

Developing a Contract

I. Preparing for the Process

- a) Plan an agenda that includes where the meeting should take place, when it will be, and who should attend. Child welfare caseworkers are encouraged, whenever possible, to do their case planning with the family as part of their ongoing work.
- b) Review and explain the contracting technique, making sure that everyone involved understands that case planning is a problem-solving method by which everyone gains and shares responsibilities.

II. Negotiating the Contract or Case Plan

- a) Define the problems.
- b) Assess the needs of all involved, and ask what each person would like to see happen.
- c) Brainstorm as many different ideas as possible to solve the problem.
- d) Record all the ideas.
- e) Do not evaluate the ideas.
- f) Choose a solution by evaluating each option listed against the following criteria:
 1. Is it realistic?
 2. Is it attainable?
 3. Are there any reasons why it may not work?
- g) Identify those options, which may be totally unacceptable, stating the reasons why they are unacceptable.
- h) Talk about the possible consequences for each solution, i.e., if we do “a” then “b” will occur.
- i) State the agreed-upon solution or solutions. Make sure that everyone understands.
- j) Record the agreed-upon solutions.

III. Implementing the Contract or Service Plan

- a) Decide who will do what.
- b) Establish time frames. The more immediate the time frame, the more effective the contract will be.
- c) Evaluate any progress made against the following criteria:
 1. How is the solution working?
 2. Does the contract need to be modified?
 3. Does the problem need redefinition?
 4. Does the whole contract need to be renegotiated?
- d) If the contract needs to be renegotiated, start again at the beginning.
- e) If the contract is working, make sure to acknowledge the success your client is experiencing.
- f) Make certain that the contract addresses AOD problems that impair parenting and jeopardize child safety.
- g) Make certain that the contract helps parents develop strategies for protecting children before they relapse and place the children at risk.
- h) Make certain that the contract supports and encourages recovery and addresses the possibility of relapses.