

● ● ● Caring for Children in Foster Care



● ● ● Voices of foster care



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● ● ● Invisible Suitcase

- I'm worthless
- I'm always going to get hurt
- I have no power
- You don't care about me
- You won't be there for me
- You will reject me



● ● ● Invisible Suitcase: a Scenario




● ● ● Helping Children Settle In

- Child's likes and dislikes
- Favorite sheets or blankets
- Family pictures
- Favorite foods
- Introductions
- Other ideas
- Be consistent
- Be patient!





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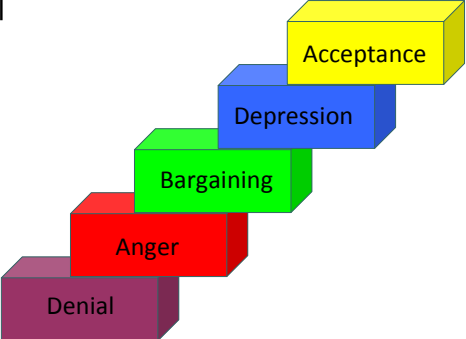


Children's Grief and Loss

- Signs of grief in children:
 - Irritability
 - Anxiety
 - Anger
 - Suicidal thoughts
 - Eating problems
 - Nightmares, sleep problems, or fatigue
 - Hyperactivity

Stages of Grief and Loss



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Emotional Disturbance

- o Behaviors that are:
 - Exaggerated
 - Last for long periods of time
 - Consistently inappropriate with developmental level or the situation



Suicidal Thoughts

- o Suicidal thoughts
 - **You must act immediately – must report to the caseworker's agency immediately**
- o Possible indicators of suicide risk:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sudden changes in personality • Giving away their belongings • Significant weight gain or loss • Changes in sleeping patterns • Depression • Extreme boredom • Talking about wanting to die or be dead 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Neglecting personal appearance • Running away from home or truancy • Family trauma • Withdrawal • Recklessness • Trying to be perfect
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● ● ● Transitions Faced by Children in Care


- Each new placement is a loss
 - New place
 - New environment
 - New routine
 - New expectations
- How would you feel?

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● ● ● Child Development – Red Flags

- For Toddlers (18 months – 3 years):
 - No two-word phrases by 24 months
 - Loss of speech or babbling or social skills
 - Not walking by 18 months
 - Not following simple directions by 24 months
 - Frequent falling and difficulty with stairs
 - Unable to communicate with short phrases
 - Not participating in “pretend play”
 - Little interest in other children
 - Extreme difficulty separating from mother

Child Development – Red Flags

- For Preschoolers (3 years – 6 years):
 - Loss of speech or babbling or social skills
 - Asthma
 - Difficulty paying attention to activities that interest other children their age
 - Difficulty following simple instructions
 - Acts in impulsive, potentially dangerous ways without considering consequences
 - Seems to always be in a hurry
 - Sudden emotional outbursts that seem inappropriate
 - Persistent misbehavior after being told “no” multiple times






Child Development – Red Flags

- For School-Age (6 years – 12 years):
 - Loss of speech or babbling or social skills
 - Difficulties with learning and memory
 - Difficulties with interacting with other children


Anorexia
 The following are common for most children when they are learning to read, but if the child is doing any of the following by age 7, discuss them with the child’s doctor:

- Confusing the order of letters in words
- Guessing words from seeing the first letter
- Losing their place on the page
- Struggling with each word
- Reading very slowly and tiring easily from reading


Child Development – Red Flags

- For Adolescents (12 years – 21 years):
 - Loss of speech or babbling or social skills
 - Headaches or migraines
 - Sleep problems
 - Suicidal thoughts
 - Depression
 - Alcohol and drug abuse








● ● ● Effects of Drugs on Development




- Red flags that might indicate drug or alcohol use or addiction (for all ages):
 - Loss of interest in activities they once enjoyed
 - Change in school achievement and involvement
 - Unpredictable mood swings
 - Withdrawing from friends who are not using drugs, and more involvement with peers who are using drugs
 - Lying about activities
 - Lack of personal hygiene
 - Sudden weight loss
 - Bloodshot eyes
 - Smelling like substances such as alcohol or marijuana


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● ● ● Discipline



- Teach, not punish!
- Relationship comes first!
- Positive behavior management:
 - Talk with the child (not to the child) about expectations, and explain the rules
 - Be consistent and follow through!
 - Match the response to the behavior
 - Tell the child – you may have made a poor choice, but you're not a bad kid!



● ● ● | What Do You Do?

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Be calm... be patient...

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● ● ● | Discipline

- You Can:
 - Respect the child as a person
 - Explain the rules and expectations of your home ahead of time
 - Be consistent in your expectations and in enforcing rules in your home
 - Give consequences that fit the behavior, and the age and developmental level of the child
 - Ensure that the child knows that you disapprove of the behavior, not of the child
 - Let the child participate in community activities
- You Cannot:
 - Use any physical discipline, which includes spanking
 - Restrain a child
 - Discriminate against the child
 - Ridicule any foster child for any bedwetting or lapses in toilet training
 - Threaten a child with removal from your home
 - Deny a child access to confidential family planning services
 - Force a child to participate in religious practices

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Daily Care Needs

- o Education
- o Healthcare
- o Hair and skincare
- o Religion
- o Life Skills
- o Recreation
- o Safety



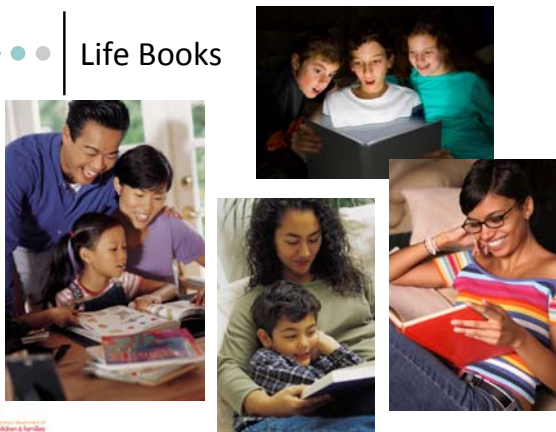
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Life Books



Fostering Teens




- o Independent Living:
 - Independent Living Plan (“IL Plan”)
 - Planning a budget
 - Looking at apartments
 - Planning and cooking meals
 - Job applications
 - Savings account
- o Maintaining a job
- o Driver’s License
- o Community and school activities
- o Clothing and music



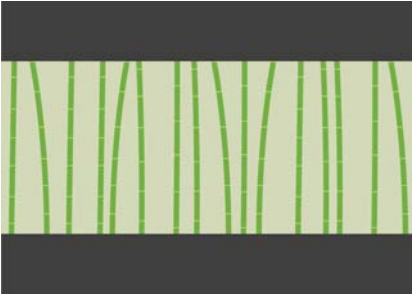


Teens and Sexuality

- o You’ll need to be willing to discuss:
 - Sex
 - Sexuality
 - Sexual orientation
 - Sexual identity

Teens and Sexuality



Culture

- What activities do you do as a family?
- What are your traditions?
- How do you honor your ethnicity and culture?



- Respecting the cultures, values, and beliefs of the children in your home
 - Ask children and their families about their culture
 - Educate yourself about their culture
 - Include their culture in your traditions

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Family Traditions

- How do you celebrate holidays and other special occasions?
- What are your fondest memories of holidays, birthdays, or other occasions?
- Do you have special activities you do as a family, such as a game or movie night?
- What kind of food does your family like to eat together?
- How do you and your family members deal with conflict?



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Review

- How placement affects children
- Grief and loss
- The “invisible suitcase”
- Adjusting to placement
- Emotional disturbance
- Transitions
- Nurturing care and discipline
- Daily needs
- Fostering teens
- Culture
