

Child Development

Background Notes

Child development is effected by environment, trauma, genetics and a variety of other factors. Children who are recipients of child welfare services may have developmental levels outside the norm for children their age. Especially when placing children in substitute care, knowledge about what is normal for a particular age and interventions and resources to assist in improving a specific child's development are important tools to maximize success for the child. During the time the child is placed in substitute care the agency and, specifically the worker, are responsible for the well being of the child including facilitating the developmental growth of the child. Initially, upon placement, obtaining assessments is critical in order to facilitate services and ensure successful development.

Tasks / Assignments:

- Review an Early Intervention or extensive child development assessment such as a Child Development Resource Center evaluation. What do you see to be the effect of the child's trauma on their development? What are the recommendations the report makes for improving the child's development?
- What services is the agency or the child's school offering or arranging to deal with any developmental lags?
- Review a CANS (Child and Adolescent Needs Strengths) Assessment. In areas where needs are identified, what services would you access for this child?

Discoveries:

- *What did you learn about how trauma affects development?*
- *What specific resources are you planning to access for the children on your caseload?*
- *What did you learn about the timelines for the CANS and initial assessments?*

Child Development continued...

Tasks / Assignments:

- Check with a coworker regarding what resources your office uses to assist with child development concerns. Ask a coworker to show you an Individualized Educational Plan and attend an IEP meeting. Find out what is required for a caseworker to obtain an evaluation for special education services.
- Complete a child development assessment using the "Physical Development Guidelines" and the "Developmental Milestones" in the Appendix. Is the child at age level developmentally? If not, what might be the reason?
- Check in the Learning Center for NetLinks on Child Development, Trauma and other topics. These NetLinks are offered on a regular basis.

Discoveries:

