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Foster Parent Training, Parenting Self-Efficacy and Positive Parenting Behaviors

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I am submitting herewith a thesis written by Kelly N. Mullican entitled "Foster Parent Training, Parenting Self-Efficacy and Positive Parenting Behaviors." I have examined the final electronic copy of this thesis for form and content and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Science, with a major in Child and Family Studies.

Heidi E. Stolz, Major Professor

We have read this thesis and recommend its acceptance:

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Foster Parent Training, Parenting Self-Efficacy and Positive Parenting Behaviors

A Thesis Presented for the
Master of Science
Degree
The University of Tennessee, Knoxville

Kelly N. Mullican

May 2018

Abstract

The purpose of this study was to provide a greater understanding of the relationships between foster parent training, parenting self-efficacy (PSE), and positive parenting behaviors. This study also aimed to explore some of the challenges that foster parents report in trying to positively parent their foster children. A snowball approach was used to identify past and present foster parents (N = 297) from across the U.S. Participants completed an anonymous, online survey measuring their experience with foster parent training, PSE, and parenting behaviors.

Quantitative results indicated different curricula predicted different aspects of PSE, and both Nurturance PSE and Achievement PSE predicted positive parenting behaviors. Qualitative results revealed that the most commonly reported foster parenting challenges were related to foster parenting agencies, child behaviors, and biological families.

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CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION

There are currently more than 435,000 children residing in the United States' foster care system (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2016). When it is not suitable for a child to remain with his or her own parents, foster placements are the first option of choice (Farris-Manning & Zandstra, 2003). Children in foster care may live in a number of possible settings, including traditional foster homes (i.e. homes with foster children to whom foster parents are not related) and kinship foster homes. Regardless of the type of placement, foster parents play an important role in ensuring foster children's healthy development and safety. Many children entering the foster care system have a history of neglect and abuse, including physical, emotional, and sexual abuse (Fuentes, Salas, Bernedo, & García-Martín, 2014). Thus, foster children are disproportionately at risk for negative outcomes such as increased behavioral and emotional problems (Burge, 2007; Landsverk, Burns, Stambaugh, & Rolls Reutz, 2006), educational problems, substance use, involvement in the juvenile justice system (Child Trends Databank, 2015), and failed foster placements (Price, Chamberlain, Landsverk, & Reid, 2009). Given the unique needs of children in foster care, it is important for foster parents to be trained in the necessary parenting skills to meet their children's needs.

Once the decision to begin fostering has occurred, foster parents are often expected to complete a series of training requirements. These training requirements include preapproval foster parent training, which is the training prospective foster parents receive before caring for their first foster child. All foster parents in the United States are required to be licensed or approved prior to their first placement; however, this licensing process can look different in each state (Dorsey, Farmer, Barth, Greene, Reid, & Landsverk, 2008). Many states require foster parents to participate in preapproval foster parent training, but the number of required training

hours and the training curricula vary by state (Grimm, 2003). Despite participating in training, some foster parents report feeling unprepared to manage the needs of children in their care (Kereker & Dore, 2006). Parenting self-efficacy (PSE) refers to a caregiver's belief that he or she has the ability to perform parenting tasks successfully (de Montigny & Lacharite, 2005). Historically, successful parenting has included two key dimensions: support and control (Barber, Stolz, & Olsen, 2005; Baumrind, 1966). Although there is abundant research demonstrating a relationship between PSE and positive parenting behaviors for traditional parents (cf. Glatz & Buchanan, 2015; Junttila, Aromaa, Rautava, Piha, & Rähä, 2015), limited research on this link has been conducted with foster parents. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to better understand the relationship between foster parent training, parenting self-efficacy and positive parenting behaviors. Additionally, this study aimed to explore some of the challenges that foster parents report in trying to positively parent their foster children.

Theoretical Framework

PSE comes from the broader concept of self-efficacy explained by Dr. Albert Bandura's classic work on Social Learning Theory. Self-efficacy can be defined as an individual's belief that he or she is capable of performing the necessary behaviors to accomplish certain tasks and goals. According to Social Learning Theory, self-efficacy influences an individual's sense of agency and control over his or her life, especially in the domains of motivation and behavior (Bandura, 1977). Bandura provided several propositions within the theory; three of those propositions are of particular interest for the present study. First, Social Learning Theory suggests that an increase in self-efficacy is associated with an increase in task performance; thus, increasing foster parent PSE should increase performance in parenting tasks. Social Learning Theory also suggests that strengthening self-efficacy will increase one's motivation to attain

goals. Foster parents recognize that they must acquire additional parenting skills to address their foster children's needs (Spielfogel, Leathers, Christian, & McMeel, 2011); therefore, increasing foster parent PSE should increase parents' motivation to attain that goal. Finally, Social Learning Theory suggests that expectations of efficacy will determine how much effort individuals will expend, and how long they will persist in the face of obstacles and adverse experiences. This proposition is especially important when considering the challenges associated with foster parenting; increasing foster parents' confidence in their ability to be efficacious in the foster parenting role will increase their levels of effort and persistence in the face of such challenges. Given the impact that Social Learning Theory suggests self-efficacy has on motivation and behaviors, it would be beneficial for foster parents to feel highly efficacious upon completion of their preapproval foster parent training.

It is also important to note the central role parents play in children's development, and the value in feeling efficacious in this regard. According to Coleman and Karraker (2000), due to parents' increased life experiences, knowledge, and skills along with an acute understanding of their child's character and individual needs, parents are in a unique position to help children manage developmental challenges in all domains of functioning (cognitive, social, emotional, and physical). Each of these domains require specific parenting tasks which are necessary to encourage optimal development. Coleman and Karraker (2000) have posed five domains of PSE that are believed to be representative of the domain-specific parenting tasks for children between the ages of five and twelve. These PSE domains include (a) encouraging school achievement (Achievement), (b) facilitating child's recreation and social development (Recreation), (c) providing structure and discipline (Discipline), (d) nurturing child's emotional development (Nurturance), and (e) maintaining child's physical health (Health). For the present study,

Achievement, Discipline, and Nurturance were measured due to their relevance to foster parenting and similarities with preapproval training content. Given the important role parents play in child development, it would be beneficial for foster parents to also feel highly efficacious in each of these three domains of PSE upon completion of their preapproval foster parent training.

CHAPTER II REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Foster Parent Training

Although most foster parents are required to participate in training, there are a variety of training curricula being implemented across the United States. The most commonly used preapproval training curricula include Model Approach to Partnerships in Parenting (MAPP) and Parent Resources for Information, Development, and Education (PRIDE). MAPP was originally developed in the mid-1980s and revised in the early 1990s. It is a 30-hour standardized curriculum delivered in ten three-hour sessions (Pastzor, 1987). Around the same time, PRIDE was developed in 1993 and revised in 2003. It is a 27-hour standardized curriculum delivered in nine three-hour sessions (Illinois Department of Children and Family Services, 1993). Each of these training programs are facilitated by a child welfare worker and an experienced foster parent. Parents as Tenders Healers (PATH) is another curriculum used in some states to train foster parents. PATH is a 23-hour curriculum delivered in seven sessions that are also led by a child welfare worker and an experienced foster parent (Spaulding for Children, 2011). Among the various preapproval training programs, there is also a variety in training content. Generally, MAPP, PRIDE, and PATH are each based on a set of objectives or competencies intended to build foster parents' knowledge and skills. Content of both MAPP and PRIDE include a broad focus on the knowledge and skills necessary to work with the child welfare system as well as an emphasis on the core values of foster care (e.g., building strengths, building connections, developing relationships, supporting children's needs; Dorsey et al., 2008). Topics covered in the MAPP curriculum include: the process of becoming a foster parent and the legal foundation for child welfare services, the role of foster parents, the impact of separation and trauma, helping

children with attachments, discipline techniques for children who have been abused or neglected, identity and culture, permanency planning, and the impact of placement on foster parents' immediate and extended family members. Overall, MAPP is intended to create well-informed foster parents who know what to expect and how to work within the child welfare system (Pastzor, 1987). PRIDE revolves around the following five competencies: protecting and nurturing children; meeting children's developmental needs; supporting children's relationships with their biological families; connecting children to safe, nurturing, lifelong relationships; and working as a member of a professional team. Overall, PRIDE broadly covers many topics, which are all believed to be essential for the welfare of foster children. Although MAPP and PRIDE are considered the "gold standard" of training curricula, both have been criticized for their large focus on procedures and policies with little attention given to issues related to managing children's difficult behaviors (Dorsey et al., 2008). Topics covered in the PATH curriculum include: understanding the child welfare system, the impact of trauma, effective discipline, cultural awareness, medical administration, and CPR and first aid. Overall, the PATH curriculum focuses on increasing foster parents' understanding of the child welfare system, the types of children in foster care and their unique needs, and the process of self-assessment to identify their strengths as foster parents (Spaulding for Children, 2011).

Given the diversity presented in foster parents' preapproval training programs, it would seem imperative to review their effectiveness; however, there have been few studies evaluating the effectiveness of foster parenting training, and both the methodologies and the results of these evaluations raise concern. In a recent review, the literature on foster parent training evaluations was called "weak at best" and "a major area for additional focus" (Festinger & Baker, 2013, p. 2148). Several additional studies have suggested that there is not enough known about the

effectiveness of foster parent training. For example, Dorsey and colleagues (2008) found that there is little empirical support for the most widely utilized curricula in foster parent training. Rork and McNeil (2011) questioned the reliability, validity, and generalizability of the available training research due to its methodological limitations. In 1991, Lee and Holland stated that there is limited knowledge in this area; then, over two decades later, Festinger and Baker (2013, p. 2152) came to the same conclusion: “there is a lack of sufficient evidence-based knowledge about the effectiveness of the programs offered.” Finally, in a major review of the literature, Grimm (2003) reported that child welfare agencies often fail to collect data on knowledge gain or behavior change. Instead, agencies tend to collect data on attendance, thus ignoring the federal requirements in place to ensure the effectiveness of foster parent training. Given the reviews of the most commonly used foster parent training curricula, MAPP and PRIDE, have shown they cannot be empirically supported (Dorsey et al., 2008; Festinger & Baker, 2013), and there are currently no published, peer-reviewed studies evaluating the effectiveness of the PATH curriculum, there seems to be a mismatch between the emphasis placed on training foster parents and the level of understanding about whether those efforts are effective.

Although foster parents recognize the importance of training, they have expressed dissatisfaction with current training as well as a need for more. For example, foster parents in one study reported training as vital for preparing them to provide high-quality care (Leschied, Rodger, Brown, den Dunnen, & Pickel, 2014). A qualitative study of 54 foster parents found that foster parents expressed dissatisfaction in multiple areas, expressing that child welfare agencies do not provide adequate training, support, or information (MacGregor, Rodger, Cummings, & Leschied, 2006). Other studies have found that foster parents express a need for additional topics to be covered within their training. For instance, two qualitative studies concluded that foster

parents desired more training in managing children's difficult behaviors (Cooley & Petren, 2011; Murray, Tarren-Sweeney, & Frances, 2011). It has also been reported that increasing the effectiveness and the amount of training that foster parents receive prevented dissatisfaction and turnover (Whenan, Oxlad, & Lushington, 2009). Thus, these studies exemplify the concerns presented by foster parents regarding their training and the importance of addressing unmet training needs.

Parenting Behaviors and Child Outcomes

Parental Support. Researchers suggest parental support is related to a host of positive child outcomes. For example, supportive parenting and parental warmth have been shown to predict lower levels of children's depression and antisocial behaviors (Barber et al., 2005). In a study of 1,111 adolescents and their parents, Janssens, Goossens, Van Den Noortgate, Colpin, Verschueren, and Van Leeuwen (2015) found parental support was significantly and negatively related to adolescents' externalizing behaviors and depression. Additionally, in a longitudinal study including 401 parents and their adolescent children, Glatz and Buchanan (2015) found that parental involvement, encouragement, and proactive prevention led to a decrease in adolescents' disobedience toward parents, school misconduct, and antisocial behaviors. Although researchers believe high parental support is related to positive child outcomes, it is also understood that low parental support may work in the opposite fashion. Low parental support has been reported to have detrimental effects on children's development such as a higher incidence of depression (Barber et al., 2005). Therefore, given the importance of parental support in predicting children's outcomes, it makes sense that foster parent training should enhance parents' abilities to provide this impactful commodity.

Parental Control. Positive behavioral control techniques have also been shown to influence child outcomes. Behavioral control can be described as a set of parenting behaviors that includes communicating clear and consistent expectations for appropriate behavior and monitoring the child's behavior according to these expectations (Akcinar & Baydar, 2014). In a sample of 933 fifth- and eighth-grade students, behavioral control, including supervision, monitoring, and parental knowledge of children's activities, was negatively associated with children's self-reported antisocial behaviors and depression (Barber et al., 2005). On the other hand, inappropriate types of parental control such as harsh parenting, which includes physical or verbal punishment, are positively associated with children's problems behaviors (Ritchie & Buchanan, 2011). In their study, Janssens and colleagues (2015) found that punitive and harsh punitive control (i.e. coercive parenting that undermines children's individuality by pressure and domination) were positively associated with adolescent problem behavior including aggressive and rule breaking behaviors. Overall, these findings suggest the importance of educating parents on the impact of their control behaviors on child outcomes in addition to teaching specific strategies to facilitate positive parental control.

Behavioral control is thought to be a broad term, which has led to a variety of conceptualizations. For this reason, researchers typically investigate narrower dimensions of parental control such as the conceptualization suggested by McEachern, Dishion, Weaver, Shaw, Wilson, and Gardner (2012). After reviewing the popular measures used to assess parenting behaviors [e.g., The Parenting Scale (Arnold, O'Leary, Wolff, & Acker, 1993), the Adult Child Relationship Scale (Pianta & Nimetz, 1991), the Parenting Sense Of Competence Scale (Johnston & Mash, 1989), the Eyberg Child Behavior Inventory (Burns & Patterson, 2001), and the Child Behavior Checklist (Achenbach & Edelbrock, 1991)], these researchers concluded that

there was a gap in the literature. In response, the Parenting Young Children Scale (PARYC) was developed, which measures three areas of parenting behaviors that have been linked to positive outcomes for young children: (1) Proactive Parenting, (2) Supporting Positive Behavior, and (3) Setting Limits. An exploratory factor analysis and a confirmatory factor analysis supported the existence of these three parenting domains. Since its conception, the PARYC has been referred to as a “well-established parenting scale,” (Parent, McKee, Rough, & Forehand, 2016, p. 195), and its parenting domains have been used to inform items on additional parenting behavior assessments (Parent and Forehand, 2014; Smith, Stormshak, & Kavanagh, 2014). In sum, the literature has demonstrated the impact of parenting behaviors related to support and control on positive child outcomes, and researchers are advancing the field in ways to measure these influential behaviors.

Parenting Self-Efficacy and Parenting Behaviors

Given the impact of parental support and control on young children’s well-being, it is important to consider the parental attitudes that facilitate these positive behaviors. Research has demonstrated the positive influence of one parental attitude – PSE – on parenting behaviors in the domains of parental support and parental control. In their longitudinal study including 286 mothers, Glatz and Buchanan (2015) found that PSE predicted an increase in mother’s promotive parenting practices such as parental involvement, encouragement, and proactive prevention, which led to a decrease in adolescents’ externalizing behaviors. Studies have also found an association between PSE and parental control. Murdock (2013) conducted a study with 82 mothers and fathers and found that high PSE in mothers predicted more supportive parenting behaviors and fewer hostile or coercive parenting behaviors; for fathers, high PSE predicted supportive parenting behaviors and exertion of control. Additionally, in their review of the role

of PSE in parent and child adjustment, Jones and Prinz (2005) reported that high levels of PSE predicted low negative control strategies such as inconsistent discipline and love withdrawal. Finally, Roskam, Brassart, Loop, Mouton, and Schelstraete (2015) found that parents who participated in an intervention to increase PSE reported more positive parenting techniques in the domains of discipline and teaching than parents who did not receive the intervention. In sum, the literature has demonstrated the positive influence of PSE on positive parenting strategies such as support and control.

Foster Parenting Behaviors and Foster Child Outcomes

Parental Support. Similar to traditional parenting, foster parents' supportive parenting behaviors have been associated with favorable child outcomes in foster children. For example, in a study of 104 foster children and their respective foster families, Fuentes and colleagues (2014) demonstrated that parental warmth and communication predicted fewer child problem behaviors related to withdrawal, rule breaking, and aggressive behaviors. On the other hand, criticism and rejection by foster parents predicted all but one of the measured outcomes, which included anxiety and depression, withdrawal, rule breaking, and aggressive behaviors. Given the instability many of these children have experienced, it is important for foster parents to become a reliable base. For instance, Dozier, Lindhiem, Lewis, Bick, Bernard, and Peloso (2009) administered a double-blind study in which 46 foster parents were randomly assigned to receive two different training curricula. Researchers found that children whose foster parents had completed the intervention aimed to increase foster parents' attachment behaviors were reported to demonstrate healthier attachments to their caregivers, as evidenced by showing less avoidance behaviors than children of caregivers who received a developmental education intervention. In sum, these findings display the importance of foster parents providing parental warmth and

support in their relationships with foster children, and therefore the related importance of developing this ability in foster parents via training.

Parental Control. It is also important for foster parents to practice effective behavioral control techniques. Lipscombe, Farmer, and Moyers (2003) conducted a longitudinal study assessing the parenting behaviors used by foster parents of adolescents in long-term placements. This study included two interviews that took place at the start of a new placement and after the placement had continued for a year (or at the point of disruption if this occurred sooner). Results showed that foster parents who provided average or good supervision outside the home were significantly less likely to experience a placement disruption than those who provided very inadequate or low supervision for their foster children. As was reviewed above for children in traditional families, foster children, also respond less favorably to inappropriate types of behavioral control. For example, utilizing data from a longitudinal study of 52 foster children in long-term placements, Schofield and Beek (2009) reported that foster children often struggle with the complex power network of birth, foster, and agency ‘parents,’ which can exacerbate issues related to autonomy negotiation. However, after reflecting over the three phases of the study, researchers were able to identify an increase in children’s confidence through autonomy-supporting behaviors such as offering choices or providing structured opportunities involving some risk (e.g., walking home from school). Overall, limited research suggests that foster parenting appears to facilitate youth well-being in similar ways as has been reported for traditional parenting; foster children develop most optimally when foster parents provide nurturing support and positive forms of control.

Parenting Self-Efficacy in Foster Parents

Given the demonstrated impact of PSE on parenting behaviors in the domains of parental support and parental control for traditional parents, it is important to consider this relationship in foster parents. Although much of the research on foster parenting has failed to include PSE, the few studies that have examined PSE within this population demonstrate positive relationships between PSE and foster family outcomes. For example, in a study of 58 foster parents caring for children between the ages of two and twelve, Whenan and colleagues (2009) found that foster parents who reported high PSE also reported high well-being and intention to continue fostering. Additionally, data from nine foster parent focus groups revealed that retention rates are improved when foster parents feel confident in the adequacy of support provided by their agencies (MacGregor et al., 2006). It has also been reported that a negative relationship exists between foster parent PSE and perceived child behavior problems. Whenan and colleagues (2009) examined a more specific concept of PSE, Difficult Behavior PSE, which measures foster parents' self-efficacy in regard to managing their foster child's difficult behaviors. Results indicated that high Difficult Behavior PSE predicted fewer perceived behavior problems. Researchers suggested that one possible explanation was foster parents with higher PSE were able to reduce the challenging behaviors of their foster child through effective parenting strategies. Finally, Murray and colleagues (2011) conducted a mixed-method study and found that foster parents reported substantial unmet needs for support and training, which was associated with high parental stress. Foster parents reported their top priority was a need for training and support on managing children's behaviors. These researchers concluded that increasing foster parents' confidence in their ability to apply training techniques is a necessary and important part of effective foster parent training. In sum, these findings suggest that foster

parent PSE may be related to positive parenting behaviors as has been shown for traditional parents, but more research is needed.

Purpose and Research Questions

Given the general goal of preapproval training is to prepare foster parents to effectively care for foster children, it is important that these parents feel prepared to do so after their preapproval training. Additionally, although there is research to support the relationship between PSE and positive parenting behaviors for traditional parents, more research is needed to fully understand this relationship in foster parents. Thus, this study aimed to address the following research questions:

1. Does PSE in each of three domains differ by the type of preapproval foster parent training (PATH, PRIDE, or MAPP)?
2. Do participant-reported training adequacy and training satisfaction differ by the type of preapproval foster parent training (PATH, PRIDE, or MAPP)?
3. Does the inclusion of specific training content areas predict PSE in each of three domains?
4. Does PSE in each of three domains predict parental support?
5. Does PSE in each of three domains predict parental control (proactive parenting, supporting positive behavior, and setting limits)?
6. What challenges do foster parents report in trying to positively parent their foster children?

CHAPTER III METHODS

Sample and Procedures

This study utilized a snowball approach to identify past and current foster parents. The link to an anonymous, online survey was emailed to organizations that were expected to have strong connections with foster parents (e.g., National Foster Parent Associations). Recipients of this email were asked to (a) follow the link and participate in the survey if they are eligible, and (b) forward the link to any known foster parents.

Overall, there were 313 responses to the survey over the three-week period designated for data collection. The present study restricted the sample to include only respondents who reported they were a past or current foster parent (i.e. “*I was previously approved to foster children, but I am no longer fostering*” or “*I am currently approved to foster children in my home; this includes foster parents who are between placements*”). The sample was also restricted to include only foster parents who (a) reported what type of foster parent they were (i.e. traditional, kinship, both, or other) and (b) reported completion of preapproval foster parent training. Thus, 16 responses were omitted from analyses because some ($n = 6$) specified “Neither,” and some ($n = 2$) did not respond to the item, “Please indicate which of the following best describes you?” (*past foster parent, current foster parent, or neither*). Four participants failed to provide information on what type of foster parent they were, and an additional four participants did not specify whether they received preapproval foster parent training.

The resulting sample included 297 past or current foster parents. Eighty-seven percent of participants were traditional foster parents (i.e. homes with foster children to whom foster parents are not related), 3.4% were kinship foster parents only, 7.7% identified as both, and 2.4% identified as other. Participants were an average of 40.9 years of age ($SD = 10.49$) and 75.4%

female and 11.8% male (12.8% missing). Eighty-two percent of participants identified as White, and 5.6% as non-White (12.8% missing).

All participants were asked questions related to the quantity and type of foster parenting training they received, challenges they have experienced as foster parents, and demographic information. Questions related to PSE and parenting behaviors were restricted to participants who indicated they had fostered a child between ages five and 13 for at least six months ($n = 143$). A summary of descriptive statistics for the full sample and the restricted parenting attitudes and behaviors sample is presented in Table 1.

Insert Table 1 here

Measures

Foster Parent Training. Foster parents identified the *type of training* they completed by responding to the item, “What type of preapproval foster parent training did you initially complete?” Response options were *PATH*, *PRIDE*, *MAPP*, and *Other*. The overall training type variable was then recoded into three new, dichotomous training variables. *Preapproval training content* was measured with 13 items to which foster parents responded *yes* or *no* according to whether they received training on each topic. The training content items were duplicated from items used in the Casey Foster Applicant Inventory–Applicant Version (CFAI-A), which is a standardized self-report measure designed to assess foster parents’ potential to be successful foster parents (Orme, Cuddeback, Beuhler, Cox, & Prohn, 2007). There was a strong overlap between items used in the CFAI-A and topics covered in the MAPP, PRIDE, and PATH training curricula; therefore, the content items utilized in the CFAI-A were considered appropriate for the current study as well. A list of content areas along with percentages of participants who reported receiving training in each content area is provided in Table 2. *Foster parent training satisfaction*

was measured with the item, “On a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 is not very satisfied and 5 is extremely satisfied, how satisfied are you with the preapproval foster parent training you have completed?” Finally, *Foster parent training adequacy* was measured with the item, “Looking back, how well did the information you received during preapproval training prepare you to be a foster parent?” Response options ranged from 1 (*not well at all*) to 5 (*extremely well*). Means and standard deviations for all variables of interest are provided in Table 3.

Insert Tables 2 and 3 here

Focal Child. PSE has been described as situation-dependent or situation-specific and prone to vary according to the context it is measured (Gildewell & Livert, 1992). In a review by Črnčec, Barnett, and Matthey (2010), it was reported that domain-specific PSE measures, such as the measures used in the present study, are more reliable when parents keep in mind a child of a particular age as opposed to thinking of parenting more generally. Because past research has shown that this is how PSE is most accurately measured, foster parents who met the eligibility requirements outlined above (having fostered a child between the ages of 5 and 13 for at least 6 months) were asked to identify a focal child within those constraints for questions regarding PSE and parenting behaviors. Next, foster parents answered *Yes* or *No* to the item, “Are you currently fostering this child?” Responses to this item determined whether participants received PSE and parenting behaviors items in present or past tense. This decision was made in order to facilitate recall and encourage each participant to focus only on her/his identified focal child.

Parenting Self-Efficacy. Domain-specific parenting measures assess parents’ beliefs in their ability to complete specific tasks. Given their narrow focus, it has been argued that these measures have greater predictive validity than general measures of PSE (cf. Wittkowskil, Garrett, Calam, & Weisberg, 2017). Keeping this in mind, the current study measured PSE in the

areas of discipline, nurturance, and achievement using the Self-Efficacy for Parenting Tasks Index (SEPTI; Coleman & Karraker, 2000). SEPTI includes 36 items divided across five parenting domains. In a recent review, SEPTI received the highest score possible on internal consistency, which was reserved for measures that had Cronbach's alphas falling between 0.70 and 0.95 after factor analysis were run on an adequate sample size ($7 \times$ the number of items and ≥ 100 ; Wittkowskil et al., 2017). To reduce survey completion time, a decision was made to include three of the five efficacy domains that were deemed most relevant for foster parents, which included 22 items rated on a 5-point Likert scale. Response options ranged from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*). Sample items for Discipline PSE include "I have more trouble with discipline than any other aspect of foster parenting," and "I thought I was a good foster parent until I started struggling so much with discipline." Sample items for Nurturance PSE include "I have trouble expressing my affection for my foster child," and "Being a loving foster parent comes easily to me." Sample items for Achievement PSE include "I do an adequate job helping my foster child with school work," and "I am not as involved in my foster child's education as I think I should be." The results of factor analyses that informed scale construction are presented below. Cronbach's alphas for the three efficacy domains were: Discipline PSE (6 items, $\alpha = .86$), Nurturance PSE (5 items, $\alpha = .82$), and Achievement PSE (6 items, $\alpha = .74$).

Parenting Behaviors. Parental support was measured using the 10-item acceptance subscale from the revised Child Report of Parent Behavior Inventory (Schaefer, 1965; Schuldermann & Schuldermann, 1988). Responses were rated on a 3-point Likert scale from 1 (*not like me*) to 3 (*a lot like me*). Sample items included "I give my foster child a lot of care and attention," and "I believe in showing my love for my foster child". The resulting 10-item scale demonstrated good reliability ($\alpha = .81$).

Three control-related dimensions were measured using the Parenting Young Children Scale (PARYC; McEachern et al., 2012), which includes 21 items rated on a 5-point Likert scale from 1 (*never*) to 5 (*always*). Items were theorized to measure three distinct aspects of parental control: Proactive Parenting, Supporting Positive Behavior, and Setting Limits. This measure was validated in a study assessing the frequency of several parenting behaviors among high risk families (N = 579). Results of factor analysis verified the PARYC as an appropriate measure of parenting behaviors (McEachern et al., 2012). Foster parents were prompted with “How often do you...” Sample items for Proactive Parenting include “Warn your foster child before a change of activity is required,” and “Break a task into small steps.” Sample items for Supporting Positive Behavior include “Reward your foster child when he/she did something well,” and “Teach your foster child new skills.” Finally, sample items for Setting Limits include “Explain what you want your foster child to do in clear and simple ways,” and “Make sure your foster child follows the rules you set all or most of the time.” The results of factor analyses that informed scale construction are presented below. Cronbach’s alphas for the three parental control measures were: Proactive Parenting (6 items, $\alpha = .81$), Supporting Positive Behavior (6 items, $\alpha = .79$), and Setting Limits (5 items, $\alpha = .76$).

Because items measuring PSE and parenting behaviors were asked in either present or past tense, new variables were created to combine corresponding items for analyses.

Challenges. Participants were also asked to share some of the *challenges* they have encountered as foster parents. The prompt read, “Often there are challenges in foster parenting. In the space provided below, please list some of the challenges you have faced in trying to positively parent your foster child.”

Analysis

The IBM SPSS Statistics program (version 24) and STATA (version 15) were used for quantitative analyses. First, factor analyses were performed on (a) the 22 items theorized to load on the three PSE domain scales and (b) the 21 items theorized to load on the three parental control scales. For research question (RQ) 1, a series of nine *t*-tests were conducted to investigate whether each of the three PSE measures differed for participants who completed each of the three types of training compared to those who did not. To address RQ 2, six additional *t*-tests were conducted to investigate whether training satisfaction and adequacy differed by training type (MAPP, PRIDE, or PATH).

With regard to RQ 3, a series of 39 *t*-tests were used to investigate the relationship between thirteen specific preapproval training content areas and the three PSE domains. For RQs 4 and 5, OLS regression was also used to investigate the relationship between PSE and positive parenting behaviors, separately for each of the three PSE domains and each of the four parenting dimensions.

Qualitative data were transferred into NVivo version 11 where open coding was utilized to identify themes within the challenges reported by foster parents, thereby addressing RQ 6.

CHAPTER IV RESULTS

Quantitative Results

Results of the factor analysis revealed that the 22 SEPTI items loaded onto six factors. However, the Eigen values of factors four, five, and six were low (though over 1.0), and the items have been conceptualized by others to represent three distinct parenting dimensions, thus we forced a three-factor solution and used promax rotation. Based on the pattern of factor loadings, five items were removed due to failure to load as hypothesized, and another factor analysis was run with promax rotation. One achievement item with a factor loading of 0.37 was retained because removing this item caused additional item loadings to fall below 0.40. All remaining items loaded as hypothesized with all loadings over 0.40 and no cross-loadings over 0.22.

Results of the second Principle Component Factor Analysis revealed that the 21 PARYC items also loaded onto six factors. However, the Eigen values of factors four, five, and six were low (though over 1.0). As with SEPTI, others have used the PARYC scale to represent three distinct parenting dimensions, thus we forced a three-factor solution and used promax rotation. Based on the pattern of factor loadings, four items were removed due to failure to load as hypothesized. Another factor analysis was run with promax rotation. One limit setting item with a cross loading of 0.38 was retained because its factor loading was above 0.40 and removing this item would result in only four items on that factor. The remaining items loaded as hypothesized with all loadings over 0.40 and no cross-loadings over 0.30.

Results of the *t*-tests examining PSE by training type indicated that foster parents trained in the MAPP curriculum ($n = 12$) reported higher Discipline PSE ($M = 4.44$, $SD = .49$) than

foster parents who did not receive MAPP training ($M = 3.55$, $SD = .99$; $t(21.33) = -5.24$, $p < .001$). The results of the other eight t -tests were non-significant.

Results of the t -tests examining whether training satisfaction and adequacy differed by training type revealed that foster parents trained in the PATH curriculum ($n = 117$) reported higher training satisfaction ($M = 3.91$, $SD = .91$) than foster parents who did not receive PATH training ($M = 3.31$, $SD = 1.07$; $t(259.98) = -4.87$, $p < .001$). Additionally, foster parents trained in the PATH curriculum reported higher training adequacy ($M = 3.32$, $SD = .99$) than foster parents who did not receive PATH training ($M = 2.68$, $SD = 1.09$; $t(263) = -4.95$, $p < .001$). The mean score of training satisfaction was significantly lower for foster parents trained in the PRIDE curriculum ($n = 71$; $M = 3.25$, $SD = 1.08$) than foster parents who did not receive PRIDE training ($M = 3.69$, $SD = 1.01$; $t(262) = 3.05$, $p < .01$). Similarly, the mean score of training adequacy was significantly lower for foster parents trained in the PRIDE curriculum ($M = 2.55$, $SD = 1.05$) than foster parents who did not receive PRIDE training ($M = 3.12$, $SD = 1.07$; $t(263) = 3.84$, $p < .001$). The results of the remaining two t -tests were non-significant; therefore, no significant differences were found in training satisfaction or adequacy for foster parents trained in the MAPP curriculum when compared to those who did not receive MAPP training.

Results of the final 39 t -tests examining PSE based on exposure to each of 13 training content areas revealed that there were significant differences in Achievement PSE in the presence of three training content areas. First, foster parents who received training on the kinds of children in foster care ($M = 4.39$, $SD = .49$) reported higher Achievement PSE than those who were not trained in this content area ($M = 3.63$, $SD = .94$; $t(9.44) = 2.55$, $p < .05$). Second, foster parents who received training on fostering a teenager ($M = 4.41$, $SD = .49$) reported higher Achievement PSE than those who were not trained in this content area ($M = 4.15$, $SD = .72$;

$t(54.50) = 2.08, p < .05$). Finally, foster parents who received training on working with sexually abused children ($M = 4.43, SD = .48$) reported higher Achievement PSE than those who were not trained in this content area ($M = 4.07, SD = .73; t(42.58) = 2.69, p < .01$). There were no significant differences in PSE as a function of the presence or absence of specific training content for the remaining t -tests.

Results of OLS regression examining the relationship between PSE and positive parenting behaviors showed Nurturance PSE significantly predicted all four measured parenting behaviors including: parental support ($\beta = .65, p < .001$), supporting positive behaviors ($\beta = .44, p < .001$), proactive parenting ($\beta = .30, p < .01$), and setting limits ($\beta = .28, p < .01$). Achievement PSE significantly predicted parental support ($\beta = .17, p < .05$). Discipline PSE was not significantly associated with any of the measured parenting behaviors.

With regard to the final research question, three overarching themes emerged from the qualitative data related to challenges faced by foster parents: (1) challenges related to the agency, (2) challenges related to child behavior, and (3) challenges related to biological families. Each of these themes and their subcategories will be discussed below.

Qualitative Results

Agency Challenges. The most commonly reported challenges were related to working with the foster parenting agencies or departments of the state. Specifically, foster parents described numerous challenges concerning communication and support. Many foster parents reported a perceived lack of communication between themselves and agency workers. For example, some foster parents described a desire to know more about the children in their care: *“It is like the child's life before foster care is a big secret and foster parents are not allowed to know the information.”* Others described a lack of transparency from their agency about placements,

with one foster parent saying, “[there was a] *lack of full disclosure of his trauma history and previous behaviors and lifestyle.*” Additionally, foster parents desired an opportunity to provide their own input, as one participant shared the challenge in, “*Not having our voices heard about the children in care.*” Additionally, foster parents reported a substantial perceived lack in agency support. One foster parent even went as far as to say, “*Without a doubt, the biggest challenge of being a foster parent is a lack of support from the system.*” While foster parents certainly expressed challenges in working with their agencies, many foster parents also acknowledged that agencies are working through their own challenges, with one participant saying, “*We try to be understanding because of the high rate of turnover and huge caseloads. It's just been challenging,*” and another describing agency workers as being “*overworked and underpaid.*” Overall, the most commonly reported challenges by foster parents were related to working with foster parenting agencies or departments of the state; however, many foster parents expressed empathy and recognized that agencies are overcoming their own challenges as well.

Behavior Challenges. Foster parents also indicated children’s behavior as being a major challenge. The terms “*tantrum*” and “*melt down*” were used frequently as foster parents explained the difficulties in managing these emotion-filled situations. One foster parent elaborated by describing the challenge in, “*figuring out their trauma triggers and managing extreme behaviors.*” Trauma was another term which appeared frequently in this theme. For example, one foster parent stated, “*The trauma displays itself in ugly ways. Tantrums. Hitting. Spitting...Non-stop screaming.*” The influence of trauma was further described as foster parents explained the changes in children’s behavior after visits with birth parents. Examples of the disruptions in children’s behavior included acting out, emotional devastation, and outbursts of anger. One foster parent said, “*The reactions after visitation with their biological parents are*

difficult too. Distant. Fits. Screaming. Not wanting to go to visits. And not wanting to leave. They're little hearts are so confused it makes it difficult to guide them and soothe them." The difficulty in providing guidance and effective consequences for children's challenging behaviors was mentioned several times. For example, one foster parent shared, "*Children with trauma don't typically adhere well with traditional redirection or talking to them,*" and another one said, "*The main challenge was figuring out which disciplinary action worked best for each child.*" In sum, there was an overall theme of challenges related to foster children's difficult behaviors, but these challenges were reported to manifest themselves in a variety of ways.

Biological Family Challenges. Another theme present was the challenges involved with biological families, which includes both the foster child's birth family and the foster parents' own biological family. One of the top reported challenges involved working with a foster child's birth parents. Foster parents described the difficulty in helping children deal with the uncertainties and disappointment as birth parents cycle in and out of their lives. For example, one foster parent expressed a challenge in, "*staying positive through dealing with birth parents,*" and another one said, "*Trying to calm/soothe a child who is upset about bio parent behavior without saying anything negative about bio parent.*" Another challenge in working with foster children's birth parents related to the struggle in forming those relationships. As one foster parent put it, this was especially true, "*When bios view you as enemy.*"

Finally, many foster parents shared concerns related to the impact of fostering on their own families. Foster parents reported challenges in marital strain, balancing one on one time between foster children and birth children, and helping biological children adjust to a foster sibling leaving. Parents also shared how foster children can often teach their biological children things they would rather them not know; for example, "*It can be difficult to have your own*

children aware of a situation and exposed to behaviors that are not necessarily beneficial or healthy.” Another foster parent said, *“It was difficult for me to remain calm when my foster children were physically or emotionally hurtful to my biological children,”* which was an opinion that was similarly stated several times. Foster parents seemed to be aware of the impact fostering has on their families (e.g., *“The whole family has to sacrifice to make it work.”*), which could explain the expressions of doubt that were so often expressed. One foster parent stated, *“I frequently wonder if I’m doing more damage to my family by being a foster parent.”* Overall, foster parenting comes with a multitude of challenges including working with a foster child’s birth parents and managing the impact of fostering on one’s own family.

CHAPTER V DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to better understand the relationship between foster parent training, parenting self-efficacy and positive parenting behaviors. Additionally, this study aimed to explore some of the challenges that foster parents report in trying to positively parent their foster children.

Discussion of Results

Quantitative results show that different types of training curricula may demonstrate different types of benefits for foster parents. For example, receiving training in the MAPP curriculum is associated with foster parents' Discipline PSE, which measured PSE related to providing structure and discipline for their foster children. This finding could be a result of MAPP's overall goal of shaping well-informed foster parents who know what to expect as they enter foster placements (Dorsey et al., 2008). One of the seven "key skills" listed in MAPP's objectives is to provide new foster parents with guidelines and practices to deal with issues that most often cause placement disruptions (Pastzor, 1987). Given one-third of foster parents indicate child behavioral problems as a reason for quitting foster parenting (Rhodes, Orme, & Buehler, 2001), a portion of training is likely to be spent teaching effective parenting strategies in order to address this objective. The MAPP curriculum also includes a content area for teaching discipline techniques specific for children who have been abused or neglected (Pastzor, 1987), and its counterpart, PRIDE, does not. Ensuring that foster parents are well-informed in this area could further explain some of the variance between group means. An informal comparison of content suggests the MAPP curriculum addresses discipline related issues more thoroughly than the other two curricula examined in this study, which would explain why foster parents trained in MAPP report significantly higher Discipline PSE scores.

Foster parents trained in the PATH curriculum reported no significant differences in PSE when compared to those who were not. This is interesting because of the significantly higher training adequacy and satisfaction scores reported by foster parents trained in PATH. This finding supports what Murray and colleagues (2011) concluded after their mixed-method study: increasing foster parents' confidence in their ability to apply training techniques is a necessary and important part of effective foster parent training. Although foster parents trained in PATH perceived their training as satisfying and effective at preparing them to be foster parents, it could be that (a) this curriculum does not adequately cover parenting behaviors, or (b) foster parents are not practicing in their homes what they have learned. Without evaluations of the PATH curriculum, it is difficult to determine what is causing this distinction in parental attitudes in regard to their training and positive parenting behaviors. Nonetheless, is it important to widen our knowledge of the effectiveness of foster parent training, and more research is needed to understand its influence on foster parent PSE.

On average, foster parents trained in PRIDE reported significantly lower training adequacy and training satisfaction scores than foster parents who were not trained in this curriculum. In other words, these foster parents indicated lower scores for how well they felt their training prepared them to be a foster parent, and lower scores for how satisfied they were with the preapproval training they received. This is a meaningful finding given PRIDE is one of the most widely utilized preapproval training curricula implemented in the United States (Dorsey et al., 2008). Moving forward, it is important to address, first, whether these are generalizable opinions and, second, why foster parents might view the PRIDE curriculum as inadequate or dissatisfying. Answering these questions would enable improvements for PRIDE to most effectively train prospective foster parents.

One of the advantages of a mixed methods study is that quantitative and qualitative data can be compared to deliver a more holistic understanding of the topic under investigation. Quantitative methods were utilized to investigate the relationship between training content areas and foster parent PSE. Results revealed that the average Achievement PSE scores were higher when foster parents reported exposure to the following three content areas: (1) the kinds of children in foster care, (2) fostering a teenager, and (3) working with sexually abused children. Qualitative analyses revealed that one of the biggest obstacles foster parents must overcome is related to children's challenging behaviors. Each of the content areas associated with Achievement PSE could be related to foster children's behavior. Although not explicitly mentioned in the results section, challenges related to teenage foster children's behaviors were expressed many times throughout the data. As made known by Bandura (1977), PSE is determined by parents' beliefs that they can influence their children's behaviors and the environment to support their children's development. Thus, despite the challenging behaviors foster parents must overcome, it appears that receiving training on the kinds of children who will be entering their homes in addition to techniques for working with teenagers and children who have experienced trauma enables foster parents to feel confident in their ability to encourage children's school achievement.

Another interesting finding was that PSE related to nurturance and achievement were associated with foster parents' positive parenting behaviors, while PSE related to discipline is not. According to the Social Learning Theory (Bandura, 1977), an increase in self-efficacy is associated with an increase in task performance; thus, it makes sense that foster parent PSE related to nurturance and achievement is associated with positive parenting behaviors. The positive association between PSE in nurturance and achievement and parenting behaviors could

further be explained by past research demonstrating the importance of providing secure attachments for foster children. For example, Dozier and colleagues (2001) reported that unless foster children have a caregiver who is nurturing, disorganized attachments are likely to exist for children who have experienced adversity. Another study reported that over half of the variability in foster children's problem behaviors can be explained by a poor attachment to foster parents (Sinclair, Wilson, & Gibbs, 2005). It has also been reported that disorganized attachments are related to a variety of negative child outcomes in the form of both internalizing and externalizing behavior problems (Carlson, 1998; Lyons-Ruth, 1996). Therefore, given the essential need for foster parents to get to the root of children's misbehavior and form secure attachment bonds, it might be that nurturing a child's emotional development and encouraging achievement are more important in foster parenting than is the need to provide structure and discipline.

When considering why PSE related to discipline is not associated with parenting behaviors, one might also conclude that this is due to the difficulty foster parents face in managing children's challenging behaviors, which was revealed in the qualitative analyses. These findings are similar to what Cooley and Petren (2011) reported, saying, "Despite reporting high levels of confidence when asked about particular domains of foster parenting, many foster parents' responses to open-ended questions alluded to a lack of perceived competence in some of the very same domains" (p. 1973). As a parent in the current study remarked, foster children do not always respond to constructive conversations or traditional parenting techniques. It is also possible that the discipline techniques parents would normally rely on are no longer appropriate to use with their foster children (i.e., corporal punishment). Either of these scenarios would require foster parents to learn a new skillset of parenting behaviors to practice with their foster children, which is in line with past research that says foster parents are often unprepared to

parent in a style most effective for the needs of their foster child (Rhodes et al., 2001). Adjusting to a new parenting style, then, could impact foster parents' ability to engage in the positive parenting behaviors measured in this study. It is promising to note that Social Learning Theory (Bandura, 1977) suggests expectations of efficacy will determine how much effort individuals will expend, and how long they will persist in the face of obstacles. Therefore, Discipline PSE might currently lack an association with parenting behaviors due to the immense challenge presented in this area, but foster parents' efficacy beliefs in this domain could drive them to persist in the midst of such behavioral challenges.

Persisting in the face of obstacles is also important when discussing the three themes that emerged from qualitative analyses. The most two most commonly reported challenges indicated by foster parents were related to working with child welfare agencies and managing children's behavior. Past research has demonstrated the difficulty foster parents often encounter in working with foster care agencies (Cuddeback & Orme, 2002; MacGregor et al., 2006). Foster parents presented a clear desire for improved communication and support from their agencies. This is a meaningful finding given a perceived lack of support is reportedly the reason some parents stop fostering (MacGregor et al., 2006). Challenges related to child behaviors problems have also been cited as a reason for foster parents to quit foster parenting (Rhodes et al., 2001). Taken together, these concerns voiced by foster parents should not be taken lightly due to their potential impact on the intent to continue fostering. Additionally, foster parents expressed challenges involved with working with their foster children's birth parents as well as the impact of fostering on their own families. Past research has revealed that foster parents have a difficult time working with a child's birth family. For example, in their interviews with 17 foster parents, Murray and colleagues (2011) found that all participants reported issues related to working birth families, and

17.7% of participants indicated this was their first priority for identifying additional support. Information on working with children's birth families is seldomly found in the literature, and only one training curricula, MAPP, explicitly mentions training content related to the impact of placement on foster parents' immediate and extended family members (Pastzor, 1987). Therefore, it appears there is a gap not only in the literature, but also in providing foster parents with the resources they need to successfully navigate these situations. Given the stress these interactions cause foster parents, it is important for more consideration to be given to such sensitive circumstances.

Limitations

This study has several limitations. Although past research suggests there is value in identifying a focal child to get the most reliable measure of PSE and parenting behaviors (Črnčec, Barnett, & Matthey, 2010), the focal child eligibility requirements greatly restricted the sample. Almost forty-five percent of survey participants indicated they had never fostered a child between the ages of five and thirteen for at least six months (N = 297; 7.1% missing). This cut the sample size nearly in half. Concerns for generalizability is another limitation. Of the 297 participants, 118 were trained in Tennessee. Given the restricted sample size and lack of geographic diversity, generalizability of the results may also be restricted; however, the findings from this study reflect a reasonable level of agreement with other studies found in the foster parenting literature. Additionally, because foster parents were asked to think retrospectively about their preapproval training and, for some, their efficacy beliefs and parenting behaviors, issues related to inaccurate recall come into concern. Moreover, shared method variance must be questioned due to foster parents individually being the single source of both their PSE and parenting behavior data, which could fail to identify any additional variables influencing

correlations among responses. Another limitation is related to this study's focus on the training foster parents received prior to their first placement (i.e., preapproval foster parent training). Although foster parents may not have received certain training content up front, it is possible they received training in similar content areas through post-approval training requirements. It is difficult to determine the effect this might have on PSE, thereby providing a potential confound. The methods used to recruit participants are also a limitation. Snowball sampling utilizes a chain referral system to recruit an otherwise difficult to reach population; however, it eliminates the possibility of random sampling, thus providing a sample that is potentially less representative of the population being studied. Knowing this was a drawback, the decision to implement a snowball approach was made in order to (a) achieve a larger sample size and (b) ensure the identities of those participating in research remained anonymous. Finally, the online nature of the survey was a limitation, restricting participation to only foster parents who had access to the internet.

Summary and Future Directions

This study provides many contributions to the current knowledge of foster parenting. The quantitative and qualitative findings can be used to identify the influential areas of training and the concerns reported by foster parents, so that problems can be addressed, and strengths can be enhanced. Given the identified relationship between Nurturance and Achievement PSE with foster parents' positive parenting behaviors, it is clear that foster parent training should work to improve PSE in these domains. Participants in the present study also reported many issues hindering their relationships with agency workers, such as a perceived lack of communication and support. It is important for foster parents and their agencies to begin collaborating as partners and working toward positive outcomes for their foster children. Given the steady numbers of

children being placed in foster care, support and training should be a priority for those involved in child welfare policy and practice. Child welfare workers should think seriously about the implications of foster parents' perceived lack of communication and support and the challenges they encounter related to managing children's problem behaviors. These are important issues to keep in mind when considering foster parent retention. It is our hope that this new empirical evidence can guide future studies of PSE in foster parents, and the resulting body of research can be used to provide direction as states work to improve services. It will involve many entities working together for a change to be reached, but it appears the time for these discussions to begin is now.

The main implications of this study are two-fold. First, the State has an important responsibility to provide foster parents with the relevant training and support they need to effectively care for their children; and, second, foster parents must utilize these resources to provide foster children with the secure and stable living arrangements they all deserve. Therefore, given the evidence provided by the current study, greater attention to empirically-supported training for foster parents is needed; however, because MAPP was associated with foster parent's Discipline PSE, which was noted to be a substantial problem area in working with foster children, more states should consider the implementation of this preapproval training program. Due to certain content areas being associated with Achievement PSE, which was predictive of parental support, foster parents should undoubtedly gain exposure to content related to the kinds of children in foster care, fostering a teenager, and working with sexually abused children. Overall, preapproval foster parent training should work to improve foster parents' PSE in order to enhance positive parenting behaviors and ultimately, child outcomes for children residing in the child welfare system.

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APPENDIX

Table 1

Summary of Foster Parent Demographic Variables

Variables	Full Sample	Constrained Sample
	<i>N</i> = 297	<i>n</i> = 143
Type of Foster Parent		
Kinship	3.4%	2.5%
Traditional	86.5%	82.5%
Both	7.7%	11.9%
Other	2.4%	2.8%
Age	40.9%	43.8%
Sex		
Male	11.8%	16.1%
Female	75.4%	74.8%
Missing	12.8%	9.1%
Race		
White	81.5%	82.5%
Non-White	5.6%	8.4%
Missing	12.8%	9.1%

Table 2

Summary of Preapproval Training Content Areas

Content Areas	Sample Size	%	Missing
Role of the foster parent	N = 267	89.9%	10.1%
Temporary nature of foster care	N = 266	79.1%	10.4%
Working with the child's parents	N = 267	75.8%	10.1%
Kinds of children in foster care	N = 266	82.8%	10.4%
Legal aspects of foster care	N = 266	69.7%	10.4%
Discipline of children	N = 267	86.5%	10.1%
Children's feelings about their own parents	N = 267	75.4%	10.1%
Effects of foster parenting on your family	N = 267	63.6%	10.1%
Fostering a teenager	N = 265	60.6%	10.8%
Helping a child develop skills for independent living	N = 264	39.7%	10.1%
Working with a child who is racially or culturally different from you	N = 267	76.1%	10.1%
Availability of more foster parent training	N = 265	73.4%	10.8%
Working with sexually abused children	N = 266	68.4%	10.4%

Table 3

Foster Parent Training Satisfaction and Training Adequacy: Descriptive Statistics

Variables	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	N
MAPP			
Training Satisfaction	3.65	.81	20
Training Adequacy	3.00	.97	20
PRIDE			
Training Satisfaction	3.25	1.08	71
Training Adequacy	2.55	1.05	71
PATH			
Training Satisfaction	3.91	.91	117
Training Adequacy	3.32	.99	117

VITA

Kelly Nicole Mullican was born in Rock Island, Tennessee. She attended the University of Tennessee in Knoxville. Nicole completed her Bachelor of Science degree in Child and Family Studies in 2016. She remained in the department of Child and Family Studies at UT to attain her Master of Science degree in 2018. While attending school at the University of Tennessee, Nicole served as both an Undergraduate and Graduate Research Assistant in the Center for Parenting. She also completed two practicum placements. First, she worked with the Family and Consumer Sciences agent at her local University of Tennessee Extension office. Next, she worked at Harmony Family Center where gained experience assisting with Tennessee foster parent training. Nicole is a member of the National Council on Family Relations and secretary of the Child and Family Studies Graduate Student Organization. Her education will continue at Oregon State University as she pursues a Doctor of Philosophy degree in Human Development and Family Studies.