



## ***National Resource Center for Healthy Marriage and Families***

### **The Director's Corner**

Greetings,

As we celebrate **National Foster Care Month**, we honor the foster parents across the country that have compassionately opened their hearts and homes to children in need. As rewarding as being a foster parent can be, it does bring with it a unique set of stressors. Foster care agencies can support foster parents in addressing some of these stressors by offering healthy relationship education. Most foster parents are required to participate in continuing education classes as a requirement of licensing.

Offering training in healthy relationship skills such as communication, conflict resolution, parenting, and financial education as a training option ensures caregivers not only have the skills needed to reduce stress and strengthen their own relationships, but also the tools to model these healthy behaviors for the children in their care.

The Office of Family Assistance funds healthy marriage and responsible fatherhood programs throughout the country that provide free relationship education workshops. Visit the new [Healthy Marriage and Responsible Fatherhood](#) website to find out if there is a program in your community.

Below are some additional tips and resources to assist you in developing a plan for integrating relationship education into your current service delivery system. If you need additional guidance, let us help. The Resource Center provides free [training and technical assistance](#).

Best Regards,

Robyn Cenizal, CFLE  
Project Director



### **Tip of the Month**

Your monthly tip to strengthen the relationships of those you serve. *Share it - Post it - Pass it on!*

Some of the risk factors for child maltreatment leading to foster care are also the same factors that place youth at higher risk of experiencing unhealthy or unsafe relationships. Here are a few ways communities and agencies can help strengthen the relationships of vulnerable youth:

- 1. Relationship Education Workshops:** Integrate healthy relationship education classes or workshops into Independent Living programs for older youth aging out of foster care. See our [Partnerships](#) page for potential partners in your area or our [Curricula](#) page for free and low-cost relationship education curricula.
- 2. Healthy Relationship Mentoring:** Encourage adults who spend significant one-on-one time with at-risk youth (e.g., case workers, mentors, Court Appointed Special Advocates, relative and foster caregivers) to discuss and model healthy relationship skills and principles.
- 3. Family Relationship Strengthening:** Use established, family-centered practices that build on existing family strengths, such as [Family Group Decision Making](#), to model interpersonal relationship skills and integrate healthy relationships into family case planning.



## Featured Resources

The Resource Center's [Virtual Library](#) has collected more than 700 materials in a variety of formats including fact sheets, research-to-practice briefs, brochures, pamphlets, training resources, program reports or evaluations, and research materials.

Select the links below to view our featured May resources:

- [How Relationship Education Leads to Stronger Foster and Adoptive Families \(Fact Sheet\)](#) This fact sheet examines how integrating healthy marriage and relationship education into services for foster and adoptive families is critical to helping families stay together so they can provide a strong base for their children's well-being.
- [Building Strong Parenting Partnerships \(Tip Sheet\)](#) This tip sheet reviews the concept of parenting styles, including two key elements of parenting: parental responsiveness (i.e., warmth or supportiveness) and parental demandingness (i.e., behavioral control).
- [Putting Youth Relationship Education on the Child Welfare Agenda: Findings from a Research and Evaluation Review \(Library Resource\)](#) This research and evaluation review focuses on relationship education for youth in foster care.



## Events

The Resource Center's [Events Calendar](#) offers a listing of Resource Center events and other national, regional, and community-wide events that might be of interest. Upcoming events include:

- The Office of Family Assistance, through its Healthy Marriage and Responsible Fatherhood (HMRF) efforts will be hosting a free live Expert Panel webcast, [Toxic Stress in Low-Income Families: Understanding Long-Term Effects](#) on Wednesday, May 21, 2014, at 1:00 PM EST. This moderated discussion will bring together preeminent, nationally recognized experts and practitioners to describe toxic stress, how exposure to childhood toxic stress can have life-long consequences as adults, and how practitioners and community-based organizations are working to prevent toxic stress exposure in children and ameliorate its effects on adults, strengthening families and communities. [Register for this event.](#)
- [National Association for the Education of Young Children \(NAEYC\) 2014 National Institute for Early Childhood Professional Development in Minneapolis, MN, June 8 - 11, 2014:](#) NAEYC hosts the National Institute for Early Childhood Professional Development, a conference designed for all early childhood professionals, including leaders who prepare, mentor, and support early childhood professionals, as well as program administrators, teacher educators, trainers, teachers, and researchers. Participants explore the expanding early childhood knowledge base, developing skills that improve professional preparation and practice, and discuss effective, active learning approaches for adults. Opportunities exist to reach attendees via an exhibit or through advertising in the final program. The Resource Center will be exhibiting at this conference.

## Feedback and Technical Assistance:

If you have suggestions or wish to speak with a Resource Center staff member, please [contact us](#) and we will be happy to assist you. If you would like to request Technical Assistance, please submit a [Training and Technical Assistance Request Form](#) and our Technical Assistance Coordinator will contact you.

To learn more about the Resource Center visit us at [www.healthymarriageandfamilies.org](http://www.healthymarriageandfamilies.org)

The National Resource Center for Healthy Marriage and Families supports safety-net service providers as they integrate healthy marriage and relationship education skills into service delivery systems as part of a comprehensive, culturally appropriate, family-centered approach designed to promote self-sufficiency.

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