Creating Culture Change

How to create culture shift generally:

1. Define a set of desired values, behaviors and clear benefits to both families and staff
   - Get buy in from staff around clear goals — i.e. placement and connections with kin for all children
   - Articulate a clear rationale for why the agency should change
   - Decide how you would measure success — i.e. 50% of children placed with kin as their first and only placement
   - Define actionable behaviors at all levels — from CPS to adoption, what needs to be done to achieve goals
   - Identify and train a Kinship Champion
2. Do a culture audit internally with all staff and externally with community partners
   - Look for the disconnect between goals and culture/ culture gaps
   - Explore current attitudes that exist about kin
   - Identify barriers to placement, connection and permanency with kin
3. Identify steps necessary to connect culture and goals and build in accountability
   - Scrutinize current process, what are current procedures and what needs to change
   - Must have supervisor buy in and hold staff accountable for results — i.e. firewall for placement with kin
   - Be consistent — staff must make monthly, weekly or even daily efforts to support the new culture
   - Engage community partners and legal community
   - For example, a goal of 3 identified supportive adults for every child that they are in touch with on a regular basis
4. Ensure strong leadership support
   - Leadership must be bold and clear about expectations
   - Take action to show this is a county priority
   - Support staff as they make the changes — give them what they need to change — training, tools, extra staff, outside contracts
5. Start small, measure and celebrate the successes
   - Define your data measures and how to measure success
   - Find local champions that embrace kinship caregiving
   - Check in regularly with how progress is going and modify accordingly
6. Be patient — change is hard, don't rush it
   - Changing a culture can take anywhere from months to several years
   - This is a work in progress and will need to be refined and revised often