Children's Home Society of North Carolina

Behavioral & Emotional Support for Foster Parents

TRAUMA INFORMED TOOLS TO HELP CHILDREN AND CAREGIVERS THRIVE

Children in foster care often come into care with experiences of trauma, loss, and uncertainty. Their behaviors are not "bad," they are often ways of communicating unmet needs, fear, or stress. At CHS, we support foster parents by providing tools, training, and guidance to help children feel safe, build trust, and develop healthy coping skills.

1. Understanding Trauma Informed Parenting

Trauma informed parenting focuses on connection before correction. It recognizes that behaviors are a response to experiences - and that healing happens through safety, consistency, and relationships.

Key Trauma Informed Strategies:

Use Calm, Regulated Responses
Responding calmly teaches children how to regulate emotions. Praise positive behaviors whenever possible.

Create Predictable Routines
Structure and routines help children feel safe and reduce anxiety.

Offer Choices
Simple choices (clothes, activities, snacks) help children regain a sense of control.

Build Trust Gradually
Be patient and consistent. Trust develops over time through reliable care and follow through.

2. What Does Behavioral and Emotional Support Look Like in Foster Homes?

Behavioral support is not about punishment—it is about teaching skills, building understanding, and creating ownership.

Common Tools Foster Parents Can Use

- **Choice Boards** - Visual tools that allow children to choose coping strategies, activities, or calming options.
- **Feelings Charts & Emotion Check Ins** - Helping children identify and name emotions builds emotional literacy.
- **Collaborative Consequences** - When appropriate, children help create reasonable consequences and solutions—promoting accountability and understanding.
- **Calming Tools** - Sensory items, quiet spaces, breathing techniques, or movement breaks to support regulation.
- **Positive Reinforcement Systems** - Encouraging progress and effort rather than focusing solely on mistakes.

3. Helping Children Take Ownership

Involving children in decision making builds confidence and trust. Ownership helps children feel heard, respected, and capable. ***Examples include:***

- Asking, "What helps when you feel overwhelmed?"
- Revisiting rules and consequences in calm moments.
- Creating household agreements together.
- Letting children help plan routines or expectations.

4. Foster Parenting Can Feel Different — And That Is Okay

Many foster parents were raised with very different parenting styles. Trauma informed caregiving may feel unfamiliar, or even uncomfortable, at first. That does not mean you are doing it wrong. It means you are learning new tools for new needs.

At CHS, we believe:

- **You do not have to parent perfectly**
- **Growth happens through education and support**
- **Asking for help is a strength — not a failure**

5. How CHS Supports Foster Parents

- **Trauma informed parenting training**
- **Behavioral health and emotional support resources**
- **Access to therapy, professional guidance, and programs like Child First to help with behavioral challenges**
- **Ongoing coaching to build confidence and skills**
- **Caregiver support—navigating behaviors not experienced before**
- **24/7 on call assistance for foster families: (336) 223-0480**
- **Online training and support via SkyPrep: chsnc.skyprepapp.com**

You Are Not Alone

With the right tools, patience, and support, foster parents can help children heal, grow, and feel safe — while growing stronger themselves.

Start Here.

Inquire today or
Sign up for a FREE info session

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