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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!

## Your Child's Love Language

When Payton received an A on his math test, his mother showered him with praise. He offered a weak smile and retreated to his room.

Ungrateful child? Spoiled?

Probably not.

His mother wasn't speaking his love language. Children express and receive love in different ways — some through acts of service; others through affirming words; still others through gifts, quality time or physical touch. Each of these expressions of love represents a different "language."

Gary Chapman introduced this concept in his book *The Five Love Languages* and later in *The Five Love Languages of Children*, which he co-authored with Dr. Ross Campbell. I spoke with Chapman about how his ideas can help parents transform their relationships with their children.

"Children receive love emotionally," Chapman said, "but because they are all different, we must pay attention to their individual needs. We must learn to speak our children's [love] language if we want them to feel loved."

What are the 5 love languages? Let's take a look.

**Words of Affirmation:** Compliments like "Great game tonight!" go a long with the child who thrives on praise. Focus your words on personality, good choices, and accomplishments, not outward appearance.

**Acts of Service:** Doing something for the child that they usually have to do for themselves like cleaning their room or making their lunch.

**Gifts:** Children with this love language cherish tokens of affection. Anything that says you were thinking of them works well: a pack of gum, chapstick, or a pair of socks.

**Quality Time:** Some children simply want your undivided attention. They cherish the bedtime stories, the kitchen baking time, and backyard sports.

**Physical Touch:** If this is your child's love language, they need physical contact to feel loved. Give them generous amounts of hugs, pats on the back, and touches on the arm.

How can you tell your child's love language? Watch how they love others and what things seem to make their eyes light up. You can also play the "Would You Rather" game with them. For example, ask, "Would you rather have me bring you home a surprise (gift) or play a board game with you (quality time)?" You can also take a love language profile test at <http://www.5lovelanguages.com/profile/children/>.



## DATES ON DECK

- Wednesday, February 15 (6:00-9:00) **Paper Tigers**; ISU Extension & Outreach in Sac City.
- Tuesday, February 21 (6:30-8:30) **Substance Abuse Awareness**; Storm Lake Area Foster/ Adopt Support Group. St. Mark Lutheran Church; 1614 West Fifth Street, Storm Lake.
- Monday, February 27 (6:30-8:30) **INAY: Signs & Symptoms of Trauma in School Aged Kids**; Denison Area Support Group; Denison Pizza Ranch. Denison, IA
- Saturday, March 11; **Equip...Launch...Success! Preparing Your Teen for a Secure Journey to Adulthood**; ICCG; Fort Dodge,
- **SPRING 2017 CONFERENCE: SAVE THE DATE - The Spring Conference will be held April 7th & 8th at the Airport Holiday Inn in Des Moines. INFO COMING SOON!**

## REMINDERS

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 should know! AND, if you are not certain who your re-licensing worker is, contact me and I will help you out.

## 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!

- **A REAL LONG TIME**: Marjorie Flannery; Cathe Vanderheiden!
- **10+ Years**: Sioux & David Parr; Chris & Angie Reinert
- **5+ Years**: Michelle & Manuel Rodriguez; Marcie & Todd Welter; Sandra Conrad; Mike & Jean Dailey; Julie Lamp; Sara Stevens; David & Billie Long; Joy Schauer;
- **ONE YEAR**: Janna & Brian Carlisle; Sheiyda Esquivel & Chris Rios; Amanda & James Ferris; Majs & Cara Knutson

**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!

Dear Parents –

I can't remember where I found the idea and who to give credit for it AND I can't put my fingers on it right now (and if you saw my desk you would understand) but I saw this real neat Valentine activity which we are going to do at the Smith House!

It involves getting a bunch of paper hearts, making colors and stuff available to all AND then giving everyone a chance to write things on them and tape them to the kids' doors! Both the parents & the kids can tape them to each other's doors and maybe even to ours!

Valentine's Day is also a chance for kids to send a card to one of their family members they may not be with at the time (sibling, parent, grand-parent). The card doesn't have to be purchased, it can be something the kiddos have made themselves.

In cleaning up my mother's house since she passed away, I have found a lot of cards and notes she had kept. As my dad said "a phone call is nice, but when you hang up, it is over; a card and letter can be read again and again and again!

-IFAPA John