

Attachment A

THE JONES FAMILY CASE

(9/09)

"I don't know what to do; she curses at me and her father, that's why I jam her sometimes."
These are the words of a 26-year-old mother, who has been referred to a social worker at the Last Chance Family Support Center.

After an ACS investigation, Malia's family was assigned to receive counseling. The mother, Malia, has a seven year old child, Sasha, who does poorly in school and has a history of absences. When she attends, Sasha fights and curses at her classmate and the teacher. Recently, she threw a classmate's textbook out of the window. Last month, she attended class only three days. As a result, the principal contacted ACS and filed an abuse report against Sasha's parents. In response, ACS investigated the family and required that the family receive immediate community based counseling.

The following are the summary notes of the intake session that the social worker held with Malia and Sasha.

Malia is an attractive young adult, dark complexioned, African American female. She exhibits a tattoo on her right shoulder, which says "bitch goddess." Under her left eye, she has a slight scar, which was the outcome of a fight that she had when she "ran the streets." She never knew her biological parents; she has been raised by a succession of aunts in Newark. At the age of seventeen, she ran away and came to New York City. To support herself and her drug habit, she was a street sex worker. Eventually, she was arrested and sent to Forgotten Souls Rehabilitation Center. There she stopped using drugs and met her "spouse" or partner, Corey. Malia has a learning disability, which limits her ability to read and write. Malia and Corey left the program together; they receive SSI and live in a two bedroom apartment in a drug infested, public housing development. Occasionally, she sells bogus DVDs on the streets.

Malia gave birth to Sasha seven years ago. Corey "spoils" the child and believes everything she says. Malia describes herself as a "good" mother. She is firm; she does not like to hit Sasha, but Sasha talks too much and does not remain still. A spanking is the only way that the child will be obedient.

JONES FAMILY CASE, PAGE TWO

Sasha is a slender, light complexioned seven year old child; she has a full head of neatly groomed braids. Her clothing is appropriate and appears to have satisfactory hygiene. In a face to face contact, with the social worker, the child says very little. Her responses are one word, ("yeah", "no"). Sasha rarely remains seated; she roams the office and picks up objects from the worker's desk and put them in her mouth. When the social worker politely asks Sasha to sit down, she responds by saying "f * * * you."

According to Malia, Sasha is an intelligent child. She says that her child does poorly in school because the teachers are inexperienced and do not know how to work with kids. Malia has rejected the school's request to have her child evaluated. Malia says that her daughter is normal but is a bit overly active.

Corey is a 28-year- old light complexioned, African American male. He has a history of drug abuse and arrests. Since Sasha's birth, he has been in jail four times, usually for selling marijuana. When her father is away, Sasha becomes more defiant and becomes angry. Malia also acknowledges that she curses at her partner and daughter when she is mad. Lately, Sasha has begun to curse back at her.

Corey is also functionally illiterate. He does like to cook and often prepares delicious meals for the family. Sasha frequently complains of headaches, during schooldays, and desires to stay home. Corey will allow her to stay home, much to the dismay of Malia. Corey does not like social workers; and he has refused to come to the intake session.

Malia feels that the social worker could best help her family by getting them better housing.

After the intake session, the social worker reviews her notes and prepares to draft a proposed plan of action, which will be reviewed by the supervisor.

JONES FAMILY CASE, PAGE THREE

QUESTIONS:

1. What is the family's presenting problem? What is the family's actual problem? What is the difference between the two types of problem?
2. If you were the social worker, what would be your list of actions for the second session? State your reason for each proposed action.
3. What are the strengths and weaknesses of the family members?
4. What information does the social worker need to acquire in order to effectively serve the family?
5. Did the school principal act appropriately by filing an ACS report against the parents? Explain why or why not.