

Child Welfare Clients' Thoughts on Being Engaged ...

The following is an excerpt from data collected during a series of interviews with 287 child protective services clients in Oregon. The interviews were conducted during a research study on client engagement by Diane Yatchmenoff, Ph.D., from Portland State University Graduate School of Social Work. The statements were drawn from interviewers' written notes, and include a mix of direct quotes, summarizations, and interpretations of what clients said.

Engagement	Non-Engagement
Offered me options, choices	Rude and sarcastic
Was reassuring	My past reflected bad on me.
Provided my son with positives	Needed the worker to listen to me and quit assuming
Listened to me	Need worker to follow through on what he said he would do
He kept my child safe.	Needed more frequent contact
They saved my son.	Workers need to see your strengths.
Asked me what I needed instead of ordering me around	Services made me angry.
Nonjudgmental	Didn't follow through
Trustworthy	Didn't tell me how my son was doing
Returns phone calls	Supposed to do things for us and they don't
Worker made all the difference.	The timeline – there weren't any services available
Worker had the best interests of my children in mind.	Hidden agenda
Gave me a chance	Judgmental
Gave me support I don't get from my family	Not listening
Helped me	Hear people out...check out the truth.
Showed me how to manage ADD son	Never gave me a chance
Took care of my son and made him safe	They need to see families as real people.
Took time to get to know me and my partner	Lack of communication with worker

Engagement	Non-Engagement
Gave me positive reinforcement	Poor follow-through after family meeting
Took time out to listen	Situation changed [Worker] started avoiding me.
Gave personal time to drive me to appointments	They need to let the families in on the planning.
Saw my strengths	Treated me like trash
Honest with me	They need to work for families as well as kids.
Made a really good placement decision for my son	Slowness...nothing got done when it was supposed to.
Very supportive of me	No contact with the worker
Made me realize I needed to change	Worker was condescending.
Caring, understanding	Worker wasn't paying attention to my case at all.
Has feelings	Needed phone calls returned
Straightforward...didn't change in court	Need more communication...more home visits
Caseworker saw both sides...listened to the evidence.	Not listening
Very patient...didn't rush me	Caseworkers do black market adoptions.
Gave me power in the situation	Some workers should not be doing this kind of work.
Cared about me and my job	Need fairness to the families
Picked me up from prison	Needed them to work with all of us ([family] at once
Made time for me	Not see me as the bad guy
Being an addict was not a strike against me.	They choose all the negative stuff from the psych evaluation.
They trusted me.	Make promises they don't keep
My worker really listened.	Misrepresented me
	They should let me read reports before they give them to the court.
	They should investigate the truth before taking your kid away.
	Need to be able to request a different worker