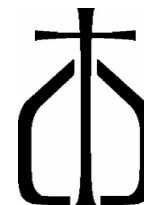




The Communication Link

Catholic Charities

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



All services are provided without regard to race, age,
color, religion, sex, disability, national origin or ancestry.

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The Indiana Adoption Program

On Jan. 1st significant changes occurred in the state adoption program. Information on these changes may be found in the Administrative Letter that is located on the DCS website at:

**[www.in.gov/dcs/files/
Admin_Letter_Adoption.pdf](http://www.in.gov/dcs/files/Admin_Letter_Adoption.pdf)**

While on line be sure to check out the adoption page of the DCS website. It contains links to many resources such as services, newsletters, and legal issues. It is located at:

www.in.gov/dcs/2730.htm

For your convenience a link to this letter can also be found on the **adoption** page of Catholic Charities' website at:

www.ccfwsb.org

A Message From IFCAA About FP Liability Insurance

As of January 2009, the county departments of Child Services no longer have the ability to provide foster parents with memberships to IFCAA or to pay for foster parent liability insurance on behalf of the county-licensed homes. However, the Indiana Department of Child Services state office will provide the foster parent liability insurance for these foster parents if they choose to become a member of IFCAA and pay their own membership fee.

The insurance program is a group policy and therefore requires membership to the Association to be eligible for enrollment. Indiana is one of the few states in the country that is able to provide foster parent liability insurance - a measure of protection for the risk that foster parents take when any child comes into their home as a ward of the state.

The annual cost of membership is charged by household and is only \$30. IFCAA recently mailed information to all foster homes in the state. If you did not receive a packet, you should call 1-800-468-4228. To enroll, fill out the membership application in the packet or go online to www.ifcaa.org and print one. Then send the form and membership payment to IFCAA. Once your membership application is accepted you will automatically be enrolled in the foster parent liability insurance program.

Many people are unaware of the importance of insurance until an accident occurs, in which case coverage can replace damage property up to \$5000 and in the case of accidental death of a child, coverage can provide legal defense and damages if sued in civil court. The Board of Directors is aware of the risks foster parents take when they accept foster children. Please, make the decision to become a member of IFCAA, enjoy the benefits and become insured for your own protection.

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Social & Extracurricular Activities for Foster Children
Written By Indiana DCS Director James Payne
(Written 1/29/08; Being Ran Again Per Director Payne's Request)

I have been concerned for years about our handling of children who come into our care and our desire and responsibility to allow them to have a normal life. This is more apparent and appropriate the longer the child is in care and probably the older the child is while in our care. But it includes all children.

I addressed this at the Foster Care Association meeting several months ago and committed to get this Directors Note out. I indicated at that meeting that we should give children the opportunity to participate in Boy Scout or Girl Scout activities, school activities, dating, overnights with a friend, the Prom, band camp, soccer and other sport activities, faith/church functions and other similar activities. The concern has been expressed that, while the children are in our care, we have an increased obligation and responsibility to keep them safe. While that is true and safety is always our paramount and first concern, they still deserve the right to be children.

I believe every child has the right to participate in age-appropriate social and extracurricular activities. It is our responsibility as an agency and as foster parents or caregivers to work to give children that opportunity and to make sure that they are safe and protected during those times. I also believe that foster parents and caregivers must take reasonable steps to determine the appropriateness and safety of those activities. As a note, the recent MARC Report comparing foster care per diems of every state indicates that Indiana ranks third in the nation for paying an appropriate amount for foster care. We therefore have the right to have the very best people serving as foster parents and other alternative care givers and to have high expectations of their care for our children.

As we do this, I believe it is important to state that we can expect foster parents and caregivers to exercise a reasonably prudent standard of substitute parental care that is characterized by careful and sensible parental decisions for children who we place in their care. Since we entrust foster parents and caregivers with our children in their home environment 24 hours a day, seven days a week, we have to be prepared to trust them to make good decisions about where those children may stay or who they are with during social and extracurricular activities. All this is done with the goal of normalizing the lives of children who are in the foster care system by allowing them to participate in those activities – for example, school sponsored field trips or sports, sleepovers with friends, scouting, group meetings with friends, the Prom, etc.

Foster parents and caregivers should take reasonably prudent steps to ensure that children are safe while engaged in those activities. Those include:

1. Having the right information about the child and the child's history to make those informed decisions consistent with the prior activities of the child as well as his/her ability and safety.
2. Take into consideration the child's ability, mental and physical health, and behaviors.
3. Consider when the activity will be held and make sure that it does not interfere with other responsibilities of the child and those responsible for the child.
4. Ask all the right questions- is the activity age-appropriate, does it enhance the treatment plan of the child, is it reasonable for the child, what are the benefits that the child will receive, etc..
5. Evaluate the risks involved in the activity consistent with the child's overall circumstances - no high risk activities.
6. Ensure that there is adequate and appropriate supervision by talking with adult supervisors and being assured of their appropriateness. This does not mean conducting a criminal background check.
7. The activity should have reasonable age-appropriate supervision and careful thought and reflection should be given when there is limited adult supervision - dating, Prom, etc. Priorities should be given to group activities.

In conclusion, the goal again is to permit children to be children within reasonable parameters that ensure safety, limited or no risk of harm or injury, and meet the guidelines above. These activities should be reported to the case manager and included in any communication with the parents, foster parents, child and family team meetings, and to the court.

Let's let children be children and support and encourage activities and events that allow them to grow up as normally as possible under the circumstances and time.

Registration Instructions:

ADVANCED REGISTRATION IS REQUIRED FOR ALL OF CATHOLIC CHARITIES' CLASSES !!!

All E-mail Registrations Must Include the Following Information.
Incomplete Requests Will Not Be Accepted!

| | | |
|-------------------------|-----------------------|----------------------|
| Your Name/Names | Address | Phone Number |
| Licensing County | Training Topic | Training Date |

Important Information You Need to Know:

- * **To register via phone contact Robin Springstead @ 260-422-5625.**
- * **To register via e-mail send the above noted information to robins@mchsi.com.**
- * **If the class is full you'll be contacted, otherwise you may not be.**
- * **Reminders will only be sent for classes that are at least 3 hours in length.**
- * **Classes marked SN are special needs topics but may be attended by any foster parent who is interested in the topic regardless of their license type.**
- * **If you are no longer able to attend a class that you registered for be sure to contact us immediately so that someone may attend in your place!**

Training Opportunities:

First Aid, Adult and Pediatric CPR, and Universal Precautions

These are licensing requirements. The Indiana DCS does not allow in-service credit to be awarded for any of these three classes. For foster care purposes, First Aid is valid for three years; CPR is valid for one or two years depending upon the service provider (check your certificate or card to determine the expiration date); and Universal Precautions is required initially and during the re-licensing year. CPR classes may be attended to renew no sooner than three months prior to their expiration date.

First Aid (FA) and Universal Precautions (UP)

| | | | |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------------|---------------|-----------------------|
| Sat., Apr. 18 th | Allen County DCS, Fort Wayne | UP: 9:00 a.m. | FA: 9:45 - 11:00 a.m. |
| Tues., July 7 th | Catholic Charities, Fort Wayne | UP: 6:00 p.m. | FA: 6:45 - 8:00 p.m. |

First Aid, Adult & Pediatric CPR, and Universal Precautions

| | | |
|----------------------------|--------------------------------|------------------------|
| Sat., Apr. 4 th | Children's Cottage, Fort Wayne | 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. |
| Sat., May 2 nd | Children's Cottage, Fort Wayne | 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. |

Moving On: Knowing When Enough is Enough (2 Hours)

This session on self-assessment, stressors, and burnout awareness will be presented by Axa Troncoso and will be held at the Allen County DCS from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m. on Tues., Mar. 3rd.

Helping Foster/Adoptive Teens Prepare to Leave the Home (2 Hours)

Join Vickie Walker and Brenda Rietdorf for this important session on helping teens transition from a foster or adoptive home to independent living. This session will be held from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m. on Thurs. Mar. 12th at the First Assembly of God Christian Center, 1400 W. Washington Center Rd., Door 15, Room 37, Fort Wayne.

What Do I Do Now? (2 Hours)

You've had pre-service training and became licensed. A child's been placed in your home. So now what do you do? This fun but informative presentation by Axa Troncoso will be held at the Allen County DCS from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m. on Tuesday, Mar. 17th.

Two in One: Developing Healthy Attachment/ Child & Family Team Planning **(4 Hours Total - 2 SN & 2 Reg. Hours)**

This two part session on what is considered to be a healthy attachment for foster parents and their placements and how to develop it along with an afternoon session on the teaming process and the foster parents' role in it will be presented by Axa Troncoso as follows:

| | | |
|----------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Sat. Mar. 14 th | 10:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. | Duke's Hospital, Peru (Miami Co.) |
| Sat. Apr. 4 th | 10:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. | Rochester Library (Fulton Co.) |

Child Burn Victims: Caring for The Whole Child (2 SN Hours)

Did you know that about 1/3 of children with burn injuries are in the foster care system? Did you know that these same children are faced with a multitude of problems on social, developmental, emotional, and physical levels? Children with burn injuries need guidance through grief issues, self control and anger issues and any number of complications resulting from the initial incident. Plan to join us from 10 a.m. to noon on Sat. April 18th as we hear representatives from the People's Burn Foundation of Indianapolis discuss these issues and also teach us about the science of the skin and the many types of burn injuries. Common burn hazards found in the home will be highlighted and discussed and methods of prevention will be taught. Class size may be limited as it will be dependent upon the location we secure for this presentation. Ideally we'd like to open this session to all foster parents and parents who have a child burn victim in their care. Reservations will be accepted as they are received as long as the correct registration process is followed.

Note: It is hoped that this same presentation will be able to be held at the Grace Brethren Church in Winona Lake from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. on Tues. Aug. 4th. Information on that class will be listed in the June edition of this newsletter.

CPI: Nonviolent Crisis Intervention (7 SN Hours)

This **fast paced** class will examine one set of strategies to use with people who are verbally escalated and one set to use defensively with people who are physically acting out. It involves a great deal of writing and physical activity. **Participants must be able to complete a written test and pass a physical competency test to earn credits.** Class size is limited to 10 people. This class will be held from 9:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. on Sat., May 16th at Duke's Hospital in Peru (2W Conference Rm.).

Disability is Natural & Other Revolutionary Common Sense (1 SN Hour)

At 7:00 p.m. on Fri., Mar. 20th DSANI will hold their annual meeting at Kachmann Auditorium in Lutheran Hospital. Kathi Snow, author of "Disability is Natural" will be the keynote speaker presenting on this same topic. For more information or to register contact DSANI at 260-471-9964 or via e-mail at dsani4u@aol.com **Note: A FP Training Credit Form must be submitted to receive credit for this.**

Need a Form? Need Information?

If so, check out the foster care page on our web site at www.ccfwsb.org.

These and others may be found there:

| | | |
|---------------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Alternative Training | Resource List & Verification Form | FP Training Credit Form |
| Child's Information Sheet | Child's Behavior Observation Form | Medication Log |
| Clothing Inventory | Court Report Form | The Communication Link |