**Client Case Assessment and Intervention Paper**

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The clients in this case assessment started with a CPS report turned in to Campbell County Department of Social Services (DSS) on May 20, 2023. The clients are KJ age 10 and TB age 9. The clients are currently living in a foster care household. Previously the clients were living with their father. In the house there were several other individuals who were in and out of the home as well. The mother was inconsistently living in the home, the mother has a protective order against her stating that she is to have no contact with the children until they are eighteen years of age. Other individuals living in and out of the home were two maternal aunts, one cousin, and one maternal uncle. There were times DSS workers visited the home and unnamed individuals resided in it.

Child protective services (CPS) got involved for the third time on May 20th, 2023, with the alleged abuser being the father, the father was allegedly using and distributing illegal substances. On May 21st, 2023, Family Service Specialist (FSS) SM and JE went to visit the children at the school. After assessing the children by asking a few questions, both children revealed that the mother was living in the home and cooking them meals. KJ would not identify his mother’s name, as he said that “she told him not to tell anyone her name.” On May 22nd, 2023, FSS workers visited the home to assess the home environment and the caregivers. The children were alternatively placed on May 22nd, 2023, with their paternal aunt, who agreed to take the children for a few days until the father could provide a different, proper caregiver.

A home visit was conducted on May 22nd, 2023, to assess the safety of the home and environment. Upon arrival, there were two children playing outside, barefoot, with no supervision. The two children entered the home, and all doors were closed. FSS approached the door and after knocking numerous times, the two children came out the side door and around the house. After continuing to knock to figure out who was supervising these two children, a woman cracked open the door and began yelling at the children to get back in the house. The two children stood behind the FSS workers denying the woman, saying “we know them, they are here to keep us safe, we are not coming back in.” The woman stated a false name because she was the mother, and she knows she is not supposed to have any contact with the children. Once the father arrived at the scene, there were multiple individuals at the house, the ones that reside in the house, as well as paternal cousin and child, maternal aunts’ boyfriend, and a several vehicles that pulled in the driveway and then immediately left once they saw the police car.

A safety plan was implemented during this visit as there was drug contraband surrounding the inside of the home, the mother living in the home, and all the other individuals living in the home who were abusing substances. At this home visit the officer on scene searched the home with us and one of the bedrooms that seemed to be where the children slept, there were two small bags of white powder residue. Another drug contraband item found was a metal smoking pipe found in the floor in the living room where the children could potentially access it. There was also an open bottle of Tylenol with pills surrounding the father’s headboard. Due to the contraband found and the mother being in the home, a safety plan was implemented to find the children an alternative placement with a family member appropriate for them. To ensure that the alternative placement home is appropriate before moving the children, CPS will conduct a home visit and a drug screen. After the father called several individuals who were not proper, the paternal aunt of the children was found appropriate and informed us that she was willing to keep the children temporarily, to give the father time to find another proper placement. On May 30th, 2023, the children were placed in a foster care home.

The immediate concerns for these two children are their safety and lack of consistency. The father was arrested two separate times after the children were removed from the home. The first arrest was because of a domestic violence incident against the mother. The second arrest was due to the use and distribution of illegal substances and distribution of firearms. These are two big concerns for the children’s safety. Although the original CPS report was not because of domestic abuse, it can be assumed that the children watched domestic violence between their parents often. If the father is using and distributing drugs, the children are at risk of being exposed to said substances or be put in danger when random individuals come to pick up drugs and firearms. Secondly the concern of inconsistency can affect their functioning because children need consistent caregivers in their lives to keep them safe and care for their everyday needs. During one of the interviews with the father, he stated that whoever was available to supervise the children were the ones to supervise them, so often the children were picked up late from school, due to inconsistency in caregiver roles and plans.

Attachment theory can be defined as the earliest bonds formed by children with their caregivers that have tremendous impact that continues through life. There are several branches of attachment theory and the specific one that applies to both clients is insecure attachment theory. These two clients experienced a lot of inconsistency with their mother growing up. Their mother would often disappear, be incarcerated, or put the children in very unsafe environments and situations. The inconsistency has caused the children to form an insecure attachment with their mother. Insecure attachment may cause children to “downplay” their emotions and appear to manage their distress, but they really are not (Children’s Attachment: Attachment in Children and Young People Who Are Adopted from Care, in Care, or at High Risk of Going Into Care., 2015). Another important part of insecure attachment theory is if the parent is inconsistent in the child’s life, they will not get excited to see the caregiver when they come around. This is a good example for both clients, they are a lot more excited to see their father than they are their mother. In this case their mother was never supposed to be around them, but she came around inconsistently.

Another theory related to both clients is disinhibited social engagement. Disinhibited social engagement disorder is when children “click” with strangers extremely fast and they tend to need more physical affection, like a hug (Disinhibited Social Engagement Disorder in Early Childhood Predicts Reduced Competence in Early Adolescence, 2019). These children have an extreme attachment to strangers. The first time FSS workers met the children, they immediately trusted the workers and were willing to leave with the workers. The day of the removal the children clung to the backs of the workers, hiding from their mother, shouting “we know them, they are here to keep us safe.” This can be a concern because the children feel comfortable with individuals they just met; this can potentially cause them harm.

 Although the clients are children, they still have many strengths. The clients have experienced a lot of trauma at such an early age, but both children are very resilient. It is a common attribute to have for children to be resilient, but considering they endured so much, it is amazing to see the resilience within them. For example, the children were extremely nervous and scared the day FSS workers took them to their new home. Not even a week later the foster mom was sending pictures of the boys with their new haircut and new clothes, and they looked so happy. The foster care worker met with the boys one week after they were placed in the foster care home and the boys raved about how much fun they were having and all the new stuff they have received since being in their new home.

The agency addressed the safety of the children by removing them from the home. Before the removal the agency addressed the concerns with both parents and informed the father that the children would not be returned home if the mother continued to reside at the home. The father was also notified that everyone living in the home would need to have a clean drug screen for the children to return home. The home conditions needed to improve in terms of having contraband laying around that was accessible to the children. There are not any services in place at this current moment for the boys, but their foster care worker may refer them to therapy. The oldest boy, MJ has anger management concerns, so if the foster parents do not feel like they can control his outbursts, they will consider getting him into play therapy. There have been services offered for both parents. The father and mother both were recommended to attend substance abuse programs. Neither one of them acted on the recommendations. The mother mentioned wanting to start in-patient therapy for her mental health and the substance abuse concerns, but the mother tends to be inconsistent and hard to contact.

Policy is an important attribute and DSS. CPS and foster care have specific policies to abide by during cases. That said, there were many policies in place during the removal, a removal itself, with specific guidelines about proper times to remove children. Foster care has many policies as well within this case. There were not any policies that directly affect the clients and the services they have or will receive.

The children are currently in a foster care home, and they are being offered services. For the oldest child, KJ, he is being evaluated for play therapy to help him work through his trauma and behavioral issues. The children were allowed to have a visitation with their father, they asked every week when they would get to see him. Due to the father’s incarceration status, the children have not visited in two weeks and continue to ask when they can see their father.

In terms of ethical considerations, there were a few throughout this case. Dignity and worth of a person can be defined as not placing judgment on family members, advocating for those individuals despite differences, and treating all individuals equally (NASW, 2021). In this case, valuing the parents and advocating for them to receive proper services that will help them keep their children safe. Although the parents put the children in harm many times, it is still important to value them and understand individuals make mistakes. Another ethical consideration in this case is having empathy for the parents. At the removal, the parents and other family members were making very disrespectful comments about how the FSS workers did not care about the well-being of the children because we were ripping them from their home and their family. The FSS workers had to have empathy and respect for their parents. The FSS workers stayed patient with the family and informed them that the goal is not to traumatize the children, but the main priority is keeping them safe, and the children were not safe in the home.

The foster care plan hearing is set for August, so there is no information on termination. The potential outcome of the case is staying in foster care, the children being adopted, or the children returning home.

The biggest change in this case is removing the children earlier. It is hard to justify this change because there are specific policies in place preventing removals from happening sooner, rather than later. Law enforcement did not report valuable information to CPS, which then prolonged the case further. Law enforcement found the mother in violation of the protective order several times and did not report it to CPS. Law enforcement also arrested the mother several times while the children were in her care and did not report the documentation to CPS. There should be reparation done to the officers involved in the case because they knew about the protective order, but they never reported any of the concerns to CPS, which then placed the children in danger for a longer amount of time.

**References**

*Children’s Attachment: Attachment in Children and Young People who are Adopted from Care, in care, or at High Risk of going into care.* (2015). National Library of Medicine. Retrieved July 9, 2023.

*Disinhibited Social Engagement Disorder in Early Childhood Predicts Reduced Competence in Early Adolescence*. (2019). National Library of Medicine.