

Involving the Court

Directions: Work with your small group to discuss the two case vignettes and respond to the questions that follow each.

Jennifer

Jennifer is a 21-year-old with a diagnosis of schizophrenia who just gave birth to a baby boy. She has a history of beating her first son severely. After placing the child in foster care, the local children and youth agency filed a petition with the court two years ago for an involuntary termination of parental rights. The court terminated Jennifer's parental rights and the child was adopted. Jennifer has not been taking medication because of her pregnancy. Her father severely abused her physically and sexually as a child. She has stated that she hates males and believes they are all "the devil." Hospital staff are requesting intervention.

-Would intervention include dependency? If so, what section of the definition would apply?

-Does this case involve aggravated circumstances? If so, why?

-If the county agency requests court involvement, in addition to identifying information, what would the petition include?

Jack

Jack is a three-year-old child who has been in a foster home for the past year with a permanency goal of reunification. The child was placed due to parental neglect and aggravated circumstances were not alleged by the agency. Mother is not a resource and her whereabouts are unknown. A neighbor phones the county agency alleging that the father is known in Colorado because he killed another child. The caseworker requests that the father get an FBI clearance after learning that the family had, in fact, lived in Boulder, Colorado. The father denied the allegation. The Colorado child welfare agency was contacted. They verified, in writing, that the father was responsible for the starvation death of a sibling and had served time for it.

-The county agency now reasonably believes that aggravated circumstances exist. What is the aggravated circumstance? What does the agency do and when?

-Is there any court action that the agency may have overlooked in the past?