

NOAS

PreService:

Partnering with the Primary Family

Learner Guide

Overview



- ✚ This course helps learners understand their need to partner with the primary family for the child's benefit. The importance of empathy is explored, and learners consider child protection from the perspective of the primary family.

Learning Objectives

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

Notes:

Strategies

-  Consider the strategies under each component of an effective partnership.
Which strategies are you comfortable doing?
-  For which will you need support?

Check the appropriate box for each.

Component of Effective Partnership Strategies

| Realistic and appropriate expectations and boundaries | Comfortable Doing | Need Support |
|--|-------------------|--------------|
| Discuss expectations and boundaries together early and answer each other's questions. | | |
| Respect their residual parental rights while their children are in temporary custody of the agency. These rights include determining the child's religious affiliation, visitation, and medical decisions. | | |
| Honor the Family Case Plan goals. If the primary goal is reunification, that is where your efforts need to be focused. | | |
| In the case of adoption, you and the primary family may want a different level of contact. Find a starting point you can both agree on and agree to re-visit the plan in the future. | | |
| Focus on the Needs and Experiences of the Child | Comfortable Doing | Need Support |
| They are the experts on their child. Recognize and assure them that they are important and irreplaceable. | | |
| Ask the family about their beliefs, practices, and traditions to learn more about them and understand their family "rules" and structure. | | |
| If you are a kinship provider, you may think you already know the answers. It is still important to ask the questions. | | |
| Open and honest communication | Comfortable Doing | Need Support |
| Ensure communication can happen if there are language | | |

| | | |
|---|--|--|
| barriers. Work with the agency to secure services. | | |
| Communicate frequently and share even the small details about the child's life. | | |
| Keep your tone respectful. | | |
| Don't assume you know the answer or understand why a primary parent said or did something. Always ask. | | |
| Conflict may occur, as in any relationship. However, disagreements should never turn into personal attacks. | | |

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.
- ✚ Implicit bias may lead some workers to judge
- ✚ Often primary parents have a history of trauma that could cause them to struggle in providing their children with the right amount of protection.
- ✚ Primary parents may have developed unhealthy coping strategies and may have difficulty trusting others and asking for help.
- ✚ Sometimes the primary parent may behave in a way that could be interpreted as a lack of motivation, passive aggression, or disinterest.

Katie's Story

- ✚ 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?
 - ✚ 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?
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- ✚ Foster care is designed to be a support for families, not a replacement for the parents.
 - ✚ Empathy is effective in partnership with the primary family include realistic and appropriate expectations and boundaries, focus on the needs and experiences of the child, and open and honest communication.

Notes:



NOAS
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Connections for youth - Support for families



CWTP | Ohio Child Welfare
Training Program

Resources

9 Parents Whose Kids Have Been in Foster Care:

[9 Parents With Children in New York Foster Care System Share](#)

Birth Parents with Trauma Histories and the Child Welfare System: A guide for resource parents

[Birth Parents with Trauma Histories and the Child Welfare System: A Guide for Resource Parents | The National Child Traumatic Stress Network](#)

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

[Helping Your Adopted Children Maintain Important Relationships With Family](#)

Rise Magazine:

[Rise Magazine](#)

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

[Ohio Understanding Your Rights as a Parent](#)