

NEWS FROM YOUR PEER LIAISON

MARCH 2016



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I UNDERSTAND... I AM A FOSTER PARENT TOO

IFAPA recognizes that foster parents often need the perspective of peers during the foster parenting and adoption experience.

I can provide support and assist you with questions regarding:

- Licensing requirements
- Training needs
- Respite care
- Behavior challenges
- Working with birth families
- Confidentiality issues
- And much more!

Ways to build and maintain sibling connections when placed separately

Our relationship with our siblings is the usually the longest running connection most of us will have. Our job as foster and adoptive parents is to help build those relationships and connections when it is safe for the children. Here are a few suggestions:

- With social worker's approval, arrange for face-to-face visits at least two times a month with children and more often if possible.
- Foster parents, adoptive parents, and social workers should help the children initiate contact. Do not wait for the children to do it.
- Families should put pictures of siblings in their home. A framed photo on the nightstand is great!
- Include information about siblings--known and unknown--in children's Lifebook's.
- Have the children see the same therapist on the same day when possible. They can visit in the waiting room and share a meal together after. The therapist can make recommendations based on information on all the children.
- When visiting the birth parents, add extra time before or after the visit so the children can play together.
- Have foster/adoptive parents provide respite for siblings of the children they foster or have adopted.
- Play games and use other techniques that encourage sibling's interaction during visits.
- Invite siblings to share birthdays, ball games, dance recitals, and more.
- Go on vacations together.
- Gather all the siblings for a family portrait.
- Use email, skype, and letters for the children to connect. Parents and workers should help facilitate this.
- If possible, place siblings in the same community. Even if the children are not able to live together, they will be able to visit each other easily and more often. Also, send pictures frequently so the children understand that their siblings are growing up too.
- For the siblings that the children cannot visit easily, make a "Sibling Box." Let the child put cards, pictures, drawings, and small gifts in a pretty box to mail to the sibling or ask the social worker to give to the child.
- Add unavailable siblings to your family's holidays. For example, have an ornament on the Christmas tree for that sibling, have a cake on their birthday or light a candle on a special day. Create meaningful rituals.

Source: Adapted from Keck, G.C. & Kupecky, R.(1998). Siblings: the old, the new, the feelings! In Adopting the hurt child: Hope for families and special needs kids.



www.ifapa.org

NEWS FROM YOUR IFAPA PEER LIAISON

Support Group Happenings

Mason City and Surrounding Areas

- *Sat. March 5th (9am-12:15pm) "Mandatory Child Abuse" (3 hrs) Cedar Falls
- *Sat. March 5th (1:15-5:30pm) "CPR/First Aid" (4 hrs) Cedar Falls
- *Sat. March 12th (9am-4:30pm) "Hope For Healing: Trust Based Relational Intervention" (6 hrs) Cedar Falls
- *Register at www.ifapa.org or call 800-277-8145

Fort Dodge and Webster City Areas

- *Sat. March 19th (9am-4:30pm) "Utilizing The Nurtured Heart Approach In Helping Children With Challenging Behaviors" (6 hrs credit) Ft. Dodge
- *Register at www.ifapa.org or call 800-277-8145

Renew Support Group, Cornerstone Church-Ames

- * No support group meeting in March
- *Please view IFAPA's new trainings in your area at ifapa.org

Allison Area Foster Parent Support Group

Waverly Vineyard Church, 319 W. Bremer

- *Tues. March 1st (6-7pm) "How to Talk to Your Kids About The Tough Stuff" Presenter: Monarch Therapy Staff (1 hr credit)
- *Support to follow (7-8 pm) RSVP by Feb. 28 if child care is needed.
- *Contact Nancy Magnall for more information at 319-352-3600

Marshall County Support Group

- Bi-monthly lunch support meeting
- 11:30-1:00 at Applebee's in Marshalltown
- * Contact Mindy Speake for dates & details at 515-291-1292
- *Please view IFAPA's new trainings in your area at ifapa.org

WINTER TIDBITS

IFAPA's Spring Conference

Exciting & Amazing Trainings

Friday & Saturday, April 8 & 9, 2016

Airport Holiday Inn-Des Moines
Register now!! At ifapa.org

All foster parents

are required to take RPPS
Training once by Sept 30, 2016.
Watch the 30 min. video at
ifapa.org

"Lucky Charms" Cupcakes

St Patrick's Lucky Charms Cupcakes are cute, festive cupcakes made of any white cake mix with the addition of green food coloring and Lucky Charms sugar cereal crushed and added into to cupcakes to add great taste. These festive treats are topped with a yummy buttercream frosting but the "gem" is the addition of the marshmallow Lucky Charm of your choice that makes it truly for St. Patrick's Day!

