

Family Connections

Volume 8, Issue 2 ~ Spring 2009

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And much more. . .

If you no longer wish to receive Family Connections:

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By telephone toll-free:
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Prevent Child Abuse and Neglect

The Children's Division devotes its work to protecting Missouri's children. Many, many child abuse prevention month events occurred around the state of Missouri during April 2009. Congratulations to all communities and agencies that sponsored events.



One way to prevent child abuse and neglect is to understand that children need consistency, love, boundaries and care. Some simple ways to do this is to provide the following for the children in your life:

- o Tell your children you love them every day;
- o Listen when they talk;
- o Spend time with them; and
- o Make them feel safe and provide order in their life.

Children are going to act up. When your child does act up, make sure you explain 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.

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.

<http://dss.mo.gov/cd/canprevent.htm>

Children's Trust Fund Chair Encourages Prevention Throughout the Year

Now that April has come and gone, so have many of the public activities highlighting it as child abuse prevention month. What many people learn during April relates to the long term impact that child abuse and neglect can impose on a child's development. Specifically, it is learned that a child who has experienced the trauma of abuse and neglect can have life-long struggles with relationships, academics, job experiences, physical health, mental health, and future parenting behavior.

Typically, if we see a child with a broken bone, we support and help that child with their physical needs and healing. However, the emotional, cognitive and spiritual breaks resulting from abuse and neglect are often not responded to or recognized in the same supportive manner.

As adults, we are responsible to create a safe environment for all children to grow, develop and heal. It is important to keep the momentum from April going throughout the year, so that we can reach each child impacted by the fear and pain of child abuse, keep the cycle from repeating and work together to stop it once and for all.

*Regina Staves, Ph.D., Children's Trust Fund Chair
Avila University, Kansas City, Missouri
Assistant Professor / Interim Chair, Department of Psychology*

News You Can Use from Advisory Boards

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Foster Care & Adoption Advisory Boards

The State Foster Care and Adoption Advisory Board extends an enthusiastic welcome to **Paula Neese**, who has returned as Director of the Children's Division. Paula has hit the ground running, as the saying goes, and we are fortunate that her "re-entry" has been seamless.



Currently, foster parents are represented by Board members in discussions with Missouri Children's Division (CD) related to behavioral and career policies. Also, guidelines for training have been submitted to CD in an agreement to eliminate the pre-approval process for an impressive list of topics. Changes in the procedure to access training will be circulated.

The Board has hosted a number of guest speakers in recent meetings including **Steve Morrow**, Office of the Child Advocate; **Tom McDonald** and **Jeff Grisamore**, State Representatives; **Celesta Hartgraves**, Acting Director of Children's Division; and **Brian Kinkade**, Deputy Director of the Department of Social Services. Speaker's topics included advocacy, the state budget process, legislative updates, policy clarification and training issues.

Communication with CD leadership, legislators, members of the Missouri Supreme Court, and foster and adoptive parents centers on issues brought to the State Board by area representatives. Those issues include respite provisions for career level foster kids, recommendations for group home placements, access to training, and concern over the "open records" of foster parents, allowing for access to personal information upon request by the general public. All of these issues are receiving attention by the Board, and decisions, policy, training offerings, tracking and trending will be shared via local meetings, e-mail, and newsletters.

Your input matters. Please attend your local meetings to share your experiences and learn more about the Board's activities. Contact your area representative with questions, comments, or concerns. Let us know how we can help.

2009 Meetings - Mark Your Calendars!

Date: 09/08/09

Time: 10:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.

Location: Howerton Building
615 Howerton Ct., Room 7, Jefferson City, MO 65103

If you would like to receive a copy of the minutes from the State Advisory Board's September meeting or would like more information about the State meeting, please contact Cheryl Williams at williams.cd@sbcglobal.net.

Regional Boards in Action

Southeast Region

The Southeast Region now has a blog that foster/adopt parents can visit online to keep up with training sessions, events, law changes, etc. The web site is www.area3fosterparents.blogspot.com.

Southeast Missouri Foster Parent's Blog. *This will be your place to go to check on upcoming events and news from the home office. I know that many of you receive newsletters, but if you are like me you lose the newsletter and can't remember where or when that training that you wanted to go to is located. I will try to update here any of the trainings that I hear about. If you know of any trainings that I do not list please leave a message for me in the comment section and I will try to get this listed.*

I hope this will be beneficial to all of you and can be used to help keep us all closer together. Here's to our new adventure of blogging

Zenita Smith 573.624.4657 / dxsmiths@logonbasic.com

St. Louis City & County Region

St. Louis City and County area resource parents have joined together to form a local board, "Gateway Foster and Adoptive Care Association". Their mission is to empower, support and advocate for foster, adoptive and kinship families across the metropolitan area, providing peer support, training and resources to promote safety, permanency and well-being for area children. This organization is for all foster, kinship and adoptive parents in the St. Louis Metropolitan Area. Area meetings are held on the third Monday of each month from 6:30 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. For additional information, please feel free to contact any of the St. Louis area representatives, or e-mail them at GFACA@yahooogroups.com.

Cheryl Williams 314.355.6445 / williams.cd@sbcglobal.net

Northeast Region

Hope Chest For Kids, Inc. will hold National Foster Parent Associations "Walk Me Home" on October 17th. *Walk Me Home... to the Place I Belong* has been created for a three-fold purpose: generate awareness of foster care, recruit and retain foster families, and to raise funds to support the programs and services of Hope Chest For Kids. This is Walk Me Home's inaugural year and 20 states have chosen to participate. Several states are conducting multiple Walks and it is expected that over 100 Walks will be conducted from May through October. Walk Me Home is a 5K (3.1 mile) walk that almost everyone can do. We are hoping to have Children's Division workers, foster/adoptive/kinship/guardianship families, boy scouts, girls scouts, schools, churches, and organizations throughout Missouri create teams to support this event. More information will be sent out in July. If you are interested in participating please contact Terrie Foltz, Development Director, at terrie.foltz@gmail.com There are many ways that you can volunteer to help with this event. Help us let people across Missouri know that there are ways that they can help abused and neglected children.

Ron Forbis 573.881.7339 / srforbis@aol.com

Want to Learn More about Becoming a Board Representatives?

Members of the State Board are chosen by their local foster/adopt parent advisory board to represent them at the State level. State Board members must commit to attending quarterly meetings in Jefferson City for a minimum of two years.

Even if you are not able to make this commitment, there are other ways you can become involved. To find out how, contact Cheryl Williams (Board Secretary) or one of the associations listed on page two.

Missouri Heart Gallery



The **Heart Gallery** was founded by the New Mexico Children, Youth and Families Department in 2001 as a unique way to help children in foster care who are waiting for adoptive families step

from the shadows into the light. Stirring portraits, which reveal the children's amazing spirits and individuality, have helped many find permanent, loving homes.

The Missouri Adoption Exchange and the Missouri CD will be featuring the Heart Gallery throughout the state of Missouri. Established in 1983, The Adoption Exchange has been making the connection between adoptive families and children with special needs. The Adoption Exchange recruits families for our country's most vulnerable children who currently wait in the foster care system. For twenty-five years, the organization has helped find families for more than 5,170 children and offered hope for a better life to some of our nation's most at risk youth. **This year 248 children are featured** in the gallery in 188 images. *For additional information and complete schedule, visit www.moheartgallery.org*

Spring/Summer Schedule

June	10th-17th	St. Louis Mills Shopping Mall 5555 St. Louis Mills Blvd., Hazelwood
July	2nd-10th	Tom Sawyer Days Mark Twain Museum 120 North Main, Hannibal Hannibal Arts Council 1221 Market St, Hannibal
	21st-23rd	Buchanan County Courthouse 411 Jules, St. Joseph
	27th-August 3rd	New Madrid County Courthouse 450 Main Street, New Madrid
August	3rd-9th	Westfield Shoppingtown 259 Westfield, Cape Girardeau
	13th-23rd	Pettis County Courthouse 415 South Ohio, Sedalia

Foster Care Awareness Month

National Foster Care Month (May) is an opportunity to recognize the generosity and commitment of foster parents and to raise awareness about the need for more families who are willing to open their homes and hearts to children in need.

Other Ways You Can Help

Help Your Local Children's Division Office

- o Donate toys, activities or books for the visitation room at the local Children's Division Office
- o Help renovate and repair the visitation room at your local Children's Division office.

Help Your Local Foster Parents

- o Donate Christmas ornaments
- o Donate school supplies and back packs for school age children in foster care
- o Donate laundry detergent and fabric softener
- o Donate hygiene items such as toothbrushes, toothpaste, deodorant, shampoo and conditioner
- o Donate bedding
- o Provide valentines, cupcakes, or Halloween candy for a foster child to distribute at school on special occasions

Help Your Local Foster Children

- o Donate nice clothes, shoes, coat, underwear, socks, etc.
- o Donate toys, stuffed animals, activities, games, books
- o Buy a yearbook, class ring or graduation cap and gown for a child in foster care
- o Pay for school pictures of a foster child
- o Buy uniforms or equipment for foster children involved in activities such as sports and cheerleading
- o Buy a girl scout/boy scout uniform for a child in foster care
- o Donate fingernail polish, makeup, earrings, or other accessories for a girl in foster care
- o Donate a prom/formal dress
- o Donate a musical instrument for a child in foster care in a school band
- o Pay a child's way into a summer camp
- o Pay little league or other athletic fees to cover a foster child playing
- o Buy a membership to a swimming pool or YMCA

For more information or to donate items, please contact the Children's Division Foster Parent Contact for your county.

(<http://dss.mo.gov/cd/fostercare/contact/index.htm>)

The Children's Division can not accept cash or donations of monetary value (i.e. gift certificates or gift cards).

Capitol Ideas:

Federal Legislation Update: Both the House and Senate Passed President Obama's FY 2010 Budget Outline

Federal lawmakers have passed the \$3.56 trillion FY 2010 budget outline proposed by President Obama. Included in the proposal are four reserve funds which relate to children and families.

- o The first fund would reform financing for child welfare services and calls for greater investment in a range of child welfare services.
- o The second fund would assist in the recruitment and retention of foster and adoptive parents.
- o The third fund would provide funding to states for home visiting programs which will be dedicated to "low-income mothers-to-be and low-income families that will produce sizeable, sustained improvements in the health, well-being, or school readiness of children or their parents."
- o The fourth fund in the budget resolution is established for health care reform.

DHSS Report Shows a Decline in National Child Maltreatment

The Department of Health and Human Services recently released the child abuse and neglect data for 2007, and it shows that the number of children who were maltreated declined between fiscal years 2006 and 2007, from 904,000 in 2006 to an estimated 794,000 children in 2007.

However, an important caveat must be noted in regard to the decline. Due to changes made in the classification of cases in the state of Florida, the number of victims of child abuse and neglect went from 134,567 in 2006 to 53,484 in 2007, accounting for approximately 80% of the national decline.

Moreover, a troubling increase was seen in the estimated number of children who died across the nation as a result of maltreatment. This number increased by approximately 15.5 percent over that which was seen last year. The full DHHS report can be read by visiting:

<http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb/pubs/cm07/index.htm>

Missouri Legislative Update SB 94 Amended to HB 154

Key language from legislation which would boost child care subsidies has been added as an amendment to a bill which would give grandparents first preference as foster parents. **Sponsored by Senator Jolie Justus (D-Kansas City)**, SB 94 is legislation which would modify provisions on child care subsidies.

The provisions would increase the child care subsidy income eligibility to 140% of Federal Poverty Level (FPL), and would increase the income eligibility for reduced transitional child care assistance from the current cap of 139% of FPL to 185% of FPL.

Currently, Missouri has the cutoff for full assistance set at 127% of the FPL, which places the state at a ranking of 47th in the nation regarding income eligibility for child care subsidy.

Sponsored by Representative **Marilyn Ruestman (R-Joplin)**, HB 154 states that if an emergency placement of a child in a private home is deemed necessary, the Children's Division within the Department of Social Services is required to make diligent efforts to contact and place the child with a grandparent unless the Children's Division determines that the placement is not in the best interest of the child. Prior to contacting the grandparent, the Children's Division must care for any physical health needs of the child.

Multiple studies have shown that foster children in kinship care benefit from a host of greater positive outcomes than foster children who are placed elsewhere, particularly those placed in group homes.

Please take action by contacting your legislators in the Senate and the House to voice your support for HB 154, and the child care subsidy amendment. Contact your representatives by accessing the following link to the Missouri House of Representatives website:
http://www.senate.mo.gov/lookup/leg_lookup.aspx

Keep Current...

Citizens for Missouri's Children produces regular legislative reports to keep citizens and child advocates plugged into developments in Jefferson City and Washington D.C. Sign up today at <http://www.mokids.org>.

Adoption Resource Center:

Eastern MO ARC

Foster & Adoptive Care Coalition
111 N. Seventh Street, Suite 402, St. Louis, MO 63101
800.FOSTER.3 (314.367.8373) / www.foster-adopt.org

A Message from Your Educational Advocate:

There are a number of children that have been diagnosed with **Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD)**. It is a term used to describe a broad range of effects associated with alcohol use during pregnancy that may result in problems with learning, emotions and behavior.

Some characteristics are: distractibility, frustration, poor fine and gross motor skills, poor attention span, lack of organizational skills, problems with concrete thinking, poor peer relations, poor decision-making skills, difficulty organizing time, impulsiveness, difficulty distinguishing between public and private behaviors, problems expressing themselves, difficulty remembering and generalizing information, and experience sensory integration problems.

Strategies for teachers: allow the child to have short breaks, create confined space using armrests or footrests, allow time to stop the activity and prepare for transition to other activities, perform one task at a time, ask the child to repeat the directions, model behavior and activities, break up longer tasks into smaller pieces. Use visuals, concrete examples and hands-on learning.

Performance may be inconsistent, transitions may be difficult, and following more than one direction at a time may be frustrating.

Encourage success and reward positive behavior with praise or incentives. Positive reinforcement should be immediate.

If one technique is not successful, try something new. Children with FAS/FASD can learn. However, they may need to use different paths to get there.

For more information on Fetal Alcohol Syndrome (FAS) and Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders (FASD), visit <http://www.nofas.org>.

Western MO ARC

Midwest Foster Care & Adoption Association
3210 S Lee's Summit Rd. Independence, MO 64055
816.350.0215 / www.mfcaa.org

A Message from Your Staff:

One critical key to obtaining **mental health and behavioral support services** is a recent psychological evaluation. If your child has not had a recent psychological evaluation (within the last two years), and you have concerns related to your child's behaviors, moods, or school performance, consider a comprehensive evaluation.

Psychological evaluations are performed by licensed psychologists when a problem, that does not have a physical origin, is noticed and the cause needs to be determined. Inappropriate behavior may include defiance, hostility or extreme anger, extreme shyness or withdrawal, avoidance of homework, or other expected chores. Inappropriate mood states may include crying and/or extreme sadness that persists over time; repeatedly stating that no one likes them, repeated silliness and/or laughing during serious situations; extreme anger over minor irritations and annoyances.

The purpose of evaluation is to determine the possible cause of the disturbance in functioning, and suggest to parents and professionals the types of supports or services which will provide the child with the best chance of improved functioning.

Psychological evaluations will help mental health professionals to better manage children's course of treatment including therapeutic interventions and medications. Psychological evaluations often provide the information necessary for parents to access services from the Department of Mental Health, and to request and receive special educational services through their local school districts.

A list of MO Health Net providers can be found at: <https://dssapp.dss.mo.gov/ProviderList/sprovider.asp?name=&statecountycodes=&st=49&Submit=Submit>. Enter your county and select 'Psychologist' from the pull down menu.

Expert Exchange

Beyond Sexual Abuse: Families Can Promote Healing

Adapted by Diane Riggs from Beyond Sexual Abuse: The Healing Power of Adoptive Families, published by Three Rivers Adoption Council in cooperation with Wayne Duehn, PhD, Sherry Anderson, MSW, and Kirsti Adkins, MPH.

Was My Child Sexually Abused?

If your child's worker does not mention sexual abuse, and records say nothing, did your child escape this form of abuse? Maybe. Maybe not. Sexual abuse often goes unnoticed and unrecorded. Children are often reluctant to talk about abuse due to feelings of guilt and shame, or fear that the abuser will punish them. Few abusers confess to their crimes when confronted by protection workers.

Initially, a sexually abused child's behavior may mirror that of children who have experienced physical abuse or neglect. Children who have been abused sexually may be angry, be confused about parental roles and responsibilities, mistrust adults, and be depressed or hyperactive. Symptoms specific to sexual abuse include sensitivity to touch (avoiding touch or being seductively clingy); sensitivity to exposing one's body (being very opposed to exposure or eager to wear scant clothing); and sexual behavior or knowledge that is out of keeping with the child's age.

Creating a Healing Environment

Supportive discussions about abuse can start the healing process, but children will not talk until they feel safe. And, while you should tell a child that she is safe, the child may need time to see that your actions consistently reinforce

your verbal promises of safety.

If your child shows signs of prior abuse by, say, inappropriately touching a sibling, take advantage of the chance to teach him about proper behavior. Calmly, you might say, *"I know you want to feel close to your sister, but that is not the way we get close in this family. Let's talk about how we show love in this family."*

If the inappropriate touching happens again, you could say (again, calmly), *"Remember when we talked about showing love in this family? What you are doing now [name the inappropriate behavior] is not the way we get close in this family. Can you remember some of the ways we show love?"*

Because sexually abused children are used to relating to others sexually, and being valued for their sexuality, non-sexual behaviors that healthy families use to express affection may be utterly foreign. Re-educating an abused child about these alien norms takes persistence and patience, and openness to questions and feelings. Avoid angrily scolding the child for sexual misbehavior, or making negative comments that could cause him to question his safety or withdraw.

Talking about Abuse

Some children may not be able to talk about the abuse for a long time, but may express intense feelings of anger or sadness. When a child exhibits these emotions, validate the child's feelings and reinforce the message that the child is not at fault for past events and is now safe.

If your child is not ready to talk, let the subject drop. Never try to force a discussion

about past abuse. When your child is finally ready to share, make the experience as comfortable and supportive for the child as possible:

Use a private setting. The child's privacy has been invaded, and you must show respect for the child's privacy.

Assume an open posture and position yourself at or below the child's level. You need to look receptive and approachable. If you want to touch or hold the child, ask permission and frame the request as your need.

Control your emotions. Under-react, but don't minimize the problem. If the child thinks anger is directed at her, it will reinforce her guilt and shame.

Encourage sharing. "I'm glad you are telling me about this, and that you trust me enough to share. I also know that this is very hard for you, but what happened to you is a part of your life and I want to know about all of you. Nothing you tell me can change my love for you."

Verbally reassure the child. Reiterate that the abuse is not the child's fault. "Adults are responsible for what they do to children, and you could not have done anything differently. You are a child, and you did nothing wrong."

Ask questions. Though it may be hard to stifle shock and disbelief, show that you really want to know what happened by calmly asking questions about the child's story.

Universalize the experience. Let your child know that many other children-girls and boys-have endured the same type of abuse.

Believe. Children rarely make up detailed stories about sexual abuse, and if you are the first person the child tells, your immediate response is vitally important. A negative reaction will reinforce the child's low self-image and damage chances for healing.

Subjects for Ongoing Communication

A sexually abused child must repeatedly be taught and reminded about:

- o **Boundaries.** Sexually abused children need to know right away that they can set personal boundaries for touching that other family members will respect.
- o **Sex.** Review the basics of male and female anatomy, normal sexual development, healthy sexual expression, and how babies are conceived.
- o **Ways to express affection.** Parents can model various types of loving contact such as side hugs, pats on the shoulder, or hand holding.

Child Sexual Abuse Resources

STOP IT NOW!:

888-773-8368 or 413-268-3096; www.stopitnow.org

The National Children's Advocacy Center:

256-533-0531; www.nacac-hsv.org

Voices In Action:

800-786-4238 or 773-327-1500; www.voices-action.org

ChildHelp USA:

800-422-4453; www.childhelpusa.org

For full article visit:

<http://www.nacac.org/adoptalk/beyondsexualabuse.html>

Surf's Up: Online Resources

Child Abuse/Neglect

The following links (and more) can be found at:
http://www.ctf4kids.org/missouri_childrens_trust_resources_links.html

Harrison's Hope

Devoted to informing the public about the dangers associated with leaving children unattended in or around vehicles. www.harrisonshope.org

INOBTB (I Know Better)

Dedicated to educating the public about keeping children safe on the Internet. www.inobtr.org

Lift-Missouri

Serves as Missouri's literacy resource center providing training, technical assistance, and materials for educators and family literacy programs. www.lift-missouri.org

Missouri Alliance for Children and Families

Facilitates planning and service implementation for families with children who have serious emotional problems. www.ma-cf.org

Missouri Amber Alert

Serves as the central resource in Missouri for individuals and organizations who wish to immediately access important AMBER Alert information designed to save children's lives. www.missouriambertalert.com

Missouri Bar Association

"You Can Stop Abuse" an 8 page booklet regarding the child protection orders act.
<http://www.mobar.org/ea260957-8086-43cf-a6b6-1f010638c1c2.aspx>

Missouri Department of Social Services

To report child abuse and neglect in Missouri CALL THE HOTLINE at 1-800-392-3738. The Children's Division staff this hotline 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year. www.dss.mo.gov

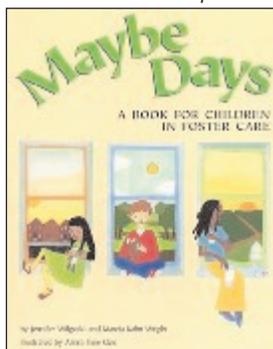
Missouri Families

Provides Missouri families with research-based solutions for healthy living. www.missourifamilies.org

Book Spot

Maybe Days: A Book for Children in Foster Care

Authors Description: Maybe Days is a straightforward look at the issues of foster care, the questions that kids ask, and the feelings they confront.



An excellent primer for the young child going into foster care, the book also explains in kid terms the responsibilities of everyone involved: parents, foster parents, social workers, lawyers, and judges. As for the kids themselves, their job is to be a kid – and there's no maybe about that.

Editorial Review from By Carrie Craft, About.com:

The answer that we give to many different questions asked by foster children, "Maybe". We wish we had a better answer, but sometimes that's the only one we can give.

Maybe Days - A Book for Children in Foster Care talks about the many different reasons children need foster parents and the feelings that go along with the foster care journey. An excellent resource for a foster parent's library.

Note to Foster Parents and Other Adults

The last section of the book is a guide for adults working with foster children. Information on the different reactions that children may have with the book as well as the foster care experience are discussed. Reactions such as anger, relief, happiness, sadness, guilt, and shame. Other challenges that accompany foster care are also addressed in the end notes. The challenges discussed include changes in foster homes, cultural issues, visitations, complicated loyalties, and blame.

About the Authors

Jennifer Wilgocki, M.S., is a child and family therapist with an expertise in attachment and bonding issues. She provides training to professionals and foster parents. **Marcia Kahn Wright, Ph.D.**, works with families and children and is a clinical psychologist.

10 Tips for Quality Family Meals

Family meals are a great time for families to get in touch with each other. Try these ideas for positive family meals!

1. Aim for 3 or more meals a week. Youth who eat with their family three times or more a week, do better in school.

2. Make family meals a priority. Adults can make family meals a priority and expect children, teenagers and adults to eat together.

3. Keep a sense of humor and laugh a lot. Simple foods served with love and laughter will outshine gourmet food.

4. Cook it Quick but Eat It Slow Though you may hurry when preparing a meal, allow ample time to enjoy the meal and talk with each other.

5. Work toward happy/relaxing conversations

Allow time for everyone to talk. Save arguments for later. **Here are some conversation starters:**

- o Describe something new you learned today.
- o Share a positive thing that happened today.
- o Describe something that made you feel happy.
- o Imagine that someone gave you \$1,000. You have to spend some of it on your family before buying anything for yourself. What would you buy for your family?
- o If you lived in a different time and place, where and when would you live?
- o If you could spend an afternoon with a famous person (living or dead), who would you pick?

If everyone in your family wants to talk at once, borrow the "talking stick" idea from Native Americans. Only the person holding the stick can talk. You might have another special item that gets passed around.

6. If time's an issue, make meals quick and easy.

For quick meal ideas visit:

<http://www.nutritionexplorations.org>

7. Shop for food and cook together. Grocery shopping and cooking together can be fun and promote family togetherness.

8. Take telephone calls later. If you can't ignore a ringing phone, unplug it, turn off the ringer, use an answering machine or voice mail, or tell people you will call back after dinner.

9. Turn the TV Off Encourage family members to star in their own lives and relate to each other rather than an image on the TV screen.

10. Respect each individual's right to decide how much to eat. Forcing children to eat food they don't like makes them dislike the food or learn to ignore feelings of hunger and satiety.

Benefits of Eating Together

When Adults and Children Eat Together...

- o Children do better in school.
- o Children have fewer behavior problems.
- o Teenagers are less apt to use alcohol or drugs.
- o Children and teenagers say they like having time to talk to the adults in their lives.
- o Communication between children and adults improves.
- o Children understand their family's values and traditions.
- o Traditions are created around food and meals.

Also...

- o Meals are more nutritious and healthful.
- o Food dollars are better utilized with larger sized purchases.
- o Time is better utilized because the family only cooks one meal.



Information provided by Washington State

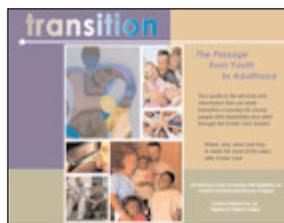
University, Cooperative Extension, the Nutrition Education Network of Washington, and USDA Food and Nutrition Service.

For complete article, visit:

<http://nutrition.wsu.edu/ebet/brochures/QualityMeals.pdf>

Guidebook for Youth With Disabilities Aging Out of Foster Care

A partnership between the Advocacy Center for Persons with Disabilities and Florida's Children First, Inc., has produced a guide to services and information for Florida youth with disabilities who are transitioning from foster care to independent living.



Passage From Youth to Adulthood provides practical information on the legal rights of students with disabilities as they transition to adulthood. While the guide is geared toward Florida students, much of the planning and information (especially about Federal laws) is applicable to youth in other States.

The guide reviews the necessary components of a transition plan, including goals related to education, work, and community integration.

Some of the specific components of the transition plan include:

- o Student's desired postsecondary school outcome
- o Adult living arrangement
- o Training and services needed to achieve the outcome
- o Practical life skills that have yet to be mastered
- o Guardianship options for adults who cannot manage their own affairs
- o Specific technological devices (supplied by agencies)

The guide also highlights the role of the State's vocational rehabilitation program in providing job training, assistive technology (if needed), and employment-related assistance. The report includes a glossary and a list of State and national transition resources.

Passage From Youth to Adulthood is available for download on the Florida's Children First website: http://floridaschildrenfirst.org/pdf/Foster_Final_Proof.pdf

Foster Youth Help Lines

If you are a teen facing a crisis and need to talk to a real person RIGHT NOW, try contacting one of the following agencies, or get some good advice from one of these sources closest to you.

Statewide

Community Counseling Center

402 Silver Springs Road, Cape Girardeau, MO 63703
573.334.1100

Info-Line United Way

1080 Washington, Kansas City, MO 64105
816.421.4980

Life Crisis Services

1423 S. Big Bend Blvd., St. Louis, MO 63117
314.647.4357

Suicide Prevention Line

Western MO Mental Health Center
600 E. 22nd St., Kansas City, MO 64108
816.471.3939

United Way Info and Referral

320 N. Jefferson, Springfield, MO 65806
417.863.7700

Youth in Need

529 Jefferson Street, St. Charles, MO 63301
314.946.3771

Nationally

National Boys Town National Hotline

800.448.3000 24 Hour National Hotline
800.448.1833 TDD line

Email: hotline@boystown.org

Website: www.boystown.org

Break the Cycle

1.888.988.TEEN for teens who have questions about domestic and dating violence.

Child-Help USA

1.800.422.4453 (24 hour toll free)

Assists Teens with any problem

Pregnant Teens

1.800.843.5437 for teens who fear they may be pregnant and teen parents.

Waiting Children

Meet Christian

Already has Big Plans for His Future

Christian (16) is an eager young man, strongly desiring a forever family. Christian has a warming smile, and a sincere heart. He is friendly, thoughtful and has a great need to please others. Christian has been successful at acquiring positive adult relationships quickly and values them immensely.



Christian receives good reports in school and desires advanced education. He is strongly interested in cars and car maintenance, and has dreamed of working his way up through the ranks at the Ford Motor Company or owning his own car detailing business in the future.

Christian is excited to secure a loving home with mutual respect and support. For more information, please contact Joni Hillary, Missouri Alliance for Children & Families, at 573.338.0251, or jhillary@ma-cf.org.

Photo courtesy of Sears Portrait Studio.

Meet Deion

Always Willing to Lend a Helping Hand

Deion (13) is quick to lend a helping hand, and takes care of his responsibilities without even being asked. Once chores and homework are finished, Deion heads outside where he enjoys riding his bike, playing sports, swimming, and spending time with friends.



Deion faces a chronic medical challenge as a result of being born prematurely. However, he is currently in stable health, with no activity restrictions. Deion is in the fifth grade, a good student who has been on the honor roll, and enjoys math.

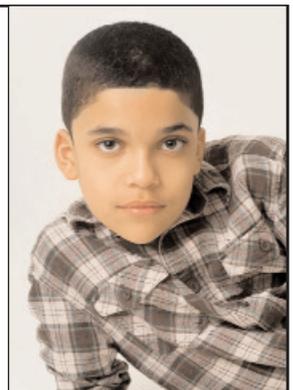
Deion has been in care for six years, and is legally free for adoption. For more information, contact Connie Doty, Wendy's Wonderful Kids Recruiter, at 800.FOSTER.3 (314.367.8373), or conniedoty@foster-adopt.org. **Photo courtesy of Sears Portrait Studio.**

Meet Isaiah

Enjoys Making Others Laugh

Isaiah (7) is a handsome fellow looking for a permanent adoptive home with a loving family to call his own. He has big beautiful brown eyes and black hair. Like most typical boys, Isaiah's favorite pass time is playing video games. Isaiah also enjoys telling jokes and make others laugh. He is very intelligent and loves to discuss how his day went, and to playback what activities he did through out the day.

For more information please, contact Travanna Alexander, Adoption Specialist of the Missouri Children's Division, at 816.929.7864, or travanna.f.alexander@dss.mo.gov.



Family Connections
c/o The Coalition
111 North Seventh Street, Suite 402
Saint Louis, Missouri 63101