



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

Foster Parent Pledge

- F** is for a Future without fear
- O** is for a way Out when times get rough
- S** is for a Safe place to stay
- T** is for Trying to help them understand
- E** is for trusting Everyone involved
- R** is for a Rest from Harm

- P** is for a Person who cares
- A** is for only an Arms distance away
- R** is for Reassurance in their lives
- E** is for Everything they do good or bad
- N** is for Nurturing them with our hearts
- T** is for all the Tender Loving Care



Does It Ever Get Easier?

(Excerpt from “Swings Hanging From Every Tree”
Daily Inspirations for Foster and Adoptive Parents by
Susan Stone)

When we entered the world of foster care we were filled with the thoughts of happy beginnings. We did not yet know the feelings that come when a child leaves. Does the leaving ever get easier?

My first instinct is to say no; but, in a way, I think it does. We learn more about how to heal and move on each time we feel the loss of another child.

I still grieve over the first child I lost. I dearly loved her, and I still wonder how her life on a reservation has been. And then there was the boy who came to us when he was two days old. We planned to adopt him, but the worker didn't like the idea of him being adopted by a family of a different culture. He left when he was five-months-old and my heart still hurts for him even though I know he is in a great adoptive home.

I have learned so much with each child I have lost. As much as it hurts, I wouldn't give any less than I did with the first child because I know I'll always reap the fruits of my labor. Sometimes it comes right away in the form of another child we have the privilege of adopting. Other times we wait and hear years later that what we did made a difference. I am grateful for the pain as well as the joy because it is through the pain that we grow.

Kathy

10 Things to Do Before Sending Your Foster Child Back to School (con't)



Do not assume that your child knows these things. Practice, even if the child says they know. We have discovered that most of the children that tell us that they know how to ride a bike safely, in reality, do not. Always ask them to demonstrate their skills. Try making it a game instead of a test. Go on a family bike ride. See how they handle traffic. Don't forget helmets!

6. Attend Open House or Tour School Building

You and your child will be able to meet the teachers and tour the school buildings at open houses. If school is already in session ask for a tour and to visit the child's room when you enroll.

7. Discuss Safe Rides

Make sure the child knows who they can get into a car with and who they cannot.

- Remember neighbors, social workers, and close relatives.
- Teach them to look for ID/name tags on people claiming to be social workers.



- Discuss who not to catch a ride from. Include strangers and anyone you'd rather not have your child be alone with – we all have these people in our neighborhoods.
- It may be difficult but you will also need to discuss getting into cars with birth parents. If the children have supervised visitation or no visitation, the children should not get into a car with birth family. Talk with the social workers about the plan and the best way to discuss this with the children.

8. Practice Opening Lockers

This is such an embarrassing thing for kids, being late to class or to gym because they can't open their lockers. Use the time you have at enrollment or at an open house to practice. Get a lock at home and practice.

9. Be Involved with the Child's Education and with the School

This is great for foster parents too. Volunteer to be a room parent and help plan holiday parties for the child's class. If you don't have time to attend school parties, bake cookies or send a bag of candy. Go on field trips or volunteer to come in and read to the kids. Most kids love to see their parents or care givers being involved in their activities.

10. Create a Cover Story

A cover story is something that the kids can tell others about why they are now in your home.



Back 2 School Checklist

- The child's immunization record.
- The child's past school's name and address. This allows the new school to obtain the child's past school records.
- Child's Social Security Number - if possible.
- Dr's name and address and phone number.
- Your friend's or family's info for emergency contacts.
- Social worker's name and number.
- Birth parent's info (if you have it). Under "Mother and Father" on the enrollment form enter in the child's birth family info, minus the phone number, as you don't want to give out info without speaking to the social worker on the case first. Write in your name under "who the child resides with". Most forms will have separate areas like this for foster, kinship, or other guardian arrangements. If not write your name and basic info under "Mother and Father" and write in the word "foster" before "Mother and Father".
- Social worker's name and number. For emergency contact info always fill in the social worker, as well as your family or friends. Also, designate the social worker as someone who can pick the child up from school as they may be transporting the child to family visits.
- Free and reduced lunches and textbooks form. Foster children always get lunches and textbooks for free. You may have to pay for other things like lab or art fees, so be prepared to write a check for the extras.

Foster Parent Support Group

Second Thursday of every month, 6-8pm
(beginning 9/9)

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

Held at: Ignite Flint Church
(4510 S. Dort Hwy - corner of Dort & Hemphill in Flint).



10 Things to Do Before Sending Your Foster Child Back to School

By Carrie Craft, About.com

Are you ready to send your foster children back to school? Here is a handy checklist to help you send them back to school with less stress.

1. Health

Healthy kids perform better in school.

- Check your child's medical card, for the date of your child's last physical. You will also need to make appointments for your foster child's dental and eye appointments. Keep these appointments current.
- Make sure you have the child's immunization records and that they are up to date. You will need the immunization records in order to enroll any child in school in the United States.

2. Paperwork

Upon enrollment you will find several forms to fill out. Go prepared and make sure you have everything on the checklist on the next page.

3. Know the Child's Education Plan

Does the child have an Individual Education Plan (IEP) for special education, behavior, and/or speech classes? Foster parents cannot sign an IEP, only the child's birth parent or an Education Advocate can sign IEP's or make any changes to the plan. Things to keep in mind:

- As foster parents you should be able to attend parent teacher meetings and conferences, but think first before you share too much information.
- Since each state is different, ask if you as a foster parent can you sign permission slips for field trips.
- Can the child sign up to play sports? It's a good idea to get a release allowing you to sign for such activities.
- Can the birth parents attend conferences with you? This would be a great way to mentor a birth family by modeling how to act at conferences, ask

questions, and advocate for a child. If birth parents are not allowed to attend meetings with you, then take steps to include them by sharing information.

4. Practice Address and Phone Numbers

Children new to your home need to know this for safety and for school. Make sure they know your full name, how to spell it correctly, and where you work.

- Practice writing the address and phone number.
- Have an index card in the child's backpack with the needed information.

5. Practice the Route to School or to the Bus Stop

Show the child the route they are to take and make sure it is a safe route. Walk or bike it with them. Practice skills such as:

- Crossing the street
- Yielding to traffic
- Stopping at stop signs
- Locking up bikes
- Knowing the correct bus number

(con't on next page)



Back to **SCHOOL** Bash

for foster children K-12

Thursday, 8/26 4-7p

**FREE - BACKPACKS
SCHOOL SUPPLIES
BOUNCE HOUSE, GAMES**

Ignite Flint Church

(corner of Dort & Hemphill, Flint, behind BP gas station)

**Please RSVP 810.936.5702
info@ifosterhope.com, ifosterhope.com**

Child's Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ Zip: _____

Gender: M F Age: _____ Grade: _____

Caregiver's Name: _____

Foster Agency: _____

Caseworker: _____

Hosted by: Foster Hope, Judson Center, Ignite Flint Church, Lutheran Social Services, Holy Cross Children's Services, Spectrum Child & Family Services



Donations are welcome!!!

Visit ifosterhope.com for more info & drop off locations. Thanks!

CRIM Festival of Races



Teddy Bear Trot

Started in 1988 as a way to get future Crim runners involved in race day activities, this event gives families a race of their own and has quickly become a flagship event for the CrimFit Youth Program.

The Teddy Bear Trot will be held on **Saturday, August 28, 2010 at 1 p.m.** Flint City Hall (Corner of 5th and Saginaw) as a part of the Crim Festival of Races!

The Crim's Family Fun Zone in the Flint Journal First Street Parking Lot Family Friendly activities, bounce houses, face painters, Genesys Mascot Photo Booth, Radio Disney and more!

Friday, August 27th 6pm – 8:30 pm
Crim Kids Invitational Awards

Saturday, August 28th 10am – 4pm

Visit www.crim.org/youth for more info about this event and other great fitness programs for youth.

We are proud to be taking part in the FOX 66 Charity Challenge Blood Drive, giving one local charity a chance to win \$500! This event will take place at the FOX 66 Bringing It Home Fall Festival on Saturday, September 18, 12noon-6pm, at Perani Arena in Flint. This challenge, in partnership with the Red Cross, will give the charity with the most presenting donors that day \$500! Did you know that one pint of blood can save up to three lives? In addition to helping save lives, each presenting donor will also be entered to win one of two 22" flat screen TV's! Donors are asked to register online today at www.wsmh.com/charitychallenge.

The Bringing It Home Fall Festival is a one-day community celebration that allows residents of Mid-Michigan an opportunity to attend a fun filled day of activities and entertainment! In its 6th year, the event will again feature free parking, free admission, free concerts, *many* free family activities, and the opportunity to win some great prizes! More information can be found at www.wsmh.com.

Charity Challenge Blood Drive: Help Save Lives, Support Local Charities, Enjoy a Great Community Event, and Win Prizes!

Back to the Bricks – August 17-21

Wednesday & Thursday

Rolling Cruise – down Saginaw, Grand Blanc to Downtown Flint 5 -10pm

Saturday

At UofM-Flint - Kids Flix 2:00PM Featuring: CARS
Downtown Center Lot

Dragster Blasts 10:00am – 2:00pm – 4:00pm

Visit www.backtothebricks.org for more info

