

Family Preparation for Reunification

1. Have constant conversation with the child/ren placed in your care and your biological children about the plan of reunification and begin early on preparing them for the return to biological parent/s. Tell them appropriate facts rather than sugar coating the situation and what is happening.
2. Make a list of things that you would like to see the biological parents complete for their children to be returned for your reference. What is your part in that?
3. Create a life book with the child in your placement if the child is of appropriate age. If not create one for them. Fill a scrapbook, binder or journal with memories, pictures, and stories.
4. Teach the child in your placement your phone number and address so that you can feel confident they can reach you if need be.
5. Reach out to the biological parents, so that they feel safe and comfortable to continue a relationship with you after reunification is achieved.
6. Give the child a transitional object. This gives them something remember or think of your home that would make them feel safe. I.e., a gift, wind chime, a picture.
7. Rely on your own personal supports. Surround yourself by family members and friends that will help you through the difficult transition.
8. Normalize your feelings, your biological children and child placed in your care by talking about missing the child/ren before and after their return to their biological parents. (Grieving the loss of the child.)
9. You and your biological children can write a letter, or draw a picture and give them to keep. Talk to the children about their feelings, and thoughts.
10. Make a worry box. Help the child placed in your care, write down, draw, paint, cut out of magazines all of their worries (or with your biological children) about being returned home. Once all of the worries are in the box have the child, tape, glue or seal in some way the worries in the box and put the box away. Every once in awhile address the worries and see if they are still worries. When the child is ready destroy or get rid of the box in an appropriate way. I.e. throw away, burn, step on etc.
11. Talk to your supports or licensing worker about other ideas and your thoughts and feelings. Know that what you are experiencing is difficult for you, your family and the children.