



# Resource Family Connection

News, Events, and Information Benefiting  
the Children of Waukesha County  
May and June, 2018



## Making a Difference by Maintaining Connections

By: Donna Gillespie Foster

When they're in foster care, one of the greatest gifts we can give young people is to help maintain - or strengthen - their connections to their families. To do this well, it really helps if we have good relationships with the birth families as well.

This isn't always easy. Working with birth parents and maintaining children's connections to them can be very challenging. In fact, maintaining connections often requires "out of the box" thinking and approaches.

### Attitude Matters

Children come into the care of foster, kinship, and adoptive parents because the birth parents have great needs of their own that prevent them from raising their children in a safe environment. Co-parenting with angry and hurt birth parents can be extremely difficult.

For my 17 years as a foster parent, I remember having to constantly think "out of the box" to build relationships with birth parents. Proving I am not judging them and that I am no better than them took a lot of effort. When I was successful, it was because I cultivated an attitude of humility and acceptance.

I tried to ask myself, "I haven't had their life struggles and experiences, so who am I to judge?" I don't want others to judge me. I knew I couldn't help birth families if I put expectations on them to live a certain way.

### Look for Signs of Success

Successful kinship, foster, and adoptive parents seem to have similar beliefs as to what their role is in helping children and their birth families. They also know success when they see it.

For example, you know you are successful when children can talk comfortably in front of you about their birth families without fear you will make hateful comments about them. Instead, they know they will hear you talk about the strengths of their parents.

### Moments for Teaching

Another indicator of success is when birth parents want you to help them learn safer and more loving ways to raise their children. This is a good sign that reunification may eventually occur.

I've got a great example of this. I know a couple that could not conceive. They hoped, one day, they could adopt to complete their family. When a newborn baby girl was placed in their home, this new foster mother attached to her quickly.

Now the goal for this child was reunification with her young birth mother. The foster mother wanted to meet the birth mother, so she brought the baby to the first visit.

Right away, the foster mother noticed the birth mother held her baby awkwardly. She did not hold the infant close and seemed confused.

Instead of judging this young woman, the foster mother gently said, "Your baby misses your heartbeat. She heard it for nine months and is bonded to you. Can I help you to hold her so she can lay her head on your heart?"

The young mother cried and said yes. In a few minutes, the birth mother was cuddling her baby, speaking softly to her and rocking her.

When the foster mother told me about this exchange I asked about her emotions, since I knew she would love to adopt this child. She simply said, "She wasn't my child. She was her baby. My baby will come later."

This foster mother respectfully shared parenting ideas with the birth mother. In time, the baby returned home.

### After Reunification

It's an even greater success when kinship and foster parents stay connected to the birth family after reunification. When birth parents have ongoing support, it lessens the chance of children re-entering care.

Even if reunification can't happen, building relationships with birth parents can lead to success. When a parent realizes they love but cannot raise their child and relinquishes their parental rights to kinship, foster, or adoptive parents that, too, is success.

And when relinquishment happens and there is a good relationship between the birth parent and adoptive parent, the child is more likely to stay connected to their birth family. This is good for the child.

### Sibling Connections

Foster and adopted children struggle deeply when they are separated from their siblings. It is a great success when we can prevent this from happening.

I have seen foster and adoptive parents either have all of the siblings in their homes or, if that is not possible, take steps to ensure siblings have regular contact through life books and shared activities, celebrations, and playtimes. These families are really one huge family unit.

*You might be temporary in their lives.  
They might be temporary in yours.  
But there is **nothing** TEMPORARY  
about the love or the LESSON."*  
Tonia Christle

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### After Adoption

Even after adoption there can be real benefits to sustaining or recreating children's connections to their birth families. Consider this story of "out of the box" thinking.

A foster parent adopted a teen who had many placements over the course of six years. This teen had not seen her birth mother or siblings during all of those years. This adoptive mother saw how the youth anguished over not knowing her birth family and constantly searched for them.

After adoption, she and her daughter found her daughter's birth mother. After making contact they started visits in the adoptive home and progressed to day-long visits in her birth family's home. Today, overnight visits with birth mom and siblings continue.

Are there struggles? Yes. From guilt, the birth mom tries to be a friend to her child, rather than a parent. But the adoptive parent has to set healthy boundaries and things are going reasonably well. She does not intend to change her mind about including the birth family in their lives. She believes that if she is to attach successfully with her adoptive child, the child needs her birth family connections as well.

### Thank You!

Is any of this easy? No! But family ties are in "permanent ink." They can never be erased. I salute you for sharing of photos, finding the birth parent strengths, creating life books so children won't forget, sharing parenting ideas, and being a continued support for children and their birth families. Thank you for the difference you make.

## The Clothing Closet is Busting at the Seams!



The Clothing Closet is running out of room with donations of infant and toddler clothing. All of the clothing is in good condition with no stains or imperfections. We have some really nice things in there, and many items still have store tags on them!! We are hoping that Kinship and Foster Families will use this resource. Please contact Megan Quandt, one of our Foster Care Coordinators, at 262-548-7373, to arrange a personal appointment to come in and "shop" in the clothing closet!

## Ryan & April Broom

Ryan and April Broom became licensed foster parents with Waukesha County in early 2015. They currently have placement of one child who has become a long-term placement. In addition to being wonderful caregivers, the Brooms also maintain a good relationship with the biological parents.



Wishing to do more for children in foster care, the Brooms are in the process of coordinating an event to coincide with foster care awareness month in May. Ryan contacted the special events team at his place of employment and proposed ideas on how to raise awareness regarding foster care. The committee is very excited to host an informative on-site session and supply drive. Representatives from Waukesha County will be coming to the organization during an ice cream social to present and answer questions people may have about all things related to foster care.

Additionally, the workplace will be collecting "placement bags" filled with a few essentials for when youth are initially placed into care. Ryan and April will be working closely with the organization and the Department to collect and distribute items/donations for foster children within the community. If you are interested in contributing to the foster care bag drive, please contact Susan Peck at 262-896-8574.

## Being a Strong Parent, Even When You're Stressed By: Fostering Perspectives

Caring for a child who needs you can be one of the best experiences in the world - but it can also be stressful for you and your family. TO support foster and adoptive parents and kinship caregivers, the Center for the Study of Social Policy (CSSP) developed "Taking Care of Yourself," a tool to help them:

- ✦ Reflect on their experience as a resource parent
- ✦ Identify their strengths and where they may need more support
- ✦ Be aware of how traumatic experiences may affect the children in their care and how that might impact them as caregivers
- ✦ Respond to the child in a supportive way even when their behavior is challenging

The following is excerpted from the part of this tool about resource parent resilience.

### Resource Parent Resilience

Resilience is the process of managing stress and functioning well even when things are difficult. Being resilient as a parent or caregiver means:

- ✦ Taking care of and feeling good about yourself
- ✦ Asking for help when you need it
- ✦ Being hopeful and preparing for the future
- ✦ Planning for what you will do in situations that are challenging for you or the child
- ✦ Not allowing stress to get in the way of providing loving care for the child
- ✦ Taking time to really enjoy the child and doing things you like to do together

### Reflect to Stay Strong

Take a moment to reflect on the following questions about your own resilience and how you can stay strong:

1. What helps you feel calm when things are stressful in your everyday life? Please list three small actions you can take to help yourself feel strong and calm. Can you make time to do these things on a regular basis?
2. What things really get under your skin as a parent? Make a plan for the things that you know have been stressful and might happen again. Think about the things this child might do differently from your other children and how you will respond.
3. Think back to other parenting or child care experiences you have had. What were some of the things you really enjoyed? Ask the child in your care about things they enjoy doing or would like to try. Building routines together around activities that you both enjoy is an important part of building a positive nurturing relationship.

If you have a caseworker, therapist, or close friend you rely on for support, consider discussing your answers to the questions above with that person so they can support you as you care for this child. You may also want to share your answers with other family members to help you all focus on what you can do to best support the child and each other.

### Check Out The Full Tool

The "Taking Care of Yourself" tool is part of Strengthening Families, an effort built around five "protective factors." Protective factors are strengths families rely on, especially when life gets difficult. The protective factors discussed in this tool are:

- ✦ Parental resilience: *Be strong, even when you're stressed*
- ✦ Social connections: *Get and give support*
- ✦ Knowledge of parenting and child development: *Learn more so you can parent better*
- ✦ Concrete support in times of need: *Get help when you need it*
- ✦ Children's social-emotional competence: *Help your child learn to care for themselves and others*

You can find the full tool online at <http://bit.ly/2wu6f4n>.



## Fun Activities

### Milwaukee Public Museum - Mother's Day

Where else can you see dinosaurs, visit turn-of-the-century Milwaukee, and walk through a rain forest all in the same place? Expertly-designed exhibits and programs offer plenty of interactive sights and sounds and special surprises at every eye level! Moms get in FREE on Mother's Day! (<http://www.mpm.edu>)

**Where:** 800 West Wells St, Milwaukee

### Memorial Day Parade

The Waukesha Allied Veterans Council invites you to the Memorial Day commemoration to honor our fallen service men and women. A River Service will take place in front of the Lee Sherman Dreyfus State Office Building, 141 N.W. Barstow Street, Waukesha, at 9:00 a.m., followed by the parade at 10:15 a.m., concluding with a program that will include a performance by the Waukesha Civic Band at 11:00 a.m. at Cutler Park. (<http://www.waukesha-wi.gov/1554/Memorial-Day-Parade>)

**When:** May 28, 2018; 9:00 a.m. - Noon

### Buchnerfest

Join us for a party in the part as we kick-off the summer reading program and the opening of Buchner Pool for the season! Buchnerfest is FREE!

- ✧ Design and decorate your own music creation
- ✧ Play musical playground games
- ✧ Test your skills with the BlastBall base run challenge
- ✧ Face painting and temporary tattoos
- ✧ Register for the summer reading program
- ✧ Come say "hi" to a real cow
- ✧ Listen to interactive storytelling and musical sing-alongs
- ✧ Meet the Summer Playgrounds staff and play classic playground games with them

Event will conclude with ice cream provided by the Waukesha County Dairy Promotion Committee.

Make a day of it! Consider packing a picnic lunch and staying for the Buchner Pool opening at 12:30 p.m.! In case of inclement weather, please call the Parks information line at 262-522-9356.

**When:** June 9

**Time:** 10:00 a.m. - Noon

### Monday Night Movie In The Park

Get comfy and bring your blanket for movies under the stars in Cutler Park (Waukesha Public Library). *The Secret Life of Pets*, rated PG, 90 minutes.

**When:** June 25, 2018

**Time:** Pre-movie activities for kids start at 6:30 p.m. The movie starts at 8:00 p.m.

**Where:** Les Paul Performance Center, Cutler Park, 321 Wisconsin Avenue, Waukesha

## Hands Around the Capitol

Join the Wisconsin Youth Advisory Council in raising awareness for foster care reform. Hands Around the Capitol is a statewide gathering where we will unite hands within the rotunda of the state capitol building to show support and raise awareness about foster care.

**When:** May 23, 2018

**Time:** Event will start at 10:30 a.m.; Speakers will begin at 12:00 p.m.; Link hands at 12:45 p.m.

**Where:** State Capitol Building, 2 E Main St, Madison, WI 53703

**Contact:** Tina Czappa at [czappac29@gmail.com](mailto:czappac29@gmail.com) with questions or to reserve a table at the event.



## Free Summer Activities

### Waukesha Public Library - Children's Library

We are here to provide parents and caregivers with Library material, programs, and services designed specifically for our youngest patrons! We have everything from e-books to homework help to a wide variety of exciting programs for children.

<https://waukeshapubliclibrary.org/children/>

### Delafield Library

Delafield Library has a wide variety of activities for children and adults of all ages. They offer book clubs, arts and crafts, movies, and activities.

<http://cityofdelafield.com/176/Delafield-Public-Library>

### Pewaukee Beach

There is no fee to go swimming at Pewaukee Beach. Beach hours are from 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., and lifeguards are on duty Wednesday - Saturday through mid-August. Mondays and Tuesdays, the beach is open; however, it is swim at your own risk. For updates about the beach and when it opens, go to:

<https://www.cityofpewaukee.us/199/Public-Beach>

### Retzer Nature Center

There is no cost to go to Retzer Nature Center. They offer a variety of environmental activities including nature hikes, bird watching, and camera clubs. For more information, click on the link for the Environment Education Activity Guide located here:

<https://www.waukeshacounty.gov/retzernaturecenter/>

## Save The Date

Waukesha County Caregiver Recognition Event! This event is for all foster parents and relative caregivers. There will be breakfast, raffle prizes, and a zoo activity for the kids! Invitations coming soon!

**When:** June 24, 2018

**Time:** 10:00 a.m. - 2:30 p.m.

**Where:** Milwaukee County Zoo

# May is National Foster Care Month



## Foster Care Recruitment Effort

In an effort to raise awareness for the need of additional foster parents in Waukesha County, we have been participating in indoor and outdoor events across the County. Our booth includes information on how to become a foster parent, frequently asked questions, steps to become a foster parent, and promotional materials. We also give PowerPoint presentations, followed by a question and answer session. If you know of an event where we can have our booth, or would like us to come and speak for an organization, please contact Libby Sinclair at

[esinclair@waukeshacounty.gov](mailto:esinclair@waukeshacounty.gov).

# Additional Training and Events



## Foster Parent Orientation

Foster Parent Orientation is open to anyone interested in becoming a licensed foster parent. **All prospective foster parents are required to attend orientation prior to the approval of your foster care license.** You will have the opportunity to learn more about our program and the children we serve.

Please note, we are no longer requiring applicants to attend Information Sessions; these have been discontinued. Our revised Orientation Sessions will cover all necessary information in one meeting.

**WHEN:** May 8, May 24, June 12, June 28, July 10, August 14, August 23, September 11, September 27, October 9, October 25, November 13, November 29, December 11, 2018

**TIME:** 5:30 PM - 7:00 PM

**WHERE:** Waukesha County Human Services, 514 Riverview Ave., Waukesha, WI

RSVP to Megan Quandt at [mquandt@waukeshacounty.gov](mailto:mquandt@waukeshacounty.gov) or 262-548-7373. (There is no childcare available.)

## 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.

A light dinner and daycare will be provided.

**June 5, September 4, December 4, 2018**  
**6:00 PM - 7:45 PM**

**Waukesha County Human Services**

514 Riverview Ave., Waukesha, WI

RSVP for this training:

<http://parentcafe2018.eventbrite.com>

## Support Group For Dads

A group to enhance group members' experience as fathers. Topics of discussion will include coping with stress; developing a better relationship with partner/spouse/child's mother; identifying positive role models in your life; identifying how you are a positive role model for your child(ren); discussing your role as a father and what you would like to change or improve.

**Fourth Tuesday of each month**

**May 22, 2018**

**June 26, 2018**

**6:00PM - 7:30PM**

**Parents Place**

1570 E. Moreland Blvd., Waukesha, WI

262-549-5575



## Foster Parent Support Group

Our foster parent support group will now be facilitated by Susan Peck. This is a valuable opportunity for you to connect with other providers in order to have an open and candid discussion regarding the rewards and challenges of the critically important work you do. In order to receive ongoing training credit, an educational topic or article will be discussed.

On-site daycare is available, but you must register in advance by contacting Parents Place.

**First Thursday of each month**

**May 3, 2018**

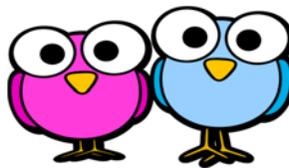
**June 7, 2018**

**6:00 PM - 7:30 PM**

**Parents Place**

1570 E. Moreland Blvd., Waukesha, WI

262-549-5575



## On-going Trainings

**DATE:** See below

**TIME:** 6:00 PM - 8:00 PM

**WHERE:** Waukesha County Human Services, 514 Riverview Ave., Waukesha, WI

All of the on-going trainings are open to foster parents, as well as relative caregivers. A light dinner and daycare will be provided.

You must register the number of adults attending, as well as the number of children for child care, for each individual session at:

<http://waukeshafostercaretraining.eventbrite.com>

## Trauma in Children

**May 17, 2018**

**Presented by: Family Service of Waukesha**

They will talk about childhood trauma and techniques you can use to deal with children affected by trauma.

## Parent Child Interaction Therapy

**June 21, 2018**

**Presented by: Chelsey Nisbet, Waukesha County Human Services**

Chelsey will talk about Parent Child Interaction Therapy (PCIT). PCIT is trauma-informed therapy that you can use with children suffering from trauma issues.



## Contact Numbers:

Waukesha County  
Health & Human Services  
262-548-7212

Michelle Lim, Foster Care  
Licensing Supervisor  
262-970-4761

Susan Peck, Foster Care Level 2  
Coordinator  
262-896-8574

Libby Sinclair, Relative Foster  
Care Level 1 Coordinator  
262-548-7277

Megan Quandt, Kinship & Foster  
Care Coordinator  
262-548-7373

Jessica Morris, Kinship & Foster  
Care Coordinator  
262-548-7256

Angie Sadler, Ongoing Social Work  
Supervisor  
262-548-7272

Eric Calvino, Ongoing Social Work  
Supervisor  
262-548-7271

## Social Workers:

Kimberly Dudzik ..... 262-548-7347

Stephanie Engle..... 262-548-7424

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

Abbey Girman ..... 262-548-7695

Sharon Godwin ..... 262-548-7684

Mallorie Hebecker ..... 262-896-6857

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

Jamie Kasten..... 262-548-7265

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

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

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

Rachel O'Sullivan ..... 262-548-7639

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

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

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

Brittany Sutton..... 262-548-7262

Sara Waldron..... 262-548-7371

Amy Weast ..... 262-548-7336

Jamie West ..... 262-548-7264

Children's Mental Health Outreach  
262-548-7666

Medical Emergency: 911

Family Emergency: 211 or  
262-547-3388

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

FASPP  
Norma Schoenberg  
920-922-9627