

Progress Update on the Parker Case at Five Months

For the first month, Jennifer complied with all aspects of the plan, coming to all eight scheduled visits nearly on time. In the second week, she found a job working overnight at a 24-hour gas station/convenience store, ½ mile from her new apartment, which her AA sponsor helped her get. She said the visitation schedule continued to work for her although her life was hectic—sleeping from 7 p.m. to 11:30 p.m., working five nights a week from midnight to 8 a.m., and taking a morning nap. She attended AA several nights a week at 5 p.m. whenever she could catch a ride both ways. She said she was saving money for a car to cut down on how hectic her life was. She said she owed a dealer \$300 from when she was using drugs, and he kept bugging her, so she would have to pay him off before any car. She agreed to go to the parenting classes that Vernon had discussed with her, but hadn't yet worked out a schedule and therefore never signed up. She met weekly with her AA sponsor, who took her out to a breakfast or diner for their talks.

During the fifth week of the visitation plan, Jennifer left a message for Vernon saying she hadn't paid her cell phone bill and now she had no phone to call Katie. She had decided to make a payment to her dealer instead because he was threatening her. Vernon developed a plan with Jennifer in which she would walk to the convenience store near to her home for the 6:50 p.m. call to Katie. Jennifer said that she would try, but she was not successful to date.

Jennifer missed her first visit with Katie in the sixth week of her visitation plan. Vernon called the gas station, and Jennifer had missed work without warning. Vernon stopped by her apartment and she was not there. However, after the missed visit, the AA sponsor and Jennifer together called Vernon. Jennifer explained that she had been roughed up by her dealer and didn't want Katie to see her black eye. She then called Katie that night and spoke with her, explaining that she was sick and couldn't visit for a while. With the sponsor's help, Jennifer reported the assault to the police and returned home and to her job.

In the seventh week of the visitation plan, Jennifer resumed visitation as scheduled. She still had not found a way to call Katie at night. The case aide reported to you that Jennifer was exhausted and distracted at both visits that week, and that she kept saying to her hyper-vigilant daughter, "It's okay, mommy's just tired, but I am fine." Jennifer was attentive to Katie some of the time and preoccupied at others. The Fitzgerald's reported that Katie seems more anxious than usual.

Jennifer reported to Vernon that she was too frazzled to go to the parenting class—she was again working at the gas station and had just found out that her rent was going up next month. She also told him that her life felt like it was on the verge of unraveling, and that she was thinking maybe she should go to Atlantic City for just a few months to make some real money working as a card dealer. She said she had connections there. She believed that if she could get ahead financially, she could live a more regular life. Jennifer said the reason that she hadn't yet done anything was because she knew that losing connection to Katie would be really bad for her daughter, and maybe the judge and you would think she couldn't be a good parent.

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One week later Vernon received a phone call from the county jail notifying him that Jennifer has been arrested and incarcerated for prostitution. This is her third offense and a violation of her parole. She was also in possession of marijuana and crack, and was intoxicated when picked up. When the caseworker visited Jennifer in prison, she begged him not to take Katie away from her. Sobbing, she told him that Katie was all she had to live for and that if he took her little girl, she would have nobody. She told him that the drugs belonged to a friend and that the prostitution was just a one-time thing, so that she could earn some extra money to pay her bills this month. If convicted, Jennifer would be in jail for 12-24 months.

By the end of the school year, Katie's teacher reports that she is less shy and starting to play with a couple of the other children. She is also doing better at regulating her emotions in the classroom, and coping better with stimuli and frustration.

Visits with Mr. Johnson went okay for the first three weeks. One week, however, when Mr. Fitzgerald and Katie arrived at the office for the visit, Mr. Johnson was not there. They had waited in the car for 30 minutes when Mr. Fitzgerald and the worker decided to cancel the visit. Katie, in tears, begged Mr. Fitzgerald to wait a few more minutes. Just then, Mr. Johnson arrived disheveled and agitated. He said there was a traffic jam and his bus was delayed. Two weeks later, Mr. Johnson reported that he realized he would not be able to maintain a visitation schedule with Katie and it was in her best interest if he was not involved in her life since he could not be consistent. He expressed a desire to voluntarily relinquish his parental rights.

Katie continued to see her grandmother once every two weeks. The Fitzgerald's have been extremely helpful and bring Katie to her grandmother's house for the visits. They report that Katie loves to do puzzles with her grandmother and they enjoy each other's company. "Grandmom" Parker continues to maintain that she wants a relationship with Katie, but due to her physical disabilities, knows she can not provide full-time care for her.

The Fitzgerald's continue to state that they can be a permanent resource for Katie.

Instructions: In your small groups and based on the 5 month update above, rate the following factors on page 3 as they pertain to the reunification plan of Katie Parker with her mother. Rate each factor as a Clear Strength, Baseline/Adequate, or Serious Problem. Use **Handout #25 (Behavioral Indicators for Reunification Planning)** as a guide. If there are some factors that cannot be rated due to lack of information, make a note as to what information you would need to rate the factor and where you obtain the necessary information. If you feel that some of the factors don't apply to this case, make note of those factors. Be prepared to defend your answers!

Progress Update on the Parker Case at Five Months (continued)

Caregiver/Child Ambivalence:

1. Overall Caregiver/Child Ambivalence
2. Parent/Caregiver Ambivalence
3. Child Ambivalence Toward Caregiver
4. Ambivalence Exhibited by Substitute Care Provider
5. Disruptive Attachment
6. Pre-reunification Home Visits

Readiness for Reunification:

1. Overall Readiness for Reunification
2. Resolution of Significant CPS Risk Factors
3. Completion of Case Service Plan
4. Resolution of Legal Issues
5. Parent/Caregiver Understanding of Child's Treatment Needs
6. Established Back-Up Supports or Service Plan

Progress Update on the Parker Case at Five Months (continued)

In your small groups, complete the following questions about the review of Katie Parker at 5 months:

1. What permanency planning tasks need to be completed?

Decision Points

2. Should the placement goal be changed?
3. What strengths/risks support this decision?

Tuning in to Self

4. What are your feelings about the case situation?
5. How could these feelings impact on your decisions?

Tuning in to Others

6. How are the various parties feeling about the case situation?

Katie:

Mom:

Grandmom Gloria:

The Fitzgeralds: