

DIGITAL DIALOGUE



# Birth and Foster Parent Partnership

Building Birth and Foster Parent Relationships to Promote Reunification



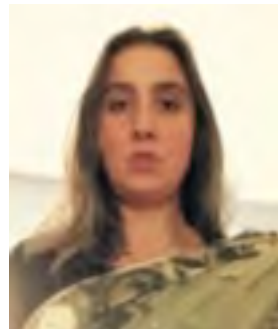
# Our Presenters



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# Meet the Birth and Foster Parent Partnership (BFPP)

The Birth and Foster Parent Partnership (BFPP) was formed in 2016 to support a national movement of birth parents, foster families, kinship caregivers, and staff. The BFPP is focused on improving relationships, building connections, and using their collective voices to transform systems, culture, policies, and practices to improve outcomes for children and families.

# Let's Talk About Language



- Evolving
- Many different terms currently in use
- Different perspectives on best language to honor both roles in the partnership
- Language used here reflects a point in time

# Benefits of Connection



*“When youth enter foster care, the goal is usually reunification, and in my case, that is what happened. If reunification had not been possible, my connection to my mother still would have been just as important. If anyone had attempted to keep us apart it would have been devastating for me, and I know that the instant I turned 18 I would have been out looking for her. Even though I had great influences in my life throughout foster care, none of them would have been able to replace the relationship I had with my mother; that bond is critical.”*

Kodi Baughman, former foster youth (Iowa)

## Why does it matter?



*"A strong relationship between a birth parent and foster parent can make a huge difference for a child and their birth family. I think it is awesome to know that your child is safe. I especially appreciate that the foster parent wants to know what practices I use to care for my child. I also have some comfort knowing that the foster parent cares about me. In this way, I can move forward with my own healing and also work on a plan for a better life for me and my family."*

Shana Hunts Along, birth parent (Minnesota)

# Overcoming Barriers



*Family Connections:  
Shrounda's Reflection*

<https://youtu.be/StNiQ7gMxKg>



## Vision for New Way of Working Together

When birth parents and foster parents/kinship caregivers are working together effectively, families have more resources to be strong and resilient, to provide children with the love and connection they need for healthy development and to build networks of people who help them when times are tough.

Any agency committed to investing in birth and foster parent partnerships must also invest in the full culture shift necessary to achieve goals for change.

Visible, tangible leadership support for birth and foster parent partnerships is critical if these relationships are to thrive and become normalized as a routine component of agency practice. ***All messages about fostering should clearly express that partnering with birth parents is a core part of fostering in almost all cases.***

In order to fully communicate that birth and foster parent partnerships are the expectation, not the exception, leaders and staff must acknowledge racial, cultural, and economic status dynamics across families, and identify opportunities to develop support for co-parenting.



# Resources

## Birth and Foster Parent Partnership (BFPP) Tools

[ctfalliance.org/partnering-with-parents/bfpp](https://ctfalliance.org/partnering-with-parents/bfpp)

## Family Connection Videos and Discussion Guide

[Family Connections](https://www.familyconnections.org)

## National Foster Care Month website

<https://www.childwelfare.gov/fostercaremonth/>

## Birth Parent/Foster Parent Relationships to Support Family Reunification

<https://www.childwelfare.gov/topics/permanency/reunification/parents/reunification/>



# Thank You!

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