



ARIZONA DEPARTMENT of CHILD SAFETY

January 22, 2024

DCS Specialist Roles:

A Family Engagement Specialist (FES) will be coordinating efforts to locate and reach out to family members/fictive kin. The goal is to assist all connections to build a supportive network for the children by sharing of information and planning for the child(ren).

- Communicate DCS plans and concerns so the FES can support the case plan goals.
- Collaborate with the FES regarding search and engagement efforts to assist in the development of a supportive network.
- Participate in any Blended Perspective Meetings, facilitated by the FES; schedule and attend the Placement Stability TDM meeting (if applicable) to assist in the decision-making process and development of a plan outlining supports leading to permanency.
- With the FES assistance, coordinate any transition efforts to a family-like setting; facilitate service referrals to in-home, community, or behavioral health services when needed; and determine with the FES and supportive network the type of follow-up contact needed and at what intervals.

Fostering Sustainable Connections

Description of Service

Fostering Sustainable Connections (FSC) seeks to improve family engagement to foster connections and support for children/youth in out-of-home care and living in group home settings. The goal is to reduce the length of stay for the children/youth in these settings while increasing family involvement in the decision-making process. Family includes those who may have a significant relationship with the child; related or fictive kin..

Four Stages of FSC:

1. Discovery and Engagement

- Family Engagement Specialist (FES) assists locating and engaging family/fictive kin through components of Kevin Campbell's Family Finding model.
- The FES works with the child/youth utilizing engagement activities that are tailored to the child/youth's age, development, and interests. The activities assist to identify family/fictive kin.
- The FES utilizes different search engines and tools to locate family/fictive kin.
- The FES shares information, as needed, to assist in building a lifelong supportive

2. Planning

- A FES facilitates discussions and meetings, when necessary, with a focus on planning for the child/youth.
- Facilitated meetings, such as a Blended Perspective Meeting (BPM), and informal discussions serve as a foundation to the family/fictive kin to determine how they can be a support to the child/youth.
- The child/youth's needs are discussed while the family/fictive kin get to know the child/youth better and become more familiarized with him/her.

3. Decision Making/Action Plan

- A Placement Stability Team Decision Making (TDM), meeting which may be requested by the DCS Specialist to make a decision that increases placement stability, ensures positive transition and identifies services and support for the child/youth and the family/fictive kin. The meeting should include a diverse group: the family, the child, friends, extended family, the out-of-home caregiver, DCS staff, service providers, community partners and others.

4. Follow-up

- A FES stays in place for a short period of time to assist DCS Specialists with ensuring formal and informal supports are in place, accessible, timely, and meeting the needs of the child/youth and family.
- A variety of in-home, behavioral health, and community services are available to support the child/youth and the family.

What to expect from FSC Provider

- There may be a waiting list. Initial contact is made within 14 days of receipt of the referral.
- The FES will meet with the youth at least two times a month for minimum of 60 minutes a visit, and attend CFT, TDM meetings, or staffing's when needed
- The FES will consult and update the DCS Specialist throughout the life of the case.
- The monthly report, fidelity tool, discharge summary, and meeting/BPM summaries are uploaded into the ADCS electronic case management system
- Discuss with the DCS Specialist how the child/youth's needs are being met during each monthly visit the FES has with the child/youth, and how the FES can assist.

Service Eligibility

Children/Youth who meet the following qualifications are eligible for Fostering Sustainable Connections:

- The child/youth is currently living in a group home, foster home or shelter setting;
- The child/youth is not living in a relative home residential treatment center, hospital, or correctional facility; and
- *The child/youth is NOT actively involved with Child-Specific Recruitment Services.*

Note: An FSC referral can be made if the child/youth's permanency goal is reunification, no parent is actively involved in reunification services, and FSC engagement activities may assist to locate and/or engage a parent.

Service Referral Process

The FSC referral (CSO-2242) is to be submitted by the child/youth's assigned DCS Specialist or Supervisor to the statewide referral email: FSC@azdcs.gov