

Families First

a newsletter for Nebraska Families

May/June 2013

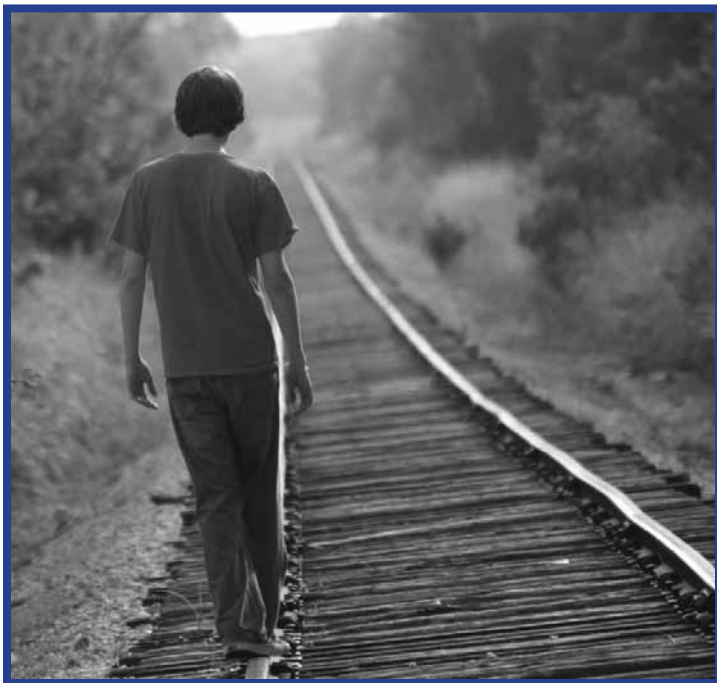
N F A P A

What Fostering Teens Has Taught Me

by Janier Caban- Hernandez

If you asked six years ago if I wanted to be a foster dad, I would have said, “NO way Jose!” Being a single, Latino male I had no idea what I could offer a child, especially as I generally don’t like little kids. As I was going through the PRIDE (Parent Resource for Information, Development, Education) classes, I became increasingly nervous as I learned more and more about the needs of these children. Could I deliver, am I ready and what about the “what ifs”...?

I was ready to speak to the trainer and drop out, until I befriended four Latino foster teenagers who lived in another foster home. After raiding my refrigerator and asking me to cook them Puerto Rican food, they encouraged me to become a foster father as “there aren’t any Latino men.” All the teens that come to my home are Latinos because from the start, we have something in common: a cultural connection and understanding of the importance of “familia” (family), “respecto”(respect) and “confianza” (“trust”).



Little kids always drove me crazy, but teenagers are an age group that I can talk and negotiate with. What I have learned about living with teenagers, I learned by attending post-licensing training, participating in roundtable discussions with other foster parents and foster teenagers and mostly by talking with the boys in my house (...and at times, “therapeutic yelling” helps!).

I tell the boys that come to my home that:

1. You don’t earn my respect or trust, you only lose it.
2. When you get me upset, you’ll be the first to know and when I get you upset, I want to be the first to know.
3. I’ll make mistakes, so help me out.
4. Help me understand how to use my cell phone, please!
5. Being courteous is never old fashioned.
6. Women like to be respected and not treated as “one of the boys.”
7. I’ll cook dinner, but you clean up.
8. As we need to communicate, I’ll get you a cell phone and pay half the bill, you pay the other half with your chore money.
9. Your education is NOT an option, you HAVE to go to school and if you need school related items, I’ll get it.
10. You’ll get \$10 for every “A” grade.
11. Don’t tell me you are proud of being a Puertorriqueño, show me by your actions and deeds.

My boys are part of my family. Some have moved out but we still contact each other and when they need help, they know they can call me. Now that I co-facilitate PRIDE classes and open houses, I challenge the participants to consider teenagers, as there is such a need for them to be welcomed to a nurturing and supportive foster home. After all, those cute little kids eventually become teenagers!

Janier Caban-Hernandez answered our call for real stories from foster parents. Have a story to share? National Foster Parent Association

Nebraska Foster & Adoptive Parent Association

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N F A P A

Families First is published bimonthly. When reprinting an article, please receive permission from the Nebraska Foster and Adoptive Parent Association, 2431 Fairfield St. Street, Suite C, Lincoln, NE 68521. 402-476-2273, toll-free 877-257-0176, or e-mail: Pam@nfapa.org. To contact a board member or mentor, visit our website at www.nfapa.org.

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Inexpensive Ideas For Summer Fun with Your Foster Children

Remember when we were kids and summer fun meant nothing fancy or expensive? Summer is the perfect time to teach foster children or newly adopted kids some great fun activities that they may have been missing out on. In case you've forgotten, here is a quick list of some of my favorite summer fun and inexpensive activities.

1. Catch lightning bugs
2. Go fishing
3. Camp out, even if it's just in your backyard
4. Cook over a fire, with adult help of course, hot dogs, marshmallows and SMORES
5. Walk barefoot in the grass
6. Blowing bubbles
7. Wash the dog in the back yard, make sure to wear a swimsuit
8. Skip stones at the lake or a pond
9. Make your own Popsicle with Kool-Aid or fruit juice.
10. Make root beer floats
11. Make homemade ice cream
12. Eat watermelon and have a seed spitting contest to see who can spit the farthest
13. Run through the sprinklers
14. Go strawberry picking at the Berry Farm or one close to you
15. Have a water balloon fight
16. Build a sandcastle
17. See how many parks you can find in your area
18. Go on a picnic
19. Go canoeing
20. Ride your bike around the neighborhood
21. Climb trees
22. Create a scavenger hunt
23. Participate in your local library reading program
24. Start a game of volleyball in your backyard and invite the neighbors to play
25. Go swimming in a pond or lake
26. Forget about bed times, sometimes
27. Find a community parade
28. Go horseback riding
29. Go on a summer vacation, even in your home town
30. Star gaze and try to find different constellations
31. Take a walk thru downtown. See all of the different stores available
32. Meet your neighbors. Have a neighborhood potluck picnic with games for the kids

Questions? Call NFAPA at 877-257-0176 or 402-476-2273.

This publication is supported by Grant #93.556 under a sub-grant from HHS Administration for Children and Families and Nebraska DHHS.

Your Questions Answered

Catch Him Doing Something Right Dr. Nancy Buck, Guest Specialist

From *The Changing Behavior Digest*

My fifteen-year-old said something the other day that hit me right between the eyes. He said, "Mom, it's like every time you say ANYTHING to me at all, it's right after I either didn't do something or when I did something wrong." He was hurt, and, as I thought about it, he was absolutely right. What's going on here, Dr. Buck, and how can I best "fix" it?



Take heart; this sort of thing happens pretty often. In order to explain what's going on, I need for you to do something. If you'll do this simple activity, you will likely answer your own question.

Make Two Lists

Make a list of ten things that fall under one or more of these categories: Complaints, Things You are Unhappy About, Things That Have Gone

Wrong, and Things That are "Out of Order." Note how long it takes you to write this list.

Next, make a second list. This time list ten things that fall under one or more of these categories: Things You are Pleased About, Things That Have Gone Smoothly, Things That are "In Order," Things That Give You Pleasure and Relief, and Things You are Happy About.

How long did it take you to write the second list? Which list was easier to write; which took more time and effort? If you are like most folks, the easiest list to create was the first one, your list of miseries.

Why is this so? Too many people mistakenly believe we are just negative people who focus way too much on our unhappiness. But this is not the case.

Biology of the Brain

The natural biology of our brain is designed to give us a signal or an urge to act when things are wrong, are out of order, or are painful for us. No brain signal or notice of ANY kind is provided when life is good, is in order, or is in a mostly



fine and stable state. This is why your list of complaints was easier to create. Normal brains of normal humans go on alert when things in life are not so good.

By way of an example, consider the temperature in the room right now. Chances are you weren't even aware of it unless it was too hot or too cold. When the temperature is comfortable, you don't even notice it! That's your brain working as it should.

Becoming Aware

When thinking about your child, what behaviors are you most aware of? Are you more aware when he is cooperating and doing as asked and expected, or when he is misbehaving, ignoring you, and continuing to do things after you've asked him to stop?

What about your own parenting practices and skills? Which do you remember easily and quickly? Do you strongly remember those proud, excellent moments when you and your child stayed connected even while you corrected him? Or are you more apt to remember those moments when you yelled, nagged or lost your temper?

Pretty amazing, isn't it? Our ability to easily find fault and error comes from how we evolved as a species when we were still living in caves. Remaining alert to harm and danger was how we stayed alive.

Make a Note to Notice

If you really want to improve your parenting practices, start working against your brain by noticing when things are RIGHT! Count your blessings; stop and smell the roses (or the coffee, if you prefer). Your brain will still recall and bring to your attention those things and events that do not fit your ideal, but don't allow it to cause you to ignore and miss the good moments in life.

Bottom line: Make a habit of working against your brain. Notice when your children are terrific and when you are an effective parent. This will add more pleasure and moments of joy and delight in your life.

Developmental psychologist, Dr. Nancy Buck, is the founder of Peaceful Parenting, Inc. and the author of the new book, *How to Be a Great Parent: Understanding Your Child's Wants and Needs*

Kits for Kids

Have a new foster child in your home? Contact NFAPA at 877-257-0176 to have a Kits for Kids bag delivered to you at support groups.



Attention Foster Parents!

Receive in-service training credit for reading this newsletter!

Now you can enjoy reading Families First and receive in-service training credit that can apply toward your re-licensure as a foster parent. This in-service training has been approved by HHS. Simply read this issue, write down the answers to the questions below, and mail your answers to your licensing worker (i.e., Agency worker). If your answers are satisfactory, you will receive 30 minutes of credit toward your in-service training requirement. If you have questions, contact NFAPA at 877-257-0176 or 402-476-2273.

Questions for in-service training quiz May/June 2013

- 1) Notice when your children are _____ and when you are an _____ parent.
- 2) Name 6 activities you can do this summer with your foster child.
- 3) What does FASD stand for and what is it?
- 4) Children with FASD tend to have a number of strengths. Name five.
- 5) Four reasons why to include a foster child on your family vacation.
- 6) Only foster parents experience grief when a foster child leaves. T or F
- 7) What can you do to help a foster child prepare for departure?
- 8) What is the average length of time a foster child is in care?
- 9) Research has shown that teens aging out of the system are highly likely as adults to experience _____.
- 10) Who needs to be notified if a child in out-of-home placement is leaving the State of Nebraska for more than 72 hours.
- 11) It is easier to create a list of complaints. T or F
- 12) May is National _____.

DHHS POLICY: Title 390

11-002.01V TRAVEL

When a child in out-of-home placement will be leaving the State of Nebraska for more than 72 hours, the parent(s), will be notified of the child's travel plans before departure. If the child will be leaving the State of Nebraska for a substantial period of time, the court or guardian ad litem will be notified of the child's travel plans before the child's departure. If the parent(s) disapproves and the worker supports the travel plans, the worker will contact the guardian ad litem for legal resolution.

All travel will be supervised by the foster parent or responsible adult if travel is a part of an approved activity. The worker will have access to an itinerary of the child's travel including a means of contacting for emergencies, if at all possible.

Juvenile offenders will not leave the state of their residence without written permission of the worker. Juvenile offenders need parental permission to leave the county of their residence.

Compassion Fatigue

Have you ever asked yourself "Why am I doing this? Why do I continue to take in foster kids?"

Ever wish you had an empty nest? You may be experiencing compassion fatigue. When caregivers are always focusing on others without taking the time to care for themselves, they can experience what is known as "compassion fatigue." Caring too much can sometimes hurt us. Compassion fatigue can lead to destructive behaviors such as bottled up emotions, excessive blaming, substance abuse & isolation just to name a few.

The misconception: as caregivers, we must care for others before we care for ourselves. Just as the stewardess on the plane tells us to put on our oxygen mask first before helping others, we as foster parents must always remember to take care of our needs first before we can help the children placed in our care.

An awareness of the symptoms of compassion fatigue and the negative effects on your life will help you make positive changes and give you a new resiliency.

Are you at risk for compassion fatigue? Do you experience any of the symptoms?

- Excessive blaming
- Bottled up emotions
- Isolations from others
- Substance abuse to mask feelings
- Compulsive behaviors such as overspending, overeating, gambling
- Poor self care (hygiene & appearance)
- Apathy, sad, no longer find activities enjoyable
- Mentally and physically tired

Be kind to yourself. Surround yourself with others who understand what you are going through. Connect with your local NFAPA support group. Seek out someone to talk to, seek professional help. Enhance your awareness with education.

NFAPA offers monthly support groups, mentors to talk to, in-service training and much more.



**EVERY
CHILD IS
A STORY
YET TO
BE TOLD**



From the Desk of the Executive Director

I am excited to tell all of you that Nebraska Foster and Adoptive Parent Association has been recognized as foster parent organization of the year by the National Foster Parent Association! Watch for pictures in the July/August issue of *Families First!*

The other thing I am excited about is that school is just about over for the summer. No more homework, no more detention for not getting the homework done, no more fund raisers. What makes me sad is that the summer break is too short. I can remember having all of June, July and August for break. Now, school starts the second week of August! I don't know why the school year seems to go so slowly and summer just seems to whiz by. Are you planning a vacation for this summer? Are you taking your foster children? I really hope that if you are going on vacation, you can take your foster children with you! I realize that it is not always possible because of visitation schedules, logistics etc. However, children are only children once and deserve to experience the same things other children do. They deserve to be able to share with their classmates the fun they had over the summer. They need to be able to learn what it really feels like to be treated as a true part of a family, whether they are foster children or not. Remember, it is always easier to get permission from birth parents to take their children on vacation with you if you have built a trusting relationship with them.

I would like to offer a few suggestions for those of you making travel plans with children this summer.

- Remember to take along the insurance cards. (one never knows when someone might get hurt)
- If you are traveling with Foster Children, take along a copy of the Child Placement Agreement, especially if you are traveling out-of-state.
- Speaking of foster children—**GET PERMISSION FROM YOUR CASEWORKER!**
- Let the children have some input into what is being planned.
- Everyone gets a bit cranky when they get tired—allow some “down time” instead of having too much activity crammed into one day.
- Let the kids know your expectations and make sure they understand them—never assume they know the rule, be very clear and have them repeat them back to you to make sure.
- Have each child make up their own activity bag, (especially if it is a long trip) filled with things they can sit and do quietly.
- Plan a picnic or snack time at a rest area along the way to give everyone a chance to run off some energy.
- Once you are at your destination, pick a place where you can meet if you happen to “lose” one another.

- Make sure you have current pictures of your kids---Just in case!
- Pack a first aid kit.
- **DON'T FORGET THE SEATBELTS!**
- **HAVE FUN!**

Summer is also a good time to try and get in some in-service training! Please watch our website for upcoming training and support groups in your area. If you have particular topics that you would be interested in learning more about, please contact our office and we will see what we can do! Have a happy, safe summer.

— Pamela Allen



Do you include Foster Children in your summer vacation plans?

Many foster families feel that since foster children are a part of the family they should also be included in family vacations. As a foster parent this is a good time to sit down and weigh the pros and cons.

Bonding as a family - It's important for a child to have healthy relationships and attachments. Remember, if a child can attach to you, he can attach to anyone. A family vacation is a great time for a child to grow even closer to you and your family.

Creating Memories – Your family vacation may be the child's only opportunity for this child to experience a vacation.

Rewarding Experience – Foster parents know that being a foster family has many rewards - helping a struggling family, provide safety and comfort to a hurting child. Taking a child on a family vacation is another opportunity. It's wonderful for a child to experience new places and new experiences.

Vacations are a normal part of growing up – Many foster children have missed out on the normalcy of family life. Families have fun together. Families argue. Families spend time together. Even if a family vacation turns out to be just horrible and stressful, isn't that a normal part of the family experience? Give that to your foster child too.

Let them know that they are important enough to include – So many foster children struggle with feelings of low self-worth. What better way to let them know that they are an important part of the family than to include them in your family vacation plans.

Permanency

The Dozler Family



David, Lisa, Rebecca, Penelope and Elijah Dozler

On March 21, 2013 we adopted Penelope and Elijah

December 1, 2011 two kids from the city packed up and moved to a farm with a family that was a first time foster family that wanted to make a difference in someone's life. No one knew what was going to happen. Penelope and Elijah had never been on a farm before and they knew that all bulls have horns. Well, we know that is not true. That was just the start of many firsts for them and us. The two kids got a big sister that is experienced at showing horses, sheep and cattle at the county fair. Both of them jumped right in and got their feet wet (lambing started). Neither one of them were afraid to catch a 130 lbs. ewe or go after the buck to give shots. David, Rebecca and I would tell them not to do it but they would try anyway.

Penelope and Elijah found out that there is a big difference between going to the fair and showing at the fair. Showing is a lot of hard work but you get a lot out of it. This year Penelope will show sheep, try her hand at horse and cattle plus bucket calf. This is Elijah's first year so he will show sheep and bucket calf. If you ask Elijah "is there more things to do in the city or farm?" he'll say the "farm". Every day after school all three had to feed the bottle lambs, halter break the ones that they will show and take care of their own bucket calves plus the girls have to brush their own horse and feed the cats and dog. After that is all done do homework, have to keep the A's, B's and what few C's they have.

I think overall you can take 85% of the city out of the kids but I don't think that you can take the country out of the kid. We have had them for 15 months before the adoption took place and we were the 4th foster home for the kids. Penelope is out in the barn with her new big sister learning everything that she can from her. And Elijah is in the tractor with his dad not saying a word to each other just being next to him, must be a guy thing. And I am the 4-H mom that makes all the rules that everybody has to live with so I get the "mean mom award" while I put the roast beef, mashed potatoes, beans and gravy on the table, that they can't get enough of. It has not been easy but we wouldn't have it any other way.

— Lisa Dozler

The Rathe Family



My husband, Josh, and I have been blessed with three amazing children through adoption. Our oldest, Treagan Skylar, was chosen for us through private adoption. He was born on May 26th, 2009 and because of our positive and open relationship with his biological parents I was able to witness the miracle of his birth. Our youngest, Jaxon Mykel, born on August 23rd, 2011, was adopted through the foster care system. He was placed with us at two days old, straight from the hospital. His adoption took place last November. Our newest son, Sheldon Thomas, born December 16th, 2010, came to us last June as an adoptive placement through the foster care system. We had known Sheldon and been a part of his life since he was 3 months old and are proud to be his chosen forever parents. His adoption was finalized on May 8th.

We always knew that having a family would be difficult but God has shown us that He has a wonderful plan in store for us. None of this would be possible without His hand guiding every step and we are grateful to be given the opportunity to be a family.

He has chosen them for us and us for them. And we are family.

— Erin Rathe

National Foster Care Month

Celebrating foster care month during the month of May, Greg and Terry Robinson's foster children covered the tree in front of their home with blue ribbons.



The Robinson's have fostered 47 children over the past 14 years.

Nebraska Foster & Adoptive Parent Association 2013 In-Service/Conference Registration

<p>June 8, 2013</p> <p>Darkness to Light Stewards of Children (3 hrs) by Matt Fosket</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence-based child sexual abuse prevention training proven to increase knowledge, improve attitudes and change child protective behaviors. Workbook, DVD and discussion. <p>CAN 101 (Child Abuse & Neglect) (3 hrs) by Anne Power</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare mandatory reporters with the knowledge and skill needed to recognize and report child abuse and neglect. Participants will discuss challenges associated with reporting abuse and neglect, practice asking minimal facts questions, and receive resources that will help them with knowing how and when to report. <p>Location: Sandhills Convention Center at Quality Inn & Suites, 2102 S. Jeffers, North Platte, NE Time: 9:00 a.m.-4:30 p.m. (Lunch included) COST PER PERSON: \$20 foster/adopt parent \$15 NFAPA Member \$40 agency/other</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Training funded by Women Investing in Nebraska, Nebraska Alliance of Child Advocacy Centers, Bridge of Hope and DHHS.</p>	<p>North Platte</p>	<p>6 hours in-service credit</p>
<p>September 13, 2013</p> <p>Caregiver Advanced Trauma Informed Parenting by Stan Waddell, LPC</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This is the final training in the Trauma Informed Parenting series. We will be looking at ways to develop safety, and ways to help children deal with their emotions. Then we will look at ways to develop resiliency in children. <p>Location: Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, 11204 S. 204th Street, Gretna, NE Time: 6:30 p.m.-9:30 p.m. COST PER PERSON: \$15 foster/adopt parent \$10 NFAPA Member \$30 agency/other</p>	<p>Gretna</p>	<p>3 hours in-service credit</p>
<p>September 14, 2013</p> <p>Caregiver Advanced Trauma Informed Parenting by Stan Waddell, LPC</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This is the final training in the Trauma Informed Parenting series. We will be looking at ways to develop safety, and ways to help children deal with their emotions. Then we will look at ways to develop resiliency in children. <p>Location: NFAPA Office, 2431 Fairfield Street, Suite C, Lincoln, NE Time: 9:00 a.m.-Noon COST PER PERSON: \$15 foster/adopt parent \$10 NFAPA Member \$30 agency/other</p>	<p>Lincoln</p>	<p>3 hours in-service credit</p>

Please fill out the registration form below. Mark which training you will be attending by putting in the date of the training. **REGISTRATION IS REQUIRED!** Send form and payment to: NFAPA, 2431 Fairfield Street, Suite C, Lincoln, NE 68521



Foster Parent In-Service Registration: Spring 2013

Name Training Date

Name Training Date

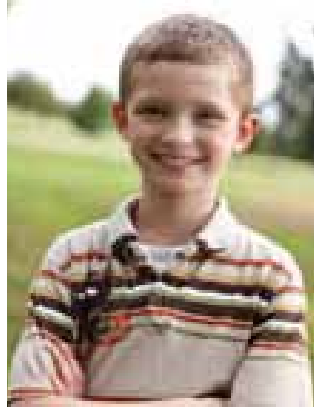
Email Address Cell # Home #

Address, City, State, Zip NFAPA Membership Number

Children Waiting...

Name: **Charlie**
 Birthdate: **November 1998**

Sex: **M**
 Race: **White/Caucasian**
 Number of Siblings: **1**
 Names of Siblings: **NA**
 Is Contact with Siblings
 Requested: **Charlie would like to remain in contact with his brother and foster parent.**



Charlie is a very loving, talkative boy. He loves to play outside with his brother. They enjoy going to the park together, playing flag football and swinging on the swings. He likes to stay busy and active.

Some of Charlie's other favorite things include playing chess and playing games on his Wii game console. Charlie is honest, friendly, and has many friends at school. He enjoys attending school and his favorite subject is spelling. Charlie enjoys talking to others about what he has done during the day.

Charlie has thrived living in both one-parent and two-parent homes. He is in need of a loving and stable home.

For more information: Email: lkelly@lfsneb.org Phone: 402-661-3135 or 402-661-3135

Name: **Tracy**
 Birthdate: **June 1993**
 Sex: **M**
 Race: **Caucasian**
 Number of Siblings: **NA**
 Names of Siblings: **NA**
 Is Contact with Siblings
 Requested: **Yes, but his permanency plan does not include placement with them.**



Tracy, or Trace as he prefers to be called, is a young man with a huge heart and a very creative spirit. Trace absolutely loves to draw and, in fact, he is never without a pencil, paper and a drawing or two. Trace describes his drawing as his way of really communicating and expressing his thoughts, feelings and dreams. Trace's creativity does not stop with drawing; he also really loves to type short stories and poetry, and create things using Legos or just things from around the house.

An avid reader, his favorite authors are James Patterson and Melissa de la Cruz; he also has a great memory and love for Greek mythology and Shakespeare. Trace has an indelible passion for animals; his favorite animal, by far, is the Wolf. However, he also loves to learn about every other type of animal and would love to be in a home that, while not completely in the country, was able to have larger dogs and

potentially horses.

For more information: Email: wrottenbucher@lfsneb.org Phone: 402-978-5667 or 402-978-5667

Name: **Krysteena**
 Birthdate: **July 2006**
 Sex: **F**
 Race: **African American**
 Number of Siblings: **3**
 Names of Siblings: **Hayden, Krystopher & Fabi**
 Is Contact with Siblings
 Requested: **Must be adopted with siblings.**



Krysteena is best described as a social butterfly! Krysteena loves to play with her brothers but also loves to do "girly" stuff like play dress up, do makeovers, and paint her nails.

She is very enthusiastic and inquisitive. Krysteena reports her favorite thing at school is the monkey bars and talking to her friends. Krysteena gets along well with her siblings, but can sometimes be found teasing her twin brother Krystopher. Krysteena is very well mannered.

For more information: Email: agubbels@childsaving.org Phone: 402-553-6000 402-553-6000 x 173

Name: **Nevaeh**
 Birthdate: **April 2002**
 Sex: **F**
 Race: **African American**
 Number of Siblings: **1**
 Names of Siblings: **Brend'n**
 Is Contact with Siblings
 Requested: **Nevaeh and her brother Brend'n must be adopted together.**



Nevaeh is a social butterfly and a girly-girl. She loves to wear bows and go shopping. Nevaeh is not afraid to tell you her likes and dislikes. She is very social and enjoys spending time with her siblings and friends.

She excels in school and plays the violin. Nevaeh would like to play soccer and run track. Nevaeh loves to eat and helps out in the kitchen, with her favorite food being ravioli. She enjoys playing outside and always stays active. She spends her free time watching movies and playing with friends. Nevaeh would like to have a pet one day.

She is very excited about living in a forever home and wants a loving family who will support her and be consistent. It is very important for Nevaeh to maintain a relationship with her younger brother and older sister.

For more information: Email: lmerz@lfsneb.org Phone: 402-661-3132 402-661-3132

Name: **Sheldon**
 Birthdate: **August 23 1995**
 Sex: **M**
 Race: **Caucasian**
 Number of Siblings: **NA**
 Names of Siblings: **NA**
 Is Contact with Siblings
 Requested: **Yes**



Sheldon has a lot of energy, and likes to be outside playing. He likes riding bikes, and being active. He loves stuffed animals and chewing gum. He also likes listening to his MP3 player.

Sheldon is an outspoken child and likes to voice his opinion about things, even when he is not asked. He struggles a little in school and will need a home that will help him with to stay on task to complete his home work.

Sheldon will thrive in a stable home that has predictable rules and consequences and is able to help Sheldon cope with the loss of his biological family. He will need a family that is open to Sheldon maintaining contact with his biological sister through phone contact and visits.

For more information: Email: breanna.bird@nebraska.gov Phone: 308-436-6540 308-436-6540

Name: **Stephaney**
 Birthdate: **12-06-94**
 Sex: **F**
 Race: **African American/ Caucasian**
 Number of Siblings: **2**
 Names of Siblings: **Tiphaney&Dakota**
 Is Contact with Siblings
 Requested: **Yes**



A sweet and charming teen, Stephaney loves shopping, jewelry and playing with make-up. She enjoys listening to music, hanging out with friends and playing sports—especially swimming and volleyball. She embraces learning (her favorite subjects are Science and History), but admits she struggles a bit with Math and English. When Stephaney graduates high school, she wants to continue her education and study to become a neonatal nurse.

When asked what she would like in a family, Stephaney said she wants a family that is not “mean.” She also hopes for a forever home that will allow her some personal space and freedom. She will do best in a loving, consistent home with lots of individual attention. Stephaney has some contact with her siblings and biological family and it is important that these relationships are supported so they can continue to grow.

For more information: Email: adoptionpartnership@childsaving.org Phone: 402-504-3666 402-504-3666



National Foster Care Month



We had a Proclamation Signing with the Governor on May 15 to celebrate National Foster Care Month and an Open House immediately following. We had a great turnout in support of foster care. We hope to see even more of you next year.

Resources for Providers & Families

www.csefel.vanderbilt.edu

*Along the left-hand bar click on “Family Tools” for a number of wonderful ready-to-print handouts written specifically for parents

- Along the left-hand bar click on “For Teachers/ Caregivers” for a variety of ready-to-print tools to use with families & children, including:
 - Scripted Stories for Social Situations
 - Tools for Working on “Building Relationships”
 - Book List
 - Book Nook
 - Teaching Social Emotional Skills

www.challengingbehavior.org

- Under the “What do you want do” tab (first tab on left) click on “Browse Resources”. Here you will have a list of tools to use with parents, including:
 - Articles
 - Brochure & Booklets
 - Backpack Connection Series
 - Handouts
 - Issue Briefs
 - Making Life Easier Series
- After clicking on “What do you want to do “ & then “Browse Resources”, there is a tab labeled “Tools”. This will take you to a link to a “Tool Kit” titled “Creating Teaching Tools for Young Children with Challenging Behavior”. This manual can be downloaded as a zip drive & is loaded with free, ready-to-use resources for kids & families.
- At bottom of each page is a “Quick Links”
 - Teaching Tools for Young Children with Challenging Behavior – This manual can be downloaded as a zip drive & is loaded with free, ready-to-use resources for kids & families. Tucker Turtle - Clicking on Tucker Turtle will not only take you directly to the resources available for using this strategy for teaching self-control to young children, but will also take you to the page with complete table of contents listing of all the tools & strategies listed & available in the Teaching Tools for Young Children with Challenging Behavior tool-kit

Facts About Foster Care!

On any given day, there are approximately 400,000 children in out-of-home care in the United States.

During the last year about 650,000 children spent some time in out-of-home care in the United States.

Children entering foster care remain there on average for nearly two years.

Despite the common perception that most children in foster care are young children, the average age of the children in foster care is over nine years old.

The median amount of time children spent in foster care increased between 2000 (12 months) and 2011 (13.5 months). On average, children in the American child welfare systems spend about two years — 23.9 months — in foster care. Ten percent of children in foster care have languished there for five or more years.

While most children in foster care live in family settings, a substantial minority — 15 percent — live in institutions and group homes.

- Nearly half of all children in foster care have chronic medical problems.
- About half of children under five years old in foster care have developmental delays.
- Up to 80 percent of all children in foster care have serious emotional problems.

More than 60,000 children living in foster care have had their biological parental rights permanently terminated. The assumption is that once parental rights have been terminated, the State should work as rapidly as possible to ensure that the child is safely in a new adoptive home and that the adoption is finalized. Yet of these children, the average time they’ve been waiting to be adopted is nearly two years (23.6 months).

In 2011, 11 percent of the children (over 26,000) exiting foster care aged out of the system. Research has shown that teens aging out of the system are highly likely as adults to experience homelessness, poor health, unemployment, incarceration, and other poor outcomes.

Sixteen percent of children in foster care in 2011 were in foster care for three or more years before they were emancipated.

“ Listen earnestly to anything your child wants to tell you. No matter what. If you don’t listen eagerly to the little stuff, they won’t tell you the big stuff, When they are big. Because to them all of it has always been the big stuff. ”

—Catherine Wallace

Adopting & Fostering Children with Fetal Alcohol Syndrome Disorders

Connie Limon, Yahoo! Contributor Network

Dec 26, 2009

One of the most fulfilling, but toughest, jobs in the entire world is “parenting.” Parenting children with special needs, such as fetal alcohol spectrum disorders brings its own set of challenges.

Many parents of children with an FASD are adoptive or foster parents. Some of these parents knew about the FASD when they welcome their children into their family, while others did not. In either case, accurate information is the key to success in raising children with an FASD.

Benefits for parents to learn about FASD include:

- An understanding of how their children are affected
- Which parenting strategies work best
- How to get services and support

If you want to adopt or foster a child with an FASD, knowing the facts can help you make an informed decision.

What is FASD?

- FASD is an umbrella term describing the range of effects that can occur in an individual whose mother drank alcohol during pregnancy
- Effects may include physical, mental, behavioral, and or/ learning disabilities with possible lifelong implications

The term is not a clinical diagnosis, but refers to conditions such as

- fetal alcohol syndrome (FAS)
- alcohol related neurodevelopment disorders (ARND)
- alcohol related birth defects (ARBD)

Physical defects as well as brain damage are the primary disabilities associated with FASD. Lifelong behavioral or cognitive problems may include:

- mental retardation • learning disabilities
- hyperactivity
- attention deficits
- problems with impulse control, social skills, language, and memory

The above problems can lead to other problems called secondary disabilities that may include:

- disrupted school experience
- alcohol and substance abuse
- mental illness
- dependent living
- problems with employment
- inappropriate sexual behavior
- involvement in the criminal or juvenile justice system
- confinement (prison or inpatient treatment for mental

health or substance abuse problems)

Children with FASD are likely to need services throughout their life and may never be able to live independently.

Children with an FASD tend to have a number of strengths that include:

- caring
- creativity
- determination
- eager to please
- they respond well to structure, consistency, concrete communication and close supervision

Many children with an FASD can avoid secondary disabilities and reach their full potential when:

- they are within a supportive home environment
- an early diagnosis is made
- and appropriate services obtained

Prospective parents may request a copy of a child’s complete medical and family history. Medical records may not always tell the entire story. Specific questions you should ask are:

- Possible prenatal exposure to alcohol or drugs
- The physical and mental health of the mother and any siblings
- The developmental history of the child, including possible delays
- Independent evaluations from a physician

Most states require adoption and foster care agencies to share information with prospective parents about the health and social history of the child and birth parents. Few states specifically address alcohol. A full investigation and disclosure is best for everyone to ensure:

- Parents are prepared
- Placements are successful
- Children get the help they need

Parents who choose to adopt or foster a child with an FASD can experience great joy along with the challenges. The child can benefit from a stable, loving home with parents and caregivers who understand his or her needs.

Before you adopt or foster a child who was exposed to alcohol or other drugs during pregnancy, consider the following tips:

- Work with informed professionals in quality adoption agencies
- Explore your feelings about alcohol and drug abuse, particularly among pregnant women
- Discuss the child’s background with your social worker so that you have a realistic picture of the birth parents’ substance use and related lifestyle
- Ask for written summaries of the child’s diagnoses, medical complications, treatment services, and necessary follow-up care
- Ask for information on services and resources to meet the child’s needs, including eligibility for adoption subsidies and Medicaid

(continued)

- Find out how to reduce the impact of the child's biological risks by providing a nurturing, responsive, and healthy care giving environment
- Recognize that you must be prepared for and able to tolerate the uncertainties that are part of adopting a child exposed to drugs or alcohol during pregnancy
- Resist negative stereotypes of children exposed to drugs or alcohol during pregnancy, which ignore the individuality of each child and the role of a healthy environment
- Recognize the importance of timely identification of problems and early intervention

Source: US Department of Health and Human Services, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Administration, Center for Substance Abuse Prevention

Disclaimer: These statements have not been evaluated by the Food and Drug Administration. The information in this article is not intended to diagnose, treat, cure or prevent any disease. All health concerns should be addressed by a qualified health care professional.

Written by: Connie Limon, Please visit my website for articles like this one at <http://smalldogs2.com/aboutbabiesandtoddlers>

Suggested Readings...

Broken Spirits~Lost Souls

By Jane E. Ryan

Provides a rare, valuable look at a silent yet potentially deadly problem plaguing families today, Reactive Attachment Disorder (RAD). Children born into crisis or ambivalence are vulnerable to attachment disturbances because the roots of this horrendous disorder occur when basic life enhancing needs of newborns and infants go unnoticed or unmet. Consequently, children who are victims of early neglect or trauma are at grave risk. The candid stories in *Broken Spirits~Lost Souls*, told by parents of disturbed youngsters, paint a clear picture of their chilling, dangerous behavior. Attachment disorder may be demonstrated by out-of-control children as young as three years old. By their teens, these kids predictably defy authority and challenge every accepted familial and societal norm. At their best, individuals with RAD represent the embryonic stages of an antisocial personality, at their worst they are full-blown psychopaths consumed by the search for another victim. RAD is not a rare phenomenon and is primarily preventable through early identification and by employing simple, sound parenting skills.



SAYING GOODBYE

BY John DeGarmo, Ed.D

Perhaps one of the most difficult aspects of being a foster parent is the moment when your foster child leaves your home. As a foster parent, your home becomes a place where foster children come for a period of time, with the goal of being reunited with their family in the near future. Reunification is not possible for some foster children, and the birth parents' rights are terminated. As a result, these children become available for adoption, and some foster parents do indeed end up making their foster child a permanent addition to their family through adoption. If reunification is not possible with the birth parents, many foster children instead are placed into a birth family member's home. Whatever the reason might be, reunification can be a difficult time for foster parents, as the child they have come to love leaves their home.

There are times when the removal of a foster child may come suddenly, and without any prior warning. You may only have a few days, or even a few hours, before your foster child is to move. This may be due to a court order, health reasons or placement into another foster home. Other times, plenty of notice is given to the foster parents beforehand. Whenever you are told, there will be emotions involved, for both you and the child. The removal of a child may be a joyous event or one that is filled with grief. If the removal of your foster child is one that you disapprove of due to the new placement, it is important that you do not share these feelings with your foster child. If you must express your concerns and feelings with the caseworker, do so in private, as it will only serve to burden the child with more anxiety during this difficult time of separation.

How your foster child is told that he or she is leaving can be a difficult conversation. You and the caseworker need to decide how best to inform the child. If the foster child has a special relationship with the caseworker, it might be best if the caseworker lets the child know. Maybe the foster mother or father would be best suited to tell the child, due to the relationship built between the child and the parent. Whoever tells your foster child needs to do so in a way that is marked with care, sincerity, kindness and truthfulness. As there are a number of reasons why your foster child might leave your home, it is important that you be honest with him or her about leaving in terms and words that can easily be understood and at the child's level. If the child is excited about returning home, celebrate this. Perhaps have a going away party, and celebrate the child's time with you. If the child is concerned and full of anxiety about moving to another foster home, an adoptive one or even about moving back to his or her own home speak to the child in positive terms, keeping a positive attitude. Remind the child that he or she is an important person and that you care and want the best for him or her.

(continued)

Grief can be expressed in a variety of ways, depending upon the individual, as it is personal. Some will shed tears and cry while others will hold it inside. Some will busy themselves in a task, while others will seem detached and far away. The departure of your foster child from your home can be one that is devastating to you and your family. It is quite normal to experience the stages of grief, as outlined by Kubler-Ross. These include shock, denial, anger, guilt, bargaining, depression and acceptance. Both foster parents and foster children can experience these emotions.

One of the ways you can prepare for your foster child's departure is by organizing a life book. This book can be a wonderful healing tool for your foster child as he or she moves to a new home. For some children, a life book is the only reminder they may have of previous houses and families. Essentially, a life book is a scrapbook of your foster child's life, and is something he or she can take along to a new home, and throughout life. Sadly, when many foster children are placed into a foster home, much of their early life story is lost, and can never be retraced.

When designing a life book for your foster child, make sure you include him or her in creating the book. Do your best to trace his or her early life; ask your caseworker for information, try to retrieve early pictures and information from birth parents and family members, if possible. Add pictures of the birth family, when possible, as well as any other foster parents the child might have had. Include pictures of friends and other important people in the child's life. Be sure to identify each person in the pictures. If you have any certificates that the child might have earned or received, include these also. Letters from important people in his or her life would also be a great addition to a lifebook. Also, be sure to include any medical history you can locate. You may need help from the caseworker, along with his or her birth family, if possible. Any family history you can add would also be beneficial to the child, both now and later on in life. This might include military service, education and accomplishments of not only the birth family, but about the biological family members, as well. Don't forget to add information about the child's own interests and hobbies, with plenty of pictures of him or her engaged in activities. Finally, leave several blank pages in the back of the lifebook, so the child can add pictures, information, and even personal thoughts later on as he or she grows, or perhaps even in the next foster home.

Think about throwing a going away party for your foster child as an opportunity to show the child how much he or she will be missed. Invite the caseworker, church members, friends of the family along with the child's friends, and anybody else over who played an important part of his or her life with you. Perhaps you could give the child some going away presents that he or she might remember you by. Make it as fun a party for the child as you possibly can, again showing that he or she is cared for.

Packing for the child can be emotional, as it may bring back memories of being removed from a previous home. Personally reflect back upon the time the child arrived at your house. It is likely that the few belongings he or she had were in a black plastic bag. Perhaps the child was dirty when brought to you, and in an unkempt appearance. Emotionally, the child was probably scared, confused and unsure if he or she were to ever see his or her family again. How you pack for him or her will be important to the child's well-being.

First, make sure the child has a suitcase, or suitcases. It does not need to be a new one; some foster parent associations or child welfare agencies may offer these for free. Second, nicely fold all of the clothing and belongings in the suitcases, including the child in this process. If the child has a lot of toys or large items, you may have to use boxes for these. Make sure you pack everything the child owns, including everything the child came with to your home. Third, include as many group photographs of the child with your family as possible. Pictures of you and your family may help him or her in the grieving process of leaving your home, and can serve as a valuable reminder that he or she is loved and cared for. Finally, place some self-addressed, self-stamped envelopes in the suitcase so the child can write to you from the new home. Add some stationery, pencils and pens, so he or she has everything needed to write to you. Also, include contact information, such as your address, phone numbers and email address in the lifebook. Finally, if possible, attempt to stay in contact with your former foster child. Emails, phone calls and letters will help him or her in the time of transition as well as remind the child that he or she is important and valued.

Saying goodbye is never easy for anyone and may be especially difficult for you and your foster child. After your foster child leaves your home, you may feel like you never wish to foster again, as the pain is too great. The grief you feel may be overwhelming. On the other hand, you may feel relief when the child leaves, as the time with him or her in your home was a difficult one. Whatever the circumstance, there will be emotions involved. With the right preparation, this time of transition can be a little bit easier for all involved.

Used with permission from Fostering Families May/June 2013

Undie Sunday

NFAPA has started a drive to collect new socks, underwear and pj's to be distributed to foster children. But we need your help! Please consider asking your Church, Vacation Bible School, work or youth group to be a collection site. Contact the office for more information.



What's Happening In Your Service Area?

South West: by Dee Nichol森

Pinwheels of Hope

North Platte hosted an event to bring awareness to foster parenting on May 1st, 2013. The cold, wet weather was less than spring-like, but attendees had their hearts warmed at the Memorial Park shelter by those who spoke. There was a pinwheel to represent each child currently placed in out of home care in the 11th Judicial District, 235 in all.

Several DHHS staff were on hand, along with some foster families from the area. Mayor Dwight Livingston addressed the group, proclaiming May as National Foster Parent Appreciation Month. Judge Piccolo spoke on child advocacy and the importance of family. Susan Tomkins, HHS supervisor from Ogallala, and former foster child herself, told of her experience in foster care. She expressed how profoundly the course of her life was changed after placement into a stable foster home. Ms. Tomkins described the stark contrast to her outcome compared to that of her siblings, who remained in the home she was moved from. Foster care made the difference in her life, and her voice broke with emotion as she told of the important role her Foster Parents played in helping make her who she is today. "You have the power," she spoke, "To change the world.....one child at a time."



Judge Piccolo



Susan Tomkin

Also in attendance were youth from "Project Everlast". One young lady from this group spoke of her experiences in foster care. She expressed how important a supportive and stable home was in the process of being able to work through the emotions of trying to reunify with her Mother.

This young woman now wants to become a social worker and give back to the system that changed her family for the better.

Tina Gastineau, RD supervisor for North Platte, called up each speaker and then talked with KNOP-TV, who covered the event. Ms. Gastineau was passionate about the need for loving homes, as well as the importance of recruiting and maintaining quality Foster Parents. "We need them now more than ever" she said.



As a foster and adoptive parent myself, I couldn't agree more. Anyone who fosters knows the hard work that goes into helping raise children whose families are falling apart. It is our job to keep that child safe and support the parents while that family rebuilds itself. It isn't easy, but it is so worthwhile. Events like this show how our work as Foster Parents is not taken for granted. We are valued, and what we do is important! Encourage others to start their own journey into Foster Care.

Supporting Each Other!



One of my favorite duties as the Eastern RFC is being able to facilitate Support Groups. The Columbus support group has been a pleasure to lead. This group of people are more like extended family than a community support group. They come together every month not only for credits and networking, but most importantly to lift each other up and give advice to new foster parents joining our group. We meet on a monthly basis at Peace Lutheran Church in Columbus on the Second Tuesday of the month at 7PM. It would not be support group if Phylis Cunningham did not bring her delicious Chocolate Chip Cookies. At our Annual Christmas Party we honored Phylis and Bud for their 20 years of service as foster parents. Both have enjoyed being foster parents and still keep in contact with many of their past placements.

— Tammy Welker

NFAPA Scholarship

Congratulations to Alena Kinsey, the winner of the \$250 NFAPA Scholarship this year. Alena is attending Nebraska Wesleyan University and is working toward a Bachelor's in Fine Arts Degree.

NFAPA 2013 Summer Support Group Schedule

NFAPA offers support groups at the following dates/time/cities. Up to date information with each support group location will be on our website calendar: www.nfapa.org.

This is your chance to gain understanding and parenting tips through trainings, discussions and networking with fellow foster families! In-service trainings offered at most support groups. Check locations for daycare availability. Support groups will be cancelled for inclement weather. Call the office, your Resource Family Consultant or check the calendar on our website for more information

NORTHERN SERVICE AREA

Columbus Support Group

held monthly 7:00-8:30 pm

Peace Lutheran Church, 2720 28th Street

July 9th

August 13th

September 10th.

Childcare is provided

WESTERN SERVICE AREA

Alliance Support Group

6:00-7:30 pm

held monthly

Alliance Library conference rooms A & B,
1750 Sweetwater Ave

June 27th

July 25th

August 22nd

Childcare is provided.

Scottsbluff Support Group

held monthly 6:00-7:30 pm

St. Francis Community Center, 1605 2nd Ave

June 18th

July 16th

August 20th.

Childcare is provided.

SOUTHWESTERN AREA

North Platte Support Group

held monthly 1:30-3:30 pm

Harvest Christian Fellowship, (1501 S. Dewey

May 19th

June 9th

July 21st

August 11th

September 15th

Childcare is provided by Jennifer Fisher from St. Francis

Lexington Support Group

held monthly 6:30-8:00 pm

Parkview Baptist Church, 803 West 18th Street

May 6th

June 10th

July 9th

August 6th

September 10th

Childcare is provided

Gothenburg Support Group

6:30-8:00 pm

held monthly (except May by members' request)

American Lutheran Church, 1512 Ave G

June 6th

July 11th

August 8th

September 12th.

Childcare is NOT provided

McCook Support Group

6:30-8:00 pm

held monthly (except for July by members' request)

Community Hospital, 1301 East H Street

May 13th

June 17th

August 12th

September 9th.

Childcare is NOT provided

Ogallala Support Group

1 pm-3 pm MT

held monthly (except for May)

New Hope Church, 118 East B Street

June 23rd

August 25th

July 28th

September 22nd.

Childcare is NOT provided





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JOIN NFAPA....your support will enable NFAPA to continue supporting foster parents state-wide!

Benefits

- Ongoing trainings/conferences at local and state level
- Networking opportunities with other foster (resource) families, adoptive families, and relative caregivers
- Opportunity for all foster (resource) families, adoptive families and relative caregivers to be actively involved in an association by serving on committees and/or on the Executive Board
- Working to instigate changes by alertness to legislation affecting the child welfare system
- An advocate on your behalf at local, state and national levels
- Alertness to legislation affecting the child welfare system

Thank you for your support!

Please mail membership form to:
NFAPA, 2431 Fairfield Street, Suite C,
Lincoln, NE 68521.

Questions? Please call us at 877-257-0176.

NFAPA is a 501c3 non-profit organization comprised of volunteer Board of Directors and Mentors.

Name(s): _____

Organization: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ County: _____

State: _____ Zip: _____ Phone: _____

Email: _____

I am a Foster/Adoptive Parent. I have fostered for _____ years.
(circle one)

I am with _____ agency.

I wish to join the effort:

- Single Family Membership** (a single foster or adoptive parent), \$25
- Family Membership** (married foster or adoptive parents), \$35
- Supporting Membership** (individuals wishing to support our efforts), \$75
- Organization Membership** (organizations wishing to support our efforts), \$150
- I wish to join the effort through a donation.

My donation will be acknowledged through Families First newsletters.

- Gold Donation, \$1,000
- Silver Donation, \$750
- Platinum Donation, \$500
- Bronze Donation, \$250
- Other, \$ _____