



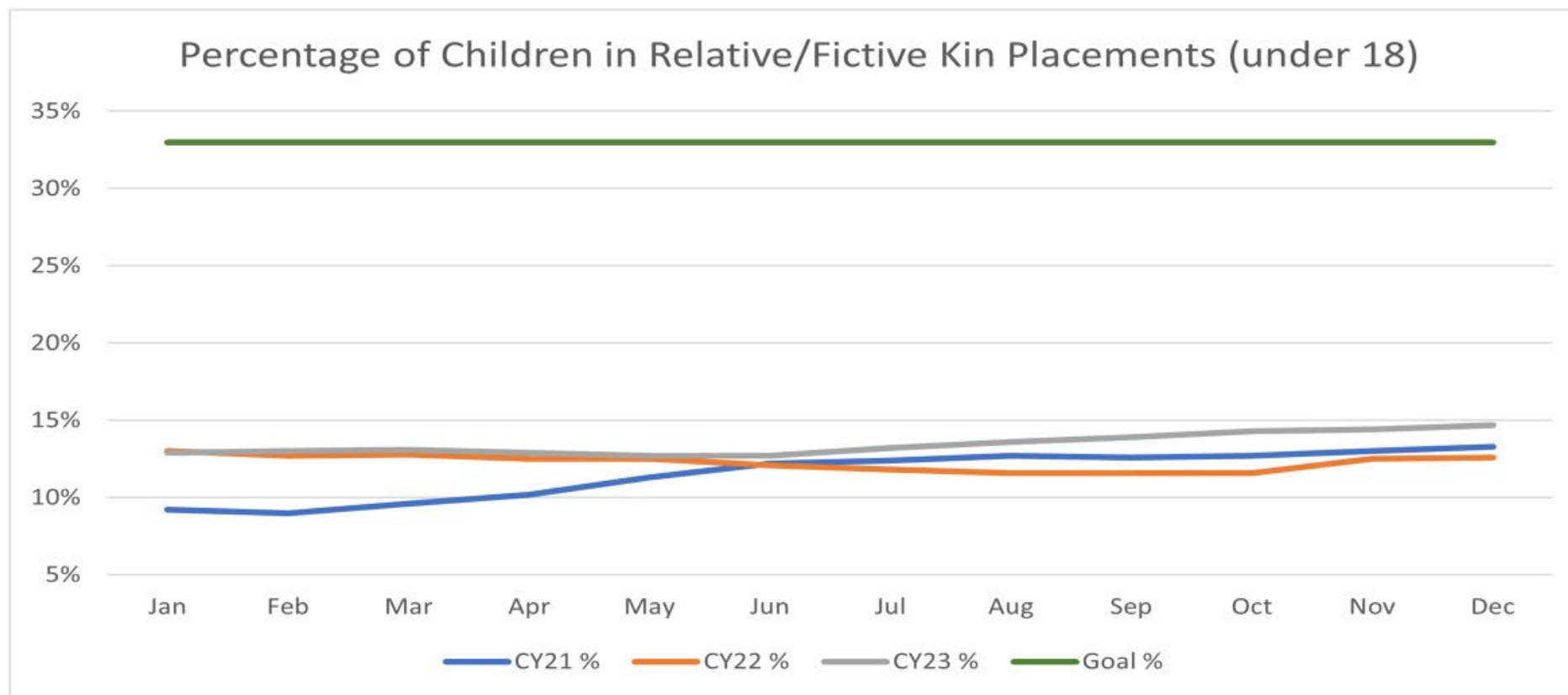
VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF
SOCIAL SERVICES

“Building a Kin First Culture in Virginia”

Presentation to Human Services Policy Committee of MWCOC

January 10, 2025

Relative/Fictive Kin Placement: Overall



Virginia Children's Services Practice Model



Virginia Children's Services Practice Model



We believe that all children and communities deserve to be safe.

We believe in family, child, and youth-driven practice.

We believe that children do best when raised in families.

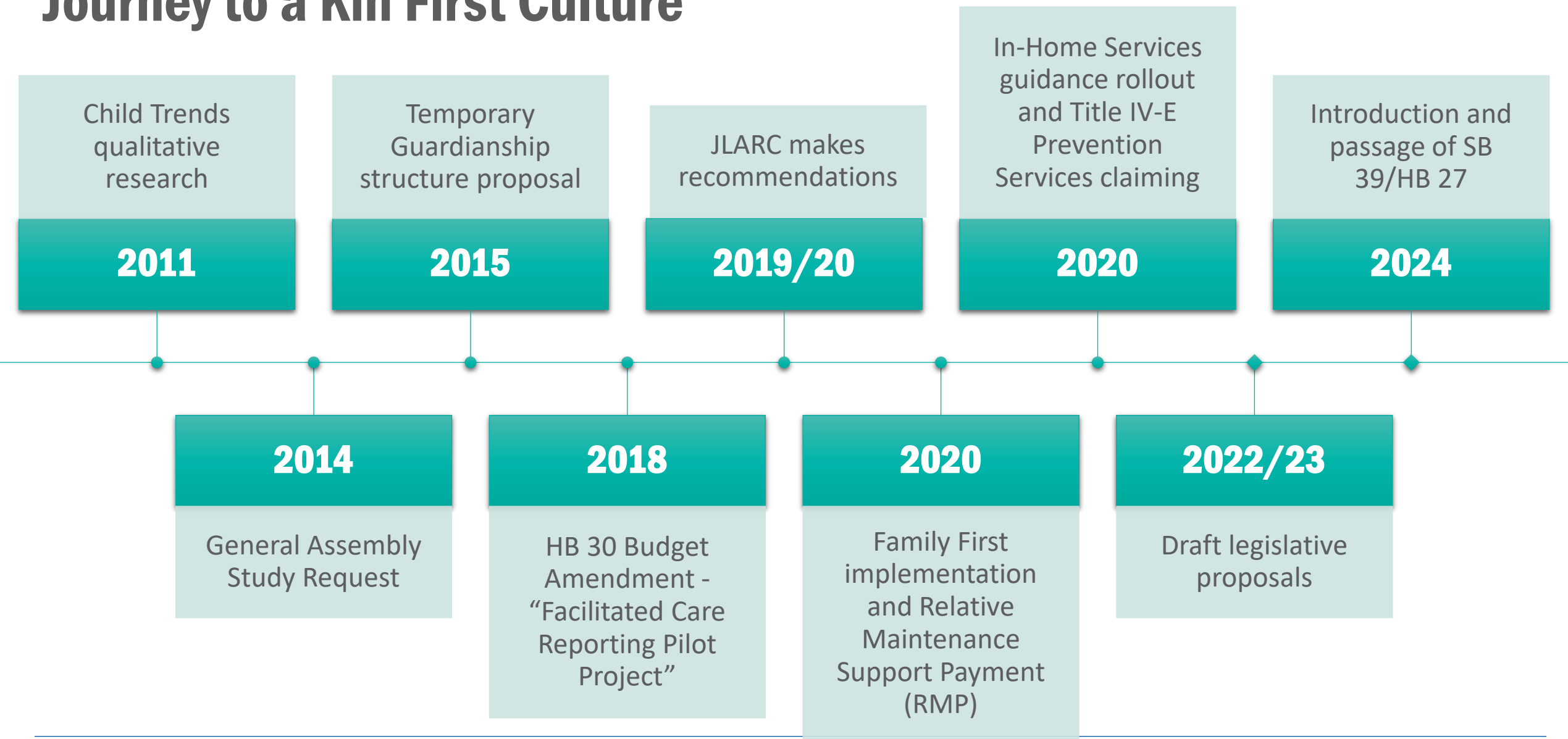
We believe that all children and youth need and deserve a permanent family.

We believe in partnering with others to support child and family success that is family-focused, child-centered, and community-based.

We believe that how we do our work is as important as the work we do.



Journey to a Kin First Culture



KIN FIRST CULTURE

In Virginia's Kin First culture, we recognize families as the experts who should always be included in decision-making and should be empowered to rely on one another for support.





Building a Kin First Culture



- Engagement
- Family driven decisions
- Working towards change

- Locate and engage fathers
- Strengthen relationships
- Support father's needs



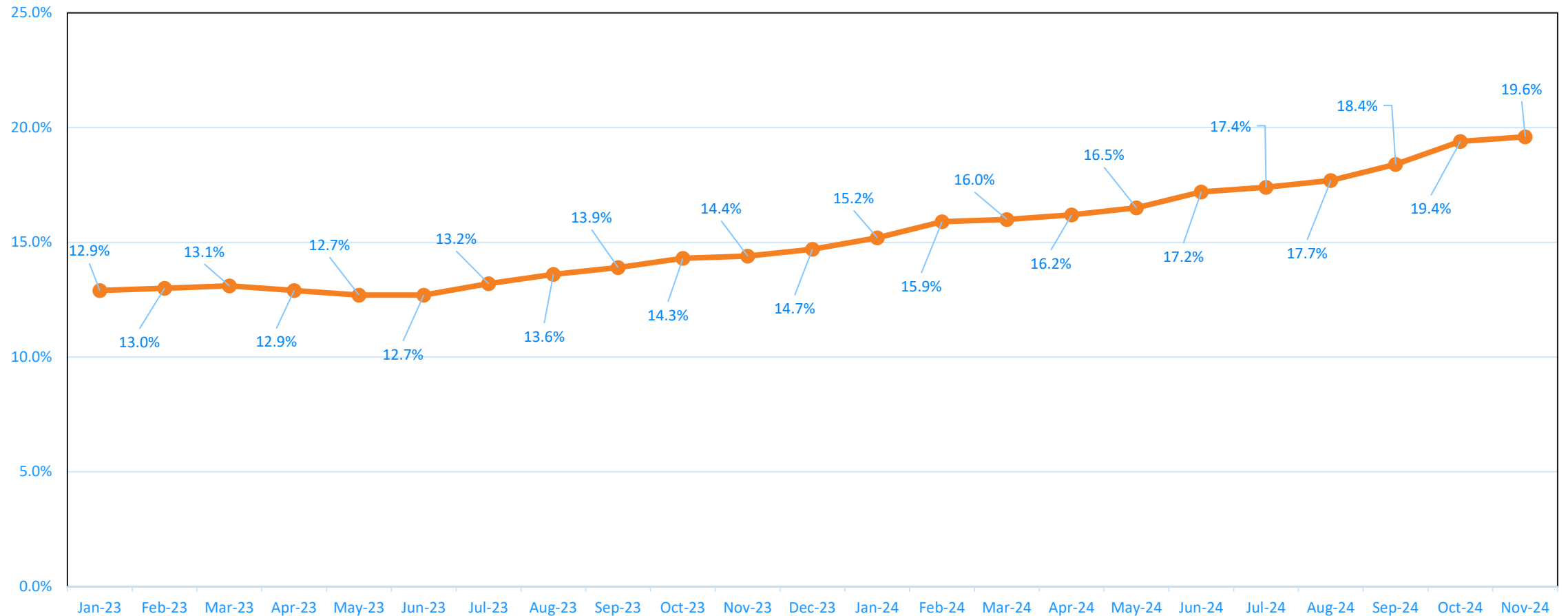


KINSHIP FOSTER CARE GOAL

By the end of 2025, 35% of all foster care placements for children/youth under the age of 18 will be in a kinship placement.

Statewide Kinship Percentage – Jan 2023-Nov 2024

Percent of Children under 18 in a Kinship Placement



Source: SafeMeasures Care Types (Subsets: 0 - 17 Years Old; Case Type: Foster Care and Dual In-Home and Foster Care).



Kin First Now



KIN FIRST NOW OVERVIEW

Intentional collaboration between Home Office, Regional Offices and LDSSs to enhance and/or create internal processes that reinvest and prioritize staff's time spent on Search, Discovery, and Assessment of relatives/fictive kin through a teaming approach.

Focus on using the Three Practice Elements (Out-of-Home Staffing, FPMs, and Permanency Assessment Tool) to guide through an Agency Action Plan:

- **Urgent discovery of and transparent engagement with family at *first* point of contact.**
- **Involvement and assessment of family and other natural supports in planning for permanency.**



KFN Agency Site Visits

19 LDSS visits from Oct 2023 – Nov 2024

Franklin County
Wise
Chesterfield-Colonial Heights
Newport News
Prince William
Alexandria
Roanoke City
Lynchburg
Buchanan
Washington Co
Richmond City
Hanover
Norfolk
Chesapeake
Harrisonburg-Rockingham
Roanoke County
Virginia Beach
Fairfax
Shenandoah Valley

KFN Sample Agency Support

- **Collaboration with Agency Leadership:**
 - Inclusion of community partners and stakeholders
 - Review of agency-specific data, to include assessment results of [Rate Your Kin First Agency.pdf \(virginia.gov\)](#)
- **Involvement of all Child Welfare Staff in designing agency-specific action plan that incorporates use of Practice Elements (Out of Home Staffing, FPM, & Permanency Assessment Tool) into actionable steps to create/revise a viable process that engages, assesses and supports kinship placements**
- **VDSS (Home Office and Regional Office staff) provides targeted coaching, consultation and technical assistance to support the installation of the ACTION PLAN**
- **Communities of Practice events**
 - Leadership to facilitate peer-to-peer collaboration between the KFN agencies
 - Learning Events to train all staff on relevant topics

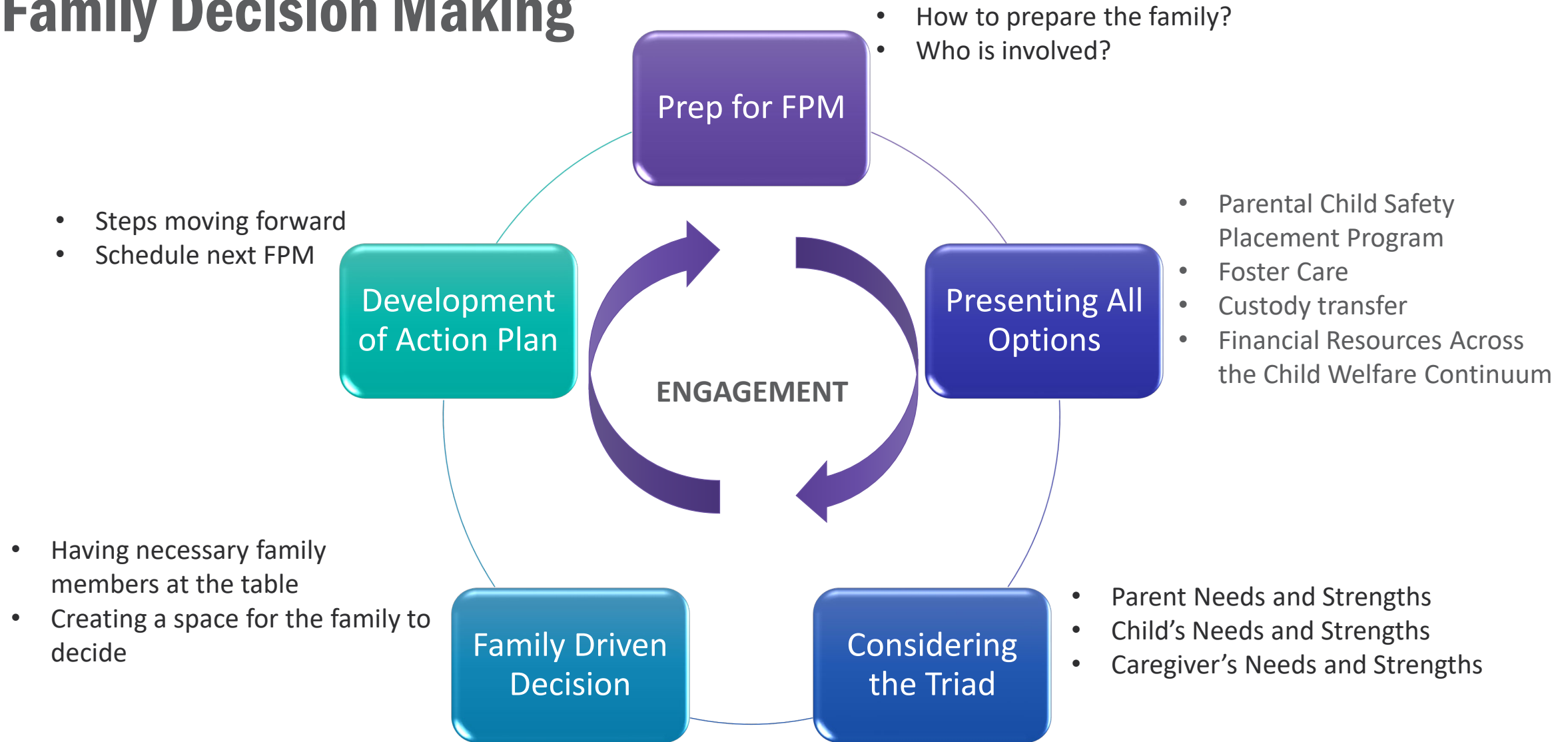
Out of Home Staffing



Internal LDSS meeting conducted within 1 business day of child's placement with kin caregiver

- Review CPS referral and circumstances that led to the child being placed out of the home
- Identify natural supports to attend the FPM
- Develop plan to prepare family and natural supports for the FPM
- Ensure completion of the Caregiver Assessment
- Address logistical concerns
- Prepare for children attending the meeting
- Ensure safe environment for all participants

Family Decision Making



Caregiver Assessment



- Accurant – criminal history inquiry
- OASIS – child welfare inquiry
- Home visit
- **Permanency Assessment Tool (PAT)**

Background Inquiries
Accurant and OASIS on every
adult 18 years and older

Home visit completed prior to
placement

Household safety
Guns
Prescriptions/alcohol/cannabis
General safety

Permanency Assessment Tool (PAT)



Permanency Assessment Tool

Assessed Relative/Fictive Kin: _____

Child(ren): _____

Assessor Name: _____ Assessment Date: _____

It is crucial that children are immediately placed with relatives/fictive kin when it is determined that they cannot remain safely in their home. This tool must be completed anytime throughout the child welfare continuum when there is a need for a child to be placed outside of their home. This tool must be used to assess relatives/fictive kin for parental child safety placements and kinship foster care.

The purpose of this tool is to engage families and understand what is needed for the best outcome for the child(ren) and family.

Relative and Fictive Kin Options	
Parental Child Safety Placement	Relative and Fictive Kin Resource Family
Background Checks <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Every adult 18+ in the home will need criminal history inquiry completed in Accurant. Every adult 18+ in the home will need child welfare history inquiry completed in OASIS. 	Background Checks <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Every adult 18+ in the home will need criminal check/Central Registry Every adult will need to do Fieldprint criminal checks within 72 hours of placement. All household adults will need current ID for Fieldprint Anyone transporting child will need DMV check (inquire about any recent driving offenses/number of points on license).
Home Visit <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete home visit prior to placement. 	Home Visit <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete home visit prior to placement.
Household safety <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Guns (need to be locked/stored separately from ammunition) Prescriptions/alcohol/cannabis General safety 	Household safety <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Guns (need to be locked/stored separately from ammunition) Pets (need to be up to date on vaccinations) Smoke alarms (must have them and be functioning) Prescriptions/alcohol/cannabis General safety
Additional Information for Parental Child Safety Placements is available on the Criminal History and Child Welfare Inquiry Job Aids available on FUSION.	Health Examinations (within 6 months of placement) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Resource parents must have a physicals completed (physical is no older than 13 months from approval). All household members must have TB screens completed (no older than 13 months from approval).
	Training/expectations (within 6 months of placement) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mandatory pre-service resource parent training (Traditions of Caring preferred) Mandated Reporter online training 3 personal references required Home study interviews (minimum of 3)

032-25-161-01-eng (07/24)

Household Configuration

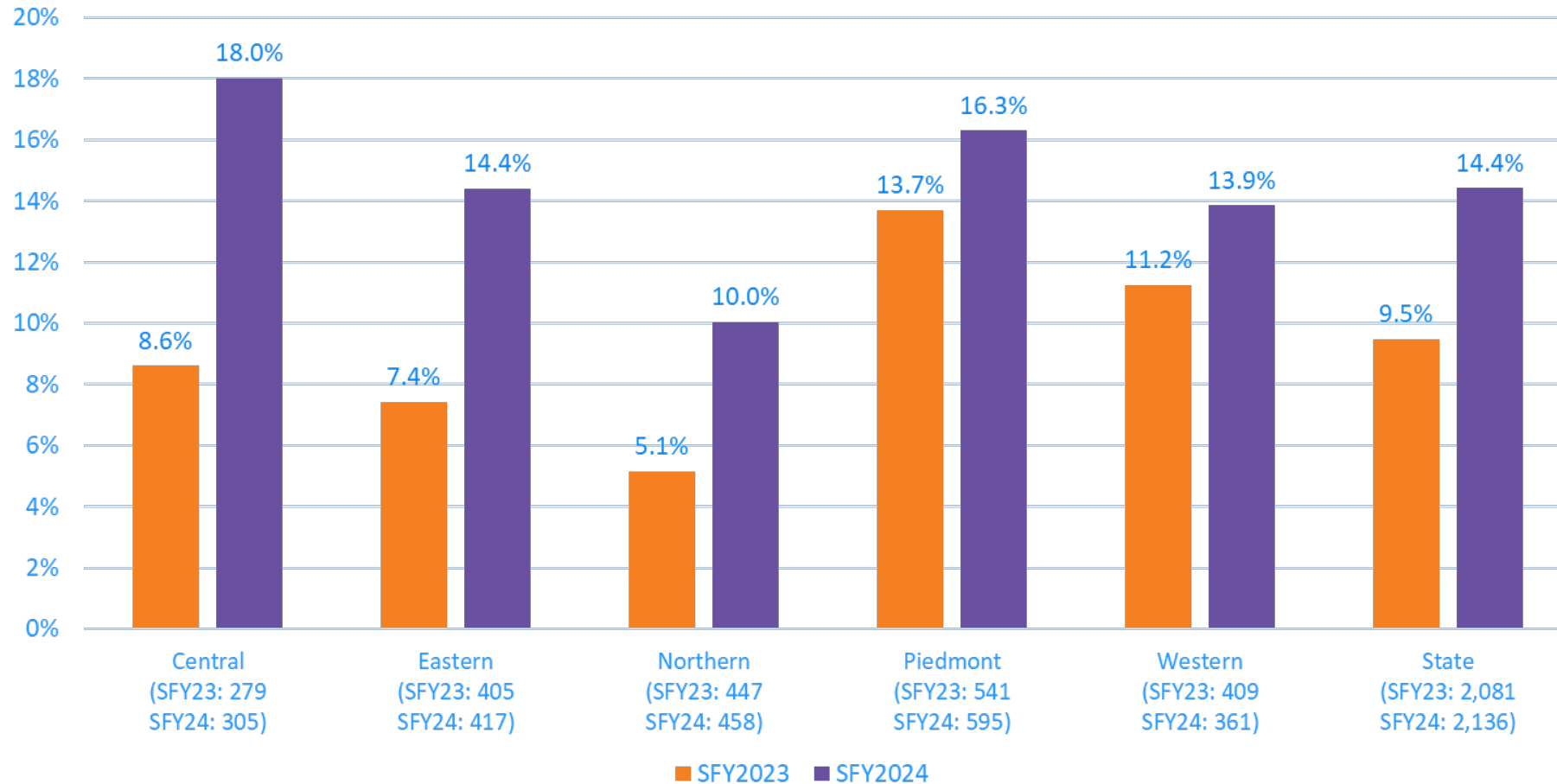
Prospective Kinship Caregiver

Parenting

Conflict Management

First Placement for New Entries - Kinship

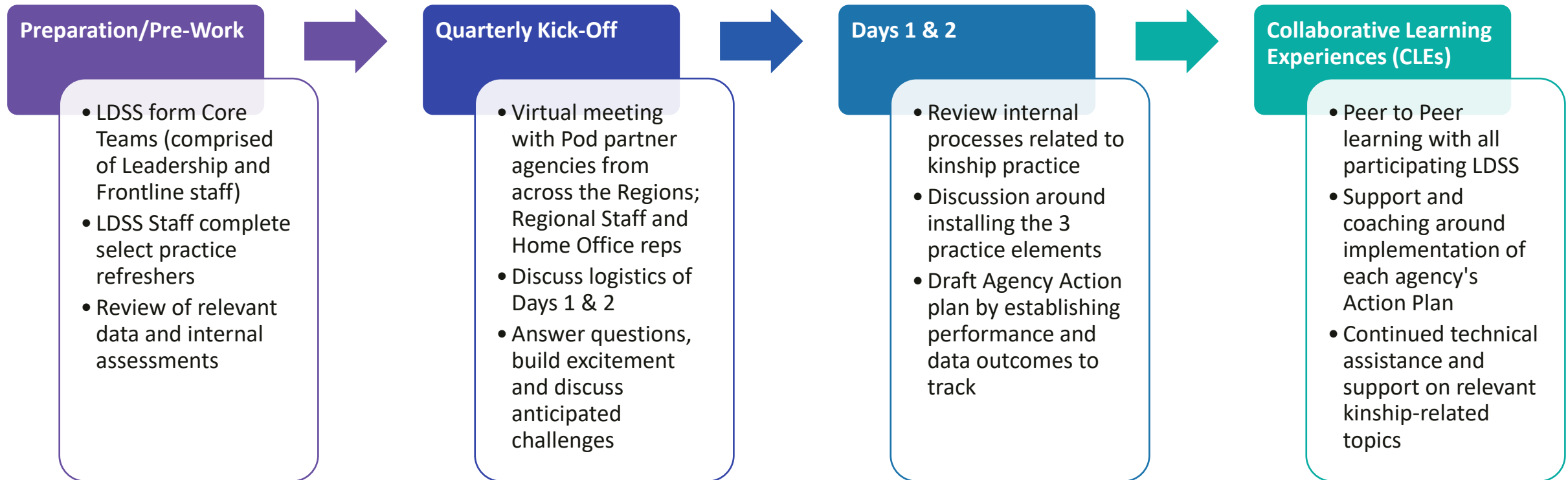
Percentage of New Entries First Placed in a Kinship Placement (Under 18)
SFY2023 and SFY2024



Source: Kin First Now Power BI Dashboard (refresh date 7/22/2024). The total number of new entries is listed under the region by SFY. This data is determined by the placement sequence number and entry date in placement. It may not include children that re-entered foster care.

What's Next for Kin First Now?

» All Agencies who have not had an individual KFN visit will participate in a Pod in 2025 (3 Pods per 5 Regions)





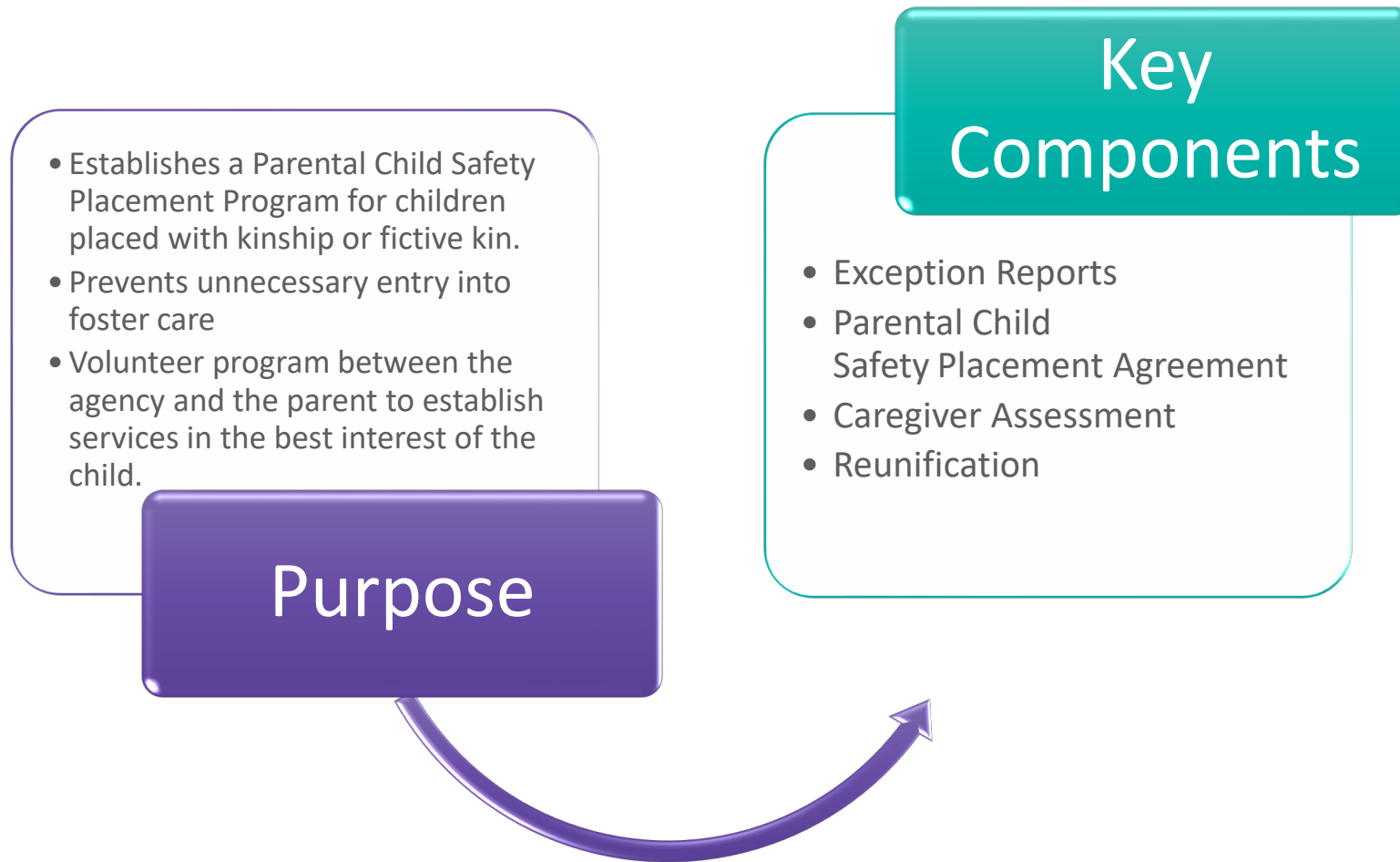
Parental Child Safety Placement Program

Basis for the Legislation





SB39/HB27 Parental Child Safety Placement Program



Establish guardrails to protect children and families

Promote family driven decisions

Increase placements with kin and fictive kin

Child-focused and family centered practice

Preservation of parental rights

Transform prevention services for families

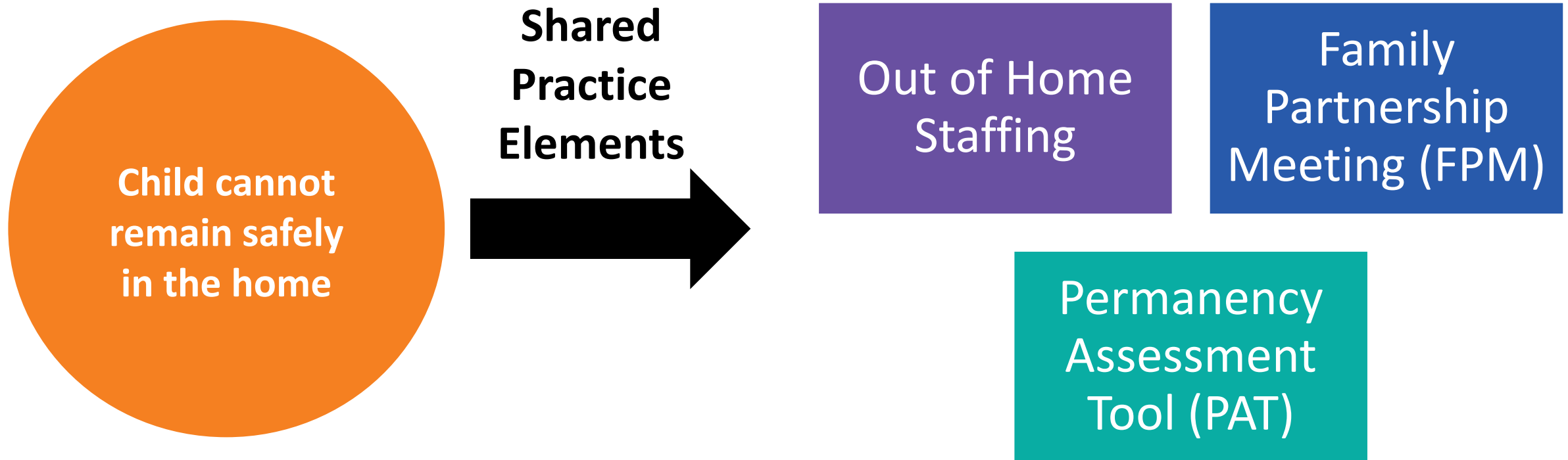
Establish streamlined processes for LDSS

Goals of the Parental Child Safety Placement Program (PCSPP)





Intersection of KFN and PCSPP





Family First Prevention Services Act

The vision for Family First is to keep children safe, strengthen families, and reduce the need for foster care whenever it is safe to do so.



Purpose of Kinship Navigator Program

Support

- Support kin caregivers by providing stability and permanency for children, serving as a resource for both formal and informal caregivers, and promoting a Kin First culture in Virginia.

Benefits

- Provides comprehensive support for kinship families, ensuring access to essential services, promoting family preservation and cultural connections, and addressing the needs of all kin caregivers, regardless of child welfare involvement.

Successes

- Access to community-specific services on a voluntary basis. High satisfaction among kin caregivers. Established partnerships with community partners (e.g., schools, health departments, private providers). Support groups, case management, and community events.

5 Current Kinship Navigator Programs:

- *VDSS has proposed for 15 more Kinship Navigators in our decision package.



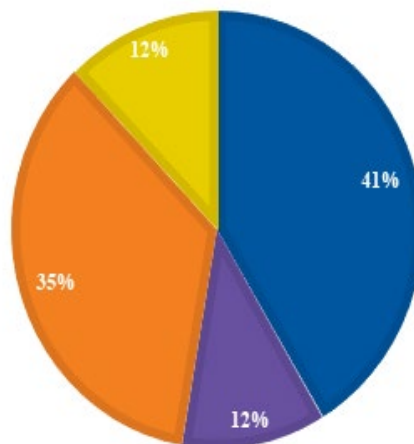
Kinship Navigator Services

Youth and Kinship Caregivers Served by Kinship Navigator Programs July 2022-Dec 2023

Locality	Youth Served	Kinship Caregivers Served
Arlington	102	86
Bedford	74	51
Dickenson	160	141
James City County	64	80
Smyth	29	27
Total	429	385

CAREGIVERS

■ Ages 18-60+ ■ 60+ ■ Grandparents ■ Aunts/uncles



SEPTEMBER IS KINSHIP CARE MONTH

The Kinship Navigator Program of Southwest Virginia has been working hard for YOU!
We are entering our 7th year of service.

Kinship Care is defined as children and youth living with relatives such as aunts, uncles, grandparents, siblings, extended family or fictive kin.

What do we do?

- Work one on one with kinship caregivers
- Community events
- Presentations to organizations
- Collaborate with organizations
- Offer and attend support groups



We finished the month of August with a record number of 44 new client referrals to assist!



Our 4 Pillars of Service

- Information
- Education
- Referrals to Resources
- Advocacy



Left to right: Melaney Bass, Nancy Boyd, Jordan Lester, Tina Presley

There is NO cost for this program

Contact us at 276-926-7179



KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Have to be intentional about any “mis-messaging” that may have occurred by VDSS
 - Ex. Of "keep kids out of foster care at all costs"
- Important to track data
 - Ex. Kin First Now dashboard
- Monitor impact of policy and legislative impacts
- Partner with other entities to support the work
 - Ex. Division of Child Support Enforcement for increased opportunities for fatherhood engagement



For more information...

Virginia Kinship Resource Guide
(kinshipvirginia.com)

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