

Resource Family Approval Orientation



Kern County Department of Human Services

Opportunities, Options, & Empowerment



Vision

We create remarkable experiences building resiliency, safety, value and respect. We are passionate and committed to transforming the lives of those we serve and those who serve.



Core Purpose

To care for and enrich the lives of children, families and individuals in our community.



Mission

We partner with children, individuals, families, and the community to provide customer centered services, ensuring safe, protected, and permanent homes for children and employment preparation for adults.

What is the purpose of Foster Care?

- ◆ The purpose of foster care is to keep children safe while in out-of-home care with a Primary goal of returning them safely to their parent/guardian.
- ◆ Concurrently, child welfare services are provided to ensure a child has a permanent home IF they cannot return to their parent/guardian.
 - Unlike Adoption Agencies that focus solely on matching families.

Annually about **89.11%** of children in our care are reunified with their parents

(Statistics from the last six years)



Why are children in Foster Care?

- ◆ They become **Dependent Children of the court** (under WIC 300)
 - Moved due to child maltreatment by parent or guardian
 - The goal is reunification with their parents or to maintain stable placement for permanency
- ◆ They become **Wards of the Court** (under WIC 600)
 - Moved due to delinquent behavior and the home is not suitable
 - The goal is rehabilitation, reunification and permanency

Both agencies want the same outcome:

Permanency - Only when a child can not reunify with their parents.



Who are the children in Foster Care?



Children who may have experienced:

- Neglect or abandonment
- Physical, emotional, or sexual abuse
- Human Trafficking

These children and youth include:

- All age groups: 0-17 & non-minor dependents
- Teen parents with their babies
- Babies born with prenatal drug or alcohol exposure
- Children with special medical needs

There are over 1,000 county approved resource families. Families open to placement of older youth and children with special needs are particularly in need.

Who are the children in Foster Care?



Cultural Considerations

- Race and Ethnicity
- Religion
- Nationality
- LGBTQ+ Youth
 - Lesbian, Gay, Bi-Sexual, Transgender, & Questioning
- Native American & Eskimo
 - ICWA (Indian Child Welfare Act)

Who are the children in Foster Care?



Youth Preparing to Live Independently

Foster Youth need your help to prepare for Independent Living!

- Employment
- College
- Self-Reliance
- Ongoing Positive Relationships

Who are the children in Foster Care?



Non-Minor Dependents (NMD)

Assembly Bill (AB) 12

- Young adults may leave foster care at age 18, but receive services until age 21

NMDs need your help!

- Mentoring/family connections
- Housing
- Guidance with college or vocational training

Who are the children in Foster Care?



Probation Foster Youth

- Youth are typically 13-17 years old
- Similar to Child Welfare, if these youth do not have a suitable home, care, custody and control can be vested with the Probation Department.
- When this happens, the youth is identified as a foster youth and is eligible for all foster care services and support.
- While deemed a Ward of the Court, most just need a Resource Family for stability and success.

If you are interested in being a Resource Family for a Probation Youth, please let the Social Workers or Deputy Probation Officer know.



What do children in Foster Care want?

Children and Youth in Foster Care want to stay connected to family and...

- love their parents and want to be together as a family
- need a caring home with unconditional love
- want to feel safe in an environment that supports personal growth and identity including cultural sensitivity and religious freedom



The Juvenile Court Process...



Juvenile Probation

- Wards of the Court



Child Protective Services

- Child Dependency



Juvenile Probation Court Process (W&IC 600)

A youth is arrested for committing an offense and temporarily detained
Kern's Youth Detention Center.

Detention Hearing

Continues detention
in Kern's Youth
Detention Center.

Dispositional Hearing

Care, Custody and
Control is taken, and
youth is ordered a
rehabilitation plan.
An appropriate
placement for the
youth is sought.

Permanency Hearings

Every 6 months to
evaluate progress of
youth's rehabilitation
and progress toward
reunification and/or
permanency.

Child Welfare Court Process (W&IC 300)

A youth is temporarily separated from his/her parent(s) or guardian(s) due to substantiated allegations of child abuse or neglect.

Detention Hearing

Court decides if a child will remain in foster care while it is determined if allegations are true and what the plan for the family will be.

Jurisdictional /Dispositional Hearing

Court decides if a child will remain in foster care while it is determined if allegations are true and what the plan for the family will be.

Review Hearings

Every 6 months a hearing is scheduled to evaluate progress of the parents in their case plan or the child in his/her permanency plan if parents are not receiving services.

366.26 or 366.3 Hearing

Permanency planning hearings for long-term permanency including Adoption, Legal Guardianship, Fit and Willing Relative, or Another Planned Living Arrangement (APPLA)

Who can be a Resource Parent?



RESOURCE
FAMILY
APPROVAL



Applicant Qualifications and Requirements

Age

You must be at least 18 years of age.

1

Mentor

You must be willing to assist children and youth in preparing for adulthood

2

Health

You must be in good physical and mental health.

3

Parenting Skills

You must use effective parenting skills with children who have been victims of abuse/neglect.

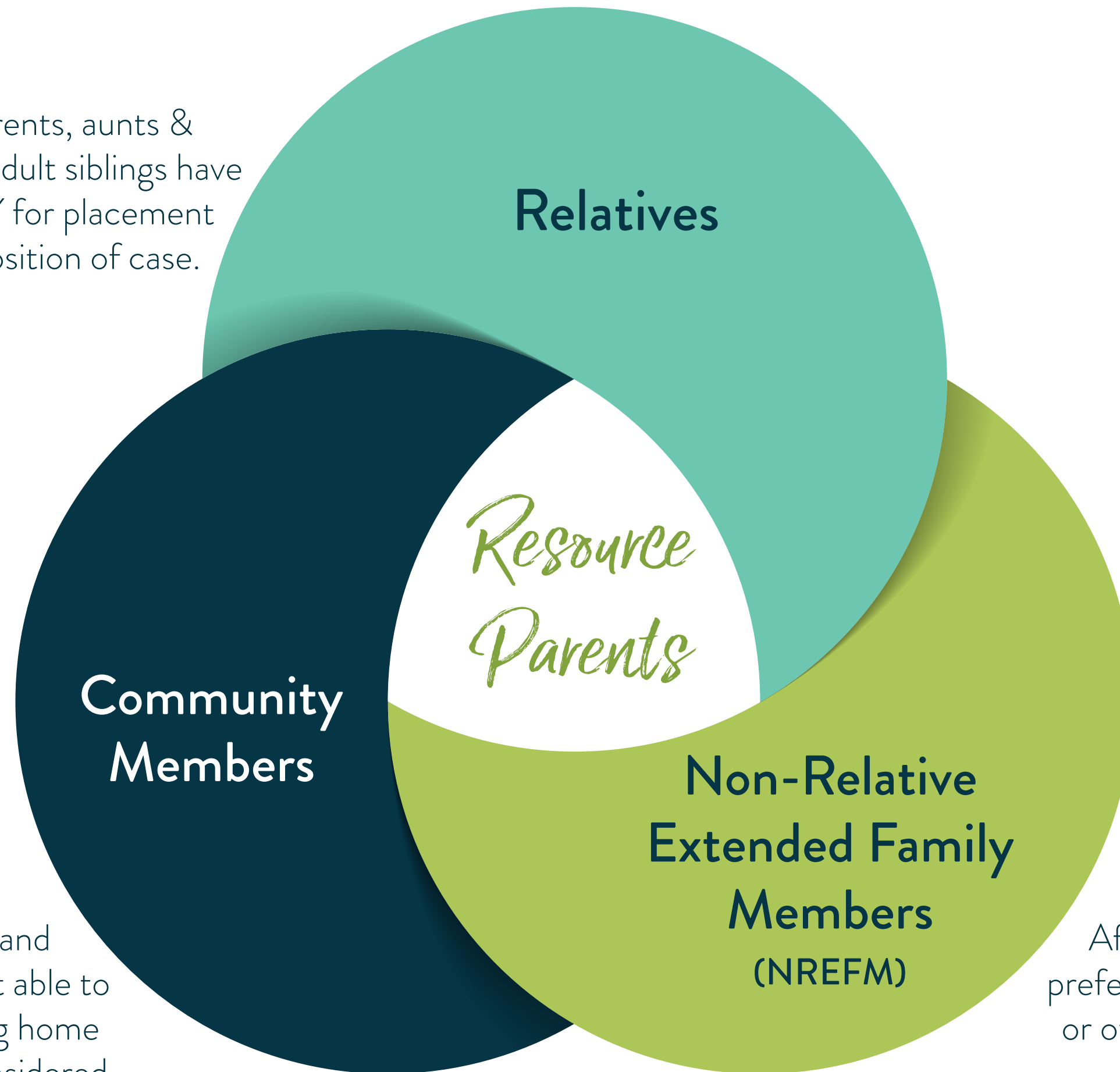
4

Who can Foster or Adopt?

- Single or Married
- All races, ethnicities, ages or gender identities
- Related or unrelated



Who can become Resource Parents?



Grandparents, aunts & uncles, and adult siblings have **PRIORITY** for placement until disposition of case.

If placement with relative or family friend is not possible, the goal is for the children to maintain contact with family if possible. The Department attempts to place with relatives first!

Any caring and consistent adult able to provide a loving home can may be considered as a resource parent.

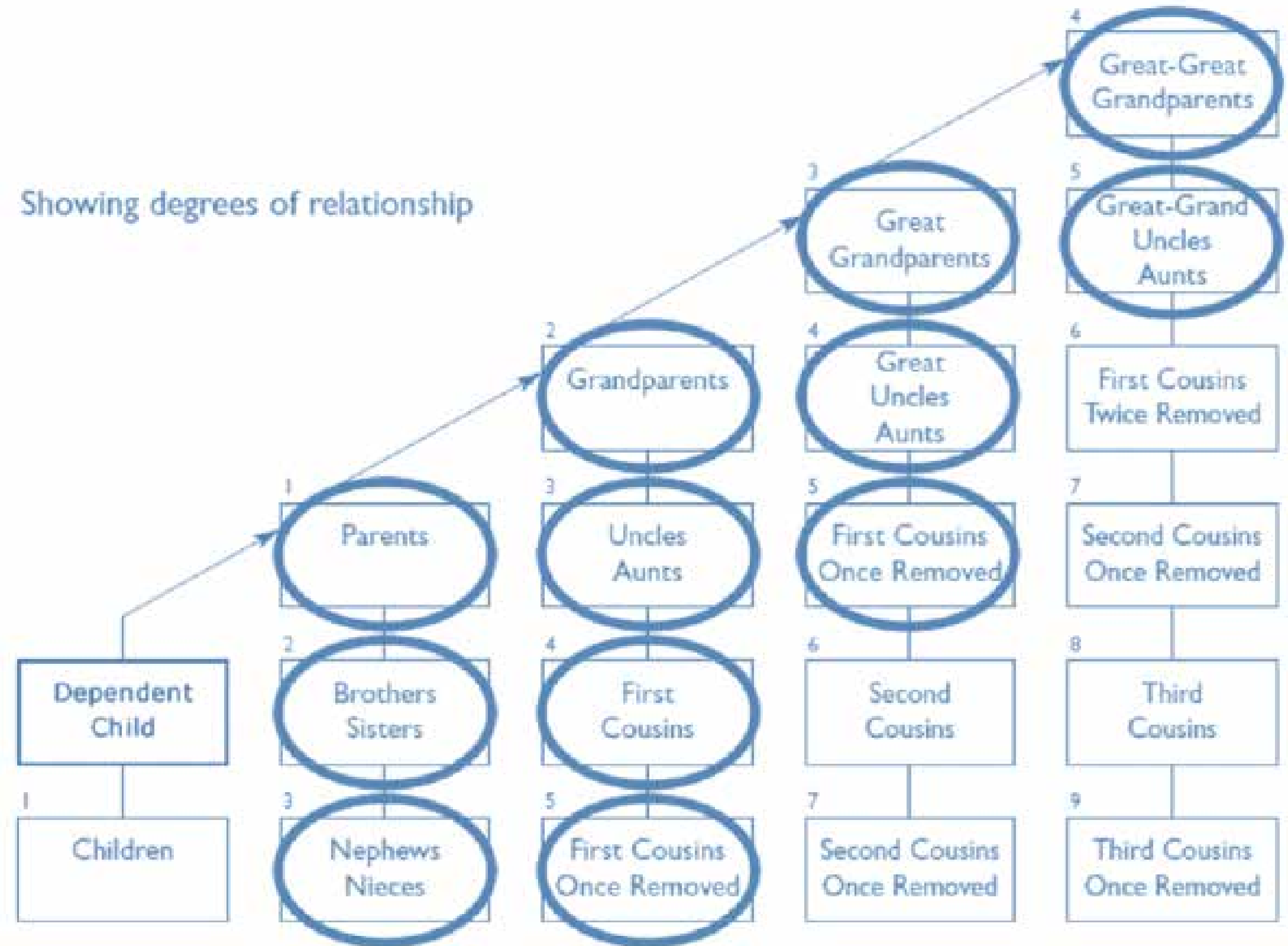
After these relatives, the preference is for family friends or others that the child has a relationship with.

What about Relatives?

The Department attempts to place with relatives with the 5th degree first.



Showing degrees of relationship



Roles of Resource Parents and Agencies

- Resource Parent
- Child Protective Services (CPS) Social Worker
- Juvenile Probation Officer
- Resource Family Approval Social Worker



What is the role of a Resource Parent?

- Provide safe loving homes
- Commit to development and success of children and families
 - Help child/youth cope with trauma of abuse and separation from his/her home
 - Mentor the child's birth parents when possible and appropriate
- Maintain a lifelong connection to children whenever possible
 - When in a child's best interest
 - Encourage and support visits with birth family
 - Even after adoption is finalized





What is the role of a Resource Parent?

- Encourage reunification with parents/guardians
- Be ready to provide a permanent family when reunification is not successful
- Give children/youth a safe, stable and nurturing environment
- Encourage and supervise school participation & attendance



What is the role of a CPS Social Worker (SW) and Juvenile Probation Officer (PO)?

Each child is assigned a CPS SW or PO depending on why they were brought into care.

- What does a SW or PO do:
 - Arrange and make placement decisions
 - Monitor a child in foster care
 - Provide case management for the child and family
 - Makes unannounced home visits



What is the role of a Resource Family Approval Social Worker (RFA SW)?

Each Resource Family has an RFA Social Worker who:

- Processes applications
- Completes background checks on families
- Completes Home and Grounds Inspections and Family Evaluations
- Makes approval decisions
- Monitors for compliance with state regulations
 - Includes making unannounced home visits

Types of Resource Family Homes



Specialized Care

- Mental, Physical & Behavioral Needs
- Additional training & funding may be available



Emergency Foster Care

- Immediate, short-term care, children ages 0-17 years



Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA)

- Children with tribal affiliation placed with members of the tribe



Ongoing Care

- Children, youth & sibling sets of all ages, especially older youth
- Temporary or Permanent

Resource Family Approval Comprehensive Assessment Process

From Orientation to Written Report



State of California's Written Directives for Resource Family Approval (RFA)

The RFA process improves the way caregivers (related and non-related) of children in foster care are approved and prepared to parent vulnerable children, whether temporarily or permanently.

◆ California Department of Social Services (CDSS)

- the state authority responsible for establishing and maintaining standards for resource family homes and childcare institutions.
- <http://www.cdss.ca.gov/inforesources/Resource-Family-Approval-Program>

◆ CDSS Written Directives

- Set of standards and laws in which Resource Families are approved and managed by.
- Once approved, a Resource Family is eligible to care for related and unrelated children in out-of-home placement.
- An approved Resource Family is approved for adoption or legal guardianship as well as ongoing fostering.



RFA Application Process



Paper Application:

- For applicants with emergency placement and who viewed the powerpoint online, provide your mailing address to RFAinbox@kerndhs.com
- A paper application and required forms will be mailed out to you with a self-addressed envelope.
- You can mail your signed application in the self-addressed envelope or drop it off in person at the drop box located at 3711 Columbus Avenue Bakersfield, Ca 93306.
- Once an application is completed and received you will be assigned a Resource Family Approval Social Worker.

RESOURCE FAMILY APPLICATION

County Use Only

County: _____

Instructions: This is an application for Resource Family Approval by a County. Please type or print clearly.

☐ Application ☐ Other (Specify): _____

Were you referred to the RFA program by a Tribe? ☐ Yes ☐ No

If "Yes," provide name of the Tribe and contact information if known: _____

I. APPLICANT(S): EACH APPLICANT MUST COMPLETE A CRIMINAL RECORD STATEMENT RFA 01B.

First	Middle	Last	
Applicant One (Legal Name):			
Preferred/Chosen Name:			
Previous Name Used: <i>*including maiden name</i>		Highest Level of Education Completed	
Date of Birth	Gender	Race/Ethnicity	Driver's License Number
Tribal Affiliation			
<input type="checkbox"/> Member <input type="checkbox"/> Descendant			
Name of Tribe:			
Email Address (Optional)		Cell Phone Number	Home Phone Number
Name/Address of Employer	Work Phone Number	Occupation	Annual Income

Resource Family Application Process

Kern County uses the eAdopt web based system

- Online application process
- Assigned via email
- Assigned to an RFA social worker who will assist you through the process

Options for assistance:

- If no computer, or internet access, your assigned RFA social worker will assist you with the process
- A worker of the day is also available to help with the application



E-Adopt web-based system:

For additional information please contact your
Resource Family Social Service Worker

- Provide your e-mail address during the Orientation
- You will be emailed a temporary password
- Create your profile
- Complete the application
- State requires an original signature on the application
- Follow your application progress online
- If no computer access, a paper copy will be made available, or a computer kiosk is available at Columbus Center
- If you have any questions you can call 661-873-2800.
- Printing forms at your convenience. (i.e. LiveScans, Health Questionnaire etc.)
- Scanning and uploading all required documents (i.e. Picture ID, income verification, etc.)
- View important documents (i.e. Home Health & Safety Assessment etc.)
- Have access to documents that can be useful (i.e. Tips on how to prepare for your home assessment)
- Receive important emails regarding your application status and reminders of yearly trainings.



Resource Family Application Process

Online or Paper Application:

- For applicants who have emergency placement AND have viewed the powerpoint online, provide your email address to RFAinbox@kerndhs.com after completing the online orientation.
- You will receive a link to access and set up your personal account in eAdopt. You have 48 hours to access the link before it expires. You may have your password re-sent by asking your RFA Worker or email RFAinbox@kerndhs.com.
- Complete and submit an online application. A Social Worker will be assigned to further assist with your application.
- Email RFAinbox@kerndhs.com to request a paper application.



Steps to Complete the Resource Family Approval Application Process

STEP 1: Attend an Orientation Class

- For Relative or Non-Related Extended Family Member (NREFM) applicants with a foster child currently placed in your care (Emergency Placement), you can view the orientation online at <https://www.kcdhs.org/services/resource-foster-families/orientation-training/orientation-online>
- For Relative, NREFM, and Community applicants who do not currently have a foster child in your care, please register at **(661) 631-6204** to attend an in-person class.

STEP 2: Complete Forms

- An online eAdopt Account will be set up for you to create your profile and begin completing the necessary forms. Paper copies can also be requested.
- NOTE: An RFA Social Worker is only assigned when there is a completed application on file or when a foster child is placed in your home prior to approval.
- If you need assistance, call **(661) 873-2800** and ask for the RFA Worker of the Day, or visit the Columbus Center office at 3711 Columbus Street between 7:30 am — 4:00 pm.

STEP 3: Background Clearances

- Live Scan (fingerprint) all adults in the home & those adults who are regularly present. Call **(661) 631-6879** to schedule an appointment.
- NOTE: A completed application must be on file prior to scheduling a Live Scan appointment.
- *Important Note: Complete live scans within 10 days from the date of application or within 5 business days from the date Emergency Placement took place.

STEP 4

- Stay in contact with your RFA Social Worker as they will guide you through the rest of the RFA process & provide any additional forms.
- If you do not know who your RFA Social Worker is, please call **(661) 873-2800** and ask for the RFA Worker of the Day.

STEP 5: Complete 12 hours of Pre-Service Training & CPR

- Bakersfield College FKCE Program **(661) 395-4991**
- CPR/First Aid **(661) 319-1836**
- Alternative training options are available under certain circumstances. Please consult your RFA Social Worker.

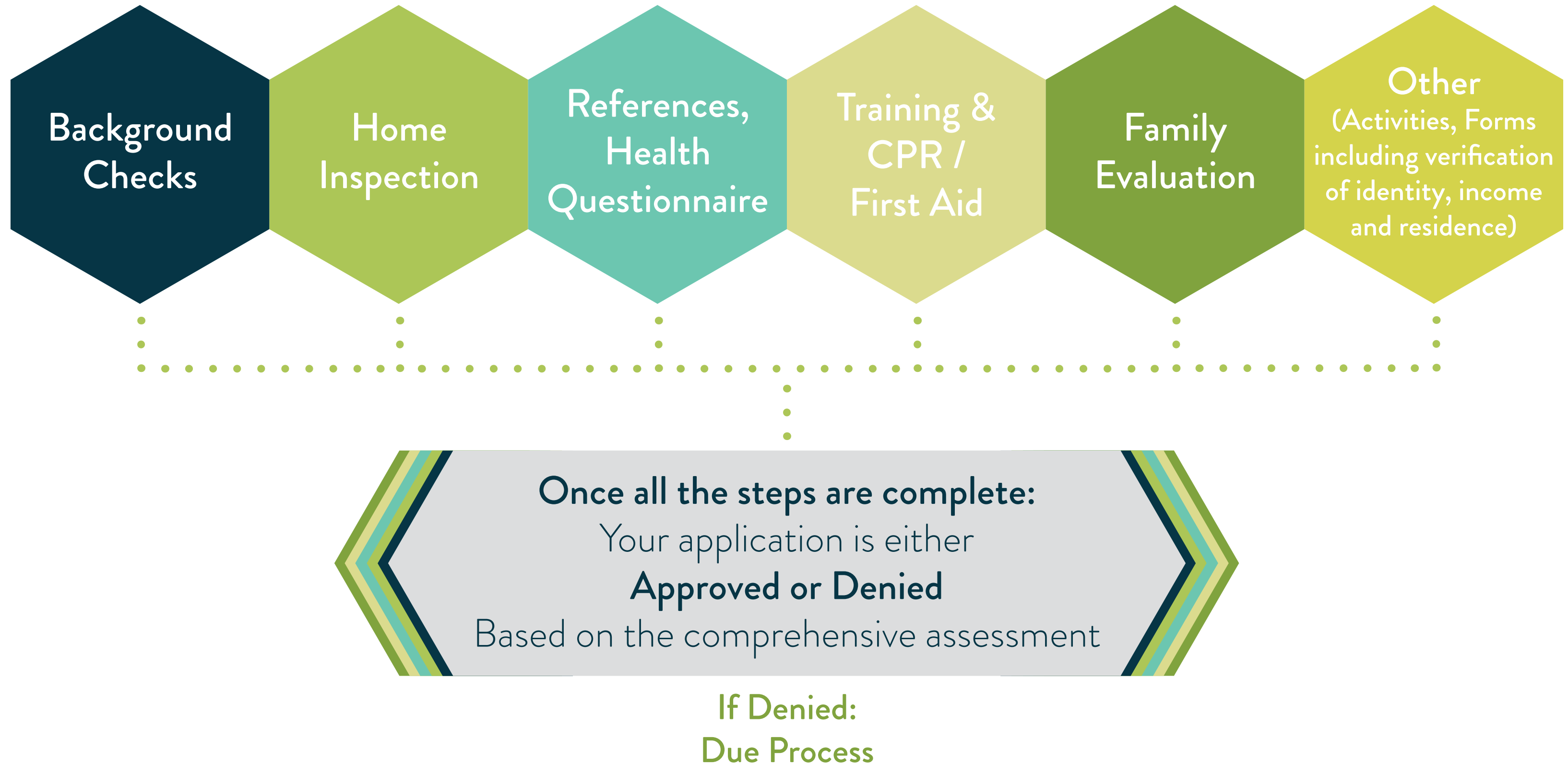
ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

- Your assigned RFA Social Worker will contact you to schedule a home inspection once all background clearances are complete.
- Note: If Emergency Placement took place, a home inspection will be scheduled within 5 business days from the placement date.
- Two in-person Family Evaluation interviews will be scheduled once all background and home inspections clear.
- The approval timeline is 90 days; however, it can vary depending on different factors. Your cooperation in meeting this timeline is essential, especially for Emergency Placement applicants, to prevent placement disruption or reimbursement interruption.
- PLEASE NOTE: Being an approved resource family does not guarantee the placement of a child in your home. The child's primary Social Worker will consider the best interests of the child before making a decision.

Resource Family Approval (RFA)
3711 Columbus St. Bakersfield, CA 93306
Office: (661) 873-2800
Email: RFainbox@kerndhs.com



Comprehensive Assessment includes:



Background Checks

The Resource Family Approval “RFA Background Assessment Guide” is available as a resource for the RFA background check procedures.

<http://www.cdss.ca.gov/inforesources/Resource-Family-Approval-Program>

Background Check Process:

- ◆ All adults (18 years and older) residing, or regularly present, in the home must complete a background check.
- ◆ A review of an individual’s state and federal criminal record information will be completed.
- ◆ All substantiated allegations of child abuse and severe neglect listed on the Child Abuse Central Index (CACI) will be reviewed and assessed.
- ◆ All adults residing or regularly present in the home that have lived in another state within the last five years will be required to complete an Adam Walsh clearance.
 - Additional Clearances:
 - CPS Clearance, Megan’s Law registered sex offender clearance, Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) check for an applicant or any adult residing in the home.
- ◆ Clearance of prior licensing history and criminal record exemption denial or rescissions maintained by other agencies.
- ◆ Criminal Exemptions are subject to review and are granted or denied.

Home Inspection

Preparing for your Home Inspection



Child Proof your Home

- Install safety devices
- Prevent access to dangerous items



First Aid Kits

- First Aid Kit
- First Aid Manual



Pet Recommendations

- Vaccinations
- License

Home Inspection

The home health and safety inspection is a health and safety assessment of the home, grounds, outdoor activity space, and storage areas. In addition, a review of the applicant's ability to care for and supervise children.

The home inspection consists of but is not limited to:

- Living area (fireplace/heater, carpets, and furniture clean and in good repair)
- Bedrooms (linens, lighting, furniture, closet/drawer space)
- Kitchen area (food, knives, cleaning supplies)
- Bathrooms (safe, clean, & operating)
- Yard (free from hazards & debris)
- Guns/weapons & ammunition (safely stored)
- Pool/bodies of water (made inaccessible)
- Capacity is limited to 6 children in the home including adopted, biological, guardianship, and children of a Non-Minor Dependents (18 years - 21 years old)
- Capacity will be determined by your RFA social worker in consultation with you

Home Inspection

To help you prepare for the Home Inspection...

The following slides provide:

- ◆ Examples of homes ready for inspection.
- ◆ Examples of homes with hazards to a child's health/safety.



Is your home
clean, safe,
sanitary, and in
good repair?



Think Safety!
Are there unsafe items
in child's reach? Are the
counters & tables too
cluttered to clean or use?

Acceptable vs. Not Acceptable



Not Acceptable

Blocked door, items hanging or stored in child's reach.



Acceptable

Clean/safe access to sports items and recycling.

What should a prospective child's bedroom have?

Applicant(s) shall ensure each child has sufficient storage space.

Applicant(s) should ensure that each prospective child's bedroom has an operable window or door that ensures a safe, direct emergency exit to the outside.

Applicant(s) shall ensure there is appropriate bedding for each individual child.



How to store cleaning solutions, poisons, and dangerous weapons?



- Resource Families shall ensure that all poisons such as pesticides, paint products, antifreeze and other dangerous items are stored in a locked storage area or out of the child's reach.
- All Household items such as knives, medications, and cleaning solutions should only be accessible to children if age appropriate and monitored.
- Resource Families shall ensure that firearms, ammo and other dangerous weapons are stored in locked container such as lock box or gun safe.
- Note: In lieu of Locked storage resource families may use trigger locks or cable locks as described in penal code section 16860.

Home Inspection

What about the outdoor activity space?

Resource families & applicant(s) shall ensure that the yard or outdoor activity spaces are free from hazards that may endanger the health and safety of a child or NMD.



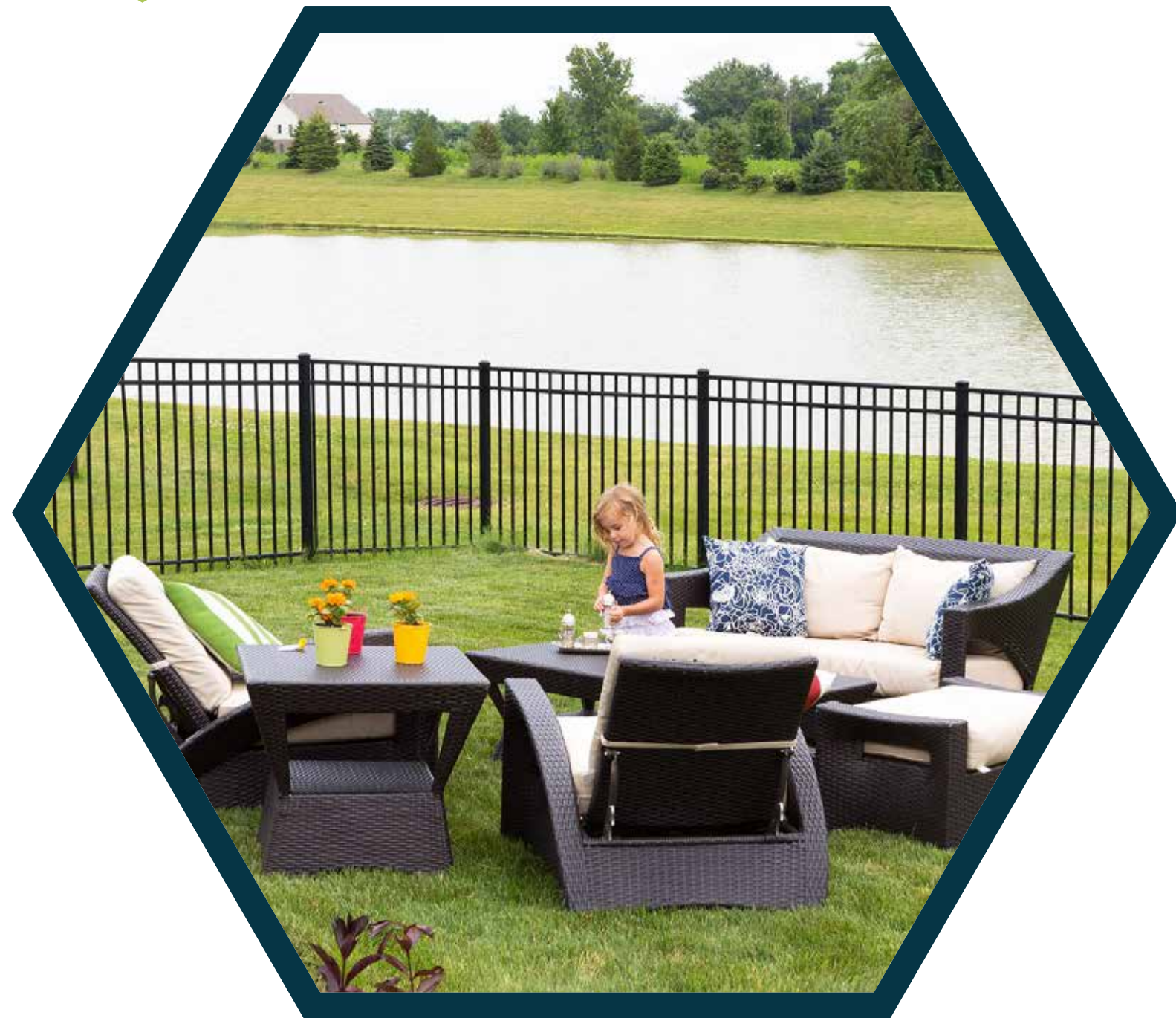
What are the safety regulations for swimming pools?



- Resource families or applicant(s) shall ensure that swimming pools, fixed-in-place wading pools, hot tubs, spas, and similar bodies of water are secured and inaccessible to: Children under 10 years of age; a child/NMD and parents of a child/NMD who is developmentally, mentally or physically disabled. Reasonable and Prudent Parent Standard shall be taken into consideration as well.
- Resource families or applicant(s) shall ensure pool safety using of the following:
 - Pool enclosure (5 foot fences)
 - Certified Safety pool cover. (All pool enclosures and covers are subject to health and safety codes 115921,115922,115923.)
- Note: Exit alarms may only be used if it is not structurally possible to use an enclosure or cover.

Pool Fences must be 5ft or 60in. tall

What about ponds, creeks, or fountains?



- Resource families or applicant(s) shall ensure secure and creeks, ponds, fountains, lakes etc. using of the following:
 - Enclosure or cover
 - Certified Safety pool cover. (All pool enclosures and covers are subject to health and safety codes 115921,115922,115923.)
- A resource family shall apply the reasonable and parent prudent standard, as set forth in Written Directive section 11-12, when securing any body of water and the level of access a child has to it.
- Note: Exit alarms may only be used if it is not structurally possible to use an enclosure or cover.

References

The application requirements consists of but are not limited to:

◆ 2-3 Reference Letters

- Of your good character and ability to provide a safe environment.
- From a co-worker, neighbor and close friends (cannot be someone in the same household).
- We will contact your references by phone, mail and/or email.

Note: Criminal exemptions will require 3 reference letters.



Health Questionnaire

The application requirements consists of but are not limited to:

◆ Health Questionnaire

- Each applicant must submit a Health Questionnaire that includes the applicant's medical history and medications.
- ◆ As deemed necessary, the county reserves the right to require an applicant to complete a health screening from a health professional to verify the applicant is in good physical health.



Training & CPR / First Aid

Each applicant needs to complete a minimum of 12 hours of pre-approval training prior to becoming an approved Resource Family.

The training requirements consists of but are not limited to:

◆ Pre-Approval Training

- 12 Hour Course- Certificate provided upon completion
 - In-person and on-line options
 - Mandated Reporter Training included
 - Call 661-395-4991 to sign-up
 - Free Annual Training (8 hours required annually)

◆ CPR and First Aid Training

- CPR/First Aid must be completed within 90 days of RFA Approval
 - Required to be renewed every 2 years for approved homes/families
 - Call 661-319-1836 to sign-up

Family Evaluation

If an applicant refuses to participate in an interview, the County shall deny the application.

The application requirements consist of but are not limited to:

- **A minimum of 2 in-person interviews with applicants (Most often in the home):**
 - One individual interview with each applicant
 - One joint interview with both applicants (if applicable)
 - A minimum of one separate face to face interview with all other persons residing in the home. (Example: other adults and children).
 - These conversations allow for more thoughtful matches of children and families.

Permanency Assessment

May include Health Screening,
marriage certificate, and
divorce decree

The application requirements consist of but are not limited to:

- Willingness and suitability to provide permanency (foster, adoption, legal guardianship) to a child or non-minor dependent at the time of undergoing RFA process.
- Please note: While RFA includes a general permanency assessment, when a specific child's case goes to adoptions, there may be additional requirements to assess suitability as a prospective adoptive parent for that child. You may collect the documents below and provide them to the RFA social worker for future use in an adoption.

Written Reports

The application requirements consists of but are not limited to:

◆ Final Written Reports

- Summary and analysis of the comprehensive assessment and a determination of applicant's capacity to foster.
- Agency and applicant receive a copy.
- Provides approval or denial of application.



Approved or Denied

Based on the comprehensive assessment, your application is either approved or denied.

Approved

- Approval is not automatically granted.
 - An applicant's comprehensive assessment must meet Written Directives to be approved.
- **Receiving approval does not guarantee a child will be placed in your home.**
 - A child's social worker or probation officer makes placement decisions.
 - Placement decisions are made in the child's best interests.
 - Application process times vary.
 - Emergency placements follow a stricter timeline due to California State Requirements.



Approved or Denied

Based on the comprehensive assessment, your application is either approved or denied.

◆ Denied

- **If Your Application is Denied:**

- You will receive a notice of action and instructions for appealing the decision, also known as Due Process.
 - Due Process is when a Resource Parent, applicant, or individual receives a:
 - Notice of denial or rescission of approval
 - Notice of exemption denial or rescission
 - Notice of exclusion, that person may appeal the decision by requesting a state hearing.
- If the decision is not appealed on or before the due date as described in the notice of action, the action will be final.

- **Reasons to deny may include, but are not limited to:**


- Inability to cooperate or failure to meet requirements.
- Non-exemptible criminal record or child abuse allegations of a serious nature.
- Home did not meet Buildings & Grounds standards, per RFA Written Directives and Health & Safety Codes.



Funding Benefits

- **Emergency Caregiver Funding:** Temporary Emergency Assistance is available for relatives that are caring for relative children on an emergency or compelling reason placement while going through the RFA Process.
- **Foster Care** funding is reimbursement provided to a caregiver on a monthly basis to care for a child placed in a resource home. Medi-Cal is available.
- **Approved Relative Caregiver Funding Option** is a program for approved relative caregivers with whom an eligible child is placed that will be able to receive a payment equal to the basic foster care rate. Medi-Cal is available.
- **Adoption Assistance Program (AAP)** Payments provides financial and other supports to help adoptive families meet the basic and unique needs of children in care, including Medi-Cal and monthly payments until age 18. In some circumstances, if the youth have a disability, the AAP payments and Medi-Cal may continue to age 21.
- **Kinship Guardianship Assistance Payment (Kin-GAP)** Program offers financial assistance and Medi-Cal for a child who is placed with an approved relative legal guardian. The payment cannot exceed the amount the child would have received if he/she remained in foster care.

For funding to care for a specific child, please speak to the child's assigned social worker/primary worker.



Adoption Process

At any point in time there are more Resource Families interested in pursuing adoption than the number of children in foster care in need of adoption.



Adoption Process

Adoption Court Process:

- **Disposition or Reunification Review Hearing**
 - Court terminates REUNIFICATION SERVICES to Parents
 - Sets Selection and Implementation 366.26 Hearing within 120 Days
- **120 Day Child Assessment**
 - Prior to 366.26 hearing, Adoption social worker determines child's best interests for permanency (adoption, guardianship, or another planned permanent living arrangement)
 - Visitation with parents continues
 - Court report supports recommendation to terminate parental rights and identifies prospective adoptive parent or legal guardian
- **Selection and Implementation 366.26 Hearing (Adoption/Guardianship)**
 - Court terminates PARENTAL RIGHTS & visitation (for adoption cases)
 - Court orders legal guardianship to be established and case is closed
 - Parents may appeal within 60 days

Adoption Process

Adoption Court Process:

- **Post Permanency Review every 6 months**
 - Court continues dependency & services until adoption is finalized
 - Placement and child's needs are monitored
- **Adoption is Finalized**
 - Court dependency is terminated, and the case is closed
- **Caregiver requirements needed to finalize adoption**
 - Must be at least 10 years older than child (exceptions)
 - Must provide verification of all marriages & dissolutions
 - Must address child support, inheritance issues, etc.
 - Must address plan for post-adoption sibling visitation, if applicable
- **Adoption Services for Caregivers**
 - Pre-adoption/post adoption services are available
 - Including Adoption Assistance Program assistance, and Medi-Cal, until the child is 18 (or up to age 21 if certain conditions are met)
 - Social Worker remains assigned
 - Counseling, case management, and support groups are available

Adoption Process

Finalization Process

- All of children's records are given to adopting parents
- Caregiver signs adoption assistance documents
- Legal documents are signed and approved
- Child may have new legal name
- Child now has a forever home!
- You may be contacted about participation at Child Family Team Meetings if child's siblings come into care after adoption finalization



Adoption: Questions you should ask

To ensure the child coming into your home has the best possible chance of adoption, ask these questions before accepting a foster care placement:

- **Have the parents lost previous children to adoptions?**
 - Often the court will not order reunification.
 - These children usually have a greater likelihood of adoption.
- **Have relatives come forward requesting placement of the child?**
 - The Department always attempts to place with relatives initially
 - Relatives have preferential consideration if they apply for placement before the disposition hearing.
- **Did the parents claim Native American Heritage & Does ICWA apply?**
 - Agency will make ACTIVE EFFORTS to place the child with a relative or Native American family/Tribe.

Anyone only interested in adoption without fostering should look into Private Adoption Agencies which have less risks but are also costly. Feel free to contact Foster Family Agencies that may be of assistance and a good fit for your interests.

Post Approval Responsibilities

Kern County is committed to the Quality Parenting Initiative (QPI) and ensuring all children receive excellent parenting, which includes collaboration and partnerships with everyone in the child's team.



Quality Parenting Initiative



What is QPI?

- The Quality Parenting Initiative is a national movement for foster care change, made up of a network of states, counties and private agencies committed to ensuring that all children in care have excellent parenting and lasting relationships so they can thrive and grow.

QPI is Based on Three Core Principles:

1. Consistent excellent parenting and meaningful relationships are the most important services we can provide to children and youth in foster care
2. Research on child, youth and brain development and the effect of trauma not only demonstrates the importance of parenting and positive relationships but provides guidance on how best to support them.
3. The individuals most affected by policies and practices are in the best position to design and implement change so that systems ensure excellent parenting and meaningful relationships for children who enter their care.

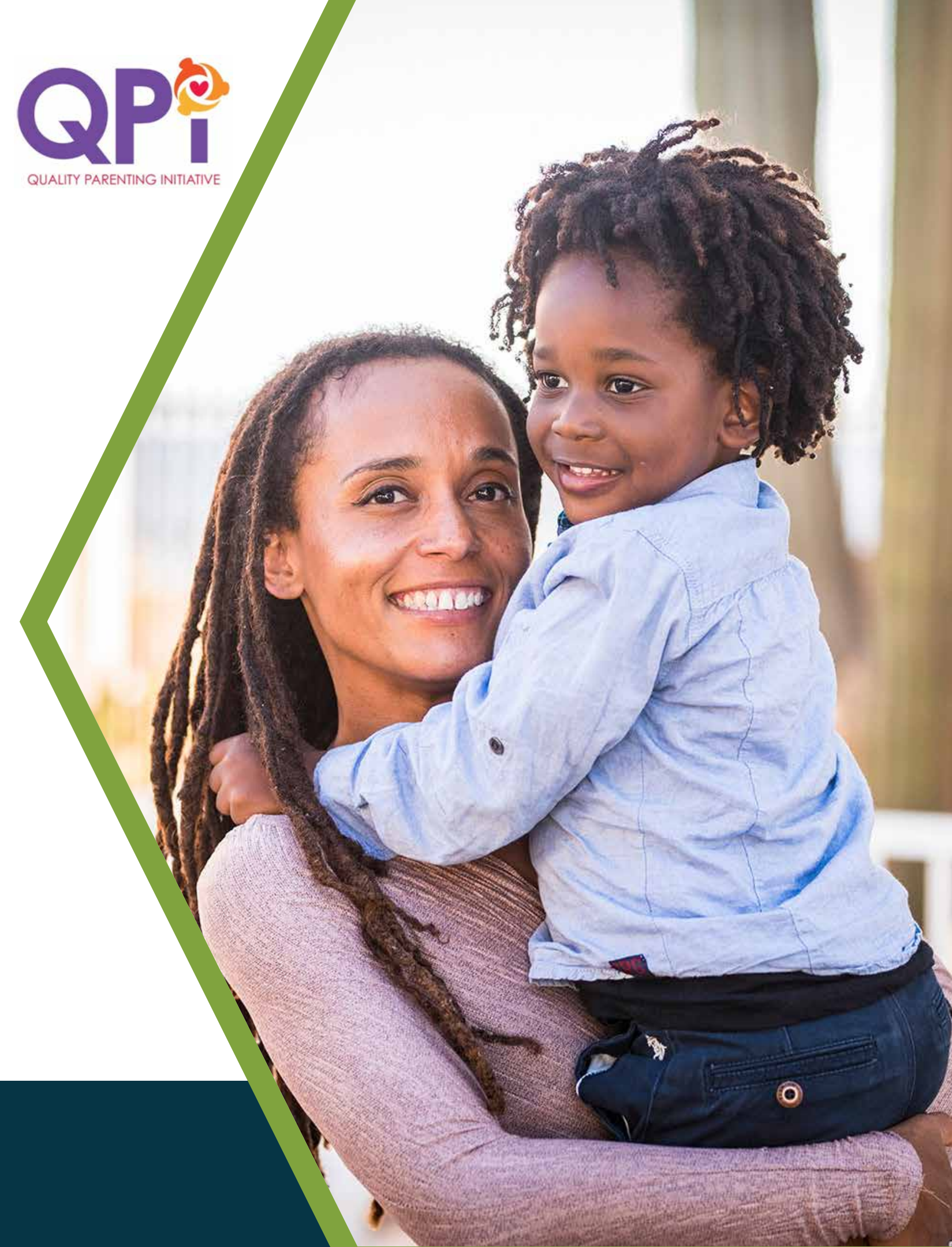


Quality Parenting Initiative



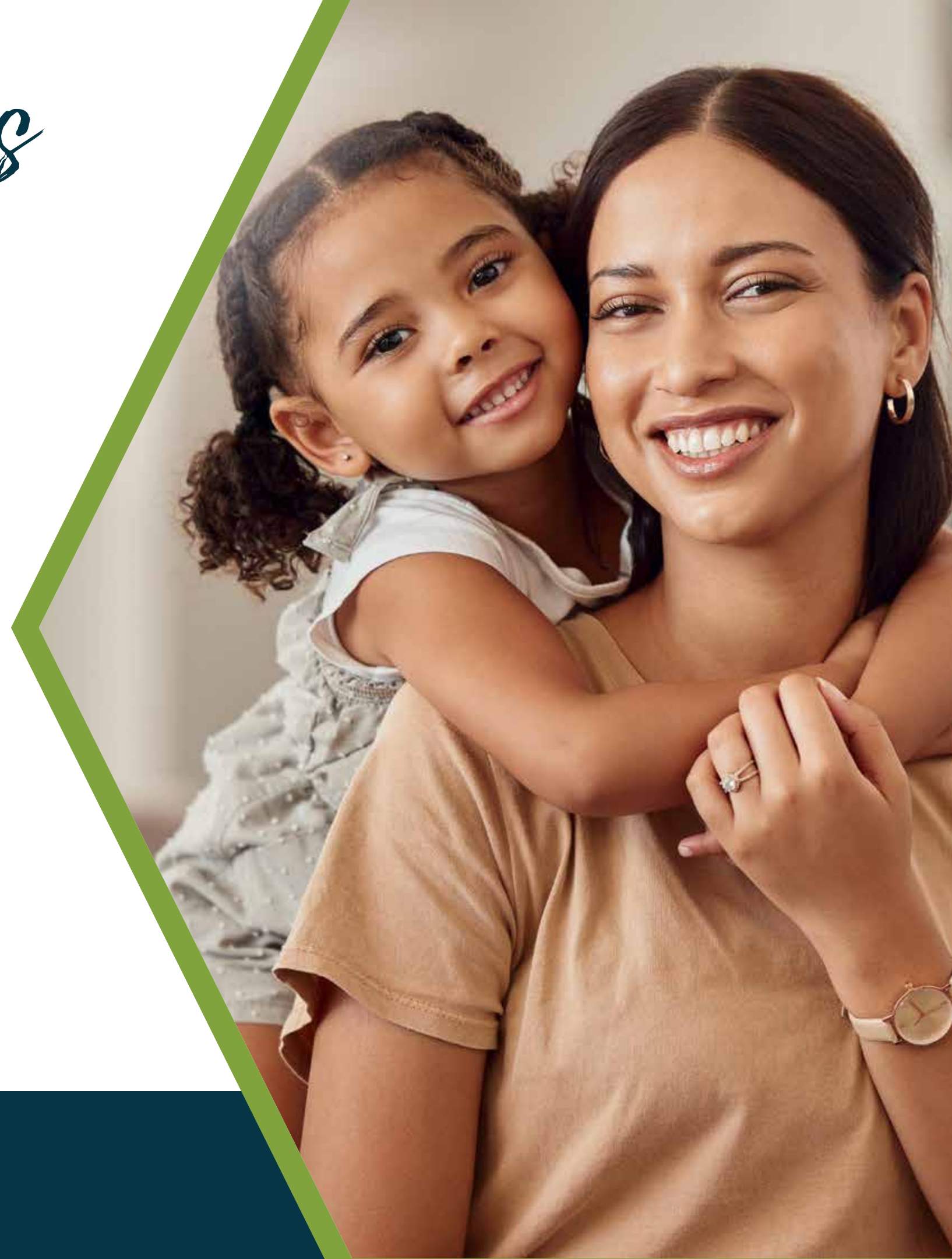
◆ What does QPI look like?

- Engaging in Comfort Calls with birth parents
- Initial contact with the foster youth's parents at the time of placement, discussing the care and support of the child. Helping to ease the stress of the child and parent being separated by establishing a foundation of communication and support. The primary social worker will assist with setting up these calls and help to mediate any challenges.
- When appropriate, encourage birth parents to be involved in appointments for the child, events at school and other important milestones.
- Advocating for the youth and birth family at Child & Family Team Meetings. As a part of the child and family team, resource parents should be regularly present at these meetings and also provide their input.
- WORKING TOWARD REUNIFICATION!
- Supporting and helping to maintain a healthy productive relationship with birth families.



Post Approval Responsibilities

- You may ask the child/NMD's social worker for a "My Journey" binder for each child/NMD placed in your home.
- **Comfort Calls**
 - Per Welfare and Institutions Code Section 308(a) the bio-parents SHALL be given a phone number the child can be reached at.
 - The phone number listed as your primary contact will be provided, unless you provide an alternate.
 - Goal: To make a connection and work as part of the same team for the child.
 - Ask about child's medical needs, allergies, favorite foods, routines, favorite shows, nicknames, etc...



Post Approval Responsibilities

◆ Biennial Updates:

- Approved Resource Families are assessed every 24 months.
- Your ongoing RFA Social Worker will schedule::
 - Home environment check
 - Annual Training Completed
 - RFA Written Report update

◆ Other Updates: Relocation or New Person in the home

- Always notify RFA Social Worker AND Placement Social Worker when planning to move and provide new address.
- Home inspection must be approved in advance, and no more than 30 days from date of address change, or funding may be terminated.
- Always notify RFA Social Worker of any significant changes in your home such as: Someone moving in or moving out.

***Assigned Social Workers are subject to change**



Post Approval Responsibilities

◆ Post Approval Training

- 8 hours annually (online, virtual and in-person)
- CPR & First Aid (every 2 years)

◆ Resource Parent must report:

- Injury or illness requiring emergency medical attention or hospitalization
- Report any suspected child abuse/neglect (661-631-6011)
- ANY unusual incident or absence (including runaway)
 - Contact RFA social worker AND
 - Contact child's primary social worker



Post Approval Responsibilities



General Requirements

- Ensure children receive ongoing medical, dental and educational services
- Maintain first aid supplies
- Maintain children's records and keep confidential
- **Provide two telephone numbers and, if available, two email addresses for 24-hour contact. Telephone service must be working at all times:**
 - Can be cellular, internet, or landline
 - Shall be accessible to a child/NMD unless prohibited by court order (reasonable restrictions must be approved by the placement worker)
- **Post emergency telephone numbers in a prominent location in the home**
- **Maintain a hard copy emergency binder in the home containing**
 - Child/NMD's information, including, name, date of birth and any medical conditions.
 - As applicable, a child/NMD's current health care and mental health care providers names and contact information, including 24-hour contact numbers.
 - Contact information for the child/NMD's social worker and placement agency.
 - 24-hour contact information for the county child welfare agency or probation department.

Post Approval Responsibilities

Personal Rights of Foster Children

- A Resource Parent shall ensure that each child is accorded the following personal rights:
 - Safe, healthful and comfortable accommodations
 - Independence appropriate to the child's age, maturity and capability
 - Free from corporal or unusual punishment
 - Unless prohibited by a court order, or placement agency, a child may acquire, possess and use their own cell phone



Post Approval Responsibilities

ABSOLUTELY NO CORPORAL PUNISHMENT!

- Spanking another parent's child is physical assault!
- Foster children have suffered physical and emotional abuse, spanking repeats the abuse!
- No corporal punishment of birth child in front of foster child.

PROHIBITED:

- Spanking
- Hitting
- Slapping
- Hair pulling
- Pinching
- Kicking, etc.



Post Approval Responsibilities

Discipline is necessary!

- Consider other approved strategies:
 - Time out
 - Remove Privileges
 - Positive Discipline
 - Behavioral Management
 - Counseling – Whole Family



Post Approval Responsibilities

Extra-Curricular Activities

- Provide opportunities for and encourage a child's participation in group sports, clubs, school activities, etc.
 - Include your foster child in family vacations and weekend trips
 - Create a Life Book
 - Scrapbook a child's stories, photos, artwork
 - Encourage journaling
 - Allow your foster child to dream!



Post Approval Responsibilities

Occasional Short-Term Babysitter

- Resource parent may arrange for the occasional use of a short-term babysitter (less than 24 hours at a time).
 - For care exceeding 24 hours at a time:
 - On an occasional basis only
 - Caregiver must be 18 or older
 - Cannot exceed 72 hours without social worker or probation officer approval
 - Respite care, temporary care of the child in another home, can occasionally be provided but must be approved, in advance, by the child's social worker or probation officer.



Post Approval Responsibilities

Resource parents are held to the “Reasonable and prudent parent standard”.

- Making sensible decisions that protect the child while at the same time encouraging their emotional and developmental growth.
- Encourages considering the best interest of the child at all times.
- In making decisions about the child consider the following:
 - Age, maturity, and developmental level of a child.
 - Nature and inherent risks of harm of the activity.
 - Best interests of a child based on information about the child such as their developmental level or behavioral tendencies.



Post Approval Responsibilities

A County shall monitor Resource Families as follows:

- Conduct biennial updates and be available to answer questions or address concerns.
- Investigate complaints against, or made by, a Resource Family.
- When needed, work with a Resource Family to develop plans to correct identified concerns.
- Ensure Resource Families are treated with dignity and respect.



Post Approval Responsibilities

Approval may be rescinded for:

- False or misleading statements to maintain approval
- Violation of any applicable law or the Written Directives
- Conduct threatening the health and safety of child/NMD
- Using Child/Youth/NMD funds/property/services for personal benefit or in a way not consistent with the child's best interests

If your approval is rescinded:

- You will receive a notice of action and instructions for appealing the decision.
- If the decision is not appealed on, or before, the due date as described in the notice of action, the action will be final.

If your approval is rescinded, you will have an opportunity to appeal the decision.



Post Approval Responsibilities

If this seems overwhelming, we are here to help you!

RFA staff are available to answer your questions and help you access eAdopt on a visitor computer.

- Call (661) 873-2800 to ask for the RFA worker of the day.
- Call ahead before visiting the Columbus Center at 3711 Columbus St. Bakersfield, CA 93306



Our Children Are All Unique!

Siblings want to stay together, to reside in the same resource family.

Children with medical needs require specialized care.

Older children & youth need permanent families as much as younger children!

Juvenile Probation youth need support!

Thank you for attending Resource Family Orientation!

