

## MODULE II: THE CHILD PROTECTION TEAM

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### Note Taking Guide

At the end of this module, you will be able to:

- Identify the members of the child welfare team and the role of these members in serving a child
- Identify advantages and challenges to teaming
- Describe the life of a child welfare case from allegation to permanency (reunification, legal custody, adoption)

### Understanding the Child Welfare System

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- The role of child welfare is to identify and protect children at risk.
- There is a continuum of services and foster care is just one component of that continuum.
- There is a system of checks and balances to protect the rights of the child, the family, and the community.



## History of Foster Care in the US

- A summary of major child welfare legislation can be found at:  
<https://www.childwelfare.gov/pubs/otherpubs/majorfedlegis/>



## The Team Approach

- Team members must have a shared goal, a plan for reaching the goal, and an effective communication system.
- As a team member, you should advocate for all children by reporting suspected abuse or neglect, educating others, recruiting, and being active in associations. You should advocate for the children in your home by providing for their safety and well-being, ensuring participation in age-appropriate activities, modeling, coaching, and supporting primary parents.



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List three ways you will use the information from this training.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

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### Scenario #I and #II

#### Scenario #I

You are an adoption social worker at a public agency. The following messages are waiting for you when you return to the office after a lengthy court hearing. You only have 45 minutes in the office before you leave for your final appointment of the day, an appointment for a first interview with a family interested in applying for adoption of special needs children. You know you won't have time to return all these messages today. Which ones can you call today? Which ones will have to wait?

- Ms. Miller needs more information on a sibling group she viewed on the Ohio Adoption Photo Listing website.
- Mr. Smith needs to set up a second homestudy visit.
- A Social Worker from another agency wants to discuss a possible match for a child in your agency's custody.
- Ms. Kelly wants to discuss concerns she has for her foster child's preplacement visits with a prospective adoptive family.
- Mr. Bryant needs to discuss Joe's (foster child) school expulsion.
- The Johnson Elementary principal wants to talk about Joe's (Mr. Bryant's foster son) expulsion.
- The state licensing specialist wants to discuss a complaint about their agency.
- Mr. Williams, therapist, wants to discuss sexual contact between two children in a kinship caregiver's home.

Scenario #II

It is Monday morning, and you are a child protective services worker in the foster care unit. Here are items on your "To Do" list this week. Prioritize tasks within your 40 hour work week.

- Complete a homestudy for a relative who is interested in providing care for a niece in foster care. The homestudy needs to be approved before the court hearing next week. **(2 hours)**
- Conduct one home visit each to the Smiths, Johnsons, and Williams for their foster care recertification. If you don't do the visits this week, their licenses will expire, and you will have to move the children in their homes). **(3.5 hours for each visit and travel time)**
- Prepare for and facilitate a Preservice training class. **(6 hours)**
- Conduct home visits for four prospective adoptive families interested in beginning the homestudy process. **(3.5 hours for each visit and travel time)**
- Process, log, and mail twenty personal reference requests. **(10 minutes per request)**
- Attend four mandatory Semi-Annual Administrative Review meetings. **(1 hour each)**
- Attend two mandatory court hearings. **(4 to 5 hours each)**
- Supervise mandatory visits with three sibling groups and their birth parents. **(2 hours each including child transportation)**
- Meet with the Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) for Johnny Jones to discuss the case plan. **(1 hour)**
- Attend mandatory weekly department meeting and supervisory conference. **(2 hours)**
- Complete documentation of three homestudies. **(6 hours each)**

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### Case Study: What's Wrong With This Picture?

Alice Turner, a 26-year-old single mother, has six children, ages two to ten. The five youngest children are in two foster homes, and the oldest child is in a residential treatment facility for emotionally disturbed children. The children entered foster care four months ago because the mother, who suffers from anxiety and depression, chronically neglected the children and left them with no adult supervision.

The 10-year-old, Billy, sees a psychiatrist bi-weekly; Billy is destructive and hyperactive. He has significant learning problems and is in a special education class at school. Billy is making poor progress academically, but the caseworker, mother, and psychiatrist have not met with the school personnel to adjust his Individualized Education Program. Furthermore, the psychiatrist provides monthly written reports to the caseworker about Billy's progress in counseling, but Alice has never met with the psychiatrist.

The court ordered supervised visitation because Alice has made threats to "kidnap" the children from placement. Since the children have been in placement, they have visited intermittently with their mother at the agency (a case aide from the agency transports the children and supervises the visits), but visits have never been coordinated so that the children can see each other. The children have not telephoned each other, and they frequently ask the caseworker about their brothers and sisters. One foster parent has decided that Alice should be able to see her children more often and has dropped three of the children off at Alice's home twice "for the afternoon." The caseworker and the court do not know about these "extra" visits. The two sets of foster parents have not talked with each other, and one foster family has not met or talked to Alice. The mother, in fact, does not know where her two youngest children are in placement. The foster mother for the two youngest children has identified some developmental delay in one of the children. Agency staff have not talked with her about her concerns, and no services to address these delays have been added to the case plan.

The caseworker has developed the case plan without input from the mother or the foster families. The semi-annual review of the case plan will be held in a few weeks, but the caseworker has forgotten to invite the foster parents.

A great aunt, Wanda, cared for the children on and off for many years when the mother was unable to manage them. The children talk about her all the time. The caseworker does not seem to be aware of her importance to the children.

The Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) for the six Turner children believes that the agency should pursue adoption planning in this case. The caseworker and her supervisor are planning to reunify the Turner family. There is significant disagreement between the CASA and the caseworker about the minimum standard for reunification. Finally, Alice's case plan says that she must locate suitable housing; but she has been too depressed to follow through with a plan to find housing she can afford, particularly since her TANF benefits were cut off 90 days after the removal of the children.



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### Individual Reflection

*Please take a few minutes to reflect on what you have learned in this Preservice training and how the information applies to you. Give this sheet to the agency worker who is completing your homestudy.*

1. Identify at least one question you have about the timeline of a child's foster care journey.

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2. List your motivations to become a caregiver or adoptive parent.

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3. What do you think your biggest challenge will be in your role on the child welfare team?

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