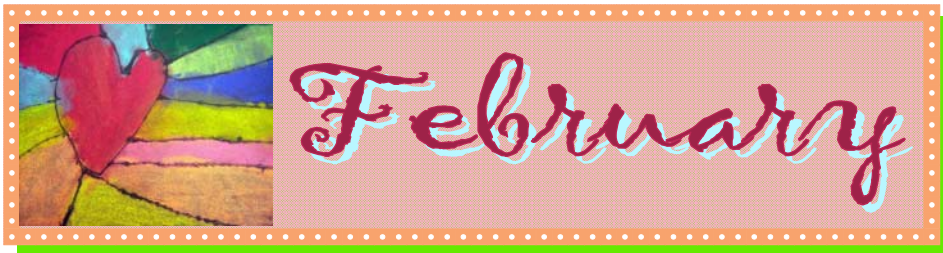




Connections



La Crosse County
Human Services

Volume 11, Issue 2
2009



Inside this issue:

TRAINING DATES FOR 2009

Please mark your calendars for the dates noted below for up and coming foster parent training. The trainings will be held on the second Tuesday of the month in the basement auditorium of the Administrative Center (former court house building). The meetings will run from 6:00pm to 8:00pm. The following are the dates for the rest of the year:

March 10th, 2009 Working with Birth Parents

May 12th, 2009

July 14th, 2009

September 8th, 2009

November 10th, 2009



Mark Your Calendar ~ 2-3
Upcoming Trainings
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Topic of training will be announced in future Connections Newsletters.

In order to run the trainings this year we will need foster parents signed up to attend the training. Please RSVP for the training when the announcement regarding the training topic is presented in the up and coming newsletters. We ask that you call Rhonda Rude at (608) 789-4834 to register.

Please remember that you will need a minimum of (4) four hours of "in house" training out of the currently required training hours needed by licensed foster parents per year. Signing up for and attending training early in the year will ensure that you are in compliance with La County's foster care training policy.

*The best
and most
beautiful
things in
the world cannot be
seen or even touched.
They must be felt with
the heart.*



-Helen Keller




Mark Your Calendar!

SPECIAL EVENTS FOR FOSTER FAMILIES

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

UPCOMING COMMUNITY EVENTS

<i>Saturday, Feb. 28, 11:00am-2:00pm</i>	<u>Sibshop</u>	Chileda, 1825 Victory St., La Crosse	
<p>"Pedal -to-the-metal celebration of the many contributions made by brothers and sisters of kids with special needs." Participants must be ages 7-13 and have a sibling with special needs. Each participant will receive a free copy of the book "Sometimes My Brother" by Angie Healy. Sack lunches will be provided. \$5 registration fee. For more information contact Mellica Oliver at (608)782-6480.</p>			
<i>Sunday, Feb. 22, 10:00am-3:00pm</i>	<u>Family Fest</u>	La Crosse Center	
<p>FREE indoor family fun day featuring a taste of summer as well as year-round resources for families. Inflatable rides, food, entertainment, and giveaways throughout the day including free tickets to Mt. Olympus' Indoor/Outdoor Water Park for all attendees while supplies last. For more information call (608)317-8748.</p>			
<i>Wednesday, April 1st</i>	<u>Child Abuse Prevention Month Mayoral Proclamation</u>		
<p>April is Child Abuse Prevention Month! The community comes together to support anyone raising children and to remind us to spend one-on-one time with our kids as much as we can. It truly does take a village to raise a child. Please mark your calendars to attend a Mayoral Proclamation to support child abuse prevention at one of the following locations:</p>			
	La Crosse County Health and Human Services Building	9:00am	
	La Crescent Elementary School	11:00am	
	Holmen (location to be determined)	11:00am	
	Onalaska City Hall	1:00pm	
	West Salem Boys and Girls Club (location not confirmed)	1:00pm	

TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

FOUNDATIONS SPRING 2009 SCHEDULES

<i>Wednesday evenings, 5:30-9:00pm</i>	<i>Thursday evenings, 5:30-9:00pm</i>
<i>Feb. 4, 11, 18, Mar. 4, 11, 18, 25, and April 1</i>	<i>Jan. 8, 22, 29, Feb. 5, 12, 19, 26, and March 5</i>
<i>Trainers: Dawn Miller and Denise Green</i>	<i>Trainers: Sarah Koenen and Rita Wolcott</i>

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

<i>Saturday, Feb. 7, 10:00am-1:00pm</i>	<u>Winter Safety Event</u>	La Crosse Children's Museum
<p>Kohl's Cares for Kids: Kids Care Kollege and Gundersen Lutheran have teamed up with the Children's Museum to offer a Winter Safety Event that has something for kids of all ages. Topics covered during this event include fire safety, burn prevention, outdoor activity safety, preventing falls on the ice and much more. Author Hilary Bilbrey will also read her book <i>Brecker Bunny Learns to be Careful</i>, based on a true story about fire safety and burn prevention. For more information contact Jennifer Peterson at 775-3258 or 800-362-9567, ext. 53258.</p>		

Mark Your Calendar!

Tuesday, Feb. 10, 6:30-8:00pm

Wheezing and Sneezing

Gundersen Lutheran Rasmus Center
1900 South Ave., La Crosse

Presentation by Pediatric Allergist Todd Mahr, MD with information on the diagnosis and treatment of asthma in children, allergic rhinitis or hay fever, identifying and preventing triggers, environmental control and management, and what can be done to reduce a child's risk of developing allergies. Free. For more information contact Jennifer Peterson at 775-3258 or 800-362-9567, ext. 53258.

Thursday, Feb. 19, 5:30-8:30pm

1-2-3 Magic

Family Resources, 1500 Green Bay St.

Parents want their kids to listen and they want to enjoy their family life. Learn how to get your kids to start doing what you want them to do. Light meal provided. Please bring a non-perishable item to benefit WAFER. Presented by Ted Stein, M.S., L.P.C., N.C.C. For more information or to register, call 784-8125.

Tuesday, Mar. 3, 5:30-8:30pm

Stewards of Children: Training for Prevention of Child Sexual Abuse

Family Resources, 1500 Green Bay St.

This nationally acclaimed training opportunity is designed to educate adults to prevent, recognize and react responsibly to child sexual abuse. Advance registration is required and enrollment is limited. Contact Lisa at 784-8125.

Saturday, Mar. 7, 1:00-3:00pm

Lifebooks: How to Present and Adopted Child's Life Story

Catholic Charities
3710 East Ave. S., La Crosse

Jennifer Demar from Scrap and Tell will be presenting a lifebook workshop for pre- and post-adoptive and foster families. Register by calling Magen Duffy at (608)782-0710 ext. 223 or Jennifer Demar at Jennifer@demtron.com. Cost is \$15 per person. Registration due Friday, March 6th.

Thursday, Mar. 19, 5:30-8:30pm

To Pee Or Not To Pee

Family Resources, 1500 Green Bay St.

Learn how to recognize the signs of toilet learning readiness, how to proceed, and foremost, how to avoid turning toilet learning into a major power struggle. Presented by Fran Swift, Parent Educator. For more information or to register, call 784-8125.

Thursday, Mar. 26, 5:30-8:30pm

Food Labels...What Does It All Mean?

Family Resources, 1500 Green Bay St.

Learn to understand the health claims on the front of food packages and how to use the nutrition facts label to help make healthy food choices. Presented by Sheila Harding, La Crosse UW Extension. For more information or to register, call 784-8125.

Thursday, Apr. 2, 4:30-6:00pm or 6:30-8:00pm

Taming the Spirited Child: Strategies for Parenting Challenging Children without Breaking Their Spirits

Radisson Hotel, La Crosse
200 Harborview Plaza

Caring for a child who is curious, adventurous, powerful, persistent and sensitive can be a challenge. Michael H. Popkin, Ph.D., will be sharing his methods for connecting with these unique children and establishing a heartfelt bond that can teach them to calm themselves and use their resources constructively. Dr. Popkin is a nationally recognized expert with 28 years of research and development of parenting tools. He has appeared on "The Oprah Winfrey Show", CNN, and more than 100 other television shows. No registration required. Free.

Thursday, Apr. 3, 8:30am-4:00pm

12th Annual La Crosse Child Maltreatment Conference

Radisson Hotel, La Crosse

This year's conference will focus on children living in homes with parents/caregivers who struggle with major mental illness or substance abuse. Registration fee is \$95. Look for further details in an upcoming newsletter.

THE IMPACT OF FORMATIVE EXPERIENCES

Many folks bemoan the fact that with all the years spent in school, there are no classes on being a spouse or parent. Many others have said, "You need a license to drive a car, but there is no test for becoming a mom or dad."

While these statements are true, we are none-the-less taught how to be a spouse and we are taught how to parent. The teaching is by way of example and it comes at the hands of our own parents or caregivers from the moment we are born and then raised. We refer to this as formative experiences.

Formative experience is the everyday life we lived growing up and the know-how we develop as a result. More often than not, the know-how develops beyond our awareness. We simply react or do the things we do, based on a familiarity, having seen or experienced something like it before.

Apart from harm to a child in the moment of abuse, there is a lasting harm in that the abusive experience sets the stage for the child to act similarly when faced with a similar situation as an adult. There is a sense of "doing what comes naturally" (or as familiar) even if what one is doing is recognized as harmful. In the absence of having been taught appropriate means of managing child behaviour or resolving interpersonal conflict, some people fall back onto

the strategies learned through formative experience. If you had proper, reasonable and decent formative experiences, that's good. If not, there is an elevated risk of managing parenting or spousal relationships as you experienced from childhood.

Everything that happens to a person as a child, can effect how they manage life as an adult.

Interestingly, even when looking at divorce, if one's parents were divorced, whether low conflict or high conflict, there is an elevated risk that the child of those divorced parents will get divorced as an adult too.

The message here is powerful. From what children are exposed to, so shall they learn and so may they do. This is not to say all adults with untoward childhood experiences are doomed to repeat them, but it is to say that there is an elevated risk in much the same way as some people experience harm from second hand smoke while others do not.

Hence the rationale of eliminating child abuse and improving parental (spousal) relationships, is not just for the protection of children in the here and now, but as an investment in their future and other future generations.

The good news is that those folks whose formative experiences left them with questionable parenting or relationship skills can improve with help and support.

"From what children are exposed to, so shall they learn and so may they do."

Adults who were abused or exposed to abusive behaviour between their parents as children, where it appears to be affecting life through parenting skills or relationships, are advised to consider

counselling, parenting courses, marital therapy or the like. The goal of these strategies is to challenge the formative experiences in favour of adopting new appropriate, directly learned strategies for managing parenting demands and getting along with others.

There is an old adage, "You can't teach an old dog new tricks", so thank goodness, we aren't dogs! People can learn new tricks and can improve upon formative experiences of the past.

Adults with untoward formative experiences affecting adult life deserve better, their children deserve better and their children - the future grandchildren deserve better too.

*By Gary Direnfeld, MSW, RSW
www.yoursocialworker.com*



TAX RESOURCES

Check out the following resources for help filing your 2008 taxes:

National Foster Parent Association Federal Tax Guide

www.nfpaonline.org

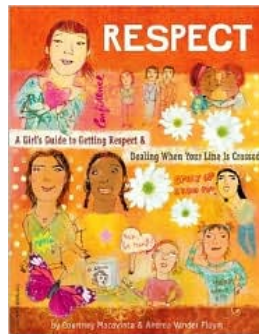
Internal Revenue Service (IRS) Frequently Asked Questions

www.irs.gov/faqs/index.html



CHECK IT OUT!

Recommended reading for parents and children



Respect: A Girl's Guide to Getting Respect & Dealing When Your Line is Crossed

By Courtney Macavinta & Andrea Vander Pluym

It is tough being a teenage girl in today's world. They are faced with hard decisions and many girls do not know how to react. The authors of this book want to change that. Their purpose is to empower girls by teaching them self-respect. They tackle the issues that girls face—getting along with family, maintaining healthy relationships, and escaping abuse. Not only do they talk about the issues, they also teach the readers how to talk about them. Each chapter includes scripts and discussion starters to help girls speak up when they do not know what to say. Another great feature of this book is the extensive resource section that lists pages of websites that girls can go to for more information or to get help if they need it. Recommended for girls ages 14-18.

Reviewed by Heather Mason, Children's Literature

This book can be borrowed from our Alternate Care unit library. Stop in and check it out!

VIEWS ON FOSTER CARE IN NORTH CAROLINA

fostering perspectives

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

Responding to the Angry Child

(from *Plain talk about dealing with an angry child*, Vol. 5, No. 2 • May 2001)

Some of the following suggestions for dealing with the angry child were taken from *The Aggressive Child* by Fritz Redl and David Wineman. They should be considered helpful ideas and not as a "bag of tricks."

- **Catch the child being good.** Tell the child what behaviors please you. Respond to positive efforts and reinforce good behavior. An observing and sensitive parent will find countless opportunities during the day to make such comments as "I like the way you come in for dinner without being reminded"; "I appreciate your hanging up your clothes even though you were in a hurry to get out to play"; "You were really patient while I was on the phone"; "I'm glad you shared your snack with your sister"; "I like the way you're able to think of others"; and "Thank you for telling the truth about what really happened."
- **Deliberately ignore inappropriate behavior that can be tolerated.** This does not mean that you should ignore the child, just the behavior. The "ignoring" has to be planned and consistent. Even though this behavior may be tolerated, the child must recognize that it is inappropriate.

(Continued on next page)

- **Provide physical outlets and other alternatives.** It is important for children to have opportunities for physical exercise and movement, both at home and at school.
- **Manipulate the surroundings.** Aggressive behavior can be encouraged by placing children in tough, tempting situations. We should try to plan the surroundings so that certain things are less apt to happen. Stop a "problem" activity and substitute, temporarily, a more desirable one. Sometimes rules and regulations, as well as physical space, may be too confining.
- **Express interest in the child's activities.** Children naturally try to involve adults in what they are doing, and the adult is often annoyed at being bothered. Very young children (and children who are emotionally deprived) seem to need much more adult involvement in their interests. A child about to use a toy or tool in a destructive way is sometimes easily stopped by an adult who expresses interest in having it shown to him. An outburst from an older child struggling with a difficult reading selection can be prevented by a caring adult who moves near the child to say, "Show me which words are giving you trouble."
- **Be ready to show affection.** Sometimes all that is needed for any angry child to regain control is a sudden hug or other impulsive show of affection. Children with serious emotional problems, however, may have trouble accepting affection.
- **Ease tension through humor.** Kidding the child out of a temper tantrum or outburst offers the child an opportunity to "save face." However, it is important to distinguish between face-saving humor and sarcasm or teasing ridicule.
- **Explain situations.** Help the child understand the cause of a stressful situation. We often fail to realize how easily young children can begin to react properly once they understand the cause of their frustration.
- **Use promises and rewards.** Promises of future pleasure can be used both to start and to stop behavior. This approach should not be compared with bribery. We must know what the child likes—what brings him pleasure—and we must deliver on our promises.
- **Say "NO!"** Limits should be clearly explained and enforced. Children should be free to function within those limits.
- **Tell the child that you accept his or her angry feelings,** but offer other suggestions for expressing them. Teach children to put their angry feelings into words, rather than fists.
- **Build a positive self image.** Encourage children to see themselves as valued and valuable people.
- **Use punishment cautiously.** There is a fine line between punishment that is hostile toward a child and punishment that is educational.
- **Model appropriate behavior.** Parents and teachers should be aware of the powerful influence of their actions on a child's or group's behavior.
- **Teach children to express themselves verbally.** Talking helps a child have control and thus reduces acting out behavior. Encourage the child to say for example, "I don't like your taking my pencil. I don't feel like sharing just now."

Source: Reprinted from the Plain Talk Series, National Institute of Mental Health Office of Scientific Information, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. (1992). Washington, D.C.: US Government Printing Office (ISBN 0160359244; DHHS Pub. No. [ADM] 92-0781).



VALENTINE KISSES

You will need:

- 6 cups rice krispy cereal
- 1 10-oz. bag of marshmallows
- 3 tablespoons margarine or butter
- 1 teaspoon vanilla (optional)
- Funnel coated with cooking spray or shortening
- 1" x 11" strip of paper for each kiss
- 12" square of aluminum foil for each kiss
- Waxed paper



Directions:

Label each piece of paper to say "A Kiss for You!". Melt the margarine and add vanilla and marshmallows. Stir until melted. Stir in cereal. Allow the mixture to cool until easy enough to handle. Have children mold it in the funnel. Place on waxed paper to cool completely before wrapping. Wrap kiss and strip in aluminum foil. Give as gifts to someone special!

www.childfun.com

PUTTY IN YOUR HANDS... VALENTINE'S CLAY

You will need:

- 3 cups white flour
- 1 1/2 cups of salt
- 1 1/2 teaspoons cream of tartar,
- 3 1/4 cups of water
- 3 tablespoons vegetable oil
- Red food coloring (or a packet of Cherry Kool-Aid)
- Heart-shaped cookie cutter (optional)
- Cellophane bags or sandwich bags
- Card stock
- Twist ties



Directions:

Mix the flour, salt, and cream of tartar in a medium saucepan. In a separate bowl, mix the water and oil, then pour the liquid over the dry ingredients and stir. Cook over medium-low heat, stirring continuously, until the mixture holds together and gets too stiff to stir (it will continue to stiffen as it cools). Let it cool, then kneed briefly. Halve the ball of clay, then knead the food coloring or Kool-Aid into each half until you reach the desired shade (make each half a slightly different shade). To make a big batch of valentines, start with 24 balls each of two dough colors, then press together one of each color to shape a two-color heart (use a cookie cutter as a mold if you like). For each valentine, place the clay heart in a cellophane bag and add a card stock tag threaded onto a twist tie.

www.familyfun.com

VALENTINE'S DAY WORD SEARCH



cupid

love

kiss

friend

card

secret

heart

poem



www.ActivityVillage.co.uk

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 .