

COMFORT CALLS

Giving Caregivers a Voice

WHY COMFORT CALLS

Significant stress and confusion occur for children and youth when they experience separation from their primary caregiver(s) due to out of home placement. At the earliest stage of out of home placement, there can be a lack of connection or relationship established between the parent and the foster family. Comfort calls address these early-stage difficulties for children/youth and their families. In 2020, Minnesota began requiring comfort calls, also known as initial calls in state statute.

GOALS

- *Set the stage for partnership and coparenting between the family and foster family.*
- *Open the door for parents and foster families to ask questions to one another that support the child/youth during the difficult time of initial separation.*
- *Encourage everyone to attend an initial meeting together.*



RECOMMENDATIONS

- *The call should take place as soon as possible after placement. The placing caseworker and foster parent(s) may call the family together.*
- *The caseworker may initiate the call then ask the family if they would like to speak with the foster parents.*
- *The initial call is not conducted in the presence of the child/youth.*

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FOSTER PARENT TIPS

Offer information about yourself; having a child staying with someone unfamiliar is frightening for parents. Here are examples of some things you could share about yourself:

- *How long you have been a foster parent.*
- *Who lives in your home, including pets.*
- *What activities or hobbies you have.*
- *What your daily routine looks like.*



GET TO KNOW THE CHILD(REN)

Talk with the parent(s) about their child(ren) so you can better care for them. Here are some examples:

- *What is the child(ren)/youth's favorite food?*
- *Do they have a favorite toy or game they like to play?*
- *What do you do to provide comfort to the child(ren)/youth?*
- *What is a nickname that they might go by?*
- *Tell how the child(ren)/youth is doing in your home.*

If the parent is not ready to have a conversation, end the call calmly and indicate that you hope to communicate in the future.

SETTING UP GOOGLE VOICE

Some families prefer to have their personal phone number remain private - that is okay and Google Voice can help you maintain contact with the family while the children are in your care. A few notes:

- *You need to have a Google account to create a Google number.*
- *Download the Google Voice app and sign in with your Google account information.*
- *Google Voice can be accessed through the computer but does require you to route the call through a phone.*