



# Connections



## DENTAL SERVICES FOR CHILDREN AVAILABLE AT SCENIC BLUFFS

Any child (under the age of 18) who is a resident of Monroe, Vernon or La Crosse counties will receive the next available dental appointment at Scenic Bluffs Community Health Centers (located in Cashton). These children will be incorporated into the dental practice of the organization and have a permanent oral health care home if desired. Scenic Bluffs happily accepts Medicaid/BadgerCare dental insurance in addition to having a sliding fee scale program—the Healthy Neighbor Plan—for which dental services are eligible.

If a child who resides in these counties is in need of dental services, regardless of their insurance status, Scenic Bluffs will get them in for care. Below is the process to access services for children:

- Parents should call Scenic Bluffs at (608)654-5100, extension 257 or 281. They may get voice mail. They should leave a message with the name and age of the child, the address and phone number and any relevant oral health concerns, and staff will call them back.
- If that child is significantly disabled or is difficult to control, Scenic Bluffs may be unable to care for them. They have general dentists, none of whom specialize in pediatrics or disability dentistry. If staff is unable, due to the complex care needs of these patients, to provide them with the type of care they require they will decline to provide services.
- Adults who may also be in need of dental services will be placed on the waiting list. This decision was made because staffing won't allow for everyone to receive care at this time. Prevention, the kind that is possible with younger populations, is key to improving the health of our communities. Adults are encouraged to get on the waiting list as Scenic Bluffs continues to take names off the list and there has been a decline in the wait time (currently approximately four months).

La Crosse County  
Human Services

Volume 11, Issue 8  
2009



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The **CLOTHING CLOSET** is in dire need of some TLC. Anyone up for sorting, tossing and organizing please contact Rhonda Rude at 789-4834 to arrange a time. Thank You!



# Mark Your Calendar!

## SPECIAL EVENTS FOR FOSTER FAMILIES

### Foster Care Banquet

Thursday, September 24 | Seven Bridges, Onalaska

### Holiday Open House

Thursday, November 19 | Children's Museum, La Crosse

## UPCOMING COMMUNITY EVENTS

### Sand on the Riverfront

Friday-Saturday, August 14-15 | Riverside Park, La Crosse

Come see sand sculptures with this year's theme "In the Movies." Funds raised benefit people with disabilities served by Riverfront. For more information call 784-9450.

### Holmen Kornfest

Friday-Sunday, August 14-16 | American Legion grounds, Main St., Holmen

Fireworks, parade (11am on Saturday), fresh corn-on-the-cob, music, carnival, fun-run, bingo, and tractor pulls. Car show and swap meet on Middle School grounds Sunday.

## TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

### FOUNDATIONS

#### Fall 2009 Session

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 FOSTER PARENT TRAININGS

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

#### Topic TBA

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

Look for a training flyer in the mail soon! Please remember to RSVP to this upcoming event.

#### Confidentiality Training

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

Presented by Megan DeVore (La Crosse County Corporation Counsel) and Richelle Zimmerman (Alternate Care Unit Social Worker).

#### Everything You've Wanted to Know About CPS Ongoing But Were Too Afraid To Ask

Tuesday, September 22 | 6:00-8:00pm | La Crosse County Human Services building—basement auditorium

This training will provide an overview of Child Protective Services Ongoing case management; Adoption and Safe Families Act (ASFA) and how it applies to cases; safety and its relationship to placement, visits and return home; roles of CPS, other units within the department, and foster parents/relative caregivers; and permanency for children, including Termination of Parental Rights.

Trainers: Michelle Winter and Jenny Schroeder, La Crosse County Child Protective Services-Ongoing

# Mark Your Calendar!

## **Children with Special Needs Unit II**

*Date to be determined | La Crosse County Human Services building—basement auditorium*

Topics will include crisis services and other community resources for children with special needs.

Trainers: Kristi Herold and Sarah Wagner-Barton, La Crosse County Children with Special Needs Unit II

## **Topic TBA**

*Tuesday, November 10 | 6:00-8:00pm | La Crosse County Administrative Center—basement auditorium*

## **Foster Parenting the Juvenile Offender**

*Thursday, November 12 | 9-11am and 6-8pm | La Crosse County Human Services building—basement auditorium*

Wayde and Jim will provide a basic summary of the Juvenile Justice system, a description of the type of youth they place, and lead a discussion on roles and responsibilities of all parties involved in the placement.

Trainers: Wayde Anger and Jim Fox, La Crosse County Juvenile Justice

## **First Things First: An Introduction to Initial Assessment**

*Tuesday, December 1 | 6:00-8:00pm | La Crosse County Human Services building—basement auditorium*

This presentation will explain the role and responsibilities of Initial Assessment workers, the course of a case beginning at the point of Access, the referral screening process, screening decisions, response times, and the course of the investigation. There will also be a brief discussion on jurisdiction versus safety.

Trainer: Serena Breining, La Crosse County Child Protective Services-Initial Assessment

## **COMMUNITY TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES**

*REMEMBER...per policy all training hours earned from outside resources must be pre-approved and verifiable (must provide a copy of the training certificate and/or pamphlet or agenda from the training.)*

## **Is There Lead In Your Home?**

*Thursday, August 20 | 10:00-11:30am | Family Resources, 1500 Green Bay St., La Crosse*

Lead, found in older homes, can lower intelligence and cause learning and behavioral problems in children. Learn to reduce the risk of lead poisoning. Presented by Maichor Lee, La Crosse County. To register call (608)784-8125.

## **Kid Friendly Snacks**

*Thursday, September 10 | 6:30-8:00pm | Family Resources, 1500 Green Bay St., La Crosse*

Learn how to use MyPyramid as a guide to plan fun and healthy snacks for kids. Samples will be available! Presented by Mary Hoefl-Leithold, La Crosse UW-Extension. To register call (608)784-8125.

## **Creating Your Family Mission Statement**

*Thursday, September 24 | 6:30-8:00pm | Family Resources, 1500 Green Bay St., La Crosse*

Who do you strive to be as a family? What do you truly value? Come learn strategies for creating your own family mission statement. Presented by Stacy Shapiro, Shapiro Strategies. To register call (608)784-8125.

## **Temper Tantrums 101: Yours and Theirs!**

*Wednesday, September 30 | 6:30-8:00pm | Family Resources, 1500 Green Bay St., La Crosse*

*"You need to go to your room—right now!" "No, I won't. You can't make me. I hate you!" "Stop that screaming."*

*"Grrrr! You stop screaming!". Anything sound familiar? Let's talk! To register contact Fran at (608)784-8125.*

## **Midwest Autism Conference: Putting the Pieces Together — Parent Evening**

*Sunday, October 18 | 7:00-8:30pm | La Crosse Center*

"Getting It Together", presented by Craig and Alyson Beytien of Dubuque, IA.

Maintaining a relationship can be difficult when a child is diagnosed with autism. The stress of diagnosis, creating treatment and educational plans, negotiating with systems, financial strains, parenting and communication differences, and basic sleep deprivation can impact and change the relationship between loving partners. Married for 22 years and parenting three teenage sons with autism, Craig and Alyson will share their insights, experiences, ideas for staying together, staying focused, and staying happy.

Cost is \$15. To register or for more conference information visit [www.uwlax.edu/conted/mac/index.html](http://www.uwlax.edu/conted/mac/index.html).

# STRATEGIES FOR TRANSITIONING CHILDREN TO AND FROM FAMILY VISITS

## Transition

Foster parents consistently identified children's transitions from their family visits back to the foster home as the most challenging aspect of visitation. Helping children to develop a transition plan that gives them what they need to "shift gears" can help validate their mixed up feelings. Providing structure can help make transitions easier.

Understanding how you deal with change can help you be more mindful of how others may respond, especially children who are still learning to communicate and manage their emotions. Whether children adjust quickly or are still adjusting before their next family visit, it's important to give them some useful tools to adjust at their own pace with acceptance and encouragement.

## Transition CHECK

**I tend to adjust to (positive or negative) changes and transition:**

- Easily/Quickly
- Slowly
- With resistance
- I love change, keeps me on my toes
- With a lot of support from friends and family

**When dealing with children's reactions to change and transition, I:**

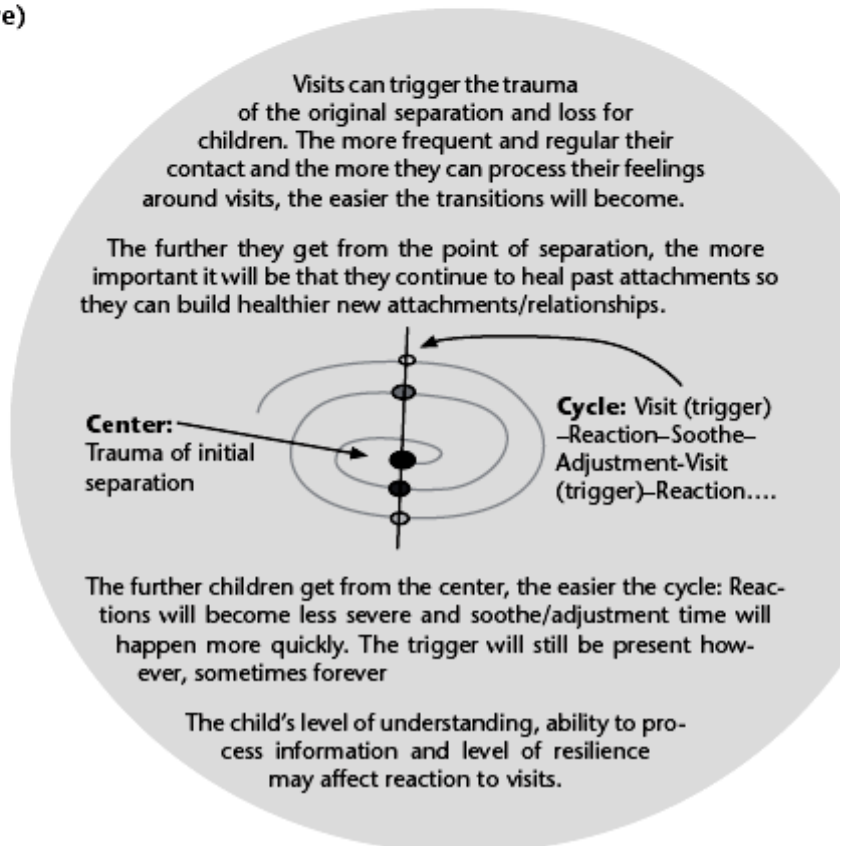
- Want to fix it
- Get overwhelmed
- Feel frustrated
- Tend to be patient
- Listen and try to support their feelings
- Ask them what they need
- Try to keep things calm and "normal"

**Put yourself in the birth parents shoes and imagine saying goodbye to your own children after your time together, I would:**

- Try to do what was best for my kids—"you do what you got to do"
- Feel jealous
- Want to take them and run
- Feel worried and/or helpless
- Feel angry
- Want to avoid the pain of the whole thing

**My experience with transitions before and after family visits has been;**

- Mostly positive
- Challenging
- Depends on family/child
- An opportunity to build a positive relationship with the family
- It's a good teachable time



## Things to Consider...

### Establish and maintain a routine.

Have your child pick a 15 minute activity they do before and after every visit—even if it's during the car ride.

### Establish and maintain a "goodbye" ritual before you leave a child with their birth parent.

For example, have the child high five, blow a kiss, "see you later alligator" as a signal that you are leaving and will be back when their family time is over.

### Be on time for all drop-offs and pick-ups

### Be courteous and positive with their parent. Avoid arguments.

### Recognize that children might need some time to be alone after a visit.

### Establish a "hello" ritual.

Once children have arrived back to your home and have some time to unwind, try playing a game, reading a book or finding something to do that makes the child feel special.

### Acknowledge the child's feelings.

Let them know you are willing to listen if and when they want to talk about their feelings.



## Words That Heal...

### Reassure

*"I'll be in the kitchen if you want to talk about how things went with your family."*

*"You are a strong kid and I know you will get through this okay. I will be here for you when you need me."*

*"Your mom/dad is going through hard time right now and couldn't get to your visit. They still love you and none of this is your fault."*

### Normalize

*"I used to go to my grandma's for the summer and it always took me a while to get settled—everything was different."*

*"It's hard for lots of kids in foster care to go from their family, back to their foster home and not know what's going to happen next."*

*"My daughter called me crying everyday for a month after she left for college. Change was really hard for her too."*

### Set Boundaries

*"I know you really want to stay here with your family but I need you to get buckled so you are safe."*

*"I'm really happy your dad gave you that fun video game at your visit but homework needs to be finished before you can play with it."*

*"If you keep all your thoughts and feelings inside, they start to build up and cause other problems. If you don't want to talk to me, let's find someone else you feel comfortable talking with."*

From: *Familyconnect: Putting the Pieces of Family Visits Together. A Guide for Foster Parents*, a publication of Family Alternatives, a private foster care agency in Minneapolis, MN. This guide is the result of a 3-year research initiative to identify best practices in family visiting. For more information visit [www.cehd.umn.edu/SSW/cascw/events/past\\_events/familyconnect.asp](http://www.cehd.umn.edu/SSW/cascw/events/past_events/familyconnect.asp).

# fostering perspectives

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## Books on the Nightstand

Book review by Becky Burmester



Change, Change, Change! I hate it so much. The anticipation of change is very difficult for me. Back in the day when my husband Joe's employment necessitated frequent relocations, I actually said on more than one occasion, "I don't care where or when we move. Just tell me the specifics and I will deal with it."

Our children – by foster care, adoption, and birth – face a lifetime of change. How they are equipped to deal with change will play a huge role in how much they enjoy life. As my friends and those who read this column know, books are some of my best friends. And there are books about change.

### Who Moved My Cheese?

In thinking about how to use books to help adults and children deal with change, *Who Moved My Cheese?* by Spencer Johnson, M.D., seemed like a good place to start. I first read this little gem of a book (a story, really) several years ago when the church where I worshipped and served on staff was preparing church leaders for the idea that our church was going to continue growing by leaps and bounds and the changes that would mean for leaders and worshippers alike. All staff read the book so that we could use the fable as a starting point for our discussions about change.

The book consists of an introduction, the fable, and a concluding section. There are only four characters: two mice named Sniff and Scurry and two "Little people" named Hem and Haw. As I was rereading the book for this article, I was thinking about its potential usefulness to foster families. Before I had finished much of the book, I was thinking about using the story with kids in care. This book can speak to persons of almost any age.

The author, clever as he is, recognized this and published *Who Moved My Cheese for Teens* and *Who Moved My Cheese for Kids*. Dr. Spencer's 12-year-old son was very much involved in the picture book version for kids. The teen version has the same fable as the adult version, but the introduction and concluding sections feature teens discussing change.

The kids' version includes discussion questions at the end of the book. My two permanent resident children, as well as my two children in temporary residence, willingly served as test subjects. They enjoyed the story and humored me by answering the discussion questions. They readily identified with aspects of Sniff, Scurry, Hem, and Haw. At ages 6, 8, 9, and 10 they recognized both their own attributes and each other's. They enjoyed figuring out if I was more like one character than another in my responses to change.

Recognizing how others deal with change enables us to present change in more palatable ways and to anticipate resistance/reluctance.

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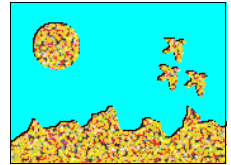
## FUN WITH SAND!

While away the long summer afternoons with these projects.

### SAND ART

You will need:

- Construction paper
- Glue
- Sand (regular or colored)



Instructions:

1. On the construction paper, draw a picture or write words with the glue. Be careful not to put globs of glue in any one spot.
2. Before the glue dries take the picture over to dry sand and with your hand pour sand onto the glue.
3. Let it sit for a few minutes and then shake off the excess sand.
4. Let it dry flat for about a half and hour (or longer depending on how much glue was used).

[www.kaboose.com](http://www.kaboose.com)

## ON THE BEACH



Have someone give you the parts of speech that are listed under the blank lines. Fill them in and then read the completed story out loud to hear about a hilarious day at the beach.



One day, my family and I go to the beach. I \_\_\_\_\_ out my towel  
(verb)  
and lay in the sun a while, but it gets too \_\_\_\_\_. So I take my pail and  
(adjective)  
shovel and begin making a sandcastle at the edge of the shore, where the  
\_\_\_\_\_ is still a bit \_\_\_\_\_ and easy to mold. First, I dig a  
(noun) (adjective)  
moat around the outside, and after that I \_\_\_\_\_ the castle walls, using  
(verb)  
seashells for windows and seaweed for the \_\_\_\_\_. I start constructing a  
(noun)  
\_\_\_\_\_, when -- oh no -- a wave crushes and sends a spray of water  
(noun)  
\_\_\_\_\_ toward me. I \_\_\_\_\_ back. When the tide goes out,  
(adverb) (verb)  
my castle is nothing but a pile of mushy sand and seashells. All that work for  
nothing! I'm about to head back to my towel, when I see a/an \_\_\_\_\_  
(adjective)  
\_\_\_\_\_. The tide must have washed it to shore. I pick it up. It's  
(noun)  
\_\_\_\_\_, spiky, and its legs are moving. I hold it in my palm and when  
(color)  
I \_\_\_\_\_ its \_\_\_\_\_, they stick to my hand and it tickles.  
(verb) (plural noun)  
"Oh," I say, "You must want to go back to your \_\_\_\_\_ in the ocean." I  
(noun)  
wade into the water and let the \_\_\_\_\_ go, watching as it  
(noun)  
\_\_\_\_\_ away.  
(verb)

[www.familyeducation.com](http://www.familyeducation.com)



### SAND DOUGH

You will need:

- 4 c. sand
- 2 c. cornstarch
- 1 T + 1 t. cream of tartar
- 3 c. hot water

Instructions:

1. Mix sand, cornstarch and cream of tartar in a large sauce pan. Stir in the hot water.
2. Cook over medium heat, stirring constantly until the water is absorbed and the mixture is too stiff to stir. Cool until it can be handled.
3. Store in an air tight container.
4. To make sculptures, use flexible, flat molds coated with vasoline or sculpt with your hands. The dough will air dry after a few days.

# 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 5:30pm to 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 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](http://www.wifostercareandadoption.org) or contact them at their toll free number I-800-947-8074 .