

**SAMPLE STRENGTH & NEED SUMMARY**

Family Name: Brown-Nesbitt	<p>Family Members:</p> <p>Jill Brown: Foster Daughter living in Smith home</p> <p>Karen Smith: Foster Mother</p> <p>David: Jill's older brother in group care</p> <p>.....</p> <p>Monica Nesbitt: Jill's mother last reported living in nearby city</p> <p>John Nesbitt: Jill's Stepfather</p> <p>Kennedy: Jill's baby ½ brother 18 months old</p>	Date of Interview(s): February, 2003
Interviewer:		

**SUMMARY:** Jill Brown came to the attention of the project on February 2, 2003 when the Child Welfare Worker made a request for assistance with stabilizing Jill Brown in her foster home with Karen Smith. Jill has been staying at the Smith home since January 7, 2003 when she was transferred from a residential program north of here. She had been in that facility for approximately the past five years. She was transferred to foster care when the facility gave a thirty day notice of discharge and asked that she be moved for her own protection. Ms. Smith, a professional level foster home, had a bed available and Jill was transferred here. At the time of referral, the Child Welfare Worker expressed concerns about a number of issues with Jill's successful transition into the home. Her primary concerns were focused on Jill's whereabouts as well as concerns about whether Jill was going to "push" Ms. Smith into a premature discharge due to her reluctance to follow directions.

The worker was dispatched to provide immediate stabilization services and complete this strength inventory in order to convene a Child & Family Team meeting to develop a Wraparound plan. Upon arrival at the home, the worker provided one night of respite in order to give both parties a "cooling off" period. During the following ten days the worker checked in with the family daily and completed these initial strengths interviews by meeting with Jill and Ms. Smith separately as well as communicating with Jill's parents by phone.

**A PLACE TO LIVE**

Karen keeps an orderly home that is very teen oriented. She specializes in working with girls and has indicated that Jill can decorate her room however she pleases. When Jill was given this freedom she tore all of her posters off the wall and has kept it bare including taking the light fixture off the ceiling. Karen admits this is unnerving for her as she would like Jill to be comfortable and she is a little worried that if a licensing worker comes over she will be accused of abuse.

Monica and John are in pretty tight quarters in an apartment setting that they live in. If Jill were to go to visit she wouldn't have her own space as they keep Kennedy's crib in the living room. John indicates that when the kids were allowed to come home on visits they were able to stay with his family in the past. He indicated that he likes to cook grilled steak and that he enjoys engaging Jill and David in this activity. He keeps a grill that he uses outside just to have some options for when Monica's kids do get a chance for a rare visit. It's been over a year since either Jill or David has been able to be home. John went on to say that David is far better at working with him on meal preparation as he is able to complete tasks. Jill does better when someone is able to stand right over her and give her instructions.

Family Strengths	Family Needs
<p>Building independence &amp; live realistically Space is not a huge issue: they are able to accommodate differences Both parents think about the whole family: avoid a focus on Jill rather than looking at David as well. <b>John:</b> Able to complete youth oriented tasks, can accommodate a variety of the kid's needs <b>Monica:</b> Prioritizing, able to manage baby needs, <b>Karen:</b> Tries to "Pick her battles", committed to youth input <b>Jill:</b> Creative problem solver, able to read people, able to understand what makes others tick</p>	<p><b>Jill:</b> To know that if gets comfortable at Karen's she won't betray her family. To have things around her that soothe her. To know that she can have Karen and her family too. To learn how to take time for herself when there is really no space.</p> <p><b>Monica:</b> To have a way to manage the family in tight spaces. To know she won't be judged for her small space.</p> <p><b>John:</b> To know that David will be included too. To learn what a teenage girl needs in terms of privacy.</p> <p><b>Karen:</b> To know that she won't be judged for Jill's choices about her room. To get reassurance that she can go slowly on this issue.</p>

## FAMILY:

Jill has been in Child Welfare custody for the past 13 years, entering the system when she was a little older than two. Initially, Jill, David (16) and their little sister Brandy were all placed in the same foster home. Brandy stayed in that home and was adopted by the family. The older two kids were moved into a series of foster homes over the next few years and finally, when Jill was seven they were separated. Jill landed in the facility, Marsh House, where she spent the last five years. She was comfortable with the routine there and identified with the other children and the rules. She was also able to see David when he was stable. This occurred approximately every three months.

During her twelve years in state custody, Jill has been able to see parents a couple of times per year. She is able to give us addresses and phone numbers of her mom and says that her original father is in the federal prison. She identifies her Mom's current husband, John as her "real dad". She indicates that she is desperately wants to go home to be with her folks. Her Child Welfare Worker indicates that this could be problem but is not forthcoming about the perceived barriers.

Jill indicates that she thinks Ms. Smith is fine but just not family. Karen Smith is a lifelong resident of the area and is very committed to providing quality care to children who others are not willing to invest in. She runs a structured home because she feels that "these kids have had enough uncertainty in their lives". She was able to tell one story about a child she had who she helped find her family members even though she was afraid that the child would be rejected.

When Jill's parents were contacted via phone, they were reluctant to talk. Through a couple of phone calls over a couple of days, the Worker was able to find out that both parents are in recovery and were concerned about the system taking the baby. Additionally, Jill's mother indicated that she was nervous about doing too much. As she said, "We got here through our broken promises. We don't want to give Jill a promise we can't keep." Jill's mother, Monica, has chronic back pain and is on Social Security Disability. Her Step-Dad, John, works with a gang prevention project in a nearby city. Despite their discomfort with the "system" they agreed to attend Child & Family Team meetings.

Jill's parents indicate that there are few extended family resources but that they do have contact with John's brother, father and great grandmother. Monica's parents have passed away although she has contact with her sister who lives in Puerto Rico. Monica was able to tell stories about all of their kid's infancies with John helping out with stories about Jill and Brandy. There were candid about their hopes and dreams for their kids as well as regrets they've had about their lives.

Family Strengths	Family Needs
<p>Realistic about commitments,            Commitment to kids, kids needs first            Strong work ethic, parents take care of business as it needs to be taken care of  <b>John:</b> Problem solver, working with gang prevention, Sense of doing the right thing  <b>Monica:</b> Articulate, is able to rationally analyze situations (No promise we can't break), good at prioritizing (sobriety &amp; baby),  <b>Karen:</b> Organized, flexible, sees importance of family, able to look at different view points            Jill: Committed to family, Has a sense of loyalty</p>	<p>Jill: To be convinced that there is still room for her at home.            To see Karen and her folks working together.            To know that her big brother is going to be okay.</p> <p>Monica: To be supported in making promises to Jill she can keep.            To be reassured that she has what take to handle Jill.</p> <p>John: To feel recognized as Jill's dad.            Karen: To feel like she has back-up for her decisions about Jill.            To know that Jill's parents will stand behind her.            To be reassured that Jill won't "go too far" in trying to get back to her family.</p>

## SAFETY

Jill is a surprisingly street smart girl who seems to know how to take care of herself. While in residential care, she took off several times but always reappeared within one week. When she returned she seemed tired but healthy and reluctant to tell where she had been. Since moving to Karen's home this has not been an issue until late last week. It appears that Jill was able to hook up with some other girls and stayed out two nights in a row. While gone she avoided contact with the police and showed up on her own. Some suspect that Jill has contact with her folks during these absences but her parents did not volunteer this behavior.

Jill is a healthy girl who is able to intimidate people when she feels pushed. When Karen asks her to do chores in the kitchen Jill will walk outside, light up a cigarette and smoke it. When Karen goes out to talk with her about this, Jill replies that she's not afraid of Karen. This usually results in Karen backing off in order to give Jill some space. Karen has expressed concern that if she continued to push that Jill might hit her. When Karen backs off the chores don't get completed until she does them some days later. When asked why this happens, Jill became somewhat agitated and indicated "she didn't feel like it." When asked how many household chores she did at the residential center she indicated that she didn't have to do any.

John and Monica live in a quiet neighborhood that is very safe. One of the reasons that they are living in such a small apartment is that they needed to go a neighborhood that did not include any of John's old gang ties. This was especially true after Kennedy was born. Because of John's job and his gang history he has expressed concerns about both kids being on the street but has indicated that he has old buddies who can look out for them. In the past, he has admitted, that he has been known to go look for either Jill or her brother when they have disappeared from placement. He indicates that he has always been able to locate them but has not always been able to convince them to go back when he wanted them to.

Family Strengths	Family Needs
<p>Connections with people who can locate Jill and David,            Past experience in the school of hard knocks  <b>John:</b> Able to mobilize resources, knows when enough is enough, able to locate Jill when necessary  <b>Monica:</b> Puts safety of Kennedy first  <b>Karen:</b> Problem solver, prioritizes what's important and what's not  <b>Jill:</b> Street smart, able to protect self through intimidation, survival skills</p>	<p>Jill: To know that John &amp; Monica will come looking for her even when she doesn't run away            To know she can see John &amp; Monica when she needs to            To learn how to do household chores</p> <p>Monica: To know that Jill won't go too far in getting away</p> <p>John: To know that Jill doesn't have to make the same mistakes he did            To know that Jill is paying attention to his warnings            To know that he won't be blamed if Jill shows up with him</p> <p>Karen: To get reassurance that Jill is safe when she's not around            To know that Jill will not hurt her</p>