



families for children
Our Children Are Our Future



FFC FYI



Focus on Teens

TEENS, TEENS, TEENS — we need homes for teens! That's what we are hearing from CPS and the County Workers. Last year, our Executive Director, Ursula DeVere, sent a letter to all foster parents asking you to consider opening your home to a teen. We are finding that almost all the foster referrals we are receiving right now are for older children, ages 12 and up. We realize that not all families are able to take a teen placement, however, we are planning to enhance our services and support for families willing to consider teen

placements. Some of the programs we are implementing are: Foster Parents of Teens Support Group combined with a Foster Teen Support Group. This would be a time for foster parents of teens to network and get training while the teens attend a separate group to socialize and get some life skills training. This is in the early stages of development and we are looking for community resources such as community and business leaders who would be willing to make a presentation to

the group. If you know of someone who would like to participate, please contact your social worker and we'll do the rest!

Foster Parents of Teens Training Opportunities:

We are developing new training classes focused on issues specific to parenting teens. In Bencia and Roseville, we have held a class called "Working with Teens." If you have suggestions for training classes please contact your social worker.



Families For Children

Winter, 2010

Special points of interest:

- ☺ **Daylight Savings Begins March 14th.** Set your clocks ahead one hour. 
- ☺ **Online Foster Parent Training hours:** www.fosterparents.com
- ☺ **Read the newsletter and win a prize!** Look for the word: *Cartwheel* somewhere in this newsletter. Be the first to contact your social worker and you'll win a Starbucks gift card. One winner per office.

Thank You to Our Long Term Families!

We want to take this opportunity to publicly thank our long term foster families. Over the years, these families have shown amazing strength, perseverance and love for the foster children in their homes.

Names have been removed for public postings to protect confidentiality

Inside this issue:

Documentation Requirements	2
Adoption Support Group	2
Ask a Social Worker	3
Book Review	3
Health Education	3
Family Spotlights	4
Kid Korner	4



Document Compliance—No One's Favorite!



One of the many responsibilities your social worker has is ensuring that your file is up-to-date and complete. To ensure compliance with CCL regulations, we perform internal audits regularly on our active parent and children files. If there is documentation missing or expired, your social worker will contact you.

As a reminder, the following is a list of items that either expire and have to be updated or have to be renewed and the timing of the renewal:

Foster Parents:

Items that expire and must be renewed in order to stay in compliance:

- Driver's License for each Foster Parent
- Car Insurance
- Infant, Child and Adult CPR/First Aid Certification for each Foster Parent
- Pet Rabies Certificates
- Water Safety Training
- Back-Up Provider's Driver's Li-

cense

- Back-Up Provider's Car Insurance
- Back-Up Provider's Infant, Child and Adult CPR and First Aid (if necessary)

Items that must be renewed:

- DMV Printout for each Foster Parent —Annually
- Budget Form —Annually
- Home Safety Check — Every 6 months
- 12 Hours of Training for each Foster Parent —Annually
- Home Study Update/Certification—Annually

Foster Children:

- Medical Exams — Annually
- TB Tests — Annually for children over the age of three.
- Dental Exams — Every 6 months for children over the age of one.
- Report Card/Education Update
- Personal Property and Valuables —

Annually

- Record of Client's/Safeguard Cash Resources — Annually
- Clothing Inventory — Every 6 months

In addition, there are a number of monthly forms required for foster children:

- Monthly Client Report with Clothing Receipts—Monthly
- Monthly Medication Log—Annual
- Psychotropic Medication Log—Annual
- Centrally Stored Meds Log—Annual
- Non-Centrally Stored Meds Log—Annual

We know that having to send us updated information is inconvenient, but it is one of the many necessary and important responsibilities of being a foster parent. We appreciate your efforts to help us keep your files up-to-date and in compliance!

Adoption Support Groups and Training Sessions



Based on your suggestions, we are changing the adoption support group format to provide both training and support group opportunities.

Families For Children will host formal quarterly training meetings/support group meetings in our offices. For example, our first training session in Roseville was held in February and covered "Honoring your Child's Heritage." The next training session in Roseville and the Bay Area will be a presentation on Beyond Consequences. From the Beyond Consequences website: Based

off of scientific research, the *Beyond Consequences* Model was developed to provide a simple yet powerful model for helping children with severe behavior. The *Beyond Consequences* Model has been shown over and over to help families find the healing that they have been looking for after years of "trying everything and nothing worked." The second half of these meetings will be devoted to a support group for Certified Parents.

We will mail (or email) you invitations to the training sessions. And, we are always looking for suggested training topics so please let your social worker know if you have any suggestions.

We also wanted to let you know that some parents in Sacramento and the Bay Area have started informal "connection" groups. These are self led and hosted by the adoptive parents at their home or other location. These groups provide an opportunity to socialize with other adoptive families and have your children meet other adopted children.

If you are interested in hosting or participating in a connection group please let your social worker know and we will put you in contact with the appropriate person.

Ask a Social Worker



I want to foster young children but I am not getting any calls!

As discussed earlier, there is a much greater need for foster parents of teens than ever before and as such, Foster Family Agencies are being asked to step up our recruiting for teen homes. This shift in foster placements is due to the economic conditions and budget constraints the Counties are facing. The Counties are being pressured to implement practices to help reduce the cost of foster placements. In Sacramento, for example, we have heard that Sacramento County has established a group of social workers who will look into relative placements for the children before placing with a private agency, the only exception being teens!

As a result of these types of programs, we are receiving

far fewer referrals for placements of younger children.

We still occasionally get referrals for a young child so if you are only interested in a young child please make sure that we have a phone number that you answer immediately as most referrals are placed with the first agency that can provide a home. If we have to leave a message, it's possible you will miss the opportunity for the placement! We suggest that you consider determining in advance (and discussing it with your partner, if applicable) what placements you are willing to accept (i.e., age ranges, behavioral issues, transportation issues, etc.) so that you can make a quick decision if we call you with a placement for a young child.

If you are willing to open your home and your heart to a teen, please let your social worker know so we can update your age range availability.

Staff Announcements

Promotions:

We are pleased to announce that **Kim W** (Oakland/Santa Clara) has resumed her role as Adoption Program Director.

New Management Staff:

We would like to introduce: **Bryan J** (Roseville) as the new Adoption Supervisor.

Training — Book Review

We are often asked for book recommendations for parents caring for foster children. One very insightful book is "*Three Little Words—a Memoir*," by Ashley Rhodes-Cooter. *Three Little Words* is an honest and powerful memoir which shares the painful details of the author's nine year journey through the foster care system, while conveying a message of inner strength and hope. (And, it's not the three words you might think!)



Health Education - Keeping Kids Active on Rainy Days



INDOOR OBSTACLE COURSE:

This is a great activity to help kids burn off some excess energy when they are stuck in the house on a rainy day!

As you design your obstacle course, keep in mind the ages, abilities, and number of children involved as well as the space you have. Make the course simple at first and change the stations as they've mastered

them. If you like, time the kids to see who can complete the course fastest. Ten stations is a good number for most kids. Here are a few ideas to get you started:

1. Crawl under or over a row of chairs
2. Crawl under a string stretched between two chair legs.
3. Jump into and out of a hula-hoop five times.
4. Walk on a balance board.
5. Throw a beanbag into a laundry basket.
6. Run while balancing a beanbag on your head.
7. Do a ring toss
8. Somersault from one point to another
9. Do a handstand or a cartwheel
10. Skip in place while reciting a poem or rhyme.
11. Do ten jumping jacks

Source: www.familyeducation.com

Family Spotlights—Some of Our Outstanding Families

Jamie and Wayne (Roseville)

Jamie and Wayne started doing foster care six years ago. Jamie was a preschool teacher and had foster children in her classroom. She saw very clearly what a difference a caring and committed foster parent made in the life of a child. She and her husband took a leap of faith and decided to become foster parents. They have had many children in their home over the years—some for as short as a couple of weeks and some for much longer. And, they have adopted one of the children they fostered.

Jeffrey (Benicia)

Jeffery or "Jeff" as he prefers to be called was originally certified with Families for Children in 2000. He took a break from foster parenting in 2007 and returned to the agency in the Spring of 2009. Jeff is a single father who maintains a close relationship with his adult daughter. Jeff is the Director for a local Christian

Help Center in Vallejo. Jeff wanted to put his "big" house to good use so he made the decision to give foster parenting a try. During the past decade, Jeff has successfully parented over forty teen boys in his home.

Jack and Penny (Benicia)

Jack and Penny have been certified foster parents with Families for Children for almost fifteen years. Their daughter Tina sees her parents almost daily and provides support to their foster parenting efforts. Both Jack and Penny are at home full time and able to give around the clock attention to the children placed in their home. Many of their foster children have specialized needs. Jack and Penny have developed skills that enable them to meet the needs of foster children on various levels of care.

John and Dennis (Roseville)

John and Dennis discussed adoption for about seven years before completing an FFC application. Sharing

custody of Dennis' 14 year old son the couple knew something about parenting and wanted the opportunity to guide and provide for a child who would otherwise grow up without parents. After going online to browse California Kids Connection and going through monthly photo-listings, they found their future son living in a group home in San Bernardino. After summer visits, "A" celebrated his 12th birthday the same month he moved into John and Dennis' home. Over the last few months the four of them have become a family. It will be made official next month in a Sacramento court room. Looking forward to next month, John said "Dennis and I are so happy to have "A" join our family. This time last year, we were a household of two. Now, we are a family of four!"



Kid Korner

BEANY BURGERS

Prep Time: 15 minutes

Cook Time: 6 minutes

Serve these crunchy, flavorful burgers with the same garnishes you'd use on regular burgers—lettuce, cheese, tomatoes, etc. They're a great source of fiber and protein and you can add more of both by serving them on whole wheat buns. Serves 4–6.

What you'll need:

- 1 can (15 oz) black beans
- 2 tablespoons tomato paste

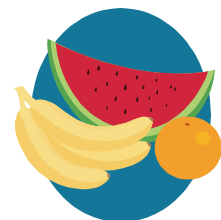
- 1/2 small red onion, peeled and chopped
- 1/2 cup plain bread crumbs
- 1 tablespoon balsamic vinegar
- 1 lightly beaten egg
- Salt and pepper to taste
- 1/3 cup yellow cornmeal
- 4 tablespoons olive oil

What to do:

1. Drain the beans and coarsely chop in a food processor or blender or mash by hand.
2. In a large mixing bowl, combine the beans, tomato paste, onion, bread crumbs, balsamic vinegar,

egg, salt and pepper. Mix very well.

3. Form into 4–6 patties. Coat the patties with cornmeal and set on a plate.
4. Heat the oil in a large nonstick skillet over medium heat. Cook the burgers for 3 minutes per side, until thoroughly heated. Garnish and serve.



Source: Scholastic Parents Magazine