



*The Birth and Foster Parent Partnership:
A Relationship Building Guide.*

Customized Training and Technical Assistance

The Birth and Foster Parent Partnership (BFPP) was formed in 2016 to support a national movement of birth parents, foster families, kinship caregivers and staff focused on improving relationships and using their collective voices to transform systems, culture, policies and practices to improve outcomes for children and families. The BFPP is managed through a collaboration between the Children's Trust Fund Alliance, Youth Law Center's Quality Parenting Initiative and Casey Family Programs.



Building and Sustaining Relationships between Birth Parents and Foster Parents

The Children's Trust Fund Alliance (Alliance) provides an array of training and technical assistance opportunities for agencies, groups, communities, and state entities that are working towards building relationships between birth parents, foster parents/kinship caregivers and agency staff to support families. The training and technical assistance is designed to help build system capacity and incorporate practices that support partnerships between parents and caregivers. The Alliance consulting team includes BFPP birth and foster parent consultants working as partners with the Alliance professional staff.

The Alliance team and BFPP members use *The Birth and Foster Parent Partnership: A Relationship Building Guide* as a training and technical assistance tool. This important guide includes recommendations from and for birth parents and foster parents/kinship caregivers on ways they can build stronger relationships to meet the needs of children or youth. The guide also offers useful tips to help build supportive and collaborative working relationships with child welfare workers and other service providers.

The Alliance's Training and Technical Assistance includes topics such as:

- 1 Introducing child welfare staff, foster parents, kinship caregivers and parents on how to use *the Birth and Foster Parent Partnership: A Relationship Building Guide*.
- 2 Building initial relationships between birth parents and foster parents/kinship caregivers and staff through various approaches such as comfort calls and icebreakers.
- 3 Supporting and sustaining ongoing relationships between birth parents and foster parents/kinship caregivers through various communication formats such as facetime, sharing photos, jointly attending school events, medical appointments, etc.
- 4 Keeping the relationship strong while working with the child welfare staff in planning for reunification or other alternative placement as appropriate.
- 5 Maintaining the relationship with the foster family after the birth family leaves the child welfare system.
- 6 Building supportive relationships between birth parents and foster parents/kinship caregivers with assistance from Parent Partners/Foster Parent Mentors.
- 7 Using *the Birth and Foster Parent Partnership: A Relationship Building Guide* as a continuous quality improvement tool.
- 8 Discussing other relevant topics such as:
 - Encouraging child welfare agency staff to create policies that support effective partnership practices, including sharing information and reviewing guidelines for confidentiality.
 - Encouraging child welfare staff to help birth parents and foster parents access community supports, including strategies they can do together (e.g., parenting classes, family field trips at family centers, etc.).

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