

Safe and timely family reunification is the primary permanency option for most children and youth who have been removed from their parent's care. All children belong with family, and family separation is a traumatic experience for both children and parents. The root causes that lead to family separation can often be addressed by connecting families with tailored services to meet their needs. Reunification planning is an opportunity to equip families with tools and support that can help them thrive in the long term and prevent foster care reentry. It is critical that caseworkers take a family-centered, trauma-informed, culturally sensitive, and strengths-based approach when working with families to achieve reunification. Key pieces of that comprehensive approach are authentically engaging parents, children, and youth and helping them build their natural supports and network of family, kin, and

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community. This bulletin features strategies and best practices to help caseworkers support families before, during, and after the reunification process.

OVERVIEW OF REUNIFICATION

Reunification is the practice of returning both care and custody of a child to a parent[1] following the child's entry into the foster care system. It is a legal process overseen by a court and is usually contingent on a parent's completion of a case plan and participation in required services and a determination that safety can be managed in the home. Reunification is considered **"timely"** when it occurs within 12 months of the child entering foster care (Children's Bureau, 2022a). The term "successful" can have many interpretations, but for the purpose of this publication, reunification is deemed **"successful"** when families remain together following reunification and children do not reenter foster care.

The Adoption and Safe Families Act of 1997 (ASFA) requires States to make reasonable efforts to preserve or reunify families. This includes connecting families with services, performing home visits, partnering with families and youth in case planning, etc. The law also outlines several conditions under which States do not have to make such efforts (for example, in cases where the parent subjected the child to aggravated circumstances, such as sexual abuse). Situations outside of those identified by ASFA may pose reunification challenges as well (for example, in families where parents do not affirm a young person who identifies as LGBTQIA2S+ [lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, questioning, intersex, asexual, Two-Spirit, or another gender or sexual identity]). However, it's still the child welfare agency's legal responsibility to make reasonable efforts to preserve or reunify families before recommending a change in the permanency goal.

When discussing reunification, it's important to acknowledge the racial disproportionality and disparity that exist in the child welfare system and that is perpetuated by biased actions, policies, and attitudes toward Black, American Indian/Alaska Native, Hispanic and Latino, and other racially and culturally diverse families. While more research is needed to understand the relationship between race and ethnicity and the likelihood of reunification (LaBrenz et al., 2021), implicit bias and systemic racism affect child welfare at every stage, including service accessibility and permanency decisions.

Another key consideration is the importance of family connections and relational permanency outside of legal reunification. It's especially important to help older youth who may age out of care establish lifelong relationships that will provide them with support and stability while they're in child welfare and transitioning to adulthood. A reimagined concept of reunification involves helping young people establish relational permanency by honoring, building, and nurturing their complex relationships with their biological families, chosen families, friends, and communities. These relationships can be supports for young people to lean on throughout life, even if they don't achieve legal reunification or permanency.

[1] The term "parent" is used in this publication to describe a child's birth parent but includes other primary caregivers and guardians as well.

Reunification Factsheet for Families

Child Welfare Information Gateway developed a companion piece to this publication written specifically for parents and other caregivers whose children are in foster care. Share *Reunification From Foster Care: A Guide for Parents* (also available in Spanish) with families to help them understand their rights and navigate the reunification process.

NATIONAL STATISTICS

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Children's Bureau collects State and Federal data on reunification and reentry. Based on data from the Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System, reunification is the most common goal for children in foster or out-of-home care (53 percent in fiscal year [FY] 2021) as well as the most common outcome for children leaving State custody (47 percent in FY 2021) (Children's Bureau, 2022b). Families from non-White racial, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds may experience inequitable outcomes throughout the child welfare system. For example, children who are Black or African American, Hispanic and Latino, and American Indian/Alaska Native are disproportionately represented in foster care compared with their percentage of the general population (Children's Bureau, n.d.).

In 2019, of all children who reunited with their parents or other caregivers, a national median of 63 percent were reunited within 12 months of entering care (Children's Bureau, 2022a). A national median of more than 7 percent of children reentered care within 12 months of a prior foster care episode. Data show a decline in performance over the last 5 years in both achieving timely family reunifications and the percentage of children reentering care (Children's Bureau, 2022a). As a result, the Children's Bureau recommends that agencies identify and review specific barriers to achieving timely reunifications.

Additionally, the reunification rates for certain racial and ethnic groups may be different, further exemplifying the disparate outcomes faced by non-White families. Many studies show that non-Hispanic Black children and American Indian/Alaska Native children are less likely to be reunited with their families than non-Hispanic White children, but this finding is not consistent across all studies (LaBrenz et al., 2023).

A HOLISTIC APPROACH TO REUNIFICATION

While reunification is usually the primary goal for children and youth, overall State performance regarding reunification is lacking (Children's Bureau, 2022a). This may be due to several challenges, from struggles establishing trusting relationships with families to difficulties addressing multigenerational trauma. This is why it is important to approach reunification holistically. In child welfare, a holistic approach involves looking at all factors that contribute to a family's system involvement (for example, poverty, substance use, or mental health) and the social determinants of health that affect children's and families' well-being and outcomes. It also means working comprehensively with both individual family members and the family as a whole to address the root causes of challenges and develop ongoing strategies and supports that will help families stay together long after reunification.

Families receiving reunification services have varied, complex needs. Some of the best interventions take a comprehensive approach to address that complexity (National Quality Improvement Center on Family-Centered Reunification [QIC-R], 2021). The reunification process should be family-centered and work simultaneously with families toward reunification while enhancing their capacity to care for and protect their children. This section explores components of a holistic approach to reunification.

Family engagement. The backbone of holistic, comprehensive child welfare practice is family engagement. Family engagement is a family-centered and strengths-based approach to making decisions, setting goals, and achieving desired outcomes in partnership with children, youth, and families (Children's Bureau, 2019). At the practice level, it involves establishing meaningful relationships with families as soon as they become involved with the child welfare system and working together to set goals, develop case plans, and make decisions. Authentic family engagement can help promote meaningful collaboration with parents, children, and families. It has also been shown to increase the likelihood of reunification (Maltais et al., 2019). A whole-family approach engages children and youth in an age-appropriate way, which caseworkers report as a crucial component of developing a reunification plan (Jedwab et al., 2018). For older youth, this includes their participation in all planning meetings and court hearings. For younger children, child welfare caseworkers should ask their input using guided questions, such as "There is going to be a court hearing today. Do you have any questions about it or anything you would like me to talk to the judge about for you?"

Engaging Fathers

When working with families, caseworkers should make conscious efforts to engage fathers, who have been historically left out by the child welfare system and are less likely to be engaged compared to mothers (JBS International, Inc., 2020). Father involvement in a child's life has many benefits for child development and well-being outcomes, including fewer behavioral problems and better performance in school (Cabrera et al., 2018). In addition to obtaining custody or being a placement option for the child, fathers can support the reunification process by sharing information with caseworkers, helping caseworkers identify kin connections, and encouraging relatives to spend time with the child or youth. Some best practices for engaging fathers and paternal relatives include actively identifying and locating fathers, providing ongoing training and coaching for staff on father engagement, and shifting perspectives to champion father engagement (Fung et al., 2023). It is also important that caseworkers recognize and address their own biases and preconceived notions of fathers. The National Responsible Fatherhood Clearinghouse has more information, resources, and programs about fatherhood and father engagement.

Trauma-informed practice. Trauma is common among children, youth, and families involved with the child welfare system and can affect how a family engages with the system (National Child Traumatic Stress Network & Chapin Hall, 2020). While removals, placements, and multigenerational involvement with the child welfare system are traumatic for the whole family, the reunification process itself also may result in further trauma. Incorporating an understanding of trauma and trauma-informed care into casework practice can help families address past and ongoing trauma as part of their reunification plan. Trauma-informed strategies can also prevent additional trauma. For example, talking to children and preparing them for reunification before it occurs can reduce trauma caused by abrupt transitions between households.

Foster care as a support. Another potential barrier that can inhibit parents from engaging in child welfare services as they work toward reunification is the inherent power differential that comes with child welfare involvement. Parents often feel fear, anxiety, and a lack of trust with child welfare caseworkers and resource families[2] (Children's Bureau, 2020b). In a holistic approach to reunification, caseworkers view and facilitate foster care as a support to families, not a punishment. For caseworkers, this includes being free of judgment and forming authentic, trusting relationships with parents. It also involves encouraging supportive coparenting relationships between birth and resource families. More information is available in the "Helping Parents Develop Skills and Supports" section of this publication.

Partnering with relatives to promote reunification. Kinship care is one way to facilitate foster care as a support because an existing relationship between a parent and relative can be very beneficial. Because of its many benefits, including minimized trauma, preserved cultural identity, and increased placement stability, kinship care is often the preferred placement option for children who can't safely live at home (Child Welfare Information Gateway, 2022). It can also be a way to promote racial equity, as kinship care has strong cultural and historical roots among Black and American Indian/Alaska Native communities (Hopkins, 2020). Regardless of whether children are living with relatives, caseworkers should make efforts to engage kin in case planning, as they can be a source of social support for parents and relational support for children and youth.

Cross-system collaboration. Cross-system collaboration is another key element to holistic reunification planning. A family that becomes involved with the child welfare system usually interacts with other systems and service providers as well, including the court system (for example, judges, attorneys, or guardians ad litem), their child's school (for example, teachers, counselors, or coaches), and health-care providers (for example, doctors or therapists). They may also interact with providers specializing in substance use treatment or other specific services. As families navigate these systems, their service providers will serve different roles, form relationships of varying levels, and see families in a variety of settings. Interprofessional communication can help providers develop a more comprehensive and complete understanding of a family's needs and how to

[2] The term "resource family" is used in this publication to describe foster, kinship, or other out-of-home caregivers.

meet them. Interprofessional communication among caseworkers, guardians ad litem, therapists, and substance use disorder counselors has been shown to facilitate timely reunification by helping professionals identify and address barriers to reunification, make timely decisions, and stay on the same page about goals and expectations (Phillips, 2023).

Concurrent Planning

Concurrent planning is the practice of seeking multiple options for permanency at the same time rather than consecutively to reduce children's time without a permanent family. Often, this means that reunification is sought as the primary goal, but the caseworker will also simultaneously seek out other options, such as guardianship or adoption. Children and youth do best when they remain with family, so concurrent planning should involve family finding and discussions with relatives or kin who may be able to care for them. For more information about concurrent planning, refer to Information Gateway's *Concurrent Planning for Timely Permanence*.

BEST PRACTICES FOR SUPPORTING REUNIFICATION AND PREVENTING REENTRY

Efforts to promote successful, family-centered reunification can begin as soon as the decision is made to place a child in out-of-home care and continue throughout the out-of-home placement and any subsequent reunification. This section describes practices caseworkers can use to support reunification and prevent reentry while children are in out-of-home care and after they have been returned to their families.

TAILORED SERVICE DELIVERY TO ADDRESS ROOT ISSUES

Reunification can only be successful when a family can continue to thrive after their involvement with the child welfare system. If the root causes that led to maltreatment in the first place are not addressed, the cycle may repeat and result in reentry. It's essential to work with families to address these root causes by connecting them with tailored, culturally appropriate, and accessible services in their community. These may include counseling, drug or alcohol treatment, parenting classes, or education and career support.

Every family comes from a different background and situation. Individualized services and timelines to achieve goals are necessary; the same approach will not work for every family. Professionals should partner with families to accurately identify issues and determine what services will meet their needs, including their racial, ethnic, and cultural needs. This will help avoid wasted time on unnecessary treatments, which can overburden parents already dealing with complex issues. Families may need help navigating challenges related to transportation, child care, or time conflicts with work that affect their ability to participate in services. In some cases, families may face practical barriers to receiving services, such as a lack of providers in their community or limited availability of services (Jedwab et al., 2018). When possible, child welfare professionals should partner with

community providers, such as hospitals, schools, nonprofits, community centers, and other organizations, for services the child welfare agency does not specifically provide. In communities with limited availability, online services may be available.

PRIORITIZING QUALITY FAMILY TIME

Frequent and regular parent-child visits, also known as "family time," help children, youth, and parents continue and improve their relationships as well as prepare to reunite. Children and youth who have regular, meaningful visits with family have a greater likelihood of reuniting with them, and the family has increased chances of sustaining reunification (Children's Bureau, 2020a).

Planning conversations with parents about the frequency, duration, and location of family time visits should begin as early as possible. Family time should begin as soon as possible after a child is removed from their home since removal can be a major cause of stress and trauma. It is important for family time to be accessible for all parents. This may include helping parents with access to transportation or scheduling visits around a parent's work schedule. Depending on a family's situation, family time may be either supervised or unsupervised. Supervision can affect the quality of family time by changing the comfort levels of parents and children as well as their ability to interact naturally. It's important to recognize that a child being placed in out-of-home care does not necessarily mean it is unsafe for parents and children to have unsupervised visits (Children's Bureau, 2020a).

One intervention that can make supervised visits more family centered and strengths based is visit coaching. Identified as a best practice by the QIC-R, family visit coaching helps parents develop parenting skills and protective factors that allow them to parent more effectively. The model involves a coach supporting parents before, during, and after visits by addressing knowledge gaps, such as familiarity with child development, and building a parent's sense of empowerment, empathy, and self-efficacy (Fischer et al., 2020). To help families feel more comfortable, coaches may be independent from the child welfare agency and come from the same community or culture as the family.

Virtual family time can be another option to help parents stay in contact with their children and promote reunification. While in-person visits are preferable, virtual visits can be helpful in situations when it's difficult for families to gather in person, such as when the child and parent live far away from one another or when the case involves a parent who is incarcerated. Virtual visits can also supplement in-person visits and help families stay more connected. Find more information in Information Gateway's *Tips for Supporting Virtual Family Time* bulletin for professionals and *Virtual Family Time: Tips for Families* factsheet for families (also available in Spanish).

Reunification With Families Affected by Incarceration

In most cases when a parent is incarcerated, child welfare professionals still have a responsibility to pursue reasonable efforts to reunify families (Casey Family Programs, 2023). Except under certain circumstances, parents who are incarcerated also have the same rights to regular parent-child visits and participation in case planning and the court process as those who are not incarcerated. Working with families affected by incarceration may present additional challenges to family engagement and participation, such as difficulties coordinating parent involvement and a lack of access to planning meetings, mandated and voluntary services, their child's education and medical decisions, court hearings, and more. Cross-system collaboration is essential when working with incarcerated parents, and systems and service providers should work together to coordinate service delivery, case planning, and family time.

To effectively support and work with families affected by incarceration, caseworkers should understand the racism and disproportionality prevalent in the U.S. prison system. Just as Black and American Indian/Alaska Native families are overrepresented in the child welfare system (Annie E. Casey Foundation, 2020; Children's Bureau, 2022b), Black and American Indian/Alaska Native individuals are incarcerated at higher rates than other races (Wessler, 2022). This systemic racism harms families involved with both the child welfare and prison systems and can cause even more harm when systems overlap. More information is available in Information Gateway's *Child Welfare Practice With Families Affected by Parental Incarceration* and Casey Family Programs' *What Should Child Protection Agencies Consider When Working With Children Whose Parent or Primary Caregiver Is Incarcerated?*

HELPING PARENTS DEVELOP SKILLS AND SUPPORTS

Strengthening parents' skills and support systems is critical for supporting reunification or avoiding reentry. The following are examples of specific services and supports that can help:

- **Education and training programs** for parents can enhance the parent-child relationship and teach both specific parenting and general problem-solving skills. Successful education programs highlighted by the QIC-R include Generation PMTO, an evidence-based intervention that teaches parents how to effectively use a series of core parenting strategies, and the Strengthening Families Program, a 10- to 14-week training that focuses on developing skills in family groups.
- **Partnerships between resource parents and birth parents** show promise in promoting timely reunification, improving family engagement, building protective capacities in parents, and strengthening child safety and well-being (Children's Bureau, 2020b). Caseworkers can facilitate

these collaborative relationships between birth and resource families by preparing families for coparenting, defining roles and setting expectations early on, facilitating frequent and quality communication between families, and encouraging resource families to act as mentors and role models. The Birth and Foster Parent Partnership provides a relationship-building guide that caseworkers can use to support relationships between birth and resource families.

- **Parent mentor programs** connect parent mentors who were once involved with the child welfare system to currently involved parents. The mentors provide parents with support, advocacy, and help navigating the child welfare system. Research shows that these programs can increase reunification rates for participating families (Acri et al., 2021). Two parent mentor programs that have shown promise in bolstering reunification include Parents in Partnership (Enano et al., 2017) and the Iowa Parent Partner Approach (Chambers et al., 2019).
- **Social support** can provide a safety net for parents before and after reunification. Helping parents strengthen their support networks and building community partnerships for child protection provide informal and formal opportunities for families to deal with stress that could lead to maltreatment. Connecting parents with an in-person or online support group can be one way to encourage social connections. Parents Anonymous is an example of a program that helps parents build social support networks.
- **Recovery coaches,** who help parents successfully complete substance use treatment, may increase the likelihood of reunification, but there is limited evidence about the effectiveness of the intervention (Francis et al., 2021). Recovery coaches support families by conducting assessments, developing service plans, advocating for parents, conducting home visits, and working in partnership with the child welfare caseworker.

OTHER CASEWORK INTERVENTIONS

In addition to tailored service delivery, quality family time, and parental supports, the following are examples of frameworks and practices caseworkers can use in their work with families seeking reunification:

- **Comprehensive safety and risk assessments** are crucial for determining a family's capacity for keeping children safe and their readiness to reunify. Some States require formal safety and risk assessments to evaluate a family's behavior. Regardless of whether a formal assessment is required, caseworkers should regularly assess for safety and risk by observing conditions in the home, parent characteristics, child characteristics, and interactions between the parent and child during visits. Assessing a family's needs, strengths, and challenges is something that should occur throughout the reunification process since they can change over time. More information is available in Information Gateway's *The Use of Safety and Risk Assessments in Child Protection Cases*.
- **High-quality legal representation for parents** is critical for child welfare cases and has numerous reported benefits, including increased perception of fairness,

increased family engagement, more personally tailored case plans, increased family time, expedited permanency, and cost savings to States (Children's Bureau, 2017). One form of high-quality legal representation is a multidisciplinary team approach, which has been shown to expedite safe reunification (Gerber, et al., 2019). Recent legislation made Federal funding available for title IV-E agencies to cover the cost of representation in foster care legal proceedings for children and families, including costs associated with hearings, meetings, research, petition filing, and more (Children's Bureau, 2021; Foster Care Legal Representation, 2023). It's important for caseworkers to be well-versed in court resources that may be available to families, such as funding support for legal representation, and to help families navigate the legal process. Viewing legal representation through the lens of racial and ethnic equity is another important consideration, as one study found that Black families in child welfare experienced a lack of quality legal representation and authentic engagement in courts (Wright, et al., 2022).

- **Keeping children connected to their communities and cultures** is an important focus of the child welfare system. The QIC-R identifies the importance of community in its best practice focus areas for reunification. More specifically, it recommends maintaining children's important connections by prioritizing foster care placements in their neighborhoods, keeping them in their communities and schools, and facilitating participation in activities they enjoy (QIC-R, 2021). Geographic closeness to their communities of origin can help children and youth maintain important connections to their family, friends, and cultures. It's important for children and youth to stay connected to those who share their race, ethnicity, and culture so they can develop and maintain their cultural identity while in out-of-home care.
- **Practicing cultural humility** by making active efforts to learn about a family's cultural needs, values, and strengths is essential to daily child welfare practice. Children and families of diverse racial, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds often experience inherent biases and disproportionate outcomes in child welfare, which could affect their ability to achieve timely, successful reunification. Caseworkers should commit to addressing their own inherent biases, perceptions, and attitudes so these embedded factors do not influence permanency or other decisions. This includes participating in ongoing training and coaching on racial disparities, cultural diversity, systemic racism, and disproportionality. The University of California San Francisco offers an unconscious bias training to help participants understand and address their unconscious biases. Caseworkers should also advocate for the families they support by actively committing to anti-racism. This includes addressing those whose actions may be affected by conscious or unconscious racism or prejudice, including agency staff, legal professionals, and service providers.

- **Family treatment courts** (FTCs) are a collaborative, family-centered intervention for families affected by substance use. In FTCs, a multidisciplinary team of staff from various agencies—usually including the judge, FTC coordinator, attorneys, guardians ad litem or court-appointed special advocates, the caseworker, and other treatment providers—work together with the family to develop an individualized case plan and help a family work toward reunification. A meta-analysis of FTC studies found that those who participated in FTCs were nearly two times more likely to achieve reunification than those who did not (Zhang et al., 2019).
- **Family group decision-making** is an umbrella term for various processes (such as family team meetings, team decision-making, and shared planning) in which parents, children and youth, caseworkers, legal professionals, kin, other family supporters, and other multidisciplinary professionals come together and actively participate in child welfare decision-making and planning processes. More information is available in the Information Gateway podcast "Family Group Decision-Making: Implementing the Family Group Conference."
- **Parent-child interaction therapy** is a practice that can help parents learn parenting techniques, decrease child behavioral issues, improve parent-child relationships, and reduce the risk of maltreatment (Child Welfare Information Gateway, 2019). Parent-child interaction therapy addresses factors that contribute to parenting issues or problematic parent-child relationships. The parent and child are treated together, and their interactions are observed by a therapist, who provides them with feedback and tools. More information is available in Information Gateway's *Parent-Child Interaction Therapy: A Primer for Child Welfare Professionals*.
- **Training for caseworkers** can help them understand and develop skills related to parental engagement and supporting incremental behavioral change (Luu et al., 2022). One potential training is "Family-Centered Reunification Training," a 60-minute online course from the Connecticut School of Social Work that provides information on family-centered reunification, family engagement, father engagement, and engagement of families from various cultural backgrounds.
- **Trial home visits**, which occur when a child returns to their family's care while the child welfare agency maintains oversight, may be a useful intervention for promoting successful reunification and preventing reentry. Findings from a survey of almost 300 caseworkers indicate that caseworkers believe trial home visits are one of the most important factors for successful reunification (Jedwab et al., 2018). One study found that children who had a trial home visit immediately before reunification had a lower reentry rate than children and youth who did not have a trial home visit (Shaw, 2021).

POSTREUNIFICATION SERVICES

Caseworkers have identified postreunification services as critical to family-centered reunification planning (Jedwab et al., 2018). These services may include ongoing family and individual therapy for parents and

children, substance use treatment, parenting classes, concrete supports, and more. Caseworkers should continue to consider the root causes that led to system involvement and tailor services to address those individual challenges. Cross-system collaboration is an important part of postreunification service coordination, and caseworkers should collaborate with community providers and other sectors on where and how a family can receive certain services and supports.

Talking with families before reunification occurs about the postreunification services they think they will need and incorporating these into their case plan may help parents, children, and youth feel more prepared and supported as they resume their normal family activities. Both parents and children may experience mixed emotions about reunification, such as excitement, gratitude, confidence, anxiety, fear, or sadness. They may also encounter challenges transitioning after reunification, such as difficulty adjusting to new schedules and differences between homes and families. Preparing families for these complicated feelings and challenges before reunification—and continuing to address them after reunification—can help ease the transition.

When families reunify on short timelines, the risk of reentry is often higher (Jedwab & Shaw, 2017). Postreunification services can act as a buffer in the months after reunification by giving families continued support where they need it rather than expecting lasting change after only short periods of receiving services. In some cases, postreunification interactions may allow child welfare professionals to identify and address issues, such as substance use relapse, before reentry becomes necessary (Font et al., 2018).

More information about providing postreunification support is available in the Capacity Building Center for States webinar "Post-Reunification Supports and Prevention of Reentry Into Out-of-Home Care."

CONCLUSION

When safe, reunification with family is the best permanency option for children and youth in foster care. Caseworkers should embrace a holistic approach to meeting a family's basic needs by engaging and partnering with families and youth in planning and decision-making and connecting families with accessible, tailored services. Family-centered reunification is an ongoing process that requires continued support after a family is reunified to prevent foster care reentry. Caseworkers can use the information in this bulletin and the following additional resources to improve their reunification approach to more holistically and comprehensively support families.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Partnering With Relatives to Promote Reunification (Information Gateway) includes stories and advice from those who have experienced kinship care on how kin caregivers can support family reunification.

Partnering With Birth Parents to Promote Reunification (Information Gateway) features themes and tips informed by conversations with birth and resource families about how attitudes, expectations, and family-centered actions can affect outcomes for children, youth, and families.

The National Quality Improvement Center on Family-Centered Reunification works with State and Tribal child welfare agencies to identify and implement best practices to support the needs of families whose children are in foster care.

A Parent's Perspective on Family-Centered Reunification Practice (QIC-R) highlights advice and tips for child welfare service providers from a parent who reunited with her children after 8 years.

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