

2012 Family Connection Discretionary Grants:  
Combination Family Finding/Family Group Decision Making

**Project Abstract/ Summary**

**Grantee Name:** Spaulding for Children

**Grantee City and State:** Southfield, Michigan

**Grant Project Title:** *MiTeam Makes Great Families (M2GF)*

**Summary of Grant Project**

MiTeam Makes Great Families (M2GF)

**Target Population:** Children/youth in the child welfare system including youth in foster care preparing for reunification and/or relative placement, children/youth in formal or informal kinship care placements or children/youth living at home with parents, with child welfare involvement due to significant risk of their removal- Specifically children in foster care with a plan of reunification with their family of origin, permanent state wards (MCI's) with a plan of adoption, families with children/youth ages 0-10 referred by DHS-CPS with a category 3 or 4 CPS disposition or with no CPS involvement, but have at least 3 of the 39 risk factors for child maltreatment.

**Target Area:** Michigan - Wayne and Oakland Counties

**Needs to be Addressed:**

The State of Michigan and private agencies in Michigan, like many other states have a model of family group decision making and engage in relative searches for the children in their care or children for whom they have some responsibility. And like many states, there are challenges in maintaining the integrity of models used and in accomplishing anticipated outcomes. Current challenges with the Michigan model include:

- Greater focus on safety and permanency with well-being as an after-thought
- Lack of consistency and uniformity in search procedures
- Lack of intensity in pursuing concurrent permanency options for older children with a permanency plan of Adoption
- Maintaining the engagement of group members until permanency is achieved by the child and solidifying support for the family after the child is placed
- The reluctance of some workers to consider relatives of a child that has been abused or neglected as a viable option.

**Purpose** – Using Spaulding for Children as the pilot test site, the purpose of the MiTeam Makes Great Families Project (M2GF) is to enhance and intensify Spaulding's current search and family group decision making process (which is based on the Michigan Model) to promote the social and emotional well-being and support healthy, positive functioning in children and youth served and to address the impact of trauma on well-being.

**Unique features:** The intensive use of technology – “Family Desk Top” a portal where whoever is working with the family will have access to plans of service and be able to update status, on-line training, on-line meetings to include persons precluded by distance from attending meetings, use of M2GF Meetings to build educational and community capacity by holding meetings in places such as fire stations, zoos, museums, faith based facilities, a search committee comprised of strategic community persons, and the provision of free CEU's as incentives for staff.

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