



Equipping resource parents with the knowledge and attitudes to effectively parent teens: Results from the CORE Teen training program

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ABSTRACT

Given the high rates of placement disruptions for teenagers, a need exists for resource parents (the collective term for foster, adoptive, kinship, and guardian caregivers) who are both willing and able to care for teenagers. In response to this need, we created Critical On-going Resource Family Education (CORE) Teen, a comprehensive foster parent training program designed to provide resource parents with the knowledge and skills to support teens in their care. A one-way repeated measures ANOVA compared the results from participants at the pretest (N = 188), posttest (N = 130), and follow up taken 90 days after training completion (N = 118). The results from trainings conducted across four states and one tribal nation indicate that participants demonstrated significant improvements in training competencies and characteristics in a number of factors related to parenting teenagers.

1. Background

1.1. Placement instability for teens in foster care

As of 2018, approximately 110,850 of youth in foster care identified as teens (ages 13–18). Teens make up 24% of youth in foster care overall (DHHS, 2019). While placement stability remains a top priority for foster care agencies, prior research indicates that age predicts placement instability, with those over the age of 13 at the greatest risk of placement disruptions (Konjin et al., 2019; Sattler, Font, & Gershoff, 2018). Placement instability correlates with decreased rates of high school completion as well as increased risk of substance use, mental health issues, and homelessness (Stott & Gustavsson, 2010). It is important to improve placement stability for this age group given their prevalence in foster care and the risk placement instability poses to their wellbeing (DHHS, 2019).

Placement instability can lead to numerous long-term negative outcomes for teens in foster care. Changes in a placement may require teens to adjust to a new school, neighborhood, and family (Fawley-King et al., 2017). These changes can result in a sense of unpredictability at a time period when a stable relationship with a caregiver is especially important for emotional development (Harden, 2004). Placement instability correlates with negative long-term outcomes for those in care such as increased rates of substance use (Stott, 2012), decreased educational

outcomes, increased rates of mental illness, and increased chances of homelessness (Burley & Halpern, 2001; Herrenkohl et al., 2003).

Teens in foster care experience greater rates of placement disruption than any other age group (Stott & Gustavsson, 2010; Wertheimer 2002; Wulczyn et al. 2003). Teens with mental illness and special medical needs also experience higher rates of placement instability, causing further disruption to youth who are especially vulnerable (Casey family programs, 2018). LGBTQ teens also face disproportionately high rates of placement instability (McCormick, Schmidt, & Terrazas, 2016). Additionally, race and ethnicity are also predictors of placement stability, as Black and Native American children and teens have lower levels of placement stability than those who identify as white and Hispanic (McDonald, Poertner, & Jennings, 2007). These intersectional experiences indicate that the negative effects of placement instability may exacerbate the barriers that LGBTQ teens and teens of color may already experience.

1.2. Contributing factors to placement instability

Placement disruption can occur for many reasons. Resource parents who lack training and social support networks tend to have more placement disruptions (Casey family programs, 2018). Fostering can be an emotionally taxing role, and often requires parenting knowledge and an understanding of the foster care system (Rhodes, Orme, & McSurdy,

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2003). The child's caseworker can be a source of support for the resource parents. However, this support can be difficult to provide, as caseworkers' caseloads may exceed the recommended number for their role. The Child Welfare League of America (CWLA) suggests that workers involved in out-of-home placement case management should not have caseloads that exceed 15 children (Hughes & Lay, 2012). Unfortunately, the GAO found in 2003 that some caseworkers managed more than twice the recommended number of caseloads. A high caseload can reduce a social worker's ability to support resource parents (Yamatani, Engel, & Spjeldnes, 2009). Caseworker turnover can also increase placement disruptions (Casey Family Programs, 2018; Ryan et al., 2006).

Salazar et al. (2012) found that teens between the ages of 17–18 in foster care had higher rates of trauma exposure than their peers who were not in foster care. The effects of trauma exposure can be difficult for resource parents to manage. In fact, prior research demonstrates that emotional and behavioral issues have been cited as a motivating factor in placement disruption (James, Landsverk, & Slymen, 2004; James, 2004). Foster children with externalizing behavior are three times as likely to experience placement disruption than children with no externalizing behavior (Courtney & Prophet, 2011). Teens in foster care may have more behavioral issues than younger children, given that they experience difficulties associated with normal adolescent development as well as the emotional effects of being removed from their biological or previous foster families. Teens' emotional and behavioral issues can be difficult for resource parents to navigate if they have not received specialized training

1.3. Foster parent training to address placement instability

Providing current and prospective resource parents comprehensive training on how to manage trauma-related behaviors and increase their understanding of how to parent teenagers can help prevent placement disruption (Cooley & Petren, 2011; Greeno et al., 2015; Whiting, Huber, & Koech, 2007). Results from a different training focusing on children indicates that trainings can promote long-term positive outcomes. For example, children whose resource parents are trained in the KEEP (Keeping Foster and Kinship Parents Trained and Supported) training program experience increased placement stability, in addition to increased positive exits from care (e.g., move from placement home for reunification or adoption) (Greeno et al., 2015). Researchers also found that resource parents who report increased perceptions of competence and self-efficacy are more likely to continue foster parenting (Cooley & Petren, 2011).

While no clear consensus exists regarding which specific factors lead to successful resource parent training, prior literature does indicate the importance of including certain components. Whiting, Huber & Koech (2007) employed a content analysis of four common foster parent training program curriculums in order to better understand common curriculum content. The researchers found eleven primary contents including topics on foster and adoptive families, attachment, behavior management, and maltreatment issues, among others (Whiting, Huber & Koech, 2007). Other researchers noted a need to include more information regarding specialized support for caring children with special needs and unambiguous approaches to defining their role as resource parents (Cooley & Petren, 2011). Whiting, Huber and Koech (2007) suggest that when creating curricula, trainers should tailor the topics to the populations they target.

While recruiting resource parents for teens in particular can prove challenging (Wiltz, 2019), providing prospective resource parents with training may help them gain confidence and a willingness to care for teens. Training resource parents can help build the skills, knowledge, and behaviors needed for effective foster parenting and navigating difficult externalizing behavior. While many trainings exist for resource parents, few provide targeted support and guidance for current or prospective resource parents of teens. Given that teens experience unique circumstances that can add an additional layer of difficulty for resource

parents, and that they are at more risk for placement disruption than other age groups, a targeted training may reduce the number of placement disruptions that teens in foster care experience.

The present study involves a training specifically designed for resource parents of teens. The following section describes the development of the Critical On-going Resource Family Education (CORE) teen training program and the self-assessment component, Resource Parent Self-Assessment of Caring for Teens (RPSAC-Teens).

1.4. Present study

The CORE Teen curriculum is comprised of three components: 1) Self-Assessment; 2) Classroom Training, and 3) Right Time Training (Spaulding for Children, 2020). Each of these three components work together to provide a multi-faceted approach to resource parent training. The self-assessment, RPSAC-T, was designed to provide resource parents a venue to learn about their strengths, the areas that may require some additional strengthening and those areas that provide them with the most challenge. RPSAC-T measures the core characteristics and competencies that have been identified as important when parenting teens who have experienced traumatic events within the child welfare system (Day et al., 2018; Patterson et al., 2018). The self-assessment is a vital part of the curriculum, supporting families in identifying their individualized strengths and areas of challenge, and allows resource parents to complete individually and then discuss the results with their parenting partners and support system. The self-assessment helps families to determine if they have the characteristics that are effective in working with teens in foster care, assess their current capacity and household function, assess their need for ongoing training, and preview the material in the CORE Teen training curriculum.

In summary, the Resource Parent Self-Assessment of Caring for Teens (RPSAC-T) tool serves two purposes: 1) allow the resource parents to reflect on their experience, recognize areas of strength, and determine areas for growth, and 2) provide a measurement to determine the efficacy of the training's ability to increase foster and adoptive competencies and characteristics.

The second part of the CORE Teen training curriculum involves the classroom training component. Curriculum developers specifically designed this component for in-service foster parents, and feedback from 50 foster parents who completed the training described the content as more in-depth than their pre-service training material. The classroom training includes seven training sessions (for 12 h of total training), led by one or two facilitators. Each session includes lectures, small and large group activities (such as vignettes, discussions, and role play), resource review and videos. Facilitators completed fidelity forms for each session by hand and uploaded them to a common software program, Sharefile. Trainers answered questions on the fidelity forms regarding their relationship with their co-trainer (if applicable), their self-perceived competency particular session material, whether activities were completed, and feedback on why activities were not completed (if applicable). The fidelity form also provided space for trainers to provide feedback on need for additional support and suggestions that they have for improving or adjusting the curriculum.

The third component of the CORE Teen curriculum is the Right Time Training. The Right Time Training includes eight training kits, with information relevant to particular topic areas for the resource families. Each kit contains a 20–30-minute video with information from content experts, families, and foster youth alumni as well as a discussion guide. The goal of this component is to provide families with ready information beyond the training itself.

We hypothesize that the CORE Teen training curriculum will lead to increased scores in the RPSAC-Teens tool, indicating increased self-reported scores in knowledge and attitudes about resource parenting. It is important to note that this analysis measures changes in knowledge and attitudes, and not necessarily behavior.

2. Methods

2.1. Participants

Resource families were recruited from public and private child welfare agencies from one of four pilot sites that were selected to participate in the CORE Teen training (Florida, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, and one tribal nation located in SE region of the United States). Participants reported an average of 4 years of resource parent experience (SD = 5.23), and all were licensed by their respective states prior to beginning the CORE Teen training. Fifty-seven percent of the participants reported that at least one teen lived with them at the time of training. No data was collected on whether resource parents' prior resource parenting involved teens. CORE Teen served to provide these families continuing education hours to support licensure maintenance. Resource parents who agreed to participate in the CORE Teen training had either previously parented teens in their homes or they had expressed an interest in taking teens into their homes. Resource parents currently parenting teens reported an average age of 16 (SD = 4.24) for teens residing in their homes. Participants who did not complete the pretest (first self-assessment) and only took the second or third self-assessment (n = 10) were not included in the analysis. One hundred and eighty-eight training participants completed the first self-assessment, 130 completed the posttest, and 118 completed the 90-day follow up. This attrition rate from pretest to follow up (34.5%) was expected as this training is also designed to help participants understand whether or not foster parenting teens is an appropriate fit for them. See Table 2 for participant demographics. Participants had an average age of 45 (SD = 11.76). Sixty-four percent of the participants identified as female. In regard to race/ethnicity, roughly 23% of participants identified as African American, 12% as American Indian/Alaskan Native, 0.5% as Asian, 0.5% Asian Pacific Islander, 5% as Hispanic, and 60% as Caucasian.

Measures

Participants took a revised version of the RPSAC-Teens tool, which includes two surveys. Ninety items examine characteristics associated with successful resource parenting and seventy-one items measure resource parent competencies. For more information on characteristic and competency definition and operationalization, see Day et al., 2020. Characteristics and competencies were measured using a six-point Likert-scale with one indicating "not at all like me" and six indicating "a lot like me". A sample question listed for each characteristic and competency is available in Table 1. Alpha scores for each measure, as they relate to the specific population in the current study, can be viewed in Tables 3 & 5. Researchers beta tested this tool on two populations outside of the current study and found it to be reliable and valid (Day et al., in press, p.2020).

2.2. Procedures

The university's Institutional Review Board approved the study protocol along with the tribal site's tribal council. All three of the state sites allowed the University IRB to function as their IRB of record. Once participants registered for the training, they received email links to complete the informed consent and the self-assessment, both of which were completed online prior to the training start date. The self-assessment was designed to allow participants to log on and off as needed, it was not required to be completed in one sitting. Resource parents received a \$200 honorarium for completing all components of the curriculum, with the self-assessment functioning as only one of the three major curricular components. The honorarium served to reimburse resource parents for transportation and childcare costs associated with training participation. Participants received emailed links and reminders to complete the self-assessment immediately after the training completed and 90 days after the training completed.

Table 1

Sample questions for each characteristic and competency measured in the RSPAC-Teens tool.

| Item type | Item | Sample question |
|---|---|--|
| Characteristic | Attunement | I have a hard time knowing what people are feeling unless they tell me directly (reverse score) |
| | Acceptance | I respect other people's values and opinions, even if they are different than mine) |
| | Adaptability/Flexibility | I am able to recognize and adjust when a parenting technique isn't working. |
| | Appreciation | I make it a point to show appreciation for even small gains. |
| | Compassion | I know how to support and empathize with a teen who is feeling pain and grief |
| | Committed | I can remain committed to a youth, even if I don't feel loving toward them |
| | Honoring relationships/Attachments | I am careful never to say negative things to my child about other people who are important in his or her life |
| | Patience/Perseverance | I know that youth may require numerous attempts at mastering ways of acting/responding |
| | Predictable/Consistent | I make rules for my foster child that are appropriate to his or her abilities and maturity level |
| | Resilient | I am able to detect signs of "burn out" in myself. |
| | Realistic | I recognize that my foster child's success may look different than other children |
| | Security/Self-Confidence | I rate my success as a parent by the way others view me (reverse score) |
| | Self-Awareness/Self-Regulation | I know how to keep from overreacting when somebody pushes my buttons |
| | Sense of Humor | I use humor and wit to help me get through difficult situations |
| | Spiritual | I am comfortable talking openly with youth about whatever is their preferred spiritual beliefs and practices |
| | Competency | Supportive |
| Trustworthiness | | I try not to make promises I can't keep |
| Behavior Management | | I am able to respectfully direct behaviors |
| Continued Connections | | I know specific ways to help youth maintain birth sibling relationships |
| Culture | | I believe when youth learn too much about their cultures, they are more likely to feel confused (reverse code) |
| Parental Adaption | | I can adjust what I expect of a youth based on his/her developmental level |
| Parental Resilience | | I can support youth, even when they are acting negatively toward me or a member of our family |
| Relationship Development | | I know how to discuss difficult topics with teens |
| Regulation | | I am aware of specific strategies to help a youth regain their composure after they have been triggered |
| Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity (SOGI) | | I am able to comfortable discuss issues related to sexual orientation/gender identity |
| Trauma-informed resource parenting | I can use specific parenting strategies that will be effective with youth who have experienced trauma | |
| Transitions | I know specific strategies to support a youth before, during, and after he/she comes to my home | |

Table 2
Participant demographic characteristics.

| Characteristic | Completed pretest ¹ (N = 188) | Completed posttest ¹ (N = 130) | Completed follow up ¹ (N = 118) |
|---|--|---|--|
| Age, mean (SD) | 44.87 (11.76) | 44.78 (11.73) | 45.58 (11.33) |
| Gender identity (%) | | | |
| Female | 119 (63.64%) | 81 (62.31%) | 71 (60.17%) |
| Male | 68 (36.36%) | 49 (37.69%) | 47 (39.83%) |
| Sexual orientation (%) | | | |
| Heterosexual/straight | 160 (88.4%) | 107 (85.6%) | 95 (84.07%) |
| Gay/Lesbian | 15 (8.29%) | 13 (10.4%) | 13 (11.5%) |
| Bisexual | 4 (2.21%) | 3 (2.4%) | 4 (3.5%) |
| Other | 2 (1.1%) | 2 (1.6%) | 1 (0.88%) |
| Race/Ethnicity ² (%) | | | |
| African American | 45 (22.87%) | 23 (17.69%) | 24 (20.34%) |
| American Indian/Alaskan Native | 23 (12.23%) | 16 (12.31%) | 13 (11.02%) |
| Asian | 1 (0.53%) | 1 (0.77%) | 1 (0.85%) |
| Asian Pacific Islander | 1 (0.53%) | 0 (0%) | 0 (0%) |
| Hispanic | 10 (5.32%) | 6 (4.62%) | 6 (5.08%) |
| Caucasian | 113 (60.11%) | 85 (65.38%) | 76 (64.41%) |
| Marital status (%) | | | |
| Married | 117 (62.9%) | 83 (64.34%) | 75 (63.56%) |
| Living with partner | 13 (6.99%) | 10 (7.75%) | 12 (10.17%) |
| Divorced | 16 (8.6%) | 10 (7.75%) | 7 (5.93%) |
| Widowed | 3 (1.61%) | 1 (0.78%) | 2 (1.69%) |
| Single | 37 (19.89%) | 25 (19.38%) | 21 (17.80%) |
| Role (%) | | | |
| Adoptive parent | 28 (14.97%) | 19 (14.62%) | 20 (16.95%) |
| Foster parent | 119 (63.64%) | 83 (63.85%) | 76 (64.41%) |
| Guardian parent | 11 (5.88%) | 10 (7.69%) | 9 (7.63%) |
| Kinship parent | 3 (1.60%) | 3 (2.31%) | 2 (1.69%) |
| Other | 26 (13.90%) | 15 (11.54%) | 11 (9.32%) |
| Number of non-biological teens in home, M(SD) | 0.77 (1.19%) | 0.67 (1.07) | 0.69 (1.09) |

¹ Some participants did not respond to certain demographic categories and the total number may not equal total number of each participant.

² Participants were allowed to select more than one race and the total percentage may exceed 100%

2.3. Analysis

Analytic strategy. The analysis sought to answer the following research question: Were there any changes in participants' self-assessment scores after participating in the CORE Teen training program between pretest, posttest (taken at the last classroom training), and the follow-up (conducted 90 days after training completion). The originally planned analysis included a one-way repeated measures ANOVA, however, the results revealed the assumption of normal distribution was violated (Field, 2013). Given the robust nature of the one-way repeated measures ANOVA (citation) and the ability to conduct a between groups analysis using this methodology, we decided to maintain this analytical approach, but report the Greenhouse-Geisser statistic, which is used to address a lack of data normality. In order to verify our results, we also conducted a non-parametric Friedman test as well as Wilcoxon signed rank post hoc analysis. The results in the non-parametric tests were the same as the one-way repeated measures ANOVA. Using IBM SPSS (version 27), we conducted a one-way repeated measures ANOVA in order to compare the effect of participating in the training on participants' scores before, during, and after the training for each of the characteristics and competencies. We also conducted one-way repeated measures ANOVA with a between groups component in order to identify whether the scores varied within three specific demographic groups. First, we compared whether those who did and did not have teens in the home at the time of training had different outcomes. Second, we dichotomized the race variable and compared those who identified as white to those who did not identify as white. Third, we compared the results between those who identified as female and those who identified

Table 3
Means scores for characteristics at pretest, immediate posttest, and 90-day follow up.

| Characteristic | Pretest (N = 188) | Posttest (N = 130) | Follow-up (N = 118) | Alpha score | Number of questions |
|--------------------------------------|-------------------|--------------------|---------------------|-------------|---------------------|
| Attunement | 4.82 (0.66) | 5.00 (0.56) | 5.10 (0.55) | 0.76 | 7 |
| Acceptance | 5.17 (0.61) | 5.37 (0.53) | 5.46 (0.55) | 0.78 | 4 |
| Adaptability/flexibility | 4.95 (0.66) | 5.22 (0.54) | 5.22 (0.60) | 0.73 | 4 |
| Appreciation | 5.19 (0.70) | 5.42 (0.53) | 5.47 (0.53) | 0.81 | 3 |
| Compassion | 4.85 (0.67) | 5.14 (0.56) | 5.23 (0.58) | 0.46 | 6 |
| Committed | 4.72 (0.75) | 5.08 (0.60) | 5.13 (0.66) | 0.70 | 4 |
| Honoring relationships & attachments | 5.16 (0.65) | 5.36 (0.51) | 5.37 (0.61) | 0.84 | 5 |
| Patience/perseverance | 4.89 (0.54) | 5.11 (0.51) | 5.12 (0.53) | 0.79 | 10 |
| Predictable/constant | 4.96 (0.55) | 5.15 (0.48) | 5.23 (0.54) | 0.73 | 6 |
| Resilient | 4.31 (0.56) | 4.59 (0.48) | 4.66 (0.55) | 0.70 | 8 |
| Realistic | 5.06 (0.66) | 5.32 (0.54) | 5.37 (0.59) | 0.81 | 5 |
| Security/self-confidence | 4.86 (0.65) | 5.04 (0.57) | 5.08 (0.58) | 0.74 | 7 |
| Self-awareness/self-regulation | 4.47 (0.53) | 4.68 (0.58) | 4.81 (0.63) | 0.58 | 7 |
| Sense of humor | 4.78 (1.02) | 5.10 (1.02) | 5.09 (0.93) | 0.89 | 3 |
| Spirituality | 4.84 (0.58) | 5.00 (0.52) | 5.04 (0.50) | 0.89 | 10 |
| Supportive | 5.44 (0.59) | 5.57 (0.47) | 5.63 (0.51) | 0.92 | 4 |
| Trustworthiness | 5.59 (0.54) | 5.63 (0.49) | 5.62 (0.54) | 0.91 | 4 |

Note. Columns for pretest, posttest and follow-up represent the mean (standard deviation). All scores represent answers on a scale of 1–6.

as male.

The analysis was conducted for each individual theme and competency, and participants' with more than 25% of missing data for a particular theme were not included in that themes' analysis. The analysis used listwise deletion in order to address missing data. As attrition may not be random, an analysis was conducted to compare demographic characteristics at pretest, posttest, and follow-up. The analyses did not reveal any statistically significant differences in demographic variables between the three time points.

3. Results

3.1. Characteristics

Mean scores for each of the characteristic scores before, during, and after the training are depicted in Table 3. The results showed significant improvements for 16 of the 17 characteristics, as depicted in Table 4. No significant effect was found from the training on the participants' self-assessment scores for the characteristic titled trustworthiness. Pairwise comparisons with a Bonferroni correction revealed that for 16 of the 17 characteristics (the exception being "trustworthiness"), statistically significant improvements in participants' scores between pretest to posttest as well as between the pretest and follow-up (See Table 5). The results did not reveal any statistically significant differences between the posttest and the follow-up. These results indicate that the training, rather than time led to the changes in participants' scores.

Between groups analysis did not reveal any statistically significant

Table 4
Results from One-Way Repeated Measures ANOVA for characteristic scores.

| Characteristic | N | SS | DF | MS | F |
|--------------------------------------|-----|-------|------|------|----------|
| Attunement | 108 | 6.88 | 1.74 | 3.96 | 25.92*** |
| Acceptance | 107 | 6.57 | 1.86 | 3.53 | 18.99*** |
| Adaptability/flexibility | 108 | 5.36 | 1.80 | 2.99 | 14.07*** |
| Appreciation | 104 | 3.92 | 1.84 | 2.13 | 11.14*** |
| Compassion | 105 | 8.52 | 1.72 | 4.96 | 28.12*** |
| Committed | 108 | 13.04 | 1.67 | 7.81 | 31.32*** |
| Honoring relationships & attachments | 108 | 4.00 | 1.91 | 2.10 | 16.28*** |
| Patience/perseverance | 108 | 3.85 | 1.88 | 2.05 | 21.91*** |
| Predictable/constant | 106 | 4.32 | 1.99 | 2.17 | 18.22*** |
| Resilient | 107 | 7.92 | 1.98 | 4.00 | 34.02*** |
| Realistic | 108 | 8.05 | 1.83 | 4.40 | 25.03*** |
| Security/self-confidence | 107 | 3.65 | 1.90 | 1.92 | 13.26*** |
| Self-awareness/self-regulation | 108 | 4.62 | 1.89 | 2.44 | 16.23*** |
| Sense of humor | 108 | 10.63 | 1.96 | 5.44 | 12.95*** |
| Spirituality | 108 | 2.84 | 1.81 | 1.57 | 15.72*** |
| Supportive | 108 | 2.44 | 1.74 | 1.40 | 10.32*** |
| Trustworthiness | 108 | 0.23 | 1.77 | 0.13 | 1.17 |

Note. * indicates $p < .05$; ** indicates $p < .01$; *** indicates $p < .001$. Greenhouse-Geisser statistic reported. Columns represent the participants included in the number of analysis, sum of squares (SS), degrees of freedom (DF), the mean squares (MS) and the F-statistic.

differences between those who did and did not have teens in the home for any of the seventeen characteristics. Additionally, no statistically significant differences existed between those who did and did not identify as white. In regard to differences by gender, statistically significant differences were found between those who identified as men and women for one characteristic (“realistic”). While statistically significant differences between the three time points were found for women ($F(1.75, 106.97) = 27.11, P < .001$), those analysis did not reveal the same results for men ($F(1.92, 76.72) = 1.62, P = .21$). For the women, there were statistically significant differences between pretest ($M = 4.93, SD = 0.70$) and posttest ($M = 5.39, SD = 0.53, p < .001$) and the pretest and follow-up ($M = 5.39, SD = .58, p < .001$), but no statistically significant difference between the posttest and follow-up.

3.2. Competencies

Table 6 depicts the mean scores for each of the competency scores before, during, and after the training. The results from the one-way repeated measures ANOVA test revealed statistically significant improvements for all of the competencies, as depicted in Table 7. Pairwise comparisons using a Bonferroni correction were also conducted. For all ten of the competencies, the results revealed statistically significant improvements in participants’ scores between pretest to posttest and the pretest to follow-up (See Table 8). The results did not reveal any statistically significant differences between the posttest and the follow-up, indicating that the knowledge gains observed from the pretest were maintained. These results indicate that the training, rather than time led to the changes in participants’ scores.

Between groups analyses did not reveal any statistically significant differences in outcomes between those who did and did not have teens in the home at the time of training or between those who did and did not identify as white. However, statistically significant differences were found between gender identities for one competency (“trauma-informed parenting”). While women had statistically significant differences over the three time points ($F(1.56, 93.71) = 37.16, P < .001$), the results did not reveal any significant differences between time points for men ($F(1.97, 78.87) = 2.43, P = .10$). For the women, there were statistically significant differences between pretest ($M = 4.85, SD = 0.69$) and posttest ($M = 5.28, SD = 0.57, p < .001$) and the pretest and follow-up ($M = 5.34, SD = 0.57, p < .001$), but no statistically significant difference between the posttest and follow-up.

Table 5
Results from Characteristics pairwise comparisons.

| Characteristic | Mean difference | Std. Error | 95% CI for difference | |
|---|-----------------|------------|-----------------------|-------------|
| | | | Lower bound | Upper bound |
| Attunement | | | | |
| Pretest to posttest | -0.28*** | 0.05 | -0.41 | -0.15 |
| Pretest to follow-up | -0.33*** | 0.06 | -0.47 | -0.20 |
| Posttest to follow-up | -0.06 | 0.04 | -0.15 | 0.04 |
| Acceptance | | | | |
| Pretest to posttest | -0.28*** | 0.06 | -0.42 | -0.14 |
| Pretest to follow-up | -0.32*** | 0.06 | -0.48 | -0.17 |
| Posttest to follow-up | -0.04 | 0.05 | -0.16 | 0.08 |
| Adaptability/flexibility | | | | |
| Pretest to posttest | -0.30*** | 0.05 | -0.43 | -0.16 |
| Pretest to follow-up | -0.24** | 0.07 | -0.41 | -0.08 |
| Posttest to follow-up | 0.05 | 0.05 | -0.08 | 0.18 |
| Appreciation | | | | |
| Pretest to posttest | -0.23** | 0.06 | -0.60 | -0.08 |
| Pretest to follow-up | -0.24*** | 0.06 | 0.62 | -0.10 |
| Posttest to follow-up | -0.01 | 0.05 | -0.13 | 0.11 |
| Compassion | | | | |
| Pretest to posttest | -0.32*** | 0.06 | -0.46 | -0.19 |
| Pretest to follow-up | -0.37*** | 0.06 | -0.52 | -0.22 |
| Posttest to follow-up | -0.05 | 0.04 | -0.15 | 0.06 |
| Committed | | | | |
| Pretest to posttest | -0.42*** | 0.06 | -0.58 | -0.27 |
| Pretest to follow-up | -0.43*** | 0.07 | -0.61 | -0.25 |
| Posttest to follow-up | -0.01 | 0.05 | -0.12 | 0.11 |
| Honoring relationships & attachments | | | | |
| Pretest to posttest | -0.25*** | 0.05 | -0.36 | -0.13 |
| Pretest to follow-up | -0.23*** | 0.05 | -0.35 | -0.10 |
| Posttest to follow-up | 0.02 | 0.04 | -0.08 | 0.12 |
| Patience/perseverance | | | | |
| Pretest to posttest | -0.25*** | 0.04 | -0.35 | -0.15 |
| Pretest to follow-up | -0.21*** | 0.05 | -0.32 | -0.10 |
| Posttest to follow-up | 0.04 | 0.04 | -0.05 | 0.13 |
| Predictable/constant | | | | |
| Pretest to posttest | -0.22*** | 0.05 | -0.33 | -0.10 |
| Pretest to follow-up | -0.27*** | 0.05 | -0.39 | -0.15 |
| Posttest to follow-up | -0.05 | 0.05 | -0.17 | 0.06 |
| Resilient | | | | |
| Pretest to posttest | -0.33*** | 0.05 | -0.45 | -0.21 |
| Pretest to follow-up | -0.34*** | 0.05 | -0.45 | -0.22 |
| Posttest to follow-up | -0.01 | 0.05 | -0.12 | 0.11 |
| Realistic | | | | |
| Pretest to posttest | -0.35*** | 0.06 | -0.50 | -0.20 |
| Pretest to follow-up | -0.32*** | 0.05 | -0.46 | -0.19 |
| Posttest to follow-up | 0.02 | 0.05 | -0.09 | 0.14 |
| Security/self-confidence | | | | |
| Pretest to posttest | -0.24*** | 0.05 | -0.36 | -0.13 |
| Pretest to follow-up | -0.21** | 0.06 | -0.34 | 0.07 |
| Posttest to follow-up | 0.03 | 0.05 | -0.08 | 0.15 |
| Self-awareness/self-regulation | | | | |
| Pretest to posttest | -0.21*** | 0.05 | -0.34 | -0.09 |
| Pretest to follow-up | -0.28*** | 0.06 | -0.42 | -0.14 |
| Posttest to follow-up | -0.07 | 0.05 | -0.18 | 0.04 |
| Sense of humor | | | | |
| Pretest to posttest | -0.41*** | 0.08 | -0.62 | -0.21 |
| Pretest to follow-up | -0.35** | 0.09 | -0.57 | -0.12 |
| Posttest to follow-up | 0.07 | 0.09 | -0.14 | 0.27 |
| Spirituality | | | | |
| Pretest to posttest | -0.20*** | 0.04 | -0.30 | 0.10 |
| Pretest to follow-up | -0.20*** | 0.05 | -0.31 | 0.09 |
| Posttest to follow-up | 0.002 | 0.03 | -0.08 | 0.08 |
| Supportive | | | | |
| Pretest to posttest | -0.18** | 0.05 | -0.30 | -0.05 |
| Pretest to follow-up | -0.19** | 0.05 | -0.32 | -0.07 |
| Posttest to follow-up | -0.01 | 0.04 | -0.10 | 0.08 |
| Trustworthiness | | | | |
| Pretest to posttest | -0.05 | 0.04 | -0.16 | 0.05 |
| Pretest to follow-up | 0.01 | 0.05 | -0.11 | 0.13 |
| Posttest to follow-up | 0.06 | 0.04 | -0.03 | 0.15 |

Note. *p < .05; **p < .01; ***p < .001. Columns represent the mean difference between the two time points, the standard error of that difference, and the confidence interval for the difference.

Table 6
Means scores for competencies at pretest, immediate posttest, and 90-day follow up.

| Characteristic | Pretest (N = 188) | Posttest (N = 130) | Follow-up (N = 118) | Alpha score | Number of questions |
|--|----------------------|-----------------------|------------------------|-------------|---------------------|
| Trauma-informed parenting | 4.86 (0.76) | 5.18 (0.61) | 5.22 (0.61) | 0.79 | 6 |
| Continued connections | 4.86 (0.78) | 5.20 (0.63) | 5.23 (0.63) | 0.81 | 9 |
| Relationship development | 4.99 (0.77) | 5.28 (0.59) | 5.39 (0.60) | 0.85 | 7 |
| Regulation | 4.68 (0.84) | 5.13 (0.62) | 5.21 (0.58) | 0.77 | 7 |
| Parental adaption | 5.02 (0.78) | 5.32 (0.59) | 5.40 (0.59) | 0.85 | 7 |
| Parenting resilience | 4.53 (0.78) | 4.92 (0.69) | 5.00 (0.69) | 0.74 | 6 |
| Culture | 4.99 (0.79) | 5.23 (0.67) | 5.25 (0.71) | 0.82 | 7 |
| Transitions | 4.81 (0.78) | 5. (1.00) | 5.27 (0.61) | 0.78 | 7 |
| Behavior management | 4.82 (0.71) | 5.16 (0.63) | 5.16 (0.60) | 0.76 | 8 |
| Sexual orientation and gender identity | 4.42 (1.11) | 4.86 (1.00) | 4.95 (1.01) | 0.89 | 7 |

Note. Columns for pretest, posttest and follow-up the mean (standard deviation). All scores represent answers on a scale of 1–6.

Table 7
Results from One-Way Repeated Measures ANOVA for competencies.

| Competency | N | SS | df | MS | F |
|--|-----|-------|------|-------|----------|
| Trauma-informed parenting | 107 | 8.12 | 1.68 | 4.84 | 31.87*** |
| Continued connections | 106 | 9.02 | 1.80 | 5.01 | 32.47*** |
| Relationship development | 104 | 9.43 | 1.74 | 5.43 | 31.05*** |
| Regulation | 104 | 13.18 | 1.69 | 7.78 | 44.16*** |
| Parental adaption | 105 | 8.25 | 1.78 | 4.64 | 29.38*** |
| Parenting resilience | 105 | 15.21 | 1.82 | 8.36 | 40.86*** |
| Culture | 104 | 5.07 | 1.75 | 2.90 | 17.21*** |
| Transitions | 103 | 12.58 | 1.74 | 7.23 | 50.36*** |
| Behavior management | 103 | 7.60 | 1.89 | 4.02 | 29.31*** |
| Sexual orientation and gender identity | 103 | 19.99 | 1.72 | 11.65 | 43.75*** |

Note. *p < .05; **p < .01; ***p < .001. Greenhouse-Geisser statistic reported. Columns represent the participants included in the number of analysis, sum of squares (SS), degrees of freedom (DF), the mean squares (MS) and the F-statistic.

4. Conclusion

The one way repeated measures ANOVA results reveal statistically significant differences between participants’ pretest, posttest, and follow-up scores for almost all characteristics (with the exception of one characteristic, “trustworthiness”) and all competencies. The post hoc analyses revealed that while statistically significant improvements occurred between the pretest and the posttest as well as the pretest and the follow-up for these themes, no statistically significant improvement occurred between posttest and follow-up. These results are promising, as the indicate that the change stems from the training and that the changes last at least 90 days post training. Between groups analyses revealed that while the results did not vary by those who did and did not have teens in the home or by race, results did vary between men and women for one characteristic and one competency.

Table 8
Results from competency pairwise comparisons.

| Characteristic | Mean difference | Std. Error | 95% CI for difference | |
|---|-----------------|------------|-----------------------|-------------|
| | | | Lower bound | Upper bound |
| Trauma-informed parenting | | | | |
| Pretest to posttest | -0.34*** | 0.05 | -0.46 | -0.22 |
| Pretest to follow-up | -0.34*** | 0.06 | -0.48 | -0.20 |
| Posttest to follow-up | 0.004 | 0.04 | -0.09 | 0.10 |
| Continued connections | | | | |
| Pretest to posttest | -0.36*** | 0.05 | -0.48 | -0.23 |
| Pretest to follow-up | -0.36*** | 0.06 | -0.50 | -0.22 |
| Posttest to follow-up | -0.001 | 0.04 | -0.11 | 0.11 |
| Relationship development | | | | |
| Pretest to posttest | -0.34*** | 0.06 | -0.47 | -0.20 |
| Pretest to follow-up | -0.40*** | 0.06 | -0.54 | -0.25 |
| Posttest to follow-up | -0.06 | 0.04 | -0.16 | 0.05 |
| Regulation | | | | |
| Pretest to posttest | -0.42*** | 0.06 | -0.57 | -0.27 |
| Pretest to follow-up | -0.50*** | 0.06 | -0.59 | -0.31 |
| Posttest to follow-up | -0.03 | 0.04 | -0.13 | 0.07 |
| Parental adaption | | | | |
| Pretest to posttest | -0.33*** | 0.06 | -0.47 | -0.20 |
| Pretest to follow-up | -0.35*** | 0.06 | -0.49 | -0.21 |
| Posttest to follow-up | -0.02 | 0.04 | -0.12 | 0.08 |
| Parenting resilience | | | | |
| Pretest to posttest | -0.45*** | 0.07 | -0.60 | -0.29 |
| Pretest to follow-up | -0.48*** | 0.06 | -0.64 | -0.33 |
| Posttest to follow-up | -0.04 | 0.05 | -0.16 | 0.08 |
| Culture | | | | |
| Pretest to posttest | -0.28*** | 0.05 | -0.41 | -0.15 |
| Pretest to follow-up | -0.26*** | 0.06 | -0.41 | -0.12 |
| Posttest to follow-up | 0.01 | 0.04 | -0.09 | 0.12 |
| Transitions | | | | |
| Pretest to posttest | -0.42*** | 0.05 | -0.53 | -0.29 |
| Pretest to follow-up | -0.45*** | 0.06 | -0.58 | -0.31 |
| Posttest to follow-up | 0.04 | 0.04 | -0.13 | 0.06 |
| Behavior management | | | | |
| Pretest to posttest | -0.32*** | 0.05 | -0.45 | -0.20 |
| Pretest to follow-up | -0.34*** | 0.06 | -0.48 | -0.21 |
| Posttest to follow-up | -0.02 | 0.04 | -0.13 | 0.09 |
| Sexual orientation and gender identity | | | | |
| Pretest to posttest | -0.51*** | 0.07 | -0.68 | -0.34 |
| Pretest to follow-up | 0.57*** | 0.08 | -0.75 | -0.38 |
| Posttest to follow-up | 0.06 | 0.05 | -0.19 | 0.07 |

Note. *p < .05; **p < .01; ***p < .001. Columns represent the mean difference between the two time points, the standard error of that difference, and the confidence interval for the difference.

5. Discussion

The results from the CORE Teen self-assessment scores indicate that participants had significant improvements in all but one of the competencies taught in the training as well as a majority of the characteristics. The significant improvements in the competencies titled sexual orientation as well as and trauma-informed resource parenting were particularly encouraging, as those teens in the LGBTQ community as well as teens with trauma-related behavior often experience unique barriers in achieving permanency (Goldberg et al., 2019; Leathers, 2004). The results of this study reinforce findings from prior studies, which show that training may lead to an increase in knowledge and attitudes related to resource parenting (Nash & Flynn, 2016; Strolin-Goltzman, McCrae, & Emery, 2017). This study adds to the literature by demonstrating how a targeted training focused on a particular age (teens) can lead to increases in knowledge and attitudes relevant to addressing the unique experiences of that particular age.

5.1. Future research

It may prove beneficial to continue using this self-assessment in

order to test the robustness of the results with other resource parents located in other jurisdictions across the United States. Future research should examine whether reported changes in characteristics and competencies lead to changes in parenting behavior. Behavioral change could be examined through surveying the teens placed in these homes, surveying the caseworkers, and/or, analyzing differences in placement stability outcomes between teens placed in CORE-teen homes and non-CORE Teen homes.

5.2. Policy implications

The improvements in participants' scores for the competencies and characteristics indicate that training particular to the needs of teens in foster care can lead to positive changes in resource parents' understanding, beliefs, and attitudes as they related to foster parenting. These findings are consistent with the conclusions from Whiting, Huber, & Koech (2007), who asserted that resource parent trainings should include topics specific to the population training developers are targeting. Given harmful effects of placement disruption, and the frequency in which they occur among teens in foster care especially, states may find it beneficial on a number of levels to invest in training programs for potential and current resource parents that specifically prepare them to parent teens. Increasing investments in these training programs also aligns with the goals of the Family First Prevention Services Act (2018), which requires states to reduce reliance on congregate care settings as a placement option for teens and young adults. This requirement means that states should continue focusing on ways to increase efforts to recruit and retain resource parents who are adequately prepared to parent teens.

5.3. Limitations

It is important to note that participants' scores in one of the characteristics did not significantly improve after the training (trustworthiness). The scores in this characteristic were already high at the pretest, which could point to a measurement error and a need to refine the RSPAC-Teens tool. However, the lack of significant change in scores may also be a result of lack of training fidelity and/or lack of training effectiveness in this content area. Furthermore, the results gender differences existed for two of the themes, as only women's scores significantly improved. Identifying the source of this lack of change for male participants may help CORE Teen program developers improve the training and implementation of the program.

It is important to note that while these results show promising improvements in knowledge and attitudes, this first evaluation of the CORE Teen curriculum should be understood in the context of evaluation tools. The Kirkpatrick model offers four levels by which to evaluate training programs: reaction, learning, behavior and results (Our Philosophy, 2020). Kirkpatrick's approach suggests that training developers should increase the time spent on level three, which evaluates whether the training has impacted long-term behavior, and four, how this behavior impacts an organization's metrics and desired outcomes (The Kirkpatrick, 2020).

The CORE teen study focused primarily on level two of evaluation, knowledge acquisition, since it utilized short-term pretest and posttest measures of participants. According to the Kirkpatrick Evaluation Model, the CORE teen program's absence of longitudinal data suggests that there are limits to understanding the impact of this training, especially in terms of its prolonged impact on participants' behaviors (level three) (The Kirkpatrick, 2020; Our Philosophy, 2020). In addition, the lack of longitudinal data limits researcher's ability to address the full impact CORE teen had on additional metrics related to resource parenting as a whole (level four) (Our Philosophy, 2020).

In short, this study was limited to measuring the short-term outcomes in terms of measuring success in obtaining knowledge and changing attitudes. It remains unclear whether those changes in

attitudes and knowledge persist over time, and if those changes also impact one's behavior and parenting long-term (12 months post-intervention). Future research should consider additional methods (such as observation or placement outcomes) to measure parenting behaviors. Additionally, some attrition occurred between the three time points. Attrition is not random and there may be factors associated with the participants who did not respond to the second and third surveys which could impact the results. For example, participants who do not have sufficient time to complete the self-assessment may also lack the time to review the material from the sessions (which could result in lower scores), which would bias the results. As previously noted, an additional limitation includes the potential ceiling effects, especially with the "trustworthiness" variable, where participants reported high scores at all three time points. These high scores could be due to participants responding in a manner they perceive to be socially desirable and/or measurement error. Future research should examine whether the questions for this variable in particular accurately capture the concept. Finally, the lack of comparison group makes it hard to identify how those in the training compared to those who either received no training or those who received different trainings.

CRedit authorship contribution statement

Alanna Feltner: Conceptualization, Methodology, Formal analysis, Data curation, Writing - original draft, Writing - review & editing, Visualization. **Angelique Day:** Supervision, Writing - review & editing. **Lori Vanderwill:** Data curation, Writing - review & editing. **Emma Fontaine:** Writing - review & editing. **Sue Cohick:** .

Declaration of Competing Interest

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

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