

MAY 8, 2018



## Celebrate May as National Foster Care Month!

By Pat Llewellyn, National Foster Parent Association President

I want to extend my appreciation to those who live this amazing life day after day. We all do this for many reasons, we told ourselves as we embarked on this journey that it is about keeping children safe, helping them heal, but we soon find out that we make changes within ourselves that we could never have predicted. Our entire future is forever affected by what we live with these children every day, and even after they leave us we hope we have impacted their lives as much as they have ours. Our roles may be different but the children are the same, as are the physical and emotional demands of parenting children of trauma.

**“It is only as we develop others that we truly succeed”. – Harvey S. Firestone**

We hear time after time that it is about the best interest of the child and no one understands like we do that there is nothing healthier for a child than an educated, enriched and empowered parent. To that end, I encourage you to network with other families, share your truths with them, help them navigate the storm and be there when the storm subsides, as so often after storms things are clearer or sadly sometimes feel irreparable. You, me, all of us in this community of caregivers need to be caretakers of each other, making sure we see those signs of physical or emotional backsliding and providing those listening ears, making eye contact (listening eyes) to read their stress and hopelessness that they are hoping no one sees. We not only see it, we feel it with them, it takes us back and in a number of ways re-energizes us because we made it over that hurdle, sometimes many hurdles.

**“Sometimes our light goes out but it is blown into a flame by another human being. Each of us owes deepest thanks to those who have rekindled the flame.” – Albert Schweitzer**

## Friends Program Grants for Youth age 13 and under in Foster Care

### Friends of Children in Foster Care Program

The Friends of Children in Foster Care Program helps children in foster care receive funds in order to participate in extra-curricular activities, such as obtaining music instruments, swimming lessons or summer camp.

### Who is Eligible to Receive to Funding?

Funding is available only for children currently in Iowa's foster care system. Children placed in pre-adoptive homes or who have been adopted are not eligible for Friends grants. Please view our application below for a list of items that are covered and not covered by this program.

### How to Apply for a Friends Grant?

**To be considered for Friends funding, please complete an application and send it along with copies of receipts/invoices to the address listed below.** Applications that are received without receipts/invoices cannot be processed. Please allow at least 10 business days for applications to be reviewed. You will be notified in writing of the decision by IFAPA staff. Decisions will be made on an individual basis.

### APPLICATION FOR CHILDREN BIRTH TO AGE 13

The maximum grant request limit for children age birth to age 13 is \$200 per child per fiscal year. IFAPA's fiscal year runs July 1 - June 30.

**[FRIENDS APPLICATION](#)** (WORD)

**[FRIENDS APPLICATION](#)** (PDF)

MARK YOUR CALENDAR FOR OCTOBER 16-17, 2015 AND JOIN IFAPA IN WATERLOO FOR TRAINING AND NETWORKING AT OUR FALL CONFERENCE!

# 10 TIPS FOR TALKING TO YOUR KIDS WHEN THEY SURPRISE YOU WITH AN UNCOMFORTABLE TOPIC

Christy lives in Arlington Texas with her husband and two daughters Ticia and Tayla, age 8 and 9 1/2. She finds that her daughters are most open with her when they are all doing something together, like cooking. She also uses "Mommy and Me" journals for topics they might not feel comfortable discussing face to face.



## HOW DO YOU APPROACH DISCUSSING SENSITIVE TOPICS WITH YOUR GIRLS?

I try very hard to be honest always when my girls ask tough questions. I try to make sure that I am speaking at an age appropriate level and sometimes that means I need to ask them to give me time to think about my answer and I tell them I will get back to them.

## DO YOU HAVE ANY SPECIAL METHODS FOR ENCOURAGING YOUR GIRLS TO OPEN UP ABOUT THINGS THEY MIGHT FEEL UNCOMFORTABLE ABOUT?

We have "Mommy and Me" journals. I started this when Tayla (9) was about 7, and Ticia was around 5. Each of my girls have their own journal and they are able to write down anything at all in them that they may feel uncomfortable discussing face to face. They leave the journal on my bed and I write back. So far, the main topics have been friendships, fights with one another and feeling sad or unloved by someone. My hope, is that by starting this early, they will be more inclined to come to me with more serious issues later. [CONTINUE READING](#)

## SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL SKILLS: What to Expect at Different Ages

Kids mature and develop at different paces, but there are certain social and emotional milestones you can expect at different ages. Keeping track of your child's progress as social and emotional skills develop can help reveal potential issues. The following timeline shows what's considered typical behavior as a child develops.

[VIEW SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL TIMELINE](#)

## 6 Tips for Responding to Negative Comments Relatives Make About Your Child

At family gatherings, relatives who don't understand learning and attention issues may make negative comments about your child. These remarks can sting, even if they're well intentioned. Here are some typical comments—and ways to respond.

- "That kid is just lazy."
- "He could be so much more."
- "He's just trying to get attention."
- "Why can't he just sit quietly like his cousins?"
- "You need to try harder in school, kiddo."

[VIEW HOW TO RESPOND TO FAMILY](#)

**May 19—Iowa City**  
**Great Trainings Scheduled - Get Your Foster Parent Training Credits**

### How to Talk So Kids Will Listen and Listen So Kids Will Talk

When parents can help children identify and express their feelings; the child is more likely to learn to manage his/her feelings effectively. When a child develops the skills to express him/herself appropriately all communication even difficult communication becomes easier. Talking, listening and setting effective boundaries are essential skills for parents. This type of communication becomes even more valuable when the parent is dealing with individuals who have experienced significant emotional trauma. (3 hours of Foster Training Credit)

### Don't Give Up On Me

There are many issues that contribute to foster placement failure and a great deal of those issues can be resolved by information and understanding. This session will look at how trauma influences the child, affects his feelings and produces behaviors that are challenging. It will provide insight in the complicated relationship between feelings and the child's choices. We will learn how identifying feelings and allowing the child to express his feelings can contribute to defused anxiety and can contribute to the de-escalation of out of control behavior. We will examine the complications of multiple placements for children and help parents identify ways that they problem solve so that the placement can be maintained. (3 Hours of Foster Training Credit)

[Click Here to Register for either class](#)