Fostering Communications

Building a Network of People in the Foster Care System

July 2018

Upcoming State Conferences…

ND Behavioral Health Conference
Civic Center, Fargo, ND
September 4, 6-7, 2018
www.behavioralhealth.nd.gov

ND Conference of Social Welfare
Baymont Inn, Mandan, ND
September 26,-28, 2018
www.ndcsw.org

ND Family Based Services Conference,
Holiday Inn, Fargo, ND
March 27-29, 2019
www.ndfbsa.org

PRIDE Link

The PRIDE Model we follow highlights the competency of **"Supporting relationships between children and their birth families".** Facilitating regular and healthy connections between the children in foster care and their birth parents can often help minimize the grief and loss that presents through out of home placement. Children often do best when foster families and birth families can work openly together through respectful communication and efforts to work together to care for the child. This alignment between foster and birth families decreases loyalty concerns for the child. This of course is a lot easier said than done, which is why the following handout from *Foster Care and Adoption Resource Center* is a great tool to figure out how to set appropriate boundaries within these relationships.

Setting Healthy Boundaries between Birth and Foster Families

Simple Connections

Attachment between a parent and child often begins when a caregiver responds to the basic needs of their infant child, and then continues to develop over the years as the parent provides the care that the child needs through routine nurturing moments. When an infants basic needs aren't met or a child's caregiver isn't emotionally present, a child's ability to attach may be disrupted. This can make it hard for a child to attach in other relationships down the road as well. Attachment therapist, Deborah Gray states "If you are trying to attach to a child who was previously parented by someone else or spent time without a close attachment figure, it can be harder to feel connected, or even confident that you are meeting the little one's needs. You may feel that they show their needs in a confusing manner—they may seem to reach toward you, and then draw away. Or, they might seem to want something from you, but then fuss that it is the wrong thing". Gray continues on within the following link to encourage "playful yet powerful ways to build lasting bonds". Attaching Through Love, Hugs, and Play

Sensory Needs

Sensory processing issues make it difficult to organize and respond to information that comes in through ones senses. Certain sounds, smells, textures, sights, and tastes can put a child on sensory overload, thus the simple notion of a flickering light, scratchy clothing, or a loud environment can result in an extreme outburst. At times, children who experience this need to be in a calm, relaxing environment, away from the hustle and bustle of everyday life. This often means indoor playtime. *Understood* offers a great list of activities that can assist in calming a child's overstimulated system.

8 Sensory-Friendly Indoor Games and Activities

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Children and Family Services Training Center
Department of Social Work
University of North Dakota

Fostering Communications is published by the UND Children and Family Services Training Center under the sponsorship of the Division of Children and Family Services, North Dakota Department of Human Services. It is intended for all foster parents, foster care providers, and child welfare agencies. Comments should be directed to the Training Center.

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May 2018

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

Online Training

CFSTC offered a webinar on confidentiality with Kelsey Bless, ND Permanency Administrator, last winter and we are now excited to share that it has been added to our website as an online training option for foster parents. We are unable to provide a certificate for verification, so would ask that you communicate with your licensing worker or case manager to obtain your one-hour training credit. This training will provide you with an overview of state law, rule, and policy specific to maintaining the confidentiality of foster care. Foster Care Confidentiality: Say What

Independent Living

North Dakota Department of Human Service policy states the following within the Roles and Responsibilities of Foster Parents (624-05-90-20) in regards to Independent Living: "Collaborate with the Chafee IL Coordinator and Custodian regarding the youth's needs and goals pertaining to Independent Living.

*Participate in quarterly Child and Family Team Meetings.
*Implement agreed upon tasks as identified in the established foster care case plan.
*Provide youth with tools, resources, and hands-on learning experiences relating to Independent Living".

The last requirement is often the hardest to fulfill since there is no set protocol to follow. Often independent living skills are only considered to be a need for those over the age of 14, but as caregivers we need to start planting the seeds on basic skills far earlier than that. It is easy to teach a child in early elementary how to wash dishes and make their bed or a early middle school student how to wash clothes. We are given many teachable moments through the years, but it takes intentional effort to take advantage and make the most of these. There are a variety of tools available at no cost to assist with this, including the following items.

Casey Family Program: Ready, Set, Fly! A Parent's Guide to Teaching Life Skills
Casey Life Skills: Resources to Inspire Guide
Pathways to Positive Futures: Things No One Told Me

Foster Parent Festivals

We will once again be offering our 9 hour Foster Parent Festivals in each of the four regions. These will consist of 3 hours on Friday evening followed by 6 hours of training on Saturday. We would love to have you join us for one of the following festivals.

* Minot on October 12-13, 2018
* Fargo on October 19-20, 2018
* Grand Forks on March 8-9, 2019
* Bismarck on March 15-16, 2019

If you would like to travel outside of your designated region, we ask that you seek permission through your licensing worker. Watch for further details on our Facebook page and website.

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