

# Family Connections

Volume 10, Issue 2 ~ Spring, 2011

## In This Issue:

### Advisory Board

- Page 2

### New Crib Safety Standards

- Page 3

### Policy Updates

- Pages 4 - 5

### Expert Exchange: Professional Answers to your Questions

- Pages 5 - 7

### Waiting Children

- Page 11

### And much more. . .

### Family Connections is edited and published by:

Department of Social Services  
Children's Division  
615 Howerton Court, P.O. Box 88  
Jefferson City, MO 65103  
[www.dss.mo.gov](http://www.dss.mo.gov)

### In conjunction with:

Foster & Adoptive Care Coalition  
1750 S. Brentwood Blvd., Ste. 210  
Brentwood, MO 63144  
800.FOSTER.3  
[www.foster-adopt.org](http://www.foster-adopt.org)

### If you no longer wish to receive this publication, please:

#### Request in writing:

Foster & Adoptive Care Coalition  
Attn: Jessi Brawley  
1750 S. Brentwood Boulevard  
Suite 210  
Brentwood, MO 63144

#### By telephone toll-free:

800.FOSTER.3 (314.367.8373)

#### Or by email:

[jessibrawley@foster-adopt.org](mailto:jessibrawley@foster-adopt.org)

## Protecting Missouri's Children from Abuse and Neglect



The Children's Division devotes its work to protecting Missouri's children. In April, National Child Abuse Prevention Month, we remind our citizens that prevention is a responsibility we all share.

Children are going to act up. When your child does act up, make sure you explain that you disapprove of the behavior but love your child. This can be a challenge for many of us. Instead of making negative attacks, use positive language to explain how your child can act more appropriately. It is also important to be consistent with your children. Clear and consistent rules give your child boundaries they will learn to follow.

As a licensed parent, you are a mandated reporter. You are the eyes and ears of our communities. **If you suspect child abuse or neglect, please call the Child Abuse and Neglect Hotline at 1.800.392.3738.**

### Five Ways to Prevent Child Abuse

*From the 2011 Prevention Packet by "Prevent Child Abuse Missouri: A Program of Missouri KidsFirst"*

#### 1. Care for Yourself

Learn more about how children grow and learn, and tips for parenting during each stage of growth. Take time out for yourself so you have the inner strength to bounce back when things are hard. Seek support from family, friends, and neighbors to help cope with the stress of everyday life.

#### 2. Care for Children

Spend time listening, reading, talking, and playing with a child. Teach good behavior by using good behavior yourself. Let children know they are loved.

#### 3. Care for Others

Offer a helping hand to others who care for children and let them know that everyone needs help from time to time. Provide emotional support to family, friends, and neighbors caring for children.

#### 4. Get Involved.

Ask community leaders and businesses to make caring for children and families a priority. Register to vote and stay informed about local, state, and national policies that impact children. Volunteer your time or donate to help children thrive.

#### 5. Report.

Trust your instincts. If you believe a child has been or may be harmed, call the Child Abuse Hotline at 1.800.392.3738 or 911 for law enforcement.

Missouri KidsFirst is one of the many organizations that works with the Children's Division to put an end to child abuse and neglect. For a calendar of events regarding statewide prevention month activities, to add an event to the statewide prevention activities calendar, or to find resources relating to child abuse and neglect prevention, please visit [www.missourikidsfirst.org](http://www.missourikidsfirst.org).

The 2011 Missouri Child Abuse Prevention Month Community Resource Toolkit (provided by Missouri KidsFirst) includes tools for individuals and communities to modify and use to support local child abuse prevention efforts. It is available at: [www.missourikidsfirst.org/pcamo/?page\\_id=6](http://www.missourikidsfirst.org/pcamo/?page_id=6)

# News You Can Use: Foster Care & Adoption Advisory Boards

## Board Representatives

### Northwest Region

- **Melinda Hardin** 816.699.3115  
dhardin3@kc.rr.com
- **Rep 2: VACANT**

### Northeast Region

- **Suzie Forbis** 573.881.7339  
srforbis@gmail.com
- **Ron Forbis** 573.881.7340  
srforbis@gmail.com

### Southeast Region

- **Kathryn Byington** 573.358.3736  
ronbyington@charter.net
- **Dean Aye** 417.469.3278  
pitstop1@centurytel.net

### Southwest Region

- **Eric Pilson** 417.779.9161  
upickpigs@centurytel.net
- **Melinda Nicholson** 417.766.5124  
marvandmelinda@yahoo.com

### Kansas City

- **Lois McDonald** 816.833.0785  
mcdonald.lois@sbcglobal.net
- **Janet Richardson** 816.796.4497  
jnrichardson@sbcglobal.net

### St. Louis City

- **Sara Glasscock** 314.283.0214  
somethindiff4ya@yahoo.com
- **Cheryl Williams** 314.355.6445  
williams.cd@sbcglobal.net

### St. Louis County

- **Barbara Bocklage** 314.608.5580  
stlbarbie@sbcglobal.net
- **Phyllis Hackman** 636.527.3255  
ms.phack@yahoo.com

## Foster Care Associations Missouri Foster Care & Adoption Association

- **Jim McKenna** 314.956.4695  
mfcaastatepres@centurytel.net

## Midwest Foster Care & Adoption Association

- **Lori Ross** 816.686.0463  
ross600@aol.com

## Foster & Adoptive Care Coalition

- **Nickie Steinhoff** 800.FOSTER.3  
nickiesteinhoff@foster-adopt.org

## Local and State Boards Working for You

The Children's Division supports foster parents through the on-going work of the State Foster Care and Adoption Advisory Board. Each area/region of the state holds local meetings quarterly and works to resolve issues of their area foster/adoptive parents. The state board consists of two parent representatives from each Regional board and three foster parent association representatives.

## Get Involved

### Local Advisory Board:

Each local board operates within its own established bylaws. To find out more information about the work being done in your area, contact your parent representative or foster parent association listed in the column to the left.

### State Advisory Board:

Each area board is responsible for sending two parent representatives to the state meetings held quarterly in Jefferson City. Parent representatives are asked to make a two-year service commitment to the state board. If you are interested in representing your area, contact your parent representative, listed in the column to the left.

## Goals of the Advisory Board

**Goal 1:** To use available internal and external data to identify systemic needs, and develop plans to address those needs, using resources available within the agencies involved and the community as a whole.

**Goal 2:** To improve partnership between the Children's Division, other relevant state agencies, and foster parents through ongoing communication, input and support.

**Goal 3:** To work together with the Children's Division to clarify policy and practices, provide feedback and recommendations regarding present and proposed policies related to child welfare.

**Goal 4:** Improve the Children's Division's communication with, and resource families' knowledge of, Children's Division policy.

**Goal 5:** To provide an opportunity for resource families, Children's Division staff, and the community to network and share resources.

## May is National Foster Care Appreciation Month!

Each May, we salute the compassionate people who make a difference by serving as foster parents, relative caregivers, mentors, advocates, social workers, and volunteers. Thanks to these unsung heroes, many formerly abused or neglected children and teens will safely reunite with their parents, be cared for by relatives, or be adopted by loving families.

But some children in foster care are less fortunate. Most communities across the country are urgently seeking more everyday people to help these youth overcome their troubled childhoods and realize their full potential. No matter what their age, every young person in foster care benefits from a meaningful connection to a caring adult who becomes a supportive and lasting presence in his or her life. For more information on how to get involved in National Foster Care Month activities, visit [www.fostercaremonth.org](http://www.fostercaremonth.org),

## Children's Division

### After Dozens of Deaths, Drop-side Cribs Outlawed and Strong New Crib Safety Standards Approved

The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) voted unanimously to approve new mandatory standards for full-size and non-full-size baby cribs as mandated by the Consumer Product Safety Improvement Act of 2008 (CPSIA). The federal crib standards had not been updated in nearly 30 years and these new rules are expected to usher in a safer generation of cribs.

Once they become effective, the mandatory crib standards will:

1. stop the manufacture and sale of dangerous, traditional drop-side cribs;
2. make mattress supports stronger;
3. make crib hardware more durable; and
4. make safety testing more rigorous.

CPSC has recalled more than 11 million dangerous cribs in the past five years, including cribs from big-name companies such as Evenflo, Delta Enterprise Corp., and Pottery Barn Kids. Detaching drop-side rails were associated with at least 32 infant and toddler suffocation and strangulation deaths since 2000. Additional deaths have occurred due to faulty or defective hardware. These new standards aim to prevent these tragedies and keep children safe in their cribs.

CPSC Chairman Inez Tenenbaum hailed the new standard for cribs as one of the strongest in the world. "I believe these new standards will markedly reduce crib-related hazards and help to ensure that young children sleep more safely in their cribs," Tenenbaum said after the vote.

Effective June 2011, cribs manufactured, sold, or leased in the United States must comply with the new federal standards. Effective 24 months after the rule is published, child care facilities, such as family child care homes and infant Head Start centers, and places of public accommodation, such as hotels and motels, must have compliant cribs in their facilities.

The full-size and non-full-size crib standards adopted the current ASTM International voluntary standards with additional technical modifications.

For more information on crib safety and safe sleep environments for baby, visit CPSC's crib information center at [www.cpsc.gov/info/cribs/index.html](http://www.cpsc.gov/info/cribs/index.html). Or, visit [www.dss.mo.gov/cd/info/forms/index.htm](http://www.dss.mo.gov/cd/info/forms/index.htm) to view the Children's Division's safe sleep practices (form CD-117)

### Digital Citizen ID Cards for Youth

The Digital Citizen Identification Card empowers youth to help keep themselves and others safer while using technology. This card does not use the word DON'T, rather it affirms what youth CAN DO to be safer online. Youth sign their Digital Citizen ID card which creates a feeling of ownership over their online behavior. Please contact Missouri KidsFirst at 573.632.4600 or visit [www.missourikidsfirst.org](http://www.missourikidsfirst.org) to inquire about receiving Digital Citizen ID cards for the youth in your community.



### 2011 Conference: "All Together Now" Presented by the Missouri Foster Care & Adoption Association in Partnership with the Missouri Children's Division

**Date:** June 16-18, 2011

**Location:** Tan-Tar-A Resort, Osage Beach, MO (centrally located between Kansas City and St. Louis and within 90 minutes of Springfield and Columbia) Rooms at Tan-Tar-A Resort are only \$69 per night when booked through MFCAA.

**Renew your membership!** MFCAA membership per year is \$20.

Send your registration and membership fees to:  
Jan Eagleburger, 225 S. Troy, Springfield, MO 65802

**Cost:**

Rates (Before May 15th)

- MFCAA members, \$90 per person
- Non-members, \$115 per person
- Daily rate (not including banquet or special events), \$30 per person

More information:

- Ron Byington, [ronbyington@gmail.com](mailto:ronbyington@gmail.com)
- Melinda Nicholson, [marvandmelinda@yahoo.com](mailto:marvandmelinda@yahoo.com)
- Jan Eagleburger, 417.862.8081 or [janeagleburger@att.net](mailto:janeagleburger@att.net)

## Capitol Ideas: Your Policy Update

### Respite for Emergency Foster Care (CD10-123)

Licensed resource providers who are contracted to provide Emergency Foster Care may on rare occasions, such as a death in the family, illness, or unplanned hospitalization, find it necessary to receive emergency respite care services.

On those occasions:

1. Payment for the respite provider is made by following the Payment Request instructions in the FACES Financial Management handbook.
2. The time that the foster youth is in respite care continues to count toward the maximum 60 consecutive days of being in an emergency placement. Policy revision was effective Oct. 1st.

<http://dss.mo.gov/cd/info/memos/2010/cd10-123.pdf>

### Resource Provider Emergency Procedures (CD10-127)

Policy requires that the resource provider review emergency plan with the foster youth in their home every six months and that the licensing resource worker review and approve the plan every six months. Additional clarifications to this policy include:

- The resource provider has read and understands the Children's Division's policy regarding infectious diseases exposure. Information regarding this is located in the Missouri Resource Parent Handbook.
- The emergency plan specifically addresses the unique needs of each foster youth placed in the home; and
- The plan is to be **updated** every six months, not just reviewed, for all and any changes in the home that would affect the household being prepared for emergencies. Such updates would include but not be limited to the unique needs of specific foster placements, the season, etc.

<http://dss.mo.gov/cd/info/memos/2010/cd10-127.pdf>

### Availability Payments for Level B Foster Care Providers (CD11-01)

A resource provider for Youth with Elevated Needs Level B may receive availability payments of \$21 per day when:

- They are not at licensed capacity for

level B placements, which is two level B youth;

- They are continuing to accept level B placements; and
- They provide transitional services for a potential level B placement into their home, or transitional services for a current level B placement out of their home.

Transitional services include, but are not limited to:

- Participate in regular staffing with the FST or Selection/Screening Team to assess progress of the plan
- Provide pre-placement visits;
- File reports;
- Actively work with the Team to identify potential children who would be good matches for their home.
- Accept children the team agrees are appropriate matches;
- Utilize the FST or Selection/Screening Team to create a specific transitional plan for the child.

Clarifications that have been added are:

- Availability payment will only be paid for one child at a time at any given time;
- If the provider refuses to accept three consecutive Elevated Needs Level B placements, then the availability payments will stop;
- Availability payments are child specific. The DCN of Elevated Needs Level B foster youth to whom the transitional services are being provided must be used to generate the payment.

<http://dss.mo.gov/cd/info/memos/2011/cd11-001.pdf>

### Resource Provider Support During Out-of-Home Investigations (CD11-02)

When a Child Abuse and Neglect report is received regarding a resource provider, the provider often feels isolated and unclear as to the process. CD staff may be unsure of what can be shared with them and may avoid visiting the provider during the investigative process. Both the resource providers and CD staff indicate they do not understand the role of the OHI unit.

A focus group consisting of Central Office staff, various levels of field staff, and resource providers met to address these concerns. The tools introduced in this memo are a result of the focus

group's recommendations.

The OHI unit is a special investigations unit within the Children's Division. The role of OHI staff is to investigate a reported concern involving a resource provider. OHI staff identify safety issues and report any safety issues to the case manager of the child(ren) placed in the home. The OHI investigator does not create a safety plan, remove children, or provide referrals for resources.

The following resources are available to provide support and instruction regarding the role and responsibilities of staff involved in the OHI process:

- Talking points have been developed to clarify the role of the local office regarding the OHI process and are available for staff to use for communicating the OHI process to resource providers.
- A flow chart indicating the OHI process.
- A Power Point discussing the OHI process is located on the CD Intranet home page under Training Resource, Power Point Presentations. The Power Point may be used to train CD staff and resource providers on the roles and responsibilities of the OHI unit.
- The Out-of-Home Investigation Protocol Information form, CD-165, has been developed for the OHI unit to provide to the resource provider being investigated for child abuse and neglect allegations.

If the OHI investigator requests the local CD worker to make the initial face-to-face contact due to regulatory time frames, the local worker shall provide a copy of the CD-165 with the name and telephone contact number of the OHI unit investigator entered thereon.

<http://dss.mo.gov/cd/info/memos/2011/cd11-002.pdf>

### Workforce Opportunities for Older Youth (CD11-23)

The Youth Independence Interdepartmental Initiative (YIII) is charged with maximizing the use of resources to support youth in or exiting from care and their transition to successful adult roles and responsibilities with the ultimate goal of improving outcomes and futures for youth exiting from foster care.

## Capitol Ideas: Your Policy Update

### State Parks Youth Corp

Youth in foster care meet eligibility requirements to participate. Participants will earn \$7.25 an hour and will work an average of 400 hours from April 1st to November 30th. Parks staff and counselors from 14 local Workforce Investment Boards recruit and select participants. Youth may apply online at: [www.thinkoutside.mo.gov/](http://www.thinkoutside.mo.gov/).

### Job Corps

Job Corps is a career technical training and education program for young people age 16 to 24 that qualify as low income. It is a voluntary program administered by the U.S. Department of Labor. Job Corps offers the opportunity to earn a high school diploma or GED. For youth who already have a high school diploma, Job Corps can help them prepare for college. Courses in independent living, employability skills, and social skills are offered to all Job Corps students in order to help them make the transition into the workplace. While enrolled, students receive housing, meals, basic medical care, and living allowances. Graduates receive transitional support services, including help locating housing, child care and transportation, for up to 18 months after they leave the program. Missouri has three locations. More information can be found at: [www.jobcorps.gov/Home.aspx](http://www.jobcorps.gov/Home.aspx)

### Vocational Rehabilitation

Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) specializes in employment and training services that assist individuals with disabilities in becoming employed. A VR counselor will determine eligibility for services. To be eligible, a youth needs to have a physical or mental impairment that causes problems with working and need VR services to be successfully employed. Once eligible, the youth will work with a counselor who will help them develop a plan for rehabilitation. For vocational information and guidance: [www.dese.mo.gov/vr/vocrehab.htm](http://www.dese.mo.gov/vr/vocrehab.htm)

### Work Opportunity Tax Credit

Private, for profit businesses across the state that hire nine targeted (including youth in foster care) groups with barriers to employment are eligible for a

federal tax credit. The Missouri Department of Economic Development, through Division of Workforce Development, administers the program in the state of Missouri. There is no limit on the number of qualifying new hires per business or total amount of tax credits per year. The forms as well as a fact sheet and brochure may be obtained by visiting [www.doleta.gov/business/Incentives/optiontax/](http://www.doleta.gov/business/Incentives/optiontax/) OR

[www.missouridevelopment.org/pdfs/dwd\\_wotc.pdf](http://www.missouridevelopment.org/pdfs/dwd_wotc.pdf)

### Workforce Investment Boards (WIB)

Participation on your local Workforce Investment Board or attendance at local meetings is an opportunity to become involved at the community level and to be aware of services available for youth. WIB information is available at:

[www.worksmart.ded.mo.gov/index.cfm](http://www.worksmart.ded.mo.gov/index.cfm).

Each WIB has a Youth Council whose primary purpose is to provide expertise in youth policy and to assist local WIBs with program design.

### Missouri Career Centers

Missouri Career Centers are located throughout Missouri and offer resume preparation, career assessment, online training and workshops as well as direct access to Workforce Investment Act Youth Programs. A map of the locations and other information is available at:

[www.missouricareersource.com/mcs/mcs/default.seek](http://www.missouricareersource.com/mcs/mcs/default.seek).

MissouriCareerSource.com is a statewide web resource that provides information on job fair listings and has a career guide which contains information on exploring careers, top Missouri jobs, interest survey, career alternatives, planning, managing money, job seeking skills, finding services, and creating a plan of action. Career assistance is offered in such areas as worker resources, disability services, on-line training, job skills assessments, job openings, and financial assistance. <http://dss.mo.gov/cd/info/memos/2011/cd11-023.pdf>

### **Revision of Emotional Abuse Definition (CD11-25)**

Emotional abuse is defined by case law as, "an injury to the child's psychological capacity or emotional stability, which is demonstrated by an observable or substantial change in the child's behavior, emotional response, or cognition, including anxiety, depression, withdrawal, or aggressive behavior."

For additional information on emotional abuse see Section 7, Chapter 33 of the Child Welfare Manual.

<http://dss.mo.gov/cd/info/memos/2011/cd11-025.pdf>

### **Older Youth Program Tips and References (CD11-33)**

There have been many changes to the Older Youth Program and new federal legislation that has significantly impacted Older Youth Program Services over the last several years. In 2011 we will again be experiencing some service provision changes. The Chafee Foster Care Independence Program Services contracts and the Transitional Living Program contracts will be rebid in 2011. There have been many efforts made to evaluate program effectiveness and enhance services. To read more, visit <http://dss.mo.gov/cd/info/memos/2011/cd11-033.pdf>



**Keep Current...** This is a brief summary of the current policies impacting the Children's Division. A more complete explanation with additional updates is available at: [www.dss.mo.gov/cd/info/memos/2011](http://www.dss.mo.gov/cd/info/memos/2011).

## Expert Exchange: Professionals Answer Your Questions

### Parents Ask:

*How can we get our child to be responsible, to try new things and hang in there when things don't go so well? When she gets discouraged, she just wants to quit.*

### Praise and encouragement empower children to try.

Parents often don't realize how much power they have to influence their children by giving them positive attention. All kids, certainly including adoptive children, tend to do what gets them attention from their parents, even negative attention. The more positive attention you give your child, the more your child will undertake and persist at new behaviors and continue doing ones you value. This is also true for teens. Although they sometimes act as if they don't care, teens want attention from their parents just as much as younger children do.

Praising your child for doing the right thing will make you a very powerful influence in her life. Praise and encouragement can be especially motivating when children are trying out new behaviors or learning new habits. Being praised helps people feel good about themselves. When your child feels good about herself and valued by you, she will want to be around you more and to do more things to get positive attention from you.

Here's how to praise effectively.

**Describe exactly what your child did that you are praising.** Don't just say, "Great job!" Say, "Great job of clearing the table after dinner," or "I really like the way you picked up everything in your room."

**Give praise as soon as you can.**

Praise will be most reinforcing then because your child will be most aware

of what she did.

**Don't hesitate to praise your child for doing something well day after day.** Your child needs to know that you notice the good habit he is developing. This will help him continue doing what earns your praise.

**Praise your child for trying hard.**

Learning new behaviors can be difficult, whether it's being responsible at home or learning a sport. Nobody does it right all the time. Making the effort as consistently as possible is what's most important. Children need to understand that mistakes are part of the learning process and that the

Praise and encouragement can be especially empowering when children are trying out new behaviors or learning new habits.

most important thing is to keep making the effort.

**Connect success to effort when you praise.** This is another way of letting your child

know that you value the effort she is making even more than the outcome. It also reinforces the notion that success eventually comes from persistently making the effort, not raw talent.

**Stay alert.** Keep looking for behaviors to praise. If you need to, catch your child in the act of doing it almost right, and praise that. Think about the new behavior your child is trying to learn. If you were your child, what would you find difficult? What does your child have to work hardest on?

**Don't be afraid to ask your child what he is proud of.** You can't expect to see everything, but you can try to learn about what your child did that is praiseworthy. If he doesn't seem to know, suggest some things you admire.

**Encourage frequently, but don't nag or threaten when your child wants to quit.** This combination may work for a little while—if all you want to do

is to get your child to do something. But it's hard on your relationship and won't encourage her to really be responsible. If something is challenging for her, acknowledge it, express your confidence she can master it, encourage her to keep trying, and praise her for making the effort. This will help build self esteem and confidence to undertake other challenging things in life.

**Try to avoid pointing out mistakes.**

Pointing out mistakes often comes across as criticism, and criticism usually backfires. Criticism will sometimes get a child to do what you want—especially if you keep it up until your child is worn down. But it won't help your child feel good about you or about what he is doing. It also doesn't teach children to learn to identify their own mistakes. It keeps them dependent on their parents to tell them what to do.

**Use questions to help your child learn from mistakes.**

Under some circumstances pointing out mistakes may be acceptable, provided it's done in a larger context of praise and positive reinforcement. But most of the time it is better to ask questions, which will help your child figure out what the mistakes were and how to improve. Ask questions like these: What did you do well? Was there anything you would have liked to do differently? What was hard about what you did? What did you learn

that can help you in the future?

**Set rules with consequences when**

**appropriate.** Setting rules and giving praise can work together. Rules help clarify expectations about some basic personal or family responsibilities. For example, if your daughter has everything picked up by dinner time, she can have a privilege like using the phone to talk to a friend or being on the computer for a half hour. If she doesn't pick up for two days in a row, she also has to do 30 minutes of

Praise early, often and specifically.

## Expert Exchange: Professionals Answer Your Questions

chores before she gets the privilege. Rules are appropriate for situations like these. However, you can also praise your child for the way she handles her responsibilities—doing so early, often, and with specifics.

**Think about it:** Wouldn't you respond more positively if you were treated like this at work? Your child is just like you—eager for, and responsive to, praise and encouragement.



Dennis O'Brien is a licensed clinical social worker, experienced educator and therapist. In addition to writing educational materials used by the Washington University School of Medicine Dept. of Psychiatry, he writes weekly columns on parenting for the Suburban Journals, monthly columns for Savvyfamily, and occasional columns for CHARACTERplus, Gifted Resource Council and other publications. O'Brien's April 6 column, "Prevent teen suicide by addressing it," won the 2010 Missouri Institute of Mental Health award for outstanding reporting on suicide.

### Growing and Sustaining Parent Engagement: A Toolkit for Parents and Community Partners

The Center for the Study of Social Policy, in partnership with First 5LA, has developed "Growing and Sustaining Parent Engagement: A Toolkit for Parents and Community Partners." This new resource helps support and sustain families' involvement in decisions about themselves, their children, services, and their communities. It provides valuable resources and how to's for implementing powerful strategies communities can use.

**View and download this free toolkit here:**

[www.cssp.org/publications/growingandsustainingparentengagementtoolkit.pdf](http://www.cssp.org/publications/growingandsustainingparentengagementtoolkit.pdf)

### Education Decision Maker (EDM)

**Who is the parent in Missouri for students with disabilities in foster care?**

The answer to this question is often confusing to case managers, parents, and school staff. The case manager is the legal guardian for children in foster care. The Educational Decision-Maker for children in State Custody with a disability is the **natural/adoptive parent/legal guardian, or foster parent**, NOT a state agency representative. **A foster parent is the educational decision-maker**, as the foster parent is considered to be "acting" as a parent, NOT a state agency representative or case manager. Someone other than the foster parent could be appointed by family court as the EDM. This means that the foster parent is the person to make the education decisions and sign any papers regarding special education unless someone else has been appointed by the court.

**Who is the Educational Decision-Maker (EDM) for Students in Foster Care that reside in a residential facility?**

When a child is in state custody and lives in a residential facility (public or private), the school district must submit a Determination of Need for an Educational Surrogate, to DESE, for children suspected of having a disability or those with a disability. Employees of state agencies, including but not limited to CD, DYS, and Juvenile and Family Courts, may only serve as an educational decision-maker temporarily until an educational surrogate can be appointed by DESE.

Employees of a residential facility (private or public) can only serve as an educational decision-maker for students within their facility if they have completed the required training provided by DESE and are approved by DESE to act as an educational surrogate for students with disabilities in the State of Missouri. For each student who has an educational surrogate appointed, DESE must determine if a conflict of interest exists and approve or deny the appointment based upon the findings.

**What are the rights of the birth parent in educational decisions for students with disabilities?**

The foster parent or the education surrogate makes the educational decisions for children who are wards of the state. The birth parents do not make the educational decisions. Birth parents may be invited to education meetings and participate but may not make the final decision about special education services.

For more information visit the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's (DESE) website at <http://dese.mo.gov/divspeced> and the **Q&A section:** <http://dese.mo.gov/divspeced/Compliance/Q&A/>. Or call the Compliance Section at 573.751.0699.

The Parent's Guide to SPECIAL EDUCATION in MISSOURI is free and may be ordered on line at:

<http://dese.mo.gov/divspeced/Compliance/documents/ParentGuide.pdf>. It is important that you understand your child's rights under Individual Disability Education Act (IDEA). This Parent's Guide is easy to read and understand. It will assist you in understanding some of the most important aspects of special education. It was written by the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, Division of Special Education.

*Article from Leslie Lewis, Director of Educational Advocacy at the Foster & Adoptive Care Coalition.*

### Kids Krafts – Terrarium

You can plant just about any kind of seed in this terrarium, which you make out of an old soda pop bottle.

#### What You Will Need:

- Plastic 2 liter soda pop bottle with cap
- Seeds
- Dirt or potting soil
- Water
- Very sharp scissors or craft knife

#### How To Make It:

1. Remove the label from the bottle. Discard the label and save the cap.
2. Wash and rinse out the bottle and cap.
3. Cut the bottle close to the bottom. There may be a “line” near the end of where the label was, that’s a good place to cut. You can cut it higher if you wish.
4. Lightly place dirt or potting soil in the base.
5. Plant a few seeds in the dirt.
6. Lightly water.
7. Put the cap on the bottle.
8. Cover the base with the top of the bottle. You will have to fiddle with it a bit to fit back inside the base.
9. Place in a sunny spot and watch your seeds grow!
10. When the plants are ready, replot them or plant them in your garden.

*Reprinted with permission from FosterParentCollege.com.*

#### Tips:

- If your soil starts to look a little dry before your seeds come up, you can unscrew the cap and insert the head of spray bottle of water. Spritz several squirts into the terrarium.
- This project can also be done with individual sized water bottles. Don’t plant more than two seeds in a small bottle like this or they will be overcrowded and won’t grow.



---

### Tropical Smoothie Recipe

Adults, help your child make this healthy and refreshing drink. A whole orange goes into this refreshing drink, making it nice and thick. This recipe takes 10 minutes to prepare and serves two. You will need a measuring cup, measuring spoons, knife, and blender.

#### Ingredients

- ½ cup overripe banana slices—frozen preferred
- 1 tablespoon almond or peanut butter (optional)
- ½ cup fresh, frozen or canned pineapple chunks (not in syrup)
- 1 seedless orange, peeled and sectioned (Sectioned means pulled apart after you peel it.)
- 2 ice cubes
- ¾ cup plain low-fat yogurt
- 1 tablespoon shredded unsweetened coconut

#### Did You Know?

The word *ascorbic*, as in ascorbic acid (another name for vitamin C), means “no scurvy”? Scurvy is a disease that comes from not getting enough vitamin C.

*From ChopChop Magazine—Spring Issue (Copyright © 2011). ChopChop is published by ChopChopKids, Inc., a nonprofit corporation whose mission is to educate kids to cook and be nutritionally literate, empower them to actively participate as health partners with their families, and help establish and support better eating habits for a lifetime of good nutrition. For more information, visit [www.chopchopmag.com](http://www.chopchopmag.com).*

#### Instructions

1. Put the banana, almond butter (if no one is allergic to nuts), pineapple and orange in the blender. Put the top on tightly.
2. Turn the blender to medium and blend until the mixture is smooth.
3. Turn the machine off, and add the ice cubes, yogurt and coconut.
4. Put the top on tightly and turn the blender to medium. Blend until ice is chopped and the mixture is smooth.
5. Serve right away, or keep covered and refrigerate up to four hours.

### Healthy Living: Turning Family Time into Active Time

For a lot of families, Sunday afternoons are a time to be together at the movies or the mall. As enjoyable as those outings may be, start thinking about spending some of that family time doing physical activities that all of you like.

Some overweight children are so averse to exercising that the first step in the right direction needs to be taken with their families. They may feel much more comfortable being active with their parents and siblings than with their peers, at least to start with. So why not play catch in the backyard, or dust off the tennis rackets in the closet and spend an hour hitting a tennis ball at the neighborhood courts?

Rather than going to the movies, take a family hike in the hills near your home. When the whole family is involved, your overweight child is more likely to join in. Once he starts losing weight and gets more accustomed to moving his body, he may be more willing to step out and join a swimming program at the YMCA or take karate lessons at the local martial arts studio.

Spend a few moments thinking of other activities that your entire family can do together. Remember, the activity should be fun. If you need some suggestions, why not consider the following?

- Go to the park and throw the football back and forth.
- Play tag in the front yard.
- Go to the community pool for a family swim.
- Buy a kite, put it together as a family activity, and fly it in the park. While you hold onto the kite string, let your

child run with the kite until the wind catches it and sends it aloft.

- Take a family bike ride.
- Go horseback riding.
- Wax the car as a family activity.
- Go to the mall—not only to shop, and certainly not to spend time at the food court, but to walk from one end of the mall to the other.

When you join in, your child will see that you believe physical activity is important, and you'll become his most important role model.

#### Talking With Your Pediatrician

How much does your child weigh? The higher the number on the scale, the greater the chance that he is out of shape or deconditioned.

Before your youngster moves from a sedentary to a more active way of life, and particularly if he has any health problems, talk to your pediatrician. Your pediatrician will be able to tell you how to ensure that exercising is a safe and enjoyable experience for your child. Above all, ask the pediatrician whether your child has any physical limitations that you need to keep in mind. For example, many parents think that youngsters who have asthma can't play outdoors on a cold day, or they'll risk having asthmatic episodes. Your pediatrician can help you and your child plan for safe outdoor activity by including this option in your child's asthma plan.

*From HealthyChildren.org*

### Free Nutritional Food Access at School for Foster and Kinship Care Children

An important provision of the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010 (Public Law 111-296) was enacted on December 31st, 2010. The Act, in Section 102, amends a key provision of the National School Lunch Act (42 USC 1758) to make any foster child categorically eligible, without the necessity of an application, for free school meals if their "care and placement is the responsibility (of an agency that administers a state IV-B or IV-E plan)" or if a "court has placed (the child) with a caretaker household".

In a January 31st, 2011 guidance letter issued to child nutrition program directors across the country by Cynthia Long, Director of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (DOA) child nutrition division, she indicated that all a local educational agency need receive is documentation from an appropriate state or local child welfare agency indicating that a child is a foster child under state responsibility or has been placed in a caretaker household by a court.

In addition to all foster children placed by a child welfare agency being eligible (regardless of whether they are IV-E qualified), a child placed by a court into a kinship home or other "caretaker" household would also be eligible.

School systems are encouraged to implement this as soon as possible, and not to wait until the next school year. DOA will be providing "prototype applications" for foster/kinship children, and supporting materials, to all state child nutrition programs in the near future, and they are working with HHS to notify state child welfare agencies of this legal development. Ms. Long's letter also urges the nutrition directors to reach out to their child welfare agencies to develop or strengthen communications that will help facilitate local implementation.

## Foster and Adoption Resource Center

### Eastern MO ARC

Foster & Adoptive Care Coalition  
1750 S. Brentwood Blvd., Ste. 210, Brentwood, MO 63144  
800.FOSTER.3 (314.367.8373) / [www.foster-adopt.org](http://www.foster-adopt.org)

#### We're Moving!

The Coalition has finally moved to our new home, the **Foster and Adoption Resource Center**, located at 1750 S. Brentwood. This move has brought all of our programming under one roof, and will allow us to provide support and services for more than **10,000** people each year! There is finally a one-stop resource center for foster and adoptive families and youth - a community gathering place where families can access much-needed services like training, support groups, recruitment services, workshops, respite services, and more. In addition to providing services to families, we will also be opening a new resale store called **[RE]FRESH: A Fashion Coalition™**.

[RE]FRESH, set to open in late Spring, will offer foster and adoptive families high-quality, low-cost clothing, generate income through sales to the general public, and offer job training and volunteer opportunities for youth. [RE]FRESH will be open to the public Friday through Sunday and all of the proceeds will go toward our programs which help foster and adoptive families.

Through our new *Fostering Financial Success: [RE]FRESH* Program, older youth in foster care will receive valuable hands-on skills-training in the store to prepare them for future employment. In March, the St. Louis Post-Dispatch wrote a story about this new Program. To read the full article, visit [www.foster-adopt.org](http://www.foster-adopt.org) and scroll down to "View News."

For more information on the Foster and Adoption Resource Center or [RE]FRESH, please visit [www.foster-adopt.org](http://www.foster-adopt.org), [www.refreshstl.org](http://www.refreshstl.org) or call 314.367.8373.

#### Support Groups Free to Foster and Adoptive Parents and Older Youth

Any parent will tell you that foster care and adoption takes more than love, it takes skill, too! The Coalition offers a variety of skills-building support groups. They are all held at Olivette Community Center (9723 Grandview Dr., St. Louis, MO 63132). Visit [www.foster-adopt.org](http://www.foster-adopt.org) and click on "For Parents" for more information and upcoming support group dates.

### Western MO ARC

Midwest Foster Care & Adoption Association (MFCAA)  
3210 S Lee's Summit Rd., Independence, MO 64055  
816.350.0215 / [www.mfcaa.org](http://www.mfcaa.org)

#### Foster Parents

MFCAA is currently accepting foster parent applications, especially for those who have a passion to foster children ages 12 and older, larger sibling groups (three or more) or children with special medical or developmental needs. If interested, please contact Jennifer Johnson at 816.350.0215 x22 or [jenniferj@mfcaa.org](mailto:jenniferj@mfcaa.org). Or visit [www.mfcaa.org](http://www.mfcaa.org).

#### Clothes Closet and Food Pantry

MFCAA's Clothing Closet provides clothing, shoes, coats, toys, high chairs, car seats and more, free of charge, to all MFCAA Members. Clothing Closet hours are 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Tuesdays and Fridays.

MFCAA's Food Pantry provides basic food items to all Members, and is open Tuesday and Friday at 9 a.m. Call 816.350.0215 for an appointment.

Foster Parents are required to maintain a certain number of training hours in order to keep their licenses, and all parents can use additional tools to care for the children in their homes. MFCAA provides two great resources: Resource Library: - a lending library with video tapes, DVD's, CD's, and books that can be checked out and used for outside training hours. Call Mary at 816.350.0215. On-site Trainings: On-site Trainings are held at MFCAA (3210 S. Lee's Summit Rd., Independence, MO 64055). To view the complete list of trainings, visit [www.mfcaa.org](http://www.mfcaa.org) and click on "MFCAA Members"; "Programs"; "Training & Support"; then "Training".

**Become a member!** MFCAA Membership is free, and all of the services are available free of charge to members. To qualify for membership, you must have adoptive, foster or kinship placement children in your home (or be actively awaiting placement of foster children). If you are interested in becoming a foster/adoptive parent, please give us a call at 816.350.0215. We would love to provide you with more information about caring for these special children. You can fill out an online membership form or download a printable version at the MFCAA website: [www.mfcaa.org/contact\\_membership.html](http://www.mfcaa.org/contact_membership.html).

## Waiting Children: Seeking Forever Families

### Meet Daniel, Joshua, Azah, Nakel, and Nicco

**Daniel (13)**, the oldest of his siblings, is a parentified child who dislikes "sitting and doing nothing." He enjoys earning an allowance and can be very helpful around the house. He says that he is "strong, both in strength and in will." Above all else, Daniel wants to live together with his brothers and sisters as a family once again.

**Joshua (12)** is sensitive and the peacekeeper of the group. He would love to grow up to be a professional athlete, but would also be just as happy with a career helping autistic children. Joshua enjoys school and says that his favorite subjects are Social Studies and Art. He's also a very talented artist!

**Azah (9)**, the only girl among four brothers, has a sweet personality. With four brothers, it is no surprise that she prefers playing outside doing "guy stuff." Riding bikes and swimming are her favorite activities. Azah likes to "go places and do things" with friends. She thinks it would be great to finally have a sister to bond with.

**Nakel (8)** likes all sorts of foods, but sweets are his passion. He has fun playing hide-and-seek, kickball, swimming, and riding his bike. He loves cars and thinks it would be awesome to have a motorcycle, Hummer, or a Mustang some day! He may be a budding auto mechanic in the works!

**Nicco (7)**, the youngest, likes riding his bike, building things with Lego's, and playing the Wii. He enjoys hugs, smiles, Disney songs, and stickers. He also really loves going to McDonalds! Nicco needs continued support with school and hopes to find a forever home with his brothers and sister. For more information on this fabulous sibling group, please call Mary Paul, Adoption Specialist, at 314.877.4339 or [mary.l.paul@dss.mo.gov](mailto:mary.l.paul@dss.mo.gov).



---

### Meet Deshawn



**Deshawn (15)** loves to spend time with family and be around other children. Though shy at first, she soon breaks into a smile that will warm your heart. Deshawn enjoys helping around the house and cooking. She is "making great improvements."

Deshawn describes herself as "a fun girl who likes to listen to music." She enjoys most music, except Country. When not listening to music, Deshawn likes to play board games; especially Monopoly. She likes playing outside and her favorite season is summer because she can spend time swimming. Deshawn's favorite TV show is That's So Raven and her favorite movies are the High School Musical series.

Deshawn is not legally free for adoption. Deshawn is in need of a structured home that will provide her with the love and attention that is necessary to help her grow through her teenage years. If you are interested in making Deshawn a permanent part of your family, please contact Lori Jester, Adoption Specialist at 816.889.2591 or [lori.b.jester@dss.mo.gov](mailto:lori.b.jester@dss.mo.gov).

---

### Meet Carlos

**Carlos (14)** is well-spoken and very intelligent, with defined goals and high aspirations. Carlos is an honor student. He is described as smart, helpful, and a good friend. Carlos is very social and gets along well both with other children and adults. In addition to being a high achiever in school, Carlos is very practical, and loves to cook. He makes dinner for his foster family at least once a week, and can always be counted on to help with the household chores.

Carlos is proud of his good grades, and it makes him happy to see all of his hard work paying off. He aspires to become a doctor or an actor, and is willing to "do the work" to make it happen. Having a forever family to cheer him on would make life really come together for Carlos, although he knows that this is one dream that's beyond his control. For more on Carlos, please contact Gayle Flavin at 314.367.8373, or [gayleflavin@foster-adopt.org](mailto:gayleflavin@foster-adopt.org).



Family Connections  
c/o The Coalition  
1750 South Brentwood Blvd., Ste. 210  
Brentwood, Missouri 63144