

Strong Families. Safe Children.



Strong Families Make a Strong Kansas

Ideas To Support Birth Parents

- **Become a foster parent.** Many times, children are placed outside of their communities and schools because there are not enough foster parents in their local areas.
- **Offer transportation.** Birth parents need help getting to meetings with agency staff, case plans, court hearings, mental health appointments, etc.
- **Help with phone calls.** Birth parents don't always have access to a cell phone or have minutes available to use to schedule and maintain necessary case planning meetings. Make your phone available or arrange for a location parents can take/make calls.
- **Provide mentoring.** Birth parents are often struggling with many issues related to their children being removed. Their self-esteem is often at an all-time low, and having someone to work with them one-on-one to prioritize what they need to work on, can be invaluable. Setting a good example and simply serving as a friend goes a long way.
- **Let them know they're not alone.** Offer a ride to community gatherings and introduce the parents to people who can help. Birth parents can feel isolated from the community and support. Encouraging community engagement will allow the parents to feel connected.
- **Provide a list of support groups.** No matter the issue, there is likely a support group available. Group topics range from substance abuse to effective parenting.
- **Work with the agency on providing nutritional snacks and/or activities for visits.** Many times a parent is required to provide nutritional snacks and activities for their visits with the children. This can be overwhelming and place an additional strain on limited funds. Helping the birth parent with coloring books, activities and other age-appropriate activities, as well as nutritional snacks can take a huge burden off parents.
- **Provide help with GED tutoring for birth parents.** Education can help provide parents with the hope for the future they need to carry on. A GED or high school diploma can open many doors for a person who feels trapped in poverty.
- **Be a flexible employer.** Employers can help accommodate birth parents' schedule. In order to be reunited, many visits, court dates and meetings are required. Let the employee know, you understand and will work with them.
- **Reach out to kinship/grandparents providing care for children.** Providing support and a list of services and resources for grandparents and kinship providers is helpful as they may not be familiar with what is available or know who to turn to for help.
- **Join KFAN (Kansas Family Advisory Network).** To learn more, visit s514060954.initial-website.com.
- **Become a Parent Ally.** Online training is available statewide. Visit www.kscourts.org/Programs/Parenting-Planning/parent-ally-orientation.asp to learn more.

For incarcerated birth parents:

- Provide stamps/envelopes for birth parents.
- Provide video minutes through facility for visits (3 minute call to say Happy Birthday)
- Provide birthday cards/Christmas cards.
- Provide inspirational literature.

*Supporters need facility approval to assist incarcerated parents.

Learn more about how to support birth parents by reading the PPS Family Handbook at http://www.dcf.ks.gov/services/PPS/Documents/PPM_Forms/Section_5000_Forms/PPS5137.pdf