



UTAH

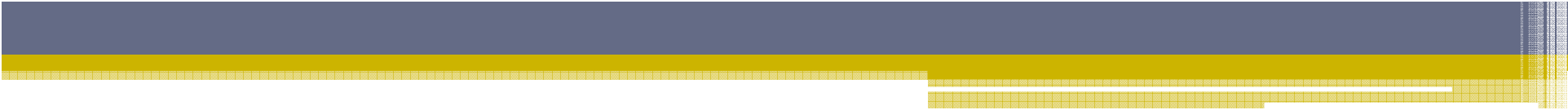
PRACTICE ELEVATED

2012 Court Improvement Summit

ELEVATE.....BUT HOW?

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We already do a good job, better than most states. We already work very hard.

- Don't we stack up pretty good?
- I really do everything I can and so do most of the other professionals, how can we work any harder than we already do?
- Yes and Yes — but we CAN always look to improve and elevate — not “harder” but maybe “better” or “smarter”



- Don't Utah kids deserve **ANYTHING** we can do to elevate our practice that would result in elevating life for them?
- We can talk for the next 2 days about some “work better/smarter” ideas that are worth trying as a team

**We do try hard to
elevate our practice and
we are going to talk
about what we have
been doing that is
working.**





But there are always new ways to look at our child welfare issues and now we have the time while we are all together to imagine other ways to “elevate” our practice — to work on some of our issues a little better/smarter

- Why are there always these new things we have to try?
- Feels like sometimes we just “experiment” with stuff
- Are we just doing stuff to do stuff?
- Aren't there known things that work?



WHAT ARE WE DOING WELL?

Going to hear about some real Court Improvement Achievements that have occurred regarding

Dually Involved Youth, Hearing Notification Information to Foster Parents, ICWA and Educational Outcomes for Foster children

Get to hear about the survey done on court proceedings - preparedness, participation, professionalism, timeliness of hearings, participation of children

Some Ideas We are Going to Talk About at this Conference

- **1. Quality Court Proceedings**
- **2. Using Structured Decision Making**
- **3. Improving the Use of Individualized Permanency**

Quality Court Proceedings

Possible Areas to Discuss:

- **All parents** ID'ed, present and represented — include incarcerated and out of state
- **Relatives** — ID'ed, provided with all the options — questions answered, include out of state ASAP
- **ICWA** — Does anyone have Native American heritage? Tribal connections ASAP

Quality Court Proceedings

- **True Child Participation** – How is this going? Are they actually coming? Getting to talk?
- **Foster Parents** – Know more than anyone about child on a day to day basis - are they coming? Getting to talk?
- **Visitation** – Is there a true understanding and discussion of what is happening – are details based on SAFETY and not “reward/punishment”

Quality Court Proceedings

- **Review of the Concurrent Planning Efforts** — is it more than a fill in the blank? Are reasonable efforts needed/happening re the secondary goal?
- **Should things look different for our Adolescents?** -Especially where there is a “IP” goal, should our court proceedings be modified to deal with unique issues?

2. Structured Decision Making (teaser)

- A more structured way to help support decisions at key points about safety and risk of the child that can be used by caseworkers and can also be presented and discussed in court setting
- A relatively new concept for Utah — many other states using it, starting to talk about it
- Utah has developed tools and beginning training
- Just starting a site in each region and you are going to be hearing about it today



3.Improving the Use of Individualized Permanency

- Is this an over used goal for Utah youth?
- Is it “us” just saying — “look there isn’t anything else for this child — except to stay in care until he/she ages out”
- Are we using this goal for younger and younger youth?

Why is this so hard?

Are there other ways to “work better/smarter” for this group of youth?



Describe the Terms

- **Permanence**
 - Durability
 - Solidity
 - Immovability
 - Eternalness
- **Adolescence**
 - Exploration
 - Risk taking
 - Mood swings
 - Transition

What is Permanency?

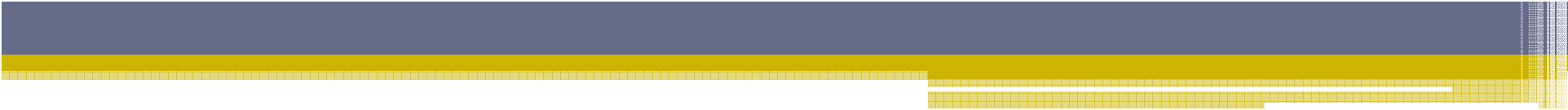
- **Stability without worry of future disruption**
- **Opportunity to live in a safe and nurturing home environment, one which can be returned to for support even as an adult; home intended to last indefinitely**
- **Contact with family of origin if appropriate**
- **Connections to community of origin**
- **Educational and health needs met**
- **Healing of past trauma**
- **Religion and culture preserved**
- **A sense of belonging and a definitive legal and social status**

Examples of What Youth Aging Out of Foster Care Lose:

- **Access to the courts** for enforcement of orders and legal advocates fighting for their right to access services.
- **Consistent adults** who are working for their best interest (i.e., foster parent, CASA, lawyer, or judge).
- **A sense of security** that may have been provided by their child welfare system involvement.
- **Medical Coverage:** in many situations, medical coverage will end unless the youth has employment.
- **Housing:** While in care the state must guarantee a youth's housing needs are addressed, but after leaving, a youth may be left to find housing on their own or through a supportive housing program.

What are the issues?

- Focus on stable placement instead of permanency.
- Once “IP” selected permanency options not revisited.
- Youth and families may not be “present” at hearings and reviews.
- Thinking that generic life skills services are going to be enough.
- Not focusing on the need for stable, supportive FAMILY relationships



The single most important contributor
to resiliency in youth is **connection
to a knowledgeable and caring
adult, or two or three...**

“Individualized Permanency”

- Permanency *goal* for the child
- The objective is to craft the most stable, secure arrangements possible
- “Permanency” includes something more than merely meeting the child’s **immediate** physical, educational, social, and mental health needs
- Key to the child’s future happiness and success is the development of relationships with members of the child’s family and communities



Let's talk about other ways to look at or approach "IP" youth issues?

- Roundtables
- More aggressive intensive involvement of the youth — different type of court hearing?
- More aggressive concurrent planning
- Re- introduction of relatives and birth parents

HAVE A GREAT CONFERENCE, and ELEVATE!



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