

# Family & Children Services Fostering Footnotes

Winter Edition  
January, February, March 2010



## Important Dates to Remember:

Please notice that an EVENING Foster Parent Support Group has been established! We will be offering the EVENING support group for families that are unable to attend our support group offered during the day. Check below for dates....

### Foster Parent Support Group:

**January 12<sup>th</sup>**- Support Group and Coffee 9:30am-11:30am (Room 421)

**January 26<sup>th</sup>**- Support Group 6:00pm- 7:30pm (Room 146) **NEW EVENING TIME!**

**February 9<sup>th</sup>**- Support Group and Coffee 9:30am-11:30am (Room 146)

**February 23<sup>rd</sup>**- Support Group 6:00pm – 7:30 pm (Room 146) **NEW EVENING TIME!**

**March 9<sup>th</sup>**- Support Group and Coffee 9:30am-11:30am (Room 146)

**March 23<sup>rd</sup>**- Support Group 6:00pm- 7:30pm (Room 146) **NEW EVENING TIME!**

### Foster Parent Task Force:

**January 19<sup>th</sup>** – Task Force 10:00am – 11:30am (Room 146)

**February 16<sup>th</sup>** – Task Force 10:00am – 11:30am (Room 146)

**March 16<sup>th</sup>** – Task Force 10:00am – 11:30am (Room 146)

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**Would you enjoy working with other foster parents and staff members to strengthen our Foster Parent/Adoption program? If so, please consider joining the Foster Parent Task Force. If you are interested, please share your interest with your foster care licensor.**  
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**The 2010 P.R.I.D.E Training Schedule** will now be available at the Family & Children Services website at [www.fcsource.org](http://www.fcsource.org). If you would like a hard copy sent to you, please contact your licensor.

Please remember the following information regarding PRIDE requirements:

**All PRIDE** training (Sessions 1-9) must be completed by the end of the **first year** after the initial licensing period.

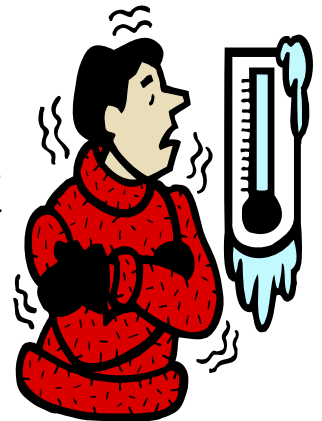
In a two caregiver home, **both** caregivers must complete **all** of the **PRIDE** training sessions.

## Take a moment and explore

the Family & Children Services website at [www.fcsource.org](http://www.fcsource.org). Under Programs, click on Foster Care & Adoption... we will be posting upcoming training opportunities and hope to have the foster care forms available for easy access.

## Are any foster parents willing to provide **SUBSTITUTE CARE** for other foster parents who need a break?

Please let us know and we will place your name on our Substitute Care Provider list. We want to be a resource for you! Please let Krista Ploski (373-0248 ext. 260) know and we will share our list in upcoming *Fostering Footnotes*. Please remember that all substitute care arrangements must be discussed with your caseworker prior to the care taking place.



**\*\*\*PLEASE NOTE: As the Agency will be closed on January 1, 2010, foster parent checks will not be going out in the mail until the 1<sup>st</sup> business day which is January 4, 2010.**

## **Friendly reminder:**

All licensed foster parents must receive at least 6 hours of training per year. To make this training requirement easier to obtain, the foster care licensing staff have created a Foster Parent Resource Library. If you are interested in a specific training topic, but are unsure how to access the information, contact your foster care licensor (Krista Ploski at ext. 260, Lynnette Mazurek at ext. 267, or Christina Smith at ext. 265). Below is a partial list of the articles we have available in our "in-house" library.

### **Relevant Issues that Bring Children into Care**

#### **Articles:**

Title: Fostering Children Who's Parents Struggle with Substance Abuse  
Author: Jordan Institute for Families  
Year Published: 2005

Title: Fostering the Child Witness of Domestic Violence  
Author: Crystalle Williams  
Year Published: 2008

#### **Sexual Abuse Articles:**

Title: Helping Children Who Have Been Sexually Abused  
Author/Adapted from: Donna Gillespie Foster  
Year Published: 2007

Title: Preparing a Safe Place for Healing for Sexually Abused Children  
Author: Jordan Institute for Families  
Year Published: 2006

#### **Teen Issues Articles:**

Title: Suggestions for Helping Survivors (related to suicide)  
Author: Hope for Bereaved  
Year Published: Unknown

Title: Teen Depression – A Guide for Parents and Teachers  
Authors: Melinda Smith, Suzanne Barston, Jaelline Jaffe, Lisa Flores Dumke, and Jeanne Segal  
Year Published (last modified): 2007

Title: Self Injury – Types, Causes and Treatment  
Authors: Deborah Cutter, Jaelline Jaffe, and Jeanne Segal  
Year Published (last modified): 2008

Title: Suicide Prevention – Understanding and Helping a Suicidal Person  
Authors: Melinda Smith and Jaelline Jaffe  
Year Published (last modified): 2008

Title: Cutting  
Author: Nemours Foundation  
Year Published: 1995-2009

Title: A Parent's Quick Reference Card – Recognizing and Preventing Gang Involvement  
Author: COPS  
[www.cops.usdoj.gov](http://www.cops.usdoj.gov)  
Year Published: Unknown

Title: Making The Internet Safer For Your Kids  
Author: Dr. Charles Fay  
Year Published: 2001

Title: Prom: A Night of Many Decisions for Teens  
Authors: Jim Fay and David Funk  
Year Published: 2002

Title: Have a Plan for Dealing with Peer Pressure  
Author: Jim Fay  
Year Published: 2001

### **The Foster Child's Perspective Articles:**

Title: Bound to a Lounge Chair  
Author: Angela Davis  
Year Published: Between 1995 and 2009

Title: We're the Real Foster Care Experts  
Author: Sabrina Hines  
Year Published: Between 1995 and 2009



## **Local Family Events...**

If you are looking for some fun families activities during the winter months, check out these sites:

[www.NatureCenter.org](http://www.NatureCenter.org)  
[www.airzoo.org](http://www.airzoo.org)  
[www.kalamazoomuseum.org](http://www.kalamazoomuseum.org)



**If you are interested in one of the following trainings, please call or e-mail Jane regarding dates and times available at (269) 373-0248 ext. 255 or [janeb@fcsource.org](mailto:janeb@fcsource.org)**

- MANDT I and MANDT II training
- Child & Infant CPR training
- First Aid training
- Adult CPR training
- Bloodborne Pathogens

**Family & Children Services will be closed on January 18, 2010 for Martin Luther King, Jr. day.**

## STAR AWARD

The STAR AWARD is a new award that we would like to introduce!



Foster Care Staff can nominate Foster Parents for performing like a "STAR". The following foster parents received the STAR AWARD for their outstanding commitment to children:

- Curtis-Strauch- "They managed to keep everything under control with a baby in the hospital and having two other foster children placed in their home. They have done an exceptional job with the children in their home and no matter what seems to happen, always seem to be able to be flexible so that everything works."
- Harris-Wimsatt- "They did a wonderful job with the transition of a foster child in their home and the reunification with his biological parents."
- Thomason- "They have taken on a lot regarding having a medically fragile child placed in their home. They also did a great job helping with the transition of one of their foster children back to his biological mother."
- Costie- "They are newly licensed and have already accepted placement of children with significant needs into their home. They have demonstrated a willingness to work with the children in their home and have used many strategies in help maintain this placement."

## New Staff Members

Please help us welcome the following staff members to the Foster Care Unit...

Joyce Blythe- Welcome Back Joyce! Joyce is an **Adoption Specialist** and is located in the Battle Creek office. She previously was a Foster Care Specialist for Family & Children Services and Lutheran Social Services. Joyce also was a Family Advocate Worker at the Battle Creek site. She has been employed with Family & Children Services for over 7 years. Joyce attended Western Michigan University and has a Bachelors Degree in Social Work.

Kari Kunkel- Kari is our new **Case Aide**. She has a Bachelors Degree in Business from Concordia University in Portland, Oregon. Her previous work experience includes working for an International Adoption Agency in Oregon and she was a Foster Care Case Aide in Washington State. Welcome Kari!

Shari Boone- Shari Boone is our new **Foster Care Recruiter**! She graduated from Alma College with a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Therapeutic Recreation. Shari has been employed by Family & Children Services for over 23 years!!! In her time here at the agency, she has been a part of the Respite Unit, Families First, Life Skills, and most recently in Case Management as a Supports Clinician.

## Kalamazoo Resources

**ASK (Advocacy Services for Kids)** – ASK provides support, training, and advocacy skills to families raising children with mood, emotional, and/or behavioral challenges. Services, resources, and a schedule of monthly support groups can be found on their website at [www.askforkids.org](http://www.askforkids.org) or by calling 269-343-5896.

**P2P (Parent to Parent of South West Michigan)**  
Parent Network Meetings: Parent to Parent of SWM provides supportive programs for parents of children with disabilities and special needs. They promote opportunities for children to fully participate in society through the support and education they give to families and communities. P2P hosts a monthly Parent Network meeting to provide helpful information and a place for parents to talk and share with other parents. The meeting takes place the **FIRST THURSDAY** (Sept. - May) of the month from 6:00-8:00 pm at the First Presbyterian Church, 321 W. South Street, downtown Kalamazoo. Childcare is provided. RSVP for childcare or questions. Call P2P at 343-8950. Website: [www.p2pswmi.org](http://www.p2pswmi.org).

**Angel Food Ministries**, Receive \$50+ of food for \$30.00. Check out the monthly menus and specials on the web site: [www.angelfoodministries.com](http://www.angelfoodministries.com). No income requirement and food stamps are accepted. Host sites and phone numbers in Kalamazoo and Portage are: New Life Victory Church, 343-5683; Fourth Reformed Church, 375-5265; New Genesis, Inc., 343-7023, ext. 210; Haven Reformed Church, 344-5871; New Day Community Church, 343-2102; Stockbridge UMC, Portage: First Church of the Nazarene, 327-3151.

**Kalamazoo County CHADD (Children and Adults with Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder)**  
Bronson Hospital Gilmore Center for Health Education, 7 Healthcare Plaza (between John Street and Jasper Street on Walnut). Meets the second Tuesday of each month from 7:00-8:30 pm. For additional information visit their website at [www.kazoochadd.com](http://www.kazoochadd.com) or call 384-2270.

**Free Clinic of Kalamazoo**, 2918 Portage Road. Services provided include- urgent medical care, emergency dental screening and referral, medication assistance, eye exam referral, HELP Desk information.  
Hours: Monday & Wednesday – 9 am to 5 pm; Tuesday & Thursday – 9 am to 9 pm. For people in Kalamazoo County who are uninsured. Phone 344-0044 or e-mail: [info@ksooclinic.org](mailto:info@ksooclinic.org).



## Puppy Chow – Fun family activity!!!

### Ingredients

- 1 (16 ounce) bag of Nestle chocolate chips
- 1 box of powdered sugar, sifted
- 1 cup peanut butter
- 1 box Crispix cereal
- 1 stick butter or margarine



### Directions

Melt butter, chocolate chips and peanut butter in a pot on stove over medium heat, stirring constantly. Sift powdered sugar into large brown paper bag. Pour chocolate mixture over cereal in large bowl. Put cereal into bag with powdered sugar and shake until completely covered. Store in an airtight bowl.

## Kids' Chore Charts: Age-Appropriate Chores (information from [lovetoknow.com](http://lovetoknow.com))

Behavior charts are often used for young children. In order to help them remember to do their chores or play nice with others, for example. Clear and simple organization is critical for kids to understand a chart, and the younger the child is, the more directed that organization must be. If they cannot read, use pictures to clearly demonstrate the behavior; plus, colorful designs also help keep the chart positive and fun. Large printing will make it more visible and keep focused on the tasks it represents. Select only a few critical behaviors to keep the chart from seeming overwhelming to a young child.

Older children can use more detailed, long-term charts that track cumulative progress toward a larger goal. Multiple behaviors, tasks, and items can be listed, and there may be room to track totals as well.

Characteristics of different charts include:

Space to list multiple tasks or behaviors to be tracked.

Hourly, daily, weekly, or monthly time increments that match the intended goal.

Space to note successful items.

Titles, legends, and other keys to remind kids about the purpose of the chart.

### How to Use Charts Effectively

Regardless of the type of chart you choose, you must use it effectively in order to help a child change their behavior. Behavior charts are great tools, but only if used properly.

**Place a chart where it will be noticed.** On the child's bedroom door, a family bulletin board, or the refrigerator are good choices.

**Be consistent about using the chart.** Giving leeway one day and not the next sends a mixed message, diluting the importance of the chart and the behaviors it tracks.



**Let the child have control of the chart.** Letting him/her color in ovals or spaces, place stickers, or draw lines to show positive progress provides ownership of the behavior.

**Review the chart daily.** By reminding children about the chart's goals and celebrating their daily successes, you reinforce the behavior and demonstrate your happiness at their progress.

**Avoid vague language.** "Be good" may mean one thing to the parent and another to the child while "say please when asking for a treat" is far less subjective. Then both parties can easily agree on when the behavior actually occurs.

**Give the chart a chance to work.** No child will modify their behavior in just one week, no matter how well done a chart may be. Kids need time to develop new behavior patterns, and charts should be used 4-6 weeks to adequately cement new behaviors.

## Rewards and Consequences

One of the best ways to motivate children with behavior charts is through a system of rewards and consequences. Rewards can be simple, inexpensive items: a piece of candy, being allowed to stay up late, being excused from a chore, or getting extra play time. By offering extrinsic rewards, children have an understandable goal to work toward rather than simply being told to change their behavior.



For older children, rewards can be more complex. Charts can include point values for good behaviors. When the total reaches a predetermined number, then they have earned their reward. Those rewards should be clearly stated ahead of time so that both parties know the end result.

## Where to Find Free Behavior Charts

Free behavior and chore charts can be found in many locations on-line or make your own. You can also go to [lovetoknow.com](http://lovetoknow.com) for some wonderful examples. The easiest solution for an extremely customized chart is to create one with a simple table or spreadsheet program.

Before making up a chore chart for your child(ren), consider what you are asking them to do. Most toddlers and 3-4 year olds would not understand such a chart. For them, it is best to simply remind them to help out when they are needed.

However, older children, even if they cannot read, can use a chart. Pictures can be used next to chores so that the child understands what is being asked of him/her. Some chores for kids aged 4-10 years old include:

Picking up toys

Setting the table

Making, or attempting to make, their beds

Of course, younger children will need more guidance and help in doing their chores. It is important that they understand their responsibility when it comes to helping around the house. Once kids are older, however, they can do significantly more, depending on their maturity level. Those from ages 10 and up, for example, can often do the following:

Take care of dishes following meals

Take trash out

Feed and water the family pets

Vacuum a particular room

Dust a room



Praising kids for a job well done makes them want to continue to please others. If the adults notice that a child keeps up with his/her chores, or does an exceptional job, or helps others with chores, the adult should praise the child. While praise can be a reward unto itself, sometimes more concrete rewards are useful as well. Taking a child out to a favorite restaurant, or letting an older child negotiate a slightly later curfew for exceptional jobs well done are two possible rewards.

Another rewards system many parents use is to add optional chores at the bottom of the kids' chore charts. These chores can be done by children only if they choose to do so. By doing a certain number of optional chores, children could then earn privileges or rewards, like extra video game time or a new t-shirt.

Here is an example of a chore chart:

# I Said Nice Things Today!

Use with stickers or markers, etc.

| Sunday  | Monday  | Tuesday   | Wednesday   | Thursday  | Friday  | Saturday  |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

Notes:

| Sunday  | Monday  | Tuesday   | Wednesday   | Thursday  | Friday  | Saturday  |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

Notes:

| Sunday   | Monday   | Tuesday  | Wednesday  | Thursday   | Friday   | Saturday   |
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Notes:

| Sunday  | Monday  | Tuesday   | Wednesday   | Thursday  | Friday  | Saturday  |
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Notes:

| Sunday  | Monday  | Tuesday   | Wednesday   | Thursday  | Friday  | Saturday  |
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|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

Notes:



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## Employee of the Month

If a foster parent would like to nominate a worker for Employee of the Month...please contact Elizabeth Lord at 373-0248 ext. 223.

September/October – Shellie Harrison

November- Jennifer Heeres

December—Deborah Palaszek

**Guardianship Training** will be held on January 28, 2010 from 6:00 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. in the Board Room at our Kalamazoo site on Lake Street. Sue Darling, the presenter, will be addressing the differences between non-subsidized guardianships and subsidized guardianships, as well as the qualification parameters for guardianships. Please RSVP to Krista Ploski at ext. 260 by January 21st.

## COLOR ME



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

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As always, thank you for taking the time to read **FOSTERING FOOTNOTES** and feel free to contact Elizabeth Lord at Ext. 223 if you have comments or suggestions.

1608 Lake Street  
Kalamazoo, MI 49001

Family & Children Services



## FOSTER CARE

*Change A Lifetime*

Family & Children Services

Call 344.0202 or 965.3247

