

DESTINATION FAMILY

EVERY CHILD DESERVES A SAFE, NURTURING, AND PERMANENT CONNECTION TO FAMILY



No child is "unadoptable." Every youth deserves the love and commitment of a safe and nurturing family, which is the goal of Stanford Sierra Youth & Families' Destination Family (DF) program.

Destination Family is a one-of-a-kind youth-focused recruitment program that is designed to achieve legal permanency for youth in foster care who have one or more barriers to adoption. The program learns the unique needs of each youth served and finds family for youth who may otherwise end up living in long-term foster care. When cases are referred, reunification services have ceased in the eyes of the court and there is no plan for legal permanency. Oftentimes the youth who most benefit from DF services are youth who are medically fragile, ethnically diverse, teenagers, or part of a sibling set that should not be separated. Without specialized permanency services, many of the youth served would age out of the system without any family support or connections. The DF team provides family finding, youth-focused recruitment, and ongoing family supports. The team links youth to community-based resources, based on their identified need, prepares them for a family and, once a family is located, supports the family through to finalization.

There is no set time limit for the provision of services for a particular youth. The DF team closes the youth's case when a child has reunified with their family, adoption has been finalized, or the court has granted legal guardianship.

KEY FINDINGS:

- Destination Family serves approximately **100** youth annually
- **69% (149/215)** of youth served by the Destination Family program have found their forever families
- **90%** of youth served in the Destination Family program maintain stability in their placement by receiving DF services
- Youth served in the Destination Family program have an average of **9.9** connections in their life and an average of **6 new** connections as a result of Destination Family - family finding

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Destination Family ensures youth have a safe, nurturing, and permanent connection to family.

DF is a promising practice to remove barriers to permanency

- Driven by youth voice: Life Domains
 - Review for understanding of where they are and where they need to get to
- Healthy relationships: Relationship Development Matching
 - A philosophy securing relational connections first and foremost
- Diligent search and youth-focused recruitment
- Preparation for adoption

DF enhances the efficacy of Children and Family Teams (CFTs)

- In a CFT, DF is the permanency expert
- Longstanding relationship creates genuine attunement
- Trust with worker ensures the authenticity of youth voice
- Well-defined, collaborative relationship with CPS enhances service provision and case management

DF supports California's Continuum Care Reform (CCR)

- Youth shouldn't have to move to access needed services. All systems share responsibility for youth and families.
- Youth living with supportive families have access to timely, relevant training, resources, and a team of support.
- CCR is re-inventing recruitment of resource families and re-defining their role as a team member in meeting the needs of the youth.
- Higher levels of care, such as group homes, will only be for a specific period of time, as an intervention, not a placement.

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