

FosterCare

SELECT

A program of
Dunn Mental
Health Center,
Inc.

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Foster Care Select Granted Another 4 year Child Placing License!

Whew!!! The month of December is always hectic because of the holidays, but this year it was especially stressful because Foster Care Select participated in our first full licensing audit with the State of Indiana.

Many of you were involved in assisting us with getting needed documentation for your foster parent files, or obtaining medical or dental records for the children in your care. Our staff spent countless hours auditing our own files to make sure that each foster family file and child's chart were in order.

Sandy Whetstine, our state licensing consultant was very helpful and made some great recommendations that we hope to put into place in the coming months. One of her suggestions was that we include pictures of the foster home and the foster child bedrooms in the files so that anyone looking at them would immediately be able to insure that there were adequate exits, plenty of space, and that the rooms are homey and free of clutter.

She also encouraged us to have foster parents have the children in their care actually practice going out of the exits for fire drills. If you have a window exit,

"Successful is the person who has lived well, laughed often, and loved much, who has gained the respect of children, who leaves the world better than they found it, who has never lacked appreciation for the earth's beauty, who never fails to look for the best in others or give the best of themselves."

you need to make sure the children can open the window and that they can actually reach it to climb out. If it is upstairs, you need to have a window ladder available all of the time.

As part of the child's record, she suggested that we have a picture and description of the child and why they were matched with your home instead of being placed with someone else. It may be for safety reasons if you have alarms or because your home is accessible. It could be because the child's religion or culture is similar to yours, or because they would have the ability to be with their siblings, close to their biological parent's home, or maintain their current school placement.

Many thanks to all of you that participated in the audit in some way.

Reminder: Annual Re-licensing Due

As many of you may know, there are a lot of foster parent licenses that are due for re-newal in the month of March. It is very important that if your license is up for an annual review that you have your 20 continuing education hours, current CPR and First Aid, and a current water test if you don't have city water. You

will also have to have local background checks updated. If your license expires in 2008, we will need to get you registered to be fingerprinted as well. Those of you that are due for an annual evaluation will receive a letter in the next couple of weeks instructing you to complete some of these tasks.

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Special points of interest:

- Hear about our Audit Results!
- Learn how to make kids feel like part of your family.
- See all of the local opportunities to earn licensing hours
- Learn about Mental Health Services Available to the kids in your care.
- Lynne's Corner

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Therapy Toolbox

By: Cindy Royce, MSW, LCSW



Establishing new foster children as members of your family is one of the most important tasks you can accomplish in the first few days of their placement.

You may ask yourself, "How can I help this child feel like part of my family without losing their own identity?"

First, make sure you have the same privileges and expectations for your foster children that you have for your own children. Nothing insures conflict quicker than having two sets of rules.

If bedtime is 9 p.m. in your home, it should be that way for all of the children unless it isn't age appropriate. If your children routinely go skating on Fridays, your foster children should be allowed to attend as well. If your own

children are allowed on the computer, your foster children should be allowed access, as long as they are supervised during its use. If you take the family out to eat and you pay for everyone's meal, your foster child should not have to use their allowance to pay for theirs. Kids are always watching and they take their cues from you. If you show that you are willing to accept them and include them unconditionally, you are more likely to have a child that is willing to engage in family traditions.

Another way to include foster children is to give them household responsibilities similar to your own children's. It is appropriate for children to have 1 or 2 daily tasks such as emptying trash, feeding pets, doing dishes, setting the

table, and assisting with their laundry.

Older children will feel more a part of the family if they are allowed to help develop menus, shop, cook, plan family activities, and participate in other skill building tasks. Having a savings account for their allowance and learning to plan for purchases are great ways to teach budgeting.

To summarize, incorporating your foster children into your family can be accomplished easily by allowing the child to feel they have an important role within the family unit. It doesn't replace their role with their biological family, but it is a way to teach how families work together to remain healthy.

Focus on Benefits: Access to Mental Health Services

Being removed from one's home and family almost always causes some sort of traumatic reaction in the children placed in our care. Even though their home may have been suspected of being physically, sexually, emotionally abusive, or neglectful, it is all the children know and they miss their family. Children express their feelings in different ways. They may appear angry, tearful, withdrawn, or afraid. They may have difficulty in school, with peers, sleeping at night, or demonstrate a change in their appetite.

As a Foster Care Select foster parent, one of the benefits offered to you is access to the many mental health professionals employed at our centers.

We have licensed therapists who can provide individual and family counseling for children in your care. If the biological family is in our region, home based services can also be put in place to help the family manage the issues that put their children at risk and to teach new ways of parenting and protecting their children.

For children who may potentially need medication, we have child and adolescent psychiatrists and APN's who can evaluate children or follow children who are prescribed medications for anxiety, depression, ADHD and other mental health issues. These services are available to the children in your care, along with an assigned case manager to help coordinate services that are needed or requested by the caseworker or foster parent. Reports are sent to the caseworker monthly to keep them updated on each child's progress.

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

Saturday, February 9th at 9 a.m.

At the Henry County Public Library.

Saturday, March 1st at 9 a.m. at FCS

offices.

Ongoing Training Hours.....

Children's Medications

Presented by Dunn Medical Staff at the Chase Building in Richmond, 3rd floor conference room

February 11th 8:30 a.m. to 10 a.m.

1.5 Hours of Continuing Education

Foster Care Select Sponsors Parent Support Group

Calling All Foster Parents!! One of the goals that we set for Foster Care Select was to develop a foster parent support group that is run by foster parents, but facilitated by Foster Care Select.

Theresa Harris of Cambridge City, and Tonya Cooper of New Castle have volunteered to co-chair the new group this year and help us get meetings under way. The first meeting will be held in the Foster Care Select office on January 29, 2008 from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m.

What is a Support Group?

A foster parent support group is designed to allow foster parents to network with one another and share common experiences and problems in order to problem solve as a group. It is a

place to meet other foster parents and develop relationships so that when you need anything from a respite care provider to a shoulder to lean on, you have people you can call who have experienced similar situations. It also allows our seasoned foster parents to act as "mentors" for our newer foster parents.



Foster Care Select will provide the meeting place and the snacks. The agenda is up to those who attend.

Who Should Attend?

It would be great if every foster parent in our region can become involved in some way. Meetings will be once a month on the 4th Tuesday. Scrapbooking materials will be provided by Foster Care Select so that those that want to work on Lifebooks or Family Books can participate in those activities as well. Anyone with other suggestions of creative activities should bring those to the meetings along with a list of materials that are needed.

If you have any questions or would like to volunteer to lead an activity for the group, please contact Lynne in the Foster Care Select office and your number will be forwarded to Theresa or Tonya!

Lynne's Corner



Brrrrr! I'm sure many of you feel the same way about winter I do. I love the snow, but I don't like the cold weather. If you have trouble coming up with family fun during January, and you are tired of rolling snow for snowman, building snow forts, making snow ice cream (yes, I have a recipe), and ice skating, think WARM! The library is a great place to have family fun. Most libraries have children's areas that offer books, games, computer activities for children, storytimes, and movies. Libraries will often publish a calendar of special events for families. The offerings are numerous. There are chess nights, teen groups and activities, and workshops on lots of topics. Many libraries allow you to not only check out books and magazines; you can check out movies, music, even artwork!

My family enjoys playing board games and renting movies and having special snacks that we make together. Working on craft projects such as lifebooks, is a great way to bond as a family.

For a great family activity create an ice cream sundae bar and let the kids invite a friend. Use mason jars or unmatched small serving bowls to hold

Cooking is at once child's play and adult joy.

And cooking done with care is an act of love.

-Craig Claiborne



"To us, family means putting your arms around each other and being there."

-Barbara Bush

toppings such as brownie pieces, crushed oreos, butterscotch chips, cherries, M&M's, gummy bears, crushed nuts, hot fudge, caramel topping, and whipped cream. Kids love to use the whipped cream you spray from the can. Combined with a movie or craft activity, you have a special afternoon with very little planning!

Overnight Chicken Casserole

*This is assembled the night before and refrigerated and then baked the next day. Great for busy evenings!

2 1/2 cups cooked chicken, diced
2 cups elbow macaroni, uncooked
1 can cream of chicken soup
1 cup plus 3 T. milk
1 (14 1/2 oz) can chicken broth
8 oz. Velveeta, cubed
1 t. salt
1 small onion chopped (optional)
1/4 cup diced celery

Combine all ingredients together and spread in an ungreased 13x9 pan. Cover with foil and refrigerate overnight. Uncover and bake at 350 degrees for 1 1/2 hours. Serves 8.

Chinese Cole Slaw

In a 2 qt. bowl, layer 2 packages of uncooked ramen noodles broken up, 1 bag shredded cabbage for cole slaw, 1 c. sunflower seed kernels, and 1 c. sliced almonds. In another bowl, mix together the seasoning packets from the noodles, 1/2 c. sugar, 1/3 c. white vinegar, and 3/4 c. oil. Pour over slaw and chill overnight. Stir prior to serving.

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**Check out our NEW website
www.fostercareselect.org
Online forms available by
using password SELECT99**

FosterCare

SELECT

*Nurturing hope in the lives of
Children*

Dear Shawna.....



Dear Shawna,

Can you explain the Foster Care Select allowance policy to me?

From, Feeling Like the Bank

Dear Feeling Like the Bank,

Most agencies have a policy that children be allowed to earn allowance while in foster care. There are many benefits to using allowance.

- It is a reward that many families use with their own children for helping with household responsibilities.
- It is a wonderful way to teach, even young children, how to save or budget their money.

Foster Care Select suggests parents give children \$10 a week. Of course, if

you have infants or toddlers, you would not give them money. They have additional expenses such as formula, diapers, and toys that you are purchasing. Allowance is most appropriate for children ages 4-18.

There are many ways to teach skills using allowance. We encourage foster parents to start a savings account for children and each week when allowance is given, have the children put a certain portion in savings—\$2 to \$3 is usually appropriate. If they attend church with the family, have them set aside \$1 for tithing. The rest can be used for movies, skating, or other activities that they would normally need to ask you for money to attend. Allow young children to take a few dollars of their allowance when they go to Walmart or on other shopping trips. Encourage them to plan for things that

they need to save for such as vacation spending money, or a larger purchase such as video games.

The per diem that each child receives is to be used to cover any expenses the child incurs, so allowance is a perfectly acceptable way to use a portion of the per diem. Clothing, school expenses, special activities or extra curricular activities also are great uses.

Allowance is also a great way for older children to learn the value of a dollar. It is a way to teach that work is important and that their efforts to take on responsibilities are appreciated. They may have to make some decisions about what activities they really want to do that week, or whether they want to dip into their savings. They may spend their money on something that is not really worth the cost. What a great way to learn life lessons!

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.

