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## Kinship Foster Care: Implications of Behavioral Biology Research

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Public child welfare systems rely heavily on kin to serve as foster parents, requiring public actors to consider and choose among different types of available kin (e.g. maternal grandmothers, paternal grandfathers, matrilineal aunts). Behavioral biology researchers have been exploring kinship relationships and the expected level of investment in child care for different types of kin. This paper explains the relevance to kinship foster care of behavioral biology research on kinship relationships and expected levels of parental investment. This research allows for the development of a rank listing of second-degree kin in terms of their likely level of investment in a related foster child. The paper describes how the rank listing could serve three beneficial functions within public child welfare systems. First, child welfare researchers could use the listing to formulate and test hypotheses concerning expected levels of investment by different types of kin in order to develop sophisticated kinship foster care placement practices and policies. Second, public actors could use the listing in conjunction with other relevant considerations when choosing among second-degree kin who step forward to serve as a foster parent for a particular child. Third, public actors could consider the listing, along with other factors, when making decisions about the level of monitoring and support services that is appropriate for particular foster care placements.