

Preparing Caregivers to Receive a Child(ren)



Preparing the Caregiver:

- **Caregivers must be provided with complete and accurate information about the child.** To comply with confidentiality, a release of information should be signed by the parent. The transfer of information is made simpler if the parent can talk directly with the caregiver. If the parent will not consent to a release of information, considerable data can still be shared with the caregiver without breaching confidentiality (i.e., John has been hit with a belt by a man and is very cautious around men.) Note: check your agency policy regarding confidential information to be shared with foster parents.

- If the caregiver has detailed information about the child, **it increases the caregiver's ability to maintain continuity** in the child's life and to reduce the stress he experiences. Information should include:
 - ❖ Daily schedule: Sleeping, bathing, and eating schedules and habits.
 - ❖ Medical care needs, medications, special physical problems.
 - ❖ How the child is accustomed to being comforted and disciplined.
 - ❖ The child's food likes and dislikes.
 - ❖ The child's interests, skills, and favorite activities.
 - ❖ How the child has been disciplined, and how he should be disciplined.
 - ❖ The child's fears, anxieties, and typical emotional reactions.
 - ❖ The child's school behavior, academic ability, extracurricular involvement, and special academic needs.
 - ❖ The child's verbal ability and ability to communicate.
 - ❖ Behaviors and behavior problems which may be expected, and recommended methods of handling the child's problems.

Preparing Caregivers to Receive a Child(ren) (continued)



- ❖ History of abuse, neglect, or sexual abuse, and how this may affect the child's development, and her response to the caregivers. Note: foster parents should be cautioned about sharing the child's confidential information with others.
- ❖ Positive relationships that exist for the child before placement should be maintained when possible.
- The caregivers must be given information about the child's parents, such as any behavior exhibited by the parents which may threaten the foster parents, expected case plan goals and objectives, their proximity to the foster home, and expected level of interaction with the caregiver.
- The estimated length of time the child is expected to be in substitute care.
- The agency's expectation of the substitute caregiver in caring for the child, including providing services directly to the child, managing services provided by other professionals, expectations for involvement in family visitation, and direct contact with the birth family.
- The caregivers must be encouraged to tell the Child Welfare Professional if, anytime during the planning or placement process, the caregivers realize they do not want to proceed with the placement of the child. The Child Welfare Professional should fully respect the family's decision and seek another home for the child. If the placement is pursued despite the family's concerns, the risk of later disruption is extremely high.