In the second part of Module 3, you’ll learn about nurturing care and discipline, the daily needs of children in foster care, fostering teens, culture, and transitions that children in care face at different times in their lives. Remember that you have the notepad document to keep notes as you go!
“Qualities and characteristics of good foster parents include being flexible, having a good sense of humor, being patient, being able to understand and display empathy, being a good listener, being able to think on your feet and having a positive attitude and really it’s about enjoying children, you need to be able to effectively say no, you need to be able to withstand a lot of pressure. You also need to be a good team member and recognize that it’s about the children and not necessarily about you.”

“I think the qualities of a good foster parent, not that I always have these, are flexibility and humor come to mind, it’s hard to be rigid and it’s really the qualities of any parent I think. Compassion, compassion for the birth family, empathy to see, you know to try to put yourself in where they’ve been and that it helps to be somebody who’s curious and who wants to learn more because you learn a lot about everything when you’re a foster parent.”

“The qualities of a good foster parent is someone that treats the child like one of their own, doesn’t show any discrimination between biological children and foster children.”

“Someone who’s caring, patient, loving, supportive of the strengths of the child and being able to see those as well as encouragement for the challenges or the difficulties they may have, it’s really important for a foster parent to also consider older youth and helping prepare them for independent living and teaching them the life skills that will enable them in the real world to be out there and be self sufficient when they’re adults.”

“A good foster parent is somebody that is doing foster care for the children and for their well being.”

“Well foster parents have to have the same magical qualities that parents have but they need to be amplified because parenting your own children is somewhat natural to you but parenting someone else’s children and children you don’t have that history with, that’s really tough so some of the qualities are patience and acceptance and some understanding, a quality of a good foster parent is to accept the child and their family and their situation without feeling the need to question it and being in it whole heartily, 100 percent. Kids deserve that from a foster parent that they’re in 100 percent.”

“The warmth and the caring and the love that they show these kids, even though they take them in as complete strangers and then they learn to have them be part of their families and as the child feels more and more secure in these homes it’s just wonderful to watch the children blossom and the foster parents give them structure and routine which some of these kids may not have had for a long time and they do it in such a loving and nurturing way. They have to learn unique discipline skills for these children as well as unique ways to help them with their emotional and mental health and the foster parents go out and do that for these kids and the families.”
How can foster parents show you that you can trust them?

“Do ‘regular’ things with me. Make me feel a part of the family and not a stranger without being too pushy.”

“Show that you care for me and my well-being also that you are invested in my success.”

“Help me make ‘your space’ my own. Don’t lock your refrigerator. Allow me to have a house key, treat me as though I am your child temporarily.”

“Be aware that I may be slow to trust you, but know that if you stick around I will learn to trust.”

“Please do not put my bio family down. Be sensitive to the relationship that I desire to have with them.”

“Don’t isolate me.”

This slide contains no narration. Please read the statements on the slide.
In parenting, discipline is a fact of life, and foster parenting is no different. The reality is that you will have to provide some discipline to the children in your home. The main thing to remember when disciplining children is that discipline is meant to teach, not punish. Providing discipline is not a way for you to get out your anger or frustrations, it is a way for the children in your home to learn about how their actions affect themselves and others. You will be best able to manage children’s behavior and to teach them how to better manage their behaviors if you first have a relationship with them. When children have a trusting relationship with you, they will care about your reactions to their behaviors and will care about how their actions affect those around them. However, if children do not have a trusting relationship with you, your reactions to their behaviors will have little effect on them.

Foster care licensing code explains specific restrictions on disciplinary procedures. The code will give you a lot of information about what you cannot do in disciplining children, but doesn’t give you many ideas of what you can do. Some ideas for positive behavior management include:

• When a child is placed in your home, talk with the child (not to the child) about the expectations and rules in your home. Explain the reasons behind the rules in your home and give the child an opportunity to ask questions. Children are more likely to respect the rules and expectations when they understand the reasons behind them.
• Be consistent in your expectations and follow through! If you say you’re going to do something, do it!
• Have the response match the behavior. For example, if a child didn’t clean his room, it would be more appropriate to tell the child that he cannot go play at the park before he cleans his room than to simply prohibit the child from playing at the park. In this case, your response is connected to the child’s behavior and will make more sense to the child.
• Make sure that you communicate that while the child may have made a poor choice, this doesn’t make them a bad kid!
Please listen to the following scenarios and think about how you would handle these situations. How could you respond to these situations in order to manage the child’s behavior in a productive way? Write down your ideas and discuss these with your licensing worker.

1. You are on the phone with a friend who you haven’t spoken to in months. Your 3-year-old foster daughter wants you to put her favorite DVD in for her. She asks you repeatedly while you’re on the phone to start her movie and to watch it with her. When you ask her to wait, she asks you “Why?” over and over.
2. One of your house rules is that everyone makes their beds in the morning before they go to school. Your 12-year-old foster son regularly leaves his bed unmade despite your reminders about the house rule.
3. Your 16-year-old foster daughter asked if she could invite her boyfriend over after school. You told her that she could invite him over once her homework was finished, but she came home after school with him.
4. A 9-year-old boy is removed from his father’s home due to neglect and placed in your home. When you sit down with him to talk about your house rules, he tells you that he didn’t have to follow any rules like that at home and doesn’t have to at your house either, because you’re not his parent.

All of these scenarios are potentially frustrating situations and probably resulted in some stressful reactions. Talk with your licensing worker about your ideas and any concerns you have about dealing with situations like these.

Now listen to other foster parents as they share creative ideas for managing behaviors....
Voice of a foster parent:

“That is so tricky, it really depends on the kid, every kid is going to be different – so what works for one kid is absolutely not going won’t work for another. You’ve got to be calm, you’ve got to be patient. You’ve got to remind yourself that it’s not about me. You’ve got to take 10 (minutes) if you need it before you respond to a question. Nobody can get your goat like your kids can. They live with you every day. They see what bothers you. Kids are challengers, they’re going to keep pushing at you until they find the point at which you’ll snap and you have to be prepared for that. You’ve got to take care of yourself first and then take care of the kids. You can’t row a boat to shore unless you bale out enough water so that you’re not going to sink.”
As a foster parent, there are many things you can do and many things you cannot do when disciplining children in your home.

You can:

• Respect the child as a person
• Explain the rules and expectations of your home ahead of time
• Be consistent in your expectations and in enforcing rules in your home
• Give consequences that fit the behavior, and the age and developmental level of the child
• Ensure that the child knows that you disapprove of the behavior, not of the child
• Let the child participate in community activities

You cannot:

• Use any physical discipline, which includes spanking
• Restrain a child
• Discriminate against the child
• Ridicule any foster child for any bedwetting or lapses in toilet training
• Threaten a child with removal from your home
• Deny a child access to confidential family planning services
• Force a child to participate in religious practices

Please see Ch. DCF 56.09, Care of Foster Children, for additional information about principles for nurturing care of foster children.
True or False: Your niece and nephew are placed in your home as foster children. Since you're related to them, it's okay to spank them to discipline them. It worked with your own kids!

- True
- False
Voices of foster youth:

“I would like to see a relationship where I can come to you and communicate with any situation, and on any given day where you wouldn’t judge me about anything that I’m coming to you about. Not necessarily if it is negative or positive, if I can come to you and talk to you about anything that I’m going through, a problem you can give me a solution and we can come to a conclusion and solve it.”

“ Asking me how I feel, caring about what I think is important, caring about my future, caring about what I think is important in life, caring about you know reunification, trying to get me back with my birth parents, I think that is a very important one and just caring about my overall well being, I mean don’t look at me like I’m just in your home and in the way, you know actually look at my situation and want to do right by me, help me succeed and get past it.”

“ Sit us down, talk to us, guide us in the right direction, basically love us like they would love someone as his child or their own child. It’s basically listen to our problems because we’re already going through enough.”

“Letting us come to them, not pushing us right when we enter their home, it’s going to be a scary environment, something new and we never knew them before hand so it’s…letting us come to…in terms of what’s going on first and then letting us open up, seeing that they’re not a bad person, that they will actually help us and then for them just to say if I’m here whenever you need to talk.”

“Letting me talk to them when I’m ready to talk to them and them telling me what’s going on with everything about me, my plans and what’s going to happen to me, what’s happening with my family, what’s going on with everything out there that I need to know.”

“I think the most important one would be just listening to them because there’s a difference as everybody knows between hearing what somebody is saying and listening to what they’re saying and a lot of foster parents don’t feel the need to listen to their foster youth like they do with their own children and it’s just as important because foster youth has the same needs if not more than their own children so it’s important that they listen to their needs, listen to what they have to say and be able to show that they are willing to have open communication, both ways.”

“I think that the best way for them to open communication lines with us is to not read the case file that we have and think that they can know us from that but take the time to actually get to know us before assuming they know who we are.”

“ It starts with trust, it starts with honesty, so if foster parents are honest with their foster kids and foster kids are honest with the foster parents who sometimes can be difficult will open up, every child is different so to be able to understand that and adjust yourself accordingly will make the foster child feel more comfortable.”
Voices of foster youth:

“Learning how to do simple things such as laundry. Learning how to use a washer and dryer. You know washing your clothes. How to do laundry. Do laundry and know how to clean up after yourself. Making sure the fridge gets cleaned out, things that youth tend to forget about once they get on their own, making sure you know clean the toilets and... Washing dishes like the basics, washing your clothes. How to clean a house the right way, do stuff the right way without making a fire hazard or something. Shopping, how to go grocery shopping. Cleaning, cooking. Cleaning, cooking. How to cook. To make actual decent meals and not have to go out to eat and spend money every night. How to use a stove. Things that make a house home.

Learning how to manage money. How to do budgeting money. Budgeting. Budgeting. How to obtain a bank account and budgeting money and... How to budget my money so I'm that I'm not struggling when my rent needs to be paid. How to budget and how to take care of money and... Credit and money management. Taxes. How to pay my utilities. The basic things all people need to learn in life. Guidance, love, protection. How to keep yourself focused on what you're doing, focus on what you need to get done throughout your day. Preparing for your future, some type of plan for my future. Finding job search. Knowing how to find a job, do a resume and interview. How to fill out job applications, saving money. Driving I think is an important one too. Basic daily living skills, knowing how to use a shower. Personal hygiene. How to take care of yourself.

Communication with my landlord, know what type of resources that I might need if I come into having problems with my landlord. They need to have some type of stability and stability is important when it comes to living on your own. Even if the foster parent doesn't have the correct training to teach us, it's their responsibility to help us find different avenues that we can learn those life skills.”
Children in foster care have daily needs that are exactly like other children their age, including education, health care, hair and skin care, religion, recreation, life skills, and safety.

**Education**

You will be expected to make sure that the children in your home are attending school and keeping up with expectations. You will need to work with school staff to ensure that the children in your care are receiving the assistance they need, but birth parents retain the right to approve Individualized Education Plans and to make educational decisions. Children in foster care are often eligible for early education programming, such as Birth to 3 Programs and Head Start.

**Healthcare**

Every child in foster care in Wisconsin is eligible for Medical Assistance coverage, and some children have insurance through their parents as well. Children in foster care must receive medical and dental care according to Wisconsin’s HealthCheck program. Birth parents usually sign authorizations for medical care while their children are in foster care, but retain the right to make major medical decisions. Talk with your licensing worker or the child’s caseworker about the requirements for the HealthCheck program. More information about healthcare for children in foster care can be found in foster care licensing code.

**Hair and Skin Care**

For many children, personal appearance is important and is connected to their self-esteem. As foster parents, you will need to help children maintain their personal appearance. Due to cultural or ethnic differences, some of the children in your home may have different skin or hair care needs than you. Talk with the child or their family to learn about the unique skin and hair care needs of the child. Some agencies offer trainings on these topics as well.

**Religion**

As you may remember from previous modules, children in foster care have the right to participate, or to not participate, in religious activities. This is one of those areas where the child’s parents retain the right to make decisions. Talk with the child’s family about honoring their religious practices, and talk with your licensing worker about any concerns or conflicts that arise.

More information about these topics can be found in your Foster Parent Handbook.
Life Skills

Children in foster care must have an opportunity to develop life skills. This is true for children of all ages, not just teens. Life skills can include things like decision-making skills, problem-solving skills, and time and money management. These skills may not come as naturally to children in foster care due to their past experiences. These children will likely need your help in developing these skills. One way for children to learn life skills is by doing household chores. Foster care licensing code places restrictions on the types of chores children can do. You will learn more about life skills specific to teenagers later in this module.

Recreation

Children in foster care are able to participate in community and school activities of their choosing, and should be encouraged to participate in such activities in order to make friends with their peers. Recreation activities are an opportunity for children to learn social skills and to make connections with others. Foster children in your home should be included in your family’s recreational activities.

Safety

Foster care licensing code requires you to take specific precautions in order to keep children safe. It is important to explain these rules to children when they are first placed in your home. Your agency may also have additional safety policies. More detailed information can be found by reading Ch. DCF 56. Some important safety considerations are:

- **Firearms**: must be unloaded and kept in a locked cabinet that is inaccessible to children. Ammunition must be locked and stored separately from firearms.
- Cleaning supplies and medications must be kept in locations inaccessible to children
- **Fire safety**: you must have an evacuation route in case of fire, and you must go over this route with the children in your home at the time of placement and every 3 months after placement.
- **Disaster Plan**: must be given to your licensing agency and include where your family would evacuate to, a list of what you will take if evacuated, and, contact information for you, a friend or relative out of the area, and the licensing worker or caseworker you will check in with.
- **Automobile safety**: all laws regarding child safety restraints must be followed. Details on these requirements can be found in Ch. DCF 56.

More information about these topics can be found in your Foster Parent Handbook or in DCF 56.
Voices of foster youth:

“So one, it’s not scary the first night on their own. Two, they don’t have the other family support to go back to, they don’t have someone that can come and stay with them the first night.”

“As foster youth we don’t get a lot of support after we’re out of the system so it’s important that we have as much of a base and foundations as we can before we go on to live our lives.”

“You’re at home, you’re being taken care of you’re being fed everyday, you know where you’re going to sleep that night but once you’re out on your own you might not know all that when you’re out there alone.”

“They need to be able to have that comfort, that safety and still having that little comfort blanket or a little stuffed animal, the only way they’re going to get that is if they’re prepared and they get the information they need before hand.”

“You think you’ll be ready but you won’t be until you actually know and have experience but also have guidance throughout your rest of your life. They need to know how realistic it is in life.”

“They’re teaching you what it’s like in the real world and so it won’t be a culture shock when you do go into the real world and you won’t struggle because when you struggle then you can become homeless or miss out on paying bills and stuff like that.”

“You have to pay bills, you have to cook and clean, you have to go to work, you have to do things in your everyday life normally, like normal people do.”

“It’s just important that we know all the different things like how to write a check, like how to do different things that we need to in order to live our lives and be a productive member of society and in order to do that we need a lot or preparation before hand.”

“You need driving skills; managing money definitely is one that I would classify as needed to learn. If they’re not prepared to live on their own they won’t be able to do the things that you need just to be able to survive like get a job, provide for a family.”
Voices of foster youth:

“A youth should start preparing for independent living as soon as they know responsibilities and the age varies, the child varies, everyone is different. Really there isn’t a number; I guess it depends on the child. I think it depends on the youth themselves what age they need to start preparing, all youth are different and some youths they are ready to start being prepared as early as their preteen years.”

“Really there isn’t a number, I guess it just depends on the child.”

“I think it depends on the youth themselves what age they need to start preparing, all youth are different and some youths they are ready to start being prepared as early as their preteen years. I think it's easier to start out at a younger age with the simpler things and then work your way up to the more complex.”

“This day and age youth are really maturing, really quickly and they can understand what they want and things that they want for their future.”

“You know it's important to start informing them about college, about jobs or trades or just different options for the future as well as preparing them with those everyday life skills like cooking, cleaning, managing money and bill paying and just to get them on track so when they do age out of system they won't be just...their learning all of it now, they kind of a have foundation set up.”
Voices of foster youth:

“Voices of foster youth:

What skills did you learn while in foster care?

What skills do you think you need?

Voices of foster youth:

“I learned how to pay bills, I learned how to clean, cook. How to use a washer and dryer, I got to learn daily living skills, making sure you take a shower every day, making sure your room is clean, making sure your bed’s made decently. Make sure that I was dressed appropriately, I was clean. Cooking, baking, washing dishes, laundry, hygiene, how to do my hair, how to keep up with myself so you don’t stink.

How to keep myself from doing stuff, buying stuff I don't need, doing stuff I'm not supposed to. I learned how to do different...different cleaning, how to making sure that I know how to cook and clean and do my laundry, all that.

I learned how to manage my own money. How to manage my money and how to be a better saver and like prepare for the future because I didn't know was...what was going to happen next. Even the fun things too like going out and fishing or hunting and knowing how to do those things.

I learned how to drive in foster care; I learned how to cook in foster care, cleaning was definitely a skill that I built in foster care. And then just like simple things like social interactions as well, just being like having different people over and knowing what me and my foster brothers needed to do in that situation and... Skills that I still think I need, cooking, I still haven’t really done much cooking, I don't like to cook because I'm not good at it and I still have my problems with picking up after myself.

How to take the bus, how to keep a job and stay focused on the job not focusing on other things. I think I really needed money management and credit management. Budgeting can be kind of a weak area some times. Money management, time management and just management in general. How to stay on budget, how to make sure you have enough of everything to the end of the month. I think that I needed those skills in foster care; I think that it would have helped me become a more aware adult now.”
Check Your Understanding - Health & Safety

Question 1 of 1

True or False: If you don't believe in premarital sex, you can prevent the
teenagers in your care access to family planning services, like taking birth
control.

○ True
○ False
Children in foster care can sometimes lose connections with their past. One way to help them stay connected is through creating a Life Book. Life Books are like scrapbooks and can include photos, other memories, funny stories, and the child's artwork.

Making a Life Book with the child in your home can be a powerful experience, as you can help the child connect with their own history. Looking into their past can sometimes be a difficult thing for children and youth to do, so they can help to decide what will go into their Life Book and what won't. You can add your own creativity and ideas, but the Life Book is for the child and should be full of the child's ideas.

If you are struggling with what to include, talk with the child's caseworker. You can also find a Tip Sheet on Life Books on the Foster Care and Adoption Resource Center's website: http://www.wifostercareandadoption.org/library/650/lifebooks-parents.pdf
Voices of foster care:

“A good foster parent is someone who loves a child and takes a child into their home and parents them and raises them and nurtures them and loves them and teaches them right from wrong and at the same time they recognize that this child has a parent out there that hopefully they're going to return to and that foster parent acknowledges that, that foster parent helps that child become you know a good human being while also helping the child stay connected to their birth parent and their family so that hopefully one day they can go back home, so a good foster parent has to be reedy to almost launch at any point, right so I think all parents get prepared to launch their kid at 18, a foster parent has to be prepared to send that child back into the world or back to their biological parent and hold in their heart that, that child will be okay.”

“I think the first piece would be flexibility, we need to be very flexible because as soon as we think it's going one way it goes a different way, kind of like being on a roller coaster. The other is acceptance and to look at it as not wrong always what birth parents are doing but different, they are different ways to do things and I think if we can look at that and accept parents for who they are it makes it a lot better.”

“I think you have to be really, really patient, you're going to have to have a lot of flexibility because you're going to have to approach problems from a tangent you can't always just go head on against a problem because a lot of kids will withdraw or get very antagonistic about it, so patience and flexibility good, you need to be consistent. In our house every Tuesday we have the same meal and the kids know that’s coming and they know their schedule because we talk about it ahead of times so there's very few surprises in what goes on in our life and I think that's very advantageous for our kids.”
Being a teenager is difficult enough, but it can be even more challenging to be a teenager in foster care. Teens have their own unique set of needs that must be addressed by foster parents. Teens desperately want to feel like they’re normal and fit in with others, and this is especially hard for those in foster care.

The most important developmental goal for adolescents is to work toward becoming independent. For teens in foster care, there are requirements put in place that are designed to help them reach this goal. Teens aged 15 or older who have been in care for 6 months or more are required to have an Independent Living Plan (sometimes called an “IL Plan”) that they create with their caseworker. This plan is meant to prepare the youth for transitioning into adulthood and includes topics like creating a budget and planning for what to do after high school. Older youth must have opportunities to practice life skills and become familiar with resources in their community.

In addition to the formal Independent Living Plan, there are lots of things that you can do with teens in your home to teach independent living skills. Some ideas include:

- Planning a budget
- Looking at apartments, and talking about security, finances, and how to interact with a landlord
- Teaching the youth how to cook and having them plan and cook meals for the family
- Helping the teen complete job applications and finding people to act as references for them
- Set up a savings account with the teen

Planning must begin early for this crucial transition toward self-sufficiency. In addition to learning life skills, healthy relationships with supportive individuals, including foster parents, friends and other adults in the community are paramount in achieving permanence for older youth aging out of care.
Maintaining employment is a powerful independent living skill for any teen, as it gives them structure and the ability to earn money. Many youth in foster care have part-time or full-time jobs, and some are able to earn school credit for their employment. Teens must obtain a work permit, which requires a signature from a parent or legal guardian. Teens can work with their caseworkers to obtain a work permit.

A common issue brought up by former foster youth is the ability to get a driver’s license while in foster care. In order for a teenager in foster care to obtain a driver’s license, they must have consent from their parent or legal guardian. The decision for a youth to obtain a driver’s license should be discussed with the youth’s team members. You’ll need to consider vehicle liability insurance and who will insure the teen driver.

Foster care licensing code requires that children in foster care are given opportunities to participate in community and school activities in order to develop relationships with peers. Children in foster care must be able to keep and wear their own clothing, as long as it is appropriate and suitable to wear, and must have access to music and books that are appropriate to their age and comprehension. Clothing and music are generally very important to teens and provide them with an opportunity to develop and express their own tastes and preferences.
If you foster teens, you will be faced with issues of sexuality. This is a challenging topic for any parent, and can be more so for foster parents, as teens in foster care may have past experiences that compound issues of sex and sexuality. You must be willing and able to discuss sex and sexuality with the teens in your care, and be willing to answer the many questions that teens may have.

In addition to discussing sex, you may have children in your care who have sexual orientations different from your own. If this is the case, these teens may have many questions about their feelings and may be confused. A teenager’s need to feel normal can lead to internal struggles about their own sexual identity, and they may want to talk to you about that. Again, you will need to be prepared to have these conversations and be comfortable discussing issues of sexual orientation. If you have concerns about discussing these issues based on your values or beliefs, talk with your licensing worker.

In your Foster Parent Handbook, you’ll find more information about teens and sexual identity.
What would you do if....

Your 15-year old foster daughter wants to talk to you about her sexual orientation and it is different than yours?

A 17-year-old boy is placed in your home, and he will probably be living on his own after he graduates from high school. He has never cooked for himself or done his own laundry.

Write down some ideas and share them with your licensing worker.

What would you do if....

Your 15-year old foster daughter wants to talk to you about her sexual orientation and it is different than yours?

A 17-year-old boy is placed in your home, and he will probably be living on his own after he graduates from high school. He has never cooked for himself or done his own laundry.

Write down some ideas that you have for dealing with each of these scenarios and share them with your licensing worker.
Think about your family’s traditions, history, and culture. What are the activities you do as a family? What are your traditions for holidays and special occasions? How do you honor your ethnicity and your culture?

Culture is the shared set of beliefs, customs, or shared experiences of a group of people.

You and your family have been impacted by your culture, just as the children in foster care have been impacted and shaped by theirs. Your culture will affect how you form relationships with others, including your foster children and their families. As a foster parent, you will need to look at your values and beliefs, and any biases you have as you foster children of various cultural backgrounds. Even if you share an ethnic background or race with the children in your home, your traditions and ways to honor your culture may be different. You will need to be accepting of other cultures, and must be willing to honor those different than your own.

One of the most important things you can do for the children in your care is to show them respect. This includes respecting their culture, their values, and their beliefs. This does not mean that you have to agree with their values or beliefs, but you must show respect for their background and their experience.

Some other ideas for honoring the cultures of children and reducing cultural conflicts are:

• Ask children and their parents about their rules, traditions, and routines
• Educate yourself about the children’s culture
• Find ways to include the child’s culture and traditions in your home

Inclusion of your child’s culture will assist the child in feeling respected in your home.

Talk with your licensing worker if you have concerns about your ability to honor other cultures and about any biases you may have.
Think about your family’s traditions as you were growing up...

How did you celebrate holidays and other special occasions? Do you still celebrate the same way?
What are your fondest memories of vacations, holidays, birthdays, or other occasions?
Ask your other family members about their favorite memories or ways to celebrate...

As you think about these questions, write down some of your answers. You might want to ask these questions of your foster children and their families too.
Voice of a foster parent:

“I know some foster families put their kids in respite and take their holiday vacations, but our kids are our kids and we take them with us everywhere we go. Our families have been super supportive, so when we travel we travel as a family of five with a dog; that’s 3 foster kids, and both my and my wife’s parents treat them as grand children; there’s no differentiation between their birth grandchildren and our kids.

We make sure that we include them. We’re a family, and we explain that we don’t know what the future holds, but right now this is our family and this is what our family looks like and we do things as a family. We need to get along as a family, and we just keep trying to build that successful family bond with people from three types of families living in the same home.”
If a child comes into your home whose family has religious beliefs that prevent them from eating meat, does your family have to become vegetarian?

- Yes
- No
Real life tips from foster parents:

“As far as some of the day to day things, food is always a big one so we've adopted new traditions in our family that have been from their family.”

“As Ask birth parents, they can be a great resource to helping understand what the children need and being able to have things that represent who they are in your home as well, through those magazines and through your toys, items like that.”

“A Around the holidays we talk about what kind of family holiday traditions have and then we try and incorporate those into our family traditions. We take them to ethnic festivals, we make sure we experiment with food, we try and make sure that we're open to trying new foods in the house and we also try and make sure they're open to trying new foods and trying our food before they absolutely discount it as unfamiliar and yucky, we make sure everybody gets a big opportunity and multiple occasions to try everything that passes on our table and if they don't like it we get them something that they will eat.”
Think back on the information that you learned in the second part of this module. You’ve heard from youth and foster parents, and learned about nurturing care and discipline, the daily needs of children in foster care, fostering teens, culture, and about transitions that children in care face at different times in their lives. Remember to write down questions that you have to discuss with your licensing worker about any of these topics.