



Now that you are licensed...

Presented by

Licensing Team

Permanency Planning: Social Work Division



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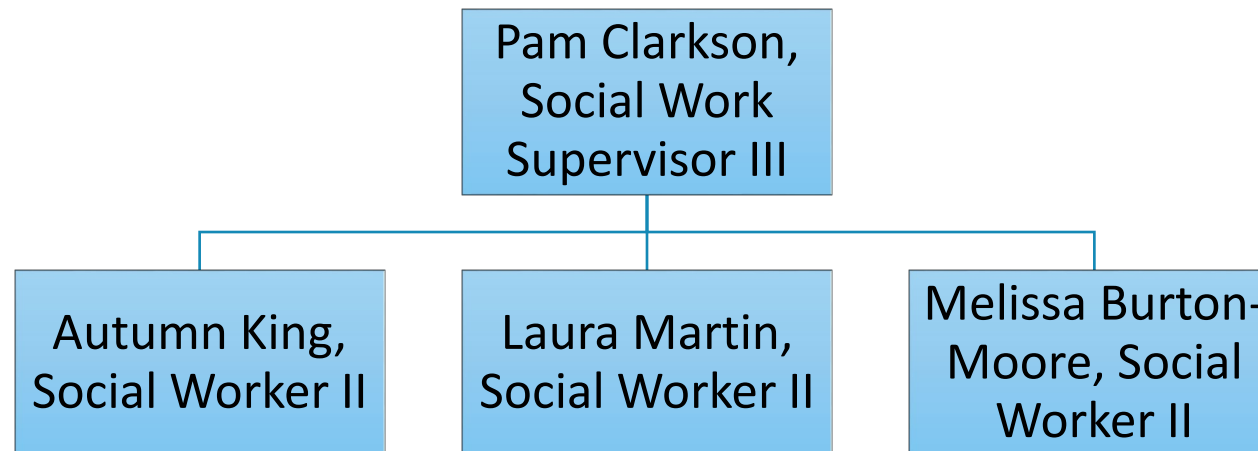
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Initial Placement Calls

Placement calls occur when a child is coming into custody or there is a placement disruption with another resource parent home.

Who are the placement workers?



What questions should you ask?

- What school does the child attend?
- Does the child have an IEP or 504B plan?
- Does the child have mental health diagnosis?
- If yes, what therapeutic services are provided? Frequency, duration, in-person or virtual?
- Allergies?
- What appointments are needed? Medical, dental, eye, etc.?
- What triggers the child?
- What are the child's strengths?
- What does contact with birth parents look like?
- Child's behaviors? Positive and/or negative.
- Does the youth have a job? A Driver's License ?
- Reasons for custody?
- Child's likes and dislikes?
- If the child is older, what level of supervision is needed?
- Anything else you may find relevant to help you make an informed decision about accepting placement.

IMPORTANT: Placement social workers may have the answers, or they may not. Every situation is different regarding the information available to social workers at the time placement is sought.



Placement Decisions

There are times when multiple resource families can take a child. The Department must choose the most appropriate home for the child based on the following criteria:

- *Least restrictive, most family-like setting which serves the child's individual needs*
 - *Within the child's home community*
 - *Within the child's former school district*
 - *Placement is with a relative*
 - *Placement is with siblings, if applicable*

NOTE: Receiving a phone call about a child does not guarantee that the child will be placed in your home.



Meeting with the Foster Child/ren:

Who will be there?

For a New Custody-

- Petitioning Social Worker- (Investigator, Family In-Home, or on-call social worker. The worker may or may not be assigned to the case).
 - Bio parent or relative (possibly dependent on situation)

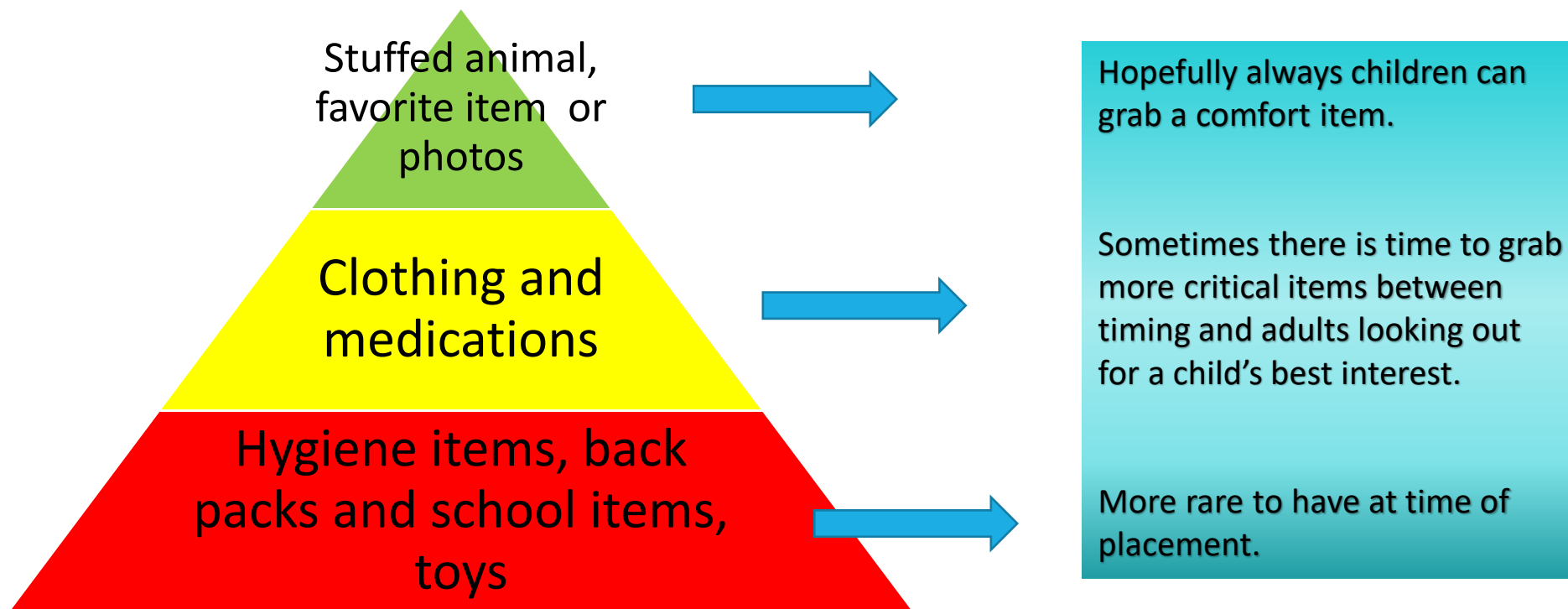
Placement Disruption –

- GAL, bio parent/relative, last placement provider, foster care or on-call social worker



What will the children come with?

Maybe everything, maybe nothing. Situations can be smooth or volatile when children enter care. Sometimes there is no time to pack up anything, and other times kids can obtain clothing and personal items before leaving home.



Paperwork you should ask for

- Medical paperwork stating doctor, dentist, mental health provider and medication information. This must include phone numbers and any scheduled appointments.
- Treat and Transport letter allowing you to communicate with the school and seek emergency care.
- Contact list; the names and phone numbers of friends or relatives the child may talk to (or not talk to).
- Dates and times or visitations and team meetings that will be occurring.
- Names and contact information of any social workers assigned, or GAL assigned.

**Some of these items may not be available immediately upon custody.*



What if I have a problem?

During regular business hours reach out to your licensing social worker! If they can help, they want to support you through these difficult first days.

Contact the foster care SW with any questions or immediate concerns.



After hours contact an on-call SW at **828-250-5900**. This contact is available for an immediate and emergent need. Please inform on-call if there is an after-hours medical emergency or runaway child.

9-1-1 is always a primary resource in the case of a medical emergency.



Shared Parenting

Resource parents **must** engage in shared parenting by:

- Developing partnerships with children and their parents or guardians;
- Helping children maintain and develop relationships that will keep them connected to their pasts; and
- Helping children placed out of their own home build a positive self-identity and positive family, cultural, and racial identity



First Shared Parenting Meeting:

must occur no later than 14 days of a child being placed out of home

BC Licensed Foster Home



Your assigned licensing social worker will contact you to schedule the initial meeting.

Kinship Home



The kinship support specialist (Pam or Natasha) will contact you to schedule the initial meeting.

Private Agency or Group Home



The Department's Social Worker I (Seth or Kim) will contact you to schedule the initial meeting.



Who will be there?

- The two most important people to be at a Shared parenting meeting are *you* and the *bio parent/removal caregiver*.
- This meeting will always have a facilitator to make sure conversation stays on topic and to help ease any nerves. In most cases, the facilitator will be the same social worker who scheduled the meeting.
- Any scheduled shared parenting meetings after the initial 14 days of custody, will be facilitated by the permanency planning social worker.
- Separate meetings will be held with the mother and father if that is necessary based on current domestic violence concerns.



What will we talk about?

- Talk about the children of course. 😊
- Favorite foods, tv shows, toys and activities
- Talents
- What comforts them when they are sad?
- Fears
- Nighttime routines
- Allergies or ongoing medical concerns
- Cultural and religious preferences
- School behaviors, strengths and challenges
- Social media, phone and friend - privileges and restrictions
- You may be asked to host sibling visits.
- You may be asked to allow the birth parent call your home to speak with the child.
- You may be asked to join the family time visits between the parent(s) and the child.



The reason for custody and non-child related aspects of the case will NOT be discussed at the meeting.



Shared Parenting Reminders

- Bio parents are just as anxious as you are at a first meeting.
- Don't make promises you can't keep, if you are unsure of something refer to the foster care SW.
- Remember this relationship is important for the child's comfort and success while out of the home. A bio parent's confidence in you will translate into their encouragement of children to respect and follow your rules at home.
- At the end of the day resource parents are part of a team to reunify a child with their parents, keep this goal in mind. You can be a mentor, coach and support to the parent.
- Copy & paste the link in the browser to review an in-depth training about shared parenting:
<https://www.buncombecounty.org/governing/depts/dss/foster/community-calendar.aspx>



Shared Parenting Q&A:

- What if the shared parenting relationship is not reciprocated by the birth parent? **You must do it anyway.**
- What if the parent is incarcerated? **You must do it anyway.**
- What if the termination of parental rights has been granted but the parent filed an appeal? **You must do it anyway.**
- What if the parent is in a substance use treatment facility? **You must do it anyway.**
- What if the parent has been absent from a child's life for six months? **You must do it anyway.**
- What if the parent says they do not wish to reunify with their child or vice-versa? **You must do it anyway.**

Shared parenting will look different for each case depending on its circumstances.



Court

Buncombe County Department of Social Services and the juvenile courts are partners in serving the best interest of children who are in a family in-home case, or in custody. They focus on the need of the children – not the guilt or innocence of the parents.

When Social Services decides that children are not safe in their parents' home, the agency will petition the court for custody of children or court-ordered services through an in-home case. The agency's petition will list children as abused, neglected, or dependent.



Non-secure custody can be granted to Social Services after the petition has been filed if the court believes the children are in immediate danger. If non-secure custody is granted, children will be placed in foster care or with a relative. Parents have the right to their own attorney and a case plan outlining what needs to be done to decrease or eliminate the factors that brought the child into the Department's custody.

A First Appearance Hearing will be scheduled within 48 hours (if non-secure custody is granted). Parents, their attorney, a social worker, the agency attorney, and GAL (a volunteer who represents the child's voice in court) will be present at Day One Hearing. When a petition for neglect or abuse is filed in the court for a child, a GAL is always appointed to the child by a judge. The GAL program has an attorney who represents them in court.

Child/parent visitation is ordered at this hearing.

Pretrial Conference *usually* occurs a week after the first appearance. Pretrial Conferences are held over e-mail exchange between the attorneys on the case. The goal is to review the petition and decide whether the adjudication hearing will be a trial or if there will be a probable consent (birth parents/caregivers consenting to everything that is outlined in the petition).

Adjudication: If the parent/caregiver(s) do not consent to the petition, there will be a trial where the social worker who filed the petition will testify. At the end of adjudication, the Court can find the child abused, neglected and/or dependent.

Adjudication is supposed to occur within 90 days of the first appearance; however, this hearing is likely to get continued the most due to various legal reasons.

Disposition: The foster care social worker presents to court what all has occurred on the case since the child came in custody. The parent(s) is court-ordered to engage in services. The Department may also receive court-ordered tasks.

Disposition usually occurs right after the adjudication.



Permanency Planning Hearings (PPH) /Reviews

Several court hearings occur during the life of a case while the child is in foster care. The goal of PPH hearings is to develop and achieve a safe, permanent home for children within a reasonable period.

These review hearings are held within 60 days of a child's entry into care, again within 90 days of the first review and then every six months thereafter. *Note that any court hearing can be continued due to various factors.*

At these hearings, the judge reviews reports from BCHHS, the GAL's office, and the parent's attorneys in order to gauge parents' progress toward reunification with their children and if the goal is reasonably achievable within the next six months.





Custody Transfer Meeting

This meeting occurs when an investigative or in-home case transfers to foster care. The meeting occurs between the petitioning social worker, the permanency social worker and the removal caregiver. The team discusses the reason(s) for custody and develops the caregiver's case plan.

All efforts are made to schedule transfer meetings within 10 business days of custody.

First Child and Family Team Meeting

- Scheduled within 60 days of custody.
- Resource parents are invited to the meeting. Your licensing social worker will also attend.
 - Separate Child and Family Team meetings will be scheduled if domestic violence is a concern on the case.
- The meeting will be held in-person unless the parent requests that it would be virtual.



The following individuals may be invited to attend...

- Neutral facilitator (always present unless it's a treatment team meeting)
 - Parent(s)
- Parent's informal supports (extended family members, friends, etc.)
 - School personnel
 - Therapist(s)
 - Assigned GAL or their supervisor
 - CDSA worker (if applicable)
 - Parent or DSS attorneys
 - Parent service providers
 - Social work supervisor(s) and/or program manager
 - Social work interns (for observation purposes only)
- Youth in custody and their supports (friend, coach, significant other or their parent, extended family members, etc.)

A parent can request that a resource parent, or any other individual that is not mandated to attend, leaves for the case plan portion of the meeting.



What will be discussed?

- Dates of meetings/appointments/evaluations
 - Expectations of resource parents
 - Shared parenting relationship strengths/needs and next steps
 - Child updates (educational, medical, therapeutic, behavioral, etc.)
 - Court updates
 - Changes to schedules/processes in relation to visits/calls, school, or services for the child
 - Permanency plan recommendations
- *Be prepared to speak at the meeting and provide updates and feedback.*





Certain information is protected and will not be shared/discussed at the meeting in full detail...

- Details of substance use, drug screens and treatment (protected by HIPAA)
 - Specifics related to parent's mental health condition and treatment
 - Specifics related to domestic violence

A parent can volunteer that information themselves; however, the Department staff cannot release that information.



Keep in mind...

Birth parents/caregivers might be upset, angry or sad. Many parents can easily feel attacked and become offline. This generally is not a typical interaction and can be traumatizing despite preparation.

You may disagree with certain decisions, team individuals and/or parent choices. It is okay to disagree; however, remain professional and respectful.

Foster care is dictated by federal and state laws, NC child welfare policy and Buncombe County protocols. The Department must abide by those even if you may disagree.

Q-TIP: Quit Taking It Personally!



School Days

- The county tries their best to leave children in the same school or daycare in order to minimize the amount of change and trauma a child experiences when they come into care. A meeting will be scheduled with the home school as soon as possible called a **BID (Best Interest Determination) meeting** to discuss how a team can make this possible. A BID meeting is most likely to occur during the transfer Child and Family Team meeting. Transportation is generally the biggest barrier, and a school district can sometimes arrange a bus to transport, or mileage may be offered to a foster parent to transport. This meeting is meant to focus on the best educational interest of the child.
- Within 30 days after the BID meeting, the foster care social worker will schedule an **ESSA (Every Student Succeeds Act) meeting** with the school to determine what services, if any, are needed to be put in place in order to ensure the student's success in school. The foster parent and the Guardian Ad Litem will be invited to participate. If able, the birth parent may also attend.



Child Care

- If you take placement of a child under 5 that needs daycare, and doesn't have a current center, get on a list or three ASAP!
- The department has limited to funding to help pay for private childcare while awaiting a placement in a center.
- Your foster care SW can assist in applications for admission and the application for vouchers to pay for the service.
- If your preferred center does not take vouchers the department *cannot* pay for the services.
- If the parent fee is more than the voucher the department *will not* be able to assist.
- Please ask questions when you have the director on the phone.
- The resource parent is asked to pay for the initial childcare registration fee. Please let your social worker know if you are experiencing a financial burden.
- Childcare subsidy program allows up to ten absences per month. You may be responsible for an out-of-pocket payment for any additional absences.



For the foster care social worker to submit a childcare voucher, the following information is needed:

1. Employer information (name of the agency/person you work for)
2. Hours and days you work
3. Name of childcare provider you selected
4. The county in which the childcare is located
5. The point of contact name for the childcare
6. The phone number and address for the childcare



Be Proactive

- Emergency childcare monies may be available to you if work absolutely cannot be missed due to child illness or another like emergency. This is decided on a case-by-case basis.
- Foster parents can find their own sitters or care givers and use their own screening procedures as you would for your own biological children. It is not necessary to run criminal back grounds.
- Ask your Foster care SW if they informed the daycare or school that you are the resource parent so they will release the child to you and speak with you regarding needs and behaviors.



IEP'S and 504-B Plans

- Many children entering foster care may have already, or need to be assessed, for an individual education plan (IEP) or a 504-B plan for school.
- These plans exist to assist students with educational achievement and held school staff plan to do so in the best and least restrictive ways possible.
- You will be asked to attend as a foster parent and help participate in sharing strengths and areas of need you see with your foster child's academic progress.



Medical Stuff

Kids coming into foster have many required appointments.

- **7 day Initial Check-up:** This appointment must occur when a child first comes into care and then again, every time, when they switch a placement. It should be with their home pediatrician. Dental appointments should be questioned at this visit to ensure children are being seen as needed and have regular cleanings. Ask the petitioning social worker (investigative or in-home social worker if this appointment has occurred).
- **30 day Comprehensive Check-up:** This appointment is more like a physical and is also with the home pediatrician. The birth parent may be invited if the pediatrician's office allows more than one adult to accompany the child to the appointment. If the birth parent attends, the foster care social worker may attend as well.
- Well visits. These happen on a regular schedule for foster children in order to have the pediatrician assess for any needs relating to their trauma and current diagnosis. This is the schedule required:

0-6 months, seen monthly

6-24 months, seen every quarter

2 to 21 years, seen 2 times per year

Foster care social workers have the required forms needed for all of these visits. Seek the forms prior to appointments so everyone is prepared. Ask your licensing SW in a pinch.

Copy & paste the following link in the browser to review an in-depth training about educational and medical components of foster care:

<https://www.buncombecounty.org/governing/depts/dss/foster/community-calendar.aspx>



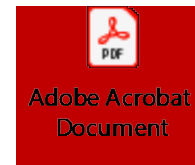
Medications

Foster Parents are *required* to document medications given to children. Ask your licensing work for a medication record and turn them into your worker when they come out for quarterly home visits. This process is in place to protect foster parents and the agency in ensuring children receive the correct and timely medications.

Double click on the blue box below to review Medication Administration Guidelines:



Double click on the red box below for the Medication Administration Record:



Storage



- Always keep prescription and over the counter medications locked up and out of reach of children.
- This is for the safety of little people who might put things in their mouth accidentally, and older children who might be looking for pills and other items to experiment with.



Who is going to come out to your home?

Guardian Ad Litem (GAL) Monthly:

A GAL's (Guardian Ad Litem) role is to focus on the children's rights and needs. GALs have access to most records concerning children, including Social Services, school, hospital, and psychological records. GALs may be trained volunteers or attorneys. *If the GAL is not maintaining at least monthly contact with the child, please inform the foster care social worker.*

Foster Care Social Worker Monthly:

You will have a home visit with a foster care social worker who will check in on the child and any concerns, needs, or successes you are having with their care.

Licensing Social Worker Quarterly:

Your licensing social worker will visit you at least quarterly to ensure your home is maintaining license requirements and to see how to best support you with the placement in your home.

Professionals As needed:

Mental Health workers or developmental workers may request to have visits or appointments in the home to assist the child with whatever needs they may have in their adjustment to your family, school needs, or any other the other matters in which they support.



Visitations

- Visits are court ordered between child/ren and their biological parents. The court system will set up guidelines in which the department or team must function. This may include *the duration of the visit, the location, level of supervision and who may attend*. A base plan should be set at the time of placement or at the custody transfer meeting.
- The department will request that you help as able with transporting children to visitations. *This is a good chance for you to touch base with the biological parents for a catch up.
- A visitation coach may facilitate transportation and supervision of visits. This will be introduced to you via the foster care social worker.
- Communication after visits is important. It may be important for a social worker to know what a child is expressing verbally or through their behaviors.
- Please note visitations are hard for children. They may be triggered due to the trauma they experienced in the home, at the point of separation, or their tremendous sorrow over missing their parent(s). Ask your licensing SW for support as needed.



Tips of the Trade

- Create a family email address and/or a google phone number for the purpose of shared parenting if you do not wish to use private contact information.
- Purchase a planner to keep up with the scheduled appointments, meetings and court hearing. A phone app works well too!
- If you wish to foster an infant/toddler, get on daycare waitlists as soon as you are licensed.
- If you wish to foster a school- aged child, contact your school district to learn about the afterschool programs.
- Inform your employer that you are a foster parent. Most are willing to be more flexible with your leave time for the child's appointments.

