

These ideas about transitioning a FC are based on Dr. Vera Fahlberg's book:

### A Child's Journey through Placement

- First off, Dr. Fahlberg recommends considerable contact between the two families—A good start would be some telephone/e-mail conversations.
- Then, she recommends 7-10 in-person contacts between the child and his new caregiver before he is moved permanently. Ideally, the first few contacts would happen in current FP's home, where new caregiver could become familiar with FC's routines in a setting where he is most comfortable. The time span between these 7-10 contacts should be short (spread out over not more than 3-4 weeks, total), since FC doesn't have a well-developed sense of time yet.
- The focus of the preplacement visiting is to transfer the attachment he has to current FPs over to new caregiver. Dr. Fahlberg recommends that these contacts take place at all different times of the day, so that new caregiver can learn FC's various routines. **Maintaining his same routines is the primary way to lessen the trauma of moving him.**
- Since he's young, paying particular attention to sensory experiences is key: same foods, soaps, detergents, fabric softeners, videos, music, etc.
- It is important to remember that "home" to FC is wherever current FPs are. He has a very secure attachment to them. So, whether the first few visits with FC happen at their house, new caregiver's house, or in the community, it's important that his current FPs are involved as much as possible, as the attachment needs to be transferred from them to new caregiver.
- After some (3-4) visits with current FPs present, and some (2-3) shorter visits alone with FC, then 1-2 overnight visits (where he comes back to current FP's house afterwards) will be useful in helping him get to know his new home and helping new caregiver try out the routines s/he's learned from current FPs.
- When it comes time for him to actually move, it's best if his current FPs are involved in literally handing FC over to new caregiver. And, if many of his clothes and his toys can go with him, this will help with recreating his known environment.
- After FC is moved, he should have a minimum of 2-3 post placement contacts with current FPs and his foster siblings. It's best if these contacts happen at new caregiver's home. These post placement visits will be a chance for 1) him to learn that his current FPs still exist (helps with the feelings of loss), 2) for his new caregiver to check-in with them and ask any new questions that have come up after s/he's had a little more time to get to know FC, and 3) for his foster siblings to see where he lives and that he's okay (not only will it be hard for FC to say good-bye, but it will be very hard for foster siblings, too).