

Protocol Supporting Parents Relinquishing Parental Rights – draft 6-23-10

I. Preparation

- A. The parent's attorney will coordinate with the assigned DHS caseworker, especially if a positive relationship exists between the parent and caseworker, to identify service providers, relatives or others to support the parent in the decision to relinquish.
- B. Arrange a location likely to provide emotional support. If it occurs in the court house, find a quiet room.
- C. Arrange for support people to be available after signing.
- D. The parent and attorney will discuss legal consequences.
- E. When the parent's attorney meets with the parent, prior to signing, determine if special arrangements should be put in place to support the parent, i.e. bus passes etc. Develop a plan to provide emotional support to the parent after the signing.
- F. Determine if grief counseling or therapeutic intervention is available through existing mental health treatment services, OHP or a graduate level internship program through Pacific University or PSU.
- G. It is best practice for the parent's attorney to be present at the signing of the relinquishment documents.
- H. Since DHS cannot release the relinquishment documents to parent's attorneys, determine how to coordinate the signing if it will be done in the parent's attorney's office. (e.g. caseworker or other DHS employee attends the meeting.)

II. Signing

- A. Arrange for Notary and satisfy the technical requirements for signing
- B. Do not rush the process. Answering questions, engaging in closing discussions and acknowledging the importance of the decision are appropriate and helpful parts of the process for the parent.
- C. Ensure witnesses to the signing understand a respectful, dignified environment must exist.
- D. Provide copies of the documents to the parents and attorneys
- E. DHS representative will retain the originals

III. After the Signing

- A. Confirm the parents have transportation home
- B. Confirm support persons are available
- C. Confirm parent has contact information for the DHS caseworker, especially if mediation is being arranged.
- D. Confirm address/phone information for the parent
- E. Continue in grief counseling or mental health counseling

F. Do not rush the end of the meeting. Assess the emotional condition of the parent and have contact information for relatives, mental health service providers available.

IV. Trial and Call