COMMUNIQUÉ

A resource for the Connecticut foster, adoptive and kinship care community.

Winter 2014

A quarterly publication of the Connecticut Association of Foster and Adoptive Parents, Inc.

Happy Winter!

The board of directors and staff at the Connecticut Association of Foster and Adoptive Parents, Inc. would like to wish you and your family a happy and safe winter!

Are you an Experienced Foster Parent?

Are you an Experienced Relative Foster Parent?

When you were newly-licensed, do you remember all the questions you had when your first foster child came into your home?

Do you remember wondering what resources were available to you?

Do you remember thinking "if I only had another foster parent to talk to who has shared the same experience"?

If you remember all of these times, then you might enjoy being a buddy!

Support newly licensed families!!

BE A BUDDY!

Training and stipend provided.

Call Wendy Sander, Buddy Coordinator at 1-800-861-8838 at CAFAP or email wendy.sander@cafap.com

What Families Are Saying About The "CAFAP Conferences"!

"All parts were great and informative. This is my first time and I will be back next year."

"I absolutely am leaving the conference inspired!"

"Very informative and well organized."

"The presentations and getting to network with other foster parents was valuable"

Are you interested in being a Foster Parent? An Adoptive Parent? Call 1.888.KID HERO for more information!

In this Edition…

From the Desk of the Executive Director

Happy Winter to All:

Have you seen our new web site?? We are thrilled to have completely revamped our sight to make it much more user-friendly and fun on the eyes. Please visit us at: http://cafap.com and then tell us your thoughts!

We had a lot of fun this autumn: 250 adults and children attended the Bridgeport Sound Tigers' hockey game; 250 adults and children attended Frightfest at Six Flags and 60 adults and children rode the Polar Express train with Santa and Mrs. Claus.

We are gearing up for Avenue of Dreams and working hard on making our 20th Anniversary Annual Conference an outstanding one for foster, adoptive and kinship families as well as DCF and private agency professionals. Save the Dates!!

This fall, 341 foster, adoptive and relative adults attended CAFAP's Post-Licensing Training Modules. We currently have 25 Post-Licensing Modules and now you can review all the classes on-line and register for classes from our web site!!

In the months of October, November and mid-December, 204 prospective foster, adoptive and relative adults attended an Open House to learn more about becoming a licensed caregiver. During the same time, DCF licensed 103 new licenses. Of those, 58 were relatives, 26 were foster and pre-adoptive homes, 15 were Special Study families, 4 were Interstate Compact families.

We encourage all of our readers to think of family and friends who may be thinking about fostering or adopting to contact us at 1-888-KID-HERO for more information. There are still many children in Connecticut in need of temporary or permanent homes and caring and nurturing adults in their lives.

From all of us at CAFAP, we wish you a cozy and happy winter and holiday season. We hope all our CAFAP families will experience close, bonding family time during the cold winter months. We will continue to offer support and information!

Margaret Doherty

Communiqué is published in both the English and Spanish language four times a year by the Connecticut Association of Foster and Adoptive Parents, Inc. CAFAP is a non-profit organization devoted to the strengthening of foster, adoptive and relative care providers through support, training, and advocacy with the aim of nurturing child safety, well being and stability in partnership with child welfare professionals and the entire community.

If you would like to contribute information for the next edition of the Communiqué, Spring 2015, the deadline is March 6th, 2015.

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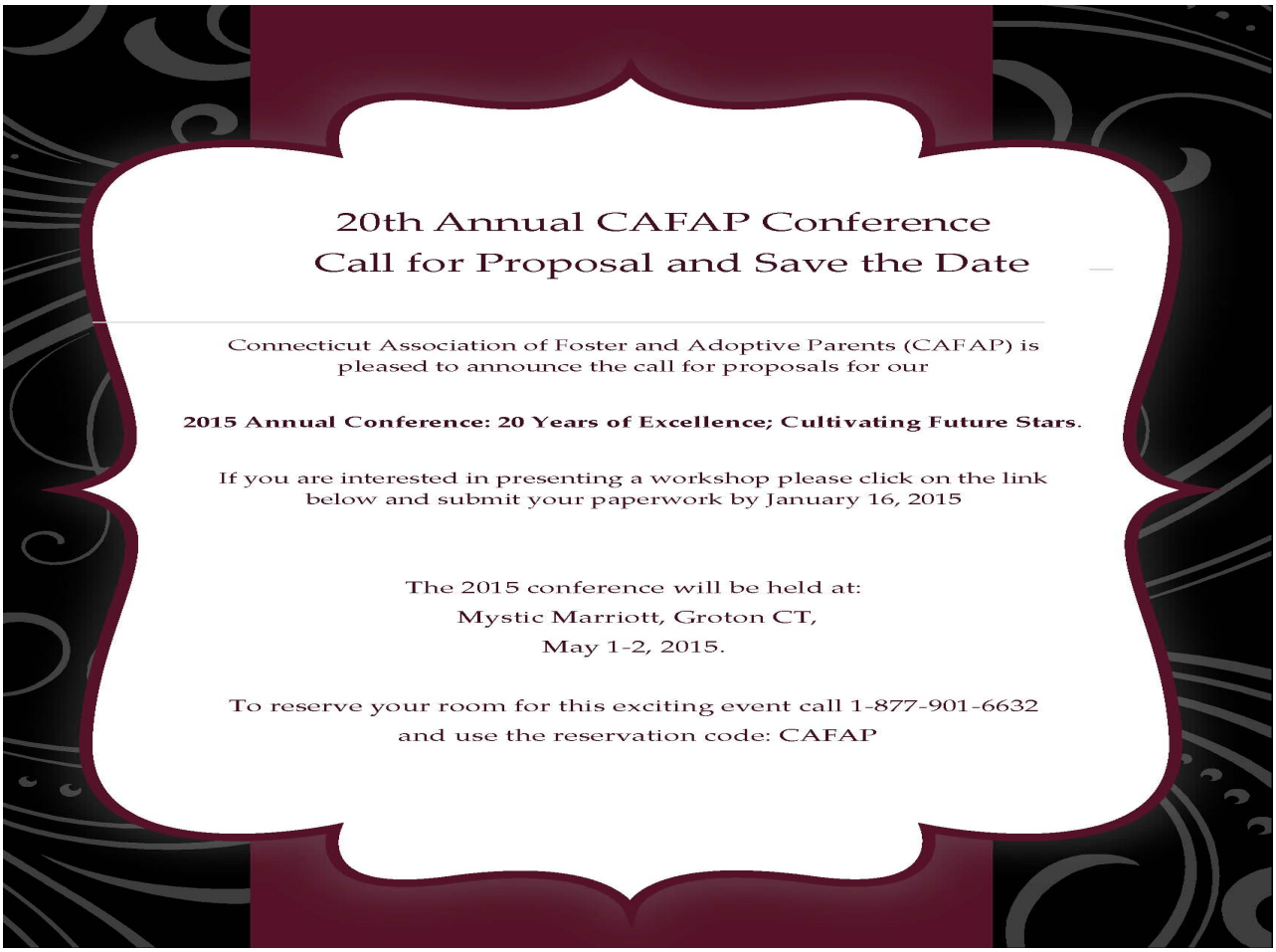
The Association would like to thank the Connecticut Department of Children and Families for the funding we receive.

Upcoming CAFAP Events

Save the Date!
March 7th, 2015
"Avenue of Dreams"

At the "Avenue of Dreams" event we provide 150 foster and adopted girls with free prom dresses, shoes, make-up and accessories to ensure that they are prom ready.

For more information please call Kareemah at 860-258-3400.



Save The Dates!
May 1st & 2nd, 2015 – CAFAP's 20th Annual Conference

If you are interested in submitting a proposal for the conference please http://cafap.com/event/call-for-presenters/?instance_id=35 for more information.

CT Youth Attend White House Effort To Improve Foster Care
By: Ana Radelat | December 9, 2014

Washington - Five Connecticut teenagers were among dozens of children in foster care invited to Washington this week to attend a White House event entitled "Improving Outcomes for Our Nation's Foster Youth."

The children listened to inspirational talks by White House and Obama administration officials who grew up in foster homes, including Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack.

The event was an effort by the Obama administration to press for better foster programs.

"We have to do a better job looking out for you," said Vice President Joe Biden.

The highlight of the event may have been viewing the new movie "Annie" and meeting its stars, including Jamie Foxx, Cameron Diaz and Quvenzhane Wallis, who plays the spunky orphan named Annie.

Ashley Chevrett, 18, a Southern Connecticut State University freshman who is still under the care of the Connecticut Department of Children and Families, gave the film a mixed review.

"The movie is pure Hollywood. It's not realistic. But it sends a beautiful message," she said. "I know no rich guy is going to swoop down and adopt me."

Chevrett has been in foster care since she was 8 and has not seen her mother in five years.

Joette Katz, commissioner of the Connecticut Department of Children & Families, accompanied Chevrette and four other foster youth from Connecticut to Washington.

"It was great for the kids to see (foster) success stories," Katz said.

She also said Biden singled out Connecticut for programs aimed at reuniting children with their parents and keeping others out of foster care.

Gov. Dannel P. Malloy plans to use federal grants to develop two new programs. One is the MOMS Partnership, which tries to tackle depression and other stresses among mothers at risk of having their children placed in foster care.

The other new program is "Caregiver Substance Use and Recovery Services," developed in collaboration with the Harvard Kennedy School Social Impact Bond Lab. It would combat substance abuse in parents and provide support services.

On any given day, there are more than 400,000 young people in foster care nationally, with over 100,000 waiting to be adopted.

Published by The CT. Mirror on December 10, 2014

2015 Legislative Session

The 2015 legislative session will begin on January 7th. The CAFAP legislative committee has decided to submit the Foster Parent Bill of Rights this year. A copy of the bill is included in this article.

As the bill moves forward, we will need foster parents to testify in person and/or by email or mail. We would also need foster parents to contact their state senators and representatives to ask that they support the bill. If you would be interested in supporting the bill, please contact Carolyn Goodridge at 860-258-3400 or by email at Carolyn.goodridge@cafap.com. We could assist you in preparing testimony or in contacting your legislators.

Proposed Connecticut Foster Parent Bill of Rights

This Foster Parent Bill of Rights is intended as an educational and advocacy tool for any person who is licensed as a foster parent by the Connecticut Department of Children and Families ("DCF"). These proposed rights are listed in the Department of Children and Families policy, state statutes, and the Foster Parent Handbook, which is available on the DCF website. References are noted.

Foster Parents are vital resources for the children of our state who have been removed from their home due to neglect or abuse. These rights should be part of ethical and best practice. A copy of the Foster Parent Bill of Rights shall be given to all foster parents when a child is placed with the foster parent, and/or when the foster parent requests a copy.

A Foster Parent's rights include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. **The Foster Parent shall be a partner and team member with the child's social worker to ensure that each child receives the full spectrum of services provided and/or arranged by the Department of Children and Families.** The Foster Parents shall be part of the child's treatment team which includes the DCF social Worker and supervisory staff, birth parents, educational, medical and mental health professionals and the child's attorney. (DCF Policy 36-55-1.3, DCF policy 36-55-1.5)

2. **The Foster Parent and the child's Social Worker shall be team members**; some aspects of this relationship include: sharing information on an ongoing basis regarding the child's individual needs, family situation and adjustment to the foster home and encouraging the Foster Parents to participate in the **total service planning process.** (DCF policy 36-55-1.3)

3. **Foster Parents shall be notified** of **all dispositional hearings**, including permanency hearings and hearings on motions to revoke commitment. (DCF policy 46-3-5, CT General Statutes Section 46b-129(o))

4. **Foster Parents shall be provided with information, support, guidance and referrals to other professionals on the child's behalf;** helping the foster family, when necessary, to identify and obtain services for the foster child, e.g. medical, educational. (DCF policy 36-55-1.3)

2015 Legislative Session (continued)

5. **Foster Parents shall receive open and timely responses to requests for information or services that are relevant to the care of the foster child.** Foster Parents should be given the regional on-call system and CARELINE numbers to be able to reach staff after normal hours. (DCF policy 33-14) Foster Parents should be given the names and numbers of their office "chain of command" as mentioned in the Foster Parent Handbook, and updates should be given as positions change.

6. **Foster Parents who accept emergency placements shall be provided with information to meet the child's immediate needs within 24 hours, or 1 working day, of the time the child is placed.** Information about the child that is not available at the time of placement must be provided **within thirty days** of the date of placement. (DCF Policy 36-55-1.3)

7. **Any Foster or prospective Adoptive Parent shall have access to and disclosure of records** pertaining to a child or youth currently placed with the Foster or prospective Adoptive Parent, or a child or youth considered for placement, which address social, medical, psychological or educational needs of the child or youth, provided that no information identifying the biological parent is disclosed without their permission. (CT Gen. Statute 17a-28)

8. **The Foster Parent shall be provided with the DCF policy regarding the role and responsibilities of the Foster Parent.** (DCF Policy 36-55-1.5) Any personal information given by Foster Parents during the licensure process should be stored and handled carefully to protect their personal identity.

9. **Foster Parents shall be provided appropriate training to enhance their relevant skills and abilities.** (Foster Parents must meet post-licensing training requirements , DCF Policy 35-55-1.5)

10. **The Foster Parent's perspective on the child's adjustment to daily life is critical to the development and review of the service plan**. Foster Parents shall be provided the opportunity to express their concerns about the child's treatment plan as part of the team without criticism/retaliation, i.e. advocating for services, refusing to accept a child for placement, requesting removal of a child for good cause, or communicating with a child's former Foster Parents, birth parents. (Policy 36-55-1.5, Foster Parent Handbook)

11. **Foster Parents shall have the right for first consideration as a placement for a child who had previously been placed in their home**, if no appropriate relative placement is available, when that child reenters the system. Foster Parents shall also be given first consideration as Adoptive Parents for a child who has lived with them for 12 months or more, and becomes legally free for adoption.

12. **The Foster Parent shall contact the "Chain of Command" for problem resolution. If that does not resolve the grievance, the Foster Parent shall be referred to the Problem Resolution Process.** (Policy 41-25-25)

A copy of The Foster Parent Bill of Rights shall be given to foster parents at the time of the placement of a child and/or if requested by the foster family.

Understanding Grief And Loss In Children
The Stages Of Grief And Loss

When a child enters your home, whether through adoption or foster care, they come with a tremendous amount of grief and loss. Losses that include birth parents, extended family, home, pets, neighborhoods, schools, friends, treasured belongings, and in some cases culture.

Don't discount the loss of "the little things" like a favorite climbing tree. I've had children talk about their favorite toys, friends, or even the lunch lady at school. People and things make a big impression on us, this is the same for our children.

As parents we hurt when our children hurt. If we want to help the child grieve we must first better our understanding of grief and loss.

The Stages of Grief and Loss
Grief is very personal. Each person will go through grief at her own pace, time, and order. When I speak of order I'm referring to Kubler-Ross' well known stages of grief established in 1969. They are:

- Shock/Denial
- Anger
- Bargaining
- Despair/Depression
- Acceptance/Understanding/Resolution

Here is an example of what grief and loss may look like in a child who is missing her birth family after entering a foster or adoptive situation.

- Shock/Denial – 'My family will be here soon to pick me up.' The child stands by the door and waits, peering out the window from time to time.
- Anger – 'I hate Social Workers. They don't understand anything about my family' or 'Police officers lied about my dad. He wouldn't do any of the things they said he did.' The child may cry uncontrollably or become angry at the foster/adoptive parents for making simple requests like asking the child to get ready for bed or being told 'no.'
- Bargaining – The child may now realize that they will be in the foster/adoptive home for some time. The child may silently pray or believe the following: 'If I'm allowed to go home I'll be the best kid. I will help keep the house clean. I will get the top grades in school.'
- Despair/Depression – 'Who is going to take care of me? Did I make this happen? I give up. Why me? I'm so alone.'
- Acceptance/Understanding/Resolution – 'I'm here in this home, but I'm safe. This is not my fault. I did not make this happen. Adults make choices for me. I need to do my best to share my feelings with adults around me that I trust. I will get through this and be OK.'

Some children may get stuck in a stage, like 'Anger.' Others will bounce between stages many times before hitting 'Understanding.' And still others will 'Bargain,' before going through 'Denial.' Kubler-Ross stated that it could take an adult 2 years to grieve the death of a loved one. It was also noted that an 18-month old child who loses her parents could take up to 6 years to fully grieve and come to a resolution of that loss. Again, grief is personal.

Taken From: Adoption.com
http://adoption.about.com/od/parenting/a/griefandchild.htm

Fostering a Child Whose Sibling(s) Live Elsewhere

Fact Sheet | Coalition for Children | Youth | Families | Milwaukee, WI

When siblings enter foster care, the goal is to keep the children together whenever possible. Sometimes, however, this cannot happen for a variety of reasons. We know from research, that sibling relationships are important for a child's development and emotional wellbeing. Sibling connections can provide a sense of family identity even if a child is not connected with other birth family members.

If you find yourself fostering a child whose siblings are living somewhere else, there are ways you can support, connect, and assist that child through the emotions and confusion that may come up.

Though you cannot control what happens in their sibling's placement, you can use this tip sheet to gather ideas about connecting with their family, facilitating visitations, and supporting the children in their feelings and struggles given their unique circumstances.

Supporting the child in your home

In most situations, the relationship a child has with his sibling is and will be the longest one he will have in his life. Being separated can feel isolating – and can be devastating. Siblings who are separated from one another may suffer from grief as a result of the losses they have experienced. Signs of grief could include:

- Crying
- Headaches
- Loss of appetite
- Trouble sleeping
- Withdrawing from others

Most of us are aware of the five stages of grief: denial and isolation, anger, bargaining, depression, and acceptance. The child in your care may go through some or all of these stages, once or multiple times. If you notice a dramatic change in her appetite, sleep schedule, or school performance, it may be time to consider seeking out professional assistance or support.

When siblings are separated, it doesn't always mean that they have to be disconnected from one another. Here are some possibilities for helping keep siblings connected:

- Keep a photo of the sibling(s) in the child's room, perhaps even some photos of the children together.
- When possible, you could set up phone calls. It's helpful if this can be done when the children can talk with one another with few distractions.
- If visits can be done safely and appropriately, (see more below) it can be beneficial for children to connect in person. A visitation plan needs to be approved by the case workers for each of the children, and could include the two (or more) families going to a park or the zoo, or any place that provides a fun activity for the families to do together. Keep in mind that siblings have often lost touch with each other and a visit where they have an activity to focus on can help to re-establish the bond between them.
- For older children, emailing, connecting on social media, and video chatting online might be options you could consider. (It is important to monitor online and social media use for the children in your care. The Coalition has some tip sheets on social media and Internet safety that you may want to refer to.)
- For no-tech options, cards and letters can also be a great way to maintain connections.
- Sending photos can go a long way to keeping the sibling bond strong, especially for children who aren't able to see one another in person.

If and when siblings do have visits or other forms of contact with one another, it's often helpful to have the contact information for the caregiver(s) of the sibling(s) so that you can keep communication open between you and the other family or families. You might want to get in touch, for example, if you are noticing behavior changes after visits.

Fostering a Child Whose Sibling(s) Live Elsewhere (continued)

You may find that these other caregivers can provide some insight about what happened during the visit. You can also check in with the child after a visit or interaction. A gentle conversation can go a long way. Try asking a few open-ended questions such as, "How was the visit with your brother?" or "How are you feeling?" These questions can be the sign a child is waiting for to open up and share.

Determining if connecting is safe/appropriate

If you are caring for a child in out-of-home care, the court or the child's case worker will determine if ongoing contact with a sibling is safe and appropriate. Visits are deemed not safe and/or appropriate for a variety of reasons. For example, a visit may be deemed unsafe or inappropriate if a birth family member has shown violent behavior at past visits, or if a sibling has perpetrated sexual abuse on the other and a visit would cause the victimized sibling further trauma. Every situation is different and there are state standards which guide a case worker's decision making in this matter.

Your role as caregiver can be to advocate for visits between siblings when appropriate and to provide the necessary supervision to ensure all children are safe while they are together. Be sure to talk to the child's case worker about types of interactions that are allowed or not allowed, the type of supervision needed, any activities the children cannot do together, behaviors to be aware of, and other ways that you could help support the interaction.

You may also want to check with the case worker about historical interactions. In some cases, there are details about how the siblings interacted with each other before entering out-of-home care that may shed some light on how they are interacting together at visits. It's especially important to alert the child's case worker as soon as possible if you notice anything that points to negative outcomes of visits or continued contact between siblings.

To help facilitate a successful visit:

- Prepare the child in your care by sending them fed, alert, and with a few ideas of conversation starters or favorite toys to share.
- If you are transporting to and from visits, try to keep the conversation light and happy, and do your best to be on time for dropping off and picking up the child in your care.
- If you can stay for the visit, you could use the time as an opportunity to get to know the parent or caregiver of the sibling(s).
- If the child has a life book, she could bring it to share or work on with her siblings.
- As with any relationship, the one between siblings in out-of-home care will ebb and flow. There might be times when you will need to remind the child in your care of this. And there may be times when you will need to remind yourself of the uniqueness of the circumstance and be extra understanding of how hard it must be for the children. The more you can help the child in your care feel supported by and attached to you, the easier it may be for him to handle the stresses of living apart from his sibling(s). By working to do all that you can to facilitate the bonds and connections between siblings, you will be helping the child in your care grow, develop and thrive.

Fact Sheet | Coalition for Children | Youth | Families | Milwaukee, WI

State of Connecticut
Sibling Bill of Rights

Preamble: The Department of Children and Families (DCF) recognizes the importance and value of sibling relationships. These rights are intended to guide the Department in the delivery of care and services to foster youth with the commitment to permanency, safety and well being. This Bill of Rights is based on a similar Bill of Rights approved by New England Youth Coalition and the New England Association of Child Welfare Commissioners and Directors in January 2012, and was developed by the DCF's Youth Advisory Board with the support of the Department.

Whereas: the importance of sibling relationships are recognized and respected;

Whereas: sibling relationships provide needed continuity and stability during a child's placement;

Whereas: the sibling bond is unique and separate from the parent-child bond;

Whereas: siblings share similar history, heritage, culture and often biology that must be preserved;

Whereas: sibling separation is a significant and distinct loss that must be repaired by frequent and regular contact;

Whereas: every foster child deserves the right to know and be actively involved in his/her siblings' lives absent extraordinary circumstances.

Every foster child, absent extraordinary circumstances and pursuant to the provisions and exclusions of section 17a-10a of the General Statutes[i]:

1) Shall be placed with siblings.
2) Shall be in close proximity to siblings if unable to be in same setting to facilitate frequent and meaningful contact.
3) Shall be afforded contact with siblings regardless of geographic barriers. The methods for contact should be outlined in the child's service plan.
4) Shall be actively involved in his/her siblings' lives and share celebrations including birthdays, holidays, graduations, and meaningful milestones.
5) Shall maintain consistent and regular contact that will be included in service planning.
6) Shall be included in permanency planning decisions relative to his/her siblings. Foster children should know what the expectations are for continued contact when a sibling is adopted or guardianed.
7) Shall be notified by DCF regarding a sibling's change of placement.
8) Shall be informed when a sibling is discharged from foster care. Alumni shall be allowed to maintain contact with a sibling who remains in state care.
9) Shall be supported by DCF in his/her efforts to maintain relationships with siblings who are not in care or have been adopted or guardianed. The Department shall facilitate such contact as appropriate.
10) Shall have predictable, regular contact with siblings that shall not be withheld as a behavioral consequence absent safety concerns.

Adopted by the DCF Youth Advisory Board, August 6, 2014

State of Connecticut
Sibling Bill of Rights
(continued)

[i] § 17a-10a of the General Statutes provides:

(a) The Commissioner of Children and Families shall ensure that a child placed in the care and custody of the commissioner pursuant to an order of temporary custody or an order of commitment is provided visitation with such child's parents and siblings, unless otherwise ordered by the court.

(b) The commissioner shall ensure that such child's visits with his or her parents shall occur as frequently as reasonably possible, based upon consideration of the best interests of the child, including the age and developmental level of the child, and shall be sufficient in number and duration to ensure continuation of the relationship.

(c) If such child has an existing relationship with a sibling and is separated from such sibling as a result of intervention by the commissioner including, but not limited to, placement in a foster home or in the home of a relative, the commissioner shall, based upon consideration of the best interests of the child, ensure that such child has access to and visitation rights with such sibling throughout the duration of such placement. In determining the number, frequency and duration of sibling visits, the commissioner shall consider the best interests of each sibling, given each child's age and developmental level and the continuation of the sibling relationship. If the child and his or her sibling both reside within the state and within fifty miles of each other, the commissioner shall, within available appropriations, ensure that such child's visits with his or her sibling occur, on average, not less than once per week, unless the commissioner finds that the frequency of such visitation is not in the best interests of each sibling.

(d) The commissioner shall include in each child's plan of treatment information relating to the factors considered in making visitation determinations pursuant to this section. If the commissioner determines that such visits are not in the best interests of the child, that the occurrence of, on average, not less than one visit per week with his or her sibling is not in the best interests of each sibling, or that the number, frequency or duration of the visits requested by the child's attorney or guardian ad litem is not in the best interests of the child, the commissioner shall include the reasons for such determination in the child's plan of treatment.

Helping Foster Kids Deal With Placement Disruption

Many times, children placed into foster care suffer from mental health issues. A placement disruption may be so severe to the child that it feels as if their entire world is falling apart. Children in foster care often struggle to best deal with and survive these traumatic events, as they struggle to adjust to a new home and new family. To be sure, the losses in their life, along with the lack of a permanent home, often times prevent these children from forming a secure and healthy attachment with a primary caregiver.

Issues from anxiety can manifest themselves in a number of ways. Perhaps the one that foster children face the most is separation anxiety, an excessive concern that children struggle with concerning the separation from their home, family, and to those they are attached to the most. Indeed, the more a child is moved, from home to home, from foster placement to another foster placement, or multiple displacements, the bigger the concern becomes. Those children who undergo many multiple displacements often times create walls to separate themselves in an attempt to not let others into their lives. In attempting to do so, many foster children end up lying to their foster families, as they try to keep their new family at a distance, and at the same time, give the child a sense of personal control.

Other anxiety disorders include *obsessive-compulsive disorder*, where a child repeats unwanted thoughts, actions, and/or behavior out of a feeling of need. *Panic disorders* find a child experiencing intense bouts of fear for reasons that may not be apparent. These attacks may be sudden, and unexpected, as well as repetitive in their nature. Panic disorders also may coincide with strong physical symptoms, such as shortness of breath, dizziness, throbbing heart beats, or chest pains. Another anxiety disorder that foster children may face includes *social phobias*, or the fear of being embarrassed or face the criticism of others.

The loss of a family may result in a foster child spiraling into depression. These feelings of depression may intrude into all areas of a foster child's life; from their capability to act and function in the home to their school environment and the interaction with those their own age. Children who suffer from a depressive disorder may show strong and continuous signs of sadness. They may also have great difficulty in focusing on school work or life around them, and may instead concentrate on death or feelings of suicide. Loss of appetite or severe changes in eating habits may also be a result of a depressive disorder. Feelings of guilt over the placement may also overwhelm a foster child. Finally, a child who suffers from a depressive disorder may lack energy in day to day tasks, or may have difficulty sleeping.

Dealing with separation and loss is difficult for anybody. As an adult, you have had experience with this, and know who and where to reach out to when in need of help. Foster children, though, generally do not know how to handle these feelings and emotions. Yet, these feelings must be released, in some fashion. One way of expressing these feelings of isolation is to lash out in anger and frustration to those around them. Though foster children do not necessarily blame you, the foster parent, or the caseworker, the feelings of frustration and loss are strong within them, and you may be the only one they can release them to. Anger may also result in destruction of property or items within your foster home, as the child lashes out.

To be sure, there are high levels of mental health problems with children under foster care. The majority of foster children face the reality that most mental health problems are not being addressed as needed. Furthermore, psychological and emotional issues that challenge foster children may even worsen and increase, rather than improve and decrease, while under placement in foster homes and care. Foster children, in many cases, do not receive adequate services in regard to mental health and developmental issues and will not likely do so in the near future, due to lack of government funding and lack of resources, as well the simple matter that child welfare caseworkers are understaffed and overworked, in most states across the country.

Dr. John DeGarmo has been a foster parent for 12 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 Foster Parenting Manual: A Practical Guide to Creating a Loving, Safe and Stable Home.*

Emergency Planning Suggestions for "CAFAP Families" from "CAFAP Families"



- Notify DCF if you have an emergency that may limit your ability to care for the children in your home.
- Call DCF's Careline (1-800-842-2288) to notify DCF if you need to move from your home and identify the location where you are moving the family. If you can, call the child's social worker as well as your support worker with this information.
- Be especially prepared if you are caring for medically complex children or children on medication. Try to get re-fills of medication in advance of an expected storm.
- If you are caring for technology dependent children, you should already have a generator for back-up power. If you don't, call your DCF worker to obtain one.
- Create a plan with your children if one of them cannot make it home during a storm: Plans should include the following:
    - Assess your location: Where are you? Is it safe? Can you stay there until the storm passes? If not, where is the nearest safe place? Can you get to the nearest safe place or do you need help to get to a safe place? Do you have a phone? How much battery life is left? If you have no phone, is there a safe adult to ask to make a call for you?
    - Plan periodic communication: Can you call me again in an hour to let me know you are still okay? Reassess your location.
- If you are caring for children that run away (DCF calls these kids "AWOL") talk to your children about being weather conscious and smart. Kids need to know they can return to your home, even if there may later be a consequence for running (being AWOL.) SAFETY FIRST!
- Pre-program cell phones, both your own and your children's phones with the numbers for DCF's Careline (1-800-842-2288) as well as their social worker and any other reliable safe adult that they can turn for help.
- Try to remember to carry phone chargers with you and/or your children. Even if you lose power, if you can get somewhere with power, you can recharge your phone.
- Remind children to pay attention to weather reports and to wear warm coats, carry gloves, hats and boots.
- Prepare your home for days without power by pre-stocking the following:
    - 1 Gallon of water per person per day
    - Canned & jarred foods (soups, fruits, vegetables, tuna, peanut butter)
    - Infant formula and diapers if appropriate
    - Flashlights and batteries; candles if extremely careful
    - Use caution if you have/can use gas; watch for leaks
    - Check carbon monoxide detectors periodically

We invite you to write to us if you think we need to add to the list!

CAFAP Fall Events

Santa Special

On Sunday December 14, 2014, 90 foster and adoptive parents and children attended the Santa Special event at Essex Steam Train & Riverboat. The families rode on a fun-filled train ride, meeting Mrs. Claus, Rudolph and Santa himself! They sung holiday sing-a-longs and each child received Christmas bells adding to the cheer. The families had a spectacular time and said they would love to come again!

The Anderson family with Santa!

CAFAP received 90 toys from the "Analeh" Toy Drive at their annual event on December 4, 2014 in Hartford, CT

"Community Health Network" donated over 150 toys to CAFAP in addition to gift cards and monetary donations on December 15, 2014