

A Parent's Guide to the Preplacement Process



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PREPLACEMENT VISITATION

- The process for building a foundation for relationships to grow.
- While we as parents are super excited and ready to go, the children can be easily overwhelmed by the process and pace of transition.
- As parents, we recognize the tremendous amount of anxiety the child is under and try to keep the child comforted.
- Children that are overwhelm or over stimulated can suffer attachment injuries that we can heal by making an emotional repair.
- Avoid highly stimulating environments such as arcades, theme parks, family reunions, and social gatherings.

PREPLACEMENT VISITATION

- Too many new people is very stressful on the child.
- Parent's email summary at the end of each days visit-with photos
- Consider something like a lock-in or quarantine for first two weeks.
- Skip Church for at least a couple weeks unless the child asks to go.
- Keep track of hydration and nutritional needs of the child.
- Too much sugar and or caffeine is always problematic.
- Too much can be just as bad as not enough.

PREPLACEMENT VISITATION

- Parents are to build the child's voice, offer choices, and share power.
- Disarming fear and building trust
- Correcting strategies IDEAL Response
- Redirect the child if they get off track- playful engagement
- Golden opportunity- the first time the child has a meltdown or is oppositional-defiant
- Parental apologies when mistakes are made- parent's redo
- Use as many Re-dos and do-overs as necessary- always use playful engagement

PREPLACEMENT VISITATION

- Help the child be an expert on their favorite activity or topic.
- Too much too soon = emotional dysregulation = maladaptive behaviors = attachment injuries
- Ask the child what they prefer hi-five or hug.
- Physical contact best on the child's initiative or with their permission.
- Move at a pace comfortable with the child's age and developmental level.
- Adjustments along the way- the ebb and flow of the emotional level
- It's always easier to schedule more than to add more if needed
- Ice breaker games on the developmental level of the child
- Uno, tick-tack-toe, jacks, pick up sticks

PREPLACEMENT VISITATION



- Gift- something for them to remember you by in between visits
- Album for each child-their name on the front-they keep with them
- Best time for placement- when the child is ready

PREPLACEMENT VISITATION

- First visit
 - At foster home
 - Introductions
 - Review Album- give child a copy with their name on it, to keep
 - Use the pictures to tell them about yourself, your home, and your community
 - Keep topics on an positive emotional level
 - Ask what their favorite toy or game is
 - When they tell you about themselves reinforce and encourage them
 - If they say they like soccer, you confirm your interest in them playing soccer
 - Ask if we could play soccer during our visits
 - Let them be your soccer expert

PREPLACEMENT VISITATION

- Ask if they would like to play on a team or just with friends and family
- If they want to be on a team tell them you can help them do that
- Look for an opportunity to let the child be an expert on something
- It may be the game Mind Craft or it could be soccer
- This is a specific strategies of empowering the child voice and valuing their opinion
- Children sense when a parent is respecting and valuing what they think. When children feel valued and respected, it helps them to self-regulate better and they are drawn into rich emotional connections with their parent.
- If they ask a highly emotional question answer is as best you can then comfort and reassure the child.
- Take photo but don't overdo it, ask for permission, have them take some
- After an hour or so go outside and play in the yard

PREPLACEMENT VISITATION

- Work in a physical activity as it helps burn off nervousness and anxiety
- Ask what safe touch they would like, a high-five, hug, or pat on the back
- Have them show you their room and their favorite toys
- Play simple ice breaker games

PREPLACEMENT VISITATION

- Second visit
 - Starts at foster home-allow a little adjustment time
 - 3 to 4 hours, close proximity- neighborhood park first, then meal
 - Continue to encourage the child to use their voice
 - Begin sharing power and offering choices
 - Physical activity- game of kick ball, hike and bike trail, playground
 - Integrate children already in the family
 - Use your connecting activities
 - Let the child be the expert on what to do for lunch
 - Ask about favorite foods and foods they dislike

PREPLACEMENT VISITATION

- Third visit
 - Pick up at foster home- each time ask the foster parents how the child seems to be managing the visitation process
 - Duration- most of the day
 - Accommodations for naps, snacks, and meals
 - One-on-one time
 - Physical activity
 - Schedule some down time
 - Children's museum
 - Connecting activities

PREPLACEMENT VISITATION

- Fourth visit
 - All day visit at adoptive home- give the child a tour of the entire home and yard
 - Plan the day to be home-based
 - Plan, shop, and prepare a meal
 - Arts and crafts activity- how's your motor running
 - Physical activity
 - Schedule some down time
 - Play calming music in the background
 - Keep stimulation levels low
 - Photos from previous pre-placement visit on wall- on night stand
 - Connecting activities

PREPLACEMENT VISITATION

- Fifth visit- at the adoptive family's home
 - Weekend visit at adoptive home- first overnight activities
 - Plan the visit to be home-based
 - Plan, shop, and prepare for meals
 - Drive through tour of community, school, park, church, Pediatrician office
 - Plan some physical activities
 - Schedule some down time
 - Play calming music in the background
 - Keep stimulation levels low
 - Connecting activities
 - Have the child call or email the foster parent to let them know they are happy and safe

PREPLACEMENT VISITATION

- Sixth visit
 - Weekend visit at adoptive home
 - Plan the visit to be home-based
 - Walk the child around school and church
 - Arts and crafts activity
 - Physical activity
 - Schedule some down time
 - Play calming music in the background
 - Keep stimulation levels low
 - Have the child call or email the foster parent to let them know they are happy and safe
 - Connecting activities

FORECAST AND PLAN

- Designed to focus attention on Parent Led Attachment Model
- Re-communicates behavioral problems a direct result of harmful past
- Focuses on building trust, disarming fear, and giving the child voice
- Parents identify connecting and empowering activities
- Parent identifies potential challenging behaviors
- Parent identifies trust based strategies to disarm fear
- Parent identifies strategies to meet needs and prevent dysregulation
- Parent identifies strategies to address when misbehavior and dysregulation occur

First Overnight- Giving Voice

- Normally on a weekend- lots of free time to spend in and around the home
- No new people
- Much like a lock-in
- Meal planning, shopping, and preparation as a family activity- giving child their voice in their new home
- Younger children can stir, cut tube cookies, peel banana's for fruit salad
- Make setting the table a fun activity- let them be an expert at something
- Do some research on YouTube- how to set a table
- Let them select their family chore- relate it to helping the family run well

First Overnight- Disarming Fear

- Fun games, board and video like Wii tennis, bowling
- Make something in arts and crafts that can commemorate their first night with the family
- Ask the child what they need to feel safe
- Ask what you can do to help them feel safe- show locking door or setting alarm
- Do they need a flash light, night light, soothing music
- Would they feel more comfortable with the bedroom door open
- Do they prefer to share a room
- Make a plan if they wake up afraid or can't get back to sleep
- Does the child need snack items to keep with them

First Overnight- Building Trust

- Go over house rules for respecting boundaries and privacy
- Go over no physical discipline
- Clarify bedtime routines
- Ask what their normal routine is
- Determine where they need parent's assistance
- Let them pick 2 bedtime stories-one for mom-one for dad
- Show them how to use the monitor to call you
- Practice having them call for help, let them time the response time