



## 2013 EPRESS

### Database Reminder

All Access and Visitation recipients should be entering current data into the database. Get caught up this summer, so we are ready for the Fall Report.

Call the Clearinghouse if you have questions.

### Questions from Directors

*I have a family back at the program – they were here a few years ago, and we still have the old file. That’s how I know that the answers that the mother gave at intake to a former staff person were not the same as she gave to my current staff on some important questions. I didn’t notice it until recently, and I’m not sure what to do.*

The paper trail of visit notes and case files could turn out to be very important in this case. You suspect that the client could be untruthful now, and it might change how you handle the case. My advice is to bring the client back in for a new intake, and have the old case file with you. Talk about the discrepancies directly – there is no need to be secretive or try to “catch” the client lying. There’s always the chance that the parent assumes that you remember all the details from the case and don’t need for her to repeat the information.

This scenario does raise the issue of repeat clients, and we’ve not talked about those old case files or scrutinizing them when the client returns. Now that this issue has been raised, incorporate a practice of going over the old case file before the client begins visits again. You should not assume that you will

remember everything about a case when it returns to your program. It may well still be important that a parent previously reported major health issues for himself or the child, or details about violence in the home, or allegations of drug addictions, just to name a few issues that could have been/may still be present in the case. Finally, if the case is a dependency case, the case manager may not be aware of the old case/allegations/issues, so be sure that he or she is aware of all of the dynamics of the case.

*A father was visiting with his six-year-old son and promised to take the child to a certain movie when the supervision is over (within a few months). My staff read about the movie, and it is not appropriate for a six-year-old. It's R-rated, with violence and gore. We didn't say anything about it at the time. Should we say something now? He's not happy that he's here, and he resents us for it already.*

While I appreciate your concern, I want you to remind you gently that you will have no authority in this family in a very short period of time. It's the nature of child protection services, and it's not a perfect world. That said, you might be able to educate this dad if you tread carefully. He sounds young and immature himself. Instead of telling him outright that he shouldn't take his son to the movie – which can backfire and lead him to taking the child simply to spite you, choose another strategy. Perhaps taking the approach of spending some additional office time emphasizing the developmental stage of this child would be received better by this dad. For example, explain to him that six-year-olds can't always distinguish between make-believe and reality. Explain that children who get frightened may internalize their fear and have nightmares and anxiety. Talk about other characteristics of a six-year-old too – use the Family Skill Building online. Encourage him to think about his child's development whenever he makes decisions. My hope is that you can build dad's parenting skills, which in turn might help him make better choices for his son.

## **Building Self-Esteem in Children**

Were you on the last phone conference training? We talked about this issue, and we encourage your staff and volunteers to read it and talk about it!

*What is Self-Esteem?*

Self-esteem refers to the way people think about themselves and the value that they believe they have. Self-esteem is an important factor in determining a person's happiness, confidence, and success in life. Self-esteem changes over time, but

childhood is the most important period in the development of a person's self-esteem. Therefore, it is crucial to foster a healthy sense of self-esteem in children, as well as to be aware of the signs of low self-esteem.

*What happens when a child has low self-esteem?*

Some children suffer from low self-esteem, or they do not think of themselves highly, or value themselves. Low self-esteem can be caused by:

- Persistent punishment, neglect or abuse
- Failing to meet their parents' or friends' standards
- Living in a stressful environment
- Belonging to a group that is discriminated against (racial or ethnic discrimination, LGBT discrimination, etc.)
- A lack of praise, attention, or positive reinforcement
- Being the odd one out, at home or at school

When a child suffers from low self-esteem, it can lead to negative consequences, including:

- **Poor academic performance:** Children with low self-esteem often feel that they will fail at everything and thus lack the motivation to do their best at school. This can result in lower grades, which in turn lead to lower self-esteem, starting a vicious cycle.
- **Decreased socialization:** Children who lack confidence and think they are not likeable find it harder to socialize. The inability to make friends leads to lower self-esteem, which leads to further isolation, resulting in another vicious cycle.
- **Risky behavior:** Evidence suggests that children with low self-esteem are more likely to give in to peer pressure and participate in unsafe behavior such as using drugs or engaging in risky sexual activity.
- **Depression:** If children continuously tell themselves that they are worthless or stupid, they can become depressed. Parents or helping professionals should seek attention immediately if they suspect that a child suffers from depression. Depression is a serious illness that requires treatment in order to recover.

*What can be done to increase self-esteem?*

Helping professionals can take measures to support a child's self-esteem, such as:

- **Encouraging children to re-frame their negative thoughts as positive ones.** **Teach** children how to recognize their negative thoughts and turn them into productive ones. For example, "I'm bad at math" can become "I love reading and writing, but I work hard at math and do the best that I can." "I'm an idiot" can become "I don't understand this."
- **Engaging children in activities that will boost their confidence and creativity.** Arts and crafts, puzzles, and writing poems can make children feel

successful. Be sure to praise children for their efforts, and if they get stuck, help them to problem-solve.

- **Re-directing expressions of failure into discussions about coping with defeat and disappointment.** If a child is dwelling on what he/she sees as a failure, turn the conversation into a talk about the ups and downs that everyone must go through in life, including adults. Then help the child come up with ways to deal with these feelings and disappointments.

*Warning signs of low self-esteem in children:*

- “I’m not good at anything.”
- “I can’t do anything right.”
- “I know I can’t do it, why should I even try.”
- “I’m so stupid.”
- “What’s the point? No one cares about me anyway.”
- Withdrawal from or anxiety toward social situations
- Giving up or becoming frustrated easily

*Tips for parents:*

- Remember that you are the most important person to your child and have the biggest effect on his/her self-esteem.
- Emphasize effort instead of the result. For example, praise your child for trying out for the soccer team instead of focusing on making the team. Tell your child you are proud of him/her for how much he/she studied for a test instead of focusing on the grade.
- When a child misbehaves, let the child know that you are upset, not with who he/she is, but with what happened. This helps separate the misbehavior from the child. For example, say, “I’m upset that you didn’t listen to me, but I still love you and I know you will do better next time.”
- Give your children tasks that will help boost their confidence, and show your appreciation for it. Assign household chores that children must complete each week, and then tell them how much of a help they are.
- Show interest in your child’s activities, ideas, and problems. Listen when the child talks to you! Show your child that his/her opinions matter by including him/her in discussions on family decisions.
- Help your child come up with at least three good things about him/herself, and then post the list on the refrigerator. Add to it occasionally.
- Be affectionate. Tell your children often that you love them no matter what, and that they are special. You love them because of who they are, not what they do.
- Laugh at yourself when you make a mistake. This will teach children to do the same.

- Create a safe and loving home environment. Children who are exposed to their parents fighting are more likely to develop low self-esteem.

*These tips for parents can be cut and pasted into a separate document and used as a handout! Call the Clearinghouse if you need help making this section into a stand-alone sheet!*

Sources:

<http://www.webmd.com/parenting/helping-your-child-develop-healthy-self-esteem#>

[http://kidshealth.org/parent/emotions/feelings/self\\_esteem.html#](http://kidshealth.org/parent/emotions/feelings/self_esteem.html#)

<http://www.nccc.org/Guidance/self.esteem.html>

<http://www.livestrong.com/article/138859-the-effects-low-self-esteem-children/>

<http://www.overcoming.co.uk/single.htm?ipg=8611>

[http://www.babycenter.com/0\\_ten-ways-to-build-your-childs-self-esteem\\_65569.bc](http://www.babycenter.com/0_ten-ways-to-build-your-childs-self-esteem_65569.bc)

## **Fact Sheet: Parenting Coordinators**

We have received several questions about parenting coordinators. Here's some helpful information.

What is a Parenting Coordinator?

- Parenting coordinators are professionals with specialized training and qualifications who help parents create and implement a parenting plan for their children.
- May be court appointed, or a single party may make a motion to the court to have one appointed, or both parties can agree to use a parenting coordinator to resolve their conflict.

What is the Objective of a Parenting Coordinator?

- To provide a child-focused alternative dispute resolution process, and
- To protect and sustain safe, healthy, parent-child relationships.

Who can benefit from a Parenting Coordinator?

- Parents who are divorcing
- Parents of blended families
- Parents who come from different cultural or behavioral backgrounds

- Parents seeking to help ensure that they are acting with the best interests of their children in mind

#### What Qualifications do Parenting Coordinators Have?

- Professionals in one of the following fields:
  - Attorneys in good standing with the Florida Bar
  - Florida Supreme Court Family Law mediators
  - Certified physician with the American Board of Psychiatry and Neurology
  - Mental Health professional
  - Completion of three years post-licensure/post-certification practice
  - Completion of a Family Law mediation training program certified by the Florida Supreme Court
  - 24 hours (minimum) of parenting coordinator training in a variety of parenting and family law procedural areas
  - 4 hours (minimum) of training in the areas of:
    - Domestic violence
    - Child abuse education related to parenting coordination

#### What do Parenting Coordinators do?

- Work with parents who have not responded to traditional forms of dispute resolution
- Monitor communication
- Adjust the parenting plan when needed
- Help to reduce stress and
- Seek positive parenting solutions
- Discuss behaviors that are detrimental to the development of the child
- Refer parents to literature on parental alienation and child rearing

#### Why are Parenting Coordinators Beneficial?

- They prevent children from being exposed to high-conflict situations that can cause long term harm.
- Studies show that prolonged conflicts between parents can cause emotional and behavioral problems in children, such as:
  - Regression in development
  - Academic underachievement
  - Hostility
  - Phobias
  - Social withdrawal
  - Headaches
  - Stomachaches

- Depression
- Abrupt personality changes
- Crying
- Separation anxiety
- Sleep disturbance
- Wetting problems
- Low self-esteem

What is the Cost Associated with a Parenting Coordinator?

- \$150-250/hour
- Generally split between both parents equally, unless otherwise agreed upon

## Thinking Beyond Actions: Developing Empathy and Critical Thinking Skills in Children

**Why are empathy and critical thinking skills important?**

Both empathy and critical thinking are closely related to the sixth protective factor against child maltreatment – *emotional and social development for children*. Children who learn emotional and social skills, such as empathy and critical thinking, are more likely to:

- Exercise self-awareness and the awareness of others,
- Manage their moods and handle difficult feelings, impulses, and anger,
- Motivate themselves, set goals, and face goals with optimism even after setbacks,
- Put themselves in another’s shoes to understand his or her perspective before and after acting or speaking, and
- Manage relationships, resolve arguments, cooperate, and collaborate with parents, classmates and friends.



**Empathy** is the ability to understand and imagine what someone else is feeling. Empathy motivates people to be kind to others, and help others who may need it.

A child who has not been taught about empathy may not consider consequences when misbehaving, making messes, or neglecting to help out around the house. A child who has developed empathy can better think through actions, and decide whether or not that action will help or hurt someone else.

**Critical thinking** is reflecting on beliefs and actions. Critical thinking allows children to ask further questions, better understand social interactions, and succeed in school and as adults.

Critical thinking helps children to think more about their actions, beliefs, and the actions of others. Without critical thinking skills, children may act more impulsively, ignore consequences, fail to reflect on their own ideas of morality, and lack curiosity.

## Teaching Empathy & Critical Thinking

Empathy and critical thinking are often taught separately, but supervised visitation is a great opportunity to teach both of these skills to children. Additionally, supervised visitation workers can model behaviors for parents that prompt their children to exercise empathy and critical thinking.

Below are various scenarios supervised visitation workers can use to build on a child's empathy and critical thinking skills. The way these behaviors are modeled and the questions asked will depend on a child's age. However, most older toddlers and children are able to understand empathy if it is explained.

## Exercising Empathy Scenarios

### Scenario 1:



Matthew is six years old and visiting with his mother, Kay. During the visit, Matthew tells his mother that he got in trouble at school for yelling at his classmate during recess. Kay says, "Don't do that again" and doesn't address the problem of yelling at the classmate again.

**1. What is the opportunity for empathy building?** Matthew has been disrespectful at school. Discussing Matthew's behavior would give Matthew a chance to reflect on how his classmate may feel when Matthew yells at him or

her.



**2. What can a supervised visitation worker say?** “Matthew, it sounds like you got in trouble for yelling at your classmate. How do you think your classmate felt after you yelled at him or her?” A worker can give Matthew time to answer, and if he does not say anything, a worker can say, “Do you think he or she likes being yelled at?” or “How do you feel when you’re yelled at? Do you think your classmate likes being yelled at?”

**Modeling for Parents:** A worker could ask questions directed at Kay, Matthew’s mom, and ask “Now, Matthew, I wonder what your mom thinks about this. Mom, how do you think Matthew’s classmate felt when he or she was yelled at? How do you think yelling makes people feel?” For some parents, a simple question like, “Mom, do you think Matthew knows how his classmate feels?” may be enough to prompt a parent to explore these feelings with his/her child.

**Follow up:** A worker can talk to Matthew and ask, “Next time you get upset with your classmate, how could you tell him or her in a way that doesn’t make him or her sad?” or say “If you get upset, next time you can think about how you would feel if someone yelled at you?” The worker can also explore why Matthew yelled at his classmate.

## Scenario 2:



Maya is four years old and is visiting her father, Byron. While playing, Maya gets frustrated while playing because she is tired and needs a nap. Maya screams and throws a block at Byron’s face, hitting him in the eye. Byron begins to yell at Maya, but stops after glancing over at the supervised visitation worker.

### 1. What is the opportunity for empathy building?

Maya became frustrated and hurt her father. This gives Maya a chance to reflect on how her father may

feel after being hit.

**2. What can a supervised visitation worker say?** “Oh, Maya, how do you think your dad feels?” or “Maya, do you think your dad hurts right now? The block hit him pretty hard. Why don’t you ask him how he feels?”

**Modeling for Parents:** A worker could ask questions directed at Byron, and say “Dad, how do you feel? Can you tell Maya how getting hit with a block makes you feel?” For some parents, a simple question like, “Dad, do you think Maya knows how you feel?” may be enough to prompt a parent to explore these feelings with his/her child.

**Follow up:** A worker can talk to Maya using age appropriate language about how it makes her feel making when her dad is hurt, or how she feels when someone else has “boo boos.” Try to focus more on empathy, not on making Maya feel guilty about what she has done. Guilt is something Maya feels, while feeling empathy focuses more on how her dad feels and how that, in turn, makes her feel.

## Exercising Critical Thinking

### Scenario 3:



Jane is 5 years old and visiting with her mother, Carol. While playing with her mom, Jane gets excited and climbs up onto a table. Carol immediately asks her to get down and when Jane asks, “Why?” her mom replies, “Because I said so.” Jane then throws a temper tantrum and reluctantly climbs down.

**1. What is the opportunity for Jane’s development of critical thinking?** Jane throws a temper tantrum because she does not want to get off the table. This gives Jane a chance to reflect on her decisions she has just made.

**2. What can a supervised visitation worker say?** “Jane, why do you think your mom wants you to stay off the table?” or “Why do you think you should stay off the table

when you’re playing a game?”

**Modeling for Parents:** When Jane responds to these questions, the worker can ask Carol to share her reasoning for making the rule. This will help Jane understand that this rule and other rules have purpose. It might also be good for the worker to communicate to the parent (in private) that it is beneficial to share the reasons behind our rules on a regular basis. It helps the child understand that it is important to critically think through our actions. Rules can protect us from experiencing the consequences that we cannot predict, but critical thinking can help us do that if we do not have rules or an answer to everything.

**Follow up:** The worker may continue asking Jane questions such as, “Do you have rules in your classroom at school that you don’t understand?” and again, “Why do you think your teacher wants you to follow those rules?” Guiding her through the thought process can help create a new pattern of critical thinking in similar circumstances.

### Scenario 4:



Chris is 14 and on a soccer team in middle school. During his visit with Mark, his 33 year-old-dad, Chris starts to share all the things he learned about soccer this week. Mark, having a lot of experience playing soccer, eventually gets irritated and says, “I know, Chris, I played for years when I was younger!” Chris gets upset, yells at his dad, and calls him names for not listening to him or caring what he has to say. Chris doesn’t want to talk to his dad for the remainder of the time.

**1. What is the opportunity for Chris’s development of critical thinking?** Chris gets upset because his dad is not listening to his stories about soccer. This gives Chris a chance to reflect on the conversation with his dad that just occurred. Mark can learn that his child needs to talk, and Mark can learn patience and putting his child first.

**2. What can the supervised visitation worker say?** After affirming Chris’s feelings, as they are valid, the worker might ask, “What are some other things that you could have said to your dad to show him that you were upset?” or “Why do you think your dad responded that way?”

**Modeling for Parents:** Though it was not the best way to respond to Chris, this is still a good opportunity for Mark to learn how to deal with an upset teenager. Chris can further develop critical thinking by being offered patience and understanding from his dad. After Chris expresses his feelings to Mark, it is important that they both explore other possible responses and how they would affect the other person, by asking questions like, “How could I have said that better?” (Here we see an overlap between empathy and critical thinking.)

**Follow up:** The worker can follow up with Chris by asking him questions like, “Next time you get upset, what are some things you can do to avoid saying things that will hurt others or get yourself into trouble?” Offer some tips that will help him think critically when making those decisions, like, “Take three deep breaths before responding when you know you are frustrated,” or “Wait fifteen seconds and try to think through three different responses before saying something.” Following up with Mark might include a discussion about how Chris needs Mark to put Chris’s feelings first. Mark might be encouraged to think about how he would feel if someone cut him off when he was discussing something important to him.

## **Final Thoughts**

Empathy often overlaps with critical thinking because they both involve a similar style of thinking – thinking “how would they feel if...” or “what happens next?” In this last example, for instance, Chris can develop empathy by considering how his response is affecting his father emotionally, while developing critical thinking by predicting the outcomes and the consequences of his word choices. Giving children opportunities to make decisions that affect themselves and others is a great way to foster critical thinking and empathy.

## **Intersections of Domestic Violence and Child Maltreatment: An Introduction**

As promised, here is the information from the Special Topics training session. You asked for it in a Word document for new staff and in-service reading, so here it is!

### **I. Introduction**

1. Child maltreatment and domestic violence frequently co-occur. Both forms of abuse share common characteristics.
2. If one form of abuse is suspected or known, the family should be assessed for the other.
3. Please click on the link and listen to the powerful 911 call:  
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ryLBCu097ns>

### **II. Objectives**

1. Realize the prevalence of co-occurrence of domestic violence and child maltreatment.
2. Understand the shared characteristics of domestic violence and child maltreatment.
3. Learn how children experience domestic violence.
4. Understand how exposure to domestic violence can impact a child.
5. Discover strategies for assessing and preventing child abuse in an abusive relationship.

### **III. Prevalence**

1. Studies measuring co-occurrence of child maltreatment and domestic violence typically find that 30 to 60 percent of families experiencing one of the forms of abuse also experience the other.
2. Co-occurrence findings vary due to:
  - Differences in populations sampled and study methods.

1. Samples of poor urban areas are likely to have higher rates of co-occurrence than affluent suburban areas.
2. Samples comprised of only shelter victims are likely to have higher rates of co-occurrence than random community samples.
- Differences in the type of harm observed.
  1. Some studies only measure physical abuse, while some observe both physical and emotional abuse.
- Differences in definitions used.
  1. Definitions used for terms such as child abuse, exposure, or domestic violence vary between studies.
3. One nationally representative study in 2006 estimated that 15.5 million American children live in families in which domestic violence had occurred at least once in the previous year.
  - McDonald R., Jouriles E. N., Ramisetty-Mikler S., Caetano R, Green C. E. (2006). Estimating the number of American children living in partner-violent families. *Journal of Family Psychology*, 20(1): 137-142.
  - That same study estimated that 7 million children live in families in which severe partner violence had occurred.

#### **IV. Shared Characteristics of Domestic Violence and Child Maltreatment**

1. The power and control dynamic of domestic violence frequently overlaps with child maltreatment.
  - Perpetrators use threats and intimidation to control their victims. Perpetrators may:
    1. threaten to report the victim to Child Protective Services for injuries the perpetrator actually inflicted
    2. threaten to take custody of the children
    3. threaten to harm themselves to control their victims
    4. stalk their victims
  - Perpetrators use the children to control their victims. Perpetrators may:
    1. harm the child to hurt the other parent, particularly when separation has occurred or is imminent
    2. use the child's behavior as an excuse to be abusive
  - Perpetrators often have poor interpersonal boundaries and feelings of entitlement. Perpetrators may

1. become angry and abuse the children when the perpetrator feels the victim is paying more attention to them.
2. require the kids to pay more attention to the perpetrator's needs than their own for fear of the consequences.
- The perpetrator may use economic abuse to control the victim.
  1. A perpetrator may restrict access to finances or transportation which can:
    - a. Prevent the victim from getting medical attention for sick and/or injured children.
    - b. Prevent the victim from otherwise meeting the child's basic needs.
2. Child maltreatment and domestic violence are both heavily stigmatized. Thus, both forms of abuse are likely to remain private matters.
3. Victims may also be unlikely to disclose abuse for the following, overlapping reasons:
  - Victims may have had a previous negative experience with service providers after disclosing.
  - Victims may fear being blamed.
  - Victims may be concerned about overreaction or minimization of the problem.
  - Victims may feel responsible, guilty, or embarrassed for the abuse.
4. With child maltreatment and domestic violence, it is difficult to prove that the perpetrator will not abuse again in the future.
5. In both cases, harm can be either physical or emotional for victims.

## **V. How Children Experience Domestic Violence**

1. Children may witness domestic violence both audibly and visually.
  - Children may hear:
    1. verbal abuse.
    2. victim's screams and pleas for help.
  - Children may witness:
    1. the perpetrator being arrested
    2. the victim's physical injuries, such as bruises
    3. the victim being taken to the hospital by ambulance.
2. Children may physically experience domestic violence.
  - Children may be:
    1. Direct targets of physical or verbal abuse.
    2. Subject to frequent moves if the adult victim tries to flee for safety.

- Children may be forced into participating in the adult victim's abuse and degradation.
  - Children may try to intervene and suffer injury, may blame themselves for the abuse, may join forces with the abuser or victim, and may become "parentified."
3. Children are more likely to be exposed to substance abuse.
    - Those who abuse alcohol are more likely to abuse their partner, and the abuse is more likely to be severe.
    - Victims may use substances to self-medicate due to physical or emotional pain.

**VI. Impact of Domestic Violence on Children** Many studies have shown that domestic violence is associated with child development problems and later adult problems; however, child resilience plays a large part in whether any one child will develop the following issues.

1. Domestic violence may result in direct physical injury and/or psychological harm to children. If a child tries to intervene during an episode of violence, the child may be physically injured. Adult victims may over-discipline in order to keep the perpetrator from getting angry.
2. Children may:
  - suffer physical injuries as the targets of violence.
  - inadvertently be injured during an episode of violence
3. Adult victims may over-discipline their children.
4. Perpetrators may be severely controlling and are likely to use harsh forms of discipline.
5. Domestic violence may interfere with the parenting a child receives.
  - The adult victim's physical injuries can prevent the child from receiving adequate care.
  - Adult victims may suffer from depression and anxiety which may hinder caring for the child.
  - The adult victim may be prevented from getting medical attention for sick and/or injured children.
  - The perpetrator's entitlement issues can lead to neglect of the child's needs.
  - The perpetrator may focus on controlling the adult victim and neglect the child's needs.
  - The child's needs may be neglected due to adult substance abuse.
6. Children exposed to domestic violence are at a greater risk of developing various behavior and emotional problems.
  - Children may express fear, shame, or guilt after disclosing.

- Children may develop:
    1. Aggressive and antisocial behaviors
    2. Low self-esteem, depression, or anxiety
    3. Fewer social skills, such as relationship forming and coping skills
  - Children exposed to domestic violence are more likely to:
    1. Attempt suicide
    2. Drop out of school
    3. Become pregnant at a young age
    4. Abuse substances as an adult
    5. Have reduced attention spans or trouble concentrating
    6. Join gangs
    7. Enter abusive relationships
    8. Abuse their own children
  - Children who have grown up in violent homes are at risk for recreating the abusive relationships they have seen.
  - One study found that child abuse or neglect increases the likelihood of arrest as a juvenile by 59 percent, as an adult by 28 percent, and for a violent crime by 30 percent.
    1. Widom, C. S., and Maxfield, M. G. (2001). *An Update on the Cycle of Violence*, National Institute of Justice, Washington, DC.
7. Even though children exposed to domestic violence are at a greater risk of developing the previously mentioned issues, each child experiences domestic violence differently.
- Recent research has shown that individual child resilience moderates child development problems.
  - Some children, even though exposed to domestic violence, develop coping skills in other ways and do not develop behavioral or emotional problems.
  - Gewirtz, A. H. & Edleson, J. L. (2007). Young children's exposure to intimate partner violence: Towards a developmental risk and resilience framework for research and intervention. *Journal of Family Violence*, 22, 151–163.

## **VII. Strategies for preventing child abuse in an abusive relationship.**

1. Removing the child from the home should be considered a last resort.
2. Protecting the adult victim helps secure the child's safety.
  - The perpetrator should be held accountable.
    1. Researchers agree that when the perpetrator is not in the home, the child fairs a lot better.



3. The first step for assisting families experiencing either form of abuse is recognizing the abuse.
4. Assessment is critical and should be done often.
5. Abuse may be physical or emotional; so, there may be more than physical signs that abuse is occurring.
  - Here are some sample questions. Please note that this is not a comprehensive list of abusive behaviors. Even if a client answers no to every question, he/she could still be in a violent relationship. This tool is not a standalone assessment for abuse. The intended purpose of this questionnaire is to begin a conversation about domestic violence.
  - Does your partner hit, kick, bite, or slap you?
  - Has your partner ever threatened to seriously injure or kill you?
  - Does your partner ever threaten or harm your children?
  - Does your partner control how much money you can spend, or what you can buy?
  - Does your partner control who you can be friends with and where you can go?
  - Is your partner very jealous and possessive over you?
  - Does your partner demand to know where you are and who you are with most or all of the time?
  - Does your partner own a gun?
  - Has your partner ever used a weapon against you or threatened you with a weapon?
  - Has your partner ever threatened to commit suicide if things didn't go their way (example: "I'll kill myself if you leave me" or "If I don't get the kids, I'll just shoot myself")?
  - Has your partner intentionally destroyed your property?
  - Have you recently broken up with your partner?
  - Does your partner follow you or stalk you?
  - Has your partner ever forced you to participate in sexual activities against your will, or had sex with you without your consent?
  - Does your partner call you names, yell at you, or say things like "you are worthless" or "no one will ever love you"?
6. Bragg - Strategies for victims: Bragg, H. L. (2003). *Child protection in families experiencing domestic violence*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration on Children Youth and Families.
  - Safety planning
  - Individual or group counseling

- Specialized assessment services or crisis counseling
  - Legal advocacy, medical, economic, and daycare services
  - Shelter or transitional living services
  - Visitation or supervised exchange services
  - A review of domestic violence information
  - Mental health or substance abuse referrals, if applicable.
7. Bragg - Strategies for children:
- Safety planning
  - Safety skills development
  - Specialized individual or group counseling
  - After-school program referrals
  - Safe visitation and exchange services
  - Community-based enrichment programs
8. Bragg - Strategies for perpetrators:
- Compliance with probation or parole, restraining orders, and custody orders
  - Parenting programs that include a focus on domestic violence issues
  - Substance abuse and mental health referrals, if applicable
  - Fatherhood programs when appropriate. Safety planning with the CPS caseworker or victims of domestic violence advocate;
  - Abuser intervention program referrals
  - Safe visitation and supervised exchange services
  - Although the majority of the men acknowledged that their children had been exposed to interparental conflicts, few perceived that their children had been affected by the arguing.
9. Working with other agencies is critical for successful treatment of families experiencing multiple forms of abuse.
- Coordinated Community Response: A coordinated community response requires diverse agencies to work together to help families experiencing multiple forms of abuse by:
    1. Assessing and providing for the needs of the entire family
    2. Developing a system to protect the child and the abused parent
    3. Making domestic abuse an issue of community responsibility
    4. Empowering victims
    5. Know the agencies in your community.
      - a. Have a list of agencies on hand that offer specific services such as:

- i. individual counseling
    - ii. substance abuse treatment
    - iii. family counseling.
  - b. Individual counseling is needed for victims and children.
  - c. Family counseling
- 6. Cross-training is essential for diverse agencies to be able to work together effectively
- 7. One of the biggest lessons learned from the 6 tests sites for the Greenbook initiative was that cross-training is essential for diverse agencies to work together.
- Roles of Community Agents
  1. Law enforcement
  2. Prosecutors
  3. Victim assistance staff
  4. Civil courts
  5. Civil court judges
  6. Criminal courts
  7. DV centers
  8. Health care providers
  9. Perpetrator's intervention programs
  10. Supervised visitation programs
- Benefits of a Coordinated Community Response include:
  1. Increased likelihood of early detection
  2. Reduced risk of re-victimization
  3. Reduced chance that families will fall through the cracks

### **VIII. Try the following case scenarios to**

#### *Case Scenario 1*

*At intake, Mrs. Smith tells the visitation staff that she is relieved that the judge ordered supervised visitation between her ex-husband, Brad, and son Phillip in the Injunction for Protection Against Domestic Violence. She notes, however, that she is worried about Mr. Smith's other son, Darius, who he had with a former girlfriend. She says she saw six year old Darius in the grocery store and he had a black eye "again." She says Mr. Smith "uses Darius as a punching bag."*

#### **Questions and Answers**

What statements has Mrs. Smith made to the staff that are alarming?

Mrs. Smith stated that she suspects her ex-husband of abusing his other child, Darius, and that he has abused Darius before.

How could the alleged abuse against Darius affect Phillip's visitation?

According to Mrs. Smith, Brad is violent, as evident by the domestic violence injunction. However, Brad is also apparently abusive towards Darius, his other child. Brad could become violent at and before or after visitation with both Phillip and Mrs. Smith, as well as staff members.

What should the staff member do?

All child abuse allegations should be taken seriously. A report to the abuse hotline should be made by a staff member (1-800-96-ABUSE). Additionally, safety provisions should be taken when Brad visits with Phillip. Staff members should be sure to document all statements made about child abuse and domestic violence.

### *Case Scenario 2*

Mr. Jeff Jones is visiting with his daughter Julie in a dependency case. He was accused of hitting her so hard that she had welts on her legs and buttocks. Mrs. Jones left Mr. Jones after the incident, and lives with Julie in an apartment a few blocks from the marital home. One day, when dropping Julie off at the supervised visitation program, Mrs. Jones says to staff, "I think Jeff is still following me. I thought he would stop harassing me after a few weeks, but he still shows up at work, and texts me that it's all my fault. He says he's sure I will suffer for this. I'm so afraid of him."

### **Questions and Answers**

What statements has Mrs. Jones made to the staff that are alarming?

Mrs. Jones is concerned that her ex-husband is following her, and he is still stalking her, which is something he has done in the past. Mrs. Jones has also stated that she is afraid of Mr. Jones.

How could the stalking situation affect visitation?

Because both parents are in the same location for visits, Jeff could use this opportunity to follow Mrs. Jones home after she leaves the visit. Jeff can also ask Julie to provide her mother with messages that may be threatening or vicious, or even physically harm Mrs. Jones before or after a visit outside or inside the visitation center.

What should the staff member do?

Every stalking situation is different. Staff should ask Mrs. Jones questions about her safety concerns, discuss ways that she can protect herself (disabling GPS on her phone, recording all instances of harassment and being followed, etc.), and discuss the possibility of a stalking injunction. Staff should also provide resources for Mrs. Jones for legal assistance, a shelter, and other victims' services. Staff members should be sure to document all statements made about child abuse and domestic violence.

## **IX. Protective Factors**

1. Nurturing attachments is when a parent bonds with the child and the child trusts the parent to meet his/ her needs.
  - Helps build child resilience.
  - Gives children coping skills.
  - Teaches interpersonal skills.
2. Knowing about normal developmental stages is when a parent understands what a child is capable of at different ages, both mentally and physically.
  - Prevents over-discipline.
  - Helps control parental frustration.
3. Having and using resilient coping skills is when parents develop healthy ways to deal with parental stress.
  - Parent is less likely to project stress onto the child.
  - Parent is less likely to act out in anger towards the child.
4. Having supportive social connections is when the parent has support systems in their life.
  - Gives the parent someone to turn to when they need help
  - Gives the child a more secure environment.
  - Models good social relationships for the child.
5. Access to external support is when the parent can identify resources in the community for support.
  - Gives the parent someone to turn in the community when they need help.
  - The parent can access resources that can help the child, such as health care, mental health, and education.
6. Social and emotional competence of children is when children learn from their parents how to express emotions in a healthy manner and build healthy relationships.
  - Child is better adjusted.
  - Child learns how to create healthy relationships.

- Child is likely to do better in school.

## **X. Hotlines**

If you suspect domestic violence or child abuse...

### **DON'T WAIT! CALL:**

- **National Domestic Violence Hotline:**
  - 1-800-799-SAFE(7233) or TTY 1-800-787-3224
- **Florida Domestic Violence Hotline:**
  - 1-800-500-1119 or TDD 1-800-621-4202
- **Child Abuse Hotline:**
  - 1-800-96-ABUSE (22873) or TTY 1-800-453-5145

## **XI. Definitions**

The following are non-legal definitions for the purposes of this training. Check your local statutes for legal definitions.

1. Child Abuse
  - Any recent act or failure to act, on the part of a parent or caretaker, which results in death, serious physical or emotional harm, sexual abuse or exploitation; or
  - An act or failure to act, which presents a serious risk of imminent harm.
2. Domestic Violence as defined by Florida Statutes § 741.28
  - Any assault, aggravated assault, battery, aggravated battery, sexual assault, sexual battery, stalking, aggravated stalking, kidnapping, false imprisonment, or any criminal offense resulting in physical injury or death of one family or household member by another family or household member.
3. Physical Abuse
  - The infliction of physical injury as a result of punching, beating, kicking, biting, burning, shaking or otherwise harming a child.
4. Child Neglect
  - Is characterized by failure to provide for the child's basic needs. Neglect can be physical, educational, or emotional.
5. Sexual Abuse

- Fondling a child’s genitals, intercourse, incest, rape, sodomy, exhibitionism, and commercial exploitation through prostitution or the production of pornographic materials.
6. Emotional Abuse
- Acts or omissions by the parents or other caregivers that have caused, or could cause, serious behavioral, cognitive, emotional, or mental disorders.
7. Harm
- Harm can occur when any person inflicts or allows to be inflicted upon the child physical, mental, or emotional injury.
  - In determining whether harm has occurred, the following factors must be considered:
    1. the age of the child;
    2. any prior history of injuries to the child;
    3. the location of the injury on the body of the child;
    4. the multiplicity of the injury;
    5. and the type of trauma inflicted.
8. Examples of Harm:
- Leaving a child without adult supervision or arrangement appropriate for the child’s age or mental or physical condition.
  - Failing to supply the child with adequate food, clothing, shelter, or health care, although financially able to do so or although offered financial or other means to do so.
  - Exposing the child to a controlled substance or alcohol.
  - Engaging in violent behavior that demonstrates a wanton disregard for the presence of a child and could reasonably result in serious injury to the child.
  - Negligently failing to protect a child in his or her care from inflicted physical, mental, or sexual injury caused by another.
9. The following are link to definitions in Florida Statutes.
- Aggravated assault — Fla. Stat. § 784.021
  - [http://www.leg.state.fl.us/statutes/index.cfm?App\\_mode=Display\\_Statute&URL=0700-0799/0784/Sections/0784.021.html](http://www.leg.state.fl.us/statutes/index.cfm?App_mode=Display_Statute&URL=0700-0799/0784/Sections/0784.021.html)
  - Aggravated battery — Fla. Stat. § 784.045
  - [http://www.leg.state.fl.us/statutes/index.cfm?App\\_mode=Display\\_Statute&Search\\_String=&URL=0700-0799/0784/Sections/0784.045.html](http://www.leg.state.fl.us/statutes/index.cfm?App_mode=Display_Statute&Search_String=&URL=0700-0799/0784/Sections/0784.045.html)
  - Assault— Fla. Stat. § 784.011

- [http://www.leg.state.fl.us/Statutes/index.cfm?App\\_mode=Display\\_Statute&Search\\_String=&URL=0700-0799/0784/Sections/0784.011.html](http://www.leg.state.fl.us/Statutes/index.cfm?App_mode=Display_Statute&Search_String=&URL=0700-0799/0784/Sections/0784.011.html)
- Battery — Fla. Stat. § 784.03
- [http://www.leg.state.fl.us/statutes/index.cfm?App\\_mode=Display\\_Statute&URL=0700-0799/0784/Sections/0784.03.html](http://www.leg.state.fl.us/statutes/index.cfm?App_mode=Display_Statute&URL=0700-0799/0784/Sections/0784.03.html)
- Child Abuse — Fla. Stat. § 827.03
- [http://www.leg.state.fl.us/Statutes/index.cfm?App\\_mode=Display\\_Statute&Search\\_String=&URL=0800-0899/0827/Sections/0827.03.html](http://www.leg.state.fl.us/Statutes/index.cfm?App_mode=Display_Statute&Search_String=&URL=0800-0899/0827/Sections/0827.03.html)
- Domestic Violence — Fla. Stat. § 741.28
- [http://www.leg.state.fl.us/Statutes/index.cfm?App\\_mode=Display\\_Statute&Search\\_String=&URL=0700-0799/0741/Sections/0741.28.html](http://www.leg.state.fl.us/Statutes/index.cfm?App_mode=Display_Statute&Search_String=&URL=0700-0799/0741/Sections/0741.28.html)
- Indecent exposure — Fla. Stat. § 800.03
- [http://www.leg.state.fl.us/Statutes/index.cfm?App\\_mode=Display\\_Statute&Search\\_String=&URL=0800-0899/0800/Sections/0800.03.html](http://www.leg.state.fl.us/Statutes/index.cfm?App_mode=Display_Statute&Search_String=&URL=0800-0899/0800/Sections/0800.03.html)
- Sexual battery — Fla. Stat. § 794.011
- [http://www.leg.state.fl.us/statutes/index.cfm?App\\_mode=Display\\_Statute&Search\\_String=&URL=0700-0799/0794/Sections/0794.011.html](http://www.leg.state.fl.us/statutes/index.cfm?App_mode=Display_Statute&Search_String=&URL=0700-0799/0794/Sections/0794.011.html)
- Stalking and aggravated stalking — Fla. Stat. § 784.048
- [http://www.leg.state.fl.us/statutes/index.cfm?App\\_mode=Display\\_Statute&Search\\_String=&URL=0700-0799/0784/Sections/0784.048.html](http://www.leg.state.fl.us/statutes/index.cfm?App_mode=Display_Statute&Search_String=&URL=0700-0799/0784/Sections/0784.048.html)

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## **Obtaining Scholarships and Grants**



This guide will help parents and students alike navigate the college financial aid system in order to aid them to secure scholarships and grants for college. While the terms “scholarship” and “grant” are often used interchangeably, there are significant differences between the two, which this guide explains.

This Guide May Be Helpful To:

- High school students
- College students

- Parents of students
- Caregivers of students
- Case Managers of students

### Scholarships vs. Grants

Scholarships are awarded for something you've done or something you're able to do, such as academic achievement, athletic performance, or volunteer activity within the community. Scholarships are typically merit-based awards.

Grants are awarded to individuals for various reasons, such as race/ethnicity, sexual orientation, or gender. Grants are typically need-based awards.

Neither scholarships nor grants require the student to pay anything back.

### Merit-Based vs. Need-Based

Awards that are merit-based are typically given to the student that meets the requirements for the award most closely. These awards are generally scholarships and can be awarded to the student with the highest grade point average (GPA) in the senior English class or to the MVP of the high school basketball team. Family income and wealth are never a factor in obtaining merit-based awards.

Awards that are need-based are given to students who have financial need. There are many factors taken into account when calculating need-based awards. For example, family income, number of dependents in a household, and cost of living. There may be qualifiers for grants that are need-based, such as a passing score in coursework, but if the requirements are all met, the grade percentage is not a factor.

### Finding Scholarships and Grants

When it comes to scholarships and grants, it is usually harder to find them than to actually obtain them. There are online databases, such as [fastweb.com](http://fastweb.com) and [www.careerinfonet.org/scholarshipsearch](http://www.careerinfonet.org/scholarshipsearch), that can be helpful in locating scholarships and grants that you qualify for.

When looking for scholarships and grants it is important to leave no stone unturned.

Where to Locate Scholarships and Grants:

- Corporations
- College/University
- Employers
- Foundations

- Non-Profit Organizations
- Religious Organizations
- Service Organizations
- Social Clubs

The goal is to locate as many scholarships and grants as possible.

### Obtaining Scholarships and Grants

Often times before applying for scholarships and grants, students will be required to complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) online. The FAFSA may not be required for certain private scholarships and grants, however, all colleges and universities require it before they can distribute any financial aid, loans included.

### FAFSA

Completing the FAFSA online can seem like a daunting task for students unfamiliar with it, however, this guide will simplify and streamline the process for students.

Steps	Where & What	How
1. Create an online account	www.fafsa.ed.gov	Click the green “Start a new FAFSA” icon on the left hand side of the screen
2. Gather necessary documentation	Students completing their FAFSA will need their social security number, as well as parental/caregiver financial information	If parents or caregivers are apprehensive to give out their financial information to you, encourage them to complete the FAFSA on your behalf
3. Fill out the FAFSA	The website provides an easy process that allows users to quickly enter all of the required information	Using the necessary documents that you’ve gather, this process should be quick

Steps	Where & What	How
4. Review your Student Aid Report (SAR) to obtain your expected family contribution (EFC)	After completing the FAFSA, students will be sent an email notification to review their SAR	The SAR will be available through the email in both HTML and PDF formats

### Florida Bright Futures Scholarship Program

This program, funded by the Florida lottery, is comprised of three awards for high school graduates with high academic achievement and commitment community service.

#### Awards

Florida Academic Scholars (FAS) Award

Florida Medallion Scholars (FMS) Award

Florida Gold Seal Vocational Scholars (GSV) Award

#### Applying for an Award

Submit a complete and error free “Initial Student Florida Financial Aid” application during the last year in high school (after December 1st and before graduation)

The application is available online at: [www.FloridaStudentFinancialAid.org](http://www.FloridaStudentFinancialAid.org)

Click “State Grants, Scholarships & Applications”

then “Apply Here”

The application gives the Florida Department of Education (FDOE) permission to evaluate the student’s high school transcript and standardized test scores for eligibility for a Bright Futures Scholarship, as well as other state scholarships and grants.

#### Terms of Eligibility

	Semester Hour Award 4 Year University	Semester Hour Award 2 Year College	Credit Limit Allowed
FAS	\$100	\$61	120
FMS	\$75	\$47	120
GSV	\$75	\$47	N/A

You must maintain the required cumulative GPA and earn the minimum credit hours in order to renew your scholarship each year

#### Florida Bright Futures Scholarship Program Requirements

The Florida Bright Futures scholarship Program has many guidelines and requirements that must be met in order to qualify. These requirements are all detailed below.

#### Community Service Requirement

FAS requires 100 hours

FMS requires 75 hours

GSV requires 30 hours

#### GPA Requirements

FAS requires a 3.5 GPA

FMS requires a 3.0 GPA

GSV requires a 3.0 GPA

#### Course Requirements

Courses must include 16 credits of college preparatory academic courses

<b>Courses</b>	<b>Credits</b>
English	4 (3 with substantial writing)
Mathematics	4 (Algebra I level and above)
Natural Sciences	3 (2 with substantial lab)
Social Science	3
World Language	2 (sequential, in the same language)

#### SAT/ACT Requirements

	<b>SAT</b>	<b>ACT</b>
<b>FAS</b>	1280	28
<b>FMS</b>	1020	22
<b>GSV</b>	Minimum Score	Minimum Score

#### Other Eligibility Requirements

- Florida resident and U.S. citizen
  - As determined by the financial aid office at the college/university of attendance
- Must not owe a repayment or be in default under any state or federal grant, loan, or scholarship program unless satisfactory arrangements to repay have been made
- Completion of the FAFSA
- High school diploma or the equivalent
- No felonies or “no contest” pleas to felonies

## Tuition Exemption

The state of Florida, like many other states, provides former foster youth and youth in formal relative care with a tuition and fee exemption at a public school district that provides post-secondary career programs, community college, or state university

The following students are eligible for tuition and fee exemption:

“A student who is or was at the time he or she reached 18 years of age in the custody of the Department of Children and Family Services or a relative under s. 39.5085, who was adopted from the Department of Children and Family Services after May 5, 1997, or who, after spending at least 6 months in the custody of the department after reaching 16 years of age, was placed in a guardianship by the court”