



# Connections

## January

La Crosse County  
Human Services  
Volume 12, Issue 1  
2010

### FOSTER PARENT TRAINING



Inside this issue:

La Crosse County has had a long standing commitment to foster parent training. We were one of the first counties to pilot the PACE training and have offered monthly foster care trainings on an ongoing basis. La Crosse County has required foster parent training by local policy for a number of years. The state of Wisconsin is making some significant changes to the child welfare laws to better serve children and families and to come into compliance with Federal Standards of the Quality Service Review.

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The State of Wisconsin as part of these changes, is updating the Foster Care Code. While there are many changes including a new foster care level system that merges Family Foster Care (56) Kinship Care (58) and Treatment Foster Care (38) into one system. An area that is a significant change for foster parents is mandatory training for each foster parent. The new rule will require 10 hours of ongoing training for each foster parent each year, effective in 2011.

Other changes to training requirements include: new foster parents will be required to take preplacement training prior to getting their first placement and will be required to complete Foundation Training (formerly PACE) within the first licensing period.

Each foster home will need to develop an *Individualized Training Plan*.

Listed below are some excerpts from the new code:



**DCF 56.14 Foster parent training. (1) PURPOSES.** This section implements s. 48.67 (4), Stats., which requires all foster parents to successfully complete training in the care and support needs of children who are placed in foster care that has been approved by the department. The purposes of foster parent training are to:

1. Improve the quality of care provided to children who live in foster or adoptive homes.

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# Mark Your Calendar!

## SPECIAL EVENTS FOR FOSTER FAMILIES

<u>Foster Care Picnic</u>	Thursday, May 27, 2010	Myrick Park (big shelter), La Crosse
<u>Foster Care Banquet</u>	Thursday, September 23, 2010	Seven Bridges Restaurant, Onalaska
<u>Holiday Open House</u>	Thursday, November 18, 2010	Children's Museum, La Crosse

## UPCOMING COMMUNITY EVENTS

### National Give Kids a Smile Day!

Friday, February 5 | By Appointment | Midwest Dental-Holmen and La Crosse

Midwest Dental is offering FREE dental care for children in need ages 3-15 years old.

Low income, Badger Care, and Medical Assistance welcome. Call to schedule an appointment:

- Holmen office (106 S. Holmen Dr.) 608-526-9243; Hours 7:30am—11:30pm
- La Crosse office (1212 Horton St.) 608-788-1090; Hours 12:30pm—3:00pm



### Frosty Flicks: Family Winter Film Series

Saturdays | 10:00am | Marcus Cinemas, 2032 Ward Ave., La Crosse

Avoid frigid winter temperatures and enjoy a fun family film. Admission is \$3.00 and includes a free complementary size popcorn. All titles selected are listed as G or PG rating. Titles and dates below are subject to change.

- Feb. 6 - Ice Age 3: Dawn of the Dinosaurs
- Feb. 13 - Night at the Museum 2: Battle of the Smithsonian
- Feb. 20 - Cloudy with a Chance of Meatballs
- Feb. 27 - Where the Wild Things Are
- Mar. 6 - Fantastic Mr. Fox
- Mar. 13 - Planet 51
- Mar. 20 - TBD

### Family Fest

Sunday, February 28 | 10:00am-3:00pm | La Crosse Center, 300 Harborview Plaza, La Crosse

Free family-oriented event with lots of games and activities.

### Family Fun Fair

Sunday, March 28 | 11:00am-4:00pm | Omni Center, 255 Riders Club Rd., Onalaska

Fun and informative day of inflatables, booths, food and refreshments, entertainment, and much more with a focus on 'Preparing for Summer Fun!' For more information visit or call (608)317-8748.

## TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

### FOUNDATIONS

#### Spring 2010 Session

Mondays, Feb. 1—Mar. 29 | 5:30pm-8:30pm | Contact Rhonda Rude for location.

Trainers are Tracy Puent and Kathy Lysaker. Call Rhonda Rude at (608)789-4834 to sign up.

#### Fall 2010 Session

Wednesdays, Sept. 8—Nov. 3 | 5:30pm-8:30pm | Human Services building—basement auditorium

Trainers are Dawn Miller and Rhonda Rude. Call Rhonda Rude at (608)789-4834 to sign up.

# Mark Your Calendar!

## 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.*

### Nurturing Your Spirited Child

*Thursday, February 25 | 6:00-7:30pm | Family Resources, 1500 Green Bay St., La Crosse*

This workshop will help parents to understand temperamental traits, identify cues leading up to challenging behavior, cope with tantrums and blow-ups when they do occur, and develop strategies for reducing or eliminating power struggles. Presented by Lisa Metz-Belzer, Family Resources Parent Educator. To register call (608)784-8125.

### Stewards of Children: Training for Prevention of Child Sexual Abuse

*Thursday, March 11 | 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.

### Sensory Processing & Practical Strategies to Promote Regulation & Reduce Maladaptive Behavior

*Session A: Monday, March 15 | 12:00-4:00pm | Human Services building—basement auditorium*

*Session B: Monday, March 15 | 5:00-9:00pm | Human Services building—basement auditorium*

*Session C: Tuesday, March 16 | 8:30am-12:30pm | Human Services building—basement auditorium*

Parents, caregivers, and professionals are invited to this fun and interactive hands-on training. Participants will come away with a basic understanding of Sensory Processing and how it impacts youth in every day life. Leave with practical strategies to promote regulation and reduce maladaptive behaviors at home, at school and in the community. Presented by Lynn Fisher (Registered Occupational Therapist working in schools with students and their teams teaching regulation strategies), Pat Adler (Occupational Therapy Assistant who has worked with students with Autism and SED for 14 years) and Paula Buege (parent of two children with SED and a behavioral interventionist working with youth struggling with challenging behavior along with their families and treatment teams). Low cost sensory tools and equipment will be available for purchase. Registration fee for this training is \$15. Please contact Vicky Shanley at 608-783-4009 with any questions.

To register, complete the information below and return to Tammy Thompson with payment:



#### Registration

\$15 per person per session

Contact Vicky Shanley at 608-783-4009 with any questions

Choose your session \_\_\_\_\_ Session A \_\_\_\_\_ Session B \_\_\_\_\_ Session C

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Send this slip and payment to: La Crosse County, Attn: Tammy Thompson,  
300 N. 4<sup>th</sup> St., La Crosse, WI 54601

## Books on the Nightstand

Book reviews by Becky Burmester

Recently I have read a couple books that should be required reading for foster parents and for foster youth. Let me tell you about them.

### Surviving the Storm

*Surviving the Storm: the Life of a Child in Foster Care* by Julia S. Charles is a wonderful book in a small package. Tipping the book scales at fewer than 100 pages, one might think it was a lightweight. To dismiss this book because of its brevity would be to squander the opportunity to really see things through the eyes of someone who has been part of the "system" and triumphed. Julia Charles carries the storm analogy throughout the book, including the dedication. Joe and I have been foster parents to several young people who are now out on their own, making it, but just barely. The "girls" are all getting a copy of this book in their Christmas stockings this year. It is short enough that they will read it (perhaps more than once), real enough that they will know that the author has "been there," and inspiring enough that they may think of Julia Charles at one of those times when everything seems just too hard.

### The Women Who Raised Me

This work by Victoria Rowell differs from most of the books that I recommend in that it is a book that truly is about the women who raised her. My book club, which reads books by African American authors, chose this book for our August book discussion. This is the book to read if you are asking yourself whether you are making a difference. I like to think that I am a strong advocate for young people sharing our home, but Agatha Wooten Armstead was a force to be reckoned with. There were many important women in Victoria Rowell's life but none as determined as Agatha Wooten Armstead.

Rowell's memoir contains more information about the women in her life than about her own life. Members of my book club speculated that the author had not yet dealt with some of the issues in her past. Two members flatly stated that this book was a fairy tale. They simply could not relate to Victoria Rowell and the life she described. Only three of our eight members finished the book. Following the discussion one member said that she was going to finish the book; the others were turning it in and starting on something else.

People in this group know me as a foster parent. Claudia said that, except for this book and knowing Becky, she had never heard or read anything good about foster parents. For me, that moves it into the category of books my non-fostering friends *ought* to read.

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# fostering perspectives

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

2. Prepare foster and adoptive families to care for and provide stability for foster children in their homes.
3. Promote communication, respect, and understanding among all involved parties, with a focus on working for the best interests of the foster child.
4. Provide opportunities to foster parents to mutually explore their values, strengths, limitations, and needs as they relate to compatibility with foster and adoptive children.
5. Develop an understanding of the child welfare system and the importance of permanency for children.
6. Encourage foster and adoptive parent networking and the use of resources.

**(3) QUALIFICATIONS OF TRAINERS.** Persons preparing or presenting materials for foster parent training shall have expertise in the subject matter as evidenced by prior experience or education, an ability to communicate their knowledge, and cultural competence.

**(4) TRAINING EXPENSES.** The department shall provide funds to enable foster parents to attend training. The funds may be used for materials, fees, transportation, and child care expenses incurred to attend training that is required or approved under this section or s. DCF 56.13.

**(5) TRAINING REQUIREMENTS.** (a) *Level of care certification.* Each foster parent shall complete any pre-placement, initial licensing, or ongoing training required for the foster home's level of care certification under s. DCF 56.13, except as provided in subs. (6) (c) and (7) (d) and (e).

(b) *Each foster parent.* The foster parent training requirements in this section and s. DCF 56.13 apply to each foster parent identified on the license to operate the foster home.

**(6) PRE-PLACEMENT TRAINING.** (a) The department shall approve a standardized curriculum for pre-placement training for foster parents that includes information on all of the following:

1. The child welfare system.
2. Relevant law and policy, including the Indian Child Welfare Act.
3. Child development.
4. The importance of maintaining a foster child's family connections.
5. Expectations for foster families.
6. Cultural awareness.
7. Access to resources.

(b) With the department's approval, a child-placing agency may modify the pre-placement training curriculum for a foster parent who is a proposed adoptive parent for a private adoption under s. 48.837, Stats., or a foreign adoption under s. 48.839 or 48.97, Stats.

(c) A foster parent who obtains a license to operate a foster home before January 1, 2011, is not required to complete the pre-placement training under this subsection, unless otherwise required by the licensing agency.

**(7) INITIAL LICENSING TRAINING.** (a) The department shall approve a standardized curriculum for initial licensing training for foster parents that includes information on all of the following:

1. Permanency.
2. Cultural dynamics in placement.
3. Child abuse and neglect.
4. The impact of maltreatment on child development.
5. Attachment.
6. Separation and placement.
7. The importance of maintaining a foster child's family connections.
8. Guidance and positive discipline.
9. Access to resources.

Note: The standardized curriculum for initial licensing training is the *Wisconsin Foundation Training for Foster Parents*.

(b) With the department's approval, a child-placing agency may modify the initial licensing training curriculum for a foster parent who is a proposed adoptive parent for a private adoption under s. 48.837, Stats., or a foreign adoption under s. 48.839 or 48.97, Stats.

(c) Trainers for the initial licensing training shall be an agency staff person or contractor and a foster or adoptive parent.

*(continued on next page)*

- (d) A foster parent who operates a foster home with a level 2 certification that is licensed before January 1, 2011, shall complete the initial licensing training before January 1, 2015, except as provided under par. (e).
- (e) A foster parent who operates a foster home with a level 2 certification that is licensed before January 1, 2011, and who provides verification to the licensing agency that he or she successfully completed a competency-based, pre-service foster parent training as described in the department's DCFS Memo Series 2002-12 is not required to comply with par. (d).

Note: DCFS Memo Series 2002-12 was issued on September 18, 2002. It is available at [http://dcf.wisconsin.gov/memos/num\\_memos/2002/2002-12.HTM](http://dcf.wisconsin.gov/memos/num_memos/2002/2002-12.HTM). Acceptable competency-based, pre-service foster parent training includes the *Partners in Alternative Care Education (PACE)* curriculum.

**(8) ONGOING TRAINING.** (a) *Individualized training plan.* At the time of renewal of a license to operate a foster home, the licensing agency and the foster parent shall evaluate the foster parent's overall performance and develop an individualized training plan for the foster parent based on his or her demonstrated need for training in particular topics or in managing specific case situations.

(b) *Licensing agency approval.* The licensing agency shall approve a foster parent's ongoing training based on the following:

1. The content of the training shall meet at least one of the purposes of foster parent training under sub. (1) and conform with the foster parent's individualized training plan, unless a greater training need is demonstrated after the plan was developed.
2. The format of the training may include any of the following:
  - a. Face-to-face consultation with professionals with expertise in specific identified areas.
  - b. Video, audio, and web-based presentations.
  - c. Support groups.
  - d. Adult education courses.
  - e. Books, periodicals, and web-based resources.
  - f. Television and radio presentations.
  - g. Mentor family consultations.
  - h. Conferences, workshops, seminars, and webinars.
3. The total credit given for training using books, periodicals, and web-based resources under subd. 2. e. and television and radio presentations under subd. 2. f. may not exceed 2 hours.
4. The cost of a particular training option and the usefulness of the skills that are expected to be gained.

La Crosse County will be looking at ways to implement these new requirements so that foster parents have access to relevant trainings. It will be however the responsibility of each foster parent to ensure compliance with this requirement by cooperating with the development of an individualized training plan and completing the required training hours. Failure to meet the requirements could range from the development of a support plan, restricting placements until a home comes into compliance, up to the revocation of a license.

If you have questions or ideas for training please contact your alternate care social worker.

## TAX INFORMATION!



The National Foster Parent Association has published its annual federal tax guidelines booklet: *Tax Year 2009: Foster, Adoptive Parents and Kinship Caregivers.*

For a link to this publication, visit the Wisconsin Foster Care and Adoption Resource Center at [www.wifostercareandadoption.org](http://www.wifostercareandadoption.org) (click on "Families").



## W-I-N-T-E-R BINGO!

Make learning to spell a treat with this letter-based version of bingo.

### Materials:

- Paper
- Mini marshmallows

### Instructions:

1. Create game boards by drawing a grid (5 squares across and 5 squares down). The squares should be slightly bigger than the size of a mini marshmallow. Write a letter in each square in random order. Every board should contain each letter of the alphabet except "x". Each player needs a different game board.

Here are some examples of game boards:



B	H	Z	I	A
T	W	J	M	F
P	N	C	O	Q
E	R	U	G	V
S	L	D	Y	K

L	R	Y	E	W
I	Q	H	B	C
V	A	M	P	K
F	S	U	N	Z
J	T	G	D	O

F	Z	I	W	N
K	V	M	E	H
P	J	B	T	U
L	O	Q	C	S
A	D	Y	G	R

2. Write winter-related words on individual slips of paper and fold them in half. See list of suggested words below.
3. To play, pick a word at random and read it aloud — spell it, too, if you have beginning readers. Using mini marshmallows as chips (snacking is allowed), players cover on their cards any letters found in the word. Keep reading words. The first player to get five boxes in a row yells "Winter!" Everyone clears their boards, and a new round begins.

[www.familyfun.go](http://www.familyfun.go)

white plow January heater shovel sleet hockey  
 snow jacket shovel igloo scarf icy  
 sniffles frost wind long johns ski candle blizzard  
 cold mitten flu sled skate glove quilt frozen COCOA hat



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](http://www.wifostercareandadoption.org) or contact them at their toll free number 1-800-947-8074 .