



Capacity Building
CENTER FOR STATES

Quality Contact Casework Activities Worksheet

Conducting a quality caseworker visit with children, youth, parents, or resource parents requires a variety of caseworker activities before, during, and after the visit. Caseworkers can use this worksheet as general guidance to help in planning and assessing quality contacts.

Before the visit

Schedule

- ☐ Align visit frequency with national and state requirements and case circumstances.
- ☐ Consider the schedules of parents, resource parents, and youth/young adults in identifying the visit time.
- ☐ Consider the length and location of visits to support open and honest conversations.

Gather information and review

- ☐ Gather and review case documents, service plans, and related data and information.
- ☐ Review documentation of the last contact to ensure follow-up was completed.
- ☐ Make any collateral contacts with key individuals in the case (e.g., therapist, treatment provider, doctor, school personnel) to assess progress and concerns.

Plan and prepare

- ☐ Set a clear purpose and agenda for the visit.
- ☐ Identify issues and concerns to explore (with room for adaptation during the visit).
- ☐ Consider and plan for worker safety.

During the visit

Engage and collaborate

- ☐ Review the objectives and agenda for the visit and incorporate input from the child, youth, parent, and/or resource parent into the agenda.
- ☐ Demonstrate genuineness, empathy, and respect for each family member.
- ☐ Suspend biases and avoid judgments.
- ☐ Make sure children, youth, parents, and resource parents feel comfortable discussing challenges and needs.
- ☐ Talk with adults and children or youth separately to allow for privacy in sharing concerns.
- ☐ Communicate support and partnership.
- ☐ Listen!

During the visit (continued)

Focus on the case plan, explore progress, and make adjustments

- ☐ Assess child safety and risk (including identification of safety threats, vulnerabilities, and protective capacities).
- ☐ Explore well-being of the child or youth and family.
- ☐ Ask developmentally appropriate questions.
- ☐ Discuss case goals, progress toward goals since the last visit, and actions needed—in language that all participants can understand.
- ☐ Identify strengths and opportunities for the child or youth and family.
- ☐ Identify concerns, changing circumstances, and challenges.
- ☐ Observe what is happening in the home.
- ☐ Discuss what the agency will do to support the family to meet identified needs and expectations for the child or youth and family.
- ☐ Make needed changes to the case plan.

Wrap up

- ☐ Conclude visit with a summary, next steps, and actions needed.
- ☐ Make arrangements for the next visit.

After the visit

Document

- ☐ Document key information, observations, and decisions in a concrete, concise, and nonjudgmental manner.
- ☐ Record information, as appropriate and in accordance with agency policies:
 - ☐ Participants
 - ☐ Date and location
 - ☐ Assessment of child safety and risk
 - ☐ Child or youth well-being (related to health, mental health, development, behavior, education, social activities, and relationships)
 - ☐ Progress toward case goals and any changes to case plan or tasks
 - ☐ Concerns expressed by the child, youth, parent, or resource parent
 - ☐ Observations on the home environment and interactions
 - ☐ Additional service needs
 - ☐ Cultural considerations
 - ☐ Follow-up activities and priorities
- ☐ Highlight actions needed, the person responsible, and target dates for easy reference.

Debrief

- ☐ Discuss visit and key directions with supervisor.
- ☐ Reflect on successful approaches during visits, challenges experienced, and areas for development in conducting quality contacts.

Follow up

- ☐ Follow up on commitments made and next steps.

To learn more about quality contacts and related Center for States publications and learning tools, visit the "Quality Matters" homepage at <https://capacity.childwelfare.gov/states/focus-areas/foster-care-permanency/quality-matters>