

FAMILY-CENTERED, NEIGHBORHOOD-BASED SERVICES

THE FOSTER PARENT, BIRTH PARENT AND SOCIAL WORKER PARTNERSHIP

A FRAMEWORK FOR RELATING

GUIDELINES

The purpose of the Framework for Relating is to help Child Welfare Professionals establish a partnership between the foster family, birth family and the social worker. These guidelines will help the Child Welfare Supervisors and Direct Service Staff properly implement the framework within the given timeframes (page 3). For further explanation, refer to Addendum A-D.

TIMEFRAME: NUMBER OF WEEKS THE BIRTH AND FOSTER FAMILY SPENDS IN AN ACTIVITY AREA (page 3)

In order to properly implement the Framework, the Timeframe must be followed. It contains 9 Levels (Level A-I) with specific timeframes under each level indicating how long the parties should remain in a level based on the Birth Family's Profile and the Foster Family's Willingness to Partner. The Birth Family's Profiles are broken down into 5 areas (Emergency, Situational, Multiple Needs A, Multiple Needs B, and Multiple Needs with a History of Violence). These profiles are fully explained in Addendum B (page 16-18). The Profiles must match up with the Foster Family's Willingness to Partner. The Social Worker needs to have a conversation with the Foster Family prior to implementing the Framework, in order to determine the Foster Family's willingness to partner with the Birth Family (to work towards a Low-Moderate Relationship or a Moderate-High Relationship with the Birth Family). These Relationships are fully explained in Addendum C (page 19). Once the Birth Family's Profile has been matched up with the Foster Family's Willingness to Partner, the Social Worker begins in Level A of each Activity. Each Level has been color coded for easy identification. For example, if the Foster Family chooses to have a Low-Moderate Relationship with the Birth Family and the Birth Family is considered Profile 2, then the Social Worker would review the Timeframe and begin with Level A (color coded: blue), 1-9 weeks. The Social Worker would match this Level (A—color coded: blue) with the activity the Foster Family and Birth Family will experience (e.g., Mail Contact). The Social Worker would review this activity, and the roles and responsibilities with the Birth Family and Foster Family. The parties would begin with Level A (color coded: blue) and remain in this level for 1-9 weeks. As the relationship develops, the Social Worker can move the families (with their agreement) to the next level, Level B (Color Coded: green) and so on, for the life of the case (Social Worker's Profile, Addendum D, page 20).

10 SPECIFIC ACTIVITIES (page 4-14)

The Framework addresses 10 specific activities (as outlined in the Table of Contents) that birth and foster families may experience throughout the duration of the case. Each area has been broken down into a Continuum of Contact. The Continuum of Contact has 9 levels (described in the Timeframe Section, page 3) with specific activities that the Birth Family, Foster Family and Social Worker must do in order to move into the next level of the relationship.

Under the Continuum of Contact Levels are the Roles and Responsibilities of Foster Parents. These Roles and Responsibilities describe exactly what the foster family has to do in order to ensure that the relationship progresses. The Roles and Responsibilities may stay the same throughout several levels. If the Roles and Responsibilities do change, a thick black, vertical bar notes it. For e.g., one specific area, Appointments and Outpatient Procedures, addresses the Roles and Responsibilities of Foster Parents which remain the same from Level A through Level C. Level D then continues with more involved Roles and Responsibilities, which continue to the last level, Level I. The same holds true for the Skills Needed of Foster Parents, CCBIT Competencies for Foster Parents, Roles and Responsibilities of Social Worker, and the Roles and Responsibilities of Birth Parents. The CCBIT (Comprehensive Competency-Based Intensive Training) Competencies refer to the Pre-Service Core Training for Foster Parents and can be a resource for the Direct Service Staff to refer to when reviewing the Framework and the Roles and Responsibilities with the Foster Parent(s).

BRIDGE DOCUMENT

Dr. Denise Goodman, Consultant for the Annie E. Casey Foundation, partnered with the Cuyahoga County Department of Children and Families to develop the Bridge Document for Birth Families, Foster Families and Social Workers (Addendum E, page 21-23). The Bridge Document outlines specific activities each party could perform to "bridge" the relationship between birth families, foster families, and social workers. The activities are listed in a continuum from Low Relationship (left side of the Bridge) to High Relationship (right side of the Bridge). The Bridge Document complements the Framework for Relating and can be used as a guide when in need of activities foster families, birth families and the social worker could do to further "bridge" the relationship.