

DC Child and Family Services Agency

**MULTI-TIERED APPROACH TO
RESOURCE PARENT
LEARNING AND
DEVELOPMENT**



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RESOURCE PARENT LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT

SUMMARY

The Child Welfare Training Academy (CWTA) provides both pre-service and in-service training for agency and private agency staff and Resource Parents. In an effort to ensure the unique training needs of new and experienced Resource Parents are met, CWTA has created the Resource Parent Learning and Development program that includes a tiered approach to training and a learning and development assessment called the family development plan.

This document includes information about the tiered approach to training, the family development plan, a listing of current Resource Parent training sessions offered by CWTA and approved vendors, and training sessions projected to be developed in response to Resource Parents' feedback and learning needs. A brief section on the Foster Parent Pre-Services Training Regulation Amendment Act of 2018 (Bill 22-97) is also included.

Learning and Development training sessions for CFSA Resource Parents will occur through a multi-tiered approach. The four tiers are:

- Tier 1: Pre-service Training
- Tier 2: Core Training
- Tier 3: Training for the Experienced Resource Parent
- Tier 4: Specialized Training

CWTA'S TRAINING APPROACH

CWTA is responsible for the pre-service and in-service learning and development for Resource Parents. This learning and development is offered via in-person/classrooms sessions and online learning. Our weekday in-person sessions are joint classes that include social workers and resource parents, while our weekend sessions are reserved for Resource Parents only. Our joint classes provided the opportunity for CFSA social workers to learn from and hear more about the experiences of our Resource Parents directly from the source and vice versa.

Based on a continuous quality improvement process, CWTA redesigned the approach to training to include a multi-tiered process. These tiers support introducing Resource Parents to the core competencies of being a resource for CFSA children and families. The competencies are from the work of the nationally recognized Child Welfare League of America as introduced in the New Generations PRIDE Model of Practice.

The New Generation PRIDE Model of Practice is designed to teach knowledge and skills in five essential competency categories for resource parents:

1. Protecting and nurturing children.
2. Meeting children's developmental needs and addressing developmental delays.
3. Supporting relationships between children and their families.
4. Connecting children to safe, nurturing relationships intended to last a lifetime.
5. Working as a member of a professional team.

These five categories of competence reach beyond pre-service training and are also integrated into recruitment, orientation, in-service training, and follow-up supports (i.e. the resource parent support worker and relicensing worker). The New Generation Pride Model of Practice is a 14-step process to develop and support resource families from recruitment through relicensing. This model of practice informs preparing and supporting resource parents by addressing the following agency practice:

1. **PLANNING:** *What is the role foster parents fulfill in accomplishing the agency's vision and mission?* The planning phase is recruitment focused with the idea of recruiting families with a specific focus on this role.
2. **DEVELOPING:** *How does the agency prepare foster parents to building relationships with birth parents and agency staff through effective engagement and communication?* Developing focuses on pre-service training, licensing, and a mutual assessment of the prospective foster family's readiness to foster.
3. **SUPPORTING:** *What supports are necessary to maintain effective foster homes with increasing competence?* The support function is purposeful in helping foster families learn and grow through continued training and ensure foster parent support workers are able to support foster parents' knowledge, skills, and abilities acquisition.

RESOURCE PARENT TRAINING POLICY

CWTA has established standards and guidelines for resource parent training to ensure uniform preparedness. Training is defined as a planned and organized activity to impart knowledge, skills, techniques, and methodologies to a resource parent or group of resource parents.

The CFSA Resource Parent training policy requires at least 30 hours of pre-service training for resource parents and 30 hours of in-service training for license renewal every two years. Resource parents can only complete up to 9 hours of in-service training online.

CWTA has worked to ensure access to both in-person and online training that will support resource parents in meeting all training requirements.

RESOURCE PARENT TRAINING OPTIONS

While CWTA offers in-person training to accommodate resource parent training needs and to ensure their continued development, resource parents also have the option of obtaining training through other avenues. These may include professional conferences, training provided by the National Center for Children and Families (NCCF) or the Foster and Adoptive Parent Advocacy Center, via various online learning platforms, or via TableTop Training.

Training sessions attended outside of those offered by CWTA should adhere to the following in-service training guidelines

- The training courses must clearly state through the course description and behaviorally-based learning objectives how the course is a planned and organized activity to impart knowledge, skills, techniques, and methodologies.
- The training course content must be relevant to both child welfare and assist in maintaining the safety, stability, and well-being of CFSA children/youth.
- The training course content must be current and designed to include recent developments in the subject area being taught.
- The training courses must be at least one hour in length. Each training hour must be at least 50 minutes of instruction in an organized learning environment and a 10 minute break.
- The training course offerings must have a mechanism of evaluation to determine the extent to which the course met the objectives, the appropriateness of teaching methods used, and the efficiency of the course presentation.

Resource parents should ensure that any external in-person training received has been approved by CWTA prior to attending a training session. If a training session is NOT approved, approval can be requested by sending the course title, description, and contact information to cwta.training@dc.gov.

If an online training course meets the above guidelines, CWTA will approve it for in-service training hours. Due to the constantly changing nature of online training platforms, CWTA provides an up-to-date list of online training websites in the quarterly theSOURCE newsletter.

THESOURCE

theSOURCE Newsletter is a quarterly publication produced by CWTA. This newsletter provides CWTA and NCCF resource parents with valuable information related to effective foster parenting along with the quarterly training schedule. At the time of publication, theSOURCE is emailed and mailed to all Resource Parents at their home address. Resource Parents are also able to access theSOURCE on the CFSA website at <https://cfsa.dc.gov/node/828232>. Resource Parents can also access theSOURCE with the following steps:

1. *Go to cfsa.dc.gov*
2. *Click on FOR PARTNERS at the top of the screen.*
3. *Click on TRAINING.*
4. *Click on CHILD WELFARE TRAINING ACADEMY.*
5. *Click on READ CWTA'S THESOURCE NEWSLETTER.*

RESOURCE PARENT FAMILY DEVELOPMENT PLAN (FDP)

Training provides a foundational level of support that introduces resource parents to the concepts related to working as a member of the CFSA professional team. However, CFSA support for resource parent development as a team member does not end with the last preservice training session. Through the use of mutual assessment from training through licensing, resource parents have the opportunity to build on their understanding and practice of key core competencies, assess their

own skills, and discuss ways to enhance these skills with their resource parent support worker. The identified means to track this learning is through the Family Development Plan (FDP).

The Family Development Plan is intended to take potential resource parents beyond the preservice preparation and assessment process. Professional development is ongoing and the Family Development Plan is used as a tool to guide the resource parents and the resource parent support worker in the process of identifying individual development needs and a plan to meet those needs. Some of the needs identified in the FDP may be related directly to training while others may involve support outside of CWTA (e. g. new resource parents attending support groups, seasoned resource parents having access to respite for the children who have joined their families, participation in town hall style discussions).

INITIAL FAMILY DEVELOPMENT PLAN

NEW RESOURCE PARENTS

A Family Development Plan will be created with each potential resource parent during an in-person session of the NG PRIDE model of practice pre-service training. The family development plan will then be shared with the Resource Parent Support Worker assigned to work with the resource parent following licensure. Through feedback from the Child Welfare Training Academy (CWTA) and home visit discussions with the resource parent support worker, guidance will be offered to the resource parent to sustain and increase knowledge and skills in each of the following five competency areas:

1. **GENERAL COMPETENCIES:**

PROTECTING AND NURTURING CHILDREN

- Trauma-Informed Foster Care Related Skills
- Resource Parenting Skills

2. **AGE –SPECIFIC, DEVELOPMENTAL, AND SPECIALIZED COMPETENCIES:**

MEETING DEVELOPMENTAL NEEDS, DELAYS, AND SPECIAL CONDITIONS

- Caring for Infants and Toddlers
- Caring for Preschool-Aged Children
- Caring for School-Aged Children
- Caring for Adolescents
- Caring for Children/Youth with Special Needs
- Caring for Children/Youth Who Have Been Sexually Abused
- Fostering Adolescent Sexual Offenders
- Working with LGBTQ Youth
- Use of Medication

3. **MAINTENANCE OF FAMILY, CULTURAL, AND LIFETIME CONNECTION COMPETENCIES:** *SUPPORTING RELATIONSHIPS WITH BIRTH AND KIN THROUGH THE CULTURE LENS*

- Resource Parent as Part of the Co-Parenting Team
- Kinship Parenting Related Skills

4. **SUPPORTING LIFETIME CONNECTIONS COMPETENCIES:**

LINKING CHILDREN TO SAFE, NURTURING RELATIONSHIPS INTENDED TO LAST A LIFETIME

- Kinship Parenting Related Skills
- Exploring Adoption Options for Permanency

5. **ACTIVE PROFESSIONAL MEMBER OF THE FAMILY’S TEAM COMPETENCIES**

WORKING AS A MEMBER OF A PROFESSIONAL TEAM

- Legal Issues
- Therapeutic/Intensive Resource Parenting Skills
- Community Collaborations
- Educational Partnerships

EXPERIENCED RESOURCE PARENTS

Experienced resource parents will complete a Family Development Plan with their resource parent support worker at the first visit immediately following the implementation of this new process. This FDP will assess the Resource Parent's competence in each of the five competency areas. Through feedback from the Child Welfare Training Academy and discussions with the Resource Parent Support Worker, guidance will be offered to the resource parent to sustain and increase knowledge and skills in each of the competency areas listed above. Family Development Plans will be updated at least once a year and/or at the time the family's needs change as related to the needs of children who join their families.

MULTI-TIERED TRAINING

Learning and Development for Resource Parents will occur in four tiers. Each tier of training is designed to build on previous learning and development to support the continued growth and competency of CFSA Resource Parents. These tiers of training are:

- Tier 1: Pre-service Training
- Tier 2: Core In-Service Training
- Tier 3: Training for the Experienced Resource Parent, and
- Tier 4: Specialized Training

TIER 1: PRE-SERVICE TRAINING

PRE-SERVICE TRAINING FOR POTENTIAL RESOURCE PARENTS

CWTA provides pre-service training to potential Resource Parents and uses an evidence-based curricula developed by the Child Welfare League of America (CWLA) titled New Generation PRIDE (Parent Resources for Information, Development, and Education). This training focuses on five categories of competence:

1. Protect and Nurture Children
2. Meet Developmental Needs, Address Delays
3. Support Relationships with Birth Families
4. Connect to Safe and Nurturing Relationships Intended to Last a Lifetime
5. Work as a Member of a Professional Team

This is achieved through a hybrid approach to training by completing four (three-hour online sessions and six instructor-led in-person sessions). The online portion of the training is offered in partnership with FosterParentCollege.com. Over a five week period potential resource parents will work closely with a CWTA trainer and their licensing team to complete the in-person sessions, online clusters, and PRIDE Connections.

TRAINING SESSIONS

SESSION ONE: CONNECTING WITH PRIDE This session focuses on introducing prospective resource parents to the New Generation PRIDE curriculum with focus on committing to the vision and mission of the agency, strategies to support achieving safety, well-being, and permanency, and understanding the essential roles of resource parents.

**ONLINE
CLUSTER
ONE**

- The Child Welfare Team
- Child Abuse & Neglect
- Child Development

SESSION TWO: LICENSURE PAPERWORK This session introduces potential resource parents to the paperwork required for completion of the family assessment and CFSA licensure process. Potential resource parents will also get to meet their licensing team and ask any questions they may have of the licensing process.

SESSION THREE: PROTECTING AND NURTURING CHILDREN This session explores building trust and attachment, understanding the impact of trauma on child development, and supports prospective resource parents to begin to assess their ability, resources, and willingness to foster and adopt.

**ONLINE
CLUSTER
TWO**

- Parent-Child Attachment
- Understanding Behavior in Foster Children
- Caring for Children who have been Sexually Abused

SESSION FOUR: MEETING DEVELOPMENTAL NEEDS: TRAUMA, LOSS, AND RESILIENCE Building on the previous session, this meeting supports resource parents to understand the impact of trauma and loss on children in foster care, introduces ways to promote resilience, and provides detailed information on parenting children who experience trauma.

**ONLINE
CLUSTER
THREE**

- Working Together with Primary Families
- Cultural Issues in Parenting

SESSION FIVE: SUPPORTING RELATIONSHIPS WITH BIRTH FAMILIES This session focuses on the importance of children in care maintaining a supportive relationship with their birth families and ways the resource parent can support this connection. It also explores building personal and cultural identity, promoting family connections and continuity, and supporting positive family time.

**ONLINE
CLUSTER
FOUR**

- Reducing Family Stress
- The Impact of Fostering on Birth Children
- Foster Care to Adoption

SESSION SIX: MAKING AN INFORMED DECISION This final in-person session focuses on involving all members of the resource family in providing support to a child in foster care while creating safe and nurturing environments and preventing placement disruptions.

ONLINE CLUSTERS

Online clusters are completed via a partnership with FosterParentCollege.com. This online learning platform provides each potential resource parent with the opportunity to complete the four online clusters at their own pace. Each potential resource parent will be registered on FosterParentCollege.com by CWTA and information on how and when to log in will be provided during the first in-person training session.

Following completion of pre-service training and the licensing process, all resource parents will have access to the in-service online training modules via FosterParentCollege.com.

PRIDE CONNECTIONS

The PRIDE Connections activities provide an opportunity to make connects between what is learned in the in-person sessions and the online clusters. Potential resource parents will be asked to reflect on the information shared during the in-person and online cluster sessions to determine their ability, willingness, and resources to complete the training process and to ultimately have a child join their family. These connections will be discussed with the licensing team as part of the home assessment process.

TIER 2: CORE IN-SERVICE TRAINING

Tier 2 of in-service training ensures new Resource Parents have an understanding of expectations and outcomes as outlined by CFSA. There is specific legislation that informs in-service training topics for specialized populations, the Foster Parent Training Regulation Act of 2018.

FOSTER PARENT TRAINING REGULATION ACT OF 2018

In December 2018, the DC Council passed legislation called the Foster Parent Training Regulation Act of 2018. The legislation requires specialized training for resource parents when a child who meets one of the following criteria joins their family:

- Is LGBTQ;
- Is a victim of sex trafficking, as that term is defined in the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000;
- Is a child with a disability;
- Is pregnant or a parent;
- Has a history of violent behavior; or
- Is sixteen (16) years of age or older.

LEGISLATION TIMEFRAMES

Within forty-five (45) days of identifying the need for specialized training, CFSA will notify the resource parent of the requirement to complete specialized training, determine the appropriate training course and provide assistance through identifying upcoming course offering dates and/or online training options to the resource parent to complete the appropriate training course.

This process will begin with the placement administration notifying the Resource Parent Support Worker assigned to support the resource parent who has a child with specialized needs joining their family. The Resource Parent Support Worker will then notify the Resource Parent of the required training and timeframes to ensure the training is completed timely.

Specialized training completed by a foster parent four (4) months prior to receiving notice from the agency or specialized training completed by a foster parent one (1) year prior to the expiration date of the foster parent's current license will count towards this specialized training requirement.

COURSES DESIGNED FOR NEW RESOURCE PARENTS

Within the first six months of licensure, new Resource Parents will be expected to complete the following sessions:

- Foundations of Child Welfare and CFSA Overview (4 hours);
- Shared Parenting (3 hours); and
- I'm Licensed Now What? (2 hours)

During the first two years following pre-service training, Resource Parents will be *required* to complete at least 9 hours of training addressing the following topics via either online sources or as offered by CWTA:

- Trauma-Informed Caregiving
- Understanding Child Development
- Understanding Childhood Disorders
- Child Welfare Appropriate Discipline Techniques
- Parenting Specialized Populations (as outlined in the Foster Parent Training Regulation Act of 2018 above)

The additional 12 hours of training necessary for licensure renewal will be at the discretion of the Resource Parent. Ideally, new resource parents will focus on the training listed above in the first 2 years of licensure, however there is no restriction for completing training from course in Tier 3 or Tier 4 in addition to complete these core training sessions.

In instances where a child/youth with unique developmental or behavioral health joins a resource family, the Resource Parent will be required to complete training specific to supporting the child/youth as outlined in the Family Development Plan.

TIER 3: TRAINING FOR EXPERIENCED RESOURCE PARENTS

COURSES DESIGNED FOR EXPERIENCED RESOURCE PARENTS (Resource Parents with more than 2 years experience)

Following a review of course completion, through the use of the Family Development Plan, a Resource Parent will step up to Tier 3 Training which focuses on providing training more specific to the Resource Parent's interests and areas of need identified. Along with identified areas of need, Resource Parents who have been licensed more than two years will be required to complete training in the following areas:

- Intergenerational Trauma
- Engagement Series – at least ONE of the following sessions should be completed:
 - Engaging Fathers
 - Engaging Older Youth
 - Engaging Biological Parents

To support the Foster Parent Training Legislation Act of 2018, Resource Parents with more than 2 years of fostering experience must also complete trainings related to the specialized populations listed:

- LGBTQ children and youth;
- victims of sex trafficking, as that term is defined in the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000;
- children with a disability;
- pregnant or a parent teens;
- a history of violent behavior; or
- Is sixteen (16) years of age or older

This requirement can be met by completing the CWTA 6 hour Specialized Populations course, or by completing online modules related to each specialized category.

TIER 4: SPECIALIZED TRAINING

COURSES DESIGNED FOR THOSE RESOURCE PARENTS WHO WANT TO BECOME SPECIALISTS

The final tier of Resource Parent training is specific to those Resource Parents who are interested in being considered as specialists with a particular population of children/youth. Currently this tier is referred to as the agency's Specialized Older

Youth (SOY) program. However, this tier extends beyond older youth and includes:

- Specific development and mental health disorders
- Medically Fragile Children/Youth
- Difficult to Place Youth

LEARNER SUPPORT



Building on the words of Benjamin Franklin, “tell me and I forget, teach me and I may remember, involve me and I learn,” learner support focuses on both formal and informal training. Formal training provides knowledge, and opportunities to observe and practice new knowledge and typically occur within a classroom setting or via online learning. Informal training flips these steps by allowing the learner to practice current knowledge, and learn through face to face one to one interaction.

Pre-service Training for all Resource Parents will take place via formal training. Required training sessions for Tier 2 will be completed through both formal and informal training with formal training focused on the above listed required training areas.

TABLE TOP TRAINING

Tabletop Training is an informal training approach offered by CWTA. The purpose of Tabletop Training is to provide Resource Parents with a quick reference guide to information regarding the unique needs of the children/teens joining their families. Tabletop Training will provide Resource Parents with information about diagnoses for all age groups, special needs, CFSA and community resources, supports and services. The ultimate goal of Table Top Training is to stabilize, support and prevent the disruption of a placement for CFSA children and teens in Resource Parent homes.

Resource Parents will be able to partner with their Resource Parent Support Worker to identify what Tabletop Training would be best suited for their needs. Recommendations for Tabletop Training can also be offered by the Placement Specialist working to join children with resource families with unique needs outside of those children previously joined with a specific Resource Parent and family.

Once the need for a Tabletop Training has been identified, the Resource Parent Support Worker will present the information included in the Tabletop Training packet developed by CWTA during a regularly scheduled home visit.

CWTA has identified several Table Top Training topics and is currently working to increase the library of offerings based on CFSA need. Current topics include:

- The First 72 Hours of a Child Joining Your Family
- Parenting Teens with Trauma: Managing Difficult Behaviors
- When the Honeymoon is Over

CWTA CONTACT INFORMATION

Questions regarding resource parent training should be directed to cwta.training@dc.gov or by calling 202-727-5015.

CWTA has also created a frequently asked questions document which can be found at this link: (link forthcoming).

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