

Referral:

Client system consists of mother, father, and their four children Tia (female, age 9), Timothy (male, age 8), Apricot (female, age 6), and Elijah (age 1, male). The family is living in the Bay Area. They are from the East Coast and have spent time moving between several states (Chicago, New York, New Jersey, and Philadelphia) where much of their extended family resides. Currently the father works under the table. The mother takes care of the children. The parents are illiterate; the father previously obtained work through family networks and cold-calling clients.

Parents Barry (male, age 27) and Sylvia (female, age 27) were arrested and jailed when they drove out of a grocery store parking lot, not realizing their 6-year-old Apricot was wandering around the parking lot.

Family identifies as “Roma or gypsy” and as Christians who attend a Romani church. The family has lived outside mainstream American culture until becoming involved with the child welfare system: before this year, the children had never attended school and could not read or write; the parents are illiterate; the father previously obtained work through family networks and cold-calling clients; the parents have used multiple names/aliases and have lived transiently in several states. Mother reports that they have never been arrested aside from the incident that opened this case.

The family describes their culture as revolving around family and Roma community functions such as attending church. Father reports that their community is “very secretive” and resists contact with American society, particularly representatives of American systems, e.g. social workers. An example of this secrecy is that the Roma have a language that has no written form, and the Romani are strictly forbidden from teaching the language to Americans/non-Roma people; in the past people have been kicked out of the community for revealing things to outsiders. Parents report extreme isolation in their current East Bay neighborhood: separation from family, hostility from neighbors, and lack of community.

Little is known about the family’s medical history as they have no paperwork/records and have used different names at different times. However, during the CPS medical clearance at the time of parents’ arrest, baby Elijah noted to be “extremely thin.” Subsequent testing revealed that baby Elijah has a rare genetic disorder that affects his development and involves unique dietary restrictions.

Strengths include large extended family, cultural community through church, close attachment between the family members.

Case Plan elements to include:

- Enrolling children in school
- Engaging in medical/dental care for children
- Obtain stable housing

How will you engage with this family to address these case plan goals?

Where do you begin?