

Recommendations for Building a Resource Parent Learning System for North Carolina

*NC Resource Parent Assessment
and Training Workgroup*

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Executive Summary

North Carolina's child welfare system has much to be proud of. Based on data from the 2010 federal Child and Family Services Reviews (CFSR), we are doing quite well compared to other states when it comes to measures such as children re-entering foster care (lowest in the country), stability of foster care placements (best in the country), and recurrence of child maltreatment (Duncan, 2012).

Yet when it comes to other key indicators, there is room for improvement. For example, we do not do as well as other states when it comes to reunifying children in foster care with their families within twelve months, or the length of time children spend in foster care (Duncan, 2012).

Our performance in all of these areas depends on many factors, including how well the child welfare system recruits, selects, trains, and supports foster, adoptive, and kinship families. Recognizing this connection, in autumn 2011 the NC Division of Social Services convened the NC Resource Parent Assessment and Training Workgroup. It asked this group, which is comprised of the Division's child welfare training partners and representatives of public and private child-placing agencies, to develop recommendations for improving the ability of North Carolina's child welfare agencies to assess and train resource parents.

Our group began its work by taking stock of North Carolina's current resources and training requirements for resource parents, building on the Jordan Institute for Families' 2011 [assessment of foster parent training in North Carolina](#). We then developed processes for identifying and evaluating pre-service and in-service courses for resource parents, as well as instruments for assessing applicants and licensed foster parents.

As we carried out this task, it became clear to us that recommendations for implementing a few courses or assessments tools, though helpful in the short term, would not be enough to put our state on the path toward continual improvements in foster care outcomes. To do this we believe North Carolina needs a more robust infrastructure to support the assessment, training, and ongoing learning of foster parents and other resource families. Thus, in addition to recommendations for implementing specific courses and assessments tools, we include below a vision and plan for building a statewide, high-quality, evidence-based, comprehensive resource parent learning system.

To continue improving outcomes, our state needs a more robust infrastructure to support the assessment, training, and ongoing learning of resource families.

Recommendations

- 1. Focus on results.** Rather than emphasize *training events*, which occur one time and may or may not lead to the results we seek, this system should have as its goal measurable, sustained improvements in resource parents' knowledge, skills, and attitudes (i.e., competencies). To achieve this goal, coaching, transfer of learning activities, and ongoing support must be an integral part of this learning system.

Sub-recommendations:

- *Adopt and use the term "resource parent"* (meaning one or more of the following: family foster care parents, therapeutic foster care parents, adoptive parents, and kinship parents) to ensure the learning system is open to and meets the needs of families who may play different roles at different times.

- *Provide training at no cost to resource parents.* Resource parents are unpaid volunteers who give up their time, privacy, and resources and generously open their homes to help vulnerable children and families. They should not be asked to bear the costs of creating or sustaining this learning system. All training (online, classroom, etc.) should be provided at no cost to resource parents.
- *Provide consistent, quality training to all resource parents.* Training for all North Carolina's resource parents should be seamless between public and private agencies (i.e., consistent in content and quality). In support of this, public and private agencies should have access to, and actively participate in, train-the-trainer (TOT) events and other opportunities to stay current on the training, coaching, and support approaches being used by their peers in North Carolina.

2. Base the learning system on competencies. *Competencies* are the general knowledge, skills, and attitudes individuals need to do their jobs. The goal of the system should be to improve short and long-term outcomes for children in care by continually building each resource parent's competencies.

Basing the learning system on competencies will allow agencies and resource parents to identify strengths and needs for continuing education and skill development. For the Division and its partners, the competencies will help identify priorities for adding new trainings to the system, especially in the early stages of developing a training infrastructure. Competencies can also guide policies that specify what training content is required.

Sub-recommendations:

- *Adopt and build upon our "universe of competencies."* Using the work done by the Institute for Human Services and others as a starting point, the workgroup developed a comprehensive list of competencies needed by resource parents at various stages of their careers. We recommend that the Division adopt the universe of competencies found in Appendix A, with the understanding that it may be necessary to modify and expand this competency list in the future to reflect the evolving knowledge, skills, and attitudes needed by resource parents.
- *Actively promote the use of professional development plans.* We recommend the Division require all child-placing agencies to create and actively use and update individualized professional development plans for resource parents. Doing so will help agencies and resource parents identify strengths and needs for continuing education and skill development.

3. Use learning communities to explore and test assessment tools and approaches for strengthening resource parent assessment. After considering the extent to which available instruments could help agencies understand and address strengths and learning needs of resource parent applicants, the workgroup recommends that the Division help the state's child-placing agencies to form one or more learning communities focused on enhancing assessment of applicants.

A *learning community* is made up of individuals from network organizations with a common interest in a subject or problem who collaborate over an extended period to share ideas, find solutions, and build innovations (NCTSN, nd). This approach would help agencies learn from one

another and experiment with low-cost or no-cost small tests of change to strengthen assessment of resource parents.

Specific instruments we recommend the learning community explore include the Adult-Adolescent Parenting Inventory-2 (AAPI-2) and the online Casey Foster Family Assessment, which is comprised of the *Casey Foster Applicant Inventory (CFAI)* and the *Casey Home Assessment Protocol (CHAP)*.

Sub-recommendations:

- *Provide technical assistance to agencies that struggle with screening applicants.* The workgroup recommends the Division seek ways to provide more robust technical assistance to agencies that are less effective when it comes to screening resource parent applicants.

4. Create an online learning portal for all NC resource parents. Currently the NC Division of Social Services uses an online learning portal, www.ncswLearn.org, to support the development of our state's child welfare professionals. We recommend that the Division expand ncswLearn.org so that it also supports the development of resource parents. This expansion would:

- Promote consistency by helping agencies take a competency-based, ongoing approach to resource parent development.
- Help resource parents and their agencies identify and access courses so that resource parents get the training they need, when they need it.
- Permit agencies and resource parents to search for trainings.
- Increase availability of online resource parent training.
- Support statewide use of resource parent development plans.
- Provide an easy-to-use, centralized means of tracking resource parents' training histories.
- Strengthen agency and state administrators' ability to assess and ensure the quality of Division-sponsored training.
- Offer resources (e.g., a coaching section, forums, written materials, webinar recordings, etc.) to support resource parent development.

Sub-recommendations:

- *Promote ease of use.* We recommend the Division seek and/or create opportunities to make the interface between online training providers and NC's resource parent learning portal (www.ncswLearn.org) as simple and seamless as possible.
- *Create a resource parent orientation on ncswLearn.org.* We recommend that the Division use www.ncswLearn.org to help prospective family foster care parents and therapeutic foster care parents learn about the application and licensing process. Providing key, stage-setting information will help prepare applicants to interact with supervising agencies, and it will familiarize those who go on to become licensed with ncswLearn.org as a learning resource/portal.

5. **Expand *in-service* learning resources and approaches.** The members of this workgroup believe the deliberate, ongoing professional development of resource parents has great potential to meaningfully impact child well-being and other outcomes. We also believe that some of this potential is being wasted because in our state not enough resources are focused on training after licensure. The following recommendations are intended to help the Division of Social Services correct this situation.

Sub-recommendations:

- a. *Make child welfare policy related to in-service training more specific.* The Division should explore ways to modify policy to articulate more specific training requirements for in-service training for family foster care and therapeutic foster care. Adoption of the recommended universe of competencies could provide a roadmap for specific recommendations.
- b. *Make more in-service training resources available.* Ideally, these training resources will be multi-faceted and include lecture-based information, instructional videos or demonstration of new practices, practical examples, and opportunities for practice with behavioral feedback (Murray, et al., 2010). These courses should address topics such as behavior management and grief and loss training, and could include training-of-trainers (TOTs) and courses child-placing agencies can implement without guidance. On its own or in collaboration with existing partners the Division could also develop/sponsor regionally-available training based on the current state of research on relevant topics such as the effect of trauma on development, placement disruption, contributing factors to child maltreatment, foster parent retention, etc.

The workgroup reviewed a number of training courses to assess the extent to which they could help agencies strengthen the development of resource parents after licensing. We recommend the Division look for ways to offer the following courses directly to NC's resource parents and/or find ways to build child-placing agencies' capacity to offer these courses themselves:

- *Caring for Children Who Have Experienced Trauma: A Workshop for Resource Parents* (Author: National Child Traumatic Stress Network)
 - *Fostering the Sexually Abused Child* (Author: Children's Alliance of Kansas)
 - *Helping Youth Reach Self-Sufficiency* (Author: ILR, Inc.)
 - *Shared Parenting** (Author: NC Division of Social Services)
 - *Step by Step: An Introduction to Child and Family Teams* (Author: Center for Family and Community Engagement) *
 - *Together Facing the Challenge* (Author: Maureen Murray)
- *Promote and expand use of online learning.* This workgroup believes classroom training will always be an essential strategy in the preparation, development, and support of resource parents. However, there are also benefits to be derived from online training. Research indicates that online training is at least as effective as traditional classroom delivery (US Dept. of Ed., 2010). What's more, e-learning offers the potential for reducing classroom time, travel time, and travel costs—all good things when you consider that resource parents' parenting and work responsibilities often make it hard to attend traditional classroom training. Therefore we recommend the Division encourage agencies to use reputable online

* *Must be significantly revised before it is appropriate for resource parents*

learning as a part of resource parent development efforts (e.g., to complement classroom training or to provide child-specific or just-in-time instruction on a topic not immediately available in classroom format). Foster Parent College (www.fosterparentcollege.com) is one example of a reputable, evidence-based online learning provider.

Another option would be to work with current providers of online training for NC child welfare staff to modify these courses and make them available to resource parents. Topic areas that can be made available relatively quickly include child mental health, effects of separation and loss, and child development. On its own or in collaboration with existing partners, the Division could also begin sponsoring webinars for resource parents on topics identified by research and by resource parents and other stakeholders as important.

- *Expand use of a coaching approach.* The workgroup believes increasing use of coaching in natural settings (i.e., coaching of resource parents in their homes) would be an effective way to develop resource parent skills and support placements. To meaningfully introduce and/or strengthen this practice the Division would need to train agency staff (placement, CPS, and licensing workers) to do *in vivo* coaching of resource parents (i.e., coaching of resource parents in their homes). There are at least four courses on offer in North Carolina right now that teach coaching to child welfare staff: *Coaching Skills*, *Together Facing the Challenge*, *Coaching in the Kitchen: Guiding Parents through Teachable Moments*, and *Staying Power! A Supervisor's Guide to Coaching and Developing Child Welfare Staff*.

It would also be important to make it clear to licensed foster parents and foster parent applicants that they should expect regular, ongoing coaching as a part of their professional development throughout their careers.

- *Promote use of Transfer of Learning tools.* There are a variety of tools agencies can use (e.g., Casey online tools) to help them focus on and plan for resource parents' ongoing professional development. The workgroup recommends that the tools it has developed (see Appendices E and F) be endorsed and shared widely by the Division, though we do not think that their use should be mandatory.
- *Support compensation of resource parent co-trainers.* The workgroup strongly believes that whenever possible training for resource parents should be co-presented by a team comprised of a child welfare professional and a resource parent, in which all training team members have been taught presentation and facilitation skills. We recommend the Division endorse this approach to training, and that it explicitly state that agencies should fairly compensate resource parent trainers for preparation and training time. (This can be done through service agreements.)
- *Use evidence-based models and fidelity measures whenever possible.* Members of the workgroup emphatically support the use of practices and trainings that have evidence of effectiveness. Although *Together Facing the Challenge* is one of the few evidence-based training courses in the field of child welfare today, many other training providers are working to build evidence of their curriculums' effectiveness. We recommend the Division support the spread of evidence-based practices and training models by endorsing specific fidelity measures. Since fidelity measures vary significantly based on the specific practice or training being replicated, we do not think one specific model should be mandatory.

1. Introduction

Since they spend more time than anyone with children in foster care, foster parents and kinship caregivers affect virtually all aspects of children’s lives, including their physical health and safety, behavior, mental and emotional well-being, education, and their connection to family, culture, and community. Given all this, the effectiveness with which the child welfare system recruits, selects, trains, and supports resource families matters a great deal.

Understanding this, in 2010 the NC Division of Social Services, the entity that oversees North Carolina’s child welfare system, asked the Family and Children’s Resource Program within the Jordan Institute for Families at the UNC-Chapel Hill School of Social Work to help it assess foster parent training in our state and explore ways it could be strengthened. That assessment, the results of which were [published](#) in February 2011, concluded that despite areas of strength our state needs a more holistic and comprehensive approach to training resource parents, especially after they are licensed.

As a follow-up to the Jordan Institute for Families’ report, in autumn 2011 the Division convened the NC Resource Parent Assessment and Training Workgroup, a group comprised of the Division’s child welfare training partners and representatives of public and private child-placing agencies. (See below for a list of workgroup members.) The Division asked this workgroup to develop specific recommendations for ways the Division could improve the ability of North Carolina’s child welfare agencies to assess and train foster parents.

Our group began its work by taking stock of North Carolina’s current training requirements and resources for resource parents, building on the February 2011 assessment mentioned above. We then developed processes for identifying and evaluating (1) existing pre-service and in-service courses for foster parents and (2) instruments that could be used to assess applicants and licensed foster parents.

As we carried out this task, it became clear to us that our state needs a vision to put it on the path toward continual improvements in foster care outcomes. This vision is outlined in the next section of this report.

The NC Division of Social Services asked us to recommend ways to improve agencies’ ability to assess and train foster parents.

Work Group Members

Barium Springs	Carl Lanier, <i>Training Team Director</i>
Buncombe County DSS	Tara Foster, <i>Family Permanence Social Work Supervisor</i>
Carolina Therapeutic	Angela Tims, <i>Director</i>
Catawba DSS	Sarah Shumate, <i>Supervisor, Adoption/Foster Home Licensure Unit</i>
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Easter Seals UCP	Cindy Thomas, <i>Licensing and Regulatory Adherence Manager</i>
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Foster care alumna and SaySo members	Chaney Porter Stokes Nicole Lyght Kendra Gillard Titianna Goings Tressina Jordan Rodney Alston
Harnett County DSS	Georgianna Lander, <i>Supervisor, Foster Care Services</i>
ILR, Inc.	Nancy Carter, <i>Executive Director</i>
KidsPeace	Tom Culver, <i>State Manager</i>
Mentor Network	Debbie Womack, <i>Quality Assurance Director</i>
NC State University (CFFACE)	Marianne Latz, <i>Center Manager</i> Joan Pennell, <i>Director</i>
North Carolina Division of Social Services	Deb Gallimore, <i>Child Welfare Trainer</i> Bob Hensley, <i>Team Leader, Regulatory and Licensing Services</i> Rebecca Huffman, <i>Team Leader, Staff Development</i> Jeanne Preisler, <i>Project Broadcast Coordinator</i> Joanne Scaturro, <i>Child Welfare Trainer</i>
Pitt County DSS	Kendrick Burden, <i>Foster Care Social Worker</i>
Rapid Resources for Families	Phyllis Stephenson, <i>Chief Executive Officer</i>
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Wilson County DSS	Joanne Lucas, <i>Supervisor, Foster Care/Adoption Services</i>

2. Vision for Resource Parent Learning System

After careful consideration, this workgroup concluded that recommendations for implementing a few courses or assessments tools, though helpful in the short term, would not be enough to put our state on the path toward continual improvements in foster care outcomes.

Rather than focus on individual training events, which may or may not change behavior, we should have as our goal measurable, sustained improvements in resource parents' knowledge, skills, and attitudes.

To achieve this goal we believe North Carolina needs a more robust infrastructure to support the assessment, training, and ongoing learning of foster parents and other resource families. Our state needs a resource parent learning system.

Accordingly, the workgroup has developed the following vision and plan for building a statewide, high-quality, evidence-based, comprehensive resource parent learning system.

Build a "Learning System," not a Training System

Rather than focus on individual training events, which may or may not change behavior, we should have as our goal measurable, sustained improvements in resource parents' knowledge, skills, and attitudes.

LEARNING SYSTEM VISION STATEMENT

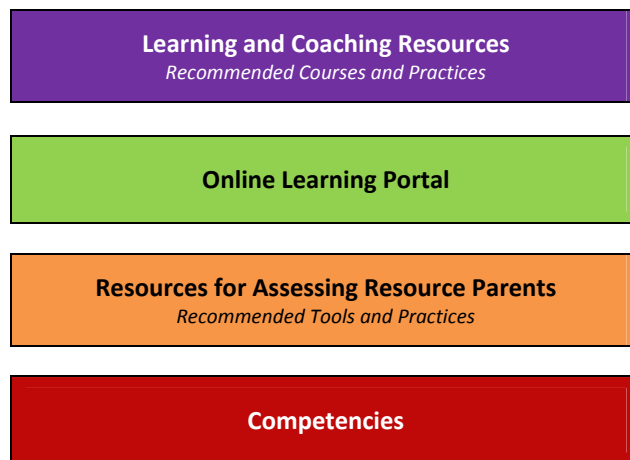
North Carolina's Resource Parent Learning System seeks to achieve measurable, sustained improvements in resource parents' knowledge, skills, and attitudes by providing competency-based, relevant, accessible, affordable, consistent, and timely training as well as follow-up coaching, transfer of learning activities, and other forms of learning support.

Core Elements

The figure below illustrates the core elements of the learning system we envision. As the figure suggests, competencies are the foundation on which all other elements depend.

Figure 1.

CORE ELEMENTS OF A RESOURCE PARENT LEARNING SYSTEM



The rest of the report describes in detail the way these core elements interrelate to contribute to the goal of continual improvement in foster care outcomes. Below are general recommendations from the workgroup for the development of North Carolina's resource parent learning system.

General Recommendations for NC's Resource Parent Learning System

Focus on results. Rather than emphasize *training events*, which occur one time and may or may not lead to the results we seek, this system should have as its goal measurable, sustained improvements in resource parents' knowledge, skills, and attitudes (i.e., competencies). To achieve this goal, coaching, transfer of learning activities, and ongoing support must be an integral part of this learning system.

Sub-recommendations:

- *Adopt and use the term "resource parent"* (meaning one or more of the following: family foster care parents, therapeutic foster care parents, adoptive parents, and kinship parents) to ensure the learning system is open to and meets the needs of families who may play different roles at different times.
- *Provide training at no cost to resource parents.* Resource parents are unpaid volunteers who give up their time, privacy, and resources and generously open their homes to help vulnerable children and families. They should not be asked to bear the costs of creating or sustaining this learning system. All training (online, classroom, etc.) should be provided at no cost to resource parents.
- *Provide consistent, quality training to all resource parents.* Training for all North Carolina's resource parents should be seamless between public and private agencies (i.e., consistent in content and quality). In support of this, public and private agencies should have access to, and actively participate in, train-the-trainer (TOT) events and other opportunities to stay current on the training, coaching, and support approaches being used by their peers in North Carolina.

3. Competencies

A. Rationale/Connection to Outcomes

A *competency* is a “cluster of related knowledge, skills, and attitudes that affects a major part of one’s job (a role or responsibility), that correlates with performance on the job, that can be measured against well-accepted standards, and that can be improved via training and development” (Parry, 1996).

The system North Carolina currently uses to train child welfare staff is competency-based. Our state uses a “universe of competencies,” which is a listing of all the knowledge and skills required for child welfare social workers, supervisors and directors; this list “drives” the competency-based training system. This proven approach to professional training helps us:

- Get the right training to the right person at the right time (Rycus & Hughes, 2000)
- Ensures we deliver only the training child welfare professionals need to do their jobs
- Deliver consistent training across the state
- Support individuals in their efforts to assess their training needs
- Develop appropriate, needed training courses and curriculum content
- Evaluate training
- Assure accountability and the continuing high quality of training.

Adopting a parallel approach to foster parent training makes a lot of sense. A competency-based approach will enable our state to objectively identify strengths and needs in its resource parent training capacity; this will be particularly useful in the early stages of the development of a resource parent training infrastructure.

A competency-based approach will also be a wonderful complement to the use of individualized professional development plans for resource parents. With the competencies as a reference point, supervising agencies and resource parents will be better able to identify strengths and needs for continuing education and skill development.

B. Workgroup Process

Workgroup members discussed and ultimately endorsed the idea that North Carolina’s Resource Parent Learning System should be competency-based. After this decision a sub-workgroup was formed to come up with a “universe” of competencies that would be comprehensive, concise, organized simply, and flexible enough to accommodate future additions or changes.

Creating a Universe of Competencies

After reviewing foster parent competency sets developed and used in Ohio (Institute for Human Services, 2009) and Maine (Bernatovicz, 1995), as well as the competencies for child welfare professionals used by North Carolina, the sub-workgroup concluded that the best approach would be to draw from these sources and its own experience to create a universe of resource parent competencies specifically for North Carolina.

North Carolina’s competency-based approach to training child welfare professionals works well. We should use the same approach to promote resource parent learning.

Organizing the Competencies

After reviewing the organizational approaches taken by others (Buehler, et al., 2006), we opted to organize resource parent competencies in a way that links them to the results we would like to achieve with children and families. Thus, as Figure 2 shows, our competencies are for the most part drawn from outcomes emphasized by the US Children’s Bureau (USDHHS, 2011):

Figure 2.

DOMAINS USED TO ORGANIZE RESOURCE PARENT COMPETENCIES
Outcome 1: SAFETY 1a. Children are protected from abuse and neglect.
Outcome 2: PERMANENCY 2a. Children have permanency and stability in their living situations. 2b. Children have continuity of family relationships and connections.
Outcome 3: FAMILY AND CHILD WELL-BEING 3a. Children’s physical, developmental, and educational needs are met. 3b. Children’s social-emotional and mental health needs are met.
Outcome 4: EFFECTIVE SUPPORT SYSTEM 4a. Resource parents are an effective member of the child’s team. 4b. Resource parents maintain their own health and well-being in order to provide optimal care for the child.

Resource Parent Development Framework

To further organize competencies and help agencies and resource parents focus on the right knowledge, skills, and attitudes at the right time, the workgroup also chose to organize competencies along a continuum that reflects resource parent development:

- (1) Pre-Service (*before licensing*)
- (2) Foundation (*during first 2-year licensing period*)
- (3) 3 Years & Beyond (*includes competencies for unique populations or caregiving role and for experienced caregivers*)

To review the proposed universe of competencies, please see Appendix A.

C. Recommendations

Base the learning system on competencies. The goal of the system should be to improve short and long-term outcomes for children in care by continually building each resource parent’s competencies.

Basing the learning system on competencies will allow agencies and resource parents to identify strengths and needs for continuing education and skill development. For the Division and its partners, the competencies will help identify priorities for adding new trainings to the system, especially in the early stages of developing a training infrastructure. Competencies can also guide policies that specify what training content is required.

Sub-recommendations:

- *Adopt and build upon our “universe of competencies.”* Using the work done by the Institute for Human Services and others as a starting point, the workgroup developed a

comprehensive list of competencies needed by resource parents at various stages of their careers. We recommend that the Division adopt the universe of competencies found in the Appendix A, with the understanding that it may be necessary to modify and expand this competency list in the future to reflect the evolving knowledge, skills, and attitudes needed by resource parents.

- *Actively promote the use of professional development plans.* We recommend the Division require all child-placing agencies to create and actively use and update individualized professional development plans for resource parents. Doing this will help agencies and resource parents identify strengths and needs for continuing education and skill development.

4. Resources for Assessing Resource Parents

A. Rationale/Connection to Outcomes

Effective assessment of applicants helps ensure safety, permanency, and well-being of children by screening out unsuitable individuals and by beginning the professional development process from the outset by identifying resource parents' learning and support needs.

B. Workgroup Process

After initial discussion of how best to fulfill its mandate, the workgroup chose to create two sub-workgroups, one focused on training and the other on assessment. Members of the assessment sub-workgroup were as follows:

ASSESSMENT SUB-WORKGROUP	
<i>Carolina Therapeutic</i>	Angela Tims, <i>Director</i>
<i>Catawba DSS</i>	Sarah Shumate, <i>Supervisor, Adoption/Foster Home Licensure Unit</i>
<i>Forsyth County DSS</i>	Carolyn Thomas, <i>Foster Homes Supervisor</i>
<i>Foster care alumna and SaySo members</i>	Nicole Lyght Rodney Alston
<i>NC Division of Social Services</i>	Joanne Scaturro, <i>Child Welfare Trainer</i>
<i>Pitt County DSS</i>	Kendrick Burden, <i>Foster Care Social Worker</i>
<i>Rapid Resources for Families</i>	Phyllis Stephenson, <i>Chief Executive Officer</i>
<i>UNC-CH School of Social Work</i>	John McMahon, <i>Clinical Assistant Professor</i>
<i>Wilson County DSS</i>	Joanne Lucas, <i>Supervisor, Foster Care/Adoption Services</i>

Diagramming NC's Current Assessment Requirements

To inform our review of resource parent assessment tools our sub-workgroup developed a diagram of the "generic" assessment process as it exists now in North Carolina, which includes:

- A common sequence of assessment steps/activities for prospective resource parents
- Procedures/sources of information agencies currently use to assess licensed foster parents
- Resources available to NC agencies to support assessment activities/best practice

This diagram can be found in Appendix B.

Creating Review Criteria

Sub-workgroup members divided into teams and used the following rubric to gather important information about potentially useful assessment tools and to facilitate comparison among the tools:

CRITERIA FOR REVIEWING ASSESSMENT TOOLS	
• Purpose	• Time to administer/score
• Creator/Owner	• Family-centered?
• Main areas or traits assessed	• Availability/cost
• Evidence-based	• Other
• Training required to administer/score	

Additionally, we used the following questions to guide our review of tools:

1. Should NC adopt or endorse this assessment tool?
2. How would it fit in the assessment and licensing process?
3. What steps would the Division or its training partners need to take?
4. What are the financial costs/implications for the Division, agencies, resource parents, or vendors?
5. Will it help us select only suitable families/will it help to focus on identifying and supporting needs in the 12 parenting skills taught in the MAPP/GPS curriculum?

Selecting Tools to Review

To select tools to review that might enhance the assessment of resource parents, we referred to the findings of a survey the Jordan Institute for Families conducted in connection with its February 2011 report. We also conducted an internet search (Google), and invited suggestions from the entire workgroup. Our goal was to identify a reasonable number of instruments that are currently in use or commonly known and might be useful to agencies in their efforts to select and support resource parents. Our initial list included the following 10 instruments:

TOOLS INITIALLY CONSIDERED
Adult-Adolescent Parenting Inventory-2
Alabama Parenting Questionnaire
Brief Symptom Inventory
Casey online screening tools
CRC support assessment
Diana Screen
Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory (MMPI-2)
North Shore Trauma Screen
Parent Stress Index
SAFE (Structured Analysis Family Evaluation)

We discussed the instruments on this list with the large group and the smaller Assessment Sub-Group. Concerns about cost, practicality, and fit with the foster care context led us early on to exclude the Diana Screen and the MMPI-2. Then, using the criteria described above, the sub-workgroup teams reviewed the remaining tools. (To see these preliminary review summaries, see Appendix C.) The sub-workgroup then discussed the tools, reaching the following conclusions.

ASSESSMENT TOOL	GROUP DECISION
Adult-Adolescent Parenting Inventory-2	Deserves deeper consideration.
Alabama Parenting Questionnaire	<u>Not a good fit</u> with assessment of prospective or licensed foster families. Could be used with birth families re: reunification.
Brief Symptom Inventory	<u>Not a good fit</u> —more suited to a clinical setting.
Casey online tools	Deserves deeper consideration.
CRC support assessment	Deserves deeper consideration.
North Shore Trauma Screen	Deserves deeper consideration.
Parent Stress Index	<u>Not a good fit</u> — with assessment of prospective or licensed foster families
SAFE (Structured Analysis Family Evaluation)	Deserves deeper consideration.

Additional research was done on the remaining tools, giving special focus to those that are free or low cost and easy to administer and interpret. Presentations about these tools were made to the large group. After each presentation the large group discussed the tools. The tools the large workgroup thought had the most potential for enhancing the resource parent assessment process in North Carolina were the:

- *Adolescent Parenting Inventory-2 (API-2)* and
- Online *Casey Foster Family Assessment*, which is comprised of the *Casey Foster Applicant Inventory (CFAI)* and the *Casey Home Assessment Protocol (CHAP)*.

Following are our recommendations for encouraging child-placing agencies in our state to consider using these tools.

C. Recommendations

Use *learning communities* to explore and test assessment tools and approaches for strengthening resource parent assessment. After carefully considering the extent to which a number of available instruments could help agencies understand and address strengths and learning needs of resource parent applicants, the workgroup recommends that the Division help the state's child-placing agencies to form one or more learning communities focused on enhancing assessment of resource parent applicants.

A *learning community* is made up of individuals from network organizations with a common interest in a subject or problem related who collaborate over an extended period to share ideas, find solutions, and build innovations (NCTSN, n.d.). This approach would help multiple agencies learn from one another and experiment with low-cost or no-cost small tests of change to strengthen assessment of resource parents.

Specific instruments we recommend the learning community to explore include the *Adult-Adolescent Parenting Inventory-2 (API-2)* and the online *Casey Foster Family Assessment*, which is comprised of the *Casey Foster Applicant Inventory (CFAI)* and the *Casey Home Assessment Protocol (CHAP)*.

Sub-recommendation:

- *Technical assistance to agencies that struggle with screening applicants.* The workgroup recommends the Division seek ways to provide more robust technical assistance to agencies that are less effective when it comes to screening resource parent applicants.

5. Online Learning Portal

A. Rationale/Connection to Outcomes

The Jordan Institute for Families' assessment of foster parent training in North Carolina (2011) found that in-service training is the weakest area of North Carolina's foster parent training system. To address this issue the report made several recommendations, including the suggestion that the Division of Social Services increase availability of online foster parent training, require and support statewide use of foster parent development plans, and centrally track foster parent training and related outcomes on an ongoing basis to better guide and assess the effectiveness of foster parent training. We believe that creating an online learning portal for resource parents would help the Division accomplish these objectives and yield other benefits as well.

Today, more and more people have access to computers and the internet. According to the Pew Internet Project, four of every five Americans have access to the internet (Zickuhr & Smith, 2012). "Currently, 88% of American adults have a cell phone, 57% have a laptop, 19% own an e-book reader, and 19% have a tablet computer" (Zickuhr & Smith, 2012).

Now it is true that as a group, resource parents have traits that have been correlated with less internet access (Zickuhr & Smith, 2012). For example, foster parents tend to be older, less educated, and of lower socioeconomic status than parents in general (Grimm & Darwall, 2005).

Wireless devices are changing things, however. Tablets are more popular among older people than among young adults ages 18-29. Mobile phones in particular are giving many of those on the other side of the digital divide—including minorities, those with no college experience, and those with lower household income levels—internet access (Zickuhr & Smith, 2012). Bottom line: an increasing number of Americans, including resource parents, have internet access.

That's a good thing, because North Carolina has had some very positive experiences using the internet to facilitate, track, and enhance learning for a child welfare audience. A prime example of this is www.ncswLearn.org, an online learning portal the NC Division of Social Services uses to support the development of our state's child welfare professionals. This site makes it easy for child welfare professionals to learn about and register for training, take online courses, print certificates for courses they have completed, review their training histories, and assess their training needs to ensure they are continually building the skills, knowledge, and attitudes they need to serve families effectively.

The website ncswLearn.org contains a section where county DSS supervisors can register their employees for training, view their employees' training schedules and cancel registrations as needed, view their employees' training attendance histories, and view their employees' assessments of their training needs. Supervisors can also use ncswLearn.org to track any training their employees have received that is not sponsored by the Division.

The site also benefits curriculum developers, trainers, and training system administrators by:

- Supporting competency-based training. The architecture of ncswLearn.org ensures each course offered is tied to one or more of the competencies for child welfare professionals.



- Helping trainers understand and improve their performance by providing information about participants' satisfaction with training.
- Facilitating communication with learners and their agencies via custom and automated emails.
- Helping administrators understand and improve the training system by giving them information about attendance, agency participation patterns, the popularity of and participant satisfaction with specific courses, and more.

Given the success it has enjoyed, it makes sense that North Carolina should expand ncswLearn.org to serve the needs of resource parents. Using the knowledge and infrastructure it has acquired over the years, North Carolina should be able to modify this portal so that as a state we can increase availability of online resource parent training, support statewide use of resource parent development plans, and centrally track resource parent training and related outcomes on an ongoing basis to better guide and assess the effectiveness of training.

B. Workgroup Process

The workgroup began exploring the idea of an online learning portal as part of its discussion of overall learning resources (for more on this, see the next section of this report). Reflecting on information and recommendations contained in the Jordan Institute for Families' February 2011 report and on workgroup members' own experiences with online learning, group members ultimately agreed that there would be many benefits to resource parents, to agencies, and ultimately to children and families if an online learning portal similar to (or built on) ncswLearn.org is included as a key element of North Carolina's resource parent learning system.

C. Recommendations

Create an online learning portal for all NC resource parents. Currently the Division of Social Services uses an online learning portal, www.ncswLearn.org, as a focal point of its efforts to support the development of our state's child welfare professionals. We recommend that the Division expand ncswLearn.org so that it also supports the ongoing development of resource parents. This expansion would:

- Promote consistency by helping agencies take a competency-based and ongoing approach to resource parent development.
- Help resource parents and their agencies identify and access courses so that resource parents get the training they need, when they need it.
- Permit agencies and resource parents to search for trainings.
- Increase availability of online resource parent training.
- Support statewide use of resource parent development plans.
- Provide an easy-to-use, centralized means of tracking individuals' training histories.
- Strengthen agency and state administrators' ability to assess and ensure the quality of training.
- Offer resources (e.g., a coaching section, forums, written materials, webinar recordings, etc.) to support resource parent development.

Sub-recommendations:

- *Promote ease of use whenever possible.* We recommend the Division seek and/or create opportunities to make the interface between online training providers and NC's resource parent learning portal (www.ncswLearn.org) as simple and seamless as possible.
- *Create a resource parent orientation on ncswLearn.org.* We recommend that the Division use www.ncswLearn.org to help prospective resource parents learn about the application and licensing process. Providing key, stage-setting information will help prepare applicants to interact with supervising agencies, and it will familiarize those who go on to become licensed with ncswLearn.org as a learning resource/portal.

6. Learning Resources

Training curricula and coaching

A. Rationale/Connection to Outcomes

Recognizing the key role that resource parents play in improving outcomes for children, our system should support resource parents in continually assessing and developing their competencies. High quality classroom and online training are a critical part of professional development for resource parents, as are tools for coaching and transfer of learning from the classroom to the home.

B. Workgroup Process

After initial discussion of how best to fulfill its mandate, the workgroup chose to create two sub-workgroups, one focused on training and the other on assessment. Members of the training sub-workgroup were as follows:

TRAINING SUB-WORKGROUP	
Barium Springs	Carl Lanier, <i>Training Team Director</i>
Buncombe County DSS	Tara Foster, <i>Family Permanence Social Work Supervisor</i>
Duke University	Tripp Ake, <i>Assistant Professor, Dept. of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences</i> Maureen Murray, <i>Assistant Professor, Dept. of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences</i> Holli Sink, <i>Graduate Research Assistant</i>
Easter Seals UCP	Cindy Thomas, <i>Licensing and Regulatory Adherence Manager</i>
Forsyth County DSS	Carmelita Burrell, <i>LINKS Coordinator</i> Tanya McDougal, <i>Family & Children's Division Director</i> Sharon Porter, <i>Recruiter Coordinator, Family & Children's Division</i>
NC Foster and Adoptive Parents Association	Wanda Douglas Tony Douglas
Foster care alumna and SaySo members	Chaney Porter Stokes Kendra Gillard Titianna Goings Tressina Jordan
Harnett County DSS	Georgianna Lander, <i>Supervisor, Foster Care Services</i>
ILR, Inc.	Nancy Carter, <i>Executive Director</i>
KidsPeace	Tom Culver, <i>State Manager</i>
Mentor Network	Debbie Womack, <i>Quality Assurance Director</i>
NC State University (CFFACE)	Marianne Latz, <i>Center Manager</i> Joan Pennell, <i>Director</i>
North Carolina Division of Social Services	Deb Gallimore, <i>Child Welfare Trainer</i> Bob Hensley, <i>Team Leader, Regulatory and Licensing Services</i> Rebecca Huffman, <i>Team Leader, Child Welfare Training</i> Jeanne Preisler, <i>Project Broadcast</i> Joanne Scaturro, <i>Child Welfare Trainer</i>
UNC-CH School of Social Work	Mellicent Blythe, <i>Clinical Assistant Professor</i>

Creating Review Criteria

Sub-workgroup members divided into teams and used the following rubric to gather important information about the courses we reviewed and to facilitate comparison among curricula:

CRITERIA FOR REVIEWING COURSES	
• Fit in licensing/training system	• Audience
• How/when offered	• Learning objectives/major content areas
• Evidence base/proof of effectiveness	• General comments
• Availability/cost	

Additionally, about each course we asked: *Should NC adopt or endorse this training?*

Process and Results from Review of Courses

To select courses to review, we referred to the findings and recommendations in Jordan Institute for Families 2011 report and invited suggestions from entire workgroup. Our goal was not an exhaustive and comprehensive review of all existing resource parent training courses. Rather, it was to identify and review a reasonable number of resource parent pre-service and in-service training courses in use today inside and outside North Carolina.

The training sub-workgroup took an approach similar to that taken by the assessment group. Using the criteria above, teams of sub-workgroup members reviewed the courses and shared their results with the entire sub-workgroup. Presentations about these courses were then made to the large group. The presentations included a close review of each course as well as recommendations for supporting model fidelity, implementation of training content, and when the course should be offered (pre-service/before licensing, foundation/within the first two year of fostering, or 3 years and beyond/specialized).

After each presentation the group discussed the curriculum and made a recommendation to (1) endorse the course, (2) endorse it with the understanding that changes must be made before it is offered to resource parents, or (3) not to endorse the course. The table below outlines the decisions we made regarding the courses we reviewed.

DECISIONS REGARDING COURSES REVIEWED			
Pre-Service Curricula	Endorsed	Changes Recommended	Reason Not Endorsed
1. Becoming a Therapeutic Foster Parent	X		
2. Institute for Human Services (OH)			<i>Parts closely resemble MAPP, while not meaningfully improving upon it.</i>
3. MAPP/GPS	X		
4. WI Pre-Service			<i>Well executed but too Wisconsin specific.</i>
In-Service Curricula			
5. Fostering the Sexually Abused Child		X	
6. Helping Youth Reach Self-Sufficiency	X		
7. Introduction to CFTs		X	
8. KEEP Training Program			<i>We unreservedly recommend KEEP, but due to cost we do not endorse including it in North Carolina's resource parent learning system.</i>
9. NCTSN's Resource Parent Training	X		
10. Shared Parenting		X	
11. Together Facing the Challenge	X		

More detailed information about the courses we reviewed can be found in Appendix D.

In addition to reviewing and ultimately endorsing training courses, our workgroup also had in-depth discussions about other practices and approaches that can be used to encourage and support the ongoing professional development of resource families. These practices and approaches included the use of coaching and *in vivo* training, using online courses and technology to enhance resource parent learning, the importance of transfer of learning, and the difficulty and importance of ensuring quality and consistency of resource parent training across the state.

Conclusions about these and other topics are reflected in the recommendations below.

C. Recommendations

Expand *in-service* learning resources and approaches. The members of this workgroup believe the deliberate, ongoing professional development of resource parents has great potential to meaningfully impact child well-being and other outcomes. We also believe that some of this potential is being wasted because in our state few of our resources are focused on training after licensure. In-service training and ongoing development of resource parents receive too little attention. The following recommendations are intended to help the Division of Social Services correct this situation.

Sub-recommendations:

- *Make child welfare policy related to in-service training more specific.* The Division should explore ways to modify policy to articulate more specific training requirements for in-service training for family foster care and therapeutic foster care. Adoption of the recommended universe of competencies could provide a roadmap for specific recommendations.
- *Make more in-service training resources available.* Ideally, these training resources will be multi-faceted and include lecture-based information, instructional videos or demonstration of new practices, practical examples, and opportunities for practice with behavioral feedback (Murray, et al., 2010). These courses should address topics such as behavior management and grief and loss training, and could include training of trainers (TOTs) and courses child-placing agencies can implement without guidance. On its own or in collaboration with existing partners the Division could also develop/sponsor regionally-available training based on the current state of research on relevant topics such as the effect of trauma on child development, placement disruption, factors contributing to child maltreatment, foster parent retention, etc.
- The workgroup reviewed a number of training courses to assess the extent to which they could help agencies strengthen the development of resource parents after licensing. We recommend the Division look for ways to offer the following courses directly to NC's resource parents and/or find ways to build the capacity of child-placing agencies to offer these courses themselves:
 - *Caring for Children Who Have Experienced Trauma: A Workshop for Resource Parents* (Author: National Child Traumatic Stress Network)
 - *Fostering the Sexually Abused Child* (Author: Children's Alliance of Kansas)
 - *Helping Youth Reach Self-Sufficiency* (Author: ILR, Inc.)
 - *Shared Parenting** (Author: NC Division of Social Services)
 - *Step by Step: An Introduction to Child and Family Teams** (Author: Center for Family and Community Engagement)
 - *Together Facing the Challenge* (Author: Maureen Murray)
- *Promote and expand use of online learning.* This workgroup believes classroom training will always be an essential strategy in the preparation, development, and support of resource parents.

However, there are also benefits to be derived from online training. Research indicates that online training is at least as effective as traditional classroom delivery (US Dept. of Ed., 2010). E-learning offers the potential for reducing classroom time, travel time, and travel costs—all good things when you consider that resource parents’ parenting and work responsibilities often make it hard to attend traditional classroom training.

Therefore we recommend the Division encourage agencies to use reputable online learning as a part of resource parent development efforts (e.g., to complement classroom training or to provide child-specific or just-in-time instruction on a topic not immediately available in classroom format). Foster Parent College (<http://www.fosterparentcollege.com/>) is just one example of a reputable, evidence-based online learning provider.

Another option is to work with current providers of online training for NC child welfare staff to modify these courses and make them available to resource parents. Topic areas that can be made available relatively quickly include child mental health, effects of separation and loss, and child development. On its own or in collaboration with existing partners, the Division could also begin sponsoring webinars for resource parents on topics identified by research and by resource parents and other stakeholders as important.

- *Expand use of a coaching approach.* The workgroup believes increasing use of *in vivo* coaching (i.e., coaching of resource parents in their homes) would be an effective way to develop resource parent skills and support placements. To meaningfully introduce this practice the Division would need to train agency staff (placement, CPS, and licensing workers) to do *in vivo* coaching of resource parents. It would also be important to make it clear to licensed foster parents and foster parent applicants that they should expect regular, ongoing coaching as a part of their professional development throughout their careers. There are at least four courses on offer in North Carolina right now that teach coaching to child welfare staff: *Coaching Skills*, *Together Facing the Challenge*, *Coaching in the Kitchen: Guiding Parents through Teachable Moments*, and *Staying Power! A Supervisor's Guide to Coaching and Developing Child Welfare Staff*.
- *Promote use of Transfer of Learning tools.* There are a variety of tools agencies can use (e.g., Casey online tools) to help them focus on and plan for resource parents’ ongoing professional development. We recommend the tools we have developed (see Appendices E and F) be endorsed and shared widely by the Division; however, we do not recommend that their use be mandatory.
- *Support compensation of resource parent co-trainers.* The workgroup strongly believes that whenever possible training for resource parents should be co-presented by a child welfare professional - resource parent team, in which all training team members have been taught presentation and facilitation skills. We recommend the Division endorse this approach to training, and that it explicitly state that agencies should fairly compensate resource parent trainers for preparation and training time. (This can be done through service agreements.)
- *Use evidence-based models and fidelity measures whenever possible.* Members of the workgroup wholeheartedly support the use of practices and trainings that have evidence of effectiveness. While *Together Facing the Challenge* is one of the few evidence-based training courses in the field of child welfare today, many training providers are working to build evidence of their curriculums’ effectiveness. We recommend the Division support the spread of evidence-based practices and training models by endorsing specific fidelity measures. Since fidelity measures vary significantly based on the specific practice or training being replicated, we do not think one specific model should be mandatory.

7. Conclusion

The Resource Parent Assessment and Training Workgroup brought together the Division's training partners and public and private child placing agencies to develop recommendations for improving the assessment and training of resource parents in our state. In the course of its work, the group expanded its scope beyond individual assessment tools and curricula in order to create a long-term vision that maximizes the potential of resource parents as partners in improving outcomes for children in care. These recommendations provide a strategic plan for the state: starting with a foundation of critical competencies; enhancing resources for assessment and professional development; creating an online portal to improve access and accountability; and increasing the availability of high quality, ongoing learning resources for the training room and the home.

Implementing these recommendations and making other needed changes is a big undertaking. It will take time and resources. This report offers a plan for the efficient and effective use of our time and resources during this period of intense economic challenges. Even more importantly, it provides a road map for fully engaging agencies and resource parents in the important task of improving the safety, permanency, and well-being of children in our child welfare system.

Patience Advisory!

Implementing these recommendations and making other needed changes is a big undertaking. It will take time.

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APPENDIX A

Recommended Universe of Competencies for North Carolina's Resource Parent Learning System

Working Definitions¹

Competency--*What* the learner needs to know. For our proposed Learning System, the competencies are the general *knowledge, skills, and attitudes* that a resource parent needs in order to improve outcomes for children and families.

Learning objective--*How* learners will be taught the competency in a particular training or coaching session. Learning objectives should describe *observable outcomes* of the training or session – i.e., what will the learner be able to do as a result?

Eventually, each competency will have many learning objectives from different courses that fall under it.

One competency may fit in multiple domains. For example, communication skills can support safety, emotional well-being, and effective partnership. Learning objectives for each training event will differentiate how the competency would be taught differently to meet different needs.

Examples:

Competency 74: Understands basics of positive behavior management techniques.

Possible learning objectives: As a result of this training/session, participants will be able to...

- Describe disciplinary methods that are appropriate in proportion to various behaviors and developmental stages in accordance with DSS policies licensing rules and regulations.
- List examples of positive feedback and incentives to be used for even small improvements, good behavior, and extra effort.
- Demonstrate appropriate techniques to extinguish negative behavior (e.g., ignoring tantrums).
- Identify resources for help in choosing and applying behavior management strategies.
- Describe and demonstrate strategies for regular positive communication in the household.

Competency 53: Able to work in partnership with primary/birth families to meet children's needs and goals.

Possible learning objectives: As a result of this training/session, participants will be able to...

- Describe and demonstrate strategies for preparing children for family visits and managing the effects of visits.
- List at least three ways that resource parents and birth parents can work together towards permanency goals.
- Describe how Life Books can be completed with children and birth families in order to help maintain connection during placement.

Competency 91: Knows resources and support services available to their family members and how to access them.

Possible learning objectives: As a result of this training/session, participants will be able to...

- Identify supportive and respite services available from agency and community resources.
- Identify educational and financial supports available for family member

¹ The competency and learning objective model shared here is the same one that has been adopted by the Division of Social Services for its training system for child welfare professionals.

Resource Parent Competencies

NC's Foster Parent Assessment and Training Work Group

Pre-Service <i>Before licensing</i>	Foundation <i>During first 2-year licensing period</i>	3 Years & Beyond <i>For unique populations or caregiving role and for experienced caregivers</i>
Outcome 1 SAFETY		
<i>1a. Children are protected from abuse and neglect.</i>		
1. Understands why physical discipline is detrimental to children. 2. Understands the importance of children feeling emotionally and physically safe. 3. Understands the connection between children's background and their behavior. 4. Understands basics of child maltreatment. 5. Understands the different levels of supervision children might need. 6. Knows the hazards in the community which place children at risk and how to minimize children's exposure to such risks.	33. Able to maintain physical and psychological safety of children who have experienced trauma. 34. Able to appropriately supervise and monitor children. 35. Understands the potential effect of abuse and neglect on all developmental domains. 36. Able to set appropriate expectations, rules, roles, and boundaries in the home.* 37. Able to arrange the family living environment to promote safety. 38. Able to ensure that each family member is aware of and knows how to respond to emergencies. 39. Able to manage own feelings and perspective in response to children's behaviors.	99. Able to identify and support protective factors in birth families. 100. Able to protect people and pets in the household when children behave destructively.* 101. Able to calm children who are exhibiting out of control or destructive behavior using appropriate techniques.* 102. Able to develop a plan and specific strategies with other team members to prevent or intervene in out of control or destructive behavior.*
Outcome 2: PERMANENCY		
<i>2a. Children have permanency and stability in their living situations.</i>		
7. Able to help children adjust to caregiver's home. 8. Understands the differences between fostering and adoptive parenting. 9. Understands the potential impact of adding new children to their family. 10. Understands types of children that their family is and is not prepared to provide care for.	40. Understands the importance of permanency for all children. 41. Understands the potentially traumatic outcomes of separation, placement changes, and inconsistent living environments for children and their families. 42. Able to use family routines and rituals to provide a sense of continuity and stability. 43. Knows strategies to prevent placement disruption. 44. Able to assist in planning with child and other team members for healthy transitions. 45. Knows how to help all family members prepare for and adjust to new arrivals and departures. 46. Able to provide support for children after placement ends. 47. Able to determine if adoption is an option for their family. 48. Able to help children prepare for adoption and cope with adoption-related stress.	

* Resource parents providing therapeutic foster care or caring for specialized populations of children may need these competencies earlier, either during the pre-service or foundation period. Individual resource parent development plans should be developed based on individual family needs and children to be placed in their home

<p style="text-align: center;">Pre-Service <i>Before licensing</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Foundation <i>During first 2-year licensing period</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;">3 Years & Beyond <i>For unique populations or caregiving role and for experienced caregivers</i></p>
<p>2b. Children have continuity of family relationships and connections.</p>		
<p>11. Understands the importance of maintaining a child’s family and emotional ties.</p> <p>12. Understands the importance of recognizing the cultural, social, and economic similarities and differences between a child's primary/birth family and resource family.</p> <p>13. Understands how one’s own culture/ethnicity/background affects one’s perceptions, behavior, values, and parenting.</p>	<p>49. Knows how to use regular visits and other contacts to maintain children’s attachments formed prior to placement.</p> <p>50. Able to manage the impact of visits upon the child’s feelings and behavior.</p> <p>51. Able to use life books and other means to help child maintain a stable, continuous sense of personal and cultural identity.</p> <p>52. Able to work in partnership with primary/birth families to meet children's needs and goals.</p> <p>53. Understands the potential effects of cultural differences on relationships,</p> <p>54. Knows strategies to establish relationships with people from different cultural backgrounds.</p> <p>55. Able to work towards cultural competence with specific populations of families.</p>	<p>103. Able to provide an appropriate level of support, coaching, and mentoring for children’s birth families.</p>
<p>Outcome 3: FAMILY AND CHILD WELL-BEING</p>		
<p>3a. Children’s physical, developmental, and educational needs are met.</p>		
<p>14. Knows health, hygiene, and nutrition practices that prevent or reduce the likelihood of illness in children/youth.</p> <p>15. Knows basic first aid and CPR techniques and conditions which require emergency treatment.</p>	<p>56. Able to promote children’s healthy development in all domains.</p> <p>57. Knows health/medical conditions that can result from abuse/neglect.</p> <p>58. Understands healthy sexual development, including issues related to sexual activity and sexual identity.</p> <p>59. Able to recognize and respond to potential developmental problems.</p> <p>60. Knows how and when to request and access specialized education, developmental, and recreational services for children.</p>	<p>104. Able to meet children’s chronic health care needs.*</p> <p>105. Able to recognize and respond to needs of children and youth in exceptional student education.*</p> <p>106. Able to recognize and respond to children with developmental disabilities.*</p> <p>107. Able to recognize and respond to children with serious medical conditions.*</p> <p>108. Able to provide care to pregnant adolescents.*</p> <p>109. Able to provide care to parenting adolescents.*</p>
<p>3b. Children’s social-emotional and mental health needs are met.</p>		
<p>16. Understands how separation and placement may affect children.</p> <p>17. Understands importance of self-esteem.</p> <p>18. Able to view situations from another’s perspective and express empathy for others’ thoughts and feelings.</p>	<p>61. Understands the process and significance of healthy attachments and the role of the trust cycle.</p> <p>62. Able to build trust and develop healthy attachments with children.</p> <p>63. Able to identify indicators of trauma.</p> <p>64. Understands the effects of trauma on children.</p>	<p>110. Able to recognize and respond to drug or alcohol exposed infants, children, and youth.*</p> <p>111. Able to recognize and respond to drug and alcohol use and abuse.*</p> <p>112. Knows stages of recovery and how the</p>

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<p style="text-align: center;">Pre-Service <i>Before licensing</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Foundation <i>During first 2-year licensing period</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;">3 Years & Beyond <i>For unique populations or caregiving role and for experienced caregivers</i></p>
<p>19. Understands importance of expressing feelings in order to maintain emotional health.</p>	<p>65. Able to help children manage the effects of trauma so that they continue to meet developmental milestones.</p> <p>66. Able to help children identify and express emotions safely.</p> <p>67. Able to assess and help adolescents build independent living skills.</p> <p>68. Able to help children and adolescents develop relationships needed to thrive in adulthood.</p> <p>69. Able to involve children in planning and decision-making.</p> <p>70. Able to involve children in developmentally-appropriate household chores and activities.</p> <p>71. Knows how to develop children’s strengths and address their needs to build resiliency.</p> <p>72. Able to assess and respect children’s preferences and personalities.</p> <p>73. Able to provide a schedule that contributes to children’s healthy development.</p> <p>74. Able to tailor communications to each child's level of understanding.</p> <p>75. Understands basics of positive behavior management.*</p> <p>76. Knows how to use structures and tools (schedules, rules, family meetings, etc.) to help children succeed.</p> <p>77. Able to assess the function of children’s problem behaviors.</p> <p>78. Able to adapt expectations and parenting techniques based on the developmental level and history of each child.</p> <p>79. Able to recognize signs of escalating conflict and de-escalate to prevent crisis.*</p> <p>80. Understands that improving maladaptive behavior takes time.</p>	<p>recovery process affects the family system.*</p> <p>113. Understands refugee and immigrant issues.*</p> <p>114. Able to provide appropriate care and supervision for children and youth with sexual behavior problems.*</p> <p>115. Knows behavioral indicators of adolescent depression and suicide risk, and how to access assessment and treatment services.*</p> <p>116. Knows behavioral indicators of emotional disturbances and mental health issues common to children in the child welfare system, and how to access assessment and treatment services.*</p> <p><i>Advanced Independent Living</i></p> <p>117. Able to help teens plan and prepare for post-high school educational and career goals.*</p> <p>118. Able to help youth find suitable independent living arrangements.*</p> <p>119. Able to help youth connect their past and present life experiences with appropriate goals for the future.*</p>
<p>Outcome 4: EFFECTIVE SUPPORT SYSTEM</p>		
<p><i>4a. Resource parents are an effective member of the child’s team.</i></p>		
<p>20. Understands the roles and responsibilities of people in child welfare and other relevant systems.</p> <p>21. Understands the basic laws and rules for adoption and foster care, including confidentiality, liability, reasonable efforts, reunification, and other statutory and regulatory requirements.</p> <p>22. Understands the rights of children and youth in</p>	<p>81. Able to work effectively with other members of the team serving the child and family.</p> <p>82. Able to make key decisions regarding the children jointly with other caregivers.</p> <p>83. Able to effectively assess own strengths/needs in providing care for children.</p> <p>84. Able to share information appropriately with other team members, following rules of confidentiality.</p> <p>85. Able to help develop and implement plans for children's care</p>	<p>120. Understands principles of continuous quality improvement (CQI) and how to support CQI efforts in supervising agency</p> <p><i>Training</i></p> <p>121. Understands principles of learning theory and adult learning styles.</p> <p>122. Understands importance of transfer of learning from classroom to home or work</p>

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<p style="text-align: center;">Pre-Service <i>Before licensing</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Foundation <i>During first 2-year licensing period</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;">3 Years & Beyond <i>For unique populations or caregiving role and for experienced caregivers</i></p>
<p>foster care and resource families.</p> <p>23. Understands agency and state documentation requirements.</p> <p>24. Understands requirements of confidentiality.</p> <p><i>Communication</i></p> <p>25. Able to communicate in a clear, honest, and effective manner.</p> <p>26. Able to read non-verbal cues.</p> <p>27. Able to use active listening skills and respectful validation when others speak.</p>	<p>and contribute to the achievement of case plan goals.</p> <p>86. Able to advocate appropriately and effectively for the child to obtain needed services and fair treatment.</p> <p>87. Knows the purpose and processes of Child and Family Team meetings and participates appropriately as a team member.</p> <p>88. Able to effectively document required information.</p> <p>89. Able to maintain a non-judgmental attitude when communicating with others.</p>	<p>and can develop activities to support this.</p> <p>123. Understands fundamentals of curriculum development for adult learners and can identify or develop training content that meets these criteria.</p> <p>124. Able to exhibit skills in a range of training methods, including presentation, group development, facilitation, experiential exercises, and use of audio-visual techniques.</p> <p>125. Understands stages of group development and knows strategies for facilitating groups at each stage.</p> <p>126. Able to plan, organize, and coordinate a training event.</p>
<p><i>4b. Resource parents maintain their own health and well-being in order to provide optimal care for the child.</i></p>		
<p>28. Understands their motivation for wanting to foster or adopt.</p> <p>29. Uses positive coping skills to manage stress.</p> <p>30. Able to identify and express emotions in a productive way.</p> <p>31. Able to recognize their own limitations and how much stress their family can handle.</p> <p>32. Understands the importance of setting time aside for personal regeneration and nurturing of adult relationships.</p>	<p>90. Knows resources and support services available to their family members and how to access them.</p> <p>91. Able to recognize when additional support is needed for self and family members.</p> <p>92. Able to build healthy relationships among all household members.</p> <p>93. Able to set time aside for personal regeneration and adult relationships.</p> <p>94. Able to manage the impact of placement disruption on all family members.</p> <p>95. Able to set priorities and manage last-minute changes without becoming overwhelmed.</p> <p>96. Able to manage own feelings and helps others in the home to manage their feelings about household changes and transitions.</p> <p>97. Knows to seek appropriate support if allegations of abuse and neglect occur; able to manage the social and emotional trauma inherent in such an investigation.</p> <p>98. Able to manage uncertainty and changes involved in child's placement and case plan.</p>	<p>127. Reaches out to other resource parents to provide mutual support, coaching, and information.</p>

** Resource parents providing therapeutic foster care or caring for specialized populations of children may need these competencies earlier, either during the pre-service or foundation period. Individual resource parent development plans should be developed based on individual family needs and children to be placed in their home*

APPENDIX B

Diagram of How Prospective and Licensed NC Foster Parents Are Assessed Today

Following is a generic process described in policy and generally true for all child-placing agencies. It is understood that some agencies have introduced practices and internal agency policies that are more complex and rigorous.

I. Prospective foster parents

Following is a common sequence of assessment steps/activities

1. First Contact	Advise applicants of licensing requirements. Supervising Agency decides whether to continue Mutual Home Assessment (MHA)
2. Orientation	Inform applicants about the services, policies, procedures, standards, and agency expectations. Applicants decide whether to continue MHA
3. Pre-service training	With fidelity to MAPP model, provides numerous opportunities to gather information about applicants and mutually assess appropriateness of licensure
4. Mutual Home Assessment (MHA)*	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Family History on each applicant 2. Assessment of each of the 12 skills 3. Assessment of the home for space 4. Assessment of the applicant's ability to participate in shared parenting 5. Assessment of applicant's financial ability to provide foster care
*includes multiple home visits	
5. Licensing process	Includes reference and background checks as well as state oversight/scrutiny of individuals recommended for licensure

II. Licensed foster parents

Procedures/sources of information agencies currently use to assess licensed foster parents.

- **Reassess/relicense biennially** (every other year). Should include repeating MHA.
 - State oversight/scrutiny of individuals recommended for relicensure.
- **At least quarterly visits from licensing staff.** For specific purpose of assessing licensing requirements. At least two of the quarterly visits each year must take place in the foster home.
 - Foster parents who provide **therapeutic** foster care services have weekly supervision and support from a qualified professional as defined in 10A NCAC 27G .0104 and .0203
- **Direct communication with foster parents** (e.g., requests for assistance or support, updates on changes in household or job status, etc.)
- **Feedback from other agency staff** (e.g., communication about how well needs of children are being met)
- **CPS assessments** of foster homes

III. Resources Available to NC Agencies to Support Assessment Activities/Best Practice

- Policy
- Training (MAPP/GPS training, 3-day licensing course, self-paced online licensing course, webinars)
- Forms and Tools (including DSS- DSS-5295, Monthly Foster Care Contact Record)
- Other publications (e.g., Supplemental Guide to Foster Home Licensing)
- MAPP listserv
- NCDSS monitoring of critical incident reports, CPS reports of foster homes
- NCDSS processes for termination, revocation of licenses
- Visits and consultation with NCDSS licensing consultants

APPENDIX C

Profiles of Tools of Special Interest to the Assessment Sub-Workgroup

The assessment sub-workgroup sought to identify instruments that might be useful to agencies in their efforts to select and support resource parents. After we identified likely candidates, sub-workgroup teams created the following seven preliminary review summaries, which the entire sub-workgroup then used to discuss the tools.

1. Alabama Parenting Questionnaire

- a. **Name:** Alabama Parenting Questionnaire
- b. **Purpose:** The Alabama Parenting Questionnaire (APQ) is a copyright protected measure of several dimensions of parenting that have proven to be important for understanding the causes of conduct problems and delinquency in youth: Positive Reinforcement, Parental Involvement, Inconsistent Discipline, Poor Monitoring and Supervision, and Harsh Discipline.
- c. **Creator/Owner (incl. contact info):** University of New Orleans. Researchers are free to download and use the APQ free of charge in their work
- d. **Main areas or traits assessed:** The areas assessed are focused on how the parents engage the children; how the parental interventions are perceived by the child and discipline strategies. The premise is, that identifying the way families interact can determine the effects of parenting on childhood conduct. There are four instruments: a parent questionnaire, a child questionnaire and on for each that would be a telephone interview. The instruments are available on the website. I will bring paper copies of the instrument with me when come to the meeting.
- e. **Evidence base:** I read an article that was cited on the website, “Psychometric Properties of the Alabama Parenting Questionnaire,” that was published in May of 2006. They identified it as a “promising measure.” However, keep in mind it was researched in Germany and measures birth children and birth families. It has not been used with foster/adoptive parents.
- f. **Training required to administer:**No training needed
- g. **Training required to score:** No training to score
- h. **Time to administer:** It did not say specifically, but looking at it, I would assume 45 minutes.
- i. **Time to score: ?**
- j. **Family-Centeredness:** I believe this tool is extremely family-centered.

If the family has agreed to be involved with the person administering the instrument, I would agree it is a family centered tool. Where it gets tricky is, if a child already has some kind of conduct disorder, is the information he or she is giving reliable?
- k. **Availability/cost:** Free if university is given credit
- l. **Copy if available:** see website (<http://psyc.uno.edu/Frick%20Lab/APQ.html>)
- m. **General comments:** I believe this tool would be more efficiently used with birth parents rather than assessing potential foster or adoptive families. It asks questions that an intake social worker may consider and pass on to the foster care worker. It may assist in shared parenting to know how the child was treated prior to coming into care. It is interesting that many of the questions clearly relate to the 12 skills, especially in the areas of discipline and working from the strengths of the child. It could also be a helpful tool to use with birth families to assess if they are ready to be reunited with their children.

Reviewed by Joanne Scaturro

2. Brief Symptom Inventory (BSI)

- a. **Name: BSI**
- b. **Purpose.** Used with Individuals 13 years and older. Psychologists, psychiatrists, physicians, nurses, and other healthcare professionals can use the BSI instrument to help:
 - Assess patients at intake for psychological problems
 - Objectively support care management decisions
 - Measure patient progress during and after treatment to monitor change
 - Provide outcomes measurement for treatment programs and providers through aggregated patient information
- c. **Creator/Owner (incl. contact info).** Developed by: [Leonard R. Derogatis, PhD](#). Kits etc. available from Psychcorp/Pearson at <http://psychcorp.pearsonassessments.com/HAIWEB/Cultures/en-us/Productdetail.htm?Pid=PAbsi>
- d. **Main areas or traits assessed**
 - SOM - Somatization
 - O-C - Obsessive-Compulsive
 - I-S - Interpersonal Sensitivity
 - DEP - Depression
 - ANX - Anxiety
 - HOS - Hostility
 - PHOB - Phobic Anxiety
 - PAR - Paranoid Ideation
 - PSY - Psychoticism
 - The BSI test is brief and requires only 8-10 minutes to complete, making it well-suited for repeated administrations over time to evaluate patient progress.
 - BSI provides an overview of a patient's symptoms and their intensity at a specific point in time.
 - The Global Severity Index (GSI) is designed to help quantify a patient's severity-of-illness and provides a single composite score for measuring the outcome of a treatment program based on reducing symptom severity.
- e. **Evidence base** (i.e., have high-quality studies of this tool and its effectiveness appeared in peer-reviewed journals? OR, has this tool been rated by the California Evidence-Based Clearinghouse for Child Welfare <http://www.cebc4cw.org/>?) The reliability, validity, and utility of the BSI instrument have been tested in more than 400 research studies.
- f. **Training required to administer.** Local software, hand scoring or mail-in scoring
- g. **Training required to score ?**
- h. **Time to administer** 8-10 minutes. Paper-and-pencil, audiocassette, or computer administration
- i. **Time to score ?**
- j. **Family-Centeredness:** I believe this tool is extremely family-centered.
- k. **Availability/cost.** Hand scoring Starter kit priced at \$115 (Includes BSI manual, 50 answer sheets with test items, 50 profile forms and 2 worksheets.)
- l. **Copy if available:** See <http://brown2.alliant.wikispaces.net/file/view/BSI+Article.pdf>
- m. **General comments:** After reviewing the BSI, my feeling is that it is more appropriate in mental health systems than for use in foster care. Because of its medical model focus, it would not be considered a family centered tool in the assessment process. Also, it is clearly an instrument to measure “patient” progress

Reviewed by Joanne Scaturro and John McMahon

3. Parent Stress Index

- a. **Name:** *Parenting Stress Index and Parenting Stress Index Short Form (PSI/PSI-SI)*
- b. **Purpose:** PSI is used for early identification of dysfunctional parent-child interactions, parental stress, family functioning, and risk for child abuse and neglect, and also evaluation of child custody decisions.
- c. **Creator/Owner (incl. contact info)** Richard R. Abidin, PhD. Can be purchased through PAR:
Website: www3.parinc.com/contact/default.aspx, Email: custserv@parinc.com, Phone: (800) 331-8378, Fax: (800) 727-9329
- d. **Main areas or traits assessed:** Child Characteristics in the full scale include: Distractibility/Hyperactivity, Adaptability, Reinforces Parent, Demandingness, Mood, and Acceptability. Parent measures include: Competence, Isolation, Attachment, Health, Role Restriction, Depression, and Spouse.

The CEBC says it is primarily intended for ages 0-3 but may also be used for parents of children of children up to 12. The developer says it was developed for children ages 3 months to 10, with an “upward extension” available for older children.
- e. **Evidence base** Yes it has been rated by CEBC as an A- . The CEBC shows 7 published, peer-reviewed studies that have demonstrated that the measure is reliable and valid, many of which include diverse populations including African-American and Spanish-speaking families. General info. from the CEBC: The purpose of having assessment ratings is to evaluate each screening and assessment tool for child welfare based on the available research evidence. The topic expert assisted with identifying assessments that met the following criteria:
 - has a manual and/or training available that describes how to administer it and score it.
 - is likely to be used in the cw field or with children and caretakers in the child welfare system.
 - The research evidence was then reviewed for each assessment and ratings were provided. All ratings are based on the English version of the measure unless otherwise noted in the assessment’s description.
- f. **Training required to administer** - Recommended 4 year degree in Psychology, Medicine, Neurology, Nursing, Occupational Therapy, Counseling or related field plus satisfactory completion of coursework in Test Interpretation, Psychometric.
- g. **Training required to score** – see above
- h. **Time to administer** – The PSI consists of a 120-item test booklet with an optional 19-item Life Stress scale; and an all-in-one self-scoring answer sheet/profile form. It takes approximately 30 minutes to complete. The PSI-Short Form takes approx. 15-20 minutes and is derived from the full-length test and consists of a 36-item self-scoring questionnaire/ profile. It yields a Total Stress score from three scales: Parental Distress, Parent-Child Dysfunctional Interaction, and Difficult Child. The developer recommends the longer form based on valuable additional info. gained for the additional 10-15 minutes.
- i. **Time to score** – manually not specified/ software- 15 minutes
- j. **I believe this tool is extremely family-centered.** ?
- k. **Availability/cost** – Software: \$775 for the PSI and PSI-SF, CD-ROM \$625, PSI-SP download \$540 with CD-ROM \$560. PSI Inventory kit including 25 hand-Scorable Answer sheets/Profile forms - \$185, Reusable booklets 10/\$65, Hand scorable Answer sheets/Profile forms 25/\$70, PSI manual \$54
Purchased from Psychological Assessment Resource (PAR)
- l. **Copy if available** -
<http://www.scalesandmeasures.net/files/files/Parenting%20Stress%20Inventory%20%281983%29.pdf>
- m. **General comments** - This assessment is in large part for evaluating a specific parent-child relationship. I don’t know that it would be applicable for a foster parent assessment process that’s about how a parent might be with potential future children who may be very different from their own children. It could help rule out parents with problematic relationships with their current children, but would not be helpful for parents with a high functioning relationship or those without children in the home.

Sources: <http://people.virginia.edu/~rra/psi.html>; <http://www.cebc4cw.org/assessment-tool/parenting-stress-index/>;
http://www.tjta.com/products/TST_031.htm; <http://www4.parinc.com/Products/Product.aspx?ProductID=PSI-SP>

Reviewed by Joanne Lucas and Mellicent Blythe

4. North Shore Trauma Screen

- a. **Name** - *North Shore-Long Island Jewish Health System Trauma History Checklist and Interview (THC)*
- b. **Purpose** – The THC is a basic interview of trauma exposure developed internally when assessing trauma histories with multiply traumatized populations. It is intended to screen for trauma history and is not a symptom inventory (it is to tell you if someone has a history of trauma, but not what effect that might be having on their functioning).
- c. **Creator/Owner (incl. contact info)** Mandy Habib, Psy.D; North Shore University Hospital, Department of Psychiatry, Assistant Professor of Psychology, Hofstra North-Shore LIJ School of Medicine, Manhasset, NY 11030 or MHabib@NSHS.edu
- d. **Main areas or traits assessed** –It contains a list of possible traumatic experiences ranging from exposure to direct experience with DV, community violence, physical and sexual abuse, natural disasters, serious accidents or life threatening illnesses, to less commonly experienced traumas such as kidnapping and stalking.
- e. **Evidence base**
Habib, M & Labruna, V (2011) Considerations in Assessing Trauma and PTSD in Adolescents *Journal of Child and Adolescent Trauma*, 4, 198-216.
- f. **Training required to administer** – None
- g. **Training required to score** – N/A
- h. **Time to administer** - Varies
- i. **Time to score** – N/A
- j. **I believe this tool is extremely family-centered.** - Agree
- k. **Availability/cost** – Dr. Habib has given permission for review and use it appears at no cost
- l. **Copy if available** - Yes
- m. **General comments**

The NSLIJHS History Checklist and Interview should be administered as an interview as Dr. Habib suggested instead of a self report.

Because this is only intended to find out trauma history and not symptoms, I don't know that I would recommend it for regular use with foster parent applicants. I think we need to focus on problematic behaviors or tendencies which may or may not be related to a history of trauma, rather than to figuring out all the trauma history someone has had.

What's interesting to me is that key factors to be gathered are age at onset, frequency, and duration. These factors are linked by research as being correlated with impact of the trauma. That seems relevant to social work training in general but not necessarily to developing a comprehensive inventory of stressful events in every applicant's past.

Reviewed by Rodney Alston, Joanne Lucas and Mellicent Blythe
Sources: person email communication with Dr. Habib, 2/2212

5. SAFE (Structured Analysis Family Evaluation)

- a. **Name** SAFE (Structured Analysis Family Evaluation)
- b. **Purpose**-SAFE is a home study methodology that provides a suite of comprehensive home study tools and practices for the description and evaluation of would-be adoptive families. SAFE is also suitable for the home study of prospective foster families, relative care providers or dual licensure of concurrent planning resource families
- c. **Creator/Owner (incl. contact info)** Consortium for Children, 65 Mitchell Boulevard, Suite D, San Rafael, California 94903, (415) 491-2200; fax: (415) 491-5015; E-mail: cfc@consortforkids.org
- d. **Main areas or traits assessed.** Psychosocial evaluation a key part. SAFE has identified 70 Psychosocial Factors that research has demonstrated to be necessary for safe and effective parenting - either through adoption, kin or foster care. The **SAFE Desk Guide** and **Psychosocial Inventory** provide an inter-related, supported and structured process to assist Home Study Practitioners in determining the strengths and limitations of a particular Applicant Family. Also includes a **Pre-Formatted Home Study Report** and The SAFE Compatibility Inventory helps support placement workers in determining the appropriateness of fit of an Applicant Family and the child or children in question.

SAFE provides practitioners with uniform information gathering tools that support the home study interview. These tools include; Questionnaire I, Questionnaire II and the SAFE Reference Letter. These tools aid the Home Study Practitioner in doing more targeted interviewing. The Questionnaires and Reference Letter assist the Home Study Practitioner in identifying strengths, as well as issues to be addressed early in the home study process, thereby eliminating a great deal of time “guessing and/or fishing” for issues that should be addressed or explored further.

SAFE emphasizes three major themes: quality, uniformity and comprehensiveness. Whether they are inter-jurisdictional or “in house” home studies, these are also the three themes standing most in the way of the willingness of agencies to make out of jurisdiction placements. SAFE users, whether public or private, have common methodology, forms, procedures, evaluation guides and language that allows for direct, detailed, and precise communication and cooperation. The same tools, process, and structure are used in each and every SAFE Home Study making it very difficult for a Home Study Practitioner to cut corners or miss important issues.

- e. **Evidence base** - See information below. It has not been rated by the California Evidence-Based Clearinghouse for Child Welfare.
- f. **Training required to administer –**

Training of Home Study Practitioners

- Schedule Training Dates for 2-day SAFE trainings for Home Study Practitioners
- Schedule Training Dates for 1-day Supervisor Training

(Phyllis – notes the registration fees for the 1 and 2 day trainings were \$40. The greater cost is staff time/ implementation / and cross agency training. The cost to begin this in NC would also need to include the initial train the trainer format.)

- g. **Training required to score – see F.**
- h. **Time to administer – Unknown – seems similar to other home studies processes - Sarah Shumate thinks 4-8 weeks based on a case that Catawba Co had in 2011 – SAFE Home study from Colorado was done from 4/19/2011 to 5/16/2011.** (Phyllis – I think the time is similar to what is recommended now as agencies should be getting to know families during the training process and gathering information for the home study. The SAFE process may be very beneficial if we change to a smaller amount of pre service and more ongoing training. If we make this change the SAFE tool could provide a higher level of consistency in the home study process.
- i. **Time to score – unknown – seems fairly simple**

- j. Sarah, Phyllis, and John believe this tool is extremely family-centered. – Strongly agree
- k. Availability/cost - \$280 per person to attend trainings listed on website; it looks like they would work up a package for the State based on need.
- l. Copy if available –see attachments
- m. General comments

At least 13 states are currently using it and at least 4-5 Canadian Provinces.

Agency reviews basic home study template and modifies document to fit their rules, regulations and laws. Consortium for Children (CFC) creates jurisdiction specific home study templates and puts it on the web site – www.safehomestudy.org. Every SAFE jurisdiction or agency is assigned their own section of the SAFE web site

Periodic Evaluation of SAFE Home Studies - Provide CFC with a reasonable number of didactic SAFE Home Studies for evaluation and feedback to jurisdiction to determine additional training needs, program improvements, supervisory skills, etc.

Research and SAFE

There is a paucity of research concerning home studies. To date, there is not a home study model that has garnered the qualifications to be deemed "evidence-based practice". SAFE is the most researched home study methodology available and the only home study approach with an ongoing research program. This is, in part, because SAFE shares the characteristic of an evidence based practice insofar as the practice has a high likelihood of being used with fidelity.

The lack of research in this critical area of child welfare is startling because determining the suitability of an Applicant Family for placement is one of the most crucial jobs in child welfare. The safety, permanence, and well-being of a child are dependent on a thorough and unbiased study of an Applicant Family.

Consortium for Children and the SAFE Staff feel strongly that SAFE should be scrutinized carefully in order to ensure that we are serving children who require placement. We strive to have the research and evaluation of SAFE become an on-going phenomenon, making SAFE a better methodology, and therefore, ensuring that we are meeting the needs of the Agencies with which we work.

For the past five years, SAFE has achieved this goal in partnership with a research team headed by Dr. Richard Barth of the University of Maryland School of Social Work and Dr. Thomas Crea of Boston College Graduate School of Social Work. Professors Barth and Crea have reviewed prior home study research, interviewed and surveyed users of SAFE, reviewed literature on indicators of adoption outcomes, and assessed differences in the ways that men and women respond to sensitive questions asked during the SAFE process. <http://www.safehomestudy.org/Research/Published-Research.aspx>

Phyllis – Additionally the fact that SAFE works well with many training models in other states shows connection to the basic content. I would certainly suggest a pilot of this model before deciding to bring it statewide. Also, it would be helpful to check on other resources that may be available as well. If needed I can check with FFTA to see if there are any additional tools that should be on our radar. However, if we have our list defined that works to.

I think the information on the SAFE tool was very impressive. We do have several of the components in our home study format that we use in NC. If we did not totally integrate the SAFE tool we could cross walk the categorical areas to be more inclusive in our current tool.

Reviewed by Phyllis Stephenson, Sarah Shumate, and John McMahon

6. Adult-Adolescent Parenting Inventory-2

- a. **Name** – AAPI 2
- b. **Purpose** – The AAPI-2 is an inventory designed to assess the parenting and child rearing attitudes of adult and adolescent parent and pre-parent populations. Based on the known parenting and child rearing behaviors of abusive parents, responses to the inventory provide an index of risk for practicing behaviors known to be attributable to child abuse and neglect.

The Benefits of Assessment

- Measure the pre and post effectiveness of your parenting program.
- Determine parenting strengths and areas that need improvement.
- Increase the probability of funding with built-in pre-process-post assessment.

The Levels of Assessment

- Pre: Data collected prior to the formal start of your program to determine entry level capabilities.
- Process: Data collected during the program to monitor ongoing growth and changes.
- Post: Data collected at the completion of your program to determine the level of growth and future intervention needs of the family.

Nurturing Skills Competency Scale (PRE-NSCS / NSF-NSCS / NSCS-PA)

The Nurturing Skills Competency Scale (NSCS) is a comprehensive criterion referenced measure designed to gather demographic data of the family, as well as knowledge and utilization of Nurturing Parenting practices. The data generated from the pre-post administration of the NSCS allows parents and staff an opportunity to measure changes in family life, knowledge and utilization of Nurturing Parenting practices. The functional purpose of assessment is to gather information for decision makers. Families, professionals in the helping fields, agency administrators and funding sources are typical decision makers that rely on information to assist them.

Pretest and Posttest Assessment

In measuring the effectiveness of your program in changing long standing parenting habits and beliefs, assessment is most often designed to gather information at the beginning and end of the program. It is important to use inventory assessment that has pretest and posttest versions which allow measurement of change without the bias of the practice effect. When used in conjunction with the AAPI-2, the NSCS provides an index of Low, Moderate or High Risk for child maltreatment

- c. **Creator/Owner (incl. contact info)** Stephen J. Bavolek, Ph.D., is a recognized leader in the fields of child abuse and neglect, treatment and prevention, and parenting education.
- d. **Main areas or traits assessed –Responses to AAPI2 focus on the following 5 categories:**
- Expectations of children**
 - Parental Empathy for Children’s needs**
 - Use Corporal Punishment**
 - Parent Child and Family Roles**
 - Children’s Power and Independence**
- e. **Evidence base: There are more than 16 research studies on the web site.**
- f. **Training required to administer** – 3 day training – can be a train the trainer – Dr. Bavolek lives in Asheville and could be a contracting resource / web based training / power points / agencies can do in-service with their staff
- g. **Training required to score** – Data entry generates a profile – scored to a norm – can export and analyze data
- h. **Time to administer** - 40 item scale – answer truthfully – must be completed by foster parent – attitudinal survey – 15 minutes
- i. **Time to score** – scored immediately after data entry – 5 – 10 minutes (Can do form A and Form B and it links by name for the profile.)
- j. **I believe this tool is extremely family-centered. - strongly agree**
- k. **Availability/cost** – 1000 test @ \$2.00 each ranges by number
- l. **General comments: Great tool!**
- Reviewed by Phyllis Stephenson

7. Casey online screening tools

Name	Casey Foster Family Assessments (CFFA) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Casey Foster Applicant Inventory (CFAI) Casey Home Assessment Protocol (CHAP)
Purpose	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improve recruitment, selection, development, and retention of foster parents as a means of improving outcomes for children in foster care The tools complement each other; both tools are designed to be used during the foster family application and selection process, but they can be used after this process as well. The tools assess a broad range of characteristics of foster parents in order to identify strengths and areas for needed development and support (Piescher, 2008)
Creator/Owner	Casey Family Programs and the University of Tennessee's College of Social Work
Evidence base	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ranked by Piescher et al. (2008) as an emerging practice (i.e., research base is merely an exploratory or descriptive study.) CFAI=acceptably reliable and valid. CHAP=acceptably valid; reliability=unknown. Not rated (NR) on the California Evidence-Based Clearinghouse for Child Welfare Orme, J. G., Cherry, D. J., & Rhodes, K. W. (2006). The help with fostering inventory. <i>Children and Youth Services Review</i>, 28, 1293-1311. Orme, J. G., Cuddeback, G. S., Buehler, C., Cox, M. E., & Le Prohn, N. S. (2007). Measuring foster parent potential: Casey Foster Parent Inventory- Applicant Version, <i>Research on Social Work Practice</i>, 17, 77-92.
Training required	4 training modules available online
Availability/cost	Free. Available online
Time to administer/level of complexity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CFAI: 20 minutes; CHAP: 5 to 20 minutes It is recommended to administer the assessments once approximately 75% of the way through the foster care licensing process, before the home study. Child welfare workers have also administered it at re-licensure for some foster families to further explore training needs. These measures could be quite valuable to treatment foster agencies as a means of assessing 1) the support that foster parents need, and 2) likely sources of support. (Piescher, 2008)
Copy if available	Visit http://www.fosterfamilyassessments.org/
General comments	<p>CFFA, module 1:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> compatible with all Parent Education Classes (PRIDE, MAP, ACT, etc.) categories assessed <ol style="list-style-type: none"> work as partners with agency support birth family relations manage demands on well-being grow as foster parent manage loss support permanency support cultural needs promote education support development meet physical and emotional needs provide a nurturing environment provide a safe environment

Source: Piescher, K. N., Schmidt, M. & LaLiberte, T. (2008, October). *Evidence-based practice in foster parent training and support: Implications for treatment foster care providers*. Center for Advanced Studies in Child Welfare, University of Minnesota School of Social Work. Accessed Nov. 09, 2010 from <www.cehd.umn.edu/ssw/cascw/attributes/PDF/EBP/EBPFPTTrainingSupportComplete.pdf>.

Reviewed by Sarah Shumate and John McMahon

8. CRC support assessment

Part 1 of 3

- a. **Name** CRC support assessment—Substitute Care Provider Placement Assessment
- b. **Purpose**---To assess whether the provider’s home and household circumstances are safe for the child being placed and whether placement of this child in this home poses any threat of harm to other children in the home
- c. **Creator/Owner** (incl. contact info)----Kathy Park: Kpark@mw.nccd-crc.org (608) 831-1180
- d. **Main areas or traits assessed:** The child in need of placement (emotional or behavioral conditions, any sexually inappropriate behaviors), children currently in the home (emotional or behavioral conditions, any sexually inappropriate behaviors), any special needs/concerns of children currently in the home or of the child being placed, home environment, the provider’s current life circumstances and if anyone has moved into the home since the last assessment or placement.
- e. **Evidence base** (i.e., have high-quality studies of this tool and its effectiveness appeared in peer-reviewed journals? OR, has this tool been rated by the California Evidence-Based Clearinghouse for Child Welfare <http://www.cebc4cw.org/>?)
- f. **Training required to administer:** None noted.
- g. **Training required to score:** None noted.
- h. **Time to administer:** Not noted; however, I would say at least an hour or more to answer the questions in the three sections and discuss any issues or concerns.
- i. **Time to score:** Not noted; I think the administration and scoring can be completed within at least an hour.
- j. **I believe this tool is extremely family-centered.** Agree
- k. **Availability/cost:** No cost was noted.
- l. **Copy if available:** Not noted
- m. **General comments:** Since circumstances may change between the time of license approval and actual placement and the provider’s life circumstances sometimes change, which may impact child safety; this assessment will be beneficial prior to making a determination for placement of any child.

Part 2 of 3

- a. **Name** CRC support assessment—Provision of Care Assessment
- b. **Purpose**---To assess the degree of care that a foster parent is able to provide and to identify where gaps exist between a foster parent’s ability to provide care and child specific needs. Where gaps exist, supports and services should be provided to increase placement stability and child well-being.
- c. **Creator/Owner** (incl. contact info): Kathy Park: Kpark@mw.nccd-crc.org (608) 831-1180
- d. **Main areas or traits assessed:** 10 domains are assessed to determine a foster parent’s current ability to provide care in that area:

<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Emotional/behavioral 2. Physical health/disability 3. Education 4. Family relationships 5. Child development 6. Substance use/abuse 7. Social community relationships 8. Cultural identity 9. Transportation 10. Permanency 	<p>For each domain, determine the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Foster parent not able/willing to provide basic care within this area b. Standard/basic care c. Increased support/intervention d. Intensive support/intervention
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- e. Evidence base (i.e., have high-quality studies of this tool and its effectiveness appeared in peer-reviewed journals? OR, has this tool been rated by the California Evidence-Based Clearinghouse for Child Welfare <http://www.cebc4cw.org/>?)
- f. Training required to administer: None noted.
- g. Training required to score: None noted
- h. Time to administer: Not noted-----at least an hour or two to discuss and determine the foster parent’s ability and assess if services/supports will increase their willingness or ability to foster a particular child.
- i. Time to score: Not noted; I think the administration (discussion) and scoring (decision) of the tool can be completed in an hour or two.
- j. I believe this tool is extremely family-centered. Agree
- k. Availability/cost: None noted.
- l. Copy if available: Provided.
- m. General comments: The tool enhances capacity, skills, and expertise of foster parents and enables agencies and foster parents to focus annual training requirements in meaningful ways. It is to be used prior to the home being deemed “placement ready”; reviewed annually.

Part 3 of 3

- a. Name CRC support assessment—California Resource Family Support Assessment Study 2005
- b. Purpose: To identify Substitute Care Providers that are in need of increased services and support to reduce placement disruption, which will in turn, increase the safety, stability, and well-being of children.
- c. Creator/Owner (incl. contact info)-----Kathy Park: Kpark@mw.nccd-crc.org (608) 831-1180
- d. Main areas or traits assessed:
 1. Criminal history as an adult
 2. Investigated/served by CPS as adult
 3. Past substance abuse problem
 4. Past mental health diagnosis
 5. Physically disciplined as a child
 6. Number of foster children placed in home during last year
 7. Primary motivation is to adopt
 8. Believes in physical discipline
 9. Demonstrates understanding of child development issues
 10. Has supportive local relationships
 11. Department received a negative reference
 12. Accepting of foster child contact with family of origin in the home
- e. Evidence base (i.e., have high-quality studies of this tool and its effectiveness appeared in peer-reviewed journals? OR, has this tool been rated by the California Evidence-Based Clearinghouse for Child Welfare <http://www.cebc4cw.org/>?)
- f. Training required to administer: None noted
- g. Training required to score: None noted
- h. Time to administer: Not noted, but I would assume that the information would be obtained during the home study process, which would consist of numerous visits.
- i. Time to score:
- j. I believe this tool is extremely family-centered. Agree
- k. Availability/cost: No cost was noted.
- l. Copy if available

Reviewed by: Carolyn Thomas and John McMahon

APPENDIX D

Summary of Course Presentations

Pre-Service

- Becoming a Therapeutic Foster Parent: John McMahon presented. **Decision**: endorsed.
- IHS Pre-Service: Rebecca Huffman presented on behalf of Deb Gallimore. **Decision**: group agreed not to endorse, in part due to concerns about how closely parts of this course resemble MAPP, while not meaningfully improving upon it.
- MAPP/GPS. Deb Gallimore, one of the Division of Social Services' primary trainers of the TOT for this foster parent pre-service course, gave a succinct and insightful description of the MAPP model and explored common barriers to model fidelity. Key points her presentation and the discussion that followed:
 - Implemented as intended, MAPP/GPS can be an effective means of assessing prospective resource families that fits well with NC's licensing process. The program also provides a model for continuing development of foster parents through its Partnership Development Plan.
 - Model fidelity is a serious problem. Half or more of all agencies do not implement MAPP as intended. Barriers include lack of agency resources, failure to effectively integrate MAPP into the assessment and licensing process (e.g., different people do training and assessment), poor selection of MAPP trainers for agencies, insufficient resources to support implementation beyond "train and hope," and expedited training schedules (e.g., 3 MAPP sessions in 1 week).
- WI Pre-Service: John McMahon presented on behalf of Carl Lanier. **Decision**: group agreed not to endorse. This online course was well executed and might serve as an inspiration for how online foster parent training might be approached, but this course is too Wisconsin specific.

In-Service

- Fostering the Sexually Abused Child (CSA MAPP): In-service. Deb Gallimore presented. **Decision**: endorsed. Caveat: recommend Division consider supplementing this course with content that teaches resource parents to prepare their birth children for the possibility that children in foster care may disclose their sexual abuse histories to them.
- Introduction to CFTs: In-service. Presented by Marianne Latz. **Decision**: endorsed with changes. Course should be assessed and revised to meet resource parents' learning needs related to CFTs (e.g., (1) give them basic understanding of what a CFT is so that they have basic "literacy" about CFTs and are on the same page as others; (2) give them a clear picture of how they can contribute to a CFT as a member of the team serving the child and family, including what they should/should not do; (3) tell them how to educate youth in their care about CFTs and prepare/empower youth to get maximum benefit from CFTs; (4) omit content more relevant for professionals and agencies, who are more responsible for planning, preparation, following policy, and CFT model fidelity.)
- Helping Youth Reach Self-Sufficiency: In-service. Wanda and Tony Douglas presented. **Decision**: endorsed. Recommend the Division looks for ways to make this course more widely available.
- KEEP: In-service. Mellicent Blythe presented. **Decision**: group was impressed by this robust intervention model and the evidence supporting its effectiveness. The group unreservedly endorsed this model, but due to its cost we do not recommend the Division include it in its plans for North Carolina's resource parent learning system.
- NCTSN Resource Parent Curriculum: presented by Tripp Ake. **Decision**: we endorsed this in-service course. Group liked the course's research base, focus on trainer fidelity, emphasis on continuing development/reinforcement over time.
- Shared Parenting: In-service. Deb Gallimore presented. **Decision**: endorsed with changes.
- Together Facing the Challenge: presented by Maureen Murray. **Decision**: we endorsed this in-service course. Group liked that the course was evidence-based, focus on trainer fidelity (very manualized), emphasis on continuing development/reinforcement over time.

APPENDIX E

Training Preparation (Transfer of Learning Tool)

The following tool is designed for supervising social workers to complete in partnership with resource parents to help them prepare for and transfer learning from in-service training events. There are two goals for this tool:

1. For resource parents to get as much as possible from each training in order to improve outcomes with children and youth in care
2. For social workers to support resource parents in bringing challenges and successes to the training room, and in transferring learning and skills from training back to their home

Training Title:

Training Dates:

Date for post-training debrief:

Learning Objectives for the training (Gathered from trainer or training material)

Resource parent's personal goals for the training (What do you hope to get out of this training? What do you want to walk away from the training knowing or doing?)

Social worker's goals/hopes for the training (What does the supervisor want the resource parent to walk away from the training knowing or doing?)

Questions that resource parent would like answered about the topic

Current situations that resource parent might want to apply or practice learning to during and after this training:

APPENDIX F

Training De-Brief (Transfer of Learning Tool)

The following tool is designed for supervising social workers to complete in partnership with resource parents to help them prepare for and transfer learning from in-service training events. There are two goals for this tool:

1. For resource parents to get as much as possible from each training in order to improve outcomes with children and youth in care
2. For social workers to support resource parents in bringing challenges and successes to the training room, and in transferring learning and skills from training back to their home

Training Title:

Training Dates:

Date of post-training debrief:

- A. Key concepts that resource parent took from the training

- B. Skills learned during the training that can be practiced with or observed by the social worker

- C. How does the information or skills from the training apply to the child(ren) in the home right now?

- D. How else can the social worker support the resource parent in applying what was learned in this training?