

A TOOL FOR REDUCING BARRIERS TO FINDING FATHERS THROUGH MOTHERS



The Voices of Our Mothers

Kenneth Thompson, fatherhood program specialist, DFPS

Here are some suggestions for working with mothers, from the mothers themselves:

- Be careful about the approach — what you're asking is too personal, too quickly.
 - For example, when you start with, "I need to know," it causes anxiety.
 - Communicate in a way to help alleviate our fears.
 - Focus on our children's safety.
 - Tell us why the information you're seeking is important.
 - Be culturally competent and respectful.
- Inform us that there is a possibility the children won't be removed, if the father or his family can provide a safe home.
- Ask us if the father needs help as well.
 - Ask, "Tell me about _____'s dad."
 - Ask about the father's family (children do better with family than with a stranger).
- We might be afraid of having to deal with an ex-spouse or partner (e.g., abusive husband).
 - We're concerned that our children will automatically go to their father.
 - Explain to us that by law you have to search for fathers. Then ask us about our concerns.
- Give us examples of why it's important that you be able to reach the father in case of emergency (e.g., the child needs medical treatment that may require the father's blood type).
- Explain to us the information we provide helps determine what's best for our children.
- Understand what kind of relationship we have with the father and adjust your approach accordingly.
- Don't just accept when we say, "I don't know where he is" on your first request. Rethink your approach.
- Reassure me that CPS will investigate concerns we provide about the father.

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