

1989



2009

Foster Family Service Newsletter

Exciting Growth

It has been one year since we opened our Jackson office, at the request of Amador County. We started with two families, both who were previously served through our Cameron Park office. Currently we have more than one dozen certified families, sixteen children in placement, and two full-time staff. Not only are we placing children from Amador County CPS, we routinely accept placements from the surrounding counties of El Dorado, Calaveras and Tuolumne. Through community outreach we have become active par-

ticipants in the local Child Abuse Prevention Council; we've established a sizeable clothing closet; and we have been asked to create a counseling center to serve young children, ages 0 to 5 years. This new office has become so busy with placement-related activities that we've had to expand our office space significantly. With leadership support from their administrator, **Judy Midgett** of our Stockton office, both **Sandy Hankins** and **Kelly Pignataro** are actively furthering our Agency's scope to this new area.

April/May 2009
Wendy Knutson, Editor

*The Delora Corporation
dba
Foster Family Service
Lic#097003903
&
**Adoptions by
Foster Family Service**
Lic#347003522*

*Executive Director
**John Johnson M.S.W.,
Psy.D.***

Board of Directors

*Steven Shortes
Bill Hughes, MA
Kathe Hughes, MS
Stuart Van Horn, Ed.D.
Teresa Downey, CPA*

*Foster/Adoptive Child
Representatives:
Amy Riffey*

*Advisory Participants:
**Arthur Magaña, Ph.D.
Wendy Knutson***

How About Some FREE College?

1. **College of the Ozarks** - Students pay no tuition in exchange for at least 15 hours a week at a campus work station at this top liberal arts school in the Midwest.
 2. **Deep Springs College** - This two-year, all-male liberal arts college in California offers free tuition, room and board in exchange for at least 20 hours a week of hard work on its ranch.
 3. **Berea College** - This Kentucky college provides a full-tuition scholarship to every student, in exchange for at least 10 hours a week in one of the school's 130 labor departments.
 4. **Olin College** of Engineering - One of the top undergraduate engineering programs in the country, this school provides every admitted student free tuition for four years.
 5. **Cooper Union** - Located in Manhattan, this school offers degree programs in art, architecture, and engineering, and every admitted student receives four years of free tuition.
- ***Other** more specialized schools with similar deals include: Curtis Institute of Music in Philadelphia, Alice Lloyd College in Kentucky, the City University of New York's Teacher Academy, and UC-Irvine School of Law (this year only) in California.

**May is
Foster Parent
Appreciation
Month!**
*Thanks to each of
you parents that do
so much for foster
children.*

Serving Our Community's Youth Since 1989

Most of us hope that a newly-placed baby or toddler will greet us with open arms, ready to love and be loved. Reality is more complex, of course. But the more attuned we are to the needs and cues of these newly arrived babies and toddlers, the better we can help them emotionally adjust to placement.

1. Carry the child a lot, even a 33-pound 2-year-old. Get a good baby carrier and aim for an hour each day.
2. Rock the child heart-to-heart every day, and don't phase out that bottle yet. Bottle-feeding is great for bonding, even with 2- and 3-year-olds.
3. Be the primary food provider in the first six months. Meal time is powerful bonding time.
4. Play on the floor at least half an hour each day. Tickle, laugh, dance, play and be silly every day.

Common problems:

Resisting affection

Newly placed young children often send conflicting signs. They can beg to be picked up and then immediately fuss to be let down. They may whine to be held and then nearly fall off your lap to avoid body contact. Foster and adoptive parents sometimes think the child “isn't cuddly,” which is not true. Rather, they are feeling hesitant about these new people in his or her life. Hesitant kids need more contact, not less. Acclimate the child to touch with a lot of gentle cuddles every day. Don't be deterred if he or she resists. Hug, carry and cuddle your child anyway. Your touch is the good medicine he or she needs to attach. “Uncuddly” kids eventually enjoy affection if parents are gently, lovingly persistent.

Avoidance

Poorly attached babies often don't want to risk loving yet another caregiver who might leave.

Regression

“Children will typically regress developmentally with a move,” says Deborah Gray in her book “Attaching in Adoption.” “Primary caregivers will need to move backwards with them and bring them forward again.” Treat the child younger than his or her age for the first few months of placement. Respond to the cries, just as you would a newborn.

Extreme independence

Some babies and toddlers will play alone for long periods of time. That's not as good as it sounds. Interaction is crucial to bonding with newly arrived babies and toddlers. Short periods of alone play are OK. But in general, you should interact.

Disturbed Sleep

This is a biggie for parents. Most babies who are moved will have disturbed sleep for weeks or months after placement. It can get exhausting. Remember that the more often you can be the solution to his or her unhappiness, the stronger the attachment will be. Keep it low-key, dark and quiet.

Signs of Attachment

Expect attachment to take time. Think months, not weeks. Though children can appear settled fairly soon, most take six months to a year to attach well. Rarely does it happen within a month. Be patient.

Good Signs to Look For:

- **Making good eye contact with you?**
- **Giggling when you tickle him or her?**
- **Seeking praise?**
- **Nestling in when you cuddle?**
- **Clinging with arms and legs when you hold him or her on your hip?**
- **Searching for you when you are out of sight?**
- **Preferring you over strangers and friends?**



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



Congratulations to **Zachary N.** of the *Resendes CFH*, on his continued good grades and nice comments from his teachers. **Zachary** is also a cadet with the Hangtown **Cadet Marine** program.

Gregory S. of the *Wells CFH* has advanced to the next level in his gymnastics classes.

Good Job to all the Girl Scouts on your cookie sales!!

We would like to say congratulations to the girl scouts at the *Riffey*

CFH on their cookie sales. These girls worked well as a team.

Tommy G., John H. and River H. of the *Resendes CFH*, all received a certificate of **Perfect Attendance** for the 2 trimester!

Tyler K. of the Callahan CFH recently received a **\$1000 grant** from Foster Youth Education.

Congratulations to Alexander D and his Mom who have reunited this month! And thank you to the Corson Family for all their sup-

port.

How about a pat on the back for support worker **Carol B.** We have known Carol to be a great support to our Cameron Park staff, but recently Carol found herself called upon for guidance by a parent who had reunified. This parent was looking for bonding ideas such as those Carol had offered during supervised visits. **Carol, this is what it is all about -You are making a difference!**

Quality Close Up

Across the Agency we are focusing more and more on the quality of our services. This is not only driven by our desire to constantly improve, but CCL has also asked all licensing service agencies to increase their monitoring of compliance-related services. Foster Family Service has designed a new quality assurance program called "Quality Close Up," which defines 'quality' as having three critical and mutually dependent categories: (1) Direct Service provided to the children and certified foster homes; (2) Coordination between our social workers and the other service agencies involved with the child and family; and (3) Documentation of all the services and actions taken by our social work personnel and our foster parents.

In the coming months we will be sharing more information about Quality Close Up. Please note that our social workers are being directed to increase their involvement with CCL-related compliance matters.

The Welcome Mat Is Out For...

The Stevenson Family Home

The Madrid Family Home

The Crafts Family Home

Welcome Back: The Steffens Family Home

We are always interested in certifying new homes. If you know of anyone who may be interested have them call their local office.

Potential Foster Parents can call one of our offices or find a Pre-Application at our website: www.fosterfamilyservice.org

A Special Thanks

Cameron Park FFS received a gift of cushy carpet for their new visit room.

Thanks to Dick's Carpet of Placerville, who gave the carpet at cost and Mr. & Mrs. Ken Crawford who so generously covered all other costs involved.

Foster Family Service Office Numbers:

Sacramento (916) 487-2111

Cameron Park (530) 676-6226

Lake Tahoe (530) 544-2111

Stockton (209) 474-1549

Santa Rosa (707) 576-0522

Jackson (209) 223-3691

Notes From Our Director

By Executive Director, **John Johnson M.S.W., Psy.D.**

Happy Spring to all our readers! I apologize for having to combine the April and May newsletters in to one, but April was an exceptionally busy time and we were unable to finalize that publication.

As we approach summer I have been thinking about the challenges that our foster parents face when having their children out of school. Not only do our special needs foster children have challenging behavior issues during the “normal” schedule of the school year, many have behaviors that escalate during the transition time of summer beginning. This has been the year for us to focus on increasing our Agency’s training curriculum; many of you have already become familiar with the PRIDE course that educates parents as to the reasons behind difficult behaviors and emotions. I feel so strongly about supporting families to have the tools to manage challenging behaviors I thought I would share some information specific to children with ADHD and defiant behaviors.

According to Russell Barkley, Ph.D. and author of “Taking Charge of ADHD,” there are specific tactics that parents can take to reduce stubborn, defiant, or oppositional behavior while increasing the child’s cooperativeness. This book is available for check out from any of our FFS offices. Dr. Barkley sets our eight steps, each based on the premise that the attention given to a child is a very powerful reward or consequence. The steps are listed below, and in the coming newsletters I will highlight them in greater detail.

- Step #1: Learn to pay positive attention to your child.
- Step #2: Use your powerful attention to gain compliance.
- Step #3: Give more effective commands.
- Step #4: Teach your child not to interrupt your activities.
- Step #5: Set up a home token system.
- Step #6: Learn to punish misbehavior constructively.
- Step #7: Expand your use of time-out.
- Step #8: Learn to manage your child in public places.

Training Corner

Cameron Park	New PRIDE Training session begins in June. Call the office for reservations.
Sacramento	PRIDE Training June 2, 9, 16, 23 & 30 last class July 7. All Tuesday classes. All starting at 6 pm with, dinner at each class. No child care.
So. Lake Tahoe	June 8, 2009 5:30-8:30pm, <i>Working with Teens</i> , Held at the Aspen Room inside Lake Tahoe Community College. Snacks provided, child care provided off location by request
Stockton	New PRIDE Training session begins in June. Call the office for reservations.
Jackson	New PRIDE Training session begins in June. Call the office for reservations.
Santa Rosa	New PRIDE Training session begins in June. Call the office for reservations.