



Overview of Families Count

Families Count is a six-week class and mentoring program offered by local churches to assist at-risk families.

Families Count is a six-week class offered at and by local churches that have been specially trained by the professional staff of Lifeline Children's Services in a workbook-driven curriculum written for at-risk parents and birth parents working to achieve permanency within their family.

The classes are designed for a group setting and include shared experiences and learning as part of an overall process meant to provide accountability for its participants.

Written with a positive focus and attention to family strengths and purpose, the classes foster self-awareness and personal growth and development. Participants are asked to do introspective work and to look closely at the reasons for disruptions within their family, while identifying individual abilities that can aid in their family's preservation.

As part of the overall process, every birth family participating in Families Count will have the option of being matched with a mentor who will come alongside the birth parent(s) and provide coaching, prayer, and additional emotional support needed for their family's success.

What do the classes look like?

There are 6 classes, or Counts, included in the Families Count curriculum.

Count One: Families are Meant to Be Successful

This session emphasizes the purpose and benefits of family and the valuable contributions that every family member makes. The circumstances and/or choices we make that draw us away from the ones we care most about are identified, along with ways to re-focus on the unique strengths and abilities every parent possesses.

Count Two: Families of Origin and How They Affect Our Families Today

This session highlights families of origin and how both positive and negative learned behaviors are passed down from one generation to the next. Participants will be able to identify both positive and negative cycles within their families and how they affect their families today.

Count Three: Families Function as Teams

This session uses a “team” analogy to help participants gain a better understanding of parental roles versus children’s roles and the unique contributions that fathers, mothers, and children make within their families.

Count Four: Families Thrive with Discipline

This session distinguishes between punishment, or punitive methods of behavior change, and discipline, or teaching positive behaviors. Participants will learn alternatives to physical punishments that they can use within their families and how their responses to misbehaviors can lay a foundation of trust between themselves and their children.

Count Five: Families were Created with a Purpose and for Permanency

This session focuses on families serving a purpose within their communities and neighborhoods. Participants will have an enhanced understanding of how families are not accidental, but put together for good things. Permanence and its importance to all family members, especially children, will be explored. Personal responsibilities, such as managing family finances and performing in a job, are closely examined, and practical tools for balancing a budget and interviewing for a job are presented.

Count Six: Broken Families can be Restored

This session discusses the brokenness of families in care and how restoration can be achieved in part by recognizing the gifts that families are.

Again, the design of the class is intentional with a goal of sustained change. Shared experience is instrumental in participants’ recognition of individual strengths and needs, and a benefit of the group and church-led process is participants can develop a network of support needed to facilitate change.