



Concurrent Plan Script

Caseworker:

I appreciate you're making time to meet with me Mr. Johnson. I know from what you told me on the phone that you haven't been actively involved in raising Katie, but I'm not sure why... could you tell me about your relationship with Katie?

Mr. Johnson:

There's not much to tell. Me and Jennifer split up when Katie was only a year old. I had to move around a lot to find work and crazy Jennifer made it just about impossible for me to see Katie. I stopped trying after awhile. So I guess I don't really have a relationship with her now.

Caseworker:

Okay, thanks for clarifying that for me. One of the things I want to do in our meeting today is to talk about some of your rights as Katie's father and the need for us to plan for your daughter's permanency. It's important you understand that Katie needs a safe and permanent home. The court has given protective custody of Katie to my agency and has ordered us to provide services to her and her family. Katie has already been in placement for 3 weeks and we're required to follow the state procedures. I would like to explain these to you.

Mr. Johnson: (defensively)

You were the ones who put her in foster care. It seems to me that's something that you gotta work out with her mother.

Caseworker: (calmly)

Our agency did need to step in to ensure Katie's safety, but our first goal is for Katie to return home as quickly as possible. While Katie is in placement, it's my job to make sure that she has a safe home to return to. If Jennifer or you are unable to provide a safe home for her within 15 months, by law, the agency has to petition the court to terminate your parental rights and find another permanent home for Katie. When that happens, we look to other relatives as options. We know from years of experience that it isn't in a child's best interest to grow up in temporary homes instead of a permanent family. And that it is very important that children have a relationship with their parents and other relatives.

Mr. Johnson:

That's all fine and well, but I'm not so sure that Katie oughta be living with her mother... Jennifer can't even handle her own problems.

Caseworker:

I can hear that you have some concerns about Jennifer's parenting abilities. We're developing what is called a concurrent plan. That just means that we work on two things at once. The first thing we'll work on is making her mother's home a safe and stable place so Katie can return.



Concurrent Plan Script (continued)

At the first court hearing, the judge decided on family reunification as the goal. But if Jennifer isn't able to provide a safe and permanent home, at the next court hearing the judge may change the goal to adoption or having Katie placed permanently with a relative or other guardian. So, the second part of the concurrent plan is helping prepare Katie for another home in case our efforts to return her home to her mother are unsuccessful.

Mr. Johnson:

So wait a minute... you're saying that Katie is going to be adopted?

Caseworker:

I know this might seem a bit confusing Mr. Johnson, but concurrent planning means that we work on two placement options at the same time. Maybe you could think about concurrent planning like it was car or life insurance? You know something that you hope you don't need, but is good to have when you do need it? Maybe it would help if I described the steps we'll be going through with Katie's concurrent plan, and where you can fit in and exercise your rights as Katie's father?

Mr. Johnson:

Okay, but don't expect me to fix this mess.

Caseworker:

We're doing the first step right now, by our talking about Katie's concurrent plan. Next we develop a Child's Permanency Plan that will outline goals to be met in order for Katie to come back home. We'll talk about that a little later. Next, we'll work out plans for you to visit Katie while she's in placement. We also prepare Katie for placement in another permanent family if she can't go home to her Mother. Another option I want to explore is the possibility of Katie coming to live with you. What are your thoughts and feelings about reconnecting with Katie and possibly being a placement option for her?

Mr. Johnson:

Whoa there just a minute... what if I don't agree to participate in this whole thing?

Caseworker:

That is an option you have Mr. Johnson. I get the sense that you're feeling hesitant about being part of your daughter's life, but also that you care about her very much. I was hoping we could develop a plan together that is best for Katie. As I said, it is important she knows her father and it seems you would like to get to know Katie better, too.

Concurrent Plan Script (continued)

Mr. Johnson:

Yes, I do think about her a lot... I am just not sure I can be a steady support in her life. I don't see how I could take care of her full-time.

Caseworker:

If Katie cannot return to her Mother and you cannot provide a permanent home for her, then you and Jennifer will be asked to give up your rights as her parents. What other permanent homes would you consider for your child?

Mr. Johnson:

Jeez, I don't know...what if I did decide to have Katie come live with me?

Caseworker:

That is a plan we can work on and I'll be available to support you through this process, including visits with Katie and future permanency meetings. I know that all of this information can seem overwhelming at first, Mr. Johnson. For today, it is important for you to know your rights and the options for Katie if she does not return to home with Jennifer or with you.

