

# National Foster Care Month Webinar Series: Building Blocks Toward Permanent Families

## Part 1: Integrated Systems Approach to Permanency-Focused Programs

*Monday, May 12, 2014  
2:00-3:30 PM EDT*

[www.nrcpfc.org](http://www.nrcpfc.org)



NATIONAL RESOURCE CENTER  
FOR PERMANENCY AND  
FAMILY CONNECTIONS  
at the Hunter College  
Silberman School of Social Work



a service of the Children's  
Bureau – ACF/DHHS and  
member of the T&TA Network

# National Foster Care Month 2014

Building Blocks Toward  
Permanent Families

[www.childwelfare.gov/  
fostercaremonth](http://www.childwelfare.gov/fostercaremonth)



## Welcome and Introductions

**Taffy Compain**

**National Foster Care Specialist**

**Children's Bureau**



**Children's Bureau**



# Webinar Agenda

- **Welcome and Introductions**

*Taffy Compain, National Foster Care Specialist,  
Children's Bureau*

- **Opening Remarks**

*JooYeun Chang, Associate Commissioner,  
Children's Bureau, ACF*

# Webinar Agenda (continued)

- **Permanency Presentations**

*Debra Emerson, TX CPS Director, Permanency, Family and Youth Services; Jenny Hinson, Division Administrator for Permanency, TX CPS; Darlene Byrne, Judge, 126<sup>th</sup> District Court, Travis County TX; Celeste Bodner, Founder and Executive Director, FosterClub; Dashun Jackson, FosterClub, Former Foster Youth*

- **Questions and Answers via online chat**

- **Closing Remarks**

*Taffy Compain, National Foster Care Specialist, Children's Bureau*



# Children's Bureau



**JooYeun Chang**  
**Associate Commissioner**  
**Children's Bureau, ACF**

**Opening Remarks**





# Perspectives on Permanence



Jenny Hinson, DFPS Division Administrator for Permanency  
Darlene Byrne, 126<sup>th</sup> District Court, Travis County, TX



Celeste Bodner, Director, FosterClub  
Dashun Jackson, 2013-14 FosterClub All-Star from Nevada

# About DFPS

The Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) works with communities to protect children, the elderly, and people with disabilities from abuse, neglect, and exploitation. It also works to protect the health and safety of children in daycare, as well as foster care and other types of 24-hour care. We do this through investigations, services and referrals, regulation, and prevention programs. DFPS has four major programs that do this important work.

- Adult Protective Services
- Child Protective Services
- Child Care Licensing
- Prevention and Early Intervention

**Child Protective Services:** Protects children from abuse and neglect through investigations, services, foster care, and adoption.

- 46,649 children and youth in DFPS conservatorship during FY13
- On average, there are approximately 30,000 children and youth in DFPS conservatorship



# About FosterClub

The national network of young people in foster care



Built for youth, powered by youth, changing life in foster care.



# Outline

- Defining Permanence
- A Paradigm Shift in Texas
- Shifting Youth Perspective
- Texas CPS Programs & Practices
- Outcomes in Travis County
- FosterClub's Youth Tools
- Q & A

# Permanency

Permanency is the term used to refer to a child exiting from DFPS care into an appropriate, permanent setting. Planning for permanency begins the moment CPS removes a child from the home and places the child in substitute care. It is a process that does not end until a child exits DFPS conservatorship, preferably to a permanent family setting.

# Permanency

{ What does it really mean?



# Permanency: A Youth Perspective

They're always talking about this Permanency stuff. You know social workers. . .lawyers . . . always using these big social work terms to talk about simple things. One day one of them finally described what she meant by permanency.

After I listened to her description, which was the first time anyone ever told me what the term meant, I said, "Oh, that's what you mean? Yeah, I want permanency in my life. I don't think I ever had that! When can I get it?"

*Youth in care*



*Foster-ness:*

*The feeling of not quite being in solid.*

*The sense of non-commitment.*

*The state of temporary.*

-Charlotte Ayanna

Author, former Miss Teen USA, actress, and former foster youth from her book "Lost in the System"

**Positive permanency** is the philosophy which guides DFPS staff in permanency planning for children in DFPS conservatorship. At its most basic, it means that DFPS seeks an outcome in which the child exits DFPS care into a permanent setting which includes a legal relationship to a family. Positive permanency is achieved when children are reunified, adopted, or permanent custody is given to another individual.

6211.1 Philosophy of Positive Permanency

# Positive Permanency



# Permanence: how does a youth know if they have it?

I have an adult who gives me good advice.

I have an adult who will/did attend my graduation ceremony.

I have an adult who values and listens to my opinion.

I have an adult who is concerned about my education.

# ... and some even harder questions

The adults I live with now will care about me in the same way once I leave foster care.

I have an adult who would bathe me if I got too sick to bathe myself.

I have an adult who I remember with a holiday card or some small birthday gift.

# 6211.2 Permanency Benefits of Permanency from a Child's Perspective

For a children and youth, permanency is not theoretical; it is about “belonging” and having ongoing connections to significant people in their lives. At its most basic, permanency is about assuring the child that someone will be in his or her life to provide support now and in the future.

For a child or youth, this means that DFPS staff must strive to identify an appropriate permanent family setting in which a child or youth can:

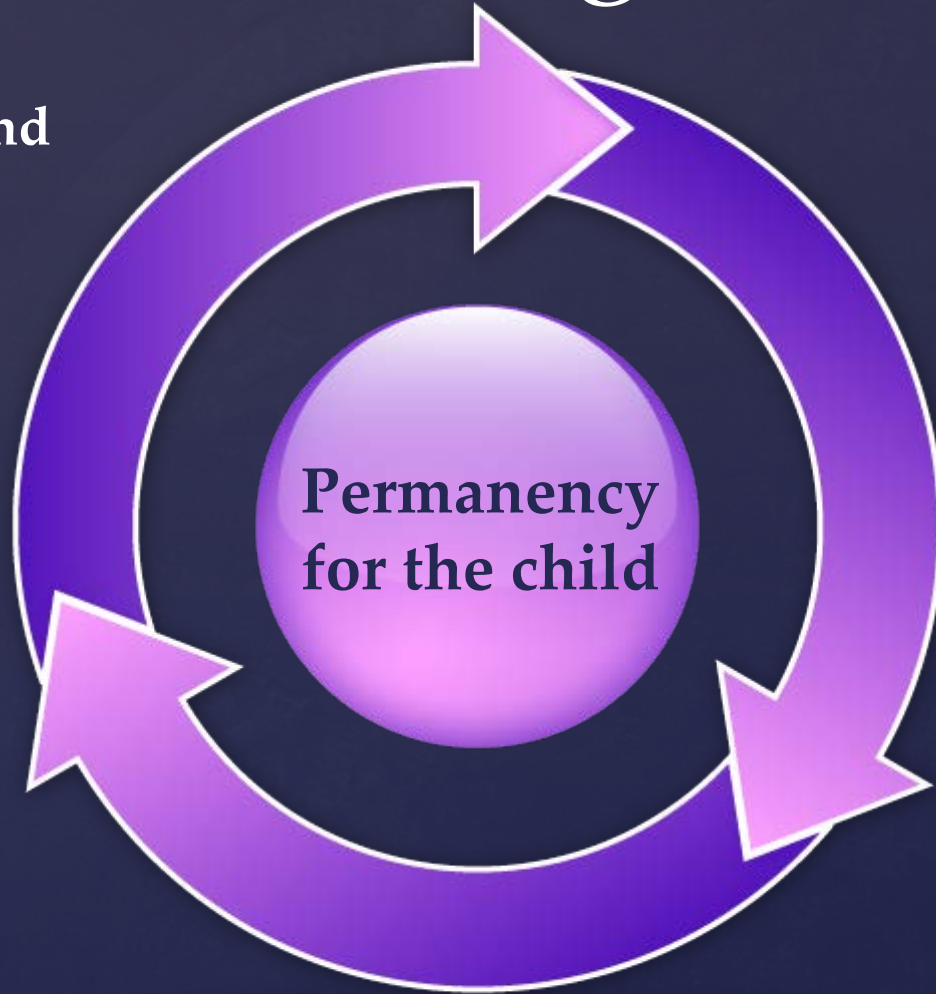
- develop a reciprocal strong relationship with the people who are providing his or her day-to-day care;
- feel a sense of belonging as a member of the family or household;
- develop trust in his or her relationships with others;
- feel a part of a wider family, friendship and community network;
- feel loved and valued for who the child or youth is;
- experience continuity of culture, language and religion;
- develop a knowledge and acceptance of his or her birth family and personal life history;
- expect that placement will continue;
- have contact with the people who are significant to him or her; and,
- understand and exercise his or her rights and responsibilities as a member of the family or household, and in the community.



# The Paradigm Shift

CPS Policy and  
Practice

State Level  
Collaboration



Direct Delivery

# 5 Questions to Guide the Process

- What will it take?
- What can we try again?
- What can we do differently?
- What can we do concurrently?
- How can we engage the child and family (*or system*) in developing & implementing the plan?

# CPS Program and Practices

- Redefined Permanency and provided context and benefits w/in policy handbook
- Enhanced Family Centered Safety Decision Making (EFCSDM)
- Permanency Values Training
  - Requirement for all staff FY15
- Permanency Roundtables
- Kinship Program
  - Permanency Care Assistance
  - Kinship Development Workers
- Permanency Planning Meetings
- Annual Interdepartmental trainings for staff and managers
- Enhanced Visitation Model

# CPS Program and Practices Continued

- Redefined criteria for permanency goals
  - No APPLA before age 16
  - Only used if ALL others ruled out
  - Supervised Independent Living (SIL)
  - Transitional Living Services
- Partnership with Faith Based community
- Family Group Decision Making Meetings
- Parent Program Specialist
- Fatherhood Program Specialist
- Youth Specialists
- Parent Collaboration Group
- Youth Leadership Council
- Disproportionality



# Stakeholder Collaborations and Practices

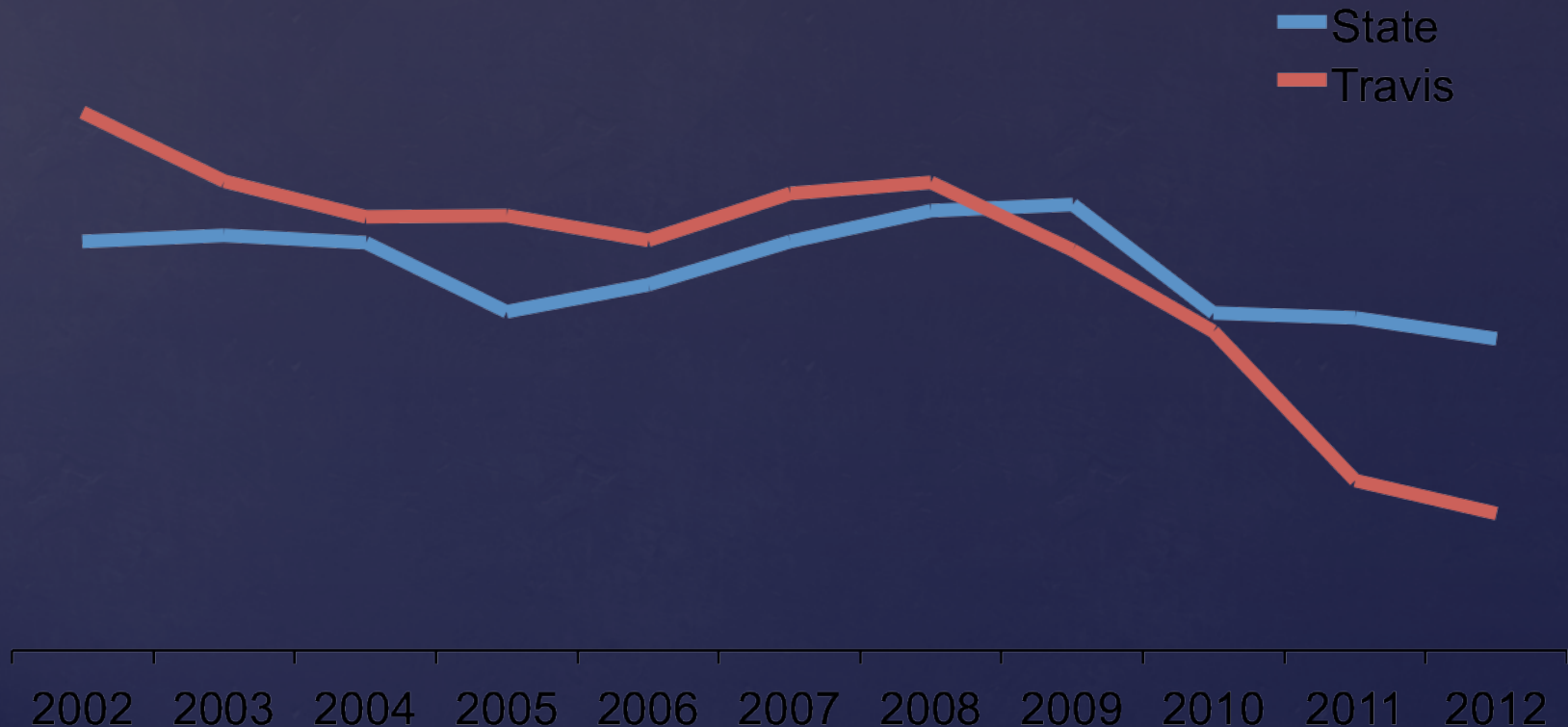
- Topical Roundtables led by Children's Commission
  - Permanency
  - Notice and Engagement
  - Visitation
- Internal and External workgroups
  - Community stakeholders
  - Child Welfare Advocates
  - Legal stakeholders
  - Parents, youth, and family
- Permanency Summit 2012
- Cross Training with CASA
- Court Report Collaboration
- Judicial Bench Book
- Judicial Conferences hosted by the Children's Commission

# Spotlight on Travis County, Texas

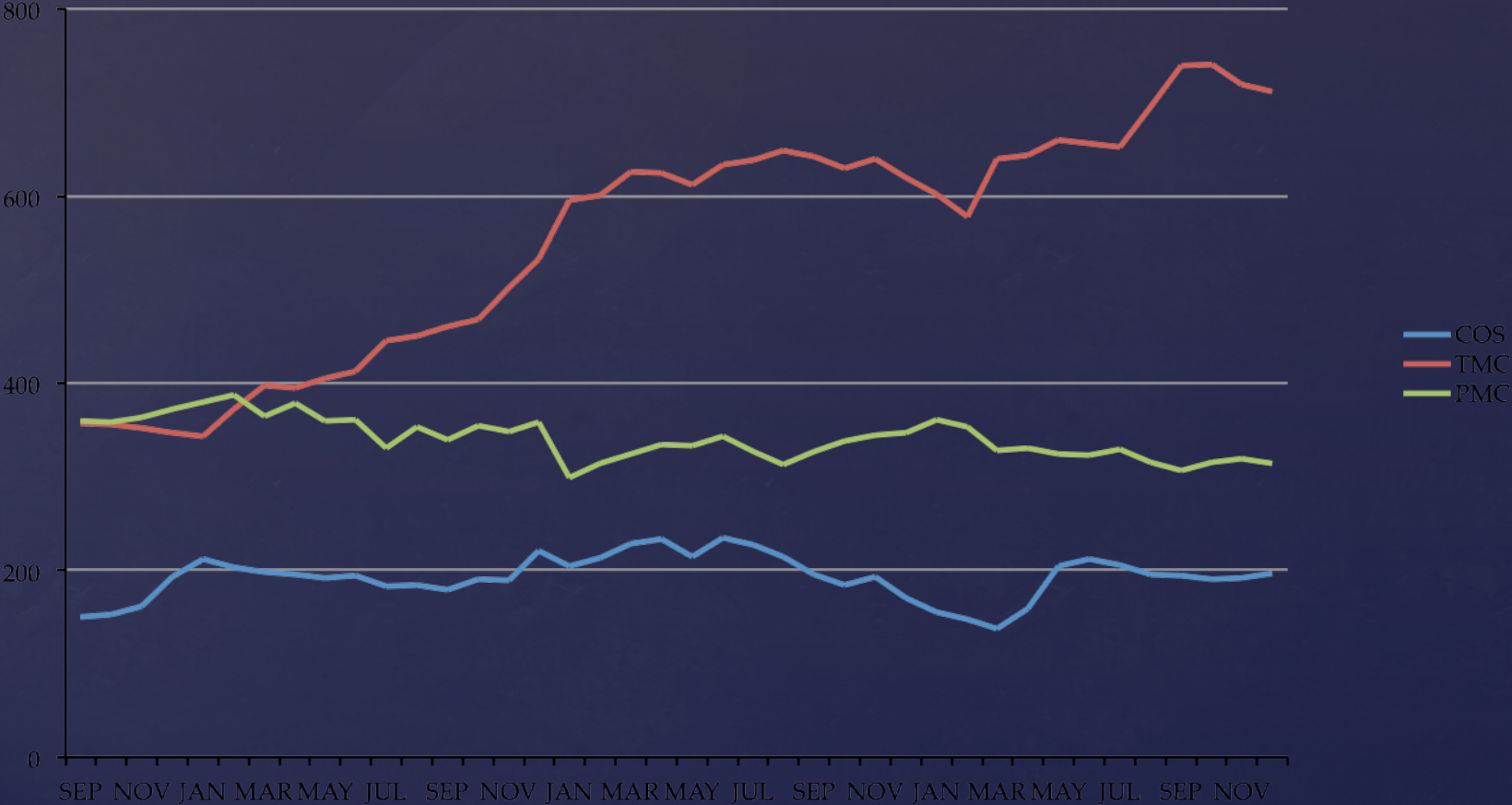
Local practices supporting Permanency

# Travis Has Significantly Reduced Children in PMC

Children in PMC at End of Year



# Travis County - No. of Children – Sept, 2009-Dec, 2012





# Travis County Practices

- Permanency is Considered Early & Often
  - Emergency Removals – COS favored where PCSP exists / TMC is avoided unless absolutely necessary
    - Judge Reviews Affidavit for efforts such as Family Group Conference, locating PCSP
    - Court orders Placements where DFPS can't recommend
- Efforts made to try to make the first placement the last placement
- Relative Caregivers given strongest consideration
  - Criminal History Challenges - Court can order placement and order risk assessments or encourage the family to seek administrative review.

# Travis County Practices (cont.)

- Permanency is considered at each hearing – “Why can’t the child go home today?”
- 81% of all Children have a CASA GAL
- Placement Review Hearings –
  - Held Every 3-4 Months (even though law requires every 6 months)
  - Practice - Reduced time between final order and first PMC hearing (predating state law change)
  - For Children in PMC without Termination, consider alternatives that might make permanency possible.

# Other Travis Permanency Efforts:

- One Judge / One Family
- Parent Representation Pilot
- Court Ordered Services Pilot
- Family Drug Treatment Court
- Aggressive Family Finding Efforts (Family Search & Engagement Initiative)
- Parent Coaching / Services Initiative
- Parent Partners Initiative

# Engagement of Child and Youth



Nothing  
about us  
without  
us!





# Getting Solid

*We need to assume youth need support in finding the answers to these questions:*

- What is it?
- Do you have it?
- Why you'd want it
- Why some fear it
- How to get it

*A youth's guide to permanence*

grandfather  
adoptive parent  
mentor  
aunt  
brother  
father  
mother  
step parent  
me  
uncle  
nephew

**what is permanence?  
do i have it?  
why should i want it?  
why do some fear it?  
how do i get it?**

# GETTING SOLID

built for youth | powered by youth | changing life in foster care

get educated  
advocate  
speak up  
belong  
involved + informed

**FosterClub** the national network for young people in foster care | [www.fosterclub.com](http://www.fosterclub.com)

# Shifting Youth Perspectives

FosterClub seeks to help youth “get solid”:

- Understand what it means to find permanence
- Develop a forward-looking view of the benefits of permanence
- Analyze and overcome their own fears:
  - “I already have a family.”
  - “I don’t need anybody.”
  - “Why try? It won’t work anyway.”

# Fantasy can also be a barrier

“I thought about my father. In my mind he grew to legendary status. He might be a famous sports figure one day or a singing star the next.”

-Antwone Fisher

Author, subject of movie

# Empowering youth

- Developing youth capacity for Relational Health
- Helping young people cope with ambiguous loss
- Assist youth in navigating complex family relationships
- Building skills and perspectives that lend to resilience



# How does a youth get it?

Know what your current plan is.

Speak up about what you want.

Take inventory of people in your life.

Get connected to supportive adults

At FosterClub, we call it

**GETTING SOLID...**

# Permanency Pact



*Life-long, kin-like  
connections between  
a young person and  
a supportive adult*

# FosterClub's Permanency Pact

*A promise between a supportive  
adult and a young person*

*about the kind of support the young  
person can turn to the adult for.*

# 45 suggested supports

- *Home for the holidays*
- *A place to do laundry*
- *Emergency place to stay*
- *Food/occasional meals*
- *Care package at college*
- *Employment opportunity*
- *Job search assistance*
- *Recreational activities*
- *Mentor*
- *Mental health support*
- *Relationship/ marriage advice*
- *Transportation*
- *Assistance with medical appointments*
- *Storage*
- *Motivation*
- *Spiritual support*
- *Legal troubles*
- *Cultural experience*
- *More...*



# In a Permanency Pact...

- *The young person identifies the supportive adult(s)*
- *Somebody they already know*
- *The adult must be willing to commit to a long-term (or lifetime) role in the young person's life*
- *The adult must be able to provide the young person with specific, positive supports*

# Youth Conversations

Use the Permanency Pact to:

- Provide concrete examples of permanence
- Help a youth look forward to the transition – and beyond
- Identify prospective supportive adults

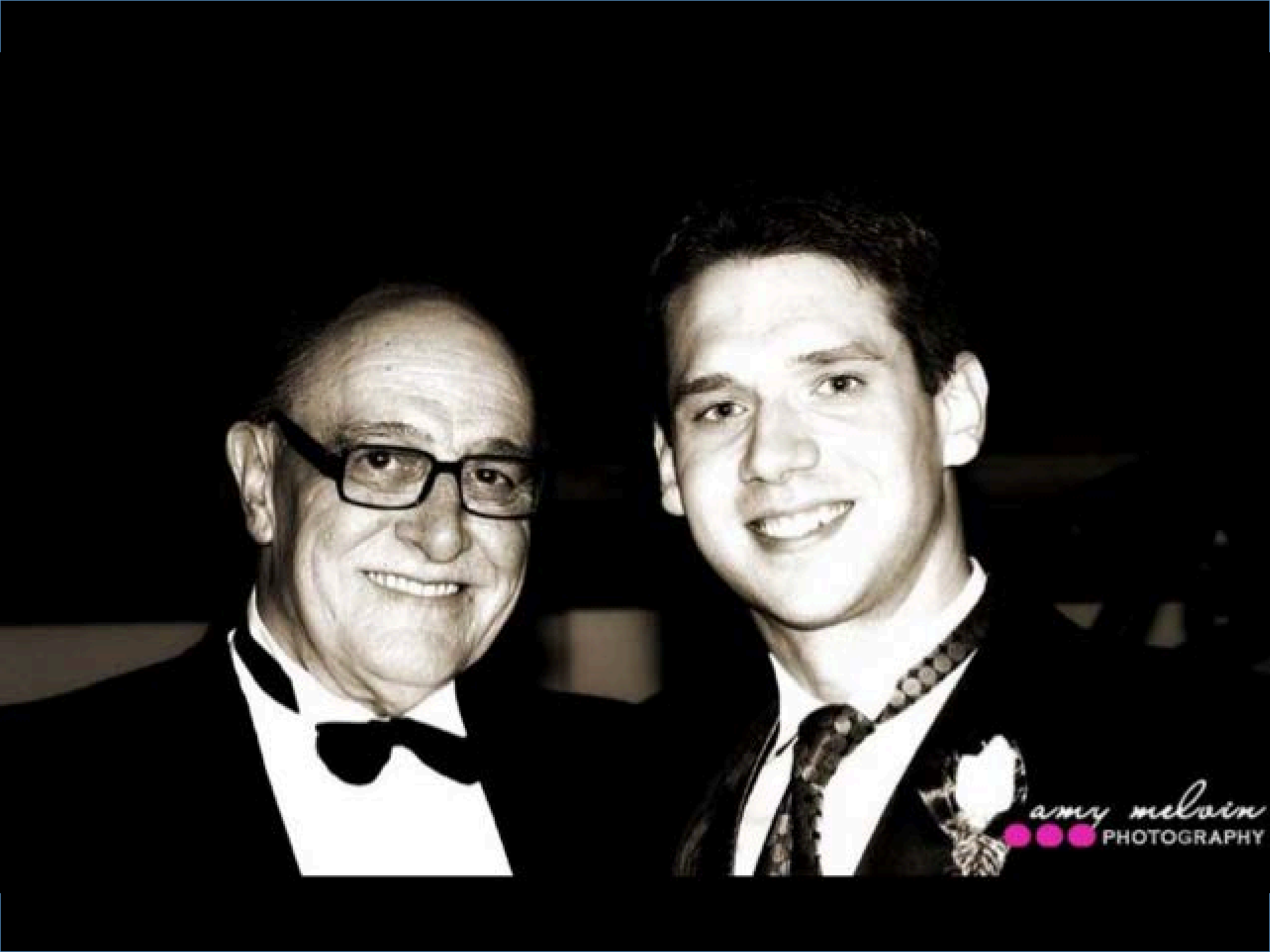
# Right People = Right Roles

- Room for multiple supportive adults (like aunts & uncles)
- Allows for inclusion birth family as part of their permanency circle
- Can add supportive adults without “taking the place” of...
- Allows for organic growth of relationships



08-31-2009





*amy melvin*  
PHOTOGRAPHY

# For more information:

## **Texas Child Protective Services:**

[www.dfps.state.tx.us](http://www.dfps.state.tx.us)

Jenny Hinson, Division Administrator for Permanency

[jenny.hinson@dfps.state.tx.us](mailto:jenny.hinson@dfps.state.tx.us)

512-438-3238

## **Travis County, Texas Court Practices:**

Darlene Byrne, 126<sup>th</sup> District Court, Travis County, TX

[rene.salinas@co.travis.tx.us](mailto:rene.salinas@co.travis.tx.us)

## **FosterClub:**

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# Questions

?????????


*Type a question using the chat  
function on your computer.*

# Resources

- National Foster Care Month 2014: Building Blocks Toward Permanent Families  
<https://www.childwelfare.gov/fostercaremonth/>
- Materials for this event are currently posted on the NRCPFC website at:  
<http://www.nrcpfc.org/teleconferences/may/part-1.htm>



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# Webinar Series

## Webinar 2

### **Real Talk: Myths and Challenges in Permanency Work**

Tuesday, May 20, 2014

2:00-3:30 PM EDT

## Webinar 3

### **Federal Supports to Improving Permanency Outcomes in Child Welfare**

Thursday, May 29, 2014

2:00-3:30 PM EDT

[www.nrcpfc.org/teleconferences/may/](http://www.nrcpfc.org/teleconferences/may/)



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# After the Event

- A feedback survey will be emailed to all participants. We appreciate your feedback!

- The event will be archived on Wednesday 5/21/14 at:  
<http://nrcpfc.org/teleconferences/archives.html>

- Sign up for Weekly Update, NRCPFC's weekly e-newsletter, to receive updates and announcements about future events.

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