

Joy
It's what we give families that stay together

SCOH and Family School

We'll call her *Ariadne. She came to us in several years ago. Her mother was an alcoholic, and during her childhood Ariadne was abused. As a mother of two, and jobless, Ariadne had a mental breakdown and forgot her infant child in a trolley stop. Her older child showed signs of abuse. She was lucky. The Philadelphia Department of Human Services referred her to us through Services to Children in their Own Homes (SCOH.)

Ariadne was helped by a FSS social worker (we'll call her Florence) to secure subsidized "Shelter Plus Housing". Florence visited Ariadne weekly. She advised, cheered, supported and encouraged every successful step Ariadne took. She helped her reach her goal of being a good mother.

Medical screening showed that Ariadne's infant had sickle cell anemia. Florence connected Ariadne with the hematology department at St. Christopher's Hospital. Florence also helped Ariadne stay on top of her mental health and medication issues. She helped Ariadne enroll herself in a Philadelphia Health Management Corporation sponsored program of family therapy. A mobile therapist treated Ariadne's depression.

Today, Ariadne says, "I am angry at myself more than I'm proud. But, who knew we weren't supposed to hit our children - that's all my parents taught me. With the parenting classes and all that stuff I did, now I know different. I know about time outs; I know that three minutes for a three year old is long enough; I know that when the children fight I separate them. I am a good mother now, and my children are with me, not in foster care. That's the main thing."

Ariadne completed her parenting education program at Family School with a newborn daughter in tow. The family successfully moved out of shelter plus housing. Ariadne's older child now attends third grade; her younger graduated from a local Head Start preschool program, and now attends elementary school. When they pack their backpacks each day for school, they seem just like any other American children. They have a home. They are loved by their mother. They value school. They love to read.

And, Ariadne? She was there to share the joy.

**** All names have been changed.***

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