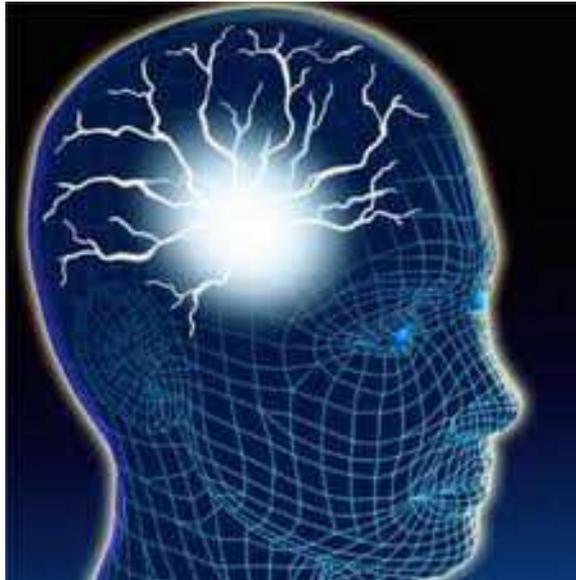


Autism and Foster Care

Mohave / La Paz County Superior Court Workshop
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Initial Advice to Foster Parents- **Don't Panic!**



**NOW
WHAT?**

- Autism may be a **scary** diagnosis for parents, foster care parents, and adopters.

- My Initial Advice
 - Relax – Be Open
 - **Never underestimate a child with autism**
 - Attend conferences that cover topics like autism, special education, advocacy, etc
 - Persons with autism may have many **academic, behavior, and social challenges** and parents will need to be prepared to meet their needs and support them.

Autism and Change



- Many with autism can be **reluctant to change**
- Social workers may need to **work to comfort the person**
- People with autism who have limited communication skills may have trouble **understanding the change**

Bonding



- It may take time for a child with autism **to bond to other family members**
- If a child has to share a room, try to place them in a room with **the person the child is most comfortable with**
- Social workers need to become an advocate. The person the **child can talk to if he/she is uncomfortable in the foster placement.**

Sleeping challenges



- Persons with autism may have **trouble sleeping**
- It can take some **concentration** to get to sleep
- For me to sleep, the room had to be **completely quiet**
- It was **hard to sleep when sick** especially with stuffy noses
- **Noises** like snoring, talking, TV, thunder, etc can **wake some kids up easily.**

Autism and Education



- People with Autism and other special needs are **welcome at all public schools** and even some private schools.
- There are many **special services** available for people with special needs
- The amount of support one needs can vary
- It is best to start the child off in an **INCLUSIVE** setting over a segregated setting with the proper supports

It is very important to get the supports they need from the beginning



- A child should **not have to wait** especially if he/she needs **assistive technology or supports in order to do his/her work**
- Include student in “**Specials**” (Art, Music, PE, Etc) and Extracurricular Activities
- Kids with autism may need supports for **Social and Friendship Skill** development (Very Important)
- CPS and social workers should help **expedite** this process when a kid changes schools

Good social policies for kids in custody, Foster Homes, and Children's Group Homes



- Kids should be **allowed to have friends** whether they live **inside the foster home** or not
- It should **not be a barrier** for a kid to get a permission slip signed.
- Kids in care should be able to **participate in many community activities, both school and non-school sponsored** both as an **individual and as a group**
- Allow **visits and sleep-overs** at **friends houses** and allow friends over to the foster / group home who live outside occasionally