



Connections

November

La Crosse County
Human Services

Volume 11, Issue 11
2009



Inside this issue:

WE NEED YOUR HELP!

This issue of *Connections* marks the 10-year anniversary of our monthly *Alternate Care* newsletter!

Since the very first issue in November of 1999, this newsletter has been a way to keep La Crosse County foster families and respite providers in the loop regarding upcoming trainings and events, policy changes, community resources, and much more.

This is YOUR newsletter and we'd like to hear from you about any changes you'd like to see in upcoming issues. If you have any feedback or comments please send them to Sharon McHugh at 785-6056 or mchugh.sharon@co.la-crosse.wi.us.

Also, in an effort to make this newsletter even more relevant and of interest to readers, we are looking to you all for any content you'd like to submit to be shared with other families. Perhaps you've come across a book that you'd recommend to other foster families? If so send the title and author to Sharon McHugh and you may see it included in a future issue. Below are other ideas of ways you can contribute to our newsletter. This is your opportunity to help support, educate, and encourage each other!

- *Family craft projects, games or activities*
 - *Recipes*
 - *Poems*
 - *Favorite quotes*
 - *Personal experiences*
 - *Inspirational stories*
- *Interesting articles you've come across*
- *Community resources. . . WE WELCOME YOUR SUBMISSIONS!*

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Shared joy is a double joy; shared sorrow is half a sorrow.

~Swedish proverb



Mark Your Calendar!

SPECIAL EVENTS FOR FOSTER FAMILIES

Holiday Open House

Thursday, November 19 | 5:30-7:30pm | Children's Museum, La Crosse

Celebrate foster care with fun for the whole family!

Please bring a pot luck dish to share.

UPCOMING COMMUNITY EVENTS

Winter Safety Day

Saturday, November 14 | 10:00am-1:30pm | Children's Museum, 207 5th Ave. S., La Crosse

Fun lessons in safety for kids of all ages with information on fire safety, animal safety, germs and H1N1, preventing hypothermia and frostbite, winter outdoor activity safety and much more. Admission is free. First 250 families will receive a free carbon monoxide detector! For more information call (608)775-2011.

Celebrate Adoption Family Dance

Saturday, November 14 | 6:00-9:00pm | Catholic Charities, 3710 East Ave. S., La Crosse

See page 4 for details.

Rotary Lights

November 27th through December 31st | 5:00pm-10:00pm (holiday hours vary) | Riverside Park, La Crosse

Drive or walk through the largest holiday lights display in the Midwest. Admission is free but cash or food donations are encouraged. Visit rotarylights.org for more information.

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. ↩

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

Mark Your Calendar!

Topic TBA

Tuesday, January 12 | 6:00-8:00pm | La Crosse County Human Services building—basement auditorium
Save the date! Training topic will be announced in a future issue.

Foster Care Record Keeping 101

Tuesday, January 26 | 5:30-7:30pm | La Crosse County Human Services building—basement auditorium
Join Will Herber for a discussion of the DCF 56 rules regarding foster parent requirements of record keeping on children in foster care. Various informational and record keeping forms will be reviewed. Foster parents are also encouraged to bring ideas and examples of what they have used in their own homes when attempting to keep records of children in their home.

Note: This is the same training that had originally been scheduled on November 11th.

COMMUNITY TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

REMEMBER...per policy all training hours earned from outside resources must be pre-approved and verifiable. Be sure to retain a copy of the training certificate, flyer, or agenda.

Parenting Your Out of Control Teenager

Six Thursdays beginning November 12 | 6:00-8:00pm | Stein Counseling, 571 Braund St., Onalaska
Parents will learn anti-button pushing strategies, how to develop clear rules and consequences for any misbehavior, how to mobilize help and how to restore lost nurturance and tenderness. Leave the class with an ironclad contract of rules and consequences and be thinking two steps ahead of your out of control teenager. Cost is \$25 per participant for materials. To register call 785-7000 ext. 21.

Infant Massage for Moms, Dads, Babies and Expectant Parents

Mondays, November 16, 23, and 30 | 5:30-7:30pm | Family Resources, 1500 Green Bay St., La Crosse
Infant massage is beneficial for physical and emotional growth and development for baby and is also relaxing for both the baby and parents. To register call (608)784-8125.

Effective Strategies for Dealing with Challenging Behaviors

Tuesday, December 1 | 6:00-9:00pm (Registration 5:30pm) | Catholic Charities, 3710 East Ave S., La Crosse
Trainer Kimberly Erickson-Nichols, founder of Heart to Heart Healing and specialist in emotional and behavioral disturbances in children, will provide specific strategies for how to deal with challenging behaviors such as lying, defiance and aggression by applying a love-based understanding utilizing the Stress Model Theory. This is a free workshop for foster and adoptive parents. Register online at www.uwrf.edu/wwpartnership.

Stewards of Children: Training for Prevention of Child Sexual Abuse

Thursday, December 3 | 5:30-8:30pm | Family Resources, 1500 Green Bay St., La Crosse
Nationally acclaimed training designed to educate adults to prevent, recognize and react responsibly to child sexual abuse. This is recommended for all adults who work with youth. To register call (608)784-8125.

SIDS: Sudden Infant Death Syndrome

Saturday, December 5 | 10:30-11:30am | Family Resources, 1500 Green Bay St., La Crosse
Learn what parents and caregivers can do to reduce the risk of a SIDS death. To register call (608)784-8125.



DON'T FORGET TO SUBMIT YOUR 2009 FOSTER PARENT TRAINING HOURS!
Please try to turn these in no later than Friday, December 4th. You will be receiving a letter in late December letting you know if you've completed the required number of hours for the year.

NATIONAL ADOPTION DAY

This year marks the 10th anniversary of National Adoption Day, a national day of celebration of adoptive families and an opportunity for courts to open their doors and finalize the adoptions of children from foster care. Since 2000, more than 25,000 children have had their adoptions finalized on National Adoption Day. This year on **November 21**, families, adoption advocates, policymakers, judges and volunteers will come together and celebrate adoption all across the nation.

For more information on National Adoption Day visit www.nationaladoptionday.org.

Friends of Adoption will be hosting a

"Celebrate Adoption Family Dance"

this month for all foster, adoptive, and pre-adoptive families. The event is free and will include DJ & dancing, games, fun and snacks. The theme of the dance is princesses and superheroes so come all dressed up. Best costume will win a prize!

When: Saturday, November 14th, 6:00-9:00pm

*Where: Catholic Charities building,
3710 East Avenue S., La Crosse*

Please RSVP to Magen Duffy at (608)782-0710 Ext. 223 or email mduffy@cclse.org.

CONGRESSIONAL COALITION ON ADOPTION INSTITUTE (YOUTH INTERNSHIP OPPORTUNITY)

Did you know that until 1975, most States discouraged or directly prohibited foster parents from being considered as potential adoptive parents to children they fostered? It's true. For the most part, these restrictions existed to protect against foster parents becoming too attached to children who may ultimately be returned to biological families. Thanks to the educational efforts of advocates, policymakers soon learned that these well meaning laws and policies were, in effect, hindering children from finding a safe, loving and permanent home of their own. So, instead they put in place laws, policies and programs aimed at promoting foster adoption and today 67% of children adopted out of foster care are adopted by their foster parents.

This is just one of many examples of how law and policy can serve as a barrier to children realizing their basic right to a family. Realizing that federal policymakers had the power

to overcome such barriers, in 2001, advocates for the world's orphaned and foster youth formed the Congressional Coalition on Adoption Institute (CCAI). Since that time, CCAI has strived to be an objective resource for information critical to advancing the efforts of federal policymakers on behalf of children. CCAI's goal is to educate federal policymakers about the need for reform, coordinate Congressional and community efforts to bring about change and facilitate opportunities for communication and awareness.

In 2003 the Congressional Coalition on Adoption Institute started a Foster Youth Internship Program to raise awareness on Capitol Hill about the needs and unique perspectives of young adults in the United States aging out of foster care. Applications are now being accepted for the 2010 program. This competitive internship program is for young adults who were in foster care at the time of their eighteenth birthday or who were

adopted after their fourteenth birthday from the foster care system. All applicants must be enrolled in college and have completed four semesters by May 2010. Selected youth will be matched to a Congressional Member and will be given a real-world experience working in a Congressional office in Washington D.C. Interns will live in Washington D.C. for the full duration of the program (nine weeks, May-July 2010). The program pays for major expenses including housing and transportation. Duties will include such things as attending committee hearings and meetings, assisting with legislative projects, and other administrative duties.

If you know of a former foster youth who would be a good match for this program visit www.ccaainstitute.org/how-we-do-it/foster-youth-internship for more information and details on how to apply.

HOW TO ENGAGE CHILDREN IN THE THANKSGIVING CELEBRATION

Are your children more of a hindrance than a help at holiday time? Would you like to involve your children in the Thanksgiving preparations, but find that they create more work than they actually do? Here are some tried and true ways to involve your children at age appropriate levels in memory making and family bonding.



Jobs for children under 3:

- Artist in Residence: Have the child create placemats for the dinner guests (see the Kids' Stuff on page 7 for project ideas). Set the child up at the table or highchair and tell her how much you depend on her to complete this important task!
- Greeter
- Pet supervisor: Pets get nervous at holidays. Little ones can pet and reassure them.
- Potato Peel Picker Upper

Jobs for children under 6:

- Chief recycler: Child can help open packages, rinse jars, collapse boxes, and gather up trash and recycling.
- Interior decorator: Make welcome banners, cut hand print leaves to make a wreath, or use bingo markers to create festive window displays.
- Chair washer: Most dining room chairs could use a wiping down

before company arrives!

- Dishes and utensils counter: This person counts out forks, knives, spoons, plates, cups and napkins for all guests.
- Potato masher

Jobs for children under 10:

- Poet Laureate: Child can write a poem of thanksgiving or welcome for guests.
- Official potato peeler
- Beverage server: Takes drink requests from guests and serves.

Be creative and come up with your own tasks. Holiday preparations can be a great opportunity to incorporate learning and life skills into your child's day! Not to mention it will keep your children occupied and productive instead of in the way and bored!

Adapted from an article by Marilisa Kinney Sachtleben, *associatedcontent.com*.

PARENT PULSE...NEW BLOG FROM FAMILY RESOURCES

Check out what's on Family Resources' Parent Educator Fran Swift's mind in this helpful, informal blog focusing on issues of interest to families:

- Discipline
- Parenting Tips
- Humor
- Ages and Stages
- Observations
- Activities and More!

Visit the blog at ParentPulse.WordPress.com



A place for all who care for children.

fostering perspectives

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Maintaining Connections

by Jeanne Preisler

Feelings of loss are unpredictable and may never go away. They may surface sporadically, when you least expect it. Often the children in care may not have the communication skills to tell you what is really going on.

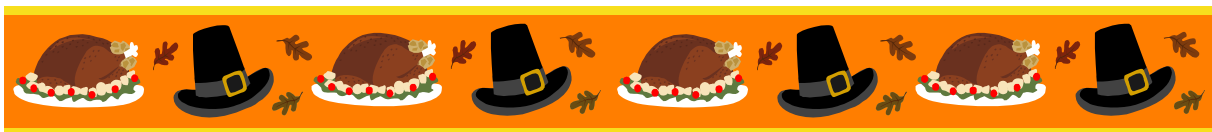
What can you do to help deal with or prevent this emotional rollercoaster? Try to remember how important it is to keep young people connected with their past as much as possible. This can be done in many ways, including picking up one of their family traditions, cooking certain foods, taking them to cultural events, writing letters to families, or developing their life book. All of these things give you an opportunity to talk about past losses and can help children communicate about their feelings.

We know that opening conversations about birth families is often a challenge for foster, adoptive, and kinship parents. We also know from experience that having these conversations is crucial as children deal with the many losses they've experienced.

Recognizing the grief also allows the children to connect with us in a deeper way. Opening discussions about their feelings helps them understand their feelings as they go through the process of grieving.

Jeanne Preisler is a former North Carolina foster parent.

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BRING SOME FUN TO THE TABLE!

Why spend money on placemats when you can make your own? Kids will love eating off placemats they helped to make. These are also a great way to surprise your holiday dinner guests!

Materials:

- Posterboard or other heavy paper (cut to placemat size, about 12 x 16 inches)
- Clear contact paper, 2 sheets per placemat (cut to be just larger than paper—about 13 x 17 inches)
- Scissors
- Glue or rubber cement
- Art supplies, clippings, etc (see list below for ideas)



Instructions:

1. Select any materials you wish to include on the placemat, arrange them on the paper, and glue them down. Be creative! Try some of these ideas...

For educational placemats...consider items that teach useful skills or reinforce lessons the child may be learning in school. For example:

- Bus route guide or city map
- Vocabulary list or foreign language words typed up on the computer or written out by hand
- Images of famous pieces of art printed off the internet
- Fire safety tips
- Math or alphabet flashcards
- A diagram of the proper way to set the table
- Food pyramid and information about making healthy food choices

For "All About Me" placemats...let the child choose items that reflect their likes, dislikes and interests. For example:

- Magazine or catalog clippings
- Biographies of favorite sports figures or positive role models (help child print these off the internet)
- Photographs

For Collage placemats...anything goes! Fill up the page, overlapping items if needed to create an interesting arrangement. Examples of materials include:

- Scraps of fabric
- Fall leaves
- Pictures from old calendars
- Comics
- Shapes cut from paper
- Greeting cards
- Stickers
- Wrapping paper
- Back of cereal boxes
- Glitter or confetti

2. After any paint, ink or glue has dried, laminate the finished creation front and back with clear contact paper. Be sure to write the date and child's name on the back first! These placemats can be wiped clean with a damp sponge.



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 Wisconsin 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 .