

Families First

a newsletter for Nebraska Families

September/October 2015

N F A P A

What is a Bonding Assessment?

by Tom Castles, Communication & Development Associate

A bonding assessment is a study that determines how a foster child has bonded with his foster or birth parents. It hinges upon a central question: if the child was removed from the current placement situation, would his overall well being be improved, hindered or unlikely to change at all?

The answer to this question is determined by a child psychologist. During the bonding assessment, she studies the child's behavior as well as his interaction with the foster or biological parent and other members of the household. While the psychologist may also interview members of the family together or in subgroups, she is most interested in the child's behavior.

Each child psychologist may handle a bonding assessment differently, but there are many key components of a child-parent relationship that most evaluators across the nation tend to look for. These include but are not limited to:

- *The frequency and nature of touching between a parent and child*
- *Comfort and guidance seeking behavior by the child*
- *The parent's ability to respond effectively to the child's needs*
- *Whether the child seems upset if separation occurs during the session*

The psychologist uses the information she gathers to decide, in her professional opinion, if the child would or would not benefit from permanent placement in the home. Oftentimes, the psychologist will offer her findings as testimony in court. This usually happens when a judge is trying to decide whether to terminate the parental rights of the child's biological parents or determine if the current foster parents should be permitted to adopt the child.

While the child psychologist's professional opinion does carry weight in court, it is the judge, not the child psychologist, who has final say in where a child will stay. The bonding assessment is simply one part of a much larger process that helps determine what is best for the child.

Still, child psychologists are experts, and their testimony is taken seriously by judges. Thanks to these psychologists, judges know that children will bond with adults who meet

their physical and emotional needs even if they are not related. They also know that having strong bonded relationships is critical in child development. It is the judge's job to minimize any trauma the child would experience by staying in a bad situation or being removed from a good one. A bonding assessment is the test that allows him to do that job.



As much as the bonding assessment may seem like a test of your behavior, the child psychologist's determination is rooted firmly in the child's behavior. Many foster and biological parents who have undergone bonding assessments will give you the same advice: be yourself. There's no need to perform or to try eliciting responses from a child. The beauty of a bonding assessment is that children's actions – especially very young ones' – are almost always authentic. If you've bonded with the child in your care, and you act as you usually would during the assessment, then the child will show just how strong your relationship is with his behavior.

If you'd like more specific information regarding bonding assessments in New Jersey, reach out to your Foster and Adoptive Family Services Family Advocate (FFA) today. Those outside of New Jersey seeking more information should contact their local case worker.

By Tom Castles, Communication and Development Associate, Foster and Adoptive Family Services (www.fafsonline.org) Originally published on www.foster-care-newsletter.com

Nebraska Foster & Adoptive Parent Association

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Attention Foster Parents!

Earn Your Foster Parent Credits While Getting the Chance to win a Great Prize!

Answer these 9 questions from this newsletter 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.

Just answer the following 9 questions and send us your answers! There are a variety of ways to do this. You can email the information to Felicia@nfapa.org, send the questionnaire from the newsletter to the NFAPA office at 2431 Fairfield Street, Suite C, Lincoln, NE, print off this questionnaire from our website, www.nfapa.org (under newsletters) and fill out/send in by email or mail or you can go to survey monkey and do the questionnaire on line at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/VLDX6V5>. 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. T or F, When a child enters my family, they are loved unconditionally and there is no difference between them.
2. Through our _____, through our _____, through our _____, and through our hugs, we may all begin to show every child we meet our love.
3. T or F, Having a strong bonded relationship is critical in child development.
4. The bonding assessment is simply one part of a much larger process that helps determine _____.
5. Finish the sentence: When a child is placed in custody under foster care, the intention is _____.
6. What is a key provision in the Preventing Sex Trafficking and Strengthening Families Act?
7. Puppets create a _____ environment?
8. T or F, When using puppets to help your children with their emotions, use open-ended questions?
9. Name two superhero's that were adopted as children.

Name: _____

Address: _____

Email: _____

Phone #: _____

Issue: Families First Newsletter: September/October 2015

A Fun Way To Teach Children to Control Emotions

June 29, 2015 by Penelope

My kids and I loved the Disney/Pixar movie, Inside Out! (Have you read **my Inside Out movie review** for foster/adoptive parents?)

What makes the Inside Out movie a great tool in parenting is that it gives kids a language to talk about the emotions they are feeling. Getting your children to talk about their emotions can be quite frustrating as a parent.

And now that Wal-Mart has the Inside Out plush characters, a parent can use them as puppets to get children talking about their emotions.

How can puppets help children talk about their emotions?

Puppets create a playful environment. Play is safety in a child's eyes. It's difficult for a child to be guarded in the midst



of play. Using puppets to communicate complicated feelings gives a child a safe way to communicate what's going on with them. During play, children are more willing to express their feelings.

To a child, talking with a puppet can feel safer than speaking with an adult, which can be quite scary.

Tips on using puppets to communicate emotions:

- *Have the child choose an Inside Out plush toy of an emotion. (Joy, Anger, Sadness, Fear, Disgust) The goal is to have the child become the character and talk as the emotion.*
- *Begin with helping the child tell a story as the emotion. — For example, "My name is ANGER and I get really mad when you don't give me candy for supper." (Remember that the emotion is speaking to you and not the child)*
- *Show empathy. "I understand why you would be angry."*

- *Use open-ended questions in your puppet show to allow the child to lead the discussion.*
 - *What happened when _____?*
 - *Why do you feel _____ (the mood of the puppet he has picked)?*
 - *What did you do when _____?*
 - *Did that make you feel better?*
 - *How do you think that made someone else feel?*
 - *What else could you do?*
 - *How would that make you feel?*
- *Point out that it is okay to have emotions, even if it feels uncomfortable.*
- *Help your child realize that emotions can affect what he does, BUT that he has choices about how to act when having that emotion.*
- *Explain that if he doesn't like what he is feeling, he can do something — like talking to someone about how he feels.*
- *At the end of each story, discuss with your child ways to cope with each feeling. "When you're feeling mad, you can take three deeps breaths." "When feel you sad, it's okay to cry."*

Also, here's a **song about emotions** you can teach your children ways to control emotions.

If you're JOYful and you know it – Laugh out loud
If you're ANGRY and you know it – Breathe in deep
If you're SAD and you know it – You can cry
If you're SCARED and you know it – Hug your dad

This shop has been compensated by Collective Bias, Inc. and its advertiser. All opinions are mine alone. #InsideOutEmotions #CollectiveBias

<http://foster2forever.com/2015/06/inside-out-control-emotions.html>

NFAPA upcoming In-service Training

Presented By Cynthia Downey (CENPATICO)

"Hope for Healing"

Part 1-Attachments, Relationships & Blue Prints

Part 2-Attachment Trauma and the Brain

Monday, November 9, 2015

Good Shepherd Lutheran Church

11204 S. 204th Street, Gretna

6:00 pm-9:00 pm

Free Training but NO Childcare offered

Send RSVP to Felicia@nfapa.org

Tuesday, November 10, 2015

Peace Lutheran Church

2710 28th Street, Columbus

6:00 pm-9:00 pm

Free Training and Childcare Provided

The Adopted Child from the Inside Out

July 7, 2015 Practicals, Stories, Trauma emotions, movies

Go see **Disney's Inside Out** and THEN if you want a window into the mind of an adopted child....specifically a traumatized adopted child...OR if you want a way to talk to your children about what an adopted child may be thinking/feeling – then read this:

Imagine the first emotion being born in your soul is Sadness rather than Joy. The first memories – the core memories – are, from that point on, colored by Sadness – the sadness of abandonment/rejection. Your personality islands are not Family Island, Friendship Island, Honesty Island, Goofball Island or Hockey Island...Instead they are Orphanage Island in place of Family Island, Lonely/Abuse Island instead of Friendship Island, Survival Island (where fantasy, the unknown and lying all collide) instead of Goofball Island, and Space Island (where the mind just blanks out into no man's land) instead of Hockey (or any other hobby) Island.

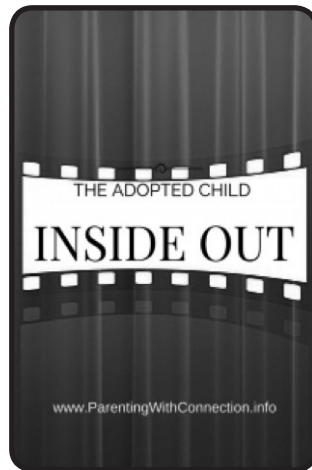
All of these unique and traumatic personality islands are what make you YOU and Sadness, as already mentioned, has colored all your core memories. All of this pains you so terribly you try to purge Sadness- because you just can't take it anymore – and give the controls over to Fear, Anger and Disgust (which is more aptly named Shame in orphan world).

The Train of Thought circles those Personality Islands all day long.

Then along comes a family who recognizes your Sadness – not because they really know you – but because they understand your circumstances can only be described as sad. They probably don't see the Anger and Shame yet...though they may see the Fear. All they see is the sad circumstance and they feel compelled to change the circumstance for you. Rarely do they think past that.

Each member of this adoptive family is generally operated by Joy. Compared to your life – their core memories are mostly colored by Joy...or at least an adult perspective that has come to know Joy. And Joy is what controls their pursuit of you. They joyfully embrace you and joyfully bring you into their home.

But then, their Joy collides with your Anger, Fear and Shame and they just want you to feel Joy....but they don't want to give up their own Joy. And you want them to know your Sadness but Fear, Anger and Shame do NOT want your family to know about your Sadness. Letting them know your Sadness means you might actually be known and you're too scared to be known because you don't think they will want you once they know you.



So the warfare begins. Joy wants to get rid of Shame, Anger and Fear. And Sadness wants to know her family's Joy. And everyone wants to hold on to the emotion controlling them because giving up control is SCARY. And who in their right mind gives up Joy to embrace Sadness? And who in their right mind gives up Sadness when it's all they've ever known?

One day – the Joy driven family is almost ready to give up. They can't find their Joy anymore and they have a choice – they can give control over to their own Anger, Fear and Disgust/Shame (and they will – often) or they can engage the Sadness – give up their own Joy (which they know is not for forever – but it sure feels like it might be) to really feel and know the Sadness of you – the adopted child.

But Sadness is heavy...and heavily guarded. So warfare ignites over and over again in the pursuit of unity/healing.

After all, you are deeply affected by the simplest of questions from friends like, "Where are you from?" – which doesn't mean much at all to a bio-kid but to you it means – you're not one of us or you don't look like your family – which triggers your Sadness and puts more Shame, Fear and Anger in control.

And you are deeply affected by the simplest statements like, "That's not your mom," or "You must be adopted." – And this is the season of your life when you just want to fit in – and so Sadness colors the memory/answers and Shame, Anger and Fear ramp up. And you feel so misunderstood – and you are – over and over again.

And your Train of Thoughts continue around Orphanage Island even though you have a Family Island because new pathways to Family Island can't be built overnight and Family Island isn't put together in a pretty way like you fantasized back on Survival Island.

And your Train of Thoughts continue around Lonely/Abuse Island, Hunger island, Space island.... because it's all you've ever known and the new pathways aren't there yet...and if they are there, there are too many walls/obstacles in the way to see them.

But one day your adopted parents figure out a way to draw out of you a sad core memory and they listen and they pray and a wall comes tumbling down and sadness pours out like a blue ocean and your adopted family floats in the vast, deep blue with you. And you look up from your doggy paddling panic to see that Sadness has actually linked you up to a new pathway....Bonding Railroad...and Family Island may still seem scary...but it's looking a little more enticing and you kind of see a way there.

And ALL of this has to happen OVER and OVER and OVER again....Sadness unlocked so a bonding can link your heart to a new pathway...to new islands – Family Island, Friendship Island, Thriving Island, Comfort Island....

And by God's grace a whole new world will be born over time and the original islands and Sadness will slowly but surely move into the forgotten zone...though, most of the memories will never be completely forgotten and can be pulled back up all too easily.

But this birthing of a new world – it costed something. A family had to be willing to let go of their own Joy...to take on Sadness – to carry it, swim in it, listen to it, know it, put hope into it....because that adopted family is the only Jesus you know for now. And you – you had to ditch Survival Island....where your imaginary friends have loved you the way you want and your fantasies have comforted you and your own skin is the only safe place you've known. You had to be brave when your new family gashed a hole in your lifeline of sadness – you had to let it go -let it ooze, or gush or flood on out. And it was and will continue to be exhausting because this process gets hijacked by your new family's own issues/sin and by your own Fear wanting control so fiercely OVER AND OVER again. And sometimes old walls are going to rise back up and you'll have to start all over again. Two steps forward, three steps back.

For the new world to form – light had to break through the miles of deep ocean so you could walk in the light with your new family and discover life is much more colorful than blue Sadness...so much more....life abundant.

This is the constant cycle of the adopted child and adoptive family. There is almost always a deeper component to discipline, answering questions, family life...even basic needs like eating – than a bio-child or never-traumatized child/family will experience.

So love on an adoptive family today. Help them swim in the ocean of Sadness that is the key to their child's healing. Don't advise them unless you've been there. Just listen. Carry the sadness with them. That is enough. Because if they start feeling lonely in the middle of that sadness they will SINK and hope is lost for the entire family.

And teach your children how words and probing questions can trigger different emotions in children from unique or difficult backgrounds and cause the Train of Thought to circle back around old Personality Islands that took so long to go black in the forgotten zone.

"For the Joy set before Him (Jesus), He endured the cross."...Joy was before Him...but He embraced the crushing sadness on our behalf to obtain it for us! So may we live in the same way!

Written by Cindy Foote. Reposted with permission.

Preventing Sex Trafficking and Strengthening Families Act

As foster parents, you should have received a letter from Douglas Weinberg, Director, Division of Children and Family Services in August regarding the Preventing Sex Trafficking and Strengthening Families Act that President Obama signed on September 29, 2014. States have been mandated to implement certain provisions of the Act by September 29, 2015. One key provision be enacted is the utilization of the Reasonable and Prudent Parent Standard by foster parents, Group Homes and Shelters. The Reasonable and Prudent Parent Standard is defined as:

The standard characterized by careful and sensible parental decisions that maintain a child's health, safety, and best interest while at the same time encouraging the child's emotional and developmental growth, that a caregiver must use when determining whether to allow a child in foster care under the responsibility of the state to participate in extracurricular, enrichment, cultural and social activities.

This law was intended to empower foster parents to decide what activities foster youth may participate in. As a result youth will be able to experience a deeper sense of normalcy. Use of the Reasonable and Prudent Parent Standard will be individualized based upon activity and if it is age or developmentally appropriate for the youth.

This is an exciting time as we make changes to help ensure youth placed into the custody of DHHS experience as normal a childhood as possible.



We Are Failing Our Children

Watching the news the past few days, weeks, and months has been difficult for me. I see children throwing rocks at cars and in big cities. I watch as 12 year old children hit by police officers at public pools. I read of teenagers taking guns to school. I witness on tv as a large family with 19 children is torn asunder by sibling incest. I listen in horror as yet another young adult walks into a church and shoots 9 others, taking away loved ones from a community that needs them. Finally, I grow disappointed as our society seeks for answers, and often focus on the wrong ones. We are ignoring a basic component in all of this. We are refusing to love our children enough to really care, to really make a difference, and to really change their lives. We are failing our children, and society doesn't seem to care.



As I bring children from foster care into my family, and into my home, one thing is most apparent; children are not being raised properly, for a variety of reasons. I have made it my mission to not only help society understand how the foster care system works, but also to break this cycle; this cycle of poor parenting. In my home and in my family, each child that comes to us is raised with respect, and raised with love; a love that is consistent and unconditional.

Briefly, children are placed under foster care for a number of reasons, such as physical, mental, and/or emotional abuse, neglect, drug abuse by parents, and domestic violence, to name a few. Many of these reasons overlap, with the child suffering from numerous mental and emotional challenges. Indeed, 51% of children placed into care come from homes of parents with substance abuse, with 15% of these parents also being incarcerated. Four percent of the parents are diagnosed with a psychiatric illness. Thirty percent of foster children are taken from their homes due to neglect, while it was found that 25% of children suffered from physical and sexual abuse. Along with this, 24% of children were living in conditions where there was no caretaker or were simply abandoned by family members. In general, 94% of all children in foster care suffer from some sort of physical health problem. When a child is placed in custody under foster care, the intention is for the child to eventually be reunited with his/her birth family. 54% of all children leaving the foster system were reunited with birth parents or family members. Yet, findings suggest that children who are reunited with their parents face greater negative outcomes than those children who are not reunited with their family.

When children are placed into foster care, lives are often changed very quickly. No longer do they live with parents and family or are surrounded by people they know. Instead, they are, most often quite quickly, placed in a home with strangers and are no longer in touch with those they know or with whom they are familiar. Sadly, the statistics for those who exit

foster care when they reach adulthood are grim; 55% will drop out of school, 65% will end up homeless, and 75% will end up incarcerated.

There have been those children who have come through my own home who have suffered from intense trauma; traumas that would bring your nightmares. Time after time, children have come to our family and have resisted my wife and I, rejecting everything we tried to provide for them. Many times, my wife and I have become worn out, exhausted, and down right weary, as we tried to care for these children in need. Through it all, I have found that children need one thing. Now, to be sure, children need structure, they need stability, and they need educational opportunities. Yet, what they need the most is one simple thing; they need a parent or an adult in their life who will be there to love them enough, unconditionally, and in a consistent manner.

This is what is missing from parents today. You are not loving your children enough. In this early part of the 21st century, you are not loving your children enough to punish them when they make poor choices. You do not love them enough to show them that their actions might be wrong. You do not love them enough to applaud them when they make the right choices, and praise them when they excel at something. You do not love them enough to be there for them in the middle of the night when they are sick, scared, or sad. No, you don't love them enough to be there for them, acting as a positive role model for them through your own actions and your own behaviors. Instead, you coddle them, make excuses for them, and place blame upon others when our children make bad decisions. Far too many times, I have witnessed parents blame others for their child's misbehavior. Blame teachers when a child refuses to complete the school work. Blame another parent when their child bullies another. Blame a police officer when their child commits a crime, or is even gunned down by someone sworn to protect us all. Now, society will say I am mistaken when I share this. My experience taking in children from foster care has taught me that far too parents, in simple terms, don't deserve to have children of their own.

These children I watch on tv, throwing rocks, acting with disrespect towards our law officers, engaging in unspeakable actions towards their own siblings, and even taking the lives of others away with chilling looks of evil written upon their faces; they are victims of failure from their own families. Their families did not love them enough, and their families have failed them. Most likely, these children will go on to fail their own children, bringing abuse, trauma, and unrest to another generation-the next generation.

Sadly, far too many of our children today come from homes where violence reigns. Profanity, abuse, and harsh words fill the air that surrounded a child. Additionally, where love is to be a child's cornerstone, it is neglected instead, as the basic needs of the child are not met, and where the emotion of love is instead substituted with just the opposite. Along with this, there are those foster children who have had poor examples of parental behavior in their lives. There are those who may believe that a real man does not express love, does not state

that he loves someone, or even grant a hug to another under the misguided belief of weakness, and that a real mother is one that will always stand up for her child, even if the child is wrong.

When a child enters my family, they are loved unconditionally, and there is no difference between them. Whether they be one of my three birth children, one of three adoptive children, or one of four dozen foster children, the labels disappear, and they become simply my children, and they are all loved with as much energy and as much passion as I have in my body. They are disciplined the same, because I love them. They are praised the same, because I love them. They are taught the

ever have.

Let us, you and I, take up this mantle. Let us show love to every child that comes before us, and in our paths. Whether it is our own children in our family or the neighbor's child down the street, the shy teenager at the grocery store check-out line or the rude child at the mall, the selfish child at our friend's house or the child with learning disabilities in our own child's classroom; each of these children need us to show them love. Through our words, through our smiles, through our actions, and through our hugs, may we all begin to show every child we meet our love. This is where change begins, and this is where love and compassion for others starts to spread.



same, and they are raised the same; because I love them. Those foster children who leave my home never cease to become my children, and I reach out to as many of them as I can, continuing to love them where ever they are in life, because that's what they need. They need to be loved. Despite all they may have done, they need to be loved.

In this world that seems to be falling apart at the very seams, it is especially important that we love our children at every opportunity, and in a variety of ways. Without this type of love, a child will not form necessary and healthy attachment with others, resulting in a number of attachment disorders. Emotional difficulties such as a lack of self worth, trust, and the need to be in control often result in the lack of unconditional and healthy parental love. Violence, apathy, and a host of other emotional and physical problems are of the result. As anyone who has worked with foster children will tell you, most of these children face an enormous amount of emotional issues, many times stemming from the lack of healthy love.

There are those moments when I am weary, and feel I have very little love and compassion to give. Indeed, there are those moments when I must pray for patience with a child who has spent hours screaming in rage at my wife and me. Yet, when needed, foster dads need to be comforting to a child in need, gentle in his words and actions. After all, this may be the only positive example of a loving father that the foster child may

Dr. John DeGarmo has been a foster parent for 13 years, now, and he and his wife have had over 45 children come through their home. He is a speaker and trainer on many topics about the foster care system, and travels around the nation delivering passionate, dynamic, energetic, and informative presentations. Dr. DeGarmo is the author of several books, including the new book Love and Mayhem: One Big Family's Uplifting Story of Fostering and Adoption, as well as Keeping Foster Children Safe Online and the foster care children's book A Different Home: A New Foster Child's Story. Dr. DeGarmo is the host of the weekly radio program Foster Talk with Dr. John. He can be contacted at drjohndegarmo@gmail.com, through his Facebook page, Dr. John DeGarmo, Twitter @drjohndegarmo or at his website, <http://drjohndegarmofostercare.weebly.com> Follow Dr. John DeGarmo on Twitter: www.twitter.com/drjohndegarmo MORE: Parenting Foster Care Foster Parents Adoption Life Lessons Foster Children This Blogger's Books and Other Items from...



Waiting for a forever HOME!

The following are children available on the Nebraska Heart Gallery.



Name: David
15 years old

Sharp dressed David can usually be found where the action is. This high-energy young teen loves to play sports—especially football—and looks forward to growing bigger and stronger. David isn't a huge fan of middle school, but continues

to work hard in order to try to do better academically. He looks forward to being part of a family with older siblings—particularly those who might be willing to toss a football with him.

For more information:

Email: scaldararo@childsaving.org

Phone: 402-504-3673

Name: Emma
12 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.



For more information:

Email: scaldararo@childsaving.org

Phone: 402-504-3673

Name: Ovi, Nariiah, Janaya and Kaionna

Born: November 2006, December 2005, August 2002, July, 2001

Talkative and outgoing Ovionce, or "Ovi" as he prefers to be called, loves to play basketball and can entertain himself for hours shooting hoops. He is smart and has done exceptionally well in Kindergarten.

He was so proud of himself when he was able write his name before the first day of school! Ovi is very creative and enjoys drawing, coloring, and playing make-believe. Ever-curious, he also likes to explore new things. Ovi is very close to his sisters and finds comfort in being with them. He would benefit from active, positive male role model in his life.

Charming and smart, Nariiah is the youngest girl in her family. She takes pride in being creative and unique and loves to express herself by dancing and doing art projects. Nariiah is a bundle of energy who always wants to run and play outside with her brother, and doesn't mind getting dirty one bit. Nariiah does well academically and is exceptionally bright, clever, and observant. (Although, she says she'd much rather play than sit in the classroom.) Nariiah would do well with a family that is flexible and active.

Janaya is described as intelligent and reserved. The quiet one of the bunch, she also has a great deal of thoughtful insight to offer when asked to share her opinions. She loves to learn and is nearly always on the Honor Roll at school. She has a great love of reading and can never be found without a book in hand. Janaya is also a talented artist--a gift she applies through drawing.

Kaionna has a dynamic personality, and is described as smart, funny, and determined. She accomplishes anything she sets her mind to. Kaionna does well in school although, like Nariiah, she would rather be doing almost anything else. Kaionna makes friends easily and likes participating in extracurricular activities such as cheerleading and volleyball. Some of her other interests include drawing, doing hair, and shopping. Kaionna says her siblings are the most important thing in the world to her and she strives to be a great role model for them.

Connections

Ovi, Nariiah, Janaya and Kaionna need to be adopted together and need to maintain relationships with a few identified supports.

For more information:

Email: scaldararo@childsaving.org

Phone: 402-504-3673

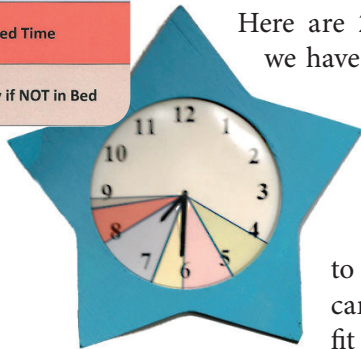


Tammy's "Foster/Adoptive Parent Tidbits"

In the past few months I have been struggling with my child on common everyday issues like chores, homework, and bedtime. These seem like tiny little issues that you would think would be easily addressed. Well not with my eight year old. I was pulling out my hair trying to figure out how to turn a child full of excuses into a child full of accomplishments.



Home Work Time
Play Time
Bath Time
Family/Supper Time
Bed Time
Penalty if NOT in Bed



I needed to take my little negotiator and turn her into respectful cooperating young lady. I turned to the internet to find some fun yet educational resources that would not only teach her age appropriate activities but also let her have a little fun in the process.

Here are 2 tidbit activities that we have implemented into my home, that makes it a little more calm and relaxing after a long day.

I have tailored them to fit our home, but you can easily adjust them to fit into your home.

Right Turn Class Offered in Lincoln

Date: Tuesday, October 6, 2015: 5:30 pm-8:00 pm

Location: Sheridan Lutheran Church
6955 Old Cheney Road | Lincoln, NE 68516

Description: What do people say to YOUR KIDS about ADOPTION?

Do your kids know how to W.I.S.E. Up! their friends, peers and neighbors about ADOPTION?

W.I.S.E. Up!, developed by C.A.S.E, is designed to empower kids and families in their own world! It is a program that teaches tools for handling comments and questions about adoption. W.I.S.E. Up! gives children and teens (and parents, too!) the power to choose how to talk about adoption with others! Children need W.I.S.E. Up! when they begin to be asked questions about adoption and their adoption story.

This TOOL is important when the children begin to hear that others are noticing some differences about how their family was formed. For children in transracial or transcultural families, that may begin as early as age 3 ("Why don't you look like your mom?") and for others, it may not begin until ages 6, 7, or 8, when their friends may begin to be curious about their adoptive family ("Why were you adopted?").

W.I.S.E. Up! is for children entering 1st — 6th grades in Fall of 2015.

Parents do need to attend with their children.

Dinner will be served.

Register Now!

W.I.S.E Up! is free to all adoptive families and guardianship families eligible for Right Turn®.

Fees for non-eligible families are \$35 for the first child and \$20 for each additional child.. Learn more about eligibility at: <http://www.rightturnne.org/services/eligibility.html>

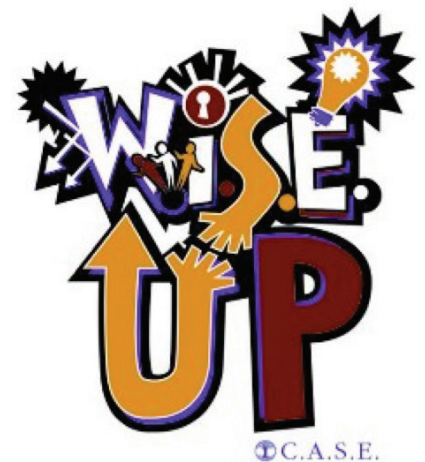
Contact Information:

Suz Bittner

sbittner@lfsneb.org

402.661.7107

To learn more about other Right turn training opportunities go to: <http://www.rightturnne.org/services/eligibility.html>



Getting Behavior In Shape At Home

Written by Laura Riffel and edited by Ann Turnbull www.behaviordractor.org

Positive behavior support, often called PBIS, is not just for schools. Parents can use the same ideas to create a better environment for the entire family. First, let's look at what PBIS is:

1. Deciding what behavior you want to change
2. Deciding how you want that behavior to change
3. Using behavior science to change that behavior
 - a. Develop a theory about why you think the behavior is occurring
 - b. Test your theory
4. Using supports that have been tested and proven to work
 - a. Teach new skills to get the same results
 - b. Change environments and daily routines
 - c. Reward positive behaviors

Positive behavior support does not mean changing the child; rather, it means creating a new

environment that supports the positive behavior you want to achieve. It means creating a plan

that determines who will help and what you will do differently. So how do you do this?

Younger children:

Let's take a hypothetical child: Let's call the child Taylor.

- *Taylor refuses to eat dinner almost every night.*
- *Let's think about what behavior we want:*

We want Taylor to eat a healthy, balanced dinner.

Let's brainstorm reasons that Taylor may be refusing to eat:

- *Taylor doesn't like the food.*
- *Taylor fills up on other things before dinner.*
- *Parents give lots of attention when dinner is refused.*

• Let's test the reasons that Taylor won't eat dinner:

- *Ask Taylor to help plan the menu with favorite foods.*
- *Limit Taylor on any snacks prior to dinner*
- *Give Taylor lots of attention by helping cook dinner; set the table, etc.*

• As each reason is tested, note which one causes Taylor to eat more dinner.

• Praise positive results

• Let's assume that more is eaten when Taylor plans the menu.

- *For the first few times, you may have to fix macaroni and cheese and peanut butter and jelly sandwiches with jellybeans; however, Taylor eats the entire meal.*
- *Praise Taylor for eating the entire meal.*

• After several successful meals, as Taylor is planning the meal tell Taylor that you are going to fix 3 things. Taylor gets to choose all three but they must be from the choices you present.

- *Give Taylor five choices and have Taylor choose three*
 - o Macaroni and cheese
 - o Peanut butter and jelly
 - o Hamburgers shaped like hearts
 - o Celery filled with peanut butter and raisin ants (call them "ants on a log")

o Pears decorated to look like a funny animal

• Notice how two of the choices were the things that Taylor has already proven likelihood of eating. Tell Taylor that if the plate is clean, it will be Taylor's choice the next evening.

• As Taylor eats more and more, give increasing praise for eating dinner and for doing a good job of planning a good meal.

• Keep changing the choices to healthy choices until you are actually replacing the macaroni and cheese and peanut butter and jelly with more healthy choices.

- *Eventually, Taylor will be willing to try new things as taste buds evolve.*

- *Taylor feels powerful because there was choice in the meals and now has acceptance of varied foods.*

• We changed the environment, and it produced more positive results than demanding that Taylor eat dinner. How many of us remember sitting at the table until it was bedtime because we refused to eat our vegetables? I doubt it really made us want to eat them again the next time.

In the interest of peace and harmony, does it matter if we altered the child's environment to get what we want or do we want him or her to do it because we say so? Most of us do the things we do because there is a payoff. Would you go to work every day if you did not get paid? We do not have to pay our children to be good, but we do have to alter the environment so there is a payoff for good behavior. Usually the pay off is more attention from parents or a friend.

Most of the time our children misbehave because they want attention and the only way they can think of to get it is to misbehave. How many times have you been in the grocery store behind a mother who is asking her child the following questions?

- *Do you want a spanking?*
- *Do you want me to take you out to the car?*
- *Do you want me to tell your father when we get home?*

Children cry, grab, scream and beg because they want to communicate something to you. The only way to change this habit is to teach them what we call "replacement behaviors". These are new behaviors that are socially acceptable. The only way to teach these behaviors is to model and practice them.

Have your child switch roles with you. Tell him or her ahead of time that you are going to practice asking for things and learning the difference between yes and no. Tell your child this is going to be fun because s/he gets to be the parent for an hour. Don't worry about what people will think of you in the store. Think about what they think of you when your child is screaming "I want..."

Walk through the cereal aisle at the store and do the following:

- Pick up a box of cereal that has a toy in that you want
- Walk over to your child and say, "I'd really like to have this cereal this week because it has a CD game of Monopoly in the box."
- I promise I will eat this cereal even if it tastes horrible, because I want the game.

Tell your child ahead of time to tell you "No" to whatever you ask for.

- When your child tells you “no,” ask him or her for a reason.
- Accept his or her reason and put the cereal on the shelf.

Then have your child do the same thing back to you

- Have him or her choose a box of cereal that has a toy in it wants
- Have him or her tell you they would like the cereal because of the toy
- Have him or her promise he or she will eat the cereal no matter what

Tell him or her no

- Have him or her ask you for a reason and then give one
- When they accept your reason praise him or her for following directions
- Practice this several times and then practice it several more time during subsequent trips to various stores with various items.

On the same days that you practice saying “no,” also practice saying “yes.” Have him or her model saying “thank you” and then compliment him or her on his or her manners. You will need to model this the same way you did for the “no” model.

It isn't a miracle, and it isn't going to happen over night. But soon, you will start to see a difference when you tell your child “no.” It is fair for him or her to understand why you said, “no,” so explaining your reason is reasonable. Your children will respect you for not using the “I'm the mommy that's why,” and you will respect him or her for using good manners by accepting your reason. Be honest in your reason. “It's too expensive.” “It's not good for you.” “I don't have the money this week,” are all good responses.

The most important lesson is to practice, practice, and practice the new behavior. You have to be consistent. If you say “no” and give a reason, then don't give in and purchase the item if further begging ensues. This only tells the child that you have a breaking point and to keep trying. If you've said “no” and given a reason, then you should not say “no” again nor give another reason. When your child accepts your answer and your reason, then it is very important for you to compliment him or her on this good behavior. It is also very important that both parents and/or caregivers are consistent.

What can you do if the above does not work? The truth is every child is different, even children in the same family. What works for some children doesn't work for all. Here are some other ideas:

- *When you enter a store remind your child that you have “X” dollars to spend and that anything they want to add will go over the limit which might take away from something else they want (going to the movies).*
- *Give your child \$5 or whatever limit you want to set. Tell your child he or she may ask for something but he or she will have to be able to purchase it with the money that you have set aside for extras. If your child wants a certain cereal, then he or she will have to pay for it. Suddenly, your child will likely become very choosy about what he or she purchases.*

Tips for older children:

This is a personal experience that worked well for my own children:

We quickly became indebted to fast food restaurants, video stores, and the popular teen clothing establishments. We investigated the reason for this loss of money and determined: 1) we let it happen because we kept giving our children more money, and 2) our children didn't understand the concept of budgeting. We decided to remedy this by creating a budget box. We bought a plastic recipe box and put in envelopes and labeled them:

- *Pizza*
- *Movies*
- *Videos*
- *Fast food*
- *Gas money*
- *Gifts for friends*
- *New clothing*

Each month we put in a certain amount of money in each envelope. If our children wanted to order pizza, they had to check the budget box and pay for it from the appropriate envelope. Suddenly, coupons were very important to them when coupons were a dirty word when mom and dad footed the bill. Suddenly, those extra cokes at the drive through were not quite as important. They considered every purchase and weighed the options. If we had to drive our children somewhere, each child had to pay us one dollar out of the budget box. We wanted our children to understand that when they had their own cars, they would need to budget trips instead of driving all over town wasting gas.

We did not have to say “no” when asked about purchases. All we had to say was “check your envelope.” We allowed no trading from one “account” to the other. The children were responsible for their own box. They quickly realized that decisions regarding the whole month were more important than living for the moment. This created an environment where everyone was happy. Our children learned to think before they acted, and it was good practice for when they became independent young adults.

This method was far superior to ranting and raving about money which was an abstract idea to them. They saw that we had a checkbook, credit cards, and cash and did not understand that we would not have those items if we spent money every time we saw something we wanted. If they wanted something, our children learned to save from one month to next to make major purchases. We did not give them extra money; when we said “no” we meant “no,” and our reason was our budget.

We praised our children:

- *when we checked their boxes at the end of the month*
- *when they paid for their own purchases*
- *when they saved up for something big*

In the world of PBIS, we changed the environment (basically we changed our behavior, we didn't dole out money any longer). We taught our children a new skill, and we provided positive feedback when they performed their new skills. Our hypothesis was that our children didn't understand the concept of budgeting. We proved that hypothesis when they learned to budget for themselves.

For more information on Positive Behavior Support visit the following websites: www.pbis.org, www.behaviordoc.org

5 Reasons I'm not quitting as a foster parent, and why you shouldn't either.

JULY 9, 2015 BY BEN PUGH

It's hard being a foster parent!

Anyone who has ever been a foster parent knows that there are hundreds of reasons to quit foster parenting. In fact, I've heard that the average foster parent only last 10-18 months before they throw in the towel and call it quits.

Why are foster parents throwing in the towel?

Some of the reasons for quitting that I've personally heard, and some of these were reasons that my wife and I felt were serious enough to quit over, are: "Working with case workers is too hard—they just don't care", or "It just takes too big of a toll on my family", or far too often, "I can't stand to be a part of such a broken system".

These are just a few of the reasons for quitting that I've heard, and I've got to say, they are all valid reasons.



Why I'm not giving up anytime soon.

So, with all the reasons to quit foster parenting, you might ask, "Why are you not giving up?"

Well, I'm glad you asked. Here are 5 reasons I came up with.

1. I'm fully aware of the need.

After being a foster parent for over 6 years, I am more aware of the need for good parents, and this need is not going away. As a principal I'm even more aware of how many kids are in the system, and how many more could be. The truth is, there are hundreds of kids who need kind, loving parents who are willing and capable of providing a positive and structured environment for foster kids to grow and succeed in.

2. If I don't do this, who will?

I remember being in college and having roommates. There were certain things that needed done but no one was willing to do them. It seemed like I was the only one willing to do the dishes, clean the bathroom, and take out the trash. After I got fed up, I moved out of that apartment, and in with my grandma (laugh if you want, but my grandma was the best roommate ever). I went to visit shortly after I moved out and the place was a pigsty. With no one there to do chores the mess just got bigger.

While I didn't feel like it was my duty to clean up after my

roommates, I do feel a responsibility to provide help and support to foster kids who really have no one else. Yes, the foster care system is a mess, but if I don't help, who will? In fact, I'm convinced that the reason the foster care system works at all is because of the dedication of good foster parents and caseworkers.

I can only imagine that if I, and other good foster parents, get out of this system, much like when I moved away from my roommates, all hell will break loose.

3. No one can foster parent like me and no one's more qualified than me.

I'm not saying I'm the world's best foster dad ever; in fact, some of my foster kids have told me that I was the worst foster dad ever. What I am saying is, we are each unique, and it is our unique qualities that help us meet the unique needs of each unique child. It is our individuality that is needed.

Now, up above I said that no one is more qualified to be a foster parent than me. Yes I have 4 years of certification with the National Teaching-Family Association, we've passed our home study, and we have 6 years experience, but what really makes me so qualified? Again, I'm so glad you asked. Here's a list of my qualifications:

1. I love working with teens. I coached sports, taught school, worked with church youth, and I'm a principal of a high school.
2. I love sports. I watch football and basketball. I get up at 5:30 a.m. at least 3 times a week to play basketball with my friends. My basketball friends often include former and current foster kids.
3. I have a witty sense of humor. My jokes are awesome and are sure to elicit one of the following responses from my foster teens: uncontrollable fits of laughter, an eye roll, or mild embarrassment.
4. I like to play board and video games. The hard part of being a board-gamer is finding people willing to play. If your foster kids are bored enough, you can get them to try anything. We often trade off board games for video games. It's fun.

Pretty impressive qualifications right? Okay, they're nothing special, but they are unique to me and for some kids they are just the right blend of qualifications. And, yes I know that I'm not the best foster dad in the world, but there are a couple of kids out there who think I am.

4. I'm getting better all the time.

I'm not perfect, but I am getting better. Sometimes I'm grumpy and irritable. Looking back, there are some situations that I could have handled better, but I've learned from those, and today I would handle similar situations much better. Foster parents are not perfect, and contrary to what people always tell my wife and me, we are not saints.

The truth is, there is no all encompassing manual on how to parent or foster parent. Yes there are tips and books that can help, but ultimately, it's the experience that is helping me improve as a foster parent.

5. Being a foster parent helps me to be a better person.

Like I said earlier, I'm not perfect. But, I do believe that being a foster parent helps me be a better person. Naturally I'm selfish. Being a foster parent helps me think of others. It helps me see the world from a different perspective. As a teenager, I thought my life must have been the hardest life. I thought my parents were the meanest parents who were not cool at all. I must confess that I was just a dumb teenager, and I promise my parents were great. Seeing what my foster kids go through helps me understand why they act the way they act.

Being a foster parent helps me be a force for good in the world. I'm not rich enough to be like Bruce Wayne or Tony Stark, but I can be a superhero in my own way. I can't fly or see through walls, but I can foster parent, and that's pretty cool.

I'm not giving up!

So, as you can see, even with all the problems with foster care, I've got too many reasons to stay. Batman and Superman might be able to save the world, but I can help save someone's world as a foster parent.

And, just some food for thought, Batman and Superman were both orphans. You never know. You might be raising a super hero!!

Ben Pugh and his wife Deb are currently foster parents of 4 brothers. By day, Ben is a principal at a high school on the Ute Indian reservation. By night, Ben and his wife try to hone their superhero skills by blogging and podcasting.



How Well Do You Know Your Child?

- What really makes your child angry?
- Who is your child's best friend?
- What color would your child like his or her room to be?
- Who is your child's hero?
- What embarrasses your child most?
- Would your child prefer a vanilla milk shake, a hot fudge sundae or strawberry shortcake?
- In gym class, would your child rather play basketball, do exercises or run relays?
- What is your child's favorite subject in school?
- What is the subject your child dislikes most?
- What names is your child called in school?
- What is your child's favorite music?
- What is your child's favorite Bible verse?
- What is your child's biggest complaint about the family?
- If you could buy your child anything in the world, what would be his or her first choice?
- What is your child's favorite television show?
- Of what accomplishment is your child proudest?
- What has been the biggest disappointment in your child's life?
- What is your child's favorite sport?
- Which of these chores does your child dislike most: drying dishes, cleaning his or her room or taking out the trash?
- What is your child's favorite book?
- Does your child feel too small or too big for his or her age?
- What gift from you does your child cherish most?
- What person outside the family has most influenced your child's life?
- When does your child prefer to do homework....after school, after supper, before bed, or in the morning before school?

Keeping an open line of communication with your child is important to their health, safety, self-esteem, trust of adults and ability to take responsibility for their actions.

If you want your child to take an interest in him or herself, you must take an active interest in your child.

If you do not know the answers to most of the above questions, it is never too late to sit down with your child and use the above questions as a guide to start a conversation. Do not ask each question at once, but pick one and expand a conversation from that one question. Do that daily or several times a week and you will see how enjoyable it can be to communicate with your child. Remember to give your undivided attention and keep TV and radio off.

<http://www.fosterparents.com/articles/knowchild.htm>

504 ACCOMMODATION CHECKLIST

If you have a child that does not qualify for special education but has a mental or physical impairment which substantially limits one or more major life activities, including learning, that child may qualify for special help in a regular classroom setting under section 504 of IDEA (Individuals with Disabilities Act).

The following is a list of accommodations that may help your child succeed in the classroom. The list can be used as a reference for parents and school personnel.

PHYSICAL ARRANGEMENT OF ROOM:

- seating student near the teacher
- seating student near a positive role model
- standing near the student when giving directions or presenting lessons
- avoiding distracting stimuli (air conditioner, high traffic area, etc.)
- increasing distance between desks

LESSON PRESENTATION:

- pairing students to check work
- writing key points on the board
- providing peer tutoring
- providing visual aids, large print, films
- providing peer note taker
- making sure directions are understood
- including a variety of activities during each lesson
- repeating directions to the student after they have been given to the class: then have him/her repeat and explain directions to teacher
- providing written outline
- allowing student to tape record lessons
- having child review key points orally
- teaching through multi-sensory modes, visual, auditory, kinesthetic, olfactory
- using computer-assisted instruction
- accompany oral directions with written directions for child to refer to blackboard or paper
- provide a model to help students, post the model and refer to it often
- provide cross age peer tutoring
- to assist the student in finding the main idea underlying, highlighting, cue cards, etc.
- breaking longer presentations into shorter segments

ASSIGNMENTS/WORKSHEETS:

- giving extra time to complete tasks
- simplifying complex directions
- handing worksheets out one at a time
- reducing the reading level of the assignments
- requiring fewer correct responses to achieve grade (quality vs. quantity)
- allowing student to tape record assignments/homework
- providing a structured routine in written form
- providing study skills training/learning strategies
- giving frequent short quizzes and avoiding long tests
- shortening assignments; breaking work into smaller segments
- allowing typewritten or computer printed assignments prepared by the student or dictated by the student and recorded by someone else if needed.
- using self-monitoring devices
- reducing homework assignments
- not grading handwriting
- student should not be allowed to use cursive or manuscript writing
- reversals and transpositions of letters and numbers should not be marked wrong, reversals or transpositions should be pointed out for corrections
- do not require lengthy outside reading assignments
- teacher monitor students self-paced assignments (daily, weekly, bi-weekly)
- arrangements for homework assignments to reach home with clear, concise directions
- recognize and give credit for student's oral participation in class

TEST TAKING:

- allowing open book exams
- giving exam orally
- giving take home tests
- using more objective items (fewer essay responses)
- allowing student to give test answers on tape recorder
- giving frequent short quizzes, not long exams
- allowing extra time for exam
- reading test item to student
- avoid placing student under pressure of time or competition

ORGANIZATION:

- providing peer assistance with organizational skills
- assigning volunteer homework buddy
- allowing student to have an extra set of books at home
- sending daily/weekly progress reports home
- developing a reward system for in-schoolwork and homework completion
- providing student with a homework assignment notebook

BEHAVIORS:

- use of timers to facilitate task completion
- structure transitional and unstructured times (recess, hallways, lunchroom, locker room, library, assembly, field trips, etc.)
- praising specific behaviors
- using self-monitoring strategies
- giving extra privileges and rewards
- keeping classroom rules simple and clear
- making "prudent use" of negative consequences
- allowing for short breaks between assignments
- cueing student to stay on task (nonverbal signal)
- marking student's correct answers, not his mistakes
- implementing a classroom behavior management system
- allowing student time out of seat to run errands, etc.
- ignoring inappropriate behaviors not drastically outside classroom limits
- allowing legitimate movement
- contracting with the student
- increasing the immediacy of rewards
- implementing time-out procedures

<http://www.fosterparents.com/articles/504list.htm>

New NFAPA Members

At Large Board Member

Anna Wishart was born and raised in Lincoln, Nebraska. She currently works for Beyond School Bells, a coalition with the mission to improve access to quality Expanded Learning Opportunities for Nebraska's youth. Anna is also the spokesperson for Let's Move Lincoln, an initiative to solve childhood obesity and is the Chair of Bootstraps and Beyond, a re-entry program for ex-convicts and former addicts. Anna and her husband, Lincoln Police Officer Joe Coleman, are foster parents and just finished fostering a seven-month old baby. They plan on continuing to foster in the future. Anna is currently running for the Nebraska Legislature. When elected, she will be a strong advocate for foster and adoptive parents and will work hard to strengthen our child welfare system to support every child in Nebraska.



New NFAPA Southeast Board Member



Rebecca and James are lifelong Nebraskans, moving from Rebecca's hometown of McCook, to James's hometown of Nebraska City in the autumn of 2013.

Rebecca, who prefers to be called Becky, is a retail sales associate at a local shoe & apparel store, and operates her own home-based custom cake & candy business which she has done successfully since 2010.

James, known by friends and family as Jim, retired from a 32-year career as a radio broadcaster. He also served his community for some 10-years as a volunteer EMT/Paramedic on the Nebraska City Rescue Squad and was the Communications Officer on the Nebraska City Fire Dept. The fact that Jim was born with a brittle bone condition and has sustained over 100 fractures, and nearly 50 major surgeries, has never slowed him down.

Currently, the Rowe's have living in their home, Becky's 15-year old daughter TayLynn, her 9-year old daughter Audra, Jim's 16-year old son Christian, and three Foster placement children ages 16,5,4. While they share parenting duties equally, Jim is a stay-at-home parent and Chief Taxi Driver on days when Becky is at her job.

The Rowe's became licensed Foster Care Providers because fostering is something Becky's family has been involved with for many years. Her father & stepmother were Foster parents, and they adopted 3 boys from Foster care, and she has a great grandmother who was taken in by another family when her parents died and later adopted in 1906, long before the Foster Care system even existed. Becky has said for many years that she wanted to be a Foster parent herself, and she and Jim have thoroughly enjoyed the experience of providing a stable home life for children who are in crisis.

Becky would love to have the privilege and opportunity to serve as the Southeast representative of the committee, as she believes she brings experience and a fresh perspective to the table.

Thank you in advance for your consideration.



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www.nfapa.org

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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 (resource) families, adoptive families, and relative caregivers
- Opportunity for all foster (resource) 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
- Alertness to legislation affecting the child welfare system

Thank you for your support!

Please mail membership form to:
NFAPA, 2431 Fairfield Street, Suite C,
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
- ☐ I wish to join the effort through a donation.

My donation will be acknowledged through Families First newsletters.

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