

Foster Parent Quarterly

Hope this newsletter finds that everyone had a great holiday. We look forward to the New Year.

If there is any information or other training guidance you are looking for, please contact Terri Pinder at terrip@ysbiv.org or Ann Pastula at annp@ysbiv.org.

Therapist Corner Helping Children Heal

Circle of Security
By Amy Adams MS, LCPC

Did you know foster parents are one of the MOST important factors to helping their foster children heal while in care? Well, you certainly are. And according to Circle of Security parenting, all children's behaviors are a form of communication and represent basic attachment needs. Parents are encouraged to focus more time on trying to identify the need and less time focusing on the consequence for the misbehavior. You might say, "how could lying, stealing, hitting, tantrums or any other misbehavior be trying to tell me something or be a need in my foster child?!" Or many parents might explain away the misbehavior by saying, "he is just manipulative, sneaky or attention seeking".

First we must understand what "attachment" really is and is not. Attachment is best understood as a predictable and repeated pattern of relating to people over time.



"Like" the agency wide Facebook page or visit our agency website at www.ysbiv.org.

- If you would like to join our Foster Parent FaceBook page please contact Kelley Lumpkin for an invite. She can be reached at kelleyl@ysbiv.org

Therapist Corner continued...

We all have one and there is no such thing as “he is very attached or she is not attached all”! Research clearly identifies a few different attachment patterns but let’s focus on a Secure Attachment- one that helps us heal, grow and develop to our fullest potential using the Circle of Security.

From birth, we all need an available, responsive and consistent caregiver to develop security in our relationships. This often does not happen for many of our children in foster care where their lives have been disrupted by abuse or neglect. So to begin, foster parents provide the “security” to help children get “back on track” so to speak. If you look at the attached handout, this is done by foster parents being “bigger, stronger, wiser and kind” and providing structure (hands), support for exploration (top of circle) and comfort (bottom of circle). The parts on both the top (watch over me, enjoy with me, delight in me, help me) and the bottom (protect me, comfort me, organize my feelings, delight in me) of the circle represent children’s needs. And *all* parents struggle to meet their children’s needs on some part of the circle based on their own history of being cared for.

So let’s look back at the tantrums (yelling, sad, angry, hitting, on floor, crying) and apply the circle. We would first ask ourselves what part of the circle is the child on and what is the basic need. Well, the child is clearly on the bottom of the circle (comfort) with the basic need of (organize my feelings). Have you ever felt so out of control that you did not know what to do with how you are feeling, perhaps over a death, other loss, being hurt? Well, due to past trauma (abuse/neglect/loss), this is that moment for your child no matter how small the reason. What he needs is for you to “be with” him, tell him you can see he is mad, upset or sad and sit near him until he is ready to talk about it. The child can still get a consequence for hitting when he is calm. The key is to help him learn to organize his feelings in the moment through “being with” him in a *calm* presence. This is how to build security with your child. Easier said than done, I know, but definitely worth it if you give it a few tries.



JANUARY: HAPPY 2017!!!



It is time for winter activities. It is the time when many of us start to feel that “cabin fever”. It is that time when the kids want to go out into the snow, even if it is too cold on a particular day. Do you have a plan for the indoor activities for the children in your care for the bitterly cold days when you cannot go out? Do you have a plan for snow days? Do you know what is in your area to go and do as a household? Please go to the Friday papers and/or websites for weekend activities, fests, available sled-ding hills, etc at parks, museums, forest preserves, etc. Check for free days at the museums and other fun places to take the kids.

Make a plan to keep you and the children busy. Schedule a movie day in the family room with lots of popcorn, grilled cheese sandwiches and other fun foods with blankets and pillows on the floor to stretch out on ... or have an indoor “beach day” to picnic together in shorts and t-shirts on a blanket on a floor. Teach the kids board games, card games, jigsaw puzzles and crafts. When was the last time you cut out a paper snowflake and taped it to a window? Just have fun with the kids!

Meanwhile, when you do go out. Be sure to have everyone bundled up to prevent frostbite and/or hypothermia. Watch the weather for the wind chill factor and dress for that. Be a role model for the children, especially those teens who are worried about their peers’ thoughts, in how you bundle up and use those layers of clothing. Make sure everyone stays properly hydrated. Cold requires frequent re-hydration just like the heat of summer. For some reason, we just don’t feel it as much in the cold. Be sure that you have the proper supplies in your car and in your home for heavy snow days when you are trapped in the snow; food, water, shovels, a way to keep warm, etc. Keep the cell phones, tablets and laptops charged so that you can call out for help if needed.

Workshops

Aurora:

Circle of Security

Feb. 15th from 5:30 pm
– 6:30 pm.

DCFS -**Module 5** -
Supporting Relationships Between Children
and Their Families
(9 hours of training)
on 2/9, 2/16, 2/23 from
6pm-9pm. Register on
VTC

Rockford:

Circle of Security

Mar. 15th from 5:30
pm– 6:30 pm.

Recruiting:

If you know of some-
one who might want to
be a foster parent, call
Tonya Beets at 815-
316-1989.

Remember to complete the attached overall review and send it back to Terri Pinder at terrip@ysbiv.org or Ann Pastula at annp@ysbiv.org for 1 hour of training credit.

Foster Parent of the Quarter:

Darrell and Phyllis Salmon have been chosen as Foster parents for the 3rd quarter. Mr. and Mrs. Salmon came out of retirement and took on three teenagers. They adjusted their lives to the needs of the children. They are willing to transport to school, sports and other clubs the children choose to be in. This requires a lot of dedication and commitment.

Mr. and Mrs. Salmon are very active in the court process which takes up their personal time. They have been very compliant with Case Worker/Licensing visits and each week they transport the children for therapy and wait for the 3 hour session and visit with parents. They are very supportive and involved in the therapies and visits.

The children describe the Salmon's as supportive, patient, good listeners, unbiased and non-judgmental. They are very committed to their well-being. Each child expresses that they allow each child to be themselves, and express themselves. They often state that they feel safe, loved and cared for.

The family's favorite times are the family activities whether it is movie night or arts and crafts.

Thank you Mr. and Mrs. Salmon for your hard work and dedication to fostering. Congratulations on making Foster parent of the Quarter.

OTHER THINGS TO NOTE:

Tax Season is nearly upon us. Please be sure to consult with your tax experts on counting the foster children. You need the long form for the federal taxes. The foster children will not be listed under dependents as they are wards of the State of Illinois, even though you have the physical care of them 24/7. The foster children are listed under charitable contributions as you are contributing by your everyday work with the children in your home. Expenses above and beyond the monthly stipend/ reimbursement that you receive can be claimed as a charitable deduction. To do this correctly, again, please talk to your tax experts.

Overall review

1. All children's behaviors are a form of _____ and represent basic _____ needs.
2. First we must understand what _____ really is and is not.
3. _____ the one that helps us heal, grow and develop to our full-est potential using Circle of Security.
4. From birth, we all need an _____, _____ and _____ Caregiver.
5. Foster parents provide the _____ to help children get _____ so to speak.
6. All parents _____ to meet their children's need on some part of the circle based on their own history of being cared for.
7. Which museum is the closest to where you live? _____
8. Cold requires frequent _____ just like the heat of summer.
9. Name two proper supplies you should have in your car during cold winter months? _____.
10. Tax season, foster children are listed under _____
_____.



Support Contacts:

McHenry County Foster Parent Advocacy Group meets 1st and 3rd Thursday of every month at 8:00pm at Holy Apostles Church 5211 Bull Valley Rd, McHenry, IL

Lifescape Community Services, Inc. 708 Kilburn Avenue, Rockford, IL 61101
815.963.1609