

Caregiver Connection

JULY 2016

A monthly publication for Washington State foster and adoptive families and relative caregivers produced by the Washington Department of Social and Health Services, Children's Administration and the Alliance for Child Welfare Excellence.

WHEN FOSTER CHILDREN BECOME PART OF YOUR FAMILY

*By the Coalition for Children Youth & Families
Milwaukee, Wis.*

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“Not only do parents make adjustments in their lives when a child in care enters their home, the children in the house are in for changes too . . . big changes! It doesn't matter if they are born or adopted into the family or are currently in foster care. Adjustments come easily for some – they move over at the table, know they will have to share your time and smile – while others are still processing the changes they had to make well into adulthood.

Humor and Insight

One Wisconsin dad, with humor and insight, tells a story about his nine-year-old son. On the evening that he and his wife were going to foster parenting classes, his son said, “Dad, so you and Mom are going to be gone all night and neglecting me all evening so

that you can learn how to care for other kids you're going to bring into our house?”

This wise father knows that his son anticipates making some big changes and is probably fearing it. It's the savvy parent who knows that the whole family will be making changes.

On the other hand, some birth children take fostering and adopting for granted. They are in a position to appreciate what their parents are doing and feel part of it. They learn their new dances in the family circle.

One woman who grew up with biological, adopted and foster siblings says, “I think I lived in my own bubble all my life. The kids who came were almost all younger than me, so I didn't have to compete with them for anything, other than the bathroom. But that was just normal.”

She goes on to say, “I was old enough to understand the basics of foster care, so the comings and goings weren't a big deal either. Growing up in a foster home is what it is – it's hard to describe unless you have lived another way to compare it to something.”

Both reactions are valid. Be open to any reactions your kids may have and have some tools ready to help the family expand.”

Becoming a foster parent when you already have kids at home is like driving and getting to a “Merge” sign on the highway. But on the highway of life, when adults decide to become foster parents, getting all the kids smoothly merged without a crash takes some thought and planning because everyone is in this together.

Preparing your biological children for the changes in family dynamics isn't often discussed when the adults in the family become foster parents. The following stories contain some tips to help you and your family make those adjustments as seamlessly as possible.



FROM A NATIONAL EXPERT



Dr. John DeGarmo, foster parent and national consultant and speaker on foster care issues

Dr. John DeGarmo, posted this on his blog in 2014 about integrating foster children into your biological family.
 (It is reprinted with his permission)
 For more information from Dr. DeGarmo, www.drjohndegarmofostercare.weebly.com/

“Last week, the foster baby that we had been taking care of since he was born four months ago moved to another home, where he was placed with his older sibling. This young one came to us weighing only four pounds, and on a heart monitor. To say that our lives were changed would be an understatement, as my wife and I spent a great deal of time taking care of this little one, getting up at all hours to feed him, and giving him what he needed the most: love. My wife and I had begun the discussion between ourselves of adopting him, as we had come to love him as our own. When he left last week, my family was grief-stricken at this loss.

Just three days ago, he and his brother came back into our home, as their current foster mother is having surgery. The wounds on my wife’s heart were re-opened as she grappled with her grief, and my children were thrilled to see their tiny little brother once again. That same night, three more children were also placed into our home, as their foster parents took a well-deserved vacation together, while we served as a respite home for these three boys. This addition of five more children brought our total to eleven children in our home. Indeed, it was a change of pace in our home, and one that we were both excited and nervous about – cooking, cleaning, bathing and other household chores that came along with a large family. My wife and I would have been quickly overwhelmed by it all, after a hard day at our day job. It was the help of our children that eased this load. Changing diapers, feeding babies, doing dishes and even reading bedtime stories; our children were invaluable to us. If for at one moment our children rebelled at the thought of having more children in foster care placed in our home, my wife and I would have had a much more difficult time of it.

When you bring foster children into your home, it can be a difficult time for your own biological children. Take some time to sit down with your children and remind them why you chose to be a foster parent. Share with them the information they need to know about your new foster child. If they are too young to understand why a child might be in foster care, do not burden or confuse them with this information; they will simply not need more information or details. Your older children may be curious as to why the foster child is coming to live with them. Share with them what you know, and remind them that the foster child is probably hurting, frightened and may reject your family in the first few days and weeks.

Tell your children that it will take time to form a relationship with the foster child. Your own children may have concerns. Perhaps they are worried

that they will have to share you with their new foster sibling. They may resent that there is a new person joining their family. Ask them to share their feelings with you, and listen to what they have to say. Reassure your own children that you will always be there for them. You will also want to plan on setting aside some special time for just you and your own children, as they will need time alone with you during your fostering.

Being a foster family can be challenging emotionally, physically and mentally. Children in foster care often demand much of your attention, and your love, which they so desperately need. It can be easy for your own children to feel neglected during this time. A little extra attention from you, their parents, will go a long way towards them and your entire family.”

Contents

When Foster Children Become Part... National Expert	1
It Takes a Village....	2
Support Tips	3
Who Will Be that Somebody?	4
Prudent Parent Law	5
Voices of Children	6
Helpful Info for Relative Caregivers	7
Just for Kids	8
Graduation Program	9
Seattle Aquarium and Park Passes	9
Consultation Team	10
Additional Resources	11
Meet Our Recruitment	12-13
Fostering WA Staff List	14
Fostering Together List	15
Caregiver Training	16
Trainers in your Region	17
	18

IT TAKES A VILLAGE: WAYS FRIENDS AND FAMILY CAN SUPPORT FOSTER PARENTS AND KIDS IN THEIR CARE

By Angela Davis
Frugal Living NW

While the broad shoulders of foster parents and relative caregivers can handle a great deal, nearly all are grateful when family, friends and the community reach out to help them carry the load temporarily. Their support gives the folks on the frontlines an opportunity to catch their breath, renew their spirit and just relax occasionally. But many would-be supporters just don't know what kind of help is needed.

Enter Portland mom and foster mom Angela Davis. In her blog, "Frugal Living NW, she recently put together an invaluable list of tips for those willing supporters. Since some of the tips refer to the Oregon system, we've added a little Washington-specific information in italics. Save this column! When friends ask how they can help, send them a copy. You'll both be glad you did! For related columns and those on other subjects, including money-saving tips for Northwest parents, go to www.frugallivingnw.com

"My husband and I have been serving as foster parents in Oregon for almost two years and we've learned a whole lot along the way. The most important lesson for us? How critical it is for us to be surrounded by people willing to help us carry the burden of fostering. Here's the deal: There isn't any shortage of people and organizations who want to help foster kids.

Seriously, if I took advantage of all

the groups that offer free stuff to my foster children, the area under our Christmas tree would be filled and our dresser drawers would be packed. But support for foster families? The ones on the front lines, parenting and advocating for the most vulnerable children in our communities 24 hours a day? Very, very little.

Burnout is high with foster families and I know for a fact that the more support a family receives, the more likely it is that they will continue fostering. And it's really in all of our best interest for healthy foster families to continue to foster.

SO, WILL YOU HELP CARRY THE GIANT BURDEN FOSTER FAMILIES ARE CARRYING?

NEXT, HERE ARE WAYS YOU CAN SUPPORT FAMILIES FOSTERING IN YOUR COMMUNITY. (I INCLUDE FAMILIES WHO HAVE ADOPTED OUT OF FOSTER CARE IN THIS GROUP AS WELL).

THESE AMAZING PEOPLE ARE IN THE TRENCHES AND OFTEN HAVE LESS INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT THAN FOSTER PARENTS DO. JUST BECAUSE A CHILD IS IN THEIR FOREVER FAMILY DOES NOT MEAN THEIR PROBLEMS ARE SOLVED.

SO, IF YOU KNOW SOMEONE WHO HAS ADOPTED A CHILD COMING FROM A TRAUMATIC BACKGROUND, USE THIS LIST TO SERVE THEM, AS WELL.



Support Tips

Communicate. Text, call, email. Ask how they are doing. Ask what you can do to make their lives easier. Let them know you are thinking of them, praying for them, rooting for them.

Provide respite. Respite is similar to babysitting, Angela notes, but is more formal and regular. It is most often providing overnight care so foster families can rest, recharge and reconnect with their core family. Foster families desperately need respite, but often don't use it because they don't have anyone who has offered to help.

The most ideal arrangement is for you to do respite regularly (one weekend a month, every other Saturday afternoon) and with the same family. For instance, an older couple in our church watches our two foster kids for the weekend, once a month. This couple is now like an extra set of grandparents, and our fosters adore them.

Please note: In Washington, you have to be a licensed foster parent to provide respite if the child comes to your home for the respite.

Support Tips

Run errands.

Go grocery shopping. Make a Costco run. Pick up prescriptions (all kids in foster care get free medical care, so you won't have to pay for anything). Drop off diapers and wipes or order supplies from Amazon and have them delivered.

Offer your gently used baby stuff. Families who foster babies are in the greatest need of "stuff"— car seats, bottles, clothing, or other equipment. Want to be even more awesome? Offer to store the items in your garage and bring it over when it's needed. Foster families already store an enormous amount of gear for future placements, it would be nice to not have one more thing to house.

Bring food.

Some families like home-cooked meals and some prefer take-out. Many families are managing kids with complex dietary needs and it's just easier to say, "Get this particular meal at Panda Express." And pay special attention to the first three weeks of a new placement. It's usually absolute chaos during those first couple of weeks. There are tons of appointments, in-home visits and assessments, visits with the family, and everyone adjusting to each other.

The very last thing these parents want to think about it is how in the world they are going to feed everyone. Just BRING THEM FOOD. Bring them gift cards to restaurants with a good take-out menu close by. Drop off a bag of groceries with fruit, vegetables, and plenty of snack foods. Bring a handful of freezer meals. Don't ask, just do it.



Organize playdates.

Foster parents often spend much of their day inside the house, so it's lovely to be able to play with others. You could also invite one kid over to play and give the parent the option to choose who will go. I offered to watch my friend's foster children one afternoon and she asked if she could send her bio son instead, saying, "He never gets to do fun stuff anymore because all of our time is taken up with the foster kids." Done and done. Simply say, "I have one extra pass to the Children's Museum. Which kid can I take for the afternoon?"

Welcome the WHOLE family over for dinner, lunch, or a playdate.

When families start fostering, the first thing to go is usually invitations for social gatherings. We often feel incredibly isolated. People without personal exposure to foster kids imagine them much more destructive and disruptive than many of them are in reality. Yes, it may be chaotic and there may be some messes, but foster families need social interaction. So keep the invitations coming.

And as an encouragement, most foster families are as gracious as they come and we have very low expectations.

We don't care what food you serve us or what your house looks like. We're just thrilled to be important enough to you to overlook the unique set of circumstances we bring to the table.

**"ANYONE WHO
STEPS OUT OF THEIR WAY TO
REMEMBER MY BIOLOGICAL KIDS
IS PRECIOUS TO ME."**

Be "hands and feet" for a family.

Offer to do whatever the foster parent needs once a week for two hours. Basically, you're Alice from the Brady Bunch. Fold laundry, read to a child, wash the dishes, run an errand, make dinner, scrub a toilet, sort through clothes, sit and have adult talk over coffee. Whatever they need at that moment, you do it.



Include all children in activities.

If the family's foster child is within the age range of the event you are planning, please invite them. Obviously, we understand that our foster isn't going to be invited to a super special birthday party, but if it's a bigger group event, include our fosters.

Many children in foster care have never attended a real birthday party or an actual playdate. You will blow their little minds with the balloons and cake and party favors, plus it is an excellent opportunity to teach your child how to serve.

Create a memory book.

When children leave foster care to either be reunited with their biological parents or move to an adoptive family, foster parents are encouraged to send them with some sort of a memory book filled with pictures, stories, and other mementos from their time in that home. For the less crafty foster parents, this is probably not going to happen. (Remember the part about high expectations and requirements of foster parents with the lack of support and resources?) Offer to take the foster family's pictures and make a scrapbook with blank areas for the foster family to add in written captions.

Pay for a class, summer camp or a haircut.

Offer to pay for a portion or all of their sports fees or camp tuition. Give the family a gift certificate to a local hair salon. Show up with a bag filled with new socks.

Provide household help.

Offer to clean their house, mow the lawn, wash the car, take the laundry to your house and bring it back folded. I have some friends who are uncomfortable with someone cleaning their house, but I bet they would hand you the keys to their van if you said you would bring it back washed and vacuumed.

Remember the foster family's biological children.

I've yet to meet a person unwilling to serve my foster children, but it's my biological children who often slip through the cracks and go unnoticed. They are the ones who have given up their home and their stability to serve their foster siblings, and their sacrifice needs to be acknowledged every so often.

“WHO WILL BE THAT SOMEBODY?”

Twenty-six years ago, Catherine Gutz was attending a Bible study class when the issue of abortion came up.

One of the participants said if a pregnancy was not terminated and a child was born, “somebody will take in a baby.”

Catherine’s response: “I said to the group ‘who will be that somebody?’”

That question nagged at her mind as, for the first time, she considered becoming that “somebody” by becoming a foster parent.

A week later, she met a woman named Peggy, who was looking for child care for her son. Catherine was running a daycare at the time, but was thinking about closing it. She told Peggy she was considering becoming a foster parent.

She could not have said those words to a more appropriate person.

“Peggy” was Peggy Hays, whose job was to recruit and support foster parents in the Clark County area. “That is called ‘confirmation,’” she said of the circumstances that changed her life.

Catherine and her husband Michael were quickly licensed, and more than a quarter century and 200+ foster children later, they are retiring.

They lost their daughter to complications from diabetes late last year; Michael is battling cancer.

They will not renew their license for the ninth time this year, which will enable them to spend time just with each other “for the first time in our marriage.”

But just as important in their decision is the effect Michael’s illness will have on any children in their Catherine and Michael Gutz care.

“These kids have had enough loss in their lives already – enough grief.

Why put them through more?

When you can avoid it, why wouldn’t you do it?”

She and Michael adopted one child, but she said they have 34 “forever kids” they call their own. Their first child in care visited at Christmas time to be with them as their daughter passed away.

“That’s relationship,” she said of the bond that had been created. “Not rules. Not regulations. Not capacity. Relationships.”

Kim Glover, a foster parent liaison with Fostering Together in Vancouver, said, “That just speaks volumes” that her foster daughter would return at such a difficult time.

Once licensed, Catherine immersed herself not only in helping raise kids in care, but in the work of making the child welfare system work better for those children.

“She was always there for foster parents,” said Meri Waterhouse, a program manager with Children’s Administration in Olympia. “She has just been a really strong resource for foster parents as I have looked at the Facebook pages.” That’s where foster parent advice is often sought and offered. “She is always one of the first to offer information, a shoulder to lean on, or a cup of coffee when caregivers need support.” Name a committee or work group to improve the system for kids, and you would probably find her on it.

- She worked with others to start for the first independent living program in the state.
- She worked to build a bond with biological parents of children in

care through a mentoring program.

- She helped push the idea of a consultation team between top Children’s Administration officials and foster parent representatives.
- She worked on the Prudent Parenting Law to help normalize the experiences of kids in care.
- She is a co-trainer who helps instruct potential foster parents.

“She’s an all-around asset,” Kim said. “She’s been a great foster parent – always there when people need her; always an ear for somebody to talk to. She is such a quintessential part of the foster parent community.”

Peggy, now retired from the state, offered the same enthusiastic assessment.

“I’d call her up to ask her to do something, and before I could even really tell her what it was, she would say ‘I’m in. I’m in.’ And it wasn’t just in a little bit. Anything she did, she did 110 percent. That’s huge because foster parents are very, very busy.”

She also said what makes Catherine so special is her great gift in working with kids.

“I would say about people, whether foster parent or social workers, there are people who can do it and then there are people who are naturals. She was a natural. She had such a way of being able to talk to those kids. I just love her to death.”

Catherine insists the work is not that of an individual – it is the work of many willing hands sharing the common cause of improving the lives of kids.

“I don’t do it by myself,” she said.

“My logic is that anybody can gripe about the system, but do what you can to make it better,” she said.

A good example is her work to improve the relationships between biological and foster parents.

“A child wants to see his biological and foster parents working together. It is all about surrounding the child with love.”

Part of that love in her home comes from her and Michael working together. He was once asked at a foster parent panel about his role in caring for kids. He said that Catherine did most of the day-to-day parenting at home, but he supported her in every way he could in that work.

He also noted, “I am the first male in their lives who hasn’t abused them,” Catherine recalls. At the time, most of their foster children were teenage girls – which made the message even more powerful. She sees the long-term benefits to her work and that of other foster parents.

She puts it this way: “So many kids come out of generational abuse. We can look forward and see the generational solutions. We are impacting generations into the future. We are changing the world they will inherit.”

For Catherine, Michael and all those who have answered the question “who will be that somebody?” with their life’s work, surely the future will say thank you.



Catherine and Michael Gutz

... AND FROM A WASHINGTON FOSTER PARENT TRAINER, THIS ADVICE

Randy Roberts, a contracted foster parent trainer with the Alliance for Child Welfare Excellence at the University of Washington, offered this advice for helping children in a biological family understand the emotional trauma of children in foster care who are now part of the family.

- Establish opportunities for your own children to seek and gain your personal support and understanding during times of emotional distress or confusion in the family.
- Help them to understand that this journey is for everyone in the family.
- Set aside time for members of your family to debrief with you about their experiences and feelings.
- Establish guidelines for when and how to check in with you during times of stress or confusion.

PRUDENT PARENT LAW

Live in Washington?

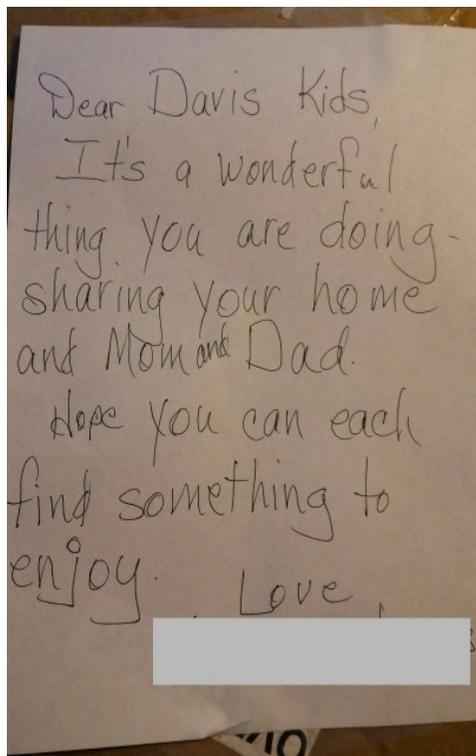
Offer to take care of foster children who are living with adults you know. (Here is what Washington state policy says about that: "Under the Prudent Parent Law, foster parents now may also arrange for the foster child to spend the night away from the foster home for up to 72 hours with someone known to the foster parent. Foster parents must ensure the needs of the child will be met and any safety and supervision plans are followed. The Prudent Parenting law does not require payment for short term-care of up to 72 hours. However, if a foster parent makes arrangements for the child and agrees to pay the alternate caregiver for short-term care, the expenses are paid by the foster parent."

Program Manager Krissy Wright with the state Division of Licensed Resources said, "Anybody you would feel comfortable placing your own children with" can be used for 72 hours under the conditions listed in the policy.)

"Our community is facing a crisis. There simply are not enough certified foster families to handle the need. The only way foster care ... will change is if more healthy families enter the system. If you're a healthy family (and most of us are), that means YOU.

As Embrace Oregon frequently says, "(child welfare workers) cannot simply snap their fingers, wave a magic wand and make families appear for vulnerable children. Families come from our community. They come from our churches, our schools, our neighborhoods."

If you're even just remotely interested in thinking about perhaps exploring foster care, this is the best way to make sure you don't fall through the cracks of the enormous (child welfare) system ...



As part of a blog post about ways friends and relatives can support foster families, Portland foster mom Angela Davis included this photo, saying...

"Our respite providers gave my bio kids a giant box of gifts one weekend while our foster kids were at their house, along with this note. This is probably the most thoughtful gift we've ever received as a family and it didn't cost very much."

Become a Washington foster parent

Call 1-888-KIDS-414



In western Washington, contact Fostering Together, www.fosteringtogether.org/

In eastern Washington contact Fostering Washington, www.sites.ewu.edu/fosteringwa/

You can also fill out a short questionnaire to get started: www.fortress.wa.gov/dshs/f2ws03apps/cafptrainingpub/ca/fosterparents/questionnaire.asp.

You can see answers to frequently asked questions about becoming a foster parent at <https://www.dshs.wa.gov/ca/becoming-foster-parent/faq>



VOICES OF CHILDREN CEREMONY TO BE HELD

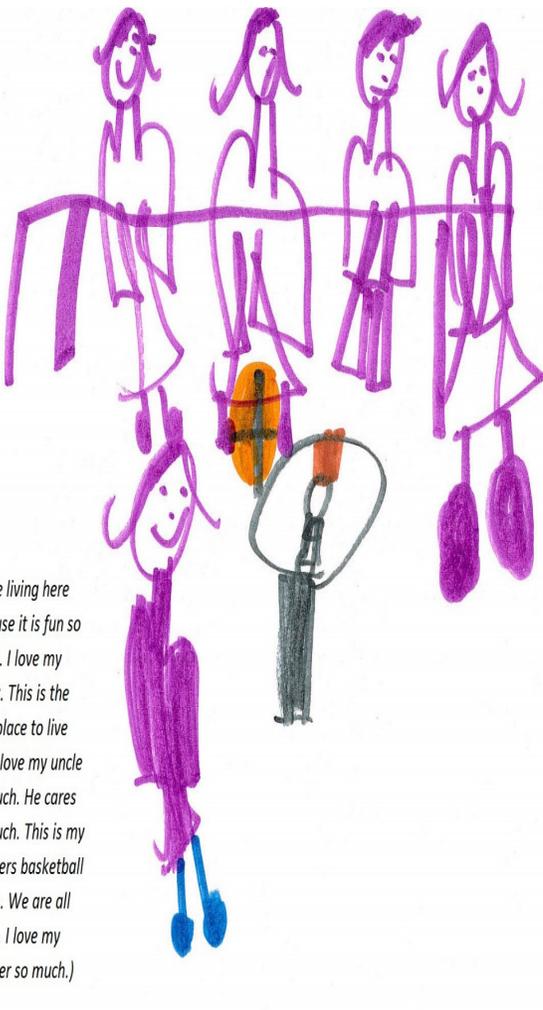
- A celebration for winners of the 13th annual contest, "Voices of Children Being Raised By Grandparents and Other Relatives," hosted by First Lady Trudi Inslee, will take place at the Governor's Mansion July 7.

Two winners in each of three age categories were chosen, based on their writing and/or artwork. Their entries tell how they feel about living with their grandparents or other relatives. Two winning entries ran in June's issue of Caregiver Connection; two more are featured this month, and the last two will be published next month.

The contest is a project of the Olympia-based Family Support and Education Services. Each winner receives a \$100 check from Twin Star Credit Union, and winners and their families also get a free night at Great Wolf Lodge, courtesy of the credit union.

For more information about the ceremony or the contest, contact Lynn Urvina at 360-754-7629 or lynn@familyess.org

MORE WINNERS



(I love living here because it is fun so much. I love my aunty. This is the best place to live and I love my uncle so much. He cares so much. This is my brothers basketball game. We are all there. I love my brother so much.)

I Love Livng hier
Bekus it is fun so
much I Love my aunty
This is The Best Plas
to Liv and I Love y ukl
so much he cese so
much This is my
Bruthrs BaskBall gam.
We are all thir. I Love
my Bruthr so much

What a Blessing it is to Have Relatives

By: Esther

My aunt and uncle are one of a kind

I love them so much

I'm glad they're mine

They lift me up

Through my ups and downs

I am so thankful to have them around

Life is not perfect

Its full of many shapes and colors

But I'm glad to know that we have each other

To have this peace

To have a place to call home

With my aunt and uncle by myside

I'll never be alone

They've been there for me

Through thick and thin

Their love is so strong

They don't have to pretend

I appreciate my relatives

Mine are as special as can be

I love my aunt and uncle very much

Thank you God for giving them to me

Hope, 5, Kent

Esther, 17, Fircrest

HELPFUL INFORMATION TAILORED ESPECIALLY FOR RELATIVE CAREGIVERS

As with foster parents, kinship caregivers also need support and resources as they raise a relative's children, who are often their grandchildren. The federal Child Welfare Information Gateway offers a menu of resources for relatives caring for their children. Several of these are listed below, and you can get more help and additional information about child welfare issues, you can link to the Gateway at www.childwelfare.gov/survey/



Grandfacts: State Fact Sheets for Grandparents and Other Relatives Raising Children

Includes state data factsheets on the number of grandparent caregivers; listings of local programs, resources, and services; state laws and policies for kinship caregivers; information about key public benefit programs; and national organizations that may be of help.

Here are some of the specific links:

AARP Grandparent Information Center

A variety of resources for grandparents raising grandchildren.

A Family's Guide to the Child Welfare System

A guide for families in the child welfare system, including experiences of other families, laws and policies, and how to advocate for a family's rights. The guide also is available in Spanish: "Guía Para la Familia Sobre el Sistema de Bienestar Infantil"

Grandfamilies State Law and Policy Resource Center

Presents a searchable database of current state laws and pending legislation in support of grandfamilies, and assists policymakers in exploring policy options to support relatives and the children in their care both inside and outside of the child welfare system.

Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Resources

A collection of resources for grandparents, including information on benefits and assistance, health and safety, and state-specific information.

The GrandKin Guide: Frequently Asked Questions and Answers for Relatives Raising Children

Explains what extended families can expect when asked to care for children by defining kinship care and different types of kinship care; explaining the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program; and discussing choices relatives have when asked by child welfare agencies to care for their related child.

INFANTS SHOULD NEVER SLEEP ON AIR MATTRESSES

In the last five years, the federal Consumer Safety Protection Commission has received reports of 40 infant suffocation deaths involving the deaths of infants who were placed to sleep on air mattresses. Infants can suffocate on an air mattress or can become entrapped between the mattress and bed frame or mattress and wall.

Never place infants to sleep on air mattresses or other soft surfaces (such as water beds and adult beds), which are not specifically designed or safe for infant use. Even properly-inflated air mattresses are usually too soft for infants to maintain a clear airway. For a safer space for baby, use a crib or play yard that has a firm, tight-fitting mattress and tight-fitting bottom sheet without any blankets, bumpers, pillows or stuffed animals.

Never place infants ages 15 months old and younger to sleep on an inflatable air mattress.

Always place baby to sleep on his or her back in a crib or play yard that meets current standards.



Color THIS! Free!

It seems these days that the world has gone colorbook crazy. Even adults have finally remembered how fun and relaxing it is to sit with a box of colors – or markers – or pencils – or gel pens – and color. If you have a printer, you and the kids can have a great time this summer coloring. When the weather's too hot to do much else or you don't want them vegging in front of the tv or they need a quiet time together, or by themselves, coloring is good!

Here are a few little internet treasure troves for coloring fans. Not only can you print absolutely free pages at these websites, they don't require you to download additional software, whose safety you're not sure about. With these websites (and a few others), a few pages of blank paper, some coloring supplies and a little imagination, kids can print out a page or a whole bunch of pages and make their own personalized coloring books. A personalized coloring book, along with a box of crayons or markers, would make a great and inexpensive gift for your child to give to another, too. And with a little imagination and assistance, children could use the images to create cards, bookmarks, party invitations or who knows what!

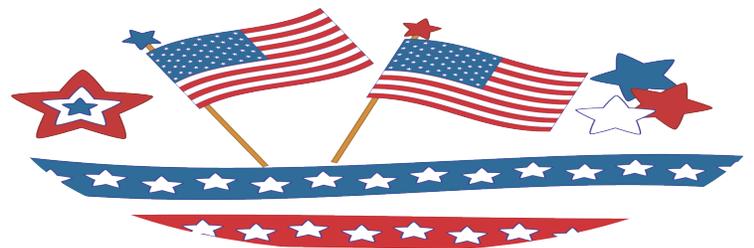
The familiar yellow-and-green Crayola© brand gives kids lots of choices. One of the great things about this website is that some of the free pages are geared for older kids and teens. (Check out the bald eagle!) A few of the pages are based on familiar characters. For instance, there's a page with Barbie.

<http://www.crayola.com/free-coloring-pages/>

Coloring Castle, a veritable plethora of coloring pages, sorted out for you by theme! Bookmarks, too.

<http://www.coloringcastle.com/>

Activity Village, UK, a website with lots of coloring pages, some with a British flavor, that can be printed. You'll need to save the ones you want as .pdf files before printing. Despite the extra step, it's a terrific website. It also has many other printables – cards, bookmarks, even Minion finger puppets (that don't need coloring, just cutting out and taping). What a good birthday party activity. <http://www.activityvillage.co.uk/printables-list>





State Park Passes and Seattle Aquarium Passes

Free state park passes are available for foster parents and relatives caring for children in state custody. The same is true for use of the Seattle Aquarium.

You can use your foster care license or card for access to the parks. You must have the foster care wallet card to access the aquarium. Relative-caregivers can obtain a card through the worker who is your home study writer in the Division of Licensed Resources.

Relative caregivers whose relative children are not placed with them through Children's Administration can obtain a pass card from their local Kinship Navigator or Kinship Support Programs.

If you have questions about obtaining a card, please contact:

Christie Boyd at: boydcha@dshs.wa.gov or 360-902-7653.

You can learn more about parks in the system at www.parks.wa.gov.

For more information about those passes, go to www.dshs.wa.gov/sites/default/files/CA/fos/documents/CCSEPT15.pdf.



Take them out to the ballgame – in Eastern Washington

Foster parents and relative caregivers with children in state care can purchase \$5 tickets for a baseball game pitting the Spokane Indians against the Tri-City Dust Devils baseball at Spokane's Avista Stadium.

The game will begin at 6:30 p.m. Friday, Aug. 26. The event is being coordinated by Fostering Washington. For tickets, go to the Spokane Indians website, <http://www.milb.com/index.jsp?sid=t486> and click on "group outings." Tickets must be purchased in advance.

CARD SAMPLES



IS A RELATIVE RAISING CHILDREN

AUTHORIZING SIGNATURE

EXPIRATION DATE

State of Washington
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL AND HEALTH SERVICES
THIS CERTIFIES THAT

IS AN UNLICENSED CAREGIVER WITH
THE STATE OF WASHINGTON
Department of Social and Health Services
Children's Administration

Authorizing Signature

June 30, 2016
Expiration Date

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PASES GRATUITOS PARA PARQUES Y EL ACUARIO DE SEATTLE

Estos pases estan disponibles para padres de crianza y familiares que tienen bajo su cuidado a niños bajo la custodia del Estado. Puede usar su licencia como padre de crianza o una tarjeta como la que se muestra arriba. Para el Acuario es necesario tener la tarjeta.

Si tiene alguna pregunta, favor comuníquese con:

Christie Boyd at:
boydcha@dshs.wa.gov
o [360-902-7653](tel:360-902-7653).

WHEN YOU NEED HELP WITH AN ISSUE, REACH OUT TO YOUR 1624 CONSULTATION TEAM MEMBER

Wondering who to turn to when you have an unresolved concern or problem related to foster care?

A consultation team that enables foster parent representatives to bring issues before high-level Children's Administration leaders was established through a provision in a 2007 state law.

That team, known as the Children's Administration Foster Parent Consultation Team (1624 Team), includes four representatives from each of the state's three regions (two from the north area and two from the south area). Team members were elected in late 2015.

The statewide team meets quarterly.

Regional team meetings also take place quarterly. Here is contact information for the team:

Foster Parent Association of Washington State Representatives

Beth Canfield
bethcanfield@comcast.net
(360) 990-1011, cell;
(360) 377-1011, home

Mike Canfield
mkbeth@comcast.net
(360) 990-1255, cell;
(360) 377-1011, home

Team Representatives

Region 1 North
Lynsey Bilbruck:
bilbruck@hotmail.com
509-560-3423;

Aimee Budrow:
aimeebudrow@gmail.com
509-846-5603;

Region 1 South
Windy Hancock
timandwindy@ymail.com
(509) 528-6392, cell; (509) 554-2377

Audra Krussel
Audra11@mindspring.com
(208) 340-9956

Region 2 North

Jamie Potter
Jalice24@yahoo.com
(425) 223-8168

Deena Parra,
deena-parra@olivecrest.org
(360) 572-4271

Region 2 South
Shannon Mead
CAFPTR2S@outlook.com
(206) 856-1508

Yosef Banai
CAFPTR2S@outlook.com
(425) 378-1625

Region 3 North Vacant

Ashleigh Barraza
ashleigh.barraza@yahoo.com
(619) 847-8370

Region 3 South
Cara Leyshon
caraleyshon@hotmail.com
(360) 440-5629 (c)

Amy Gardner
michaelamy52@msn.com
(360) 200-2102



Do you have a story idea or topic you'd like to see addressed in the Caregiver Connection.

Have you seen a helpful article on caregiving you'd like to share more widely?

Please pass your ideas or articles to Bob Partlow:

bpartlow1970@hotmail.com;
Tel: 360-539-7863.

Additional *Resources*

Washington State's Kinship Navigators

Helping grandparents and relatives raising children

Locate information, resources, and a link to your local Kinship

Navigator for support at:

https://www.dshs.wa.gov/altsa/kinship-care-support-services?-field_counties_value=Thurston&-field_kinship_care_resource_type_value=Kinship+CSP&field_city_value=olympia&=Apply

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Foster Intervention Retention and Support Team

FIRST

Offers neutral third party advice and support for foster parents when dealing with allegations or a licensing violation.

ALL FOSTER PARENTS STATE-WIDE PLEASE CALL:

253-219-6782

Email:

FIRST@olivecrest.org

Coordinated Care

New health plan managed care for Apple Health Foster Care.

Apple Health Core Connections is designed for:

- Children and youth in foster care
- Children and youth in adoption support
- Young adults in extended foster care (18-21 year olds)
- Young adults 18-26 who aged out of foster care on or after their 18th birthday

Contact information: 1-844-354-9876 (TTD/TTY: 711)

For eligibility, please contact the Health Care Authority Foster Care Medical Team at 1-800-562-3022 ext. 15480.

FPAWS

Foster Parent Association of Washington State FPAWS is an all volunteer, non-profit association, led by experienced caregivers who provide support and helpful services to all caregivers (foster, adoptive, and kinship) in Washington State.

Contact FPAWS at

www.fpaws.org

1- 800-391-CARE (2273).

FOSTER PARENT AND CAREGIVER CRISIS AND SUPPORT LINE:

1-800-301-1868

Foster Care Critical Support and Retention Program

This program was developed to help retain foster parents who care for sexually reactive children, physically assaultive children, or children with other high-risk behaviors. Short term therapeutic and educational interventions are available to help support the stability of the placement.

This service is free of charge and is provided through Olive Crest. Contact the child's worker if a referral would help you in handling the behaviors of the child in your home.

If you would like to learn more about the available services contact Jasmine Hodges Olive Crest's Critical Support Clinician

425-1612 ext. 1356 or

Jasmine-Hodges@olivecrest.org

Additional *Resources*

The Mockingbird Society's mission is to empower foster and homeless youth with the tools of advocacy to make positive changes within the foster care system.



They produce a newspaper, set up constellations of homes for foster parents to connect, and use the power of the voices of youth to advocate for positive changes in the child welfare system.

Visit them at
www.mockingbirdsociety.org.



This nationwide organization is based in Issaquah and lists its mission is "to provide students with the inspiration, mentoring, counseling and financial support they need to help navigate their individual path to college completion. We do everything in our power to help our students persist and succeed."

The foundation offers a number of scholarships, including the Governor's Scholarship for Foster Youth, and runs the annual summer Make It Happen! experience to better prepare young people for college.

Read more at
www.collegesuccessfoundation.org.



Seattle-based Treehouse serves more than 8,000 youth in foster care and their caregivers each year helping youth succeed in school, meet key material needs, and participate in essential childhood experiences. Services are tailored to help youth graduate from high school with a plan for their future. Through education, the organization also helps to empower caregivers to advocate on behalf of the educational rights and needs of youth in care.

See their website at
www.treehouseforkids.org.

Meet Our Recruitment Partners

Who Support You

Children's Administration (CA) works in partnership with two separate agencies to provide foster parent recruitment and retention / support services to prospective foster parents, current foster parents and relative caregivers in all areas of Washington. Our goals are to:

- Increase the numbers of safe, quality foster families to meet the diverse needs of children and youth placed in out-of-home care in Washington State, and
- Offer support to foster parents and relative caregivers

Prospective foster parents are welcome to license through either CA's Division of Licensed Resources (DLR), or any private child placing agency licensed in Washington. Our recruitment partners serve all families, regardless of where they choose to become licensed.



Olive Crest's Fostering Together program supports the west side of the state (Regions 2 and 3) through foster care Liaisons.

Eastern Washington University's Fostering Washington program supports (Region 1) the east side of the state through Resource Peer Mentors (RPMs),

The Liaisons or RPMs provide information, help and guidance for you from your first inquiry, through training, and throughout the licensing process to become foster parents. Liaisons and RPMs both answer questions and share helpful information during your foster care journey. They offer:

- Support at your first placement,
- Support groups , (some with training hours available and some provide a meal and / or child care)
- Mentoring,
- Training, and
- On-line Facebook groups

All supports are designed with our caregivers in mind. We want to help you connect with other caregivers, obtain additional training, and find answers to questions. Both Olive Crest and Eastern Washington University offer information and referral services to foster parents and relative caregivers. The regional liaisons or peer mentors also help resolve issues foster parents may experience in their local area. Contact the liaison or RPM listed for your area with any questions you might have.



EWU's Staff List

Region 1:



Last name	First Name	EWU Email	Counties	Cell phone
Acosta	Mirna	amirna@ewu.edu	Yakima	(509) 307-3628
Bilbruck	Lynsey	lbilbruck@ewu.edu	Okanogan-North	(509) 560-3423
Bludau	Melike	mbludau@ewu.edu	Spokane	(509) 714-7728
Budrow	Aimee	abudrow@ewu.edu	Okanogan	(509) 846-5603
Cammack	Heather	hcammack24@ewu.edu	Whitman	(509) 288-0207
Crossley	Cheryl	ccrossley1@ewu.edu	Yakima	(509) 985-7038
Curbow	Staci	scurbow@ewu.edu	Benton	(509) 308-2985
Farnsworth	Chrystal	cfarnsworth1@ewu.edu	Kittitas	(509) 304-7000
Fordham	Kim	kfordham@ewu.edu		(208) 676-1186
Flowers	Meaghan	mflowers1@ewu.edu	Spokane, Lincoln	(509) 991-9692
Gardee	Tamera	tgardee@ewu.edu	Franklin	(509) 314-8354
Gilk	Teri	tgilk1@ewu.edu	Klickitat	(360) 942-9001
Hancock	Windy	whancock2@ewu.edu	Benton	(509) 528-6392
Harris	Ruth	rharri28@ewu.edu	Ferry, Stevens, Pend Oreille	(509) 675-8888
Holcomb	Rick	rholcom1@ewu.edu	All Regions	(509) 468-9564
Lesley	Molly	mohallor@ewu.edu	Spokane	(509) 326-6250
Leavitt	Rochelle	rleavitt2@ewu.edu	Kennewick & Pasco	(509) 308-2282
Morehead	LaDeana	lmorehead@ewu.edu	Chelan	(509) 670-7270
Muse	Mon Ra'	mmuse@ewu.edu	Spokane, Whitman, Garfield, Asotin	(509) 359-0791
Oldridge	Lindsey	loldridge@ewu.edu	Walla Walla	(509) 240-0174
Potter	Gail	gpotter@ewu.edu	Spokane	(509) 359-6130
Powers	Druska (Dru)	dpowers8@ewu.edu	R1 N & S	(509) 928-6697
Redford	Kim	kredford@ewu.edu	Grant and Adamas	(509) 750-0232
Robinson	Mary	mrobinson6@ewu.edu	Chelan	(509) 393-3123
Rogers	Linda	lrogers@ewu.edu	Spokane	(509) 389-7192
Sherman	Amber	asherman4@ewu.edu	Spokane, Pend Orielle, Stevens, Ferry	(509) 359-0874
Simpson	Jessica	jsimpson4@ewu.edu	Okanogan	(928) 201-6288
Slowe	Barb	bslowe@ewu.edu	Yakima	(509) 833-6391
Stoebner	Hayley	hstoebner@ewu.edu	Chelan, Douglas, Grants, Adams, Okanogan	(502) 724-2589
Tejeda	Brittney	btejeda@ewu.edu	Benton	(509) 438-9608
Thomson	Karen	kthomps9@ewu.edu	Spokane	(509) 230-4668
Whitworth	Tyann	twhitworth@ewu.edu	Region 1 South	(509) 731-2060
Wilson	Danielle		Grant & Adams	(509) 398-1553
Warwick	Ivy		Asotin	

Olive Crest's Fostering Together Liaisons: Region 2:

Last Name	First Name	Email	Counties	Phone
Crow	Shala	Shala-Crow@olivecrest.org Program Director	Region 2	360- 220-3785
Parra	Deena	Deena-Parra@olivecrest.org Staff Support	Region 2	360-572-4271
McClure	Leilani	Leilani-McClure@olivecrest.org	NE King County	425-681-2094
Smith	CeCe	cece-smith@olivecrest.org	South King County	509-201-7069
Anderson	Maia	Maia-anderson@olivecrest.org	King West County, MLK, White Center	425-346-8336
Harp	Megan	Megan-Harp@olivecrest.org	Smokey Point	425-350-3839
Buckles	Summer	Summer-Buckles@olivecrest.org	Everett, Sky Valley and Lynnwood	425-830-9400
Pitts-Long	Angela	Angela-Pitts-Long@olivecrest.org	Central District	425-614-6176
Uratsun	Christina	Christina-Urtasun@olivecrest.org	Island, San Juan, Skagit and Whatcom	360-720-0969

Olive Crest's Fostering Together Liaisons: Region 3:

Last Name	First Name	Email	Counties	Phone
Marshel	Leeann	Leeann-marshel@olivecrest.org Regional Director	Region 3 Coordinator	360-909-0421
Fowler	Michelle	Michelle-Fowler@olivecrest.org	Support Assistant for Region 3	360-772-1955
Thompson	Erika	Erika-Thompson@olivecrest.org	Pierce	206-406-2398
Johns	Jeanie	Jeanie-Johns@olivecrest.org	Kitsap	360-265-3398
Hatzenbuehler	Niki	Niki-Hatzenbuehler@olivecrest.org	Mason and Thurston	253-219-3355
Cortani	Linda	Linda-Cortani@olivecrest.org	Jefferson and Clallam	360-640-0869
Mitchell	Tristan	Tristan-mitchell@olivecrest.org	Grays Harbor & Pacific	360-581-3590
Moore	Jeanmarie	Jeanmarie-moore@olivecrest.org	Lewis, Cowlitz, Wahkiakum	360-442-9605
Glover	Kim	Kim-Gover@olivecrest.org	Clark and Skamania	360-433-7150



Caregiver Training

The Alliance for Child Welfare Excellence provides training for foster parents, relatives, and prospective adoptive parents who are providing care to children placed in their homes by the Children's Administration.

The Course Catalog provides easy access to scheduled trainings in your community.

For caregivers that do not have a computer or need assistance registering for classes, the Alliance has registrars available to help you, including a Spanish speaking registrar.

For assistance, please call **1-866-577-1915** and leave a message for a registrar in your Region. A registrar will contact you and help you with your registration.



As always, let us know if you are seeking training that we are not providing!

We have the following titles on line as eLearnings:

- 1) [Effects of Abuse and Neglect on Child Development](#)
- 2) [Infant Safety and Care](#)
- 3) [Introduction to the Indian Child Welfare Act \(ICWA\)](#)
- 4) [Parent-Child Visitation](#)
- 5) [So You Have Your First Placement: Now What?](#)
- 6) [Youth Missing From Care](#)

To register for a course you can visit our website at:
www.allianceforchildwelfare.org and click on the Course Catalog.



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REGION	NAME	EMAIL	TELEPHONE
R1 Spokane & surrounding areas	Jan Hinkle-Rodriguez, Supervisor	janh5@uw.edu	509-836-5499
	Leon Covington, Trainer	leonc44@uw.edu	509-846-8641
	Renee Siers, Trainer	siersr@uw.edu	509-363-3399
	Kebbie Green, Registrar		1-866-577-1915
R1 Yakima, Tri-Cities, Ellensburg & surrounding areas	Jan Hinkle-Rodriguez, Supervisor	janh5@uw.edu	509-836-5499
	Ryan Krueger, Trainer	krry300@uw.edu	509-358-3096
	Patty Orona	po5@uw.edu	509-225-7927
	Eileen Angier, Registrar		1-866-577-1915
	Maria Amaya, Registrar – Spanish (Español)		1-866-577-1915
R2 Seattle Metro Area	Yolonda Marzest, Supervisor	ymarzest@uw.edu	206-923-4955
	El-Freda Stephenson, Trainer	elfreda@uw.edu	206-923-4922
	Cara Mbaye, Trainer	mbayec@uw.edu	206-923-4914
	Janice Jackson, Registrar		1-866-577-1915
R2 Bellingham, Everett, Mount Vernon & surrounding areas	Yolonda Marzest, Supervisor	ymarzest@uw.edu	206-923-4955
	Joan Sager, Trainer	sagerj2@uw.edu	360-594-6744
	Julie Kerr, Registrar		1-866-577-1915
R3 Tacoma, Bremerton, Puyallup & surrounding areas.	Arthur Fernandez-Scarberry, Supervisor	sart300@uw.edu	206-276-4549
	Gracia Hahn, Trainer	hahng@uw.edu	253-983-6362
	Luanne Hawley, Registrar		1-866-577-1915
R3 Tumwater, Olympia, Centralia, Long Beach, South Bend, & surrounding areas.	Penny Michel, Trainer	mpen300@uw.edu	360-725-6788
R3 Clallam County and Jefferson County	Robert Judd, Trainer	juddre@uw.edu	360-344-3003
R3 Aberdeen, South Bend and Long Beach.	Stephanie Rodriguez, Trainer	steph75@uw.edu	206-321-1721
R3 Vancouver, Camas, Stevenson & Kelso.	Colleen Cornman-Wilcox, Trainer	cm39@uw.edu	360-993-7991
	Kim Glover, Registrar		1-866-577-1915