

Fact Sheet: The Impact of Visiting

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June 2007

Parent-child relationships and reunification:

“Studies of children in out-of-home care have repeatedly found a significant relationship between parent-child visits and the likelihood of reunification.” (cited in Beckerman 1998)

“Children who are visited frequently are more likely to be returned to their homes than those who are visited infrequently.” (Fanshel and Shinn, as cited in Cantos, Gries and Slis 1997)

Mother's motivation to change:

“A mother's motivation to change is enhanced when ongoing contact with the child provides reassurance that she is still the parent and will continue to play a meaningful role in the child's life.” (Burry and Wright, 2006)

Children's behavior and emotional adjustment:

“Children who are visited regularly by their biological parents have fewer behaviour problems than do children who are visited less frequently or not at all.” (Cantos, Gries and Slis 1997)

“Children who experience regular visitation show fewer behavior problems in the foster home.” (Colon 1978, as cited in Burry and Wright, 2006)

“Visitation by natural parents can aid the child in elevating his self-esteem, understanding and coping with his parents' problems, and effectively mourning the loss of his natural parents. Both psychoanalytic theory and empirical data suggest that visiting a parent is better than no parent at all.” (Garrison 1983)

“If children do not have an opportunity to visit with their families, the child could form an exaggerated view of the parent, which in turn might affect the child's self-esteem.” (Litner, as cited in McWey and Mullis 2004)

“Visiting helps calm some of the children's separation fears and gives both the placed children and the foster parents continuing opportunities to see the parents realistically instead of maintaining irrational notions of them.” (Cantos, Gries and Slis 1997)

“Children who were frequently visited show significantly greater gains in nonverbal IQ scores than those who were visited infrequently.” (Fanshel and Shinn, as cited in Cantos, Gries and Slis 1997)

“Children who were regularly visited were found to have better emotional adjustment and better school adjustment.” (Fanshel and Shinn, as cited in Erera 1997).

“Children who were regularly visited exhibited less abusive language and less immature defiant behavior with peers.” (Borgman, as cited in Erera 1997)

“Birth family connection offers the child the opportunity to develop a permanent positive attachment and helps them learn how to develop and maintain long-term relationships.” (as cited in Mapp 2002)

“When youth are separated from their birth family, they come to believe they have no identity to relate to. This impedes their ability to complete the adolescent task of forming a self-identity and their ability to form positive relationships, as with their foster family.” (Salahu-Din and Bollman, as cited in Mapp 2002)

“The relationship with a birth family member can help give children strength to endure the trauma of foster care and has been shown to help children adjust better to being in care.” (as cited in Mapp 2002)