

Roles & Responsibilities

Why have an Ice Breaker meeting?

The term Ice Breaker refers to an initial meeting between the birth parents, foster parents and caseworker. This meeting provides an opportunity for parents and foster parents to talk about the needs of the child.

The parents and foster parents are able to share information about themselves and their parenting practices. Parents also share information critical to the child's comfort and adjustment in a new setting.

This meeting is the first step in the development of a partnership between the family and the temporary caretakers of their child.

Introduction meetings are most effective when they occur early in a child's placement, ideally within 3 to 10 days. It lasts about 60 minutes and occurs at the office.

Parents

- Share information about your child, including bedtime, daily routines, favorite toys and foods, hobbies, likes and dislikes, etc.
- Bring the most important personal items for the child such as pictures, toys, clothing, or other special things.
- Provide information about your child's needs, including cultural traditions/issues.
- Make sure the participants understand why the meeting is being held and what will be discussed.
- Keep the discussion focused on the child's needs.
- Ensure that the participants feel safe and comfortable.



Case manager
(Caseworker)

- Coordinate the meeting.



Foster parents

- Ask for specific information about the child from the parents, such as routines and medical needs.
- Talk about why you are a foster parent and some of the rules of your house. (You can also bring pictures that show your house and family activities.)

Children benefit

When there is contact between the child's parents and foster parents, studies show that children:

- ❑ Have more stable placements.
- ❑ Experience better emotional development.
- ❑ Are more successful in school.
- ❑ Return home sooner.

Parents benefit

Contact with foster parents helps parents feel more at ease about their child's safety, well being and placement.

Foster parents benefit

Contact between the foster parents and the child's parents can:

- ❑ Remove anxiety about the child's family.
- ❑ Facilitate easier transitions between visits & reunification.
- ❑ Allow more opportunity for visitation scheduling.
- ❑ Decrease the child's acting out behaviors.

How to have an effective introduction meeting.

- ❑ Arrive on time.
- ❑ Focus on the child's needs.
- ❑ Respect the feelings, opinions, cultural differences and ideas of others.
- ❑ Recognize the importance each person has had in the life of the child.



**DEPARTMENT OF
HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES
CHILDREN'S SYSTEM OF CARE**

If you have questions, comments or concerns, please contact:

Name _____

Agency _____

Phone _____

