

# NEWS FROM YOUR PEER LIAISON



**JOHN SMITH**

IFAPA Peer Liaison

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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!



[www.ifapa.org](http://www.ifapa.org)

February, 2016

Dear Parents,

We live in a diverse society that includes people of many races, cultures, and beliefs. Individuals possess different physical and mental characteristics as well. Teaching your child about diversity can help your child grow up to be open-minded, fair, respectful of other's rights and feelings, and aware of people's similarities and differences.

- **Toys and games:** Avoid toys that encourage stereotypes (cowboy and Indian figures, for example). Don't limit activities based on outdated gender roles. Let boys play with cooking sets. Let girls pretend to be firefighters.
- **Use a world map or globe** to locate countries that you hear about in the news or read about in books. Talk about how people from many cultures share one small planet.
- **Music:** Borrow tapes or CD's of world music from a library or buy your own. Listen to radio programs of ethnic music.
- **Books:** Read fairy tales and fables from other cultures. Talk about common themes, such as love and hate, honesty and hard work. Ask a children's librarian to recommend books with characters from different groups and lands.
- **TV, newspapers and magazines:** Watch shows about different cultures. Discuss any stereotypes or prejudice that you see on TV or in photos. For example, are the doctors usually male? Are the criminals often people of color? Talk about news events that show injustice or poverty at home or abroad.
- **Foods:** Find out where favorite foods come from (lasagna from Italy, stir fry dishes from Asia, etc). With your child, prepare a recipe from a different culture. Serve it with a familiar food to encourage acceptance. Note: kids can be picky about new foods. Tell your child its okay not to like a food after trying it, but he or she should not make fun of it.
- **Watch what you say and do:** Children will follow your example, no matter how often you talk about diversity. Examine your own prejudices and work to overcome them.
- **Avoid ethnic, racial and sexist humor** even about your own race or gender or ethnic heritage. (It only encourages more of the same.) Teach your children to say, "That's not funny!" or "That's not fair!" to racial, ethnic, or sexist jokes.
- **Avoid general statements**, such as "Old people can be like that." General statements can lead to stereotypes.
- **Think about other messages you may unknowingly send your child:** For example: Do you lock your car doors only when you drive through certain neighborhoods?
- **Examine your work and social life:** For example: Do you welcome relationships with people different from you? Do you invite people of other cultures and ethnicities to your home?
- **Keep in mind that healthy self-esteem allows children to respect others.** Children with poor self-esteem are more likely to be prejudiced. They may put others down to feel better about themselves. Help build your child's esteem by letting your child know that he or she is important and special, is respected as an individual, has talents and strengths, and has rights and responsibilities.

Take Care & God Bless,  
IFAPA John

## DATES ON DECK

Saturday, February 6, (9:00AM-4:30PM) **Utilizing the Nurtured Heart Approach in Helping Children with Challenging Behaviors** at Grace Lutheran Church, 1407 W. 5<sup>th</sup>, Storm Lake.

Saturday, February 20, (9:00AM-4:30PM) **The Grieving Process: How to Help You and Your Kids Heal** at Stoney Creek Inn, 300 3<sup>rd</sup> Street, Sioux City.

Saturday, February 27, (9:00AM-12:15PM) **Mandatory Child Abuse Reporter Training** at Stoney Creek Inn, 300 3<sup>rd</sup> Street, Sioux City

Saturday, February 27, (1:15PM-5:30PM) **Mandatory Child Abuse Reporter Training**. at TBA in Sioux City. *You will need to preregister!*

*(Check the IFAPA website [www.ifapa.org](http://www.ifapa.org) and go to trainings, or contact me if you need info about any classes or available trainings)*

\*\*And, don't forget, if it has been three years since you last took an approved **CPR & First Aid** training or five years since you took your **Mandatory Child Abuse** training, you will need to complete these before you can be re-licensed. If you can't remember, touch base with your IKN or DHS licensing workers; they will know!

\*\*Also, as part of a new federal law, foster parents are now required to complete a Reasonable and Prudent Parent Standard Training by September 30, 2016. In order to complete this requirement, IFAPA has created a training video which is available on our website. It takes about 30 minutes to complete and you just as well get it done before next fall!

## 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: Marge Flannery; Cathe Vanderheiden;
- 15+ Years: Dwight & Nancy Metcalf
- 10+ Years: Chris & Angie Reinert; David & Sioux Parr
- 5+ Years: Michelle & Manuel Rodriguez; Marcie & Todd Welter; Eliseo & Maria Rizo; Jason & Dawn Murley; Johnnie Laird & Sandra Conrad; Michael & Elizabeth Criss; Mike & Jean Dailey

IFAPA's Spring Conference  
Friday & Saturday, April 8 & 9, 2016  
Airport Holiday Inn & Convention Center - Des Moines  
More INFORMATION should be available this month!!



## From My Side of the Desk!

The first weekend in January, I attended the funeral for Don, a good friend. His wife asked me to read something at the funeral and I was honored to do so. Waiting for the funeral I noticed another friend (much younger) who was there. BJ was a Pall Bearer. I knew how proud Don was of BJ and how Don always followed not only what BJ did but also BJ's children's accomplishments. BJ shared with me that his son was wrestling in a very tough tournament that weekend and didn't understand why his dad couldn't be there. BJ told me how he shared with his son how Don had played such an important part in his life at a time when he needed a good adult role model. Every day, we make an impact on children and may not even be aware of it. What we each remember about it, is what it's all about. Make sure to take a deep breath, relax and respond!

**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 parents are the best part of my day!

-IFAPA John