



ONLINE TRAINING FOR FOSTER PARENTS

Tuesday, 2/3
Infant / Toddler Play
Lisa Bingly
7:30-9pm

This session will help parents understand the benefits of play with attention to routines and natural situations that arise in the home. We will discuss the importance of observation and how to use observation as a tool for growth and development. This session will include information appropriate for ages birth to three years.

Presented by Lisa Bingly, MEd, a Developmental Specialist at MENTOR Early Intervention.

Wednesday, 2/4
What ADHD is
Audrie Vantangoli
7:30 - 9pm

This training offers parents a strength-based, practical understanding of ADHD through a developmental lens. Families learn what ADHD looks like in everyday life—beyond labels and stereotypes—and gain tools to support their child's attention, regulation, and participation across home, school, and community settings.

Presented by Audrie Vantangoli, MOT, OTR/L, CPRCS, Pediatric Occupational Therapist and owner of Get A Grip Occupational Therapy.

Friday, 2/6
Shame to Resilience
Gwenn Bass
7:30 - 9 pm

Shame is a powerful, often hidden emotion that affects how we see ourselves and relate to others. This session explores how shame operates in the lives of children, caregivers, and professionals—and offers tools for transforming shame into self-compassion, authenticity, and resilience. Learning Objectives: Define and recognize how shame shows up in behavior, relationships, and systems. Examine how shame contributes to stress, reactivity, and burnout in caregiving and professional roles. Practice strategies for fostering self-compassion and building resilience personally and professionally.

Presented by Dr. Gwen Bass and her team—educators and foster/adoptive parents—for practical strategies to resolve conflict and reconnect after difficult moments, all grounded in personal and professional experience.

Monday, 2/9
Healthy Anger
Cindy Horgan
7:30 - 9 pm

Anger is part of the human condition. The question we need to ask is whether it is constructive or destructive. Learn how to teach and model healthy anger skills to our children. Being a parent also means being a teacher. Understanding our own unique discipline style and how it impacts us as parents. Learn how to move from “drill sergeant” to “teacher”

Presented by Cindy Horgan, Director of Family Support Services at Cape Cod Children's Place

Tuesday, 2/10
Understanding & Responding to Sexual Behavior in Children
Michael Medeiros
6:30-8pm

This session will provide knowledge and skills to: identify "developmentally expected" sexual behaviors of children and youth, distinguish developmentally expected behaviors from those that might be inappropriate, coercive, abusive or illegal, and respond to all sexual behaviors in ways that promote healthy development of children and that support bystanders who may be affected.

Presented by trainer, foster and adoptive parent Michael Medeiros.

Thursday, 2/12
Good Sports Always Win
Donna Shea
10:30am- 12pm

This session explores why sportsmanship is one of the most important social skills children can develop — both on and off the field. In this interactive workshop, we'll walk through ten practical tips that help children handle winning, losing, and competition with confidence, kindness, and self-control. Caregivers will learn simple coaching language and strategies they can use in everyday moments to build resilience, emotional regulation, and positive peer relationships. Participants will also leave with ready-to-use tools they can immediately apply at home and in group play settings.

Presented by Donna Shea, a social skills coach with over 23 years of experience working with children and teens (Grades K-12) using a playful, strength-based approach that supports confident communication and emotional growth.

Wednesday, 2/18
Poison Prevention
Department of Public Health
7:30 - 9pm

This training will explore the burden and causes of childhood poisonings based on age and development specific risks and apply this knowledge to prevent poisonings.

Participants will Identify poison risks and support children in learning safe habits to prevent accidental poisonings as well as how to access and utilize available resources tools and community services that promote safety and prevent unintentional poisoning.

Presented by the Massachusetts Department of Public Health

Thursday, 2/19
Infant Safe Sleep
Alyssa Golner
7:30 - 9pm

This session introduces the fundamentals of creating a safe and nurturing sleep environment for your family. Whether you're a new parent or caregiver, or you're seeking safe sleep methods for your growing family, this course equips you with essential knowledge and practical tips based on established safety standards. Join us as we explore strategies for promoting healthy sleep habits, ensuring peaceful nights and brighter day for you and your loved ones.

Presented by Alyssa Golner, a passionate advocate for infant safe sleep, this training blends expertise with personal experience. Alyssa's dedication to the safety and well-being of every child empowers caregivers with the confidence and skills needed to create the safest sleep environments for their babies.

Monday, 2/23
Cross Cultural Foster Parenting
Judith Wilson
7:30 - 9 pm

This workshop provides knowledge and skills helpful for cross-cultural foster parenting. We address similarities and differences in how families thrive across cultures. We discuss aspects of cultural identity that can differ between foster children and foster parents and how to bridge cultural gaps. Culturally derived practices will be covered including: family structure and roles, interdependence and autonomy, communication, caregiving, gender roles, belief systems and norms, and identity development.

Participants will learn strategies for successfully foster parenting across cultures through activities and deepening relationships.

Presented by Dr. Judith Wilson, Associate Professor at Bridgewater State University and Dr. Wendy Champagne Williams (she/her), Associate Professor at Bridgewater State University.

Tuesday 2/24
Motivational Interviewing for Families:
Conversational Tools to Improve Connection and Communication
Emily Kline
7:30 - 9pm

How can we help the people in our lives who are obviously struggling but push us away? Or talk to teens about unhealthy behaviors without making them angry and defensive? A communication strategy called motivational interviewing is widely used by health professionals to enhance people's motivation to make positive changes. After working with thousands of families, Dr. Emily Kline will share how she teaches parents and other family members to use the tools of motivational interviewing to have better, more productive conversations about everything from hygiene to medication. Submit your "hardest topics" before the event. Email your "hardest topics" to schoolofhardtalks@gmail.com

Dr. Emily Kline is a clinical psychologist with 20 years of experience working with individuals and families in community mental health settings. She has lead research studies with adolescent and young adult mental health, and parent focused interventions.

Wednesday 2/25
Caring for Teens
Michael Medeiros
6:30 - 8pm

In Massachusetts, there is a high need for out-of-home placements for teens, yet foster and pre-adoptive families are sometimes hesitant to accept teen placements for various reasons. Adolescence can be a challenging time for all youth, and parents often struggle to understand how best to support the teens in their care.

Join us as we demystify the teen experience, explore key aspects of adolescent development, and discuss strategies for positively impacting and working with teens.

Presented by trainer, foster and adoptive parent Michael Medeiros.

Thursday 2/26
Social Emotional Development with Boundary Setting for Different Ages
Kelly Petravicz
7:30 - 9pm

This training focuses on understanding and supporting the social-emotional development of children and adolescents, with an emphasis on teaching and modeling healthy boundaries. Participants will explore how emotional awareness, self-regulation, empathy, and communication skills evolve across developmental stages and how consistent boundary setting promotes emotional safety, respect, and positive relationships

Presented by Kelly Petravicz, LCSW, an Early Intervention Program Director.

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