

# Common Core 3.0

Deepening Assessment Skills Assessment Block  
200 Level Curriculum Polk/Hernandez Case  
Vignette



## **Polk/Hernandez Family Vignette**

Gloria Hernandez – age 32 – Mother, Hispanic  
William Polk – age 34 – Father, African American  
Samantha Polk – age 14 – Daughter, African American/Hispanic  
William Polk, Jr. – age 7 – Son, African American/Hispanic  
Amalia Polk – age 1 – Daughter, African American/Hispanic

### **Referral:**

Received on Thursday, at 1:45pm. The Child Abuse Hotline received a report that Amalia had suspicious bruises on her buttocks and back at daycare today. The daycare provider, Michelle Lacey, reported that Amalia seemed fussier than usual today. When they changed Amalia’s diaper, they noticed that she had bruising on her back and buttocks. They did not notice any bruises yesterday. The daycare provider asked the mother, Gloria Hernandez, about the bruises and she could not explain how they happened. The daycare provider was concerned that Amalia may have been physically abused. The hotline worker completed an SDM hotline assessment and assigned the report as a 24-hour in-person response for physical abuse, other injury.

### **Initial Investigation:**

The worker called the reporting party. Ms. Lacey, the daycare provider, reported that she has known the family since William, Jr. (aka Willy) was a baby. She was his daycare provider as well. She has not ever had any concerns as long as she has known the family. Ms. Lacey said that she does know both parents had a substance abuse history when Samantha was little but they have not had any problems that she knows of for many years. Ms. Lacey says that the mother is usually the one to drop off and pick up Amalia, although the father will pick her up on occasion. Ms. Lacey said that Amalia appears comfortable with her mom and always runs to her mom at the end of the day when she is picked up. Ms. Lacey knows that both parents work very hard but struggle to make ends meet. Mr. Polk is often working multiple jobs, picking up odds and ends when he can and Ms. Hernandez provides most of the care for the children when she is not at work. Ms. Hernandez cleans houses for a living. Ms. Lacey says that Ms. Hernandez usually picks Amalia up around 5:30pm.

### **Cross Report**

The assigned worker made a telephone cross-report to the local police to coordinate the investigation due to the presence of injuries. A juvenile officer was assigned and asked the caseworker to do initial field interviews with the children and let her know if there were any disclosures.

### **CWS History**

Three prior referrals and one prior case from when Samantha was little  
Two for general neglect and one was substantiated for physical abuse of Samantha  
Ms. Hernandez was abusing prescription drugs and Mr. Polk was drinking alcohol to excess

- Family had two intimate partner violence incidents that were reported and allegations that Samantha was not being supervised or fed
- During one of the intimate partner violence incidents, when Samantha was two years old, Ms. Hernandez was holding Samantha and Mr. Polk struck Samantha in the face while he was swinging at Ms. Hernandez. Samantha was removed from their custody.
- Both parents completed their substance abuse treatment and intimate partner violence treatment and reunified with Samantha after 9 months.

- Since that time the family has not had any additional referrals.

### **Criminal History**

- Mr. Polk has one arrest for a DUI when he was 20 and another arrest for Battery for the incident in which Samantha was hit. Mr. Polk served 3 days in jail and then was released on probation.
- Ms. Hernandez does not have any criminal history.

### **School Visits**

The worker goes to visit Samantha at Madison High School. The worker takes the time to explain her role and purpose of visit and then engages Samantha and finds out that Samantha is a dancer. She is a freshman at the high school. She made the team at the high school and has been dancing since she was about 4 years old. Samantha used to go to dance classes through the Parks and Recreation Department. She is very excited about being on the high school dance team. Her coach is Ms. Rebecca and she has two friends on the team, Lyanna and Kyra. The worker completes a genogram and ecomap with Samantha and discovers that the family is very connected to Mr. Polk's side of the family, having several aunts, an uncle, and the paternal grandmother living close by. The social worker asked if there was any Native American heritage in the family on her mom's or dad's side of the family. Samantha said, "not that she is aware of." They are also very connected to their church and Samantha has a strong connection with her youth pastor, Pastor John. Samantha also says she is close with her best friend's family. Her best friend's name is Taylor and Taylor's mom is Mrs. Powell. They live next door to the Powell family. Samantha says things with her family are good. She sometimes has to help watch Amalia and Willy because her parents work a lot. She says that sometimes her mom picks Amalia up from daycare and comes home to drop her off with Samantha and then goes back to clean one more house. She said that Willy and Amalia are never home without her or her parents to watch them. Samantha said her dad works a couple of different jobs. He helps his uncle work at his auto repair store. Samantha also said her dad is a driver for a company but didn't know exactly what. Samantha denied that her parents fight in front of them or that they use alcohol or drugs to excess. She said her dad has a few beers sometimes but that nothing changes about him when he drinks. Samantha says her mom does not drink very often and has never seen drugs in her house. Samantha says there is always food in the house and the kids do not go hungry. When asked about discipline, Samantha said that she gets her iPhone taken away or gets grounded. She said that sometimes Willy gets spanked but mostly gets toys taken away. Samantha said her parents just tell Amalia no or will smack her on the hand. The worker asked Samantha if any of the kids have any bruises or injuries right now. She said they do not. Samantha denied any sexual abuse for herself or her siblings. When asked about medical care Samantha said they go to the community clinic when they need to.

The worker went to visit Willy at Parker Elementary School. The worker talked with Willy and learned that he is in second grade at Parker Elementary School. Willy said that he likes to play basketball. The worker showed Willy the genogram and ecomap from his sister and asked if Willy would add anyone to them. Willy added his best friend, Juan, and Juan's parents. Willy said sometimes he and Juan play together after school and he goes to Juan's house to play on the weekends sometimes. Juan lives on the next street over from him. The worker utilized the 3 Houses tool to interview Willy. In his House of Good Things, Willy put that he likes to play basketball with his dad. He said he and his dad play basketball on the weekends when his dad is not working. Willy also put his mom's cooking in his House of Good Things. He said his favorite thing that his mom makes is "mole" but she doesn't make that very often because it takes a long time to cook. Willy also put that everyone gets along in his house and he likes spending time as a family. In his House of Worries, Willy put that he is worried about his parents working so much because Willy and Amalia are left home with Samantha. He said he likes his sister but

Samantha doesn't play with him when they are home and he gets bored. He also said that sometimes she is on the phone a lot and he has to take care of Amalia. The worker asked Willy if Samantha or his parents are always there. Willy said usually but there has been a couple of times lately where Samantha is at dance practice and his parents are not home. Willy said he takes good care of Amalia, except one time he was playing in his room and Amalia got out on the back balcony. Willy said he pulled her back in when he heard her crying from getting her leg stuck in the railing. In Willy's House of Worries he added that he worries that Amalia will get in trouble more. The worker asked Willy about that. At first he was reluctant to give more details, but then Willy said that Amalia has been getting in trouble a lot lately. As she gets closer to turning two their dad is getting madder at her because Amalia gets into things. Willy told the worker that last night his dad smacked Amalia with a wooden spoon because she took out all of the DVDs from the TV stand. The worker asked Willy what his mom did when this happened. Willy said she was yelling at his dad to stop. Willy said Samantha was at her friend Taylor's house so she didn't know what happened. The worker asked Willy if he knew what alcohol or drugs were. Willy said he knew alcohol is beer and drugs are marijuana – they had learned about them at school. The worker asked Willy if his parents had been drinking alcohol or using drugs. He said that his dad had been drinking beer last night before he spanked Amalia. Willy did not know how many beers his dad had. The worker asked Willy to draw in his House of Wishes. Willy put that he wishes his parents didn't have to work so much. He also drew that his dad would not drink beer and that Amalia would listen better when his parents tell her no.

Following the interview with Willy, the worker contacted the juvenile officer and asked for a joint response to interview the daycare worker and Amalia.

### **Daycare Visit**

The worker along with the juvenile officer did a joint response to visit Amalia at daycare. Amalia was able to say her name and her siblings' names. She was comfortable with Ms. Lacey, the daycare provider, wanting to stay with her and wanting to be held. Ms. Lacey changed Amalia's diaper and showed the worker the bruises she had noticed. The worker was able to take pictures of the bruises. The caseworker and officer agreed that the injuries were minor and did not require medical attention. Amalia just kept saying "no, no" when Ms. Lacey was pointing at her bruises.

Ms. Lacey said that Amalia is always clean and she likes the family. She does worry that Amalia is a little bit behind in her language skills. Ms. Lacey has tried to address this with Ms. Hernandez but says that Ms. Hernandez shrugs it off saying Amalia is only behind because she is learning both English and Spanish. Amalia gets breakfast and lunch while at daycare. Ms. Hernandez arrived to pick up Amalia while the worker and juvenile officer were there. The worker explained that they had received a referral regarding bruises on Amalia and would like to speak to Ms. Hernandez about it. Ms. Lacey allowed them to go into a back room to conduct the interview.

Ms. Hernandez was crying and said that she did not want her babies taken away again. She said that they learned so much when Samantha was taken away and have not had any fights since then. The worker helped calm Ms. Hernandez down. She showed Ms. Hernandez the genogram and ecomap. Ms. Hernandez filled in some more members of her family but said she is not close to them. The social worker inquired if Ms. Hernandez had any Native American heritage. Ms. Hernandez said she nor her husband has any Native American ancestry. She shared they are very involved with their church. Their pastor helps them whenever they are having problems. Ms. Hernandez was asked about fighting in the home. She reiterated that she and Mr. Polk do not fight anymore and they learned better ways to communicate with one another. The worker asked about alcohol or drug use. She said that she stopped drinking or using. Ms. Hernandez said Mr. Polk was sober for a long time but then about 3 years ago started drinking a few beers on the weekend. She said recently he has been very stressed

about money and Mr. Polk has started to drink during the week also. Ms. Hernandez said that they are both working a lot. Amalia was not planned and they have struggled to make ends meet. Ms. Hernandez said that Mr. Polk works in his brother's auto repair shop and then drives for Uber to try to make some extra money. Ms. Hernandez cleans houses. When asked about who watches the children, Ms. Hernandez said that Samantha sometimes stays home with Willy and Amalia while they are at work late but it is dance season at the high school and she is busy with that. When needed, little Willy is left in charge. The worker asked who is responsible for ensuring the safety and feeding of Willy and Amalia when they are the only one's home? Mr. Hernandez reported that they have phone numbers for emergencies and sometimes they don't eat until she is home and they seem hungry. Ms. Hernandez stated that money is currently so tight that she cannot afford to pay for more child care hours and can't afford to miss the chance to earn some additional money. Ms. Hernandez denied that any of her children have been sexually abused. When asked about mental health history, Ms. Hernandez stated she has been diagnosed with depression in the past but has not experienced any bouts recently. The worker asked Ms. Hernandez about the bruises on Amalia's back and legs. Ms. Hernandez said that Amalia fell down and hit her bottom on the stairs. The worker told Ms. Hernandez that does not seem like a possible way for Amalia to get the bruises. Ms. Hernandez started crying again and admitted that last night Mr. Polk had drank a few beers. Amalia went into the TV stand and started pulling all the DVDs out onto the floor while Mr. Polk was watching TV. Mr. Polk got very upset at Amalia, grabbed a wooden spoon, pulled Amalia's diaper down and started smacking Amalia on the bottom with the wooden spoon. Ms. Hernandez said she yelled at him to stop but she was afraid he would hit her if she tried to intervene. The worker asked Ms. Hernandez if Mr. Polk had ever hit her before and she looked down, but didn't answer. Ms. Hernandez said that after Mr. Polk stopped she took Amalia and put some cream on her legs and put her to bed. She said that Willy was very upset at what had happened. Samantha was at her friend, Taylor's, house and did not know about what happened. The worker explained to Ms. Hernandez that this was very serious. The worker would need to talk with Mr. Polk as well and work with the parents on a safety plan or Amalia and Willy would need to be removed from the home. Ms. Hernandez said that the worker could follow her home and Mr. Polk would be there. Ms. Hernandez said that she could call Mr. Polk's sister, Leann, as well as Mrs. Powell and Pastor John to come to the house to help with a safety plan.

### **Home Visit**

The worker and officer arrived at the home and Mr. Polk was very upset that the worker was there. He said they have dealt with CPS in the past and done everything they needed to keep their kids safe. The worker explained the allegations and Mr. Polk immediately denied them. The worker asked to speak with Mr. Polk separately. She showed him the genogram and ecomap. He did not add anyone to them, and when asked, reported that there is not any Native American ancestry in his family. Mr. Polk said that he and Ms. Hernandez do not fight anymore. They haven't fought since Samantha was taken away. He denied any mental health issues. He said that he does occasionally have a few beers but doesn't see it as a problem. Mr. Polk was asked about the bruises on Amalia's back and buttocks. Mr. Polk said he didn't know what the worker was talking about. The worker showed him the pictures and he said Amalia must have fallen. The worker explained the 3 Houses tool to Mr. Polk and showed him the drawings that Willy had done. Starting with the House of Good Things, Mr. Polk did say that he and Willy love to play basketball together. When the worker showed Mr. Polk the House of Worries, he became very angry that Willy would have told the worker about what happened last night with Amalia. Mr. Polk did admit that he used the wooden spoon on Amalia. He said he had a long day at work and has told Amalia a hundred times not to play with the DVDs. She didn't listen and he got mad and hit her probably too hard. Mr. Polk said he had only had a couple of beers last night. The worker explained that they would need to develop a safety plan with people who are willing to help out, otherwise Amalia will need to come into custody. Mr. Polk agreed to have his sister, Ms. Powell, and the pastor involved in the safety plan.

Based upon this information, the juvenile officer departed, stating that he would continue his investigation to consider whether any charges would be filed, but stated he would not be taking Mr. Polk into custody at this time.

The worker sat down with Mr. Polk, Ms. Hernandez, Leann (Mr. Polk's sister), Ms. Powell (the neighbor), Pastor John, and Samantha to develop the safety plan. The worker asked the family to explain why we were here tonight. Mr. Polk explained to the network members that he had hit Amalia with a wooden spoon last night. He admitted to being under a lot of stress lately with bills, working two jobs, and barely having enough money to cover rent and food. Mr. Polk admitted that he has been drinking a few beers every night to help him relax. Ms. Hernandez said they were especially worried about paying for Samantha's dance expenses but didn't want to tell Samantha that because they are very proud of her. The worker shared the 3 Houses that Willy drew with the network members. They were surprised by the amount of stress the family has been feeling lately and all expressed a desire to support the family. Leann did say that she wasn't too worried though. They all grew up getting a whooping and it taught them a good lesson. The worker asked if Leann could understand the concerns since Amalia is so young and had bruises. She said she did and Leann would like to participate in the safety plan. Together the network, the family, and the worker developed the following Danger Statements.

The worker, Ms. Hernandez, Pastor John, Aunt Leann, and Ms. Powell are worried that Mr. Polk will drink too many beers, become frustrated with Amalia, and hit Amalia with an object or his hands, leaving marks and bruises or hurting Amalia even worse.

The worker, Ms. Hernandez, Mr. Polk, Pastor John, Aunt Leann, and Ms. Powell are worried that Willy and Amalia will be left home alone while Ms. Hernandez and Mr. Polk are working and Willy and Amalia will not be well supervised and could get hurt.

The network, family, and worker developed a safety goal that: Ms. Hernandez and Mr. Polk will work with child welfare and their network of Aunt Leann, Pastor John, and Ms. Powell to develop a plan and show everyone that Mr. Polk will not drink around the children and will not hit the children for discipline. They will also show everyone that they always have a safe adult to care for Willy and Amalia. Child welfare needs to see this plan in place and working continuously for 30 days to determine the outcome of the investigation.

Based on the safety goal, the network and the family developed the following safety plan:

1. Mr. Polk will live with Leann and will not be alone with Amalia during this time.
2. Ms. Hernandez will call on Leann or Ms. Powell to watch Willy and Amalia if she has to be at work.
3. Mr. Polk and Ms. Hernandez will tell two other people they are close to about the problems they are facing and ask them to participate in the safety plan.
4. Aunt Leann and Pastor John will supervise visits between Mr. Polk and Amalia. They both agree to not allow Mr. Polk to use any physical discipline with Amalia.
5. Pastor John is going to help the family apply for some financial assistance for daycare and to help talk to school about ways to cover the cost of Samantha's dance expenses.
6. The worker will refer the family to PG&E program to lower their gas and electric bill.
7. Mr. Polk agrees to call his previous sponsor again and start attending at least 3 AA meetings per week.
8. Ms. Hernandez agrees to attend at least 2 Al-Anon meetings per week.

The worker made a note to add an allegation of general neglect to the report, based upon the lack of adult supervision of Amalia and Willy.

## **Stop and complete the Safety Assessment**

## **Further Investigation:**

One week after the safety plan is enacted, the worker conducts a home visit to check on the family. In talking with Ms. Hernandez, the worker learns that Ms. Hernandez does not have a history of abuse as a child; however, Mr. Polk does. Ms. Hernandez said that Mr. Polk does not like talking about it but his father used to burn him with cigarettes as a child. Mr. Polk's father was also an alcoholic. Ms. Hernandez said that things have been hard this week with Mr. Polk out of the home but Leann and Pastor John are helping a lot. In addition to work, Ms. Hernandez had to go to Willy's school for an IEP meeting to update his plan for the school year. Ms. Hernandez said that she knows that things will be back to normal once Mr. Polk is sober again. The worker also checked in with Willy. He said he misses seeing his dad every day but he did go to his aunt Leann's house a couple of times to see his dad. Willy said that he thinks his dad is doing better because he didn't smell beer when Willy went to visit. The worker also saw Amalia who was playing with her toys. The worker asked Ms. Hernandez about Amalia's speech. Ms. Hernandez said they are not worried because Amalia is learning English and Spanish so her speech will come around. Amalia was happy and wanted to play with her brother. The worker did not see any marks or bruises. Ms. Hernandez changed Amalia's diaper and showed the worker that the bruising from the previous week was almost entirely gone.

After about two weeks of enacting the safety plan, the worker receives a phone call from Pastor John stating that Amalia was hit again and has a bruise on her arm. Pastor John said he is with the children at their home right now. He had come over because Ms. Hernandez called saying she didn't have anyone to watch the kids while she went to work.

Pastor John said that when he arrived, he noticed the bruising. The worker told Pastor John she would be right over. The worker made a note that a new referral should be filed upon return to the office. The worker contacted the juvenile officer to make a joint response.

The worker and officer arrived at the home and Pastor John allowed the worker in. He said that he asked Ms. Hernandez what happened. She tried to cover it up but then broke down in tears saying she couldn't reach anyone last night to watch the kids and she had to go to work. They have still been very stressed with money. She called Mr. Polk and he left his sister's house to come help watch the kids. Ms. Hernandez told Pastor John that he smelled like he had been drinking but she didn't know what else to do. When Ms. Hernandez got home from work a few hours later, Willy told her he saw Mr. Polk hit Amalia on the arm with his belt. Pastor John felt so sorry that he wasn't able to stick to his piece of the safety plan. He said he was with another family last night and couldn't get away to take the call from Ms. Hernandez.

The worker attempted to interview Amalia but she just kept saying "Ouch, hurt daddy". The worker interviewed Willy and he confirmed what Pastor John said. Willy said he was having fun with his dad when Amalia started throwing her toys at the TV. Willy said that at first his dad tried to stay calm but then got really mad, took off his belt and hit Amalia's arms three times. Willy said he tried to stop his dad from doing it but was afraid he would get hit too when his dad turned and swung the belt at him. Amalia was crying and very scared. Willy said after that, he took Amalia to his room and laid with her until she fell asleep. When his mom got home, he told her everything. Willy said his dad has never been like this before and he doesn't understand why he is acting like this.

The worker interviewed Samantha who said that she was at her friend's house again. She has been spending a lot of time over there. She's in high school now and that's what you do in high school. Samantha said she also doesn't like getting stuck watching her siblings all the time so she prefers to go to Taylor's house to get her

homework done and relax. Samantha felt badly that she wasn't home and her sister got hurt again.

Pastor John called Ms. Hernandez and asked her to come home from work right away because the worker was at the house. Ms. Hernandez said she was in the middle of cleaning and wouldn't be able to get away for another hour or so. The worker spoke to Ms. Hernandez on the phone. The worker asked Ms. Hernandez about the bruises on Amalia's arm. She said that she could not talk about it while at work but she would do her best to finish quickly and get home. Ms. Hernandez agreed to allow Pastor John to watch the children until both she and the worker were able to get back to the home.

The worker and officer went to interview Mr. Polk and his sister. Pastor John assured her he would stay until the worker returned. When the worker arrived at sister Leann's house, Leann was surprised to see her. The worker asked Leann how everything was going. Leann said that things were going very well. She was sure her brother was attending his meetings and "he can't be drinking because I don't have any alcohol in the house." The worker told Leann she needed to speak with Mr. Polk so Leann went in the house and got him.

Mr. Polk came out and immediately asked the worker not to tell his sister about what happened. The worker asked Mr. Polk to explain what happened. He said that his wife called him last night crying. She had called Leann and Pastor John. Neither one of them answered their phones. Ms. Hernandez needed to go to work and did not want to ask Samantha to babysit again. Samantha was at Taylor's house and needs to be a teenager. Mr. Polk said he knew he should not have gone over to the house. He had stopped at a bar after work with two friends. He wasn't going to have a drink but then his friends convinced him to just have one. By the time they left, Mr. Polk had consumed three beers. Mr. Polk said he thought he could handle being with the kids and he could show his wife that he was changing. He said that at first things were fine. He was playing video games with Willy and Amalia was playing on the floor. Mr. Polk said then Amalia started throwing her toys at the TV. He said he tried to ask Amalia what she wanted but it's really difficult with her because she doesn't talk very well. Mr. Polk said his wife is the one who wanted to teach her Spanish but the other kids didn't learn it so why does Amalia need to. Mr. Polk said he lost his temper quickly – he knew it was because he had been drinking. He stood up, took off his belt, and smacked Amalia on the hand. He said Willy got pretty scared and even yelled for Mr. Polk to stop. Mr. Polk said he felt terrible when he saw the look on Willy's face – "like he thought I would hit him too." Mr. Polk said that he told his wife what happened as soon as she got home. She was sobbing and was so scared that the children would get removed.

The worker asked Mr. Polk if we should tell Leann since she is part of the safety network. He agreed to tell his sister. When Leann heard the story, she couldn't believe it. She said that she knew they grew up getting spanked but they live in different times, and Amalia cannot keep getting hurt like this. Leann said she was so sorry that she couldn't pick up her phone last night. She was helping their sister with her children. Leann said she saw her brother when she got home last night but he just looked tired. They didn't say much to each other and it didn't seem like he had been drinking.

The worker told Mr. Polk that the safety plan is not working. The worker still needed to talk with Ms. Hernandez but there is a chance that the children could be taken into custody. Mr. Polk was upset but said he understood. The juvenile officer indicated that the investigation would continue but that there was no basis for an arrest at this time. Leann said that she would be willing to have the children come live with her if that was necessary. Mr. Polk said he would find somewhere else to stay if it meant the children could be with his sister instead of with strangers. The worker said this is helpful information to have. Following a conversation with Mr. Hernandez, the worker would convene a team meeting to discuss the placement options and develop a plan.

The worker returned to Ms. Hernandez's house. Ms. Hernandez was home with Pastor John and was crying. She knew the children were going to get taken away and begged the worker not to remove them. The worker asked Ms. Hernandez what happened and she provided the same information that Willy and Mr. Polk had provided. She said that she knew she should not have called her husband but Ms. Hernandez did not have anyone else she could ask. The worker asked Ms. Hernandez and Pastor John if they could reach anybody else at the moment to try to work on another safety plan.

Ms. Hernandez said she didn't think she could do that right now. She was so embarrassed and did not want to have to tell others about what is going on in their family.

The worker reiterated the Danger statements to Ms. Hernandez and she said that she felt like they still accurately represent everyone's worries. Ms. Hernandez and the worker discussed adding the worry about Willy being hit by Mr. Polk. A new Danger statement was developed stating: CWS, Ms. Hernandez, Pastor John, and Willy are worried that Mr. Polk will drink too many beers, become angry at Amalia, and hit Amalia with an object or his hand, leaving marks and bruises. The worker stated that she is worried about Ms. Hernandez not being able to protect the children from Mr. Polk, allowing him to be around the children when he has been drinking, and that Mr. Polk could hit Willy and Amalia, leaving marks or bruises or even more serious injuries.

The worker stepped outside to consult with her supervisor who agreed that Willy and Amalia would need to be taken into protective custody and that a team meeting would be scheduled as soon as possible to assess placement options and develop a placement plan. Both the worker and the supervisor felt that Samantha was not at risk and could safely remain in the home. The worker asked about detaining with the aunt, Leann. The supervisor was worried that Leann could not recognize the signs of when Mr. Polk was drinking and preferred the children somewhere else until a TDM could be held.

The worker spoke with Ms. Hernandez and Pastor John and explained that Willy and Amalia would need to be taken into custody. Ms. Hernandez asked if the children could stay with Leann. The worker explained that her supervisor felt Leann could not recognize the signs of when Mr. Polk was drinking so they wanted the kids to stay with someone else until a family meeting, called Team Decision Making, could be held to further assess if Leann can keep the children safe. Pastor John volunteered to keep the children, as long as it was only going to be for a few days. The worker asked Pastor John for the information about him and his wife and was able to get an emergency clearance. Ms. Hernandez helped load the children in the car. The worker told Ms. Hernandez she would call when the TDM is scheduled. The worker took Willy and Amalia to Pastor John's home and completed the home inspection.

The worker explained to Willy that they could not live with their mom and dad right now because Amalia keeps getting hurt and because Willy thought he might get hurt too when his dad gets angry. Willy was crying but said that he understood. He said he would help Amalia not feel sad. She has never been away from their mom before.

Case promotion decision: The worker closed the referral as substantiated for physical abuse for Amalia and substantiated as general neglect for Willy and Amalia. The worker will be promoting the referral to a case.

## **Stop update the Safety Assessment and complete Risk Assessment**

The Detention hearing was held three days later and the judge ordered that Willy and Amalia remain out of the home with Pastor John and his family and that the Agency continue to assess the Aunt Leann for possible placement.

### **Case Planning:**

A few days before the Detention Hearing, the worker held a Team Decision Making (TDM) Meeting with the family. Ms. Hernandez, Mr. Polk, Pastor John, and Leann came to the TDM. The family also brought Uncle Sal, Grandma Beverly and Coach Rebecca with them. The social worker asked each team member how they would like to be referenced during this meeting, by their first name, nickname or last name. Ms. Hernandez asked to be called Gloria; Mr. Polk requested “Willy”, and the other team members wanted to go by: Pastor John, Leann, Sal, Mrs. Beverly and Rebecca. The social worker then asked each participant to share observed strengths about Gloria and Willy’s parenting and family.

Through this inquiry, the social worker learned a lot about the cultural context of the family. Ms. Hernandez grew up in single mother household and lived not knowing if there was going to be enough food for dinner. Ms. Hernandez mother was very spiritual and always took her children to church every Sunday. Gloria has fond memories of Sunday School, her childhood pastor and potluck celebrations at the church. When Ms. Hernandez became a teenager, she began to rebel and stopped going to church with her mother and siblings and has been estranged from them for many years. As Gloria shared about where she came from it became very apparent the importance of church to her now and why they attend as a family. She also shared that she is sad that Samantha doesn’t want to go to church regularly. Gloria sees the church as a support system and looks forward to attending weekly. Willy was more private about his sharing, but it was apparent that he has strong families ties and support from his sister, Leann; Uncle Sal; and his mom, Mrs. Beverly.

During the TDM, the family talked about the problems they had been having financially and all of the stress of caring for three children. Willy was honest about struggling to work two jobs and the impact of Samantha’s dance costs on the family. Willy admitted that he is having a hard time staying sober and that he did have a few beers after the Detention Hearing.

Gloria shared that there have been a lot more struggles in their family. She was upset that none of her family members were there and said that her family has never liked Willy. They were very angry with him when she first became pregnant with Samantha when they were young. Gloria’s mother was angry that she had thrown away her chance to go to college because of Willy. Gloria said that after Samantha was removed, her family told her to leave Willy and was upset when they got back together. Gloria wished they had support from her family.

The worker talked with the family about the need to develop a case plan and the areas covered in the Family Strengths and Needs Assessment.

## **Stop and complete the Family Strengths and Needs Assessment**

At the TDM, the worker shared that she identified the priority needs for the family as substance abuse and household and family relationships for Willy, parenting skills for both parents, and social support for Gloria as the priority needs. Everyone in attendance agreed that those were the primary focus areas.

At the TDM, Aunt Leann asked about being a placement for the children. The supervisor expressed the worry that Willy had been living with her and was drinking and she couldn't identify the signs when he was there. The supervisor said she would have concerns about Aunt Leann's ability to know when Willy is drinking and not allow him to be around the children then that is happening. Uncle Sal volunteered that he knows when Mr. Polk is drinking. He told the group what Willy signs are and Willy and Gloria confirmed those were true. Uncle Sal volunteered to supervise all of the visits with Willy so that Aunt Leann could have placement without worrying about Willy being around. The supervisor said that Aunt Leann would need to finish the clearance process before final decisions could be made about placement but that they would consider her. Grandma Beverly said that Willy could live with her for the time being so that Leann would have a better chance of the kids being placed with her. Coach Rebecca said that she would go back to the school and ask about getting a scholarship for Samantha's dance costs. Gloria asked if she could have unsupervised visits with the children. The supervisor agreed as long as Willy was not at the visit at the same time. Pastor John agreed to have Gloria pick up the children on Tuesdays and Thursdays after school and then on Saturday afternoons. Willy Jr. and Amalia would also get to see Samantha during those visits.

Toward the end of the TDM the worker shared what she had been developing as a safety goal. Willy and Gloria will work with CWS and their safety network of Pastor John, Aunt Leann, Uncle Sal, Grandma Beverly, and Coach Rebecca to develop a plan and show everyone that Willy can remain sober around his children and that he can always discipline the children without hitting or threatening to hit them. Willy and Gloria will show that they always have a safe adult to watch the children rather than leaving the children home alone. Gloria will be able to protect the children from Willy if he has been drinking or if he is getting angry with the children. CWS needs to see this plan in place and working continuously for 6 months to consider returning the children home. The family agrees that this sounds like the plan they have been discussing with the worker.

Following the TDM, the worker met with Gloria and Willy separately to develop the case plan. Gloria identified that she needed a better support system for herself, that she really didn't have any friends. She also said she wants to be stronger to protect the children and stop Willy if he gets angry again. Gloria said that she wants to be able to stop working so many jobs so that she can be home with her children after school. She wasn't sure how that could happen financially but said her children are her priority. The worker also addressed Amalia's speech delays with Gloria. At first, Gloria was defensive but she was at least open to having a developmental assessment of Amalia to better determine if Amalia needs some extra help with her speech. Gloria said that Willy Jr. has an IEP at school for some behavioral problems.

Willy said that he wants to stay sober again. He knows he needs to work his steps again and meet with his sponsor. He was willing to complete a substance abuse assessment to determine the level of treatment he might need. Willy said that he wanted to learn how to better handle Amalia's tantrums. He said that his other two children listened better than she does and he gets angry that he has to tell her "no" so many times. Willy said that they need to save up some money to have a buffer. He said that he could pick up some extra Uber shifts. He knows it will be hard but if they save now while the children are out of the home, maybe Gloria can only work during the day once the children come home.

The case plan was presented to the court at the Juris/Dispo hearing three weeks later. The social worker also provided the relative placement information and recommended that the children be placed with Aunt Leann on the condition that Mr. Polk not reside in the home and that Aunt Leann not supervise Mr. Polk's visits. A true finding was made on WIC 300(b) counts for Mr. Polk and Ms. Hernandez. Reunification services were ordered for both parents.

## Polk/Hernandez Initial Case Plan

### Case Plan Participants:

Mother: Gloria Hernandez

Father: William Polk

Children: Willy Polk Amalia Polk

### **Gloria Hernandez**

#### Objectives:

1. Develop positive support systems with family and friends.
  - a. Ms. Hernandez will identify two new people that she is willing to trust and tell what is happening with her family and invite them to participate in the next family meeting.
  - b. Ms. Hernandez will identify two additional people that she can use as childcare for the children.
2. Show that you will not permit others to physically abuse your children.
  - a. Ms. Hernandez will identify and list three things that she will do to stop Mr. Polk from threatening or abusing Willy and Amalia.
  - b. Ms. Hernandez will demonstrate during visits that she is able to stop Mr. Polk from threatening or abusing Willy or Amalia.
3. Be willing and able to arrange appropriate childcare and supervision when you are away from home.
  - a. Ms. Hernandez will identify two additional people that she can use as childcare for the children.
  - b. Ms. Hernandez will write out her childcare plan for the worker in case she has to work after the children get home from school.
  - c. Ms. Hernandez will demonstrate that she utilizes her safety network to provide childcare for the children, rather than relying on Samantha or Mr. Polk.

### **William Polk**

#### Objectives:

1. Develop positive support systems with family and friends.
  - a. Mr. Polk will identify two new people that he is willing to trust and tell what is happening with his family and invite them to participate in the next family meeting.
  - b. Mr. Polk will identify one person that he can use as a mentor for learning how to better parent Amalia.
  - c. Mr. Polk will identify at least two people he can call when he feels like drinking who will help him maintain his sobriety.
2. Interact with your child without physical abuse or harm.
  - a. Mr. Polk will list five ways he can discipline Amalia without using physical discipline.
  - b. Mr. Polk will demonstrate during visits that he can discipline Amalia without using physical discipline.
3. Stay free from alcohol and show your ability to live free from alcohol dependency.
  - a. Mr. Polk will participate in outpatient drug treatment program.
  - b. Mr. Polk will have all negative drug tests.
  - c. Mr. Polk will participate in regular 12 step meetings and demonstrate progress in completing his 12 steps.

### **Willy Polk**

#### Objectives:

1. CWS Social Worker will work with Willy, his school, and his caregiver to resolve challenges that Willy can maintain problem-free school behavior.
  - a. Willy will continue to participate in his IEP services for school counseling to help him resolve

- conflicts at school.
- b. Willy will talk to his school counselor, his social worker, or Aunt Leann if he is not feeling safe at school and feels like he is going to get into a fight.
2. Willy agrees to receive age-appropriate services.
    - a. Willy will receive medical/dental care in accordance with CHDP requirements.
    - b. Willy will continue to receive updates to his IEP in accordance with legal standards.

### **Amalia Polk**

#### Objectives:

1. Amalia will receive age-appropriate services.
  - a. Aunt Leann will ensure Amalia's developmental evaluation and follow-up referrals for services are completed.
  - b. Amalia will receive medical/dental care in accordance with CHDP requirements.
2. Aunt Leann will attend all speech therapy appointments for Amalia.

### **Visitation Services**

#### **Gloria Hernandez**

Ms. Hernandez will pick up Amalia and Willy from Ms. Lacey's daycare on Tuesdays and Thursdays and have the children for 2 ½ hours. She will ensure that Willy's homework is complete, and that Amalia and Willy receive dinner and are bathed before returning them to Aunt Leann's home. Ms. Hernandez will also have the children on Saturdays for 4 hours. She will ensure the children have a meal and she will attend Amalia's speech therapy appointment.

#### **William Polk**

Mr. Polk will have 3 supervised visits per week for 2 hours each time. Uncle Sal will supervise Mr. Polk's visits. Mr. Polk will demonstrate that he can interact with Willy and Amalia without threatening to hit them or without physically disciplining them. Mr. Polk will demonstrate that he understands Amalia's developmental stages and why she may say "no" so many times. Mr. Polk will be sober at all visits with the children.

### **6-month review**

Ms. Hernandez got started on her case plan immediately. She joined a Women's Support Group at the church which is geared toward helping wives of alcoholics and drug addicts. She has made several friends whom she is starting to trust. She's also been taking her Nurturing Parenting Program parenting class. She said it has helped her learn how to build up resilience in her kids and to understand her role in protecting them. Ms. Hernandez said that she and Mr. Polk have been talking and decided on some things that she can do if she notices Mr. Polk starting to get angry with Amalia. Ms. Hernandez said that they agreed that she would point out to Mr. Polk that he is getting angry, then ask him if he would like her to intervene. She said if that doesn't work then she will pick up Amalia and take her to another room if Mr. Polk is not able to calm down. Ms. Hernandez says that the current visits have been going very well. She feels like the children could come live with her since Mr. Polk is not living with her anymore. The worker asked Ms. Hernandez about their financial and relationship status. She stated that she and Mr. Polk want to be a family, but know that for the foreseeable future, they must live in separate households in order to get children home with her as soon as possible while Mr. Polk is working through his plan. She said that Coach Rebecca was able to get all of Samantha's fees waived for her dance competitions so all they have to pay for is her uniforms, which has made things much easier. Ms. Hernandez said that it has been difficult for Mr. Polk to pick up extra shifts because of participating in his services. She has been working multiple cleaning jobs still. The worker asked Ms. Hernandez what would happen if the children were returned to live with her and she had to work. Ms. Hernandez said that one of her friends from church volunteered to help watch the children. She also said that

Grandma Beverly and Aunt Leann said they can continue to stay more involved with the family and help with childcare. Ms. Hernandez also said that Ms. Powell, the neighbor, said that all the kids are welcome to go over to her house, not just Samantha. Having the children out of the home has been very hard on Samantha and she feels guilty for not being around to watch them more. Ms. Hernandez said that Samantha can help sometimes but she also wants to give Samantha the opportunity to be a teenager.

Mr. Polk went for his substance abuse assessment and was recommended that he participate in outpatient treatment. He was enrolled about two weeks after the Juris/Dispo hearing. Mr. Polk said that he was going to treatment every day and building a support system. He reconnected with his sponsor and started working his steps. Mr. Polk admitted that about 1 month after going into treatment he did have one more relapse. His coworkers took him out for his birthday and bought him some drinks. Mr. Polk said that the next day he went back to treatment and told them about his relapse and he got started again. He identified that he needs to develop new friendships with other people who do not drink until he feels strong enough to say “no” when he is with his coworkers. He said that he did have to miss a couple of visits with the kids – one due to his relapse and the other due to his work schedule. Mr. Polk enjoys visiting with his kids. He did say that dealing with Amalia sometimes is still hard but he is learning. He is participating in the Incredible Years parenting class and is learning a lot of about child development and why Amalia acts the way she does sometimes. Mr. Polk said that Uncle Sal is helping him learn how to use his new skills when he visits with Amalia. Mr. Polk wants to have the kids go back home with Ms. Hernandez. He said that he and Ms. Hernandez have talked about how she can protect the kids if he is starting to get angry. Mr. Polk said that he agreed that she can stop him if Ms. Hernandez notices he is getting angry with Amalia.

Following the Juris/Dispo hearing, Willy and Amalia are placed with Aunt Leann. They enjoy living with her and have continued unsupervised visits with their mom on Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays. The developmental assessment of Amalia did show that she has a speech delay. She was referred for speech therapy and Ms. Hernandez has been participating in her speech therapy appointments. Willy remained in his school of origin and is doing well in school. His IEP continues to be appropriate. Aunt Leann reports that Willy enjoys visits with his father. Mr. Polk and Uncle Sal take Willy and Amalia to the park or go to Uncle Sal’s house. Aunt Leann told the social worker that Amalia was shy to go with her dad at first, but is doing much better now. She said that Mr. Polk visits 2-3 times per week, usually for 3 hours at a time. Aunt Leann continues to use Amalia’s daycare, Ms. Lacey, to provide childcare for Amalia while Aunt Leann works part-time. This has also helped Amalia’s development since she is remaining in the same environment.

In talking with Uncle Sal, he reports that Mr. Polk is doing better in parenting Amalia, although he still gets easily frustrated with her. Uncle Sal said that Mr. Polk sometimes still expects Amalia to listen after just one time. He hasn’t learned how to distract or refocus Amalia so that things don’t become a power struggle. Uncle Sal said he is trying to role model for Mr. Polk.

Samantha said that it has been really hard having her brother and sister out of the home. Samantha said she wants to help watch them more so that her parents don’t have to worry so much about daycare. She said that she likes getting to visit with them when they pick them up and it is better now that they are living with Aunt Leann. Samantha said that she thinks her dad has learned and that he would never be mean to Amalia like that again.

Willy enjoys school. He and Juan are still really good friends and sometimes he gets to go to Juan’s house after school. Willy says that living with Aunt Leann is going well but he misses home and wants to go home with his mom. He doesn’t understand why they can’t be home with her since she didn’t hit Amalia. Willy said that he knows his parents are taking their classes so they can come home. He likes visiting with his dad and said they have fun at the park. Willy said he is not afraid of his dad anymore.

After 4 months, Ms. Hernandez is allowed to have overnight visits. For the first 3 weeks, Willy and Amalia spend the night from Friday to Saturday. After the 3 weeks, the overnight visits are expanded to the full weekend. Mr. Polk is not allowed to be at the house during the overnight visits.

After 5 months, Ms. Hernandez is allowed to be at Mr. Polk's visits with Uncle Sal still present. Ms. Hernandez and Mr. Polk are expected to demonstrate that Ms. Hernandez is able to protect the children from Mr. Polk. Uncle Sal is to only intervene if Ms. Hernandez is not able to be protective.

**Stop and complete Reunification Reassessments for each parent's household**

**(Note: FSNA not completed for this exercise but would be completed in order to update case plan.)**

## Polk/Hernandez 6-month Case Plan Update

### Case Plan Participants:

Mother: Gloria Hernandez

Father: William Polk

Children: Willy Polk Amalia Polk

### **Gloria Hernandez**

#### Objectives:

1. Develop positive support systems with family and friends.
  - a. Ms. Hernandez will ensure that two new network members attend the next family meeting to help with childcare.
2. Show that you will not permit others to physically abuse your children.
  - a. Ms. Hernandez will demonstrate during visits that she is able to stop Mr. Polk from threatening or abusing Willy or Amalia.
3. Be willing and able to arrange appropriate childcare and supervision when you are away from home.
  - a. Ms. Hernandez will write out her childcare plan for the worker in case she has to work after the children get home from school.
4. Ms. Hernandez will demonstrate that she utilizes her safety network to provide childcare for the children, rather than relying on Samantha or Mr. Polk.

### **William Polk**

#### Objectives:

1. Develop positive support systems with family and friends.
  - a. Mr. Polk will identify two new people that he is willing to trust and tell what is happening with his family and invite them to participate in the next family meeting.
  - b. Mr. Polk will identify at least two people he can call when he feels like drinking who will help him maintain his sobriety.
2. Interact with your child without physical abuse or harm.
  - a. Mr. Polk will list five ways he can discipline Amalia without using physical discipline.
  - b. Mr. Polk will demonstrate during visits that he can discipline Amalia with using physical discipline.
3. Stay free from alcohol and show your ability to live free from alcohol dependency.
  - a. Mr. Polk will participate in his aftercare program
  - b. Mr. Polk will have all negative drug tests.
  - c. Mr. Polk will participate in regular 12 step meetings and demonstrate progress in completing his 12 steps.

### **Willy Polk**

#### Objectives:

1. CWS Social Worker will work with Willy, his school, and his caregiver to resolve challenges that Willy can maintain problem-free school behavior.
  - a. Willy will continue to participate in his IEP services for school counseling to help him resolve conflicts at school.
  - b. Willy will talk to his school counselor, his social worker, or Aunt Leann if he is not feeling safe at school and feels like he is going to get into a fight.
2. Willy agrees to receive age-appropriate services.
  - a. Willy will receive medical/dental care in accordance with CHDP requirements.
  - b. Willy will continue to receive updates to his IEP in accordance with legal standards.

## **Amalia Polk**

### Objectives:

1. Amalia will receive age-appropriate services.
  - a. Ms. Hernandez will attend all speech therapy appointments for Amalia.
  - b. Amalia will receive medical/dental care in accordance with CHDP requirements.

### Visitation Services

#### **Gloria Hernandez**

The children will be placed with Ms. Hernandez. Ms. Hernandez will supervise Mr. Polk's visits.

#### **William Polk**

Mr. Polk will have 3 supervised visits per week for 2 hours each time. Ms. Hernandez will supervise Mr. Polk's visits. Mr. Polk will demonstrate that he can interact with Willy and Amalia without threatening to hit them or without physically disciplining them. Mr. Polk will demonstrate that he understands Amalia's developmental stages and why she may say "no" so many times.

### 12-Month Review

At the 6-month court hearing, the worker recommends that the children be returned to Ms. Hernandez and that Ms. Hernandez be permitted to supervise visits with Mr. Polk. Following the 6-month review hearing, the family has a meeting to discuss the safety plan before returning the children home to Ms. Hernandez. Ms. Lacey, Aunt Leann, Grandma Beverly, and Ms. Laub, a new friend from church, agree to provide childcare for Ms. Hernandez. Ms. Lacey can continue to provide daily childcare for Amalia until 5:30 and for Willy from after school until 5:30pm. Aunt Leann will pick up the children on Mondays, Grandma Beverly on Wednesdays, and Ms. Laub on Fridays. All of them are able to keep the children until 7:00pm. Ms. Hernandez said that her jobs end early on Tuesdays and Thursdays so she can pick the children up by 5:30pm on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Mr. Polk is not allowed to be in the home, but Ms. Hernandez can supervise visits with Mr. Polk. Ms. Powell also says that she can provide childcare on the weekends if Ms. Hernandez needs to take a weekend job. She says that even though Samantha usually comes over on the weekends, she is happy to take the other two children as well.

Throughout the next couple of months, Samantha, Willy, and Amalia all report that things are going well. Samantha and Willy say that their mom uses their daycare plan. Willy reports that one time during a visit with his dad, his mom was able to intervene when their dad was getting angry with Amalia. Ms. Hernandez continues to participate in Amalia's speech therapy appointments and Amalia's speech has greatly improved. Ms. Hernandez reports that she and Mr. Polk are doing much better and things are how they were when he was sober previously. She did admit to one time where she had to intervene with Mr. Polk and Amalia but she was able to do so.

Mr. Polk showed the worker his list of behaviors he has learned to do when he is becoming frustrated with Amalia. Mr. Polk says that he can walk away, redirect Amalia to another activity, count to 10 taking deep breaths between each number, call Ms. Hernandez for help when he notices he is becoming frustrated, and take a self-time-out. Mr. Polk talks about several times when he has utilized these skills during visits with Amalia. When the worker has stopped by unannounced during a few visits, she has seen Mr. Polk redirect Amalia or walk away from the situation.

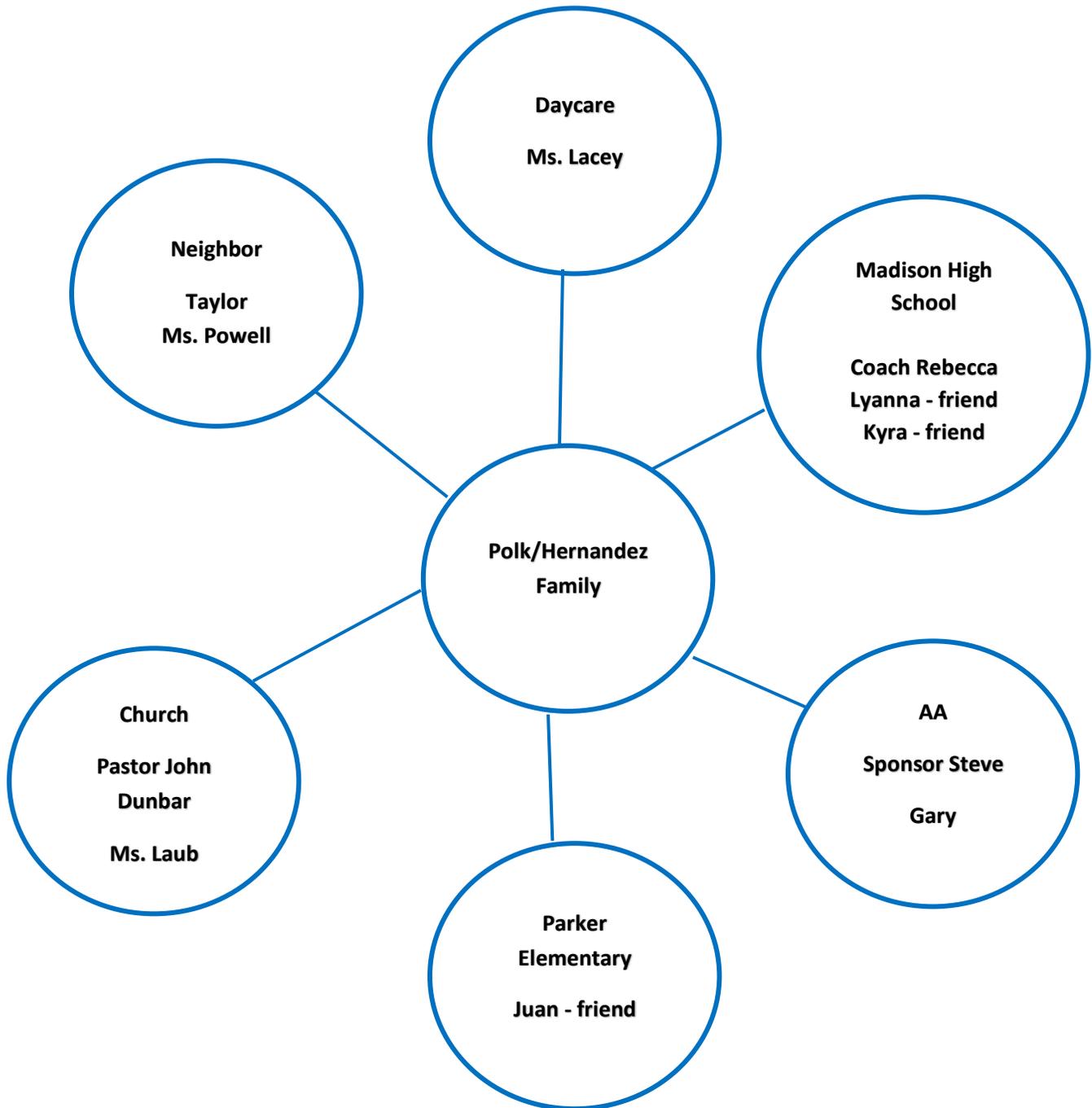
After 9-months, a second reunification reassessment is conducted on Mr. Polk's household and he is allowed to move back into the home. Another family meeting is held to update the safety plan. Pastor John, Ms. Powell, Ms. Lacey, Aunt Leann, Uncle Sal, Grandma Beverly, Ms. Powell, Ms. Laub, Coach Rebecca, and Mr. Polk's sponsor, Steve, and Mr. Polk's friend from meeting, Gary, are in attendance. Everyone at the family

meeting feels the family has made tremendous progress. Financially they are in a much better position and have not been as stressed. Mr. Polk has been sober for 7 months and has completed his outpatient treatment. He continues with his aftercare program and attending his 12 step meetings. Both parents have completed their parenting programs and feel they have learned a lot from them. Ms. Hernandez and Mr. Polk have demonstrated their ability to keep the children safe while together. The family establishes a safety word with Samantha and Willy and the children identify that they can call Uncle Sal, Aunt Leann, and Grandma Beverly if they ever don't feel safe. Ms. Lacey will continue to provide childcare until 5:30 pm. Aunt Leann, Grandma Beverly, and Ms. Laub will provide after-hours childcare on a regular basis. Ms. Powell will check in with Samantha at least two times per week to make sure things at home are going well. Pastor John will check in with the family on Sundays when he sees them at church. Coach Rebecca said that she will start the applications for scholarships for next school year to help with Samantha's dance costs. Coach Rebecca adds that Samantha is a very good dancer and has a lot of potential to go on to college with dance scholarships. Steve said he is willing to notify the social worker if Mr. Polk has a relapse or is no longer participating in his recovery program. Gary said that he is also in recovery. He attends meetings with Mr. Polk and will be sure to call Mr. Polk if he notices he is not attending meetings anymore.

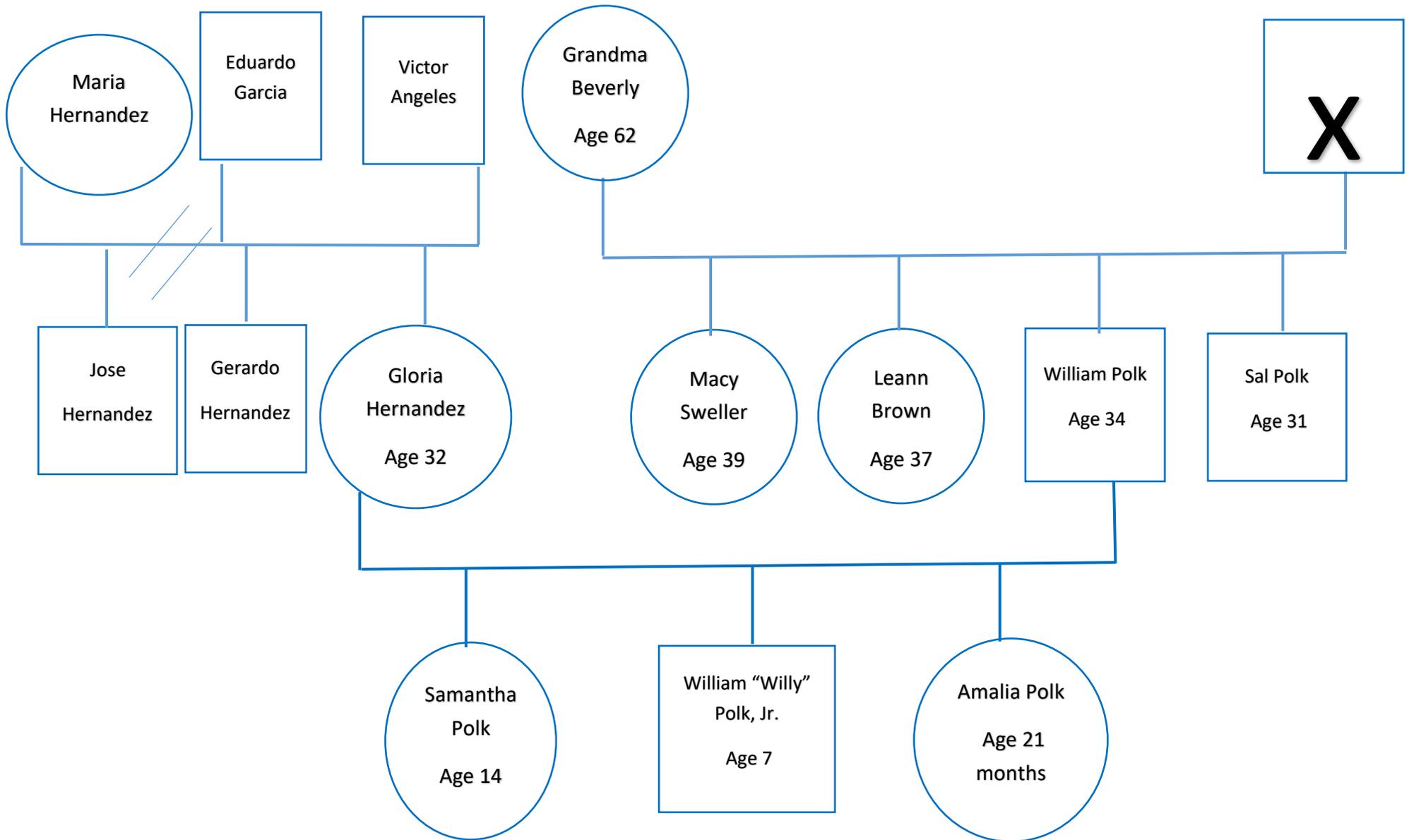
The family continues to do well over the next few months and demonstrates that they can utilize their safety network. All of the network members report that their check-ins have shown the family to be utilizing their new skills and protective capacities. Mr. Polk has remained sober and Ms. Hernandez has demonstrated her ability to intervene if Mr. Polk becomes angry with Amalia. Ms. Hernandez is working less as the family has been able to reduce some of their costs.

### **Stop and complete the Risk Reassessment**

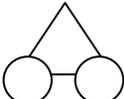
## Polk/Hernandez Ecomap



# Polk/Hernandez Family Genogram



## Genogram Symbols

Male		Abortion	
Female		Death	
Unknown Gender		Twins	
Gay Man or Woman		Identical Twins	
Pregnancy		Adopted Child	
Miscarriage		Foster Child	

## Family Relationships

Marriage		Engagement	
Separation in Fact		Cohabitation	
Legal Separation		Cohabitation and Separation	
Divorce		Temporary Relationship	

## **Emotional Relationships**

Normal 

Friend 

Intimate / Close 

Estranged 

Hostile 

Violent 

Physical Abuse 

Emotional Abuse 

Sexual Abuse 

Neglect 

Manipulative 

Controlling 