

Sources of Information - CHILD

(Please note that it is not your role as a CASA volunteer to interview a child about the allegations; many of the children have been interviewed many times and additional interviews may be harmful to the child and to any potential criminal prosecution.)

If the child is verbal:

1. What are your interests?
2. Have you visited/spoken to your relatives? How often? What was the best part about the visit? What did you like least?
3. What do you like best about your current placement? What do you like least?
4. Are you having any problems at home? School? Friends? Have you told anyone? What was the outcome?
5. What is your favorite thing about school? What do you like least?
6. What does your future look like in your mind?
7. If you could live anywhere you wanted, where would you live? Why?

Additional child observations:

1. What is the child's affect and mood?
2. Do you see any significant mood changes?
3. What is the child's development stage? Are they on track?
4. What is the child's verbal ability?
5. How are the child's relationships with others? How does he/she interact?
6. What is the child's intellectual outcome?

Best places for observation:

1. In the home (biological or foster).
2. At the school.
3. During a parent or sibling visit.



Sources of Information – Parents & Family

Biological Parents:

1. What is your version of the events stated in the petition?
2. Are there any omissions or extenuating circumstances you feel are important?
3. How often do you speak to or visit with your child?
4. How often is your child visiting with their siblings?
5. What is your plan or goal for your child? Desire for reunification?
6. What steps are you taking towards your reunification goal? Services started? Completed?
7. What help do you need from me or DHS to achieve your goal?

Tell me about your child:

1. What activities do they enjoy?
2. What is their personality like?
3. What do they love? What do they fear?
4. Are there any significant behavior problems or strengths?
5. Are there any medical concerns?
6. How does your child perform in school?

Extended Family:

1. What is your version of the events that you have seen in the family?
2. What resources are available within your family for the child and the parents?



Sources of Information – Foster Parents & Group Homes

Foster Parents:

1. Tell me about the child. Personality? Behavior? Likes and dislikes?
2. How are things going?
3. Are there any significant behavior problems present?
4. How is he/she getting along with your family?
5. Are there other children present in the home? How is the interaction between children?
6. What does discipline look like for the children in your home?
7. What is the child's regular schedule? Are there any routines? Activities?
8. What are the child's daily chores?
9. What school is the child attending? What grade are they in? How is their performance in school? Any challenges?
10. How often is the child visiting with their parents in person? By phone or video chat? Who is supervising these visits?
11. How often is the child visiting with and talking to outside family members (grandparents, aunts/uncles, siblings)?
12. Are there any medical concerns or conditions? Who is the child's primary care physician? Any specialty physicians?
13. Is the child receiving any type of therapy (occupational, physical, or mental health)?
14. Does the child currently take any medications daily (prescribed or over-the-counter)?
15. Do you have any concerns?

Group Homes:

(Group home managers should be asked the foster parent questions and the questions below.)

1. How does the child get along with the staff? Other residents?
2. Has he/she integrated themselves into group home life?
3. What activities does the group home offer? Is the child participating in these events?
4. May I have a copy of his/her treatment plan? When is the next treatment planning meeting?

Sources of Information – Professionals

DHS Caseworkers

1. What is the child's current placement? Contact information?
2. Where are the biological parents currently located? Contact information?
3. Are there any additional family members present in the child's life? Contact information?
4. Is the child currently in any type of therapy (occupational, physical, mental health)? Contact information for therapists?
5. How many times has the child been moved since coming into placement? Reason for the moves?
6. How are the parents progressing on their case plan?
7. Are there any visits with parents and family? How often? Supervised? If not visits, why?
8. Are there any medical or safety concerns?
9. Is there any additional information we should know about?

ICWA Tribe

1. Is the child an enrolled member of the tribe?
2. What resources are available to the family/child through the tribe?
3. Is there a potential for transfer of jurisdiction on this case?
4. Will anyone be appearing in court on behalf of the tribe?
5. What are the potential cultural responses to the current family problem?
6. Are there any extended family or members of the tribe who may be a potential placement alternative for the Indian Child?

Sources of Information – Professionals (Continued)

Teachers:

1. What is the child's personality like? Likes and dislikes?
2. What is the child's attendance like in your class?
3. When he/she attends class, is he on time?
4. Is he/she typically prepared for class (homework, books, folder, and pencil)?
5. Are there any significant behavior problems? Have these problems been address with the parents? Request copies of incident reports.
6. Does he/she actively participate in class?
7. Does he/she ask for help when he does not understand the lesson?
8. In your opinion, is he/she able to do the work?
9. What are his/her grades like? May I have a copy of the most recent report card/progress report?
10. Are there any education problems or delays? What are the child's strengths?
11. What resources are available at the school? (Tutoring, test prep, etc.)
12. Has an IEP been requested? When? By whom? Status?
13. What is the level of parent involvement? Conferences? Meetings?
14. What are the child's peer relationships like? Friends?
15. What steps should be taken to help him/her be more successful in school?
16. Is the child on track to graduate on time? (high school students)
17. What extracurricular activities are the student involved in? (junior high/high school students)

Doctors:

1. Does the child have a current medical condition that is being monitored?
2. Is the child's medical condition related to the abuse and/or neglect?
3. What is the child's past medical history? Surgeries?
4. What follow-up services may be required to address medical conditions resulting from abuse and/or neglect?
5. Is the parent/guardian completing treatment as prescribed?

Sources of Information – Professionals (Continued)

Therapists/Psychiatrists:

1. What is the child's diagnosis?
2. Has he/she been prescribed medication? Which ones? Dosages? How often is this evaluated?
3. How often is the child seen? Does he/she keep his appointments? If not, why?
4. Is he/she open to therapy? Engaged in discussion?
5. May I have copies of any assessments, reports, and visit notes?
6. Recommendations? (Anger, management, structured activities, mentor, etc.)
7. Is there any other type of therapy that would be beneficial that he/she is not receiving? (family, group, play)

Child's Attorney

1. What is their current opinion of the case?
2. Have they visited with the child/foster parents either in person or on the phone?
3. Are there any current plans to file any type of petition in the court?
4. Is there anything the volunteer should know that they may not have heard from other parties?

Parent's Service & Resource Providers:

1. Therapists/Counselors
2. Pastors
3. Sponsors (NA, AA, GA)
4. Friends/Neighbors
5. Parent's Attorney
6. Landlords
7. Probation Officer

Note: This list of basic questions and sources is only a guide. All of the questions may not be appropriate for each case. For additional help or information please contact your volunteer coordinator.