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# Connections

## SEPTEMBER

### WISCONSIN FOSTER CARE RECOGNITION MONTH

La Crosse County  
Human Services  
Dept.

Volume 9, Issue 9  
2007

## All I Really Need to Know I Learned in Kindergarten

All I really need to know about how to live and what to do and how to be I learned in kindergarten. Wisdom was not at the top of the graduate school mountain, but there in the sandpile at Sunday School. These are the things I learned:

Share everything. Play fair. Don't hit people. Put things back where you found them. Clean up your own mess. Don't take things that aren't yours. Say you're sorry when you hurt somebody. Wash your hands before you eat. Flush. Warm cookies and cold milk are good for you. Live a balanced life--learn some and think some and draw and paint and sing and dance and play and work every day some. Take a nap every afternoon. When you go out into the world, watch out for traffic, hold hands, and stick together. Be aware of wonder. Remember the little seed in the Styrofoam cup: The roots go down and the plant goes up and nobody really knows how or why, but we are all like that. Goldfish and hamsters and white mice and even the little seed in the Styrofoam cup--they all die. So do we. And then remember the Dick-and-Jane books and the first word you learned--the biggest word of all--LOOK.

Everything you need to know is in there somewhere. The Golden Rule and love and basic sanitation. Ecology and politics and equality and sane living. Take any one of those items and extrapolate it into sophisticated adult terms and apply it to your family life or your work or your government or your world and it holds true and clear and firm. Think what a better world it would be if we all--the whole world--had cookies and milk about three o'clock every afternoon and then lay down with our blankies for a nap. Or if all governments had as a basic policy to always put things back where they found them and to clean up their own mess. And it is still true, no matter how old you are--when you go out into the world, it is best to hold hands and stick together.

--Robert Fulghum



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Come said the wind to the  
leaves one day,  
Come o're the meadows and  
we will play.  
Put on your dresses scarlet  
and gold,  
For summer is gone and the  
days grow cold.

- A Children's Song of the  
1880's

# Mark Your Calendar!

## Generalized Foster Parent Trainings

*Tuesdays, 6:00-8:00pm. Human Services Building Basement Auditorium*

*September 11, 2007 Canceled*

*November 13, 2007 Topic To Be Announced*

## PACE Schedule - Fall 2007

12-week cycle on Wednesday evenings 5:30-8:30 pm starting on September 19th, 2007 and ending December 12th, 2007 (break on October 31st). Classes will be held in the basement auditorium of the Administrative Center (this is a different location than normal). Trainers are Sarah Koenen and Rita Wolcott.

6-week cycle on Saturdays 9:00am-3:30pm starting on October 6th, 2007 and ending November 17th, 2007 (break on October 27th). Classes will be held in the basement auditorium of the Human Services building except for the November 10th class which will be in the Administrative building basement auditorium. Two sessions will be covered each Saturday with a 30-minute lunch which is provided. Trainers are Nissa Knutson, Tracy Puent, and Kathy Lysaker.

**Please call Rhonda Rude at 789-4834 to sign up for either of these PACE cycles or for make-up classes.**

## Other Training Opportunities

*Tuesday, Oct. 16, 4:00-6:00pm Psychopharmacology in Children and Adolescents*

This training, presented by Dr. Jennifer Lahmann from Gundersen Lutheran, will include a general overview of medications (antidepressants, antipsychotics, mood stabilizers, etc.) and will also include updates on any medications that have come out recently. The training will be held in the Health and Human Services building basement auditorium. This is free and no registration is needed.

**Upcoming Workshops at Family Resources, 1500 Green Bay St.**

**For more information or to register, call 784-8125. Child care may be provided.**



*Thursday, September 20, 6:30-8:00pm ADHD-Naturally*

Listen to and explore some ways to treat and prevent ADD/ADHD naturally. Presented by Dr. Steven P. Czys, CSCS.

## Special Events

***Thursday, Sept. 20, Social hour begins at 5:30 Foster Parent Banquet Drugan's***

You should be receiving your invitation soon--remember to RSVP to Rhonda Rude by September 10th. Please be thoughtful when you RSVP to help us prevent over-purchasing food.

*Thursday, Oct. 4, 7:00pm*

Torchlight Parade

La Crosse

*Thursday, Oct. 25, 5:00-8:00pm*

Harvest of Thanks

Roncalli Newman Center, 1732 State St.

# Parade Season 2007

School season is just beginning and that means the Parade Season is coming to an end. The Torchlight Parade is scheduled for October 4<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 pm. This will be the final parade of 2007 for foster parents in the community to promote awareness of foster care in La Crosse County. Participation in foster care events is a great way to meet other foster parents in the community and then begin to develop your support network.

As has been mentioned in previous articles, your participation matters. Please call Rhonda Rude (608) 789-4834 to sign up for this last parade event of the year. We will need a commitment of participation from a minimum of (4) four foster families in order to be involved in the Torch Light Parade this year. Please register with Rhonda by September 25th.



## Journey of a Foster Parent

You made the initial call and learn that this step will change the path of your life.

*Yet you continue the journey.*

You find out that being a foster parent means giving and sharing every minute of your life with a stranger's child. You endure the process of being licensed and the probing into every phase of your life as you learn that the path you have chosen is not about you, but about children who will enter your home at random, day or night, with their fears of the future and their nightmares of the past.

*And still, you continue the journey.*

You overcome myths about foster parenting as you realize that there is no such thing as a foster child, but there are children in foster care, children like the ones you know, seeking love, approval, a family and the message that they really do count.

*And you embrace the journey.*

You nurture the children placed in your home through their sorrow, fears, and inability to bond because you understand they have not known anyone trustworthy enough to give their hearts to. You watch their growth and relish the trust they place in you. You show them the love and patience they crave by listening to the events of their day, holding them when they cry, kissing them when they hurt. You hold them close. You convinced them they no longer need to be afraid of the night or day. You let them call you mom and dad. You share your heart and soul.

*And you realize, nothing will ever compare to this journey.*

When the time came to leave your home, you tell them everything will be OK, that they will always be remembered and loved. You hold back the tears until they are out of sight. Then the tears rain down as you grieve your loss and concerns for their future. You dry your tears and turn your thoughts toward the next little strangers who will enter your home and with whom you will start all over in your mission to love them and convince them that they really do COUNT.

And humbly you continue your journey. As the world ponders the question "What is the worth of a foster parent? A child in foster care knows - PRICELESS!"

*Written by: Jeanne Duffy, Fostering Families Today, May/June 2007. page 52.*

# Is My Child's School Program Working?

By Lee Tobin McClain, Ph.D.

Many kids in foster care struggle with reading and are enrolled in special education services. If you're starting to foster a new child, chances are you're scrambling to get him or her in school and get the records transferred. If you've traveled a ways down the road, it's time to look at your child's school program. How can you support it at home? What can you do if it's not working?

Especially if you have a struggling reader on your hands, school interventions can be helpful whether your child is in third grade or 10th. Fortunately, researchers Douglas Fisher and Gay Ivey have pulled together research on what makes reading programs work, especially for struggling adolescents. Here's what they say you should look for.

First, schools should provide readable, interesting books focused on the material students are studying. A glance through the books shelved in your child's classroom can reveal a lot: are they tattered and dull-looking, or new and appealing? Do they make learning fun? Additionally, teachers in all subjects should help students develop skills at reading the texts in their classes. If the science teacher provides outlines for difficult chapters and talks about getting through them, it's a good sign.

Beyond these basics, special reading programs should have you child interacting with an expert teacher, preferably a reading specialist--not a computer. Teachers can tailor instruction to a child's particular weaknesses and select reading materials of interest. Computer programs claim to be individualized and often feature music and graphics with kid appeal, but their effectiveness rarely proves as high as one-on-one time with a teacher.

Beware of "skill and drill" programs that don't give a child practice at reading useful, age appropriate texts. Too much emphasis on word recognition or phonics can deaden interest in reading, and a lack of interest is fatal. Real books, magazine articles or Web sites that address student interests can and should be incorporated into after-school programs or special-education sessions. Finally, children in reading programs should spend the majority of their time reading and writing--not filling out worksheets or chanting letter sounds.

## Reinforcement at Home

You can help at home by leaving appealing educational books and magazines in strategic locations--kitchen table, bathroom and car--and by talking about how you read challenging texts. "Wait a minute, this recipe is confusing. Let me read it again" is a reading strategy; share it with your child.

Reading aloud is one way to make sure your child gets some time exposed to books. With a young child, it's easy to snuggle up with a story. If older kids won't accept readaloud, read a paragraph from your favorite magazine and ask you teen's opinion. Either way, you're modeling fluency and expressive reading, and while sharing your enjoyment of reading.

Shelves at mega-bookstores are filled with workbooks that look wonderful and promise fabulous academic gains. I've often succumbed and bought them for my daughter. But like most kids, she learns more from writing a letter to a friend than filling in a worksheet, even though her spelling is iffy and her handwriting next to unreadable. And colorful "circle everything that starts with 'p'" pages pale in comparison to a

chapter from Junie B. Jones.

## If the School Program is Bad

What do you do if the school program seems weak? It sounds trite, but the squeaky wheel gets the grease. Unfairly, some teachers and school administrators have a preconception that kids in foster care don't have any adults who care about them. If there is limited teacher attention, more of it comes to the student whose caregivers are known to be involved.

Start by asking questions of the classroom teacher, reading specialist and principal:

- "Is Susan's reading instruction computerized, or does she work with a specialist?"
- "What's the proportion of worksheets to actual reading time?"
- "Do all the students start at the same place, or do you individualize instruction?"
- "How do you assess her to figure out if this program is working? Can I see the results?"

There's no need to be accusatory, of course; most teachers do their best with limited resources, and some programs are dictated by school districts or even federal law. However, it's also true that most programs can be adjusted if parents are clearly dissatisfied with them. Poor readers are at a significant risk for dropping out of school, and kids in foster care fall into that category twice as often as other kids. It behooves all of us to pay attention to what schools are doing, and to gently confront administrators who continue to implement programs that don't work.

*Source: Fostering Families Today, March/April 2007*



**OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR**

**A PROCLAMATION**

**WHEREAS**, the issue of peace embraces the deepest hopes of all peoples and remains humanity's guiding inspiration; and

**WHEREAS**, in 1981, the United Nations proclaimed the International Day of Peace be "*devoted to commemorating and strengthening the ideals of peace both within and among all nations and peoples*"; and

**WHEREAS**, the United Nations expanded the observance of the International Day of Peace in 2001 to include the call for a day of global ceasefire and non-violence, and invited all nations and people to honor a cessation of hostilities for the duration of the Day; and

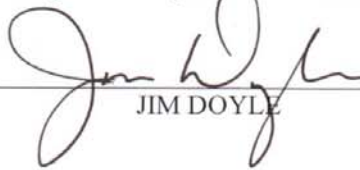
**WHEREAS**, there is a growing support within our state for the observance of the International Day of Peace which affirms a vision of our world at peace, and fosters cooperation between individuals, organizations and nation; and

**WHEREAS**, global crises impel all citizens to work toward converting humanity's noblest aspirations for world peace into a practical reality for future generations;

**NOW, THEREFORE, I, Jim Doyle, Governor of the State of Wisconsin, do hereby proclaim September 21, 2006**

**INTERNATIONAL DAY OF PEACE**

IN TESTIMONY WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the Great Seal of the State of Wisconsin to be affixed. Done at the Capitol in the City of Madison this thirty first day of August in the year two thousand six.

  
JIM DOYLE

By the Governor:

  
DOUGLAS LA FOLLETTE  
Secretary of State



# fostering perspectives

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

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## Awaken the Sleeping Student

Child Welfare Report (August 1996)

There is an old Native American saying that "people need to grieve a loss a full season," but when a child is a victim of physical assault, incest, verbal abuse, or domestic violence, we often do not give them a full season to recover. Most do not get even a full six hours before they are back at your school or in your foster home.

When a child "shuts down" in your home, they are often overwhelmed by trauma and crisis. When you face a serious crisis, you may hide in bed until you are ready to emerge. Children often do not have that option. To cope and recover, they must extract recovery time whenever they can, so they may withdraw instead of doing whatever they are supposed to do. Here are some guidelines for successfully awakening--and working with--sleeping children:

**Identify Good Work Days:** like you, children cannot become involved in work soon after a serious crisis or trauma. Ask the youngster to identify days they are better able to work. Negotiate work on "bad" days.

**Don't Wrestle for Control:** the child has learned that when they are not in control of events, they are often the victim of events. They take control by becoming "invisible" and doing little or nothing. Sometimes having control has helped these children minimize or stop abuse, so they will often fight intensely to keep control in your home. By allowing the child to have as much control as possible, you can gain cooperation you'll never get otherwise. So, instead of saying "Do this," say "Would you rather do this now or later?" Often masters at seizing and keeping power, the harder you tug on the child, the more stuck they become.

**Teach Mistakes Are Okay:** at home (with birth parents) making a mistake can mean getting hit or shamed, so shutting down and doing nothing can certainly seem the safest and wisest path. Teach that making mistakes is normal, and will not engender abuse in your home. Ask the child to write down on the top of a paper a benign (harmless) error she made. On the bottom of the page, she should write what she learned from making the mistake. Then have her throw away the top of the paper and keep the bottom--a metaphor for how mistakes are vital to learning.

**Moderately Praise Progress:** at home (with birth parents) the child may hear how terrible they are. If you strongly contradict that belief by overpraising the child, the child may feel so uncomfortable that he or she will act out to prove you wrong. It's as though suddenly a person was telling you that you were the most beautiful person on the planet. It might not fit with your previous experience, and could make you quite uncomfortable. Resist the temptation to "make up" for neglect or abuse by making a huge fuss about progress. Give moderate praise instead, or better yet, ask the child how they would like you to respond when they do something great.

**Have Moderate Expectations:** you may be tempted to set goals such as completing all overdue homework. While entirely realistic for other children, it may be far too hard for the shut-down child debilitated by severe family problems. All goals must be cooperative, not coercive. Select goals that are highly doable, tiny steps. These children desperately need success, not more failure.

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## Egg Carton School Bus

### Materials:

- Scissors
- Glue
- Lid (top) of an egg carton
- Yellow paint or markers
- Black construction paper or 2 lids from milk jugs (for wheels)
- Black marker
- Small photographs of family members, cutouts of people from magazines, or hand drawn faces



### Instructions:

Paint (or color with marker) the lid yellow. Cut two circles out of black construction paper for wheels or use the milk jug lids. Once the paint on the bus is dry, attach the wheels to the bottom. Glue the pictures of people into the holes. If there aren't holes in the egg carton glue the people to the front and draw windows around them. Write "School" on top with a black marker.

From: <http://www.dltk-kids.com>

## Stop-and-Think

### Riddles



1. If the red house was made of red bricks, and the blue house was made out of blue bricks, what was the green house made of?

2. What runs but never walks?
3. What is white when it's dirty and black when it's clean?
4. What has one eye but cannot see?
5. What do you throw out when you need it and take in when you don't need it?
6. What belongs to you, other people use it a lot, but you hardly ever use it?
7. What happens once in a minute, twice in a moment, but never in two thousand years?
8. What gets wetter the more it dries?
9. What is so fragile even saying its name can break it?
10. What gets bigger the more you take away?

From: [www.activityvillage.co.uk](http://www.activityvillage.co.uk)

ANSWERS:  
 1. Glass 2. Water 3. A blackboard 4. A needle  
 5. An anchor 6. Your name 7. The letter M  
 8. A towel 9. Silence 10. A hole

## September Unscramble



1. oclhso
2. uatnum
3. tlbalofo
4. lvesae
5. aspepl
6. sobko
7. olarb dya
8. lfal

From: [www.abcteach.com](http://www.abcteach.com)

ANSWERS:  
 1. school 2. autumn 3. football 4. leaves  
 5. apples 6. books 7. labor day  
 8. fall

# Connections



LA CROSSE COUNTY HUMAN SERVICES  
300 4TH SREET NORTH  
LA CROSSE, WISCONSIN 54601

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

## Pass the word on!

Do you know anyone who's interested in being a foster parent? Orientation sessions for those who'd like to learn more about the program are held the first Monday of every month from 6:00 - 7:00PM. Those interested in attending should call Rhonda Rude at 789-4834 to sign up.

## Is there anything you'd like to contribute to our newsletter?

Please send it to:  
Attn: Sharon McHugh  
La Crosse County Human Services  
300 N. 4th St.  
La Crosse, WI 54601  
mchugh.sharon@co.la-crosse.wi.us  
(608) 785-6056

*We welcome any feedback or suggestions you may have!*



Foster Care & Adoption  
Resource Center

Looking for information on foster care or adoption? The Foster Care and Adoption Resource Center provides the following services:

- Resource lending library
- Links to training opportunities and resources
- *Fostering Across Wisconsin* quarterly newsletter

Visit their webpage at [www.wifostercareandadoption.org](http://www.wifostercareandadoption.org) or contact them at their toll free number 1-800-947-8074 .