

# Chronological List of Handouts and Overhead Transparencies

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## Handouts

1. Meeting 8 Agenda
2. Characteristics of the Family System
3. Skills Practice: Conflicting Needs for Privacy
4. Skills Practice: Conflicting Needs for Safety, Well-being, and Confidentiality
5. Confidentiality Policy\*
6. Effects of Foster Care Skit: Donny
7. Effects of Adoption Skit: The Thomas Family
8. Effects of Adoption on Marriage
9. Creating an EcoMap
10. Creating an EcoMap – Worksheet
11. First Day
12. Teamwork Roles of Foster and Adoptive Parents' Worksheet

\* *Handout needs to be developed by agency.*



# Meeting 8: Understanding the Impact of Fostering or Adopting

## Agenda

<u>Time</u>	<u>Topic</u>
<b>(35 Minutes)</b>	<b>A. Introduction to Meeting 8</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>◆ Welcome back</li><li>◆ Mutual selection issues</li><li>◆ Roadwork review</li><li>◆ Meeting 8 agenda</li></ul>
<b>(25 Minutes)</b>	<b>B. The Family as a System</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>◆ Assess how the addition of a child affects the family system</li></ul>
<b>(50 Minutes)</b>	<b>C. Meeting the Conflicting Needs of Children in Foster Care and Family Members</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>◆ Managing conflicting needs</li></ul>
<b>(10 Minutes)</b>	<b>BREAK</b>
<b>(10 Minutes)</b>	<b>D. Using an EcoMap to Assess Family Energy</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>◆ Components of an EcoMap</li></ul>
<b>(15 Minutes)</b>	<b>E. Creating an EcoMap</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>◆ EcoMap as an assessment tool</li></ul>
<b>(25 Minutes)</b>	<b>F. What the Child Brings – Dealing with Family Changes</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>◆ Strategies for incorporating children and youth into your family</li></ul>

**Time**

**Topic**

**(10 Minutes)**

**G. Meeting 8 Summary and Preview of Meeting 9**

- ◆ Summary of Meeting 8
- ◆ Preview of Meeting 9
- ◆ Next step in the mutual selection process
- ◆ A Partnership in Parenting Experience

**ROADWORK**

- ◆ Review all the handouts.
- ◆ Complete the “First Day” handout for the next family consultation.
- ◆ Complete the “Teamwork Roles of Foster and Adoptive Parents’ Worksheet” and bring it to Meeting 9.

# Characteristics of the Family System\*

The family system has five major characteristics: boundaries, rules, roles, power distribution among family members, and communication patterns.

## Boundaries

Families have boundaries, or “invisible lines,” that define who or what is inside the family and who or what is outside. Very closed families have locked gates, high fences, unlisted numbers, not much contact with the outside world, and lots of secrets. Very open families have frequent guests, unlocked doors, and lots of “differences” among family members.

Are your family boundaries able to accept a new member who will come also with a child welfare worker, birth family, etc.?

## Rules

Over time, families develop rules about how they relate to each other and the outside world. The rules are developed by the family to ensure stability and keep the family distinct from other families.

What are your family rules about food, about dress, and about who can be friends of the family?

Which rules are openly discussed and can be changed? What happens if a rule is broken?

How will a new person adjust to your family rules? What will happen if that person cannot adjust?

## Roles

Every family works out things like who does the chores, who handles the money, and who cares for the children. The way we fulfill our roles depends upon our culture, our own upbringing, our lifestyle, and family composition. In some cultures, for example, older children are responsible for taking care of the younger children in their families.

Each member of a family has a unique role. There is only one mother, wife, husband, father, partner, oldest child, youngest child, only male or oldest male. What is it like to be the mother, father, youngest child, only female, etc., in a family?

How will the addition of a new child change the roles of family members? What new role will be ascribed to the new child?

\* Adapted from “Understanding Families” by Jo Ann Allen (1982) in **Adoption of Children with Special Needs: A Curriculum for the Training of Adoption Workers**. Athens, GA: The Office of Continuing Social Work Education, School of Social Work, University of Georgia, p. 12-18

## **Decision Making**

All families have ways of making decisions and resolving conflicts. Some families strive for equality and let everyone participate in making decisions. Other families allow only one family member to make the “major decisions.”

It is important that the family have an orderly pattern of power distribution – one that is reliable but flexible enough to change if necessary.

How are decisions made in your family?

What decisions will need to be made regarding your foster care or adoption experience?

Who primarily will be involved in making those decisions? How will the other family members feel about the way these decisions are made and what decisions are made?

## **Communication Patterns**

You can't not communicate. All behavior says something. Even silence is a message. A family works out its roles, rules, power, and boundaries through communication.

Families develop unique communication patterns. In some, messages are clear; people let you know where they stand and can express themselves relatively freely. In others, individuals cannot freely express their needs and there is little congruence in what people feel, say, and do.

There are all kinds of workable and effective communication and relationship patterns. Culture and ethnicity have a lot to do with how families express themselves. What is important is that the communication patterns of the family matches that of the child.

Would a new child in your family understand how your family expresses feelings, gives instructions or does different activities?

## Skills Practice: Conflicting Needs for Privacy

### Make Her Get Out of Here!

**Child:** Karen, age 14

**Reason for Placement:** Neglect and Medical Neglect

**Permanency Plan:** Karen will be reunited with her mother if her mother completes treatment and can take care of her. If that is not possible, Karen's foster parents are considering adopting her, but have not made a final decision yet.

**Foster Parents:** Pat and Ken Conrad

**Foster Parents' Child:** Ruth Conrad, age 12

**Role Players:** Ruth (Daughter of Pat and Ken, Foster Parents)  
Pat (Foster Parent)

**Situation:** Ruth has come to talk with her mother, Pat, in her mother's bedroom. Ruth is unhappy about having Karen living with them.

**Ruth:** Mom, I'm so miserable. I absolutely hate having Karen live with us! I want her out of here!

**Pat:** Ruth, you know that we are a foster family. That means Karen is part of our family. What's going on?

**Ruth:** Mom, she's begun hanging out with some really strange girls at school. It's hard enough having her in my grade while she's so much older, but now she's hanging out with those girls! And she's been getting into my clothes and using my CDs. This is not what I thought it would be like to be a foster family. Mom, I'm so unhappy in my own home! This isn't fair!

**Pat:** (respond to Ruth)





## Skills Practice: Conflicting Needs for Safety, Well-being, and Confidentiality

### What is Confidential?

Child:	Jeryce, age 11
Reason for Placement:	Neglect and Sexual Abuse
Permanency Plan:	The plan is for Jeryce to return home. The Carnells are considering adopting Jeryce if that is not possible
Foster Parents:	Melanie and Mark Carnell
Time in Foster Care:	4 months
Role Players:	Mrs. Johnson (Member of the Carnells' Church) Melanie or Mark Carnell

**Background:** Jeryce is an 11-year-old girl who came into care as a result of neglect and sexual abuse. Jeryce's father and mother are separated, but continue to spend time together, especially to use drugs. Jeryce has been mostly on her own throughout her childhood because of her parents' addiction. Several older adolescents in the neighborhood who do drugs with her parents have sexually abused Jeryce. Jeryce is African American and is living in a white foster home in a working class, white neighborhood. During the first month in the Carnells' foster home, Jeryce began skipping school. When some of the neighborhood kids yelled terrible racial slurs, Jeryce mentioned the incident to her foster mother but expressed no emotions about it.

**Situation:** The Carnells have begun attending a mixed-race church in a neighborhood across town and they are quite active. Jeryce has formed some friendships with girls her age at the church and last night she was allowed to go to a friend's home for a slumber party. The Carnells are receiving an angry telephone call from the parent of the girl who hosted the party.

Phone rings.

**Mrs. Johnson:** Mr. Carnell, this is Mrs. Johnson, Marnie's mother. My husband and I are upset and beside ourselves! We can hardly believe what we've heard from Marnie this morning! It was about Jeryce and I can barely bring myself to talk about it.

**Mark (or Melanie) Carnell:** Something about Jeryce? Please let me know what is upsetting you.

**Mrs. Johnson:** Marnie says that Jeryce could talk about nothing but sex all last night. And she wanted to show the other girls how to French kiss! Of all things! And it got worse than that!

**Mark  
(or Melanie)  
Carnell:** I really do need to know everything you know. Can you tell me what else Jeryce did?

**Mrs. Johnson:** Um...this is so difficult...OK...She wanted to teach the girls how to masturbate! Can you believe that? I am shocked! Where in the world would she have learned these things?

**Mark  
(or Melanie)  
Carnell:** (Respond, or get help from the group for a response)

## Confidentiality Policy

### *Do Not Copy!*

This handout is to be developed by the child welfare agency and should clearly state the policy on confidentiality for foster parents.



## Effects of Foster Care Skit: Donny

### Characters

Ms. Phillips, foster parent and Donny's birth mother

Ms. Howard, Donny's teacher

Donny, 11-year-old son of Ms. Phillips

### Scenario

**Ms. Howard (telephoning Ms. Phillips):**

"Ms. Phillips, I'm really concerned about Donny. He is usually such an energetic boy. The past week he has been very tired in class. He doesn't want to play outside with the other children. With such an abrupt change in behavior, I am really concerned. When the change is so quick, we sometimes wonder if drugs are involved."

**Ms. Phillips:**

"I'm not sure what's wrong. Recently, our whole family has been a little upset. The 3-year-old we fostered for the past year has just returned to her parents. We are happy for her and her family although a little sad for us. Let me talk to Donny. I will get back to you. Thanks for calling."

**Ms. Phillips (to Donny):**

"Donny, your teacher called. She said she was really concerned about you. She said you had no energy in school and you didn't want to play with your friends. Will you tell me about it?"

**Donny:**

"I don't know, I'm just tired."

**Ms. Phillips:**

"You know we've all felt a little tired and sad since Tiffany left. Could that be what is making you tired and maybe a little sad?"

(Ms. Phillips notices tears in Donny's eyes.)

(Donny, display a sad expression. Rub your eye as though you are brushing away a tear.)



# Effects of Adoption Skit: The Thomas Family

## Characters

Mr. Thomas, husband

Ms. Thomas, wife

## Background

Mr. and Ms. Thomas have four birth children, ages 16, 18, 20 and 22. They have recently adopted Jason and Jeff, twins who are 10. Mr. Thomas just received a call from his mother.

## Scenario

**Mr. Thomas:**

“Mom just called. She asked if we could find someone to take Jason and Jeff over the Fourth of July weekend. She said there really isn't room for two more to sleep at the cottage on the lake. Besides, she said the boys wear her out. Mom wants us and the older kids to come. She just doesn't feel she can take Jason and Jeff for the weekend.”

**Ms. Thomas:**

“You know, I don't think she has ever accepted the fact that we adopted. Well, what did you tell her?”

**Mr. Thomas:**

“I told her that I would get back to her. I didn't know what to say. I know she really wants to see her grandchildren. I've gone to the lake every Fourth of July since I was a kid. Mom only gets to see the boys who are in college once or twice a year. I don't know what to do.”

**Ms. Thomas:**

“You're right, she wants to see her grandchildren, but what about our youngest sons?”





## Effects of Adoption on Marriage\*

The Jacksons were a childless couple, ages 34 and 35. They had been married for 12 years. They went through a long and expensive infertility study but nothing was conclusive. They decided to adopt. After a long wait, the Jacksons felt that they were fortunate to get a beautiful and healthy 18-month-old boy.

Ms. Jackson became extremely attached to her son and was reluctant to allow him out of her sight. Although Mr. Jackson felt a close bond with his son, he felt his wife's attention to the baby was excessive. It was, after all, the first time in his marriage that he had to share his wife.

The couple had never had an opportunity to take a big vacation. Mr. Jackson got the opportunity to take his wife to Paris on an all-expense-paid vacation. Ms. Jackson, who rarely left the baby with a sitter, refused to go because she did not want to leave the baby for the week – although her parents or her husband's parents would have gladly taken care of the child.

Mr. Jackson was extremely disappointed and upset. He felt that the baby had taken his place. He engaged in an extramarital affair, had lots of arguments with his wife, and started spending a great deal of time with the “boys” at his club.

### Questions for Discussion

- ◆ What do you think Mr. Jackson was feeling?
- ◆ What do you think Ms. Jackson was feeling?
- ◆ How would you explain Mr. Jackson's behavior?
- ◆ How would you explain Ms. Jackson's behavior?
- ◆ Could this situation have been prevented?
- ◆ What needs to happen now?
- ◆ Could these problems happen in your family?

\* Adapted from **Self-Awareness, Self-Selection and Success: A Parent Preparation Guidebook for Special-Needs Adoptions** by Wilfred Hamm, Thomas D. Morton and Laurie Flynn (1985). Washington, D.C.: North American Council on Adoptable Children, p. 63.



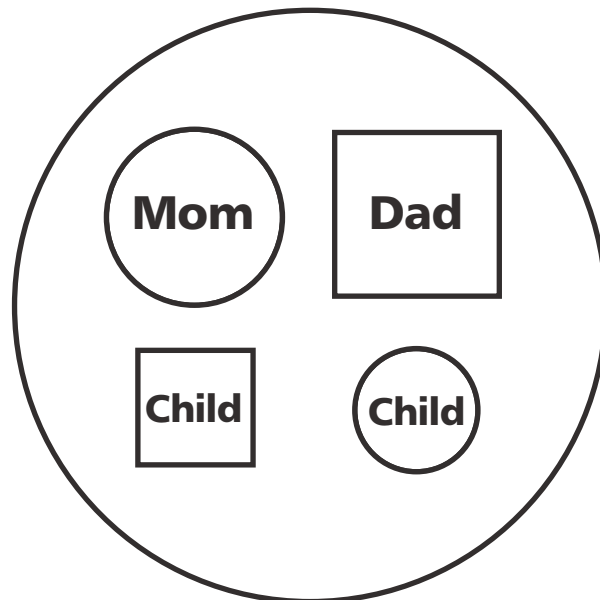
## Creating an EcoMap\*

The purpose of the EcoMap is to:

- ◆ Help your family consider the “quality” of your environment;
- ◆ Look at the balance you have between stress and support;
- ◆ Look at ways these stresses and supports might be affected by your decision to foster or adopt;
- ◆ Assess your strengths to foster or adopt;
- ◆ Assess the demands and needs of a new child upon your family's balance;
- ◆ Use as a tool with the child welfare worker to assess if foster care or adoption is right for your family and, if so, what child with what kind of background, personality, family ties, etc., would best fit into your family's “world;” and
- ◆ Develop preventive strategies to reduce the stresses and increase your support, if you decide to foster or adopt.

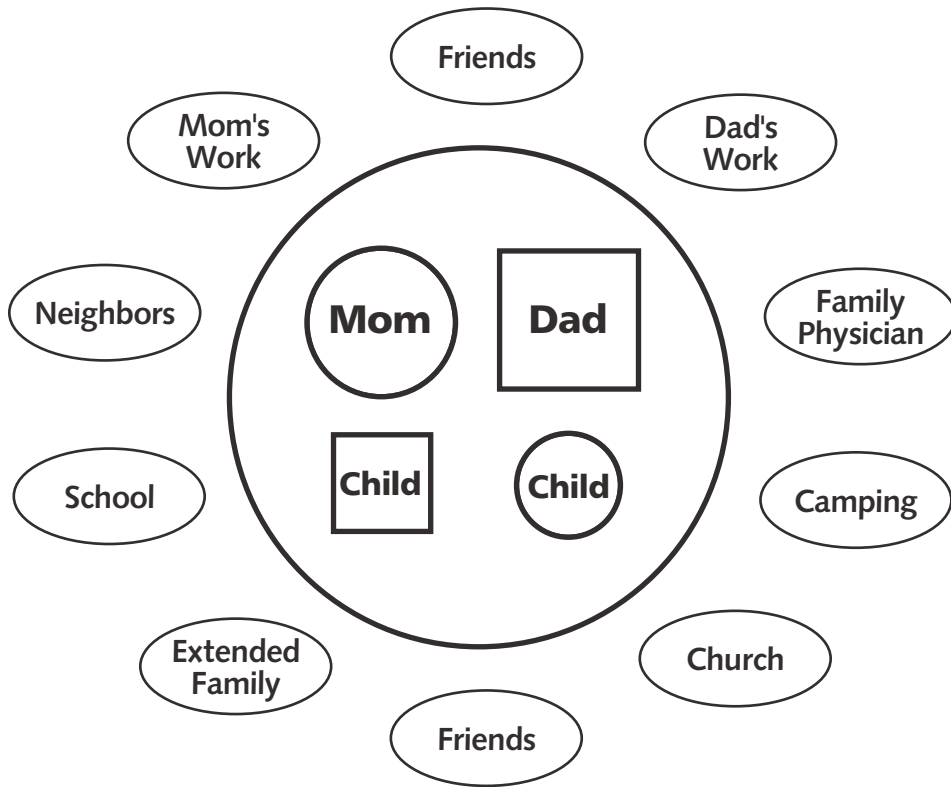
Steps for drawing the EcoMap:

1. In a large circle put the names of all the people who live in your household (pets are allowed, too). Males are represented by squares and females by circles. Pets are usually represented by triangles.



\* From Ann Hartman, **Finding Families: An Ecological Approach to Family Assessment in Adoption**, Sage Publications, Inc., Beverly Hills/London, p. 35., 1979.

2. Next, draw circles outside your family circle which indicate the systems that give and take away energy. Label the other circles for different aspects of your family life. For example, a “Work” circle, a “School” circle, “Religion,” “Recreation,” “Extended Family,” “Friends,” “Neighbors,” “Health Care,” “Hobbies,” etc. Here is an example.



3. For each of these circles and for the people in your family, draw one of three kinds of lines from a person in the circle to the circle with which that person has a relationship. The three types of lines are:

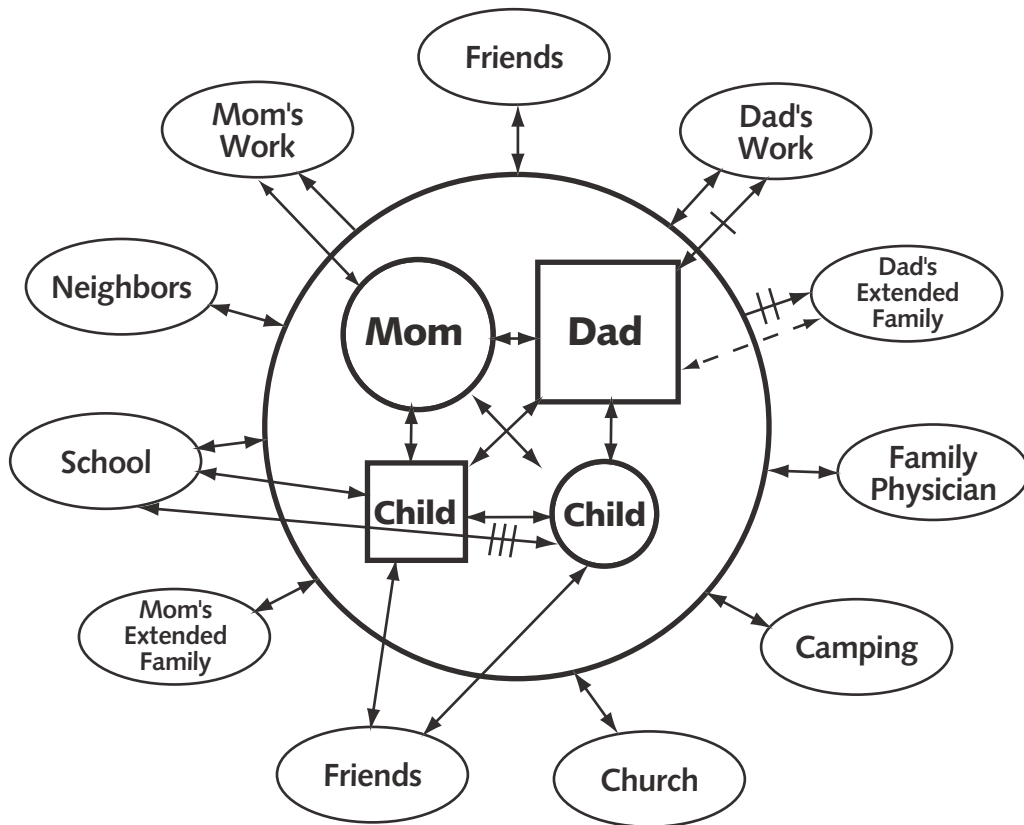
- ◆ Solid for a strong relationship or energy flow. \_\_\_\_\_
- ◆ Heavy solid for an especially strong relationship. =
- ◆ Dotted for a weak relationship. - - - - -
- ◆ Hash marks for a difficult relationship. #####

If the outside circle affects the family as a whole, draw the line to the family.

4. If you both give and receive energy from the area, draw arrows in both directions. If the giving or receiving is one-way, draw the arrow in the appropriate direction.



Following is an example:



5. Discuss your EcoMap, considering the following issues:
- ◆ How would you describe most of your relationships? Are they strong, weak, or difficult?
  - ◆ How will the strong relationships support your involvement in foster care or adoption?
  - ◆ How will the weak or difficult relationships, or those having significant stress, be weakened or made more difficult through foster care or adoption?
  - ◆ How will a new child affect each family member – especially in terms of sharing time, space, and resources?
  - ◆ How will the extended family and friends react to the new child?
  - ◆ What potential problems do you see?
  - ◆ What resources do you have to deal with these problems?
  - ◆ What new resources or supports could you develop to help you deal with these problems?
  - ◆ Children come to you with their own EcoMaps. Will you be prepared to talk with the child welfare worker about how a child's EcoMap fits together with yours?

## Creating an EcoMap – Worksheet

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

On this page, please create your own EcoMap.

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

Now that you have completed your EcoMap, consider the following questions:

- 1. What are at least five additional “systems” you know would likely be added to your EcoMap with the addition of a child through foster care or adoption? List them here:

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- 2. For each of the above systems, which would be a source of energy and which would require energy?

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- 3. Which of your sources of energy might be negatively affected by your becoming a foster or adoptive family?

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- 4. Which of your sources of energy might remain strong should you become a foster or adoptive family?

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# First Day

## Possible Events

- ◆ Children home from school
- ◆ Kids use the bathroom
- ◆ Get ready for dinner
- ◆ Parent comes home from work
- ◆ Eat dinner
- ◆ Evening activities
- ◆ Get ready for bed
- ◆ Go to bed
- ◆ Middle of night

## Issues

- ◆ Get acquainted. Are there pets?
- ◆ How comfortable does a 5-year-old or a 15-year-old feel about using the bathroom in a “strange” house?
- ◆ Who takes care of child while dinner is being prepared and table is being set? Does the child know to wash up?
- ◆ Child gets acquainted with another person.
- ◆ Where will new child sit? What will child eat? Does child say grace if your family does not; or vice-versa?
- ◆ What does child do while dishes, homework are being done? Does child watch TV? Is TV allowed on school nights? Do your friends or family call to hear about new child; what do you say?
- ◆ One more person in the bathroom – does a 5-year-old bathe alone; will the child want to do that in a “strange” house? What will the child sleep in if he or she doesn't have pajamas?
- ◆ Where will the child sleep?
- ◆ Is the child afraid? Does the child have nightmares? Does the child wet the bed?

### **Possible Events**

- ◆ Get up in the morning
- ◆ Eat breakfast
- ◆ Leaving for school, work
- ◆ Morning activities
- ◆ Eating lunch

### **Issues**

- ◆ What does the child do after waking up while people get ready for school, work, etc.?
- ◆ Same issues as for dinner.
- ◆ Will child go to school? If both parents work, who takes off to stay with child or enroll child in school?
- ◆ If child stays home, what will you do with child; what activities will you plan?
- ◆ Same issues as for dinner.

Additional issue: The child may need clothes or medical care – how will that be handled?

How will the following issues be handled in your family?

- ◆ How will boundaries change?
- ◆ How will decisions be made?
- ◆ How will space be rearranged?
- ◆ How will time frames change?
- ◆ How will patterns of communication change?
- ◆ Who probably will be devoting the most time to care for the child and how will other family relationships be affected, i.e., how will roles change?
- ◆ Which events and issues would be similar and different had there been pre-placement visits?

On the following page list the events in your family's typical day. Then list the issues or questions that will arise because of the events.





# Teamwork Roles of Foster and Adoptive Parents' Worksheet

## Important Concepts in Child Welfare

In the spaces provided, please jot down what you remember about each of these concepts which we covered in Meeting 1. Some of the terms are already defined for you. Then jot down what you remember about the possible teamwork role of foster or adoptive parents relative to each concept.

<b>Concept</b>	<b>What I Remember About this Concept:</b>	<b>The Teamwork Role of Foster or Adoptive Parents Relative to this Concept is:</b>
Foster Care		
Adoption		
Child Protective Services		
Termination of Parental Rights (TPR)		
Physical Abuse		
Sexual Abuse		

<b>Concept</b>	<b>What I Remember About this Concept:</b>	<b>The Teamwork Role of Foster or Adoptive Parents Relative to this Concept is:</b>
Neglect		
Well-being		
Risk		
Permanence		
Permanency Planning		
Concurrent Planning		
Safety		

<b>Concept</b>	<b>Explanation or Definition:</b>	<b>The Teamwork Role of Foster or Adoptive Parents Relative to this Concept is:</b>
<b>Case Review</b>	Law requires that every child in foster care have a review of his or her case, to confirm that policy and law are being assured. Case review can be administered by a citizen review board or by an agency administrative system. Judicial review also happens periodically for every child in out of home care.	
<b>Timeliness</b>	Because a child experiences time differently than adults, it is important to make decisions based upon a child's sense of time. Legally, because of passage of the Adoption and Safe Families Act (ASFA), the permanency planning hearing must be held 12 months after a child enters foster care. The child welfare agency must initiate or join in termination proceedings for all children who have been in foster care for 15 out of the most recent 22 months. (The law also provides for circumstances in which it is not necessary to file such proceedings.)	
<b>Reasonable Efforts</b>	Although defined by state law, this term simply means that the child welfare agency has done everything reasonably possible to prevent removal and to achieve reunification.	
<b>Full Disclosure</b>	Parents of children in foster care must know everything the agency staff knows. They need full information about all the alternatives they face, as well as the legal timeframes. Likewise, foster parents must receive all information about a child available at the time of placement.	

<b>Concept</b>	<b>Explanation or Definition:</b>	<b>The Teamwork Role of Foster or Adoptive Parents Relative to This Concept is:</b>
<b>Searching for Relatives</b>	Law requires that the child welfare agency search for any relatives with whom the child can be placed, either for foster care, or for adoption if there is termination of parental rights.	
<b>Case or Family Conferencing</b>	The caseworker is responsible for periodically bringing together key stakeholders involved with a family and child, to review progress, to assess strengths and needs and to plan with the family.	
<b>Permanency Hearings</b>	Originally called a “dispositional hearing” the “permanency planning hearing” is held 12 months after a child enters foster care. A child is considered to have entered foster care from either the date of the first judicial finding of deprivation (i.e., <b>adjudication</b> ) or to the date 60 days after the date on which the child is removed from the home.	
<b>Confidentiality</b>	The policy or law limiting information that may be discussed about children and their families.	