

# Wright County Human Services Child Foster Care

April 2012

Wright County Human Services, 1004 Commercial Dr, Buffalo, MN 55313 - 763-682-7400  
<http://www.co.wright.mn.us/department/humanservices/childfoster.asp>

## We take this month of May to Honor Foster Care Families

### STAFF

Marian Elkerton, Supervisor  
763-684-2331

Jill Marzean, Non-Relative  
Licensor  
763-682-7484

Kris Carlson, Relative Licensor  
763-684-2311

Lisa Gertken, Licensing  
Investigator  
763-682-8934

Tammy Romer, Office Support  
Specialist  
763-682-7488

*You open your home to children.  
What is it like for the children?  
What is it like for them, in crisis,  
To come into a home they do not know  
To people they do not know?*

*Do they know how to tell you their routines,  
Their likes, their fears, their history, their story?  
They may be too young, too afraid, and way too overwhelmed.  
They may think it is their fault they are no longer with their family.*

*What a challenge to recognize who these children really are.  
How do you come to know them?  
How do you understand the ways to meet their needs?  
How do you know what has brought them fear and hurt in the past?  
How do you provide them with things that may be familiar  
To comfort them?*

*How do you understand their actions and behavior  
And know how to respond?  
How do you help them grow?  
How do you work with all the systems involved with these children?  
And how do you continue  
To care for your family, and for yourself?*

*We recognize all these challenges  
And the efforts of you and your family in the care of these children.  
We know this can be the most rewarding,  
But yet the most difficult of endeavors.*

*We appreciate you and support you.  
We know we could not accomplish our mission without you.*

*Marian Elkerton, Supervisor, Intake and Resource Unit  
Wright County Human Services*

---

***“Fostering is the  
hardest job you’ll ever  
love.”***

*~ Unknown*

---

## Window Screens Are Designed To Keep Bugs Out, Not Children In

by Jane Kvalheim, RN,BSN,PHN

This time of the year just begs us to throw open the windows and let a refreshing spring breeze into our homes. It is also the time of year falls from windows increase dramatically.

Every year in the United States, nearly 5,000 children (mostly toddlers) fall out of windows and approximately 20 die. Others are left with lifelong disabilities. A child who falls only 10 feet can suffer spinal injury, paralysis and fatal head injury.

In 2009, 4 year old Parker Reck died after attending a family house warming party. All the kids had retreated upstairs to play. Sometime during their fun, Parker pressed up against a window screen and fell 2 stories to the ground. After several agonizing days in the hospital, Parker died.

It is important to realize that a window screen is not a safety device. They give a false sense of security. Window screens are designed to keep bugs out, not keep children in.

**So what can we do to prevent these falls?**

-Keep windows closed and locked when children are around. Keep furniture and anything that a child can climb on, away from windows. When opening a window for ventilation, choose one that a child cannot reach.

-If you have double-hung windows (the kind that can open from the top as well as up from the bottom) it is generally safer to open the top pane, but some older children may have enough strength to open the bottom pane.

-Set and enforce rules that your child cannot play near windows. Especially the activity many kids love, jumping on the bed. "We play two big steps away from windows."

-When buying new windows, ask for built-in-4 inch-limiters

-Strategic landscaping may lessen the extent of injury sustained in the event of a fall. Shrubs and soft edging such as wood chips or grass under a window can cushion potential falls.

-Install window guards on all 2<sup>nd</sup> story or higher windows. Window guards easily screw into the side of a window frame and have bars no more than 4 inches apart. A mesh option is also available. **All window guards must have a release mechanism so that they can be opened for escape in a fire or other emergencies without special knowledge or tools.**

-Removing the hand cranks on casement windows is also a great option.

The bottom line is to ensure that windows do not open more than 4 inches. Toddlers have been known to fall out of windows or get trapped in windows openings in as little as 5 inches.

Another reminder is to take a moment to secure curtain pulls and blind cords. Install safety tassels on the ends of curtain pulls or cut the loops so a child is less likely to get trapped.

If a child does take a serious fall, remember to never move them. Call 911 and let trained medical personnel assess and move the child.

For more information visit:

[www.usa.safekids.org](http://www.usa.safekids.org), [www.stopat4.com](http://www.stopat4.com)

Window guards can be purchased at:

[www.kidco.com](http://www.kidco.com), [www.truevalue.com](http://www.truevalue.com), [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com)

## Resource Library

Wright County Human Services recognizes the hard work and dedication that it takes to be a Child Foster Care, Family Child Care Provider, or Adoptive Parent. We would like to assist you in meeting the various needs of children in your care by providing a variety of resource materials available for checkout.

There are currently over almost 40 books with more to come! Please see **page 7** for a full listing of available titles. A list of the resource descriptions is located on the Wright County Human Services Child Foster Care website on the Provider Corner page, under Foster Parent Training.

Some examples are:

**Behavior with a Purpose** Thoughtful Solutions to Common Problems of Adoptive, Foster and Kinship Youth  
by Richard Delaney & Charley Joyce

*Behavior with a Purpose provides a practical understanding of and clinically relevant interventions for common problems of youth in adoptive, foster and kinship homes. Specific attention is placed on food hoarding, wetting, defiance, lying, stealing and negative attention seeking behavior. The book also explains how the positive intent of adoptive, foster and kinship parents can often work at cross purposes with the motivations of the child. Numerous case examples illustrate the dynamics of a problem. The book firmly endorses the healing power of the family and is written from a strengths-based perspective.*

**The Connected Child** For Parents who have welcomed children: from other countries and cultures, from troubled backgrounds, and with special behavioral or emotional needs  
by Karyn B. Purvis, David R. Cross, & Wendy Lyons Sunshine

*The adoption of a child is always a joyous moment in the life of a family. Some adoptions, though, present unique challenges. Welcoming these children into your family--and addressing their special needs--requires care, consideration, and compassion. Written by two research psychologists specializing in adoption and attachment, The Connected Child will help you:*

- *Build bonds of affection and trust with your adopted child*
- *Effectively deal with any learning or behavioral disorders*
- *Discipline your child with love without making him or her feel threatened*

**Hands-On Learning** More than 1000 Activities for Young Children Using Everyday Objects  
by Gwen Snyder Kaltman

*Organized into 16 themes, this resource features more than 1,000 hands-on activities using inexpensive, readily available objects to engage young children's senses.*

***Please contact Jill or Kris for checkout procedures and training records.***

## Safe Medication Storage

As foster care providers, you are all aware that the child foster care Home Safety Checklist states, "Medication is inaccessible to children and vulnerable adults as needed. Schedule II controlled substances are stored in locked areas." Most of you have also had a conversation with your licenser regarding when you should be sure to lock up your medications. We would like to stress the importance of taking this expectation very seriously.

All medications must be inaccessible to young children in your care. This is always necessary and it is your responsibility to be sure that children do not have access to any medications. For example, if you choose to keep your medications on a high shelf, you must ensure children cannot climb to reach it and that medication is always put back appropriately after use.

When caring for teenage youth, again the primary concern is safety. Many of our foster children are taking prescribed medications. When taken appropriately, these medications can be vital to a child's success. However, there are also significant safety concerns present regarding both prescribed and over the counter medications. Today's teens are quite creative and resourceful. It is important that you continue to stay up-to-date with the new trends regarding chemical use. Many household cleaners and over the counter medications are being huffed, swallowed, or snorted by children to get high. Common household products used to get high include nutmeg, cough syrups, air dusters, markers, gasoline, and many types of cleaning products. To learn more about substances youth are now using please go to [http://www.getsmartaboutdrugs.com/identify/your\\_home.html](http://www.getsmartaboutdrugs.com/identify/your_home.html)

Another area of concern is the sale of medications. We have seen children pocketing medications and selling them to peers in the community. Remember these could be medications prescribed for the child or any medication they find in the home. Finally, a child struggling to manage their mental health needs, may attempt to utilize chemicals to hurt or injure themselves to escape emotional pain. All of these issues may have serious and potentially fatal ramifications for children.

The child foster care rule requires you to keep all medications and potentially hazardous materials inaccessible to children *as needed* in order to keep children safe. Wright County Human Services does expect that these concerns are taken seriously. If you are caring for a child who you suspect may use substances inappropriately or who may be selling medications, please complete a thorough walk through of your home to ensure any potentially dangerous materials or over the counter medications are either locked up or secured so that you know the child will not have access to them. When in doubt, lock them up.

---

*"Teenagers whose parents talk to them on a regular basis about the dangers of drug use are 42 percent less likely to use drugs than those whose parents don't."*

~ Statistics on Teenage Drug Use

[http://www.teendrugabuse.us/teen\\_drug\\_use.html](http://www.teendrugabuse.us/teen_drug_use.html)

---

## Court Information for Children

Being involved in the court system can be very overwhelming for children. The Children's Law Center of Minnesota (CLC) focuses on legal advocacy for foster care youth. They have developed a booklet for youth and young adults 10-21 years old who are in or have been in foster care under Minnesota state court jurisdiction for Child in Need of Protection and Services (CHIPS). [Knowing Your Rights A Handbook for Kids in Foster Care](#) includes information on attending court hearings, people involved in the case, the child's lawyer, and child's rights.

The CLC website also offers helpful information for people of all ages to understand their rights and legal options in different situations. Children can access information on expungement of criminal records, emancipation, voting and employments rights, medical requests and consents, and more.

A link to the CLC and the handbook can be found on the Wright County Child Foster Care website under Provider Corner/*General Resources*.

<http://www.clcmn.org/resources/foster-children/>

---

***“The beautiful thing about learning is that no one can take it away from you.”***

*~ B.B.King*

---

## Online Training

Here is another opportunity for education! The Center for Advanced Studies in Child Welfare (CASCW) at the University of Minnesota is attempting to increase the resources they provide to social workers and foster providers. They have a series of online modules that can be used for training.

As the CASCW states, the modules are self-directed learning opportunities consisting of narrated Power Point presentations created using a tool called Adobe Presenter. In addition to the self-advanced narrated slides, each presentation may contain a variety of media, including video clips, website links, or other audio files.

Wright County will accept the certificate of completion offered through the Survey Monkey questionnaire. This is the second link at the conclusion of the training. Happy learning!

<http://www.cehd.umn.edu/ssw/cascw/PracResources/Modules/ModuleHome.asp>

## Differences & Similarities Between Court Ordered and Voluntary Placement

### DIFFERENCES

Court Ordered Placement	Voluntary Placement
Children are placed in foster care under a court order where either the parents are in support or may not be in support of the placement decision. The court holds authority over the placement. There is usually a basis for a CHIPS petition. (Child in Need of Protection or Services)	Parents have agreed to place their child into foster care without court involvement necessary. The court may review the placement to ensure best interest for the child, but the court has <u>not</u> made the decision to place child into foster care. The parent and agency hold the authority over the placement.
Children cannot be moved from the foster home without court notification or court approval.	Parents have the authority to remove their children from foster care. Children may also be moved from a placement at the discretion of Wright County Human Services. Foster parents would be given a 72 hour notice before the child would be moved from their care.
Parents and children are required to actively follow a case plan designed to resolve situational concerns, so that children can be reunified with their family. This case plan is <u>court ordered to be followed</u> and typically involves action steps to be taken by both the parent(s) and children. Typical expectations for children may include school attendance or participation in therapy or other support services.	Parents and children are required to actively follow a case plan designed to resolve situational concerns, so that children can be reunified with their family. This case plan has been agreed to by the agency and the family. This may be more focused on parent or child goals and may look different from case to case depending on the purpose of the placement.

### SIMILARITIES

Most expectations for foster care providers remain the same regardless of the type of placement. A few examples have been listed below.

- Foster parents, family, and agency should work as a unified team to reach the best possible outcomes for the child and family involved. Throughout this process respecting one another's values, time, feelings, and expectations of the case plan.
- Foster parents must have agency and parent's approval before signing a child up or changing any support services, clubs, activities, or programs not already established in the child's case plan.
- Foster parents must have agency and parent's approval before providing a child any medications not already established in the child's case plan.
- Expectations for supervision of a child is established through conversation with each individual child's team and laid out through the child's case plan. This may be different from child to child.

## Available Resource Library Titles ~ April 2012

- Ants in their Pants** Teaching Children Who Must Move to Learn (by Aerial Cross)
- Are You Listening?** Foster Conversations that Help Young Children Learn (by Lisa Burman)
- Attachment-Focused Parenting** Effective Strategies to Care For Children (by Daniel A. Hughes)
- Behavior With A Purpose** Thoughtful solutions to common problems of adoptive, foster and kinship youth (by Richard Delaney/Charley Joyce)
- Beyond Behavior Management** The Six Life Skills Children Need to Thrive in Today's World (by Jenna Bilmes)
- Beyond Consequences, Logic and Control** Love Based Approach to Helping Children with Severe Behaviors Vol 1. (by Heather T. Forbes, B. Bryan Post)
- Beyond Consequences, Logic and Control** Love Based Approach to Helping Children with Severe Behaviors Vol 2. (by Heather T. Forbes)
- Born for Love** Why Empathy is Essential and Endangered (by Bruce D. Perry)
- The Boy Who Was Raised As A Dog** And other stories from a child psychiatrist's notebook (by Bruce D. Perry/Maia Szalavitz)
- Brain Based Early Learning Activities** Connecting Theory and Practice (by Nikki Darling-Kuria)
- Come and Play** Sensory Integration Strategies for Children with Play Challenges (by Aerial Cross)
- The Connected Child** For Parents who've welcomed children from other countries, cultures, troubled backgrounds and with special behavioral and emotional needs (by Karyn B. Purvis/David R. Cross/Wendy Lyons Sunshine)
- Dance, Turn, Hope, Learn!** Enriching movement activities for preschooler (by Connie Bergstein Dow)
- Don't Get So Upset!** Helping young children manage their feelings by understanding your own (by Tamar Jacobson)
- Everyday Early Learning** Easy and Fun activities and toys made from stuff you can find around the house (by Jeff A. Johnson)
- Finding Your Smile Again** A Child Care Professionals Guide to Reducing Stress and Avoiding Burnout (by Jeff A. Johnson)
- Hands-On Learning** Over 1000 activities for young children using everyday objects (by Gwen Synder Kaltman)
- Healing Parents** Helping Wounded Children Learn to Trust and Love (by Michael Orlans and Terry M. Levy)
- Healing Troubled Adopted Children with Complex Histories** Focus on Anger Issues (by Dr. Richard Delaney)
- How to Handle Hard to Handle Preschoolers** A Guide for Early Childhood Educators (by Maryln Appelbaum)
- Jump into Science** Active Learning for Preschool Children (by Rae Pica)
- Keeping Your Smile** Caring for Children with Joy, Love, and Intention (by Jeff A. Johnson)
- Making It Better** Activities for Children Living in a Stressful World (by Barbara Oehlberg)
- MN Orphan Train Riders** Historical Reflections on Adoption Over a Lifespan Adoptees Have Answers (by Renee Wendinger)
- No Biting, Second Edition** Policy and Practice for Toddler Programs (by Gretchen Kinnell)
- The Out-of-Sync Child** Recognizing and Coping with Sensory Processing Disorder (by Carol Stock Kranowitz)
- Parenting from the Inside Out** How a Deeper Self-Understanding Can Help You Raise Children Who Thrive (by Daniel J. Sigel/Mary Hartzell)
- Parenting the Hurt Child** Helping Adoptive Families Heal and Grow (by Gregory C. Keck/Regina M. Kupecky)
- Practical Solutions for Practically Every Problem** The Early Childhood Teacher's Manual (by Seffen Saifer)
- So This is Normal Too?** (by Deborah Hewitt)
- The Way I Feel** (by Janan Cain)
- Touchpoints** A Guide to Understanding Your Child's Physical, Emotional and Behavioral Developments (by D. T. Berry Brazelton)
- Use Your Words** How Teacher Talk Helps Children Learn (by Carol Garhart Mooney)
- What do you do with the mad that you feel?** Activity Book Helping Children Manage Anger (by Family Communications)
- Why Children Bite** A Family Companion to No Biting (by Gretchen Kinnell)
- Wounded Children Healing Homes** How traumatized children impact adoptive and foster families (by Jayne E. Schooler, Betsy Keefer Smalley/Timothy Callahan)