

CWS3101W Introduction to Resource Family Work

LEARNER HANDOUTS



VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF
SOCIAL SERVICES



List of handouts CWS3101W Introduction to Resource Family Work

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2025 Recruitment, Development, Support (RDS) Framework

2025 Recruitment, Development, Support (RDS) Plan Template

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Child-Specific Recruitment Plan (Goal of Adoption)

Developing Recruitment Plans: National Resource Center for Diligent Recruitment (NRCDR) Toolkit

Going Beyond Recruitment for Older Youth (AdoptUSKids)

Kinship Assistance Throughout the Child Welfare Continuum

Kinship Care Brochure (New! August 2025)

Partnering with Resource Families: Treat Them Like Gold

Practitioner's Guide (AdoptUSKids)- Getting More Parents for Children from Your Recruitment Efforts

Tracking Prospective Parents template (Excel)

Transfer-of-Learning Day 1

Word document TOL post-class for activities related to Day 1; email to your trainers after Day 1

Activity: questions related to common roadblocks and possible solutions around recruitment practices and tips

Supervisor Transfer-of-Learning

Word document TOL received from your trainers post-class to discuss and do activities with your supervisor within your agency

CWS3101W: Introduction to Resource Family Work

Course Objectives:

1. Employ a best practice framework model to recruit and retain resource families.
2. Implement a program to prioritize kin-first culture and prioritize placement with kin with safe and appropriate.
3. Facilitate the use of the National Development Training Curriculum materials to train and assess prospective resource families.

Caseworker Competencies:

1. Recruit and train new prospective resource families to be trauma-informed caregivers.
2. Understand processes to approve kinship resource families as placement providers for local department of social service.
3. Understand the value of maintaining family and community connections for children and youth placed in foster care.
4. Establish a model of recruitment, development, and support as a best practice framework to recruit and retain resource families.
5. Understand different recruitment uses and approaches; child specific, targeted, and general recruitment
6. Utilize National Development Training Curriculum (NTDC) training for prospective resource families; including the self-assessment, instructor-led training, and “right time now” online training modules.
7. Utilize National Development Training Curriculum (NTCD) Facilitator’s Guides to maintain model fidelity to the curriculum.
8. Understand that the “Support” aspect of the recruitment model is vital and ensure in-service training opportunities for resource families.
9. Distinguish Kinship-specific practices and supports for kinship families to provide continual support for placement stability.

Strength-Based Child Welfare Words and Expressions*

The words and expressions used in child welfare are often passed down from one generation of staff to another and thus are also commonly used by families and children. To continue the focus on strengths, the following historical words and expressions have been reframed to convey a more positive approach.

| Historical Words & Expressions → | Preferred Strength-Based Words & Expressions |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| Aging Out | Connecting to a relationship that is safe, nurturing, and intended to last a lifetime Every young person who leaves foster care must be connected to at least one adult who is committed to providing that young person with a safe, nurturing, and enduring relationship. |
| Caretakers | Caregivers Recognizes the care that is provided, such as a kinship caregiver. |
| Continuum of services | Array of services Means encircling the child and family with essential services and getting the right service(s) to the child and family immediately. |
| Damaged children | Children who have experienced trauma; children with special needs Avoid labeling children negatively. |
| Foster or adoptive home | Foster or adoptive family Focus is on the individuals who comprise the family, not on the home. In other words, it is the family (not the home) who will heal or hurt children. |
| Going through training | Participating in training Individuals must be actively involved in the training process, so they participate in the activities. |
| Hard-to-place children | Safe and nurturing families are hard to find Instead of making children seem responsible for a shortage of qualified foster and adoptive families, this places the responsibility on communities and agencies to identify and support quality foster and adoptive families. |
| House and home study; home visit | Mutual family assessment; consultation A process in which agencies identify the competencies that prospective foster and adoptive parents need. Together, they mutually assess an individual's or family's ability, resources, and willingness to be team members in child protection and trauma-informed care of children. |
| Natural parents or natural family | Parents, or birth parents, or birth family, or primary family, or family of origin Parents and family members may not need to be labeled, however if they should be identified, using the term "natural" implies that other families are unnatural. |
| Permanency | Connecting children to relationships that are safe, nurturing, and intended to last a lifetime A goal for family foster care; this outcome focuses on ensuring that every child leaves foster care status connected to at least one adult who is committed to providing a relationship that will be safe, nurturing, and intended to last a lifetime. |

| Historical Words & Expressions ➔ | Preferred Strength-Based Words & Expressions |
|---|--|
| Placing children with foster or adoptive families | Joining children with foster and adoptive families Instead of “placing” children as if they are objects, children “join” foster and adoptive families, and the entire family is supported. |
| Problems or weaknesses | Strengths and needs Identifies positive areas to build upon when addressing issues of concern. |
| Recruitment and retention | Develop and support After being recruited, foster and adoptive parents/families must be developed and supported, commensurate with the mission of the agency. |
| Removal | Separation Children and parents are separated; this term implies the possibility of reuniting the family. |
| Screening or weeding out | Selecting in Emphasizes a positive approach to inviting foster and adoptive parents into the agency as team members in child protection. |
| Services for foster and adoptive parents | Supports for foster and adoptive parents The goal of family foster care is to provide services to children and birth parents. Foster parents require supports to fulfill their role as members of a professional team. |
| Substitute care | Family foster care Recognizes that no one can “substitute” for our birth history and also recognizes that the strength of foster care is that it offers family living. |
| Visits or visitation | Family time Emphasizes the significance of quality time in which parents can practice parenting skills that are appropriate to their children’s age and stage of development. |

* Developed by Eileen Mayers Pasztor, DSW and Eshel Williams, PsyD, LMFT.

Training Requirements for Resource Family Staff

Name: _____

Start Date: _____

The following on-line courses will be required to be completed within the **first three (3) weeks** of employment. *These courses are **pre-requisites** for many other courses including CWS3100W Resource Family New Worker Guidance Training with OASIS. (Note: e-Learnings denoted by CWSE titles.)

| COURSE | Resource Family Services Staff Completion Date |
|---|--|
| CWSE1002 Exploring Child Welfare - online | |
| CWSE5692 Recognizing and Reporting Child Abuse and Neglect – Mandatory Reporter Training - online | |

The following **Online** and **Instructor Led courses** will be required to be completed no later than within the **first 6 months** of employment.

| COURSE | Resource Family Services Staff Completion Date |
|--|--|
| CWS3100W Resource Family New Worker Guidance with COMPASS/OASIS Virtual Learning Lab (Prerequisites: CWSE1002, CWSE5692) | |
| CWS3101W Introduction to PRIDE Model (Prerequisites: CWSE1002, CWSE5692) | |
| CWS3103W Mutual Family Assessment (Prerequisites: CWSE1002, CWSE5692) | |
| CWSE4060 Family Search and Engagement – online (Prerequisites: CWSE1002, CWSE5692, CWS3100W) | |
| CWS4080W Kinship Care in Virginia (Prerequisites: CWSE1002, CWSE5692, CWS3100W, CWSE4060) | |

Start Date: _____

[illegible]

Last updated: 10/28/2021

Expanding Your Parenting Paradigm Discussion Questions

1. As you reflect on the information presented in the video, has your view about how to parent a child that you are fostering or adopting changed? If so, how has it changed?
2. Which areas of your parenting do you think you might need to adjust to accommodate the needs of a child who has experienced trauma, separation or loss?
3. Which challenges do you anticipate that you will have as you expand your parenting paradigm? (Look back at your report from your self-assessment to obtain ideas.) How might these challenges impact others within your family?
4. Which characteristics or skills did your self-assessment reveal as needing the greatest attention?
5. What are some ways that you believe you can create a consistent and predictable environment when a child you are fostering or adopting enters your home?
6. Which kinds of visual reminders can you place in your home to help you stay focused on the root causes of the child's behaviors rather than the behaviors themselves (for example: calming pictures, resource books, pictures of joyful times, notes with reassuring words)?
7. Do you think that changes in your routines or traditions will cause any of your family members discomfort or stress? (For example: If your family travels every Sunday to your mother's home for dinner, how will your mother feel if that tradition cannot be accommodated easily?)
8. How can you help to prepare members of your family and support system for the journey of fostering or adopting a child?

Overview

Understand why traditional parenting is not effective for children who have experienced separation, loss, or trauma; ability to identify parental strengths as well as the need to adapt parenting techniques to support these children; aware of changes needed to be made to parenting values and beliefs; understand the importance of adapting parental expectations; understand the need to not take things personally; value cultural humility; aware of characteristics for successfully parenting children who have experienced separation, loss or trauma including:

- Flexibility
- Patience
- Nurturing
- Compassion
- Sense of humor

Knowledge Competencies

- Identify the characteristics of parents that are more effective when parenting children who have experienced separation, loss or trauma.
- Understand the parenting techniques that may need to be adjusted to meet the emotional, developmental, social and physical needs of children.
- Understand why traditional parenting techniques are not always effective for children who have experienced separation, loss or trauma.

Attitude Competencies

- Willing to learn and expand their set of parenting skills and strategies to support children who have experienced separation, loss or trauma.
- Embraces the role of creating an environment that helps children heal.
- Willing to understand and validate the intersecting identities and lived experience of the child.
- Willing to see discipline as an opportunity to support children in learning and growing rather than punishment for behavior.

Target Audience

- This theme is applicable to all target audiences. A specific video has been created for each of the target audiences

EXPANDING YOUR PARENTING PARADIGM ONLINE VIDEO

Key Points

General Information:

- Parenting paradigm refers to the way you look at parenting – the way you communicate, teach, discipline, and your attachment style – and how you personally approach these facets of parenting.
- Your parenting paradigm, or approach, is usually based on your experiences being parented as a child and the ways you may have already parented children born to you.
- For children who have experienced trauma, loss or separation these ‘traditional’ approaches are not always effective. Parents who are fostering or adopting need to expand their parenting paradigm in order to have tools and an approach that is more effective for children who have experienced trauma, loss or separation.

Part I: What Do You Mean by Expanding Your Parenting Paradigm?

Through research and experience, we know that relationships are the way people heal and grow. The relational interaction between the parent figure and the child in need of healing is a primary therapeutic tool and requires a special kind of parenting.

8 Ways to Expand Your Parenting Paradigm

1. Recognize the importance of routine and normal family interactions
 - a. Everyday family interactions can help children feel safe
 - b. It is a slow process that happens in seemingly mundane moments throughout the day such as setting the table for dinner or reading a book together
2. Move away from the idea that you can “fix” the child
 - a. Children do not need to be fixed, they need an environment and people around them that can help them heal and grow
 - b. Being connected and unconditionally committed to them is critical
 - c. Trust is essential and will take time to grow
3. Focus on the reasons behind the behavior and not the behavior itself
 - a. Look for the reasons behind the behavior – recognize that the behavior is often a way that children are communicating their unmet needs
 - b. Ask yourself how you can meet that need
4. Be attuned to the child’s needs and be prepared to alter your routine to meet those needs
 - a. Pick up on the cues that the child is giving you
 - b. Observe the child and allow flexibility in your routines/plans so that you can prioritize meeting the child’s needs



5. Set realistic expectations for the child and also for yourself
 - a. Pay attention to the child's abilities and developmental capacity- chronological age is not always the age that they are developmentally, socially or emotionally
 - b. Give yourself and your child grace
6. Celebrate the small successes
 - a. Hitting the milestones may take a long time – celebrating the smaller successes that are made along the way helps both you and the child remain hopeful going forward
7. Use play to connect
 - a. Play and fun are an important part of childhood – make time and space for this to happen
 - b. Play is possible, even when children need structure
8. Find a balance between connecting and correcting
 - a. Remember the definition of discipline is “to teach”
 - b. If you are always correcting and handing down consequences, you are not giving opportunity for the child to want to connect with you
 - c. Look for the positives in the child and be sure to communicate them on a regular basis

There is not a one-size-fits-all approach; you need to adapt your parenting to the individual needs of the child.

Part II: Why Do I Need a New Parenting Paradigm?

Science is teaching us that the experiences in the first years of life will have an impact on brain development, and that a growing brain requires the following:

- Nurturing environment
- Positive interactions
- Sensory-rich experiences
- Strong attachment
- Learning opportunities

Toxic stress can interfere with healthy brain development. Some factors that have a negative impact:

- Drug and alcohol exposure or mother's prenatal stress
- Disruptions in bonding and attachment between baby and caregiver
- Traumatic experiences

The attachment cycle happens thousands of times in an infant's life – when that cycle is completed well, a child grows up feeling attached, cared for, and safe. When the cycle is disrupted or completed in a way that does not meet the infant's needs, a child can grow up feeling unsafe, and believing that their caregivers are not trustworthy. The good news is that the brain can change and repair, over time and with repetition of positive experiences.

Part III: How to Expand Your Parenting Paradigm

The need to feel connected is a key part of being human. Developing a connection with the child must become your first priority. Some essential ideas to keep in mind are:

- Trust and attachment go hand-in-hand
- Children who have experienced trauma, loss, and separation may have a greater need to know what to expect
- It's unrealistic and even unfair to expect children who have experienced many broken promises to trust you just because you are trustworthy – it must be demonstrated over time in both significant and small ways
- Traditional discipline techniques rarely work with children who have experienced trauma, loss or separation

Building a relationship with the child is the best intervention. The parent who is fostering or adopting should provide an environment that helps build a strong, positive relationship by:

- Creating a consistent and predictable environment
- Creating heart-to-heart rituals to build connections
- Giving the child a voice within your family
- Asking yourself what happened to the child to cause a behavior, rather than why they did the behavior in the first place
- Being attuned by giving the child your full attention, observing body language, and being sensitive to their changing moods
- Understanding that the child's developmental age may be much younger than their chronological age
- Learning to self-regulate and stay calm
- Remembering that it's about the child, not you



Overview of Video for Expanding your Parenting Paradigm

Parenting children who have experienced trauma, grief and loss requires a different type of parenting. Parents must learn to think about the child's behaviors, discipline, and love in a whole new light. The video in this theme describes why traditional parenting is not always effective for children who have experienced trauma, grief and loss and what it means to expand your parenting paradigm. Parents will learn the importance of developing new parenting tools and strategies that they can utilize to create an environment that is safe, nurturing and stable.

Please note that there are four versions of this video. Participants should only watch the version that is applicable to their situation. The core information in all of the videos is the same; however, a different lens is applied based on the target population. The four videos include:

- Expanding Your Parenting Paradigm- A video for prospective foster and adoptive parents
- Expanding Your Parenting Paradigm- A video for kinship caregivers
- Expanding Your Parenting Paradigm- A video for American Indian Alaska Native foster and adoptive parents
- Expanding Your Parenting Paradigm- A video for families who are adopting via the intercountry process or private domestically

Improving RECRUITMENT OUTCOMES

11 Things a Practitioner Can Do

1 Be customer-friendly in your approach.

Foster and adoptive parents are the most important resource we have to provide for the children we serve. How you treat them will determine whether they stay in the process and, ultimately, become part of your team. Try to put yourself in their shoes at every stage of the process. How would you like to be treated?

2 Be informed about local, State, and national recruitment initiative and calendar.

This information will help you schedule your work so you can be prepared to respond quickly and effectively to the possibility of an influx of inquiries, as well as inform families you talk with at event, classes, in the course of work and people you meet in your community.

3 Look for ways to participate in your agency's community recruitment projects, regardless of what your job is.

From the agency director to the person who answers the telephone, recruitment is everybody's business! Successful agencies encourage all staff and resource parents to be mindful of the need for families wherever they go and help out with recruitment.

4 Know the characteristics and needs of the children in your area who needs foster and adoptive parents.

Speak optimistically and honestly about the children who need care and the role of the foster and adoptive parent. As prospective parents go through the process, continue to provide them with reliable information to make informed decisions about fostering and adopting, including full disclosure regarding the children, their needs and the service needs of the birth families. Respect the parents / Give them the opportunity to explore areas where they may have doubts. Trust their ability to make good decisions for themselves. This can be done at all stages of the process.

5 Be knowledgeable about all of the steps in the continuum from recruitment through to placement and post-placement support.

Prospective parents will have lots of questions. Be prepared to answer them whether you are answering the phone, providing training, or doing a home visit. Promise to get back with answers to questions you can't respond to on the spot, and then follow through with this promise!

6 Work to rule people in, not out of the process.

It is important that the practitioner realize that the most ordinary, and sometimes unusual, people have grown into amazing resource parents with training and support. Most of the time parents present themselves to the agency for an altruistic purpose. They have passion and emotion about this. Our challenge is to learn how to maintain that passion and turn it into informed and sustained commitment.

7 Utilize seasoned foster and adoptive parents whenever possible to help support new parents through the process.

Many agencies are partnering with their resource parents and/or parent groups to help in recruiting. Parents handle initial inquiries, participate in home visits, are part of the training team and provide support to new parents during the process. Agencies that do this are modeling the team process from day one.

8 Identify and collaborate with other community partners and organizations.

Networking with community groups and partnering on recruitment efforts can be satisfying, supportive and productive for the practitioner. Faith based and community-based organizations that endorse your efforts can bring new families to your door. These organizations can also provide space and resources to make your orientation and training meetings more accessible to parents. You are likely to get better attendance as a result.

9 Be a team player.

Everybody who has a hand in recruiting and preparing families to foster and adopt can be made to feel that they are part of a team in a very important endeavor. This is a complex process that involves handoffs from recruiter to trainer, to family assessment worker, to placement worker, etc. All involved should have the same value system and a sense of urgency about completing the work as soon as possible.

10 Be sensitive to the prospective foster and adoptive parents' sense of time.

The longer it takes to move from step to step, the less likely the family will stay in the process. However, if a parent is treated well and helped to feel part of the team early on, he/she is more likely to stay the course. It is important to be honest about the reasons for delays when they occur and to help the parent use this time in productive ways, e.g., involve them with other foster, adoptive or kinship parents, or enlist them to provide respite care.

11 Understand your role in and the importance of tracking and evaluation to improve recruitment outcomes.

Organizations that are customer-oriented are beginning to look at the quality of their interactions with resource families at every stage of the process. They need cooperation from people on the "front line" to get good data and feedback.

National Resource Center for

RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION

of Foster and Adoptive Parents

at



AdoptUSKids

Together we hold their future

More free resources at:

www.adoptuskids.org/nrc-recruitment

AdoptUSKids is a service of the U.S. Children's Bureau, member of the T/TA Network, and supported through a cooperative agreement (grant #90CQ0002) between the Adoption Exchange Association and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Children's Bureau.



DATA-DRIVEN RECRUITMENT

Key Data Elements on Foster and Adoptive Families¹

Using data effectively is a key part of conducting diligent recruitment. Most child welfare systems have good data on children in foster care and their characteristics. One of the most important — and often most lacking — areas of data is on prospective and current foster, adoptive, and kinship parents. Having useful data on prospective and current parents gives a child welfare system crucial insight into how effective their current approaches are in recruiting, developing, and supporting foster, adoptive, and kinship families.

We know that collecting, tracking, and analyzing data can be challenging for child welfare systems. There are often barriers and significant delays involved in adding new data elements to data systems; many child welfare systems also report challenges in making it possible for staff to collect and enter data consistently and in a timely manner. Recognizing that child welfare systems may only be able to track a few new pieces of data on foster and adoptive families, we have prioritized key data elements below that will help inform your efforts to recruit and maintain a pool of families and help you assess the effectiveness of your strategies and efforts.

Data Elements on Current Families

Key Question to Ask Your Data: Are our current families being fully utilized?

1 Where are our current families located in relation to where our children come from?

- Are our children being placed in close proximity to their birth families?
- Are siblings being placed together?
- What are the trends in this data?

2 How many homes have not had a placement in the past six months?

- Why have they not had a placement?
- Do these families need specific training, development, and support to help them be able to be a resource to children in need of placement? If so, how can you help the family develop their capacity to meet the needs of these children?
- Do these homes need to be either closed or referred to an agency that might be more appropriate to their interests and capabilities (e.g., the family wants a healthy infant but that is not the type of placement the agency has). If your child

Exploring this question helps your child welfare system begin to focus on whether current recruitment strategies are targeted to building a pool of families that can meet the needs of the children and youth needing placement. It can also indicate if any work needs to be done to close or refer to other agencies homes that are not utilized, freeing staff time to recruit, study and support families willing to accommodate the needs of your children/youth.

You may be able to use AFCARS data, CFSR outcome data, and possibly data from your data systems to look at this question.

welfare system is not going to place children with the family, you may want to refer them to a more appropriate agency or have a discussion with the family about developing their ability to meet the needs of children needing placement or closing their home.

¹ For this tip sheet, when referring to families we are referring to non-relative or non-fictive kin homes.

Data Elements on the Licensure/Approval Process

Key Question to Ask Your Data: How is our process working for getting families licensed/approved?

- 1 How many families have made inquiries in the past six months?**
- 2 How many families have attended an initial orientation or participated in an initial orientation discussion with a worker?**
 - Of those, how many families have attended pre-service training?
 - Of those, how many were certified/licensed?
- 3 How long does the process take?**
 - How long was it from point of application to final certification/licensure?
 - How long was it between the milestones of the process:
 - Time from inquiry to initial orientation or discussion?
 - Time from orientation to first pre-service training?
 - Time to get all paperwork in?
 - Time for the study to be completed?
 - Time for the worker to write it up and get all needed approvals (e.g., supervisor, review team)?

Examining this question will help you determine whether there are any significant barriers or delays in the licensure/approval process. By reviewing this data, you can identify any parts of the process that might need to be changed in order to keep families moving through the process at an appropriate pace (e.g., policies that create barriers to licensure, lack of consistent good customer service and support). Answering this question also helps you identify whether you need to develop new strategies to keep families engaged during the licensure/approval process.

You may want to look in your data system to see if this information is already being collected and simply needs a query or data warehouse report generated; if it's not already being collected, you may want to track in the future.



Data Elements on Placement Capacity

Key Questions to Ask Your Data: What is our current actual capacity? Is that capacity sufficient to meet the need for appropriate placements for children currently in need of a placement and for our anticipated placement needs?

- 1 What is the true bed capacity of our homes?**
- 2 How many openings do we currently have?**
- 3 If a home is available to accept children:**
 - What behaviors and special needs is the family trained, developed, supported, and equipped to accept?
 - Will they accept sibling groups? How large of a sibling group can they accept?
 - What ages of children will they accept?

Examining these questions will help your system determine your true capacity of placement options for children in foster care. By “true capacity” we mean the realistic number of children that each family can care for at any given time and have been approved to take. Tracking data — both quantitative and qualitative — on your true capacity will help you determine what kinds of placements options you need to increase (e.g., families that can take sibling groups of three or four, families that can take teens, etc.). This data further helps you determine if available families are in locations that will enable children to remain in or near their communities.

We recognize the reality of the shortage of foster homes that many child welfare systems face and that having a shortage can lead to overplacing children in homes. However, to accurately understand your needs for recruitment, you must have a clear picture of your true capacity of placement options, even though you may be placing more children in a home than the home’s true capacity.

You will need to work with your data system to determine the best ways to analyze your true capacity for placing specific groups of children and youth (e.g., sibling groups, teens, medically fragile children). You may also want to review your licensing/approval documentation processes to determine whether you are collecting the information you need for understanding the true capacity of approved homes, including understanding how well you are preparing, developing, and supporting families to help them be equipped to care for children with specific needs.



Data Elements on Effectiveness of Recruitment, Development, and Support Strategies²

Key Question to Ask Your Data: Are our recruitment strategies effective in finding appropriate families for our children and keeping those families engaged both before and after children are placed with them?

- 1 What brings families to our agency? How many openings do we currently have?**
- 2 What are the characteristics of families that are good at meeting the needs of the children entering care? How do we define “successful families” to guide our recruitment efforts?**
- 3 How many families have left our agency in the past six months?**
 - What are their real reasons for leaving? Do we understand and capture the real reasons why families end their relationship with our agency (e.g., families who adopt might have wanted to continue as foster parents but end the relationship with the agency because they don’t feel supported)? Do we allow families to define their reason for leaving or do we make them fit their answer into one of our pre-defined reasons?
 - What are the characteristics of families who leave?
 - What is their average tenure?

This question is helpful to determine the allocation of resources and focus of efforts to keep families engaged with your system. If recruitment strategies are not bringing in the families you need, you may need to re-evaluate those strategies and invest your resources differently to maximize resources. This may also help you determine what strategies you need to use to continually develop and support families to help them meet the changing needs of the children and youth in need of placement.

You may be able to obtain this data by conducting short periodic surveys in appropriate formats for your communities (e.g., using online surveys, distributing paper surveys, getting input at community events). You might also be able to use existing data from your data system to answer some of the questions.

² We encourage child welfare systems to focus on actively developing and supporting both prospective and current foster and adoptive families, rather than focusing on the idea of “retention.” By meeting a family’s needs, you increase their ability to address each child’s unique needs, while also strengthening their relationship with your child welfare system. The traditional view of retention suggests passively holding onto families, whereas developing and supporting involves building and nurturing a relationship with families so that they continue to feel equipped to meet the needs of children and youth. See our resources on [developing and supporting families](#).

Additional Resources

Developing a more data-driven approach to recruitment is an ongoing process for child welfare systems and aligns well with your other efforts to improve outcomes for children, youth, and families. We have many other resources available to support child welfare systems' use of data to guide family recruitment, development, and support. Our website, www.nrcdr.org, provides resources on how to use data as you build and sustain a pool of families for children in foster care and waiting to be adopted. Our customizable [Diligent Recruitment Navigator](#) offers multiple suggested discussion questions to help you examine your data on recruitment, customer service, and family engagement and support. We also provide tailored technical assistance to States, Tribes, and Territories to help you develop and implement data-driven diligent recruitment programs.



More free resources at:

www.nrcdr.org

AdoptUSKids is operated by the Adoption Exchange Association and is made possible by grant number 90CQ0003 from the Children's Bureau. The contents of this resource are solely the responsibility of the Adoption Exchange Association and do not necessarily represent the official views of the Children's Bureau, ACYF, ACF, or HHS. The Children's Bureau funds AdoptUSKids as part of a network of National Resource Centers established by the Children's Bureau.



Virginia's Faster Families Highway & Family-Match

The [Family-Match Application](#) is a data-driven decision-making technology which equips child welfare professionals with a tool to help identify and evaluate prospective foster and adoptive families for children in the foster care system from the moment of initial inquiry. VDSS has made this tool available at no cost to LDSS and partner agencies in order to increase the number of resource families and improve permanency for children in care.

Family-Match and it's Faster Families inquiry process bridges the divide between recruitment and placement, for improved, accelerated recruitment and matching of children with prospective families.

For Recruitment

- *Over 6,000 families in 3.5 years onboarded*
- *68% of families want to support reunification*
- *Increased county + regional collaboration*
- *Increased stakeholder participation*



Families Meet Here

Family-Match provides child welfare professionals with a tool to identify adoptive families for children through General, Targeted, & Child Specific Recruitment Capabilities

For Adoption Matching

- *Over 1,300 special needs children matched*
- *Over 650 finalized adoptions and counting*
- *60% increase in placement stability*
- *Decrease in time to match*



The Best Fit

To get started, contact:

Anna Tyson
Virginia Family-Match Director
anna@adoption-share.com
757.228.5279

ONGOING TRAINING & SUPPORT FOR SYSTEM USERS

- 1:1 & small group virtual training
- In-Person large group training
- 1:1 Virtual support
 - walk through demos
 - questions & brainstorming
- Email support
- Phone Support

Are you connected to Virginia's Faster Families Highway?

Families are needed now more than ever to support children and youth in foster care. Families in the Commonwealth of Virginia can:

- help children remain connected to their families and home communities with a goal of reunification
- help children transition to a compatible family chosen for adoption

VDSS has established the Faster Families Highway program to help increase the number of prospective foster and adoptive families while providing a streamlined process local departments can leverage to assist workers in the identification, evaluation, and utilization of families for children in care.

LDSS Offices play a key role in the success of family recruitment, selection and matching. By promoting individual OnRamps—custom registration pages—all 120 LDSS integrate families into a shared network, ensuring a steady pipeline across the Commonwealth. Each LDSS can then use the OffRamp to quickly find families that best meet the needs of children in care.

Faster Families (OnRamp)

Gives agencies their own branded recruitment portal whereby prospective foster and/or adoptive families complete a 6-step inquiry which includes their goals, interests and preferences, criminal attestation, family-match assessment, readiness assessment, and family profile picture. Families who complete their inquiry will be provided access to an introductory training on trauma.

Agencies utilizing their OnRamp can:

- Personalize portal by adding their logo for increased recognition and continued branding.
- Have a unique URL to embed on websites and brochures to funnel families onto the Faster Families Highway.
- Track progress of families and access aggregated data for families through their personalized recruitment portal.
- Maximize impact by making sure prospective foster and/or adoptive families get where they need to go!

Family-Match (OffRamp)

Provides dashboard for agency to see prospective families (both unapproved and approved) in their county or region to include family willingness, capacity, and matchability to support children in care in their county. Allows agencies to create child cases for children in care who are in need of adoptive families for the purposes of identifying compatible families.

Agencies utilizing their OffRamp can:

- View in depth profiles of prospective, in-process, and approved families locally, regionally, and statewide.
- Create and manage child cases through a teamwork approach. Note: Families do NOT see child information or photos
- Explore approved families who are compatible with child cases.
- Select and connect with families to onboard for their own agency's approval process.
- Priority onboard families that can support the children in care.
- Track the family's progress through recruitment, approval, placement, matched, & adopted.

Resource Family Tip Sheet

INQUIRY TO INFORMATION SESSION

The purpose of this tip sheet is to support your LDSS in developing a philosophy of “Screening/Welcoming In” vs. “Screening Out” when recruiting and developing prospective non-relative resource families. Always remember that we are finding families for children NOT children for families.

INITIAL INQUIRIES

- Families who express an interest in becoming resource families receive immediate responses to their inquiries in ways that are welcoming, strengths-based, and culturally appropriate.
- Identify one person in your LDSS who is responsible for responding to the inquiries.
- Use **Faster Families Highway** to field all inquiries and streamline the process.
- Consider having an “inquiry only” phone number that is linked to the person responsible for responding to all inquiries. If you have a recorded message- direct them to the Faster Families Highway.
- Consider have an “inquiry only” email. Having this email address set up ensures that whoever is responsible for responding to inquiries always gets them. This is particularly helpful when thinking about staff turnover and printed materials. Again, have an automated response that sends them to the Faster Families Highway.
- If you have front desk staff who fields all calls for the LDSS- write up a script for them to follow and post it by the phone. Example- “Thank you for your interest in becoming a resource parent and desire to learn more. John Peterson (Inquiry Person) is the individual who handles all inquiries for our LDSS. I will transfer you to him, but here is his extension number should you need to contact him directly in the future.”
- Information is shared in an open and direct way between prospective resource families and the LDSS.
- Your LDSS needs to develop a plan for regular information sessions – best practice is to hold an information session at least once a month- If you are a smaller LDSS- your CRAFFT coordinator may be able to provide support if needed. When responding to an inquiry- the family should be extended an invitation to an information session.

INFORMATION SESSION

The information session should cover:

- Clear expectations of a resource parent’s role at your LDSS. This should include building a relationship with the birth family and supporting reunification and why this is critical in supporting families in crisis.
- Clear explanation of the time commitment that comes along with being a resource parent.
- Clear explanation of your role as the LDSS as it relates to what you offer to resource parents as well as your role as it relates to a child coming into foster care.
- Clear explanation as to what your LDSS needs as it relates to the children in their care.
- What resource parent motivations best serve children in care when becoming a resource parent.
- If they are a two-parent household, both parents must attend and complete pre-service training.
- If they have children or other adult household members in the home, they should be discussing this decision with them.
- The “timeline” for approval- what comes next after the information session?
- Explanation of pre-service training and the MFA process.

Resource Family Tip Sheet

INQUIRY TO INFORMATION SESSION

THINGS TO CONSIDER ENSURING BEST PRACTICE

- Does your LDSS want to develop an Initial Inquiry Form to collect basic information- like date of inquiry, name, number, email?
- Does your LDSS want to develop some sort of information packet to hand out at Information Sessions?
- Does your LDSS want to do an initial home visit before extending an invitation to pre-service training?
- At what point in the process do you want a family to fill out the application?
- For Data purposes- your LDSS should develop a tracking system for Inquiries, attendance at Information Sessions, Attendance at pre-service training, and completion of pre-service training (and for those who don't complete pre-service training - the reason why they didn't.)
- If the prospective resource family has other adult household members who will be providing support to the child in the home, consider having that adult participate in pre-service training.

The Essential Elements of Trauma-Informed Parenting

1. Recognize the impact trauma has had on your child.

Children who have survived trauma can present incredible challenges. But when you view children's behaviors and reactions through the "lens" of their traumatic experience, many of these behaviors and reactions begin to make sense.

Using an understanding of trauma as a foundation, you can work with other members of your child's team to come up with effective strategies to address challenging behaviors and help your child develop new, more positive coping skills.

2. Help your child to feel safe.

Safety is critical for children who have experienced trauma. Many have not felt safe or protected in their own homes, and are on a constant state of alert for the next threat to their well-being.

Children who been through trauma may be physically safe and still not feel psychologically safe. By keeping your child's trauma history in mind, you can establish an environment that is physically safe and work with your child to understand what it will take to create psychological safety.

3. Help your child to understand and manage overwhelming emotions.

Trauma can cause such intense fear, anger, shame, and helplessness that children are overwhelmed by their feelings. In addition, trauma can derail development so that children fail to learn how to identify, express, or manage their emotional states.

For example, babies learn to regulate and tolerate their shifting feelings by interacting with caring adults. Older children who did not develop these skills during infancy may seem more like babies emotionally. By providing calm, consistent, and loving care, you can set an example for your children and teach them how to define, express, and manage their emotions.

4. Help your child to understand and manage difficult behaviors.

Overwhelming emotion can have a very negative impact on children's behavior, particularly if they cannot make the connection between feelings and behaviors. Because trauma can derail development, children who have experienced trauma may display problem behaviors more typical of younger children.

For example, during the school-age years, children learn how to think before acting. Adolescents who never learned this skill may be especially impulsive and apt to get into trouble. As a trauma-informed resource parent, you can help your children to understand the links between their thoughts, feelings, and behaviors, and to take control of their behavioral responses.

5. Respect and support the positive, stable, and enduring relationships in the life of your child.

Children learn who they are and what the world is like through the connections they make, including relationships with other people. These connections help children define themselves and their place in the world. Positive, stable relationships play a vital role in helping children heal from trauma.

Children who have been abused or neglected often have insecure attachments to other people. Nevertheless, they may cling to these attachments, which are disrupted or even destroyed when they come into care.

As a trauma-informed resource parent, you can help your child to hold on to what was good about these connections, reshape them, make new meaning from them, and build new, healthier relationships with you and others as well.

6. Help your child to develop a strength-based understanding of his or her life story.

In order to heal from trauma, children need to develop a strong sense of self, to put their trauma histories in perspective, and to recognize that they are worthwhile and valued individuals.

Unfortunately, many children who have experienced trauma live by an unwritten rule of “Don’t tell anyone anything.” They may believe that what happened to them is somehow their fault because they are bad, or damaged, or did something wrong.

You can help children to overcome these beliefs by being a safe listener when children share, working with children to build bridges across the disruptions in their lives, and helping children to develop a strength-based understanding of their life stories.

7. Be an advocate for your child.

Trauma can affect so many aspects of a child’s life that it takes a team of people and agencies to facilitate recovery. As the one most intimately and consistently connected with your child, you are a critical part of this team. As a trauma-informed resource parent, you can help ensure that efforts are coordinated, and help others to view your children through a trauma lens.

8. Promote and support trauma-focused assessment and treatment for your child.

Children who have experienced trauma often need specialized assessment and treatment in order to heal. The effects of trauma may be misunderstood or even misdiagnosed by clinicians who are not trauma experts. For example, the nervousness and inability to pay attention that comes with trauma may be misdiagnosed as ADHD, or moodiness and irritability may be misdiagnosed as bipolar disorder. Fortunately, there are trauma-focused treatments whose effectiveness has been established. You can use your understanding of trauma and its effects to advocate for the appropriate treatment for your child.

9. Take care of yourself.

Caring for children who have experienced trauma can be very difficult, and can leave resource families feeling drained and exhausted. In order to be effective, it is important to also take care of ourselves, and take action to get the support we need when caring for traumatized children.

Self-Assessment Tool

The Self-Assessment tool allows you to learn about different competencies and characteristics that may be important when parenting children who have experienced trauma, separation, and loss.

The questions are worded as if you already have a child in your home. It is understood that the first time you take this Self-Assessment you are just beginning your journey and therefore may not have a child in your home. As you respond to each question, consider how you would answer as though you *do* have a foster or adopted child in your home. The second time you take the Self-Assessment, you will have completed the Classroom-Based Training and may or may not have a child in your home. Again, if there is not a child in your home yet, respond to the questions as if there is a child in your home.

Please answer each question by selecting the number on a scale of **0 (Strongly Disagree) to 10 (Strongly Agree)** that best reflects your answer to each statement.

| 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
|-------------------|---|---------------------|---|-------------------|---|----------------|---|------------------|---|----------------|
| Strongly Disagree | | Moderately Disagree | | Slightly Disagree | | Slightly Agree | | Moderately Agree | | Strongly Agree |

| Self-Assessment | | Score |
|-----------------|---|-------|
| 1 | I am committed to developing a healthy attachment with the children I parent, no matter how long it takes. | |
| 2 | I can recognize when the children I parent are not reaching typical developmental milestones. | |
| 3 | I know the various losses that children who are adopted or from foster care may experience. | |
| 4 | I know trauma-informed parenting strategies and techniques. | |
| 5 | I understand how early trauma, abuse, and neglect impacts brain development. | |
| 6 | I am able to adjust rules to meet the developmental and emotional needs of a child when a parenting technique is not working. | |
| 7 | I respect the opinions of a child I'm parenting, even if they are different from mine. | |
| 8 | I am good at anticipating how children will respond to difficult situations. | |
| 9 | In (most) difficult parenting situations, I can work with the child I'm parenting to find a solution. | |
| 10 | I know that even when a child is rejecting or hostile towards me, they need people who will commit to caring for them. | |
| 11 | I know how to provide a supportive and nurturing environment for children I am parenting. | |
| 12 | I believe that children need to be supported or helped to express their pain and grief. | |
| 13 | I believe humor can be used to decrease tensions associated with parenting. | |

| | | | | | | | | | | |
|-------------------|---|---------------------|---|-------------------|---|----------------|---|------------------|---|----------------|
| 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| Strongly Disagree | | Moderately Disagree | | Slightly Disagree | | Slightly Agree | | Moderately Agree | | Strongly Agree |

| Self-Assessment | | | | | | | | | | Score |
|-----------------|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|-------|
| 14 | I may need to adjust my parenting techniques over time as the relationship between a child and me grows. | | | | | | | | | |
| 15 | I am careful not to say negative things to children about other people who are important to their lives. | | | | | | | | | |
| 16 | I notice even the smallest steps of a child's progress. | | | | | | | | | |
| 17 | In most situations, I can identify why I have responded inappropriately in a parenting situation. | | | | | | | | | |
| 18 | I do not need to receive love and affection from a child in order to provide love and affection as a parent. | | | | | | | | | |
| 19 | I understand the importance of being honest and reliable in building trust with a child I am parenting. | | | | | | | | | |
| 20 | I am willing to learn and practice new attachment parenting strategies. | | | | | | | | | |
| 21 | I know when to seek help if I have questions or concerns about the development of the children I parent. | | | | | | | | | |
| 22 | I understand how various types of losses related to foster care/adoption can impact children over their lifetime. | | | | | | | | | |
| 23 | I know the reasons why trauma-informed parenting strategies and techniques help children manage their behaviors and emotions related to separation and loss. | | | | | | | | | |
| 24 | I understand how children's behaviors and coping strategies are associated with underlying exposure to trauma. | | | | | | | | | |
| 25 | I am able to recognize when a parenting technique is not working. | | | | | | | | | |
| 26 | I value differences in others, including those in the children I am parenting. | | | | | | | | | |
| 27 | When children "act out", I am usually able to figure out what triggered the behavior. | | | | | | | | | |
| 28 | I am confident I can meet the specific needs of the children in my care. | | | | | | | | | |
| 29 | When children I'm parenting do something wrong, I reassure them that they are still loved by me. | | | | | | | | | |
| 30 | When children get emotional, I can be present and supportive to them. | | | | | | | | | |
| 31 | Children who have experienced loss should be allowed to express their pain and grief. | | | | | | | | | |
| 32 | I think that using humor is an important way for me to deal with parenting stress or challenges. | | | | | | | | | |

| 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
|----------------------|---|------------------------|---|----------------------|---|-------------------|---|---------------------|---|-------------------|
| Strongly Disagree | | Moderately Disagree | | Slightly Disagree | | Slightly Agree | | Moderately Agree | | Strongly Agree |

| | Self-Assessment | Score |
|----|---|--------------|
| 33 | I recognize that success of the child I am parenting may look different than success for other children. | |
| 34 | I realize that a child's love for and loyalty to the birth parents and other family members, former foster families, and others is not a rejection of me. | |
| 35 | If the child I am parenting and I work together to solve a problem, we'll eventually find a way to resolve it. | |
| 36 | I reflect on what I have done successfully or unsuccessfully in my role as a parent. | |
| 37 | I can be nurturing toward a child without receiving affection in return. | |
| 38 | It is important to me that a child I am parenting sees me as a safe and trustworthy person. | |
| 39 | I believe it takes time to build trust. | |
| 40 | I believe it is my role to support children in reaching their unique and full developmental potential. | |
| 41 | I understand that grieving children often express emotions differently than adults. | |
| 42 | I know ways to build relationships with children who have been traumatized. | |
| 43 | I know how to recognize behaviors associated with the fight-flight-freeze response. | |
| 44 | I am open to new ideas and techniques to improve my parenting. | |
| 45 | I have an interest in and a curiosity for learning about those who are different from me. | |
| 46 | As I am parenting, it is important for me to be sensitive to what children are experiencing. | |
| 47 | I believe that I can change my parenting style to help a child heal and grow. | |
| 48 | I believe a parent's dedication to a child is expressed through unconditional commitment. | |
| 49 | I know that at times my being a supportive listener is one of the most important things I can do for a child. | |
| 50 | I know it is important to try and understand what is really going on with a child and not only focus on negative behaviors. | |
| 51 | I use humor to connect with the children in my care. | |

| 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
|-------------------|---|---------------------|---|-------------------|---|----------------|---|------------------|---|----------------|
| Strongly Disagree | | Moderately Disagree | | Slightly Disagree | | Slightly Agree | | Moderately Agree | | Strongly Agree |

| | Self-Assessment | Score |
|----|---|-------|
| 52 | I accept that I may make mistakes in my parenting choices and can learn from those mistakes and adjust accordingly. | |
| 53 | I believe that current and former relationships have an effect on a child's self-perception and identity. | |
| 54 | I know ways of calming myself down after a difficult situation. | |
| 55 | I take the time to think about ways in which I can improve my parenting. | |
| 56 | I know how to stay calm in a situation when a child is pushing my buttons. | |
| 57 | It is my role as a parent to create an environment of trust. | |
| 58 | I change my own responses based on the moods and emotions I recognize in children. | |

Be ready and willing to embrace your child's culture, and make sure you educate yourself.

TIP FROM A FOSTER/ADOPTIVE PARENT

| Kinship (15 Hours Face-to-Face) | At Home (Kin 3 Hours, Non-Rel 8 hours) | Non-Relative (18 Hours Face-to-Face) |
|--|--|--|
| <p>Intro/Welcome VA Training & MFA Process (including VA timeline and goals, which includes adoption)</p> <p>Building Resilience for Kinship Caregivers (1.5 hours, add confidentiality agreement)</p> <p>Closing and Reflection Kinship: https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/11P6tlCjWJx3qs6NSmxVkrhcW-A5LsuSU/edit?usp=sharing&ouid=108192941729544509959&rtpof=true&sd=true</p> | <p>Session 1</p> <p>NTDC: Self-Assessment (Paper Version) https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1jAomCShP3l4_ssVIHGtey8i9yi-1x6e?usp=sharing</p> <p>NTDC video: Intro to Child Welfare (.5)</p> | <p>Intro/Welcome VA Training & MFA Process</p> <p>Foster Care – A Means to Support Families (most of theme) Reunification: The Primary Permanency Goal (most of theme, with VA goals and timeline added, which includes adoption)</p> <p>Closing and Reflection Non-Relative: https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1Wix_FUvVXpf6u0rXMf2KcPzz4jPMRxgl/edit?usp=sharing&ouid=108192941729544509959&rtpof=true&sd=true</p> |
| <p>Child Development (1.5 hours)</p> <p>Attachment (2 hours)</p> <p>Closing and Reflection</p> | <p>Session 2</p> <p>Circles of Support (respite activity)</p> <p>NTDC video: Expanding your Parenting Paradigm (1)</p> <p>Combined PP: https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/14X3wauVdhXUJc3iUI1hl8h_AHT-cdLvX/edit?usp=sharing&ouid=108192941729544509959&rtpof=true&sd=true</p> <p>Self-assessment worksheet for circles of support: https://drive.google.com/file/d/1ncO7BJW3HrnEohS4R2riYJjBlpNfqVt1/view?usp=drive_link</p> | <p>Child Development (1.5 hours)</p> <p>Attachment (2 hours)</p> <p>Closing and Reflection</p> |
| <p>Separation, Grief, and Loss (discussion of adult Losses) (2 hours)</p> <p>Maintaining Children's Connections (1 hour)</p> <p>Closing and Reflection</p> | <p>Session 3</p> <p>Life Events Inventory</p> <p>NTDC RT (non-relative only): Family Dynamics (1)</p> | <p>Separation, Grief, and Loss (discussion of adult Losses) (2 hours)</p> <p>Maintaining Children's Connections (1 hour)</p> <p>Closing and Reflection</p> |

| | | |
|---|--|---|
| | <p>Combined PP: https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1Tn1vwNLSVU3tp0g2gk5d9gp_1gNYxaPU/edit?usp=drive_link&ouid=108192941729544509959&rtpof=true&sd=true</p> <p>The Significant Live Events Inventory can be found at: https://docs.google.com/document/d/1opDbZio8ut1DMWngESHYiqrTE_S61ggQ/edit?usp=drive_link&ouid=103922136145310214530&rtpof=true&sd=true</p> | |
| <p>Trauma-Informed Parenting (2 hours) (add Discipline Agreement)</p> <p>First hour of TRB</p> <p>Closing and Reflection</p> | <p>Session 4</p> <p>Behavior Management Worksheet</p> <p>NTDC RT (all): Sexual Trauma (1.5)</p> <p>NTDC RT (non-relatives) Education (1.5)</p> <p>Combined PP: https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1u7dB4LZBWDqzXAJEgEo6vLxoQKeEfUev/edit?usp=drive_link&ouid=108192941729544509959&rtpof=true&sd=true</p> <p>The behavior management strategies self-assessment tool can be found at: https://docs.google.com/document/d/1cWJaRT7rhgWccdUH1zjff91SVKhRVKzY/edit?usp=drive_link&ouid=103922136145310214530&rtpof=true&sd=true</p> | <p>Trauma-Informed Parenting (2 hours) (add Discipline Agreement)</p> <p>First hour of TRB</p> <p>Closing and Reflection</p> |
| <p>Second hour of Trauma-Related Behaviors (full theme is 2 hours)</p> <p>Excerpt 1 hour of: Creating a Stable ... Home Environment (adding information</p> | <p>Session 5</p> <p>VDSS: Normalcy (.5 hour) VDSS: Mandated Reporter (1)</p> | <p>Second hour of Trauma-Related Behaviors (full theme is 2 hours)</p> <p>Excerpt 1 hour of: Creating a Stable ... Home Environment (adding information</p> |

| | | |
|---|--|--|
| <p>about stages of disruption and disruption prevention, theme is normally 2 hours)</p> <p>Virginia's Additional Training Topics</p> <p>Next Steps/Closing and Reflection</p> | <p>NTDC RT (non-relative): Preparing for and Managing Visitation (1)</p> <p>Post Assessment (both)</p> <p>Combined PP: https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1JqltbcEy-AqA_z-48AV61IH3npj9l4m3/edit?usp=sharing&ouid=108192941729544509959&rtpof=true&sd=true</p> <p>Additional Training Packet: https://drive.google.com/file/d/1QLL6hWNOLSgVqH-8Df3Ur-OAVMQx3Y00/view?usp=drive_link</p> | <p>about stages of disruption and disruption prevention, theme is normally 2 hours)</p> <p>Virginia's Additional Training Topics</p> <p>Next Steps/Closing and Reflection</p> |
| <p>(kin who want to attend non-relative session 6 would be welcome to do so, but they are finished with training without it)</p> | <p>Session 6</p> <p>"A Day in the Life" (family clock) Worksheet (non-relative)</p> <p>NTDC RT (optional): Building Parental Resilience</p> | <p>Finish Creating a stable ... (1 hour)</p> <p>Effective Communication (excerpt)</p> <p>Preparing for and Managing Intrusive Questions (adding the Confidentiality Agreement)</p> <p>Discuss Adoption and <u>Virginia Goals – wrap back around to the timeline and discuss post-permanence supports and adoption</u></p> <p>Next Steps/Closing and Reflection</p> <p>Combined PP: https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1VoLLnleCs55_Nm8zRdmtkpKJ5K3UnAw0/edit?usp=sharing&ouid=108192941729544509959&rtpof=true&sd=true</p> |

*Assessment Worksheets

Resource Family Tip Sheet

Respite Care

The instructions for respite care can be found on FUSION at: <https://fusion.dss.virginia.gov/dfs/DFS-Home/Resource-Family/Respite-Care-Services> (titled “Respite Application Instructions”). In the application instructions, it states that the purpose of the respite care funds is 3-fold:

- 1.) To promote & support stability for children in foster care.
- 2.) To support efforts of achieving timely permanency.
- 3.) To support connections for children in foster care with their relatives.

Important things to remember:

- Respite care funds can only be used to pay for respite provided by LDSS-approved resource families, not LCPA families.
- When a child is in a respite placement, their resource family will continue to receive the regular maintenance foster care payment without interruption.
- The LDSS should explore other natural supports that would allow “respite time” to the resource family *before* exploring the possibility of respite.
 - o Please refer to the following link about normalcy: <https://fusion.dss.virginia.gov/dfs/DFS-Home/Foster-Care/Normalcy>
 - o If natural supports are not an option, then the LDSS should arrange for the child and the respite resource parent to meet beforehand.
 - o If there are multiple respite episodes, it is recommended that you use the same resource parent to lessen the child having to meet new families.
- If a relative is providing respite care, they would need to be an approved kinship resource parent to be paid with the respite funds.
- Funding for this program is 100% federal/state funds and there is no local match.
- Respite care can be provided in the respite families home or the child’s resource family’s home (or other VDSS-approved settings). This allows LDSS to be creative when thinking about services that will support stability, achieving timely permanency and/or supporting connections for children in care with their relatives.
- Respite care is not a long-term solution to placement challenges. Respite is temporary, short-term and should not be longer than 14 consecutive days at a time.
- Another funding option to explore to supplement BL864 is through FAPT who can recommend respite funding for foster care cases.

Due Dates for the Respite Funds:

- Applications are usually due in March 7 each year. Look for information in broadcasts about exact due dates each year.
- The mid-year report is due every Dec 11th (or the Friday before if the 11th falls on a weekend) and it is found on FUSION under the Resource Family page.
- The year-end report is due every June 11th (or the Friday before if the 11th falls on a weekend) and it’s found on FUSION under the Resource Family page.
 - o The mid-year report and the year-end report are contained in the same spreadsheet with tabs to indicate mid-year and year-end reporting.
- Award letters are sent out at the beginning of the fiscal year to notify LDSS about the award/allocation amount.

Resource Family Tip Sheet

Contingency Claims

The Contingency Fund is a resource offered to Resource families who are approved through a local department of social services (LDSS). It is designed to minimize out of pocket expenses to Resource families when a child placed in their home causes loss or damages (accidental or intentional) to the parent's home/property.

DISCLAIMER: Any funds administered through the contingency claims process may be subject to seizure or garnishment if there are outstanding debts owed to local, state, or federal government agencies.

You must adhere to the following steps and timeframes outlined in Foster Care guidance (18.6 Contingency Fund). As you are processing the contingency request, please consider the differences between a repair or a replacement as outlined below.

- The Resource parent must notify the LDSS worker within **30 days** of the discovery of the loss or damage.
- All damaged or destroyed items must be viewed by the LDSS worker, within **30 days** of discovery of the loss or damage.
- Within **7 days** of the report to the LDSS, the Resource parents should file a claim with their own insurance for damages that total \$3000 and above.
- Estimates:
 - All estimates should be completed by a professional and submitted on company letterhead.
 - A signed estimate is required for claims involving repair or replacement of damaged property. A statement regarding the feasibility of repair versus replacement should be included. Additional estimates may be requested at the discretion of the LDSS or VDSS.
 - All damages with an estimate of \$1000 or more require a second estimate.
- For claims involving destruction, damage, or theft of property, the Resource parent must produce evidence the items stolen or damaged were in their possession (pictures showing proof of damages, proof of purchase, etc.).
- For damaged items or property that cannot be repaired and must be replaced, families will be reimbursed for the value of the object at the time that it was purchased. For additional information, please reach out to your Resource Family Practice Consultant.
- The following forms as well as supporting documentation must be completed with a **written signature or a digital signature with audit report in Adobe**, and submitted within **45 days** of the discovery of the loss or damage to your Resource Family Practice Consultant - [Foster Care Contingency Fund Claim](#), [VDSS W-9](#).
 - Incomplete forms and/or an unacceptable signature will cause delay in the processing of your contingency fund request. **Failure to submit the claim within 45 days will result in a denial of the claim.**

| Do's | Don'ts |
|---|--|
| Remember to adhere to the above timeframes | Send an incomplete contingency packet. |
| Double check and verify the homeowner's insurance | Don't forget that contingency funds are for LDSS approved homes (not LCPS homes). |
| Remind the family about the requirement of the estimate containing language as to whether the damage can be repaired versus replaced. | Don't allow an estimate to expire. The person giving the estimate may benefit from understanding the duration of the contingency process. VDSS will select the estimate that is the most cost effective. |
| If the claim is denied, you can seek CSA funding through your FAPT team | Don't send with a typed signature. A written signature is required, or a digital signature through Adobe, accompanied by an Audit Report (see link, ADOBE HELP VIDEO) |
| Document the damage by taking photos | |

Resource Family Tip Sheet


Contingency Claims

Below is a checklist to assist agency workers in the steps that need to be completed for submitting a contingency claim request.

| | | |
|-----------------------------|---|-------------------------------|
| Resource Family Name: _____ | | |
| | Steps to take: | Date of completion: |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | The Resource parent must notify the LDSS worker within 30 days of the discovery of the loss or damage. | Click or tap to enter a date. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | All damaged or destroyed items must be viewed by the LDSS worker, within 30 days of discovery of the loss or damage. | Click or tap to enter a date. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Within 7 days of the report to the LDSS, the Resource parents should file a claim with their own insurance for damages that total \$3000 and above. Contingency fund claims can cover \$500 of the deductible. | Click or tap to enter a date. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | All damages with an estimate of \$1000 or more require a second estimate. | Click or tap to enter a date. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | For claims involving destruction, damage, or theft of property, the Resource parent must produce evidence the items stolen or damaged were in their possession (pictures showing proof of damages, proof of purchase, etc.). | Click or tap to enter a date. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | A signed estimate is required for claims involving repair or replacement of damaged property. A statement regarding the feasibility of repair versus replacement should be included. Additional estimates may be requested at the discretion of the LDSS or VDSS. | Click or tap to enter a date. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Submit Completed Contingency Packet: Foster Care Contingency Fund Claim Form , VDSS W-9 Form and all supporting documentation must be submitted to your Regional Resource Family Practice Consultant within 45 days of the discovery of the loss or damage to the foster parent. | Click or tap to enter a date. |

SAMPLE VDSS W-9

Please see tips for completion at the bottom!

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Form W-9 Commonwealth of Virginia Substitute W-9 Form Revised March 2022 | Request for Taxpayer Identification Number and Certification | |  |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Social Security Number (SSN) <input type="checkbox"/> Employer Identification Number (EIN) <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; display: inline-block;"> 1 1 1 0 0 1 1 1 1 </div> | | Please select the appropriate Taxpayer Identification Number (EIN or SSN) type and enter your 9 digit ID number. The EIN or SSN provided must match the name given on the "Legal Name" line to avoid backup withholding. If you do not have a Tax ID number, please reference "Specific Instructions - Section 1." If the account is in more than one name, provide the name of the individual who is recognized with the IRS as the responsible party. | |
| Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) (see instructions) <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; display: inline-block;"> 1 1 1 0 0 1 1 1 1 </div> | | Legal Name: Jane Smith Business Name: | |
| Entity Type <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Individual <input type="checkbox"/> Corporation <input type="checkbox"/> Sole Proprietorship <input type="checkbox"/> S-Corporation <input type="checkbox"/> Partnership <input type="checkbox"/> C-Corporation <input type="checkbox"/> Trust <input type="checkbox"/> Disregarded Entity <input type="checkbox"/> Estate <input type="checkbox"/> Limited Liability Company <input type="checkbox"/> Government <input type="checkbox"/> Partnership <input type="checkbox"/> Non-Profit <input type="checkbox"/> Corporation | | Entity Classification <input type="checkbox"/> Professional Services <input type="checkbox"/> Medical Services <input type="checkbox"/> Political Subdivision <input type="checkbox"/> Legal Services <input type="checkbox"/> Real Estate Agent <input type="checkbox"/> Joint Venture <input type="checkbox"/> VA Local Government <input type="checkbox"/> Tax Exempt Organization <input type="checkbox"/> Federal Government <input type="checkbox"/> OTH Government <input type="checkbox"/> VA State Agency <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other | |
| Contact Information Legal Address: 5600 Cox Rd. City: Glen Allen State: VA Zip Code: 23060 Remittance Address: 5600 Cox Rd. City: Glen Allen State: VA Zip Code: 23060 | | Name: Jane Smith Email Address: jane.smith@email.com Business Phone: Fax Number: Mobile Phone: 555-555-5555 Alternate Phone: | |
| Section 2 - Certification Under penalties of perjury, I certify that: 1. The number shown on this form is my correct taxpayer identification number (or I am waiting for a number to be issued to me), and 2. I am not subject to backup withholding because: (a) I am exempt from backup withholding, or (b) I have not been notified by the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) that I am subject to backup withholding as a result of a failure to report all interest or dividends, or c) the IRS has notified me that I am no longer subject to backup withholding, and 3. I am a U.S. citizen or other U.S. person (defined later in general instructions), and 4. The FATCA code(s) entered on this form (if any) indicating that I am exempt from FATCA reporting is correct. Certification instructions: You must cross out item 2 above if you have been notified by the IRS that you are currently subject to backup withholding because you have failed to report all interest and dividends on your tax return. For real estate transactions, item 2 does not apply. For mortgage interest paid, acquisition or abandonment of secured property, cancellation of debt, contributions to an individual retirement arrangement (IRA), and generally, payments other than interest and dividends, you are not required to sign the certification, but you must provide your correct TIN. See instructions titled Certification | | | |
| Printed Name: Jane Smith Authorized U.S. Signature: | | HANDWRITTEN SIGNATURE HIGHLY RECOMENNDED!!! Date: 07/11/2025 | |

1. All highlighted and boxed fields MUST be filled out when completing the VDSS W-9 form for Contingency Claims. Finance will kick back all incomplete W-9's.
2. We strongly recommend getting a handwritten signature at the time the worker is out assessing the damage. Finance will only allow a digital signature with an audit report, which is only attainable from individuals with Adobe account. Typed signatures will get kicked back.

Post Placement Review

Please respond to the following questions candidly so that we can continue to improve the care we provide.

Resource Family Name: _____

Please check one of the following which best describes your approval:

_____ Relative Foster Home _____ Fictive Kinship Home _____ Traditional Resource Home

Child(ren) Name(s): _____

Foster Care worker: _____

Resource Family Worker: _____

What was the outcome for the child(ren) you were caring for: (check one, use multiple checks if more than one youth left your home):

_____ Return Home/Reunification

_____ Placement with kinship/fictive kinship resource parent

_____ Custody transfer to relative

_____ Adoption

_____ Disruption

_____ Other, please explain: _____

Preparation and Support:

Y/N Did you feel like your preservice or in service trainings prepared you to become a resource parent to the child(ren) in your home?

Y/N Did you have support throughout the placement from the agency Resource Family worker?

Y/N Did you have support throughout the placement from the youth's case worker?

Y/N Did you have assistance with gaining access to services the youth in your home needed?

Y/N Were you invited to attend court hearings?

Y/N Were you invited to attend Family Partnership Meetings?

Y/N Were you given copies of relevant paperwork, such as Foster Care Code of Ethics, the Financial Agreement, Foster Care Service plan, youths insurance card, etc?

Additional comments you would like to share about the preparation and support you received:

Youth Outcome:

Y/N Were you prepared for and informed about potential outcomes?

Y/N Did you have sufficient time to prepare for this transition?

Y/N Did you feel like the youth was prepared?

Y/N Did the department communicate the plan with you?

Y/N Were you involved in the outcome planning?

Additional comments you would like to share about the outcome:

Self Reflection:

- 1) What strengths do you feel your family demonstrated during this fostering experience?

- 2) What did you learn about yourselves/ your family during this foster parenting experience?

- 3) What were the greatest challenges that your family faced while caring for this/these youth(s) experiencing foster care?

- 4) What may you do differently during your next foster parenting experience?

- 5) Any additional feedback you would like to share?

THANK YOU FOR YOUR FEEDBACK AND TIME!

Family Development Plan

The development of this plan is to ensure LDSS and resource parents are working together toward growth and collaboration to ensure that all youth in local resource homes are being cared for with best practice standards, AND that local resource parents are receiving support in areas needed, so they can best support the youth in their homes.

| Area of Need | Follow Up Needed | Who is Responsible | Date to be Completed |
|--|--|---|---|
| <p>Example: Resource family was a new family and did not know how to access Early Intervention or WIC services for the six month old placed in their home</p> <p>-----</p> <p>LDSS did not provide signed copies of Foster Parent Code of Ethics and Financial Agreement to resource family until a month after placement</p> <p>-----</p> <p>Resource family struggled to stay calm when youth experienced tantrums in the home</p> | <p>Example: LDSS will discuss processes with resource parents and provide contact information for local health department</p> <p>-----</p> <p>LDSS will review their internal processes for ensuring paperwork is signed and given to resource parents at placement</p> <p>-----</p> <p>Resource parents will take either the Trauma-Informed Parenting course or Noncompliance and Defiance course on Foster Parent College</p> | <p>Example: Resource parents and resource family worker</p> <p>-----</p> <p>Resource family worker and foster care staff</p> <p>-----</p> <p>Resource parents</p> | <p>Example: Two weeks from date Family Development Plan was completed</p> <p>-----</p> <p>10 days from date Family Development plan was completed</p> <p>-----</p> <p>Resource parents will provide copies of their completion certificate to resource family worker before next placement occurs</p> |
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