Fostering Communications

Building a Network of People in the Foster Care System

May 2015

Foster Care….
because a child can never have too many people to love them!!!

Foster Care Month

Governor Jack Dalrymple has proclaimed May as Children's Foster Care Month. Check out the following link to read the details of the Governor's proclamation for this year's Foster Care Month: **2015 Proclamation**

Back Row:
Mike Bartholomew, Director of Morton County Social Services; Dean Sturn, ND State Foster Care Administrator; and Bonita Moch, Morton County Social Service Center Foster Care Licensor

Front Row:
Sandy Helbling, Morton County Foster Parent; Govenor Jack Dalyrymple; and Jim Helbling, Morton County Foster Parent.

In an annual observance, Governor Jack Dalrymple, proclaimed May 2015 Children's Foster Care Month in North Dakota. Within that proclamation, Governor Dalrymple noted that foster families open their homes and hearts to children who need care and stable surroundings. He went on to note that compassionate foster families play an important role in assuring that children and youth are able to grow and develop in a safe, stable, and nurturing environment until they can be reunited with their families or achieve another form of permanence in their lives.

I would also like to express my gratitude and respect to all the foster care providers in North Dakota. As a group, your commitment to provide care, love and support for foster children is exemplary. The selfless dedication that is exhibited by foster families is truly admirable. Each and every foster home can, and does make a difference in the lives of foster children. This was summed up very well by anthropologist, Margaret Meade, when she wrote, "Never doubt that a small group of committed people can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has." Foster families are one of those groups of committed people that change the word for foster children. Thank you for all you do!

~Dean Sturn, MSW/LCSW North Dakota State Foster Care Administrator

State of
North Dakota
Office of the Governor
Jack Dalrymple
Governor

PROCLAMATION
CHILDREN'S FOSTER CARE MONTH
MAY 2015

WHEREAS, strong families are the foundation of our communities and state, providing love, support, and guidance children need in order to succeed; and

WHEREAS, North Dakotans have a long-standing tradition of opening their homes and hearts to children in need of stability and caring surroundings; and

WHEREAS, compassionate foster families play an important role in assuring that children and youth are able to grow and develop in a safe, stable, and nurturing environment until they can be reunited with their families or achieve permanency through adoptions and other lifelong connections; and

WHEREAS, Children's Foster Care Month is an opportunity to recognize the valuable contributions of foster families and everyone involved in the community effort to provide quality foster care; and

WHEREAS, dedicated foster families frequently adopt foster children who cannot return to their birth families, resulting in a greater need for more foster families; and

WHEREAS, foster families, county social services, child welfare professionals, and others involved with foster care deserve recognition this month and all year long for their continued team work and steadfast devotion to the safety, permanency, and well-being of children and youth; and

WHEREAS, the annual observance of Children's Foster Care Month calls attention to the value of foster care as a temporary service that provides help, healing, and hope to children and youth in our state.

NOW, THEREFORE, as Governor of the State of North Dakota, I do hereby proclaim May 2015, **CHILDREN'S FOSTER CARE MONTH** in the state of North Dakota.

Jack Dalrymple
Jack Dalrymple
Governor

ATTEST:
Alvin A. Jaeger
Alvin A. Jaeger
Secretary of State

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Department of Social Work
University of North Dakota

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Upcoming Conferences…

ND Children & Family Services Conference
July 27-30, 2015
Bismarck, ND

Register online by clicking HERE

Foster & Adoptive Parent Flings
(mini-conferences)

Fargo
October 2-3, 2015
Minot
October 16-17, 2015
Bismarck
April 15-16, 2016
Grand Forks
April 29-30, 2016

PRIDE Link

The PRIDE Model we follow highlights the competency of "*Supporting relationships between children and their birth families".* We need to remember that even though a child may feel some relief after being removed from a neglectful or abusive home, they still likely will have feelings of grief and loss from being separated from the people they love and know, including parents, extended family, and other community members. As foster parents and case managers, we need to make all attempts to promote connections between a child and their family. Having regular scheduled contact for a child with their parents, such as visitation, is just one of the ways we can help to decrease a child's grief. The following booklet from Iowa Foster and Adoptive Parents Association (IFAPA) offers insight into the importance and benefits of shared parents/decision making, what skills of communication are needed to overcome challenges that may arise, how to best support this relationship through Child and Family Team meetings, and how to consider visitations as "Family Interaction Plans".

Resource Parents Partnering with Birth Parents to Benefit Children

Drug Awareness

Sadly there is a growing use of drugs in North Dakota. One of these drugs is an Opioid known as Fentanyl, which has taken the lives of at least 12 people in the eastern half of ND this last year. As foster parents, we need to be aware of the signs of such a drug to ensure the safety of the youth we care for. The following link is a short video produced by the University of North Dakota and Altru Health System as they share a message about Fentanyl.

ND Drug-Related Deaths & Overdoses

Grand Forks School District also shared the following letter with all Grand Forks Student Caregivers as to the signs/symptoms of use, signs of overdose, and the slang terms youth are using to talk about this drug. Fentanyl can be lethal in in very small quantities and is absorbed through the skin or can even be ingested due to airborne particles, so if you come in contact with it, please do not touch it and contact your local police department immediately!!!

Letter to all Parents, Guardians, and Caregivers re: Fentanyl

Simple Reminder

As noted on the first page, May is National Foster Care Month; in honor of the children in foster care, it seemed fitting to include an article that reminds us of the trauma that these youth experience before being placed into foster care. It can be easy to forget that the behaviors a child may display mean far more due to the trauma they have experienced earlier in life.

It's Not "Just a Kid Thing": Behaviors in Adopted and Foster Children

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May 2015

ONE….

One tree can start a forest;
One smile can begin a friendship;
One hand can lift a soul;
One word can frame a goal;
One candle can wipe out darkness;
One laugh can conquer gloom;
One hope can raise your spirits;
One touch can show you care;
One life can make the difference;
Be that ONE today!!

~Author unknown

Summer IEP Plans

A break from the school work can be much needed for some children; however; it can also be a time where they lose critical gains they have worked hard to attain all year long. It is important as caregivers we find a balance in offering the break while promoting new goals. The following link from "Understand: For Learning & Attention Issues" offers ideas how one can break down IEP goals into skills you can work on over the summer as well as how to incorporate teachable moments into daily life.

Reinforcing Your Child's IEP Goals Over the Summer

Organizing Companion

It seems these days we all have too many appointments or events to manage. Sometimes it helps to have a tool to help us stay organized and on top of life. "Cozi" is a free app that can be added to an apple or android device or even used as a link off of the internet. It allows you to upload a calendar, set reminders, add a grocery list, a to do list, and even a family journal. The unique piece to this app is that it can be shared with others, so the whole family can use this single app. Cozi could be a wonderful tool as a foster parent to manage your foster youth's appointments/ visitations as well as to document any necessary details that you would like to share with your case manager through the family journal. You can even share the journal entries through email after you have written them. The grocery list could be used by all family members to add necessary grocery items, such as personal care items that a foster youth may be too shy to ask for. The link for this app can be found below.

Cozi: Family Life Simplified

Toolbox

Even as adults with years of experience, managing one's anger can be hard at times. As children experience life, they too have to figure out what works and what doesn't when learning how to manage their feelings. We may see a child struggle with managing their anger as they aggressively lash out physically or verbally to those they are close to. They may seem to become another person during these moments; a person that you have no idea how to help calm down. It is important to remember during these moments that learning to manage ones anger is really ongoing process in life. Children placed into foster care may not have had healthy role models to show them how to best express anger or how to cope with anger. As their caregiver, it is your job to help them learn constructive way to express their anger. Author Michele Borba offers 6 ideas to help get you started.

Helping Kids Handle Anger

Another wonderful tool that you can share with your foster youth is a video that shows kids candidly speaking about anger and how they cope. It offers a kid friendly version of using mindful mediation.

"Just Breathe"

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