

HOME VISIT GUIDLINES

The child
The Family
The Foster Family
Residential Treatment Facility

My initial visit is almost always planned and scheduled in advance. Sometimes I will go with the caseworker on a visit that is already scheduled.

Introduce myself –

Who I am,
What my role is & how it differs from that of the caseworker & CASA volunteer,
What I expect from them,
What they can expect from me.

THE CHILD

What I tell or don't tell them depends on many factors depending on the child's age and the facts of the case.

How old are they and what do they know about the case?
Are they at home or placed out of the home?

Have the parents admitted to the allegations?
Will there be a trial in the D & N OR in a criminal proceeding?
Will the child be required to testify?
Have they been interviewed and by whom? DHS, law enforcement, CAC?
Are there video taped interviews or police reports I can review?
Are they the victim of the abuse?

What kind of abuse? DV, sexual abuse, neglect, physical or emotional abuse?

What do they like best about . . . this home, their mom and dad, these foster parents?

What do they worry about?

How can I help them?

I tell them and their parents that the child can tell them as much or as little of my conversations with the child, as the child chooses BUT the child does not have to tell them anything.

I give them the opportunity to speak with me in private.

I may contact the school or others involved with the child.

I give the child my number and encourage the child to call me.

PARENTS

What I want to know about their family and their home?

What happened to get DHS involved?

Have they been involved with DHS before and why?

How many children do they have?

How many live with them?

Where are the others?

What is their criminal history?

What is their employment history?

Does the child have any medical issues, past or present?

Are they being addressed?

How long have they lived in this county and where did they live prior to that?

What kind of support do they have from friends and family?

Do they have any concerns about the children's behaviors?

What is their understanding of what is required of them regarding visits?

What are the rules of the house?

What are the consequences for not following them?

What do they think their child needs?

Have they worked with GALs before and what was their experience with GALs?

What other people will the children in the home have contact with?

What I want to observe in the home:

The children interacting with their parents and others in the home.

The physical layout of the house and where the child eats, sleeps and plays.

Is the home ADEQUATE and meet the basic needs of the child?

Are there any pets and how do they respond to the children in the home?

What I am looking for:

Safety concerns, which includes physical safety and emotional safety.

Whether the child is comfortable or at ease with the parents.

Whether the parent responds to the child's needs and cues.

Whether the environment is clean and safe

Whether the environment is nurturing

What I want them to know:

Their responsibility in the treatment plan and plan for reunification.

They should call me with any information they think I need that affects the child.

The child is free to call me anytime and has my number.

I DO NOT REPRESENT THEM OR THE FOSTER PARENTS OR DHS!

They may not agree with what I think is best for the child and with what I may recommend to the Court. But their input is very important and I consider it in making my recommendations.

I may drop in unannounced.

I may contact the school or others involved with the child.

How to address any complaints they may have about my recommendations or me.

FOSTER HOMES

What I want to know about a foster home?

What agency licensed them? CPA?

Do other counties place children with them?

How many children of their own live there?

How many children are they licensed to care for?

Are they employed outside the home in addition to doing foster care?

How long have they been licensed with the present agency?

What kind of support do they receive from their agency?

How long have they been doing foster care?

What other agencies have they been licensed with and where?

If they have been with other agencies in the past, why did they change?

Have they adopted children?

Are they considering adopting children?

What behaviors would cause them to ask that a child be removed?

What is their understanding of what is required of them regarding visits?

What is their attitude about the families of the foster children they care for?

What are the rules of the house?

What are the consequences for not following them?

What do they think this child needs?

Have they worked with GALs before and what was their experience with

GALs?

What other people will the children in the home have contact with?

What I want to observe in a foster home:

The children interacting with Foster Parents and others in the home.

The physical layout of the house and where the children eat, sleep and play.

Does the home look, smell and feel good?

Are there any pets and how do they respond to the children in the home?

What I am looking for:

Safety concerns, which includes physical safety and emotional safety.

Whether the child is comfortable.

Whether the foster parent responds to the child's needs and cues.

Whether the environment is clean and safe

Whether the environment is nurturing

What I want them to know:

Their responsibility in the treatment plan and plan for reunification.

The concept of reasonable efforts.

They should call me with any information they think I need that affects the child.

The child is free to call me anytime and has my number.

I DO NOT REPRESENT THEM OR THE PARENTS!

I may drop in unannounced.

I may contact the school or others involved with the child.

RESIDENTIAL TREATMENT CENTERS

What I want to know about a residential treatment center?

What agency licensed them?

Do other counties place children with them?

How many children are currently placed there?

How many children are they licensed to care for?

How long have they been licensed?

What kind is the staff to child ratio?

How often do they have staffings?

What is their policy about physical management of a child?

What behaviors would cause them to ask that a child be removed?

What is their understanding of what is required of them regarding visits?

What is their attitude about the families of the children they care for?

What are the rules of the facility?

What are the consequences for not following them?

What do they think this child needs?

Have they worked with GALs before and what was their experience with GALs?

What I want to observe in a residential treatment center:

The children interacting with staff and other children in the center.

The physical layout of the facility and where the children eat, sleep, play and go to school.

Does the facility look, smell and feel good?

What I am looking for:

Safety concerns, which includes physical safety and emotional safety.

Whether the child is comfortable.

Whether the staff is responsive to the child's needs and cues.

Whether the environment is clean and safe

Whether the environment is nurturing

What I want them to know:

Their responsibility in the treatment plan and plan for reunification.

The concept of reasonable efforts.

They should call me with any information they think I need that affects the child.

That I expect to receive reasonable advance notice of staffings.

The child is free to call me anytime and has my number.

That I may drop in unannounced.

That I may contact the school, the child's therapist or others involved with the child.

HOME VISIT /REPORT OF DIRECT CONTACT VISIT

Child's name/Age _____ Attorney/Caseworker _____

Child's name/Age _____ Date of visit _____

Child's name/Age _____ Placement Agency _____

Child's name/Age _____ Date of placement _____

Names of Foster Parents : _____

Face-to-face contact with child(ren)? Yes No Where? _____

Others present: _____

Child's present behaviors/appearance: _____

School/attendance/grades: _____

Medical/Dental appts.; Date/Outcome/ Immunizations: _____

Current developmental milestones/Special Needs/Therapy: _____

Efforts to preserve child's ethnic, cultural and religious identity: _____

Are there any risks to the child's safety in this home? _____

Check Child's room; roommates? _____

Status of family contact, visitation: _____

Discussions with foster parents: _____

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