

Families First

a newsletter for Nebraska Families

January/February 2013

N F A P A

North American Council on Adoptable Children

Position Statement

Access to Trauma-Informed Care

Philosophy

Many adopted children and youth have experienced trauma in their young lives—be it related to abuse, neglect, exposure to domestic or community violence, or loss of birth family. Often, the prolonged trauma facing a child who enters foster care due to ongoing neglect or abuse can have a greater impact than a single traumatic event such as witnessing violence, natural disasters, etc. Such ongoing exposure to trauma—called complex or cumulative trauma—causes neurological changes that can result in developmental delays, difficulty with attachment, mental or physical health problems, increased risk of later victimization, substance abuse, and other behavioral problems throughout the individual's life. The effects of trauma can influence every aspect of a child or youth's life and often dramatically change family dynamics and every family member's life. Trauma can also affect families for generations to come, with deep impacts over time.

In spite of these challenges, there is hope. Children and youth can heal from trauma. Healing takes time, intention, expertise, and resources; a trauma-informed system of care is one of the resources that can help the healing process. Understanding what constitutes trauma and the impact trauma can have on a child or youth and his or her family improves the ability of the child welfare, health, mental health, and other systems to meet each child or youth's needs while promoting healing and resilience.

When a traumatized child or youth and his or her family need mental or behavioral health care, they have a right to receive trauma-informed care—care that acknowledges the effect trauma has on individuals and their families, modifies services to respond to those effects, focuses on skill- and strength-building rather than symptom management, and avoids further traumatization. A trauma-informed system is also one that acknowledges and includes parents as key participants in the healing process for a child or youth.

NACAC embraces the National Child Traumatic Stress Network's definition of trauma-informed care: "A trauma-informed child- and family-service system is one in which all parties involved recognize and respond to the impact of traumatic stress on those who have contact with the system including children, caregivers, and service providers. Programs and agencies within such a system infuse and sustain trauma awareness, knowledge, and skills into their organizational cultures, practices, and policies. They act in collaboration with all those who are involved with the child, using the best available science, to facilitate and support the recovery and resiliency of the child and family."

Trauma is but one of a complex set of experiences a child or youth suffers as a result of abuse or neglect. Trauma requires holistic assessment and comprehensive treatment. Trauma-informed care recognizes a child or youth's strengths and respects their individual challenges. Child welfare, mental health, health, and other systems are called upon to incorporate trauma-informed practices into their existing service array based upon evidence-informed practices.

Research and literature related to resilience and healing from trauma all recognize the foundational importance of lasting, stable relationships. Therefore, the provision of trauma-informed services must always be concurrent to and compatible with seeking and supporting permanent families for all children who have experienced trauma, whether in their birth family, kinship care, or non-relative adoption or guardianship.

Policy and Practice Recommendations

- The U.S. and Canadian federal governments should invest in research to identify the short- and long-term effects of trauma and to identify evidence-based clinical practices that reduce the effects of trauma on children, youth, and their families. The federal governments should widely disseminate these research findings, and encourage the use of best practices in trauma-informed care.

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, e-mail: nfapa@windstream.net

To contact a board member or mentor, visit our website at www.nfapa.org.

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*RFC = Resource Family Consultant

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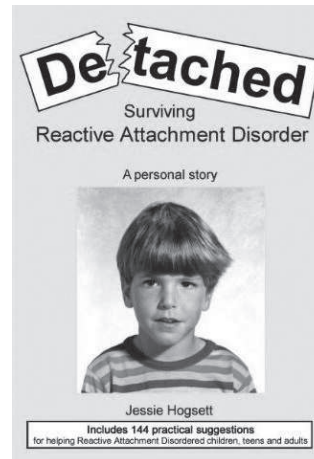
This publication is supported by Grant #93.556 under a sub-grant from HHS Administration for Children and Families and Nebraska DHHS.

NFAPA Suggested Reading

Detached!

Surviving Reactive Attachment Disorder

By Jessie Hogsett

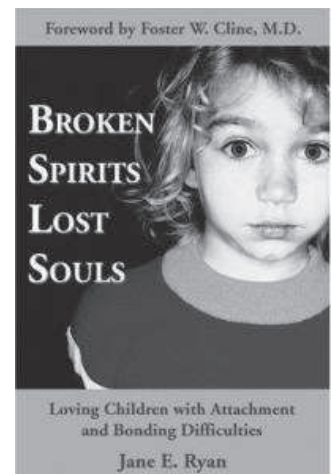


Is the true story of a young boy who never “attached” or “bonded” with his alcoholic mother. He felt unloved, uncared for, unsafe, sad, lonely and extremely angry. As he grew up, he, like most Reactive Attachment Disordered kids, acted out, exhibiting severely antisocial, even violent, behavior. You’ll travel back in time to view a young child’s life through his own eyes. You’ll see an innocent boy become a severely emotionally disturbed teen. Then, against all odds, you’ll read about miracles few ever thought possible.

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.



Continued from page 1

- All assessments for children and youth in care and adopted from care should be trauma-informed. (See NACAC's position statement on Cognitive, Social, Emotional, Physical, Developmental, and Educational Needs of Foster and Adopted Children and Youth for more information on assessments.) Because the impact of trauma can mimic other disorders, before a foster or adopted child is given a particular diagnosis or prescribed psychotropic medication, the child or youth should be thoroughly assessed for the impact of trauma. In addition to other effective services and support provided to each child or youth in care, the child welfare system should fund and provide access to treatment to address any issues arising from trauma the child or youth experienced.
- Federal, state, provincial, First Nations, tribal, and territorial governments (hereafter called governments) should adopt a policy that all child welfare system providers are informed about the effects of trauma, appropriately assess each client's trauma history, and offer services that facilitate recovery. These public entities should ensure providers have access to research and practice guidelines related to effective trauma-informed care.
- Governments should invest in and ensure access to trauma-informed care, and develop networks of culturally competent trauma-informed providers who can provide care that is developmentally appropriate for each child or youth served.
- Governments should fund evaluations of public mental and behavioral health services to assess if these interventions are trauma-informed, and make recommendations for changes when necessary.
- Until all services are truly trauma-informed, governments should promote and provide access to those public and private services that have been shown to be effective trauma-informed services.
- All health and mental health care systems and providers should incorporate into their services evidence-based and evidence-informed trauma-informed practices that acknowledge and respond to the effect of trauma. Such services build on respect for the traumatized individual and allow time for the individual to build trust. Each system and provider should also develop its own written policies and procedures for ensuring the provision of evidence-based and evidence-informed trauma-informed care and for educating its workforce about trauma.
- All health and mental health care providers should assess each individual's trauma history and respond respectfully and appropriately to provide trauma-informed care.

- Parents and caregivers should be given access to information about the impact of trauma on their child, opportunities to learn about and practice trauma-informed parenting strategies, and information and support related to their own experiences with intergenerational and/or secondary traumatic stress.
- When possible, treatment should involve peer support from others who have experienced trauma and can share their stories of recovery and growth.
- Systems must seek ongoing and in-depth input from trauma survivors and their families about how services might better meet the needs of children and youth who have been traumatized and the families who care for them.
- Institutions that educate health and mental health care providers should require students to receive education on the effects of trauma and the best way to treat individuals who have been traumatized. Training should include the prevalence of trauma and its impact on individuals, how to recognize trauma-affected behavior, and what is most effective in serving individuals who have been traumatized.
- Any certification or education in adoption competence must include competency in trauma and loss issues along with the other core issues in adoption.

NFPA
NATIONAL FOSTER PARENT ASSOCIATION

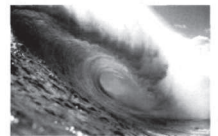
Mark your calendar now

43rd Education Conference

June 5-8, 2013

****Renaissance Long Beach Hotel,
Long Beach, California****

**Oceans of
Opportunity....Catch
a Wave to Permanence!**



For additional information visit the NFPA Website at www.nfpaonline.org or contact Sarah Schafer at sschafer@nfpaonline.org or 1-800-557-5238

NFPA Supports Foster Parent's in achieving safety, permanence and well being for the children and youth in their care.



IMPROVING OUTCOMES FOR INFANTS, TODDLERS AND FAMILIES THROUGH A TRAUMA-INFORMED SYSTEM OF CARE



HOLDREGE: MARCH 7, 2013

HASTINGS: MARCH 8, 2013



An advanced training led by a multi-disciplinary group of trainers focusing on improving outcomes for young children involved in the child welfare court system. Topics include:

- Trauma-informed response to maltreated infants/toddlers
- EDN/CAPTA/Part C Evaluations and Services
- Improving court practice and outcomes through a Trauma Informed Court System

All individuals with a stake in the child welfare system are invited to attend, including judges, attorneys, case-workers, clerks, school personnel, law enforcement, medical and service providers, early childhood providers, foster families, treatment providers, CASA, FCRB, and court facilitators

You must register to attend. Breakfast and lunch will be provided. There is no cost but registration will close when limits are reached. Register online at https://ccfl.unl.edu/registration/helping_babies.php

SPONSORED BY THE NEBRASKA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES AND THE NEBRASKA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



Lifebook

The departure of a foster child from your home is often a difficult time. Because this can be a time of great difficulty and one of emotional upheaval, it is important to prepare beforehand when it comes to the transition of your foster child from your home into another. From the very first day you bring a foster child into your home, it is critical to remember that he will very likely not be with you forever. There will come a time when he will move to another home; whether it is reunification with his parents, his family members, another foster home, or adoption. Therefore, planning for his departure begins when he first arrives.

One of the ways you can prepare is by organizing a lifebook for your foster child. This book can be a wonderful healing tool for your foster child as he moves to a new home. For some children, a lifebook is the only reminder they may have of previous houses and families they once called home. Essentially, a lifebook is a scrapbook of your foster child's life, and is something he can take with him to his new home, and throughout his 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. A lifebook can not only help the child remember important aspects of his past, it can also bring to light memories that fade away when a child grows older.

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

A lifebook helps a foster child recognize his or her individual worth, something that is so very important for each child in foster care. For many foster children, placement into foster care is a traumatic experience. Lifebooks can be

a testament to their strength and their ability to overcome whatever challenges they may face while in care.

*Dr. John DeGarmo has been a foster parent for 11 years, now, and he and his wife have had over 30 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 the highly inspirational and bestselling book *Fostering Love: One Foster Parent's Story*, and the upcoming book *The Foster Parenting Manual: A Practical Guide to Creating a Loving, Safe and Stable Home*. He also writes for a number of publications and newsletters, both here in the United States, and overseas. Dr. DeGarmo can be contacted at drjohndegarmo@gmail.com, through his Facebook page, Dr. John DeGarmo, or at his website, www.drejohndegarmo.com.*

Save the Adoption Tax Credit

We recently received the following update from the IRS with news about the 2012 adoption tax credit:

- Taxpayers who plan to claim the adoption credit will not be able to file their return until late February or early March. The IRS is still updating their computer systems due to the late legislation. an announcement will be placed on [IRS.gov](http://www.irs.gov) when the Service is able to process the form.
- The Form 1040 federal tax return and the Form 8839, Qualified Adoption Expenses, must still be mailed to the IRS. The Service was unable to convert the Form 8839 to an electronic format this year.
- Taxpayers must maintain supporting documentation when filing their return. They are not required to attach these documents to their return this year.

For additional information, visit <http://www.irs.gov/> and type Adoption Credit in the Search box

2013 Summer Workshops

The Foster Care Review Office has their 2013 Summer Workshops scheduled.

Go to their website at: www.fcro.nebraska.gov.

Contact Mary Furnas with any questions at **800-577-3272** (Nebraska Only).

New NFAPA Western Resource Family Consultant

My name is Jackie Sterkel-Sandersfeld. I live in rural Western Nebraska "Alliance" on a 4000-acre cattle ranch "Mill Iron Bar Ranch" that I own and operate with my husband "Gene" of thirty years and our daughter "Hannah", age 23. We raise Black Angus cattle and run a few head of horses, in addition to the farming-side of the operation. Our mainstay for crops is alfalfa hay, but we also do some row cropping of corn and wheat on a rotational basis.

Besides being a full-time mom, wife, and ranch-hand, I work a few days a week at one of the local feed yards. I just finished my third term on the Morrill County FSA committee, and will move on to serve as its advisor. Over the past twenty-something years I have been involved in the manufacturing and agriculture industry; working my way through the system from an entry level clerical position, on to a multi-facility controller, and then into senior management.

As for my schooling, I have come to the conclusion that I am a late bloomer in life; I am getting closer to deciding what I want to be when I grow up. Back when I graduated from high school, I told everyone that I was going to attend college in the fall -- I just failed to tell them which fall. So now, some thirty years later I finally "did it" by obtaining my Bachelors in Criminal Justice.

The love of family and children has been engrained in me for as long as I can remember; this love has led me down a variety of paths. All of these endeavors have been truly rewarding, however, not to say without challenge. I have volunteered as 4-H Leader, Sunday School Teacher, Adult Basic Education Mentor, Tutor for children with disabilities, past Foster Parent, and absolutely the most rewarding (as well as most challenging) an adoptive Mom. My life has/is filled with a multitude of kids (now many young adults), who even though have not lived in my home...I still consider to be "my kids"... and to them I am lovingly referred to as "Mama J".

Adding to my chaotic lifestyle, to ensure a deficit in boredom, we have seven dogs, one cat, a donkey, a couple pigs, and a few chickens. In my spare time I love to garden, can, paint, read, quilt, sewing of all sorts, and needlework.

Well there is a quick highlight of my life. Keeps me busy and sometimes works as a deterrent to keep me out of trouble -- not always -- but helps. I look forward to getting to know and working with everyone at NFAPA, as well as the families in the Western Service Area! The position of Resource Family Consultant will once again put me back on the path I love... service to families and children.



Scholarships

Other Scholarship Opportunities listed on NFPA site at

<http://nfpaonline.org/youthscholarship>

- www.collegeboard.org
- www.fastweb.com
- www.finaid.org
- www.fafsa.ed.gov
- www.collegecrunch.org
- www.savingforcollege.com
- www.UNCF.org
- www.fc2success.org
- www.jimcaseyyouth.org
- www.getcollegefunds.org
- www.discoverfinancial.com/community/scholarship
- www.collegenet.com
- www.waedfoundation.org/gs/
- www.ed.gov/programs/gearup/index.html
- www.collegescholarships.com/
- www.nrcys.ou.edu/nrcyd/state_home.htm
- www.affcf.org/mc/page.do?sitePageId=62702
- www.questbridge.org/cps/awards/summer_school.html
- www.onwardandupwards.org
- www.sociallearning.com
- **First Chance Scholarship (University of Phoenix)**
- **Public Service Loan Forgiveness**

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.



LINCOLN COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

The Lincoln Community Foundation is pleased to announce that we have updated our scholarship guidelines and application materials for spring 2013 scholarship awards!

You may find information about our available scholarships by visiting our website at:

<http://www.lcf.org/>

Due to an exciting new advancement in the administration of the Lincoln Community Foundation scholarship program, we now have online application functionality on our website for scholarship applicants to use. Students are now able to apply for multiple scholarships by completing a single application. Their answers to questions within the application will match them to scholarships for which they are eligible to apply. Then they will select the specific scholarships for which they choose to apply and upload the required attachments for each one. The application deadline will be two weeks later this year, on **March 31st, 2013**.

The Lincoln Community Foundation administers more than 50 different scholarships—**many of which are for students who live outside of Lincoln/Lancaster County!** We encourage all students from across Nebraska to visit our website to check their eligibility. Click on “Scholarships” in the “GRANTS” box near the top of our home page. Students can search scholarships by the specific name of the scholarship, or by keywords relating to the criteria of the scholarship. Watch the REQUIREMENTS in the scholarship description for a list of documents the student will be required to upload after they complete the application.

Students will create an account on our website prior to filling out the general application. After the application pages, they will be presented with a list of scholarships for which they may be eligible to apply. Please encourage your students to carefully review all of the scholarships that display on their list to make sure they are eligible to apply; it is possible that some of the scholarships that display may not be applicable to them.

The Lincoln Community Foundation is very excited about this new online application system, and we are looking forward to your feedback. If you have any questions regarding our website or about our scholarships in general, please do not hesitate to contact me at robertm@lcf.org or (402) 474-2345.

Thank you for your assistance!

Rob McMaster Program Assistant
215 Centennial Mall South, Suite 100, Lincoln, NE 68508
Phone: 402-474-2345 Fax: 402-476-8532

Nebraska Foster and Adoptive Parent Association Scholarship

Application Deadline: April 1, 2013

\$250 Scholarship Program

NFAPA offers a scholarship for an adoptive, foster, guardianship, or kinship child, who wishes to further their education beyond high school or GED. This can be at a college or university, vocational and job training, or on line learning. The scholarship form will be available on our website.

www.nfapa.org

*Requirements and submission instructions will be listed.

NFPA Youth Scholarship

The National Foster Parent Association (NFPA) Youth Scholarship Fund was established to benefit foster, adoptive and birth children of NFPA members. Up to five scholarships are awarded annually based on available funds. Scholarships may be awarded to current foster children and biological or adopted children of an NFPA member.

Each scholarship may be for college/university or vocational training.

2013 scholarship applications are due no later than March 15, 2013.

More information at:

<http://nfpaonline.org/nfpascholarship>

COOKBOOKS!

NFAPA still has some “*Guess Who’s Coming for Dinner*” cookbooks!

There are some wonderful recipes you and your family are sure to enjoy. Foster & Adoptive families, community members and state leaders have shared their favorite recipes. Call the office at 877-0257-0176 to order some today. They will also be available at our in-service trainings.



Cost: \$10.00 plus shipping

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

February 16, 2013

Scottsbluff, NE

6 hours in-service credit

The Impact of Toxic Stress on the Developing Child by Mark Hald, Ph.D.

- Discusses what toxic stress is and how the various forms impact the young child's developing brain.
- Facilitate ways to be with children in helpful ways when they are emotionally and behaviorally dysregulated integrating the principals of attachment and trauma informed care.

Location: Gering Public Library, 1055 P Street, Gering, 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

March 23, 2013

North Platte, NE

6 hours in-service credit

Trauma Informed Care (3 hrs) by Teresa Ward, M.A.L.T.M.H.P.

- We know that traumatic events across the lifespan lead to predictable patterns of brain development, traits and behaviors in individuals. Teresa will be presenting information on trauma informed care, including information on the long term biological and emotional effects of trauma, the Adverse Childhood Experiences Study, and implications for help, treatment and building resiliency in survivors of trauma.

Guardianship (1.5 hrs) by Barb Nissen

- The reporting documents require significantly more information for the court and other interested parties. Come learn more.

What Foster Parents Need to Know About Psychotropic Medications (1.5 hrs) by Barb Nissen

- Many children in foster care take medications to moderate their behavior or their mood so they can function in a family or school setting. During this training, foster parents will have the opportunity to find answers to frequently asked questions.

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

April 19, 2013

Gretna, NE

3 hours in-service credit

Trauma Informed Parenting by Stan Waddell, LPC

- Learning Essential Elements of Trauma Informed Parenting, Trauma 101 and understanding and dealing with trauma's effects. We will look at some case studies and ways to parent kids who have been through trauma.

Location: Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, 11204 S. 204th Street, Gretna, NE

Time: 6:30 p.m.-9:30 p.m.

Cost Per Person: \$20 foster/adopt parent \$15 NFAPA Member \$40 agency/other

April 20, 2013

Lincoln, NE

3 hours in-service credit

Trauma Informed Parenting by Stan Waddell, LPC

- Learning Essential Elements of Trauma Informed Parenting, Trauma 101 and understanding and dealing with trauma's effects. We will look at some case studies and ways to parent kids who have been through trauma.

Location: NFAPA Office, 2431 Fairfield Street, Suite C, Lincoln, NE

Time: 9:00 a.m.-Noon

Cost Per Person: \$20 foster/adopt parent \$15 NFAPA Member \$40 agency/other

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

June 8, 2013

North Platte, NE

6 hours in-service credit

Darkness to Light Stewards of Children (3 hrs) by Matt Fosket

- Evidence-based child sexual abuse prevention training proven to increase knowledge, improve attitudes and change child protective behaviors. Workbook, DVD and discussion.

CAN 101 (Child Abuse & Neglect) (3 hrs) by Matt Fosket

- 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.

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

This training is sponsored by:



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 _____

Mark Your Calendars!

NFAPA offers support groups at the following dates/times/cities. Up to date information with each support group location will also be on our calendar page on the website. This is your chance to gain understanding and parenting tips through trainings, discussions, and networking with fellow foster families. In-service training is offered at most support groups. Registration is not required, unless noted, but you are welcome to contact your Resource Family Consultant to let them know you are coming! Support Groups will be cancelled for inclement weather. Call the office or check the calendar on our website at www.nfapa.org

NORTHERN AREA:

Childcare offered at all Northern Support Groups for families that attend.

Columbus:

Peace Lutheran Church (2720 28th St) 7:00-8:30 pm
February 12, 2013 April 9, 2013
March 12, 2013 May 14, 2013

South Sioux City:

Old Dane Golf Course 7:00-8:30 p.m.
(2666 Hwy 35, Dakota City)
February 19, 2013 April 16, 2013 (TBA)
March 19, 2013 (TBA)

Norfolk:

Faith Regional Health Systems 6:30-8:00 pm
(2700 Norfolk Ave, Norfolk Room)
February 28, 2013 April 25, 2013
March 28, 2013

O'Neill:

Assembly of God Church 7:00-8:30 pm
(204 North 7 St)
March 21, 2013 May 16, 2013

EASTERN AREA:

Childcare offered for families that attend.

Gretna:

Little Red School House Daycare 6:30-8:00 pm
(21730 Laura Street)
February 25, 2013 April 22, 2013
March 25, 2013

CENTRAL AREA:

Childcare provided for families that register the children they will bring by calling 402-853-1092

Kearney:

First United Methodist Church 6:30-8:30 pm
(4500 Linden Dr.)
February 14, 2013 April 11, 2013
March 14, 2013

Grand Island:

First St. Paul's Lutheran Church 6:30-8:30 pm
(1515 Harrison)
February 12, 2013 April 9, 2013
March 12, 2013

WESTERN AREA:

Childcare offered in North Platte for families that attend.

North Platte:

Harvest Christian Fellowship Church 1:30-3:30 pm
(1501 S. Dewey)
February 10, 2013 April 21, 2013
March 10, 2013

Gothenburg:

American Lutheran Church (1512 Ave G) 6:30-8:00 pm
February 21, 2013 April 18, 2013
March 21, 2013

Ogallala:

New Hope Church 1:00-3:00 pm MT
(118 East B St)
February 17, 2013 April 28, 2013
March 17, 2013

McCook:

Community Hospital (1301 East H St) 6:30-8:00 pm
February 25, 2013 April 22, 2013
March 25, 2013



A Letter from the Executive Director

By Pamela Allen

You will notice that many of the articles in our newsletters deal with the issue of working with birth family. I have so often seen foster families, who because they refused to work with the birth family, many times make a child choose between birth and foster family. NO child should have to make that choice. I have never had a child come into my home that didn't love his/her birth parents. I can also honestly say that I have never met a birth parent that didn't love their child. It is true, that some parents are not able for a variety of reasons to take care of their children...but they do love them and they deserve to be treated with dignity and respect. I am always grateful that they gave birth to the children rather than terminating a pregnancy. Put yourself in the child's place. How would you feel if someone (especially someone you are living with) is talking badly about people you love?

How do we as foster parents, work with birth family? We advocate for our children as part of a TEAM. In pre-service training, we talk a lot about TEAM as well as working with birth family. We learn about the importance of "Forever Families" and how that looks as a foster parent. Many of the birth families we work with will continue to need support when their children return home. What better support than the foster family who lived with the child 24/7 for a period of sometimes months or even years. I like to think that my role changes from that of a foster mom to that of an Aunt (or grandma) who can be there for support and encouragement.

Should all children go home? Unfortunately not, however whenever it is safe, it is the right of every child to be raised by their birth parent. I am not saying it is easy, or that it won't hurt your heart. I just ask you to remember why you became a foster parent. We are not saints and it is human to become angry and discouraged. Remember to reach out to your support system. Talk to other foster parents. Attend Trainings and Conferences. Keep up the GREAT work you are doing. Every time you reach out and touch a child's life it is FOREVER!



Fostering Love

by Dr. John DeGarmo

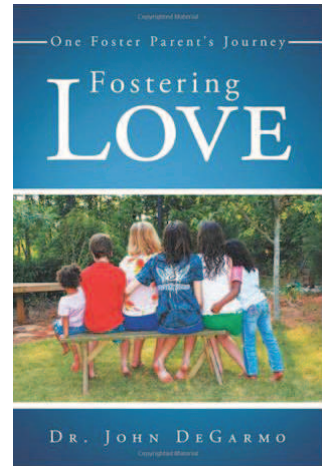
One Foster Parent's Journey by Dr. John DeGarmo, leading expert in the Foster Care System.

Children suffering from abuse. Neglect. Malnutrition. Even drug-related problems passed on from a mother's addiction. Children rejected by those who were to love them most, their parents. When placed into a foster home, many of these children carry with them the physical and emotional scars that prevent them from accepting the love of another.

This journey as a foster parent is the most difficult thing John DeGarmo has done. Through the sleepless nights with drug-addicted babies, the battles with angry teens, and the tears from such tremendous sadness, John DeGarmo learns that to follow God's call in his life means to take up His cross in his own home. *Fostering Love: One Foster Parent's Journey* is the true-life account of his experience as a foster parent, along with his wife and their own three children, as he followed God's call to take foster children into his home. This is a story of heartbreak, sadness, and ultimately love as he came to find God in the tears and smiles of many foster children.

Fostering Love: One Foster Parent's Journey is ranked as one of the top hot new releases in inspiration and spirituality on Amazon.com. The book can be purchased as a bound volume or electronically from sites such as Crossbooks.com, Amazon.com, or Barnes and Noble.com.

If you wish to contact Dr. DeGarmo, you can find him on facebook page Dr. John DeGarmo, his personal webpage is www.drjohndrgarmo.com, or e-mail him drjohndegarmo@gmail.com.



"This is a book every foster parent should be required to read."

-Scott P.-Bank Manager/Foster Parent

"Strength of character isn't always about how much you can handle before you break, it's also about how much you can handle after you've broken."

—Robert Tew

Fostering Hearts

Welcoming your Foster Child

Dr. John DeGarmo

The first impression you create with your foster child is often vitally important to how the next few days and weeks will transpire. This will probably not be the sweet little child who rushes into your waiting arms, laughing delightfully, as you might imagine. It is highly likely that your foster child will be scared and frightened, full of anxiety. He may have left his family moments ago, and is now told that you are his family, for the time being. Without a doubt, he is full of questions, as emotions swirl within him. Although it is impossible to predict how he will react when he first meets you, it is important that you approach this time with caution and care.



When the caseworker pulls into your driveway, go out to the car and welcome the caseworker and child, introducing yourself immediately, with a warm smile and soft voice. Inform your foster child who you are and the role you will now play in his life. He may very well not understand the foster care system, or what foster parents do. Do not insist that your new child call you mom or dad. Allow your foster child to call you by your first names, if you feel comfortable with this, or by whatever name he feels comfortable in calling you. As the child may be scared, do not insist that he react to you right away. This is a time of extreme difficulty, and your foster child may be in a state of shock. As you help him inside with his possessions, take him by the hand, if he is a little one, or place a soft hand upon his shoulder, if he is a teenager. Actions like these can be reassuring that all will be okay, that he is in a safe and caring home. Do not insist upon hugging, as he may be too embarrassed or hurt to do so.

Show him where he will sleep, and where his clothes will be kept. Have a nightlight already on in the room, if the room is dark. Ask if he is hungry, and offer him some food. If he doesn't want any food, do not insist upon it. He will eat when he is ready and hungry.

You will have to sign some paper work with your caseworker, as well as go over any last minute news, details, and information. If possible, do this away from the child, as this can be especially embarrassing and damaging to your new child. This is a good time for your foster child to eat, or be alone in his new room. If you have children of your own, it may also be a good time for them to engage in some sort of play with their new foster brother. Your foster child will likely be overwhelmed with the situation, so it is important

that you make sure your home is as peaceful and quiet as possible. Allow your foster child to have some personal space and alone time. If it is late at night, do not insist that he go to bed immediately. After all, he is probably not only needing some time to reflect on the day's events, sleep may be difficult to come by, as he is in a strange bed, in a strange home. Sadly, it is not uncommon for newly placed foster children to cry themselves to sleep during the first few nights. Do not be surprised if this happens. He may be scared and lonely. Let him know that you understand how difficult it is for him, and that his tears are normal and all right. Read to him a bedtime story each night; place a nightlight not only in his room, but in the nearby bathroom, as well. Let him know that he can get up in the night and use the bathroom whenever he needs to.

*Dr. John DeGarmo has been a foster parent for 11 years, now, and he and his wife have had over 30 children come through their home. Dr. DeGarmo wrote his dissertation on fostering, entitled *Responding to the Needs of Foster Children in Rural Schools*. 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 the highly inspirational and bestselling book *Fostering Love: One Foster Parent's Story*. He also writes for a number of publications and newsletters, both here in the United States, and overseas. Dr. DeGarmo can be contacted at drjohndegarmo@gmail.com, through his Facebook page, Dr. John DeGarmo, or at his website, www.drejohndegarmo.com.*

Notice for NFAPA Board Nominations

The NFAPA Election Committee is seeking nominations for the upcoming elections in April. We are inviting NFAPA members to submit a letter of interest and short bio for the following positions:

- Treasurer
- Eastern Representative
- Southwestern Representative
- Western Representative

All responses must be submitted by **March 15, 2013**.

Mail nominations to:

Pat Rice, State Secretary
c/o Nebraska Foster and Adoptive Parent Association
2431 Fairfield Street, Suite C
Lincoln, NE 68521

Making the Commitment

Like any other challenging and rewarding venture in life, fostering offers a wide range of experiences. Some good. Some not so much. But it's all well worth it.

One thing that can't be disputed is that it is needed when there are children who have nowhere else to go. For my husband and me, deciding to become foster parents was one of the biggest commitments we've made. Five years later, now as non-relative caregivers, we've learned a few tidbits we'd like to share with others who are foster parents or considering being a foster parent.



Here are seven tips to help make your foster care experience as rewarding and successful as it is intended to be.


1. YOU are making a difference in a child's life. Not all foster parents are "in it for the money" so don't let others' misconception stop you from telling everyone you know, "Yes, I am a foster parent and I'm proud of it." Your commitment and excitement is the best recruitment tool ever.
2. Having said that, fostering is a full-time job, just like parenting biological children. I used to feel bad when being placed with an infant and I couldn't answer the phones or reply to emails as quickly, but then I had an "ah ha" moment: I didn't feel bad with my biological children because I was expected to have crazy days. No difference here. There are no "off" days in fostering but if you do need a break, utilize respite care or babysitting services and don't feel guilty about it.
3. You can't take away a child's pain at losing his or her parent, even if it's temporarily. You can only be there, in the moment, when the pain is too much to bear. Even sitting in silence is better than not being there.
4. Celebrate successes, no matter how minor. Along the same lines, don't ignore bad behavior either, no matter how minor. Sometimes, as foster parents, we may never have a complete picture of what the child's life was like beforehand so establish your ground rules for rewards and discipline upfront. Remain the steady force in the child's life so that they will learn to balance the good with the bad.
5. Not every placement is the "right" placement for you. You have to be comfortable in knowing what you can handle and what you can't handle. Don't be discouraged if it doesn't work out; just remain confident in the fact that you provided what you could to the best of your ability.

6. Fostering challenges marriages. You MUST maintain a healthy relationship because there will now be 10 times as many people in your lives -- children, biological parents, biological siblings, caseworkers, healthcare professionals, etc. -- all with differing personalities and opinions and who all need your time. And just as you would with biological children, stay united in providing care and discipline.
7. You don't have to do it alone. There are organizations and associations to support you. Don't ever feel that your situation is too unique; share your concerns with others and don't be afraid to ask for help.

My husband and I love being part of a system that helps children. When we talk to acquaintances about fostering, we don't sugarcoat it and we don't bash it -- we just provide an honest discussion.

As I said before, fostering is a commitment and as with any commitment, it's not all good and it's not all bad but you're in it for the long haul.

Michael and LaShaun Wallace are parents to four, including one who was adopted from foster care, and are the non-relative caregivers of an infant. Michael writes for ESPN.com and LaShaun is a board member for the Florida State Foster/Adoptive Parent Association and National Foster Parent Association.



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2021 East Hennepin Avenue, Suite 320, Minneapolis, MN 55413

January 2013

Department Directors,

Every day we read of privacy violations, identity theft, and other incidences of our personal data and information being released into the wrong hands. Be it the hacking of computer systems jeopardizing our finances, or other types of identity theft the problem is real, serious, and a concern for many Americans.

This reality is even a greater threat for many resource (foster, kinship, adoptive) parents throughout many parts of our country. Sadly it is not uncommon to see the files of these parents left open on desk tops where they are easily accessible to the public. Conversations regarding these files are often overheard in elevators and restrooms amongst case workers and child welfare professionals.

Resource parents are required to disclose large amounts of personal, financial, and family data and information to receive licensing and approval to help with our nations children trapped in the child welfare system. Sadly their privacy can be violated and compromised if procedures are not in place to protect them.

Below is a suggested privacy statement from the National Foster Parents Association (NFPA) addressing this critical issue. Please consider adapting this policy or creating similar protections throughout your organization. The lynch pin to providing services to America's displaced children is an active and involved core of resource parents. Your assistance in strengthening the ability of these individuals to provide necessary services is crucial.

Thank you for your time and efforts on behalf of children and resource parents.

David H. Sharp

National Foster Parent Association
Public Policy Chair
www.nfpaonline.org

123.12 - Privacy of Foster Parent of Information

Whereas foster parent's information contained within any state agency is personal and private and whereas such information should remain confidential from all persons except those persons authorized to obtain such information.

Whereas such information includes but is not limited to social security numbers, addresses, phone numbers, income and financial information, health insurance, drivers license, marriage and divorce history, information gleaned from pre-service training classes

Whereas foster parents have a detrimental reliance on appropriate safeguards being set in place to protect such information with regard to agency policy and procedures

Therefore be it resolved; the National Foster Parent Association encourages , all foster parent licensing agencies to establish clear policies which safeguard electronic, written and oral transmission of foster parent information within their respective states and beyond. Further we ask for the agency to set in place policy that limits who can view and access such information

"The National Voice of Foster Parents"

1-800-557-5238 • (fax) 888-925-5634 • www.NFPAonline.org • info@NFPAonline.org

Adoption Tax Credit Is Made Permanent

The legislation to avoid the fiscal cliff (the American Taxpayer Relief Act of 2012, signed into law on January 2) included a provision that made the adoption tax credit permanent. Unfortunately it did not make the adoption credit refundable, so it will only benefit those adoptive families who have federal income tax liability.

For 2013, we believe the maximum adoption credit and exclusion will be slightly higher than the 2012 maximum of \$12,650. The credit will begin to phase out for families with modified adjusted gross incomes above a certain level (around \$190,000) and the credit will go away completely for those with incomes around \$230,000. (Exact numbers for the maximum credit and income guidelines have yet to be released.)

For 2013 and beyond, the credit will remain flat for special needs adoptions, meaning that those who adopt children from the U.S. who receive adoption assistance/adoption subsidy benefits can claim the maximum credit regardless of their expenses. For other adoptions (except for step-parent adoptions), parents can claim the credit based on their qualified adoption expenses.

NACAC is deeply disappointed Congress did not make the adoption tax credit refundable for 2012 or future years, and will continue to advocate for refundability in the future. We will keep you posted on these advocacy efforts.

Even though the credit isn't refundable for 2012, we encourage those who adopted in 2012 to submit a Form 8839 with their 2012 taxes even if they do not have tax liability. Although they will not receive an adoption credit refund with their 2012 taxes, the credit can be carried forward up to five additional years. Families might benefit later if either their tax situation changes or the credit is made refundable in the future, and then wouldn't have to amend their 2012 taxes.

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 January/February 2013

1. Name 3 things you can do when a foster child first arrives at your home.
2. You should insist on hugging a new foster child. T or F
3. When should you plan for the departure of a foster child?
4. What is a Lifebook?
5. What should you include in a Lifebook?
6. How many scholarships does the Lincoln Community Foundation administer?
7. What is the National Child Traumatic Stress Network's definition of trauma-informed care?
8. The Adoption Tax Credit is refundable. T or F
9. Where is the closest support group to you?
10. NFAPA offers many in-service trainings. Which training interests you and why?

Undie Sunday

Nebraska has over 4,500 children in out-of-home foster care. That takes a lot of socks! We at the Nebraska Foster and Adoptive Parent Association have started a drive to collect new socks, underwear and pjs to be distributed to these children and teenagers. We need your help!



We hope that your church will see this as "a project they can get behind" and assist us in making this a successful drive. There will be a collection site at your church for your donations. Please call to make arrangements for NFAPA to pick up the "undies" and distribute your gifts.

NEW Undergarments of every sort are needed!

- | | |
|-----------|---------------|
| • Diapers | • Undershirts |
| • Panties | • Briefs |
| • Boxers | • Socks |
| • Pjs | |

**All Sizes toddler to teens.
Thank you for participating!**



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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, \$ _____