

# TIPS FOR RESOURCE PARENTS\*

## How to Support a Child Who Has Been Separated From His / Her Parent(s):

### 1. PREPARE YOURSELF

- Learn about your role as a resource parent and the needs of children placed in your care.
- Recognize that the child is attached to their birth parent(s) and that separation is traumatic.
- Set realistic expectations (for yourself and others) and accept that there will be challenges and setbacks along the way.
- Remember that each child is different and what works for one child may not work for another.
- Understand that the birth parent(s) may be of a different race, ethnicity, or culture.
- Respect that birth parent(s) may have different opinions, beliefs, and/or lifestyles from you.
- Be aware of your personal biases and avoid stereotyping birth parent(s) and/or other members of the child's team.
- Maintain regular contact with the child's ongoing social worker.
- Consider how you can remain a support to the child after reunification/permanency.

### 2. SUPPORT THE CHILD

- Understand that the child is grieving the separation/loss of their birth parent(s), loved ones, home, community, and routine.
- Be honest with the child about when they will be able to talk to and/or see their birth parent(s), siblings, and other loved ones.
- Let the child know that your role is to take care of them until their birth parent(s) are able to.
- Take interest in the other important people in the child's life and get to know them.
- Find ways to honor the child's connection to the birth parent(s) and other loved ones.
- Be available to offer support before and after phone calls and/or visits with birth parent(s).
- Be honest with the child about what the team is working towards (i.e. the permanency goal).
- Do not speak ill of the child's birth parent(s) or disrespect towards the child's loved ones.
- Be careful not to set the child up by making promises that you cannot keep.

### 3. WORK WITH THE BIRTH PARENT(S)

- Remember that birth parent(s) add value to the child's life and that they love their child.
- Be sensitive to the fact that the birth parent(s) are grieving the separation/loss of the child.
- Recognize that the birth parent(s) are the experts on their child and that they have important information to contribute.
- Make a good first-impression by being caring, genuine, non-judgmental, and non-threatening.
- Highlight the child's strengths and attribute the positive qualities to the birth parent(s).
- Acknowledge the birth parent(s) concerns and reassure them that their child loves them.
- Demonstrate that the child is safe and well-cared for by providing child updates.
- Honor the parent-child connection by sharing stories and pictures with the birth parent(s).
- Include birth parent(s) in decision-making, planning, and activities when appropriate.
- Encourage the birth parent(s) and support their progress as a birth parent mentor.



Family Link is a system-wide effort to promote communication and shared parenting practices between resources and birth parents for the benefit of children in the DC foster care system.

\*The term *resource parent* is used to refer to foster, kinship, and adoptive parents.

More information available at:  
[www.dcfapac.org/FamilyLink](http://www.dcfapac.org/FamilyLink)

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