

# Family Connections Oregon: Family Finding Lessons Learned

## FCO Research Capsule #2

The information provided in this FCO Research Capsule was summarized from the JBA Year 2 Cross Site Evaluation Report for 2009 Funded Grantees (Dec 2011).

Category	Lessons Learned & Recommendations
<b>Start-Up and Planning</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Include stakeholders in early stages of planning and implementation. Gaining support at the highest levels of the public agency should be the first step.</li> <li>• Take steps to inform and prepare caseworkers and supervisors for the family-finding initiative before implementation begins. Caseworkers need to feel that their concerns were heard during the planning process.</li> <li>• Before hiring staff members, identify the skills, qualities, and competencies desired in family-finding staff members. If using a coaching model, consider coaching, mentoring, and training skills in addition to those skills related to family finding.</li> </ul>
<b>Staff Training and Supervision</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Make intensive supervision and support readily available to staff.</li> <li>• Focus training and supervision on family engagement. Training should be interactive and utilize modeling.</li> <li>• Provide training in mediation to improve family-finding staff members' abilities to work effectively with families and other service providers.</li> <li>• Provide training on attachment as well as grief and loss to help family finding staff members work through difficult issues with families.</li> <li>• Create a supportive professional network of family finding workers where they can share experiences and benefit from peer-to-peer learning.</li> </ul>
<b>Service Model</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Allow flexibility in engagement strategies, planning processes, and timelines in order to meet the diverse needs of children and families.</li> <li>• Conduct consistent and frequent family meetings to build a supportive system for the child.</li> <li>• Maintain a commitment to manageable caseloads for family-finding workers in order to maintain the quality of services provided.</li> <li>• To avoid placement disruptions, allow time for relationships to develop and supports to be put in place before placing a child in a relative's home.</li> <li>• Address existing agency mandates, expectations, and timelines that conflict with family-finding goals.</li> </ul>

