



Connections



september

La Crosse County
Human Services Dept.
Volume 8, Issue 9
2006

Help Children Succeed in School

Children's academic success is affected by many factors. While you can't take tests for them, you can ensure success in school by encouraging family members to do the following:

Encourage daily family routines

- Provide time and a quiet place to study.
- Assign responsibilities for chores.
- Be firm about times to get up and go to bed.
- Have dinner together.

Monitor out-of-school activities

- Set limits on TV watching.
- Check up on children when you're not at home.
- Arrange for after-school activities and supervised care.

Model the value of learning, self-discipline, and hard work

- Communicate through questioning and conversation.
- Demonstrate that achievement comes from working hard.
- Use reference materials and the library.

Express high but realistic expectations for achievement

- Set goals and standards appropriate for age and maturity levels.

- Recognize and encourage special talents.
- Inform friends and family about successes.

Encourage children's development and progress in school

- Maintain a warm and supportive home.
- Show interest in children's progress at school.
- Help with homework.
- Discuss the value of education and possible career options.
- Stay in touch with teachers and school staff.

Read, write, and discuss among family members

- Read, listen to children read, and talk about what is being read.
- Discuss the day over dinner.
- Tell stories and share problems.
- Write letters, lists, and messages.

Use community resources for family needs

- Enroll in sports programs or lessons.
- Introduce children to role models and mentors.
- Use community services.

SOURCE: *Protection Connection* newsletter (Volume V, Issue 3); 1998; published by the Protective Services Training Institute of Texas; available online at <http://www.utexas.edu/research/cswr/psti/index.php?lm=newsletter&m=protconn>



The Reading-Friendly Home

By Lee Tobin McClain, PH.D

"Here, read a book!" you say.

"No way!" says your child.

We all know that reading skills are crucial to our children's success. But what if the direct approach to encouraging reading doesn't work?

Take a tip from environmental assessors, interior decorators and preschool teachers. Create a reading-friendly milieu and they will read. Here are six ways.

Subscribe.

What is it about magazines that makes them so appealing? Is it the glossy photographs? The short articles that can be digested right along with a breakfast donut? The way magazines focus on a subject matter that's dear to our hearts?

Even for a foster child who isn't a scholar, getting a magazine in the mail can be a high point of the day...and that excitement is all about reading. Nothing's less like a school than *Skateboards Today* or *National Cheerleader*, and yet the same skills they'll build pouring over these seemingly light-weight magazines will translate into more skillful reading with next week's history assignment.

Magazines don't cost much if you subscribe, and they make great holiday or birthday presents.

Baskets, Baskets Everywhere.

No need to buy new shelving for the magazines and books that litter our home.

Instead, think about all the places people sit and relax, and plop down a book-sized basket in each one: bathroom, kitchen table, favorite chair in the den, bed side. A lot of small baskets are friendlier and more accessible than one tall bookcase of spine-out books. If it's easier to find reading material than to find the remote, more reading is likely to get done.

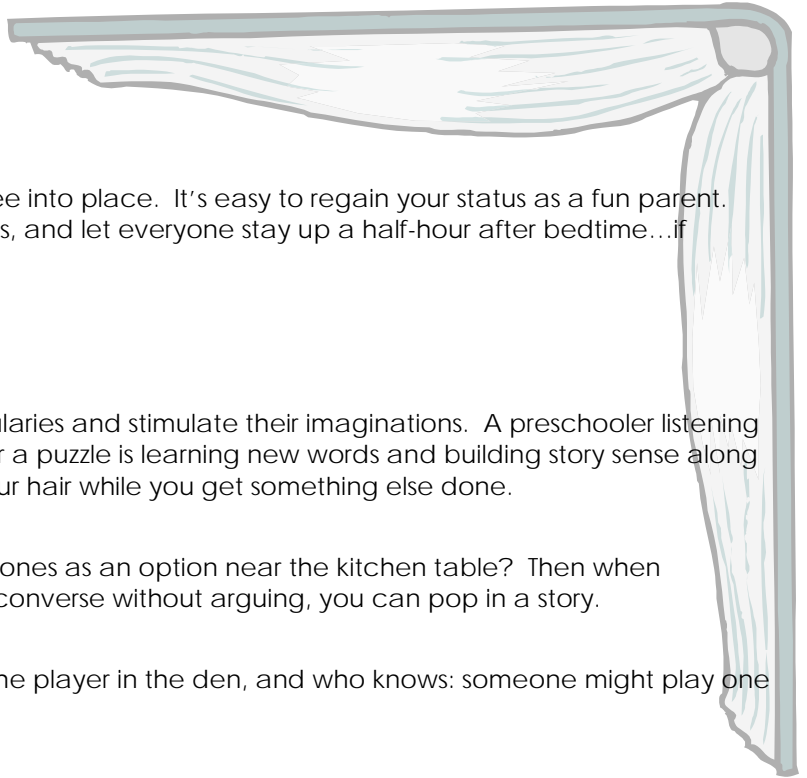
Tame the Television.

Speaking of the remote, use it to click that TV off. The biggest enemy of reading is television, and experts say that no child should log more than an hour or two of screen time per day. One way to tame the habit is to have specific times of the day when the TV is off-limits. A line like, "We don't watch TV in the morning," may shock and jar at first, but if you stick with it---repeating the words calmly and steadily ---they will become the truth, and the whining will fade.

If fun books or magazines are available, TV-free hours are the time they'll get read.

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Late Night Reading.

OK, so you seem like a meanie from putting tip three into place. It's easy to regain your status as a fun parent. Just give all the kids reading lights in their bedrooms, and let everyone stay up a half-hour after bedtime...if they're reading.

Go Audio.

Unlike television, audio books expand kids' vocabularies and stimulate their imaginations. A preschooler listening to a book on tape while she colors or puts together a puzzle is learning new words and building story sense along with fine motor skills. And---oh, joy---she's out of your hair while you get something else done.

How about putting a cassette player with head phones as an option near the kitchen table? Then when someone's eating alone, or a group is too tired to converse without arguing, you can pop in a story.

Stack some books-on-CD from the library besides the player in the den, and who knows: someone might play one and get hooked.

Be A Model.

As you're creating a reading-friendly home, take a few minutes each day to put your feet up with a good book. You'll show your kids through action that you value reading. And action is what they remember long after our many words have faded away.

This article is taken from the Fostering Reading column series published in Fostering Families Today, July/August Issue 2006.

Mark Your Calendar!

Sept 14, 6:30-8:00 PM, Bring It On, Family Resources parenting workshop. If you have concerns about your child's behavior or want to know more about appropriate expectations and discipline for your family, bring your questions and ask our panel of five Family Resources' Parent Educators! To register call (608)784-8125.

Sept 14-17, Applefest, La Crescent, Minn. Orchard tours, arts and crafts, flea market, parade, and pageants. Call (507)895-2800.

Sept 22-24, Cranberry Festival, Warrens. Cranberry bog tours, photo contest, bike tour, parade, music, food and antique/flea/farmers' market. www.cranfest.com.

Sept 29-Oct 7, Oktoberfest, La Crosse. Parades, arts and crafts, music, sports, carnival rides, food and more. www.oktoberfestusa.com or call (608)784-FEST.

Don't forget about the Foster Parent Banquet on Thursday, September 21 at Drugans!

Join us for the generalized training on **Tuesday,**
September 12, from 6-8pm

in the Human Services Building Basement Auditorium.

Topic: **Independent Living**

Presented by Dawn Miller, Joannette Robertson, and Jamie Betteworth

This training is strongly recommended for foster parents of children 5 and over. This is your opportunity to discuss the Independent Living Program with Joannette and Jamie of the Family and Children's Center. Please contact Rhonda at 789-4834 to register.



Foster Care & Adoption Resource Center

Looking for information on Foster Care or Adoption? Visit us at our webpage:

www.wifostercareandadoption.org
or you may feel free to contact the resource center at our toll free number: 1-800-947-8074

or via email:

info@wifostercareandadoption.org

Town Hall Meetings

The Alternate Care Unit sponsors Town Hall Meetings for licensed children foster and respite homes. The Town Hall meetings provide an opportunity for foster parents and respite providers to give feedback to the Alternate Care Unit about the foster care and respite program, to get questions answered about policy and procedures as well as participate in the development of new policies. The meetings are also an excellent chance to meet other foster homes and begin developing a support network.

The meetings typically run from 6-8 PM. Foster parents are able to earn training credits for attending and participating in the meeting.

The schedule for the upcoming Town Hall Meetings is:

September 26th - Administrative Conference Room -Human Service Building

October 17th - Administrative Conference Room -Human Service Building

December 5th - Administrative Conference Room -Human Service Building

Denise Green maintains a group email listing for announcing these meetings. If you would like to be added to the listing, you can contact Denise at zbadgreen@charter.net.

We hope you take the opportunity to join us at the meetings.

Keith Keller



Welcome New Foster Parents

Submitted by Will Herber

Please welcome Kim Collins to our foster care community. Kim lives with her daughter in Holmen Wisconsin and she comes to our community to provide respite care for children in foster care. She is already a certified provider for Gundersen Lutheran and has helped a few of our foster parents with respite care in the past. Kim has experience in providing respite care for teens in foster care. She has cared for children that present with difficult emotional and behavioral issues. Kim enjoys fishing and camping and plans on keeping the children in her care active on the weekends. She is also familiar with the busy social calendars of teens as her daughter is a very active teenager. If you meet Kim at one of the up and coming foster care events or trainings please welcome her.

Please welcome Julie Beebe and Rhonda Bowlin to the foster care community. Julie and Rhonda come to us with the plan to be respite providers for children in foster care. They also hope to become licensed as ongoing foster parents some day. Julie and Rhonda live in the Onalaska/Holmen area with their five children and two cats. The parents are already familiar with foster care as they know several foster parents in this community. They are likely to be busy providing respite care to some of the children in these homes. Julie and Rhonda are interested in caring for children of all ages and they have experience in parenting children of the entire age range. They currently have three teenagers in the home. Whew! If you should happen to see them at up and coming trainings or foster care events, please welcome them.

Please welcome Susan Clark to our foster care community. Susan lives in central La Crosse with her two dogs and two cats. She enjoys working on her home projects both inside and outside. She also enjoys other outdoor activities such as canoeing, hiking, and camping which she hopes to enjoy with a foster child. She comes to foster care with the intention of providing a home to a young child that is a relative and she hopes to be able to become an adoptive resource for this child. She is scheduled to attend the pre-service training (PACE) this fall and this will be a good time for her to meet some other new foster parents. Unfortunately, she is unable to attend this year's recognition banquet this month but please welcome her when you see her at other foster care events or the regular training sessions.

Please welcome Natalie Kemp (again) to our foster care community, this time as a foster parent. Natalie has decided to provide ongoing care as a fully licensed foster parent. She recently was introduced to the foster care community in July's Connections newsletter. Natalie will be keeping herself busy this school year with her two children and a foster child who all have very active calendars. Some of you out there may have already met Natalie through her involvement with respite care. When you see Natalie at an up and coming foster care event or training please be sure to re-welcome her to the foster care community.

Please welcome Rebecca Johnson to our foster care community. Becky lives in West Salem, Wisconsin with her son. She has become licensed to provide respite care for other foster parents in the community. Becky is currently an in-home child care provider and also provides respite for Gundersen Lutheran of La Crosse. Some of you may already know Becky as she has been a parent visitation monitor for Coulee Youth Centers Inc over the past two years. Becky looks forward to providing care to other foster children and she hopes to enjoy many activities with them. Becky's son is also very excited about the prospect of having other kids around the home. He might be able to give them a few tips on golf as he has aspirations of becoming a professional golfer or a window repair specialist (just ask all the neighbors). Please welcome Becky if you should see her at the next foster care event or training.

PACE FALL 2006

Below is the upcoming PACE schedule for those interested in the training or who need make up sessions. In either case please contact Rhonda Rude at 789-4834 to register for a class or make-up session. Please remember when choosing a session that you are not allowed to miss three sessions or more.

12 Week Cycle:

Tuesday Evenings, 3 hour sessions, 5:30 PM—8:30 PM

*La Crosse County Human Service Building
Basement Auditorium*

Trainers: Rita Wolcott & Sarah Koenen

| | |
|---------------------|----------------------|
| Session 1: 9-19-06 | Session 7: 11-7-06 |
| Session 2: 9-26-06 | Session 8: 11-14-06 |
| Session 3: 10-3-06 | Session 9: 11-21-06 |
| Session 4: 10-10-06 | Session 10: 11-28-06 |
| Session 5: 10-17-06 | Session 11: 12-5-06 |
| Session 6: 10-24-06 | Session 12: 12-12-06 |

(Break 10-31-06)

6 Week Cycle:

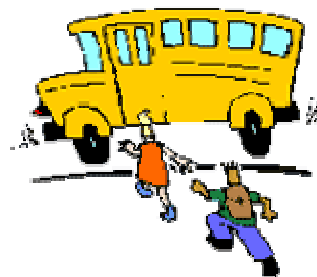
Saturdays, 6 hour sessions, 9 AM—3:30 PM

*La Crosse County Human Service Building
Basement Auditorium*

Trainers: Richelle Zimmerman, Tracy Puent and
Kathy Lysaker

| | |
|--------------------------|----------------------------|
| Sessions 1 & 2: 10-7-06 | Sessions 7 & 8: 11-4-06 |
| Sessions 3 & 4: 10-14-06 | Sessions 9 & 10: 11-11-06 |
| Sessions 5 & 6: 10-21-06 | Sessions 11 & 12: 11-18-06 |

(BREAK 10-28-06)



What Do You Mean By

Cognitive Delays: Delays in learning, compared to other children of the same age. Mental retardation is sometimes, but not always, the cause. Special education programs can help.

Developmental Delays: Delays in motor skills, speech and/or learning, compared to other children of the same age.

Speech and Language Disabilities: Delayed or inadequate speech and language development. Treatment depends upon the cause. Speech therapy often helps.

Excerpted from Adopt! January 2005. Published by Adoption Resources of Wisconsin.



September 4

Labor Day

This day is dedicated to the achievements of American workers and the contributions they have made to the strength, prosperity, and well-being of our country.

September 10

Grandparents Day

This is a day to honor grandparents, to give grandparents an opportunity to show love for their children's children, and to help children become aware of the strength, information, and guidance older people can offer.

Boppy
Bube
Gammy
Gamps
Gams
Gannie
Gma

Gommy
Gpa
Gramma
Grammy
Gramp
Grampa
Grams

Gran
Granddad
Granddaddy
Grandma
Grandmama
Grandmom
Grandpa

Mamaw
Mamie
Marme
Mawmaw
MeeMaw
Meme
Nana

Nonny
Papaw
Pappy
Paw
PeePaw
Poppa
Poppy

Nicknames for Grandparents

A V F
G R A N D P A
R M S G R A N D M A H
G R A M M A G R A M P A U
B O P P Y G T R E I M A R M E
G M E M E K Q A J F G A M M Y
A R P X P N L S N F M A W M A W O
G A O L Y N G H D G O M M Y G M A
M R N P K U A R C M B G R A M S X L B
J A D P U L I A G A N N I E N O N N Y
P M D Y C N F N K M G R A M M Y G P A
P A M M A Q D M A M I E P A P A W
O D V E N F M Z L G A M P S B N O
D F E A R O K O M A M A W G U
Y H M P M M G R A N D D A D K
P A P P Y R Q P E E P A W
W B U B E P O P P A G
O H A G A M S
A T L

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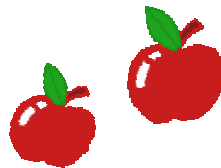
Grandma's Caramel Apple Cookie Dessert

INGREDIENTS:

- 3 Red Delicious apples—peeled, cored, and sliced
- 2 cups apple juice
- 1 (18 oz.) package refrigerated sugar cookie dough
- 3 tablespoons white sugar
- 1 (18 oz.) container caramel dip

DIRECTIONS:

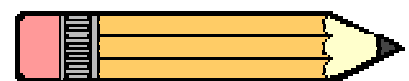
1. Preheat oven to 350°F. Grease a cookie sheet.
2. Place apple slices in a bowl and cover with apple juice.
3. Roll out cookie dough onto prepared sheet. Sprinkle with sugar.
4. Bake in preheated oven 5 to 7 minutes, until set.
5. Warm the caramel dip in the microwave and spread most of it over the cooled cookie. Remove the apple slices from the juice and arrange in rows over the caramel. Drizzle remaining caramel over apples. Cut into squares and serve.



**PENCIL
POWER!**



- A pencil will write in zero gravity, upside down, and under water.
- A pencil can write 45,000 words.
- More than 2 billion pencils are used in the United States every year.
- The typical pencil can draw a line 35 miles long!



fostering perspectives

Sponsored by the NC Division of Social Services and the NC Family and Children's Resource Program

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Reading About the Hard Stuff: Child Sex Abuse

Sometimes I like to think that there isn't anything left to learn about kids and their mistreatment. After 22 years as a foster parent and nine years as a Guardian ad Litem, surely I should have heard about it all! But, just as raising one or more children to successful adulthood holds no guarantee of further parenting success, knowing something is not knowing or understanding everything.

I am going to recommend a small but powerful book for survivors of sexual abuse. The book is *The Me Nobody Knows: A Guide for Teen Survivors* by Barbara Bean and Shari Bennett. (Caution: there are currently at least three books in print whose titles begin with "The Me Nobody Knows." Don't drop into your favorite bookstore without the title and the authors' names.)

The statistics for sexual abuse are unbelievable: one in four females and one in seven males are sexually abused before they turn 18. The impact on foster parents is huge. Many (if not most) teens entering our homes are reacting to some kind of trauma. This brief book (155 pages) contains a powerful message of hope coupled with a strong dose of reality.

While the book is designed as a workbook for teens to use in conjunction with therapy, I learned much from reading it. I know teens that have been sexually abused, but have not yet begun to effectively process that experience. I also know teens that I only suspect have been sexually abused. This book helped me understand some of the "off the wall" responses/reactions that some of my teens have exhibited. Perhaps the most important thing I re-learned is that when teens have a WWII-level reaction to something, parents should try to reframe the situation so teens can tell us what they are reacting to, and why.

I am a first-page-to-last-page reader and probably always will be. However, the final section of *The Me Nobody Knows* is designed to be cut out of the book and shared with parents if the victim thinks they would be helpful. I think that for foster parents the end of this book would be an excellent starting point.

This book is carefully written to establish in the young person's mind that although they were the victim of sexual abuse, they now have power. They are survivors. The behaviors they used to survive worked. Now they need to learn to thrive. The authors are very clear that recovery is a journey. Shari Bennett frequently quotes young survivors, which helps make the therapy process real. I am glad to have this book on my bookshelf.

I also highly recommend *Represent: The Voices of Youth in Care*, a periodical written by youth who are or have been in care. *Represent* is a real conversation starter at our house. All I do is leave the newest issue open to an article and set it on the kitchen counter—the counter where all snacks originate! Without fail the teens sharing our home ask me, "You reading this?" When I say, "Yes, why?" They have all responded with something to the effect that the article has gotten it right and captured their own experience with the system. Check out *Represent* at www.youthcomm.org.

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