



JOHN SMITH

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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

How can we work with birth families during the holidays?

- Ask children about their experiences and try to incorporate some of their traditions. The children placed in your home may miss some activities that they experienced with their family or in a previous placement.
- If possible, ask your child's family members about their holiday traditions and customs. Ask about their beliefs and observances. Although you may feel stretched at the holidays, try to coordinate schedules with the birth families. This gives the children a chance to share what is familiar while experiencing new traditions.
- This is a good time for the youth in your home to make small gifts and send cards to their birth families or old neighbors and friends.
- This is a time when many children feel conflicted feelings about their birth families and worry about them. It is a good time to let the young person know that it is okay for them to be safe and cared for even if their family struggles. Reassure them if you can, about the safety and care of their birth family.

<http://fosteringperspectives.org/fpv15n1/holidays.htm>

Religious Differences & the Holidays

The holidays can be tough for foster families. Children in care miss their families and their traditions, while at the same time they may want to be part of the activities of the foster family. When there's a religious difference between the child's family and the foster family, things can become even more complicated.

Religion can be a sensitive issue. Legally, birth parents have the right to choose their children's religion or lack of religion. Placement of their child in foster care does not take away this right.

Of course, most foster parents try to respect the culture and religious customs of the children in their care. But what does this mean when it comes to religion?

The answer lies in establishing open lines of communication among foster parents, DHS, and the birth family. If your agency knows how you feel about religious issues (for example, if prayer makes you feel uncomfortable, or if you feel compelled to convert children and their families), it will make informed placement decisions. If you haven't already done so, consider talking with your social worker about how religion affects your role as a foster parent.

This communication works both ways. The more you know about the religion, traditions, and preferences of birth families, the easier it will be for you to act in a way that honors their beliefs.

DATES ON DECK

There aren't many trainings during the month of December. IFAPA trainings will start again after the first of the year.

The Carroll Area will be offering a CPR/First Aid in January; If you are in need, feel free to touch base with me. Also check with your licensing worker to see if you are in need.

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

****Friends of Foster Care grant money is still available!**
The link with more information is:
<http://www.ifapa.org/resources/Friends-of-Children-in-Foster-Care-Program.asp>

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!

- 15+ Years: Deborah & Tony Beam
- 5+ Years: Jeanette & Neal Keairns; Bobbie Sue & Justin Onken; Josie & Charles Weier; Jennifer & Bryant Miller; Jeanette Tate & David Ackerman

Happy Holidays to each and every one of you! Holidays are tough on families! Make certain to sit back and relax and take some time for yourselves! You are treasures to lots of youngsters and don't forget it !!

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



From My Side of the Desk!

Things have changed at the Smith House! We may have bitten off more than we can chew. We have taken on a sibling group of four boys ages 7-13!

It had been some time since we have had younger kids and I had forgotten all that goes with after school care, getting ready in the morning, night time rituals and the commitment! BUT, tucking them in at night makes it all worth it!

But what I do find is that there a lot of people out there at this time of the year willing to help out! People have asked if there was a need for clothes and even helping out with Christmas.

Each of us models daily to other adults and families! Who knows, there may be a potential foster parent curious about how things are going. Let's make certain that we share the good times as well as our challenges.

-IFAPA John