

2011 Family Connection Discretionary Grants:  
Using Family Group Decision-making to  
Build Protective Factors for Children and Families

**Project Abstract/ Summary**

**Grantee Name:** The Children's Home Society of New Jersey  
**Grantee City and State:** Trenton, New Jersey  
**Grant Project Title:** *CHSofNJ Kinship Family Group Decision Making Project*

**Summary of Grant Project**

The Children's Home Society of New Jersey will use voluntary Family Group Decision Making to build protective factors for a unique 450 Trenton NJ kin families: kinship families (highly grandparents) not open in the state child welfare system but caring for children at risk of entering or re-entering child welfare system. Using FGDM, project intervention will identify, demonstrate and evaluate with kin: enhanced protective factors, reduced risk factors, how to build child resiliency so no further abuse/neglect occurs, how to develop family capacity to overcome obstacles to avoid children's entry/re-entry into child welfare system.

Research says: **1)** kin more likely to begin to experience problems when child becomes an adolescent; **2)** kin are reluctant to engage with any community services until an extreme crisis occurs.

Unique, free, graduated, integrated, three phase model (Recruitment/Engagement; Participation, Services, Building Trust; and Family Group Decision Making/Family Team Meetings) will be offered to both existing state-funded Kinship Navigator families and to kin families not 'in the system' at our existing, innovative Mercer county/Trenton GrandFamily Success Center; second phase: for 200 kin caregivers engagement in group learning/support services; third phase for 100 kin having, established trust, suggest FGDM meeting (we call a "family/friends gathering"). The proposed project is family-driven, family-centered, strength-based, implements best practice elements of Family Group Decision Making model, and identifies, demonstrates and evaluates: **1)** Which kinship families not known to system are good candidates for voluntary FGDM and which ones can best utilize the model; **2)** How to engage successfully kin to use FGDM model; **3)** How to conduct kin FGDM meetings to reach successful outcomes.

Unique Strengths: Our NJ agency with decades of experience providing FGDM model will leverage our existing NJ State funded Kinship Navigator program and GrandFamily Success Center; our agency is 1 of 6 national ACF Kinship Cares grantees.

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