

## Mobility Mapping

A Mobility Map is a child's memory of his or her life put to paper. The mobility mapping process allows the child to rediscover the important people and places from his or her past. The process can reveal a child's daily activities and significant relationships, as well as distinctive community or neighborhood features, structures, or geographic characteristics. It is likely the child will share personal stories of family and friends, places frequently visited, and favorite memories. The information revealed can provide children with knowledge about where they came from and important emotional connections from their past. This information contributes to their identity development. It can also provide caseworkers with opportunities to reach out to the people identified through this process and encourage connections with the child.

This activity can be done with children and adults. It is important to allow several hours to complete this activity, depending on the age of the child and how many moves the child experienced.

Prior to completing the Mobility Map, explain to the child the purpose of the activity:

- To stimulate the child's memory,
- To generate discussion between the child and caseworker,
- To explore diverse topics, and
- To draw out information useful for locating connections that have been lost.

Strategies for engaging the child:

- Be patient and encourage the child to draw pictures.
- Be mindful of the individual's developmental stage.
- Allow the child to take the lead.
- Work with child at their convenience.
- Encourage caregiver's involvement only if the child feels comfortable with their participation.
- Keep a sense of humor.
- Be flexible.
- Respect individuality.
- Remember the unique cultural aspects of the child.
- Understand that a genuine rapport with a child takes place over time.

**Materials Needed:** An assortment of writing tools: markers, pens, colored pencils, or crayons; at least one pad of poster size paper, tape, and a private space with plenty of wall space. The child needs to feel safe in order to share information without concern of others overhearing. It is preferred that the Mobility Map be done in the child's home.

**Instructions:**

1. Tape paper along several walls in the room at a height the child can easily reach.
2. Prepare the child by telling them things such as:
  - "We are going to have fun today and draw a big picture of the story of your life."
  - "We are only going to focus on positive memories and you can skip over any negative memories or negative times in your life."
3. Explain to the child that you want to be able to remember all of the things he or she tells you so you may go back and ask questions or write notes.
4. Use the questions below as a guide to help you get started or stay on track during the mobility mapping. These questions are not all inclusive as each child will require individualized attention and guidance to successfully complete a mobility map. The child should write the names of the individuals they draw as well as the locations, including addresses if known, or other geographical information.

Questions:

- Think back as far as you can in your life. Where was the first place you remember living?
- What did it look like?
- Can you draw it for me?
- How old were you when you lived there?
- Who lived there with you?
- Can you draw them for me?
- What were their names?
- How old were they?
- Do you remember your neighbors?
- Can you draw their houses?
- What were their names?
- Did you know them well?
- What school did you go to?
- Did you ride the bus?
- Did you have a favorite teacher?
- What was their name?
- Can you draw the school and your teacher in it?
- How about a favorite coach or other school people?
- Did you go to church or other religious services?
- Can you draw the place you went to?
- What did you do for fun when you lived there?
- Did anyone come to visit often?

- Did you go visit anyone?
- Where did you live next?
- How old were you when you moved?
- Who lived with you in this place?
- Can you draw them and the house and how old they were?
- Repeat this until you get to the place they live now

Other Clarifying Questions:

- Who in the family would know relatives' last names?
  - Who planned family reunions or events?
  - What foods did you eat and did anyone have an accent?
  - Do you remember any landmarks or street names?
  - How big is your family?
  - What are some fun memories or stories?
  - What social media sites do you use?
5. Ask the child to go back with a different color marker and put a mark next to the people with whom they feel safe.
  6. Ask the child to repeat this with a different color marker and mark the people with whom they do NOT feel safe.
  7. Ask the child to identify the people from the safe list with whom they would want to reconnect.
  8. Ask the child what five things are missing in their life right now. This can include people, places, things or unanswered questions.
  9. Ask the child to identify their top five needs.
  10. Ask the child to place a number next to the need in order of importance with 1 being the most important and 5 the least important.

**Remember to encourage the child often and to redirect away from negative memories. Tell them that you can focus on the positive things during this activity.**

Prior to giving the Map to the child, take a picture and scan the image into eWiSACWIS. Once the map is complete, give the child the final Map.

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