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**Aspiranet**  
**~ March 2023 ~**  
**Monthly Training**

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### **Preventing Placement Disruption**

For children and youth in foster care who have experienced loss and separation from their families, additional changes in placement can have negative, lasting impact. Research confirms that placement moves not only add to the impact of being separated from their family, but placement changes can also result in further trauma. Placement disruption means having to relocate to unfamiliar surroundings with an unfamiliar family, often being separated from their siblings, and leaving their school, which furthers their loss of important relationships – all of which reinforces their sense of not belonging. This further reinforces in their mind, that they are unwanted or unlovable. This can all lead to significant distress and negative emotional impact, including the ability to form trusting, healthy relationships into adulthood.

Within child welfare, there are three fundamental goals for all children and youth placed in out of home care: Safety, Permanency and Well-being. Each time a child experiences a change in caregivers, these essential goals are negatively impacted. Child development research tells us that children need consistency, predictability, and attachment to a caring adult to thrive. This is especially true for children in foster care, who have experienced trauma leading up to and including removal from their home and community. Children in out-of-home care need stable adult connections to support their well-being. These secure attachments can best be developed in stable placements that help young people transition in and out of care and into permanency without delay.

With each move a child experiences, their permanency (returning to their family, being adopted, or going into guardianship) can be delayed and potentially prevented altogether due to the “chain effect” as follows: well-being is negatively impacted, leading to increased behavioral and mental health issues, and a decline their educational experiences and outcomes; these types of challenges often increase the likelihood for placement disruption to occur again. With regards to safety, even if a child’s physical safety is not directly impacted, their sense of “felt” safety (their perception of their safety) will be impacted due to a lack of predictability and consistency in their life.

For these reasons, the goal is to attempt to maintain a child within a resource family until permanency can be achieved, whether with their own family, with the current caregivers, or another identified family. It is recognized that there may be times when a placement change is unavoidable, such as a significant change within the resource family (health, relocating, job change, etc.) or when it is determined that a move is necessary in order to meet the child’s needs. In these cases, the goal is to develop a transition plan that helps to lessen the impact for the child as much as possible.

## What Can Resource Parents Do?

As noted, we recognize that there are times when, as a resource parent, you do not have control over some of the factors that may contribute to placement disruption. However, there are some key ways resource parents can help to increase placement stability and reduce the likelihood of disruption:

**Communicate & Ask for Help:** Your Aspiranet Social Worker is there to support you, and it's essential that open communication occurs in order for your social worker to offer assistance. There may be many individual reasons why resource parents do not ask for help or feel they need it. However, please don't hesitate to communicate your concerns to your Aspiranet Social Worker as they come up. Be specific about what you need and if you are not getting the results you need, it's OK to contact the Aspiranet Program Director or a supervisor for additional support. Bottom line – please ask for help before you start to feel you're past your "breaking point".

**Find the Positive:** This may sound "easier said than done", but focusing on the positive can provide an important shift in perspective. Reflect daily on "what is working or going well" and build on that. Positively reinforcing children and youth's behavior, attitudes, and actions that we *want to see* can be impactful.

**Keep Children Active:** Help the children in your care to identify their strengths and interests. Use positive activities at home and in the community to build on them. When children are positively engaged in activities they enjoy, their behavior can also be positively impacted. In addition, when children are engaged in community based activities, it gives children an opportunity to interact with other children and adults, and provides both resource parents and children a break from one another (something we all need sometimes!)

**Learn:** We know that children and youth in foster care have complex needs: trauma, mental and physical health issues, educational needs, etc. Research suggests that foster placements are more stable when resource parents have a clear understanding of the issues their children are struggling with, and are prepared with the knowledge and skills needed to successfully parent children and youth in their care. Foster Parent College ([www.fosterparentcollege.com](http://www.fosterparentcollege.com)) is a readily available resource to all resource parents with a large variety of free training available. Please explore courses available; many may address the specific parenting issue or need specific to the child in your care. Please talk with your Aspiranet Social Worker if you need assistance.

**Support Child's Relationships:** Maintaining connections between children and their siblings, friends, parents and other family members can contribute to their sense of stability. Inquire with your Aspiranet Social Worker about scheduling visits and contact not only with birth parents, but others important in the child's life.

**Use Respite:** Using respite care is an important way for resource parents to get a break to recharge. Please do not reserve using respite only for emergencies. Respite allows resource parents to renew their energy, which can enhance the quality and the longevity of being able to parent children in your care. Please discuss respite needs with your Aspiranet Social Worker.

**Build and maintain your own Support System:** Maintain connections to your family, friends, faith community, other resource parents; whoever is a resource to you to stay healthy and take care of yourself.

**Self-Care:** Each month the Aspiranet Newsletter features a reminder about self-care because it is that important! As every parent knows, parenting is a 24/7 endeavor. Every parent needs a way to “refill” in order to continue to give. Whatever self-care is for you, make it a priority.

Sources :

[https://fosteringperspectives.org/fp\\_v10n1/disruption.htm](https://fosteringperspectives.org/fp_v10n1/disruption.htm)

<https://www.casey.org/placement-stability-impacts/>

My signature below indicates that I have completed the March 2023 training "Preventing Placement Disruption".

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*Signature Resource Parent #1*

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*Date*

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*Print Name Resource Parent #1*

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*Signature Resource Parent #2*

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*Date*

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*Print Name Resource Parent #2*

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*Aspiranet Authorized Signature*

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*Date*

Training credit: \_\_\_\_ minutes