

The voice of birth families to improve visits in foster care.

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In foster care, contact visits with birth families play an important role in relation to the child's wellbeing, and they may impact on placement outcomes. However, the views of birth parents with respect to such visits have largely been unexplored. This research is part of a project financed by the regional government of Andalusia (SEJ-7106) regarding contact visits in foster care. This study aims to give voice to parents and gather their views about contact visits, including how they might be improved. Participants were 23 birth families who had contact visits with 35 children in non-kinship foster care. Semi-structured individual interviews were conducted in order to explore two key aspects: the parents' opinions regarding the contact visits and the main areas they felt needed improving. The interviews were transcribed and the transcripts were examined using an inductive method of open coding to identify themes among participants' responses. The main themes to emerge concerned their general view of contact visits and the organization of visits. The paper discusses the study's implications of the findings for practice.

Keywords: Foster care, contact visit, birth family, improving visits