

Harm of Removal in Child Welfare



Presented by:

Laura Vogel, Administrative Office of the Courts'
Family & Youth Justice Programs

Jacob D'Annunzio, Office of Public Defense Parent
Representation Program

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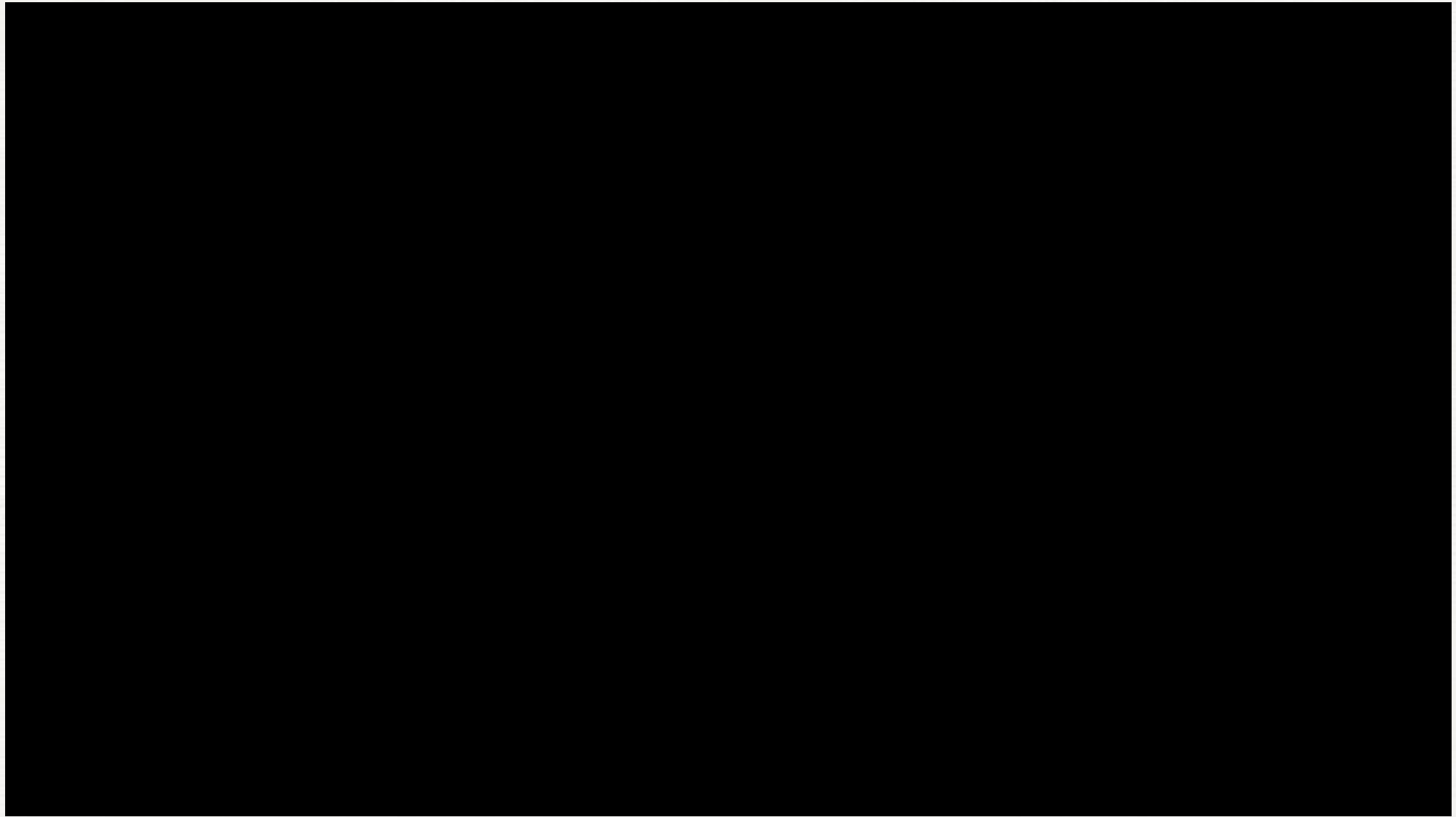
“Separating children from their families can cause irreparable harm, disrupting a child’s brain architecture and affecting his or her short- and long-term health.

This type of prolonged exposure to serious stress - known as ‘toxic stress’ - can carry lifelong consequences for children.”

-American Academy of Pediatrics



“My home wasn’t perfect, but it was mine.”

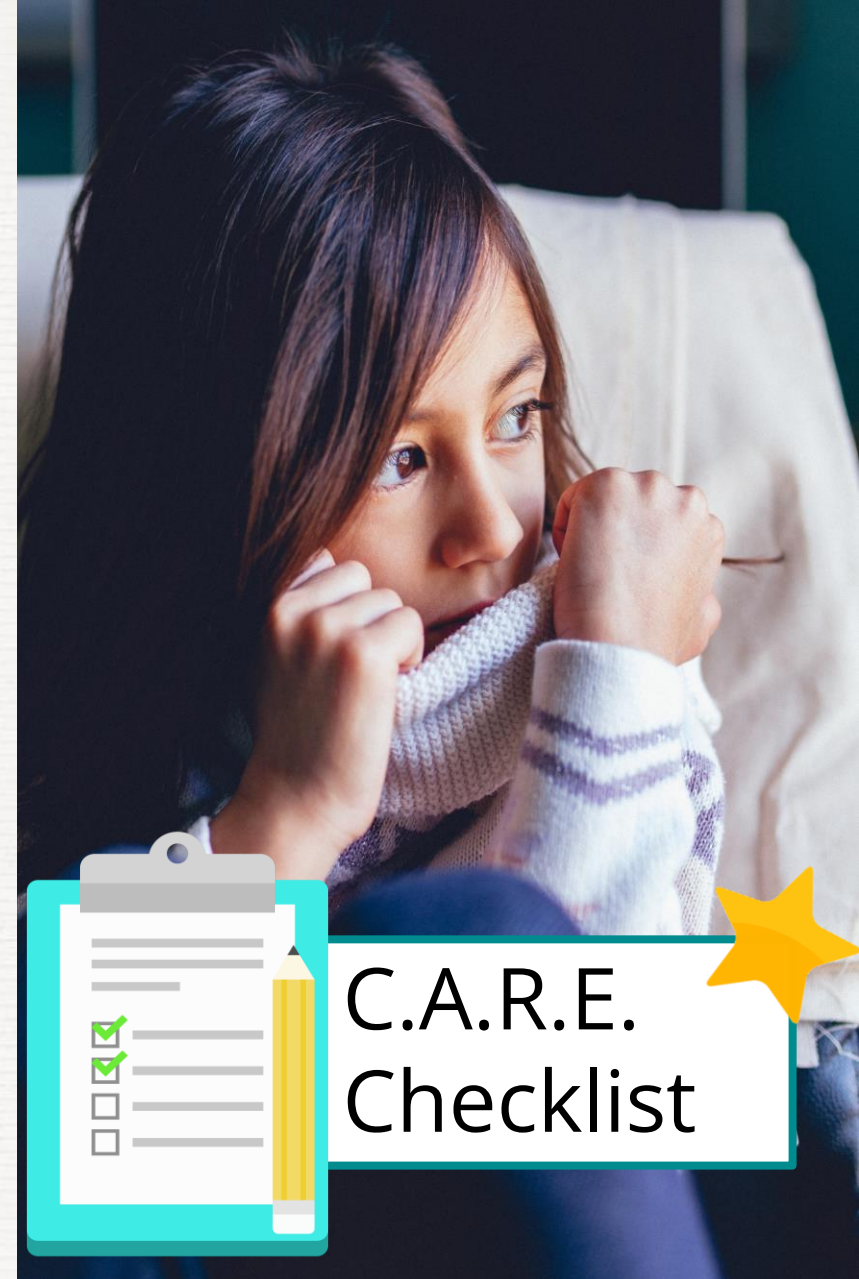


Ambiguous Loss

Physical absence with psychological presence



- **Placement Reason Ambiguity**
- **Structural Ambiguity**
- **Placement Context Ambiguity**
- **Relationship Ambiguity**
- **Role Ambiguity**





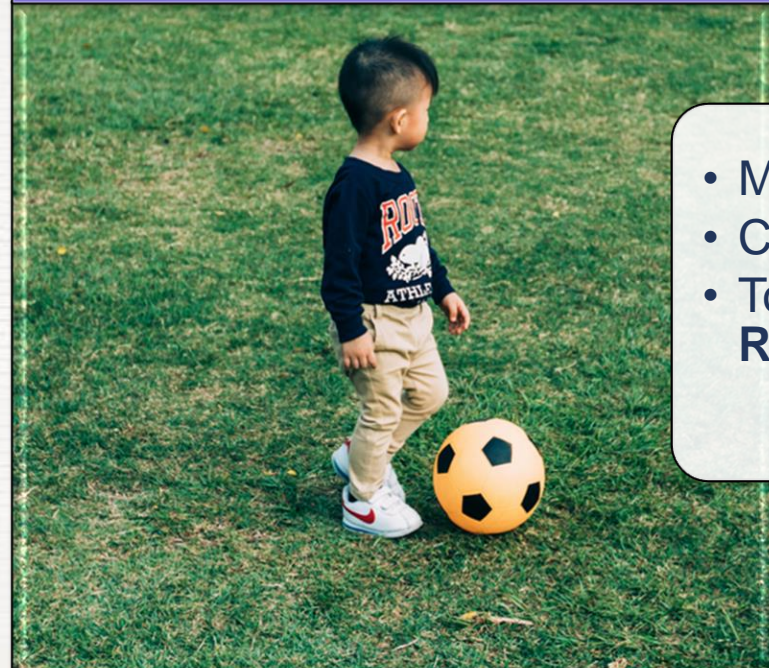
Patterns of Stress Activation

Unpredictable



- Extreme
- Prolonged
- Sensitization/
Vulnerability

Predictable



- Moderate
- Controllable
- Tolerance/
Resilience



Impacts of Toxic Stress

Parent-child separation is a source of toxic stress for children.




Toxic stress changes how the body responds to stress and alters brain structure and functioning.



These disruptions in neurocognitive development put children at greater risk for a multitude of health and psychological impairments in adulthood.



The Research: Marginal Homes



Children “on the margin” of placement experienced improved outcomes when they remained at home as compared to *similarly-maltreated* children who were removed and placed into foster care.

(Doyle 2007; Doyle 2008; Doyle 2013)

“**on the margin**” which refers to cases where CPS investigators may disagree about the recommendation of removal.

Children who remained home were far less likely to experience **teen pregnancy, commit a juvenile offense, and were more likely to hold a job** for at least three months as compared to those placed into foster care.

[Child Protection and Child Outcomes: Measuring the Effects of Foster Care. Doyle, Joseph J. American Economic Review Vol. 97, No. 5 \(2007\): 746-770.](#)

Children placed into foster care were **2 to 3 times more likely to become involved with the criminal justice system** as adults and experienced **higher rates of arrest, conviction, and imprisonment** as compared to those who remained home.

[Child Protection and Adult Crime: Using Investigator Assignment to Estimate Causal Effects of Foster Care. Doyle, Joseph J. Journal of Political Economy Vol. 116, No. 4 \(2008\): 746-770.](#)

Children placed into foster care were more likely to **engage in juvenile delinquency and have the need for emergency care** (3 times higher) as compared to those children who remained home.

[Causal Effects of Foster Care: An Instrumental-Variables Approach. Doyle, Joseph J. Children and Youth Services Review Vol. 35, No. 7 \(2013\): 1143-1151.](#)

The Research: Foster Care



Foster care children experience high rates of mental health disorders and are at an increased risk of experiencing negative long-term health outcomes.

Engler AD, Sarpong KO, Van Horne BS, Greeley CS, Keefe RJ. [A systematic review of mental health disorders of children in foster care](#). *Trauma, Violence, & Abuse*. 2022;23(1):255-264.

Children who have been placed in foster care are:

7x as likely to experience depression

6x as likely to exhibit behavioral problems

5x as likely to feel anxiety

3x as likely to have attention deficit disorder, hearing impairments and vision issues

2x as likely to suffer from developmental delays, asthma, obesity and speech problems



The Research: Disproportionate Impacts

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Specifically Black & Indigenous Families



- Acceptance for investigation (Zuravin et al., 2005)
- Substantiation of alleged maltreatment (Ards, et al., 2003)
- Placement in out of home care (Rivaux, et al., 2008)
- NOT being placed with Relatives
- Multiple Moves within the first 12 months
- Length of time in placement
- Longer time to reunification (Hill, 2005)

<https://www.dcyf.wa.gov/sites/default/files/pdf/reports/CWRacialDisparityIndices2019.pdf>



Placement

- Relative/suitable other
- Supports reunification
- Provides stability
- Includes siblings

Family Time Visitation

- Frequent / consistent
- Least-restrictive, natural setting
- Developmentally appropriate

Educational Stability

- Same school
- Pre-school and/or daycare

“Connectedness has the power to counterbalance adversity.”

-Dr. Bruce Perry

Child & Family Specific Mitigations

- Race & Ethnicity
- Religious observances
- Culture & traditions
- Language
- Routines
- Extracurricular activities
- Medical & dental providers
- Pets
- Belongings
- More.....

Cannot do this without knowing the family

Removal



Continued Separation



Transitions



Removal & Continued Separation



Drinks

Bath

Other

ABOUT THIS CHILD

Name: _____ Age: _____
Nicknames: _____ DOB: _____
Sex: _____ Pronouns: | _____
Gender Identity: _____
Orientation: _____
Years attending: _____
Current School/Daycare: _____
Significant Adults: _____
Current Primary Attachment Figure: _____
Friends/Peers: _____
Respite Provider/Babysitter: _____
Mother: _____ Phone #: _____ Okay to contact? _____
Mother's Current Family Time Plan _____
Father: _____ Phone #: _____ Okay to contact? _____
Father's Current Family Time Plan _____
Giving Caregiver: _____ Phone #: _____ Okay to contact? _____
Receiving Caregiver: _____ Phone #: _____ Okay to contact? _____

Created by Washington Association for Child Advocate Programs (WACAP) Fall 2021

DAILY SCHEDULE / ROUTINE

Days this schedule covers (weekdays, weekends, Saturday, Sunday, etc): _____

5:00 AM	_____
6:00	_____
7:00	_____
8:00	_____
9:00	_____
10:00	_____
11:00	_____
Noon	_____
1:00 PM	_____
2:00	_____
3:00	_____
4:00	_____
5:00	_____
6:00	_____
7:00	_____
8:00	_____
9:00	_____
10:00	_____
11:00	_____
12:00 AM	_____

Transitions



The Neglected Transition C.A.R.E. CHECKLIST

Communicate. Affirm. Recognize. Ensure.

1. C.A.R.E. for Children's Foster Care Notification	Y/N
Is someone with whom the child is familiar present when the child is being notified they are being placed into foster care?	
Have you introduced yourself to the child and explained who you are?	
Have you been sensitive to the child's feelings and provided an opportunity for the child to ask questions?	
2. C.A.R.E. for Children's Belongings	Y/N
Have you asked the child if there is anything that is important to them in the home that they would like to bring with them?	
(If applicable) Have you explained to the child why certain belongings of importance are not able to be transferred with them to their foster care placement?	
3. C.A.R.E. for Children's Experiences of Placement Reason Ambiguity	Y/N
Have you told the child why they have been placed into foster care, in an age-appropriate manner?	
Have you provided the child with an opportunity to ask any clarifying questions about why they have been placed into foster care?	
Have you told the child that they are not to blame for being placed into foster care?	
4. C.A.R.E. for Children's Preference for Parental Accompaniment	Y/N
Have you taken into consideration the child's feelings about the presence/absence of their family members during their placement into foster care?	
(If applicable) Have you told the child why their parents cannot accompany them to the foster care placement?	
(If applicable) Have you offered the child an opportunity to bring a personal belonging that reminds them of their loved ones?	

Mitchell, M. B. (2016). *The Neglected Transition: Building a Relational Home for Children Entering Foster Care*. New York: Oxford University Press.

C.A.R.E. Checklist

FTDM Transition Planning Guide

INTRODUCTORY/LOGISTICS

Does everyone agree that this transition should be prioritized with the child in mind?

How much time do we have until this transition has to/should happen?

On what date should we make the actual move?

RELATIVE SEARCH

Have we considered (and looked for) additional family members instead of foster care?

Has an additional round of relative searches been conducted?

Have we done background checks?

CHILD MOVE PREPARATION

How are we introducing the adults to each other? (i.e. new caregivers to the old ones)?

How, when and where and how often should we introduce the new caregivers to the child?
(Should be on the child's "home turf" to start, gradually progressing to overnights at the new caregivers.)

FTDM Transition Planning Guide

Let's Practice!

Getting to Know Liam

- 8 year-old boy
- In the third grade, same school and for three years, and in the community his whole life
- Has been diagnosed with ADHD and Tourette's syndrome.
- Has a speech impediment that makes it difficult to understand many of his words.
- Has had an IEP for 1 year, struggles with impulse control and is frequently corrected for his behaviors.
- Low self-esteem and voices hating himself.
- Has two older brothers, one who is 25 and lives 3 hours away and one who is 11.
- Unlike his older brother (11), he displays all of his emotions through words and action with little to no filter.
- His very best friend lives several blocks away and is in the same class.
- Has been on the same soccer team since he was 4 – he lives for soccer. They practice Mondays and Wednesdays with games on Saturday.
- The family dog is 2 weeks younger and Luca considers her his “little sister”.

Liam is removed from home on Friday evening and taken to a receiving home until placement can be determined at the Shelter Care Hearing on Monday.

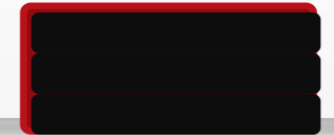
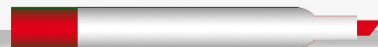
Liam: Identifying Harms of Removal

Instructions

1. In pairs/groups
2. Discuss Liam's situation and identify the different harms of removal that Liam would likely experience.



DO NOT jump to mitigation of harm of removal. We are not yet talking about what we can do, we are only identifying the likely harms of removal to Liam.

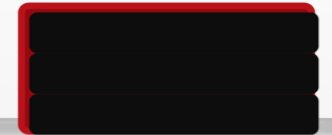


Liam: Mitigating Harms of Removal

Instructions

1. Thinking about the list your group just made, what role could a child advocate play in helping mitigate the harmful impacts of removal to Liam?

Hint: Think about who and what is important to Liam



Resources

1



FYJP Harm of Removal Webpage

2



Harm of Removal Map



3



C.A.R.E. Checklist

4



Thank You!

Laura Vogel

laura.vogel@courts.wa.gov

Jacob D'Annunzio

Jacob.Dannunzio@opd.wa.gov

