

ATTACHMENT-FOCUSED PARENTING

1) Create Safety to Allow Attachment

- Conduct pre-placement visits
- Involve primary family ASAP
- Create and maintain a physically and emotionally safe environment to minimize ambivalence and anxiety

2) Acceptance

- What we do to build attachment must not be driven by what we expect from our efforts
- Accept child's entire self
- Don't deny or become overwhelmed by child's history of maltreatment
- Help child recognize emotional, social, behavioral difficulties he has in a developmentally attuned way
- Flex/tailor parenting to child's attachment style
- Provide support and nurturing when child is highly distressed- develop comfort with expression of child's negative emotions
- Foster a sense of relatedness
- Communicate daily that child is prized

3) Alliance Formation

- Develop a sense of connectedness with child through caregiver qualities of commitment, attunement, consistency, positive regard for child, modulating your own emotions and needs
- Extend/adapt caregiver qualities to interactions with child's primary family
- Make placement rewarding (see additional information HO)
- Work collaboratively to solve problems child is facing

4) Correcting the child's "working model" for relationships

- Practice more neutrality in parenting
- Be mindful that, while insecurely attached children desire relationships, they may be distrusting or fearful of them. They need a more precise view of what relationships can mean. Interactions they've experienced with primary families aren't the only way people respond
- Engage in activities with the child that allow him to take the lead and make choices to increase his sense of efficacy
- Look for opportunities to model empathy
- Assist the child in naming feelings and expressing thoughts about adults in his life
- Model/teach the child how to respond to problems in relationships
- Work with a therapist