

# Practice Points

## Genograms & Eco-maps

The purpose of this Practice Point is to remind Children's Service Workers of the importance and value of utilizing the process of developing a Genogram and/or Eco-map when working with families.

As case work begins there is limited information and little insight into the family's history and frame of reference. Developing a genogram with the family can also assist a case manager in identifying extended family and various relatives who need to be notified when a child is coming into state custody and aid in the necessary search for potential relative placement providers at the same time. It can be a non-threatening way to gather important information together.

The genogram is a tool for collecting information about the family's structure and the family's caregiving patterns or relationships with others over time. Constructing a genogram with family members helps identify all of those people who are currently involved in caring for the child, those who cared for the child in the past, and those who may be able to care for the child in the future. The eco-map helps the caseworker assess the adequacy of resources and support systems available to the child and their family.

Both tools may be used to collect information with biological parents, children, kinship caregivers, other members of the kinship network, and the extended family as a whole. Using this process with older youth in care can assist them in thinking about who they have or had connections with that they may want to renew or strengthen. The genogram and eco-map may be used to facilitate engagement of non-resident parents and other members of the family and kinship network to gain their perspective on the family system and functioning. Multiple genograms or ecomaps can be developed depending on the purpose and who the worker needs to develop the information with.

For more information and examples of genograms and eco-maps, please see Child Welfare Manual, [Section 7, Chapter 25](#).

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