Supervisory Guide for Family Finding- Things to Consider

1. What members of this child’s biological family have been identified? Who do we have little or no information about?
2. How can you engage this youth/caregiver/relative to gather more information about the family? Which tools would be most effective to engage this person and obtain more information? (case mining, ecomap, genogram, placement mapping, social media, etc)
3. Do you recognize any biases in your beliefs about this youth or family that could affect your ability to make ongoing and exhaustive efforts to identify more family members?
4. How can we engage the family in a culturally competent way in order to develop an effective relationship that will result in identifying more individual who can potentially support this child?
5. What are some ways we can build teamwork with the other professionals involved with this youth to enhance family finding efforts?
6. Even though family may have been involved a few years ago, have we reached out to them recently?
7. How can we ensure that we are working urgently and relentlessly to identify both biological and symbolic relatives for this youth?
8. Are there any systemic barriers to locating and engaging family members in permanency planning for this youth, such as licensing requirements or ICPC? Who can we work with that can help with addressing these barriers?
9. Have we engaged birth father and/or paternal relatives? Have we considered that even though father may not want to be involved, his relatives may feel differently?
10. Have we reviewed the case file from the beginning? Were any prior home studies denied and did we review who the references were? Have we contacted collaterals that were engaged during the investigation stage?
11. If a prior home study was denied, how long has it been? Is it possible that the family’s current situation has changed for the better? Is this a family we can reconsider?
12. If a home study was denied, are the concerns listed things that can be addressed by participating in services? Are the concerns safety related? Can the concerns be remedied?
13. Do the youth in care have adult/older siblings? Has contact/engagement occurred with the older youth?
14. If siblings are placed separately- has ongoing visitation continued on a regular basis? If not, what solutions could be developed to address the current barrier that prevents contact from occurring?
15. Have the birth parents been engaged even if their parental rights are terminated? Engaging the birth parents does not have to be if they are being considered for placement only. They can provide information on other relatives/family.
16. If/when birth parents are re-engaged, even if termination of parental rights have occurred, have we assessed their current living situation and reconsidered their ability to parent the children currently?

17. Have we assessed the current placement’s (foster placement) attitude or feelings towards the youth achieving permanency?

18. Has a family group conference occurred? Even if relatives are not identified as a potential permanent placement, can they be a permanent connection or have a permanent relationship with the youth?

19. If a diligent search has occurred on the family, have you reviewed it with the youth to see if he recognizes names or addresses that returned on the search?

20. Remember, stability does not supersede achieving legal permanency. Often times, a myth is if a youth has been stable in a foster placement, there is hesitancy to move the youth and/or begin to search for birth family. However if the move is towards an intended to be permanent placement, where legal permanency can be achieved, then it should be considered.