

KINNECTIONS SUCCESS STORY - I

In January 2012, two children, ages 2 months and 1 year, were placed into protective custody due to the parents' failure to provide adequate medical care for the children who were diagnosed with Failure to Thrive.

When the KI staff met with both parents for engagement, the father expressed his desire to have the children placed in the paternal grandparents' care. The father reported having one sibling who lives with the grandparents. The father was not able to identify other extended relatives. The mother also expressed her desire for the children to be placed with the paternal grandparents. The mother reported that she grew up in foster care after being removed from her parents. Her father is still incarcerated and her mother is homeless. The mother has no contact with her extended relatives. She reported her family relationships were distant and dysfunctional. The mother indicated that she has one sibling who lives in Reno, CA and reported having a good relationship with her. The mother provided contact information for her sister.

The KI staff contacted the maternal aunt who lives in Reno. She reported she was interested in placement of the children and, so, the KI staff obtained her information and presented it to the Department. The court ordered an ICPC for the maternal aunt to assess her for possible placement. However, it was determined later that the Department was not recommending placement with the maternal aunt due the FR services being offered to the parents.

Towards the end of January, the Kinship unit denied the paternal grandparents for kinship placement due to previous CPS history. When the KI staff met with the paternal grandparents and the paternal aunt, the paternal grandmother was upset and did not wish to provide any family information. The grandmother indicated that she has conflicts with several family members and she does not have contact information for them. The paternal grandfather identified the names of several relatives, however, he could not provide any other information besides their names. The paternal aunt also did not offer any additional relatives for possible placement.

Seneca searches were conducted to attempt to locate other possible relatives. Although the results for both parents were limited, the KI staff was contacted by one maternal relative and one paternal relative who responded to the Seneca letters. The maternal relative, who identified himself as the mother's uncle, reported that he has not seen the mother since she was in the care of her father. The maternal relative reported that he was not capable of providing care for two special needs children. While his contacts with other relatives were limited, he provided contact information to one relative who lived in another county. The KI staff contacted this relative who reported that she is the mother's cousin but she had not seen the mother since she was living with the father (over 15 years ago). She indicated that she is not able to care for two young children due to recently getting married and living with her in-laws. Both maternal relatives were not able to identify other relatives.

The KI staff was also contacted by a paternal great-uncle as a result of the Seneca search. When the KI staff met with the paternal uncle and his wife, it was discovered that they did not have a close relationship with the father and the paternal grandparents due to a family conflict that

KINNECTIONS SUCCESS STORY - I

occurred several years ago. They were not aware the father had children. After describing the situation and process for relative placement, the paternal great-uncle and aunt reported that they would like to have time to make a decision about whether or not they would like pursue placement of the children.

One week later, the paternal great-uncle made contact with the KI staff to inform her that they were interested in pursuing kinship. The KI staff immediately met with the paternal relatives to conduct a relative evaluation. The paternal great-uncle expressed his concerns for the children's well-being and indicated that he was placed into foster care as a young child and his older sibling took him in and provided a stable home for him. He indicated that he would like to do the same for the children. After completing the relative evaluation and contacting the county social worker, the KI staff submitted a kinship referral for the paternal relatives. The CPS Kinship unit approved the paternal relatives for placement on March 28, 2012.

Supervised visits were approved a month later by the county social worker and the KI staff assisted in coordinating these visits. While the paternal relatives were waiting on being assessed for placement by the Department, the KI staff was regularly meeting with the paternal relatives to educate them on how to care for children with Failure to Thrive. After a few visits, the KI staff and the paternal relatives learned that the Department was not recommending placement due to the mother being opposed to placement. The mother was opposed to placement because she did not have a relationship with these relatives.

The KI staff advocated on behalf of the paternal relatives, including attending court hearings with them and making contacts with the child's attorney. A TDM meeting was scheduled by the county social worker on June 29, 2012 to address the mother's concern about placement with the paternal relatives and it was determined that placement in the relatives' home would be appropriate. A relative court hearing was scheduled one week later and the children were placed with the paternal relatives. KI staff assisted the relatives in working with the foster parents to ensure that they were provided with the children's dietary and medical information, as well as financial needs. The children are doing extremely well in this home. The paternal great-aunt quit her part-time job to provide full-time care for the children. The relatives are committed to adoption if the parents do not reunify with the children.

KINNECTIONS SUCCESS STORY - II

A sibling set of two children, one girl and one boy, were placed into protective custody after being locked out of their apartment and their mother could not be located. During the investigation it was discovered that the mother was addicted to drugs and would leave the children often with no electricity or food. The older child's biological father had passed away before she was born and the younger child's father was unknown. The maternal family in the area consisted of a maternal aunt, maternal grandaunt, maternal grandfather, and a younger cousin. The family all lived together but placement with them was not an option. However, the maternal family members continued to visit and provide support.

A meeting with the mother did not result in any new information and she would not share anything about the father of the child who had passed away. The contact information for the maternal family was incorrect so an unannounced visit occurred. The maternal aunt was home but she was only able to provide very limited information. She disclosed that the kids and her sister had lived in another area before moving to Sacramento and she was aware of paternal relatives and older half-siblings but she did not have phone numbers, addresses, or last names. She was, however, able to provide the father's date of death and first names of relatives that she could remember. With this information a search was completed on the deceased father. A search on Facebook produced the possible siblings.

The children completed a family tree and only identified their maternal family as important. When asked about the paternal relatives that had been disclosed by the maternal aunt, the children confirmed that they had been introduced to the paternal family and had visited them a couple of times. They reported that it had been about three years since they had seen them and did not remember a lot of details, but recalled attending an event with the paternal grandmother.

The county social worker was interested in finding relatives as the mother had not engaged in services. The CSW had received the Death Certificate for the father and shared additional information. A second search was requested and new possible relatives were identified. A telephone call was received and the caller confirmed that she was indeed the paternal grandmother and had been looking for her grandchildren! She was extremely emotional over the phone and stated that there were other family members that knew the children and were very interested in regaining contact with them. A family meeting was scheduled and everyone's information was collected. The oldest of the half-siblings wanted to be considered for placement and a relative evaluation was completed with her. In collaboration with the CSW, a reunion visit was arranged. The children and paternal family members had a wonderful visit and are continuing to strengthen their relationship. The older sister is currently looking for a house to purchase so she can begin the kinship process for placement of the children. The CSW is in favor of placement in this home.
