

Through the Eyes of the Child: Safety, Permanency, and Wellbeing

Reasonable Efforts Case Scenarios

Scenario 1: Drug Bust – out of home placement

Mother	Children	Age	Father
Nikki Ackerson	Bella Ackerson	6	Jason Ackerson
	Finn Ackerson	4	

Last Monday, in connection with an ongoing drug investigation, law enforcement agents executed a search warrant at the home Nikki and Jason Ackerson. The agents confiscated 7 grams of methamphetamine, 4 pieces of crack cocaine, numerous baggies of marijuana, scales related to drug sales, and three loaded firearms on the kitchen table and one in the living room. Jason and Nikki Ackerson were arrested and charged with unlawful possession of a controlled substance. They've been released on bond.

The couple's two children – Bella Ackerson, age 6, and Finn Ackerson, age 4 – were playing in the living room at the time of the drug bust. The children were taken into emergency protective care. The parents were not able to provide the name of a friend or family member who could care for the children.

Nikki Ackerson a history of using alcohol, meth, and marijuana. She has been to chemical dependency treatment on two occasions and completed drug treatment 7 months ago. Jason Ackerson has been to chemical dependency treatment and drug treatment on five occasions and was released two weeks ago.

Jason Ackerson also has a history of domestic violence. When the social worker met with Nikki and Jason Ackerson, she learned the family is going to be evicted at the end of the month and they do not have a place to live.

On Tuesday, the county filed a CHIPS petition. At the EPC hearing, the parents admitted the petition. The court adjudicated the children as in need of protection or services and placed the children in foster care. A relative search is ongoing.

Based on the out of home placement plan, the judge ordered the following goals and disposition. You will need to decide what reasonable efforts the agency must make to support the parents to achieve the goals.

Goal 1:

Nikki and Jason Ackerson will demonstrate for a period not less than 9 months that the children will always be cared for by a sober caregiver by:

- Ensuring the children always have a safe sober caregiver.
- Making sure they are sober and able to make safety decisions during visitation, trial home visit, and other times the children are in their care.
- Recognizing the triggers that cause them to relapse and dealing with them in a healthy way to avoid relapse.

Tasks:

1. Parents will complete a chemical use assessments and follow all recommendations.
2. Parents will actively engage in treatment and create and follow an after care plan to maintain sobriety.
3. Parents will not use any mood altering chemicals, including alcohol, and will be subject to random testing to ensure sobriety.
4. Parents will create a safety plan for the children in the event of relapse and list appropriate caregivers that can be utilized in the future.

Goal 2:

Nikki and Jason Ackerson will demonstrate for a period not less than 9 months that they have a safe place for the family to live by:

- Living in a residence clean and safe for the children, considering their age and safety needs.
- Keeping firearms in a locked cabinet away from the children.

Tasks:

1. Parents will obtain a list of landlords in the area.
2. Parents will secure a security deposit and first month's rent.
3. Parents will meet with United Community Action and the Refuge to discuss funding/housing options.

Goal 3:

Nikki and Jason Ackerson will demonstrate for a period not less than 9 months that the children are not exposed to domestic violence by:

- Recognizing negative triggers.
- Understanding the effects of an abusive relationship on their children.
- Keeping the children away from domestic violence.

Tasks: Nikki and Jason Ackerson will:

1. Successfully complete a course on the effects of domestic violence on children.
2. Engage in services to gain understanding about abusive relationships and the effects on her children.
3. Make sure the children are not around or residing with anyone who the Court, county social services agency, or the Guardian ad Litem has identified as a concerning individual.

Goal 4:

Nikki and Jason Ackerson will provide information about immediate family and relatives.

Tasks:

1. Parents will provide county social services with names and contact information for their parents and extended family.

What reasonable efforts would the agency provide to support the above goals?

Nikki Ackerson
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Jason Ackerson
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What type of visitation would be arranged and what specific efforts would the agency make to support visitation?

Scenario 2: Mental Health – Out of home placement

Mother	Children	Age	Father
Bethany Baker	Ava Baker	5 months	Robert Jones

An intake was received by county social services regarding Bethany Baker. She is 19 years old and gave birth to Ava Baker 5 months ago. The report states Bethany is having a difficult time dealing with the stresses of being a new mother. Bethany has been observed sobbing outside her apartment. Bethany has told neighbors she cannot handle the baby crying all the time and cannot handle being a mom. On several occasions Bethany has commented about “ending it” all and taking her baby with her.

When the social worker went to Bethany’s home, he could hear the baby crying from the moment he entered the apartment complex. He knocked on the door for five minutes before it was answered by Bethany who stated she had been sleeping. The baby continued to cry, and, at the direction of the social worker, Bethany attended to the child. The social worker observed a very wet diaper and the baby’s bottom was red with what looked to be a severe diaper rash. Bethany provided the infant with her lighter in attempt to calm the child when she was changing the child’s diaper.

Bethany told the social worker she is taking Percocet, which makes her drowsy and allows her to sleep, which is all she wants to do. She also drinks Vodka to help her sleep. Bethany also reported that on three occasions in the last few weeks she has crushed up Percocet and added it to Ava’s formula to keep her calm and make her sleep.

Bethany does not have any family in the area. She moved to Your Town to be with her boyfriend, Robert Jones. But, they broke up shortly after she found out she was pregnant and she does not know his location. She identified Robert Jones as Ava’s father. The only friend she has in town is Sue James, whose lives in the apartment building and whose parental rights to her own children were terminated last year because of abuse.

Ava has not been to any infant follow up medical appointments. It appears the child is not developmentally on track because she is not able to hold up her head and she does not seem to be able to control her eyes, which wander.

Bethany does not have a drivers’ license. Robert Jones has a 2001 vehicle that is not in working condition.

Ava was taken into emergency protective care and a CHIPS petition was filed.

Based on the out of home placement plan, the judge ordered the following. You will need to decide what reasonable efforts the agency must make to support Bethany to achieve the goals.

Goal 1:

Bethany Baker will show that she is able to meet the child’s developmental and safety needs by:

- Learning more about ages, stages/developmental milestones for her child.
- Showing she can use this understanding by talking about the milestones her child has reached and her progress in meeting those milestones.
- Identifying possible safety issues and doing what she needs to do to keep the child safe.
- Showing she is able to pick out appropriate activities based on her child’s current stage.

Tasks: Bethany Baker will:

1. Cooperate and participate with the Help Me Grow Program.
2. Attend and participate in Ava's Well Child Checkup and other medical appointments.
3. Participate in parenting classes.

Goal 2:

Bethany Baker will address her mental health needs that are impacting her ability to parent by:

- Recognizing her triggers, and learning and showing that she can deal with them in a healthy way.

Tasks: Bethany Baker will:

1. Complete a diagnostic assessment and abide by the recommendations.
2. Meet with her family physician or a psychiatrist to discuss whether medication is needed.
3. Cooperate with individual counseling and follow the recommendations.

Goal 3:

Bethany Baker will provide information about immediate family.

Tasks: Bethany Baker will;

1. Provide county social services with names and contact information for her parents and extended family.

Goal 4:

Bethany Baker will meet with the social worker to explore safe and reliable transportation options so that she and Ava can attend and participate in meetings, assessments, and other appointments.

Tasks: Bethany Baker will:

1. Arrange for safe and reliable transportation.
2. Explore which friends and family members can assist with transportation.
3. Obtain a car seat.
4. Explore barriers to getting a driver's license.

Goal 5:

Robert Jones will maintain contact with county social services, and engage in services to establish paternity and a relationship with his child.

Tasks: Robert Jones will:

1. Provide county social services with contact information and any updates.
2. Cooperate with establishing paternity.
3. Provide information regarding relatives.
4. Meet with county social services staff to assess his willingness and ability to provide for the day-to-day care of the child and determine services needed to establish a parent-child relationship and safely parent.
5. Explore options for getting his car repaired so he can assist with transportation.

What reasonable efforts would the agency make to support the above goals?

Bethany Baker
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Robert Smith
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What type of visitation would be arranged and what specific efforts would the agency make to support visitation with both parents?

Scenario 3: Dirty House, Drugs, and Domestic Violence

Mother	Children	Age	Father
Peggy Smith	Billy Jordan	10	Jesse Jordan
	Angie Smith	6	unknown
	Jennifer Browne	4	Brad "Buddy" Browne

An intake was received by county social services regarding Peggy Smith and her children, Billy Jordan age 10, Angie Smith age 6, and Jennifer Browne age 4. The intake stated Peggy's home has piles of garbage, mold, food scraps, and dog feces all over the home. The children all sleep in the living room in sleeping bags and do not have any beds or mattresses. The report goes on to state Peggy left the children home alone Tuesday evening (3 days ago) while she went out. She was gone about five hours. When she came home, she was "acting funny" according to Billy. She had a green substance that, according to Billy, looks like "the green stuff you put on spaghetti." She also had a needle and white powder, but hid them in her purse before Billy could get a better look at the items.

In the last 12 months county social services has received eight reports regarding the family, and three have been screened in regarding living conditions and drug use. Peggy has a conviction for possession of controlled substances from 5 years ago and recently plead guilty to possession of drug paraphernalia (pipe).

The social worker went to the home and found the condition of the home was concerning, but not enough to ask for removal of the children at that time. Peggy refused to submit to drug testing, stated she did not need any help, and refused to meet with the worker again.

The adjudicated father of Billy Jordan is Jessie Jordan who is in prison until June 2020. The father of Angie Smith is unknown and Peggy would not provide names of potential fathers. Jennifer Browne's father is Brad Browne who was residing in the home until last month. He is currently incarcerated facing domestic abuse charges against Peggy Smith. Peggy has recanted her statements against Brad and would like him to move back into the home.

Based on all of these concerns and the mother's refusal for voluntary assistance, the social worker met with the Assistant County Attorney who filed a CHIPS petition. At the admit/deny hearing, the Court granted the county's request for out-of-home placement of the three children.

Based on the out of home placement plan, the judge ordered the following. You will need to decide what reasonable efforts the agency must make to support the Peggy to achieve the goals.

Goal 1 for Mom:

Peggy Smith will demonstrate for a period not less than 6 months that the children will always be cared for by a sober caregiver by:

- Recognizing the triggers that cause her to relapse and dealing with them in a healthy way to avoid relapse.
- Ensuring the children always have a safe and sober caregiver.
- Making sure she is sober and able to make safety decisions during visitation, trial home visit, and other times the children are in her care.

Task: Peggy Smith will:

1. Complete a chemical use assessment and follow all recommendations.
2. Identify a safety plan for the children in the event of relapse.

Goal 2:

Peggy Smith will demonstrate for a period not less than six months that the children will live in a safe and stable environment by:

- Recognizing the cause of the unsanitary living conditions
- Removing trash, clutter, and pet feces from the home and making sure the house continues to be trash and clutter free.

Tasks: Peggy Smith will demonstrate for a period not less than 6 months that she is able to keep the home clean and safe for the children by:

1. Completing a healthy homes inspection and abide by the recommendations.
2. Establishing a regular cleaning schedule to avoid unsanitary living conditions.
3. Creating a plan to make sure the pets do not defecate in the home and, if they do, a plan to promptly remove feces and clean the floors.
4. Obtaining appropriate sleeping arrangements for the family.

Goal 3:

Peggy Smith will demonstrate for a period not less than six months that the children are not exposed to domestic abuse or violent individuals by:

- Recognizing negative relationships.
- Understanding the effects of an abusive relationship on her children.
- Keeping the children away from domestic abuse and violent individuals.

Tasks: Peggy Smith will:

4. Successfully complete a course on the effects of domestic violence on children.
5. Engage in services to gain understanding about the reason she becomes involved in abusive relationship and the effects on her children.
6. Make sure the children are not around or residing with anyone who the Court, county social services agency, or the Guardian ad Litem has identified as a concerning individual.
7. Have no contact with Brad Browne until it has been approved by the Court.

Goal 4:

Peggy Smith will work with county social services agency to establish paternity for Angie Smith.

Tasks: Peggy Smith will:

1. Identify potential fathers.
2. Provide contact information for potential fathers.
3. Provide a genetic sample for testing.
4. Make the child available to collect a genetic sample for testing.

Goal 5:

Jessie Jordan will maintain contact with county social services agency and engage in services to improve his parenting skills and relationship with his child.

Tasks: Jessie Jordon will:

1. Provide county social services agency with information regarding maternal and paternal relatives.
2. Provide county social services agency with any updates to his contact information.
3. Participate in the "While we are Apart" workbook.
4. Contact his case worker to determine if parenting classes are available.

Goal 6:

Brad Browne will maintain contact with county social services agency and engage in services to address the domestic violence in the home.

Tasks: Brad Browne will:

1. Complete a domestic violence assessment and abide by the recommendations.
2. Complete and anger management assessment and abide by the recommendations.
3. Not have contact with the children until approved by the Court.
4. Provide county social services agency information regarding relatives.
5. Provide county social services agency with any updates to his contact information.

What reasonable efforts would the agency make to support the above goals?

Peggy Smith
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Jessie Jordon
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Brad Browne

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What type of visitation would be arranged for the parents and what specific efforts would the agency make to support visitation?

Scenario 4: Truancy – Protective Supervision

Mother	Children	Age	Father
Daisy Meier	Rayann Sheeran	15	Marcus Sheeran
	Prince Meier	6	unknown
	Shelby Smith	2	

An intake was received regarding Daisy Meier who has a 15 year old daughter named Rayann Sheeran, a 6 year old son named Prince Meier, and a 2 year old named Shelby Smith.

Prince has been acting out at school. He is often aggressive with peers and teachers. He often makes references to beating people up and shooting them. Recently he has started calling female classmates “hoes” and has mentioned having sex. When the school counselor spoke to Prince, she discovered he is playing several Xbox games with “M” ratings, such as GTA, Resident Evil, and war/fighting games in which he “kills a lot of people.” Prince has been sent to the principal’s office on 2 occasions in the past week for his disruptive classroom behavior. He never has his homework done or planner signed. He is often tired in class and states he stays up until midnight playing video games. So far this school year he has had seven unexcused absences and eight excused absences. Prince told the school social worker that Rayann is supposed to watch him and his sister when their mom is gone, which is often according to Prince. Recently Ms. Meier left Rayann in charge over the weekend. There was very little food in the home. Rayann was left with \$20, but according to Prince, Rayann used it to buy “weird cigarettes.” Rayann had two of her friends stay overnight and they smoked the cigarettes. One of her friends, Dalton, stayed in Rayann’s room and the door was locked.

Rayann has five unexcused absences and has recently become argumentative and dropped out of volleyball. She has participated in volleyball since she was in fourth grade and excelled at the sport. When the social worker met with Ms. Meier she didn’t understand why allowing Prince to play these games was wrong and refused to work with county social services. She also argued about the appropriateness of leaving Rayann to care for the younger children. Ms. Meier stated Rayann is expressing her independence and does not have concerns about her recent behaviors or the care she provides to the younger children. Ms. Meier stated she will not make Prince go to school because he gets angry and will swear at her and hit her, so it is easier to just give in and let him stay home. She has refused to allow him to meet with a counselor or seek outside therapeutic help.

Based on the out of protective services case plan, the judge ordered the following. You will need to decide what reasonable efforts the agency must make to support the Mary to achieve the goals.

Goal 1:

Daisy Meier will make sure Prince goes to school daily, with no unexcused absences.

Tasks:

1. If Prince is ill, Daisy Meier must contact the school and advise them of his illness.
2. Daisy Meier must return communications from the school.
3. Daisy Meier will make sure Prince completes his homework and will sign his planner.

Goal 2:

Daisy Meier will show she is able to meet the children’s safety and wellbeing needs by:

- Showing she is able to pick out appropriate activities based on her children’s current stage.
- Be able to articulate why “M” rated games may not be appropriate for a 6 year old.
- Addressing the violence in the home and working with providers to address this concern.

Tasks:

1. Daisy Meier will complete parenting classes and demonstrate knowledge of what was taught.
2. Prince will complete a diagnostic assessment and abide by the recommendations.
3. The family should cooperate with in-home family therapy.
4. A behavior chart will be created for Prince.

Goal 3:

Daisy Meier will ensure the children have appropriate caregivers.

Tasks:

1. Daisy Meier will not require Rayann to watch the other children for more than 8 hours.
2. Daisy Meier will ensure the children have appropriate food at all times.
3. Daisy Meier will not allow Rayann to have friends at the home when she is watching the younger children.

Goal 4:

Rayann will attend school daily, with no unexcused absences.

Tasks:

1. If Rayann is ill, Daisy Meier must contact the school and advise them of her illness.

Goal 5:

Rayann will be drug and alcohol free.

Tasks:

1. Rayann will complete a chemical use assessment and abide by the recommendations.
2. Rayann will be subject to random UA’s, PBT’s, or hair follicle testing if requested by county social services or the GAL.

What reasonable efforts would the agency make to support the above goals?

Daisy Meier
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Rayann Meier
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6.
7.

Prince Meier
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2.
3.
4.
5.
6.
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Scenario 5: Domestic Violence – Protective Supervision

Children	Age	Mother	Father	Step Father
Jimmy Paige	10	JoAnne Paige	Marcus Paige	Joe Thomas

An intake is received regarding the child Jimmy Paige, who is years old. Jimmy is in 4th Grade at Westside Elementary. Yesterday he was sent to the principal's office for cheating on his math test. He begged the principal not to call his mother because he would "get a spanking" when he got home. This morning Jimmy arrived at school and was favoring his left arm. Jimmy said his stepfather Joe Thomas was upset he was sent to the principal's office yesterday and grabbed him by his left arm and squeezed. Jimmy went on to say he was spanked with a belt last night and he had a bruise on his lower back from being hit.

Law enforcement interviewed Joe and he admitted spanking Jimmy with a belt and said things "got out of hand" last night. Jimmy's mother, JoAnne Paige, was present during the incident and did not do anything to intervene. She would like Joe to remain in the home and said Jimmy is "a handful and needs discipline." She admits to spanking him regularly and has left bruises in the past.

Joe Thomas has two prior convictions for domestic assault, one involving JoAnne Paige. The police placed the child on an emergency hold and a CHIPS has been filed.

Based on the out of home placement plan, the judge ordered the following. You will need to decide what reasonable efforts the agency must make to support the JoAnne to achieve the goals.

Goal 1:

JoAnne Paige will demonstrate the child is not abused or exposed to domestic abuse or violent individuals, by:

- Learn about her child's development and emotional needs and understand how to meet her child's needs
- Identify safety issues and what she needs to do to keep her son safe
- Consistently using a variety of non-physical discipline techniques

Tasks:

1. JoAnne Paige will receive education regarding the effects of an abusive relationship on her child.
2. JoAnne Paige will receive education about how to protect her child from abuse.
3. JoAnne Paige will participate in parenting classes and in-home services to improve mother-son relationship and address trauma.
4. Joe Thomas cannot be in the home until approved by the Court.

Goal 2:

JoAnne Paige will not allow inappropriate individuals to care for her child.

Task:

1. JoAnne Paige will not allow individuals identified by the Court to have contact with the children.

Goal 3:

JoAnne Paige will provide information about immediate family and relatives.

Tasks:

1. JoAnne Paige will provide county social services with names and contact information for her parents and extended family.

Goal 5:

Marcus Paige will maintain contact with county social services, and engage in services to establish a relationship with his child.

Tasks:

1. Marcus Paige will provide county social services with contact information and any updates.
2. Marcus Paige will provide information regarding relatives.
3. Marcus Paige will meet with county social services staff to assess his willingness and ability to provide for the day-to-day care of the child and determine services needed to establish a parent-child relationship and safely parent.

What reasonable efforts would the agency make to support the above goals?

Joanne Paige
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Marcus Paige
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