



House Human Services Committee

Presentation on Kinship Care

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What Is Kinship Care?

Child Welfare League Definition

- Kinship care is the full time care, nurturing and protection of children by relatives, members of their tribes or clans, godparents, stepparents, or any adult who has a kinship bond with a child.

DFPS Policy

- Kinship caregivers are unlicensed caregivers whom the court has approved for a child's placement because they:
 - are related to the child by blood, marriage, or adoption; or
 - have a significant, long-standing relationship with the child's family.

Statute and Policy

Federal Law

- Title IV-E of the Social Security Act requires states to give preference to relatives who meet child protection standards over non-related caregivers when placing a child.

State Law

- The Texas Family Code requires courts to place children with the child's non-custodial parent or with a relative of the child unless placement with the non-custodial parent or a relative is not in the best interest of the child.

Agency Policy

- DFPS policy requires CPS staff to identify and locate relatives of children needing placement and assess the relative family's willingness and suitability to care for the child.

Need for Kinship Care

- Too few children are in kinship placements.

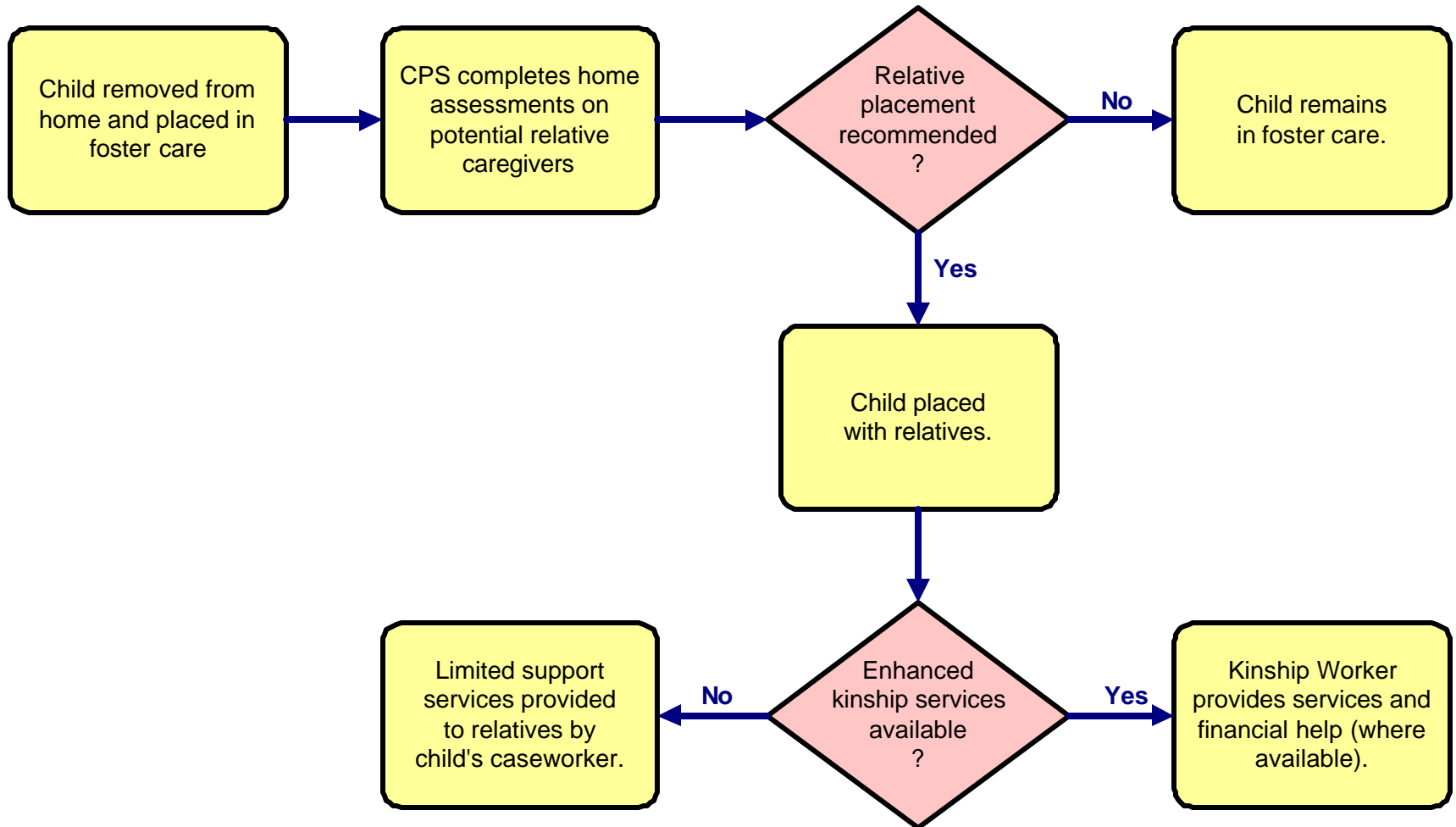
- Kinship caregivers:

- Can provide safe, nurturing homes for children
- Enable children to remain with extended family
- Reinforce children's sense of identity and positive self esteem
- Often need extra support to provide a stable placement

	FY'04
Children in paid non-relative foster care	17,239
Children in kinship care	6,136
Number of kinship caregivers	3,908
Disruption rate from kinship to foster care	18.5%

- Providing relatives with support and training increases the likelihood that children will remain in kinship care.

Kinship Care Process



Kinship Home Assessment

- Purpose: to determine the family's willingness and ability to provide for the child's:
 - Safety
 - Permanency
 - Well-being
- Components:
 - Criminal and abuse/neglect background checks
 - Reference checks
 - Kinship home assessment
 - Placement Recommendation

Kinship Program Growth

1997

- First enhanced kinship program in Texas started in San Antonio.

2003

- SERAPE (Supporting and Enhancing Relatives as Placements) started in Webb, Nueces, Hidalgo, Cameron and Willacy counties.
 - Pilot initiative approved by 78th Legislature.
 - Only kinship program to offer financial assistance in addition to other kinship support services.
 - Use of TANF funds restricts financial assistance to caregivers related through blood, marriage or adoption.

2005

- Kinship support programs are now offered in 38 counties to families participating in Family Group Decision-Making conferences.

Enhanced vs. Traditional Kinship

Enhanced Kinship

- Family Group Decision Making
- Optional training to equip families to offer kinship care
- Specialized Kinship Development Worker
- Day care
- Case management services to support family needs
- Financial support (in some areas only)
- Information and referral to community and state services

Traditional Kinship

- Case management services to kinship caregiver based on availability of child's caseworker
- Day care as funds allow
- Limited information and referral services