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**CHILD AND FAMILY GUIDANCE OF GEORGIA, INC.**

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**Comprehensive Child and Family Assessment**

**CLIENT:** Deborah Schultz

**DATE:** March 2007

**ASSESSOR:** Alicia M. Gregory, LMFT

**REFERRING AGENCY:** Wilkinson County Department of Family and Children's Services

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The following is an excerpt from what will be provided to the Wilkinson County Department of Family and Children Services. This is provided at the request of Bibb County Superior Court Tilman E. Self, III.

**INTRODUCTION**

Child and Family Guidance of Georgia were notified on February 28, 2007 to conduct a Comprehensive Child and Family Assessment on Emma Rose. Emma was taken into care on January 20, 2007 when the Wilkinson County Department of Family and Children Services had a "pick up order" to take Emma into the Department's care. She was placed with foster parents, Lisa and Glen in Wilkinson County.

**INTERVIEWS**

**Elizabeth Hadaway** was interviewed in her home on March 14, 2007 in Bibb County. Elizabeth was asked to provide background information regarding Emma. She stated that her relationship with Emma began in 2004 when Emma was just four years old. She stated that Emma's biological mother Debbie had a partner by the name of "Star". Star began working at Karen Baughier's place of business. During that time, Elizabeth understood that Debbie began to have serious problems with her oldest child M. She explained that M. was killing pets, being "very physically violent" towards his mother Debbie and abusive both physically and emotionally to his younger sister Emma. As a result of his behavior, Star sent her two sons to live with a family member in Florida. Elizabeth understood that Debbie and Star were going through multiple relationship problems, which included drug abuse and financial issues. As the problems

progressed, Debbie attempted to place M. [redacted] in foster care. When the Department was unable to take M. [redacted], Debbie asked Elizabeth to take Emma for "six months to a year" because she was aware of both physical and potentially sexual abuse occurring to Emma by the older brother. Elizabeth stated that at that time, she felt it was inappropriate to take Emma knowing that she would return to her mother soon after. She felt the confusion for Emma would potentially have more serious consequences. As a result, Debbie, Star, M. [redacted] and Emma moved away for about a year and a half. During that time, M. [redacted] was taken into the custody of the Department of Family and Children Services in Jones County and Emma remained with her biological mother and her partner. After this time passed, a letter came asking that Emma be adopted and two weeks later Elizabeth Hadaway picked her up on May 15, 2006.

Once Emma moved into Elizabeth Hadaway's household more information was obtained as to the daily problems that Emma faced. Emma said that she lived in a van for some time before moving back to Georgia. Emma told stories of being called a "bitch" by both the mother and brother. Emma would call herself 'stupid' and 'retarded' regularly. Emma reported that one of her rooms had a lock on the outside so that she could not get out. Emma also commented on not being able to go outside often when she lived with her biological mother.

Elizabeth reported that Emma had problems with adjustment that were apparent once she moved to Georgia. Emma had a fear of being alone and was apt to "shriek and cry" if she thought this might happen. Emma needed constant reassurance that she was not going to be left by herself. Emma was unaware of what foods were called and referred to them as that "yellow stuff" or that "green stuff". Similarly, if food such as a box of cereal was running low she would become anxious asking questions about being able to buy more and would at times attempt to conserve how much she ate in an effort to keep it longer. Elizabeth reported that over time all of the above reported behaviors decreased significantly.

Academically, Emma was not performing at her age and grade level. When she arrived to live in Georgia, she had never been in school at the age of six and knew little of her ABC's and how to read. Elizabeth provided documentation to the assessor as to how performance improved dramatically over the summer before entering into kindergarten. Elizabeth had a scrapbook made with a page inserted showing her alphabetical work when she first arrived. Many letters were distorted, back words or very shaky writing. Later work was much improved and with a clear difference in her abilities. Elizabeth reported working diligently with her on everything from shapes, colors, number, letters and basic reading to prepare her for kindergarten. Emma was placed in the Twiggs County school system although she reported having a preference for wanting to send her to Montessori school but was unable due to scheduling conflicts.

Aside from working with Emma academically, she was also provided a well-rounded amount of stimulation and activity. Emma went to several summer camps including soccer, camps through Macon State College and Children's Museum in Macon, Ga. As well, pictures were present through out the home of trips taken to Tybee Island and other local vacation spots in Georgia. Elizabeth commented on one picture in particular where Emma was carving out a pumpkin during Halloween. She stated that the entire holiday of Halloween was being celebrated for the first time for Emma.

Elizabeth became teary during one portion of the interview when questioned about her concerns now that Emma had been removed from her second home. Elizabeth appeared to have many concerns about whether trust can be developed once again. She reported thinking about this often and worrying extensively for Emma. Elizabeth began reporting some of the changes she understood that Emma may be currently exhibiting including bedwetting, lying and competing for attention with the many children reportedly living in the foster home. Elizabeth learned of this information during the very initial placement with the [redacted]s and is not aware of the current situation as she stated a no contact order is currently in place. Although she was adamant that what interaction she had with the foster parents was positive, she reported feeling that Emma needed more individualized attention and worried that the removal had caused a new trauma for Emma.

Lisa and Glen [redacted] along with the oldest adopted child A [redacted] were interviewed in their home on March 23, 2007 in Wilkinson County. Lisa and Glen reported that many children live in the home with multiple children remaining in the home for periods of time following emergency placement. Lisa began immediately to provide her concerns about any movement of Emma to another foster placement until the courts have resolved what is in her best interest. Ms. [redacted] stated that she and her husband were planning on adopting four siblings and the home may have to be closed as a foster placement. Given her concerns of this occurring, she felt Emma would deteriorate if she had to be moved once again and stated that discussion had occurred between her and Glen as to what would be most beneficial to Emma. Lisa stated that Emma is very attached to Elizabeth. She said specifically, "You could tell that she felt very loved, safe and that (meaning her previous home) was home to her, and I feel like that is still what Emma wants." Lisa stated that it was obvious that Emma had been parented well prior to her coming in foster care. Now Lisa's concerns are that her "self-worth" would plummet and that she may begin to act out if she has to be fostered or adopted by another family.

Ms. [redacted] was able to provide some information regarding the past issues present for Emma with her biological mother. Lisa stated that Emma reported to her, "She (Debbie) just gave me away." Emma has asked about what will happen to her and Lisa stated that she explained that Elizabeth wants to adopt her but it is up to the courts to make that decision.

When Emma first arrived at the [redacted] home, she reportedly was mean to the children including hitting them. She lied often, refused to complete any homework and was frequently defiant towards adults in the house. One incident led her to write sentences due to continued defiance after lying to the [redacted] family. The [redacted]s also reported that Emma had incidents of hurting the animals in the home. Academically, Emma is currently behind according to Ms. [redacted]. She stated that at first Emma's abilities were not assessable due to her defiance but now she understands that she is capable of completing her math work, but continues to be behind in reading. She stated that math homework often has reading involved and therefore makes it difficult for her to complete. Ms. [redacted] stated that it was her opinion based upon her long time work with foster children that Emma is capable of performing better, but she struggles to concentrate on

academic issues given her continuous worry over what will happen to her. The oldest adopted child, A , was able to confirm this possibility from her own experience.

Ms. also explained the bedwetting occurrences. She stated that Emma was wetting the bed through her pull-up and sheets every night. To her knowledge, Emma had an issue with bed-wetting previously, but that it was not occurring due to other strategies used in Elizabeth's home. As a result, Ms. now has Emma on two prescription medications to stop the enuresis. Emma is prescribed Imipramine, 10 mg and Desmopressin, .2 mg. She stated that at this time, the medication is effective and she hopes to cease the use of pull-ups at night. Other bedtime issues include the restless sleep and frequent nightmares. Emma would wake up in the middle of the night screaming, "No, No Don't Hurt Me!" and the would find Emma scrunched up in a ball and would have difficulty waking her up from the traumatic state. Emma would only tell Ms. that she had been hurt when she was with her biological mother but nothing further. Ms. stated that the medications have also been helping with the sleep issues and she wakes up easily and does not appear as tired. Ms. also stated that Emma sleeps with a picture of her Mommy (Elizabeth) and her Oma (Karen) at night and keeps it with her wherever she goes.

Emma was interviewed privately at the foster home of Lisa and Glen. This assessor began asking Emma if she were able to tell the judge where she wanted to live what would she say. Emma stated, "My Mommy and Oma- I am suppose to have a Daddy but I think they just found each other and they love me, take care of me, feed me and let me play with my brother and sister outside." To clarify, Emma refers to Elizabeth as her "mommy", Karen as her "oma" and her biological mother as "Debbie" through out the interview. Emma provided many details about her every day life with her 'mommy and oma.' Including feeding the animals and exciting activities done together. Emma soon began to tell a very confusing story about what most recently happened when she was taken from her home. She appeared to understand little that was occurring accept to say that, "Mommy talked on the phone a lot, I think to DFCS." Emma later went on to say, "My whole family needs me, even my dogs and chickens need me." She then began to relay a story of feeding her animals and how the pigs got out once and she helped rescue them back home.

Emma was questioned about her biological mother, she immediately said, "You mean Debbie." She stated that she used to have a lot of fun with Debbie and Star, but "M (M. ) got took away and the other two boys (Star's children) went away." She then said, "She just gave me away too." Emma stated that there was not enough food to eat and when she lived in "B. 's house" (a father of one of the children), it was not clean and had many roaches in it. Emma stated that her brother was "always mean to me." She told a story of M urinating directly on her and incidents of being physically hurt by him. M reportedly called her a 'bitch' daily. Emma said in regards to M hurting her, "that was the only thing he wanted to do to me." This assessor questioned how Debbie disciplined M for his behavior and Emma stated that she often did not tell and when she did tell her biological mother about the urination incident, she reported that M ran away afterwards.

Emma completed several drawings for this assessor and their interpretation and copies are included. Emma gave this assessor several drawings asking if this assessor was going to see her mommy again and if she would give them to her (Elizabeth). At the end of the interview, Emma stated to the assessor, "Can you tell my mommy that no matter what, I will see her again someday."

## **ASSESSMENT TOOLS**

### **Genogram**

A Genogram is an attempt to map out family coalitions and alliances, historically significant events, family myths and rules and other significant issues that may have an impact on the family. The Genogram, similar to a family tree, is multigenerational and can reveal some important patterns that may have been passed down to the present generations.

### **Crystal Ball**

The Crystal Ball is a hand-drawn picture or brief written passage about the family members' future inside the crystal ball.

### **Kinetic Family Drawing**

A Kinetic Family Drawing is a hand-drawn picture with the specific directions of, "Draw your family doing something together."

## **INTERGENERATIONAL ASSESSMENT**

A genogram was completed to the best of ability given the lack of knowledge and whereabouts of both biological parents. Emma has one older full sibling names M. and one younger half-sibling named A. . What is known about the biological parents is that the bio-mother, Deborah Schultz was adopted and her information beyond the current generation is unknown. M Sr. has reportedly had all rights terminated and his whereabouts have been unknown for some time. The couple was married and divorced in 2002.

## **CRYSTAL BALL AND KINETIC FAMILY DRAWING**

First, Emma was asked to complete a Kinetic Family Drawing (KFD). She drew a picture of (from left to right) her 'oma', 'mommy' and herself holding hands together outside of their home on a bright sunny day. She stated that pink was her favorite color and she colored both herself and her mommy in bright pink dresses indicating her connection between her and her mommy. Emma was aware that the assessor had contact with her mommy and perceived that Elizabeth may see the drawing and finally proceeded to write, "I Love You Mommy and Oma." It should be noted here that one of the foster children

was lingering around while Emma completed her drawings. He stared at her picture and said, "Where am I?" Emma answered directly, "You are not in my family."

Emma was then asked to draw her future. At the age of six, this can be difficult to understand so further prompting was given. "Emma, if you could draw me (the assessor) a picture of what you would want to do in six months, what would it look like and who would be there?" Emma drew a picture of herself and her mommy carving a pumpkin together. Again, Emma and her mommy look very similar indicating Emma's connection with Elizabeth.

## **CAREGIVER AND CHILD INTERACTIONS**

The Biological mother, Ms. Deborah Schultz whereabouts is not known to provide information in this category. As well, given the current no contact order with the former guardian, Ms. Hadaway and the child, it was not possible to observe the interactions of this family together.

## **CHILD'S NEEDS**

Emma is in need of a safe and stable environment that will meet her physical, emotional and academic needs. Emma has been through multiple traumas including abandonment, physical and emotional abuse and possibly sexual abuse. As a result she will need intensive family and individual therapeutic services to tackle these issues. As well, Emma will likely require continued further special attention to her academic needs to ensure she has the best chance for future success. This will include daily time working on academic issues at home and regular meetings with school officials to ensure her success. If Emma cannot return home, she needs to remain in contact with whom she considers her family both through visitation as well as therapeutic services. This will allow for Emma's necessary adjustment to the loss of a second family.

## **SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

Emma is a six year-old Caucasian female who was placed in the care of Wilkinson County DFCS in January 2007. Emma has had a life long history of trauma including physical, emotional and likely sexual abuse. She has been abandoned by her natural mother and has been removed from her mommy who she considers as her family. Elizabeth Hadaway has been Emma's "mommy" for almost the last year and based upon the above reported information, it is in the best interest of this child to be returned home to her. Ms. Hadaway exhibits the quality characteristics that are necessary for good parenting. As well, Ms. Hadaway has taken on the special task of caring for a child that is not her own with many special needs. Ms. Hadaway will ensure that this child has the specialized attention that is required to give, as well as, every advantage towards a successful life. The following are recommendations to ensure the needs of Emma:

1. In Emma's best interest, it is recommended that she return to her family, Ms. Elizabeth Hadaway.
2. Emma will need to complete a psychological evaluation to assess any further academic or emotional needs that may have not been addressed at this time.
3. Emma will need specialized attention from caretakers to ensure her academic success.
4. It is recommended that regular meeting with school officials occur to ensure Emma remains on track academically.
5. Intensive therapeutic services are recommended including family therapy and individual psychotherapy to address the abandonment, emotional, physical and likely sexual abuse issues.
6. If it is confirmed over time that Emma has been sexually abused, she may require specialized therapeutic services for this particular issue.
7. Given the above recommendations, if Emma cannot return home, she may benefit from placement in a foster to adopt family that can provide the above services including weekly therapy and intensive academic services.
8. Emma should continue to see her physician on a regular basis and ongoing assessment of her enuresis issues should be addressed.
9. Emma should continue to have regular dental check-ups every six months.

**ASSESSOR:** \_\_\_\_\_

Alicia M. Gregory, LMFT, License #1039

**ASSESSOR:** \_\_\_\_\_

Elizabeth T. Wood, M.Ed, LPC, License #3937



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