

CASA CDAD RNER



UPCOMING COURT DATES

IBERIA PARISH

June 12, 2024

June 24, 2024

ST. MARTIN PARISH

June 21, 2024

June 27, 2024

CASA BIRTHDAYS

Terri Thompson - June 7

Leah Cowie - June 18

Brent Richard - June 30

REUNIFICATION IS WORTHY OF IMMEASURABLE TIME

“A couple of months ago, there was a story in the news about a 4-year-old boy who wandered off into the woods with the family dog. It was unclear how far the child had gone but according to the news, he had been missing for an hour sometime after 7pm. They showed the state police body cameras at the moment they heard the dog barking, and the state police found the crying boy unharmed. They scooped him up and delivered him to his mother’s arms. I don’t know if the family is known to the child welfare system, but I didn’t get that impression. The story was not about any suspected neglectfulness on the part of his parents—it was about the rescue, the dog, and the reunification. Repeatedly that week, the news covered this story and showed the video of the young boy being reunited with his mother.

It’s not lost on me why they covered it repeatedly—it’s a feel-good story of reunification. Everyone can participate in the happiness of seeing this unharmed child safely reunited with his parents after an uncertain journey into the woods that could have ended much differently. Children being reunited with their parents safely, after being separated for any period of time, is indeed worthy of immeasurable time on the airwaves.” - Associate Commissioner Aysha E. Schomburg

FATHER'S DAY



father

[fah-*th*-er] *noun*

the head of the family that teaches by example and inspires his children to be the best that they can be.

see also: *protector, hero, role model*

TO THE WORLD,
YOU ARE A FATHER.
BUT TO YOUR FAMILY,
YOU ARE THE WORLD.

REUNIFICATION MONTH

In a perfect world every family would have what it needs, whether that is concrete supports such as housing and cash, or even access to culturally appropriate mental health services. In that same perfect world, all families would stay together safely and be supported by their extended families and communities. That is a world in which foster care is obsolete. We don't live in a perfect world, though, and while the first goal is always to keep families together, we don't always reach that goal.

Every year, 2 million children come into contact with the child welfare system due to investigations of parental abuse or neglect. The loss of a parent is arguably one of the most distressing experiences a child can undergo, and can lead to an irreparable sense of loss that can stunt development and lead to behavioral problems. Foster care is meant to be a temporary solution, but children stay in foster care for an average of two years. In addition, the average foster child is moved from one home to another at least once, with 25 percent moving three or more times. Put simply, reunification is the common goal in most foster care cases, because when children and their parents are able to reunify, families thrive.

Let's Celebrate Unified Families

In the last few years, there has been an effort for more prevention and support and less removal from homes and entry into foster care. The **Family First Prevention Services Act of 2018** aims to push funding in that direction. We know that in cases where there are no safety concerns, children are far better off staying with their families than entering foster care. Studies show that children in foster care who age out face extreme hardships, including homelessness, mental health concerns, and addiction, among many other issues.

"Family-Centered Reunification Training" aims to help child welfare agencies infuse family-centered practices and strategies in their reunification work to achieve more timely reunifications that better address families' needs and improve their capacity to safely care for their children. The principles of family-centered reunification, like those of family-centered practice, highlight the importance of engaging families and ensuring their active involvement throughout the process, encouraging their strengths, focusing on their mental health and well-being, and recognizing and honoring their cultures and backgrounds.

Strategies can include connecting families to evidence-based community services, focusing first on placement with relatives to preserve cultural and family connections, offering parent education opportunities, and ensuring regular visits between family members and with agency workers.

REUNIFICATION MONTH

Family Engagement Is Fundamental to Successful Reunification

There are many noted benefits of foster care reunification. Nationally, about **50% of parents reunify with kids in foster care**. Plus, studies have shown that reunification significantly improves permanency outcomes for children and parents. After foster care reunification, children do better in school, parents do better at work, and families thrive long-term.

Both the frequency and the nature of the caseworker's contact with the family are important. Family engagement becomes meaningful when family members believe their involvement in case planning and services is valued and respectful of their potential to keep their children safe, provides them with the information they need to successfully advocate for themselves and their children, and enables them to access the services and resources they need to achieve reunification.

Effective visitation practice goes far beyond attention to the logistics of scheduling and transportation; it provides an opportunity to build parental skills and improve parent-child interaction. A study of reunification in a sample of 922 children aged 12 and younger found that children who were visited by their mothers were 10 times more likely to be reunited.

The development of a positive relationship between the foster and birth parents may allow children to avoid the stress of divided loyalties and position foster parents to play a supportive role after reunification. Foster parents may facilitate family reunification through both the mentoring of the birth parents and the support of their visitation. Parents participating in a program that paired them with parents who had successfully navigated the system were more than four times as likely to be reunified with their children as parents in a comparison group.

Reunification preparation and post-reunification supports must be based on the needs of the children and family rather than on arbitrary timeframes. Reunification should be viewed as a process that includes maintaining family relationships while children are in care, careful planning, and the provision of post-reunification supports. Families are best supported when all available resources, both formal and informal, are brought to bear on their behalf.

CLICK TO LEARN MORE

**CHILD WELFARE
INFORMATION GATEWAY
ON REUNIFICATION**

**SECURING & RESTORING
THE FAMILY IS IN THE
CHILD'S BEST INTERESTS**

**A NEW TRAINING FOCUSING
ON FAMILY-CENTERED
REUNIFICATION**

**FAMILY REUNIFICATION:
WHAT THE EVIDENCE
SHOWS**

Even though the Emancipation Proclamation was made effective in 1863, it could not be implemented in places still under Confederate control. As a result, in the westernmost Confederate state of Texas, enslaved people would not be free until much later. Freedom finally came on June 19, 1865, when some 2,000 Union troops arrived in Galveston Bay, Texas. The army announced that the more than 250,000 enslaved black people in the state, were free by executive decree. This day came to be known as "Juneteenth," by the newly freed people in Texas.



June teenth