



Santa Barbara County Department of Social Services

Resource Family Approval Pre-Service Training

Module One:
Working as a Member of the CWS Team to Support Safety and
Permanence

Santa Barbara County Department of Social Services

RFA Training Goals

- ▶ Realistically prepare caregivers to be Resource Parents who can meet the special needs of children and youth in care.
- ▶ Prepare Resource Parents to provide familiar, safe, and nurturing environments for children in foster care.
- ▶ Prepare Resource Parents to be members of the Child Welfare Team.
- ▶ Achieve Safety and Permanency for children who are part of the Child Welfare Services system.



Resource Partner Training Values

- ▶ The trainee values the importance of a solution focused and nonjudgmental approach when working with the CWS system.
- ▶ The trainee values the balance between the Constitutional rights of the biological parents and meeting the safety and care needs of children.
- ▶ The trainee values Permanency as a primary goal for children.
- ▶ The trainee values the importance of the children's long term kinship relationships.
- ▶ The trainee values his/her role as a member of the CWS professional team working to provide children with permanency, stability and safety.



Agenda

- ▶ Making an informed decision about Placement.
- ▶ Case Plans
 - What is the case plan
 - Visits with parents
 - Concurrent Planning
 - Being a member of the CWS Team
- ▶ Working collaboratively with the child's case manager and other members of the CWS team
 - Advocating for your child and yourself
 - Creating Safety and Personal Rights
 - Team Work Resources



Teamwork Group Agreements

- ▶ Everyone always has the right to pass - silence is a contribution.
- ▶ We agree to allow others to finish speaking before we speak and avoid interrupting and side conversations.
- ▶ We agree to put past hurts behind us, and focus on the needs of foster children and how we can prepare meet children's needs.
- ▶ We're here to "try it out".
- ▶ We agree to respect one another's confidentiality.
- ▶ We will work together to hold to these agreements and authorize the trainer to hold us to them.



How will your life change?

Have you thought about how your home, family schedule or routines change when a new child comes to live with you?



Case Plan Goals

The primary goal of the case plan is permanency, possible goals:

- ▶ Remain home
- ▶ Return home
- ▶ Adoption with siblings
- ▶ Adoption
- ▶ Maintain in legal guardianship
- ▶ Legal guardianship
- ▶ Long term foster care
- ▶ Stable foster care with emancipation
- ▶ Long term foster care with relative caregiver

NOTE:

These final three do not actually represent permanency



Participatory Case Planning

In participatory case planning, social workers work together with the family and others (such as relatives, service providers and community members).

A Team Decision Making (TDM) model is followed to develop strength-based case plans that are tailored to meet the particular needs of the child and family.



What is Permanency?

- ▶ The final, legal, forever home via reunification, adoption or guardianship.
- ▶ Reunification is the ***first choice*** for permanency.
- ▶ It requires concurrent planning – working on reunification AND adoption or guardianship, this includes assessment of potential adoptive families wherever they reside.
- ▶ A long term foster placement is ***NOT*** permanency.



Concurrent Planning

What is concurrent planning?

- ▶ Helping a family solve problems that made the child unsafe so they can go home.

AND AT THE SAME TIME....

- ▶ **Creating and implementing a “Plan B” for the child in case they cannot go home.** Types of “Plan Bs”
 - ▶ Going to live with a non-custodial parent.
 - ▶ Being adopted by a relative or non-relative.
 - ▶ Being adopted according to tribal custom by a relative or tribal member.
 - ▶ Granting legal guardianship until adulthood.



Types of Visits

- ▶ Telephone and/or in person.
- ▶ Supervised - Supervised visitation is an opportunity for the social worker to assess progress and an opportunity to shape parent's skill development.
- ▶ Unsupervised – step up process – from a few hours, to an overnight, to several nights.
- ▶ Extended visit – a pre reunification visit.
- ▶ Good-bye visits when parental rights are terminated can be considered.



Supporting visitation with the Birth Family

- ▶ Visitation allows children to maintain relationships with their parents, siblings, and others who were close to them prior to placement and, reassuring the child and supporting development.
- ▶ Visits are an opportunity for a parent to practice safe parenting and demonstrate her/his protective capacity and readiness to keep the child/ren safe over time.



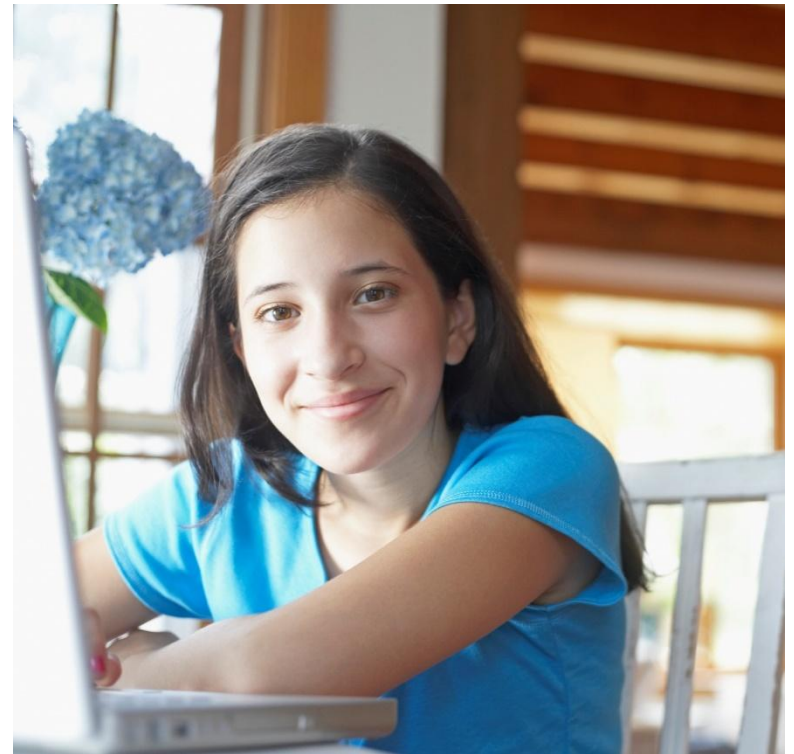
What is the Resource Caregiver's Role with Birth Families?

- ▶ It is in the best interest of a child to be reunified with their birth family whenever it is safe to do so. Resource families play a vital role in this process and are considered “co-parents.”
- ▶ Resource Families, both relative and non-relative, understand the importance of fostering relationships with the children's biological parents, and help children to visit and reunify with their parents whenever possible.
- ▶ When birth family reunification is not possible, resource families are integral to helping us ensure children have long-term forever homes and families.



Creating safety in your home

- ▶ Characteristics of a healing home...
 - Private Space
 - Boundaries
 - Respectful nurturing
- ▶ What rules, tasks, roles and activities would you create in your home?



Why Discuss Boundaries

Boundaries can easily become blurred due to:

- ▶ The nature of Child Welfare Services:

- There is an inherent paradox in the role of the Resource Parent, and the need to provide safety to a vulnerable child, while at the same time maintaining “professional” relationships with the different members of the CWS team.

- ▶ Resource Families are:

- Are primary witnesses to the child’s trauma.
- Caring people who want to do what is best.



Blurring of Boundaries

Can occur one small step at a time and almost without warning, yet if we are aware, the warning signs are there.

What may appear to be small may end up having significant ramifications on the well being of a child, biological parents, and Resource Families.

- ▶ Can lead to disruption in a child's placement.
- ▶ Can lead to disruption in a child's Court process.



What to expect during monthly caseworker visits

- ▶ The caseworker must see the child in their living environment at least every other month.
- ▶ The caseworker must offer the child a chance to talk privately without you present.
- ▶ The caseworker will ask you many questions about how the child is adjusting and developing..



Mandated reporter/Incident reports

- ▶ A child may disclose information to you about past or present incidents of abuse – you must report this information.
 - 1-800-367-0166
- ▶ Incident reports:
 - Running away
 - Medical emergencies
 - Injuries
 - Arrests -- assaults
 - Property damage



Prudent Parent Standard

- ▶ It's a right and a responsibility.
- ▶ Allows a caregiver to make routine decisions about activities of a child, such as babysitting, staying overnight at a friend's home or traveling with a designated adult.
- ▶ You must exercise your "prudent" and reasonable judgment.



Discussion

PROMOTING SAFETY

MAINTAINING THE CHILD'S PRIVACY/CONFIDENTIALITY IN THE COMMUNITY AND ON SOCIAL MEDIA

DO'S AND DON'TS



Nuts and Bolts of Teamwork

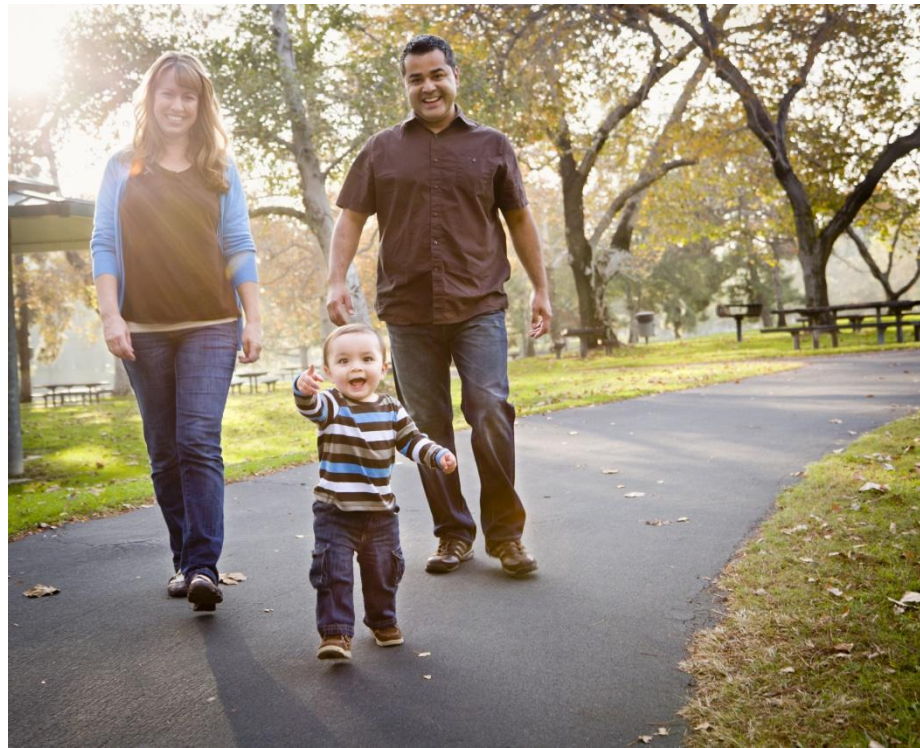
- ▶ Questions you might ask the placing worker
- ▶ Getting the child settled
- ▶ Checklist of essential placement information and paperwork
- ▶ Record keeping
- ▶ Assessing your child's needs
- ▶ The rights of Children and Resource Parents
- ▶ Frequently asked questions



Let's draw a picture of you once upon a time....

Quality Parenting Initiative

The Quality Parenting Initiative (QPI) is Youth Law Center's approach to strengthening foster care, including kinship care, using branding and marketing principles.



Core Premise of QPI

- ▶ The primary goal of the Child Welfare System is to ensure that children have effective, loving parenting.
- ▶ The best way to achieve this goal is to enable the child's own parents to care for him or her.
- ▶ If that isn't possible, the system must ensure that the foster or relative family caring for the child provides the loving, committed, skilled care that the child needs to reach the child's long term goals.





Thank You!!

