

Iowa Department of Human Services

Reunification Staffing Guide

Timeframe

After the team decides that it is safe for reunification to occur (supported by safety/risk assessments); Schedule a staffing and invite all key decision makers including family. This process should not be held up based on schedules alone, consider if only a couple members can't make it to have them join by phone, give feedback before the meeting, etc.

Process

This meeting, in best practice, should be facilitated and co-facilitated jointly with the DHS SWCM and FCS provider, using the outline below with key talking points as a guide. A member of this team should be designated to take notes. This plan should be made available to everyone after the staffing.

Introductions

- ◆ Go around the table and review everyone who is present and their role with the family.

Review

- ◆ Service Plans/Case plan goals
- ◆ Ongoing services for both parents and children
- ◆ Current family interaction plan
- ◆ Identify upcoming court dates and type of hearing
- ◆ Take time to celebrate progress and change for the family – verbal praise from the **team**

Reunification Plan

- ◆ Discuss/document the **readiness** of the parents and children to be reunified.
- ◆ **Identify supports** (present or not present at the meeting) to help the family achieve their goals.
- ◆ Discuss/document what the **transition plan** looks like for the child(ren) to come home (create a calendar if needed/helpful).
- ◆ **School-** discuss any transitions needed at school, supports the child(ren) may need, transportation to and from school, IEP information.
- ◆ **Daycare-** discuss the need for daycare for child(ren), including the providers, payment, and transportation to and from daycare.
- ◆ **Services/Appointments-** identify upcoming appointments for child(ren) and parents, create calendars for the family, and discuss any issues/barriers with transportation.
- ◆ **Children's Needs-** identify any need a child may have in relation to returning home, including physical needs (cloths, bed, school supplies, etc.), emotional needs (common transition responses/behaviors).
- ◆ **Parent's Needs-** identify any needs a parent may have with the child(ren) returning home (support, positive reinforcement, respite care and/or time-out plan, support with parenting skills).
- ◆ Discuss **typical things we would expect to see** once reunification occurs to educate and "normalize" (children pushing limits, having behaviors, school problems, and stress on parents). Plan for these things to occur. Discuss the difference between adjustment back home and trauma (intentional behaviors vs. trauma-induced behavior).
- ◆ **What still needs to occur** before reunification- identify any steps still to complete before the child(ren) return home (consider how these steps will get done and by whom, assign time frames).
- ◆ **Identify any barriers-** as well as solutions to rectifying those barriers.
- ◆ **Identify DHS/FCS expectations-** how will things change, or remain the same once the child(ren) is/are home, clear open communication for expectations (safety plan if needed)
- ◆ **Follow up plan-** identify any items in plan that require follow up, assign who will follow up and time frame.
- ◆ **Crisis plan-** Develop a crisis plan for what will occur if the family goes into crisis, how can supports (formal or informal) assist the family by keeping everyone safe until the team can come back together, identify all options (including Family Preservation Services if needed).

Agreement

- ◆ Ensure everyone at the table agrees with the plan. If not, review the concerns/barriers and problem solve.
- ◆ **CELEBRATE** again with the family- be creative and have fun.