



Foster & Adoptive Care Coalition

FOR EVERY CHILD... A PLACE TO CALL HOME

Preparing Youth and Relative to Meet

Use the following statements.

Message to the youth:

- Through new ways of finding people that weren't available before, we found one of your relatives.
- Your relative didn't know how to find you.
- The only expectation we have for today's visit is to introduce you to your relative. This will be a time for you to ask questions, but remember your relative might not know the answers (i.e. where is your birth parent).
- If you are uncomfortable in the visit and want the visit to end, just tell anyone of your team members (you won't be left alone in the visit).
- You can tell your relative that you live in a foster home, but do not tell them the phone number or address. If you want to visit with your relative again, your team will schedule the visit.
- It is natural and okay to have a lot of different feelings (happy, sad, angry) after you meet your relative – your team is here to help you.

Message to the relative(s):

- The team is happy you have taken the step of wanting to meet the youth, and we know it may be overwhelming. For your comfort level and for the youth's comfort the team will be supervising the visit.
- For the youth's wellbeing, it is important that the process be slow and that we make no promises to the youth.
- The visit is an opportunity for you to reconnect with the youth. Again, for the youth's wellbeing share limited information as not to overwhelm the youth.
- The youth may feel confused or angry – do not take it personally. The youth may also be very excited and may talk about the future with you – just take one step at a time and make no promises. Remember, the youth has been in foster care for years and has had a lot of losses and disappointments.
- We request that you not ask the youth for information such as their phone number or address.
- We know that meeting the youth can be overwhelming and that you might not be sure of the next step to take, we will help you in this process. We just ask that you be honest with the team – if you can not make the commitment of staying connected with the youth we ask that you let us know so we can address it with the youth.
- If you're not sure if you should answer a specific question the youth may ask you, let the youth know you'll try to find the answer out for them.

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