A monthly publication for Washington State foster and adoptive families and relative caregivers

produced by the Washington Department of Social and Health Services, Children's Administration and the Alliance for Child Welfare Excellence.

January 2015

FOSTER PARENTING: A UNIQUE EXPERIENCE

Marci Miess, coordinator of the Pacific Northwest Caregivers Conference and a retired foster parent and Shala Crow, a foster parent and foster parent liaison from Bellingham.



The joys and challenges of taking children into your home and heart create a distinctive set of experiences that others often find hard to fathom.

The video link below, (Stuff) People Say to Foster Parents is a sometimes hilarious look unintended message is that neither foster at how others see the foster care system, the children and the caregivers. It highlights the many myths and misunderstandings that exist about the day -to-day life of supporting, nurturing, advocating and just simply helping raise children whose life passages have often been so dreadful most people can't even imagine.

The issue of perception was again highlighted to some extent in December in a thread of comments posted on the Vancouver DCFS Placement Desk Facebook page. Foster parent Jill Hofstede

expressed mixed feelings about some messages that appear in public, particularly those about how foster children get few or no gifts for Christmas. While she, like others who commented on the issue, are grateful people who are willing to help, the parents, social workers nor anyone else in child welfare care enough to provide gifts -

or even essentials such as coats, shoes and pajamas for kids in care.

"The journey of being a foster parent leads you down paths most others never travel"

FOSTER PARENTING: A UNIQUE EXPERIENCE Continued...

They appreciate the sentiment of wanting to help, but find what she calls "sob stories," asking people to provide what most foster parents already try to provide, aggravating.

Here is part of what Jill wrote:

"I hate that in our world we have to continue to propagate the crappy foster parent stereotype in order to get people to help us out providing for the children in our care. I know 99 percent of us buy for our kiddos, but that, in turn, stretches our already stretched resources. FYI foster families provide for their kiddos at a sacrifice to all sometimes. MOST of us are not monsters...I do welcome the help in providing for them ... the coats, socks, gift cards ARE appreciated, but I hate the means in which they go to get them." Another foster parent wrote that ads asking for help portray a disparaging image of foster families that is untrue of the ones she knows: "I think it also further isolates children receiving help from the foster system into this 'poor foster kids' image that is not helpful when they are trying to fit in with their peers."

Another foster parent wrote about the gifts they get their kids: "My bedroom is packed with presents waiting to be wrapped. Yes it's hard making a dollar stretch for five fosters. We do it because we want to and enjoy it. I hate how Hollywood portrays foster parents grrrrr," Wrote another: "We, too, have always given tons and tons to our kiddos – borrowed and forever – because many times before care they had nothing. Never experienced a birthday or Christmas. The donations we get help with a small portion of the financial cost. Most foster parents I know treat their kiddos as their own

and they are showered with gifts and clothes. Some of these ads make it sound like kids are walking around in burlap sacks. But maybe that's the only way people will give. By playing up and highlighting the maybe one percent of foster parents who don't treat kiddos as their own. I would love to see ads say 'help foster parents give children in care an amazing Christmas this year!' instead of help Johnny get underwear since he's in foster care and no one cares there....."

The images presented also affect other kids in the family, wrote one foster parent: "So my almost 16 (year) old bio son came home from school the other day so upset, I finally got it out of him. He heard a commercial on the radio about foster kids not getting gifts and he was mad because we have always made sure that all our foster kids have equal or more than our bios! It was a proud moment, yet hard to process this with my son!" she wrote. Still others wrote about the new version of the movie, Annie. This version is set in a terrible foster home and several foster parents said they would not see it.



FOSTER PARENTING: A UNIQUE EXPERIENCE Continued



"The myth of foster care is something that will never change," said Mike Canfield, co-president of the Foster Parents Association of Washington State (FPAWS). "This drives foster parents nuts – that people would think they would send their kids out into the snow barefoot with no coat. They don't understand how much foster parents sacrifice their own personal comfort for the good of society."

In support of foster families who may have trouble meeting the extra needs during the holidays, many offices throughout the state have participated in gathering and distributing gifts. The Holiday Helper program operated out of Children's Administration headquarters in Olympia, for example, found sponsors to provide gifts for 44 children, which were then wrapped and distributed.

Foster parents quite often deal with the myths and misconceptions with humor. For instance, one foster mom with seven foster, adoptive and biological children of different ethnicities was asked by a woman how one mother could have seven children who looked so different from each other. The mother's quick-witted answer: "They all have different fathers."

And of course, what other of life's activities has often-humorous lists of what it means to do the work: You know you are a foster parent:

- "When you have three little girls all named Melissa.
- The local schools send you extra enrollment packets "just in case."
- Saying goodnight resembles the end of an episode of The Waltons TV show: `Night, John Boy .
- ... 'night, Mary Ellen . . . 'night, 'Lizbeth," etc.
- If you can't help telling someone you love them even if you've only known them for two weeks...

"Kindness is the Bridge."

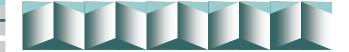




"People Say to Foster Parents"

Produced by Rob Bethke and used with his permission! Click on this link:

http://vimeo.com/110548783



TALKING TO KIDS ABOUT RACE

Tip of the Day: The Legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

In honor of the Martin Luther King Jr. Day of Service, I would like to honor his legacy by broaching the subject of race. Don't be afraid to bring it up.

For many parents, the "race" talk is as difficult as the puberty talk. And like talking about sex, some parents believe that if they talk about issues of race with their children, they will cause them to notice race in a way that they did not before. Parents also have concerns about saying something that will be repeated and taken

Dr. Michelle Terry

Provides advice to caregivers, gives these suggestions for talking about race with children by discussing with them the life and legacy of the leader whose birthday we celebrate this month.

out of context. However, if you follow the quotes of Dr. King, talking about race becomes inspirational!

"I look to a day when people will not be judged by the color of their skin, but by the content of their character," he said. Look for teaching moments. For example, if your child comments on the different colors of people's skin, that's an easy way to talk about how people can be beautiful in many different ways. There are also many good children's books that discuss race in a positive way. Or you can look for subtle openings in everyday life, like a discussion about hair texture and hairstyles.

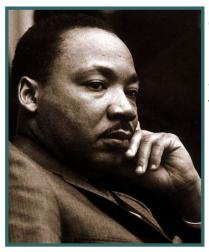
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Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. would have been 86 years old this month, had he lived.

TALKING TO KIDS ABOUT RACE.

CONTINUED...



"Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere," he said.

Make the message age-appropriate. Since even young children can understand when something is unfair, you can talk about racism being unfair. For example, you can say, "slavery happened a long time ago, but holding people captive and making them work without paying them is unfair. So slavery was ended, because many people – black and white – thought it was unfair and worked to change it."

It is important to offer examples of people working together, because people of different races can hold the same beliefs, as is the contrary—not all members of a particular race or ethnicity think alike.

"The ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of comfort and convenience, but where he stands at times of challenge and controversy," King said.

Accept that prejudiced comments may happen – and that doesn't mean your child is racist. If your kid makes a questionable remark, remember children often repeat what they hear others say, and it doesn't necessarily mean that the child believes it. Ask your child calmly, "What made you say....?", then gently dispute the prejudiced remark or stereotype.

"I have a dream that one day this nation will rise up and live out the true meaning of its creed – we hold these truths to be self-evident that all men are created equal," he said.

Most importantly, be a role model. Parents who have learned to connect in work and leisure with many ethnicities and cultures are more likely to have children who develop those important life skills at an early age and who then become comfortable acclimating to diverse customs and ideas.



"Occasionally in life there are those moments of unutterable fulfillment which cannot be completely explained by those symbols called words. Their meanings can only be articulated by the inaudible language of the heart," he said.



RUNNING TOWARD THE FUTURE



Aaron Mason with his family of marathoners right after the race: (left to right) Sydney, Britney, Aaron, Shadrach and Angela.

B uilding strong families and giving young people confidence in their abilities occurs in many ways. Aaron and Cathy Mason of Cheney chose to train for and run the Portland Marathon in October with their family, which includes three foster daughters and their biological son.

Michael Dunn, former superintendent of the Cheney School
District and now superintendent of Educational Service District
101, met with the family and wrote the piece that follows.
"I am just so impressed with the Mason family," he says.
Aaron, 49, and Cathy, 47, have been foster parents since 1988
and have cared for about 80 children in that time. They decided
to do the marathon with the children currently in care, which
they have never done before, as a way of showing young
people what they could do if they put their minds to it.
"Some kids don't have a lot of confidence," said Aaron, who
teaches in the Cheney School district. "We wanted to find
something kiddos can do that give them confidence." They
also did it for another cause: Raising money for Teen Closet, a
clothing store for youth in foster care in Spokane County. The

Masons, who have used the closet in the past, appeared on local TV and helped raise \$3,000 for it.

Aaron said the training started slowly, walking a mile, building to a half marathon, and finally, a full marathon. The summer heat sometimes drained energy and enthusiasm from the training, but they all made it. Aaron gave great credit to state social worker Catherine McEnderfer, who supported them in many ways, including getting her colleagues and others to contribute about \$1,500 for hotel stays and other logistical support for races they ran before the marathon. Helping them make this happen "was an amazing experience," McEnderfer said.

In thank-you notes to those who had supported them, all three girls told the most important thing they had learned. "The highlight is going through with the promise I made," wrote Angela. "I learned that I am stronger than I ever was before ..." Aaron said that by running for a cause, he instilled more than just confidence in the kids. "I tell them, 'let's don't put our eyes on ourselves, but see what we can do to help others'," he said.

"Some people are cruel and dishonest for sport - but there are lots who are fighting a good fight and running a fair race. That is what deserves the attention and energy."

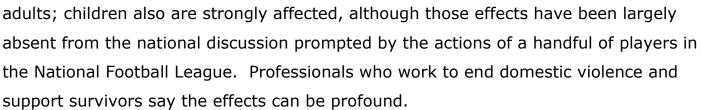
~ Julia Roberts



DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

CARING FOR KIDS WHO HAVE EXPERIENCED DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

omestic violence is a pattern that runs across all socio-economic groups. It not only affects



Recent work on the effects of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACES) lists partner abuse – males using violence against females – as one of the top ten most serious of those experiences.



Susan Blumenfeld, child trauma training director at the National Center on Domestic Violence, Trauma and Mental Health, says domestic

violence is listed as one of the adverse childhood experiences that can have later consequences for adult well-being, especially if children experience four or more of these experiences during childhood. Joanna Zapien, youth and parenting coordinator for SafePlace Olympia, an advocacy group that helps those who are victims and operates a domestic violence shelter, agrees: "On a scale of 1-10, it would be about 20."

Children affected by this kind of trauma can be hyper-vigilant said Zapien and SafePlace Executive Director Mary Pontarolo. They become scared, losing a sense of trust in adults. Past traumatic events can be triggers for future behaviors. They also can become abusers themselves, Joanna said. "We learn what we see and repeat it. Kids are a result of their childhood," Zapien said.

CARING FOR KIDS WHO HAVE EXPERIENCED DOMESTIC VIOLENCE. (Continued)

Violence in the home does not have to occur repeatedly to have an effect. It can be either a one-time event or cumulative. In either case, it leaves a lasting impression.

"How many times does it take for a person to point a gun at (a child's) caregiver to be traumatized?" Pontarolo asks. "Only once."

Domestic

Violence

Awareness

The issue of domestic violence is multi-layered, says
Blumenfeld, She described it

as "an ongoing pattern of coercive power and control of one intimate partner over the other," adding: "Children's experiences of domestic violence are individual, widely varied and unique. Some children do well and may not need additional supports as they grow into adulthood. Others, particularly children living in homes where they have experienced domestic violence from an early age and/or exposure to severe and prolonged violence, are at greater risk for developing trauma-related responses that may impact their growth and

"The traumatic impact of experiencing domestic violence may affect children and their non-abusive parents/caregivers, as well as their relationships with each other, and the primary relationships within families that children rely on for safety, nurturance and protection from harm.

Based on the research about resilience, and with more than 30 years of practice wisdom, we have learned that the single most important resource for children in fostering resilience and healing from the traumatic effects of experiencing domestic violence is a secure attachment

relationship with a loving parent or caregiver over time."

Sometimes, the abused adult – 80 to 90 percent of them are women – can be the subject of investigation for "failure to protect" children in their care. "Sometimes, those in child welfare don't see the ways in which the adult tried to protect the child," she says. Washington state tries to take into account all the ways in which the abused parent tried to protect their children, said Maureen Kelly, domestic violence program manager for Children's Administration.

CARING FOR KIDS WHO HAVE EXPERIENCED DOMESTIC VIOLENCE.

(Continued)

Washington, like other states, also does not consider the witnessing of domestic violence by itself as a reason to



remove a child from his/her biological home, Kelly said.

She agreed with Pontarolo and Zapien that the traumatic effects of experiencing domestic violence may lead to long-lasting effects. However, we need to take into account the range of protective factors that might buffer and lessen the impact, including establishing a consistent, loving relationship with a nurturing caregiver over time.

Blumenfeld recommends that foster caregivers help children in times of transition, such as when children visit with their biological parent or family or when they are on their way to and from appointments, by helping them anticipate what is going to happen during the visit or appointment and by establishing routines to help welcome them back to their foster home. Caregivers should get as much information as possible about children coming into their care – "the more information, the better."

Pontarolo and Zapien are in accord that establishing a good relationship with children affected by domestic violence is key.

"The trick is getting to know the kid," Zapien said, whose job includes regular interaction with kids who have been affected. "Let the child know you are interested in how they are feeling."

As they act out, try to find more positive things for them to do. "Give them other options than acting out," she said.

What more can caregivers do to help children who have experienced domestic violence?



The National Center on Domestic Violence, Trauma & Mental Health also provides a tip sheet at its website:

http://www.nationalcenterdvtraumamh.org/wpcontent/uploads/2012/05/Tipsheet Children-Exposed NCDVTMH May2012.pdf







Finding Training and Support



The Alliance for Child Welfare Excellence at the University of Washington provides training for caregivers in the support of children in their care. Information about trainings in your area and other helpful information can be found at www.allianceforchildwelfare.org.

Another organization, Fostering Together, a branch of Olive Crest, provides recruitment and support services for caregivers of children in state custody. Fostering Together has established dozens of support groups around the state to bring foster parents together, further their training and answer their questions. It also has Facebook pages to share knowledge and help foster parents find resources.

You can find information at www.fosteringtogether.org







MAKE A DIFFERENCE

BECOME A FOSTER PARENT

Share this message with others!

Throughout Washington, foster parents are needed to love, coach, mentor, wipe tears, celebrate, support and encourage children and youth living outside their home due to abuse and neglect. Could you, your family or a friend make a difference in the life of a child?

Maybe you could even deal with some teen drama!

Are you ready to learn more about becoming a foster family?

Washington's foster parent recruitment phone line, 1-888-KIDS-414, provides information and can answer many of your or your friends' questions. Take a minute to call, because you don't know what you're missing!

Information on becoming a foster parent also is available at the Children's Administration website: http://www.dshs.wa.gov/ca/fosterparents/ or www.fosteringtogether.org.

Caregivers!

MILEAGE

DO NOT FORGET TO TURN YOUR FORMS IN!

CA does not reimburse for mileage requests older than 90 days. If you have questions about allowable mileage, use the link below:

http://www.dshs.wa.gov/pdf/ms/forms/07 090.pdf.

Beginning January 1, 2015 the amount reimbursed to caregivers for mileage has increased to .575 cents per mile.

Safety Tip



A recall notice has been issued by the company producing <u>Dream on Me Play Yards</u> because the rails can collapse, presenting a strangulation hazard to young children, according to a press release from the federal Consumer Products Safety Commission. The commission's press release says the recall affects Dream On Me incredible two-level deluxe adjustable-height play yards with model number that start with 436A, 436B, 436G, 436O, 436P or 436R.

The play yards, made with a steel powder-coated frame-base and rolling, hooded casters, have a fabric-and-mesh covering that comes in a variety of colors. They include a changing top, a toy bar with soft toys, a side pocket for storage and a carrying case. "Dream On Me" is printed on the bottom left-hand side on the outside of the product. The model number is printed on a label attached to the play yard's mattress. The play yard can be folded for storage.

About 10,000 play yards are affected by the recall. They were sold for about \$60 by Amazon, Kohls, ToysRus, Wal-Mart, Wayfair and other retailers and online retailers from March 2010 through January 2014. The Commission release states, "Consumers should immediately stop using the recalled play yards and contact Dream On Me to receive a free repair kit."

For further information, contact Dream On Me toll-free at (877) 201-4317 from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. ET, Monday through Thursday, and 8 a.m. to 4 p.m., Friday, You also can contact the company online at www.dreamonme.com, then click on the "Recalls" tab.











Additional Resources

Washington State's Kinship Navigators

Helping grandparents and relatives raising children

Locate information, resources, and a link to your local Kinship Navigator for support at:

https://fortress.wa.gov/dshs/f2ws03apps/ kinship/kinshipmap.asp

FOSTER PARENT AND CAREGIVER CRISIS AND SUPPORT LINE:

1-800-301-1868

Fostering Well-Being Care Coordination Unit (FWB CCU):

FWB CCU can help answer health-related questions or help you with health related issues for children/youth in your care.

Contact information:

1-800-422-3263 ext. 52626 or

360-725-2626 (8:00 a.m.- 4:30 p.m.) or

e-mail: fwbccu@dshs.wa.gov.

FPAWS:

Foster Parent Association of Washington State FPAWS is an all volunteer, non-profit association, led by experienced caregivers who provide support and helpful services to all caregivers (foster, adoptive, and kinship) in Washington State.

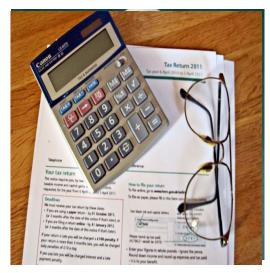
Contact FPAWS at www.fpaws.org or 1-800-391-CARE (2273).

Foster Intervention Retention and Support Team (FIRST):

Offers neutral third party advice and support for foster parents when dealing with allegations or a licensing violation.

- ⇒ EASTERN WASHINGTON (Region 1) call 509-928-6697
- ⇒ WESTERN WASHINGTON (Regions 2 and 3) call 253-219-6782
- ⇒ Email (covers all of Washington) FIRST@olivecrest.org

TAX QUESTIONS



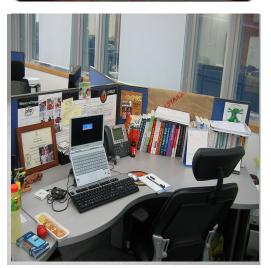
Foster parents may claim a tax deduction on certain foster care payments for children who have been placed in their care for more than half of the tax year. Foster parents will need the child's social security number (SSN) which can be obtained from the child's caseworker.

Children's Administration staff cannot provide tax advice.



The following resources are available for help:

1) The Internal Revenue Service (IRS) 1-800-829-1040 or at www.irs.gov. IRS publication 501 provides information on Exemptions related to Dependents and Qualifying Children.



2) The DSHS Office of Accounting Services, Tax Desk (866) 563-8155 or taxinfo@dshs.wa.gov, can help providers and vendors with:

- ◆ Requests for copies of tax documents sent by DSHS to the provider.
- Address changes.
- Adjusting tax documents to reflect repayment of overpayments.
- ♦ IRS correspondence the provider has received about DSHS payments.

www.dshs.wa.gov/ca/fosterparents



CA Foster Parent Consultation Team (1624)

Regional Representatives -2015

Regional representatives have been elected to serve in positions on the statewide Children's Administration Foster Parent Consultation Team - informally known as the "1624 team" - for 2015.

Meeting four times a year with top-level CA management to discuss issues of statewide concern to foster parents, the representatives serve as the voices of foster parents to the management of Children's Administration (CA). They also help coordinate regional consultation teams.

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Fostering Together Regional Recruitment and Retention Staff

Fostering Together liaisons are here to provide help and support to foster parents and relative caregivers all across Washington! Bring them

your questions on training, licensing, finding resources or supports for new or challenging placements, or whenever you have a need. They are great at helping find what caregivers need. If you have questions contact those listed below for assistance – they are here to help you. Also, check out their website for much more information, www.fosteringtogether.org, and ask about their FaceBook on-line support groups in your area – they will help you get signed in.

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Training for current and potential new foster parents statewide is provided by The Alliance for Child Welfare Excellence. Following is the Contact information for the Trainers in your Region. In addition, the Alliance website has updated training information for caregivers, along with other valuable information.

REGION	NAME	EMAIL	TELEPHONE
R1	Jan Hinkle-Rodriguez, Supervisor	<u>janh5@uw.edu</u> .	509-836-5499
Spokane & surrounding areas	Leon Covington, Trainer Nancy Leigh, Trainer, Renee Siers, Trainer Amber Sherman, Registrar	leonc44@uw.edu Leighn2@uw.edu siersr@uw.edu trainingregistrar@gmail.com	509-363-2410 509-846-8645 509-363-3399 509-363-4821
R1 Yakima, Tri-	Jan Hinkle-Rodriguez, Supervisor	<u>janh5@uw.edu</u>	509-836-5499
Cities, Ellensburg & surrounding areas	Ryan Krueger, Trainer Eileen Angier, Registrar	krry300@uw.edu	509-358-3096 800-876-5195
R2 Bellingham,	Yolonda Marzest, Supervisor	<u>ymarzest@uw.edu</u>	206-923-4955
Everett, Mount	El-Freda Stephenson, Trainer	<u>elfreda@uw.edu</u>	206-923-4922
Vernon & surrounding areas	Emma Nierman, Trainer	enierman@uw.edu	206-923-9414
R2 Seattle Metro Area	Yolonda Marzest, Supervisor	<u>ymarzest@uw.edu</u>	206-923-4955
	Julie Gelo, Trainer Joan Sager, Trainer	jkg@uw.edu sagerj2@uw.edu	425-339-1811 360-738-2305



ALLIANCE FOR CHILD WELFARE STAFF (continued...)



REGION	NAME	EMAIL	TELEPHONE
R3 Tacoma, Bremerton, Puyallup & surrounding areas	Arthur Fernandez- Scarberry, Sup Linda Falcocchio, Trainer Luanne Hawley, Registrar	sart300@uw.edu falcol@uw.edu caregiver.training.tacoma@gmail.com	206-276-4549 253-983-6474 253-881-1207
R3 Tumwater, Olympia, Centralia, Long Beach, South Bend, & surrounding areas.	Penny Michel, Trainer Linda Bales, Registrar	mpen300@uw.edu resource.family.training.r3@gmail.com	360-725-6788 360-485-8146
R3 Aberdeen, Forks, Port Angeles & Shelton	Vacant		
R3 Vancouver, Camas, Stevenson & Kelso	Colleen Cornman-Wilcox, Trainer Kim Glover, Registrar	cm39@uw.edu ruregistered3@gmail.com	360-993-7991 360-326-3864

