# HOW YOUR PARENTING CAN HELP CHILDREN IN NEED

1. **A Climate for Healing** – You may be afraid of becoming attached to a child who may be moved from your home and wonder if you can survive this kind of loss. The child who has had many losses needs everything you can give. The attention, care and respect you offer the child can create the possibility for them to heal from abuse and neglect, no matter how long the child is in your home.
2. **Honesty** – The child may have questions about his/her biological parents. It may be difficult to tell the child the truth about the circumstances, which brought them into care, why they may be moved or why they can’t remain with your family permanently. These questions are best answered simply and truthfully, being sensitive to the child’s age and mental development. Your Triad Social Worker can assist you in this process. Being honest with the child in home can build trust between the two of you over time.
3. **Communication** – What you say and what a child hears may not be the same. Also be aware that foster children may respond differently to circumstances than your own children. Practice reflective listening with your foster child and ask questions so you can begin to understand how they think and feel. Please remember, words can wound deeply. Never, ever ridicule a child, nor threaten a child with removal from your home. Clear concise communication can also build trust between you and the foster child in your home over time.
4. **Boundaries** – Is a word that describes the set of rules about your own body and personal space. Many foster children are confused about respecting themselves and others because their boundaries have been violated by physical or sexual abuse. You will help your foster child begin to establish these boundaries by listening to them respectfully, setting limits regarding safety and personal space, and providing continuous guidance. Be very mindful of your open affection with your partner and with your children. As stated above, many children come from homes where affection was inappropriate, displayed inappropriately or was paired with domestic violence. As such, a child’s reaction to affection may be startling or inappropriate. Appropriate boundaries displayed by all family members helps build a sense of personal safety in the child.
5. **Consistency** – Children who have been exposed to an addict’s behavior, domestic violence or neglect often present chaotic behaviors themselves. When Resource parents present clear, consistent schedules, it creates a climate of external control, which the children will internalize in time.