

PARTICIPANT PREWORK SUMMARY: FOSTER CARE - A MEANS TO SUPPORT FAMILIES

Read:

Co-Parenting or Shared Parenting by Phyllis Stevens, North American Council on Adoptable Children. This article can be found on the NTDC portal under this theme.

Listen:

NTDC Podcast on Foster Care – A Means to Support Families

Host: April Dinwoodie

Guest: Robbin Pineda, experienced resource parent

Title: The Importance of Strategies for Supporting Child and Parent

Key Points from Podcast:

- In order to develop a healthy and productive relationship with parents first, we need to make sure we are recognizing and respecting the fact that they are indeed still the parents.
- Include the parents whenever possible. Some examples include: making sure they know about and perhaps even offering to take parents to parent/teacher conferences and doctor's appointments.
- Bring completed schoolwork, artwork, report cards and school pictures to visits so parents can see things that the children have done.
- Text little anecdotes about the child and send pictures between visits.
- Invite parents to take part in holiday celebrations.
- As the foster parent, you have to recognize that imbalance in your co-parenting relationship and try to empower the parent, advocate for them, and support them whenever and wherever possible.
- Parents can already feel an enormous amount of grief, loss, guilt, and shame and it can come to life through anger and defensiveness. It is important to keep this in mind and to try to work past it.
- Remember that these parents LOVE their children. Many have had challenging upbringings themselves that may be contributing to how they are parenting.
- It's important to think about putting yourself in the parent's shoes. If we had those same life experiences, were given the same tools, we may have made similar mistakes.
- By maintaining connections and ties with the child's parents and family, you will help the child feel safer and less anxious about being in your home. This will go a long way in your relationship building with the child too.



Questions to Consider:

- Has your understanding of the role of foster parents changed as a result of listening to the podcast and reading the article? In what ways?
- What do you think are some necessary elements of a foster parent/ parent partnership?
- What are some of the strategies for supporting birth parents that you think will be easy for you to take on?
- What are some of the strategies and tasks that you think will be difficult for you? What can you do to make them easier?
- What were the 2 or 3 things that most affected you emotionally as you listened to the podcast or watched the video?
- Why do you think taking care of the children includes supporting the birth family?

