

Title: Child Welfare Manual
Section 6: Resource Development
Chapter 6: Support Groups For Foster, Kinship And
Adoptive Parents
Effective Date:

Section 6 Overview

This section is developed to guide Children's Service Workers in decision making, the provision and documentation of services to children and their families, development of community resources, and their subsequent assessment and utilization. These resources are designed to enhance and augment services to children and their families in need of preventive, protective, and out-of-home care services.

Procedures contained in this chapter incorporate assessment standards (largely based on licensing rules) which reflect the concern of the agency for those children who must live apart from their families during some part of their minority. The purpose of these standards is to protect those children from abuse, neglect, injury, and exploitation, and to assist in treatment and improved social functioning.

It is recognized that such direction cannot be all inclusive; therefore, staff will still need to exercise judgment in individual case situations. In those situations in which staff do not follow the procedures, they will be expected to document the justification for their actions in the individual case record.

With each procedure, and each step within a procedure, it may be necessary for the worker to secure supervisory assistance in order to make a decision. The procedures do not contain a reference to worker-supervisor conferences, but this joint decision-making activity is understood to be an integral part of service delivery to community resource providers.

Chapter 6 Overview

This chapter will describe the process for connecting foster/kinship and adoptive parents to local/statewide and national support groups.

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6.1 Support Groups:

1. The Children's Service Worker will inform the foster/kinship/adoptive parent(s) and applicants of local/statewide/national support groups by giving name and address of contact.
2. Support, encourage, and participate in development and maintenance of support groups, by:
 - a. Providing Foster Parents With Data, Information, And Guidelines On The Obligations, Responsibilities And Opportunities Of Foster Parenting;
 - b. Informing Foster Parents Of Changes In Laws And Regulations Relevant To Foster Parenting.

Related Subject: Section 210.537, RSMo
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3. Allow leadership to evolve from within support group, rather than imposed externally.
4. The teaching foster parent/adoptive parent will develop support group if none exists, or supplement existing county activities.
5. Evaluate efforts of development and maintenance.
6. Record activities in county file.

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6.2 Transracial Parenting Project

When an applicant indicates an interest in parenting interracial/culturally, the Children's Service Worker may introduce the applicant to the Transracial Parenting Project, a **voluntary** resource for those considering parenting a child(ren) of a different race, culture, or ethnicity.

Related Subject: Attachment A, of this chapter, Self Awareness Tool; Transracial Parenting Project
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Attachment A: Self Awareness Tool; Transracial Parenting Project

Developed By: The North American Council On Adoptable Children

The purpose of this attachment is to introduce the Transracial Parenting Project, a **voluntary** resource for those considering parenting children of a different race, culture, or ethnicity. The project, funded by a federal Adoption Opportunities Grant, was developed by the North American Council on Adoptable Children (NACAC) to provoke thought and discussion by parents making that decision. **The parents' participation in the project is voluntary and totally separate from the home assessment process.**

The Transracial Parenting Project Is Made Up Of Three Components:

1. Self Awareness Tool

First, parents may choose to complete the **Self Awareness Tool**. The Transracial Parenting Project will be introduced, very briefly, during the STARS pre-service training. It will be presented as a voluntary resource and the Self Awareness Tool will be offered to all prospective foster/adoptive parents. The tool is a workbook that provides parents, in the privacy of their own home, an opportunity to explore whether fostering or adopting a child of a different culture is appropriate for their family. The workbook contains written exercises that help parents explore ways to prepare for parenting a child of a different race or culture.

The workbook is not meant to frustrate or discourage parents, but rather to educate them on what it truly means to parent a child from another race or culture. Answers will not be shared with agency staff.

2. Training Curriculum

Second, a **Training Curriculum** can be used to facilitate a session for foster/adoptive parents and prospective parents who would like to discuss issues of transcultural parenting in a group setting. The curriculum includes focused questions to highlight the important issues involved in caring for a child of another race or culture-racism, identity development, family issues, community resources, and more.

The curriculum is designed to be used with groups of 12-20 parents. Although smaller groups may be used, there should be enough people to encourage the profitable exchange of ideas. Smaller, less diverse counties may choose to pool their resources.

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The session can be presented as a full or half-day session, depending upon the group size and need. Each area should schedule a group session to be held each month.

To separate the voluntary Transracial Parenting Project from any aspect of the agency's assessment process, the group session should be held at a location outside the Children's Division (CD) office. Also, a teaching foster/adoptive parent, not an agency staff person, will facilitate. The facilitator can be paid through the Teaching Foster/Adoptive Parents' Contract. **The individual selected to serve as the group facilitator is Not to be connected in any way with the process of assessing the prospective parent's ability or willingness to become a foster/adoptive parent.**

The expectation is that the facilitator will have experience in parenting a child of a different culture. The Training Unit will offer a Train the Trainer teaching component. Parents who are currently fostering or adopting children of other cultures are welcome to participate. This could enrich the quality of the discussion, answer unmet needs of those currently parenting, and encourage the development of support groups. Anyone interested in the group session should contact the local CD office to be scheduled into the next session. Mileage and childcare expenses will be reimbursed for the already licensed foster parents as well as for the prospective foster/adoptive parents. Expenses for the prospective parents who participate in the group session will be reimbursed regardless of whether they successfully complete the STARS/Spaulding training.

There is also a 20-minute videotape available for use during the group session. The title of the video is "Struggle for Identity; Issues in Transracial Adoption". The video is comprised of interviews with young adults who had been adopted transculturally. There are sequences of the adoptees and their parents discussing similar issues. Area Offices will receive a specified number of tapes to be utilized in the group sessions.

3. Parenting Resource Manual

Finally, NACAC developed a **Parenting Resource Manual** for parents who have already adopted or are fostering a child of another race, culture, or ethnicity. The manual covers the day-to-day realities faced by multicultural families: cultivating positive self-esteem; understanding and dealing with race in a race-conscious society; caring for hair and grooming; finding appropriate resources in the community; and addressing particular medical issues.

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