

Caregiver Connection

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A monthly publication for Washington state foster and adoptive families and relative caregivers.
WASHINGTON DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL AND HEALTH SERVICES, CHILDREN'S ADMINISTRATION

Bullying

What makes children vulnerable to Bullying – or to bully other children?

Adopted from Parenting Press

If you're concerned about your child's interactions with other kids, or if you suspect your child may be turning into a bully, here's food for thought from those who study both the victims and perpetrators of physical, cyber and psychological harassment.

Kids are more likely to be the victims of bullies if:

- They demonstrate aggressive behavior (children who do not develop the verbal skills to express feelings and resolve issues are more often bullied).
- They demonstrate oppositional behavior and hyperactivity.
- There is abuse, neglect or violence in family history.

Other factors include:

- Speech problems
- Physical clumsiness
- Physical or mental disabilities
- Shyness and unsociability
- Willingness to submit to a bully (to be accepted, for example)

What makes children more likely to bully? They are the kids who:

- Have higher levels of anger and impulsivity
- Are defiant toward adults
- Have few friends and less sense of belonging
- Seek to dominate or manipulate
- Are poor losers
- Lack nonviolent communication strategies and skills
- Refuse to accept responsibility for their behavior
- Crave attention

They may also:

- Have had punitive or coercive parents (in other words, a harsh home environment where children are yelled at, called names or threatened)
- Watch television, movies and videos where put-downs are depicted as acceptable

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Margaret Wilkins



Margaret Wilkins has always been on the “front lines”.

Whether as a Child

Guidance therapist, a DCFS social worker, or as a foster parent, Margaret understands the experiences of children in the child welfare system. And she wants to do something about it! She has been doing something about it for many years!

Margaret became a foster parent 20 years ago. At the time, she was a therapist working with kids in foster care. It disturbed her when people told her she was the most consistent person in the lives of the kids she counseled. It was pretty clear to her that the most important person should not be someone they see once a week for an hour. At first she just did respite care, but pretty soon she had teen girls filling her home. “That’s my specialty,” says Margaret. She decided on teen girls because she saw the difficulties in finding placements for them and she knew she could make a difference.

Currently, Margaret has three girls in her home. Two are in the Foster Care to 21 Program. One is attending Seattle University and the other is in the cosmetology program at Clover Park. Margaret speaks proudly of the competent and accomplished young women they are becoming. The youngest is almost 15 and is making her own mark on the world with her participation in the Tacoma Youth Symphony. A European tour is in the works and the symphony will have a chance to perform in some of the great cathedrals of Europe. What a wonderful opportunity!

The last family member is FinaLee, the yorkie.... as in “Finally, I have a dog!” He’s not attending college or going to Europe, but Margaret is very pleased to at last have a canine family member.

As the older girls become more independent, Margaret is planning for another teen to join her family. That will probably happen soon! But she is really enjoying the rewards of having 2 kids in college and seeing them grow into amazing adults.

The whole family enjoys spending time together. Over the years, there has been a lot of travel and wonderful experiences. A lot of times now it is just the two of them, eating out and talking, going to movies, getting their nails done. But Margaret says, “I have a van for a reason.” That means those wheels are often rolling, taking girls to the mall, roller skating, and all those girl things.

Margaret describes foster parenting as a powerful experience that can change your life. She cherishes the experiences she has had.

You can too.

Continued from front cover

- Interpret innocent actions as hostile and uses these as excuses to strike out (for example, when bumped into)
- May be victims of bullying themselves

What is bullying? Yes, it’s having your lunch or lunch money stolen, or being beat up, or having rumors spread about you. It’s also:

- Threatening (for example, to hurt a child, the child’s pet or someone the child loves)
- Stalking and cyber stalking
- Theft and vandalism of possessions
- Sexual, religious or racial harassment, which can be slurs, gestures, or electronic bullying
- Public humiliation
- Excluding someone socially
- Spreading lies or rumors

If your child is being bullied, document the instances and take the information to an appropriate adult. If the bully is an adult, and you have observed the bullying, try to discuss the issue in a nonconfrontational way. One expert suggests saying, “My child seems to be afraid of school. Any ideas why that might be?” You can also help your child deal with bullies by using books that allow kids to practice responses. With *My Name is Not Dummy*, *I Want to Play*, *Heidi’s Irresistible Hat*, *Amy’s Disappearing Pickle* and *Bully on the Bus*, your child can role-play through typical situations and be better prepared to communicate with peers.

Children must learn that bullying behavior will not be tolerated, but parents must also deal with the underlying causes of the bullying behavior and help children find a better outlet for their feelings.

The Head Start program and the Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program (ECEAP)

Children in foster care or living in relative care are eligible for three programs in Washington State that provide care, education, health services coordination, family support and parent involvement. There is no cost for these programs; relative caregivers and foster families are encouraged to enroll the children in their care!

- The Early Head Start (EHS) program includes children from birth to age three and their families. EHS programs enhance children’s physical, social, emotional and intellectual development. They also support parents’ efforts to fulfill their parental roles, including foster parents and relative caregivers.

The Head Start program and the Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program (ECEAP), pronounced “e-cap,” both serve low-income and at-risk three and four-year-olds and their families. ECEAP is Washington’s pre-kindergarten program. Because Head Start is federally-funded, a family must qualify financially to participate in a Head Start pre-school. All children in foster care, or those who are a dependent of the juvenile court and living with a relative caregiver, also qualify for Head Start regardless of the foster family or caregiver’s income. For caregivers who are receiving welfare or disability benefits, the child in their care is also immediately qualified for Head Start otherwise eligibility rests on income level.

Both of these educational programs focus on preparing children for success in school and life, preschool education, health services coordination, family support and parent involvement.

To learn more about ECEAP, Head Start or Early Head Start, and to locate a program near you, go to www.del.wa.gov/care/find-hs-eceap or contact your social worker.

Health officials urge pertussis vaccination for adults and teens to protect infants

Whooping cough cases showing up around the state

While Washington's overall number of reported whooping cough (pertussis) cases remains even with last year, we're seeing more activity in the past few months.

Young children should get four doses of vaccine between two and 18 months of age – each dose provides more protection. Babies under two months are too young to get the pertussis vaccine, so it's important for parents and others in close contact to "cocoon" babies by getting immunized themselves.

"Immunizations aren't just for kids," said State Health Officer and pediatrician Dr. Maxine Hayes. "Whooping cough vaccine protects teens and adults, and by getting it they help protect infants who are too young to be vaccinated, but have the greatest risk of serious complications, including death."

Pertussis (www.doh.wa.gov/cfh/Immunize/diseases/pertussis/) is highly contagious and spreads easily through coughing and sneezing. Initial symptoms are similar to the common cold — sneezing, runny nose, low-grade fever, and a mild cough. An infected person can spread the disease from the

beginning of the cold-like symptoms to three weeks after the coughing episodes start. Antibiotics can reduce the contagious period.

The disease symptoms are milder in adults, who may not even realize they have it. People who have or may have pertussis should stay away from babies, young children, and pregnant women until treated. "It's important for adults to find out if they've had the vaccine," said Dr. Hayes.

More information on preventing whooping cough is available by contacting your local health agency (www.doh.wa.gov/LHJ-Map/LHJMap.htm) or the Department of Health's immunization program (www.doh.wa.gov/cfh/Immunize) at 360-236-3595.



Free respite care for medically fragile children

Located in Centralia, Washington, Pope's Kids Place is a multi functional complex with a pediatric clinic, a dental clinic, a daycare facility and an overnight respite center. Pope's Kids Place opened its doors to special needs children in 1995.

Starting in October of 2010, Pope's Kids Place, with a grant from the Children's Justice Task Force, will begin offering FREE respite care to medically fragile children in Washington State who live in: foster care, relative care, or with their biological families. Transportation reimbursement to and from this respite opportunity will be considered. Length of stay will be granted based on distance travelled, the needs of the caregivers and the total number of children who apply.

With a high staff-to-child ratio with specially trained and skilled nurses and assistants, Pope's Kids Place's "Vivian's House" is prepared to attend to your child's medical needs and emergency situations. Vivian's House offers specialty equipment, comfortable living spaces for children of all ages, stages and physical abilities with a consideration for special accommodations. Children using ventilators, feeding tubes, seizure disorders, spina bifida, several palsy and other medical needs are welcome and cared for in a nurturing, pleasant and safe environment.

If you are caring for a medically fragile child in your foster home or are a social worker of a child with these special needs, please contact Pope's Kids Place as soon as possible to begin the process of enrolling for this FREE respite. There is a simple application and qualifying process.

At Pope's Kids Place, we believe that all children are miracles! You can depend on Pope's Kids Place to offer the best care to fit your child's specific needs.

If you have any questions about the program please contact Shawna Estrada, Program Director at (360) 736-9178 or email sestrada@popeskidsplace.org

Post Adoption **Support**

Is your child in school?

The Adoption Support law has been amended to require that the Department provide assurance to the federal government that school-age children receiving adoption support benefits are attending school through a public or private school or home schooling. In October you will receive with your adoption support check a brief questionnaire requesting information about your child's school attendance. We would appreciate your helping us fulfill our statutory duty by responding in the following ways: e-mail, phone, or postal mail.

MAIL

Adoption Support
P.O. Box 45713
Olympia, WA 98504-5713

PHONE 1-800-562-5713

EMAIL post-adoptflms@listserv.wa.gov

Regional Contacts

Region 1 – Spokane

Kira Mitchell 509-363-4628
Pam Copeland 509-363-3379

Region 2 – Yakima

Steve Bergland 509-454-6924

Region 3 – Everett

Natalie Trigsted 425-339-1762
Linda Richardson 425-339-3998

Region 4 – Bellevue

Aaron Washington 425-590-3072
Jennette Norris 425-590-3069

Region 5 – Tacoma

Cindy Anderson 253-983-6359
Laura Davis 253-983-6281

Region 6 – Tumwater

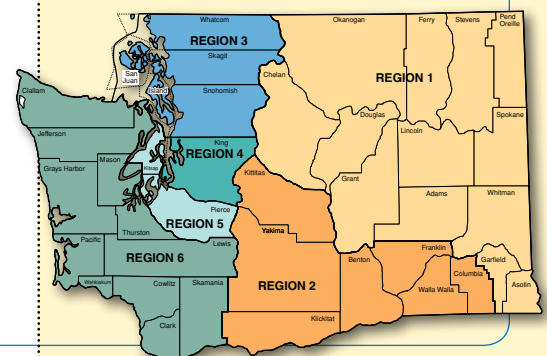
Cheryl Barrett 360-725-6758
Kim Mower 360-725-6778

Headquarters – Olympia

Lonnie Locke 360-902-7932

Toll free number: 1-800-562-5682

(listen carefully to the recorded message)



Important numbers to know when you take care of children in out-of-home care

Foster Parent and Caregiver Crisis and Support Line: 1-800-301-1868

ON-GOING AND CRISIS SUPPORTS FOR FOSTER PARENTS

Under contracts with the state, three private agencies are working to build supports for you within the foster care community. Supports include hubs, support groups, and matching new foster parents with veteran foster parents. To get connected:

- If you live in Eastern Washington, the Olympic Peninsula down through Pacific County or from Thurston County to Clark County, call 1-888-794-1794.
- If you live in King County or any counties north of King County, call 206-605-0664.
- If you live in Pierce or Kitsap counties, call 253-473-9252.
- If you live in King County, the Friends of Youth CARE program provides short-term counseling, education and support to help you care for your most difficult children. 1-888-263-3457 or 206-915-0459.

Family Help Line: 1-800-932-HOPE or www.parenttrust.org. The Family Help Line is a free, statewide training and referral line for the families of Washington state. Last year, the Family Help Line received more than 5,000 calls and requests for information. Calls can last up to 90 minutes and parents can call as often as needed.

Support for foster parents under investigation for allegations of abuse or neglect: Foster Parent Investigation Retention Support Team (FIRST) 253-219-6782. Monday through Saturday, 8:00 a.m. – 8:00 p.m., or leave a message and receive a return call within 24 hours.

Foster Parent and Caregiver Crisis and Support Line: 1-800-301-1868

Mental Health Crisis Line Information: The crisis line telephone number for your county or region is available on the DSHS Mental Health Division website at: <http://www.dshs.wa.gov/mentalhealth/crisis.shtml>.

GENERAL FOSTER PARENT INFORMATION FOR THE STATE OF WASHINGTON

FPAWS: Foster Parent Association of Washington State, 1-800-391-CARE (2273) or www.fpaws.org. FPAWS is seeking new members and supporting foster parents in many ways, including referrals to local associations.

Kitsap and Pierce County information about becoming a foster parent or to receive foster parent support: Foster Care Resource Network, 253-473-9252. Monday through Friday, 9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. or leave a message and receive a return call by the next business day.

RESOURCE INFORMATION AVAILABLE STATEWIDE

Get connected to information on resources in your area by calling 211 – a toll free number.

Children's Administration Foster Parent Website:

<http://www.dshs.wa.gov/ca/fosterparents/>

Children's Administration Foster Parent Training Website – Trainings are open to all licensed foster parents, licensed relative caregivers and unlicensed caregivers. For information about foster parent and caregiver training, check out:

<http://www.dshs.wa.gov/ca/fosterparents/training.asp>

CHILDREN'S ADMINISTRATION FOSTER CARE LISTSERV

Join the 2,200 people who have subscribed to the List Serve <http://listserv.wa.gov/cgi-bin/wa?SUBED1=fosterparents&&A=1> for updated information on resources for the work you do in caring for children.

Family Planning Services are designed to help avoid unwanted or mistimed pregnancy and are available through your local Community Service Office (CSO). Each CSO has a full time Family Planning Nurse to help provide services to Medicaid eligible clients. There is also a Family Planning hotline number 1-800-770-4334.

Washington Basic Health

An important benefit for foster parents

Basic Health is a state-sponsored program providing low-cost health care coverage through private health plans. Eligibility requirements include:

- Income less than 200% of the federal poverty guidelines
- Not Medicaid eligible

You choose your coverage and you choose your providers. Free preventive care, office visits, low annual deductibles, and affordable prescription drugs.

Due to the popularity of this program, there is a significant waiting list. However, foster parents are able to by-pass the waiting list!

This is a terrific benefit for foster parents who do not have health insurance through other means. If you are a relative caregiver with a dependent child placed in your home, this is a benefit to becoming a licensed foster parent for your relative child. To request an application, please call 800-660-9840.

1624 elections in November (Foster Parent Consultation Team)

November is the month that new representatives are chosen for the statewide 1624 Foster Parent Consultation Team. This is an opportunity to be a part of an effective collaborative team that includes foster parents and Children's Administration staff in working to develop positive impacts in Washington's foster care system. We really encourage your interest! Involvement includes a monthly business meeting, either by phone, videoconferencing, or in person. Face to face or videoconferencing meetings happen quarterly, with conference calls in between. You would also provide some leadership to the regional 1624 meetings.

We want to hear from you! To learn more or express your interest in being involved, please contact your regional Children's Administration liaison listed below:

REGION 1 Laurie Palmquist 509-363-3523

REGION 2 Terry Lockett 509-454-6927

REGION 3 Kathy Ramsay 425-339-1746

REGION 4 Stephanie Allison-Noone 425-590-3030

REGION 5 Betsy Rodgers 253-983-6309

REGION 6 Peggy Devoy 360-993-6919