How Tribal Placements Benefit Native Children placed in Foster Care

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Summary: American Indian and Alaska Native foster children's health and well-being is best protected when they are placed with family or tribal members, physicians tell the U.S. Supreme Court. Evidence shows that children's mental and physical health are best served when placed with a family or tribal member. Being placed with extended family—a grandparent, aunt, uncle or adult sibling—helps a child keep familial and community bonds and offers a sense of stability, identity and belonging.

A meta-analysis of studies involving more than 600,000 children found that the practice known as "kinship care" leads to fewer behavioral problems for children, fewer mental health disorders and fewer placement disruptions when compared to children in non-kinship care.

Application: This resource offers key information for State, Tribes, and territories policymakers and legislators. It also offers excellent information for medical, mental health, and child welfare professionals as well as foster, adoptive and kinship parents.

Source: American Medical Association

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