

**FSC Information:**

Fostering Sustainable Connections (FSC) is a Department of Child/youth Safety program intervention which works to engage youth living in congregate care by identifying connections and supportive relationships in their life. This program also seeks to identify family-like settings or permanent placement options for our child/youth in congregate care. The program's framework is the Family Finding Model created by Kevin Campbell. Methods used by the Family Engagement Specialists (FES) to engage children/youth in the Family Finding process include engagement activities and electronic search engines. FSC seeks to improve family engagement, and to foster connections and supports for the child/youth while increasing family involvement in decision making. DCS is committed to reducing the number of child/youth currently living in congregate care (group homes and shelter care); in addition to reducing the length of time they spend there. FSC works closely with the family, relatives, the child/youth, and life-long supportive networks for the child/youth to ensure a variety of services and supports are available to help the child/youth and those caring for them.

What to expect from the Family Engagement Specialist once a case is assigned:

The FES will determine with the DCSS what search and engagement efforts are needed; meet with the child and contact family/supports to explore and discover connections; utilize techniques provided through the Family Finding model to assist in the development of a supportive network; facilitate discussions and meetings for a Blended Perspective Meeting and planning for the child; coordinate with the child, family, DCSS, others, and TDM Facilitator when a Life Long Connections (LLC) TDM is needed; prepare the child and family for the LLC TDM; assist the DCSS with ensuring formal and natural supports are in place throughout the FSC process; and Determine with the DCSS and the family/supports the type of follow-up contact needed and at what intervals.

**What FSC needs from the DCSS:**

Collaborate with the FES regarding search and engagement efforts; coordinate with the FES on efforts being made to assist in the development of a supportive network; participate in any Blended Perspective Meetings, facilitated by the FES; attend the LLC TDM (if applicable) to assist in the decision making process and development of a plan outlining supports leading to permanency; with the FES assistance, coordinate any transition efforts to a Family Like Setting; facilitate service referrals to in-home, community, or behavioral health services when needed; and determine with the FES and supportive network the type of follow-up contact needed and at what intervals.

**Eligibility Criteria:**

All referrals are required to be sent to [FSC@AZDCS.gov](mailto:FSC@AZDCS.gov).

A child/youth is eligible to be served by Fostering Sustainable Connections when all of the following criteria are met:

1. The child/youth is currently placed in a group home setting;
2. The child/youth is between the ages of 0 to 17.5.

3. The child/youth has not been referred or received Child-Specific Recruitment Services or Casey Family Programs.
4. If the child's/youth's permanency goal has been Reunification exceeding six months an FSC referral may be submitted if determined appropriate by the DCS Specialist.

Higher Level of Care Determination FSC will be available for child/youth placed in a higher level of care with special consideration for specific levels of care on a case to case basis. Cases must be reviewed by the FSC Statewide Coordinator and staffed with the DCSS.

**Please contact [Lauren.Zanotti@azdcs.gov](mailto:Lauren.Zanotti@azdcs.gov) with any questions.**

Thank you!