

October 2019

CYFS Foster Caregiver/Adoptive Parent Calendar

Welcome Fall—Time for Healing, Time for Growing, Time for Fun!



*Many thanks for all
you do, every day,
for the children and
their families!*

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Give Thanks!

Last night, it occurred to me that we spend significant time every day in providing care for these amazing foster children and youth, time that is necessary to help them heal from those hard places known and unknown to the adults in their lives. We all know the needs—addressing issues at school, in the home, working with a counselor, and oftentimes with weekly follow-ups that require us to track information and provide regular communication with the team and other professionals. Meeting these needs requires countless hours on the road and the regular replacement of tires and new oil changes due to all the miles that accumulate from making sure we attend all these appointments. In addition, when we must use our family time to meet these needs—followed by simple but hurried regular meals, baths, tooth brushing, preparing for the next morning, some efforts toward straightening their rooms and other chores, homework, and participation in band or choir or piano lessons or sports or church groups—when do we find time to just enjoy each other as a family, experiencing fun as a family?

The very nature of play is therapeutic. It supports healing and learning, fosters hope and trust, and promotes connection/relationship between the individuals involved. Play encourages the use of the imagination through role play and creativity—activities like dress-up, playing school or house, building towers with blocks, making a pie from playdough, turning a large cardboard box into a spaceship, or taking photos of butterflies while on a walk...using brightly colored sidewalk chalk on the driveway, making up a story and illustrating with the use of hand puppets, lying in the grass and watching the clouds with wonder for what they may resemble—a face or kitten or hand or angel... When children and youth lead these experiences, they acquire more confidence, more creativity, more flexibility, more practice in just making choices and using good judgment. All of these things support the development of a healthy adult, - adults who demonstrate confidence, compassion, flexibility, and vision. One more bonus—enjoying these activities can result in healthier adults who have **fun memories to cherish**...those things we enjoyed as a family, beautiful memories to help us through the hard days, and to help us remember we are loved..

The world is so serious, with many good reasons, but our children and youth need to spend more time in play, as play can help develop many skills needed by adults. Play gives us as foster caregivers and adoptive parents the opportunity to model each one, combined with the opportunity to strengthen these precious connections/relationships, the place where healing begins. By the way, there's no age limitation on the value of play. It's a good thing for all of us! Every day!

CYFS Foster Caregiver/Adoptive Parent Calendar

Danville

Thursday, Oct. 24, 2019, Trunk or Treat, 5:30 to 7 pm at the Danville CYFS Office.

Champaign

Wednesday, Oct. 30, 2019, Trunk or Treat, 5:30 pm, at the Champaign CYFS Office.

Galesburg

Friday, December 6, Holiday Party, doors open at 4:30, but come as soon as you can. At First Christian Church, 514 Sunny Lane, Monmouth, IL, 61462. Dinner provided, followed by fun activities to be enjoyed by everyone living in your household. Come join us for a time of celebration and joy! RSVP to Amanda at 309.342.1136.

LaSalle

Thursday, October 3, 5:30 to 7:30 pm. Childcare is provided! We will meet at the LaSalle CYFS Office. Please RSVP to Erin by October 1st—earn 2 training credit hours for giving your input on agency decisions and learning about our implementation plan. Come join us, and learn more about becoming a Foster Caregiver Advisory Board member.

1st Sunday of every month, Foster Parent Support Group at noon. These are held at the Crossbridge Church located at 4161 Columbus St., Ottawa, IL, 61350.

Peoria

Tuesday, October 1, 5:30 to 7 pm. Childcare is provided. Please consider joining to provide input on agency decisions and provide support for other foster caregivers in our agency. We are meeting at the Peoria CYFS Office.

Monday, October 7, 14, 21, 28, Nov. 4, Updated PST Sessions 4, 5, 6, 7, and 8, either 10 am to 1 pm or 5:30 pm to 8:30 pm. These group sessions began Sept. 9. No child care is provided. Next groups will begin February 3, 2020, both 10 am and 5:30 pm sessions.

Thursday, October 15, 6 to 8 pm. Foster Caregiver Support Group. Mindy Wilson, CYFS Nurse, will share information on her role with the agency and children under the Medically Complex contract. She will also discuss the need for more foster caregivers needed to provide this specialized care for children and youth with these special needs. Child care is provided for those who reserve a slot by RSVP to the Licensing Worker.

**November is
National
Adoption
Month**



Thursday, November 19, 6 to 8 pm, Foster Caregiver Support Group. Dr. Dawn Michaud will present information on Foster Care and Navigating Special Education Services. Child care will be provided for those foster caregivers who reserve a slot by RSVP to the Licensing Worker

Saturday, December 7, Peoria Foster Family Christmas Party, at Second Chance Church. 11:30 to 1:30.

Rock Island

Tuesday, October 8, Foster Caregiver Support Group, 5:30 to 7 pm. Human trafficking/investigations training at the Rock Island CYFS Office. RSVP to Aimee at 309.786.0770.

Friday, October 11, Foster Parent Appreciation Dinner, 6 to 9 pm. At New Life Fellowship Church in Moline.

Saturday, October 19, 8 am, Family Pride Event at Niabi Zoo.

2 recruitment events with Alliance—Monday, October 7, 6 pm, at Black Hawk, and Saturday, October 19, 9 am, at Black Hawk

**TRAUMA COMPROMISES OUR
ABILITY TO ENGAGE WITH
OTHERS BY REPLACING
PATTERNS OF CONNECTION
WITH PATTERNS OF
PROTECTION.**

STEPHEN PORGES

Something to get excited about...a new support group for Pekin Community High School students. This group will focus on students who are being raised by relatives other than their parents. This group will meet on the fourth Tuesday of each month during the third period at the school. If you know of a student who would benefit from this support group, have the student contact their counselor or Mr. Joel Schmieg at the school. We want to thank Kroger's in Pekin for the donation to assist the group. If you have any questions, please contact Jennifer Durbin at 323-6543.



Mary Kay's Corner

In case I haven't mentioned it in a while, I just want you to know how much CYFS appreciates our foster parents. **You all rock!**

During the past few months we have been busy many different projects and a majority of them have been ones that you, our foster parents have initiated. As you may already know, CYFS is re-energizing the Foster Caregiver Advisory Boards. Each office has a board and each board designs the type of activities that meet the needs of the members of their group. So for example, the LaSalle board may do some things different than the Peoria board. Each board is unique and tailored to meet the needs of foster parents in their local community. All boards have the same mission and goals. We thought it would be good to post the FCAB's mission and goals here so all of our foster parents would have an opportunity to learn more about the boards.

The Center for Youth and Family Solutions

Foster Caregiver Advisory Board

Mission Statements

The Center for Youth and Family Solutions Foster Caregiver's Advisory Board (FCAB's) provides foster parents the opportunity to support each other and work side by side with the CYFS staff to build and strengthen the foster parent community. FCAB's strive to create a positive sense of foster parenting within their local communities.

Each branch office's board is unique and is shaped by the needs and vision of the local board members.

FCAB GOALS

Goals of each branch office FCAB may vary but all are grounded in strengthening the foster parent experience. Goals include:

- Foster Parent Training and Education
- Foster Parent Advocacy and Networking
- Foster Parent Fundraising activities
- Foster Parent Recruitment and Retention
- Foster Parent Support and Mentoring

Each Foster Care Advisory Board is as unique as its local community. Some hold meetings monthly, while others meet quarterly. These meetings allow foster caregivers a way to join together to do the following:

- Address foster caregiver needs such as trainings or identifying local resources
- Improve foster care services
- Consider ways to strengthen their local foster care experience
- Assist in the development and delivery of the Foster Care Implementation Plan
- Work together and support each other
- Recruit and support new foster parent
- Work with their local foster care staff to maintain positive relationships. (cont'd. pg. 4)



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 Rest of *Mary Kay's Corner*

If you would like to know more about your local FCAB or if you would like to join your local CYFS FCAB please contact your licensing worker.

Another exciting opportunity we are working on is something that came up at the FCAB meetings. To help foster parents connect with each other, the FCAB's discussed the need for new ways to network. As a result, very soon, CYFS will be bringing Foster Caregiver Support Group pages to Facebook. Each FCAB will have its own support group page. The idea is that this way even if you cannot come to a support group or other fostering activities, you could still reach out to foster parents through this private group. Once all of the kinks are worked out, your licensing worker will let you know how to access the page. Looking forward to many good discussions and opportunities to support each other.

We could forget to remind all of you that this is the time of year when our foster parents and foster care teams review and work on the foster parent law implementation plan. As many of you already know our first step is to review the current implementation plan to see what is working and what needs some improvement. This step has already happened in many of our offices. Once we have your feedback, the 2020 implementation plan will be presented for review and discussion. A huge thank you to all of the foster parents who worked on the improving the plan for this year and for those who have not had a chance to touch base on the plan, please feel free to contact me at mkcollins@cyfsolutions.org with your ideas and thoughts.

Happy Fall! - *Mary Kay*





Challenging Behaviors and Some Tips on How to De-Escalate a Child in Distress

Children who misbehave may **NOT** be just a spoiled child who is trying to get attention or his or her own way. Children misbehaving are mostly struggling to communicate what he or she needs. ***All behavior usually happens for one of three reasons:***

The child wants something, the child is trying to avoid something, and the child is trying to meet a sensory need, such as avoiding a noise or being touched

When a child is in the middle of a meltdown or struggling to emotionally regulate him or herself, parents must always remain calm first and then depending on the child may want to:

Decrease stimulation- Lower the volume on the television, dim bright lights, ask others to leave the room, etc.

Validate their feelings- Acknowledge the situation is upsetting to your child

Encourage verbalization/offer help- Ask the child to talk to you about what is upsetting him or her

Reinforce the positive- Focus on the positive things that your child might be doing

Redirect, exchange, and prompt- Tell your child what you want him or her to do, “Please use an indoor voice” instead of saying “Stop yelling!”

Switch off- Ask the child if another adult (spouse, friend, adult child residing in the home) would be better to talk with them instead of you

Withhold attention/wait- Wait it out when all else fails. Let him or her know you will talk with him or her once they are able to remain calm

Don’t rush the process- Act as if you have all day and it will hopefully be better in a few minutes -if not it may take all day

<https://www.bradleyhospital.org/tantrums-meltdowns-and-kids-acting-out-what-do>

And remember: **T.A.C.O.S.**



T- Don’t Threaten the child **A-** Don’t Argue or contradict the child **C-** Don’t Challenge the child in the heat of the moment

Pointing your finger and standing over a child can be intimidating and may initiate a fear response to the child. Be mindful of your body language and if the child is sitting you may also want to sit down to get on the same level as the child.

From Amanda Troyer, Licensing Worker, Galesburg CYFS

The Center for Youth and Family Solutions

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

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Branch Offices

Bloomington—Center	309.829.6307
Bloomington—Morris	309.820.7616
Champaign	217.352.5179
Danville	217.443.1772
Galesburg	309.342.1136

LaSalle	815.223.4007
Lincoln	217.732.3771
Macomb	309.833.1791
Peoria	309.323.6600
Rock Island	309.786.0770
Springfield	217.528.3694

Achieving Solutions Together



November is National Adoption Month



*On September 30, 2019, The Center for Youth and Family Solutions served 1,082 children and youth for the state of Illinois, with the help of more than 582 licensed traditional and relative foster homes, and 191 unlicensed CYFS relative foster homes that provided for their placement (42 unlicensed relative homes have pending applications). **Many, many thanks to each of you for all you do, every single day!**



Team CYFS,

We had an unexpected visitor drop by our Peoria Richwoods office this afternoon (end of September) and her intention was **inspiring**.

This is **Shelby** (pictured with our Volunteer and Intern Coordinator Sue Hirschman). Shelby is a former youth in care. She came today with a purpose. She wanted to **pay it forward**. She brought with her items that she felt youth in care would love to have; things that she always wanted when she was younger, but couldn't afford. Things like make up, colorful water bottles, fun school supplies.

She also wanted to in a way, **make amends**. She recognized that she was not always the easiest youth to work with. But the thing is, she is now thriving. And she knows she couldn't have done this without her team here at **CYFS**, specifically **Sara Higgins**, who was her family worker and biggest advocate.

On those days that you feel tired, frustrated and wonder if you are making an impact, you really do make a **big difference**.

