

Washington Case Scenario

Background Information: The family consists of the mother, Charlene Washington, age 23; father, Dwight Kirby, age 27; and their four children, twins, Dwight Jr. and DeeAnn, age 6; Malik, age 4; and, Melanie, age 7 months. This family resides at 1234 the East Side Avenue, Apartment 4C in Urban, Pennsylvania. The mother lives in public housing with her four children.

The agency received a referral from the school nurse and social worker, respectively, Aimee Roth and Robin Blakely, from the Urban City Elementary School. Both Dwight and DeeAnn complained that they were hungry. The nurse (Aimee Roth) observed that the children were small for their age. The nurse decided to weigh the children and found that they were underweight. In addition to the children being underweight, DeeAnn had a handprint across her left cheek and a swollen lip. The inside of DeeAnn's mouth was also cut. When the nurse asked DeeAnn how she got the injuries, DeeAnn started to cry and said that she would get in big trouble if she told.

The school nurse contacted the school social worker. The school social worker asked both children a series of questions regarding the handprint on DeeAnn's face and the injury to her mouth. The first child interviewed was Dwight. The school social worker asked Dwight to talk about how things were going at home. At first, Dwight resisted; however, as he became more relaxed, he began to talk more about his living environment. He stated that he loved his mother, but he gets scared at times when she yells at them. He said that she yelled at them for spilling juice on the floor in the kitchen. Dwight mentioned that his mom asked who got the juice out of the refrigerator. DeeAnn was the one who took it out, so her mother started beating her. He said that DeeAnn was still crying after her beating when mom told her to shut-up. That was when their mom slapped DeeAnn so hard in the face that she fell on the floor, striking her mouth on the corner of the table as she fell. He said, at the time, the baby was also crying. Dwight said that the baby cries all the time.

After the school social worker interviewed Dwight, the school social worker interviewed DeeAnn. When Robin asked DeeAnn to explain what happened, DeeAnn gave the same account as her twin brother. DeeAnn also stated that their mother usually disciplines them by hitting them. Both children appeared to be telling the truth. The children stated that they are not afraid of their mother, except when they do something wrong and she starts yelling. The school social worker asked the children together whether they would like to go home. They both said, "Yes."

The school social worker asked the other teachers about any concerns about these children. One teacher stated she tried to contact the mother about the behavior of Dwight but got no positive response. The teachers noted no other concerns about the other children. The interview revealed that DeeAnn had been the only child physically hit by her mother at that time. Dwight reports that his mother does not hit him too often because he tries to be on his best behavior. In regard to DeeAnn, she gets hit far more often than Dwight does. DeeAnn states that her mother hits her more because her mother says that she is too grown for her age. Both children stated that their mother hit them in the past whenever they were not good, but they never had marks on them. The social worker observed that DeeAnn conducts herself in an adult manner at times.

Washington Case Scenario (cont'd)

Dwight and DeeAnn are in school the majority of the time. When they miss school, they do so for a valid reason. On the other hand, Dwight often gets into fights with the other schoolchildren. Both children make friends well and no one has concerns with the children's social functioning. Teachers often report that DeeAnn tries to boss the other children but the children still play with her. DeeAnn said that she and Dwight sometimes take care of their 4-year-old brother, Malik. DeeAnn and Dwight try to help their mother when she says she is tired. The children denied their mother using any drugs or alcohol; however, they did say that, when their father lived with them, he would drink everyday when he came home.

A review of the agency's records found that, with this family, the agency had no prior involvement. However, agency representatives noticed that the mother became involved with the agency as a child but, until recently, not as a parent. The agency found the mother, when a child, dependent at the age of 16. The mother had the twins at age 17. Charlene had her children while placement. Her Independent Living program assisted her in locating her current housing. She was unable to live with her mother because the courts sentenced her mother to three years in the county jail. The courts found her mother to be in violation of her parole for selling and using drugs. Charlene was the only child that her mother had in her care. Charlene's younger brother lived with his father. Her father never became involved in her life as a child. However, she now sees her father every-so-often. Charlene graduated from high school.

