



Family Assessment and Preparation

Practitioner Check List

- ✓ Approach family preparation and assessment as a mutual information-sharing and decision-making process where power is shared by the prospective parent and the agency.
- ✓ “Screen in” families with a warm, personalized and culturally appropriate welcome. Provide clear, factual information so they can self-assess their interest and ability as they continue through the process.
- ✓ Be mindful of varying cultural connotations of adoption, and be aware of the influence of your own values and experiences. Work as part of a team to minimize the impact of personal biases.
- ✓ Incorporate into preparation classes opportunities for prospective parents to hear directly from birth parents, older youth and experienced caregivers, including adoptive parents.
- ✓ Be as flexible as possible! Schedule training and interviews at times and places that are convenient for families. Assist prospective parents with paperwork, and arrange for training and forms to be available in languages other than English as needed. Request licensing waivers and variances for requirements that do not compromise safety, especially in the case of kinship placements.
- ✓ Include significant content on adoption in initial preparation of kin, foster, and adoptive families. Provide an “adoption refresher” and child-specific learning opportunities when a family is in the process of adopting a child/youth currently in their care.
- ✓ Use personal interviews to enhance the learning process by soliciting questions and continuing to share information about adoptive parenting.
- ✓ Double check each family assessment profile to be sure it captures strengths and needs with depth, accuracy and objectivity. Be certain it represents the family well.

Coaching Tips for Supervisors

- Keep current with research and practice innovations so that you can share new and evidence-informed approaches with your staff.
- Track data on the progress of applicants in the inquiry to licensing/approval process; share it regularly with staff to address trends and barriers.
- Model attention to cultural competence in interactions as well as in systemic factors. Analyze data on the racial/ethnic make-up of families to identify and respond to disparities in how applicants move through the process.
- Work with managers to remove barriers to flexibility in the scheduling and location of training and interviews as well as the ability to waive requirements that do not impact safety.
- Read family profiles and provide thoughtful feedback to build practitioners’ skills.
- To teach the “art” as well as the “science” of family assessment and profile writing, team experienced workers with new staff and share examples of complete and well-written family profiles to be used as models.