FAST Notes & observations on the conversation

Arkansas Family Advocacy & Support Tool

Action Levels for Ratings

0	No evidence of a need; may be a strength	2	Action
1	Watchful waiting/prevention	3	Immediate action; dangerous or disabling

Conversation Starters

These questions are suggestions. You do not have to use them all and you are not limited to these examples. These are just ideas to get you thinking. No work aid can take the place of your professional judgment.

- How is your relationship with your partner/significant other?
- Tell me how you and your spouse (the other person involved in caregiving) collaborate and parent.
- Who do you consider "family"? Tell me about your whole family.
- What people do you consider family who live outside your home?
- Who helps you when you are stressed out?
- How long have you lived in this community?
- On a scale of 1-5 how safe would you say your neighborhood or community is? (1 is no concern – 5 is very unsafe) To whom or where can you go to feel safe?
- How do you handle disputes among the children?
- How do you handle disagreements with your significant other?
- Have you ever worried about your safety when you and your partner disagreed/argued?
- Has anyone else worried about your safety or tried to intervene to make sure you were safe?
- Have there been any big changes in your family?
  - How are you and your child dealing with these changes?
  - How are you and your significant other dealing with these changes?
- Who manages the money? How do you make decisions about how the money is spent?
- How does your family make decisions about important matters?

The Assessment Process

The FAST is designed to maximize communication about the needs and strengths of families. The FAST includes ratings of the Family Together, each Caregiver, and all children and youth. For in-home services cases, the FAST must be completed within 30 days and a subsequent assessment every 90 days thereafter. A few things to keep in mind:

1. It is designed to be completed over several sessions with the family-there is no way it can be done in one short contact.
2. It is a good way to structure visits with the family.
3. FAST information should be gathered from multiple sources-not just one interview with the caregivers. Best practice would be to staff the case with the investigator, reach out to the school if they are involved or any counselor or therapist involved with the family, gather police reports or any supporting documentation of evidence that will be shown in the FAST, etc.
4. Information included in the FAST will inform the case plan.
5. The document that prints out of CHRIS can be used for several purposes but it must be shared with the family and family team members.

The Family Together

Parent/Caregiver Collaboration, Sibling Relationships, Extended Family Relationships, Family Conflict, Family Communication, Role Appropriateness, Family Safety, Financial Resources, Residential Stability, Home Maintenance

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Next Steps?

FAST Notes & observations on the conversation

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Conversation Starters

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- Tell me about household rules and expectations. How do your children know the rules?
- Who is the primary disciplinarian? What would your children say if I asked them what happens when you disobey?
- If one of your kids is being really difficult - for example, he "lies all of the time" - what is one creative way that you have used to deal with it?"
- As a child did you ever experience any type of abuse?
- Do you ever feel like you just can't take it anymore?
- Do you ever have a hard time just getting going? When/if you cannot "get going" who takes care of your child?
- Have you ever been hospitalized for issues related to mental health?
- Have you ever attempted suicide?
- Tell me about your drug or alcohol use. Do you **or others** feel like you have a problem because of drug or alcohol use?
- If the family member admits to drug/alcohol use consider:
  - What drug (s) do you use?
  - In the past year, what was your typical use pattern for drugs and/or alcohol?
  - What treatment have you received?
- Tell me about your job. Or, how do you provide for and support your family.
- How does the family get to work, appointments, school, shopping, etc.

Caregiver Status (assess each identified caregiver)

Empathy, Boundaries, Involvement, Supervision, Discipline, Partner Relationships, Vocational Functioning, Mental Health, Alcohol/Drug Use, PTSD Reactions, Organization, Physical Health, Developmental, Accessibility to Child Care, Family Stress, Education, Legal, Transportation, Safety

Observations & Next Steps

FAST Notes & observations on the conversation

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Conversation Starters

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- Tell me how your child behaves at school?
  - Have you had to miss work or school because of problems?
  - How did you handle the problem/s?
- What kinds of services do you think your child needs?
  - How do you go about locating services for your child or yourself?
- When someone tells you something about yourself or your child that you disagree with, how do you handle that?
- What is something your child has done in the last month that you or your child is really proud of?
- Tell me what you see as a parent's rights and a parent's responsibilities.
- Tell me about why you think DCFS is involved in your life. What do you think needs to change in order for DCFS to get out of your life? Have you worked with DCFS before and what was that like?
- We say we are here to help your family. Tell me what kinds of things would feel helpful.
- How is your child's physical/mental health?
  - Who is your child's doctor? Dentist?
  - Does your child have any health conditions we should know about?
  - Do you and your children have health insurance?
  - Has your child ever received treatment for mental health problems?

Caregiver Advocacy

Knowledge of Service Options, Knowledge of Rights/Responsibilities, Ability to Listen, Ability to Communicate, Natural Supports, Satisfaction with: Youth's Living Situation, Educational Arrangement, and Satisfaction with Services Arrangement

Observations & Next Steps

FAST Notes & observations on the conversation

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- Tell me how you get along with your birth mom (or dad, family, brother, sister, etc.).
- Tell me how you get along with (primary caregiver).
- Sometimes it is hard growing up. What kinds of things bother you? Tell me about your day-to-day problems.
- When you are angry or upset, tell me what happens? How does someone else know if you are angry/upset? How do you calm yourself down when you need to?
- Tell me about your health and any medication you take (if you take any).
- Are you in counseling?
- How is school going? What part do you like best? What part is hardest for you?
- Do you feel like you need help (to do better in school, to solve problems, etc.)
- What do you think needs to happen in your family?
- Tell me about your friends? Who do you look to for support?

Note: parents/caregivers /collaterals need to be asked the same questions about the child/youth and answered compared.

Youth Status (assess for each child/youth in the home)

Relationship with Bio Mother, Relationship with Bio Father, Relationship with Primary Caregiver, Relationship with Other Adult Family Members, Relationship with Siblings, Health Status, Mental Health Status, Adjustment to Trauma, Cognitive Skills, Self-regulation Skills, Interpersonal Skills, Education Status

Observations & Next Steps