



GRANVILLE VANCE

public health

SNAPSHOTS OF SUCCESS

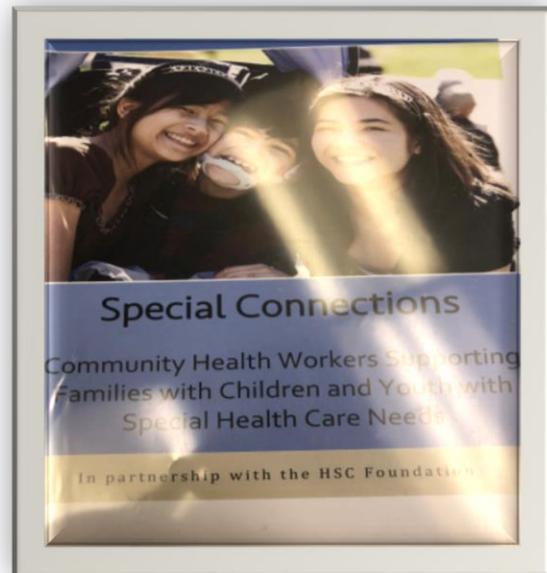
Innovative Approaches (IA) Strategies at Work

GRANVILLE/VANCE INNOVATIVE APPROACHES

Integration of *Special Connections* training with Vance County Foster Parents to Positively Impact Foster Youth– Changing Policy and Practice at the Local Level

Granville and Vance Counties are 2 of the 14 North Carolina counties selected to participate in the North Carolina Division of Public Health, Children and Youth Branch’s Innovative Approaches Initiative. Innovative Approaches serves to improve the service system for children and youth with special health care needs (up to age 21) through collaborations and partnerships with parents of children and youth with special needs (CYSHCN), medical providers, and community agencies.

According to Child Trends.org *Child Maltreatment Facts in the U.S.* report for federal fiscal year 2015, “Child neglect and abuse- also known as child maltreatment- is a grave concern; it is associated with many negative outcomes, it includes physical injuries, psychological problems, and in extreme cases, death. In 2015, almost 700, 000 U.S. children were found to be victims of maltreatment. This is likely an understatement, as some cases lack evidence and others go unreported. Each year, states submit data to the federal government on reports of maltreatment, called “referrals.” After receiving referrals child protective services investigates to determine if children are at risk of maltreatment, if maltreatment occurred, and if services are needed. Children and families may receive a variety of services including foster care, family preservation, mental health, and substance abuse.” Childtrends.org goes on to share that in 2015 the percent of victims who received foster care services in the United States was 23%.



Infants, children and youth in the North Carolina foster care system meet criteria for children and youth with special care needs. As of April 2018, Vance County has forty children who are in custody (foster care), with two of those children being in the 18-21 program. This number can increase or decrease depending on several factors including the amount of reports received, the amount of reports that meet North Carolina statute to have child/children in custody, or if child/children are in custody and the family has successfully completed an out of home case plan and the home is now safe for the child/children to return home. Children who are in custody/foster care are most times care for by a licensed foster parent.

Vance County Children's Services currently has fourteen licensed foster homes, and a total of twenty foster parents. To become a foster parent in Vance County, one must first meet the basic criteria of:

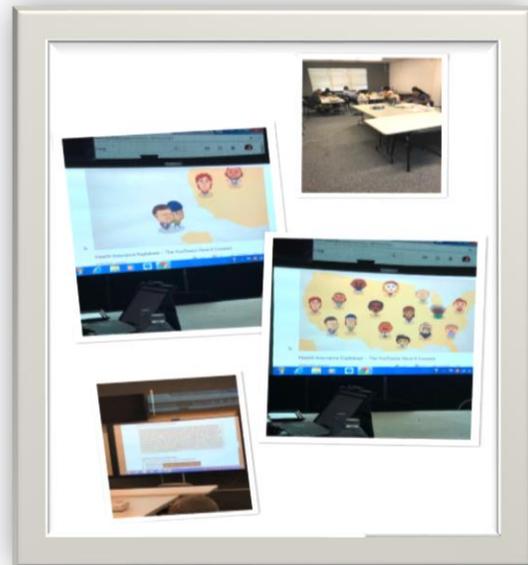
- Be at least 21 years old
- Have a stable home and income
- Be willing to be fingerprinted and have a criminal records check
- Maintain a drug free environment
- Complete all required training and be licensed by the State of North Carolina

Required training for potential foster parents includes Trauma Informed Partnering for Safety and Permanence - Model Approach to Partnerships in Parenting (TIPS-MAPP) which is designed to help prospective adoptive/foster parents understand the difference between the desire to help and making the commitment to bring children into their home. While children in foster care are considered CYSHCN, the TIPS-MAPP training does not educate foster parents on how to care for, advocate or support CYSHCNs. From this current challenge the need and collaboration with *Special Connections* was born.

Special Connections: Community Health Workers Supporting Families with Children and Youth with Special Health Care Needs is a curriculum authored by Judith Palfrey and Aubry Threlkeld in partnership with the HSC Foundation. The HSC Foundation works to improve access to services for people who face social and health care barriers due to disability, chronic illness or other unique circumstances. Partners in initial piloting, testing and evaluating early versions of the curriculum include Columbia Presbyterian Hospital, North Carolina Innovative Approaches, and the Massachusetts Department of Public Health. The Granville Vance Innovative Approaches site has specifically utilized the *Special Connections* curriculum to build the skill set of foster parents in caring for CYSHCN.

The *Special Connection* curriculum features eight modules covering the following topics which are an essential addition of skills/training for Vance County licensed foster parents:

1. *What does it mean to be a community health worker (CHW) working with children and youth with special health care needs (CYSHCN)?*
2. *What are special health care needs?*
3. *How do I ask for what I need for a patient in the community?*
4. *How do I communicate with CYSHCN?*
5. *How do I help families understand and plan for life transitions?*
6. *How do we conduct a home visit and how do we evaluate services for CYSHCN?*
7. *How do we know what information to share with our communities?*
8. *How do we take what we have learned back to our communities?*



HSC Foundation. (2016). *Special Connections: Community Health Workers Supporting Families with Children and Youth with Special Health Care Needs*. Boston, MA: Judith Palfrey and Aubry Threlkeld.

National Maternal and Child Health Bureau Performance Measure:
Families of CYSHCN will partner in decision making at all levels
and will be satisfied with the services they receive.

WHY DID YOU SELECT THIS APPROACH?

1. Coordination of care is a priority issue for the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) as noted in the policy statement “Patient- and Family-Centered Care Coordination: A Framework for Integrating Care for Children and Youth Across Multiple Systems.” It is noted on the AAP Medical Home website that “Coordinated care is not something that occurs solely within the walls of medical practice. Efficient communication and coordination with appropriate community services and other providers or clinicians can optimize health outcomes and decrease fragmented care.”
2. *Special Connections* as a supplemental training for Vance County licensed foster parents strengthens their ability to be an advocate for CYSHCNs in their care.
3. *Special Connections* training with Vance County DSS Children’s Services – Foster Care affords the opportunity for foster parents to become informed on what SHCN are and make referrals as appropriate to the Children’s Developmental Services Agency (CDSA), Care Coordination for Children (CC4C) and other needed supportive services for CYSHCNs in their care.

RESULTS

Vance County DSS Children’s Services- Foster Care adapted their supplemental required trainings for licensed foster parents to include *Special Connections*.

1 Vance County Foster Care Social Worker trained in the implementation of the *Special Connections* curriculum.

1 GVDHD IA Parent trained in implementation of the *Special Connections* curriculum.

2 GVDHD IA staff trained in the implementation of the *Special Connections* curriculum.

20 Vance County licensed foster parents were offered to participate in the *Special Connections* training.

6 Vance County Licensed Foster parents were trained on the *Special Connections* curriculum in the first session with Vance County Children’s Services on March 16, 2018.

7 Vance County Licensed Foster parents were trained on the *Special Connections* curriculum in the second session with Vance County Children’s Services on May 18, 2018.



6 Vance County Licensed Foster parents will be trained on the *Special Connections* curriculum in the 2018-2019 fiscal year, resulting in all current Vance County Licensed Foster Parents having completed the *Special Connections* Training.

In addition, 2 Vance County DSS Children's Services Staff and 1 GVDHA IA Parent Advisory Council Co-Chair to be trained in the *Special Connections* curriculum training in FY 2018-2019.

By the end of FY 18-19, 40 Vance County foster youth will have a licensed parent who is trained in *Special Connections*. This training affords foster parent increased skills in advocating, supporting, and fostering appropriate transition for foster youth moving forward.

RELATED COMMUNITY EFFORTS

The Foster Care age was extended to 21 in 2017 in North Carolina by Session Law 2015-241, Section 12C.9. NC's Foster Care 18 to 21 program offers extended foster care to children who have aged out from foster care and assist young adults in transitioning into adulthood while moving towards greater independence. For additional information on Foster Care 18 to 21 services for young adults visit: <https://www2.ncdhhs.gov/info/olm/manuals/dss/csm-10/man/CSs1201c12.pdf>

TIMELINE/KEY MILESTONES



March 2017– *Special Connections* 2-day training held for IA staff and community partners.

May 2017- IA presentation on *Special Connection* to Vance County Children's Services.

July 2017- IA and Vance County Children's Services Foster Care meeting to discuss offering *Special Connection* training to Vance County Licensed Foster Youth.

September 2017- IA and Vance County Children's Services meeting to discuss potential training schedule and incorporating into current MAPPS training.

November 2017- Vance County Foster Care and IA collaborate and decide to offer *Special Connections* as a required supplemental training for foster parents, after they are licensed.

January 2018- IA Coordinator and those trained in facilitation of *Special Connections* meet to review curriculum.

February 2018- IA Coordinator and Vance County Children's Services meet to plan training dates to offer *Special Connections* one day training to Vance County Licensed Foster Parents, dates selected: March 16, 2018 & May 18, 2018 with training time(s) of 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. at Vance County Children's Services.

February 2018- IA Coordinator creates training flyer ad and registration process/forms for foster parents and provides to Vance County Foster Care Social Worker and Vance County Licensing Social Worker for distribution to Vance County foster parents.

February 2018- IA Coordinator, IA Parent Outreach Coordinator, and Vance County Foster Care Social Worker meet to create schedule for the *Special Connections* training and select modules to present during the training.

March 2018 – Copies of the *Special Connections* curriculum printed for Vance County licensed parents.

March 2018 – IA Coordinator, IA Parent Outreach Coordinator, and Vance County Foster Care Social Worker meet to practice modules for *Special Connections* training, review media used in training, create training folders and ordered lunch for the training.

March 16, 2018- First *Special Connections* training held for Vance County Licensed Foster Parents. 6 foster parents trained in *Special Connections*, and this session was observed by Dr. Marcia Russell contract evaluation for the *Special Connections* curriculum developers.

March 2018 – IA Coordinator, IA Parent Outreach Coordinator and Vance County Foster Care Social Worker reviewed progress of first training session and begin preparation for training session II.

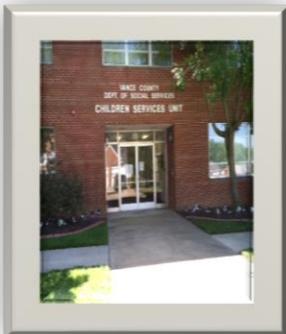
April 2018- IA Coordinator, Vance County Children’s Foster Care Social Worker, and Parent Outreach Coordinator prepared training materials for *Special Connections* training session II.

April 2018- IA Coordinator creates training flyer ad registration for foster parents and provides to Vance County Foster Care Social Worker and Vance County Licensing Social Worker for distribution to Vance County foster parents.

May 2018- IA Coordinator and Vance County Foster Care Social Worker meet to practice modules for *Special Connections* training, review media used in training, create training folders and ordered lunch for the training.

May 18, 2018- Second *Special Connections* training held for Vance County Licensed Foster Parents. 7 foster parents completed *Special Connections* training.

May 2018- IA Coordinator, IA Parent Outreach Coordinator, and Vance County Foster Care Social Worker review training session I and II to celebrate successes and brainstorm for improvements. Vance County Children’s Services Foster Care decides to offer *Special Connections* in Fall 2018 for remaining 6 currently licensed Foster Parents, as well as decided to offer *Special Connections* annually to Vance County licensed foster parents as a supplemental training.



COMMUNITY PARTNERS

Granville Vance District Health Department Innovative Approaches (GVDHD IA)
Vance County Department of Children’s Services – Foster Care

LESSONS LEARNED

This project required integration of a needed specialized training opportunity into an already established program that serves foster youth. The integration/addition of *Special Connections* training for licensed foster parents, enhanced their current understanding of how to advocate for, seek resources, support and collaborate with key supports/community partners for their foster CYSHCN.

Starting this project as a small pilot in Vance County allowed for learning that worked well in a controlled environment while also showing success, which aided in the decision for Vance County Children’s Services to offer *Special Connections* training to all Vance County licensed foster parents on an annual basis beginning fiscal year 2018-2019 forward.

PROJECT IMPACT ON FAMILIES OF CYSHCN

“I am very excited that Vance County DSS is able to incorporate the *Special Connections* training in to the foster parent in-service training!” – Shelley W. Hester; VCDSS Foster Care and Adoption Social Worker

“I love any chance to learn more to serve the foster youth, I have been a foster parent over ten years, and I want to learn as much as I can.” – VCDSS Licensed foster parent

FOR MORE INFORMATION

For additional information on the North Carolina Innovative Approaches Initiative, please contact:

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