



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.



Strong Families Make a Strong Kansas

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.