

# Inclusive Permanency Planning:

Improving equitable access to  
family for children with  
international connections





# For Reflection...

**How many people here have worked on a case  
where there was a family member overseas?**

**Yes**

**No**

**I don't know**

# For Reflection...

**The needs of children are better served in the US, regardless of their family situation:**



# For Reflection...

**I am confident in my ability to help find and engage with a child's potential family resources outside of the US.**





# INTERNATIONAL SOCIAL SERVICE NETWORK



**FOUNDED IN 1924, THE ISS NETWORK HAS BEEN CONNECTING CROSS BORDER FAMILIES IN OVER 100 COUNTRIES ACROSS THE GLOBE FOR NEARLY A CENTURY!**



# Who are we talking about?

## Families on the Move

~ 280m people live outside their country of origin (~45m in US)

~ 40m native born Americans have an immigrant parent (12% of population)

~ 127,000 unaccompanied minors released annually to sponsors in US

~ Between 5 and 8 million U.S. citizens living abroad



**With 18 million children in the United States having at least one immigrant parent it is reasonable to assume that a subset of 391,000 children in the U.S foster care system have family connections overseas.**

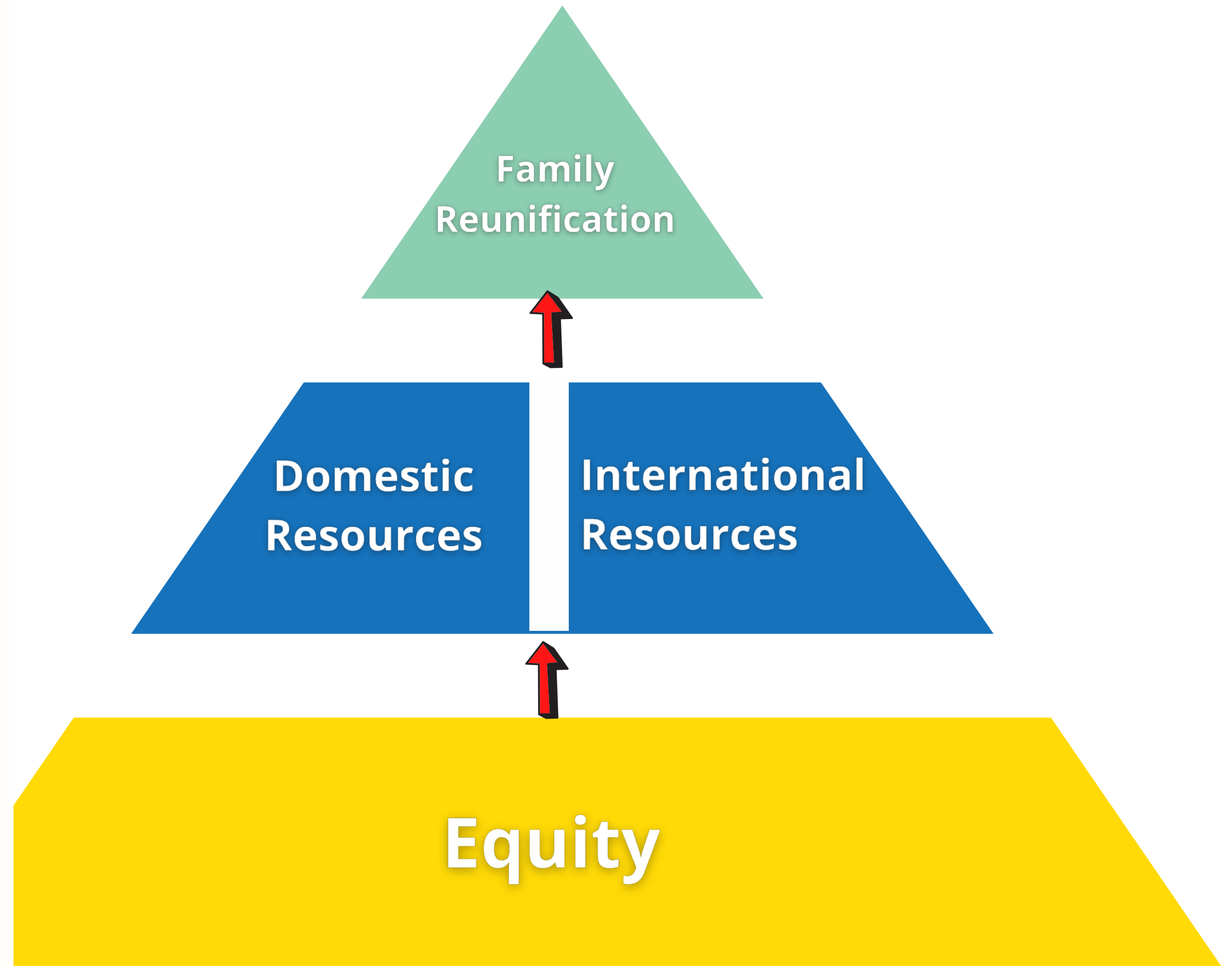
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# Equity in case practice

In 2021, the National Conference of State Legislatures produced a report [3] acknowledging families of color experience disproportionate and disparate permanency outcomes as compared to their White counterparts. To mitigate the disparity the report suggests the

Child welfare systems develop culturally responsive practices and eliminate bias in placement processes.





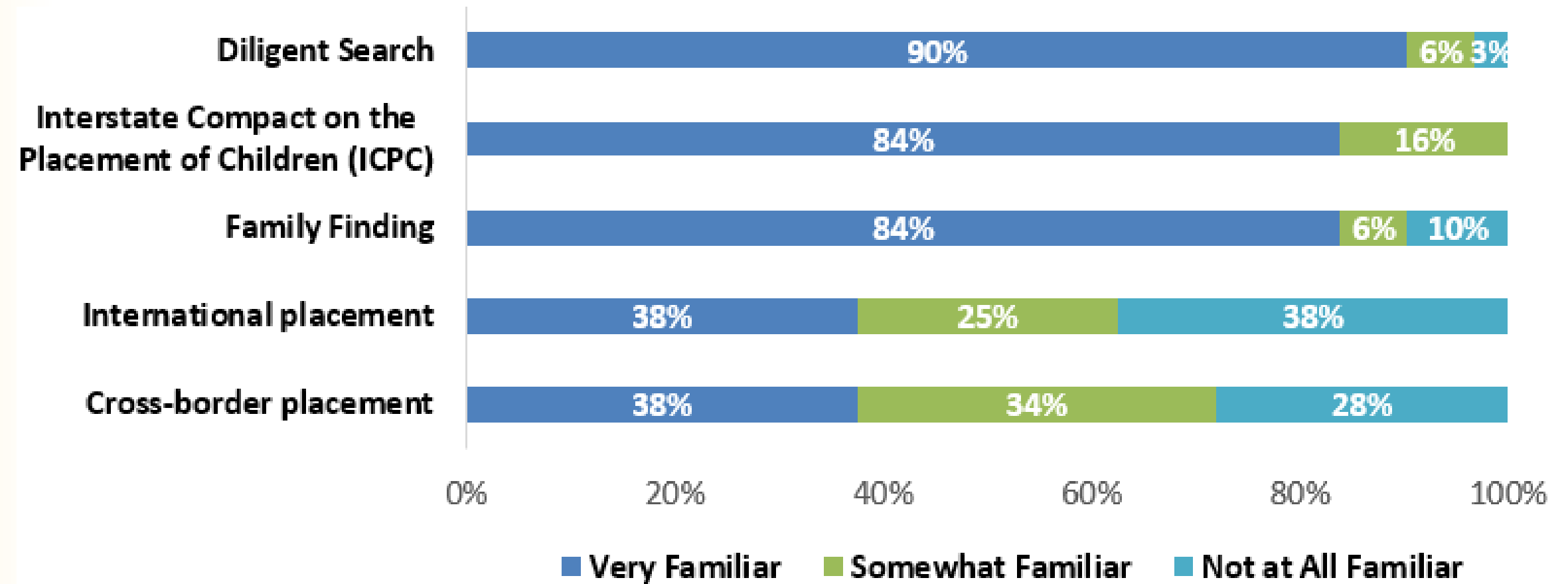
# Awareness of policies

ISS-USA exploratory research found that of respondents to a national survey of child welfare professionals, **84 – 90 %** were very familiar with the terms:

**Diligent Search, Family Finding, Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children (ICPC).**

**Far less familiarity of cross-border placement or international placement was demonstrated.**

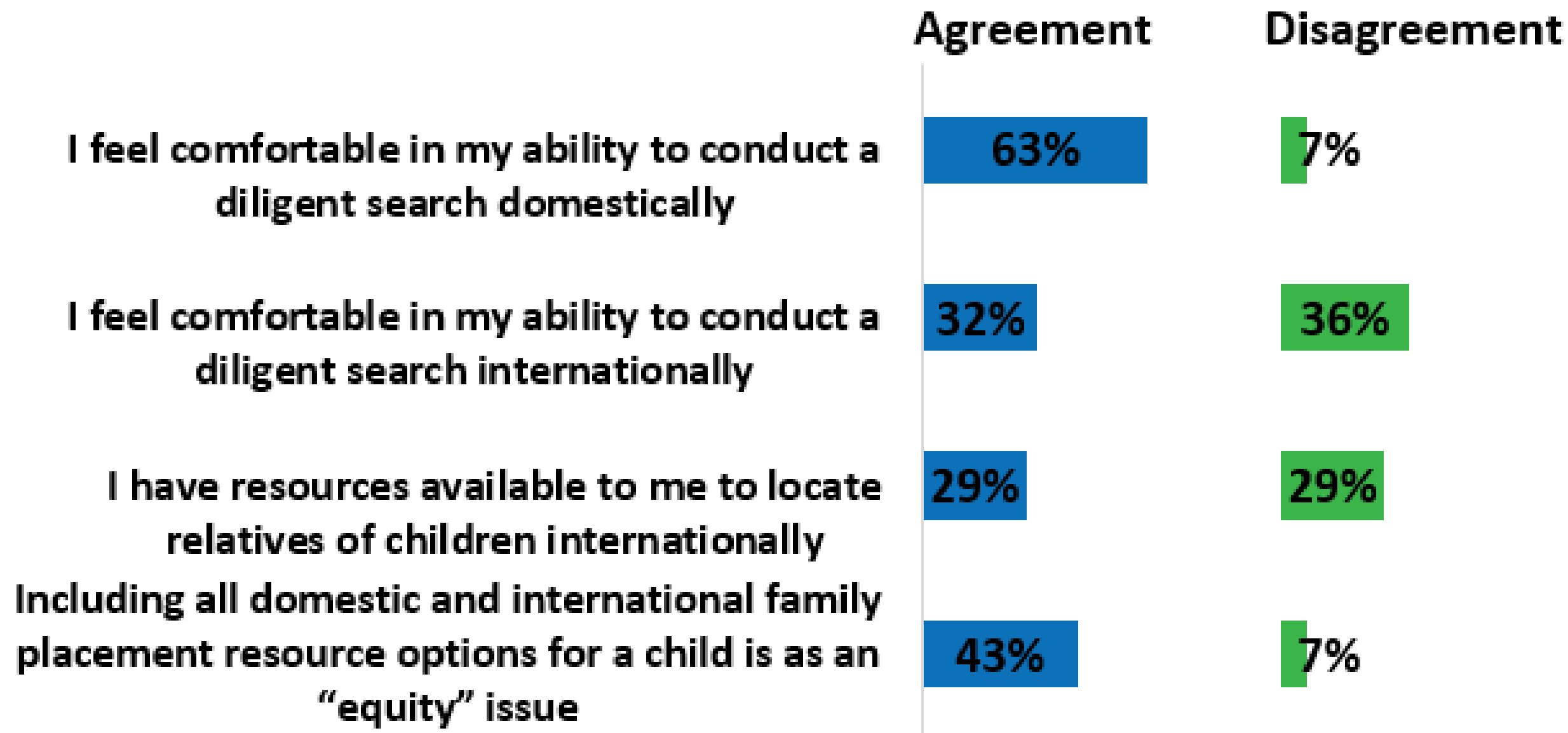
## What factors drive permanency decisions when there is an international component?



**A majority of respondents indicated that international diligent search/family finding is not a regular part of their work, even when working with immigrant children.**



# COMFORT LEVEL



**A majority of respondents There was far less comfort and understanding of resources related to engaging with family internationally as compared to domestically.**

# Case Scenario

Maria is 6-years old living in Orange County Florida. She is taken into DCF custody and placed in a non-relative foster home after her mother is detained.

Her social worker begins to case plan

Through international family finding, her caseworker discovers that Maria has an aunt in Honduras who is willing and interested in caring for the her.





# Case Scenario

Maria is a U.S. citizen whose family is from Honduras. Maria's mother came to the United States when she was four months pregnant with her. Her father's whereabouts are unknown and he has not been part of her life.

Maria grew up speaking Spanish in her home and spoke frequently with her maternal relatives in Honduras. She has no other family in the US.

Maria's mother, who was picked up by immigration officials after a traffic stop, ultimately receives a removal order.



# Florida

## Where do we stand

- There are **4.5 million immigrants** in Florida
- There are **1,464,000 children** in Florida with at least 1 **immigrant parent**
- In FY22, **13,195 unaccompanied minors released to sponsors** in Florida- 7th highest in the nation- 3rd highest in the nation
- **~23,000** children in state foster care



**% of the population of Florida are immigrants**



**% of the child population has an immigrant parent**



**% of children with at least one immigrant parent in Florida are U.S. citizens**

With **34%** of children in **Florida** having at least one immigrant parent it is reasonable to assume that a subset of **23,000 children**[1] in the state foster care system have family connections overseas.

[1] Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System (AFCARS), data received as of October 4, 2021, as of September 30, 2020  
<https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/documents/cb/afcarsreport28.pdf>



# **THE WHY OF INTERNATIONAL** **PERMANENCY PLANNING**

## **Family connections can:**

- **Give child resources when needed**
- **Connect child to their culture, language, traditions**
- **Strengthen child's sense of identity**
- **Strengthen the extended family**



## **The Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act of 2008 (Public Law 110-351)**

**“...provides that, within 30 days after the removal of a child from the custody of a parent or parents of the child, the State shall exercise due diligence to identify and provide notice to all adult grandparents and other adult relatives of the child (including any other adult relatives suggested by the parents), subject to exceptions due to family or domestic violence...”**

# The WHY of International Permanency Planning

## [Achieving Permanency for the Well-being of Children and Youth \(ACYF-CB-IM-20-09\)](#)

"There are critical aspects of practice that serve to **protect and preserve a child's core identity and sense of belonging**. These include things like... conducting **exhaustive and ongoing kin searches**...and making placement decisions that carefully consider a child's connections to their community. When agencies and courts don't invest time and effort in these practices, **we prevent children from experiencing true permanency and well-being**.



# How Can ISS-USA Help?

## Services in Support of:



**Person Tracing**



**Document Tracing**  
(birth certificate, death certificate, etc.)

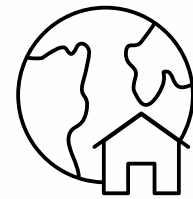


**Notification of child in care,  
or serving of the legal documents**



**Involve international family members  
in Family Team Meetings and other  
permanency planning activities**

## Equitable Permanency Planning



**International home studies**



**Background Checks**



**Community Resource  
Assessments**



**Psychological Assessments**

## For Children in Transnational Families



**Child Welfare Checks**



**Post Placement  
Follow up**



**Travel Assistance  
-Repatriation  
Assistance**



**Training and  
Technical Assistance**



# Community Resource Assessments

Assessment tool

Planning tool

Child Specific





# Return & Reintegration

Less than 30% of unaccompanied minors receive adjustment of immigration status (2018)

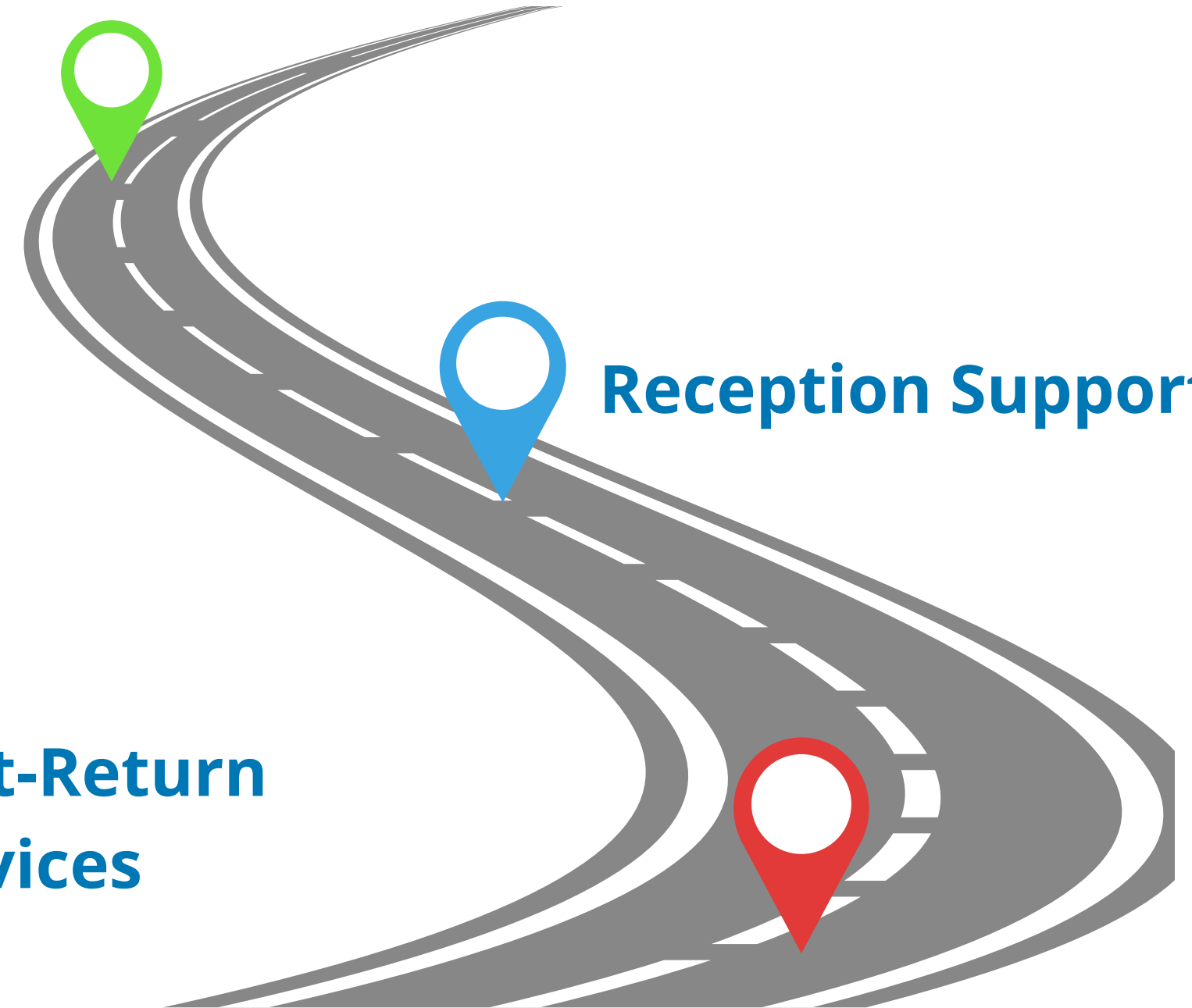
Return and Reintegration services should be part of concurrent planning.

ISS-USA to offers repatriation and reintegration services that support families before and after reunification.

Pre-Departure Planning

Post-Return Services

Reception Support

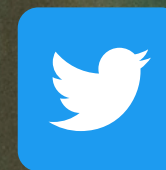






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# Thank You!

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**Questions:**

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**Training and Technical Assistance:**

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