

<b>Child Welfare Services Branch</b>	<b>HAWAII DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES POLICY ANNOUNCEMENT</b>	
	<b>Policy No: PA 2005-5</b>	<b>Issuance Date: 06/13/05</b>
	<b>Subject: SUPPORTING, STRENGTHENING, AND MAINTAINING FAMILY CONNECTIONS THROUGH KINSHIP PLACEMENT OF CHILDREN ACTIVE WITH CHILD WELFARE SERVICES BRANCH (CWSB)</b>	

### **POLICY DIRECTIVE**

The 2004 Casey Family Programs' Breakthrough Series Collaborative Framework with Public Child Welfare Agencies has identified that family relationships are enduring and offer permanent resources to their own members as a foundation principle on supporting kinship care. Research, cited by the National Resource Center for Family-Centered Practice and Permanency Planning, show that connection with birth parents and siblings is essential for children and that the majority of young adults who grow up in foster care have contact with their biological family as young adults.

A key finding of the 2003 Federal Child and Family Services Review (CFSR) on Hawaii's child welfare system indicated that CWSB did not achieve substantial conformity with Permanency Outcome 2: *The continuity of family relationships and connections is preserved for children*. The CFSR also found that CWSB "was not consistent in its efforts to preserve connections between children and their families or to seek and assess relatives as placement resources, although this is mandated in State policy."

This policy directive affirms CWSB's policy to seek and assess relatives or kin as foster, adoptive, and/or permanent placement resources for children under the Department's voluntary, court-ordered foster or permanent custody and that relatives or kin placement is preferred to maintain family connections.

? "Kin" is defined as both maternal and paternal relatives, adult siblings, or individuals not biologically or legally related to the family, including but not limited to family friends, hanai caregivers, or family pastor or minister, but who are, nevertheless, perceived as "family" by the children and/or their family members.

? When children are unable to be maintained safely in their own family homes, **on-going** efforts shall be made by CWSB staff to identify, explore, encourage, pursue, locate, and offer support and assistance to kin as a foster, adoptive, and/or permanent placement resource. CWSB staff **shall** utilize Ohana Conference to locate kin.

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- ? In the absence of safety factors, as defined in accordance with the CWSB Differential Response Intake Assessment, placement with kin meeting CWSB licensing requirements **shall be a priority** in order to maintain family connections and as a permanent resource for children.
- ? CWSB staff shall assist kin by encouraging and expediting the paperwork and placement process, including but not limited to child-specific foster parent application and home study, inter-island home study request, interstate compact home study request, adoptive home study request, transition visits, and/or courtesy supervision of placement.
- ? Kinship placement requires a realignment of relationships for birth parents, children, family members, and their kin. The process of realignment and transition may be difficult for everyone, and therefore services and supports shall be provided by CWSB staff and providers during this process and for the duration of the kinship placement.
- ? In any court proceedings relating to foster, adoptive, and/or permanent placement, CWSB staff shall recommend placement with kin meeting CWSB licensing requirements, as defined above, unless confirmation of a safety factor, as defined in accordance with the CWSB Differential Response Intake Assessment, is made by CWSB staff.