The Annie E. Casey Foundation

Family *to* **Family** **Initiative**

Our Work

1. **Principles**	*What We Believe*
2. **Outcomes**	*Results We Are Seeking*
3. **Goals**	*What We Intend to Do*
4. **Strategies**	*How We Achieve Our Goals*

1. Principles and Values

We believe that . . .

- A child's safety is paramount.

- Children belong in families.

- Families need strong communities.

- Public child-welfare systems need partnerships with the community and with other systems to achieve strong outcomes for children. ▪

2. Outcomes for Children

We are committed to improving results for children and families in the child welfare system, with an emphasis on safety, stability, permanence, and well-being and includes . . .

- Reducing the number and rate of children placed away from their birth families.

- Among children coming into foster care, increasing the number and rate at which children are placed in their own neighborhoods or communities.

- Reducing the number of children served in institutional and group care and shifting resources from institutional and group care to kinship care, family foster care, and family-centered services.

- Decreasing lengths of stay of children in placement.

- Increasing the number and rate of children reunified with their birth families.

- Decreasing the number and rate of children re-entering placement.

- Reducing the number of placement moves children in care experience.

- Increasing the number and rate of brothers and sisters placed together.

- Reducing any disparities associated with race/ethnicity, gender, or age in each of these outcomes. ▪

3.   Goals for the Child Welfare System

To achieve these results, we are committed to the following changes in the child welfare system:

- Developing a network of family foster care that is focused on safety, neighborhood-based, culturally sensitive, and located primarily in communities in which children currently live.

- Ensuring that all children who come into foster care, including teens and brother-and-sister groups, are routinely placed with families.

- Increasing the number and quality of foster and kinship families to meet projected needs.

- Providing the services birth families and children need in a timely enough manner that they can be safely reunited as soon as possible.

- Screening children being considered for removal from home to determine what help their family needs to keep them safe, to make that help available when it is most needed, and to better support the children who must be placed.

- Involving birth parents, foster parents, and kinship families as team members with our agency and with one another.

- Becoming a neighborhood resource for children and families by investing in the capacity of communities where large numbers of families involved in the child welfare system live. ▪

4.   Strategies in Our Work

To achieve these changes in the child welfare system, we are committed to implementing four core strategies:

- **Recruiting, Developing, and Supporting Resource Families.** Finding and maintaining foster and kinship families who can support children and families in their own neighborhoods.

- **Building Community Partnerships.** Establishing relationships with a wide range of community organizations in neighborhoods where referral rates to the child welfare system are high and collaborating to create an environment that supports families involved in the child welfare system.

- **Making Decisions as a Team.** Involving not just foster parents and caseworkers but also youth, birth families and community members in all placement decisions to ensure a network of support for the children and for the adults who care for them.

- **Evaluating Results.** Collecting and using hard data about child and family outcomes to find out where we are making progress and to show where we need to change. ▪