Module 4: Placement, Retention and Re-licensing

Licensing Pre-Service Curriculum

Participant Guide

Office of Child Welfare

4/26/2017
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**References:**

- Fostering Perspectives Newsletter, Vol. 13, No. 2 • May 2009  
  [http://fosteringperspectives.org/fpv13n2/transition.htm](http://fosteringperspectives.org/fpv13n2/transition.htm)
- Department of Children and Families employees must follow the Florida Code of Ethics, Operating Procedure No. 60-5, Chapter 5, October 9, 2013.
Unit 4.1:  
Placement, Retention and Re-licensing Process

Learning Objectives:  
1. Explain the importance of matching a specific foster home to a child’s needs and strengths, whenever possible.  
2. Identify the types of transitions a child in the foster care system may experience on his/her personal journey towards permanency.  
3. Identify strategies for maintaining foster homes.  
4. Identify continuing supports for foster parents.  
5. Identify common disruptions and supports to prevent these from occurring.  
6. Summarize and explain the requirements, procedures and documents required for re-licensing foster homes.  
7. Explain the importance of and requirements for home visits.  
8. Identify eligibility requirements for completing the re-licensing process with intent to issue a three-year license.  
9. Explain the possible issues resulting from incomplete re-licensing assessment.
Phase III: Placement, Retention, and Re-licensing

During this phase a Licensing Specialist’s job tasks include:

- Review and evaluate the foster parent profile to assist with the proper matching and placement of children.
- Conduct purposeful home visits as required.
- Provide effective and timely interventions to prevent placement disruption and retain foster parents.
- Identify and communicate needs of foster parent or children to appropriate parties to ensure that services are rendered in a timely manner.
- Serve as a liaison between the foster home/children and Case Managers.
- Assess foster parents to identify and provide for on-going training needs.
- Inspect the home to assure continued compliance with home inspection standards in Chapter 65C-13, F.A.C.
- Develop and implement strategies to encourage foster parent peer-to-peer support.
- Investigate reported safety concerns in a foster home.
- Develop and implement corrective action plans to respond to identified safety concerns in a foster home.

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Partnership Commitments Regarding Placement

Responsible placement:

- Children will be placed only with caregivers who have the ability and are willing to accept responsibility for the care of a child in light of the child’s culture, religion and ethnicity, special physical or psychological needs, unique situation, including sexual orientation and family relationships.

- DCF, CBC, and agency staff provide caregivers with all available information to assist in determining if they are able to appropriately care for a child. Caregivers must be willing and able to learn about and be respectful of the child’s religion, culture and ethnicity, and any special circumstances affecting the child's care. DCF, CBC, and agency staff assist them in gaining the support, training, and skills necessary for care of the child.
Placement Considerations

The goal of a careful matching process is to ensure the most appropriate fit between the needs of the child and the strengths of the family.

- Matching is the task of reviewing the assessments of potential families along with those of available children to determine the best family to provide safety, permanency, and well-being for a specific child or sibling group.
- The selection of a potential foster parent should be a collaborative effort between the child's Case Manager, foster parent, Licensing Specialist, placement services, and other professionals.
- The Licensing Specialist is most aware of the foster parent’s strengths and needs so that input is critical.
- In seeking families for children, Child Protective Investigators or Case Managers should first explore families to which the child already has some attachment (e.g., relatives or current or previous foster parents).

Types of Placements

The three types of placements are:

- Relative
- Non-relative
- Child specific
Activity A:

Bringing Families Together

Directions: Review foster parent and child information. Respond to the prompts that follow the information. Upon completion, discuss responses in the large group.

Foster Parent Information

Nancy’s Story

Nancy (31) is a single foster parent who completed her license a year ago. She has had several placements that have lasted a few days throughout the full year. She currently has one foster child in her home. He is seven and has some learning disabilities. Her parents fostered when she was little and she had a lot of foster brothers and sisters coming and going. As adults, she still keeps in touch with a few of her foster siblings. She is proud of how good her family was to the kids and has heard that many of the kids felt they had come to her parents’ home just-in-time. That is the kind of home she wants to be. She is excited about helping kids who really need a fresh start. She does admit that she feels like she may not be able to handle kids with physical disabilities and feels she is not prepared to take on very young children. She wishes she had made the decision to foster years ago. She loves to see what a well-informed, dedicated team can do to make the difference in a child’s life. She admits that fostering is very emotional for her. There are so many joys and such despair. She loves laughing with children, watching them learn new skills, and building dens under the dining room table. She cries for their pain and she worries about the placements. She stresses over visitations. Nancy works while her foster son is at school. Nancy’s mother sometimes picks him up from school when Nancy has to work late.

List the strengths and needs of each parent using the information provided.

1. ____________________________________________________________________________

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_____________________________________________________________________________
Kelly and Jim’s Story

Kelly (50) and Jim (52) have one birth child, Sebastian (10). They completed their license a few months ago and are awaiting their first placement. They had never really thought about fostering, but they had friends who did it and shared how rewarding it was, so they thought they would try. They felt they could offer a loving home as well as support the children during a difficult time. They felt their life experience and experience with their own child would help them be good foster parents. They are a very kind couple with a warm presence. They enjoyed the licensing process and learned so much about parenting children in out-of-home care. They learned that their own parenting style would need to be altered to help children who have been traumatized. This scares them a little, but they are confident they can do it. However, they are hesitant about exposing their own child to extreme emotional outbursts or worse. They know that some sacrifices have to be made by not only them but by their son as they begin to accept children in their home. They have said they can take children of any age, but would prefer children around their son’s age or younger. They are nervous about the initial placement as they don’t know the age of the child(ren) entering their home and are not certain how to prepare.

List the strengths and needs of each parent using the information provided.

2. __________________________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________________________

Bianca and Graham’s Story

Bianca (39) and Graham (37) have two birth children, Scott (15) and Penelope (17). They enjoy being parents and having a family. They wanted to share their love and their home with more children. They would love a houseful, but know they cannot effectively meet the needs of too many children at one time. They have been fostering for nine years. They have had twenty-five placements during that time. They are currently fostering three children, two of whom are siblings and are soon to be reunified with their mom. Their other foster child is up for adoption as parental rights have recently been terminated. Bianca and Graham are highly involved in the church and community. They are also active participants in the foster care community. Bianca and Graham take fostering very seriously and strive to be advocates for the children as well as their birth parents. They have worked with children who have displayed many trauma-related behaviors over the years. They say they have seen it all.
List the strengths and needs of each parent using the information provided.

3. __________________________________________________________________________________
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Hannah’s Story

Hannah (58) has been a foster care provider for three years. She has provided care for a
number of children over the years and has adopted one child, Zach (14). Hannah is a
retired pre-school teacher and her birth children are grown. Fostering seemed the natural
next step. Her adult children have provided her with much encouragement and support.
The decision to become a foster parent was one she made with her family and they
continue to help by offering practical support. They even participate in foster parent in-
service training events. Hannah has shown the ability to embrace children into her family
as if they have always been a part of the family. She is willing and able to embrace
children of all ages, abilities and ethnicities. Hannah sometimes struggles with
relationships to birth parents because their actions often frustrate and anger her.

List the strengths and needs of each parent using the information provided.

4. __________________________________________________________________________________
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Child/Youth Information

Ali, Aliyah, Miriam, Haider, Jafar, Ahmad

This is a very special sibling group with two sets of twins. The elder twins are Ali and Aliyah (12/05), followed by Miriam (05/07), then Haider (07/09), and lastly twins Jafar and Ahmad (01/11). Aliyah is more reserved and quiet but has a pleasant personality. She enjoys cheerleading, dancing, and enjoys traditional girl things. Her twin Ali can be reserved too, but becomes very talkative when a topic interests him. He loves to jump on a trampoline, is very adventurous, and likes to try new things. Miriam is sweet, affectionate, and can be a bit shy at first, but is quite a little chatterbox once she gets to know you. She also enjoys cheerleading and dance. She likes school and gets good grades. Haider is a sweet and loveable boy. He gets along with his siblings and likes to play with stuffed animals and play video games. Ahmad is very energetic and likes to stay active. He loves to play outside. He takes a lot of pride in his appearance and enjoys looking good and playing with different hairstyles. His twin, Jafar, is more reserved and likes to be helpful. He is kind and generous and likes to do anything fun. Like his twin, Ahmad, Jafar likes to make sure he looks good.

Their parents are working very hard to reunify with them within the next six months. The agency is working closely with them family to achieve the six-month timeframe.

Answer:

What are the children’s needs?

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Select the family you believe would best meet the child(ren)’s needs and express your rationale.

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________________________________________________________________________

Assess the potential impact of the match on the children.

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________________________________________________________________________
What is the potential impact of the match on the foster family?

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Determine what would be needed from the Licensing Specialist to support the match.

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**Jimmy, Taylor, Stephanie, Diane, Brad**

This sibling group is comprised of five children: Jimmy, Taylor, Stephanie, Diane, and Brad. These children have a lot to offer a family: they’re all loving, kind, and currently residing with a non-relative who is unable to continue caring for them. They’re hopeful to find a family willing to keep all five of them together.

Jimmy is the oldest child in the sibling group and is quiet. His focus is on family and he tends to be protective of his siblings and other extended family members. He enjoys sports, his favorite being football. He enjoys playing on a football team and is eager to continue doing so in the future. He also enjoys watching movies, getting on the Internet, and playing board games and video games in his free time.

Taylor enjoys gymnastics, drawing, swimming, shopping, watching TV, and playing around on her cell phone and tablet computer. She hopes to become a veterinarian in the future. She wants people to know that she is “cute, fancy, strong, funny, talented, a Christian, a gymnast, and intelligent”.

Stephanie is the middle child in this sibling group and she enjoys sports especially swimming and playing soccer and watching TV. She aspires to become a singer someday and wants people to know that she is “funny, awesome, talented, and a Christian”.

Diane enjoys going to the park, swimming, playing with Lego blocks, shopping, and doing “girly” stuff like painting her nails and getting her hair fixed. Her favorite colors are pink, purple, and blue. She hopes to join karate in the near future, something she has been dreaming of for quite a while.

Brad is the youngest sibling and has an easy-going personality. He’s a sweet boy who generally does what he’s told (even by his older siblings). He loves to play with dinosaurs and animals and hopes to become a bus driver when he grows up. He loves to watch TV, loves animals, enjoys playing with blocks and colors, and loves to play outside.
The father of this sibling group is incarcerated and the mother is experiencing major depression. She is currently hospitalized and relatives have been contacted about the children’s need for care. The expended family lives in another state, so the agencies now are working on getting home studies completed however this process may take up to three months.

**Answer:**

What are the children’s needs?

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Select the family you believe would best meet the child(ren)’s needs and express your rationale.

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Assess the potential impact of the match on the children.

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What is the potential impact of the match on the foster family?

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Determine what would be needed from the Licensing Specialist to support the match.

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________________________________________________________________________
Melissa, Judy, Barrish, Marcus

Melissa, Judy, Barrish, and Marcus are a sibling group that is very attached to each other. Melissa, born in November 2003, is a beautiful girl with a very positive and caring spirit and is very friendly. She enjoys getting her hair done, and she loves fashion. Melissa also loves to talk on her cell phone. She is very helpful. She does chores without being prompted and she helps take care of her siblings. Melissa can be very shy, but she warms up quickly to people. She does receive special education services. She attends regular classes but has accommodations made for her. She generally makes good grades.

Judy, born in September 2006, has a beautiful smile and she is very friendly. Judy is very attached to her siblings. She loves to travel and see new things. She loves children and interacts very well with small children and babies. Judy loves technology. She is very good with computers and tablets. She does receive special education services. She spends most of her day in a resource classroom.

Barrish, born in August 2009, is a very curious child who talks to anyone and asks many questions. He has a very pleasant disposition. Barrish does have to be prompted to do daily tasks. Barrish loves football. He also likes toy trucks and cars. He loves animals and he loves to play outside. Barrish receives special education services. He spends most of his day in a resource classroom.

Marcus, born in October 2011, is a very loveable and energetic young boy. He loves to play with toys. He loves cars and trucks. Marcus likes to watch TV and also likes to play with blocks and do puzzles. Marcus is a very active child. He enjoys being around people he knows and he is very attached to his siblings. Marcus responds positively to prompting, redirection, and verbal praise. He has moderate behavioral and emotional needs and requires constant supervision. Marcus receives special education services. He spends most of his day in a resource classroom.

Both biological parents are addicted to meth and there are no relatives willing to take these children. The children were self-parenting most of the time during the last year and neighbors made multiple reports about their lack of supervision. The school has also made reports regarding lack of hygiene, food, clothing and not having basic needs met.

Answer:

What are the children’s needs?
Select the family you believe would best meet the child(ren)’s needs and express your rationale.

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Assess the potential impact of the match on the children.

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What is the potential impact of the match on the foster family?

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Determine what would be needed from the Licensing Specialist to support the match.

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Nathaniel

Nathaniel is an endearing seven-year-old boy who has a lot of love to give to a family. He enjoys spending time outside, riding on his scooter, blowing bubbles, and swinging. He also likes playing with doll houses, and even doing chores. Nathaniel is an active participant in classroom discussions at school.

Nathaniel is of African American and Native American heritage and needs parents who will preserve his connection to his tribe and ensure cultural connections are forged and maintained.

The best fit in a family for Nathaniel will have an active lifestyle, be very loving, and be able to patiently provide structure, stability, and predictability, which Nathaniel needs to heal and grow. He does best with one-on-one attention and close supervision for safety and guidance.

Nathaniel was being raised by his mother and was sexually abused by his uncle (mom’s brother). He disclosed the abuse to a teacher at school. Nathaniel and his mother live
with his grandmother and the uncle also lives in the same home. The uncle was court ordered to not have contact with Nathaniel but it was discovered that the mother and grandmother allowed him to move back into the home. They believe that Nathaniel is making up the story.

**Answer:**

What are the children’s needs?

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________________________________________________________________________

Select the family you believe would best meet the child(ren)’s needs and express your rationale.

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Assess the potential impact of the match on the child.

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What is the potential impact of the match on the foster family?

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Determine what would be needed from the Licensing Specialist to support the match.

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Thai

Thai is an likable thirteen-year-old child. Thai is yearning to be part of a family who will provide love, stability, and guidance to him. Thai is fun to be around and has a very sweet personality. He is quite the conversationalist and is rather engaging. Thai describes himself as helpful, intelligent, silly, and respectful. Thai does well in school and enjoys looking nice. He does not like to be bored and thrives when he has an element of physical activity in his day.

Thai enjoys animals immensely. A prior respite family of his had a hobby farm and caring for the animals provided Thai with a sense of satisfaction, helpfulness, and a way to expend energy in a positive way. His favorite television channel is Animal Planet and he can tell you a lot of exciting facts about animals.

Thai is doing well with school. He is getting along well with peers, completing his homework as assigned and his interest in reading has increased. Thai responds well to earning rewards for positive behavior.

Thai is in need of a family who can provide stability for him at last. A calm, consistent, and structured environment would be best for Thai as he acclimates to family life. Thai’s treatment team feels that it would be best for him to be the youngest or only child. Thai was sexually abused by his father from age four to six and was sent to live with his grandmother until she passed away a year ago. His mother has some developmental challenges and has not been able to establish housing or stability to provide consistent care for Thai. Now she is receiving services from ADA and they are hopeful she will be able to reunify with Thai in the next six to nine months.

**Answer:**

What are the children’s needs?

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________________________________________________________________________

Select the family you believe would best meet the child(ren)’s needs and express your rationale.

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________________________________________________________________________
Assess the potential impact of the match on the child.

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What is the potential impact of the match on the foster family?

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Determine what would be needed from the Licensing Specialist to support the match.

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Nicolas

Nicolas is a helpful and polite seventeen-year-old boy with endearing brown eyes. His favorite color is blue and his favorite food is pepperoni pizza. Nicholas likes to draw and play games that include Monopoly, Clue, Yahtzee, Chess, and Checkers. One of his all-time favorite movies is The Page Master, which is about a boy who likes adventure and uses his imagination, much like Nicholas himself.

Nicholas enjoys school and has a strong desire to do well. He says gym is his favorite class because he likes playing sports, especially basketball. Nicholas has also participated in Special Olympics and likes bowling. Nicholas enjoys singing, playing with toys, reading books, and putting together puzzles.

Nicholas would benefit most from nurturing and patient parents who will be able to devote time and attention to him. Furthermore, he needs parents who will be understanding of his challenges, have realistic expectations of him, and be willing to be patient during transition.

Nicholas has been in and out of foster care for the last six to seven years as his father has struggled with drug and alcohol dependence and his mother is deceased. Recently his father was incarcerated and has a very long sentence due to involvement in a violent crime. At this point in his life, Nicholas does not desire to be adopted, but would like a family that he can spend his favorite holiday, Christmas, with after he becomes an adult. He would like a family who also shares some of his interests, which include: spending time outdoors, going to the lake and swimming (in the shallow end), playing in the sand, and
listening to country music. He is open to being part of a home with other children he could get to know better, as well as a home with pets that could include either a dog or cat.

**Answer:**

What are the children’s needs?

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________________________________________________________________________

Select the family you believe would best meet the child(ren)’s needs and express your rationale.

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________________________________________________________________________

Assess the potential impact of the match on the child.

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________________________________________________________________________

What is the potential impact of the match on the foster family?

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________________________________________________________________________

Determine what would be needed from the Licensing Specialist to support the match.

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Helping Children Adjust to Placement

Here are some tips for Licensing Specialists to emphasize with foster parents to make a child feel comfortable on his/her first day/night of placement in their home. These tips will be further discussed during the next activity, First Night.

Licensing Specialists will need to discuss with foster parents how important it is that they:

- Support children speaking with their parents after getting settled in if this is within court guidelines. If the parents are not able to engage right away, support a phone call as soon as possible.
- Speak with the birth parents and ensure they will provide great care for their child(ren) and ask for any guidance on the needs and preferences of the child(ren).
- Help the child feel safe by telling him/her about their family and the neighborhood.
- Explain and show children where they will sleep, and if applicable, who shares the room.
- Give them a tour of the home and consider putting non-institutional signs on the doors (Child’s Name Bedroom, bathroom, laundry etc.) until the child is comfortable with where everything is located.
- Inform the child about the rules about bedtime.
- Encourage children to tell them if they are hungry and be clear and sensitive about explaining what they can eat, e.g., can they go into the refrigerator?
- Explain where the bathroom is and that a light will be left on so they will be able to find it easily. Inform them which towels are theirs.
- Ask if they would like help putting their things away and where they can put their belongings.
- Ask about their favorite foods, toys, clothing and music.
- Ensure that the child’s living space and freedom in the home mirrors the other household members.
Activity B: First Night

Directions:
1. Review the First Night worksheet below.
2. The first column on the table offers suggestions that foster parents can implement to assist with the “first night” of placement.
3. Work in small groups to develop at least one task the Licensing Specialist can do to assist the foster parent in implementing the suggestions in column A.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Column A – Foster Parent Suggestions</th>
<th>Column B – Licensing Specialist Suggestions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Have a conversation as to what they would like to call you.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Help the child feel safe by telling him/her about your family and the neighborhood.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Explain and show them where they will sleep, and if applicable, who shares the room.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inform the child about the household rules, including bedtime.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tell them if they are hungry what they can eat, e.g., can they go into the refrigerator?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Explain where the bathroom is and that a light will be left on so they will be able to find it easily. Inform them which towels are theirs.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ask if they would like help putting their things away and where they can put their belongings.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ask about their favorite foods, toys, clothing and music.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Funding Sources

When the child is legally in foster care and in a licensed setting, the child is eligible for a variety of funding sources including Title IV-E fund entitlements which may include:

- Medicaid
- Women Infant Children (WIC) nutritional program
- Free/greatly reduced daycare/aftercare/summer camp
- Board rate (money for child and child’s upkeep, which should not be perceived as a paycheck for foster parents)
- Clothing vouchers
- Back-to-school supplies
- Free breakfast/lunch at school
- Tuition waivers for post-secondary educational institutions and other qualifying vocational/technical programs (tuition and certain fees identified by the Department of Education that are waived)

Types of Transitions

While trying to reach reunification, it is necessary to have concurrent goals so the child can achieve permanency.

Each of these goals result in a different type of transition:

- Transition back to biological parent(s)
- Transition to relative placement/guardianship (this could also be a non-relative
- Transition to independent living
- Transition to adoption

When talking about transitions, it is necessary to discuss other disruptions in foster care including:

- Unplanned runaway by the child
- Unplanned changes in the foster family
- Discovery of deal breakers by the foster parents

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Transition Back to Biological Parent(s)

- Children may wonder if it is safe and if the parent has really changed or if change will last.
- Children may regress in placement due to anxiety.
- Children may want to reject the foster family first to show loyalty to family or to avoid their feelings.
- Emotions may run high when reunification is planned and is not immediate.
- Timing for telling children should be discussed with the team.

Transition to Relative Placement/Guardianship

Sometimes relatives (or non-relatives) come forward during the placement experience. Relatives, non-relatives, and parents who are non-offending may motion for and gain custody even while the previously custodial parent is still working a case plan.

Transition to Another Foster Home or Group Home

For any number of reasons, children may have to move from one foster home to another foster home or group home. These transitions can be just as traumatic as any other transition for children and the families they are leaving. Children in this situation are often uncertain, afraid, and grieving.

To make these transitions as painless as possible, adequate information sharing is needed. For the Licensing Specialist and Case Manager, this means working with the child’s parents to learn about the child’s likes and dislikes, bedtimes, routines, favorite foods, and other things that will help the child feel more comfortable, and then passing this and other information on to the foster parent.
This also means sharing information with the child as well. The child should know at all times what is happening to them and why. Based on the responses from children in the Fostering Perspectives writing contest, there are a lot of things young people want to know before moving to a new foster home. Core questions may include:

- Will you respect me? Respect means different things to different children. It can include treating their belongings well (even if they are worn or dirty), honoring their religious faith and supporting church attendance, treating every child in the home fairly, and never referring to them as a “foster child”.

- Will you help me maintain connections? This includes visits and other contact with family members and also connections with friends, former foster parents, etc.

- Will you accept me for who I am? Children frequently blame themselves for moves. We must constantly make it clear to the children that what is happening is not their fault and that they are not being punished for something they did.

### Transition to Independent Living

- Many children age out of the system if reunification is not possible and they are not adopted. In this case, they will transition to Independent Living.

- This transition should be planned well in advance as part of the concurrent planning process. A transition plan will be in place and the youth will have been working, since his/her 13th birthday, on developing skills in self-sufficiency.

- When a youth turns 18, he/she is officially an adult, and as such, will be leaving the Child Welfare System (although a case can stay open until he/she is 19 if requests are made), but supports are in place to help the youth make a successful transition.

- This is both an exciting and overwhelming time for anyone, but a child who is leaving foster care faces more challenges such as:
  - a higher risk for unemployment
  - poor educational outcomes
  - health issues
  - early parenthood
  - long-term dependency on public assistance
  - increased rates of incarceration
  - homelessness

The Independent Living Program and its benefits are set up to help the youth in this transition.
Transition to Adoption

Benefits to foster parent adoption include:

- Greater knowledge of a child’s experiences prior to placement and knowledge of what behaviors to expect from the child
- Fewer fantasies and fears about the child’s birth family, because they often have met and know them as real people with real problems
- A better understanding of their role and relationship with the agency and perhaps a relationship with their worker (if the same worker stays throughout the duration of the child’s placement)
- No need to move to a new family and experience additional loss
- Permanency more quickly
- Allowing biological parents to know who is permanently caring for their children

Show Time – Video Review

After watching the “I Like Adoption” video, what are takeaways regarding the transition to adoption?
Partnership Commitment – Smooth Transitions

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Activity C: Trauma Sensitive Transitions

Directions:
1. Read the transition summaries below.
2. Assign the following roles to each participant: Foster parent, Case Manager, Guardian ad Litem, CLS Attorney, and Licensing Specialist. For the IL transition, you will need an IL Specialist. For the adoption transition, you will need an Adoption Specialist. You may also add a relative or transition parent as appropriate.
3. Conduct a staffing where each transition summary is discussed and every member of the team contributes in planning a trauma-informed transition.
4. Use the following questions to guide the staffing discussion:
5. Staffing questions:
   a. What does the child need to reduce the trauma of transition?
   b. What needs does the foster parent have?
   c. How can the foster parent help meet the child’s needs?
   d. How can the Case Manager, Guardian ad Litem, CLS Attorney, the Licensing Specialist, and others help meet the child’s needs and the foster parent’s needs?

Transition to Biological Parent
Cassandra who is 14-years-old, her mom, Cathy, and her team worked hard to help her recover from a lack of basic care including not having access to food and shelter when she was with her mom. As a result of having Cassandra removed from her, Cassandra’s mom made a decision to get off drugs and agreed to enter a treatment program. Although Cassandra’s mom has more tasks to do on her case plan, she now has the support she needs to keep moving forward. Unfortunately, this has happened previously and Cassandra’s mom stayed clean and sober for almost a year before using again. Mary, the foster parent, has met Cassandra’s mom, Cathy at court and although it was awkward, Mary let Cathy know that Cassandra really misses her. Cathy thanked her for taking care or Cassandra. At the permanency hearing, the judge determines that as soon as the providers involved with Cassandra and her mom deem them stable enough, Cassandra can return to her mom’s care. This move will not be immediate, however, in response to the news, Cassandra returns to the foster parent’s home and packs. She then shuts out the family emotionally and spends her days waiting for the therapists to give the judge approval for reunification.

Transition to Relative Placement
Jessica’s dad’s sister, Aunt Maggie, has been trying to convince the dad to step up and seek custody of Jessica. However, he does not feel prepared to be a single parent and he continues to offer minimal support while Jessica’s mom struggles with mental illness. Recently Jessica’s mom was hospitalized after threatening to kill herself and Jessica. As a
result, three-year-old Jessica was placed in licensed care because her father could not be located. After finally reaching the father and completing a home study, it was determined that Jessica would not be safe with him until he implemented some changes. He was relieved because he verbalized not being in a position to care for a child due to the fact that he does not have a consistent place to live and he struggles with addiction. He recommended we contact his sister, Maggie for assistance. Maggie knows Jessica and often kept her on the weekends until Jessica’s mom started avoiding her because she said she was going to report her for not taking care of Jessica. It has been about six months since Maggie last saw Jessica. The judge orders Jessica to be placed with Maggie within 24 hours. Jessica has been in this foster home for three months and everyone has fallen in love with her. In addition to a deep attachment to Jessica, the family was planning to take her to their family reunion and purchased clothes and a plane ticket for Jessica which was approved prior to Maggie’s petition for relative placement.

**Transition to Another Foster Home or Group Home**

Julie is a 13-year-old girl who had been living with her paternal grandmother because her mother abandoned her. Her mother was a known prostitute and was involved in illicit drug use. The grandmother was unable to manage Julie’s behaviors and the school contacted the Department after Julie was found having oral sex with a male classmate on school property and the grandmother refused to pick her up from school. The grandmother said she had no help and was unable to keep taking care of Julie, so she was placed in foster care.

Julie was placed with a single mom who has one birth daughter who is 16 years old. The foster mother hoped this would be a good arrangement for Julie and also a good experience for her daughter. Initially, Julie seemed to be doing well in the placement and her teachers reported she was performing better at school as well. Recently the 16-year-old daughter overhead a conversation between Julie and a male arranging a place to meet and have sex so she informed her mother. The foster mother and Case Manager met with Julie and discussed birth control, pregnancy and safety with her. Julie agreed to be careful, but would not open up in the conversation.

Recently Julie’s behavior spiraled out of control. She started running away and was picked up by the police in the early hours of the morning. She has been making contact with unknown males on the internet and her text messaging suggests she is vulnerable to sexual exploitation. Everyone on the team is worried she is heading in the same direction as her mother. This disruption in the household has become extremely stressful for the foster mom and her daughter so after trying to work with Julie and the team for several months, with Julie making no changes, the foster mom has asked that Julie be moved from her home.
**Transition to Independent Living**

Mike came into foster care at age 14 due to ongoing substance abuse by both parents which left him on his own a lot without the resources to take care of his basic needs. When DCF removed him from his home, he went to live with one of his best friend’s family and he has become part of that household. The family was very supportive of his interests and pushed him to excel academically. Now he is 17 years-old and desires to move out into an apartment close to the community college where he will begin classes soon. Mike has not had consistent contact with his parents and sometimes he seems depressed that they are still unable to remain clean and sober. He is hopeful that one day they can have a great family. Mike has been working part-time at the Dairy Queen and now has a very good savings account. In the past, Mike has been known to give money to friends in need without thinking it through. The family he lives with have expressed concern that Mike’s parents will find out where he lives and ask him for money or a place to stay and Mike will not be able to say no.

**Transition to Adoption**

Austin, a precocious six-year-old, is a member of a sibling group of three children. Due to extensive sexual abuse and subsequent child-on-child abuse between Austin and his seven-year-old female sibling, they were placed in two separate foster homes and their infant sibling was placed with a relative in another state. Austin has done very well in treatment and his therapist believes he is ready to move to a forever family. Austin is very bonded with the single foster parent who is struggling with the decision that she cannot commit to adopting Austin. Austin has been allowed to have supervised visits with his sister who has not been matched with a family yet.

Professionals do not believe the siblings would ever do well in a home together, so the permanency plan is to find them separate adoptive families. Austin has expressed sadness that he and his sister cannot live with the same family, but he is wanting to be adopted. He rarely mentions the baby until he is around other babies or sees family photographs.
Foster Parent as Transition-Maker

As the transition-maker, foster parents are expected to establish the foundation for a child's successful transition by:

- Providing a loving and safe home where the child feels connected and wanted
- Being a sensitive and responsive caregiver who develops a nurturing relationship with the child that helps the child heal and responds to child behaviors and responses through traumatic sensitive-care while maintaining their own platform
- Helping the child develop his/her own strategies for resilience as well as building skills in self-regulation, self-control, social interaction, and cognition
- Helping the child prepare for the future through support and encouragement of child's interests, education and cultural background, and supporting connections and relationships
- Talking with children about the changes that occur with transition
- Helping children understand their own history, and helping children adjust to losses
- Planning as well as anticipation of how they will support children through emotional highs and lows

Partnership Commitment – Avoiding Disruption for Child

Disruptions in Foster Care
Preventing Disruptions

These strategies include:
- Involving the team to help resolve the problem as early as possible
- Request a staffing to help stabilize and identify additional supports if needed
- Seeking counseling for the child and/or family
- Respite care to give everyone time to reflect and regroup
- Educating oneself on the reasons for and possible strategies for coping with the deal breaking behaviors
- Joining a support group

When Disruptions Does Occur

Change of placement is advisable when:
- The safety of the family and other children is in jeopardy.
- A reasonable solution cannot be found.
- Medical conditions exist that the family is not skilled to handle.

Disruption Due to New Placement
Disruption Due to Unplanned Runaway

___________________________________________________________________________

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Helping Children Understand Their History

Life books, eco-maps, life-maps, and life-paths are all tools foster parents can use to help children of various ages understand and find ways to visually represent the answers to questions of how they came to be separated from their biological family and where they will ultimately belong.
Activity D:

Creating a Life Map

Directions: Review sample Life Map. Create a Life Map using the materials available. Life Maps that reflect both good and bad events can make you appreciate, adapt or change your life in some way. You may draw your symbols, cut the symbols out of magazines, use stickers, etc.

A life map tracks your journey through life and marks out important events along the way. Remember that an important event doesn’t have to be exciting or memorable for others, the map is all about showing what is important to you.

Share your Life Map with others in the class.

Sample Life Map
Retaining Foster Parents

Adopt Us Kids, identified three things foster parents wished their agencies knew:

1. “As a new foster parent, I may have unrealistic expectations. I may be broadsided by shattered assumptions.”

2. “Although I have training, I do not have life experience living with traumatized children. I will have emotions and thoughts that catch me unaware.”

3. “My family will go through a transformation, that fostering isn’t a job, but a lifestyle change for the entire family. Our family may be changing and no one supports us and guides us through those changes - ones we may not like.”

Reasons Foster Parents Leave

- Lack of Support and Responsiveness from the Child Placing Agency
- Lack of Clarity around Role and Inclusion of Foster Parents
- Lack of Effective Partnerships between Foster Parents and Birth Families

Foster Parent Turnover in Florida
Activity E:

Keeping Foster Parents – A Retention Campaign

Directions: Given your assigned topic, answer the following questions.

Support and Responsiveness of Child Placing Agency

• How can you provide foster parents with necessary information about the child and family?

• How can you ensuring that responses to foster parents’ issues and concerns are timely and supportive as well as promote use of respite and self-care?

• How can you ensure regular and frequent visitation of children in placement by the workers?

Role Clarity for and Inclusion of Foster Parents

• How can you train staff on facilitation of difficult relationships?
• How can you raise awareness about the need for birth family–foster parent connections?

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• How can you increase understanding of confidentiality issues?

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___________________________________________________________________________
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Foster Parent–Birth Family Relationships

• How can you connect foster parent and birth families shortly after placement?

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___________________________________________________________________________
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• How can you support birth families in the relationship with foster parents?

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Activity Notes:

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Common Expectations

Common expectations include:

- Our love will be enough.
- We will feel love for and connection with this child quickly.
- This child will step into our family and easily function with our rules, goals, and ambitions.
- Our biological children will embrace this new child as a sibling.
- Our child will fit well into our extended family and be welcomed by them.
- Our friends and acquaintances will validate our role as parents and support us through this fostering process.
- We will never feel regrets or ambivalence in fostering this child with a traumatic past.

Home Visits

Questions to Start Conversations During the Home Visit

- How do you see your family? How has that changed since the child entered the family?
- What does your support system look like? How have your social activities changed?
- How have you been impacted by the responses from family and community regarding the issues you face with the child? How have these responses made you feel?
- How are you managing strong feelings? How do you see your spouse managing strong feelings? Has that changed since the child has entered you family?
- Do you feel competent as a parent? If not, when did it change for you?
• If you have other permanent children in the household, how would you describe changes you’ve seen in them? Positive? Neutral? Negative?
• Do you feel safe? Do your children feel safe?
• Discuss any responses to trauma triggers you have noticed in yourself, the child, and others in the family.
• How effective do you feel you are in managing behaviors of children in your home?
• Share any changes you or others have noticed in yourself as a result of stress that may be caused by your role as a parent (numbing, hypersensitivity, or increased sleeplessness).
• Discuss any outside resources or supports you find helpful in parenting and decision-making.

Re-licensing Requirements

65C-13.028, F.A.C.

Re-licensing Procedures

The following steps are required to complete the re-licensing process for a licensed foster home:

• A careful review of the foster parent’s licensing year in order to identify any outstanding issues that may warrant further exploration for relicensing purposes.
• A notification to the foster parents that the relicensing process will begin and their need to schedule a convenient time to meet.
Re-licensing Process Documents

Requirements for re-licensing (always use the most current forms from the Center for Child Welfare website: http://centerforchildwelfare.fmhi.usf.edu):

- Application for License to Provide Out-of-Home Care for Dependent Children
- Re-licensing Standards Checklist
- Unified Home Study (capturing information from the past licensing year including new information about new household members)
- Review of Partnership Plan.
- Documentation (in FSFN) of at least eight hours of in-service training, including Psychotherapeutic Medication
- Case Manager’s Review of licensed out-of-home caregiver’s performance (to be completed by the Case Manager)
- Youth exit interview forms (to be completed by the Case Manager)
- Copies of driver's license and validation of vehicle insurance
- Satisfactory environmental health inspection report from the local health Department or agency (may include radon and water sample testing, if applicable)
- Evacuation and disaster preparedness plans
- Pet vaccinations (if applicable)
- Criminal background checks (statewide FDLE and FBI are every 5-years or if there is a 90-day in service), local law checks, juvenile delinquency checks (youth ages 12-17) and abuse history checks completed annually
- Any documentation requiring review to ensure continued compliance (i.e., new income generated) if there is change in employment or information related to a “change” that occurred during the licensing year
Re-licensing Unified Home Study

As a part of the re-licensing application file, the supervising agency shall make a thorough assessment and evaluation of each licensed out-of-home caregiver and document this evaluation using the Unified Home Study module in FSFN. The updated home study shall include all of the assessments required for an initial licensing home study as specified in rule 65C-13.025(4), F.A.C., as well as an assessment of fostering experiences over the past licensing year.

**Discipline.** Description of how the licensed out-of-home caregiver has managed behavior with children placed in the home.

**Family life.**
- Documentation of the licensed out-of-home caregiver’s support and integration of children into the family, such as attendance at and involvement with children’s activities, ensuring children have reliable transportation to school, social events, medical appointments, and inclusion in other family activities. The supervising agency will describe the licensed out-of-home caregiver’s attentiveness to the provision of clothing and allowances to the children in their care.
- Documentation of the level of cooperation of licensed out-of-home caregivers with the children’s families, including visitation for any children placed in the home during the previous licensing year. Describe how the family has worked with the supervising agency and other service providers.
- Documentation of the licensed out-of-home caregiver’s compliance with proper administration and monitoring of medication, cooperation with medical directives and appointments.
- Documentation of the maintenance of school and resource records for each child in placement.

**History of Placement Activity.** Placement activity during the previous licensing year shall be identified and discussed. If the family requested that a child be moved, the reasons and circumstances must be addressed. The narrative must provide detail about each child who has left the home and address how the family has worked with each child.

**Staff Feedback.** A summary of feedback from the lead and/or supervising agency staff members as it relates to the family’s continued suitability and performance as a licensed out-of-home caregiver; and Investigations, Special Condition Referrals, Concerns or Complaints. A summary assessment of investigations and special condition referrals, incident reports, accidents and complaints during the previous licensing period must be included.
Summary. A summary of the family’s ability to continue the provision of foster care services shall be completed and should encompass the following:

- A recommendation concerning the appropriateness of continued licensure including a professional development plan.

- The unified home study shall be completed, reviewed, and approved in FSFN. The home study shall also be signed and dated by the counselor responsible for completing the study and the counselor’s supervisor. The licensed out-of-home caregiver shall be offered an opportunity to sign the home study and must be provided a copy. The signature pages shall be uploaded as an attachment to the Unified Home Study in FSFN.

Continuing Education

In accordance with 409.175, F.S., prior to licensure renewal, each foster parent and emergency shelter parent shall successfully complete eight hours of in-service training.

License Renewed

Some of the most critical tasks for this phase of work include:

- Guiding and educating foster parents so that they can learn how to foster.
- Attention to the assessor role: noting strengths and needs for the family that have become evident in the placement process.
- Attention to the communication role: liaison to the agency and Case Manager/team.
- Attention to co-parenting: assisting families with supporting reunification and other concurrent goals.
Three-Year License

A three-year license can be granted to foster homes (including medical or therapeutic) meeting specific criteria, which includes:

- The family has been licensed for three years or longer.
- The family has not been the subject of a report of child abuse or neglect or foster care referral with findings of maltreatment and is recommended by the assigned Child-Placing Agency and the lead agency for a three-year license.
- The family has not been placed on a performance improvement plan/corrective action plan.
- The family has clear background checks.
- The home is not licensed for more than five children.
- The family has no infractions of good moral character.
- The number and frequency of placements that result in disruptions is considered and used in the decision as to whether to issue a three-year license.

Changes During the Licensed Year

65C-13.027, F.A.C.
Subsequent Licensing

If the region does not participate in the attestation model for license, the Regional Licensing Authority shall determine if the re-licensing application file is complete and notify the lead agency in writing of the need for any additional materials or information within ten business days of receipt of the re-licensing file. The lead agency must submit the necessary materials or information to the Regional Licensing Authority within ten business days of receipt of the written notice. A license cannot be issued until all information has been received.

- If approved, a license shall be issued to the applicant no later than ten business days from receipt of the complete re-licensing file.

- If the completed file of materials was received prior to the expiration of the existing license upon approval, the renewal date of licensure shall begin on the day the existing license expires.

- If the submitted application file is not complete at the time the existing license expires, the renewal date of licensure shall be the actual date of approval by the Regional Licensing Authority. No child shall be placed or remain in an unlicensed setting.

- A copy of the license shall be provided by the Regional Licensing Authority to the lead agency for dissemination to the supervising agency or directly to the supervising agency if the agency does not contract with the lead agency. The supervising agency is responsible for sending the license to the family.

- If the supervising agency or Regional Licensing Authority determines that the out-of-home caregivers have not satisfactorily met the standards for continued licensure, the licensing authority shall consult with the regional legal counsel.

- If the Regional Licensing Authority denies the application for re-licensure, the applicant shall be notified within ten business days of the determination, identifying the reasons for the denial, the statutory authority for the denial and the applicant’s right of appeal pursuant to Chapter 120, F.S. The applicant shall be afforded the opportunity to withdraw the application. If the applicant elects to withdraw the application, this must be documented in FSFN.
Incomplete Re-licensing Assessment

If a re-licensing assessment is incomplete, it might result in:

- Placement disruption for the children and subsequent impact
- Funding disruption (Title IV-E) as it is tied to legal status and licensed settings
- Licensing lapse which impacts other areas of licensure (i.e., need for background screening if it results in a break of more than 90-days)
- Other important deadlines to keep in mind throughout the process that could result in an incomplete licensing packet include:
  - Health inspections which expire one year from the date of a satisfactory result and should be requested 60-days prior to expiration if completed by the local health Department (which include radon testing every five-years)
  - Background screenings which should be completed no more than 90 days prior to the submission of a file and then at the five year re-screening mark for FDLE and FBI unless there is a 90-day break in service as a result of a voluntary closure. Locals and civil records checks are performed annually.

When a Foster Home is in Violation of Legal Standards

Some examples of licensing concerns or violations include:

- Negative Case Manager review
- Negative child exit interview
- Other licensing concerns such as refusal of placements or continued requests for removals after placement
- Foster care referral or abuse reports from the Abuse Hotline
Unit 4.2:
Foster Parent Development

Learning Objectives:

1. Explain the stages of development and how to evaluate a foster parent to determine what their training needs are.
2. Identify development options available to prepare and support foster parents.
3. Explain the purpose of and steps for developing and using a Professional Development Plan with foster parents.
4. Identify strategies for effective coaching.
5. Explain strategies for best practices in training delivery and development.
6. Identify other training opportunities to which families may be referred.
7. Given a scenario, evaluate a family to determine a family’s training needs and select the appropriate training for them.
8. Prepare and deliver a training presentation for foster parents.
Evaluating a Foster Parent’s Development Needs

Stages of Development

The Competence Ladder highlights two factors that affect thinking during the learning process:

- Awareness (consciousness)
- Competence (skill level)

The stages include:

- Stage 1: Unconsciously Unskilled
- Stage 2: Consciously Unskilled
- Stage 3: Consciously Skilled
- Stage 4: Unconsciously Skilled

Unconsciously Unskilled

When people are Unconsciously Unskilled, they do not yet know enough about the realities of the job to have realistic expectations of themselves or the experience, and therefore they have not yet consciously begun to understand all that they don’t know.
Consciously Unskilled

By this stage, people have a growing understanding of what is required and begin to understand the difficulty of the task and the skills they have to learn. People may lose confidence or even give up. Therefore, it's important to stay positive at this stage.

Consciously Skilled

At this stage, people know that they have acquired the skills and knowledge they need. They put their learning into practice regularly and gain even more confidence as they use their new skills. While they still need to concentrate on performance, these activities become increasingly automatic.

Unconsciously Skilled

At this level, people use their new skills effortlessly, and perform tasks without conscious effort. During this stage, the family functions in a way that best meets the needs of foster children and the system without even having to think about it.

Supporting Foster Parent Development
Activity F:

Licensing Specialist – Development Levels and Needs

Directions:
1. In pairs, you will interview each other and based on the interview, together decide the most appropriate level.
2. Based on the level assigned, together, create a Development Plan that will move you to the next level(s). Discuss the questions that follow.

- What is your development level?

- What types of development opportunities would be appropriate for you?

- How can supervisors, trainers and others help you meet development needs?

Activity Notes:
Key Elements of a Professional Development Plan

The purpose of a Professional Development Plan should not be to assess performance (as we have plenty of tools for that), but rather it should be to establish long and short term goals to assist foster parents to improve performance. It should be thought of as a partnership between the agency and the foster parent to increase our capacity to care for children in out-of-home care.

Some key elements include:
- **Goals**: Short-term and long-term goals with estimated completion dates
- **Development Objectives**: Linked to mission/goals/objectives and foster parent’s development needs
- **Training and Development Opportunities**: Activities in which the foster parent will pursue with estimated and actual completion dates. These activities may include formal classroom training, web-based training, rotational assignments, shadowing assignments, on-the-job training, self-study programs, and professional conferences/seminars.
- **Outcomes**: A place to indicate if outcomes were achieved and next steps, if any
Professional Development Plan Process

- **Pre-Planning**: Licensing Specialist and foster parent prepare independently for meeting.

- **Licensing Specialist/Foster Parent Meeting**: Discuss foster parent strengths, areas for improvement, interests, goals, and agency requirements.

- **Prepare Written Plan**: Foster parent, in consultation with Licensing Specialist, completes plan for individual development.

- **Implement Plan**: Foster parent pursues training and development identified in plan while Licensing Specialist provides coaching, mentoring, teachable moments, and helps identify training opportunities.

- **Evaluate Outcomes**: Licensing Specialist and foster parent discuss usefulness of training and development experiences and determine next steps.
**Activity G:**

**A Professional Development Plan for Foster Parents**

**Directions:** Review the professional development plan template. You may customize this for your area. Discuss how you can create a plan.

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**Foster Parent Development Plan**

Foster Parents:  
Licensing Staff Name  
Evaluation period:  

Date Completed

This form is intended to assist in identifying the development needs of foster parents. Ideally, the Licensing Specialist will work with the foster parent and use this form as a guide to identify strengths and needs during each licensing cycle or whenever it would be helpful. Together, the Licensing Specialist and foster parent would identify ideas to develop skills, knowledge, and awareness of those areas needing development. Conclude by identifying resources and supports that would help achieve desired outcomes.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Foster Parent as Part of the Foster Care Team</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Development Ideas: Training, Coaching/Mentoring</th>
<th>Who Can Help</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Understanding my role as a member of the child/youth services team and how to work with agency staff and the role of other professionals on the team</td>
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<td>Understanding the reasons for the placement, for maintaining a policy of permanency planning, and for promoting a team approach to family reunification</td>
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<tr>
<td>Knowledge of policies regarding emergencies, vacation planning, respite care, and record keeping</td>
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<td>Signs and symptoms of neglect, physical abuse, and sexual abuse; how and when, and to whom to report this information; who is mandated to report; and how to support the child or youth in care throughout the assessment process and policies on confidentiality</td>
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<tr>
<td>How to participate in case planning, staffings and court proceedings with team members</td>
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<td>Understanding the Quality Parenting Initiative, the importance of foster parent associations and supports, the importance of mutual respect, and equal partnership among team members.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Fostering Family Connections</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Skill/Knowledge</strong></td>
<td><strong>Yes</strong></td>
<td><strong>No</strong></td>
<td><strong>Development Ideas:</strong></td>
<td><strong>Who Can Help</strong></td>
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<td>Family interaction – mentoring and working with birth parents</td>
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<td>Training, Coaching/Mentoring</td>
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<tr>
<td>Concept of co-parenting</td>
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<tr>
<td>The importance and maintenance of sibling connections</td>
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<tr>
<td>Understanding and supporting cultural issues in foster parenting</td>
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<tr>
<th><strong>Separation and Attachment</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Skill/Knowledge</strong></td>
<td><strong>Yes</strong></td>
<td><strong>No</strong></td>
<td><strong>Development Ideas:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>The potential negative effects of separation for the child/youth and family, and how to help the child/youth handle feelings of sadness, loss, anxiety, and anger</td>
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<td>Training, Coaching/Mentoring</td>
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<tr>
<td>The importance of reunification and supports for successful permanency planning activities</td>
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<td>How to prepare children/youth for transitions</td>
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<td>How to develop and update life books including how to involve the child/youth in developing the life book</td>
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<tr>
<td>Skill/Knowledge</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Development Ideas: Training, Coaching/Mentoring</td>
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<td>How parenting challenging children/youth who have experienced abuse separation and loss can affect both nuclear and extended family members</td>
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<td>How foster parenting can affect parent/child, sibling, marital or other adult relationships within the family and how to deal with stresses that can potentially affect these relationships</td>
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<tr>
<td>Identifying the types of children/youth that their family can most effectively foster and the types of children/youth who should not be placed with their family</td>
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<tr>
<td>Foster Care Related Skills</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Development Ideas: Training, Coaching/Mentoring</td>
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<tr>
<td>Foster parent’s role and responsibility in dependency court, including how to assist in preparing children and how to testify appropriately in court hearings or submit feedback for court</td>
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<tr>
<td>The principles of behavior modification and how to use positive parenting, time out, shaping of behavior, modeling strategies, extinction, and behavioral charts to manage the behavior of a child/youth with emotional problems</td>
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<tr>
<td>Health, hygiene, and nutrition practices that prevent or reduce the likelihood of illness in children/youth</td>
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<tr>
<td>Basic first aid and CPR techniques for children and youth</td>
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<tr>
<td>How to assist the child/youth with problems that result from cultural differences at school, in the neighborhood, and with social service providers, and how to advocate for equal access to services and activities for all children/youth</td>
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<tr>
<td>The signs and symptoms of infants and children exposed to drugs and alcohol; how to advocate for appropriate treatment, strategies to stimulate development and how to deal with the accompanying physical, social, cognitive, and emotional problems</td>
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<tr>
<td>The potential negative effects of child abuse, neglect, and sexual abuse on development, and how to work with the developmental delay or problems</td>
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<tr>
<td>Age-appropriate and realistic expectations for children/youth with development problems</td>
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<tr>
<td>How to access and work with community service providers, including school personnel, mental health worker, and doctors, to obtain needed services for the child</td>
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</table>
### Legal Issues

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Skill/Knowledge</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Development Ideas: Training, Coaching/Mentoring</th>
<th>Who Can Help</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The legal issues that affect child welfare and foster care practice, including confidentiality, liability, reasonable efforts, reunification, and other statutory and regulatory requirements</td>
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<td>The roles and responsibilities of court personnel, including guardians-ad-litem, Children’s Legal Services attorneys, appointed special advocates, defense attorneys, judges and the juvenile court processes</td>
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### Working with Children/Youth Who Have Emotional Behavioral Problems

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Skill/Knowledge</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Development Ideas: Training, Coaching/Mentoring</th>
<th>Who Can Help</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The signs and symptoms of depression and suicide in children/youth; how to obtain emergency mental health services; and how to support the child/youth through the crisis intervention process</td>
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<tr>
<td>Interventions to assist in treatment and management of children/youth with mental health or emotional problems, including discussion of feelings and concerns, problem solving, empathic listening, behavior management, de-escalation, and assault prevention</td>
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<tr>
<td>Possible reasons a child/youth might lie, steal, or exhibit destructive behavior and effective strategies to deal with these problems</td>
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</table>
### Caring for Children/Youth Who Have Been Sexually Abused

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Skill/Knowledge</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Development Ideas: Training, Coaching/Mentoring</th>
<th>Who Can Help</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The signs and symptoms of sexual abuse</td>
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<tr>
<td>Strategies to decrease sexually provocative or acting out behavior in children/youth; how to assist the child/youth with anger, low self-esteem, and guilt</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ways that a sexually abused child/youth might affect foster family members and how to appropriately intervene in instances of sexual exploration and exploitation between the sexually abused child/youth and other children or youth</td>
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<tr>
<td>How to reduce family members’ vulnerability to allegations of sexual abuse, and strategies to deal with the social and emotional trauma inherent during sexual abuse assessments</td>
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### Supporting Normalcy for Children and Youth

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Skill/Knowledge</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Development Ideas: Training, Coaching/Mentoring</th>
<th>Who Can Help</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Advocating for children's participation in extracurricular activities, exploration of the arts, membership in organizations, sports involvement, etc.</td>
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<td>Supporting age and developmentally appropriate activities and socialization with peers</td>
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<td>How to assist youth in accomplishing the appropriate developmental tasks</td>
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<tr>
<td>Specialized Focus</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Development Ideas: Training, Coaching/Mentoring</td>
<td>Who Can Help</td>
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<tr>
<td>Skill/Knowledge</td>
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<td>Development Ideas:</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Training, Coaching/Mentoring</td>
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<tr>
<td>The signs and symptoms of child/adolescent alcohol and substance abuse</td>
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<tr>
<td>How to work with teachers, counselors, and other school personnel to assess reasons for a child’s/youth’s school problems or failure and develop a plan for remedial training or tutoring; and strategies to help the child at home with school work</td>
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<td>Techniques, including teaching, modeling, coaching, and positively reinforcing to prepare the youth for independent living</td>
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<td>How to recognize when development is delayed or follows abnormal patterns, and the early warning signs of developmental disabilities</td>
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Training

Effective Coaching

- **Build a Relationship:** Trust is key. While the Licensing Specialist’s roles as regulator and assessor are extremely important, he/she must also build trust and partnership. Foster parents need to see that he/she truly wants to help them grow… not just assess and regulate.

- **Provide Measurable Goals:** Where are they now? Where do they need to go? Just like in any job performance plan, the Licensing Specialist wants to look at current performance and identify a desired performance. For example, if a foster is struggling with building a relationship with the birth family, identify specific tasks to complete such as sending photos or inviting the birth family to an event.

- **Involve Them in the Process:** For coaching to be successful, the Licensing Specialist needs to get buy-in from the foster parent. They need to see its value. Help them to gain self-awareness and insight into their needs.

- **Challenge Thinking and Assumptions:** Ask open-ended questions, help foster parents search for alternative solutions to problems, and encourage reasonable risk-taking.

- **Support and Encourage:** If Licensing Specialists keep in mind the ultimate reason for everything they do (the child), it is easy to remember that they are partners in learning. Listen to foster parents. Allow time for them to vent without judgment. Remember, they have a very difficult job. Encourage them to make progress, support them in that progress, and recognize their successes.

- **Drive Results:** Licensing Specialists are coaching to help achieve goals.
Becoming an Effective Trainer

Good trainers understand the following main tasks as their responsibility:

• **Prepare:**
  - Know the content
  - Practice
  - Preparation of the training room

• **Know your audience:**
  - **Adult Learning Characteristics:**
    - Adults have accumulated life experiences and prefer practical learning activities that draw upon prior skill knowledge. It is important to acknowledge and respect these characteristics.
    - Most adults learn best by experiencing a blend of activities that promote knowledge acquisition (cognitive), attitudes and beliefs (affective), and practical application (behavioral).
    - Adults have established opinions and belief systems that must be respected.
    - Adults learn at different rates and in different ways.
    - Adults learn best in a democratic, participatory, and collaborative environment.
    - Adults are goal/relevance oriented.
    - Adults want to know what’s in it for them. Motivation to learn is key!
  - **Learning Styles:** We retain approximately ten percent of what we see; 30 to 40 percent of what we see and hear; and 90 percent of what we see, hear, and do. Training must appeal to all the learning styles which include: visual, auditory, and kinesthetic.
    - **Visual learners** tend to learn by looking, seeing, viewing, and watching.
    - **Auditory learners** tend to learn by listening, hearing, and speaking.
    - **Kinesthetic learners** tend to learn by experiencing, moving, and doing.

• **Use proven facilitation techniques:**
  - Allow participants to talk and share during a session.
  - Asking questions, in addition to the structured activities and demonstrations, can really help keep a training session interactive. It is a great way to get participants involved and gives the trainer a good barometer of what they are thinking and what questions they may have. It is one of the most powerful tools of a trainer.
  - When asking a question, state it clearly and then be quiet. In fact, wait ten-seconds. This allows people to think, come up with an answer, and the courage to share it with the group. Always offer a smile and encouragement when participants are brave enough to share in a conversation. Then follow-up what they said with affirmation and either acknowledge their statement or gently redirecting to a different point.
  - Illustrate with examples. Through experience, people learn. Trainers will probably have plenty of examples and non-examples to share through their own experience.
and that of the foster parents. Remember to always keep confidentiality in mind and share the spotlight.
- Stay on point.
- Keep things moving. It can be challenging to keep the topic on track and manage tangents both when training as well as in the question and answer session at the end. Learn some helpful statements to help bring things back such as, “Let me think about that get back with you after we wrap-it-up”.

- **Be mindful of time:**
  - Beginning sessions at the stated time respects the time of those who made a point to be on time. Ending on time respects everyone’s time.

- **Professional appearance and communication:**
  - Dressing in a manner that elicits respect and leadership assists in establishing professionalism.
  - When selecting clothing, consider that all eyes are on the trainer. Training is a physical activity and there will usually be a fair amount of bending and standing.
  - Using communication that is positive, clear, concise and well-articulated will aid in facilitation of diverse audiences.

**Developing Training**

Keep the following in mind for all course development:

- **Outcomes and Expectations:** “What do I want them to be able to DO at the end of the day?”
- **Knowledge, Skills, and Attitudes (KSAs):** What are the KSAs that allow them to accomplish the outcomes and expectations?
- **Content:** Select content that is relevant to the audience and supports the goal of competence and confidence. Select activities that will build success.
- **Methodology:** How will participants engage? Individually, small group, team teaching, etc.
  - Types of activities to help adult learners process information include:
    - Role playing
    - Homework
    - Guided imagery
    - Group work
Activity H:

Mini-Lesson

Directions:
1. Select one of the provided articles and develop a five minute training on the article using the outline below. The article titles are:
   a. Quality Parenting Initiative
   b. Normalcy-Don’t Say No Until You Know
   c. Parenting a Child Who Has Been Sexually Abused
   d. Understanding Birth Parents with Trauma Histories
   e. Understanding Child Welfare and the Courts
   f. Helping Youth Transition to Adulthood
   g. Helping Your Foster Child Transition to Your Adopted Child
   h. Celebrating Holidays with Children You Foster
   i. Grief and Loss for Foster Families
   j. Pregnancy Prevention for Youth in Foster care

2. Present the article as if you are presenting to a group of foster parents at an upcoming meeting.

   • Identify outcomes and expectations.

   • Identify knowledge, skills, and attitudes (KSAs).
• Determine content.
  __________________________________________________________
  __________________________________________________________
  __________________________________________________________

• Determine methodology.
  __________________________________________________________
  __________________________________________________________
  __________________________________________________________

• Build a mini-lesson.
  __________________________________________________________
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  __________________________________________________________

Activity Notes:
  __________________________________________________________
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