

Module 5 Developing & Maintaining Family Connections

1. Module 5: Developing and Maintaining Family Connections

1.1 Developing and Maintaining Family Connections



Notes:

This module, *Developing and Maintaining Family Connections*, will provide you with information about working with birth families, the importance of children having contact with their families, connections of children in foster care to their siblings, and challenges that may come up with family interaction. You have learned already that children have strong attachments to their families, even when they have been abused or neglected by those family members. As a foster parent, you need to recognize and honor children's attachments to their families, even if you may not understand this.

If you are a relative of the child you are caring for, maintaining family connections will be a more complex process. This is also true of like-kin caregivers as roles and relationships between you and the child and you and the child's parents change significantly. Relative and like-kin care providers have to maintain a balance between being the licensed foster home and being a part of your extended family or family support in a new role. This is not an easy thing to do, and you can look to your licensor and the child's

child welfare professional for support in this process.

For the purpose of this module, we will refer to relative, like-kin caregivers at times as foster parents (as all out of home caregivers are licensed under that same licensing code) or simply as caregivers.

2. Feelings & Emotions Children & Parents Experience

2.1 Feelings & Emotions Children & Parents Experience

Feelings & Emotions Children & Parents Experience

Birth parents may have a range of emotions:

Failure Resentment
 Embarrassment **Anger**
Disagreement
 Distrust No control

Resentment is normal
 Need to work together

Notes:

You have learned about the grieving process and about how we all experience grief differently. An earlier module discussed the grief that children feel when they enter care or move to a new placement. Now think about the grief a birth parent feels when their child is placed into foster care.

Birth parents might feel like they've failed as parents and may be embarrassed. Sometimes birth parents are doing the best they can, and they could feel angry that their children were removed and disagree with the reasons for removal. It is possible that they do not trust "the system" and feel that you are part of that system. They might be resentful of you because

you're caring for their child and feel like they're not good enough to be parents. Birth parents often feel a lack of power over the situation and may feel like they have no control or no voice. It is important to give birth parents respect and time to work through their grief.

If you are a relative or like-kin caregiver, your role has now changed in your family or with the parent and child. The child's parents may be grateful that you are willing to take their child in a time of need, but also may be resentful about you caring for their child when they are unable to do so. Understand that this resentment is to be expected and is something that may be overcome in time. The child's parents will likely feel a sense of loss even though their children are able to live with a family member or someone they know or knows their child. You will need to be willing to work with the child's parents to help them learn to safely care for their children. You may also have a sense of loss, as your future plans, and relationships, role and status in your family may significantly change. For like-kin caregivers, you may grieve the changes in the relationships you had with the child and with their parents.

Even though you are already a part of this child's family or have a relationship with the child and/or their parents, you will need to take the time to develop a sense of trust and support with the child and with the child's parents in a new way. Being a family member or having a relationship with the child or parent does not automatically ensure feelings of trust and attachment, and this is something that your family will have to build on.

2.2 Birth Parent Perspective



Notes:

"That's the most important thing that a mom needs to do, stays in contact with their child because you know if you don't stay in contact with your child, your child won't know who you are, so that's the main important thing. If you want your child back and they're giving you an opportunity to get your child back so you have to do your part, stay in contact with your children."

2.3 We're Not So Different



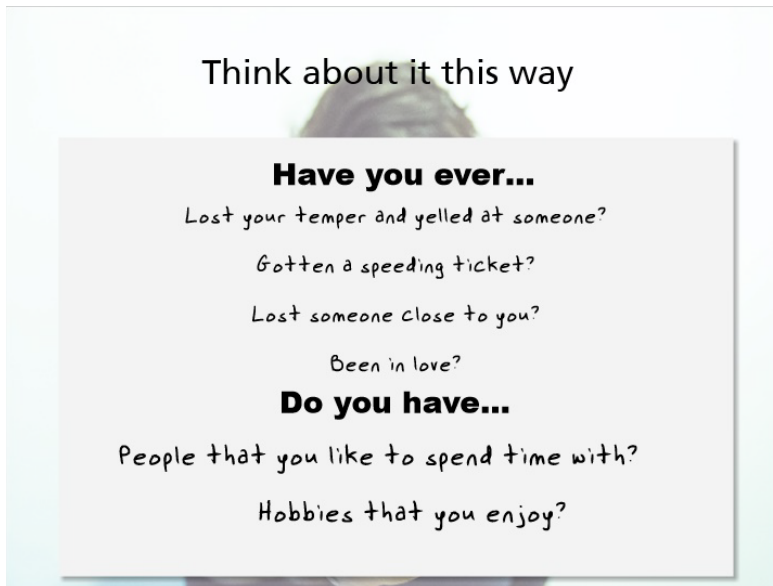
Notes:

Think about your own family for a minute. Is your family perfect or are there things you wish were different? Almost everyone has something they wish they could change about their family. The birth families of the children you're caring for probably feel the same way.

All families have strengths, and part of your role as a foster parent is to help birth parents to build on their strengths. While you are not responsible for the actions of birth parents, you will have a unique opportunity to help them to recognize and build on their abilities as parents.

If you are a relative caregiver, you will be creating a new role for yourself in your family. You are already part of that child's birth family, so it may be difficult to take on a new role in the family. For like-kin caregivers, you will be stepping into a new role with the child and their parents. On one hand, you'll already have a relationship and a connection with that child's birth parents. On the other hand, you might have a tougher time now stepping into the role of foster parent, because you're already part of the family or have been a family support. You'll have to find a way to balance your prior role with the family with your new role as a foster parent. Talk with your licenser about how to maintain this balance, and just know that it will take practice, time, and you are not alone.

2.4 Think About It This Way



Notes:

Think about it this way...

Have you ever lost your temper and yelled at someone?
 Have you ever gotten a speeding ticket?
 Have you lost someone close to you?
 Have you ever been in love?
 Do you have people that you like to spend time with?
 Do you have hobbies that you enjoy?

Did you say yes to some of these questions? Chances are, you did. The birth parents that you are working with are no different. They've probably lost their temper or gotten angry, and they have probably been in love or have things they do for fun. If you are able to connect with birth parents and work with them, the child will benefit significantly!

3. Shared Parenting

3.1 Shared Parenting



Notes:

As a foster parent, you will be sharing the role of parenting the foster children in your home. Because you are acting as a temporary parent, not replacing their parents, you must share this responsibility. This means working together with the child's parents to help achieve the goals for the child and the family.

Listen to the following case study to gain an understanding of the importance of shared parenting...

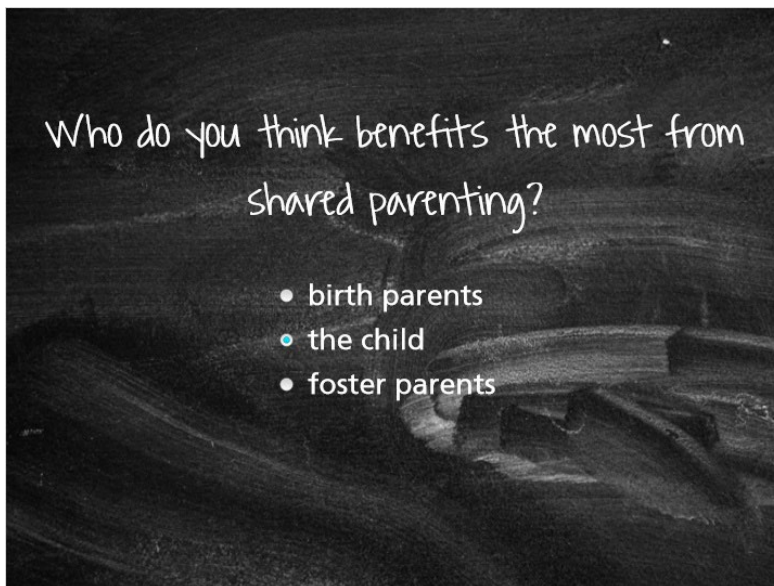
6-year-old Amy is removed from her home due to neglect by her parents, and is placed with the Potter family. When Amy was placed, her parents (Steve and Susie) didn't have contact with her or the other members of the team for a while. The Potters called Steve and Susie, wrote letters to them and stopped by their house to try to contact them to give them updates on how Amy was doing. When Steve and Susie did get in touch with the team, they were very cautious and distrustful of the Potters. They accused the Potters of trying to break up their family and take their daughter away from them, and the Potters explained that they were trying to help get their

family back together and to get Amy back home, not to break up their family. The Potters scheduled family contacts and encouraged phone calls between the contacts. The Potters asked Steve and Susie for pictures of the two of them and other family members so that they could display them in their home and in Amy's room. The Potters invited Steve and Susie to Amy's doctor appointments and to her school play. Steve and Susie eventually began to trust the Potters and they started to attend meetings and appointments, and had more and more contact with Amy. Steve and Susie and the Potters began to work together as a team. Eight months after Amy was placed with the Potters, she returned home to live with her parents.

This example shows how birth parents and foster parents can work together to reach the best outcome for a child. It is important to recognize that shared parenting does not always result in children being reunited with their parents as sometimes reunification is not in the child's best interests. Talk with your licensor about your ideas for sharing the parenting role with a child's birth parents and if this is appropriate for the child in your home.

3.2 Shared Parenting Benefits

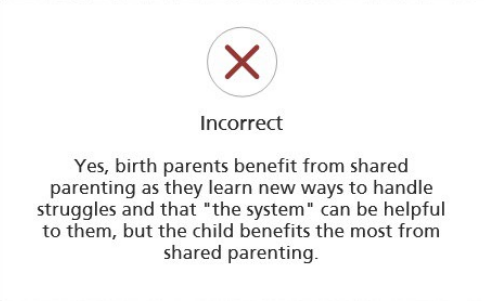
(Multiple Choice, 10 points, 2 attempts permitted)



Correct	Choice	Feedback
	birth parents	Yes, birth parents benefit from shared parenting as they learn new ways to handle struggles and that "the system" can be helpful to them, but the child benefits the most from shared parenting.
X	the child	Absolutely! When a child sees their birth parents and foster parents working together with their best interests in mind, they too will feel like part of the team and will be more likely to participate in their planning. The child definitely gains the most benefit from shared parenting.
	foster parents	Yes, foster parents benefit from shared parenting by learning to work with new families and learning how to gain respect for the culture and experience of others, but the child benefits the most from shared parenting.

Notes:**Incorrect (Slide Layer)**

Who do you think benefits the most from



The slide features a white rectangular box with a red 'X' icon in a circle at the top center. Below the icon, the word 'Incorrect' is written in a bold, black font. The main text explains that while birth parents learn new ways to handle struggles and find the system helpful, the child is the primary beneficiary of shared parenting. At the bottom center of the box is a 'Continue' button with a black border.

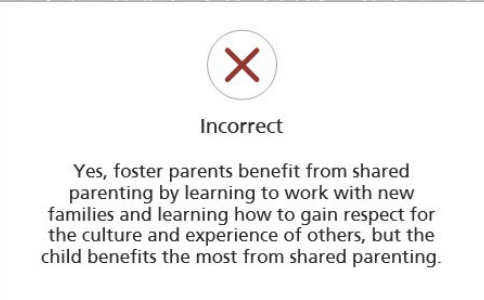
Incorrect

Yes, birth parents benefit from shared parenting as they learn new ways to handle struggles and that "the system" can be helpful to them, but the child benefits the most from shared parenting.

Continue

Incorrect (Slide Layer)

Who do you think benefits the most from



The slide features a white rectangular box with a red 'X' icon in a circle at the top center. Below the icon, the word 'Incorrect' is written in a bold, black font. The main text explains that while foster parents learn to work with new families and gain respect for other cultures, the child is the primary beneficiary of shared parenting. At the bottom center of the box is a 'Continue' button with a black border.


Incorrect

Yes, foster parents benefit from shared parenting by learning to work with new families and learning how to gain respect for the culture and experience of others, but the child benefits the most from shared parenting.

Continue

Correct (Slide Layer)

Who do you think benefits the most from



Correct

Absolutely! When a child sees their birth parents and foster parents working together with their best interests in mind, they too will feel like part of the team and will be more likely to participate in their planning. The child definitely gains the most benefit from shared parenting.

4. Benefits of Family Interactions

4.1 Benefits of Family Interactions

Benefits of Family Interactions



permanency options, if needed.

Notes:

Family interaction, an opportunity for children to have contact with their

families, and their identified support network helps children in foster care to maintain connections to their families, natural supports and to strengthen relationships. All the connections in a child and family's life should be viewed as an opportunity for connection and support, even if they are not able to provide on-going care for the child. These connections will benefit both the child and the parents, as the child will be able to spend time with family members and others they feel connected to while the parents will be able to develop and practice the skills that they are learning in order for the child to return home. Interaction while children are in care also allows the family to work on building relationships and trust with one another. Family interaction also helps to:

Facilitate timely reunification.

Evaluate and address any safety issues.

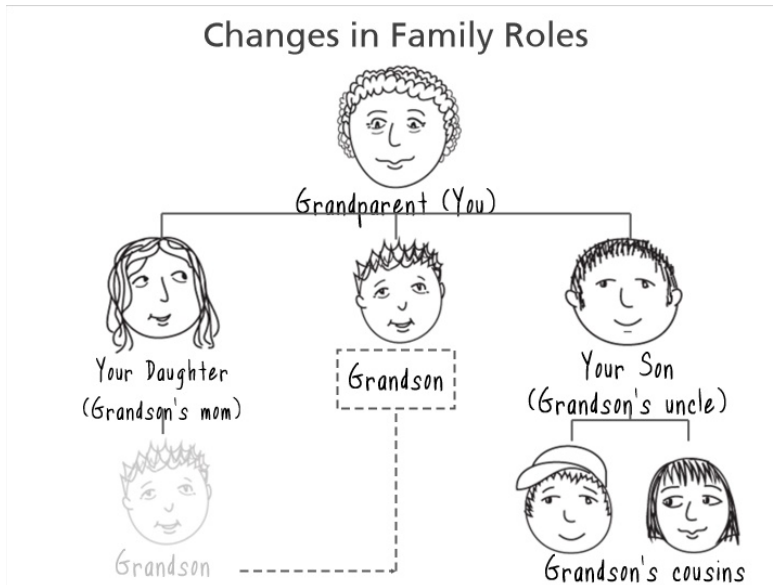
Evaluate and help to improve parenting skills.

Minimize the trauma that was done to the child when they were removed from their parents' care.

Maintain and enhance relationships of children to their siblings and family members, natural supports, community and establish and look into other permanency options, if needed.

5. Changes in Family Roles

5.1 Changes in Family Roles



Notes:

For relative caregivers, you have heard about how your role will change in your family, but this is not only true for you. The role and status of the child and their birth parent will also change.

For example, if you are caring for your daughter's son, watch and see how the roles and relationships may change while your grandson is in your home. When you are caring for your grandson as the licensed foster parent, you must put his needs first, and he literally moves up to the level of his mom and uncle. He becomes your primary responsibility, so your role with him becomes that of a parent more so than a grandparent. Think about how this might change the relationships between you and your grandson, your children, and your other grandchildren, as well as how the relationships will change between your grandson and you, his mom, his uncle, and his cousins.

This change in roles can create a sense of loss for everyone and may be confusing at times. Your grandson may come to see you as more of a parent, and your other grandchildren may be confused at why they have a different relationship with you than their cousin does. Your daughter and son may be

frustrated because your grandson now must be your priority, while in the past your priority may have been your children. You might feel some guilt that now your grandson will be the priority before your children, and this is to be expected. You might even feel some embarrassment that your family is involved in the child welfare system and that you'll have to disclose some negative information about your child. Know that there is support available to you, and that you deserve to seek out the assistance that your family needs. These feelings about the changing of roles within your family will be something that your family needs to discuss and work through to assist in this transition.

Like-kin providers will experience similar changes in their roles and relationships they have with the child and/or the parent from family friend, neighbor, teacher, coach, mentor to the role of parent to the child.

5.2 Changes in Role



Notes:

“Navigating the changes in my role, you know, I’m really, at this point, I’m a grandmother so that’s an adjustment in itself. And with my granddaughter, it’s you know, am I a grandma mom. I have a another almost adult daughter who lives in my home and is she an aunt? You know I; I really am embracing

the relationship with this little child that I love so much and I'm really not forcing what that child calls me. You know we have nicknames for each other like they do in many families like DeeDee or Papa and it's really more about the love and the safety at this point. There's no permanency has been decided and I'm comfortable with that sort of fluidity of things, but I don't think everybody is. I think, you know in terms of role and what a person is called, I'm thinking more into the future. You know I'm dealing with somebody who is under two years old, but as she gets older what I think the role and who I am and how she identifies me will be more and more important as she starts school, and at this point we are able to leave that sort of open until permanence is decided. And you know, I'm comfortable with that and I know she knows I love her, and you know, I know I love her and I'm committed to her and I am, you know willing to see what those relationships look like in the future. They will be solid, and we'll figure out the rest together."

5.3 Family Interaction Specifics

Family Interaction Specifics

- Face-to-face is preferred**
 - Contacts at parents' home, foster home
 - Daily activities (school and extra curricular, religious activities, doctor appointments)

You will not be responsible for setting up all of the family interaction
- Relative or like-kin providers**
 - Work with child's child welfare professional
 - Talk with your licensor

You have opportunity to strengthen family bonds
- Family Interaction Plans**
 - REQUIRED
 - Lays out expectations for contact

Talk with child's child welfare professional if you have questions or concerns

Notes:

The preferred method of family interaction is face-to-face, but this is not always in the child's best interests. Family interaction can include contacts at the parents' home, the foster home, but also includes daily activities like school and extra-curricular events, religious activities, or doctor appointments. Including birth parents in their children's daily activities will

help them to feel connected to their child, and will show the child that their parents are still involved in their daily lives. You will not be responsible for setting up all of the family interaction, but this is important information for you to have.

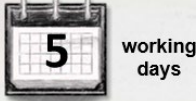
If you are a relative or like-kin provider, family interaction might be a unique situation for you. If you typically spend holidays together, for instance, you will need to coordinate this with the child's child welfare professional in order to respect any court-ordered conditions (such as no-contact orders). You may be put into awkward situations if family interaction is restricted or prevented by the court. Talk with your licensor or the child's child welfare professional about how you can deal with these situations. As a relative or like-kin provider, you'll also have the opportunity to strengthen bonds by helping the child's parents learn new parenting skills. As a caregiver known to the child or parent, it may also be more natural to spend time together.

Children in out-of-home care are required to have a Family Interaction Plan, which lays out the expectation for contact between a child and their family members. Talk with the child's child welfare professional if you have questions or concerns about the child's plan. The next several slides will explain some of the requirements for family interaction.

5.4 Frequency of Family Interactions

Frequency of Family Interactions

- Face-to-face family interaction must occur within 5 working days of a child being placed into out-of-home care, and while the child remains in out-of-home care
- Face-to-face interaction must at least occur weekly
- Children must have the opportunity to interact with their parents (through cell phones, letters, email, or other methods) weekly



Notes:

Wisconsin policy for CPS cases states that face-to-face family interaction must occur within 5 working days of a child being placed into out-of-home care, and while the child remains in out-of-home care, face-to-face interaction must at least occur weekly. This is a minimum requirement, so contact can occur more than weekly. Children must also have the opportunity to interact with their parents (through cell phones, letters, email, or other methods) weekly. The policy states that the frequency of interaction should depend on the child's wishes, the child's age, developmental level, and on the case plan and permanency plan. These interactions should take place in a location that encourages the most natural interaction between the family members, taking into account safety considerations for the child or other family members


5.5 Sibling Interactions

Sibling Interactions

- Efforts must be made to place siblings together when this is appropriate and possible

When this is not possible:

- Siblings must have a face-to-face interaction at least once per month



Notes:

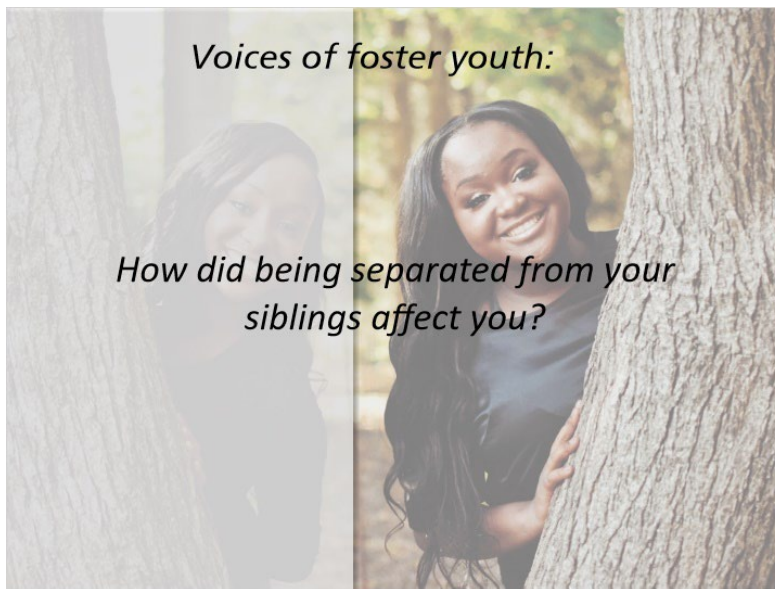
There are also requirements for how much interaction children must have with their siblings. Efforts must be made to place siblings together when this is appropriate and possible, but when it is not possible, siblings must have a face-to-face interaction at least once per month. Just like with the child's parents, children should be given other opportunities to interact with their siblings, through phone calls, letters, email, video calls, social media, play dates, sleep overs, and other methods to help them stay connected to each other.

A common frustration expressed by former foster youth is that they were not given enough opportunities to spend time with their siblings.

Many foster youth wish that they could have seen their siblings more often, and wish they could have done so in places that were familiar to them, such as their parents' home or the foster home. Sometimes children's ability to spend time with their families and siblings is decreased due to behavioral issues, but foster youth will tell you that lack of access to their siblings will likely lead to increased behavioral problems. When children lose their connections to their families and loved ones, they also sometimes feel hopeless and lose their motivation to comply with their expectations. Foster care licensing code does not allow family interaction to be decreased as a

punishment to a child.

5.6 Voices of Foster Care



Notes:

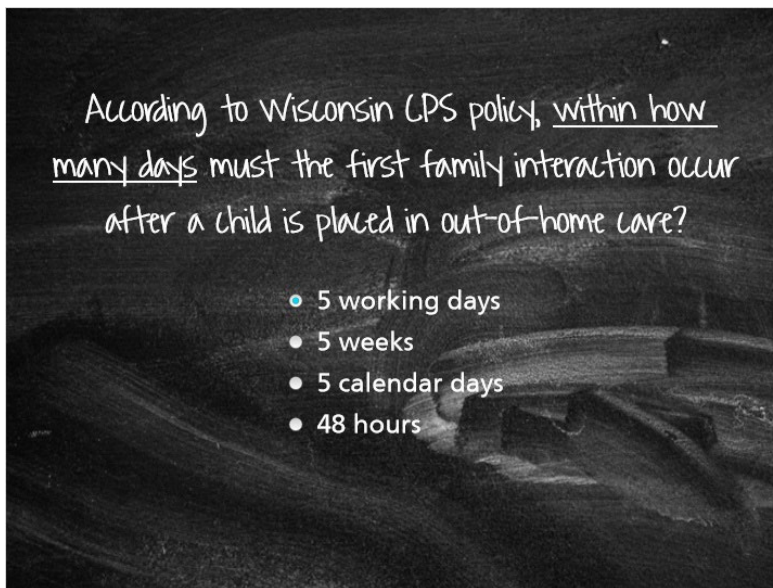
"When it came to my siblings I think that the opportunities were not considered or even an option to be able to see them especially when I was placed in out of home placement, in out of home care. I wished that I was asked or even consider my feelings, I wished that my feelings were considered when it came to my siblings because we were very close and I think that it's important to still have a relationship with them although I was in an out of home care because you know we were in a home together at one point and it's not a good feeling to have a relationship with someone, grow up with them, see them every single day and all of a sudden not even have an option to see them is very traumatic and although I was not given the opportunity, I'm thankful now that I have a relationship with them despite that traumatic experience."

"I miss my sister, I was taken out of care and when I was detained, she was 17 so they kept her at home and I pretty much got moved straight to a foster home and she got to stay at home. I miss her still to this day because of that we haven't been in contact with each other or able to see each other."

I felt like I was missing a part of me, like I went from seeing her everyday to not seeing her at all so it was hard for me, it was a big adjustment, like I...now I sleep by myself because I use to share a bed with her so it was like a big adjustment, it kind of until today is still an adjustment, I'm always going to feel like I missed a big part of me and like there's a part of me missing."

5.7 Family Interaction Frequency

(Multiple Choice, 10 points, 2 attempts permitted)



Correct	Choice
X	5 working days
	5 weeks
	5 calendar days
	48 hours

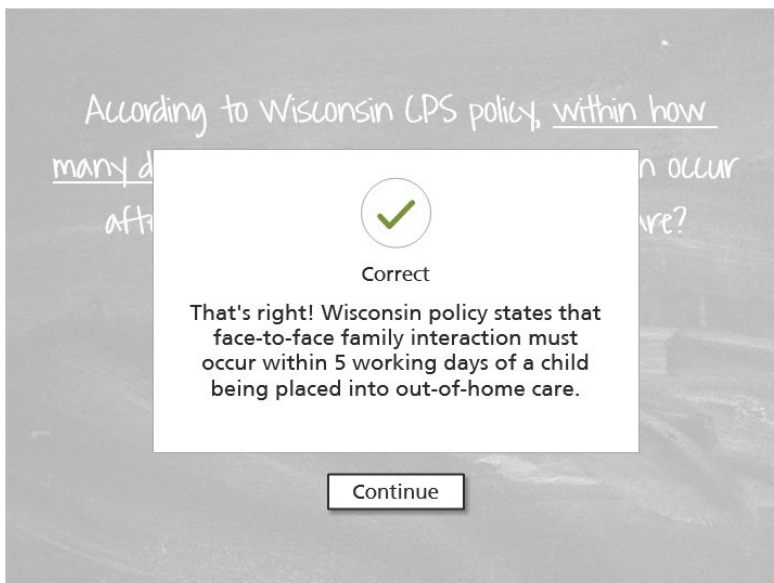
Feedback when correct:

That's right! Wisconsin policy states that face-to-face family interaction must occur within 5 working days of a child being placed into out-of-home care.


Feedback when incorrect:

That is incorrect. Wisconsin policy states that face-to-face family interaction must occur within 5 working days of a child being placed into out-of-home care.

Correct (Slide Layer)



According to Wisconsin CPS policy, within how
many d n occur
aft are?

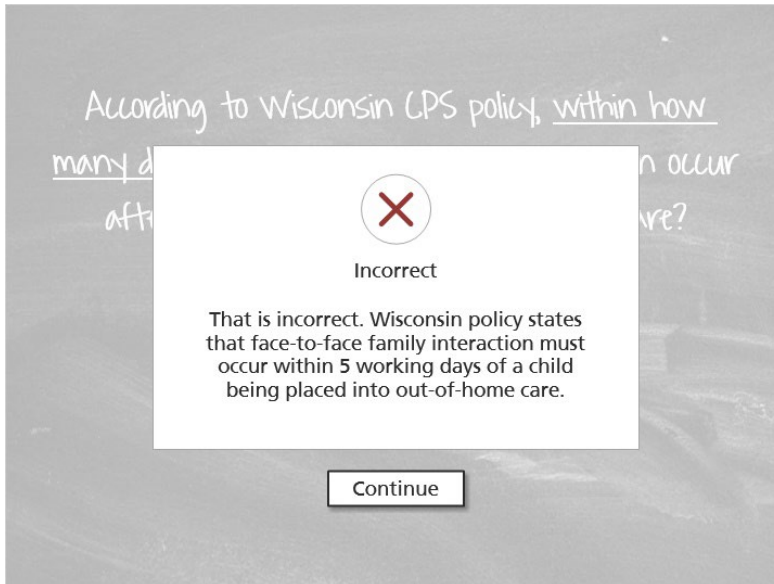


Correct


That's right! Wisconsin policy states that face-to-face family interaction must occur within 5 working days of a child being placed into out-of-home care.

Continue

Incorrect (Slide Layer)



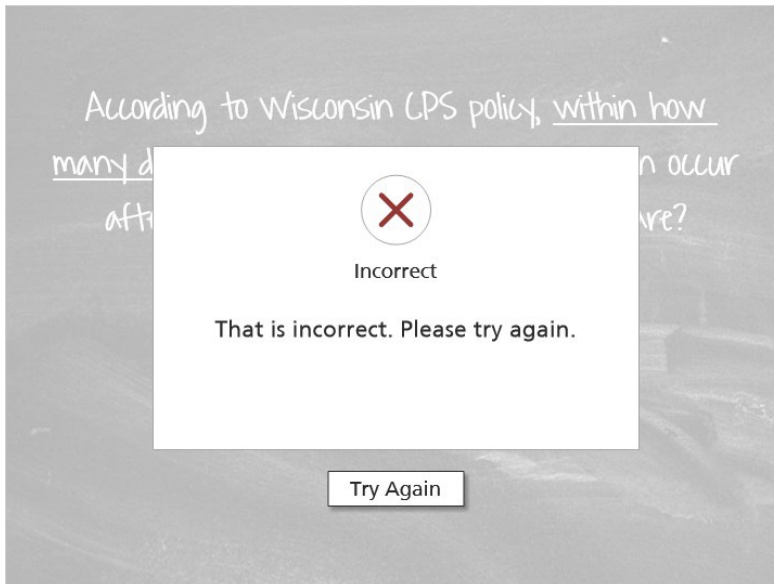
According to Wisconsin CPS policy, within how
many days after placement, face-to-face family interaction must occur?


Incorrect


That is incorrect. Wisconsin policy states that face-to-face family interaction must occur within 5 working days of a child being placed into out-of-home care.

Continue

Try Again (Slide Layer)



According to Wisconsin CPS policy, within how
many days after placement, face-to-face family interaction must occur?


Incorrect

That is incorrect. Please try again.

Try Again

5.8 Types of Family Interactions



Notes:

Family interaction does not only include formal face-to-face contacts, it can include things like phone calls, play dates, medical appointments, school and community activities, holiday gatherings, religious services, and family meals. Other ways to promote contact between parents and children is to give copies of schoolwork and report cards to a child's parents, helping the child to create cards or gifts for their family, and sending letters, emails, text messages, video calls to parents regarding the child's daily activities and progress.

Actively involving a child's parents in daily activities will help to show the child that their parents are still an important piece of their life. This will help to increase and sustain the connection between the child and their family and will lead to better outcomes for the child.

5.9 Real Life Tips: Staying Connected

Real life tips from a foster parent:

Click on pictures to hear more.

What creative ways did you find to keep youth in your care and their families connected?

What ideas do you have to help keep the children in your care connected to their families?
Make a note to share with your licensor.

Notes:

"Some of the ways that I've had that I've been able to keep kids and their families connected have been just the traditional phone calls or visits, some of my kids and I have made we made a calendar with pictures and report cards is actually a big one too."

"In one case our oldest daughter she has at home visits with her mom when her mom is doing well and she has five siblings who are also in foster care so even when her mom isn't doing well and they wouldn't be getting together around their mom we have arranged group visits where all the siblings can come and do an activity like we've rented youth centers and we've had them go to the mall together just to hang out just so they can connect even when mom isn't doing well and doesn't provide a place for that to happen. Our younger boys don't get to see their mom except in supervised visits one hour a week so we have them draw their mom a picture or write their mom a letter or... I mean the youngest one is too young to write letters but we'll help him... we'll help him write what he wants on a piece of paper for his mom and then we make sure we get those to the social worker."

"We do quite a few different activities to be able to stay connected with birth families, one is I ask for a picture of the birth parents to have in a child's room, we also make life books so the children can see the rest of their

extended family, we just do it in those little photo books that are like 24 pages or 30 pages and then the children can have that with them, what I'll do is make copies of them so that if we... you know use the copy in their book so if it's gets wrecked we don't get upset about that. We invite birth parents over to our home if that's okay with the case manager, we also meet in public if that's okay, going to the park, places like that."

FP 1 W (Slide Layer)



Real life tips from a foster parent:

"Some of the ways that I've had that I've been able to keep kids and their families connected have been just the traditional phone calls or visits, some of my kids and I have made we made a calendar with pictures and report cards is actually a big one too."


Back

What creative ways did you find to keep youth in your care and their families connected?

What ideas do you have to help keep the children in your care connected to their families?
Make a note to share with your licensor.

FP 2 M (Slide Layer)

Real life tips from a foster parent:



“In one case our oldest daughter she has at home visits with her mom when her mom is doing well and she has five siblings who are also in foster care so even when her mom isn't doing well and they wouldn't be getting together around their mom we have arranged group visits where all the siblings can come and do an activity like we've rented youth centers and we've had them go to the mall together just to hang out just so they can connect even when mom isn't doing well and doesn't provide a place for that to happen. Our younger boys don't get to see their mom except in supervised visits one hour a week so we have them draw their mom a picture or write their mom a letter or...I mean the youngest one is too young to write letters but we'll help him...we'll help him write what he wants on a piece of paper for his mom and then we make sure we get those to the social worker.”


Back

What creative ways did you find to keep youth in your care and their families connected?

What ideas do you have to help keep the children in your care connected to their families?
Make a note to share with your licensor.

FP 3 W (Slide Layer)

Real life tips from a foster parent:



“We do quite a few different activities to be able to stay connected with birth families, one is I ask for a picture of the birth parents to have in a child's room, we also make life books so the children can see the rest of their extended family, we just do it in those little photo books that are like 24 pages or 30 pages and then the children can have that with them, what I'll do is make copies of them so that if we...you know use the copy in their book so if it's gets wrecked we don't get upset about that. We invite birth parents over to our home if that's okay with the case manager, we also meet in public if that's okay, going to the park, places like that.”

Back

What creative ways did you find to keep youth in your care and their families connected?

What ideas do you have to help keep the children in your care connected to their families?
Make a note to share with your licensor.

5.10 Tips for Positive Family Interactions



Notes:

You have heard in previous modules about children struggling after spending time with their families. Children often enjoy the time with their family, and having that time come to an end can be very difficult. Even if the child had a difficult time living with their family, that connection remains after the child enters foster care. Returning to your home is a reminder that they are not able to live at home with their family.

Talk with the child prior to family interaction so they know what the plan is. Give them the start and end times and the location, as well as a plan for when they return to your home. Plan an activity with the child for after their contact so that they can be active and expend some energy. Being active is a positive way for children to channel their energy in a productive way, and will help them to transition back to your home.

Remember that having difficulty returning to your home is normal for children; it is to be expected. They may go through a range of emotions, including anger and frustration, sadness and they will need you to be understanding and flexible during this transition period. If you are willing to work with the child and their family, the transitions from family interactions back to your home will get smoother over time.

For children who are living with a relative or someone they knew before they came into out of home care, it can be even more difficult for them to manage their emotions after visiting with their family. They may feel guilty for missing their parents or siblings and feel that they are disrespecting you by being disappointed to return to your home. As the caregiver, it is important for you to discuss this with the child and let them know that their disappointment is normal and is an okay thing to feel. Let them know that this shows their loyalty to their parents and doesn't take anything away from their loyalty to you.

It can be powerful to let children know that it's okay for them to love their parents more than you – this can give them permission to have relationships with you and with their parents, and that having one doesn't diminish the other.

5.11 Real Life Tips: After Contacts



Notes:

"After contact with the birth parent most of the time we'll try to keep things low key, I don't want to schedule any big activities after that and then just debrief as much as the kids are comfortable. We do highs and lows

in our family so I might say oh what was the high of your visit and what's the low but I don't want the kids to feel like I'm grilling them and I don't want to grill them I just want them if they want to be able to talk about it that's fine, a lot of them do, a lot of them just say oh it was fine then they don't say a whole lot."

"When we have visits or the children have contact with their birth parents I think it's really important to understand that they're going to have a hard time when their birth parents are leaving and that's to be expected. Often times foster parents think that oh no we shouldn't have any visits because this child is crying or upset or hurt when their parents have left and that's just the opposite, if they're feeling like that, that's a good thing, that means they have a connection to there family so we try to keep it quiet at the home, offer more quiet activities so that the children can get back into the groove at our house."

"We try and have their favorite food ready for them for dinner that night, we just keep it safe and calm and low key and we don't hassle them about what happened at their visit unless they want to open up but if they need quiet time to process that we make sure they have that quiet time."

Untitled Layer 1 (Slide Layer)



Real life tips from a foster parent:

"After contact with the birth parent most of the time we'll try to keep things low key, I don't want to schedule any big activities after that and then just debrief as much as the kids are comfortable. We do highs and lows in our family so I might say oh what was the high of your visit and what's the low but I don't want the kids to feel like I'm grilling them and I don't want to grill them I just want them if they want to be able to talk about it that's fine, a lot of them do, a lot of them just say oh it was fine then they don't say a whole lot."

Back

What does your family do following contact with birth parents?

Click on pictures to hear audio.

Untitled Layer 2 (Slide Layer)

Real life tips from a foster parent:

"When we have visits or the children have contact with their birth parents I think it's really important to understand that they're going to have a hard time when their birth parents are leaving and that's to be expected. Often times foster parents think that oh no we shouldn't have any visits because this child is crying or upset or hurt when their parents have left and that's just the opposite, if they're feeling like that, that's a good thing, that means they have a connection to there family so we try to keep it quiet at the home, offer more quiet activities so that the children can get back into the groove at our house."

[Back](#)

What does your family do following contact with birth parents?

Click on pictures to hear audio.

Untitled Layer 3 (Slide Layer)

Real life tips from a foster parent:

"We try and have their favorite food ready for them for dinner that night, we just keep it safe and calm and low key and we don't hassle them about what happened at their visit unless they want to open up but if they need quiet time to process that we make sure they have that quiet time."

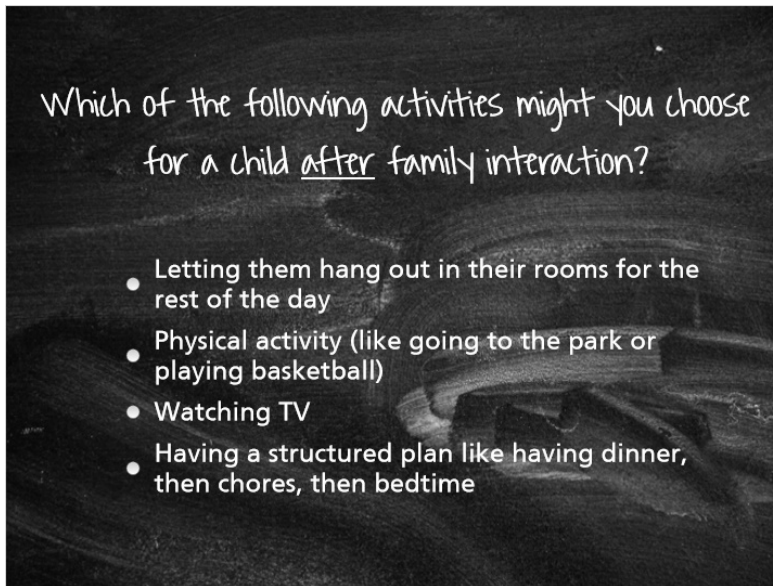
[Back](#)

What does your family do following contact with birth parents?

Click on pictures to hear audio.

5.12 Which of the following activities might you choose for a child after family interaction?


(Pick One, 0 points, 1 attempt permitted)



Choice
Letting them hang out in their rooms for the rest of the day
Physical activity (like going to the park or playing basketball)
Watching TV
Having a structured plan like having dinner, then chores, then bedtime

Thank You (Slide Layer)

Which of the following activities might you choose




- If a child asks for some time alone, you can give them some time, but it's also recommended to plan an activity ahead of time to help them to work through their emotions. Allowing a child to isolate themselves may not help them in transitioning back to your home.
- Each child will deal with returning to your home differently, so talk with the child and their team to determine the best activity and have a consistent plan for the transition.
- Having a structured plan like having dinner, then chores, then

Continue

Thank You (Slide Layer)

Which of the following activities might you choose




- Physical activity is usually a great idea for kids after a family contact so that they can work through their emotions and expend some of the energy they may have. Before the child has their family interaction, plan an activity together so that they know what they'll be doing when they return. Each child will deal with returning to your home differently, so talk with the child and their team to determine the best activity and have a consistent plan for the transition.
- Having a structured plan like having dinner, then chores, then

Continue

Thank You (Slide Layer)

Which of the following activities might you choose




Children may want to do something like watching TV when they return to your home, but it's generally a good idea to have a physical activity for them to do. This doesn't necessarily mean that they have to run around, but having an activity that you can do together will help the child transition back to your home. Each child will deal with returning to your home differently, so talk with the child and their team to determine the best activity and have a consistent plan for the transition.

- having a structured plan like having dinner, then chores, then

Continue

Easter Egg (Slide Layer)

Which of the following activities might you choose



You will probably have a schedule in your home for things like dinner, chores, and bedtime, and sticking to this routine will help the child to know what to expect when they return. It's also a good idea to have another activity for the child to do when they return, to work through their emotions, and you can include this in your daily schedule for days when the child has contacts with their family. Each child will deal with returning to your home differently, so talk with the child and their team to determine the best activity and have a consistent plan for the transition.

- having a structured plan like having dinner, then chores, then

Continue

6. Power of Sibling Connections

6.1 Power of Sibling Connections



Notes:

As you learned earlier in this module, foster youth will tell you that the thing they missed the most while they were in care was spending time with their siblings. This connection is very powerful, and must be maintained, as long as the relationship is an appropriate one and is not prohibited by a court. Wisconsin law requires that siblings are placed together when possible and appropriate, and that if they are not placed together, frequent interaction must be arranged. As discussed earlier, this does not just mean face-to-face interaction, but can include other forms of contact.

7. The Ties That Bind

7.1 The Ties That Bind



Notes:

The Ties That Bind (Adapted from the Presley Ridge Foster Parent Training Program. Updated language 2022 WCWPDS)

Along the way you have been learning about the value of permanence, and family and other connections. The following story illustrates the importance of both of those concepts. Let's learn about Dawn and the "ties that bind". To help demonstrate, we'll draw a line between Dawn and those people she has a connection to. We will "cut ties" when those relationships are severed.

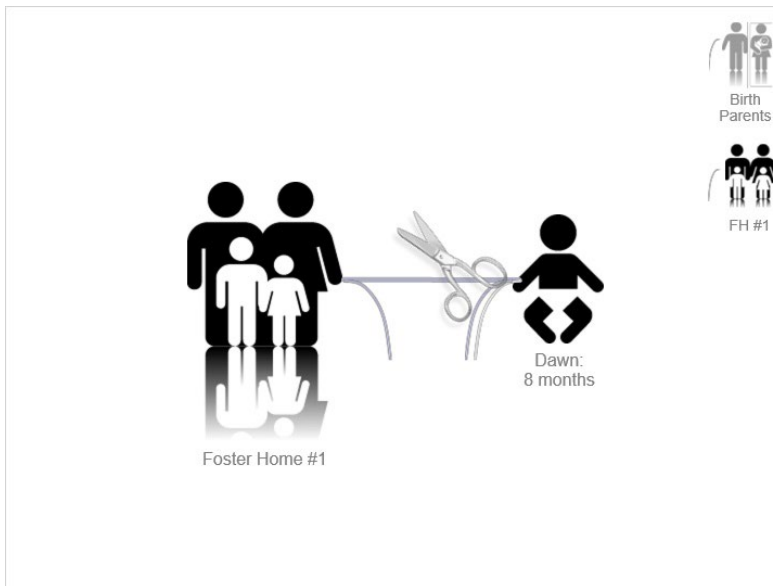
7.2 Ties #1



Notes:

Dawn's story begins when her biological parents made an adoption plan because they were unable to care for a baby. She has no information about her biological parents, their families, or the circumstances surrounding her birth.

7.3 Ties #2

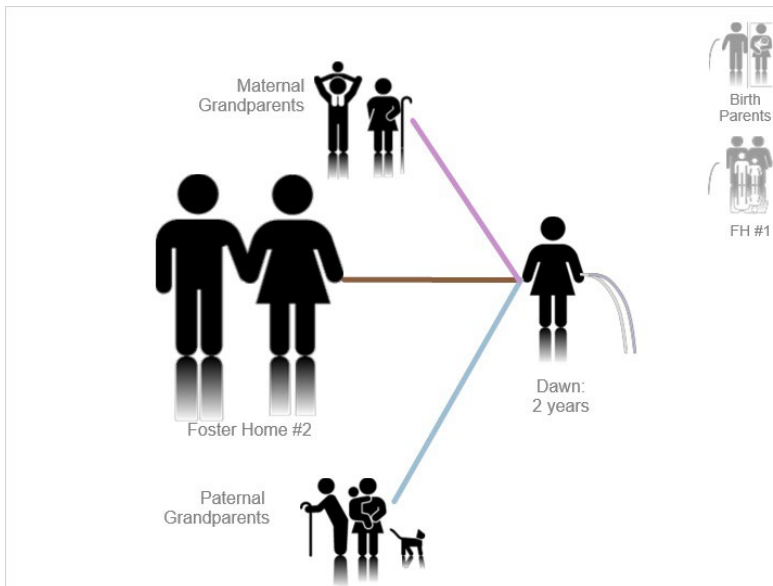


Notes:

Right after Dawn's birth, she was taken into out of home care by the county social services agency where her biological parents resided. She was placed into a foster home.

At the age of 8 months, Dawn moved from her first foster parents to a second foster home.

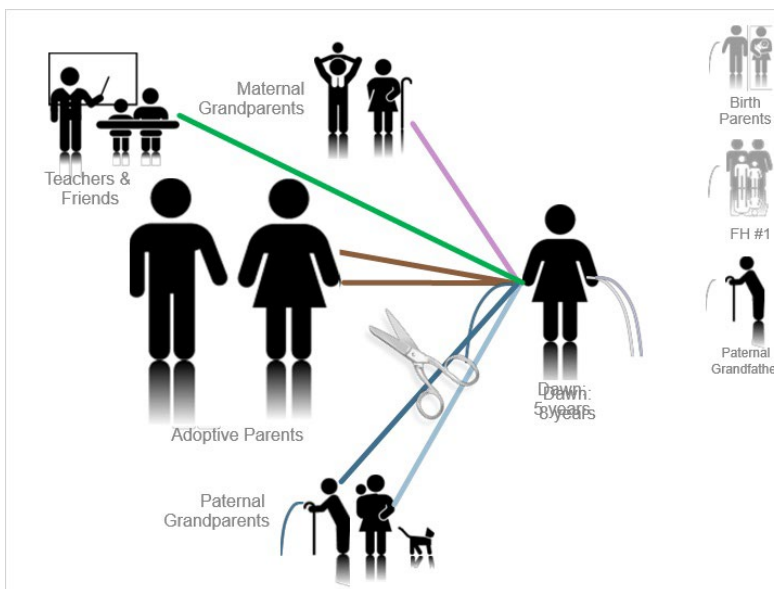
7.4 Ties #3



Notes:

Dawn stayed in this second foster home until they adopted her at age two. Her adoptive parents had married at a young age, and after trying unsuccessfully to conceive for a few years, turned to foster care and adoption as a way to grow their family. At first things went fine; both maternal and paternal grandparents were delighted to have a granddaughter.

7.5 Ties #4

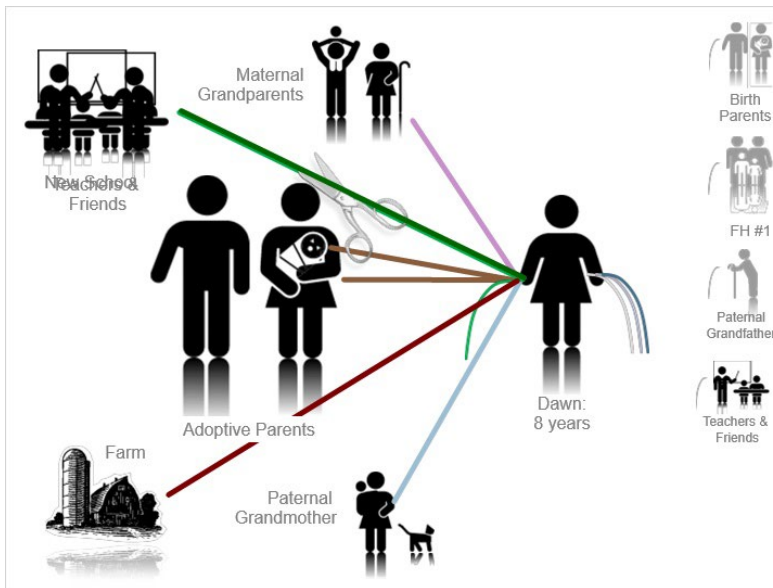


Notes:

At the age of five many big events occurred in Dawn's life. Dawn's parents started experiencing marital difficulties and Dawn's needs for structure, security, and nurturing weren't always met. And, despite marital problems, Dawn's mother conceived, and gave birth to a baby boy nick-named Junior. Lastly, Dawn began kindergarten.

When Dawn was 8 years old, her paternal grandfather died.

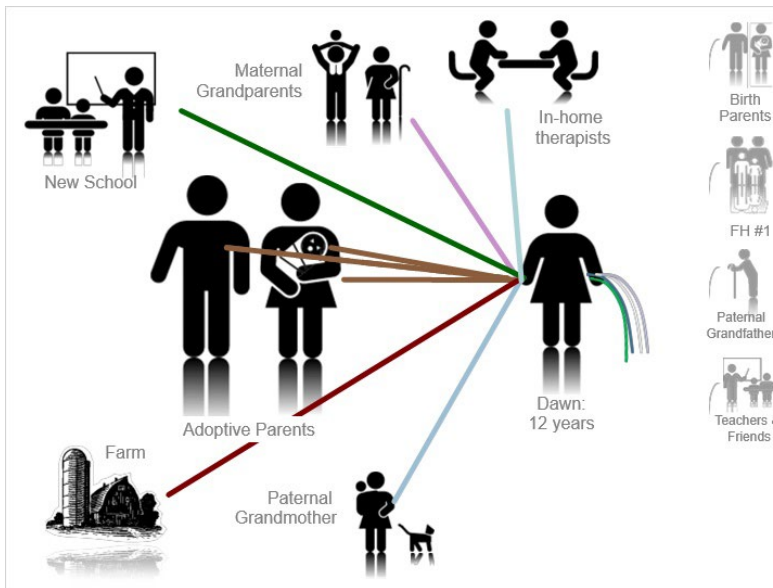
7.6 Ties #5



Notes:

In his will, the grandfather left the family farm to Dawn's father. Dawn and her family moved to the farm. In the process, Dawn had to leave behind the school where she had been very successful, as well as her classmates, her best friends, community, and all the familiar routines that were normal to her. Dawn had to start at a new school.

7.7 Ties #6

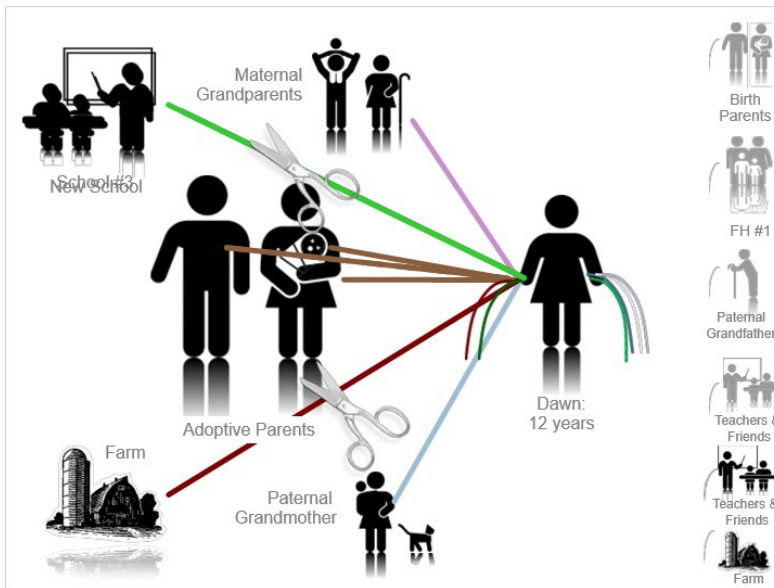


Notes:

At age 12, Dawn's family entered into family counseling. Dawn's mother had recently overdosed on pain medication and had to be hospitalized, and her father was drinking heavily. The in-home family therapists had concerns about the possibility that Dawn's father was abusive to her mother.

The therapy brought about some changes. Most notably that Dawn's father entered into a treatment program for 90 days, followed by living in a halfway home for a few more months. Dawn talked to and saw her dad sometimes, but mostly he was absent from her life during those months.

7.8 Ties #7

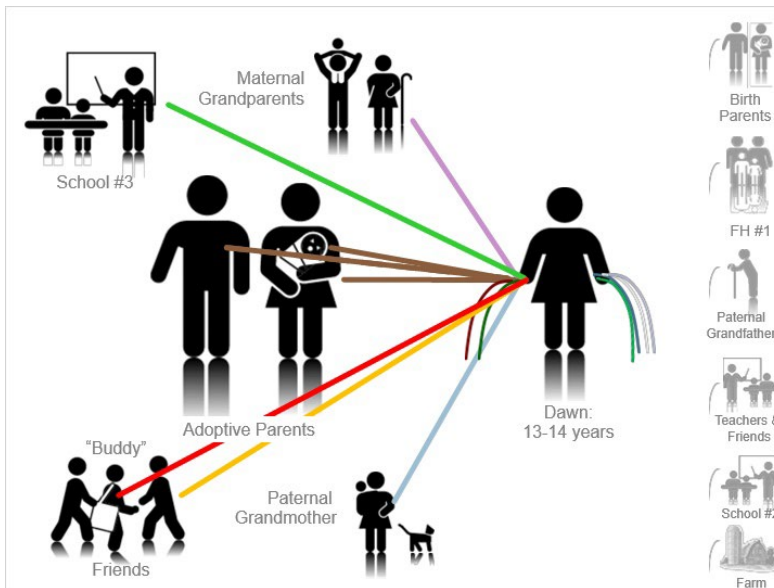


Notes:

After her father returned home, her parents decided to sell the family farm.

Dawn's family moved again. This time to a town 120 miles away. Dawn enrolled in another new school, her father began attending a nearby technical college, and Dawn's mother got a job in the evenings working at a local pizza restaurant.

7.9 Ties #8

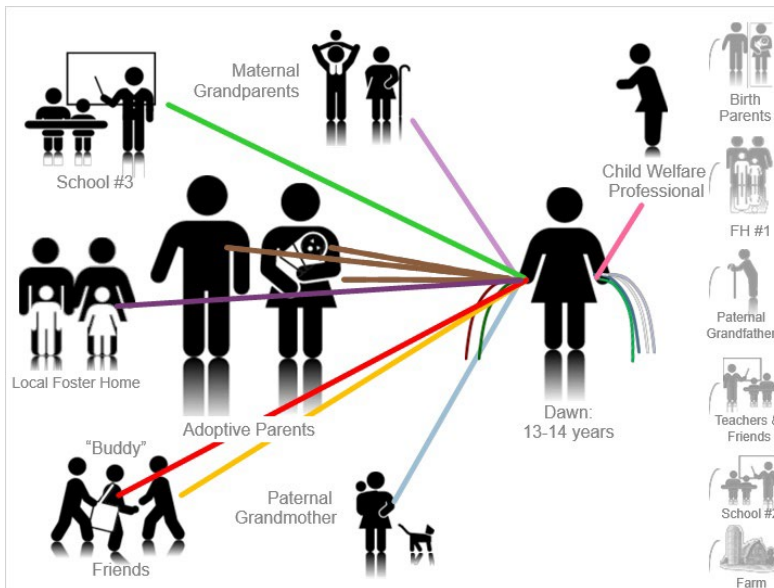


Notes:

Between the ages of 13 and 14, Dawn started getting into some trouble. She often cut classes, her grades started slipping, and shoplifting became a new hobby for her. Dawn started hanging out with kids who were drinking, smoking pot, and occasionally using other drugs too.

One of those kids was "Buddy". Buddy gave Dawn the attention and connection she hadn't been receiving at home for a long time. He became her first real boyfriend.

7.10 Ties #9



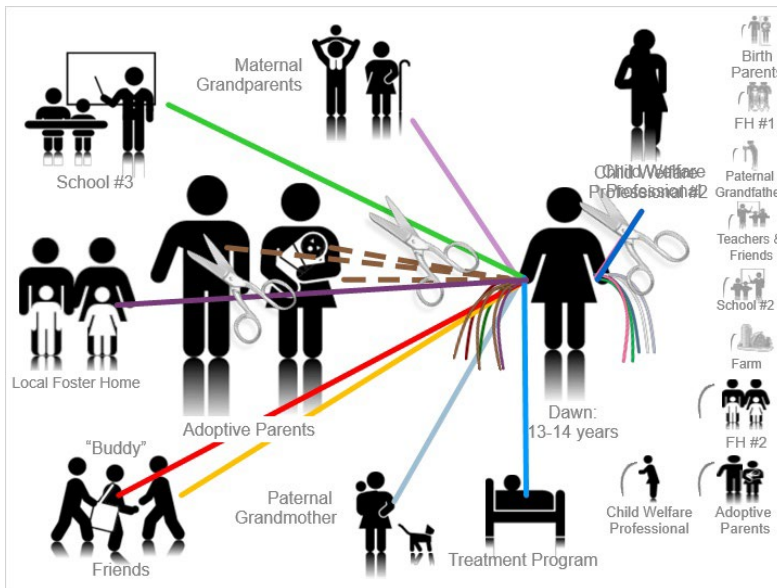
Notes:

Dawn's behavior started to decline. She was caught shoplifting twice in the same week. This, along with her poor school attendance record, landed her in juvenile court. She was placed on supervision and assigned a child welfare professional

While on probation, Dawn was caught shoplifting again. While she was sitting in shelter care, her parents learned she was using birth control. Fed up with her behavior, her parents refused to come and pick her up.

Dawn was placed into a local foster home until the situation could be worked out. Dawn begins to turn to alcohol as a release from her pain, grief, and all the losses she has endured.

7.11 Ties #10



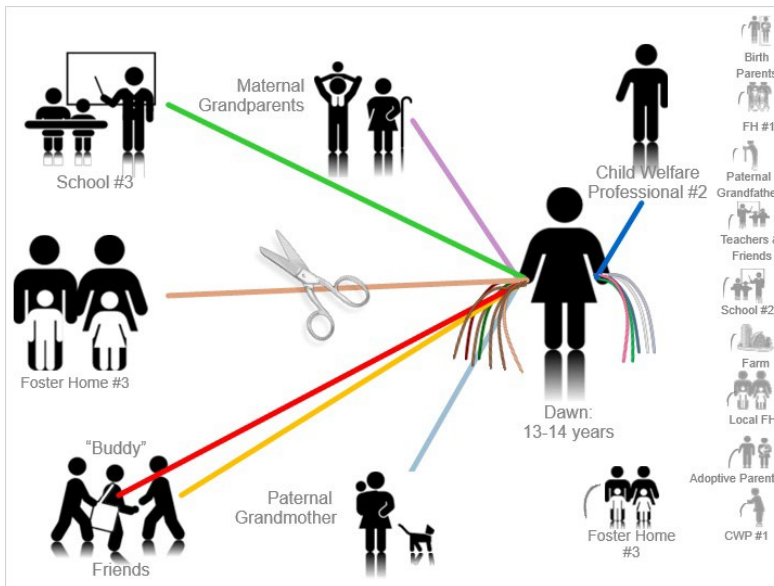
Notes:

It was decided that Dawn should enter a substance abuse treatment program where she went for 28 days.

During her stay in the foster home and the substance abuse treatment program, Dawn's parents refused to cooperate with the wishes of the county social service agency. Eventually they requested that their parental rights be terminated. They discontinued all contact with their daughter.

Dawn was also assigned a new child welfare professional, and never saw her old child welfare professional again.

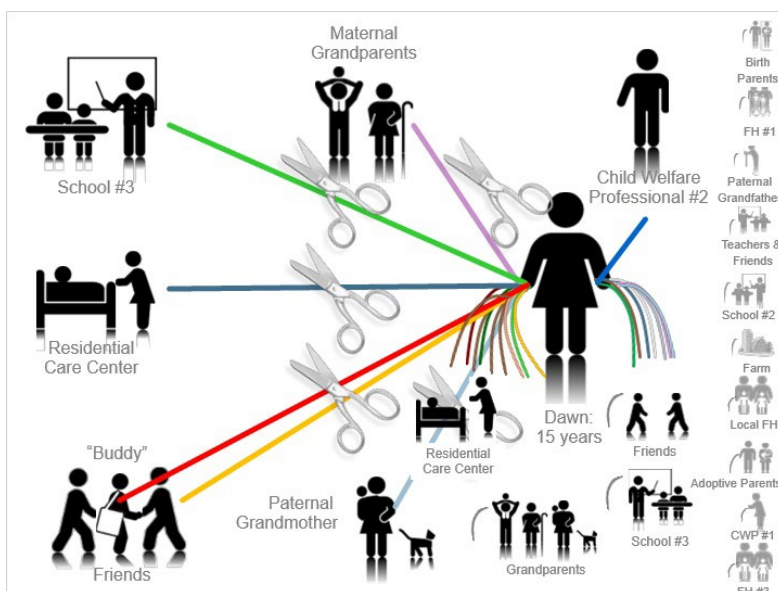
7.12 Ties #11



Notes:

After the treatment program Dawn went to live at yet another foster home. She lived there only 3 months before her foster parents gave a 30-day notice asking for her removal. They said her issues were way too much for them to handle and they were unable to meet Dawn's needs.

7.13 Ties #12



Notes:

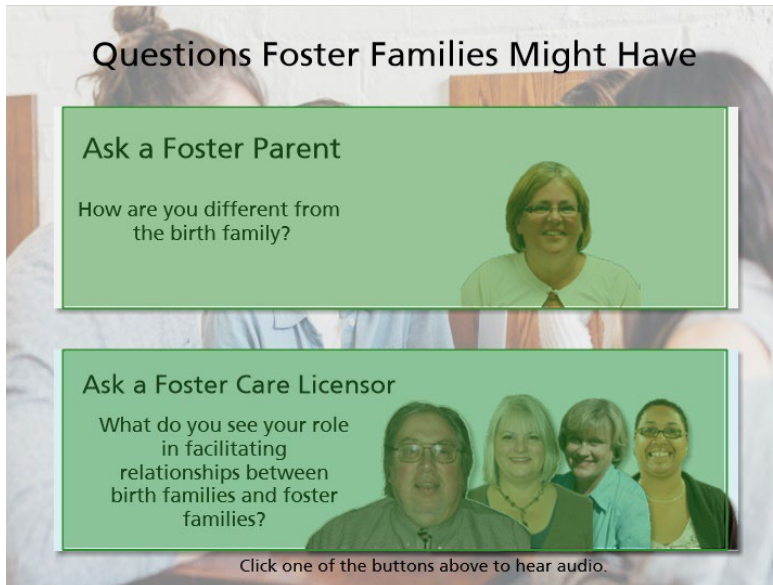
Dawn then was placed in a residential care center (RCC). She hasn't seen her friends since the last time she was caught shoplifting, nor has she returned to her school. Her parents have stopped all contact. She hasn't heard from her brother either. Dawn has not received a call, a visit, or a card from any of her three living grandparents. Nor has she heard from any of her former foster parents.

Dawn turned 15 last week. She celebrated by sneaking out of the residential care center and meeting up with Buddy. Buddy and Dawn's current child welfare professional are the only connections she still has.

Dawn's story is troubling in many ways. Let us take a minute to think about what is really important in the "big picture". Who do you wish Dawn was still connected to? Imagine you're Dawn's next foster parent. What could you do to help reconnect Dawn and those people? How could you make sure that a child placed in your care retains family connections and ties to people who are important to them even during tough circumstances? Take a minute to think about it and jot down some answers. This may be one of the most important things you can do as a foster parent.

8. Questions Foster Families Might Ask

8.1 Questions Foster Families Might Have



Questions Foster Families Might Have

Ask a Foster Parent

How are you different from the birth family?

Ask a Foster Care Licenser

What do you see your role in facilitating relationships between birth families and foster families?

Click one of the buttons above to hear audio.

Notes:

You probably have lots of questions about everything you've learned about working with birth families.

Listen to the answers that other foster parents and foster care licensors gave to the following questions:

Ask a foster parent:

"We're different than the birth family in very few ways, actually we're more like birth families, if we just sit down and write a list of the things that we're the same and different I think the difference are we have more supports than often our birth families have, we have more advantages financially to be able to do things than many of the birth families that we've worked with in the past. I think the most important thing that we're the same on is that we do care about the children together."

Ask a foster care licenser:

"The agency and the social work staff or case work staff of the agency are really important to bridge that connection between the biological family and the foster family. They are there to provide some guidance and support, help be a good role model in terms of relationship and connecting and all of this really helps reduce the potential for loyalty conflicts and problems later on and this really helps the children especially if the foster family and biological family get along well because the better the relationship between the Bio family and the foster family, generally the smoother the placement."

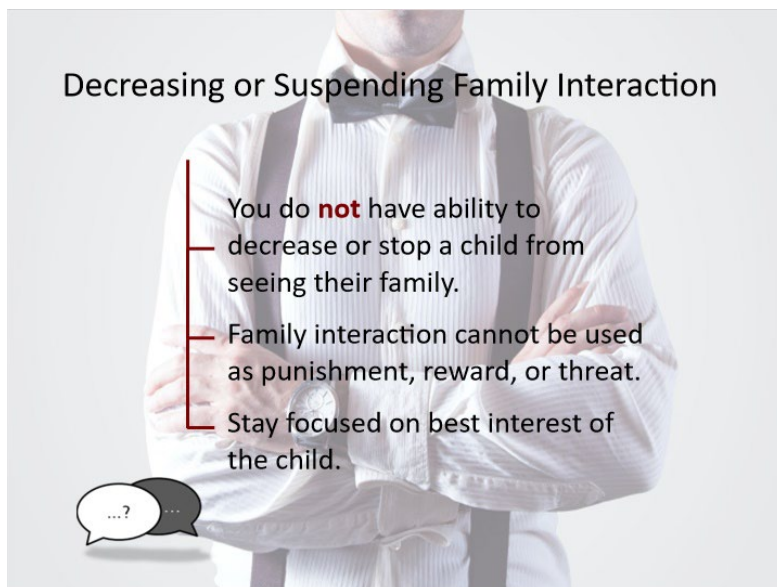
"The social workers, the team members, the biological family and the family should all be working together for the benefit of the child. As a social worker my job is to help assure that, that happens, sometimes that's mediating between the two parties if there has been a misunderstanding, sometimes that's just encouraging that it's okay to make that phone call to the foster mom and ask the question or encouraging the foster dad to extend himself to the family, sometimes my job is to be encouraging and sometimes it's to be mediating but always it's to be a part of that team."

"I work as a foster parent training manager and I think it's very important that our foster parents and birth parents are brought together so that they can understand each other and work towards the common goals which is reunification and the only way we can do that is by them working very, very closely together."

"Make it known to both parties that it's okay for them to have a relationship, that it is desired for them to have a relationship and so my job really is to kind of help that be as natural as possible, but I really see my job as kind of letting that relationship form and develop over time as naturally as possible, recognizing that they're not going to always get along, that there maybe conflicts but that's okay and if I can instead of trying to solve the conflict or stop the communication really bring them together so that they can work together I think in the long run that's going to be most helpful in that relationship developing."

9. Decreasing or Suspending Family Interaction

9.1 Decreasing or Suspending Family Interaction



Notes:

While you may have concerns about the family interaction and may not approve of the plan, you do not have the ability to decrease or stop a child from seeing their family. Family interaction can only be prohibited by the child welfare professional's agency, or if the court rules that the interaction is not in the child's best interest. As you learned earlier, family interaction cannot be used as a punishment, a reward, or a threat for a child; and the child welfare professional's agency cannot prohibit or decrease interaction as a punishment for a parent who is not working with the agency to follow the case plan or permanency plan.

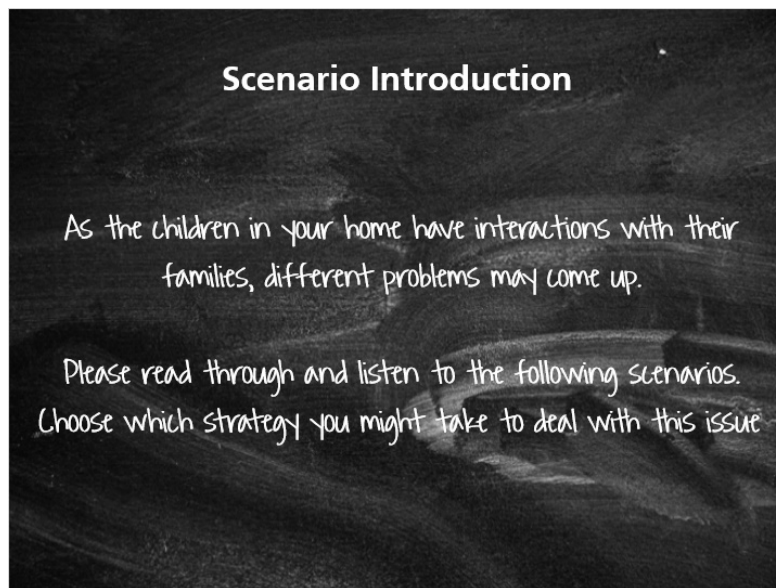
If you have concerns about the plan for family interaction or about anything that may be happening during the contacts, talk with the child's child welfare professional.

For relative and like-kin caregivers, it may be difficult for you to discuss concerns you have about the child's interactions with their parent. This may be an awkward conversation to have, but it is important to always have the best interests of the child in mind. Agency child welfare professionals are

critical supports to assist you in navigating these challenges. You are not alone.

10. Scenarios: When Problems Arise

10.1 Scenario Introduction



10.2 Scenario 1:

Your foster daughter, Ashley, has regularly scheduled contact with her mom, Tina, every Thursday at 5:00. Ashley looks so forward to these contacts, and one Thursday, Tina does not come to your home and does not call. You call to check on her and she does not return your call until the following day. She apologizes and says it won't happen again. The following Thursday, she does not come for the contact again and does not call.

What do you do?

(Multiple Choice, 10 points, unlimited attempts permitted)

Scenario 1:

Your foster daughter, Ashley, has regularly scheduled contact with her mom, Tina, every Thursday at 5:00. Ashley looks so forward to these contacts, and one Thursday, Tina does not come to your home and does not call. You call to check on her and she does not return your call until the following day. She apologizes and says it won't happen again. The following Thursday, she does not come for the contact again and does not call.

What do you do?

(Make your selection, then click Submit)

- Call Tina and leave her messages every day until she calls you back. You tell her how angry Ashley is and tell Tina that she can't see Ashley until she apologizes and promises that she'll come when she says she will.
- Call Ashley's child welfare professional and let her know that you're concerned because Tina has not come to see Ashley at the scheduled time. You let her child welfare professional know that Ashley seemed sad that Tina missed the contact.
- Tell Ashley that her mom was busy and you're sure she'll come next week.
- You decide not to mention anything to the child welfare professional because Tina promised to come next week.

Correct	Choice	Feedback
	Call Tina and leave her messages every day until she calls you back. You tell her how angry Ashley is and tell Tina that she can't see Ashley until she apologizes and promises that she'll come when she says she will.	No! There are several reasons not to take this approach: 1) You do not have the ability to decrease or suspend family interaction, and 2) This is not an effective or productive way to work with birth parents!
X	Call Ashley's child welfare professional and let her know that you're concerned because Tina has not come to see Ashley at the scheduled time. You let her child welfare professional know that Ashley seemed sad	Absolutely! Talk with Ashley's child welfare professional and express your concerns. Let the child welfare professional know the details of the contacts that were missed. You will need to contact Ashley's child welfare

that Tina missed the contact.	professional after every missed visit.
Tell Ashley that her mom was busy and you're sure she'll come next week. You decide not to mention anything to the child welfare professional because Tina promised to come next week.	No! Do not make promises that you have no control over to Ashley that her mom will come next week, because you don't know this for sure. Telling Ashley that her mom was busy will likely leave Ashley feeling like the other things Tina had to do were more important than Ashley is. You can certainly talk with Ashley about any frustrations or concerns that she has.

Incorrect (Slide Layer)

Scenario 1:
Your foster daughter, Ashley, has regularly scheduled contact with her mom, Tina, every Thursday at 5:00. Ashley looks so forward to these contacts, and one Thursday, Tina does not come to your home and does not call. You call to check on her and she does not return your call until the following day. She apologizes and says she was busy. On Friday, she does not return your call.

Incorrect

No! There are several reasons not to take this approach: 1) You do not have the ability to decrease or suspend family interaction, and 2) This is not an effective or productive way to work with birth parents!

Continue

Call Tina and let her know you are concerned. You tell her how you are concerned and apologize for not calling her sooner. You tell her that you are concerned about her missing the contact. You tell her that you are concerned about her missing the contact.

Call Ashley and let her know you are concerned. You tell her that you are concerned about her missing the contact. You tell her that you are concerned about her missing the contact.

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Tell Ashley that her mom was not at home and that you are sure she'll come next week.

You decide not to mention anything to the child welfare professional because Tina promised to come next week.

Correct (Slide Layer)

Scenario 1:
Your foster daughter, Ashley, has regularly scheduled contact with her mom, Tina, every Thursday at 5:00. Ashley looks so forward to these contacts, and one Thursday, Tina does not come to your home and does not call. You call to check on her and she does not return your call until the following day. She apologizes and says she was busy. On Friday, she does not return your call.

Correct

Absolutely! Talk with Ashley's child welfare professional and express your concerns. Let the child welfare professional know the details of the contacts that were missed. You will need to contact Ashley's child welfare professional after every missed visit.

Continue

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Incorrect

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Continue

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Tell Ashley that her mom was busy and that she'll come next week.

You decide not to mention anything to the child welfare professional because Tina promised to come next week.

10.3 Scenario 2:

Your grandson, Tyler, is placed with you and has contact scheduled with his dad, your son, Thomas, on a weekly basis. One day when Thomas comes to pick Tyler up, he smells as though he's been drinking alcohol and is slurring his speech a little bit. The plan is for Thomas to take Tyler out to dinner and to a movie.

What do you do?

(Multiple Choice, 10 points, 2 attempts permitted)

Scenario 2:

Your grandson, Tyler, is placed with you and has contact scheduled with his dad, your son, Thomas, on a weekly basis. One day when Thomas comes to pick Tyler up, he smells as though he's been drinking alcohol and is slurring his speech a little bit. The plan is for Thomas to take Tyler out to dinner and to a movie.

What do you do?

(Make your selection, then click Submit)

- Yell at Thomas and tell him that he has to quit drinking or he'll never get his son back. You're so frustrated with his drinking and it's time you let him know that.
- Let Tyler go with Thomas to dinner and a movie. You know how much Tyler was looking forward to this outing.
- Offer to have Thomas and Tyler have dinner at your house, and tell them that they can rent a movie to watch there.

Correct	Choice	Feedback
	Yell at Thomas and tell him that he has to quit drinking or he'll never get his son back. You're so frustrated with his drinking and it's time you let him know that.	No! While it is understandable that you're frustrated about Thomas' drinking, this is not the time or place to confront him.
	Let Tyler go with Thomas to dinner and a movie. You know how much Tyler was looking forward to this outing.	No! If you know that Thomas has been drinking, you cannot allow him to take Tyler in a vehicle while under the influence.
X	Offer to have Thomas and Tyler have dinner at your house, and tell them that they can rent a movie to watch there.	This is a great compromise. This way Tyler and Thomas still get to spend time together in a safe way.

Incorrect (Slide Layer)

Scenario 2:
Your grandson, Tyler, is placed with you and has contact scheduled with his dad, your son, Thomas, on a weekly basis. One day when Thomas comes to pick Tyler up, he smells as though he's been drinking alcohol and is slurring his speech a little bit. The plan is for Thomas to take Tyler out to dinner and

Incorrect

No! While it is understandable that you're frustrated about Thomas' drinking, this is not the time or place to confront him.

Continue

- Yell at Thomas and tell him how you feel about his son being drunk. You never get to yell at your son, so you let him know that you're disappointed.
- Let Tyler go with Thomas. Tyler was looking forward to this evening, and you don't want to ruin it. You let Thomas know that you're disappointed, but you let him take Tyler to dinner.
- Offer to have Thomas and Tyler stay at your house, and tell them that they can rent a movie to watch there.

Incorrect (Slide Layer)

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Incorrect


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Continue

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- Offer to have Thomas and Tyler stay at your house, and tell them that they can rent a movie to watch there.

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Correct

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Continue

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Tyler was looking forward to this evening.
Offer to have Thomas and Ty
let your house, and tell them
that they can rent a movie to watch there.

10.4 Scenario 3:

Your foster son, Darius, has weekly contact with his parents, Jackie and Marcus. In addition to the contact, Jackie and Marcus come to your home often without calling first, and call your house multiple times each day, sometimes after Darius' bedtime.

What do you do?

(Multiple Choice, 10 points, unlimited attempts permitted)

Scenario 3:

Your foster son, Darius, has weekly contact with his parents, Jackie and Marcus. In addition to the contact, Jackie and Marcus come to your home often without calling first, and call your house multiple times each day, sometimes after Darius' bedtime.

What do you do?

(Make your selection, then click Submit)


- Talk to the child welfare professional and then ask Jackie and Marcus to call ahead of time when they'd like to stop by, and to call before Darius goes to bed. You tell Jackie and Marcus that you want them to have contact with Darius, but you'd like to be able to plan their contacts and phone calls a little more.
- Wake Darius up whenever they call so that they can talk with him. You can't stand in the way of a child interacting with their family.
- Stop answering the phone when you see that Jackie and Marcus call, and when they stop by, tell them that Darius is busy.

Correct	Choice	Feedback
X	Talk to the child welfare professional and then ask Jackie and Marcus to call ahead of time when they'd like to stop by, and to call before Darius goes to bed. You tell Jackie and Marcus that you want them to have contact with Darius, but you'd like to be able to plan their contacts and phone calls a little more.	Yes! You should discuss this with Darius' child welfare professional and let her know about the issue. After talking with the child welfare professional, you can talk with Jackie and Marcus about planning the contacts better. You want them to have contact, but it would be helpful for Darius and for you to have things planned out a bit more.
	Wake Darius up whenever they call so that they can talk with him. You can't stand in the way	Probably not the best plan. Talk with Darius' child welfare professional about your

<p>of a child interacting with their family.</p>	<p>concern that Jackie and Marcus are calling after Darius' bedtime so that you can talk with Jackie and Marcus about calling earlier in the day.</p>
<p>Stop answering the phone when you see that Jackie and Marcus call, and when they stop by, tell them that Darius is busy.</p>	<p>No! You do not have the ability to prevent contact between Darius and his parents, no matter how frustrating this may be.</p>

Correct (Slide Layer)

Scenario 3:
Your foster son, Darius, has weekly contact with his parents, Jackie and Marcus. In addition to the contact, Jackie and Marcus come to your home often without calling first, and call your house multiple times each day, sometimes after Darius' bedtime.



Correct

Yes! You should discuss this with Darius' child welfare professional and let her know about the issue. After talking with the child welfare professional, you can talk with Jackie and Marcus about planning the contacts better. You want them to have contact, but it would be helpful for Darius and for you to have things planned out a bit more.

Talk to the child welfare professional ahead of time so that Jackie and Marcus can call ahead of Darius' bedtime. You can also talk to Jackie and Marcus about calling a little earlier in the day. You can't prevent contact with Jackie and Marcus to call ahead of Darius' bedtime. You can't prevent contact with Jackie and Marcus to call ahead of Darius' bedtime. You can't prevent contact with Jackie and Marcus to call ahead of Darius' bedtime.

Wake Darius up when Jackie and Marcus call, and when they stop by, tell them that Darius is busy. Jackie and Marcus call, and when they stop by, tell them that Darius is busy. Jackie and Marcus call, and when they stop by, tell them that Darius is busy.

Stop answering the phone when you see that Jackie and Marcus call, and when they stop by, tell them that Darius is busy. Jackie and Marcus call, and when they stop by, tell them that Darius is busy.

Incorrect (Slide Layer)

Scenario 3:
Your foster son, Darius, has weekly contact with his parents, Jackie and Marcus. In addition to the contact, Jackie and Marcus come to your home often without calling first, and call your house multiple times each day, sometimes after Darius' bedtime.

Incorrect

Probably not the best plan. Talk with Darius' child welfare professional about your concern that Jackie and Marcus are calling after Darius' bedtime so that you can talk with Jackie and Marcus about calling earlier in the day.

Continue

Talk to the child welfare professional ahead of time. You can talk to Darius, but not alone. You can't wake Darius up to stand in the room. Stop answering the phone when Jackie and Marcus call, and when they stop by, tell them that Darius is busy.

Incorrect (Slide Layer)

Scenario 3:
Your foster son, Darius, has weekly contact with his parents, Jackie and Marcus. In addition to the contact, Jackie and Marcus come to your home often without calling first, and call your house multiple times each day, sometimes after Darius' bedtime.

Incorrect

No! You do not have the ability to prevent contact between Darius and his parents, no matter how frustrating this may be.

Continue

Talk to the child welfare professional ahead of time. You can talk to Darius, but not alone. You can't wake Darius up to stand in the room. Stop answering the phone when Jackie and Marcus call, and when they stop by, tell them that Darius is busy.

11. Stereotyping a Birth Family

11.1 Voices of Foster Youth: Family Interaction Plan



Notes:

"I was not involved in creating the family interaction plan, I only got to see my mom if I went to in home visits where the parent educator... I would have liked to be able to see her without my siblings because she always had to be on them because of their problems to have the time for her to actually take the time and spend time with me would have been great. I was forced to go see my father every once in a while, I would have liked for it to be my choice."

11.2 Stereotyping a Birth Family

FAMILIES ARE NOWHERE

Possible stereotypes about birth parents:

Birth parents don't care about their kids
 They don't know how to be parents
 They're irresponsible
 They're in jail

FAMILIES ARE NOWHERE

Possible stereotypes about you:

You're rich
 You're trying to take my kids away
 You think you're better than me
 You're only a foster parent to make money
 You don't care about my kids
 You think I don't care about my kids

Notes:

Read out loud what you see on the screen. Did you read it as, "families are now here" or "families are nowhere?" Think about which one you saw first and the difference between those two statements. If you approach birth families with the attitude of "families are now here," you'll be able to work with them and help them to reach the most appropriate goal for their child. If you approach birth families with the perspective of "families are nowhere," then it will be much more difficult for you to work productively and positively with birth families.

Your relationship with the birth parents will affect your relationship with the child and will affect the child's outcome. You must be willing to work with their family, both the child and family will feel supported and respected, and you will all be able to work together for the best outcome for the child. If you are unwilling or unable to work with the child's family, the child will see that conflict and will not feel as supported by you.

Think about some stereotypes you might have about birth parents. What are some things that come to mind?

Birth parents don't care about their kids

They don't know how to be parents

They're irresponsible

They're lazy and have no morals

They're in jail

What are some stereotypes that you think birth parents may have about you?

You're rich

You're trying to take my kids away

You think you're better than me

You're only a foster parent to make money

You don't care about my kids

You think I don't care about my kids

Now think about how many of those things are actually true for you. Probably not many of them, if any. Now consider that the same is true for the stereotypes that you have for birth parents; some of those things may be true with some birth parents, but certainly not with all of them. If you go into this process with a negative view of birth parents, it may be difficult for you to work collaboratively and productively with birth families. If, however, you believe that some of the stereotypes about birth parents may be inaccurate (just like the ones are about you), then you'll be in a great position to work as a team with birth families.

11.3 Voices of Foster Youth: Who Do You Miss?

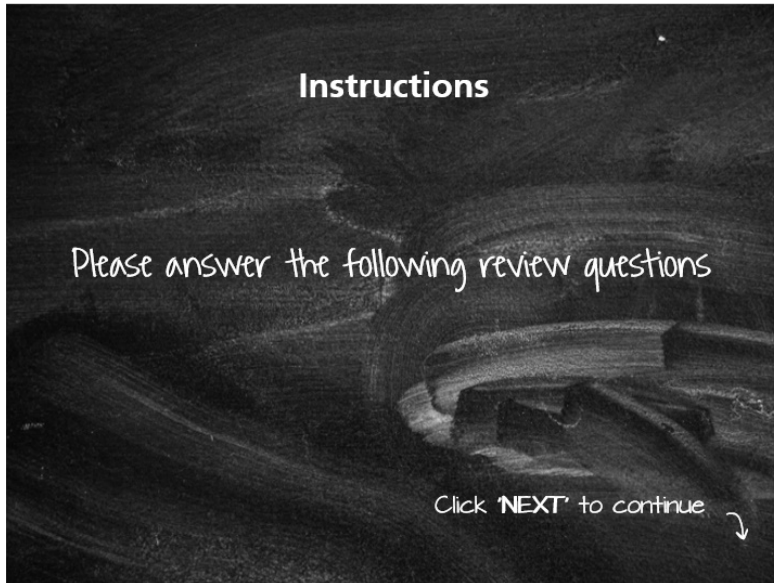


Notes:

"I missed my mom the most because that's my mom. I wished that I would have saw my mom more often, the opportunity was not given it was as though we had to jump through loops and hoops to see her and in my opinion that was not right on either my kinship families side or even the case manager's side, I miss her the most and I wanted to be with her, despite her down falls or her mistakes or her problems that she was going through, I felt as though if I could be with her I wouldn't miss out on that relationship that I could have had with her and I missed my mom the most."

12. Check Your Knowledge

12.1 Instructions



12.2 If you are a relative provider and are caring for your grandson (your daughter's son), your role in your family has now changed, and so have your relationships with family members. What other relationships have now changed in your family?

(Multiple Choice, 10 points, unlimited attempts permitted)

If you are a relative provider and are caring for your grandson (your daughter's son), your role in your family has now changed, and so have your relationships with family members. What other relationships have now changed in your family?

- The relationship between your grandson and his cousins
- The relationship between you and your daughter
- The relationship between you and your grandson
- All of the above

Correct	Choice	Feedback
	The relationship between your grandson and his cousins	That's definitely true, but the really correct answer for this question is D, "All of the above." Since your grandson is now living in your home, you have to meet his needs first, before your children or your other grandchildren. Your other grandchildren may feel like they don't get as much attention from you or have the same privileges as your grandson, and this may change the relationship between your grandson and his cousins, as well as the relationship

	<p>between you and your other grandchildren. This is something your family will need to discuss as a family to discuss how to deal with changes in roles and relationships.</p>
<p>The relationship between you and your daughter</p>	<p>That's certainly true, but the really correct answer for this question is D, "All of the above." Since you are now caring for your grandson, you have to put his needs first, before the needs of your own children. This puts your daughter and your grandson on the same level in their relationship with you. This is something your family will need to discuss as a family to discuss how to deal with changes in roles and relationships.</p>
<p>The relationship between you and your grandson</p>	<p>That is absolutely true, but the really correct answer for this question is D, "All of the above." Since your grandson is now living with you, you are</p>

	<p>now responsible for his daily needs and have become his primary caregiver, which hasn't always been your role. This is something your family will need to discuss as a family to discuss how to deal with changes in roles and relationships. You'll want to talk with your grandson and let him know that you're not replacing his mom, but you're just taking care of him for now.</p>
X All of the above	<p>You're right! All of these relationships will change in your family now that your grandson is living with you. You can look back at the "Changes in Family Roles" slide to see how this might look in your family. All of these changes are things that your family will need to discuss as a family to discuss how to deal with changes in roles and relationships.</p>

Correct (Slide Layer)

If you are a relative provider and are caring for your grandson (your husband's son), your role in your family has no...

family... with... now

● The r...
 ● The r...
 ● The r...
 ● All of the above

Correct

You're right! All of these relationships will change in your family now that your grandson is living with you. You can look back at the "Changes in Family Roles" slide to see how this might look in your family. All of these changes are things that your family will need to discuss as a family to discuss how to deal with changes in roles and relationships.

Continue

Incorrect (Slide Layer)

If you are a relative provider and are caring for your grandson (your husband's son), your role in your family has no...

family... with... now

● The r...
 ● The r...
 ● The r...
 ● All of the above

Incorrect

That is absolutely true, but the really correct answer for this question is D, "All of the above." Since your grandson is now living with you, you are now responsible for his daily needs and have become his primary caregiver, which hasn't always been your role. This is something your family will need to discuss as a family to discuss how to deal with changes in roles and relationships. You'll want to talk with your grandson and let him know that you're not replacing his mom, but you're just taking care of him for now.

Continue

Incorrect (Slide Layer)

If you are a relative provider and are caring for your grandson (your legal base son) - your role in your family has no... S with... e now... family... busins

● The r...
 ● The r...
 ● The r...
 ● All of the above

Incorrect

That's certainly true, but the really correct answer for this question is D, "All of the above." Since you are now caring for your grandson, you have to put his needs first, before the needs of your own children. This puts your daughter and your grandson on the same level in their relationship with you. This is something your family will need to discuss as a family to discuss how to deal with changes in roles and relationships.

Continue

Incorrect (Slide Layer)

If you are a relative provider and are caring for your grandson (your legal base son) - your role in your family has no... S with... e now... family... busins

● The r...
 ● The r...
 ● The r...
 ● All of the above

Incorrect

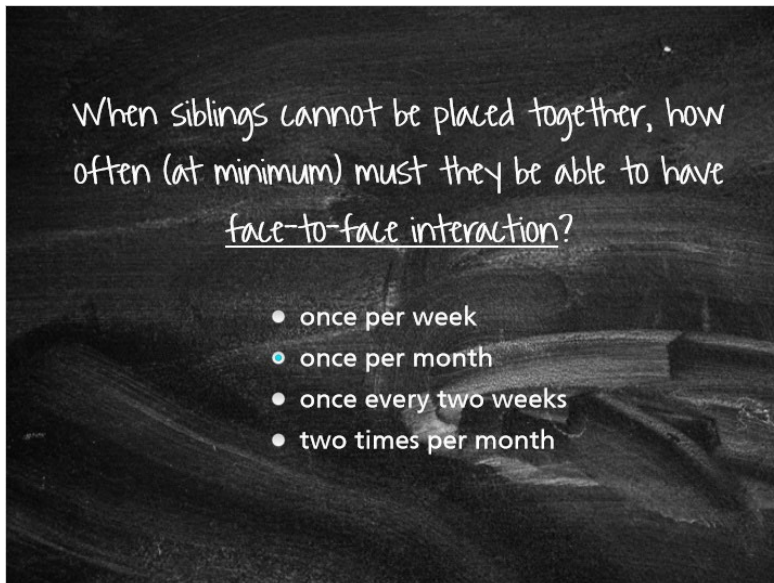
That's definitely true, but the really correct answer for this question is D, "All of the above." Since your grandson is now living in your home, you have to meet his needs first, before your children or your other grandchildren. Your other grandchildren may feel like they don't get as much attention from you or have the same privileges as your grandson, and this may change the relationship between your grandson and his cousins, as well as the relationship between you and your other grandchildren. This is something your family will need to discuss as a family to discuss how to deal with changes in roles and relationships.

Continue

12.3 When siblings cannot be placed together, how often (at minimum) must they be able to have

face-to-face interaction?

(Multiple Choice, 10 points, 2 attempts permitted)



Correct	Choice
	once per week
X	once per month
	once every two weeks
	two times per month

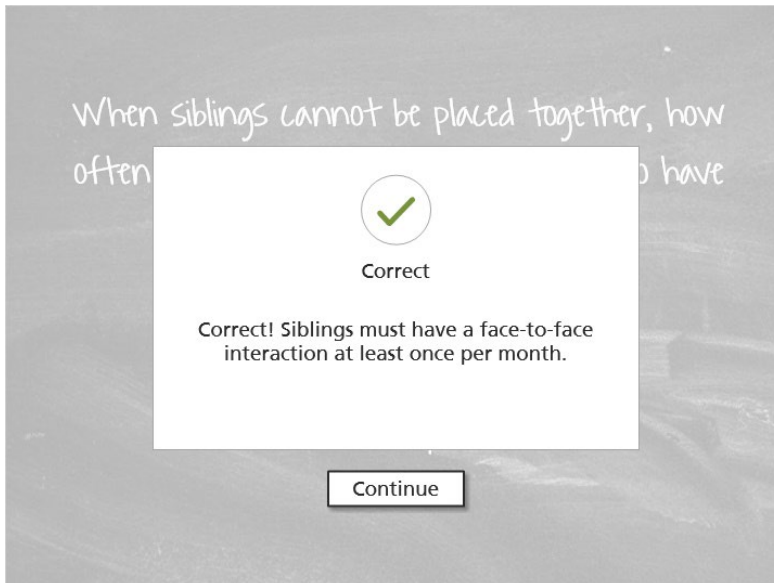
Feedback when correct:

Correct! Siblings must have a face-to-face interaction at least once per month.


Feedback when incorrect:

That is incorrect. Siblings must be allowed to have face-to-face interaction at least once per month.

Correct (Slide Layer)



When siblings cannot be placed together, how often do they have to have

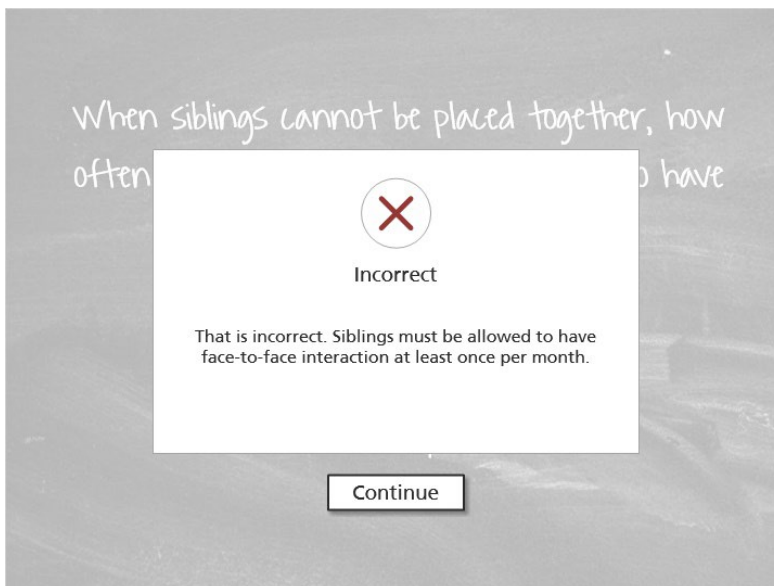


Correct


Correct! Siblings must have a face-to-face interaction at least once per month.

Continue

Incorrect (Slide Layer)



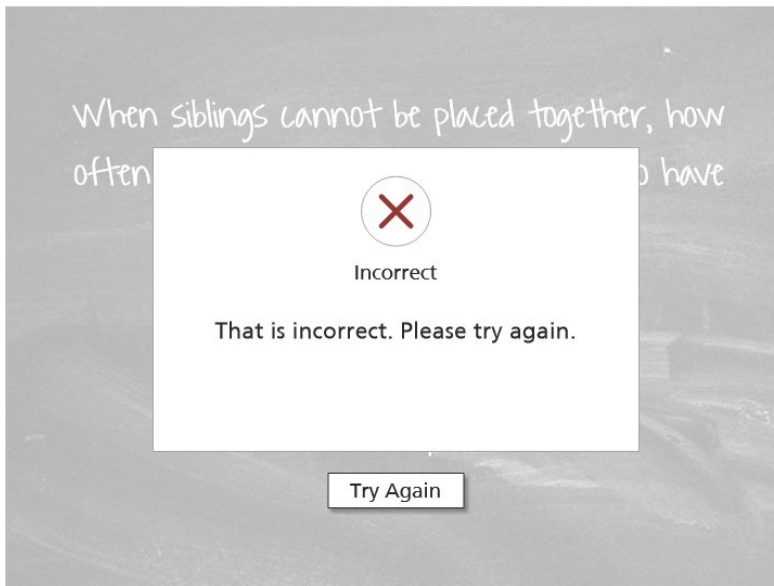
When siblings cannot be placed together, how often do they have to have



Incorrect

That is incorrect. Siblings must be allowed to have face-to-face interaction at least once per month.

Continue

Try Again (Slide Layer)

12.4 What are some stereotypes that come to mind when you think about birth families?

What are your concerns about working with birth families?

Write down some of your thoughts and share them with your licensor so that you can work through your concerns.

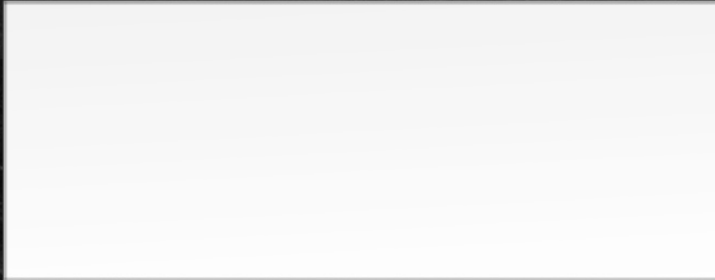
(You can type them here, then copy/paste them into a new email to your licensor... or add them to your Notepad document.)

(Essay, 0 points, 1 attempt permitted)

What are some stereotypes that come to mind when you think about birth families?

What are your concerns about working with birth families?

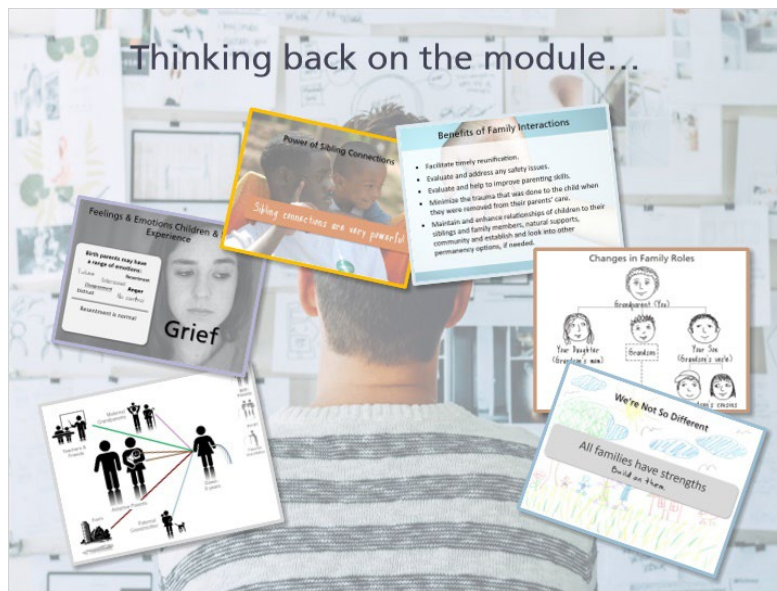
Write down some of your thoughts and share them with your licensor so that you can work through your concerns.
(You can type them here, then copy/paste them into a new email to your licensor... or add them to your Notepad document.)



Notes:

13. Thinking Back on the Module

13.1 Thinking Back on the Module...



Notes:

Take a moment to think back on what you've just learned in this module.

You have heard from foster youth, birth parents, foster parents, and licensors about the importance of children maintaining connections to their families.

You have learned about how birth parents experience grief and anxiety when their children are placed into foster care.

You've learned how important it is for children to spend time with their parents and siblings, and about ways to handle it if you have concerns about these interactions.

You've also learned how things will change if you are related to the child in your home, and how you'll need to balance your roles of being a relative and being a foster parent.

But most of all, you've learned that working together with the child's team provides the best outcomes for the child.