



Resource Family Connection

News, Events and Information Benefiting
the Children of Waukesha County

December 2014



12 Ideas for Supportive Adults to Help Their Young Person Through the Holidays

By: The National Network for Young People in Foster Care

1. Prepare the foster youth in your care for the holidays in your home

Have a discussion with the young person about your family's holiday customs. Do you celebrate over multiple days, or is there one "main" celebration? Are there religious customs? Will gifts be exchanged? What should they wear? Who will they meet? What preparations need to be done in advance? Will there be visitors to the home? Will they be taken on visits to the homes of other family or friends? And in all of these events, will your youth be expected to participate? Knowing what to expect will help to decrease anxiety around the holidays. Avoid surprises and you will decrease seasonal tensions.

2. Prepare friends and family before you visit

Let people know in advance about new family members in your home. Surprising a host or hostess at the door with a "new" foster youth may set up an awkward situation — such as a scramble to set an extra place at the table — making the young person feel like an imposition right from the start of the visit. Your preparation of friends should help cut down on awkward, but reasonable questions such as "who are you?" or "where did you come from?"

3. Remember confidentiality

You may receive well intended but prying questions from those you visit with over the holidays. If your young person is new to your home, it is natural that family members ask questions about your youth's background. Understand that questions are generally not meant to be insensitive or rude, but simply come from a place of not knowing much about foster care. Think in advance about how to answer these questions while maintaining your youth's confidentiality. Use the opportunity to educate interested family and friends. Discuss with your young person how they would like to be introduced and what is appropriate to share about their history with your family and friends. (Remember, they have no obligation to reveal their past.)

4. Arrange meeting your family in advance, if possible

The hustle and bustle of the holidays can make it particularly chaotic for your young person to participate in your family traditions. Anxiety may run high for young people already, and the stress of meeting your relatives may be a lot to deal with. If possible, you can arrange a casual "meeting" in advance of "main events." If it is not possible or practical to meet beforehand, make a list of names of some of the people they'll meet and their connection to you. You can also encourage a quick call from relatives you plan to visit to deliver a personal message of "we are excited to meet you" so that your youth knows they will be welcome.

"Holidays are hard even when u have found "new family" because u still feel awkward and ur mom and dad are not there so though it is easier it sill makes u sad because u are reminded of what u don't have."— Foster Club member Divine, age 21, from Wisconsin, in foster care more than 3 year
www.FosterClub.org the national network for young people in foster care

Permission is granted to reproduce and distribute this publication, so

long as all portions of the document remain intact.

The Youth Tips page may be reproduced on it's own. May not be reproduced for profit. Thank you for your support of young people in foster care.

5. Have extra presents ready to help offset differences

It should not be expected that all relatives purchase presents for our youth. Be prepared with other small gifts and for those family members that express concern over not having brought a gift, offer one of your "backups" for them to place under the tree. Extra presents may be addressed "from Santa", even for older youth, to help offset a larger number of gifts other children may receive at the same time. Children often keep count of the number of gifts received (right or wrong) and use it to compare with other kids, so sometimes quantity is important.

6. Facilitate visits with loved ones

The holidays can be a busy time for everyone including foster parents and caseworkers. But it is especially important during this time of year to help your young person arrange for visits with loved ones. Don't allow busy schedules to mean the postponement of these important visits. Try to get permission for your youth to make phone calls to relatives (if long distance charges are an issue, ask if calls can be placed from the foster care agency or provide a local business or individual to "donate" by allowing the use of their phone). A youth may wish to extend holiday wishes to relatives and friends from an old neighborhood, but may need your help getting phone numbers together. Use the opportunity to help the youth develop their own address book.

7. Help them make sure their loved ones are okay

Young people may worry that their family members are struggling through the holidays. If homelessness has been a regular issue, the winter season may bring cold weather and extreme hardship. Your youth may experience guilt if they feel a loved one is struggling while they, the youth, are living in comfort. Knowing that a biological parent or sibling has shelter from the cold or has their other basic needs met may ease a young person's mind through the always emotional holidays.

Continued on Page 2

**Waukesha County
wishes you and
your family a safe
and happy holiday
season!**



12 Ideas for Supportive Adults to Help Their Young Person Through the Holidays Continued from Page 1

“Up until this Christmas I had been in the system during holidays and birthdays. And it was harder being at home for holidays rather than being in the system. At least there, people actually celebrate it and show love.”

— Foster Club member beccah07, age 19, from Indiana, in foster care more than 3 years

8. Extend an invitation

If it is safe and allowed by your foster care agency, consider extending an invitation to siblings or bioparents through the holidays. It need not be an invitation to your “main” holiday event, consider a “special” dinner for your youth to celebrate with their loved ones. If this not a possibility to do within your home, consider arranging a visit at a local restaurant (ask the caseworker is it would be appropriate for the visit to be unsupervised or if your supervision would suffice). Extending an invitation to their loved ones need not signal to a young person that you support their bio-family’s lifestyle or choices — rather it tells a young person that you respect their wish to stay connected to family. You will also send a message to the youth that that aren’t being put in a position to “choose” your family over their bio-family and that it is possible to have a relationship with all the people they care about.

9. Understand and encourage your youth’s own traditions and beliefs

Encourage discussion about the holiday traditions your young person experienced prior to being in foster care, or even celebrations they liked while living with other foster families. Incorporate the traditions the youth cherishes into your own family celebration, if possible. Use the opportunity to investigate the youth’s culture and research customary traditions. If the young person holds a religious belief different from yours, or if their family did, check into the traditions customarily surrounding those beliefs.

10. Assist in purchasing or making holiday gifts or in sending cards to their family and friends

Allow young people to purchase small gifts for their relatives, or help them craft homemade gifts. Help send holiday cards to those that they want to stay connected with. The list of people that your youth wishes to send cards and gifts to should be left completely to the youth, although precautions may be taken to ensure safety (for example, a return address may be left off the package, or use the address of the foster care agency) and compliance with any court orders.

www.FosterClub.org the national network for young people in foster care *Permission is granted to reproduce and distribute this publication, so long as all portions of the document remain intact. The Youth Tips page may be reproduced on it’s own. May not be reproduced for profit. Thank you for your support of young people in foster care.*

11. Understand if they pull away

Despite your best efforts, a young person may simply withdraw during the holidays. Understand that this detachment most likely is not intended to be an insult or a reflection of how they feel about you, but rather is their own coping mechanism. Allow for “downtime” during the holidays that will allow the youth some time to themselves if they need it (although some youth would prefer to stay busy to keep their mind off other things — you will need to make a decision based on your knowledge of the young person). Be sure to fit in one -on-one time, personal time for your youth and you to talk through what they are feeling during this emotional and often confusing time of year.

12. Call youth who formerly lived with you

The holidays can be a particularly tough time for youth who have recently aged out of foster care. They may not have people to visit or a place to go for the holidays. In addition, young people commonly struggle financially when they first leave foster care. A single phone call may lift their spirits and signal that you continue to care for them and treasure their friendship. Be sure to include these youth on your own holiday card list. A small token gift or gift basket of homemade holiday goodies may be especially appreciated.

HAVE YOU HEARD?

Eve Altizer & Rebecca Hollister
Child and Family Division
Supervisors

As our first snow fell upon us this past weekend, we cannot help but smile at a child’s excitement as they awaken to the glistening white flakes. We also smile as we reflect upon the past year as we have had the pleasure in licensing approximately 30 Level 1 homes and 25 Level 2 homes. And although we welcome all of you in to our “family”, we continue to need quality foster homes, like yours, especially for sibling groups, teenagers, and children with special needs. We hope that you will share your experiences with your friends, family, neighbors, co-workers, churches, and community and encourage them to consider becoming foster parents. For more information, or to request for one of our licensors to meet with you, your family, or an organization, please contact Janis Mantel-Ramos (262-548-7267), Libby Sinclair (262-548-7277), or Susan Peck (262-896-8574) and they would be more than happy to connect with you!

The change of season brings the opportunity for renewal and peace. We often hear people discuss how they struggle to find peace within themselves, peace with others and even dream of peace on earth. As we reflect on the last year, we’d like to take a moment to say thank you for all of the wonderful work that you do with not only the children you care for, the families you work with, and the system that can sometimes be frustrating, but the positive, lasting and peaceful impression you have on children and families in our community.

“Peace. It does not mean to be in a place where there is no noise, trouble or hard work. It means to be in the midst of those things and still be calm in your heart. (unknown)

Happy Holidays,
Eve and Rebecca

Just a reminder...

- Waukesha County is closed on Wednesday, December 24, 2014 and Thursday, December 25, 2014 for Christmas Eve and Christmas Day.
- Waukesha County is closed on Wednesday, December 31, 2014 and Thursday, January 1, 2015 for New Years Eve and New Years Day.



Waukesha County Celebrates the Second Annual Adoption Day

On Friday, November 7th, Waukesha County celebrated Adoption Day by recognizing adoptive parents. The event was attended by many adoptive families. One family had three generations present to celebrate their adoption ceremony! Waukesha County Social Worker Jeannine Eng and her family participated in the re-adoption ceremony for their daughter, Maiya. Judge Domina acknowledged the love and devotion of families who adopt. Corporation Counsel Molly Jasmer shared her experience of being an adoptive parent. There was representation by the Coalition for Children, Youth and Families, Bethany Christian Services, Lutheran Social Services and Catholic Charities to provide information on adopting. Waukesha County staff made crafts with the children and many people brought lots of yummy dishes to share. It was a wonderful and heart-warming event.

Thanks to Kelly Haag, Monica Paz, Megan Fishler, Stacy Pawlak, Mersadi Hillard, Bonnie Knipple, Julie Loose, Janis Ramos and Jeannine Eng for all their hard work to make this event a success!

A Mother's Journey by Jeannine Eng

On National Adoption Day 2014, my husband and I re-adopted our daughter Maiya. What this means to us is that our journey of growing our family was now complete. Since Maiya is now 10 years old and she came home from China at the age of 14 months, in our hearts this journey was complete 9 years ago but now it's "official" in the eyes of the Court here in Waukesha County.

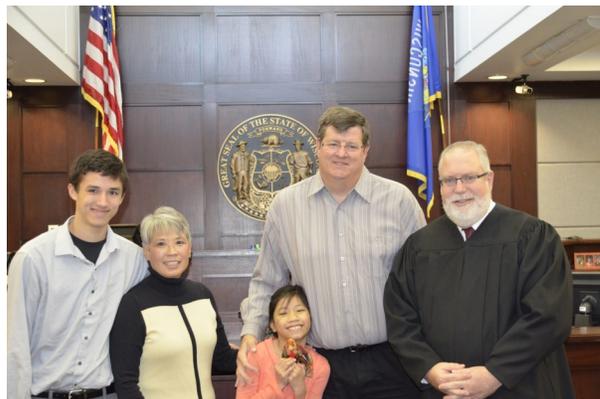
This journey began when I married Peter on May 18th 1991. While I had always assumed that I would be a mother one day, it had never occurred to Peter that he would one day have a family and become the best dad ever to three amazing children. Our first child, Aaron, was born in 1999 and when he was about one year old we began to think whether or not we wanted another child to join our family. Now for as long as I can remember, I had always considered adopting a child and my reasons for wanting to adopt were simple and rational, decisions made with my brain. So as we considered growing our family, I thought about how if I had more than one child I didn't want more than two and I wanted one boy and one girl. Adoption was the only way to assure that outcome. Also, being very much aware of the plight of Chinese daughters abandoned as infants. I viewed adopting a baby girl from China as a way to be part of the solution to this crisis, and a way to serve my "sisters" in China; my sisters being not only the abandoned babies but also the mothers whose daughters are taken from them.

What I discovered when I went to China to bring my first daughter home, was that adoption is not a decision that you make with your brain. It quickly became clear that it's a choice that you make with your heart. From the very moment that I met her, I just knew that Ame was my daughter. I could see it and I could feel it deep in my heart. Meeting my daughter in China and at the same time seeing all the other daughters meeting their parents, made it very clear that adoption was just a different path for finding our children and bringing them home. We all have our journeys for finding our families, for finding our homes. Surprisingly I left China knowing that I had another daughter there in China waiting for me to find her and bring her home.

Over the next year as Ame's personality developed it became even clearer that she was born to be one of us. She easily integrated into the family dynamics and developed characteristics similar not only to our immediate family but to those of our extended family as well. That's when it occurred to me that this was the real miracle of life....how this child could be born half way around the world but in her very being is very clearly my child. A miracle was the only way to explain the perfectness with which she fit into our family.

True to my heart, one year later we started the process of adopting Maiya and she came home in June 2005. April 1st 2004 is Maiya's birthday, May 24th 2005 is Maiya's Gotcha Day, June 5th 2005 is her coming home day, and November 14th 2014 is her It's Final day... thank you Judge Domina.

So now our family is whole. Peter and I with our 3 amazing children. One biological child and two adopted children. One child born to us and two children born for us. Some people think parents adopt children because they "have to", other people think parents adopt children because they choose to, I believe that parents adopt children because they are destined to. This is the family we were meant to be. It was our destiny.



Aaron Hachmeister, Jeannine Eng, Maiya Eng, Peter Hachmeister, and Judge William Domina

Clothing Closet Corner

We need the following items for the Clothing Closet:

- Gift Cards for Teens

The Clothing Closet is open to all providers.



Foster Family Holiday Party

Wednesday, December 17, 2014

- * FREE Dinner Provided
- * Kids Christmas Puppet Play
- * Presents for all kids



Sign up at <http://www.coolkidsevent.com> or call [262-404-5092](tel:262-404-5092) to register your family.

Need Caps or Mittens for Your Foster Kids?

Each year WCTC staff and students collect and distribute caps and mittens to several organizations helping the needy in our community. If you would like to receive mittens or caps for the foster kids in your care, please email the following by December 6th to bwinkler@wctc.edu:

- ★ The foster child's first name and gender,
- ★ Age, and
- ★ Color preference.



Training and Events



Training Offered By Waukesha County

Parent Café

Parent Café's are an educational opportunity for parents to come together and deal with the stressors, worries and challenges of parenting in a supportive environment.

February 3, 2015; April 28, 2015; June 2, 2015; August 4, 2015; October 6, 2015; and December 1, 2015
5:30 to 8:00 PM

Center for Excellence, N4W22000 Bluemound Road, Waukesha

To register for childcare, RSVP or for questions call, 262-521-0317.

Waukesha County Foster Parent Orientation

Waukesha Department of Health and Human Services invites you to attend a foster parent orientation meeting. These meetings are open to anyone who is interested in learning about our foster care program. **If you are currently in the process of becoming a licensed foster parent, you are required to attend an orientation session prior to approval of your foster care license.**

We encourage you to complete the online foster parent pre-placement training prior to attending this information session. The training can be found online at <http://wcpds.wisc.edu/foster-parent-training/>. Please save the certificates after you have completed each module. These are required to become licensed.

When:

January 8, 2015; February 10, 2015; March 10, 2015; April 14, 2015; May 12, 2015; June 9, 2015; July 14, 2015; August 11, 2015; September 8, 2015; October 13, 2015; November 10, 2015; and December 8, 2015
 All orientation sessions occur from 6:00- 8:00 PM

Where: Human Services Center, 514 Riverview Ave., Waukesha, WI 53188

To register for an orientation session, contact your foster care coordinator.

Relative Caregivers Support/Education Group

Relative Caregiver Support/Education Group Christmas Party

December 16, 2014

6:00 PM - 7:30 PM

At All About Learning Daycare Center

1705 Paramount Dr.

Please RSVP to Janis Ramos (262) 548-7267 or Libby Sinclair (262) 548-7677 by December 11th.

Fostering Love and Discipline With The Brain In Mind

Presented by: Dr. Mary Hess, PhD, Licensed Clinical Psychologist

Tuesday, December 9, 2014

5:30 to 7:30 PM

Waukesha County Human Services Center
 514 Riverview Avenue, Waukesha

RSVP by November 21, 2014 to Janis Ramos at 262-548-7267

The Trauma Informed Care System with At-Risk Pre-School Children

Young children exposed to trauma and adverse childhood experiences (ACE's) are at increased risk for poor developmental outcomes. **The Trauma Informed Care System with At-Risk Preschool Children** was developed to address the needs of children in child protective services. This presentation will highlight assessment data regarding the functional delays seen in a small sample of children within the Waukesha County Child and Family (CPS) Unit as well as provide information on interventions addressing the components that build responsive and secure caregiver-child relationships and improved child well-being and learning

Thursday, January 15, 2015

5:30 - 7:30 PM

Waukesha County Human Services Center
 514 Riverview Avenue, Room 029, Waukesha

The Role of Communication in Being a Foster Parent

Presented by: Ruth Graczowski, Foster Parent and Professional Encourager

Tuesday, January 27, 2015

6:00 to 8:00 PM

Waukesha County Human Services Center
 514 Riverview Avenue, Waukesha

RSVP to Janis Ramos at 262-548-7267

Training

Parents Place Programs
262-549-5575 www.ppacinc.org

- **Love & Logic®**
 Tuesdays, Dec. 2 - 23 from 5:30 - 7:30 PM
- **Parent/Teen Relations: Understanding Your Teen's Anger**
 Mondays, Dec. 1 & 8 from 5:30 - 7:00 PM
- **ADHD**
 Mondays, Dec. 15 & 22 from 6:00 - 7:30 PM

Coalition for Children

www.coalitionforcyf.org

For other training opportunities, see the Coalition for Children, Youth & Families website:

www.coalitionforcyf.org. They offer interactive webinars that count toward the required face to face training hours.

Contact Numbers:

Waukesha County
 Health & Human Services
 262-548-7212

Eve Altizer, Supervisor
 262-548-7272

Rebecca Hollister, Supervisor
 262-548-7271

Kathy Mullooly, Supervisor
 262-896-6832

Janis Ramos, Foster Care Coord.
 262-548-7267

Susan Peck, Foster Care Coord.
 262-896-8574

Libby Sinclair, Relative Licensing
 262-548-7277

Social Workers:

Jennifer Adler..... 262-548-7265

Jessica Cirillo..... 262-548-7639

Tracy Clark..... 262-548-7270

Megan Fishler..... 262-896-8570

Laura Jahnke..... 262-548-7359

Becca Kuester..... 262-896-6857

Jessica Larsen..... 262-548-7346

Melissa Lipovsek..... 262-548-7348

Maria Maurer..... 262-548-7345

Chelsey Nisbet..... 262-896-6896

Stacy Pawlak..... 262-548-7262

Michael Reed..... 262-548-7347

Elizabeth Russo..... 262-548-7349

Kim Sampson..... 262-548-7273

Linda Senger..... 262-548-7698

Kinship Workers:

Linda Finn..... 262-548-7254

Jessica Morris..... 262-548-7256

Children's Mental Health Outreach
 262-548-7666

Medical Emergency: 911

Family Emergency: 211

Foster Parent Mentor

Jen Mersfelder..... 262-542-2926

David Mersfelder..... 262-542-2926

If an Allegation of Abuse or Neglect has been made against you, please call:

FASPP

Norma Schoenberg
 920-922-9627

October 2014 Placements

| | | | |
|------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|--|
| Level 2 Placements: 45 Children | Juvenile Corrections: 1 Children | Group Homes: 0 Children | Residential Care Facilities: 5 Children |
| Level 1 Placements: 49 Children | Level 2 Foster Homes: 99 Homes | Level 1 Foster Homes: 50 Homes | Total Children in OHC: 104 Children |

