

THE CAREGIVER'S VOICE: BEING A VALUABLE PART OF AN EFFECTIVE CHILD WELFARE TEAM

Developed by: OCWTP

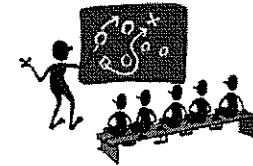
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Agenda

- Introductions
- Functions of Teams
- Teams and Participants
- The Foster Parent as a Professional
- Working with the Agency
- Working with the Primary Family
- Working with the Schools
- Working with Other Providers
- Putting It All Together



Crossing the River




Crossing the River

- To win, each team must get all of its members to the other bank
- If any member gets wet, the team loses
- If your entire team reaches the other side, you may eat the candy in the bucket!



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Why do we have teams?



To better meet child's needs	Quicker permanency outcomes	Reduces conflicted loyalty
Reduces allegations	Reduces child's problem behaviors	Reduces foster parent burnout

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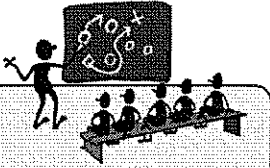
Rules for Effective Team Functioning



- Agree on the goal
- Communicate about the process
- Agree to disagree on some points
- Be well-trained and informed
- Participate
- Be culturally sensitive
- Build trust & atmosphere of honesty
- Acknowledge our own issues & motivations

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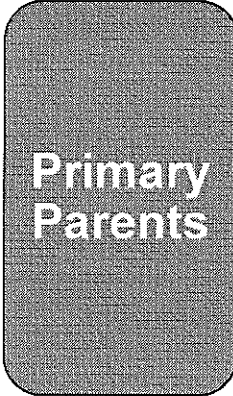
Various Teams



Primary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Birth parent • Foster parent • Caseworker • Child/Youth
Family Decision-Making	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Primary team • Adoption worker/ Kinship worker • Child specific recruiter • Family or child advocates
Service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Primary team • Other service providers for child • Other service providers for primary parent(s)

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Roles and Responsibilities of Primary Team Members: Primary Parents



- Maintain connection through contact with child; nurture child
- Help establish case plan activities
- Collaborate with worker, foster caregiver, service providers
- Acknowledge needs for various services
- Assure child is safe and needs are met

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Roles and Responsibilities of Primary Team Members: Foster Caregivers

Foster Caregivers

- Nurture child and assure daily needs for care are met
- Advocate for services and planning to meet short-term, long-term needs of child
- Collaborate with other team members
- Promote contact, connections for child with primary family
- Empower primary parents to have active parenting role

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Roles and Responsibilities of Primary Team Members: Caseworkers

Caseworker

- Coordinate case plan development --offer, or refer, services
- Assure parent and child maintain contact
- Facilitate communication, collaboration
- Promote team focus on safety, permanency for child
- Facilitate conflict resolution

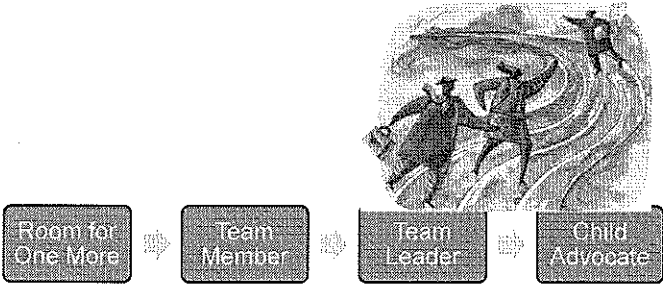
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The Foster Caregiver as Professional



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Stages of Foster Caregiver Development




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graph LR; A[Room for One More] --> B[Team Member]; B --> C[Team Leader]; C --> D[Child Advocate];
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Interpersonal Communication


- Know when to approach others
- Know how to communicate
 - ❖ Email
 - ❖ Telephone
 - ❖ In person
- Keep requests short, to the point
- State situation briefly; State your need briefly; Give time frame available; preferred method of communication



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Written Communication

Sending	Receiving
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Incident reports• Daily log• Emails• Notes to primary parents• Notes to school	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• How to read school records• How to read case reports



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Meetings



Prepare


Attend

Advocate

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Working with the Agency

- Structure of the Agency: CSB or JFS
- Agency Policies vs. State laws/rules
- Agency Practices



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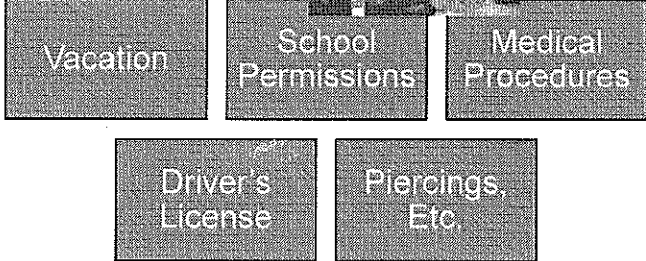

Confidentiality



- Communicating with School
- Communicating with Extended Family
- Communicating with Community Members
- Social Networking Sites
- Email communication

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Permissions



Vacation

School Permissions


Medical Procedures

Driver's License

Piercings, Etc.

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Caseworker Roles and Responsibilities



- Intake Worker
- Ongoing Worker
- Foster Care Worker
- Adoption Worker
- Kinship Worker


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Permanency Planning: The Caregiver's Role

- Family Contacts
- Semi-annual Reviews

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Family Interaction Tasks

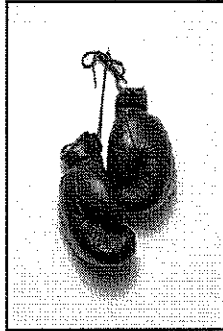


- Assist or provide transportation of child
- Have regular on-going contact with parent
- Permit Family Interaction in the foster homes
- Arrange Family Interaction
- Document behavior before, during, and after
- Encourage contact and support child
- Have child ready to participate
- Pack clothing and other essentials for overnight
- Help child accept separation from parent
- Use the contact for life book opportunities (pictures, mementoes)
- Notify caseworker of any unplanned activity that occurs

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Conflict Resolution Scenerios

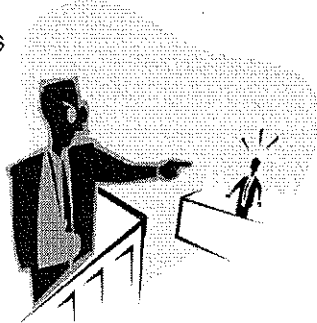
- Review your conflict situation.
- Discuss possible resolutions.
- Choose a spokesperson to share your work.



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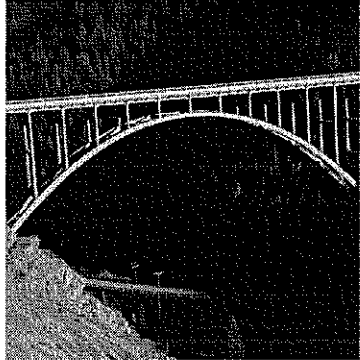
Allegations

- Build trust with other team members
- Document incidents
- Get support



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Working with the Primary Family Building Bridges



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Working with Other Providers

Schools	Legal	Medical Health
Behavioral Health	Others?	




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Working with the School

Advocating for the child

IEPs/504 Plans


Surrogate Parents



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Please discuss....

- What did you learn about working as part of the child welfare team?
- How will you use this knowledge to make you a more effective team member?
- Thanks for all of your hard work today, and every day on behalf of Ohio's most vulnerable children & families!



Brian