

Goodbye Visits

Background Notes

Goodbye visits are held when a parent relinquishes their rights to a child or when a Court has terminated a parent's rights. These visits are necessary to help a child understand what is happening in their life and provide a way for emotions to be expressed both by the child and the parent. These visits are often emotional and should be facilitated by a skilled SSA, caseworker or therapist. The parents and the children should be well prepared for this final visit. Parents are often encouraged to write a letter to their child, letting them know that they love them and they will miss them, but that it is alright for them to be happy in their new home. There should be lots of pictures taken. The visit can even be recorded on video to provide both the parent and the child with lasting memories. These visits will prove to be critical to the child throughout their lives.

Tasks / Assignments:

- Talk with a SSA or an experienced caseworker in your office to find out how they handle goodbye visits. Are caseworkers typically involved?
- How are families prepared for goodbye visits? Who prepares them? Are foster parents involved?
- What kinds of activities take place during a goodbye visit?
- Talk to your Supervisor to find a case which will have a goodbye visit to observe or participate in.

Discoveries:

- *Why is a goodbye visit important?*
- *What is most beneficial for families in terms of goodbye visits?*
- *How do caseworkers manage their own emotions in these difficult visits?*
- *Who comforts the child and parent after the visit?*