



October 2010

Newsletter

Valuing Identity, Promoting Advocacy and
Mobilizing Community
to better serve children and families
in the foster care system

(810) 936-5702 www.ifosterhope.com

Fall Fun for Everyone!

MURDER *dinner tour*
MYSTERY

Saturday, November 13th
Downtown Flint

Historic Capitol Theater Tour
Appetizers - 501 Bar & Grill
Dinner Presentation - Rowe Building
Dessert & Dancing - Raspberries Rhythm

All proceeds from this Red Carpet event will
benefit local foster children and their families through
Foster Hope - ifosterhope.com

For-Mar's annual celebration of the harvest season! Hay wagon rides through the arboretum and preserve, activities and crafts for children, cider and doughnuts for sale, apple cider making, and old fashioned children's games and a mystery trail walk. You can bring an already carved pumpkin and enter it to win a prize.

For-Mar Nature Preserve

Saturday, October 2, 2010

9:00am-3:00pm

Free for all ages, Details: 810-789-8567



Halloween Harvest Zoo Boo!

October 22 & 23, 4-8pm

October 24, 1-5pm

Put on your costumes and trick-or-treat your way through the merry-not-scary Zoo! Load your treat bag with goodies from various vendors and booths. Ticket price includes Zoo admission, train and carousel ride, special entertainment and trick-or-treating. Advance Tickets \$6, \$8 at the gate; Call (989) 759-1408 for tickets.

November 13th, 6:00p sharp

The Capitol Theater
140 E. Second Street, Flint

\$40/single, \$75/couple

810.936.5702 by 11/1

This is an interactive murder mystery. Each person attending will be assigned a character and asked to keep secrets and complete objectives. Space is limited, so order your tickets today!

Establishing Yourself as a Parent

my little
pumpkin
picker



So, you've gone from an empty house to a full one. Now what? When it comes to foster and or adopting a child, especially an older child - setting roles, rules, and boundaries can be tough. This is especially true if you've never parented before or if you are a young parent. Believe me, the kids smell fear!

Lots of people want to be the "cool" mom or dad on the block. From my experience and from the families I've seen and worked with, the kids need and cry out for real parenting. Don't be afraid of this role and don't be afraid of feeling like the kids don't like you from time to time. There is a huge difference between being a buddy or friend to your children and being a parent. Parents -

- meet needs,
- set boundaries or rules,
- allow consequences to occur in order to teach a life lesson

When it comes to parenting, especially with

older kids, it is very important to establish your role as a parent as soon as the children walk in the door.

Meeting Basic Needs

Physical - Whenever a child enters our home, after introducing myself, I always ask the child if he is hungry or thirsty. I hope that this sends the message that I care and will take care of him. It also tells him that I will meet his physical need for food. As you begin to foster or adopt children who have been neglected, you will see that food is sometimes a big issue.

Emotional/Mental - This is also a very emotional time for children, and each child handles it differently. Some kids like to talk while others want some space and time. I usually make myself available by being close but not intrusive. Also, never make a promise you can't keep like, "Yes, we'll see your big brother this weekend," when you have

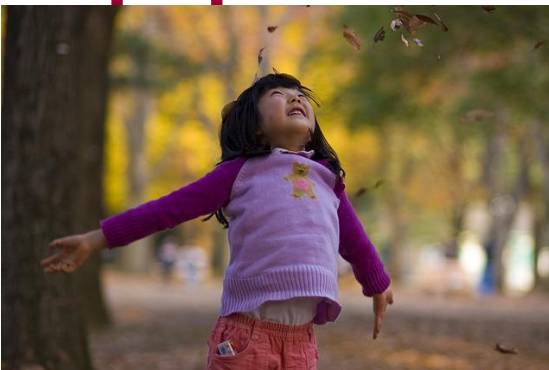
no clue where his big brother is located. Instead ask the child to tell you about his big brother. Asking open questions help you get to know the child and for the child to see you as a caring adult.

Setting Boundaries and Rules

When it comes to setting boundaries and rules of the home, I establish these with the kids on the very first day. I think this gives the kids the immediate feeling of structure and predictability. Some rules are set in stone and cannot be negotiated, like safety rules; other rules can be handed over to the kids for their input.

Allowing the kids to participate in setting family/home rules gives them a chance to feel like they have some power during a very controlled time in their life.

...To be continued next month



"I would like to believe when I die that I have given myself away like a tree that sows seed every spring and never counts the loss, because it is not loss, it is adding to future life. It is the tree's way of being. Strongly rooted perhaps, but spilling out its treasure on the wind." May Sarton

"We live in a world in which we need to share responsibility. It's easy to say 'It's not my child, not my community, not my world, not my problem.' Then there are those who see the need and respond. I consider those people my heroes." Fred Rogers

Foster Parent Support Group and Training

October 14th - 6pm

November 11th - 6pm



Ignite Flint Church (corner of Dort & Hemphill – Flint)

Child Care for the kids*, Great Conversation and Training** for you, Refreshments for all!

*Please RSVP to reserve child care: 810.936.5702

**Attendance counts as 1 hour of training

10 Surefire Ways to Destroy a Perfectly Good Marriage with Foster Care

By: Carrie Craft, About.com

Foster care is a lot of work and stress, but it's also very rewarding. The emotional roller coaster of fostering can either build your relationships or destroy them. Here is a tongue-in-cheek look at how foster care can hurt your marriage. Written with humor, but with meaning behind each suggestion.

1. **Neglect your marriage.** Stay away from things like date nights - NEVER have couple time. Allow foster care to become your whole world with room for nothing else.
2. **Allow the child to manipulate and triangulate.** Playing you against your spouse is a great game! Fall into conversations with openers like, "Boy, Dad said you wouldn't let me go with my friends, but he would."
3. **Argue in front of the kids.** This way the kids will know that you're stressed and wearing down.
4. **Ignore your own needs.** Don't go out for lunch with friends, enjoy your hobby, or take a long bubble bath. This will keep you good and cranky.
5. **Take all of the child's behaviors personally.** Then take the stress and frustration out on your spouse and family.
6. **Disagree with your spouse on discipline in front of the children.** This shows a further division between you two.
7. **Choose to be resentful of the situation.** Don't communicate your needs and feelings to your spouse in a healthy manner.

8. **When things get really bad, don't seek out help from professionals or clergy.** Keep it all bottled up inside, deep, deep inside.
9. **Isolate yourself and refuse to talk about things.** Don't vent to friends, allow feelings to build, thus causing you to explode.
10. **Convince yourself that respite isn't necessary.** You are a rock! You can handle anything! You don't need a break!

Something to think about: If by working to help a family we lose our own, we really don't accomplish much, do we?



Creamy Pumpkin Dip

Sweeten your fall celebrations with this sweet, cinnamon-scented pumpkin spread that makes a delicious dip for crisp cookies or a sweet spread for warm breads and loaves fresh from the oven.

- 1 (8 ounce) package cream cheese, softened
- 2 (7 ounce) jars marshmallow cream
- 1 (15 ounce) can pumpkin (not pumpkin pie filling)
- 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon



1. In a medium bowl, beat together cream cheese and marshmallow cream until smooth.
2. Fold in pumpkin and cinnamon. Cover, and chill in the refrigerator until serving.

Fall Window Hanging

This project encourages young kids to appreciate the different shapes and colors of leaves. Choose a selection of colorful leaves from your garden or local park, then do this activity the same day as older, crispy leaves may break up too readily.

You will need:

- a selection of leaves
- clear sticky contact
- scissors
- a short piece of ribbon



1. Cut out a rectangular piece of contact and fold it in half. Then peel off the backing from one side of the contact and start to arrange leaves on it.
2. When the leaves are in place, put a piece of ribbon at the top of the picture to form a loop.
3. Peel off the remaining contact and carefully fold it back over the leaves and ribbon.
4. Trim off any wonky edges and hang it up against a window.

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Be sure to visit our website for more upcoming events and resources for foster parents and children!

www.ifosterhope.com 810.936.5702