



National Training and Development Curriculum

FOR FOSTER AND ADOPTIVE PARENTS



NTDC and Home Study Assessments Integration Guide

June 2024



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- The North American Council on Adoptable Children
- National Council for Adoption
- ChildTrauma Academy
- The University of Washington



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Overview of the National Training and Development Curriculum (NTDC)

Much has been learned in the past decade regarding the effect of maltreatment and the long-term influence of trauma, 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 on the preparation, education, and development of these foster and adoptive parents. Particularly, the child/youth's post-adoption stability and well-being 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) is intended to be a product that could be used by all states, tribes, and territories and applied consistently wherever it is implemented.

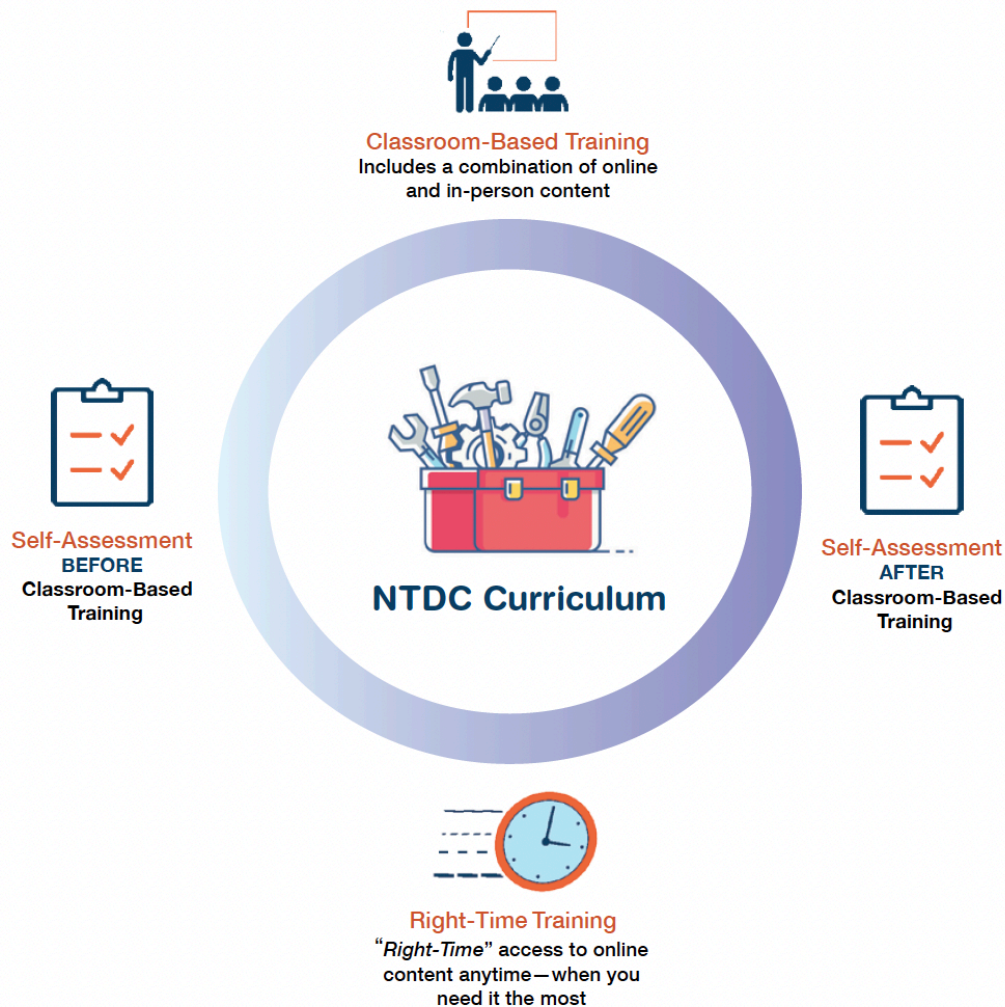
Target Population

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.

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.



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. There are a total of 23 classroom-based themes. Of these 23:

- Two themes (“Expanding Your Parenting Paradigm” and “Overview of the Child Welfare System”) are designed for online access so that participants can complete them independently or in a classroom setting.
- Two themes were created specifically for kinship families (“Kinship Parenting” and “Building Parental Resilience for Kinship Caregivers”).
- Two themes are specific to the intercountry/private domestic adoptive family population (“Intercountry Adoption Overview” and “Connections with Birth Families After Adoption”).
- Four themes (“Overview of the Child Welfare System,” “Foster Care: A Means to Support Families,” “Reunification: The Primary Permanency Planning Goal,” and “Maintaining Children’s Connections”) are not used with the intercountry and private domestic adoptive family population.

Right-Time Training

Right-Time Training is designed to provide current and prospective foster, adoptive, and kinship caregivers with timely access to a range of training once they have a child in their home. The NTDC Right-Time Trainings are flexible—they can be used by parents on their own, with a worker and the parent together, or in a support group format. Caregivers can pick and choose among the Right-Time Training topics based on what’s happening in their current parenting journey or based on the issues a child they may parent is facing. For many foster, kinship, and adoptive families, Right-Time Training offers an excellent, effective, and accessible option for ongoing training requirements within their agencies.

Purpose of This Guide

This guide is designed for child welfare professionals who conduct home study assessments. Its purpose is to illustrate how concepts explored in the NTDC can be integrated into common areas addressed in a home study assessment.

Common Home Study Elements



Childhood and Family History: Prospective caregivers provide information about their own upbringing, family dynamics, and significant life events. This helps assess how their past experiences may influence their parenting approach.



General Parenting Skills: Prospective caregivers discuss their parenting philosophies, approaches to discipline, and strategies for supporting a child's development. Professionals evaluate the prospective caregiver's capacity to provide a nurturing and stable environment.



Specialized Parenting Skills and Knowledge: Prospective caregivers demonstrate their understanding of attachment theory, trauma-informed care, and relevant parenting techniques. Professionals assess the prospective caregivers' readiness to address the unique needs of foster or adoptive children. This may also include plans to support a child's identity and cultural connections.



Support Systems: Professionals examine the prospective caregivers' support networks, including family, friends, and community resources. They assess the availability of emotional, practical, and financial support for the prospective parents and the children in their care.



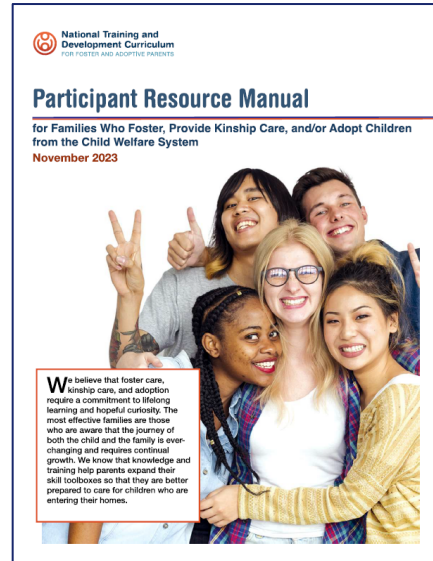
Adoption and Foster Care Considerations: Professionals assess the prospective caregiver's openness to supporting permanency goals for children, shared parenting and other types of ongoing contact with a child's birth family members.

NTDC and Home Study Integration

During the home study assessment process, prospective caregivers can be given the opportunity to share insights they gained from completing NTDC's classroom-based themes. These insights can offer valuable information about their readiness to care for children.

One of the most direct connections between home study assessment elements and the NTDC is the **reflection/relevance component** of the classroom-based content.

- Each NTDC classroom-based theme includes a reflection/relevance component where parents are asked to apply the information learned to their own lives. This 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.
- Participants are encouraged to utilize the Participant Resource Manual to document their responses to these questions.



When home study visits are taking place, prospective caregivers can be invited to share key takeaways from their responses to the reflection/relevance questions with the child welfare professional. The child welfare professional can incorporate some of the information shared by prospective caregivers into their home study report.

Incorporating NTDC Insights into Home Study Assessments: Step-by-Step Considerations

1

Identify NTDC process used in your jurisdiction.

Determine which NTDC themes are included in the preparatory training for prospective caregivers in your jurisdiction. Verify the specific themes prospective caregivers are required to complete prior to beginning the home study interviews. This information may vary depending on your location's training requirements and process.

2

Review Reflection/Relevance components.

Each NTDC classroom-based theme includes a reflection/relevance component. This aspect prompts participants to apply the information learned in NTDC into their own lives, encouraging self-reflection and challenging assumptions about caregiving.

Identify which reflection/relevance questions you want to discuss during home study interviews. Different reflection/relevance questions will deepen your understanding of the prospective caregiver's life experiences and of the insights they have gained for supporting children who have experienced separation, loss and trauma.



Reflection/Relevance Questions for each classroom-based theme are listed on pages 9 – 14 of this guide.

3

Prepare prospective caregivers.

Prior to conducting home study interviews, notify prospective caregivers that you would like to discuss some of the takeaways they gained from participating in NTDC including responses to some of the curriculum's reflection/relevance questions.

NTDC participants are encouraged to use the Participant Resource Manual to document their responses to reflection/relevance questions. Prospective caregivers may want to have this manual with them during home study interviews.

Note: Participants should not be required to provide copies of their Participant Resource Manual to the home study assessor.

4

Interview prospective caregivers.

During home study visits, engage in conversations with prospective caregivers about key takeaways from their responses to reflection/relevance questions in the NTDC themes they have completed.

Include relevant insights from prospective caregivers in the home study report. Highlight how their reflections align with the skills and experiences necessary to provide effective support to children who have experienced trauma, separation, and loss.

NTDC participants should not be expected to share all thoughts and comments expressed in response to a reflection / relevance question. Rather, this should be seen as an opportunity for deepening the conversation between the prospective caregiver and child welfare professional about skills and experiences that will be used to provide support to children.

5

Recommend additional training opportunities.

After conducting home study interviews and prospective caregivers' responses to reflection/relevance questions, identify any gaps or areas where additional training may be beneficial.

Appendix A provides a list of FREE training materials focused on trauma-informed caregiving, steps for building attachment, and therapeutic interventions for children who have experienced separation, loss, and trauma, and other relevant topics.



By following these steps, you can effectively incorporate insights gained from NTDC classroom-based themes into the home study assessment process, enhancing the understanding of prospective caregivers' readiness to support children who have experienced trauma, separation, and loss.

Common Home Study Elements and NTDC Classroom-Based Themes

Following is a description of common home study elements along with the corresponding NTDC classroom-based theme's reflection/relevance questions.

Common Home Study Element: Childhood and Family History

This element of the home study includes information from caregivers about their own upbringing, family dynamics, and significant life events. This helps assess how an prospective caregiver's past experiences may influence their parenting approach.

NTDC Classroom-Based Theme	NTDC Reflection and Relevance Questions
<p>Attachment</p>	<p>We all have a primary attachment style or ways that we tend to interact with others. Our adult attachment style will influence the way we parent. Consider your own attachment history for a moment and reflect on how that may affect your parenting.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Think about your own attachment history—the way that your parent or earliest caregivers took care of you. Consider for a moment how you were parented. • How might you categorize your parent(s)' style of attachment? How did that feel for you as a child? • Now picture the child you hope to foster or adopt. Think about how you might want to parent this child differently or similarly. Take a moment to write any reflections down. If you find that some thoughts and feelings surface outside of class, it would be good to continue reflecting on the effect on your parenting.
<p>Separation, Grief, and Loss</p>	<p>Parents need to consider their own grief and loss triggers. Think back to a personal loss. Be aware that dealing with our own losses may be triggering, so remember to do what you need to do to take care of yourself. Now that you have thought about a personal loss, consider these questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can you imagine how supporting a child's loss might stir up feelings in you? • What are some ideas for how you will practice good self-care to help deal with these feelings?
<p>Parenting a Child with a History of Sexual Trauma</p>	<p>Think about your childhood and how you were given messages about boundaries, protection of your body, and privacy.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What were those messages? • Were they explicit messages, or were they more subtle and delivered by example? • Is there anything about those messages that you would change for a child coming into your home?

Common Home Study Element: General Parenting Skills

In this element, prospective caregivers will provide information about their parenting philosophies, approaches to discipline, and strategies for supporting a child's development. This information helps professionals evaluate the prospective caregivers' capacity to provide a nurturing and stable environment.

NTDC Classroom-Based Theme	NTDC Reflection and Relevance Questions
Introduction and Welcome	<p>Refer to Handout 1*: Characteristics of Successful Foster and Adoptive Parents. Identify one characteristic that you consider a strength and one that is a challenge for you.</p> <p><i>*Handout 1: Characteristics of Successful Foster and Adoptive Parents can be found in Appendix B of this guide.</i></p>
Child Development	<p>Think about “Randy” from the Classroom-Based Training activity*. What do you think would be most challenging to you if you were caring for him, as a child with such a mixture in developmental stages? What support might you need?</p> <p><i>*In this activity, participants are given descriptions of a child’s behavior in seven different developmental domains and asked to estimate the child’s age from the descriptions. At the end of the activity, the child’s actual age is revealed, and there is a discussion around the difficulties and challenges for the child and the parents that might result from the differences in developmental and chronological age.</i></p>
Effective Communication	<p>Think of a time recently when you had an interaction with a child or teen that did not go well. Recall the details of the situation for a moment. Then consider how you might have handled it differently now that you have the new skills that you learned in this theme.</p>

Common Home Study Element: Specialized Parenting Skills and Knowledge

This home study element allows a prospective caregiver an opportunity to demonstrate their understanding of attachment theory, trauma-informed care, and relevant parenting techniques. This may also include the prospective caregiver's plans to support a child's identity and cultural connections. Professionals assess the prospective caregiver's readiness to address the unique needs of foster or adoptive children.

NTDC Classroom-Based Theme	NTDC Reflection and Relevance Questions
<p>Trauma Related Behaviors</p>	<p>When you feel drained, it will be critical that you take care of yourself so that you are able to provide the nurturing and regulation the child needs, even in challenging situations.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When you are highly distressed or threatened, do you use tend to use more hyperarousal strategies (do you get confrontational, agitated, and angry with conflict/frustration/stress) or dissociative strategies (do you avoid and shut down with conflict), or some of both? What do you think sparked you to develop these strategies? • Based on what you have been learning, identify the list of regulating or calming activities that you use or can use. What makes you feel better when you are upset? • Reflect on how your responses to distress may play out when interacting with a dysregulated child.
<p>Trauma Informed Parenting</p>	<p>Recall the podcast called "The Emotional Container in Real Life." Think about Diane Lanni and her son. Now think about a child having a meltdown, yelling at you, and calling you names. Consider these questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do you think it would feel to you? • What might be your first reaction? • How would you get yourself ready to help the child co-regulate? • What support might you need?
<p>Cultural Humility</p>	<p>Being culturally humble means that we will always be growing. Take a moment to reflect about what would help you to be more prepared to parent children from cultures and backgrounds that are different from yours. To help guide your thoughts, use the sample statements below. How would I like to become more prepared to take children from cultures and backgrounds that are different than mine?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Educate myself about _____. • Educate family members about _____. • Stay open by_____. • Expand my social network by_____.

<p>Parenting in Racially and Culturally Diverse Families</p>	<p>We have learned about parenting in racially and culturally diverse families. Using Handout 2*: Recommendations for Parenting in Racially and Culturally Diverse Families, circle those suggestions that you think would be easiest to you to do and put an X by those that seem harder. Then, reflect on why this might be so.</p> <p><i>*Handout 2: Recommendations for Parenting in Racially and Culturally Diverse Families can be found in Appendix C of this guide.</i></p>
<p>Mental Health Considerations</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What do you think a child with mental health considerations needs most from those caring for them? • Think about people you know who have experienced mental health challenges and have been successful. How did they address the challenges?
<p>Impact of Substance Use</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How hard do you think it will be to remember and respond to the child’s developmental age, as opposed to their chronological age? • What are some behaviors that might easily be misinterpreted by adults that are more likely symptoms of a brain injury? • What supports and resources in your community do you think would be helpful to support a child with an FASD, and how could you find these supports and resources?
<p>Creating a Stable, Nurturing and Safe Home Environment</p>	<p>Make a list of the challenging behaviors that you worry about dealing with. Then answer the following questions to help you plan and prepare to manage challenging behaviors.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the behaviors that really bother you? Why do they trouble you so much? • What is your greatest fear about managing one of these challenging behaviors? • What proactive things do you think you can do to cut off escalations before they occur? • List one or two skills that you’ve learned in this theme. • How do you honestly think you would react in the face of escalating behaviors, and how would you want to react differently?
<p>Kinship Parenting</p>	<p>Reflect on some of the feelings the child is having about living apart from their mom or dad and how have they displayed these feelings with their behavior.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When you see the behavior, how have you responded in the past? • What did you learn today that can help you respond differently when this comes up in the future? • Write a letter/response for how you would like to respond to the child next time you notice these feelings on display.

Common Home Study Element: Support Systems

In this element, professionals examine the prospective caregivers' support networks, including family, friends, and community resources. The assessment includes the availability of emotional, practical, and financial support for the prospective parents and the children in their care.

NTDC Classroom-Based Theme	NTDC Reflection and Relevance Questions
<p>Preparing for and Managing Intrusive Questions</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What do you envision as responses from friends and family as you share that you may be fostering or adopting? If you have already told people, how have their reactions felt to you? • Is there anyone you are concerned about telling of your plan to foster or adopt? Why? How do you think things will play out between this person and the child over time? • Think about who among your family, friends or community might be judgmental or use stigmatizing language. How do you plan to manage this?
<p>Maintaining Connections with Siblings, Extended Family Members, and Their Community</p>	<p>Write down the names of three important people in your life, including at least one sibling if you have one. For each one, answer the following questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What role do they play in your life? • When was the last time you talked with them or saw them? • What would be missing if you no longer had contact with them? • What efforts would you do or make to be sure to maintain contact with them?
<p>Building Resilience for Kinship Caregivers</p>	<p>Write one challenge you expect to experience as you take on the role of parenting a family member's child and one behavior you will practice to reduce stress and avoid burnout.</p>

Common Home Study Element: Adoption and Foster Care Considerations

In this home study element, professionals assess the prospective caregiver's openness to supporting permanency goals for children, shared parenting and other types of ongoing contact with a child's birth family members.

NTDC Classroom-Based Theme	NTDC Reflection and Relevance Questions
<p>Reunification: The Primary Permanency Planning Goal</p>	<p>Think about a child you know and care about, and imagine the child is in foster care and living in your home. Imagine you are telling the child how you plan to help them return to their parents by answering the following questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do you hope to participate in reunification activities (visitation, court appearances, reporting, etc.)? • What do you hope to be able to do to support parents and other family members? • What are you willing to do after the child returns home to help the reunification be successful?
<p>Foster Care: A Means to Support Families</p>	<p>Reflect on what thoughts, beliefs, and attitudes you may have had regarding parents prior to beginning the Classroom-Based Training.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What thoughts, beliefs, and attitudes did you have about parents whose children are in foster care before you started this class? • How have your thoughts, beliefs, and attitudes regarding parents changed?
<p>Kinship Parenting</p>	<p>Think about a recent situation where the child's parent or other family member argued with you about something related to the child in your care.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How did you respond? • If you changed your response, do you think there would have been a better outcome to the situation? <p>Write a short letter to the individual describing your preferred response, taking into consideration some of the responses that we have discussed in the session today.</p>

Appendix A

Additional Training Resources

NTDC Right-Time Training Resources

NTDC provides 15 Right-Time Training themes. Each theme was developed to provide foster, adoptive and kinship caregivers with information and resources through the right training at just the right time. Themes include:

- Accessing Services and Supports
- Building Children’s Resilience
- Building Parental Resilience
- Common Feelings Associated with Being Adopted
- Education
- Family Dynamics
- Intercountry Adoptions Medical Considerations (designed for families who adopt via the intercountry process)
- Life Story: Birth Story and Adoption Story
- Managing Placement Transitions
- Preparing for Adulthood
- Preparing for and Managing Visitation
- Responding to Children in Crisis
- Sensory Integration
- Sexual Development and Identity
- Sexual Trauma

Accessing Right-Time Training

There are two main ways to access Right-Time Training and the rest of the NTDC curriculum:



- Visit <https://ntdcportal.org>, then choose Curriculum, then Right-Time Training Materials. You’ll see a list of all topics. For access to the courses in an e-learning format, visit <https://ntdcportal.org/training-for-families/>
- Visit <https://learn.childwelfare.gov/> and scroll down to National Training and Development Curriculum for Foster and Adoptive Parents. After you create a CapLEARN account, you can choose Right-Time Training, pick a topic, and click on the Enroll Me button.

CORE Teen Right-Time Training Resources

CORE Teen is a curriculum for prospective and current parents who are or will be raising older children from foster care who have moderate to severe emotional and behavioral challenges.

Just like NTDC, CORE Teen was developed with funding from the Children's Bureau, Administration on Children, Youth and Families and is available FREE to states, tribes, territories and private agencies.

CORE Teen's Right-Time Training Resources include:

- Relationship Development
- Parental Adaptation
- Parental Regulation
- Trauma Informed Resource Parenting 1 – Understanding and Recognizing the Effects of Trauma
- Trauma Informed Resource Parenting 2 – Understanding Behavior
- SOGIE
- Transitions
- Continued Connections

Accessing CORE Teen Right-Time Training

There are two main ways to access Right-Time Training and the rest of the CORE Teen curriculum:



- Visit <https://spaulding.org/professionals/spaulding-institute/core-teen-curriculum/> then scroll down to the Right Time training section.
- Visit <https://learn.childwelfare.gov/> and scroll down Search the Course Catalog. Search for CORE Teen. After you create a CapLEARN account, you can choose Right-Time Training, pick a topic, and click on the Enroll Me button.

Handout 1:
Characteristics of Successful Foster and Adoptive Parents

HANDOUT #1: CHARACTERISTICS OF SUCCESSFUL FOSTER AND ADOPTIVE PARENTS

An essential component of NTDC curriculum is the inclusion of 14 characteristics of successful foster and adoptive parents that were identified through a review of literature, stakeholder interviews, and evaluation of existing curricula. Self-assessment and self-reflection are essential components of the NTDC curriculum. Several characteristics are highlighted in each theme, allowing continued opportunity to think about their importance and to reflect on your parenting characteristics as they relate to each theme. The online self-assessment will provide you with feedback and suggest resources based on your self-rating.

Choosing to reflect on one’s own parenting characteristics, knowledge, skills, and abilities begins with a recognition that all parents have areas of strength as well as challenges. This self-assessment is designed to help you identify both strengths and challenges. As you use this self-assessment tool, be honest with yourself and use your self-ratings to identify areas for growth and change. If you already completed the online self-assessment, use the feedback you received to jot down the strengths and challenges you already identified. If you have not yet completed the online self-assessment, you can use the information below to help identify two characteristics that you see as strengths and two characteristics that you see as challenges for yourself.

Identify your top 2 strengths: 1. 2.	Identify your top 2 challenges: 1. 2.
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Tolerance for Rejection:

It is not unusual for a child who has been hurt and felt let down or rejected by caretakers in the past to direct their anger and hurt at others who take on a caretaking role. The child who has felt rejection may try to defend against being hurt and feeling rejected again by being the first to “reject,” rather than wait on the expected rejection from the parent. Foster and adoptive parents will need to keep the long game in mind. The child will feel less need to reject after they feel increased safety and security in their relationship with you. That said, there is nothing easy about hurtful comments and experiencing rejection, even when we are aware of what is going on. Parents are only human. It is important to remember to get support and validation from others who know how hard the parent is working to best meet the child’s needs.



Adaptable/Flexible:

Parents who are adaptable/flexible have the willingness and ability to make changes in parenting style and/or responses to accommodate, encourage, and support children's physical, emotional, and cognitive needs. Parents who are adaptable and flexible are not restricted by stereotypical or societal roles/expectations. Instead, these parents are comfortable acknowledging when something is not working and are open to trying a different approach or modifying their expectations of the children they are parenting. The ability to be adaptable/flexible allows more responsiveness to children's needs.

Have a Sense of Humor:

Parents who have a sense of humor can laugh at themselves and do not take everything too seriously. These parents can use humor to manage the stress of parenting, vent feelings, and deescalate tense situations to build rapport and relationship with a child. It is important for these parents to be mindful to use humor without sarcasm or insults since children who have experienced trauma may not understand the distinction between joking and comments that are uncaring or belittling.

Believe in Self-Efficacy:

Self-efficacy is the feeling of competence and confidence in the ability to effectively parent. Parenting children who have experienced trauma, separation, or loss will sometimes challenge parents to expand their parenting strategies. Parents who believe in self-efficacy acknowledge that they don't know the answer to every problem but are confident that they can resolve problems and issues that inevitably arise.

Realistic:

Parents who are realistic understand that there will be varying degrees of success with different situations and with each child. Realistic parents understand that their efforts may not result in a change in a child's understanding or behavior until much later and they are able to make mistakes, adjustments, and allowances as they re-evaluate expectations. Parents know what their expectations are for the child and can identify when those expectations are not being met and may need to change. They also know that children will make mistakes and that "two steps forward and one step back" is a natural part of growth. Realistic parents help the child understand this too as they celebrate the small steps and see mistakes as learning opportunities.

Trustworthy:

Parents who are trustworthy can create an environment of confidence and safety in their home. Trust is based on understanding the importance of honesty, consistency, routines, and rituals, and then being able to implement these. It requires the ability to be prudent about what is promised to a child, so that the child's expectations are met. Trustworthy parents are careful about their communication so that they consistently prove to the child and the child's birth family that they are reliable.



Attuned:

Being an attuned parent is the ability to be aware of, understand, and be sensitive to the needs of a child at any given time, despite the degree to which the child expresses or does not express their needs with words. Being in tune with moods, level of exhaustion, hunger, rhythms, responses, and needs for physical contact, affection, security, and movement will help the parent respond positively to the child and build trust and a sense of safety. Attunement also requires that the parent stay calm and emotionally regulated so they can help the child regulate their own emotions.

Resilient and Patient:

Parents who are resilient and patient understand their role as helping children achieve success in small steps, beginning with measurable, daily tasks. They don't dwell on past mistakes or the future to pressure themselves, their partners, or the children they parent. These parents notice and celebrate small successes, teaching children to appreciate the accumulative effect of their efforts. Patient and resilient parents have an ability to wait for answers or change without giving up and can withstand "testing behaviors" including hurtful, angry, or rejecting comments and actions. Children with resilient and patient parents have a steady, consistent support as they grow and develop.

Emotionally Supportive/Nurturing:

For children who have experienced separations, loss, and trauma, their behaviors are often tied to a lack of emotional safety as they oftentimes have difficulty feeling calm, safe, and secure. Emotionally supportive and nurturing parents create a sense of safety for the child. Be present for the child by showing up physically and creating a safe place for the child to process and talk. Find quiet times each day to give the child your full attention. Practice your listening and communication skills, avoid interrupting, and be careful not to jump in too much with advice. Your ability to be empathetic, emotionally supportive, and nurturing when children share feelings or memories will help create a sense of felt safety.

Appreciative of Diversity / Other World Views:

Parents who are appreciative of diversity and other world views have an understanding and a sense of respect for children who bring a different set of values with them. For parents, it means having an ability to reconcile that the child's behaviors and values may not align with their own behaviors and values. They accept that this will feel uncomfortable and, at times, may feel wrong as dealing with differences in beliefs and cultural expectations may be challenging. If not resolved, this can be a source of discontent, tension, and conflict. Parents with an appreciation for diversity and other world views show their children and their children's family respect and acceptance.



Committed:

Parenting a child who has a history of loss and trauma contains many challenges. Commitment is the ability to be dedicated to a child, sticking with them no matter how difficult the journey. Parents will need to carefully and consciously consider the requirements of parenting a child and understand that it is not about fulfilling their own parental needs. A parent who is committed recognizes the role may not offer much validation or reinforcement of their skills and talents, but they are determined to engage in the long-term work of unconditional parenting and promoting child well-being. Commitment allows parents to persevere in the face of adversity, knowing that they are doing the right thing.

Empathetic/Compassionate:

Parents who are empathetic and compassionate can perceive or feel others' emotions, particularly disappointment or sadness. It requires that the parent look past the current behavior and find the core distress related to the child's response. Parents who practice empathy and compassion know they cannot shield the child from pain but can allow the child to express the pain and grief they experience. These practices help children identify and process their own emotions and create an environment conducive to healing and change.

Self-Aware/Self-Reflective:

Effectively parenting a child who has experienced loss and trauma will require self-awareness and the ability to self-reflect. We are all impacted by our upbringing as children. It will be important to be aware of how our upbringing impacts our parenting and reflect on when this does and does not translate into parenting that meets the needs of the child. Also, parenting a child whose history includes loss and trauma may bring up a parent's history of unresolved losses and traumas. For example, a child's grief reactions may trigger the parent's unresolved loss and grief which may prevent them from being able to respond to the child in a supportive, nurturing way if the parent is not self-aware.

Relationally-oriented:

Relationally-oriented parents recognize and value the importance of relationships to the child. They show respect for the child's birth family and previous relationships, as well as their own relationship directly with the child. These parents know how to move beyond any anger or jealousy they may feel toward birth families to help children resolve relationship issues with birth family members, former foster families, and others so the children can ultimately grieve losses, maintain connections, and feel good about themselves.



HANDOUT #2: RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PARENTING IN RACIALLY AND CULTURALLY DIVERSE FAMILIES

Below are tips shared by adults who have had the experience of being raised in racially and culturally diverse families sharing practical things parents can do to help children feel a greater sense of belonging and connection to their race, culture and/or ethnicity.

- Enroll children in activities with people from the child's birth heritage.
- Be especially mindful of diversity in the school the child will be attending as the child will spend so much time there. Visit the school in advance and you can also find statistical data on the Department of Education website.
- Consider moving to or living near neighborhoods where people look and/or speak like the child.
- Seek hair and skin care advice and products from the child's community of origin. Connect your child to people and places where they can learn about these things, such as barber shops and beauty salons. (While best done in person, the internet is also a resource.)
- Expose the child to the language, food, art, and customs of their birth heritage, both inside and outside of your home.
- Positively influence the child with books, movies, current events, and music that represent the child's race and or culture. Do this in ways that engage and open discussions-this is an active not passive process, unlike leaving books on a shelf.
- While parenting the child:
 - ✓ Highlight the contributions and resilience of people from the child's race or culture that has been demonstrated in history.
 - ✓ Acknowledge racism, discrimination, oppression, and historical trauma. This involves understanding inequitable outcomes in modern America for people of color. Recognize the reality of poorer educational outcomes in communities of color, health disparities, like mortality rates being highest for Black children, the wealth gap between minorities and majority groups, and a disproportionate representation of people of color in the criminal justice and foster care systems.
 - ✓ Develop your own comfort in having tough conversations about the life skills children of color need, such as how to interact with the police, or in a store, or the possibility of women of color being oversexualized. Keep these discussions concrete, clear and accurate.

- ✓ Allow for a range of reactions to come up, such as anger, sadness, pride, pushing away, overidentifying, etc.
- ✓ If you do not have comfort, skill, or knowledge in these topics, it is ok and even advisable to bring in someone who does.





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