



SC Connecting For Kids Finding Families

Volunteers For Youth Conference
March 9, 2012

Grant Program

- A Partnership With The S.C. Department Of Social Services And The S.C. Guardian Ad Litem
- Funded From September 2009 – September 2012
- Locate And Establish Permanent Connections For Children In Danger Of Aging Out Of Foster Care Without Supportive Adults

Grant Staff

- Grant Administrator – Kathryn Kendrick
- Grant Supervisor – Interim (Virginia Ravenel)
- Grant Evaluator - Suzanne Sutphin
- Family Connection Coordinators:
Rick McWhorter
Twofeathers Martin

Grant Counties

Upstate

Greenville, Greenwood, Newberry, Oconee &
Spartanburg

Family Connection Coordinator -

Rick McWhorter

803-240-5049

rmcwhorter@oepp.sc.gov

Grant Counties

Lower – Middle State

Aiken, Bamberg, Barnwell, Calhoun, Dorchester,
& Orangeburg

Family Connection Coordinator -

Twofeathers Martin

803-201-4698

tmartin@oepp.sc.gov

Consequences

Aging Out – No Connections

After 2 Years Of Aging Out Of Foster Care

- < 50% Completed High School
- < 50 % Employed
- 1 in 7 Homeless

Consequences

Aging Out - Positive Connections

- Safety Net
- Knowledge Base Of Life Experience

Referral Sources

- DSS Foster Care
- DSS Intensive Foster Care and Clinical Case Services
- DSS Adoptions
- GAL Staff
- GAL Volunteers
- Foster Care Review Board

Referral Criteria

- Age 12 – 17
- 2 Or Fewer Established Family / Fictive Kin Connections

Other Referral Considerations

- Children With A Pending Plan Of Reunification
- Children With A Pending Adoption
- Children Who Are A Danger To Themselves
And / Or Others

What Is A Connection?


- A Connection Is Relative And /Or Non-Relative (18 Years & Older) Who Commits To Establish A Relationship With A Child
- Type Of Connection Could Be Letter Writing, Phone Calls, Social Media , Lunch / Supper, Visits, Weekend Stays, Holidays & Even Placement
- The Connection Will Undergo Background Checks

Involvement - Child

- The Child Is Not Initially Involved (Aware) Of The Search Process
- If The Results Of Case Mining Yield Potential Connections Who Complete Background Checks And Agree To Connection With Child – The Child Is Then Notified of Potential Connection To Determine His/Her Interest
- If Connections Are Not Available, The Child May Be A Source Of Information (Age May Be A Factor)

Belief Systems

- I Don't Know These People
- If They Cared, They Would Have Come Forward
- The Apple Doesn't Fall Far From The Tree
- The Youth (Placement) Is Stable
- The Youth (Placement) Is Unstable
- This Is An Unusual Case (Child Gifted) And Thus Don't Expect This With Other Children

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- We Already Do This
 - The Child Has No Family
 - Teenagers Don't Need Or Want A Family
 - Treatment Should Be Completed Or Child Stabilized Before Involving Family
 - Placements Are More Stable Than Relatives

Family / Fictive Kin Comments

- Thought We Lost Her
- Told That I Was Not A Close Enough Relative
- Thought She Had Been Adopted

Child Response

- Thought Family Had Forgot
- Anxious
- Excitement

Opportunity

While Other Grant States Are Concerned About The Survivability Of Family Connections Program, SC GAL Has Agreed To Assume This Responsibility At The End Of The Grant

Non Grant Counties

While Other Grant States Are Limited To Serving Designated Grant Counties, SC GAL And SC DSS Have Signed An MOA To Offer Family Connection Services To Counties Outside The Grant (Including Richland CASA In Search Training)

GAL Volunteer Training

Two - Volunteer Search Training Conducted

September 2011

October 2011

Responsibilities

Grant County

Mine Case Files / Internet Search (Free) /
Provide Information To Family Connection
Coordinator

Non Grant Counties

Mine Case Files / Internet Search (Free) /
Provide Information To Caseworker and GAL
Volunteer

Questions

