Nebraska Foster & Adoptive Parent Association

Families First

a newsletter for Nebraska Families

March/April 2018

N F A P A

5 Things Adoptive Parents Want Teachers To Know About Trauma.

by Mike Berry



Along with providing content that enriches the lives of adoptive, foster and special needs parents, we want to be proactive about creating resources you can pass on to professionals, like a teacher or coach. So when our friend Michele asked us to make a video explaining trauma to teachers, we jumped at the chance!

We jumped because we've been there many times in the past- Sitting in IEP (Individual Education Plans) meetings that looked more like a sinking ship than a proactive plan. It wasn't that the teacher was unprofessional, or rude (although we've experienced that), it was a lack of understanding. Most of the children in their classroom did not come from traumatic pasts. Most were not abused, or removed and placed in foster care. Most were not malnourished or left to fend for themselves before their adoption. Most had a forever home from birth.

To try and explain why my 10-year old son believes he's starving because he lived in a homeless shelter as a newborn and did not receive proper nutrition, often fell on deaf ears. Many times, we walked out of those meetings defeated, frustrated, angry and wanting to yank our child out of school altogether.

However, we discovered a much better way. When we started talking, patiently and calmly, about the facts of trauma and how it manifests itself in our children, things changed quickly. In this special video, Kristin and our good friend Nicole, share 5 key truths that adoptive parents want their children's teachers to understand about trauma.

Here's a quick list and synopsis of the points that Kristin and Nicole shared in the video:

1. Communication is key.

Everything that is happening in your classroom could be a direct result of our child's traumatic past. You must proactively communicate every day with us.

2. We're not being mean.

We are working on helping our children understand logical consequences.

3. We're working on a bigger picture.

Our children were traumatized at birth because of separation, but they've also experienced secondary trauma in entering our family. Therefore, we are actively working on establishing trust, a healthy bond, and attachment with our children.

4. Trauma changes the brain.

Our children suffered immediate trauma when they were separated from their birth mother at birth.

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3601 N. 25th Street, Suite D, Lincoln, NE 68521
402-476-2273, toll-free 877-257-0176, e-mail: Felicia@nfapa.org
www.nfapa.org.

NFAPA Staff

Felicia Nelsen, Executive Director: 877-257-0176 or Felicia@nfapa.org
Corinne O'Brien, Program Coordinator: 402-476-2273 or Corinne@nfapa.org
Michael Wilson, Social Media: 402-476-2273 or Michael@nfapa.org
Tammy Welker, Northeastern/ Eastern Area RFC: 402-989-2197 or Tammy@nfapa.org
Robbi Blume, Northwestern Area RFC: 402-853-1091 or Robbi@nfapa.org
Terry Robinson Central/Southwest RFC: 402-460-7296 or Terry@nfapa.org
Jolie Camden, Western RFC: 308-672-3658 or jolie@nfapa.org
*RFC=Resource Family Consultant

NFAPA Board of Directors

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jtwells@frontiernet.net

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SpringDahl@gmail.com

Eastern Representative
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Omaha, NE 68130
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joeygaines@aol.com

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402-613-3409

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Questions? Interested in becoming a member of the Board?
Call NFAPA at 877-257-0176 or 402-476-2273.

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Attention Foster Parents!

Earn Your In-Service Hours While Getting the Chance to Win a Great Prize!

Answer these 10 questions correctly and you will not only earn .5 credits toward your in-service hours, but your name will also be put in a drawing for a prize. For this issue we are offering a $10 Walmart gift card.

There are a variety of ways to do this. You can email the information to ***Corinne@nfapa.org***, send the questionnaire to the NFAPA office at 3601 N. 25th Street, Suite D, Lincoln, NE 68521 or you can complete the questionnaire online at ***https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/MarAprNewsletter2018***. We will then enter your name in the drawing! We will also send you a certificate for training credit to turn in when it is time for relicensing. Good Luck!

1. Fill in the blank. When we started talking, _____ _____ _____, about the facts of trauma and how it manifests itself in our children, things changed quickly..
2. List 5 Key Points that Parents want Teachers to Know.
3. True or False. These comments hurt the children that are living with us, causing them further grief, anxiety, and emotional trauma.
4. Fill in the Blank. In my home, there are no _____. There is no _____ _____,no, _____ _____, no _____ _____. They are all my children.
5. Name two of the five Tips of keeping your children safe with Cell Phones..
6. True or False. Sixty percent of children who victims of child sex trafficking rescued from a FBI nationwide raid conducted over 70 cities were children from foster care or group homes.
7. Fill in the blank. Tragically, for so many children in foster care, the search for love leads to a road of _____ _____.
8. True or False. When children and their primary caregivers simultaneously suffer the effects of trauma without help, families stay together.
9. Fill in the Blank. It's hard for most people to imagine how parenting can end in _____.
10. True or False. Are Foster parents are invited to Family Team Meetings? Have you been invited to a Family Team Meeting?

Name: _____

Address: _____

Email: _____

Phone #: _____

(Continued from page 1)

5. Our children's information is private.

We often do not share the details of our children's past openly out of protection for them.

Resources You Can Share.

We want you to be able to pass this on to teachers and school administrators so we're providing the link to a special landing page with both the video and a sample letter we recommend sending along with the video link. Remember- the goal is not to drive home a point, or even prove a point with your child's teacher. That was our approach in the early days and it didn't work. If you go in guns blazing, belligerent or frustrated, your child's teacher and/or principal will not capture the facts. They will not become educated on trauma. They will think you're crazy.

The letter should include…

- A cordial introduction.
- A brief explanation of why they are receiving this letter.
- A synopsis (not full explanation) of your child's story.
- An explanation of the YouTube link (or other resources)
- An expression of wanting to work with the teacher

Then include the landing page link (below) and adapt our sample letter as needed.

As we often say in our posts, and emails- we hope that the content we share enriches, encourages and lifts you up on this sometimes difficult journey. We know what you're going through on a daily basis. We know the battles you fight, with your children, but also for your children. We've been in that trench.

Remember…you are not alone!

Reprinted with permission from:

http://confessionsofanadoptiveparent.com/5-things-adoptive-parents-want-teachers-to-know-about-trauma/

How Parents of Kids with Reactive Attachment Disorder Get Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder

By Institute For Attachment and Child Development

Imagine a soldier comes home from war. But when he returns, there aren't "Welcome home hero" signs. No warm embraces. The people he loves might be there—maybe his wife and parents—but only to tell him that the war was his fault. That if he had just tried harder, he could've stopped the war all on his own.

This is the sort of message those raising society's toughest children get. Whether an adoptive or foster parent or stepparent, parents of children with reactive attachment disorder (RAD) don't get support. Instead, friends, family, and professionals who don't understand RAD tell them to just love more or parent better. And just like soldiers, these isolated parents often get post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

It's hard for most people to imagine how parenting can end in PTSD. After all, they're "just kids". But children with RAD—a disorder that develops when kids don't get a chance to attach normally to their caregivers, often due to abuse and neglect—aren't like other kids. So raising them isn't like raising other kids either.

What it's like to raise

To raise a child with RAD is very different from raising other children. Traditional parenting and discipline simply don't work due to the nature of the disorder. The lack of trust and attachment changes everything in the parent-child dynamic. And the closer a parent tries to get to a child with RAD emotionally, the further away the child pushes.

The tricky part is that raising children with RAD can look similar to raising other children to outsiders. Just like all children, kids with RAD lie to their parents, steal things from others, argue with their parents, and throw tantrums when they don't get their way. Unlike all children, however, kids with RAD take these troublesome behaviors to a whole new level. The behaviors are constant, not occasional. The tantrums turn into dangerous situations. The lying is completely irrational to the point that parents begin to question their own sanity. The arguing is incessant and exhausting.

At the same time, parents of kids with RAD get a lot of unsolicited advice from others who think they understand the situation. All of these misunderstandings lead parents to feel more alone and confused.

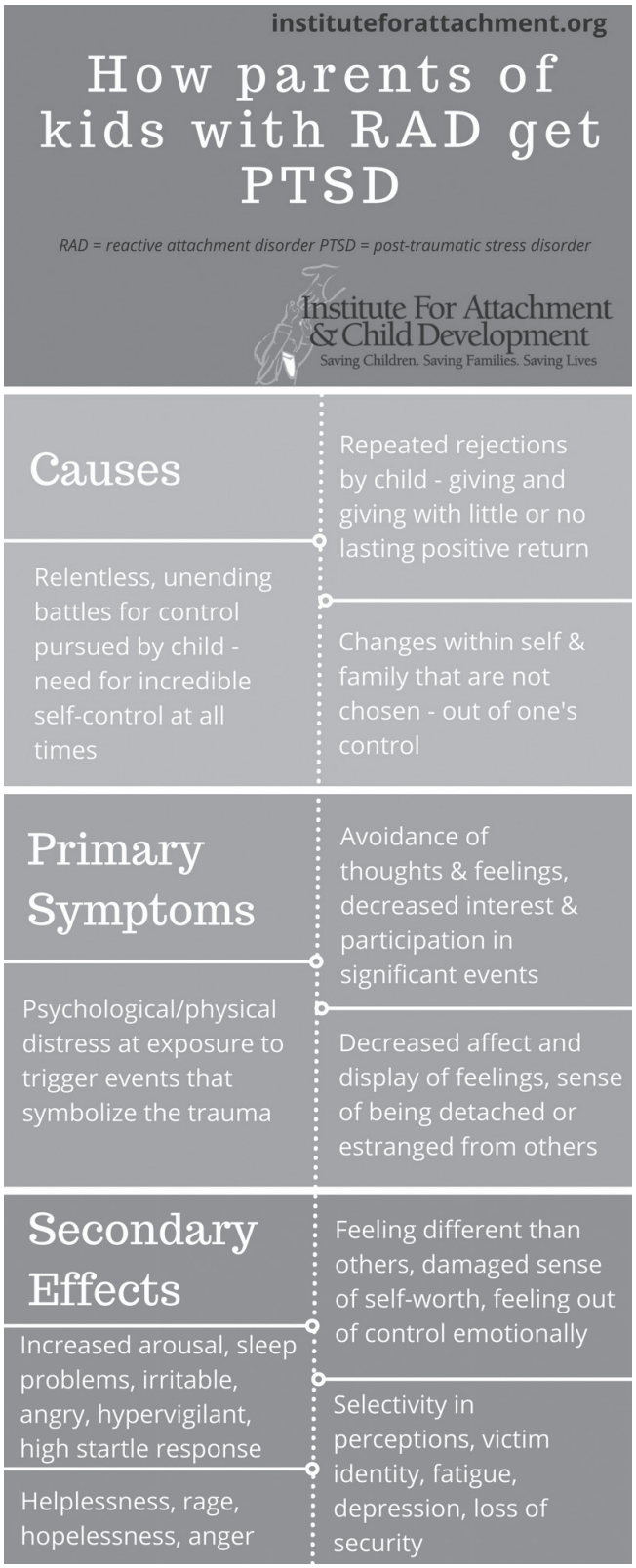
On top of these "normal-looking behaviors", kids with RAD also do plenty of things other children do not. Because they don't trust adults to care for them, they attempt to control their environments and the people in them. For kids with RAD, these innate behaviors are a survival mechanism. Thus, they carry them out extremely well. Children with RAD can easily charm and manipulate adults in subtle ways. For example, they often push away their mothers by lying about them to others—whether family members, teachers, or even the police. Yet, others do not see such behaviors.

As these behaviors continue day after day, life falls apart behind closed doors. The primary caregivers feel as though they aren't doing enough when they're actually giving everything they can. They don't often leave the house due to their children's behaviors. Other children in the family feel the effects of it all. Over the years, the primary caregivers—often the mothers—lose all hope. She loses herself.

How parent PTSD develops

Parents—typically mothers—often look frantically for help with their children with RAD. Yet, their spouses and extended family members don't understand the situation and

blame them. Even most mental health professionals either don't understand the realities of RAD or don't know how to help. As a result, parents begin to feel isolated. Many mothers of children with RAD say they feel as though they're "going crazy". Ironically, many parents who work relentlessly to help their children overcome past trauma experience PTSD of their own. If you or someone you know raises a child with RAD, please look for the following signs of PTSD.



What to do

When children and their primary caregivers simultaneously suffer the effects of trauma without help, families fall apart. The divorce rate is high for those raising children with RAD. Also, many adoptive families face the risk of adoption disruption. They need outside help. Sadly, parents who struggle with PTSD typically don't find that help. They often don't have the resources to do so and can't find qualified attachment professionals. Many times, they hide their issues from friends and family who have blamed them for "poor parenting" for years.

If you are a parent with PTSD or want to help a loved one, consider the following:

- Sign-up for our newsletters to learn more and advocate on behalf of children with RAD and their families.
- Learn about our unique therapeutic treatment model for children with RAD.
- Share our videos about reactive attachment disorder with others.
- Attend one of our workshops or arrange for our Executive Director Forrest Lien to travel to your area to give one.
- Take (or give parents) respite time away from a child with RAD to rejuvenate.
- Find a qualified attachment specialist.
- Consider a visit with a physician for evaluation and treatment for depression.

Here at the Institute for Attachment and Child Development, we're working to educate the greater public and advocate on behalf of those raising children with RAD. A loving family environment is the best chance kids from hard places have to heal. But that healing doesn't come easy. While family is a crucial start, kids with RAD don't heal from love alone. And time doesn't take it away.

Those raising kids with RAD need a lot more than a warm bed and a big heart. They need extensive training about parenting a child with RAD, help from attachment professionals, support from loved ones, financial resources, respite care and, sometimes, specialized inpatient treatment for their kids with RAD. Sadly, they rarely get any of it. Families fall apart, adoptions disrupt, and the cycle starts all over with kids cycling in and out of foster and adoptive homes.

Please join us in our fight for greater education and action about the realities of RAD. Together, we can support these parents, help children overcome the effects of trauma, keep families together, and build healthier communities.

Editor's Note: This article was originally published in June of 2015 and was extensively updated in January of 2018. Reprinted with the permission of Institute for Attachment. www.instituteforattachment.org

7 phrases not to say to a foster parent—and why

by Dr. John DeGarmo

During my 15 years as a foster parent, I have had the privilege of having over 50 children come to live in my home, and become a part of my family. Without a doubt, I would never have been able to do it if it were not for the support of my friends and family.

Yet, I also understand that these same people truly do not understand how the foster care system works. Indeed, before I was a foster parent, I was the same way. I simply did not understand the foster care system.

"Indeed, before I was a foster parent, I was the same way. I simply did not understand the foster care system."

With that in mind, here are seven things one should never say to a foster parent—seven statements that might be offensive to those who have given their lives to helping children in need.

More importantly, these comments hurt the children that are living with us, causing them further grief, anxiety, and emotional trauma. They are meant as words of comfort and words of support. However, so many times, the words are hurtful, instead.

1. Which child belongs to you?

In my home, there are no labels. There is no biological child, no adoptive child, no foster child. They are all my children, and I love them unconditionally. Each child living in my home is a member of my family. As foster parents, we can protect the child from harm, provide a safe and secure home, offer nutritious meals, and open up a doorway of opportunities for foster children, granting them new and exciting experiences that they may never have dreamed of.

Yet, with all of this, with all of the wonderful opportunities and safe environments, foster children really crave love the most. They want to be loved, and they need to be loved in order to grow. After all, every child deserves to be loved.

2. I couldn't do what you do. I would get too attached.

My response is this; "That's a good thing. It is supposed to hurt. My heart is supposed to break! These children need me to hurt for them."

To be sure, children in foster care need stability and they need security. Yet, what they need the most is to be loved. As foster parents, we might be the first adults who have ever loved the child in a healthy and unconditional fashion. Sadly, for some children, we may be the only adults who will ever love the child in this fashion, in an unconditional manner. So, when the child leaves our home and our family, our hearts should break. We should experience feelings of grief and loss. After all, we have given all of our hearts and love to a child in need.

Oh, and I do cry each time these children leave my home. I do grieve, as my heart is indeed broken.

3. They sure are lucky to have you.

Imagine, if you will, being taken away from your mother and your father, without any warning at all. Imagine being taken away from your siblings, your pets, your stuffed animals and toys. Imagine being taken away from your bedroom, house, yard and neighborhood. Imagine, too, being taken from all of your relatives, friends, classmates and everything you knew. In addition, after all of this, imagine if you were suddenly thrust into a strange house, with strangers, and informed that this was your new home and new family for the time being. Being placed into a foster home is a very frightening time—one filled with fear, uncertainty and anxiety.

It took me awhile to realize one simple fact—so many of these children do not want to live with me. It doesn't matter that I can provide them security, stability, good nutrition and new and exciting opportunities. At the end of the day, I am not their father, and my wife is not their mother. These children want to go home.

4. How much do you get paid?

Raising any child in today's society is financially challenging. Foster children are no different in that respect. Whether it is diapers and baby wipes, or clothes and high school graduation material, foster parents are bound to spend money on these children. It is true that state's agency often reimburses us on much of it, though there may be times where we spend our own money. As so many of these children coming into care have never experienced a birthday, Christmas, or another holiday, we often reach into our own pockets and wallets, and go all out to make these special events just that, very special.

Do I make money being a foster parent? Absolutely not! I do become rich, though, rich with love, laughter, and the opportunity to watch children heal and find hope.

5. I can't do it. I'm just too busy.

Busy?

I have had up to 11 children in my home, at the same time. I have had as many as seven in diapers in my home. Both my wife and I work full-time jobs, with my wife owning her own business. We have no help—there is no nanny or maid. There are no family members living nearby who can help look after all of the children. Without a doubt, my life is rather busy, as well as hectic at times. At the same time, I wouldn't have it anyway else. I am not too busy to help a child in need. My life

is simply busy being filled with laughter, joy, and love.

6. You can't help every child, you know.

I have heard this statement many times. When I do, I often relate a famous story to these people.

Perhaps you know the story of the starfish.

A father and son were walking along a beach at sunrise after a huge storm. When they stepped onto the beach, they were met with thousands of starfish, littering the beach, hundreds in each direction. The boy bent down and picked up a starfish, throwing it far into the ocean. Again and again, he repeated the action. After watching his son for some time, the father asked, "Son, what are you doing?"

"I'm throwing these starfish back into the ocean," the young boy answered.

"I see. But why are you doing this?" the father asked.

"When the sun comes out, and starts warming up the beach, the starfish will all die. I have to throw them back into the water."

"But son, you can't save all of these starfish. You can't possibly make a difference."

The boy stopped for a moment to take in his father's words, then bent down, and picked up another starfish in his hand, before throwing it as far as he could back into the ocean. Turning to his father with a large grin spreading across his face, he simply said, "It made a huge difference for that one!"



7. You are a superhero.

While I appreciate the comment, I am not a superhero. I am not a saint, either. There are days when I am exhausted and worn out. There are days when I am frustrated with the system. There are moments when I wonder if I can continue on. There are even moments when I wonder if I have made any difference, at all.

Yet, the need is so very strong. With over 450,000 children in foster care on any given day, and not enough homes or families open to caring for these children, there is a very strong need for foster parents today. It is a call I simply cannot ignore. There are children suffering, as you read this, who need someone to say, "I will help you. I will love you."

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www.drjohndegarmofostercare.com

How Children in Foster Care Fall Victim to Child Sex Trafficking

It is certainly not an issue that our society wants to talk about.

by Dr. John DeGarmo



The Trafficking Victims Protection Act (TVPA) defines child sex trafficking as "in which a commercial sex act is induced by force, fraud, or coercion, or in which the person induced to perform such an act has not attained 18 years of age."

300,000 children in the United States are prostituted each year; are victims of child sex trafficking. Across the globe, it is a $32 billion industry each year. For these hundreds of thousands of children, a life of horror and danger is forced upon them as they serve as prostitutes for local and global criminal organizations.

Many of these victims are children from the foster care system. In 2013, 60 percent of children who victims of child sex trafficking rescued from a FBI nationwide raid conducted over 70 cities were children from foster care or group homes. These children were found in hotel rooms, truck stops, and even homes; these children as young as four years of age, according to Dr. Kaylani Gopal, the founder and president of the SAFE Coalition for Human Rights.

Foster children can be particularly vulnerable to sexual predators. Foster children often experience higher levels of anxiety than other children, and this can manifest itself in a number of ways. Perhaps the one that foster children face the most is separation anxiety, an excessive concern that children struggle with concerning the separation from their home, family, and to those they are attached to the most. Without a doubt, the more a child is moved, from home to

home, from foster placement to another foster placement, or multiple displacements, the bigger the concern becomes. Those children who undergo many multiple displacements often times create walls to separate themselves in an attempt to not let others into their lives. Still, others feel starved for a sense of family and of belonging. To be sure, this type of anxiety and insecurity can make them vulnerable to sexual predators, as children in foster care search for love. For those foster children who have been abused in some way in the past, they may be more likely to show inappropriate sexual behavior or seek out love in inappropriate places.

Tragically, for so many children in foster care, the search for love leads to a road of sexual exploitation. Foster children often are in need of love; yet do not know what a healthy and loving relationship is. With no one to show them early in their lives what true unconditional or healthy loving relationships are, children in foster care mistakenly seek it out, often times online. What many foster parents do not know, though, is how easy it is for foster children to encounter sexual predators online. These sexual predators know that foster children are particularly vulnerable to this kind of assault.

Most prostituted youth today come from environments where they have already been sexually abused. To be sure, the majority of children in America who are exploited sexually have already endured a life of physical, sexual, or psychological abuse. Indeed, the contributor to a child entering into a life of child sex trafficking is a prior life of sexual abuse. Along with this, many of these children who have already been exposed to sexual abuse have problems with low self-esteem, and do not receive the educational opportunities they deserve. Foster children often come from environments of these forms of abuse. Teens that age out of the foster care system are also more likely to end up homeless, and may choose a life style of prostitution in order to "make ends meet," financially, so to speak. These youth are more inclined to be placed into foster homes or group homes, and are also more likely to run away. Pimps also attract foster children by targeting them in group homes, promising them gifts, a sense of belonging, and a place where they will be loved, as well as encouraging them with presents and gifts, all while grooming them for a life as a child prostitute.

Each child is precious. Each child is a gift. Each child needs to be protected. There are roughly 500,000 children in foster care today. There are thousands of children who need someone to protect them from a sexual predator, who need someone to rescue them from child sex trafficking. There are thousands of children who need people to stand up for them. Perhaps even in your own neighborhood or city, there is a child from foster care who is a victim of child sex trafficking who needs someone to help them; someone like you.

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www.drjohndegarmofostercare.com

NFAPA Support Groups

Have you ever thought about attending a support group? NFAPA offers support groups to foster, adoptive and kinship families! This is your chance to gain understanding and parenting tips through trainings, discussions and networking with fellow foster families.

This is a great way to meet other foster/adoptive families in your area! In-service training is offered at most support groups for those needing credit hours for relicensing. Up to date information with each support group location will be on the calendar page on our website at www.nfapa.org. Support Groups will be cancelled for inclement weather.

Contact a Resource Family Consultant for more information:
Jolie Camden (Panhandle Area): 308-672-3658
Tammy Welker (Columbus): 402-989-2197
Terry Robinson (Central/Southwest Area): 402-460-7296
Robbi Blume (FACES): 402-853-1091
NFAPA Office: 877-257-0176

IN-PERSON SUPPORT GROUPS

- **Alliance Support Group:** Meets the third Thursday of the month.
  Registration is required.
  Contact Jolie Camden to register: 308-672-3658.
  Location change-contact Jolie for updated information.
  6:00-7:30 p.m.
  February 15, March 15, April 19, May 17, 2018
- **Scottsbluff Support Group:** Meets the second Tuesday of the month.
  Registration is required.
  Contact Jolie Camden to register: 308-672-3658.
  Regional West Medical Center, in South Plaza Room 1204.
  6:00-7:30 p.m.
  February 13, March 13, April 10, May 8, 2018
- **Chadron Support Group:** Registration is required.
  Contact Jolie Camden to register: 308-672-3658.
  Location change-contact Jolie for updated information.
  6:00-7:30 p.m.
  February 6, March, 6, April 3, May 1, 2018
- **Columbus Support Group:** Meets the second Tuesday of the month (except July and December). Childcare available.
  Contact Tammy Welker at: 402-989-2197.
  (Thank you Building Blocks and Behavioral Health Specialists for providing childcare!).
  Peace Lutheran Church, 2720 28th St.
  7:00-8:30 p.m.
  February 13, March 13, April 10, May 8, 2018
- **Norfolk Support Group:** Meets quarterly.
  Childcare available by Building Blocks and Behavioral Health Specialists.
  Contact Terry Robinson at 402-460-7296
  First Christian Church, 1408 E. Benjamin Ave.
  6:30-8:00 p.m.
  March 22, June 28, September 27, December TBD

ONLINE SUPPORT GROUP

- **FACES:** Online Support Group: Every Tuesday 9:00-10:00 p.m. CT Contact Felicia at Felicia@nfapa.org to become a member of this closed group. Meets weekly to discuss issues foster parents are facing. Support only.

TRANSRACIAL SUPPORT GROUP

- **Parenting Across Color Lines:** This group supports and strengthens racial identity in transracial families. Support only. Meets the fourth Monday of the month.
  Children welcome to attend with parents.
  Newman United Methodist Church, 2242 R Street, Lincoln. 7:00-8:30 pm
  Contact the NFAPA office to register for Family Events or any questions. 402-476-2273
  For more information contact Laurie Miller at Laurie@nfapa.org
  February 26, March 26, April 23, 2018

Be sure to mark your calendars! If you have a topic you want discussed, please contact the Resource Family Consultant for that group.

Waiting for a Forever HOME!

The following are children available on the Nebraska Heart Gallery.



Names: Damarion

6 years old

Damarion is a fun loving boy with a smile that will melt your heart! He is active and loves some rough and tumble play. Damarion enjoys lights, music and toys that make sound. He is very affectionate and will seek out and give affection frequently; he often enjoys cuddling and taking naps on the couch. Damarion has some special medical and developmental needs and would do best with a family that is committed to helping him reach his full potential and ensure he can get to his frequent appointments.

Damarion will bring lots of joy to his forever family!

Connections:

Damarion will need support in maintaining relationships with a few important people in his life.

Name: Narilah

12 years old



Charming and smart, Nariiah is very personable and attentive to details. She loves to help in the kitchen and enjoys family dinners. Nariiah takes pride in being creative and unique. She loves doing art projects and dancing as ways to express herself. Nariiah has lots of energy and enjoys playing outside with her friends, but also loves to go to the salon and get her nails done. Nariiah would do well with a family that is active and flexible.

Connections:

Narriah is very bonded to her siblings and will need support with maintaining her relationships with them.

Name: Myesha

12 years old



Myesha is a fun loving, energetic, and adventurous girl who not only likes "girly" things, but also isn't afraid to get dirty when riding her bike and playing outside. Very creative, she enjoys making beautiful artwork and hopes to be an artist when she grows up. When she's not busy with her art, she can be found putting on entertaining performances complete with singing and dancing. There is never a dull moment with this big personality who loves to make others laugh.

Connections

Myesha needs to maintain a relationship with her younger sister.

For more information on these children or others on the Heart Gallery please contact Sarah at:
Email: scaldararo@childsaving.org
Phone: 402-504-3673

Making the Commitment to Adoption

Sponsored by Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services
Facilitated by Nebraska Foster & Adoptive Parent Association

Register online at
https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/SpauldingTraining

Nebraska Foster & Adoptive Parent Association
3601 North 25th Street, Suite D
Lincoln, NE
April 27, 2018: 6:00 p.m. -9:30 p.m.
April 28, 2018: 8:00 a.m. -5:30 p.m.

The Spaulding program is offered to prospective adoptive families. Spaulding training offers families the tools and information that they need to:

- Explain how adoptive families are different
- Importance of separation, loss, and grief in adoption
- Understand attachment and its importance in adoption
- Anticipate challenges and be able to identify strategies for managing challenges as an adoptive family
- Explore the lifelong commitment to a child that adoption brings

Don't have time to make it to a support group?

Join us every Tuesday night from 9:00 – 10:00 pm (CST) for our online support group - FACES.

Contact Felicia Nelsen at felicia@nfapa.org for more information.

NFAPA SCHOLARSHIP

APPLICATION DEADLINE: APRIL 2, 2018

NFAPA offers a $250 scholarship for an adoptive, foster, guardianship or kinship child, who wishes to further their education beyond high school or GED. The scholarship can be used for college, university, vocational, job training or online learning. The scholarship form is available of our website at www.nfapa.org. Requirements and submission instructions are listed.



What are you doing this summer?

How about hanging out with your siblings for a weekend of fun and connection at Camp Catch-Up?

Here's the scoop. Together, you can enjoy everything camp has to offer: canoeing, ropes courses, water activities, hiking, and more - and it's completely free!

You can choose from three weekends, depending on what's closer. Transportation provided at designated locations across Nebraska.

Central NE Camp: May 31-June 3 at the Timberlake Ranch Camp, Marquette, NE
Western NE Camp: June 21-24 at the Nebraska State 4-H Camp, Halsey, NE
Eastern NE Camp: August 3-5 at the Eastern NE 4-H Center, Gretna, NE

New to camp? Go online to apply at **campcatchup.org.**
Attend camp last year? Log into your **campdoc.com** account to update your information.

ELIGIBILTY REQUIREMENTS

1. For youth ages 8-19. Younger siblings accepted on a case by case basis.
2. Have at least one sibling not residing with the camper also attend camp.
3. Have the ability to understand the purpose of camp.

ROYAL FAMILY KIDS CAMP

Royal Family KIDS Camp provides a one-week summer camp for foster children and other at-risk children.

Age: Grades K-5

Each child is paired with an adult counselor that has been carefully screened and trained to work with children in the dependency care system.

There are many Royal Family KIDS camps across Nebraska. Find a location and date of camp in your area at: https://rfk.org/locations/nebraska/

In the Lincoln area, camp is July 16-20, 2018. Contact Jane Corkill for more information: 402-413-7253
Please check our online interest form at : http://goo.gl/forms/YjGkF5iGMJ

Is Your Child Prepared for Their First Cell Phone?

By Smart Social Team



Use these tips to prepare your teen or tween for their first cell phone

For many parents, giving their child their first cell phone can be intimidating. Unlike driving, there's no set age for teens to start having access to their own cell phones. The right time to get a cell phone is different for every student, but once your student has one how can you ensure that they stay safe? From social media apps, to internet access, to unlimited texting capabilities, it can feel overwhelming for parents. So, we asked 5 experts to share their best tips parents can use for keeping kids safe before and after giving them their first phone.

Set up clear guidelines for all phone use

Dr. John DeGarmo,, The Foster Care Institute, @ DrJohnDeGarmo

Check your child's phone nightly to see who is reaching out to them, and who they are reaching out to. Remember, you are not your child's friend, you are their parent, and you are protecting them from predators and others who seek to harm them in some way. Become involved in your child's life, interests, and activities – both online and offline.

Be persistent in warning their children about dangerous and inappropriate sites. Protective filters and browsers should be in place, helping to block your child from accessing these sites. Set up clear guidelines for all phone use with your child, and post these as a consistent reminder. Closely monitor your child's online actions, as well as their cell phone for any disturbing messages, texts, and pictures. Let him know you will be doing so.

Remind your student not to believe everything that comes across the phone. Teach your child to bring to your attention any site or contact that might be suspicious in nature. Keep credit card details somewhere safe where children can't access them, and make sure not to save credit card details online. Make sure that 'click to buy' options are not activated. Lastly, teach your child about the realities and dangers of child predators who prowl the internet, looking to target children.

Set a good example

Julia Cook, Parenting Expert

Before getting your child their first cell phone, ask yourself "Does my child "need" a cell phone, or do they just "want" one? Make sure you set a good cell phone user example for your child. (You cannot expect your child to not text and drive if they see you do it etc..)

For younger children: Avoid phones with texting or IM capabilities. Program in all names and numbers that are important for your child to know. Discourage your child from answering numbers that he/she does not recognize. Thoroughly discuss how, when, and why the phone should be used.

For older children: Reinforce the how, when and why the phone should be used. Always expect your child to answer calls from you. Make sure the phone is turned off at night. Strongly discourage cell phone use during meal time and other family together times. Purchase the texting plan that works best for your family. Monitor your child's text messages, phone calls, and times of usage. Have your child review your cell phone bill with you. Discuss and strongly discourage cyberbullying, sexting, texting/talking while driving, and other inappropriate cell phone behaviors. Establish and enforce realistic consequences for improper cell phone use.

Remember the cell phone is never the cause of the problem… it's the person using the cell phone that causes the problem.

Have an honest and open conversation about parental controls

Barb Harvey, Parents, Teachers and Advocates, Inc.

Parents often wonder if using parental controls is an invasion of privacy. Consider the stage of life your children are in. Remember the stage of a two-year-old where they were constantly getting into things and exploring because they were curious about everything? Teens are in the same stage, only they are now exploring the world of adulthood. When children are 2 parents can put them in a high chair or playpen to keep them safe. Now as a teen we have parental controls for safety. It is a safety measure to monitor where they are curious and to answer their questions before they get bad advice or are preyed upon by nefarious people.

The important thing here is to sit down and have an honest and open conversation about parental controls. You can start the conversation by saying, "this is not your phone, this is my phone. I am letting you use it. It is a privilege and I am going to monitor your use of it." Then the conversation can go from there. I suggest using a monitoring tool which first flags inappropriate hashtags or abbreviations. Then look for ones which will flag online bullying texts or posts. Also, use time

controls. Teens can get to talking at 9PM and not realize it is 1AM. A time limit helps teens control those late night calls. Once teens are old enough to go out at night with their friends the times can be adjusted. Finally, use phone tracking. Most iPhones have this ability, it is important for parents to be able to tell where their teens are and a tracking program is ideal for this.

Utilize the phone as a learning device

Arvin Vohra, Vohra Method

Before a student gets a phone, parents should frame the phone as a learning device. The parents should have the student agree to use the phone for an hour a day of educational training. Once the student has the phone, it's usually too late to build that habit.

Because of their constant presence, phones are great for learning anything that needs to be memorized (vocabulary, language, states and capitals, etc.)

Use cell phones to teach your student financial responsibility

Airto Zamorano, Numana SEO, @NumanaSEO

If you're debating whether or not to give your child their first phone, consider turning it into an exercise that will teach your student financial responsibility while getting to have their first cell phone. Create a tracker for your child's chores and assign a budget for the cost of their phone plus their allowance. Each chore should equal a dollar amount, so if they fail to complete one then they lose some of their weekly budget. Children really enjoy the sense of responsibility and also having their own phone.

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https://smartsocial.com/first-cell-phone/



Our friends at SmartSocial.com are giving away 2 weeks of their Parent University program our community.
SmartSocial.com is where Law Enforcement, Parents and Teachers go to get the latest digital safety tips to keep kids safe online.
Parents also get videos they watch WITH their kids to motivate students to be positive and safe online.
Use discount code "nfapa" when registering to get a 2 week free trial (and 25% off the following month)!
Learn more about Parent University at:
https://smartsocial.com/parent-university/

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girl scouts spirit of nebraska

Girl Scouts Spirit of Nebraska is the largest girl-serving organization in the state with more than 21,000 members. We have 6 service centers, 6 camps, and 1 outdoor education facility, and serve more than 92 Nebraska counties and Carter Lake, Iowa. Our organization is, and has always been, grounded in the Girl Scout Promise and Law. With the support of committed adult volunteers, activities are girl led so that each girl's leadership potential can bloom. Girls become members of Girl Scouts first, then they choose their pathway; Individual Girl Scout, troop, camp, events, series, travel… Girls can do it! When a girl becomes a member of Girl Scouts, her membership will follow her where-ever she goes.

Girls gain:

- Self-confident
- Strong and Compassionate
- To respect herself and others
- Make good decisions
- Be open to new challenges
- Use her skills and talents to make her world a better place

As a Girl Scout, your daughter will grow into her best self.

Foster & Adoptive Care parents as well as kids in the Juvenile Probation System, for the past couple of years Girl Scouts has received funding from a private donor that shares your same passion for underserved girls. This funding will provide each girl in Nebraska with a free membership and other free camp opportunities. Troop experience is encouraged but not necessary for a beneficial membership. Girls and guardians can choose to enroll as an Individual Girl/Adult Member. This gives another level of flexibility without sacrificing the Girl Scout experience. Registration is easy and FREE. Contact Danielle Smith to get started or ask questions. You can reach Danielle at dsmith@girlscoutsnebraska.org or 402.875.4358. To view the program opportunities, click:

http://www.girlscoutsnebraska.org/content/girlscoutsnebraska/en/programs/program-list.html

What do girls do in Girl Scouts? Click to read more.:

http://www.girlscoutsnebraska.org/content/girlscoutsnebraska/en/what-girl-scouts-do/what-girl-scouts-do.html

Registration is easy and can be done by filling out the form:

https://fs17.formsite.com/girlscoutsnebraska/form48/index.html

Contact Danielle Smith with questions or if you need help in filling out the form.

402.875.4358
dsmith@girlscoutsnebraska.org
8230 Beechwood Dr.
Lincoln, NE. 68510

The Team Needs You!

We believe we are better together!

We know that children grow best in families! Foster families provide an essential and valuable service when children are unable to remain in their own homes. We want foster families to foster families! We want foster families to engage in supporting biological families in their reunification process. We want foster families to teach biological families how to engage their children while instilling good character and values such as respect, trustworthiness, responsibility, fairness, and caring. We want you to be a member of the team and we recognize the knowledge you bring to the team process.

We are encouraging our Children and Family Support Specialists to ensure that foster families are invited to participate in the child and family team meetings. We believe at a minimum it is essential that you provide information on how the kids are doing in your home and what they need to be supported from the team. A parent may choose to excuse you from the child and family team meeting once this discussion concludes and that is okay. We need to respect their decision-making on what to share with you about themselves. We are excited to have additional collaboration and success as the team supports one another.

Lori Harder, Deputy Director Children and Family Services and Theresa Starr, Program Specialist Children and Family Services

6 Ways To Deal With Rejection From Wounded Children.

By Guest Writer

Dealing with rejection from your child is an uphill battle. No parent wants to face this. We want to believe we can love them through their trauma. How do you successfully parent your child but deal with their rejection at the same time?

"WE had FUN with DAD," hissed my daughter, as she met me at the door with an angry sneer. Her glare and belittling tone once again communicated, what seemed to be, sheer hatred of me. We had just returned from camping at the Lewis and Clark Trail State Park. My husband had secretly given me the choice of driving the nice, newer car with our three children or the old, Ford Escort carrying the smelly Newfoundland dog, whose rancid stench had come from playing in the river all weekend. I chose the dog.

Her words hardly represented an isolated jab. In fact, she had been doling out insults like candy for months, finding any way she could, to verbally assault me. Later, I cried into my husband's shoulder. Between heaving sobs and strings of slobber I said, "I can't do this anymore! I just can't take one more jab!"

It may sound crazy that an emotionally stable, confident, grown woman would be so tied up in knots about emotional barbs coming from a child. One would think it would have been easy to brush off her rejection because she was "just a kid." But at times it just wasn't.

If, like me, you're dealing with the pain of a child who constantly pushes you away or rejects you, here are several things I've learned.

1. Don't take it personally.

I know, I know. Easier said than done. Most of the time when my husband told me "Don't take it personally" I wanted to punch him in the face. Those words didn't seem very helpful, but he was right.

When dealing with a wounded child, we need to picture ourselves like a lifeguard, going into an ocean of rejection and pain to help them. Because of their past trauma, our child is drowning in pain, and drowning people do strange things out of fear. Most of the time, they fight against the very person who is trying to save them. My daughter didn't hate me. She was afraid I didn't love her.

It really isn't personal. You could be Ward and June Cleaver and a wounded child would still push you away. Not only has trauma changed the brains of your child, they are trying to protect themselves from getting hurt again. They aren't trying to attack you, even though at times it certainly feels that way.

2. Take breaks.

I remember a time when my husband and I were on the beach in Florida. I kept trying to stand up in the water, but the waves just kept coming and coming, each one knocking me down as soon as I would begin to get my bearings. It was impossible to stand up, regardless of how strong I tried to be.

Just like those ocean waves, the constant waves of belittling and rejection can knock down the best of parents. Just because the rejection comes from a young child doesn't necessarily lessen the hurt, as if a smaller person's words pack less of a punch.

In those times, we need to be able to get away and regroup. Take breaks so you can rest and come back to interact with your children with enough strength to not get pulled under by the waves of their rejection.

3. Spend time with those who encourage.

In those times of feeling so discouraged and beaten down, we need to spend time around people who encourage us and help lift us up. It is impossible to maintain a positive attitude

toward children who spend the day rejecting us without spending time with those who help counteract with positive messages.

Support groups can provide a great resource. I can't tell you how much the women from our adoptive mom's support group encourage me. All I have to do is send out a quick SOS text and I have several women encouraging me to keep going.

Even if you can't get away to spend time with friends, ask a few family members or friends to text you reminders of your good qualities or how much they love you throughout the day.

4. Infuse your life with positives.

Surround yourself with positive messages. Listen to a podcast with noise-cancelling headphones while your little one throws the mother of all temper tantrums in the living room. Write yourself positive notes or scripture and post them around the house. Read an uplifting book during a mandatory quiet/nap time for your kids. Do an art project with the kids and include a positive message to yourself in yours. Find creative ways to include positive messages into your life that can cancel out the negative ones you're receiving from your children.

5. Continue pursuing outside activities.

At one point, my children's therapist encouraged me to get a job outside of the home, because she recognized that I needed something in my life to focus on besides my kids and their issues.

Find a hobby that you enjoy. Take an art class or join a pinochle team. Get a part-time job. Do something that reminds you of who you are beyond your role as a parent and that allows you to have a little fun in the process. Since fun is something that tends to get sucked out of our homes by wounded children faster than a hoover picks up dust, we must be purposeful in continuing to do things we find fun.

6. Change expectations.

It took me years to realize that I had walked into this whole foster and adoption thing with unrealistic expectations. When I thought about becoming a parent, I pictured a chubby toddler running joyously into my arms every time they saw me. After we adopted three older foster children, I had to let go of the expectation that these kids would respond to me like children who hadn't experienced pain and rejection. When their rejection of me became unbearable, however, I had to allow myself to grieve the fact that reality didn't match my dreams. At times I just needed a good old-fashioned cry so I could process through the discrepancy and then move on.

**Editor's note- This is a guest post from our good friend Jennie Owens. She and her husband Lynn, support foster and adoptive families through their nonprofit organization, www.foreverhomes.org. Jennie also speaks to parenting groups and leads retreats for foster and adoptive families. She provides training and one-on-one coaching services to parents through their clinic, Canyon Lakes Family Counseling, in Kennewick, WA.*

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http://confessionsofanadoptiveparent.com/6-ways-to-deal-with-rejection-from-wounded-children/

Human Trafficking Training



The Division of Children and Family Services partnered with NFAPA to provide Human Trafficking training to foster parents across Nebraska.

Nebraska Foster parents are required to be trained on recognizing Human Trafficking, both sex trafficking and labor trafficking. (NRS 43-4707)



An hour long training is available to meet the requirement at the following link :

http://dhhs.ne.gov/children_family_services/Pages/trafficking_FosterParents.aspx



The deadline to complete this training is March 31, 2018. Nebraska Foster parents must receive an hour of HumanTrafficking training every two years in conjunction with the licensing period.

For any questions, please contact:
Ivy Bloom | Program Specialist
CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES
Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services
OFFICE: 402-471-9160

10 Powerful Truths About FASD That Will Change Your Perspective.

by Mike Berry

For the majority of the world, Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) is misunderstood and often judged. But, there are powerful truths that can change your life when you understand, and embrace them.

Anger.

That's the word that comes to mind when I think about FASD. Anger.

I'm angry at a broken world where addiction runs rampant, angry that we've been forced to accept a new normal, angry at the numerous therapists, doctors, and authorities who've downplayed or disagreed with my child's diagnosis over the years, angry at a world that judges before seeking the truth, and angry when I think about the missing pieces of my child's life.

The child I chose with love.

Most of all, I'm angry that he will never have a normal childhood. A part of his brain is absent thanks to a stupid choice, a lack of self-control, and an unwillingness to guard his precious life before he took one peek at the world. I know this sounds harsh but this is the stuff I wrestle with often. Sometimes it eats at me, grinding away at my soul like a jackhammer grinding away at concrete. Other times, it's sadness. A deep longing to go back in time, before his conception, and beg his birth mother to not make the choice she would eventually make.

Yes, we reel in pain over this disease. After all, that's what it is. It's brain damage, and the worst kind too, as far as we're concerned. We live with the devastation of our child's violent outbursts that have brought trauma on our family so deep that we're not sure we'll ever heal from it. We wrestle but, we're hopeful. In the midst of our life, which often looks more like a pile of ashes than a life, we have a hope and a belief that our



child, our son, will succeed. It began a while ago, when we embraced some powerful truths about FASD…

1. It's a permanent condition.

FASD is permanent brain damage. It cannot be reversed nor cured. The part of the brain that is affected will never heal or be restored. When we finally stopped fighting against this reality, and stopped trying to fix our son's physical condition, we discovered something revolutionary (more on that in a minute).

2. It's an uphill climb.

Everyday of our child's life will be an uphill climb, and it will be so for you if you have a child who suffers from this. You'll fight with them, and against them. Heck, you'll spend a ton of time fighting professionals who just don't get this disorder. You will feel like you're climbing the side of a mountain but never reach the summit. Honestly, it's painful, and exhausting. Doesn't feel very hopeful, right?

3. No amount of alcohol is okay.

There is no safe amount. One drop at any given moment during pregnancy can cause permanent damage. We are astounded that doctors still tell women today that they can have a glass of wine or a small drink every now and then while they're pregnant. In our opinion these doctors should be barred from practicing medicine for eternity.

4. It's misunderstood.

Recently, Kristin was watching YouTube videos on the NoFAS website when one woman stated, "FASD doesn't get the attention it deserves because it's not a 'designer' disorder like autism." True! There is a vast misunderstanding surrounding FASD.

5. It's often judged.

Even though it's clear that we are adoptive parents (our oldest son is African-American), we have been judged. My wife, mostly, as a mother, has faced judgement even though she is not his biological mother. This stems from the misunderstanding we just talked about. It's also inaccurate education on the realities of FASD. But….

6. It's not the end.

Reading those first 5 truths feels depressing and dark. I know. I wrestle with them all the time. Every time I look at my children who are affected by FASD I feel a mixture of anger and sadness. But I've discovered there's hope. This is not the end, even though it feels like it when you're crawling through the trench. This is not a wrap on our child's life. And, here's why…

7. It's a fight.

You and I are locked in hand-to-hand combat as parents. Yes, with our sons and daughters because, let's be honest, the days of parenting a child suffering from FASD are dark and un-ending. But this fight is much bigger than anything we've seen. It's not a fight against our children, it's a fight for our children. It's a fight for their heart because we love them. I love my son more than anything and that's why I'm choosing to fight for him, even though I sustain deep wounds! I will not stop chasing down resources or finding outlets who get this disorder.

8. It's not a life sentence for you -or- your child.

While this disorder is permanent, this is not a life sentence unless you let it become so. It's your choice. The world is slowly starting to wake up to the reality of FASD and great resources are starting to take shape. NoFAS is one of those. This website is packed full of insightful and inspiring content, plus resources that can help navigate the trials of parenting a child with this disorder. One other resource that we are huge fans of is the documentary Moment To Moment.

9. It can't be cured but it can be flipped on it's end.

It's all comes down to whether or not you choose to keep

fighting for your child. The world may see my children as hopeless or damaged, but I see my child as a promising human being filled with talent, creativity and the ability to overcome this and succeed.

10. The disorder can't be changed, but the heart can be.

We are committed to helping my son's heart heal. In fact, it's our daily prayer for him. We believe this is the answer for FASD. He will always wrestle with the side-effects of this disease. He will always deal with impulsivity and a thought-process that fails him, but, the healing of his heart is how he will beat the odds and overcome this. Nothing in this world can make us give up on him, or this truth.

As I write this post, my oldest son, who has been in and out of residential facilities for the past 5 years, thanks in part to violent behavior, brought on by FASD, is moving to a new facility even farther from our home. Many would read those words and immediately place blame on us. Frankly, Kristin and I have wrestled with that already. We've laid awake many nights, over the past 5 years, asking God what we did wrong, begging Him for an answer. We've watched the way other children (and adults) have treated our son, judged him, and his disorder. We've stood helpless as our son caused a scene in public or flew into a rage and hurt one of our other children or us.

Yet, we won't give up. As we grapple with the truths above, we find power through them. We find the will to fight. As the reality of his condition and the condition of hundreds of thousands of other children like him, sink in, we find ourselves invigorated and motivated. The hope that we have is the hope we choose to seize. We could give up and allow our son to remain a statistic, or we could keep getting up, even when we're knocked down hard, and help our son become a success! We choose the latter.

Reprinted with permission from:

http://confessionsofanadoptiveparent.com/10-powerful-truths-about-fasd-that-will-change-your-life/

YOU ARE INVITED.

PROCLAMATION SIGINING-PROCLAIMING MAY AS FOSTER CARE MONTH IN NEBRASKA

May 7, 2018 • 11:00 a.m. at the Capitol

Luncheon Reception immediately following Signing at the NFAPA office

RSVP TO FELICIA
402.476.2273 or Felicia@nfapa.org

Upcoming Training

Facilitated by the Nebraska Foster & Adoptive Parent Association

Sponsored by Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services

The Kinship Connection

This six hour training will provide Relative & Kinship families with training on the following topics:

- The Legal Process
- RPPS/Respite
- Trauma & Attachment
- Safety
- Behavior Management
- Redefined Roles
- Loss & Grief
- Permanency Options for Children & Youth

Saturday, February 17, 2018
from 9 am – 4 pm: Gothenburg

Saturday, February 17, 2018
from 9 am – 4 pm: Omaha

Saturday, March 3, 2018
from 9 am – 4 pm: Grand Island

Monday, March 19, 2018
from 9 am – 4 pm: Omaha

Saturday, March 24, 2018
from 9 am – 4 pm: North Platte

Tuesday, March 27, 2018
from 9 am – 4 pm: Lincoln
Saturday—April 28th, 2018
from 9 am - 4 pm: Chadron
Saturday, May 5, 2018
from 9 am - 4 pm: York
Saturday—May 26, 2018
from 9 am – 4 pm: Sidney
Saturday June 2, 2018
from 9 am – 4 pm: Scottsbluff
Saturday—June 9th, 2018
from 9 am – 4 pm: Alliance

Saturday, July 14, 2018
from 9 am – 4 pm: Grand Island
Saturday, July 28, 2018
from 9 am – 4 pm: Hastings

Saturday, August 11, 2018
from 9 am – 4 pm: Kearney

Saturday, September 1, 2018
from 9 am – 4 pm: Scottsbluff
Saturday, September 22, 2018
from 9 am – 4 pm: North Platte

Registration is required.
Register online:

https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/KinshipRegistration2018

These informational classes are for Relative & Kinship families who have not taken pre-service classes to be licensed foster parents.

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JOIN NFAPA ….your support will enable NFAPA to continue supporting foster parents state-wide!

Benefits

- Ongoing trainings/conferences at local and state level
- Networking opportunities with other foster families, adoptive families, and relative caregivers
- Opportunity for all foster families, adoptive families and relative caregivers to be actively involved in an association by serving on committees and/or on the Executive Board
- Working to instigate changes by alertness to legislation affecting the child welfare system
- An advocate on your behalf at local, state and national levels
- 25% of membership dues goes toward an NFAPA Scholarship

Thank you for your support!

Please mail membership form to:
NFAPA, 3601 N. 25th Street, Suite D
Lincoln, NE 68521.

Questions? Please call us at 877-257-0176.

NFAPA is a 501c3 non-profit organization comprised of a volunteer Board of Directors and Mentors.

Name(s): _____

Organization: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ County: _____

State: _____ Zip: _____ Phone: _____

Email: _____

I am a Foster/Adoptive Parent. I have fostered for _____ years.
(circle one)

I am with _____ agency.

I wish to join the effort:

- ❑ **Single Family Membership** (a single foster or adoptive parent), $25
- ❑ **Family Membership** (married foster or adoptive parents), $35
- ❑ **Supporting Membership** (individuals wishing to support our efforts), $75
- ❑ **Organization Membership** (organizations wishing to support our efforts), $150
- ❑ **Friends of NFAPA,** $5 billed Monthly

My donation will be acknowledged through Families First newsletters.

- ❑ Gold Donation, $1,000
- ❑ Silver Donation, $750
- ❑ Platinum Donation, $500
- ❑ Bronze Donation, $250
- ❑ Other, $ _____