



Family Finding

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DATA & PRACTICE
REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

UC DAVIS

Continuing and
Professional Education | Human Services



Center For Excellence
FAMILY FINDING & ENGAGEMENT



About the Center for Excellence

The California Department of Social Services (CDSS) and the University of California, Davis (UC Davis) have partnered together to launch the Center for Excellence in Family Finding and Engagement, designed to support county child welfare agency efforts to keep youth linked with their family members. The Center will provide statewide culturally appropriate training and technical assistance to county child welfare and probation departments, and foster care providers to enhance their practices, policies, and efforts for family finding, support, and engagement. In addition, the Center will be providing dedicated and specialized efforts for family finding, engagement and support to promote the stability and security of Indian children and families in partnership with Tribes to support the best interest of the child.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Orienting to This Document

This document provides a review of the literature related to family finding practice. First, empirical outcomes and implementation data for proprietary Family Finding Models are presented. Next, empirical outcomes data for nonproprietary models are reviewed. An interpretation of findings across studies is then provided, and a description of two adapted family finding models is presented. Lastly, several integrated approaches to support the implementation of family finding practice with a focus on restorative and responsive practices are identified and summarized. Examples of how each approach may be used in conjunction with an established Family Finding Model are suggested.

The information in this document may be used to inform efforts related to establishing effective and sustainable family finding practice. Care was taken to disaggregate data by model and/or practice to provide the clearest possible understanding of outcomes and impact. Information that may inform the development of family-centered practice and mobilize a shift toward kin-first culture was prioritized.

Overall, a review of data and practice suggest the need for integrated, holistic family finding approaches. The development of a "hybrid" model that integrates existing family finding practices with other evidence-informed approaches may result in the greatest efficacy and impact.



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FAMILY FINDING MODELS

The models below are proprietary, empirically evaluated family finding models. Links to source information (e.g., websites, reports, articles) are provided where available. Components of each model are summarized, and evaluation data from the academic and academic-adjacent (e.g., Child Trends) literature are reviewed.



Family Finding

(click to follow)

The Campbell Family Finding Model is a structured six-step model designed to locate and engage the kin of children in out-of-home care. The model was developed by Kevin Campbell at Seneca Family Agencies and the National Institute for Permanent Family Connectedness (NIPFC, 2016).

Other "proprietary" models *without* readily available peer-reviewed empirical data include [Family Search and Engagement](#) (FSE; click [here](#) for the FSE logic model) and [Extreme Family Finding](#). While the efficacy of such models is difficult to determine without clear empirical data, they may offer promising strategies for family finding practice.

30-Days-to-Family

(click to follow)

30 Days to Family is an intense 30-day intervention that is implemented when children enter foster care. The program is a combination of family search and engagement and kinship navigator. It was developed by the Foster and Adoptive Care Coalition (Atkinson, 2021).

THE FAMILY FINDING MODEL: OVERVIEW

CENTRAL BELIEFS

- 01 All individuals have between 100 and 300 family members.
- 02 Knowledge of the whereabouts and well-being of family members is a basic human need essential for the restoration of dignity.
- 03 Children need a sense of belonging and unconditional love for health, growth, and development.
- 04 Loneliness is often at the heart of suffering for children in the foster care system, as they lose contact and connection with family members over time and with multiple placement moves.
- 05 Respectful, collaborative engagement with family members is central to the successful planning for permanency and support for children, whose lives have been disrupted by trauma.
- 06 Families, not government or private agencies, take care of children best.
- 07 Parents need connections and supports to provide adequate care for their children.
- 08 Parents and families want the best for their children, even when factors interfere with their ability to provide it for them directly.

(Malm, Allen, McKlindon, & Vandivere, 2013)

The Campbell Family Finding Model (Campbell, 2005) is designed to locate, engage, and involve kin in supporting children's placement, permanency, and well-being. The overarching goal of the model is to increase options for children's legal and emotional permanency. Legal permanency may include adoption and guardianship, as well as reunification. Emotional, or relational, permanency refers to establishing a life-long connection with an adult who will unconditionally support and maintain healthy contact with the child, beyond the age of 18 (Malm, Allen, McKlindon, & Vandivere, 2013). Originally designed for youth lingering in care, the model is now also applied at the "front-end" of the system when the child enters foster care. For children new-to-care, the recommended service duration is 120 days. For youth lingering in care, the recommended duration of services is 6 to 8 months. The Model is comprised of 6 steps (Campbell, 2005).

LOGIC MODEL

(click to follow)

THE FAMILY FINDING MODEL: OVERVIEW

6 STEPS

STEP ONE	
DISCOVERY	The goal of this step is to identify at least 40 family members and important people in the child's life through an extensive review of a child's case file (i.e., case mining), internet search tools, and interviewing youth (if appropriate), case worker, family members, and other supportive people.
STEP TWO	
ENGAGEMENT	The goal of this step is to engage as many kin as possible with the goal of sharing important information about the needs of the child and identifying supportive adults willing to participate in a planning meeting on how to keep the child connected to kin.
STEP THREE	
PLANNING	The goal of this step is to develop a plan to meet the needs of the child with the participation of kin by holding Blended Perspective Meetings (BPM). Blended Perspective Meetings engage the family in how they can contribute and commit to the child's success.

THE FAMILY FINDING MODEL: OVERVIEW

6 STEPS

STEP FOUR	
DECISION MAKING	The goal of this step is to discuss and decide legal and relational/emotional permanence options for the child. This may occur during the BPM or in follow-up meetings.
STEP FIVE	
EVALUATION	The goal of this step is to evaluate the appropriateness of connections and permanency plans developed for the child.
STEP SIX	
FOLLOW-UP & SUPPORT	The goal of this step is to ensure relationships remain beneficial for the child and that the child and their family have the needed formal and informal supports to help maintain permanency.

THE FAMILY FINDING MODEL

Empirical Evaluation Outcome Data

AUTHOR(S)	STUDY CHARACTERISTICS	SAMPLE CHARACTERISTICS	KEY FINDINGS
Vandivere, Malm, Allen, Williams, & McKlindon (2017)	RCT (2008-11) 9 Counties in N. Carolina	Intervention $N = 295$ Comparison $N = 278$ Ages 10-17 at referral Youth with no permanent placement or reunification plan	No Impact <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Positive moves (i.e., a move to a less restrictive placement or from a nonrelative to a relative)
Leon, Saucedo, & Jachymiak (2016)	Quasi-Experimental (2011-15) Illinois DCFS	Intervention $N = 196$ Comparison $N = 262$ Ages 6-13 at referral Front-end family finding; youth new-to-care	No Impact <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reunification rates Placement stability Externalizing behavior Internalizing symptoms Positive Impact <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Located 75% more relatives Subgroup finding: higher proportion of relative placements to total placement for children with 5 or more placements.
Garwood & Williams (2015)	RCT (2011 - 14) Intent-to-treat design	Intervention $N = 83$ Comparison $N = 91$ Ages 0-14 at referral New-to-care (NTC)- in care less than 6 months ($n = 96$) Lingering-in-care (LIC)- in care 16 months or longer; focused on youth ages 9 to 14 ($n = 78$)	No Impact <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discharge to positive permanency (e.g., reunification, adoption, or guardianship) Positive Impact <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Placement with relatives at discharge (16% of intervention; 7% of comparison group). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Subgroup finding: placement with relatives for NTC intervention children (20% compared to 8% of NTC comparison children).

THE FAMILY FINDING MODEL

Empirical Evaluation Outcome Data (cont.)

AUTHOR(S)	STUDY CHARACTERISTICS	SAMPLE CHARACTERISTICS	KEY FINDINGS
Shklarski, Madera, Bennett, & Marcial (2015)	Pre-post exploratory descriptive design (2014 - 15) Family Finding and Engagement Project at The Children's Village in collaboration with NYC Administration for Children's Services	Sample size = 38 Ages 10-21	<p>No Impact</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Legal Permanency- no association between number of connections and legal permanency plans. <p>Positive Impact</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Six times as many connections after intervention. Increased strength of kin connection after intervention. 74% of youth reported they had connections with adults who will provide lifelong support.
Malm, Vandivere, Allen, Williams, & McKlindon (2014)	RCT (2008-11) 9 Counties in N. Carolina	Intervention <i>N</i> = 267 Comparison <i>N</i> = 265 Between the ages of 10 and 17 and had no identified permanent placement	<p>No Impact</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Step-down in placement Well-being outcomes: social support, enrolled in college, self-efficacy, had assets, experienced material hardships, had contact with and/or felt close to immediate family. <p>Positive Impact:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 12 months after RA, youth in the intervention were more likely than those in the comparison group to live with kin, and were less likely to live in a non-kin foster home. 12 months after RA, youth in the intervention were more likely than those in the comparison group to have contact with at least one sibling, one grandparent, and one other relative.
Malm, Vandivere, Allen, Williams, Mcklindon (2013)	RCT (2008 - 11) San Francisco	Intervention <i>N</i> = 116 Comparison <i>N</i> = 123 Ages 0 to 20 at referral	<p>No Impact</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reunification rates Re-entry after discharge rates Exiting care rates (regardless of discharge reasons) <p>Positive Impact</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fewer placements (50% of intervention children experienced 2+ placements compared to 67% of comparison children).

THE FAMILY FINDING MODEL

Empirical Implementation Data

Several process studies have examined the implementation of Campbell's Family Finding Model. The table below summarizes key findings. Corresponding recommendations are provided.

AUTHOR(S)	KEY FINDINGS	RECOMMENDATIONS
Shklarski (2021)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Specialists implemented only four of the six steps; steps are sometimes combined (i.e., Decision Making and Planning) and the Evaluation step is skipped; Only 30% of Specialists reported they always accomplish the last two steps. Participants expressed the model does not provide concrete tools to support youth and kin throughout the family finding process; participants noted the last two steps are not informed by explicit protocols relative to the previous steps. Participants spent more time implementing the first two steps and struggled to implement the other steps; Specialists noted the complexity of implementing the intervention, emphasizing some steps take longer than expected and are not linear--the steps are iterative and Specialists often return to earlier steps as needed. Specialists reported that the iterative nature of implementation often requires some improvisation, which is not accounted for or addressed in the intervention guidelines. Specialists reported youth engagement in the process varied and there was a lack of guidance from the intervention guidelines on how to effectively engage youth; 26% of workers engaged youth at the beginning of the process, while 46% engaged youth during the Discovery step, but not during the Engagement and Decision Making steps. Some specialists reported encountering systemic barriers (e.g., case worker interference) that complicated their work. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop concrete guidelines and supports for model implementation and youth involvement at each step. Develop and implement policies that reduce barriers that slow down the family finding process. Educate child welfare practitioners and other involved parties about family finding to increase awareness, buy-in, and cooperation.
Shklarski (2020)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Engagement step was viewed as the most important and time consuming step; Engagement was required across all steps of the intervention. Formal training in the model was associated with greater implementation fidelity; Specialists expressed a need for training in the model and the need to train case workers and other involved parties. Fifty-five percent of Specialists reported the quality of their training was low, and that affected the quality of their work. Participants with adequate amounts of supervision were more likely to follow all steps of the intervention; Specialists reported supervisors who were available, supportive, and knowledgeable helped them overcome systemic barriers and think outside of the box. Positive attitudes toward emotional/relational permanency were associated with higher implementation fidelity; Specialists who recognized permanency as a continuum reported higher fidelity. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Foster a cultural shift within the agency prior to dissemination and implementation of a new intervention. Inform workers about upcoming changes to "business as usual" to better prepare them to implement new practice. Develop standardized, high quality training. Provide ongoing support and supervision to monitor and improve implementation fidelity.

THE FAMILY FINDING MODEL

Empirical Implementation Data (cont.)

AUTHOR(S)	KEY FINDINGS	RECOMMENDATIONS
Green, Rushovich, William, Brusca, & Murray (2019)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engagement was seen as the most important and time-intensive step and lasted throughout the case. Specialists combined the Planning and Decision Making steps and evaluated each step rather than at the end of the process. Specialists emphasized the importance of the relationship with the casework, noting a collaborative relationship was imperative to positive youth outcomes. When and how to include youth in the process was made on a case-by-case basis and was based on the youth's perceived coping ability. Specialists recommended a caseload of no more than 10 active cases. Specialists reported constantly playing "catch up" when working with older youth who were lingering-in-care. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop supports to enhance communication and collaboration between Family Finders and case workers. Begin family finding services at the front-end of the system and carry out the work with a sense of urgency.
Malm, Vandivere, Allen, Williams, & McKlinton (2014)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Co-location provided opportunities for relationship building between Specialists and case workers. Some participants reported encountering resistance from social workers during the Discovery step. Family Finders noted older youth lingering-in-care were more resistant to Family Finding Services. Participants noted it was helpful to begin with older relatives, who may be the "gatekeepers" of family information. All participants agreed in-person communication was the most effective way to contact families; In rural areas, this included home visits. Participants emphasized the importance of keeping the case worker informed. The Evaluation and Follow-Up steps were less understood, and therefore, not fully implemented; Participants noted these steps were not fully described during training. Lack of buy-in was a major barrier to full implementation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Co-locate designated family finding workers with case workers to increase ease of communication and collaboration. Develop responsive strategies for working with older youth.

THE FAMILY FINDING MODEL

Empirical Implementation Data (cont.)

AUTHOR(S)	KEY FINDINGS	RECOMMENDATIONS
Malm, Vandivere, Allen, Williams, Mcklindon (2013)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Specialists commented on challenges in making initial contact with the case worker; Participates noted that in some instances, caseworkers did not see the value of finding and engaging the family if the child was already in a stable placement. Specialists reported some difficulties handing-off the case to the caseworker, reporting that the case worker did not often "pick up" where the Specialist left off; Participants noted this process is easier if the case worker is involved in the Family Finding process. Caseworker layoffs and turnover made it difficult to identify the assigned worker and maintain communication and collaboration. Caseworkers received general training on the intervention, but did not receive standardized training and were not required to implement the remaining steps of the model (e.g., follow-up and support) in a consistent measurable way. Participants noted that in some cases, it was difficult to establish paternity, which prevented engagement with paternal family members. Specialists commented on difficulty dealing with sensitive family issues and maintaining effective boundaries. Some birth parents expressed that the intervention was rushed and Specialists were too persistent. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide ongoing education and manualized training to all staff. Implement accountability mechanisms to ensure all steps of the intervention are implemented fully and consistently.
Malm & Allen (2011)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There are key differences in implementation based on if the child is new-to-care (NTC) or lingering-in-care (LIC); Differing priorities across approaches may impact implementation. For NTC, the focus and goals of the intervention often expanded beyond the child and prioritized developing a supportive network to strengthen reunification efforts. Reintroducing family members into a child's life may be a more delicate and time-consuming process of children LIC; Participants noted they often involve the youth's therapist. Specialists with NTC cases reported feeling more pressure to perform family finding tasks with urgency and having less time to collaborate with other workers. For children LIC, workers prioritize relational/emotional permanency since legal permanency is less likely over time; Staff noted legal permanency may outweigh relational permanency for NTC cases. In NTC cases, plans for emotional support are often targeted to the birth parent to promote reunification. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Examine the implications of serving different populations of youth. Build out capacity to flexibly support different goals and priorities.

THE FAMILY FINDING MODEL

Empirical Implementation Data (cont.)

Across the studies summarized above, several implementation facilitators and barriers were identified. Facilitators and barriers that were commonly mentioned are described below.

COMMON FACILITATORS

Designated Specialist

Having a designated specialist whose primary job was to carry out Family Finding acted as an important driver of effective implementation. Without other case responsibilities, specialists can devote the effort and capacity necessary to complete the often-time-consuming tasks of family finding work. The specialist also needs to possess special clinical skills to help youth and their families navigate the process.

Communication & Collaboration

The importance of a collaborative relationship and ongoing communication with the entire child welfare team was clear across studies. Effective communication and collaboration promoted effective implementation. Co-locating the Family Finding workers and child welfare staff in the same office or building helped facilitate communication and collaboration.

Staff Training

Training on Family Finding was necessary for effective and full implementation. Across studies, participants noted that training prepared them for the work, and emphasized instances in which the lack of training made it difficult for them to understand and carry out key family finding practices. Training to educate child welfare staff/leadership on family finding practice(s) also emerged as a key driver of implementation. Agency-wide training increased program visibility and helped create buy-in among staff and leadership.

COMMON BARRIERS

Organizational Culture

Organizational culture that did not prioritize and support family involvement acted as a barrier to full implementation. In some agencies, Family Finding represented a new way of work, and in some instances, respondents reported feeling unsupported by agency administration. Lack of support from leaders resulted in less support from other staff and fewer referrals to family finding services.

Buy-In

A key barrier to full implementation was the lack of buy-in from all stakeholders involved in the family finding process (e.g., case workers, children, and immediate and extended family). In some instances, caseworkers were perceived as reluctant to engage family members in their child's case. Court workers also demonstrated some resistance, and youth did not always see the value of connecting with family members--particularly older youth who were 'burnt out' on the child welfare system. Parents and families also demonstrated reluctance to share information and get involved. Families were sometimes confused by the purpose of such services and intimidated by the commitment.

Outcomes and Implementation Conclusions

Implementation of Campbell's model may lack full fidelity, with almost all studies reporting instances in which steps were skipped or combined. Communicative and collaborative relationships emerged as key facilitator of implementation, while a lack of buy-in emerged as a significant barrier (Malm et al., 2014).



30 DAYS TO FAMILY

30 Days to Family activates intensive family search and engagement within 30 days of the child entering the foster care system. The overall goal of the program model is to the number of children placed with kin at the time they enter foster care (Atkinson, 2019). The model features two primary components: family finding and family support interventions. In family finding, specialists engage in immediate and intensive searches for and engagement with family members. Specialists make direct personal contact and prioritize meeting families where they feel most comfortable (e.g., in their homes). Family support interventions are designed to identify and mobilize natural and community resources to promote stability, eliminate barriers, and create a network of supports (Atkinson, 2019).

Program specialists utilize a strength-based approach that engages families in problem solving and decision making that is owned by the family (Atkinson, 2019). Families are empowered to problem solve and decide among themselves the most viable placement plan and needed supports. Implementation fidelity is assessed by 49 fidelity measures (Atkinson, Forber-Pratt, & Moredock, 2021).

LOGIC MODEL

(click to follow)



PROGRAM HALLMARKS

- 01 **Commitment to Racial Equity**
- 02 **Urgency**
- 03 **Relentless Search**
- 04 **Serving Two Families at a Time**
- 05 **Sibling Relationships**
- 06 **Establishing Paternity**
- 07 **Educational Needs**
- 08 **Barrier Busting**
- 09 **Natural and Formal Supports**
- 10 **Family Connections Beyond Placement**
- 11 **Strengths-Based Approach to Family Decision Making**

30 DAYS TO FAMILY

Empirical Evaluation Outcomes & Cost Savings

To date, two rigorous, independent impact evaluations of 30 Days to Family have been conducted (Atkinson, 2019; Atkinson, 2022). Study 1 was conducted in Missouri, where the model originated. Study 2 was conducted in Ohio. To create a comparison group, children eligible but not served were matched on key study variables to children served. 30 Days to Family is rated in the California Evidence Based Clearinghouse as having "Promising Research Evidence."

STUDY 1- MISSOURI

Atkinson (2019)

Intervention *N* = 310 (*M*-age = 6.4 years)

Matched Comparison *N* = 230

KIN PLACEMENT

Children served by the intervention were significantly more likely to be placed with kin compared to those not served

TIME IN CARE

Children served by the intervention spent less time in foster care; Children 9 years and older were in care an average of 194 days; Children with a disability spent an average of 258 fewer days in care

PLACEMENT STABILITY & CONTEXT

Children served by the intervention were less likely to change placements after being placed with kin (reduced by 81%); Children served were also less likely to be placed in a treatment setting (28% fewer children placed in treatment)

STUDY 2- OHIO

Atkinson (2022)

Intervention *N* = 372 (*M*-age = 6.1 years)

Matched Comparison *N* = 347

KIN PLACEMENT

Children served by the intervention were more likely to be placed with kin and exit care to live with kin

TIME IN CARE

Children served by the intervention spent less time in foster care (average of 69 fewer days) compared to children not served

PLACEMENT STABILITY & CONTEXT

Children served by the intervention were less likely to change placements after being placed with kin (reduced by 36%); Children served were also less likely to be placed in a treatment setting (50% fewer children placed in treatment)

COST SAVINGS

ATKINSON (2019)

\$10,217/child

saved taxpayer dollars

\$2,300/child

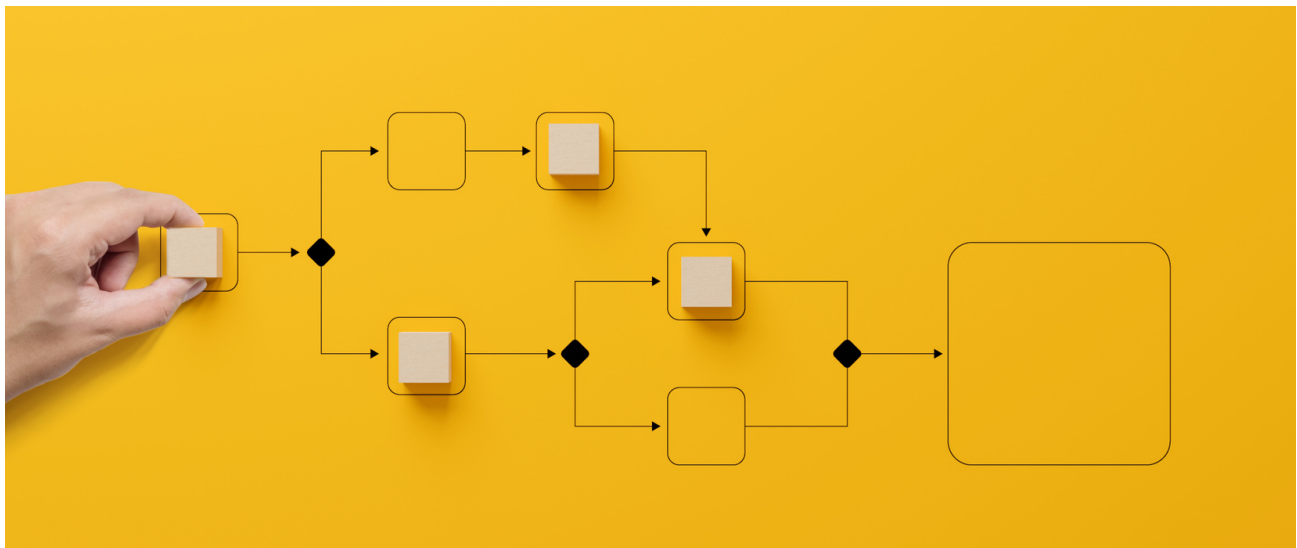
savings for every avoided
placement change

\$29,000/child

savings for every avoided
treatment placement

30 DAYS TO FAMILY

Empirical Implementation Data



KEY FINDINGS

01

The limited caseload and timeframe facilitated the intensity of services and creates a sense of urgency that promotes the likelihood of positive outcomes.

02

Beliefs about family strongly influence all implementation practices.

03

Participants emphasized the importance of having all staff on the same page about child needs and placement options.

04

Respondents emphasized a need to establish collaborative partnerships across entities within each child welfare agency.

05

Program leaders reported that some case managers did not value the program and were reluctant to refer children; These caseworkers believed the pace of the program was too fast and questioned its efficacy.

Atkinson, Forber-Prattm, and Moredock (2021) evaluated the implementation of 30 Days to Family in both Missouri and Ohio. Overall, results suggested a high level of fidelity, driven by several implementation drivers including well-developed training and technical assistance, clear performance goals and implementation milestones, and the use of 49 fidelity measures.

CONCLUSIONS

Taken together, the three studies to-date evaluating 30 Days to Family provide positive conclusions, suggesting high efficacy and implementation fidelity. The models clear training and implementation guidance, as well as its focus on urgency, relentless search, and smaller caseloads, may support overall efficacy and fidelity.

NONPROPRIETARY MODELS

Empirical Evaluation Outcome Data

The table below summarizes additional empirical findings from evaluation of nonproprietary family finding models. In some cases, the components of the model are not clearly identified, making it difficult to determine what practices/processes the data are reflective of. It is possible the models described below utilize a proprietary model not specified in the article. These data may provide additional insight into the effectiveness of family finding practice.

AUTHORS	STUDY CHARACTERISTICS	SAMPLE CHARACTERISTICS	KEY FINDINGS	MODEL DESCRIPTION
Welti, Wilkins, & Malm (2021)	Phase 2 pilot study 2016-2022 Ten offices in LA county- pilot and expansion	Total analytic sample: 12, 082 across pilot and comparison offices Served by P3 N = 722 New-to-entry	<p>No Impact</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Likelihood to move from relative to non-relative placement Likelihood to reunify with parents <p>Positive Impact</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased probability of relative placement. Increased likelihood that a child placed with relatives would be adopted or have a finalized guardianship. 	Upfront Family Finding/ Permanency Partners Program (P3); Retired social workers are hired and trained as Permanency Specialists. Program criteria include children who are new-to-care and/or are being detained on a hospital hold, detained at large, or being placed in stranger (foster) care. Program duration: 90-days. <i>Specific model components not stated in the article.</i>
Boel-Studt & Landsman (2016)	RCT	Intervention N = 125 Comparison N = 118 Youth with and without a history of congregate care (CC) placement	<p>No Impact</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Physical permanency <p>Positive Impact</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased odds of relational permanency for intervention children with histories of CC compared to control children with histories of CC. 	Intensive Family Finding (IFF); Using search and engagement strategies, IFF begins with identifying potential supports and aims to establish permanent connections and placements with kin. <i>Specific model components not stated in the article.</i>

NONPROPRIETARY MODELS

Empirical Evaluation Outcome Data (cont.)

AUTHORS	STUDY CHARACTERISTICS	SAMPLE CHARACTERISTICS	KEY FINDINGS	MODEL DESCRIPTION
Landsman, Boel-Studt, & Malone (2014)	Iowa Department of Human Services (IDHS) and Four Oaks 26 counties; central and mid-southeast Iowa	Intervention $N = 116$ Comparison $N = 123$ Ages 0 to 17 at referral	<p>No Impact</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of placement disruptions • Likelihood of subsequent maltreatment <p>Positive Impact</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Three times as many family team meetings • Twice as many family members involved in planning • Twice as likely to achieve relational permanency • Eight times more likely to be adopted by a relative • Decreased probability of aging out of care without permanency 	Families for Iowa's Children Model (FIC); Five components: Referral; Information Gathering, Documentation and Search and Identification; Contact, Assessment and Engagement; Family Ties: Transition to Family; and Documentation. Informed by the Family Search and Engagement model developed by Catholic Community Services of Western Washington and EMQ Children and Family Services (2008).

INTERPRETATION OF KEY FINDINGS

Taken together, results from family finding evaluations are inconsistent and provide mixed support for the efficacy of family finding programs (Greeno, Rushovich, Williams, Brusca, & Murray, 2019). Such inconsistency may be attributed to several factors, including limited measurement, multi-contextual influences, program limitations, and inconsistent or incomplete implementation.

01

Measurement Constraints. Inconsistent findings may be partly explained by the limited definition and measurement of permanency across studies. For instance, most studies only include indicators of legal permanency; few studies to date have measured the impacts of family finding practice on emotional and relational permanency (e.g., Landsman, Boel-Studt, & Melone, 2014). Indeed, Family Permanency Specialists noted the benefits of family finding may be difficult to measure and called for future measurements to prioritize child-centered outcomes other than legal permanency and reunification rates (Greeno, Rushovich, Williams, Brusca, & Murry, 2019; Shklarski, 2021). Most evaluations also do not include assessments after youth leave care. Because family finding practice prioritizes the development of long-term connections with kin, it is possible the impacts of family finding manifest after youth have left care and rely more on those connections (Leon, Saucedo, & Jachymiak, 2016).

02

Multi-contextual Influences. Family finding practice may have the largest impact on outcomes most proximal to family finding and engagement (e.g., number of kin found and connected). More distal outcomes (e.g., permanency, internalizing, and externalizing behaviors) may be less impacted because they are likely influenced by a greater number of factors across multiple contexts that family finding does not encompass (Leon, Saucedo, & Jachymiak, 2016).

INTERPRETATION OF KEY FINDINGS

03

Program Limitations. Family finding may have a limited impact on youth well-being because as a stand-alone program, it is not a psychosocial prevention or intervention program. The impacts of family finding on psychosocial outcomes may be amplified when embedded into existing evidence-based interventions that prioritize psychological and social well-being. Such treatment interventions may too be enhanced by the intensive family finding and engagement strategies prioritized in family finding practice (Leon, Saucedo, & Jachymiak, 2016).

04

Inconsistent Implementation. Several process studies (e.g., Shklarski, 2021) have revealed the inconsistent or incomplete implementation of the Family Finding model. Such inconsistencies in model implementation may limit the intervention's ability to affect positive outcomes, reducing the difference in outcomes between youth who do and do not receive family finding services (Vandivere & Malm, 2015). Consistent implementation with fidelity may result in more positive outcomes.



ADAPTED MODELS

Furthering Family Finding

Using Campbell's Family Finding Model as a foundation, organizations have developed enhanced models to guide their family finding practice. For example, the Children's Home Society of North Carolina (CHS) revised Campbell's six-step model by developing a three-tiered approach. Each tier offers increasingly intensive services and is targeted to specific populations to ensure children receive the suite of services most likely to support their permanency (Malm, Williams, & Rosinsky, 2016). Evaluation results suggested Tier 2 was associated with better outcomes (e.g., permanency, step-downs) compared to Tier 3 (Malm, Williams, & Rosinsky, 2016). Malm and colleagues (2016), offered some caution when interpreting these results, noting that the majority of Tier 2 cases occurred in a county very supportive of kinship care. Thus, it is possible the effectiveness of Tier 2 may, in part, be explained by the county of origin. Implementing family finding practice in counties with a strong kin-first culture may be associated with more positive outcomes, regardless of service type (Malm, Williams, & Rosinsky, 2016).

TIER #1



A 1-to 2-month diligent search service; Designed to notify relatives when children enter out-of-home care.

TIER #2

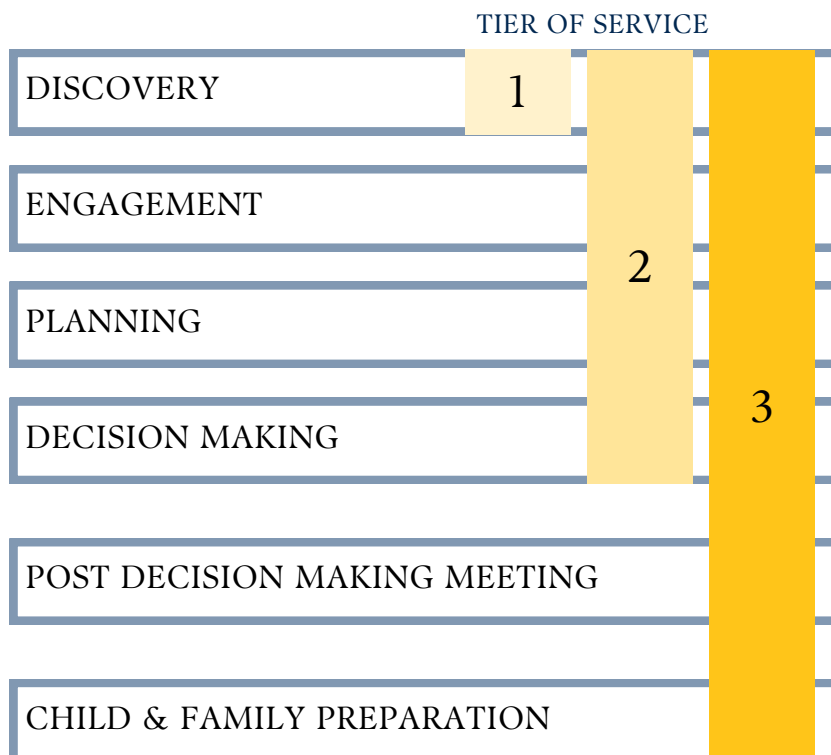


Similar to the first four steps of Campbell's Family Finding Model; a 3-to 4-month family engagement service designed to build a support network.

TIER #3



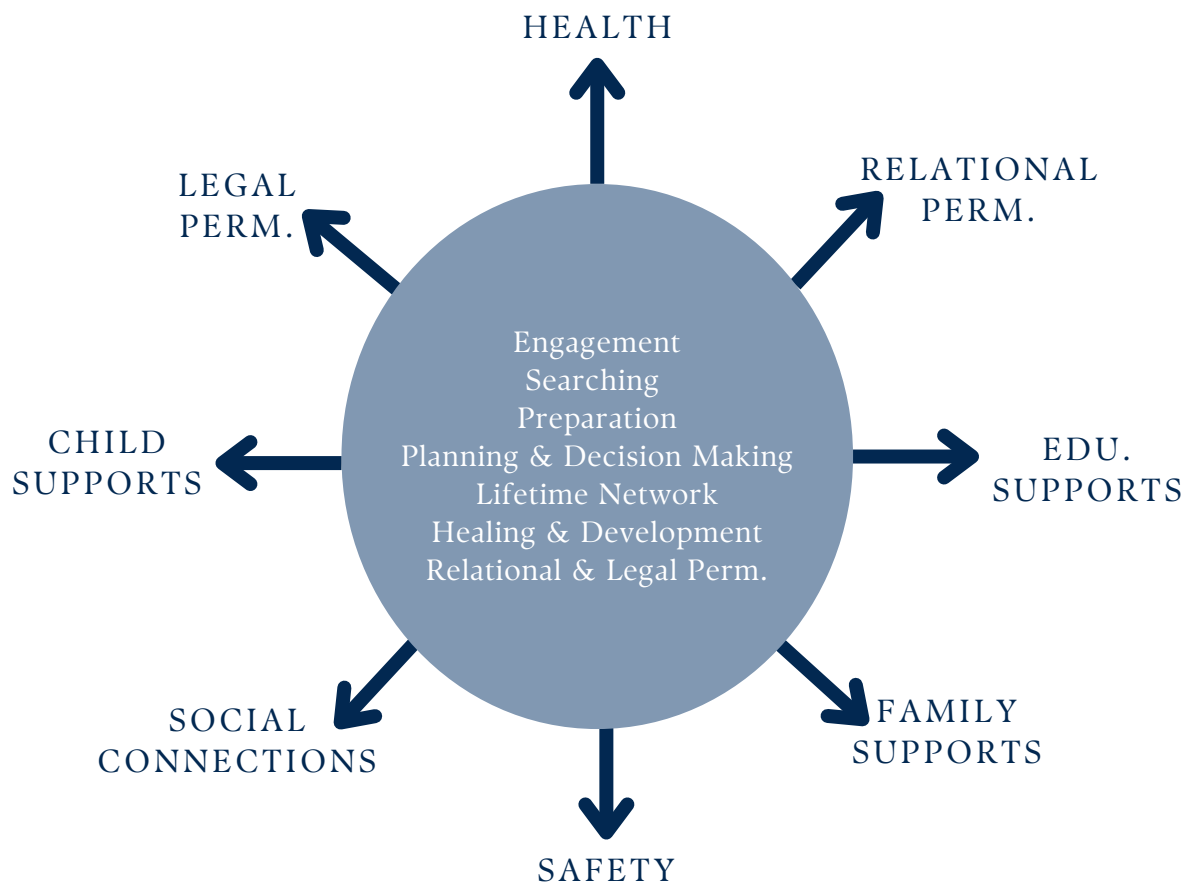
A 12-month permanency service; includes first four steps, as well as **two newly-developed steps** designed to engage kin who can provide legal permanence.



ADAPTED MODELS

Furthering Family Finding

Similarly, Pennsylvania's Family Engagement Initiative developed and utilizes a revised version of Campbell's Family Finding Model, incorporating the key components of Campbell's model and developmental science related to resilience and adverse childhood experiences. For example, children's ACE scores are used to support trauma-informed family finding practices. The revised model endorses a holistic approach that prioritizes well-being and healing-elements not explicated in Campbell's original six-step model. The Initiative reports all family finding efforts to the court using this form. No empirical evaluation data for this model were available at the time of review (Office of Children & Families in the Courts, 2023).



Steps and components of the Initiative's revised family finding model. To review complete model information and corresponding forms, click [here](#).

INTEGRATED APPROACHES

To support the *doing* of family finding, programs may consider integrating approaches that prioritize restorative and responsive practice into their family finding frameworks. Such approaches may provide concrete processes and practices for implementing family finding and may be especially helpful in mobilizing a shift to kin-first culture. Four such approaches are described below. Examples of how each may be utilized to inform family finding practice are also provided.

Cultural Brokering

Cultural Brokering Programs provide culturally congruent services, support, and advocacy to parents and family members as they navigate the Child Welfare system. Cultural brokering aims to reduce disproportionality and disparities within the Child Welfare system and empower families by recognizing, supporting, and developing their strengths and capacities (The California Evidence-Based Clearinghouse for Child Welfare, 2023). Cultural brokers create partnerships between families and child welfare workers and help families navigate the system and their trauma histories. Cultural brokers often have shared experiences with families, and they leverage them as a point of connection to influence and empower parents and families (Crawford, Carr, & Borunda, 2022).

Safety Organized Practice

SOP is a collaborative, culturally respectful, trauma-informed, and evidence-informed best practice approach that utilizes skillful engagement, meaningful partnerships with families and their networks, and the development of plans that build on a family's strengths and foster behavior change within a family system to ensure child safety, permanency, and well-being. SOP is both a framework for practice and a set of tools and strategies; The model provides on-the-ground practice tools intended to support the achievement of federal child welfare outcome measures, including improved timely permanency and placement stability and reduced recurrence of maltreatment and re-entry to foster care.



3-7-5 Model

The 3-5-7 Model is based on a formula that weaves together three components through a variety of activities that will assist the child in making a successful transition from uncertainty to permanency as he/she/they reconciles the separations and trauma of his/her/their life (Henry, 2003).

Family Meeting Models

Family Meeting Models (e.g., Family Group Decision Making, Family Team Conferencing, Peacemaking Circles, Youth-Centered Permanency Round Tables) may empower youth and families by prioritizing family and community voice, authority, equality, respect, and ownership (Burford, Braithwaite, & Braithwaite, 2019). For instance, Family group decision-making (FGDM), which includes the family and other important supportive figures in the child's life in planning and decision-making, may assist in reducing disparities by giving voice to perspectives that extend beyond the individual case worker. Indeed, research suggests that FGDM may be associated with less time in care and increased reunifications for Black children (Sheets et. al., 2009).

INTEGRATED APPROACHES

Restorative and Responsive Practice

The tables below provides examples of how the approaches described on the previous page may be integrated with/inform the implementation of a discrete family finding model (Campbell's model used here for illustration purposes).

CAMPBELL'S 6-STEP FAMILY FINDING MODEL	CULTURAL BROKERING
Discovery	A Cultural Broker accompanies the responding social worker on the initial response and assists with culturally-informed family finding. During this time the Cultural Broker facilitates the interaction with CPS and the household, helping the parents understand that they are there to provide brokering, advocacy, and support. The Cultural Broker works with the family in identifying relatives and kinship care for the placement of their child.
Engagement	The Cultural Broker assesses the needs of the family and the children to determine how they can best support the child and family by meeting one on one with the child, parent, and family members to build trust and provide knowledge and skills for navigating the Child Welfare System. The Cultural broker works to provide additional context to the social worker through a trauma and culturally informed lens (Crawford, Carr, & Borunda, 2022). The Broker acts as a bridge between the family and the social worker to provide opportunities for parents to ask questions, advocate for their child, address concerns, and build partnerships between the social worker, parents, and family.
Planning	The Cultural Broker assists with the development of a family empowerment plan driven by family needs, issues, and priorities (University of Washington College of Education [UW edu], 2015). The cultural Broker provides resources and support services to parents and family members that that are accessible and tailored to their unique needs. During blended perspective meetings Cultural brokers work to facilitate a collaborative environment for parents, family members, and social workers (National Center for Cultural Competence, et al. 2004).
Decision Making	The Broker facilitates additional meetings and/or maintains open lines of communication to provide an opportunity for parent to voice and influence in decision-making and avenues for parents to work with family and the social worker to influence change through their relationships and shared concerns, giving them relational power (UWedu, 2015).
Evaluation	The Cultural Broker continues to meet with parents and family members face to face to ensure progress towards goals and provide other practical, culturally-aligned supports as needed.
Follow-Up & Support	The Cultural Broker follows up with the family, child, and parents to make sure these relationships are remaining positive for the child and offering support as needed.

INTEGRATED APPROACHES

Restorative and Responsive Practice

CAMPBELL'S 6-STEP FAMILY FINDING MODEL	SOP
Discovery	SOP prioritizes the recognition of how self-beliefs, assumptions, and identities influence interactions with families and provides strategies to help mitigate unconscious bias that may impact how child welfare workers look for and engage families. Ask children and families about their resources, support systems, and needs to help guide future planning. CalSWEC SOP toolkit can be utilized as a resource to guide the incorporation of the SOP approach.
Engagement	Utilize the three questions, solution-focused questioning, motivational interviewing, and appreciative inquiry to help identify the needs of the family and insight into their perspective. Work with parents to identify natural supports, and possible safety network members and complete a safety mapping. Gain an understanding of the youth's perspective through the use of Three Houses, Safety House, and Permanency House activities (CalSWEC, 2023).
Planning	Work collaboratively with youth and families to identify support networks that can help provide safety, permanency, and well-being. Conduct CFTMs using Consultation and Information Sharing Framework and Safety Mapping to guide the discussion. Work collaboratively to support shared understandings, worries, goals, and agreements. Utilize SOP solution-focused techniques to support discussion. When possible, include the child in the meetings and incorporate their perspective in discussions (CalSWEC, 2023).
Decision Making	Every decision and assessment should reflect the collaborative work of the family network, parents, and social worker.
Evaluation	
Follow-Up & Support	

INTEGRATED APPROACHES

Restorative and Responsive Practice

CAMPBELL'S 6-STEP FAMILY FINDING MODEL	3-7-5 MODEL
Discovery	<p>Prepare the child for connections with kin; The three components that will assist the child in making a successful transition from uncertainty to permanency are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Completing three tasks (CIA): clarification, integration, actualization 2. Answering five questions: Who am I? What happened to me? Where am I going? How will I get there? When will I know I belong? 3. Implementing seven critical elements: engage the child in the process; listen to the child's words; when you speak, tell the truth; validate the child and the child's life story; create a safe space for the child as he/she/they does this "work"; it is never too late to go back in time; pain is part of the process <p>Resources for incorporating the 3-7-5 model can be found on Darla L. Henry & Associates, Inc's website here.</p>
Engagement	
Planning	<p>All family and kinship members to establish relationships of permanency are fully involved in the planning of how they can contribute to the child's process of resolving grief and rebuilding relationships (CEBC, 2023).</p>
Decision Making	<p>Through the engagement, process youth explore the meaning of their relationships and decide whom they want to maintain/develop a relationship with, and whom they do not. These decisions may change as they age and encounter new developmental needs (Henry & Manning, 2011). Permanency should be a collective decision made with the child and family when a child has moved into the actualization phase.</p>
Evaluation	<p>Incorporate an evaluation of stability, continuity, and mutuality--elements that strengthen permanency connections and feelings of belongingness (Henry & Manning, 2022). For many youths, this can be an ongoing, lifelong process, and does not necessarily end with permanency (Henry, 2005).</p>
Follow-Up & Support	

INTEGRATED APPROACHES

Restorative and Responsive Practice

CAMPBELL'S 6-STEP FAMILY FINDING MODEL	FAMILY MEETING MODELS (E.G., FGDM)
Discovery	Meet-in-person in the families "territory" when possible, with the caregiver and key figures in the child's life to assess the family's needs.
Engagement	Find additional family members and supportive members. This could include organizations and community members that the family works with. One-on-one meetings should be conducted with support members to guide their thinking about how they can contribute to the safety and stability of the child/children (Oats et al., 2018).
Planning	<p>Planning takes place during family team meetings where the family group is the key planning and decision-making partner regarding the child's safety, permanency, and well-being. The family group may meet outside of the family team meetings to apply their knowledge in a familiar setting that is consistent with their decision-making practices (American Humane Association et al., 2010).</p> <p>Peacemaking Circles: Peacemaking circles give less power to court actors that are intentionally unfamiliar with the family and give primacy back to non-neutral stakeholders who frequently are excluded from, or have diminished roles in, child welfare hearings—such as extended family and community members. These stakeholders are naturally more motivated to look after their own relative's well-being, and more capable and motivated to hold others accountable for finalized decisions. The circle provides those persons, along with the parent(s), the space to speak as a core component of the planning and decision-making process (Schilfgaarde & Shelton, 2021).</p> <p>Youth-Centered Roundtables: Through the Youth-Centered Permanency Roundtables program, professional case consultants work with agencies to create a framework that centers youth voices during meetings. The meetings consist of a permanency consultant, Support(s), facilitator, master practitioner, scribe, case worker, supervisor, an expert/specialist, and the youth. The youth's voice drives the direction of the conversation. The initial PRT discusses the following questions: what will it take for this youth to achieve permanency; what can we do that has been tried successfully before; what can we do that has never been tried; what can we do concurrently to help this youth achieve permanency; and how can we engage this youth in permanency planning? Permanent Roundtable meetings are held on an ongoing basis until the youth achieves legal or relational permanency (Kinnect (2020).</p>
Decision Making	The family group and agency work together to address concerns and then enter a partnership where the agency supports the family group. Decision-making is driven and owned by the family (American Humane Association et al., 2010).
Evaluation	
Follow-Up & Support	Continuous follow-ups occur to provide support and ensure that the plan remains relevant and achievable. Additional family group meetings may be scheduled to address issues/concerns, additional resources, and new information. The family group and agency personnel may update and revise the plan as needed (American Humane Association et al., 2010).

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