

Parent Partner Activities

- Work with families to promote engagement in case plan activities.
- Help maintain connections between parents and children while in out of home care.
- Share insight and understanding about their own personal experiences that may help parents be successful in their reunification efforts.
- Assist in the goal of reunification and/or the development of appropriate alternative permanent plans.
- Provide a sense of hope and inspiration to parents in the “system”.
- Connect parents with resources.
- Provide encouragement, outreach and support.
- Work with Parent Partner team (Parent Partner Coordinator, child welfare case worker, planning committees, etc.).

The Parent Partners are compensated for their time and travel and are asked for at least a one-year commitment to mentor at least two families. Parent Partners commit to working with a family for an average of 7-10 hours a month.

The Parent Partner program provides training, support, and ongoing education for Parent Partners. Parent Partners also meet with the Parent Partner Coordinator weekly for supervision to discuss ongoing issues and case concerns.

Clinical Support is provided for Parent Partner on at least a monthly basis for clinical issues that arise in the provision of services.



Parent Partners



Parents Empowering Parents

For the Parent Partner Handbook
and additional information visit
the Iowa Parent Partner
page at:

<http://www.dhs.state.ia.us>

The Iowa Parent Partner Approach is
funded by DHS and administered by CFI.



children & families of iowa
Restoring hope. Building futures. Changing lives.

OUR MISSION

Parents empowering parents to strengthen families, communities and systems, thereby achieving safety permanency and well being for children.

The Parent Partner Approach

The Parent Partner Approach celebrates individuals who have overcome obstacles through change, recovery, and accountability by using their skills to mentor families who are currently navigating through DHS as their children are in foster or kinship care. Parent Partners demonstrate advocacy and effective communication, while holding families accountable in meeting their case plan goals.

SELECTION PROCESS

Parent Partners are selected based upon their interpersonal skills, successes, and proven abilities to overcome obstacles. Parent Partners have been involved with the Department of Human Services (DHS) due to child protection issues. At one time, their children were removed from their primary care and have since been successfully reunified or child protection issues have been resolved.

EXPERIENCE

Many Parent Partners have had personal experience with domestic violence, substance abuse, and/or mental health issues. It is these

experiences that make Parent Partners so beneficial to families who are currently receiving DHS services due to child protection issues. Parent Partners complete extensive training prior to mentoring families. They are able to offer hope and advocate for families. In addition, they form a critical link between the DHS worker, other professionals, and the family.

PARENT TO MENTOR MATCHING

A parent who is interested in being matched with a Parent Partner should make this request to their DHS caseworker. A parent's request for a Parent Partner mentor is voluntary and the parent may choose to end involvement.

Parent Partners collaborate with social workers, counselors, attorneys and providers to address the needs of families, assist in policy and program development, change perceptions in communities, and facilitate trainings and learning opportunities.

Parent Partners are role models, mentors, resources and supports. Parent Partners are not there to fix another parent. They are not counselors. Parent Partners do not provide childcare, transportation of children or supervision of family interaction (visits).

Parent Partner mentor eligibility requirements

- Have been reunited with children for at least one year. Training may be started after six months of reunification.
- Have had at least one year to resolve issues related to termination of parental rights, or other permanency decisions where children were not reunited with the prospective Parent Partner.
- Have a healthy and stable family situation with no current child welfare involvement for safety issues.
- Have no founded child abuse report since assuming the role of Parent Partner or Parent Partner in Training.
- Have some flexibility to attend meetings and co-facilitate groups.
- Have been substance free (including alcohol) for one year if substance abuse was a protective concern.
- Participate in all required training as well as individual and group supervision, including clinical support.
- Agree to share their experiences as a learning tool with other parents, community partners, and child welfare staff.
- Agree to demonstrate appropriate behavior that will reflect positively on the Parent Partner program.

Individuals will not qualify to become a Parent Partner mentor if any of the following apply:

- Founded sexual abuse
- Listed on the sex abuse registry
- Convicted in the death of a child