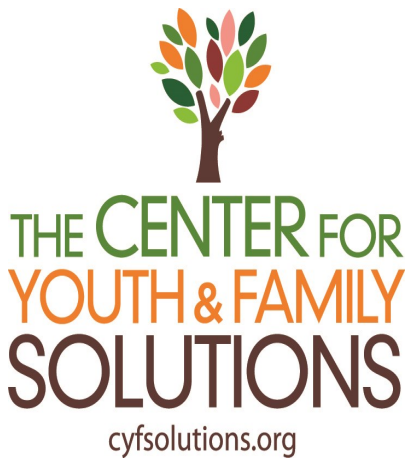


Foster/Adoptive Caregiver Connection

Foster/Adoptive Caregiver Connection

Milestones, Anniversaries, Birthdays...



March 1, 2014, marked the 2nd birthday of The Center for Youth and Family Solutions.

This April is the 31st annual recognition of Prevent Child Abuse Month. Can you believe how fast the last two years have gone by? Time passes quickly for adults, as we strive to make a positive difference for children and youth in foster care, and for their families.

But for children, time is a different experience. We all "know" this, but sometimes forget what it might mean to the child in our care. We have special celebrations—birthdays, holidays, other family celebrations like reunions and homecomings, which can serve as triggers for children and youth with painful experiences. What could at first glance look like a happy celebration, to a child in care, these situations can be marked by trauma, grief, and loss. And sometimes no one knows what a certain day might mean to a child.

Perhaps this makes our role as

foster caregiver, adoptive parent, or guardian even more important as we work to strengthen our relationships with these children. We can't change the past, but we can help these amazing children and youth heal and grow, and create new moments of success built on their achievements and special gifts.

This past "training season", one foster caregiver asked if we aren't setting up our kids for failure by providing high rates of praise, and encouragement for everything they attempt even if they fall short of what they try to do or become. After all, the world doesn't seem to offer these same affirmations, and instead seems to provide many experiences of disappointment or failure, inadequacy and what may appear to be simply mediocre.

This question seems to follow me through the different training groups—what seems to be strengthening is my own resolve and understanding that this is exactly what all kids need, especially kids who have experienced trauma, loss, and grief. We can't count on the "world" to

provide affirmations for our kids, and we know from the research using a high praise rate promotes stronger relationships/connections and healing. These are two things our kids desperately need—we're not "babying" them by giving them praise, we are helping them understand they are capable, competent, and are valuable human beings. For decades parents and teachers alike have been encouraged to "catch the child 'being good'". This means providing buckets of praise and affirmations, helping the child to have the confidence to try again, to work toward the next level, and know win or lose, it's the 'trying' that is important.

So we celebrate with our children their birthdays, their "gotcha' days" - when they moved into our homes and hearts, and adoption or guardianship days. When we can, we celebrate their return home days to their own families of origin—we do all these celebrations because each child and youth is a **treasure**, and life is always a gift, **always** worth celebrating.

Inside this issue:

Calendar 2

Planning Ahead for Camp 2

Mary Kay's Corner 3

Medically Complex Caregiver Inspiration and Need 4



Spring into Summer

Seems like many of our children and youth struggle to finish the school year—after 8 months of sitting in desks and tackling academics, they seem to turn into one giant wiggle worm.

The obvious response—exercise whenever possible. Run, skip, dance, jump, ride bikes (with proper safety gear) to use some of this energy. Allow at least an hour in the evening before bedtime to return to "calm", or at least "calmer". Reading is much more soothing for that last hour of the day instead of video games



or TV. Quiet music might also be helpful as part of the bedtime ritual.

Those last words before going out the door the next morning can set the tone for the entire day at school. Let's encourage them, value them, and remind them they are very capable and amazing in the last moment we share each morning—and set them up to grow and succeed!



Galesburg

Saturday, April 5, 9 am to 5 pm, CPR Training at CYFS Office in Galesburg. Jennifer Cunningham, CYFS Nurse, is the trainer. 10 slots—4 remain open. Call Amanda to RSVP for this training.

Thursday, April 24, 4 to 6 pm, Foster Caregiver Support Group at Galesburg CYFS Office. Naomi Taylor will present information on Domestic Violence.

Thursday, May 8, 5:30 to 7:30 pm, Foster Caregiver Support Group in Monmouth. Location to be announced later. This interactive training will be presented by Lori Brown from CYFS, on Cultural Diversity.

Monday, June 2 thru July 28, 6-9 pm, PST for Foster Caregivers, at CYFS Office in Galesburg. Call Amanda at 309.342.1136 to register or ask questions.

Thursday, June 26, 5:30 to 7:30 pm, Foster Caregiver Support Group in Galesburg. Speaker and location to be announced later.

Thursday, July 31, 5:30 to 7:30 pm, Foster Caregiver Support Group in Monmouth. Location and Speaker to be announced later.

June 1 thru 6 - Galesburg CYFS Office will be preselling Krispy Kreme Donuts (tentative). Buyers may pick up their donuts on June 11, from 1 to 4 pm. Price is approximately \$6/dozen. Please call Amanda at 309.342.1136 for details.

LaSalle

Saturday, April 12, 9 am to 5 pm, CPR at CYFS Office in LaSalle. Call Erin to register at 815.223.4007.

Tuesday, May 6, 6 to 8 pm, FCAB at the CYFS Office in LaSalle. Call Erin for more information at 815.223.4007.

Peoria

Thursday, April 3, 6 to 8 pm, Specialized Foster Caregiver Support Group. RSVP Shannon Doubet at 309.323.6542.

Friday, April 4, noon—**Hands Around the Courthouse**, kickoff for Prevent Child Abuse Month, at the Peoria County Courthouse. Come join us to help raise awareness about abuse and neglect.

The Calendar

Tuesday, April 15, 6 to 8 pm, Foster Caregiver Support Group, on Peoria Park District Summer Programs with Steve Montez from Peoria Park District. RSVP Carol at 309.323.6529.

Thursday, May 1, 6 to 8 pm, Specialized Foster Caregiver Support Group. RSVP Shannon Doubet at 309.323.6542.

Saturday, May 31, starting at 1 pm—Foster Caregiver Appreciation Picnic at East Peoria Fondulac VFW Shelter. RSVP to Allison at 309.323.6557.

Thursday, June 5, 6 to 8 pm, Specialized Foster Caregiver Support Group. RSVP Shannon Doubet at 309.323.6542.

Saturday, June 7, Run Wild 8K & Wild Mile Fun Run, Wildlife Prairie State Park near Hanna City, IL.

Tuesday, June 17, 6 to 8 pm, Foster Caregiver Support Group. CYFS Lead Caseworker Shannon Doubet will present information on "Love & Logic". Child care is provided—call Carol at 309.323.6529 to confirm.

Tuesday, July 15, 6 to 8 pm, Foster Caregiver Support Group. Stefanie Carter will present "Facts and Trends on Substance Abuse in Youth". Child care is provided—call Carol at 309.323.6529 to confirm.

Wednesday, July 23, Peoria Chiefs Fundraiser sponsored by the FCAB.

Tuesday, August 19, 6 to 8 pm, Foster Caregiver Support Group. Dawn Michaud from SEAPCO will present "Special Services in Education". Child care is provided—call Carol at 309.323.6529 to confirm.

Rock Island

Monday, April 28, 5:30 to 7 pm, Foster Caregiver Support Group Meeting on Grief and Loss in Adolescents, presented by Counseling Intern Allison Elfine. RSVP your licensing worker.

Monday, May 19, 5:30 to 7 pm, Foster Caregiver Support Group Meeting. RSVP your licensing worker.

Monday, June 23, 5:30 to 7 pm, Foster Caregiver Support Group Meeting. RSVP your licensing worker.

ALSO—Informational meetings about adoption and fostering are held at each branch office on the second Tuesday of each month, starting at 5:30 pm.

DCFS is offering several trainings across the region this winter and spring. Please call your licensing worker for information regarding training topics, dates/times, and locations, as well as information on how to register. This information can also be found on-line at www.DCFSTraining.org.



Planning Ahead for Camp

Now is the time to find options for camp this summer, for children in your care. One option is Comeback Kids Camp, held July 21st through 26th, at East Bay Camp, Lake Bloomington, IL. This camp is geared for foster girls, ages 7 through 11, but they do not have to be wards of the state. Deadline for enrollment is May 31, but space is limited so earlier submittal of registration is strongly encouraged. If interested, please contact your child's worker asap. (Guardian signature on the application is required for all wards of the state.)



Mary Kay's Corner

Important Phone Numbers

Child Abuse Hotline

800.252.2873

Missing Child Helpline

866.503.0184

Advocacy Office

800.232.3798/217.524.2029

Foster Parent Hotline

800.624.KIDS/800.624.5437

Adoption Hotline

800.572.2390

Inspector General

800.722.9124

Daycare Information

877.746.0829/312.328.2779

Youth Hotline

800.232.3798

The partnership between our foster and adoptive parents and our staff is truly important to how we all provide for the children who come into care. In our last newsletter we discussed the importance of understanding the role of the foster or adoptive parents in providing care. Next, let's take a look at the specific relationships between our foster and adoptive parents and our staff. Since the first staff member a prospective foster or adoptive parent generally comes in contact with is our licensing staff, we will begin there. It is important to note that if you are interested in adoption, your adoption specialist is also your foster care licensing worker.

The relationship between staff and foster or adoptive parents begins long before a child is placed in your home. It begins with the first inquiry you make into becoming a foster parent or adoptive parent. During this first contact, you have a chance to speak to one of our workers. This first contact gives you information on the specifics about becoming a foster or adoptive parent. You will learn about the requirements, the training and the support you receive as a CYFS foster or adoptive parent. We want you to make informed decisions, so you are given plenty of information as well as time to consider your options.

Consider your licensing worker as your guide. Your worker can support you in the following ways.

- Help you identify the unique qualities or characteristics that will assist you in succeeding as a foster or adoptive parent.

- Help you discover where you need to grow to ensure you are ready for the challenges of foster or adoptive parenting. For example, if you have never worked with children who act out as a way of coping with loss, your worker may suggest you participate in trainings or support groups to become better aware of how children's behavior is influenced by trauma.

- Assist you as you work through the process of licensure. It is not enough to simply want to be a foster or adoptive parent. Foster and adoptive parents in Illinois must comply with licensing standards that are grounded in law. For this reason, your licensing worker will require you to have a medical examination, pass background checks, participate in training and have your home evaluated for safety.

- Help you assess the specific needs of children that would do well in your home. This will include the number of children that may be placed in your home, the specific ages and needs of each children and how these children will impact your current family system.

Once you are licensed, the role of your licensing worker is to help and support you with the next part of your journey. This may include helping prepare for placements, make sure you stay in compliance with the licensing standards, provide opportunities for ongoing training and assist you when a child is placed in your home. The licensing worker, when necessary will also conduct licensing complaint investigations.

For your part, there are some things you can do to strengthen your relationship with your worker.

- Be timely with your responses. If you are asked to complete paperwork or to provide some follow up, do so in a timely way.

- Keep your worker in the loop. Once you are licensed, your worker will be required to meet with you within 60 days and then every six months. If you need something more or if something changes in your life, it is your responsibility to make sure your licensing worker is made aware.

- When you have a placement, continue to work with your licensing worker. The licensing worker will partner with the child's worker to make sure you have what you need to be successful with the placement. The licensing worker can help you identify resources you may need to work with the child placed.

- At this point, your worker will provide ongoing training opportunities on topics important to foster and adoptive parents. When your worker follows up in providing requested training opportunities, participate in them. Not only will you become more aware of foster care issues but you will be helping your worker, help his/her foster parent team.

Finally understand while your licensing worker is your advocate and there to help you with your foster or adoptive parent experience, their ultimate responsibility is to ensure the safety and well-being of the children placed in our CYFS homes. You can work in partnership with them on this effort as well by taking an active part in your foster or adoptive parenting experience.

Next time we will consider the relationship between the foster parent and the child's foster care worker.



The Center for Youth and Family Solutions

2610 W. Richwoods Blvd.
Peoria, IL 61604

Branch offices in Bloomington, Champaign, Danville, Galesburg, LaSalle, Lincoln, Macomb, Rock Island, and Springfield

Phone: 309.323-6600
Website: www.cyfsolutions.org

Branch Offices

Bloomington—Morris	309.820.7616	Lincoln	217.732.3771
Champaign	217.352.5179	Macomb	309.883.1791
Danville	217.443.1772	Peoria	309.323-6600
Galesburg	309.342.1136	Rock Island	309.786.0770
LaSalle	815.223.4007	Springfield	217.528.3694

Achieving Solutions.
Together.



May is National Foster Care Month!

Thanks for all you do, every day!



2nd Annual Birthmother's Day Balloon Launch

The 2nd Annual CYFS Birthmother's Day Balloon Launch will be held on May 10th. The Center for Youth and Family Solutions believes it is important to reach out to birthmother's to not only give a voice to birthmother's but to honor their role as the first mothers. What better way to do this than to come together and raise up the balloons in remembrance of the role of a first mother in a child's life. To learn more about the event in your community go to our CYFS website, www.cyfsolutions.org.

On Being a Medically Complex Foster Caregiver

A foster caregiver from Springfield had this to say when asked why she cares for children under the medically complex contract...

"I've been doing this for 7 years...it can be very heart-breaking, sometimes difficult, but the children give back so much. Each smile is precious. Sometimes I think about how that child's life might have been if I hadn't stepped up—that's one reason why I continue to do what I do."



The Center for Youth and Family Solutions is seeking individuals who are either currently licensed or willing to become licensed in order to provide care, safety, structure, stability and nurturing for the most vulnerable children and youth in foster care, those with a wide array of medical needs. The ideal caregiver is a team player, actively participating in all of the child's needs – transporting the child to various medical and therapy appointments and taking part in child and family team meetings, counseling appointments, and school staffings. In addition to providing care for the child in their home, medically complex caregivers often have the opportunity to work with the child's family, helping with visits, mentoring the parent(s), and allowing phone contact. Medically complex caregivers receive monthly reimbursements for the children placed in their home, along with support services in case management, nursing support, counseling/therapy, and training as needed. Ongoing trainings tailored for medically complex caregivers are provided by the agency, with a minimum of 16 hours required annually. Please contact us through our website, www.cyfsolutions.org or call Jamie at 1-800-788-8881.