The Icebreaker Meeting:
How The System Can Support Relationship Building Between Birth Parents and Foster Parents

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Project Goals

**System Goal:**
*Decrease the number of children in foster care.*

**Icebreaker Goal:**
*Provides system-supported structure for birth and foster parents/kinship caregivers to cultivate positive relationships.*
An Icebreaker is...

- An informal, face-to-face meeting between caregivers that is facilitated by a partnership staff member
- To occur soon after child placement
- A sharing of needed information so that caregivers do a great job taking care of child.
What Ice breakers are NOT

* Mediation session between caregivers
* For asking the Foster Parents to supervise visitations
* Meetings where children are present
* Formal meetings with several staff members in attendance
Icebreaker Tools

About My Child

Instructions:
This tool has been adapted for use as part of the information shared during the Parent to Parent Meeting. This tool is designed to help you and the Partnership Parents caring for your child share important information about your child’s growth and development.

Information to be completed by the parent/guardian.
Fill in identifying information.

All About ME

My name is ____________ and here is some information that might be helpful to my new caregivers.

My name is ____________ which means I am _______ years old. I have ____________ brothers and sisters. Their names and ages are: ____________

Co-parenting Icebreaker Meeting

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FSESN Case Name:</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FSFN ID Number:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child(ren):</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biological Parent(s):</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foster Parent(s)/Caregiver(s):</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attendees:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date/Time/Location:</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Description of meeting (Parent’s level of engagement, temperament, timeliness, etc.)

Your Child’s “Eco-Map”

Nearly all young children develop close bonds to at least two or more people. We call these “heart connections”. Please put your child’s name in the circle below. Think about the different adults in your child’s life with whom he or she has a close bond or “heart” connection. Draw circles that represent each of those people, putting each person’s circle either close to, or if you wish a little farther away from, your child’s circle so each one reflects how close your child feels to that person. Then connect each circle to your child’s circle with a line. Remember: include everyone who supports or interacts with your child on a regular basis. To see a sample “Eco-map”, turn the page over.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WHAT</th>
<th>WHEN</th>
<th>FACILITATED BY WHOM</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ECC Cases</td>
<td>April 2016</td>
<td>ECC Coordinator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-ECC Bay County Licensed Care</td>
<td>June 2016</td>
<td>Foster Parent Support Specialist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Other Bay County Dependency Cases (Including kinship caregivers)</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>Specialist/Case Worker</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
General Process Flow for ECC Cases

Night of Removal

At initial shelter hearing—no later than one week.

One week after entering the program

Within two weeks of entering the program

Decision made to shelter

✔ Foster home located
✔ Community Coordinator (CC) notified of removal & attends court.

CC will propose icebreaker with birth parent(s). Make contact with Foster Parent Support Specialist for icebreaker.

✔ Icebreaker time is arranged

Icebreaker Completed
General Process Flow for NON-ECC Bay Cases

At Removal,
Specialist contacts Placement Department and PI.

Within 48 hours,
Specialist contacts Foster Parent first for Icebreaker meeting.

Within one week after entering system of care.

Icebreaker
Completed within TWO weeks of family entering into system.

Begins Research

- Looks for No Contact Orders, if parent is available, screens for safety concerns.
- Starts tracker of the child and caregivers.

If YES from Foster Parent, then Bio Parent will be contacted.

Icebreaker time is arranged at BBCBC during office hours.

Meeting Notes uploaded into FSFN.
Deal breakers for Icebreakers

- Foster Parent not willing
- Bio Parent not willing
- Child has adoption goal
- Planning to go Expedited TPR
- No contact order
- Extreme mental health issues, don’t offer it
- Parent not available
- Temporary or respite placement.
80% of participants said the icebreaker was helpful to them

More than 80% participants said they would do it again

90% of foster parents have remained in contact with the birth parents

25% of foster parents said that they have had supervised visits since icebreaker

Input from kinship caregivers: "Not the same as before". Better understanding of what it means to be a custodian.

*October 2015 Circuit 6 Participants surveyed
To Be Continued...

* What’s next?

Site Visit to Pinellas County on March 4th

* Any questions, Ideas, Suggestions?

THANK YOU for Being Here!