

# Family Connections

Volume 9, Issue 4 ~ Fall 2010

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### And much more. . .

## National Adoption Day November 20, 2010

National Adoption Month started off as a week long celebration in 1976 before blossoming into the current month long celebration. The President makes a **proclamation** each year, announcing November as National Adoption Month. It is a time to celebrate family and create awareness of the hundreds of thousands of children in foster homes awaiting adoption. States, communities, and agencies hold events during the month to bring the need for families for these children and teens to public awareness. The celebration usually includes **National Adoption Day** (Adoption Saturday) with courthouses throughout the nation participating and hundreds of adoptions being finalized on that day.

The 11th Annual Adoption Saturday 2010 is set for November 20th. This year, communities in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico and Guam will hold celebrations to finalize more than **4,500** foster care adoptions, bringing the total number of finalized adoptions as part of National Adoption Day to more than **35,000!** Judges, attorneys, adoption agencies, adoption professionals, and child advocates volunteer their time to finalize adoptions and celebrate all families who adopt.

## What You Can Do

Many communities sponsor National Adoption Month events. For more information about the events taking place and foster care adoption, please visit [www.nationaladoptionday.org](http://www.nationaladoptionday.org) or <http://dss.mo.gov/cd/adopt/activity/events.htm>. If events are not offered in your area or you want to do more, there are many activities and things you can do throughout the month of November.

Write a **family mission statement**. Ask everyone to write down ideas that they feel are important for a family to have like respect, sharing, and/or honesty.

Be a **mentor** to a foster child.

**Attend an event** in your area celebrating National Adoption Month/Day.

Read or write an **adoption-themed poem**.

Contact a children's organization or foster care agency and **ask how you can help**.

Join an adoptive parent **support group** in your area. If there isn't any, consider starting your own.

Create your **family tree**. If you have foster/adoptive children, help them complete one about their birth family (if information is known) as well as adoptive family.

Write a **thank you note** to a foster care agency and thank them for the work they do to help children.

**Donate** money, clothing, toys or school supplies to a foster care agency.

Tell someone close to you that you are **thankful** to have them in your life.

Join a **toy drive** or **sponsor** a foster child's birthday to help make their day special.

Keep the children awaiting homes in your thoughts this month by **lighting a candle**.

Work on your **life books** together.



**National Adoption Day Coalition Partners include:** Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption, Freddie Mac Foundation, Annie E. Casey Foundation/Casey Family Services, Children's Action Network, The Congressional Coalition on Adoption Institute, and The Alliance for Children's Rights.

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## To Unsubscribe

**Request in writing:** Foster & Adoptive Care Coalition, ATTN: Jessi Brawley, 111 North 7th St., Ste. 402, St. Louis, MO 63101

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

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### Candace A. Shively starts as head of Missouri's Children's Division

Candace A. Shively, a longtime veteran of children and family services programs in Kansas, Oklahoma and Pennsylvania began as the new director of the Missouri Department of Social Services' Children's Division.



Candace most recently worked as the deputy secretary of the Kansas Department of Social & Rehabilitation Services. She replaces former Director Paula Neese who announced her retirement this summer.

"Candace's unique perspective and extensive experience in child welfare and other social service programs will be instrumental in our efforts to better the lives of Missouri children and families," said Ron Levy, director of the Missouri Department of Social Services.

In Kansas, Shively managed 3,300 staff in children & family services, child support, economic and employment support, and vocational rehabilitation services. In Missouri she will oversee a staff of 2,140 in areas that include child abuse and neglect investigations and foster care. The Division currently oversees about 9,950 children in foster care in the state.

### 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

### The Missouri State Foster Care and Adoptive Advisory Board is Now on Facebook

The Missouri State Foster Care and Adoptive Advisory Board is happy to announce their presence on Facebook. Connect with other fans, keep up-to-date on current happenings, and learn how the Advisory Board is working hard to meet the needs of all of Missouri's children and their resource parents. Visit <http://www.facebook.com/pages/Missouri-State-Foster-Care-and-Adoption-Advisory-Board/148241425212614?ref=ts>.

### Children's Division e-Form Webpage

The Children's Division now has an e-Form page! If you have questions or comments regarding the forms or web page, email [AskCD@dss.mo.gov](mailto:AskCD@dss.mo.gov). Visit <http://www.dss.mo.gov/cd/info/forms/index.htm>.

## Regional Boards in Action

### Southeast Region

The quarterly meeting of the Southeast Regional Foster/Adoptive Parent Advisory Board was held in Poplar Bluff on August 27th. The meeting included foster parent representatives from each of the nine Circuits within the region, Circuit Managers, and several guest foster parents.

Our keynote speaker for the meeting was Sally Gaines, Older Youth Program Development Specialist, Children's Division. Sally discussed in detail how the Older Youth Program is structured and what services are provided to the youth of Missouri from ages 14 to 21. Sally also spoke about the National Youth in Transition Database, or **NYTD** (pronounced nited). NYTD is a data collection system designed to track the independent living services provided to our youth, and to measure the success in preparing youth for their transition from foster care to independent living. All older youth in care that turn 17 after October 1, 2010 through September 30, 2011 will be asked to fill out an online questionnaire. A paper copy of the questionnaire will be available, but it will be much easier to participate online.

Foster parents have a key role to play in the successful implementation of NYTD. It is of great importance that foster parents encourage eligible youth in care to participate in NYTD by filling out the online questionnaire. If a youth does not have his or her own email address, foster parents should assist and ensure that they establish an email account of their own. The youth should then give the email address to their Children's Division worker to be entered into FACES and thus available for NYTD. It should only take about ten minutes to fill out the online form. By doing so, youth can directly impact the services available to them now and in the future.

After the presentation, each circuit reported on their efforts to create local foster parent support groups to help resolve issues within their respective area. Each circuit has its own unique support structure in place; some groups are formal, others are very informal. In every circuit, the Board member representative is committed to being a resource to the foster parents. If you would like to participate in your Circuit's support group, please contact your Board representative or licensing worker for more details.

Finally, the meeting broke into workgroups that will focus on particular areas of need that we have identified for our region. The four workgroups are:

- Professionalism
- Advocacy
- Recruitment
- Training

Reports on progress from these workgroups are expected at our next Regional Foster/Adoptive Parent Advisory Board meeting scheduled for December 3rd. If you wish to participate in the Southeast Regional Foster/Adoptive Parent Advisory Board, or have any questions about the Board, please contact **Dean Aye**, Chairperson at [pitstop1@centurytel.net](mailto:pitstop1@centurytel.net) or 417.469.3278.

### Links to Resources Available for Foster/Adoptive Parents from the MO Department of Social Services Website

#### Foster Parent Resources:

[www.foster-adopt.org](http://www.foster-adopt.org) —

Foster & Adoptive Care Coalition

[www.mfcaa.org](http://www.mfcaa.org) —

Midwest Foster Care & Adoption Association

[www.ccfosteradopt.com](http://www.ccfosteradopt.com) —

Central Missouri Foster Care & Adoption Association

#### Mental Health Resources:

[www.aap.org/fostercare/](http://www.aap.org/fostercare/) —

American Academy of Pediatrics

[www.missouri.networkofcare.org/home\\_state.cfm?stateid=30](http://www.missouri.networkofcare.org/home_state.cfm?stateid=30) —

Network of Care for Mental & Behavioral Health & Developmental Disabilities

[www.kclinc.org](http://www.kclinc.org) —

Local Investment Commission (LINC)

[www.ct4kids.org](http://www.ct4kids.org) —

Children's Trust Fund

[www.fostercaremonth.org](http://www.fostercaremonth.org) —

National Foster Care Month Information

#### Adoption Resources:

[www.adoptuskids.org](http://www.adoptuskids.org) —

National photo listing service for children awaiting adoption

[www.adoptex.org](http://www.adoptex.org) —

Adoption Exchange (links to photo listings and information about adoption activities in Missouri)

[www.kcchildren.com](http://www.kcchildren.com) —

Jackson County adoption information

#### Resources available at:

<http://www.dss.mo.gov/cd/fostercare/links.htm>

## Capitol Ideas: Your Policy Update

### Frequently Asked Questions

#### Available on the Internet (CD10-81)

Frequently Asked Questions have been developed and posted on the Internet for parents and child care providers. It is the intent of the Child Care Assistance program to share information with our parents and child care providers so they can access information in a timely fashion to make informed decisions. The Child Care Assistance Program will continue to place additional FAQs on the Internet in the future.

Staff are encouraged to share Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) for Parents and Providers and the website address with households and child care providers. The FAQs can be accessed at <http://www.dss.mo.gov/cd/childcare/htm>

#### Medical Foster Care Policy Revision (CD10-96)

The purpose of this memo is to introduce the revision of Children's Division policy and forms for eligibility and placement of foster youth in a resource home for elevated medical needs. The revision of the medical foster care policy was completed with participation and contribution from pediatricians.

A youth in foster care who:

- is medically diagnosed with extraordinary medical condition(s) and/or mental or physical disabilities,
- and requires 24-hour availability of a resource provider specifically-trained to meet the elevated medical needs, and
- has a diagnosed condition that significantly and substantially impairs the youth's ability to function on a daily basis

is eligible for placement in a resource provider home contracted to provide Medical Foster Care services.

The Medical Foster Care Assessment Tool, CS-10, has been revised to provide clarification of what diagnoses

deem a foster youth with elevated medical conditions eligible for a medical resource home.  
<http://dss.mo.gov/cd/info/memos/2010/cd10-096.pdf>

#### Changes to Child Care Payment Processes For Protective Services Children (CD10-92)

The purpose of this memorandum is to outline the changes to child care payment processing for Protective Services (PS) children. Effective August 1, 2010, Children's Division staff will begin entering child care authorizations for PS children via the Interface link in FACES. These authorizations will generate Child Care invoices that will be paid through FAMIS.

<http://dss.mo.gov/cd/info/memos/2010/cd10-092.pdf>

#### 2010 Legislation and Related Changes to OHI Policy and Procedure (CD10-99)

The purpose of this memorandum is to introduce legislation passed in the 2010 legislative session which impacts reports of child abuse and neglect when the alleged perpetrator is a school employee. These changes are effective August 28, 2010, and impact policy and procedure for Out-of-Home Investigations (OHI) only.

##### House Bill 1543

The passage of House Bill 1543 enacts several changes in Missouri law related to elementary and secondary education. The only direct impact to the Children's Division will be as a result of changes to Section 160.261 RSMo., and applies only to policy and procedure for investigations conducted by the Out-of-Home Investigations Unit (OHI).

- In section 160.261.10 RSMo., current law provides that the Children's Division (OHI unit) does not have jurisdiction over and does not investigate any report of alleged abuse arising out of or related to any spanking administered in a

reasonable manner by any certificated school personnel.

- In the revised section 160.261.10 RSMo., this bill gives the Children's Division (OHI unit) jurisdiction for any report of alleged abuse arising out of or related to any spanking that is not witnessed by a school employee or any report in which sexual misconduct arises from the spanking.
- This bill also adds that the CD (OHI Unit) shall not have jurisdiction over or investigate any report of alleged abuse arising out of the use of force to protect persons or property when administered by personnel of a school district as long as no allegation of sexual misconduct arises from the use of force.

Division policy and procedure related to spanking in a school setting by certified school personnel as well as the use of force to protect persons or property have been revised to reflect these legislative changes. (CWM Section 2, Chapter 7)

<http://dss.mo.gov/cd/info/memos/2010/cd10-099.pdf>

#### Immediate Changes to the Child Abuse/Neglect Administrative Review Process Resulting from Case Law

The purpose of this memorandum is to inform staff that immediate changes to the child abuse/neglect review process are necessary in response to a Western District Court of Appeals decision. The Court defined the term "pending criminal charges", which will impact the Division's ability to: 1) proceed with an administrative review; and, 2) release Child Abuse/Neglect (CA/N)

Investigative records to an alleged perpetrator. See, Stephen J. Pitts vs. Williams and Levy, Missouri Court of Appeals Case No. WD71275.

The court's ruling requires the Division to revise its policy and procedures as

## Capitol Ideas: Your Policy Update

sent out in CD10-69. The updated Child Welfare Manual section and adjoining forms, checklists and/or items of professional correspondence are available online, and should be used effective the date of this memorandum.

<http://dss.mo.gov/cd/info/memos/2010/cd10-097.pdf>

### **Expansion of eligible relatives for Guardianship Subsidy. Increase in Maximum Legal Expenses in Guardianship Cases.(CD10-101)**

The purpose of this memorandum is to inform staff that great-grandparents, great-aunts and great-uncles are now included in the eligible relative category to obtain Guardianship Subsidy.

In an effort to provide for the permanency of Missouri Children, the definition of eligible relatives to receive guardianship subsidy has been expanded as of September 1, 2010 to include Great-Grandparents, Great-Aunts and Great-Uncles.

Additionally, a change has been made to include children who are SSI eligible prior to the completion of Adoption or Guardianship as subsidy eligible children.

The maximum amount to be paid for the legal expenses to establish a legal guardianship has been increased to \$2,000 for both contested and uncontested guardianships.

<http://dss.mo.gov/cd/info/memos/2010/cd10-101.pdf>

### **Relative and Kinship Placement Providers (CD10-102)**

The purpose of this memorandum is to introduce policy revision regarding relative and kinship placement providers including:

- Definitions clarifying the distinction between a relative and a kinship provider;
- Process and procedures for making a placement in an unlicensed

relative or kinship home;

- Process for licensure of a relative or kinship home;
- Process for making a relative or kinship placement in a currently licensed resource home; and
- Identification of non-safety licensing standards that may be waived by the Regional Office on a case-by-case basis in order to license a relative resource home in response to House Resolution 6893 Title I, Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act.

#### **Definitions**

- **Relative:** A person related to another by blood or affinity within the third degree (grandparent, brother, sister, half-brother, half-sister, stepparent, stepbrother, stepsister, uncle, aunt, or first cousin.) RSMo 210.565.2.
- **Kinship:** A person who is non-related by blood, marriage or adoption who has a close relationship with the child or child's family (godparents, teachers, close family friends, and fellow church members) or a person who has a close relationship with the child or child's family and is related to the child by blood or affinity beyond the third degree.

### **The Missouri Child Care Resource and Referral Network (MOCCRRN) Regional Reorganization and Operational Name Change (CD10-114)**

The purpose of this memorandum is to advise staff that the Missouri Child Care Resource and Referral Network (MOCCRRN) has restructured its regional offices and will begin operating as Child Care Aware® of Missouri.

MOCCRRN is licensed as a member of the national organization Child Care Aware®, considered to be "the nation's most respected hub of information for parents and child care providers." In order to bring more name-awareness to their efforts, MOCCRRN will begin operating as Child Care Aware® of Missouri effective October 1st, 2010.

#### **Keep Current...**

The above is a brief summary of the current policies impacting the Children's Division. A more complete explanation is available at: [www.dss.mo.gov/cd/info/memos/2010](http://www.dss.mo.gov/cd/info/memos/2010).



## Information and Resources

### Foster Care Transition Plans Must Include Health Care Information

The Administration on Children Youth and Families released overarching program instructions for the Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act of 2008, and announced new regulations requiring transition plans for youths aging out of foster care to include new information about the youth's health care. The health care regulations became effective Oct. 1st.

The program instructions for state implementation of the Fostering Connections Act were long-awaited by child welfare practitioners and advocates. They address in particular a number of questions around the two optional aspects of the act: a federally matched guardianship assistance program and a federally matched extension of foster care until age 21.

The new health regulations require that the transition plans include details about the importance of the youth designating officially a person who can make health decisions on his or her behalf if the youth cannot make them and does not want any relative to make them, and provides the youth with the documents to carry out those wishes. Such situations could arise if the youth is seriously injured in an accident or suffers from a mental impairment.

The regulations also require states and tribes to prepare health oversight plans for youths aging out of foster care, including information about health insurance.

Information about the new health care requirements can be found by visiting:  
[http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb/laws\\_policies/policy/pi/2010/pi1010.htm](http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb/laws_policies/policy/pi/2010/pi1010.htm).

### MO HealthNet for Kids

The Department of Social Services provides many services for Missouri children through the MO HealthNet for Kids (MHK) Program, the state's healthcare program for children. Two divisions within the department, the Family Support Division and the MO HealthNet Division coordinate to provide these services.

Through the MO HealthNet for Kids program, children receive full, comprehensive coverage including primary, acute and preventative care, hospital care, dental and vision care as well as prescription coverage. Whether your child is currently enrolled in MO HealthNet for Kids or you're interested in learning more about the program, visit <http://www.dss.mo.gov/mhk/> to find information from all three divisions including how to apply, who is eligible, what benefits are offered and how to find a doctor in your area.

### FosterClub Transition Toolkit Helps Youth Map Futures

FosterClub, a national network supporting young people in foster care, has developed the **FosterClub Transition Toolkit** to help youth develop a plan for transitioning into adulthood. The toolkit encourages youth to prepare their individual plan with the supportive adults involved in their lives, such as foster parents, teachers, or mentors, and is designed to help youth assess their assets, identify resources, and plan for life after foster care. The toolkit also provides a "Readiness Scale" for youth to track their progress in the following 10 areas:

- Finances and Money Management
- Job and Career
- Life Skills
- Identity
- Performance
- Education
- Self Care and Health
- Housing
- Transportation
- Community, Culture and Social Life

FosterClub's Toolkit supports the Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act of 2008, which requires that all States develop an individual transition plan for the foster youth during the 90-day period before a youth leaves foster care.

**To download the Transition Toolkit, visit:**

[www.fosterclub.com/files/transition\\_toolkit.pdf](http://www.fosterclub.com/files/transition_toolkit.pdf)

### Financial Liability of Foster Parents

Foster parents should not sign as a responsible financial party on medical procedures for foster children. This is in order to protect the financial liability of foster parents.

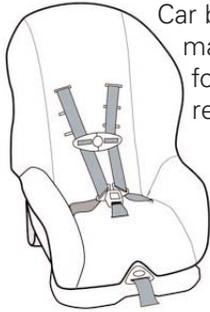
**Any forms that are received regarding the medical bills for foster children should be returned to the Children's Division immediately upon receipt.**

### Adoption Heart Gallery Moves through Missouri

The Gallery has been traveling across Missouri since April, featuring professional photographs of Missouri foster children awaiting adoption. The 208 photos capture the hearts and souls of the children. Everyone is encouraged to attend — especially current and prospective foster and adoptive parents as well as community partners. The Children's Division partners with the Adoption Exchange to host the gallery. For further information and a complete and updated schedule of the remaining dates for the Heart Gallery, please visit <http://www.moheartgallery.org>.

# Children's Safety

## 21 Safest Booster Seats Revealed With New Ratings



Car booster seats are getting safer, but many still fail to provide proper protection for young children, a national safety research and testing group has found.

In a new guide for parents, the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety reviewed the seat belt fit of 72 models available at major retailers or online, assigning a "Best Bet" rating to the 21

boosters that provided a correct fit across the full range of vehicle types. Booster seats that don't position seatbelts properly can lead to injuries in a crash and lessen the effectiveness of the belt, experts say.

The institute, a nonprofit highway research group funded by automobile insurance companies, gave a "Good Bet" rating to seven other models that would give a correct fit in the majority of vehicles.

**Only 21 out of 72 booster seats evaluated received a "Best Bet" rating.**

See the complete list and the institute's full report at <http://www.iihs.org/research/topics/boosters/default.html>. "We've been rating booster seats for a full three years now and in this latest round we've found them to be a lot better than they used to be," says Anne McCartt, Senior Vice President for Research at the Institute. "There are a lot more good choices for parents now with more boosters on our list of 'Best Bets.'" In 2009, only nine boosters out of the 60 reviewed got the "Best Bet" rating, with eight garnering the "Good Bet" grade.

Boosters have improved overall, but eight failed to make the grade because they didn't position the seat belt correctly. Those **"Not Recommended"** include: Eddie Bauer Deluxe, Eddie Bauer Deluxe 3-in-1, Evenflo Express, Evenflo Generations 65, Evenflo Sightseer, Harmony Baby Armor, Safety 1st All-in-One, Safety 1st Alpha Omega Elite.

"The new report should highlight to parents that they need to be smart consumers," says Dr. Barbara Gaines, Director of Trauma and Injury Prevention at the Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh of the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center. "They shouldn't be focusing on which seat has the nicest pattern, but on the way it actually fits in the vehicle."

No matter which booster they choose, parents should look closely at diagrams showing how the seat belt should lie across their children's shoulders and lap, Gaines says.

That advice may come as a surprise to some parents. A common misconception among parents is that the boosters work by simply sitting the child up higher, says McCartt. So the assumption is that any booster that lifts the child up will work. But the real point of the booster is to **position the seat belt so that it provides optimal protection**. While even a poorly positioned belt can save lives, it can put a child at risk of internal injuries in a crash.

### Secure seat belt fit

Shoulder belts should fit across the middle of the joint, not too close to the neck and not too far over. When the shoulder strap is too close to the neck, kids get uncomfortable and will often wriggle out of the belt, McCartt says. When the belt is too far over it will allow too much movement during a car accident. Still, Lee cautions that parents inspect the fit of the booster and belts since there is a wide range of height in children between the ages of 4 and 8.

Parents worried about the fit of their child's booster seat can always have it checked, suggests Gaines. "In almost every community there are free car seat fitting stations," she says. "Sometimes they can help you make it fit better."

The best way to find a car seat fitting station in your community is to type in the name of your community and "car seat fitting" into your web browser, Gaines says. Or, check with the local children's hospital or police department.

When it comes to the lap belt, the optimal position is across the thighs. When the belt is positioned higher so that it falls across the abdomen, the child is at risk for damage to the intestines and the spine in a crash, Gaines says.

The real value of the new report is that it takes the guess work out of choosing a booster seat.

*Reprinted from article on msnbc.com by Linda Carroll*



## Kids' Crafts

### Fabulous Pillow

Age: Preschool and older

For this nifty craft, your child will use permanent fabric markers to decorate a pillowcase that he or she can take with them anywhere they go. **Here's a hint:** put a piece of cardboard inside the pillowcase so that while your child is drawing on it the ink won't leak through to the other side of the pillowcase. Have fun!



#### Materials:

A clean plain pillowcase, white or a pale color  
Cardboard that fits inside the pillowcase  
Permanent fabric markers

#### Directions:

1. Put the cardboard inside the pillowcase.
2. Draw whatever you want on the pillowcase. You can put your name on it, too.
3. If the package for the fabric markers recommends ironing over your art to "set" the ink, please ask a grown-up to help you.
4. When it's time to wash your pillowcase, wash it separately in cold water with gentle soap. That will keep your art looking nice longer.
5. Here's another hint: these make nice gifts!

*Reprinted from www.familyeducation.com*

### Nature Bracelet

Age: Toddlers and older

#### Materials:

Masking tape  
Scissors

#### Directions:

Before going outdoors with your child, wrap a piece of masking tape to his or her wrist, sticky side up. As you explore, help him or her attach colorful leaves, flowers, and other interesting discoveries to their bracelet. When done, use scissors to snip off the bracelet. Display it on a bulletin board, shelf, or wall.

*Reprinted from www.familyeducation.com*

#### Printables

There are tons of websites that offer printable coloring pages, games, and puzzles for free. Use the backs of recycled paper to print dozens of pages for your kids to enjoy for hours!

Here are just a few:

[www.printables.familyeducation.com](http://www.printables.familyeducation.com)

[www.printables4kids.com](http://www.printables4kids.com)

Type, "children's printables" in a search engine to find more!

### Homemade Colored Playdough

Store playdough in a covered container or ziploc bag. If it sweats a little, just add more flour. For sensory variety, use playdough warm or cool as well as at room temperature.

#### Materials:

1 cup water	1 tbsp vegetable oil
1/2 cup salt	1 tbsp cream of tartar
Food coloring	Saucepan
1 cup flour	

#### Directions:

1. Combine water, oil, salt, cream of tartar, and food coloring in a saucepan and heat until warm.
2. Remove from heat and add flour.
3. Stir, then knead until smooth. The cream of tartar makes this dough last 6 months or longer, so resist the temptation to omit this ingredient if you don't have it on hand. Store this dough in an airtight container or a ziploc freezer bag.

*Reprinted from www.familyeducation.com*

### Fall Leaves Placemat

Age: Preschool and older

#### Materials:

Flowers and leaves	Clear contact paper
Construction paper	Scissors
Ribbon (optional)	

#### Directions:

1. Gather leaves and/or flowers that you'll use for your place mats.
2. Remove the flower blossoms/leaves from their stems and lay them on the construction paper. Practice arranging them on the contact paper – once you put the flowers/leaves on the paper, you won't be able to move them!
3. For each placemat you want to make, cut two pieces of contact paper, approximately 9" x 12".
4. Peel the backing off one piece of contact paper and lay it sticky-side up on the table.
5. Arrange the flowers/leaves on the sticky side of the contact paper.
6. Press the flowers and/or leaves so they lay flat on the contact paper. If you'd like to add more decoration, press ribbon to the edges for a border.
7. Peel the backing off the remaining piece of contact paper. Carefully cover your place mat (sticky-side down) with the contact paper. Do this step slowly and carefully to avoid getting wrinkles in the placemat.
8. Flatten your placemat once more to smooth out any wrinkles or air bubbles, and then use the scissors to trim any uneven edges. Now you're ready to set the table!

*Reprinted from www.familyeducation.com*

## Tips and Resources

### 10 Easy Ideas for Better Bag Lunches

#### On a Roll

When you think of making a sandwich, you probably reach for sliced bread. But changing things up by putting the fixings on a roll might entice your child. Bulkier rolls can be too filling and loaded with carbs, so consider buying small dinner rolls and making mini sandwiches with anything from turkey and cheese to a veggie or black bean burger.

#### Cracker and Cheese Buffet

Another alternative to boring sandwiches is crackers and cheese. Buy low-sodium, multigrain or whole-wheat crackers and slice up some reduced-fat cheddar cheese. To add more food groups to your child's lunch, cut deli meat into cracker-sized pieces, and apples into slivers. Turkey, cheese, and apple are a tasty combination, and kids will have fun assembling it on a cracker.

#### A Kebab of Favorite Foods

Kids are known for liking or hating food based on how it looks. Kebabs are another way to beat sandwich boredom because they just look fun to eat. Buy short wooden skewers and string on bite-sized chunks of different foods your child likes. Use leftover grilled chicken or baked ham from dinner and pair it with low-fat cheese and cherry tomatoes. You can even add grapes, berries, or other fruit. There are no rules for what counts as lunch if it's healthy and your child likes it!

#### Breakfast for Lunch

Here's another rule-breaker. Some kids just like breakfast better than lunch, so why not pack a yogurt with low-sugar cereal and berries or banana slices to mix in? Another idea is a multi-grain waffle (that you toast or microwave before school) with a serving of peanut butter for your child to smear on at lunch. Just be sure to watch the sugar content and not to let your child eat the same foods all day, every day. You want him or her to get a good mix of foods so that she takes in different nutrients.

#### Wraps

Wraps have become a popular sandwich vehicle, but they can get boring, too. Make them fun again by making pinwheel finger sandwiches together. Lay a tortilla wrap out flat and have your child spoon or layer on any ingredients, such as tuna salad or hummus with thin slivers of cucumber, or deli ham and American cheese. Make the layer of ingredients very thin and spread it out evenly on the wrap. Take one edge of the wrap and roll it up tightly, and then cut it into 1-inch slices to reveal the tasty spiral inside.

#### Creative Condiments

Condiments are highly underrated. Some kids won't touch a burger without ketchup, so they might be more likely to enjoy their entire sandwich if it has some flair, like a bit of spiced-up mayo or sweet honey mustard. Does your child love barbecue sauce or hot

sauce? Add a dash to a tablespoon of low-fat mayo or plain yogurt to add new life to a sandwich. Guacamole or cranberry sauce paired with deli turkey will soon be a favorite. Just keep an eye on the nutritional information, and make healthy choices. Some condiments have high sugar, fat, or salt content.

#### Salad Bar to Go

Maybe your child doesn't love eating salad at home, but he or she does if you're at a restaurant where they get to pick the fixin's at a salad bar. Use that same concept for school lunches. Ask him or her about their favorite kind of lettuce and what they like to add to make a salad tasty. Maybe it's grilled chicken, dried cranberries, mandarin oranges, and croutons (which you can make by slicing up stale bread and baking it in the oven). Put those items in little containers that he or she can mix in with salad greens on their own. Taking part in food preparation can make meals more enticing for kids. Just be sure to use a low-fat salad dressing.

#### Pasta Salad

Pasta salad doesn't have to be a snooze. Here's another opportunity to find out your child's favorite ingredients and add them to an old standby: pasta. Cook spirals, shells, or other fun-shaped pasta. After it has cooled, toss in peas and turkey pepperoni, or leftover taco beef and sweet corn, or pieces of broccoli and cheese ... the possibilities are endless. Just add low-fat salad dressing and you're done!

#### Rainbow Lunch

Eating fruits and veggies in a variety of colors gives kids a healthy mix of nutrients. Challenge your child to eat a rainbow of at least a few different colors of food at lunch. Have him or her help you pack something red, yellow, and blue one day, and something orange, green, and purple the next day. Try to get creative and pick things other than apples and bananas. Has he or she tried red bell pepper or yellow star fruit yet?

#### Peanut Butter and ...

Hopefully your child isn't allergic to peanut butter and his school still allows it (some have banned it because of widespread peanut allergies). Peanut butter sandwiches are a beloved lunch item. What can you pair it with besides the classics – jelly, jam, honey, marshmallow fluff, or bananas – to bring it back to life? Try apple slices and raisins, a few crunchy pretzels, or even a sprinkling of mini chocolate chips.

*Reprinted from [www.familyeducation.com](http://www.familyeducation.com)*



**Kids get bored with the same old sandwiches from September through June. Using cookie cutters to make sandwiches in cute shapes can only take you so far. Find some new lunch ideas that will make your child ravenous and his classmates envious!**

## Foster and Adoption Resource Center

### Eastern MO ARC

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

### 24-Hour Crisis Intervention for Adoptive and Pre-Adoptive Families in St. Louis County

Thanks to a generous grant from the St. Louis County Children's Service Fund, the Foster & Adoptive Care Coalition now offers 24-hour Crisis Intervention services to adoptive and pre-adoptive families in St. Louis County! For more information on the Crisis Intervention program, contact Dawn Milburn, Lead Family Intervention Specialist, at 800.FOSTER.3.

### Family Support Network

To promote permanency and prevent out-of-home placement, Family Support Network has a therapist available, dedicated to serving pre-adoptive/adoptive/guardianship families in St. Louis County. Families can access this service if they are receiving Crisis Intervention services from Foster & Adoptive Care Coalition OR if they are seeking a therapeutic intervention but are not necessarily in crisis. To access 24-hour Crisis Intervention services from the Foster & Adoptive Care Coalition OR services from the Family Support Network, families must live in St. Louis County and must call 800.FOSTER.3.

### Adoption Saturday Celebration

Family Court of St. Louis County  
On Saturday, November 20th from 9 a.m. to noon, the Family Court of St. Louis County will open its doors to finalize adoptions in the St. Louis metro area. In addition to the adoptions, there will be activities to celebrate families that adopt and provide information to would-be parents about the adoption process.

### Mark Your Calendar

#### 2011 St. Louis Regional Kinship Care Conference

*Strategies for Supporting Relative Caregivers of Children and Youth* featuring Dr. Joseph Crumbley (Author, Family Therapist, Trainer, Consultant)

**Date / Time:** Friday, April 15, 2011 / 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

**Location:** University of Missouri St. Louis  
J.C. Penney Conference Center

**Cost:** \$45 (includes lunch & parking)  
(4.25 Social Work credit hours pending)

The purpose of the conference is to provide professionals methods of supporting and intervening with kinship caregivers and their families, and to offer caregivers coping strategies to manage the family dynamics and emotional issues specific to kinship care.

For more information, visit [www.extension.missouri.edu](http://www.extension.missouri.edu).

### 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)

### Midwest Foster Care and Adoption Association Celebrates 10 Years

On August 21st, friends and patrons of MFCAA helped us celebrate our 10th anniversary at a reception held at the Kansas City Jazz Museum. Guests enjoyed perusing both the Jazz Museum and the Negro League Baseball Museum located in the famous 18th and Vine Historical district. Lori Ross, Executive Director of MFCAA, recognized Mike McGonagle and Shook, Hardy, Bacon Law Firm for generous and ongoing support of the organization.

### 2010 Conference

#### Fostering Strategies for Change: Children, Families, and Their Communities

November 17-18, 2010

Kansas City Convention Center (Kansas City, MO)

#### Register now for the 2010 Regional Conference.

This event is a collaborative effort of MFCAA, Cornerstones of Care, UMKC School of Social Work, and the MO Children's Division. This effort merges three separate events in support of a single regional conference featuring speakers, workshops, and collaborative strategies for improving systems and services to children and families. Training credit and CEUs are available. The conference is being held at the Kansas City Convention Center in proximity to numerous restaurants and area attractions. For more information, visit [www.fs4conference.org](http://www.fs4conference.org) or [www.MFCAA.org](http://www.MFCAA.org).

### We Need More Families!

We are seeking foster parents and children in foster care to participate in a research project about what makes kids resilient.

To participate, we need foster parents and children who are at least eight years old to complete surveys. Both the parent and child will receive payment for their participation each time a survey is completed. Worried about having time to do the surveys? Don't be! We can do surveys during the evenings and weekends at a community location convenient to your home and your family's schedule — whatever works best with your family. Please join us in this important effort to help youth in foster care — your participation is essential to helping us make the system better for youth in foster care. If you are interested in the SPARK Project, please call the SPARK Project team at 913.897.8454. We're looking forward to getting to know you and your family!

## Waiting Children: Seeking Forever Families

### Meet Moses

*Enjoys wrestling, reading, going to church, and is determined to attend college*

**Moses (12)** is a well-mannered, bright young man. Moses is very social and enjoys interacting with others, playing video games, wrestling, working out, reading books, playing chess, and listening to music. During the summer, Moses worked hard to earn money while on summer vacation. He enjoys going to church, and hanging out with his girlfriend, who attends the same church as he does. Moses' placement providers state, "He is a bright young man and is very respectful to adults. He also has great interactions with his peers at school."

Moses likes his current school and states, "I enjoy this school because they have a variety of classes and are more diverse. There are less problems at this school." His favorite classes are Math and English, in which he excels. As one teacher stated, "Moses is doing well in my class. He is well-behaved and respectful." Moses has expressed that he hopes to attend college one day.

Moses has three older adult siblings. He currently visits his sister and her husband, each weekend, and enjoys spending time with them. It will be beneficial to Moses for him to maintain contact with his siblings after adoption. Moses will do well in a one or two parent family, with or without other children. For more information, please contact Lori Jester, Adoption Specialist, at 816.325.6046 or [Lori.B.Jester@dss.mo.gov](mailto:Lori.B.Jester@dss.mo.gov).



### Meet Hana

*Loves to cook and is described as, "a sweet girl who needs lots of love"*

At age 5, **Hanna** is already a budding cook, who likes to help prepare meals, especially when there's mayonnaise involved! Sometimes slow to warm up to new people, Hanna is very loving, and shows it with hugs. Described as "a sweet child, who needs a lot of love," this blond, blue-eyed little girl has made many positive changes since coming into care. Hanna, who is in good health, faces some developmental challenges. To learn more, please contact Lori Jester, Adoption Specialist, at 816.325.6046 or [Lori.B.Jester@dss.mo.gov](mailto:Lori.B.Jester@dss.mo.gov).

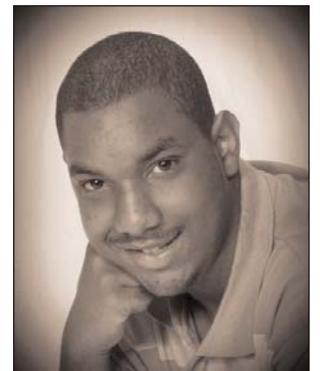
### Meet Hakeem

*Loves baseball and his favorite player is Albert Pujols*

**Hakeem (15)** is a friendly, fun loving, and sweet child. He is very athletic and enjoys sports, especially basketball and baseball. His favorite baseball player is Albert Pujols from the St. Louis Cardinals. He also loves video games, and he is especially good at memory games.

Hakeem is in good physical health. He does have some developmental delays and is in the 10th grade at a self-contained special education school. Hakeem enjoys school and studies diligently.

Hakeem is legally free for adoption and is looking for a family that will accept him and love him unconditionally. Hakeem would do well in a home with either no children or with children his age or older. He would also like to be able to maintain a relationship with his current foster mother following final adoption. For more information on Hakeem, please contact Liz Johnson, Wendy's Wonderful Kids Recruiter at the Foster & Adoptive Care Coalition, at 314.367.8373 x31, or [lizjohnson@foster-adopt.org](mailto:lizjohnson@foster-adopt.org).



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