



Resource Family Connection

News, Events and Information Benefiting
the Children of Waukesha County

August 2014



Shared Parenting: Putting the Needs of Children First By: Coalition for Children, Youth and Families

Imagine your favorite potted plant. Now picture someone taking that plant and cutting it off where the plant meets the soil and sticking the remaining stem into a new pot of dirt. The plant doesn't thrive and yet you gave it a great new pot with fresh soil, water, and organic fertilizer. Must be something wrong with that plant . . .

Or is it that we, as a system, have just cut the child off from the roots of his family and taken him out of his familiar soil? What if we can help him to retain his roots while we're temporarily replanting him until the first pot is able to mend a few holes? (*Thanks to the Institute of Human Services for the example.*)

Shared parenting is the newest term for what some foster families have been doing all along—welcoming a relationship with the family of the child in care. It happens successfully when foster parents and parents work together to raise children.

Toni, an experienced Wisconsin foster parent, says that, "Shared parenting involves opening your home to a child's family for visits, frequent communication, and making decisions together."

Shared parenting is a philosophy that governs the way foster families and families involved with the system work together. It emphasizes the key role foster parents play in keeping children connected to their families, while at the same time allowing the children's parents to remain the experts—the parents—on their children. Foster parents are key in helping to give the natural parents credibility and confidence.

When kids in care see two families working together and giving the okay to have a relationship with both families, they experience less stress and don't have to worry as much about loyalty to either family. Shared parenting can result in kids having shorter placements and quicker returns home. Even in cases where kids can't return home, shared parenting often helps kids put the pieces of their life together more easily.

Initial Meeting

Upon initially meeting with a child's family, try to get information from the parents about the child. Parents need to be empowered. They are an excellent resource for gaining insights into the needs of the child in your care. You might also ask if there are others (family friend, mentor, favorite aunt, grandparent, etc.) who could or should be involved in the parenting or caretaking process.

- Discuss the specific needs of the child and how the needs can be met. How will the IEP plan be implemented? When does he or she get meds? Is there an important blanket or bedtime ritual that should be maintained?
- Outline specifics such as schedules, roles, and responsibilities.

Who will make the doctor's appointments? Will the child's parents and foster parents be able to attend parent-teacher conferences? How will the child get to the visits?

- Anticipate disagreements and discuss ways that you can work together to resolve them.
- Discuss the family's expectations about contacts and visits within the foster home, birth home and community. Are weekly visits enough? Are they doable with everyone's schedule? Can the child call the family whenever he wants or just at certain times of the day?



Developing connections

The following are some suggestions in initially developing this relationship.

- Welcome the child's family into your home, and set boundaries with both the parents and child about any areas that are off limits to others (usually bedrooms). Or go with the child and the family if the child wants to give a tour of the whole house.
- Encourage regular contact between parents and children, as approved by the placing agency. Help make parents feel comfortable visiting in the foster home, or work with the family to find a neutral spot where everyone feels comfortable (school, a mall, library, restaurant, etc.).
- Reassure the parents that your job as a foster parent is to keep the child safe and provide temporary care. Remind them that you are not a replacement for the child's parents.
- Encourage regular contact between the adults about the child's health, behavior, school, friends, community, and job.
- Take photos of the child within the foster home along with photos during visits with family. Give your child's family copies of these photos.
- If possible, ask the parents to schedule appointments for the child or try to accommodate the parents' schedule when setting up appointments.
- Encourage the birth parent to participate and have input into decisions about child care, school, medical, extra curricular activities, religious, and cultural events.

It might be easy to become overwhelmed or get discouraged about all the extra things that you should do—especially because you're already doing a lot just to care for the children placed in your home.

However, it might be helpful if you try to imagine that *you're* the one who has a child in care and just how grateful you'd be if someone were doing those extra things to keep you involved.

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HAVE YOU HEARD?

Eve Altizer & Rebecca Hollister
Child and Family Division
Supervisors

Hello everyone! We hope that you are having a fun filled summer in spite of the crazy weather changes! We'd like to take a moment to remind everyone about the training requirements for those of you who are a **Level 2** home. We understand that at times it can be difficult to meet these requirements because life happens! However, if training requirements are not met at the time of relicensing, your license can be decreased or put on hold. According to DCF 56.14, the training requirements are as follows:

- Each foster parent who operates a Level 2 foster home shall complete a minimum of 30 hours of initial licensing training under s. DCF 56.14 (7) during the initial licensing period. This requirement will be met when completing the Foster Parent Foundation series.
- Each foster parent who operates a Level 2 foster home shall complete 10 hours of ongoing training under s. DCF 56.14 (8) in each 12- month period of licensure subsequent to the initial licensing period. This requirement can be met by attending trainings offered by the Department, Southern Training Partnership, community partners such as the Foster Care and Adoption Resource Center (FCARC) and the Coalition for Children, Youth, and Families, and limited amount of hours for worksheets, and reading various articles.

If you do not meet the training requirements at the time of relicensure, and you have a current placement, your license may be decreased to a Level 1 Child Specific license and the rate will be \$226 per child, per month. If you do not have a current placement, your license could be placed on 'hold', a plan will be developed that will include a specific training timeline, and you will not be able to accept any placements until the training requirements are met.

Training hours can be counted for attending webinars, completing worksheets (limited), and even reading this newsletter! If you have any questions regarding training or to inquire as to the number of training hours you need, please contact Janis Mantel-Ramos at 262.548.7267 or Libby Sinclair at 262.548.7277.

As always, we appreciate and thank you for all that you do for the children of Waukesha County!

"Gratitude is not only the greatest of virtues, but the parent of all others." -Cicero

Eve and Rebecca

Clothing Closet Corner

We need the following items for the Clothing Closet:

- Gift Cards for Teens



Resource Family Recognition Event July 26, 2014



Special Thanks to Our Event Sponsors

| | |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Jack Safro | Flabbergast |
| Applebee's – Brookfield | Green Bay Packers |
| Badger Health Care Center | Harley Davidson Museum |
| Betty Brinn Children's Museum | Milwaukee County Zoo |
| Chuck E. Cheese | Milwaukee Admirals |
| Chula Vista Resort | Prairieville Park |
| Circus World Museum | Swimtastic |
| ComedySportz | Waukesha Civic Theatre |
| Coopers Hawk | Pizza Hut |
| Discovery World | Wisconsin Athletic Club |
| Divino Gelato Café | |
| Edgewood Golf Course | |

Shared Parenting Continued from Page 1

Recognizing parent strengths

Recognize the strengths of the parents, and praise them for their efforts and successes. Examples include the following:

- “You sure have good ideas about how to handle Juan’s tantrums. I’m glad you have shared this with me.”
- “I sure appreciate seeing you every week. It helps Juan see that we get along.”
- Turning negative attributes into positive strengths can be trying. Sometimes a parent may question the foster parent’s quality of care of their child. Turn this into a positive strength by saying, “It seems like you really care about Juan. For his sake, I want to make sure that we agree on what to do next.”

You build trust if you respect the parent’s strengths.

Be prepared for setbacks

There may be relapses by the parent, and they may not be interested or able to maintain the shared parenting relationship as they had in the past. Talk to your caseworker to keep them informed of the relationship with the birth parent and shared parenting process. You might also want to talk to other foster parents to see how they handled things when there were roadblocks between the families.

Strengthening the shared parenting relationship

Foster parents can promote a healthy relationship between child and parent(s) through not only their communication and attitude, but also through day-to-day actions, such as:

- Ask the birth parent to help with the child’s life book. Ask for pictures and stories.
- Have children draw pictures, write stories, or poems for their parents.
- Invite the birth parent to join in the child’s favorite activity with the foster family (family bike ride, playing a board game).
- Offer to celebrate special events such as birthday or other family events by inviting your child’s family to your home or restaurant.
- Once a child has been returned home to his or her family, offer to maintain contact through phone calls and provide support to the family, as approved by the supervising agency.

Foster parents are frequently recognized for helping the children in their care open doors so that the kids can fly on their own. But as a foster parent, you also have a great opportunity to help not just the child, but for his or her family as a whole. As the old adage says, “Give your children roots and wings.” Thanks to the many foster parents who are helping to keep those roots intact.

For more information, also see **Chapter 4: Developing and Maintaining Family Connections of the Wisconsin Foster Parent Handbook** at: <http://wifostercareandadoption.org/Resources/WisconsinFosterFamilyHandbook.aspx>

Sources for this tip sheet

NYS Citizens' Coalition for Children, Inc.
410 East Upland Road
Ithaca, New York 14850
(607) 272-0034
www.nysccc.org

Foster Families Working with Birth Families to Help Children Move to Timely Permanency at
<http://www.nysccc.org/Video/timelypermanence.pdf>.

Listening to Birth Families: Forming Kinship Groups by Northwest Media, Inc. (DVD and training manual)

Fostering Perspectives, North Carolina Division of Social Services and NC Family and Children’s Resource Program
Vol. 4, No. 2, May 2000 ;Vol. 10, No. 1, Nov. 2005
<http://www.fosteringperspectives.org/>

Training Matters, a publication of the North Carolina DSS Children Services Statewide Training partnership. Vol. 4, No. 2, April 2003.
<http://www.fosteringperspectives.org/>

Foster Care & Adoption Resource Center Library Resources

(You can find the following by going to wifostercareandadoption.org, clicking on Library and then typing in the title or other keyword in the search box.)

Walk a Mile in My Shoes: A Book about Biological Parents for Foster Parents and Social Workers, by Judith Lee & Danielle Nisioviccia

The Coalition’s *Partners* newsletter on Shared Parenting
<http://wiadopt.org/Resources/CoalitionNewsletters.aspx>

Fostering Across Wisconsin newsletter
<http://wifostercareandadoption.org/Resources/FosteringAcrossWisconsinNewsletter.aspx>

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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.

August 5, 2014, October 7, 2014, and December 2, 2014

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.

Foundation Training – Level 2 Only

A new session of Foster Parent Foundation Training will begin in September. If you need to complete this training, please sign up as soon as possible. To register for the training, go to: <https://pdsonline.csod.com/client/pdsonline/default.aspx>.

If you have not signed up for a training in PDS Online before, please go to:

<http://wcpds.wisc.edu/pdsonline/fosterparents.aspx>

All of the fall training sessions will be held on Tuesdays from 5:30 PM - 8:30 PM at Waukesha County Human Services, 514 Riverview Ave., Waukesha, WI 53188. The dates for the training are

September 16, 2014 - November 11, 2014.

Relative Caregivers Support/Education Group

We will not be having the Relative Caregiver Support/Education group in July or August.

Our next group will be:

September 16, 2014

Tuesdays 6:30pm

Guest Speaker: Margaret Bayer, Addiction Resource Counsel

Family Support Group-For Family Members of Addicted People

Addiction Resource Council, 741 N. Grand Avenue Suite 300, Waukesha, WI 53186

If someone in your family is struggling with drug or alcohol addiction, you are not alone! Come and meet with other families who are experiencing similar situations. It's a way to share your experiences, learn coping skills, and how to set healthy boundaries.

Call Margaret Bayer with questions (262-409-2664)

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:

August 4, 2014, October 6, 2014, November 3, 2014, and December 1, 2014

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.

Trauma Informed Parenting

Many caregivers keep hearing about Trauma Informed Care or TIC and are left wondering what it exactly means. This training will do more than help caregivers understand what TIC means, it will also offer concrete suggestions for how Foster Parents can implement TIC in their work with the children and families they serve. The training introduces caregivers to TIC and engages caregivers in thoroughly understanding it and talking about steps they can take to improve the behaviors they see from the kids in their care.

When: Thursdays, September 25, 2014 to October 30, 2014

5:30 to 8:00 PM

Where: Waukesha County Human Services Center, 514 Riverview Avenue, Waukesha

A Minimum of 6 people is required to have the training. Register online at <https://pdsonline.csod.com/client/pdsonline/default.aspx>

This series will provide 18 hours of foster care training hours.

Training

Parents Place Programs

262-549-5575 www.ppacinc.org

- **Love and Logic ®**
Mondays, August 4 - 25 from 5:30 - 7:30 PM
- **Calming the Explosive Volcano**
Tuesdays, August 5 - 26 from 6:00 - 7:30 PM
- **Love and Respect**
Monday, August 11 from 5:30 - 7:00 PM
- **Growing Creative and Happy Kids**
Wednesday, August 13 from 1:00 - 3:00 PM

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

Libby Sinclair, Relative Licensing
262-548-7277

Social Workers:

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

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

Amy Mantey..... 262-548-7341

Maria Maurer 262-548-7345

Jessica McDonald 262-548-7639

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

Stacy Pawlak 262-548-7262

Susan Peck..... 262-896-8574

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

Deb Fosberg..... 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

June 2014 Placements

Level 2 Placements:
43 Children

Juvenile Corrections:
0 Children

Group Homes:
1 Children

Residential Care Facilities:
4 Children

Level 1 Placements:
37 Children

Level 2 Foster Homes:
99 Homes

Level 1 Foster Homes:
50 Homes

Total Children in OHC:
87 Children

