

# NEWS FROM YOUR 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



www.ifapa.org

## Social Media & Internet Safety

How do we keep our kids safe online? What websites are our kids even visiting? What apps are our kids using? Parenting in the age of technology can be challenging. Technology like Internet and social media change the way children communicate. It changes the way they develop relationships with peers. Know what your kids are doing online!

Here is a list of popular social apps kids are using:

- Twitter** – a microblogging app limited to 140 character messages called “tweets”
- Instagram** – social media with 15 second photo and [video sharing](#)
- Snapchat** – messaging app with a time limit before text or picture “disappears”, includes photo filters
- YouTube** – video uploading platform with sharing capability in a “channel”
- Musical.ly** – performance and video sharing of lip synced songs – [some lewd songs](#)
- Live.ly** – a portion of Musical.ly that [allows for live video feed](#)
- WhatsApp** – messaging (text, audio, video and photos) – [uses address book](#)
- GroupMe** – messaging (photos, videos, calendar links) – [risk of adult themes](#)
- YikYak, uChat** – brief, local chats with a claim of anonymity – [bullies, live video, lewd](#)
- Tumblr** – combo of blog and Twitter, streaming scrapbook – [public, easy porn access](#)
- Kik** – text messaging within the app – [stranger danger, tied to crimes, in-app ads](#)

Technology Tips for Parents:

- Most social media sites have a minimum age of 13.
- Set firm ground rules for use and stick to them.
- Require your child to share usernames and passwords for all social media accounts. Beware of children setting up multiple accounts!
- Frequently check their devices and accounts for inappropriate content.
- Check privacy settings on the apps and Internet browser. Set to the strictest level.
- Frequently check the history on Internet browsers to see what sites have been visited and when.
- Have your child turn in electronics at night/bedtime.
- Monitor your child’s friend list within any social media account. They should only have friends they know.
- Limit screen time.
- Be a good example and teach manners with regards to how and when to use electronics.
- Communicate with children. Teach them to never share personal information online or to agree to meet someone they don’t know.

**Be Smart – Build Security – Be Safe**

# NEWS FROM YOUR IFAPA PEER LIAISON

## JANUARY 2017 TRAININGS

Date & Time	Name of Training & Trainer	Credit	Location
Saturday, Jan. 14, 2017 (9am- 4:30pm)	<a href="#">ACT on Your Stress: Stress Management for Foster and Adoptive Parents Using Acceptance &amp; Commitment Training</a> (Warren Phillips, Ph.D)	6 hours	Sioux City TBA

## 9 Tips to Prevent Holiday Anxiety in Children

The holidays are a fun and joyous time but also a very busy one, and holiday stress and anxiety in children can and does happen. During the holidays, there are lots of fun activities and events going on, both at home and at school. And while that can be a good thing, the reality is that all that hustle and bustle means schedules are often out of whack, bedtimes get pushed back, and routines are disrupted. As a result, it's inevitable that kids may feel some degree of holiday stress.

**1. Set a calm example.** The most important way parents can help ease anxiety in children during the holidays is by trying to keep things relaxed as much as possible. The way parents handle an issue can set the tone for how their kids will behave. If you let holiday stress get to you, your kids will definitely pick up on it.

**2. Set up conditions for good behavior.** Avoid taking your child to places such as the mall or holiday gatherings when he is hungry or tired.

**3. Remember the importance of routines.** The holidays can throw a big wrench into household routines. To minimize holiday anxiety in your kids, try to get routines back on track once an event or party is over.

**4. Watch what she's eating.** Between all the extra sugary holiday snacks and the lack of time to sit down to regular meals, it can be all too easy for kids to eat less healthy foods, which can contribute to holiday anxiety in children.

**5. Get your child moving.** Fresh air and exercise are essential for boosting mood and re-setting the spirit, which can alleviate holiday stress and anxiety in children.

**6. Avoid over-scheduling.** Try to limit your holiday parties and activities so that you and your child are not overwhelmed. A couple of events a week may be fine, but having an obligation every day can lead to holiday anxiety.

**7. Have your grade-schooler help you.** Big kids love to help mom and dad, especially if they get lots of praise for being responsible and helpful. If you have to shop, ask your child to help you look for an item at the store (fun stocking stuffers for cousins, for example). Giving your child a task will not only boost her self-esteem, it'll distract her and help prevent any holiday anxiety.

**8. Schedule some quiet time.** Having some peace and quiet with your child is more important than ever during the busy holiday season. Find a quiet corner and read a book with your child or take a walk outside in nature, away from noise and crowds.

**9. Remind your child -- and yourself -- what the holidays are really all about.** A great antidote for holiday stress is helping others, whether it's by shoveling an elderly neighbor's sidewalk or by wrapping presents for needy kids at your local church. Helping others will alleviate her holiday stress and anxiety.

Adapted from: [www.verywell.com](http://www.verywell.com)

## 5 Ways to Reduce Holiday Stress

- 1) **Redefine traditions** - Often times we continue holiday traditions because that is what we grew up doing. Maybe we want to continue these traditions and maybe we don't. The pull you feel between maintaining tradition and the anticipation of potential difficulties may cause you more stress. Don't be afraid to redefine tradition.
- 2) **Be assertive** - You know how long your children can tolerate a gathering and what their accommodations may be. Let everyone know, ahead of time, how long you will be staying. Leave when you said you would. Be assertive when asked to "stay just a little longer".
- 3) **Accept help** - No one says you have to do it all. Holiday decorating, baking, potlucks, gatherings, social events and more can wear you out! If people offer to help, accept it. Don't be afraid to opt out. You don't have to do it all to have happy holidays.
- 4) **Don't abandon healthy habits** - Get enough sleep. Get exercise. Stress eating will only make you feel tired and irritable. Have healthy snacks and get regular exercise.
- 5) **Take a breather** - Make time for yourself. Spending 15 minutes alone, without distractions, reduces stress and is refreshing.

