

The NTDC Is Coming!

By Carey Tompkins, NACAC's NTDC project coordinator

The National Training Development Curriculum (NTDC) is a state-of-the-art, interactive classroom and online program that helps prepare people who are interested in fostering or adopting to be successful parents. NTDC provides families with the initial tools and basic knowledge that will help them start this journey toward parenting children who have experienced trauma, separation, or loss and then provides them with ongoing access to information and training so that they can continue to enhance their skills once the child is in their home.

Designed for all foster and adoptive families, the curriculum will have breakout sections targeted to:

- Families who adopt from other countries or through private domestic adoption
- Kinship caregivers
- American Indian/Alaskan Native foster and adoptive parents

NTDC is being piloted in seven state or county child welfare systems and one tribal nation and will undergo rigorous evaluation. The curriculum will be available for free to state, local, and private foster and adoption agencies in 2022. Although 2022 sounds a long way off, if you think your agency might be interested, it's not too early to begin thinking and planning for implementation.

NTDC's Origins

Funded through a five-year cooperative agreement with the US Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Children's Bureau, the NTDC is led by Spaulding for Children in partnership with the Center for Adoption Support and Education (C.A.S.E.), the North American Council on Adoptable Children (NACAC), the National

Council for Adoption, ChildTrauma Academy, and the University of Washington, School of Social Work.

Collectively to develop the training, this team conducted:

- Systematic review of literature that examined characteristics and proficiencies associated with placement stability and permanency
- Reviews of existing curricula
- Stakeholder interviews to identify the characteristics, proficiencies, and trainings that contributed to successful placements
- Semi-structured interviews with national experts from the child welfare and mental health fields to determine the strengths and gaps in current foster/adoptive training curriculum
- Surveys of 35 states to assess satisfaction with the training currently offered for foster and adoptive parents

Curriculum Structure and Content

The NTDC curriculum includes three components that together provide participants with knowledge, competencies, attitudes, and skills important to successfully parenting children who have experienced trauma, separation, grief and loss. These include:

- Self-assessment
- Classroom-based training
- Right time training

Self-Assessment

Becoming a foster or adoptive parent is a life-altering experience. Making the

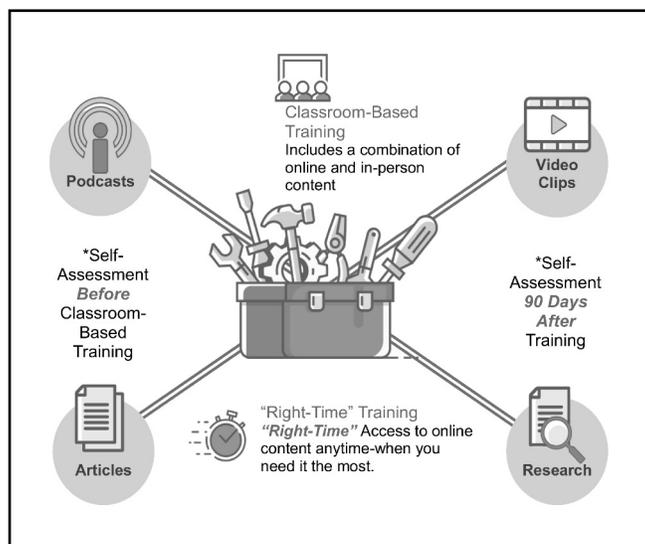
decision to foster or adopt requires self-reflection and continuous learning, most of which takes place after the child has moved into your home. For this reason, NTDC has included a self-assessment as a critical part of the curriculum. The purpose of the self-assessment is to help prospective foster and adoptive parents better understand their knowledge, competencies, and attitudes in certain areas. The assessment is taken before the parents participate in the curriculum and again after a child is placed in their home.

Through the NTDC self-assessment, parents can better understand their strengths and areas where they need to learn more. The self-assessment results are confidential and parents will get a feedback report highlighting areas of growth and offering suggestions and additional resources parents can access to increase their knowledge or skills.

Classroom-Based Training

As a result of the research described earlier, the NTDC team identified 17 themes to be covered in classroom-based training for prospective foster or adoptive parents, and two themes to be completed online while parents attend the classroom training:

- Child Development
- Attachment
- Separation, Grief and Loss
- Trauma Related Behaviors



- Trauma Informed Parenting
- Effective Communication
- Reunification—The Primary Permanency Planning Goal
- Foster Care—A Means to Support Families
- Preparing for and Managing Intrusive Questions
- Maintaining Children’s Connections with Siblings, Extended Family Members and Their Community
- Cultural Humility
- Parenting in Racially and Culturally Diverse Families
- Mental Health Considerations
- Impact of Substance Use
- Power in Practicalities
- Creating a Stable, Nurturing, Safe Home Environment
- Accessing Services and Support
- Expanding Your Parenting Paradigm (online)
- Overview of the Child Welfare System (online)

The classroom training takes about 27 hours.

In addition, NTDC classroom curriculum offers themes created specifically for special target populations: Kinship Relations, Connections with Birth Families After Adoption, Intercountry Adoptions, and Building Parental Resilience for Kinship Caregivers.

Both the classroom and right time training (described below) include podcasts, articles, tools and video clips. In the videos and podcasts, participants hear from parents, professionals, and youth who experienced foster care and adoption. As one NTDC facilitator explained, “The “Real-Life” videos and examples are also excellent tools for empowering foster/adoptive parents.”

Right Time Training

Right time training is designed to offer current or prospective parents ongoing learning and skill develop-

ment when they need it. It can be used in a variety of ways including parents access it on their own, agencies or other leaders using for a support group, or case managers using it during a home visit. Right time sessions take about an hour to complete and cover the following topics:

- Accessing Services and Support
- Building Children’s Resilience
- Building Parental Resilience
- Common Feelings Associated with Being Adopted
- Education
- Family Dynamics
- Intercountry Adoptions: Medical Considerations
- Life Story: Birth Story and Adoption Story
- Sensory Integration
- Managing Placement Transitions
- Preparing for Adulthood
- Preparing for and Managing Visitation
- Responding to Children in Crisis
- Sexual Development and Identity
- Sexual Trauma

Overall, the NTDC curriculum will give parents the opportunity to learn, practice, and incorporate essential competencies for parenting children with histories of trauma, separation, and loss.

How to Participate in NTDC

If you’re interested in learning more about NTDC, you can go to <https://ntdcportal.org> and:

- Watch the Overview of NTDC under NTDC Tools — <https://ntdcportal.org/resources/>
- Review the NTDC themes — <https://ntdcportal.org/curriculum/themes/>
- Look at sample curriculum components — <https://ntdcportal.org/curriculum/sample-components/>
- Learn more about the NTDC themes and aligning competencies — https://ntdcportal.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/facilitator_Combinedcompetencies_052020-1.pdf

If you’re a parent or worker who is interested, ask your agency leaders to learn more about NTDC and how to implement it locally. Encourage leaders to compare what is required in your state, county, or tribal nation and NTDC’s themes and reach out to the NTDC project director (mlis@spaulding.org) to obtain more in-depth information about NTDC and how the team can help with implementation in your community. ♦

Eric

Eric is a one-of-a-kind youth with a good sense of humor. He is a good storyteller—for example, he’ll talk about cookie robots from the movie *Despicable Me*. He loves to play video games on his Nintendo DS or iPad. He was born in 2000 and in school likes his history class the best. Eric would love to have a family to call his own and that he can count on. It’s important to him to know that he is part of a family who will remain a reliable part of his life and who will look out for him. If this sounds like you, contact Laura Poole at Children Awaiting Parents: lpoule@capbook.org or 585-232-5110. ♦

