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## Parent Coaching

### Family Priority Overview

As community mental health provider for the past fifteen years, Family Priority has aligned with Virginia State objectives of increasing family stabilization through parent education and empowerment and we believe that our proposed Parent Coaching Program can assist in meeting this goal. Family Priority's model is to help parents understand their children's developmental needs, develop positive/proactive approaches to managing challenging behaviors and to tap into parent and family strengths and natural supports thus decreasing the risk for abuse and neglect. Family Priority fully understands that many parents present with developmental/intellectual disabilities, mental health issues or other challenges that prevent them from fully benefitting from group parenting programs. Our home-based individualized parent education program will provide these parents a unique opportunity for empowerment and family growth. Parent Coaching may be done when a youth is living in the home, or prior to the transition home from an out of home placement.

Family Priority identifies the following goals in its mission statement:

- To provide an intensive, focused, comprehensive program that bridges the gaps between existing programs.
- To use creative best practice approaches that provide evidence-based outcome measures.
- To provide a family-centered wrap-around process that is culturally competent, strengths-based and individualized-working in collaboration with our community partners.
- To teach comprehensive parenting skills designed to promote growth in an active, real-time coaching modality.

### Family Priority Parent Coaching

For the Parent Coaching Program to be successful it is imperative to assess each family's needs and form an individualized plan for that family. Family Priority's Parent Assessment consists of three essential components:

1. **Assessing a child's developmental levels and determining related parenting needs:**  
Central to Family Priority's Parent Coaching Program is the belief that identifying and understanding the child's developmental level is imperative. The clinicians and the parents need to possess a thorough understanding of the child's developmental functioning to assure that appropriate expectations and interventions are developed. Family Priority clinicians utilize specifically designed tools to assess a child's physical development,



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learning and language development, problem solving style, ability to effectively trust and establish relationships, behavior and emotional development, as well as play and social development. Once these developmental considerations have been determined and understood by the clinicians, interventions will be designed to aid parents in helping their children meet appropriate developmental milestones.

2. **Identifying family, parent, and child strengths that can be utilized in increasing family cohesion:** An integral part of the assessment process is helping families determine what is working well and what their inherent strengths are. Not only can this empower parents, but these strengths can be utilized in creating solutions to areas of need.
3. **Exploring natural supports within the family and additional community resources that can be utilized to increase family support:** As we often see in the families we serve, helping parents identify their natural supports that can be drawn upon in raising a family can decrease feelings of isolation, burn-out, and stress that often lead to concerns about abuse and neglect. As these natural supports are identified, interventions can be designed to link families to community resources to achieve this same goal when personal supports are not available.
4. **Identifying risks and protective factors within the family:** Most families have both challenges and strengths that can be identified and targeted for parent education. These include issues related to school, home, community and environmental factors to include friends and peers.

After assessing a child's developmental needs, as well as gaining a thorough understanding of the family's strengths and resources, services will be tailored to meet the parent's unique needs and learning styles. Although skill development is an essential part of this program, we also believe that many parents would benefit from understanding that the challenges they face with their children are shared and that there are small steps parents can take to ensure family cohesion. Depending on a family's needs, typical topics covered in a skill development program may include:

- Understanding the child's developmental needs
- Increasing healthy communication
- Assuring that the child's safety and basic needs are consistently being met
- Implementing a positive approach to discipline
- Developing positive sense of self in parent and child
- Understanding the impact of environmental issues and trauma on a child's behavior



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- Helping parents understand the relationship between parent self-care and support systems in a child's overall adjustment

### **Staff Qualifications and Training**

As an agency, Family Priority prides itself in hiring and training clinicians who have strong clinical experience and who are client-centered, strengths-based and display professionalism across all settings. All Family Priority staff are master's level clinicians with extensive experience in providing services to parents, the majority are licensed or license-eligible. All Family Priority mental health staff are required to receive weekly clinical supervision with a LMHP and participate in on-going competency based training. While Family Priority provides voluntary training to foster professional growth, all staff are required to participate in the following trainings:

- Integrating Multicultural Considerations into Counseling
- Risk Assessment Training
- Treatment Planning: A Family Approach
- Positive Psychological Interventions in Counseling
- Overcoming Resistance
- Building Partnerships and Creating Long-term Change
- Client Confidentiality

The Clinical Director will identify qualified staff to serve as clinicians in our in our Parent Program, staff will be required to successfully complete all components the following competency based training modules:

- Assessment of Developmental Functioning Level : Ages 0-6 (Part 1) and Ages 7-18 (Part 2)
- Understanding Attachment Styles and their application to Parent Coaching



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## **Parent Coaching Series- Session Framework**

The following represents a guideline for providing services and will be adjusted to fit individual/family.

In **bold** are specific therapeutic tools that can be used with families. After each session, parents will be assigned a task to complete during the upcoming week-the task will be tailored to the needs of the family and whenever possible will be focused on family bonding, strength identification, stress management, relaxation, cohesion and growth.

It is important to note, that session framework will be determined following the initial assessment. This does not reflect a session plan that would be utilized if there are safety concerns.

**Session 1: Developmental Assessment and Identification of Strengths, Supports and Needs:** During the initial meeting Family Priority clinicians will work with parents to help them develop a better understanding of Developmental Functioning Level of children. The goal is for the parent to understand that in order to identify appropriate expectations and interventions it is imperative that there is a clear understanding of the child's developmental functioning.

During this session clinician and parent will work together to complete the **Child Developmental Diagnostic Assessment/Scale**. This is a specifically designed tool that will assess a child's physical development, learning and language development, problem solving style, ability to effectively trust and establish relationships, behavior and emotional development, as well as play and social development

Additionally, clinicians will work with parents help them establish goal areas for services, as well as to identify needs and challenges. Family Priority fully understands that the child's physical/emotional safety and health issues are the top priorities-if safety/health issues are not addressed in the Developmental Plan they will be identified here and incorporated throughout the treatment plan.

Parents will be encouraged to identify their family's strengths and to draw on their own expertise of their children. Clinician will assist the parent in completing the "**Core Strengths Snapshot**". This tool is used to help parents identify the strengths that they possess as well as the strengths that are inherent in their family systems.

Additionally, clinicians will collaborate with parents to identify potential natural and community supports that can be utilized in increasing family stability.

**Session 2: Healthy Communication:** Clinicians will review results of developmental assessment and explore ways of effectively communicating with child at their appropriate developmental level.



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Additionally, they will utilize instruments designed to assess family patterns of communication and the ways in which family members relate to one another.

**Session 3 and 4: Positive Discipline Approaches:** In these sessions, clinicians will help parents identify their attachment style and the type of parenting approaches they utilize. Focus will be on enhancement of parent strengths and an understanding of the attachment needs of their child.

**Session 5 and 6: Developing positive sense of self in parent and child:** This session will ideally be utilized as a “bringing it all together” session. Parents will be encouraged to participate in an activity with the child and the counselor that has been identified as enjoyable for the family. Parents will be coached to encourage and praise child, as well as to reinforce desired behaviors. Additionally, opportunities will likely arise in which children will display undesired behaviors and parents will be allowed the opportunity to process how they either encouraged or discouraged these behaviors. Clinicians may use “The Difference that Makes a Difference” handout in providing education to parents. In addition, this section will explore the use of natural consequences in positive discipline.

**Session 7: Supports and Self-Care:** Clinicians will again emphasize the importance of utilizing natural and community supports in providing care to a child- parenting is hard-work! After discussing natural supports and times that they might be utilized, parents will be provided information on community supports and resources that are available to them. Rather than leaving parents with a stack of brochures, this might take the form of meeting the parent at the identified resource, such as the “Boys and Girls Club”, to model for parents how to obtain community supports for their children.

**Anticipated Outcome:**

After successful completion of Family Priority’s Parent Coaching Program, parents will be able to verbalize an understanding of their child(rens) developmental level and will have identified and effectively utilized appropriate strategies to manage their child(rens) unique needs. The families will have increased natural and community supports and will embrace individual and family strengths. The family will have identified and resolved any safety or health risks. They will have an understanding of the child and family’s attachment and communication patterns and will adjust these to promote positive parenting relationships. It is anticipated that parents that successfully complete this program will refrain from engaging in neglectful and/or abusive behavior.



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**Hours and Costs:**

\$70.00 per hour; three hours per week; minimum twelve weeks