

Testimony for Senate Committee on
Health and Human Services
March 10, 2010 hearing on Fostering
Connections

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Background:

- With CASA program for 9 years.
- Worked with countless children who could have found permanency through this program.
- Worked with countless relatives who could have raised children had they had this support.

Case #1

- Three children ages 6, 4, and 3
- Placed with paternal grandmother since 2007
- Financial struggles are endangering the permanency of this placement
- Needs of these children are high

Case #2

- Three children ages 10, 8 and 4
- Placed with aunt recently
- Insufficient grounds for termination on Mom but not safe to return
- Extensive financial difficulties of relatives
- PCA may help keep these children together and with this aunt

Suggestions

- Ensure that children don't miss out on adoptive placements, just because it may be easier for the parties to agree to PMC than push for termination and adoption.
- Clear rules are needed around who decides that a child is ineligible for adoption, what the criteria are for that determination, and who can review it.

Suggestions

- Don't let the prospect of these agreements slow down the progress of a case toward final orders and permanency for the child.
- A PCA with an appropriate relative may be worth a small delay in the case (few months) but a child's sense of time necessitates that CPS cases come to a resolution sooner rather than later.