

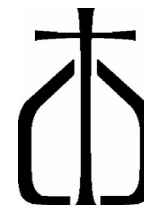


The Communication Link

Catholic Charities

Serving Allen, Cass, Fulton,
Kosciusko, Miami & Wabash County

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A Letter to Foster Parents From DCS Director James Payne Dated February 4, 2010

On behalf of the Department of Child Services, I would like to thank you for your commitment to the children of Indiana. I am aware of the challenges of being a foster parent and appreciate all that you do to support children during very difficult times in their lives. We recognize that caring for someone's child is both rewarding and challenging and as a result we have been working on a reorganization plan to improve our support of foster parents. The initiatives outlined below include the Regional Foster Care Specialist position, foster parent liability insurance, and the development of a foster parent email list. We believe these initiatives will help us better provide for the care of the children and support you as foster parents.

Regional Foster Care Specialists

For over a year, DCS has been working to reorganize the foster care program. Part of this reorganization initiative has resulted in the development of a dedicated staff position, the Regional Foster Care Specialist, whose primary responsibility will be to provide more targeted and timely support services such as recruitment, licensing, training, and communication. This position will be filled with an existing Family Case Manager (FCM) who will receive training related to practice and policy issues in the area of foster care.

The Specialist will work with the foster family throughout their involvement with fostering. Support from the very beginning of the licensing process will be offered to the foster parents so that, together, we build a stronger, longer lasting, positive relationship. Our goal is to better support foster families so they can focus on providing the best care possible for the children placed in their home.

The workers who were selected to become Regional Foster Care Specialists have embraced their new role with enthusiasm. They have noted how meaningful it is to them to have the ability to take the time necessary to offer foster parents the support they need and really get to know the families that are doing so much for the children that we place in their care.

In addition, the Specialists have found that working regionally has helped them get to know other foster parents in their region and build a stronger support network between foster families. Working regionally also helps the Specialist to find homes that have the experience or special skills to deal with the specific needs of children that enter into DCS care. Specialists will be established in all regions this spring. If you have not already, you should be hearing from your Regional Foster Care Specialist as s/he begins this new role.

(Continued on Page 2)

Letter From Director Payne (Continued From Page 1)*Foster Parent Liability Insurance*

To further support foster parents, DCS will again pay for liability insurance through the Indiana Foster Care and Adoption Association. This insurance program, administered by IFCAA, can help pay for attorney fees, court costs and damages awarded by a jury when an accident or injury occurs at a foster home. In order to obtain liability insurance the foster parent must become a member of IFCAA.

The membership requires an annual fee of \$30 that is paid by the foster parent to IFCAA. Once the membership fee has been received by IFCAA, DCS will provide payment of the liability insurance for that family. If you have any questions about the insurance program, call the IFCAA office at (800) 468-4228.

Email List

In order to better communicate with you in the future, we would like to develop an email list of foster parents. If you would like to receive updates via email, please supply us with your e-mail address. You can send it to us at the following address:

DCS.FosterCareSpecialist@dcs.IN.gov

In your e-mail, we ask that you include the following information:

County:

Name:

Street Address:

City, State:

Zip Code:

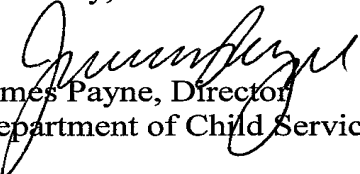
E-mail address:

This information will help us to better serve your needs and keep you up-to-date as we make improvements to our process.

I hope you find these changes to improve the support and communication you receive from DCS. From an economic standpoint, these are very challenging times for our country, our state, and our communities.

We welcome your ideas as we continue to work together to build strength in the child welfare system to provide the best possible outcomes for the children in our care. I hope you will continue to partner with us as we implement our foster care reorganization. We appreciate all that you do and look forward to our continued work together.

Sincerely,


James Payne, Director
Department of Child Services

**IN-SERVICE TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES:
PRE-REGISTRATION IS REQUIRED!**

TO REGISTER CALL 260-422-5625, ext. 223

OR E-MAIL THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION TO ROBIN at robins@mchsi.com:

YOUR NAME, ADDRESS, TELEPHONE #, TRAINING TITLE & DATE

ALL REGISTRATIONS RECEIVED WITHOUT THIS INFORMATION WILL NOT BE PROCESSED!

Adult & Pediatric CPR (Valid for 2 Years. A Licensing Requirement: No In-service Hours)

Sat., Mar. 27 th	Children's Cottage, Fort Wayne	9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.
Sat., Apr. 17 th	Children's Cottage, Fort Wayne	9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

Medical Coverage for Foster Children (1.5 SN Hours)

Indiana Care Select representatives will be presenting this informative program on how to register foster children for medical coverage and which coverage options are available. This class will be held at the Fulton County Library (Room A) from 6:00 to 7:30 pm on Wed. Mar. 3rd.

Adoption Support Group: Tips For Working With SN Children (2 SN Hours)

This session will be held from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m. on Thurs. Mar. 11th at the First Assembly of God Christian Center, 1400 W. Washington Center Rd., Fort Wayne (Door 15 - Room 37 B).

Foster Family Resource Guide (5 Hours)

Have you ever wondered what your rights are as a foster parent? Do you know the definition of a CHINS and understand the legal process pertaining to it? Do you know how to prepare if you've been subpoenaed? May you say no to foster placements? Is your home the safest it can be? Do you understand your role in visitations? Have you been documenting properly? If you don't know the answers to some of these questions or if you could use a refresher, then you should plan to join us at Winona Lake Grace Brethren Church (1200 Kings Highway Winona Lake) from 10:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. on Sat., March 13th. If you have a copy of the Foster Family Resource Guide please bring it with you.

Post Traumatic Stress Disorder also known as PTSD (2 SN Hours)

Did you know that when treating children under age 3, trauma must be considered before any other diagnosis? Or that if an adult and a child both experience the same trauma, a child under the age of 11 is three times more likely to suffer PTSD? Or that 90% of children who are traumatized have parents who have been traumatized? To learn more about PTSD in relation to children and adults you should plan to join us for one of the following sessions that will be held in Fort Wayne:

Thurs. Apr. 8 th	6:00 to 8:00 p.m.	First Assembly of God Christian Center
Sat. Apr. 10 th	9:00 to 11:30 a.m.	Catholic Charities

Say Yes to No (7.5 Hours: Must Commit to All 3 Sessions)

Say Yes to No is a powerful parenting tool developed by Dr. David Walsh and his team at the National Institute on Media and the Family. Say Yes to No empowers parents to set boundaries & expectations for their children. Say Yes to No teaches communities why it's important that children learn the word "no" and how to deal with being told "no." Say Yes to No gives practical ways to tell children no. Finally, it also shows how when implemented consistently, Say Yes to No helps children realize the value of "yes." Dr. Walsh argues that learning how and when to say No is crucial to raising healthy, self-reliant kids." This class will be held at The Villa (5601 Noll Ave. Fort Wayne) from 9 to 11:30 a.m. on Tues. Apr. 13th, 20th, & 27th. All 3 sessions must be attended for credit to be awarded.

Documentation of All Sorts (5 Hours)

This training which teaches participants what and how to document in relation to fostering is a one-time requirement for at least one member of each foster home. This training will be offered from 10:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. on Sat. Apr. 17th at the Rochester Library in Fulton County (320 W. 7th St. Rochester).

Notice to Foster and Adoptive Parents Regarding the 1099 Misc Form
The following information (dated 2/2/10) was obtained from the Indiana Department of Child Services web site located at www.in.gov/dcs/index.htm

The 1099 that you recently received regarding your foster care maintenance per diems was sent out in error. You will be receiving a corrected 1099 from the State that will, in all but a limited number of cases, show zero reportable income related to the foster care maintenance payments that you have received. In addition, at this time, no income related to foster care per diems has been reported to the Internal Revenue Service. Concerning the 1099 Misc form you received regarding adoption assistance payments for 2009: This form was sent in error and will be corrected. None of the adoption assistance payments you received in 2009 were reported to the IRS as income. You will receive a corrected 1099 form that no longer includes the adoption assistance payments in that report.

Tax Preparation Help For Foster Parents

The following link will take you to tax information related to fostering in the year 2009. It is not specific to Indiana but may be used as a resource. All tax questions should be directed to your accountant.

[http://www.nfpaonline.org/uploads/2009_federal_tax_benefits\(1\).pdf](http://www.nfpaonline.org/uploads/2009_federal_tax_benefits(1).pdf)

Looking for a Dentist Who Treats Individuals With Disabilities?

Help is Here! Visit the web site at http://www.iusd.iupui.edu/OHS_Site/ which is managed by Oral Health Solutions for Individuals with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities. This site lists dentists practicing in Indiana who provide services to those on Medicaid who have an ID or DD diagnosis.

Project Stepping Stone: A FREE Program to Help Hispanic Youth

Project Stepping Stone was created in 2004 to help Latino high school seniors and juniors consider and prepare for college. The program operates in partnership with Indiana businesses, the State of Indiana, and various universities and high schools with a focus on breaking down barriers, building trust, providing a business immersion experience, preparing students for college, providing college orientation, as well as leadership training and helping in the community. All of these experiences and courses are provided by caring business and university volunteers at **no cost** to the student or parents.

Success to Date: Over 90% of Project Stepping Stone students enter college. 2010 will be the 7th year of Project Stepping Stone. Of all students that have attended PSS, 90% are accepted and enter college. Last year 107 students from over 40 high schools were able to attend Project Stepping Stone.

One Week for a Life Time: This summer the program will be held June 13th -19th at Indiana State, IUPUI, Ball State and Marian College campuses. This 7 day/6 night program does not end on the last day but rather continues long after by building strong bonds between the mentors and students. The students also are challenged to become strong community leaders helping locally and to use the knowledge they gain to help guide other students to college. This is a lifetime experience that will make a difference in their lives.

Applications Now Being Accepted: You can access the application link and other documentation at www.projectsteppingstone.com Priority will be given to those applications received by March 15th. Final application deadline is March 31st. Exceptions are made based on extenuating circumstances.



Free Children's Museum of Indianapolis Foster Family Memberships

The Children's Museum of Indianapolis and the Indiana Department of Child Services has extended the opportunity for foster families throughout the state to sign up for a free one year membership under the new Foster Family Members program (FC license & ID required). For more information on the free membership visit the museum website at www.childrensmuseum.org or call 1-800-820-6214.