

# FosterCare

SELECT

A program of  
Dunn Mental  
Health Center,  
Inc.

1416 Broad Street,  
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New Castle, IN 47362  
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## An Open Letter from FSSA Director, Judge James Payne...

### Written 1-29-08 Regarding Social and Extra Curricular Activities for foster children...

I have been concerned for years about our handling of children who come into our care and our desire and responsibility to allow them to have a normal life. This is more apparent and appropriate the longer the child is in care and probably the older the child is while in our care, but it includes all children.

I addressed this at the Foster Care Association meeting several month ago and committed to get this director's note out. I indicated that we should give children the opportunity to participate in scouts, school activities, dating, overnights with a friend, prom, band camp, sports activities, church functions, and other similar activities. The concern has been expressed that, while the children are in our care, we have an increased obligation and responsibility to keep them safe. While that is true and safety is always our paramount and first concern, they still deserve the right to be children.

I believe every child has the right to participate in age-appropriate social and extra-curricular activities. It is our responsibility as foster parents to work to give children that opportunity and to make sure that they are safe and protected during those times. I also believe that foster parents must take reasonable steps to determine the appropriateness and safety of those activities. **As a note, the recent MARC Report comparing foster care per diems of every state indicates that Indiana ranks third in the nation for paying an appropriate amount for foster care.** We therefore have the right to

have the very best people serving as foster parents and to have high expectations of their care for our children.

Foster Parents should take reasonably prudent steps to ensure that children are safe while engaged in activities. Those include:

- Having the right information about the child and their history to make informed decisions consistent with their ability and safety.
- Take into consideration the child's mental and physical ability, and behaviors.
- Consider when the activity is being held to make sure it doesn't interfere with other responsibilities.
- Ask the right questions.. Age appropriate? Enhance treatment of child? What benefits will the child receive from participation?
- Evaluate risks involved. No high risk activities.
- Ensure that there is adequate and appropriate supervision by talking with adult supervisors and being assured of their appropriateness. It does NOT mean do background checks.
- The activity should have reasonable supervision and careful thought must be given when supervision is limited such as for dating. Priorities should be given to group activities.

The goal is to permit children to be children and activities should be reported to the caseworker, family, and to the court. Please be supportive of these activities!

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### Special points of interest:

- *Hear Judge Payne's Views on Activities for Foster Children*
- *Learn about having reasonable expectations for foster kids.*
- *See all of the local opportunities to earn licensing hours*
- *Learn how to refer families that are interested in foster parenting.*
- *Lynne's Corner*

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# Therapy Toolbox

By: Cindy Royce, MSW, LCSW



When a child comes into your home and you are suddenly in charge of helping to shape their life, it is very easy to get caught up in the moment. You want to do great things for them and with them. You want significant changes to appear before your eyes. If you are too impatient, this unfortunately can mean you also have unrealistic expectations of that child.

Before they reached your home, they were taken out of theirs. Most of the time they were not given a choice if they wanted to stay or not, just told they must go. They are going to live with strangers (hopefully you won't be that for long, but you are now). They are going to sleep and eat with people they don't know. The house is strange,

the rules are different, even the food may be different. We're talking about significant changes in their lifestyle.



When starting to work with these children, remember where they came from. They may have never had to do chores. Saying grace at the table may scare them. Doing homework before being confronted by a teacher may be foreign

to them. Maybe these children aren't well versed in hygiene and good personal habits. Manners may not have ever been taught.

Most kids, once they connect, want to please you. If they don't connect, gaining compliance may take some time. Even when they want to please you, they may not know how. Many times the family roles are so muddled and the boundaries blurred that is difficult to understand how families should behave.

Sit back, take a deep breath and realize this may be the challenge you are seeking. Give children what they need most.. Love, attention, guidance, patience, and a chance to succeed. Reserve the bad stuff like judgment, impatience, intolerance, and anger. Those will not be helpful in your quest.

## Focus on Benefits: Rewards for Referring New Parents

Many of you have taken advantage of our Foster Care Select Referral Bonus in the last year. This is a bonus that is paid to foster parents who refer a family that is interested in becoming a licensed foster home. The bonus is paid when the family completes the licensing process and is able to accept placements.

What families are we looking for? We prefer that you refer families that are not already licensed by another agency. We do accept transfers, but our preference is to license our own families. This helps us ensure that families are

trained according to our policies and procedures and approach foster care from our philosophy. It also helps us to maintain good relationships with other agencies and counties.

The types of families we are looking for should have some of the following qualities:

- Be interested in providing a loving and nurturing home to children of all ages.
- Be employed, or have outside income unrelated to fostering or public assistance.

- Be able to pass all background checks.
- Have adequate bedroom space for foster children to be able to feel at home with dresser and closet space for their belongings.
- Be open to working toward reunification planning with the county and family by being supportive of visitation plans, therapy, and other needed services.
- Be able to provide transportation to all appointments and activities.

## Regional Training Opportunities

Recently the Foster Care Select Office in New Castle has ordered some books and videos on the Alternative Training List. Foster Parents may earn up to 8 of their 20 hours of continuing education needed annually through these resources. You may check these out by contacting Lynne at 866-521-3010. Please limit yourself to one item at a time so that everyone has an opportunity to utilize these resources.

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### CPR / First Aid / Universal Precautions

Saturday, March 22nd at 9 a.m. at Oak Park Church in Richmond.

Ongoing Training Hours.....

### Effects of Substance Abuse on Children in Foster Care Placement

Saturday, April 5th from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the Warren Library

9701 East 21st St. , Indianapolis

RSVP by calling FCS at 866-830-8829

### 5 Hours of continuing education

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Next FAKT Pre-Service Training will be held April 17, 18, 19, 20, and 21st. You must attend all 5 sessions with your spouse to become licensed. For more information, call the Foster Care Select office at 866-521-3010. Evening sessions are 5-8 p.m. and Saturday is 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

## 12 Ways to Help Your Child Be a Better Learner

Engaging your child in brain boosting activities at home is the secret to helping him make the grade in class. Here, elementary school principals tell you how to start.

1. **Start a Parent-Child book club.** Check out 2 copies of a book from the library and discuss it after each chapter. Establish a regular time and place to meet. Maybe it's every Saturday at the Starbucks!
2. **Take Walks in Your Neighborhood.** Point out various forms of plant life, examples of architecture, identify flowers and trees, animal tracks, etc.
3. **Travel cross country or cross county.** Vacations and day trips expose your child to a variety of activities, museums, historical sights, plays, and cultural activities.
4. **Look at the Stars.** Check out a book on astronomy from the library and set out to stargaze. Look for constellations, shooting stars and locate the moon.
5. **Bridge Generation Gaps.** Take your child to a nursing home for a volunteer visit. They can talk

about their school experiences and listen to someone else's from a different era.

6. **Provide Solitude.** Designate a quiet place for downtime. Children need a break from the fast paced world of video games, computers, and television, which can over-stimulate young minds. Instead, give them options for solo play such as books, dolls, or art supplies.
7. **Expose your Child to Current Events.** If your local newspaper has a kids' section, read the paper together and discuss the news. It is great to talk about the election process, community news and world events.
8. **Begin a Family Game Night.** Board games and parlor games foster strategic thinking, help build vocabulary and math skills and teach sportsmanship. The time together promotes conversation.
9. **Become a Student Again.** Is your student studying the Civil War? Ask him to tell you the key points and let him teach you what

he has learned.

10. **Give Your Child the Skills to Deal with Anger.** One principal suggests this idea for helping your child calm down. Tell them to "cool the pizza." When they are angry, tell them to imagine there's a pizza in front of him that is too hot to eat. So hot, that he needs to blow it off to cool it. This will remind him to take breathers in a "hot situation."
11. **Sharpen Computer Skills.** If you have a computer at home, encourage your child to use it for journal writing or to send correspondence. No computer? Look at your local library for access.
12. **Encourage Your Child to Write His Own Biography.** Have your child list accomplishments and other things they have done, as well as what they would like to do in the future.

Parents CAN make a difference in their child's ability to be successful at school, but much of the learning must begin at home. Developing good study habits and finding the child's interests will help develop their zeal to learn.

## Lynne's Corner



Happy Easter and Happy Belated St. Patrick's Day! I love these holidays because they signal the beginning of spring. After the long dreary winter, it is a great time to look toward new life in the form of budding trees and flowers.

Some great spring family activities can include celebrating the Easter season at your place of worship and teaching your children the significance of the holiday. There are also traditional activities such as coloring eggs, participating in Easter egg hunts, exchanging Easter baskets, and shopping for that new Easter outfit! Easter is a holiday that promotes family time.

Another spring activity can be planning gardens and flower beds and allowing children to pick out their favorite flowers in their favorite colors. Give every

child a large pot to plan. Let them choose 5 or 6 plants that they like and form a container garden. Then give them the responsibility for taking care of pulling weeds and watering the container. This can also be done with sections of a garden or flower bed as well.



### Easy Strawberry Trifle

- 1 large frozen Sara Lee Pound Cake, thawed.
- 1 quart strawberries, sliced
- 1 jar strawberry ice cream topping
- 1 large container whipped topping

Cut pound cake into cubes. Place one third of the cubes in a glass trifle bowl or a deep glass bowl. Mix the sliced strawberries and strawberry topping. Place one third of strawberry mixture on top of the cake cubes and then top with one third of whipped topping. Repeat with cake, strawberry mixture and whipped topping. This is easy to double if needed.

### Spinach Artichoke Dip

- 1 box thawed, frozen chopped spinach with water squeezed out
  - 1 c. sour cream
  - 1/2 c. parmesan cheese
  - 1 c. mozzarella cheese, shredded
  - 8 oz. softened cream cheese
  - 4 cloves crushed garlic
  - 1 14 oz can artichoke hearts, chopped
- Mix all ingredients well and place in a 1 qt. baking dish. Bake at 350 degrees. Serve with tortilla chips, or veggies.

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**Check out our NEW website  
[www.fostercareselect.org](http://www.fostercareselect.org)  
Online forms available by  
using password SELECT99**

# FosterCare

SELECT

*Nurturing hope in the lives of  
Children*

## Dear Shawna.....



Dear Shawna,

What should I do if my biological kids don't get along with my foster kids.

*From, "The Referee"*

Dear "Referee,"

It is difficult when your biological kids and foster kids don't get along well, but it is also normal to have some sibling conflict.

One of the things we have all of our foster parents do prior to becoming licensed, is to discuss the feelings that everyone in the home has about fostering. Prior to having foster children placed in your home, you want to make it clear that any disagreements will be handled in the same fair and consistent manner that you currently utilize. That means that if your children don't

like the foster children, it is not an option to make them leave. If you won't get rid of your own children, it can't be an option for foster children.

If your children are on board with your decision to foster, but just have differences with the foster children you currently have, one suggestion would be to have family meetings. Encourage each child to list the things that they feel are creating the conflict and several possible solutions to help resolve the conflict. This allows children to learn some important skills about resolving conflicts on their own. It is very important to listen to both sides and encourage the children to work toward solutions together. You will find that most conflict between your biological children and your foster children is very typical of siblings. Someone borrowing things without asking, talking about

*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 to address foster parent questions that everyone may have. You can email your questions to [lynne@dunncenter.org](mailto:lynne@dunncenter.org).*

the other person at school, not keeping their share of the bedroom clean etc. It is also difficult to share your parents with other children and feel that everyone is getting "equal" attention. That is one reason we discourage families from taking on too many children.

All in all, conflict is a natural part of life and we want our children to learn positive ways to resolve conflicts. Encouraging children to be open and honest while also looking for appropriate solutions are important skills to teach both our biological children and our foster children.

