

# FAMILY-CENTERED, NEIGHBORHOOD-BASED SERVICES

## FRAMEWORK FOR RELATING

### The Foster Parent, Birth Parent and Social Worker Partnership

#### CASE STUDY #1

**Bobby Dunn was removed from his mother due to neglect and emotional abuse. His mother has a history of leaving the 5 year old at home alone for hours while Ms. Dunn is out with her boyfriends. Ms. Dunn is unemployed due to back problems, but is expected to be returning to work in a few months. Ms. Dunn has a history of substance abuse, but it does not seem to cause Ms. Dunn to be violent/hostile. Based on the Assessment Worker's report, the family has a host of problems and there is moderate to high risk to the child at this time and therefore, Bobby had to be removed.**

**Bobby was placed into the foster home of Mr. and Mrs. Smith on Wednesday. Mr. and Mrs. Smith live close to Bobby's neighborhood. They have been foster parents for 10 years. The Worker informed Mr. and Mrs. Smith that Bobby has a development delay which will require medical attention. It could be attributed to Fetal Alcohol Syndrome, but that has not been determined yet. Bobby will be going to Kindergarten next year, he was held back for this current year.**

**The Worker informed Mr. and Mrs. Smith that the agency will be holding a Family Team Meeting on the upcoming Monday for the foster parents and Bobby's mother. The Worker outlined to the foster parents the intentions of the Family Team Meeting and asked if they would be attending. The Smiths agreed to attend and looked forward to receiving information from Bobby's mother regarding Bobby's likes and dislikes. The Worker also asked if the Smiths would be willing to start developing a relationship with his mother so to hopefully facilitate a quicker reunification. The Smiths agreed to have a relationship with Ms. Dunn, but requested that they would like to take the relationship very slow at this point. They have some fears regarding her substance abuse issues and are uncertain if she could become violent/hostile.**

**On Monday, the Family Team Meeting was held between Ms. Dunn, Mr. and Mrs. Smith and the Assessment and Ongoing Worker assigned to the case. The Ongoing Worker began the meeting by discussing the purpose of the Family Team Meeting, went over the ground rules and then asked Ms. Dunn to share with the foster parents Bobby's likes and dislikes. After the families shared information about Bobby, the Ongoing Worker began the discussion on relationship building—the contact between the foster parents and birth parent at this time.**

## QUESTIONS REGARDING CASE STUDY #1

*If you were the Worker,*

1. What profile would you assign to Ms. Dunn?
2. What relationship willingness level would you assign to Mr. and Mrs. Smith?
3. What level would you begin the Relationship activities?
4. Based on the information in the case study, what activities could Ms. Dunn and Mr. and Mrs. Smith do to help begin the relationship development?
5. What is the Social Worker's role and responsibilities with these activities?
6. What are the Foster Parents' role and responsibilities with these activities?
7. What is the Birth Parent's role and responsibilities with these activities?
8. Are the Foster Parents qualified to partner with the Birth Parent on each activity? If not, type of support would the Foster Parents need to partner with the Birth Parent on the activities you selected?
9. Although every relationship develops differently, how much time would you recommend the families spend involved in the activities at the level you recommended? When would an appropriate time be to hold another Family Team Meeting?

*If you were Mr. and Mrs. Smith (the Foster Parents):*

10. Would you be comfortable developing a relationship with Ms. Dunn? If so, what activities would you be willing to do to start building the relationship?
11. What would you like the Worker's role to be with the beginning stages of the relationship? What support would you need?
12. Would you feel qualified to partner with the Birth Parent with each activity? If not, what would you like to receive to feel more qualified and comfortable?
13. How long would you remain at the identified level the families are at right now? When would you be willing to move to the next level?

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#### CASE STUDY #2

Susy Clark, age 10, was removed from her mother and stepfather, Mr. and Mrs. Clark two days ago due to physical abuse. Her mother and stepfather have a history of domestic violence and this time, Susy received injuries. The Assessment Worker determined that Susy received the injuries from Mr. Clark, but Mrs. Clark did not intervene to stop the abuse to Susy.

Susy was placed into the foster home of Ms. Beck, who has been a foster parent for 2 years. Ms. Beck lives a few communities away from the Clarks. She was informed of the reason for Susy's removal and that the Clarks have a history of violence that usually involves alcohol. The Assessment Worker informed Ms. Beck of the Family Team Meeting (FTM) that would be held in 5 days and the purpose of the FTM. Ms. Beck was very reluctant to attend the meeting, but was informed that she would be safe and that Susy would be able to visit with her parents after the FTM.

The Assessment Worker asked Ms. Beck if she would like to have contact with the Clarks. Based on the information Ms. Beck received regarding the Clarks' history with violence, Ms. Beck firmly stated that she would not like to have any contact with the Clarks unless the agency was present.

The FTM was held 5 days after placement. The Clarks appeared to be somewhat hostile toward the agency and Ms. Beck. They were reluctant to share information regarding Susy's likes and dislikes, but ended up providing some useful information to Ms. Beck. The Clarks were anxious about seeing Susy and quickly agreed to the roles and responsibilities the Assessment and Ongoing Workers stated during the meeting. The Ongoing Worker stated that at this time, the Clarks could have bi-weekly supervised visits with Susy and that Ms. Beck would be providing them with monthly updates about Susy via mail. The Clarks were upset that they could not call Ms. Beck directly and demanded her phone number. The Ongoing Worker reminded the Clarks that at this time, that information would not be given out. The meeting ended with some hostility and uneasiness between the Clarks and Ms. Beck.

The Ongoing Worker met with Ms. Beck 1 month after placement to discuss the possibility of increasing contact between her and the Clarks so that they could work on developing the relationship. The Clarks have abided by the roles and responsibilities and have not caused Ms. Beck any problems. Ms. Beck stated that she was hesitant about developing a relationship, but understood the importance of having some type of relationship with Susy's family.

## QUESTIONS REGARDING CASE STUDY #2

*If you were the Worker,*

1. What profile would you assign to Mr. and Mrs. Clark?
2. What relationship willingness level would you assign to Ms. Beck?
3. What level would you begin the Relationship activities?
4. Based on the information in the case study, what activities could Mr. and Mrs. Clark and Ms. Beck do to help begin the relationship development?
5. What is the Social Worker's role and responsibilities with these activities?
6. What are the Foster Parents' role and responsibilities with these activities?
7. What is the Birth Parent's role and responsibilities with these activities?
8. Are the Foster Parents qualified to partner with the Birth Parent on each activity? If not, what type of support would the Foster Parents need to partner with the Birth Parent on the activities you selected?
9. Although every relationship develops differently, how much time would you recommend the families spend involved in activities at the level you identified? When would an appropriate time be to hold another FTM?

*If you were Ms. Beck (the foster parent),*

10. Would you be comfortable developing a relationship with Mr. and Mrs. Clark? If so, what activities would you be willing to do to initiate the relationship development?
11. What would you like the Worker's role to be with the beginning stages of the relationship? What support would you need?
12. Would you feel qualified to partner with the Birth Parent with each activity? If not, what would you like to receive to feel more qualified and comfortable?
13. How long would you recommend remaining at the relationship level you selected? When would you be willing to move to the next level?

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#### CASE STUDY #3

Amanda Thompson, age 13, has been in Mr. and Mrs. Jones' foster home for 6 months. Amanda was placed into the Jones' home due to physical and emotional abuse caused by her mother. Amanda's mother, Ms. Thompson, has a history of domestic violence as well as substance abuse. Ms. Thompson has been receiving substance abuse treatment since Amanda has been removed and remains clean and sober. Ms. Thompson has also left her abusive boyfriend and now resides in her own apartment.

Mr. and Mrs. Jones attended the FTM meeting when it was first held right after Amanda was removed from her home. The FTM went well and the Joneses felt comfortable about developing a relationship with Ms. Thompson. Within the 1<sup>st</sup> month, the Joneses decided that they would give their phone number to Ms. Thompson so she could contact Amanda directly.

In the 2<sup>nd</sup> month, the Joneses decided that they would drive Amanda to her mother's apartment for visits that they would then supervise. These visits went well and Amanda's Worker was aware of this decision although was not completely supportive of the Jones' decision.

In the 3<sup>rd</sup> month, the Joneses decided they would transport Ms. Thompson to Amanda's school events and medical appointments. Amanda's Worker worried that the Jones may be getting too involved with Ms. Thompson and that they were developing the relationship too quickly. The Worker contacted Mrs. Jones during this month and discussed her concerns. Mrs. Jones stated that they were getting along with Ms. Thompson fine and that Amanda's mother respected the boundaries and appreciated her time with Amanda.

By the 5<sup>th</sup> month, the Joneses were inviting Ms. Thompson to family activities, such as picnics, movies, and to parks. The Worker was very concerned that the relationship was definitely moving too quickly and was unsure as to how to support the families' relationship. The Worker was worried the relationship would fail.

By the 6-month, the Joneses contacted the Worker and informed the Worker that they would *not* be transporting Ms. Thompson to any events nor would they be having any type of relationship with Ms. Thompson. Supposedly, Ms. Thompson and the Joneses had an argument about a boyfriend Amanda has and their feelings about Amanda dating at her age. Amanda wanted to go to the movies with her boyfriend. Ms. Thompson threatened to come and "do harm to" the Joneses if they would not allow Amanda to go to the movies with her boyfriend alone. The Worker is now faced with what to do with the relationship, Amanda's placement and the Joneses' safety.

## **QUESTIONS REGARDING CASE STUDY #3**

*As the Worker,*

- 1. Based on the situation and the unfolding of the events as they occurred, what suggestions would you make to manage the conflict and move the relationship forward in a productive manner?**
- 2. How would you recommend handling the task-related behaviors and relationship-oriented behaviors?**