



FAMILY & CHILDREN
SERVICES A SOURCE OF HOPE



Fostering Footnotes

summer 2018



7/18/2018 – Foster Parent Appreciation Picnic. Join us for a fun filled evening – dinner, petting farm, face painting and more! The event is located at our Kalamazoo office and will be outside behind the Family Center. Thank you to Eaton Corporation for sponsoring this event. Please see further into the newsletter for the formal invitation.

7/28/2018 – Save the date for Kalamazoo area's annual training event. The training will be **from 9 am to 5 pm** with lunch and childcare provided. Formal invitations will be sent as soon as possible. RSVPs will be required.

8/11/2018 – Sensory Showtime of Christopher Robin at Celebration Cinema in Portage. Lights are dim but remain on, the volume is lowered, there are limited previews and cheering, calling out, or event strolling around the theatre is welcome according to the cinema's website. For actual show times visit www.celebrationcinema.com/events/sensory-showtimes or call 269-323-0447.

8/17/2018 – Movies in the Park featuring Sherlock Gnomes at Frays Park, 4400 Canterbury Ave., Kalamazoo, **starting at 7:00 pm** and sponsored by the Kalamazoo Parks and Recreation. This is a **free activity** and the website suggests bringing a blanket. Family friendly activities will begin at 7:00 pm and continue until the movie begins at sunset. Food and snacks are available for purchase.

Open through 9/9/2018 – Cats and Dogs Exhibit at the Kalamazoo Valley Museum. The Kalamazoo Valley Museum describes it as *"In the exhibit Cats & Dogs, we immerse ourselves in numerous entertaining and interactive elements and environments that help us to truly understand the animals that many of us lovingly share our homes with. Three different environments; in their skin, in their heads and in our society, are designed for visitors to move through and experience what it is like to be in a cat and dog's world. With over 20 hands-on exhibits, visitors will have fun learning and experimenting."* The Kalamazoo Valley Museum offers **free admission** and is open most days **from 9:00 am to 5:00 pm**.

Ongoing – Kingman Museum in Battle Creek, offers **free admission** and has **planetarium shows for \$2.00** per person. Their address is 175 Limit St., Battle Creek and their hours are **Saturday and Sunday 10:00 am to 4:00 pm**.

Ongoing – Foster/Adoption play dates occur the **third Friday of every month from 10:30 am to 12:30 pm** at Calvary Bible Church on Drake Road in Kalamazoo. The play dates are in the gym and children's climbing area. No shoes are permitted in this area so please leave shoes in the entry room and make sure your children wear socks. Please RSVP to Hannah Wainer at 269-420-9003 or hmb217@juno.com.

Ongoing – Brown Bag Lunch Adoptive, Foster, Kinship Parent Connections. This group meets the **second Thursday of each month 12 pm to 1 pm**. Located at the Family Enrichment Center, 415 S. 28th St., Battle Creek.

Ongoing – Parenting the High Needs Child Support Group. This group meets the **third Monday of each month from 6:30 pm to 8:30 pm**. It is located at the Family Enrichment Center, 415 S. 28th St., Battle Creek, MI 49015. Childcare is available and an RSVP to (269) 660-0448 is required.

Ongoing – Saturday Parenting Series; Children of Trauma. This series is offered the **third Saturday of each month from 9:00 am to 12:00 pm**. It is located at the Family Enrichment Center, 415 S. 28th St., Battle Creek. Childcare is provided but to register for that you have to call 269-788-0923 ahead of time.



New and Important!

Foster Parent Use of Social Media/Texting Procedure

While social media has changed the way the world communicates, it has also created privacy and safety concerns. Foster parents might use social media for support or for education purposes. Below are tips for foster parents to follow to avoid any HIPAA/confidentiality concerns while using social media.

Social Media Use by Foster Parents:

- **Protect privacy and confidentiality.**
 - Do not identify a youth as a foster child or post the youth's name or address on a social network. Never discuss specific case information.
- **Photos and foster children.**
 - Photos are not permitted of children in care on social media.
 - This includes foster family pictures with youth in your care at the beach or Christmas photo cards.
 - Photos can create privacy issues and possibly safety risks.
- **Think before you post.**
 - Be sensitive to how messages may be interpreted by others, including your youth's family members and agency staff. Posting negatively about the parents of youth in your care is not promoting positive working relationships. Our number one goal is reunification.
- **Case planning involves the TEAM.**
 - Case planning involves the foster care specialist and team. Posts regarding the need for a new foster home/ re-placement of a child in your care is not appropriate. This is a case planning decision the team needs to be involved with.
- **Be aware that posts may reveal the youth's locations.**
 - Some smartphone photos and network services (such as Facebook's and Instagram's location features) provide GPS information. Learn how to manage location services on your smartphone or turn them off completely.
- **Texting**
 - The texting of information to caseworkers regarding foster children is considered sensitive/confidential and is not permitted.





Safety Check – Social Media: Tips for Foster Parents and Caregivers

By: Child Welfare Information Gateway (www.childwelfare.gov)

While social media has changed the way the world communicates, it has also created privacy and safety concerns. This page discusses the benefits of social media for children and youth in foster care and provides tips for parents and caregivers who want to help youth use social media safely. Advice for social media use by foster parents is also provided.



Helping Youth Use Social Media Safely

While it may be tempting to forbid children and youth to use social media, this is seldom realistic. The Internet and mobile devices are too widespread and accessible. In addition, forbidding social networking may make it harder for youth in foster care to fit in with friends and relate to other teenagers in the community. Instead, foster parents should provide guidance and boundaries to help youth in their care use social media safely. Before talking to youth about social media, make sure you know your child welfare agency's social media policies.

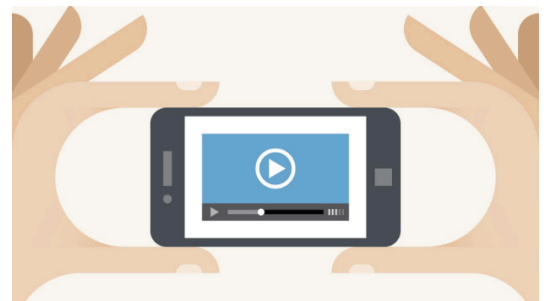
Social Media Provides Benefits for Youth

Social ties. Social media helps youth in foster care fit in with their peers and fosters normalcy. Using social media, youth can keep in touch with friends, siblings, and others and make new connections.

Support. Through online community groups, youth in foster care can share experiences with peers who have had similar experiences. (See FosterClub at <https://www.fosterclub.com/forums/youth-message-board> and Foster Care Alumni of America's groups on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/FCAANational/>.)

Family connections. Between visits, youth in foster care may share posts or have online conversations with biological family members, when appropriate and approved by the caseworker.

Self-expression. Videos, blogs, and other digital venues allow youth in foster care to express their feelings and ideas, which can help shape their identity and contribute to healing from childhood trauma. What are the risks? Youth in foster care may be particularly vulnerable to inappropriate contact, cyberbullying, or child predators. In addition, social networks and private messaging may aid in communication with adults or family members who are "off limits."



Tips to Help Youth Use Social Media Safely

Talk with your youth's caseworker. Ask about safety needs and concerns that may affect your youth's use of social media and whether he or she had any past issues with social media use.

Discuss social media with youth in your care. Ask youth how they use social media and private messaging and why it's important to them. Share and discuss Child Welfare Information Gateway's social media tip sheet for youth (<https://www.childwelfare.gov/pubs/smtips-youth/>.)



Safety Check – Social Media: Continued...

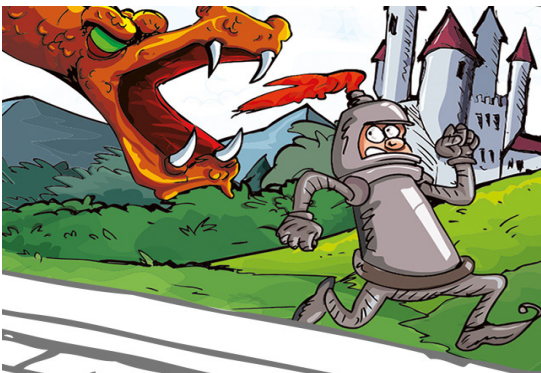


Set house rules for what's okay and what's not. Rules will likely vary with the youth's age, but setting them early is important. (See sample family media agreements for different age groups at http://www.common sense media.org/sites/default/files/imce/educatefamilies_fma_all.pdf.)

Set strict privacy settings. Use privacy settings to help youth limit who can find them online, which posts or photos can be seen, and who has contact permissions. (For information on Facebook settings, read <https://www.facebook.com/safety/groups/parents/>; for Instagram, Snapchat, and other networks, visit <http://foster-adoptive-kinship-family-services-nj.org/protecting-social-media-teens-2016/>.)

Teach youth to keep personal information private. Advise youth in foster care not to post their full name, address, school name, phone number, or other identifying information. (See how to keep youth safe from identity theft at <http://www.parents.com/kids/safety/tips/how-to-prevent-child-identity-theft/>.)

Learn about social media sites and apps. Keep abreast of current technology and best practices for the most popular social media sites and apps youth are using today. (See this list at <https://www.common sense media.org/blog/social-media-apps-parents-should-know-about>.)



Be aware of online gaming risks. Online games can be unsafe as players often interact with others on gaming platforms. Youth should avoid posting pictures of themselves or giving personal information while playing online games, and they should know they can come to you if they are being bullied or harassed. Be aware of the kind of games your youth plays and discuss the risks. (See online gaming tips for parents at <http://www.internetmatters.org/advice/online-gaming/>.)

Monitor use. Station computers in a shared area (not a bedroom), and keep track of mobile device use. Know what type of social media your youth uses. Consider asking youth for passwords and permission to let a trusted adult “friend” them. However, try to balance monitoring with privacy. Installing an online monitoring program can also help watch out for inappropriate use.

Conduct searches. Every so often, search a youth's name and address to see what information or tagged photos are publicly available. (See ways to combat unwanted photos on Facebook at <http://www.inglewoodportal.org/news/2513>.) Watch out for profiles on dating apps or risky matchmaking sites. Look for use of dating sites like OKCupid, Match.com, or Tinder, which may not be appropriate for teens. (See a list of apps to be aware of at <https://safesmartsocial.com/app-guide-parents-teachers/>.)





Safety Check – Social Media: Continued...



Explain the need to be careful. Make sure youth understand that online, not everyone is who they say they are. Advise youth to avoid sharing intimate photos and messaging about sex online. (Read about protecting foster youth from human trafficking at <https://www.fosterclub.com/groups/sex-trafficking>.)

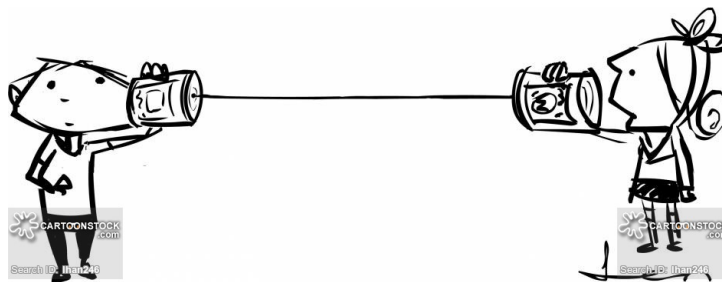
Discuss cyberbullying. Warn youth not to send, forward, or respond to mean or embarrassing messages or pictures. Help youth document, block, and report bullying if needed. (For more information, see <http://www.pacerkidsagainstbullying.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/bullying101tab.pdf>.)

Keep lines of communication open. Encourage youth to let you know if an exchange makes them uncomfortable, if someone is sending them inappropriate photos, or if anyone asks to meet them in person. Appreciate your youth's participation in their online communities and show interest in their friends.

Understand their language. Youth in foster care may use abbreviations, hashtags, and emoji in their online communications. Understand that teens communicate in a language different from yours. (Learn more about online abbreviations at <http://time.com/4373616/text-abbreviations-acronyms/>; emoji use at <https://emojidictionary.emojifoundation.com/>; and hashtags at <http://mashable.com/2013/10/08/what-is-hashtag/#JKPFk3EQIPqF>.)



Be prepared to deal with mistakes. When youth slip up and don't follow guidelines, approach the situation as a teachable moment and calmly work together on what to do next.



"I said, how do you send a text with this thing?"



Behavior Management Spot

TIME-IN DISCIPLINE (www.foster2forever.com)

Instead of time-out, use time-in for discipline and as a calming strategy, especially when children are dysregulated. The first step in any interaction with your child is to remain calm and try to connect with your child emotionally through empathy.

SIT TOGETHER

The goal is to calm the child with your calm, quiet presence. Sit close to your child with calmness and a soothing voice showing empathy for your child's frustration, but using very few words. If the child allows, use gentle, loving touch to reassure the child. If young enough, have your child sit in your lap. When your child is calm, affirm the rule or behavior that must be followed, without lecturing.



WORK TOGETHER

Working together is especially useful if your child needs to clean a mess or struggles to complete a task alone. In a positive tone, encourage your child to help complete the task. "I could really use your help." Complement and thank your child for any progress. Remember not to do the task for your child, do it with your child.

WALK IT OUT

Movement is particularly helpful if a child's misbehavior is related to excessive energy. Get your child to walk, run, jump, or otherwise move with you to release upsetting feelings and calm the child's brain. As you are moving together, discuss appropriate behavior, without lecturing your child.

TALK IT OUT

Ask open-ended questions about what happened from your child's point of view. "You didn't want to _____, huh?" Allow your child to openly say what's going on without lecturing. Ask your child about the choices without judgement. "What was good about your choice? What was bad?" Once your child is calm, open the discussion to reparation or how to make things better.

PLAY IT OUT

Playfulness is safe to a hurt child, and can be used as a first level of discipline. By reacting to your child's inappropriate behavior with a playful question (and even tickling sometimes), you can disarm your child into compliance. Follow-up with a do-over.

DO IT OVER

Do-overs give your child a chance to practice the correct behavior. In a non-threatening, upbeat tone of voice, say "Let's try that again." You may have to demonstrate how to act or speak appropriately. Be sure to praise your child for the correct behavior.

Please
Join Us!



Foster Parent Appreciation Picnic

Bring your Family and Enjoy!

Wednesday, July 18th, 2018

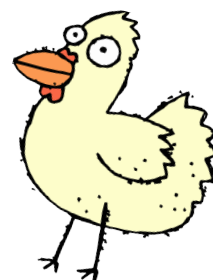
5:30 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.

1608 Lake Street, Kalamazoo

Outside under the Tents

Dinner
Provided

Petting Farm



Face
Painting

Obstacle
Course!



Please RSVP
to Shari Boone

269-373-0248 x4632

269-290-0011

sharib@fcservice.org

by Monday, July 9th



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THANK YOU to Eaton Corporation and its employee volunteers for sponsoring and supporting this event!

We Need Your Help!

To spread the word about becoming a Foster Parent, I would like to hear from you. What ideas or events do you think would be a great opportunity to get the word out? For example, attending your church to speak about becoming a Foster Parent or any event you think would be beneficial.

With your superb ideas, please contact

Jamila Washington, Recruitment Specialist, at **269-501-0834** or by email at jamila.washington@fcsource.org.



Foster Care ON-CALL Telephone Number (269) 569-8294

This phone number is an important resource for you and for foster children. This number should be utilized when the agency is closed and your worker is not available. Typically this would be between the hours of 5 pm and 9 am and on weekends. If something happens that requires a trip to the emergency room, behaviors escalate etc., please be sure you are calling this number. During normal office hours, contact your foster care worker directly.

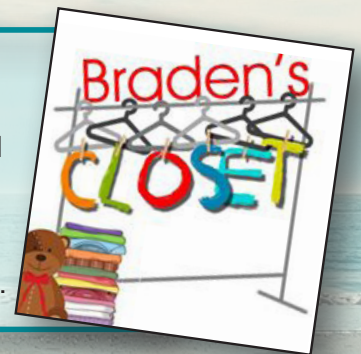


Resources

Braden's Closet is a resource for any foster parent who is in need of clothing, shoes, sheets, blankets, or comforters for the children in their care. Braden's Closet is a part of Fostering Hope and all items are tax deductible. They also accept donations of new and gently used clothing.

Braden's Closet is located at 930 Foxwood Lane, Otsego, MI.

You can visit their page on Facebook or call them at 269-567-0603 for more information.





Apple & Peanut Butter “Sliders”

You won't have to light up the grill for these summertime sliders! Turn simple apples, peanut butter and raisins into a fun summer snack that your kids will gobble up in minutes.

Ingredients:

- Red or green apples
- Peanut butter
- Raisins

Directions:

1. Without peeling the apple, cut two slices and remove the core.
2. Smear the peanut butter onto one side of your apple “slider” and sprinkle on some raisins.
3. Top this healthy snack with the second slice of apple and serve!

Note: For less picky eaters, you can stuff apple sliders with cheese and thin slices of ham or cream cheese and a few chocolate chips.

Slice apple slices, spread Nutella or peanut butter, and make little apple “sandwiches”. Make several of these. Grab a couple carrots as well. Put a carrot in the middle of the plate, and arrange the apple “sandwiches” in the shape of wings to form a butterfly. Great finger food!



Frozen Yogurt Sundaes

Have cold, creamy summer sundaes without all the extra sugar when you freeze low-fat yogurt cups and top them with fresh fruit. All of the flavor and fun with none of the guilt!

Ingredients:

- Low-fat yogurt
- Grapes
- Blueberries
- Watermelon
- Or any fruit of your choice

Directions:

1. Place the yogurt container in the freezer until the yogurt is completely frozen.
2. While you're waiting, dice your child's favorite fruit into bite-sized pieces and set them aside.
3. Using an ice cream scooper, scoop the frozen treat into a dessert bowl and let your kiddo top it with diced fruit. Then watch the hunger melt away.



Thank you for taking the time to read Fostering Footnotes.

Please contact Krista Ploski at 269-344-0202 ext. 4609 or kristap@fcsourse.org if you have comments, ideas or suggestions.



