

MORE INFORMATION ABOUT MAPP CLASS!

Buncombe County Department of Health and Human Services will work in partnership with you to help you prepare to become a skilled, competent foster parent! We will clarify any expectations you might have in your role as a foster or adoptive parent and help you develop skills in working with children who have experienced trauma such as being physically abused, neglected, sexually abused, abandoned or emotionally mistreated and are experiencing grief and loss. The MAPP class process is formatted to assist prospective foster and adoptive applicants to make an informed decision about whether the role of foster and/or adoptive parent **is or is not** appropriate for them.

- ▶ CLASSES ARE FREE!
- ▶ HELD QUARTERLY
- ▶ FOR MORE INFO: e. familiesforkids@buncombecounty.org / p. 828-250-5868

MEETING 1

Welcome to the Group Preparation and Selection Program

Acquaints leaders and participants with the Group Preparation and Selection Program and each other. Explanation of the process; discussion of foster care, adoption, and permanency planning; outline and discussion of the roles and responsibilities of foster parenting and adoptive parenting; communication skills building.

MEETING 2

Where MAPP Leads: A Foster Care & Adoption Experience

Overview of a foster care and adoption experience from the perspectives of clients (children and parents), foster parents, adoptive parents, and child welfare workers. Demonstrates the stresses and losses which can lead to foster care placement or adoption; what happens if a foster home placement or adoption does not work out; how families are reunited; how children are moved into adoption; and how some youth in foster care move into independent living.

MEETING 3

Losses and Gains: The Need to be a Loss Expert

Explores the impact of separation on the growth and development of children, and the impact of foster care and adoptive placement on the emotions and behaviors of children and parents. Examines personal losses (death, divorce, infertility, children leaving home) and how difficult life experiences affect success as adoptive parents or foster parents. Emphasizes the partnership roles of foster parents, adoptive parents, and social workers in

turning separation losses into gains.

MEETING 4

Helping Children with Attachments

Explores the subject of attachment and child development. Focuses on how attachments are formed and the special needs of children in foster care and adoption (especially in the areas of building self-concept and appropriate behavior). Discusses the partnership roles of foster parents, adoptive parents, and child welfare workers in helping children form new attachments.

MEETING 5

Helping Children Learn to Manage Their Behaviors

Discusses techniques for managing behavior, with an emphasis on alternatives to physical punishment. Topics include special issues in discipline for children who have been physically or sexually abused or neglected. Techniques to be discussed include being a "behavior detective," reinforcement, time out, mutual problem solving, structuring and setting limits, negotiating, and contracting.

MEETING 6

Helping Children with Birth Family Connections

Examines the importance of helping children in care maintain and build upon their identity, self-concept, and connections. Considers issues such as how children's cultures and ethnic backgrounds help shape their identity; the connections children risk losing when they enter care; and why visits and contacts with birth families and previous foster families are important.

MEETING 7

Gains and Losses: Helping Children Leave Foster Care

Discusses family reunification as the primary case planning goal as well as alternatives like foster care, adoption, and independent living. Examines disruption and its impact on children, families, and agency staff. This meeting also focuses on the partnership role of child welfare workers, foster parents, and adoptive parents in helping children move home, into an adoptive home or into independent living.

MEETING 8

Understanding the Impact of Fostering or Adopting

In the previous meetings, we discussed and "felt" what foster care and what adoption are all about. We learned about separation and attachment, how to build and maintain

relationships with children and how to support them in working out the emotions they have for the important people in their lives. We've devoted a lot of time to the roles of both the foster parents and the adoptive parents, and the special way they will improve the lives of many children and families. But what will be the impact of all this effort on the foster families and adoptive families? How will this experience affect their marriage, children, relatives, friends, job, and income? In Meeting 8, we find out!

MEETING 9

Perspectives in Adoptive and Foster Parenting

This meeting is open to all members of prospective foster and adoptive families, especially children, grandparents, close friends—anyone who will play a major role in the foster family or adoptive family. This meeting features guest foster families and adoptive families. The guests will talk about their personal experiences in fostering and adopting. Some of the topics include: impact on marriage and family, visiting parents, discipline, searching, helping children with family reunification, and making adoptions work. Other panel members may be attorneys, social workers, and birth parents.

MEETING 10

Endings and Beginnings

The important tasks of this meeting will be to assess group members' strengths and needs as foster parents or adoptive parents. There also will be some time to say good-bye ... the ending. As the preparation/mutual selection process is coming to an end, so begins the transition into becoming a foster family or adoptive family ... the beginning.