YOUTH DOMAIN E: Preserving Connections

Scope: This domain measures youth’s contact and connections with their birth parents, legal parents, guardians, siblings, relatives and kin that they do not live with. This domain is not about the relationships with others in the caregiver’s home (Domain B). In this domain, contact is any type of communication, but visitation is face to face.

Focus: Because a youth came to the caregiver’s family through the child welfare system, they have family that is distinct. It is in their best interest to preserve these relationships, unless doing so would be detrimental.

Parenting: All youth benefit from preserved connections with relatives and others who do not live in the same home. In this domain, parenting is about nurturing a youth’s connection with parents, siblings who do not live in the caregiver’s home, relatives and kin. Maintaining family connections has life-long significance for a youth; it preserves family and medical history, identity, and cultural information.

Special points: Special points in this domain and Domain F: Developing Identity are based on the quantity of indicators that support the levels of parenting in both domains.

E. Youth’s Needs
CHECK ONE

- a. Has supportive relationships, positive interactions with parents, siblings, relatives or kin.
- b. Has positive interactions with parents, siblings, relatives or kin, despite some lapses of contact with family; or youth has no contact with parents, siblings, relatives or kin.
- c. Visits parents, siblings, relatives or kin, but these visits are difficult for them. Youth’s experiences have significantly affected their interactions with parents, siblings, relatives or kin.
- d. Visits parents, siblings, relatives or kin, but these visits are traumatic for them. These experiences have severely impeded their sense of safety and security.

Explain if you selected a youth needs rating of d:

E. Parenting Care and Attention
Caregiver(s): CHECK ALL THAT APPLY

- 1. Supports family and/or sibling visits or contacts, helps youth prepare for visits, and helps them with any reactions. (Basic)
- 2. Shares information about youth with parents, siblings or other relatives to maintain the parental responsibilities or to preserve connections. (Basic)
- 3. Respects and values youth’s connections to parents or relatives when visits or contact are infrequent, unpredictable, or do not occur. Caregiver shares information with the youth about their family to preserve connections and family history. (Basic)
- 4. Helps youth with their reactions to visits or canceled visits that impact their temperament for more than a 24-hour period. (Significant)
☐ 5. Notifies the youth’s parents or other relatives of medical appointments, and invites them to school or community activities. (Significant)

☐ 6. Welcomes youth’s parent(s), siblings, or other relatives into their home to preserve or strengthen their attachment and involve them in the youth’s care and activities. (Significant)

☐ 7. Formally mentors or participates in therapy with youth’s parent(s), prospective adoptive parents or relative custodians, having contact with them several times a week. (Extensive)

☐ 8. Is responsible to supervise regular face-to-face visits with youth’s parents or other adult relatives per court order, case plan or contact agreement. (Extensive)

☐ 9. Actively assists youth with unusually intense reactions related to regular visitation. (Extensive)

☐ 10. Drives or goes with youth to visit parent(s), siblings, relatives or kin more than 16 times a month. (Extensive)

☐ 11. Drives one hundred miles or more every month for youth to visit with parents, siblings, relatives or kin. (Extensive)

☐ 12. Contact with the youth’s parents or other relatives is complex and difficult, but caregiver(s) safely maintains a relationship and contact with youth’s family by exercising sound judgment. (Exceptional)

☐ 13. None of the above indicators apply to caregiver’s parental care and attention. (None)

Explain if you selected parenting indicators of Extensive or Exceptional:
YOUTH DOMAIN F: Developing Identity

**Scope:** This domain measures youth's developing identity and social connections that sustain and strengthen their well-being and efforts of the caregivers to connect a youth with relationships and community resources that develop and preserve their identity and culture. Identity is defined as a sense of who one is and a sense of belonging or membership to a cultural group or multiple groups. A youth's identity and sense of self is developed with reference to their birth and extended family, peers, social and culture influences, religion, gender, community and law, media (including social media) and other factors.

Culture is the shared beliefs, customs, practices and social behavior of a particular group; this would include a youth's ethnicity and race, faith/spirituality, socio-economic factors, sexual identity, families' traditions and social identity. Practices, customs and social behaviors include language, milestones, food, celebrations, clothing, strengths and history, norms of behavior, and child-rearing practices. Youth's culture includes their birth family's culture, and is not limited to identification with a minority culture; it may refer to the prominent culture. Community consists of people, formal organizations and informal groups of people, or location(s), or social media groups with which a youth feels a sense of membership, fulfillment of need or shared connection.

Youth’s developing identity, their connection to others and how they feel about it influences behavior, cognitive and emotional outcomes including academic achievement, levels of happiness, anxiety, social integration, self-esteem and over-all well-being.

**Focus:** Because a youth came to the caregiver’s family through the child welfare system, the youth’s developing identity is influenced by their past and all cultural connections must be considered and honored. This domain is not specifically about preserving family connections (Domain E) or supervision needs (Domain C), but considers the efforts of the caregiver(s) to preserve and support a youth’s growing identity and well-being.

**Parenting:** All youth need relationships and social connections to develop their identity, including their ability to successfully integrate and synthesize their life experiences into their identity. In this domain, parenting is about initiating conversations, demonstrating and ensuring a youth has relationships in the family and community that help a youth develop their identity and positive self-image. A caregiver’s leadership and acceptance of responsibility encourages a youth’s development in this area. Without parental support, a youth is likely to show less interest in, or make less effective use of, supports and resources to develop an authentic, healthy identity.

**Special points:** Special points in this domain and Domain E: Preserving Connections are based on the quantity of indicators that support the levels of parenting in both domains.

**F. Youth’s Needs**

CHECK ONE

- **a.** Reflects a strong sense of identity and demonstrates a positive self-image. They can talk about their connection and familiarity with their cultural customs and practices. Socializing with others connected with the community is a source of comfort and strength.

- **b.** Reflects typical, age-appropriate identity development, and is comfortable with cultural customs and practices, and is socializing with others connected to a community.

- **c.** Reflects a conflicted identity or a poor self-image that is atypical for their age, adversely affecting their interest in developing familiarity with cultural customs or practices, and with others connected with their community.

- **d.** Reflects a damaged identity or absence of an identity that contributes to self-destructive behaviors or relationships. A youth’s damaged self-image is evident in their current social behaviors that currently seeks to damage or disengage relationships.
F. Parenting Care and Attention
Caregiver(s): CHECK ALL THAT APPLY

☐ 1. Demonstrates respect for youth’s identity and their community. Caregiver makes efforts to increase cultural awareness, and takes the responsibility to show and teach youth about their family history, including their birth family’s culture and community. Ensures youth has items and information needed to maintain skin and hair care. (Basic)

☐ 2. Demonstrates awareness and makes efforts to keep youth emotionally and physically safe from intolerance in the home and community. (Basic)

☐ 3. Provides a home environment for youth with food, language, clothing, and community activities that support youth developing a positive self-image and authentic, healthy identity. (Significant)

☐ 4. Has established significant, ongoing positive relationships with individuals or other families who are willing to mentor youth’s developing individual identity. Caregiver can identify specific people, and their deliberate, recognizable actions with youth established for this purpose. (Significant)

☐ 5. Demonstrates and mentors youth to develop skills to safely negotiate difficulties in diverse settings at school, in the neighborhood, within social network communities and in public. (Extensive)

☐ 6. Regularly coordinates, attends or hosts cultural community events to help youth establish, develop and maintain connections to their culture that builds their identity. Caregiver can identify the frequency of specific events and how they support youth’s identity development. (Extensive)

☐ 7. Drives 200 or more miles each month for youth to attend events to make or keep connections with their culture and community. (Extensive)

☐ 8. Helps youth repair and build their damaged identity. Caregiver can list the substantial, deliberate parenting actions they take to nurture youth’s pride in their identity and involvement in group activities that build a positive self-image. (Extensive) (This indicator is valid only when paired with need d)

☐ 9. Transformed their daily life to include youth’s individual identity and community into caregiver’s daily life. Caregiver and family have made permanent major life changes to commit to youth’s identity and community, such as joining a new faith community, moving to a new home, or changing schools. (Exceptional)

☐ 10. None of the above indicators apply to caregiver’s parental care and attention. (None)

Explain if you selected a youth needs rating of d:

Explain if you selected parenting indicators of Extensive or Exceptional: