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Recruitment of American Indian Foster Parents

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Recruitment of American Indian Foster Parents



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Need

Family Connect is a treatment foster care agency. The agency consistently receives referrals for children who are enrolled members of an Indian tribe and need to be placed in a home that meets the criteria of the Indian Child Welfare Act of 1978 (ICWA). There are a limited number of licensed homes at this agency that meet this criteria. The Indian Child Welfare Act of 1978 specifies:

In any foster care placement, a preference shall be given, in the absence of good cause to the contrary, to a placement with

- i. a member of the Indian child's extended family;*
- ii. a foster home licensed, approved, or specified by the Indian child's tribe;*
- iii. an Indian foster home licensed or approved by an authorized non-Indian licensing authority;*
- iv. an institution for children approved by an Indian tribe or operated by an Indian organization which has a program suitable to meet the Indian child's needs. (Public Law 95-608, 1978)*

Purpose

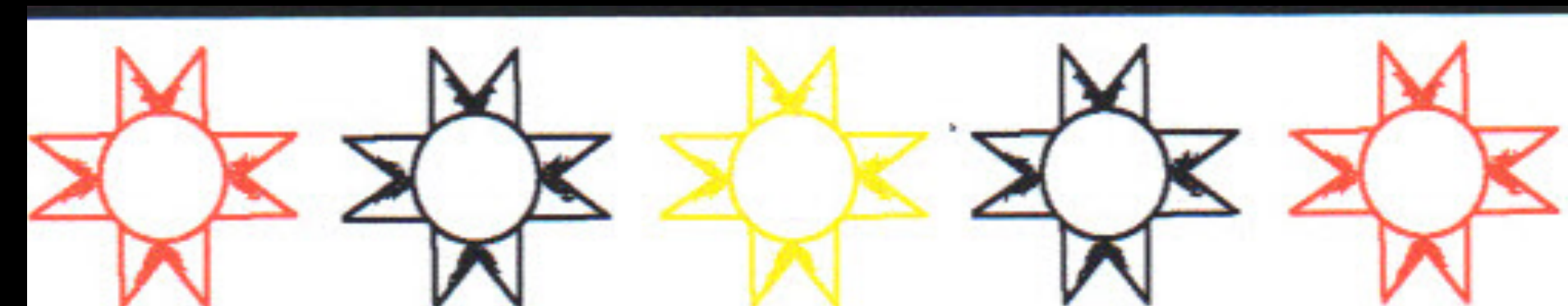
- Help Family Connect meet the needs of Native American Foster Children.
- Increase the number of American Indian families who provide foster care for enrolled (or eligible for enrollment) tribal children.
- Educate all foster families by providing a cultural resource guide.

Literature Review

Kinship bonds, community and tribal connections, values and traditions, language, spirituality, and cultural practices are all elements fundamental to preserving and strengthening Indian Families (Earle, 2000; Kessel & Robbins, 1984 as cited by Bussey & Lucero, 2012).

Because of the placement priority of ICWA when followed and American Indian children in foster care, the foster care family is likely to be extended family members. These family members are more involved in the children's tribal nation and culture. The involvement provides the children with a stronger connection and possibilities to develop a relationship with their tribal nation's social, cultural, and political realm (Cross, 1986; Cross, 2003; Kreisher, 2002 as cited by Cross, 2006).

A brochure can be directed to a specific group, and can give people information on how exactly they can get involved (Hampton, 2013).



An Indian Child



Needs You To Be A Foster Parent



Fostering Culture



A resource guide for Foster Parents who are providing care for Native American Children



Methodology

Key word searches for each part of this project using the Mankato State University Library System and the internet included: *recruitment of American Indian foster parents, ICWA,, developing a brochure, historical trauma of Native Americans, culturally sensitive books for Indian children, American Indian education, culturally appropriate activities and parenting helps*. Material was identified that supported the purpose and literature was integrated for each area. Accuracy discussions with Andrew M. Small, attorney, were conducted.

Recruitment Brochure: A brochure geared specifically toward recruiting Native American families to provide foster care for enrolled (or eligible for enrollment) tribal children that adhere to the Indian Child Welfare Act of 1978 (ICWA) requirements was developed. The target audience is American Indian adults. The reader will gain information on the need, how they can fulfill the need and how they can be supported in their commitment to foster children. They are directed to contact Family Connect to become a licensed foster care parent.

Cultural Resource Brochure: A brochure targeting all foster parents of American Indian children was developed. The reader will gain knowledge on where to access information on cultural activities, history, books and other resources. The reader is directed to contact Family Connect for further support in **fostering American Indian children**.

Recommendations

- The recruitment brochure can be mailed, distributed at presentations and conferences.
- It can be personally distributed to Native American families living off and on the reservations in Minnesota.
- The cultural resource brochure can be used to educate all foster parents, children and staff.
- It can be mailed, distributed at support groups, and delivered at home visits.
- The information on the brochures could be used on posters, flyers, and in media outlets.

Limitations

- The brochures may not reach the intended recipients.
- The recruitment brochure may fail to inspire American Indians adults to apply for foster care licensure.
- The cost of printing may be a deterrent for the agency to follow through and print the brochures.

References

References are available from the author upon request.

Acknowledgments

Brochure artwork by Andrew Charles Vig