

Safety and Trauma in the First 30 Days of a CINC Case

Amy Dickson & Samantha Morrison

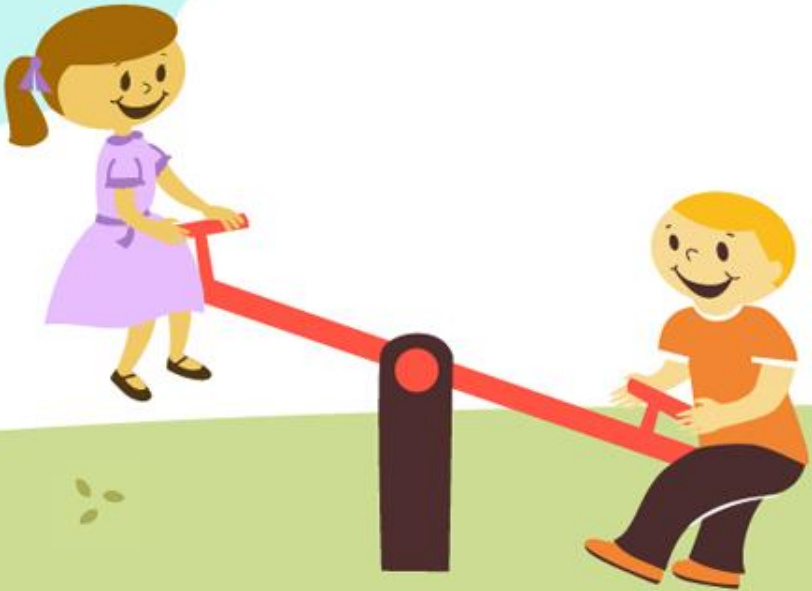


Agenda

- First Objective- Looking for alternatives to taking custody
- If Custody Must Be Taken- How to reduce trauma
- Issues to Keep in Mind



If a Removal is
Necessary



Child Challenges associated with transitions

Attachment is essential for child survival and the attachment system can be damaged.

Developmental trauma disrupts:

- The formation of secure attachments

 - Focused Attachment --> 7-8 months

- Exploration of the environment/learning

- Development (e.g., communication abilities, motor abilities, social-emotional skills, problem-solving skills)

- Behavior and emotion regulation skills

- Self-esteem

- Health

- Future relationships

- Challenges include:
 - Beliefs that something is "wrong" with me
 - Fears of needs not being met (e.g., for safety, food, nurturance, etc.)
 - Reminder of potential early experiences of traumatic separations
 - Emotional or behavioral outbursts
 - Trouble with eating, sleeping, toileting and/or developmental regression

Child
challenges
associated with
transitions

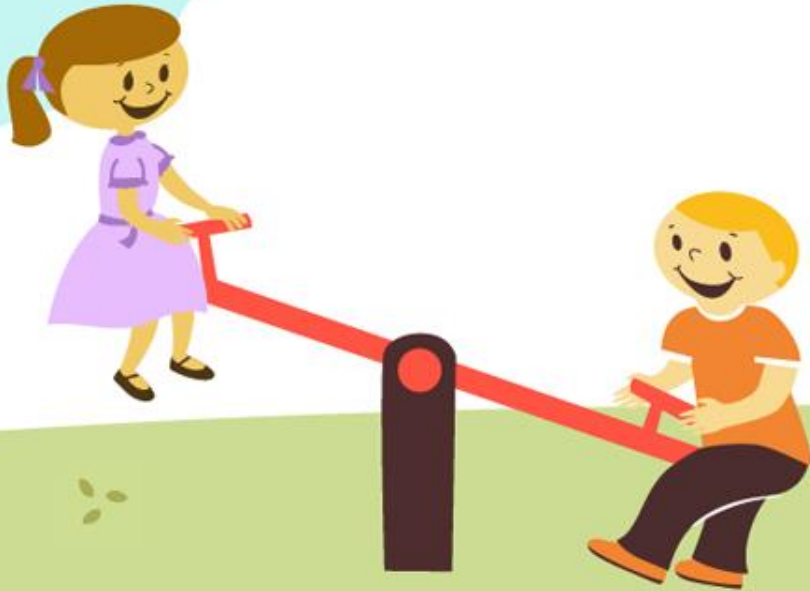


Issues to Consider

- Can we get the Parents calm enough to cooperate with identifying safe individuals who already know the child: relatives, neighbors, fictive kin to take the child
- Pre-removal Conferences/Meetings
 - Give parents the time to calm down, vent their feelings and become part of the planning. Can someone join to help the parent?
 - What does the child need
 - Medicines
 - Favorite toys, loveys, etc.
 - A picture of the family
 - A phone number to reach the parents
 - The parent explaining what will happen and where everybody will be



In emergency removals,
the children are often
not told what is
happening



Sometimes children don't even see their
parents and are removed from school or day
care and may not see that parent for a
month or more.

How would you feel if that happened in your family?



- Abrupt separation is traumatic, but we can lessen the impact of the trauma
 - Help the parent explain to the child what is happening
 - Even if it is an infant
 - Make sure that contact happens again later that day through a telephone call or video chat
 - Connect the foster parent and the bio parent if they are unknown to one another
 - Help the parent pass on information to the foster parent regarding anything that will help the child ease into the placement
 - Plan an in person visit as soon as possible between the parent, child, and siblings



- Try to maximize time between parent and child given safety considerations
- Encourage open communication between parent and foster parent so the child's functioning and well-being can be shared
- Try to keep the child in the same school or day care and routines the same.
- Don't forget contact with siblings if they are separated
- Contact with relatives is also important even if they can't take the child into their home.
- Encourage questions to allow the child to lessen their anxiety
- Fictive kin need more guidance on how to talk to the children about what is happening



Open Communication

- For new caregivers: Don't badmouth the parents
 - Don't call yourself Mom or Dad
 - Encourage the children to share their routines from home
 - When children push boundaries, discuss this is the way that matters are handled in this home and every home is different versus implying the previous home was wrong/poor parenting
 - If the child cannot reach the parent via telephone, encourage drawing a picture or writing a letter to share with the parent. Let the child tell stories about their parent.
 - Foster caregivers stay close by for safety
 - New homes have strange noises and everything is unknown
 - Encourage questions but it is ok if you don't have all the answers



Change is scary

Take the child's perspective.

How can we help them feel more in control and safe?

