

# Empowering Parents

## Empowering Parents

**Casework activities designed to engage the parent should begin at the time of the placement. The Child Welfare Professional should:**

- ❖ Develop or strengthen the relationship with the parent.
- ❖ Allow the parent to verbally express anger and resentment.
- ❖ Reassure the parent of the Child Welfare Professional's intent to reunite the family.
- ❖ Explain that the child is being moved to assure her safety not to punish the child or the parent.
- ❖ Provide specific data, which describes the risk to the child of remaining at home.
- ❖ State that the acknowledging problems and working with the agency is the first step toward having the child returned.
- ❖ Explain that reunification will occur as soon as the child's safety can be assured.
- ❖ Encourage the parent to become involved in the development of the case plan.
- ❖ Explain that the agency expects the parent to remain actively involved in the child's life throughout the placement period.
- ❖ Explain that the child will be very frightened, and that the parent can be of considerable help to the child by being supportive and reassuring during the placement.
- ❖ Acknowledge that the parent may prefer to fight the Child Welfare Professional and agency, but that this may have potentially painful consequences for himself and the child.
- ❖ Encourage the parent to participate in planning and carrying out placement and reunification activities, and those activities necessary for the child to be returned home.

### **New Things Learned Today**

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**During the period immediately after the move, the parent's continuing involvement should be supported and maintained. The Child Welfare Professional should:**

- ❖ The Child Welfare Professional should increase contacts with the parent during and immediately after the move.
- ❖ The foster caregiver should be given opportunities to talk with the parent about the child's needs, routines, and schedule. At times, exchanging phone numbers is useful. This maintains the parent's role as a primary source of information about the child.
- ❖ Scheduling regular and frequent visits between the child and the parent is critical. The first visit should occur within 48 hours of placement.
- ❖ Parents should be involved in making major decisions about the child. Parents should routinely be involved in agency staffings and case conferences.
- ❖ It is extremely important that the agency make appropriate services available to parents to enable them to implement the activities in the case plan.
- ❖ If the agency does not involve the parent from the earliest stages of placement, we foster a sense of helplessness in the parent that ultimately works against successful reunification.
- ❖ A few parents may interfere with, or sabotage the placement. In these situations, the Child Welfare Professional's primary responsibility is to protect the child. With effective casework intervention, however, most parents can become responsible participants in the placement and casework process.

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