

Families First

a newsletter for Nebraska Families

December 2009/January 2010

N F A P A

LOOKING BACK

By Betty Hastings

Looking back, it's hard to believe and to realize the changes that have occurred for some of us in the past 50 years or less. A lot of these have also affected our fostering life.

Children could ride in cars with no seat belts or air bags. Riding in the back of a pickup truck on a warm day was always a special treat. Think about where this would get us today, especially as foster/adoptive parents!

Back then, we had no childproof lids on medicine bottles, doors, or cabinets, and when we rode our bikes, we had no helmets. We drank water from the garden hose and not from a bottle. We shared one grape soda with four friends, from one bottle and no one died from this!

We could leave home in the morning and play all day, as long as we were back when the streetlights came on. No one was able to reach us all day. No cell phones. Some families didn't have phones in their homes at all! Can you imagine what our kids would say to this: "NO CELL PHONES!"

We got cut, broke bones and broke teeth and there were no law suits from these accidents. They were accidents!!!

No one was to blame but us!!! Today, as foster parents, we have constantly the possibility of allegations to be placed upon us, even for those unavoidable accidents!

Some of us even had fights, punched each other and got black and blue and learned to get over it. We ate cupcakes, bread and butter, and drank sugar soda but we were never overweight...we were always outside playing. Now, playing without the X-Box, texting, and other indoor activities our kids are bored! We did not have Play stations, Nintendo 64, X Boxes, video games, 99 channels on cable, video tape movies, personal cellular phones, personal computers, Internet chat rooms... but we had friends and had time for visiting friends.

We could back then ride bikes to or walk to a friend's home and knock on the door, or ring the bell or just walk in and talk to them. Imagine such a thing. Without asking a parent and going out by ourselves! Out there in the cold cruel world and without a



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Looking back

guardian and could still feel safe! Most of us did not even lock our doors and we all went to church regularly. Not today! My, how things have changed!

When we disobeyed our parents, we knew what was next for us. Parents weren't afraid to take matters into their own hands without the worry of the state becoming involved. We were taught respect. The hickory switch was very often used in many homes but today most hickory branches have been able to grow larger and for other usages.

Christmas time was a special event, celebrating the birth of our Lord, but today we're fighting to keep Christ in Christmas, and not to celebrate just the 'Holiday Season.'

The past 50 years has been an explosion of modernization and new ideas. Some great improvements were added, but wonder how God looks upon some of the changes that we've

accepted in our world today?

We live today in a culture where the emphasis is on youth. It's certainly ok to focus on our youth, but the goal of many adults today is to think young, act young, and look young. People are willing to spend a lot of money for vitamins and ointments and even more for cosmetic surgery to help them hold on to a youthful appearance. In many circles the voice of the young takes precedence over the experience and wisdom of the elderly. However in years gone by the aged were respected and their counsel was sought after.

Coming back to the thought of "aging and usefulness," I guess it's because I've been reminded and asked by my family, "Mom, when are you going to slow down and retire." I keep saying to them, "Hey, I know that God's not through with me yet." I've got more life and experiences to give my foster children now after my years of fostering and I feel as long as God gives the strength and ability to get up and go, I know that there's usefulness still in my life.

Even the scripture states in Psalm 92:14: "They shall still bring forth fruit in old age." Think about it! Getting up in age can be a time to bring forth much fruit to the glory of God. It is a time that is coming to all of us as foster parents unless something unusual happens before then. Our children need us! We've seen the changes that have occurred in the past and even more will come about in the next few years.

A challenge for each of you is that we start every morning as our feet hit the floor to first thank God for life and then to thank him for the opportunity to serve Him more today than yesterday regardless of the changes brought about, and to have the assurance that we're touching lives as we foster children for a better future.

Nebraska Foster & Adoptive Parent Association

Families First a newsletter for Nebraska Families

N F A P A

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• Boys Town: 402-498-3018
• Child Saving Institute: 402-533-6000, ext. 266
• Omni: 402-397-9866, ext. 106

Finding Joy in Your Children

Ever get caught up in challenges or conflict raising your kids? Not uncommon.

The sad truth is, though, that when mired in conflict we can lose sight of happier, better times and lose not only our own spirit, but also the spirit of the relationship. When mired in conflict, we can lose sight of our mutual love and escalate bad feelings, not to mention bad behavior. We can turn our children, and they us, into villains.

When mired in conflict or parenting challenges, some parents reasonably turn to counselling. They look for strategies to manage their children's behavior. They seek better forms of behavioral control or discipline. This is not necessarily a bad thing, as children do need to learn limits and internalize rules. However, a focus just on behavior and discipline can give rise to ongoing bad feelings between parents and children. Resentment can continue to build on both sides. Focusing only on behavior leaves out a vital ingredient for parents and children to both feel great about themselves and the relationship. It may sound corny, but that ingredient is joy.

Finding and expressing joy in children tells them they are of value. As children feel and experience their parents finding joy in them, spirits lighten and bad feelings can fade. Rather than being mired in challenges and conflict, attention is directed to good times, good feelings and cooperation. Parents and children experience a different kind of emotional energy, one through which they can return to talking and discussion as a means of mediating behavior rather than relying upon control and enforcement.

Reflecting on joy, one parent writes:

o It somehow brought their preciousness back to life for me and I realized that there are definitely times that it's difficult to appreciate or feel loving towards our children until we revisit the times it was so easy to love them.

The challenge in using joy as a means to rekindling parent-child relationships and better feelings is that some parents may have forgotten how or where to find joy. A survey of parents involved in early childhood education, social work

and family therapy provides the following suggestions for finding joy in children:

- Catch them doing something right.
- Watch your children when they are asleep.
- Remind your children of the pleasure and pride you take in them.

Reflecting on the outcome of using joy on her now adult children another parent writes:

- Having three very headstrong boys, when they were teens, I used to go into their bedrooms after they were asleep and just look at them and remember when they were babies curled up in their cribs. I also thought of times when they gave me laughter and tears of pride. I knew down deep that they would grow into responsible adults who not only would be my sons, but my friends. That got me through some rough times – did not resolve conflict, but did give me a better perspective and some patience the next day.

Mired in challenges or conflict with your children? Then think about finding joy in them.

For more examples of how other parents find joy in their children, go to www.yoursocialworker.com and find the link, Joy – Survey and Results.

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Keep Christ in Christmas

By Betty Hastings

Once a year we all decorate and celebrate for the busy Christmas season, But I wonder if we really stop and realize the real true purpose and reason, Scripture states it was prophesied John the Baptist would prepare the way to give knowledge of one to come with light and salvation for all to convey,

The scripture says Mary gave birth to the baby Jesus in a lowly manger of hay, no room for them in the inn, but a place was provided where the animals stay. We see today the bustle and hurrying around buying special gifts for love ones, stop for a moment and recognize the season is because God sent his beloved son?

God loved us so much and sent his Son to earth thus; born of the Virgin Mary. But, I'm afraid that too many of us have taken the birth of our Lord too lightly. We've made this a season of celebrating Santa, partying and often we forget to recall the day the angels proclaimed our Lord's birth, is our God upset?

Looking at scriptures, the shepherds and wise men worshiped him here on earth, many have forgotten now to thank God, for his gift of His beloved Son's birth. I hope you can say that you have remembered and truly honored His birthday.

And done what you can to follow the great commission, only then can you say "Thank you, Lord, for the birth of your son and for the promise of eternal security, it was because of your great love, compassion, and the gift that was given so freely."

Let us remember to keep Christ in Christmas and it's not just a holiday season. But it's a reason to celebrate and share Christ with others -that is the true reason.



A Letter from Executive Director Pamela Allen

We are coming through a year that has brought with it many changes, and have had many phone calls from Resource Parents wondering "what is going to happen to NFAPA". Thank you for your concern. NFAPA is YOUR organization, your support, your advocate, and we will continue to be that as we move forward with the Out of Home Reform. Some of the lead agencies have contracted with NFAPA to continue to offer in-service training, support groups, newsletters and conferences. There are some who have chosen not to. Please watch our nfapa.org website for our calendar of events.

I would like to take this opportunity to wish each and everyone of you who open your hearts and homes to children and their birth families a happy and peaceful holiday season. Please try to take some time for yourselves and remember that unless you take care of yourselves and your family relationships, you cannot take care of others. I believe that here in Nebraska, we are truly blessed with people that care about each other and about family. We have true "down home" values and beliefs which allow us to "hang in there" when times get tough. We don't give up on children OR their families. Thank you!

Encontrar la Alegría en Sus Hijos

¿Nunca enredarnos en desafíos o conflictos cuando criando sus hijos? No es poco común.

La triste verdad es, sin embargo, que cuando sumido en los conflictos, podemos perder de vista las veces más felices y más mejores y perder no sólo nuestro propio espíritu, sino también el espíritu de la relación. Cuando sumidos en conflictos, podemos perder de vista nuestro amor mutuo y escalar los malos sentimientos, así como también la mala conducta.

Podemos cambiar a nuestros hijos, y ellos a nosotros, en los villanos.

Cuando sumidos en conflictos o problemas de crianza de los hijos, algunos padres razonablemente los toman a los hijos a la consejería. Buscan estrategias para manejar la conducta de sus hijos. Buscan mejores formas de control de conducta o disciplina. Esto no es necesariamente una cosa mala, como los niños necesitan aprender los límites y internalizar las reglas. Sin embargo, concentrarse sólo en el comportamiento y la disciplina pueden llevar a la continuación de los malos sentimientos entre padres e hijos. El resentimiento puede seguir construyendo en ambos lados. Centrarse únicamente en el comportamiento omite un ingrediente vital para ambos los padres y los niños para sentirse bien sobre sí mismos y la relación. Puede sonar cursi, pero ese ingrediente es la alegría.

Encontrar y expresar la alegría en los niños les dice que son de valor. Como los niños ven que sus padres están encontrando la alegría en ellos, los espíritus aligeran y los malos sentimientos pueden desaparecer. En lugar de ser envuelto en problemas y conflictos, la atención se dirige a los buenos tiempos, buenos sentimientos y la cooperación. Los padres y los niños experimentan un tipo diferente de energía emocional, a través del cual pueden volver a hablar y la discusión como una forma de mediar el comportamiento en lugar de confiar en el control y la obediencia.

Reflexionando sobre la alegría, un padre escribe:

- De alguna manera le devolvió la vida a su preciosidad

para mí y me di cuenta de que definitivamente hay veces que es difícil de apreciar o sentir amor hacia nuestros hijos hasta que volvamos los tiempos cuando era tan fácil amarlos.

El desafío en el uso de la alegría como un medio para reavivar las relaciones de padre-hijo y mejores sentimientos es que algunos padres han olvidado cómo o dónde encontrar la alegría. Una encuesta de los padres involucrados en la educación infantil, trabajo social y terapia familiar ofrece las siguientes sugerencias para encontrar la alegría en los niños:

- Mírelos haciendo algo bien.
- Mírelos a sus niños cuando están dormidos.
- Recuérdale a sus hijos del placer y el orgullo que ellos les dan.

Reflexionando sobre el resultado de la utilización de la alegría en sus hijos que ahora son adultos, otro padre escribe:

- Teniendo tres niños muy testarudos, cuando eran adolescentes, solía ir a sus cuartos después de que

estaban dormidos y sólo mirarlos y recordar cuando se estaban acurrucados en sus cunas como bebés.

También pensé en los momentos en que me dio risa y las lágrimas de orgullo. Sabía que iban a hacerse mayor en adultos responsables que no sólo sería de mis hijos, pero mis amigos. Eso me hizo a través de tiempos difíciles - no resolver el conflicto, pero me dio una mejor perspectiva y un poco de paciencia al día siguiente.

Sumido en problemas o conflictos con sus hijos? Luego piense en encontrar la alegría en ellos. Para más ejemplos de cómo otros padres encuentran la alegría en sus hijos, vaya a la www.yoursocialworker.com y encuentre el enlace de web, Alegría - Encuesta y Resultados.

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When a child can't be home for Christmas

By Pamela Allen

Parenting can be a challenge anytime of year, but holidays seem to be more stressful. Parents are busy planning parties, shopping for gifts on top of doing everything else that always needs to be done. Children get caught up in the excitement of gifts and Santa and if they weren't hyper before, this is a time that even the most relaxed child can become out-of-sorts. It is not uncommon for those of us that foster to get a call a day or two before Christmas (or even on Christmas Eve) to take placement of a child or a sibling group of children so they don't have to spend Christmas at a shelter. Knowing that this can (and does) happen, it is a good idea to prepare ahead of time. If you know that in the event you were to get a call you would say "yes", it is a good idea to have an extra stocking and stocking stuffers on hand as well as a few extra gifts that would be appropriate for the age group of child you normally would accept into your home.

Remember, being away from his/her family during the holiday season, no matter why the child was removed, may very well bring behaviors. You may help the child by encouraging the child to talk about his/her parents, help the child make gifts to give to the parents and if possible, plan for a visit between the child and their parent. If you can be involved in the visit, this is a wonderful time to get started on a "Lifebook". Take lots of pictures and ask questions. If you cannot be a part of the visit, send a disposable camera and then get the pictures developed as soon as possible! Then, when you are wondering what to do with the kiddos during Christmas break, they can get started on putting their pictures in their lifebooks.

Changing a Life

By Valerie Busic

The phone call comes in. "Do you have enough room?"
For one more young child... He needs a home very soon.

He comes to your door, Tattered and bruised.
His clothes are all dirty, He's wearing no shoes...

You welcome him in With a smile on your face,
He'll have to adjust At his very own pace.

His life has been A hard, rocky road.
Somehow you must help To lighten his load.

He is going to need you To care for him now.
So deep in your heart You silently vow
To make his life better Than what he has now,
To again make him smile, Though you're wondering how.

Each new day brings Anger, sadness, and joy
You pray that your love Can help this young boy.

Sometimes it seems that You're getting nowhere,
And you wonder shy God said "Send this child there."

After an especially trying day When you're sure
There must be An easier way

Into the room His footsteps now come,
With a shy hug, he whispers, "I love you, Mom."

With tears in your eyes, You know just what to say.
You've waited and waited For this very day.

"Remember this, honey, And no matter what,
You're special, I love you You just hold on to that."

And then the day comes When you answer the phone...
They're sending "your" little boy Back to his home.

You think of the work That may be undone
When they do send him back, To the very same one.

He's much different today Then he was, way back when.
Your hard work has paid off, You can see it in him.

You hope and you pray He'll remember your love
But you can't help but wonder, Will it be enough?

To carry him through What may lie ahead
You try to be strong To cover your dread

Your head says you must Get through the good-byes
But the weight in your heart Feels like a part of it died.

Later you learn He's doing quite well,
He comes over to visit And you really can tell.

His life isn't perfect but... It's turning quite nice
So you have made a difference In one little boys life.

Attention Foster Parents!

Receive in-service training credit for reading this newsletter! Now you can enjoy reading *Families First* and receive in-service training credit that can apply toward your re-licensure as a foster parent. This in-service training has been approved by HHS. Simply read this issue, write down the answers to the questions below, and mail your answers to your licensing worker (i.e., Resource Development worker). If your answers are satisfactory, you will receive 30 minutes of credit toward your in-service training requirement. If you have questions, contact NFAPA at 877-257-0176 or 402-476-2273. Questions for in-service training quiz – December/January.

1. What is the contact information for your agency?
2. Decisions regarding a child who is a ward residing with the parent should be made by _____.
3. When a child is in Out of Home placement, the worker will involve _____ in the decision making.
4. Name 5 areas that may have cultural or religious implications that should involve parent decisions.
5. When the parent chooses not to be involved, the foster parent makes all decisions. T ___ F ___
6. It is your responsibility to provide transportation. T ___ F ___
7. As a foster parent, you are part of a _____
8. _____ is always the primary goal when a child comes into the foster care system.
9. Foster parents can work with the birth family. T ___ F ___
10. Conference dates for 2010 are: _____.

DHHS POLICY CORNER - CHAPTER 11-000**SPECIFIC ISSUES FOR THE CHILDREN IN THE CUSTODY OF THE DEPARTMENT**

Decisions regarding a child who is a ward residing with the parent should be made by the parent. The worker will intervene when a parental decision regarding a child who is a ward is likely to harm the family or child.

When a child is in out-of-home placement, the worker will involve at least the parent, foster parent and child in decision-making. Decisions are made in keeping with the best interest of the child, safety, case plan and the permanency goal.

When parental rights have been terminated or relinquished or the parent's whereabouts are unknown, or the parent chooses not to be involved, the Department is responsible for all decision-making based on the best interest of the child, safety, the case plan and the permanency goal.

11-001 DAILY CARE DECISIONS IN OUT-OF-HOME CARE PLACEMENTS

Foster care providers or residential staff will make decisions involved with the daily care of the child such as:

- personal hygiene,
- discipline (in accordance with Department policy), and
- family routines.

NOTE: Daily care decisions are always made in accordance with Department policies and guidelines and licensing requirements. Special conditions about daily care will be determined by the worker.

Certain decisions regarding care of children have potential implications to the cultural practices and religious beliefs of a family. To avoid violating a child and family's culture and religious beliefs, the Department will attempt to involve the parent in decisions about care of children. Routine care decisions having particular potential for cultural and religious implications are:

- haircutting and hair coloring,
- body piercing,
- tattoos,
- clothing
- dating,
- driver's license,
- cultural practices,
- religious or spiritual practices,

- photographs, and
- social and school activities.

Decisions will be made with respect for the cultural and religious beliefs of the child and family. The worker may consider the need for input from the guardian ad litem.

7-001.05 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF TEMPORARY CARE GIVER

• Communicate and work cooperatively as a team member with the worker, parents and service providers toward the goals of the case plan;

• Communicate and work cooperatively as a team member with the parents;

• Work toward the goal of permanence as outlined in the case plan;

• Regularly discuss with the worker the child's progress, needs and behaviors;

• Notify the worker of law violations by the child or law enforcement contact with the child;

• Notify the worker of emergencies including medical problems and runaway behavior;

• Arrange for routine and emergency medical care for the child and advise the worker. Use the medical provider covered by the parents' insurance, if applicable, or the provider identified by the worker;

• Secure specific care and treatment for the child such as medical, psychological or school evaluations, under the guidance of the worker as outlined in the case plan;

• Recognize respite care as a necessary support to provide quality care to the child;

• Cooperate with the development and implementation of the visitation plan;

• Advocate for the child's educational rights and help the school staff understand the child's emotional and educational needs;

• Arrange for or provide transportation for the child;

• To the workers, provide written documentation regarding the child's progress and contacts with parents and other family members; and

• Attend pre-service and ongoing training if licensure is involved.



The year sure went fast. It's time to start planning for the 2010 Foster Parent Conferences

June 26-27 Midtown Holiday Inn, GrandIsland

July 16-17 Quality Inn Sandhills, NorthPlatte

Tentative date for Lincoln July 31-Aug 1

Kinship Foster Families Face Major Changes

By Michelle Linberger

Mary has mixed feelings. Since taking custody of her grandson Jonathan, her life has changed dramatically.

Mary's initial decision to care for Jonathan came easy to her. Her daughter, Rochelle, had been involved with drugs and in and out of trouble for years. Finally DSS removed Jonathan from Rochelle's care due to neglect. Before placing Jonathan with a foster family, DSS asked Mary if she would be willing to take care of Jonathan full time until he could be reunited with Rochelle. She didn't hesitate.

Although we wouldn't go back and change her decision, Mary has found caring for Jonathan an extremely rewarding but stressful task. She never imagined that she would be parenting a child at her age. Three years from retirement, Mary had planned on doing some traveling and becoming involved in community activities. Now their plans are on hold.

Mary is resentful at times because she feels her "golden years" are being taken away from her. Later, she feels guilty for having these thoughts. She thinks, "I should just accept this responsibility without complaining. After all, I am doing it for my grandson and the situation isn't his fault."

Mary, the grandmother in the fictional case example above, is a kinship foster parent. Like many other grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins and siblings. Mary's life has been dramatically altered by her decision to care for the children of family members. The work kinship caregivers do is truly a labor of love.

Benefits

Many children find the transitions associated with foster care easier to handle when they are placed with relatives. Because he was allowed to live with his grandmother, Jonathan is spared the stress of having to move in with strangers and start new relationships from scratch. Since Jonathan already has a relationship with Mary, his transition into foster care is easier. In fact remaining with his family is likely to help Jonathan maintain his sense of identity—he'll feel less like a foster child, less a part of "the system".

When custody is returned to Rochelle, Jonathan's transition out of foster care will be easier, since his foster mother (Mary) will still be an active part of his life. Most importantly, he is spared the pain and grief many children face when they must say good-bye to a foster family, never to see them again.

Stresses

Families who become kinship foster families also face many challenges. Each family member must struggle to learn a new identity and define a new role for themselves. As this process is taking place, miscommunication, frustration, guilt and resentment sometimes occur.

Take for instance, the family in the case example. For Mary, the decision to become involved was made in order to help Rochelle and to avoid having Jonathan taken from the family.

In spite of her good intentions, it's very natural for Mary to feel some resentment, guilt and disappointment.

Generally, kinship caregivers have reached a point in their lives where they've raised their own children and now finally have a little extra time and money. Any plans to travel, take a class or volunteer in the community must be put on hold. They are back to raising children again. They may feel overwhelmed as they look at the huge task in front of them and the time, energy and resources it will take to be a "parent" to this child.

Birth parents must also cope with changes in their roles. Initially, Rochelle was relieved that her mother could take Jonathan. Rochelle could concentrate on her treatment without worrying about Jonathan's safety in an unfamiliar home.

But eventually Rochelle begins to feel displaced. She feels as if she is no longer the mother. During her weekly visits with Jonathan at DSS, Rochelle notices that he relates to Mary as his mother more and more. Rochelle feels jealous of the attention Mary gets from Jonathan. She can't believe her mother would take her place like this! For her part, Mary can't understand Rochelle's anger or believe how ungrateful she is.

Solutions

In most kinship situations, the scenario is similar: life stages and roles get mixed up. Since their roles have changed individuals in the family must learn new ways to relate to each other. For the sake of everyone involved, it's important that all family members deal with these stressors. Communication is key. If everyone is able to talk about positive and negative feelings, a lot of resentment can be prevented.

It's also crucial that the kinship caregiver have some type of support system. Family members, clergy and support groups can remind foster caregivers that they are not alone. Many counties have support groups for grandparents raising their grandchildren. By offering a place to share information, solutions and feelings with peers going through the same experiences, these groups can help tremendously.

Other effective resources, such as parenting classes, mental health services or respite can be located by contacting the local DSS (DHHS in Nebraska) or mental health agencies. The AARP Grandparent Information Center (202-434-2296) offers a wealth of information on legal, social, health and financial issues affecting grandparent caregivers.

Michelle Linberger is a Foster Care Consultant with Methodist Home for Children in Wilmington North Carolina.

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Kinship caregivers may call NFAPA's Kin-Nect line for mentoring and support at 888-484-4KIN. Please visit the nfapa website at nfapa.org for in-service trainings and support groups in your area!

Scholarships for Foster Kids

For the over half a million foster children in the United States*, paying for college might seem an insurmountable challenge. Fortunately, there are a number of scholarships available to help underwrite the education of young people who are or have been in the American foster care system.

Private Organization Foster Child Scholarships

The National Foster Parent Association (NFPA) offers a scholarship designed to help foster students pay for education beyond the high school years at any college or university. Applicants must be current high school seniors, must give the NFPA cost information on the college or university they plan to attend, and must have been accepted by said college or university before receiving NFPA funding. Additionally, all recipients of this award must submit a short essay (topic given) along with their applications. Scholarship amounts vary.

The Casey Family Scholars Scholarship attempts to reduce the financial barriers foster children may encounter when considering entering higher education. By providing scholarships of up to \$10,000, the Casey Family Scholars Program offers foster youth under the age of 25 the opportunity to attend the national college or university of their choice.

The Darko Rapotez Memorial College Scholarship Fund for Aged Out Foster Youth offers between \$5,000 and \$10,000 in college and tuition fee assistance to children who have “aged out” of the foster care system. However, the price of books, housing, transportation, and other higher-education-related costs are not covered. Recipients can be between the ages of 18 and 24 and may come from anywhere in the United States as long as their high school GPA has been 3.0 or higher.

If you're a high school senior in foster care, you can apply in the autumn for yearly the Horatio Alger Scholarship. This program awards between \$2,500 and \$10,000 per student; monies can be used to pursue a bachelor's degree at any accredited American college or university.

The Orphan Foundation of America (OFA) Scholarship annually gives amounts between \$500 and \$5000 to current or former foster youths who are planning on furthering their education via academic or vocational training. Any unmarried U.S. foster children with a cumulative high school GPA of at least 2.0 and who are under the age of 25 may apply.

The National Scholarship Fund for foster children awards between \$1,500 and \$10,000 to foster youth, former foster youth under 25, and orphans to be used in any state for training after high school.

(* Source: U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, Administration for Children & Families, 2006)

Struggling to Breathe

Did you know that almost 5 million kids have asthma? And did you know that there are 10 million missed school days each year because of it?



Asthma is a disease in which the normal functions of the lungs increase. The airways that lead to the lungs become sensitive, which in turn causes a person to have problems breathing.

Wheezing, a squeaky sound when someone breathes, coughing and shortness of breath are symptoms of asthma.

The disease can be triggered by a number of things:

- Exercise - running or jumping
- Infections – bronchitis or sinus problems
- Allergies – reactions to dust or pets
- Irritants – cigarette smoke or strong smells
- Weather – cold air or wind
- Emotions – crying, laughing or stress

Some asthma problems can be avoided by staying away from the things listed about that trigger the disease. Depending on how they suffer from it, children are given medication to help control asthma. For those who have allergies to things like cats or flowers, there are allergy shots to help with the sneezing and other symptoms.

Asthma should be taken seriously. Whether you or someone you know has asthma, it's important that you know what triggers the disease and what to do if someone is having trouble breathing.

Meet the New Southwestern Resource Family Consultant

Tara Knuth born and raised in North Platte, moved to Kearney in 1994 to attend UNK, and graduated with a degree in Elementary Education but has never taught a day in her life. She began her career working with youth and families at Boys and Girls Home and then Region III Behavioral Health for a total of seven years. After she married in 2004, her and her new husband Aaron decided to begin a family which included opening their home to foster children. The first placement they received was three amazing boys Zaven (11), Isaiah (9), and Devon (8) that they adopted a year later. Within that year they had a beautiful daughter Samantha (4). Tara is very excited about this new opportunity and is looking forward to working with all of you.

Useful Websites

The Collaboration to AdoptUSKids is a project of The Children's Bureau, part of the Federal Department of Health and Human Services. In October 2002, The Children's Bureau contracted with The Adoption Exchange Association and its partners (The Collaboration to **AdoptUSKids**) to devise and implement a national adoptive family recruitment and retention strategy, operate the **AdoptUSKids.org** website, encourage and enhance adoptive family support organizations and conduct a variety of adoption research projects. www.adoptUSKids.org

Adoption.com is a website that offers a photolisting of children awaiting adoption, valuable resources, and information. www.adoption.com

Answers4Families.org is a project of the Center on Children, Families, and the Law at the University of Nebraska in Lincoln and is supported by funding from the Nebraska Health and Human Services System: Aging and Disability Services, the Office of Protection and Safety, and the Office of Family Health; and the Nebraska Department of Education - Early Development Network. The mission of Answers4Families is to provide information, opportunities for dialogue, education and support to Nebraskans with special needs and their families and develop and provide internet resources to families. www.answers4families.org

Casey Family Programs provides an array of services for children and youth, with foster care as its core. Casey services include adoption, guardianship, kinship care (being cared for by extended family), and family reunification (reuniting children with birth families). Casey is also committed to helping youth in foster care make a successful transition to adulthood. www.casey.org

The **Central Plains Center for Service** provides a variety of opportunities for positive change to individuals, families, and communities throughout the entire state. The following programs are currently being offered. Parents as Teachers Program, The PALS (Preparation for Adult Living Services) program & Education and Training Vouchers. See their website for additional information at www.central-plains.org

The **Child Welfare League of America** is an association of almost 1,200 public and private nonprofit agencies that assist over 3.5 million abused and neglected children and their families each year with a wide range of services. www.cwla.org

The **National Foster Parent Association** is the only national organization which strives to support foster parents, and remains a consistently strong voice on behalf of all children. www.nfpainc.org

May is National Foster Care Month for more information on what's happening around the country for National Foster Care Month go to www.fostercaremonth.org

For information about the **Nebraska Department of Health & Human Services website**. www.hhs.state.ne.us

If you are interested in reviewing information relating to foster care and adoption in Nebraska, go to www.hhs.state.ne.us/reg/t390.htm for Nebraska regulations.

Founded in 1974 by adoptive parents, the **North American Council on Adoptable Children** is committed to meeting the needs of waiting children and the families who adopt them. www.nacac.org

THANK YOU & MERRY CHRISTMAS!

It is heartwarming to see children reach out to other children in need! NFAPA would like to say Thank You, to the staff and children of Norris School! The children and staff work year round to gather items for NFAPA's Kits for Kids program and to gather gifts to be given to children in foster care at Christmas! THANK YOU CHILDREN! Thank you for caring about others. THANK YOU NORRIS STAFF! Thank you for instilling the gift of service in the children.

NFAPA MENTORS

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Beringer, Elaine	Octavia	402-539-2595	
Blume, Robbi & Norm	Valentine	402-376-1344	kids4us01@yahoo.com
Bower, Janelle Sue	Gering	308-436-5968	
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Carroll, Mary	Stanton	402-439-2727	mothermary2727@yahoo.com
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Cunningham, Phyllis & Bud	Columbus	402-564-3758	
Daily, Barb	Omaha	402-498-3851	
Esau, Leigh & Pat	Lincoln	402-617-0667	
Flodman, Stefanie	Lincoln	402-475-4240	
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Frink, Wade & Carol	Fremont	402-727-4074	KEEPONTASK@YAHOO.COM
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Hazen, Deb	Curtis	308-367-8765	
Herbert, Tammy	Homer	402-698-2305	
Herley, Melissa	Clearwater	402-485-2556	
Hixon, Tracy	McCook	308-345-3030	number1hot_mama@yahoo.com
Hohman, Joyce & Rick	Omaha	402-334-3355	
Hoselton, Rhonda	Hastings	402-463-8627	
Jamison, Willie	Fremont	402-721-6208	willifosmom@yahoo.com
Jensen, Marie	Goehner	402-523-4785	MCSALJen@stewireless.com
Jones, Chasity & Tom Gassman	York	402-362-6166	cjone001@neb.rr.com or tom404@hotmail.com
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Lange, Robin	Maywood	308-362-2235	birdie@atcjet.net
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Lyon, Troy & Sandy	Doniphan	402-391-0575	5girls@hamilton.net
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Rogers, Felicia	Omaha	402-932-4011	
Schroeder, Cyndi & Michael	Fremont	402-721-6520	mcschroeder9284@msn.com
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Staggs, Deb	Hastings	402-462-5110	
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Svoboda, Jennifer	Mitchell	308-632-2616	
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Welker, Tammy	Gretna	402-659-4569	
White, Cathy & Dan	Auburn	402-274-5533	jlanphear@mindspring.com
Widener, Lori	Kimball	308-235-3911	
Wiedel, Lynne & Jerry	Belvidere	402-768-6803	lynne_wiedel@hotmail.com
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Williamson, Michelle	Grand Island	308-381-2896	WILLAMSON3502@MSN.COM
Wilson, Colleen	Parks	308-423-2191	
Wilwerding, Sandra	Omaha	402-334-7251	dswilwerding@cox.net
Young, DeAmbra	Omaha	402-926-4941	deambra2@yahoo.com

Cookbook Recipes Needed

Calling all foster, kinship and adoptive families.

NFAPA is putting together a cookbook and needs your recipes. We would like to represent all families across the state of Nebraska. Active participation will determine whether or not we move forward. With the holidays coming up keep us in mind when preparing your favorite recipes as well as the everyday favorites.

The Nebraska Foster and Adoptive Parent Association cookbook will serve three purposes:

1. A reference of favorite recipes by our foster and adoptive family
2. A fun way of sharing and getting to know one another across the state, building a sense of community and support among foster, kinship and adoptive families.
3. A method of raising funds for our organization and educating individuals about our organization

Categories for recipes are, but not necessarily limited to:

- Beverages
- Quick Breads and Yeast Breads
- Cakes and Frostings
- Candies
- Casseroles
- Cookies and Bars
- Desserts and Holiday Recipes
- Meat, Fish, Eggs
- Mixes, Quick and Easy
- Quick Mixes
- Pies
- Salads and Salad Dressings
- Snacks
- Soups and Sandwiches
- Miscellaneous



In addition to the recipes the following may be included:

- Antidotes or favorite quotes relating to children, fostering, etc. (for example: This Coca Cola Cake recipe was introduced to us as a favorite of our first teen placement.) Keep in mind confidentiality applies.
- Notations regarding a recipe that fulfills a dietary requirement such as: gluten free, low carbohydrate, etc
- Your name as submitter of recipe (optional email, number of years fostering)
- Invite adoptive and bio children to participate – younger children may want to include their age. (For example: a recipe for play dough submitted by Susie Smith, age 7).

A separate email address has been set up for this project. Send submissions to: NFAPAcookbook@gmail.com or mailed to Joan Kinsey, 315 South 9th Street, Suite 10, Lincoln, NE 68508



KITS FOR KIDS

Foster Parents:

As you get new placements into your home, please call the NFAPA office for a “Kits for Kids” bag for your child. We will have a mentor deliver your kit.

If you are interested in becoming a “Kits for Kids” collaborator or FOCUS member, please call the office or e-mail nfapa@windstream.net.

1-877-257-0176

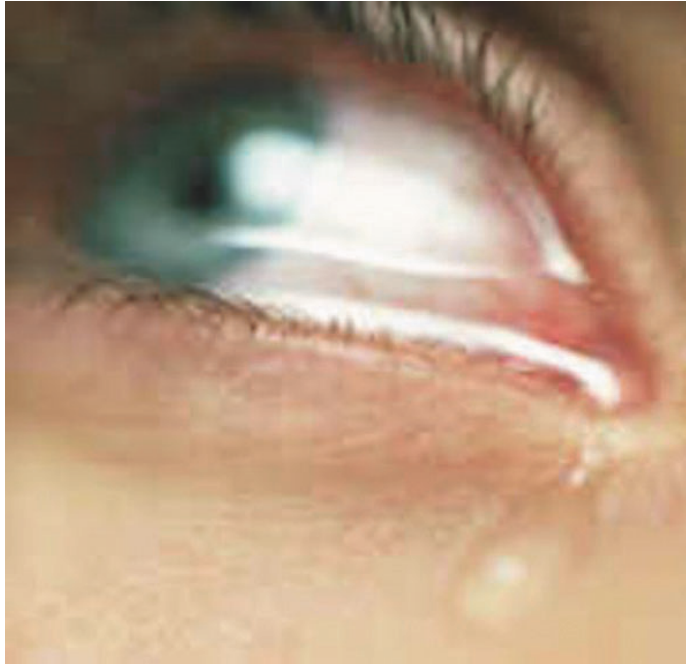
Helping Cope With Separated Siblings

It is estimated that about 70% of the children in out-of-home care have brothers and sisters who are also in care, and that as many as one-third to one-half of the more than 55,000 children in foster care have been separated from at least one of their siblings. If you are involved with children in care, as the employee of an agency or as a resource parent, you probably have known children whose brothers and sisters have been placed in different families.

There are many reasons this is so. Sometimes it is difficult for the agency to find a home able to accept a large groups of brothers and sisters. Sometimes siblings enter care at different times, and the choice must be made between taking the older child from a family with which he or she has bonded or placing a new baby separately. Some siblings have the same mother but different fathers, and paternal relatives are willing to take the children to whom they are related. Whatever the reason, the end result is the same. Children who are brothers and sisters are not given the opportunity to live together and develop the strong and enduring bond that is often the longest-lasting relationship in a person's life.

If you work with children who are separated from siblings there are several things you can do to help preserve and strengthen their bonds.

- Educate yourself about the importance of the sibling bond in general.
- Find out the history of these particular children and how important their relationship has been to them in the past.
- Ask the children how they feel about their brothers and sisters.
- Take these relationships into account in making decisions or giving input into decisions about the the "best interest" of the children may be. Their attachment to each other may be one of the most important issues to them.
- Help separated siblings maintain contact with one another. Establish relationships with birth families or other resource families who are caring for the brothers and sisters of children in your care. Do what you can to help the children



visit one another regularly, including spending time together in fun activities like picnics, sleep-overs, or just playing together on a playground. Children do not want to have "visitations" for an hour once a month in an agency office!

- Help children use other ways to keep in touch, too, such as telephone calls, cards and letters and sending photographs and artwork through the mail. They may wish

to work together on lifebook pages that can be passed around each one adding to a page started by another. If you have Internet access, help them use e-mail or an instant messaging program to keep in touch more often.

- If siblings are located nearby, consider sharing the same day care, babysitter or respite provider to give the children more opportunities to spend time together.

- Try to schedule other activities together-visits to the library, doctor or dentist, joining the same soccer league or neighborhood sports

association-you can probably think of lots more!

For more on siblings in out-of-home care, see the resources listed on our web page at http://www.casey.org/cnc/policy_issues/siblings.htm

Casey Family Programs Reproduction of the material is authorized for educational noncommercial use.

Kin-Nect Support Line 1-888-848-4kin (4546)

The Kin-Nect Family Support Line is a statewide, toll-free line for kinship caregivers. The Kin-Nect Family Support Line provides kinship caregivers with emotional support, information and referrals for training, support groups and other agencies working with grandparents and other relatives. The line is available seven days a week, 24 hours a day.

The Kin-Nect Family Support Line is a service of the Nebraska Foster and Adoptive Parent Association. Further information can be found at our website www.nfapa.org or by calling 1-888-848-4kin (4546).



Association for Treatment and Training
In the Attachment of Children

Presents

Therapeutic Parenting



Therapeutic Parenting

Name _____

Name #2 _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Home Phone _____ Daytime Phone _____

Agency/Organization (If applicable.) _____

Email Address _____ Fax _____

The registration fee for this conference is \$35 per person.

of People _____ x \$35 = \$ _____

Enclose money order or check payable to ATTACH or give credit card information below:

Method of Payment:

Check# _____

Visa Mastercard Exp. Date V-Code
 _____ _____

Credit Card # _____

Signature _____

Date and Location

Therapeutic Parenting

Saturday, April 24, 2010

The Nebraska Children's Home Society

4939 S. 118th Street

Omaha, NE 68137

Telephone (402) 451-0787

Intended Audience: Foster and adoptive parents, parents of children with attachment problems, case workers, therapists.

Fee and Registration

The registration fee is \$35.00. Go to the registration page to register online or mail the registration to ATTACH, P.O. Box 533, Lake Villa, IL 60046. Please remit payment with registration by April 9, 2010.

Cancellation Policy

Cancellations must be received by April 9, 2010 to receive a refund. A \$5 handling fee will be deducted from the refund. No refunds will be made for cancellations received after April 9, 2010.

Agenda - Saturday, April 24**8:30 AM - 9:00 AM Registration & Continental Breakfast****9:00 AM - 10:00 AM *Loss: The Hidden Trauma*****Jacquelyn Meyer, LMHP**

Barriers to a child's attachment to his new parents can come not only from a child's past, but also a parent's past. Join us as we explore the losses involved in adoption/foster care and how to put those losses into perspective, allowing healing and bonding to occur.

10:00 AM - 10:15 AM Break**10:15 AM - 10:30 AM Roll Play****10:30 AM - 11:15 AM *Complex Trauma: What it is and what it means for you*****Arthur Becker-Weidman, Ph.D.**

This presentation will describe what is complex trauma, how it affects child development, and what this means for parents and therapeutic interventions. You will learn what is complex trauma, its impact on attachment, behavioral regulation, emotional regulation, cognition, dissociative responses, biology, and self-concept, and what this means for parenting.

11:15 AM - 11:30 AM Roll Play**11:30 AM - 12:15 PM *Attachment Across Generations*****Mary Jo Land, CPT**

We all have vulnerabilities that sometimes get in the way of being calm and kind, especially when we feel provoked or triggered by our child's behavior. A deeper self-understanding of this dynamic can be achieved through understanding attachment across generations.

**12:15 PM - 1:30 PM Lunch Break
Lunch is provided.****1:30 AM - 2:15 PM *Adjusting Expectations*****Lynn Wetterberg, MS**

All families come to parenting with dreams. When these dreams collide with reality it can leave a parent angry and depressed. What is needed is an "attitude adjustment"! Come learn to free yourself of unrealistic expectations and take joy and pride in little accomplishments.

2:15 PM - 2:45 PM *I ESCAPE: A protocol which promotes pro-social behaviors***Craig Clark, MA, MFT**

Based on a protocol developed at Cornell University, ATTACH has adapted this intervention for caretaker use at home. The protocol is designed to effectively intervene, stop unwanted behaviors, and provide a constructive response that applies recommended parenting approaches outlined in the ATTACH parenting handbook.

2:45 PM - 3:30PM Break**3:30 PM - 5:00 PM *Role Playing: A Different Way of Parenting***

Facilitator: Mary Jo Land
Panel Members: Robert Spottswood, Art Becker-Weidman, Christopher Diani, Pat Ann St. Germain

The therapeutic parenting approach will be modeled through role-playing of common scenarios. Parents will learn how to look beyond the behavior and respond in a more empathic way.

5:00 PM Adjournment

ATTACH
23rd Annual Conference
To be held
September 21 - 24, 2011
At the Double Tree Hotel
Omaha, Nebraska



315 South 9th Street
Suite 10
Lincoln, NE 68508
www.nfapa.org

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Nebraska Foster & Adoptive Parent Association

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I am a(n): _____ Adoptive Parent _____ Foster Parent _____ Agency Worker _____ Other

I provide foster care for the following agency (list agency name): _____

Please mail support form along with payment to:

NFAPA, 315 South 9th Street, Suite 10, Lincoln, NE 68508

Questions? Call NFAPA at 402-476-2273, toll free 877-257-0176, e-mail: nfapa@windstream.net