

# NEWS FROM YOUR PEER LIAISON

June, 2015



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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)

Dear Parents,

“School is out; no more homework!” “Summer is here; I can do whatever I want!” These are the sounds I generally hear at the end of the year and I bet you do, also. However, two weeks later, I know I am going to hear “I’m bored” or “There is nothing to do.”

During the school year, kids are always on a schedule, always on the go. Letting them take a break seems like a good idea to all of us. However, for some of our older kids, it may mean slacking off and sleeping in. When a child goes from a go, go, go pace to nothing, it might be okay to take time off for a day or two, but then they get bored and, as parents, we pay the consequences. A bored child is an annoying child who may find trouble. The easiest way to stop your child from getting bored is to schedule their summer days so that they know what is going to happen and can pick and choose what they want to do by learning to make choices.

To start, schedule your entire summer out monthly. Put in your family summer vacation and put in your child’s schedule (camps and day trips) that have already been planned. If you find that there are big gaps of free weeks, help your child find things to fill them up. Maybe there is a babysitting opportunity or they can volunteer at a nursing home. If you break up these large blocks of time, your child may not settle into the routine of sleeping in late every day, getting up, and doing nothing.

Once your monthly schedule is completed, create a weekly schedule. Put down the things you already have planned and then write down the opportunities to do things. If your child finds they have the time to do the extras, they will know when these things are happening. We have never scheduled ourselves to go to some of the extra things in our area, but it is on the calendar, and we could go if we had the time and the urge to do something. It may even be something you can all do at your house like make homemade ice cream, s’mores, or tie dye some shirts.

Then, make a daily routine with your child. Plan things that need to be done daily. Although these things are simple to remember, having them written down helps keep everyone’s stress level down at the end of the day! Schedule in video and TV time so that these activities don’t take up your child’s entire free time and the whole day! Make sure to leave some free time.

Scheduling and time organization will keep your child from getting bored and give them plenty of free time, with some practice at making choices. It will also reduce everyone’s stress level, and this is a positive thing for parent, child and the whole family! ☺

Take Care & God Bless – IFAPA John

## DATES ON DECK

June 2, (7:00-9:00 p.m.) **Reducing the Risk of Abuse Allegations** at West Central Iowa Support Group in Carroll.

June 13, (9:00 a.m.-12:15 p.m.) **Mandatory Child Abuse Reporter Training** at Stoney Creek Inn in Sioux City.

June 13, (1:15-5:30 p.m.) **CPR & First Aid** in Sioux City at a site to be announced. **PREREGISTER WITH IFAPA FOR THIS**

June 20, (9:00 a.m.-12:15 p.m.) **Developing Emotional/Social Competency in Challenging Infants and Toddlers** at Stoney Creek Inn in Sioux City.

June 20, (1:30-4:45 p.m.) **Hope for Healing: Trust Based Relational Intervention** at Stoney Creek Inn in Sioux City.

June 22, (6:30-8:30 p.m.) **Topic to be Determined** at Denison Area Foster & Adoptive Parent Support Group in Denison.

### **SUPPORT GROUPS** (FEEL FREE TO CONTACT ME FOR MORE INFORMATION!)

- West Central Iowa Support Group for Foster/Adoptive Parents (meets monthly (except July & December) on 1<sup>st</sup> Tuesday of month) – Carroll
- Denison Area Foster/Adoptive Parent Support Group (meets 4<sup>th</sup> Monday in October, January, March & June) – Denison
- Fort Dodge Lunch & Learn (meets monthly on 4<sup>th</sup> Thursday of month)
- Merville Support Group (meets monthly on the first Tuesday @ 6:30)
- Woodbury Lunch Support Group (meets monthly on 3<sup>rd</sup> Monday @ 11:00) – Sioux City
- Storm Lake Foster/Adoptive Support Group (meets Sept, Oct, March & April)

***(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)***

## JUNE 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: Vicky & Jeff Lower
- 15+ Years: Thomas & Brenda Harms
- 10+ Years: Mary & John Bernholtz; Shelly & Jessie Kitrell

***AND: The IFAPA Fiscal Year is ending. Have you used Friends of Foster Care grants? Adoption Respite?***

## From My Side of the Desk

For years, I have made a summer to-do list. I think this stems from my days as an educator. My list was things around the house which needed to get done, not what I wanted to do. I put things off and the first of August, I crossed things off that were never going to get done. Then when school started I threw the list away as there was no time left to get anything done. Summer is supposed to be enjoyable, but my list and summer was stressing me out! Then last night we watched the "Bucket List." I realized I was approaching summer the wrong way. Instead of making a list which I didn't want to do, I needed to make a "Summer Bucket List!" So, did. It was a lot more fun making a list of fun things I want to do this summer. On my list is to use respite! We all need a break, and FYI, if we don't take care of ourselves, who will? ☺

**AND REMEMBER:** I am just an email/phone call away. I am here for you! If you 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