



2021 Online International Gathering

We Still Can't Believe It!

Tusla, Ireland

Aishleen Healy
Evelyn Alexander
Lavina Temple

Signs of Safety International Gathering 2021



“We Still Can’t Believe It!”

Presenters:

Social Worker Aishleen Healy

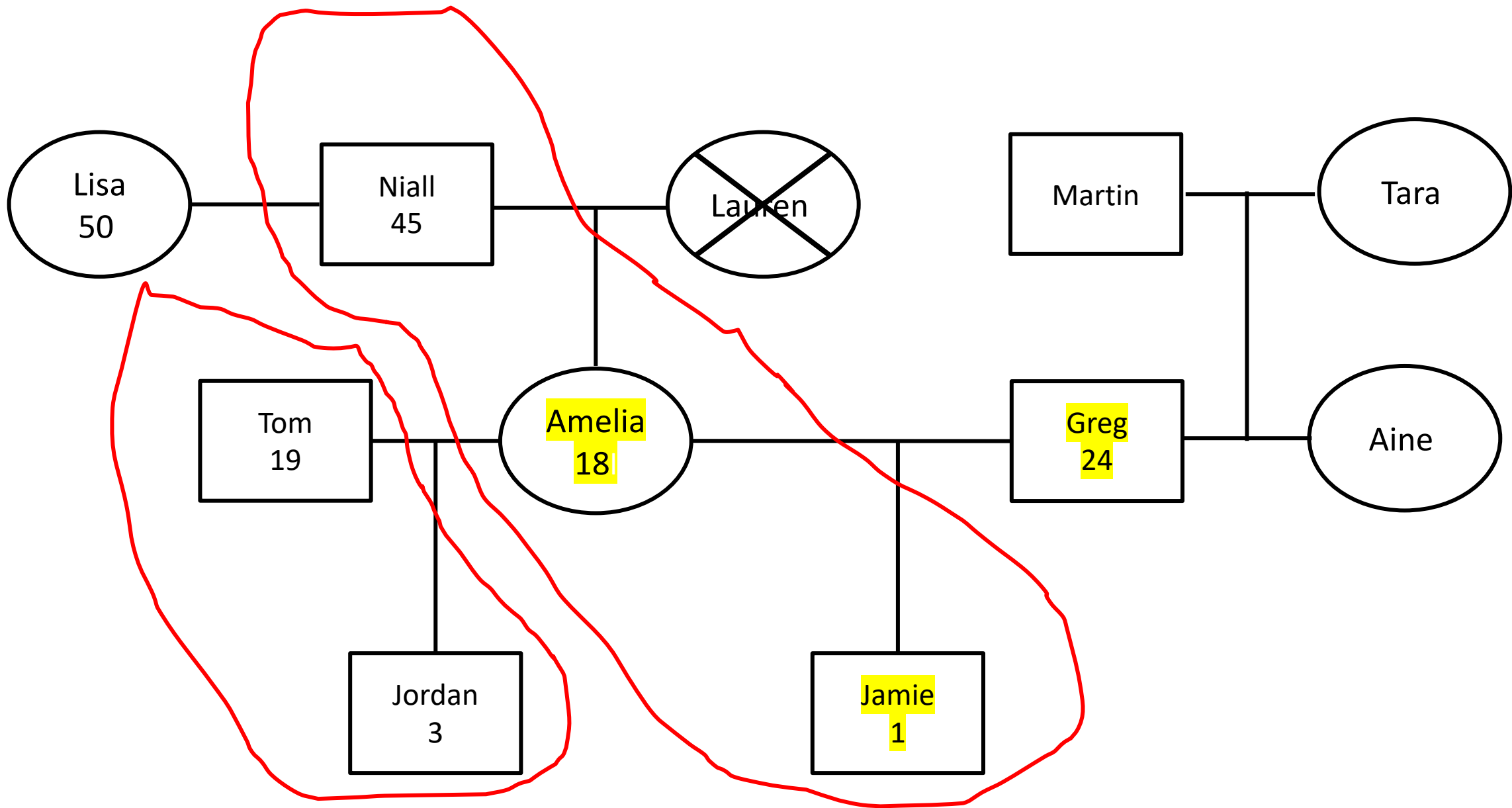
Team Leader Evelyn Alexander

Signs of Safety Practice Lead Lavina Temple



Introductions





Introduction to the case

Mum Amelia

Her first son in care

New baby Jamie in the maternity hospital

A family who were DONE with this

A Social Work team who were DONE with this

and....**THE** social media post!

Getting Started: Identifying Assumptions

I know this family and they want nothing to do with her, they are her network

Mum couldn't do it before and nothing really has changed in her life

Mum Amelia has no network

She needs to be supervised around the clock with her baby because of her physical disability

Even if someone did agree to be in the network, Mum Amelia is so difficult they will drop off

Assumptions are not truths

When our truth is challenged

Terror



A New Story

Amelia does have a network. Network finding and her network just looked different

Amelia could do a lot more than her medical and physio team thought she could

When Amelia said she loved and wanted her baby she could turn that into action

Things didn't look different in her life but our approach was different.

She couldn't show us safety with her first child but that didn't mean she couldn't with her second

The Learning

Trusting in the process

Responding to challenges

Bringing rigour to the work

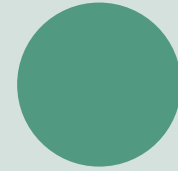
Trusting in the process and in the network



**TAKING THE FIRST
STEPS IN LETTING
GO**



**HANDING OVER
RESPONSIBILITY
IN SMALL AND
BIG WAYS**



**STEPPING INTO
AND THROUGH
OUR WORST
FEARS**



**BELIEVING WHAT
WE ARE SEEING**

Network Plan 2020

| Monday | | Tuesday | | Wednesday | | Thursday | | Friday | | Saturday | | Sunday | |
|--------------|-----------|--------------|-----------|--------------|-----------|--------------|-----------|--------------|-----------|--------------|-----------|--------------|-----------|
| Times | Available | Time | Available | Time | Available | Time | Available | Time | Available | Time | Available | Time | Available |
| 7.00am | Grandad | 7.00am | Grandad | 7.00am | Grandad | 7.00am | Grandad | 7.00am | Grandad | 7.00am | Grandad | 7.00am | Grandad |
| 8.00am | Grandad | 8.00am | Grandad | 8.00am | Grandad | 8.00am | Grandad | 8.00am | Grandad | 8.00am | Grandad | 8.00am | Grandad |
| 9.00am | Stella | 9.00am | Stella | 9.00am | Stella | 9.00am | Stella | 9.00am | Helen | 9.00am | Grandad | 9.00am | Grandad |
| 10.00am | | 10.00am | Jennifer | 10.00am | Jennifer | 10.00am | Jennifer | 10.00am | Helen | 10.00am | Grandad | 10.00am | Grandad |
| 11.00am | | 11.00am | Jennifer | 11.00am | Jennifer | 11.00am | Jennifer | 11.00am | Helen | 11.00am | Grandad | 11.00am | Grandad |
| 12.00pm | | 12.00pm | Greg | 12.00pm | Jennifer | 12.00pm | Stella | 12.00pm | Helen | 12.00pm | Grandad | 12.00pm | Grandad |
| 1:00pm | | 1:00pm | Greg | 1:00pm | Jennifer | 1:00pm | Stella | 1:00pm | | 1:00pm | Grandad | 1:00pm | Grandad |
| 2.00pm | | 2.00pm | Greg | 2.00pm | Jennifer | 2.00pm | Stella | 2.00pm | | 2.00pm | Grandad | 2.00pm | Grandad |
| 3.00pm | Margaret | 3.00pm | Greg | 3.00pm | Jennifer | 3.00pm | Stella | 3.00pm | | 3.00pm | Grandad | 3.00pm | Grandad |
| 4.00pm | Margaret | 4.00pm | Greg | 4.00pm | Jennifer | 4.00pm | Stella | 4.00pm | | 4.00pm | Grandad | 4.00pm | Grandad |
| 5.00pm | Margaret | 5.00pm | Greg | 5.00pm | Jennifer | 5.00pm | Stella | 5.00pm | | 5.00pm | Grandad | 5.00pm | Grandad |
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| 11.00pm | Grandad | 11.00pm | Grandad | 11.00pm | Grandad | 11.00pm | Grandad | 11.00pm | Grandad | 11.00pm | Grandad | 11.00pm | Grandad |
| 12.00-7.00am | Grandad | 12.00-7.00am | Grandad | 12.00-7.00am | Grandad | 12.00-7.00am | Grandad | 12.00-7.00am | Grandad | 12.00-7.00am | Grandad | 12.00-7.00am | Grandad |

* Stepmom available every second weekend

What Needs to Happen

- Network to create Whatsapp group
- Network to make plan of supports to be offered
- Stella to help Amelia with Baenaedos Parenting Referee!
- SW to write support letter → Email to Amelia
- * Amelia to follow up with PHN
- Amelia & Stella to call PHN - MON + TUES 2.30-6
- Amelia to contact Springboard
- Greg to invite sister to next Network meeting
- SW to bring Trajectory
- Amelia to call Disability support
- Amelia to get Jamie's Birth Cert
- Stella to book Community room for next meeting

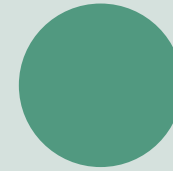
Changing how we respond to obstacles and worries



**IT DOESN'T
MATTER IF THEY
ALL SCALE A 10**



**HELP THE FAMILY
AND NETWORK
UNDERSTAND
WHAT WE WANT
TO SEE**



**PREPARE FOR
CONVERSATIONS
ABOUT OUR
WORRIES**



**STOP WORKING
HARDER THAN
THE FAMILY AND
NETWORK**

Friday 1st Oct
Arrived today at 9am. [redacted] answered the door to me. She told me about her night with [redacted] while changing and feed he was doing so well I didn't help her. [redacted] got out of hospital yesterday and he was a little out of sorts last night. She told me that she will chat with [redacted] about it when [redacted] arrives. [redacted] is using her support network very well and is not afraid to ask questions or ask for help.

Fri 2nd Oct
Arrived 9.30 to take over from [redacted] [redacted] was awake when I arrived + then slept until 12 when he needed a feed. [redacted] is very attuned to [redacted] needs. She asked if feed him to be able to observe someone else doing the feed to be able to problem solve why he has been spitting up. She told

“Amelia told me about her night with Jamie while changing him and she was doing so well I didn't help her”.

“She is using her support network very well and is not afraid to ask questions and ask for help”

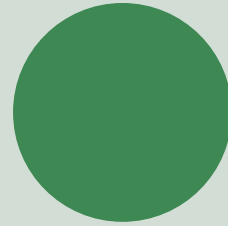
“She asked if I would feed him to be able to observe someone else doing the feed to problem solve why he had been spitting up”

SAT 3RD

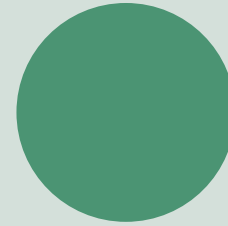
[REDACTED] BATHED [REDACTED] AND CHANGED HIM
FED him, put him to BED, I AM [REDACTED]
Very IMPRESSED HOW WELL [REDACTED] IS DOING
CARING FOR [REDACTED] SHE IS DOING FANTASTIC.
[REDACTED] BOUGHT THE SMA CARTONS TO TRY INSTEAD
OF ~~POWDER~~ POWDER FORMULAR. [REDACTED] SUGGESTED
TO [REDACTED] TO TRY THE CARTON ON THE
LAST FEED AND DURING THE NIGHT FEED.
[REDACTED] DID THIS SATURDAY NIGHT. AND IT
WORKED WELL. [REDACTED] IS GOING TO DO THIS
WAY FROM NOW ON. SO THERE WAS NO
CONFLICT WITH NEW SUGGESTION. [REDACTED]

"She is doing fantastic...Amelia bought the SMA cartons to try instead of powder formula. Granny suggested to Amelia to try the carton on the last feed and during the night feed. Amelia did this Saturday night and it worked well. She is going to do this way from now on. So there was no conflict with the new suggestion"

BRINGING RIGOUR TO THE WORK



**IMMEDIATE SAFETY
SCALING**



**SAFETY BEGINS IN THE
MIDDLE COLUMN**



**SUSTAINING THE TEAM:
APPRECIATIVE INQUIRY**

BRINGING RIGOUR TO THE WORK



**IMMEDIATE SAFETY
SCALING**

1. How safe is the child? We will complete Safety Scaling.

On a scale of 0-10 where 10 is there are still some worries about the past harm and the danger but I am confident that Jamie is getting everything he needs and is safe because there are a network of people around him who have a safety plan and are doing it and 0 is there are people around and a bit of a plan but we don't really know day to day how Jamie is getting everything he needs and we are just waiting for him to have an accident or be neglected in the next few days.

SW Aishleen: 8

Team Leader Evelyn: 6

What is bringing you up the scale? What have you seen or heard about since we last met?

- Stella is managing the schedule so we can see that there are always people there. She did a really detailed timetable, she says stuff like "I will hang on ten minutes because X was late". S is around the corner and can pop over if someone cancels. Hasn't happened yet. From the meetings and calls- S is running the network and plan. If I said I will pop over on Wednesday at 12 for a home visit she says "oh that is Jenny's time, she will be here" she is really familiar with it.
- How do I know people are sticking to the plan? When I was there when there was a changeover. S was leaving and G was coming, I saw the plan working myself on Thursday.
- M is taking the baby to her house on a Monday and baby's Dad is taking him now once a week.

I see their comments in the safety journal. Amelia sent me pictures. Best ones- Granny had recommended a formula at nighttime and it helped her kids so Amelia took that advice on board...Grandad recorded that. He said he was impressed Amelia took Granny's suggestion. Grandad said she is doing fantastic with the advice and support. He writes every day in the safety journal. Aishleen talked to Amelia about this, asking her how she is doing that, really honoured her for what she is doing. She is getting up in the morning and doing her jobs. Other examples: Monday 5th Amelia asked S to give Amelia the morning feed so she can do her jobs, she asked for advice. Everyone is writing in the safety journal – really specific, behavioural specific examples and observations about who did what, linked to the harm.

Network get it. Even when they don't want to write in the book they tell me. "I worry about it, I wasn't on the schedule but I wanted to pop in and see them".

- It is clear that Amelia is asking people for help, doing that a lot. I see it in conversation and on visits and in the safety journal. Amelia is still afraid it seems to tell us anything "negative" or challenging but we have some examples e.g. they decided to test if Amelia could carry the baby down the stairs with Stella walking right in front of her ready to hold Jamie. It didn't work out and SW really honoured Amelia for telling her about that and coming up with a creative solution...Amelia said maybe next time she could try scooch down on her bum instead of walking, that it might be safer.
- Network are changing things to meet needs, some days like today they stepped up support and S took Jamie today because Amelia is not well. Amelia said she didn't feel well and S was worried so took the baby in case she has to isolate, might be getting a test...said she can take him for a few days. She has a heart condition that means she can't be around anyone sick so just in case she couldn't supervise she thought ahead and offered this solution. They rang me at 9am to tell me about it. Reassuring that they are spotting things, thinking it through themselves, being agile.
- Amelia is on her own for 20 minutes now during a collection – how did that progress? Stella was staying at nights, not any more. She was getting up in the morning and Amelia was doing everything anyway. She was bundling them into the car to do her don's school collection. She doesn't bring him out of the cot until someone comes back. They felt it was unfair and Amelia was more than capable to watch him. They asked at a network meeting, said they will do it if we insist. She doesn't need help in those times, there was someone across the road if needed. We said we would take their guidance, it is a short time and no reason to think J wouldn't be safe. We also said Amelia could meet halfway to hand over Jamie on a Monday. Hasn't happened yet due to rain.
- When she was in the hospital I asked a student SW to check in with the hospital. They had no concerns. He was being tube fed so no feeding but she spent her time there, swapping with Dad. She managed really well.

What is the main thing you have heard or noticed that brings you down the scale?

Amelia appears to have a lack of proactiveness. If I ask her something she checks with Stella, e.g. not sure about who is coming, what time etc.

I worry that if Stella is not around or sick what will happen. She is managing a lot of it. She is doing the main communication with me, I want Amelia to be in touch with me e.g. cancelling visits and changing access. Amelia isn't the main person.

What would move me up?

Amelia taking more of a lead in the network safety plan. I would like to see less dependency, I would like to see her taking a bigger role, less dependent. Although we do have examples of Amelia doing lots of things.

Amplification of Safety Scaling

“how do you know people are sticking to the plan?”

“what are the strongest entries this week in the safety journal?
What impressed you most when you read it?”

“what has been the biggest surprise in terms of what someone
has done to create safety?”

“what are the best examples of helpseeking since we last met?”

What did you see on the visit that let you know baby is getting
what he needs?

“what have been the strongest examples of them managing
hard moments?”

“how have you given more responsibility to Amelia or the
network and has their response made you more or less
worried?”

Network Meeting on the 23rd September 2020

Immediate Safety Scaling

On a scale of 0 to 10 where 10 means even though there have been behaviours that could be or were harmful for the child I am confident the child is currently safe and 0 means I believe the child is being harmed or will be in the coming days, where would you rate this situation for this child today?

Number: 6

What are the things I have seen, heard, noticed that bring me up the scale and show me this child is being safely cared for and that the safety plan is being followed? What are the protective and resilience factors that are bringing me up?

X5 network members gave 10 out of 10. This appears to me to be unrealistic, however, I acknowledge that Amelia has exceeded all expectations in managing Jamie. The journal is full of examples of her feeding, changing, winding and bathing him (with help). Her and Stella have managed to devise a way of her carrying him down the stairs.

What are things that are bringing me down the scale, why am I not a 10? What are the most worrying factors or biggest risk factors right now today?

The most worrying factor continues to be the network's determination not to see any problems. If this is to work then we need to acknowledge that there will be obstacles to overcome and problems arising, however, none of them appear to see them. Jamie is safe at present, there are people around 24 seven, however this cannot continue and we need to see Amelia managing on her own and when problems arise her calling on the network and they responding. Until I see some realistic problems and solutions arising I will continue to be worried.

What would I need to see happen over coming days to bring me up the scale? If I am a 0-3 what needs to happen immediately so I know this child is safe tonight and tomorrow?

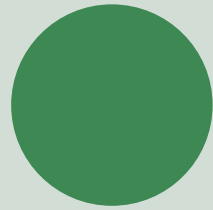
I would need to see more obstacles being overcome and recorded.

I would need to see network identifying of weaknesses as well as strengths

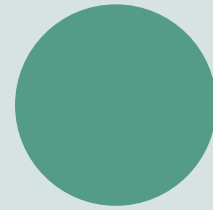
I would need to see Amelia being left on her own for a short time to ascertain how she manages

I would need to get the input from other professionals that Jamie has been seen to see what they observe

BRINGING RIGOUR TO THE WORK



**IMMEDIATE SAFETY
SCALING**



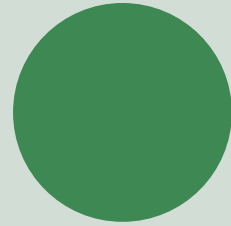
**SAFETY BEGINS IN THE
MIDDLE COLUMN**

Wednesday 7th [redacted]
[redacted] brought J [redacted] home about 7.30
Last, J [redacted] was due a feed he was crying
So I rang [redacted] and offered to take him
to her house as I was feeling rundown.
She dropped back this morning he was happy
and content she said he slept good for her
last night.
Now we are heading out with [redacted] which
means I will get to see my friend [redacted] :-)

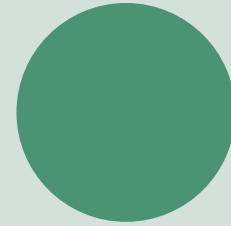
Saturday 8th - Collected A [redacted] from [redacted]
[redacted] as [redacted] was doing night shift in hospital
We had dinner together [redacted] went to bed
early for a good night's sleep, in good form
but worried about J [redacted] breathing.
Sunday 27th Baby J [redacted] staying
in tonight - A [redacted] prepared baby bag + bottle
for her stay. Brought car seat in for coming
home tomorrow Monday and gave [redacted]
back top part of pram - all of her own decisions
[redacted]

***“Baby’s Dad brought him home about 7:30pm last night...
I was due a feed and was crying. I rang Stella and offered
to take him to her house as I was feeling rundown. She
dropped back this morning he was happy and content. She
said he slept good for her last night”***

BRINGING RIGOUR TO THE WORK



**IMMEDIATE SAFETY
SCALING**



**SAFETY BEGINS IN THE
MIDDLE COLUMN**



**SUSTAINING THE TEAM:
APPRECIATIVE INQUIRY**

Final Key Messages

- We have to let go to meaningfully give it a go
- It really does take a village to raise a child
- A child is safe when you are **SHOWN** that they are safe
- This process is hard and time consuming work, strong leadership is critical





An Ghníomhaireacht um
Leanaí agus an Teaghlach
Child and Family Agency

Thank You!

Social Worker Aishleen Healy — aishleen.healy@tusla.ie

Signs of Safety Practice Lead Lavina Temple — lavina.temple@tusla.ie



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