

Building Connections Between Birth and Foster Parents Through Art and Music

The Extra Mile Family Resource Center

Project Description

This project is designed to help family 'units' made up of a birth parent(s), foster parent(s) and the children that they share have fun and build positive communication. Each family will have three sessions.

Session 1: Introductory Meeting (Birth and Foster Parents separate, child not present)

A Parent Partner will meet with the birth parent to explain the project and the purpose.

Separately, a Foster Parent Mentor will meet with the foster parent for the same thing.

In these introductory meetings, the Parent Partner and Foster Parent Mentor will discuss with the parents why both roles are important and the need to work together. They are available to provide guidance, support, and knowledge throughout the process.

Whose role is it to tell the child?

The foster parent, who currently has the most contact with the child, should tell him or her. However, the birth parent can and should certainly talk about it during visits!

This meeting will last approximately one hour.

Session 2: Icebreaker Meeting (Birth and Foster Parent together, child generally not present)

The birth parent and foster parent will meet together, along with a facilitator for part of the session, to introduce the two. This is a great time for the foster parent to ask the birth parent questions about the child, such as routines, likes/ dislikes, favorite foods, and fears, just to name a few examples. This is also a good time for the birth parent to ask questions about the foster home and the family. In addition, some time should be spent getting to know each other.

The facilitator will go over some ground rules and possible scenarios that may come up while the caregivers are spending time together.

In addition, during this meeting some time should be spent forming a continued contact plan, in which the family unit develops a plan for regular communicating with and about the child. This plan will be done in accordance with DCFS guidelines.

This meeting will last approximately one hour.

Session 3: Art Class OR Music Class!

This final session will consist of either an art or music project, depending on what the family decides.

The project will be guided by either an art or music instructor and should be fun! This is a time for the birth and foster parent to spend time together with the child and just have fun.

Following the session, a meal will be provided.

What if the family can't decide which class? Let the child decide what he or she would rather do!

This session will last approximately two hours.

For more information, contact Evangeline Boudreaux, Program Director, at 337-277-2489.