

Fostering Communications

Building a Network of People in the Foster Care System

July 2014

Upcoming Conference Information...

ND Foster & Adoptive Family Conference

October 3-4, 2014

Fargo, ND

Registration

Available Soon !!!!

Online at: <http://und.edu/centers/children-and-family-services-training-center/>

ND Family Based Services Conference

April 6-10, 2014

Fargo, ND



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

PRIDE Link

The PRIDE Model we follow highlights the competency of *“Working as a Member of a Professional Team”*. Being part of a team sometimes requires us to step back and reflect on how we are or are not contributing to the team’s goal. As a family progresses towards reunification, teamwork is required to ensure that a child’s safety and well-being are held in highest regard. One of the ways we can ensure this is through what is referred to as “Co-Parenting”. Co-parenting in the following article is “the sharing of nurturing by birth parents, foster parents, and the case managers” which “is known to speed permanency and protect the child’s development”. As foster parents, you are asked to work in partnership with your foster child’s birth parents and case managers, which the following piece discusses in great detail. <http://www.fostercareview.org>

Power of Tenacity

Motivational speaker and former foster child, Derek Clark delivers an inspiring speech on “Tenacity” or persistent determination. Thirteen years of Derek’s early life was spent in foster care in the San Francisco bay area and you can see within this video how he never gave up.

“At five years old Derek’s mother and stepfather turned him over to the county social services but kept his brother and sister. Derek felt as if he had been deleted from his family. His father was in prison for the criminally insane.” “Neurological reports stated that at six years old, he had the IQ of a two and a half year old and diagnosed him with erratic psychosis. Having also been misdiagnosed as mentally handicapped and having numerous emotional and language difficulties, Derek never gave up. With the help of his foster parents and mentors, he has defied the artificial limitations imposed upon him. This has never held Derek back from accomplishing what he set his heart and mind to. From owning a very successful corporation to having a family, his maxim is to make no excuses. He shares with his audiences inspiration and the tools that he uses to live with tenacity – (persistent determination) and is a firm believer that your life gets better when you begin to become aware, heal and purposely decide to not let the past infect your future.”

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EyjDmeVn_dA

Words Matter

“Abandonment, rejection, hopelessness, and helplessness are profound voices in the minds of children who’ve suffered trauma and loss. These are the echoes in their minds that form their identity. During the very critical years when a child should feel the most protected, loved, and nurtured these children experience overwhelming loss and upheaval.” As Foster Parents, your words can be far more impactful than you may realize. The following article offers suggestions of messages that can help foster a child’s confidence and self-esteem.

<http://pamparish.com/8-phrases-foster-adopted-children-need-to-hear/#.U8QQvmdOVaQ>

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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



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Back to School

Most of us don't want to think about the fact that school is just around the corner; however, preparing your foster child can be critical in them having a successful start to the school year. The following two pieces offer tips how you can help your foster child with going back to school: <http://adoption.about.com/od/parenting/a/backtoschool.htm>

<http://www.imafoster.com/2013/08/5-ideas-to-help-your-foster-children.html>

Parent-Teacher Conferences are important to learn how a child is progressing overall in school. One way foster parents can mentor and include a child's biological parents, is to make sure all caregivers, foster parents and biological parents, are included during these meetings. The following article offers advice on how foster parents can be a positive role models during such meetings with your foster child's teacher.

<http://adoption.about.com/od/fostering/a/parentteacher.htm>

Complex Trauma

The National Child Traumatic Stress Network (NCTSN) Complex Trauma Collaborative Group has developed this new factsheet designed specifically for caregivers, which provides information on how a caregiver can support a child with a complex trauma history. It presents information that can help a caregiver understand complex trauma and recognize the signs and symptoms of complex trauma in their child. It also offers recommendations for what the caregiver can do to help their child heal, as well as tips for self care.

http://www.nctsn.org/sites/all/modules/pubdlcnt/pubdlcnt.php?file=http://www.nctsn.org/sites/default/files/assets/pdfs/complex_trauma_caregivers_final.pdf&nid=1517

Parenting Toolbox

Power struggles get old for everyone involved as there never seems to be a true winner in any situation. On average a child hears 432 negative comments to 32 positive. Founder of Positive Parenting Solutions and author, Amy McCready shares her thoughts on how to diminish the power struggles as a caregiver in her video "Simple Words to Avoid Power Struggles". Through this video she offers four positive strategies for better results. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WZYsRzuqNv8>

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**North Dakota
Foster &
Adoptive
Parent
Association
News...**



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“Oops”

By: Jim Hooge, ND Foster & Adoptive Parent Association President (jim43hooge@gmail.com)

As you read this, it might be helpful to be in a place where you can speak out loud without generating concern in those near you. The meaning can have as much to do with tone and cadence as with the actual words themselves.

“Sorry”. The word is simple, clear and easy to say...or is it? If you say it with a low tone and draw it out, with the second syllable lower than the first, you will recognize this as an apology that is somewhat unwilling and forced. An authority figure is probably standing behind and making sure it is said.

“Sorry”. If it is said with a high pitched, nasal, almost whiny tone, we probably recognize that the giver is minimizing the situation, trying to be a little bit silly hoping that humor may ameliorate the situation.

What is the form of your apology when you make it? How do you want it to be received? Is that different than what you want to hear in an apology from someone else? Have you ever told someone not to apologize to you unless they really mean it? How long did you have to wait? When does the apology have to be followed with action?

We have a homemade poster on the wall in our office area. It has three points, with corresponding statements.

Recognize the problem. “Oops.”

Admit responsibility. “I did...”

Find a solution. “I will fix this by...”

Not every situation has a ‘solution’. Not every vase can be repaired or replaced. Not every word can be unspoken. Often we have to simply do our best. We also usually try to not make the same mistake again. Families are the place to work and practice this.

Every family will have some system or expected form for this process. It may even be to simply avoid it. As parents we have found it to be important to communicate the form that we prefer and recommend to children in our home. I recently saw a book by Gary Chapman and Jennifer Thomas while visiting family. The book has been updated and is titled “When Sorry Isn’t Enough” I wasn’t able to read much of it at the time, but it got me to thinking on the subject and I think it may be helpful for others too, in this area.

We are nearing the NDFAPA annual conference time. A significant part of the conference involves recognizing important events and milestones in our work. The Association is again inviting nominations for Foster Parent of the Year, Social Worker of the Year, and Agency of the Year. Although longevity is significant, we want to be recognizing people who are doing important work regardless of the length of time. So, we invite nominations for people with shorter tenure, as well. Please send the name, contact information for them, and a description of the reason for the nomination to my email and I will send it on to the awards committee.