

Guiding the Caregiver through Self-Assessment for Reunification Support

Who guides the caregiver through self-assessment for reunification support?

The family development specialist, licensing worker or the permanency caseworker guides the caregiver in this process.

What is the purpose of the Discussion Questions to Consider with Caregivers?

The Discussion Questions are used to structure the discussion about the caregiver role in family reunification. Talking through the Discussion Questions helps the caregiver make an informed decision regarding the reunification support that he or she is willing and able to offer for children whose permanency goal is to return home, particularly children new to the child welfare system.

Some Elements of the Discussion with the Caregiver

As you discuss the questions with the caregiver, pay special attention to areas of strength. These may permit important contributions to family connections for all children that the caregiver fosters. Explore the possible rewards to the caregiver in working with the families of their foster children. A less anxious and more trusting child, fewer licensing complaints from parents, and the joy of helping a family heal are often noted. Acceptance and support of his family is one of the best gifts that a caregiver can give to a foster child.

Address the points the caregiver finds to be difficult. What are the caregiver's concerns? How are these similar to or different from the aspects of reunification with which the caregiver is more comfortable? Can the caregiver's concerns be met through careful planning, caseworker support or other means? Is reunification work something that the caregiver would like to do but has some concerns about, or is this work not well suited to this caregiver?

Making a Decision

If the caregiver has no interest in supporting return home of children entering care, or is not suited to do so, note that there is a caregiver statement for signature by caregivers ready and able to give this support and move on. Focus on the many children for whom the caregiver can provide foster care, including children who no longer have a reunification goal and need a permanent family.

Guiding the Interested Caregiver through Completion of the Self -Assessment

If the caregiver appears ready to participate in reunification work, turn the page over to guide him or her through the self-assessment. Have the caregiver read each statement, check the appropriate box and initial the answer. If the caregiver checks "yes" in each of the boxes, he or she has self-assessed as ready to sign the Caregiver Statement. Be sure that the caregiver understands that signing the statement in no way insures a placement. The signature indicates that the caregiver understands the responsibility associated with accepting a child new to the system and will make his or her best effort to fulfill that responsibility.

Your signature on the document indicates your agreement with the caregiver statement. Submit the completed document to the designated person at your agency. This statement documents the caregiver as reunification prepared for CAPU assignment of children new to foster care.