



Partnering with the Primary Family

Preservice

Learner Guide

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Notes:

Learning Objectives

- Describe the benefits of partnering with the primary parent
- Identify strategies to effectively partner

Building Empathy

Committing to becoming a foster caregiver is committing to **doing what is best for the child**, which includes actively partnering with their primary family.

Benefits of partnering with the primary family include:

- Minimizes the trauma of removal
- The child doesn't feel like they must choose one family
- Reassures the primary parent the child is safe
- Provides the child access to medical and genetic information
- Keeps the child connected to their culture
- Allows for families to support each other

The fact is that life for some families is incredibly stressful, and options are limited.

What are some examples of stressors or limited options that you are familiar with?



Notes:

Notes:

Some families are watched more closely than other families. In addition, implicit bias may lead some workers to judge Black families and families of color more harshly.



Often primary parents have a history of trauma that could cause them to struggle in providing their children with the right amount of protection. In addition, they may have developed unhealthy coping strategies and may have difficulty trusting others and asking for help.

Having your child removed from your care is a traumatic event. What are some feelings a primary parent might experience?

Katie, part 1

- What was Katie's attitude towards primary parents when she was first approved to foster and adopt?



- What was Katie’s “aha” moment?
- Did you have any “aha” moments listening to Katie’s story?

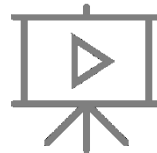
Sometimes the primary parent may behave in a way that could be interpreted as a lack of motivation, passive aggression, or disinterest.

What might be your first thoughts if a parent misses a visit? What might be some understandable reasons they miss a visit?

Partnering

Foster care is designed to be a support for families, not a replacement for the parents.

Katie, part 2



- How was Katie’s attitude different this time around?
- What do you think Katie was worried about when the worker asked her to arrange the visit?
- What do think Katie was thinking and feeling after the visit?

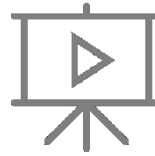
In addition to empathy, other components of an effective partnership with the primary family include realistic and appropriate expectations and

Notes:

boundaries, focus on the needs and experiences of the child, and open and honest communication

Katie, part 3

- What are some examples of how Katie has changed regarding her relationships with the primary families?



Guest Speaker(s)

Write down your questions and key points the speaker makes.



Application

Write down one or two “aha’s” moments you had during this course.



Notes:

Resources

9 Parents Whose Kids Have Been in Foster Care:

<https://www.thecut.com/2018/08/foster-care-nyc-9-parents-with-children-in-system-interviewed.html>

Birth Parents with Trauma Histories and the Child Welfare System: A guide for resource parents <https://www.nctsn.org/resources/birth-parents-trauma-histories-and-child-welfare-system-guide-resource-parents>

Foster Parent Guide for Maintaining Connections [Ohio C.A.R.E Resource Tool](#)

Interacting with Birth Families: <https://fosterandadopt.jfs.ohio.gov/foster-care/currently-a-foster-parent/interacting-with-birth-families-fostering>

Fact Sheet: Helping Your Adopted Children Maintain Important Relationships with Family:

https://www.childwelfare.gov/pubPDFs/factsheets_families_maintainrelationships.pdf

Rise Magazine: <https://www.risemagazine.org/rise-magazine/>

Understanding Your Rights as a Parent (After a Child's Removal):

https://www.americanbar.org/content/dam/aba/administrative/child_law/parentrep/kyrguides/ohio.pdf