

## Cheryl – Part I

Cheryl is five years old. She and her-nine-year old sister were referred to the public children services agency for neglect when neighbors found her trying to cross the street, unsupervised at 10:00 PM on a Saturday evening. The subsequent investigation found that she had been severely, chronically abused, and occasionally neglected. Her mother was addicted to heroin, and used other drugs and alcohol as well. Her mother often locked Cheryl up in the closet for punishment, beat her, and left her alone with her 9-year-old sister when she went out partying. She has no visible means of support. Neighbors think she prostitutes herself to earn drug and rent money.

Cheryl and her sister were immediately placed in her aunt's (Ms. Robertson) care. At the shelter-care hearing, mother arrived high, and the agency was granted temporary custody of both girls, and maintained them at Ms. Robertson's home.

Ms. Robertson was not surprised that the agency became involved. She stated that she had been worried about the girls for some time, and that she had kept them overnight on several occasions, when the older sister would call her for help. Ms. Robertson had not reported the situation to children services, hoping to avoid outside intervention.

Ms. Robertson is a single mother, with five children. She scrapes by on her salary as a nurse's aide and child support she receives from her ex- husband. She stated that she loves both girls immensely, and is prepared to care for them for "as long as it takes".

### **Discussion questions for Cheryl Part I:**

For the purpose of this exercise, you will discuss only Cheryl, not her sister.

You are an ongoing family services worker. This case was transferred to you today. The investigation occurred three weeks ago, and Cheryl and her sister have been in the aunt's home since that time.

Your supervisor asked you to assess Cheryl's developmental needs, in preparation for developing the case plan.

Please discuss, and be ready to report out on the following questions:

**1. What would you ask Ms. Robertson about Cheryl's Development?**

**2. How would you make your own observations about Cheryl's development?**

**3. Where else would you gather additional information about Cheryl's development?**