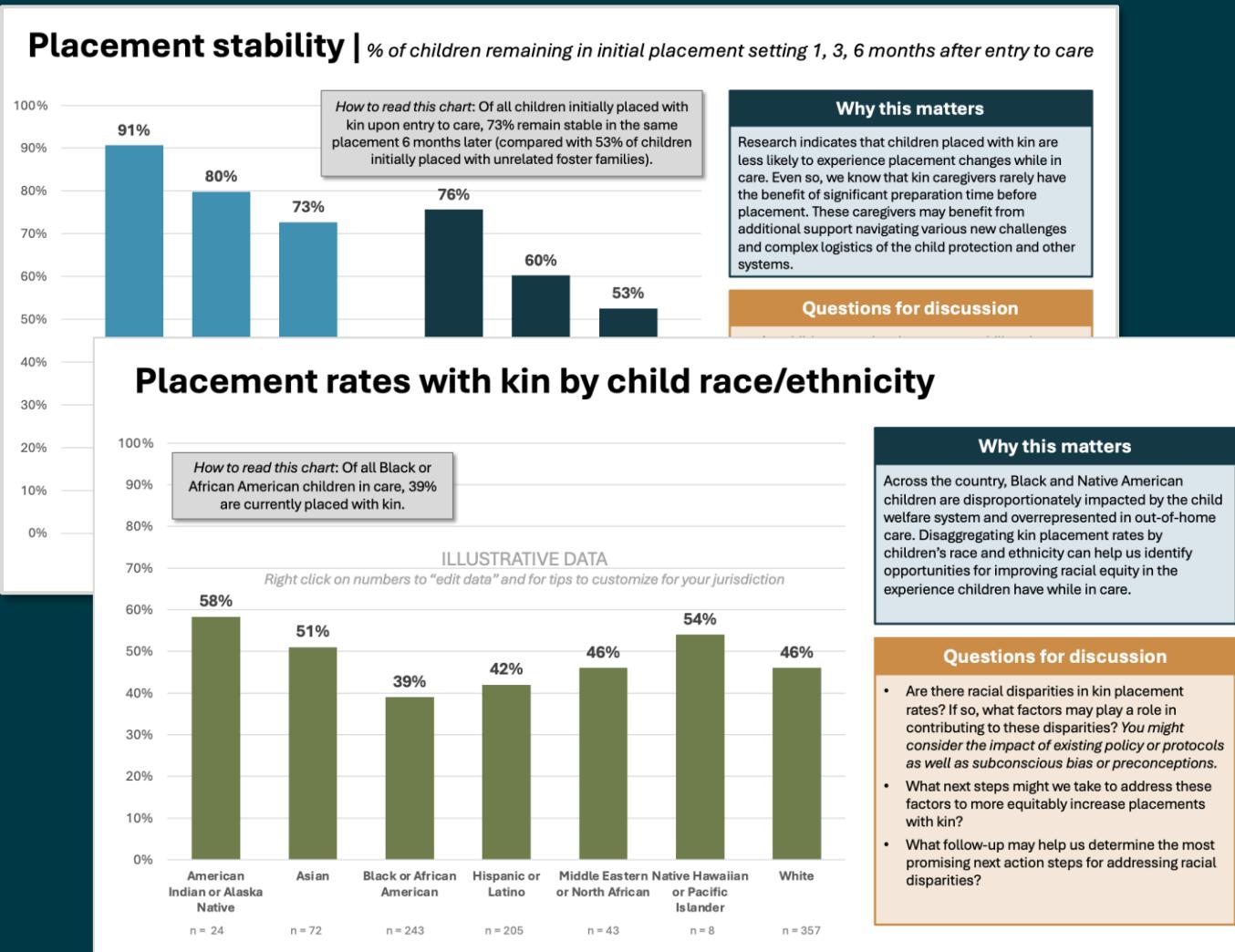


The GPL supports governments in building just and effective service systems that deliver better outcomes for the people they serve.

We do this by working closely with state and local governments to develop and test promising practices. We then spread these practices to communities across the country. By investing in public servants, we create long-lasting capacity to sustain change.

Kin-first tool spotlight:

Kin Placement Dashboard Guide



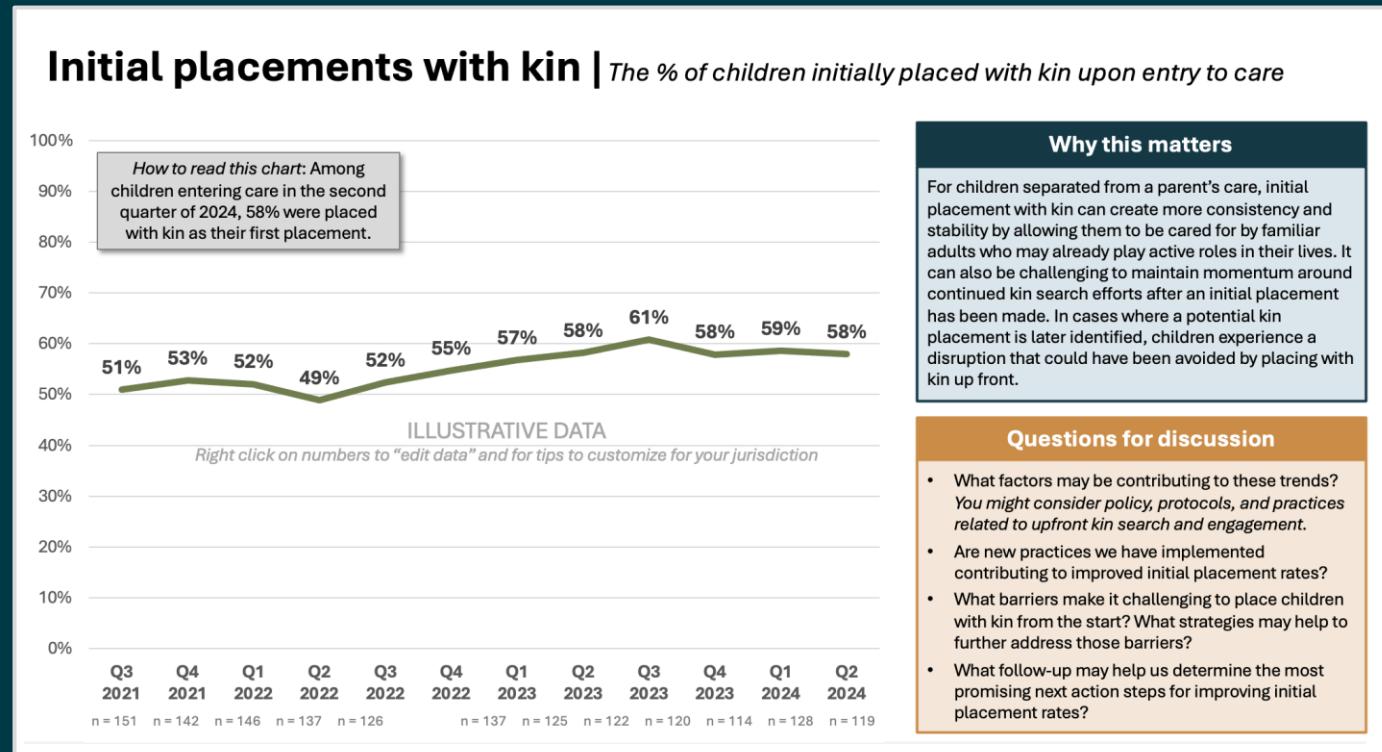
What's in the guide?

Six customizable charts of key metrics to regularly review and discuss as part of data-driven performance improvement efforts to increase kin placements.

- Overall kin trends:** The overall share of children in care placed with kin
- Initial kin placements:** The share of children initially placed with kin upon entry to care
- Placement stability:** The share of children initially placed with kin who remain in that same placement one, three, and six months later
- Meaningful data disaggregation:** How to disaggregate these metrics by geographic units and key demographic indicators, like child's age and race/ethnicity

Kin-first tool spotlight:

Kin Placement Dashboard Guide



San Diego County introduced new ways to measure and communicate the importance of kin-first practices across their large system, such as quarterly kinship data reports and roundtable data discussions with managers.

“I’m proud that we know our data and are measuring kin placement trends so we can better support children and their caregivers. As we move forward with building a kin-first culture, having this data is the foundation.”

—Mariah Williams, Kinship & Community Engagement Support Program Coordinator,
San Diego County Child & Family Well-Being

Using data to drive action:

Strengthening tools and accountability mechanisms for conducting and documenting high-quality kin searches

Why this matters:

- ✓ Increased likelihood of placing with kin, sooner
- ✓ Maintain a larger support network for the child & family
- ✓ De-duplication of staff efforts

Potential impact on data-driven performance outcomes:

- Increased overall kin placement rates
- Increased initial kin placement rates
- Opportunity to target specific populations less likely to be placed with kin (e.g., teens, LGBTQ youth)

FAMILY FINDING CONNECTIONS LOG			
Child(ren)'s Name(s):			
Case ID:			
CONTACTS			
Relationship to Child(ren)	Name	Address and Phone Number	Brief Notes (e.g., why not pursued/placed, other support roles to play for child/family, follow-up touchpoints, etc.)
MATERNAL FAMILY			
Mother			
Maternal Grandmother			
Maternal Grandfather			
Maternal Aunt			
Maternal Uncle			
Maternal Cousin			
Maternal Other:			
Maternal Other:			
PATERNAL FAMILY (Cut and paste for multiple fathers)			
Father of:			
Paternal Grandmother			
Paternal Grandfather			
Paternal Aunt			
Paternal Uncle			
Paternal Cousin			
Paternal Other:			
OTHER FAMILY			
Adult Sibling			
Other family:			
FICTION KIN			
Stepparent			
Parent of Half-Sibling			
Godparent			
Neighbor			
Church Member			
School Connection			
Family Friend			
Parent of Child's Friend			
Other:			

Approaches to test:

- Build a kin search checklist for staff
- Find and engage family and fictive kin early
- Maintain a shared list of kin as a living document to staff keeps building on**
- Require local director sign-off for all non-kin placements

Kin-first tool spotlight:

Family Finding Connections Log

Broward County, FL developed the Family Finding Connections Log to support staff in documenting & building on a strong network of kin placement and support options from the start.

List format may be easier for staff to use than genogram software

Tool prompts staff to explore paternal side as well as maternal side *and* fictive kin—especially important for teens and LGBTQ+ youth

FAMILY FINDING CONNECTIONS LOG			
Child(ren)'s Name(s): _____			
Case ID: _____			
CONTACTS			
Relationship to Child(ren)	Name	Address and Phone Number	Brief Notes (e.g., why not pursued/placed, other support roles to play for child/family, follow-up touchpoints, etc.)
MATERIAL FAMILY			
Mother			
Maternal Grandmother			
Maternal Grandfather			
Maternal Aunt			
Maternal Uncle			
Maternal Cousin			
Maternal Other:			
Maternal Other:			
PATERNAL FAMILY (Cut and paste for multiple fathers)			
Father of:			
Paternal Grandmother			
Paternal Grandfather			
Paternal Aunt			
Paternal Uncle			
Paternal Cousin			
Paternal Other:			
OTHER FAMILY			
Adult Sibling			
Other family:			
FICTIVE KIN			
Stepparent			
Parent of Half-Sibling			
Godparent			
Neighbor			
Church Member			
School Connection			
Family Friend			
Parent of Child's Friend			
Other:			

Space for notes to capture information about nature / history of relationship, barriers to placement, etc. as a living document that can be updated over time

Listing many potential relationships supports broad exploration of options for placement or other supporting roles – rather than anchoring on single placement option.

“The log can be really helpful for both our staff and families. A lot of families will say ‘We don’t have anyone,’ but then their answers change when staff get specific. Introducing the log showed staff that making kin placements is a priority for us.”

—Sheryl Williams, Program Manager of Case Management & Adoptions, ChildNet, Broward County, Florida

Using data to drive action:

Building and maintaining momentum for continued kin search when initial placement is not with kin

Why this matters:

- ✓ Family situations and contacts may change over time
- ✓ A child's support network can and should continue to grow
- ✓ De-duplication of staff efforts, increased communication across handoffs

Potential impact on data-driven performance outcomes:

- Increased overall kin placement rates
- Increased placement stability, decrease in placement changes

Children not placed with kin during [previous month]

Child name(s)	Case ID	Age	Race	Sex	FTM?	Genogram?	Placement type	CPS Supervisor	Date for follow-up
Ex. Jane Smith	123456789	2	BI	F	Yes	No	Foster home	Greg Williams	9/15

Questions to consider:

1. **Kin search practices:** What did the team do well to proactively identify potential kin placements?
2. **Placement options:** Were there any potential relative caregivers? What prevented placement? Is there anything that the team can do to facilitate placement?
3. **Supporting ongoing search:** What actions has the team taken to support the family in finding placement? What are there any ongoing leads for possible kin placement? What are the next steps?

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Example approaches to test:

- ❑ Use every point of contact with the family as a kin search opportunity
- ❑ Create accountability for follow-up through a structured case review process

Kin-first tool spotlight:

Non-Kin Placement Case Review

Template initial slide of monthly data & case review meetings:

Why are we focused on kinship care?

Children placed with kin may:

- **Maintain stronger connections** to family, community, and culture
- Experience **less trauma**
- Have **better behavioral and mental health outcomes**
- Experience **better placement stability** and fewer placement changes
- Be **less likely to reenter care**

Kinship check-in & case review goals:

- 1) Highlight effective search practices used by staff, even in cases where children were not initially placed with kin.
- 2) Identify challenges encountered in each case, discuss strategies for continuing to pursue kin placement, & assign next steps
- 3) Follow up on cases with existing leads and support ongoing search activities to enable children to live with kin in the future

[Previous Month]'s Placements:

[#] removals
[#] children placed with relatives & fictive kin

[#]% of children placed with kin in [previous month]

Michigan counties conducted monthly case review meetings to create accountability for regularly reviewing placements not made with kin, bust placement barriers together, and grow their kin-first culture.

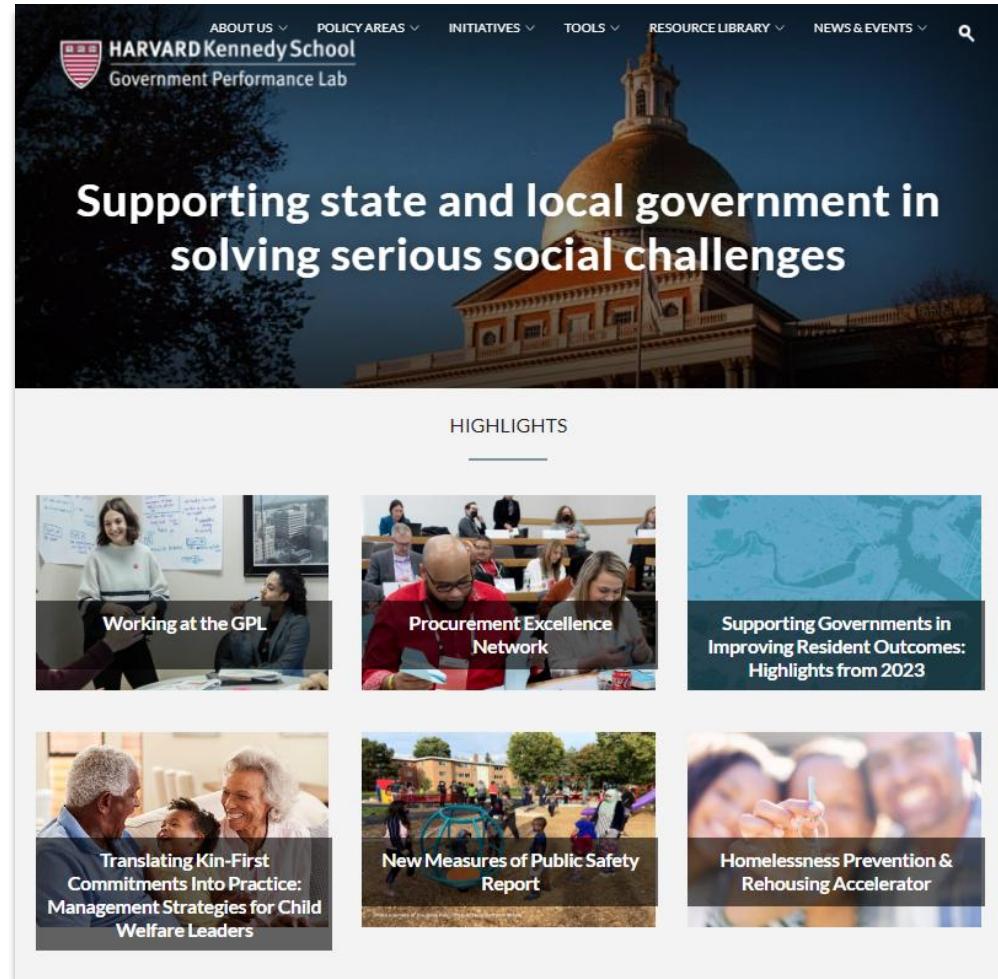
“Monthly kinship meetings forced everyone to step back, reevaluate, and prioritize what we need to do to keep looking at kin placements.”

—Jennifer Ulmer, MSW, Program Section Manager
Wayne County, Michigan Department of Health & Human Services

Thank you!

We'd love to connect! Want to talk more about any of the strategies or tools shared today? Or discuss a kinship care challenge or initiative your agency is working on?

Reach out to us at
Lynda_Blancato@hks.harvard.edu
and EmmaClegg@hks.harvard.edu



The screenshot shows the homepage of the Harvard Kennedy School Government Performance Lab. The header features the school's crest and the text "HARVARD Kennedy School" and "Government Performance Lab". The main banner image is a night photograph of the Massachusetts State House. The banner text reads "Supporting state and local government in solving serious social challenges". Below the banner, a "HIGHLIGHTS" section is displayed with six thumbnail images and their corresponding titles:

- Working at the GPL** (image shows two people at a table)
- Procurement Excellence Network** (image shows a group of people in a meeting)
- Supporting Governments in Improving Resident Outcomes: Highlights from 2023** (image shows a map of the United States)
- Translating Kin-First Commitments Into Practice: Management Strategies for Child Welfare Leaders** (image shows a family of three)
- New Measures of Public Safety Report** (image shows a group of people in a park)
- Homelessness Prevention & Rehousing Accelerator** (image shows a close-up of two people smiling)

For more on about GPL's work and to sign up for our newsletter, visit our website: [Government Performance Lab \(harvard.edu\)](https://www.hks.harvard.edu/gpl)

The Harvard Kennedy School Government Performance Lab wishes to acknowledge that these materials are made possible by a grant and support from Casey Family Programs. Additional resources and tools for child welfare leaders seeking to strengthen kin-first practices can be found on our website [here](#).