Foster Care Forum

Waukesha County
Health & Human Services
October 2011

What Do These Behaviors Mean?

By: Adoption Resources of Wisconsin

"I'm a convert!" said one formerly skeptical Wisconsin foster-adoptive parent. "It really is all about fear, and sometimes it really is as simple as asking, 'What are you afraid of?'"

Kim talks about how frustrated she was in not being able to break though her daughter's defiance. Finally one day while driving, she asked her daughter, "You don't act out at school, right? But you do with me. Why is that?" Right away her daughter answered, "I'm afraid that Monique [her daughter's biological mom] is drinking again and if she drinks, she might hurt someone and I don't want her to go to jail."

Kim was stunned. She had no idea how much her daughter still thought about her past and how scared she was to have someone she loved potentially be incarcerated. What's more, Kim was surprised that there was no real like to the "why" behind her daughter's behaviors and her daughter's fears. Like most of us, Kim was taking her daughter's outbursts personally.

While Kim says that she was glad for the immediate breakthrough in that particular incident, she also admits that it wasn't the cure-all she was hoping for and didn't always have the same results in other attempts.

Not An Easy Fix
As with other parenting approaches, this is not an easy fix. It may not generate immediate results, but over time, it can help you with your child's most challenging behaviors.

Heather Forbes wrote about a lot of these behaviors in her book: *Beyond Consequences Logic and Control: A Love Based Approach to Helping Children with Severe Behaviors*.

Here are some different approaches that may help in understanding some of the most challenging behaviors.

Fear and Stress
Most children lack the words and understanding to identify what they are feeling and what they need. Instead, children may act out when their emotions are too big or scary. Often, the emotions causing the behaviors is fear—triggered especially when too much stress is present. It's hard when your own stress level is high, but try to respond to the fear behind your child's actual behavior.

The following behaviors are common in children who have had a history of trauma or challenges with attachment. Some behaviors, however, are just ingrained in people—every child is born with a certain temperament and resilience level.

Aggression
A child displaying aggression can be scary to encounter. Kim says that even though her 6-year-old can be completely heart melting at times, the sheer rage continues to amaze her. "It's a shock to hear someone that little and sweet have so much hate directed at you and to have her use the f bomb, threats to kill and gestures that she does. It's hard to think of her as vulnerable."

The aggressive behavior may seem as though it is an attempt to push you away, but at those times, your child needs you the most. Remaining calm is the best thing that you can do. It will help to calm your child and that is probably what he or she wants.

Your primary focus is to keep your child and others safe. Reasoning with your child at this point usually only serves to *increase* the aggression and reinforces the behavior. During times of high emotion, people can't process information very well and thus no learning occurs. Approach the topic later when you and your child have regained composure and are calm again.

Defiance
When your child defies you, it often triggers feelings of anger in you. Children may be defiant because they're fearful. One of the things they fear most is not having *any* control, and paradoxically, being *out* of control. While it might seem like they're trying to push your buttons (and they can be gifted at this!), defiant children might be trying to gain some control - or push you to be in control.

Some children are also defiant as a way to push you away. Again, there's a paradox of wanting to be loved, but also being afraid to be loved - and thus possibly hurt or abandoned.

Some children are naturally more assertive and ready to speak up than others, and some have learned to be defiant as a survival mechanism. Meet your children where they are by validating their feelings.

For example, *Are you afraid of … you can talk to me about that. I'm not going anywhere.*

Defiance is more likely to happen at certain times, usually during transitions from one activity to another, such as school time, bedtime and bath time. Remain firm in what you're asking, but don't add consequences to your child or soon you'll be in a lose-lose spiral.

Try not to place demands on your children, but give options like, "When you've taken your meds, then you can leave the table, but do you want to take them before dinner or after dinner?"

Lying
The child who lies may continue to do so even after he's caught, making the behavior hard to understand. Your child may be lying because he's fearful of something. Our job - and it's not an easy one at all - is to find out what the fear is.

When your child is scared, he won't be receptive to hearing why lying is wrong. Instead, try to reassure your child that you're there for him, even if he's doing something wrong. Imagine being a gazelle on the African Savannah, backed up against a wall with a lion staring you down. You would do and say (if you could speak) anything to make the lion turn and leave you alone. Unfortunately, this is how many of our children feel, and they truly believe they must lie to survive.

Continued on Page 3

Pre-Placement Training
for Prospective Foster Parents

Starting in March 2011 Prospective Foster Parents need to do Part 1 of the training on the following website: http://www.wcwts.wisc.edu/foster-parent-training
We will then meet to discuss the learning points and to answer your questions.

Monday, October 24, 2011	**6-9 PM**
Monday, November 14, 2011	**6-9 PM**

All Classes are held in the Brookfield Room G137 in the Human Services Center located at 500 Riverview Avenue.

Please enter the building at door 6. Call Shari Rather at (262)548-7267 to register.

Jesse's Corner

Jesus Mireles
Manager of the Children and Family Division

Earlier this year, I expressed an interest in participating in a pilot project with the State Department of Children and Family Services (DCF). The goal of this pilot is to improve the current division structure and functioning to ensure that the needs of children, youth, families, and the community are being met while identifying and meeting the needs of staff within the agency. This project is a joint effort between the Wisconsin Child Welfare Professional Development System, the American Public Human Services Association (APHSA) and our division.

As many of you know, the Children and Family Services Division is currently comprised of three units.

- The Child and Family Services Unit provides ongoing services to families and their children who are at risk of abuse or neglect; are at imminent risk of a placement or in a placement with a relative. In addition, they provide services for children placed through the Interstate Compact for the Placement of Children (ICPC) and services requested by another county when a child or family moves to Waukesha County (courtesy supervision). They also provide licensing and training for Level 1 foster homes.
- The Permanency Services Unit provides services to children and families when placement in a foster home has occurred or is likely to occur. Placement prevention and support, as well as post-placement services, support children and families along the continuum of their experience. As you know, they also provide foster parent recruitment, training and licensing for all Level 2 foster homes.
- The Children's Special Needs Unit provides oversight and case management services to children and families where behavioral or mental health concerns require long-term care.

In addition, our Division has been involved in multiple pilot and innovative services and supports such as the Trauma Informed Care Partnership of Waukesha County; Strengthening Families Initiative-Parent Café's and CompassWisconsin-Threshold. At the same time these new approaches and practices have been developed, shrinking funding from state and federal sources have resulted in the need to enhance our efficiencies and social work practice.

I am concerned about the critical areas that affect our ability to perform to the level our division has come to expect of itself including:

- Responding to statutory and court mandates, the type and volume of work done within the units has shifted.
- Staff morale and turnover has increased during the timeframe of the changes listed.
- Frequent and predictable supervision and support.
- The influx of children and families needing service has increased.
- The complexity of providing services to families has increased due to the factors that bring them to the attention of the department.

In our continuous effort for improvement, we'd like to focus our efforts and goals to ensure:

- The needs of the children, youth, and families involved with the system will continue to be met.
- The Division will continue to be known not only for innovative practices, but also for sustainable practices that are manageable in a changing landscape of shifting resources.
- The structure of our division, in partnership with contracted services, will be well aligned to the tasks of the organization and will maximize the resources and talents of the highly skilled staff.
- Staff retention will return to previous levels, reflecting workforce satisfaction with the demands of work and level of supervision and support provided by the organization.
- The leadership of the organization will have an experience of closure and deepening their practice as they then move on to new practices and innovations.
- Staff will have an increased sense of satisfaction and pride in being able to accomplish and prioritize important features of the work.

We are working collaboratively with the Wisconsin Child Welfare Professional Development System and APHSA to implement the recommendations from our previous meetings. We created a 10-member Continuous Improvement team with two (2) representatives from each, three supervisors and I. I anticipate this team will follow up on all the recommendations but more importantly, we have a structure to address future issues and concerns that will allow us to make informed choices about our social work practice. I will keep you posted in an upcoming "Jesse's Corner".

On a personal note, I want to thank our Deputy Director, Don Maurer for his dedication and commitment to serving our community. As some of you may know, Don started his career in foster care and worked in various divisions in our Department. Throughout his career, Don has been an advocate for those less fortunate and has always supported our foster care program and child welfare in particular. He has supported us in many ways throughout the year that I don't have enough space to list them all. Some of you may have met Don during one of our annual foster care recognition events throughout the years. Don has been one of the driving forces behind our child protective services and foster care program. After 35 years of dedicated service, he plans to retire in November, but I anticipate his involvement in our community will continue in some capacity. On behalf of all of my staff and our Department, I wish Don good health and good luck in his retirement. Don thanks much!

Jesse

TRAUMA INFORMED CARE TRAINING

Who: Training will be led by Tim Grove, chief program officer for Integrated Family Services

When: Wednesday, October 12, 2011, 9 a.m.-1 p.m.
Lunch included
Registration deadline Friday, October 7

Where: Capitol West Academy, 3939 N. 88th Street, Milwaukee, WI, Franciscan Center - lower level of bldg.; enter from 88th St.

Cost: $20, checks payable to St. Aemilian-Lakeside Foundation

Registrants should send the following information along with payment to Sandy Engelhardt, St. Aemilian-Lakeside, 8901 W. Capitol Drive, Milwaukee, WI 53222:

- Name
- Organization
- Organization's address
- Registrant's e-mail address and phone number

Training Offered By Waukesha County

Parent Café Host Training
October 26 & November 2, 2011
5:30 - 8:30 PM
Center for Excellence
N4W22000 Bluemound Road
Waukesha
To confirm your attendance or need of child care, please call 262-548-7267.

Parent Café
November 17, 2011
5:30 PM
Center for Excellence
N4W22000 Bluemound Road
Waukesha
To register for childcare, RSVP or for questions call, 262-548-8080.

Shared Parenting
November 19
Elmbrook Church
777 South Barker Road
Brookfield, WI
9:00 AM to 4:00 PM
Register online at: **southernpartnership.wisc.edu**
Required training for foster parents licensed in 2010 and 2011

What Do These Behaviors Mean?
Continued from Page 1

Lying is often motivated by fear, but sometimes it's also "hard wired" in. In Deborah Hage's, *Antecedents to Lying and Telling the Truth* article (deborahhage.com/articles/lying.html), she explains that in normal brain development, a baby will be hungry or wet and will cry.

But with some kids who are neglected, the baby doesn't get fed or changed, so he learns to lie to himself. As Hage says, "The internal messages he must give himself in order to survive are, 'I am no longer hungry. I am not cold.' The internal lying messages continue, 'I am not worthy of being kept warm, comforted, held, cuddled, rocked. The world is unsafe. No one cares.' The lies enter his psyche and embed themselves in his brain."

Hoarding and Gorging
Hoarding and/or gorging are common among many kids adopted from foster care or institutionalized care. There was usually a time when they didn't have enough food or have experienced negative events around food.

This behavior is often present for years - even in a place where the child has access to food and where there are healthy rituals around food. Stress, fear and habit all contribute to children regressing to hoarding food.

Tips for helping you deal with hoarding, include:

- Provide access to snacks and food, and reassure your children that there will always be enough to eat.
- Remind your children that they can count on you and that you'll try to help them "feel full" with their emotional needs.
- Be aware of when and where the behaviors are taking place. This is often when your children are feeling the most stress.
- When you find food stashed in rooms where food isn't allowed, calmly remind your children where food *is* allowed.

Stealing
Children who have spent time in homes without a consistent person to help soothe them, often have trouble soothing themselves. They may seek an external way to soothe, and stealing is one way. This may seem like a strange way to cope, but having the power to control the situation can be very calming to a child who has felt powerless and was used to a chaotic environment.

This behavior can become repetitive because the body becomes used to the relief achieved from stealing. Wait until your child is calm and emphasize your responsibility.

For example: *I am the parent and when you steal, it's my responsibility. Is anything bothering you? Can I help with anything?*

Children may steal things that they don't even want. They may not hide what they have stolen from you because they aren't trying to sneak it past you. They simply couldn't control the urge to be soothed through stealing.

The place that children steal from may give you insight as to where the child has stress. For example, if they steal from a sibling, then perhaps they feel that sibling receives more attention.

Fear and Triggers
When children are already scared and have engaged in one of the behaviors in this tipsheet, you probably won't be able to get through to them. Instead, try to identify what triggered the fear so you can help to reduce it in the future. Once (or perhaps more likely, if!) your children are calm, try to talk to them constructively about why their behavior was inappropriate.

Children often don't consciously know what they are doing at the time they are doing it. If enough fear takes over them, they often go into survival mode. And everyone expresses that differently. Take the time to walk away, calm down, and then return to the situation. Try to develop a plan for what you'll do in the future.

This tipsheet was intended to get you thinking about what might be behind these behaviors...but coming up with solutions can be an equally frustrating journey.

Calling All Creative Kids!
Do You Want To Be Famous?
It's Your Chance To Put Your Artwork On Display

The ROKs committee is having its sixth annual non-competitive Art Show on **November 17th in the Board Room of the Human Services Center.** Every year we display art done by the talented kids who work with WCDHHS. Some of the artwork has included drawings, paintings, sculptures, jewelry, poems, stories and "Sculpey" figures. We have also had a flautist, poet, singer, sketch artist, guitarist, cellist and a drum circle that have performed at past Shows. If you can sing, dance or play a musical instrument, we would love to have you be part of the program on November 17. From young children to older teenagers, all art efforts are included in the Show.

Please think about being a part of this year's Show and mark your calendars for November 17. We'd love to have you join us. The young people who have participated in the past have enjoyed having the chance to show others their artistic efforts. We look forward to your involvement. If any young people, parents or caregivers have any questions, please contact your worker. More information about the Show will be included in future Newsletters.

To help all of our young artists in their efforts, we will also be hosting an **Art Creation Day** in the lunchroom of the Human Services Center on Thursday, October 6, from 4:00 to 5:30. We will have lots of art supplies available for anyone to use and will also have adults available to help any young people who would like to use this time to create their art.

Finally, as in years past, we invite any artists to create a mural to be displayed at the Agency. The theme of this year's mural is **People Helping People**. If you would like to participate in this, you need to submit to your worker by September 15 a draft sketch of what your mural will look like. The sketches will then be reviewed for approval and the mural(s) will be unveiled at this year's Show.

Thank you.

2011 Flu Immunization Clinics

Waukesha County Public Health Division has received 2011 influenza vaccine and has already begun administering the vaccine to the public. Vaccines are the most powerful public health tool to control influenza. The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) recommends yearly flu shots for *all* people ages 6 months and older. The Waukesha County Public Health Division is one of only a few places where the entire family can receive flu vaccine at the same time without needing to schedule an appointment.

Children's flu vaccines (6 months through age 18) are available for a $7 fee. No child will be turned away for inability to pay. Flu vaccines for adults (19 and over) cost $30. The high dose flu vaccine is available for people age 65 and older due to the higher prevalence of complications from the flu in this age group. The high dose flu vaccine aims to provide more effective protection against flu and the fee is $45. Cash, check or straight Medicare Part B accepted for payment. Bring card. No Medicare HMO's. Medicaid accepted.

Immunization Clinics are held each month in communities throughout Waukesha County. Immunizations are also available at the Waukesha County Public Health Center located at 615 W. Moreland Blvd., Waukesha, WI, Monday through Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Walk-in service is available at all clinic locations. For immunization clinic dates, times (including evenings), and locations, please visit www.waukeshacounty.gov/flu or call the Waukesha County Public Health Division at (262)896-8430. Please call to confirm availability of vaccine as there is a limited supply.

October 2011 Foster Parent Spotlight
Dayna & Nate Miller

Dayna and Nate Miller have known each other for 8 years and were married June 4, 2005 in Sturgeon Bay, Wisconsin. Originally from Wausau, Dayna met Nate while they were neighbors in South Milwaukee. Dayna previously worked at Wells Fargo Bank as a branch manger but has worked at Chase Bank for the past year while Nate has been self-employed as a carpenter since he was 16 years old at Renaissance Construction with his family. If Dayna could have an alternate career, she would like to be a landscaper. With building and landscaping a new yard, Dayna has found great joy in the process of designing and implementing a landscape plan.

They are expecting their first non-foster child in December and have been foster parents to three kids total, currently having a 13-month old. They decided to become foster parents after losing their first child about a year and a half ago and wanted to give back to the community. They also decided to become foster parents to give kids a safe home.

Dayna said that the experience of being a foster parent has been nothing but wonderful and has remained in contact with the previous kids she had in her home. Her and her husband have even helped the mother of her previous kids grocery shop, cook, and have been there for emotional support. Even the infant they have still has regular contact with her biological grandmother.

They have only attended the foundation series and described the experience as "phenomenal." The Millers enjoyed the examples and role-playing as really effective and loved the opportunity to network with other foster parents. The most rewarding aspect of foster parenting to Dayna is watching the kids grow and the most difficult is giving the children back. She knows that it's the right choice and the kids belong with their biological parents.

Her advice for foster parents is to remain in contact with the biological family of past and current foster kids, no matter how hard it is because she said that you'll regret it in the long run if you don't.

The clothing closet is now stocked with transition clothes for fall to winter.

Please stop by and stock up for your foster child's clothing needs.

Contact Numbers:

Waukesha H & HS
262-548-7212

Children's Mental Health Outreach
262-548-7666

Medical Emergency: 911
Family Emergency: 211

Foster Parent Mentor
Jen Barcus..... 262-542-2926
David Mersfelder 262-542-2926
Nikki Mertens..... 262-246-6180

Lisa Roberts, Supervisor
262-548-7271

Mary Alice Grosser, Supervisor
Relative Licensing
262-548-7272

Shari Rather, Foster Care Coordinator
262-548-7267

Libby Sinclair
Relative Licensing
262-548-7277

August 2011 Placements

Regular Foster Care:
29 Children

Treatment Foster Care:
61 Children

Group Homes:
4 Children

Residential Care Facilities:
14 Children

Relative Placements:
8 Children

Level 2 Foster Homes:
105 Homes

Level 1 Foster Homes:
91 Homes

Total Homes Assisting Other Counties
18 Homes

For Allegations of Abuse and Neglect Support, please call:

FASPP
Norma Schoenberg
920-922-9627

Social Workers:

Jennifer Adler 262-548-7265
Bob Alioto 262-548-7262
Suzanne Arnold 262-548-7348
Kate Flansburg 262-896-6857
Laura Jahnke 262-548-7359
Maria Maurer..... 262-548-7345
Susan Peck..... 262-896-8574
Madeline Prange..... 262-548-7394
Janis Ramos..... 262-896-8069
Michael Reed..... 262-548-7347
Cindie Remshek 262-548-7639
Greg Rewolinski 262-548-7270
Elizabeth Russo 262-548-7349
Kim Sampson 262-548-7273
Mark Sasso..... 262-548-7346
Linda Senger 262-548-7698
Deanna Stevlingson . 262-896-8570

We Need You!

For more information about becoming a foster parent in Waukesha County, please contact Shari Rather at:

srather@waukeshacounty.gov

262-548-7267

Or visit our website at www.waukeshacounty.gov And follow the links to foster care.

Jack Safro
Toyota•Ford•Lincoln•Mercury
Lexus•Infiniti•Scion