

## Set the Stage for Permanency

There are critical times in the life of a case when information is obtained, decisions are made, and actions take place that will impact the trajectory and, ultimately, the permanency outcome. One of these times is when children are initially entering the child welfare system. It is critical that child welfare systems obtain comprehensive information about children and their families during this time period so that a foundation is laid to:

- identify the pool of appropriate placement options (including kin and fictive kin).
- capture information that will inform the full disclosure process.
- set the tone for parental involvement.
- set the stage for concurrent planning.

Entry into care is also a critical time to identify and engage as many birth family members as possible. Birth families need to understand the process that will take place and have a clear understanding of the laws and policies that guide child welfare agencies. Birth families also need to have a voice in the case planning process along with opportunities to share critical information about their children with the foster parents entrusted to care for them.

This is also a key time to identify and engage stakeholders, both inside and outside of the child welfare system, who can surround families with supports and services that ultimately help children move toward permanency. Child welfare systems need to assess their practices and policies to determine whether they are building a strong foundation upon entry into care that will promote the achievement of permanency.