



Initial Meeting

**The first meeting
between Birth
Parents and Bridge
Resource Parents**

Children and Family
Services Division



How To Have An Effective Initial Meeting

- Arrive on time.
- Focus on the child's needs.
- Respect the feelings, opinions, cultural differences and ideas of others.
- Keep what is said in the meeting confidential.

Children Benefit

- Have more stable placements.
- Experience better emotional development.
- Are more successful in school.
- Return home sooner.

Birth Parents Benefit

- Contact with Bridge Resource Parents helps Birth Parents feel more at ease about their child's safe, well-being and placement.
- They can share information about their child's likes, dislikes, routines and medical needs.
- It gives the birth parents an opportunity to be an expert on their child.

Roles and Responsibilities:

Birth Parents

- Help make the child's transition easy by assuring them it is okay to trust the Bridge Parents.
- Share information about your child, including bedtime or daily routines, favorite toys, and foods, hobbies, likes and dislikes.
- Bring important personal items for the child, such as pictures, favorite toys and clothes or other special things.

Child Welfare Specialists

- Coordinate the meeting.
- Notify all parties of date, location and time.
- Make sure participants understand why the meeting is being held and what will be discussed.
- Keep discussion focused on the child's needs.
- Ensure participants feel safe and comfortable.

Bridge Resource Parents

- Ask for specific information about the child from the parents, such as routines and medical needs.
- Ask questions that will help you understand the child's needs, including cultural traditions.
- Talk about why you are a Bridge Resource Parent and some of the basic rules of your house. Share the Bridge Resource Family Profile which describes your family and family activities.

Bridge Resource Family Requirements

- Have the ability to love, understand, care for and accept a child to whom they did not give birth.
- Be at least 21 years of age and preferably no more than 55 years older than the child considered for placement.
- Applicants and each household member, 18 years of age or older, must submit fingerprints for a state and national criminal history records search.
- Submit to a search of all OKDHS records, including Child Welfare records.
- Ensure that no household member has a prior conviction of any sexual offense.
- Attend 27 hours of pre-service training.
- Have sufficient income to meet current expenses.
- Be in good physical and mental health to provide for the needs of the child – physical exam is required.
- Be legal residents.
- Have a working vehicle and a telephone.
- Provide sufficient beds and bedrooms for additional children.
- May be married, single, legally separated or divorced.
- Provide information for a family assessment – home study.



Why have an Initial Meeting?

An initial meeting provides an opportunity for Birth Parents and Bridge Resource Parents to talk about the needs of the child.

The Birth Parents and Bridge Resource Parents are able to share information about themselves and their parenting practices.

Initial meetings are most effective when they occur early in a child's placement. The Child Welfare Specialists coordinate the meeting. It lasts about 30 minutes or more and can occur at various places that are safe and comfortable for everyone involved.



**If you have any
questions, please feel
free to contact your
Child Welfare Specialist.**

**www.okdhs.org/fostercare
www.okdhs.org/adopt**



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