

Katie Parker 1 Week Update

It has been one week since Katie's emergency removal and placement with the Fitzgerald family. Mr. and Mrs. Fitzgerald are a married couple in their forties who have fostered numerous children of all ages for the past 18 years. They live at 2062 W. 14th Lane in Coal City, Pa. They have a great deal of experience working with children who suffer from abuse and neglect. Katie is the only child currently placed in the home.

Katie's mother, Jennifer, is scheduled for a drug and alcohol assessment. She has visited Katie one time since her placement and says she is committed to frequent visitation with her daughter.

The caseworker is still making efforts to locate Katie's father.

Following the move, Katie has had eating and sleeping problems. Sometimes she gorges her food; other times she refuses to eat. She frequently awakens at night crying. Although her eyes are open and she talks to the Fitzgerald's during these episodes, she has no memory of them in the morning. There is frequent enuresis, at least three nights out of the week and occasionally during the day. She is lethargic and has no energy.

Fortunately the Fitzgerald's live in the same neighborhood as Katie and she can continue to attend kindergarten at the Brookfield school. The teachers report that Katie makes little effort to engage with her classmates. Her teacher tells the Fitzgerald's that she is painfully shy and withdrawn, and refuses to play with the other children or get involved in group activities. She gets frustrated and cries easily, like when her pencil breaks or her milk spills at lunch. The teacher is concerned that she has difficulty paying attention and seems to forget simple instructions, even when they are given repeatedly.

The Fitzgerald's are helping Katie cope with the separation and loss. They offer Katie physical comfort when she seems to need it, especially when she wakes up at night crying, but also seem to know when she needs space to cope with the stress she is feeling. They try to provide her with structure and routine, and are patient with her, understanding that moving through the grieving process takes time. They know the value of visits and are willing to support a visitation plan.

The caseworker has also been in contact with Katie's Maternal Grandmother, Mrs. Parker. Grandmom reports that she has a strong bond with Katie and although she can not provide full-time care for Katie she would like to be a part of the visitation plan. Ms. Parker, Katie's mom says that Katie loves to visit her grandmother.