



Connections



OCTOBER

Creating Successful Respite Experiences for Children

La Crosse County
Human Services
Dept.

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Respite Care is a temporary break from the ongoing care provided by a caregiver. The caregiver may be a foster parent or a biological parent. Respite, while very important is not an entitlement. Respite is limited by the amount of budgeted dollars as well as the availability of respite resources. Some caregivers use respite on a regularly scheduled basis, while others use it when they feel the "need" and others, rarely use it.

Respite also has an effect on the children that we serve. When a child enters foster care, the first 30 days of placement are a time the child can settle into the home and begin to bond with the foster family. Respite earned by the foster parent during the first 30 days can be used after the first month of placement.

Issues of bonding, attachment, and the number transitions a child makes from one caregiver to another all have an impact on the child's level of security, sense of belonging and ultimately in the behaviors they exhibit.

To make respite a positive experience

for children, there are things a foster parent and respite provider can do.

First and foremost is sharing relevant information about the child/children. **As you learned in the confidentiality training respite providers fall with in the need to know category.** The respite provider will be providing temporary care for the child/children so they need to know the names of the children, medications/health information /allergies, parent's names family interaction times, any limitations on parent contact, behavioral/safety issues, bed time routines, favorite activities, emergency contact information etc. Make sure you plan enough time at the time of drop off to allow for an exchange of information and allow for questions to be answered.

Maintaining consistent respite providers is very beneficial to the child/children. When a child goes to a familiar place, it increases the likelihood that the respite stay will be successful. When planning to take a child to a new respite home, make contact with the provider prior to the
(continued on page 4)

"Autumn is a second spring when every leaf is a flower."

—
Albert Camus



Mark Your Calendar!

Special Events for Foster Families

Thursday evening, November 20th

Holiday Open House

Children's Museum

Fun Community Events

Sat.-Sun. Oct. 11-12

Hmong New Year Celebration

Veterans Memorial Park, Hwy. 16, West Salem

Hmong food, entertainment and goods for sale. Free admission.

Sunday, Oct. 19, 7-8:30pm

Finding Normal (Midwest Autism Conference parent evening presentation)

La Crosse Center

Marty Murphy is an adult with Autism Spectrum Disorder. She delivers a humorous and energetic message while providing the audience a unique, personal look into the world of autism. Mary graduated from the University of Arizona S.A.L.T. program and the Ballymaloe Culinary School in Ireland but also spent many years of her life feeling depressed and isolated. With amazing insight she shares the emotional impact of living with autism and how she has found her "Normal." Cost: \$15 (includes conference opening reception beginning at 6pm). To register go to www.uwlax.edu/conted or call (608)785-6504.

Friday, Oct. 31, 4-8pm (La Crosse, Onalaska, Holmen, & West Salem); 5-8pm (Bangor)

Trick or Treat!

STEM Saturdays

Sessions are designed to give youth in grades 4-8 a chance to explore the wonderful world of Science, Technology, Engineering and Math in a fun, hands-on way. To register go to <http://www.uwlax.edu/conted/stem/> for a printable registration form. For more information call the UW-L Continuing Education and Extension Office at (608)785-6500. Enrollment is limited. \$29 per class (scholarships are available).

October 18, 9:00am-12:00pm

Where on Earth?

Learn how GPS satellites use mathematics to triangulate your position on the surface of the earth, use GPS units in a race to find a hidden treasure, and develop a way to measure the size of the earth. Instructor: Jen Kosiak, Ph.D., and Jon Hasenbank, Ph.D., Mathematics

November 15, 9:00am-12:00pm

Crime Scene Investigation: The Case of Jason Worth

A missing heir. Money, power, and mystery. Student sleuths will use the same tests that a forensic scientist would use to discover who kidnapped Jason Worth by analyzing blood samples, finger prints and other evidence to solve the crime. Instructor: Faye Ellis, M.S., Biology

October is Fire Prevention Month!

Have you tested the batteries in your smoke detectors lately? Make it a habit to do this every time you set your clocks ahead or behind. So before going to bed on **Saturday night, November 1st**, change your clocks and your smoke detector batteries!



Training Opportunities

FOUNDATIONS - Fall schedule

Saturdays, 9:00am-4:30pm

November 1st, 8th, 15th, and 22nd

Trainers: Richelle Zimmerman and Kathy Lysaker.

Call Rhonda Rude at (608) 789-4834 to sign up.

Mark Your Calendar!

Training Opportunities (continued)

Sat. Nov. 15 (8:30am Sign-in) **"The Effects on Children Who Witness Domestic Violence" (AM) and "Positive Behavior Management" (PM)** Meadow Park Church of Christ, 1315 6th Ave. SE, Rochester, MN

Training for adoptive, foster and kinship families and the professionals who serve them presented by MN ASAP (Minnesota Adoptive Support and Preservation).

Presenter: Mary McGowan, BA Psychology, Nearly completed MA in Clinical Psychology and Counseling, Minor in Community Violence Prevention and Child Development, in process. A professional trainer and consultant, Mary has also fostered many children over 20 years and is an adoptive parent of 5. She is also a Guardian as Litem (CASA) and has experience with advocacy and success in obtaining services necessary for children.

Morning workshop (9am-12pm): Domestic or family violence not only affects the victim, but also has a major impact on all family members-especially children and youth. Come learn what the effects are at various developmental stages and how it impacts the relationships with foster and adoptive families. We will also discuss what signs to look for in children & youth in your care. Mary McGowan will present using visual tools and real examples of how harmful domestic violence is to children and youth who witness it. There will be opportunity for questions and open dialogue.

Afternoon workshop (1-3:30pm): Positive Behavior Management: There is sometimes a fine line between crisis management and behavior management. In this informative and practical session, trainer Mary McGowan will describe techniques and strategies to encourage positive behavior in children. Discuss and learn healthy and effective ways to respond (rather than react) to your children's 'language' of behavior.

Fee: \$20 per person or \$35 per parenting couple.

Register online at www.mnasap.org. Questions call (612)798-4033 or (877)966-2727.

Tuesday, Nov. 18, 6:30-8:00pm **Supporting the Specific Learning Needs of Your Child**
Clearly Alumni and Friends Center, UW-La Crosse

This portion of the annual fall educator workshop is designed for parents to learn strategies to support child's individual learning style, ways to extend classroom learning at home, and how to advocate for your child's specific learning needs. Cost: \$9 (includes refreshments). To register go to www.uwlax.edu/conted or call (608)785-6504.

Upcoming Workshops at Family Resources, 1500 Green Bay St.
For more information or to register, call 784-8125. Child care may be provided.



Thursday, Oct. 9, 6:30-8:00pm **Understand Your Baby Through Baby Sign**

Babies have control over their hands long before speech develops. Research shows infants using Baby Sign begin talking and understanding words earlier. Come learn some basic signs to start you on your way.

Presented by Danielle Sprain, Certified Baby Sign Presenter

Thursday, Oct. 16, 6:30-8:00pm **Fire Safety**

Fire safety is an important issue that is forgotten too often. Come hear an officer from the Fire Inspection Bureau discuss how to make a family escape plan and other important issues related to family fire safety.

Thursday, Nov. 9, 6:30-8:00pm **Rearing to Read**

Reading grows at home. Learn how to develop this passion, open pathways of success and pleasure for your child and create close connections in your family. Presented by Fran Swift, Parent Educator—
Family Resources

(continued from page 1)

scheduled respite time. Do a brief visit to the home to let the child know where they are going and introduce them to the people that will be caring for them. This will hopefully help reduce anxiety about the respite time.

Some foster homes develop respite bags for the children. These bags contain items the child will need while on respite, tooth brush, comb, PJs, clothes, favorite toys etc. Let the child help pack the bag, this will give him/her a sense of control and responsibility. Keep the child's medication separate and give directly to the respite provider along with instructions on dosage and times. The respite provider should also have the MA card and medical authorization form. Having these items pre-packed before the respite times cuts down on some of the chaos when getting children to respite.

It is very important to develop positive relationships with your respite provider. By having a good working relationship, you will hopefully develop a consistent and reliable respite option for your child. Treat them fairly, honor drop off and pick

up times, provide them with the information they need to provide care for the child, help them problem solve about situations they may experience.

Please familiarize yourself with the **Respite Provider Agreement Form**.

The **Respite Provider Agreement Form** should be completed and dropped off with the respite provider at the **beginning** of the respite stay. This form includes a space for listing medications and medication times, as well as other special instructions for caring for the child/children. **The respite provider can refuse to accept the children if the Respite Provider Agreement Form is not brought at the beginning of the respite stay. Emergency contact information must be provided to the respite provider.** At the end of the respite stay the dates/times should be documented. The form must be signed by the foster parent and the respite provider.

If in emergency situations the respite provider can not complete the agreed upon times, it is the responsibility of the primary care provider/foster parent to pick up the child.

The respite provider in accepting a child for an agreed upon time period, is responsible for providing supervision and care to the child/children during that time period. The complex needs of the children in care require qualified care givers. **Respite providers should not be hiring baby sitters to care for the child/children that the respite provider is being paid to care for.**

The respite form also serves as a billing sheet, making sure that the forms are filled out completely, are legible, and are turned in on time. Respite forms are due by the 3rd day of the following month the respite was provided. For example, respite care provided in June would need to have the respite form submitted by July 3rd. This will facilitate payment to the respite provider in a timely manner.

If you have any questions about providing respite care or your responsibilities as a respite provider, please talk to your Alternate Care Social Worker; or to Sharon McHugh at 785-6056.

*By: Keith Keller
Supervisor, Alternate Care Unit*



Costume Drive!

La Crosse County Human Services and the La Crosse Radio Group are sponsoring a Halloween costume drive from now until October 20th for any family or foster parent working with the Family and Children's Section. Donations of any new or gently used costumes or accessories can be delivered to Rhonda Rude on the 3rd floor of the Human Services Building located at 300 N. 4th St in La Crosse.

On Wednesday October 22nd families are invited to select a costume at no cost for their children. You do not need to have donated a costume to receive a costume. Costumes will be available first come first serve from 9am - 5pm in the basement auditorium of the Human Services Building.

Please contact Rhonda Rude at 789-4834 if you have any questions.



fostering perspectives

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

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Helping Children by Engaging Their Parents

by Donna Foster

Kim was 12 years old and had been in foster care for some time when she came to live with us. As we got to know one another, I asked Kim why she left her other foster homes, where she had been placed with her sisters. She was very clear: "I wanted to see my Mom and my sisters hated my Mom. I wanted to go home with her and I felt no one there (at the foster home) would help me."

After hearing her viewpoint of her past life and future plans, I understood why Kim voiced her demands from the start. She wanted to see her Mom, talk about her Mom, and one day, go home to her Mom.

What she didn't know about me was that, as a foster parent, I believe the stronger the healthy connections are between a child and her birth family, the more resources I have available to help the child.

I never discourage children from talking about their birth families. Understanding their families aids me in understanding the children. If I want to do my part in helping children understand their situations and plan for their futures, there isn't any room for judgment. Who they are is where they have come from. The people who take part in the growing years of a child make an imprint on the child's life; they all become a piece of who and what the child becomes.

Engaging Kim's Mom

Kim's mother was very angry at me and at DSS. She resisted the Judge's orders: parenting classes, therapy, stable employment, and adequate housing. She had a job and was ready for a larger apartment if the children could come home. But she felt she didn't need to do the other things.

When I first met her she was forceful and angry. But when I acted in ways to build her trust in me, such as sitting behind her in court to support her and giving her updates on Kim's daily developments, she mellowed. In time, she did all she was ordered to do. Kim's mother had a personal disaster which lengthened Kim's return, but throughout the years, she showed her love to Kim. Kim and I wrote a letter to the Judge stating our strong support for

(Fostering Perspectives, cont.)

reunification and listed the factual proof of Kim's mother's involvement with her.

In the five years Kim lived with us her mother and my husband and I shared in parenting Kim. Her mother attended all of Kim's school events, meetings, and church activities. She and I developed the house rules and consequences and we enforced them together. She chose to use the same discipline plan with Kim on her visits home.

Kim's grandmother stepped forward when Kim's mother needed a support person to help her raise Kim in her teen years. In the end, Kim, her mother, and her grandmother lived together for two and a half years until Kim went out on her own.

Kim needed this time to reconnect with her family. There were hard times (raising a teen is difficult for any parent) but the good times were wonderful. Kim regained her relationships with her siblings as the years passed. I felt instrumental in aiding Kim on her adolescent journey and we will be there for her throughout her life.

An unexpected benefit to being a foster parent for Kim and working with her birth family was that our two families became one. Kim never felt she had to choose one family over another.

Not all children have happy endings. There are birth families who don't want to cooperate or are dangerous to their children and others. There are absent parents. There are children who don't want to reunite.

Even so, there are ways to help children gather information about their families and understand their situation. Time spent helping children fill in their life's gaps through talking and creating a life book builds a stronger relationship between foster parents, social workers, and the child. In the end, the child wins.

Donna Foster, an author, national trainer, and consultant, lives in Charlotte, NC. This article has been adapted from "The Voice of a Child," in Fostering Perspectives v. 4, n. 2.

Just for today...

Smile at a stranger.

Listen to someone's heart.

Drop a coin where a child can find it.

Learn something new and then teach it to someone.

Tell someone that you're thinking of them.

Hug a loved one.

Don't hold a grudge.

Don't be afraid to say "I'm sorry".

Look a child in the eye and tell him or her how great they are.

Don't kill that spider in your house; he's just lost. Show him the way out.

Look beyond the face of a person and into their heart.

Make a promise, and keep it.

Call someone, for no other reason other than to say, "Hi."

Show kindness to an animal.

Stand up for what you believe in.

Smell the rain, feel the breeze, listen to the wind.

Author
Unknown





Ghost Painting

Materials:

- White construction paper
- Heavy wax paper (same size as white paper)
- Pencil with a dull point
- Water color paints or very thin tempera paint (2 colors)
- Paint brush (at least 1" wide)
- Water



Haunted Hink Pinks

The answers to Hink Pinks are two rhyming words that each have one syllable. The BONUS Hink Pink answer has two words of two syllables!

What does a spook have for breakfast?



What did the witch use to clean the cemetery?



What is a fast prank?

What is a wealthy woman who casts spells?



What is a scary evening?



What is a really good bunch of magic words?



What is a small, really thin, furry animal that flies?



BONUS: What is a fun Halloween gathering for kids all dressed as Albert Einstein?



Steps:

1. Place wax paper over the white construction paper. (You can tape or paper clip them together so the wax paper won't slide around.)
2. Draw a picture on the wax paper with a dull pencil, pressing down hard.
3. Remove the wax paper. The wax will have transferred to the paper.
4. Paint over the entire picture with a very light, thin color (such as orange). Paint lightly with tip of brush, never scrubbing. Do not go over picture more than once.
5. Without waiting for the first coat to dry, go over the picture with a dark color (such as purple). Don't worry about covering the paper smoothly—let it streak.
6. To make the torn paper frame, use a piece of construction paper the same size as the picture. Fold the paper in half and tear the center out about 1.5" from the edge. Open and past onto picture.

(Drawing on white paper with a white crayon and then painting over it will produce a similar effect.)

www.familyeducation.com

ANSWERS TO:
HINK PINKS:
TOMB BROOM;
QUICK TRICK;
RICH WITCH;
FRIGHT NIGHT;
SWELL SPELL;
FLAT BAT;
SMARTY PARTY



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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 .