



Integrated Casework Practice Model

tipsheet

Promoting Educational Stability and Success Discussion Questions for Foster Care Review

This tip sheet was prepared to be used as a resource for those involved in foster care reviews to guide discussions about how to encourage healthy social/emotional development, and how to promote school readiness and school engagement for DCF children and youth.

Questions to Ask: Infants, Toddlers and Preschool

- How is child/infant made to feel safe and secure? How are infant/child's cues, such as crying, responded to? How are infant's needs responded to? How is infant/child comforted?
- What interaction/engagement occurs with child? Is there lots of talking, reading, singing to the child? How is child expressing and regulating his/her emotions? How is the child communicating what he/she wants?
- What are the opportunities for the child to explore and learn about his/her environment? Is child enrolled in child care, play groups or pre-school? Does family take walks, go to playgrounds, parks, libraries etc?
- How is the child using his/her imagination? How is child problem solving and handling frustration?
- Does the child have friends and have the opportunity to interact with other children?
- Is the child meeting developmental milestones socially and developmentally? If not, is the child receiving Early Intervention or special education services? Have they been evaluated?

Questions to Ask: Kindergarten – 12th Grade

General – all children/youth

- Is child/youth enrolled in and attending school regularly? If not, what is strategy to address barriers? If not, have evening classes or GED classes been discussed/explored?
- Does child enjoy school? Do they have friends? Connections to teachers or other educators?
- How is the child/youth doing in school? What happened at the last parent/teacher conference? How was the most recent report card? and/or MCAS scores?
- How did they do on their most recent MCAS? If child/youth did not receive a *Proficient*, what kind of help/tutoring has been arranged with school to address their needs?
- Has child/youth had discipline infractions and how have they been addressed?
- Is child engaged in school activities, after-school activities and/or sports?
- Is child attending the same school s/he was attending prior to placement? Is transportation being provided? If so, by whom?
- If child is to return home and has not been attending the same school, what needs to be put in place to assure a smooth transition back to school?

Special Education

- Is child receiving special education services? If so, what type of services?
- Where are the services delivered? What type of placement is the child in (e.g., resource room, substantially separate program, etc.)?
- Is Individual Education Program (IEP) current?
- Does the DCF social worker have a copy of signed IEP? Who signed IEP?
- Are services meeting child's needs? Is child making progress toward achieving goals/objectives on IEP?

High School

- Has s/he passed 10th grade MCAS?
- What are plans for assuring graduation?
- Has there been a credit audit? Has the youth earned sufficient and appropriate credits for graduation, college admission?
- Is the youth interested in pursuing post-secondary education or vocational training? If not, is the youth ready for the workforce?
- Who is assisting the youth with planning?
- Is there need for a 688 referral? If so, has the youth been referred?
- Has the youth taken the exams (SAT/ACT) that may be required for college admission?
- Does the youth have any income?
- What funding resources are available for the youth to pursue post secondary education?
- Is the youth aware of his/her eligibility for the educational financial support programs available through DCF? Has the youth applied for any and all benefits that he/she is eligible for, i.e. Tuition and Fee Waiver, Foster Child Grant, Education and Training Voucher?
- Where will the youth live, work? What does he/she need from DCF in order to be successful in their chosen path?

Questions to Ask: Youth Pursuing Post Secondary Education

- Is the youth making progress in his/her chosen post-secondary education/vocational training program?
- Does the youth have a savings account and access to funds for incidental purchases required for education?
- What are housing plans for summer/breaks?
- Is the youth aware of the cost of his/her schooling? Is the youth aware of his/her financial responsibilities including FAFSA and Grant deadlines, loan repayment, costs of incidentals, eg. books?
- Has the youth applied annually for the financial support programs available through DCF for post-secondary education?
- What is the plan for after college or vocational training and is the youth on track toward that goal?
- Does the youth have a supportive person/mentor who can help him/her be successful?