



Successful Foster Care Placement: A Teamwork Approach to Avoiding and Resolving Conflict in Placement

TRAINER GUIDE

Developed by MidSOUTH and the
University of Arkansas IV-E Partnership

Carolyn Lee, MEd, LPC, is the primary developer of
this revision.

U·A·L·R

School of Social Work

TRAINER GUIDE

Audience: This training is designed for an audience that consists of both Division of Children and Family Services (DCFS) staff and foster parents. This training in part addresses the intent of legislation passed in the 2003 Arkansas General Assembly that requires a cooling off period when foster parents request that a child be removed from their home. The intent of the legislation was to prevent foster placement disruptions whenever possible. This training addresses skills by workers and foster parents to facilitate permanency, safety and well-being of children in care.

Organization: This workshop consists of a Trainer Guide, Participant Manual and handouts. The Trainer Guide contains the training outline, a resource section with supplemental information for the trainer, and a copy of all participant material.

Time: This workshop is formatted for a three (3) hour presentation.

Developers: This material was originally developed as a joint initiative between MidSOUTH and the University of Arkansas, Fayetteville IV-E Partnership. Carolyn Lee, MEd, LPC, MidSOUTH, is the primary developer of this revision.

SUCCESSFUL FOSTER CARE PLACEMENTS:

A teamwork approach to avoiding and resolving conflict in placements

Trainer Guide

COA Standards:

- ❖ G7.2 a, b, c
- ❖ G7.2.03 a, b, d
- ❖ G7.3.01
- ❖ G7.3.04 a, b
- ❖ G7.3.07 a, b, c

Competencies Addressed:

- ❖ 104-3
- ❖ 201-5
- ❖ 201-7
- ❖ 535-7

Objectives: Participants will

- Develop an understanding of activities to support successful placements.
- Recognize signs of conflict in foster care placements between foster parents and foster child.
- Understand roles and responsibilities of foster care team
- Develop the skill to mediate conflict resolution and write placement agreement supporting foster parents and foster child.
- Have the ability to assess conflict between families and staff, know strategies to help re-establish a constructive family/staff relationship, and know when to remove the staff person from the case.

Materials

- Name Tents
- Construction Paper
- Markers
- Flip Charts
- Pens
- Plain paper

Room Setup: Have foster parents and workers sitting at the same table. Distribute the participants evenly by using color construction paper designated for foster parents and workers at each table. As participants enter the room, guide them to the appropriate “colors” that you have designated before the training.

I. Introductions

- A. Trainer to Group – briefly introduce yourself and establish your credentials to train the material.
- B. Cover housekeeping issues – location of break rooms and bathrooms, smoking areas, **turn off cell phones and beepers**, etc. **Remind participants to sign the sign-in sheet in order to get credit.**
- C. Conduct an **icebreaker** to begin to introduce members to one another. If it is a large group, divide the large group into smaller groups by designating each table as a small group. Ask the participants to introduce themselves to members of their group and tell how many years experience they have as either a foster parent or as a worker. Ask someone to record the total number of years each group (foster parents and workers) represents at the table. Then, ask each table to repeat their totals to the larger group.

If it is a small group, go around the room with introductions and number of years experience from the foster parents and workers. Make a grand total of years on the flip chart in front of the room.
- D. Agenda – cover the agenda quickly, **Participant Manual, PM page 2.**
- E. Review Goals and Course Objectives – cover the goals and course objectives quickly. This material is in the **Participant Manual, PM page 3.**
- F. Overview of training – This continuing education training is designed to use principals of mediation in resolving conflict in foster homes. The same principals can be used in casework with other client families, as well as supervisors with caseworkers and their assigned cases.

The skills learned in this workshop are to assist workers in maintaining foster care placements and to avoid unnecessary moves for children. When conflicts develop between foster parents and foster children, a resolution meeting can be called to try to mediate the problems to help them negotiate solutions and compromises, rather than move the child. The premise of this approach is for foster parents to want to try to resolve the problems rather than have the child moved. The training will also address the new legislation that mandates a staffing prior to moving a child and the five-day waiting period to find an alternative placement.

In addition, caseworkers need to be responsive to foster parents and follow-up regularly with them on the status of the placement. Regular follow-up and support can diffuse small problems before they snowball into large ones. A good referral and regular contact with foster parents can help a difficult placement succeed.

II. Review Roles and Responsibilities of Foster Care Team **PM 4-14**

Do not go over the roles and responsibilities. Simply tell participants it is there for them to review since they have already covered the material in previous training. The material is taken directly from the Foster Parent Handbook.

Discuss how important it is for all members to work together as a team to benefit the foster child. To demonstrate teamwork complete the following exercise in front of the class.

Team work dance

Purpose:

The purpose of this exercise is to visually demonstrate the importance of team work.

Methodology:

1. Ask for 5 volunteers
2. Take one person aside. Instruct this individual to be in the middle when the group lines up. The middle person is instructed to follow the group's instructions for a few steps, then start to go the opposite direction. ***(If there is a co-trainer that person is in the middle).***
3. Designate one person to represent the child, two people to represent a foster parent couple, a fourth person to represent a worker, and the fifth volunteer to represent the Attorney Ad Litem. (The person in step 2 is part of this group – which person he/she portrays is not important.)
4. Instruct the group of 5 to do a team work dance:
Two steps to the right, 1 step to the left in unison. Do this as a group until the trainer tells them to stop.
5. Let the group begin “dancing.” Allow the dance to go on for a few steps until the designated person begins to go in the opposite direction.
6. Once the person begins dancing the wrong way, let the exercise continue long enough to see how the other group members react to this “acting out.”

Processing

Discuss the importance of everyone working together as a team. When someone starts to do things differently, the whole team is impacted, and everyone has to respond. Thank participants for their help.

III. Supporting a Successful Placement

Begin this section of the training with a **small group** brainstorming exercise.

Purpose

The purpose of this exercise is to build on the vast amount of experience in the room with workers and foster parents related to successful foster placements.

Materials

This exercise requires a flipchart set up for each small group and a flipchart or whiteboard for the trainer.

Methodology

1. Ask or write the question on the whiteboard or flipchart: “What makes a successful placement?”
2. Ask the participants at each table to list their experiences and beliefs about their experiences on what makes a placement successful.
3. Have each group report to the large group and generate a list on the flip chart.

Processing:

(Review the following points, focusing on the practical aspects to be used in the field by foster parents and workers.)

A. Prepare foster parents and foster child for placement.

- a. **Worker** – Prepare the foster parents by sharing as much information as possible with them about the child. This will help the foster caregiver to provide as much continuity for the child as possible and make the child more at ease in their home. Review **page 15** in PM for more suggestions.
- b. **Worker** - Prepare the child by telling them about the foster family and the foster home. Share any pictures you might have of the family. After suggestions from the group about how to do this, review the points on **page 16** in PM for other ideas.
- c. **Worker** – At the office, request the child complete “All About Me” (**pages 17-19** in PM). This can be the beginning of the Life Book. Worker should make a copy for the child’s file and take the completed form to the foster parent when making the placement.

B. Arriving at the home.

- a. **Worker** – Spend time with foster parent and foster child when placement is made. Help foster child and foster parent share information that will assist them in this transition. Help foster child ask questions that the child might have but not know how to ask. Remember the child is in a state of shock and denial and may not be able to cognitively think about what he/she needs to know. Review “All About Me”. Leave this with foster parents to use to start the Life Book for the child. Do not just drop the child off at the door and leave! See suggestion of topics to discuss on page **20 PM**.
- b. **Foster Parent** – share information with child about your family and household. Talk about the rules and a routine day in your family. If it is during school time, share with the foster child what school they will attend and plans to get them enrolled. Give the child any other information that will help them anticipate what to expect. Remember your family may operate totally different than what this child has experienced in their life. What are other suggestions from experienced foster parents in the training? Make a list of suggestions on the flip chart.

C. Settling in the placement.

- a. **Worker** – Follow-up with foster parents the next day after placement is made. Inquire about status and additional information the foster parent may have learned from the child that you did not know. Remember, the foster parents live with the child and they will be a good resource for information you, the worker, may not learn in the initial intake.
- b. **Foster Parent** – Start a journal that will record significant events in the child’s life. In your records, include school reports, significant photographs of the child taken periodically, a record of the child’s memberships, and participation in extracurricular activities. In addition you will maintain the health record. Remember the child is going through a series of changes; i.e., separation from his/her parents; anxiety about coping with DCFS personnel, a new family, and new surroundings. Helping the child through these changes will support the placement.
- c. **Worker** – Always return phone calls promptly to foster parents. Use **email** if available for specific technical questions. Use the phone or visit for more complex issues. Give family your **email** address and office phone number during placement. Discuss how easy it is to send an email without divulging confidential information about the case in order to ask for help or to set up a meeting as soon as possible.
- d. **Foster Parent** – Leave messages for your worker if they are not available. They are often out of the office and will need to return your call. Send an email if possible. Give worker your email address during placement.

Make the transition from here that even when you have worked to prepare the placement there are still problems that arise and continued teamwork is vital to the success of the placement.

D. Addressing problems in the placement.

- a. At the first sign of a problem, all parties should address it. Visits are made regularly by the worker during which time include a private discussion with the foster parent and a private discussion with the child. Deal with problems when they are small. Don't avoid warning signs until problems are big.
- b. **Group Exercise** – this can be done as a brainstorming exercise as a large group, or divide into small groups that will generate their own lists and report back to the larger group. ***Ask the groups to do a listing exercise of warning signs of problems developing in foster homes.*** Report to the large group and combine the lists into one large list on a flip chart.
- c. When a problem is identified, foster parents and worker need to try to identify new approaches for the foster parents to try in their home. If no creative ideas can be developed, then a resolution meeting may be needed.

E. Conflict Resolution Meeting

Before deciding to move a child, try a conflict resolution meeting. This option should be used before a change in placement is determined to be necessary. When it becomes apparent a resolution meeting is needed the caseworker will act in the role of mediator and help facilitate discussion between the foster parent and foster child. Follow-up after the resolution meeting is an important part of the process. The purpose of the resolution meeting is to try to negotiate solutions and compromises, rather than move the child. The premise of this approach is the foster parents will want to resolve problems and maintain the placement.

- IV. **Worker** – When a resolution meeting is needed, the worker will act in role of mediator. The meeting should include the foster parent and foster child, if age appropriate. See **PM page 21**.
- V. **Worker** – Begin the meeting by going over the rules for the Resolution Meeting prior to addressing the problems. See **PM page 22**.
- VI. Review pages **23-25** in PM.

*Review Sample Issue, **PM page 26**. Discuss the process.*
*Review Sample Agreement, **PM page 27**. Discuss the process.*

Divide participants into small groups. Explain that each group will be assigned a scenario. Each group will address the following issues and give feedback to the large group. Someone should be designated as the reporter and someone should be the recorder. See page 29 in PM.

Assign each group a scenario and:

1. State the foster parents' position
2. State the foster child's position
3. Identify issues
4. Discuss and negotiate an agreement
5. Draft a written agreement

The scenarios 1-6 are included in the resource section of the trainer guide.

G. New Legislation

- II. Workers and foster parents need to remember that multiple moves for a foster child are bad for their self esteem and do not teach them how to resolve conflict. Moving a child should be avoided if at all possible.
- III. If child must be moved, the legislature passed a new law that mandates a meeting with all parties involved within 48 hours of the foster parents wanting a child moved, and 5 days before that move has to be made. **Reference new law Act 1809 and review.** See **PM page 29**.

H. Conclusion

See page 30 in PM.

Summarize the main points of the training, including:

- ❖ Preparing the child and foster parents for the placement
- ❖ Supporting the placement
- ❖ Dealing with conflict when it arises
- ❖ Trying mediation to avoid a move
- ❖ Complying with the new Act 1809 when a move must happen

Ask if anyone has any questions.

Thank everyone for coming and participating. Ask them to complete their evaluations before leaving. Their certificates will be mailed to them.

Resource Section

Trainer Notes:

These scenarios are handouts. Each group will need only copies of the scenario the group is addressing.

Scenario I

George is a 15 year old who has lived in the Bush foster home for 2 months. When he first came to the Bush home, he was very cooperative and followed all the rules. When George came to live with the Bush family, he was told that all teens have to be in bed and turn their music down by 11 PM on school nights. Recently George has argued every night about going to bed at 11 PM and refuses to turn his music down until Mr. Bush goes to George's room to tell him to do so. The Bush family has about had it with George. They say they are not getting enough rest and are tired of arguing with George every day. George thinks the Bush's rule is too strict. He thinks he should be able to listen to the music as long as he wants and should not have to go to bed before midnight.

Scenario II

Tina lives with the Gore family. When she moved in with them and their two young girls, she thought they were a great family. She was not keen on helping out around the house, but was willing to do some work so she could stay with them. After the first couple of weeks, Tina did less and less of her assigned chores. Mrs. Gore has always given her children chores and expects them to be done each day before bedtime. Recently, when Ms. Gore gave Tina her assigned chores for the week, Tina said she wasn't going to do them because the home was not hers and she didn't think she should have to take care of someone else's house. The Gore family thinks Tina should have the same responsibilities as their daughters. They say they cannot keep her, if she won't do chores.

Scenario III

Monica has lived with the Cheney family for a year. She moved in with them when she was 14. They got along great until Monica met Bill, her new boyfriend. Monica is not allowed to date, but is allowed to have Bill over for visits when the Cheneys are home. On two recent occasions, the Cheneys have come home to find Bill at their home alone with Monica and the Cheney's daughter who is 12. They have restated their rule to Monica and have told her she cannot stay with them, if they cannot trust her. Monica insists that she is not "alone" with Bill when the Cheney's daughter is there. She says the Cheneys are being unfair because they act like they can't trust her even though she follows all the rules they have set for her. She thinks they just don't like Bill because he is 18.

Scenario IV

Osama is 13. He has lived with the Huckabee family for 6 months. He really likes living with them because he and Mr. Huckabee go duck hunting, and he and Mrs. Huckabee go on bear and snake hunts. He also really likes the triple-wide mobile home they live in because he has his own room and television. Osama doesn't much like going to school. He gets on the bus every morning, but often shows up late for his first period class. He meets his buddies close to the campus and they smoke cigarettes before going over to school. School attendance is very important to the Huckabees. They are adamantly against smoking. When the school called the Huckabees about Osama's behavior, they were shocked and embarrassed. They had no idea the problems existed. They confronted Osama who swore he would not smoke or be late again. Two weeks have passed since the confrontation. Today the Huckabees got a call from the school telling them Osama was late again and smelled like cigarettes. The Huckabees really care about Osama, but say they cannot keep him, if he continues these behaviors.

Scenario V

Johnny Carson has been in the Lenno foster home for six weeks. Prior to coming to this home, he had been in 3 placements in 6 months. When he was placed with the Lenno family, special care was taken to explain his challenging behavior and the problems that had arisen in the prior foster homes. Johnny has a habit of losing his temper and hitting walls or slamming things around in his room. The Lennos assured you at the time of Johnny's placement that they could deal with this type of behavior after raising a son who acted much like the description of Johnny. This morning the Lennos called to say they wanted Johnny to be moved immediately. He had become angry at breakfast because there was no cereal he liked and had stomped off into the bedroom. When Mr. Lenno went to the bedroom door to insist that Johnny come out to eat, words were exchanged, Johnny slammed the bedroom door in Mr. Lenno's face, and hit his fist against the wall. Although there was no hole in the wall, the Lennos say they are unwilling to tolerate this type of behavior from a disrespectful boy.

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Presented by:

University of Arkansas IV-E
&
MidSOUTH Training Academy



Successful Foster Care Placement: A Teamwork Approach to Avoiding and Resolving Conflict in Placement Agenda

Competencies: 104-3, 201-5, 201-7, 535-7

- A. Placement Issues
- B. Making a Foster Home Placement
- C. “Staying in touch”
- D. Red Flags
- E. Conflict Resolution Meeting
- F. Mediator’s Role
- G. Resolution Agreement
- H. New Legislation

GOAL:
**Participants will learn skills to avoid and
resolve conflict in relationships.**

Objectives: Participants will

- Develop an understanding of activities to support successful placements.
- Recognize signs of conflict in foster care placements between foster parents and foster child.
- Understand roles and responsibilities of foster care team
- Develop the skill to mediate conflict resolution and write placement agreement supporting foster parents and foster child.
- Have the ability to assess conflict between families and staff, know strategies to help re-establish a constructive family/staff relationship, and know when to remove the staff person from the case.



Responsibilities of the Foster Care Team

Foster Child

Children have certain inherent rights based on their special status as children and their inability to care for themselves. Among these inherent rights are the right to live with their birth/legal family and to receive love, protection, nurturance, and support until they reach the age of majority; the right to be free from harm, neglect, and abuse; to receive an education; to have physical care and medical attention; to enjoy all facets of family life; to be disciplined and to receive religious and moral training, and to grow into self-sufficient, independent young adults.

When a child's right to live with his own birth/legal family is in jeopardy, the child has a right to be represented by legal counsel and to have his legal rights protected in any judicial procedure which addresses custody or guardianship. DCFS has certain responsibilities to children who have been removed from the custody of their birth/legal parents. Responsibilities of DCFS to foster children are as follows:

- To place the child in a family foster home, kinship foster home, or, other substitute care facility that can best serve the child's needs and is the least restrictive environment;
- To place the child close to birth/legal parents to allow frequent contact;
- To have regular visits for the child with birth/legal parents, siblings, and other with whom there is a significant relationship, unless restricted by court order;
- To give the child honest information regarding all decisions;
- To provide the child the basic rights inherent to all children as stated above;

- To allow the child to participate in case planning, conferences, staffings, and court hearings, etc., whenever possible and age appropriate;
- To keep a record for each child that includes legal documents (e.g., birth certificate, social security card, court orders).
- To help the child return to the birth/legal parents' home at the earliest possible time or to be legally freed to form new family ties with relatives or adoptive parents; and
- To prepare the child for independence.

Birth/Legal Parents

Birth/legal parents are the key to long-range planning for the foster child. They are central members of the foster care team. The child began with them, identifies with them, and in most instances, longs to return to them. The return of the child to his home is dependent on his birth/legal parents' ability to improve their situation. Otherwise, his birth/legal parents face the possibility of long-range plans being made which may include termination of parental rights. With the exception of parents of children for whom the Department on Human Services is guardian or birth/legal parents whose rights have been permanently terminated, DCFS has certain responsibilities to the birth/legal parents of children placed in the custody of the Department of Human Services.

Responsibilities of the DCFS to birth/legal parents are:

- To offer and provide services directed toward preservation of the family as a unit and the avoidance of foster care is at all possible;
- To inform the birth/legal parents of the reason for removal of the child when foster care is necessary;
- To advise birth/legal parents that they can seek the assistance of an attorney anytime a legal action involves the child. If the birth/legal parents cannot afford an attorney, they can advise the court of this and seek assistance from Legal Aid, the Lawyer Referral Service, or other private means;
- To understand birth/legal parents without criticism or judgment and to acknowledge the birth/legal parents share in the child's life;
- To advise birth/legal parents of what parental privileges are retained while the child is in foster care;
- To advise birth/legal parents of what conditions must be met in order to have the child returned to them;
- To include birth/legal parents in developing the case plan for the child;
- To provide birth/legal parents every possible assistance and service for resolution or correction of conditions necessary for return of the child;
- To insure that birth/legal parents have full cooperation from all foster care team members toward achievement of case goals; and,
- To return the child to the birth/legal parents' home when the necessary changes or conditions required by the court or DCFS have been made and circumstances that necessitated the removal have been eliminated.

Responsibilities of birth/legal parents are:

- To cooperate as a foster care team member by participating in staffings, and court hearings;
- To maintain contact and communication with the child including keeping appointments for visitation and placing and returning calls;
- To help develop and follow the case plan (CFS-6010), thereby, making a permanent plan for the child;
- To notify DCFS at the earliest possible time if the birth/legal parents are not longer willing to work toward reunification and they wish to relinquish their parental rights and/or that another relative exists who would offer a permanent home to the child;
- To make necessary changes or correct conditions which prevent the child's return;
- To provide emotional support for the child;
- To be involved, whenever possible, in specific activities affecting the child such as medical care, religious, and social events; and,
- To provide financial support for the child. The court has a chart and will designate an amount for the birth/legal parents to pay.

Family Foster Parents and Kinship Foster Parents

As temporary substitute parents, you are close to the foster child on a day-to-day basis. This closeness makes you a vital member of the foster care team. You are in an excellent position to evaluate the child's current needs and ensure they are being met in your family or through resources in the community.

You, as team members with a unique perspective of the child, can contribute a special knowledge to DCFS and to the birth/legal parents including information about the child's behavior, relationships with playmates and other members of your family, adjustment to school and to the neighborhood.

By your observations of the child's relationship with his birth/legal parents and the child's reactions to visitation, you can enhance the DCFS work with the birth/legal parents. In some instances, you may also serve as actual role models for the birth/legal parents. This role modeling may be the first opportunity the parent has had to observe and learn effective parenting skills.

The responsibilities of DCFS to Foster Parents and Kinship Foster Families are:

- To provide pre-service training and continuing education for your role as family foster parents;
- To provide all available information concerning the child and the birth/legal family situation to enable you to make an informed decision about your ability or inability to provide care for the child in your home and participate in the case;
- To involve you as a team member in preplacement activities and case planning as well as staffings, and court proceedings;
- To ensure that you have a clear understanding of your role as well as the role of other team members in achieving case goals;
- To provide you with reimbursement for food, clothing and shelter which you have given children in your care;
- To allow you to continue your own family patterns and routine, as much as possible;
- To allow you to request removal of a child from your home, with notice;
- To give notice, whenever possible, when a child is to be removed from your home;

- To promptly inform you of any complaint against your home or of any condition or problem in your home which adversely affects your “approved” status as family foster parents and to provide guidance and support from DCFS toward resolution of the condition or problem (see section on Compliant Against Foster Family Other Than Child Maltreatment.)
- To provide you access to a grievance procedure when difference arise with DCFS which have not been resolved to your satisfaction (See section on Family Foster Parent Grievance Procedure); and,
- To inform you of DCFS programs, services, and policies which relate to foster family care.

The responsibilities of Family Foster Parents and Kinship Family Foster Parents to DCFS, the child and the child’s family are:

- To participate in family foster parent pre-service training and continuing education programs designed to enhance your ability to care for foster children;
- To assist in the development of an individualized training plan and follow the plan;
- To abide by the policies and the decisions of DCFS and accept DCFS’s supervision;
- To participate in DCFS resources, community resources, and court activities as a team member with pertinent information based on day-to-day knowledge of the child in your care;
- To assist the child and DCFS in planning and achieving the child’s return to his birth/legal parents’ home or to a permanent placement;
- To provide a nurturing family life experience to the child including guidance, stimulation, affection, and appropriate discipline;
- To train and discipline children with kindness and understanding;
- To establish well defined rules, set expectations and limits are consistent with the child’s age. There will be consequences for inappropriate behavior and the child will be appraised of the behaviors and actions that are not acceptable prior to any discipline being administered.
- To train and teach each child using techniques that stress praise and encouragement, discipline should be positive not negative.

Children shall not be subjected to verbal abuse, derogatory remarks about themselves or their family members; nor should they threaten to have the child removed from the foster home.

Methods of discipline that are unacceptable for use by foster parents with the child include but are not limited to:

1. Cruel, severe, or humiliating actions, such as washing mouth with soap;
2. Taping or obstructing child's mouth;
3. Placing painful or unpleasant tasting or hot substances in the mouth, lips, etc.;
4. Placing a child in dark areas;
5. Humiliation in public;
6. Physical punishment inflicted in any manner, such as hitting, pinching, pulling hair, slapping, kicking, twisting the arms, forced fixed body positions, etc.;
7. Denial of meals, clothing shelter;
8. Withholding implementation of the case plan (CFS-6010), any denial of basic rights;
9. Denial of visits, telephone, or mail contact with family members;
10. Assignment of extremely strenuous exercise or work;
11. Locked isolation of any kind; and,
12. Punishment of any kind for poor toilet habits.

DCFS or foster parents shall never give permission for the school to use corporal punishment (whip the child). The school may elect to whip but we can never give permission for them to do so.

- To provide food, clothing, shelter and personal care;
- To lock up all medicines, cleaning supplies, insecticides, gasoline, hazardous tools, knives, guns, or similar dangerous objects. Guns must be unloaded and stored in a secure, locked location separate from ammunition. Foster parents shall administer medication only in accordance with directions on the label. All medications shall be stored in a secure location, and psychotropic medications shall be kept securely locked. Foster parents shall be aware of possible side effects of all medications. Foster parents shall keep a log of all medications dispensed;
- To provide for enrollment and regular school attendance when age appropriate in an accredited school and to encourage the expression of the child's strengths and special talents. Home Schooling is not allowed;
- To cooperate with DCFS in arranging for routine medical and dental care as well as ensuring that the child receives appropriate care during any illness; to

accompany the child on all medical appointments; to monitor the child's intake of medicine (prescription or non-prescription);

- To maintain a record of health care, especially immunization records via the Medical Passport;
- To keep a lifebook for the child to record developmental progress as well as regular and special events in the child's life while the child is in your home;
- To speak positively of the child's birth/legal family;
- To maintain absolute confidentiality of private information about the child and the child's birth/legal family;
- To support the case plan, including the visitation plan and help the child feel comfortable with this;
- To maintain open communication with all team members; and, this includes communication with the child's birth/legal family when contact between you and family is part of the case plan.
- To notify DCFS of any pertinent conditions, problems, or major family changes;
- To provide the child with opportunity for recreational activities and for participation in family, school, and community activities;
- To provide information to your Family Service Worker that will be useful in case planning, to participate in staffings and court hearings;
- To assist in preparing the child and showing support or any move that must be made (to birth/legal parents' home, relatives, another foster home, or an adoptive home);
- To keep the terms of the CFS-462 (Initial Foster Home Agreement) and CFS-461A (Foster Home Agreement Addendum); and,
- To notify DCFS of any needs, requests, pertinent changes or problems.

The Department of Human Services (DHS) and Its Agent, The Division of Children and Family Services (DCFS)

The Department of Human Services acting through its agent, the Division of Children and Family Services, serves as the court-appointed legal custodian of the child and has the ultimate responsibility for ensuring that the child has the best possible foster care experience and that appropriate long-term plans are made. There is also a direct vested interest in resolution on the problems or conditions affecting the status of the birth/legal family. The cooperative efforts from the courts, other agencies, and community resources are necessary to ensure that responsibilities to the child and assistance in resolution of problems or conditions affecting the child's birth/legal parent are carried out.

Department/Division responsibilities are:

- To serve as the court-appointed legal custodian of the child;
- To provide the foster child, birth/legal parents, foster family, and kinship foster family with the necessary support services to accomplish goals set out in the case plan;
- To work with birth/legal parents, foster families, and kinship foster family to see that the child's emotional needs are met;
- To conduct regular staffings, and arrange for Judicial Reviews of the case;
- To provide necessary medical or psychological services, evaluations, care or treatment needed by the child;
- To ensure that the child has planned regular visitation with his birth/legal parents; or, if there are barriers to visitation, to provide services directed toward removal or reduction of barriers to visitation;
- To ensure visits for child with siblings by planned regular contact (once every two weeks);

- To maintain regular contact with all team members according to the case plan;
- To keep all team members informed of significant changes in the status of the case or individual team members;
- To provide opportunity for a religious experience with respect for the child's and birth/legal parents' religion;
- To take the legal steps necessary to place the child in a permanent home when return to the birth/legal parents is not possible within a reasonable length of time, usually not more than one year; and,
- To keep the terms of the CFS-462 (Initial Foster Home Agreement) and CFS-462A (Foster Home Agreement Addendum).

Preparing the Foster Caregiver

Providing complete and accurate information about the child to the foster parent will enable the caregiver to maintain a sense of continuity for the child. Information at placement should include:

- ❖ Age and probable length of placement
- ❖ Siblings and where they are located.
- ❖ Sleeping, bathing and eating schedules;
- ❖ Medical care needs, medications, special physical or emotional problems;
- ❖ Food likes/dislikes;
- ❖ Interests, skills, and favorite activities;
- ❖ Fears and anxieties;
- ❖ School behavior, academic ability, extra-curricular activities and educational needs;
- ❖ Verbal/communications ability
- ❖ Behaviors that can be expected and recommendations for handling them;
- ❖ History of maltreatment, and expected results on development and interaction with the foster parent.



Preparing the Child

- ❖ Tell the child about the foster family and the foster home.
- ❖ Talk to the child about the treatment plan, as age appropriate.
- ❖ Discuss the child's feelings about the placement.
- ❖ Discuss what has to happen for the child to be returned to parents.
- ❖ Ask child to complete "All About Me", with or without assistance, as age appropriate. This can be used to begin the Life Book.
- ❖ Let the child know he/she will be seen by a doctor.
- ❖ Talk to the child about where they will attend school.



ALL ABOUT ME

NAME _____

AGE _____ BIRTHDAY _____

SCHOOL GRADE _____

SCHOOL NAME _____

CLOTHING SIZES

SHIRTS _____

PANTS _____

SHOES _____

UNDERWEAR _____

MY FAVORITE FOODS ARE _____

I DON'T LIKE TO EAT _____

MY FAVORITE GAMES ARE

PLACES I LIKE TO GO _____

THINGS I LIKE TO DO _____

THINGS I DON'T LIKE TO DO _____

I AM HAPPY WHEN _____

I FEEL BAD WHEN _____

I GET MAD WHEN _____

I GET SCARED WHEN _____

MY BIGGEST PROBLEM IS _____

THINGS I DO BEST _____

WHEN I GROW UP I WANT TO BE _____

I REALLY NEED TO KNOW _____

If I could have three wishes come true, I would wish:

WAYS OF HELPING CHILD UPON ARRIVAL AT PLACEMENT:

- ❖ Which lights are left on at night?
- ❖ What are the rules about snacks? What kinds of foods can be a snack? Can they be from refrigerator or pantry?
- ❖ Who uses the bathroom first in the morning? What is the bath schedule?
- ❖ What are the rules about mealtimes?
- ❖ What are the rules about cleaning up rooms? Chores?
- ❖ When must people be home?
- ❖ How is allowance handled?
- ❖ Do people close their doors?
- ❖ How is laundry handled?
- ❖ When can the radio and television be used?
- ❖ Are things done “on schedule” or when people feel like it?
- ❖ Are there rules about bringing friends home?
- ❖ What time is bedtime for children of different ages?
Under what circumstances is bedtime extended?

When a resolution meeting is needed the worker will act in the role of mediator between foster parent and child

MEDIATOR ROLE/PROCESS:

1. Identify the Issues
2. Clarify to be sure all parties understand
3. Educate and Share Information
4. Take Notes
5. Keep Meeting Focused and Moving Towards Resolution
6. Write Agreement
7. Follow up and Review Progress

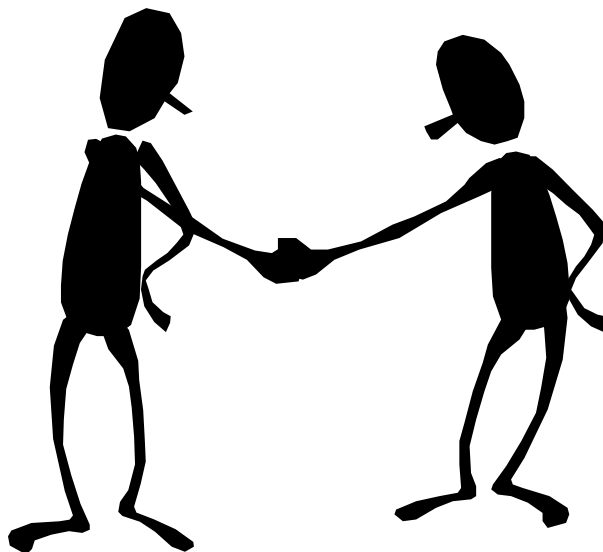
KEEP IT SIMPLE!!



RULES for RESOLUTION MEETING:

Both Parties:

1. Agree to meet;
2. Agree to speak without interrupting;
3. Agree to resolve issues;
4. Develop agreement in writing;
5. Agree to follow agreement;
6. Agree to no foul language, no yelling;
7. Agree to time outs when someone needs one
8. Other suggestions?



Initiating Conflict Resolution

- Calm Down!
- Ask to talk to the other person
- Open with a request for the other person to help you solve the problem. This reduces defensiveness and establishes an atmosphere of problem solving and collaboration.
- Say something positive if possible. Establish background or history that you have with the other person. For example, "You and I have worked together for a long time. Our working relationship means a lot to me."
- Tell the other person what is on your mind. Describe the behavior or incident. The description should *not* be an evaluation or analysis.
- Use the **XYZ** method of telling the other person what is on your mind.
When you do _____ **X** _____, (behavior)
_____ **Y** _____ happens, (consequence)
and I feel _____ **Z** _____. (feelings)
Keep your **XYZ** statement short and to the point. Deal with one problem area at a time. The other person is more likely to become defensive if they are subjected to a long laundry list of behaviors that are causing difficulty.
- Allow the other person to respond. This is critical! Often, people do not realize that there is a problem and when confronted may respond willing to change. However, don't get discouraged if you don't get the response you want.
- Ask if the other person understands. Ask how the other person feels about what you have said.
- Ask if the other person is willing to make a change.
- Make an agreement for change. Formulate a statement describing what you have talked about.
- Thank the other person for listening.

Mediating Conflict Resolution

- Stay calm!
- Each person *must* be present and must be reasonable.
- Have each party state their complaint using the **XYZ** method.

When you do _____ **X** _____,
_____ **Y** _____ happens and
I feel _____ **Z** _____.

- Agree on the problem.
This is a critical aspect of mediation. Often, the parties involved need help defining the problem.
- Develop a list of solutions.
- Make an agreement for change.
- Follow-up!

Responding to Conflict Resolution

- Calm Down!
- Listen to what the other person is saying.
- Paraphrase what you have heard **OR** ask for an explanation if you do not understand.

State what you have heard using the **XYZ** formula.

When I do **X** (behavior)
 Y happens (consequence),
and you feel **Z** (feelings).

Ask for a specific example if you are unsure of what the other person is talking about.

- Agree with some aspect of the complaint.
Even if you don't agree with what the person is saying, you can still say something such as, "I agree that my behavior is upsetting to you."
- Ask the other person what they want you to do. You can ask them for solutions to the problem and you can offer your own solutions.
This shows respect for the other person's position and shifts the focus of the encounter from a negative "confrontation" to a positive "problem solving" event.

In some cases, it may be helpful for both parties to write down every solution you can think of, even silly ones. Looking at outrageous solutions can add humor to the situation and help you both to move toward resolution. Then look at the solutions you have generated and weight the merits.

- Tell the person you understand.
- Make and agreement to change. State in specific terms what you plan to do.
- Ask if you can tell your side.
- Apologize if you need to.

SAMPLE ISSUE:

Processing with Both Parties:

Issue: Messy Room
(Clarify....What does messy mean? Be specific)

“Foster Child” has a Messy Room, with her dirty clothes on the floor and bed not made.

Foster Parent: Wants Foster Child to Pick up dirty clothes and make bed every day before school.

Foster Child: Does not think her messy room is an issue. Her issue is the foster mom “nags” her all the time.
(Clarify Nagging)

Mediator: How are “you” going to resolve these issues to maintain this placement?

Address: Privileges
Consequences

Foster Child needs to know ahead of time the privileges earned by accomplishing tasks and the consequences if she chooses not to do to agreement.

Does this have to be done 7 days a week?
Would 4 out of 5 school days be enough?
What privilege is earned for doing it?
What is the consequence for not doing it?

Sample Agreement:

We agree to the following:

1. (Child's Name) agrees to pick up all dirty clothes from floor and make bed in morning prior to leaving for school. If no school, then chore will be done by noon that day.
2. (Foster Parent's Name) agrees to check room each morning and note success on calendar each day. Calendar will be posted in kitchen.
3. (Foster Parent's Name) agrees to allow (Child's Name) to rent a movie or go skating Friday nights when she completes chores 5 out of 7 days.
4. (Foster Parent's Name) agrees to only remind (Child's Name) one time about completion of chore.
5. We agree to review our progress with caseworker in one month.

Foster Parent Signature, Date

Foster Child Signature, Date

Directions for Scenarios

- Review rules for resolution meetings.
- Each group take a scenario and
 1. State the foster parents' position
 2. State the foster child's' position
 3. Identify issues
 4. Discuss and negotiate an agreement
 5. Draft a written agreement

ACT 1809-SECTION 17

- (a.) To reduce the number of placements of children in foster care, anytime a foster parent requests a foster child to be removed from their home, excluding an emergency that places the child or a family member at risk of harm, the foster parent must:
1. Attend a staffing which will be arranged by DCFS within forty-eight (48) hours to discuss what services or assistance may be needed to stabilize the placement.
 2. The foster child, the child's attorney ad litem and a CASA, if appointed to the case, shall be notified so that they can attend and participate in the staffing and planning for the child's placement.
 3. If the placement cannot be stabilized the foster parent will continue to provide for the foster child until an appropriate alternative placement is located, but this shall not be longer than five (5) business days.

Implementation Procedures:

1. An emergency that places the child or a family member at risk of harm is defined as *"Imminent harm to the foster family members or foster children."* If the request for removal from the foster parent meets this definition a staffing is not required and the child can be removed immediately.
2. Once a request for removal is received from the foster parent a staffing must be held within 48 hours of the notification. If the request is made on the weekend or a holiday, the staffing must be held by COB of the next working day.
3. Immediate notification of a staffing is to be given to the attorney ad litem, CASA, and the foster child if age appropriate. The notification can be by phone, fax, or email. You will need to ensure that you have a way of contacting the attorney ad litem and CASA immediately. This staffing and notification does not impact required staffings and should only be conducted to help stabilize the placement and/or planning for the child's placement.
4. If the placement cannot be stabilized an appropriate alternative placement must be made within five business days from the request.
5. The requirements of this Act do not apply to planned moves or placements or to respite care.

Summary

- Worker needs to prepare foster parents and foster child for the placement with as much information as possible.
- Foster Parents need to prepare foster child with as much information about their home and what to expect as they can.
- Foster care team needs to support each other with current information.
- Deal with conflict as it arises.
- Try mediation to avoid a move.
- Comply with Act 1809 when a move must happen.