

Strategies for Using Data to Prioritize Kinship Care

June 24, 2026

- Welcome, we will begin at the top of the hour
- Please type in the **chat** box - your name, state, tribe (if applicable), and role
- Type questions in the **chat** box at any point during our time together
- **We will provide a separate meeting link for a 30-minute Q&A with our presenters, starting in an hour, at 3 PM ET**
- By the end of the week, all participants will receive a link to the slides and the recording

Who We Are & How We Help



Learning Collaboratives and Information Dissemination

The Network hosts webinars and facilitates learning collaboratives.



A Centralized Hub

The Network is elevating exemplary kinship/grandfamily practices and programs from around the country.



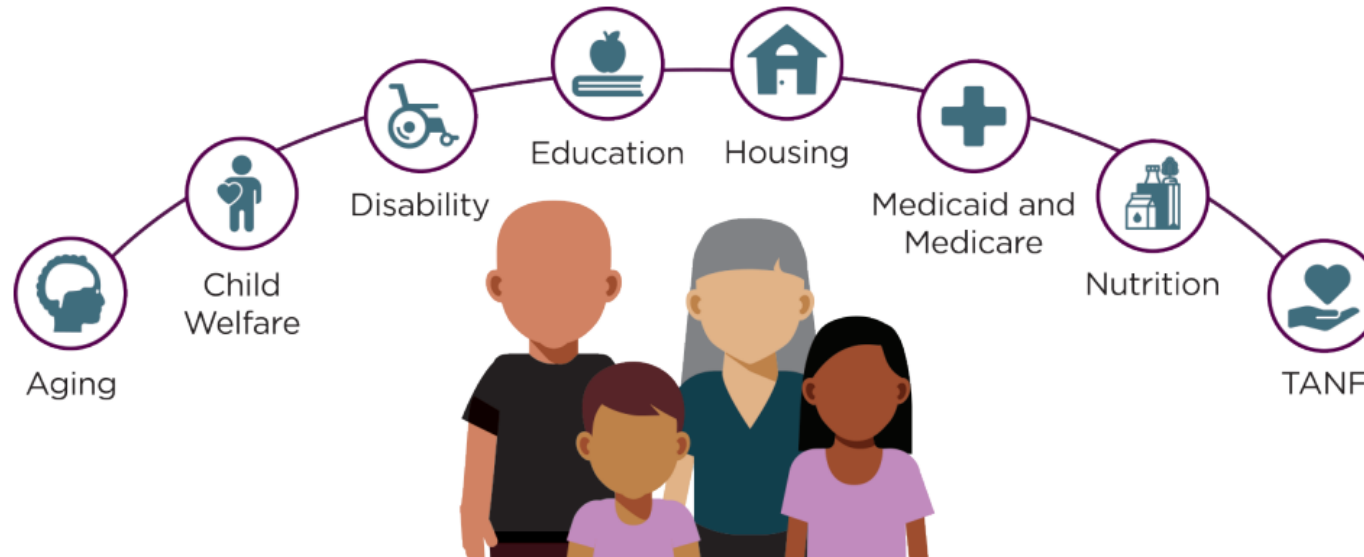
Bridging Systems for Kinship Families

The Network is helping Idaho, San Diego County, and Oneida Nation of Wisconsin optimize their collaborative approaches and improve their services. Solutions will be replicable for others.



Individual Assistance

We respond to individual requests for help from government agencies and nonprofit organizations.



Welcome Our Presenters



Noah Duncan
Executive Director
Foster Insights
University of Chicago



Jack Tait
Data Scientist
Foster Insights
University of Chicago

Strategies for Using Data to Prioritize Kinship Care

Foster Insights

Webinar for Grandfamilies & Kinship Support Network

June 2026

Agenda

1 Intro & Kin Benefits

2 Why Data Matters

3 A Starting Point for Using Kin Data

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1 Intro & Kin Benefits

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3 A Starting Point for Using Kin Data



Born at the University of Chicago

Our team started as generalists at the University's Center for RISC, an innovation lab for social good



Initially Focused on Data-Driven Recruitment

We came into child welfare with fresh eyes intent on using data to drive foster home recruitment



Realized Child Experience Was Missing

The data clearly showed that just having homes didn't always solve the "why" behind recruitment



Scaling Adoption of Adverse Placement Score

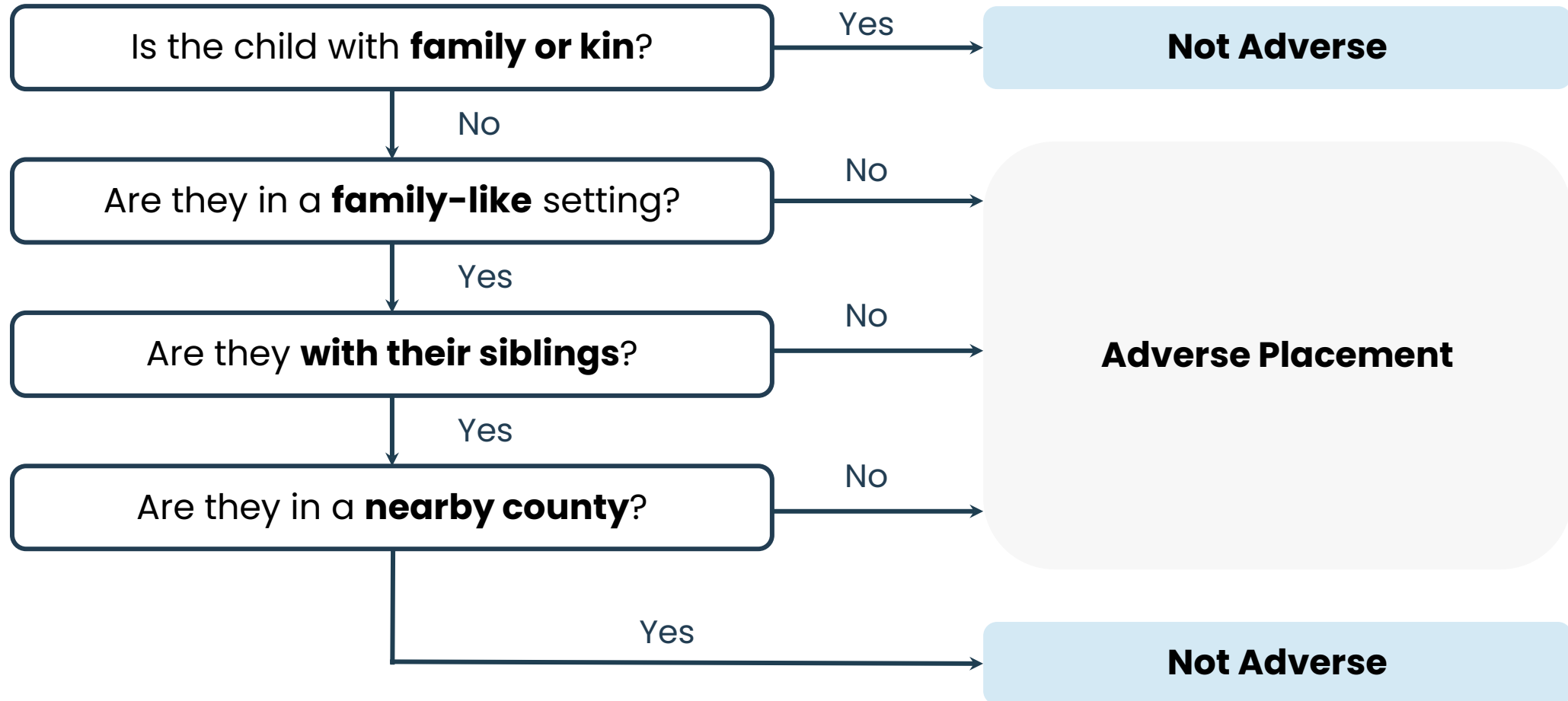
Oklahoma became the first state to write its new Performance Improvement Plan with APS in it



Our Path:

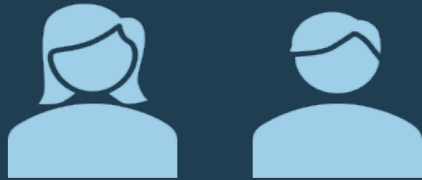
Foster Insights is a nonprofit dedicated to using data to improve child welfare

We help CW agencies use data to center the child's experience



In a previous GKSJN webinar, we discussed the benefits of kin placement

Placement Type	% <u>Disrupted</u> After 180 Days	<u>Median</u> Distance	% of Days Placed with <u>All Siblings</u>	% Moves to <u>Reunification</u>
Kin	25-34%	6-20 Miles	50-63%	42-58%
Non-Relative Foster Home	51-59%	18-60 Miles	33-49%	20-28%



Benefits to Child

- Maintain connection with family and community
- Reduced school disruption and easier parental visitation
- Increased placement stability



Benefits to Workforce

- Significantly less driving to and from far-from-home placements
- More non-relative homes available when kin isn't feasible
- Increased stability means greater fewer emergent situations

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3 A Starting Point for Using Kin Data

Leave reflections in the chat!

**How does data typically show up
in your day-to-day work?**



We typically think about data for the purpose of reporting...





We typically think about data for the purpose of reporting...

...but it also impacts every day decision-making



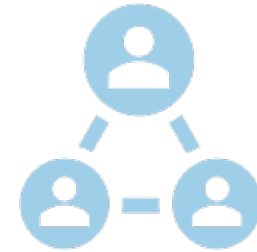
Our work looks differently depending on how success is measured



**Task
prioritization**



Decision-making



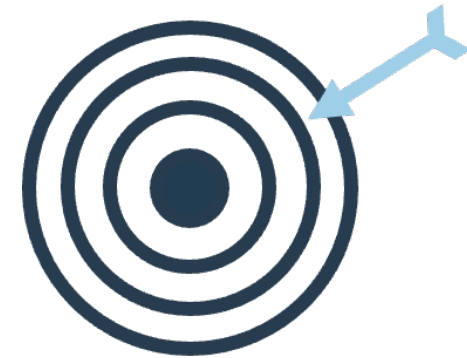
**Workforce
structure**

**The everyday impact of data makes it
crucial to choose the *right* metrics**

Optimizing for metrics can produce unintended consequences



**Metric only captures a
small piece of the puzzle**

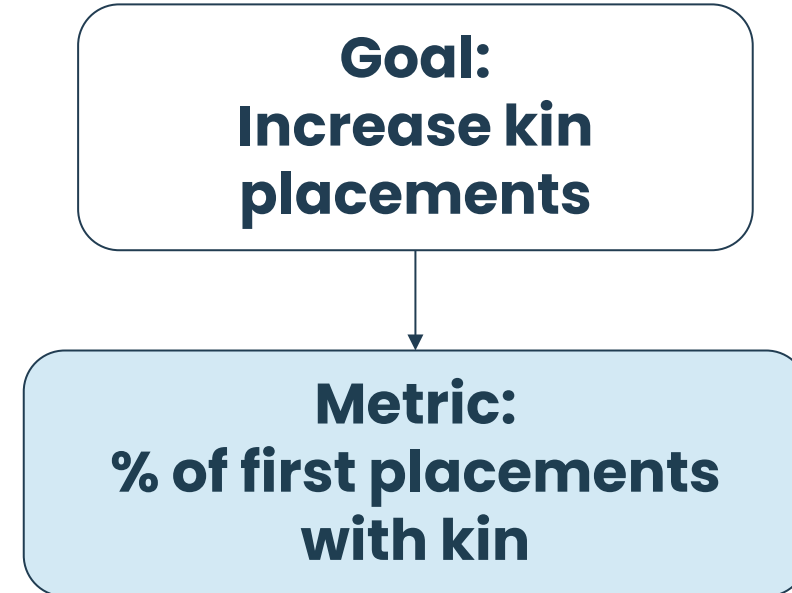


**Metric is too far removed
from the ultimate goal**

Optimizing for metrics can produce unintended consequences



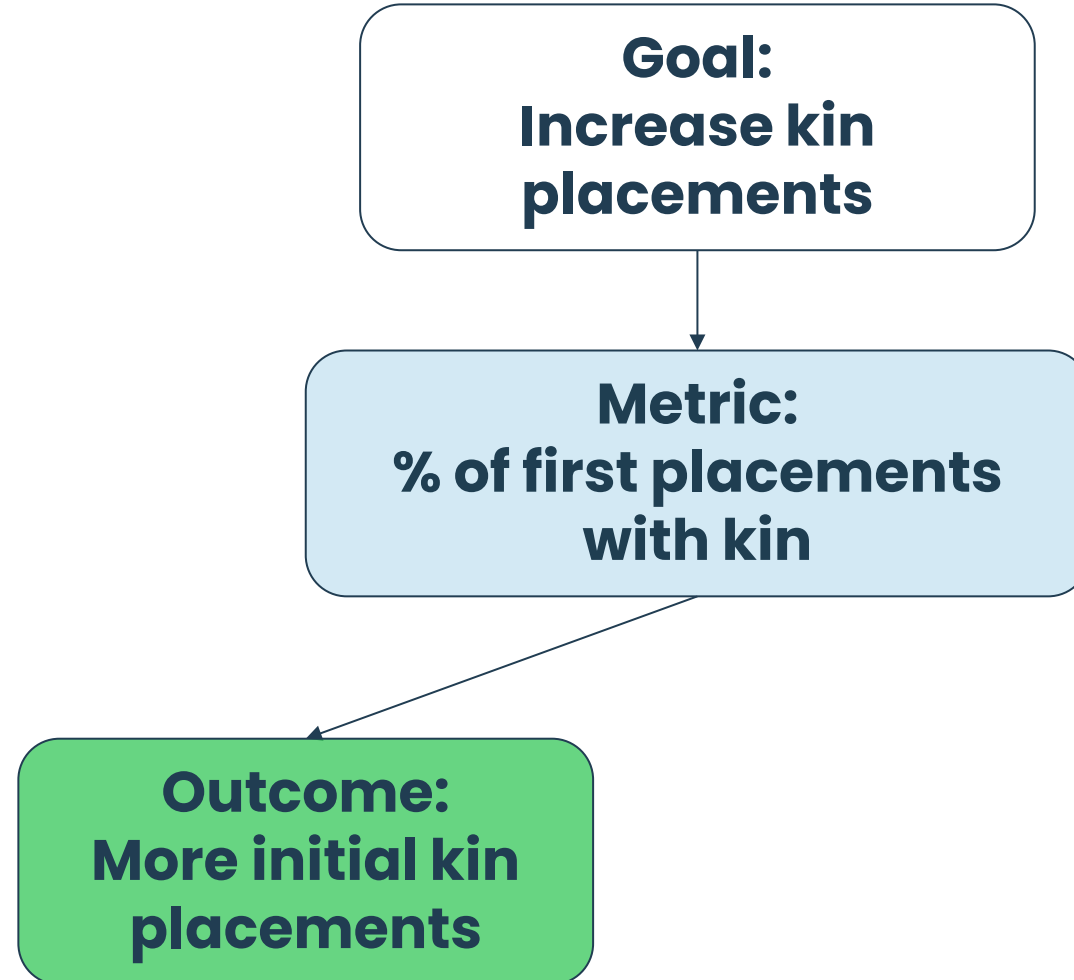
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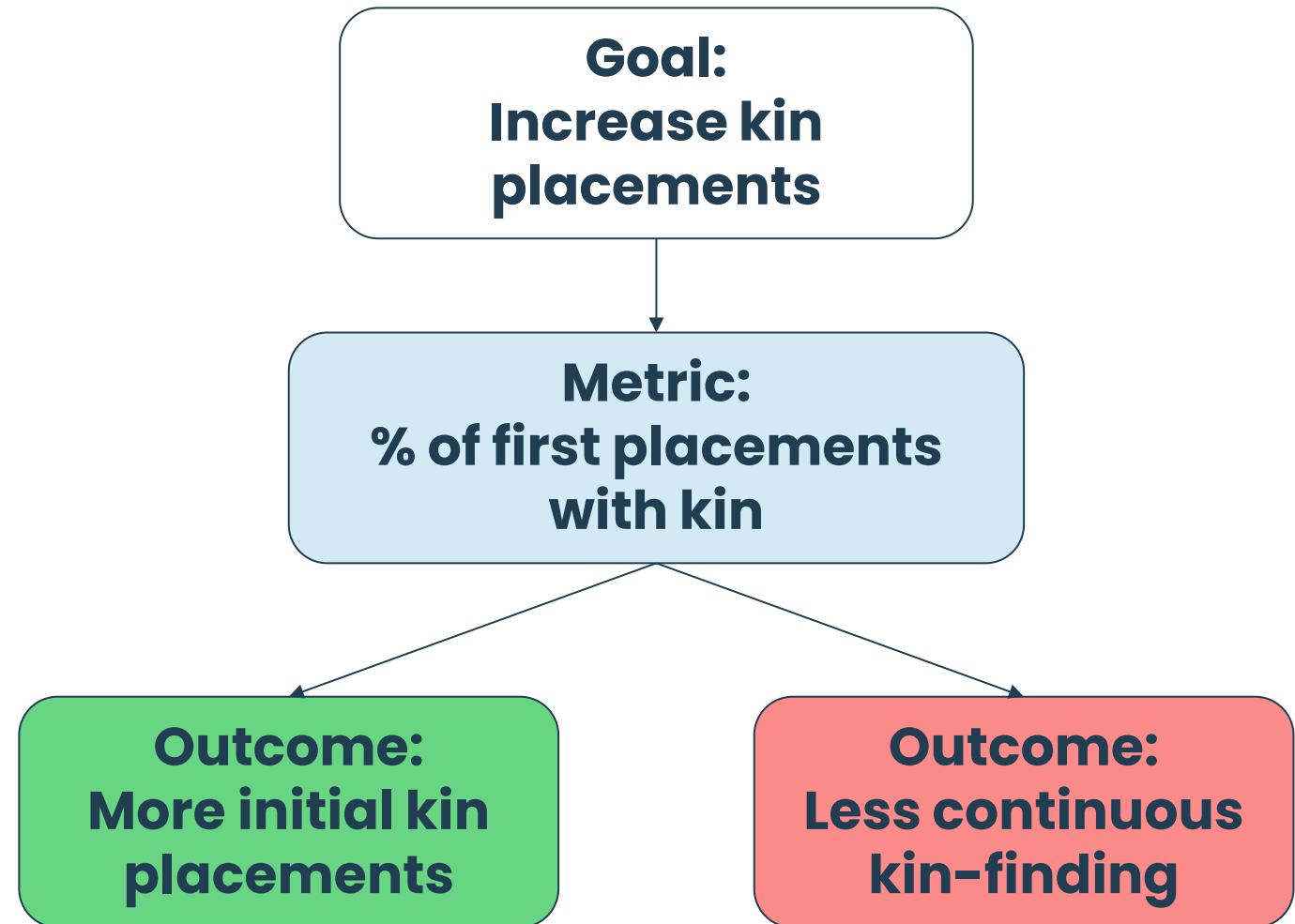
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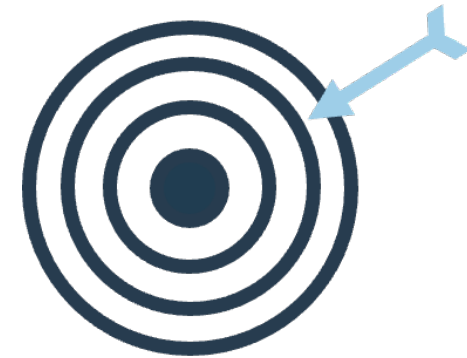
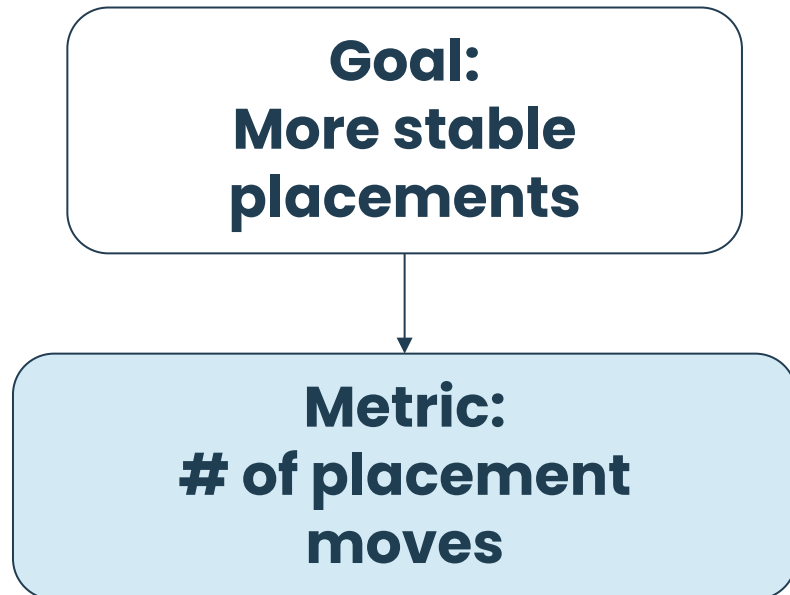
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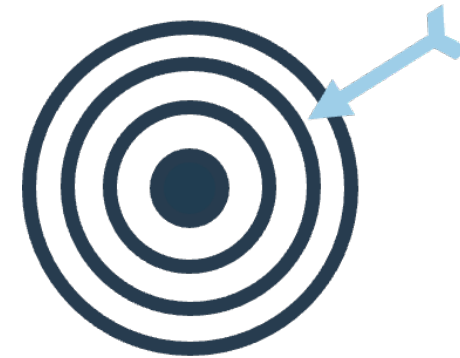
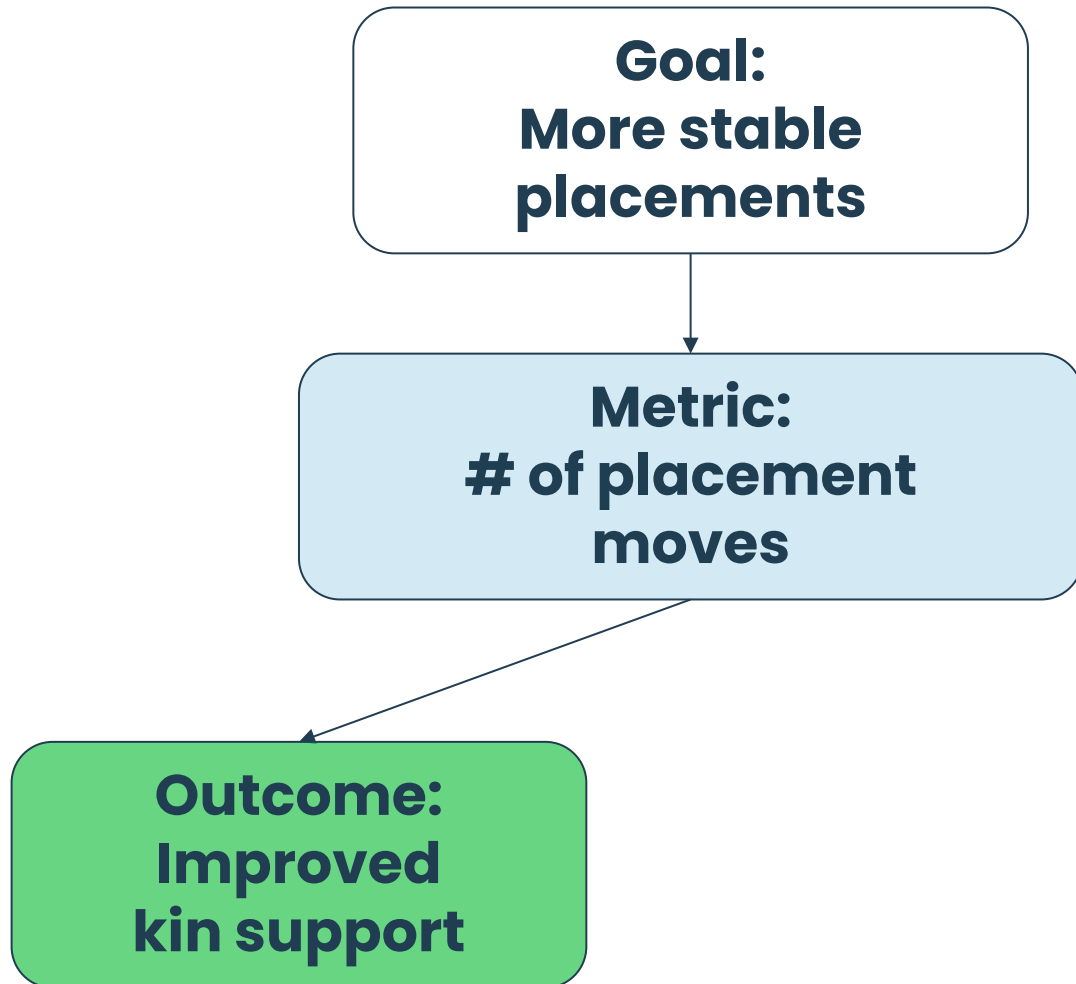


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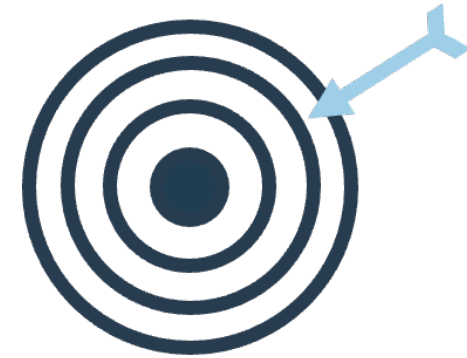
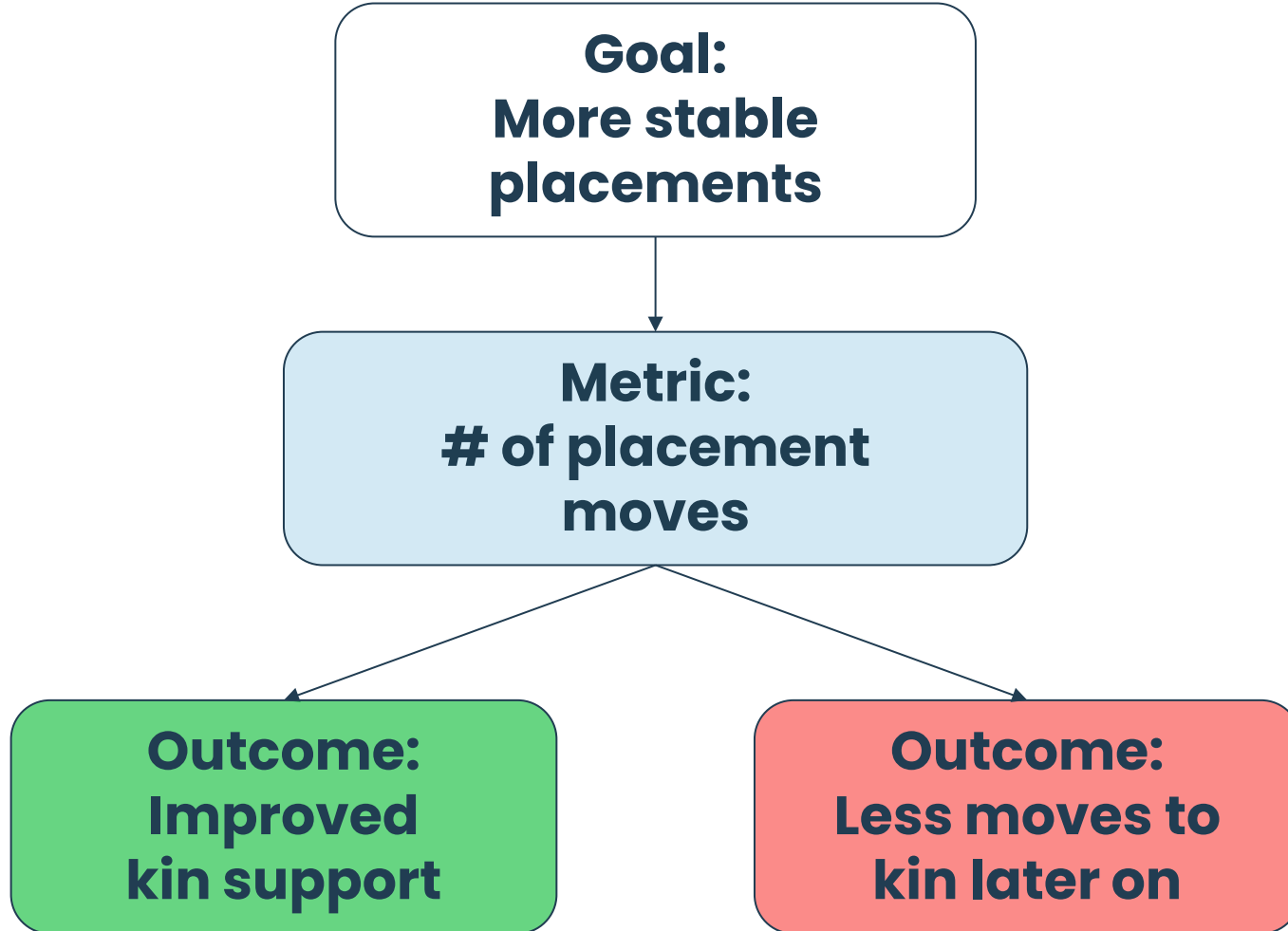
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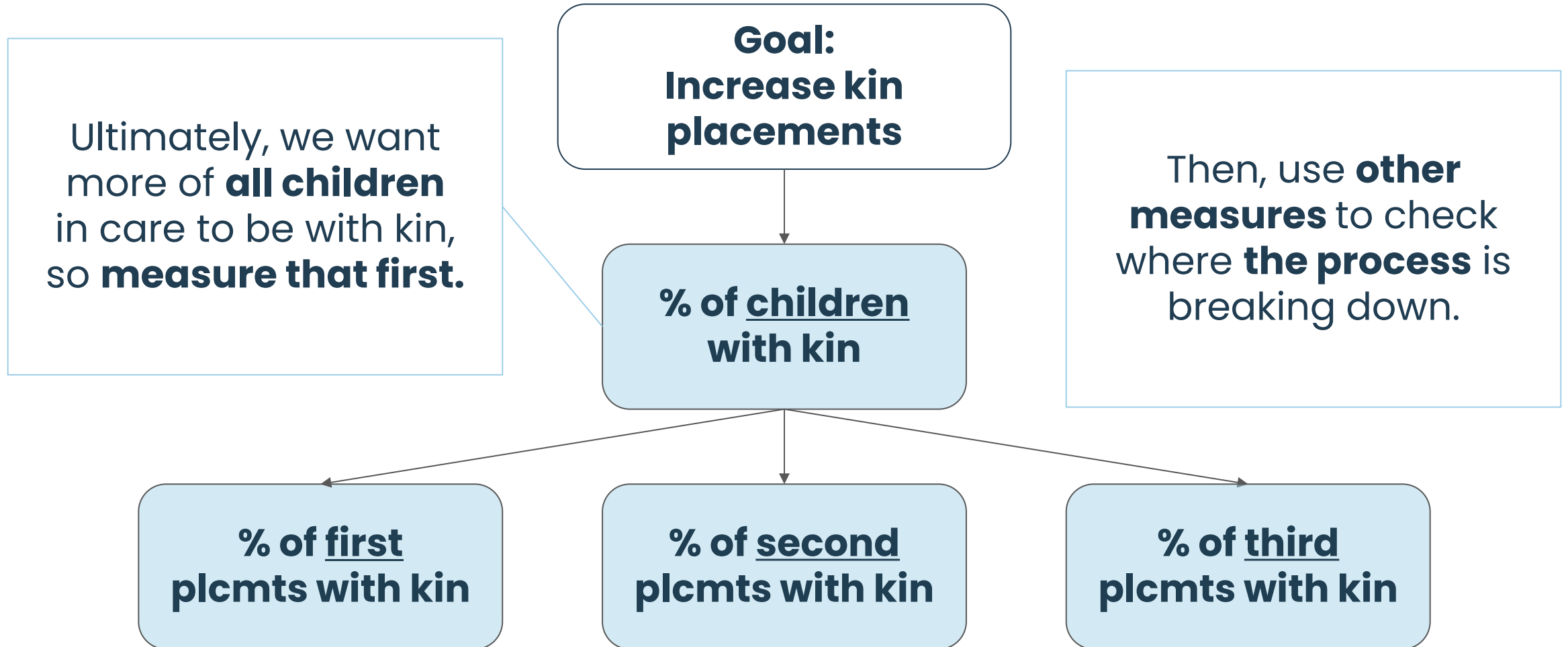
Optimizing for metrics is inevitable.

We have to ensure that optimization still creates our desired outcome.

Working to improve a given metric isn't necessarily a problem. But ask yourself:

- **What *is* the desired outcome?**
- **What is this metric *missing*?**

Tracking multiple metrics can sometimes give you a fuller picture



Agenda

1 Intro & Kin Benefits

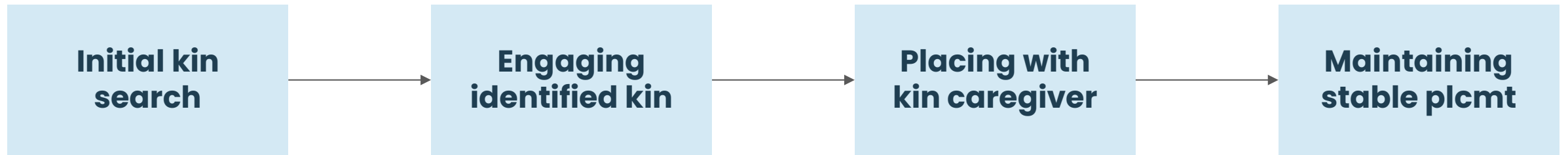
2 Why Data Matters

3 A Starting Point for Using Kin Data

Leave reflections in the chat!

In your agency, what are the biggest barriers to placing more children with kin?

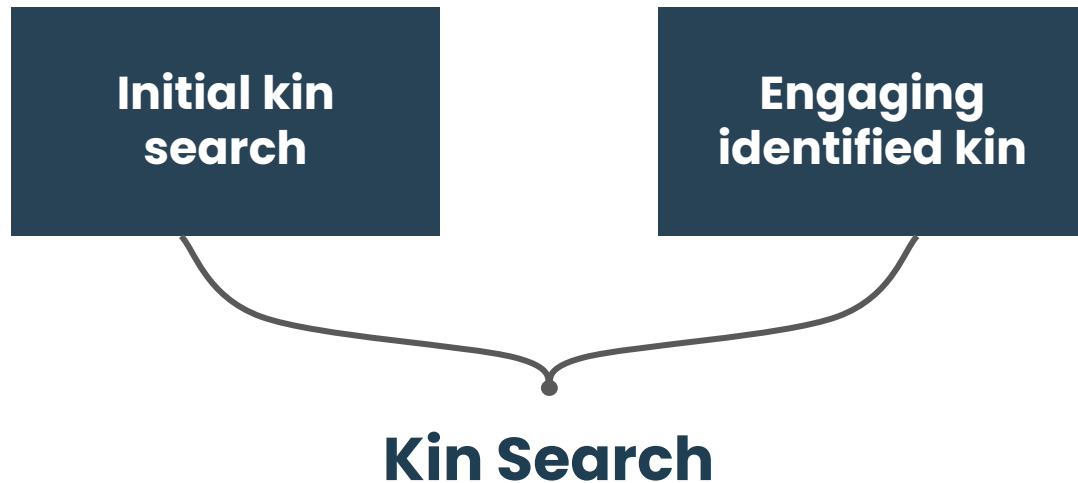
Breaking down the kin process can help target efforts



Breaking down the kin process can help target efforts



Breaking down the kin process can help target efforts

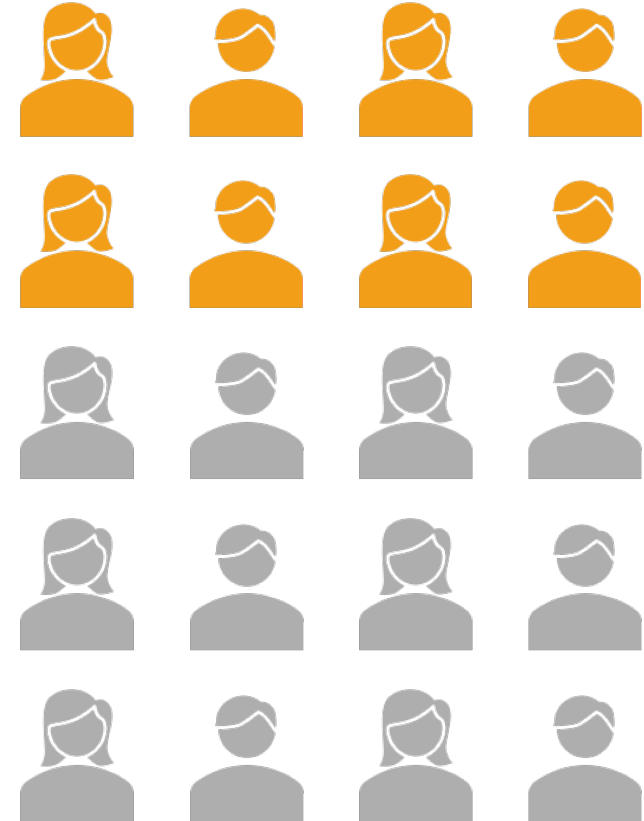


In one state, we used data to investigate how they could increase their rate of kin placement.

We started with the kin search process...

Breaking down the kin process can help target efforts

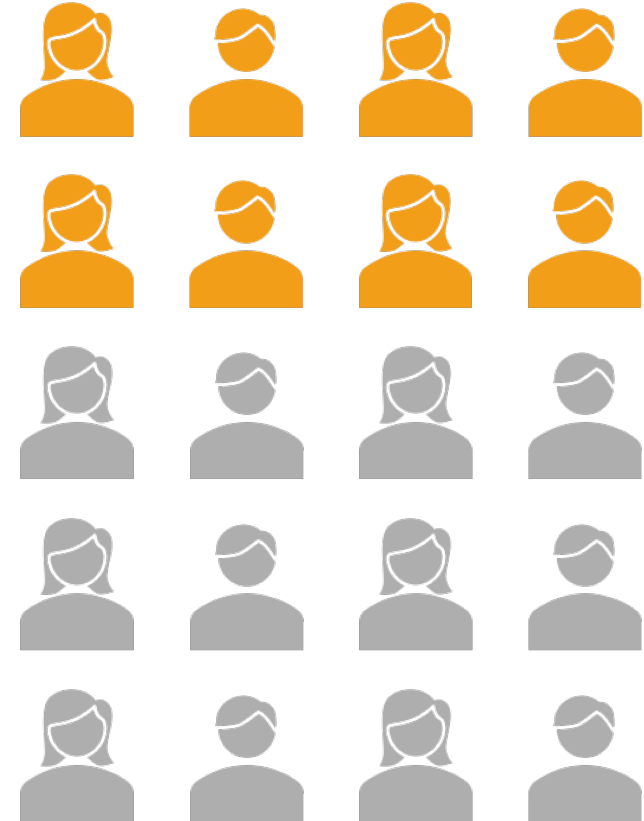
...but we discovered that 40% of kids who had never been placed with kin actually had kinship options who said 'yes' to placement.



Breaking down the kin process can help target efforts

...but we discovered that 40% of kids who had never been placed with kin actually had kinship options who said 'yes' to placement.

So the question became "what are the barriers to making these placements?"



Increasing placements with kin requires seeing where barriers exist

**Are we struggling to find
kin who can
take placement?**

OR

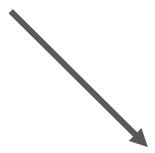
**Are we finding kin
but struggling to
make placements?**

You can use simple data to identify specific blockers to kin placement

Child	Date of Kin Search	Number of Kin Contacted	Number of Kin Responded	Number of Kin Yes for Plcmt	Placed With Kin?	Barriers to Placement
Child 1	02/01/26					
Child 2	02/04/26					
Child 3	02/11/26					

You can use simple data to identify specific blockers to kin placement

Child	Date of Kin Search	Number of Kin Contacted	Number of Kin Responded	Number of Kin Yes for Plcmt	Placed With Kin?	Barriers to Placement
Child 1	02/01/26					
Child 2	02/04/26					
Child 3	02/11/26					



Looking at one month's worth of data is a great starting point

Increasing placements with kin requires seeing where barriers exist

**Are we struggling to find
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take placement?**

OR

**Are we finding kin
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make placements?**

If few kin were identified at all, examine the kin search process

Child	Date of Kin Search	Number of Kin Contacted	Number of Kin Responded	Number of Kin Yes for Plcmt	Placed With Kin?	Barriers to Placement
Child 1	02/01/26	2	0	0	N	
Child 2	02/04/26	4	1	0	N	
Child 3	02/11/26	7	3	0	N	

How are we initially identifying kin? How are we reaching out to those we identify? Are we reaching out to every kin we identify? What kind of responses are we receiving?

If few kin were identified at all, examine the kin search process

Child	Date of Kin Search	Number of Kin Contacted	Number of Kin Responded	Number of Kin Yes for Plcmt	Placed With Kin?	Barriers to Placement
Child 1	02/01/26	2	0	0	N	No response
Child 2	02/04/26	4	1	0	N	Uneasy about state involvement
Child 3	02/11/26	7	3	0	N	Financial concerns

Quantitative data can help us understand *what* happened, but written notes can help us understand *why* it happened and identify even more specific roadblocks

Increasing placements with kin requires seeing where barriers exist

Are we struggling to find
kin who can
take placement?

OR

Are we finding kin
but struggling to
make placements?

If kin were identified but not used, examine the kin approval process

Child	Date of Kin Search	Number of Kin Contacted	Number of Kin Responded	Number of Kin Yes for Plcmt	Placed With Kin?	Barriers to Placement
Child 1	02/01/26	11	5	3	N	
Child 2	02/04/26	4	2	2	N	
Child 3	02/11/26	7	3	1	N	

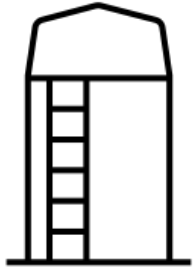
Why were these children unable to be placed with kin? Were there barriers to approval that could be addressed?

If kin were identified but not used, examine the kin approval process

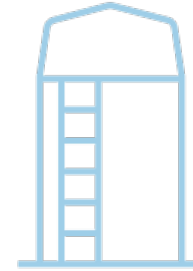
Child	Date of Kin Search	Number of Kin Contacted	Number of Kin Responded	Number of Kin Yes for Plcmt	Placed With Kin?	Barriers to Placement
Child 1	02/01/26	11	5	3	N	Mom does not want child with kin
Child 2	02/04/26	4	2	2	N	Kin located 5 hours away
Child 3	02/11/26	7	3	1	N	Already in a stable non-relative home

Quantitative data can help us understand *what* happened, but written notes can help us understand *why* it happened and identify even more specific roadblocks

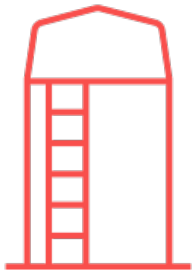
Rather than operate in silos...



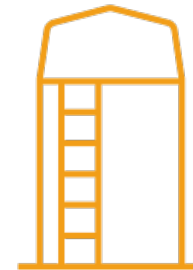
Region A



Region B

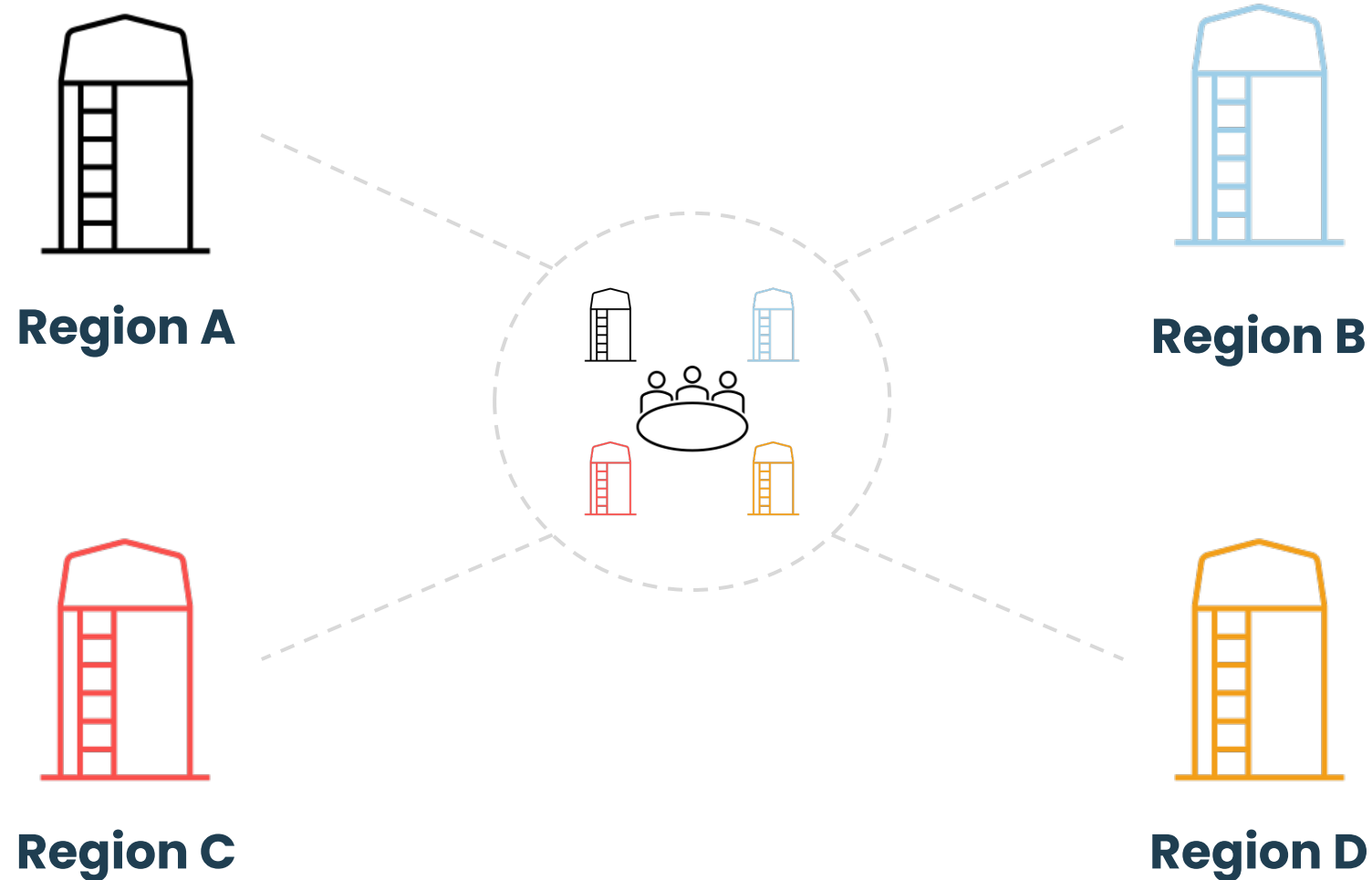


Region C



Region D

...sharing successes and struggles can grow the impact of this work



Thank you!

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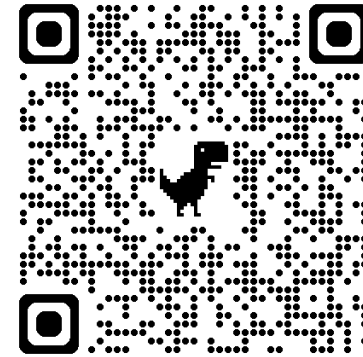
Join Us for our Next Webinar!



The Role of Private
Child Welfare
Agencies in Kin-
Specific Licensing
and Supports

Thursday July 16, 2026
1:00 p.m. – 2:30 p.m. ET

Register Here



Connect & Access Support

Request assistance

We will add you to our monthly newsletter list, unless you ask us not to. To see past issues: www.gksnetwork.org/the-network-connection-newsletter/

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