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FAMILY ADVOCACY AND SUPPORT TOOL

*A family planning and outcome tool for understanding family circumstances
And assisting in planning for services and reunification*

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1. THE FAMILY TOGETHER

In this section, we would like to you to think about who you consider to be your family. Every family is a little different in this way. Once you have decided who is in your family. Please describe your family on each of the following questions using the scoring sheet provided.

1. Parental/Caregiver Collaboration

This item refers to the relationship between parents (or other primary caregivers) with regard to working together in child rearing activities

- 0 Adaptive collaboration. Parents usually work together regarding issues of the development and well being of the children. They are able to negotiate disagreements related to their children.
- 1 Mostly adaptive collaboration. Generally good parental collaboration with occasional difficulties negotiating miscommunications or misunderstanding regarding issues of the development and well being of the children.
- 2 Limited adaptive collaboration. Moderate problems of communication and collaboration between two or more adult caregivers with regard to issues of the development and well being of the youth.
- 3 Significant difficulties with collaboration. Minimal collaboration and destructive or sabotaging communication among any parents regarding issues related to the development and well being of the youth.
- N/A Not applicable

2. Relationships among Siblings

This item refers to how the children in the family (brothers and sisters) get along with each other.

- 0 Adaptive relationships. Siblings generally get along well. Occasional fights or conflicts between them occur, but are quickly resolved.
- 1 Mostly adaptive relationships. Siblings generally get along, however, when fights or conflicts arise there is some difficulty in resolving them.
- 2 Limited adaptive relationships. Siblings often do not get along. They generally attempt to resolve their fights or conflicts but have limited success in doing so.
- 3 Significant difficulties with relationships. Siblings do not get along. The relationships are marked by detachment or active, continuing conflicts, and may include physical violence.
- N/A Not applicable

3. Extended Family Relationships

This item refers to the family's relationship with other relatives who do not currently live with the family.

- 0 Adaptive relationships. Extended family members play a central role in the functioning and well being of the family. They have predominately positive relationships with members of the extended family and conflicts are resolved quickly.
- 1 Mostly adaptive relationships. Extended family members play a supportive role in family functioning. They generally have positive relationships with members of the extended family. Conflicts may linger but eventually are resolved.
- 2 Limited adaptive relationships. Extended family members are marginally involved in the functioning and well being of the family. They have generally strained or absent relationships with extended family members.
- 3 Significant difficulties with relationships. Family is not in contact or estranged from extended family members. They have negative relationships with continuing conflicts.
- N/A Not applicable

4. Family Conflict

This item refers to how much fighting occurs between family members. Domestic violence refers to physical fighting in which family members might get hurt.

- 0 Minimal conflict. Family gets along well and negotiates disagreements appropriately.
- 1 Some Conflict. Family generally gets along fairly well but when conflicts arise resolution is difficult.
- 2 Significant conflict. Family is generally argumentative and conflict is a fairly constant theme in family communications.
- 3 Domestic violence. Threat or occurrence of physical, verbal or emotional altercations. Family with a current restraining order against one member would be rated here.
- N/A Not applicable

5. Family Communication

This item refers to the ability of all family members to talk to each other about their thoughts and feelings. It should only be about communication within the family.

- 0 Adaptive communication. Family members generally are able to directly communicate important information among each other. Family members are able to understand each other's feelings and needs.
- 1 Mostly adaptive communication. Family members can communicate important information among each other. Some individuals or certain topics are excluded from direct communication. Mutual understanding is inconsistent.
- 2 Limited adaptive communication. Family members generally are unable to directly communicate important information among each other. Family members have difficulties understanding each other's feelings and needs.
- 3 Significant difficulties with communication. Family members communicate mostly through indirect, covert means or there is no sharing of important information at all. They are not able to understand each other's feelings or needs.
- N/A Not applicable

6. Family Role Appropriateness

Boundaries refer to the ability of family members to separate themselves as individuals and appropriately separate communication with various family members. Hierarchies refer to the organization of decision-making authority in the family.

- 0 Adaptive boundaries. Family has strong appropriate boundaries among members. Clear inter-generational hierarchies are maintained.
- 1 Mostly adaptive boundaries. Family has generally appropriate boundaries and hierarchies. May experience some minor blurring of roles.
- 2 Limited adaptive boundaries. Family has difficulty maintaining appropriate boundaries and/or hierarchies. Some significant role problems exist.
- 3 Significant difficulties with boundaries. Family has significant problems with establishing and maintaining reasonable boundaries and hierarchies. Significant role confusion or reversals may exist.
- N/A Not applicable

7. Family Safety

This item refers to the degree to which family members are safe from being physically insured in the home.

- 0 No risk. Family provides a safe home environment for all family members.
- 1 Mild risk. Family home environment presents some mild risks of neglect or exposure to undesirable influences (e.g., alcohol/drug abuse, gang membership of family members) but no immediate risk is present.
- 2 Moderate risk. Family home environment presents moderate risks to family members including abuse and neglect or exposure to individuals who could harm the youth.
- 3 Severe risk. Family home environment presents a clear and immediate risk of harm to family members. Individuals in the environment present immediate risk of significant physical harm.
- N/A Not applicable

8. Financial Resources

This item refers to the income and other sources of money available to family members (particularly caregivers) that can be used to address family needs.

- 0 No difficulties. Family has financial resources necessary to meet needs.
- 1 Mild difficulties. Family has financial resources necessary to meet most needs; however, some limitations exist.
- 2 Moderate difficulties. Family has financial difficulties that limit their ability to meet significant family needs.
- 3 Significant difficulties. Family experiencing financial hardship, poverty.
- N/A Not applicable

9. Residential Stability

This item refers to the stability of the family's housing. This does not refer to the risk of placement outside of the family home for any member of the family.

- 0 Family has stable housing for the foreseeable future.
- 1 Family having some difficulties maintaining housing due to things such as difficulty paying rent or utilities or conflict with a landlord.
- 2 Family has had to move in the past six months due to housing difficulties.
- 3 Family has experienced homelessness in the past six months.

II. CAREGIVER'S STATUS

In your family, certain family members have primary responsibilities for managing the household and raising children. In some families, parents are the primary caregivers, in other families a step-parent, a grandparent or an aunt or uncle also have these responsibilities. Please identify ALL of the caregivers in your family and describe them on the scoring sheet provided using the items described below.

10. Caregiver's Emotional Responsiveness

This item refers to the caregiver's ability to understand and respond to the joys, sorrows, anxieties and other feelings of children with similar or helpful feelings.

- 0 Adaptive emotional responsiveness. Caregiver is emotionally empathic and attends to child's emotional needs.
- 1 Mostly adaptive emotional responsiveness. Caregiver is generally emotionally empathic and typically attends to child's emotional needs. However, certain psychological issues undermine the Caregiver's emotional responsiveness.
- 2 Limited adaptive emotional responsiveness. Caregiver is often not empathic and frequently is not able to attend to child's emotional needs.
- 3 Significant difficulties with emotional responsiveness. Caregiver is not empathic and rarely attends to the child's emotional needs.
- N/A Not applicable

11. Caregiver's Boundaries

Boundaries refer to the caregiver's ability to separate from children and appropriately keep things from children that they should not know or be exposed to given their age and role in the family.

- 0 Adaptive boundaries. Caregiver has strong, appropriate boundaries between her/himself and her/his children.
- 1 Mostly adaptive boundaries. Caregiver has generally appropriate boundaries between her/himself and her/his children. Mild boundary violations may occur at times. Minor problems of rigidity of boundaries may occur.
- 2 Limited adaptive boundaries. Caregiver has problems maintaining appropriate boundaries between her/him and her/his children. Mild boundary violations may be routine or significant boundary violations may be occasional. Boundaries may be rigid.
- 3 Significant difficulties with boundaries. Caregiver has significant and consistent problems maintaining appropriate boundaries between her/himself and her/his children or is excessively rigid in her boundaries.
- N/A Not applicable

12. Caregiver's Involvement in Caregiving Functions

This item refers to the degree to which the caregiver is actively involved in being a parent/caregiver.

- 0 Caregiver is actively and fully involved in daily family life.

- 1 Caregiver is generally involved in daily family life. She/he may occasionally be less involved for brief periods of time because she/he is distracted by internal stressors and/or other external events or responsibilities.
- 2 Caregiver is involved in daily family life but only maintains minimal daily interactions for extended periods of time.
- 3 Caregiver is mostly uninvolved in daily family life. She/he may not interact with children on a daily basis.
- N/A Not applicable

13. Caregiver's Supervision

This item refers to the success with which the caregiver is able to monitor children in his/her care. This item should be rated consistent with the developmental needs of the children in care.

- 0 Good supervision. Caregiver demonstrates consistent ability to supervise her/his children according to their developmental needs.
- 1 Adequate supervision. Caregiver demonstrates generally good ability to supervise children; however, some problems may occur occasionally.
- 2 Fair supervision. Caregiver has difficulty maintaining an appropriate level of supervision of her/his children.
- 3 Significant difficulties with supervision. Caregiver has significant problems maintaining any supervision of her/his children.
- N/A Not applicable

14. Caregiver's Discipline

Discipline refers to the caregiver's ability to encourage positive behaviors by children in his/her care through the use of a variety of different techniques including but not limited to praise, redirection, and punishment.

- 0 Good discipline methods. Caregiver generally demonstrates an ability to discipline her/his children in a consistent and benevolent manner. She/he usually is able to set age appropriate limits and to enforce them.
- 1 Adequate discipline methods. Caregiver is often able to set age appropriate limits and to enforce them. On occasion her/his interventions may be either too harsh or too lenient. At times, her/his expectations of her/his children may be too high or too low.
- 2 Inadequate discipline methods. Caregiver demonstrates limited ability to discipline her children in a consistent and benevolent manner. She/he rarely is able to set age appropriate limits and to enforce them. Her/his interventions may be erratic and overly harsh but not physically harmful. Her/his expectations of her/his children are frequently unrealistic.
- 3 Significant difficulties with discipline methods. Caregiver disciplines her/his children in an unpredictable fashion. There is either an absence of limit setting and disciplinary interventions or the limit setting and disciplinary interventions are rigid, extreme, and physically harmful.
- N/A Not applicable

15. Caregiver's Partner Relationship

This item refers to the caregiver's relationship with another adult. If married, this refers to the caregiver's husband or wife.

- 0 Adaptive partner relationship. Caregiver has a strong, positive, partner relationship with another adult. This adult functions as a member of the family. A person without a relationship who currently has no interest in one would be rated here.
- 1 Mostly adaptive partner relationship. Caregiver has a generally positive partner relationship with another adult. This adult may not function as a member of the family.
- 2 Limited adaptive partner relationship. Caregiver is currently not involved in any partner relationship with another adult but wishes to have one.
- 3 Significant difficulties with partner relationships. Caregiver is currently involved in a negative, unhealthy relationship with another adult.
- N/A Not applicable

16. Caregiver's Vocational Functioning

This item refers to the caregiver's work effectiveness including, but not limited to, attendance, productivity, and relationships with co-workers.

- 0 Good vocational functioning. Caregiver is fully employed with no problems at work. Alternatively, Caregiver may not be seeking employment or chooses to be a full-time homemaker.
- 1 Adequate vocational functioning. Caregiver is partially employed, employed significantly below her/his level of education/experience/training, or is having some work related problems.
- 2 Fair vocational functioning. Caregiver is having significant work-related problems or is temporarily unemployed because of such difficulties.
- 3 Significant difficulties with vocational functioning. Caregiver is chronically unemployed or obtains financial resources through activities which are illegal and/or potentially harmful to her/himself and her/his family members (prostitution, drug dealing, for example).
- N/A Not applicable

17. Caregiver Mental Health

This item refers to mental health needs only (not substance abuse or dependence).

- 0 No mental health problems. Caregiver has no signs of any notable mental health problems.
- 1 Mild mental health problems. Caregiver may have mild problems with adjustment, may be somewhat depressed, withdrawn, irritable, or agitated.
- 2 Moderate mental health problems. Caregiver has a diagnosable mental health problem that interferes with his/her functioning.
- 3 Significant difficulties with mental health. Caregiver has a serious psychiatric disorder.
- N/A Not applicable

18. Caregiver Alcohol and/or Drug Use

This item includes problems with alcohol, illegal drugs and/or prescription drugs.

- 0 No problems with alcohol or drug use. Caregiver has no signs of any notable substance abuse problems.
 - 1 Mild problems associated with alcohol or drug use. Caregiver may have mild problems with work or home life that result from occasional use of alcohol or drugs.
 - 2 Moderate problems associated with alcohol or drug use. Caregiver has a diagnosable substance-related disorder that interferes with his/her life.
 - 3 Significant difficulties with alcohol or drug dependence. Caregiver is currently addicted to either alcohol or drugs or both.
- N/A Not applicable

III. YOUTH'S STATUS

In your family, you have at least one person under the age of 21. The following section is used to describe EACH of these family members individually. Again use the scoring sheet provided to describe each youth separately.

19. Relationship with Biological Mother

This item refers to the youth's relation with his/her birth mother only.

- 0 Adaptive relationship. Youth has a generally positive relationship with biological mother. The youth appears to have formed a secure attachment, and can turn to mother for security, comfort or guidance.
 - 1 Mostly adaptive relationship. Youth has a somewhat positive relationship with biological mother. The youth appears to have mild attachment problems that interfere with his/her ability to turn to mother for security, comfort, or guidance.
 - 2 Limited adaptive relationship. Youth has a somewhat negative relationship with biological mother. The youth appears to have moderate attachment problems that interfere with his/her ability to turn to mother for security, comfort, or guidance.
 - 3 Significant difficulties with relationship. Youth has no ongoing relationship with his/her biological mother. The youth appears to have severe attachment problems.
- N/A Not applicable

20. Relationship with Biological Father

This item refers to the youth's relation with his/her birth mother only.

- 0 Adaptive relationship. Youth has a generally positive relationship with biological father. The youth appears to have formed a secure attachment, and can turn to father for security, comfort or guidance.
 - 1 Mostly adaptive relationship. Youth has a somewhat positive relationship with biological father. The youth appears to have mild attachment problems that interfere with his/her ability to turn to father for security, comfort, or guidance.
 - 2 Limited adaptive relationship. Youth has a somewhat negative relationship with biological father. The youth appears to have moderate attachment problems that interfere with his/her ability to turn to father for security, comfort, or guidance.
 - 3 Significant difficulties with relationship. Youth has no ongoing relationship with his/her biological father. The youth appears to have severe attachment problems.
- N/A Not applicable

21. Relationship with Primary Caregiver (if not biological mother or father)

This item refers to the youth relationship with whomever is his/her primary caregiver at the moment. This item is not applicable (N/A) for youth in congregate care environments.

- 0 Adaptive relationship. Youth has a generally positive relationship with primary caregiver. The youth appears to have formed a secure attachment, and can turn to primary caregiver for security, comfort or guidance.
- 1 Mostly adaptive relationship. Youth has a somewhat positive relationship with primary caregiver. The youth appears to have mild attachment problems that interfere with his/her ability to turn to primary caregiver for security, comfort, or guidance.
- 2 Limited adaptive relationship. Youth has a somewhat negative relationship with primary caregiver. The youth appears to have moderate attachment problems that interfere with his/her ability to turn to primary caregiver for security, comfort, or guidance.
- 3 Significant difficulties with relationship. Youth has no ongoing relationship with his/her primary caregiver. The youth appears to have severe attachment problems.
- N/A Not applicable

22. Relationships with Other Adult Family Members

This item refers to the youth's involvement with adult family members who do not have primary caregiving responsibilities for the youth.

- 0 Adaptive relationships. Youth is able to have predominately positive relationships with other adult family members and is able to participate in conflict resolution with them.
- 1 Mostly adaptive relationships. Youth is able to have generally positive relationships with other adult family members. At times, conflicts may occur and linger between them but eventually are resolved.
- 2 Limited adaptive relationships. Youth is only able to have peripheral relationships with other adult family members or the relationships are strained.
- 3 Significant challenges with relationships. Adult family members are available emotionally and practically, but the youth is unable to have relationships with them.
- N/A Not applicable

23. Relationship with Siblings

This item refers to the youth's relationship with brothers and sisters including half-siblings, step-siblings, and foster siblings.

- 0 Adaptive relationships. Youth is able to have predominately positive relationships with siblings and is able to participate in conflict resolution with them.
- 1 Mostly adaptive relationships. Youth is able to have generally positive relationships with siblings. At times, conflicts may occur and linger between them but eventually are resolved.
- 2 Limited adaptive relationships. Youth is only able to have peripheral relationships with siblings or the relationships are strained.
- 3 Significant challenges with relationships. Siblings are available emotionally and practically but the youth is unable to have relationships with them.
- N/A Not applicable

24. Health Status

This item is used to describe the youth's current physical health.

- 0 Good health. Youth is in generally good physical health.
- 1 Adequate health. Youth gets sick more often than peers, but the health problems do not interfere with his/her general functioning.
- 2 Fair health. Youth has some health problems that interfere with his/her functioning.
- 3 Significant health challenges. Youth has significant health problems that may be chronic or life threatening.
- N/A Not applicable

25. Mental Health Status

This item is used to describe the youth's current mental health.

- 0 No mental health challenges. Youth has no signs of any notable mental health problems.
- 1 Mild mental health challenges. Youth may have mild problems with adjustment, may be somewhat depressed, withdrawn, irritable, or agitated.
- 2 Moderate mental health challenges. Youth has a diagnosable mental health problem that interferes with his/her functioning.
- 3 Significant challenges with mental health. Youth has a serious psychiatric disorder.
- N/A Not applicable

26. Cognitive Skills

Cognitive skills refers to the youth's intellectual capacity. Problems with include mental retardation and learning difficulties that are a result of learning disabilities.

- 0 Good. Youth meets or exceeds all cognitive developmental milestones.
- 1 Adequate. Youth is close to meeting all cognitive developmental milestones.
- 2 Fair. Youth has some problems with immaturity or delay in meeting developmental milestones.
- 3 Significant difficulties with cognitive development. Youth has mental retardation.
- N/A Not applicable

27. Self-Regulation Skills

This item refers to the youth's ability to self-regulate him/herself and his/her bodily functions. Self-regulation skills change developmentally so this item should be rated within the context of developmentally appropriate skills.

- 0 Good. Youth has mature self-regulation. Youth is able to self-soothe, function independently and effectively structure free-time.
- 1 Adequate. Youth is generally able to self-regulate in an age-appropriate way.
- 2 Fair. Youth has some difficulties with self-regulation.
- 3 Significant difficulties with self-regulation. Youth is unable to manage him/herself in a developmentally appropriate way.
- N/A Not applicable

28. Interpersonal Skills

This refers to the youth's ability to make and maintain friendships and other relationships with peers and adults.

- 0 Good. Youth has excellent, mature relationship skills.
- 1 Adequate. Youth has good, developmentally appropriate relationship skills.
- 2 Fair. Youth has some difficulties with social skills and friendship development and/or maintenance
- 3 Significant difficulties. Youth has significant difficulties with social skills and friendship development.
- N/A Not applicable

29. Educational Status

This item refers to the youth's status with school. If the youth has completed his/her schooling then use '0'. If youth has dropped out without completing then use a '3'.

- 0 Good educational functioning. Youth is meeting or exceeding educational expectation at an age-expected grade level.
- 1 Adequate educational functioning. Youth is mostly meeting educational expectations at an age-expected grade level.
- 2 Fair educational functioning. Youth is performing below educational expectations and/or requires a specialized educational setting in order to learn at an adequate level.
- 3 Significant difficulties with educational functioning. Youth has significant educational problems including some behavioral problems related to academic difficulties (chronic truancy, suspensions, expulsions, being held back, etc.). Youth may be placed in a specialized educational setting but remains unable to learn at an adequate level.
- N/A Not applicable

IV. CAREGIVER ADVOCACY STATUS

This section provides an opportunity for your family to assess its current level of ability to advocate for members, particularly youth who have needs. In addition, three items are provided to allow the family to describe its perspective on the appropriateness of living, educational, and services arrangements for youth members.

30. Knowledge of Family/Child needs

This item refers to the caregiver's ability to recognize the needs of the family and individual family members.

- 0 Caregiver/s have strong understanding of family and child needs.
- 1 Caregiver/s have understanding of family and child needs but may still require some help in learning about certain aspects of these needs.
- 2 Caregiver/s require assistance in understanding family and/or child needs.
- 3 Caregiver/s require substantial assistance in identifying and understanding family and child needs.
- N/A Not applicable

31. Knowledge of service options

This item refers to the choices the family might have for specific treatments, interventions or other services that might help the family address their needs or the needs of one of the family's members.

- 0 Caregiver/s have strong understanding of service options.
- 1 Caregiver/s have understanding of service options but may still require some help in learning about certain aspects of these services.
- 2 Caregiver/s require assistance in understanding service options.
- 3 Caregiver/s require substantial assistance in identifying and understanding service options.
- N/A Not applicable

32. Knowledge of rights and responsibilities

This item refers to the caregiver's ability to understand and acknowledge the legal and moral rights and responsibilities of their caregiver roles.

- 0 Caregiver/s have strong understanding of rights and responsibilities.
- 1 Caregiver/s have understanding of rights and responsibilities but may still require some help in learning about certain aspects of these needs.
- 2 Caregiver/s require assistance in understanding rights and responsibilities.
- 3 Caregiver/s require substantial assistance in identifying and understanding rights and responsibilities.
- N/A Not applicable

33. Ability to Listen

This item refers to the caregiver's ability to hear both positive and negative feedback about him/herself and family members in a way that he/she can understand. This item would include asking clarifying questions.

- 0 Caregiver(s) is able to listen carefully and understand both good and bad news regarding family and child issues.
- 1 Caregiver(s) has listening skills but sometimes struggles to hear either good or bad news regarding family and child issues.
- 2 Caregiver(s) requires help learning to listen effectively.
- 3 Caregiver(s) requires substantial help learning to listen effectively.

34. Ability to Communicate

This item refers to the caregiver's ability to effectively describe his/her needs as well as needs of other family members in a manner that others can understand.

- 0 Caregiver(s) is able to express feeling and thoughts effectively with regard to family and child issues. Others hear, understand, and respond.
- 1 Caregiver(s) is able to express feeling and thoughts but sometimes struggle to express these so that others can listen and/or understand.
- 2 Caregiver(s) requires help learning to express feelings and thoughts effectively with regard to family and child issues.
- 3 Caregiver(s) requires substantial help learning to express feelings and thoughts effectively with regard to family and child issues.
- N/A Not applicable

35. Natural Supports

Natural supports refer to help that you do not have to pay for. This could include friends and families or a church or other organization that helps the family in times of need.

- 0 Caregiver(s) has substantial natural supports to assist in addressing most family and child needs.
- 1 Caregiver(s) has natural supports but some limitations exist whereby these supports are insufficient to address some family and child needs.
- 2 Caregiver(s) has limited natural supports.
- 3 Caregiver(s) has no natural supports.
- N/A Not applicable

36. Satisfaction with Youth's Living Arrangement

This item refers to the caregiver's satisfaction with the current living arrangement of any youth identified with needs. If a youth lives at home this describes the caregiver's desire to maintain this placement.

- 0 Caregiver(s) is pleased with identified youth's current living arrangement.
- 1 Caregiver(s) is satisfied with identified youth's current living arrangement, although some improvements could be made.
- 2 Caregiver(s) believes a change in living arrangement is desirable.
- 3 Caregiver(s) believes an immediate change in living arrangement is required.
- N/A Not applicable

37. Satisfaction with Youth's Educational Arrangement

This item describes the degree to which the caregiver is satisfied with the education placement of children in the family.

- 0 Caregiver(s) is pleased with identified youth's current educational arrangement.
- 1 Caregiver(s) is satisfied with identified youth's current educational arrangement, although some improvements could be made.
- 2 Caregiver(s) believes a change in educational arrangement is desirable.
- 3 Caregiver(s) believes an immediate change in educational arrangement is required.
- N/A Not applicable

38. Satisfaction with Services Arrangement

This item refers to the degree to which the caregiver is satisfied with any services (or lack there of) for children in his/her care.

- 0 Caregiver(s) is pleased with identified youth's current services arrangement.
- 1 Caregiver(s) is satisfied with identified youth's current services arrangement, although some improvements could be made.
- 2 Caregiver(s) believes a significant change in services arrangement is desirable.
- 3 Caregiver(s) believes an immediate and significant change in services arrangement is required.
- N/A Not applicable