



NC DEPARTMENT OF
**HEALTH AND
HUMAN SERVICES**

Foster Home Licensing Track Training: A Job Aid for Supervisors Division of Social Services

Foster Home Licensing Track Training: A Job Aid for Supervisors

The Foster Home Licensing Track Training is designed to provide an overview of the roles and responsibilities of a Foster Home Licensing worker in working with children, families, and foster parents, including placement considerations, kinship care and licensure of relatives, foster parent qualifications and requirements, and licensing of foster homes.

Day 1

- Practice Model and Family-Centered Practice
- Purpose and Legal Basis
- Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging
- Roles and Responsibilities
- Crucial Conversations

Day 2

- Foster Parent Roles and Responsibilities
- 12 Skills for Successful Fostering
- Training Requirements
- Reasonable and Prudent Parent Standard
- Assessing Foster Homes
- Foster Parent Qualifications and Background Checks

Day 3

- Physical and Environmental Safety Requirements
- Issuing a License
- Mutual Home Assessment
- Permanency
- Shared Parenting

Day 4

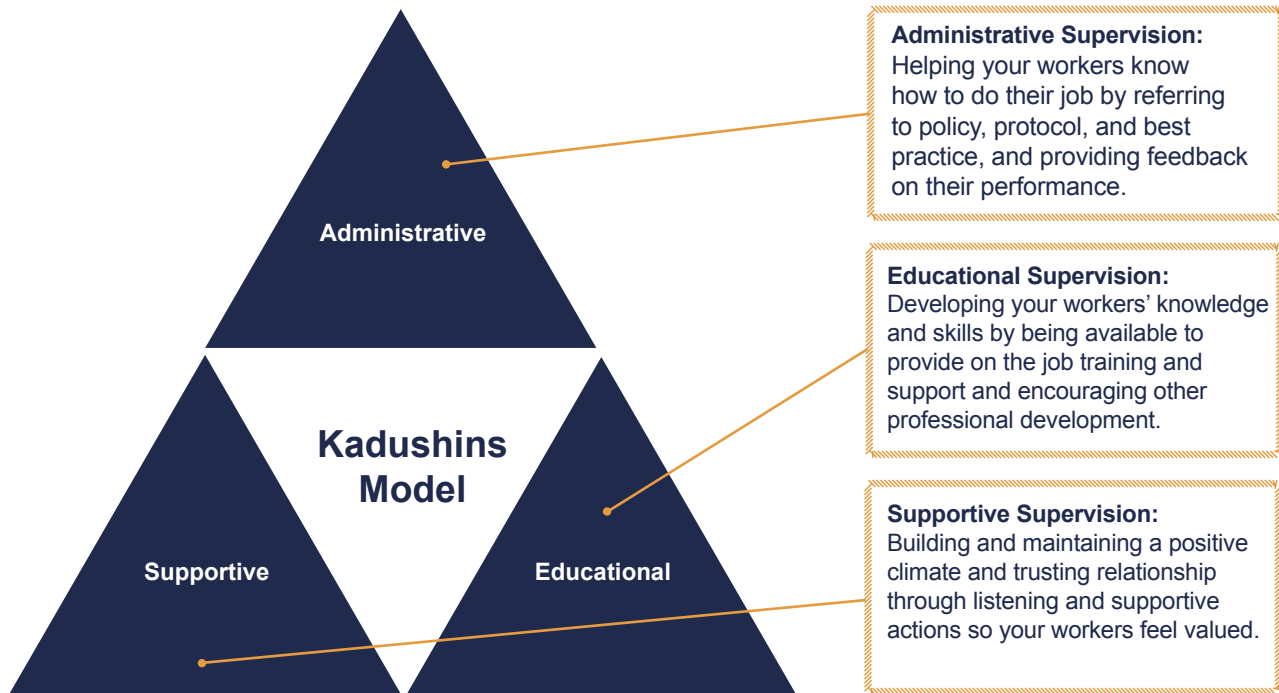
- Shared Parenting
- Supporting Foster Parents
- Educational Stability
- Placement Capacity
- Placement Matching
- Preparing for Placement
- Supporting Placement Stability
- Child and Family Teams
- Working with Relatives

Day 5

- Quality Licensing Visits
- ICPC
- License Renewal
- Foster Home Recruitment and Retention
- Considerations for Worker Safety
- Worker Wellness and Self-Care

A Model for Supervision

Supervisors are the gateway to child welfare practice. They affect the quality and effectiveness of casework practice, influence agency culture, and directly correlate to staff retention. A supervisor’s role with training is to promote the transfer of learning from the training classroom to the work with children and families. New workers must practice their newly acquired skills on the job and receive feedback on their performance. Supervisors should master skills, knowledge, and capacity in three areas:



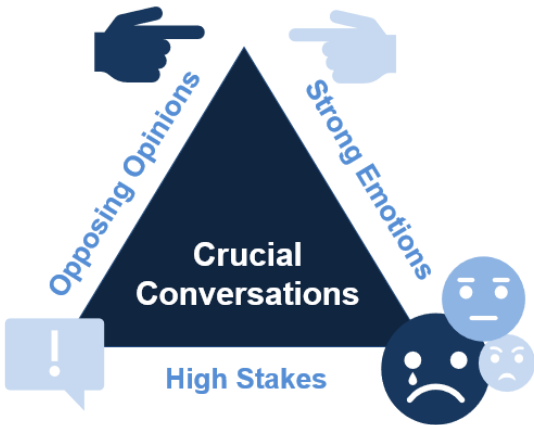
Supervisor Support for Transfer of Learning

Below are some key concepts taught in the Foster Home Licensing Track Training that support worker’s skill development. Content is followed by guidance on how supervisors can support the transfer of learning process for that specific topic. The North Carolina Practice Standards provide the behaviors for how workers successfully partner with children, families, and providers. Supervisors parallel the Essential Functions of the Practice Standards as they successfully support their workers.



Communicating Essential Function

Crucial Conversations



Crucial conversations are conversations that are:

- High stakes
- Have opposing opinions
- Elicit strong emotions

Communicating Essential Function

Supportive

Ask your worker to identify conversations that did not go well and how they could have utilized crucial conversation strategies to improve that interaction.

Coach them through planning their next crucial conversation.

Celebrate their success and provide additional support as needed.

Educational

During a staff meeting, have a new worker and a seasoned worker teach the concepts of crucial conversations.

Have your worker facilitate group discussions on what types of conversations are high stakes with opposing opinions and strong emotions. Then, ask them to facilitate a discussion about crucial conversation strategies that could be used in these instances.

Conduct role plays where your staff practice crucial conversations.

Administrative

Support your worker in identifying when crucial conversations arise in their casework.

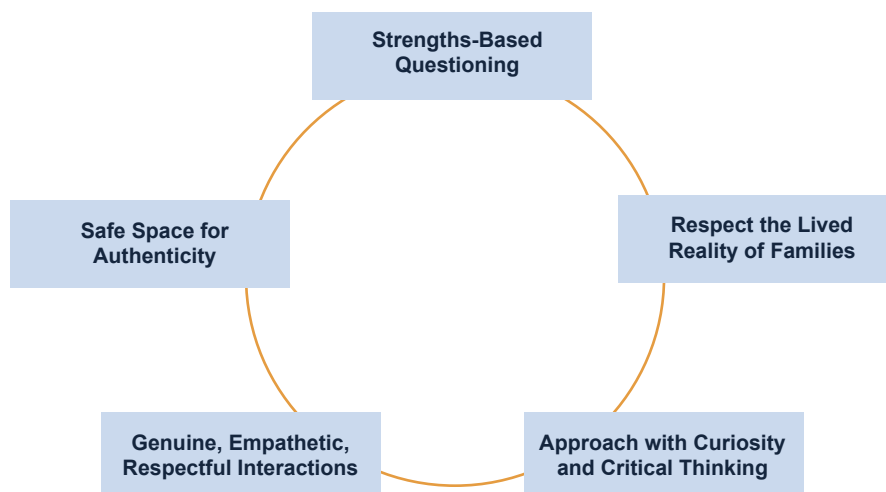
Use crucial conversations language to discuss policy requirements that align with the crucial conversations framework, such as placement or permanency plan changes, CFT meeting conflict, or when progress is lacking on a case plan.

Provide feedback on their ability to use crucial conversation skills. Model the use of the crucial conversations framework with your worker.

Engaging Essential Function

Narrative Interviewing

Narrative interviewing keeps the family at the center of the interview, giving the family member the freedom to express themselves in their own words, maintaining ownership of their experiences, while helping to get the information and context needed to make well-informed assessment decisions. With narrative interviewing, more of the context and integrity of their experiences are apparent, and family members will not feel the pressure to provide prompted responses to the questions asked to get the information needed to complete the Mutual Home Assessment.



Supervision Strategies to Support Engaging in Narrative Interviewing

Supportive

Observe your worker conducting a narrative interview with a potential foster parent. Debrief with them how they felt the interaction went. Listen attentively to understand. Celebrate their strengths and guide them through identifying ways to refine their skills. Provide any needed support.

Educational

Provide knowledge and tips to refine your worker's use of strength-based interviewing and the types of questions they use (exception finding, coping, scaling, position-taking on another's perspective, and preferred future).

Administrative

Review your worker's contact notes and foster home licensing documentation. Provide feedback on if their documentation is objective and reflects engagement efforts (see narrative interview visual above). Train them on how to document in an objective, strength-based manner.

Working with Relatives: Unique Needs of Relative Caregivers

Every relative caregiver experiences a wide range of emotions, faced with the complex new challenges of relative caregiving. There is a depth, a complexity of emotional involvement inherent in relative caregiving. Relative caregivers have unique needs and experience many challenges in providing care for a relative's child.

Risk of Retaliation: By becoming a caregiver, the parent may conclude that the relative has aligned with the agency. Therefore, the relative caregiver risks retaliation.

Lack of Financial Support: Many caregivers are not prepared for the added costs of taking care of a child.

Isolation: Due to the stigma of their situation, many families feel isolated from their community. They also feel that some of the services aren't tailored to their unique needs.

Natural Support System Change: Many caregivers report that their friendships change. Their lives aren't as spontaneous or flexible, and many of their peers are not raising young children.

Changing Parenting Norms: Over the years, culture and parenting approaches change. Relatives may not have kept up with the changes.

Different Parenting Skills: Caring for a child who has experienced maltreatment and separation requires enhanced parenting skills. Relative caregivers may need ideas regarding appropriate reactions, responses, and ways to connect with children.

Complex System: Families may need additional support navigating the services systems and the child welfare case process.

Capacity to Care: Caregivers may worry about their capacity to care. People's health and ability to provide care can change quickly.

Supervision Strategies to Support Engaging Relatives

Supportive

Engage your worker in deeper level discussions about barriers and solutions to meeting the unique needs of relatives. Celebrate their successes in helping relatives navigate their new roles, relationship dynamics, and unique needs that come with providing support to their family within the child welfare context.

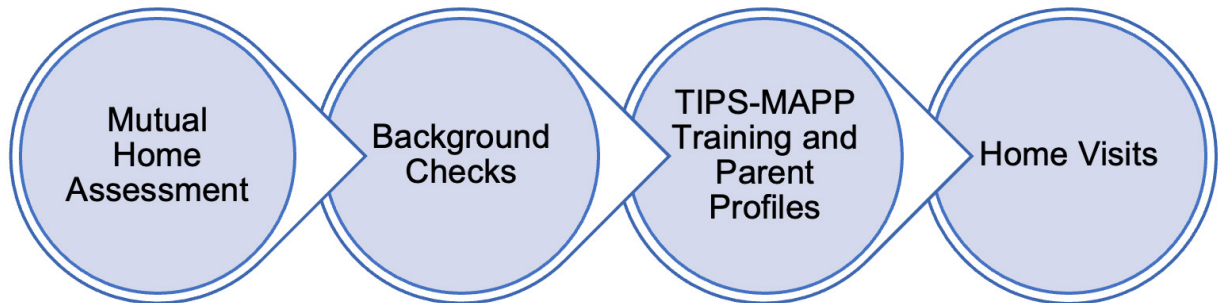
Educational

Educate your worker on engaging relatives and fictive kin. Encourage your worker to attend kinship training opportunities provided by kinship care experts.

Administrative

Teach best practice strategies to engage relatives in a manner that promotes minimizing trauma, preserving cultural identity, improving well-being, and increasing permanency. Provide feedback on your worker's relative engagement skills.

Assessing Essential Function



Supervision Strategies to Support Assessing

Supportive

Have your worker shadow a peer. Possible shadow experiences include shadowing a peer who:

1. Explains the qualifications to prospective foster parents in a thorough, clear, and succinct manner.
2. Is proficient at background checks.
3. Does an excellent job at assessing physical and environmental safety.

Debrief shadow experiences with your worker. Ask thoughtful questions to obtain their insights. Support them in applying what they learned through coaching and celebrate their successes.

Educational

Ask your worker to share their elevator speech regarding the qualifications for obtaining a foster home license. Add to the discussion by filling in any gaps and any specifics regarding your agency. Follow up about what is working and next steps to explain the foster home licensing qualifications to prospective foster parents.

Administrative

Conduct a true and false activity in a staff meeting to refresh staff understanding of foster parent qualifications and background checks.

Observe your worker during a home visit assessing physical and environmental safety. Provide feedback on their assessing skills each of these requirements.

12 Skills for Successful Fostering

Know their family	Communicate effectively	Know the children	Build strengths and meet needs
Work in partnerships	Be loss and attachment experts	Manage behaviors	Build connections
Build self-esteem	Ensure health and safety	Assess impact on own family	Make an informed decision

Supervision Strategies to Support Assessing the 12 Skills for Successful Fostering

Supportive

Support your worker as they identify areas they are strong in and opportunities for improvement in assessing the 12 Skills of Fostering. Support them with strategies and tips to improve their assessing skills as needed. Follow-up on skills and strategies used throughout the licensing process.

Educational

Coach your worker through their understanding of each of the 12 Skills and support them as they provide information to foster parents to ensure they understand the 12 Skills as well.

Administrative

Guide your worker through assessing one of their prospective foster homes using the 12 Skills and provide feedback. Have them identify strengths and needs while assessing the prospective foster parents. Guide them to identify what they know, and are already doing, what they need to know, and what they could do moving forward.

Mutual Home Assessment

The Mutual Home Assessment is the key document in the foster home licensing process. The Licensing Authority relies on this document to determine whether to license an applicant. There are 5 parts to the Mutual Home Assessment.

- 1 Family History of Each Applicant
- 2 Assessment of 12 Skills for Successful Foster Parenting
- 3 Assessment of Home and Space
- 4 Assessment of Applicant's Ability to Participate in Shared Parenting
- 5 Financial Ability to Provide Care

Supervision Strategies to Support Assessing in the Mutual Home Assessment

Supportive

Coach or provide a peer mentor to support your worker through their first-issued foster home license, renewal, and ICPC. Provide feedback and develop a plan that utilizes strengths and builds opportunities for growth.

Educational

Talk with your worker about how they plan to have crucial conversations when a family may not be a good fit for fostering, such as a poor fit due to the potential foster parent's inability to see the importance of shared parenting or to see foster care as temporary. Provide education and tips on these difficult conversations.

Administrative

Walk your worker through a completed Licensing Packet and Mutual Home Assessment reinforcing requirements and quality documentation.

Background Checks and Mitigation of Non-Barrable Offenses

Individuals convicted of certain crimes are prohibited from providing foster care. These crimes include abuse against children, domestic violence, crimes against children, and crimes of serious violence. To ensure each person granted a license has not been convicted of such crimes, every applicant's criminal history must be assessed. Criminal background checks must be performed in three areas: federal, state, and local.

Federal

- Fingerprints

State

- North Carolina Department of Public Safety Offenders
- North Carolina Sex Offender and Public Registry
- North Carolina Health Care Personnel Registry

Local Courts

Responsible Individual List

Adam Walsh Checks – if resided outside North Carolina in the last 5 years

Supervision Strategies to Support Assessing Background Checks

Supportive

Model strengths-based conversations around background check requirements that balance fitness for foster care with rehabilitation and relevance to the ability to care for children appropriately.

Educational

Support your worker through mitigation conversations around non-barrable offenses. Ask them what they must assess and do and how previous convictions relate to the care and safety of children in foster care.

Educate your staff on any missing requirements or procedures.

What to consider and assess:

- Nature of the crime
- Length of time since the conviction
- Circumstances around commission
- Number and types of prior offenses
- Evidence of rehabilitation
- Age at the time of commission

Administrative

Use two-level staffing decisions to assess an application that includes prior criminal history. Assist your worker in obtaining appropriate agency approval and the written recommendation from the agency's executive director when non-barrable offenses are present.

30 hours of pre-service training is required prior to licensure

TIPS-MAPP training is recommended by NC DSS

Goals of TIPS-MAPP

- Meet developmental needs
- Meet safety needs
- Shared parenting
- Support concurrent planning
- Meet family needs

Once foster parents are licensed, they are required to continue the enhancement of their skills through in-service training. They should complete 10 hours of in-service training annually, or 20 hours within the two-year licensing period, and must complete this requirement before they are eligible for re-licensure.

Supervision Strategies to Support Assessing with Foster Parent Training

Supportive

Support your worker in making connections with foster parent trainers so that training notes and observations can be shared.

Educational

Educate your worker on the training requirements for foster parents.

Administrative

Talk with your worker about foster parent training requirements, making sure that they understand when training should be completed and when and how ongoing training should be conducted.



Planning Essential Function

Permanency

- **Legal Permanence:** a legally established relationship through reunification, custody, adoption, or guardianship or a child's relationship with a parenting adult as recognized by law.
- **Relational Permanence:** an emotional attachment between the child and caregivers and other family members and kin or recognizing the many types of important long-term relationships that help a child feel loved and connected.
- **Cultural Permanence:** a continuous connection to family, tradition, race, ethnicity, culture, language, and religion.

Supervision Strategies to Support Support Planning in Permanency

Supportive

Observe your worker as they explain permanency to prospective foster parents. Coach them through a thorough explanation which includes the foster parent's role in permanence and managing their expectations around case planning and outcomes.

In addition, support your worker in planning and practicing crucial conversations with foster parents when foster parents' actions are not congruent with the permanency plan.

Educational

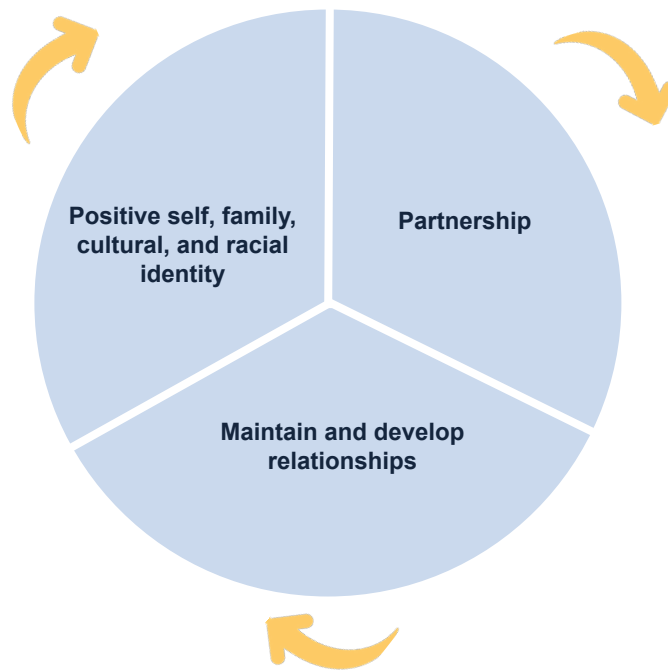
Educate your worker on different considerations during permanency conversations. For example, the discussion and preparation for permanency for relative caregivers will be different than a non-relative foster parent.

Administrative

Discuss Permanency with your worker. Add to their understanding of legal, relational, and cultural permanence, permanency options, and concurrent planning.

Shared Parenting

North Carolina's Administrative Code 70.E.1104 requires that "foster parents shall develop partnerships with children and their parents or guardians, help children maintain and develop relationships that will keep them connected to their pasts, and help children placed in the home build a positive self-concept and positive family, cultural, and racial identity." Shared parenting benefits the child, their parents, the foster parents, and the agency. Shared parenting makes a significant contribution to lessening the trauma, for both the child and their family, associated with out-of-home placement.



Supervision Strategies to Support Planning in Shared Parenting

Supportive

Model a shared decision-making approach to case management, where collaboration is used in brainstorming and solutioning. Connect these case management strategies to shared parenting. Provide opportunities to shadow peers to supplement learning on shared parenting strategies.

Educational

Discuss the benefits of shared parenting with your worker. Share available agency resources or strategies that could support or provide a solution to barriers for shared parenting.

Administrative

Observe your worker as they prepare prospective foster parents for shared parenting. Assess how your worker promotes partnering with the family, maintaining and developing relationships for the children, and creating positive self, family, cultural, and racial identity through shared parenting. Provide support and feedback.

Implementing Essential Function

Supporting Foster Parents

Adequately supporting foster parents leads to higher rates of foster parent retention, increased placement stability, and improved permanency outcomes. Consider the following supportive strategies.

Peer Mentoring

Support Groups

Services

Childcare Assistance

Training

Resources

Supervision Strategies to Support Implementing with Supporting Foster Parents

Supportive

Have your worker shadow a peer that demonstrates strong skills in supporting foster parents by valuing their placement preferences, matching, and preparing foster parents for placement. Debrief this observation. Ask them what strategies they plan to incorporate and what they may do differently. Reinforce best practice by celebrating incremental successes.

Educational

Discuss agency resources that can be used to support foster parents, such as respite care, flexible funding, and training opportunities.

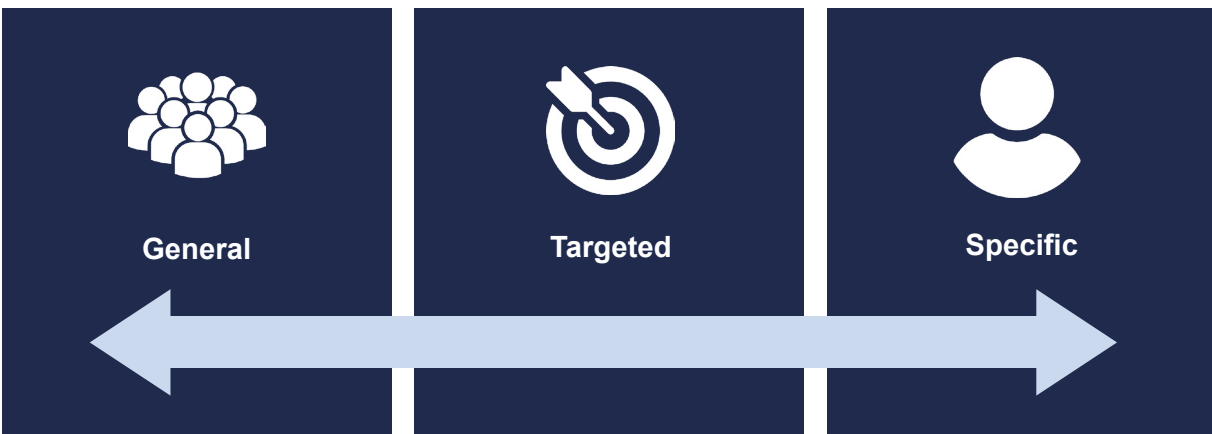
Review with your worker what support for foster parents looks like while they are awaiting placement and when they have a child placed with them. Add to their understanding as needed.

Administrative

Observe your worker, and provide feedback, as they support foster parents, such as making referrals to services, connecting foster parents with peer mentors, or referring them to support groups.

Foster Home Recruitment and Retention

There are 3 different types of recruitment, with each one serving a specific kind of purpose.



- **General recruitment** broadcasts a call for foster and adoptive parents and builds public awareness and interest. This is done, for example, through advertising or by setting up an information table at a community event.
- **Targeted recruitment** refers to efforts to find foster and adoptive parents who can meet the needs of children in care. Agency administrative and demographic data are used to determine the characteristics of current foster and adoptive parents and of the children in care. Recruitment efforts are then targeted to potential resource parents who can meet the unique placement needs of certain children, such as sibling groups, adolescents, or children with visual or hearing impairments.
- **Child-specific recruitment** refers to efforts to recruit a foster or adoptive family for a specific child or sibling group.

Supervision Strategies to Support Implementing in Recruitment and Retention Strategies

Supportive

Encourage your worker to set additional individual goals around foster home recruitment. Celebrate small successes and gains along the way.

Educational

Share agency resources and expectations around retention, such as surveying, being responsive to feedback, and using flexible funds to plan and implement retention activities.

Discuss the role of data in recruitment planning. Educate your worker on how to locate available data and how to utilize data to inform recruitment needs and gaps in resources.

Administrative

Discuss the agency's diligent recruitment plan with your worker and the expectations to review the plan and make appropriate updates.

Reinforcing Best Practices



North Carolina Practice Model

- Demonstrate and share how you incorporate the Practice Model into your practice.
- Observe staff and provide feedback on their implementation of the Practice Standards and Safety Organized Practice.
- Encourage your worker to complete the Practice Standards Self Assessment.
- Develop plans around strengths and opportunities to enhance their practice.



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- Ask your worker to share how they address and ensure equity in permanency planning.
- Support your worker in identifying cases where there are concerns for equity and disproportionality, and help your worker to address these concerns.
- Share information and organize presentations about community-based services that are culturally relevant to the populations they serve.



Trauma-Informed Care

- Have your worker discuss the impact of trauma on child development and behaviors, and provide feedback.
- Provide information about trauma-informed community resources available to parents, children, relatives, resource parents, and others.



Quality Contacts

- Have your team review the components of quality contacts in a staff meeting. Have them provide tips and suggestions.
- Observe your worker during a caseworker contact and provide feedback on their strengths and areas of opportunities.



Worker Safety

- Be clear about any department expectations related to safety and on-call practices.
- Provide your worker with any agency-specific policies related to worker safety.
- Support and address any impacts after there has been a threat to a worker's safety.



Self-Care

- Utilize Reflective Supervision to check-in with your worker about their intake reports and the circumstances to which they have been exposed.
- Review your worker's self-care plan. Assess where they are strong and where they have barriers.
- Coach your worker to discover strategies for themselves to minimize the barriers in their self-care plan.