

May 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

Foster Parent Support Group

Friday, May 21 6:00-8:00pm

*****New Location - Ignite Flint Church**

4510 S. Dort Hwy Flint, MI 48507 (corner of Dort & Hemphill)

Refreshments and Great Conversation!

Free Child Care available!

(please call to reserve) 810-936-5702

Current Series:

How to Be a Great Foster Parent Session 2: Creating a Foster Care Binder



Documentation is crucial for a foster child's case.

Documentation means noting a child's behavior changes, grief cycles, medical problems and emotional needs. This is when you as a foster parent are sharing valuable insights and information with the foster care team. The social workers may not know that the foster child suffers from night terrors and has nightly for weeks. This may mean a needed referral to a mental health professional or medication evaluation.

What You'll Learn This Session:

- 1) The importance of documentation and how it can help increase the power of your voice in your foster child's case.
- 2) You will create your own binder during the session that will help you begin easily documenting, right away!

What will my kids do while I am in the support group?

We are working on all kinds of fun activities for the kids. As this group grows, we are looking forward to providing activities by age, including life book scrapbooks and teen support groups.

Fostering Connections with Birth Families



When doing foster care, we are given many opportunities to gain a connection to the child's family. How we choose to use these opportunities makes the difference between fostering a child and fostering a family.

Taking Time with the Parents and Extended Family

I've met grandparents, aunts, uncles, and other family members both before and after visits. Remember that these family members are experiencing a great loss, as well. They often do not get the visitation time that parents are offered.

- Listen to what they have to say, if you're comfortable with the conversation. I've taken time with parents and other extended family members to jot down genealogy and later added that information to the children's life books. One grandfather related his WWII stories. This is a great way to

help instill pride in the children's birth families, and to build a sense of self-esteem and identity within the child.

- The holidays bring a great opportunity for forming a connection with the family. Consider taking a gift to the parents. I usually get the child's picture taken for Christmas, and then bring framed photos to the parents. I also include an envelope with several different pictures in a variety of sizes, which parents can keep for themselves or choose to give to extended family. Additionally, I like to frame a smaller size photo, like a 5"X7", for grandparents at Christmas time. Another idea is purchasing a small scrapbook, into which you can just slip photos. This makes a great gift, and the parents seem to enjoy the candid pictures. If you are uncomfortable giving a gift, a simple card is a nice gesture.

Remember that the goal of fostering is almost always reunification of the family. In most cases, this is best for all involved. By fostering these connections with the parents and building a relationship of trust, foster parents begin to mentor a whole family instead of fostering one child. Parents may then be willing to ask of you, the foster parents, parenting questions or advice. And, when the child goes home, the parents will have you as another resource to lean upon while they work to rebuild their lives. This is, hopefully, a relationship that will last between your two families for some time to come.

Your efforts to foster the whole family and build trust, will give the child the opportunity to have several people in his/her life that care for him/her.

By Carrie Craft, About.com



foster your future
FYF

Foster Hope is hosting Foster Your Future, a summer community life skills program for foster youth ages 14-18.

The program will provide instructional sessions, hands-on activities, group counseling, and community field trips relating to topics such as: Self Image, Communication Skills, Community Connections & Resources, Sexual Health, Substance Abuse, Boundaries & Emotional Health, Study Skills, Goal Setting, College Education, Job Readiness Training & Mock Interviews, Money Management, Food/Nutrition & Cooking, Housing Resources, Transportation Resources.

The program will run 6/21 –8/6 on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays, 10:00am-3:00pm.

Applications and more information available online at ifosterhope.com or by contacting Tennison Barry – 810.936.5702, tbarry@ifosterhope.com



Care Kits were created especially for Foster Children coming into care. They are full of new or gently used clothing and personal care items. They are affordable and available for pickup anytime, even after hours and on the weekends.

Contact Foster Hope
(810) 936-7502
carekits@ifosterhope.com

INFANT Care Kits contain:

3 pair of PJ's
3 pair of socks
Diapers/Wipes
Bibs/bottles
3 outfits
3 onesies
1 sweatshirt or coat
Plus More!!!

CHILDREN/ YOUTH Care Kits contain:

2 pair of PJ's
3 pair of socks
3 pair undies
1 pair shoes
3 shirts
3 pants
1 sweatshirt or coat
Plus More!!!

Fun Games for Sneaky Speech Therapy

By Carrie Craft,
About.com

"I Went to..."

It's the one where you:

Recite a long list of items and then add one, alphabetically, for the next player to remember.

"I went to the zoo and I saw an anteater, a bear, a crocodile, a deer, an elephant and ... a ferret!"

Sneakily strengthens:

- Vocabulary
- Phonics
- Memory

Five ways to tweak it:

1. **To focus on vocabulary**, do the reciting yourself and just have your child add a word each time.
2. **To focus on memory**, have the child recite the long string of items while you provide the next selection.

3. **To focus on phonics**, have the destination and every one of the items endlessly added all start with the same sound: *"I went to Kansas and I brought candy, Christmas cards, kittens, catalogs ..."*
4. **To focus on articulation**, pick a sound to target and then make the destination and every one of the items endlessly added all start with that sound: *"I went to the supermarket, and I bought soda, celery, sandwiches, steak, strawberries ..."*
5. **To focus on alphabet**, change the destination each round and come up with a place and three items that start with the same letter; next player has to come up with the same for the next letter: *"I went to Alaska and brought an ax, an atlas and an anteater." "I went to Boston and I brought books, bottles and band-aids." "I went to Cancun and I brought carrots, cupcakes and cola."*

"I Spy..."

It's the one where you:

Spot something in plain sight and reveal one detail, making the other player guess what it is. *"I spy, with my little eye, something that begins with J."*

Sneakily strengthens:

- Receptive language
- Expressive language
- Deductive reasoning

Five ways to tweak it:

1. **To focus on receptive language (listening skills)**, have your child be the "spyer" more frequently than the guesser.
2. **To focus on expressive language (oral skills)**, have your child be the "guesser" more frequently than the "spyer."
3. **To focus on categories**, choose items only by color -- *"I spy something that's blue"* -- or shape -- *"I spy something that's square"* -- or function -- *"I spy something you use to write."*
4. **To focus on phonics**, describe items by the sound they start with: *"I spy something that starts with the 'f' sound."*



Foster Hope **CARNIVAL**
Sun 5/23 2-4pm
Downtown Flint
Flat Lot
 (corner of Saginaw & Kearsley)

\$3/child
Adults are FREE
 (when accompanied by a child)

Admission includes unlimited:
 Inflatables
 Face Painting
 Games
 Performances for Kids by Kids

Carnival Foods
 at family friendly prices
\$1 bike raffle

FUN FOR THE WHOLE FAMILY!
 Raising money and awareness for children and families in the foster care system.

Event sponsored by the Foster Hope Project – Valuing Identity, Promoting Advocacy, Mobilizing Community to better serve children and families in the foster care system.
 For more information: www.ifosterhope.com or 810.936.5702
 All contributions are tax deductible.

Foster Hope, in partnership with Leadership Genesee Class of 2010, would like to invite you to participate in the “Heart on my Sleeve” campaign during May, Foster Care Awareness Month.

To “wear your heart on your sleeve” is said to have derived from the middle ages when Knights would wear a ribbon pinned to their sleeve as a sign of the one they were fighting for. We too wear our heart on our sleeve as a symbol of our commitment to care and fight for the children and families in the foster system.

Please help your place of employment or school coordinate one or more days in the month of May on which they will allow their employees/students to wear jeans, and/or purchase a Foster Hope decal for a small donation. All proceeds will help fund programs such as Foster Your Future, Care Kits and Foster Parent Support Groups.

For more information, including a coordinator’s packet, contact (810) 936-5702 or heart@ifosterhope.com

Foster Parent of the Year to be honored at the Foster Hope Carnival. Nominate your favorite foster parent today at www.ifosterhope.com
 Winner receives a one month family membership to Genesys Athletic Club!

Crim Kids Classic – Sat 5/15

10:00am - The Crim Kids Classic offers families a day of fun and fitness. This children’s event is held at the Flint Cultural Center in conjunction with National Museum Day. For ages 0-12 crim.org

- Participate in the Diaper Dash, Toddler Trot, Quarter Mile, Half Mile or One Mile race.
- Every child is a winner, receiving a Crim Kids Classic T-shirt, goody bag and medal at the finish line.
- Fun for the whole family with exhibits and activities focusing on health and fitness.
- Free admission to the Cultural Center attractions.

Bouquet of Photo Flowers

What you'll need:

- Construction paper, various colors
- Glue stick, scissors, tape, photos
- Green chenille stems, one for each
- Optional: patterned paper

How to make it:

1. Cut photos into circles to be used as the center of the flower.
 2. Cut simple flower shapes out of construction paper.
 3. Glue photo circle to the center of the flower.
 4. This step is optional: Glue construction paper flower to a piece of patterned paper. Cut around the flower giving your construction paper about a half-inch border of patterned paper.
 5. Tape chenille stem to the back of your flower. Make sure the tape is secure by pressing onto the tape with your fingernail.
- Trim ends of chenille to the length you desire, depending on what you are using as a vase. If making a handheld bouquet, don’t trim the chenille; simply tie a ribbon bow around them all.
 - By: Amanda Formaro, www.kaboose.com

