



PODCAST WITH FOSTER CARE SOCIAL WORKERS

By Lisselotte Lowagie, Agency Growing Up, Flanders, 2022

PART 9: Shared world, focusing on parents to be parents

Katrijn

Where parents, can be parents, we try to involve them as much as possible. For example, parents can always go to the hairdresser with their child. If they can continue to take on that task, then that is very fine. If they can continue to take on other parental tasks, such as parent contact at school, they are allowed to do so. There are so many parental tasks that they can no longer do because that parenting responsibility suddenly no longer belongs to them. But if you can share certain things in consultation with the foster carers and parents can do that, that's the best fine. If you can build that back, when you see those parents stabilizing again, then yes, we should try to do that.

But I think you have to take into account the place of everyone . and also the time it takes for everyone. You also have to discuss this very transparently with the parents.

You don't achieve something like this in a week or month. Everyone's voice is very important.

We talk with the foster carers in advance, and they do know that their guidance is temporal. Although they know that it can suddenly be done, that does not make it easy.

Then you hope, as a foster care supervisor, that even if the child returns to his house, the contact still remains. That this shared world still exists, even though there is no foster care situation. That is the ideal situation, and that would be the best thing for the child.

Nele

That is the best situation for the child.

Lisselotte

Yes, that shared world is the most beautiful.

Katrijn

That is one of our three goals, but the shared world facilitates the other two. When we have reached a shared world, we can achieve a lot of success.

Ilse

That also supports a child's loyalty. A child has a very great loyalty to the parents and the foster carers that is built up.

Nele

Yes, besides the foster parents, the child is also connected to the parents. You can't take that away.

Katrijn

Of course, but it's not easy. As a supervisor, you want to be able to rotate that triangle (child, parents, and foster carers) as well as possible.

But especially with a network placement, they often have such a past, and together with the parents, you notice that in the beginning that triangle cannot turn, and you are already happy that you can just be the intermediary.

The child also sees that there is no shared world there yet. Then you use what you have from the beginning, and you can only hope that one day they can sit together at the table.

Nele

A shared world, I think that's a nice concept.

Lisselotte

Yes

Katrijn

That's a great goal though.