

# FosterCare

SELECT

A program of  
Dunn Mental  
Health Center,  
Inc.

1416 Broad Street,  
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## Parents Day Out Allows Parents to Christmas Shop While Their Kids Have Fun!

On December 1st, Foster Care Select parents and their children joined together at the Foster Care Select office for our First Annual Parents Day Out.

Breakfast Casserole, pancakes, sausage, donuts and fruit topped the menu. As soon as parents were finished eating, they were allowed to leave and work on their Christmas shopping while Foster Care Select staff provided child care and Christmas activities for the 18 children who attended.

Christmas movies such as The Santa Clause 3 and Elf were enjoyed as well as Christmas puzzles, computer games, coloring, and crafts. The kids also enjoyed a pizza lunch which was donated by Eric and Onalee Counciller who own the Skymart in New Castle. Only one piece was left at the end of the day! Parents returned after several hours of shopping and picked up their

children who were well behaved, but exhausted by the end of the day. All of the kids received a treat bag when they left as a reward for being so cooperative and helpful throughout the day.

If you weren't able to join us this year, mark December 6, 2008 on your calendar so you can attend next year's event!



Theresa Harris enjoys a yummy breakfast.



Above left: Families gathered at the office to eat breakfast prior to parents leaving to Christmas shop.

Above right: Pat Hall getting psyched to shop!



Bottom left: Shawna's boys getting ready for a fun day of Christmas activities.

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### Special points of interest:

- Check out the pictures from our first Parent's Day Out
- Learn about making Memory Wreaths
- See all of the local opportunities to earn licensing hours
- Learn about the importance of Supervision
- Lynne's Corner

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## Therapy Toolbox

By: Cindy Royce, MSW



Every family has traditions that they celebrate during holidays. Have you ever asked yourself why these are important? Traditions remind us of who we are and what makes our family unique.

A Memory Wreath is a way for each of your foster children to express family memories that are important to them while also incorporating new traditions.

The holidays are often a time when our foster children are more stressed than usual. They serve as a reminder that the children are not in their own home. This may result in increased irritability or depressive symptoms. A Memory Wreath may assist kids in expressing their feelings.

There are many ways to make a Memory Wreath so feel free to get creative with your children. Collect pictures, important awards, childhood treasures, etc. to decorate the wreath. Photos and awards can be photo copied and down-sized and placed on a circular disc of cardboard, or the end of a juice can. Use trim, stickers, gemstones etc to decorate the ornament. Take childhood treasures like a special cookie cutter, items made in grade school crafts, baby's first Christmas ornaments, favorite trinkets etc. that have a special meaning or story connected to them, and attach them to the wreath as well.

Encourage your children to tell you the story about each ornament and why it is important. This reinforces a sense of

self and adds value to their history. Helping kids use words to express their emotions about the past can reduce the potential for inappropriate behaviors.



An example of an ornament made from an old photo.

## Focus on Benefits: Weekly Supervision

One of the most important benefits Foster Care Select provides is weekly supervision. I'm sure many of you are thinking, "That's just one more person I have to meet with every week!" Supervision is important because it allows you to discuss your foster children's progress as well as problems they may be having at home, school, or during visitation. It is a wonderful time to ask questions, clarify information, and share what positive things you are doing with your foster children. Supervision also allows us to respond to behav-

iors as they occur, rather than to wait until they become a crisis.

Supervision also allows us to share with you our appreciation for the things you do well and make suggestions for improvements. Many times we use this time to share feedback we have gotten from caseworkers or family members.

Here are some tips that we have received from caseworkers to create a positive experience for both the DCS and the child in placement:

- Please be flexible. When you work to assist with visitations, appointments, etc without complaint, you make your home valuable to them.
- Don't complain about bio families in front of the children or to the caseworker. It appears as if you aren't supportive of the case plan.
- Don't be upset if the caseworker drops in to see you and the kids. They just want to see where the children live and meet the family on a casual basis.

## Regional Training Opportunities

Dates have been scheduled for our next **Pre-service (FAKT)** training. They are:

**Thursday, January 24th** 5 to 8 p.m.

**Friday, January 25th** 5 to 8 p.m.

**Saturday, January 26th** 9 to 5 p.m.

**Monday, January 28th** 5 to 8 p.m.

**Tuesday, January 29th** 5 to 8 p.m.

**These trainings will all be held in the Foster Care Select office.**

Please make sure you RSVP for all trainings you plan to attend!

**CPR / First Aid / Universal Precautions**

**Wednesday, December 5th** at 6 p.m. This training will be held at Oak Park Church in Richmond, Indiana

Ongoing Training Hours.....

**Conundrums of Psychiatric Care**

Presented by Charlotte Hannah, APRN, CS, BC

**Tuesday, December 11, 2007** from 6 to 8 p.m. in the Boardroom at Dunn Mental Health Center, 831 Dillon Drive, Richmond, IN

2 Hours of Continuing Education

## Levels of Care and How they Relate to Per Diem

Many of you have experienced having the phone ring and either Shawna or myself asking you if you are interested in taking a foster child into your home. Of course you ask the basic information such as the child's name, age, sex, and county they are coming from, but many of you have asked, "What level are they?"

The level of care is determined after Foster Care Select agrees to take the placement and has chosen a home. Unfortunately, it will not be determined most of the time until after you get the child. We can usually make a ballpark guess based on the information we receive, but if it is an emergency placement, we may not have enough information to determine the

level. There are 9 domains that are considered:

- Behavior
- Legal Involvement
- Emotional
- Social
- Medical
- Educational
- Sexual Behavior
- Family Involvement
- Substance Use

As you can see, most children have some areas that they have more prob-

lems in than others. Foster Care Select staff work together to determine the level based on how the client scores in each of these areas. **It is not a negotiated level.** It is a mathematical formula. We do try to make sure that we do not put too many intensive service children in the same home.

**\*\*Remember the per diem is NOT income. It is NOT reported on your taxes. It is to be used to meet the child's needs. That includes clothing, transportation to appointments and visits, extra-curricular activities, and allowance. If you have the child at least 1 day over 6 months, you can claim them as a dependent on your taxes as well.**

## Lynne's Corner



Christmas is my favorite time of year because there are so many fun activities to do with children.

It is a wonderful time of year to teach children about giving by volunteering to serve meals at a shelter, collecting canned goods for a local pantry, collecting pet supplies for the local animal shelter, or purchasing gifts for a needy family. What a great family tradition!

One of our favorite family traditions is to bake for the holidays. The whole family gets involved in choosing what types of cookies or candy we will make. We listen to Christmas music and spend the weekend making everyone's favorite treats. We then use inexpensive Christmas trays or tins and package up a sampling of treats for neighbors and friends. It is as much fun to give the treats away as it is to make them!

If you haven't already noticed, a continuing theme in the newsletter has been participating in or creating traditions. Sharing stories about past Christmas', favorite ornaments, traditional foods, etc. is a great way to engage your foster child in some positive discussions about their families.

*Blessed are the children who have parents and grandparents who can relate stories of their own pasts, connecting the children with the memories, lighting a taper in the imagination that never goes out.*

*-Juanita Williams*



### Christmas Breakfast Casserole

\*This can be assembled the night before and refrigerated and then baked Christmas morning.

1 24 to 32 oz bag frozen, shredded hash browns, thawed.

2 cups diced ham

4 cups shredded Colby jack cheese

7 eggs

1 cup milk

1/2 t. salt

1/2 t. ground mustard.

Pre-heat oven to 350. Lightly grease a 9x13 pan (I use disposable pans so no dishes!) Layer the hash browns, then ham, then cheese. Beat the eggs, milk, salt and mustard together and pour over the layers. Bake covered for 1 hour. Remove foil and brown for 15 more minutes.

\*Hint— If you spray the foil with Pam, it won't stick to the cheese while baking.

## A program of Dunn Mental Health Center,

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**We are working on a  
website.... Watch for  
more details!**

**FosterCare**  
SELECT

*Nurturing hope in the lives of  
Children*

## Dear Shawna.....



Dear Shawna,

I have been licensed with Foster Care Select for a few weeks now. When will I get kids placed in my home?

*From, Waiting Patiently*

Dear Waiting Patiently,

Becoming licensed to foster is a lengthy process and everyone who becomes licensed hopes to get foster children as soon as possible. As a placing agency, we have no control over when children are removed from an unsafe environment—that is done by Child Protective Services. Unless the child is at eminent risk, there are other interventions that DCS must try first to overcome the family's barriers in providing a safe home. They also have to consider if there are any appropriate relatives

available for the children to reside with. When the decision is made to use foster care, the caseworker must decide if they have an appropriate county home or if therapeutic care is needed. When a referral is made to Foster Care Select, an assessment is made as to which family can hopefully best meet the children and bio family's needs. Often the caseworker will request that we attempt to find a home in a certain school district or county, or that a child be close enough to maintain therapy with their current therapist. We also have to assess factors such as whether the child is aggressive or sexually acts out, because we would not want to put them in your home if you have other children who could potentially be victimized. These requests may limit the scope of homes for that particular child. If you request a specific age range, that may also limit the number of children

*Foster Care Select is a child placing agency which promotes providing care of the highest quality to foster children with special needs. Started in 2007, we have grown to over 50 homes across the state in less than a year and have several more homes in the process of becoming licensed.*

*Our regional offices are:*

- *Northern Region—located in Fort Wayne*
- *Central Region—located in Indianapolis*
- *East Central Region—located in New Castle*
- *Southern Region—located in Bedford*

*For more information on fostering through Foster Care Select, contact Lynne Carter at 866-521-3010.*



*Dear Shawna is a column we decided to start this month to address foster parent questions that everyone may have. You can email your questions to [lynne@dunncenter.org](mailto:lynne@dunncenter.org).*

appropriate for your home. We also look at the child's problems and try not to place too many high needs children in a home. Although you may be licensed for 6 or 8 children, that may not be an optimal number if the children all have lots of needs. We would prefer to utilize those beds for large sibling groups.

When we do get a "good match" you will definitely get a call. We have, and continue to get, calls from the counties we serve and I will continue to pursue placements from the counties in our region. Most of our homes currently have children. We are very appreciative of what you all do. When you provide a good service, the county will often call us and request you. Although I can not predict when a placement will occur, I can predict that Foster Care Select will continue to grow in this region!