Appreciation Central

Each May we are given the opportunity to recognize all of the children in foster care across our nation as well as show appreciation for all of the individuals who contribute to the care and safety of our children. Governor Burgum has once again declared May as “Children’s Foster Care Month”.

Governor Burgum’s Proclamation can be found also at: Children’s Foster Care Month

President Trump’s 2017 Proclamation shares the following message:

In the last year alone, America’s foster families opened their homes and hearts to more than 300,000 young people. But we can do more...

We encourage you to read the rest of the 2017 Presidential Proclamation for National Foster Care Month.
**PRIDE Link**

The PRIDE Model we follow highlights the competency of “Supporting children’s relationships between children and their birth families.” We support these relationships in many ways, including visitation. “As a foster parent, you have the opportunity to help children and families develop stronger connections, whether or not children return to their birth family. Family visits can be one of the most valuable opportunities for children to heal and cope with the trauma of being separated from their family. Research shows that when children have regular, frequent contact with their family while living in foster care, they experience shorter foster care placements, less re-entry into foster care, more successful reunification, and overall improved emotional well-being”. The following link connects us to a portion of Wendy Negaard’s guide to “Putting the pieces of family visits together”. Negaard shares how caregivers can make the transition to and from visitations a little less painful.

*Putting the Pieces of Family Visits Together: Transitions*

**Empathy**

Children who are placed into foster care experience trauma and from this, emotions can be hard for them to manage, often being displayed in hard to handle behaviors. The children in our care have experienced events that we will never know about. Events that have left their mark far greater than we would often like to believe. This makes it hard for caregivers to see life from the child’s perspective. “Empathy is often defined as seeing things from the other person’s point of view. But empathy is actually a physical event, controlled by the insula in our right brain. The structure of the right brain is formed during the first two years of life, before your baby becomes verbal. Scientists suspect that the right brain is the orchestrator of intimacy. The insula connects the brain with the heart, digestive organs, and skin. So when our heart leaps, or our stomach turns, or our skin crawls, the insula is sending us a message. And when we feel deep empathy, we feel it in our bodies. That means a more accurate definition of empathy is “feeling” from the other person’s point of view. Empathy strengthens the relationship bond. Empathy helps the child to feel understood, less alone with her pain and suffering. Empathy heals”(Dr. Laura Markam, Aha!Parenting). The following article from *Aha! Parenting* shares what empathy is and isn’t along with a follow-up article that shares what to do when empathy does work.

*Empathy: Foundation for Emotional Health*

We encourage you to follow us on Facebook as we share ongoing resources and articles throughout the month. We also advertise various upcoming training opportunities. Find us on Facebook at: Children and Family Services Training Center
13 Reasons Why

A new Netflix series was released the end of March and has raised a variety of concerns. "13 REASONS WHY" centers around a teenager who commits suicide and leaves behind a box of tapes that details what led her to end of life. This is a raw, graphic series that depicts not only concerns of youth depression and suicide, but also bullying, sexual assault, alcohol and drug usage by minors, and many other circumstances our youth face today. This series does not shy around the "tough stuff" which could be concerning material for vulnerable youth without proper discussions to follow. This article offers great talking points if you choose to watch this series with your youth.

We encourage you to take the time to become educated about this series so you can make an informed decision on whether or not the youth in your care should be allowed to view the graphic material. Another insightful article comes from social worker, Brooke Fox. She shares a number of concerns about the series as it relates to vulnerable youth.

***This series is rated TV-MA (Mature Audience Only, specifically designed to be viewed by adults and therefore may not be unsuitable for children under 17); however, many youth have open access to Netflix, so would be able to view without a caregiver's permission or even knowledge***

Cost of Vicarious Trauma

In honor of Foster Care Month, we wanted to re-share the message from Amy Cunningham on the impact of vicarious trauma in hopes of reminding caregivers once again to take the time for self-care. “Vicarious Trauma” is a significant change in oneself within trauma situations as a result of being involved with another individual's trauma story. To best care for others, you must also take the time to care for yourself.

Appreciation Central

The staff at CFSTC want to take a moment to say “thank you”…

THANK YOU for opening your homes and your hearts to the children placed with you. THANK YOU for making the effort to ensure that the youth in your care get the services they need, along with taking the time to transport them to and from appointments, visitations, etc. THANK YOU for your openness to case workers and other professionals into your homes. THANK YOU for your unending patience as you walk through the stressful moments of the “unknown” and doing what you can to ease the minds and hearts of the youth who also wonder when permanency will come.

THANK YOU for stepping into the role of a foster parent… it is appreciated more than words can say!!!