

2012 Family Connection Discretionary Grants:
Combination Family Finding/Family Group Decision Making
Project Abstract/ Summary (updated Jan 2013)

Grantee Name: Children's Home Society of Washington
Grantee City and State: Seattle, Washington
Grant Project Title: *Family Connections*

Summary of Grant Project

Family Connections is designed to combine current **family finding** and **Family Team Decision Making** efforts in Washington and create a more unified, **collaborative, trauma-informed approach**. By combining and enhancing the two separate models, and **more effectively resourcing** the combined model, services and outcomes for children & families will improve.

This model demonstration project will develop and conduct a randomized control trial of a combined Family Engagement/FTDM model that is more effective at **ensuring permanence for children, improving child and family well-being, and increasing youth and family involvement in their own treatment planning**. The project is a public-private partnership between Children's Home Society of Washington, the Department of Social and Health Services, Children's Administration, Secret Harbor, and Partners for Our Children.

Family Connections will target children/youth with **serious behavioral or emotional difficulties** at risk of Behavioral Rehabilitation Services (BRS) referral in the northwest corner of Washington State (Children's Administration Region 2 North.) These children have the most challenging behaviors, are generally older than the overall population of children in the child welfare system, and have the greatest need for increased family connections and placement options. The project will serve 90-120 such children and their families over the life of the project (with another 90 families assigned to the randomized control group.)

The project has **three main components**:

1) **Enhanced Family Engagement** efforts to follow up on relative search/family finding activities and engage parents, maternal and paternal relatives and fictive kin to provide support and resources, long-term connections and family placement. 2) **Added Family Team meetings** designed to engage parents, extended family members and fictive kin in a collaborative service planning process. 3) **Professional development training** for public and private agency staff to learn about the effects of trauma and toxic stress on child development and family functioning and improve their ability to provide effective trauma-informed care and education to children and families in the child welfare system.

The project has the following goals:

1. Improve parent, family member and youth engagement in the child welfare process
2. Improve child and family well-being of families enrolled in the project
3. Reduce intensive (Behavioral Rehabilitation Services- BRS) placement rates and duration and increase family placement rates for children requiring out-of-home placement
4. Increase community engagement in the child welfare process

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