This module, Developing and Maintaining Family Connections, will provide you with information about working with birth families, the importance of children having contact with their families, connections of children in foster care to their siblings, and challenges that may come up with family interaction. You have learned already that children have strong attachments to their families, even when they have been abused or neglected by those family members. As a foster parent, you need to recognize and honor children’s attachments to their families, even if you may not understand this.

If you are a relative of the child you are caring for, maintaining family connections will be a more complex process. Relative care providers have to maintain a balance between being a foster parent and being a part of your extended family in a new role. This is not an easy thing to do, and you can look to your licensing worker and the child’s caseworker for support in this process.
You learned in the last module about the grieving process and about how we all experience grief differently. The last module discussed the grief that children feel when they enter care or move to a new placement. Now think about the grief a birth parent feels when their child is placed into foster care.

Birth parents might feel like they’ve failed as parents and may be embarrassed. Sometimes birth parents are doing the best they can, and they could feel angry that their children were removed and disagree with the reasons for removal. It is possible that they do not trust “the system” and feel that you are part of that system. They might be resentful of you because you’re caring for their child and feel like they’re not good enough to be parents. Birth parents often feel a lack of power over their situation and may feel like they have no control or no voice. It is important to give birth parents respect and time to work through their grief.

If you are a relative caregiver, your role has now changed in your family. The child’s parents may be grateful that you are willing to take their child in a time of need, but also resentful about you caring for their child when they are unable to do so. Understand that this resentment is to be expected and is something that may be overcome in time. The child’s parents will likely feel a sense of loss even though their children are able to live with a family member. You will need to be willing to work with your family members to help them learn to safely care for their children. You may also have a sense of loss, as your future plans, and relationships, role and status in your family may significantly change. Even though you are already a part of this child’s family, you will need to take the time to develop a sense of trust and support with the child and with the child’s parents. Being a family member does not automatically ensure feelings of trust and attachment, and this is something that your family will have to build on.
Voice of a birth parent:

“That's the most important thing that a mom needs to do, stays in contact with their child because you know if you don't stay in contact with your child, your child won't know who you are, so that's the main important thing. If you want your child back and they're giving you an opportunity to get your child back so you have to do your part, stay in contact with your children.”
Think about your own family for a minute. Is your family perfect or are there things you wish were different? Almost everyone has something they wish they could change about their family. The birth families of the children you’re caring for probably feel the same way.

All families have strengths, and part of your role as a foster parent is to help birth parents to build on their strengths. While you are not responsible for the actions of birth parents, you will have a unique opportunity to help them to recognize and build on their abilities as parents.

If you are a relative caregiver, you will be creating a new role for yourself in your family. You are already part of that child’s birth family, so it may be difficult to have another role in the family. On one hand, you’ll already have a relationship and a connection with that child’s birth parents. On the other hand, you might have a tougher time now stepping into the role of foster parent, because you’re already part of the family. You’ll have to find a way to balance your role in the family with your new role as a foster parent. Talk with your licensing worker about how to maintain this balance, and just know that it will take practice, time, and you are not alone.
Think about it this way...

Have you ever lost your temper and yelled at someone?
Have you ever gotten a speeding ticket?
Have you lost someone close to you?
Have you ever been in love?
Do you have people that you like to spend time with?
Do you have hobbies that you enjoy?

Did you say yes to some of these questions? Chances are, you did. The birth parents that you are working with are no different. They’ve probably lost their temper or gotten angry, and they have probably been in love or have things they do for fun. If you are able to connect with birth parents and work with them, the child will benefit significantly!
As a foster parent, you will be sharing the role of parenting the foster children in your home. Because you are acting as a temporary parent, not replacing their parents, you must share this responsibility. This means working together with the child’s parents to help achieve the goals for the child and the family.

Listen to the following case study to gain an understanding of the importance of shared parenting...

6-year-old Amy is removed from her home due to neglect by her parents, and is placed with the Potter family. When Amy was placed, her parents (Steve and Susie) didn’t have contact with her or the other members of the team for a while. The Potters called Steve and Susie, wrote letters to them and stopped by their house to try to contact them to give them updates on how Amy was doing. When Steve and Susie did get in touch with the team, they were very cautious and distrustful of the Potters. They accused the Potters of trying to break up their family and take their daughter away from them, and the Potters explained that they were trying to help get their family back together and to get Amy back home, not to break up their family. The Potters scheduled family contacts and encouraged phone calls between the contacts. The Potters asked Steve and Susie for pictures of the two of them and other family members so that they could display them in their home and in Amy’s room. The Potters invited Steve and Susie to Amy’s doctor appointments and to her school play. Steve and Susie eventually began to trust the Potters and they started to attend meetings and appointments, and had more and more contact with Amy. Steve and Susie and the Potters began to work together as a team. Eight months after Amy was placed with the Potters, she returned home to live with her parents.

This example shows how birth parents and foster parents can work together to reach the best outcome for a child. It is important to recognize that shared parenting does not always result in children being reunited with their parents as sometimes reunification is not in the child’s best interests. Talk with your licensing worker about your ideas for sharing the parenting role with a child’s birth parents and if this is appropriate for the child in your home.
Thinking back to the previous slide...
Who do you think benefits the most from shared parenting?
Family interaction, an opportunity for children to have contact with their families, helps children in foster care to maintain connections to their families and to strengthen relationships. These connections will benefit both the child and the family, as the child will be able to spend time with family members, and the parents will be able to practice the skills that they are learning in order for the child to return home. Interaction while children are in care also allows the family to work on building relationships and trust with one another. Family interaction also helps to:

- Facilitate timely reunification.
- Evaluate and address any safety issues.
- Evaluate and help to improve parenting skills.
- Minimize the trauma that was done to the child when they were removed from their parents’ care.
- Maintain and enhance relationships of children to their siblings and other family members, and
- Establish and look into other permanency options, if needed.
For relative caregivers, you have heard about how your role and will change in your family, but this is not only true for you. The role and status of the child and their birth parent will also change.

For example, if you are caring for your daughter’s son, watch and see how the roles and relationships may change while your grandson is in your home. When you are caring for your grandson as a foster parent, you must put his needs first, and he literally moves up to the level of his mom and uncle. He becomes your primary responsibility, so your role with him becomes that of a parent more so than a grandparent. Think about how this might change the relationships between you and your grandson, your children, and your other grandchildren, as well as how the relationships will change between your grandson and you, his mom, his uncle, and his cousins.

This change in roles can create a sense of loss for everyone and may be confusing at times. Your grandson may come to see you as more of a parent, and your other grandchildren may be confused at why they have a different relationship with you than their cousin does. Your daughter and son may be frustrated because your grandson now must be your priority, while in the past your priority may have been your children. You might feel some guilt that now your grandson will be the priority before your children, and this is to be expected. You might even feel some embarrassment that your family is involved in the child welfare system and that you'll have to disclose some negative information about your child. Know that there is support available to you, and that you deserve to seek out the assistance that your family needs.

These feelings about the changing of roles within your family will be something that your family needs to discuss and work through to assist in this transition.
The preferred method of family interaction is face-to-face, but this is not always in the child's best interests. Family interaction can include contacts at the parents' home, the foster home, but also includes daily activities like school events, religious activities, or doctor appointments. Including birth parents in their children’s daily activities will help them to feel connected to their child, and will show the child that their parents are still involved in their daily lives. You will not be responsible for setting up all of the family interaction, but this is important information for you to have.

If you are a relative provider, family interaction might be a unique situation for you. If your family spends holidays together, for instance, you will need to coordinate this with the child’s caseworker in order to respect any court-ordered conditions (such as no-contact orders). You may be put into awkward situations with family members if family interaction is restricted or prevented by the court. Talk with your licensing worker or the child’s caseworker about how you can deal with these situations. As a relative provider, you’ll also have the opportunity to strengthen the bonds in your family by helping the child’s parents learn new parenting skills. As a relative, it may also be more natural to spend time together.

Children in out-of-home care are required to have a Family Interaction Plan, which lays out the expectation for contact between a child and their family members. Talk with the child’s caseworker if you have questions or concerns about the child’s plan. The next several slides will explain some of the requirements for family interaction.
Wisconsin policy for CPS cases states that face-to-face family interaction must occur within 5 working days of a child being placed into out-of-home care, and while the child remains in out-of-home care, face-to-face interaction must at least occur weekly. This is a minimum requirement, so contact can occur more than weekly. Children must also have other opportunities to interact with their parents (through phone calls, letters, email, or other methods) weekly. The policy states that the frequency of interaction should depend on the child’s wishes, the child’s age, developmental level, and on the case plan and permanency plan. These interactions should take place in a location that encourages the most natural interaction between the family members, taking into account safety considerations for the child or other family members.
There are also requirements for how much interaction children must have with their siblings. Efforts must be made to place siblings together when this is appropriate and possible, but when it is not possible, siblings must have a face-to-face interaction at least once per month. Just like with the child's parents, children should be given other opportunities to interact with their siblings, through phone calls, letters, and email.

A common frustration expressed by former foster youth is that they were not given enough opportunities to spend time with their siblings. Many foster youth wish that they could have seen their siblings more often, and wish they could have done so in places that were familiar to them, such as their parents’ home or the foster home. Sometimes children’s ability to spend time with their families and siblings is decreased due to behavioral issues, but foster youth will tell you that lack of access to their siblings will likely lead to increased behavioral problems. When children lose their connections to their families and loved ones, they also sometimes feel hopeless and lose their motivation to comply with their expectations. Foster care licensing code does not allow family interaction to be decreased as a punishment to a child.

Voices of foster youth:

“When it came to my siblings I think that the opportunities were not considered or even an option to be able to see them especially when I was placed in out of home placement, in out of home care. I wished that I was asked or even consider my feelings, I wished that my feelings were considered when it came to my siblings because we were very close and I think that it's important to still have a relationship with them although I was in an out of home care because you know we were in a home together at one point and it's not a good feeling to have a relationship with someone, grow up with them, see them every single day and all of a sudden not even have an option to see them is very traumatic and although I was not given the opportunity, I'm thankful now that I have a relationship with them despite that traumatic experience.”

“I miss my sister, I was taken out of care and when I was detained, she was 17 so they kept her at home and I pretty much got moved straight to a foster home and she got to stay at home. I miss her still to this day because of that we haven't been in contact with each other or able to see each other. I felt like I was missing a part of me, like I went from seeing her everyday to not seeing her at all so it was hard for me, it was a big adjustment, like I...now I sleep by myself because I use to share a bed with her so it was like a big adjustment, it kind of until today is still an adjustment, I'm always going to feel like I missed a big part of me and like there's a part of me missing.”
According to Wisconsin CPS policy, **within how many days** must the first family interaction occur after a child is placed in out-of-home care?

- 5 weeks
- 5 working days
- 5 calendar days
- 48 hours
Family interaction does not only include formal face-to-face contacts, it can include things like phone calls, play dates, medical appointments, school and community activities, holiday gatherings, religious services, and family meals. Other ways to promote contact between parents and children is to give copies of schoolwork and report cards to a child’s parents, helping the child to create cards or gifts for their family, and sending letters or emails to parents regarding the child’s daily activities and progress.

Actively involving a child’s parents in daily activities will help to show the child that their parents are still an important piece of their life. This will help to increase and sustain the connection between the child and their family and will lead to better outcomes for the child.
Voices of foster parents:

“Some of the ways that I've had that I've been able to keep kids and their families connected have been just the traditional phone calls or visits, some of my kids and I have made we made a calendar with pictures and report cards is actually a big one too.”

“In one case our oldest daughter she has at home visits with her mom when her mom is doing well and she has five siblings who are also in foster care so even when her mom isn't doing well and they wouldn't be getting together around their mom we have arranged group visits where all the siblings can come and do an activity like we've rented youth centers and we've had them go to the mall together just to hang out just so they can connect even when mom isn't doing well and doesn't provide a place for that to happen. Our younger boys don't get to see their mom except in supervised visits one hour a week so we have them draw their mom a picture or write their mom a letter or...I mean the youngest one is too young to write letters but we'll help him...we'll help him write what he wants on a piece of paper for his mom and then we make sure we get those to the social worker.”

“We do quite a few different activities to be able to stay connected with birth families, one is I ask for a picture of the birth parents to have in a child's room, we also make life books so the children can see the rest of their extended family, we just do it in those little photo books that are like 24 pages or 30 pages and then the children can have that with them, what I'll do is make copies of them so that if we...you know use the copy in their book so if it's gets wrecked we don't get upset about that. We invite birth parents over to our home if that's okay with the case manager, we also meet in public if that's okay, going to the park, places like that.”
You have heard in previous modules about children struggling after spending time with their families. Children often enjoy the time with their family, and having that time come to an end can be very difficult. Even if the child had a difficult time living with their family, that connection remains after the child enters foster care. Returning to your home is a reminder that they are not able to live at home with their family.

Talk with the child prior to family interaction so they know what the plan is. Give them the start and end times and the location, as well as a plan for when they return to your home. Plan an activity with the child for after their contact so that they can be active and expend some energy. Being active is a positive way for children to channel their energy in a productive way, and will help them to transition back to your home.

Remember that having difficulty returning to your home is normal for children; it is to be expected. They may go through a range of emotions, including anger and frustration, and they will need you to be understanding and flexible during this transition period. If you are willing to work with the child and their family, the transitions from family interactions back to your home will get smoother over time.

For children who are living with a relative, it can be even more difficult for them to manage their emotions after visiting with their family. They may feel guilty for missing their parents or siblings and feel that they are disrespecting you as another family member by being disappointed to return to your home. As the relative caregiver, it is important for you to discuss this with the child and let them know that their disappointment is normal and is an okay thing to feel. Let them know that this shows their loyalty to their parents and doesn’t take anything away from their loyalty to you.

It can be powerful to let children know that it’s okay for them to love their parents more than you – this can give them permission to have relationships with you and with their parents, and that having one doesn’t diminish the other.
Real life tips from foster parents:

“After contact with the birth parent most of the time we'll try to keep things low key, I don't want to schedule any big activities after that and then just debrief as much as the kids are comfortable. We does highs and lows in our family so I might say oh what was the high of your visit and what's the low but I don’t want the kids to feel like I'm grilling them and I don’t want to grill them I just want them if they want to be able to talk about it that's fine, a lot of them do, a lot of them just say oh it was fine then they don’t say a whole lot.”

“When we have visits or the children have contact with their birth parents I think it's really important to understand that they're going to have a hard time when their birth parents are leaving and that's to be expected. Often times foster parents think that oh no we shouldn't have any visits because this child is crying or upset or hurt when their parents have left and that's just the opposite, if they're feeling like that, that's a good thing, that means they have a connection to their family so we try to keep it quiet at the home, offer more quiet activities so that the children can get back into the groove at our house.”

“We try and have their favorite food ready for them for dinner that night, we just keep it safe and calm and low key and we don't hassle them about what happened at their visit unless they want to open up but if they need quiet time to process that we make sure they have that quiet time.”
Family Interaction Activities

Which of the following activities might you choose for a child after family interaction?

- Physical activity (like going to the park or playing basketball)
- Letting them hang out in their rooms for the rest of the day
- Watching TV
- Having a structured plan like having dinner, then chores, then bedtime
As you learned earlier in this module, foster youth will tell you that the thing they missed the most while they were in care was spending time with their siblings. This connection is very powerful, and must be maintained, as long as the relationship is an appropriate one and is not prohibited by a court. Wisconsin law requires that siblings are placed together when possible and appropriate, and that if they are not placed together, frequent interaction must be arranged. As discussed earlier, this does not just mean face-to-face interaction, but can include other forms of contact.
The Ties That Bind  (Adapted from the Presley Ridge Foster Parent Training Program)

Along the way you have been learning about the value of permanence, and family and other connections. The following story illustrates the importance of both of those concepts. Let’s learn about Dawn and the “ties that bind”. To help demonstrate, we’ll draw a line between Dawn and those people she has a connection to. We will “cut ties” when those relationships end.
Dawn’s story begins when she was placed for adoption by parents who were unable to care for a baby. She has no information about her biological parents, their families, or the circumstances surrounding her birth.
Right after Dawn’s birth she was taken into custody by the county social services where her parents resided. She was placed in a foster home.

At the age of 8 months, Dawn moved from the only parents she had known to a second foster home.
Dawn stayed in this second foster home until she was adopted at age two. Her adoptive parents had married at a young age, and after trying unsuccessfully to conceive for a few years, turned to foster care and adoption as a way to have a family. At first things went fine; both maternal and paternal grandparents were delighted to have a granddaughter.
At the age of five many big events occurred in Dawn’s life. Dawn’s parents started experiencing marital difficulties and Dawn’s needs for structure, security, and nurturing weren’t always met. And, despite marital problems, Dawn’s mother conceived, and gave birth to a baby boy nick-named Junior. Lastly, Dawn began kindergarten.

When Dawn was 8 years old, her paternal grandfather died.
In his will, the grandfather left the family farm to Dawn’s father. Dawn and her family moved to the farm. In the process, Dawn had to leave behind the school where she had been very successful, as well as her classmates, and her best friends. Dawn started a new school.
At age 12, Dawn’s family entered into family counseling. Dawn’s mother had recently overdosed on pain medication and had to be hospitalized, and her father was drinking heavily. The in-home family therapists had concerns about the possibility that Dawn’s father was abusive to her mother.

The therapy brought about some changes. Most notably that Dawn’s father entered into a treatment program for 90 days, followed by living in a halfway home for a few more months. Dawn talked to and saw her dad sometimes, but mostly he was absent from her life for those months.
After her father returned home, her parents decided to sell the family farm.

Dawn’s family moved to a town 120 miles away. Dawn enrolled in a new school, her father began attending a nearby technical college, and Dawn’s mother got a job in the evenings working at a local pizza restaurant.
Between the ages of 13 and 14, Dawn started getting into some trouble. She often cut classes, her grades started slipping, and shoplifting became a new hobby for her. Dawn started hanging out with kids who were drinking, smoking pot, and occasionally using other drugs too.

One of those kids was “Buddy”. Buddy gave Dawn the attention she hadn’t been receiving at home for a long time. He became her first real boyfriend.
Dawn’s behavior started to decline. She was caught shoplifting twice in the same week. This, along with her poor school attendance record, landed her in juvenile court. She was placed on supervision, and assigned a caseworker.

While on probation, Dawn was caught shoplifting again. While she was sitting in shelter care, her parents learned she was using birth control. Fed up with her behavior, her parents refused to come and pick her up.

Dawn was placed in a local foster home until the situation could be worked out. Dawn begins to turn to alcohol as a release from her pain.
It was decided that Dawn should enter a substance abuse treatment program where she went for 28 days.

During her stay in the foster home and the substance abuse treatment program, Dawn’s parents refused to cooperate with the wishes of the county social services. Eventually they requested that their parental rights be terminated. They discontinued all contact with their daughter.

Dawn was also given a new caseworker, and never saw her old caseworker again.
After the treatment program Dawn went to live at another foster home. She lived there only 3 months before her foster parents gave a 30-day notice asking for her removal. They said her issues were way too much for them to handle.
Dawn has been placed at a residential treatment facility. She hasn’t seen her friends since the last time she was caught shoplifting, nor has she ever returned to her school. Her parents have stopped all contact. She hasn’t heard from her brother either. Dawn has not received a call, a visit, or a card from any of her 3 living grandparents.

Dawn turned 15 last week. She celebrated by sneaking out of the residential treatment facility and meeting up with Buddy.

Buddy and Dawn’s caseworker are the only connections she still has.

Dawn’s story is troubling in many ways. Let’s take a minute to think about what is really important in the “big picture”.

Who do you wish Dawn was still connected to? Imagine you are Dawn’s next foster parent. What could you to help reconnect Dawn and those people? How can you make sure that a child placed in your care retains family connections and ties to people who are important to them even during tough circumstances? Take a minute to think about it and jot down some answers. This may be one of the most important things you can do as a foster parent.
You probably have lots of questions about everything you’ve learned about working with birth families. Listen to the answers that other foster parents and foster care coordinators gave to the following questions:
Ask a foster parent:

“We’re different than the birth family in very few ways, actually we’re more like birth families, if we just sit down and write a list of the things that we’re the same and different I think the difference are we have more supports than often our birth families have, we have more advantages financially to be able to do things than many of the birth families that we’ve worked with in the past. I think the most important thing that we're the same on is that we do care about the children together.”
Ask a foster care worker:

“The agency and the social work staff or case work staff of the agency are really important to bridge that connection between the biological family and the foster family. They are there to provide some guidance and support, help be a good role model in terms of relationship and connecting and all of this really helps reduce the potential for loyalty conflicts and problems later on and this really helps the children especially if the foster family and biological family get along well because the better the relationship between the Bio family and the foster family, generally the smoother the placement.”

“The social workers, the team members, the biological family and the family should all be working together for the benefit of the child. As a social worker my job is to help assure that, that happens, sometimes that’s mediating between the two parties if there has been a misunderstanding, sometimes that’s just encouraging that it’s okay to make that phone call to the foster mom and ask the question or encouraging the foster dad to extend himself to the family, sometimes my job is to be encouraging and sometimes it’s to be mediating but always it’s to be a part of that team.”

“I work as a foster parent training manager and I think it’s very important that our foster parents and birth parents are brought together so that they can understand each other and work towards the common goals which is re-unification and the only way we can do that is by them working very, very closely together.”

“Make it known to both parties that it’s okay for them to have a relationship, that it is desired for them to have a relationship and so my job really is to kind of help that be as natural as possible, but I really see my job as kind of letting that relationship form and develop over time as naturally as possible, recognizing that they’re not going to always get along, that there maybe conflicts but that’s okay and if I can instead of trying to solve the conflict or stop the communication really bring them together so that they can work together I think in the long run that’s going to be most helpful in that relationship developing.”
While you may have concerns about the family interaction and may not approve of the plan, you do not have the ability to decrease or stop a child from seeing their family. Family interaction can only be prohibited by the caseworker’s agency, or if the court rules that the interaction is not in the child’s best interest. As you learned earlier, family interaction cannot be used as a punishment, a reward, or a threat for a child; and the caseworker’s agency cannot prohibit or decrease interaction as a punishment for a parent who is not working with the agency to follow the case plan or permanency plan.

If you have concerns about the plan for family interaction or about anything that may be happening during the contacts, talk with the child’s caseworker.

For relative care providers, it may be difficult for you to discuss concerns you have about the child’s interactions with your family members. This may be an awkward conversation to have about other members of your family, but it is important to always have the best interests of the child in mind. Agency caseworkers are critical supports to assist you in navigating these challenges. You are not alone.
Scenario Introduction

As the children in your home have interactions with their families, different problems may come up.

Please read through and listen to the following scenarios. Choose which strategy you might take to deal with this issue.
Voice of foster youth:

“I was not involved in creating the family interaction plan, I only got to see my mom if I went to in home visits where the parent educator...I would have liked to be able to see her without my siblings because she always had to be on them because of their problems to have the time for her to actually take the time and spend time with me would have been great. I was forced to go see my father every once in a while, I would have liked for it to be my choice.”
Read out loud what you see on the screen. Did you read it as, “families are now here” or “families are nowhere?” Think about which one you saw first and the difference between those two statements. If you approach birth families with the attitude of “families are now here,” you’ll be able to work with them and help them to reach the most appropriate goal for their child. If you approach birth families from the perspective of “families are nowhere,” then it will be much more difficult for you to work productively and positively with birth families.

Your relationship with the birth parents will affect your relationship with the child, and will affect the child’s outcome. If you are willing to work with their family, both the child and family will feel supported and respected, and you will all be able to work together for the best outcome for the child. If you are unwilling or unable to work with the child’s family, the child will see that conflict and will not feel as supported.

Think about some stereotypes you might have about birth parents. What are some things that come to mind?
Birth parents don’t care about their kids
They don’t know how to be parents
They’re irresponsible
They’re lazy and have no morals
They’re in jail

What are some stereotypes that you think birth parents may have about you?

You’re rich
You’re trying to take my kids away
You think you’re better than me
You’re only a foster parent to make money
You don’t care about my kids
You think I don’t care about my kids

Now think about how many of those things are actually true for you. Probably not many of them, if any. Now consider that the same is true for the stereotypes that you have for birth parents; some of those things may be true with some birth parents, but certainly not with all of them. If you go into this process with a negative view of birth parents, it may be difficult for you to work collaboratively and productively with birth families. If, however, you believe that some of the stereotypes about birth parents may be inaccurate (just like the ones are about you), then you’ll be in a great position to work as a team with birth families.
Voices of foster youth:

“...I missed my mom the most because that's my mom. I wished that I would have saw my mom more often, the opportunity was not given it was as though we had to jump through loops and hoops to see her and in my opinion that was not right on either my kinship families side or even the case manager's side, I miss her the most and I wanted to be with her, despite her down falls or her mistakes or her problems that she was going through, I felt as though if I could be with her I wouldn't miss out on that relationship that I could have had with her and I miss my mom the most.”
Take a moment to think back on what you’ve just learned in this module.

- You have heard from foster youth, birth parents, foster parents, and licensing workers about the importance of children maintaining connections to their families.
- You have learned about how birth parents experience grief and anxiety when their children are placed into foster care.
- You’ve learned how important it is for children to spend time with their parents and siblings, and about ways to handle it if you have concerns about these interactions.
- You’ve also learned how things will change if you are related to the child in your home, and how you’ll need to balance your roles of being a relative and being a foster parent.
- But most of all, you’ve learned that working together with the child’s team provides the best outcomes for the child.