

# 8 Advocacy Tips to Support Placement Stability in Foster Care



Placement with kin has proved more stable and safe for many children and youth in care. **Advocate for vigorous family search efforts and for kin placement if a safe option is available.**<sup>1</sup>



Kin caregivers may struggle with the costs of providing for the children in their care. Depending on the caregiving arrangement there may be financial supports available. **Advocate for foster care financial benefits for kin.**<sup>2</sup>



Research demonstrates that children placed with siblings are more stable than those that aren't, on average.<sup>3</sup> Advocate that siblings stay together unless sibling placement is not in the child's best interest, according to the Foster Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act of 2008.<sup>4</sup>



Ask: Is the agency providing support and services that support healthy reunification? Does the proposed foster parent plan align with the child's permanency goal? **Engage with the child's team and advocate for reasonable efforts.**<sup>5</sup>



Research demonstrates that children's behavior is the most significant cause of placement disruption.<sup>6</sup> **Advocate for evidenced-based mental health services and treatment foster care, if appropriate, especially in the face of repeated disruptions.**



**Maintain regular contact with the child/client and the caregivers.** Placement breakdowns can occur because the caregiver doesn't know where to communicate their needs.<sup>7</sup> In addition, **providing caregivers voice in meetings and court appearances improves their sense of efficacy and may improve child welfare outcomes.**<sup>8</sup>



The Every Student Succeeds Act requires school stability for students in foster care when that in their best interest. Success at school supports placement stability. **Ask for a Best Interest Determination from the child's school and attend the meeting.**<sup>9</sup>



Children and youth in care often need more than stability at school; they need an opportunity to connect with peers and caring adults,<sup>10</sup> catch up on their academics,<sup>11</sup> and demonstrate non-academic skills in extracurriculars.<sup>12</sup> **Make sure the school is aware of changes at home so they can support sustained achievement.** Ask for special education support (if applicable) and general education support like "Check and Connect"<sup>13</sup> if available. Ask about strength based activities after school and how your student might benefit.



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