



Family & Children Services Fostering Footnotes

Spring Edition
April, May, June 2010

Important Dates to Remember:

Please notice that an EVENING Foster Parent Support Group has been established! We will be offering the EVENING support group for families that are unable to attend our support group offered during the day. Check below for dates...

Foster Parent Support Group:

April 6th - Support Group and Coffee
9:30am- 11:30am (Room 146)

April 20th - Support Group 6:00pm- 7:30pm
(Room 421) **NEW EVENING TIME!**

May 4th - Support Group and Coffee
9:30am- 11:30am (Room 146)

May 18th - Support Group 6:00pm – 7:30 pm
(Room 421) **NEW EVENING TIME!**

June 1st - Support Group and Coffee
9:30am- 11:30am (Room 146)

June 15th - Support Group 6:00pm- 7:30pm
(Room 421) **NEW EVENING TIME!**

Foster Parent Task Force:

April 13th – Task Force 10:00am – 11:30am
(Room 146)

May 11th – Task Force 10:00am – 11:30am
(Room 146)

June 8th – Task Force 10:00am – 11:30am
(Room 146)

Would you enjoy working with other foster parents and staff members to strengthen our Foster Parent/Adoption program? If so, please consider joining the Foster Parent Task Force. If you are interested, please share your interest with your foster care licensur.

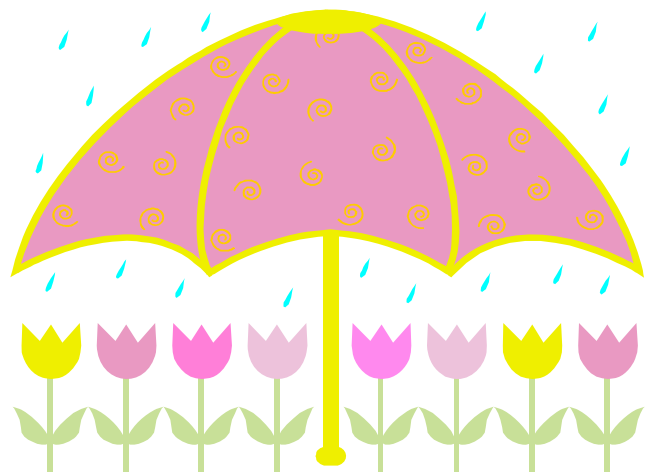
Please Help Us Recruit New Foster Homes!

There is a \$25 stipend available to any foster parent that recruits a new foster family. The stipend will be received after the new family becomes licensed with Family & Children Services. If you know of a family that might be interested in providing care for foster children, please contact our foster care recruiter - Shari Boone at 373-0248 ext. 277.

May is National Foster Care Month!

Please look for information regarding our annual Foster Parent Appreciation Event!

Each May, we salute the compassionate people who make a difference by serving as foster parents, relative caregivers, mentors, advocates, social workers, and volunteers. Thanks to these unsung heroes, many formerly abused or neglected children and teens will either safely reunite with their parents, be cared for by relatives, or be adopted by loving families.



Foster Parents Often Foster the Whole Family

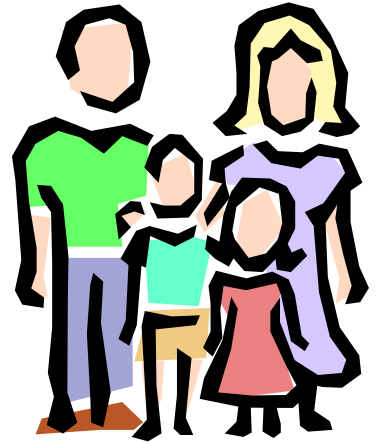
Fostering Connections with Birth Family (By Carrie Craft, www.About.com)

When doing foster care, we are given many opportunities to gain a connection to the child's family. How we choose to use these opportunities makes the difference between fostering a child and fostering a family.

Taking Time with the Parents and Extended Family

I've met grandparents, aunts, uncles, and other family members both before and after visits. Remember that these family members are experiencing a great loss, as well. They often do not get the visitation time that parents are offered.

- Listen to what they have to say, if you're comfortable with the conversation. I've taken time with parents and other extended family members to jot down genealogy and later added that information to the children's life books. One grandfather related his WWII stories. This is a great way to help instill pride in the children's birth families, and to build a sense of self-esteem and identity within the child.
- The holidays bring a great opportunity for forming a connection with the family. Consider taking a gift to the parents. I usually get the child's picture taken for Christmas, and then bring framed photos to the parents. I also include an envelope with several different pictures in a variety of sizes, which parents can keep for themselves or choose to give to extended family. Additionally, I like to frame a smaller size photo, like a 5"X7", for grandparents at Christmas time. Another idea is purchasing a small scrapbook, into which you can just slip photos. This makes a great gift, and the parents seem to enjoy the candid pictures. If you are uncomfortable giving a gift, a simple card is a nice gesture.



Remember that the goal of fostering is almost always reunification of the family. In most cases, this is best for all involved. By fostering these connections with the parents and building a relationship of trust, foster parents begin to mentor a whole family instead of fostering one child. Parents may then be willing to ask of you, the foster parents, parenting questions or advice. And, when the child goes home, the parents will have you as another resource to lean upon while they work to rebuild their lives. This is, hopefully, a relationship that will last between your two families for some time to come.

Employee of the Month

If a foster parent would like to nominate a worker for Employee of the Month...please contact Elizabeth Lord at 373-0248 ext. 223.

December – Deborah Palaszek
January- Melinda Lussier
March- Erin Smith

Are any Foster Parents willing to provide Substitute Care for other foster parents who need a break? Please let us know and we will place your name on our Substitute Care Provider list. We want to be a resource for you! Please let Krista Ploski (373-0248 ext. 260) know and we will share our list in upcoming *Fostering Footnotes*. Please remember that all substitute care arrangements must be discussed with your caseworker prior to the care taking place.

If you are interested in one of the following trainings, please call or e-mail Jane regarding dates and times available at (269) 373-0248 ext. 255 or janeb@fcsource.org

- MANDT I and MANDT II training
- Child & Infant CPR training
- First Aid training
- Adult CPR training
- Blood borne Pathogens

Here are some websites to access for foster parent training opportunities. (Some of these trainings do have a cost associated with the training, but the costs are very minimal.)



www.fosterparents.com
www.fosterparentcollege.com
www.medscape.com/nurses

Additional Articles Available in Our “In-House” Resource Library

(Please contact your licensor to obtain any of the articles listed below.)

Head Lice Articles:

Title: Head Lice to Dead Lice (supplement to video)
Author: Sawyer Mac Productions
Year Published: 1997

Title: Know Your Enemy
Author: www.Headliceinfo.com
Year Published: 2000

Infant Development Articles:

Title: Special Report: Your Child’s Speech and Language Development
Author: Allison Martin/Adoptive Families
Year Published: 2009

Title: Various short articles related to development of the “Vulnerable” infant
Authors: Marie Kanne Poulsen, PHD & Joe Chapot
Year Published: Unknown

Title: Early Interventions for ADHD Infants and Children...Or “How to Live With Human Hummingbirds”
Author: Katherine L. Toon
Year Published: Between 1995/2009 FCAC

Learning Disabilities Articles:

Title: Learning Disabilities – Types, Symptoms, and Interventions
Authors: Jeanne Segal, Deborah Cutter, Ellen Jaffe-Gill, Suzanne Barston, and Tina de Benedictis
Year Published (last modified): 2008

Mental Health Diagnosis Articles:

Title: Characteristics of Asperger’s Syndrome
Author: KRESA
Year Published: 2006

Title: Parenting a Child with ADD/ADHD – Strategies for Family and Home Life
Authors: Ellen Jaffe-Gill, Lisa Flores Dumke, Robert Segal, Tina de Benedictis, Melinda Smith, and Jeanne Segal
Year Published (last modified): 2007

Title: Children’s Mental Health Facts – Children and Adolescents with Conduct Disorder
Author: www.mentalhealth.samhsa.gov
Year Published: Unknown

Title: Borderline Personality Disorder: Brain Differences Related to Disruptions in Cooperation in Relationships
Author: Science Update
Year Published: 2008

Title: Borderline Personality Disorder
Author: Wikipedia
Year Published (last modified):



1-2-3 Magic Effective Discipline for Children 2-12

Presented by
Sarah Hahnenberg, MA, LPC

- Learn effective discipline strategies to stop misbehavior and enhance positive behaviors.
- Bring your discipline issues/questions to get answers and suggestions.
- Connect with other foster parents faced with your challenges.
- Handouts and refreshments will be provided.

Trainings will be offered Saturdays on the following dates: (please choose ONE)

- April 24, 2010 10:00am – 2:00 pm
- July 23, 2010 10:00 am – 2:00 pm

Location: Lutheran Social Services of Michigan
1803 Whites Road, Suite 5
Kalamazoo, MI 49008

To attend: Please call Sarah Hahnenberg at (269) 345-5776 ext. 29 at least 4 days prior to the training to reserve your place.

Please remember that foster parents must ask the case worker for permission for things such as hair cuts for foster children, getting foster children’s ears pierced, traveling across state lines with foster children, or what to do with clothing that the foster child has outgrown. Case workers will then direct the question to the appropriate individual such as birth parents or the court.



I want to thank all the foster/adoptive/kinship parents that I have met for your warm welcome and willingness to allow me to ask questions regarding the specifics of foster care, ideas for recruiting, directions to get to your home, etc.

I look forward continuing to meet all of the foster parents and working as a team to offer support, ongoing training and ways to convey the extremely hard yet SO important job each of you do every single day.

We are working on adding information to the website that is pertinent and helpful for you, i.e. online training, upcoming trainings, links to various relevant websites and possibly even a "blog" for parents to ask questions. I have also started emailing training opportunities to foster parents who have signed a release to share information via email that are timely and don't make it in the newsletter in time. Please feel free to email me at harib@fcsource.org for suggestions and ideas for the website or upcoming trainings, etc.

Finally, I want to invite all of you to our foster/adoptive/kinship parent support groups. We have two in **Kalamazoo** that meet once per month. It is an opportunity to gain exposure to an ongoing form of support in providing foster care, observe group problem-solving methods and skills and listen to specific examples of the impact of foster care on foster families, as well as ongoing training hours if there is a specific topic. The daytime meeting is the second Tuesday of each month from 9:30 to 11:00 am. The evening class meets the 3rd Tuesday of each month from 6:00 to 7:30 pm. Both groups meet in room 146. There are currently two support groups for foster/adoptive/kinship parent support groups in Calhoun County. The **Battle Creek** group meets the second Monday of the month from 6:30 -8:30 pm and they meet at Battle Creek Counseling Associates. The **Albion** group meets the first Monday of each month from 6:30 – 8:30 pm at New Hope Worship Center. All of this information is going to be on the website also.

Thank you again for the opportunity to get to know you all better and please feel free to call me at 373-0248, ext. 277 or my email address to ask specific questions or share ideas and other information.

Shari Boone,
Foster and Adoptive
Family Recruiter/Ongoing Support

The **2010 P.R.I.D.E Training Schedule** will now be available at the Family & Children Services website at www.fcsource.org. If you would like a hard copy sent to you, please contact your licensor.

Please remember the following information regarding PRIDE requirements:

- **All PRIDE** training (Sessions 1-9) must be completed by the end of the **first year** after the initial licensing period.
- In a two caregiver home, **both** caregivers must complete **all** of the **PRIDE** training sessions.

International Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders (FASD) Conference

Friday & Saturday, April 9 & 10, 2010
Kewadin Casino Hotel and Convention Center,
Sault Ste Marie, Michigan

- To register: Call 800-725-9692 or www.dcs.wisc
- For additional information contact Kristi Obmascher, FASD Conference Manger, at (608) 262-8971 or at kobmascher@dcs.wisc.edu.

Foster Parents -

Please remember to complete an Incident Report if a foster child in your home has an incident or accident. Examples for incident reports might include if a foster child bumped his head, fell off their bike, tripped and scratched up their knee, received a bite from another child at preschool, or hurt their elbow. After an Incident Report is completed, IT MUST BE SUBMITTED to the foster care worker immediately. For further clarification, please see the Unusual Incident Policy.

Foster and Adoptive Parents, Kinship Caregivers

What: **Battle Creek** Support Group Meetings

When: Every second Monday of the month; 6:30 pm to 8:30 pm

Where: Battle Creek Counseling Associates
211 Capital Avenue, N.E.
Battle Creek, MI 49017

Upcoming Meetings and Topics:

4/12/10: What It Means to Accept Children Unconditionally

5/10/10: Managing Oppositional and Defiant Behavior

6/14/10: The Importance of Building Children's Self-Esteem

What: **Albion** Support Group Meetings

When: 1st Monday of each month; 6:30 pm to 8:30 pm

Where: New Hope Worship Center
13600 28 Mile Road (just off I-94, Exit 121
-then 1 mile north)
Albion, MI 49224

Upcoming Meetings and Topics:

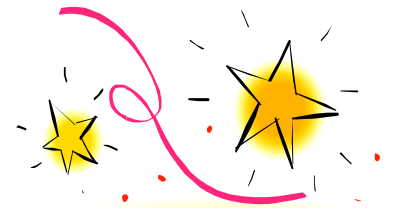
4/5/10: What It Means to Accept Children Unconditionally

5/3/10: Managing Oppositional and Defiant Behavior

6/7/10: The Importance of Building Children's Self-Esteem

Take a moment and explore the Family & Children Services website at www.fcsources.org. Under Programs, click on Foster Care & Adoption.... we will be posting upcoming training opportunities and hope to have the foster care forms available for easy access.

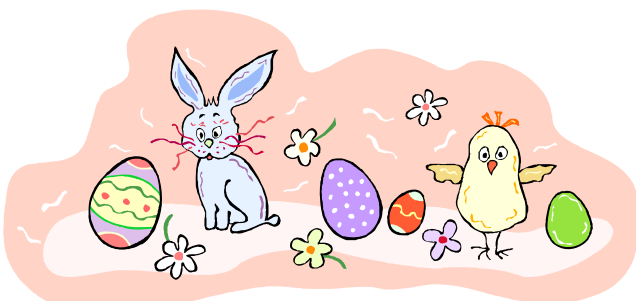
STAR AWARD



The STAR AWARD is a new award that we would like to introduce!

Foster Care Staff can nominate Foster Parents for performing like a "STAR". The following foster parents received the STAR AWARD for their outstanding commitment to children:

- Perisee- "She is very patient and waits for a call every week regarding parenting time. Even after experiencing car difficulty, she was able to call upon friends to help transport the children to their scheduled parenting time. She was able to handle this situation by being calm and with the support of good friends!"
- Brandys/Snyder- "They have done a great job with the 2 siblings. They are easy to work with and have created a wonderful loving home for the children. They ask informative questions, they are very organized and they are very welcoming to the workers".
- Nichols- "All of the children are polite, happy and well behaved in her home. She has a great family network and takes the children to many family functions. She is very accommodating toward staff and will get you what you need in a timely manner."
- Kamrowski- "They brought birthday cake, plates, and forks to a foster child's supervised visit for him to have with his mother to celebrate his 1st birthday. This was wonderful!"
- Chaney- "She remained very positive despite the system throwing some kinks into an adoption. She has gotten all of her paperwork in at lightening speed and has been flexible in working with us. She has never displayed any negativity and is always so positive and polite. You can tell that she loves the child in her care very much and no bad news or stress in the world is going to ruin the constant good mood she is in due to having that child placed in her home. She is a delight to work with and is an inspiration to me!"
- Facey- "Thank you for informing Family & Children Services of trainings available for foster parents and resources in the community."



Should Birth Parents Be Involved with Foster Children? (www.life123.com)

When a child is removed from his family and placed in foster care, it is a difficult time for the child, the birth parents and the foster family.

Two out of three children who enter foster care because of a harmful family situation are reunited with their birth parents within two years, studies show. Regular visits between a foster child and his birth parents help to shorten the time of foster care and reunite children and parents more smoothly. By the same token, denying contact between a foster child and his birth parents has a negative impact on the child.

The Importance of Birth Parent Contact with Foster Children

- Visitation between parents and their children in foster care is considered to be the most important factor in reuniting a child successfully with his family.
- Regular visits allow social workers to observe and assess the parent-child relationship and the progress toward reuniting the family.
- Supervised visits allow birth parents to practice new parenting skills and behaviors and show that they're willing to work to get their family reunited.
- The child benefits from these visitations because it reduces the pain of separation and reassures him that his family is still there and that he still belongs.
- Foster parents get to see their foster children interact with their birth parents, which leads to a better understanding of what the child has experienced and is going through.

Some Facts About Birth Parent Contact with Foster Children

- Birth parents are more likely to show up for visits if they start immediately after placement. If the birth parent has a scheduled visit with her children within 48 hours of placement, she's more likely to attend more visits in the future.
- Foster children who saw their birth parents at least once every two weeks tended to show fewer behavior problems, had less anxiety and less depression. They also tended to rate their birth parents as "normal" or "healthy."
- Children who had frequent visits from their birth parents were more likely to be placed back in the home sooner.
- It is normal for children to regress, act out or behave badly immediately after a visit with his birth parents. It's a natural, temporary setback and is due to conflicting feelings about his parents.

How Foster Parents Should Interact with Birth Parents

Some things to keep in mind when interacting with the birth parents of foster children:

- In a meeting with the birth parents, introduce yourself and tell them, "I want you to know that I'm taking care of your child until he can go back home. He misses you. Is there anything you think I should know?"
- Be prepared for anger. Birth parents separated from their children are going through serious anger, frustration and loss. Show compassion and don't get angry in return.
- Assure birth parents that you are not trying to replace them and you will not harm their child.
- Humbly admit that they know more about the child than you do. Ask them questions about what he likes and dislikes and how you can be a better foster parent for him.
- Answer any questions the birth parents have for you, such as where the child sleeps, who he interacts with and how he's doing in school.
- Help prepare your foster child for visits with his birth parents. Talk positively about them and get there on time and with a positive attitude.
- Along with the social worker, develop an action plan for working with the birth parents to do what's best for the child.

1608 Lake Street
Kalamazoo, MI 49001

Family & Children Services



FOSTER CARE

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Family & Children Services

Call 344.0202 or 965.3247