WHAT IS FAMILY INCLUSION?

Family inclusion is much more than family contact – it includes involvement in all aspects of children’s lives. It is when parents and family are genuine “stakeholders” in the system along with other key stakeholders such as carers & agencies. Family inclusion can be seen in informal & relaxed relationships between parents, family, children & young people, carers & workers. These relationships need purposeful support and assistance to develop and be sustained over time.

There is no set formula. Family inclusion is about children rather than set procedures, rules & guidelines. It is consistent with frameworks. Family inclusion is established by developing relationships between parents, carers & workers and is child centred with high levels of child participation.

EXAMPLES OF FAMILY INCLUSIVE MODELS

Family Finding (Biehle & Goodman 2012)

Icebreaker Meetings for Parents & Carers

Keyworker Meetings for Parents & Carers

Buttle & Goodman 2012

Peer Led Community Development

Thorpe & Ramsden 2014

Muloobinba Aboriginal Corporation

Peer support with parents & family

Peer Support: Bentstä 2011

WHAT IS FAMILY INCLUSION?

Family inclusion is effective. The evidence is growing – children need enduring & multiple connections. Young people who leave care with intact & strong relationships with their family have more positive life experiences.

WHY DO WE NEED TO BE FAMILY INCLUSIVE?

FAMILY INCLUSION CAN

• Prevent child removal

• Increase family restoration

• Let children know their identity is respected & loved

• Create stronger relationships with family which improves long term outcomes

• Develop higher quality child focused relationships between stakeholders

• Implement effective assessments & increase child safety

• Improve children’s social & family connections

• Create greater permanency & stability

Family inclusion needs to operate at individual, agency at society levels & be understood as respectful partnerships among parents, carers & workers.

FAMILY INCLUSION STRATEGIES HUNTER – (FISH)

FISH formed because the children & young people of the Hunter Valley of New South Wales in the child protection & out of home care systems need better relationships with their families & for their families to be actively & respectfully included in their lives.

FISH has developed family inclusive ideas based on the lived experience of family, evidence & practice wisdom. Family inclusion is not easy & will be different for different families. There is no set formula for better relationships.

It means developing professional relationships, not building professional boundaries. It means reflecting on how our practice is inclusive of family & making changes to increase inclusion. Most importantly, family inclusion needs leadership from all parts of the sector – especially parents, family & children.

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