



Connections

JUNE



Summer Safety

For most children, summer brings endless hours of sun and fun. Yet it's also an opportunity for both small and serious injuries. Here are some safety tips that will help make you child's summer a safe one.

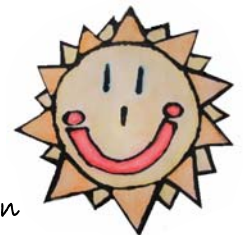
- Never leave children unattended in or near the water. Use U.S. Coast Guard approved life vests, also known as personal flotation devices (PFDs), on boats, docks, and around deep or swift water. Have adults take turns as "designated child watchers" at parties or family gatherings. Enroll children in swim lessons.
- Make sure children always wear a helmet when rollerblading, skateboarding or riding a bicycle or scooter.
- Protect children from excessive exposure to sun- especially from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Use a sunscreen with a Sun Protection Factor (SPF) of 30 or higher and apply it at least 30 minutes before going outside. Do not apply sunscreen to children under six months of age. Keep infants safely out of the sun, and dress them in loose, light colored clothing.
- Supervise children away from areas where lawn mowers are being used. Never allow children to ride on mowers.
- Minimize the risk of bee and insect stings by having children wear shoes and light-colored clothing. Use insect repellent sparingly on children and never on infants. Keep antihistamine on hand in a safe location.
- Know the plants in your yard. Teach your child to identify unsafe plants, and not to pick or eat anything with out first checking with an adult. Call the National Poison Center Hotline at 1-800-222-1222 if you suspect a poisoning has occurred or to receive a list of poisonous plants. Keep a bottle of Ipacac Syrup on hand, but use only on the direction of poison control.
- Keep children from playing near barbecues and bonfires and always have a fire extinguisher or at least 16 quarts of water close by in case of fire. Only adults should use lighter fluid. Teach older children how to safely operate a barbecue grill.
- Strap children in a properly fitting seat belt, car seat or booster seat when traveling by car or airplane.

La Crosse County
Human Services
Dept.
Volume 10, Issue 6
2008



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"A man never stands as tall as when he kneels to help a child."

-Unknown

From Family Ties newsletter, published by Adoptive and Foster Families of Maine, Inc., June 2007

Mark Your Calendar!

Special Events for Foster Families

Thursday evening, September 18th

Foster Parent Banquet

Drugan's, Holmen

Thursday evening, October 2nd

Torchlight Parade

La Crosse - North side

Thursday evening, November 20th

Holiday Open House

Children's Museum

Fun Community Events

Wed.-Sun., July 2-6

Riverfest

Riverside Park

River City Water Ski shows, entertainment, fireworks, food, beverages, crafts, music and more.

Training Opportunities

Tuesday, July 15, 2008

6:00 to 8:00pm

La Crosse County Human Services Building - Auditorium

Family Resources will present to foster families:

**Building Protective Factors
with Families**

Upcoming Workshops at Family Resources, 1500 Green Bay St.

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



Thursday, June 19, 6:30-8:00pm

Live Your Values...Live in Peace

Come explore and define what is important to you and your family and learn strategies to help you live in harmony with your values. Presented by Stacy Shapiro, President of Shapiro Strategies.

Thursday, June 26, 6:30-8:00pm

To Pee or Not to Pee...That is the Question!

Hear about how to recognize the signs of toilet learning readiness, how to proceed, and how to avoid turning toilet learning into a major power struggle. Presented by Fran Swift, Parent Educator.

Mark Your Calendar!

Caring for the Sexually Abused Child: The Challenges with Fostering

Trainer: Nancy Pohlman

June 30, 2008

Best Western Arrowhead, Black River Falls

6—9 p.m.

NO FEE

Description: The focus of this workshop is to prepare foster/adoptive parents who will be, or are, caring for children who have been sexually abused. The workshop will include common responses to, and effects of sexual abuse, particularly in terms of trauma and separation. We will then discuss how to care for the sexually abused child and the common behaviors to be aware of including sexually reactive behaviors. The training will include the continuum of touch, strategies to prevent victimization and the roles and responsibilities of the foster parents. We will give suggestions for rules, privacy and boundaries.

For information, contact:

Western Wisconsin Partnership

UW-River Falls

B0026 WEB, 410 South Third Street

River Falls WI 54022

Phone: 715-425-0612

Fax: 715-425-3800

Website: www.uwrf.edu/wwpartnership

Email: mary.lou.bean@uwrf.edu

Trainer: Nancy has over 20 years experience in a variety of Social Work roles. She has a Bachelor's degree in Social Work from UW-La Crosse and a Masters degree in Social Work from UW-Madison. Nancy has worked as a sexual assault advocate, an ongoing social CPS and delinquency social worker and is a licensed foster parent. She has been a supervisor for La Crosse County Department of Human Services since 1999. She has past experience supervising the Alternate Care Unit and currently supervises a CPS unit. She is an adjunct faculty for Winona State University and Viterbo University Social Work Programs. She has been training and consulting since 2001 to audiences of foster/adoptive parents, social workers, supervisors and directors. Nancy is a parent of three children, two of which are through foster care and adoption. She is active in the La Crosse Community promoting awareness and education regarding child abuse and neglect and at a state level serving on various Child Welfare committees.

Register Online at: <http://www.uwrf.edu/wwpartnership>

CO-SPONSORED BY: WESTERN WISCONSIN PARTNERSHIP,
CATHOLIC CHARITIES AND FRIENDS OF ADOPTION



Correction:

A poem featured in last month's issue of *Connections* contained a typographical error that altered the poem's meaning. Below is the corrected version of the poem. We apologize to the writer for the misprint!

Angry Child

By Ruby Bilyeu, foster parent

I'm so very angry and I really don't know why
I never know just what will make me laugh or cry!
You are supposed to fix it, you are supposed to see
You are supposed to always know what is hurting me!

Don't feed into my anger; don't give into my rage
Help me fight the battle my inner self doth wage!
Giving in confuses me, so it helps me not at all
It just makes me angrier, and again I fall!

Don't let me control you; I've no control over me!
Help me control my anger, so that I can see
Please, show me that my anger will never leave you cold
Show me that I'm worthy for you to love and hold!

Please, show me that sharing your love will not leave me alone
And that sharing my love brings more love of my own!
So I'll know that when I'm hurting; you want to understand
And I'll know that when I fall I'll always have your hand!

Starting Anew



By Jeanette Lomando, Former President
Foster Parent Advisory Council of Suffolk County, Inc.

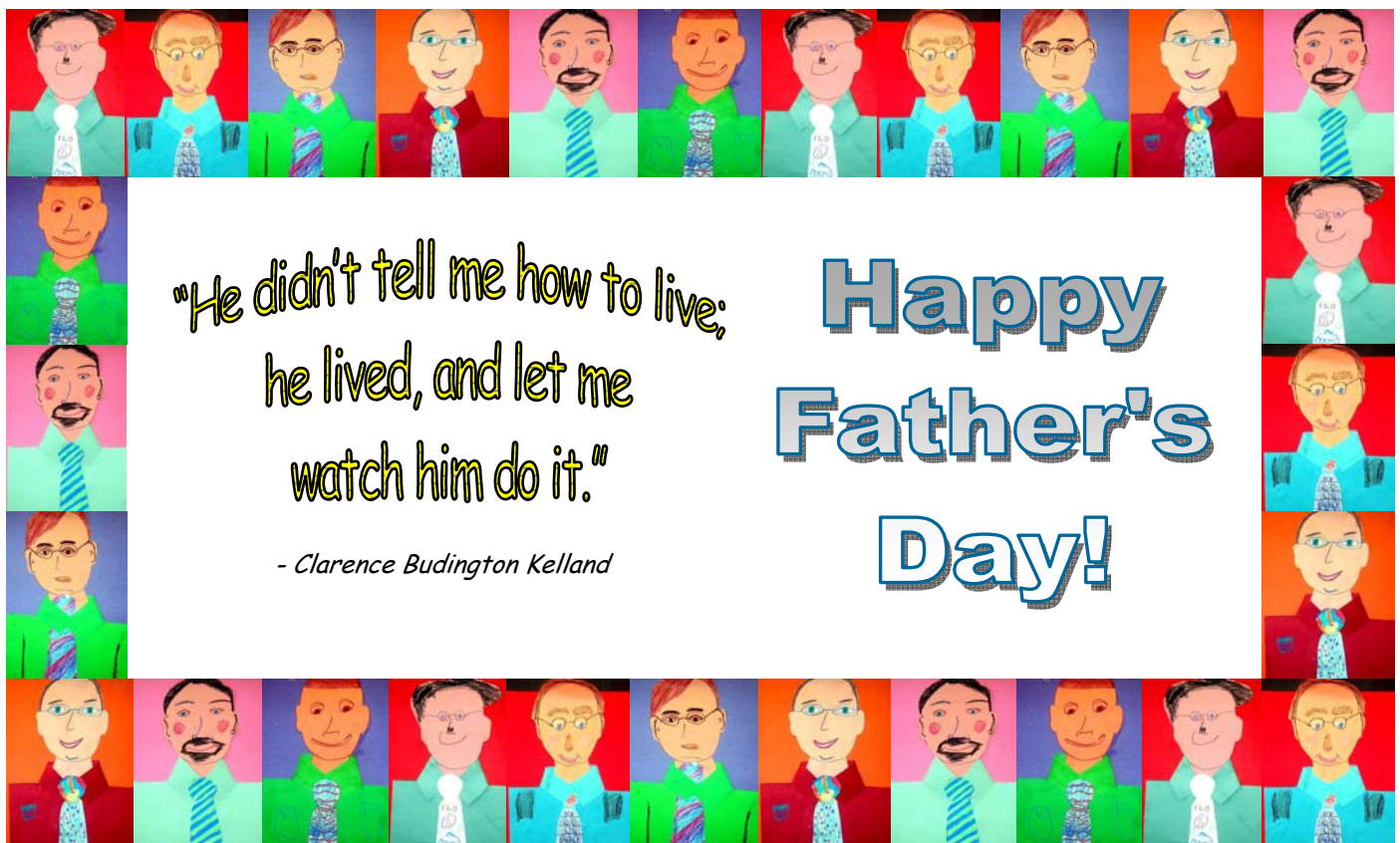
As a foster/adoptive parent advocate, I frequently get calls from families who are going through a bad time when children who have been in care for several years move on. The loss is tremendous and we have all been there. As a foster parent myself, I know this can be the worst time for foster parents.

I like to think of it as a house that I'm building and when it's done, a family moves in and I move on. It's hard to think that they will care for that house as I did. I can never believe that they would know the work that went into it. Each block for the foundation was hand picked, hugged and held to perfection. The tears, the love, the joy, and also the fun I had with it. All the while I wanted to believe it would be forever, but instead the master builder had a different plan, and I was to move on to a new location and start construction anew.

Remembrance of the original house, and passing it so often, noticing that wind, storms and all of the rest of the elements have not damaged as it continues to stand solid. The shingles needed repair and it needed paint: windows needed replacing, but the original structure was still intact. I knew then that I did a very good job and that was what kept me going onto the next structure. I will never forget that house I built, but I do know that it will survive, and I'm so happy to be part of it.

I am truly moved by the foster parents who call me and tell me stories of the child that is leaving, and I always wish that I could make it easier. But there is no easy way. Always remember that you will always be in their heart and that you've made a difference in a child's life.

From the New York State Citizens' Coalition for Children, Inc., <http://nysccc.org>.



fostering perspectives

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

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Making Up For Lost Time

by Joan S. McAllister

As a waterfront counselor during the 1970's, I had the responsibility of teaching young campers how to swim. Our camp lake had an F-shaped dock that worked well for teaching the basic strokes while we kept an eye on the kids as they learned. One of our camp directors asked if she could attend classes, and I welcomed her participation. She did very well and only missed a couple of lessons due to her job. She confidently agreed to participate in the "final exam" so that she could get her "Basic Swimmer" certificate. She swam away from the dock toward the center of the lake, where she was to turn at about 100 yards and swim back. To my dismay, she kept going. And going. And going!

I realized too late that something was wrong, and called out to her. She kept swimming, and was far beyond my reach either with a pole or life preserver. When I swam out to get her, she was tired and scared, and gratefully allowed me to pull her back to safety.

She had missed the lesson on turning around, and I had missed out on that fact. After all, she had developed into what appeared to be a good swimmer. After all, she seemed confident. And after all, doesn't everyone know how to turn around in the water? I was dead wrong, and both of us were really lucky.

When children are involved in the foster care system, they frequently miss out on life lessons that we take for granted. Why? Because they are just trying to survive all the changes that foster care requires. "Who are these people?" "How long will I stay?" "Where will I go to school?" "Will my friends remember me?" "What are the rules in this place?" "Will they beat me?" "What is going on with my family?" "Why did this happen to me?" "Will they forget about me?" And on and on. These life-challenging questions interfere with that child's ability to learn from his environment. Her natural curiosity may be shut down because of anxiety. If he moves to another placement, progress that was made is likely to be lost. She lags behind further and further with each move. If we are lucky, he lets us know what he doesn't know. If not, he may fake it, pretending to know – or at least to not care.

I once worked in a children's home with teenagers. One day two of the older girls had appointments with me. Both were very mature, intelligent girls. Both had missed their last menstrual periods. Both were sexually active. One was convinced that she was not pregnant because she swam every day. The other was also convinced that she was not pregnant because she and her boyfriend were very careful to have sex only in the middle of the month between her menstrual periods. Both, needless to say, were pregnant.

As state coordinator of the NC LINKS program, I am concerned about the gaps in learning that are often experienced by our teens in foster care. By the time they are 16, these teens are convinced that they know what they need to know. They are developmentally pulling away from adults, and very unlikely to reach out to us to learn the skills they have missed. By the time they—and we—realize what they need to learn, many have experienced crushing circumstances due to unplanned pregnancy, withdrawal from school, underemployment, criminal involvement, or homelessness.

fostering perspectives

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(continued from page 5)

It is easier to build a child than to repair an adult. As a foster parent, you have an opportunity to help kids catch up with what they need to know. You are best as a teacher when you demonstrate what you are teaching, rather than just telling kids. It helps to also demonstrate that it is okay to not know everything! Kids have a lot to teach us too, and your openness to learning from them can set the stage for the young person's acceptance of what you are trying to teach.

Foster parents can make a difference in the capacity of every child in their care to succeed as an adult. Even very young children benefit from having developmentally-appropriate decisions to make: which outfit to wear, which stuffed animal to sleep with, or what kind of cake she wants for her birthday.

Young children can benefit from experiencing the natural consequences of some of their decisions, like running out of money before the next allowance, or losing access to free transportation when family chores are left undone. Moral development includes discussions such as why you share your cookie with Johnny, or why you don't hit Mary, or why you don't take things that don't belong to you. Be open to discussions about sexuality and choices regarding sexual behavior. Give kids opportunities to work toward goals that they set for themselves and encourage their progress.

In addition, foster parents have opportunities every day to teach the little skills that facilitate adult life. This involves intentionally taking the time to engage children and youth in experiences or adult decision-making processes. Talk about why you buy store-brand peanut butter but name brand bread, or show them how you figure unit pricing on groceries. Show how you shop for bargains on clothes using the newspaper. Make a game out of using coupons by letting the child have half of the money saved on coupons.

Skill building activities could include talking about what to do when the engine light comes on in the car. Show how to change a tire, check the oil, or replace air pressure in the tires. When the opportunity arises, show how to stop a toilet from running. Demonstrate how to handle tools safely. Help the child open a bank account. Discuss and demonstrate how to handle credit cards responsibly.

Take him with you when you buy stamps, get a passport, vote, or renew your driver's license. Help him develop a list of emergency numbers. Teach him to cook while you are cooking, to wash clothes while you are doing laundry, to clean a refrigerator when that stuff in the back spills. Help them practice several ways to say no to drugs and alcohol, to sex, to cigarettes, shoplifting, and other self-destructive behaviors. Let them know that you really do care about them and that you believe in their future.

Kids may not act like they are paying attention, but on some level, they usually are. At the very least, they appreciate your time. The knowledge you instill may rest dormant for awhile and then pop up when needed. Or at least they will know how to use the telephone book, call you up and say, "Now tell me again what you said about . . ."

Joan S. McAllister is the NC LINKS Program Coordinator for the N.C. Division of Social Services.

Patriotic Wind Sock Craft



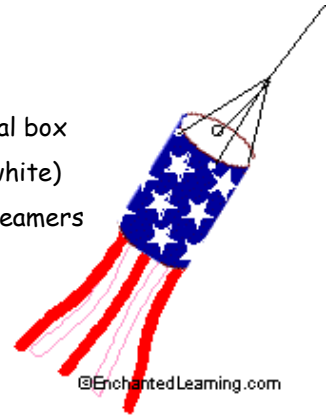
Did you know...

...that you can tell the temperature by counting cricket chirps? The warmer the temperature, the faster a cricket chirps. Using a watch with a second hand, count the chirps for 15 seconds and add 40 to that number. You'll have the temperature in Fahrenheit degrees! Impress your friends and family! Tell them you can tell the temperature just by looking at your watch!

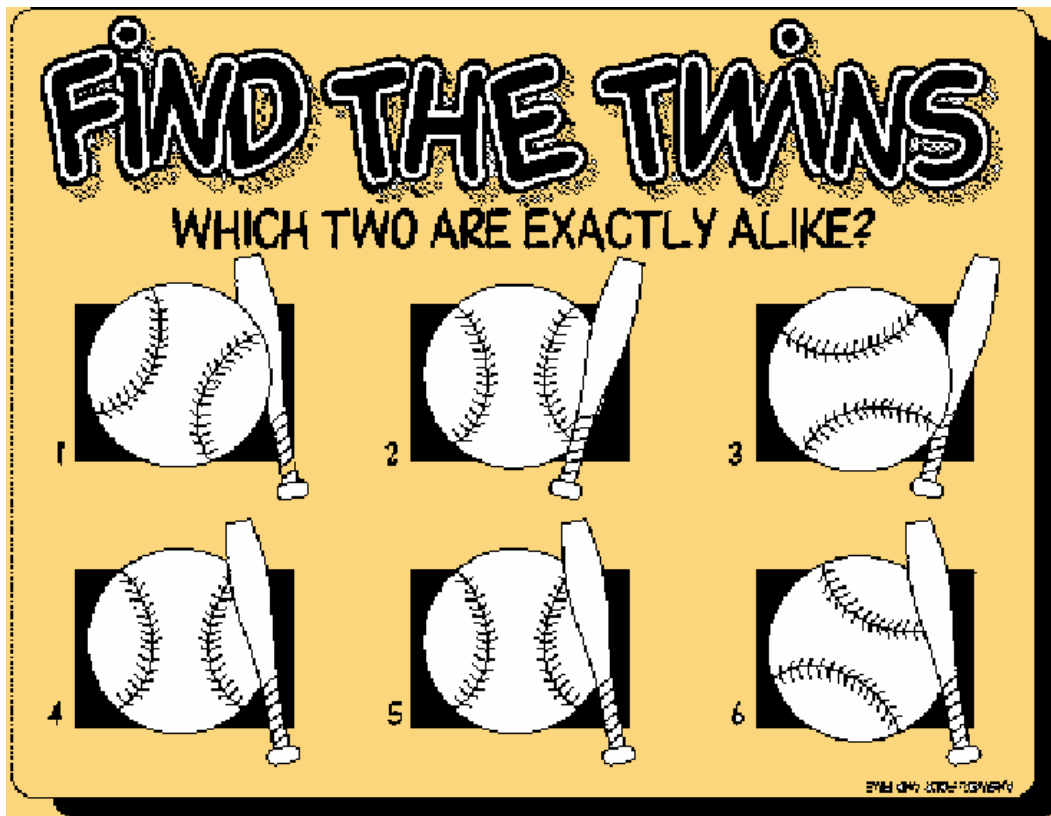


Supplies needed:

- A cylindrical cardboard oatmeal box
- Construction paper (blue and white)
- Red and white crepe paper streamers
- Glue
- String
- Scissors
- Hole punch



Cut the bottom off a cylindrical cardboard oatmeal box. Cover the box with blue construction paper and then glue on white construction paper stars. Cut some red and white crepe paper streamers and glue or staple them to one end of the wind sock. Punch four holes along the top of the wind sock. Cut two pieces of string about a foot long. Tie the strings to the wind sock (tie opposite ends of a string to holes on opposite sides of the cylinder). Tie a longer piece of string to the smaller pieces - you'll hang the wind sock from this piece of string. Hang your patriotic wind sock from your window or porch.



Have
a
great
summer!



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 or contact them at their toll free number 1-800-947-8074 .