



Children's Alliance

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Trauma Informed Partnering For Safety and Permanence – Model Approach To Partnerships In Parenting (TIPS-MAPP)

TIPS-MAPP is often viewed as a pre-service training, when in actuality it is a model program that utilizes 15 tools designed to help perspective adoptive/foster parents understand the difference between the desire to help and making the commitment to bring children into their home. Leaders use the tools to help inform participants about the child welfare system and the role of foster parents, develop the necessary skills to become a successful foster/adoptive parent and assess families to determine if they are a positive fit for the role of a foster parent and for their agency.

TIPS-MAPP leaders will be involved with families through group meetings and individual family consultations. Using both approaches allow leaders to combine the mutual selection process and the preparation process for prospective foster families and prospective adoptive families to achieve the following objectives to:

- ◆ Ensure the family assessment is objective and described in specific, behavioral terms.
- ◆ Increase the amount of responsibility prospective foster parents and adoptive parents take in the decision-making process, as a foundation for the responsibility they will take after a child is placed in their home.
- ◆ Set the foundation for partnership between parents and social service agency staff.
- ◆ Provide an opportunity for prospective foster parents and adoptive parents to make an informed decision about their ability to foster or adopt, based on an assessment of their ability to respond to simulated foster care and adoption experiences.
- ◆ Prepare prospective adoptive parents and foster parents for the initial and long-term impacts of a new child in their family system.
- ◆ Give new foster parents and adoptive parents some guidelines and practice to deal with issues that most often cause placement disruptions (e.g., children's behavior during the grieving process; children's feelings toward birth or other families; working with the agency).
- ◆ Prepare adoptive parents for the life-long issues they will confront as their child matures to and through adulthood.

During the Leader Certification training, participants will develop skills to implement the program in their agencies. They will practice using the Leader's Guide which contains process notes and information on how to facilitate the 10 parent group meetings. Participants will also learn best practice standards for preparing families to foster or adopt are identified in the Implementation Guidebook. This resource helps leaders learn how to use the other tools in their work with families. These include the Family Profile; family consultation; strengths/needs assessment; criteria for mutual selection; partnership and professional development plans; meeting notes; references; Profile notes; Eco-Maps; Family Maps; Fertility Loss Expert Worksheets; and Summary and Recommendations.

When agencies implement the TIPS-MAPP Program, they often find a need to bring the philosophy of partnership to the rest of the child welfare team. Effective implementation requires that more than the parents are ready to be partners. Parents prepared to work in a model of practice will expect the system to operate on the principles they have learned. Retention of prepared foster and adoptive parents will increase if there is a commitment to the partnership in all child welfare practice.

Goals and Objectives of the Program

The TIPS-MAPP Program is designed to help prospective foster and adoptive families develop five abilities that are essential for foster parents to promote children's safety, permanence and well-being. Foster and adoptive parents will be able to:

1. Meet the developmental and well-being needs of children and youth
2. Meet the safety needs of children and youth
3. Share parenting with a child's family
4. Support concurrent planning for permanency
5. Meet their family's needs in ways that assure a child's safety and well-being

Program goals are supported through a mutual selection process which emphasizes open communication and trust between prospective foster families, adoptive families and child welfare workers, using common criteria for assessment and a problem-solving approach to areas of concern.

Below provides a brief description of the 10 meetings:

Meeting 1: Introduction

Acquaints leaders and participants with each other and provides an explanation of the TIPS-MAPP program to the participants. The meeting explains the process of becoming a foster or adoptive parent and the legal foundation for child welfare services. With the focus on safety, well-being and permanence, participants will meet several children and parents (in a video) who have been involved with foster care and adoption. Additionally, the participants are introduced to the strengths based approach that is built upon throughout the program.

During Meeting 1, every family receives a copy of a Profile. The Profile gives prospective foster and adoptive families an opportunity to describe themselves in their own words. The Profile becomes part of the information used to help in the decision about fostering or adopting. The self-assessment tool provides leaders information on how to guide, support and develop the family to be successful foster parents. It also becomes part of the information kept by the agency to help children, birth families and child welfare workers get to know the foster and adoptive family better.

Handouts include:

1. Meeting 1 Agenda
2. Criteria for Mutual Selection of Foster and Adoptive Parents
3. Description of the TIPS-MAPP Preparation and Selection Program Meetings and Steps
4. Strengths / Needs Assessment
5. Partnership Development Plan
6. A Brief Summary of Child Welfare Laws Important to Foster and Adoptive Parents
7. Important Definitions for Foster Parents and Adoptive Parents
8. Safety, Well-Being and Permanence – Video Worksheet
9. How Changing Laws and Practices Affect Children in Foster Care – Case Example and Worksheet
10. Bill of Rights for Children in Foster Care
11. Rights of Parents of Children in Foster Care
12. Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA)
13. Multiethnic Placement Act of 1994 and Amendment of 1996 (MEPA/IEP)
14. Fostering Connections for Success and Increasing Adoptions Act
15. Resource Guide for Foster and Adoptive Parents (Handout created by the agency)

Meeting 2: Where MAPP Leads: A Foster Care and Adoption Experience

Meeting 2 provides an overview of a foster care and adoption experience from the perspectives of clients (children and parents), foster parents, adoptive parents, and child welfare workers. Case examples of eight children will be used to help participants consider the safety, well-being and permanence needs of children who have been abused, neglected or maltreated.

Family Consultations are scheduled after Meeting 2. The consultations are meetings in the homes of prospective foster and adoptive families. They are designed to help the families and the leaders jointly assess strengths and needs in a family setting. All family members participate during the decision-making and learning process.

During the family consultation, the family and the leader will agree upon a Partnership Development Plan which states who will do specific tasks and when the tasks will be done, in order to meet on or more needs in the preparation and decision making mutual selection process.

Handouts include:

1. Meeting 2 Agenda
2. The Cycle of Need
3. The Alliance Model of Child Welfare Practice
4. The Role of Foster and Adopt Parents in Building Alliance with Parents of Children in Foster Care
5. Steps in Foster Care Case
6. Erickson's Stages of Development
7. Understanding Child Traumatic Stress (NCTSN)
8. Lily's Stages of Development
9. Components of Well-being of Children and Youth in Foster Care
10. Assessing the Well-Being Needs of Children and Youth – Worksheet
11. Helping the Premature Infant or Prenatally Drug-exposed Baby Attach and Develop
12. Important Information about Parenting Children Who Have Been Exposed to the HIV Virus
13. Important Information about Parenting Children with Fetal Alcohol Syndrome or Fetal Alcohol Effect (FAS/FAE)
14. Important Definitions for Foster/Adopt Parents of Children Who Learn and Grow Differently
15. Important Information for Foster/Adopt Parents about Parenting Youth Who are Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual or Transgendered
16. Strengths/Needs Worksheet

Meeting 3: Losses and Gains: The Need to Be a Loss Expert

Meeting 3 explores the impact of separation and trauma on the growth and development of children as well as the impact of foster care and adoptive placement on the emotions and behaviors of children and parents. Examines personal losses (death, divorce, infertility, children leaving home) and how difficult experiences affect success as adoptive parents or foster parents. The meeting emphasizes the partnership roles of foster parents, adoptive parents, and social workers in turning separation losses into gains.

Handouts include:

1. Meeting 3 Agenda
2. Loss and Grieving in Foster Care and Adoption
3. The Life Book
4. Helping Children with Healthy Grieving – Worksheet
5. Helping Children with Healthy Grieving – Family Assessment Questions
6. A Strengths/Needs Worksheet for Fertility Loss Experts
7. Bonding and Attachment

Meeting 4: Helping Children With Attachments

Meeting 4 explores the subject of attachment and child development. Focuses on how attachments are formed, the impact of abuse and the special needs of children in foster care and adoption (especially in the areas of building self-concept and appropriate behavior). The meeting discusses the partnership roles of foster parents, adoptive parents and child welfare workers in helping children form new attachments.

Handouts include:

1. Meeting 4 Agenda
2. The Basic Needs of Humans
3. Definition of Attachment
4. The Cycle of Need: Attachment
5. The Positive interaction Cycle
6. Four Healing Emotions
7. Promoting, Building, Rebuilding and Supporting Attachments: Four Case Examples
8. Strengths/Needs Worksheet

Meeting 5: Helping Children Learn Healthy Behaviors

Meeting 5 discusses techniques for teaching children healthy behaviors, with an emphasis on alternatives to physical punishment. Topics include special issue related to discipline for children who have been physically or sexually abused or neglected. Techniques to be discussed include being a “Behavior detective,” reinforcement, time out, mutual problem solving, structuring and setting limits, negotiating, and contracting. The meeting emphasizes the partnership among foster parents and child welfare workers.

Handouts include:

1. Meeting 5 Agenda
2. Patterns of Response
3. Definitions: Discipline and Punishment
4. Discipline Techniques To Help Children and Youth Learn Healthy Behaviors
5. Discipline Methods Worksheet
6. Case Examples – Discipline
7. Choosing Discipline Strategies to Keep a Child Safe
8. Strengths/Needs Worksheet
9. Side Effects of Physical Punishment
10. Physical Punishment: What Every Parent Should Know
11. Agency Policy on Use of Physical Punishment for Foster/Adoptive Parents
12. Shared Parenting and Alliance Building: Benefits to the Children, Foster/Adoptive Parents and Parents of Children in Foster Care
13. The Importance of Birth Parents to Children in Foster Care

Meeting 6: Helping Children With Birth Family Connections

Examines the importance of helping children in care maintain and build upon their identity, self-concept, and connections. Considers issues such as how children’s cultures and ethnic backgrounds help shape their identity; the connections children risk losing when they enter care; and why visits and contacts with birth families and previous foster families are important.

Handouts include:

1. Meeting 6 Agenda
2. Identity and Culture – Important Definitions
3. Asking Questions to Understand Cultural Needs – Worksheet
4. Scenarios – Managing Problems with Visits
5. Foster and Adoptive Parents’ Guide for Successful Visits or Contacts
6. Letter to the Birth Parents

Meeting 7: Gains and Losses: Helping Children Leave Foster Care

Meeting 7 discusses family reunification as the primary case planning goal as well as alternatives like foster care, adoption and independent living. The meeting examines disruption and its impact on children, families and agency staff. The meeting also focuses on the partnership role of child welfare workers, foster parents, and adoptive parents in helping children move home, into an adoptive home or into independent living. The meeting features a video of a mother, foster mother and worker planning the return of the mother's children to her home.

Handouts include:

1. Meeting 7 Agenda
2. Merrilee's Case
3. The Role of Foster and Adoptive Parents in Transitioning Children and Youth from Foster Care
4. Viewing Worksheet – Partnering for Safety and Permanence: Planning the Return Home
5. Risks and Safety in Foster Care
6. Roles and Responsibilities for Assuring Safety in Foster Care
7. Planning a Move: Helping Children Transition from Foster Care – Worksheet
8. Definitions – Disruption and Dissolution In Foster Care And Adoption
9. Stages of Disruption or Dissolution
10. Disruptions: Preventions and Interventions
11. Giving Permission: The Steps of Integration
12. Openness in Adoption
13. Strengths/Needs Worksheet
14. Resources Guide for Post-Adoption Finalization Services
15. A Youngster's Story
16. Disruption: A Foster Mother's Point of View
17. Disruption: Another Foster Mother's Point of View
18. A Letter to Some Friends
19. Questions for Family Discussion

Meeting 8: Understanding the Impact of Fostering and Adopting

Previous meetings included discussions and experiential activities to find out what foster care and adoption are all about. Participants learned about separation and attachment, how to build and maintain relationships with children and how to support them in working out the emotions they have for the important people in their lives. In Meeting 8 prospective parents explore the impact of fostering and adopting can affect prospective parents' marriages, their own children and relationships with extended family.

Handouts include:

1. Meeting 8 Agenda
2. Characteristics of the Family System
3. Skills Practice: Conflicting Needs for Privacy
4. Skills Practice: Conflicting Needs for Safety, Well-being and Confidentiality
5. Confidentiality Policy
6. Effects of Foster Care Skit: Donny
7. Effects of Adoption Skit: The Thomas Family
8. Effects of Adoption on Marriage
9. Creating a Family Systems Snapshot
10. Family Systems Snapshot – Worksheet
11. Creating an EcoMap
12. Alana's Family Map
13. The Family Map of a Child Coming Into Your Home
14. First Day
15. Teamwork Roles of Foster and Adoptive Parents Worksheet

Meeting 9: Perspectives in Adoptive Parenting and Foster Parenting Teamwork and Partnership

Continues the examination of the impact of foster and adopting on families and builds skills for shared parenting. The meeting features a video of a parent talking about her experiences where her daughters were in foster care. A special Children's Group will be part of this meeting, designed especially for children and youth from families who are thinking about becoming foster or adoptive families.

Handouts include:

1. Welcome Game
2. Meeting 9 Agenda
3. Partnership Building and Teamwork in Foster Care
4. Effective Communication Techniques for Teamwork, Shared Parenting and Alliance Building
5. Effective Communication for Shared Parenting – Observation Worksheet
6. Role of Foster and Adoptive Parents in Concurrent Planning
7. Permanency Planning – A Family Conference Simulation
8. Final Strengths/Needs Worksheet
9. History of Foster Parent Adoptions in the United States

Meeting 10: Endings and Beginnings

Assesses group members' strengths and needs as foster parents or adoptive parents while. Participants will have the opportunity to voice questions regarding the next step toward the licensing process. The group has an opportunity to say goodbye ... the ending. Participants As the preparation/mutual selection process is coming to an end, so begins the transition into becoming a foster family or adoptive family ... the beginning.

After the last meeting there is a final Family Consultation during which the leader and the parents agree about the family's future role as a foster family, as an adoptive family, or as another kind of child welfare advocate. A Professional Development Plan, developed by the leader and the parents, provides direction for support of the family during the next six months of partnership in the child welfare program.

Handouts include:

1. Meeting 10 Agenda
2. Reporting Abuse of Children in Our Community
3. Allegations of Abuse – Preventative Practices
4. Partner in Permanency Planning Worksheet
5. A strengths/Needs Worksheet for Foster Families Considering Adoption
6. Professional Development Plan
7. Final Evaluation of the PS-MAPP Group Preparation and Selection Program