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M. 2.
POLEPARK FAMILY COUNSELLING CENTRE

TO: The Reporter to the Children's Panel for Tayside

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
William Tarbett (DOB 09.07.91)

Report of Work Carried out at Polepark with the above named children

1. Background

Since September 1994 [REDACTED] and William have resided with foster carers, Mr and Mrs [REDACTED] whilst [REDACTED] has resided with foster carers, Mr and Mrs [REDACTED]

Reasons for their Reception into Care were:-

- 1.1. Continuing concerns for the safety of the children
- 1.2. Behaviour problems of children at school, family centre and at home.
- 1.3. Mr Tarbett's refusal to co-operate with the Social Work Department.
- 1.4. The children's involvement in the ongoing acrimony between the parents

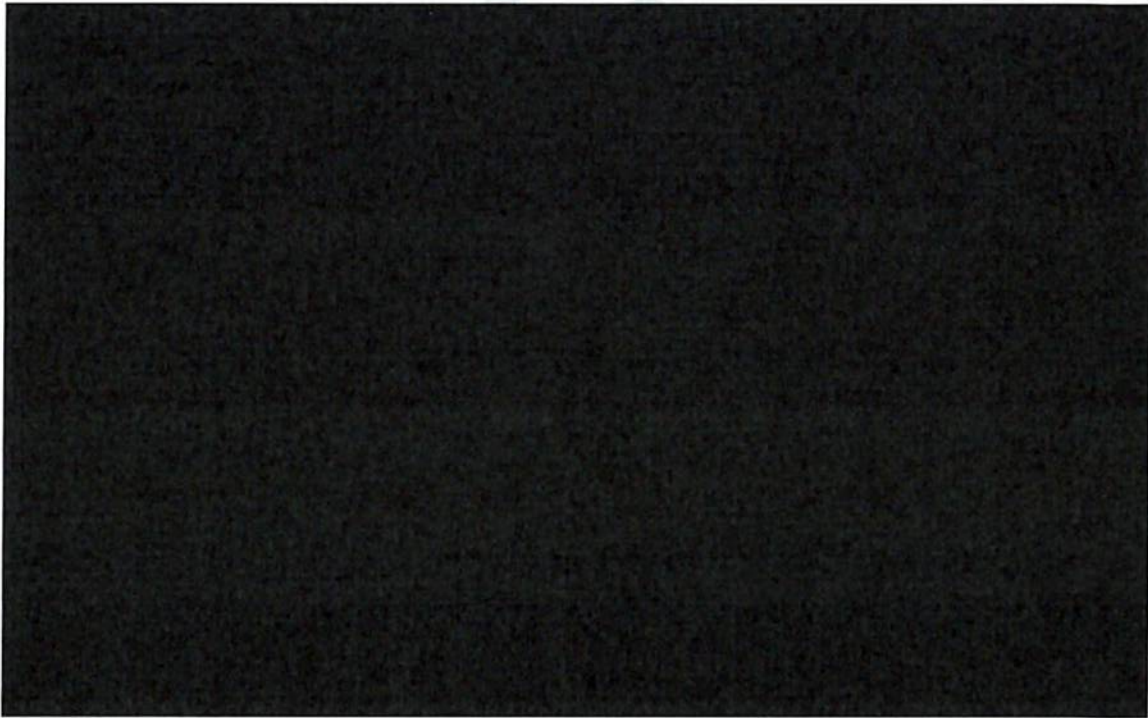
At the time of the children's Reception into Care Mr Tarbett was their main carer. Linda Archer (Mother) had recently left the family home. Over the years there have been ongoing concerns regarding the care of the children, a history of Linda Archer leaving the family home for periods, with or without the children, and a history of allegations and counter allegations by each parent when they were apart regarding the standard of care of the children and of physical chastisement. There have also been allegations (by Mr Tarbett) of [REDACTED]. These were investigated. There was insufficient evidence to prefer charges. Workers and others involved with the children have ongoing concerns regarding the sexualised behaviour they at times display.

2. Reason for this Referral

Following an incident of a sexual nature involving both William and [REDACTED] in the foster home in November 1994, it was felt that perhaps the children would benefit from having time and space at Polepark to talk and to explore their feelings and actions in relation to this particular incident and also to check out their feelings regarding other areas of their lives. The work which is ongoing is focused on the children's views and is not investigative but therapeutic in orientation.

It was felt [REDACTED] (sibling) should be part of the work. Although she is not living with the boys at present, the three children are very close to each other emotionally and there have been concerns in the past in relation to all three children regarding sexualised comments, language and behaviour.

3. Previous work undertaken with [REDACTED]



4. Purpose of Present Sessions

- 4.1. To get a clearer idea of what the children's prematurely sexualised knowledge is, to explore what it means to them. Primarily, it is a therapeutic service to ultimately help the children work out with supportive adults what is or is not acceptable touching for children of their age.
- 4.2 To give all 3 children the space and opportunity to explore what is important to them in their present situation, ie living in care and not being together.

The purpose of the work was explained to the three children in the following way on their first joint session:-

- 4.3. They would come to Polepark to play and talk about how they felt about living in foster care and not at home.
- 4.4. To talk about the behaviour and language they sometimes use which "grown ups" worry about, for example, [REDACTED] -

incidents when he has lifted up the girls skirts at school and tried to pull down their pants. [REDACTED] - inappropriate sexual language, William - found in bed of another child (female) in foster home apparently simulating sexual intercourse.

The work got off to a good start as two of the children were familiar with Polepark, with one of the workers who had worked with them in the past (Sandra) and with the style of work (play therapy).

5. Polepark Sessions

An introductory session for all three children was held on 2.2.95, followed by a block of six sessions, followed by a review. These sessions have been managed by having only two children attend at any one time on a weekly basis. Consequently, each child has been seen two weeks out of three. To date there have been 16 sessions and 2 reviews. Workers have also met with Mr Tarbett (28.04.95) and Linda Archer (05.05.95) to feedback to them the content of the work and issues/themes arising from the work.

6. Content of Sessions

The children have all settled well and spend their sessions playing, drawing and talking. They are all aware that the purpose of the sessions are to look at how they feel about the three of them being in care. What is good about that/what is difficult. What they feel are the reasons they are in care. What are the behaviours/words (sexualised) that people worry about. What do they understand about the words and the behaviour they sometimes use.

The children are using the sessions well. They are having and using the opportunity to talk about issues important to them, past and present.

7. Feedback from Sessions

[REDACTED] is a serious thoughtful boy who uses his sessions to work through, express and explore his feelings. He does this through his play, particularly drawings and by asking relevant questions.

He has talked in his sessions about why he thinks he is not at home. According to [REDACTED], it is because "mummy and daddy can't look after us properly" and "they can't handle us". [REDACTED] in the earlier sessions, was guarded in what he said about his parents and events in the past at home. He showed a loyalty to them both, particularly in respect of his father who was the main carer at the time [REDACTED] came into care in September. However, as sessions have progressed, he has been able to separate the actions of his father which he sees as bad from the person of father which he sees as good.

Through some of his talk, play and drawings, he expresses the violence and fearful experiences that he feels have been directed towards him and his siblings in the family home. This is evidenced by some of the statements he and his siblings have made to us as workers in various sessions.

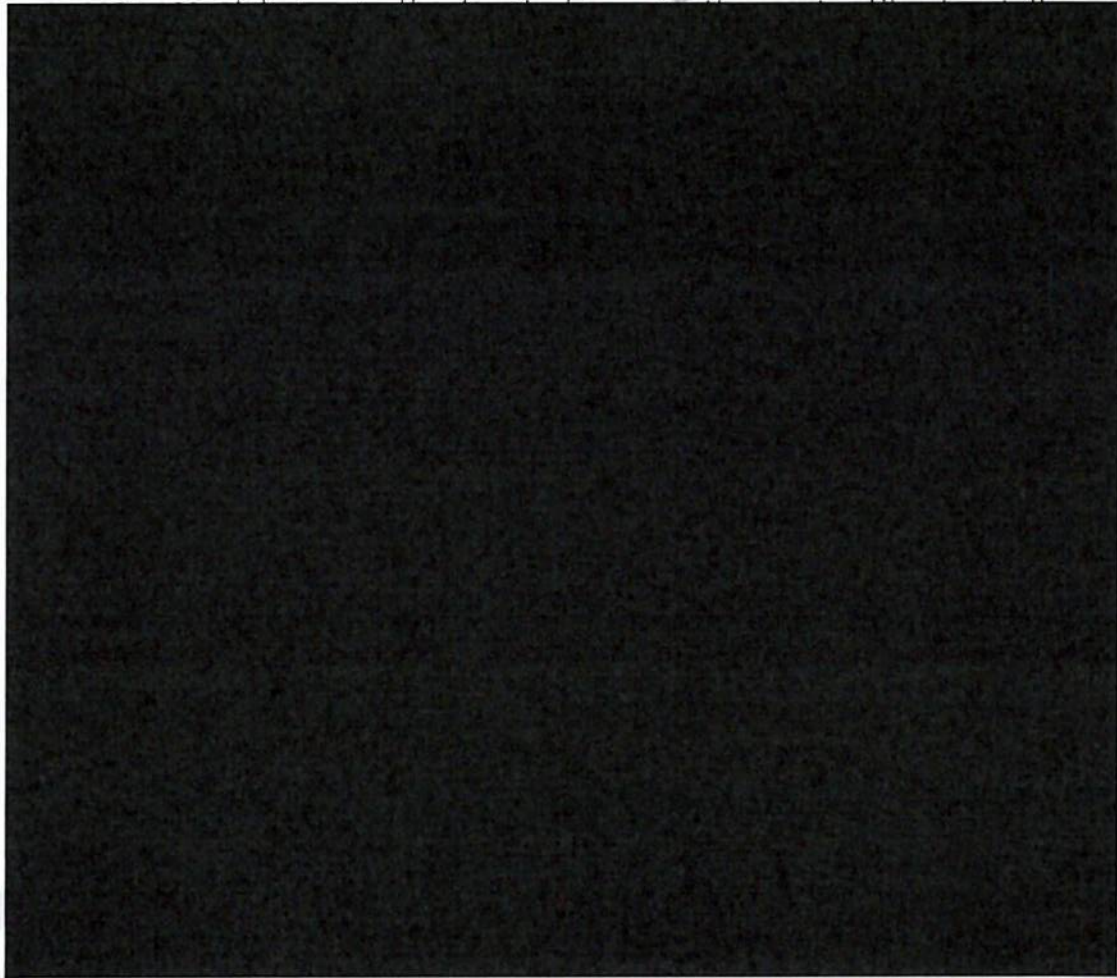
Violence - Children talk of an occasion when [REDACTED] was "kicked around the room by dad". They also describe times when [REDACTED] and William have been hit by their father. For the children, other issues appear to be around witnessing "Mum and Dad fighting", Dad threatening Mum, "[REDACTED] and Dad fighting". They have all expressed a fear of [REDACTED] and his "scary faces". (All children can demonstrate what he does). William states he "runs away and hides" when [REDACTED] frightens him.

When talking about difficult things, [REDACTED] said "dad thinks I can handle this", then added, "but I can't". Each child has other fears regarding ghosts, monsters, snakes, "the dark" and drowning.

All three children are able to describe similar events and incidents. However, at times [REDACTED] verify one another's statements, whilst at other times they disagree, ie, when [REDACTED] talks about her/them being hit by their father, [REDACTED] will sometimes say she is lying. [REDACTED] remains adamant, [REDACTED] defends his father. [REDACTED] states that he is not unhappy in foster care. He responds well to the consistency, boundaries and child-centredness of his foster home.

We have also addressed with [REDACTED] some of the concerns raised by foster carers, parents, workers and school, etc., regarding his sexualised behaviour and language. We have checked out with [REDACTED] examples of behaviour and language that he has displayed in the past at school, in his foster placement and in other places, ie social worker's car. [REDACTED] along with his siblings, will acknowledge they do use certain language and behaviour and has opened up over a period of time as to where some of this behaviour and knowledge may have come from.





William

William understandably does not have the same language development and skills as his brother and sister. To compensate, he uses the medium of play well, enabling him to explore and express his feelings surrounding various issues. Some themes and issues for William are "bad boys fighting", using toy doll figures to act out a scenario in which "mummy and daddy are fighting", ("mummy gets hurt and knocked over/down by daddy"). "Baby [redacted] in a bath, and a snake biting his feet". William used the toy snake in much of his play and it seemed to represent some kind of angry play, often being kicked, stamped, jumped on and finally thrown outside the room. The snake was always described as "bad". He also used two soft toys which he called "monsters", one of these soft toys in particular was mutilated, cut and stabbed, always around the eyes, throat, and genital area. It was also kicked up and down the stairs within Polepark, as was at times "the snake". Whichever Polepark worker was with William during those times was instructed and directed by him in what to do regarding those different scenarios, William needing to be in control.

Workers have explored with William his sexualised language. It has taken the form of him using expressions like "Me going to shag you" (said to his keyworker at family centre). William is able to give Polepark workers an explanation of what he thinks shagging is (demonstrated with dolls). It was William who was found in bed with older female child in foster carer's home, pyjama trousers off and appearing to simulate sexual intercourse. His explanation of this incident was that he was giving the little girl "a cuddle". Foster carers have advised that when he plays with two dolls, he lies one on top of the other and says they are "shagging". All three children have indicated, using the dolls, their understanding of "shagging".

8. Feedback to Mr Tarbett - 28.04.95

At a meeting with Mr Tarbett he was acquainted with information in this report. Mr Tarbett does not accept that the violence as seen and experienced by his children would have any effect on them. He commented on the sexual behaviour in stating that this was all "a load of rubbish", "that you workers put ideas into bairns heads". However, he also indicated that the children's sexualised behaviour was a result of them having witnessed [REDACTED]

behaviour at some time.

9. Feedback to Linda Archer

At a meeting with Ms Archer on 05.05.95, the same feedback was given to her re themes and issues as was previously given to Mr Tarbett. Workers asked Ms Archer what she thought might be the reason for the children's sexualised behaviour. She replied she did not know and was adamant that none of the children had ever seen any sexual activity/behaviour between herself and Mr Tarbett, nor herself and a previous partner. She did, however, state that family members (boy and girlfriend) had slept together in the same room in the family home as two of the children (William and [REDACTED]). She felt it was possible that this may have been when and where the children observed sexual activity/behaviour.

10. Conclusion

Work to date at Polepark has consisted/of two strands:-

A Looking at family life - past and present, good/bad.

- B The children's sexualised knowledge and behaviour, explore what it is, where they may have learned this and what it means to them.
- A We as workers give the children opportunities in their sessions to talk about the good things and difficult things relating to their past and present situations.

Good things the children talk about in regard to the present:-

██████ and the boys both seem settled and content in their individual foster homes. ██████ in particular feels that not being hit is one of the good things for her. The boys talk about outings they have enjoyed and seeing their parents and baby brother ██████. When access first began, parents were seen together and, laterally, Mr Tarbett on his own and Ms Archer and baby on their own.

Good things from the past when living in family home which are shared with workers:-

Being taken to park with ██████ (adult sister) and her baby.
Mum sticking up for them.
Watching TV, play with toys.

Hard things for these three children have been:-

Past - William expresses mostly through play his fear of some adults in the family. He has stated that he has been hit by his father and has seen father and other family members fighting. Although he expresses his anger and confusion about past experiences at home, he also says, "It's a shame for dad", (because he is on his own).





- B It is the opinion of Polepark workers that all three children have sexual knowledge inappropriate to their age and development. Their sexual knowledge may have originated from adults not setting proper and private boundaries surrounding their own sexual behaviour/activity. Parents differ in their explanations regarding the above. This is likely to leave the children vulnerable as they play out their own interpretation of what they understand they say they have seen. Children need adults now and in the future to help them learn and understand what is appropriate regarding their own and other bodies.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Sandra Smillie'.

Sandra Smillie
Family Counsellor

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Fiona M. Sinclair'.

Fiona Sinclair
Family Counsellor

25 July 1995
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DETAIL RECORD

(For specified incidents or agreed cases)

Client Name: [REDACTED] and William Tarbett URN:
DOB:

Date: 17 July 1995

Event: Session 16 (PPK)

Workers - Fiona Sinclair and Sandra Smillie

Purpose of Session - to catch up with their news, especially [REDACTED] move to respite carers. Continue to go with their own agenda.

Main Points

1. Today [REDACTED] came full of news of her move to respite carers, [REDACTED] in hospital (Approx 6-8 weeks). She talked about the family as if they were her own and gave a strong impression that she had been there some time instead of only a few days. Talked about family members as if they were own ie, "my grandad" and "my parents/carers". She also excited/pleased about the family pets. Workers noted the ease in which [REDACTED] has apparently settled in. Seen as unrealistic and superficial in terms of normal attachment.
2. [REDACTED] was given an opportunity within the session to talk/play out her feelings regarding [REDACTED] being in hospital and what that would mean to her. She seemed unable and uninterested in expressing anything to do with this situation, apart from commenting that [REDACTED] had phoned her the previous night and told her she was missing [REDACTED].
3. William, whilst on his own with Fiona talked about baby [REDACTED] living with [REDACTED], he was under the impression that baby [REDACTED] was still there. Fiona explained he was back with mummy again. William accepted this. Fiona asked if he had seen daddy lately, he replied he had not. Went on to say that daddy was living on his own in the multi and "pulling his pants down, him do not shut the door". Explored this further and heard from William that he was talking about the bedroom door.

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He went on to describe seeing "mummy and daddy doing the shagging in the bed" (used toy figures and bed furniture to show Fiona). [redacted] and Sandra joined them with snack etc and when [redacted] heard the content of the above scenario she placed the man toy figure on top of the woman doll figure (face to face) saying "they are kissing, shagging, do it in bed". She then used two other toy figures to usher the 3 children away saying "grown ups take the children away (to own bedroom), children should not see shagging". This led to talk about what they both say they have seen in the past, ie, "mummy and daddy shagging in the bedroom". [redacted] opens the bedroom door, mummy says "close the door" and William says when the door is open they all "run in and see the shagging".

4. Workers again checked out what the children mean by "shagging". [redacted] replied "kissing, lying on top, pants down". Later stated "pants down is a dirty thing to do". William laughing and giggling during this talk around "shagging". Also during today's session William taking down doll's trousers and talking about "wee manny".

At times [redacted] appears to begin to understand the need for new boundaries regarding sexual talk and behaviour eg., "children should not see shagging" etc (as above). However, at other times she instigates sexual conversation - today in the car, singing about shagging and encouraging William to join in.

Helping the Children Make sense of their present situation.

5. Mixed feelings about not living with Dad or with Mum came up again today. Children needed further explanations regarding why they are in care and can not return home. Both can recognise/agree about bad bits, also have good bits which they miss. William quite defensive and impatient with workers today regarding talking about mum. Seemed to feel workers were critical of her - had to reassure him. Also [redacted] felt it should be possible to live with mum (not dad), feels mum wants them,

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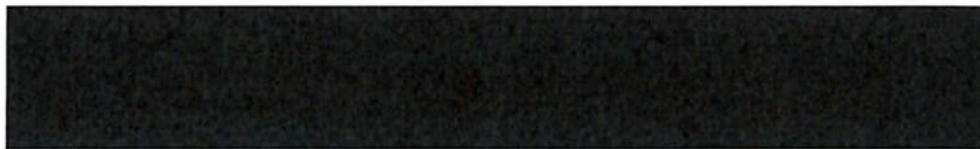
Issues and Themes

These continue to be:-

1. The sexualised behaviour and language they still exhibit and express (at times). Their understanding of what they state they have seen and experienced within the family home.

It would appear that adults have not taken appropriate responsibility regarding their own sexual behaviour. As a result, these children have gained sexual knowledge inappropriate to their age and development.

2. The children are more confident in expressing and voicing their feelings regarding the violence they have witnessed and experienced in the past.
3. Future as the children see it:



William has expressed mostly through play his fear of adults in the family home. Has stated that he has been hit, and seen others being hit by dad, and adults (family members) fighting. Although he expresses his anger and confusion about past experiences at home he also says "it is a shame for dad", (because he, Mr Tarbett, is now on his own).

4. [REDACTED] has now moved to her respite carers. Need to be aware of attachment issues regarding future placements. Has settled in to new home very quickly. On the face of it she appears not to be distressed or anxious regarding her separation (at present) from [REDACTED]

DETAIL RECORD

(For specified incidents or agreed cases)

URN:

Client Name: . [REDACTED] William Tarbett DOB:

Date: 03.07.95

Event: Session at Polepark

Worker - Sandra (Fiona on holiday)

Children brought to session today by [REDACTED]. Own child and the twins they foster also with him as they are all off school today. One of the twins started crying because she wanted to see the room that [REDACTED] and William get their session in. [REDACTED] emphatic that she was not getting in the room (family room) - could look in but not come in. She went off with [REDACTED] crying about this.

Whilst getting our tray ready said today we would go upstairs right away as there was a surprise for them. Keen to know what it was. Worker had got them both a little birthday present and card as it was [REDACTED] birthday last week and is William's this coming Sunday.

In the room [REDACTED] the most interested in the presents. William less interested, needed a help to take paper off etc. Both got comic, sweets and card. [REDACTED] also got a notebook whilst William got Plasticine. [REDACTED] looked pleased at getting a comic and said 'great' when he saw the notebook which had Dennis the Menace on the cover. Said he would take this to school. Both started off right away eating the sweets.

Enquired what [REDACTED] had got for his birthday from other people. Said he got Power Rangers gloves from Mum and a football. Also pyjamas from someone. Asked what he had got from Dad. Said 'nothing', did not elaborate. Said he had had [REDACTED] to his birthday on Sunday and they had all been to Jungle Kids (which had been good). This led to talk about little [REDACTED] - why was he there? [REDACTED] said [REDACTED] in care too now you know'. 'He lives with [REDACTED]'. Asked if he knew why [REDACTED] answered 'its cause Mum's not well - its not because of nothing bad'. Whilst this conversation going on [REDACTED] took up the soft brick and started throwing it at the walls. Asked if he was feeling angry - did not answer, William then asked for his knife.

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Took him through to Fiona's desk to get it. Left [redacted] measuring cups of juice for everyone. Brought the knife back - William said he wanted the knife 'cause I'm angry'. Then said to me 'I love my daddy'. 'Marion said we're never going back'. Asked him if he knew why Marion might have said this. [redacted] joined in and said 'because of access, we're not allowed to see him now'. Said I thought it was not just because of what happened at access but may be because Daddy had frightened them and hit them when they lived at home. Said again that children should not get hit - needed Dad to know this and make their home safer if they were to return home. [redacted] then said 'he's threatened Mum with a knife' - (went on to say he has not ever told us this before). William said 'he hit me and [redacted] with a belt'. [redacted] carried on by saying 'he hits me all the time with a belt for nothing'. [redacted] then wanted to look at his comic, started doing a quiz inside it - wanted my help around this. William took his shoes off and went over to the sand and started playing in it. Again like other weeks he said there was a dog, went on to say he would need to get a gun and shoot it or cut the dog with his knife. Played for a while in sand then wanted to paint - [redacted] looked up from what he was doing and said 'let him Sandra'. William, however, changed his mind whilst I was getting things ready for him - went back to sand and looking back at me said [redacted] and me live in the water, we were drown-ed, we don't have no Mummy or Daddy'. [redacted] then started to talk about [redacted] (who is [redacted] and [redacted] son), said he would be leaving school soon and was going to universe (University?). Both talked a bit about living with [redacted] William said [redacted] both said [redacted] gives them into the most trouble. William again talked about 'his Daddy', said if he does not go home his daddy will say 'where is my boy'. The police will take Daddy away - continued to say 'its a shame on my daddy'. Reassured both that they will be looked after if they do not go home. Daddy can look after himself. They need someone to look after them. Again they settled back to playing.	

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Both wanted time in the garden before they went home - William had a new water pistol he wanted to try out. Went out for last ten minutes. Both pleased to see [REDACTED] and her daughter when they came to pick boys up. Went with no fuss what-so-ever in car today (like a family).

Sandra Smillie

Sandra Smillie
Family Counsellor

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DETAIL RECORD

(For specified incidents or agreed cases)

URN:

Client Name: . William & [REDACTED] Tarbett DOB:

Date: 29.05.95

Event: Session 12

MAIN POINTS

- 1 Boys going this week to Butlin's for long weekend (with foster parents). This means we will see [REDACTED] on own next Monday - then [REDACTED] following Monday.
- 2 Talked about access - children still seeing Mummy but not Daddy. [REDACTED] remarked he is sad because he does not see Daddy now. However, later [REDACTED] clear about why 'no access with Dad' and 'not going home to live'. Mum and Dad being bad. Can't look after us (children). Can't look after themselves. [REDACTED] said "we're getting a new family". Further discussion re they would still be brothers and sister.
- 3 Children squabbling today over juice. This was followed by discussion re cause of fights. William felt [REDACTED] and him fight and [REDACTED]. Then William said - [REDACTED] and Dad fight all the time. William said he tells the police and [REDACTED] is taken to jail. At another time William pretending to cut grass - said Mummy watching. When asked why, said 'so don't get hurt'.
- 4 William talking about 'pulling knickers down'. Seems Mum does this re toileting at access [REDACTED]s view) - William saying he does this at Sunday School and when Rhoda ("nice lady") is babysitting. [REDACTED] backed this up but agreed with us William should not do this (show private parts), said he tells William this. At Sunday School [REDACTED] said William had pulled out his 'wee manny' and [REDACTED] said, 'don't do that you dirty wee midden'.

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- 5 Upstairs - William played in sand - happy play - socks and shoes off. Said he was on beach. Spoke about lifeboat (saw it yesterday). Said he had a sore bummy - dog had bit him. [redacted] drew face on balloon then discovered angry brick. Asked what it was. When told, started throwing it with 'an angry face' (good at expressing anger). Wanted to know what made workers angry.

William still in sand - took baby (dolly) rubbed it face down in sand. Said it was crying; had been bit by doggy. Came out sand at this point - put police hat on and told us he was Dad. Went to phone and talked to his pal.

- 6 Role play - involving both boys and workers - directed by William.

He was Dad - doll was Mum - Sandra was Mum's pal - Fiona pal's Mum/police - [redacted] - Dad's son/later policeman.

Play was about Dad putting Mum out, angry at pal, lots of fighting/hitting, Dad had knife to cut Mum, Dad hitting pal (putting her to bed), finally Dad phoned the police. Police (Fiona) came - Dad wanting Mum taken to jail. [redacted] then became involved sticking up for Mum (he had been in sand digging - said he was a gardener).

[redacted] also drew a picture of beach today. Just sea/sand/sky - no people.

FEEDBACK FROM [redacted]

- 1 Came with children today and took them home. All children off school today.

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2 Indicated she knew about William in Sunday School. Said 'they' were good about it.

3 [REDACTED] advised both sets of children with them will be going for permanency. They will be keeping the twins till then - too much to keep boys also - therefore they will be moving on.

4 Phone call from Fiona to [REDACTED] (29.05.95) re Rhoda. Rhoda is a foster carer known to [REDACTED] she also teaches at Sunday School.

Sandra Smillie

Sandra Smillie
Family Counsellor

Fiona M. Sinclair.

SS/WAM
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