

# *Case Study of Roberto*

## **Directions for Role Play Activity:**

Ms. Domingo called the agency and asked the agency to place Roberto because she can no longer control him. She is concerned that his behavior will escalate and that he will harm her or his two younger siblings when he is in one of his “fits of rage”.

Roberto is a 15 year old Hispanic male living with his single mother in a rural town in Pennsylvania. Roberto’s father is sporadically involved with the family. Roberto has two younger brothers, ages 10 and 11. Ms. Domingo is currently on disability due to a progressive vision problem. She has limited mastery of the English language and she has relied on Roberto frequently to negotiate the “systems” that they are involved with in the community.

In a previous meeting with Roberto’s mother, she indicated that Roberto has been sullen and irritable for much of the past year. She and Roberto constantly argue and fight. Even the slightest thing seems to send Roberto into a fit of rage. Roberto’s outbursts have escalated recently, including occasions when he has thrown things and punched holes in the walls and doors. His mother reported that Roberto seems unhappy and is withdrawn spending increasing amounts of time either away from home or wanting to be alone. She also believes that Roberto may be drinking and has frequently smelled alcohol on him when he returns home.

Roberto’s grades have fallen over the past year and he has missed 20 days of school this year complaining of not feeling well or not having the energy to get out of bed. Roberto frequently stays up until 2 or 3 in the morning and then is too tired to awake for school. If Roberto misses the bus, Ms. Domingo has no means of transportation to get him to school.

In an interview with Roberto, he appeared sullen and showed very little emotion. During the interview, Roberto revealed that he has few things in his life that he is interested in and feels hopeless that his life will improve. He was unable to articulate why he is feeling this way. He is being teased at school for his size (Roberto is very small for his age) and admitted not wanting to go to school some days because he can’t take the teasing anymore. He denied that he is feeling angry about anything and stated that his mother exaggerated his temper.