



Partnering with  
Families in Their  
Home

Child and Family  
Team Meetings

Courts

Crisis Situations

Culturally  
Responsive Crisis  
Situations

Alternate  
Caregivers

# SCALING *Engagement*



Case  
Management  
Redesign



# Scaling Engagement Index

## Partnering with Families in Their Homes

Case Worker	2
Supervisor	5
Director	8

## Child and Family Team Meetings

Case Worker	12
Supervisor	14
Director	17

## Courts

Case Worker	19
Supervisor	21
Director	23

## Crisis Situations

Case Worker	25
Supervisor	27
Director	30

## Culturally Responsive

Case Worker	32
Supervisor	34
Director	36

## Alternate Caregivers

Case Worker	38
Supervisor	40
Director	42

Partnering with  
Families in Their  
Homes

Child and Family  
Team Meetings

Courts

Crisis Situations

Culturally  
Responsive

Alternate  
Caregivers





## Engagement Activity: Partnering with Families in Their Home



### CASEWORKER

#### INADEQUATE



- Does not partner with families; makes decisions or creates plans without their input.
- Appears judgmental, condescending, or dismissive.
- Displays negative non-verbal cues such as crossed arms, eye rolls, avoiding eye contact, or standing over seated family members.
- Talks *at* families or “preaches” instead of engaging in two-way communication.
- Treats families as “less than” or inferior.
- Uses a rushed, forceful, or impatient tone.
- Initiates contact with a letter instead of personal outreach when a family needs support.
- Uses child welfare jargon or acronyms that families do not understand.

#### ADEQUATE



- Meets families where they are and adjusts approach based on their readiness, culture, and current situation.
- Aligns goals with families to ensure shared understanding and collaboration.
- Actively works the case plan; follows through on tasks and keeps communication consistent.
- Encourages empowerment — helps families identify their own strengths and lead their planning.
- Ensures family members feel heard, valued, and acknowledged as the experts on their own family.

Partnering with  
Families in Their  
Home

Child and Family  
Team Meetings

Courts

Crisis Situations

Culturally  
Responsive

Alternate  
Caregivers



## Engagement Activity: Partnering with Families in Their Home



### CASEWORKER

#### INADEQUATE



- Demonstrates poor body language — checking watch, emails, phone, or computer during meetings.
- Fails to make eye contact or show attentiveness during conversations.
- Talks too fast or over-explains without checking for understanding.
- Makes judgments or assumptions about the family's behavior, capacity, or motivation.
- Expects families to conform to the worker's schedule or pace without flexibility.
- Prioritizes agency goals over the family's values or voice.
- Refers to families as "cases" instead of people or partners.
- Fails to follow through on promises or tasks; lacks reliability.
- Reacts rather than plans; avoids meaningful engagement or problem-solving.

#### ADEQUATE



- Builds trust through transparency, honesty, and consistent follow-through.
- Shows empathy and respect — validates family emotions and perspectives.
- Is prepared, punctual, and professional during all interactions.
- Utilizes motivational interviewing to support change and build internal motivation.
- Spends quality, focused time with families — prioritizing meaningful interactions.
- Creates impactful, family-led goals that reflect what "healthy" looks like for that specific family.
- Demonstrates cultural awareness and competence throughout case planning and visits.

Partnering with  
Families in Their  
Home

Child and Family  
Team Meetings

Courts

Crisis Situations

Culturally  
Responsive

Alternate  
Caregivers

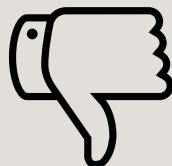


## Engagement Activity: Partnering with Families in Their Home



### CASEWORKER

#### INADEQUATE



- Dominates conversations and disregards family contributions.
- Ignores or minimizes cultural or linguistic needs.
- Schedules meetings at inconvenient times without consulting families.
- Uses a “one-size-fits-all” approach that ignores family context or culture.
- Provides inconsistent information or avoids difficult conversations.
- Focuses solely on compliance or control instead of partnership and trust.
- Arrives late, unprepared, or distracted.
- Uses directive or punitive communication instead of supportive dialogue.
- Treats visits as tasks to complete rather than opportunities for engagement.

#### ADEQUATE



- Demonstrates active listening — uses reflection, empathy, and open-ended questions.
- Acknowledges and plans for cultural needs and sensitivities.
- Considers practical barriers such as work schedules, transportation, or childcare when scheduling meetings.
- Understands family dynamics, learning styles, and barriers such as health, literacy, or cognitive delays.
- Maintains positive, open body language — leans in, maintains eye contact, and shows attentiveness.
- Communicates clearly and respectfully, avoiding jargon and acronyms.
- Uses plain, supportive language that families understand.

Partnering with  
Families in Their  
Home

Child and Family  
Team Meetings

Courts

Crisis Situations

Culturally  
Responsive



Alternate  
Caregivers





**Engagement Activity:**  
**Partnering with Families in Their Home**



	<b>INADEQUATE</b> 	<b>ADEQUATE</b> 
<b>SUPERVISOR</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Focuses only on paperwork and compliance instead of engagement quality.</li><li>• Uses a directive, critical, or punitive tone in supervision.</li><li>• Dismisses staff input, concerns, or emotional responses.</li><li>• Avoids addressing poor engagement practices (e.g., judgmental language or lack of follow-up).</li><li>• Fails to model respect, empathy, or cultural humility.</li><li>• Ignores the impact of workload, burnout, or secondary trauma on staff performance.</li><li>• Provides unclear or inconsistent expectations.</li><li>• Relies heavily on email or reports instead of meaningful supervision conversations.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Models respectful, family-centered communication and professionalism in all interactions.</li><li>• Provides reflective supervision that focuses on learning, growth, and engagement quality — not just compliance.</li><li>• Creates a safe environment for staff to discuss challenges, mistakes, and emotional impacts of the work.</li><li>• Gives timely, balanced feedback that highlights strengths and identifies areas for growth.</li><li>• Encourages staff to use empathy, active listening, and cultural responsiveness with families.</li></ul>

Partnering with Families in Their Home

Child and Family Team Meetings

Courts

Crisis Situations

Culturally Responsive

Alternate Caregivers



## Engagement Activity: Partnering with Families in Their Home



	<b>INADEQUATE</b> 	<b>ADEQUATE</b> 
<b>SUPERVISOR</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Fails to recognize or reinforce effective family engagement practice.</li><li>• Avoids accountability conversations or minimizes issues when problems arise.</li><li>• Does not provide coaching or mentoring opportunities for staff development.</li><li>• Prioritizes deadlines over relationship-building or case quality.</li><li>• Uses jargon, acronyms, or “system talk” without explanation.</li><li>• Makes assumptions about staff intent or capacity without seeking understanding.</li><li>• Demonstrates poor body language (e.g., distracted, rushed, checking phone during supervision).</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Reviews casework to ensure family voice and partnership are evident in documentation and planning.</li><li>• Supports staff in identifying and removing barriers that hinder meaningful family engagement.</li><li>• Promotes flexibility in scheduling and case planning to meet family needs.</li><li>• Advocates for staff needs (training, workload balance, support) that improve service quality.</li><li>• Acknowledges and celebrates staff who demonstrate strong engagement practices.</li><li>• Maintains transparency in decision-making and communicates expectations clearly.</li></ul>

Partnering with  
Families in Their  
Home

Child and Family  
Team Meetings

Courts

Crisis Situations



Culturally  
Responsive

Alternate  
Caregivers



**Engagement Activity:**  
**Partnering with Families in Their Home**



	<b>INADEQUATE</b> 	<b>ADEQUATE</b> 
<b>SUPERVISOR</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Reacts to crises rather than providing proactive guidance.</li><li>• Neglects to ensure families are treated as partners in planning.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Demonstrates consistency, reliability, and follow-through in supervision.</li><li>• Engages staff using motivational interviewing techniques to promote ownership and reflection.</li><li>• Reinforces agency mission, values, and trauma-informed, family-centered principles.</li><li>• Encourages use of plain, accessible language when working with families.</li><li>• Models positive nonverbal communication — open posture, calm tone, and active listening.</li></ul>

Partnering with Families in Their Home

Child and Family Team Meetings

Courts

Crisis Situations

Culturally Responsive

Alternate Caregivers





**Engagement Activity:**  
**Partnering with Families in Their Home**



Partnering with Families in Their Home

Child and Family Team Meetings

Courts

Crisis Situations

Culturally Responsive

Alternate Caregivers

	INADEQUATE 	ADEQUATE 
DIRECTOR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Focuses solely on metrics, audits, or compliance rather than engagement quality or relationships.</li><li>• Leads from a distance, disconnected from staff, families, or community partners.</li><li>• Fails to communicate agency vision or mission in a clear or meaningful way.</li><li>• Does not involve family or frontline voices in policy or program design.</li><li>• Neglects to address inequities, bias, or cultural barriers within the organization.</li><li>• Avoids accountability or deflects responsibility for systemic challenges.</li><li>• Does not ensure adequate staffing, resources, or support for meaningful engagement.</li><li>• Creates a hierarchical culture that discourages honest communication or feedback.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Provides ongoing, reliable guidance and presence for supervisors and staff.</li><li>• Builds strong relationships based on trust, open communication, and mutual respect.</li><li>• Demonstrates active listening, empathy, and availability during staff interactions.</li><li>• Ensures caseload management support by advocating for reasonable workloads and equitable distribution.</li><li>• Protects individual weekly staffing time for supervision and reflection.</li><li>• Schedules and maintains consistent group huddles to promote connection, alignment, and shared purpose.</li></ul>



**Engagement Activity:**  
**Partnering with Families in Their Home**



Partnering with  
Families in Their  
Home

Child and Family  
Team Meetings

Courts

Crisis Situations

Culturally  
Responsive

Alternate  
Caregivers

**INADEQUATE**



**ADEQUATE**



**DIRECTOR**

- Creates a hierarchical culture that discourages honest communication or feedback.
- Uses fear-based or punitive management approaches that erode trust.
- Ignores or minimizes staff burnout, stress, or turnover related to workload or engagement demands.
- Fails to model empathy, transparency, or relational leadership.
- Overlooks or fails to acknowledge innovative or effective practices from staff or supervisors.
- Relies solely on written directives or memos instead of relational, two-way communication.
- Makes decisions in isolation without consulting staff, supervisors, or stakeholders.

- Encourages and models a positive, supportive work environment through tone, language, and presence.
- Promotes team-building and collaboration across programs and leadership levels.
- Practices active problem-solving, addressing barriers such as bias, safety concerns, or cultural sensitivities promptly.
- Respects staff's protected time and prioritizes quality, focused engagement over quantity or speed.
- Establishes trust through transparency, consistency, and reliability.
- Leads by example — always prepared, focused, and completing tasks as promised.



**Engagement Activity:**  
**Partnering with Families in Their Home**



Partnering with  
Families in Their  
Home

Child and Family  
Team Meetings

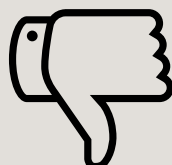
Courts

Crisis Situations

Culturally  
Responsive

Alternate  
Caregivers

**INADEQUATE**



**ADEQUATE**



**DIRECTOR**



- |  |   |  |
|--|---|--|
|  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Allows use of jargon or impersonal labels (e.g., "cases," "clients") instead of family-centered language.</li><li>• Reacts emotionally or publicly to crises rather than modeling calm, solution-focused leadership.</li><li>• Lacks visibility and accessibility within the agency or community.</li><li>• Neglects to promote ongoing learning, reflection, and improvement in engagement practices.</li><li>• Is inconsistent or unavailable in providing support and guidance to staff.</li><li>• Fails to build trusting relationships or demonstrate active listening.</li><li>• Cancels or skips scheduled meetings and disrupts protected supervision time.</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Demonstrates relational leadership that balances accountability with compassion.</li><li>• Embeds family and staff voice into policy, decision-making, and agency improvement efforts.</li><li>• Promotes cross-system collaboration with Tribal, cultural, and community partners.</li><li>• Communicates the agency's mission and vision clearly, connecting them to daily practice.</li><li>• Advocates for system changes and resources that strengthen family engagement and workforce well-being.</li><li>• Uses data, feedback, and reflection to drive continuous improvement.</li></ul> |
|--|---|--|





**Engagement Activity:**  
**Partnering with Families in Their Home**



	<b>INADEQUATE</b> 	<b>ADEQUATE</b> 
<b>DIRECTOR</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Disrespects staff time with last-minute demands or interruptions.</li><li>• Avoids addressing barriers, bias, or safety concerns raised by staff.</li><li>• Fails to advocate for resources, training, or workload balance that support engagement.</li><li>• Demonstrates poor modeling (unprepared, distracted, or disengaged in meetings).</li><li>• Prioritizes tasks and deadlines over relationship-building or staff well-being.</li><li>• Neglects team-building and recognition opportunities that strengthen morale.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Encourages cultural humility, inclusivity, and equity at all organizational levels.</li><li>• Recognizes and celebrates staff successes and effective engagement practices.</li></ul>

Partnering with Families in Their Home

Child and Family Team Meetings

Courts

Crisis Situations

Culturally Responsive

Alternate Caregivers



## Engagement Activity: Child and Family Team Meetings



### CASEWORKER

#### INADEQUATE



- Case worker does not meet the family where they are at, failing to assess or consider the family's readiness to change (e.g., imposes action steps on a family in pre-contemplation).
- Key parties are missing from the meeting or are not invited in a timely manner.
- Meetings are scheduled without consideration of family work schedules, transportation, or childcare needs, creating barriers to participation.
- The purpose of the meeting and team member roles are unclear or not communicated ahead of time.
- Participants are not prepped before the meeting, resulting in confusion or lack of direction during discussion.

#### ADEQUATE



- Case worker meet the family where they are at and understands their readiness to change (Example- pre-contemplation, action, etc.)
- All parties attend the meeting. Case worker schedules meeting with consideration of family members' employment (time of day) and schedules.
- Purpose of the meeting is clearly communicated, as well as the roles and responsibilities of each team member.
- All participants of the meeting at prepped prior to the meeting.
- Case worker is culturally aware and sensitive.
- Case worker actively engages family and encourages family-led participation to help families to feel empowered and heard.

Partnering with  
Families in Their  
Home

Child and Family  
Team Meetings

Courts

Crisis Situations

Culturally  
Responsive

Alternate  
Caregivers





## Engagement Activity: Child and Family Team Meetings

CASEWORKER	INADEQUATE	ADEQUATE
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Case worker lacks cultural awareness or sensitivity, failing to adapt communication or planning to the family's culture, language, or traditions.</li><li>• Family is not engaged or empowered during the meeting; the case worker dominates discussion or makes decisions without family input.</li><li>• Case worker does not use reflective listening or show empathy, leading to defensiveness or withdrawal from the family.</li><li>• Motivational Interviewing techniques are not utilized; the worker focuses on compliance or deficits rather than collaboration and strengths.</li><li>• Case worker creates plans that reflect agency goals only, rather than integrating the family's personal goals and priorities.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Case worker uses reflective listening and shows empathy.</li><li>• Case worker utilizes Motivational Interviewing techniques.</li><li>• Case Worker is incorporating personal goals with family goals.</li><li>• Case Worker has a understanding family dynamics, barriers and what healthy looks like for that family (culture, language, whether parents can read or health conditions, cognitive delay).</li><li>• Providers and community support are informed by the case worker, and are active team members.</li><li>• Post Meeting- Case worker and family touch base about the meeting.</li><li>• Refers to families respectfully and personally, using the family's or child's name.</li></ul>

Partnering with  
Families in Their  
Home

Child and Family  
Team Meetings

Courts

Crisis Situations



Culturally  
Responsive

Alternate  
Caregivers





## Engagement Activity: Child and Family Team Meetings

	INADEQUATE 	ADEQUATE 
SUPERVISOR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Supervisor does not monitor how staff assess or respond to family readiness, leading to delay of case movement.</li><li>• Key family members or supports are not invited to meetings and there is follow-up or accountability.</li><li>• Meetings are scheduled without oversight or flexibility, creating barriers to family attendance.</li><li>• Roles and purposes are unclear, and staff receive little preparation or feedback before facilitating meetings.</li><li>• Cultural responsiveness is not discussed or modeled, leading to inconsistent or insensitive approaches.</li><li>• Supervisor allows worker-led meetings to become agency-driven, without ensuring family voice and choice.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Supervisor ensures case workers meet families where they are at, supporting assessment of readiness to change and matching interventions accordingly.</li><li>• All relevant parties are invited and attend meetings; supervisor supports coordination and problem-solving when barriers arise.</li><li>• Supervisor reviews scheduling practices to ensure meetings are accessible for families and respectful of their work and personal schedules.</li><li>• Purpose, roles, and responsibilities for each team member are clearly defined and reinforced in supervision.</li><li>• Case workers are coached and prepared prior to meetings to ensure confidence, organization, and cultural responsiveness.</li></ul>

Partnering with  
Families in Their  
Home

Child and Family  
Team Meetings

Courts



Crisis Situations

Culturally  
Responsive

Alternate  
Caregivers



## Engagement Activity: Child and Family Team Meetings

	INADEQUATE 	ADEQUATE 
SUPERVISOR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Limited coaching or observation of reflective or motivational interviewing practices.</li><li>• Plans reflect only agency compliance goals, with minimal connection to family priorities.</li><li>• Supervisor does not review or support understanding of family barriers, resulting in unrealistic case plans.</li><li>• Community and tribal partners are not engaged, or collaboration is superficial.</li><li>• Little to no follow-up occurs after meetings, with missed opportunities for feedback or accountability.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Encourages family-led participation, emphasizing empowerment, collaboration, and respect.</li><li>• Coaches staff on reflective listening and motivational interviewing techniques, providing feedback and support for skill development.</li><li>• Ensures plans reflect both agency and family goals, reinforcing family ownership in case planning.</li><li>• Reviews family dynamics and barriers with staff to ensure they are understood and accounted for in planning.</li></ul>

Partnering with  
Families in Their  
Home

Child and Family  
Team Meetings

Courts

Crisis Situations

Culturally  
Responsive

Alternate  
Caregivers





**Engagement Activity:**  
**Child and Family Team Meetings**



	INADEQUATE	ADEQUATE
SUPERVISOR		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Reviews post-meeting follow-up, confirming that workers meet with families and clarify next steps.</li><li>• Active problem solving, act when needed when a barrier is encountered (bias, safety, cultural sensitivities).</li><li>• Monitors data and feedback to ensure CFTMs occur consistently, with family and provider participation.</li></ul>

Partnering with Families in Their Home

Child and Family Team Meetings

Courts

Crisis Situations

Culturally Responsive

Alternate Caregivers





## Engagement Activity: Child and Family Team Meetings



	INADEQUATE 	ADEQUATE 
DIRECTOR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Director does not communicate clear expectations around CFTM meeting quality or family-centered practice.</li><li>• Provides insufficient resources for staff to schedule, prepare, or facilitate effective meetings.</li><li>• Does not prioritize training on engagement or facilitation skills, leading to inconsistent worker practice.</li><li>• Cultural responsiveness is not embedded in policy or training, resulting in inequitable family experiences.</li><li>• Collaboration with community and tribal partners is limited or inconsistent, reducing support networks for families.</li><li>• Ignores family and staff feedback about meeting effectiveness or accessibility.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Director establishes agency expectations that CFTM meetings are family-driven, culturally responsive, and collaborative.</li><li>• Allocates resources and staffing to support effective meeting facilitation (training, scheduling flexibility, interpretation, transportation supports).</li><li>• Communicates a clear vision that families lead their own planning and goal-setting, with staff serving as partners and facilitators.</li><li>• Promotes interagency and community collaboration, ensuring providers and supports are active participants in the planning process.</li></ul>

Partnering with  
Families in Their  
Home

Child and Family  
Team Meetings

Courts

Crisis Situations

Culturally  
Responsive

Alternate  
Caregivers



**Engagement Activity:**  
**Child and Family Team Meetings**



	INADEQUATE	ADEQUATE
DIRECTOR		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Uses family feedback and case reviews to strengthen CFTM practice and identify systemic barriers.</li><li>• Models' transparent communication and empathy, reinforcing the values of collaboration and family empowerment.</li></ul>

Partnering with Families in Their Home

Child and Family Team Meetings

Courts

Crisis Situations

Culturally Responsive

Alternate Caregivers





Engagement Activity:  
Courts

CASEWORKER	INADEQUATE	ADEQUATE
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Fail to explain the court process, leaving families confused, anxious, or misinformed.</li><li>• Use legal jargon or authoritative language that alienates or intimidates families.</li><li>• Provide little or no preparation before hearings or fail to debrief afterward.</li><li>• View court as a one-way process — focusing only on compliance or documentation rather than collaboration and understanding.</li><li>• Exclude families from meaningful participation, speaking <i>for</i> them instead of <i>with</i> them.</li><li>• Submit biased, incomplete, or culturally insensitive reports to the court.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Communicates clearly and transparently with families about court procedures, timelines, and expectations in understandable, non-legal language.</li><li>• Prepares families for court by explaining who will be present, what will happen, and how they can participate or have their voice heard.</li><li>• Encourages and supports family participation, helping parents, youth, and kin feel empowered and informed rather than intimidated.</li><li>• Maintains consistent communication before and after hearings, providing updates and clarifying outcomes and next steps.</li><li>• Documents and shares accurate, objective, and strengths-based information with the court.</li></ul>

Partnering with Families in Their Home

Child and Family Team Meetings

Courts

Crisis Situations

Culturally Responsive

Alternate Caregivers





Engagement Activity:  
**Courts**

CASEWORKER	INADEQUATE	ADEQUATE
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Show minimal advocacy for family strengths or progress, focusing only on deficits or concerns.</li><li>• Communicate inconsistently, causing confusion about next steps or court expectations.</li><li>• React defensively or dismissively when families express frustration, fear, or mistrust of the system.</li><li>• Fail to coordinate with attorneys, GALs, or tribal representatives, leading to fragmented information and weaker outcomes.</li><li>• Lack follow-up, leaving families unaware of what happened in court or what they need to do next.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Collaborates with legal partners (attorneys, GALs, tribal reps, etc.) to ensure family perspectives and cultural considerations are represented in court recommendations.</li><li>• Advocates for family progress and needs in court settings, ensuring the family’s cultural, linguistic, and situational context is reflected in reports and testimony.</li><li>• Demonstrates professionalism and respect for all parties in the courtroom, modeling fairness and empathy.</li><li>• Explains the “why” behind court decisions, helping families understand the system and reducing fear or confusion.</li><li>• Uses trauma-informed and culturally sensitive communication, recognizing how court involvement may retraumatize or trigger mistrust.</li></ul>

Partnering with Families in Their Home

Child and Family Team Meetings

Courts

Crisis Situations

Culturally Responsive

Alternate Caregivers



Engagement Activity:  
**Courts**

	INADEQUATE	ADEQUATE
SUPERVISOR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Fail to guide or review staff communications with families about court processes.</li><li>• Overlook inaccuracies or bias in worker reports or testimony.</li><li>• Treat court involvement as a procedural step, without considering the family’s emotional experience or understanding.</li><li>• Neglect to prepare staff to help families navigate complex or intimidating legal systems.</li><li>• Provide little oversight of worker-family communication before or after hearings.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Coaches workers on how to communicate court information to families clearly, respectfully, and in plain language.</li><li>• Reviews case documentation and court reports to ensure they are accurate, strengths-based, and culturally informed.</li><li>• Encourages transparency and accountability—ensuring families are kept informed before and after each court hearing.</li><li>• Supports workers in preparing families emotionally and practically for court proceedings, including what to expect and how to participate.</li></ul>

Partnering with Families in Their Home

Child and Family Team Meetings

Courts

Crisis Situations

Culturally Responsive

Alternate Caregivers





Engagement Activity:  
**Courts**

	INADEQUATE	ADEQUATE
SUPERVISOR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Ignore family feedback or concerns about fairness or cultural sensitivity in court interactions.</li><li>• Lack coordination with legal partners, leading to inconsistent messaging and fragmented support.</li><li>• Reinforce a compliance mindset rather than a supportive, family-centered one.</li><li>• Avoid addressing power imbalances or cultural misunderstandings that may emerge in court settings.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Collaborates with legal partners (attorneys, GALs, tribal liaisons) to promote consistency and shared understanding of each family’s needs and progress.</li><li>• Models professionalism and respect in interactions with the court system and expects the same from their staff.</li><li>• Uses supervision to reflect on the emotional impact of court work on both staff and families, promoting empathy and trauma-informed practice.</li></ul>

Partnering with Families in Their Home

Child and Family Team Meetings

Courts

Crisis Situations

Culturally Responsive

Alternate Caregivers





Engagement Activity:  
Courts

	INADEQUATE	ADEQUATE
DIRECTOR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Lack clear expectations for how staff engage with families around court matters.</li><li>• Neglect to build partnerships with judicial and legal stakeholders, limiting the agency’s influence on court practices.</li><li>• Provide minimal training or guidance for staff and supervisors on navigating court systems.</li><li>• Ignore family feedback about feeling unheard or misunderstood during legal processes.</li><li>• Emphasize compliance and documentation over family voice, understanding, and empowerment.</li><li>• Avoid addressing recurring communication issues between agency staff and the courts.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Sets the expectation that family engagement in court is transparent, strengths-based, and culturally informed.</li><li>• Promotes collaboration with judicial partners, attorneys, tribal courts, and community agencies to improve family-centered outcomes.</li><li>• Advocates at the systems level for court processes that respect family voice, cultural identity, and trauma-informed practice.</li><li>• Uses data to identify disparities in court outcomes for families of different cultural or racial backgrounds and addresses them proactively.</li><li>• Ensures training and professional development for staff and supervisors on effective communication, courtroom professionalism, and cultural responsiveness.</li></ul>

Partnering with Families in Their Home

Child and Family Team Meetings

Courts

Crisis Situations

Culturally Responsive

Alternate Caregivers



Engagement Activity:  
**Courts**

**INADEQUATE**



**ADEQUATE**



**DIRECTOR**

- Builds relationships with judges and court officials to foster mutual understanding and shared accountability for family engagement.
- Supports transparency and continuous feedback loops between the agency, families, and the court to improve processes.
- Models ethical advocacy and equity, ensuring all families are treated with dignity and respect throughout legal proceedings.
- Sharing legislative bills and budget related to casework and families
- Involving caseworkers in legislative testimony prep (to ensure case worker perspective and boots on the ground experience)

Partnering with Families in Their Home

Child and Family Team Meetings

Courts

Crisis Situations

Culturally Responsive

Alternate Caregivers





Engagement Activity:  
Crisis Situations



CASEWORKER	INADEQUATE	ADEQUATE
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Fails to assess or triage the situation promptly, delaying response or escalating risk.</li><li>• Delays communication with parents or provides limited or unclear information about what occurred.</li><li>• Excludes parents from safety planning, taking full control rather than empowering them to develop or contribute to the plan.</li><li>• Neglects to involve providers or alternate caregivers, resulting in inconsistent or confusing responses.</li><li>• Fails to notify the Field Service Specialist (FSS) or team members promptly, limiting coordination.</li><li>• Attempts to manage the crisis alone, without seeking input or collaboration from others, specifically their supervisor.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Assesses and triages the situation promptly, gathering accurate information to determine safety level, urgency, and immediate needs.</li><li>• Informs parents or caregivers in a timely and transparent manner, ensuring they understand what occurred, what actions are being taken, and what supports are available.</li><li>• Engages the parent or caregiver in present danger or safety planning, focusing on building their skills, confidence, and capacity to manage future crises.</li><li>• Collaborates with providers and placement caregivers (if the child is in an out of home safety plan) to ensure consistent, trauma-informed communication and response that align with best practice.</li></ul>

Partnering with Families in Their Home

Child and Family Team Meetings

Courts

Crisis Situations

Culturally Responsive

Alternate Caregivers



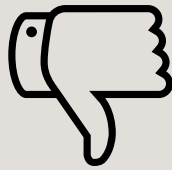


## Engagement Activity: Crisis Situations



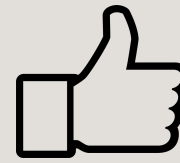
### CASEWORKER

#### INADEQUATE



- Appears flustered, reactive, or emotionally detached, creating additional tension or mistrust with the family.
- Uses directive or judgmental communication, focusing on blame instead of solutions.
- Provides incomplete or delayed documentation, causing confusion about what actions were taken.
- Does not follow up after the crisis, missing opportunities for debriefing, prevention, or family capacity building.

#### ADEQUATE



- Notifies the Field Service Specialist(FSS) and other relevant team members immediately to ensure coordination and oversight.
- Facilitates a team-based response — involving supervisors, providers, and support networks to stabilize the situation and create a shared plan moving forward.
- Demonstrates calm, professional, and empathetic demeanor, maintaining focus on safety, reassurance, and problem-solving.
- Uses reflective listening and clear communication, validating family emotions and maintaining trust even in tense situations.
- Documents the incident promptly and accurately, noting steps taken, communication with all parties, and follow-up actions.
- Follows through on next steps and aftercare, ensuring ongoing monitoring, support, and communication after the crisis has stabilized.

Partnering with  
Families in Their  
Home

Child and Family  
Team Meetings

Courts

Crisis Situations



Culturally  
Responsive

Alternate  
Caregivers



## Engagement Activity: Crisis Situations



	INADEQUATE 	ADEQUATE 
SUPERVISOR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Fails to respond promptly when notified of a crisis, leaving staff unsupported or directionless.</li><li>• Provides unclear or inconsistent guidance, causing confusion in triage or safety decisions.</li><li>• Does not verify that parents or caregivers have been informed or allows communication delays that erode trust.</li><li>• Does not support family inclusion in safety planning or problem-solving.</li><li>• Overlooks coordination with providers, foster care providers, or other team members.</li><li>• Neglects to notify leadership when the crisis escalates or impacts multiple systems.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Provides immediate support and guidance to the worker during a crisis, ensuring safety protocols are followed and response steps are clear.</li><li>• Ensures timely communication with parents, caregivers, and other key stakeholders, promoting transparency and consistency in messaging.</li><li>• Guides and supports staff in family engagement, encouraging inclusion of parents in safety planning and empowering them to strengthen coping capacity.</li><li>• Coordinates with placement providers, community supports, and other agencies to ensure a unified and trauma-informed response.</li></ul>

Partnering with  
Families in Their  
Home

Child and Family  
Team Meetings

Courts

Crisis Situations

Culturally  
Responsive

Alternate  
Caregivers





## Engagement Activity: Crisis Situations



	INADEQUATE	ADEQUATE
SUPERVISOR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Allows staff to operate in isolation, rather than promoting teamwork and shared problem-solving.</li><li>• Demonstrates reactive, dismissive, or emotionally charged behavior, which can heighten worker or family distress.</li><li>• Does not offer debriefing or follow-up, missing opportunities for reflection and staff support.</li><li>• Fails to review or correct incomplete documentation, leaving gaps in accountability and continuity of care.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Communicates with leadership (Director, FSS, or other administrators) when a situation meets critical thresholds or public safety concerns.</li><li>• Facilitates a collaborative team response, helping staff leverage internal and external resources rather than managing crises in isolation.</li><li>• Models calm, professional, and culturally responsive leadership, setting a tone of empathy, problem-solving, and respect.</li><li>• Provides debriefing and emotional support to workers following a crisis to reduce burnout and reinforce learning.</li></ul>

Partnering with  
Families in Their  
Home

Child and Family  
Team Meetings

Courts

Crisis Situations

Culturally  
Responsive

Alternate  
Caregivers

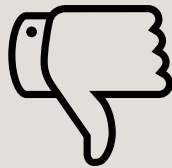




**Engagement Activity:**  
**Crisis Situations**



**INADEQUATE**



**ADEQUATE**



**SUPERVISOR**

- Reviews documentation and follow-up actions, ensuring accuracy, timeliness, and reflection of the family's role in resolution and planning.
- Help case worker prioritize, focus and execute; gameplan, encouragement, support
- Ensure adequate compensation for on-call
- Share knowledge and experience for crisis situation

Partnering with  
Families in Their  
Home

Child and Family  
Team Meetings

Courts

Crisis Situations

Culturally  
Responsive

Alternate  
Caregivers



## Engagement Activity: Crisis Situations



	INADEQUATE	ADEQUATE
DIRECTOR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Lacks clear crisis response policies or protocols, resulting in confusion and inconsistent practice.</li><li>• Fails to ensure crisis training or preparedness, leaving staff under-equipped to respond effectively.</li><li>• Responds reactively or inconsistently, providing little direction or reassurance to staff and families.</li><li>• Does not coordinate with external partners, creating fragmented or duplicative responses.</li><li>• Withholds or delays information from leadership or the public, reducing trust and transparency.</li><li>• Neglects follow-up or systemic review, allowing similar crises to recur without learning or change.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Establishes and enforces clear crisis response protocols, ensuring all staff understand reporting, communication, and safety expectations.</li><li>• Ensures supervisors and staff are trained in crisis management, trauma-informed care, and culturally responsive communication.</li><li>• Creates a culture of calm, coordinated response, modeling measured decision-making and transparent communication.</li><li>• Provides immediate support and resources to supervisors and staff managing high-risk situations.</li><li>• Oversees timely notification to leadership, legal, or public information channels as appropriate to the severity of the crisis.</li></ul>

Partnering with  
Families in Their  
Home

Child and Family  
Team Meetings

Courts

Crisis Situations

Culturally  
Responsive

Alternate  
Caregivers





## Engagement Activity: Crisis Situations



	INADEQUATE	ADEQUATE
DIRECTOR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Fails to support staff post-crisis, ignoring the emotional and professional toll of crisis work.</li><li>• Overemphasizes blame or compliance rather than reflection and system improvement.</li><li>• Does not monitor crisis data or trends, missing opportunities to improve safety and prevention.</li><li>• Models disengaged or authoritarian behavior, creating fear or confusion instead of confidence and collaboration.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Facilitates cross-system collaboration with community partners, law enforcement, courts, and mental health professionals to ensure coordinated responses.</li><li>• Monitors follow-up and recovery efforts, ensuring lessons learned are integrated into policy and practice improvements.</li><li>• Prioritizes staff well-being, ensuring access to debriefing, peer support, and wellness resources post-crisis.</li><li>• Reviews data and trends to identify patterns in crises and proactively address systemic contributors.</li><li>• Models transparency, accountability, and empathy, setting an example of leadership that is calm, ethical, and family-centered during difficult situations.</li></ul>

Partnering with  
Families in Their  
Home

Child and Family  
Team Meetings

Courts

Crisis Situations

Culturally  
Responsive

Alternate  
Caregivers



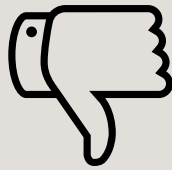


## Engagement Activity: Culturally Responsive



### CASEWORKER

#### INADEQUATE



- Make assumptions or stereotypes about families based on their race, ethnicity, religion, or culture.
- Communicate in a way that is dismissive or culturally insensitive, such as ignoring language barriers or using jargon.
- Fail to recognize or respect cultural traditions during assessments, home visits, or case planning.
- Apply a “one size fits all” approach without adapting to the family’s unique values or beliefs.
- Show discomfort or avoidance when cultural issues arise rather than addressing them openly and respectfully.

#### ADEQUATE



- Builds authentic relationships with children, parents, and families through respect, curiosity, and humility about their culture, traditions, and values.
- Seeks to understand the family’s cultural background and integrates that understanding into assessment and service planning.
- Uses culturally appropriate communication, including preferred language, tone, and nonverbal cues.
- Acknowledges and respects differences in family structures, parenting norms, and beliefs without imposing personal or agency biases.

Partnering with  
Families in Their  
Home

Child and Family  
Team Meetings

Courts

Crisis Situations

Culturally  
Responsive

Alternate  
Caregivers



## Engagement Activity: Culturally Responsive



### CASEWORKER

#### INADEQUATE



- Overlook systematic or historical factors that may affect the family engagement or trust.
- Neglect to include culturally relevant supports, such as faith leaders, tribal representatives, or extended family in planning.
- React defensively when receiving feedback about cultural bias or insensitivity.

#### ADEQUATE



- Collaborates with community partners to improve understanding and engagement with families from diverse backgrounds.
- Demonstrates self-awareness, reflecting on how their own cultural identity, privilege, or bias may influence their interactions.
- Advocates for equity in access to services and ensures interventions are meaningful and relevant to the family's cultural context.
- Shows flexibility and adaptability when traditional service models do not align with the family's cultural needs.

Partnering with  
Families in Their  
Home

Child and Family  
Team Meetings

Courts

Crisis Situations

Culturally  
Responsive

Alternate  
Caregivers



## Engagement Activity: Culturally Responsive



### INADEQUATE



### SUPERVISOR

- Avoid or shut down conversations about culture, race, or bias during supervision.
- Ignore cultural context when reviewing case decisions or family engagement challenges.
- Fail to hold staff accountable for culturally insensitive practices.
- Overlook disparities in how cases are handled across different cultural groups.
- Provide feedback that minimizes or invalidates staff or family experiences related to discrimination or cultural difference.
- Lack relationships with community or tribal partners, leading to limited resources for families.

### ADEQUATE



- Models' cultural humility and awareness in their own interactions with staff, families, and partners.
- Encourages open dialogue about bias, race, and culture in supervision without defensiveness or fear.
- Guides staff reflection on how culture impacts assessments, decisions, and family engagement.
- Reviews casework through a cultural lens, ensuring workers consider family values, beliefs, and community context.
- Provides coaching and training on culturally responsive practice and challenges stereotypes or bias when observed.
- Builds partnerships with cultural organizations, tribal representatives, and community leaders to support families

Partnering with  
Families in Their  
Home

Child and Family  
Team Meetings

Courts

Crisis Situations

Culturally  
Responsive

Alternate  
Caregivers

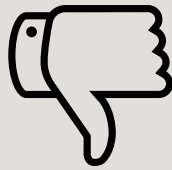




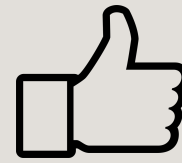
**Engagement Activity:  
Culturally Responsive**



**INADEQUATE**



**ADEQUATE**



**SUPERVISOR**

- Model bias or rigidity, signaling to staff that culture is secondary to policy or compliance.
- Neglect to promote cultural competence training or professional development for staff.

- Supports staff well-being and inclusion by valuing diverse perspectives within the team.
- Advocates upward for resources and policies that promote equity and cultural responsiveness.

Partnering with  
Families in Their  
Home

Child and Family  
Team Meetings

Courts

Crisis Situations

Culturally  
Responsive

Alternate  
Caregivers



## Engagement Activity: Culturally Responsive



### INADEQUATE



### ADEQUATE



#### DIRECTOR

- Treat cultural responsiveness as optional or superficial (e.g., diversity events without structural change).
- Fail to collect or act on disparity data showing inequitable outcomes.
- Ignore staff or community feedback about culturally insensitive practices or policies.
- Maintain homogeneity in leadership without seeking diverse perspectives.
- Use compliance-focused leadership that values meeting mandates over meaningful engagement.
- Lack partnerships with key cultural or tribal stakeholders.
- React defensively when issues of race, bias, or equity are raised.

- Establishes and enforces policies that embed equity and cultural responsiveness into all agency practices.
- Prioritizes representation and inclusion in hiring, leadership development, and decision-making structures.
- Communicates a clear vision that cultural humility and respect are essential to quality service.
- Uses data to identify and address disparities, ensuring fair outcomes across racial and cultural groups.
- Allocates funding and resources to support culturally grounded services, training, and community partnerships.
- Engages meaningfully with tribal, racial, and ethnic communities to shape agency strategies and initiatives.

Partnering with  
Families in Their  
Home

Child and Family  
Team Meetings

Courts

Crisis Situations

Culturally  
Responsive

Alternate  
Caregivers



**Engagement Activity:  
Culturally Responsive**



**INADEQUATE**



**ADEQUATE**



**DIRECTOR**

- Neglect to invest in training or accountability systems that sustain culturally responsive practice across the agency.

- Creates a safe organizational culture where staff feel empowered to discuss equity issues and challenge bias.
- Models' accountability and transparency when cultural missteps occur, turning them into learning opportunities.

Partnering with  
Families in Their  
Home

Child and Family  
Team Meetings

Courts

Crisis Situations

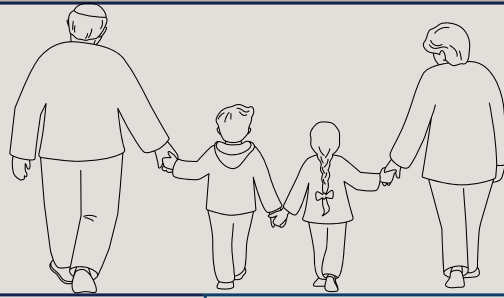
Culturally  
Responsive

Alternate  
Caregivers



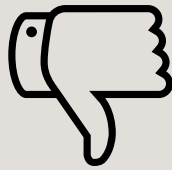


## Engagement Activity: Alternative Caregiver



### CASEWORKER

#### INADEQUATE



- Fail to acknowledge the alternate caregiver's lived experience or expertise in the child's daily life.
- Communicate inconsistently or leave alternate caregivers unsure about expectations or next steps.
- Avoid difficult conversations about child behavior, safety, or expectations.
- Place blame on alternate caregivers for challenges that are systemic or child-driven
- Overstep boundaries by treating the alternate caregiver as a staff member rather than a partner.

#### ADEQUATE



- Treat alternate caregivers as key partners in the child's care.
- Listen attentively to concerns about the child's routines, behavior, and needs.
- Involve alternate caregivers in goal setting, planning, and problem solving.
- Recognize caregiving challenges and offer guidance, resources, and encouragement without judgment.
- Provide timely updates on child welfare decisions, visits, and changes.
- Honor cultural practices, household routines, and family values in caregiving.
- Schedule visits and meetings considering alternate caregiver availability and obligations.

Partnering with  
Families in Their  
Home

Child and Family  
Team Meetings

Courts

Crisis Situations

Culturally  
Responsive

Alternate  
Caregivers



## Engagement Activity: Alternative Caregiver



### CASEWORKER

#### INADEQUATE



- Assume alternate caregivers understand child welfare policies without explanation.
- React defensively to alternate caregiver feedback or concerns.
- Minimize or dismiss the alternate caregiver's emotional investment in the child.
- Fail to provide coaching or practical strategies to support alternate caregiving.

#### ADEQUATE



- Follow through on commitments, complete tasks as promised, and come prepared for interactions.
- Maintain professional boundaries while offering advice or coaching.
- Recognize and reinforce what alternate caregivers are doing well.
- Share tools, guidance, and supports tailored to the alternate caregiver and child.
- Acknowledge the priority of biological family relationships while interacting with all caregivers in a manner that is supportive, respectful, and free from undermining behaviors.

Partnering with  
Families in Their  
Home

Child and Family  
Team Meetings

Courts

Crisis Situations

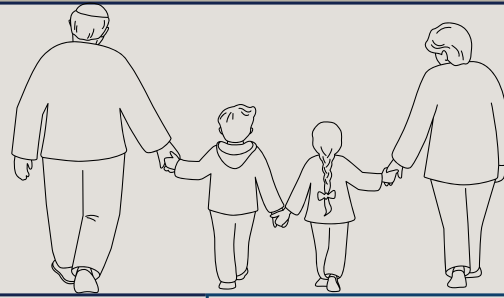
Culturally  
Responsive



Alternate  
Caregivers





## Engagement Activity: Alternative Caregiver



	INADEQUATE 	ADEQUATE 
SUPERVISOR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Fail to monitor or support staff in their engagement with alternate caregivers.</li><li>• Allow inconsistent approaches across staff, creating confusion for alternate caregivers.</li><li>• Fail to address conflicts between alternate caregivers and staff or mediate when needed.</li><li>• Avoid advocating for resources or training that would improve support for alternate caregivers.</li><li>• Focus primarily on deadlines and paperwork rather than quality relationships with alternate caregivers.</li><li>• React to complaints or issues only after escalation, rather than proactively.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Provide guidance and support to case workers to ensure strong relationships with alternate caregivers.</li><li>• Model respectful, collaborative, and provider-centered communication.</li><li>• Encourage case workers to actively listen and include alternate caregivers in planning discussions.</li><li>• Review cases to ensure alternate caregiver voice is considered in placement decisions and ongoing support.</li><li>• Address challenges, conflicts, or barriers promptly with problem-solving support.</li><li>• Advocate for sufficient resources, training, and workload balance to support alternate caregiver engagement.</li></ul>

Partnering with  
Families in Their  
Home

Child and Family  
Team Meetings

Courts

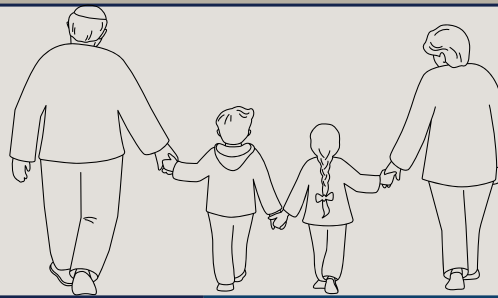
Crisis Situations



Culturally  
Responsive

Alternate  
Caregivers



## Engagement Activity: Alternative Caregiver



	INADEQUATE 	ADEQUATE 
SUPERVISOR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Ignore feedback from alternate caregivers about staff performance or system barriers.</li><li>• Fail to reinforce the importance of building trust with alternate caregivers.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Encourage consistency, transparency, and trust between staff and alternate caregivers.</li><li>• Facilitate team huddles and supervision sessions that include discussion of alternate caregiver engagement.</li><li>• Recognize and celebrate staff who build strong partnerships with alternate caregivers.</li><li>• Promote culturally responsive practices in working with alternate caregivers.</li></ul>

Partnering with  
Families in Their  
Home

Child and Family  
Team Meetings

Courts

Crisis Situations

Culturally  
Responsive



Alternate  
Caregivers





## Engagement Activity: Alternative Caregiver



	INADEQUATE 	ADEQUATE 
DIRECTOR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Remain distant from frontline staff and alternate caregivers, limiting insight into relationship challenges.</li><li>• Allow inconsistent agency policies or practices to negatively affect alternate caregiver trust.</li><li>• Fail to recognize systemic barriers that impact engagement with alternate caregivers.</li><li>• Prioritize organizational convenience over the needs or voices of alternate caregivers.</li><li>• Avoid leading initiatives that improve staff skills in working with alternate caregivers.</li><li>• Do not communicate changes, expectations, or policies clearly to staff or alternate caregivers.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Provide consistent support and resources to supervisors and case workers for engagement with alternate caregivers.</li><li>• Build trusting relationships across the agency with staff and alternate caregivers.</li><li>• Protect individual supervision time and encourage regular team huddles focused on alternate caregiver relationships.</li><li>• Model respectful, active listening and professional communication with staff and alternate caregivers.</li><li>• Support caseload management, ensuring staff have time to maintain strong relationships with alternate caregivers.</li><li>• Encourage a positive work environment and model collaboration, problem-solving, and team-building.</li></ul>

Partnering with  
Families in Their  
Home

Child and Family  
Team Meetings

Courts

Crisis Situations



Culturally  
Responsive

Alternate  
Caregivers



## Engagement Activity: Alternative Caregiver



	INADEQUATE 	ADEQUATE 
DIRECTOR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Overlook the importance of honoring alternate caregiver time, expertise, and household routines.</li><li>• Allow staff burnout or high turnover to negatively impact relationships with alternate caregivers.</li><li>• Fail to model or enforce ethical and culturally responsive engagement practices with alternate caregivers.</li><li>• Neglect opportunities to celebrate or highlight positive partnerships with alternate caregivers.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Act proactively to remove barriers or address issues such as bias, safety concerns, or cultural sensitivities.</li><li>• Ensure transparency and follow-through in decisions affecting alternate caregivers.</li><li>• Advocate for system changes, training, and resources to strengthen engagement with alternate caregivers.</li><li>• Recognize and celebrate staff and alternate caregiver successes in partnership.</li><li>• Promote cultural humility, equity, and family-centered practices in engagement with alternate caregivers.</li></ul>

Partnering with  
Families in Their  
Home

Child and Family  
Team Meetings

Courts

Crisis Situations

Culturally  
Responsive

Alternate  
Caregivers