



What is an Icebreaker?

An Icebreaker is a facilitated conversation that provides an opportunity for parents/caregivers and foster parents to meet each other and talk about the needs of the child. The parents/caregivers and foster parents can share information about themselves and their families.

Icebreakers are most effective when they occur early in a child's placement. Usually, the child's case manager or other agency staff facilitates the Icebreaker, which lasts about 30-40 minutes. It is typically held at the case manager's office.

If you have any questions, please contact your child's case manager.



Icebreakers

The first conversation between parents/caregivers and foster parents



What is my role?

Parents/Caregivers

Share information about your child with the foster parents, including bedtime or daily routines, favorite toys and foods, hobbies, likes and dislikes, important medical information, etc.

Bring important personal items for your child, such as pictures, favorite toys, clothes and other special things.

Foster Parents

Ask for specific information about the child from the parents/caregivers, such as routines, favorite things and medical needs.

Ask questions about cultural traditions and other information that will help you care for the child.

Talk about why you are a foster parent and your desire to help the child reunite with his/her family.

Facilitators/Case Managers

Facilitate the meeting.

Make sure the participants understand why the meeting is being held, and prepare them for what will be discussed.

- Keep the discussion focused on the child's needs.

Ensure the participants feel safe and comfortable.



Why is an Icebreaker helpful?

When parents/caregivers and foster parents have contact with each other, the child may:

Adjust more easily in the foster family
Better maintain the bond with his/her birth parents

- Do better in school

Contact with foster parents helps parents/caregivers feel better about their child's safety and well-being and allows them the opportunity to share important background information about their child with the foster family.



How can we have a productive Icebreaker?

Arrive on time.

Focus on the child's needs and how you can work together to meet them.

Respect the feelings, opinions, cultural differences and ideas of others.

Recognize the important role that each person has in the life of the child.

Keep what is said at the Icebreaker private.