

Child Safety Alert

From Commissioner John B. Mattingly

#15

June 26, 2006

Children's Services' Policy Regarding Kinship Care

Finding the Best Placements for Our Youth

Children's Services is committed to ensuring that when children need out-of-home care, every effort is made to place them with kinship resources, including relatives and other adults who already have a significant relationship with the child or family. Of course, all caregivers – including relatives – must be willing and able to keep the children safe.

The Kinship Guidelines update Children's Services' policy regarding kinship care. Note that ACS and its partner agencies now have expanded responsibilities under New York law to identify and seek appropriate kinship caregivers.

It is Children's Services' responsibility, with the help of our child welfare partners, to keep children connected with their families and communities. As you know, kinship placements can reduce the trauma experienced by children entering foster care and offer permanency options for children moving from residential or group care into a family setting.

When children enter care, it is particularly important that Child Protective Services (CPS) staff interview all family members including the child in order to identify adults with whom the child has a significant relationship and who may be able to serve as a kinship placement resource. It is imperative for CPS staff to seek to identify appropriate kinship caregivers and to immediately conduct emergency home studies to initially place children with caregivers with whom they are already connected.

In addition, foster care providers must continue to make every effort to identify appropriate kinship placement resources at the time of placement and at any appropriate time during the child's out of home placement.

The guidelines are available on the intranet at <http://nycacs>. Click on "News" then "Child Safety Alert Newsletters."

