



Spring 2026 Foster Parent Conference

April 24-25, 2026

Registration Brochure

Presented by the Tennessee Department of Children's Services Statewide Training



General Information

The Spring 2026 Foster Parent Conference will be held Friday, April 24 and Saturday, April 25, 2026. This year's conference is a **FREE** virtual event. Pre-registration is required.

Registration Information

The deadline for registration is Saturday, April 18, 2026. [Visit the Foster Parent Conference webpage and select the link provided to register.](#)

Only foster parents who have registered by the deadline will be permitted to attend the conference or join any of the workshop sessions.

1. Complete the registration form and include all requested information. If multiple people within your household will be attending the same conference workshops together, you may submit one form for the household. Include the other household members in the provided field and be sure to provide the full legal names for all attendees. **It is critical that you are able to access the email address you provide with your registration information, or you will not be able to attend the conference.**
2. Select the classes you wish to attend from the dropdown menu provided for each session.
3. When you are satisfied with your selections, submit the form to complete your registration. A copy of your registration will be sent to the email address provided. **Check your promotions, spam, junk, or clutter folders regularly if a confirmation email does not appear in your inbox within 24 hours of submitting your registration.**
4. **Access to workshops:** The week of conference, you will receive an email from Carolyna.Pride@tn.gov with your conference schedule, which will include a link to join each of the workshops you have selected. **Check your promotions, spam, junk, or clutter folders if these emails do not appear in your inbox.** Save these links so that you will be able to join the trainings. If you lose your registration links before training, contact the conference help desk for assistance. Workshops will be delivered using the Microsoft Teams platform. [View the resource guide for additional assistance when accessing live webinars.](#)
5. Course materials will be available in the Brightspace learning management system. Accounts will be created for registrants who do not have Brightspace accounts using the email address provided on the registration form. Communication from Brightspace will appear from system-noreply@tndcs.brightspace.com.

If you have not received links to join training by **Wednesday, April 22, 2026**, contact the [Conference Help Desk](#)¹ for assistance.

Registration Form Overview

Use the following images as a guide when completing your conference registration.

The first section of the registration form collects your role (foster/adoptive/kinship parent, agency staff, or community partner) and agency affiliation (DCS or provider agency), as well as basic contact and demographic information. This information is used to identify participants to ensure that you receive your workshop links and materials, as well as credit for the trainings you attend during conference.

The first item on this form also requests you to indicate whether this is a new registration or a change or update to a previous submission.

¹ Conference Help Desk direct link: <https://forms.gle/KZSy3LykSez9gU5s7>

2026 Spring Foster Parent Conference Registration

Thank you for registering for the 2026 Spring Foster Parent Conference. This is a FREE virtual event and will take place Friday, April 24, and Saturday, April 25, 2026. To find a complete list of workshops and descriptions, visit the [conference webpage](#) and [download the conference brochure](#).

Foster parents are encouraged to discuss their selections with their Foster Care Support Workers prior to registration.

This is a:*

- NEW registration
- UPDATE or CORRECTION to a previously submitted registration

Role *

- Foster/Adoptive/Kinship Parent
- DCS Staff/Provider Agency Staff
- Other Community Partner

Agency or Organization *

TN DCS

Participant (enter your full LEGAL name) *

Jon

First Name

Dorian

Last Name

Enter the FULL LEGAL NAME of any other participants who will be viewing the selected trainings with you.

Elliot Reid

If other members of your household will be participating in the conference but NOT in the same trainings, please submit a separate registration form.

Email *

J.Dorian@SacredHeartHospital.com

Confirm Email *

J.Dorian@SacredHeartHospital.com

Phone *

(615) 931-8787

May we text you at this number? *

- Yes
- No

County *

Davidson

Do you have a DCS Brightspace account? *

- Yes
- No
- I am not sure.

Enter your Brightspace username(s) *

Jon.Dorian

If multiple members of your household are attending the same workshop sessions together, you may complete a single registration form and list additional participants in the space provided. If household members are attending different workshop sessions, please submit a separate form for each attendee.

The email address you provide for your registration will be the address used to contact you for the conference. Registrants with existing Brightspace accounts will also receive system communication about the conference to the email associated with their account. Please ensure you have access to this email so that you can receive communication from the Department of Children's Services about the conference.

If you indicate that you have a Brightspace account, you will also be asked to provide your username(s). Accounts will be created for conference attendees as needed using the information provided in this registration.

The second section of this form collects workshop selections.

All conference attendees will be registered to attend the Conference Welcome Session as well as the keynote sessions on Friday morning and Saturday morning. Use the dropdown menus to select additional workshops for the rest of the conference.

If your Friday Afternoon Session B workshop selection ends before 3:00pm Central/4:00pm Eastern, you will have the opportunity to register for an additional workshop.

If you do not wish to attend a workshop during any of the breakout session times, select, "I do not wish to attend a training at this time." at the bottom of each list.

Course Selection

Conference Welcome Session *

Conference Welcome Session and Agency Updates/Advocates and Mentors (9:00 AM-10:00 AM C/10:00 AM-11:00 AM E) ⌵

Friday Morning Keynote *

1A: Internet Crimes Against Children (10:00 AM-11:30 AM C/11:00 AM-12:30 PM E) ⌵

Friday Afternoon Workshops: Session B *

4B: Emergency Response Toolkit: Putting Prepare into Practice (12:30 PM-2:00 PM C/1:30 PM-3:00 PM E) ⌵

Friday Afternoon Workshops: Session C *

1C: Parenting Without Burning Out (3:00 PM-4:00 PM C/4:00 PM-5:00 PM E) ⌵

Saturday Morning Keynote *

1D: Reflecting on and Reconnecting with One's "Why" for Fostering (9:00 AM-10:45 AM C/10:00 AM-11:45 AM E) ⌵

Saturday Morning Workshops: Session E *

6E: When Things Go Wrong: Preparing for and Navigating Mental Health Crises with Your Child (11:00 AM-12:00 PM C/12:00 PM-1:00 PM E) ⌵

Saturday Afternoon Workshops: Session F *

5F: Handle with Care Verbal De-escalation (1:00 PM-3:00 PM C/2:00 PM-4:00 PM E) ⌵

Submit Form

When you are ready to complete your registration, select the button labeled **Submit Form** beneath the workshop selections. Once your form has been successfully submitted, you will be taken to a confirmation screen with a summary of your form responses.



Thank you for registering for the 2026 Spring Foster Parent Conference, scheduled Friday, April 25, and Saturday, April 25, 2026. During the week of the conference you will receive workshop materials and links to join your conference sessions.

Be sure to use _____ when logging into your sessions the day of training, and enter the full legal names of all participants when requested to ensure you receive training credit.

Your schedule is below.

Schedule for:

John Dorian

Elliot Reid

Workshop Schedule:

Friday, April 24, 2026:

Conference Welcome Session and Agency Updates/Advocates and Mentors
(9:00 AM-10:00 AM C/10:00 AM-11:00 AM E)

1A: Internet Crimes Against Children (10:00 AM-11:30 AM C/11:00 AM-12:30 PM E)

4B: Emergency Response Toolkit: Putting Prepare into Practice (12:30 PM-2:00 PM C/1:30 PM-3:00 PM E)

1C: Parenting Without Burning Out (3:00 PM-4:00 PM C/4:00 PM-5:00 PM E)

Saturday, April 25, 2026:

1D: Reflecting on and Reconnecting with One's "Why" for Fostering (9:00 AM-10:45 AM C/10:00 AM-11:45 AM E)

6E: When Things Go Wrong: Preparing for and Navigating Mental Health Crises with Your Child (11:00 AM-12:00 PM C/12:00 PM-1:00 PM E)

5F: Handle with Care Verbal De-escalation (1:00 PM-3:00 PM C/2:00 PM-4:00 PM E)

[Click here to submit another registration form.](#)

This information will also be emailed to the address provided. Participants will receive a conference schedule letter the week of the conference containing links to join each workshop.

When recording your conference attendance, be sure to enter the same name(s) and email address and the correct Brightspace username (if applicable) you used when registering to ensure you receive proper training credit. The workshop presenter or technical assistant will instruct participants how to receive credit during each session.

Virtual Conference Agenda

Conference attendees can earn up to 11.5 hours of training credit by attending workshops scheduled during all sessions.

- **Friday, April 24, 2026**
 - 9:00am-10:00am Central/10:00am-11:00am Eastern – Conference Welcome and Agency Updates/Advocate and Mentors
Conference attendees receive 1 hour training credit.
 - 10:00am-11:30am Central/11:00am-12:30pm Eastern – Internet Crimes against Children
Attendees receive 1.5 hours of training credit. Fulfills trauma and therapeutic hours.
 - 11:30am-12:30pm Central/12:30pm-1:30pm Eastern – Lunch
 - 12:30pm-4:00pm Central/1:30pm-5:00pm Eastern – Workshops
Attendees receive between 1 to 3 hours of training credit depending on selection.
- **Saturday, April 25, 2026**
 - 9:00am-10:45am Central/10:00am-11:45am Eastern - Reflecting on and Reconnecting with One's "Why" for Fostering
Attendees receive 2 hours of training credit. Fulfills trauma and therapeutic hours.
 - 11:00am-12:00pm Central/12:00pm-1:00pm Eastern – Workshops
Attendees receive 1 hour of training credit.
 - 12:00pm-1:00pm Central/1:00pm-2:00pm Eastern – Lunch
 - 1:00pm-4:00pm Central/2:00pm-5:00pm Eastern – Workshops
Attendees receive between 1.5 to 3 hours of training credit depending on selection.

Conference Welcome Session

This session kicks off our conference and includes important updates and information for foster parents. Please plan to attend this session just as you would attend the Opening Ceremony of an in-person conference.

Virtual Conference Training Etiquette

- All participants must be able to view the training presentation. Participants who call in only will not be able to receive credit for these trainings.
- Participants may not attend training while in a moving vehicle (driver or passenger) or while operating heavy machinery.
- Participants may not attend training while working at their job.
- Cameras are NOT required for conference; however, while on video, participants must be clothed in appropriate classroom attire and may not be in bed.
- All participants must be physically present with the device being used to attend training (for example, participants may not participate via FaceTime, phone, etc., with another participant who is attending the training).
- Participants may not vape, smoke, use tobacco products, or consume alcohol during training.

Friday Keynote Session: Internet Crimes Against Children

In today's connected world, the internet is more than just a tool; it's a primary environment where children socialize, learn, and grow. For foster parents, navigating this landscape presents unique challenges, especially when balancing a child's need for autonomy with the necessity of protection.

This course will cover:

- What foster parents need to watch for on the Internet (common risks and warning signs).
- Safety controls and parental settings on computers, tablets, and phones.
- Identifying harmful apps and understanding their risks.
- Safety considerations when using AI tools like ChatGPT.
- Recognizing and managing hidden apps that may pose risks to children.

This session will be held Friday, April 24, from 10:00am Central/11:00am Eastern to 11:30am Central/12:30pm Eastern. Attendees will receive 1.5 hours of training credit, which foster parents can count toward trauma and therapeutic hours.

About Robert Burghardt:



Assistant Special Agent in Charge, Internet Crimes Against Children (ICAC), Tennessee Bureau of Investigation
Assistant Special Agent in Charge (ASAC) Rob Burghardt began his career with the TBI in 2017 investigating Internet Crimes Against Children (ICAC) and Cyber Crimes. In 2022, he was promoted to ASAC to supervise the TBI's ICAC Task Force. Prior to the TBI, ASAC Burghardt was an Intelligence Specialist with the United States Coast Guard and an Officer with the United States Secret Service assigned to the White House under President Bush's administration. ASAC

Burghardt continues his military career here in Nashville as an Intelligence Analyst with the 218th Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance Group of the TN Air National Guard.

Saturday Keynote Session: Reflecting on and Reconnecting with One's "Why" for Fostering

Foster parenting is a journey defined by profound emotional highs, complex systems, and the steady, quiet work of showing up with love. But even the most dedicated hearts need a moment to pause.

This keynote event is intentionally designed as a "deep breath" for our foster community. It is a space to acknowledge the weight you carry, celebrate the consistency you provide, and remind you that your efforts are seen, valued, and vital.

This course will cover:

- Encouragement and inspiration during challenging times
- The importance of partnership and support (with spouses, co-parents, agencies and community)
- The role of self-care and sustainability in long-term fostering
- Reflecting on and reconnecting with one's "why" for fostering, especially when the work feels heavy

This session will be held Saturday, April 25, from 9:00am Central/10:00am Eastern to 10:45am Central/11:45am Eastern. Attendees will receive 2 hours of training credit, which foster parents can count toward trauma and therapeutic hours.

About Keith McGee:

Keith McGee is a strategic and visionary executive with more than forty-five years of leadership experience in business operations, executive management, and team development. In 2022, he joined the University of Tennessee Institute for Public Service where he serves with the Naifeh Center for Effective Leadership, advancing strategic leadership and public sector excellence.

A Tennessee native, Keith dedicated nearly 28 years to city and county government, retiring as Chief Administrative Officer for the City of Memphis. In this capacity, he led the daily operations of the country's 18th-largest city. His municipal service also includes roles as Director and Deputy Director of the Human Resources Division and Secretary to the Civil Service Commission.



Before assuming leadership roles with the City of Memphis, Keith served more than eleven years with the Shelby County Sheriff's Department. He progressively assumed positions with increasing responsibility including Sergeant, Administrative Lieutenant, Jail Support Manager, and Operations Officer for the first Corrections Training Academy. He also provided national training and consulting for the U.S. Department of Justice National Institute of Corrections.

Keith previously led the Keith McGee Group, an executive and human resources consulting firm whose clients include Federal Express, the Tennessee Department of Labor and Workforce Development, the University of Memphis, McNeill Hotel Company, and the City of Franklin.

He holds a Bachelor of Science in Human Services from Thomas Edison State University and a Master's Degree in Instructional Design and Technology from Trevecca Nazarene University.

Keith enjoys quality time with his family and values opportunities to travel, enjoy film and music, and explore great culinary experiences. He is married to the former Natasha Metcalf, and they have three wonderful children, including one who was adopted.

Training Requirements

[Policy 16.9 Attachment: Required Training Chart for Foster Parents²](#)

Effective March 7, 2024:

Each **foster parent or caregiver** must complete the following post approval training courses during the specified timeframes below:

- First Year
 - Creating Normalcy through Prudent Parenting (3 hours)
 - Any approved exploitation/trafficking course (credit hours vary)
 - One approved trauma-informed training (credit hours vary)
 - Preventing Suicide among Foster Care Youth (3 hours)
 - This training fulfills the trauma requirement. This training also counts toward therapeutic hours for therapeutic foster homes.
 - Each **foster parent or caregiver** must complete additional training to total 8 hours with the above requirements.
- Second Year and thereafter:
 - CPR & First Aid every 2 years (minimum of 6 hours)
 - Medical Resources and Information Refresher every 2 years (2.5 hours)
 - One trauma-informed training required annually (credit hours vary)
 - Additional training hours to meet 8-hour annual requirements (read below for additional information)

All **foster parents and caregivers** in the home must complete CPR & First Aid (minimum 6 hours) and Medical Resources and Information Refresher (2.5 hours) every two years. The remaining hours may be chosen from other trainings offered or approved by the Department of Children's Services Office of Statewide Training.

If you have questions or would like additional information about training, please contact your Foster Care Support (FCS) Worker.

² Required Training Chart for Foster Parents direct link:
<https://public.powerdms.com/TNDCS/documents/2104735>

Workshop Detail

Friday, April 24, 2026

Session A

Start	End	Course Detail
9:00am C 10:00am E	10:00am C 11:00am E	Conference Welcome Session, Agency Updates, Advocates and Mentors Presented by Ronya Faulkner, Lindsey Coleman, and Sarah Webb 1.0 hour credit
10:00am C 11:00am E	11:30am C 12:30pm E	Keynote 1A: Internet Crimes against Children Presented by Robert Burghardt, TN Bureau of Investigation 2.0 hours credit In today's connected world, the internet is more than just a tool; it's a primary environment where children socialize, learn, and grow. For foster parents, navigating this landscape presents unique challenges, especially when balancing a child's need for autonomy with the necessity of protection. This course will cover: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What foster parents need to watch for on the Internet (common risks and warning signs).• Safety controls and parental settings on computers, tablets, and phones.• Identifying harmful apps and understanding their risks.• Safety considerations when using AI tools like ChatGPT.• Recognizing and managing hidden apps that may pose risks to children. Fulfills Trauma and Therapeutic Requirements

Break for Lunch

11:30am-12:30pm Central/12:30pm-1:30pm Eastern

Session B

Start	End	Course Detail
12:30pm C 1:30pm E	3:30pm C 4:30pm E	<p>1B: Connecting the Dots: What Every Foster Parent Should Know about CANS</p> <p>Presented by Nena Horton and Michelle Reiter, TN DCS</p> <p>3 hours credit</p> <p>The Child and Adolescents Strengths and Needs Assessment (CANS) is used by DCS to communicate needs and strengths of youth and their families. In addition to the importance of the child/youth's voice and the family's voice for the CANS, the foster parent's voice is also one of the most critical and vital elements to ensure positive outcomes for that child/youth. This course will share information about the what/why/how of CANS, what can be learned about traumatic experiences and reactions a youth may have, and ways that teams can help youth to "build their bounce."</p>
12:30pm C 1:30pm E	3:30pm C 4:30pm E	<p>2B: Creating Normalcy through Prudent Parenting</p> <p>Presented by Amanda Felts, Harmony Family Center</p> <p>3 hours credit</p> <p>This training introduces and instructs participants on how to create normalcy through reasonable prudent parenting standards which is characterized by careful, thoughtful parental decision making that is intended to maintain a child's health, safety, and best interest, while creating a more normal life.</p> <p>Fulfills first year training requirement.</p>
12:30pm C 1:30pm E	2:30pm C 3:30pm E	<p>3B: Sexual Abuse: Responding to Disclosure</p> <p>Presented by Josh Johnson, Sexual Assault Center</p> <p>2 hours credit</p> <p>In this training, participants will learn the basics of how to respond to disclosures of sexual assault. We will cover the basics of the neurophysiology of trauma, how to support survivors, and the importance of responding in ways that re-establish power and control for the victim/survivor.</p> <p>Fulfills Trauma and Therapeutic Requirements</p>

Start	End	Course Detail
12:30pm C 1:30pm E	2:00pm C 3:00pm E	<p>4B: Emergency Response Toolkit: Putting Prepare into Practice Presented by Angela Webster, Association of Infant Mental Health in TN (AIMHiTN)</p> <p>1.5 hours credit</p> <p>Emergency Response Toolkit: Putting Prepare into Practice, is a three-part series. This training will be part one of three, digging deeper into AIMHiTN's Emergency Response Toolkit. This part will focus on the first pillar, Preparation, of the toolkit. The training will highlight enhancing foster parents understanding of how emergencies can impact infant and early childhood mental health. Foster parents will practice what an early relational approach to emergency preparedness may look like through break out room scenarios. Additionally, we will utilize the toolkit to prepare foster parents and families for emergencies and/or Natural Disasters, as we aim to support the children and families in our community.</p>
12:30pm C 1:30pm E	3:00pm C 4:00pm E	<p>5B: Drug Trends and Trafficking Presented by Hayley Griffith, TCTA</p> <p>2.0 hours credit</p> <p>This course will explore the crucial links between human trafficking and substance use and reveal how traffickers exploit youth through the means of drugs and alcohol as well as how substance use can complicate the process of exiting the human trafficking reality and pose challenges for young survivors trying to heal and rebuild their lives. Learners will also discover how to offer support and utilize regional resources throughout Tennessee.</p> <p>Fulfills the Trafficking Requirement</p>
12:30pm C 1:30pm E	2:00pm C 3:00pm E	<p>6B: Understanding Mental Health Diagnoses for Children Presented by Dr. Liz Paiml, UT Health Science Center COE</p> <p>1.5 hours credit</p> <p>Children in foster care have significantly higher rates of mental health diagnoses compared to non-foster children. Nationally, up to 80% of children in foster care have at least one mental health diagnosis, with 23% carrying more than one diagnosis. Foster parents play a pivotal role in supporting healing, stability, and the emotional well-being of their foster children. Understanding a foster child's background and emotional state is crucial for creating effective support plans. Foster parents who embody these traits can positively influence their foster child's mental health, especially through understanding of mental health diagnoses and active participation in treatment. The current course will educate foster parents on child mental health by providing an overview of common mental health diagnoses for children in foster care, including diagnostic criteria, prevalence, common presentations, and supportive strategies.</p> <p>Fulfills Trauma and Therapeutic Requirements</p>

Start	End	Course Detail
12:30pm C 1:30pm E	2:30pm C 3:30pm E	<p>7B: TBRI Foundations-Empowering Self-Regulation Presented by Shianne Newell, TN DCS 2 hours credit This training is designed to give participants insight into the roots of self-regulation difficulties common among children from “hard places.” We hope to give participants practical tools to facilitate learning and practicing self-regulation skills. Fulfills Trauma and Therapeutic Requirements</p>
12:30pm C 1:30pm E	2:00pm C 3:00pm E	<p>8B: Supporting Children with Intellectual Disabilities in Foster Care Presented by Dr. Kelsey Maloney, UT Health Science Center COE 1.5 hours credit Intellectual developmental disorder (IDD), or intellectual disability, occurs in 1-3% of the population. Children with IDD are twice as likely to enter the foster care system. Despite this, child welfare professionals and foster parents may not receive specific training in caring for this population. After attending this session, participants should be able to define IDD, identify common behavior concerns, develop strategies for behavior management, establish strategies to address hygiene and puberty concerns, implement methods to support socialization, and determine paths to school advocacy. Fulfills Trauma and Therapeutic Requirements</p>
12:30pm C 1:30pm E	2:30pm C 3:30pm E	<p>9B: Calming Down with Your Vagus Nerve: How to Use Brain Science to Give Yourself a Reset Presented by Ashley Jasinski, TN Dept. of Mental Health & Substance Abuse Services 2.0 hours credit Screaming, tantrums, big emotions and feeling out of control? Think of your nervous system like a car and the Vagus nerve controls the brake. In this session we will discuss the brain and body science on why the Vagus nerve is important and how it not only controls behavior but impacts many other areas of the body. Participants will learn practical and easy strategies to stimulate the Vagus nerve to provide a relief and reset in times of stress. Most importantly, participants will leave with tools for both building daily habits and in-the-moment activities to help get the Vagus nerve back online and reset to calm. Fulfills Trauma and Therapeutic Requirements</p>

Start	End	Course Detail
12:30pm C 1:30pm E	2:30pm C 3:30pm E	<p>10B: Placement Stability Presented by Courtney Cleek, TN DCS</p> <p>2.0 hours credit</p> <p>Placement stability gives children the nurturing environment they need to grow strong roots and thrive. In this training, participants will learn about placement stability by definition, the current landscape of placement stability, and positive caregiver factors that contribute to placement stability. Additionally, this course will provide strategies that contribute to successful placement connections through relationships and partnership.</p> <p>Fulfills Trauma and Therapeutic Requirements</p>

Session C

Start	End	Course Detail
3:00pm C 4:00pm E	4:00pm C 5:00pm E	<p>1C: Parenting Without Burning Out Presented by Naomi Asher, The Maven, LLC.</p> <p>1 hour credit</p> <p>Foster parenting is meaningful work, but it can also be emotionally and physically exhausting. This course helps foster parents recognize early signs of burnout and offers practical, realistic tools to stay healthy and engaged in caregiving. Participants will explore common stressors unique to foster care, including trauma-related behaviors and system demands, and learn strategies to reduce overwhelm, set boundaries, and protect their energy. The course also normalizes the use of respite care as a responsible and proactive support. Caregivers will leave with a personalized plan to sustain their well-being while providing stable, nurturing homes for children in their care.</p> <p>Fulfills Trauma and Therapeutic Requirements</p>
3:00pm C 4:00pm E	4:00pm C 5:00pm E	<p>2C: Understanding an ADHD Diagnosis for Children Who Have Experienced Trauma Presented by Dr. Jennifer Stewart, Vanderbilt Kennedy Center TRIAD Services</p> <p>1 hour credit</p> <p>Children who have experienced trauma are often diagnosed with ADHD- but trauma-related symptoms and ADHD can look strikingly similar. This workshop is designed to help caregivers understand the overlap and distinctions of an ADHD diagnosis in children with trauma histories. Participants will explore how trauma effects brain development, attachment, emotional regulation, attention and behavior and how these impacts can mimic or mask ADHD symptoms.</p> <p>Fulfills Trauma and Therapeutic Requirements</p>

Start	End	Course Detail
3:00pm C 4:00pm E	4:00pm C 5:00pm E	<p>3C: De-escalation Series: Decreasing Crises by Creating a Comprehensive Support Plan: The Tile and Grout Method Presented by Dr. Keith Bailey, Harmony Family Center 1 hour credit</p> <p>Sometimes, meeting the needs of our children and decreasing crises looks like making plans to offer support and teaching here and there. However, some of our children need a full array of supports 24/7. This webinar will explore the “tile and grout” method of building supports. Instead of building a path to health and healing with only a few steppingstones, we will look at how to create a solid path of intentional and continuous support.</p> <p>Fulfills Trauma and Therapeutic Requirements</p>
3:00pm C 4:00pm E	4:00pm C 5:00pm E	<p>4C: Legislative Update Presented by James Layman, TN DCS 1 hour credit</p> <p>This presentation will include the legislative updates relative to DCS from the 114th General Assembly, as well as updates over the last couple of years.</p>
3:00pm C 4:00pm E	4:00pm C 5:00pm E	<p>5C: BlueCare Resources Presented by Tyler Greer and Jeremiah Hughes, BCBS TN 1 hour credit</p> <p>Join us for an engaging session as we delve into the benefits and resources offered by BlueCare TN's SelectKids program. As Tennessee's exclusive health plan for children in foster care and state custody, we understand the complexities of navigating the healthcare and foster systems. Alongside delivering healthcare benefits, our compassionate Care Team stands ready to assist foster families in coordinating their child's healthcare requirements seamlessly. During this presentation, we will discuss services and resources available for foster children and families through BlueCare, including behavioral health support, dedicated social workers, expert dieticians, nurse case managers, pharmacy specialists, hassle-free appointment scheduling, comprehensive preventative health programs, and much more.</p>

Saturday, April 25, 2026

Session D

Start	End	Course Detail
9:00am C 10:00am E	10:45am C 11:45am E	<p>Keynote 1D: Reflecting on and reconnecting with one’s “Why” for fostering</p> <p>Presented by Keith McGee, UT Naifeh Center for Effective Leadership</p> <p>2 hours credit</p> <p>Foster parenting is a journey defined by profound emotional highs, complex systems, and the steady, quiet work of showing up with love. But even the most dedicated hearts need a moment to pause.</p> <p>This keynote event is intentionally designed as a "deep breath" for our foster community. It is a space to acknowledge the weight you carry, celebrate the consistency you provide, and remind you that your efforts are seen, valued, and vital.</p> <p>This course will cover:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encouragement and inspiration during challenging times • The importance of partnership and support (with spouses, co-parents, agencies and community) • The role of self-care and sustainability in long-term fostering • Reflecting on and reconnecting with one’s “why” for fostering, especially when the work feels heavy <p>Fulfills Trauma and Therapeutic Requirements</p>

Session E

Start	End	Course Detail
11:00am C 12:00pm E	12:00pm C 1:00pm E	<p>1E: Nutrition on the Go</p> <p>Presented by Shayna Smith, TN DCS</p> <p>1 hour credit</p> <p>This course teaches you how to move past the "fast-food trap" by mastering the art of balanced meals that incorporate all essential food groups. You will learn to optimize your energy through smart hydration and the reduction of sugary, processed snacks, replacing them with nutrient-dense alternatives. By focusing on simple "plan-ahead" strategies, you'll eliminate mealtime decision fatigue and reduce daily stress, ensuring that a busy lifestyle never comes at the expense of your health.</p>

Start	End	Course Detail
11:00am C 12:00pm E	12:00pm C 1:00pm E	<p>2E: Lead Poisoning Presented by Rachael Stough, TN Department of Health 1 hour credit</p> <p>Lead exposure remains a significant public health challenge, particularly for developing children. This course is designed to equip parents, foster caregivers, and educators with the essential knowledge to identify lead hazards, understand the biological impacts of exposure, and navigate the specific regulatory and support systems available within the state of Tennessee.</p>
11:00am C 12:00pm E	12:00pm C 1:00pm E	<p>3E: Support Program - Parental Attachment Styles Presented by Kaleigh Hicks, TN DCS 1 hour credit</p> <p>In this curriculum, parents will learn general information about the four basic attachment styles, how those styles form, and how a parent's attachment style impacts how they parent. Parents will also gain an understanding of their specific attachment style. They will be able to identify the strengths and challenges of that attachment style to develop a healthier, more secure attachment with a child who has experienced trauma. This curriculum also offers practical scenarios that parents commonly encounter and learn how to respond to triggers or frustrations they may experience in parenting, with the goal of moving forward in healthier patterns.</p>
11:00am C 12:00pm E	12:00pm C 1:00pm E	<p>4E: Feelings In Motion Presented by Chante Hensley, Bair Foundation 1 hour credit</p> <p>The "Feelings in Motion" curriculum is a social-emotional learning program designed to help children identify, understand, and regulate emotions through movement, vocabulary development, and mindfulness. It often uses a "body scan" approach, teaching children to recognize physical sensations associated with feelings to improve emotional regulation.</p> <p>Fulfills Trauma and Therapeutic Requirements</p>
11:00am C 12:00pm E	12:00pm C 1:00pm E	<p>5E: Special Investigations Unit (SIU) Overview Presented by Emily Hodge and Mikelle Ciere, TN DCS 1 hour credit</p> <p>Foster parents will learn what happens when a foster home receives a referral; the role of SIU as a result of a referral, and the investigative tasks of SIU, timeframes. Additionally, the presenters will share information about the types of allegations, the types of classifications, partnership between SIU and foster parents and tips for responding to a disclosure made by a child.</p>

Start	End	Course Detail
11:00am C 12:00pm E	12:00pm C 1:00pm E	<p>6E: When Things Go Wrong: Preparing for and Navigating Mental Health Crises with your Child</p> <p>Presented by Sinead Love, Harmony Family Center</p> <p>1 hour credit</p> <p>When parenting children from hard places, we often encounter mental health crises, moments where it really pays off to have planned ahead. Much like preparing your family with fire drills or safety plans, we will think through what could arise in terms of a mental health crisis, walk through the steps to take and plan for resources you will want to have on hand. Challenging moments feel far less scary when we have prepared ourselves for what might happen ahead of time. You'll leave having prepared ahead for if a crisis moment ever arises, leaving you more empowered and ready to support your child.</p> <p>Fulfills Trauma and Therapeutic Requirements</p>

Break for Lunch

12:00pm-1:00pm Central/1:00pm-2:00pm Eastern

Session F

Start	End	Course Detail
1:00pm C 2:00pm E	3:00pm C 4:00pm E	<p>1F: Together Facing the Challenge: Impactful Relationships: A Trauma-Informed Approach to Building Connections</p> <p>Presented by Kaleigh Hicks, TN DCS</p> <p>2 hours credit</p> <p>Together Facing the Challenge (TFTC) is a trauma-informed, evidence-based training and coaching model for caregivers. Beginning with the importance of relationship building, TFTC helps caregivers utilize interventions to help shape new behaviors while supporting youth on their healing journey.</p> <p>Fulfills trauma and therapeutic hours.</p>

Start	End	Course Detail
1:00pm C 2:00pm E	4:00pm C 5:00pm E	<p>2F: CORE Teen: Parenting Youth Who Have Experienced Trauma Presented by Tamara Gray, TN DCS 3 hours credit</p> <p>This session will define what trauma means in the context of its impact on youth in the foster care system. This class will describe ways that traumatic stress and adversity impact a youth’s development as well as describe the importance of responding to the underlying cause of a youth’s behaviors. The core competency of this class is that parents will nurture and promote the well-being of their youth through trauma informed parenting. Recommended Right Time Videos: Parental Adaptation; Understanding and Recognizing the Effects of Trauma. Fulfills trauma and therapeutic hours.</p>
1:00pm C 2:00pm E	3:00pm C 4:00pm E	<p>3F: Tool Time for Dads: Relational Parenting When It's Tough Presented by Joshua Legg and S. Chris Troutt, The Papillion Center 2 hours credit</p> <p>Parenting children from hard places can be challenging. Kids from hard places, just grow up to be adults from hard places. But what happens when those adults, particularly men, are faced with parenting a child from a hard place or one that has special needs? Every infraction parents have as an individual will be challenged. The rate of divorce in families with a special needs child may be as high as 87% in the US. In addition, nearly 1 in 10 men in the US experience depression or anxiety but less than half will receive treatment. Also worth noting, over 6 million men suffer from depression per year, but male depression often goes under diagnosed. Lastly, men are less likely to address previous traumatic experiences they have had. These statistics combined with parenting a child from a hard place can create a high stress atmosphere leaving lasting impacts on families and the men who love them. This presentation offers understanding and tools to equip and support men who are parenting children from hard places to rise above their own wounds, to heal, move from surviving to thriving and becoming fully present with their loved ones. Fulfills Trauma and Therapeutic Requirements</p>

Start	End	Course Detail
1:00pm C 2:00pm E	3:00pm C 4:00pm E	<p>4F: Medical Resource and Information Refresher Presented by Belinda Bernard, TN DCS 2 hours credit This course is required for all DCS foster parents every two years after approval. This refresher course includes an update on medication administration policies and procedures. The course also provides an update on the knowledge to safely and effectively administer medications to children in care. Topics included in this class range from self-storage and disposal of medication to common errors in medication administration. Fulfills biennial MRI training requirement.</p>
1:00pm C 2:00pm E	3:00pm C 4:00pm E	<p>5F: Handle with Care Verbal De-escalation Presented by Shawna Welker and Toney Horton, TN DCS 2 hours credit In this workshop focusing on verbal de-escalation, participants will learn the difference between inward and outward tension/expression; the tension reduction cycle; the solid object relationship model; and the use of prompt, skillful, and appropriate intervention tactics on a verbal basis. Fulfills Trauma and Therapeutic Requirements</p>
1:00pm C 2:00pm E	3:00pm C 4:00pm E	<p>6F: Foster Child Bill of Rights Presented by Andrea Nash, TN DCS 1.5 hours credit The Foster Child Bill of Rights course will explore new legislation in Tennessee that guarantees children in state custody access to education, housing, medical care, and a safe environment free from abuse and neglect.</p>
1:00pm C 2:00pm E	3:00pm C 4:00pm E	<p>7F: What Trauma Looks Like at 7am, 4pm, and Bedtime: Supporting Foster Children through the Hardest Parts of the Day Presented by Dr. Teri Rouse 2 hours credit Trauma often surfaces during the most vulnerable parts of the day — rushed mornings, after-school transitions, and bedtime. In this practical and compassionate two-hour session, Dr. Teri Rouse explores why these pressure points trigger dysregulation and how trauma impacts a child's brain, body, and behavior. Foster parents will gain clear insight into what's really happening beneath the behavior and walk away with realistic, trauma-informed strategies to reduce escalation, increase connection, and create calmer daily rhythms. Fulfills Trauma and Therapeutic Requirements</p>

Start	End	Course Detail
1:00pm C 2:00pm E	3:00pm C 4:00pm E	<p>8F: Understanding the Court Process for Foster Parents Presented by Sammi Maifair, Stacy Lynch and Carrie Mason, TN DCS and AOC 2 hours credit</p> <p>In this session, speakers from the TN Court Improvement Program will provide foster parents information regarding the dependency and neglect process in Tennessee juvenile courts and define important roles within the child welfare case that interact with the child in foster care. The speakers will discuss the critical perspective that foster parents provide to the court, the foster parent's right to notice, and the right of foster parents who have served youth in their home for 9 months or longer to present best interest evidence in dependency and neglect hearings.</p>
1:00pm C 2:00pm E	3:00pm C 4:00pm E	<p>9F: Effects of Cannabis on the Adolescent Brain Presented by Dr. Kristen Gilliland, Vanderbilt 2 hours credit</p> <p>In this workshop, participants will learn about the significant increase in cannabis potency, look deeper into the rescheduling of marijuana from schedule I to schedule III, and gain important knowledge on how THC interacts with adolescent brain development, study scientific evidence on THC's impact on brain maturation, emotional regulation, cognition, and addiction vulnerability. Plus, we will look at the connections between cannabis use and long-term psychiatric outcomes like depression, anxiety, and even psychosis.</p>

Workshops Fulfilling Training Requirements

Workshop	Fulfills
1A: Internet Crimes Against Children	Trauma, therapeutic
2B: Creating Normalcy through Prudent Parenting	First year training requirement
3B: Sexual Abuse: Responding to Disclosure	Trauma, therapeutic
5B: Drug Trends and Trafficking	Trafficking, trauma, therapeutic
6B: Understanding Mental Health Diagnoses for Children	Trauma, therapeutic
7B: TBRI Foundations-Empowering Self-Regulation	Trauma, therapeutic
8B: Supporting Children with Intellectual Disabilities in Foster Care	Trauma, therapeutic
9B: Calming Down with Your Vagus Nerve: How to Use Brain Science to Give Yourself a Reset	Trauma, therapeutic
10B: Placement Stability	Trauma, therapeutic
1C: Parenting Without Burning Out	Trauma, therapeutic
2C: Understanding an ADHD Diagnosis for Children Who Have Experienced Trauma	Trauma, therapeutic
3C: De-escalation Series: Decreasing Crises by Creating a Comprehensive Support Plan: The Tile and Grout Method	Trauma, therapeutic
1D: Reflecting on and Reconnecting with One's "Why" for Fostering	Trauma, therapeutic
4E: Feelings In Motion	Trauma, therapeutic
6E: When Things Go Wrong: Preparing for and Navigating Mental Health Crises with Your Child	Trauma, therapeutic
1F: Together Facing the Challenge: Impactful Relationships: A Trauma-Informed Approach to Building Connections	Trauma, therapeutic
2F: CORE Teen: Parenting Youth Who Have Experienced Trauma	Trauma, therapeutic
3F: Tool Time for Dads: Relational Parenting When It's Tough	Trauma, therapeutic
4F: Medical Resource and Information Refresher	Biennial training requirement
5F: Handle with Care Verbal De-escalation	Trauma, therapeutic
6F: Foster Child Bill of Rights	Trauma, therapeutic
7F: What Trauma Looks Like at 7am, 4pm, and Bedtime: Supporting Foster Children through the Hardest Parts of the Day	Trauma, therapeutic

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the deadline for conference registration?

The deadline for registration is Saturday, April 18, 2026. Due to the online nature of the conference and the need to communicate with participants ahead of workshops, there will be no exceptions.

How do we register if we are a couple or have other adults in the home?

Household members who will be attending the same courses can submit a single registration form. Follow the prompts on the registration form to identify co-parents or additional household members in your conference registration.

If you do **NOT** intend to attend the same workshops, please submit separate registrations for each attendee.

How do I change my workshop selection?

Conference attendees may request changes to workshop selections through April 18, 2026. Please submit another registration form for any participants wishing to modify their workshop selections.

Choose the option labeled “UPDATE or CORRECTION to a previously submitted registration” for the first item on the registration form.

How many training credit hours are available this year?

Depending on workshop selections, participants can earn up to 11.5 credit hours by attending workshops during morning and afternoon sessions both days of the conference.

The conference is a great opportunity for DCS parents to fulfill training requirements for the year and helps provider parents fulfill therapeutic training requirements.

How do I access my virtual workshops?

Participants will receive a confirmation letter the week of the conference containing links to join each workshop. The sender for these emails will be Carolyna.Pride@tn.gov. Please save this email address in your contacts, and check your spam, junk, clutter, and promotional folders if you have not received these emails in your inbox. **These links will also appear inside your Brightspace account in the conference course.**

If you have not received your conference schedule email by April 22, 2026, contact ei_dcs.brightspace@tn.gov for assistance.

Workshops will be delivered using Microsoft Teams. [View the resource guide](#)³ if you are unfamiliar with the platform or need assistance troubleshooting the app. Please ensure the app has been downloaded to your device and is up to date before the day of the conference. Links for the mobile app and web app are included in the resource guide.

How do I access workshop materials?

Workshop materials, including handouts, slide deck presentations, and resource links will be available in Brightspace. You may download these items ahead of time or follow along during the presentation as applicable.

Conference participants will be enrolled in their selected workshops in Brightspace, where they will be able to access these materials and other resources.

How do I get credit for attending conference workshops?

Participants will be instructed how to ensure their attendance has been captured during each workshop. The week following the conference, attendance will be recorded in Brightspace. Attendees will be able to access awards and certificates directly from their Brightspace accounts. Learners receive email notifications once awards have been issued; these are sent to the email associated with each learner account.

If you have not received your conference certificates by **Tuesday, May 5, 2026**, please contact ei_dcs.brightspace@tn.gov for assistance.

How do I know if a training fulfills trauma or therapeutic hours/another training requirement?

The course descriptions in the brochure indicate which requirements are fulfilled by each course, if applicable. Additionally, the table under the “Workshops Fulfilling Training Requirement” section lists courses fulfilling specific requirements. Attendees will receive a badge for applicable requirements in Brightspace to indicate these trainings should be applied to their required hours.

³ Microsoft Teams Resource Guide:

<https://www.tn.gov/content/dam/tn/dcs/documents/training/fpresources/MSTeams-guide.pdf>

To find additional training opportunities, visit our website:

<https://www.tn.gov/dcs/program-areas/training/fpt.html>

Live Virtual Classroom Deliveries (Webinars):

<https://www.tn.gov/dcs/program-areas/training/fpt/calendars/post-state.html>

Self-Paced Online Training:

<https://www.tn.gov/dcs/program-areas/training/fpt/info/brightspace.html>

Podcast Series:

<https://www.tn.gov/dcs/program-areas/training/cw-resources/dcs-talks.html>

Child Welfare Resources:

<https://www.tn.gov/dcs/program-areas/training/cw-resources.html>