



SB 1292 – Foster Parent Training Requirements
Senate Health & Welfare Committee
February 17, 2026

Madam Chair and Members of the Committee:

My name is **Ivy Walker**, Policy Associate with **Idaho Voices for Children**.

Idaho Voices for Children **supports SB 1292**, with one amendment. This bill takes an important step toward restoring foster parent training requirements that were eliminated last year—an elimination that left Idaho out of alignment with long-standing child welfare standards. We are grateful to see training expectations reinstated.

As written, **SB 1292 requires prospective foster parents to complete specific training modules—covering trauma, behavior management, working with birth families, court processes, and child safety—with a total training requirement capped at ten hours.** The bill also directs the department to offer ongoing training on rights and responsibilities, trauma, child safety, first aid, and gun safety.

This is meaningful progress. But it is not enough.

Across the country, states require significantly more than ten hours of pre-service training because **research consistently demonstrates that foster parents need comprehensive preparation to support children who have experienced trauma.** National models—such as Trauma-Informed Partnering for Safety (TIPS) and Resource Parent Curriculum (RPC)—typically require **20 to 30 hours** of foundational instruction. Ten hours simply cannot prepare families for the behavioral, emotional, and developmental needs of children entering care. Idaho Voices for Children has worked in the child welfare space on behalf of youth and foster parents for over 20 years. We have never met with foster parents or prospective parents that felt the trainings were so burdensome that it kept them from being a foster parent or to discontinue their licensing. In fact, the message we've heard from foster parents is the opposite. Foster parents reported feeling ill-equipped to parent children who have experienced trauma and have higher behavioral health complexities. They've asked for more support from IDHW, not less.

SB 1292 must be the starting point—not the finish line.

Our concerns include:

- **Ten hours does not meet evidence-based best practices.** While SB 1292 reintroduces training, it sets a cap that is far too low for trauma-responsive care.
- **Children in foster care deserve parents who are fully equipped**, not partially prepared. Idaho should not aim for the minimum when the stakes are this high.
- **Foster parents deserve support, tools, and skills**, not just eligibility. Underprepared foster parents are more likely to experience placement disruptions and burnout, which in turn harms children.



As Idaho continues to see rising needs in its child welfare system—including placement instability, increasing behavioral health complexity, and the dissolution of foster youth engagement—this is precisely the moment to invest in high-quality, evidence-based training.

Today, we support the bill sponsor’s intention because it moves Idaho in the right direction. But, our **official recommendation would be to send SB 1292 to the amending order**, to revise section (b), line 20 and replace “shall not exceed” with “no less than”. Idaho needs legislation that fully aligns with national standards, research, and the realities of caring for children with trauma histories.

We appreciate your work to restore training expectations, and we look forward to partnering with you on future efforts to strengthen Idaho’s foster care system, support caregivers, and ensure children receive the stable, informed, and compassionate care they deserve.

With thanks,

Ivy Walker
Policy Associate
Idaho Voices for Children
iwalker@idahovoices.org
208-949-6855