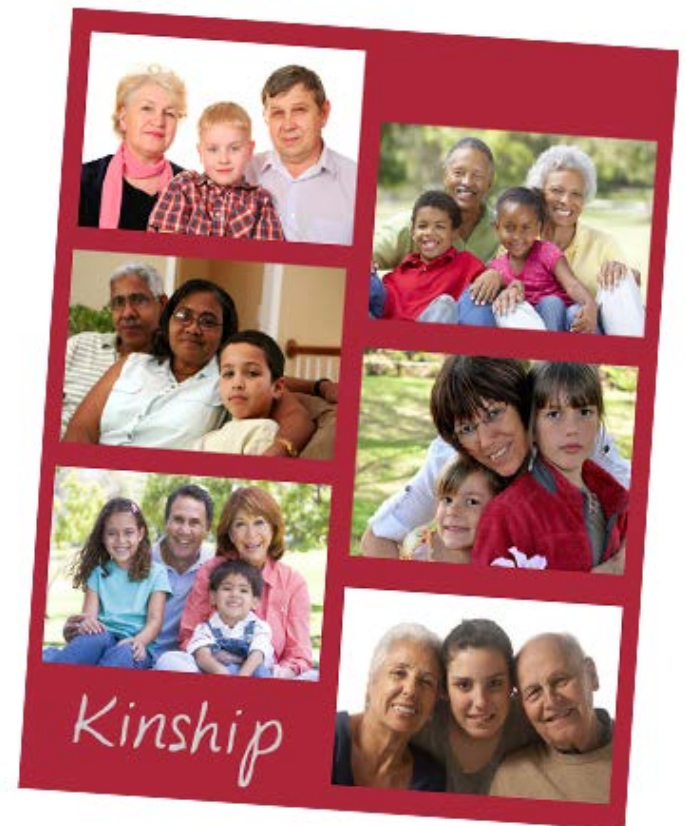
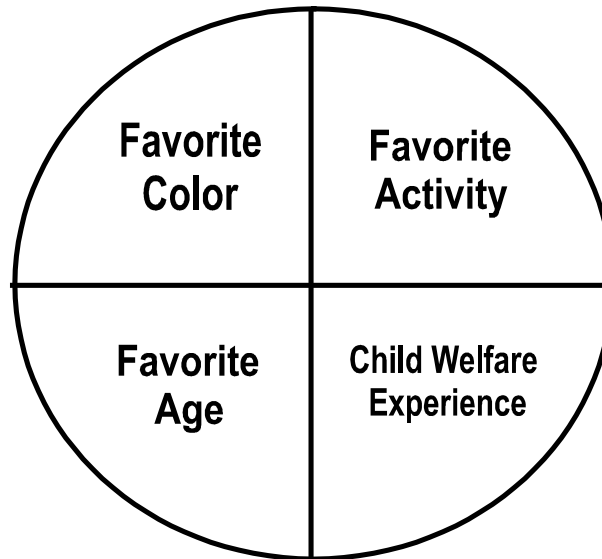


Caring for Our Own



The Friendship Pie

1. Write your responses below each statement, as appropriate.
2. Then find several participants in the group who share the responses you have written.
3. Allow the participants who share your responses to write their first names in the appropriate quadrants below each statement.





Traditional Foster Care Pre-service vs Kinship

Reasons for Kinship Placement

- 1. Enables children to live with people they know and trust.
- 2. Reduces the trauma of living with people who initially are unknown.
- 3. Supports the transmission of a child's family identity, culture and ethnicity.
- 4. Facilitates children's connections to their siblings.
- 5. Strengthens the ability of families to give children the support they need.

Common Themes Among Kinship Caregivers

The relationship between the kinship caregiver with the helping network.

The relationship between the kinship caregiver and the children in their care.

The relationship between the kinship caregiver and the birth parents of the children in their care.

Program Components

**Nine Group Meetings for Kinship
Caregivers**

30-hour Training of Facilitators

The Nine Meetings

Meetings 1-3: The Kinship Caregiver

Meetings 4-6: The Children

Meetings 7-8: The Birth Parents

Meeting 9: Closing

Caring for Our Own Program Agenda

Meeting 1: Introduction to Caring for Our Own

Meeting 2: Assessing the Impact of the Children Living in My Home

Meeting 3: Looking at My Role in Achieving Permanency

Meeting 4: Assessing the Strengths and Needs of the Children

Meeting 5: Building on the Strengths and Meeting the Needs of the Children in my Care

Meeting 6: Preparing Children and Youth for the Future

Meeting 7: Understanding the Issues of Birth Parents

Meeting 8: Working with Birth Parents to Achieve Permanency for Their Children

Meeting 9: Networking and Moving Ahead

Outcomes for Caring for Our Own

Children living with kinship caregivers will have their immediate and ongoing needs safety, permanency and well-being met.

Kinship caregivers will help children achieve legal permanency in the shortest time frame possible.

Kinship caregivers will build and maintain collaborative relationships that support meeting the child's emotional, educational and physical development..

Older adolescents will receive the educational and vocational services they need in order to achieve self-sufficiency.

Kinship caregivers will have an ongoing, informal social support network made up of other kinship caregivers.

Features of the Program

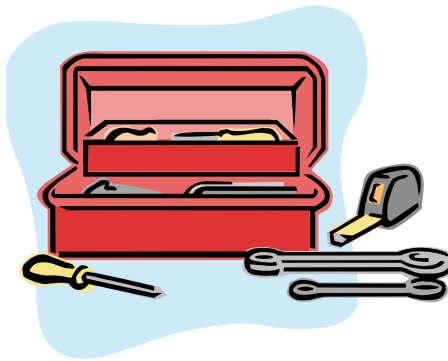
Family
Sharing

Family
Assessment
Process

Transitional
Reactions

Tools of the Program

- Family Plan
- Personal Keepsakes Journal
- Caregiver Workbook





Meeting 1: Introduction to Caring for Our Own

This meeting provides an opportunity for the caregivers and the facilitators to get acquainted with each other, establish the comfort and safety issues of the meeting and review the structure and desired outcomes of Caring for Our Own.

Key Activities

- Welcome and Introductions
- Clarifying Expectations and Ground Rules
- Overview of Caring for Our Own
- Individual Family Sharing

Family Sharing

How long have you had the children living in your home?

How are you feeling about your role in parenting the second time around?

What is one hope or dream you have for the children in your care and for their birth parents?

What is one concern you have about the children in your care and about their birth parents?

What resources or services do you need to support your role as a relative caregiver?

What has helped you thus far in caring for the children placed in your care?

African Proverbs

“It is through other people’s wisdom that we learn wisdom ourselves; a single person’s understanding does not amount to anything.”

“One who has family and friends is richer than one who has money.”

“Good fellowship is sharing good things with friends.”

“A child is:

The one who gives us honor

The one who covers us more than clothing

The one who gives us the boldness to speak in a gathering.”



Meeting 2: Assessing the Impact of the Children Living in My Home

This meeting provides the caregivers with an opportunity to assess the immediate impact of having children live in their homes. It also helps the caregivers in assessing their ability to meet the present needs of the children in their care.

Review to Renew

K

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Key Activities

- Family Sharing
- Family Assessment Process
- Our Life Changes
- Agency Mission statements
- Child Welfare Goals
- Strengths based perspective

Family Assessment

A family assessment is an evaluation (self-assessment) of the strengths and needs of an individual and/or his or her family members, which will assist in planning for short- and long-term goals.



Our Life Changes

Life Situations	Before the Child	Our Life Now	Our Life in Five Years	
			HOPES	FEARS
Social Life				
Work				
Marriage/ Relationship				
Finances				
Plans for the Future				
Relationship with Adult Children				
Involvement with Outside Agencies				



“Life has two rules:

No. 1, Never quit!

No. 2, Always remember rule No. 1.”

(Duke Ellington)



Meeting 3: Looking at My Role in Achieving Permanency

This meeting provides the caregivers with an overview of reunification and adoption, and identifies ways in caregivers can support permanency planning. It will also continue to provide the caregivers with the opportunity to assess the strengths and needs of the members of their immediate household and of their extended families.

Key Activities

- Supporting Permanency
- The EcoMap
- Identifying Transitional Reactions for Kinship Caregivers

Transitional Reactions for Kinship Caregivers

Hopes and Dreams

Grief and Adjustment

Shifting Parental Roles and Responsibilities

Guilt

Embarrassment

Carrying Over Past Issues


Loyalty

Adjusting to Child rearing Demands

Anger

Planning for Illness or Death

Sabotage



Meeting 4: Assessing the Strengths and Needs of the Children in My Care

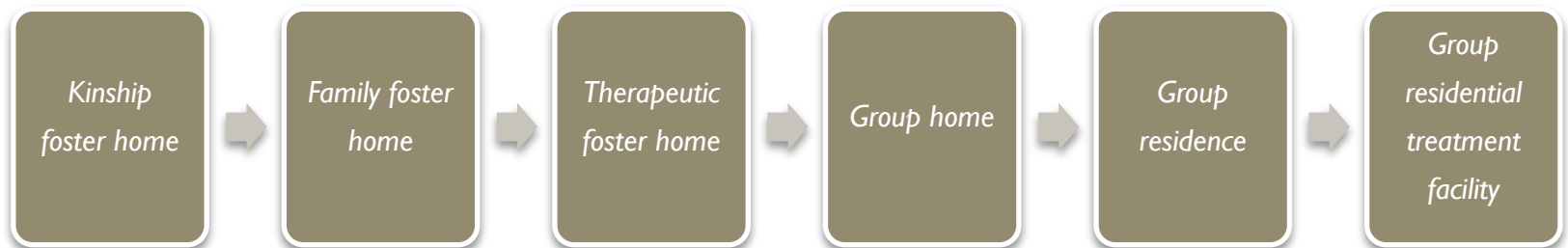
This meeting helps the caregivers begin to focus on the needs of the children living in their homes. It also helps them identify types of services that they need to access to ensure some stability in the children's overall growth and development.

Key Activities

- Permanency Principles
- Impact of Abuse and Neglect on Children
- Ensuring Children's Safety
- Order of Placement Preference
- Looking at Children's Strength
- Identifying Strategies for Managing Behaviors of the Child

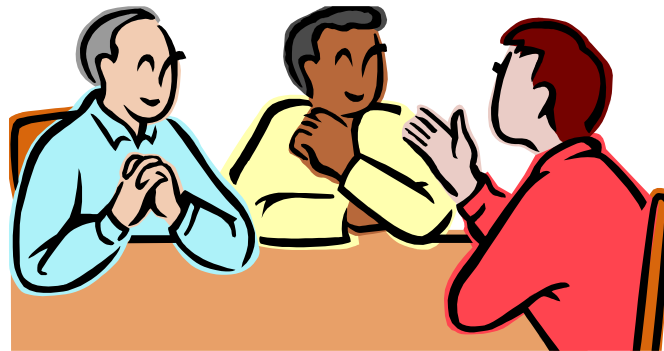
Order of Placement Preference

The order of least restrictive to most restrictive placement settings is as follows:



Instructions for Small Group Activity

- *Each person share your responses*
- *Give each other feedback*
- *Support identified strategies*
- *Suggest any additional strategies*





Meeting 5: Building on the Strengths and Meeting the Needs of the Children in My Care

This meeting continues to help the caregivers examine the behavior of the children living in their homes and identify methods of managing that behavior.

Key Activities

- Identifying Trauma and Children's Transitional Reactions
- Ensuring Children's Safety
- Developing Behavior Management Strategies

Transitional Reactions for Children living with Relatives

Hopes and Dreams

Loss/Separation

Feeling Unloved and Thrown Away

Guilt

Anger

Embarrassment

Carrying Over Past Issues

Trying to Get Put Out or Acting Out

Accepting Kinship Caregiver in a Parental Role

Divided Loyalties

Worry About Caregiver Becoming Ill or Dying



Identifying Management Strategies for Children

- 1. Identify the behavior concern.*
- 2. Identify the possible underlying transitional reactions.*
- 3. Identify how the child's trauma may impact their behavior.*
- 4. Identify possible management strategies to address the behavior.*
- 5. Use the worksheet to record your responses.*



Meeting 6: Preparing Children and Youth for the Future

This meeting assists caregivers in understanding their role and responsibilities in the education of the children in their care and preparing youth for independent living. In addition, this meeting provides caregivers with information to ensure the safety of children and youth and to meet the needs of youth who might be gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgendered and questioning.

Key Activities

- Enrichment through Education
- Helping Children Achieve Adult Self Sufficiency
- Birth Parent's EcoMap

A Parents Definition of Advocacy

- A** *Allow yourself to intervene on your child's behalf.*
- D** *Don't be intimidated.*
- V** *Vocalize your concerns.*
- O** *Opinions on your child's rights should be stated.*
- C** *Continue to monitor all aspects of your child's educational needs.*
- A** *Anticipate resistance while striving for excellence.*
- C** *Count on your instincts for your child's welfare.*
- Y** *You can make the difference.*

Youth Issues: Instructions for Activity

Review the assigned fact sheet on your topic area.

Select a reporter and a recorder for the group.

Imagine that the youth in your care has just said to you “I am ____ (pregnant, gay, in a gang or meeting older people online).

Now answer the following questions:

- How are you feeling?
- What are your concerns for yourselves, the youth and your family?
- What do you need to get ready to have a conversation with the child or youth?
- What are the first 2-3 things you would say to convey to the child or youth that it is ok for them to talk to you?

Where would you go for additional help to deal with the situation?

You have 20 minutes for this activity.



Meeting 7: Understanding the Issues of Birth Parents

This meeting provides an opportunity for the caregivers to examine the challenges birth parents face. It also will give the caregivers a better understanding of the transitional reactions for birth parents and how these issues interplay with the caregivers' own transitional reactions. This meeting also will give the caregivers an understanding of substance abuse and its affects on birth parents and their ability to assume the primary parenting role with their children.

Key Activities

- Identifying and Managing Transitional Reactions of Birth Parents
- Chemical Dependence
- Developing Management Strategies

Transitional Reactions for Kinship Caregivers	Transitional Reactions for Children	Transitional Reactions for Birth Parents
Hopes and Dreams	Hopes and Dreams	Hopes and Dreams
Grief and Adjustment	Loss/Separation	Grief and Remorse
Shifting Parental Roles and Responsibilities	Feeling Unloved and Thrown Away	Accepting a New Relationship
Guilt	Guilt	Guilt
Embarrassment	Anger	Carrying Over Past Issues
Carrying Over Past Issues	Embarrassment	Feeling Under the Kinship caregiver's and Agency's Authority
Loyalty	Carrying Over Past Issues	Anger and Disappointment
Adjusting to Childrearing Demands	Trying to Get Put Out or Acting Out	Feeling Betrayed
Anger	Accepting Kinship Caregiver in Parental Role	Planning for Illness or Death
Planning for Illness or Death	Divided Loyalties	
Sabotage	Worry About Caregiver Becoming Ill or Dying	

Individual Activity: Management Strategies

List the birth parents' transitional reactions.

Identify strategies for the helping parents.

List chemical and substance dependence issues (if relevant to your family).

Identify strategies to deal with your family's chemical and substance dependence issues



Meeting 8: Working with Birth Parents to Achieve Permanency for Their Children

This meeting examines how caregivers can redefine their relationship with birth parents in order to ensure children's physical safety and emotional well-being and support birth parents' efforts to achieve permanency for their children.

Key Activities

- The Family as a System
- Resolving Conflict
- Importance of Visits and Contacts Between Birth Parents and Children

Characteristics of a Family System

Family boundaries

Family rules

Family roles

Decision making and power distribution

Communication styles



Meeting 9: Networking and Moving Ahead

This meeting provides the caregivers with the opportunity to complete their assessment of their ability to meet the long-term needs of the children in their care. Each of the caregivers develop a Family Plan and also have the opportunity to plan with each other how they can keep in contact once the Caring for Our Own meetings are completed.

Key Activities

- Overview of the Family Plan
- Assessing My Family's Strengths and Needs and Developing a Family Plan
- Moving Ahead

Family Plan Worksheet

My family's strengths are...

My family's needs are...

I need to talk with the caseworker about...

Other issues on which I need to work with my family members or others include...

I will put this into action by...

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