

Strengths/Needs Worksheet

Now that you are completing the GPSII/MAPP Program, some of your original feelings about foster care and adoption may have changed. Please discuss your ideas on the following issues:

- 1. We have spent much time discussing the dynamics of both foster care and adoption. Based upon what you know about your family right now, are you willing and able to commit to being a **foster family**, an **adoptive family**, a **foster/adoptive family**, or some other **child and family advocate**? Explain below to what role you are ready to commit and why you feel that role is the right one for you and your family:

The role to which we are ready to commit: _____

How we know the role is the right one: _____

- 2. Considering the “Twelve Skills for Successful Fostering and Adopting” and all the abilities developed during the GPSII/MAPP program, what do you see as your family's major strengths in assuming the role you have chosen? _____

How has your thinking about your strengths changed since Meeting 1? (The criteria and skills are listed at the end of this handout for your reference.) _____

3. Thinking about Twelve Skills for Successful Fostering and Adopting and all the abilities developed during the GPSII/MAPP program, in what aspects of the new role do you think you will need the most help? _____

4. As you know, children who are placed in foster or adoptive homes have many special needs and present some real child management challenges. Which special needs or behavior challenges do you feel best prepared to handle? _____

Which special needs or behavior challenges do you feel least prepared to handle?

5. Many of the children needing foster care and adoption have had some inappropriate sexual experiences. For example, they may have observed older children or adults involved in sex or they may have been sexually abused. If you have decided that you would like to be a foster or adoptive parent, could you parent the following children?

	Could parent without help	Could parent with help	Could not parent
A. Child who masturbates			
B. Teenager who was or is sexually active			
C. Child whose mother was or is involved in prostitution			
D. Child of any age who has been sexually abused			
E. Child who talks to you about sex			
F. Child who talks to your children about sex			
G. Other behavior you want to mention here (please specify):			

6. Many of the children needing homes today have special needs. If you have decided you can be a foster or adoptive parent and given your own family's strengths and needs, could you parent the following?

	Could parent without help	Could parent with help	Could not parent
A. Child who wets the bed			
B. Child who is HIV-positive			
C. Child who has a history of running away			
D. Child who has been involved with Juvenile Court as an offender			
E. Child who has used drugs or alcohol			
F. Child who is developmentally disabled			
G. Child who must use a wheelchair			
H. Child who is blind			
I. Child who expresses interest in homosexual relationships			
J. Child who is transgender			
K. Child who has a terminal illness			
L. Other special needs - please specify:			

7. If you have decided you can be a foster or adoptive parent, imagine that the caseworker is at your door with the child you are planning to foster or adopt. Please describe the child, for example: physical appearance, family background, personality and school ability. _____

8. You and your family have contributed much time and energy to this program. What has kept you going, involved and committed? _____

9. If you have decided you can be a foster or adoptive family and/or a child/family advocate, what will you need to keep you going, involved and committed?

10. As a result of the GPSII/MAPP Program, are there other ways you think you might be able to help children who have been abused, neglected, or emotionally maltreated?

- Be a mentor for a youth planning to leave care
- Provide respite care
- Provide clerical support
- Be a recruiter
- Serve as a Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA)
- Be a Big Brother/Big Sister
- Provide transportation support
- Be a political advocate
- Raise funds
- Volunteer for group care facilities
- Provide foster care or adopt in the future
- Other (please specify):

If you have decided that now is not the time to be a foster or adoptive parent, would you like us to keep information about your family on file? If so, for how long?

Twelve Skills for Successful Fostering and Adopting

1. Know your own family.

Assess your individual and family strengths and needs; build on strengths and meet needs.

2. Communicate effectively.

Use and develop communication skills needed to foster or adopt.

3. Know the children.

Identify the strengths and needs of children and youth who have been abused, neglected, abandoned, and/or emotionally maltreated.

4. Build strengths; meet needs.

Build on strengths and meet needs of children and youth who are placed with you.

5. Work in partnership.

Develop partnerships with children and youth, birth families, the agency, and the community to develop and carry out plans for permanency.

6. Be loss and attachment experts.

Help children and youth develop skills to manage loss and attachment.

7. Manage behaviors.

Help children and youth manage behaviors.

8. Build connections.

Help children and youth maintain and develop relationships that keep them connected to their past.

9. Build self-esteem.

Help children and youth build on positive self-concept and positive family, cultural, and racial identity.

10. Assure health and safety.

Provide a healthy and safe environment for children and youth and keep them free from harm.

11. Assess impact.

Assess the ways fostering and/or adopting will affect your family.

12. Make an informed decision.

Make an informed decision to foster or adopt.

Abilities Developed in the GPSII/MAPP Program

The abilities developed in each of the meetings are designed to help you make an informed commitment to:

- ◆ meet the developmental and well-being needs of children and youth in foster care or adopted through foster care
- ◆ assure a child's safety in foster care
- ◆ share parenting with the birth family of a child in foster care
- ◆ support planning for permanency
- ◆ meet your own family's needs in ways that assure a child's safety and well-being

Each meeting developed several critical and enabling abilities. Following are the critical abilities developed in the first nine meetings of GPSII/MAPP.

GPSII/MAPP Meeting 1 Abilities – By participating in this meeting, prospective foster and adoptive parents should be able to:

- ◆ Describe their role in the mutual selection process.
- ◆ Define the purpose of foster care and adoption.
- ◆ Explain the goal of the GPSII/MAPP Program.
- ◆ Explain the purpose of the “Twelve Skills for Successful Fostering and Adopting.”
- ◆ Define key child welfare terms.
- ◆ Explain the concept of well-being.
- ◆ Explain foster care and adoption to their family or friends, and why partnership is so important.

GPSII/MAPP Meeting 2 Abilities – By participating in this meeting, prospective foster and adoptive parents should be able to:

- ◆ Communicate a willingness to support children's connections to their birth families.
- ◆ Choose steps and strategies for assessing well-being of children and youth.

GPSII/MAPP Meeting 3 Abilities – By participating in this meeting, prospective foster and adoptive parents should be able to:

- ◆ Use strategies to help a child heal from loss.
- ◆ Create parenting interventions for children and youth at different stages of development to deal with reactions to loss.
- ◆ Assess and apply the impact of personal situational and maturational losses on their role as foster and adoptive parents.

GPSII/MAPP Meeting 4 Abilities – By participating in this meeting, prospective foster and adoptive parents should be able to:

- ◆ Select strategies for helping a child heal from loss and strengthen or build healthy attachments.
- ◆ Keep children and youth physically, mentally, emotionally, socially, and spiritually/morally healthy in the foster home.
- ◆ Promote, rebuild, and support positive attachments of children and youth in foster care.
- ◆ Assess their own strengths and needs in helping a child to recover from loss and attach.

GPSII/MAPP Meeting 5 Abilities – By participating in this meeting, prospective foster and adoptive parents should be able to:

- ◆ Explain the difference between the parental interventions of punishment and discipline.
- ◆ Explain how behaviors are indicators of underlying needs.
- ◆ Select parental interventions that will help children and youth manage their own behaviors.
- ◆ Help children and youth manage their behaviors.
- ◆ Choose discipline strategies that assure a child's safety.
- ◆ Describe policies and procedures for investigating allegations of abuse in foster families.
- ◆ Distinguish between naive and manipulative false allegations of abuse.
- ◆ Plan ways to use support and manage the family's emotions during an investigation of abuse.

GPSII/MAPP Meeting 6 Abilities – By participating in this meeting, prospective foster and adoptive parents should be able to:

- ◆ Describe how culture, race and ethnicity are tied to identity.
- ◆ State the responsibilities of foster families relative to ICWA (Indian Child Welfare Act)
- ◆ Determine the risks for a child whose cultural identity is not maintained in foster care or adoption.
- ◆ Nurture a child's cultural connections.
- ◆ Support shared parenting.
- ◆ Demonstrate support of the alliance model through visits.

GPSII/MAPP Meeting 7 Abilities – By participating in this meeting, prospective foster and adoptive parents should be able to:

- ◆ Help children and youth transition from foster care.
- ◆ Demonstrate ways to prevent disruptions or dissolutions of foster care placements or adoptions.
- ◆ Apply strategies for intervening with a child's behavior during a family crisis or preventing a crisis.

GPSII/MAPP Meeting 8 Abilities – By participating in this meeting, prospective foster and adoptive parents should be able to:

- ◆ Anticipate specific changes that might occur with the family's decision to foster or adopt.
- ◆ Manage the conflicting needs of children in foster care and members of the foster family.
- ◆ Assess how current ways for managing boundaries, family rules, family roles, decision-making, and family communication, may work or not work with the decision to foster or adopt.
- ◆ Explain how concurrent planning might affect their roles and responsibilities as foster or adoptive parents.
- ◆ Use an EcoMap to determine the energy sources and drains on the family.
- ◆ Manage the family's energy sources and drains.
- ◆ Manage changes in the family's relationships.

GPSII/MAPP Meeting 9 Abilities – By participating in this meeting, prospective foster and adoptive parents should be able to:

- ◆ Work together with child welfare staff, other service providers, court personnel, and the parents of children and youth in foster care.
- ◆ Explain the purpose and possible structure of family conferences.
- ◆ Explain the role of the foster parent in family conferencing.
- ◆ Successfully demonstrate the use of effective communication techniques.
- ◆ Explain the key terms and concepts that guide best practices for children in care and their families.
- ◆ Describe and assess the impact of foster parents adopting children in their home.