

# *The Fostering Connections Act: Texas Implementation*

Title IV-E  
Roundtable

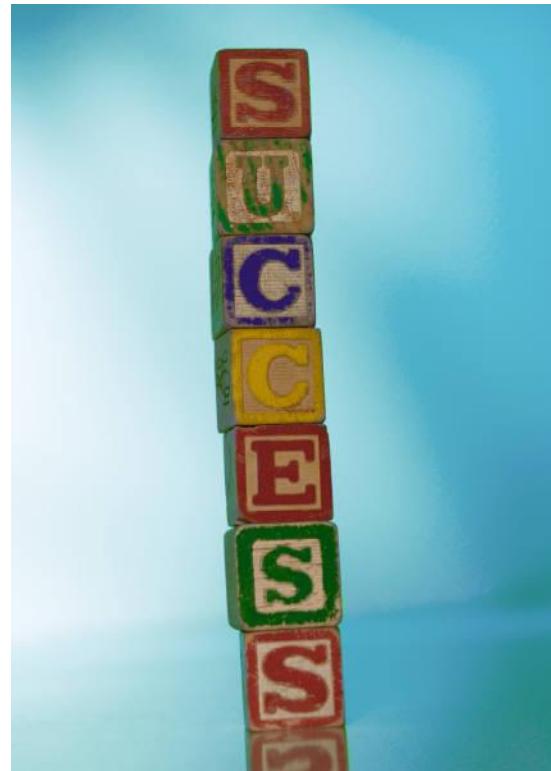
T Bar M  
New Braunfels



June 3, 2010

Liz Kromrei,  
LCSW

*Guiding Principal: We should resolve issues that have been past barriers to success (good outcomes) for youth exiting care/achieving permanency.*



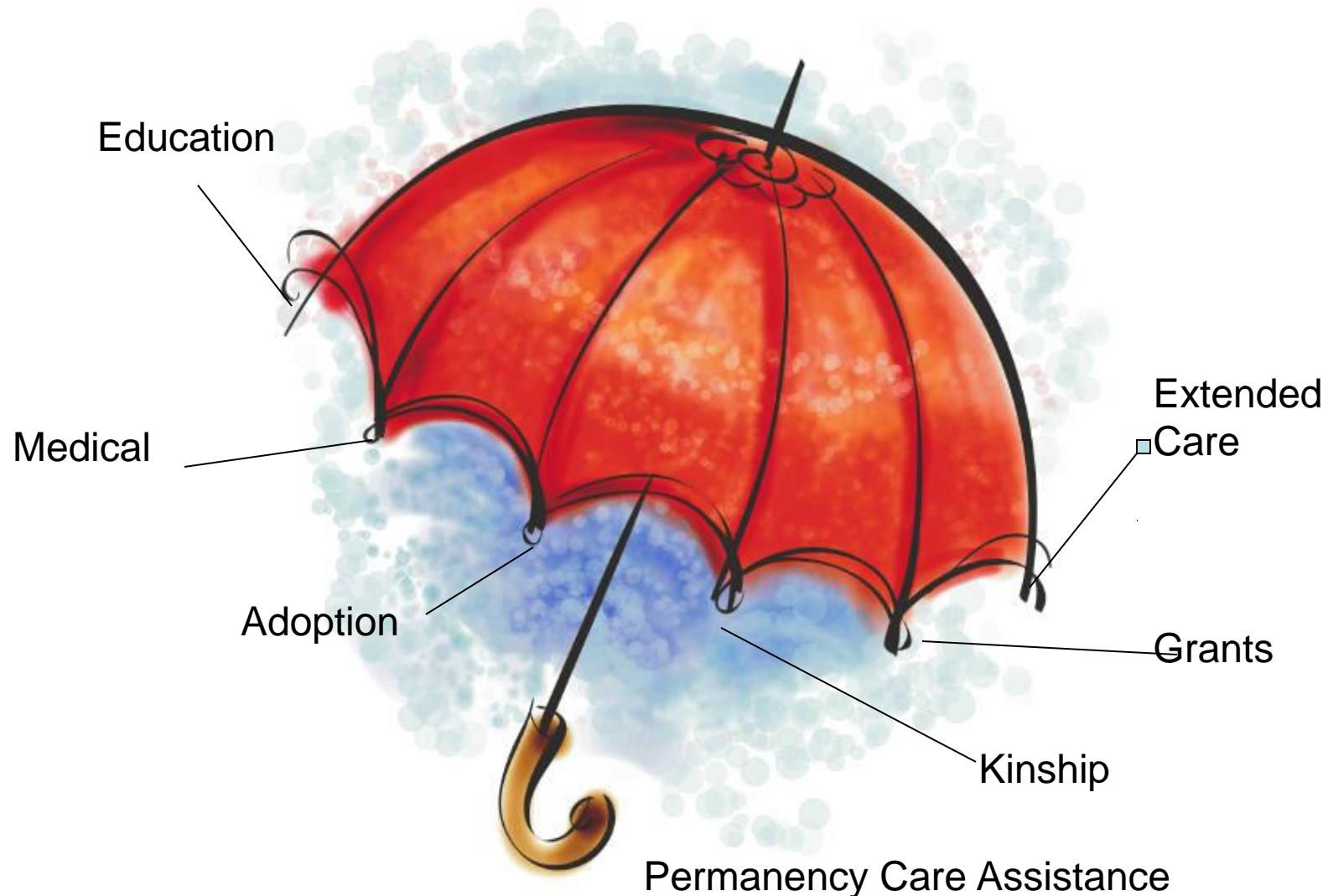
# What is Fostering Connections?

Legislation that promotes permanency and extends services for children and youth with an emphasis on adoption, relative care, and aging out of care:

- *Federal*: Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act of 2008
- *State*: House Bill 1151 and Senate Bill 2080



# Fostering Connections: Multiple Components



## Fostering Connections Act Optional Components

The 81st Texas Legislature passed:

- Relative Guardianship Assistance (“Permanency Care Assistance”) Program for relatives who take legal custody of a CPS foster child for whom the relatives have been verified foster parents for six months.
- Extension of permanency care assistance benefits up to the youth’s 21st birthday if agreements were signed after the youth turns 16.
- Extension of adoption assistance benefits up to the youth’s 21st birthday if agreements were signed after the youth turns 16.

# **Permanency Care Assistance (PCA) Program**

## ***What is it?***

A new option for youth who are in DFPS conservatorship and would otherwise grow up in foster care because going back home and adoption are not possible

Permanency Care Assistance is a “new way of doing business” for Texas.



## Permanency Care Assistance (PCA) Program

- PCA positively impacts children and youth:
  - It provides true permanency in the eyes of the child and family because they have their resolution and the CPS case is closed
  - Children/youth exit care more quickly
  - Fewer placement disruptions
  - Children/youth maintain family connections
- PCA positively impacts the child welfare system:
  - Stems the rate of caseload growth
  - Reduces caseworker time spent on face-to-face visits
  - Avoids administrative costs
  - Removes CPS cases from over-crowded court dockets and relieves counties of attorney ad litem costs

# Permanency Care Assistance (PCA) Program

The primary focus of this new program is to help move more children and youth towards permanency, especially those who would *otherwise grow up in foster care*.

- Not for youth who can be adopted.
- Not for youth who can be reunified.

# Using PCA to Help Children Exit Care to Permanency

Strategies include

- Promotion of the new program,
- Coordination of efforts within CPS and among other DFPS programs,
- Collaboration with community partners,
- Kinship notification after removal,
- Diligent searches,
- Recruitment of verified kinship placements with the focus on permanency,
- Case mining,
- Special effort to address children where DFPS has PMC and the permanency plan is “stuck”.

# Using PCA to Address Permanency

## Promotion of the new program

- Ensure information is known and available about PCA
- Remember PCA as an option when reviewing cases
- Get enthusiastic...this really is a good thing!
- Eliminate myths

## Coordination of efforts among CPS programs

- Communicate to ensure completion of the requirements
- Communicate to resolve barriers

## Collaboration with community partners

- Bring them into the loop; make them part of the plan
- Share information and answer questions

# Using PCA to Address Permanency

Kinship notification after removal

- Identify, notify, involve
- Use/Build family support system
- Start from the first day

Diligent searches

- Use new agency resources
- Broaden search as needed

# Using PCA to Address Permanency

Recruitment of verified kinship placements  
with the focus on permanency

- Encourage kinship families to become verified when possible to facilitate permanency efforts
  - Waiver of non-safety standards
  - Mini Pride
  - DFPS or CPA

# Using PCA to Address Permanency

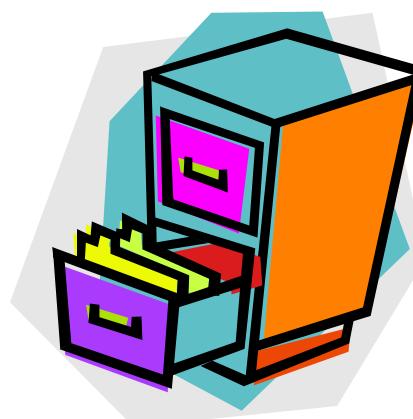
Recruitment of verified kinship placements  
with the focus on permanency

- Help keep kinship family focused on child  
achieve timely permanency
  - ❑ Notification of permanency options at  
placement
  - ❑ Letter of Intent when ready to pursue  
PMC/PCA
  - ❑ Only 6 months are needed

# Using PCA to Address Permanency

## Case mining

- Read/review case for family information
- Use new forms in Smiley
- Talk to youth, they often have relative options



# Using PCA to Address Permanency

Special effort to address children where DFPS has PMC and the permanency plan is “stuck”:

- Target cases
- Ask youth about relatives
- Hold special staffings
- Request Family Group Conferences

## Permanency Care Assistance Program

### *Example*

- Sibling group of four, ages 2, 5, 8 and 11 years
  - There are 16, 13, 10, and 7 years (respectively) remaining before they each become adults. This is a total of 46 years of DFPS conservatorship without the PCA option.
  - If not placed together, 46 years of conservatorship would require 552 monthly caseworker visits.
  - Typically they would experience poor outcomes.

## Average Placement Cost Per Child\*

|                        | <u>Foster Care</u> | <u>PCA</u>        |
|------------------------|--------------------|-------------------|
| <b>Year 1</b>          | <b>\$21,593</b>    | <b>\$15,548**</b> |
| <b>Years 2 - 5.3</b>   | <b>\$92,312</b>    | <b>\$23,524</b>   |
| <b>Total 5.3 years</b> | <b>\$113,905</b>   | <b>\$39,072</b>   |

**PCA Cost Avoidance= \$74,833**

\*average length of time in long-term care is 5.3 years

\*\*includes 6 months of foster care payments

Note: costs above do not reflect cost avoidance in PCA from closing CPS cases.



LIZ KROMREI

1011

# of years  
Spent in FC:

4%

WPA PCA for  
41  
Children



# PCA Nuts and Bolts

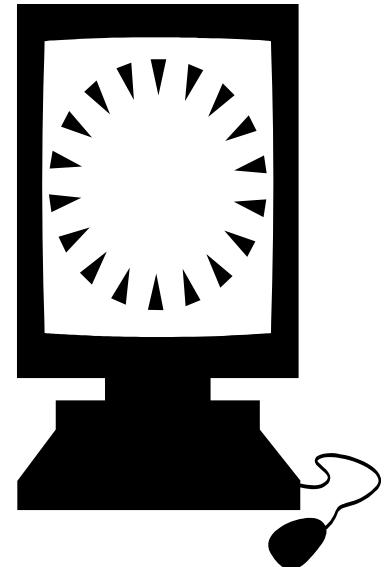


- Checklist for eligibility for PCA program
- Verified kinship placement required for six months
- Letter of Intent when PMC/PCA becomes plan; update of Child's Plan
- PCA application: beginning 9/1/10, request in IMPACT and submit paperwork
- PCA negotiation; if 16, may extend to 21<sup>st</sup> birthday
- Court names kinship family as PMC
- PMC payments start first of following month

# IMPACT Changes

Computer Based Training on  
Fostering Connections and  
IMPACT changes

IMPACT roll out: August 22



# IMPACT Changes

- Automated Kinship notification letter
- Documentation of kinship waiver or variance requests
- Documentation of reasons for withdrawal from process
- Placement Page to have kinship information
- Child's Plan Updates: Goals, Permanency
- PCA Tab will have PCA Application
- PCA may extend to 21st birthday if PCA agreement signed after youth turns 16



# For More Information:

Fostering Connections Intranet Site:

[http://intranet/CPS/Fostering\\_Connections/](http://intranet/CPS/Fostering_Connections/)

Questions can be e-mailed to:  
[Fosteringconnections@dfps.state.tx.us](mailto:Fosteringconnections@dfps.state.tx.us)



# Questions?

