

OBSERVATIONS -- OUR FIRST HIRE FROM IL
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What worked

- Having Fostering Acadia identify a youth
- Learning about our candidate's trauma and coping style (although this came later)
- Staying "with it" even when the going was rough, when our youth was:
 - repeatedly late for work
 - not managing phone time at work
 - defensive and angry
 - negative and complaining
 - not receiving correction well
 - not trusting
 - spending work time eating or having "talks" rather than working
 - not being thorough with tasks
 - refusing to take responsibility for actions

What didn't work (or how we were not prepared)

- Our assuming this youth ready to do the job
- Not giving enough structure and accountability from day one
- Our going too "easy" at first
- Our not knowing how to correct the behaviors and lack of work performance
- Our not knowing how to respond to defensiveness
- Not realizing that this youth did not really want the job and in this youth's mind, didn't need it
- Our not understanding the lack of motivation
- Our not understanding the lack of ability to prioritize the job as it related to life

What helped

- Listening - and it took a lot of it!
- Giving our youth a voice - as our youth said, "I did not have a voice growing up."
- Not abandoning this youth or the situation just because things weren't working. This was the start of building trust
- Giving space to talk about family issues
- Doing some fun activities together outside of work
- Studying together (driver's test)
- Assigning a supervisor within the company who was closer to the youth's age for accountability, freeing Darrell and myself to be the relational/permanency people in this person's life
- Visiting during COVID lockdown
- Acknowledging accomplishments on social media, validating importance

Important lessons we have learned:

- Need to have better up front conversations and good two-way dialogue about expectations at time of onboarding to ensure understanding
- Don't compromise on expectations. Be firm, but understanding when failures occur
- Prior to onboarding, create, assign, and prepare internal structures for supporting the employee
 - Prepare the supervisor well and include trauma informed training
 - Assign a mentor (someone closer to the age of the employee that is strong, but caring)
 - It is important to include people that are NOT supervising but are committed to the welfare of the employee.
- From the start, have some background information and an evaluation of the employee's temperament. This along with the YouScience assessment would prepare both employer and employee.