



# Foster Family Service Newsletter

## Holiday Parties...

### **Cameron Park & Jackson:**

Friday, **Dec. 5** from 6pm-8pm at Bounceopolis! Santa will be there too!

**Sacramento:** Sun, **Dec. 7**, from 6pm-8pm at Foothill Skate. Santa and all his helpers will be there with skates on for a lot of fun, food and evening of skating

**Stockton:** Fri. Dec. 17 from 7pm-9pm at the Oak Park Ice Arena.

### **So. Lake Tahoe:**

Tues, **Dec 16** from 12-2pm Potluck at the Tahoe Verde

Clubhouse. Santa arrives at 1pm!

**Santa Rosa:** Sat, **Dec 10** at 2pm at the Snoopy Home Ice Skating Rink.

**Oroville:** Mon, **Dec 15** from 5 to 6:30pm. RSVP your social worker for the location.



**December 2008**

*Wendy Knutson, Editor*

*The Delora Corporation  
dba*

**Foster Family Service**

Lic#097003903

&

**Adoptions by**

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**FROM THE BOARD  
OF DIRECTORS  
TO YOU!**

## What is an IEP?

**Definition:** *Abbreviation for Individualized Educational Plan, a plan for educational support services and outcomes developed for students enrolled in special education programs.*

The "IEP" (or "individualized education program") is a process and a document.

If an assessment says your child needs special education, you will have an IEP meeting at least once a year. You and the rest of the IEP team (including your Social Worker or/and County Worker) will write an IEP document that says what your child needs and what services will meet those needs. It should say:

\*What level your child is at in school;

\*What the long- and short-term goals are for your child;

\*What special education and related services your child needs;

\*How much your child can be with children who aren't disabled; and

\*When services should start.

If you think your foster child may need an IEP talk with you FFS Social Worker about getting this started.



## **Subtle Signs** by Arthur Becker-Weidman, Ph.D (Taken from "Fostering Families Today," Feb-Mar 2003)

Adjusting to a new child in the family can be difficult, but what if the adjustment period seems to be taking longer than expected. As the months drag on you begin to question your decision to adopt and wonder how much more you can take. But, this difficult adjustment time may not be normal, your child may suffer from any number of mental, physical and emotional illnesses. Only by watching the subtle signs can you begin to understand the struggles of your new child.

Gail tells her 7-year-old daughter, Sally, to pick up the napkin Sally had dropped. As Sally crosses her arms a sad and angry pout darkens her face. Gail says, "Sally, I told you to pick up the napkin and throw it away." Sally stomps over to the napkin, picks it up, and throws it away. Crying and whining, Sally stands with her back to Gail. Sally, angry and unhappy is exhibiting one of the subtle signs of attachment sensitivity that nearly all children adopted at a young age demonstrate. An informal survey I conducted of children adopted from Asia between the ages of 4 months and 2 years of age revealed that more than half the children showed subtle signs.

Attachment is an interpersonal, interactive process that results in a child feeling safe, secure, and able to develop healthy, emotionally meaningful relationships. The process requires a sensitive, responsive parent who is capable of emotional engagement and participation in contingent collaborative communication (responsive communication) at nonverbal and verbal levels. The parent's ability to respond to the child's emotional state is what will prevent attachment sensitivities from becoming problems of a more severe nature.

What are the subtle signs?

1. Sensitivity to rejection and to disruptions in the normally attuned connection between mother and child.
2. Avoiding comfort when the child's feelings are hurt, although the child will turn to the parent for comfort when physically hurt.
3. Difficulty discussing angry or hurt feelings.
4. Over valuing looks, appearances and clothes.
5. Sleep disturbances. Not wanting to sleep alone.
6. Precocious independence — A level of independence that is more frequently seen in slightly older children.
7. Reticence and anxiety about changes.
8. Picking at scabs and sores.

Internationally adopted children experience at least two significant changes during the first few months of life that can have a profound impact on later development and security. Birthmother to orphanage or foster care, then orphanage to adoptive home are two transitions. We know from extensive research that prenatal, post-natal, and subsequent experiences create lasting impressions on a child. During the first few minutes, days and weeks of life, the infant clearly recognizes the birthmother's voice, smell and taste. Changes in caregivers are disruptive. The new caregivers look different, smell different, sound different, taste different. In the orphanage there are often many care givers but no one special caregiver. Adoption brings with it a whole new, strange and initially frightening world. These moves and disruptions have profound effects on a child's emotional, interpersonal, cognitive and behavioral development. The longer a child is in alternate care, the more these subtle signs become pervasive.

There are effective ways for a parent to help his or her child.

Parents and the right parenting are vital to preventing subtle signs from becoming anything more than sensitivities. Parenting consistently with clear and firm limits is essential. Discipline should be enforced with an attitude of sensitive and responsive empathy, acceptance, curiosity, love and playfulness. This provides the most healing and protective way to correct a child.

As Sally walks away to pout, Gail comes up behind her, scoops her up and begins rocking her gently while crooning in Sally's ear. Gail sings songs and tells Sally she loves her and understands Sally is angry at being told what to do. Gail expresses sadness that Sally is so unhappy. At first Sally resists a bit, but she soon calms down and listens as Gail tells her how much she loves Sally. Sally is sensitive to feelings of rejection and abandonment that are evoked by her mother's displeasure, so Gail brings Sally

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## We Are Proud To Say... We Have Great Kids & Great Parents Too!

**Joey S.** of the *Bridges Home* has been busy with school. Joey has just been awarded Student of the Month and brought home some fantastic grades! **We are all proud of you Joey!**

**Arianna R.** of the *Anderson Home* had had a job while attending high school and is doing quite well at both of them. **Keep up the good work Arianna!**

News from the *Hankins Home*: **Norman S.** has been nominated for the Gate program by 3 teachers and is a straight A+ student. **Raymond** and **Rhianna R.** are both mastering the third grade with flying colors...and learning to raise their hand and have patience. This is a true virtue. **Great news, Norman, Raymond & Rhianna!**

**Tristan and Matthew F.** of the *Huber Home* have both been awarded certificates for Perfect Attendance this semester. The Cameron Park office would also like to recognize the brothers for working their good manners here at the office. They have done a great job and we enjoy them visit us. **We are proud of both of you!**

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### ...Subtle Signs Continued from Page 2

closer to reassure Sally non-verbally. It is by experience that the subtle signs are addressed and managed. Nonverbal experience is more powerful than verbal experience since most of the subtle signs have their origin in nonverbal experience and nonverbal memory.

These sensitivities are not a mental illness or Reactive Attachment Disorder. They are subtle signs of attachment sensitivities. So, what can you do?

First, as Gail does with Sally, bringing the child in close is better than allowing the child to be alone or isolate him or her self.

Second, as Gail does with Sally, talk for the child. Putting words to what the child is feeling. This allows the child to feel understood by you, maintains a connection, and helps assuage the fear of rejection and abandonment.

Third, don't make food a battle. A child who steals food or hoards food usually has sound emotional reasons for this. Providing the child with food so that your child experiences you as provider is often the solution. Put a bowl of fruit in the child's room. (Be sure to keep it filled. It does no good if you provide and then leave an empty bowl!) In some instances, I've recommended that the parents provide the child with a fanny pack and keep it stocked with snacks. This usually quickly ends hoarding and stealing of food.

Fourth, for the child who is overly independent, doing for the child and not encouraging precocious independence is helpful. So, making a game of brushing your 6-year old's teeth, dressing your 7-year-old, or playing at feeding a 9-year-old, are all ways to demonstrate that you will care for the child. Keeping it playful and light, allows the child to experience what the child needs and helps eliminate hurtful battles.

In conclusion, subtle signs are important reminders that our children have ongoing sensitivities that as parents we must address in a responsive and sensitive manner. Responsive and sensitive communication is essential. Attachment is a function of reciprocal, sensitive and responsive communication; attachment does not reside in the child alone. It is important for the parent to manage and facilitate this attuned connection within a framework of clear limits and boundaries, natural consequences, and firm loving discipline.

For more information, contact Dr. Becker-Weidman of The Center For Family Development by writing to 5820 Main Street, Suite 406 • Williamsville, NY 14221, calling 716-810-0790, e-mailing [Aweidman@Concentric.net](mailto:Aweidman@Concentric.net) or visiting the Web site at [www.Center4FamilyDevelop.com](http://www.Center4FamilyDevelop.com).

## Notes From Our Director

*The Christmas season is so very busy, and often overshadowed by the pressure to shop and have a fair*

*amount of gifts for each of our children. Regardless of ones' religious beliefs, I challenge our readers to remember the most important "reason for this season": to be thankful for what we do have, and to share our time, our love, and our homes with those most important to us. Just think about this for a moment...if each of us committed to sharing only positive and supportive information with those around us during the month of December, I venture to guess that our holidays would be considerably more uplifting.*

*The foster children in our program look to us for safety, security, and to see how we handle challenging times. Think about the value you could bring to these children's holidays by showing them a positive outlook during this busy time of year. And please don't forget that most foster children have increased levels of anxiety and sadness during the Christmas season, as they are often torn between wanting to be with their biological family and seeking to have fun in their temporary home.*

*Of course our children will want to receive gifts at Christmas, but by emphasizing the importance of unconditional positive attention, and through slowing down the pace to spend time with them, the children in our care can experience the greatest gift of all: the gift of love.*

Happy Holidays to all our readers!

**John**

*Last Chance  
Training Hours!!!*

## Training Corner

Dr. Art Magana and FFS Sacramento are offering a 4 hour training. The workshop will review some of the main reasons

foster children face social and emotional problems in their adjustment to out of home care. Foster parents will gain valuable information on trauma based behaviors, separation and loss, as well as examining the responses in children as they visit with their biological parents. Treatment and parent support information will also be provided.

<b>Cameron Park</b>	<b>Monday</b> , Dec 1st, 6-8pm. in the FFS office. Foster / Adopt Support Group. <b>RSVP 530-676-6226</b>
<b>Sacramento</b>	<b>Saturday</b> , Dec 13th 10am-2pm in the FFS office. <b>FOUR HOURS</b> of training! RSVP Sacramento: 916-487-2111
<b>So. Lake Tahoe</b>	<b>Saturday</b> , Dec 6th 11-1 in the FFS office. <b>Foster / Adopt Support Group</b> . Snacks provided. Sorry, no child care provided. <b>RSVP to Megan</b> .
<b>Stockton</b>	<b>Friday</b> , Dec 12th 7pm-9pm Christmas Party at Oak Park Arena.
<b>Santa Rosa</b>	<b>Wednesday</b> , Dec 3rd, 11:30-3:30. "Caring Matters: Reducing Stress for Greater Well-being" RSVP to Erin for location
<b>Oroville</b>	<b>Wednesday</b> , Dec 10th, 5:30-8:30pm at FFS/ GO FRC: <b>Consequences-natural and logical consequences</b> and more. Pre-Register with your FFS worker. Sorry, no childcare.