This bibliography was compiled in May 2007. For new titles added to the Gateway database, go to: http://basis.caliber.com/cwig/ws/library/docs/gateway/SearchForm

Reunification Programs and Practices
2002-present

Successful Family Reunifications: The Power of Stories (Including, Evidence-Based Practices Related to Family Reunification and Stability).
Jamieson, Marie.
Children's Home Society of Washington.
Jamieson Consulting.
2006
Children's Home Society of Washington
3300 NE 65th St.
Seattle, WA 98115-0190
Tel: (206) 695-3200
chswa@chs-wa.org
Available From: http://www.chs-wa.org
This report discusses the outcomes of a project that explored the experiences of 12 parents who have been successfully reunified with their children for over a year and are doing well. All of the reunified children (16 in total) had been in out-of-home placement more than 3 months (the median was 12-15 months). At the time of the child protective services removal, one-quarter of the children were less than one year old and three of the sixteen were teenagers. All of the reunifications had been for at least a year and not more than five years. For the study, each parent was privately asked to tell his or her story and four areas of inquiry were explored: getting my children back, keeping my family together, advice for other parents, and parents’ ideas for change. The report uses the parents' own words to describe their experiences and ideas in each of the areas of inquiry. Key factors parents identified as helping them succeed include: housing, including clean and sober shelters, transitional housing, and availability of Section 8 vouchers; assistance in accessing services and effective coordination among service providers; being held accountable and participating in staffings and court hearings; and parent-child visits being scheduled right away, available more than once per week, and held in a comfortable setting. Evidence based practices related to family reunification and stability are also shared. 13 references.
http://www.chs-wa.org/successfulreunifications.pdf

Integrating substance abuse treatment and child welfare services: findings from the Illinois Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse Waiver Demonstration.
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.
Alcohol and other drug abuse is a major problem for children and families involved with public child welfare. Substance abuse compromises appropriate parenting practices and increases the risk of child maltreatment. A substantial proportion of substantiated child abuse and neglect reports involve parental substance abuse. Once in the system, children of substance-abusing families experience significantly longer stays in foster care and significantly lower rates of reunification. To address these problems, child welfare systems are developing service integration models that incorporate both substance abuse and child welfare services. This study provides an initial examination of the effectiveness of one service integration model that emphasizes the provision of intensive case management to link substance abuse and child welfare services. The authors used an experimental design and focused particular attention on two outcomes: access to substance abuse services and family reunification. The findings indicate that the families assigned to the experimental group used substance abuse services at a significantly higher rate and were more likely to achieve family reunification than were families in the control group. (Author abstract)

Integrated services for families with multiple problems: obstacles to family reunification.
Marsh, Jeanne C. Ryan, Joseph P. Choi, Sam. Testa, Mark F.
2006
Children and youth services review
28 (9) p. 1074-1087
Available from: Elsevier
Customer Service Department 6277 Sea Harbor Drive
Orlando, FL 32887-4800
Tel: (877) 839-7126
Fax: (407) 363-1354
usbkinfo@elsevier.com
Available From: http://www.sciencedirect.com
Child welfare clients with co-occurring problems are recognized as clients who have difficulty achieving positive child welfare outcomes. The current study focuses on families in the child welfare system with co-occurring problems and the impact of such problems on the likelihood of reunification. The current study contributes to the literature on service integration by examining
whether it is necessary to go beyond assessment and service access to insure families make progress in each co-occurring problem area to achieve reunification. The sample is comprised of 724 substance-abusing families enrolled in the Illinois Title IV-E Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse (AODA) Waiver Demonstration. Data on client progress consisted of provider ratings completed quarterly to track progress related to problems of substance abuse, domestic violence, housing and mental health. The findings indicate that progress in resolving co-occurring problem areas does increase the likelihood of achieving family reunification. Thus, the provision of the child welfare service model alone is insufficient. In order for child welfare systems to increase reunification rates, services must target the specific needs of individual families and assist them in achieving progress within co-occurring problem areas. Successful integrated service programs must identify the range of specific problems that clients are dealing with and insure that they address and resolve these problems in order to increase the likelihood of family reunification. (Author abstract)

Reunification [website].
California Evidence-Based Clearinghouse for Child Welfare.
2006
Publication Information: California Evidence-Based Clearinghouse for Child Welfare
Chadwick Center for Children and Families Children’s Hospital and Health Center 3020
Children’s Way, MC 5017
San Diego, CA  92123
Tel: 858-966-7431
http://www.cachildwelfareclearinghouse.org/contact-us
Available From:http://www.cachildwelfareclearinghouse.org/
The California Evidence-Based Clearinghouse for Child Welfare (CEBC) website is designed to allow you access to a summary of practice topical areas or programs relevant to one or more major child welfare goals. This link allows you to view the programs that have been reviewed and rated by the CEBC in the Reunification topical area. Results are shown only for the programs that have been rated in each category. (Author abstract modified)
http://www.cachildwelfareclearinghouse.org/search/topical-area/8

Trial home visits: strengthening reunification practices.
2006
CASCW practice notes
18 p. 1-13 html pages
Available from: University of Minnesota
School of Social Work 105 Peters Hall 1404 Gortner Avenue
St. Paul, MN  55108
Tel: 612-625-1220 800-779-8636
Fax: 612-624-3744
ssw-info@che.umn.edu
Available From:http://ssw.che.umn.edu
The trial home visit is now a key strategy in assuring successful reunification. In Minnesota, as in the rest of the country, reunification, the process of reconnecting children in out-of-home care with their families, has special significance. Minnesota emphasizes reunification with parents as the most common and preferred permanency arrangement for children. In order to improve stability in the reunification process, the concept of a trial home visit was recently introduced as a legislative initiative (M.S. 260C.201 subd 1). This edition of Practice Notes is intended to provide guidelines for strengthening practice in the volatile and crisis-ridden period of reunification, known as the "trial home visit." (Author abstract)
http://ssw.che.umn.edu/CASCW/pn_306.html

Family Reunification: What the Evidence Shows
Issue Brief
Child Welfare Information Gateway
2006
Child Welfare Information Gateway
Children's Bureau/ACYF 1250 Maryland Avenue, SW Eighth Floor
Washington, DC  20024
Tel: 800.394.3366 703.385.7565
Fax: 703.385.3206
info@childwelfare.gov
Available From:http://www.childwelfare.gov
Family reunification, the process of returning children in temporary out-of-home care to their families of origin, is the most common goal and outcome for children in out-of-home care. This issue brief examines States? successes and challenges related to family reunification, as documented in the Federal Child and Family Services Reviews; reviews research regarding factors contributing to timely, stable reunifications; offers specific program examples that illustrate these factors; and uses all of the above to suggest several guiding principles for practice in this critical area of permanency planning.
http://www.childwelfare.gov/pubs/issue_briefs/family_reunification/index.cfm

Family Reunification Initiative: A Needs Assessment and Family Reunification Program to Address the Challenges That Female Offenders and Their Dependent Children Face in Family Reunification.
DAI-B 67/01, p. 601, Jul 2006
Mceuin, Courtney Leigh.
Spalding University.
2006
ProQuest Digital Dissertations
Tel: 1-800-521-0600, extension 3042
Available From: http://wwwlib.umi.com/dissertations/
The current exploratory study was undertaken for the purposes of (1) identifying the needs of a representative sample of female offenders with dependent children who plan to transition from the Kentucky Correctional Institution for Women (KCIW), a medium security women’s prison, back to Jefferson County, Kentucky: (2) surveying community service agencies that are potentially useful to releasees in the area of family reunification; (3) identifying gaps in family reunification services; (4) designing a program that will help women who are transitioning back to the community to increase the probability of reunification with family members, especially dependent children; and (5) designing a set of methods to evaluate such a program. Forty-six female offender participants from KCIW who were being considered for parole or had reached the end of their prison sentence with plans to transition back into Jefferson County voluntarily participated in semi-structured interviews in order to discover the common family reunification needs of female releasees. Eighteen community service agencies participated in semi-structured interviews to identify the service capacity available to female releasees and any gaps in family reunification services. The results of the female offender and community service surveys demonstrated that female releasees with dependent children could benefit from the implementation of a family reunification program that provides individualized, intensive family case management and service coordination and direct family service provision. (Author abstract) http://wwwlib.umi.com/dissertations/preview/3205125

Refining the practice of family reunification: “mining” successful foster care case records of substance-abusing families (Chapter of Child welfare for the twenty-first century: a handbook of practices, policies, and programs.)
Cordero, Antonia. Epstein, Irwin. 2005
Available from: Columbia University Press
Order Department 136 S. Broadway
Irvington, NY 10533
Tel: 800-944-8648
Fax: 1-800-944-1844 914-591-9201
Available From: http://www.columbia.edu/cu/cup/
This chapter focuses on successful reunification practices with families affected by substance abuse. Highlighting findings from a study of the case records of 18 families mandated into care for reasons of substance abuse, it illustrates how qualitative clinical data-mining of positive reunification outcomes can be employed to identify case characteristics and provide examples of strength-based foster care practice with substance-abusing parents. Best practices in the following four stages of the reunification helping process are explained: the exploration stage, assessment stage, intervention stage, and termination stage. 2 tables, 1 figure, and 37 references.
Defining and achieving family reunification (Chapter of Child welfare for the twenty-first century: a handbook of practices, policies, and programs.)
Pine, Barbara A. Spath, Robin. Gosteli, Stephanie. 2005
Available from: Columbia University Press
Order Department 136 S. Broadway
Irvington, NY 10533
Tel: 800-944-8648
Fax: 1-800-944-1844 914-591-9201
Available From:http://www.columbia.edu/cu/cup/
This chapter begins with national statistics on the number of children in foster care in the United States, and presents a brief overview of the policy context of family reunification. The discussion outlines a broader definition of positive outcomes in family reunification and provides information on the risk and protective factors of families working toward reunification. Promising research-based practice approaches, the skills and values needed for effective practice in family reunification, and ethical aspects of practice are discussed. Case examples are included to illustrate practice principles for working with children in out-of-home care and their families. 51 references. (Author abstract modified)

Lighting the fire of urgency: reunification of families in America's child welfare system [teleconference].
National Resource Center for Family-Centered Practice and Permanency Planning, 2005
Taylor and Francis Inc.
325 Chestnut Street Suite 800
Philadelphia, PA 19106
Tel: 800-354-1420
Fax: 215-625-8914
info@taylorandfrancis.com
Available From:http://www.taylorandfrancis.com
The web cast will provide participants with information and tools to quickly identify and engage relatives for children and youth in America’s child welfare system. The results, strengths and challenges of replication projects in California, Illinois, and Washington will be discussed. Viewers will learn that families are typically larger in numbers of relatives and more diverse in their levels of stability and willingness to help than previously thought. As a result of breakthrough technology and practice frameworks emphasizing engagement, participation and action, which may have previously not been used by child welfare professionals, family members can be quickly and extensively identified. This web cast will illuminate these breakthrough technologies for viewers as novel means of reunifying children and youth with families. Free
Family reunification practice with parents who abuse drugs (Chapter of Child welfare for the twenty-first century: a handbook of practices, policies, and programs.)
Maluccio, Anthony N. Ainsworth, Frank.
2005
Available from: Columbia University Press
Order Department 136 S. Broadway
Irvington, NY 10533
Tel: 800-944-8648
Fax: 1-800-944-1844 914-591-9201
Available From: http://www.columbia.edu/cu/cup/
This chapter explores the challenges social workers face in attempting to reunify families in which there is parental drug abuse. The incidence of children in out-of-home care who have parents that abuse drugs is discussed, as well as the continued relevance of family reunification practice in serving these families. New service innovations that facilitate drug treatment are highlighted, and a three-stage model of family reunification is presented. 26 references.

Evaluation of the Intensive Reunification Program of Kansas Children’s Service League.
Berry, Marianne. McCauley, Kelly.
University of Kansas
2005
Publication Information: Marianne Berry
Available from: Marianne Berry
University of Kansas 311 Twente Hall
Lawrence, KS 66044-3184
Tel: (785) 864-2378
andysmom@ku.edu
This report evaluates the effectiveness of the Intensive Reunification Program (IRP), a program that provides short-term intensive services to parents of children in foster care. The program was developed in the summer of 2003, and pilot tested between October, 2003 and October, 2004. The evaluation of the program was a quasi-experimental design, comparing family progress and case outcomes between 12 families completing the pilot program and 14 purposively selected families receiving conventional foster care services during the same time period. A total of 12 families in the IRP were studied, but only 7 had completed at least 36 weeks in the program by October, 2004. Findings from the evaluation indicate the IRP experienced a 57% reunification rate for its families, compared to a 29% reunification rate for families receiving conventional services for the same length of time (or more). When reunification rates are based on children rather than families, the reunification rates were 56% for those in the pilot group and 29% for those in the
conventional group. Another 24% of the children in the comparison group reunified, but later returned to care. There were no disruptions in the IRP group. In addition the average time to reunification for those in the IRP was 7 months, compared to 8 months in the conventional group. The IRP was also found to be successful in reunifying families referred for physical abuse, neglect, or truancy. The conventional foster care services group experienced reunifications of families referred for physical abuse or neglect. Finally, after 36 weeks in each program, the IRP families had more positive ratings from their caseworkers than did those in conventional services in parenting skills, home environment, social support and family relationships. Recommendations for reunification programs are provided. An appendix includes the following tools: Concurrent Planning Guide, Adult-Adolescent Parenting Inventory (AAPI-2), The Strengths and Stressors Tracking Device, and feedback forms. 3 tables and 9 references. (Author abstract modified)

**A resilience-based model of reunification and reentry: implications for out-of-home care services.**
Thomas, M. Chenot, David. Reifel, Barbara. California State University. 2005
*Families in society : the journal of contemporary social services.* 86 p. 235-243
11700 West Lake Park Drive Milwaukee, WI 53224
Tel: 414-359-1040
Fax: 414-359-1074
[info@familiesinsociety.org](http://www.familiesinsociety.org)
Available From: [http://www.familiesinsociety.org](http://www.familiesinsociety.org)
This study presents a resilience-based model for the successful reunification of children in out-of-home care services. Individual, familial, and environmental risk and protective factors associated with reunification and reentry into out-of-home care were gleaned from relevant literature and inform the construction of the model. The resilience-based model demonstrates that high levels of protective factors can buffer or even weaken the hold of risk factors, thereby reducing the likelihood of reentry. The importance of resilience-informed interventions in preventing reentry and promoting the continued reunification of children is highlighted. The implications of this resilience-based model for practice and research are discussed. (Author abstract)

**Celebrating Families : an innovative approach for working with substance abusing families.**
*The source : newsletter of the National Abandoned Infants Assistance Resource Center.*
This article profiles Celebrating Families! (CF!), a new approach to bringing reunification to families separated due to parental substance abuse accompanied by neglect, domestic violence, or abuse. This education/support group model was developed for use in the Santa Clara County, California, Family Drug Treatment Court. CF! explores four aspects of healthy living: physical, psychological, social, and spiritual. The model consists of 15 weekly, 90-minute sessions, each followed by a 30-minute structured, related family activity. Early research results have shown a significant increase in the rate of family reunification and a shortened stay in foster care for children. The rationale for the approach is discussed, along with the role of drug treatment courts, the history of the program, program objectives, foundations of the program, the curriculum, and program outcomes. 14 references.

When family reunification works: data-mining foster care records.
Cordero, Antonia E.
University of Connecticut.
2004
Families in society: the journal of contemporary social services.
85 p. 571-580
Available from: Families in Society
11700 West Lake Park Drive
Milwaukee, WI 53224-3099
Tel: 1-414-359-1040 x3663
Fax: 1-414-359-1074
info@familiesinsociety.org
Available From:http://www.familiesinsociety.org
Concurrent permanency planning policy mandates heighten the need to evaluate effective family reunification practices. This retrospective practice-based study examines positive family reunification outcomes at a New York City foster care agency. It uses a qualitative clinical data-mining methodology and the Professional Review Action Group case review model to conduct an intensive examination of 18 families’ case records. Families were mandated into care for
neglect, domestic violence, or substance abuse. This paper identifies family characteristics and
strength-based casework practices that emerge during examination of the foster care
reunification process. The family characteristics examined include (a) family attachment bonds,
(b) separation anxiety, (c) reunification ambivalence, and (d) intergenerational family patterns. In
addition, 3 casework practices emerge: (a) the worker’s active support of resiliency in family
attachment; (b) the worker’s attention to the resolution of placement separation anxiety and
family reunification ambivalence, and (c) the worker’s attention to intergenerational family
patterns. Practice implications for refinement of foster care best practices are discussed. (Author
abstract)

Promising practices in child welfare: family reunification: a review of current strategies /
Voices for America’s Children.
Voices issue brief
Voices for America’s Children.
2004
Publication Information: Washington, DC : Voices for America’s Children.
Available from: Voices for America’s Children
1000 Vermont Avenue, NW, Suite 700
Washington, DC  20005
Tel: 202-289-0777
Fax: 202-289-0776
voices@voices.org
Available From:http://www.voicesforamericaschildren.org
Sponsoring Organization: Freddie Mac Foundation.
The 2001 federal Child Outcomes Report revealed that states with high rates of family
reunification within 12 months of placement also have high rates of re-entry into foster care. The
trend is indicative of a failure to adequately prepare families for the child's return home. This
brief describes effective strategies that help to support successful reunifications. Services include
intensive time-limited treatment, parent-child visitation, psychosocial counseling, aftercare
assistance, extended family involvement, and collaboration between foster and birth parents.
Strengths-based family services and geographic proximity to birth parents also help to improve
reunification outcomes. Evaluators suggest that preservation programs focus on a specific
population of families with founded reports of maltreatment and concentrate efforts on certain
problems, such as parental substance abuse. 24 notes.
http://www.voicesforamericaschildren.org/Content/ContentGroups/Policy/Child_Safety/Member
_Mailing1/Forming_Families/Promising_Practices_in_Child_Welfare_Family_Reunification/Reu
nification.pdf

Promising practices in reunification.
Dougherty, Susan.
National Resource Center for Foster Care and Permanency Planning.
2004
Available from: National Resource Center for Family-Centered Practice and Permanency Planning
Hunter College School of Social Work 129 East 79th Street
New York, NY 10021
Tel: 212-452-7053
Fax: 212-452-7475
grad.socworkadvisor@hunter.cuny.edu
Available From: http://www.hunter.cuny.edu/socwork/nrcfcpp

Little in the literature helps to identify programs that are successful in achieving lasting reunification of children in out-of-home care with their families. Much of the research has looked at characteristics of children and families that help or hinder reunification, but not at whether children are able to remain in their homes over time, or what their long-term outcomes are in safety and well-being (Littell and Schuerman, 1995; Maluccio, 1998; Wulczyn, 2004). The National Resource Center for Foster Care and Permanency Planning (NRCFCPP) has worked with some programs that seem to be moving toward faster, safer and lasting reunifications. However, as there is little research to prove that these programs actually do work, they have chosen in this report to highlight several practices they believe are important components of reunification programs that appear to be achieving good results. These practices are: placement decision-making; parent-child visiting; intensive services; resource parent/birth parent collaboration; and aftercare services. 7 references. (Author abstract modified)

Reunifying families, cutting costs: housing-child welfare partnerships for permanent supportive housing.
Harburger, Deborah S. White, Ruth A.
Child Welfare League of America.
2004
Child welfare.
83 p. 493-508
Available from: Child Welfare League of America
2345 Crystal Drive, Suite 250
Arlington, VA 22202
Tel: 703-412-2400
Fax: 703-412-2401
order@cwla.org
Available From: http://www.cwla.org/
In the absence of an adequate supply of affordable, quality housing, child welfare agencies are placed in the unenviable position of separating families to protect children from the debilitating effects of homelessness. This article presents recommendations for cost-effective housing-child
welfare partnerships that will shift the burden of providing adequate housing back to housing agencies. These partnerships have the potential to move child welfare agencies closer to achieving permanence and well-being for all children. A table indicates the potential savings each state may realize by providing supportive housing. (Author abstract modified)

Reconnecting children with absent parents: a model for intervention.
Family court review. 42 p. 439-459
Available from: Sage Publications
2455 Teller Road
Thousand Oaks, CA 91320
Tel: 800-818-7243 805-499-9774
Fax: 800-583-2665 805-499-0871
info@sagepub.com
Available From:http://www.sagepub.com
Reconnecting a child with an absent parent is a complex process. This article describes variables influencing the reconnection and proposes a seven-stage model for supporting successful reconnections. Case examples illustrate the discussion. Ethical dilemmas for practitioners and courts involved in reconnections are outlined. Guidelines for working with reconnections and directions for future work are proposed. Experience with the model underscores the importance of maintaining a child-centered focus and timeline, understanding safety and risk issues and implementing an appropriate safety plan, the critical role of assessment and support services, and the value of consultation and teamwork. (Author abstract)

Birth parents and the reunification process: a study of the Mendocino County model.
Available from: Center for Social Services Research
University of California Berkeley, School of Social Welfare 120 Haviland Hall, #7400
Berkeley, CA 94720-7400
Tel: 510-642-1899
Fax: 510-642-1895
ecohen@berkeley.edu
Available From:http://cssr.berkeley.edu/research_units/bassc/index.html
This report discusses the findings of a study that examined key services offered by the Mendocino County Family Service Center (MCFSC) to assist birth parents in gaining reunification, in order to better understand the change process for birth parents in the child welfare system, their service needs, and the potential usefulness of the MCFSC model in meeting those needs. In particular, the study sought to examine the role of the Intake and Empowerment groups, to identify the key components of the group interventions that appeared to facilitate a change process for birth parents, and give voice to the experience of birth parents with respect to this change process and the services they have received. The study used data from interviews and focus groups involving 14 staff members and 17 clients. The report begins by explaining the role of the 8-week Intake support group to address issues of anger and denial, educate the client about the court process and the importance of building relationships with social workers, and to facilitate both the taking of responsibility and engagement in further services by focusing on the importance of change. Following successful participation in an Intake group, parents begin a series of parenting classes while simultaneously entering an Empowerment group, during which parents are provided with weekly support for their process of change. The report shares staff perspectives on the program philosophy, theories of change, and services approach, followed by a summary of clients' descriptions of their needs, and their perspectives on services received. Observations of the client change process are discussed, reporting on the 8-week empowerment group process. This section includes a discussion of interventions by group facilitators, interventions by group members, and a case example designed to illustrate the kinds of changes observed to occur within the 8-week period. 21 references. (Author abstract modified) http://cssr.berkeley.edu/childwelfare/pdfs/Promising/Mendocino_Full_Report.pdf

Identifying and reducing barriers to reunification for seriously mentally ill parents involved in child welfare cases.
Families in Society
85 p. 107-118
Available from: Alliance for Children and Families
11700 West Lake Park Drive
Milwaukee, WI 53224
Tel: 414-359-1040
Fax: 414-359-1074
info@familiesinsociety.org
Available From: http://www.familiesinsociety.org
Forming judgments about parenting capacity, a necessary part of permanency planning, is much more difficult when the parent has a serious mental illness. The time necessary for effective treatment for such parents is often longer than the court-ordered time limit for family reunification. This puts mentally ill parents at a distinct disadvantage in their efforts to preserve
their families. Using Arizona as an example, this article discusses the barriers in both child welfare and mental health systems to accurate and effective assessment and treatment. It presents recommendations for research and suggestions for child welfare personnel to enhance the potential for mentally ill parents to reunify with their children. (Author abstract) http://www.alliance1.org/Publications/fis/FIS_PDFs/85-1PDFs/851Risle.pdf

**Evaluation of family preservation and reunification programs [website].**


Available from: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation, Room 415F 200 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, DC  20201
Tel: 202-690-7858 877-696-6775
Fax: 202-690-6562
ocrmail@hhs.gov
Available From: http://aspe.hhs.gov/hsp/evalfampres94/
Conducted from 1994 through 2002, the Evaluation of Family Preservation and Reunification Programs was intended to evaluate rigorously programs designed to prevent the placement of children in foster care when it can be avoided. A related effort to reunify families who had at least one child placed in foster care was also evaluated, and related issue papers on family preservation, fiscal reform, and cost estimation were produced. The evaluation was originally undertaken as directed by Congress in the 1993 Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act which created the Family Support and Family Preservation Program, since renamed the Promoting Safe and Stable Families Program. Westat, Chapin Hall Center for Children, and James Bell Associates conducted the evaluation and wrote the reports.
http://aspe.hhs.gov/hsp/evalfampres94/

**Intensive family reunification services protocol.**

National Family Preservation Network. 2003

Available from: National Family Preservation Network
3971 North 1400 East
Buhl, ID  83316
Tel: 888-498-9047
director@nfpn.org
Available From: http://www.nfpn.org
This protocol provides an overview of the history, values and beliefs, program standards, research, public policy, and resources on safely and effectively reuniting families following out-of-home placement. Reunification services in this protocol are closely tied to, yet not identical to Intensive Family Preservation Services. These services may be provided within any child and family service system, including child welfare, juvenile justice, mental health, and developmental
disabilities. For purposes of this protocol, the child welfare system represents all other systems.

(Author abstract modified)

http://www.nfpn.org/reunification/protocol.php

Evaluation of Oregon’s Title IV-E waiver demonstration project, final report.
Child Welfare Partnership Graduate School of Social Work, Portland State University.
2003
Available from: Portland State University, Graduate School of Social Work
520 SW Harrison St.
Portland, OR  Available From:http://www.cwp.pdx.edu
Sponsoring Organization: Children’s Bureau
As part of the Title IV-E Waiver Demonstration Project, the state of Oregon allocated foster care maintenance funds to support children and families within the Strengths/Needs Based System of Care program. Local child welfare agencies were permitted to spend the flexible money for foster care prevention, the expansion of effective services, the development of new services, and subsidized guardianship. The intention of the waiver was to reduce placements in foster care and improve the well-being of families. This report summarizes the findings of process, impact, and outcome evaluations. Comparisons were made between agencies that participated in the waiver project and the system of care initiative; agencies with a waiver but no involvement in the system of care program; agencies that participated in the system of care initiative, but not the waiver project; and agencies that did not participate in either program. Although agencies receiving waiver funds had lower placement rates than non-waiver jurisdictions, there was no difference in family reunifications within one year of child placement in foster care. The groups also had similar rates of permanency with relatives and risk for subsequent maltreatment. Placement stability was greater for agencies participating in one program than agencies that received funds from the waiver and the system of care initiative. The results demonstrate that children receiving flexible funds from the waiver were more likely to remain in their home. However, the evaluation did not examine the effectiveness of specific services. The study recommends that the flexible funding streams continue after the completion of the waiver project and that more evaluations be conducted to measure outcomes of services. 20 figures, 22 tables.
http://www.cwp.pdx.edu/pdfs/Waiver%20Final%20Report%203-27-03.pdf

Tailoring intensive family preservation services for family reunification cases: final results of field testing and validation of the North Carolina Family Assessment Scale for Reunification.
Kirk, Raymond S.
National Family Preservation Network.
2002
Available from: National Family Preservation Network
3971 North 1400 East
Buhl, ID 83316
Tel: 888-498-9047
director@nfpn.org
Available From:http://www.nfpn.org

Family service agencies in Indianapolis, Indiana; Federal Way, Washington; and St. Louis, Missouri pilot tested the use of family preservation techniques for families with reunification plans. The demonstration project, which was administered by the National Family Preservation Network, also examined the validity of the North Carolina Family Assessment Scale for Reunification (NCFAS-R). The scale evaluates the strengths and needs of families in seven domains: environment, parental capabilities, family interactions, family safety, child well-being, caregiver/child ambivalence, and readiness for reunification. Approximately three-fourths of the 170 cases managed over a two-year period were resolved with the return of the child. The NCFAS-R was found to be reliable and valid for evaluating participants and reflecting relationships between rating scores and outcomes. 28 references, 11 figures, and 6 tables.

Understanding the parenting support needs of maltreating parents and their children.
Kuehnle, Kathryn. Becker, Marion. Lynn, Nancy B.
Children's Board of Hillsborough County (FL)
University of South Florida, College of Public Health.
2002
Available from: Children's Board of Hillsborough County
1205 East 8th Avenue
Tampa, FL 33605
Tel: (813) 229-2884
Available From:http://www.childrensboard.org

This study examined family reunification practice in Hillsborough County, Florida to identify opportunities to support parents when their children are returned to their care. The lack of support for parents places children at risk of repeat maltreatment and re-entry into foster care. Information for the study was obtained from a review of best practices in parent education and interviews with parents, kinship care providers, foster parents, dependency attorneys, and child welfare workers. The findings revealed several challenges to the development of family reunification services, including inadequate staff time and the emphasis of funding sources on placement. Existing parent education techniques are not effective because of difficulties with visitation and the lack of consideration for the cultural, socioeconomic, and educational characteristics of the parents. The study recommends that the community implement the Nurturing Parent Program model with features such as customized materials for subgroups of children and parents, home visitation, interactions between parents and children, and extended intervention activities. Community volunteers can be recruited to transport children to visit their parents and to provide parent training and support.

http://www.childrensboard.org/downloads/malpar%20REFLO.pdf
A Comprehensive Approach to Family Reunification Following Incest in an Era of Legislatively Mandated Community Notification.
Digioiorgio-Miller, J.
Morristown Memorial Hospital, Morristown, NJ. Family Enrichment Program.
2002
Journal of Offender Rehabilitation
35 83-91
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There is little comprehensive literature that outlines the treatment process of reunification of the incest family where the father is the offender. Most of the literature regarding family reunification offers family therapy models which fail to integrate the individuals perspective and issues related to the abuse with the formulation of a family therapy plan. Treatment providers often prematurely approach this reunification process prior to understanding all of the dynamics involved in a safe process which ensures the comfort of the victim while understanding the relapse prevention plan of the offender. They recommend family therapy when one family member requests it without considering the progress or requests of the other family members. This may assist the family in the hope that reunification may be just around the corner when in fact, the offender may not have learned his risk factors or does not have a workable relapse prevention plan. The victim, while he/she may request the meeting, may not be ready to process his/her feelings regarding the abuse. This paper examines the current literature on incestuous family reunification and present a comprehensive treatment model that takes into consideration each family member’s issues regarding the abuse. A victim-centered approach integrated with offender specific treatment will be discussed. The impact of the current notification laws on the family and how the therapist role regarding this impact both with the family and the other systems are also discussed. (Author abstract) 10 references.

Project Family: final evaluation report.
Thomas, Charles G. Illback, Robert J. Sanders, Daniel.
The Family Place: A Child Abuse Treatment Agency, Inc., Louisville, KY.
2002
Publication Information: The Family Place: A Child Abuse Treatment Agency, Inc., Louisville, KY.
Available from: The Family Place
982 Eastern Parkway
The Family Place: A Child Abuse Treatment Agency utilizes the family systems approach to treat families affected by incest. Services are customized to the specific effects of intrafamilial sexual abuse and are designed to support family reunification or contact goals. Children and non-offending parents receive individual and group therapy, while non-abused siblings participate in family therapy. Offenders attend individual, couples, and group therapy. The Project Family evaluation was intended to measure the effectiveness of the program and its adherence to the principles of family systems treatment. Desired outcomes included safety for the child and family, recognition of personal responsibility and risks for sexual abuse, improved parenting skills, and decreased symptoms. Although the evaluation was not completed as planned because of low participation, the study focused on the reliability of the Treatment Review Questionnaire used by therapists to assess progress. The preliminary study indicated that the instrument was reliable and revealed differences in the perspectives of therapists and clients. Therapists assessed progress based on the severity of the problems, the duration of abuse, and substantiation. Clients considered the duration of the abuse and family chemical dependency when reviewing their success. The report advises similar programs to generate referrals from multiple sources and to inform referring agencies about the evaluation research. Evaluation studies also should address issues such as informed consent and the impact of multiple systems on research participation. 14 tables, 1 measure.

My Baby’s Father: A Family Systems Focus on Re-Involvement of Men in Meeting Family Reunification and Permanency Goals.
Ford, Ross N.
2002
The National Resource Center for Family-Centered Practice and Permanency Planning
p. 22-26
National Resource Center for Family-Centered Practice and Permanency Planning
Hunter College School of Social Work 129 East 79th Street
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Available From: http://www.hunter.cuny.edu/socwork/nrcfcpp
To support better outcomes for families and children "My Baby’s Father," uses a family systems approach and concrete skill development as a way to increase male involvement. The training we use in the program is based on the Enriched Structural Family Therapy (ESFT) model, which is an original family systems approach to strengthening families. ESFT is strengths-oriented, solution-focused, skills based and culturally sensitive. The model encourages a systemic perspective of families and helps child welfare workers to focus on solutions, not problems and pathology.


Treating Infant-Parent Relationships in the Context of Maltreatment: Repairing the Ruptures of Trust.
Larrieu, Julie A.
Tulane Univ. Health Sciences Center, New Orleans, LA. Institute of Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health.
2002
Zero to Three
16-22
Publication Information: Zero to Three: National Center for Infants, Toddlers, and Families, Washington, DC.
Available from: Zero to Three: National Center for Infants, Toddlers, and Families
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Available From: http://www.zerotothree.org
The Institute of Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health of Tulane University Health Sciences Center provides multidisciplinary assessment and treatment for infants in foster care and their birth parents in preparation for the child’s return home. Team members, including child psychiatrists, developmental psychologists, clinical social workers, pediatricians, and paraprofessionals, conduct a comprehensive family evaluation and recommend criteria for reunification to the child protective agency and the court. Interventions focus on individual family members as well as the children and consist of therapeutic visitation, infant-parent psychotherapy, and interaction guidance. The goal is for parents to develop the minimum level of skills necessary for reunification, with options to continue treatment to address the source of problems. This article reviews the important elements of treatment and reports the success of the program, which has significantly reduced the risk of maltreatment for participants. 6 references.

Parental Visiting and Family Reunification: Could Inclusive Practice Make a Difference?
Leathers, S. J.
2002
Child Welfare
81 595-616
This study examined whether parental involvement in foster children's lives while in placement is correlated with more frequent visiting and a greater likelihood of reunification. Parental involvement through inclusive practice is believed to help parents overcome common barriers to visitation, such as time requirements, agency policy, transportation, foster parents, and psychological issues about shame and inadequacy. The hypothesis was tested among a random sample of 230 twelve- and thirteen-year olds placed in traditional family foster care. Information about visitation patterns and parental involvement was collected from interviews with caseworkers and foster mothers. Caseworkers also were asked to rate the likelihood that the children would be reunified with their family. Adaptation to foster care and emotional and behavior disturbance specifically were measured. The results suggest that mothers who visit their child and are involved in case reviews and child care activities visit more frequently than mothers who visit in settings such as agency offices and have no other types of involvement. In addition, visiting frequency is highly predictive of reunification. These associations were not explained by maternal substance abuse, mental illness, or the child's placement history. Future research should determine the impact of inclusive practice on visitation and reunification rates. If inclusive practice is effective, the approach will help families and agencies comply with the timeframes mandated in the Adoption and Safe Families Act. (Author abstract modified) 21 references, 4 tables.

Andrews, M.
Tanana Chiefs Conference, Inc., Fairbanks, AK.
2002
Alaska Law Review
19 85-117
Publication Information: Duke Univ., Durham, NC. School of Law.
Available from: Alaska Law Review
School of Law Duke University Room 2040
Durham, NC 27708
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Available From:http://www.law.duke.edu/journals/
Recent decisions by the Alaska Supreme Court place new responsibility on the state's
Department of Health and Social Services to facilitate family reunification for children in state care. This article explores these rulings and their potential impact on children and families in the state. Special attention is paid to differences between reasonable efforts provisions in the state's Child in Need of Aid statute and active efforts mandated under the federal Indian Child Welfare Act. The legal history and legislative development of each statute is discussed, and the author argues that with few exceptions, the Alaska high court has been consistent in adhering to both reasonable and active efforts standards in its decisions. A number of cases illustrating this argument are presented. Over the past 25 years, the court has applied a single standard that meets provisions of both statutory provisions. Nonetheless the court has failed to articulate whether the efforts of the state Department of Health and Social Services has been inconsistent in determinations regarding the fitness of parents to provide care for children taken into state custody. The high court needs to more clearly articulate for trial courts requirements for objective testimony of parental unfitness or unwillingness to care for a child in termination hearings, the author says. 244 footnotes.

http://www.law.duke.edu/journals/19ALRAndrews

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This final report presents an evaluation of federally funded family preservation programs designed to prevent the placement of children in foster care when it can be avoided. The report focuses on programs in Kentucky, New Jersey, Tennessee, and Philadelphia. Three of the sites employ the Homebuilders model of family preservation (Kentucky, New Jersey, and Tennessee). The Homebuilders prevention program is based on crisis intervention theory and calls for short-term, time-limited services provided to the entire family in the home. Services include contact with the family within 24 hours of the crisis, caseload sizes of one or two families per worker, service duration of 4-6 weeks, provision of concrete services and counseling, and up to 20 hours of service per week. Philadelphia employs a broader, home-based, family preservation service model that focuses on the behavior of the family overall, and attempts to change the way in
which the family functions as a whole and within the community. Aside from a primary goal of placement prevention, the model seeks to improve functioning of parents, families, and children. The program stresses longer-term interventions based on family systems theory. The Philadelphia program tailored home-based services to build upon the Pennsylvania Free substance abuse services provided in the 1980s. Key characteristics include 12 weeks of service to families, a focus on drug and alcohol abuse in families, caseload sizes of five families per worker, and provision of both concrete services and counseling. Study findings from interviews with caseworkers and caretakers found the family preservation programs did not reduce placement of children in foster care. Volume 1 of the report provides a description of the study implementation, study sites, and families in the Homebuilders model sites. Volume 2 provides a summary of the study, an examination of services for the Homebuilding sites, outcome analysis for the Homebuilders sites, a description and analysis of the Philadelphia family preservation program, and study conclusions. Numerous tables and figures. (Author abstract modified)

http://aspe.hhs.gov/hsp/evalfampres94/final/