

FPC Courses & Course Objectives

Anger Pie

Rick Delaney, PhD. discusses the ABCs of behavior in relation to anger outbursts in 5- to 10-year-old children. Understanding the Antecedent, Bias/Behavior and Consequences of children's challenging behaviors can help parents anticipate, successfully handle, and help change anger outbursts. Also discussed are the impacts of child maltreatment on behavior, warning signs of anger outbursts, positive and negative consequences of behavior, healthy anger, and when to seek professional help.

Course Objectives

At the end of this course, you will be able to:

1. Identify the ABCs of anger outbursts.
2. Identify antecedents and consequences of anger outbursts.
3. Understand how past experience influences bias.
4. Describe how bias influences behaviors.
5. Give examples of positive and negative consequences.
6. Describe healthy anger.

Autism: A Strength-Based Approach

Children with autism and children in care often exhibit similar behaviors. It's important for parents to recognize the differences, so children on the spectrum can be diagnosed early and accurately. This class explores autism, how to identify autism in children, and how to support children with autism and encourage their strengths and abilities.

Course Objectives

At the end of this course, you will be able to:

1. Describe autism and its causes.
2. Identify the characteristics and behaviors of children with autism.
3. Know what services and treatments are available to children with autism.
4. Understand how to manage challenging behaviors.
5. Understand how to support and encourage children with autism.
6. Describe common medical issues among children with autism.

Building Trust, Motivating Change

It can be challenging for a parent to open up a conversation with any youth about behavior issues, but it can be especially difficult for a parent of a youth who has experienced trauma. This course, developed for parents of teens, explores how they can use motivational interviewing techniques to help build trust with the youth in their home, engage the youth in conversation, and encourage behavior change.

Course Objectives

At the end of this course, you will be able to:

1. Understand how to build trust with youth.
2. Describe the three components of motivational interviewing.
3. Understand how to use the OARS skills of open-ended questions, affirmations, reflections, and summaries.
4. Recognize change talk.

Caring For Children Who Have Been Sexually Abused

Course available in English & Spanish.

Foster parenting a child who has been sexually abused presents unique challenges. Children who enter care with a history of being sexually abused carry with them psychological scars that result in emotional problems and behavioral issues. Some children suffer in silence, others deny the abuse, while others act out sexually. Rick Delaney, PhD., and Betsy Keefer Smalley, LSW, provide insight into the world of the abused child and how foster parents can help.

Course Objectives

At the end of this course, you will be able to:

1. State the definition and types of child sexual abuse.
2. Describe the dynamics of child sexual abuse.
3. Know different sexual behaviors that can constitute child sexual abuse.
4. Understand the characteristics of children who have been sexually abused.
5. Understand the complexity of issues surrounding recovery from sexual abuse and the challenges caregivers face.

Child Abuse and Neglect

Course available in English & Spanish.

Betsy Keefer Smalley, LSW, researcher and foster parent trainer with the Institute for Human Services in Ohio, leads this pre-service course for individuals who want to become foster parents. Child Abuse and Neglect focuses on understanding child physical abuse and neglect, and developing empathy for birth parents. Also covered are how to distinguish between abuse and common, accidental childhood injuries as well as reporting to authorities. Supplemental handouts round out the course. **Caution: contains graphic images.**

Course Objectives

At the end of this course, you will be able to:

1. Understand the causes and risk factors of child maltreatment.
2. Develop empathy for the birth parents.
3. Distinguish between common, accidental childhood injuries and abuse.
4. Identify child physical abuse and neglect.
5. Know when and how to report abuse to authorities.

Child Development

Course available in English & Spanish.

Robert Nickel, MD, developmental pediatrician and professor of pediatrics, and Betsy Keefer Smalley, LSW, consultant and author, share their expertise in the fields of pediatrics and child welfare in this preservice course on child development. You will learn how child development can be altered by the effects of abuse and neglect and how an understanding of typical child development and developmental domains and stages can help foster parents know when children in their care may be exhibiting behaviors indicative of maltreatment.

Course Objectives

At the end of this course, you will be able to:

1. Identify red flags of development that indicate problems in abused and neglected children.
2. Describe the impact of abuse and neglect on child development.
3. Understand risk and protective factors.
4. Identify developmental domains and stages.
5. Understand temperament and goodness of fit.

Child Safety and Supervision

Michael F. Quinn, M.A., social worker and foster family agency supervisor in residential foster care and group home settings, discusses the safety challenges faced by foster parents. Also covered are the importance of collecting pre-placement information, making in-home observations of child behavior, developing in- and out-of-home safety plans, reporting unusual incidences, and working as a childcare team member. Supplemental handouts are included.

Course Objectives

At the end of this course, you will be able to:

1. Collect important pre-placement background information about a child's special needs.
2. Adjust a home's safety features to best meet a child's needs.
3. Conduct in-home observations of a foster child.
4. Develop a safety plan for in- and out-of-home situations.
5. Report unusual events or incidences to the proper authorities.

The Child Welfare Team

Course available in English & Spanish.

This pre-service course provides a broad overview of the child welfare system. You'll learn how the system works, who is involved and their roles and responsibilities, key terms, and goals of the system. A bonus section on supporting sibling relationships of children in care was added to the course in January 2021. Supplemental handouts round out the course.

Course Objectives

At the end of this course, you will be able to:

1. Identify the primary goals of child protective services.
2. Understand how the child welfare system works.
3. Understand the stages a typical case follows.
4. Identify who is on a child's team and their responsibilities.
5. Know how to work as a team on behalf of a child.
6. Know best practices for siblings in the care system.

Children Entering Care: Mental Health Issues

Course available in English & Spanish.

Roughly 80% of the children in care have some mental health issues. Unfortunately, mental and behavioral health care is the largest unmet health need of these children. This class explores common mental health issues for children entering care, how disorders are diagnosed and treated, and how parents can work with professionals to support their children's mental health needs.

Course Objectives

At the end of this course, you will be able to:

1. Know how to identify qualified mental health professionals.
2. Understand how mental health professionals make diagnoses.
3. Describe externalizing and internalizing behaviors.
4. Understand how to use behavioral strategies to respond to children's behaviors.
5. Know the different types of therapies.
6. Know what questions to ask mental health professionals about psychotropic medications.

Children Entering Care: Physical Health Issues

Course available in English & Spanish.

As many as 80% of children coming into care have a medical condition and many have not experienced regular health care. This course explores common physical health issues for children entering care, and how parents can collaborate with health care and community providers to support their children's medical needs.

Course Objectives

At the end of this course, you will be able to:

1. Describe the "medical home".
2. Describe the role of primary care physician (PCP).
3. Define "chronic" and "acute".
4. Know what to expect in initial and follow-up health care visits.
5. Describe common physical health issues for children entering care.
6. Understand how to support children with acute and chronic medical conditions.

Could It Be FASD?

Course available in English & Spanish.

While fetal alcohol spectrum disorders are surprisingly common in children in care, they can often be difficult to diagnose, as the signs and symptoms are associated with a number of other conditions. This class explores fetal alcohol spectrum disorders, how to identify them, and how parents can support children who were prenatally exposed to alcohol.

Course Objectives

At the end of this course, you will be able to:

1. Describe fetal alcohol spectrum disorders (FASD).
2. Understand how prenatal exposure to alcohol can affect a developing brain.
3. List common learning and behavioral issues associated with FASD.
4. Identify potential signs of FASD.
5. Understand the relationship between trauma and FASD.
6. Know how to support children with FASD.

Cultural Issues in Parenting

Course available in English & Spanish.

Children enter foster care with their own cultural background, which influences their behavior, beliefs, and world view. Children benefit when foster parents respect and are supportive of their cultural differences, including differences in customs, sexual orientation, and gender identity. This class examines how parents can support children's cultural development at various ages and offers suggestions for coping with insensitive or hurtful episodes at school and in the community.

Course Objectives

At the end of this course, you will be able to:

1. Give examples of cultural differences to expect when a child enters a home.
2. Describe aspects of culture.
3. Recognize stereotypes based on race, color, and ethnicity.
4. Describe the cultural needs of children by age group.
5. Give examples of ways to support a child's sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression.

Eating & Food Issues

Eating and food issues are complex, and resource parents often have concerns about their children's food-related behaviors. This class explores common eating and food issues for children in care, the underlying causes of these behaviors, and how parents can support their child and promote healthy and balanced eating.

Course Objectives

At the end of this course, you will be able to:

1. Identify common eating and food issues for children in care.
2. Understand the difference between nonpsychiatric eating and food issues and psychiatric eating disorders.
3. Understand how trauma can contribute to eating and food issues.
4. Know how to support children with eating and food issues.
5. Define "pica."
6. Know how to encourage healthy eating.

Escalating Behavior Unwrapped

Course available in English & Spanish.

Many children in care have experienced trauma, which can impact how they react to circumstances and events that remind them of the abuse and cause them to escalate. There are many techniques caregivers can use to help children de-escalate. This course explores escalation, its causes, and strategies for de-escalation. To get the most out of this course, it is strongly recommended that trainees first take *Trauma-Informed Parenting*.

Course Objectives

At the end of this course, you will be able to:

1. Describe escalation and de-escalation.
2. Describe the "thinking brain" and the "survival brain."
3. Understand how trauma impacts children's brains.
4. Identify phases of escalation.
5. Know how to have restorative conversations.
6. Know how to develop a plan to de-escalate behavior and how to use crisis intervention and management.

Fire Play and Fire Setting

Almost all children show an interest in fire; however, sometimes this interest leads to playing with fire or even fire setting. This class covers fire play and fire setting and the differences between the two behaviors, as well as the levels of concern parents should have about repeat and future fire play or fire setting. Also provided are general steps caregivers should take if their child demonstrates fire play or fire-setting behavior.

Course Objectives

At the end of this course, you will be able to:

1. Define the terms "fire play" and "fire setting."
2. Identify the differences between fire play and fire setting.
3. Determine what level of concern to have about future fire play or fire setting.
4. List the caseworker's recommendations for parents who report fire behavior.

Foster Care to Adoption

Course available in English & Spanish.

Most children in foster care eventually return to live with their birth families. When reunification is not an option, the child may enter long term foster care, kinship care, or be adopted. Adoption is surrounded by myths and expectations that can be problematic for adoptive families and the child being adopted. This course explores the foster care to adoption process and offers insight and suggestions to make this transition easier for everyone involved.

Course Objectives

At the end of this course, you will be able to:

1. Understand how the adoption process works and what to expect.
2. Understand pre-placement issues.
3. Dispel myths about adoption.
4. Understand post-adoption issues and challenges.
5. Describe how foster care, kinship care, and adoption differ.

The Foster Home Investigation Process

Each year many foster, adoptive, and kinship providers are investigated for violating state foster care regulations involving the health, safety, and supervision of foster children. Special foster care regulatory agencies, including Child Protective Services, have been mandated to investigate foster care regulation violations and complaints. While difficult for foster parents, these investigations are a necessary part of the safety net that protects children in care. This course will provide viewers a general overview of the investigation process. Also discussed are why foster home investigations are necessary, what happens during and after an investigation, and how providers can limit the impact of an investigation on their household.

Course Objectives

At the end of this course, you will be able to:

1. Understand why foster home investigations are necessary.
2. Describe what happens during and after an investigation.
3. Describe how providers can limit the impact of an investigation on their household.
4. Know how to prepare for contacts with a foster care agency.
5. Describe a Plan of Corrective Action.

Grief & Loss in the Care System

Course available in English & Spanish.

Charley Joyce, LICSW, discusses how, in foster care, grief and loss are experienced by everyone involved in the removal and placement of a child. The child, birth parents, and the foster family all go through stages of grief. Yet, this grief is often denied or hidden. Learn about the stages of natural grieving, how grief is expressed, and “complex grief.” Also discussed are strategies for helping children, birth parents and family members handle and appropriately express their feelings of grief and loss.

Course Objectives

At the end of this course, you will be able to:

1. Identify the stages of grief.
2. Understand what contributes to foster children’s and birth parents’ grief over the child’s separation from their birth parents.
3. Describe the manifestations of grief and loss in children and birth parents after the child is removed from the birth family home.
4. Identify strategies for foster parents to help children through the grief.
5. Understand the grief and loss foster parents experience following the return of children to the birth parents.
6. Describe “complex grief” and identify strategies for helping prevent this type of grief.

House Safety

House safety and compliance with state regulations for foster homes are discussed by Michael F. Quinn, M.A., social worker and foster family agency supervisor. Michael shares his 25 years of experience in the field of residential foster and group home care as he takes viewers on a virtual tour of a typical foster home. A sample room-by-room home inspection checklist, highlighting common foster home regulations, is among the handouts included for downloading by course participants.

Course Objectives

At the end of this course, you will be able to:

1. List the reasons for conducting a self-guided home inspection.
2. Describe how to conduct a self-scout walk-through home inspection.
3. Identify common household hazards.
4. List strategies for keeping interior and exterior locations safe for children.

The Impact of Fostering on Birth Children

Course available in English & Spanish.

Adding a foster child to the household naturally stirs up a variety of emotions. Birth children of foster parents may be excited at the prospect of a new child in the home, but at the same time may be jealous of the time and energy their parents devote to the new child. This course explores what birth children may feel through all phases of the fostering process and offers tips for helping them cope.

Course Objectives

At the end of this course, you will be able to:

1. Identify challenges for the family that chooses to foster children.
2. Identify ways to ease family stress caused by fostering.
3. Identify the three main phases of the placement process.
4. List six ways to reduce placement problems.
5. Explain how the addition of a foster child can redefine or adjust the family roles.
6. Explain how post-placement reflection can contribute to the success of subsequent placements.

It's My Marriage!

This marriage education workshop, based on the Prevention and Relationship Enhancement Program (PREP) developed by Drs. Howard Markman and Scott Stanley, explores how resource parent couples can resolve conflict and promote intimacy in the family through improved communication. With the help of the workshop facilitator and four couples, participants are taught to recognize both constructive and destructive patterns of communication. Other researchers provide additional information about techniques proven to enhance relationships.

Course Objectives

At the end of this course, you will be able to:

1. List the four types of safety needed in a marriage.
2. Recognize the four communication danger signs.
3. Describe the four warning clues of hidden issues.
4. Use the TAB or "Take a Break" Technique.
5. Define the speaker's and listener's roles.
6. Describe the four steps of problem solving.
7. Identify the four steps in the process of forgiveness.
8. Describe the five stages of changing a behavior.

Kinship Care

Joseph Crumbley, D.S.W. explores issues specific to kinship care. The course focuses on some of the unique problems and stressors related to this type of care. Dr. Crumbley offers caregivers insights and steps on kinship parenting, and he provides general steps for parents to consider when parenting these special foster children. Supplemental handouts are included.

Course Objectives

At the end of this course, you will be able to:

1. Identify two reasons for the increase in children in kinship and relative care.
2. Identify three reasons why kinship/relative care is positive for the child.
3. State three challenges faced by kinship providers.
4. Identify clinical issues or fears that can impact the behavior of a child in kinship care.
5. List strategies for helping a child develop respect for, trust in, and loyalty to the kinship family.
6. List ways to acknowledge a child's feelings and develop positive, appropriate ways to communicate.
7. Identify steps for involving all family members in developing a plan for the child.

Lying (2nd Edition)

Rick Delaney, Ph.D. examines underlying motivations children may have for not telling the truth: to get out of trouble, to boost self-esteem or get attention, and to get others in trouble. He also examines pathological lying and “good” and “bad” tattling. Dr. Delaney gives parents strategies for teaching children in their care to learn to tell the truth and develop emotional honesty.

Course Objectives

At the end of this course, you will be able to:

1. Identify four underlying reasons that can cause children to lie.
2. List strategies for helping children learn to tell the truth.
3. Outline positive strategies to help reduce the frequency of pathological lying.
4. Distinguish between “good” and “bad” tattling.
5. State how to focus on the emotional and psychological needs that cause a child to lie.
6. Understand how to help a child develop emotional honesty.

Lying (Advanced Parenting Workshop)

Workshop participants learn about the types of lying and why children lie. Then they look at the case of a 16-year-old boy who lies constantly, and at his foster parents’ reaction. With the help of Dr. Rick Delaney and his teaching assistants, participants work together to develop an action plan for the parents, with concrete steps for coping with and curbing the boy’s chronic lying.

Course Objectives

At the end of this course, you will be able to:

1. Understand the four types of lying.
2. Recognize behavior clues for identifying types of lying.
3. Understand six common reasons for lying.
4. Learn how to emotionally support a child who lies.
5. Develop and implement an action plan for coping with lying.

Noncompliance and Defiance

A family does best when there is a good deal of cooperation from all its members. However, cooperation isn’t the same as blindly going along with every request. Parents have the challenging job of helping a child balance his or her own needs and safety with the need to be a cooperative member of the family. This course examines the spectrum of cooperation and noncompliance, from fearful cooperation to defiance, including the zone in the middle of the spectrum called self-assertion.

Course Objectives

At the end of this course, you will be able to:

1. Understand the differences between cooperation and noncompliance.
2. List four cooperation and noncompliance myths.
3. List four common reasons for cooperation problems.
4. Identify where a child’s response to a request falls on the spectrum of cooperation and noncompliance.
5. List general steps for helping children build their ability to self-assert.

Parent-Child Attachment

Course available in English & Spanish.

Betsy Keefer Smalley, LSW, and Dr. Rick Delaney lead this pre-service course on attachment. You'll learn the difference between healthy and unhealthy attachment, how separation and loss affect attachment, and how attachment theory applies to real life. Supplemental handouts round out the course.

Course Objectives

At the end of this course, you will be able to:

1. Discuss the importance of attachment for the healthy emotional development of a child.
2. Describe the potential negative effects of maltreatment, separation and loss.
3. Describe how issues of divided loyalty, perceived abandonment or rejection, reactivation of feelings from previous separations, and ambivalence about attachment and permanence play a role in emotional conflict.
4. Discuss how insecure attachment established earlier in life impacts a child's behavior while in placement.

Parenting a Child Who Was Substance Exposed

Substance exposure is a factor that can contribute to children's behavior and affect foster and adoptive families. This course explores how parents can care for children who were prenatally exposed to substances or drug endangered, and create an environment that encourages resilience in children with a history of trauma.

Course Objectives

At the end of this course, you will be able to:

1. Describe risk and protective factors.
2. Understand the impact of prenatal substance exposure and drug endangerment on children.
3. Identify parenting strategies to encourage attachment in children.
4. Describe three important temperament traits.
5. Understand how to prevent substance abuse in adolescents.
6. Understand how to talk about birth parents' substance abuse.

Positive Parenting 1

In this class, host Sarada Thomas introduces three positive parenting techniques: Cooperation, or making effective requests; Tracking problem behaviors; and Encouragement, or rewarding desirable behaviors. The class includes ideas for dealing with children who resist positive parenting techniques.

Course Objectives

At the end of this course, you will be able to:

1. Describe the key components of effective requests.
2. Know why and how to track problem behaviors.
3. Explain how to encourage good behaviors.
4. Understand when it is time to alter your strategy.

Positive Parenting 2

In this class, host Sarada Thomas introduces two more positive parenting techniques. The first segment, Setting Limits, shows how to create and introduce household rules and explains the benefits of having household rules. The second segment explains how to create effective Behavior Contracts, how to present them in a way that will encourage children to comply, and how to work with kids who resist.

Course Objectives

At the end of this course, you will be able to:

1. Understand the value in allowing children to help make the rules.
2. Explain why rules are important.
3. Know how to write an effective behavior contract.
4. Offer appropriate rewards for cooperation.
5. Know how to cope with resistance from a child.

Preparing Teens for Postsecondary Education

Course available in English & Spanish.

Attending college or other postsecondary education can be a challenge for any person. However, children in care face unique educational challenges as a result of the complex trauma they have experienced and a lack of resources and support. This course explores how resource parents can help youth in grades 6 to 10 overcome obstacles, prepare for postsecondary education, and achieve their educational and career goals.

Course Objectives

At the end of this course, you will be able to:

1. Understand the unique educational challenges youth in foster care face.
2. Understand how to help youth plan for postsecondary education.
3. Understand the difference between fixed mindset and growth mindset.
4. Describe the five stages of changing a behavior.
5. Identify a variety of educational pathways, including 4-year universities, 2-year community colleges, and vocational training programs.
6. Know the education planning milestones for middle schoolers, 9th graders, and 10th graders.

Problematic Sexual Behaviors (Advanced Parenting Workshop)

When children in care demonstrate a sexual behavior, it can be difficult for resource parents to understand. This Advanced Parenting Workshop addresses problematic sexual behavior in children in care. Several family studies are presented and, with the help of Dr. Silovsky and the teaching assistant, participants learn how to determine whether a child's sexual behavior is problematic and how to respond to a child's sexual behavior.

Course Objectives

At the end of this course, you will be able to:

1. Understand child and adolescent sexual development.
2. Identify problematic sexual behaviors.
3. Identify where a child's behavior falls on the continuum of sexual behaviors.
4. Know how to respond to a child's sexual behaviors.
5. Know how to support a child who demonstrates problematic sexual behaviors.
6. Identify myths and facts related to problematic sexual behavior.

Reducing Family Stress

Course available in English & Spanish.

Day-to-day life is full of naturally occurring stress. The addition of a foster child, especially one with problem behaviors, can alter the family dynamic, compounding existing stress. This course discusses how the stressors that accompany fostering can be reduced and provides insight into and strategies for preserving a nurturing family environment.

Course Objectives

At the end of this course, you will be able to:

1. Identify sources of stress in the foster family.
2. Describe the impact fostering a traumatized child can have on family members.
3. Describe the physical and emotional impact of stress and trauma.
4. Describe how stress can be minimized during all phases of placement.
5. Describe how a support system can help reduce stress for the foster family and help preserve a nurturing family environment.

The Role of Mandated Child Abuse Reporters

Course available in English & Spanish.

Every 8 seconds someone files a report of suspected child abuse. More than half of all reports come from mandated reporters, including child care workers and foster parents. Child abuse laws vary from state to state and the list of mandated reporters and their responsibilities is continually updated. This course discusses the challenges and responsibilities mandated reporters face and provides strategies to help ensure the investigation process is not compromised.

Course Objectives

At the end of this course, you will be able to:

1. List and describe types of child abuse.
2. Know what to include in a report of suspected child abuse.
3. Identify who is obligated to report suspected child abuse.
4. Identify two factors to consider when reporting suspected abuse.
5. Describe common elements of the abuse investigation process.
6. Identify mandated reporter skills.

Running Away

Rick Delaney, Ph.D. explores reasons children run away from caregivers. Five types of runaway behavior are examined: searching for roots, running from rules, running from love and intimacy, wanting to be wanted, and running to street crime. Dr. Delaney discusses warning signs of running away and the development of a safety plan.

Course Objectives

At the end of this course, you will be able to:

1. Identify five reasons why foster children might run away.
2. List five warning signs of running away.
3. Describe four ways to help children stay connected to a birth parent.
4. Identify three components of a safety plan.
5. Describe five strategies for promoting non-threatening belonging.
6. State three ways to replace negative attention-seeking behaviors.

Self-Injury (Advanced Parenting Workshop)

Children and teens who self-injure often do so as a way to cope with past trauma or current stress, and to communicate strong emotions. This Advanced Parenting Workshop explores non-suicidal self-injury and other forms of self-harm, including high-risk behavior and hair-pulling. Several short case studies and one in-depth case study are presented and, with the help of Dr. Delaney and his teaching assistant, participants use the Trauma-Sensitive Review Form to understand the children's behavior and develop an action plan.

Course Objectives

At the end of this course, you will be able to:

1. Describe non-suicidal self-injury, or NSSI.
2. Understand the differences between NSSI and other forms of self-harm.
3. Use the Trauma-Sensitive Review Form to understand a child's behavior.
4. Describe how to use validating statements.
5. Describe how to mirror a child's feelings.
6. Develop an action plan to help a child who self-injures or self-harms.

Sleep Problems (2nd Edition)

When a child has a sleep problem, a parent has a sleep problem too. In this course, Dr. Rick Delaney examines four types of sleep problems in children: fears about sleeping alone, frequent waking and roaming, nightmares and night terrors, and sleep problems and depression. He gives parents insights into the possible reasons for their child's problem behavior, and follows up with some practical and immediate steps they can take to deal with their child's particular type of problem behavior.

Course Objectives

At the end of this course, you will be able to:

1. Identify four types of sleep problems in children.
2. Describe the difference between nightmares and night terrors.
3. State when to seek professional/medical help for a child with sleep problems.
4. Describe the warning signs of depression in children.
5. List general guidelines that can help a child with sleep problems.

Social & Physical Aggression (Advanced Parenting Workshop)

It is complicated for parents to know how to handle children who act aggressively towards adults or other children. Two in-depth family studies are presented and, with the help of Dr. Delaney and his teaching assistant, participants use the Social Information Processing (SIP) approach to understand aggressive behavior and support their children.

Course Objectives

At the end of this course, you will be able to:

1. Understand the differences between physical and social aggression.
2. Understand the differences between proactive and reactive aggression.
3. Identify the underlying reasons for a child's aggression.
4. Describe bullying.
5. Use the SIP approach to understand a child's behavior.
6. Describe empathy.

Substance-Exposed Infants

Course available in English & Spanish.

Robert Nickel, MD, developmental pediatrician and professor of pediatrics and Susan Edelstein, MSW, Program Director of TIES for Adoption/ UCLA address the issues and challenges faced by parents who care for substance-exposed infants. The health and medical needs of infants and newborns prenatally exposed to drugs can be perplexing and serious. This course sheds light on this complex subject and provides useful strategies for parenting these infants as well as valuable tips for working with an infant's professional team.

Course Objectives

At the end of this course, you will be able to:

1. Understand the effects of prenatal substance exposure on infants.
2. Identify myths and common misinformation about the effects of substances on infants and children.
3. Identify medical issues of substance-exposed infants.
4. Identify strategies for parenting irritable, dysregulated infants.
5. Identify strategies for parenting lethargic infants.
6. Understand how to work with professionals and the child's biological parents.

Supporting Normalcy

Course available in English & Spanish.

Children in care should have as close to a normal life as possible, and be able to engage in the same positive youth activities as children who are not in care. The reasonable and prudent parenting standards were developed by each state so parents would have the necessary guidelines to encourage normalcy. This course explores how to provide normalcy for youth in care using the prudent parenting standards.

Course Objectives

At the end of this course, you will be able to:

1. Describe "normalcy" and "reasonable and prudent parenting standards".
2. List three benefits of youth activities.
3. Know seven questions to ask yourself when making prudent parenting decisions.
4. Understand how to advocate for children's participation in an activity.
5. Understand that each state has its own reasonable and prudent parenting standards.
6. Know how the Foster Children's Bill of Rights and the Foster Parent's Bill of Rights promote normalcy.

Taking Things – Stealing

Even though taking things is common among children in care, it can still be upsetting for parents. However, if parents focus on determining the source of the behavior, they can help prevent the children from developing a serious problem. This course explores several reasons for taking things, including experimentation, intellectual disability, trauma history, and social or psychiatric problems, and how to teach acceptable behaviors to children who take things.

Course Objectives

At the end of this course, you will be able to:

1. List four common reasons for taking things.
2. Understand how a child expresses his or her needs through taking things.
3. Understand how to help encourage a child who takes things verbalize his or her feelings and needs.
4. List steps for teaching appropriate replacement behaviors to a child who takes things.
5. Know when to seek professional help for a child who takes things.

Taking Things without Permission (Advanced Parenting Workshop)

This Advanced Parenting Workshop explores the common reasons for taking things. Two case studies are presented, and participants work together to determine the reasons behind the children's taking things and how their parents can teach them more acceptable behaviors. With the help of Dr. Rick Delaney and his teaching assistant, participants then develop an action plan for one case family.

Course Objectives

At the end of this course, you will be able to:

1. List four common reasons for taking things.
2. Recognize the four defining signs of complex trauma.
3. Describe the seven aftereffects of complex trauma.
4. List five components of nurturing parenting.
5. Develop and implement an action plan.

Trauma-Informed Parenting

Course available in English & Spanish.

Many children in care experience traumatic events, including abuse, neglect, and domestic violence. These traumatic events can affect a child long after he or she has been removed from the source of the trauma. This class explores how parents can care for a child while being sensitive to his or her past traumatic experiences.

Course Objectives

At the end of this course, you will be able to:

1. Describe "complex trauma."
2. Understand how a child's past experiences impact his or her behavior.
3. Use the Trauma-Sensitive Review Form.
4. Understand how to encourage a child to develop strength and resilience.
5. Describe the seven aftereffects of complex trauma.
6. Understand how to adapt parenting style to a child's needs.

Understanding Behavior in Foster Children

Course available in English & Spanish.

Foster children often enter homes with challenging behaviors rooted in a history of trauma. Parents need to be able to decipher problem behavior in order to understand its source. This insight will enable parents to help their children heal and learn new, more acceptable ways to express themselves. This course will look at the function, or purpose, of behaviors, and will provide keys for unlocking the underlying meaning of challenging behaviors. Also covered are the ABCs of behavior and a look at parenting styles.

Course Objectives

At the end of this course, you will be able to:

1. List the 3 steps for understanding a child's behavior.
2. Understand and be able to describe surface behaviors.
3. List 4 common reasons for behavior.
4. Describe the ABCs of behavior.
5. List 7 behavior trackers.
6. Describe 4 parenting styles and state their relationship to a child's behavior.

Understanding Birth Family Relationships

Parents can ensure their children's well-being by communicating with them openly about their biological family, facilitating contact, and helping them find closure. This class explores the range of openness in adoption, the birth connection, and birth relationships.

Course Objectives

At the end of this course, you will be able to:

1. Understand the difference between an "open adoption" and a "closed adoption."
2. Describe the "birth connection" and the "birth relationship."
3. Define empathy and compassion.
4. Appreciate the benefits of an open relationship with the children's birth family.
5. Understand how to build a bridge of contact with the children's birth family.

Understanding Noncompliance (Advanced Parenting Workshop)

This Advanced Parenting Workshop introduces the spectrum of cooperation and noncompliance, then explores how trauma can affect a child's ability to cooperate. Two case studies are presented and, with the help of Dr. Delaney and his teaching assistant, participants use the Trauma-Sensitive Review Form to understand the children's behavior.

Course Objectives

At the end of this course, you will be able to:

1. Understand the differences between cooperation and noncompliance.
2. Identify where a child's response to a request falls on the spectrum of cooperation and noncompliance.
3. Recognize the four defining signs of complex trauma.
4. Describe the seven aftereffects of complex trauma.
5. Use the trauma-sensitive review form to understand a child's behavior.
6. Develop ideas for helping a child deal with the aftereffects of trauma.

Understanding Sex Trafficking

Course available in English & Spanish.

Sex trafficking is a difficult issue to discuss, but it is becoming more and more relevant, especially to parents of children in care. While estimates vary, anywhere from 50% to more than 90% of the children who have been trafficked have been involved in some way with the child welfare system. This class explores commercial sexual exploitation of children, what it is, and how parents can recognize signs that a child is being sexually exploited.

Course Objectives

At the end of this course, you will be able to:

1. Recognize warning signs of commercial sexual exploitation.
2. Dispel myths about human trafficking, including sex trafficking.
3. Describe victim blaming.
4. Understand the grooming process.
5. Identify risk factors and vulnerabilities for commercial sexual exploitation.
6. Know parenting strategies for preventing child sexual exploitation.

Working Together with Primary Families

Course available in English & Spanish.

A child in care has two families: the primary and the foster family. Research has shown that when these families work together, the child's confusion and anxiety are decreased and the likelihood of reunification increases. Nonjudgmental and respectful communication can be challenging, especially when histories and backgrounds differ or when abuse and neglect are part of the child's past. This course offers foster parents strategies for developing positive communication with and understanding of the primary family.

Course Objectives

At the end of this course, you will be able to:

1. Define "primary family."
2. Describe the importance of the foster family's relationship with the primary family.
3. Describe the benefits and challenges of shared parenting.
4. State the role of the child protection team.
5. Identify typical issues that bring primary families to the court system.
6. Give examples of grief and ambiguous loss.
7. Understand the role of empathy in foster care.

Working with Birth Parents: Visitation

Charley Joyce, LICSW explores problems and solutions relating to birth parent visits. Mr. Joyce discusses the three phases of the visitation process and identifies strategies foster parents can use to make visits positive and productive. The role of the foster parent during visits and the benefits for foster children of birth parent visits are covered. Supplemental handouts are included.

Course Objectives

At the end of this course, you will be able to:

1. Identify three phases of the visitation process.
2. List the benefits for foster children of visitation with biological parents.
3. Describe the role of the foster parent in the visitation process.
4. Identify problems that may occur before, during, and after visitation.
5. Identify solutions to problems that may occur during the visitation process.

Working with Schools

Karen Jorgenson, M.A. and Ginger Gorham, M.S. examine problems frequently encountered when working with a child's school and offer simple, positive guidance to foster parents on developing a working relationship with schools. Ms. Jorgenson and Ms. Gorham also discuss building a school-parent team, roles and responsibilities of the foster parent and the school, special education, homework strategies, and dealing with difficult behaviors at school. Handouts are included.

Course Objectives

At the end of this course, you will be able to:

1. Identify reasons children in care experience significant school problems.
2. Identify members of a school "team."
3. State school and foster parent roles and responsibilities.
4. Identify strategies to help a child transition to a new school.
5. Identify ways to advocate for your child when dealing with schools.
6. Describe the role of the parent in the special education process.
7. List strategies for overcoming homework struggles.
8. Identify methods for dealing with difficult behaviors at school.