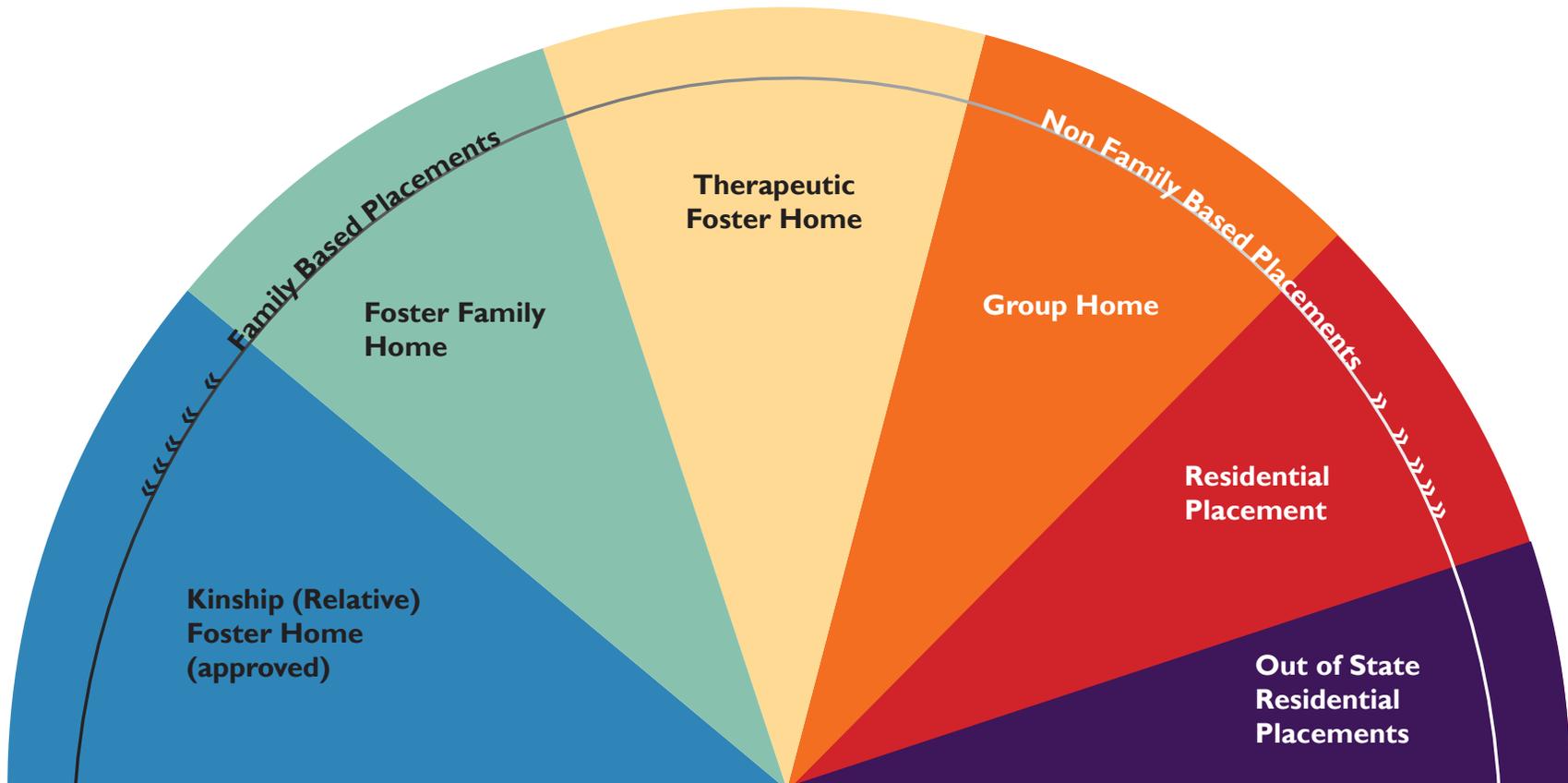


# Foster Care Continuum of Placements - Family First

Placement occurs after the child is removed from home by court order, entrustment, or non-custodial foster care agreement and placed in a substitute care setting. Placement is the physical setting in which the child finds himself, that is, the resultant foster care setting. In making placement decisions to secure the most appropriate home for a child, whether an initial placement or change in placement, the service worker, in collaboration with key partners and members of the Family Partnership Meeting (FPM), shall place the child in the least restrictive, most family-like setting that is committed to meeting the child's best interests and needs, including educational, medical and behavioral health needs.



Foster care is intended to be a temporary rather than a long-term solution for children who have been removed from their family homes for reasons of neglect, abuse, abandonment, or other issues endangering their health and/or safety. When children cannot live safely with their families, the first consideration for placement will be with kinship connections capable of providing a safe and nurturing home. When placement outside the extended family is necessary, we encourage healthy social development by supporting placements that promote family, sibling and community connections. A foster home is the home of an individual or family who is approved as meeting the standards established in Virginia. When a child needs a higher level of support, a non family-based setting may be needed. Non-Family like settings should be temporary, should focus on individual children's needs, and should prepare them for return to family and community life.

# Family Based Placements

## **Kinship (Relative) Foster Home (approved)**

When a child cannot live safely with his or her birth parents or prior custodians, the first out of home placement to be considered should be placements with relatives and extended family members, including relatives in other states in accordance with the Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children (ICPC). When a relative is identified as the best placement resource for a child, the relative may be approved as a provider on an emergency basis and the child may be placed immediately. The relative shall become a fully approved provider within 60 days. Relative Foster Homes receive foster care maintenance payments on behalf of the child in their home through Title IV-E or state pool funds.

## **Foster Family Home**

When the LDSS determines that the child cannot remain safely at home and the diligent search for relatives has not resulted in placement of the child with his or her extended family, the service worker shall consider placement with a foster and adoptive family. Foster and adoptive families often commit to support reunification with the child's family, but are also prepared to adopt if the child and family do not reunify. Foster Homes receive foster care maintenance payments on behalf of the child in their home through Title IV-E or state pool funds.

## **Therapeutic Foster Home**

Therapeutic Foster Care (TFC) homes are fully approved homes that provide services designed to address the special needs of children and families. Services to children and youth are delivered primarily by therapeutic foster parents who are trained, supervised, and supported by licensed child placing agency staff. Treatment is primarily foster family based and is planned and delivered by a treatment team. Children should be placed in TFC homes only when the specialized services available through such homes are consistent with the documented needs of the child. TFC placements should not be considered a step down in a process of reducing the intensity of placement types needed by a child. If the needs of children placed in TFC homes decrease over time, the child should remain in that home until the child is reunified or another permanency goal is achieved. Therapeutic Foster Homes receive foster care maintenance payments on behalf of the child in their home through Title IV-E or state pool funds. The Agency overseeing the Therapeutic Foster Home and providing case management support for the treatment team receives payments from Medicaid and state pool funds.

# Non Family Based Placements

Non family based placements offer care and treatment for a child who requires more intensive time-limited, and intensive interventions as part of the continuous focus on stabilizing the child and family, returning the child home, or placing the child with another permanent family.

## **Group Home**

Group homes are a children's residential facility that is a community-based, homelike single dwelling, or its acceptable equivalent, other than the private home of the operator, and serves up to 12 children. The cost of maintenance is paid from Social Security, title IV-E, Medicaid (called room and board), or state pool funds for nontitle IV-E children. Services provided in a group home will be paid from Medicaid or state pool funds. Group home services that can be purchased include services provided to every resident and specialized services provided to meet a child's individual needs.

## **Residential Programs**

Residential programs provide 24-hour support in conjunction with care and treatment or a training program in a setting other than a hospital or training center. Residential services provide a range of living arrangements from highly structured and intensively supervised to relatively independent requiring a modest amount of staff support and monitoring. The cost of maintenance is paid from SSI, title IV-E, Medicaid (called room and board), or state pool funds for nontitle IV-E children. Services provided in a residential program will be paid from Medicaid or state pool funds. Residential program services that can be purchased include services provided to every resident and specialized services provided to meet a child's individual needs.