

PERMANENCY

Love and belonging. For a lifetime.

WHO **Every child.**

- Every child needs and deserves to feel love, a sense of belonging, and have the continuity of family and loved ones to support and guide them in their lives.
- California's 70,000 foster children especially need permanency, given the trauma they experience when they are separated from their families and removed from their homes — an experience that most of us cannot even imagine.

WHAT. **Love and belonging. For a lifetime.**

- Too many of our foster children live in uncertainty, unsure of what is happening to them, and who is committed to them for a lifetime. Separated from their parents, siblings and tribes, they live in a succession of foster or group homes and lose the continuity of friends, family, school and community.
- There are three paths to legal permanency (reunification with a child's family, adoption or guardianship). A youth also can find permanency through a lifelong commitment from a caring adult or family (known as "emotional" or "relational" permanency).

WHY..... **A better life.**

- Helping foster children find permanency in their lives enables them to be connected with others, to know unconditional love and support, and to develop a crucial sense of identity. This helps them to grow into healthy, happy and productive adults.
- Without permanency, foster children are largely on their own at 18 or 19 when they "age out" of the foster care system. Without family and any sort of a "safety net," they face daunting odds — many end up unemployed, homeless or in jail.

WHERE..... **In a family.**

- Permanency means strengthening families to keep their children safely at home whenever it is possible to do so.
- Families come in all shapes and sizes — Permanency often means we rethink standard definitions of "family" and focus more on the relationships that youth need to feel loved and supported.
- If children do enter foster care, permanency efforts keep them connected to their families. By locating extended family members and other loved ones, we can reduce the time children spend in care.

WHEN..... **Now!**

- Permanency is urgent and achievable for every child and youth in foster care. Every day a youth is not in a family is a day too long.
- When foster children have permanency, they are able to exit the foster care system with the security of a family, resulting in significant savings to the state and counties.
- Let's build on California's progress — and our momentum — in improving efforts to find permanency for our foster children and youth.

HOW..... **Together.**

- Everyone has an important role to play — It takes teamwork by families, caregivers and professionals — with the child or youth at the center of the process — to find and support permanency.
- We know what we need to do and how to do it — Through coordinated state and local leadership, we can unite our efforts and combine our resources to ensure a lifetime of love and belonging for every foster child and youth in California.