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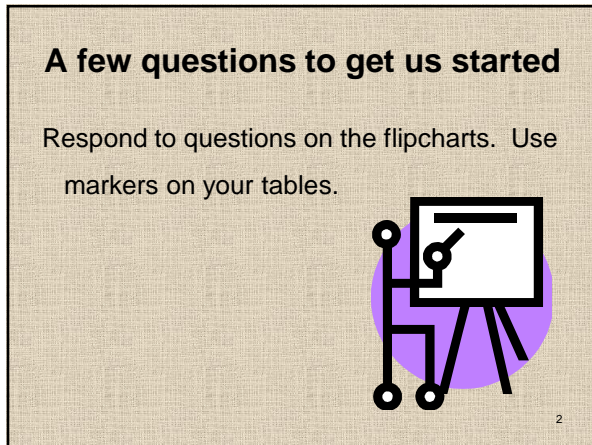
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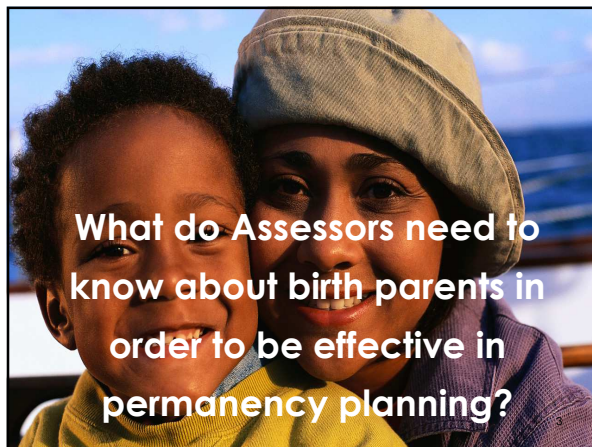
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**Do birth parents love their children?**



**Do children want to be loved by their birth parents?**

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**Principles of Birth Parent Counseling**



Awareness adoption is a lifelong issue

Family Involvement

Empowerment

Enabling

Self-determination

Cultural Sensitivity

Responsible Birth Parenting

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**Core Issues of Birth Parents**



- Guilt
- Shame
- Control
- Identity
- Rejection
- Trust
- Loss & Grief

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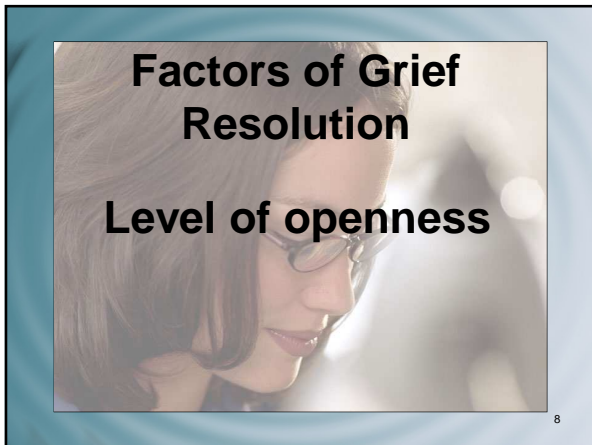
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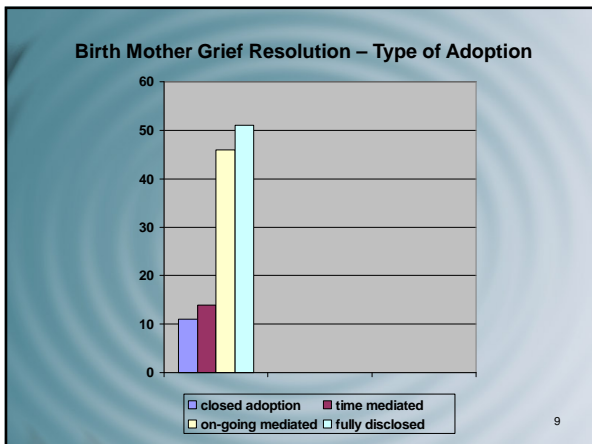
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**Factors of Grief Resolution**

- Current relationships and other factors impacting grief
  - Understanding of and movement through the “process of realization”
- Availability of support through the adaptive grieving process

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**Birth fathers**

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What are barriers to working with birth fathers when decision is voluntary?



What are barriers to working with birth fathers when the decision is involuntary?

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**A Look at Our Agencies...**

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**Workers did not try to find fathers...**

In 61% of cases, no reference to father's whereabouts was made during home visits with kinship caregivers



John O'Donnell, 1999

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**Workers lack information about fathers**

- Did not know marital status of 41% of fathers
- Did not know housing status of 54% of fathers
- Had no information about education or income of fathers



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### Workers focused on father's deficits

- Workers identified problems that affected father's parenting capacity in 67% of cases
- Workers did not know of any strengths in 50% of fathers
- Workers stated 15% of fathers had no strengths



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### Fathers Were Not Involved in Planning

- 82% of fathers had not contributed to most recent assessment
- 90% of fathers had not participated in most recent case plan
- Workers identified father's lack of participation as an impediment to case planning in only 16% of cases



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### Strategies to Engage the Birth Father

- Enlist mother's aid; educate her about father's importance
- Educate father about responsibilities
- Inform father of his rights early in process
- Actively encourage father to participate in planning
- Father's involvement may need to be separate from that of the mother
- Prevent use of child as a pawn between parents
- Facilitate birth father's expression of grief/loss

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**PUTATIVE FATHER REGISTRY**



**DEVELOPED FOR THREE REASONS:**

- To reduce the likelihood of a traumatic separation as a result of improper termination of parental rights
- To require the putative father to take a proactive step in planning for his child's future
- To protect the father's rights

1-888-313-3100

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**Social and Medical History**



Completing the ODJFS 01616 is mandatory for voluntary and involuntary placements.

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**Adoptive Family Selection**

**Your Tasks**

- Educate birth parents about the importance of choosing adoptive parents
- Educate birth parents about issues and sensitive areas that adoptive parents face during the adoption process.
- If open adoption, prepare realistically for the experience



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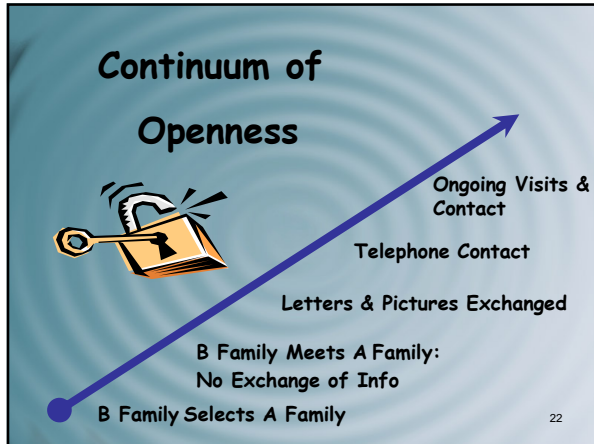
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**Ohio Rules Regarding Open Records**

**People adopted prior to 1964:**  
--access to their original birth certificates through a request to Dept. of Health

**People adopted from 1964 to 1996:**  
--may access original birth certificates in March, 2015; birth parents have option to express wishes, withhold name

**People adopted after 1996:**  
--may have open records when they reach age 21, depending on the wishes of the birthparent. Birthparents will have a continuum of openness from which to choose when signing surrender

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- 
- IDENTIFYING INFORMATION**
- First Name
  - Last Name
  - Maiden Name
  - Alias
  - Social Security Number
  - Address
  - Telephone Number
  - Place of Employment
  - Number used for State Dept. of Education MIS
- 24

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### Engaging the Extended Family

- Enlist birth mother's help in identifying family members
- Identify leader within the family--be aware of cultural patterns
- Educate birth parents about importance of family involvement, destructiveness of secrets
- Explore kinship placement options
- Give family information about options
- Involve family in building lifebook
- Process grief with family
- Discuss openness considerations
- Plan family conference

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### THE OPTIONS

- Parenting
- Kinship care
- Foster care
- Adoption by family, friend, other



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### Decision-Making – Tasks of the Professional

- Begin educating about adoption process and the lifelong impact
- Educate about the importance of a positive birth experience
- Inform them of their rights all through the process
- Continued assessment of birth parent decision-making and coping skills

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### Concurrent Case Planning

- Seeks to eliminate delays
- Considers all reasonable options for permanency at earliest possible point
- Primary plan is usually reunification with birth parent
- An alternative permanency goal is pursued at the same time
- Families engaged in collaborative planning

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### Family Group Decision-Making

- Family meetings are called when child protection becomes involved
- Family identifies key individuals (family, friends, service providers) invited to participate
- Family brainstorms options for care and protection of child
- Facilitators guide discussion and decision-making about most appropriate permanency option for child

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### Permission Messages

- Designed to help both birth parent and child understand child will not be parented by the birth parent
- Provides “permission” from birth relatives for child to become part of another family
- Usually face-to-face contacts, but permission may be given in a video, audiotape, or letter
- Communicates to all that relinquishment of parental rights does not signify relinquishment of love

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**Workers must assess the appropriateness of a transition visit:**

- Is it in the child's best interests to have a transition visit? Will it be psychologically helpful or harmful?
- Who should be there?
- What boundaries need to be set?
- What is the developmental level of the child (would a letter or videotape be more appropriate)?

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**Messages from Birth Parent:**

- Ownership of reason for placement
- Ownership of reason for custody change
- Closure to going home
- Message parent will be okay
- Message parent loves child
- Permission for child to love new family
- Permission for child to succeed and be happy

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**Suggested Order of Transition Visit**

- Small talk
- Reminder of reason for visit
- Parent gives message and permission
- Child gives message
- Gift exchange
- Take pictures
- Goodbyes
- Birth parent leaves
- Process feelings with child

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### Transfer of Learning

Write down two or three things you learned today that you can use in your practice.

When are you going to use these ideas?

Anyone want to share?



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