



Foster 
VC Kids

Ventura County Children & Family Services

DAY
One

Day *One* At-a-Glance

Section	Time	Materials	Activities
Orientation and Introductions	30 Minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● PPT 1.1-1.3 ● Distribute Participants' Guides ● Participant Guide 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Ground Rules
Children & Family Services & Foster VC Kids Mission, Vision and Values	15 Minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● PPT 1.4-1.6 ● Participant Guide 	
Resource families as Partners	40 Minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● PPT 1.7-1.8 ● Participant Guide Handout: Partnership Agreement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Partnership Agreement
The System of Care	50 Minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● PPT 1.9-1.20 ● Participant Guide 	
Deal Breakers	30 Minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● PPT 1.21-1.23 ● Participant Guide 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Recognizing Deal Breakers
Introduction to Homework Assignments	10 Minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● PPT 1.24-1.25 ● Participant Guide 	
Wrap-up	5 Minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● PPT 1.26 ● Evaluation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Complete Evaluations

About Day *One*

Overview

Day One of the 21st Century Caregiving: Foster VC Kids Resource Family Training serves as an introduction to fostering and our system of care. Each member of the professional foster care team is an important partner in assisting the child and family through this trying time in their lives.

Resource families must understand the system of care, be honest about why they are here and realistic about their expectations. In Session One, you will cover an overview Children & Family Services, key information about the statutes that govern our system of care, and introduce the process and partners involved in the Ventura County system of care. In addition, you will cover the mission, vision and values of CFS and Foster VC Kids. You will also begin the discussion on deal breakers. Finally, you will introduce the homework element of the training.

Case Studies: You will be utilizing case studies throughout the training so that participants may have the opportunity to apply their learning. Today's session will not include any case study materials.

Real Cases: You will want to make it clear to the participants that all of the case studies used in this curriculum are de-identified families with any identifying information altered or removed.

Learning Objectives

- ✓ Demonstrate a clear understanding of CFS goals and how it relates to your role as a resource family.
- ✓ Explain the mission, vision and values of CFS and Foster VC Kids and how your role as a resource family fits into the system of care.
- ✓ Discuss the key elements of the system of care.
- ✓ Identify Ventura County's dependency court process and the key partners in the system of care.
- ✓ Articulate any attributes or issues children may have that you would not be able to accept in your home.

Trainer Preparation

In addition to the Trainer's Guide, Participants' Guides, and PowerPoint Slides, Day One will require the trainer to locate and prepare the following supplemental materials. All supplements should be found in the appendix:

Evaluation Form:

- See appendix for the evaluation form to be completed by the participant.

Attendance Form:

- See appendix for the attendance form.

Handouts:

- Ventura County Partnership Agreement* (see appendix).

Participant's Guide

You will provide a *Participant's Guide* to each participant today. This guide should be used in class for classroom & homework activities. Additionally, lecture content is presented throughout the guides as well as supplemental content. The participants will keep this guide at the completion of this training.

Introduction and Orientation

Materials

PPT 1.1-1.3

Distribute
Participants' Guides

Participant Guide

Flipchart Paper/Markers



30 Minutes

Presentation – Introductions

Introduce yourself and welcome the participants to the **21st Century Caregiving: Foster VC Kids Resource Family Training**

- *Cover the following:*
 - *Your name.*
 - *Work responsibilities/length of time at your organization.*
 - *Why you're excited to be training this curriculum!*
 - *Your role as a trainer for the class*
 - *Your role in the assessment of your participants. In addition to training, you will be observing and listening to each family. In the spirit of partnership, your role of trainer is also to notice red flags, to identify areas of concern, and to guide the participants to the right decisions about foster care. Explain that any concerns you have will be shared with the family and the Foster VC Kids Team.*

- **Provide** any other information you would like to share to begin allowing the participants to get to know you.

- **Ask** participants to introduce themselves and stress the importance of getting to know classmates and other resource families. Stress the significance of having a robust support network that can assist with emotional and practical support . Ask them to cover the following:
 - *Their name.*
 - *Where they live.*
 - *Why they are eager for this training.*
 - *Any other information that will support the group in getting to know each other.*



PowerPoint Presentation – Course Introduction Learning Goals (SLIDES 1.1-1.3)



21st Century Resource familying :
Foster VC Kids Professional Resource family
Training Session 1

SLIDE 1.1

PowerPoint Title Slide: 21st Century Caregiving: Foster VC Kids Resource Family Training (*Session 1*)

Course Learning Goals

- Participants will be able to make informed decisions about fostering for their family.
- Participants will understand their important roles and commitments as members of the Ventura County professional foster care team.
- Participants will be prepared to navigate the foster care system.
- Participants will be prepared to provide quality parenting, normal childhood experiences and trauma-sensitive care to the foster children in their home.



SLIDE 1.2

PowerPoint Slide: Course Learning Goals

- ▶ The overarching goals for the **21st Century Caregiving: Foster VC Kids Resource Family Training** include the following:
 - ▶ Participants will be able to make **informed decisions about fostering** for their family.
 - ▶ Participants will understand their **important roles and commitments** as a member of the **Foster VC Kids professional foster care team**.
 - ▶ Participants will be prepared to **navigate the foster care system**.
 - ▶ Participants will be prepared to **provide quality parenting, normal childhood experiences and trauma-sensitive care** to the foster children in their home.



SLIDE 1.3

PowerPoint Slide: Day 1 Learning Objectives

- ▶ The learning objectives for Day One of the ***21st Century Caregiving: Foster VC Kids Resource Family Training*** include the following:
 - ▶ Demonstrate a clear understanding of **CFS goals** and how it relates to your role as a resource family.
 - ▶ Explain **CFS and Foster VC Kids mission, vision and values** and how your role as a resource family fits into the system of care.
 - ▶ Discuss the key elements of **the statutes that govern child welfare and our dependency process**.
 - ▶ Identify the Ventura County's **dependency court process** and the **key partners** in the system of care.
 - ▶ Articulate any **attributes or issues that children may have** that you would not be able to accept in your home.



SUMMARIZE

- ▶ Preparing resource families for their role as a member of the professional foster care team is one of the most important functions of the training and Foster VC Kids teams. We believe the work you are doing and our partnership with you is critical to the success of our mission, vision and values.
- ▶ We are excited you have joined us on this important adventure. It will change your life forever. It will change the life of a child forever. When responding to the statement "Boy you have your hands full," one resource family simply replied, "No, just very blessed."



Activity – Ground Rules

INTRODUCE the Activity

- *Post Slide 1.4 as you introduce this activity.*
- ▶ Before we get started, let's take a moment to build ground rules for our time together.
- ▶ We are going to be together for eight sessions, and we have a lot to do. Ground rules can make our time enjoyable; help us remain on task; establish an understanding about our needs and confirm our commitment towards our goals, allow us to take shared risks and help to make this training a success.

PURPOSE of Activity

- *Reinforce the concept of the group's ground rules.*
- *Obtain ownership of and commitment to the course from participants.*
- *Encourage participants to share personal information.*
- *Energize participants about their personal strengths for the role of resource families.*
- *Help promote an atmosphere that provides for shared risks.*

DIRECTIONS for Activity

Say:

- ▶ In order to build effective ground rules, we need to keep in mind the goals for our time together, and to then identify how we will work together to effectively reach these goals. This includes a conversation about what you want, what the agency wants us to accomplish, and what each of us has to offer.

Ask:

- ? What would help you work best together to reach the course goals during the eight sessions that you are going to be together?**
- ? What can trainers and other participants do to make you most comfortable?**

**SAMPLE RESPONSES for Ground Rules:**

- ❖ Turn off cell phones and/or pagers.
- ❖ Be on time for class.
- ❖ Respect others/respect and honor confidentiality. Ask permission to share private information.
- ❖ Have fun.
- ❖ Cooperate in a team effort.
- ❖ Relax and be comfortable.
- ❖ Respect other participants.
- ❖ Listen to the person who is speaking.
- ❖ Be supportive.
- ❖ Freedom to pass and not have a conversation in public, may want to address a topic one on one.
- ❖ Parking Lot for Questions that are important but need to be discussed at another time

Ask:

- ? What do you expect to get out of this training?**



SAMPLE RESPONSES for What Participants Want:

- ❖ Learn about foster children and their families.
- ❖ Learn about my responsibilities as a resource family.
- ❖ Learn about unconditional commitment and permanency planning.
- ❖ Learn about the people and agencies I will be working with.
- ❖ Learn about the system of care.
- ❖ Learn about the laws, policies and procedures.
- ❖ Learn about the court system.
- ❖ Learn about how to handle difficult situations.
- ❖ Learn how to provide trauma-sensitive care.
- ❖ Learn about the matching process.
- ❖ Learn about grief and loss



SUMMARIZE

- ▶ Participants will attend all eight sessions of training.
- ▶ Participants are expected to provide feedback to the trainer and each other throughout the session.
- ▶ Participants should honor confidential information.
- ▶ Any homework activities are expected to be completed by the assigned dates.
- ▶ Participants may pass anytime they are asked a question or asked to volunteer, but participation is strongly encouraged.

REVIEW: Housekeeping Items

- ▶ Cell phones.
- ▶ Evaluations.
- ▶ Restrooms.



DISTRIBUTE PARTICIPANT'S GUIDES

- **Distribute** participant guides and review the components:
 - *Introductory Letter*
 - *Table of Contents*
 - *Content*
 - *Worksheets*
- **Orient** to using participant guides and review the components. *Inform participants that participant guide is intended to be a tool to support learning and doesn't match the slide presentation. Inform participants there is a note page at the end of each section for note taking of information.*



TRANSITION

- ▶ Let's begin our discussion by talking about the goal of Ventura County Children and Family Services, as well as the mission, vision and values of the agency and the Foster VC Kids team.

Children & Family Services

Mission and Values Statement

Materials

PPT 1.4-1.6

Participant Guide

Flipchart Paper/Markers



15 Minutes

Presentation –Introduction to Topic

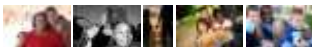
- ▶ In order to be a fully prepared and engaged partner in our system and on the Foster VC Kids professional foster care team, it is important for you to know who we are. It is also important for you to understand our mission, as well as the vision and values for Ventura County’s Children & Family Services.
- ▶ We are going to begin this training by providing an overview of Children and Family Services. I will also introduce you to the system of care and its partner agencies.

PowerPoint Presentation – Children and Family Services (SLIDE 1.5)



Children & Family Services

- ▶ CFS overarching goal is **Protecting Children by Strengthening Families.**
- ▶ Whenever possible, CFS seeks to maintain children in their homes safely.
- ▶ When this is not possible CFS seeks to first place with relatives/extended family members.
- ▶ The ultimate goal is to return children to their parent (or family of origin) as soon as it is safe.



SLIDE 1.5

PowerPoint Slide: Overview of Children and Family Services(CFS)

- ▶ The overarching goal of CFS is Protecting Children by Strengthening Families.
- ▶ Children & Family Services is dedicated to helping families protect children from harm, safeguarding children who have been abused or neglected, and ensuring that children have safe and permanent homes.
- ▶ CFS staffs the child abuse hotline, investigates reports of alleged abuse/neglect, works with families towards case goals, supports youth gain independent living skills, conducts resource family approval, and provides support to resource families.

- ▶ Whenever possible, CFS seeks to maintain children in their homes safely.
- ▶ When this is not possible, CFS seeks to first place the child/ren in the home of a relative or extended-family member. When placement with a relative is not possible (or not immediately achievable), placement into a foster home is required.
- ▶ The ultimate goal is to return the child to the care of the parent or guardian as soon as it is deemed safe.
- ▶ When reunification is not possible, we seek to establish a long-term permanent connection.
- ▶ Ventura County is part of the nationwide Quality Parenting Initiative. This means we are committed to improving the quality of partnership within the child welfare system and hold high expectations for all partners in the system.

Ask:

- ? If CFS is trying to maintain and strengthen families, why is resource family training and approval important?**

Trainer's Note: Have current statistics available such as number of children in care, number of home, etc.

Sample Responses:

- ❖ In order to successfully reunify families, the safety and well-being of children need to be maintained as families work through their case plans.
- ❖ The safety and well-being of children must be maintained as a permanent living situation is established.



PowerPoint Presentation – Foster VC Kids Mission, Vision and Priorities (SLIDES 1.6-1.8)



SLIDE 1.6

PowerPoint Slide: Foster VC Kids

- ▶ Foster VC Kids is a program of The County of Ventura Human Services Agency, Children and Family Services (CFS). Foster VC Kids is the resource family information, resource and support arm of the county, working with community partners to ensure that our resource families have the support they need to offer quality care.
- ▶ The Foster VC Kids team works closely with many community providers to meet the needs of families; this includes both families of origin and resource families.
- ▶ Some of these partners include Kids & Families Together; the Foster & Kinship Care Education programs at our community colleges; Casa Pacifica; Ventura County Behavioral Health; private Foster Family Agencies; Channel Islands Social Services; the Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA); Children's Services Auxiliary; RaisingHope; and other community based service providers such as Interface & City Impact.
- ▶ Through engagement and meaningful relationships, Foster VC Kids supports families to enhance safety, permanency, and well-being for their children. Preserving the primary family and support relationships is our priority. When this is not possible, Foster VC Kids strives to ensure children will maintain and establish safe, nurturing unconditionally committed relationships.
- ▶ As resource families, you are an important partner in reaching our mission. Effectively preparing you for that role is of critical importance, which is why we are here today. This

commitment is ongoing, and this pre-service training is just one of many training opportunities you will receive.

- ▶ Our priorities include: Safely stabilize and preserve families; and if that is not possible, then Safely care for children and reunify children to their families of origin; and if reunification is not possible, Safely support the development of permanency and lifelong, unconditionally committed relationships for children and youth.
- ▶ Support caregivers in providing high-quality care in partnership with the county.

The Quality Parenting Initiative

- ▶ Ventura County is a QPI County.
- ▶ This means we are committed to high quality partnership within the child welfare system.



SLIDE 1.7

PowerPoint Slide: The Quality Parenting Initiative

- ▶ We value teamwork, respect, nurturing, and committed partners.
- ▶ The partnership agreement we will discuss in a minute comes from our QPI work and goal to increase the quality of care in the system, as well as the partnership between caregivers and the agency.
- ▶ Resource families are viewed as professional partners on the foster child's team.
- ▶ We are going to watch a short clip of Carole Shauffer, Director of Strategic Initiatives at the Youth Law Center to learn a bit more about QPI and 21st Century Caregiving



SHOW Video:

About the Quality Parenting Initiative & Being a 21st Century foster family from www.qpicalifornia.org.



SUMMARIZE

- ▶ When a child comes into your home, you hold a deep responsibility for that child's well-being. You must be prepared to treat the child as if he/she is your own while also providing the care needed for a child who is dealing with trauma and loss.
- ▶ Additionally, you must be prepared for co-parenting and understand that the best outcome for this child, if possible, is reunification with his biological parent(s).
- ▶ During this training, we will be working on developing your 21st Century caregiving skills and knowledge. We will also be building on your existing skills and knowledge so that together we can change the world, one family at a time – and achieve positive outcomes for the children and families we serve Ventura County.



TRANSITION

- ▶ Let's continue our discussion by talking about how the resource family fits within the professional team.

Resource families as Partners

Materials

PPT 1.8-1.9

Participant Guide

Flipchart Paper/Markers

Handout: Foster
VCKids Partnership
Agreement



40 Minutes



Presentation –Introduction to Topic

- ▶ We will be discussing your roles and responsibilities as a member of the professional foster care team throughout this training, but for now I want to spend some time giving you a broad overview of the commitments you are making when you sign up to be a resource family.
- ▶ I also want to introduce you to an important document that helps to clarify our responsibilities toward each other and to the child: They *Foster VC Kids Partnership Agreement*. This document helps to solidify the mission, values and vision of CFS and Foster VC Kids.

DISTRIBUTE Handout

- *Distribute Foster VC Kids Partnership Agreement, which can be found in the appendix.*



Partnership for Children in Out of Home Placement (SLIDE 1.8)

SLIDE 1.8

PowerPoint Slide: Partnership Commitments.



- ▶ *The Ventura County Partnership Agreement*
 - ▶ This document serves as a reminder that we are all partners in responsibility for the well-being and care of children involved with CFS.
 - ▶ Children need normal childhoods as well as loving and

skillful parenting which honors their loyalty to their biological family. The purpose of the Ventura County Partnership Agreement document is to articulate a common understanding of the values, principles and relationships necessary to fulfill this responsibility.

In addition to complying with all statutory and regulatory requirements, the following commitments are embraced by all of us:

▶ **Respectful Partnership.**

- ▶ To ensure that the care we give our children supports their healthy development and gives them the best possible opportunity for success, caregivers and agency staff will work together in a respectful partnership.

▶ **Professional Behavior.**

- ▶ All members of this partnership will behave professionally, will share all relevant information promptly, and will respect the confidentiality of all information related to the child and his or her family.

▶ **Case Planning.**

- ▶ Caregivers, the family and CFS will participate in developing the plan for the child and all members of the team will work together to implement this plan. This includes caregiver participation in team meetings or court hearings related to the child's care and future plans.
- ▶ Agency staff will support and facilitate caregiver participation through timely notification, inclusion in the case and providing alternative methods for participation for caregivers who cannot be physically present.

▶ **Excellent Parenting.**

- ▶ Excellent parenting is a reasonable expectation of caregivers.
- ▶ Caregivers will provide and agency staff will support excellent parenting.
- ▶ This requires a loving commitment to the child and the child's safety and well-being, appropriate supervision and positive methods of discipline, encouragement of the child's strengths, respect for the child's individuality and

likes and dislikes, providing opportunities to develop the child's interests and skill, awareness of the impact of trauma on behavior, equal participation of the child in family life, involvement of the child with the community and a commitment to enable the child to lead a normal life.

▶ **Responsible placement.**

- ▶ Children will be placed only with caregivers who have the ability and are willing to accept responsibility for the care of a child in light of the child's culture, religion and ethnicity, special physical or psychological needs, unique situation including sexual orientation and family relationships.
- ▶ CFS will provide caregivers with all **available** information to assist them in determining whether they are able to appropriately care for a child. Caregivers must be willing and able to learn about and be respectful of the child's religion, culture and ethnicity, and any special circumstances affecting the child's care. Agency staff will assist them in gaining the support, training and skill necessary for care of the child.

▶ **Professional development.**

- ▶ Caregivers will have access to and take advantage of all training they need to improve their skills in parenting children who have experienced trauma due to neglect, abuse or separation from home, to meet these children's special needs and to work effectively with child welfare agencies, the courts, the schools and other community and governmental agencies. In addition to the pre-service course you are taking now, in-service training every year is mandatory to maintain a foster care license.

▶ **Services and support.**

- ▶ CFS will provide caregivers with the services and support they need to enable them to provide quality care for the child.

▶ **Avoiding disruption for child.**

- ▶ Once a family accepts the responsibility of caring for the child, the child will be removed from that family only when the family is clearly unable to care for him or her safely or legally, when the child and his or her biological family are

reunified, when a child is being moved to a relative, when the child is being placed in a legally permanent home in accordance with the case plan or court order, or when the removal is demonstrably in the child's best interest.

▶ **Smooth transitions.**

- ▶ If a child must leave the caregiver's home for one of these reasons and in the absence of an unforeseeable emergency, the transition will be accomplished according to a plan which involves cooperation and sharing of information among all the persons involved, respects the child's developmental stage and psychological needs, ensures they have all their belongings, and allows for a gradual transition from the caregiver's home and, if possible, for continued contact with the caregiver after the child leaves.

▶ **Co-Parenting, family mentoring and continuity for child.**

- ▶ When the plan for the child includes reunification, caregivers and agency staff will work together to assist the biological parents in improving their ability to care for and protect their children and to provide continuity for the child.

▶ **Respect for child's connections.**

- ▶ Caregivers will respect and support the child's ties to his or her biological family (parents, siblings and extended family members) and will assist the child in visitation and other forms of communication.
- ▶ CFS will provide caregivers with the information, guidance, training and support necessary for fulfilling this responsibility.
- ▶ Along the way, you may also discover additional connections and links with family or family friends that can serve as a support system for the child.

▶ **Obtaining and maintaining records.**

- ▶ Caregivers will work in partnership with CFS to obtain and maintain records that are important to the child's well being including child resource records, medical records, school records, photographs, and records of special

events and achievements. Sharing these notable events and accomplishments is critical to the co-parenting relationship.

▶ **Child advocacy.**

- ▶ Caregivers will effectively advocate for children in their care with the child welfare system, the court, and community agencies, including schools, child care, health and mental health providers, and employers.
- ▶ CFS will support them in doing so and will not retaliate against them as a result of this advocacy.

▶ **Full participation in child's mental and physical well-being.**

- ▶ Caregivers will participate fully in the child's medical, psychological and dental care as they would for their biological child.
- ▶ Agency staff will support and facilitate this participation.
- ▶ Caregivers and agency staff will share information with each other about the child's health and well-being.

▶ **Supporting school success.**

- ▶ Caregivers will support the child's school success by participating in school activities and meetings, including IEP (Individualized Education Plan) meetings, assisting with school assignments, supporting tutoring programs, meeting with teachers and working with an educational surrogate if one has been appointed and encouraging the child's participation in extra-curricular activities.
- ▶ Agency staff will facilitate this participation and will be kept informed of the child's progress and needs.



Activity – Partnership for Children

INTRODUCE the Activity



- *Post Slide 1.9 as you introduce this activity.*
- ▶ The ***Foster VC Kids Partnership Agreement*** allows us to establish, up front, expectations for our partnership.
- ▶ Let us explore a few of these areas and identify what they may mean for you as a caregiver.
- ▶ Again, during the training--and as a part of our on-going commitment--we will be building on your strengths and helping you with your needs.

PURPOSE of Activity

- ***Reinforce*** the concept of the *Foster VC Kids Partnership Agreement*.
- ***Allow*** participants the opportunity to identify their strengths and needs in meeting the guidelines of the *Partnership Agreement*.
- ***Provide*** examples. For example, an experience and strengths they already have with "Responsible Partnership" is a successful marriage or parenting their biological children together.

DIRECTIONS for Activity

Say:

While all of these commitments are important, I want us to talk about a few that are especially critical to supporting a child in foster care. These are:

- **Respectful Partnership & Professional Behavior**
- **Avoiding Disruptions & Smooth Transitions**
- **Family Mentoring & Maintaining Connections**
- **Full participation in the child's mental & physical well being**



Refer **participants to** Participant Guide Day One Resource family Partner Strengths and Needs Worksheet.

- *Allow the participants 15 minutes to complete the worksheet with ideas about how they can meet this commitment, concerns they have about specific commitment and questions they have about what they are committing to.*
- **Discuss** as a large group.

SAMPLE RESPONSES for Respectful Partnership and Professional Behavior :

- ❖ I treat others with respect.
- ❖ I honor the opinion, feelings, skills and knowledge of others.
- ❖ I have a successful marriage.
- ❖ My spouse and I make decisions as a team when parenting our own children.
- ❖ I have successfully worked as a member of a team.
- ❖ I involve others into the decision-making process if it involves them too.
- ❖ I enlist the help of others when I need it.
- ❖ I am willing to share what I know and how I feel.
- ❖ I am a good listener.
- ❖ I am willing to follow instructions and requirements.
- ❖ I understand that to be a fully-committed partner, I must fully participate in all aspects of care, including case planning

SAMPLE RESPONSES for Avoiding Disruption and Providing Smooth Transitions

- ❖ I make plans well in advance.
- ❖ I like to be prepared in case life throws me a curveball.
- ❖ I understand that this child may not be in my home forever and that I need to prepare both of us for the day he or she has to leave.



SAMPLE RESPONSES Family Mentoring and Respect for Child's Connections

- ❖ Open to many experience myself.
- ❖ Open Minded.
- ❖ I like to meet new people.
- ❖ I like to be surrounded by family and culture.
- ❖ I enjoy helping others.

SAMPLE RESPONSES for Full Participation in Child's Mental and Physical Well-Being (

- ❖ I keep all my medical appointments and get my teeth cleaned every 6 months. I do the same for my children.
- ❖ I know what to do in an emergency.
- ❖ I seek advice and help when I need it.
- ❖ I am able to provide care to a child with special physical or mental needs.



SUMMARIZE

- ▶ During this training, we will be building the tools we need so that you, as resource families, can meet your part of the ***Foster VC Kids Partnership Agreement.***
 - ▶ Additionally, we will continue to discuss the roles and responsibilities of each member of Ventura County's professional foster care team and how each professional can help you meet the needs of your foster child as well as the needs of your family.



TRANSITION

- ▶ Now that we have discussed the CFS and Foster VC Kids mission, values and priorities as well as the roles and commitments of the professional foster care team, let's turn now to the requirements of the system by exploring the law and the dependency court system as well as the specific people and agencies involved in the system of care

The System of Care

Materials

PPT 1.10-1.20

Participant Guide

Flipchart Paper/Markers

Sticky Notes



45 Minutes

Presentation –Introduction to Topic

- ▶ We have a moral obligation and commitment to the children in our care, but we also have legal obligations.
- ▶ These legal requirements have been created to provide positive outcomes for children and their families. They include the policies and procedures we must follow in California's child welfare system.



PowerPoint Presentation – The Welfare & Institution Code (W&IC) and ASFA (SLIDES 1.10 & 1.11)



SLIDE 1.10

PowerPoint Slide: What is the Welfare & Institution Code?

- ▶ W&IC provides the legal framework for everything we do in the state of California's child welfare system.



SLIDE 1.11

PowerPoint Slide: What is ASFA?

- ▶ In 1997, President Bill Clinton signed the Adoption and Safe Families Act (ASFA) into law. ASFA was a fundamental change in the way we think about child welfare. The health and safety of children clearly became the primary concerns of child welfare.
- ▶ Resource Family Homes must be in compliance with ASFA standards in order to be eligible for foster care funds.
- ▶ The main goal of ASFA is to assure the health and safety of children and to promote permanent homes for children.
- ▶ ASFA identified three outcome areas with seven major outcome goals for child welfare and required the states to comply.

Overarching Outcomes for Children



SLIDE 1.12

PowerPoint Slide: Overarching Outcomes for Children

- ▶ The major outcome goals that ASFA seeks to achieve are reflected in California’s overarching outcomes for children.
- ▶ These outcomes for children are to ensure:
 - ▶ Safety
 - ▶ Permanency and
 - ▶ Well-Being.

Overarching Outcomes for Children



SLIDE 1.13

PowerPoint Slide: Safety Outcomes

- ▶ Safety outcomes include:
 - ▶ Children are, first and foremost, protected from abuse and neglect.
 - ▶ Children are safely maintained in their homes whenever possible and appropriate. Ask:

? What do you think the threshold might be for opening a case of abuse or neglect?

Sample Responses:

- ❖ A child has marks or bruises from physical beatings.
- ❖ A child tells someone at school that they are being hurt by someone in their household.
- ❖ It is important to note that according to statute, reports can and should be made whenever there is a reasonable suspicion or knowledge that a child is being hurt. As we will discuss when looking at the case flow, a report in and of itself is not cause to open a case but rather a reason to assess whether the report is valid (substantiated) based on a matrix of types of abuse and neglect and impact on the children. Some key factors in assessing whether a case is opened, which may or may not lead to removal, are:
 - The severity and impact of the abuse or neglect on the child and the child's current and future safety.
 - The child factors: age of the child, vulnerability, special conditions that make the child more likely to experience serious and/or long term effects and or death.
 - The parent/caregivers: parent/caregiver willingness and ability to provide safety for the child(ren), parent/caregiver willingness to seek and utilize help in attaining safe conditions and providing protection for the child.
- ❖ It is also important to know that we will discuss the decision making process later in this session as we go through the case flow.

- ▶ Determining whether a case will be opened is a decision that begins with the hotline call and is made over the course of an initial investigation and, when necessary, in consultation with the State Attorney assigned to Child Welfare service . We will talk more about this in a bit.
- ▶ It also must be pointed out that many of the calls received by the Abuse Hotline do not result in cases being opened AND that many children and families whose cases are opened remain intact while services are delivered.

Overarching Outcomes for Children

**SLIDE 1.14**

PowerPoint Slide: Permanency Outcomes

- ▶ Permanency outcomes include:
 - ▶ Children have permanency and stability in their living situations. This includes being returned home.
 - ▶ The continuity of family relationships and connections is preserved for children.
- ▶ Relatives and non-relative caregivers who are close friends of the family are the first to be considered if removal is deemed necessary to provide for stability and continuity.
- ▶ The California dependency court system is built around a 12-month to permanency model, but many factors can impact this outcome.
- ▶ The resource family is a key link to helping a child reach permanency by working with the biological family and participating in case planning activities.
- ▶ **Concurrent planning**, which we will discuss more in-depth shortly, is often conducted to promote permanency outcomes.

Ask:

? What do you think the term Concurrent Planning means?

Sample Responses:

- ❖ Having two goals at the same time.
- ❖ As we work towards reunification, we are concurrently planning for alternate permanency options during the

whole time to make sure children are not left hanging.

- ▶ In order to facilitate concurrent planning and permanency, the RFA process includes a permanency assessment. This assessment does not mean the child will need to be adopted but allows the agency to make a determination about whether the family is an appropriate long term permanency option so that if the case plan changes to permanency planning, the family has already been assessed and approved to provide that next level of care.
- ▶ So what are we looking at when we are conducting this assessment? The assessment will be looking at a range of family and environmental factors. These include a caregiver's experience as a child and how they were parented, past and current relationships, past and current challenges (such as past abuse suffered, substance use), health, support system, parenting style and skills, culture competence, openness to continuing to support relationships with family of origin, employment and financial history, and physical environment of the home. While some of these areas may sound, and will likely feel, intrusive the purpose is to ensure that if a child requires permanency, that the family can truly offer a stable and supportive environment to the child.

Overarching Outcomes for Children



SLIDE 1.15

PowerPoint Slide: Well-Being Outcomes

- ▶ Well-being outcomes include:
 - ▶ Families have enhanced capacity to provide for their children's needs.
 - ▶ Children receive appropriate services to meet their educational needs.
 - ▶ Children receive adequate services to meet their physical and mental health needs.

Ask:

- ? How do you think we can help families develop an enhanced capacity to provide for their children's needs?**

Sample Responses:

- ❖ Providing them with needed services like parenting classes, alcohol and drug programs, mental health services.
- ❖ Providing them with mentoring, support and modeling.

- ? What types of services can we provide children to help meet their educational needs**

Ask:

Sample Responses:

- ❖ Enrolling them in school.
- ❖ Participating in school conferences, events, and meetings.
- ❖ Involving the biological family in educational decisions and events.
- ❖ Providing special services and tutoring.
- ❖ Providing them with financial assistance and scholarships

Ask:**? What types of services can we provide children to help meet their physical and mental health needs?**

Sample Responses:

- ❖ Ensuring they have regular medical and dental care.
 - ❖ Ensuring they receive prescribed medications.
 - ❖ Ensuring they have specialized physical and mental health care, if needed.
 - ❖ Ensuring they have emergency care, if needed.
- ▶ There are some ways that the three outcomes provide room for discussion and guide decision-making in individual cases.
- ▶ The need for **SAFETY**: this need can mean that children must be removed and placed in care in order to keep them safe: when there is not a parent or caregiver available to protect a child, or when a parent or caregiver is a danger to a child in real and immediate terms, removal may be the best path to insuring safety. HOWEVER, the implementation of ASFA was designed to make sure that this solution is not over-used. The need for SAFETY can also guide us to make sure that we put in services and supports, including family and alternate caregivers within the household, to assure safety while change is occurring in the underlying causes that led to the child abuse and neglect.
 - ▶ The need for **PERMANENCY** can mean that children need to stay in their home and family if safety can be created. The process of removal is traumatic in and of itself, as we will discuss in future sessions. Creating a safe environment where there has been harm can be difficult and scary, however the value of children retaining important primary relationships and staying in familiar settings is a motivator to us in trying to preserve families whenever safely possible.
 - ▶ The need for **WELL-BEING** permeates the decision-

making process as well-being includes emotional and mental health which can be adversely impacted by removal or by remaining in an unsafe, unsupervised environment. Well-being can be negatively impacted by either decision.

- ▶ As you can see, the outcomes described in ASFA as the underpinning of our work often guide the case-by-case decision-making about whether families remain intact or children are removed.



PowerPoint Presentation – Ventura County System of Care (SLIDES 1.16-1.20)



SLIDE 1.16

PowerPoint Slide: Snapshot of a CFS Case



- ▶ As I mentioned, the Welfare and Institution Code is the legal framework for child welfare in the state of California. There are procedures we must follow, forms we must fill out, rules we must abide by.
- ▶ The Dependency Court System is defined by W&IC. Let's take a look at this system, how a child's case is processed and who is involved in the process.
- ▶ This, and the next, flow chart illustrate what happens to a child's case from Abuse Hotline to Permanency Hearing. Let's walk through it together.
- ▶ The first step in the process is a call to the child abuse hotline.
- ▶ If any person has reasonable cause to suspect child abuse, abandonment or neglect, they have a moral (in some cases, mandated, as is the case for resource families) responsibility to call the **Abuse Hotline** (805-654-3200).
- ▶ The Child Abuse and Neglect Reporting Act, as laid out in penal code, requires specific individuals to report suspected

child abuse or neglect: "... a mandated reporter shall make a report to an agency specified in Section 11165.9 whenever the mandated reporter, in his or her professional capacity or within the scope of his or her employment, has knowledge of or observes a child whom the mandated reporter knows or reasonably suspects has been the victim of child abuse or neglect" (California Penal Code, section 11166).

- ▶ Resource families, like social workers and other professionals are **mandated reporters** and are required to give their names when reporting.
- ▶ The **Child Abuse Hotline Worker** will make an assessment based on the available information, and will decide if it is sufficient to accept a report.
- ▶ Ventura County CFS utilizes what is called "Differential Response." This enables the county to determine what "path" of services would best support the family. There are three "paths" in Ventura. Path 1 involves referring the family to a community based partner for assistance, such as food pantries or job & career centers. Path 2 is a joint response from a community partner and CFS social worker, who both support the family while ensuring safety for the child. Path 3 is when an investigation into the allegations is required.
- ▶ If an investigation is warranted,(Path 3), an **Emergency Response (ER) Social Worker** is assigned to conduct the investigation. This investigation may require an Immediate Response (IR) if the allegations are significant. Otherwise an investigation will take place within 24 hours or 10 days, depending on the nature of the allegation.
- ▶ Some calls may be **Evaluated Out** and referred to for other services or resources because they do not meet W&IC criteria.

Ask:

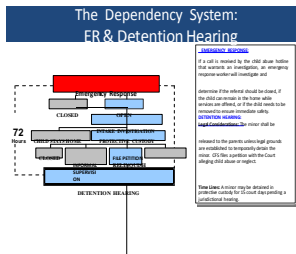
- ? **What types of information received do you think would prompt a hotline worker to accept a report and prompt an investigation?**

Sample Responses:

- ❖ Allegations of serious harm or impending serious harm.
- ❖ Typical high risk factors: young children, use of

substances, allegations of domestic violence, and allegations of untreated and serious mental health issues.

- ❖ Reliable information and detailed reports of why the reporter believes there is a reason to suspect child abuse or neglect.
- ❖ The abuse or neglect is alleged to occur either by a parent or caregiver OR the parent/caregiver is not protecting the child from abuse or neglect.
- ❖ Refer **participants** to Participant Guide Day One: Children and Family Services Child Welfare System and Juvenile Dependency Process



SLIDE 1. 17 PowerPoint Slide: The Dependency System: ER & Detention Hearing

- ▶ The ER Social Worker investigates the allegations and determines the next course of action. These may include:
 - ▶ The referral is closed because no concerns are present.
 - ▶ The child may remain in the home if no imminent risk is present. Services may be offered to assist the family.
 - ▶ Removal is required to ensure safety of the children.
- ▶ Removal is a traumatic event for a child that is already facing trauma in his/her life. Making this transition easier is a major goal for everyone on the care team.
- ▶ When a child is removed, he/she may be placed on an emergency basis with a relative, in a foster home, or at an emergency shelter. Some children will be placed in a foster home while a relative’s home is being approved for placement.
- ▶ When a child is placed in out of home care, a Needs and Services Plan is developed. This is a document that will have information about the child, relevant history, visitation information , information about the child’s behavior, abilities education, and medical needs. As more information is learned about the child, this plan may be modified.
- ▶ Children will also be placed with a Health & Education Passport (HEP notebook) which will be your main tool for

meeting your documentation and record keeping requirements as a resource family. This notebook should be used to keep documentation of any health, education, behavioral, or other relevant/significant events or needs.

Ask:

? When a child is first removed from his home, what are your gut reactions to how he/she might be feeling?

Sample Responses:

- ❖ Angry
- ❖ Sad
- ❖ Scared
- ❖ Confused
- ❖ Overwhelmed

Ask:

? How would you feel if your child was removed from your home?

Sample Responses:

- ❖ Angry
- ❖ Sad
- ❖ Scared
- ❖ Confused
- ❖ Overwhelmed

Ask:

? Why is a transition plan so important for the first night?

Sample Responses:

- ❖ Because the child is angry, sad, scared, confused and overwhelmed.
- ❖ To help make the child comfortable.
- ❖ To help your family feel more comfortable.

Ask:

? What are some things you can do to help a child on his/her first night?

Sample Responses:

- ❖ Give a brief tour of the house and show the child his/her room.
- ❖ Ask the child what kinds of food he/she likes and/or take the child shopping for groceries.
- ❖ Ask if the child has any questions about your home.
- ❖ Validate and normalize any fears the child may have about being in a new home.
- ❖ Ask the child about his/her nighttime routine.
- ❖ Be flexible in the first days of placement to support the child in transitioning.
- ❖ Assess what, if any, contact the child may have with his/her family or other connections and support continuity of those relationships, when appropriate.

Detention Hearing

- ▶ Once a child is removed from the home, a **Detention Hearing** is scheduled within the first **72 hours** of the removal. This hearing determines if the removal will continue. In some cases, children may be returned home at this time.
- ▶ During the hearing, the judge determines whether probable cause exists keep a child in care pending further investigation of the case.
- ▶ The placement of a child may or may not change at the time of the detention hearing.
- ▶ Families are entitled to a visit together prior to the detention hearing. As a resource family, you will likely be asked to assist in coordinating that visit prior to the hearing. You may also be asked to participate in an **Ice Breaker** meeting very soon into the placement experience. An **Ice Breaker** is a meeting, facilitated by the agency, to assist caregivers and birth parents in sharing information and beginning their work together.

needs in being met.

- ▶ The ongoing social worker will be your main resource when it comes to questions about the child, access to services, and visitation.
- ▶ Staying in communication with the child's social worker is critical. Resource families should feel comfortable in reaching out to social workers to share observations, ideas, and concerns.
- ▶ If you ever have challenges in communicating with the assigned social worker, CFS encourages you to work through those challenges with the social worker, his/her supervisor, and the manager (when appropriate).

All county employees can be reached via email by using: firstname.lastname@ventura.org. For example: mary.smith@ventura.org. Using email can often provide you with the quickest response.

More on Reunification

- ▶ In every case, **Family Reunification** is the goal for children until it is determined that the family will no longer meet the case plan goals in a timely enough manner to support permanency. This timeline varies for several legal reasons.
- ▶ The ongoing social worker provides services and visits minimally every thirty (30) days to ensure the child's well-being in foster care and meets with the biological family to promote achievement of the family goal and monitor progress.
- ▶ As we mentioned earlier, children may also have a **Concurrent Goal** to ensure that they do not languish in foster care. Concurrent goals are additional permanency goals, such as adoption, independent living, or guardianship.
- ▶ When a child has a concurrent goal, the ongoing social worker and team are working towards both goals at the same time (concurrently) knowing that if reunification cannot occur within the timeframe that would best meet the child's need for permanency, another outcome will become the goal or final plan for the child.
- ▶ As a resource family, you may be asked if you are willing to provide a permanent family for a child(ren) if they cannot return home. Particularly for children who are young, being

removed is traumatic and **the idea of making the first placement the best placement is critical in case planning.**

- ▶ If you believe that you and your family can provide a permanent home, you will be working on two goals yourselves: one being the goal of supporting a child's family making the changes needed to assure safety, and the other of being prepared to move towards adoption if the efforts of the family to change are not successful. In the end, the judge makes the decision and there are decision-making points all along the way wherein children could be moved from your care without much notice.
- ▶ As you now understand, court involvement is constant and diligent in attending to the whole family, including parent and relative capacity to provide safe and secure placement, and attending to the child's adjustment, safety, permanency, and well-being while in your care.



SLIDE 1.19 PowerPoint Slide: The Dependency System: Review Hearings

- ▶ The purpose for **review hearings** is to review the case in court, to review the status of the case and to review the case plan.
- ▶ The first judicial review occurs within six months of the child's entry into foster care.
- ▶ Additional reviews occur every six months and within 90 days after the child's 17th birthday.
- ▶ During judicial review hearings, the court receives updates on the parents/legal custodians' case plan progress.
- ▶ The following people, among others, must be notified of judicial review hearings: the resource family or legal custodian in whose home the child resides, any pre-adoptive parent, the attorney for the child, and the child (10 years of age or older). If the child chooses not to attend, the social worker must document the reasons why the youth declined.
- ▶ Resource families may submit one or more **JV-290s** directly to court or to the child's social worker to share their feedback and observations regarding the child's progress in their home.

- ▶ A parent's reunification services may be terminated at review hearings. This decision is made based upon the parent's participation in his/her case plan.
- ▶ Reunification services must be terminated prior to alternate permanency plans being implemented.
- ▶ A permanency hearing is held no later than 12 months from the child's entry into foster care.
- ▶ At the permanency hearing, the court considers the permanency options of reunification, adoption, permanent guardianship and permanent placement with a fit and willing relative.
- ▶ If the child is not returned to the parents but there is a substantial likelihood that the child will return within 6 months, services may be extended.
- ▶ Reunification for parents may be terminated at this time if the court determines that not enough progress on the case plan has been made or if the child cannot be safely returned home.

18 MONTH PERMANENCY HEARING

- ▶ The child shall be returned to the parents unless substantial risk remains or the parents have failed to participate in court ordered services.
- ▶ Reunification for parents may be terminated at this time if the court determines that not enough progress on the case plan has been made or if the child cannot be safely returned home.
- ▶ When reunification services are terminated, the long term permanency goal must be identified.

Ask:

? How do you think you would prepare yourself and your family for these hearings?

Sample Responses:

- ❖ Prepare for any outcome.
- ❖ You need to know what is happening so that you can support the child(ren) as their future is determined and

they have questions and responses to the outcome of the review so speak to the social worker before any court dates.

- ❖ Plan for supporting and partnering with the family related to the outcomes of this hearing.
- ❖ Prepare to support the child for either outcome, if s/he is old enough to understand.
- ? Complete a JV 290 to share your observations about the child's progress and needs.

SLIDE 1.20



PowerPoint Slide: The dependency system: Adoption & Guardianship

- ▶ This hearing is also referred to as the .26 hearing but is formally known as the selection & Implementation hearing.
- ▶ This is when the permanency plan for the child will be finalized. The plan may be long-term foster care, guardianship, or adoption.
- ▶ If an adoptive home has been identified AND a home study has been completed, the parental rights will be terminated at the .26 hearing and adoption will be determined to be the permanency plan.
- ▶ Parents may, and often do, appeal their rights being terminated.
- ▶ After all appeals are completed, if the rights remain terminated, the adoption process will move forward.



Participant Guide

PowerPoint Presentation – The Foster Care Team (SLIDES 1.21)

- ▶ Now let's take a look at the system in terms of the partners who are involved in a child's case.



- Refer participants to **Participant Guide Day One: System of Care: Partners**

The Foster Care Team



SLIDE 1.21

PowerPoint Slide: Family

- ▶ At the first level in the system of care, we have the child's family. This includes:
 - ▶ **Child.** Once the child has been adjudicated, the court has jurisdiction over the child until his 18th birthday and/or until the court releases jurisdiction over the child. Some youth will opt to stay in the foster care system through their 21st birthday for additional support. He has the right to go to court and should always try to attend. He can also speak to the judge by telephone or through a letter. The child may include feelings and information in the Judicial Review Report.
 - ▶ **Biological Parent(s).** Biological parents receive services that allow them to work through tasks on their case plan in order to be reunified with their child. They should be involved in the co-parenting of their child and visit their child unless otherwise ordered by the court. In court, they have a right to be represented by or appointed a lawyer. They must be notified about all court hearings and be present at them.
 - ▶ **Biological Relatives.** Even if we have not been able to place the child with relatives, extended birth family of a child in foster care should maintain a relationship with the child as long as it is a safe and healthy relationship. The birth family can be a helpful part of the team by giving family health information and helping keep the child connected to their culture.

- ▶ At the next level in the system of care, we have CFS Team. This includes:
 - ▶ **Emergency Response Social Worker:** Completes investigation. After initial investigation and detention hearing, the case is transferred to the court worker.
 - ▶ **Court Social Worker:** completes more in-depth assessment of the family and attends J&D hearing. After this hearing, the case is transferred to an ongoing social worker.
 - ▶ **Ongoing Social worker:** conducts ongoing case manager for the child, family, and foster family and attends review hearings.
 - ▶ **Youth Services Division (YSD) Social Worker:** specialized social workers who work with adolescents and their families to develop independent living skills and support the youth's transition into young adulthood.
 - ▶ **Adoptions Social Worker:** If reunification was not successful and once an adoptive home is identified, the adoptions social worker case manages the case through the adoption.
 - ▶ **Resource Family Approval Worker (RFA):** Each caregiving home is assigned to an RFA worker who is the social worker that can support a resource family in complying with Resource Family Approval Written Directives, including the steps to becoming fully approved. RFA Workers are also responsible for investigating alleged complaints made against a resource family home.
 - ▶ **Placement Coordinator:** CFS has specialized team members who work with our social workers and foster homes to identify the best placement for a child in care. Placement coordinators will be contacting caregivers when there is a need for placement and your home appears to be a match for the child. Resource families are always able to no if they feel they cannot meet the needs of the child. Relatives who are seeking placement of related children will not be contacted by placement, as that placement will occur through the case-carrying social worker.

- ▶ **Recruitment, Development & Support (RDS):** The Foster VC Kids team has RDS specialists who are assigned to resource families. RDS will work to get to know you through an in-home visit, will share resource information and provide linkage to relevant support programs, help you navigate the system, and provide support as you continue to develop as a resource family.

- ▶ At the next level in the system of care, we have the courts.
 - ▶ **Attorneys..** The parent's attorney provides legal advice and guidance to the parent at every stage of the court process. The child's attorney (Attorney ad Litem) is appointed by the judge to advocate for the child and represents only the child. The county will also be represented at hearings by County Counsel.
 - ▶ **Judge.** The judge decides what is in the best interest of the child and how to keep the child safe. After listening to everyone involved in the case and reading the reports, the judge determines if removal is in the best interest of the child, if the case should be adjudicated, if supervision should be terminated and if parental rights should be terminated. The judge approves the case plan and conducts a judicial review every 6 months to review the status of the case plan until permanency is achieved.

- ▶ Finally, we have other important people in the child's life such as:
 - ▶ **Doctors/Therapists/Developmental Specialists.** Their role is to help determine the physical and mental health of a child and help improve or maintain that health and development.
 - ▶ **Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA).** A CASA is usually assigned to a child at a court hearing, if the court deems one necessary. The CASA works for the child's best interest in court and is an additional resource for the resource families, biological parents and the child.

- ▶ **Teachers.** Teachers are an important part of the team. Teachers can help with identifying behavior and developmental problems. By having open communication with your child's teachers, you can work together to help the child adjust to their new surroundings. If your foster child struggles in school, their teacher is the best person to link you to the help that they need in a school setting.

Other Community Resources. This may include:

- ▶ The resource family Peer Partner & Educator (PPE) who can offer training and education to resource families in their first two years of fostering.
- ▶ Respite care through Channel Islands Social Services who can offer babysitting in the foster family home.
- ▶ Kids & Families Together is a local nonprofit agency that offers a range of programs and services to foster, relative, and adoptive caregivers. One of these programs (Support, Education, & Training) can offer you up to 18 weeks of in-home education and training to support you in continuing your growth.
- ▶ Community-based agencies such as Child Development Resources, Children's Services Auxiliary, RaisingHOPE, WIC, local clothing closets, Faith in Motion partners, and support groups.

Ask:

- ? **Why are so many people included in a child's care team and case?**

Sample Responses:

- ❖ Child welfare is complex. We are dealing with human emotions and we are also dealing with the law.
- ❖ Professionals with specific roles involving the child, the family and the foster family provide better service for

the child.

Ask:

? Which professional works primarily for the foster child?

Sample Responses:

❖ Ongoing Social Worker

▶ While the ongoing social worker does provide assistance to the biological family, child, & resource family.

Ask:

? Which professional works primarily for resource family?

Sample Responses:

❖ RDS and RFA Worker



SUMMARIZE

- ▶ Understandably, this is a lot of information to digest about a complex system of care.
- ▶ Many factors are considered when making decisions about removal, placement, case planning, termination of supervision, reunification, and termination of parental rights.
- ▶ It is also very important to note that judges can change the removal order or waive the case plan at any time. A situation can change dramatically throughout the case plan process and as resource families you need to be prepared for this.
- ▶ Additionally, many people and agencies provide support and services to meet the child's needs, the resource family's needs and the biological parent's goals.



TRANSITION

- ▶ We have established the legal framework for the system of care, now let's explore what we call deal breakers and develop strategies for dealing with things you might find uncomfortable.

Deal Breakers

Materials

PPT 1.22-1.23

Participant Guide



30 Minutes

Presentation –Introduction to Topic

- ▶ As we begin the topic of deal breakers, I want to remind you that part of my role as trainer will be to observe, listen and talk with you for assessment purposes. As we get to know each other, I may discover or you may share deal breakers. They will result in a clearer picture for the matching process, which we will begin discussing in upcoming weeks.
- ▶ A deal breaker can be thought of as something that you as a resource family feel you could not handle or tolerate as a caregiver. This may be certain child behaviors, ages, or other factors.
- ▶ A deal breaker may also be something that you do not feel you can agree to or follow through with as a resource family. This may be an agency expectation, an aspect to the partnership agreement, or something as simple as making a required change to your home to become licensed (installing a pool fence)
- ▶ You may discover through the course of this training that the things you thought were deal breakers are not. But, you may also discover that things you thought your family was ready for, you are not.



PowerPoint Presentation – Deal Breakers (SLIDES 1.22-1.23)

SLIDE 1.22

PowerPoint Slide: Deal Breakers: RFA Approval Requirements



- ▶ There are specific agency requirements you must meet as a resource family-you learned about these at the RFA orientation. Some of these may be considered deal breakers for you. These may include:

- ▶ **Your age**
- ▶ **Financial means**
- ▶ **Background check**
- ▶ **Working as part of the professional team**
- ▶ **Ability to complete all steps of the RFA approval process**



SLIDE 1.23

PowerPoint Slide: Deal Breakers: Your Requirements

- ▶ You either already know or will discover your own deal breakers including:
 - ▶ **Sex, Age and Number of Children.** You will need to consider which ages you are comfortable with and which ages you think you may have concerns about. You should also consider if you have any concerns or issues with females or males in your home.
 - ▶ **Health of the Child.** There are many healthy children in foster care, but there are also children with health issues including some serious disorders. You should consider what your family is unwilling or unable to handle in terms of health issues and why.

- ▶ **Education of the Child.** Children come at all levels of educational motivation and success. Some are high achievers and some have special education needs. You should consider if you are unwilling to spend the time and effort on special education needs and extra tutoring. Remember though, that just because you value education and a child is a low achiever, does not mean this is a poor match. You can provide the low achiever with guidance and support and help them learn to value education.
- ▶ **Characteristics and Behaviors of the Child.** Like all children, the children in foster care come with their own set of behaviors, both positive and negative. Depending on the negative experiences they have faced in their lives, they may also have trauma-induced/related behaviors you may have not seen before. You should consider if there are certain behaviors that you deem inappropriate for your family or your ability to handle. For example, if the child tends to reject father figures and there is a strong male influence in your house, this may cause issues. Is it a deal breaker? Maybe. Or, if you have other children in your house and the child has a history of inappropriate sexual behavior, you may consider this to be a deal breaker.
- ▶ **Family History/Culture of the Child.** Children in foster care come from many backgrounds. Many children in foster care have siblings. Many children have strong ties to their families. Some have been sexually abused. Some have biological parents with drug and/or alcohol abuse problems. Some have no family at all. Where do you personally draw the line? For example, do you feel confused, frightened, and unsure of the impact the sexual abuse of a child may have on your child and family. Additionally, if a child's culture is different from your own, are you willing to provide that child with cultural connections and experiences or allow that child to go to a different church than yours?
- ▶ **Your Feelings Toward Openness.** Are you open to transporting a child to visit with family members? Are you willing to meet with the biological family and arrange visitations with siblings? Are you willing to share information with the biological family?.If you are unwilling to work with the biological parents, then your ability to meet the family goal of reunification will be severely restricted. This may cause challenges as a resource family,

as these are priorities within CFS and are part of the partnership Foster VC Kids requires of our resource families.

- ▶ While you may consider some of these circumstances deal breakers now, educating yourself through this training, through discussion with your peers and through the licensing process, may change your mind. It is important that we use our ground rules of honesty and respect (*TRAINER'S NOTE: build on the ground rules in this comment*) because your ability to know yourself and your own limits and deal breakers is going to be very crucial in making sure that you can provide a healing and helping response to children who come into care. As we have established, this is a small number of children compared to the general population, however these children have already had a huge number of life experiences that make it imperative that they be able to count on the adults on their 'team' during their journey to permanency. There is no shame in being able to say that you cannot provide the specific type of care that children who have experienced abuse and neglect require, and we invite you to keep this idea of 'deal breakers' in mind as we continue.



Activity – Deal Breakers

INTRODUCE the Activity



- *Post Slide 1.25 as you introduce this activity.*
- ▶ It is also a good idea to truly identify what your deal breakers are so that children with those issues are not placed in your home during the matching process.
- ▶ It is important for you to examine your continued motivation to foster in light of the requirements, deal breakers and mutual selection.
- ▶ For relative caregivers, you may decide that are no “deal breakers” for you to care for your family member; you may

think of these things are possible challenges you will need assistance with.

- ▶ Finally, during each session, I plan on spending time getting to know each family on a personal basis and answering any questions you may have. While you are completing this activity, I will be coming around the room and visiting with each family for around 5 minutes.

PURPOSE of Activity

- *Allow participants to begin thinking about their deal breakers.*
- *Allow participants to begin thinking about the matching process.*
- *Allow participants to examine their continued motivation to foster in the light of the requirements, expectations, and deal breakers.*
- *To allow the trainer the opportunity to observe participants and listen to their concerns/issues.*

DIRECTIONS for Activity

Ask:

- ? What are your personal deal breakers?
- ? What are your concerns?
- ? What is your motivation to foster considering the requirements, deal breakers and mutual selection?



- **Refer** participants to **Participant Guide Day One: Recognizing Deal Breakers Checklist**.
 - *Allow the participants 15 minutes to complete the worksheet*
- ▶ Take your time and really think about these items. If you identify a deal breaker, try your best to explain why you feel this way. As you progress through the course, the discovery process may change your mind, but be honest about how you feel now.
- ▶ Also, think about the strengths and needs you identified earlier. For example, you may have identified your educational expectations as a strength, but how would you feel if you are fostering a child who is struggling to stay in school
- **Review** the activity by asking if anyone would like to share their deal breakers or concerns with the large group. Be sensitive, but provide insight and brief discussion. Discuss:
 - *Partnership Requirements*
 - *Sex, age, number of children.*
 - *Health of child.*
 - *Education of child.*
 - *Characteristics and behavior of a child.*
 - *Family history/culture.*
 - *Feelings towards openness.*

- ▶ This activity should have resulted in some good old-fashioned soul searching. These are very important things to think about because a successful match will make for a successful experience for both the foster child(ren) and your family. A poor match, will likely result in more upheaval in the child's life and the added trauma of an additional placement.
- ▶ While some of you may have unexpectedly discovered that becoming a resource family is not right for your family at this time, others may have discovered that the skills they already have make them more comfortable with a whole new group of children they once thought would not be a good match.



TRANSITION

- ▶ You will continue this discovery process throughout the training. As you learn new skills and develop critical knowledge for fostering, what was once frightening to you may not be so scary anymore.
- ▶ Let's talk a little now about how you can start developing some of these skills outside the classroom.

Introduction to Homework Assignments

Materials

PPT 1.26-1.27
Participant Guide



5 Minutes



Presentation –Introduction to Topic

- ▶ Let's take some time to discuss the homework element of 21st Century Caregiving
- ▶ **Direct** participants to find the homework pages at the end of Day One in the participant guide and review the components.
- ▶ There will be three kinds of homework activities. You may be asked to complete a self-assessment to help you and the Foster VC Kids team understand strengths and areas for growth. You will be asked to complete journaling questions to help you reflect on and process what you've learned. Finally, you may be asked to read articles or handouts on specific topics to provide more in-depth information.



PowerPoint Presentation – Purpose of Homework Assignments (SLIDES 1.26-1.27)

SLIDE 1.26

Purpose of Homework Assignments

- 1. The purpose of the homework element to this training is to reinforce the skills and knowledge you are building in the classroom.
- 2. The journaling assignments will help you identify your strengths, needs, motivations and desires which is critical if you are going to effectively bring a child into your home.
- 3. The reading assignments will help build your knowledge.

PowerPoint Slide: Purpose of Homework Assignments

- **Refer participants to *Homework Notebook: Day One Homework***

- ▶ The purpose of the homework element to this training is to reinforce the skills and knowledge you are building in the classroom.



- ▶ The **journaling assignments** and **self-assessments** will help you identify your strengths, needs, motivations and desires which is critical if you are going to effectively bring a child into your home.

- ▶ The **reading assignments** will help build your knowledge.
- ▶ **Refer** participants to Day 1 Homework page of participant guide.
- ▶ **Inform** participants that they will be reviewing the Homework with their Foster VC Kids RDS specialist when they become licensed.

1. Visit www.fostervckids.org to learn more about Foster VC Kids and to review the event calendar and resource sections.
2. Attend a Resource family Networking Group or meet with your PPE.
3. Research Doctors and Dentists in your area that accept Medi-Cal/Gold Coast Health Care Plan
4. Learn about the Respite Care Program
5. Research Women, Infants and Children (WIC) Nutritional Program
6. Complete resource family in-service training-remember you need 8 hours of annual training!

7. *Join iFoster.org*
8. *Complete the Foster Health Link online training to learn more about the medical database.*
 9. *Visit www.qpicalifornia.org to learn more about QPI and Just In Time Training*
 10. *Create your Self-Care Plan*
- ***Explain*** *that these are not all due the following week, but should be completed in the first year of caregiving. Distribute CFAI.*

Before our next session, please complete the Casey Family Homes Applicant Inventory. This will be useful for a handful of reasons. Firstly, it will give us an idea of where you are starting in terms of skills related to parenting in the foster care system, working in partnership, and helping your family adjust to fostering. We will complete it again at the end to see how this training has helped you grow in these areas. Secondly, this will help us identify a plan to build on your strengths and support you in continuing to grow and learn as a resource family.



SUMMARIZE

- ▶ Taking the time to complete this homework will provide you an opportunity for self-reflection, a greater sense of fostering and will allow you to transfer the skills and knowledge you are building in the classroom.



TRANSITION

- ▶ Let us wrap up for the day.

Wrap-up

Materials

PPT 1.27



5 Minutes



Presentation – Wrap-up

- *Post Slide 1.27.*
- *Process the work day with the participants.*

Ask:

- ? What did you learn from today's session?
- ? How will you integrate these new skills into your plan to become a resource family?
- ? What did you experience today that would not be useful to you as a resource family?

- *Elicit responses and briefly discuss.*



SUMMARIZE

- ▶ This is just the beginning session. There will be lots to learn within the next six sessions and field training.
- ▶ Please be open-minded and take advantage of this new

learning experience. Our goal is to have you see if fostering is a good fit for you as well as to develop knowledge and learn important skills for this very important job. If, through this process, you discover that fostering is not for you, you can still help in so many ways.

- ▶ Thanks for your input and participation and I will see you _____ (*date, time, and location of the next day of training*).

EVALUATIONS

If evaluations are being used they should be distributed and completed at this time.