

NEWS FROM YOUR PEER LIAISON

August, 2016



JOHN SMITH

IFAPA Peer Liaison

How to Contact Me:

877-305-3396

712-665-4011

jsmith@ifapa.org

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!



www.ifapa.org

Dear Parents,

One of the most significant steps a child in care takes is transitioning to a new school from another school, or even transitioning to a new building within the same school district. This is a momentous step for your student. You are concerned for your student and chances are your child is pretty stressed about it too – *new teachers, a new building, let alone a whole bunch of new students to get acquainted with!* This is an important transition in your child's life. It is critical and it can be *fun*. Check out some of the suggestions below, it is possible for you to ease the transition so that **BOTH** you and your student emerge safe and sound!

1. **Familiarize Your Student With Their Surroundings.** If you think back to your first days in college or even in a new job, you'll remember that a lot of your anxiety stemmed from being unfamiliar with your surroundings. Simple things like knowing where the restroom is can feel like major obstacles. To help your student, take a tour of the school together before school begins.
2. **Get Organized.** To help your child adapt to his new school schedule, look at ways you can jointly become organized. This may include an individual planner for them, and also a bulletin board for a family calendar, reminders and notes. Experiment with ways that work for you and your family to make sure that nothing (including homework) is forgotten.
3. **Enable Positive Peer Networking Opportunities.** When a kid is new, it is a lot like being a small fish in a big pond. Your student may be thrown into an environment where they know no one and end up feeling lost. Try to help your child develop some positive personal relationships before school starts.
4. **Encourage Independent Problem Solving.** It can be difficult to see your student struggling, but try to do your best to simply lead them in the right direction. Focus less on solving problems for your student and more on enabling them to solve their own problems.
5. **Keep Track of What Your Student is Doing.** You don't need to micromanage your student, but it is important that you're aware of what's happening in their life. If you notice their grades are slipping or they are reluctant to go to school, some part of the transition has failed and you need to work together with your student to address it.

Remember, a transition to a new school need only be as difficult as **YOU** make it. By maintaining a positive attitude (and encouraging your student to do the same), you are helping them ensure that this next phase of their life is **Successful and FUN!**

Take Care & God Bless – IFAPA John

DATES ON DECK

<p>Saturday, Aug. 27, 2016(9am-12:15pm)</p>	<p>Calming the Trauma Storm (Marty Wallace, LMHC)</p>	<p>3 hours</p>	<p>Fort Dodge Iowa Central Community College 2031 Quail Ave East Campus Triton Room</p>
<p>Saturday, Aug. 27, 2016(1:15pm-4:30pm)</p>	<p>Time to Get the Schools on Board (Marty Wallace, LMHC)</p>	<p>3 hours</p>	<p>Fort Dodge Iowa Central Community College 2031 Quail Ave East Campus Triton Room</p>
<p>Saturday, Aug. 27, 2016(9am-12:15pm)</p>	<p>Mandatory Child Abuse Reporter Training</p>	<p>3 hours</p>	<p>Sioux City Stoney Creek Inn 300 3rd Street Nebraska Room</p>
<p>Saturday, Aug. 27, 2016(1:15pm-5:30pm)</p>	<p>CPR and First Aid (Register & Pay Here) To avoid late fees, pay by Sunday, Aug. 14</p>	<p>4 hours</p>	<p>Sioux City TBA</p>

FOSTER PARENT MILESTONES

Please join me in thanking the following foster parents for their years of service to Iowa's children as this month marks their renewal anniversary. Thank you for your years of dedication!

- **20+ Years:** Traci & Daniel Sliefert; Denise & Mark Weitl
- **15+ Years:** Lori & Steve Magnuson
- **10+ Years:** Mitchell & Lidabel Bachman
- **5+ Years:** Jay & Catherine Luetje; Amy & Marlyn Purdie; Bianca & Maurico Garcia; Kristine & Ryan Brandenberger; Amanda & Jeremiah James; Lesa & Dale Tokheim
- **1 YEAR:** Amy & Bruce Lesemann; Jody & Debra Skeeters; Brenda & Bob Tiefenthaler

AND REMEMBER: I am just an email/phone call away. I am here for you! If you ever have a question, concern or celebration, give me a call. The conversations which I have with other Foster Parents are the best part of my day!

-IFAPA John



From My Side of the Desk!

It's back to school time! This means start getting in that groove! Observe bed times and get up times; turn off the self-feeder to help them get used to scheduled lunch and snack times; you also may want to start limiting their screen time; a lot of prep work needs to be done to have them ready to learn. **STRUCTURE!!**

And if you have a new child in your home going to school in your area for the first time; make sure that all is ready! The social worker is responsible for making sure the birth parents sign the proper forms so school records can be forwarded to the new school. It is important that birth parents, foster parents and the social worker clarify who will register the child for school.

As a result of Congress passing a bill in 2014, Foster Parents are now able to sign permission slips for a child in foster care to participate in school activities.

However, The foster parent is to NEVER sign indicating they are the parent or guardian!

-IFAPA John