

Kinship Care: "When a Common Sense Solution is Politicized"

www.monarchfamilyservices.org

Dr. Valerie D. Jackson

January 24, 2023

Introduction



Presenter: Founder and CEO of Monarch Family Services "Kin First" Child Placing Agency

History of Family Separation



America's historical legacy of family separation, whether against Indigenous communities (i.e. American Indian Residential Schools), African Americans (e.g., slavery), immigrants (e.g., separation at the border).

Policies + Practices



Nationwide, approximately 30% of children in conservatorship live with people considered relatives (Parolini, 2018).

Child Welfare Outcomes



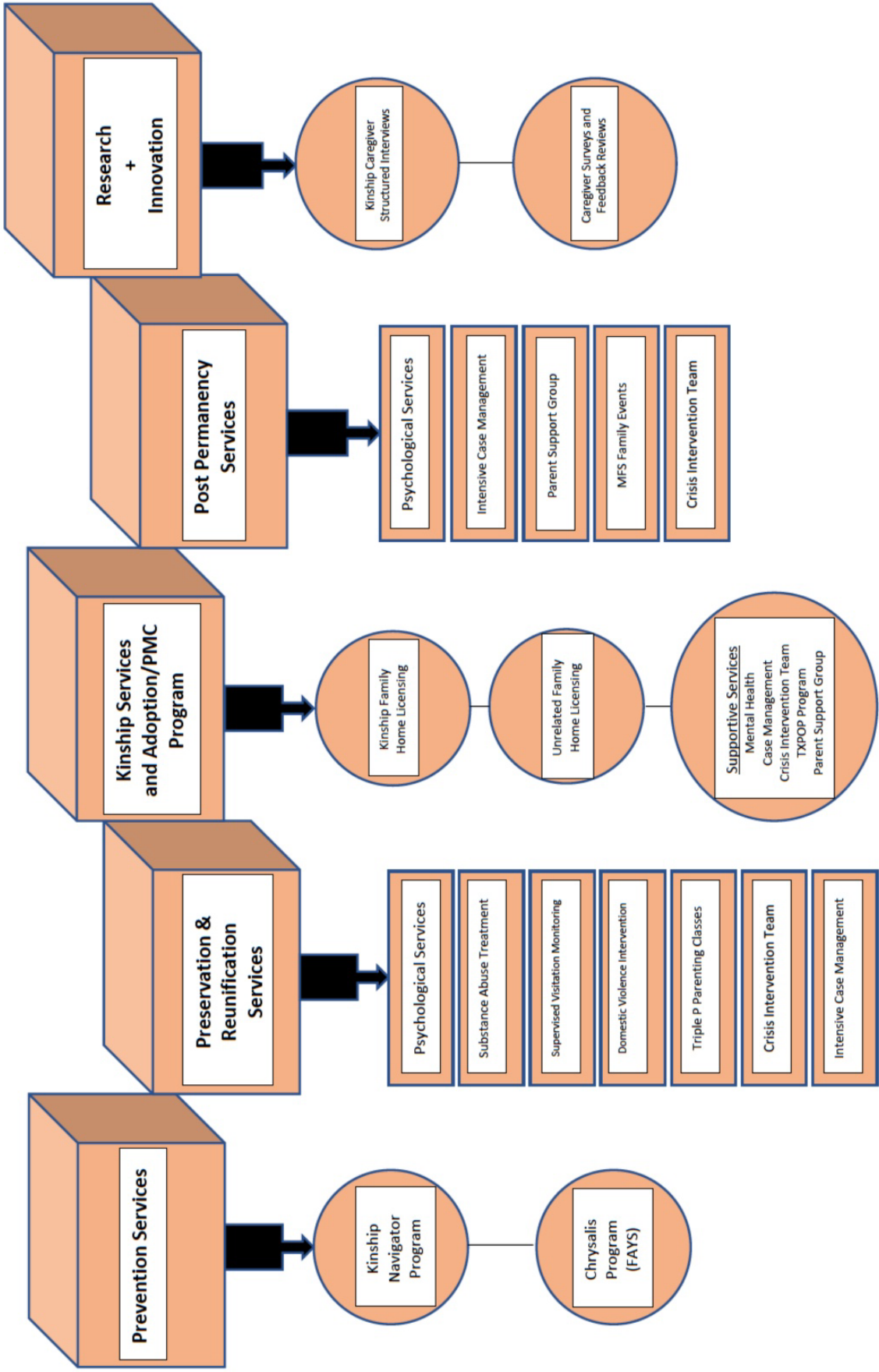
Black children in Texas foster care experience higher rates of placement disruption than White and Hispanic children (Sattler, Font, & Gershoff, 2018).

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- Dr. Valerie D. Jackson, Licensed Clinical Psychologist
- Service Provider for Child Welfare Agencies/Organizations for 23 years - direct care staff, psychologist, program developer, and researcher
- Established Monarch Family Services in 2014 , The Adolescent Center and Mental Health Services in 2015, and Initiatives for Healthy Communities in 2017
- Predominately work with biological parents and relative caregivers
- Program model has successfully delivered compassionate, family-centered services to thousands of families
- Two overriding goals: heal from past trauma and maintain a stable, healthy home environment
- Major focus on mental health services and case management needs
- In 2019, organized a research team in partnership with University of Houston conducted a study on the unique needs of kinship families
- As of 2021, MFS kinship program is accredited by Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF) International

*MFS
Program
Model*

TOC



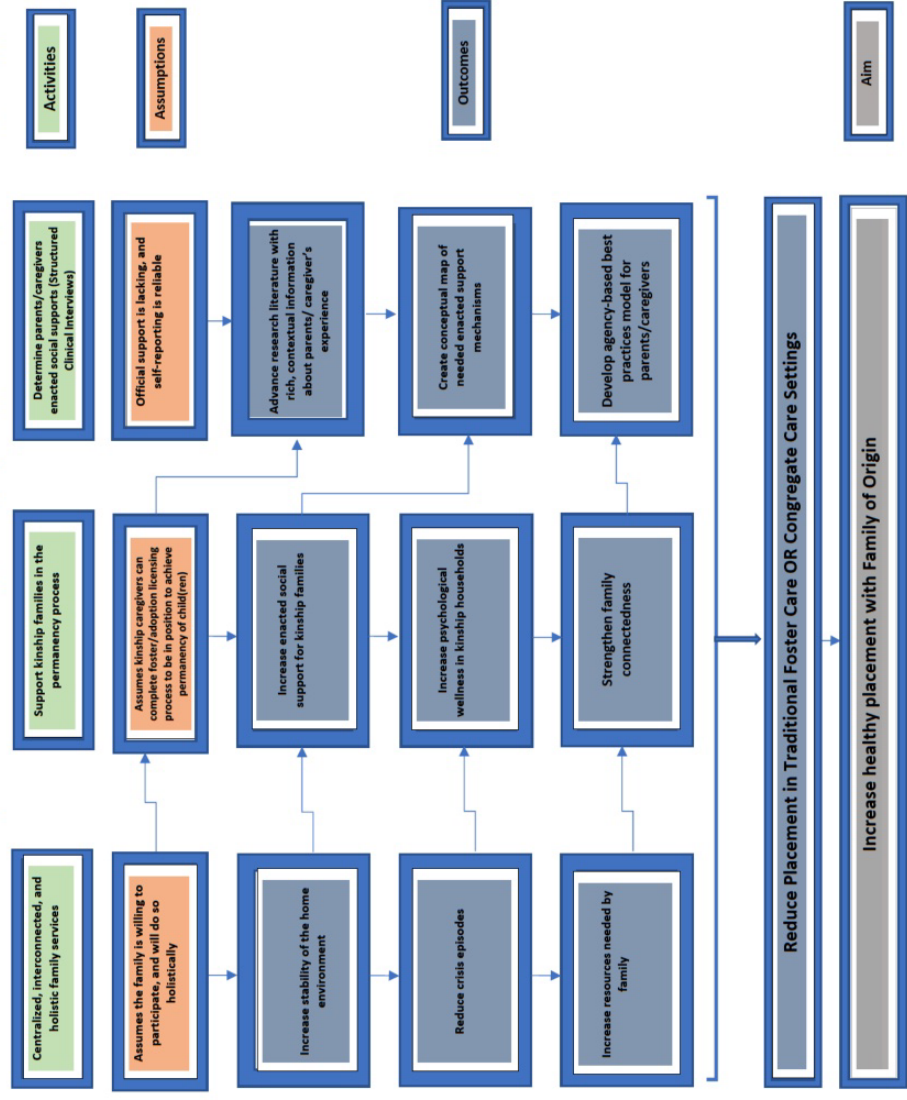
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THEORY OF CHANGE: Increase placement with Family of Origin (Biological Parents and/or Kinship Caregivers)



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*American
Indians*

*African
Americans*

Latino

America's Dark History of Family Separation

BIPOC communities are disproportionately represented in foster care (National Conference of State Legislatures, 2021). In this way, the trauma of being removed from one's home is transmuted by systemic racism in the legal and child welfare systems into a structural issue. Moreover, this practice is intertwined with America's historical legacy of family separation, whether against Indigenous Communities (i.e. American Indian Residential Schools), African Americans (e.g., slavery), Immigrants (e.g., separation at the border).

Why???

American Indian Residential Schools

American Indian residential schools, were established in the United States from the mid-17th to the early 20th centuries with a primary objective of "civilizing" or assimilating Native American children and youth into European American culture. In the process, these schools denigrated Native American culture and made children give up their languages and religion. At the same time the schools provided a basic Western education. These boarding schools were first established by Christian missionaries of various denominations. Parents had to authorize their children's attendance at boarding schools and, if they refused, officials could use coercion to gain a quota of students from any given reservation.

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Why???

America's cruel history of separating children from their parents
By: DeNeen L. Brown (Washington Post, Nov. 31, 2018)

Slavery

- Enslaved mothers and fathers lived with the constant fear that they or their children might be sold away
- The federal government maintained these evils through the fugitive slave laws and other rules which defined African Americans as property with which a slave owner could do whatever they wanted
- The idea of family is simply less important to people of color and that the people involved are less than human
- After the end of the Civil War, thousands of former slaves looked for lost relatives and children who had been sold away from their families

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Why???

“Zero Tolerance” Immigration Enforcement Policy in 2018

- Undocumented asylum seekers were imprisoned, and any accompanying children under the age of 18 were handed over to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS)
- CBS News reports that 2,342 children were separated at the border from more than 2,200 adults between May 5 to June 9
- More than 900 parents have yet to be reunified with their children
- Families are still being separated at the border. As justification, Border Patrol agents are using vague or unproven allegations of suspected gang activity to separate parents from children

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Why???

Common Sense Moment

Why do government policies require the removal of children from their families?

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Child Welfare Bills Supporting Relative Caregivers

Nationwide, approximately 30% of children in conservatorship live with people considered relatives (Parolini, 2018). In Texas, the percentage of formal relative caregivers correlates with the national numbers. The highest rate of relative caregivers is in the South and Southwestern states, with African American families overrepresented compared to the general population of Americans of color.

Title IV-E Waiver

*1980 Adoption
Assistance and Child
Welfare Act*

*1997 Adoption
and Safe
Families Act*

*2008 Fostering to
Connection to
Success and
Increasing
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*2014 Preventing Sex
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Administration
Proposal for
Kinship Families*

1980 Adoption Assistance and Child Welfare Act

- Formal kinship care began in 1979 with *Miller v. Youakim* United States Supreme Court decision
- Mandated that child welfare agencies allow family members that meet the licensing requirements as foster parents receive the same financial benefits (McGowan & Walsh, 2000) as non-related foster parents
- Agencies to make reasonable efforts avoiding unnecessary removal of children from their homes and to reunify foster children with their families (relatives) whenever possible (Rolock, 2015)

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1997 Adoption and Safe Families Act

- Public concern that children remained in foster care for extended periods and/or experienced multiple placements
- Mandates each state to make every effort to find permanent placements and to give preference to relative caregivers when making permanency decisions

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2008 Fostering Connection to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act

Allows States to offer grandparents and other relatives kinship guardian assistance payments when they have assumed legal guardianship of children for whom they have (1) cared for as foster parents; or (2) committed to on a permanent basis

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2014 The Preventing Sex Trafficking and Strengthening Families Act

Provision for relative caregivers ensuring children continue to be cared for by a legal guardian named in the kinship guardianship assistance agreement when the first relative guardian dies or becomes unable to provide care for the child

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2018 Family First Prevention Services Act

- Encourage States to reduce placement of children in congregate care (i.e. residential treatment centers, group homes, shelter, etc.)
- Funding allocated for prevention programs, improvements to the kinship home licensing system, and reforming adoption and legal guardianship processing and programs

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2023 Biden Administration Proposal for Kinship Families

- \$20 billion over a decade to assist kinship families
- Increase the number of foster children who live in kinship care by reimbursing States at a higher rate if they place children with family members instead of in group homes or institutions
- More money for programs that help such families, and to expand a tax credit to include people who take legal guardianship of young family members
- Proposals prioritize keeping children with their birth parents or other relatives

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Title IV-E Waiver + Kinship Care

- Designated for the support of licensed foster care, and only a fraction of federal dollars can be spent to support unlicensed kinship placements
- Kinship caregivers may have the option of becoming licensed foster parents, licensing rules and regulations vary from state to state, and the requirements may deter kin from doing so, thus limiting the services and supports they are eligible to receive
- Child welfare agencies are limited in their ability to create kinship support staff positions and in the funds they can use to assist kinship families
- Compared to children placed in non-relative foster care, children placed with unlicensed kin and whose caregivers received kinship care services spent fewer days in placements, experienced greater placement stability, and were less likely once discharged from placement to re-experience maltreatment or re-enter care.

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Policies + Practices



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Foster Care Outcomes

- Black children in Texas foster care experience higher rates of placement disruption than White and Hispanic children (Sattler, Font, & Gershoff, 2018). These experiences of multiple placement disruptions may undermine children's ability to attach to and trust their adoptive parents or guardians (Dozier, Zeanah & Bernard, 2013), which may contribute to dissolution risk
- Among children in foster care, males are more likely than females to have been removed partly due to behavior problems and to experience restrictive (congregate care) placements (U.S. Children's Bureau, 2015)
- Several studies suggest that compared to the general population, former foster children have poorer physical health
- Lower self-esteem, less happiness, and less satisfaction with life as a whole than general population
- Youth in foster care are less likely to graduate from high school than their peers
- Arrest rates for male former foster children is reported to be over 40%
- The number of former foster children among the homeless may suggest that efforts have fallen short to provide some sort of transition to independence for those who age out of foster care

Foster Care: Bad for Your Health

Researchers found that kids who'd been in foster care were:

- Seven times as likely to experience depression
- Six times as likely to exhibit behavioral problems
- Five times as likely to feel anxiety
- Three times as likely to have attention deficit disorder, hearing impairments and vision issues
- Twice as likely to suffer from learning disabilities, developmental delays, asthma, obesity and speech problems

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Benefits from Kinship Care

- Reduced trauma after removal by providing familiarity, continuity, and retention of familial ties. (Epstein 2017; Ehrle & Geen 2002).
- Improved mental health outcomes. (Epstein 2017; Messing 2006; Winokur, et al. 2018).
- Fewer behavioral problems and better social outcomes. (Holtan, et al. 2005; Rubin, et al. 2008; Sakai, et al. 2011; Winokur, et al. 2018).
- Better educational outcomes and educational stability. (Conway & Hutson 2007; Holtan, et. al. 2005; Mass. Ct. Impr. Prog. 2019).
- Greater placement stability and higher levels of permanency. (Hegar & Rosenthal 2009; Koh 2010; Koh & Testa 2008; Koh & Testa 2011; Sugrue 2019; Winokur, et al. 2018; Winokur, et al. 2018)
- Better cultural, ethnic, racial, and traditional connections to their communities of origin. (Child Wel. Info. Gateway 2021; Conway & Hutson 2007; Hopkins 2020; Nat'l Ass'n of Black Soc. Workers 2003; Sugrue 2019).
- Stronger ties to the child's biological family. (Holtan, et al. 2005; Metzger 2008).
- Greater placement satisfaction for children and youth, including feelings of love and belonging. (Chapman, et al. 2004; Conway & Hutson 2007; Hegar & Rosenthal 2009; Metzger 2008; Montserrat & Casas 2006).

*Services
&
Support*

Kinship Families Services and Support

- Kinship care should generally be prioritized and supported. (Bissell, 2017; Doblin-MacNab 2015; Lin 2014; Miller 2017; Raphael 2008)
- Kinship caregivers need better, and more equitable, access to the financial resources and services available to non-kinship foster families. Their caregiving role often comes unexpectedly, leaving many kinship caregivers unprepared for the financial demands of caring for a child. Consequently, child welfare agencies and state governments should work to provide a greater number of resources to meet the demands of caregiving. (Bailey, et al. 2013; Lin 2014)
- Kinship caregivers need more flexible licensing standards in order to remove barriers to kinship care. (Bissell 2017; Miller 2017)
- Kinship caregivers need better access to and information about supportive services, support groups, and parenting skills training/education. (Castillo, et al. 2013; Collins 2011; Gerard, et al. 2006; Hayslip, et al. 2019; Hayslip & Kaminski 2005; Kirby 2015; Lee & Blitz 2014)
- Kinship caregivers need resources directed to their individualized needs. (Carr, et al. 2012; Hayslip, et al. 2020)
- Child welfare agencies and advocates can better support kinship caregivers if they consider cultural, racial, and ethnic differences and the impact of systematic oppression on different groups. (Carr, et al. 2012; Collins 2011; Fuller-Thompson 2005; Kopera-Frye 2009).

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Services*

*Preservation
&
Reunification
Services*

*Kinship
Permanency
Program*

*Post
Permanency
Services*

Research



MONARCH FAMILY SERVICES

Are you a relative caregiver without CPS involvement? We know it takes a village; therefore Monarch Family Services (MFS) offers supportive services for your entire family! Kinship Navigator Services is our relative caregiver program that can assist you in providing the best care for your grandchildren, nephew, niece, and other kindred relatives.



Relatives who volunteer to provide a home to children in cases where the birth parent(s) cannot provide care are heroes. You and other like you account for the largest population within alternative care arrangements. Benefits of a relative caregiver placement is the ability of most children to maintain in their sibling group, to have strong perceptions of cultural identity and connection, to participate in visits with birth parents, and maintain a stable placement. Monarch Family Services is committed to the stability of the family to ensure children thrive for a lifetime.

Contact us today to learn how kinship navigator services can assist your family!

Monarch Family Services' Merits

- Nationally Accredited Agency by CARF
- Psychologist, Therapist, and Social Workers on staff that work closely with the family
- Highly skilled trauma trained staff
- Utilize evidence based practices
- Consistently offering compassionate and professional services



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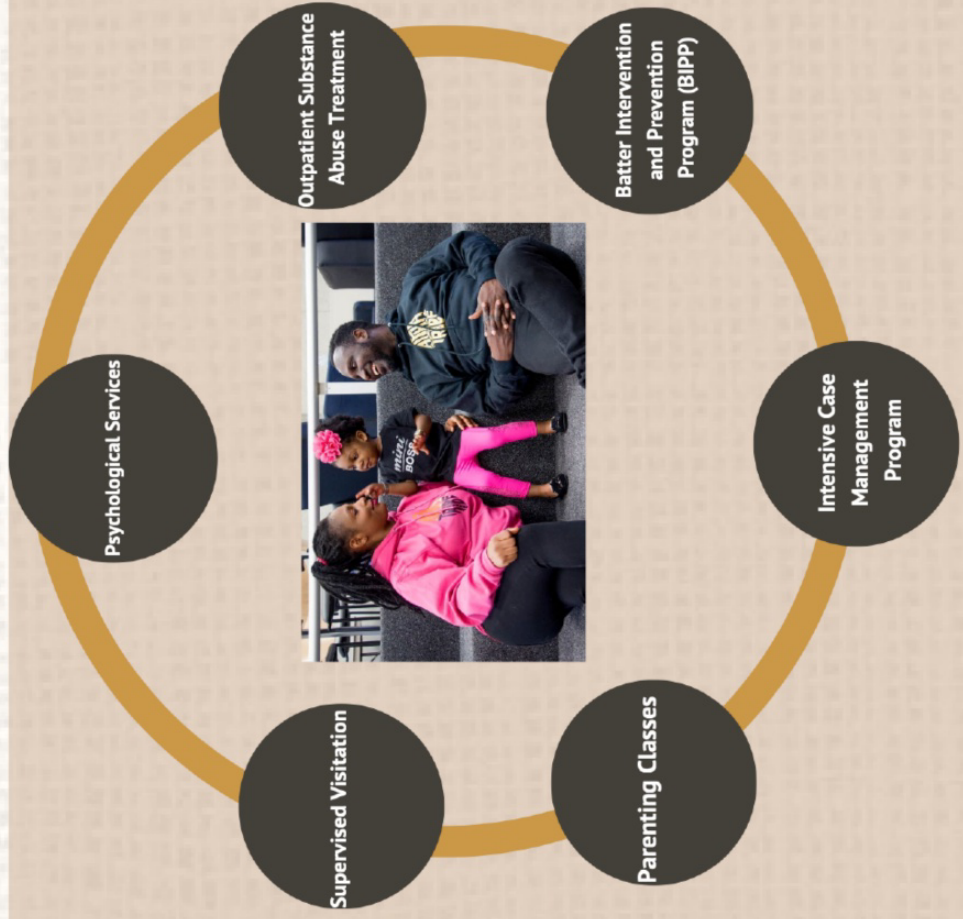
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Research



MONARCH FAMILY SERVICES

PRESERVATION AND REUNIFICATION SERVICES FOR FBSS AND CVS FAMILIES
CONTRACTED DFPS PROVIDER



Psychological Services

Outpatient Substance Abuse Treatment

Batter Intervention and Prevention Program (BIPP)

Intensive Case Management Program

Parenting Classes

Supervised Visitation

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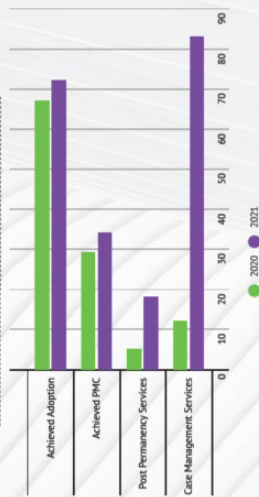
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MONARCH FAMILY SERVICES

Monarch Family Services is a "Kin First" Agency. More than 90% of the families that the agency serves are relative caregivers. The staff in our Kinship Program are well trained and have years of experience successfully getting families through the home licensing process and verified as Adopt, Foster to Adopt, or Foster to Permanency Managing Conservatorship - Permanency Care Assistance home. We have post-permanency support and services available for all our families.



Kinship Families Served in 2020 & 2021



Monarch Family Services' Strengths

- Nationally Accredited Kinship Agency by CARF
- Specialize in working with Kinship Families for over 8 years
- Financial Assistance for home licensing process
- Psychologist, Therapist, and Social Workers on staff that work closely with the family
- Highly skilled trauma trained staff
- 97% success with relative caregivers completing the home licensing process
- Utilize evidence based practices
- Unlimited Post Permanency Support for all families
- Agency conducts kinship family research in partnership with a local University
- Consistently offering compassionate and professional services

"Kinship Factoid"
 Children raised by relatives, as adults have reported better well-being than children in foster care (Winokur et al., 2014)

Monarch Family Services "Kin First" Child Placing Agency

Monarch Family Services (MFS) compassionately and professionally delivers services to improve the lives of children and to strengthen families. Our agency is family-focused because we recognize every child and family have a unique path towards healing. MFS provides integrated and comprehensive services across the family service spectrum. MFS is a Department of Family and Protective Services' provider for those with active Child Protective Services (CPS) cases. The agency has the following programs: Prevention Services, Preservation/Reunification Services, Kinship and Unrelated Adoption, and Post Permanency Services.

*Prevention
Services*

*Preservation
&
Reunification
Services*

*Kinship
Permanency
Program*

*Post
Permanency
Services*

Research



MONARCH FAMILY SERVICES

Monarch Family Services (MFS) post permanency program provides support to our relative caregivers for a lifetime. Relative caregivers and the children previously in the custody of Child Protective Services are offered supportive services on a continual basis after adoption or permanency is achieved through the agency. This assistance is comprehensive and offered throughout all stages of the child's life.

MFS Post Permanency Program



Families can access any of the above services until the child reaches adulthood. However, services are also offered to all adult adoptees in need of guidance and assistance from the agency. Monarch Family Services is committed to the stability of the family to ensure relative caregivers and the children they care for continue to thrive after permanency is achieved.

Monarch Family Services' Strengths

- Nationally Accredited Agency by CARF
- Psychologist, Therapist, and Social Workers on staff that work closely with the family
- Highly skilled trauma trained staff
- Utilize evidence based practices
- Unlimited Post Permanency Support for all MFS families
- Consistently offering compassionate and professional services



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Research

Kinship Research Phase I

Grandma Needs Help!"

Importance of Social Support in Kinship Families

- 8 Kinship Caregivers were recruited from MFS FAD Department
- Research Assistance conducted 1-3 hour structured interviews via Zoom using open ended questioning.
- Interviews were recorded by Zoom and then uploaded to Sonix for transcribing.
- We developed questions, themes, and theories throughout the analytic process by increasing familiarity with the data.
- We identified patterns across the eight interviews, including three types of social support: Enacted, Perceived, and Social Embeddedness
- The interviews were observed by three research assistants to determine the levels of social support that were endorsed by the families.
- The findings were rated and analyzed by the researchers using interrater reliability.
- The findings provided specific actions on what kinship caregivers categorize as support.

Kinship Research Phase II

Fostering Resilience: Increasing Placement Continuity with BIPOC Kinship Families

- Investigates why only 6% of kinship families that are eligible for financial support (home licensing) choose to participate in the process
- Administer surveys to 1,000 kinship caregivers that choose not to participate in the home licensing process.
- Randomly select caregivers (n=100) that completed the survey to participate in a structured interview
- Evaluate the response for all caregivers and difference/similarities from BIPOC and Non-BIPOC
- Findings of this project will inform the State of Texas how to best communicate the home licensing process and benefits; government building trust with BIPOC kinship families, and the best methods to support the kinship families that have the greatest needs

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Research

Kinship Care: "When a Common Sense Solution is Politicized"

www.monarchfamilyservices.org

Dr. Valerie D. Jackson

January 24, 2023

Introduction



Presenter: Founder and CEO of Monarch Family Services "Kin First" Child Placing Agency

History of Family Separation



America's historical legacy of family separation, whether against Indigenous communities (i.e. American Indian Residential Schools), African Americans (e.g., slavery), immigrants (e.g., separation at the border).

Policies + Practices



Nationwide, approximately 30% of children in conservatorship live with people considered relatives (Parolini, 2018).

Child Welfare Outcomes



Black children in Texas foster care experience higher rates of placement disruption than White and Hispanic children (Sattler, Font, & Gershoff, 2018).

Interview with the Arizmendi Family

- How did the children come to be in your care?
- What were the triumphs? challenges?
- How can the child welfare system be changed to assist kinship caregivers more effectively? In a “perfect world,” how would the system have supported you as a kinship family?

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GRAZIE VINAKA

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