**Pre-Service Module: Placement**

**Section 2: Preparing and Sustaining Out-of-Home Placement**

**Section Learning Objectives**

By the end of Section 2: Preparing and Sustaining Out-of-Home Placement, child welfare professionals will know or be able to:

* Explore how to support and sustain children and youth in out-of-home care
* How to build resiliency in children and youth in out-of-home care
* Duties and responsibilities that are needed to help sustain the placement, as well as keep children safe in out-of-home care

**Section Themes and Key Points**

Below is a summary of the themes and key points covered in this section. This summary is intended to remind learners of the key learning points addressed and assist supervisors / coaches in understanding what was covered in order for them to guide and support the application of learning for new child welfare professionals related to this section.

1. This section addresses the important role for child welfare professionals in preparing children, parents, and out-of-home care providers for placement. Assisting with navigating this process to maintain connections and a sense of normalcy increases a child’s resiliency, which will increase the sustainability of the placement.

Guidelines for preparing for placement includes:

* Partnering with the child by using a participatory approach, discussing preferences and concerns, attempting to make pre-placement visits and providing the “Handbook for Youth in Foster Care” for children over the age of 14.
* Preparing a parent by listening and acting with compassion but always keeping the child or youth safe. Use trauma-informed approaches; be patient, calm and empathetic with parents.
* Supporting Out-of-Home Care Providers involves providing information to out-of-home care providers about Part A, Part B, and Medical Consents, contact limitations of who can see the child, application to benefits to meet the needs of the child, the child welfare professional’s contact information, and answers to their questions.

1. This section reviews the Wisconsin State Statutes and memos issued by the Department of Children and Families that guide placement:

* Confirming Safe Environments – child welfare professionals who are responsible for placing children in out-of-home care must evaluate and confirm the safety of a placement.
* The Reasonable and Prudent Parent Standard – allows out-of-home care providers to make decisions on a day-to-day basis that will not delay or prevent a child from having normal experiences.
  + Making Reasonable and Prudent Decisions - when determining if a decision is reasonable and prudent, the out-of-home-care provider must consider the following:
* Age, Maturity, and Developmental Level
* Best Interest of the Child
* Child’s Behavioral History
* Court Orders and Legal Considerations
* Creative Planning and Court Orders
* Cultural and Religious Considerations
* Potential Risk Factors
* Emotional and Developmental Growth
* Family-Like Living Experience
* Child’s Wishes
* Parent or Guardian Wishes and Input
* Family Interaction – the first family interaction should be scheduled as soon as possible after the initial placement. Family Interaction is an opportunity to maintain, establish, and promote parent-child relationships and attachment.
* Preserving Family Connections (Family Preservation) – ensures family interaction and sibling connections.
* Other Caseworker Requirements
  + Caseworker Face-to-Face Contact Requirements
  + Reporting Youth Missing from Out-of-Home Care
  + Change of Placement Requirements

**On-the-Job Application Activities**

Listed in this section are optional transfer of training activities to support the learner in applying the knowledge acquired during the Placement: Prepare and Sustain Out of Home Placement Pre-Service Module to their CPS roles and responsibilities.

These three activities are optional and are provided only to aid the child welfare professional and supervisor/coach in supporting transfer of learning from pre-service to the agency. The child welfare professional, with input from their supervisor/coach, may choose to complete all, some, or none of these activities or substitute in other activities.

Each of the three activities are described below, and a resource section to aid the post-activity supervisor/coach discussion with the child welfare professional follows the description of the third activity.

**Option 1: The Reasonable and Prudent Parent Standard Memo Activity**

The federal Preventing Sex Trafficking and Strengthening Families Act of 2014 added a requirement for a “Reasonable and Prudent Parent Standard” for out-of-home care providers. This memo sets forth policy requirements for the Reasonable and Prudent Parent Standard as described in the Preventing Sex Trafficking and Strengthening Families Act and 2015 WI Act 128.

* Pull out your Ongoing Services Standards.
  + Locate and review the “Reasonable and Prudent Parent Standard to Promote Normalcy” section.
  + If you need to access a copy of the Ongoing Services Standards, you can find them on the DCF website page: <https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/cwportal/policy> in the “Standards” section. If you need help finding them, ask your supervisor/coach for assistance.
* Meet with the Foster Care Coordinator at your agency and ask about the situations they have encountered in their work with foster families in applying this standard. How were they resolved or dealt with?
* Review your findings with your supervisor or coach

**Option 2: Culturally Competent Practices Activity**

* Consider: What culturally competent practices need to be considered and recognized in cases involving and Indian Child? An African American child?
* Review and discuss culturally competent practices with your supervisor or coach.

**Resource for Option 2: Culturally Competent Practices Activity**

This resource section is provided to aid the post-activity supervisor/coach discussion with their child welfare professional after completion of Option 3 related to the Culturally Competent Practices Activity.

Child welfare professionals and foster parents may need to take unique steps to ensure the child's well-being if the child's cultural background is different than their own. This means a thorough respect and understanding of the child’s religion, cultural values, customs, and beliefs. Cultural humility can give a child a sense of permanency and belonging that will benefit them in emotional, mental, and spiritual ways.

Some specific examples of culturally competent practice could include hair care and religious practices.