

November 17, 2020 – Case Managers

A special thanks to our 2 exceptional case managers and panelists: **Adrian Galindo (CHS)** and **Kettely Joseph (CFCE)**.

- 1) **How many cases and how many children are currently on your caseloads?**
 - **Adrian** has approximately 12 children with 8 cases.
 - **Kettely** has about 10 cases and 20 children. This is about what they normally carry.
- 2) **How are you doing your home visits during the pandemic?**

Both are conducting the majority of their visits virtually, but they are required to see the children in person every 90 days. They are expecting to be conducting more visits in person in the near future.
- 3) **What are the biggest challenges you face?**

Both case managers agreed that juggling everything they must handle at the same time is the greatest challenge. **Kettely** mentioned focusing and prioritizing all the requirements while also making sure all services are in place. **Adrian** added that all the sources of information, documents, and reports are an additional challenge.
- 4) **What determines the type relationship you have with the Guardian ad Litem?**

For **Adrian** it is open communication, teamwork and respect. It is the GALs who show commitment and stay in touch with whom he has the best relationships. **Kettely** agreed and mentioned we are both working together for what is in the best interest of the children, and we must work together as a team.
- 5) **If a GAL reaches out to you—what is a reasonable amount of time to expect a reply?** If the matter is urgent—24 hours. The response time really depends on the relationship you have with the case manager. Under normal circumstances—within 48 hours. If you have no ongoing communication with the case manager and haven't established a relationship, expect them to get back to you when they have a moment. Please understand that oftentimes emergencies arise, and they have to deal with them immediately and may not be able to respond immediately. Again—if you have a good relationship, they will probably text you and let you know they are swamped and will get back to you shortly.
- 6) **Why is there such a high case manager turnover?**

Adrian—it's a tough job and not monetarily rewarding. The reward is in helping people. You sacrifice your personal life, self-care, and your time. Everything is put on the case manager—it all trickles down, and the case manager bears all the responsibility for anything that goes wrong.

Kettely—there is so much you have to do—court docs, all appointments and services, visitation, transportation, staffings, emails, and court hearings.
- 7) **What should we do if the case manager doesn't respond to emails, calls or texts?**

Copy the supervisor (in fact , you can copy the agency supervisor on any communication with the case manager) and put 1st attempt, 2nd attempt, etc. Keep a paper trail.

8) **How and when do you notify the GAL of a modification of placement?**

Again—it depends on the relationship they have with the GAL. If they have open communication, the GAL will already know there is a problem with a placement and will be notified immediately (or w/in 2 days) of the new placement.

9) **What kind of training do you receive for children with special needs, APD, etc?**

We receive general training and ongoing continuing education in trauma, special needs children, domestic violence. If there is something specific to a child with special needs and we don't know the services, etc., we staff the case.

10) **If finding adequate housing or employment is part of the case plan and a barrier to reunification, how do you assist the parents?**

Adrian has never put that as a case-plan task if the child can adequately and safely be provided with shelter, clothing, bathing, and food. He will assist a parent by doing referrals for housing assistance, any available housing funds (HUD), or ask the agency for assistance with co-pay or resources to stabilize a placement.

Kettely has worked with Citrus for housing and assisted parents with job fairs, clothing for interviews, etc. In special situations, they both work with their agencies to find appropriate shelters (domestic violence, homelessness).

11) **How do you prefer to be contacted?**

Adrian prefers phone conversation and **Kettely** prefers texts—unless a conversation is necessary because you are brainstorming a situation.

12) **When developing a relationship with the case manager:**

- **Open the lines of communication.**
- **Be respectful.**
- **Understand that they have multiple cases and many children on their caseloads.**
- **If you have a very difficult case—find ways to assist the case manager.**
- **Share information.**
- **If you are going to bring something up in court—let the case manager know in advance so if possible, the problem can be remedied.**
- **If you are able to help the case manager, you are helping the child.**

13) **How do you handle transitioning a case when a case manager leaves the agency?**

- Transferring the cases is done by the supervisor.
- There is a big difference when someone gives notice and is attentive to detail and leaves their cases in good order—than someone who just quits and hasn't done anything on their case load.
- If you had a good relationship with the prior case manager and all of a sudden, they aren't responsive, reach out to the supervisor—the case manager may be ill or have a personal situation or they may have quit.
- The supervisor can give you the contact info for the new case manager.
- If that doesn't work—ask the caregivers or foster parents. The new case manager will reach out to them almost immediately.

14) **Is having to transport children to all their appointments, etc. a burden?**

Routine transportation assistance would be a major help. Foster parents do not usually accept any responsibility for transporting the kids to their medical, dental appointments, etc. There are many excellent foster parents, and there are those who treat the children in their homes like tenants (not able to enter until foster parent is home from work, etc.). There are support workers who handle transportation in the agencies, but there is so much need, there are never enough. A foster parent taking a child to scheduled appointments shows another level of caring for the children.

15) **What bothers you the most? What would make your job easier?**

Adrian—this COVID-19 situation. I feel much more connected and involved when I do my job in person. I miss my colleagues and office. When I have that connection with my families and the kids, I feel like a mini super-hero working for the greater good. Better pay and foster parents accepting more responsibility would make my job easier.

Kettely—what bothers me is the system not doing as much as they could to help the families. The demand and the need for good foster homes hasn't been met. Although children are placed in safe homes, they are not thriving because there aren't enough homes. **The benefit of transporting children is that you have one-on-one time with them and children will open up and share things they aren't comfortable telling you during home visits**—they are afraid the walls have ears.