



Shared Parenting

Presented by

Licensing Team

Permanency Planning- Social Work



Legal Basis

North Carolina 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.



Policy

Foster parents must engage in shared parenting by:

- Developing partnerships with children and their parents or guardians;
- Helping children maintain and develop relationships that will keep them connected to their pasts; and
- Helping children placed out of their own home build a positive self-identity and positive family, cultural, and racial identity.



Protocol

A shared parenting meeting between the parent(s) and the placement provider must occur within fourteen days of a child being placed out of home.

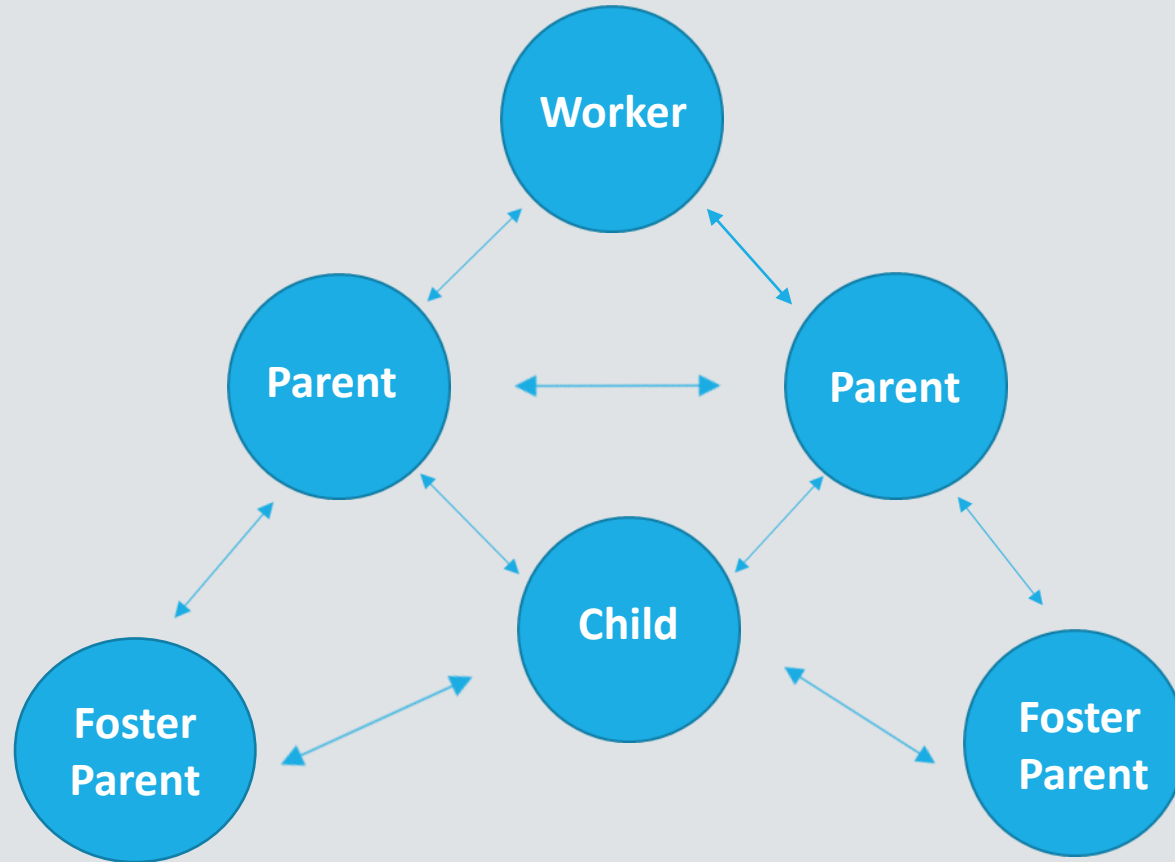
Foster parents, whether supervised by a private agency or a county child welfare services agency, must participate in shared parenting.



Shared parenting: The birth and the foster parents work together as partners to parent a child in foster care in the context of a trusting relationship that is supported and facilitated by a caseworker.



Shared parenting is a partnership.



Six Principles of Partnership

1. *Everyone desires respect.*
2. *Everyone needs to be heard.*
3. *Everyone has strengths.*
4. *Judgements can wait.*
5. *Partners share power.*
6. *Partnership is a process.*



When children come in care birth parents may experience the following losses:

- Role of being a parent
- Having children with them
- Making decisions regarding the welfare of their children
- Support of those around them
- Knowing where their children are and if they are safe
- Loss of self-esteem
- Loss of control over what happens to their family
- Loss of identity as a parent



Seven Dynamics of Change

Be mindful...

1. People will feel awkward.
2. People will initially focus on what they have to give up.
3. People will feel alone.
4. People can handle only so much change.
5. People are at different levels of readiness for change.
6. People will be concerned that they do not have enough resources.
7. People will revert to old behavior without encouragement.



As a foster parent you can...

- Ensure that you do not impose your own biases about a birth parent's previous decisions.
- Model positive communication.
- Be aware of the birth parent's fears and possible losses.
- Always be prepared to discuss the needs and interests of the child with the birth parent. Remember, they are the expert on their child.
- Partner with the child's worker and/or visitation coach to make the visitation between the child and their parent as smooth as possible.
- Share with a birth parent a positive attribute you see in their child.
- Encourage and empower the birth parent to work on their case plan.





Potential Benefits for Foster Parents:

Creating supportive relationships and sharing information with birth parents may:

- Enhance child development, learning, and well-being by encouraging the child to return to the child role
- Decrease children's defiant behavior by reducing the children's desire/need to demonstrate loyalty to birth family
- Provide information and insights that enable foster parents to meet children's needs earlier and in a more effective way, thus helping children and reducing foster parent frustration
- Reduce conflict with birth parents over various issues (e.g., grooming)
- Increase birth parent support for foster parents by reassuring them their children are being well cared for and that foster parents do not seek to replace them
- Create a positive connection between the foster parents, the child, and the child's family that will not have to end, even if the placement does



Shared Parenting Topics to Consider for Discussion

Hygiene



- Preferred shower/bath
- Hair care (when, how, what products)
- Dental care
- Assistance required?
- Schedule (night/morning)

School

- Tutoring
- Routine
- Special needs
- Assistance required?
- IEP/504 plans





Medical

- Allergies
- Medications
- Appointments
- Immediate medical needs
- Vaccinations

Meals

- Favorite foods
- Disliked foods
- Food allergies
- Routine (time/ location)
- Assistance
- Type of formula, if applicable





Comfort

- Comfort items
- Stuffed animal
- Blanket
- Ways to comfort



Bedtime

- Routine
- Storytime
- Schedule



Fears

- Unusual fears
- Typical childhood fears



Clothing

- Style of dress
- Assistance
- Clothing not allowed



Activities

- Favorite activities
- Prohibited activities
- Favorite games, puzzles, cartoons, shows, music, etc.
- Favorite sport(s)



Behavior and Discipline

- Reactions to stress
- Unusual behaviors?
- Discipline- what works and what doesn't?



A social worker may encourage you (safety factors considered) to...

- Host sibling visits if applicable
- Allow the birth parent to call the foster parent's home
- Allow the foster parent to participate in the parent/child visitation

Your licensing worker is always willing to discuss options about how this can occur safely.



Shared Parenting Safety

Clear boundaries and ground rules for the contact should be discussed and set with input from the birth family, the foster family, and the county child welfare services agency. A Family Contact plan can be utilized to help with this discussion/plan to:

- Address personal and emotional safety issues for the child, birth family, and foster family; and
- Discuss ground rules regarding phone calls, visitation, and transportation.

Information exchanged during shared parenting meetings must remain confidential.



Shared Parenting Platforms

Where can shared parenting occur?

Child and Family Team meetings

Before and after the child and parent visit

Text

Phone calls

Email

Facetime/Skype and other video chat platforms

At the child's medical/dental/therapeutic appointments

At the child's school events/meetings



Please note that some of the platforms may not be appropriate for certain cases. Discuss with your licensing worker what you are comfortable with.



NOPE

JUST... NOPE.

- Foster parents cannot create social media accounts under a false name/identity to locate and establish contact with birth parents.
- Foster parents cannot share confidential information that has been exchanged during shared parenting meetings with foster parent's friends and relatives.
- Foster parents cannot speak ill of the birth parents and their decisions in front of the child.



Please watch the video...



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d-lz7qHibts>



Check your knowledge!

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/YKCYXS3>



Please copy and paste in your browser to take the quiz.



Thank you for your participation!

This training was made with specific state mandates and Buncombe County policy targeted. Some policies may differ dependent on licensing agency and county of placement origin. Please check in with your agency if this training could count as part of your ongoing in-service training hours.

