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# Foster, Adoptive, Kinship, and Birth Parent Training 2025–2026



In an exciting venture with the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services, the MSU School of Social Work is pleased to present opportunities for training specific to all caregivers engaged with the Michigan child welfare system.

If you are a foster parent, adoptive parent, kinship/relative parent, or birth parent, these **FREE trainings** are customized to help support your needs in raising the children in your home, understanding some of the unique and sometimes challenging needs that children and their families often face in the child welfare system.

Following licensure, caregivers are required to earn six hours of training annually. The trainings in this catalog will count toward those required training hours.

Find all program details on our website: [socialwork.msu.edu/ce](http://socialwork.msu.edu/ce).

## How to register for trainings

Webinar training: <http://bit.ly/4IS0SUh>

If questions, contact: Gina Tremonti Gembel, MSW, at the MSU School of Social Work Continuing Education office  
[swkce@msu.edu](mailto:swkce@msu.edu), 517-353-3060

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School of Social Work



## Foster, Adoptive, Kinship, and Birth Parent Training

If you are a foster, adoptive, kinship/relative, or birth parent, these FREE trainings are designed to empower and support you in caring for children involved in the child welfare system—offering tools and insights to better understand their unique needs and strengths, and your role as a caregiver.

This training is intended for adults. Some content is not appropriate for children.

### Technology Safety

Date/time: **Wednesday, December 10, 2025**

Program 12:00 PM – 1:15 PM (ET)

Location: **ONE-HOUR WEBINAR**

Presenter: **Barb Clark**

FASD/Behavior Consultant, BIS Youth Studies, Sociology & English



Training objectives: As a result of this training, you will be prepared to:

- Understand why children and adolescents with trauma histories are at greater risk when it comes to technology safety.
- Utilize concrete strategies for managing technology use safely for children and adolescents.

Beginner and intermediate skill levels

Target audience:

- ✓ Foster Parents
- ✓ Adoptive Parents
- ✓ Kinship/Relative Parents

Description: Who wishes we were still in the dark ages when it comes to our kids and technology? Technology safety is a challenge for all parents, but when we are parenting kids with trauma histories and neuro-diversity, the challenge is exponentially magnified. In this webinar, we will talk about why this is more of a challenge for our kids and some strategies to try to keep them safe.

### The Behavior Is a Clue, Not the Whole Story

Date/time: **Monday, December 15, 2025**

Program 12:00 PM – 1:15 PM (ET)

Location: **ONE-HOUR WEBINAR**

Presenter: **Cole Williams, BS**

Executive Director, The Delta Project, with lived experience as a foster and adoptive single parent



Training objectives: As a result of this training, you will be prepared to:

- Examine how racial bias and systemic inequality influence the interpretation of children's behaviors, and practice reframing those behaviors through a trauma-informed, anti-racist lens.
- Develop greater self-awareness of how their own emotional responses, cultural beliefs, and lived experiences impact the way they connect with and respond to children in moments of dysregulation.

Beginner, intermediate, and advanced skill levels

Target audience:

- ✓ Foster Parents
- ✓ Adoptive Parents
- ✓ Kinship/Relative Parents
- ✓ Birth Parents

Description: When a child yells, shuts down, or acts out, it's easy to focus on the behavior. But what if we saw these moments as signals, not problems? This interactive and reflective webinar will invite foster, kinship, adoptive, grandparent, and biological caregivers to shift from reacting to behaviors to understanding the deeper needs beneath them. Through storytelling, real-life scenarios, and guided exercises, we'll explore the emotional worlds of children and teens, especially those impacted by trauma, grief, or system involvement. We'll draw powerful parallels between adult dysregulation and child behavior, creating space for empathy, insight, and connection. Caregivers will leave with tools to decode behavior, respond with intention, and see their children as humans in discovery.



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### Antiracist Parenting Workshop

**Date/time:** Friday, January 9, 2026  
Program 12:00 PM – 1:15 PM (ET)

**Location:** ONE-HOUR WEBINAR

**Presenter:** Kenisha Coon, MS, PhD Candidate  
Founder and Principal Consultant, Kenisha Coon Consulting



**Training objectives:** As a result of this training, you will be prepared to:

- Understand how systemic racism and implicit bias impact parenting, child development, and family dynamics across diverse cultural contexts.
- Equip parents and caregivers with practical strategies to foster antiracist values at home, including how to initiate age-appropriate conversations about race, identity, and equity.

**Beginner, intermediate, and advanced skill levels**

**Target audience:**

- ✓ Foster Parents
- ✓ Adoptive Parents
- ✓ Kinship/Relative Parents
- ✓ Birth Parents

**Description:** This interactive webinar will empower parents and caregivers to raise socially conscious, equity-minded children in an increasingly diverse and complex world. Grounded in antiracist principles and trauma-informed approaches, the webinar will explore how racism shows up in family systems, education, media, and everyday interactions. Participants will learn tools for disrupting bias, affirming identity, and building inclusive practices at home. Through reflection, discussion, and real-life scenarios, caregivers will leave with actionable strategies to nurture empathy, cultural awareness, and justice-oriented values in the next generation.

### Launching Differently: Supporting Adult Kids

**Date/time:** Monday, January 12, 2026  
Program 12:00 PM – 1:15 PM (ET)

**Location:** ONE-HOUR WEBINAR

**Presenter:** Barb Clark  
FASD/Behavior Consultant, BIS Youth Studies, Sociology & English



**Training objectives:** As a result of this training, you will be prepared to:

- Understand why children with trauma histories face greater challenges in emerging adulthood.
- Identify strategies to implement early in childhood to support healthy adulthood.

**Beginner and intermediate skill levels**

**Target audience:**

- ✓ Foster Parents
- ✓ Adoptive Parents
- ✓ Kinship/Relative Parents

**Description:** Often, we think parenting is easier after age 18, and that our work here is done. This is not always the case, especially if there are neuro differences from trauma histories or other hidden neurodiversity. This webinar will discuss strategies and ideas on how to walk the fine line of being a support for adult kids while having boundaries and teaching them interdependence.



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### What Caregivers Should Know About Healthy Sexual Development



Date/time: **Tuesday, January 13, 2026**

Program 10:00 AM – 12:00 PM (ET)

Location: **TWO-HOUR WEBINAR**

Presenter: **Jerry Peterson, MA in Theology**

MDHHS Children's Services Administration SOGIE Consultant

Intermediate skill level

Target audience:

- ✓ Foster Parents
- ✓ Adoptive Parents
- ✓ Kinship/Relative Parents
- ✓ Birth Parents

Training objectives: As a result of this training, you will be prepared to:

- Understand typical, healthy sexual development in children and teenagers.
- Have respectful and empathetic conversations with children and youth on healthy sexual development topics.

**Description:** Learn about typical, healthy sexual development in children and teenagers. It is developmentally appropriate for children of all ages to be curious about sex and sexuality. They will benefit greatly from a safe and accepting environment to explore sexual development topics in appropriate ways. A clear profile of problematic sexual behaviors will be provided to help participants distinguish between healthy, typical sexual behaviors in children and youth and behaviors that cause harm and require professional intervention. Guidelines and tools for communicating with children, youth, and families about sexual development topics will be provided. A scenario exercise will help participants apply what is learned to a real-life situation.

### Creating Homes that Foster Secure Attachment

Date/time: **Friday, January 16, 2026**

Program 12:00 PM – 1:15 PM (ET)

Location: **ONE-HOUR WEBINAR**

Presenter: **Pamela Wolz, LMSW**



Beginner and intermediate skill levels

Target audience:

- ✓ Foster Parents
- ✓ Adoptive Parents
- ✓ Kinship/Relative Parents
- ✓ Birth Parents

Training objectives: As a result of this training, you will be prepared to:

- Identify five skills to foster secure attachments, with a better understanding of cultural considerations.
- Describe two ways to increase safety and security in your parent/child relationships
- Apply ways to deepen your key relationships.
- Increase caregiver's self-care.

**Description:** Children who've experienced neglect, abuse, or disruptions in attachment understandably face challenges in family and peer relationships. In this webinar, you will learn 10 skills that foster secure attachment. You will learn practical ways to increase feelings of safety and security within your parent-child relationship and in your home environment. You will leave this one-hour webinar with concepts you can begin using immediately to deepen the most key relationship of your life.



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### Self-care: How to Recognize and Take Care of Ourselves

Date/time: **Monday, February 2, 2026**

Program 12:00 PM – 1:15 PM (ET)

Location: **ONE-HOUR WEBINAR**

Presenter: **Kelley Blanck, LMSW**

Faculty, MSU School of Social Work



**Training objectives:** As a result of this training, you will be prepared to:

- Define compassion and caregiver fatigue.
- Identify when you are experiencing caregiver burnout and fatigue.
- Draft a plan for self-care.

**Beginner skill level**

**Target audience:**

- ✓ Foster Parents
- ✓ Adoptive Parents
- ✓ Kinship/Relative Parents

**Description:** Caregivers often face unique challenges and responsibilities, and this webinar aims to equip them with the tools they need to maintain their well-being while providing the best care for their loved ones. Self-care plays a critical role in maintaining physical, emotional, and mental health. This webinar will help caregivers recognize common stressors and challenges specific to foster, adoptive, and kinship caregiving. It is designed to support foster, adoptive, and kinship caregivers by providing them with essential self-care strategies. This training will use a mix of activities and small group interaction to discuss this topic.

### Addressing Problematic Sexual Behaviors

Date/time: **Wednesday, February 18, 2026**

Program 10:00 AM – 12:00 PM (ET)

Location: **TWO-HOUR WEBINAR**

Presenter: **Jerry Peterson, MA in Theology**

MDHHS Children's Services Administration SOGIE Consultant



**Training objectives:** As a result of this training, you will be prepared to:

- Identify and assess important differences between typical and problematic sexual behaviors in children and youth.
- Learn about supportive interventions and referral options to support children, youth, and families in addressing problematic sexual behavior.

**Intermediate skill level**

**Target audience:**

- ✓ Foster Parents
- ✓ Adoptive Parents
- ✓ Kinship/Relative Parents
- ✓ Birth Parents

**Description:** Learn more about the differences between typical sexual behavior and problematic sexual behavior (PSB) in children and youth. The focus will be on children and youth ages 7 to 17. A "checklist" of common characteristics of PSB will be presented along with recommended methods of assessment and intervention. The problem is the behavior, not the child. Guidance will be provided on creating safety plans that promote well-being for children and families. Resources and tools will be provided to help families set expectations and boundaries regarding sexual behavior and learn about the importance of establishing safe environments that support healthy relationships. There will be a number of opportunities for participant engagement in scenarios and discussion.



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### FASD Uncovered: Why It Matters in Foster Care

Date/time: **Wednesday, February 25, 2026**

Program 10:00 AM – 12:00 PM (ET)

Location: **TWO-HOUR WEBINAR**

Presenter: **Barb Clark**

FASD/Behavior Consultant, BIS Youth Studies, Sociology & English



Training objectives: As a result of this training, you will be prepared to:

- Explore the risk factors associated with prenatal exposure to alcohol, illicit drugs, and tobacco.
- Define FASD and explain the connection between brain impairments and observable behaviors.

Beginner and intermediate skill levels

Target audience:

- ✓ Foster Parents
- ✓ Adoptive Parents
- ✓ Kinship/Relative Parents

**Description:** Fetal alcohol spectrum disorders (FASD) are brain-based conditions caused by prenatal alcohol exposure. Though more common than autism, FASD often goes undiagnosed or misdiagnosed—especially in foster care. Children with FASD may struggle with memory, emotional regulation, impulse control, and understanding cause and effect. These challenges are not always visible, but they impact daily functioning and relationships in profound ways. This webinar will help foster parents understand the effects of prenatal alcohol exposure on brain development and behavior, providing a clear foundation for recognizing the signs of FASD in the children they care for.

### The Big 3: Raging, Lying, and Stealing

Date/time: **Wednesday, March 4, 2026**

Program 10:00 AM – 12:00 PM (ET)

Location: **TWO-HOUR WEBINAR**

Presenter: **Barb Clark**

FASD/Behavior Consultant, BIS Youth Studies, Sociology & English



Training objectives: As a result of this training, you will be prepared to:

- Explore why consequence/punitive-based approaches are not effective with youth who have trauma histories.
- Identify trauma responsive approaches that promote connection and relationships.

Beginner and intermediate skill levels

Target audience:

- ✓ Foster Parents
- ✓ Adoptive Parents
- ✓ Kinship/Relative Parents

**Description:** Children and adolescents who have experienced trauma have unique brain wiring and are often at a mixture of developmental ages. Typical consequence-based behavioral strategies are often not effective and can lead to further trauma and impact the relationship between the adults and children/adolescents. Participants will learn new approaches to use with children and adolescents who have trauma histories, which will help you to understand them better and improve communication and relationships. The strategies we will cover are recommended for in-utero trauma such as FASD and also for trauma they may have experienced after birth.



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### Being Your Child's Best Advocate: Tools and Strategies



Date/time: **Monday, March 23, 2026**

Program 12:00 PM – 1:15 PM (ET)

Location: **ONE-HOUR WEBINAR**

Presenter: **Kelley Blanck, LMSW**

Faculty, MSU School of Social Work

**Training objectives:** As a result of this training, you will be prepared to:

- Explain what advocacy is, the different types, and why it is important for caregiver families.
- Identify systems that families encounter that may need advocacy support.
- Develop specific skills and strategies for advocating in different spaces.

**Beginner skill level**

**Target audience:**

- ✓ **Foster Parents**
- ✓ **Adoptive Parents**
- ✓ **Kinship/Relative Parents**

**Description:** Caregivers often find that they must advocate for their children to ensure that they get the care, benefit, and support needed for success. This webinar is designed to empower caregivers with the knowledge, skills, and confidence they need to effectively advocate for themselves and the children in their care. Caregivers face unique challenges that often present barriers to helping and caring for their children. This webinar aims to equip foster, adoptive, and kinship caregivers with the tools to navigate these challenges and to elevate their voices through advocacy strategies. This webinar will use a mix of activities and small group interaction to discuss this topic.

# On-demand training courses

**Now offering FREE online courses! No registration required!**

Online courses are recordings of live webinars and can be watched from the convenience of your home, office, or on the go! For each course, you will complete a post-training evaluation. **NO CONTINUING EDUCATION CLOCK HOURS (CECHs)** are offered for the online courses.

TARGET AUDIENCE	COURSE #	TRAINING TITLE
Caregivers	200-18	Trauma-informed Caregiving (Part 2): Understanding Neurodevelopment and the Stress Response System
Caregivers	208-18	Support Services for Transgender and Gender Non-Conforming Children and Families
Caregivers	213-19	Doing the Difficult Work (Part 1): How to Develop Effective Relationships with Birth Families
Caregivers	218-19	When Behaviors Prevent School Success: Advocating for Your Child with Emotional or Behavior Problems
Caregivers	372	Trauma-informed Caregiving (Part 1): Becoming Trauma-Informed Parents



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**Registration for child welfare online courses is no longer required!**

All child welfare online courses are available here:

<http://bit.ly/4p4KpyQ>

Click on "Begin this course" under the course you would like to take. This will take you to a survey to record your attendance, and then you will be redirected to the video.

**NO CECHs ARE AWARDED FOR THESE ONLINE COURSES.**

Additional online trainings will become available soon!

**Stay tuned, and check the website often!**