



National Training and Development Curriculum

FOR FOSTER AND ADOPTIVE PARENTS

Kinship Self-Assessment Report
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The self-assessment is a tool of the NTDC curriculum used to help prospective foster, adoptive, and kinship caregivers understand their strengths and areas of potential growth in knowledge and attitudes associated with successful parenting. This report provides an overview of the results over time of the self-assessment specific to kinship caregivers. All of the kinship caregivers in the sample trained alongside nonrelative prospective foster and adoptive parents, and participated in the training using a virtual, zoom-based training platform. A total of 59 kinship caregivers from intervention sites in Colorado, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Kansas, and Missouri are included in these results as participants who completed the self-assessment for at least one theme both at baseline immediately prior to taking the NTDC classroom curriculum as well as a follow-up 90-days after completing the NTDC classroom curriculum. Regression analyses controlling for a variety of caregiver demographics were conducted for each theme and characteristic to determine if any observed changes in participant scores from baseline to the 90-day follow-up were statistically significant.

The results of these analyses indicate that the NTDC classroom curriculum is largely helpful for kinship caregivers to further develop their knowledge and skills in a range of content areas related to effective parenting. Participants saw statistically significant improvements between baseline and 90-days after training completion for 17 themes and three characteristics. Of the remaining themes and characteristics, 13 saw improvements in average score but small sample sizes and/or high baseline scores meant that those improvements were not statistically significant. Three characteristics also saw no change but had very high baselines, with average scores of 9.0 or higher on a scale from 0 to 10. Overall, these results indicate that kinship caregivers were knowledgeable in how to care for children before starting NTDC, and that the NTDC classroom curriculum helped those caregivers to become even more knowledgeable by identifying and filling in those areas of learning opportunities that did exist.

INTRODUCTION

The self-assessment is a tool of the NTDC curriculum used to help participants recognize their personal strengths and areas for growth. This report focuses on the results of the self-assessment specifically for kinship caregivers, with findings indicating that the NTDC classroom curriculum was largely effective for this cohort. The remainder of this report describes the self-assessment, the methodology of the study, details of the results, and a summary of the key findings.

Description of Self-Assessment

Researchers designed the self-assessment tool to examine foster, adoptive, and kinship parents' knowledge and attitudes associated with successful parenting (see Tables 2 and 3 below for the list of the themes and characteristics as well as a sample question for each). Foster, adoptive, and kinship parents from the training group took the self-assessment prior to beginning the classroom component of the NTDC (i.e., baseline) and 90 days after training completion. Using the results of the self-assessment, adult learners can seek out resources and support for areas where they might be able to grow their knowledge and skills. The 244 question self-assessment includes 20 themes and 14 characteristics. Each participant receives a personal profile from their self-assessment. Each item was measured through questions related to knowledge as well as attitudes. The self-assessment measured each theme and characteristic using an 11-point scale that ranged from 0 (strongly disagree) to 10 (strongly agree).

METHODOLOGY

Sample

This report focuses on the subpopulation of the NTDC trained families that reported they were caring for a kinship child at the time of study enrollment. All participants completed the self-assessment via an online REDCap survey. To be included in the study, respondents needed to identify as a participant of the study (not a facilitator), complete the classroom training between April 2020 and July 15th 2022, and consent to participate in the study.

For the baseline, 138 kinship caregivers met the inclusion criteria and completed the self-assessment. For the 90-day self-assessment, 59 kinship caregivers met the inclusion criteria and completed the self-assessment. More participants consented to participate in the study and completed the demographics portion of the questionnaire than completed the self-assessment measure. The number of participants included in the analysis for each construct varied, as some participants did not complete the questions for each construct and some participant responses did not meet the quality control standards associated with some reverse scoring questions. After filtering, an average of 29 participants were included in the analysis for each of the themes.

The demographics and caregiver characteristics from the kinship caregiver subsample for those who completed the self-assessment at baseline and at the 90-day follow-up can be found in Table 1. At baseline, participants had a mean age of 41.9 years old, and were predominantly White (69.6%), not of Hispanic or Latinx ethnicity (84.8%), female (65.9%), heterosexual/straight (92.8%), married (61.6%), were caring for at least one biological child in the home (70.3%), had another supportive caregiver in the home (72.5%), and had attained some college level of academic training (24.6%) or were a college graduate (23.9%). The demographics and caregiver characteristics of participants who also completed the self-assessment at the 90-day follow-up were similar in demographics, with a mean age of 43.2 years old, and were predominantly White (72.9%), did not report identifying as having Hispanic or Latinx ethnicity (84.7%), female (66.1%), heterosexual/straight (88.1%), married (59.3%), had at least one biological child in the home they were caring for (76.3%), had another supportive caregiver in the home (76.3%), and had attained some college level academic training (23.7%)

or were a college graduate (25.4%). These kinship caregivers were represented across six sites both at baseline and at the 90-day follow-up, including Colorado, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Kansas, and Missouri.

Table 1. Demographics and caregiver characteristics from participant sample for those who completed the self-assessment at baseline (n=138) and at the 90-day follow-up (n=59)

Measure		Baseline (n=138) N (%) / M (SD)	90 Day (n=59) N (%) / M (SD)
Age (years)		41.9 (12.3)	43.2 (10.3)
Race [^]	African American or Black	36 (26.1%)	13 (22.0%)
	American Indian or Alaskan Native	4 (2.9%)	1 (1.7%)
	Asian or Asian American	1 (0.7%)	1 (1.7%)
	Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	2 (1.4%)	1 (1.7%)
	White	96 (69.6%)	43 (72.9%)
	Other	5 (3.6%)	1 (1.7%)
Hispanic or Latinx		21 (15.2%)	9 (15.3%)
Gender	Female	91 (65.9%)	39 (66.1%)
	Male	47 (34.1%)	20 (33.9%)
	Non-binary	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Sexual Orientation	Heterosexual/straight	128 (92.8%)	52 (88.1%)
	Gay	1 (0.7%)	1 (1.7%)
	Lesbian	5 (3.6%)	3 (5.1%)
	Bisexual	2 (1.4%)	2 (3.4%)
	Choose not to identify	2 (1.4%)	1 (1.7%)
Education	Some high school	13 (9.4%)	9 (15.3%)
	High school graduate	27 (19.6%)	5 (8.5%)
	Some college	34 (24.6%)	14 (23.7%)
	Trade / technical / vocational training	14 (10.1%)	9 (15.3%)
	College graduate	33 (23.9%)	15 (25.4%)
	Some postgraduate work	2 (1.4%)	1 (1.7%)
	Post graduate degree	15 (10.9%)	6 (10.2%)
Site	Colorado	51 (37.0%)	19 (32.2%)
	Florida	24 (17.4%)	12 (20.3%)
	Georgia	42 (30.4%)	20 (33.9%)
	Illinois	2 (1.4%)	1 (1.7%)
	Kansas	13 (9.4%)	4 (6.8%)
	Missouri	6 (4.3%)	3 (5.1%)

Marital status	Married	85 (61.6%)	35 (59.3%)
	Living with a partner but not married	17 (12.3%)	9 (15.3%)
	Divorced	9 (6.5%)	3 (5.1%)
	Widowed	1 (0.7%)	0 (0%)
	Single	26 (18.8%)	12 (20.3%)
Has biological children		97 (70.3%)	45 (76.3%)
Another supportive caregiver in home		100 (72.5%)	45 (76.3%)

^ Participants were able to choose more than one race category

Analyses

The self-assessment data was analyzed using the software R. Questions belonging to a particular theme were combined into an average score for that theme. The average score was calculated across all participants for each theme. Themes were analyzed independently, and participants with missing data for a certain construct were not included in that construct's analysis. Many of the themes included one reverse-scored question. An example includes the following question from the "maintaining connections theme", "I know when children experience a transition, it is best to cut contact with their previous community, family, and friends and focus on building new relationships". The responses from these types of questions were reverse scored, meaning that if someone responded with a "0" for "strongly disagree", their score would be reversed to a 10 in order to indicate a high level of competency. As a quality control measure, once the reverse score of that question was calculated, that score was subtracted from 5 (chosen as a halfway point). Scores equal to or lower than five indicated that someone may not have been carefully reading the question and may have answered with the same response regardless of the question content. Participants' scores that did not meet that quality control threshold were not included in the analysis for each theme. Lower scores in each theme indicate lower levels of competency.

Summary statistics were provided for each theme and characteristic. A series of regression analyses were also conducted using the `lm()` function in the "stats" package in the statistical programming language R. Regressions were conducted for each theme and characteristic to compare participants' scores from the first time they took the survey (baseline) to the second time they completed the survey (90 days after completing the training) in order

to see if participants' scores significantly changed between the two time points. Each regression included the demographic and caregiver characteristics listed in Table 1 as control measures.

In addition, Cronbach's Alpha was calculated to measure the internal reliability for the sets of items (constructs) related to each theme trained (Table 2) and parenting characteristic (Table 3) in the self-assessment. This test describes the extent to which all items in a scale measure the same concept, by measuring the items' correlation to one another. The test provides a number between 0 and 1, with 1 representing no random error in the scores. As the number provided increases from 0 to 1, the fraction of that score that can be attributable to error will decrease. When the items within a scale correlate to one another, the alpha value increases and gets closer to 1. A general rule of thumb for alpha scores is that scores above .70 indicate good levels of internal reliability.

Table 2. Sample Questions by Theme with Alphas from Kin Specific Sample

Item	Sample question	Alpha
Accessing services and support	I believe that seeking services and supports for both children and the parent is a sign of strength.	.85
Attachment	I know parenting strategies and behaviors that strengthen healthy relationship in a way that is safe and based on the child's needs.	.72
Child development	I believe it is my role to support children in reaching their unique and full developmental potential.	.82
Connections with birth families after adoption	I am aware of the challenges that may be encountered in maintaining connections with birth families after adoption.	.86
Creating stable, nurturing, and safe home environment	I know strategies to help make children impacted by trauma, separation or loss feel psychologically and physically safe in the home.	.84
Cultural humility	I can understand the protective factors and strengths that come from different races, cultures, families, and communities.	.89
Effective communication	I am aware of the components of effective communication including both verbal and non-verbal language.	.84
Expanding your parenting paradigm	I believe it is my role to validate and show compassion for the lived experiences of the children I parent.	.85
Foster care - a means to support families	I know strategies to nurture children's ongoing relationship with their birth families.	n/a

Kinship Parenting	I understand how caring for a relative’s child can impact existing roles and relationships within the family.	.75
Maintaining Connections	I understand my role in helping children maintain connections to their siblings.	.87
Preparing for and Managing Intrusive Questions	I know how to use positive language when sharing information about children and how they are with my family.	.78
Mental health considerations	I know accurate and sensitive language to describe behavioral symptoms and diagnoses.	.82
Overview of the child welfare system	I understand common aspects of child welfare court process, including the roles of parents who are fostering/adopting.	.86
Parenting in racially and culturally diverse families	I can describe strategies to help children prepare for and handle racism and microaggressions (subtle slights or attacks based on race).	.90
Reunification- the primary permanency planning goal	I know what concurrent planning is for children in foster care.	.83
Separation, Grief, and Loss	I know the various losses that children who are adopted or from foster care may experience.	.83
Substance Use	I am committed to learning new techniques to care for children that may have been exposed to substances before birth.	.76
Trauma Informed Parenting	I know trauma-informed parenting strategies and techniques.	.83
Trauma Related Behaviors	I understand how early trauma, abuse, and neglect impacts brain development.	.76

n/a = No data available

Table 3. Sample Questions by Characteristic with Alphas from Kin Specific Sample

Item	Sample question	Alpha
Adaptability/flexibility	I am able to adjust rules to meet the developmental and emotional needs of a child when a parenting technique is not working.	.61
Appreciation for diversity/other world views	A child would feel welcomed and respected in my family.	.74
Attunement	When children “act out”, I am usually able to figure out what triggered the behavior.	.74

Belief in self-efficacy	I believe that there is a way to address difficult parenting problems in a way that results in a positive outcome for both the parent and the child in my care.	.83
Committed	I know that even when a child is rejecting or hostile towards me, they need people who will commit to caring for them.	.66
Emotionally supportive/nurturing	I am able to meet the emotional and physical needs of the children I am parenting so that they feel safe.	.71
Empathy & Compassion	I know that children often express feelings of grief with behaviors that may seem negative to others	.74
Having a sense of humor	I think that using humor is an important way for me to deal with parenting stress or challenges.	.82
Realistic	I recognize that the success of the child I am parenting may look different than success for other children.	.80
Relationally oriented	I believe that current and former relationships have an effect on a child's self-perception and identity.	.84
Resilient and patient	I am pretty good at not letting children push my buttons.	.75
Self-awareness/self-reflection	In most situations, I can identify why I have responded inappropriately in a parenting situation.	.71
Tolerance for rejection	I don't measure my success as a parent by the way the child I am parenting views me.	.81
Trustworthiness	I understand that building a trusting relationship with a child starts with my ability to be consistent in reinforcing routines.	.82

RESULTS

Themes

For each of the 20 themes, Table 4 presents the mean (average) and standard deviation of participant self-assessment scores at baseline and 90-day follow-up, along with the change in means to measure participant learning from the NTDC classroom curriculum. In addition, statistical results of the regression analyses are reported for each theme to understand if any observed changes in mean scores are significant (p-value), along with an odds ratio (OR) that indicates how many times as likely participants were to improve their score at the 90-day follow-up as compared with their score at baseline.

On average, n=30 kinship participants completed both the baseline and 90-day follow-up self-assessments while meeting the inclusion criteria and passing the quality control measures for each theme.

At baseline, the kinship caregivers rated themselves at an average of 8.5 on a scale from 0 to 10, which indicates having some competency in a content area but are not feeling confident in having the full range of skills. The theme with the lowest average score at baseline for kinship participants was “trauma informed parenting” (M=7.3, SD=1.6). The highest rated theme was “accessing services and support” (M=9.2, SD=0.9).

At the 90-day follow-up, kinship caregivers rated themselves at an average of 9.3 on a scale from 0 to 10, which indicates confidence in having near the full range of skills. The theme with the lowest average score at 90-day follow-up for kinship caregivers was “trauma informed parenting” (M=9.0, SD=1.0). The highest rated theme was “expanding parenting paradigm” (M=9.9, SD=0.1).

Participants’ scores improved 0.8 points on average from baseline to the 90-day follow-up after completing the NTDC classroom curriculum. There were 17 themes that had statistically significant improvements from baseline to 90-day follow-up. Of the three themes without statistically significant results, “foster care a means to support” did not have data available to analyze for any participants who met the inclusion criteria and quality control measures. Additionally, “expanding parenting paradigm” and “mental health” showed

improvements, though not large enough to meet the higher thresholds of significance required by their smaller sample sizes.

Table 4. Kin Specific Theme Scores at Baseline and 90 Days (average n=30)

Theme	N	Baseline M (SD)	90 Day [^] M (SD)	Change in Means	p-value	Odds Ratio [95% CI]
Accessing Services and Support	40	9.2 (0.9)	9.6 (0.6)	0.4	0.02*	1.4 [1.1, 1.9]
Attachment	23	8.8 (0.8)	9.3 (0.7)	0.5	0.01*	1.6 [1.1, 2.3]
Child Development	38	8.8 (0.9)	9.4 (0.7)	0.6	0.001**	1.7 [1.3, 2.4]
Connections with Birth Families	8	8.2 (1.0)	9.4 (0.7)	1.2	0.01*	3.4 [1.4, 8.3]
Creating a Stable Home Environment	38	9.0 (1.0)	9.4 (0.7)	0.4	0.01*	1.6 [1.1, 2.2]
Cultural Humility	41	8.4 (1.3)	9.3 (0.9)	0.9	< 0.001***	2.3 [1.5, 3.6]
Effective Communication	38	8.4 (1.4)	9.1 (1.0)	0.7	0.02*	2.0 [1.1, 3.4]
Expanding Parenting Paradigm	4	8.5 (1.4)	9.9 (0.1)	1.4	0.12	4.1 [0.5, 32.0]
Foster Care a Means to Support	n/a					
Kinship Parenting	30	8.5 (0.9)	9.2 (0.8)	0.7	0.004**	2.0 [1.3, 3.2]
Maintaining Connections	32	8.4 (1.4)	9.4 (0.7)	1.0	< 0.001***	2.7 [1.6, 4.3]
Managing Intrusive Questions	48	8.6 (1.3)	9.2 (0.9)	0.6	0.002**	1.9 [1.3, 2.9]
Mental Health	13	9.1 (1.0)	9.4 (0.5)	0.3	0.18	1.5 [0.8, 2.6]
Overview of Child Welfare	37	8.4 (1.4)	9.1 (0.8)	0.7	0.004**	2.1 [1.3, 3.6]
Parenting in Racially and Culturally Diverse	45	8.6 (1.1)	9.3 (1.0)	0.7	< 0.001***	2.0 [1.4, 3.0]
Reunification	31	7.4 (1.5)	9.1 (1.1)	1.7	< 0.001***	5.6 [2.9, 10.8]
Separation, Grief, and Loss	26	8.2 (1.4)	9.3 (0.6)	1.1	< 0.001***	3.2 [1.9, 5.5]
Substance Use	32	8.6 (1.1)	9.4 (0.8)	0.8	< 0.001***	2.3 [1.5, 3.5]

Trauma Informed Parenting	13	7.3 (1.6)	9.0 (1.0)	1.7	0.004**	5.7 [2.0, 16.6]
Trauma Related Behaviors	26	8.4 (1.5)	9.3 (0.7)	0.9	0.009**	2.3 [1.3, 4.3]

^=90 days after training was completed; n/a = No data available; *=p<.05, **=p<.01, ***=p<.001

Characteristics

For each of the 14 parenting characteristics, Table 5 presents the mean (average) and standard deviation of the kinship caregivers' self-assessment scores at baseline and 90-day follow-up, along with the change in means to measure caregiver learning from the NTDC classroom curriculum. In addition, statistical results of the regression analyses are reported for each characteristic to understand if any observed changes in mean scores are significant (p-value), along with an odds ratio (OR) that indicates how many times as likely participants were to improve their score at the 90-day follow-up as compared with their score at baseline.

On average, n=28 kinship caregivers completed both the baseline and 90-day follow-up self-assessments while meeting the inclusion criteria and passing the quality control measures for each characteristic.

At baseline, participants rated themselves at an average of 8.9 on a scale from 0 to 10, which indicates having a high degree of competency in a content area but are not feeling confident in having the full range of skills. The characteristic with the lowest average score at baseline for kinship participants was "adaptability/flexibility" (M=7.7, SD=0.8). The highest rated characteristic was "trustworthiness" (M=9.6, SD=0.6).

At the 90-day follow-up, participants rated themselves at an average of 9.2 on a scale from 0 to 10, which indicates confidence in having near the full range of skills. The characteristic with the lowest average score at 90-day follow-up for kinship caregivers was "adaptability/flexibility" (M=8.1, SD=0.8). The highest rated characteristic was "resilient and patient" (M=9.9, SD=0.3).

Participants' scores improved 0.3 points on average from baseline to the 90-day follow-up after completing the NTDC classroom curriculum. There were 3 themes that had statistically significant improvements from baseline to 90-day follow-up. Of the 11 themes without statistically significant results, nine of them had baseline scores of 8.9 or higher. These very

high baselines make it difficult to measure improvement statistically. Additionally, “adaptability/flexibility” and “having a sense of humor” showed improvements, though not large enough to meet the higher thresholds of significance required by their smaller sample sizes.

Table 5. Kin Specific Characteristic Scores at Baseline and 90 Days (average n=28)

Characteristic	N	Baseline M (SD)	90 Day [^] M (SD)	Change in Means	p-value	Odds Ratio [95% CI]
Adaptability/flexibility	16	7.7 (0.8)	8.1 (0.8)	0.4	0.06	1.5 [1.0, 2.4]
Appreciation for diversity/other world views	34	9.0 (1.1)	9.0 (1.3)	0	0.91	1.0 [0.6, 1.8]
Attunement	23	8.1 (1.0)	8.7 (1.0)	0.6	0.03*	1.7 [1.1, 2.8]
Belief in self-efficacy	32	9.0 (1.0)	9.3 (0.9)	0.3	0.19	1.3 [0.9, 2.0]
Committed	23	9.1 (0.7)	9.4 (0.6)	0.3	0.13	1.3 [0.9, 1.8]
Emotionally supportive/nurturing	32	9.0 (1.4)	9.5 (0.8)	0.5	0.09	1.6 [0.9, 3.0]
Empathy & Compassion	37	9.0 (0.8)	9.2 (0.9)	0.2	0.21	1.2 [0.9, 1.7]
Having a sense of humor	20	8.2 (1.5)	8.7 (1.2)	0.5	0.14	1.7 [0.8, 3.3]
Realistic	34	9.4 (0.7)	9.4 (0.7)	0	0.62	1.1 [0.8, 1.5]
Relationally oriented	45	9.2 (0.7)	9.4 (0.7)	0.2	0.18	1.2 [0.9, 1.6]
Resilient and patient	18	9.5 (0.8)	9.9 (0.3)	0.4	0.048*	1.5 [1.0, 2.2]
Self-awareness/self-reflection	14	8.3 (0.7)	9.0 (1.0)	0.7	0.02*	2.1 [1.2, 3.8]
Tolerance for rejection	31	8.9 (0.9)	9.1 (1.0)	0.2	0.29	1.3 [0.8, 2.0]
Trustworthiness	33	9.6 (0.6)	9.6 (0.6)	0	0.91	1.0 [0.7, 1.3]

[^]=90 days after training was completed; *= $p < .05$, **= $p < .01$, ***= $p < .001$

CONCLUSION

The results of the self-assessment analysis for kinship caregivers suggest that the NTDC classroom curriculum is largely helpful for kinship caregivers to further develop their characteristics, attitudes, knowledge, and skills in a range of content areas related to effective parenting. Participants saw statistically significant improvements between baseline and 90-days after training completion for 17 themes and three characteristics. Of the remaining parenting themes and characteristics, 13 saw improvements in average score but small sample sizes and/or high baseline scores meant that those improvements were not statistically significant. Three characteristics also saw no change but had very high baselines, with average scores of 9.0 or higher on a scale from 0 to 10. Overall, these results indicate that kinship caregivers were knowledgeable in how to care for children before starting NTDC, and that the NTDC classroom curriculum helped those caregivers to become even more knowledgeable by identifying and filling in those areas of learning opportunities that did exist.