

Families First

a newsletter for Nebraska Families

November/December 2018

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Share Your Story: Holiday Traditions

We asked the Adoptive Families Reader Panel: How do you integrate your child's culture of origin and/or adoption story into your family's holiday rituals?

By Editorial Team

How do our readers celebrate the holidays? For many, bringing their new child home involves incorporating a new set of traditions from their child's heritage into their holiday festivities.

Whether it means celebrating a whole new holiday (Kwanzaa or Chinese New Year) or adding elements of another culture into their own holiday celebrations (Russian ornaments on the Christmas tree; Korean sweets mixed in with the other treats at a Hanukkah celebration), it's the perfect way to make your child feel right at home. Here are a few ways other adoptive parents have done it.

Winter Festival

"Every January, our adoption agency hosts a Grandfather Frost festival to share Russian holiday traditions and foods with our children. For my husband and me, this offers a wonderful starting point for celebrating and investigating our son's heritage throughout the year."

—Kristin Dodson, Woodbury, Minnesota

Christmas

"Both my husband and I come from large Italian families who have maintained a lot of old customs. We brought up

our biological children on heartwarming Italian traditions and food specialties each Christmas. With the addition of our Korean daughter, we realized that we should add another culture to our celebration.

So, each December I visit our local Asian market and buy

Korean treats to add to the platter of Italian cookies and pastries and mandu that is part of our appetizer spread. Family members have now come to expect these, and they have truly become a part of our extended family's traditional celebration."

—Anna Marie Bonafide, via e-mail

Chanukah

"I love to cook, so we've worked to incorporate my

daughter's Chinese heritage into our Jewish family's traditions via food. For Chanukah, we make Chinese onion cakes because they are fried in oil, like latkes.

We received two authentic moon cake molds as a gift from her godmother, and now, for every Autumn Moon Festival, we make homemade 'Moon Cake Knishes,' filled with mashed potatoes instead of the traditional dough. My 3-year-old daughter's favorite part is banging the cakes out of the mold!"

—Alicia Messing, Phoenix, Arizona

Korean Lunar New Year

"We now celebrate Lunar New Year, which we never did before adopting our children. I usually teach a short Lunar

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Nebraska Foster & Adoptive Parent Association

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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/NovemberDecember2018>. 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. Finish the sentence. I cannot carry trauma for my child. I can only cry, "Up you get. Come on baby, I can't carry it for you _____."
2. Fill in the blank. I watch every week as children from hard backgrounds struggle to emerge from the darkness of trauma and cycle into the same _____, _____, _____.
3. What are four things you can do to promote self care?
4. Fill in the blanks. Parents dealing with developmental psychiatric or learning disorders are far more likely to experience _____, _____, _____ and _____.
5. True or False. Their little brains have been wired to survive threatening circumstances.
6. True or False. Doctors know more about the effects of trauma on development than most foster parents.
7. Fill in the blank. In America today, there are some _____ kids in foster care.
8. List 5 tips to help your child when racial issues arise.
9. True or False. We have always done it that way (family holiday traditions) makes foster and adoptive children in your family feel like they are part of your family.
10. List three ways you can help a foster child or child feel like they are part of your family traditions during the holiday season.

Name: _____

Address: _____

Email: _____

Phone #: _____

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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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(Continued from page 1)

New Year lesson in each of their classrooms, and they wear their traditional Korean hanboks to school that day.

Also, I give them at least one Christmas gift that is Korean in nature. Last year, they each received Korean paintbrushes and rice paper, as well as a book on Korean culture. These are a few of the ways in which we try to keep their cultural identity alive—and learn a bit more about it ourselves. We always have fun in the process!”

—*Tracie O'Connor, via e-mail*

Easter

“My family has passed down the Polish tradition of blessing our Easter basket food (swienconka) on Holy Saturday. After adopting our son from Russia, I was happy to find out that this is a Russian tradition as well! This past Easter was the first time that my 3-year-old son showed a real interest in such things. While lining the basket with the beautiful linens we brought back from Russia, we talked about his birth country. In addition to the usual food items, I added pysanky (decorative Russian eggs) this year.”

—*Amy Havens, Grosse Ile, Michigan*

Thanksgiving

“We adopted our son from Kazakhstan on Thanksgiving Day, and his birthday is November 30, so this is a joyous week for us. I love telling his adoption story as part of our celebration. My favorite part of the story recalls when I ran down the street to a little market. As I left the store, I almost ran into a crowd of babushkas selling produce.

A lone pumpkin in the middle of the pile caught my attention, and I began babbling in Russian, pushing coins into the seller's hands as tears came to my eyes. Our host understood why I was crying over a pumpkin, and the cook fixed us a traditional Kazakh pumpkin dish for breakfast the next day.”

—*Dianne Combs, Indiana*

Adoption Day

“We celebrate three Adoption Days a year to honor not only each child, but how we became a family. Each celebration is much like a birthday, complete with cake and the singing of “Happy Adoption Day to You.” But we have party bags for all of our kids rather than larger gifts for the celebrant alone.

I also take the opportunity to share cake at school, and to teach the child's classmates about adoption through an interactive presentation. The teachers are always warm to this idea, and the kids are receptive.”

—*Cindy Roberts, via e-mail*

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<https://www.adoptivefamilies.com/adoption-bonding-home/family-holiday-traditions/>

How Angry Adoptive Moms Are Changing The Game For Vulnerable Children.

by Michelle McKinney

You don't change the world by staying quiet, being nice, or playing by the rules. Just ask adoptive moms. The passion, energy, and voice they have can, and will, change the world for vulnerable children.

My husband attended a breakout session for an organization doing crazy awesome things in the world for orphans. This question was asked: “So who made this happen?”

Leader's answer: “It's usually angry adoptive moms who make things happen.”

Ah, yes! Angry Adoptive Moms. That would be me on some days. OK, Many days. But on other days, I'm just a normal mom. Loving my kids through the good and the ugly. Cooking, cleaning, feeding, footballing, driving. That's the life of a mom. Then there are the OTHER other days. We moms with kids from hard places, are just sad. Burdened. Deeply depressed. And yes, angry.

We quite LITERALLY took on the burdens of the world. Poverty. Orphans. HIV/AIDS. And it's huge. Bigger than us. It hurts. We can't do this hard thing alone. And yet, too many are. It is true we adoptive moms can be angry. In your face. Pushing our agenda on you. Preachy. Sounding arrogant at times. But here's why.... We don't have the energy to hide our feelings and our insides anymore. Hiding them is a luxury.

We can't afford it.

We don't have the energy to hide our feelings and our insides anymore.

There are children starving, dying, tortured...and all without a mom and dad to care. This is not OK to anyone. But we as adoptive parents are living with the results of such autoricitys. And we have become rather zealous...perhaps fanatical. Here's why:

1. We want more orphans to have forever families.
2. We want more non-adoptive families to help adoptive families.
3. We want our kids to live in a safer world.

Safer with their extended family. Safer with their teachers at school. Safer with friends, which means first safer with friend's parents. Safer at church. Safer with their coaches. Safer with their doctors. (We know more about the effects of trauma on development than most doctors) Safer means those people mentioned have been educated on my kid's “special” needs (which are usually invisible to the outside world) and provide a healing and grace-filled environment for our kids to flourish.

Not just seeing their bad behaviors, but trying to understand

the reason behind the behaviors. There is a reason. They are not bad, spoiled or catered to. My 4 kids have had more loss in their short little lives than most of us could ever imagine. They may not remember a particular bad event, but their little brains have been wired to survive any threatening circumstance. And anything new is a threat. EVERY, SINGLE time. They can't help but be driven by this instinct. We are compelled beyond ourselves to help them find healing. But we see US and OUR failures. And yet....in spite of our weaknesses...to be blunt...we're doing something about it. We know our messiness. Our anxiety. Our flaws. Our horribleness as moms. Seriously horrible. I told my 4-year-old the only reason I was letting her go with Grammy one day was because I didn't want to be with her.

Horribleness right there. I knew it was the wrong thing to say, and yet I said it anyway.

Wikipedia's definition of "horribleness:" me.

Perhaps you've said something similar to your bio daughter. No one is perfect. But your bio daughter hasn't known the loss that my daughter has. She's ACTUALLY been left. For good. Abandoned. By her biological mother. These words carry much more weight and harm. We are angry because we see YOU and your AWESOMENESS. Seriously, some of you are rockin' the mom thing.

Like you'd never say what I said to ANY child. I hear a lot of, "Not everyone should adopt!" Agreed. But why are we so quick to throw that out there when confronted? Why can't our response be instead to ask how we can help those who are? Several years have passed now since the Haiti earthquake. My son is Haitian. So I have good reason to believe someone in his biological family died, lost a leg, an arm, a child, a mother. Someone. Or many. Perhaps that's why he was born in the Dominican. I remember the responses from several mom friends with the number of new orphans that were created. "I'll take one!" Really? If someone dropped one at your door right now, really?

Because if that's true, then why haven't you? There have always been earthquakes and famine and, and, and... There are orphans right now BEGGING for YOU to take them. And if you aren't willing to adopt, then you can do something for the families who are. But where are these families to help? Adoptive moms and dads are so weary. Beaten down. By extended family members, schools, doctors, systems and yes, our kids. But we'd actually take another one...or four. Because we've seen too much. We know too much. And often we're chastised for this seemingly insatiable habit of bringing one more home. So yeah, we're angry. The anger we feel from the injustice is fed by the passivity and the excuses. Things are said like it wouldn't be fair to our OTHER kids. Who is it really LESS fair for? Is it more fair for another child to be raised with no parents and starve, be abused, never know love, be forced into prostitution as teens and pushed out onto the streets? We're angry because we want justice for children. We

are angry because we want grace.

If you aren't willing to adopt, then you can do something for the families who are.

For our kids. For us. We're angry because we want help and help is no where to be found. We're angry because many of our once close friends and family have quietly slipped out of our lives because we're simply too messy. We do make others uncomfortable. We do make others mad. But adoptive parents are missing a huge piece in their life and that is non-adoptive families.

If anger is the catalyst for an orphan to become a son or daughter, if anger is what it takes for an adoptive family in crisis to have a healthier family stand with them in the fire, then so be it.

Reprinted with permission from:

<https://confessionsofanaadoptiveparent.com/how-angry-adoptive-moms-are-changing-the-world/>

Unconditional Love: Building a Stronger Sense of Self-Worth for the Children and Youth in Foster Care

by Michelle Madrid-Branch

Difficult to place...

These three words identified me, within my foster records, as a baby girl who would be hard to place due to my ambiguous ethnicity and questionable beginnings. My social worker, in England, listed the names of the potential adoptive parents who had looked me over with a "negative reaction." There didn't seem to be any surprise that I had been met with this kind of response. My earliest history had marked me as an unwanted child.

I was the product of an affair. Neither my birth mother nor my birth father wanted to raise me. I was secreted away into foster care and marked, labeled, and tagged as lesser than other babies born into loving homes with parents who adored and embraced them.

I had been categorized as one of "those children" who—through no fault of my own—was marginalized because of the decisions and actions of my parents, along with the judgments of strangers. My parents had left me as an orphan, and the stigma associated with that title disfigured my sense of self-worth.

In America today, there are some 500,000 children and youth in foster care. They are America's orphans. The ways in which we, as a society, respond to their circumstances and needs will most certainly influence how they view themselves, over the course of their lives.

I'm a grown woman, yet I still ache over the little girl—the first me—who was judged and diminished within my foster records. That girl had been relinquished by her parents, removed from her first life, and labeled as “strange looking, dark, unwanted, and difficult to place,” by those in the business of protecting and safeguarding children in the system.

Recently, I spoke with a U.S. Congresswoman who has a heart for foster kids. She relayed the story of a young intern who shared with the Congresswoman her struggles while in foster care and the trauma of being removed, time and time again. Home after home, rejection after rejection.

The young woman expressed how she had battled with feelings of worthlessness and depression, and had faced moments where taking her own life seemed a better choice than living the life she was in.

This young woman's story is not an isolated one. Of the 500,000 children and youth in U.S. foster care today, how many of these kids carry around the weight of a scarred self-image? How many of them feel unseen and unheard? Invisible? How many of them find it hard to trust? How many of them feel lost and unloved on the inside? How many of them have been adversely labeled due to circumstances surrounding them that have absolutely nothing to do with who they are, or the potential that they hold?

All too often, we don't ask these questions to those of whom foster care directly impacts: the kids. If we asked them, we just might hear what the Congresswoman heard. And, perhaps, that's our fear. We'd have to look deep into a system that is set up to intervene when children are neglected and abused, and we'd have to see that this very system, although well-intended is—more times than we'd like to admit—causing the children it serves further harm.

Our government is parent to 500,000 orphaned-children. I wonder if it really understands their needs. If it asked its children, our government might learn that it's hard to trust when life has shown you that people will leave, neglect, hurt, and harm you. It might also discover that living with the daily reality of rejection scars one's self-image and sense of self-worth. Might those who govern genuinely look into the lives of these kids and experience just how unfair it is for anyone to judge them and label them? Would they be willing to stand in their shoes for just a moment?

Until you are willing to stand in another person's shoes, that person does not exist to you because you don't know their story. We need to stand in the shoes of America's 500,000 orphans because they exist, and they should matter to every one of us.

Oh, how I wish that someone could have told me, as a foster child and international adoptee, that removal from the arms of my birth mother didn't mean that I was bad. That removal was not of my doing. I wish that someone could have told me that I wasn't unwanted. I wasn't a broken child. I was in a broken situation. There's a difference.

And, as much as I longed to find a way back to the girl who lived before intervention and adoption, I wish someone could have told me that home can't be found at some specific place on a map.

Home is a state of mind. Home is a knowing, beyond the shadow of a doubt, that someone loves you and will always be on your side—even when trust comes hard and self-worth seems fleeting.

What if we committed ourselves to sharing these messages with the foster kids

in our communities? Whether we foster them, adopt them, or mentor them, could we—together—help ease their burden and give them a stronger sense of self?

I understand that there are real and urgent reasons why children are removed and placed into foster care. I also know that one parent cannot adequately look after 500,000 children. It takes a village. And, I just want to wake that village up because we are powerful in numbers. America's orphans need us not to slumber while they suffer.

It seems to me that, during these very fragile and confusing times in the life of a foster child, we might do a better job at reminding them of their worth and of their innocence. We might expand upon our own compassion and empathy to give foster kids what they really need: unconditional love. Because when a person feels seen and heard—without judgment—they feel valued. And, that goes a long way in building a stronger sense of self-worth for children and youth in foster care. These kids have never been difficult to place—society just hasn't taken the time to stop, listen, lean in, and find them.

Reprinted with permission from:

<http://michellemadridbranch.com/unconditional-love-building-a-stronger-sense-of-self-worth-for-the-children-and-youth-in-foster-care/>



Why Self-Care Is Essential to Parenting

Caring for children with intense needs can take an emotional (and physical) toll on parents

by Juliann Garey



Parenting can be stressful under the best of circumstances, but moms and dads of children with developmental and mental health challenges often have to deal with strain of a different magnitude. Caring for a child with special needs can become a full-time job — and an overwhelming one at that, if you don't have adequate support. Without enough help, parents may be headed toward caregiver burnout, which negatively affects everyone.

The consequences of chronic stress related to raising kids who have intense needs are real. Studies show that parents of children with developmental, psychiatric or learning disorders are far more likely than others to experience:

- Anxiety
- Depression
- Insomnia
- Fatigue
- Marital problems

According to one British study, chronic stress puts these parents at risk for medical issues as well. This study found that parents of children with either autism or ADHD had significantly higher levels of both cortisol, the stress hormone,

and CRP, a biomarker linked to everything from colorectal cancer to diabetes to heart disease.

The risks, both emotional and physical, to caregivers of challenging children are important to address, for the children's sake as well as the parents'. Below, we look at common contributors to caregiver stress and offer some suggestions to help parents stay healthy, balanced and committed to their kids.

Accepting limits to what you can do

Experts agree that part of avoiding or lessening burnout is to challenge the idea that you are the only one who can help and there is no limit to what you need to do.

Dr. Wendy Blumenthal, an Atlanta-based psychologist, says she sees mothers who reach a breaking point because they are driven to shoulder all the responsibility for their high-needs child. "These supermoms — they're not sleeping, they're constantly anxious, calling every doctor they can think of."

"These parents feel like they should be able to do it all and the first thing to go is basic self-care," says Elaine Taylor Klaus, the cofounder of Impact ADHD, which offers training for parents of kids with ADHD and other disorders. "There are long-term risks of caring for these kids," she says. "And one of them is that parents burn out." Taylor Klaus urges parents to take seriously their own basic self-care including:

- Getting enough sleep every night
- Staying hydrated
- Getting regular exercise
- Spending time away from children

Isolation and exhaustion

When you have a child whose behavior is difficult or whose needs are challenging, feeling cut off from support and empathy can contribute to the stress. Colleagues, neighbors, friends, family — even your spouse can seem to be on another planet. "People cannot understand what you're going through," says Patricia Kandel, who has raised two children with serious mental illness. "There's so much alienation."

By the time her family decided their youngest daughter needed to go into a group home, Kandel says, "I was barely functioning." She, her husband and her 20-year-old daughter were all diagnosed with PTSD "from all the years of living the way we did," and her marriage had become unrecognizable. "It's not a typical marriage. It's survival."

Outside assistance was nowhere to be found. "You can't get a babysitter," Kandel continues. "Our own family wouldn't even help us. We never had any money. I had to be here 24 hours a day."

High-stress and time-intensive situations like this one are also where respite care could play a role, says Jill Kagan, director of Access to Respite Care and Help (ARCH). "Respite care is temporary relief for the parent or the primary caregiver of the child so they can take a break from the responsibilities

of their continuous caregiving,” she explains.

Many parents aren’t aware of the existence of respite care, she says. “They’re so focused on getting services for their child that they may not even stop to think that there are services out there for them as well. It seems out of the realm of possibility.” But it isn’t. ARCH’s website includes an introduction to respite care and ways for parents to locate respite care by state as well as a list of funding sources. (ABCs of Respite: A Consumer’s Guide for Family Caregivers)

It takes a village, but you need to ask

Another obstacle to getting help is that you may be afraid to ask. But in truth, people who genuinely want to help may not know how.

Parents need to be fairly direct. “Could you watch the kids on Wednesday so that I can get a haircut?” “If I give you a list, could you pick up the groceries?” These specific requests make it easier for family and friends to pitch in while not feeling out of their depth.

“People are often willing to help you in small ways,” says Dr. Blumenthal. “Like watching your non-challenged child so you can take your special-needs child to therapy.” Proposing babysitting exchanges with another parent (or even network of parents) of another special needs child is another way to get some time away, and some needed perspective.

Getting out and about

Many parents of kids with psychiatric and developmental challenges find that they lose touch with friends and activities outside the home. “Fifty percent of my sessions are just parent sessions” to help navigate that reality, says Dr. Matthew Rouse, a clinical psychologist at the Child Mind Institute.

Taking care of your emotional and social health is just as important as practicing more routine self-care. Several experts, including Dr. Rouse, emphasized the importance of reclaiming an adult-only social life. Dr. Rouse asks questions like:

- What are you doing for yourselves?
- What are you as a couple doing to support each other?
- When’s the last time you had a date night?
- When did you last spend time with friends?

To mitigate feelings of isolation, Dr. Rouse recommends:

- Finding a support network outside the immediate family. There are online and in-person support groups for just about every diagnosis out there.
- Spending time with friends who have no connection to your child. “Support groups are great,” Rouse says “but that’s still doing something for your child.”
- Planning social activities that put you among people who care about you.
- Time for activities that are purely pleasurable — reading,

running, painting.

“The way I’ve framed it with parents who are resistant to this,” Dr. Rouse says, “is to tell them, ‘It’s like you’re depositing money into a bank and building up cash reserves. To have more to give your child, you have to build up those reserves.’”

Nurturing the marriage

Throughout, parents need to pay close attention to perhaps the most vulnerable relationship of all — the one between spouses. Experts suggest that parents make it a point of maintaining their relationship with small steps they can continue, and that they make it a point of letting the marriage exist outside of roles as caregivers.

“I encourage parents to take little breaks such as when their child is in a therapy session or in school,” says Dr. Cindy Ariel, a Philadelphia-based psychologist who specializes in working with families of special-needs children. Other small steps you can take might include an in-home break or “date.” Even if you don’t have help, there are still ways of finding time to devote to your relationship so that you and your partner don’t end up feeling like you’re merely tag teaming as caregivers.

Maintaining a healthy marriage and effective caregiving team is made much harder when parents disagree about treatment strategies and approaches. Andrea Weissman’s son Ethan, now 12, has learning, attention and social challenges. She and her husband often disagree on what is considered “normal” behavior.

“He thinks a lot of stuff is more normative than I do and tells me I’m ‘catastrophizing,’” she says. “We certainly don’t parent in a consistent manner — which is not good for Ethan.” Or for her—she feels she drinks too much as a result.

This is a common situation, according to Dr. Blumenthal. “There are information seekers and information deniers,” she says, “people who want to dismiss the diagnosis or write off their child’s symptoms as normal.” When one parent is a “seeker” and the other a “denier”— which she says is often, especially when a child is first being diagnosed — the conflict can put an enormous strain on the relationship.

“If you have differences around the child’s treatment, try to see things from the other person’s perspective,” Dr. Rouse suggests. “That will help you to reconnect.” And that’s easier if you’ve laid the groundwork with even something as simple as a “nightly check-in” that can help you and your partner stay close.

“Just making time before bed to tell each other about the highlight and lowlight of the day” is beneficial, he says. “So it’s focused more on the person’s emotional experience during these events, and less like a planning or logistics meeting. It can build intimacy and empathy just through sharing and listening.”

Reprinted with permission from:

<https://childmind.org/article/fighting-caregiver-burnout-special-needs-kids/>

Waiting for a Forever HOME!

The following are children available on the Nebraska Heart Gallery.



Name: Emma

15 years old

Emma is an energetic and talkative girl that likes school, playing outside and trying new things. Her confident attitude makes it easy for her to speak her mind and she also enjoys being around others. Emma likes to joke and laugh; she is very funny and has a great sense of humor! Her personality shines through and she thrives with structure and routine. Emma is a sweet girl who is very

caring and loves being a big helper with younger peers. As with all children, Emma loves positive reinforcement and she is looking forward to finding her forever family.



Name: Timothy

13 years old

Timothy, or "Tim" as he prefers, is a very sweet and caring child. He loves to tell stories and is incredibly animated! When he grows up, Tim would like to be a firefighter or a policeman; either would be good for him because he is very social and loves to talk! He enjoys video games, bowling, reading, and is also a big fan of superheroes. Tim has demonstrated good

skills when presented with consistency and structure. Tim has expressed that he would prefer a two parent household that is loving and can be patient with him while he continues to work on developing his social skills and interactions with peers and adults alike. He very much looks forward to meeting his forever family!

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

When the weather outside is frightful, how about having a Hot Cocoa Bar!

For a warm treat set up a Hot Cocoa Bar. Set out delicious mix-in's to enhance your cocoa. Stir your cocoa with a candy cane or chocolate covered spoon. Add some marshmallows, or a scoop of ice cream and top your cocoa with some whipping cream. Sprinkle some cocoa powder or colorful sprinkles on top of the whipping cream.

Hot Cocoa Bar

Mix It In!

Crushed Candy Cane
Chocolate Chips
Peanut Butter Chips
White Chocolate Chips
Hersey Kisses
Thinly Chopped Andes Mints
Mini Marshmallows
Caramels
Chopped Up Candy Bars
Chocolate Truffles

Fatten It Up!

Scoop of ice cream
Whipped Cream

Stir In Some Flavor!

Candy Cane
Peppermint Stick
Rock Candy Stick
Cinnamon Stick
Chocolate Covered Spoons



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<https://hubpages.com/games-hobbies/bunco-themes-for-december>

Membership Drive

The Nebraska Foster & Adoptive Parent Association empowers, supports, and advocates for Nebraska families by promoting safety, permanency, and well-being of our children. Your membership supports the important mission of NFAPA. There are several membership levels to accommodate everyone in the foster care, adoptive care, and child welfare community.

NFAPA offers four annual membership levels; Single Family (\$25), Family (\$35), Supporting (\$75) and Organization (\$150). In order to enrich NFAPA's mission, we are offering a new membership program – Friends of NFAPA. This membership level is billed \$5 monthly.

To join, simply mail in the membership form included in this newsletter or visit

www.nfapa.org. Your membership will ensure that Nebraska's most vulnerable children will have their greatest chance at success!

WHAT FOSTER CARE HAS TAUGHT MY SONS



By Shannon Hanson

One of the most-asked questions I get about being a foster parent is if it was hard on my bio kids to have foster kids in and out of our house. The answer is absolutely, yes! But just like running a marathon, building a house, or completing a degree, hard doesn't necessarily equal bad.

I remember the day we told our oldest son we were getting licensed to take in kids who needed a safe place to live while their parents worked hard to create stability for them in their own home. I asked my son what he thought about sharing his space, and toys, and parents with other kids who needed them. He immediately said that he would love to do that. Within the week he was asking any kids he saw walking alone anywhere we went if they needed a home and wanted to come home with us. We had to remind him that taking a kid off the street was called kidnapping not fostering and while we laughed at his excitement I knew how badly he wanted any child around us to feel safe and loved. I knew his big heart would be a huge asset to any child we had living in our home but I also knew that asking him to open that beautiful heart to foster care was going to hurt a bit too.

As the boys have gotten older and we have seen placements come and go it has been amazing to watch them process all that is required of us as we strive to create calm in a place of chaos. Foster care has been hard on them, stretched them beyond themselves, challenged everything they knew to be true before it all began. They have had to learn that hurting people hurt people. That most of our problems seem small compared to what many others have to deal with. And that the only person we can ever truly change is ourselves. There were times where they asked us to take a break, begged us to let them “keep” a child in our home forever (and had to learn that we have no control over where they end up but we do get

to love them well while they are here), and used words like “caseworker,” “GAL,” “home supervisor” and “county worker” like they were common knowledge to anyone else their age. Through all the ups and downs of foster care, I saw that even though it hurts at times the empathy, compassion, and love that grew in their hearts was overwhelming.

Then my oldest came home from school last year and told me that there was a kid who other kids were having trouble with because they would throw fits and be mean at recess. The other kids were talking about him and told everyone else to stop being friends with him. My son said he stepped in and told them that maybe that kid was just doing the best that he could and that maybe being kind to him no matter what might work better. I couldn't believe that he was able to see past his behavior to the person underneath, something I know he never would have comprehended if it weren't for foster care.

I hear people say all the time that they just couldn't foster because it would hurt too much to say goodbye. Or that they don't know how they could love someone so much and let them go. Foster care has taught our family how to live in the moment and to appreciate each moment for what it is because tomorrow is not guaranteed. We know that even if forever never happens, the change that happens today stays with someone forever, and no time spent loving someone else is ever wasted. I know it's hard to stretch but hard is ok. And sometimes hard is more than ok. Hard turns into something more beautiful than it would have been if the only thing we ever knew was easy.

Shannon is a Colorado adoptive parent. As a foster parent, she was certified by Hope & Home. She is currently supporting other families on their foster parenting journeys.

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<https://co4kids.org/community/what-foster-care-has-taught-my-sons>

Advisor Role

In 2016 the Governor signed into law LB 746 that created the Strengthening Families Act Committee (SFA) under the Nebraska Children's Commission. This advisory group focuses on normalcy for foster youth. A subcommittee of the SFA is The Another Planned Permanent Living Arrangement (APPLA). APPLA has created a Tip Sheet to help address the Advisor role on the transition team for those children 14 and older.

Below is information on the Advisor Role but more information and a TIP sheet for Caseworkers can be found at:
<http://www.childrens.nebraska.gov/Subcommittees/APPLASubcommittee.html>

Strengthening Families Act Youth Advisor

ADVISOR TIP SHEET



ADVISOR Definition

Definition of Advisor –

By definition, an advisor involves speaking on behalf of a person to ensure that their rights and needs are recognized. The SFA Advisor is an individual identified by the youth to be designated as the youth's advisor and advisor on the application of Reasonable and Prudent Parenting Standards (RPPS). RPPS allow foster parents to use their best judgment in making day-to-day decisions about activities foster youth are involved in. This applies to activities and being able to participate in age-appropriate extracurricular, academic, enrichment, and social activities that promote a sense of "normalcy" while in foster care. Advocacy is about increasing the amount of control that a person has over their own lives, the advisor needs to ensure they are working in a way that fosters independence.



ROLES OF An Advisor

The Advisor must agree to be a participant on the team (as defined by the youth and team).

- Build relationships and communicate with team members to best serve the youth.
 - o Team members that may be a part of the team
 - ◆ Family Permanency Specialist (FPS) – Case Manager
 - ◆ Guardian ad Litem (GAL) – Legal advisor for the youth, attorney who represents the youth's interests at court
 - ◆ Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) – Volunteer who gathers information and make recommendations to the judge
 - ◆ Independent Living Specialist (ILS) – Worker assigned to help set and meet goals of the youth in order to build self-sufficiency skills.
 - ◆ Foster parents – Foster parents provide care for children who cannot safely remain in their own home.
- Roles, responsibilities, participation, and communication may change based on the youth's current situation.
- The advisor has the option to withdraw from the position at any time.
- The youth has the option to rescind the offer to advisor at any time if they feel the individual is not working in their best interest.
- Specific situations the youth would like the advisor to assist them with:

Identify how the advisor is going to communicate. How is the youth's voice going to be heard?

Five Tips for Adoptive Parents Addressing Racial Incidents with Children

1

Create a space for them to talk openly and honestly about the incident. Educate your children about the history of race in this country and give them the vocabulary to discuss these incidents.

2

Make certain that they feel safe. Remind your children that you love them unconditionally and emphasize that you will do everything in your power to fight for them.

3

Share your feelings. Express sadness, compassion and outrage, but moderate your feelings so that your children don't feel as though they have to take care of you.

4

Affirm what they are feeling. Provide support and validation for their feelings but recognize that you have a different lived experience.

5

Take action. Take your children to a march, write a letter to the president, or donate your time to a local charity. Empower your children to speak up and do something to right a wrong.

Indian Child Welfare Act Under Fire: Federal Judge Strikes Down 40-Year-Old Law, Appeals Could Lead to Supreme Court

October 7, 2018 | by John Kelly

The Indian Child Welfare Act, passed in 1978 to prevent the removal of Native American children from their families and tribes, has been deemed unconstitutional by a federal judge.

A federal judge has declared unconstitutional a 40-year-old law that was passed to protect against the separation of American Indian children from their families and tribes by state-run child welfare systems.

In *Brackeen v. Zinke*, U.S. District Judge Reed O'Connor ruled in favor of three states – Texas, Indiana and Louisiana – and several foster and adoptive couples, declaring that the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) was a race-based law lacking a present-day articulation of its need. Citing a recent Supreme Court ruling on sports gambling, O'Connor also ruled that ICWA unfairly expected states and tribes to enforce federal standards.

Though ICWA has been contested in court myriad times since its passage in 1978, this is the first time that a federal judge has put the future of the law in jeopardy.

No federal court “has determined any provision of ICWA to be unconstitutional, even though these arguments have been raised in various courts, including the Supreme Court,” said Chrissi Ross Nimmo, deputy attorney general of Cherokee Nation, in an email to *The Chronicle of Social Change*.

Critics of ICWA praised O'Connor, saying it rolls back a law that puts Native American children at risk.

The decision “is a great victory for the rights of Native American children throughout the United States, who deserve the same strong protections against abuse and neglect as their peers of other races,” said Timothy Sandefur, vice president for litigation at the Goldwater Institute, which filed a friend of

the court brief in the case. “ICWA denies them that protection and prioritizes their race over all other considerations. That’s immoral, and today’s decision rightly holds that it’s also unconstitutional.”

The Cherokee Nation and three other tribal defendants will seek an immediate stay of the ruling and appeal O'Connor’s decision to the Fifth Circuit, Nimmo said. The other defendants in the case are leaders of two federal agencies: the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), and the Department of the Interior.

“We remain optimistic that the federal government will continue to defend the constitutionality of ICWA as they have done thus far,” Nimmo said.

“The Department of the Interior strongly opposes any diminishment of ICWA’s protections for Indian children, families, and tribes,” said Tara Mac Lean Sweeney, assistant secretary for Indian affairs at the agency. “The Department will continue to work with tribes and states to implement ICWA moving forward.”

HHS has not issued any public statement yet about the decision.

If the Fifth Circuit upholds O'Connor’s decision, the fate of ICWA could wind up in the hands of the U.S. Supreme Court.

Protecting Tribes

ICWA was passed in 1978 at a time when a staggering number of Indian children were taken from reservations and placed with white families, often far away from their tribes and families-of-origin. In the 1960s and 70s, the Association on American Indian Affairs found that 25 to 35 percent of all Native children were being removed from their families.

The law mandates that, when a child is removed from home for abuse or neglect, state and tribal child welfare agencies take clear steps to keep children connected to their families and tribes. Placement with non-Indian foster families should thus be a placement of last resort in the foster care continuum. Adoptions by non-Indian families can be challenged for up to two years by tribes if they believe the parent’s consent for it was obtained by fraud or under duress.

Opponents of ICWA have long argued that the law endangers Indian children. Attorneys with the conservative Goldwater Institute have challenged ICWA nearly a dozen times on grounds that the law “discriminates” against Native children, placing the tribe’s best interests above those of the child.

Nimmo dismissed those claims as mostly emanating from think tanks that see rolling back ICWA as a “first step in the erosion of tribal sovereignty.”

“If they are allowed to take our children, then they are allowed to steal the future of our tribes and undermine our very status as the indigenous people to this country,” Nimmo said.

Some youth advocacy groups have filed briefs critical of ICWA’s reach – though not opposed in principle to the law – in previous court challenges, including the Center for Adoption

Policy, Advokids and the National Council for Adoption.

Three Families, Three States

This current case centers on three non-Indian families seeking to adopt children of Native American ancestry. Two of the children have parents or grandparents who are enrolled members of tribes; one child's biological father is an unregistered descendant of a tribe.

The Brackeen family, of Texas, is seeking to adopt a baby from Arizona identified in the case as A.L.M. The child's biological parents – the mom a member of the Navajo Nation and the father a member of the Cherokee Nation – both support the Brackeens' efforts to adopt.

The adoption process is moving forward, but under ICWA, either tribe could challenge it for up to two years to argue for a placement with a relative or another Native American family.

The states involved in the case as plaintiffs claim that the requirements of ICWA are a burden on their ability to recruit foster and adoptive parents, and find suitable placements for Indian children. The Texas Department of Family Preservation Services asserts that, because of the process dictated by ICWA, the Brackeens said they were unlikely to seek adoption of another Native American child.

Race and States

U.S. District Judge Reed O'Connor, writing the decision for the District Court for the Northern District of Texas, found ICWA to be a race-based law that requires "strict scrutiny" aimed at avoiding unnecessarily broad protections. This assertion contradicts previous court findings that ICWA is a political protection that requires only a "rational basis."

In his opinion, O'Connor, who was appointed in 2007 by George W. Bush, criticized government and tribal lawyers for failing to offer a defense of the law's importance.

"The Federal Defendants have not offered a compelling governmental interest that the ICWA's racial classification serves, or argued that the classification is narrowly tailored to that end," O'Connor wrote. "Because the government did not prove — or attempt to prove — why the ICWA survives strict scrutiny, it has not carried its burden to defend the ICWA."

Nimmo said that "decades of federal case law has held that statutes that give unique benefits or burdens to Indian people and Indian tribes are not race-based," and that "there was no reason to justify why ICWA withstands 'strict scrutiny' because the law is ... not subject to such review."

It will surely be a point of debate in the Fifth Circuit appeal. Nimmo said that even if the law were to be considered race-based, it would stand up to strict scrutiny.

"Sections 1901 and 1902 [of ICWA] list Congressional findings on the need for ICWA and the federal government's role as trustee for Indian tribes and their people," Nimmo said.

O'Connor also ruled that ICWA amounted to an unconstitutional shift of costs and enforcement to state governments. He cited the recent *Murphy v. NCAA* case,

which this year ended the federal limitations on states permitting sports gambling. The gambling ban violated the anti-commandeering doctrine because it "regulated states rather than individuals."

ICWA, O'Connor judged, violates the same principles. Under the law, he wrote, "Congress shifts all responsibility to the states, yet 'unequivocally dictates' what they must do."

Destined for High Court?

Should this case reach the high court, soon operating for the first time with a full slate of nine justices, it will be the second high-profile ICWA case in five years. The other, a 2013 case called *Adoptive Couple v. Baby Girl*, involved a Native American father fighting the adoption of his daughter by a non-Indian couple in South Carolina.

The court did not strike down ICWA or any provision of it in that case, but did make clear that its protections were limited.

"The Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) was enacted to help preserve the cultural identity and heritage of Indian tribes, but under the State Supreme Court's reading, the Act would put certain vulnerable children at a great disadvantage solely because an ancestor — even a remote one — was an Indian," said Samuel Alito, writing for the majority.

Native Americans in Foster Care

There were 17,896 American Indian or Alaska Native youth in foster care in 2012, according to federal data obtained by *The Chronicle*. That number had risen to 20 percent, to 21,576, by 2016.

In most states, these youth make up a tiny fraction of the overall foster care population. But they make up a third of all foster youth in six states: Minnesota, Oklahoma, Montana, North Dakota, Alaska and South Dakota.

Federal data also shows an increase in foster homes that identify as American Indian or Alaska Native households. There were 3,793 such foster homes in 2016, about 1,000 more than there were in 2012.

Sixty-four percent of those homes are in the six states with the highest percentage of Native foster youth, but it is hardly an even split. For example, Oklahoma has more than 1,000 Indian foster homes by itself. In South Dakota, where 60 percent of foster youth are American Indian, federal data shows only 16 American Indian foster homes.

A recent award-winning investigation into South Dakota's child welfare system by NPR found that the number of Indian youth in foster care was wildly disproportionate to their proportion of society, and that 90 percent of those youth were not kept with their families or tribes.

Christie Renick contributed to this article.

Note: This article was updated on Monday, October 8 to further clarify the circumstances under which a tribe could appeal an adoption.

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Foster Care and Adoption

– No Ordinary Walk in the Valley

She sat in my lap and screamed and sobbed. Her denim jumper was damp; a mix of sweat and tears.

My husband had just called me because she would not stop screaming. I met him outside the bank beside his truck and I took my raging and screaming child into the quiet confines of my car. Her shrieks echoed loudly and I held her hands that were trying to claw her face. I ached to touch and heal her pain. She was hysterical and shaking and I had no idea how to meet the need she was desperately voicing; and the hardest part was knowing that she didn't even know what the need was. Something minor had triggered a spiral into unfathomable darkness and fear, and it took a long time before my voice penetrated the depths and she resurfaced a shaking and hiccuping ball of exhaustion that collapsed on me.

I sit in my car and here is another moment that I don't know what to do, or where to turn. In the world of foster and adoption, there are lots of parenting tips, attachment theories, and science-based methods that in these big moments...it mostly feels like squirting an inferno with a water gun. I have sat in this space many times over the years and there comes this realization that I cannot fix, heal, piece back together such a shattered heart. Instead it is a long journey of sitting in the dark moment and holding on tight.

In the Lord of the Rings movie, my favorite part is when Frodo is so burdened by the darkness and pain he is carrying, that he collapses. His friend Sam says the following:

In the deepest pits of pain and broken, I cannot carry trauma for my child. I can only cry, "Up you get. Come on baby, I can't carry it for you, but I can carry you and it as well."

And so I just sat in the car as the moments ticked by. There was no special methodology, trauma-informed parenting technique, or intervention. It was just an ugly, raw moment where I picked her up and she told me where we would go. And she took me to a place where her cries weren't heard and she was hungry and scared. I sat with her and it was lacking in methodology and parenting technique, it was walking her pain and it hurt.

The awful part, the heart-wrenching-sobbing-mess part, the dark-rage-and-bottomless-tears part is this, you should not foster or adopt if you think you can rescue, redeem or save a child. Because you cannot. You are not their savior, their redeemer, or their rescuer. By choosing this path, you are choosing to do something HARD. And I'll be honest, a very human part of me wants to warn you away. You see, I listen every week to broken, shattered and torn-apart families. I watch every week as children from hard backgrounds struggle to emerge from the darkness of trauma and cycle into the same sabotage, shame, and blame cycle. It is here that we see our ineptitude and inability to repair, and it is here that we come

to the end of ourselves and realize this was never our job.

We started fostering over ten years ago. I walked onto the stage of foster care and I was ready to save a child. Months into our first placements and I found that I had crawled off the stage and was now working in the dust below. Foster care and adoption was not my stage to strut upon as the star of the day. Instead I felt myself crawling in the muck and the mire, sifting in the wreckage as a lonely stage carpenter trying to rebuild broken framework without instructions.

I began reading everything I could about raising children from hard places and attended classes and trainings to find the magical answer. I learned about brain development and the science behind trauma. I studied and started to apply what I had learned. And I'll be blatantly honest; I'm human and there are times I don't "parent with connection" and I cannot reach my inner-Karyn Purvis* to save my life. However they say experience is the greatest teacher. And what has been the greatest teacher for me, is the day to day valley with my kids. It's the moments that I cannot fix and instead just shoulder the load with them in the moment.

What does the valley look like?

- supporting reunification even when every fiber of your being is shred in two.
- watching them drive away in the back of the caseworker's car knowing that the parents they were removed from; are still the same parents one year later.
- it's crying in your bed at night because you want to quit because this kid is SO HARD, and nothing is working, and then getting up the next morning and not quitting.
- when you're so tired because the child needs medication every three hours and there is no break at night.
- when your bank account has \$12 and you need \$30 in gas because the nurse on the unit called and asked you to return because your foster baby is fading.
- when you go to church and everyone asks where you have been and says how good you look, and inside you are falling apart.
- it's the nights you don't sleep because sometimes there really are monsters under their bed, and the dark is truly scary.
- it's hearing that "I could never do that", and thinking, "I can't do it either, but I'm here and it's the only choice".
- It's answering the question, "Why didn't my real mom want me?"

The valley is lonely – Even when surrounded with the most amazing and well-meaning friends, you will be lonely. You are going to struggle and you will look for answers from the attachment experts and the behavior methods, and as a fellow lonely-struggler, I encourage you to remember that character and substance are found within hardship and adversity.

And sometimes, you can only cry, “Up you get. Come on baby, I can’t carry it for you, but I can carry you and it as well.” And you dig in and you walk the valley because you were born to do this.

We are not built for the mountains and the dawns and aesthetic affinities, those are for moments of inspiration, that is all. We are built for the valley, and that is where we have to prove our mettle.

—Oswald Chambers

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<http://www.ransomforisrael.com/contact/>

We Are More Than Our Adoption.

by Kristin Berry

Our society prides itself on titles, positions, rankings, and statistics. It’s how we identify pro-athletes, leaders of major corporations, and our favorite sports teams. Often, it’s how we identify ourselves. But we have learned that, in our family, we are much more than a title.

Ok, Ok I understand our blog is called Confessions of an Adoptive Parent. It’s easy to think that we eat sleep and breathe adoption. Our title is a brand but it isn’t all that we are. Adoption, to us, is more like a surname. A last name is an identifier but it isn’t a person’s sole identity.

Last summer I was volunteering with lovely woman at an event at a local park. We were assigned to the craft table and we were both so grateful to be located in a well shaded area. The air was sticky and oppressive. Even the children were moving from activity to activity in a sluggish slow motion. As laughing groups of children meandered in and out of our station, we had a chance to get to know a little more about each other. We talked about our grandchildren, husbands and children. We laughed at some of the funny things we had in common. She shared about her faith and why she came to church alone. We both agreed that one day our greatest hope is to sit side by side with our entire families in worship. As we swept up glitter and google eyes off the floor of the concrete shelter, she told me a little known fact. The spelling of her last name had been changed in the generation just before hers. She was related to a very well-known criminal. Her family wasn’t necessarily ashamed but they were tired of their identifier being tied to the actions of one single person. It was a part of their story but it certainly wasn’t the whole story.

A last name is an identifier but it isn’t a person’s sole identity.

I thought about her words as I packed my kids in the backseat of my rusty Suburban. I rolled all the windows down and began the drive home. We were all too exhausted to talk and I think we were all wishing we had saved enough to fix the air-conditioner. I stopped at the drive through window of a fast food restaurant and ordered 7 ice-cream cones. It seemed like the entire city had the same idea so we sat in silence for a long time waiting to pull forward. My 8-year-old suggested we buy a cone for daddy and then remembered he was out of town. He burst out laughing at the thought of giving the gift of a melted ice-cream cone. His laugh is contagious and it took us a minute to catch our breath. I found myself asking, “What would you want people to know about you? What makes you, you?” Here are a few of the things my kids want you to know about who we really are...

“I am a good singer, my room is messy and I love to read. I am going to be a writer one day.”

“I am going to be a master Lego builder when I grow up. My kids will think it’s so cool that I work for Legos. I also like bats. I kind of wish I was still a baby but I’m glad I don’t poop my pants.”

“Ha Ha Ha, he said ‘poop!’ I have a friend named Miles, I don’t like sports and my dog is Mandela. I am enthusiastic. Oh and Jesus made me.”

“I love to dance. I like gymnastics and being outside. I like to help others and I like serving at church.”

“Jesus made me, that’s why I’m so handsome.”

“I’m good at football. School is hard. I wish you would let me get two ice-cream cones.”

“I have two moms, two dads, a chicken, 7 siblings plus 5 more bio-siblings.”

The conversation contained a few more references to buggers and farts before I threatened to pull out of line and forego the treat we had all been waiting for. They stifled their giggles and I smiled. We are an adoptive family, that will always be one of our identifiers. It isn’t all that we are. We are a family of faith. We are a large family. We are silly. We are a preacher’s family. We are a loud family. We are a theater family, football family, church family, Indiana family. We are dog people. We more recently have become cat people too. We are an adoptive family. We are more than our adoption. We are a family.

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<https://confessionsofanaadoptiveparent.com/we-are-more-than-our-adoption/#more-6780>

NOVEMBER IS NATIONAL FOSTER MONTH!

**Consider Donating on Giving Tuesday:
November 27th, 2018**

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
Box Butte General Hospital, Alliance Room, 2101 Box Butte Ave.
6:00-7:30 p.m.
November 15, 2018
- **Scottsbluff Support Group:** Meets the second Tuesday of the month. Registration is required.
Contact Jolie Camden to register: 308-672-3658
Sugar Factory Road-*please do not bring in Pepsi products*.
6:00-7:30 p.m.
November 13, 2018
- **Chadron Support Group:** Registration is required.
Contact Jolie Camden to register: 308-672-3658
CHA Daycare and Home School, 237 Morehead
6:00-7:30 p.m.
November 19, 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.
November 13, 2018

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. 6:15-8:00 pm
Contact the NFAPA office to register for Family Events or any questions.
402-476-2273
For more information or to RSVP, contact Laurie Miller at Laurie@nfapa.org
Family Event: August 1. Meetings: August 27, September 24, October 22, 2018

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

No Longer Fostering? We Would Love To Hear From You.

We are interested to learn about families leaving foster care and the reasons behind their decision. This information can assist us to advocate for future policies to support foster families. If you are a former foster parent, please take a moment to provide feedback on your foster care experience.

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/nfapaexitsurvey>

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, November 10, 2018

from 9 am – 4 pm: Lincoln

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 NFAPAyour 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, \$ _____