National Training and Development Curriculum
FOR FOSTER AND ADOPTIVE PARENTS

The National Training and Development Curriculum (NTDC)

For American Indian Alaska Native Families Who Foster, Provide Kinship Care, and/or Adopt Children from Tribal and/or Public Child Welfare Systems

# Implementation Manual

June 2022

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- Center for Adoption Support and Education

- The North American Council on Adoptable Children

- National Council for Adoption

- ChildTrauma Academy

- The University of Washington
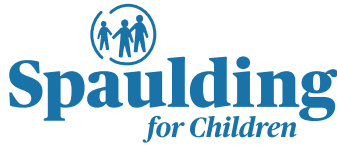
These agencies have worked collaboratively with staff; families who have fostered, adopted, and provided kinship care; young adults with lived experience in the child welfare systems; and expert consultants to develop the curriculum and all accompanying documents.
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Chapter 1: Overview

The Administration on Children, Youth, and Families—Children's Bureau is committed to promoting the social and emotional well-being of children who have experienced maltreatment, exposure to violence, and/or trauma. Placement stability and permanency is of the utmost importance to ensuring the well-being of these children. Foster care and adoptive placements are most likely to be successful when the foster/adoptive family

- Has been properly educated about the background and needs of the child placed in their care;
- Has learned appropriate intervention strategies for the mental health, medical, emotional, and behavioral challenges of the child; and
- Fully commits to embracing these challenges.

Much has been learned in the past decade regarding the effect of maltreatment and the long-term influence of separation and loss experienced by children removed from their families. The promise of a successful placement for these children and stability in these homes is strongly dependent upon the preparation, education, and development of these foster and adoptive parents. Particularly, post-adoption stability and well-being of the child/youth is directly linked to adoptive parents' capacity to understand and meet the child's needs and provide the appropriate support and intervention.

To better prepare families who wish to foster, provide kinship care, or adopt children, the Children's Bureau funded the National Training and Development Initiative for Foster/Adoptive Parents, a cooperative agreement to develop a state-of-the-art foster/adoptive parent training and ongoing skills development program to include intensive preparation and development components that reflect the capacities required of successful foster/adoptive parents. The National Training and Development Curriculum (NTDC) was intended to be a product that could be used by all states, tribes, and territories and consistently applied wherever implemented.

Target Population

Recognizing that the developmental, training, and capacity needs of individuals/families interested in becoming foster parents and those who are interested in adoption have many similarities, the NTDC was developed using a core set of competencies and characteristics. The curriculum design is intended to support three populations:

- Families who foster, provide kinship care, and/or adopt children from the child welfare system;
- Families who adopt via the intercountry or private domestic process; and
- American Indian Alaska Native families who foster, provide kinship care, and/or adopt.

Approach of the Curriculum

The NTDC is an educational approach to developing families who foster, provide kinship care and/or adopt children with backgrounds of trauma, separation, and loss. Given the complexity of the task, this program is distinguished from other training programs whose goal may be to simply transmit information. Rather, the goal of the NTDC is for participants to absorb knowledge and understanding in digestible and engaging ways that allow them to meaningfully reflect on the effect and application in their lives as they start the journey, as well as throughout the journey.

The curriculum developers used several concepts when developing the curriculum, including adult learning theory, self-directed learning, transformative learning, and a layered curriculum approach.

Key adult learning principles that were considered include the following:

- Adult learners bring experience into the learning environment.
- Adults need to know why they are learning something.
- Different teaching methods apply depending on whether you are trying to change attitudes, build skills, or increase knowledge.
- Most successful adult learning takes place in a collaborative or cooperative setting, where sharing and synergy are crucial.

Self-directed learning is a process by which individuals take primary charge of planning, continuing and evaluating their learning experiences.[1]

Transformative learning is the idea that learners who are getting new information are also evaluating their past ideas and understanding and are shifting their very worldview as they obtain new information and through critical reflection.[2]

Layered curriculum allows learners to be responsible for their own learning and perform their learning by using different learning styles based on their own interests and needs.[3]

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1 Merriam, S. B., Caffarella, R. S., and Baumgartner, L. M. (2007). *Learning in adulthood*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

2 Western Governors University. (2020, July 17). What is the transformative learning theory? WGU Blog. Available: https://www.wgu.edu/blog/what-transformative-learning-theory2007.html#close

3 LaSovage, A. J. (2006). *Effect of using a layered curriculum format of instruction in a high school environmental science energy unit* [Unpublished master's thesis]. Michigan State University. Available: ProQuest Dissertations and Thesis database UMI Microform 1425162.

Using these approaches, the NTDC draws on the knowledge of those with lived experience while challenging existing perceptions and parenting beliefs of those who are just starting their journey in becoming a foster, kinship, or adoptive parent.

The NTDC guides families through a process of self-reflection through the use of a Self-Assessment. Participants rate their level of comfort and skill based on characteristics and competencies that research indicates are crucial for foster, kinship, and adoptive families. They then attend classroom-based training that uses both self-directed and transformative learning to further develop their understanding of the needs of the children and youth coming into their home and how they may need to adapt their parenting strategies to build relationships that support the well-being of all.

The final component of the NTDC is Right-Time Training, which is available to families as they grow with the child or youth and face additional parenting challenges after placement and post-adoption; the training supports ongoing learning and application.

Core Beliefs of the Curriculum

The curriculum encompasses core beliefs that have influenced its overall construct. Understanding these core beliefs provides a better appreciation of the intent of the curriculum and its design. These are the core beliefs of the NTDC:

- All children who are in foster care or have been adopted have experienced loss.
- Parents who are caring for children in foster care must embrace the reality that returning home/ reunification is the primary goal and work to support this outcome, including working actively with the children's families.
- Making the decision to foster or adopt involves self-reflection. Parents need to reflect on their characteristics, family dynamics, and reasons for wanting to embark on this journey.
- Fostering and adopting requires continuous learning, most of which takes place after the child or youth has moved into the home.
- All parents bring a set of skills; however, it is vital for those who provide foster care or adopt to expand these skills so that they are able to provide stability, safety, and nurturing to children who have experienced trauma, separation, and loss.
- Learning by adults is best done through dynamic interaction that combines lecture with activities and discussion that reinforce the competencies.
- Flexibility in a curriculum is crucial in order for it to meet the needs of a particular site and the families served. The NTDC was constructed in a format that allows sites to move themes around in a manner that meets their participants' needs and their site requirements.
- The training facilitators are crucial in helping parents along this journey. They have a responsibility to facilitate conversations and create a dynamic and engaging learning environment. A co-facilitator model, with one professional and one parent with lived experience, strengthens the parents' learning experience.

Curriculum Language

The NTDC leadership team carefully considered curriculum language, and we suggest explaining these intentional language choices to participants in order to promote shared understanding of the use of these terms.

- *Parent* or *child's family* vs. *birth family* or *biological family*
  The curriculum uses the terms *parent* or *child's family* as a reminder that the children who are in foster care have parents who remain their legal parents until their rights are terminated. Even when the parental rights have been terminated, the child's parents remain a part of the child's life story and should always be acknowledged. Facilitators will need to consider how to emphasize this language choice within their classroom environment.

  Note: For some American Indian Alaska Native tribes, *customary adoption* is a term/practice that is applied when termination of parental rights is not a part of the permanency plan.

- *Parenting in racially and culturally diverse families*
  There are numerous terms that are currently used to describe families who foster or adopt a child that is not from their same race, tribe, and/or cultural background, including transracial adoption/transcultural adoption or multicultural or multiracial families. Due to concerns expressed with each of these terms by adult adoptees and adoptive parents, the NTDC leadership team decided to use more general language. Facilitators should acknowledge this choice when the term is first used in the classroom and describe the intent for deciding upon this descriptor.

- *Facilitator* vs. *trainer* or *instructor*
  Those individuals who lead classroom-based training are called facilitators because their role is to facilitate conversations and to engage participants in the process of learning, rather than to convey material in a one-way fashion.

Development of the NTDC Characteristics and Competencies

As part of the development of the NTDC, researchers conducted literature reviews to identify key characteristics and competencies of families who foster or adopt successfully. They reviewed a total of 874 books, peer-reviewed articles, government reports, and other literature materials. In addition to the literature review, researchers conducted 41 interviews with four different stakeholder groups:

1. Tribal child welfare professionals and tribal resource parents
2. International/private domestic adoptive parents
3. Public domestic kinship, foster, and adoptive parents
4. Young adults who experienced foster care, were raised by relatives, and/or were adopted as children

These interviews supported and augmented the findings from the literature reviews on core competencies needed in preservice training. Researchers also administered two rounds of surveys to content experts and child welfare professionals (collectively referred to as panelists) with the goal of narrowing down the list of characteristics and competencies. In addition to the panelists, researchers conducted focus groups with a mix of foster, adoptive, and kinship parents and professionals.

After the literature reviews, interviews, surveys, and focus groups were complete, researchers compiled a list of characteristics and competencies to support successful foster, adoptive, and kinship parenting for the NTDC curriculum. Researchers distributed a survey to more than 300 parents who have fostered or adopted to complete and provide feedback.

Researchers then analyzed the survey for reliability and revised the survey using both the participant feedback and the results from the reliability analysis. A second test of the characteristics and competencies was sent out to more than 60 parents who have fostered or adopted and revised again based on the internal consistency testing and feedback from respondents.

The Characteristics of Successful Foster and Adoptive Parents are woven throughout the curriculum. The questions on the Self-Assessment are designed to assess the participants based on each of these characteristics. The Characteristics of Successful Foster and Adoptive Parents are also highlighted throughout each of the Classroom-Based and Right-Time Training themes based on which ones have been identified as important for that particular topic.

Overview of NTDC Components

The NTDC curriculum has three components, all of which are equally important in providing families with the knowledge, skills, and attitudes they need in order to effectively parent children who have experienced trauma, separation, and loss. These components include a Self-Assessment, Classroom-Based Training, and Right-Time Training.

Classroom-Based Training
Includes a combination of online and in-person content

Self-Assessment
BEFORE
Classroom-Based Training

NTDC Curriculum

Self-Assessment
AFTER
Classroom-Based Training

Right-Time Training
"*Right-Time*" access to online content anytime—when you need it the most
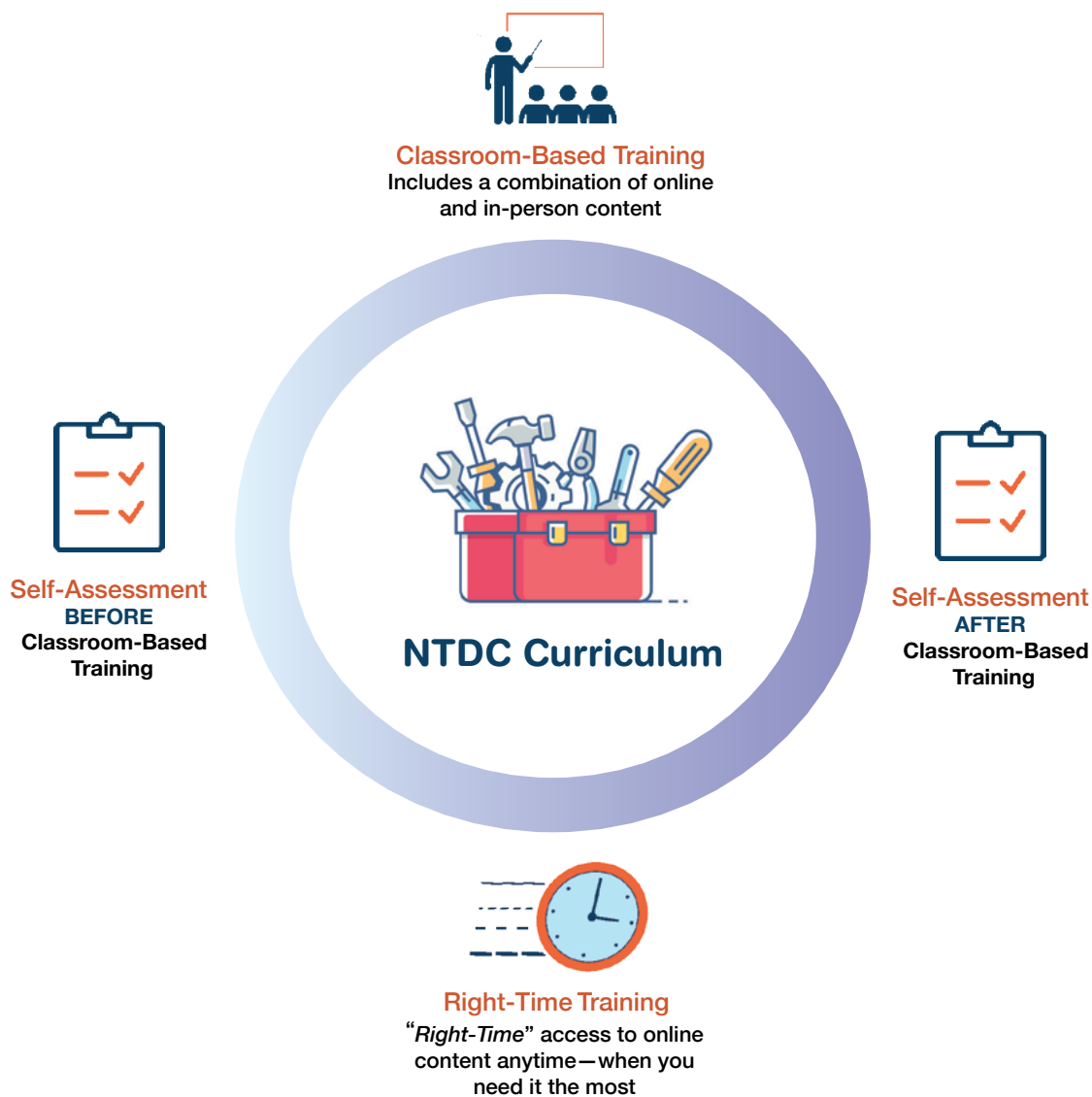
Self-Assessment

The NTDC Self-Assessment tool provides families who are preparing to become foster, kinship, or adoptive parents the opportunity to learn more about themselves as they consider the characteristics and competencies that are important when parenting children who have experienced trauma, separation, and loss. It is designed to be self-administered, allowing participants to

- Recognize their areas of strength,
- Identify areas that would benefit from additional support and information, and
- Discover areas that may cause the greatest challenge when parenting a child or youth.

Through this journey of self-discovery, caregivers can use this information to build on their existing strengths while exploring skills and competencies they see as potential challenges. The Self-Assessment characteristics and competencies are highlighted throughout the NTDC, which supports learning to continue beyond the completion of the Self-Assessment.

Classroom-Based Training

Theme is the term the NTDC uses to describe the individual topical content areas covered in the curriculum. Themes can be compared to modules in a training manual or chapters in a book. Each Classroom-Based Training Theme is a mini training (one to two hours in length) on a specific topic. All Classroom-Based Training Themes follow a similar construct:

- Content-layered learning that includes 15–20 minutes of lecture followed by an activity or interactive learning opportunity.
- Reflection/relevance section where parents are asked to apply the information learned to their own lives.
- Resources for parents to continue their learning on the topic.
- Optional pre- and post-tests to evaluate competency gains.

Many adaptations have been made to the NTDC so that it is culturally relevant and inclusive of American Indian Alaska Native histories, experiences, and values. American Indian Alaska Native consultants adapted the NTDC themes and activities to be relevant to tribal populations. In addition, the curriculum made space for the inclusion of specific tribal culture and customs.

Although tribal nations expressed challenges in being able to train 27.5 hours of classroom-based instruction as part of their initial training, American Indian Alaska Native consultants declined to identify "core" themes for training. Rather, they deferred to each individual tribe about identifying the relevant prioritized themes based on their primary agency needs. Further, American Indian Alaska Native consultants are of the opinion that tribes will use all of the Classroom-Based Training themes; however, some of the supporting themes will have a better fit beyond the initial preparation for foster/adoptive parents, such as with inservice and post-adoption training.

Right-Time Training

Right-Time Training gives participants the ability to access information and resources when and as they need it; in other words, "the right training at just the right time." The Right-Time Training is a crucial component of ongoing learning. All Right-Time themes take approximately one hour and follow a similar construct, which includes these components:

- A brief video that includes professionals and parents who have fostered and/or adopted talking about the topic.
- A discussion guide for parents to complete after watching the video.
- A tip sheet that highlights key points covered in the video.
- A question-and-answer document related to the topic.
- "My Story" podcast in which a young adult with lived experience talks about the topic.
- Additional podcasts with professional experts and parents with lived experience (included for select themes).
- Resources that parents can access to continue their learning on the topic.
- A post-test to reflect competency gains.

Chapter 2: Self-Assessment

Overview

The NTDC Self-Assessment is a self-discovery tool that provides families who are preparing to become foster, kinship, or adoptive parents the opportunity to learn more about themselves as they consider the characteristics and competencies that are important when parenting children who have experienced trauma, separation, and loss. It is designed to be self-administered, which allows the participant to recognize and build on their areas of strength, explore areas that would benefit from additional support and information, and identify areas that may cause the most challenge when parenting a child/youth. The Self-Assessment characteristics and competencies are highlighted throughout the NTDC, which supports the continuation of learning beyond the Self-Assessment completion.
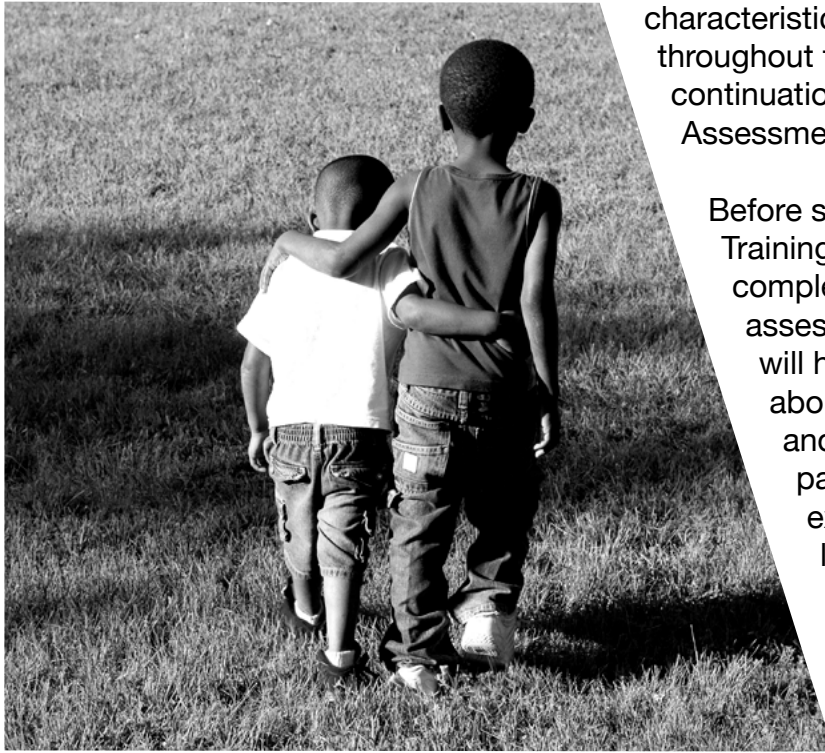
Before starting the Classroom-Based Training, each parent is encouraged to complete the Self-Assessment. The assessment includes questions that will help participants discover more about their characteristics and abilities and how these relate to successful parenting of children who have experienced trauma, separation, and loss. After parents complete the Self-Assessment, they will receive feedback on their strengths and areas for growth and where they can find resources within the curriculum that will help them increase knowledge in the areas noted for growth. The Self-Assessment report is intended to be confidential and is shared only with the participant. However, facilitators should encourage parents to share their results with their parenting partner and support system.

Participants may take the Self-Assessment a second time after they complete the classroom portion of the curriculum so that they can receive additional feedback on their strengths and areas for growth. The second Self-Assessment will also allow participants to compare results to those from their first Self-Assessment. This process allows participants to see their growth during the Classroom-Based Training and identify areas where they may benefit from continued learning, which could be addressed through the Right-Time Training component of the curriculum.

A Self-Assessment Guide, which explains the Self-Assessment in more detail, is available separately.

Characteristics and Competencies in Self-Assessment

Caregiver Characteristic	Characteristic Descriptions
Adaptability and Flexibility	• Caregivers have the willingness and ability to make changes in their parenting style to adjust, encourage, and support the child's physical, emotional, and mental needs. • As part of a parenting team, they each share the responsibility of caring for children. • Successful parents are comfortable acknowledging when something is not working and are able to try a different approach and/or modify their expectations for the child(ren) they are parenting.
Appreciation for Diversity and Other World Views	• An understanding and appreciation for children who bring a different set of values with them. • These parents are able to accept that the child's behaviors and values may not be the same as their personal values and that this will feel uncomfortable and, at times, very wrong. • They know that if not resolved/accepted, this can be a real source of upset, tension, and conflict.
Attunement	• The ability to be aware of, understand, and be sensitive to the specific responses and needs of a child at any given time, even if the child does or does not express these needs directly. • Being in tune with a child's moods, exhaustion, hunger, rhythms, responses, as well as the child's needs for physical contact, affection, security, stimulation, and movement, with the goal of building a trusting relationship. • Staying calm in moments of stress while helping the child manage their own emotions.
Belief in Self-Efficacy	• Feel competent and have confidence in one's ability to effectively parent.
Committed	• The ability to be dedicated to a child, sticking with them no matter how difficult the journey. • Carefully and thoughtfully considering the requirements of parenting a child and understanding that it is not about fulfilling their own parental needs. • They recognize that the role may not offer much appreciation or valuing of their skills and talents, but they are willing to commit to the long-term work of unconditional parenting and supporting child well-being. • They believe in commitment and are able to persevere in the face of adversity. They are secure in their commitment to the children in their care and know that they are doing the right thing.

Caregiver Characteristic	Characteristic Descriptions
Emotionally Supportive and Nurturing	• Creating an emotionally supportive environment that gives the child a safe space to talk about their emotions, including the positive ones. • Children need a supportive space to share and a calming guide to listen and empathize, so that children feel heard and understood. • This could mean listening more than you speak, allowing the child to find solutions for their problems.
Empathy and Compassion	• The ability to perceive/feel others' emotions, particularly other's disappointment or sadness. • It requires that the parent look past the current behavior and find the core distress related to the child's response. • They know they cannot shield the child from pain, but must allow the child to experience and express pain and grief.
Having a Sense of Humor	• The ability to laugh at themselves and not take everything too seriously. • Successful foster or adoptive parents are able to use humor to manage the stress that can result from parenting. • Humor can be used to vent feelings and de-escalate tense situations without the use of sarcasm or insults. • Humor can be used to build rapport and relationships with a child.
Realistic	• Understand that there are different kinds of success with different situations and with each child. • Parents understand that their efforts may not result in a change in a child's understanding or behavior until much later. • They know what their expectations are for the child, and they can identify when those expectations are not being met and when they may need to change their expectations.
Relationally Oriented	• The ability to recognize and value the importance of relationships to the child. • Shows respect for the family, previous relationships, and the child. • Caregivers move beyond any anger or jealousy they may feel toward birth families in order to help the children resolve relationship issues with family members and former foster families in order to ultimately grieve losses, maintain connections, and feel good about themselves.

Caregiver Characteristic	Characteristic Descriptions
Resilient and Patient	• Foster and adoptive parents see their role as helping children achieve success in small steps, beginning with measurable daily tasks. • They do not dwell on past mistakes or the future to pressure themselves or the children. • They celebrate small successes, teaching the child to appreciate each effort, no matter how small. • They have an ability to wait for answers/solutions without giving up. • They are able to handle and tolerate a child's "testing" behaviors, including hurtful, angry, or rejecting comments and actions.
Self-Awareness and Self-Reflection	• These parents are able to understand and be aware of why they have responded to a child in the manner that they have. • They can identify what was good, bad, and different about the way they were raised, while adjusting their own parenting to meet a child's needs. • Parents can identify and forgive themselves for having negative feelings toward a child; moving from disappointment to acceptance. • They know their own history of experiencing loss and being hurt, and they can identify how they might bring their experience into their parenting in negative ways if they are not careful.
Tolerance for Rejection	• These parents do not take it personally when a child directs hurtful comments or behaviors at them. • Parents acknowledge that the rewards of parenting are not immediate and, in fact, may take a long time before they experience them. • Parents are able to provide a loving, nurturing environment to a child without receiving any acknowledgment, gratitude, or love in return.
Trustworthiness	• Creating an environment of trust is the role of the parent. • Trust is based on understanding the importance of honesty, consistency, routines, and rituals—and then being able to put that understanding into practice. • It requires the ability to be careful in what is promised to a child so that the parents can keep their word and meet the expectations they have set.

Caregiver Competencies	Competency Descriptions
Trauma-Related Behaviors	• Learn how chaos, threat, neglect, and other adversity during development can alter the developing brain and that, in turn, can change the ways children think, feel, and act. • Understand the major stress responses we use to cope with perceived and actual threat. • Recognize the reasons and range of adaptive symptoms from inattention and distractibility to avoidance and shut-down. • Learn about reasons for rejection and testing. • Recognize survival skills and coping strategies that result in a complex range of behaviors.
Trauma-Informed Parenting	• Learn the three Rs: Regulate, Relate, Reason. • Be informed of practical trauma-informed parenting strategies. • Be aware of trauma support resources for children. • Recognize the importance of finding activities to have fun with children. • Recognize the importance of connected parenting and the relationship as the foundational cornerstone. • Understand how to promote healthy behaviors. • Recognize the importance of parent self-regulation. • Know how to be proactive versus reactive. • Recognize the difference between discipline and punishment.
Separation, Grief, and Loss	• Understand the impact of separation and ambiguous loss. • Learn different ways children grieve, lifelong grieving, and the importance of providing opportunities for grieving. • Recognize strategies to help children deal with grief and loss. • Understand loss and fractured attachments with family members and previous placements. • Recognize the importance of establishing and maintaining essential relationships with and for children. • Understand the impact of frequent moves and the importance of managing transitions for children. • Understand the separation, grief, and loss experienced by all members of the foster/adoption network.
Attachment	• Understand the importance of attachment in parenting both for the children and parents who are fostering or adopting. • Recognize the impact of fractured attachments/lack of attachments on children's ability to attach. • Identify strategies to develop healthy attachment bonds, developing trust and developing children's sense of connectedness and belonging. • Know how to be attuned to children, recognizing and honoring children's primary attachment to their families.
Child Development	• Understand typical child development as well as disrupted child development. • Understand developmental delays and how to meet children's developmental needs. • Recognize the unique challenges associated with parenting children from each developmental stage.

Chapter 3: Classroom-Based Training

Overview

The Classroom-Based Training themes provide a framework to build a strong foundation for parenting children who have experienced trauma, separation, and loss. Parenting children with such experiences requires a wide range of competencies and characteristics, which can be enhanced or built. Through shared learning with others who are parenting through foster care or adoption, and with the facilitation of an experienced professional and parent team, we believe that families can provide the healing environment children need. Each Classroom-Based Training theme has clearly delineated competencies. The training provides concrete information on the roles and responsibilities of parents who foster and/or adopt as well as the knowledge, skills, and attitudes they need in order to effectively parent children who have experienced trauma, separation, and loss.

The content in Classroom-Based Training themes is designed to be quick-moving with lots of interaction and is presented using various teaching modalities. This type of content-layered learning includes short lectures that are then reinforced with skill-based practice, activities, and small- and large-group discussions. Clips from the documentary *Foster* are used as teaching tools, along with many short videos specifically designed for the NTDC. Hands-on activities and group work encourage brainstorming and deeper conversation, while self-reflection and relevance activities allow families to consider how they might apply the information learned to their own lives.

Although originally developed for an in-person classroom training experience, the classroom content offers adaptations for those training via a remote platform.

Themes Included in Classroom-Based Training

Suggested Order of NTDC Themes

Although tribal sites are free to make their own decisions regarding selection and order of themes based on local needs, the suggested order of themes highlights the layered learning approach of the NTDC, starting first with understanding and graduating to more challenging information and practical tips. The **Foundational** themes give participants the conceptual framework they will need in order to successfully parent children who have experienced trauma, separation, and loss. These themes partner together to create a solid foundation for digesting and accepting the powerful and sometimes new or challenging information in the **Expanding Families** themes.

We recommend placing the **Specialized Care Consideration** and **Power in Practicalities** themes toward the end of the series because the information is not to be received in a vacuum, but rather built on top of an understanding of all other needs a child who is in foster care, in kinship care, or has been adopted may be experiencing.

1 Foundational Classes: **12 hours total**

Introduction and Welcome	1.5 hours
Child Development	1.5 hours
Attachment	2 hours
Separation, Grief, and Loss	2 hours
Trauma-Related Behaviors	2 hours
Trauma-Informed Parenting	2 hours
Effective Communication	1 hour

2 Expanding Families: **7.5 hours total**

Reunification: The Primary Permanency Planning Goal	1.5 hours
Foster Care: A Means to Support Families	1.5 hours
Preparing for and Managing Intrusive Questions	1 hour
Maintaining Children's Connections	1 hour
Cultural Humility	1 hour
Parenting in Racially and Culturally Diverse Families	1.5 hours

3 Specialized Care Considerations: **4 hours total**

Mental Health Considerations	1 hour
Impact of Substance Use	1.5 hours
Parenting a Child with a History of Sexual Trauma	1.5 hours

4 Power in Practicalities: **2 hours total**

Creating a Stable, Nurturing, Safe Home Environment	2 hours

5 Online Themes: **2 hours total**

Expanding Your Parenting Paradigm	1 hour
Overview of the Child Welfare System	1 hour

Online themes offer the flexibility of being viewed either during class time or independently outside the classroom. The "Overview of Child Welfare: American Indian Alaska Native Perspective" and "Expanding Your Parenting Paradigm" themes include a video, discussion questions, additional resources on the topic, and an optional post-test. Facilitators need to inform the participants of these two themes, show them how to access them, and instruct them on when they are expected to watch the online themes. The site will need to determine how they want facilitators to confirm completion of the online themes and the outcome if families do not complete these two themes. At some point during the Classroom-Based Training, the facilitator should conduct a review of these

themes and answer any questions that the participants have. We encourage facilitators to also include local information about their child welfare system because the video is not specific to any site.

Delivery of the 19 themes above will equate to a total of 27.5 hours of classroom content.

Adapting Classroom Themes for Kinship Families

The NTDC Classroom-Based Training for foster, kinship, and adoptive families may include addendum materials that are specific for kinship caregivers. The facilitator will need to know who is in their audience and then adapt the curriculum for that specific target population. Each PowerPoint presentation has a section at the end called "Addendum: Inclusion Materials for Target Populations." This section will detail which slides or activities need to be adapted if addressing kinship families.

Recognizing that kinship families may experience additional challenges when working with the child's parents and extended family, the NTDC created two themes that specifically address the unique aspects of being a kinship caregiver:

- Kinship Parenting: **2 hours**
- Building Resilience for Kinship Caregivers: **1.5 hours**

Knowing that some states, tribes, and territories have reduced training requirements for kinship caregivers, the NTDC team gathered information from multiple sources to identify a condensed training schedule based on all the themes contained within the curriculum. The themes that were recommended as part of preparation training for kinship caregivers are listed below. All themes are classroom-based unless indicated otherwise:

- Impact of Substance Use: **1.5 hours**

- Separation, Grief, and Loss: **2 hours**

- Trauma-Related Behaviors: **2 hours**

- Trauma-Informed Parenting: **2 hours**

- Kinship Parenting: **2 hours**

- Building Resilience for Kinship Caregivers: **1.5 hours**

- Accessing Services (Right-Time Training theme that can be done in or outside class): **1 hour**

This equals **11 hours** of Classroom-Based Training and **1 hour** of Right-Time Training.

Facilitators will need to determine how best to support kinship caregivers while considering their own licensure/approval processes.

## Classroom-Based Knowledge, Attitude, and Skill Competencies

Each Classroom-Based Training theme has competencies that have been woven into the learning. The competencies address meaningful sets of knowledge, attitudes, and skills that are important to the role of a parent who is going to foster or adopt. A full list and description of the competencies can be found in the Parent Resource Manual and at the beginning of each classroom theme in the Facilitator Classroom Guide.

You can find a complete table of themes with the aligning knowledge, attitude, and skill objectives in Appendix A.

Connection of Self-Assessment Characteristics to Classroom-Based Training

The curriculum uses a building block graphic to identify which characteristics are highlighted in each of the Classroom-Based Training themes. Each theme highlights three or four characteristics that are central to the topic.

Near the beginning of each of the Classroom-Based Training themes, there is a slide that includes a figure of a person building the wall with all the characteristics. Although the graphic will remain the same, the bricks that are colored in red will change based on the characteristics that are highlighted in the theme. The facilitators will review this slide at the beginning of the training and will need to

continually tie the information discussed in class back to these characteristics. To help with this connection, the Facilitator Classroom Guide will point out where a characteristic is being discussed in the Facilitator Notes.
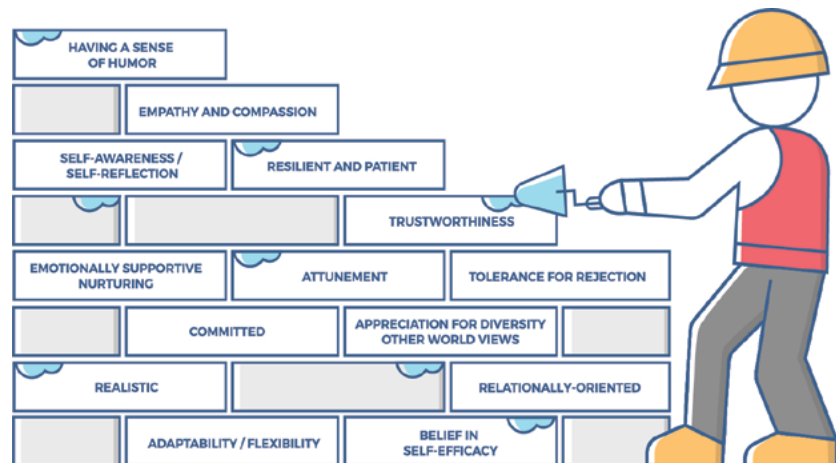
It is important to note that in addition to the characteristics that are highlighted for each theme, there are likely more characteristics that will be touched upon during the theme. Facilitators should feel free to identify any of the characteristics that they believe are being covered in the material. By the end of the Classroom-Based Training, participants should be very aware of these characteristics. They should be able to identify areas where they have strengths as well as areas that may

Characteristics Highlighted in Classroom-Based Themes

Characteristic	Classroom Themes
Adaptability and Flexibility	• Reunification: The Primary Permanency Planning Goal • Cultural Humility • Mental Health Considerations • Impact of Substance Use • Building Resilience for Kinship Caregivers • Intercountry Adoption Process Overview
Appreciation for Diversity and Other World Views	• Maintaining Children's Connections Cultural Humility • Parenting in Racially and Culturally Diverse Families • Connections with Birth Family After Adoption • Intercountry Adoption Process Overview
Attunement	• Child Development • Attachment • Trauma-Related Behaviors • Effective Communication • Creating a Stable, Nurturing, Safe Home Environment • Parenting a Child with a History of Sexual Trauma
Belief in Self-Efficacy	• Foster Care: A Means to Support Families • Preparing for and Managing Intrusive Questions
Committed	• Trauma-Related Behaviors • Mental Health Considerations • Impact of Substance Use • Intercountry Adoption Process Overview
Emotionally Supportive and Nurturing	• Child Development • Separation, Grief, and Loss • Effective Communication • Preparing for and Managing Intrusive Questions • Creating a Stable, Nurturing, Safe Home Environment
Empathy and Compassion	• Separation, Grief, and Loss • Reunification: The Primary Permanency Planning Goal • Foster Care: A Means to Support Families • Parenting a Child with a History of Sexual Trauma
Having a Sense of Humor	• Preparing for and Managing Intrusive Questions • Kinship Parenting • Building Resilience for Kinship Caregivers
Realistic	• Child Development • Mental Health Considerations
Relationally Oriented	• Attachment • Foster Care: A Means to Support Families • Maintaining Children's Connections • Effective Communication • Connections with Birth Family After Adoption

Resilient and Patient	• Trauma-Informed Parenting • Trauma-Related Behaviors • Impact of Substance Use • Kinship Parenting
Self-Awareness and Self-Reflection	• Attachment • Separation, Grief, and Loss • Trauma-Informed Parenting • Maintaining Children's Connections • Cultural Humility • Parenting in Racially and Culturally Diverse Families • Kinship Parenting • Building Resilience for Kinship Caregivers • Connections with Birth Family After Adoption • Parenting a Child with a History of Sexual Trauma
Tolerance for Rejection	• Trauma-Informed Parenting • Trauma-Related Behaviors
Trustworthiness	• Attachment • Creating a Stable, Nurturing, Safe Home Environment • Trauma-Informed Parenting

Tools to Support Delivery of Classroom-Based Training Themes

Facilitator Classroom Guide

Each Classroom-Based Training theme Facilitator Classroom Guide contains all the information the facilitator will need to train the theme. We encourage facilitators to closely review the Facilitator Classroom Guide for all themes they will be training prior to the class and that facilitators bring a printed copy of the Facilitator Classroom Guide to the classroom.

In the Facilitator Classroom Guide, an image of each PowerPoint slide will appear at the top of the page, followed by notes for the facilitator. The notes are broken out into the following categories:

- **Facilitator Notes:** This is general information that the facilitator needs to know about the slide, including important background content.
- **Paraphrase:** The information in this section is not written in a manner that is conducive to reading directly to the participants. Instead, the facilitator must read the information and then determine how they want to transfer the information to the participants.
- **Say:** This information contains specific things that we want you to state to the participants. They are worded in a manner that can be read directly to the participants.
- **Ask:** This is a discussion question to ask the participants.
- **Do:** These are specific instructions about something the facilitator will need to do for that activity, lecture, and/or discussion.

Use of PowerPoint Slides

The PowerPoint presentation is the vehicle the NTDC curriculum uses to structure Classroom-Based Training.

Please note that when you use "presenter view" to show the PowerPoint presentation, you can see the facilitator notes on the far-right hand side. However, due to the number of notes and directions provided for facilitators, it would be difficult for the facilitator to follow by looking only at the screen.

You will notice that there are some slides that are hidden. This means that the facilitator can see the slides, but they will not be visible to the classroom audience. The slides that are hidden should stay hidden, with the exception of those that are identified for specific target populations. Facilitators may need to unhide some of these slides and move them to the correct spot in the slide deck for this purpose.

> **Quick Tip: How to Hide or Unhide a Slide in a PowerPoint Presentation**
> Click on one of the slides and then click on "Slide Show." You should see a menu appear, and one of the options will be "Hide Slide." When you click on that, you will see a circle with a mark through it that will appear on the top left corner of the slide. If you see this circle, it means that the slide will not show during a presentation. If you want to unhide a slide that is hidden, follow the same directions; the circle will be removed and you will then see the slide when you show it as a presentation.

Participant Resource Manual

The Participant Resource Manual is a key component of the Classroom-Based Training and was developed based on the principles of adult learning theory, which emphasizes that transformational learning is achieved when adults are able to draw on their experiences and engage in critical self-reflection.[4] The Participant Resource Manual provides an opportunity for participants to self-reflect as they learn a new way of parenting and challenge assumptions about themselves and how they care for children who have experienced trauma, separation, and loss.

Facilitators will need to ensure that participants have the Participant Resource Manual prior to attending the first classroom session and remind them to bring it to each class thereafter because they will need to reference and write in it. Facilitators should also consider how to maximize the use of the manual to support participants' learning during the Classroom-Based Training sessions and see it as a bridge to continued learning at home. Handouts and any written activities are found there. A list of resources for each theme that participants can access on their own is also provided to support self-directed learning to maximize the use of the manual to support participants' learning during the Classroom-Based Training sessions and see it as a bridge to continued learning at home.

Important Logistics

As you prepare to deliver the Classroom-Based Training themes, we encourage you to familiarize yourself with all materials in advance in order to ensure a smooth and confident delivery. The Classroom Themes At-a-Glance, found in Appendix B, provide facilitators with a quick reference tool that shows what will be needed in order to successfully facilitate each of the themes.

You will need the following supplies if conducting the session *in the classroom*:

- Laptop or PC, LCD projector, and screen or white wall upon which to project the slides and videos.
- External speakers to project audio for video clips played via the laptop or PC.
- Power strip and/or extension cords.
- At least one flipchart and easel so that participants can easily see the flipchart from their seats (a whiteboard and erasable markers make a good substitute). A few activities require more than one flipchart (noted in the Facilitator Classroom Guide).
- Flipchart pads with adhesive backing or painter's tape to post flipchart pages on the walls for reference (and to easily remove them after class).
- Large markers in dark, bright colors that are easy to read from anywhere in the classroom.
- Blank name tent cards (name tent cards made during the first session can be reused for subsequent sessions).

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4 Knowles, M. (1980). *The modern practice of adult education: Andragogy versus pedagogy, Rev. and updated ed.,* Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Cambridge Adult Education.

You will need the following supplies if conducting the session *via a remote platform* (additional tips for remote delivery can be found in this manual under the heading "Considerations for Remote Instruction"):

- Access to a stable, strong internet connection.
- A computer with the ability to connect to the remote platform being used.
- A back-up plan in the event your internet and/or computer do not work.

All videos and podcasts are included with the curriculum materials with the exception of the movie *Instant Family*. To use these clips, you must purchase the *Instant Family* DVD. Alternate activities are identified within the PowerPoint notes if the *Instant Family* DVD is not available.

Many of the video files are large; they will require quite a bit of time to download and may not stream well. We encourage facilitators to have the PowerPoint presentation, Facilitator Classroom Guide, and all media downloaded in advance, either directly onto the computer that will be used for the presentation or onto a jump drive. It is always a good idea to come to the classroom with the material on two locations (jump drive and on the hard drive of a computer), just in case there are any difficulties with accessing the information.

Because of the varying ways that sites can customize delivery of the Classroom-Based Training themes, an agenda for sessions is not provided. Facilitators will need to develop an agenda for each of the training sessions they conduct. The agenda should include all themes that are being covered during the session and information related to breaks.

Evaluation

Pre-/Post-Tests
An optional pre- and post-test are available for the Classroom-Based Training.

Fidelity Monitoring
Fidelity forms were created for sites interested in monitoring fidelity to the NTDC.

Need for Information Pertinent to the Local Area

There are some themes that require the facilitator to bring information on the topic that is specific to their local area, as noted in the table below.

THEME	LOCAL INFORMATION NEEDED
Introduction and Welcome	• Information about the training location and any other logistics participants need to know about the location • Class schedule • Facilitator information
Reunification: The Primary Permanency Planning Goal	• Description of the reunification process that is specific to your local area • Local statistics related to the reasons children are leaving foster care or the percentage of children who are reunified with their families in your local area
Mental Health Considerations	• List of mental health agencies/therapists with experience working with children who have experienced trauma, separation, and loss • Policies and procedures regarding medication management
Creating a Stable, Nurturing, Safe Home Environment	• Policies, practices, or procedures specific to your area that are related to prudent parenting
Building Resilience for Kinship Caregivers	• List of local services and supports • Any services or supports offered in your area that are specific for kinship caregivers

Considerations for Remote Instruction

There are many HIPAA-compliant web and video conferencing platforms that are suitable for use in healthcare, provided that a HIPAA-covered entity enters into a business associate agreement with the selected platform and uses the platform compliantly (i.e., adhering to the HIPAA Minimum Necessary Standard). There are additional steps that can increase security:

• Use waiting room features to ensure that only registered participants attend.

• Turn off options that allow participants to join before the host.

• Enable features that require participants to enter a password to join the meeting.

There are some general tips that you should think about in planning to use remote platforms for the NTDC:

• Consider limiting meetings to one or two themes and taking shorter, more frequent breaks throughout the time together. Encourage participants to stand or stretch when they need to and to leave their screen during the break.

- Think carefully about where you will be located during the session. Backgrounds that are free from distractions tend to work best. Be aware of how your actions may create distractions. Sit up; maintain eye contact; avoid eating and drinking; and avoid exaggerated movements such as yawning, stretching, or wandering around the room.

- Select quiet, indoor locations whenever possible to help improve video and audio quality. Using headphones will also improve sound quality and lessen ambient noise. Enable settings to share computer sound so that video clips can be heard (consider having external speakers available in case the sound is too low when playing videos).

- Ensure proper camera height so the participants' view of you is not too low, high, close or far. Placing your computer on a higher surface so that the camera is looking down at you is recommended. Avoid sitting directly in front of or beside a bright light source, or the audience will see you as a shadowy figure; instead, place your computer between you and the light source. Practice looking at the camera when you speak so that the participants feel like you are talking directly to them.

- Identify all the documents you are going to use during the training and have them open on your desktop so that they are easily accessible when you want to share them. Check in with participants throughout the training to confirm that they are seeing what you intend them to see, especially as you change your view between the PowerPoint presentation, documents, and video clips.

- Practice good "screen hygiene" by disabling messaging and email programs and closing nonrelevant windows and browsers. Closing unnecessary applications may also improve video quality and reduce the likelihood of you being dropped from the meeting.

- Practice with the remote platform that you will be using prior to hosting a session so that you feel comfortable with its features. Learn basic skills such as how to mute and unmute participants, how to use the chat room, and the steps for sharing your screen and playing videos.

- Set some basic ground rules and etiquette guidelines and send them to participants in advance, such as when to mute, encouragement to use headphones, how to use the chat function, expectations about keeping cameras on, and ways to maintain privacy if others are nearby.

- Have at least two facilitators: One can manage technical aspects while the other delivers content. Break up material and switch roles among facilitators to help keep participants engaged. Determine ahead of time how you will communicate with one another during the session (e.g., private chat, texting).

- Use strategies to keep the session interactive and participants engaged. Change the energy, style, or speaker about every 7-10 minutes by using a poll, asking for input in the chat/questions pod, or inserting a video or activity. Commenting on poll responses as they come in or explaining the purpose of the poll keeps participants engaged while awaiting results. Ask people to use reactions during lecture and discussions, such as thumbs up/thumbs down. Whenever possible, unmute people so they can speak rather than limiting interaction only to the chat window.

Specific adaptations for delivery of the classroom-based themes in a remote setting are identified in the Facilitator Classroom Guides for each theme.

Making the Most of the Classroom-Based Training

Best Practices Related to Classroom Facilitators

Use of Co-Facilitation Model

A co-facilitation model—one where there are two facilitators who share the responsibility of leading the training session—is strongly recommended. Having a balanced co-facilitation team consisting of one facilitator who works in the child welfare field and has training experience and another who has lived experience as a foster/adoptive parent can bring credibility to the content and highlight the importance of parental expertise. Both facilitators need to be fully trained on the curriculum and equally share in delivering the curriculum. We recommend that at least one of the trainers be reflective of the participants in the class (e.g., American Indian Alaska Native trainer if training American Indian Alaska Native participants).

Co-facilitation models have many benefits. Co-facilitation allows for more effective management of group dynamics. While one facilitator is delivering material, the other can monitor participants' nonverbal reactions such as body language and facial expressions. Co-facilitation enhances the learning environment by allowing for a variety of personal experience and knowledge to be brought into the classroom, which can create a more interesting and engaging experience for participants. Use of a co-facilitation model provides a built-in mechanism for support. Facilitators should plan time not only to prepare for sessions, but also to debrief after the sessions. This approach will allow them to share their views on the participants' experiences (what is working and what is not working) and to determine how best to solidify the gains made and to enhance learning on topics that the group has not yet mastered.

In a co-facilitation model, the facilitators share the content delivery. Ideally, co-facilitators should work together to learn one another's strengths and determine together how to maximize these strengths to allow for the most effective presentation of material possible. When co-facilitators know each other well, they often have a comfortable interaction and find that they can seamlessly present information in a more conversational manner while still maintaining focus on the content that needs to be covered.

Co-Facilitation Tips

- Review the topics each of you will cover and the time frames for each activity or presentation. Be aware of timing so that you are sure to allow time for your co-facilitator's presentations. Decide who will keep track of time and talk about what you will do if you find that you are running over on time. Discuss expectations regarding room set-up and clean-up, follow-up with families in between training sessions, and any administrative tasks.

- Clarify the role of the facilitator who is not currently training. For example, during flipchart activities, have one facilitator manage the discussion and the other facilitator write the information on the flipchart (remember to write large and legibly and remove flipchart pages after class to protect confidentiality). When you are not presenting, sit where you and your co-facilitator can make eye contact but are not distracting to the participants. Focus on what your co-facilitator is saying. Do not do other things or leave the room; it may be distracting to participants and communicates a lack of engagement.

- Co-facilitators bring diverse viewpoints to the classroom, which is important; however, both facilitators need to be on the same page regarding the core beliefs of the training. Discussions with the co-facilitator about differences in interpretation of the content should be handled outside the classroom. Set some basic ground rules before working together that both facilitators can agree to, including handling disagreements of content and chiming in when the other person is speaking. In the event that one of the facilitators feels they must state their differing opinion, consider a statement like, "I have a viewpoint that is a bit different that I would like to share." When using this technique, facilitators should be sure that perspective and examples shared with participants support the intended learning points.

Facilitator Characteristics

Facilitators should have experience either working directly with families who have fostered or adopted or direct experience parenting, especially with children who have experienced trauma, separation, and loss. Facilitators may be child welfare or adoption professionals, or they may be foster, adoptive, or guardianship parents with experience parenting this population. Although the work and lived experience as related to the topics to be covered is vital, having experience with the population alone is not enough. The facilitators should embody the following characteristics:

- A commitment to lifelong learning, including a belief that they will learn from participants even as they are training.
- A belief in the ability of people to grow and learn.
- A sense of fun and humor in their presentation style.
- A belief that all children can heal, grow, and succeed in a family if the family is given tools and continued development.
- An ability to engage, encourage, and inspire participants.
- A willingness to find strengths in individuals and a desire to help parents build their skills.
- Cultural humility and the ability to work with a diverse group of participants.
- A willingness to have difficult discussions with participants.

Diversity Elements

Facilitators will likely encounter participant groups that come from diverse backgrounds and have diverse needs. Facilitators who are sensitive to diversity issues are aware that people's cultural backgrounds and life experiences shape their views and beliefs.

When facilitating sessions, you must be aware and respectful of the cultural norms that may influence participants' views, while also understanding that each individual will likely have their own viewpoints that are important to understand. Even when a facilitator shares membership with participants in a particular cultural group, an assumption about participants' views should not be made. Remember that, especially when exploring sensitive subjects and family matters, participant views will likely be connected to deeply rooted values and beliefs. To support a rich experience for all participants, seek to understand these unique viewpoints. Help participants share their perspectives with one another and encourage them to talk about how their membership in a particular cultural group may shape these views. Facilitators should not seek to change participants' personal values and beliefs, but rather should look for opportunities to allow participants to recognize their views

and evaluate the influence of these views on their role in parenting children who have experienced trauma, separation, and loss.

In some cases, training groups are a mix of participants (parents who are fostering, parents who are adopting, and kinship caregivers). In these instances, there will be many content areas that are universally applicable to all participants, but other content areas may not seem as relevant to one group or another. Being aware of the make-up of the audience can help the facilitator meet the specific needs of the group by emphasizing or allowing time for targeted areas. Facilitators should provide opportunities for all participants to engage in the session, even when presenting content that may seem less relevant to one subset of the group. This can be accomplished by asking members of subgroups to share their perspectives with one another on the topics being covered. Questions to consider include these:

- We can see how relationships with the child's parents can be complex. Could any kinship caregivers in the room share with the group what the special challenges here are?
- What advice do the adoptive parents in the room have for other parents who are just beginning this process?
- We have talked about how this issue may affect families who are fostering. How does this issue change for families who are planning to adopt? For kinship families?

As was noted previously, a co-facilitation model where a facilitator with professional experience and a facilitator with lived experience are paired together can bring credibility to the content and highlight the importance of parental expertise. Facilitators with diverse experiences provide more opportunities to highlight different perspectives and stimulate critical reflection.

Wrapping Up the Classroom-Based Portion of the Curriculum

Although none of the themes include a section for closure, we want to encourage sites to continue to conduct the graduation or celebration that they would normally do when prospective foster or adoptive parents complete their classroom training. It is important to celebrate this milestone with the families and to encourage them to continue on with the journey. Some of the things that the facilitator will want to mention on the last day of the classroom-based training include these:

- Thank the family for completing the class and for taking time out of their schedules to learn new tools.
- Recognize the amount of time families have spent in getting prepared for this journey and remind them how beneficial this will be in preparing them for a child to move into their home.
- Encourage families to continue their development. Parenting children who have experienced trauma, separation, and loss will require lifelong learning. Families can continue with their development through the Right-Time Training, the NTDC podcasts and resources, local support groups, and trainings offered on-site.
- Provide families with an idea of local processes and what they should expect to take place in the licensure process.

Best Practices Related to Classroom Facilitators

Establishing a Safe Learning Environment

Creating a safe environment is the first step in the learning process. The goal is for participants to be open to considering the content being presented and comfortable sharing ideas with others with whom they are sharing the learning experience. Taking the time to create safety first is crucial and should not be overlooked. Welcoming participants as they enter the room, taking time for introductions, and supporting informal interactions between participants are all ways that help foster a safe environment.

When you are interacting with participants use open body language and a friendly, clear tone of voice. Remember to smile and make eye contact. Consider your attire—facilitators should be professional in appearance, but also not appear too formal or unapproachable.

Facilitators should follow the basic tenets of a safe learning environment, including these:

- Agree to class rules early on.
- Build trust.
- Model a positive attitude.
- Give supportive feedback.
- Respect participants' feelings.
- Redirect participants who are off topic.
- Shut down unhealthy conversations and inappropriate behavior.

At the beginning of the training, establish some ground rules with the participants that are displayed during every class as a reminder to the participants. The ground rules should include items such as these:

- **Confidentiality:** Due to the sensitive nature of the material that will be covered during the class, it is crucial that participants ensure that anything shared in the classroom stays in the classroom. Share the concept, not the personal details.
- **Acceptance:** Participants will be coming to this training from all different backgrounds. They will all have their own reasons for wanting to foster or adopt a child. As a result, it is vital that the participants be open to differing views and be willing to listen openly to others.
- **Participation:** Participation should be encouraged; however, it is important to set rules about being aware that other people are in the training, so the questions and information cannot be directed to a particular person or their individual situation.
- **Parking Lot:** The idea of a parking lot should be established at the start. This is where unanswered questions or questions that are not directly related to the theme being covered can go. This approach helps participants to know that they are being heard but not taking up class time with something that either can't be answered or is not relevant to the topic at hand.

Engaging Participants

Good engagement is important to the learning process. Greet participants at the start of every session to create a welcoming environment and stimulate engagement. Use name tents so that participants can learn one another's names. In a virtual platform, you can allow participants to enter the meeting early so that they can be welcomed and feel "seen." Starting virtual meetings in gallery view so that you can see everybody can help participants feel connected. Ask participants to check that their names appear accurately on the screen. Use participants' first names as you engage with them. Use more inflection and action in your voice; you should use a "stage" voice.

Facilitators should monitor participants' engagement levels and use strategies to increase engagement as needed. This might mean adjusting the teaching method, checking in on comfort levels, or providing participants with a break. Because all audiences will be different, facilitators must be flexible. For example, signs of participant disengagement may mean that the material being covered is not challenging enough. In other cases, a disengaged participant may be overwhelmed by the content being presented. As a facilitator gets to know each group, they can become more attuned with the participants' learning needs.

Audience Engagement Indicators

Engaged	Disengaged
Nodding head	Drumming fingers
Smiling and/or making eye contact	Shrugging or yawning
Looking interested	Seeming easily distracted
Asking relevant questions	Having excessive sidebar conversations
Leaning forward	Looking away or glossed over eyes
Sharing experiences	Crossing arms or legs
Trying activities on their own	Resting head in palm of hand or arm
Taking notes	Coming late

Note: You may occasionally notice a participant breaking eye contact to use their hands to color, doodle, or knit. This is likely a way of staying engaged and integrating learning, so they should not be discouraged unless the participant seems not to be taking in the information.

Facilitator Preparation
It is important to be knowledgeable about the information being presented. Prior to training the material, it is vital that the facilitator review this entire document, read the Facilitator Classroom Guide for each theme, review all videos and handouts, and be familiar with the Participant Resource Manual. Although the Facilitator Classroom Guide provides the facilitator with the basic information needed to train the topic, facilitators who are not well-versed on the topic covered in the theme should review the additional resources for each theme and/or obtain additional information from their site on the topic.

Allow yourself enough time to fully prepare for each theme and re-orient yourself to the theme if you haven't facilitated it recently. Review the table in the Overview chapter of the Facilitator Classroom Guide for instructions and a materials list that is specific for each theme. You should also be familiar with all the Resources listed in the Participant Resource Manual, which will augment your own knowledge as well as prepare you to respond to participants' feedback about them. Prepare and organize your presentation ahead of time so that it is clear and easy to follow, such as highlighting content and/or creating your own outlines. Break out the sections with your co-facilitator ahead of time so that everybody is aware of what they will be covering during the class.

Having a good understanding of not only the Classroom-Based Training but also the Self-Assessment and Right-Time Training can also be helpful and will allow you to help participants make connections in their learning.

Additional recommended preparation tips include these:

- Be familiar with the location where you will hold your session. Consider how to arrange the room. If possible, seating should be arranged so that all participants can see the facilitators and one another. Tables for participants to place their materials on are also important.

- Ensure that you have all required material and the handouts for the themes that will be covered during the session. Be sure that you are communicating with your co-facilitator about where you have the necessary materials and which of you will be handling which materials/equipment.

- Test the video playback for every video being used in each theme from start to finish on whatever computer or device you plan to use in the classroom.

- Arrive at least one hour prior to the start of the session to set up the classroom, including the flipchart(s). You may wish to label flipchart pages you will use with titles so that they are ready to go when you get to each activity. Many themes use more than one flipchart exercise.

- Check any equipment (slide projector, flipchart, and videos/speakers) ahead of time to make sure all are working properly. Be sure the audio can be heard and the video is visible from the front to the back of the room.

- If using a laptop, be sure that it is plugged in or that the battery is fully charged (regardless of battery strength, keeping your computer plugged into the power cord may be best).

- For remote delivery, sign on at least 30 minutes ahead of the planned start time to test technology.

Classroom Management Techniques

The Classroom-Based Training themes contain activities, discussion and lecture. It is important that at least one of the two facilitators feels comfortable and has basic skills on how to engage adult learners. There are many techniques that effective facilitators can use to enhance the learning process. Several of these are described below.

Relate content to participant needs, concerns, or interests.

Illustrate your teaching points with practical examples. The NTDC mixes up the lecture with activities. It is important that facilitators make time for all discussion and activities, as this is a crucial part of the learning. Facilitators should add in information about their own life experience (work with families or parenting) that is relevant to the topic at hand. Each theme has a slide for key takeaways; make sure you save time to go over them. It is important to underscore key learning points. After making a major point, ask participants to think about how the information could relate to their situation. Encourage discussion and use large-group brainstorming to help participants generate ideas.

Maintain focus on the learning points.

Follow the guidelines and prompts in the facilitator's notes listed in the Facilitator Classroom Guide, especially set-up instructions, timing, and guidance on key points and debriefing. Circulate during activities to check in with each group and offer guidance as necessary. Keep discussions on topic by posing questions to the entire group that relate to the learning points. Having a firm understanding of the material that needs to be covered and the learning needs of each group will allow you to make decisions about topics that you can shorten and those that may require more time. Consider allowing time after the conclusion of the session for questions that participants may want to discuss outside of the group.

Keep participants active.

Limit time spent giving lectures or "talking at" participants. Listening with retention lasts only about 20 minutes at a time, and adults in particular have a low tolerance for sitting and listening. The NTDC has been designed for short lectures, so facilitators should monitor themselves if lecture sections take longer than the intended time frames. Ask questions to engage participants in the material you are presenting. Use simple, yet effective, nonverbal and verbal ways to involve participants, such as asking them to read aloud or to write or hold an object during a demonstration. Change the pace frequently, move around the room, invite participants to move around the room, and provide sufficient breaks. If you do not have time for a full break, you can always provide options of standing or stretching in place or taking a few breaths.

Encourage positive group dynamics.

Allow participants to share their experiences with one another. Move participants into groups as needed and assign members to small groups using a variety of methods to encourage diverse groups and to give learners a chance to work with different people. Giving feedback to participants about their examples is also important and provides the facilitator with opportunities to reinforce learning points or to encourage further discussion on a topic.

Be respectful of participants' time.

Follow the recommended timing guidelines to keep the activities and discussions focused and on track. The Facilitator Classroom Guides include timing estimates throughout to help you pace yourself. During activities, announce timing at key intervals (e.g., "You have five more minutes to work."). This helps keep them focused and working within the time frame you set for them. Always start and end on time.

Use humor as part of the learning process.

The ability to laugh and to find humor in daily exchanges with their children can be an important tool to help parents cope with the stress that can result from caring for children who have experienced trauma, separation, and loss. Humor can also help parents create an environment where their children can experience the fun, playfulness, and laughter of family life. Modeling the use of humor in the classroom can help participants see its value, which they will benefit from in parenting.

Use questions as a teaching tool.

Questions can provide insights to facilitators about participants' knowledge and beliefs about a particular topic. This allows facilitators to determine if they should spend more or less time on a specific area of content in relationship to audience needs. Purposeful use of questions is a great way to enhance engagement, challenge assumptions and support critical reflection in participants, which will ultimately help participants apply what they learn. You will not have time to elicit questions in every section of material, but be sure to pause for clarifying questions if participants look confused or disengaged.

You can direct questions to the group or to a specific individual. When you pose questions to the larger group, you will stimulate thinking of all participants, allow people to respond voluntarily, and avoid putting anyone on the spot. Questions asked to a specific individual may be used when you want to provide an opportunity for a participant with known experience to share something with the larger group. You might also ask a question of a specific participant to connect the content currently being covered with an idea previously expressed by that person.

Facilitators should give some thought to the questions that they ask. There are two basic types of questions: open (usually beginning with *what, how,* or *why*) and closed (usually beginning with *is, can, how many,* or *does*). Open-ended questions require more than a yes-or-no answer and can be used to stimulate thinking and discussion. Closed-ended questions require a one-word answer and tend to close off discussion.

Consider the following tips when constructing questions:

- Ask clear, concise questions covering a single issue. Asking rambling, ambiguous questions covering multiple issues will only confuse and frustrate your participants.
- Ask reasonable questions based on what people can be expected to know at any particular point. If you ask questions that are too difficult for the majority of people to answer, the audience will be more likely to disengage.
- Ask challenging questions that provoke thought. Questions that are too easy do not promote critical thinking.
- Ask honest, relevant questions that direct people to logical answers. Questions that are intended to fool people do not promote a safe learning environment and may discourage participation.

Responding to participants' questions provides an opportunity to enhance the learning for the group as well as for the individual. The way in which you respond to a person's answer affects not only on the individual but also the amount of future participation you will receive from everyone. Some ways to handle answers to questions that will maintain a high level of participation include these:

- Using positive reinforcement for answers that are on target.
- Acknowledging the effort of the respondent, regardless of whether the answer is right or wrong.
- Minimizing potential embarrassment for off-track or incomplete answers.

As much as possible, redirect the question back to the person or to another participant. Some examples include these:

- "That's a good question. What brings up that question for you?"
- "That is an interesting question. What do others think?"

Responding to questions in this way promotes critical thinking in the individual as well as the group and can also allow other participants to share their expertise. In some cases, you may prefer to answer the question yourself. This may be best if there is not sufficient time to engage in a larger discussion or if the question being asked is a simple clarification question.

In other cases, facilitators may need to delay their response to participants' questions. This may be the case when the question is outside the scope of the session, will be covered later in the session, or requires more time for an accurate response. Be familiar with the entire breadth of the curriculum so that you know what and when to refer to and share this with participants. Use your parking lot and/or assure participants that you will have plenty of other opportunities to discuss things if time is running over. Redirect participants who have many questions or who are off-base to individual conversations with you as necessary.

Practice effective communication skills.

Effective communication can put participants at ease and promote a positive learning environment. Facilitators should consider the following skills:

- **Tone of voice.** Avoid speaking in monotones. Try to vary your pitch, speaking rate, and volume. Use language that all participants can understand. When jargon or technical terms are used, define these for participants.

- **Positive attitude.** When facilitators demonstrate support and enthusiasm for the content, participants will feel more engaged and encouraged. When difficult moments come up, acknowledge them honestly and in a constructive way—relating difficulties in the training setting to those that are often experienced while parenting.

- **Active listening.** When participants contribute during the session, listen carefully to their comments. As much as possible, incorporate their ideas into the discussion to enrich the conversation and promote critical thinking. Remain neutral, objective, and open during discussions. Your role is to facilitate the discussion, so you will likely listen more than talk. If you are unsure of a question, say so; it's OK if you don't know the answer to every question.

- **Nonjudgmental stance.** Validate participants' experiences, listen without bias, and seek to understand participants' perspectives. When you understand a participant's viewpoint, you will be in a better position to determine how to connect their viewpoint to learning objectives. Facilitators also need to be aware of their own biases and act in a professional manner when their "buttons" are pushed.

- **Compassionate presence.** Keep in mind that much of the content presented in sessions can have an emotional effect on participants. Recognize and acknowledge when the group is discussing emotionally difficult issues. Redirect negative or silly comments to maintain the focus. If a participant demonstrates strong feelings about a topic being discussed, you must be adept at reading those feelings and acknowledging them. If a participant leaves the room during a time something sensitive is being discussed, make sure one of the facilitators checks in on them.

- **Managing group dynamics.** Create and maintain a safe and trusting environment. Participants should be encouraged to share their experiences and contribute to the group learning process. This will mean that facilitators will need to both connect similar ideas shared by participants and manage discrepancies in participants' viewpoints. Skilled facilitators use these opportunities to enhance the critical thinking process, which will support the application of new skills. If someone is dominating the discussion, redirect to others, and try to draw out those who are quiet. Add spontaneity to the session by randomly calling on participants or asking participants to share a story that is related to the content being shared. Acknowledge participants' contributions and ideas. Remember that some participants may feel more comfortable sharing in the small-group activities.

- **Summarizing.** Frequent summaries can be helpful to make the session content more digestible. Summaries can also be used to shift focus when needed. Reviewing key takeaways at the end of each topic area and again at the end of each session will help ensure that all content is covered. Summarize or repeat back statements to help everyone stay on track and keep (or regain) focus with the group. Introduce a 90-second rule, where people are asked to finish their sentence/thought after 90 seconds, as part of your ground rules.

- **Flexibility.** Facilitators are most effective when they are able to follow the curriculum and script but also able to make adjustments as necessary in activities or discussion in order to accommodate the participants' needs. This requires the ability to quickly interpret participants' verbal and nonverbal responses and to be responsive to parents in the moment.

- **Use of silence.** Silence is an important facilitation tool because it can allow space for participants to consider a new idea and reflect on their reaction to new content without interruption. Skilled facilitators resist the temptation to break the silence. If there is no immediate response to a question, be careful about how quickly you jump in. Often when there is silence, participants are thinking and processing. For facilitators who have a tendency to jump in, you can practice the trick of counting to seven before prompting further. It is important for facilitators to protect this space as participants gather their thoughts. Allow brief pauses when transitioning from one section to another and from one activity to another.

Incorporate personal experiences.

Stories have been used for centuries to pass on knowledge and are a very effective learning tool. When information is embedded in the context of a story, it is more readily retained and provides a way to relate to the content in a real-world way. This helps participants consider how they might apply the information to their own parenting.

Sharing a personal experience can create a connection between the facilitators and the audience and can bring credibility to both the facilitator and the content being presented in the session. Facilitators with lived experience can relate to participants in a unique way in that they can share the pains, frustration, and joy of caring for youth who have experienced trauma, separation, and loss.

Make sure that the personal experiences and examples that you are using are related to the content being presented and are shared in a way that enhances the intended learning points. If you share experiences and stories only for the sake of sharing, you are shifting the focus to yourself and away from participants. This will distract participants, making the material less meaningful for them.

Self-disclosures should be as honest and positive in nature as possible. Use caution when sharing negative stories; these may leave participants feeling deflated and discouraged and could lead participants to perceive the facilitator as less competent and less trustworthy[5]. If sharing an emotional story, be sure to practice first with a smaller group or friend.

5 Klebig, B., Goldonowicz, J., Mendes, E., Miller, A. N., & Katt, J. (2016). The combined effects of instructor communicative behaviors, instructor credibility, and student personality traits on incivility in the college classroom. *Communication Research Reports*, 33(2), 152-158.

Chapter 4: Right-Time Training

Overview of Right-Time Training

Recognizing that adults learn best when the information is applicable to their own situation, the NTDC has created a component of the curriculum called Right-Time Training. Parents who are fostering and adopting need training that is easily accessible and available when they need it. Training is important when parents are first starting the journey. but ongoing learning is just as important. As families have children move into their homes, as children go through different developmental stages, and as families encounter new challenges, they will need to have a way to access information and tools. The Right-Time Training was designed to meet this need. It is not intended to replace in-person training and seminars that are offered locally; rather, it should supplement this information and provide families with a tool that enables them to access the information they want when they want it.

Right-Time Training themes contain information that is specific to parents who are fostering and adopting. Each theme takes approximately one hour to complete and follows a similar construct:

- A brief video that includes professionals as well as parents who have fostered and/or adopted talking about the topic.
- A discussion guide for parents to complete after watching the video.
- A tip sheet that highlights key points covered in the video.
- A question-and-answer document related to the topic.
- "My Story" podcast in which a young adult with lived experience talks about the topic.
- Additional podcasts with professional experts and parents with lived experience (included for select themes).
- Additional resources that parents can access.
- Post-test to evaluate competency gains.

Right-Time Training Themes

There are 15 themes covered in Right-Time Training. None of these themes are addressed in the classroom training (with the exception of Sexual Trauma, which has a classroom theme called "Parenting a Child with a History of Sexual Trauma"). Right-Time Training themes are not designed to go in any particular order.

- Accessing Services and Support
- Building Parental Resilience
- Common Feelings Associated with Being Adopted
- Education
- Family Dynamics
- Increasing Children's Resilience
- Intercountry Adoptions: Medical Considerations

- Life Story: Birth Story and Adoption Story
- Managing Placement Transition
- Preparing for Adulthood
- Preparing for and Managing Visitation
- Responding to Children in Crisis
- Sensory Integration
- Sexual Development and Identity
- Sexual Trauma

The Right-Time Themes At-a-Glance, found in Appendix D, provides a quick reference tool that shows what content elements are included in each of the Right-Time Training themes.

Connection of Right-Time Training to Classroom-Based Training and Self-Assessment

The Right-Time Training themes are designed to help participants learn how to handle challenges or situations as they move through the journey of fostering or adopting a child. We recommend that participants be required to complete one Right-Time theme while they are taking the Classroom-Based themes so that they can become acquainted with this resource. This approach will make participants aware of how to access the Right-Time Training and show how it could benefit them in the future. The hope is that by having families access this resource when they are in Classroom-Based Training, they will be more likely to use it in the future as a resource.

Evaluation

Post-tests are available for the Right-Time Training themes.

Use of Right-Time Training

Right-Time Training was designed to be easily accessible to families when they need it and is a great tool for ongoing training and development of families. As children go through different developmental stages and as families meet new challenges, the Right-Time Training themes support ongoing learning. The videos and My Story podcasts can easily be shown in a parent support group, and then the facilitator can use the discussion questions to guide participants' conversation. Caseworkers can watch the videos with a family based on a specific need or as part of preparation training. Together the caseworker and family can discuss the questions and determine what additional resources or information the family may need. Right-Time Training themes can also support sites in the education of casework and other front-line staff, as well as support agencies in their family recruitment and retention efforts.

Characteristics Highlighted in Right-Time Themes

Characteristic	Right-Time Themes
Adaptability and Flexibility	• Sensory Integration • Preparing for Adulthood • Education • Preparing for and Managing Visitation • Family Dynamics
Appreciation for Diversity and Other World Views	• Preparing for and Managing Visitation • Sexual Development and Identity • Common Feelings Associated with Being Adopted
Attunement	• Responding to Children in Crisis • Preparing for and Managing Visitation • Family Dynamics • Sensory Integration • Sexual Trauma
Belief in Self-Efficacy	• Education • Accessing Services and Support • Intercountry Adoptions: Medical Considerations • Managing Placement Transitions
Committed	• Preparing for Adulthood • Intercountry Adoptions: Medical Considerations
Emotionally Supportive and Nurturing	• Life Story: Birth Story and Adoption Story • Managing Placement Transitions • Sexual Development and Identity
Empathy and Compassion	• Building Children's Resilience • Sexual Trauma
Having a Sense of Humor	• Building Parental Resilience
Realistic	• Preparing for Adulthood • Education • Accessing Services and Supports • Intercountry Adoptions: Medical Considerations
Relationally Oriented	• Life Story: Birth Story and Adoption Story • Common Feelings Associated with Being Adopted • Preparing for and Managing Visitations
Resilient and Patient	• Responding to Children In Crisis • Preparing for Adulthood • Building Children's Resilience • Accessing Services and Support • Building Parental Resilience
Self-Awareness and Self-Reflection	• Sexual Trauma • Sexual Development and Identity • Responding to Children In Crisis • Building Parental Resilience • Life Story: Birth Story and Adoption Story
Tolerance for Rejection	• Responding to Children in Crisis • Common Feelings Associated with Being Adopted
Trustworthiness	• Family Dynamics • Building Children's Resilience • Managing Placement Transitions

Appendix A: Classroom-Based Knowledge, Attitude, and Skill Competencies

ATTACHMENT		
Understand the importance of attachment in parenting both for the children and parents who are fostering or adopting; recognize the impact of fractured attachments/lack of attachments on children's ability to attach; identify strategies to develop healthy attachment bonds, developing trust and developing children's sense of connectedness and belonging; know how to be attuned to children; recognizing and honoring children's primary attachment to their families.		
KNOWLEDGE	**ATTITUDES**	**SKILL**
• Identify caregiver behaviors that enhance and strengthen relationships. • Understand the importance of parent's own attachment history and style in developing and maintaining relationships with children. • Describe the relationship between attachment, safety, attunement and relationships. • Define the impact of fractured attachments/lack of stable relationships on children's ability to connect with others. • Understand the importance of supporting children's primary attachments to their families in order for them to connect to others.	• Willing to accept the idea that children may have difficulty with relationships due to previous circumstances. • Willing to work on the development of healthy relationships with children over an extended period of time. • Willing to commit the time needed to be attuned and present for children. • Willing to support the concept that children are expanding family versus replacing their families.	• Demonstrate how to discipline in ways that protect and/or build the parent–child relationship.

BUILDING RESILIENCE FOR KINSHIP CAREGIVERS
(Specific to kinship caregivers)

Understand the importance of self-care and practical ideas how to do it; understand signs of stress and burnout; recognize the importance of parents who are providing kinship care to maintain their mental, physical, emotional and spiritual well-being; understand what parental resilience is and why it is important; understand how caring for children who have experienced trauma, separation, and loss can affect your own well-being; understand the behaviors that foster a protective environment for parents and children.

KNOWLEDGE	ATTITUDES
• Understand why maintaining physical, emotional and spiritual well-being contributes to successful kinship parenting. • Know the signs of caregiver stress and burnout. • Understand why self-care is a necessary component of good parenting and essential to strengthening resilience. • Understand that parent resilience is the ability to recover quickly after encountering a difficult or tough situation. • Know how the trauma, separation and loss that the children have experienced can affect the kinship caregiver. • Know strategies to implement self- care. • Understand behaviors that foster a protective environment for parents and children.	• Believe self-care is an integral part of being an effective parent. • Committed to the idea of prioritizing children's needs while balancing ways to meet their own. • Believe resilience is important to the success of kinship caregivers.

CHILD DEVELOPMENT

Understand typical child development as well as disrupted child development; understand developmental delays and how to meet children's developmental needs; recognize the unique challenges associated with parenting children from each developmental stage.

KNOWLEDGE	ATTITUDES
• Understand typical child development as well as disrupted child development. • Understand developmental delays and how to meet children's developmental needs. • Recognize the unique challenges associated with parenting children from each developmental stage.	• Believe it is important to support children in reaching their unique and full developmental potential. • Commit to parenting children based upon their developmental level and not their chronological age. • Willing to adapt expectations based upon children's developmental needs of children.

CREATING A STABLE, NURTURING, SAFE HOME ENVIRONMENT

Aware of strategies to make children affected by trauma, separation, and loss feel psychologically and physically safe; understand how to set up a home to be safe for all household members; understand how the sense of safety ties to behaviors; aware of how to set boundaries, show consistency and predictability, and adapt routines and rituals; know how to be attuned to children; understand safety from children's perspective.

KNOWLEDGE	ATTITUDES	SKILL
• Understand how to develop and maintain daily routines to provide a sense of security for children. • Understand how to balance setting consistent and predictable limits with the unique needs of children who have experienced trauma, separation, and loss. • Learn strategies to help children impacted by trauma and loss feel psychologically and physically safe in the home. • Identify strategies to communicate in a manner that reflects children's ability to process knowledge. • Understand how the sense of safety ties to behaviors.	• Willing to change family routines and rituals to meet the children's needs instead of making the children change to meet the family routines and rituals. • Willing to set boundaries while flexibly adjusting to the child's emotional and developmental needs.	• Practice using "STEPS" to manage escalated behaviors.

CULTURAL HUMILITY

Obtain an overview of cultural humility; recognize the importance of honoring and incorporating children's cultural identity and respecting families from varying races, religions, ethnicities, and economic statuses; openness to a child's sexual orientation and gender identity and expression; able to view these differences from a strengths-based perspective; know strategies for parents who are fostering or adopting to respect as well as navigate differences in values from the children and families; acknowledge imbalances of power and inequities.

KNOWLEDGE	ATTITUDES	SKILL
• Know strategies that can be used to demonstrate respect, inclusion, and support of children and parents' intersecting identities (including cultural and racial backgrounds as well as SOGIE.) • Understand the meaning and importance of cultural humility and cultural responsiveness when fostering/adopting children when interacting with or talking about families. • Identify ways in which the family who is fostering or adopting may be culturally responsive when parenting children whose culture and identity is similar to or different from their own.	• Believe showing respect for similarities and differences in race, ethnicity, economic status, sexual orientation and gender is crucial to healthy child development. • Open to making changes in order to honor and respect children and their families from varying backgrounds. • Believe children should be allowed to maintain areas of difference from mine, now and as they develop.	• Demonstrate the ability to ally with children in conversations about their developing identities.

EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

Understand the definition of effective communication, including both verbal and nonverbal language; understand how to use open communication with children; recognize the importance of active listening skills; be aware of strategies to convey compassion and attunement; recognize how to talk to children about difficult and/or sensitive issues with openness; know how to develop and maintain open communication.

KNOWLEDGE	ATTITUDES	SKILL
• Be aware of strategies to discuss difficult/sensitive issues with children in a supportive manner. • Know strategies to convey empathy. • Be aware of the components of effective communication, including both verbal and non-verbal language. • Identify empowering and inclusive language. • Be able to describe what effective listening skills are for parents.	• Believe it is important to communicate with children about sensitive topics even when I am uncomfortable. • Feel it is important to be open to learning about ways to be a better communicator with children.	• Demonstrate ability to talk with children about difficult and/or sensitive issues in an empathetic and empowering manner.

FOSTER CARE: A MEANS TO SUPPORT FAMILIES

Understanding the child welfare experience from the perspective of the child's parents; finding compassion for parents and challenges they may be facing; strategies to nurture children's relationship with their parents, integrating and maintaining on-going communication and connection between parents and children, addressing potential challenges in partnering with the child's parents, helping children prepare for visits including understanding and managing reactions to visits.

KNOWLEDGE	ATTITUDES	SKILL
• Understand challenges the child's parents may be facing. • Understand how challenges facing parents can impact the consistency and quality of visits with their children. • Describe strategies to nurture children ongoing relationship so that they can maintain strong connections with their families. • Identify specific examples of how parents who are fostering can support the child's parents. • Describe the importance of co-parenting and strategies parents who are fostering can employ to do this.	• Willing to work with and support the child's parents in obtaining reunification. • Develop and exercise compassion for parents who are separated from their children.	• Demonstrate an ability to positively support the relationship between children and their parents.

IMPACT OF SUBSTANCE USE

Understand the short- and long-term effect on children exposed to substances prenatally, including fetal alcohol spectrum disorders (FASDs); recognize issues that may be present if parents use(d) substances; be aware of medical issues that can arise due to substance exposure, including higher risk of later addiction; understand the genetic component of addiction and addiction as a chronic disease; be aware of parenting strategies for children exposed to substances prenatally.

KNOWLEDGE	ATTITUDES	SKILL
• Understand what FASDs are and the potential lifelong effect on children's social, emotional, and cognitive functioning that are associated with this and other parental substance use conditions. • Understand the effect substance use has on the developing brain-both in utero and throughout the lifetime. • Identify strategies to effectively parent children who have been exposed to substances prenatally. • Understand the genetic component of addiction and addiction as a chronic disease.	• Committed to learning new techniques and adjusting parenting style when caring for children who have been exposed to substances prenatally. • Committed to modeling a healthy lifestyle for children. • Embraces the concept that children who have been exposed to substances will likely have special needs. • Willing to have compassion for parents who are seeking treatment for an addiction and understands that relapse is a part of recovery.	• Reframe challenging behaviors using positive behavioral support techniques.

KINSHIP PARENTING
(Specific to kinship caregivers)

Understand the complexities associated with caring for children who are related including: divided loyalties; redefining roles and relationships; setting boundaries with parents and other relatives; and the range of emotions that may be experienced (including anger, resentment, guilt, and/or embarrassment); understand how to manage family dynamics and conflicts, identify triggers and effectively manage stress.

KNOWLEDGE	ATTITUDES	SKILL
• Understand how kinship care can change family roles, causing tensions with extended family members, families and children. • Know strategies to handle relations with extended family. • The kinship caregiver is aware of their own feelings and triggers associated with redefining their family role.	• Believe it is the kinship caregiver's responsibility to protect children from the circumstances that brought them into protective care, even if it creates family strife. • Believe it is a sign of strength to accept help managing complex family relationships. • Believe it is important to support the child's relationship with their paternal and maternal family members. • Willing to process the emotional effect of raising a family member's child. • Willing to understand and support the responses and feelings that children experience in kinship care.	• Set limits with the child's parents in ways that protect the children's safety while demonstrating the importance of the parent to the child.

MAINTAINING CHILDREN'S CONNECTIONS WITH SIBLINGS, EXTENDED FAMILY MEMBERS, AND THEIR COMMUNITY

Understand the importance of integrating and maintaining on-going communication and connection among siblings; understand sibling dynamics and the importance of sibling bonds; know how to navigate and support visits with siblings; recognize the importance of maintaining connections with extended family members and the community at large (e.g, schools, church, friends, sporting teams); identify strategies to keep children connected to their community; understand the role of parents who are fostering in maintaining these connections.

KNOWLEDGE	ATTITUDES	SKILL
• Explain how parents who are fostering or adopting can help children maintain connections with extended family members and community of origin. • Identify effective strategies to maintain communication between separated siblings. • Identify issues that may arise when promoting communication with extended family members and potential solutions to these issues. • Know the importance of maintaining relationships with siblings and extended family members.	• Believe that it is important to actively maintain children's connections to siblings (including those born later), extended family members, and community when possible. • Willing to blend family traditions to honor and/or include siblings and extended family.	• Demonstrate ways to create authentic connections to siblings, extended family, and community.

MENTAL HEALTH CONSIDERATIONS

Have a basic understanding of mental health disorders and conditions that commonly occur in childhood; recognize that not all survival behaviors or symptoms of grief are connected with mental health disorders; know about commonly administered psychotropic medications; know how to obtain consistent, adequate and appropriate access to mental health services.

KNOWLEDGE	ATTITUDES
• Understand the complexity of appropriately diagnosing children with mental health conditions when they have experienced trauma, separation, and loss. • Know where and how to access information on common childhood mental health conditions and psychotropic medications through the child's medical professionals and resources. • Learn accurate and sensitive language to describe behavioral symptoms and diagnoses.	• Committed to implementing recommendations related to children's mental health. • Willing to recognize one's own possible bias, attitudes and assumptions about the need for mental health services. • Willing to parent children who may have mental health challenges and willing to continue to seek resources and services for such needs. • Believe that the experiences children have had will significantly affect their behavior.

PARENTING A CHILD WITH A HISTORY OF SEXUAL TRAUMA

Be aware of the indicators of sexual abuse; recognize the effect of interrupted sexual development; be aware of the unique challenges associated with parenting children who have been sexually abused; recognize the potential risk factors for children who have experienced sexual trauma, including re-victimization, sexual trafficking, and re-enactment behaviors; understand that parents can learn and implement effective parenting strategies that can help keep children safe and help them heal from sexual trauma.

KNOWLEDGE	ATTITUDES
• Identify indicators of sexual abuse. • Describe the risk factors for children who have been sexually abused and how to respond to prevent these risk factors from manifesting. • Know how to draw safe boundaries with and for children regarding sexualized knowledge and/or behaviors.	• Willing to examine personal feelings about sexuality and how this might affect parenting children who have experienced sexual trauma. • Embrace the concept that children are not at fault for sexual abuse/assault they have experienced. • Willing to parent children with the understanding that sexual abuse/exposure is often undetected. • Prioritizes children experiencing as few losses as possible. • Willing to learn parenting strategies that help ensure children's safety and healing from sexual trauma.

PARENTING IN RACIALLY AND CULTURALLY DIVERSE FAMILIES

Understand the effect of parenting children from different racial/ethnic/cultural backgrounds; know how to honor and incorporate child's race/ethnicity/culture into existing family system; identify strategies to help children develop positive and proud identities; help children and families prepare for and handle racism in all forms.

KNOWLEDGE	ATTITUDES
• Know how to help children develop positive identities. • Understand the effect fostering/adopting children of a different racial/ ethnic/ cultural background will have on both the family and the child. • Describe strategies to help children prepare for and handle racism of all types. • Understand that additional knowledge, skills and attitudes are needed when parenting children from a different race/ culture than their own. • Understand the importance of supporting children's exploration of race/culture.	• Believe it is important to support the integration of the child's cultural identity into the family that is fostering or adopting. • Believe learning about different races, cultures and ethnicities and valuing the differences requires a commitment to lifelong learning. • Feel it is important to connect and help children connect with people/communities of similar backgrounds to the children. • Believe it is important to support children's exploration of race/culture.

PREPARING FOR AND MANAGING INTRUSIVE QUESTIONS

Aware of how to prepare family and friends for a child to join the family; understand how to honor the child's privacy; be familiar with strengths-based language to introduce the child into the community; understand strategies to manage intrusive questions and support children in responding to questions while preserving their privacy.

KNOWLEDGE	ATTITUDES	SKILL
• Identify strategies to appropriately answer questions and/or diffuse probing from others regarding the child. • Describe the strengths-based language that can be used when sharing information about the child and why they are with the family who is fostering or adopting them. • Identify strategies to prepare family and friends on how best to welcome a child joining the family.	• Willing to prioritize a child's feelings over adults' curiosity, even if the adult is well-intended and/or a family member. • Committed to the idea of protecting the child's background information on a need-to-know basis. • Willing to accept the responsibility for modeling appropriate responses to probing questions for the child. • Believe it is important to follow up privately with the child following an intrusive encounter with others.	• Use strengths-based, person-centered language when sharing information about the child and why they are with the family who is fostering or adopting them.

REUNIFICATION: THE PRIMARY PERMANENCY PLANNING GOAL

Understand the permanency options that exist and the role of parents who are fostering in permanency planning—especially with reunification; understand permanency from the child's perspective; recognize reunification as the primary goal for all children entering the foster care system; understand their role in caring for children while at the same time preparing them to return home; understand the role of parents who are fostering in working with the child's family to achieve reunification; understand concurrent planning.

KNOWLEDGE	ATTITUDES
• Identify strategies to support reunification efforts and help children plan for a successful reintegration into their family. • Understand that reunification is the primary permanency goal for children in care. • Define concurrent planning for children in care. • Define the role that parents who are fostering play in permanency planning including when reunification is not possible.	• Willing to support efforts to return children home. • Accept the idea that reunification is the primary permanency planning goal. • Willing to support children to find permanence when reunification is not viable.

SEPARATION, GRIEF, AND LOSS

Understand the effect of separation and ambiguous loss; learn different ways children grieve, including lifelong grieving, and importance of providing opportunities for grieving; recognize strategies to help children deal with grief and loss; understand loss and fractured attachments with birth family members and previous placements; recognize the importance of establishing and maintaining essential relationships with and for children; understand the effect of frequent moves and the importance of managing transitions for children; understand the separation, grief, and loss experienced by all members of the foster/adoption network.

KNOWLEDGE	ATTITUDES	SKILL
• Explain the various losses that children may experience and how these losses can affect their feelings and behaviors currently and in the future. • Describe the grieving process for children and behaviors that may be associated with it. • Define ways that children grieve and how it often looks different from the way adults express grief. • Understand how ambiguous loss and unrecognized grief affects children. • Understand how to support children in acknowledging their losses and grieving them over the life cycle. • Learn how to recognize grief and loss as the possible underlying causes of behaviors.	• Committed to recognizing and honoring children's losses and helping them to grieve. • Willing to reflect on how one's own losses may impact their parenting experience.	• Demonstrate the ability to recognize behaviors that may result from grief and loss and respond effectively in a way that considers the underlying cause of the behavior.

TRAUMA-RELATED BEHAVIORS

Learn how chaos, threat, neglect, and other adversity during development can alter the developing brain and can, in turn, can change the ways children think, feel, and act; understand the major stress responses we use to cope with perceived and actual threat; recognize the reasons and range of adaptive symptoms, from inattention and distractibility to avoidance and shut-down; learn about reasons for rejection and testing; recognize survival skills and coping strategies that result in a complex range of behaviors.

KNOWLEDGE	ATTITUDES	SKILL
• Realize how childhood trauma, including abuse and neglect, can affect the developing brain, and how this can have an ongoing effect on the child's development. • Recognize the effect of trauma on behaviors. • Understand how challenging behaviors can be coping or survival strategies caused by underlying trauma. • Understand triggers and how they affect children's behavior. • Understand the main strategies we use when under threat (arousal and dissociation). • Understand that fear and threat change the way we think, feel, and behave.	• Believe that learning information about the potential effects of trauma on children is essential. • Accept that they will need to learn a trauma-informed way to parent.	• Learn to recognize the range of "sensitized reactions" of children who have experienced trauma, separation, and loss.

EXPANDING YOUR PARENTING PARADIGM
(Online theme)

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

KNOWLEDGE	ATTITUDES
• Identify the characteristics of parents who are more effective when parenting children who have experienced trauma, separation, and loss. • Understand the parenting techniques that may need to be adjusted in order to meet children's emotional, developmental, social, and physical needs. • Understand why traditional parenting techniques are not always effective for children who have experienced trauma, separation, and loss.	• Willing to learn and expand their set of parenting skills and strategies to support children who have experienced trauma, separation, and loss. • Embraces the role of creating an environment that helps children heal. • Willing to understand and validate the intersecting identities and lived experience of the child. • Willing to see discipline as an opportunity to support children in learning and growing rather than punishment for behavior.

OVERVIEW OF CHILD WELFARE: AMERICAN INDIAN ALASKA NATIVE PERSPECTIVE
(Online theme)

Understand the child welfare system and how it operates; know the key players and their roles; be aware of crucial child welfare laws that have shaped child welfare; understand the role of the court system and how decisions get made; be aware of reasons children enter the child welfare system and the types of maltreatment children may face; understand the permanency options that exist for children and the importance of being considerate of a child's sense of time.

KNOWLEDGE	ATTITUDES
• Understand the role court plays in determining permanence for a child. • Understand the rights and responsibilities of parents who are fostering. • Understand the different types of maltreatment and how children come to the attention of the child welfare system. • Identify key players in child welfare and their roles in the child welfare system. • Know of how the child welfare system has developed over the years.	• Values daily caregiving for children as a fundamental role for parents who are fostering. • Willing to accept their role on the child welfare team and the roles of other team members. • Willing to accept the fact that although parents who are fostering are vital in the care of children, other stakeholders in the child welfare system will ultimately make crucial decisions for the children.

Appendix B: Classroom Themes At-a-Glance

Introduction and Welcome

Materials Needed	Handouts	Media

• Photos of children to be placed around the room (if you decidve to use them)
• Materials to make name tent cards
   • Sturdy paper
   • Markers
	• Class schedule for your site
	• Handout 1: Characteristics of Successful Foster and Adoptive Parents
		• Narrator's AIAN Introduction of Expanding Your Parenting Paradigm (Online theme)

Child Development

Materials Needed	Handouts	Media
None	• Handout 1: Glossary: Child Development Podcast • Handout 2: Broad Developmental Themes from Birth to Age 21 Years • Handout 3: Sexual Development • Handout 4: CDC Tip Sheet, Infants (0–1 year of age) • Handout 5: CDC Tip Sheet, Toddlers (1–2 years of age) • Handout 6: CDC Tip Sheet, Toddlers (2–3 years of age) • Handout 7: CDC Tip Sheet, Preschoolers (3–5 years of age) • Handout 8: CDC Tip Sheet, Middle Childhood (6–8 years of age) • Handout 9: CDC Tip Sheet, Middle Childhood (9–11 years of age) • Handout 10: CDC Tip Sheet, Young Teen (12–14 years of age) • Handout 11: CDC Tip Sheet, Teen (15–17 years of age)	• Podcast: Bruce Perry, MD, PhD

Attachment

Materials Needed	Handouts	Media
• A paper bag, hat, cardboard box, or plastic bin to use as a grab bag for the Examples of Relationship-Promoting Activities exercise • 3x5 cards for the Relationship-Promoting Activities activity (at least 2 per participant)	• Handout 1: Cycles of Attachment • Handout 2: American Indian Alaska Native Examples of Relationship Promoting Activities • Handout 3: Pottery JAR Activity Worksheet	• Podcast: Secure Attachment by Tami Decoteau • Podcast: Ambivalent Attachment by Tami Decoteau • Podcast: Avoidant Attachment by Tami Decoteau • Video: Attachment: Relationship-Focused Discipline

Separation, Grief, and Loss

Materials Needed	Handouts	Media
None	• Handout 1: Historical Loss Adult Form • Handout 2: AIAN Historical Trauma and Intergenerational Grief/Loss • Handout 3: Developmental Stages of Grief • Handout 4: Theories of the Stages of Grief in Foster Care and Adoption: Common Grief Responses for Children • Handout 5: Ambiguous Loss Haunts Foster and Adopted Children • Handout 6: Case Study: Addressing Darren's Grief • Handout 7: Case Study: Addressing Darren's Grief (for Kinship Caregivers)	• Podcast: Understanding Grief and Loss in Foster and Adoptive Children by Dr. Gregory Manning • Video: Separation, Grief, and Loss in Children and Adolescents with Debbie Riley • Video: Clip from documentary *Foster* featuring Sydney

Trauma-Related Behaviors

Materials Needed	Handouts	Media
• *Instant Family* DVD	• Handout 1: Identifying States • Handout 2: Holiday Dinner Scene (Option 2 if not showing the *Instant Family* clip) • Handout 3: Predictable Escalating and De-Escalating Behaviors Chart	• Video: Brain Basics • Video: State Dependent Functioning • Video: *Instant Family* clip (separate DVD); time stamps found on slide

Trauma-Informed Parenting

Materials Needed	Handouts	Media
• *Instant Family* DVD	• Handout 1: The Three Rs: Reaching the Learning Brain by Beacon House	• Podcast: Trauma Informed Parenting by Bruce Perry, MD, PhD • Podcast: The Emotional Container in Real Life by Diane Lanni • Video: *Instant Family* clip (time stamps found on slide) • Videos: Living Room Scenes 1 and 2

Effective Communication

Materials Needed	Handouts	Media
None	• Handout 1: The 4Ps • Handout 2: Case Study for Effective Communication • Handout 3: Case Study for Effective Communication for Kinship Caregivers	• Video: Effective Communication with Children and Teens with Heather Forbes • Video: Being Parallel to Allow for Effective Communication with Bruce Perry, MD, PhD

Reunification: The Primary Permanency Planning Goal
(Specific to child welfare)

Materials Needed	Handouts	Media
None	• Handout 1: Permanency Options • Handout 2: Case Study: Chandra • Handout 3: Supporting a Child Through the Reunification Process	• Video: Healing, Culture, are Key for Award-Winning Mother, Shana's Story • Video: Creating a Successful Reunification

Foster Care: A Means to Support Families
(Specific to child welfare)

Materials Needed	Handouts	Media
• A culturally relevant baby doll for the Raven's Story activity • Raven's Story: Instructions for Facilitators and Raven's Story for Volunteer Reader(s) are only for facilitators and any designated volunteers. This activity is easily adaptable for remote platform learning as it involves participant volunteers reading the story and others who are using Handout #2 to record their feelings as each part is read. • Prepared chart (or slide if facilitating remotely) for the Continuum of Contact activity • Sticky notes (3 x 3 size) for the Continuum of Contact activity (enough for each participant to have 5-6)	• Handout 1: Feelings When Needs are not Met for American Indian Alaska Native Families • Handout 2: Podcast with Dr. Dee Bigfoot: Key Points and Questions • Handout 3: Foster Parents: Bridging the Gap of Separation Between Children and Their Families	• Podcast: Foster Care as a Means to Support Families for American Indian Alaska Native Families by Dr. Dee Bigfoot

Preparing for and Managing Intrusive Questions

Materials Needed	Handouts	Media
• *Instant Family* DVD	• Handout 1: Tip Sheet: Talking about How We Describe Ourselves	• Video: Managing Intrusive Questions from Strangers with Beth Hall • Video: *Instant Family* video clip (time stamps found on slide)

Maintaining Children's Connections with Siblings, Extended Family Members, and Their Community
(Specific to child welfare)

Materials Needed	Handouts	Media
None	• Handout 1: Overcoming Barriers to Connection with the Child's Family	• Video: Clip from documentary *Foster* featuring Mary • Video: Re-Establishing Family Connections

Cultural Humility

Materials Needed	Handouts	Media
None	• Handout 1: A Glossary of Terms on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Expression (SOGIE) • Handout 2: Enhancing Your Toolbox Activity: Conversations That Ally • Handout 3: NTDC Parent Tip Sheet: Cultural Humility	None

Parenting in Racially and Culturally Diverse Families

Materials Needed	Handouts	Media
• Large assortment of small beads in at least eight different colors (enough for each participant to have at least 20 beads) • Bowls to hold a mixture of beads in each color (place at least 1 bowl per table before the start of class) • At least one clear plastic cup per participant and a few extras • Prepared flipchart sheet or whiteboard with list of racial/ethnic groups for bead activity	• Handout 1: Terms We'll Use • Handout 2: Parenting in Racially and Culturally Diverse Families for American Indian Alaska Native Families who Foster or Adopt • Handout 3: Recommendations for Parenting in Racially and Culturally Diverse Families	• Podcast: Parenting in Racially and Culturally Diverse Families by Beth Hall

Mental Health Considerations

Materials Needed	Handouts	Media
Three index cards labeled as follows: • Card 1: Hyper/Manic • Card 2: Oppositional • Card 3: Crazy	• Handout 1: Parent Tip Sheet: Children's Mental Health • Handout 2: Gifts of the Seven Grandfathers for American Indian Alaska Natives • Handout 3: Role of Parents Who Are Fostering when Psychotropic Medication Has Been Prescribed • Optional for sites: • List of mental health agencies and professionals that your agency recommends • Your agencies' policies on medication management	• Video: Addressing Children's Mental Health Needs • Video: Jessica's Success from *Foster*

Impact of Substance Use

Materials Needed	Handouts	Media
None	• Handout 1: Understanding Complicated Children: The Impact of Prenatal Exposure • Handout 2: Developmental Quadrant	None

Parenting a Child with a History of Sexual Trauma

Materials Needed	Handouts	Media
None	• Handout 1: Key Points: Right-Time Training Video on Sexual Trauma • Handout 2: False Allegations: How to Protect Yourself and Respond • Handout 3: House Rules for Sexual Safety • Handout 4: Interrupted Sexual Development	• Video: NTDC Right-Time Training on Sexual Trauma

Creating a Stable, Nurturing, Safe Home Environment

Materials Needed	Handouts	Media
• *Instant Family* DVD	• Handout 1: Reasonable and Prudent Parenting: Promoting Normalcy • Handout 2: Beginning to Know You • Handout 3: Safety and Support Plan Handout 4: Sample Safety and Support Plan • Handout 5: Parent Guide to Talk About and Fill Out the Safety and Support Plan • Handout 6: Parent Tip Sheet: Dos and Don'ts to Manage Escalated Behaviors • Handout 7: Parent Tip Sheet: FAQs on Self-Harming Behaviors • Handout 8: Managing Challenging Behaviors Case Study Examples Activity	• Video: *Foster* Clip #1: children being woken up and getting ready for school • Video: *Foster* Clip #2: child not able to get on school bus • Video: Creating a Stable, Nurturing, Safe Home Environment Kitchen Scene 1 • Video: Creating a Stable, Nurturing, Safe Home Environment Kitchen Scene 2 • Video: *Instant Family* video clip (time stamps found on slide)

Kinship Parenting
(Specific to kinship caregivers)

Materials Needed	Handouts	Media
None	None	• Podcast: Kinship Parenting with Kathleen Assaad

Building Resilience for Kinship Caregivers
(Specific to kinship caregivers)

Materials Needed	Handouts	Media
None	• Handout 1: Taking Care of Yourself: Tips for Kinship Care Providers • Handout 2: Case Study Examples • Any information you prepared as a handout on locally available options for support for • kinship caregivers	None

Appendix C: Right-Time Training Knowledge and Attitude Competencies

Theme	Knowledge	Attitude
Family Dynamics: Understand the impact of fostering/adopting on primary relationships (marriage, children already in the home and extended family) and impact on work and social life. Anticipate and plan for challenges and changes to family environment. Understand family functioning: Make informed decisions regarding the age of children and types of behaviors that the family could effectively handle, birth order and challenges that can arise due to changes related to birth order, and the presence of a parentified child in a family setting.	Define how fostering/adopting can impact all people in the family and their existing relationships. Understand the emotional stress that can result from fostering/adopting and how this might impact their family functioning. Understand the importance of birth order and how changes to this can cause challenges for children and youth. Understand techniques for responding to unaccepting extended family members. Understand how to prepare children already in the home with information and support regarding the families' decision to foster/adopt.	Willing to change family environment to incorporate the needs of children. Willing to assess their family in order to make an informed decision about the ages of children and the behaviors they bring that they would effectively be able to parent. Willing to assess the impact of fostering/adopting on all members of their current family.

Theme	Knowledge	Attitude
Sexual Trauma: Be aware of indicators of sexual abuse. Recognize the impact of interrupted sexual development. Be aware of the unique challenges associated with parenting children who have been sexually abused. Recognize the potential risk factors for children who have been sexually abused, including re-victimization, sexual trafficking, and re-enactment behaviors.	Identify indicators of sexual abuse. Describe the risk factors for children who have been sexually abused and how to respond to prevent these risk factors from manifesting. Know how to draw safe boundaries with and for children around sexualized knowledge and/or behaviors.	Willing to examine personal feelings about sexuality and how this might impact parenting children who have been sexually abused. Embrace the concept that children are not at fault for the sexual abuse/assault they have experienced. Willing to parent children with the understanding that sexual abuse/exposure is often undetected.
Building Children's Resilience: Understand concepts and definitions related to enhancing resiliency in children who have experienced trauma, separation, and loss. Understand the protective factors and how to build upon protective factors. Be aware of strategies that support children and develop their identity, self-esteem, and skills toward self-advocacy.	Describe the importance of the stable and committed relationship with a supportive parent, or another caregiving adult. Describe the protective factors of resiliency. Describe the importance of determining and understanding how loss, separation, and trauma have negatively affected the physical and mental development of resiliency in a child. Describe strategies to incorporate into daily care, creating a holistic/wholistic environment, which focus on developing and enhancing resiliency. Understand how to provide support and assistance to other caregivers in the provision of a trauma-informed environment that supports resiliency in children who have had loss, separation, or trauma.	Values relationship over compliance. Willing to work with the child to explore negative belief systems about self and world to improve perspective about self and world. Willing to advocate to meet the child's emotional needs in other environments.

Theme	Knowledge	Attitude
Education: Understand education considerations that may need to be put in place for children who have experienced trauma, separation, and loss.	Describe strategies to partner with teachers and schools to get educational needs of children met. Understand the challenges that children in foster care and children who have been adopted may face in school settings. Understand the potential emotional impact on children as they transition into or out of different schools.	Value being an active team member with schools and is willing to contribute knowledge, observations and recommendations to meet the needs of children.
Sensory Integration: Understand sensory integration. Be aware of how to be a sensory detective to identify children's needs. Develop strategies to meet children's sensory integration needs. Be aware of techniques to help children with sensory integration needs.	Able to identify and explain strategies to respond to children who have sensory seeking and sensory avoidance behaviors. Define sensory integration processing disorder and provide examples of sensory seeking and sensory avoidant symptoms that children can experience.	Committed to the role of sensory detective to determine children's needs and patterns. Open to learning proactive and new parenting techniques that ensure children's sensory needs are being met.

Theme	Knowledge	Attitude
Responding to Children in Crisis: Be aware of strategies to help children become regulated while de-escalating crises. Be aware of strategies to help children return to a calm state and keep children who are dysregulated safe while also keeping family members safe. Be aware of strategies to help children and families feel physically and psychologically safe. Understand the importance of partnering with other professionals and entities around a crisis (e.g., police, Department of Juvenile Justice, mental health professionals).	Define strategies that can be used to calm children who are escalated. Explain ways to make children feel physically and psychologically safe. Understand how dysregulated children are reacting from a place of fear with a fight, flight, and/or freeze response.	Committed to parent children who may have episodes of extreme dysregulation and/or crisis. Willing to learn techniques to keep oneself regulated even during crisis.

Theme	Knowledge	Attitude
Sexual Development and Identity: Understand healthy sexual development. Be aware of definitions and language (familiar with the differences between sex and gender, gender expression and gender identity, and sexual orientation and gender). Know how to help children and teenagers develop strategies to handle bias and discrimination. Be open to nonbinary gender identities. Be aware of how to help teenagers understand healthy sexual relationships.	Understand healthy sexual development. Know how to talk to children and teenagers about healthy sexual development and relationships. Define strategies to effectively support and affirm children and teenagers as they explore their sexual orientation and gender identity and expression. Define ways that bias, and discrimination connected to sexual orientation and gender identity and expression may impact children and teen's self-esteem. Define language related to sexual orientation and gender that is culturally attuned. Understand how to assist children and teenagers prepare for and manage bias and discrimination associated with their SOGIE. Know that it is developmentally appropriate for children and teenagers to be curious about sex and sexuality. Understand that children and youth need a safe and accepting environment in which to explore their sexuality.	Open to allowing children and teenagers developmentally appropriate space to explore their sexuality. Open to supporting children and teenagers in positive identity development connected to their sexual orientation and gender identity and expression.

Theme	Knowledge	Attitude
Life Story: Birth Story and Adoption Story: Understand when and how to tell children their adoption/birth story, based on age and developmental level. Recognize the importance of making this an ongoing conversation with children in an inclusive, open fashion. Be willing to honor strengths while also acknowledging challenges.	Understand the parent's role and how to help children integrate their life story, including the periods before and after adoption. Aware that children need clarification and integration regarding their birth story in order to support positive identity development. Understand the importance of introducing the birth and adoption story early and making it a natural, ongoing conversation with children based on their chronological and developmental age.	Believe that children have a right to know their birth story. Believe children have the right to develop and own their birth/adoption story. Believe it is important to positively and honestly share the birth/adoption story with children. Feel it is important to protect the child's birth story when communicating with others. Willing to search for additional resources needed to better understand and share the children's birth/adoption story in ways that honors racial, cultural and ethnic origins.

Theme	Knowledge	Attitude
Managing Placement Transitions (Specific to child welfare): Understand how to effectively support children in both planned and unplanned placement transitions both into and out of the foster/adoptive home. Help children feel welcome. Stay connected.	Can identify practical techniques and strategies to ensure children joining families feel welcome and connected. Can identify practical techniques and strategies to ensure smooth transitions for children who are moving out of the home. Can identify strategies to stay connected before, during and after a transition has occurred.	Prioritizes children experiencing as few losses as possible. Willing to be flexible to meet children's needs during transitions. Believe that it is the parent's responsibility to support children through transitions.
Preparing for Adulthood: Be aware of a strengths-based approach to preparing teenagers for successful transition to adulthood. Understand how developmental age impacts this process. Recognize that preparing for adulthood does not end at 18 and that teenagers require support well after. Know how to provide teenagers with skills that set them up for success as young adults, including these: • Understanding personal finances. • Connecting to medical providers. • Finding adult services. • Obtaining college and/or work-readiness skills. • Navigating relationships with adults, their families, and/or former foster families.	Know the common skills that teenagers will need to effectively navigate as an adult. Understand how developmental age impacts this process and recognize that preparing for adulthood does not end at 18. Know how to teach teenagers skills to prepare for college, work and life. Understand that it is the responsibility of the parent who is fostering to teach skills throughout all developmental stages that will help teenagers successfully transition to adulthood. Be aware of the various benefits and services that teenagers may be eligible to receive in their transition into adulthood.	Believe it is the parent who is fostering responsibility to help teenagers prepare for adult living. Believe that teenagers who have been in the child welfare system can lead productive, successful lives. Believe it is important to continue to support and stay connected with teenagers through the transition into adulthood and beyond.

Theme	Knowledge	Attitude
Preparing for and Managing Visitation: Understand how to check in and address children's concerns, questions, and emotions before and after visits with their families. Be able to name and validate the range of feelings associated with visits from children and their parents. Understand how to prepare the children for visitations. Recognize the importance of visits, even if children exhibit behaviors before or after the visits. Understand the role of the parent who is fostering or adopting in the visit and the need to keep the children free to enjoy the visits. Be aware of language to use with children when visits are missed or canceled.	Can identify strategies to help prepare children for visits with their families. Learn strategies to manage children's behaviors that may occur before or after visits.	Willing to relinquish caregiving of children when their parent is present. Believe that visitations are critical to arrange, even if they are missed or canceled or impact the child's behaviors.
Common Feelings Associated with Being Adopted: Understand common feelings that children can have that are associated with being adopted, such as believing that they were responsible for removal from their home, internalizing the message that they should be grateful or that they should feel lucky to have been adopted, feeling guilty regarding mixed loyalty issues, experiencing a sense of loss or being different, etc. Know strategies for parents to provide support for children to help them address and make sense of these emotions.	Identify the common feelings that children may have that are associated with being adopted. Know that children will process their loss and grief developmentally. Learn strategies that help children manage their feelings connected with their adoption story. Understand that adopted children think about their family, who will always have a psychological presence in the child's life.	Willing to acknowledge and validate the child's feelings associated with adoption. Willing to support the child in maintaining or opening connections with their family members. Willing to learn strategies that can help all family members deal with issues of loss, grief and other feelings associated with being an adoptive family.

Theme	Knowledge	Attitude
Building Parental Resilience: Understand the importance of self-care and practical ideas how to do it. Understand compassion fatigue. Recognize the importance of parents who are fostering or adopting maintaining their mental, physical, emotional, and spiritual well-being. Understand what parental resiliency is. Recognize the importance of resiliency of parents who are fostering or adopting. Understand how caring for children who have experienced trauma, separation, and loss can impact our own well-being. Understand the impact of loss on parents who are fostering or adopting and how this may affect parenting. Understand how to handle grief associated with children leaving the home.	Understand why maintaining physical, emotional and spiritual well-being is important for parents who are fostering or adopting. Know why self-care is a necessary component of good parenting and essential to strengthening resiliency. Know how the trauma, separation and loss that the children have experienced can impact the parent who is fostering or adopting them. Learn practical tips for self-care.	Committed to good self-care as an integral part of being an effective parent. Open to prioritizing children's needs while balancing ways to meet their own.

Theme	Knowledge	Attitude
Accessing Services and Support: Normalize the need to ask for services and the importance of being a lifelong learner. Recognize the need to become an advocate for children to ensure they get the services they need. Recognize the importance of developing a support network (school, community supports, friends, medical). Understand the types of services available, including counseling for trauma and loss. Understand the importance of medical/developmental screening and counseling. Understand the value of support groups and peer-to-peer programs.	Know key strategies to become an effective advocate for children. Understand the benefits of a support network and strategies to develop this type of network. Aware of the various types of services and supports available to children and the parents who are fostering and/or adopting them.	Believe seeking services and supports for both the child and parent who is fostering and/or adopting is a sign of strength. Believe it is helpful for the children and for the parent the fostering or adopting parent(s) to have access to a therapeutic network. Believe in advocating for the needs of children.

Appendix D: Right-Time Training Themes At-a-Glance

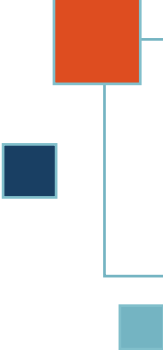| Theme	Video Highlights	Podcast Highlights
Building Children's Resilience	The Building Children's Resilience video defines resiliency, in part, as the ability to bounce back from hard times, and highlights how the parent-child relationship is critical to building resiliency. The importance of learning how to proactively teach and model coping and social skills to children is emphasized. The video highlights the building blocks of resiliency. It is important to note that children's resilience is very connected to their parents' or caretaker's resilience. We encourage parents who are fostering or adopting to review the Building Parental Resilience Right-Time Training theme in conjunction with this theme.	My Story podcast with Kelscey Martin discusses the importance of relationships to her own resilience while in kinship care.
Building Parental Resilience	This video describes the importance of parental resilience for parents who are fostering or adopting children who have experienced trauma, separation, and loss. The video also provides tips on how parents can build their own resilience while staying committed to meeting the needs of the child. The video will provide an overview of why maintaining physical, emotional, and spiritual well-being is important to parents who are fostering or adopting.	Podcast with Janice Goldwater, founder and executive director of Adoptions Together and adoptive mother. Goldwater shares her thoughts about the importance of self-care as a crucial component of successfully parenting children who have experienced trauma, grief and loss.
Common Feelings Associated with Being Adopted	The Common Feelings Associated with Being Adopted video summarizes some of the common thoughts and feelings experienced by children and adolescents in adoptive families. Adults who were adopted discuss their own personal experiences while also speaking on a more global level. One adoptee who has adopted children also shares that perspective. Suggestions are provided on how parents can assist and support their children with challenging emotions from a developmental perspective and determine when professional assistance is indicated.	No podcast for this theme.

Theme	Video Highlights	Podcast Highlights
Education	The Education video centers on two family's journeys as they navigate the education system in support of a child in their home who is experiencing the effects of trauma at school. We learn, through the families' experiences and from key experts, how trauma, separation and loss may affect academic and social development; ways to collaborate with schools and advocate for children; the basic services and supports available for children with educational needs such as Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) and 504 plans; and strategies for helping children who are struggling.	Two My Story podcasts are presented. Ashley Ash and Oscar Medrano discuss the impact placement moves had on their education. They share ideas about what was most helpful from the adults in their lives, including the importance of advocacy.
Family Dynamics	This video provides a realistic view of how family life will be impacted by fostering or adopting. Parents who are fostering or adopting will learn strategies for making the home environment responsive to the needs of children, while also attending to the long-term needs of the family as a whole. The video will highlight some of the challenges that might arise from fostering or adopting as well as the rewards that come with this responsibility.	My Story podcast with Jessica De Larwelle, who talks about her experience coming into foster care at age 15. She discusses what her foster parents did to help her and her sister cope with the transition into their home. Podcast with parent and child welfare expert Elizabeth Richmond, who shares her experience as a foster parent for more than 26 years, providing concrete strategies to help children feel welcome when transitioning into a new home.

Theme	Video Highlights	Podcast Highlights
Life Story: Birth Story and Adoption Story	The Life Story: Birth and Adoption Story video draws from the experiences and knowledge of foster and adoptive parents, adult adoptees, and experts to teach viewers the importance of talking to children about their stories, especially those aspects of a child's story that happened prior to being placed in a foster or adoptive family. The video introduces specific ways that parents can help children understand their past, including a better understanding of the reasons the children were placed in a foster or adoptive home.	My Story podcast with Mercedes Zhaler. Adopted at 3 days old, Zhaler shares her adoption story as a black child growing up with white parents in a rural community.
Managing Placement Transitions	The Managing Placement Transitions video demonstrates the important role that foster parents play in supporting children as they transition into and out of their home. Foster parents with extensive experience helping young people in foster care make smooth, supported transitions share their insights. Some of the skills and strategies covered include: making children feel welcome and connected, effective communication with children about the why, where, when, and how of transitions, maintaining flexibility in working to meet the child's needs and how to maintain ongoing connections with children.	My Story podcast with Christina Guillotte, who was placed in foster care at 8 years old, later reunified with her mother, and then placed in foster care again at age 15. She was adopted at age 17. She shares her story of managing placement transitions.
Preparing for Adulthood	The Preparing for Adulthood video centers on a family's experience in helping their child effectively transition to adulthood. The video introduces strategies for to assist youth in understanding personal finances, connecting with medical providers, finding adult support services, and developing readiness skills for college or work. The video highlights how to help youth make these transitions when their emotional development may not match their chronological age. Former foster and adopted youth share difficulties they faced in their transition to adulthood. Key experts provide further insight into unique challenges for adolescents who have experienced trauma, separation and loss and one family explains how they helped youth in their home weather these challenges.	My Story podcast with Kwam Green, who was placed in foster care at 12. He aged out at 20 years old and discusses his journey into adulthood, what his challenges were, and what helped him navigate this period of his life.

Theme	Video Highlights	Podcast Highlights
Preparing for and Managing Visitation	The Preparing for and Managing Visitation video highlights the perspectives of two parents who had their children removed and placed in the child welfare system. They share key tips on how to engage parents in visits and how to help parents feel comfortable and empowered to interact with their children. The family shares their perspectives related to preparing children for visits, supporting the children's parents during visits, co-parenting and how to help children after visits.	My Story podcast with Ashlei Steinbruegge, who shares her experience of living in four different foster homes and how important visitation is in staying connected to her mother and siblings.
Responding to Children in Crisis	The Responding to Children in Crisis video summarizes the phases of crisis and provides foster and adoptive parents with an understanding of each phase of crisis. Adoptive parents and professionals discuss the fright, flight or freeze acute stress response. They share their insights about how to prevent children from escalating by identifying and proactively managing triggers as well as setting up the environment to ensure children feel physically and psychologically safe. Parents also hear about how their reactions can impact crisis situations. Since not all crises can be prevented, the video also provides practical information on how parents can ensure that both they and the children themselves remain safe during the crisis phase.	My Story podcast with Jennifer Rhodes, who had 25 placements while in foster care. She describes the importance of relationship building in dealing with children in crisis. Podcast with Bruce Perry, MD, PhD, Founder of the ChildTrauma Academy and clinical expert, who discusses strategies for supporting a child in crisis. Podcast with resource parent Diane Lanni, who describes how to be an emotional container for a child in crisis.

Theme	Video Highlights	Podcast Highlights
Sensory Integration	The Sensory Integration video centers on a family's journey as they navigate daily life parenting children with sensory needs. Parents and experts talk about how early childhood trauma may impact a child's ability to process, organize, and act upon sensory stimuli. Viewers will learn how to become sensory detectives, how to safely and appropriately meet the child's sensory needs in the home, school, and community, and how to use sensory strategies to positively impact caregiver/child attachment.	No podcast for this theme.
Sexual Development and Identity	The Sexual Development and Identity video provides an overview of healthy sexual development and how parent who are fostering or adopting can help children navigate through this development. The video highlights an adoptive parent who has helped numerous children transition through adolescence including one of her children's changing SOGIE over time (SOGIE stands for sexual orientation, gender identity and expression). The video summarizes the importance of parents who are fostering or adopting being supportive and accepting of the youth's sexual development and formation of a strong, positive SOGIE.	My Story podcast with Jarel Melendez, who came into foster care at the age of 3 and transitioned out at age 18, when he was adopted by his maternal grandmother. Melendez shares his experience navigating sexual development and identity as an openly gay youth.
Sexual Trauma	The Sexual Trauma video describes the impact that sexual abuse or inappropriate exposure to sexual activity can have on a child and how this can impact the child's behavior and healthy sexual development. Parents who are fostering or adopting will learn how therapy can help children recover from sexual abuse and help parents provide the necessary supports to prevent re-abuse and re-enactment of the abuse on other children. Parents will hear how they can maximize protective factors to minimize future risk for children who have experienced sexual trauma, and how they can create a home atmosphere that can be physically and emotionally safe for children.	Podcast with Susan Josephsen, who is an adoptive mom and therapist. She shares her expertise about children who have been sexually abused.

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

TIP FROM A FOSTER/ADOPTIVE PARENT