

# Practice Focus

## CONTACTING

<b>What is It?</b>	<p>After completion of the search for possible permanency connections for an identified child/youth, contacting is the next step in the FSE process. In this stage, workers contact potential permanency connections, engage them in discussion regarding permanency and assess their level of interest and commitment in providing care/support to the identified child/youth.</p> <p>* It is important to keep in mind that while contacting identified connections the focus of your discussion with them should be on the child's situation and that confidentiality must be respected.</p>
<b>What laws and rules (OAC) apply?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act of 2008</li><li>• Preventing Sex Trafficking and Strengthening Families Act of 2014</li><li>• OAC Rule 5101:2-39-01 Removal of a Child from the Child's Own Home</li></ul>
<b>Contacting may look like this if you are an <u>Intake Worker</u></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Notify maternal and paternal grandparents and any known adult relatives within the first 30 days of a removal of the child(ren) from the home (pursuant to OAC 5101:2-39-01). Sample notification letters and response forms can be found here <a href="#">(link Attach- Word Documents E &amp; F)</a></li><li>• Conducting telephone calls to identified relatives to discuss their ability to be a family connection, have visits, and/or be a placement option. (see sample telephone scripts <a href="#">here</a>)</li><li>• Conversations with identified non-blood kin regarding their ability and willingness to serve as a placement option.</li></ul>

<p><b>Contacting may look like this if you are an <u>Ongoing Worker</u></b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Follow up calls to identified relatives or non-blood kin throughout the life of the case to assess their ability and willingness to provide care/support for the child/youth. Remember, a relatives or non-blood kin situation and circumstance may change over the life of the case; they may not have been in a position to visit or serve as a placement option at one time but this could change later on in the case.</li> <li>• Notifying any new relatives that may be identified throughout the life of the case of their option to be a family connection, have visits, and/or be a placement option and assess their ability to do so. (see sample telephone scripts <a href="#">here</a>)</li> </ul>
<p><b>Contacting may look like this if you are an <u>Adoption or Independent Living Worker</u></b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Re-contact each relative or non-blood kin, introduce yourself and explain your role.</li> <li>• Explore birth parents as a possible connection for youth; especially older youth who have been in P.C. without an adoptive match or youth that may have returned to agency custody after a disrupted adoption. (This can be considered on a case by case basis and should be based on Agency policy and procedure).</li> <li>• When writing letters, send a current flyer of the child/youth as well (if available).</li> </ul> <p>Suggested ways for reaching out to relatives include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If the relative knows about the situation, you can begin the discussion by stating: “We are looking for family connections for this child/youth. We are putting together a history for this child in the form of a life book and we would like to see if you would be able to contribute any photos or other information for this book?”</li> <li>• If they ask for visits, explain the agency’s policy/procedure and that you would need identifying information from them including a SS #, birth date, address etc. in order to complete a background check on them prior to exploring this option. Do NOT make promises of visits, placement, etc.</li> <li>• Discuss the case with your supervisor and determine what type of contact would be in the child’s best interest and the details of how to go about introducing the idea to the child/youth and their caregiver.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If the family does not know about the child or has only a vague recollection , while you are on the phone with the relative, stick to clear facts about the child only and not the birth parents history. (Most of the time the birth family does know a lot of information already)</li> </ul>
<p><b>Contacting may look like this if you are a Family Team Meeting Facilitator</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Invite relatives or non-blood kin to meetings. During meetings, engage relatives in discussion about the types of support they can provide to children/families.</li> <li>• Reinforce importance of relatives or non-blood kin not only as a placement resource, but also as a support for families and a connection for children.</li> <li>• Identify relatives or non-blood kin during the meetings who may be able to be a support, the family’s caseworker can then complete follow up calls with anyone identified.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Contacting may look like this if you are a Kinship Worker</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conduct telephone calls to explore how relatives or non-blood kin can be supports, connections, and/or placement options for children.</li> <li>• Sharing with the Intake or Ongoing worker information gained from contact with relatives or non-blood kin that might support FSE efforts.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Tools</b></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Relative Notification Letter and Response Form <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Summit County Resource:(Attach Word Documents E &amp; F)</li> </ul> </li> <li>✓ <a href="#">Sample Telephone Scripts</a></li> <li>✓ <a href="#">Sample Telephone Scripts</a></li> <li>✓ <a href="#">Connections Tracking Form</a></li> <li>✓ <a href="http://www.familyecho.com">www.familyecho.com</a> (Free Family Tree/Genogram site)</li> </ul>
<p><b>Documentation Suggestions/Reminders</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Any FSE type of contact should be labeled in SACWIS with a Family Search and Engagement subcategory</li> <li>• Relative or non-blood kin who are identified in a genogram activity log should also be added to the associated persons tab in SACWIS for <u>all</u> cases.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Supervisor Strategies</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Verify that the genogram is updated prior to SAR.</li> <li>• Discuss actions taken and progress made regarding FSE efforts during supervision.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Regularly document FSE activities performed in supervision notes.</li> </ul>		
<b>Training Suggestions via the Ohio Child Welfare Training Program</b>  	E-Track #210-40-S	Introduction to Family Search and Engagement	3 Hour Classroom Learning-uses internet for activities
	E-Track # 210-39	Family Search and Engagement: The Path to Best Practice	6 Hour Classroom Learning
	E-Track #210-23-ODJFS-I-S	Overview of Fatherhood: Empowering Fathers to Improve their Child's Life	6 Hour Classroom Learning
	E-Track #210-22	Engaging Dads: Walking the Walk and Talking the Talk	6 Hour Classroom Learning