



Connections



APRIL CHILD ABUSE PREVENTION MONTH

La Crosse County
Human Services

Volume 11, Issue 4
2009

Preventing Child Abuse and Neglect

The statistics can feel overwhelming. In 2006, an estimated 905,000 children in the United States were found to be victims of child abuse and neglect. However, child abuse and neglect can be prevented. State and local governments, community organizations, and private citizens take action every day to protect children. You can help.

Research has shown that parents and caregivers who have support—from family, friends, neighbors, and their communities—are more likely to provide safe and healthy homes for their children. When parents lack this support or feel isolated, on the other hand, they may be more likely to make poor decisions that can lead to neglect or abuse.

Parenting is one of the toughest and most important jobs in America, and we all have a stake in ensuring that parents have access to the resources and support they need to be successful. Entire communities play a role in helping families find the strength they need to raise safe, healthy, and productive children.

Here are some things you can do:

- Get to know your neighbors. Problems seem less overwhelming when support is nearby.
- Help a family under stress. Offer to babysit, help with chores and errands, or suggest resources in the community that can help.
- Reach out to children in your community. A smile or a word of encouragement can mean a lot, whether it comes from a parent or a passing stranger.
- Be an active community member. Lend a hand at local schools, community or faith-based organizations, children's hospitals, social service agencies, or other places where families and children are supported.
- Keep your neighborhood safe. Start a Neighborhood Watch or plan a local "National Night Out" community event. You will get to know your neighbors while helping to keep your neighborhood and children safe.



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"The cost of reaching children at risk may be daunting but the cost of failing to reach them is more than society can possibly afford."

~ Roger Weisberg

Information provided by the Child Welfare Information Gateway. For additional resources on preventing child abuse visit www.childwelfare.gov.

Mark Your Calendar!

SPECIAL EVENTS FOR FOSTER FAMILIES

<u>Foster Care Picnic</u>	Thursday, May 28	Myrick Park (big shelter), La Crosse
<u>Foster Care Banquet</u>	Thursday, September 24	Seven Bridges, Onalaska
<u>Holiday Open House</u>	Thursday, November 19	Children's Museum, La Crosse

UPCOMING COMMUNITY EVENTS

Family Resources' Annual Bunny Hop

Saturday, April 11 | 1:00-2:00pm | Seminary Park, 3400 East Ave. S., La Crosse

Hop on over and enjoy some Springtime activities and...hunt...for what do you suppose? Registration is required. For more information, call Fran at 784-8125.

Help increase awareness of child abuse prevention by ordering dinner!!!

Thursday, April 16

Pizza Hut in La Crosse (both locations) will donate 20% of their proceeds today to the Child Abuse Prevention Task Force. For a coupon, visit cpclax.com.

Healthy Kids Day at the YMCA

Saturday, April 18 | 11:00am-1:00pm | La Crosse Area Family YMCA, 1140 Main St., La Crosse

FREE health and wellness related activities for children and families including kids yoga, family Zumba, bike safety, nutrition information, family 1 mile walk, and a bounce house from the Big E Company. For more information contact Jamie Klonowski at 782-9622 ext. 236.

FREE Family Fun Day at the Museum

Sunday, April 26 | 12:00-4:30pm | Children's Museum of La Crosse, 207 5th Ave. S.

Free admission today (thanks to the Coulee Region Child Abuse Prevention Task Force) includes crafts, refreshments, door prizes, and loads of fun.

TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

FOUNDATIONS FALL 2009

Saturdays: October 17, 9:00am-3:30pm | La Crosse County Human Services building—basement auditorium

October 24, 9:00am-3:30pm

November 7, 8:30am-4:00pm

November 14, 8:30am-4:00pm

Trainers are Mike Heal, Suanne Kraft and Richelle Zimmerman. Call Rhonda Rude at (608) 789-4834 to sign up.

LA CROSSE COUNTY ONGOING FOSTER PARENT TRAININGS

Tuesday evenings | 6:00-8:00pm | La Crosse County Administrative Center—basement auditorium

May 12 FOSTERING THE SEXUALLY ABUSED CHILD

July 14 Topic to be announced.

September 8 Topic to be announced.

November 10 Topic to be announced.

RSVP for these trainings by
calling Rhonda Rude at
(608)789-4834.

CONFIDENTIALITY TRAINING

Tuesday, September 15 | 6:00-8:30pm | La Crosse County Human Services building—basement auditorium

Presented by Megan DeVore and Richelle Zimmerman.

Mark Your Calendar!

You Are Your Child's First Teacher

Tuesdays, April 14-28 | 6:30-8:00pm | Family Resources, 1500 Green Bay St., La Crosse

This 3-week discussion class will provide you with the tools and understanding to lay the foundations of learning for your child and bolster your confidence and zeal. Topics include: Rearing to Read (week 1), Play is Essential (week 2), and Out and About Activities (week 3). To register or for more information call Fran at 784-8125.

CPR Awareness Training

Wednesday, April 15 | 5:30-9:00pm | Franciscan Skemp Healthcare La Crosse Clinic

American Heart Association certified instructors will be teaching CPR awareness training, which includes adult, child and infant CPR and use of the Automatic External Defibrillator (AED). This class is not a certification class. Event is free and open to the public. For registration, contact Marlis O'Brien at (608)392-2879.

Move More...Watch Less: Taming Your Couch Potato

Thursday, April 16 | 6:30-8:00pm | Family Resources, 1500 Green Bay St., La Crosse

Join us to explore the new activity recommendations for kids and parents and find inexpensive, fun ways to fit fitness into your busy life. Presented by Linda Lee of the La Crosse County Health Department. To register or for more information call 784-8125.

"Positive Parenting" and "Guiding Children 24/7"

Saturday, April 18 | 8:00am-12:15pm | Gundersen Lutheran Rasmus Center, 1900 South Ave., La Crosse

Nurse practitioner Kay Johnson will focus on positive parenting by attending to children's developmental needs and making sure parents are able to communicate, cooperate and negotiate with their children in positive ways. In the second half of the program, join early childhood education instructors Tracy Craker and Mary Henthorne as they explain strategies for guiding children in the home, at early childhood education programs and in the community. All participants will have the opportunity to make a "bag of tricks" that will magically smooth out everyday routines and transition times. For more information or to register contact Jennifer Peterson at (608)775-3258.

Happiest Baby on the Block

Thursday, April 23 | 6:00-7:30pm | Family Resources, 1500 Green Bay St., La Crosse - OR -

Tuesday, May 12 | 9:30-10:30am | La Crosse Public Library, 800 Main St., La Crosse - OR -

Thursday, June 11 | 6:00-7:30pm | Family Resources, 1500 Green Bay St., La Crosse

Find out how to soothe crying and colicky babies with the 5 S's: five easy techniques that will calm your baby and turn on his amazing "calming reflex." Copies of The Happiest Baby on the Block DVD and books will be available for checkout. To register or for more information contact Jackie at 784-8125.

Stewards of Children: Training for Prevention of Child Sexual Abuse

Thursday, April 30 | 5:30-8:30pm | Family Resources, 1500 Green Bay St., La Crosse

This nationally acclaimed training opportunity is designed to educate adults to prevent, recognize and react responsibly to child sexual abuse. Facilitators of this training are trained and authorized by Darkness to Light, a national nonprofit organization. To register or for more information contact Lisa at 784-8125.

The P.L.A.Y. Project Autism Workshop

Saturday, May 2 | 7:30am-12:00pm | Gundersen Lutheran Rasmus Center, 1900 South Ave., La Crosse

Richard Soloman, MD, medical director of the P.L.A.Y. Project (Play and Language for Autistic Youngsters) at the Ann Arbor Center for Developmental and Behavioral Pediatrics, will lead this workshop for concerned parents or professionals who are looking for practical ideas and answers to pressing questions about caring for children with Autism Spectrum Disorder. For more information or to register contact Jennifer Peterson at (608)775-3258.

Where Does My Money Go?

Thursday, May 7 | 6:30-8:00pm | Family Resources, 1500 Green Bay St., La Crosse

Learn money management basics and how to make and follow a budget that works. Presented by Jackie Urban of the Credit Counseling Center of La Crosse. To register or for more information call 784-8125.

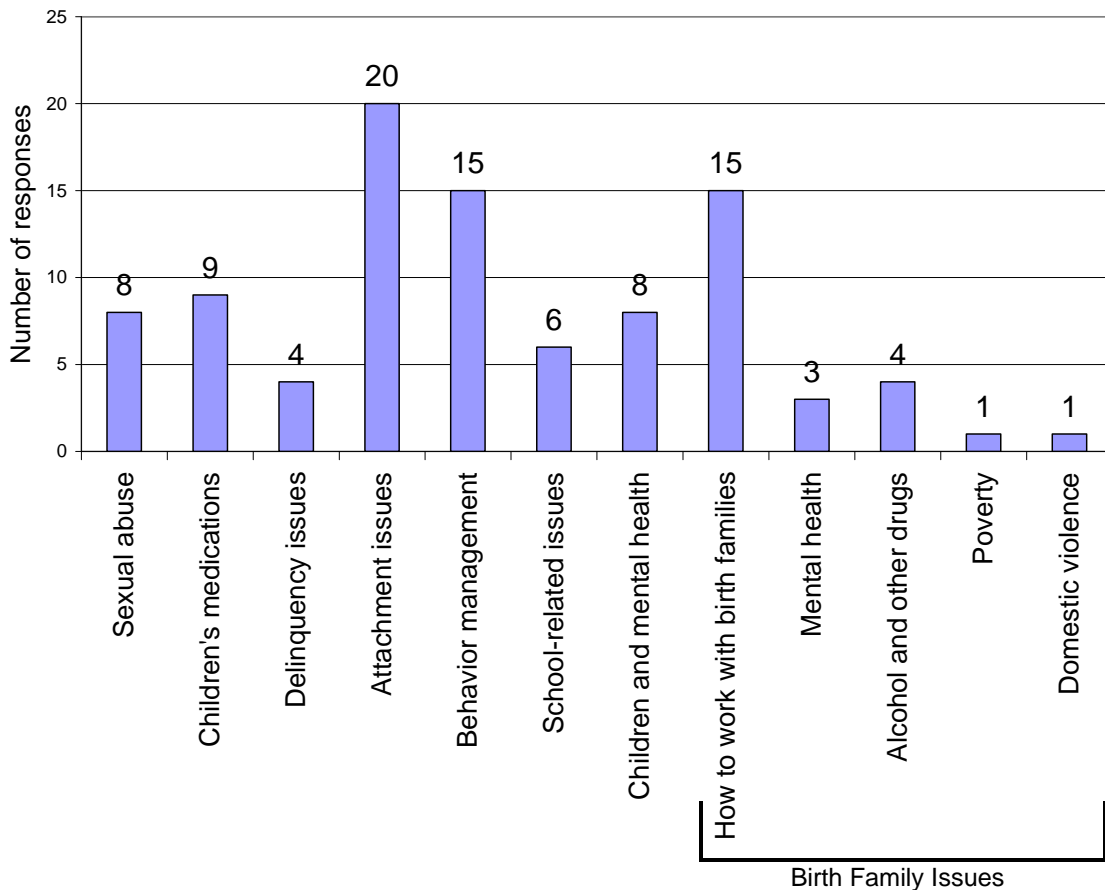
Results of the Foster Parent Training Survey

Most of you will recall the training survey that was completed in November 2008 via phone calls to your homes. Thanks to Julie Miller, Christa Harder, and Lynn Schultz who assisted in the completion of these calls. Thanks also to Sharon McHugh, social service specialist, who compiled and created the below noted results and charts for your review. Thanks to all of you in the foster care community who took the time to help us create a better foster care training program for 2009 and beyond. In the future, our agency will likely survey you all again to provide us with important feedback regarding your training needs. The Foster Care Recruitment and Retention Committee members appreciate the high number of survey returns which helped them focus on the specific and current training needs of the foster care community.

Below is a summary of the results to some of the survey question. The survey also included a number of open-ended questions regarding your thoughts on various issues related to trainings. Comments made in response to those questions do not appear below but have been presented to the Retention and Recruitment Committee to be taken into consideration when planning future trainings. A total of 59 foster families responded to the survey which is approximately 62% of licensed homes.

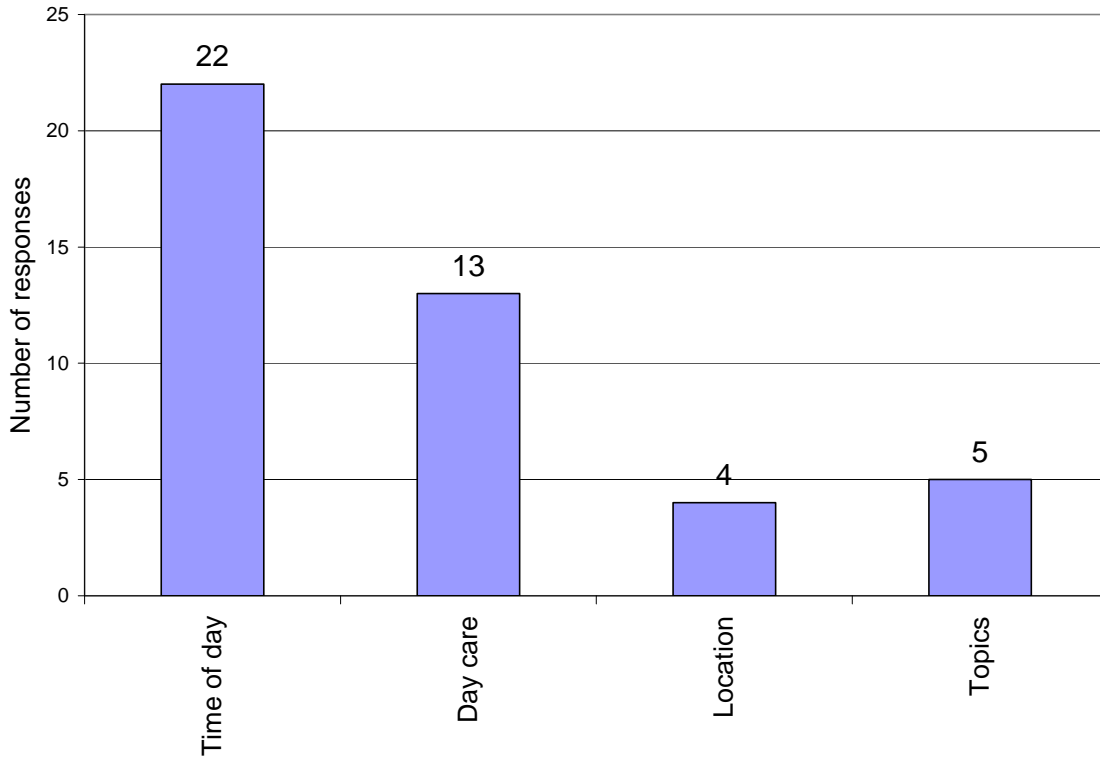
Survey question #1: Which of the following topics do you want/need presented by the Department regarding fostering children and their families in your care?

Result: The training topics most requested by foster parents were attachment issues, behavior management, and how to work with birth families.



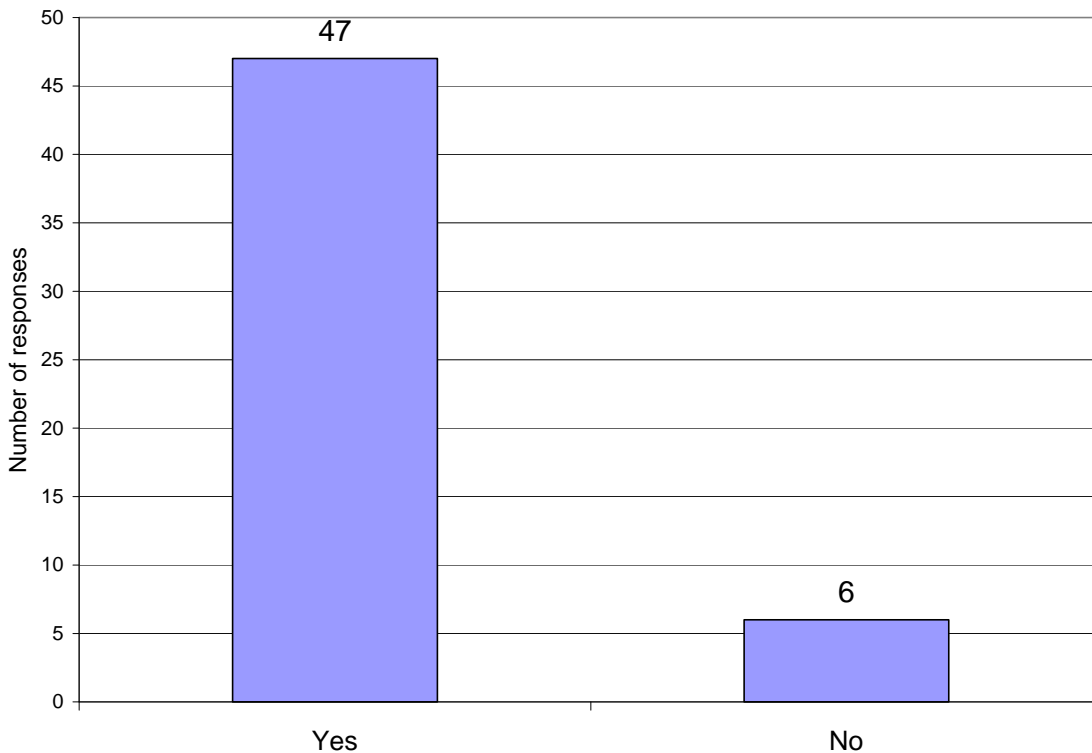
Survey question #3: What are the main barriers to earning the required training hours per year?

Result: The time of day trainings are held is the most common barrier to earning the required number of training hours.



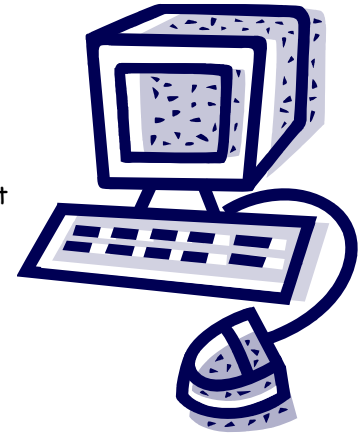
Survey question #6: The department is exploring the possibility of training running for 1 hour 30 minutes with 30 minutes remaining for open discussion and support. Would this be appealing to you?

Result: The majority of respondents would prefer this format for future trainings.



Something New in 2009

Just in time for the recognition month of foster parents, the Alternate Care Unit has redesigned the Foster Care webpage. This new version will "go live" in the month of May. We hope that the new site provides two purposes. One purpose will be the continuing promotion of awareness of foster care in La Crosse County and the recruitment of new foster parents. A second purpose will be to provide ongoing support to all of our currently licensed foster parents by offering web links to parenting resources, to State and Federal legislation pertaining to foster care, and to La Crosse County specific policies and forms (user friendly templates). Your feedback regarding the Foster Care webpage will be greatly appreciated. Please look for the official announcement of this new webpage in the May Connections newsletter where we will have a description of how to access this site from your home computer.



Family Books

Have you updated your Family Book lately? Take a moment and think about the last time you updated your Family Book for your foster home file. Have you moved, new pets, more kids in your home, whatever it may be please try to keep your Family Book current! Family Books should begin with an outside picture of your home and then a picture of all family members. It should also include individual pages for each family member, pet, rooms of the house, especially where the children will be sleeping. In the case of planned placements, children can look through the Family Book with the foster parent or social worker prior to meeting the family, which addresses some of their fears, and reduces feelings of strangeness during their arrival in your home. Children entering your home as an emergency placement may review the Family Book in the car on their way to your home. The children really do look at every page of your album. It truly does make children feel more comfortable during a difficult situation. Have fun updating!

Name Change to Administrative Rules

In July 2008, the Division of Children and Family Services in the old Wisconsin Department of Health and Family Services (DHFS), as well as parts of the Department of Workforce Development, became the new **Department of Children and Families (DCF)**. This past December a memo came out stating that the administrative rules formerly administered by the Division of Children and Family Services in DHFS will be re-named using the new DCF prefix. This change effects all child welfare administrative rules.

As foster parents, you are familiar with Ch. HFS 56, the administrative code for Foster Home Care for Children. This code will now be referred to as **DCF 56**.





PRETTY PENCIL PINWHEELS

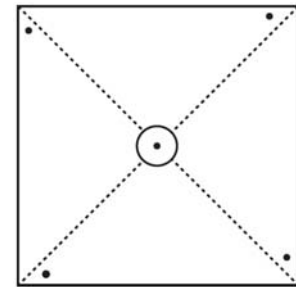
During the month of April, a field of pinwheels is planted to remind everyone to help do their part to keep children safe. You can make your own pinwheel by following the instructions below. It will be a pretty spring decoration for the garden!

Materials needed:

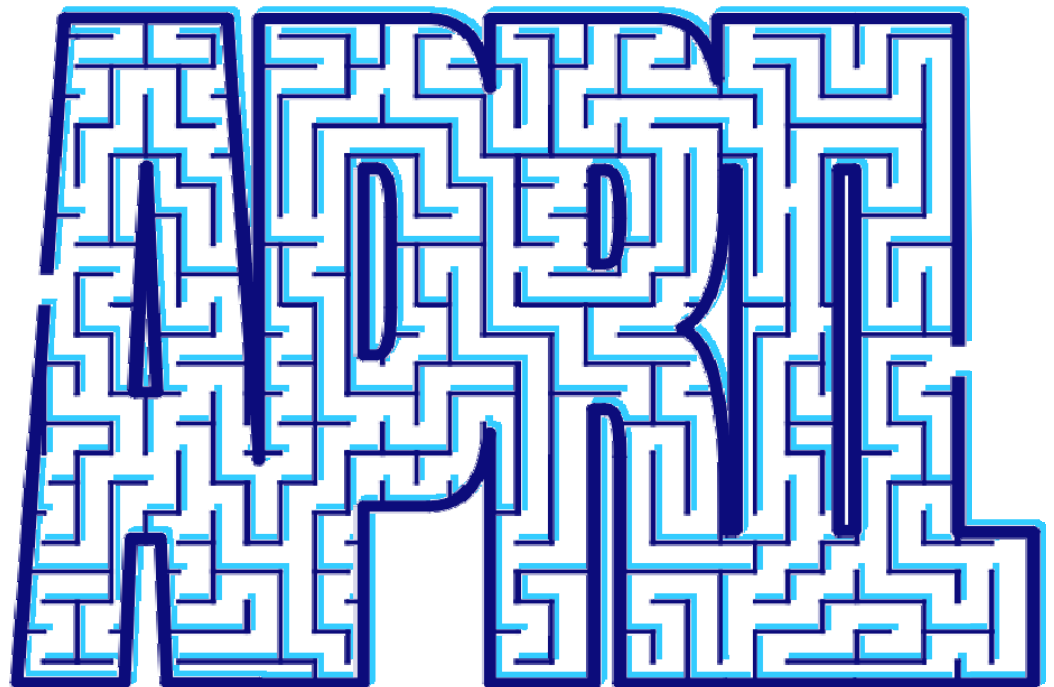
- Colored card stock or construction paper
- Thumbtack or stick pin
- Pencil with new eraser
- White craft glue
- Scissors
- Sequins



Instructions:



1. Copy this design onto a square piece of colored paper.
2. Cut along the dotted lines (be careful not to cut into the center circle).
3. Use a thumbtack or stick pin to poke holes in every other corner (as indicated on the pattern).
4. Take one corner (one with a hole) and fold it toward the center of the square. Fold the next corner that has a hole and fold it toward the center on top of the first holed corner. Repeat with the other two corners with holes until all four are folded into the center. Glue the folds to each other and to the center. Hold together until dry.
5. Push the thumbtack through the center of the pinwheel and into the eraser of the pencil. Make sure the pinwheel isn't touching the eraser or it won't spin.
6. Glue some sequins to the flaps of the pinwheel and let dry.



www.kaboose.com

www.puzzles.about.com

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 6:00pm to 7:30pm. 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 your ideas, comments, or suggestions 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



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 I-800-947-8074 .