

Promoting Equity in Family Finding



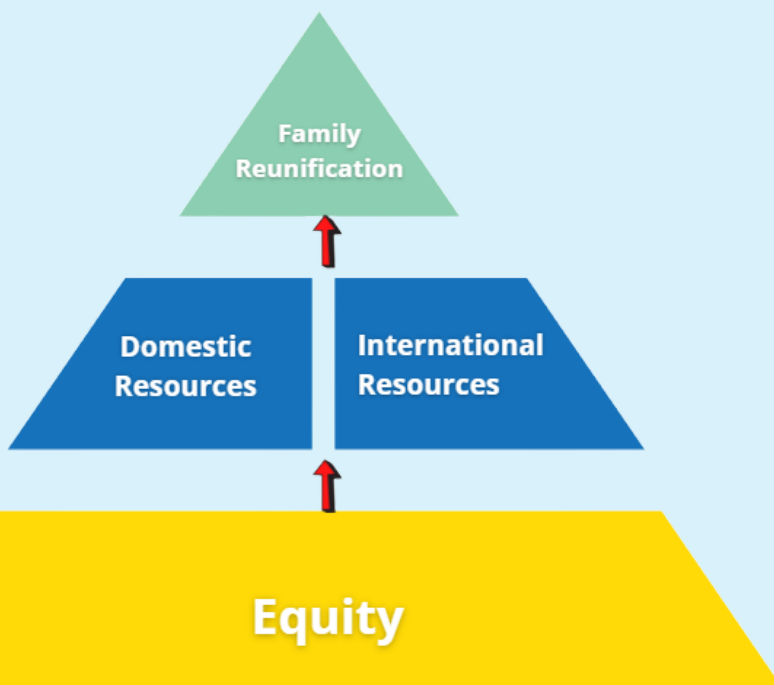
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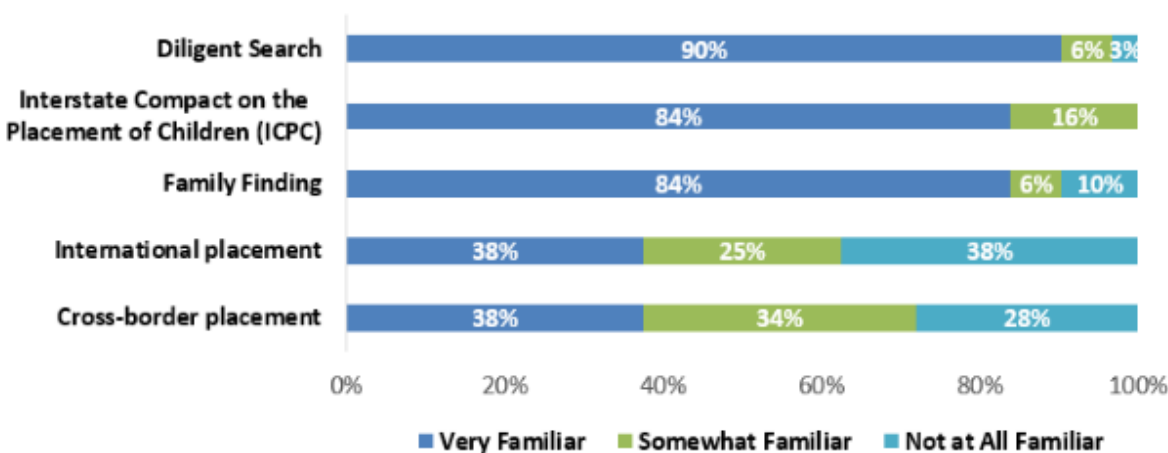
International Social Service, USA (ISS-USA) has worked for decades connecting children to their families across borders.

Including international placement options within policies is a **culturally responsive practice** that **prioritizes placement with kin** without solely prioritizing timeframes.

ISS-USA conducted a review of family finding and placement policies in all 50 U.S. states relating to cross-border cases. ISS-USA further conducted a survey of child welfare workers to assess their familiarity and comfort with cross-border placement.

Equitable case practice involves connecting a child with kin *wherever* they reside and assessing for safe placement.

Respondent familiarity with the following terms:



84-90% of survey respondents were familiar with diligent search and family finding.

...only 38% with international processes

~1/3 of respondents felt comfortable with their ability to locate family overseas...

...more considered connection to overseas family an Equity issue

| | Agreement | Disagreement |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|--------------|
| I feel comfortable in my ability to conduct a diligent search domestically | 63% | 7% |
| I feel comfortable in my ability to conduct a diligent search internationally | 32% | 36% |
| I have resources available to me to locate relatives of children internationally | 29% | 29% |
| Including all domestic and international family placement resource options for a child is as an "equity" issue | 43% | 7% |

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Child welfare workers are **far more comfortable conducting a domestic diligent search than they are with international family finding**, which limits permanency options for children who have family members outside of the U.S.



Only 35 percent of surveyed child welfare professionals felt their Family Court would be willing to consider placement of a child with a **parent or relative living abroad**.

We can achieve more equity in child welfare with **expanded advocacy efforts that promote cross-border family finding in permanency planning**.

Equity



Equitable access to kin as placement options can only be achieved with increased awareness of resources around family finding.

Engagement



National platforms such as the Children's Bureau and the Court Improvement Programs should highlight **cross-border permanency planning as the responsibility of each state** in prioritizing child attachments and kinship connections.

Evaluation



ISS-USA is prepared to consult with states and federal entities to **develop, implement and track policies and practices** related to cross-border placements.

ISS-USA can assist with widespread dissemination of:



Information on obtaining cross-border permanency planning services through ISS-USA.



Trainings related to facilitating and monitoring cross-border placements.



Guidance in working on cases involving immigration courts or engaging deported parents.



Domestic and international child welfare resources to connect with relatives and extended family.

Resource Requests