



## What training models exist for new parent partners to become effective advocates?

Parent partners<sup>1</sup> play a critical role in supporting parents who are currently involved with the child welfare system. As individuals with lived experience navigating the system, parent partners have perspectives and expertise unique from other stakeholders. To support new parent partners to become effective mentors and advocates, it is essential to provide them the appropriate training before they begin their role and serve families directly.

To complement the strategy brief, [\*How do parent partner programs recruit, train, and supervise parents with lived experience?\*](#), eight programs have shared the training topics that new parent partners must complete during their onboarding process. These programs reflect the variety of different models and approaches that parent partner programs use, such as community-based programs, court-based programs, and child welfare agency-based programs.



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PROGRAM AND DESCRIPTION	TRAINING TOPICS
<p><b>Arizona</b> <a href="#">Family Involvement Center</a><sup>2</sup></p> <p>The Family Involvement Center is a family-run organization providing peer support for parents involved in the child welfare system, as well as in behavioral health. Its parent partner program is based on the Parents 4 Parents model developed in Washington state (see below).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Sharing your story</li><li>• Engagement</li><li>• Boundaries</li><li>• Mandatory reporting</li><li>• Confidentiality</li><li>• Impact of trauma</li><li>• DCS 101</li><li>• Non-adversarial advocacy</li><li>• Self-care</li><li>• Workplace etiquette</li><li>• Peer Parent Support Certification</li></ul>
<p><b>California</b> <a href="#">Riverside County Children's Services</a><sup>3</sup></p> <p>The parent partner program in Riverside County is based out of the county's child welfare agency. Its model was designed by a group of six parents with lived experience in the system who the agency hired to develop and operationalize a parent partner program.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Engagement</li><li>• Self-care</li><li>• Motivational Interviewing</li><li>• How to tell story</li><li>• Cultural sensitivity</li><li>• How to be client-centered</li><li>• How to advocate for treatment of both parents, including fathers</li></ul> <p><b>Approach:</b> Training is delivered in nine daily sessions, spread out over a few months, and currently is undergoing a redesign. Core training is offered through the <a href="#">Continuing and Professional Education</a> program at the University of California, Davis, and includes parent partners as trainers. Additional trainings are available through other community partners.</p>
<p><b>California</b> <a href="#">Stanford Sierra Youth &amp; Families</a><sup>4</sup></p> <p>The parent partner program at Stanford Sierra grew out of the organization's wraparound services model, and peer partners are now embedded within every program at the agency. Child welfare parent partners are co-located at child welfare offices in three Northern California counties.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Boundaries</li><li>• High fidelity wraparound model</li><li>• Family-centered principles</li><li>• How to tell your story</li><li>• Cultural competency</li><li>• Engagement</li><li>• Discharge</li><li>• CPR and first aid</li><li>• Mandatory reporting</li><li>• Constructive feedback and communication</li><li>• Therapeutic Crisis Intervention</li></ul>

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<p><b>Iowa</b> <a href="#">Parent Partners for Families</a><sup>5</sup> through <a href="#">Children &amp; Families of Iowa</a></p> <p>Originally implemented by the state Department of Human Services, the Iowa Parent Partners Approach now is operated through a contract with Children &amp; Families of Iowa, a nonprofit that provides a variety of prevention and intervention services to families.</p>	<p>Before mentoring:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Building a Better Future</li><li>• Mandated reporter</li><li>• Boundaries and safety issues</li><li>• DHS 101</li><li>• Family interaction</li><li>• Confidentiality</li></ul> <p>During the first year:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Solution focused meetings</li><li>• Domestic violence</li><li>• Mental health</li><li>• Cultural competency</li><li>• Substance use</li></ul> <p><b>Approach:</b> Parent partners identified the training topics. Additional training opportunities are available through the community on topics such as implicit bias and trauma-informed care, allowing for enhanced learning and networking.</p>
<p><b>Kentucky</b> <a href="#">Sobriety, Treatment, and Recovery Team (START)</a><sup>6</sup> (National START Model: <a href="#">Children and Family Futures</a>)</p> <p>Kentucky's parent partners programs is an affiliate of the national START model. Parent partners (called family mentors in START) are individuals in long-term recovery from substance use who also have lived experience with the child welfare system.</p> <p>The University of Kentucky hires the parent partners, pairing them with a specialized START caseworker from the child welfare agency. The partnership is housed within the state's child welfare agency and focuses its work on families with young children that are impacted by parental substance use.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Introduction to community-based services</li><li>• Child welfare overview/START mini academy</li><li>• START foundational training</li><li>• START minimum work guidelines and START manual chapter review</li><li>• Data systems training</li><li>• Responding to the impact of implicit bias</li><li>• Understanding cultural differences and implicit bias</li><li>• Domestic violence course</li><li>• Motivational interviewing</li><li>• Recovery Champions</li><li>• Online modules on substance use and child welfare from the <a href="#">National Center on Substance Abuse and Child Welfare</a></li><li>• Peer Support Specialist Training (30 hours)</li></ul>

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<p><b>Oklahoma</b> <a href="#">NorthCare</a><sup>7</sup></p> <p>NorthCare is an integrated behavioral health services provider offering a number of mental health and substance use services. Parent partners provide support to parents with an open child welfare case whose children are in out-of-home care.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Confidentiality</li><li>• CPR and first aid</li><li>• Cultural awareness, sensitivity, and competence</li><li>• Domestic violence education</li><li>• Ethics</li><li>• Mandatory reporting</li><li>• Motivational interviewing</li><li>• Peer Recovery Support Specialist Certification (through the state of Oklahoma)</li><li>• Safety training</li><li>• Therapeutic options</li><li>• Trauma-informed care</li></ul> <p><b>Approach:</b> Training is conducted in multiple forms over the first 90 days. It is delivered through agency orientation, online platforms, classroom learning, and one-on-one training sessions. New parent partners also receive opportunities to shadow and observe experienced parent partners doing their jobs before serving families on their own.</p>
<p><b>Oregon</b> <a href="#">Morrison Child &amp; Family Services</a><sup>8</sup> Parent Mentor Program</p> <p>Morrison Child &amp; Family Services provides a continuum of prevention, mental health, and substance use treatment services for youth, along with foster care services.</p> <p>Its parent partner program is a collaboration with the state's child welfare agency and other community partners, and focuses on supporting parents involved with the child welfare system.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Overview of the parent mentor program</li><li>• Self-care and personal growth</li><li>• Mentoring skills: communication</li><li>• Professional conduct-boundaries and ethics</li><li>• Mentoring skills: motivational interviewing and stages of change</li><li>• Crisis intervention</li><li>• Professional conduct-relationship building</li><li>• Mentoring skills: advocacy</li><li>• Mentoring skills: empowerment</li><li>• Mentoring skills: family dynamics</li><li>• Community resources and system navigation</li><li>• Professional conduct: documentation overview</li><li>• Culturally responsive practice</li><li>• Child abuse and neglect</li><li>• Health and wellness</li></ul> <p><b>Approach:</b> Training spans 123 hours, contains about 15 units, and includes 30 to 40 hours of job shadowing. The Parent Mentor Program has an implementation manual for supervisors at new startup sites.</p>

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<p><b>Washington</b> <a href="#">Parents for Parents (P4P)</a><sup>9</sup></p> <p>The P4P program started through a small group of parent allies, in partnership with the Children's Home Society of Washington. Organizations hosting the program include county courts, local nonprofits, and other community-based organizations.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• P4P program components</li><li>• Role and responsibilities</li><li>• Dependency system</li><li>• Hearing outreach and role</li><li>• Engagement skills</li><li>• Story sharing</li><li>• Group facilitation</li><li>• Cultural competency</li><li>• Community resources</li><li>• Data collection/retention</li><li>• Reframing/validation</li><li>• Boundaries and ethics</li><li>• Court structure</li><li>• Mandated reporting</li><li>• Self-care</li><li>• Professionalism</li><li>• Employment soft skills</li></ul>

To learn more, visit [Questions from the field](#) at [Casey.org](#).

- 1 Parent partners also are known as parent mentors, peer partners, peer mentors, and other similar terms. The name of the program and the title of the role vary by organization. For purposes of this brief, the term "parent partner program" is used and the parents who provide these services are referred to as "parent partners."
- 2 Information provided by Karin Kline, director of child welfare initiatives, Family Involvement Center, January 27, 2022.
- 3 Information provided by Roger DeLeon, parent partner, Riverside County (Calif.) Children Services Division, January 12, 2022.
- 4 Information provided by Christina Cagle, director of family and youth partnership, Stanford Sierra Youth & Families, January 12, 2022.
- 5 Information provided by Sara Persons, parent partner director, Children & Families of Iowa, January 12, 2022.
- 6 Information provided by Erin Smead, director, Sobriety Treatment and Recovery Team in Kentucky, January 27, 2022.
- 7 Information provided by Karen Coy, program manager, Oklahoma Parent Partners at NorthCare, January 19, 2022.
- 8 Information provided by Linda May Wacker, program director, Morrison Child and Family Services, January 12, 2022.
- 9 Information provided by Heather Cantamessa, national family impact program manager, Children's Home Society of Washington, January 9, 2022.

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